

DECLARATION

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT VERSUS SAVING NATURE?
A CASE STUDY IN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

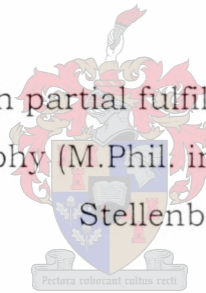
I, the undersigned, declare that the assignment is my own original work that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted at any university for a degree.

Signature

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Date: 2003 11 21

Assignment presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Masters Degree in Philosophy (M.Phil. in Applied Ethics) at the University of
Stellenbosch



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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted at any university for a degree.

ABSTRACT

This research project has been purposed at shedding light and bringing clarity and practical resolution to the ethical dilemma brought about by seemingly incompatible principles and value positions associated with the two contentious issues: social development and nature conservation. In view of exposing the contentions between the two above-mentioned value positions, this project has pitted anthropocentrism against biocentrism/ecocentrism.

However, as alluded to in this research, many people in developing countries, South Africa included, are victims of poverty and hunger which need redress. Unfortunately the alleviation of the same has been made possible through ruthless exploitation and maximum expansion of natural resources and in the process, the environment suffered much. However, with social development, the natural environment is often sacrificed and conversely with the protection and preservation of nature, man is then condemned to destitution.

With the introduction and the case exposé forming the introduction of this research project in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 is devoted to the research methodology used throughout this project. Also, given the problem statement, endeavours to search for answers to the central questions are outlined. An analysis of the case study is also made in this chapter.

Chapter 3 deals with the weighing of the classical dilemmas namely: anthropocentrism versus biocentrism/ecocentrism and this further entails the notion of justice versus conservation pertaining the case in point.

These classical dilemmas are put into critical perspective in Chapter 4 wherein monistic value approaches are exposed in terms of their failures. Precisely, the either-or choices following from pure theoretical principles are put into question with reference to the case under discussion. An alternative, namely the pragmatic approach, which maintains a multiplicity of values, is hereby brought into play.

Chapter 5 entails a critical appraisal of the decision to be taken by the Makhado Municipality Council with regard to the development of the shopping complex or the protection of the indigenous tree sanctuary. In conclusion, recommendations and suggestions are stated within the context of the case in point. However, it is imperative to note that these recommendations and suggestions should be read in conjunction with one another, and not in isolation from one another. Furthermore, the same should not in anyway be indiscriminately used as a universal standard in any similar or related case.

Further research on this ethical debate is encouraged.

ABSTRAK

Die doel van hierdie navorsingsprojek is om helderheid en 'n praktiese oplossing te kry met betrekking tot die etiese dilemma wat voortspuit uit die oënskynlik onversoenbare beginsels en waardeposisies wat geassosieer word met twee omstrede kwessies, naamlik sosiale ontwikkeling en natuurbewaring. Met die oog daarop om die kwelpunte rondom bogenoemde twee waardeposisies aan die lig te bring, stel hierdie projek antroposentrisme teenoor biosentrisme/ekosentrisme.

Baie mense in ontwikkelende lande, insluitend Suid-Afrika, is slagoffers van armoede en hongersnood, soos aangedui word in die loop van hierdie navorsing. Hierdie situasie noodsaak regstelling. Pogings om verligting te bring in hierdie verband, lei egter tot die genadelose eksploitasie en maksimum ontwikkeling van natuurlike hulpbronne. In hierdie proses word die omgewing ernstig beskadig. Die ongelukkige toedrag van sake is dus dat sosiale ontwikkeling dikwels geskied ten koste van die omgewing, terwyl die beskerming en bewaring van die omgewing op sy beurt dikwels die mens behoefdig laat.

Hoofstuk 1 van hierdie navorsingsprojek bevat 'n inleiding en beskrywing van die geval onder bespreking, terwyl Hoofstuk 2 gewy word aan die navorsingsmetodologie wat in hierdie projek gebruik word. Dit bevat ook 'n skets van die pogings om antwoorde te soek op die sentrale vrae van die probleemstelling, en 'n analise van die gevallestudie.

In Hoofstuk 3 word die klassieke dilemmas wat verband hou met die betrokke probleem opgeweeg, naamlik antroposentrisme teenoor biosentrisme/ekosentrisme, en die idee van geregtigheid teenoor die idee van bewaring.

Bogenoemde klassieke dilemmas word in 'n kritiese lig beskou in Hoofstuk 4 deurdat die tekortkominge van monistiese waardebenaderings uitgewys word. Die óf-óf keuses wat volg uit suiwer teoretiese beginsels word bevraagteken met verwysing na die geval onder bespreking. 'n Pleidooi word uiteindelik gelever vir 'n alternatiewe pragmatiese benadering wat eerder 'n veelheid van waardes betrek.

Hoofstuk 5 bevat 'n kritiese beoordeling van die keuse wat die Makhado Munisipaliteitsraad moet maak tussen die ontwikkeling van 'n winkelkompleks of die beskerming van 'n inheemse boomreservaat. Ter afsluiting word aanbevelings en voorstelle gemaak in verband met die kwessie onder bespreking. Dit is egter belangrik om daarop te let dat hierdie aanbevelings en voorstelle nie apart van mekaar beskou moet word nie, maar eerder saam gelees moet word. Dit is verder ook belangrik dat die aanbevelings en voorstelle wat met betrekking tot hierdie geval gemaak word nie sonder meer gebruik moet word as 'n universele standaard vir soortgelyke of verwante gevalle nie.

Verdere navorsing oor hierdie etiese debat word aangemoedig.

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1. Introduction.

Now with great emphasis put on the economic emancipation of humankind, the issue of social development seems to always top every agenda of summits and conferences held all over the world especially in developing countries. As is commonly the case, most people in developing countries live under sub-human conditions. This, therefore, calls for the alleviation of such dehumanising and distressful conditions. Thus, for the advocates of anthropocentrism, a human-centered environmental ethics position, alleviation of poverty becomes an imperative issue. However, the realisation of social development as a goal often seems to be at the expense of nature.

Furthermore, some economic developers from developed countries take advantage of the situation and further their economic aspirations in developing countries at the expense of nature. Still in the same vein, certain affluent companies try to escape nets of high taxes and stricter environmental rules and regulations in their native countries and settle in developing countries. In the process, environmental conditions of developed countries are sacrificed. Obviously, economic development which at most times is considered as a means to social development, has won the hearts of many, since it leads to economic emancipation of the destitute. Whatever nature is suffering from in the wake of economic development, the argument goes, is solely for the benefit of mankind.

However, despite all international outcries about saving nature by environmentalists, economic developers have continued to maximally exploit nature in order to get the best for mankind. All these are done as if there is a superabundance of resources nature can offer indefinitely.

1.2. Nature and purpose of the research.

Perhaps before delving deeper into stipulating objectives and aims of this research, it is rather imperative to make an observation that the issue of economic development has developed indifferent orientations and inclinations amongst many. To start with, to the anthropocentrist it would sound, or rather, look absurd that the impoverished masses continue to live under subhuman conditions whilst the economic invasion of a pristine forest or tree sanctuary, for instance, could provide them with a lifeline.

Obviously, such an economic developer would argue against the preservation of nature at the expense of human life or rights. Simply put, economic developers would systematically argue that nature could not be kept pristine in the faces of the hungry whilst provisioning of needed goods and services could be made possible through the exploitation of natural resources.

On the contrary, the ethical view of the ruthless developers can be sharply contrasted to that of ecological sensitivity which is biocentric or ecocentric in nature. According to Hattingh (1999:75), ecological sensibility, which entails the rejection of the instrumental value theory of anthropocentrism, argues from a non-anthropocentric position that contends against the unrestrained exploitation and expansion of resources.

As further noted by Hattingh (1999:75), in its argument against the anthropocentric and extensionist position (the latter endeavours to extend human values to parts of nature), ecological sensibility maintains that every non-human entity has an interest in its own survival. As such, this means that non-human entities are not primarily means to ends external to themselves but are ends in themselves. They therefore have intrinsic value.

Given the two seemingly incompatibly extreme ethical positions as observed above, it is therefore obvious that this becomes the focal point of this research project. To be precise, this research project will make endeavours to bring compatibility between social development and saving nature which tend to be issues occupying extreme or polar ends of the same continuum. Put differently, this research project will propose a more pragmatic solution to the classical dilemmas brought about by the two monistic value approaches identified above. In essence, the issue of sustainability will hereby be put into perspective.

Furthermore, attempts will be made at searching and proposing solutions and answers for moral questions associated with development and nature preservation/conservation. This research project aims to achieve this by an extensive study of relevant literature and also with the aid of a case study based on the intended invasion of an almost pristine indigenous tree sanctuary by Makhado Municipality (formerly Louis Trichardt) for the purpose of a shopping complex development.

1.3. Case description

a) Context

South Africa, just like other developing countries, experiences issues of moral dilemma pertaining economic development. However, even though it shows some flashes which are characteristic of developed countries, South Africa is in more than one way more of a developing country than a developed one. However, to a few South Africans who still have good memories of the past apartheid South Africa, they will remember that due to the legalised apartheid system, South Africans were segregated according to socio-economic lines which were mostly racial. Several acts and regulations in line with the very same nemesis were put into place. As a result, separate development and self-determination came into effect. Blacks, as a result, were clustered in neglected and underdeveloped areas. Because of poor and pathetic economic conditions they were in, their dwellings were built from scrap metal and low standard materials. People in such areas led their lives in subhuman conditions. The squatter conditions in which they were eventually worsened due to negligence, overcrowding and lack of proper planning on the side of government. In areas like the Cape Flats, Soweto and several others of the same nature, ecological considerations and sensibility were completely neglected.

However, the “haves” live in affluent suburbs with good infrastructure, sanitation, running water, electricity and well-maintained roads. Recreational parks, tree parks and open spaces are usually taken for granted. The lack of ecological sensibility of the “have-nots” resulted in many eco-unfriendly practices. Open spaces were invaded in search of better living conditions. Forests, beaches and private pieces of land didn’t survive the invasion either.

All these were done for human survival. Obviously, the culture of ecological sensibility waned and as such there was no more respect for nature. The government, of late, also played a significant role in considering nature and its resources as a means to an end – a means for human survival and economic emancipation.

This, the government promoted through the implementation of Reconstruction and Development Programmes. In certain areas, pristine natural areas were tampered with in order to provide areas for the building of low cost houses for the impoverished. However, through housing schemes, the government wanted to correct gross inequalities of the past. In certain instances, to be specific, forests were hewed down; natural flow of rivers interrupted, ecosystems interfered with. All these and other forms of social development were done for the emancipation of the impoverished black masses and to attach at some instances, economic status associated with the developed countries.

Except for its good effects on humans, development along these lines never provided the environment with anything good. Obviously, the environment suffered tremendously under the subjection of ruthless developers. For them nature's inherent worth never counted. As such, the environment only mattered in terms of being valued instrumentally. It provided the developer with valuable entities like: vast land, water and breathable air, to mention but a few.

b) Case narrative

Following the dawn of democracy towards the mid-nineties, many blacks moved into urban areas in search of better living conditions. The same also happened in Makhado Town (formerly Louis Trichardt) where a number of middle and high income classes moved from the surrounding black rural areas into the then White-only town in search of better living standards. Established in 1896, the town experienced the apartheid era when separate development policy was in effect, reflecting segregation along socio-economic lines which were basically racial. Following this, there was a separate residential development for blacks in Tshikota Location as was with Indians at Eltivillas and so was it with commercial development (see the map in Appendix A).

Makhado, a town ideally situated 100km from the Beitbridge border post in the north as well as from Polokwane (formerly Pietersburg) in the south on the N1 route, lives to its trademark "Gateway to Other African States" because of its excellent rail, road and air links with the rest of Africa. The Tropic of Capricorn, which forms the southern boundary of the Soutpansberg area, crosses the N1 49km south of Makhado and is a point of popular photographic stopover for visitors. The Soutpansberg mountain range on the northern side of the town is a unique wilderness area with over 500 tree species of which 50 are endemic.

The ushering of democracy or democratic dispensation in 1994 led to a considerable influx to Makhado Town. This put excessive stress on economic goods and services provided by the said town. Simply put in economic terms, demand exceeded supply. However, the said stresses also extended to the natural resources the former residents of the town depend on. Those who could not, financially or otherwise, afford to permanently

move into Makhado Town became daily commuters to search for jobs and means of survival. But all the same, others are still languishing deep in economic quagmire because of lack of jobs. As such, in order to correct the inequalities of the past, job provision became inevitable. In response to that, Makhado Municipality provided the lowly black class with open spaces for vending within the business area. Unfortunately no follow-up controls were effected as expected. As of now, the town looks much dirtier than it was in years of old – yet with the problem of unemployment virtually the same.

The problem is even more complex when considering that about 600 000 people who reside within the jurisdiction of this municipality depend upon this town for employment and economic activities. However, although 6 500 job opportunities are currently available at Makhado Town, it is estimated that another 7 000 job opportunities are required to meet the needs of the present population which is projected to grow to an average of 983 000 by year 2005.

However, despite all these efforts by Makhado Municipality, the goal of social development could not be realised. In an effort to realise its most demanded economic goal of social development, Makhado Municipality somehow secured funds from a mysterious donor and decided to allocate such for the development of a shopping complex.

The indigenous tree sanctuary that lies next to the N1 and Songozwi Street intersection is a home of 145 regional indigenous tree species and has Dorprivier winding through it, thus creating a complex but fascinating ecosystem. The said tree sanctuary also houses a small graveyard of the five soldiers killed in the accident that happened in September 1988 when one of the steel forts situated in Voortrekker square was blown apart during the packing of ammunition by the then artillery squadron.

The proposed shopping complex, which is intended to occupy the tree sanctuary site, is of regional standard, that is precisely, a new modern plush shopping complex to serve the whole region of Vhembe. This is an extensive project which together with other associated facilities requires about 3.6 hectares of land. The main structure of the complex is projected to cover an area of 27 000-sq meters and its construction has been divided into two phases. The first phase, which will cover 15 000-sq meters, is to be commenced with towards the end of 2003. However, the completion of the entire project, in terms of construction will take a period of two years.

After completion, the shopping complex will accommodate enterprises like Pick 'n Pay and its associated speciality shops attracted due to functional magnetism. A multi-purpose sports hall, gym, two cinemas, squash courts, filling station and other potential tenants will also form part of the complex. (The information about the development of a shopping complex emanated during protracted negotiations with the Director of Strategic Development of Makhado Town in order to access documents about the same which, unfortunately I was denied access for political reasons).

The intention to sacrifice the tree sanctuary for the development of a shopping complex, in order to provide jobs for the impoverished, has as of now sparked tension between groups with differing views about the same. The Council, which is enjoying massive support from certain business sectors and most importantly the majority of blacks – mostly the impoverished – is relentlessly pressing for the development of the shopping complex. Their socio-political argument is based on the premise that the tree sanctuary is of no economic value since people are still going hungry with the same covering a space that can be turned into a valuable economic asset. Unfortunately, the tension has turned to be a nasty political and racial debacle.

On the other side is a group of those who argue against the development of a shopping complex in the tree sanctuary. The constitution of this group is mostly white and only a few of non-whites who are ecological sensible – and this is basically not along colour lines. As they argue, they maintain that the tree sanctuary has an intrinsic value which should not be sacrificed at the expense of a shopping complex. Furthermore, some within the same group attach aesthetic value to the tree park.

The two differing positions which seem to occupy the polar ends of the continuum, as reflected in this case, stem from the Constitution of South Africa. Those who are favouring the intention to clear the tree sanctuary so that a shopping complex could be established, are basically concerned about economic development, which in turn helps the impoverished out of poverty and joblessness. However, apart from the fact that this position is based on socio-political consideration, the Constitution of South Africa (1996:10) enshrines the Bill of Rights with stipulations for the right to health care, food, water and social security. Embedded within the right to health care, food, water and social security, the Constitution of South Africa (1996:10) stipulates that:

Everyone has the right to have access to (amongst others):

- sufficient food and water; and
- social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance.

Granted the above social development-based consideration, economic development becomes inevitable, hence this intention to clear the tree sanctuary in order to develop a shopping complex so that people could get jobs and therefore experience economic emancipation they so much want.

This is a clear indication that those who favour the clearing of the tree sanctuary are doing so at the expense of the environment but for humans. As such, their position is basically anthropocentric.

However, on the other end is a group of non-anthropocentrists that considers the clearing of the tree sanctuary for the establishment of the shopping complex unethical. Amongst them are those who argue that the tree park should be left as it is for its own good. The tree sanctuary, as they argue, has its own inherent worth and should not be used as a means to an end. Partly stemming from the Constitution of South Africa (1996:8 - 9), the Bill of Rights stipulates amongst others, a right to a safe environment. This right enshrines a positive attitude towards environmental preservation and ecological sensibility. It precisely states that:

Everyone has the right:

- to an environment that is not harmful for their health and well-being
- to have the environment protected . . . through reasonable legislative and other measures that:
 - ✓ prevent pollution and ecological degradation and;
 - ✓ promote environmental protection (Constitution of SA, 1996:8 - 9).

Still in the same notion of environmental protection and sensibility, the National Forests Act (Act 84 of 1998) – Chapter 3, section 7, subsection 1 states:

No person may:

- a) cut, disturb, damage or destroy an indigenous, living tree in a natural forest; or
- c) possess, collect, remove, transport, export, purchase, sell, donate or in other manner acquire or dispose of any tree, or any forest product derived from a tree.

However, despite the sense of environmental protection and preservation as envisioned in the Constitution of South Africa and the National Forests Act, all this is done in order to protect human interests but at the expense of environmental interests where it has to. To be precise, environmental protection is hereby done for the benefits of humankind and therefore this position is somewhat anthropocentric.

This is also stated clearly and explicitly in the National Forests Act (Act 84 of 1998) Chapter 2 section 3a) which states: natural forests must not be destroyed save in exceptional circumstances wherein the opinion of the Minister, a proposed new land use is preferable in terms of its economic, social or environmental benefits. However, whether for its own good or inherent worth, at least the environment is protected and this shows some sense of ecological sensibility – simply called respect for nature.

1.4. Moral dilemma/Problem statement.

The socio-political situation of South Africa, particularly in Limpopo Province – with specific reference to Makhado Town – renders this case remarkably complex. Because of its broad base and in the view of the multiplicity of contributing factors to this conflict, space and time would not allow delving deeper into them. This is further compounded by historical, racial, cultural and political orientation of the groups involved in the tension brought about by clashing values. Stated in simple form, the problem statement can be formulated thus:

If the Makhado Municipality Council continues with the execution of its proposal of clearing the tree sanctuary for the development of a shopping complex, the intrinsic value of nature would be overridden. On the other hand, its reluctance to do the same will be tantamount to sending the poor and hungry into further destitution. How then can a solution to this dilemma be accessed?

1.5. Research project structure.

With the introduction and case study exposé forming the introduction of this research project in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 is devoted to the research methodology to be used throughout the research project. Also given the problem statement, endeavours to search for answers to the central question will be made. An analysis of the case study will as well be made in this chapter.

Chapter 3 deals with the weighing of classical dilemmas namely: anthropocentrism versus biocentrism/ecocentrism and this further entails the notion of justice versus conservation pertaining the case in point.

Classical dilemmas are put into critical perspective in Chapter 4 wherein monistic value approaches are exposed in terms of their failures. Precisely, the either-or choices are put into practice in pertinence to the case under discussion. However, this is done with pure theoretical principles forming a point of departure. An alternative, namely the pragmatic approach, which maintains a multiplicity of values, is hereby brought into play.

Chapter 5 deals with the application of the discussion to Makhado's choice regarding the tree sanctuary and the shopping complex. Further, concluding remarks and recommendations with reference to the case in point will be made, thus drawing and tying the different strings of this study together.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction.

This research investigates a very common topic in South Africa following the introduction of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. Unfortunately, this topic has not received much attention from theoretical perspective but is practically in the limelight due to several development projects associated with the programme identified above.

In this study, the methodology used is basically a literature study in which critical thinking is also applied. Much attention is paid to the study and analysis of the views expressed by different writers and in the process; deductive conclusions are arrived at after literature study. An analysis of a case study forms the base of this research and has been used to arrive and substantiate certain conclusions or arguments.

In reference to this chapter, the case study methodology will be used of which some of the aspects are: role-players and their interests, other stakeholders, alternative courses of action; and norms and values. A short summary will form the conclusion of this chapter.

2.2. Role-players.

2.2.1. Makhado Municipality Council.

With this matter of the development of the shopping complex being protractedly discussed within the executive echelons of the municipal council, it shows without doubt that this matter is of sensitive concern. Also for the fact that the executive council is pro-African National Congress, it leaves no doubt that the same becomes the proponent of the shopping mall project for the economic emancipation of the destitute.

Rumoured within the corridors of the municipal offices, and of which some members of the council anonymously confirm, they as the council have received some substantial funds from certain Chinese donors to develop the area in order to boost the tourism image of their area of jurisdiction and emancipate the poor and hungry. Following that the development of a shopping complex of the magnitude explained in chapter one became an inevitable choice.

However, this was not without hiccups especially considering the area of choice targeted – an indigenous tree sanctuary. This choice sparked emotional tensions within the council. The opposition party within the council argued against the development of a shopping complex with the indigenous tree sanctuary being sacrificed for such. However what started like protracted deliberations within the executive level spilled over and further inflamed tensions within the already divided inhabitants of the municipality. Furthermore, being the proponent and the adjudicator, the council could not evade the temptation of exercising power and thus reacting irrationally in the whole matter – further exacerbating the complexity of the whole issue.

What was also of grave concern was the council's way of handling the matter. Instead of rationally and impartially addressing the matter to its subjects, it unfortunately further sowed a seed of division and racialism, thus further divided its subjects. This has been done through various fora like civic organisations' meetings.

2.2.2. Local Business people.

Business people reacted indifferently to this proposition. Perhaps this has been due to racial composition, political orientation and even socio-economic status which are so diverse amongst them. Those who favoured the development of such a project are predominately blacks who harbour with fondness the ideology of black economic empowerment. It is something like this what they wished to have happened quite sometime ago. Thus to afford them an opportunity to get a slice from an economic cake of the region. Basically, thus to afford them an opportunity to trade their goods and services and showcase their entrepreneurial skills.

Furthermore, they welcome such a proposition as it opens them a sea of formal and informal business opportunities. Again, it brings to "halt" the monotonous practice that has led many entrepreneurs and various companies rent or lease excessively expensive premises in some of the buildings thus putting to shy budding business incumbents. Following this, it is very clear that the interests, claims and values of this group of business people are extremely anthropocentric and have no ecocentric/biocentric consideration of nature. This is so since the development of the said shopping complex is at the expense of a tree sanctuary that boasts of indigenous tree and plant species as well as a complex ecosystem in this almost pristine vicinity.

However, on the other side, an antagonistic group of business people abhors the proposition for the development of a shopping complex but not on non-anthropocentric grounds. The premise of their argument is that, it does not make economic sense that a new shopping complex be established while the central business district of the town is on the verge of decay and collapse. As they argue, many goods and services providers have of late been closing down for causes which need thorough investigations to establish. As a result many have been losing their jobs. For that reason, as they argue, the establishment of such a plush shopping complex does not seem to be an inevitable alternative to address the crisis.

Furthermore, the fact that this group of antagonistic business people is predominately composed of the elite Whites and Indians, its interest position raised eyebrows of many as it has been sensed to be selfish. However, this sparked and inflamed the tensions even further. In other words, the vast difference and variance in value and interest positions of the two groups of business people also rendered this case remarkably complex. To be precise, the value and interest positions of the two business groups seems irreconcilable – hence the tensions.

2.2.3. Pressure group.

The pressure group of ecocentrists/biocentrists, which is predominately white, has brought another view to this case. Their argument against the development of a shopping complex in a tree sanctuary is basically founded on the ethical idea of respect for nature and other empirical reasons. In their argument, they rejected human superiority in that human life, in particular, life of the destitute, cannot be saved at the expense of nature.

If that be, let a shopping complex be built elsewhere, they say, where environmental impact could not be so severe. A tree sanctuary with such a number of indigenous tree and plant species as well as a complex ecosystem cannot simply be sacrificed for the sole benefit of man. To them, other alternatives can be pursued, thus leaving the almost pristine tree sanctuary untouched.

On a more practical note, the pressure group also came up with some critical ideas about the feasibility and compatibility of such a large scale shopping complex. Taking note of the fact that the development should be 60 meters away from the N1 road which runs parallel to Dorprivier and again that the same development should be outside of a 60 – 100 meter flood line, it remains practically impossible for such a large scale development to occupy a virtually narrow strip of land and expected to be a tourist attraction and also achieve other economic goals without gross environmental impact.

Furthermore, realising that their pleas and suggestions as “informal” pressure group, seem to fall on deaf ears, the pressure group decided to take court action to put a halt to the development.

2.3. Other stakeholders.

➤ Anonymous Chinese funder:

Undeniably, this funder has business interests in the whole matter and would, of course, influence the decision of the municipality council in this matter. Precisely, the funder favours that the tree sanctuary be sacrificed for the development of a shopping complex.

➤ Other inhabitants of Makhado Municipality:

Some people do not take this matter into serious consideration especially for lack of interest. However, those who, directly or indirectly, will be affected by the decision taken will start to consider this matter seriously when the impact of the decision taken will start to affect their social lives, either positively or negatively.

➤ General customers of Makhado Town:

For the fact that the scope for shopping will be increased by the establishment of the new shopping complex which houses some fancy shops, most customers prefer that a tree sanctuary be sacrificed in order that their *needs* be met through the development of a shopping complex.

➤ Street vendors and public transport associations:

With their potential customers no longer concentrated in the same vicinity, their business opportunities are likely to be adversely affected but at face value, it may look as if they will flourish. In this regard, street vendors and public transport associations favour the development of the shopping complex rather than the spring of the tree sanctuary.

➤ The jobless in and around Makhado Town:

With 7 000 more jobs opportunities needed, it goes without saying that the development of the shopping complex could be important in order to give the lifeline to the poor and the destitute. Obviously the jobless in and around Makhado Town will welcome a decision to build a plush shopping complex on the tree sanctuary site.

2.4. Alternative courses of action.

Some of the alternative courses of action in handling the moral dilemma facing Makhado Municipality Council can be listed as follows:

Alternative 1: To continue with the development project.

Despite the excessive pressure and legal threats that the municipality is getting from the formal pressure groups and perhaps other informal structures, it should heed to the call of the majority and continue to develop the large scale project in the tree sanctuary. This would mean unconditionally hewing down the indigenous trees and other plant species, thus interfering with the complex ecosystem and generally sacrificing the natural environment. This would be justified by valuing nature instrumentally in order to provide for human needs and interests. Nature is thus seen as nothing but a resource to create needed job opportunities and improves the tourism image of the region and town.

Alternative 2: To stop the development outright.

The municipality may accede to the demands and pressure from the pressure groups and outrightly, without other considerations, stop the development. This would mean, disappointing the possible and potential funder of the project and ultimately setting a very unpopular precedence with other potential donors and funders. Furthermore, this would also mean ruthlessly shattering dreams and hopes of possible substantial job opportunities of the destitute as would be the

entrepreneurial hopes of the elite. However, this would, either intentionally or not, accord nature the intrinsic worth it deserves. From this point of view, the aim would be to let the indigenous tree sanctuary, complex ecosystems and the natural environment remain intact, undisturbed and not interfered with.

Alternative 3: Allocate a new site for the development.

What basically seems to be a more plausible alternative to this scenario is to reach a solution by way of compromise. Compromise through allocating a new site for such a luxurious development. This would mean the natural vegetation would be spared or saved and this not in denial of the development of a shopping complex. This creates a situation where both extremely positioned antagonistic groups become winners. Winners in the sense that a shopping complex will be built, even though on an alternative site, and nature will be spared. In reference to the case in point, an alternative site is available lying just diagonally opposite the contended one.

Alternative 4: Build the shopping complex on the tree sanctuary site, but create a new forest somewhere else. In other words, the tree sanctuary should be sacrificed and compensated for by being created on another site which is not closer to the business area.

2.5. Norms and values.

2.5.1. Relational norms.

The expectations amongst colleagues are that they rely on norms of trust, loyalty, honesty, solidarity and fairness. Furthermore, people may be expected not to turn their backs on their colleagues. Like in most cases, norms and values can be contradictory. However, in reference to the case in point, how can it be possible for the pro-ANC municipal council to be honest to its party supporters and at the same time turn down a foreign offer to develop such a project due to environmental pressure and consequently deny its supporters opportunities for economic emancipation. If the council outrightly stops the project, will it at the same time earn trust with its colleagues or supporters?

2.5.2. Professional norms.

Naturally, municipal councils in their interactions with other professional structures are expected to be honest, fair, just, unbiased and reliable. Obviously, councils or councillors have to base their decisions on rational grounds and not to discriminate or show any favours of whatever nature. Furthermore, reliability also plays an integral role in business interactions thus setting good precedence for future interactions. Taking this developing case into consideration, stopping the project due to pressure and legal threats the council “receives” from pressure groups will in no way earn them trust and loyalty from the business partners, that is the project funder and the interested business companies to invest in the project when it is completed.

2.5.3. Public norms.

These norms govern all exchanges between people of the community or the public in general and are based on sincerity, equally and respect. Basically, these norms create constructive communication and facilitate progress. The values of happiness, well being and health are what all people are expected to strive for. Again, contractual agreements have to be preserved and so it serves the public image of public or private institutions. In view of this, the local authority is obliged to serve the common good of society, and maximize benefits for all.

As is usually the case in practice, public norms usually override professional and relational norms, particularly when parties are not in a professional or personal relation to one another. The case in reference proves such since it is the public norms that tip the scales. This is so, particularly for the fact that contractual agreement have to be respected and so are human rights and interests and this should not be done at the expense of rights and interests of nonhumans.

2.6. Conclusion.

As is reflected in this chapter, the case in reference presents a rather complex but interesting dilemma since it is basically concerned with development which of late has become somewhat inevitable but can also be very destructive in environmental terms. When considering the extreme ethical positions presented, and evaluating their respective norms and values an opportunity is presented to at length delve into the classical dilemmas of playing off the environment and development against each other. This therefore warrants a theoretical analysis through a literature review of the case in point.

CHAPTER 3

CLASSICAL DILEMMAS WEIGHED.

3.1. Introduction.

The main focus of this chapter is to weigh the classical dilemmas depicted by the case in reference as being the polar ends of ethical evaluation. In other words, the purpose of this chapter is to show how the two ethical positions, ecocentrism/biocentrism and anthropocentrism, are represented as contentious/contending positions through the case in reference. This goal will be achieved through a theoretical analysis of various literature studies while in the process linking each step of the weighing back to the case in point. This will be achieved through pitting the two ethical positions against each other in order to show their varying values, principles, claims and norms. However, this chapter serves as a link between the exposition of the dilemma in the case and the practical application of ecocentrism/biocentrism and anthropocentrism to the same.

3.2. Ecocentrism/biocentrism versus anthropocentrism.

The two ethical positions occupy the extreme polar ends of the ethical continuum and therefore appear to be irreconcilable. To be precise, the biocentric outlook of nature, as advocated for by Taylor and the Deep Ecologists, maintains a nonanthropocentric or ecocentric view of nature. The subscription is to a norm of biocentric egalitarianism, which claims that all living things are of equal moral worth or equal intrinsic value (VanDeVeer and Pierce, 2003:259).

Simply put by Taylor (2003:207), one of the components of the biocentric outlook of nature is that “humans are thought as members of the Earth’s community of life, holding that membership on the same terms as apply to all nonhuman members.” A central idea here is that humans are in nature not above or outside of nature (VanDeVeer and Pierce, 2003:259). The claim that humans by their very nature are superior to other species is therefore groundless if we maintain that humans are equal to all biological creatures and therefore are not separated from them. As Taylor (2003:203) asserts, every animal and plant is like us in having a good of its own.

On the contrary, in terms of anthropocentrism, nature is considered to be of value only in so far as it can be utilised as a resource for humans; as Hattingh (2002:9) points out. This anthropocentric view of nature therefore considers nature as valuable as long as it is useful to human beings and as such this ethical position values nature instrumentally. The intrinsic value of nature – the value that it has independent of its use value to humans – is denied. From this perspective, it is therefore clear/evident that the anthropocentric position emphasises meeting human needs, in particular those of the poor, and thus, in some of its versions, supports an unrestrained development and expansion of natural resources (Hattingh, 1999:71)

As alluded to earlier on, these two ethical positions represent opposing views pertaining the case in reference. Obviously, ecocentrism/biocentrism will abhor and prevent the sacrificing of a tree sanctuary for the development of a shopping complex. The tree sanctuary will be viewed as deserving respect for its own good, and thus is valued inherently. On the other hand, anthropocentrism will favour the development of a shopping complex on the site occupied by a tree sanctuary since such land will be considered valuable only if it is of use to humans. As for this case, the two

value positions present a very complex scenario that seems to be insurmountable.

Furthermore, as it has always been the case, the realisation of human values and/or human rights has been done through the exploitative treatment of ecosystems and life communities, and this is what ecocentrists/biocentrists reject, rather calling for a life-centered system of environmental ethics (Taylor, 2003:202). What Deep Ecologists embrace with fond memories is a life-centered system of environmental ethics that entails moral obligations which accord nonhumans respect, protection and promotion of their good for their sake as members of the Earth's biotic community.

To be precise, the ethical position maintained by ecocentrism/biocentrism is non-anthropocentric. In view of this, the well-being of humans and nonhumans alike should be realised as an end and never as a means to an end. This therefore calls humans to look at the whole biosphere in a new light. What underlies the fundamental moral attitude of life-centered system of environmental ethics, as maintained in ecocentric/biocentric view of nature, is the conception of "The Good of a Being and Inherent Worth" (Taylor, 2003:202).

Furthermore, what does good to an entity is good and contrariwise a bad thing for an entity is something that is detrimental to its life and well-being. This therefore implies that what is done to a thing will be good or bad not because of the intended results or goal. As such, a thing is good or bad irrespective of its consequent results. For this reason, a human being can do good to non-humans without being oriented to one's own goal. Following this, a tree sanctuary will have its integrity, stability and beauty preserved irrespective of pressing human needs like provision of jobs and eradication of poverty, which in this case can be achieved through the development of a shopping complex.

As already indicated, the anthropocentric position is in sharp contrast with the ecocentric/biocentric position maintained by the conception of “The Good of a Being and Inherent Worth”. The anthropocentric position considers nature as a means for human survival and therefore it should be used in whatever way as long as that helps humans survive or be economically better off. Following this, nature is usually sacrificed for social development. Arguments for the hewing down of the tree sanctuary for the development of a shopping complex are hereby justified. This is so because, in the anthropocentric position, it is wrong to place any constraints on the ability of the market to generate goods and services in response to consumer demands (Norton, 2003:169). As a result, the business view became that of viewing the natural world as a free and unlimited good that can be squandered without regard for the future, Shaw and Barry (1992:537- 8) remark.

Furthermore, the anthropocentric position has no consideration for nonhuman members of the biosphere. Surprisingly, many philosophers doubt that nature has intrinsic value and as such profess that humans have no moral duties to nature and its nonhuman members since they have no interests (Shaw and Barry, 1992:550). In support of this view, Rolston (1992:142 - 3) notes that there are some ethicists who profess that forests are nothing but collections of trees – loose collections of externally related parts – and are at too low a level of organisation to be respected intrinsically. Following this is the justification of reasons for the clearing of the tree sanctuary in Makhado Town in the name of economic development. In this regard, species on the so-called simple and lower order are merely steps toward so-called higher species of rational life forms since in the anthropocentric view they are considered means to an end for human survival.

In view of this, Desai (2002:6) notes, during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, that 90 million ha of forests have been cleared in the 1990s. Such clearings of forests, like in the case in reference, have been done to provide land for economic and agricultural development in order to provide for human needs. Viewing this from an anthropocentric perspective, there is nothing wrong in clearing forests if the same is done to enhance development and economic growth, thus alleviating poverty in general by, for instance, providing jobs for a large number of the destitute, as in this case 7 000 jobless people. Succinctly put by Hattingh (2002:9), this type of exploitation is in order so long as it is balanced by gains in financial and human capital.

Furthermore, even on the issue of valuing of nature, the two ethical positions still vary much. As for ecocentrism/biocentrism, the issue/concept of a moral attitude of respect for nature entails the idea of inherent worth. The principle of moral consideration, which is closely linked to the concept of moral worth, implies that nonhuman living things are deserving of the concern and consideration of all moral agents simply in virtue of their being members of the Earth's community of life (Taylor, 2003:203). This implies that the good of each is to be accorded value and acknowledged as having worth by all rational agents. In view of this, the principle of moral consideration entails that every individual is deserving of consideration.

Following this, and in reference to the case in point, the targeted "virgin" land covered by indigenous plant species in Makhado Town should be left "untouched" since its value is independent of its use value to humans. In ecocentric/biocentric perspective, the "virgin" land, even though it may remain pristine and not developed otherwise still carries value, that is intrinsic value. This is so because the principle of intrinsic value maintains

that a member of the Earth's community – human or nonhuman – is worthy of being protected, preserved and its good promoted as an end in itself and for the sake of the entity whose good it is (Taylor, 2003:204). This view brings into play the principle of “Respect for Nature” which is defined as an act of subscribing to the principles of moral consideration and intrinsic value and so conceives nonhuman living things as having that kind of worth (Taylor, 2003:204). Implicit with this kind of attitude for respect of nature is that the attitude for human superiority is hereby questioned. Basically it is not only humans who should be accorded respect as the “only” individuals deserving of intrinsic worth, nonhuman living things also do.

On the contrary, the ethical position of economic developers is directly opposite to that of ecocentrists/biocentrists when taking into consideration the issue of attaching value to nature. An anthropocentric view of nature is that the nonhuman world is valuable only in terms of instrumental value (Fox, 1995:149, cited in Hattingh, 1999:71). It is therefore obvious that from a practical point of view, in as far as the anthropocentric view of nature is concerned, nature and its resources are valued only in as far as it is valuable to human use. In other words nature is valued instrumentally.

This is because nature is considered as a collection of resources for human use. For this reason, human life is accentuated as that which is so valuable that it should be maintained indefinitely (Hattingh, 2001/2:8). For human life to be maintained indefinitely – in the anthropocentric view – demands that nature be sacrificed. In view of this, nature is not considered to have intrinsic worth. This has as well been envisioned in the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998). As Hattingh (2001/2:9) points out, the National Environmental Management Act (also known as NEMA) is firstly about people and not about conservation of nature in the narrow, conventional sense of the word.

Although reference is made within NEMA to the notion of placing limits on our exploitation of nature, this is put within the larger frame of the management of natural resources for the benefits of humans (Hattingh (2001/2:9). Explicit within this assertion is that nature is used as a means for human interests and well-being. As such, nature is valued instrumentally and not intrinsically as is with the ecocentric/biocentric view/position.

Following this view, and in reference to the case in point, the indigenous tree sanctuary will never be considered valuable in the anthropocentric view if it remains “pristine” as it is of now. Such a “pristine” tree sanctuary should be hewed down in order to provide space for the development of a plush shopping complex which is more associated with progress than do a natural tree sanctuary lying almost pristine in a business vicinity. To be precise, it is only when a plush shopping complex covers the targeted piece of land that it will fetch an attractive value. Only instrumental value counts and not inherent value in as far as anthropocentrism is concerned.

However, as for the principle of “respect for nature”, the following has to be categorically stated. Within this principle is a feature that distinguishes the attitude for respect of nature from the set of feelings and disposition that comprise the love of nature (Taylor, 2003:204). As such, love for nature differs from respect of nature. Respect for nature is an attitude everyone is supposed to have regardless of one’s disposition and feelings for nature. Given the explanation above, it is apparent that “respect for nature” parallels the attitude of respect for persons as anthropocentrism maintains. As in pertinence to the case in point, respect for nature will undermine human needs and wants, if they are isolated from the interests of the rest of the biotic community. As such, the tree sanctuary will lie in idle in the faces of those who are technologically equipped to manipulate it to provide for human needs and wants.

However, from an anthropocentric view, land or even a tree sanctuary should not lie pristine in the faces of the hungry and destitute when it can be of help to emancipate them economically, thus show respect for humans.

Another area of contention between ecocentrists/biocentrists and anthropocentrists – hereafter alternatively referred to as economic developers – is the principle of equality based on the biocentric outlook of nature. According to Devall and Sessions (2003:265), the biocentric outlook of nature which entails the principle of equality maintains “all things in the biosphere have an equal right to live and blossom and to reach their own individual forms of unfolding and self-realisation within the larger Self-realisation”. Accordingly, an equal right to live and blossom can only be achieved when all members of the Earth’s community of life are considered equal. This is possible where no member of the Earth’s community of life is superior to the other since superiority may entitle a justification for the use of one by another for the attainment of the utmost good for oneself. Put explicitly, every creature’s right to life and to blossom should not be overridden for the good of another. In reference to the case in point, the tree sanctuary should not be cleared in order to develop a shopping complex, to thus answer human poverty and hunger.

In view of this, there is no need to set up hierarchies of species in which humans are considered superior since humans are biocentrically part of nature and not above it. Precisely, this is an outright denial of human superiority and instrumental valuing of nature. With the tree sanctuary lying on the windward side of part of the residential area and the central business district, the reason to leave it pristine, preserved and protected should not be of its valuable use as windbreaker.

Equally the same, and still on the biocentric outlook of nature, the tree sanctuary should not be removed/cleared precisely for the benefit of humans. This is so because the value attached to the tree sanctuary – to be specific – is not derived from considerations regarding human well-being or rights, but done so independent of its relationship to what humans considers to be conducive of their own good. Simply put by Taylor (2003:205), although it is humans who must do the valuing for the ethics of respect for nature, the value ascribed should not be a human value.

Quite to an extreme rather, Taylor (2003:208), just like other ecocentrists/biocentrists, suggests that if humans come to extinction, the destruction of nature by developments would cease: poisoning and polluting the environment would come to an end, no more degradation as a result of environmental subjection to large-scale technology and uncontrolled population growth. To add to the list, there should be no ruthless and inconsiderate hewing of the tree sanctuaries by “selfish” economic developers. However, this raises an ethical question of the relationship between conservation and justice, which is analysed hereunder.

3.3. Conservation versus social justice.

Radical environmentalism, in particular Social Ecology, which occupies the extreme position on the far end of environmental ethics, rejects anthropocentrism that basically “confers on the privileged few the right to plunder the world of life, including human life” (Bookchin, 1994:29, cited in VanDeVeer and Pierce, 2003:262). In Bookchin’s view, however, Deep Ecologists care more about preservation of the wilderness than they do about social justice.

However, without denial that humans are suffering, the environment too is suffering from problems whose root causes need to be addressed. As such, Deep Ecology argues that the narrow, egoistic and individualistic notion of self-realisation should be overcome before we could hope to resolve environmental problems (Hattingh, 1999:77). This is a clear indication that radical environmental ethics is against strong anthropocentrism which is characterised by calls to address poverty, hunger, famines and epidemics through ruthless means and strategies of the economic developers which are done on the expense of nature.

However, Deep Ecology maintains an ecocentric/biocentric position which is characterised by the spiritual notion of self-realisation which according to Hattingh (1999:77), entails a broadening of the self through a strong identification with the whole of the universe. As indicated earlier on, Deep Ecology assumes an egalitarian position which claims that all living things – humans and nonhumans included – are of equal moral worth or equal intrinsic value. This therefore entails an intuitive experience of the harmony and wholeness of nature, a rejection for social consideration on the expense of nature.

But this clash between Social and Deep Ecology only serves to confront us with deeper questions about the relationship between conservation and justice. What should come first, nature or people? What do we owe future generations? And how should we go about conservation and social development if we wish to overcome and address these questions? In the following sections, I will analyse the deep-seated and ongoing standoff between conservation and justice, while Chapter 4 will be devoted to a critical perspective on the theoretical views that are discussed in what follows.

3.3.1. What should come first, nature or people?

3.3.1.1 When nature comes first.

According to Devall and Sessions (2003:266), “the well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on earth have value in themselves. The values are independent of the usefulness of nonhumans world for human purposes”. This ecocentric/biocentric position accords respect and value to nature as a whole.

In this light, the ecological processes of the planet Earth should remain intact. This is an argument for the preservation of nature, thus leaving it pristine. In reference to the case in point, it is implicit with this principle that the tree sanctuary should not be tampered with through the development of a shopping complex in an effort to address poverty and hunger brought about by unemployment. However, if the environment and its ecological processes should remain intact, thus respecting their inherent worth, humans should therefore not exploit the environment in order to address their problems but should rather remain in the quagmire of their problems.

Also of very serious concern, Devall and Sessions (2003:267) note that the “present human interference with nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is worsening”. The fact that humans, just like other nonhuman species, are modifying some ecosystems does not put to halt the fight to preserve and extend areas of wilderness and near-wilderness, as Devall and Sessions (2003:267) argue. However, it is “surprising” that the attitude of economic developers toward nature preservation is demeaning through their ruthless actions. The same applies to the intended invasion of the tree sanctuary for the development of a shopping complex at Makhado

Town. As Shaw and Barry (1992:547) note, tropical forests which, of course, are major reservoirs of bio-diversity are of late cleared in an attempt to provide survival means for the growing populations of the poor. It should be borne in mind that forests have intrinsic value of their own which should not be sacrificed for human considerations and rights.

Furthermore, present economic growth as conceived and implemented today by industrial countries is incompatible with the principles of Deep Ecology, Devall and Sessions (2003:268) note. Thus, even though people profess that development is done in a sustainable way, “sustainable” still means “sustainable in relation to humans”. This leaves the notion of “sustainability” as an anthropocentric issue and as such is totally against the ecocentric/biocentric position maintained in Deep Ecology. Also noted by Devall and Sessions (2003:268), “present ideology tends to value things because they are scarce and because they have a commodity value”. In other words, nature and its resources are valued instrumentally instead of being valued intrinsically as Deep Ecology maintains. The present ideology is also reflected in the case in reference in that there is a push for the carrying out of a project on the site occupied by the tree sanctuary as it tends to be of no value when left “pristine”.

Taking into consideration what economic developers consider as reasons for the sacrificing of nature in order to alleviate poverty and hunger, it may look unjustifiable and inhumane that we try to save nature whilst some people are starving. This is much so particularly when one considers the admittance by some philosophers that there is no technical solution to rescue us from this misery (Hardin, 2003:372). For instance, to help curb the misery brought about by overpopulation, to some abortion is immoral whereas others consider birth control abhorrent. Given the scenario presented by the case, do we always have to cater for human interests and rights at the expense of degrading nature?

Put contentiously by Rolston (1996:261), “ought we save nature if this results in people going hungry? In people dying?” Contextually put rather, should the tree sanctuary remain as is in the faces of the hungry and poor who can benefit from the development of a shopping complex on the same site?

To Rolston (1996:261), regrettably the answer is sometimes yes. In this view, this conclusion is implied by the fact that there has to be some sort of control, particularly if we acknowledge that there is uncontrolled persistence of the root causes of environmental exploitation. This follows a fact that “humans had no right to use more than a portion of the planet and they had already passed the limit and as such, wild places must be left wild” (Sessions, 1998:255).

In arguing for the protection of nature and its biota, Rolston (1996:262) notes of a hard-line shoot-to-kill policy for poachers adopted in Zimbabwe in which people are discouraged from poaching endangered black rhinoceros in order to fend for their needs by selling horns. This hard stance seems unethical since the saving of black rhino as a species costs human lives. In this manner should human rights ever be overridden by a society that wants to do better by conserving natural resources? Rolston (1996:262) asks. To be precise, should nature’s rights come before human’s rights? Should humans die when nature is preserved or kept pristine?

Before the root causes of environmental exploitation are fully addressed, the answer, regrettably is still yes. This is because humans have no sufficient concern for nature. They should, if they have concern, control their own population growth, change their habits of consumption and regulate their technology so as to save the Earth’s surface as a habitat for wild animals and plants (Sessions, 1998:255).

Granted this, the targeted tree sanctuary, in Makhado Town, for the development of a plush shopping complex should not be cleared.

Bluntly put by Rolston (1996:263), since we are not obligated to cover human mistakes with the sacrifice of natural values, there should be no development on reserved areas, even if people there remain in relative poverty or even if with escalating population, they become poorer. To make an inference from this assertion, reserved areas like tree sanctuaries, for instance, should not be cut down in order to provide areas for economic development to in turn alleviate poverty and hunger by providing jobs thereof. But this raises a question of violation of human rights, a question of justice. To answer this, Rolston (1996:264) points out that “human rights to development, even by those who are poor, though they are to be taken seriously, are not everywhere absolute, but have to be weighed against other values at stake”.

By other values at stake, Rolston is referring to, amongst others, ecological values which entail the inherent worth of fauna and flora which are valuable regardless of their usefulness to humans. Of course, not every area has to be sacrificed for human-centered interests and so is the tree sanctuary in reference. This is so because alternative venue and/or means for survival can be found, thus saving the tree sanctuary. By this, Rolston (1996:264) argues, people are not told that they must starve, but they are told that they cannot save themselves from starving by sacrificing nature set aside in reserves. In line with this, one would infer that humans should be consistent in their upholding of rights: human and nonhuman rights alike.

However, even though the development of a shopping complex seems inevitable for human survival, the hungry and poor have no right to develop and change areas in reserve, thus the tree sanctuary, in any way they please. At times, economic development must be put to a halt or never precede considerations for natural values even in situations where humans are in a brink of starvation.

As Trusted (1992:20) controversially asserts, human activity is a malignant cancer that can lead not only to self-destruction but also to the destruction of other forms of life. Put contextually, the development of a shopping complex on the indigenous tree sanctuary is likely to destroy fauna and flora and other complex ecosystems within the area. For this reason, saving nature should precede saving people since this deepens understanding of the human place in the larger scheme of things. Explicitly put, humans should be considered as part of things and not above things as the anthropocentric view supposes. This is because the loss of natural resources is not repairable.

As Shiva (1992:189) points out, “while natural resources can be turned into cash, cash cannot be turned into nature’s ecological processes”. In line with this, humans should therefore be less of a menace to nature and other species in order to consider their interests and rights. Obviously, nature – precisely the tree sanctuary – should be protected and remain pristine.

3.3.1.2. When people/humans come first.

Anthropocentrism, a human-centered environmental ethical position, considers nature as a collection of resources needed for human use. In this view nature is considered valuable as long as it is useful and beneficial to man. As such, nature is used as a means for human interests and well-

being, thus putting humans first, before nature. Following this view, Mandla Gantscho (2002:17), head of the regional Developmental Bank of Southern Africa, contends that since the poor rely on natural resources, we therefore need to address their poverty in order to take care of the planet. Put differently by Rasmussen (1994:54), economic growth is absolutely vital since without it, the poor and destitute, and the environment are condemned. The environment will not be protected if national accounts do not grow, and the environment will certainly decline if national incomes decline.

This anthropocentric view of development demands that the environment be utilised first in order to cater for human needs. This implies that there should be clearing of, for instance, the tree sanctuary for the development of a shopping complex, thus to create jobs for the poor and hungry. In the anthropocentric view this is justifiable since if we try to protect nature at the expense of the hungry and poor, the same will “pull down the fences around conservation areas”, so to say, maximally and without restraints exploit everything until nothing is left. With nature depleted beyond regeneration capacity, the poor and hungry will eventually be wiped out – a scary and harsh condition, of course.

Furthermore, without the sacrifice of nature, people will eventually, die out. This, in simple terms is real catastrophe. For this reason, the tree sanctuary in reference has to be cleared in order to provide a site for the development of a shopping complex and this will eventually provide jobs and food for the hungry and poor in and around the jurisdiction of Makhado Municipality Council. In this view, there should be no areas of nature conservation in the faces of the hungry. Following this, strict and constraining environmental control laws and regulations have to be waived since they present an element of injustice by condemning the hungry and poor to destitution and abject poverty.

However, this cannot go down well with Deep Ecologists. But to counter the Deep Ecologist's view of nature preservation, economic developers have an intriguing question for that: If the world's rain forests are to be protected from clearance for economic development, then how is an ever growing human population to be fed? (Palmer, 1992:182). Put in context, if the tree sanctuary is to be protected from clearance for the development of the proposed shopping complex, then how will the poor and hungry be saved from destitution? How will they be fed with little or no exploitation of areas, that are, as it were, kept in reserve. As such, with nature conservation the livelihood of the destitute is denied.

“Not to give”, as Trusted (1992:13) notes with some writers, “is tantamount to murder”. In other words, fencing off certain areas for their own sake – like the tree sanctuary – is as good as condemning the hungry to death. Furthermore, as Rolston (1996:251) sarcastically suggests, feeding people first has a ring of righteousness as it considers basic human rights and values. For this reason, eradicating poverty becomes an indispensable requirement since food is absolutely vital for human survival and well-being. When Rolston's assertion is taken at face value it follows that people have to eradicate poverty by allowing developers to invade pristine areas preserved for their own sake – by building shopping complexes which in turn provide jobs and food for the poor.

3.3.2. Should we conserve or should we not? (Do we owe future generations?)

If we answer this question in terms of yes or no it will be a quick way to ethically dichotomise the issue of value subscription. However, if we decide to conserve and keep certain areas in a pristine natural state, it would

mean taking no consideration about the poor and hungry. But if we ruthlessly develop the environment in pursuit of the eradication of poverty and hunger, it would mean showing no consideration for nature and those who will inherit the planet earth after our departure. In this view, the issue of development and conservation raises concerns for inter- and intra-generational justice. This is so in the sense that if we conserve the environment and all its natural resources, we are doing it for future generations but at the same time denying the hungry and the poor within the same generation their rights for survival and well-being.

To be specific, the unrestrained nature of economic development which is hereby characterised by the intended decision to develop a shopping complex on the tree sanctuary site is a cause of deep concern for Deep Ecologists or pressure groups in particular because it has a bearing on the fate of future generations. As Hattingh (2002:9-10) concedes, with its anthropocentric emphasis on meeting human needs, the weak notion of sustainable development justifies the exploitation of natural resources far beyond the limits of the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems. By exploiting natural resources – like for instance, natural vegetation – far beyond ecological limits, future generations are condemned to poverty. This is a clear and explicit example of inter-generational injustice. In view of this, developments are no longer in consideration of what future generations will inherit.

As Shaw and Barry (1992:547) note, while most of us agree that it would be immoral to make the world uninhabitable for future generations, can we talk meaningfully of those future generations having a right that we not do this? After all, our remote descendants are not yet alive and thus cannot claim a right to a livable environment. By this, the authors are implying that since these generations do not exist yet, they therefore cannot at present be said to have interests at all.

In concurring with Shaw and Barry, Gower (1992:5) points out that many people believe it would be quite wrong to deprive further the poor of the present generation for the sake of advantages for future generations. Bluntly and explicitly put by Solow (2003:442), “there is something inconsistent about people who profess to be terribly concerned about the welfare of future generations but do not seem to be terribly concerned about the welfare of the poor today”. In this view Solow is pitting the issue of intra-generational justice against inter-generational justice, of course with the former receiving the nod.

Perhaps taking this for a thought, does it sound good that the tree sanctuary remains as is when the poor and hungry are condemned to starvation in saving the same for future generations? How will the future generation come into existence when the present is starved to death? However, even though there should be concerns for intra-generational justice, the same should not be attained through the compromise of present environmental standards.

But taking a closer look at Solow’s assertion, it may sound that there be no conservation of nature and its resources for the sake of future generations or for their own sake. This might be so, as VanDeVeer and Pierce (2003:419) quote Matthew 6:34: “Take therefore no thought for tomorrow: for the tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is evil thereof.” Furthermore, worrying about future generations is, in this view, not a concern of the present generation.

As Gower (1992:7) further argues, “even though it is true that we can benefit future people, there is nothing that future people, apart from our immediate dependents can do for us in return for the favour”. This may imply that saving, lets say, a tree sanctuary for a distant future generation

would make much less sense particularly when one realises that such saving is unidirectional. More so, we don't even know how they will value it, if at all.

Of course, the guilt-ridden may save and protect nature for future generations, but what they don't know is how the said generations will handle or treat that which they passed unto them. As Solow (2003:440) stresses, "we don't know what they will do, what they will like, what they will want. And to be honest, it is none of our business." The economists' devil-may-care conclusions about the further future are a cause of concern.

But, despite all the anthropocentric views, conclusions and attitudes about future generations, the fact is that the indiscriminate patterns of development in order to cater for human rights and interests have scarred the globe and contaminated the natural environment. Some irreplaceable natural resources are getting scarce and expensive everyday.

3.3.3. Justification for nature conservation.

To start with, Rolston (1996:260) identifies three problems which seem to be the root causes of instrumental valuing of nature in which humans value nature so long as they amass benefits from its use or exploitation. The three problems are: overpopulation, overconsumption and underdistribution. This has as well been alluded to by VanDeVeer and Pierce (2003:389) who argued that starvation is not always, and may not even usually be a by-product of a lack of food on the planet but is often a result of skewed distribution of food and the radically unequal distribution of wealth. In light of this, it is not basically the lack of food in the planet that should be used as a reason to justify human inconsiderate exploitation of the environment, root causes such as underdistribution and overpopulation should be considered as well.

3.3.3.1. Overpopulation.

As Dasgupta (2003:414) asserts, some people argue that population growth is a cause of poverty and environmental degradation whereas others maintain that poverty is a cause rather than a consequence of increasing human numbers. Basically, the argument is whether economic development for human survival degrades the environment or whether denying human food by fencing off areas of nature conservation is the root cause of environmental degradation as man tries to curb hunger and poverty problems?

A rather morally defensible view of the value of nonhuman environment tends to support the Malthusian concern about the rapid increase of human population that has increased from 1 billion in the early 1800s to over 6 billion today (VanDeVeer and Pierce, 2003:390). Reiterated by Bormann and Kellert (1991:xii), growth in human numbers demands for natural resources and for this reason people must learn to reduce the growth rate of humans. However, to reduce the growth rate for humans raises a question of social justice and therefore carries a sense of moral overtone. But to neglect that and allow a geometric increase of human population puts the carrying capacity of the environment under tremendous stress and this, in biocentric/ecocentric sense carries a moral overtone too. The same position is also maintained by Rolston (1996:258) who argues that it sounds morally humanistic to feed the hungry but “when we come to our senses we realise that this kind of winning, if it keeps on escalating is really losing because humans will lose and nature will be destroyed as well”. Put in beautiful simplicity by Rolston (1996:259), feeding people always seems humane, but when we face what is really going on, by just feeding people we could be feeding a kind of cancer.

This is so because when people are fed, that is when fences of areas of nature conservation are pulled down, when forests or tree sanctuaries are invaded and cleared to provide sites for economic development, in the long run human population will increase geometrically, thus bringing into picture a problem of scarcity or lack anew. Then, how will this trend of unfolding misfortunes come to an end? How will this malignant cancer be beaten?

For instance, VanDeVeer and Pierce (2003:389) note that the Aswan Dam in Egypt was built to feed four million people but by the time they finished, Egypt had ten million more people than when they started. In view of this, it is not heroic and not even permissible to supply food, rather it is like we don't have a duty to do so.

As noted by Malthus (2003:398), when unchecked, human population increases geometrically, subsistence only increases arithmetically. It is clear therefore that the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man. It therefore implies that the unchecked increase of human population is putting an undue stress on nature and as such requires means of control that should soon be developed to avoid a situation where both humans and nature will lose.

However, as the quality of human life deteriorates, natural resources are further stressed, ecosystem health and integrity degenerate, and this compounds the losses again – a lose-lose situation (Rolston, 1996:259). But to avoid this situation – a lose-lose situation – the geometric increase in human population has to be dealt with since a neglect of this cannot be solved by continuously and ruthlessly exploiting nature and its resources to feed and fend for the hungry and poor.

As indicated earlier on, birth control methods raise questions of social justice and these as well carry with them moral overtones amongst many and even different religious groups and this is prevalent as well amongst the inhabitants of Makhado Town, in particular those involved in the case in reference.

3.3.3.2. Overconsumption.

As Goodland (1998:203) notes, current global trends are moving away from sustainability, and there is also an increasing number of analysts' report that we are moving toward the limit of global food production. Of course, reasons for this could be numerous. However, to Goodland (1998:203), diet is a poverty and equity issue, and this is referred to in that the poor are mainly concerned with the quantity of their diet, the rich with quality. From this assertion, it is implicit that consumption patterns between the rich and the poor are different but are conjointly contributing toward environmental degradation. However, Reichart (1998:47) is basically not concerned about consumption since "living things must in some way consume natural resources for survival" but is concerned rather in the manner in which natural resources are consumed by human beings since it has severe environmental implications.

This is also prevalent in the case in reference because the envisioned development of a shopping complex in the tree sanctuary has in it an attribute of economic status since some people, as indicated earlier on, are of the idea that this will form part of tourist attraction. Taking this idea into consideration, it follows that the development of a shopping complex of this magnitude and capacity is not basically aimed at addressing basic human needs like poverty, but rather "greed".

This Werhane (1998:3) calls overconsumption which by definition entails, “to expend by use, devour, destroy or use up more than I *need* or can assimilate, and I may use up resources that become available to others”. To use up resources that become available to others, is hereby indicated by the idea to forgo an indigenous tree sanctuary for a shopping complex for which an alternative site can be allocated.

In addition to this, Goodland (1998:212) notes that overconsumption is associated with affluent people since they tend to eat higher on the food chain, more especially, eat more meat. This, Devall and Sessions (2003:268) confirm by asserting that there is prestige in vast consumption and waste. However, if overconsumption is associated with affluence, one would concur with Werhane (1998:10) “economic development encourages overconsumption and destroys the ecosystem”. Implicit with the issue of overconsumption, nature is hereby valued only as much as it is useful to humans. This is because overconsumption demands that nature be valued instrumentally and as such exploited.

So the same is with the tree sanctuary. However, when nature becomes a commodity, just like how economic developers value the tree sanctuary, we therefore no longer think of ourselves as part of nature. And its aesthetic value is no longer appreciated for its own sake. In the light of this, for their own interests and well-being, humans are rejecting the notion for respect for nature and are therefore viewing nature anthropocentrically. This, however, is not without repercussions.

Put in beautiful simplicity, development entails economic growth which in turn entails overconsumption of raw materials, which in turn leads to environmental degradation and all these add up to ecological and planetary disaster (Werhane, 1998:7). However, that human overconsumption leads

to ecological and planetary disaster is a clear indication that humans are depleting their “means” of survival and are therefore literally consuming themselves.

Arguing for the solution of the root cause, over-consumption, Werhane (1998:5) suggests that humans need to rethink about nature, to reidentify with nature and its values exhibited in areas of conservation and preservation.

In the light of this, one would argue that since economic development encourages overconsumption and ecological degradation, there is a need for the total transformation of attitudes. There has to be emphasis on the intrinsic valuing of nature and on insisting that it must be respected; and priority should always be given to the preservation of its value (Soper, 1998: 272).

To be precise, in the biocentric/ecocentric view of nature, the referred to Municipality should stop economic development in areas of conservation, in particular the tree sanctuary, since such culminates into overconsumption and eventually ecological degradation. Still in the same vein, humans should stop commodifying nature but value it intrinsically: “First and most basic, we must change our position from an anthropocentric to a biocentric posture by avoiding all hierarchical postures, by being-with-things, and not above things” (Gudynas, 1990:146).

3.3.3.3. Underdistribution.

The distribution problem is even more complex, Rolston (1994:37) asserts, and one cause is that the earth’s natural resources are unevenly distributed by nature. For instance, Rolston (1994:37) adds, one quarter of

the known petroleum reserves are in Saudi Arabia and more than half in the Middle East whereas the need for petroleum, however, is dispersed around the globe. In this view, those who by virtue of luck found themselves with vast natural resources at their disposal will feel better off than the hungry and poor.

Equally the same, those who find themselves in areas where there is advanced economic development will view that as an impressive achievement. Advanced economic development, thus through the development of a regional shopping complex, is what some people contend will boost the tourist image of Makhado Town and as well answer the cries of the poor and hungry. However, with most of the economic and business functions concentrated in far away provinces like Gauteng, most people, like in the case, feel that the development of the proposed project is coming at the right time since many are jobless and as a result hungry and poor.

However, even in the circumstance of underdistribution, areas in conservation should not be invaded and again the destitute should not be given food handouts, Rolston (1996:259) contends. This should be so because admitting refugees, even though it looks humane, lets such persons flee their own national problems (Rolston, 1996:252). This is prevalent with the case in reference since people generally are complaining about loss and lack of jobs due to the influx of Zimbabweans in the jurisdiction of Makhado Municipality. To an outrageous extreme rather, Rolston (1996:252) contends that the destitute should be fenced out or else the valuable environment will be depleted beyond regeneration capacity.

Rolston's argument creates a need to visit Gareth Hardin's famous essay: "The Tragedy of the Commons". Reinterpreted and revised by Reichart (1998:51), the Prisoners Dilemma as an interpretation of the tragedy of the

commons becomes clearer when we substitute herdsmen for prisoners and change the prison sentences to reflect their ordinal utilities. The new “Commons Dilemma” version involves two herdsmen using one common pasture:

The herdsmen can choose to both cooperate with each other and preserve the health and integrity of the common by maintaining their herds at a steady state, or they may defect on their cooperation by increasing their herds. In a *preferred* situation where both herdsmen defect, and continue to add cattle, both will eventually receive no benefits (Reichart, 1998:51).

It is therefore implicit that where resources are held in common, like the tree sanctuary in reference, as it is a public property by virtue of being owned by the municipality, they will be overused or wrongly exploited. As Hardin (2003:372) notes, “freedom to *exploit areas in common use* will bring ruin to all”. Obviously, without the discipline of having some sort of control, areas in conservation may be ruthlessly invaded in the name of social development.

However, sacrificing areas of nature conservation does not solve any of these problems: overpopulation, overconsumption or underdistribution. It brings further loss, Rolston (1996:260) argues. Rolston’s argument is based on the premise that even if there is a continued supply of food for the poor by, for instance, the invasion of areas in conservation like tree sanctuaries, the poor and hungry will sooner or later get hungry again. As is commonly observed, human output from the environment is not in anyway proportional to what they put back. Unfortunately such ecological deficits have *no one* to correct.

To this Hardin (2003:406) proposes a solution he derives from a Chinese proverb: “Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach him how to fish and he will eat for the rest of his life”. Acting on this advice, the Makhado Municipality Council should encourage its poor and hungry inhabitants to engage in self-help projects and not wait to be pushed by greedy developers and social circumstances against the fences of nature conservation areas.

Precisely, nature should not be sacrificed for economic development in order to solve the problem of underdistribution, lest it will be pushed into ecological disaster.

3.3.4. Justification for social development.

The extreme anthropocentric view of development which advocates for unlimited economic growth and argues against the placement of any constraints on the ability of the free market to generate goods and services for human consumption, has been severely criticised by ecocentrists/biocentrists. However, except for social and justice reasons for the justification of the same, there are other reasons on which anthropocentrism is based. For discussion, superabundance and technological optimism – which specifically will herein be referred to as the notion of the intersubstitutability of resources – will form two bases in the justification for social development.

3.3.4.1. Superabundance.

As noted by Shaw and Barry (1992:538), business, like ruthless economic developers, has considered the environment to be a free, virtually limitless good. This assumption justifies the continuous expansion of resource exploitation since the environment is considered limitless and thus is capable of providing more and new resources because it is “inexhaustible”. It is like, for instance, a farmer who after the overgrazing of one paddock by his herd of cattle moves on to new areas while leaving the overgrazed one recuperating. It might be true or sensible for a while, but if every farmer has to do exactly the same, the environment will soon prove that it is exhaustible.

The notion/idea of superabundance has led to a tendency of irresponsibility in many of us today: rivers are poisoned, air in our towns and cities is filthy and dangerous to breathe. To be precise, most of the natural resources have been exhausted or are in the brink of exhaustion. Succinctly put by Rescher (1992:561), the environmental crisis has left us in short supply of natural resources and the project of “producing” another planet earth to live on after we have used this one up is unfortunately unfeasible. In Rescher’s view, the earth and its natural resources do not prove to be inexhaustible. But in weaving a way out, but still agreeing that the earth can sometimes run out of resources, Simon (2003:413) claims that there are resources on other planets. In this view, economic developers feel secure that they can always move on, nature – in particular the universe – will provide.

Granted the explanation above, and in reference to the case in point, the Municipality, with the backing of lucrative funding, felt that the development of such a large-scale shopping complex on a tree sanctuary site was inevitable. Particularly for the fact that the location and situation

of Makhado Town is such a valuable and convincing factor that natural species are in abundance. To be precise, the natural tree species occupying the targeted site for development is not even close in number to the same species occupying valleys and slopes of the Soutpansberg on whose foot the town is situated. Those who favour the carrying out of the project argue that indigenous tree species are in abundance and therefore a few of those which occupy the tree sanctuary should be cleared in order to provide a site for the development of a shopping complex which in turn will save many of the poor and hungry by providing jobs. So how would you allow the rather invaluable tree sanctuary deny the destitute the provision of a lifeline? Should the hungry and the poor die in the name of environmental protection whilst there is abundance of what can be used or spared elsewhere?

In summation, from an anthropocentric view and in reference to this case, the tree sanctuary should be forgone to provide a site for the proposed development – to save if not mankind, then the poor and the destitute of Makhado Town.

3.3.4.2. Technological optimism.

Technological optimism, herein and after to be represented by the notion of intersubstitutability of resources, is a very strong base for the argument of social development without boundaries. This notion has no regard for the protection and preservation of nature and its resources. As noted by Shiva (1992:192), “Solow, the 1987 Nobel Prize winner in economics, holds that production and growth can completely do away with exhaustible natural resources and resource exhaustion is not a problem”.

The economists' slumber which continues in spite of loud alarms of ecological crisis is hereby perhaps encouraged by faith in the power of the human mind that science and technology will always deliver us from all possible harm caused by our continued unrestrained exploitation and expansion of resources (Fox 1995, in Hattingh, 1999:72). Accordingly, a limitation on the use of environment may be overcome by new breakthroughs in technology. This is another premise on which economic developers base their argument for their continued unrestrained exploitation and expansion of natural resources.

Even though economic developers acknowledge that stocks of non-renewable resources will decline and the price of raw materials/resources will rise, their confidence rests in the intersubstitutability of resources (Norton, 2003:170). Basically, when prices of valuable resources escalate, cheaper alternatives will always be found, they believe.

Accordingly, Solow (2003:440) maintains that there is no reason for our society to feel guilty about using up aluminium so long as we leave behind a capacity to perform the same analogous functions using other kinds of materials – plastics or other natural or artificial materials. This, in essence, is suggestive of the fact that there is no reason for us to use sparingly of the resources we have found in order to make the next generation survive, after all resources are replaceable. In reference to the case in point, perhaps on a weaker notion of intersubstitutability, the number of sacrificed tree species in the tree sanctuary can/may be compensated for by planting an equal number of such on another site – basically there is no definite loss.

Furthermore, if such trees in the sanctuary are valuable to the nearby households in terms of windbreakers, for instance, the proposed shopping complex may fulfill the same duty. Again, if such trees are valuable in terms of the fact that they recycle carbon dioxide, slow erosion and prevent floods, a replacement or alternative means could be found to help fulfill the same functions. As Shiva (1992:192) notes with economists, if it is easy to substitute other factors for natural resources, then there is simply no problem. The world can, in effect, get along without natural resources, so exhaustion is just an event, not a catastrophe. As such, the invasion and clearing of the tree sanctuary for the development of a shopping complex should not in any way – from an anthropocentric view – be considered a problem, it is but an event.

Furthermore, on the issue of the environmental crisis resulting from too much of pollution which is generally associated with development and progress, economists have a “solution” for that. As the cost of disposing of pollutants and wastes increases, entrepreneurs will be stimulated to develop alternative means of recycling and disposal (Norton, 2003:170).

The same is also what Werhane (1998:7) maintains; as we pollute, we learn new techniques to clean up and even improve the environment. To the economists, the brook Dorprivier that runs through the sanctuary is not a cause of alarm if the shopping complex is developed, since resultant pollution and wastage will effectively be dealt with by technology.

This sort of technological optimism encourages the ordinary man on the street to treat the environment in quite a savage manner even to the utter detriment of humankind and the environment alike. But some economic developers refute them in maintaining, “humanity has never set itself historical problems that it has not found the means to resolve” (Soper, 1995:260).

This is what environmentalists discourage, since this form of argument, in their view, justifies extreme anthropocentrism and thus ecological destruction. Furthermore, economic developers contend that man is a being of enormous adaptability, resiliency and power. He has learned to survive and make the best of it under some extremely difficult and unpleasant conditions, Rescher (1992:564) notes.

Put contextually, even though man will be able to make it under such extreme conditions of ecological disturbance due to the removal of indigenous species of the tree sanctuary and the development of a shopping complex, unfortunately nature or the natural environment will not benefit from such incredible human power and resiliency.

3.4. Conclusion.

With the two polar and seemingly irreconcilable ethical positions weighed from a theoretical position in reference to the case in discussion, a very practical and very complex dilemma is hereby presented. Those who unconditionally accord nature respect consider it absurd and inconsistent that the equals to nature, human beings, only value nature as long as it can be utilised as resource for humans. On the other hand, anthropocentrists consider it irrational that human rights and considerations are pushed by the way side in the name of environmental protection. With the two extreme ethical positions weighed and precisely discussed, it is therefore necessary that they be put into critical perspective with reference to the case in point.

CHAPTER 4

THE CLASSICAL DILEMMAS PUT IN CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE.

4.1. Introduction.

The main focus of this chapter, in view of the perspectives illustrated in the previous chapter, is to put the classical dilemmas that were discussed in Chapter 3 into perspective by critically evaluating the respective monistic value approaches informing them. Put rather differently, the either-or choices between environment and development are hereby put into perspective with reference to the practical context of the case in point. However, this task is done with pure theoretical principles forming a point of departure. This critical analysis comes in handy before the chapter is brought to its closure with the suggestion of an alternative to bring together these almost irreconcilable extreme polar ethical positions.

4.2. Implications of the ecocentric/biocentric approach.

The ecocentric/biocentric view that maintains a stance of protecting nature for its own sake, that further maintains that life in general should be protected – despite its support from ecocentrists/biocentrists – has received acute criticisms from social scientists and politicians. To many, Rolston's argument that the starvation of people to death can sometimes be justified in the name of environmental protection is highly controversial (Attfield, 1998; Brennan, 1998). However, in most cases criticisms emerge where short-term economic considerations clash with long-term ecological considerations.

Despite its advocacy for a very strong form of sustainability, as Landman (2000:8) notes, the intrinsic value approach seems to fail since when taken to an extreme it could result in everything in creation being ascribed intrinsic worth resulting in human beings not being able to justify utilising any of the earth's resources for their own sustenance. This, in principle implies that areas in nature conservation should remain untouched. The "don't touch" attitude which goes with the intrinsic valuing of nature has a connotation of social injustice. As noted by Hattingh and Attfield (2002:86), this position creates a situation in which people are marginalised to such an extent that they are literally as well as figuratively speaking, pushed up in some cases against the fences of nature conservation and let to starve in the name of environmental protection.

This as well can be much so when taking the case in reference into consideration. As indicated earlier on, efforts by the local municipality to accede to job provisioning, which is quite inevitable, hit the snag. The much desired and needed goal of social development couldn't be realised without the sacrifice of the environment. Precisely, vending in the open spaces within the main business area could not pay off. Unfortunately, problems cascaded. The town is now dirtier that it was in the years of old. Following this explanation, it is implicit that the intrinsic value approach is unable to deal with temporal and contextual issues since it is not sensitive to time and context.

Furthermore, this approach fails in that it only cares about wilderness preservation and does little or nothing about issues of social justice. This approach denies and degrades the uniqueness of human beings, human subjectivity, rationality, aesthetic sensibility and the ethical potential of humanity (Bookchin, 1988:13, in VanDeVeer and Pierce, 2003:262).

Perhaps, this is an exposition of a flaw in biocentric/ecocentric view of nature in valuing nature as equal to humanity and thus denying human superiority in the Earth's community of life. This non-anthropocentric position maintained in most cases by Deep Ecologists further raises question of social and biological, if not physiological considerations: Is it possible, ecologically or otherwise, that nature and man live in separation and there be normal *proliferation* of both? Of course, there is no plausible answer that ecocentric/biocentric approach can offer in this regard.

With reference to the case in point, the ecocentric/biocentric approach, in maintaining its denial of human superiority, implies that the indigenous tree sanctuary should remain as is and alternative means for human survival should be found. If human survival needs that a shopping complex be established in order to provide jobs for the poor and hungry, the same can/may be done without the sacrifice of nature – let alone the indigenous tree sanctuary. This, in essence implies support for genocidal programmes. As VanDeVeer and Pierce (2003:389 - 390) acknowledge, this stance invites criticisms for its support for an infringement of the “right to procreate”. Of course, people will feel deterred to procreate in a situation where they know that they will be denied natural means for survival – to depend on nature. With its population size expected to grow to an average of 983 000 by the year 2005 and an estimated 7 000 job opportunities presently needed, under these conditions Makhado Municipality is faced with a very serious problem to contend with.

However, in his defence of his unpopular stance of nature first, Rolston seems to have a point in maintaining that at times we ought not to always feed people first but rather ought sometimes to save nature because pulling down the fences and allowing people to consume what is still left in nature conservation areas will lead to a complete destruction of the remaining parts of nature until nothing is left (Hattingh and Attfield, 2002:86).

Obviously, with nothing left in conservation camps because fences would have been pulled down to allow the destitute escape hunger and poverty, the ultimate result will be that they will starve to death because nothing will be left for consumption. As such, the destitute will, in essence, not be actually saved by sacrificing areas in nature conservation but indirectly condemned to starvation.

To put this matter into context, the invasion of the indigenous tree sanctuary in order to help emancipate the poor and hungry by building the intended plush shopping complex, may initially seem to have a ring of righteousness but considered more contextually, this issue of justice will eventually lead to some sort of catastrophe. However, with more food on the table due to new and/or better wages and salaries, furthermore with the indigenous tree sanctuary sacrificed, nature is likely to be sacrificed even more due to increased population growth. Precisely, putting people first and nature second has its own connotation in terms of social justice.

However, in Hattingh and Attfield's (2002:86) view, that the hungry are being pushed up against the fences of conservation areas is because of nothing else except the result of a long series of unwise political, economic and social policies that have been made by societies in the past. In the light of these, Hattingh and Attfield (2002:86) concede that the conservation of nature turns out not to be the problem, nor the fence around conservation areas, but rather a social-political and economic system that compels us to encroach upon nature to the point of its destruction. This implies that unless the root cause of this problem is effectively and efficiently addressed, there will be enough justification for the continued destruction of conservation areas – the indigenous tree sanctuary in particular.

“Accordingly”, Hattingh and Attfield (2002:87) propose, “before we allow further destruction of nature, or what is left of nature, we should first reverse the unwise decisions of the past that made environmental destruction possible and inevitable in the first place. We should not allow nature, or what is left of it, to pay the ultimate price of the unwise human decisions of the past.” In reference to the South African situation, unjust systems of the land ownership should be reversed through land-restitution and land reform. But with land-restitution and land reform at such a snail’s pace, will nature continue to be sacrificed until the same is completed? It shouldn’t be like that.

4.3. Implications of the anthropocentric approach.

Social development, of course, has received tremendous support from the poor and the affluent alike. The poor receive food for survival whereas the affluent receive quality food and a lot more of luxuries, but all these have been possible through severe compromises on the side of the environment. As Shiva (1992:187) points out, “economic growth and development had promised to create abundance. It had promised to remove poverty. However, instead, by causing the destruction of the livelihoods and life-support systems in the Third World, growth itself became a source of poverty and scarcity.”

Bormann and Kellert (1991:x) have as well observed that humankind is cumulatively destroying the very life-support systems upon whose function all humans are ultimately dependent. However, it should be remembered that basically “all” detrimental environmental effects have been done in the name of social development, to save and sustain humankind. Beautifully and interestingly put by Werhane (1998:9), economic growth is thought to

be a positive indicator of political and economic worth, but through the same, we are consuming our planet, our habitat, our means of survival. Precisely, we are consuming ourselves.

The same problem has as well caught up with highly technologically advanced countries like Japan, for instance. As Tracey Steward (2002:5) notes in her interview with Junichero Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg; following the devastation of World War II, Japan experienced rapid industrial and economic growth. However, in the rebuilding of the country many environmental mistakes were made. This is because Japan placed development before environmental protection and as a result, air became polluted and water became unacceptably dirty. In other words, nature was ruthlessly sacrificed for the emancipation of humankind – to satisfy human needs and wants.

Also in the same vein, Hawken (1998:384) notes that the greatest amount of human suffering and mortality is caused by environmental problems. Contaminated water is killing a hundred times more people than all forms of pollution combined, but environmental organisations or companies are doing little or nothing to address that. Of course, “no” rational person can intentionally and deliberately plan to poison humankind on such a massive scale. Companies either cannot do likewise. Pollution, deforestation, desertification or any other forms of ecological destruction are just but side effects of social development and economic growth. However, without efforts for social development and economic growth, ecological destruction could be minimal but that is tantamount to the destruction of humankind.

Furthermore, South Africa as a developing country, and with most of its inhabitants living in abject poverty is unfortunately travelling along the route travelled by countries like Japan – to put development before environmental protection. Admittedly, the poor, just like everyone else, rely on natural resources for survival, but our overdependence on the same, like in the case of Japan, is proving to be disastrous.

This, as well, is also prevalent with the case in reference. Because of the large contingent of labour force waiting in idle for the provisioning of jobs through the development of the said regional shopping complex, the future of the tree sanctuary is in a very precarious situation. The pursuit for job provisioning is therefore *inevitable* and *non-negotiable*, and so are the efforts to sacrifice nature – precisely the tree sanctuary. Without it being sacrificed for the development of the shopping complex, the jobless, poor and hungry are condemned to starvation. But Nitin Desai (2002:6) raises a concern that the demand for food is rising as the world population grows and the capacity of food production to keep the pace is diminishing, especially in developing countries and as such land has been degraded beyond rehabilitation.

In the anthropocentric view, it is consistent with the notion of development that forests are hewed down to be replaced by equally or more valuable developments which in turn can save people from poverty and hunger. Furthermore it is also consistent with the anthropocentric view that tree sanctuaries, like the one in reference, when lying in idle do not necessarily provide food for the hungry and as such have to be replaced by developments, like the one of a shopping complex, which quickly and directly put bread on the table through job provisioning. In doing this, economists are denying an obvious fact that “nature shrinks as capital grows”, Shiva (1992:189) warns.

Again, economists are ignorant of the fact that “while natural resources can be turned into cash, cash cannot be turned into nature’s ecological processes”, Shiva (1992:189) adds. Stemming from the same assertion, it follows that increased availability of financial resources cannot regenerate the life lost in nature through ecological destruction in the name of economic growth and development. Succinctly put by Shiva (1992:193): “Only when you have felled the last tree, caught the last fish and polluted the last river, will you realise that you can’t eat *or breathe* money.” Precisely, the proceeds from economic growth and development cannot pay back on the effects of the resultant ecological destruction.

In view of this, Nitin Desai (2002:6) warns that if we do nothing to change our current indiscriminate patterns of development, like sacrificing a tree sanctuary for a shopping complex, we will compromise the long-term security of the Earth and its people. In essence, Nitin Desai is in a way admitting that the way in which humankind is exploiting nature and its resources in order to alleviate human poverty and hunger, is undermining our source of livelihood, and the sooner we change human development patterns the better. Put differently, “it is pointless being a world player unless you have a world worth playing in.” (Standard Bank Group – advert ahead of Johannesburg World Summit 2002 – adapted from MAIL and GUARDIAN, August 23 - 29, 2002/Vol 18, no 23 www.mg.co.za).

4.4. Failure of either-or choices.

From several scenarios and assertions cited in this chapter and elsewhere in this study, it is implicit that dealing with the issue of development from a monistic value approach proves problematic and therefore practically implausible. The two monistic value approaches, with their rather

seemingly unwavering stance at the polar ends of the ethical continuum, cannot in practical contexts be brought into compatibility. Of course, even short-term economic considerations are bound to clash with long-term ecological considerations. However, this is not an argument to advocate against biocentrism/ecocentrism and anthropocentrism as if they are basically a recipe for disaster, but in context and time, the two have been found wanting.

4.4.1. Biocentric/ecocentric flaws.

With nature and its biota being ascribed intrinsic worth which goes along with the principle of respect for nature, this results in an unfortunate circumstance where everything or every member of the Earth's biotic community will remain pristine. This implies that the use of natural resources by human beings as a basic means of survival is hereby denied. This is predominately so because human superiority is denied or rejected in favour of a principle of equal worth amongst all members of the Earth's biotic community. In practical perspective, the biocentric/ecocentric position denies interaction of man with the environment.

However, by maintaining these principles, this monistic value approach proves to be a square peg in a round hole when matters like the case in reference are put into practical perspective. Precisely, with its denial of human superiority, nature and its biota will definitely remain untouched in the faces of the poor and hungry. In other words, when nature comes first, when nature is kept pristine and protected from human intervention, the poor and hungry will be condemned to starvation. This, without doubt, carries a notion of social injustice. Put rather differently, protection of areas in nature conservation is thus tantamount to putting humankind to death.

Put in context, that is with reference to the case in point, human intervention or tampering with the tree sanctuary in order to provide jobs for the poor and hungry through the development of a shopping complex is hereby denied and no compromises can be entered into. Alternative suggestions like that the removed trees from the tree sanctuary can be compensated for by planting an equal number of such at an alternative site, is in biocentric/ecocentric view inconsistent with its principles. Basically, nature and its biota should not in anyway be used as a means to an end. However, if that is the case, human inability to create its own food as do green plants (autotrophs) is therefore not taken into consideration and this is a serious cause of concern as it is not consistent with natural laws and principles of ecology.

Precisely, with its denial of human superiority and human interaction with nature, this monistic value approach is, in context and time, grossly unrealistic and impracticable. No wonder why there is of now nasty racial and political debacles pertaining the issue of the development of a shopping complex in the tree sanctuary.

4.4.2. Anthropocentric flaws.

As reflected in this chapter and elsewhere in this study, the monistic value approach of anthropocentrism has been proven, either explicitly or implicitly, to be flawed. Assigning primacy to capital, and separation of production from conservation are the main flaws of the notion of social development (Shiva, 1992:189). To start with, advocacy for development has been mostly based on the assumption that man-made capital is a substitute for nature's capital (Shiva 1992:192). Based on this assumption, flows of cash and currency are believed to be able to replace

nature's flows and processes, but unfortunately in practical circumstances, it has proven otherwise.

Furthermore, the development flaw of separating production from conservation is based on an ill-conceived perception that production is untouched by ecological principles. To the economists, nature's economy is not primary and production through development secondary; to them the converse is the case and this renders the practice of nature protection and economic production mutually exclusive activities (Shiva, 1992:191). By maintaining the same, thus putting development first, as already indicated, the Japanese have learnt, unfortunately the hard way.

From this assertion and several others alluded to earlier on, it follows that anthropocentrism lacks consideration for nature and so it is with future generations. Its promotion for meeting human needs and wants through unrestrained exploitation and expansion of natural resources, has in practical contexts proven to be problematic. Unfortunately, many aspects of nature have been compromised beyond regeneration capacities. Of course, there seems to be a fact in the idea that the poor and hungry should not die, being figuratively squeezed against fences of conservation areas. But the ruthless manner through which humankind is extracting resources from nature for own use is a cause of concern. Some compromises nature has acceded to are practically not rehabilitable.

In reference to the case in point, it sounds justifiable that the tree sanctuary be sacrificed for the development of a shopping complex as this has a notion of justice and economic progress. But if the same is consistently and continually done on every area of nature conservation, will man end up a winner? The answer is absolutely no. This is so because, no matter how much man has amassed from sacrificing nature, his dependence on nature and its resources will never come to an end.

Precisely, because “a lot of what is valuable to human takes place outside of the market; and natural benefits are sometimes not expressible in market terms” (Radford, 2002:10). More so still, because “. . . human desire is never satisfied” (Proverbs 27:20). Shaw and Barry (1992:54) have echoed the same in asserting that some environmental benefits are not calculable. Of course, what market value can one attach to the aesthetic value of a tree sanctuary and its complex ecosystems?

However, the ruthless exploitation and maximum utilisation and expansion of natural resources, as maintained by economists is based on the ill-conceived perception of superabundance and technological optimism. However, without denying an obvious fact that we cannot go back home to the sense of ecological purity, the problem resulting from ruthless environmental exploitation is now taking its toll. As Leopold (2003:219) points out, “a system of conservation based solely on economic self-interest is hopelessly lopsided. It tends to ignore, and thus eventually to eliminate, many elements of land community that lack commercial value”.

Put differently by Bormann and Kellert (1991:xiv), an economic policy based on short-term estimations of material return that *altogether* discount future long-term negative environmental impacts, that regard natural ecosystems of no worth needs to be viewed not only as a bad economics but also as morally inconsistent with our sense of community membership and stewardship.

4.5. General evaluation of either-or choices.

A very quick and precise conclusion that can be drawn from the assertions above is that the existing diversity of value theories means that there is basically “no common language to communicate effectively with the public,

no shared vision, no unified voice amongst environmentalists or decision-makers and environmental policy formulators". (Norton, 1994:9, cited in Hattingh, 1999:78). Furthermore, what characterises environmental ethics, as already deliberated upon, is a dichotomy between anthropocentric and ecocentric/biocentric value theories. However, because of their failure to deal with contextual problems and issues, they, according to Hattingh (1999:78) quickly degenerate into ideological stalemates.

The fact that the two value approaches are based on ethical monism is quite evident when clashes between the two prevail in contextual instances like in the case in reference. However, despite this, monistic value approaches purport to always and in *all* circumstances come up with uniquely correct moral judgements due to their logical consistency and internal coherence. In essence, these monistic value approaches evade the problem of "ethical relativism" *associated* with a pragmatic value approach; as some philosophers argue.

As Hattingh (1999:79) concedes, monistic value approaches in environmental ethics are highly problematic when it comes to policy formulation in practical issues. Despite being theoretically coherent and internally consistent, monistic value approaches are "handicapped" in addressing the complexity of the problem to which they are applied and this is prone to be locked into the single factor principles they maintain. Simply put, environmental ethics of this nature is only successful in theoretical issues and fail dismally in practical ones – a very serious cause of concern.

To avoid confusion and despair, there is a need for environmentalists to move/turn away from monistic value approaches; to reduce or totally do away with over-reliance on universal principles. Most precisely, there is a need to become more pluralistic and problem-oriented.

4.6. Proposed approach.

As already highlighted to earlier on, taking into consideration the inability and failure of monistic value approaches to deal with contextual and practical issues; and a fierce battle ensuing between the same, it therefore follows that the dichotomy between human needs satisfaction and environmental protection must be overcome. As Norton (2003:1) puts it, “*there is a need for an efflorescence of new ideas and practical suggestions for responding – rationally and democratically – to specific, place-based environmental problems*”.

Pragmatism, which Norton proposes as an approach better suited to overcome the dichotomy brought about by anthropocentric and biocentric/ecocentric value theories, is one approach that never separates “fact” from “value”. Facts gain their meaning within an action-oriented context (Norton, 2003:94). This, in a way, is a form of approach that advocates for both environmentalism and rational development. Precisely, in the pragmatic approach, environmental protection and economic development are done in a rational manner.

As further noted by Norton (2003:175), in this approach, individual behaviours are not the main focus of environmental ethics. This, in essence, as is pertinent to the case in point, any position that may be taken by Makhado Municipality in dealing with and overcoming the dilemma

presented within this case, should not in anyway be used as a standard in any similar or related case. As such, the moral status of any activity depends not only on the content, but also on the context and time of the action.

Taking the case in reference into consideration, for the fact that the proposed project – a shopping complex development – intended to be developed in an indigenous tree sanctuary will put to sacrifice 145 or less tree species, should not precisely be considered an act of gross rights violation since compensations can be made. Taking into consideration that Makhado Town is situated on the foot of the Soutpansberg mountain range, which boasts of not less than 500 tree species of which 50 are endemic, it therefore sounds like *no* issue of serious concern that the development of the proposed shopping complex in the tree sanctuary should be carried out.

Alternatively, the about to be sacrificed indigenous tree species can be compensated for by being planted on an alternative site and the said graves can be developed to a monument and as such serve as a center for tourist attraction. Furthermore, efforts to reduce the likely adverse environmental impacts should be made so as to put into consideration some sense of ecological and environmental protection. The design of the complex could also be done in such a manner that the maximum of individual trees are kept in place to enhance the buildings and to provide shade in the parking area of the complex. This is necessary in the sense that without environmental protection, it is an undeniable fact that in the long run, the human race is likely to “perish” as a result of too much of pollution, wastage, chemicals and so forth.

This, in a way, is a concession that without denying an obvious fact that the shopping complex should be developed to ensure that the poor and hungry are precisely saved, no ruthless form of development should be

encouraged since under rational and democratic circumstances, nature should as well be accorded value. This is an apparent reflection of consistency with pragmatic approach of taking on board together the issue of “fact” and “value”. This approach basically eases or resolves a dilemma or dichotomy pertinent with either-or choices.

Put in beautiful simplicity by Nitin Desai (2002:6), “we cannot separate development from environment, we can’t say development first, environment afterwards”. Again, we cannot as well say environment first, development afterwards. Basically, we have to do both together. This is because development and environment are intricately linked. Undeniably, the two are practically co-dependent and as such one cannot do without the other. However, to be able to carry the two on board together at the same time and still acquire the desired results equitably demands a notion of rationality – rationality in order to avoid bias and gross violation of worth and rights, respectively accorded to both environment and humans.

Alternatively, thus in reference to the case in point, an alternative site could be acquired where less impact on nature can be “effected”, thus at the same time realising a dream to fight poverty by developing the much “needed” shopping complex. This alternative sounds much more plausible because it leaves much of nature – in particular the indigenous tree sanctuary – intact but at the same time effectively fights poverty and hunger, of course, with minimum impact on the environment.

In view of the above, Norton (2003:179) acknowledges; “this approach balances short-term economic and long-term ecological concerns but does not reduce them to a common metric”. In essence, environmental policy is constrained by both ecological and economic limits, as reflected in the case in point, but the scales have tipped to economic concerns after pointing out

that the risk of removing the indigenous tree species, or alternatively using an alternative site, is insignificant. Insignificant, firstly because indigenous tree species can be compensated for by being planted elsewhere, and secondly because the proposed alternative site is virtually bare and is without significant tree species except grass and shrubs.

Now looking at the way the dilemma has been exposed and means to overcome such have been suggested with reference to the case in point, it follows that the pluralistic value approach used here recognises multiple principles and criteria. As Toman (2003:236) asserts, this approach, while pluralistic, does not inherently lead to arbitrary application of decision criteria, simply because the decision rules applied depend on the context. However, a profound advantage of the use of a pluralistic approach is its flexibility depending on its consideration for content and context of the case under discussion. Furthermore, it encourages discussion in which parties involved pose their views, thus contributing towards the resolution of the case in point. As Toman (2003:237) acknowledges, the kind of discussion in reference leads to a process of value articulation, criticism, and experimentation with multiple schemes for valuing environmental goods.

Despite inviting fierce criticisms from extreme anthropocentrists and deep ecologists due to what they term inconsistency when dealing with environmental issues and problems, a pragmatic approach, like any other pluralistic value approach, has proven beyond any reasonable doubt that it is practical and workable and should not in any way be associated with ethical relativism. Even for the fact that it takes into consideration facts and values conjointly, content and context as well as time, it stands head and shoulders above the archaic and monistic value approaches.

4.7. Conclusion.

As already depicted in the better part of this chapter and elsewhere in this research project, “economists and ecologists employ different conceptualisations for explaining the interactions of humans with the environment” (Toman, 2003:225). Furthermore, guided by their varying ideological orientations, economists and ecologists maintain contentious ethical positions which in practice are in most cases ignorant of the contents and context of a case in reference, and thereby employ theoretical resolutions that can miss the whole point in a practical situation.

However, as Norton (2003:1) asserts, “I am happy to say that a number of very bright and talented young philosophers have begun to work in more problem-based and process oriented mode”. It therefore follows that pragmatism is more plausible an approach because of its ability to overcome the ethical dichotomy presented and associated with anthropocentrism and biocentrism/ecocentrism.

CHAPTER 5

APPLICATION OF THE DISCUSSION PERTAINING THE MUNICIPALITY'S CHOICE REGARDING THE CASE IN POINT.

5.1. Introduction.

With much about theoretical and practical deliberations being made pertaining to the case in point, the focus of this chapter will be directed at the application of the same regarding the choice that needs to be made regarding the indigenous tree sanctuary and the shopping complex. Conclusive remarks and recommendations will be made based on theoretical and practical deliberations already made about the case in point. Furthermore, loopholes pertaining to the required decision with reference to the case will be made. This chapter comes in handy to tie different ends of the argument together. Precisely, this chapter is purposed to serve as a conclusion of the whole research project.

5.2. The municipality's choice regarding the development of the shopping complex or the protection of the tree sanctuary.

With so much pressure coming from the pressure group, and in my view with not much of ecological consideration influencing the decision, the Municipality Council in reference has decided to suspend the development of the shopping complex on the indigenous tree sanctuary. Basically, the Council has opted for an alternative that dilutes the dilemmatic situation by way of compromise. Compromise, through allocating a new site for the development of such a luxurious shopping complex. The decision that has

eased pressure on both sides since it carries a notion of neutrality. This is so because both extreme positions seem to be catered for. Precisely, the Council has opted for alternative 3 suggested in Chapter 2.

This choice, as opted for by Makhado Municipal Council, implies a win-win situation since it carries with it a notion of community development that promotes short-term economic growth in a way that is compatible with protecting and augmenting biodiversity. More specific rather, this option encourages and promotes the development of the proposed shopping complex for the emancipation of the hungry and poor, and at the same time protects nature and its biota by sparing the indigenous tree sanctuary. In Norton's (2003:179) view, this option creates a balance between short-term economic and long-term ecological concerns. Precisely, nature and people are both saved, and not nature or people alone on the expense of another as it is prevalent with either-or choices. Quite interesting with this approach or option is that virtually all of the values that were articulated by various role-players in this case have been basically protected and acknowledged.

Furthermore, this option entails a notion of "Caring for the Earth" as highlighted by Hattingh (2002:10). This promotes respect and care for the community of life – human and non-human life. In the process, human life is saved and nature and its biota conserved. In reference to the case in point, the community under the jurisdiction of Makhado Municipality is encouraged, directly or indirectly, to care for the natural environments around them. It is again conscientised of the fact that the environment needs to be considered and all expansion of natural resources and economic development and growth should be eco-friendly and done with an eye towards conservation and benefits for future generations.

Again, in that the utter denial to develop the proposed shopping complex is an option consistent with biocentrism/ecocentrism position, many questions of social justice emerge due to the fact that it amounts to condemning the hungry and poor to death. At the same time, the development of the shopping complex on the tree sanctuary, without consideration of ecological and environmental impacts associated with the same, is a depiction of extreme irrationality. In other words, sticking to options guided by monistic value approaches is extremely problematic, basically because such entail either economic or ecological bias. It is either humans or the environment that is being saved, and never both. This is a win-lose, or lose-win situation. However, an option that promotes economic growth and development that is compatible with protecting nature and its biota carries much water and is therefore justifiably encouraged.

5.3. Prospective flaws, shortcomings and problems associated with the decision taken.

To start with, factors which have influenced the Council to take this decision leave much to be desired. Precisely because moving onto a new site in order to develop the plush shopping complex due to pressure is a decision that is morally wanting. This is because the Council relented to the pressure only due to the consideration of judicial threat. This implies that the Council never took into consideration the notion of the value the indigenous tree sanctuary deserves. In other words, nature and its biota, precisely the tree sanctuary, have not been accorded the value it deserves when the decision was taken. Formulated differently, the decision was not to save the tree sanctuary, but to avoid a legal battle.

Furthermore, if the Council carries on with the decision to develop the shopping complex on the said alternative site that is situated diagonally opposite the contended indigenous tree sanctuary, plans have to be put in place to deal with resultant economic and ecological implication, which of course have undesirable results. It is very likely that the development of such a regional scale shopping complex on a new site will shift economic and business attention from the already existing business center. Its strategic position is likely to attract more customers than the main business center situated a few hundred meters away from the N1 route.

This situation will not only affect formal business practice but also informal business practice. With many people now likely to try their luck in the *new* shopping complex, street vending and public transport practice in the main business center will directly or indirectly be affected. Directly affected because fewer people will visit the main/old business center. Indirectly due to cumulative attraction associated with the new luxurious shopping complex. As a result, the now less attractive shopping centers – Eltivillas and the central business district of Makhado Town – will experience economic lapse and as such eventually decay economically.

With the new budding opportunities springing and blossoming along the N1 route, new and potential business developers will be tempted to target sites along the same route. This will make a lot of sites along the N1 vulnerable for development and economic exploitation. This, in a way will put the future of the now spared indigenous tree sanctuary again in a precarious situation. For the fact that the intended development of a shopping complex on the tree sanctuary has, as of now, been suspended, it raises questions about its future when the dust about its intrinsic value shall have settled and when new developments are being attracted due to ribbon development along the N1 route.

As already alluded to, economic development along the N1 route is likely to attract new and further developments which the Council needs to regulate in order to avoid maximum utilisation and expansion of natural resources.

5.4. Recommendations and suggestions.

With future developments likely to string along the N1 route, preventive measures need to be taken in order to avoid ruthless exploitation of sites occupying the vicinity close to the same route. In view of that, i.e. in order to avoid future *temptations* to sacrifice the tree sanctuary for economic development, one would suggest that private land-ownership be encouraged in order to avoid the common use of land. Precisely, the Council should auction the indigenous tree sanctuary to the highest bidder with the intention to develop the same into a botanical garden. With the new and rather ecological sensible development in place, and again for the fact that it will be privately owned, the invasion of the same will at least be put at bay.

Putting the tree sanctuary in government stewardship will not guarantee environmental protection since governments change and again unstable political decisions may adversely affect plans for nature conservation. However, when the tree sanctuary is developed into a botanical garden, it will serve as a point of tourist attraction and as such job opportunities will be created whilst nature is being saved and protected.

Furthermore, on the objectives of environmental ethics, what should be of utmost importance in as far as development is concerned, is life in general – life for humans and non-humans. If we concede that human survival is dependent upon nature and its resources, economic development should accordingly be done on the basis of rational and democratic considerations.

It would sound rather awkward that development be solely concerned about social upliftment, thus saving people, while the side effects of the same endeavours are devastating to life in general. For sound reasons, of course, the Council should strive for an environment which after utilisation should not be harmful and hazardous to our health and well-being.

Furthermore, we should, of course with considerable *pains* try to keep within the carrying capacity of the environment. This is because the environment and its resources are not extra-stretchable. However, to try and keep within the carrying capacity of the environment may be achieved as follows: Firstly, there should be some sort of control on population growth. This is because uncontrolled population growth leads to environmental degradation since development will have to be extensive in order to keep pace with an ever-increasing number of dependents. Secondly, we have to reduce the excessive pressure that has already been put on the environment through our uncontrolled greed. Unfortunately, many people everywhere in the world are clamoring for affluence and a place on the high consumption bandwagon, and pitifully few are jumping off (Rescher, 1992:562).

Thirdly, beliefs which are based on technological optimism and super-abundance of natural resources in the universe, which profess that man can move on to new heights endlessly, should be proved and exposed to the optimists that they are fallacies. Fallacies because efforts and strategies to help curb environmental and ecological problems resulting from inconsiderate developments have been quite costly and at times failing dismally.

On the other hand, communities should be empowered and be conscientised to take care of the environment. This involves a change of mindset by our communities. They should be weaned from their over-dependence on the government. Previously, people used to be ruthless in

their manner of handling and exploiting natural resources knowing that the then government will take care of the resultant mess. As already indicated, the results were just but dismal. Again, the culture of carelessness has to be eradicated from our communities, particularly the previously marginalised ones. This is because a number of them is ignorant, if not naïve, about the effects of ruthless development on the environment.

5.5. Conclusion.

From the recommendations, suggestions, exposé and assertions already alluded to, one can conclude that a more plausible consideration that should be taken on board before efforts and endeavours are made to save people from starvation and poverty, should entail a balanced relationship between development and ecological integrity. This, in essence is not a consideration that puts people first then nature, or nature ahead of people. This is a consideration that acknowledges a highly intricate relationship between people and nature, social development and environmental protection. This is because an ethic that puts either people or nature first is already discriminating against the value, worthiness and rights of either of the two.

In essence, a suitable and workable ethic should encourage and promote a mutualistic relationship between development and ecological consideration. As such, development should not suffer because of environmental protection and vice versa. However, for this ethic to be realised in practical situations, contexts, contents and times of specific cases should be taken into consideration, lest the whole thing will degenerate into an ideological stalemate based on monistic value approaches. Lastly, the environment needs to be considered and all expansion and development should be eco-friendly and done with ecological sensibility.

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APPENDIX A**LOUIS TRICHARDT****KEY:**

- T:** indigenous tree sanctuary
- A:** alternative site for development
- S:** Songozwi Street