

Thinking Sustainability through the Earth-Eco-Socialist Paradigm

Philomena Aku Ojomo, PhD Department of Philosophy, Lagos State University

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.804019>

Received: 07 March 2024; Revised: 23 March 2024; Accepted: 27 March 2024; Published: 27 April 2024

ABSTRACT

Safeguarding our environment, which is home to both humans and nonhumans, is imperative to prevent widespread negative impact. The urgency for collaborative efforts to maintain the earth's well-being is underscored by the escalating environmental crises worldwide. This paper posits that the environmental degradation we witness is significantly occasioned by capitalist practices that exploit both human and nonhuman entities. It critiques the classical free-market approach as insufficient for fostering environmental sustainability. In contrast, the paper advocates for "Earth-eco-socialism," a model it champions as conducive to harmonizing human-nature relations. This model diverges from the capitalist fixation on perpetual material growth and environmental exploitation, which undermines the potential for meaningful existence for many. Earth-eco-socialism is grounded in the conviction that development and social progress must address social issues and environmental challenges simultaneously, through legislation and democratic processes, without compromising human needs. This approach merges ethical considerations with ecological stewardship, promoting cooperative environmental management, flexible environmental legislation, and its rigorous enforcement. The conclusion underscores the imperative of embracing the Earth-eco-socialist framework for our interactions with nature and one another, as a pathway to achieving environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Environmental crisis, capitalism, environmental sustainability, earth-eco-socialism

INTRODUCTION

Owing to the growing concerns over global warming, wildlife extinction, desertification, ozone layer depletion, and a host of other environmental issues, there has been a corresponding concern about the need for environmental sustainability (Theis & Tomkin, 2018). The subject matter of environmental sustainability can be approached from different perspectives. Some approach it from a policy/administrative perspective while others approach it from a philosophical angle. Policies are usually based on certain underlying philosophies and sometimes, to really implement effective policies, a good investigation of the philosophies that could potentially limit or enhance the efficacy of a policy is pertinent (Zimmerman & Callicott, 2001). As we discuss the need for environmental policies that will engender environmental sustainability, there is also the need to investigate how underlying philosophies affect the outcome of these policies.

Over the last five decades, there has been an ongoing debate between the capitalists and socialists as to which philosophical orientation and practice is both feasible and more environmentally friendly (Pepper, 2002). On the one hand, this paper investigates how capitalism poses as a catalyst for environmental degradation, and on the other hand, how earth-eco-socialism serves as an alternative framework of moral sensibility to engender environmental sustainability. The paper begins by clarifying what environmental sustainability entails, before investigating the role that capitalism has played and is currently playing in the challenge of environmental degradation. Following this, the paper then proposes the earth-eco-socialist paradigm as framework that overcomes the challenges of capitalism and realizes the common good, while still ensuring environmental sustainability.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

In general everyday usage, sustainability refers to the capacity to persevere in quality and quantity through time. It has its roots in the Latin word “sustinere,” which means “to hold up.” From an ecological standpoint, it refers to the ability of ecological systems to remain productive and diverse over time. For humans, it describes the potential for long-term maintenance- both of individual/corporate well-being and the natural world, as well as the responsible use of the earth’s resources (Weaver et al., 2000). Kuhlman and Farrington (2010) describe sustainability as an idyllic state of affairs whereby there is safe interaction and peaceful coexistence between human civilization and the earth’s biosphere.

As extrapolated from the U.S. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the goal of sustainability is to “create and maintain conditions, under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations” (FHPL, 2018: 131). According to this delineation of sustainability, a sustainable approach is a structured and systematic approach that seeks to understand the intricate relationship that exists among the social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainable development, in a bid to better comprehend the consequences of our actions. Ideally, since these three pillars are intertwined, any research that aims at environmental sustainability invariably fortifies the society and engenders prosperity. Similarly, Robert Goodland (2002) noted that there are four major types of sustainability, which are social, human, environmental, and economic. In summary, sustainability entails the process of using the limited human and natural resources to meet present needs without jeopardizing the capacity for posterity to meet their needs.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY?

The Encyclopedia Britannica (2014) defines the environment as “the complex of physical, chemical, and biotic factors that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival.” The main aspects of the environment include the atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere. The environment includes both social and physical factors which surround and influence people. It has both subjective and objective dimensions. It includes water bodies and all life forms in them, grassland, forests, land, deserts, animals, and even man (Gana et al., 2015). According to Nwanne(2013:23), it refers to “all the natural endowment and those provided by man in his efforts to make life meaningful and comfortable. This means everything that affects man in anyway- land, water, air, trees, grasses and houses.”

Environmental sustainability therefore refers to the “to the conservation, management and rational utilization of natural resources in such a way to maintain the integrity of each ecosystem, support all life, ensure the preservation of biodiversity and prevent environmental degradation” (Gbenda, 2012: 3). Also, John Morelli (2011: 5) defines environmental sustainability as:

a condition of balance, resilience, and interconnectedness that allows human society to satisfy its needs while neither exceeding the capacity of its supporting ecosystems to continue to regenerate the services necessary to meet those needs nor by our actions diminishing biological diversity.

This implies a commitment to preserving ecosystems and natural habitats that are in a critical state, the adoption of green economy, maintenance of good air and water quality, reduction of environmental pollutants, proper waste management and recycling policies, preservation of biodiversity, and ensuring resource integrity. Goodland (1995) identifies three degrees of environmental sustainability (weak, strong, and absurdly strong) in relation to the four types of environmental capital (natural, human, social, and human-made). The weak sense of environmental sustainability attempts to preserve the total capital in a collective sense without partitioning them. On the other hand, the strong sense of environmental sustainability focuses on maintaining the different types of capital individually. The absurdly strong sense of

environmental sustainability intends to never deplete anything. Obviously, the last degree of environmental sustainability is called absurd because it is not realistic. This is because, to survive, we must use resources; but how and why we use the resources makes all the difference. The idea is not use resources faster than they can replenish themselves, as well as setting up the necessary structures in place that ensure the perpetuity of these resources.

How then do we identify sustainability issues? An issue of sustainability arises when the existence or quality of a thing that is valuable is under threat. This threat can either already be in existence or in potential form. The range of things that we can identify as requiring sustainability includes- services of the ecosystem (such as water cycle, climate change, water purification, soil protection etc.), natural beauty, others species, different ecological communities, natural resources, and quality urban environments. For the utilitarian, the motivation to sustain the environment is because of its usefulness, while for the altruist, the motivation is solely because those things are valuable and good in themselves (Sutton, 2004).

CAPITALISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

According to Maurya et al., (2020: 1), environmental degradation refers to “the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources which includes all the biotic and abiotic element that form our surrounding that is air, water, soil, plant animals, and all other living and non-living element of the planet of earth.” The main factors driving environmental degradation are human and natural. The human elements of environmental degradation include overpopulation, industrialization, modernization, deforestation, etc., while the natural factors include floods, fires, typhoons, rising temperatures, drought etc. However, in this section, we want to specifically look at the role that the human factor of capitalism plays in engendering environmental degradation.

Earlier on, we noted that the three pillars of sustainable development are interrelated. Hence, economic activities often have environmental impacts and vice versa. Capitalism is identified here as an economic system that is contributing much to the environmental degradation in present times. Capitalism refers to an economic system where there is private ownership and control of property for personal interest, and the market forces of demand and supply freely determine the prices in the market. The main feature of capitalism is the overriding motive for profit. A capitalist economy is founded on pillars such as private property, self-interest, competition, a decentralized market system moderated by the forces of demand and supply, freedom of choice in relation to consumption, and limited role of the government. In this free market economy, otherwise known as laissez-faire economy, markets function under little or no control (Jahan and Mahmud, 2015).

In the opinion of Yonghong Zhang (2013: 69):

Throughout the history of human development, the increasing environmental depredation almost synchronizes with the capitalist industrialization and modernization process. In the context of economic globalization, a research on ecological crisis can't be separated from the analysis of the nature of capital.

This is due to the fact that main driving force in a capitalist economy is the unlimited desire for profit. The greed associated with capitalism often makes it difficult for the altruistic spirit that it necessary for the preservation of the environment to thrive. In one instance, some environmentalists in England once inquired from a corporate executive what justification his company could give for discarding its raw industrial waste into a nearby river. Mother Nature had taken millions of years to setup that habitat to serve several purposes such as providing drinking water, swimming, fishing and other activities. However, the papermill had deformed the river into an open sewer. The executive argued that discarding the mill's waste into the river was the most “cost-efficient” way of managing the company's waste. He posited that it was the only way of

ensuring the continual delivery of quality products, ability to make reasonable profits, and also retain competitive advantage. According to this executive, anything short of this would cause the company to crumble and make many lose their jobs (Parenti, 1998).

While the company sounds like being compelled to employ this rather environmentally hazardous approach, it does appear that on second thought, there would be no loss of competitive advantage if all companies were subject to the same environmentally friendly policies, since the additional cost of proper effluent management will be incurred by all competitors. Of course, this would still entail less gain for all polluters.

With the advancement of capitalist economy globally, statistics reveal an ever-growing environmental degradation. In 1998, the World Wide Fund for nature revealed that the earth had lost one-third of her natural resources from 1970-1975; the index of freshwater lowered by 50%; a drop in the index of the marine ecosystem by 30%; and a drop in the world's forest area and resources by 10%. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization statistics further revealed that the annual rate at which tropical deforestation is occurring is about 0.7% and this is constantly accelerating. Due to rain forest reduction, we are experiencing more floods, climate change, and rapid extinction of biodiversity. The excessive use of Freon and other related substances has greatly contributed to the depletion of the Ozone layer, making creatures on earth more susceptible to the dangers of increasing ultraviolet rays from the sun. There is also the immense release of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, CFCs, and others, which are exacerbating the current greenhouse effect, causing a rise in the global climate, and further resulting in the melting of glaciers and the rising of the sea level. Several organisms and natural habitats are being destroyed and desertification is advancing rapidly (Zhang, 2013).

While everyone is a potential victim of environmental degradation, some persons or group are more affected by others on the basis of their geography or economic status. Studies have shown that poor people are more susceptible to cancer due to less access to good health care and protection from occupational hazards. Poisonous pesticides that have been scrutinized as unsafe are sometimes sold to Third World Nations where environmental regulations are lax. These toxins then reappear as fruits, meat, vegetables and other food stuffs on our tables. In Central America, the desire for cheap farmlands for cattle rearing has resulted in the destruction of rain forests. Usually, when the thin soil layer of the rain forest is destroyed and the once lush rain forest begins to turn into a desert, it is abandoned for another forest. Also, more than 25% of prescription drugs are also derived from rain forests. This has led to the extinction of songbirds, which are vital for rodent and pest control (Parenti, 1998).

So, we see that the unprecedented economic development brought about by capitalism is also matched by unprecedented ecological crisis. This is seen in the price that Third World Countries are paying for the prosperity of the West. Considering the limited resources available, the more the West demands, it necessarily follows that the Third World Countries will have less. It is ironical that the West, who constitute about 20% of the world's population are consuming about 80% of the world's resources, with Third World countries suffering the ecological consequences of this imbalance. All these are the result of production activities and consumption by humans. Observing this situation, Paul Sweezy noted that:

Already, a very large section of the world's scientific community is fully aware of the seriousness of the ecological threat facing the planet, but what is not widely recognized is that the cause of the threat is capitalism itself. Bourgeois economics seeks to hide or deny this fact. No wonder. If it were generally understood, capitalism would soon be identified for what it is, the mortal enemy of human kind and many other forms of life on the planet (In Zhang, 2013: 72).

Considering capitalism's role in the declining health of the environment, the question then is, "is it possible to achieve a sustainable capitalism?" It is hard to imagine how that can be realized considering capitalism's creed of "grow or perish." Parenti (1998: 96) puts it this way:

Profits are the name of the game, as business leaders make clear when pressed on the point. You're not going to stay around very long, they say, if you don't make a profit. The first rule of corporate capitalist production is: make the largest possible profit or eventually go out of business. The central overriding purpose of business is capital accumulation. You must have more capital when you finish than when you began. How could it be otherwise? This explains why pollution, like sin, is regularly denounced but vigorously practiced.

Joel Kovel (2007: xi) also notes that, "Growing numbers of people are beginning to realize that capitalism is the uncontrollable force driving our ecological crisis." Regarding the difficulty in attaining a sustainable capitalism, Paul Hawken *et al.* (1999: 5) noted that, "Capitalism, as practiced, is a financially profitable, non-sustainable aberration in human development." Hence, both Kovel and Hawken *et al* agree that capitalism is not sustainable and there is a need for a revolution. In response to the need for this much needed revolution that will both meet our economic needs while ensuring the sustainability of the environment; this paper offers a unique perspective- earth-eco-socialism.

EARTH-ECO-SOCIALISM: AN ECOLOGICAL INTERVENTION

From an etymological standpoint, ecology refers to a place where things reside. Explaining this concept Taiwo Osemwegie (2011) noted that "eco" (the root word in ecology) means a home. In his words, it refers to "a way of describing lives in the natural environment. As it relates to ecology, or the environment, it means the 'natural relationship' (or the study of the relationship) between plants, animals and people, and the places in which they live" (2011: 17). In similar vein, Callicott (1998: 129) observes that ecology deals with "...the study of the relationship of organisms to one another and to the elemental environment." Hence, ecology has to do with the relationship that exists among organisms and their environment. This involves both the living and non-living components of the environment. As such, ecological ethics has the propensity of transcending the limitations of anthropocentric ethics since it encompasses all species in the biotic community, as well as the abiotic components of that community.

On the other hand, socialism is an ideological framework that has many strands and with a long history. Andrew Vincent (2010: 83) observes that "The word 'socialism' finds its root in the Latin *sociare*, which means to combine or to share. The related, more technical term in Roman and then medieval law was *societas*. This latter word could mean companionship and fellowship as well as the more legalistic idea of a consensual contract between free men."

From this understanding, a socialist strives for a society that is organized on the values of cooperation and mutual companionship, in contrast to a capitalist society that thrives on as competition. There are several strands of socialist theory and several scholars who have written along this line of thought such as Pierre Leroux, Henri de Saint-Simon, Marie Roch Louis Reybaud, Karl Marx, Robert Owen, Franz Fanon, Michael Parenti, Walter Rodney, among others. Nonetheless, the general idea that cuts through the various individual nuances of different socialist theory is that it represents a socio-economic system earmarked by common possession of the avenues of production and a co-operative organization of the economy. The political dimension of this theory therefore seeks to make possible the establishment of this system.

Since the mid-nineties, several theorists have made attempts at merging socialist principles with ecological values in a bid to address environmental issues and engender sustainable communities. This need for an eco-socialist framework to redirect the course of our approach to environmental issues happened in the wake of the period when technological revolution, industrialization, and capitalism brought enormous economic prosperity and profit, but at the cost of environmental health and sustainability. As a political theory, eco-socialism is therefore aimed at addressing the destructive tendencies occasioned by the capitalist exploitation of land and the labour of workers across the globe. Thus, James O'Connor (2005: 455) observed that:

The massive expansion of Western capitalism since World War II has in large part been based on the massive externalization of social and ecological costs of production. Since the slowdown of the world economic growth in the mid-1970s, the concerns of both socialism and ecology have become more pressing than ever before in history. 'Accumulation of capital through crisis' during the past two decades of slow growth in the West has produced even more devastating effects, not only on wealth and income distribution, norms of social justice, treatment of minorities, and so on, but also on the integrity of community and environment.

Corroborating O'Connor's this position, Adam Whitford (2011) noted that, "Eco-socialism, as it has been developed since the 1990s, is based on the twin notions that ecological sustainability is indispensable if we are to achieve prosperity and equality for all human beings, and that such a society would be impossible under capitalism." So, what we see is not just the capitalists' exploitation of human labour, leading to a continuously expanding gap between the rich and the poor, but also the exploitation of the environment. As it turns out, both the biotic and abiotic components of the ecosystem are all negatively impacted by toxic chemicals that are being released into the land, sea, and air. This continuous degradation of the environment has its roots in the idea that the environment exists solely for the purpose of wealth creation. As described in the words of Whitford (2011):

We are thus fighting the two driving forces of the current system: capitalism and productivism. Capitalism imposes the commodification of everything for new sources of profit. It is therefore responsible for widening the gap in social inequality and for the ongoing globalization, liberal and destructive of liberty. Social and environmental dumping prevail, with the relocation of pollution and damage to ecosystems. Productivism depletes natural resources and disrupts the climate. The consumerist ideology is its corollary.

The eco-socialist approach therefore addresses the critical issues of social justice and environmental sustainability together. Hence, it articulates solutions to the challenge of social inequality as it pertains to the distribution of wealth, as well as the degradation of the environment. This is why Bookchin (2005: 475) stresses the fact that, "Social ecology is an appeal not only for moral recognition but also, and above all, for social reconstruction along ecological lines. It emphasizes that an ethical appeal to the powers that be (that embody blind market forces and competition relationships), taken by itself, is likely to be futile." Eco-socialism therefore represents a rational answer to the dual gridlock that humanity now finds itself due to the unhealthy manner of consumption and production, which are exhausting humans and depleting the environment. It is an ingenious political framework initiating a common front against a capitalist ecology which is driven by obsessive and excessive productivism.

Eco-socialists argue that the only way to address the ongoing environmental crisis is by eliminating capitalism. According to their perspective, the exploitative nature of capitalism is a significant contributor to the negative impact on the environment, and therefore, it needs to be eliminated. Eco-socialists contend that this can only be achieved by transitioning to a socialist society.

Eco-socialists maintain that capitalism is fundamentally at odds with values such as collaboration and solidarity, which are essential for achieving ecological sustainability. The reason for this is that capitalism fosters social injustice and oppression, which prevent communities from working together towards a common goal. For this reason, eco-socialists argue that capitalism and environmental sustainability are incompatible.

Moreover, eco-socialists recognize that capitalism is the root cause of environmental degradation, and that a shift towards a socialist society would put an end to all forms of exploitation and inequality. This would create an egalitarian society that is driven by an interest in ecological sustainability. Overall, eco-socialists believe that a fundamental shift away from capitalism is necessary to address the environmental crisis and create a more just and sustainable society.

Due to the outcry against that capitalist's massive contribution to the degradation of the environment, it was impossible for them to continue business as usual without addressing the environmental concerns that have been raised. However, their response did not seem like they were really concerned about resolving their problem of exploitation. Their response seemed like an attempt to offer alternative form of capitalism, that at face value appears environmentally friendly, but in reality, is only a repackaging of their old errors with a new label. This they do in the hopes that the unwary observer will feel more comfortable with capitalism and give them a free pass to continue plundering the earth. Now what did they call this alternative form of capitalism? They called it "green capitalism" (Sanders, 2020).

The environmental movement known as "green capitalism" has mostly concentrated on developing alternative energy sources and opposing fossil fuels. Within some of the most polluted industries, large corporations heavily invest in advertising to promote their "green" activities. Capitalists are investing trillions of dollars in green energy because they have discovered that it can be profitable, with the support of top environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and the 350 Organization. There is urgent need to complete a great deal more.

The recent environmental documentary-*Planet of the Humans* accurately portrays the situation and the fact that the production of the current green energy options (biomass, wind, and solar) causes as much planetary damage as the benefits they provide (Sanders, 2020).

In actuality, the utilization of natural resources is running out, and greenhouse gas emissions are rising. One illustration is the fact that the pace of loss of tree cover was 2.8 percent more in 2019 than it was in 2018, which is the same as a football field being lost every 6 seconds throughout the year. Trees among other things take in and retain carbon dioxide, and the destruction of forests causes an increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere (Sanders, 2020).

It is clear that, the principles of capitalism are written with this planetary destruction in mind. The system is basically anarchistic; it prioritizes profit over all else and requires perpetual expansion. Nature is dominated, and social consequences are disregarded. Since the start of industrialization, the earth has suffered damage as a consequence of the capitalist economic system. It is unreasonable to count on the beneficiaries of the same establishment that put us in this problem to help us out of it.

While *Planet of the Humans* does a fantastic job of outlining the gravity of the situation and posing the possibility that capitalism may be an issue, it makes no specific recommendations for resolving it. It implies that all technology is detrimental. Additionally, it makes unsettlingly ambiguous remarks on the issue of overpopulation without tackling racist justifications that blame people of color and developing nations.

Observing these developments, eco-socialists argue that the practical solution is not merely a rebranding of capitalism but doing away with the ills of capitalism and initiating a new system entirely- ecosocialism. Socialism entirely eliminates the profit motive by transferring ownership of businesses and natural resources to the public. All aspects of producing and providing products and services for the benefit of humanity are democratically controlled by workers of all categories, including manufacturing, technical, and scientific workers. The anarchy, excess output, and catastrophic squandering of the capitalist system are no longer present. We no longer have to hold out hope that "the market" will become profitable enough for change to occur.

Environmental racism may be eliminated in a socialist economy that prioritizes human needs since individuals of color have been actively involved in the change movement. Prioritizing the closure and cleanup of toxic manufacturing and storage facilities will allow for the transfer of workers to secure positions and the provision of excellent housing and educational opportunities for families. In addition, women acquire the ability to regulate their own reproduction when everyone has complete economic and social power, which has been demonstrated to lead to smaller families.

To fast shift away from damaging kinds of energy, the energy sector must first be nationalized. Even “sustainable” energy, such as subpar solar planned replacement and continued reliance on polluting types of backup energy, is concealed by the fossil fuel and mining corporations. We won’t be able to choose the finest technology until we stop energy producers from making extraordinary profits, but in a socialist economy, we have the capacity to do so.

In order to significantly reduce the need for individual mobility and allow for the redesign of cities and towns, all segments of the transportation industry- autos, airlines, and railroads- must be nationalized. It is challenging to determine what the true need is in a system of capitalism that uses a great deal energy for unproductive activities.

Nonetheless, the earth-eco-socialist perspective takes the contribution of eco-socialism towards environmental sustainability a step further. Earth-eco-socialism is a vigorous eco-socialist approach towards environmental sustainability that acknowledges the necessity to confront the ecological and social roots of environmental challenges. The basic principle is that the preservation of the earth overrides human interest. As Bookchin (2005: 462) rightly points out, “to separate ecological problems from social problems- or even to play down or given token recognition to this crucial relationship- would be to grossly misconstrue the sources of the growing environmental crisis.” Hence, earth-eco-socialism is hinged on the idea that social progress and development should be undergirded by principles which provide the basis for addressing both social and environmental challenges through democratic principles and laws, without sacrificing legitimate human needs.

This means that social justice for humans ought not to be at the expense of the environment. It has to include non-human animals, plants and the earth. Revealing the limitations of eco-socialism, Orton (2010) noted that eco-socialism:

...is unfortunately people-centered, not Earth-centered. Where is the advocacy for wilderness preservation and other species? Nonhuman species appear to be an afterthought. Social justice for humans is of course necessary, but it must be subordinate to Earth justice for all species.

This entails that earth-eco-socialism sees the challenges of economic exploitation, poverty, and global environmental pollution as interconnected. So, we see that while earth-eco-socialism shares a lot with eco-socialism, it rejects the Marxist left-wing aspect of eco-socialism. This is because an unrestrained Marxist left-wing eco-socialism could further exacerbate ecological challenges. This danger becomes pronounced when we ponder on the way that eco-socialism undermines other issues facing the society, especially the technology that emerges in the process of production:

The left also fails to recognize what is in a sense a deeper problem for those desiring revolutionary change, that of the cultural context and content of mass society—the addiction to capitalist-defined “comforts” and a vision of material plenitude that are so destructive ecologically. The result is an incapacity to confront not just the ruling class, but the grid itself—the grid imposed on the land, in society, even in the character of each person—of mass technics, mass mobility, mass pseudo-communications, mass-energy-use, mass consumption of mass produced goods (Watson, 2005: 490).

It is against this framework that earth-eco-socialism recommends a moral obligation and ecological sensitization which considers the benefit of all species in our ecological consideration of what we do and how we interact with the world around us. Another limitation of eco-socialism is thus captured:

It seems to me that “socialism” or “eco-socialism”, as a description of a future deep ecology-inspired and socially just post-capitalist society, is not adequate or inspirational. The type of future ecocentric socially just social formations is up for discussion. There are no worked out social models that can be simply adopted (Orton, 2010).

Highlighting another shortcoming of eco-socialism, Watson (2005: 448) rightly observed that: “As for the left, despite useful insights into commodities and the market economy, it has always almost exclusively embraced industrial, energy-intensive system originally generated by private capitalism as a ‘progressive’ force that would lay the basis for a free and abundant society.”

Hence, earth-eco-socialism leans more towards the moral than the political protection of the rights of humans and the land. It encompasses socialism as a value system which advances the quality of the common social solidarity, collective interest, and mutual benefit. From an ecological standpoint, it stresses the interrelatedness of humans and the environment, and therefore recommends the preservation of the earth in a collective sense, rather than the protection of the good of some of its inhabitants. This we believe is very vital for environmental sustainability. Earth-eco-socialism therefore presents us with a normative framework for actions and policies directed towards engendering environmental sustainability.

The earth-eco-socialist perspective being presented in this work advocates for cooperative land management through individual and group collaboration. It is crucial to emphasize the significance of effective environmental education, flexible environmental laws, and the regulation of vehicles and technological devices. While human needs are important, environmental and social bodies must also regulate these needs. The concept is that environmental regulations should be upheld and clearly outlined in the constitution. This is because one cannot fully appreciate and love nature without having love, respect, and patriotism for it. In order to encourage people to follow acceptable environmental regulations, ecological education must be promoted.

Having knowledge of the prefix “earth” is appropriate in order to further explain earth-eco-socialism. The Earth is a vast topic that encompasses many scientific fields of study. These fields include meteorology, astronomy, oceanography, geology, and environmental science. Astronomy deals with studying things outside of Earth’s atmosphere, such as the solar system or other worlds. On the other hand, meteorology examines the factors that alter the atmosphere and create weather. Oceanography is the methodical study of the earth’s oceans, whereas geology investigates the elements that constitute the Earth and how they evolve, as well as the past events of the globe and its life-forms. Environmental science, meanwhile, delves into how organisms interact with their environment (Glencoe Science, 2008).

A comprehensive understanding of the Earth is therefore necessary to reflect on the causes and beginning of environmental crises. This requires not only understanding how individual ecosystems or entire biomes are diminished, harmed, or destroyed, but also how the entire Earth is impacted by internal and external factors. A holistic approach to Earth sciences and ecology is necessary to approach both the scale of the current environmental problems and the proper tactics for solving them.

It’s important for a comprehensive theory to take into account a variety of environmental processes, both natural and artificial, from a scientific perspective. Earth-eco-socialism believes that ethical considerations should begin with our responsibility to care for the Earth based on a holistic understanding of the planet. By doing this, the well-being of all organisms is taken into account, not just the interests of humans. It’s reasonable to limit human interference with the planet in order to prevent ecological imbalances. This plea goes beyond promoting the interests of one nation over another. It’s an effort to create a moral framework for thinking about environmental problems that affect the entire world.

The socialist component of Earth-eco-socialism is not entirely based on Marxist theory. We agree with Marx that issues of worker exploitation, alienation, dominance, and subordination need to be reexamined. We believe that the cooperative concept is critical today. However, we do not believe that only a violent revolution can bring about societal transformation. Instead, we want a system that avoids international conflict or violence. Respectful communication and dialogue across different lines are essential. The United Nations can support this by institutionalizing it at all levels of social organization.

Finally, Earth-eco-socialism is based on the moral principle that an action is environmentally correct if it supports the use of natural resources in a way that benefits the members of the biotic community that would be affected by the action.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes with a defense of the need for the adoption of the earth-eco-socialist paradigm in our relationship with nature and others, if we are to achieve a sustainable environment. From the foregoing discourse, we see how the capitalist worldview poses a threat to the environment. While some scholars have engaged in discussions about the feasibility of sustainable capitalism, it is argued that given the core values of capitalism, which emphasize competition and profit-making, aligning sustainability with capitalism presents significant challenges. What we need is not a rebranding of capitalism but a whole new system that emphasizes cooperation instead of competition, social good instead of personal interest, and care for the environment instead of an exploitation of the environment. This new system is what earth-eco-socialism promises to achieve if it becomes the basis for economic, social and environmental policies. The paper concludes that there are certain things human beings can do to make this earth livable. First, it is to control the way we emit carbon into the atmosphere which impact on the climate, the lives of people, and other organisms. Second, to ensure that the conflicts between humans are put to the barest minimum, this means that war by all means should be avoided. Third, it is to remember that scramble for mineral resources such as oil, Uranium, gold, etc. is one of the major reasons why nations are going to war. Fourth, the current proxy war against Russia through Ukraine is a major reason why sustainable development would be impossible. This war has geopolitical consequences. NATO and Europe being on one side, and Russia, China, North Korea, etc. are on another side. The two camps are nuclear powers. The conflict resulting therefrom can lead to nuclear war and when there is a nuclear war, there is no living, nothing to sustain.

REFERENCES

1. Callicott, J. (1998). "The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic," in *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, Louis P. Pojman (ed.), 2nd, Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
2. Encyclopedia Britannica (2014). "Environment." *Encyclopedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*, Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica.
3. Federal Historic Preservation Laws (FHPL), (2018). "National Environmental Policy Act." *The Official Compilation of U.S. Cultural Heritage Statutes*, 2018 Edition, Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior: 131-134.
4. Gana, J. & Toba, P. (2015). "Environmental Pollution and Sustainability." *Journal of Research in Environmental Science and Toxicology*, 4(1): 1-9.
5. Gbenda, J. (2012). "A Keligo-cultural Respective on Ecological Sustainability in Nigeria." *African Dynamics of Social Science Research*, 2(2): 1-8.
6. Glencoe Science (2008), *Earth Science, Geology, the Environment, and the Universe*, Columbus: McGraw-Hill Co., Inc.
7. Goodland, R. (2002). "Sustainability: Human, Social, Economic and Environmental." *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Change*, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
8. Jahan, S. and Mahmud, S. (2015). "What is Capitalism?" *Finance and Development*, Retrieved from <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2015/06/pdf/basics>
9. Kovel, J. (2007). *The Enemy of Nature: The End of Capitalism or the End of the World?* New York: Zed Books.
10. Kuhlman, T. and Farrington, J. (2010) "What is Sustainability?" *Sustainability*, 2: 3436–
11. Maurya, P. et al. (2020). "An Introduction to Environmental Degradation: Causes, Consequence and Mitigation." In: *Environmental Degradation: Causes and Remediation Strategies*, DOI:

- 10.26832/aesa-2020-edcrs-01: 1-20.
12. Nwanne, B. (2013). "Media, Environmental Sustainability and National Development in Nigeria." *New Media and Mass Communication*, 18: 14-30.
 13. O'Connor, J. (2005). "Socialism and Ecology," in *Environmental Philosophy from Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, Michael E. Zimmerman e tal, 4th, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
 14. Orton, D. (2010), "Mixed Thoughts on Ecosocialism," retrieved from http://home.ca.internet-greenweb/mixed_thought_on_ecosocialism.pdf on 28/05/2015.
 15. Osemwegie, T. (2011). "Eco-Bio-Holism: An African Environmental Value and Approach to Environmental Justice and Sustainability," *Journal of African Ethics and Value*, C. J. Ekwealo (ed.), Vol. 1, Lagos: Midilag Ventures.
 16. Parenti, M. (1998). *America Besieged*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.
 17. Paul, H. et al. (1999). *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*. Boston: Little, Brown.
 18. Pepper, D. (2002, September 26). *Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice*. Oxford: Routledge.
 19. Sanders, D. (2020). "Ecosocialism vs 'Green' Capitalism." *Freedom Socialist Party*. Retrieved from <https://socialism.com/fs-article/ecosocialism-vs-green-capitalism>.
 20. Sutton, P. (2004). "A Perspective on Environmental Sustainability?" *A paper for the Victorian Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability*, Retrieved from <http://www.green-innovations.asn.au/>.
 21. Theis, T., & Tomkin, J. (2018). *Sustainability: A Comprehensive Foundation*. Texas: OpenStax CNX.
 22. Vincent, A. (2010). *Modern Political Ideologies*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell publishing.
 23. Watson, D. (2005), "Against the Megamachine: Empire and the Earth," in *Environmental Philosophy from Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, Michael E. Zimmerman e tal, 4th, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
 24. Weaver, P. et al., (2000). *Sustainable Technology Development*. Greenleaf Publishing: Sheffield, UK.
 25. Whitford, A. (2011), "Henri Lefebvre and Ecosocialism," retrieved from: <http://socialresistance.org/2633/henri-lefebvre-and-ecosocialism>.
 26. Zhang, Y. (2013). "Capitalism and Ecological Crisis." *Journal of Sustainable Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3: 69-73.
 27. Zimmerman, M. E., & Callicott, J. B. (2001). *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*.