

Marxist, neoclassical and deep ecologist theories of ecological crises

[Science](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

According to Marxist theory the fundamental causes of environmental degradation is the mode of production that comes into contradiction with the natural processes. It is only capital accumulation that is taken into consideration, but the value of environment is given little attention. The mode of capitalist production is designed in such a manner to yield the biggest returns in terms of profits within the shortest time possible. This mode of production does not integrate the natural process.

The capitalistic growth does not consider the time required for the resources to regenerate or formation. The mode of production has also been spread over the globe and does not respect the already existing social organizations (Kovel, 2007). The production and supply of energy is supposed to go ahead without interfering with the natural environment including the flora and the fauna. Marxist approaches argue that environmental degradation does not result from lack of wisdom in capitalist mode of production, but result due to the logic that underline the system.

The call for environmental protection that would result to qualitative growth as advocated by social democrats is stymied by the logic of capitalists (Eckersley, 2005). The flow of individual capitalist is determined by the rationality of capitalists, but the whole system become irrational due to competition among capital, innovative processes to improve on the mode of production and save on raw materials that does not materialize due to unfair competition. For this reason there is nobody who cares for the welfare of the environment and thus water, soil, air are polluted.

Unfair competition has resulted to overproduction problems. This means that natural resources are overexploited into production of non profitable goods <https://assignbuster.com/marxist-neoclassical-and-deep-ecologist-theories-of-ecological-crises/>

and services. Violations of environmental regulations have resulted due to this unfair competition in search of super profits (Kovel, 2007). This can be identified by such criminal behavior of use of substances that have been inadequately tested, use of harmful and toxic substances, dumping of toxic wastes in unauthorized places, use of chemical labels with false statement (Eckersley, 2005).

Marxist theory of imperialists metropolises argue that most advanced environmental degradation resulting from economic growth is in the most developed countries. There is economic exploitation due to economic quantification of social, natural and historic substrata in these countries is governed by commodity production which has resulted to fragmentation of social processes which were used in production there is competition among owners of the centralized properties which have led to environmental problems in imperialist countries.

There is much use of land to create business premises, industries, theme parks and other structures which have facilitated much traffic and commuting time, but the structure of needs have not been changed. There is much traffic congestion in these metropolitan areas due to traffic policing on the private cars on the use of petroleum fuel. This is a threat to these places (Eckersley, 2005). Centralization of property has demanded building of energy firms especially nuclear power stations and fossil fuels which are a threat to the air quality and are not rational in economic use of energy.

In market production they see it advantageous to throw away, burn, flush out what they consider unimportant and this have contributed to waste problem (Kovel, 2007). The consequences of this is much waste in the <https://assignbuster.com/marxist-neoclassical-and-deep-ecologist-theories-of-ecological-crises/>

environment a characteristic of capitalist overabundance which have resulted to environmental problems of; urban sprawl, destruction of ecological systems over congestion, air pollution, release of radioactive substances building up of toxic substances and wastes etc (Benton, 1996). The environmental failures cannot be corrected by capitalism.

The environmental resources of water, air, soil, and wood are wasted polluted and degraded often without control by capitalism these environmental resources are considered as exogenous factors in economy i. e. they are factors of making profit. The limited nature of natural resources is seen by those buyers of them but the sellers interest is to expound on them and don't see the need to safeguard them. The current push for capitalist is deregulation that is controlling to the attempts made of controlling the exploitation of the natural resources.

Otherwise they are contemplated on false premise that the good profits (environmentally friendly) and bad profits can be distinguished on the laws of value. The imperialist countries have designed their structure of the economy as to give end of pipe solution already when the harm has already been done. This has very little remedies to the environmental problems. The consumers within capitalist production have been shaped and have aggravated ecological crisis. The individual change however can contribute very little in searching for the solution of environmental degradation (Benton, 1996).

Ecological problems in developing countries have been seen to be as a result of poverty. According to Marxist poverty in these countries is as a result of imperialist action and their economic policies but is not an outcome of fate. <https://assignbuster.com/marxist-neoclassical-and-deep-ecologist-theories-of-ecological-crises/>

Environmental problems in imperialist countries are as a result of affluence and not due to market economy. The poor people have become the victims and agents of environmental degradation. In most developing countries there is shortage of basic commodities especially fuel, food and water.

The environmental problems faced by the developing countries have the origin of capitalist production. Imperialist countries have dominated the world market and depend on developing countries for raw materials of their industry and this have contributed to overexploitation of natural resources in these countries. The imperialist countries have designed economic structure that are dependent on the world market and have imposed them to the developing countries. For this reason the environmental resources are chosen on this basis for export to facilitate production in the imperialist countries.

The pressure falls on the poor people in their environments. The impact of exploitation of environmental resources is widely felt in developing countries than in capitalist metropolises. According to Marxist environmentally degrading dynamics and organizing contradictions of World Bank are carried to the developing countries. The actions of the World Bank are devastating and incorporable weaker forces oppose it. Raw materials are exploited for world market and there is parallel development of such things like roads, power –plants etc.

There is also heavy clearance of land to pave way for pasture land or farm land to produce products for export and use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers that have resulted to pollution. The action of the World Bank raise a question about the poor people since they are pushed to regions marginalized and <https://assignbuster.com/marxist-neoclassical-and-deep-ecologist-theories-of-ecological-crises/>

therefore burns forest to pave way for farming. Cutting hillsides settling in flood prone areas or in arid zones etc contributing to ecological crisis (O'Connor, 1997). According to Marxist this question about the growth of cities in the developing countries is causing environmental problems.

These cities have also resulted to waste disposal problems since dump wastes in unauthorized places. There are also energy shortages in these countries. The problems of the developing countries are aggravated by debts to imperialist countries and World Bank which often mean exploitation of more resources for export and thus increase in the level of poverty capitalist countries also transfer hazardous materials into the developing world and therefore pollute their environment. According to Marxist seeking to solve environmental problems of the developing world is a serious problem that often does not materialize.

Credits and debts given to them only compound the problem and what is supposed to be done is reduce depending on the imperialist countries (O'Connor, 1997). The system of bureaucratic societies has also resulted to similar environmental problems as in imperialist countries. The reason for this is that they have only overcome the capitalist laws of value only partially but they have depend on capitalist and world market dependency on technological progress of the imperialist economies has also contributed to environmental degradation. Bureaucratization was expected to develop a social economy but it eliminated democracy.

The issue of environments was only addressed in small departments. Deep ecology is based on the idea that the environment is supposed to stay intact and does not exist to serve human beings. According to deep ecology <https://assignbuster.com/marxist-neoclassical-and-deep-ecologist-theories-of-ecological-crises/>

species have the right to exist no matter the unfaithfulness to their human being (Orton, 1999). Deep ecology places value on biodiversity which is necessary to the flourishing of both living and nonliving. According to this approach the origin of ecological crisis can be located on the systems of human beliefs, i. e. either religious or philosophical. Human beings are seen to dominate nature (O'Connor, 1997).

According to the deep ecologist the right to live for all living things is universal and cannot be quantified. Therefore even human beings cannot be excluded from biotic community. It is believed that members of biotic community are supposed to preserve its integrity, beauty and stability (Orton, 1999). Deep ecology shows that the civilization of human beings has damaged the integrity of nature. Ecosystem can absorb limited amount of water only if they do not exceed the carrying capacity. Through this approach ecologists have shown that human activities have changed the biosphere from its natural state.

Deep ecologist gives holistic approach to environmental problems. The field of deep ecology uses two approaches i. e. scientific and deep ecology. Scientific ecology explains the relationship between living species of the earth and the environment (Orton, 1999). The field uses four directions i. e. Spirituality, Ideas, Feelings and Action. Spirituality tries to explain our relationship with what we see as sacred. Life here is seen as being sacred and it is believed that the power of life acts through the work of the earth recovery. Ideas on the other hand are based on idea that we are parts of nature rather than outsiders of nature.

As part of nature we should use the ability to develop the ecosystem rather than destroy them. We should be the stewards of the environment rather than have dominion over it. Feelings unable us to see the state of the nature since we are part of it. As stewards we act according to these feelings. As environmental stewards we act for live (Orton, 1999) Marxist, Neoclassical and Deep ecologist theories of ecological crises. Neoclassical theory originated from several abstraction i. e. individualistic utility theory, firm theory and market theory. . Neoclassical values economy more other than anything else.

Ecosystem is seen as just mere elements within the economy. In contrast to Marxist theory and deep ecology, neoclassical do not recognize the physical limits of nature and therefore they support for infinite growth. They hold that hefailurethat have resulted to ecological crisis occur due to lack of market values. However neoclassical economics have tried to integrate environmental issues in the market systems. This is contrary to Marxist theory, where Marxist sees all the environmental issues as a result of capitalism production. Neoclassical economist believes that markets will make everything right.

In reality neoclassical do little to account for value of environment (Laferriere & Stoett, 1999). According to neoclassical economics market failures occur in three instances i. e. externalities, imperfect structure and public goods. Externalities in neoclassical economic approaches, crisis results due to negative externalities that result to inefficiency in the market. In this approach what is considered to be an externality is something that is external and is not determined by the nature. An example is where waste

<https://assignbuster.com/marxist-neoclassical-and-deep-ecologist-theories-of-ecological-crises/>

effluent from a firm is discharged into a water course resulting to water pollution.

According to neoclassical economics this only happens because the value of the community water is not accounted for in the cost of production since this value is not available in the market to be purchased by the community (Laferriere & Stoett, 1999). This is contrary to Marxist theory and deep ecology approach. Marxist theory argues that such ecological crisis does not arise because of lack of wisdom but money driven factor which are aimed at maximizing profit. Deep ecology on the other hand has explained our actions towards the environment using the four directions as mentioned earlier.

In this approach our actions towards the environment should be that of stewardship and such actions of discharging effluent into water body does not support the integrity, beauty and stability of nature and therefore this is wrong. According to Marxist theory, the environment is therefore undervalued, unprotected and polluted. Even where neoclassical economics call for internalizing the externalities so that amount of pollution is obtained. It is contrary to deep ecology since deep ecology support for the integrity of nature (Plumwood, 2002).

The denial that externality only results from diversions from the real world lead to structures that are irrelevant to all the living things and the environment according to deep ecology approaches to ecological crisis. This is because it is only in the real world human being and other species live and therefore the models do not prescribe solutions to the problems that already exist in it. Moreover environment is treated as a thing that can be

abstracted, exploited according to this approach of negative externalities regardless of the fact that it is dynamic living component.

To place value on the environmental components so that they can be internalized in market it is contrary to Marxist theory since this value is placed only due to individual preferences. Such evaluation of environmental goods is hypothetical markets, contingent market valuation etc which have resulted to interference with the integrity of nature since nature is complex and human being cannot successfully value it. In neoclassical economic methods it remains clear that environment is a commodity that can be substituted once hedonic pricing and anthropocentric allocation of prices has been successfully determined (Plumwood, 2002).

The values of natural resources are not prioritized by the market mechanism and it is only the exchange value base that is considered (Laferriere & Stoett, 1999). This is in contrast to deep ecology since resources under this doctrine should be part of nature and they have value in themselves and should be allowed to pursue their own good. In contrary resources are valued if they bring environmental benefits that can be evaluated or economic benefits according to neoclassical economists.

It therefore means that species with no use value which have been attached to them have no any effect on optimal allocation of resources. Human beings have limited knowledge about the biodiversity, biophysical and therefore optimal valuation of the components of the environment often leads to irrational choices. Therefore market failure is not the problem or the one that brings the conflict between environment and the economic activities. The

conflict merely arises due to impossibilities of the market structure to place a
<https://assignbuster.com/marxist-neoclassical-and-deep-ecologist-theories-of-ecological-crises/>

reasonable value of all the components of the environment in the real world (Plumwood, 2002).

Ecological crisis have resulted to irreversible changes to earth and its inhabitants. Damage to the environment has threatened many species of the earth. Initially the issue was infinite growth which cannot be supported by our finite earth. The threats created by ecological destructions can be dealt with by altering the concepts of economic growth . this is in contrast with neoclassical approaches that support market economies and holds that the crisis are due to market failure (Foster, 1997).

The ecological crises are threatening the species of the earth. According to Marxist and deep ecologist crisis result from human activities that impact on the earth. According to Marxist there is need to change the mode of production and there is no need to wait for scientific evidence of their ecological consequences. However this is contrary to neoclassical economics where some firms are still maintaining harmful production techniques with little technological innovations the technological progress instead is acting on environment and destroying it.

The industrial revolution of the 19th century resulted to production of much waste that polluted the environment. The wastes had consequences of degrading the environment and also threatening the health of all human being especially occupational workers since 19th century ecological degradation has become fast and furious. Ecological degradation is an outcome of technological advancement with little care of nature. This occurred on the eve of 19th century with innovation of cars petroleum use, the rise of

chemical industry and agricultural sectors with heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides.

The issue of planned economics and industrialization of the third world has also contributed to qualitative leap of resources (Benton, 1996). Deep ecologist has deep understanding of the nature. Marxist on the other hand analyzed the society and excluded co-evolutionary understanding of the relationship between nature and human beings. According to deep ecology analysis of nature the two cannot be viewed as separate entities or independent bodies. Rather, sees the two as co-evolutionally and they change each other in dynamic processes.

The historical forces and social forces forms the basis in which human beings treat the environment. Marxist's assert that historical materialism in economic degradation is designed with structures that are degrading environment systematically and are exceeding the carrying capacity of the earth (Burkett, 1999). This is contrary to the views of neoclassical economists. Therefore they have caused much environmental degradation instead of establishing a co- evolutionary relationship.

For Marxist there is both crisis of nature and social crisis that have resulted to ecological crisis. The ecological crisis has resulted due to the mode of production and reproduction that are designed to exploit the resources (Burkett, 1999). Marxist theory agree that human being have become both agents and victims of the ecological crisis and this has been evidenced by; social alienation malnutrition and pollution and poisoning to the environmental components in which human being depend and also see capitalism as being as specific historic form.

<https://assignbuster.com/marxist-neoclassical-and-deep-ecologist-theories-of-ecological-crises/>

(Benton, 1996). Bourgeois society which is criticized Marxist but supported by neoclassical economics is created by capital which also results to appropriation of nature and the social bonds to the members of the society. The great civilization of man results to nature being seen as an object for human beings, which is supposed to be utilized and fail to be recognized (Burkett, 1999). The discovery of the laws of the nature is seen as merely ruse in order to subjugate it to human needs as objects of utilization or facilitate production.

Bibliography Barry J, Eckersley (2005): The State and the Global Ecological Crisis. ISBN-13: 978-0-262-52435-3, MIT Press. Benton T (1996): The Greening of Marxism. ISBN 157230118X. Guilford Press. Burkett P (1999): Marx and Nature: A Red and Green Perspective. ISBN 0312219407, St. Martin's Press. Eckersley R (2004): The Green State: Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty, ISBN 0262050749, MIT Press. Foster, John Bellamy (1997): The Crisis of the Earth. Organization & Environment (journal), Vol. 10, No. 3, 278-295 DOI: 10. 1177/0921810697103003 Kovel J (2007): The Enemy of Nature, ISBN: 9781842778715 Laferriere E, Stoett J (1999): International Relations Theory and Ecological Thought: Towards a Synthesis, ISBN-13: 978-0415164795, Routledge. O'Connor J (1997): Natural Causes: Essays in Ecological Marxism. SBN 1572302739, Guilford Press Orton D (1999): Deep Ecology and Criticism, ISBN: 0-8476-8929-8, Littlefield. Plumwood V (2002): EnvironmentalCulture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason. ISBN 0415178770, Routledge