# Environmentalism

Environmentalism is an ideology that emphasizes the importance of conserving natural resources found in the varied ecosystems of the earth by advocating that natural resources be viewed from an ecological perception (Grigsby, 2015). As Buel (2009) outlines, it is an umbrella term covering any environmental reform independent of whether it is ecocentric or anthropocentric, moderate or radical. Environmentalists assert that alteration of a single element in the ecosystem is likely to affect all other elements since there is interdependence of organisms. As Doyle, McEachern, and McGregor (2015) outlines, environmentalism emerged in USA and Europe in the late 19th century and in its all forms pioneered in environmental movements. For instance, in the first wave of environmental movements preserving and conserving the natural environment from the harm resulting from human settlement and industrialization was emphasized. Subsequently, the second wave shared similar conservation and preserving aims in the twentieth century (Doyle, McEachern, and McGregor, 2015).

Environmentalism provides certain requirements. Firstly, it requires humans to have a responsibility to utilize natural resources in a way that supports the integrity of the ecosystem in terms of its health and viability (Grigsby, 2015). Ecosystem integrity necessitates protection of certain resources from depletion, conservation of water and land, and limiting development projects including dams, roads, and buildings. Further, environmentalists argue that preserving the integrity of the ecosystem necessitates avoiding a dominating strategy to nature since humans do not have the credible intellectual foundation to be masters of nature as their knowledge of natural processes and nature are limited (Grigsby, 2015). Environmentalism requires people to refrain from actions that cause harm to natural ecosystem while recognizing ethical compulsion to nature (Grigsby, 2015). Additionally, environmentalism advocates for sustainable development, a concept that accentuate the utilization of natural resources in a way that does not destroy or deplete the ecosystem’s elements (Elliot, 2012). Sustainable development ensures that an ecosystem’s developed area does not reduce its viability in areas such as biodiversity. What is more, environmentalism calls for environmental stewardship where humans are advocated to act as ecological caretakers of the earth (Grigsby, 2015). Therefore, environmentalism outlines various strategies, all seeking to protect and preserve natural resources.

Environmentalism opposes certain acts and principles. According to Grigsby (2015) environmentalism rejects the notion that humans are masters of nature and the center of the universe claiming that humans should be cautious or humble in utilizing natural resources (Grigsby, 2015). For instance, some sustainable development advocates suggest that the population of cod fish in British waters has significantly reduced due to overfishing. Similarly, environmentalists have criticized excessive use of timber products citing possible deforestation which could lead to depletion of timber resources. Equally, environmentalists have argued against Massachusetts landfill projects claiming that the activity endangered the indigenous salamanders (Grigsby, 2015). Further, environmentalists have criticized development of reservoir and real estate in central coast California suggesting that doing so would involve draining the wet lands thereby destroying the California red legged frogs’ natural habitat.

Environmental activists have also opposed conversion of large tracts of land into commercial land for agribusiness, road construction and suburban settlements (Grigsby, 2015). For example, in the United States, conservative environmentalists argue that increasing grain fields in Prairie has driven away wolves and bears which has resulted to overpopulation of prey such as deer eventually leading to increased damage on indigenous plants due to overgrazing. Additionally, some environmentalists oppose demarcation of land according to ownership arguing that fences alter the ecosystem by limiting free movement of organisms (Grigsby, 2015). Other conservative environmentalists oppose some farming practices like application of strong pesticides which expose non-target insects and other organisms to a wide range of negative effects. According to Grigsby (2015) environmentalists have criticized utilization of petroleum fuel as a source of energy which releases carbon dioxide gas into the atmosphere thereby leading to global warming.

Differences between moderate and radical forms of environmentalism exist. Firstly, radical environmentalism has increasingly been associated with deep ecology, an aspect with a distinct feature of strong spiritual and ecocentric identification with nature (Dunlap, 2014). Conversely, moderate form of environmentalism takes an anthropocentric approach that recognizes humans as dominant over nature (Barrow, 2014). They are termed as either mild or light green (Barrow, 2014). Secondly, radical environmentalism reacts to the demands of the existence of humans in humanism and technology dominated culture at the expense of the ecology (Dunlap, 2014). As such, issues of concern to it include the rising trend of extinction of species, ozone depletion, acid rain, and greenhouse effect among other global and local issues. Also, radical environmentalism stratifies between non-violent acts including peaceful protests, government lobbying, and media engagement and violent acts including controversial or illegal protests such as ecotage, protest camps, and direct action (Almquist and Bagozzi, 2016). On the other hand, moderate environmentalism involves non-violent acts to call for attention to environmental concerns in long and short distances. Most often, violent acts by radical environmentalists tend to be highly localized (Almquist and Bagozzi, 2016). Therefore, as the names suggests, radical environmentalism involve deep-rooted acts into supporting nature over human needs while moderate environmentalism tend to focus on neutralizing the human needs and nature’s concerns.

## References

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