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## CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION MOVEMENT AND THEIR INFLUENCES ON ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION IN THE USA

Yusuf GÜNES\*

### Abstract

In this article, I discuss the concepts of conservation and preservation depending on their main philosophy, historical development, and applicability. Also, I discuss the concepts of wilderness, biocentrism, deep ecology, radical environmentalism, and environmental organizations such as mainstream environmental organizations and radical environmental organizations. Then, I try to connect these concepts depending on their relations to each other, their philosophies, and their effects on each other. In sum, I conclude that environmental movement has been constructed depending on two main philosophies; conservationism and preservationism. And both philosophies and other concepts such as radical environmentalism are applicable to current environmental issues in some cases. This means that each philosophy may be applicable to solve an environmental problem in a particular field.

Keywords: Conservation, Preservation, Environment, Movement, Wilderness

Koruma ve Muhafaza Hareketi ve Çevre Mevzuatının Olusumu Üzerindeki Etkileri

### Özet

Bu makalenin amacı, korumacılık ve muhafazacılık çevre koruma felsefelerini, onların temel koruma felsefelerine, tarihsel gelişimlerine ve uygulanabilirliklerine dayanarak tartışmaktır. Ayrıca, yabani doğa, biyosantrik çevrecilik, derin ekoloji, radikal çevrecilik ve çevreci örgütleri tartışmak da bu makalenin kapsamı içinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Sonra, temel düşünce tarzları ve birbirlerini etkilemeleri açısından bu kavramlar arasındaki ilişkiler ele alınmıştır. Sonuçta, çevre hareketinin bu iki temel felsefe (korumacılık ve muhafazacılık) üzerine kurulmuş olduğunu ve bunlarla birlikte radikal çevrecilik, derin ekoloji, yabani doğa gibi alt kavramların da güncel çevre sorunlarına uygulanabilir olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Koruma, Muhafaza, Çevre, Hareket, Yabani Doğa

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\*Dr., İstanbul Üniversitesi, Orman Fakültesi, Ormancılık Hukuku Anabilim Dalı.

### Conservationism and Preservationism

Conservationism and preservationism are two main concepts in environmental movement. These can be considered the roots of environmental movement, because they existed for the first time in environmental arena. In other words, the initial steps of environmental movement have been directed by both philosophies. Then, other philosophies mentioned in this paper came out some time later. The roots of both ideas can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. The severe environmental destruction of early nineteenth century led environmental thinking to arise in the American Society. Cohesive philosophies and policies began to develop, because people became to recognize that the natural resources were limited and nature, besides economic values, had also scenic and recreational values. These two considerations, economic and recreational values, led the above two philosophies. Although the conservationist and preservationist philosophies quarreled through the history, both played the most important role in environmental movement. They both directed the way in which many environmentalist ideas were developed. They inspired the early environmentalists that they became aware of current environmental problems.

Conservationism is an idea that recognize "wise use" of natural resources. According to Gifford Pinchot, the most prominent inspirer of the conservationism, the term conservation means the wise use of natural resources in brief. He is still considered a leader in founding American forestry. He was the first chief of the USDA Forest Service in 1898. Pinchot was the first person drafting forest management plans for the purpose of providing the greatest goods of the greater number for the long run (Hays, 1959). This philosophy considers natural resources as a source of raw materials for economic development. Since conservationists became aware of the scarcity of natural resources first, they perceived that those resources had to be used wisely. This means that we, as human beings, must use natural resources depending on economic and scientific methods. We can use natural resources, but we cannot exploit them. Theoretically, conservationism never let people exploit the natural resources.

According to Dryzek (1997), the main concept of conservation movement was the rational use of natural resources as input. This movement did not want to environment for aesthetic concerns, scenic beauty, and recreational reasons, or for human health. Instead of that, this movement sought only to ensure those resources such as minerals, timber, and fish that had to be used reasonably and wisely. Consequently, there would be huge amount of natural resources to provide raw materials for growing industrial economy.

Progressive conservation movement was initiated by Gifford Pinchot and supported by the U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt (Hays, 1987). During that era the science addressed local ecosystem problems and issues of producing commercial commodity. Conservation movement led the development of the tree farming. That

means that usage of natural resources were reasonable and wise, if that usage depended on scientific and economic criteria. Conservation movement means to seek to limit the types of exchange value uses. In other words, natural resources have a limited usage fields only to be an input in production process. And not any other usage field or exchange value exists other than economic concerns. In order to provide enough commodity to industry, we should prevent these resources from such destructions as erosion, siltation, water pollution, and clear cutting.

Conservation movement attempts to sustain economic activity such as soil conservation in agriculture and water conservation in industrial water systems. In this sense conservation notion is much related to sustained yield movement around the beginning of this century. Both movements supported the same idea that scientific thinking about the usage of natural resources and the limitations of such usage and sustaining the ecosystem in order to produce raw materials for industry were the main issues of concern. Also, rapid deforestation, soil erosion, water pollution by siltation in navigable waters were the main reasons behind the development of both of these movements.

“Conservation movement seems to be consistent with the logic of treadmill by insuring a steady supply of a particular natural resources, albeit placing limits on the speed of the treadmill” (Schnaiberg & Gould, 1994, p. 144).

Conservation movement was inspired by some ideas about conservation ecology via its key figure, Gifford Pinchot (Pinchot, 1947). The movement’s main argument was that the natural resources of America was in danger of being exploited, and thus, more rational scientific management was required to better put those resources to efficient economic use (Dryzek, 1997, p. 64).

Pinchot explained in 1898 that the purpose of forestry was service to society not to tree itself. This means that the Forest Service, the foresters, all kinds of activities related to forestry (all of them may be called “forestry”) should act for the purpose of providing benefits to the public. Rather than taking care of tree itself all forestry activities should be directed toward managing forests in order to obtain the greatest benefits and economic values for the public. This idea was initially strongly followed by Forest Service’s chief Fernow (Zivnuska, 1971). This strong utilitarian view to natural resources led the conservation movement to be split into two main ideas, conservation and versus preservation, in which preservation movement was developed depending on that argument.

John Muir who worked with Gifford Pinchot in early conservation movement years to support and establish federal forest reserves led founding the Sierra Club in 1892 to promote recreation, scenic beauty, and aesthetics in a primeval setting of nonuse. Since Pinchot failed to recognize the importance of recreational use, he tried to

manage National Parks as timberland to harvest raw materials for industry. Muir fought against that idea which wanted to control and properly utilize the national parks. He strictly opposed utilitarian ideas and spent all efforts to leave all national parks as unexploited.

In contrast to conservation movement, preservation movement means “to seek to isolate parts of the ecosystems and protect them from any exchange-value use in social production systems” (Schnaiberg & Gould, 1994, p. 144). Preservationists tend to protect ecosystem as a whole from any raw material withdrawals and additions. The nature should remain however it is. This movement denies any economic activity in a particular area.

These two ideas about environmental conservation fought against each other in several environmental issues. For example; in 1913 Congress permitted San Francisco city to build a reservoir for water supply in Hetchy Hetchy valley in Yosemite National Park. That issue even further split the conservation movement. Pinchot helped to construct the dam, while Muir opposed it.

#### Wilderness:

The concept of wilderness can be traced back to the first half of the nineteenth century. “In 1832 George Catlin proposed that the government preserve lands in their pristine beauty and wilderness. Henry David Thoreau wrote in 1855: “why should not we...have our national preserves...not for idle sport or food, but for inspiration and our own true recreation ?” Various actions to reserve city and state parks began in the 1800s (Wirth, 1966). For that reason the early parks such as Yosemite and Yellowstone were established to preserve their pristine beauties and wilderness.

Wilderness supporters advocate that we have to protect biological diversity, support viable wildlife populations, and prevent the extinction of endangered species. To achieve these kinds of protection, more natural forests need to be reserved such as wilderness area, national parks, scenic rivers etc. for particularly these purposes.

Because of raising public awareness environmental groups put enough pressure to Congress to enact a statute about those issues. Thus, Wilderness Act was enacted in 1964 and settled the stage for reserving public lands as wilderness areas. This act defines wilderness as “a wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this chapter an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primitive character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which;

1- generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable,

2- has outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation,

3- has at least five thousand acres of lands or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition,

4- may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value" (16. U.S.C.A. 1132, b).

According to Senator Gorton, "it is vitally important to protect and preserve those areas in the State which have outstanding natural characteristics and high value as wilderness. Those areas should be preserved for the benefit of future generations at the same time. We realize the value and importance of the timber resources in our State and the concerns of the forest products industry on the uncertainty that has resulted from the RARE II (Roadless Area Review Study and Evaluation) process. For this reason, it is advisable to move expeditiously to release lands not appropriate for wilderness designation for other uses" (Cubbage et al., 1993, p. 128). As a politician, he seemed to support both wilderness and economic development, although wilderness philosophy denies an economic development in any particular area reserved as wilderness. In this sense, RARE means that in the late 1970's the USDA Forest Service conducted the second major review of potential national forest wilderness areas. According to the agency the less forest roads the more efficient nature protection. Therefore, more roadless areas should be preserved as wilderness. That is why it is called "Roadless Area Review and Evaluation II".

#### Deep Ecology:

Rosenbaum (2001, p. 32) defines the concept of deep ecology as "humans are, at best, only a part of nature and not necessarily the most significant part. They believe that all forms of life have an equal claim on existence, that social, political, and economic institutions should promote the ecological vitality of all created orders, that fundamental changes in national institutions and lifestyles are essential to preserve global ecological integrity. The fundamental political problem, from the deep ecologist's perspective, is that social institutions have become instruments for human exploitation of the created order for the primary benefits of human, often through technologies that threaten to destroy essential aspects of the natural order. Deep ecology inherently challenges the fundamental institutional structures and social values on which governments, economies, and societies presently constituted. Thus, between deep ecologists and what they call the "shallow ecology" of mainstream

environmentalism there abides a profound philosophical tension, nourished by antagonistic principles and a sharply disparate political imagination."

To Dryzek (1997), deep ecology is the most prevalent in the United States, although its origins are Norwegian. Arne Naess drew a contrast with the shallow or mainstream ecology movement. Deep ecology is associated with the radical wilderness group, Earth First!, and with the nature writers such as Edward Abbey and Barry Lopen (Naess, 1973).

According to Dewall and Sessions (1995), deep ecology was founded depending on two basic principles that are self-realization and biocentric equality. Self-realization means identification with a larger organic self beyond the individual person. The idea is to cultivate a deep consciousness and awareness of organic unity, of holistic nature of the ecological webs in which every individual enmeshed.

Along these lines, Warwick Fox (1990) describes a transpersonal ecology, a psychological condition of identification and care for the beings, ecosystems, and nature in its entirety. Deep ecologists consider species, populations, not just individual creatures. Clearly this transpersonal aspect of deep ecology resonates with eighteenth and nineteenth century romantic concepts of how people should think about the ecology. Biocentric equality means that no species, including the human species, is regarded as more valuable or in any sense higher than any other species.

The opposite of biocentric equality is anthropocentric differences. Anthropocentrism means that human should dominate to the nature. Every thing in the nature should serve to human beings. Nature is important as long as it serves human needs.

Deep ecologists are more concerned with wilderness than any other environmental concepts or problems. They are rarely interested in other environmental problems such as air pollution, water degradation etc. For example; urban congestion and agglomerations are outside of the deep ecological philosophy. Edward Abbey's, one of the most prominent deep ecologists, novel called the "Monkey Wrench Gang" measures road distances in terms of six-packs of beer the driver needs to consume. Hayduke, one of the heroes in the novel, throws the empty cans out of the window; if the environment has already been trashed by a road, a few beer cans make no essential difference.

Rain forest activist Pete Seed has said that "The basic idea of deep ecology is that humanity is only another member of biotic community...Other species have just as much importance and right to exist as we do." He also envisions "working toward a situation where 99 percent of the land would be turned back into wilderness. The whole world would be a national park spinning through space, and there would be small

enclaves of human beings whose satisfactions come not from materialism but from the love of nature and spirit" (Stone, 1989, p.60).

The concept of Gaia, the Greek Goddess "Mother Earth", is one aspect of deep ecology. According to James Lovelock, an early Gaia proponent, the Gaia hypothesis is that "the biosphere is a self-regulating entity with the capacity to keep our planet healthy by controlling the chemical and physical environment" (Odum, 1993, p. 34). To the deep ecologist, "the human species has not right to exert a disproportionate impact on Mother Earth. Even the notion of benevolent stewardship is distasteful, in that it implies human dominance over species and systems" (Cubbage et al., 1993, p. 238). It seems that deep ecology is much closer to preservationist idea than conservationism, because they both object economic development in some particular areas. This philosophy stresses that some particular areas should be prevented from economic development.

#### Radical Environmentalism:

Radical environmentalism is a kind of environmental movement that was first inspired by the failure of mainstream environmental organisations or national organisations against the government's anti-environmental policy particularly during the Reagan era. Instead of reconcilable policy, they preferred direct actions such as sit-ins, monkey-wrenching etc. against anti-environmental policy (Dunlap & Mertig, 1992), the street politics of civil disobedience, nonviolent demonstrations, and political obstruction (Rosenbaum, 1998).

To environmental radicals, "the harassment of commercial whaling vessels on the high seas by Green peace protest vessels, carefully arranged protests to attract media attention worldwide, can be better politics than the inhibited, reformist style of the mainstream organizations" (Rosenbaum, 2001).

Radical environmentalists were inspired by the philosophy of deep ecology movement in which biocentrism is the main idea of environmental thinking. According to radical environmentalists, human beings do not have superior status than the rest of the creatures and environment. They deny the idea that nature serves human beings (Dewall, 1995). They share the notion that all life is threatened by modern cultures. They want an essential cultural transformation that objects modern civilized society's political and economic institutions. "This preoccupation with transformational politics usually involves a belief in "bearing witness" by lifestyle changes emphasizing harmony with nature, conservation of resources, and cooperative living in reconstructed, ecologically sensitive societies" (Rosenbaum, 2001, p.33).

Deep ecology and radical environmentalists believe that the nature has its own spirit as human beings have. We, as human beings, realize that nature has its own

identity. It is more than something that has inalienable rights or inherent value from our expanding perspective of care (Light & Katz, 1996).

### Environmental Organizations

There are many people who are dealing with environmental issues. Some of them are involved environmental problems as individual bases, while the others are concerned with these kinds of problems as organized groups which are called "environmental organizations". Although these kinds of groups are many, there is not any particular definition that fits to define them. Many environmentalists present some characteristics of these groups without any definition. Environmental organizations function a kind of lobbying activity in political arena on behalf of environment rather than industry. Although each has its own characteristics, we can classify them into two main categories; mainstream environmental organizations and radical environmental organizations, depending on their ideology, political views, and tactics.

Mainstream environmental organizations such as Sierra Club, Audubon Society, first of all, do not reject economic development. They seem more reconcilable with industrial and political institutions. They use lobbying and try to influence policy makers on environmental issues. To them, environment is a kind of raw material source for industry and has to serve economic development. Wise use is the main principal for them.

In contrast, radical environmental groups such as Earth First!, Friends of the Earth, and Sea Shepherd Society have different ideologies than mainstream environmental organizations. They believe in the equality of life between nature and human beings, meaning that all creatures have equal right to survive and none of them dominate to the others. They use direct action against anti-environmental policy (Mitchell, et al., 2002; Rosenbaum, 2001; Cabbage et al., 1993).

### The Relationship Among These Concepts

Since the beginning of this article, the concepts of conservation, preservation, wilderness, biocentrism, anthropocentrism, deep ecology, radical environmentalism, mainstream environmental organizations, and radical environmental organizations have been discussed. When we look closer at the environmental movements, we can recognize two main movements; conservation and preservation.

Conservationists believe that the environment can be protected while it is also used as a source of raw materials for industry. They support "wise use" principle which means that environment can be better protected by economic and political planning without overexploiting it. They do not deny modern economic society. Their main policy is reconcilable with government and policy makers to solve environmental

problems. They do not want to fight, protest etc. against any anti-environmental policy action. Depending on this philosophy, national forests were established to produce enough raw materials for industry. Anthropocentrism is a better idea for a conservationist, accordingly, human being first, nature is second in ranking.

Mainstream environmental organizations accepted conservationist philosophy that environment needs to be protected depending on economic considerations and for future generations. They believe that environmental problems can be solved by working policy side by side. The best tactics is to convince the policy makers to solve conflicts. In this sense, they seem a kind of enforcement agencies of conservationist philosophy.

In contrast, preservationist philosophy seek to protect the environment, the nature, and habitat for their own sake, not on behalf of human species. To enforce this philosophy, they established National Park System and Wilderness Area. Deep ecology is a kind of preservationism, but more radical than early preservationist movement. Deep ecologists support biocentric thought for environmental protection. They deny economic development and civilization as long as they contradict ecological sustainability. They do not accept the idea that human is above and over the other creatures and the environment. Wilderness is one of the essential parts of preservationist thinking. They consider the nature as of equal importance as human beings. Also, radical environmental groups support preservationist philosophy. They were inspired by deep ecology in that they consider that the nature has its own spirit like human beings.

#### Current Situation

Currently these two main philosophies exist to some extent. They debate and fight each other in several environmental conflicts. For instance; the Lake Alma case in Georgia is a unique example for this kind of conflict. When the city council decided to construct a dam on Lake Alma in Bacon County for recreational purposes, some radical environmentalists fought against that construction activity, but failed stopping the construction of the reservoir. In this case, conservationists supported the reservoir dam construction. They believe that this kind of development may help environmental protection and society's necessities, while radical groups protested the reservoir construction ending total failure (Turner, 1989).

Since economic growth is continuing, conservationist idea seems to dominate on preservationism and they seem also protecting the environment better than preservationism. For example; it was estimated in 1920 that the U.S. would have run out of forests within the following 25 years. Now, by 1990s, the forest coverage is more than 70 years ago (Cubbage et al., 1993). Moreover, it is quite easy to see that the developed world has more clear and better protected environment than the developing world where the environmental degradation is more severe and irreversible. On the other hand such an economic development costs the human beings very much, which

means that new and serious environmental dangers are upcoming. We can see some more environmental degradations that we may regret pursuing economic development such as Mayans<sup>1</sup>.

### Conclusion

The struggle between economic development and environmental protection seems to continue in the future. Although preservationists raise the density of their movement against anti-environmental action and policies, the industrial development keeps continuing. Conservationist and preservationist philosophies can still dominate environmental movement. Although there may be some extreme movements, they may moderate themselves and come closer to these two main philosophies; conservationism and preservationism.

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<sup>1</sup> According to a theory, they were extinguished because of severe environmental destruction.

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