



**The Concepts of "Nature and Environment"
In Islamic and European Paradigms:
Theoretical and Empirical Framework**

Master's Degree in Euro Mediterranean Studies

By: Lobna Fouad Hegazy

Under The Supervision Of

**Dr. Amany Masoud
Assistant Professor of Political Science**

**Faculty of Economics and Political Science
Cairo University**

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DEDICATION

*Dedicated To All
Nature's Lovers*

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ABBREVIATIONS:

ASSIs	Areas of Scientific Interest
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CLC	Convention on Civil Liability
COP	Copenhagen Accord
DGCD	Directorate General of Cooperation for Development
DOE	Iranian Department of Environment
EAD	Environment Agency- Abu Dhabi
EAP	Environmental Action Program
EAs	Environmental Assessments
EC	European Commission
ECO	Environmental Citizens' Organization
EEA	European Environmental Agency
EEAA	Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency
EEB	European Environmental Bureau
EEC	Environmental Emergencies Centre
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EISs	Environmental Impact Statements
ELF	Environmental Life Force
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EP	European Parliament
ERWDA	Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency
ESEH	European Society for Environmental History
EU	European Union

FHS	Forest History Society
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organization
LDC	Less Developed Countries
LLMC	Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims
MCE	Ministerial Committee on the Environment
MEPA	Environmental Protection Administration
MNRs	Marine Nature Reserves
MSEA	Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs
NCWCD	National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development
NDTF	Natural Disaster Task Force
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NGO's	Non Governmental Organizations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
PIC	Prior Informed Consent
REACH	Registration, Evaluation and Authorization of Chemicals
SSSIs	Special Scientific Interest
UAE	United Arab of Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICE	Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe
USA	United States American

Chapter One

1. Introduction

Nowadays, Environmental Degradation is deterioration of environment through depletion of natural resources, destruction of ecosystems and extinction of wildlife. Environmental degradation is result of the dynamic inter play of socio-economic, institutional and technological activities. Environmental changes may be driven by many factors including economic growth, population growth, urbanization, intensification of agriculture, and rising energy use. However, poverty still remains a problem at the root of several environmental problems. So, the environmental degradation is a result of over-development and not underdevelopment since the environmental degradation had been the cause of Humankind exploitation regarding the natural resources for development, and industrial revolution. Also a way for countries' boom is to get the most advanced technology without paying any attention to natural resources. The methods and the pace that countries seek to develop and improve puts pressure on the biophysical limits of the globe that lead to unsustainability in the globe causing environmental degradation and global warming. Still, what is the major cause of this?! Here, a simple analysis is that historically the development of Europe and America, which represents major part of the Western culture, is built on underdevelopment of Asia and Africa, which is the Islamic culture due to colonialism. The environmental degradation is due to a new way of life in which the moderns of the West have chosen and now the moderns of the non-West want to mimic without giving it much thought of its consequences to human ecology. Moreover, material development and pursuit of materialism are due to a historical shift in the

worldview of the European societies. In this worldview, the modern order was built on the cadaver of Christianity and disdain for religion. Along with jettisoning Christianity, the Christian view of nature also had to go, which was substituted by an evolutionist, materialist and mechanical view of nature. The world had shifted from spiritual to materialistic view. The Western paradigm had always appeared as dominant world in modernity economically, and technologically. On the other hand, the Muslim world is still economically and militarily backward, but ecologically; in terms of emissions and toxic waste, they are most environment friendly; although they are recipients of toxic waste from the West, which does not want to dispose on their soil. So, in the nutshell, in early modernism, Islam and Muslims seems as impediments on progress paths. Now, the whole ideology of progress has gone bust because of ecological disasters around the world; accordingly, the world has begun to think differently regarding the modernism development that came out of the West, either in its communist form, which imploded from inside or its capitalistic form. As a result, the West turned its back against religion and developed a new philosophy including its view of nature, by which its concomitant social, economic and political forms are directly responsible for the environmental disasters and global warming. Muslims, on the other hand, have borne the brunt of the West to hold on to religion which is a backward form of human consciousness. Muslims; however, stayed more faithful to their religious ideals more than any other religious community. Even if they talked of reform, they could only go so far and not change their quintessential views on nature, which in their worldview was inseparable from God and hence; its sanctity. Recently, the theology of ecology represents gradual recognition of traditions importance such as Islam, and Christianity.

Due to the erroneous conception of nature and secularization of nature, modern Western world had directed to materialism, which led to hyper development and environmental disaster. Therefore, the sacred concept of Nature had been eroded and replaced by environment concept, which amplifies the materialistic way of thinking and behaving in the modern world. However, due to the environmental degradation, pollution, global warming and climate changes appeared recently in the universe whether it is a Muslim or Western worlds. Modern thinkers had been working to find out many solutions and methods to save nature. Consequently, the thesis is discussing the historical and original concept of nature in both Islamic and Western paradigms to be able to differentiate between nature and environment concepts and how the evolution had took place. Furthermore, it asserts that the modern thinkers started over to realize nature as a gift from Allah, so Man should not exploit for his own interests. Muslim scholars had been faithful to their view of nature that emanates from their scriptures and tradition since they are bound to divine concept of nature; as well as some Western Philosophers who had interrelated the concept of nature to Divine order in Christianity.

Many environmental movements were established in the Western world had called to pay attention to natural resources that had been profoundly abused, which led Muslim world get back to Allah's law and regulations, which is the Holy Quran to find out that the Holy Quran stated many verses regarding the Nature and its benefit for Man, and how Man should treat it under Divine orders.

1.1 Literature Review

There are many books, articles and studies that discussed Enrolment issue and its relation to European Union and its agreements, while, others had discussed Nature philosophically only. So, there were rare studies that had combined the historical, philosophical concept of nature and its evolution to environment and the environmental degradation and its agreements to protect environment in both Islamic and Western paradigms, and mutually agree on one cause to save the environment.

1- Topics discussed the European Union and Environmental degradation Forms

Gabriel, Sigmar. “Environment” The council of The European Union. Press Release. Press 25. 20 Feb. 2007. Brussels.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/envir/92864.pdf>

This article discusses the attempts of the European Union to examine the reasons behind the environmental degradation and spread awareness for the global demand for energy sources throughout their council formation to debate some of the environmental problems. So, it discusses the resources in the environment and their effectiveness such as the climate change, and global warming impacts such as heat waves, drought, flood and heavy solid, and greenhouse gas effects.

Carl, M P. “DG Environment: Annual Management Plan” European Commission Directorate- General Environment. 2007.

<http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/environment/pdf/management_plan_2009.pdf>

This article is highlighting the idea of European Union’s commission to develop and implement environmental policies to accomplish, contribute and achieve the long term objectives of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentration in

the atmosphere to decline the biodiversity effect and provide an environment with less pollution and healthy for the Man.

Schiessler, Nora et Thorpe, Ed et Jones, Wendy et Philips, Leigh. “Life and Waste Recycling.” European Commission. 2007. Belgium.

<<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/lifefocus/documents/recycling.pdf>>

The article defines the different types of the wastes and how can we reuse these wastes by recycling production to avoid the pollution and to benefit the maximum use of these wastes in beneficial methods to generate energy and to be used in other forms of the products. It states that the Waste represents an enormous loss of resources in the form of both material and energy, in which the management waste creates environmental damages. Therefore, there should be solutions for these wastes to reform them in form of other products to reduce the pollution and damage to the environment.

2-Topics discussed the Nature from philosophical perspective

Roberts, D. Lawrence. “Approaches to Nature in the Middle East.” Center for Medieval& Early Renaissance Studies. State University of New York. Binghamton, New York. 1982.

This book provides the view of a culture on the topic of nature by providing insights about the way people view themselves in relation to the universe; medieval; view of nature by manifesting beliefs about the relation of nature to Allah and Man. The idea of the Nature in the medieval era was represented in their visual arts, artists’ ideas and attitudes towards the nature. So, the book views the nature from the perspectives of the philosophical and artistic work.

Torrance, John. "The Concept of Nature" Clarendon Press. 1992.

The book is presenting the view of different philosophers in various eras about the concept of Nature and how each philosopher defines the concept of Nature based on the era and the specified time period. It is specified in the time era of the Greek Antiquity, Middle Ages, Revolution of the seventeenth century, Darwin's definition of Nature and Modern era. However, it does not compare the concept of Nature in all eras, but it presents each on its own era.

3-Studies discussed the Environmental issues from different perspectives

Hassan, Fatma Ahmed. "The International Agreements for Protecting Environment and its Effects on the Exports of the Organization for petroleum Export countries (OPEC)." Cairo University. Faculty of Economic and Political Science. M.Sc. Thesis in Economics. Cairo. 2006.200 Page.

The thesis study examines the theme of International conventions to protect the environment and its impact on the exports of the organization of OPEC in the use of oil. It responds to the challenges of OPEC policies with a view to maintain market stability and rates of production prices. Thus, it discussed the environment through environmental conventions and its relation to the Petroleum sector.

Sheta, Ahmed Adel. "Environment protection in World Trade Organization Agreements." Cairo University. Faculty of Economic and Political Science. M.Sc. Thesis in Economics. Cairo. 2005. 250 Page.

The thesis study aimed at studying Environmental protection within the framework of WTO agreements. It discussed to what extent did the agreements of the WTO reconciliation between the goals of liberating international trade and protect the environment. It argues that the economic growth would be reached if there is protection of Environment. Thus, it is related specifically with World Trade Organization and its relation to the environmental protection.

Mohammed, Nehad Anwer Sayed. “Role of the United Nations Environment Program in Enhancing International Environment Protection.” Cairo University. Faculty of Economic and Political Science. M.Sc. Thesis in Political Science. Cairo. 2009. 309 Page.

The thesis study highlights the role of the United Nations Environment program in enhancing international environment protection through clarifying refuting and evaluating its role in protecting the environment with reason of exacerbation of environmental problems, which is the reason for the international tension, and increase the interdependence between economic development and environmental development, and limited environmental resources for escalating human needs and inadequate national efforts in the area of environmental protection given the cross border Nature of environmental problem. Thus, its argument is the growing role of the United Nation environmental program in protecting the environment, which is limited to the United Nations role in environment.

El Sayed, Mohamed Zaky Aly. “Dimensions of Sustainable development, case study: Environmental Dimension in the Egyptian Economy.” Cairo University. Faculty of Economic and Political Science. Cairo. M.Sc. Thesis in Economics. 2000. 270 Page.

The thesis study explores the development theory and its relation to the dimension of growth and development that had led to a lot of economic, social and environmental problems. So, it discusses one of the reasons for the lacking behind the economic and social development is the ignorance of human towards environmental dimensions. Thus, it focuses on the social and economic growth and its relation to the environment.