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# Climate change, capitalism and eco-socialism

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## *Introduction*

Climate change is considered by the vast majority of scientists to be the most problematic issue that humanity will ever face. The conditions leading to a possible catastrophic ending have been studied for a long period of time and are all considered to be possible events in the next few decades, thus eradicating any hope for our generations to flourish. Meanwhile, the response from the political and economic sectors is just a mere consideration of the problem. In some cases, there is also the denial of climate change, which entails a major difficulty in tackling climate change per se. Even though this notable impediment to tackling climate change will not be evaluated, it will to some extent be considered indirectly in the section on democratic planning and advertisement. The dissertation has the objective of analysing and evaluating climate change to ultimately propose the relevance of this matter. Some consider climate change to be not that important and that economic matters have superiority. Nonetheless, this can be easily dismissed through data and scientific papers that state the relevance of climate change. The importance of the aforementioned climate change is also confirmed by the vast majority of scientists, who have, on numerous occasions, stressed the urgency to act and avoid any further setbacks from an environmental perspective. Capitalism is subsequently taken into consideration and analysed both from a theoretical and a philosophical perspective. Nonetheless, the various benefits are all considered and taken into consideration. Hence, one may also say that in reality, we may be able to do something through our (our is referred to humanity) resources and technologies, thanks also to the capitalist system. Even though this claim may receive some objections if one considers that these outstanding amounts of resources are there because exploitation was used to acquire them. In juxtaposition, capitalism will also receive some criticism since it is undeniable that exploitation and the general approach to life are not suited for climate change. Considering that climate change has seen major setbacks since the Second World War, which correspond to the establishment of many power relations, for instance, the hegemony of the US, and the ancestral institutions which led to the creation of the European Union and other global institutions such as the IMF. By way of example, the International Monetary Fund, allowed the spread of capitalism. It is worth mentioning that a reflection on the ethical-political matter of climate change was proposed.

Therefore, it is evaluated that a new theory must emerge or that reforms have to be implemented in order to change the catastrophic course of events. Yet, it is undeniable that maintaining our modern-day capitalism would lead to the exacerbation of climate change. Relating to this, eco-socialism is proposed. The framework of the theory and the in-depth evaluation of the eco-socialism framework are done. This, of course, is followed by a brief introduction of the eco-socialists' proposal, which is subsequently followed by an evaluation of what eco-socialism is, and that question is fully answered thanks to the literature. One of the main propositions of Michael Löwy is fully analysed and advocated for, due to the fact of the possible positive outcomes it can cause in the socio-political context of democratic countries. However, the limitations are comprehensively considered, and the author attempted to answer those objections. In the following sections advertising is proposed as a way to deal with climate change and it is concluded with a general consideration

of whether eco-socialism is a possible solution to the capitalist ecological crisis. A conclusion is followed, considering what has been stated, thus providing a general overview of what has been advanced. Furthermore, some final considerations for the thesis are suggested.

Lastly, the relevance of climate change is analysed and fully stated. Moreover, capitalism is extensively analysed, both considering the advantages and the criticisms. Of course, capitalism has both, and the seriousness of climate change is something that allows the criticisms to take over the benefits. In fact, eco-socialism is proposed as a solution, even though it will be analysed in the last part of the dissertation to ascertain if it can really be considered as such.

## *Chapter 1 Why global warming is an issue that needs the utmost attention?*

This chapter will consider the question "Why global warming is an issue that needs the utmost attention?". It is crucial to consider that scientific research produced many replies to this question. To be more precise, as NASA suggested in 1860, the physicist John Tyndall acknowledged the fact that climatic changes could result from changes in atmospheric composition. Further developments were made in 1896 with Svante Arrhenius who predicted that "*changes in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels could substantially alter the surface temperature through the greenhouse effect*" (NASA, 2022). It is known that global warming is extremely dangerous and considering the various research and studies made throughout the 19th century onwards, one may also ask why nothing was done to change this catastrophic course of events. The complexity of this question may need an evaluation that corresponds to another dissertation which this thesis will not tackle, even though one may assume some hypotheses. For instance, the nature of mankind or its socio-political conditions and context may have led to the exploitation and overconsumption of goods. Being a fundamental milestone in the implementation of a capitalistic doctrine by which the well-being in the short term is preferred over the well-being of future generations. Yet, to reply to the aforementioned question, "Why global warming is an issue that needs the utmost attention?", we may consider that as the temperature of our planet raises, the number of extreme meteorological phenomena increases exponentially. Examples of extreme weather may be rainstorms, droughts, cyclones, heat waves, thunderstorms, tornadoes, lightning, hail, destructive winds, ocean acidification, wildfires, or the increase in sea levels. Moreover, sea levels are rising dangerously, having the potential to swallow islands and coastal areas, thus destroying the economy but more importantly the lives of individuals, animals, and vegetation. Crucial to consider is that climate change is significantly dangerous also because it directly threatens the most vulnerable individuals. Children and elders are a vivid example, not to mention, the poor, being at risk especially if unable to afford new challenges brought about by the climate.

Noteworthy is also the pollution of the air individuals breathe. The WHO, World Health Organization, declares that "*Air pollution is contamination of the indoor or outdoor environment by any chemical, physical or biological agent that modifies the natural characteristics of the atmosphere*" (World Health Organization, 2023). The causes can be attributed to industrial facilities, forest fires, the usage of motor vehicles and household consumption devices. Additionally, the principal pollutants that endanger the vast majority of public health are ozone, carbon monoxide, and sulphur dioxide, being the major causes of diseases in the respiratory system. The World Health Organization evaluated that almost the whole global population, 99%, live in a context in which the quality of the air exceeds the WHO guidelines limits. The countries suffering the most from the worst air quality are low-income countries and middle-income countries. The same intergovernmental organization (WHO) proposed that an effective solution is policies aimed at reducing air pollution. For the reason being, it impacts positively the general overall health as well as the precious climate.

Regarding, the sea level rise, one shall consider that a warmer climate will inevitably cause the melting of different ice caps, for instance, the ones of Greenland and Antarctica, which will eventually lead to many cities throughout the globe being swallowed by the sea or 'simply' flooded. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration considered, *“the planet continued its warming trend in 2022, with last year ranking as the sixth-warmest year on record since 1880, according to an analysis by scientists from NOAA’s National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI)”* (NOAA, 2023). As the NOAA consider *“Earth’s average land and ocean surface temperature in 2022 was 1.55 degrees F (0.86 of a degree C) above the 20th-century average of 57.0 degrees F (13.9 degrees C) — the sixth highest among all years in the 1880-2022 record* (NOAA, 2023). Furthermore, one shall also consider that since 1977, the year 2022 has been the 46th consecutive year having global temperatures rising above the average of those from the 20th century. In addition, *“the 10-warmest years on record have all occurred since 2010, with the last nine years (2014-2022) among the 10-warmest years”* (NOAA, 2023). As the NOAA considered, the Northern Hemisphere surface temperature reached sixth place being the warmest in the 143-year record with an outstanding 1.98 degrees Fahrenheit, converted to Celsius, a surplus of 1.10 degrees C. Differently, the Southern Hemisphere witnessed an increase in the surface temperature with a 1.10 degrees F or 0.61 degrees C above the average. These are all data coming from the NOAA, that provide us with a clear picture of which the planet earth is burning down, leading to disastrous consequences that will eventually be irreversible for our current and future generation. Extreme weather conditions are also tremendously expensive in economic terms and in terms of lives lost. Solely in 2022, the US experienced various extreme weather conditions that led to a death toll of *“474 people”* (*Record Drought Gripped Much of the U.S. in 2022*, 2023). As the NOAA assessed, only in the same year (2022), the 18 events which took place throughout American soil caused \$165.0 billion in damages surpassing the cost of extreme weather conditions in 2021, amounting to \$155.3 billion. NOAA considered the already passed year *“the third most costly year on record, only behind 2017 and 2005; all inflation-adjusted to 2022 dollars”* (*Record Drought Gripped Much of the U.S. in 2022*, 2023).

Climate change has also impacted the production of food and the consumption related to it. As EPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency) considered that *“Changes in the frequency and severity of droughts and floods could pose challenges for farmers and ranchers and threaten food safety.”* (Climate Impacts on Agriculture and Food Supply | Climate Change Impacts | US EPA, 2016) This vital food security if threatened would lead to an increase in the general cost of bread, milk, eggs, beef and so on. In fact, new *“technologies”* are initiating to evolve, from the vegan option to the insects having different spillover effects: firstly, the decreased environmental impact and secondly, the drastic reduction in the number of animals killed. Since a moral human being shall always consider the consequence of his/her actions hence, it would unquestionably be reassuring that millions of animals are saved from corporations which would have transformed that meat into a mixture of chemicals rendering the food addictive. A vivid example is fast food. Not to mention that all the food consumed is traded in a global market, which is home to speculation,

exploitation, and profit. Usually, the famine and thirst of one or more individuals imply a growth in some point percentage in the acquisition and sale of these commodities by a few individuals. Nevertheless, it becomes far more problematic if one considers that the amount of arable land is decreasing while the number of individuals on this planet is increasing steadily. Despite this tragic news, the profiting possibility of this situation is enormous and if capitalism is objectively evaluated, its structure and dogmas are not suitable for the current ecological crisis. The reason is that those tragic and catastrophic events signify desperation and sorrow for some individuals, while for few others it means just profit. Recalling some contemporary occurrences, especially the Sars Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukrainian war, various companies and single individuals have profited from these events in which many are scarred forever or even worse have lost their lives. Nonetheless, the capitalist's impact on the environment will be considered and evaluated in the following chapter.

Nevertheless, there is another massive issue, overpopulation. The United Nations considered *“The world’s population is more than three times larger than it was in the mid-twentieth century. The global human population reached 8.0 billion in mid-November 2022 from an estimated 2.5 billion people in 1950, adding 1 billion people since 2010 and 2 billion since 1998”* (United Nations, 2022)., it further adds that *“the world’s population is expected to increase by nearly 2 billion persons in the next 30 years, from the current 8 billion to 9.7 billion in 2050 and could peak at nearly 10.4 billion in the mid-2080s”* (United Nations, 2022). The main causes of this exponential growth, assessed by the United Nations, are the overall increase in the average life lived by an individual throughout the globe, the increasing number of people who survives the reproductive age and increasing urbanization. Even though it can be considered that these are excellent news, the overall increase in the well-being around the planet is simultaneously a dangerous situation, since the risk of overpopulation is evermore present and we are currently living in this crisis, without doing anything. To avoid the total exhaustion of the resources that the planet has it is crucial to reduce the trend of people living on this planet since as the number of individuals increases, so does the demand for food, shelter, medicine, and everything they need. So, this may be avoided if developing countries are put into place programs which share awareness on the impact of bearing a child. Developing countries are only considered because the fertility of developed countries has seen a significant reduction in the number of children born each year. Not by chance, the United Nations considered that *“fertility in all European countries is now below the level required for full replacement of the population in the long run (around 2.1 children per woman)”* (United Nations, 2022).

As mentioned above, also ocean's health is put at risk. Ocean's acidity has increased by 26% respect to 1990. NOAA considered, *“ocean acidification is already impacting many ocean species, especially organisms like oysters and corals that make hard shells and skeletons by combining calcium and carbonate from seawater.”* (NOAA, 2020). Additionally, the Governmental Agency considered another crucial fact to take into consideration, which is, *“as ocean acidification increases, available carbonate ions (CO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup>) bond with excess hydrogen, resulting in fewer carbonate ions available for calcifying organisms to build and*

*maintain their shells, skeletons, and other calcium carbonate structures.*” (NOAA, 2020). As a result, *“if the pH gets too low, shells and skeletons can even begin to dissolve”* (NOAA, 2020), changes in the overall chemistry of the ocean can also affect organisms which do not require any calcification process, for instance, some fish have decreased capacities in detecting predators as it increases the acidity of the water. Thus, creating more and more imbalances in the ecosystem.

Moreover, heatwaves are another growing problem that is becoming seriously dangerous since they are the most dangerous natural hazards. The problem is that their effect has disregarded the fact that they are not immediate. The World Health Organization stated, *“from 1998-2017, more than 166 000 people died due to heatwaves [...] between 2000 and 2016, the number of people exposed to heatwaves increased by around 125 million”* (World Health Organisation, 2022). This dangerous phenomenon will occur more often due to climate change leading to a spillover effect impacting the wellbeing of people, disrupted by the heatwaves since it has a notable influence on health services and emergency services. Extreme heat can also lead to crop failure and loss of livestock. A danger for both the life of citizens and its economy. Heatwaves can also be related to another worrying phenomenon, wildfires. As the European Union evaluated in the JRC TECHNICAL REPORT on *“Forest Fires in Europe, Middle East and North Africa 2021”* it is considered that *“over 5 500 km<sup>2</sup> of land were burned in 2021 – more than twice the size of Luxembourg”* (European Commission, 2021). and that the effect is not influencing just Europe but also nearby countries in the Mediterranean region, which caused an important number of damages and human casualties. The year 2022 was considered the *“year with the highest number of fires since 2006 - in addition to what is expected to be recorded as the most severe drought in Europe in 500 years”* (European Commission, 2021). If it is taken into consideration the specific case of Italy, the report considered that again *“at the National level, the number of forest fires and burn scar area in 2021 were higher than the previous year: +23.1% in terms of the number of fires, +273% in terms of burnt area. The average area per fire more than doubled from 11.4 ha to 25.4 ha.”* (European Commission, 2021). In Sicily instead, temperatures reached 48 degrees Celsius. Regarding temperatures, *“2021 was characterized by an anomaly of +0.23 degrees compared to the 1961-1990 period”* (European Commission, 2021)., and the overall rainfall in the peninsula decreased by 7%.

Thereafter, comprehending why climate change is a serious issue and why it is vital to act upon it, the present dissertation will focus on *“Capitalism’s framework and its consequences on the climate”*.



## Chapter 2 Capitalism's framework and its consequences on the climate

### 2.1 Capitalism definition and framework

Nowadays, in most of the Western world, capitalism has spread thoroughly, and it can be traced back to the notorious Scottish economist and philosopher, Adam Smith. He proposed an idea which may provide a general overview of the theoretical framework of capitalism. He proposed that *“It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.”* (Smith & Icarus, 2021). In this notion, the pillar of capitalism is self-interest, rather than humanity or benevolence, which is disregarded for the sake of self-love. The abovementioned economist also considered that society would benefit if individuals would pursue their self-interest. In his words, *“he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it.”* (Smith & Icarus, 2021). So, from this perspective, men acting in their self-interest would indirectly pursue and reach the interests of society. A practical example of this idea may be that entrepreneurs would prefer a green business, spending their resources on research and development to find ways to make the business greener, which is what the market demands. But as will be evaluated in the following subchapter, it is certainly not the case, where the market has no power in the decision-making of the firms since they are themselves the market. Yet, we shall consider a more modern definition of capitalism, starting with the International Monetary Fund, which considered capitalism to be an *“economic system in which private actors own and control property in accord with their interests, and demand and supply freely set prices in markets in a way that can serve the best interests of society.”* (Jahan & Mahmud, 2015). Hereafter, this confirms the previous idea of self-love of Adam Smith, with the only difference being the interest towards the society which is now considered. A notable improvement of the previous definition, surely one can say. The IMF also adds that *“the essential feature of capitalism is the motive to make profit”* (Jahan & Mahmud, 2015), however this motive to make profit without private property would be inefficient. To tell the truth, private property is crucial, otherwise, the profit coming from a specific asset would not reach the owner, and thus, he/she would not be motivated to continue his/her work. Secondly, self-interest comes per se that, it is an egoistic conception of society where the personal demand and will of one person, or a small group of people affected directly or indirectly the entire system, which is of course formed by the remaining people. The International Monetary further listed some pillars of the abovementioned economic thought. The proposed pillars are private property, self-interest, competition, a market mechanism, freedom to choose and the limited role of government. Private property, as already mentioned, allows people to own something which may range from land, animals, and houses and thus be the owner of that asset, consequently, being able to profit from that asset for the sake of self-interest. Yet, he/she must consider the competition between actors, providing

ways to be cost-effective and improve quality, so having a perpetual fight to have a better product or outcome which will lead to people choosing your products or services. The market mechanism is also fundamental since prices are determined in a decentralized way thanks to every single interaction between the buyer and the seller. Freedom to choose is as well crucial the same International Monetary Fund considered it to be fundamental since it would allow the market to be managed with the freedom to choose where “*dissatisfied customers can buy different products, investors can pursue more lucrative ventures, workers can leave their jobs for better pay*” (Jahan & Mahmud, 2015), thus increasing the overall quality of the system. Lastly, the government has no role from an economic perspective and its only purpose is to grant and protect the rights of citizens and allow the proper functioning of markets.

Capitalism, however, is not a static economic policy, but it is interchangeable and is continuously improving itself, able to maintain its hegemonic position. There are different types of capitalism, those found in a liberal market economy and those of a coordinated market: the former is similar to the economic system of the United Kingdom and the United States, where the laissez-faire ideology is dominant while the coordinated market economies can be Japan or Germany, in which unions or other non-market institutions cooperate.

A definition of capitalism may also be crucial in the understanding of what is capitalism, as the Cambridge Dictionary defines it as the “*economic, political, and social system that is based on property, business, and industry being privately owned, and is directed towards making the greatest possible profits for private people and organizations.*” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020) This provides a general overview of the definition of capitalism but if one shall provide a more in-depth analysis, the connotation of Hodgson is the most appropriate, which considers that capitalism has six fundamental features which characterize it from the other ideology. “*A legal system supporting widespread individual rights and liberties to own, buy, and sell private property*” (Hodgson, 2015) secondly, a “*widespread commodity exchange and markets involving money*” (Hodgson, 2015) and a “*widespread private ownership of the means of production by firms producing goods or services for sale in the pursuit of profit*” (Hodgson, 2015). In addition, it is crucial that “*much of production organized separately and apart from the home and family*” (Hodgson, 2015). A “*widespread wage labor and employment contracts*” (Hodgson, 2015), and lastly, “*a developed financial system with banking institutions, the widespread use of credit with property as collateral, and the selling of debt.*” (Hodgson, 2015) This is also in line with what Weber considered in “*The Spirit of Capitalism*” which considered that “*man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life.*” (Weber, 2005). Weber’s consideration of men aligns perfectly with the way capitalism is structured, especially with the noteworthy attention provided by capitalism towards self-interest. Capitalism nowadays became something which men are born into it, presenting itself “*as an unalterable order of things in which he must live*” (Weber, 2005). Surely, the nature of mankind fits perfectly with the individualistic nature of capitalism and the consideration of the self, which as we recall, will indirectly benefit society. In addition, “*the profit motive that not only gives capitalism its coherence as an abstract system but also explains its dynamism*” (Bowles, 2014). Capitalism,

differently from any other economic theory, was able to be both coherent at the theoretical and practical level, especially considering how time has changed in the last years and the way capitalism adapted to this ever-changing environment. However, one may also question why this theory was so successful in North America, like the United States of America or Canada, or Europe, while in other parts of the world, it did not. This lies *“according to Weber, Protestantism encouraged its followers to engage in worldly affairs and emphasized self-discipline and rationalism. This ethic allowed capitalism, with its emphasis on accumulation for its own sake and its restless pursuit of profit-making opportunities”* (Bowles, 2014). Yet, one may also trace the history of capitalism to when for religious purposes one had to pay for indulgences to be saved or to go to heaven. Even though, it was later discovered that indulgence was used for the Catholic Church’s businesses, it is, fundamental to note that the propensity to work and to make a profit was also to some extent coerced on those people who believed that if they paid more, they would spend less time in purgatory or going directly in heaven. Even though one may question the morality of this act, it inevitably allowed the creation of a shared collective ideology to work more and gain more, being a vital pillar of capitalism. Yet it must be considered that it is difficult to date exactly when capitalism was born since, *“for some writers, the existence of markets indicates that a capitalist world system stretches back a long way, while for others the more recent emergence of labour markets suggests that capitalism proper emerged during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.”* (Bowles, 2014).

Capitalism, nevertheless, came also to terms with the criticism it has received, especially in the last years. For instance, capitalism recognized the importance of the state and how it is a fundamental actor in allowing the well-functioning of capitalism. Different from the previous conception of the state, which is considered to be the source of all evils. For now, *“the state is needed after a certain point to enable capitalism to flourish because rules and an enforcer of those rules are needed.”* (Bowles, 2014). This goes together with the previous definition provided, which capitalism needs a legal system to work. These definitions share a general overview of the ideology, enabling us to better understand the essence of capitalism. Nonetheless, the state shall not be an active participant *“rather the state plays the role of referee, ensuring that there is fair competition between contestants.”* (Bowles, 2014). Nevertheless, this may be contested that the state is also corrupted by capitalism, through lobbies influencing the decision and the role of the State. But it will be evaluated later. The limited presence of the State is caused by the idea that the markets are self-adjusting and that any *“imbalance between supply and demand – is restored through the change in price.”* (Bowles, 2014). The market in this narrative is a fundamental actor ensuring a long-lasting equilibrium between the actors, while the government are the cause of some economic problems, such as unemployment or inflation which is argued that they are *“the result of destabilizing government policies: excess money creation in the case of inflation, and institutional frictions such as minimum wages and pro-trade union bargaining legislation in the case of unemployment”* (Bowles, 2014). So, the market should be regulated as little as possible to ensure the equilibrium between the actors involved. Nevertheless, despite the various global financial crisis the idea of

the self-adjusting market is still strong and accepted, even though, now, “*a bit more regulation of financial markets is now accepted as needed.*” (Bowles, 2014).

Consequently, having understood the definition of capitalism and its framework, this dissertation will focus on capitalism’s benefits.

## 2.2 *Benefits of capitalism*

After the definition of capitalism is understood and its framework is also analysed, it is now crucial to provide some data on the benefit of this ideology. As one can imagine, capitalism has led to an exponential increase in wealth, if we consider the chart, from “Our World in Data”, below the difference is outstanding. The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita in the US increased exponentially, and we know that the United States is the homeland of the laissez-faire ideology. The situation is different in countries like China, where a mixed form of capitalism interlinked with the Chinese Communist Party is formed. The other European countries, which are also capitalist, however, have a lower GDP per capita. These two-continent differences were caused by the different socio-political landscapes and by the diverse cultures. Notable to mention is the differences in attitudes in the consideration of the status of workers between the various European countries, which of course have some divergences, but they do share more “compassion” towards the workers in respect to the United States of America. It is also noteworthy to note the differences in the role of the state, in the American one there, is not a central form of government, while generally in the European states, more centralized states are found. All variables considered; capitalism can be regarded as the ultimate reason the US has the highest GDP per capita, and the European countries follow, with the other non-democratic states having the lowest GDP per capita.

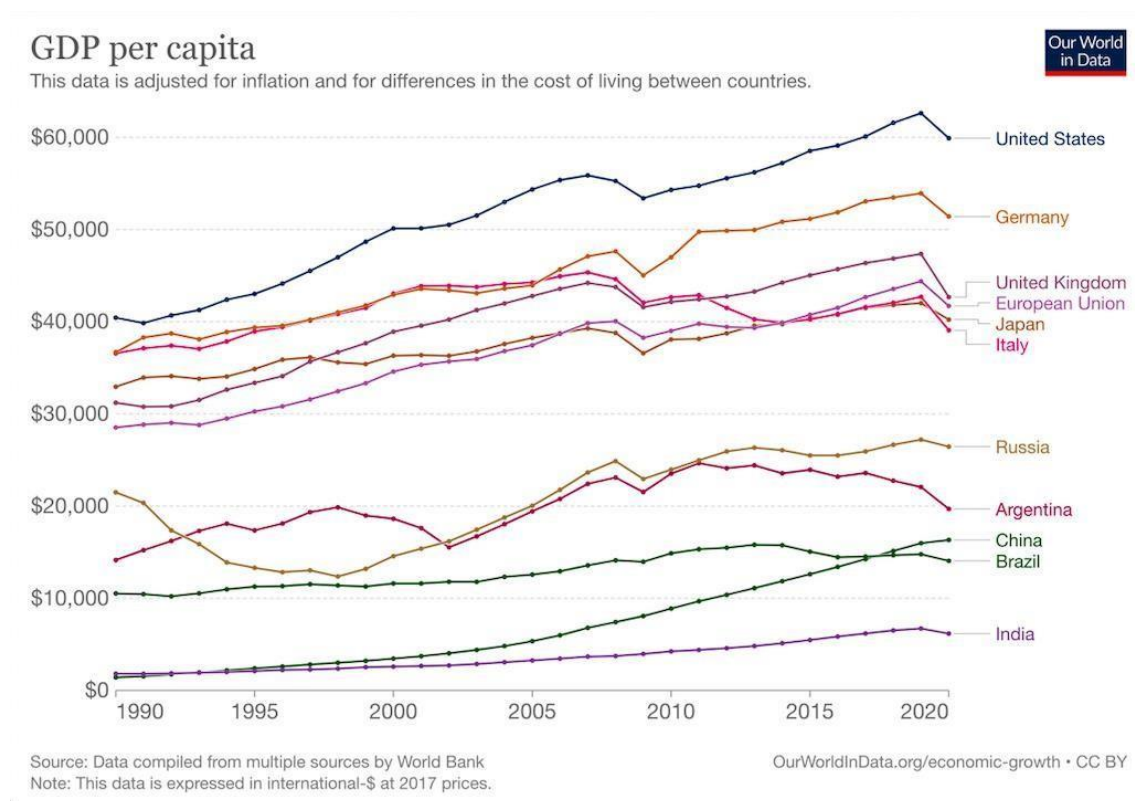


Figure 1 (Our World in Data, 2023)

Another variable which helps us understand the advantages of capitalism is life expectancy. If we take into consideration the graph below, it is common sense to agree that life expectancy increased drastically, especially in the last century. Luckily, in this context, the differences in life expectancy are not massive as it was with the GDP per capita. This is caused by the fact that capitalism involves innovation, technological advancement, and globalization, helping the spread of new technologies able to save a life. Notable to mention is the progress witnessed by medicine. Now humans can cure most diseases that in the past were responsible for an innumerable amount of death.

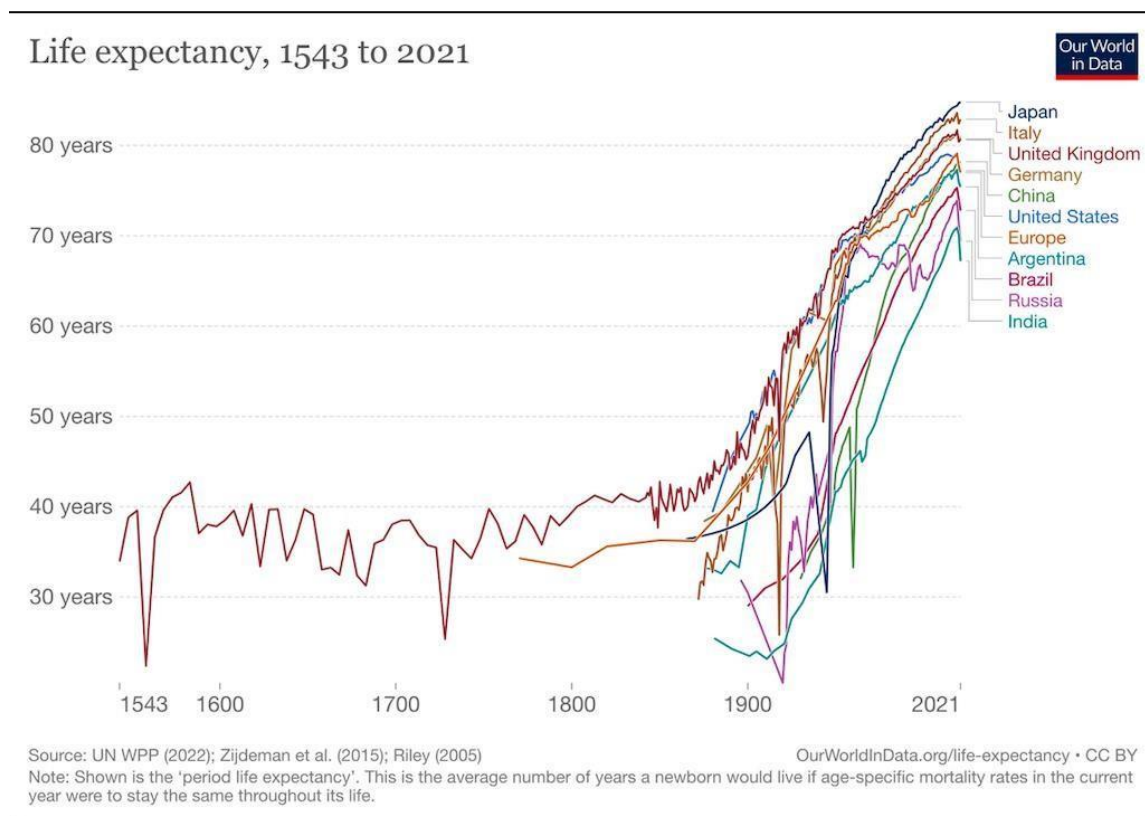


Figure 2 (Our World in Data, 2023)

Furthermore, capitalism with its inherent competition allows every player to enhance and improve their services or products, and naturally, it is in their interest to share with other individuals so that the mentioned actor can make a profit and the buyer will receive that good or service, a win condition one can say. Therefore, one may consider that the claim previously mentioned about self-interest influencing positively society is true. The dissertation, however, will uncover some truth about this claim in the following subchapter.

Hence, innovation plays a crucial role in capitalism, it is in the interest of the capitalist to make an innovative and improved product, leading other actors to compete with this enhanced product, which subsequently will lead them to innovate and enhance their product. In addition, capitalism will surely care about the environment since without the planet the actor running their enterprise will not be able to make a profit, because of the uninhabitable conditions that the capitalist will face or because no buyer will be able to

buy since all the economic resources will be re-located towards the healing of the environment or improving the conditions disrupted by extreme weather.

Furthermore, a potential benefit for proponents of capitalism is that it is suitable for the safeguarding of the planet. To be more precise, as Bowles considered, *“the argument is that capitalism, being a profit-motivated system, will ensure that goods are produced using the minimum level of inputs necessary. This includes minimizing the use of natural resources. Free trade and environmental sustainability are compatible goals on this reading.”* (Bowles, 2014). So, compatibility among these variables may surely ensure a better result in the step towards a more sustainable future. Holding this in mind, it can lead to other arguments used by some capitalists, which evaluate that the tragedy of the commons is caused *“by the absence of private property and the market”* (Bowles, 2014). The commons are all those types of resources which are *“owned by everyone and so not really owned by anyone”* (Bowles, 2014) and *“since they are owned by no one, there is no incentive to conserve them. If I don’t catch the fish, then someone else will”* (Bowles, 2014). This is a comprehensible thought which lies in the mistrust that humans have towards each other, and one way to tackle this massive issue is to privatize that good so that they would do everything in their power to safeguard that good. So, a solution to this problem from a capitalistic perspective is the establishment of property rights in every single resource, allowing the market to adjust to the needs of everyone and of that common.

Capitalism has been fundamental in also solving the so-called coordination problem, which is, *“how can the production and consumption decisions of millions of agents be organized so that the outcome is desirable rather than chaotic? The coordination problem is resolved in capitalism using markets.”* (Bowles, 2014). Recalling the definition of markets, markets are the *“interactions of buyers and sellers”* (Bowles, 2014) which determine the prices of goods and services to be bought or sold considering both the demand and the supply of that goods or service. Furthermore, as Bowles considered, markets are fundamental and helpful since they *“determine prices which permit goods to be sold for all those willing to offer their goods for sale at the market price and all purchasers willing to pay the market price to buy the goods.”* (Bowles, 2014). Thus, allowing the effective coordination of the economy. A massive benefit concerning the other ideologies, which do not have the same efficacy in the coordination of every aspect.

After this analysis of the benefits of capitalism, the criticisms will be uncovered in the next subchapter.

### **2.3 Criticisms of capitalism**

*“It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.”* (Smith & Icarsus, 2021). Without any context given, the vast majority of the people would eventually agree, to some extent, with this quote, since it would be utopian to think about a society which provides everything that the entire population requires. Adam Smith, as previously mentioned, added that *“we address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.”* (Smith & Icarsus, 2021). This passage also highlights to some extent how Adam Smith depicted humanity and the consideration he had towards it. Yet, the self-love considered

above may raise some questions regarding the way business is made in the last years. The Scottish philosopher and economist would not have agreed with the current capitalist methodology where the profit of one single individual or a small group of individuals exceeds the interests of the whole society, and in specific cases also of the whole planet. The major actors of our years surely have forgotten about the self-love which he spoke about. Multinational corporations making billions of profits, or states able to exploit others, cannot be considered moral or ethical. If capitalists cared about their self-love, then why would they continue exploiting people and the climate for the sake of some profit? Their self-love is an egoistic type of love, which does not take into consideration the future of their life and the planet on which they live in. Recalling, that even though the humanity in those individuals is missing, they still function as humans and for that reason, a planet with unbreathable air cannot sustain their life.

Other criticisms can also surge over the ideas proposed before regarding the presumed benefits of capitalism. Firstly, if capitalism is about ensuring environmental safety to allow the profit-making of entrepreneurs and other actors, why do the socio-economic trends and the earth system trends propose a different reality? The socio-economic trends in the picture below show us how humans progressed in the last decades from the increase in population to the exponential increase of the real GDP or foreign direct investment. Not to mention, the notable increase in primary energy use or paper production. These are all data depicting humanity to be progressing but at the same time, one shall consider the other trends which are the direct and indirect cause of these wonderful advancements. The picture below of the earth system trends shows us a different picture of the capitalist societies, exhibiting the effects of these advancements. The increase in carbon dioxide or methane, ocean acidification, marine fish capture, the loss of tropical forests or the terrestrial biosphere degradation are all essential features which are lost or endangered because of capitalism. There is a notable similarity in the start date if we consider both the socio-economic trends and the earth system trends, being not a random window of events but a series of causes and effects. This is mainly linked with capitalism, which of course allowed a massive growth, but at the same time is threatening the whole of humanity and the animals which are going extinct.

# Earth system trends

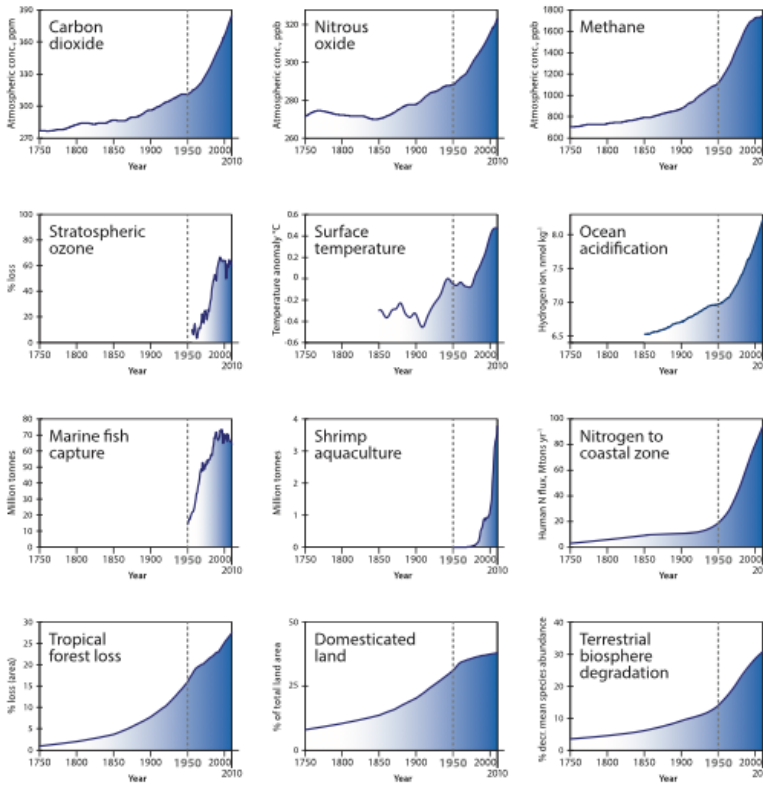


Figure 3 (Steffen et al., 2015)

# Socio-economic trends

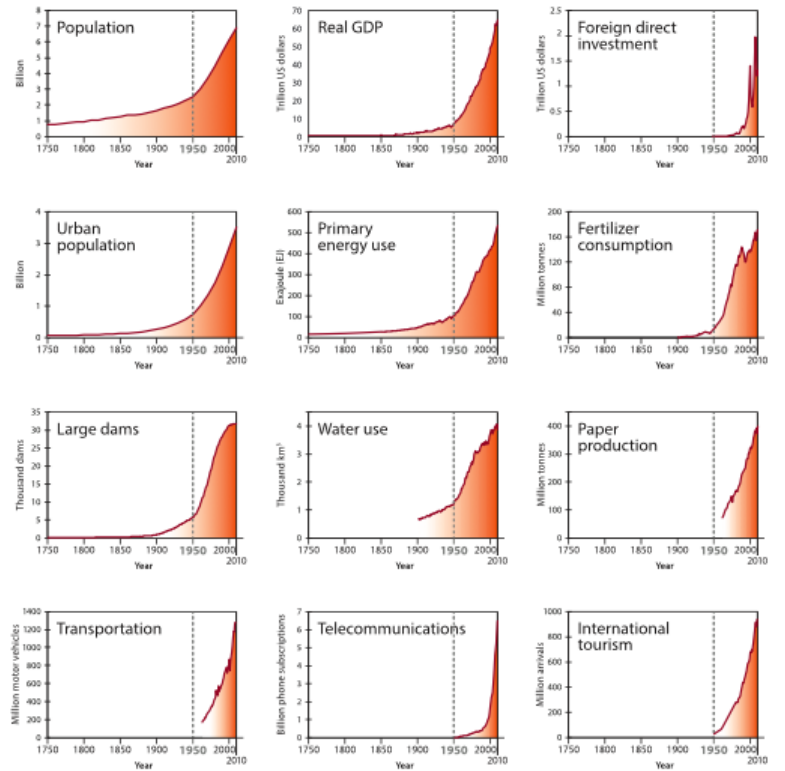


Figure 4 (Steffen et al., 2015)



So, if capitalism truly cares about the environment, why nothing concrete was ever done to stop the increases of the earth system trends that shows the real state of our planet? The fact that self-love and self-interest is the only factor which is considered in the decision-making process causes a notable divergence between the interest of the single individual against the interest of the whole society. It is in the interest of the whole society to have fossil fuel companies spending the majority of their resources in a green transition, but since the individual interest is preferred, then that company will continue investing in fossil fuels rather than a greener business since it is the most profitable business. From a theoretical perspective, the entrepreneurs and those able to control the production and the budget should use fossil energies to allow the transition towards a greener future to allow the establishment of a more stable future which is more bearable and less catastrophic. However, if we consider the reality, most of the enterprises involved in the fossil fuels sector, are responsible to greenwash their consumers, through advertisements which do not propose the reality.

With respect to the tragedy of the commons mentioned above, the capitalist proposition will induce a massive loss of life. The consideration that if I do not catch a fish then another individual will catch it, is something that causes enormous insecurities and for that, it shall be built back that confidence in humanity. This mistrust caused by decades of individuality is irreparable, and this dissertation will not uncover how the system induced mistrust among people. Hereafter, regarding the solution proposed for the common good by the capitalist, it is inevitable that if a common is owned by a single individual or company they will do everything in their power to profit as much as possible. However, there can be a difference depending on which capitalism they choose. There can be sane capitalism and insane capitalism. Sane capitalism would ensure that some fish will not be captured so that they may live and continue procreating, nonetheless, it is utopian because modern capitalism, which can be considered to be an insane type of capitalism, prefers short-term demand to long-term demand. In this case, we may assume that the choice of most of the actors in the last decades indicates that the preferred capitalism is the one which prefers the short-term over the long-term, so the insane type of capitalism. If that is not the case, why would lobbies for fossil fuels or other companies continue to push for that profit, which inevitably causes the complete annihilation of the environment? If everyone acted solely based on the egoistic assumption of self-interest, then why citizens of a developed country should care about the individuals of Africa who will bear the effects of my actions? The egocentric view of the self is not something that will help us, as humankind, achieve remarkable things in the future, but only destruction and despair. If more cooperation among everyone is pursued and more rationalistic thoughts are proposed leaving alone the disinformation made, the people would surely choose the most rational thought. Why would anyone choose the future destruction of the whole human race to gain something more today? It is about the respect that a generation has towards its future generations.

Kocka, further added that capitalism will lead to “*extreme individualization that are inherent in capitalism and that may lead, absent countermeasures, to the erosion of social welfare and neglect of the public interest. This raises the question of just what it is that holds societies together*” (Kocka, 2016). The abovementioned critique is not something that capitalism may hide from it, it causes egoism and individualism,

and no community or society may ever flourish if the people within care solely about their interests. If we evaluate our modern society, it can be declared that the only types of communities that are existing nowadays are only those linked with religious beliefs, political associations or any type of organization which entangles various individuals under a common fight or banner, such as “Ultima Generazione” or “Fridays for Future”. This causes polarization in society, creating a bubble of individuals who share their perspectives and ideas with each other, rather than debating those of a different opinion. However, a community encompassing every single individual, under the banner of being part of that community, may flourish if there is a more cooperative approach, leading to a more inclusive society. Where no matter the ideas one person has, he/she is part of the community. Another critique, raised by Kocka is the fact that capitalism is extremely dependent on perennial growth and the “*constant expansion beyond the attained status quo*” (Kocka, 2016) which inevitably “*threatens to destroy natural resources (environment, climate) and cultural resources (solidarity, meaning)*” (Kocka, 2016). To this claim, the author of this dissertation agrees, since a whole chapter was written regarding the destruction of the environment.

In addition, this dissertation will consider the hypocrisy of the capitalist business cycle, where “*In the boom period of the cycle, profit expectations are high, and investment is high. The demand for labour is high and as a result unemployment falls and wages start to be bid up. However, after a while, the rise in wages eats into capitalist profits and creates a ‘crises, that is a crisis of profitability. This is ‘solved’ by capitalists reducing their investment levels, with the result that growth falls and unemployment increases until workers are disciplined to accept lower wages; at this point profit expectations pick up and the whole cycle is repeated.*” (Bowles, 2014). This is something which will be repeated without any foreseeable end, especially if one considers the role of unemployment in the capitalist society, where it is essential since it weakens the “*bargaining power of labour*” (Bowles, 2014) and as Bowles considered “*an inevitable feature of capitalism.*” (Bowles, 2014). Not to mention that the capitalist system is a system which commodifies everything it touches, for instance, nature or a “*Natural resources such as water are now entering commodity production. Capitalism is therefore seen as a relentless process of commodification, leading to the marketization of ever more aspects of human existence as the search for profits, the driving force of capitalism, must be satisfied in new ways*” (Bowles, 2014) it further adds that nature will inevitably be commodified and used as a commodity, “*a feature which is not found in other societies such as many indigenous societies.*” (Bowles, 2014). The current thing of state should be changed and give space to the real value of nature. Nature is not something which a single or a group of individuals can profit from, it is the house of everyone, and we are only some individuals which live in it for some decades, nothing more. The pretentious idea of owning something as nature which is everlasting, and it is present since the beginning of civilization, is not something that can be attributed to someone or protected by a contract. It is something more valuable, also because, without it, humanity would die. The term “we” above is intended, for the humans living on the planet, since it has to be recalled that nature will always find a way to heal itself. It is we who are risking everything for the sake of some profit. If we also consider the age of the universe, it is estimated to be “*around 13 billion years - give or take a few billion.*”

(How Old Is the Universe?, 2000). We are nothing compared to the existence of the universe and if we evaluate the cosmic calendar, we are causing, in less than a few seconds, nearly the complete destruction of the planet which needed millions of years to create and evolve. In addition, if we look at the picture below which is the famous blue dot, we may effectively see our place in the universe, and as the European Space Agency stated, with this picture we may see the “*Earth, 1.44 billion km away in this image, appears as a blue dot at centre right; the Moon can be seen as a fainter protrusion off its right side. The other bright dots nearby are stars.*” (ESA, 2013). This outstanding scientific progress would surely help us curb the arrogance of some individuals to be the “god” who ascended to earth because of their wealth. We are just a minuscule part of the universe and for that reason, we shall re-assess our perceived importance, and we should increase our awareness of what we are currently doing and why, and if we are proceeding the right way, towards the right path. Surely, we are not, we have a destroyed planet and soaring inequalities that will probably never be filled. This growth has notorious and unbearable results which cause great risk to the future of humankind.



*Figure 5 (Cassini's Pale Blue Dot, n.d.)*

Lastly, it is fundamental to also consider the various claims of Fraser which harshly criticized capitalism. The author of this dissertation agrees with Fraser’s claim that “*an economic system oriented to the limitless accumulation of surplus value, appropriated privately by for-profit firms, is inherently self-destabilizing [...] capitalism is deeply and constitutively undemocratic. [...] it often promises democracy in the political realm. However, that promise is systematically undercut by social inequality, on the one hand, and by class power, on the other.*” (Fraser, 2022). The first consideration regarding the natural instability of capitalism as already considered above is something that even the most pro-market must consider since history

shows that crises occur every once in a while. Regarding the non-democratic state of capitalism, it is something which is emerging if democratic planning is proposed. As it will be evaluated in the next chapter, capitalism is not able nor will ever be able to have such democratic features in its system. Furthermore, “*capitalist societies institute a sharp division between human beings and nonhuman nature, which cease to belong to the same ontological universe. Reduced to a tap and a sink, nonhuman nature is opened to brute extractivism and instrumentalization. If this is not an injustice against nature (or against nonhuman animals), it is at the very least an injustice against existing and future generations of human beings who are left with an increasingly uninhabitable planet.*” (Fraser, 2022). The author embraces this concept and stresses once again that the preference for short-term gains over long-term gains is something which undermines every possibility to have such an economic system to tackle climate change.

In conclusion, we shall also consider that lobbies should not be able to influence policymakers, especially when establishing climate negotiations, since “*climate change will not be solved through negotiations dominated by corporate interests*” (Dorothy Grace Guerrero, 2018). Not to mention that the number of disparities between the developed countries, which are usually capitalists, and those developing or underdeveloped is nearly impossible to equalize if the current narrative persists.

#### **2.4 Reflection on the ethical-political matter of climate change.**

After the dissertation provided the general framework of capitalism, its benefits and also the criticism that the ideology has, the author of this dissertation will reflect on the ethical and political matters of climate change. With the help of the first chapter, it is clear why the climate is something extremely crucial and as such, we as humankind should provide manners to provide and fulfil our needs while ensuring the sustainability and well-being of the planet. It is known, that for now the relationship with the environment is solely based on human exploitation of nature without providing any help to the environment allowing the environment to heal. At the same time, it is unethical nor moral to bring our planet to the brink of collapse for the sake of an insatiable economic ideology. Humanity shall refrain from this economic approach and re-assess some other options which take into consideration the climate, disregarding to some extent the extensive anthropocentrism which characterizes our society. This ethical position, thus, should be pivotal in the political landscape, where usually personal interests or lobbies influence the decision-making of an institution or government, thus failing to recall society’s interest. Fundamental to recall is that there is also “*an increasing acceptance that capitalism is directly connected with climate change*” (Dorothy Grace Guerrero, 2018). The next chapter will deal with eco-socialism, which is extensively analysed and hence is considered if it would be a solution to this ecological crisis.

### *3.1. Introduction*

Eco-socialism is to be considered one of the new branches of the new political and economic theory of the left, fusing both the fight for a better climate and ecological sustainability with socialist principles. Global warming and climate change, in general, are threatening, as already considered in the previous chapters, the entire human race, thus fuelling the need to search for and develop a new political and economic theory that may replace or reform capitalism. Eco-socialists all share the idea that capitalism cannot be suited to a sustainable environment or ecological sustainability. While using a socialist system is useful in obtaining a sustainable society both from an ecological point of view and from a humanitarian standpoint, where inequalities are cut down. Capitalism is considered by the vast majority of eco-socialists to be a never-ending continuous exploitative system that commodifies natural resources in order to make a profit out of them, exploiting both the human capital, the humans, and the natural resources. Consequently, in a capitalist society, this approach is responsible for the annihilation of man, since in the last few decades men have been considered just as means to achieve more production or more value-added, disregarding their humanity and everything positive within that term, e.g., dreams or goals that every human being has. In fact, it can be considered that human beings are also commodified for the sake of profit, and that cannot be denied. This can also be seen from a social perspective, if a man/woman does not have a job that produces a good salary or is considered noble or valuable by society, then that person will inevitably lose some respect from the other people within his/her community. However, in this instance as well, the only thing that is taken into account is the work that the individual is capable of performing; as a result, their humanity is completely disregarded. This can be attributed to the commodification of the workers and of the individuals, which are just numbers that are either able or unable to produce more value for a determined service or product. This will inevitably cause a further polarization process in society, dividing it even more and causing more social and economic inequality. Not to mention that human beings are annihilated if their dreams and goals are completely disregarded, and a capitalist system is precisely doing that.

One of the most prominent ideas found in the theory is democratic planning; in fact, the proponents of this ideology propose the prioritisation of the planet's and people's needs over profit. Consequently, this leads to a more sustainable and equitable society. As will be evaluated in the following sections, democracy plays a fundamental role in the cause of eco-socialism since it proposes an effective democratic society where decision-making is done mainly by the people of that state. Every single individual has control over their workplace, what should be produced, and the overall direction in which society should go, which is completely different from what is happening right now with capitalism. Consequently, it eradicates any fear of excessive state presence or bureaucratic control, which could result in authoritarianism or a loss of democracy in a democratic state. In addition, eco-socialism can be considered the only political

philosophical theory which is able to fully integrate such a democratic tool into its theory. In fact, it will also be considered why capitalism could never introduce democratic planning.

Radicalized anthropocentrism is also disregarded by eco-socialists since they do propose that humans are part of the ecological system and that our actions should coincide with the capabilities of nature, thereby tackling overconsumption from the root. Additionally, the so-called “social” problems are given a possible solution since problems such as sexism, racism, or poverty represent forms of oppression affecting some specific communities, thus creating an imbalance in the quality of life of the people living there. Thus, a real sustainable society has the duty to address them, preventing their spread and reducing their intensity. Notable to mention is that the division between the Global North and Global South is also taken into consideration, as will be discovered in the next sections. Eco-socialism can be extremely useful to tackle climate change, and the promotion of democracy can be a way to increase its popularity among democratic countries, which are lamenting the weakening of their democratic apparatus.

The definition of eco-socialism, the core beliefs of its main thinkers, and the aforementioned democratic planning will all be examined in the following sections. Advertisements will also receive some consideration, and a possible analysis will be given to determine whether eco-socialism can address the capitalist ecological catastrophe.

### **3.2. What is eco-socialism?**

Eco-socialism, as previously mentioned, is a political theory based on “*an essential insight: that preserving the ecological equilibrium of the planet and therefore an environment favorable to living species, including ours*” (Löwy, 2015). Michael Löwy considered that having a sane environment is “*incompatible with the expansive and destructive logic of the capitalist system*” (Löwy, 2015). Thus, it is straightforward that capitalism and eco-socialism are to be considered as two opposite poles. Capitalism is considered to “*dominates human societies, capitalism, blindly and stubbornly resists changes that are indispensable if we are to preserve the dignity of human existence*” and “*Eco-socialism a radical proposition –i.e., one that deals with the roots of the ecological crisis*” (Löwy, 2015). Eco-socialism is considered a “*project for the future*”, (Löwy, 2015), based upon the critique of capitalism while providing a new way to approach life as a whole, both from an economic perspective and also from an ecological one. The definition provided by Michael Löwy considers eco-socialism to be “*a current of ecological thought and action that appropriates the fundamental gains of Marxism while shaking off productivist dross.*” (Löwy, 2015). Not to mention that James O'Connor considered eco-socialism to be “*theories and movements that seek to subordinate exchange value to use value and abstract labor to concrete labor, that is, to organize production for need*” (Löwy, 2015) Thus, “*Eco-socialism [...] problematizes both the capitalist labor process and also the structure of use value and needs (consumption).*” (O’connor, 2011). If the claims proposed by Michael Löwy are also included, then eco-socialism is made up of democratic planning, which is crucial in evaluating the various goals of a society and the way to reach them through the production that society owns collectively.

Furthermore, one shall consider that the whole rationale of eco-socialism is founded on two distinct proposals, the first being that the capitalist countries “*which is based on the logic of boundless accumulation [...] cannot in any way be extended to the whole planet without a major ecological crisis*” (Löwy, 2015) and that the notorious capitalist expansion “*based on a market economy [...] directly threatens [...] the very survival of the human species*” (Löwy, 2015). For this reason, the aforementioned theory focuses mainly on the protection of the environment, mainly because without the environment and the whole ecosystem sustaining its life, we, as humans, cannot live, hence, it is in the human’s interest to avoid any further destruction, which one may also consider to be “*a humanist imperative*” (Löwy, 2015). Obviously, one may consider that the criticism against capitalism is a staple of the left-wing political theories, but especially in this case, these harsh critiques are mainly caused by the havoc provoked by capitalism on the environment.

Eco-socialism, however, can also be defined differently from the previous conceptions provided above; in fact, Joel Kovel considered that “*We call ecosocialism that society in which production is carried out by freely associated labor and with consciously ecocentric means and ends.*” (Kovel, 2013). Ecocentrism is fundamental in this theory, where the “*Use-value and quality are valorized over exchange-value and quantity, and the economy is now embedded within society rather than, as under capitalism, standing over society*”. (Kovel, 2013). Hereafter, if the commons are considered, then it is all about defending them and the environmental resources. Of course, it has to be done a considerable amount of work and progress to reach an eco-socialist state, but it “*requires that the entire international division of labor be overcome, including that of proletarians, or wage laborers, and this is a problem the difficulty of which can scarcely be overestimated. Capital’s domination of labor is predicated on separating workers from the means of production, and also from each other. This is the foundation of its triumph, and has become sedimented into the labor movement itself [...] while being divided nationally or regionally, North and South having many separate agendas*” (Kovel, 2013). Here, eco-socialism will surely have a remarkable challenge to unite labor, and of course, this was easily done in capitalist economic theory. For this reason, the establishment of any new theory will witness difficulties, mainly because solving the coordination problem is something that is fundamentally complicated. Yet, eco-socialism can resolve this issue if it uses the urgency of people to combat climate change. A remark is also needed, this theory is not one that follows the “*market’s profit logic, and the logic of bureaucratic authoritarianism*” (Löwy, 2015), since they are considered to be “*incompatible with the need to safeguard the natural environment*” (Löwy, 2015). Crucial to mention is that the abovementioned theory is not homogenous, but some topics and ideas are common, for instance, the shared opposition against the “*infinite expansion of a mode of production and consumption that destroys nature*” (Löwy, 2015) or the opposition against the “*productivist ideology of progress*” (Löwy, 2015). Thus, while eco-socialism is still in need of new research, it is noteworthy to consider that eco-socialism per se, being a theory that is based on environmentalism and lies in the mainstream of the political left, is for the implementation of renewable energies, the progressive reduction and elimination of nuclear energy. Even though the author of this dissertation does not consider the latter proposal to be a valuable solution for the

current energetic situation and the international equilibrium, the implementation of renewable energies is highly endorsed. In fact, states are awakening themselves to invest more in renewable energies, but more has to be done, and if the current methodology to approach climate change is pursued, humanity will face many insurmountable challenges. For this reason, left-wing political theories, especially eco-socialism, have to reconsider its position on nuclear energy since it will be fundamental from an energetic perspective. If we remove nuclear plants and start reducing the research in this field, the probability of solving global warming will be to some extent impossible, also because if we withdraw from nuclear power, how would it be replaced? With oil, gas, and coal? This would put more pressure on the planet, which probably would not be able to endure it anymore. To this extent, if this last proposal is adjusted and improved, we have a great tool to tackle climate change. Also, because, the fight against nuclear capabilities in the field of war is something which will receive notable support from every political field, both from some parts of the right and other parts of the left. Furthermore, following the consideration of democratic planning, which will be analysed in the next subchapter, people will decide if nuclear energy will be invested in or if it will be dismissed. Of course, that decision will need to take into consideration the capabilities of energy production from renewables and non-renewables and the withdrawal effects of nuclear energy in these two types of energies. Naturally, the decision that will be taken will consider all the available data.

Nonetheless, it is also fundamental to consider and evaluate, to some extent, one of the manifestos of the theory. The one taken into consideration is “Copenhagen 2049”, which is a caricature of the way in which humanity has faced global warming and the outcomes of the choices made by humans.

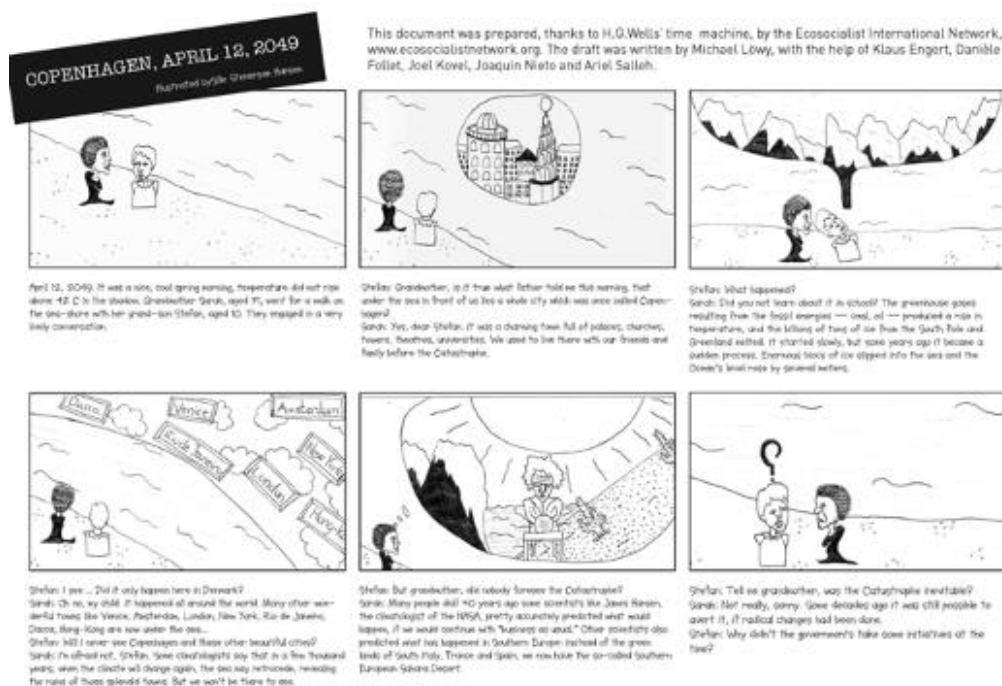


Figure 6 (Löwy, 2015)



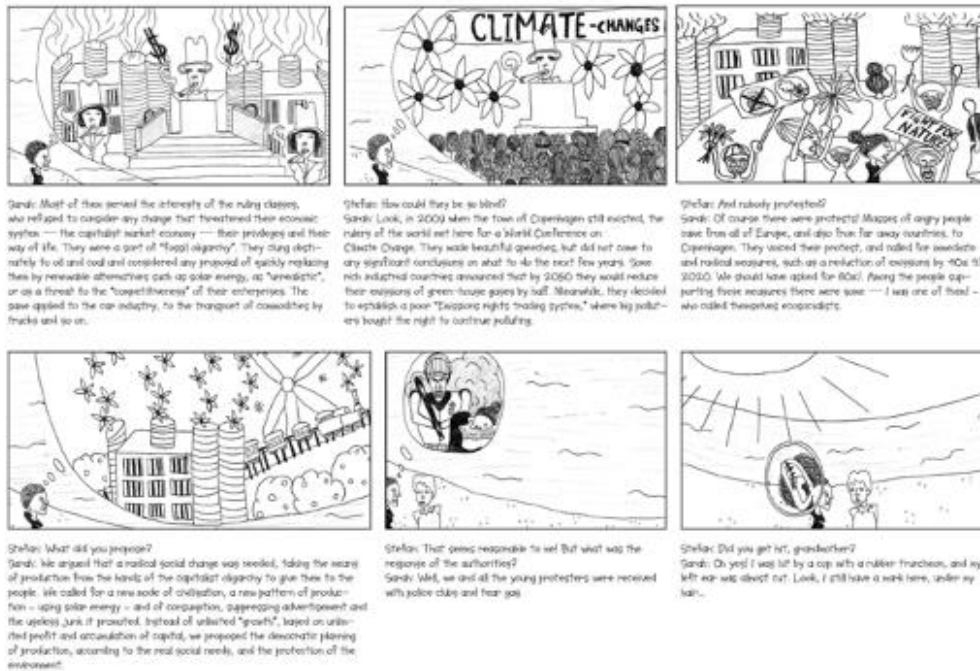


Figure 7 (Löwy, 2015)

In this not-so-dystopic future, there are two protagonists, the grandmother Sarah (71) and her grandson Stefan (10). As the talks go on, they allow the reader to understand that under the sea there were many cities, and one of them was Copenhagen. This happened because greenhouse gases coming from non-renewable energies like coal and oil caused the temperature to rise, leading to the melting of ice from the South Pole and Greenland, directly influencing the rise of the sea level. These catastrophic events took place throughout the world, and it is also considered that these cities will be visitable as soon as the climate changes, especially when the sea recedes, allowing the grandson to see the desert cities that in the past were populous. The young boy questioned why nothing was done, and the grandmother replied that people knew about it, especially if business continued to be done that way. The grandson then asked if this catastrophe could have been avoided, and the truth was uncovered by the grandmother, who stated that it was possible and there were all the tools available to do it, but no radical change was made; in fact, governments served the needs and interests of those in power, which went against any change for the climate. The politicians knew about the problem and continued their speeches with inspiring words, but nothing serious was ever done. The proposal enacted was the establishment of the "emissions rights trading system" which allowed big companies and polluters to pollute. Protest broke out, demanding eco-socialist propositions like radical social change or removing the means of production away from the capitalist oligarchy, promoting renewable energies, and reducing the infinite capitalist growth. The response from those in power was violent, and they were rejected without any hope for their future. Disregarding this story is immoral since there is the possibility that this can take place, especially if we consider the response of humanity to climate change. Nothing serious was done in the manifesto, and also in our society, nothing serious is done, so the possibility that this takes place is not so remote. Radical change, is needed and has to be implemented as soon as

possible, but we already have youths protesting in the streets demanding for ecological justice, but how are they considered? Foolish and inconsiderate while being completely disregarded, even because the possibility to do something and to improve the situation is in the hands of those who are causing climate change. For this reason, this manifesto shall induce people to act, to fight for a better climate, for themselves and especially for future generations. Not to mention that by doing so, an incalculable number of people can be saved, and this should be a notable motivation to continue with the protests until nothing serious is done. A possible solution, though, may be assessed if democratic planning is evaluated in fact, in the following topic will be taken into consideration and analysed will be the already cited democratic planning.

### 3.3. *Democratic planning*

As was already mentioned, democratic planning is one of the core tenets of eco-socialism. The author of this dissertation shares this perspective and believes that democratic planning is essential to the success of the eco-socialism cause. Firstly, it is fundamental to analyse what democratic planning is, which can be defined as the allocation of resources, goods, and services for a specific desired outcome that was previously decided collectively. The idea of collectivity is something that usually comes up, and it is considered both from a national perspective and from a local/regional point of view or even on an international level. In fact, *“democratic planning would define products are to be subsidized or even distributed without charge; • what energy options are to be pursued [...] how to reorganize the transportation system according to social and ecological criteria”* (Löwy, 2015). This provides the reader with a better understanding of the concept of democratic planning.

Democratic planning is also fundamental since it gives back to the citizens their lost participation, giving them every possible incentive to participate in political life. To allow this extensive participation, however, the labour time is thought to be reduced, allowing every single individual to spend some of their work time for society. Hereafter, it would go hand in hand with the fact that *“a significant increase in free time is in fact a condition for working people’s participation in the democratic discussion and management of the economy and society”* (Löwy, 2015). It gives back the faith lost in these last decades, which highlighted the divergence between people’s interests and needs and the political response to those interests, which in the majority of cases was never met, thus leading to a colossal drop in trust between individuals and politics. For these reasons, eco-socialism and democratic planning are fundamentally interlinked, in which democratic planning follows the socialist principle of equality and the strong state’s presence providing the people with the choice to destroy or to save the environment. Thus, allowing them to make environmentalist policies if rationality is pursued, we take for granted the latter since no human being would ever sacrifice his or her own well-being, life, and the future of his/her kids for the sake of an individualistic choice. It is also fundamental to add that, it would be wrong to think that democratic planning can be enacted in a capitalist society, especially if we consider the modern type of capitalism. People have already expressed numerous times their willingness to end non-renewable energy dependence. Yet, nothing was ever done,

and nothing will ever be done since the business of non-renewable energy in this case is extremely lucrative, and no businessmen or businesswomen will ever put aside this business that is able to create billions of dollars of profit. The only way in which, capitalists would support the democratic choice of those individuals is if their democratic choice would lead them to more profit or power. It is thus impossible to consider that capitalism would enact the abovementioned democratic planning since people would decide the production and investment of everything that is related to their state. Thus, capitalists and entrepreneurs would have no place in this plan. Nor, one cannot imagine having a capitalist system in which democratic planning is fully done. In fact, the real power of democratic planning is that decisions regarding investment and development, as already considered, will be made solely by the citizens and not by entrepreneurs, multinational corporations, or enterprises because of the consequences for the whole society.

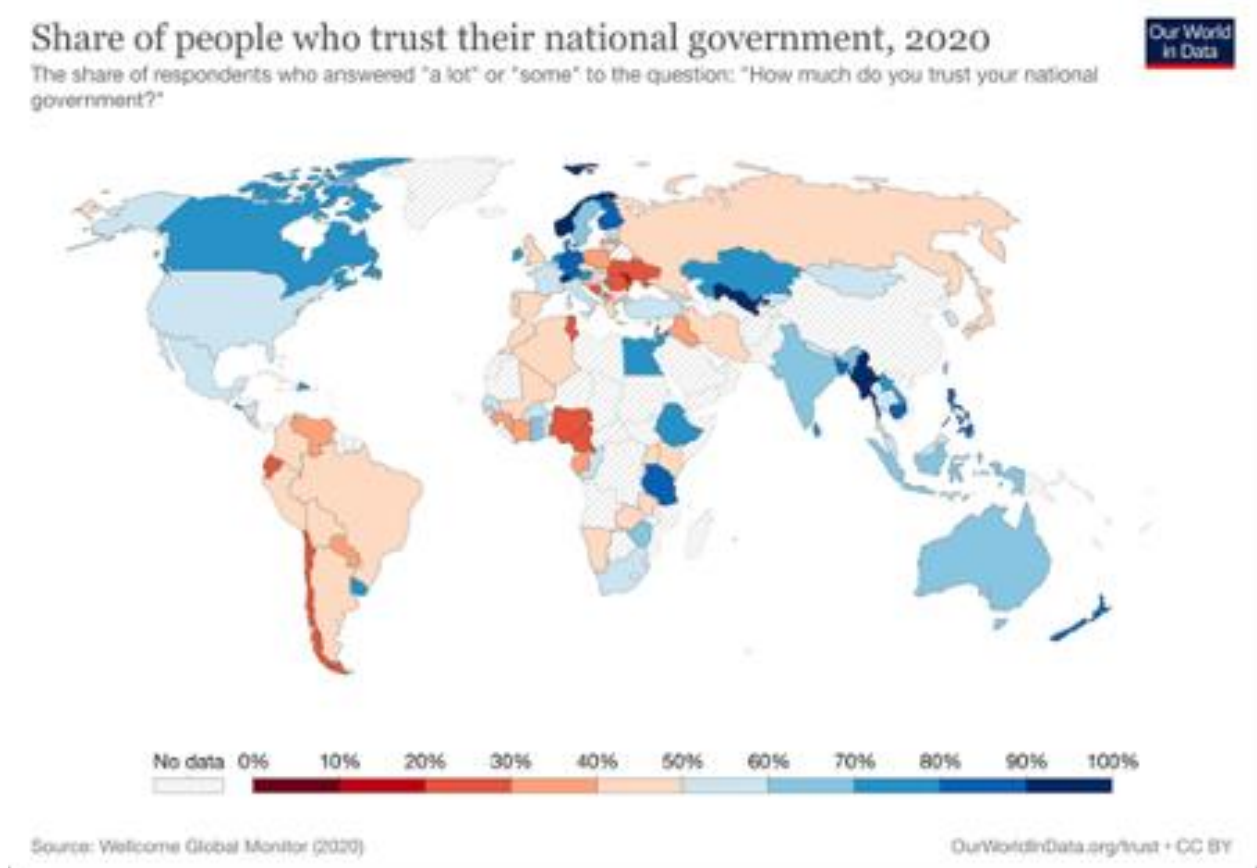


Figure 8 (Our World in Data, 2020)

The graph above is a representation of the fact that in democratic countries, the trust between citizens and the state is not as strong as it should be. The Nordic countries, especially Norway and Finland, have done a good job, but at the European level, it is worryingly low, and in some cases, there is a notable mistrust of their state. This is the case if Spain, Portugal, and the United Kingdom are considered. Italy and France, even though they are not in the red zone, are in a position in which their national governments are trusted in a shallow way, thus completely different from the level of Germany, in which everybody may agree on the efficiency of its national government. It can also be seen in the differences between the number of governments Germany had and the ones in Italy. The trust is, of course, low, for historical reasons, also in

the Eastern part of the European Union, but in that case, there should be an interest in establishing their democracies and solidifying their democratic instances. This can be done through society to make every single individual in those states consider democracy as their tool to impact their societies. Democratic planning, in fact, would be useful both in the red zone and in the shallow blue zone since it could grant the citizens their lost democratic power, allowing them to speak their minds and contribute to their society. Of course, it would also motivate the blue zone to continue with its effort to grant a functioning democracy.

Nevertheless, democratic planning is nothing similar to the fettering mechanism of the bureaucratic planning of the USSR, “*which is inevitably inefficient and arbitrary*” (Löwy, 2015). Moreover, democratic planning would allow efficient and rational choices, since the decision-makers are every single individual living in that specific community, and they would never choose a policy that would go against their own interests. Regarding the rationale of the decisions, one has to mention that it is extremely dependent on the data provided by the authority, how they are portrayed, and especially the decision-making process of the individuals forming society.

The real problem affecting democratic planning is “*democratic control of the plan at all levels: local, regional, national, continental [...] international*” (Löwy, 2015). As previously evaluated, capitalism was extremely efficient in addressing the coordination problem; however, democratic planning would be efficient as well if every single individual in each of the single countries throughout the world had access to the same scientific data. Thus, allowing them to choose the best option, which is the immediate stop of ecocide and allowing nature to re-heal. The most challenging situation of this ecological crisis and eco-socialism would be democratic planning at the international level, but a solution must be found “*since ecological issues such as global warming are planetary and can be dealt with only on a global scale*” (Löwy, 2015). A possible solution may be that everyone, as previously considered, has access to all the scientific data available, allowing people to define their positions, but the data should be solely scientific, and no opinion should be given since no ideology is superior to the well-being of our planet. The use of science is fundamental since climate change would affect both our generation and future generations, especially because global warming and climate change are problems that can only be solved through science and nothing else. We may not consider solving climate change with prayers or with populist political slogans. For that reason, more space and resources should be granted to the research, allowing for the production of more data and, thus, allowing people to make decisions. In addition, “*The democratic nature of planning is not incompatible with the existence of experts: their role is not to decide but to present their views [...] to the democratic process of decision making*” (Löwy, 2015).

The implementation of global democratic planning is something that is excruciatingly difficult to achieve, but if we consider the number of lives and ecosystems at stake, it is something that can be achieved. Humans have already shown that, if united, they can do majestic things, so why not collectively challenge the problem rather than tearing each other down for the sake of some profit? A bad blood situation between

nations is something that has to be shaken off if we want to preserve the earth; otherwise, our future is doomed to perish.

Furthermore, democratic planning does have the need for a body that would enact those directions and policies decided by the people, but the presence of “*executive/technical bodies in charge of putting into practice what has been decided*” (Löwy, 2015) has nothing to do with authoritarianism or any other type of extremism that would recall any left-wing radicalism such as Stalinism. It will be inherently democratic due to the fact that people will decide for themselves, and those bodies are only present to enact those policies.

Democratic planning, however, is something that is fully integrated into the eco-socialist proposal, mainly because it follows both the socialist principles of equality and the strong state, with, of course, the idea of common ownership and environmentalism. The latter, however, cannot be given for granted that people will eventually choose the most pro-environmental choice, but it is straightforward that it is in the interest of every single individual to have a habitable planet that includes resources for future generations. So, even though the theory does not propose nor have any possibilities to enforce environmentalist policies to be carried out, it is completely dependent on the rationality of the individuals that will make those decisions. Notable to mention, is that democratic planning follows socialist principles since every single individual is included in that plan. Not to mention that the state is made up of individuals who live in a specific society hence, the democratic choice of the individuals is directly a decision of the state. Recalling that the state, in socialism, is a strong institution with the capacity to control specific assets of the state thanks to the common ownership, no opposition can be made to that democratic decision. Another guarantee is that any left-wing extremism will be scared away. Once again, it is impossible to think of another theory that would implement democratic planning as well as eco-socialism. For these reasons, democratic planning is strongly linked with eco-socialism, using the anthropocentric view of socialism with the already mentioned environmentalism. As a proper and possible solution for the climatic crisis, these considerations will lead to more ecocentric views since the planet is being annihilated. The following section will deal with advertising, which is essential for eco-socialism and the efficient functioning of democratic planning.

### **3.4 Advertising**

As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, capitalism lacks a long-term vision of the effects of the choices it makes. Therefore, capitalism is bound by a “*Rationality limited by the capitalist market, with its shortsighted calculation of profit and loss, stands in intrinsic contradiction to ecological rationality, which takes into account the length of natural cycles*” (Löwy, 2015) and the problem is the capitalist system and nothing else. Any additional efforts made in accordance with this theory cannot address climate change because “*the system itself, based on ruthless competition, the demands of profitability, and the race for rapid profit, is the destroyer of nature's balance*” (Löwy, 2015). Even though, capitalists may convince themselves that capitalism can assist the environment, it is intrinsically wrong since the so notorious “*green capitalism is nothing but a publicity stunt, a label for the purpose of selling a commodity [...] in the best of cases a local*

*initiative equivalent to a drop of water on the arid soil of the capitalist desert*” (Löwy, 2015). The problem of capitalism regarding climate change is something that cannot be solved with capitalism itself. In the preceding chapter, the reasons why, were already uncovered. Nonetheless, advertising can be helpful in providing a new framework, confirming capitalism’s incapacity to deal with global warming and a possible way to deal with climate change. Corporations or multinationals do prefer to “greenwash” or advertise a particular good in order to sell it, but this cannot be in the interests of humanity because of their short-sighted capitalist vision, which only considers the profit in the coming months or years without taking into account the consequences of those actions. *“Advertising pollutes the mental landscape [...] Nothing escapes its decomposing influence: in our time we see that sports, religion, culture, journalism, literature, and politics are ruled by advertising. All are pervaded by advertising’s altitude [...] advertising is nothing but a tool, an instrument of capital used to dispose of its output, to unload its shoddy goods, to make its investments pay, to expand its profit margins, and to win “sectors of the market.”*” (Löwy, 2015). Among other things, consumerism is so expanded and so voraciously present because of advertising. It is the advertisement, that moves people to buy the new telephone, which in the majority of cases is the same as the previous year. It is the advertisement, that proposes ideas of misogyny or patriarchy, establishing, even more, the roots of this plague. Not only that, but it is the advertising, that proposes the idea which eating meat is masculine, and if someone refrains from eating it for environmental, moral, or ethical reasons, then it is considered to be weak or strange. Advertisement is responsible for shaping the social context in which we live in and providing us with an idea of what our lives would be if we bought those new products or services. The problem is that it is an infinite loop, new products will always be released, and more advertising will be done. The real problem is when advertisements spread ideas which go against climate change or do not reflect the reality of the situation. If advertisements were true and coherent with the health of the planet, then more attention would be granted to the catastrophic situation of climate change. Imagine, if at every advertisement panel, there would be a slogan or a picture reminding you that future generations will have wars because of a lack of natural resources or will not be able to live on this planet since the air is unbreathable. What would happen? For sure, some would be against it and would convince themselves that climate change will not affect them and is something related to various conspiracy theories nonsense. At the same time, more awareness and more attention would be given to this topic, allowing every single individual to come to the realization that something has to be done. *“A change in consumption habits will not be accomplished in a day: it is a social process that will take years.”* (Löwy, 2015) it will be even harder if we consider that advertisements are present since the presence of television or of newspapers. Not to mention that *“compulsive consumption is one of the essential driving forces for the process of expansion and unlimited “growth” that have always characterized modern capitalism and now are driving us, with ever-increasing speed, toward the abyss of global warming”* (Löwy, 2015) and if anything can be done to preserve our life on our planet, then we shall do it.

Not to mention that *“the advertising industry [...] has invaded all spheres of human life in modern capitalist societies: not only nourishment and clothing, but sports, culture, religion, and politics are shaped*

*according to its rules*” (Löwy, 2015). Considering this and always bearing in mind climate change, it is unthinkable to still have an industry promoting consumerism. Thus, we shall avoid the promotion of advertisements, but instead, focus on the evaluation of scientific data regarding the environment, showing the current state of things. Taking into consideration the consequences of a determined products or services.

### ***3.5 Is it really a possible solution to the capitalist ecological crisis?***

Eco-socialism can be considered a viable solution to the current capitalist ecological crisis, and this is especially true if we consider democratic planning and the reform of advertising. But it is surely difficult to achieve the aforementioned plan, especially a global one. Many consider this to be a utopia, but because it is thought to be unthinkable, we refrain from making any progress. If we instead focus on the positive sides and how to resolve the negative ones, it would be easier to change the course of events. Democratic planning for declining democracies is a life-saving opportunity, enabling individuals to restore their faith in politics. So, mobilization is surely needed, and any other types of crying for help are also suggested. The heart-breaking situation is that the only thing that can be done is very limited.

Taking all this into consideration, a brief recap of the main pillars of eco-socialism is fundamental to better comprehending whether eco-socialism is a possible solution to the capitalist ecological crisis. The answer seems obvious, and everything that is not about limitless expansion and growth is suited to be better off than capitalism, but, in this case, eco-socialism would be able to propose a way to approach politics differently which entails the salvation of nature. The abovementioned pillars of eco-socialism are social ownership, ecological sustainability, social justice, internationalism, anti-imperialism, and participatory democracy. To start with, social ownership is rooted in the democratic control of eco-socialism, which lies as already mentioned, in democratic planning, in which society decides the way in which resources are used and distributed, taking into consideration the environment. Ecological sustainability lies in the fact that, eco-socialists reject the shared idea of limitless growth and that the natural equilibrium of nature should be respected otherwise, humanity would suffer immensely. Social justice is also another pillar of socialism, where equality is proposed, where no matter the race, the socioeconomic status, or the gender they do recognize themselves they are still part of society, which will decide democratically its future plan. In addition, if a specific individual is considered “different” or even worse, unworthy or inferior, what kind of society is that? A problematic one, for sure, which will never flourish. Society has the duty to allow the growth of its citizens and not tear each other down to feel better about their own situation. Thus, inequalities are also fought for and eradicated at their root. Internationalism is as well a core value of eco-socialism, since the divisions between the global north and the global south are something that the proponents of this theory do consider. Eco-socialism in fact, goes hand in hand with anti-imperialism, which is also another pillar of the theory. Anti-imperialism is rejected both because there is a complete rejection of imperialism and colonialism, and because, with all those approaches, nature would be exploited no matter what, without any

consideration of the future. Participatory democracy is the last pillar of eco-socialism where everyone in a society can influence the decisions of the state.

The dissertation will now be concluded by evaluating what has been proposed regarding climate change, capitalism, and eco-socialism, defining the importance of each of the arguments proposed, analysing the advantages and disadvantages that each theory has, and summarizing what has been evaluated in the previous chapter. This will allow the author of this dissertation to consider whether eco-socialism is suitable to replace capitalism or not.



## *Conclusion*

This dissertation has tackled different and various stimulating concepts that can be overviewed in the present section, which is the concluding part of the current. Considering this, the ultimate objective is to provide a conclusion to the dissertation. This section will be organised to provide the readers with a general framework of the thesis, the reformulation of its purpose, and lastly, it will be considered whether eco-socialism is suitable to replace capitalism. Lastly, the author will complete the dissertation with some final remarks and critiques, thus paving the way for future studies on the aforementioned topic.

The dissertation is divided into different sections, starting with the introduction, where the plan of the thesis is stated, followed by an evaluation of the reasons why climate change is important, and an evaluation of capitalism's framework, benefits, and criticisms. Eco-socialism is thus proposed, especially considering the framework of the theory, going in-depth with democratic planning and advertising. This allowed for an evaluation of whether eco-socialism can be considered a substitute for capitalism. The author of the dissertation proposes to avoid any replacement of capitalism but to reform it fundamentally; otherwise, humanity would be doomed. The complete replacement, in the immediate short-term, of capitalism is not advised for the simple fact that there would be an opposition requiring years to tackle. Hence, in the short-term, reforming capitalism is advised since it would be easier and faster. In the long-term however, eco-socialism is a fundamental asset in the fight against climate change and the rising extremisms that are seen throughout the globe, e.g., frequent regime changes in Africa or the extremist ideology spreading like the far-right in the European continent. For these reasons, eco-socialism can be considered a suitable solution to the capitalist ecological crisis if we are referring to the future. Returning to the short-term reform of capitalism, a way to reform it would be to stop allowing fake news to spread and to wage a serious fight against climate disinformation. Fundamental is also democratic planning, where people decide the direction of society and its politics. Of course, it is fundamental to state that people may mobilise to propose these ideas, but it will be difficult to achieve them. The only way to have these requests made is for them to spread across society and become something that politicians move towards in order to get more votes. Thus, the electoral capacity of those proposing eco-socialism or some features of eco-socialism has to be increased, allowing the functioning of the demand-supply mentality. Thereby, if more people want democratic control and reform in the advertising sector, then we would have a political class willing to act upon those requests. In addition, advertising should promote and share more scientific data regarding climate change and provide content and tools to allow people to better understand what is going on around the world.

In conclusion, the author believes that it is fundamental to consider that this thesis will pave the way for future studies on democratic planning and eco-socialism, which lack extensive literature. If more research were carried out, democratic planning would be easily applied, whether eco-socialism is embraced or not, and this would increase the democratic awareness of citizens, allowing them to recover their lost trust in politics.

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## ***Riassunto***

La presente tesi mira ad analizzare il fenomeno del cambiamento climatico ponendolo in relazione con le teorie capitaliste ed eco-socialiste, evidenziandone le problematiche e le possibili soluzioni.

Il primo capitolo volge ad esplicitare la natura e l'impatto del fenomeno sulla nostra quotidianità. I primi studi in merito emergono già a partire dal diciannovesimo secolo, quando gli scienziati John Tyndall e Svante Arrhenius pubblicano alcune delle loro scoperte al tempo percepite come particolarmente divisive e avveniristiche. Sostenevano, infatti, che i cambiamenti climatici potessero essere il risultato di alterazioni a livello atmosferico, dove la quantità di diossido di carbonio presente nell'aria tende ad influenzare le temperature a causa dell'effetto serra. Va da sé che, all'innalzarsi delle temperature, accresce il numero degli eventi meteorologici estremi verificabili. Essi possono variare dalle ondate di calore improvvise, alla siccità, fino all'innalzamento del livello del mare. Quest'ultimo fenomeno pone a rischio tutte le comunità più vicine alle coste che saranno così costrette ad abbandonare le proprie terre ed emigrare in aree geografiche più sicure. Un altro fenomeno grave che può avvenire è l'acidificazione degli oceani che potrebbe causare la completa distruzione del nostro ecosistema, poiché un PH troppo acido non permetterebbe la sopravvivenza della fauna marina che causerebbe così un effetto domino con la conseguente distruzione dell'intera catena alimentare. Altre conseguenze degli squilibri climatici sopracitati, possono essere l'insorgere di roghi estensivi che provocano ingenti danni alla flora, alla fauna, altresì agli insediamenti umani, la degradazione della qualità dei raccolti e la sopravvivenza del bestiame, tutti fenomeni che comportano squilibri sociali per l'uomo e che mettono in grave crisi le attività produttive.

Altrettanto allarmante è l'inquinamento atmosferico causato dalle industrie, dall'agricoltura estensiva, dall'allevamento intensivo, dall'utilizzo di combustibili fossili quali carbone, petrolio, gas e olii e dai consumi quotidiani di ogni singolo cittadino, le cui conseguenze a lungo termine possono diventare irreparabilmente catastrofiche. L'eccessiva tendenza consumistica, quindi la necessità continua di realizzare nuovi prodotti, ha causato l'immissione di molteplici agenti inquinanti nella nostra atmosfera, fra cui l'ozono, il monossido di carbonio e il biossido di zolfo, che in seguito a una esposizione prolungata causano gravi danni al sistema respiratorio, incidendo dunque inevitabilmente sulla qualità della vita delle persone coinvolte e nel modo in cui la vita stessa viene vissuta.

La risposta all'impatto dei fenomeni estremi dipende purtroppo dalla condizione economica della comunità colpita. Infatti, un paese europeo o nord americano può contare su un numero più elevato di risorse per far fronte ad infrastrutture danneggiate, curare i feriti e dare sostegno ai familiari dei defunti rispetto ad un paese africano o sudamericano. Questa disparità evidenzia ulteriormente le già note disuguaglianze tra nord e sud del mondo. A favore di questa tesi, un numero sempre maggiore di persone si trova costretto ad emigrare dai paesi in via di sviluppo verso quelli più avanzati. Ne consegue che questi ultimi offrano maggiore protezione e salvaguardia dagli effetti causati dal cambiamento climatico ed offrano una migliore qualità della vita. L'emigrazione di massa sfocia però velocemente nella sovrappopolazione che genera un grande squilibrio demografico, oltre a rappresentare una sfida importante per tutti i paesi coinvolti alimentando così le tensioni diplomatiche a livello internazionale.

Fra i molteplici piani dell'Organizzazione Mondiale della Sanità si evidenzia nello specifico l'attuazione e la promozione di politiche che hanno come obiettivo la riduzione dell'inquinamento atmosferico, diminuendo così la probabilità che si verifichino le situazioni evidenziate e descritte ampiamente già nel primo capitolo.

Nella seconda parte è invece illustrato il fenomeno del capitalismo analizzandone punti di forza e svantaggi osservati da un punto di vista teorico. Una delle maggiori spinte alla realizzazione di questo sistema politico è l'ideologia di Adam Smith, fondatore del pensiero capitalista. La sua tesi proponeva gli interessi personali come motore principale della vita. Secondo il suo pensiero, infatti, perseguirli apporterebbe unicamente beneficio al singolo ed in modo più indiretto alla società.

Per una visione più completa è però necessario prendere in considerazione anche una valutazione teorica più moderna del capitalismo stesso, citando la definizione del Fondo Monetario Internazionale. Invero, esso considera il capitalismo come un sistema economico dove il privato vive e si comporta sulla base dei propri bisogni influenzando indirettamente la società. I pilastri cardini su cui si basa sono la proprietà privata, l'interesse personale, la competizione, il mercato, la libertà di scelta ed il ruolo limitato del governo. In primo luogo, la proprietà privata permette agli individui di poter guadagnare grazie ai propri possedimenti e va ad alimentare l'aspetto competitivo e gli interessi personali. Inoltre, spinge di conseguenza i produttori ad incrementare la qualità del loro *output* attraverso le proprie capacità economiche e le proprie scelte. Questo

sistema diventa più efficace se inserito in uno sfondo caratterizzato da un mercato decentralizzato che dà un valore costante alle variabili economiche. Come già citato precedentemente, per garantire il buon funzionamento del mercato e lo scambio delle merci, è necessario che il governo ricopra un ruolo unicamente marginale e svolga una funzione di controllo e protezione dei diritti dei cittadini. Il capitalismo moderno ha però cambiato la visione dello Stato stesso. Se in passato lo Stato era considerato come causa principale di qualsiasi crisi economica, ora la sua presenza è totalmente accettata e riconosciuta nella sua funzione di ente regolatore.

Il successo del capitalismo va anche attribuito alla sua dinamicità ed intercambiabilità. Non è un caso, infatti, che vi siano sostanziali differenze nei sistemi capitalistici che possiamo trovare nel mondo globalizzato. Ad esempio, il sistema nordamericano e del Regno Unito prediligono “*laissez-faire*” e quindi il lasciare fare, che si distanziano particolarmente da quello tedesco, il quale favorisce, invece, un sistema basato sulla cooperazione con le istituzioni non di mercato. L’obiettivo finale del capitalismo è però sempre produrre profitto e ciò si rispecchia anche nella ideologia del sociologo Max Weber che vedeva l’uomo costantemente dominato e trascinato da questa volontà per accumulare sempre più ricchezze.

Pertanto, ci si potrebbe domandare la motivazione per cui il capitalismo abbia preso piede solamente in alcune aree geografiche e in particolare negli Stati Uniti, nel Canada e nell’Unione Europea a differenza di altre come l’India e la Cina. La risposta al quesito risiede nella forte influenza della religione cristiana cattolica e protestante e nell’approccio che queste dottrine hanno nella vita di tutti i giorni. In entrambi i casi, il legame della fede con il lavoro e l’ambiente economico in generale è sempre stato molto forte. Un esempio chiaro di ciò lo troviamo nel periodo medievale con la vendita delle indulgenze, per le quali i fedeli donavano i propri averi alla Chiesa per salvare la propria anima ed ambire ad un posto in Paradiso.

Tra i benefici apportati dal capitalismo ci sono sicuramente l’aumento dell’aspettativa di vita nel mondo, l’incremento delle ricchezze di cui hanno beneficiato anche se in maniera minore i paesi più poveri ed il fenomeno della globalizzazione. Quest’ultimo ha permesso la diffusione di tecnologie avanzate e di servizi, utili e necessari alla semplificazione e al miglioramento della vita di tutti i giorni. L’innovazione gioca un ruolo fondamentale in questo ambito motivando l’incremento costante della qualità di un prodotto o di un

servizio mediante un “effetto a cascata”. Il capitalismo è da molti anche considerato il sistema economico per eccellenza, capace di affrontare il riscaldamento globale, conseguentemente dal fatto che non può esistere business senza un ambiente funzionale ed equilibrato. Il sistema capitalista potrebbe, inoltre, far fronte anche alla “*tragedy of commons*” nel momento in cui una privatizzazione di larga scala venisse messa in atto. A tal proposito, si può certamente affermare che questo sia uno dei motivi per cui il capitalismo è attualmente così egemonico e dominante.

Non è però ovviamente esente da notevoli difetti, quali in primis il concetto di interesse personale così predominante ed estremamente antropocentrico. In realtà, nessuna comunità potrebbe fiorire in un contesto dominato da un individualismo così radicalizzato, perché causerebbe soltanto ulteriori divisioni, tensioni e conflitti. Altresì, la diffusa ideologia per cui la crescita economica non dovrebbe avere limiti è oggettivamente irrealizzabile, oltre che estremamente dannosa, in quanto il nostro pianeta non è più in grado di sostenere questi ritmi individuali così accelerati per i quali sarebbero necessarie quantità colossali di risorse e di energie di cui ovviamente non disponiamo. Tenuto conto che non siamo in grado di concedere alla nostra terra il tempo necessario per potersi rigenerare per quanto noi effettivamente e così velocemente consumiamo, ne consegue che “*l’overshoot day*”, il giorno che indica la fine delle fonti rinnovabili rigenerabili in un anno solare, ricorre adesso in una data antecedente rispetto a quella dell’anno precedente. Affinché si possa garantire una corretta salvaguardia e cura dell’ambiente sarebbero necessarie l’attuazione di politiche volte ad osservare i cambiamenti a lungo termine nei nostri comportamenti e nelle nostre scelte. Il capitalismo moderno, invece, predilige un interesse unicamente a breve termine, non considerando l’enorme danno che si arreca all’ambiente con il consumismo e la produzione sfrenata necessaria a soddisfare i bisogni legati alla nostra realtà quotidiana.

Il capitolo viene concluso con una riflessione etico-politica riguardante il cambiamento climatico. Persino la privatizzazione dei beni comuni non sarebbe attuabile, visto che sfocerebbe nello sfruttamento più completo della natura, allorquando il suo valore inestimabile non dovrebbe essere invece di proprietà alcuna. Difatti, nessuna somma di denaro può generare la vita o essere paragonata alla bellezza della natura di questo pianeta. Poco realistica potrebbe essere la visione ambiziosa di poter colonizzare un altro pianeta, direi quasi in maniera illogica e fuori dalla nostra portata. Prendendo questo in considerazione, la presente dissertazione



vuole rivalutare il ruolo della Terra nel nostro sistema planetario dando così la giusta priorità dovuta essendo necessaria alla salvaguardia della sopravvivenza della specie umana.

All'interno del terzo capitolo, vi è una considerazione della teoria eco-socialista nella quale è valutata sia la sua sostenibilità ambientale, accolta e promossa dagli scienziati, sia alcuni dei fondamentali principi socialisti. Questo permetterebbe ad un'eventuale società eco-socialista di eradicare sia le diseguaglianze all'interno di esse e fra gli stati stessi. Segue poi, una critica generale sulla tendenza del capitalismo a mercificare tutto e di plasmare quindi il contesto socioculturale in cui gli esseri umani sono considerati mere risorse. Questo potrebbe essere contrastato mediante una pianificazione democratica, che permetterebbe un passaggio eccezionale da una società capitalista a una più eco-socialista. Tuttavia, gli ideali capitalisti verrebbero respinti insieme all'antropocentrismo radicalizzato, agli estremismi facilmente reperibili nelle democrazie moderne ed a uno Stato poco presente. Il tutto a favore, invece, di un potere decisionale ripartito nelle mani di tanti e favorendo così una maggiore uguaglianza tra tutti gli individui della stessa società.

Per conoscere le origini dell'eco socialismo bisogna osservare gli studi di Michael Löwy, James O'Connor e Jovel Kavel, dai quali si evince un modello politico che propone l'idea della riduzione del lavoro ideata da Marx. In cui si evince la pianificazione democratica in ogni aspetto della società, la sua critica e la sostituzione della considerazione della teoria capitalista dei beni che hanno un valore basato sulla loro domanda e non sulla loro qualità o necessità. Successivamente, il manifesto eco socialista "*Copenaghen 2049*" viene analizzato nel dettaglio per permettere una maggiore attenzione al lettore di valutare e comprendere al meglio la situazione attuale. Il manifesto propone, inoltre, una critica alla risposta capitalista al cambiamento climatico, poiché consente alle imprese di continuare ad inquinare senza apportare alcun cambiamento volto alla salvaguardia dell'ambiente. Causando così l'inondazione delle città costiere, una perdita incalcolabile per le future generazioni che non potranno dunque godere delle bellezze delle città ormai perdute e sommerse.

La pianificazione democratica viene dunque valutata ed analizzata nel dettaglio proponendo così gli innumerevoli cambiamenti positivi che apporterebbe all'apparato democratico e politico delle democrazie di tutto il mondo. Non da meno, le democrazie che più beneficiano della pianificazione democratica sono quelle dell'Unione Europea dove le tendenze estremiste e populiste si diffondono in maniera esponenziale. Quanto appena detto è direttamente proporzionale con la perdita di fiducia nella politica e nel suo autoreferenzialismo.

La pianificazione democratica è considerata dunque un obiettivo particolarmente impegnativo da conseguire in special modo con l'uso estensivo della democrazia. Soprattutto in una società capitalista, dove gli interessi di una singola impresa o corporazione sono preferiti rispetto a quelli della società e della collettività. L'applicazione della pianificazione democratica è particolarmente difficile da attuare se non addirittura impossibile in alcuni casi. Pertanto, qualsiasi sistema che toglie potere a queste corporazioni o imprese sarà impossibilitato ad essere applicato tenuto conto che essi accetterebbero un nuovo sistema solo ed esclusivamente se apporterebbe benefici e guadagni a loro stessi.

Segue, poi, una sezione dedicata all'industria pubblicitaria ed i suoi effetti sulla società. Moltissime convinzioni e modi di agire del consumatore sono influenzati dall'industria del marketing, che spinge quest'ultimo a consumare ignorando le conseguenze che ciò ha sul clima e non fornendogli le informazioni necessarie per analizzare oggettivamente il fenomeno per attuare scelte responsabili. È stato dunque proposto come, se impiegate correttamente, le pubblicità possano avere effetti positivi e significativi sulla consapevolezza della popolazione di una nazione. Per questo è urgente una riforma di queste ultime, affinché possano essere più informative sulle loro possibili conseguenze sul clima a discapito del loro scopo lucrativo.

La dissertazione si conclude con una ricapitolazione di ciò che è stato enunciato nella tesi, valutando dunque l'eco-socialismo come possibile sostituzione del capitalismo e come valida possibilità di combattere il cambiamento climatico. A seguire, viene proposta la necessità di una maggiore ricerca e studio sia in ambito eco-socialista che in quello riguardante la pianificazione democratica prima che possano essere sperimentati, approvati e messi in atto.