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The mechanism of industrial capitalism has been producing a nasty byproduct over the last century and a half, creating income inequalities, and national resource deficiencies,¹ and an overall ill ease amongst the working class.²

Here we must ask the questions: Can inequality be held back by implementing a new way of producing capital? Can an ecological collapse be prevented with capitalistic ventures? The machinery of capitalism might lead to ecological doom because of depletion of resources and mass inequality. Is this true or not? What do we want to defend? What data would we use? In order to assess this situation we wish to turn towards the fields of sociology, anthropology, and economics. Analyzing these findings of values of justice, equality, and change, specifically concerning markets and economies, we wonder if we can fix capitalism's course through its own institutions.

According to the World Values Survey findings from 2011, most Americans value economic growth over environmental concerns, with 60.2% of the surveyed believing in prioritizing job growth over environmental protections.³ Concerning capitalism and income

¹ <http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/10/12/125017>

"This seems a reasonable approach in view of the recent evidence reporting multiple environmental and social crises, of which climate change is but one. For example, from 2009, the Stockholm Resilience Centre have showed that, as a result of human activities, we have now either crossed, or are imminently in danger of crossing, nine earth system 'planetary boundaries' within which humanity can safely live (Rockström et al 2009, Steffen et al 2015)."

² A report of feelings of happiness in the United States, in comparison to income level, show that individuals in the 9th and 10th level of income according to the World Values Survey are significantly happier, with 75.6% in the ninth, and 58.3% in the tenth, as compared to only 30.2% in the lowest income rung self-identifying as "very happy".

Inglehart, R., C. Haerpfer, A. Moreno, C. Welzel, K. Kizilova, J. Diez-Medrano, M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin & B. Puranen et al. (eds.). 2014. World Values Survey: Round Six - Country-Pooled Datafile Version: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>. Madrid: JD Systems Institute, Section V10.

³ Ibid, section V81.

inequality, 23% of the surveyed believe that competition is good and only 4.5% of the surveyed think that the rich get wealthy at the expense of others.⁴ Despite this, 55% of people have “not very much” confidence in major companies.⁵ This data may have changed within the past seven years as this survey was last conducted in 2011 and is additionally limited by its sample of 2,232 participants. What this data shows is that these American participants have a tendency to prioritize the economy over the environment and that they may not be willing to sacrifice their economic well being for environmental wellbeing. This data emphasizes the question of whether capitalism can solve our current environmental crisis.

	TOTAL	Country Code		
		China	Tunisia	United States
People can only get rich at the expense of others	5.6%	1.6%	15.6%	4.5%
2	2.4%	2.2%	2.8%	2.5%
3	4.3%	4.6%	4.1%	4.0%
4	5.2%	4.5%	4.4%	6.4%
5	13.9%	8.4%	14.9%	19.0%
6	11.2%	9.2%	8.8%	14.6%
7	12.5%	13.6%	9.9%	12.7%
8	15.0%	20.2%	6.6%	14.1%
9	7.9%	11.2%	2.5%	7.3%
Wealth can grow so there's enough for everyone	13.6%	10.6%	22.2%	12.0%
No answer	3.3%	5.3%	0.7%	2.8%
Don't know	5.1%	8.8%	7.6%	-
(N)	(5,737)	(2,300)	(1,205)	(2,232)
Mean	6.49	6.96	5.94	6.36
Standard Deviation	2.54	2.23	3.16	2.37
Base mean	(5,251)	(1,976)	(1,106)	(2,169)

Selected samples: China 2013, Tunisia 2013, United States 2011

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Redistributive programs do mitigate environmental injustices, but it does not go far enough as in other systems of economic functioning - it's hard to find a balance between minimizing harm and maintaining a capitalistic economy. In a series of 140 interviews with policy makers, officials, and civil society leaders, spanning across both Capitalist and Socialist

⁴ Ibid, 99.

⁵ Ibid, 101.

⁶ Ibid 120.

countries, by Karen Bell, she found that changes are more easily made in countries where the government takes direct action.⁷ In socialist countries, the problem is of the campaign, which is necessary in order to convince people to make a change over to environmentally friendly practices, propaganda must be deployed and public opinion, changed.⁸ Capitalist countries regularly turn environmental protection into business incentives and can only change so much about the environmental condition.

One of the solutions of our current capitalist system of environmental degradation and inequality is that posed by Natural Capitalists. Written by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and Hunter Lovins, *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*, portrays numerous opportunities to reform capitalist production and business. Natural Capitalism is defined by its four overarching principles: “redesigning industry on biological models with closed loops and zero waste; shifting from the sale of goods (for example, light bulbs) to the provision of services (illumination); and reinvesting in the natural capital that is the basis of future prosperity”⁹ However, much like policy within Socialist countries, this “revolution” would require a reshaping of people’s values and worldview.

Ultimately, it seems that enacting radical environmental protections requires a remodeling of human values and worldviews. Implementation of protections and radical changes in current systems of production and industry is particularly important in this present moment of existential anxieties. Capitalism doesn’t have to be the problem, but its current implementation is not equipped to prioritize environmental protections.

⁷ <http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/10/12/125017>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <http://www.natcap.org/sitepages/pid5.php>

