

SUFFICIENCY AND THE SHIFTING DYNAMICS OF EFFICIENCY: A POLITICAL ECONOMY AND JURISPRUDENCE REVIEW

Muhammad Syarahil Mutianwar Efendi

Department of Administrative Law, Faculty of Law, Universitas Sebelas Maret,
Surakarta, Indonesia.

syarahilefendi@student.uns.ac.id

Reza Ilham Maulana

Department of Administrative Law, Faculty of Law, Universitas Sebelas Maret,
Surakarta, Indonesia.

rezailhammaulana@student.uns.ac.id

Abstract

Sufficiency is a concept that challenges efficiency, a rational consequence that hitherto grows within the logic of capitalism. Without efficiency, the structure of capitalism collapses, as it has become the ontological prerequisite sustaining the structure of production, distribution, and accumulation of capital; Contrarily, efficiency leads to the collapse of the Earth's systems, as it inherently overlooks ecological boundaries and fails to recognize the limits of nature as a fundamental principle in economic activity. This article examines, from a normative perspective, the transformative potential of sufficiency through an epistemic assertion within political economy and jurisprudence. It explores how this concept can redefine the relationship between economics, ethics, and ecology, advocating for a more balanced approach to socio-ecological justice that benefits both humans and nature.

Keywords: *Sufficiency, Efficiency, Political Economy, Jurisprudence, Justice.*

TEORI SUFISIENSI DAN DINAMIKA YANG BERGESER DALAM TEORI EFISIENSI: TINJAUAN EKONOMI POLITIK DAN DOKTRIN HUKUM

Intisari

Sufisiensi adalah sebuah konsep yang menantang prinsip efisiensi, sebuah konsekuensi rasional yang sampai saat ini tumbuh dalam logika kapitalisme. Tanpa efisiensi, struktur kapitalisme akan runtuh, karena telah menjadi prasyarat ontologis yang menopang struktur produksi, distribusi, dan akumulasi kapital; sebaliknya, efisiensi menyebabkan runtuhnya sistem bumi karena secara inheren mengabaikan batas-batas ekologis dan gagal mengenali batas-batas alam sebagai prinsip fundamental dalam aktivitas ekonomi. Artikel ini mengkaji, dari perspektif normatif, potensi transformatif dari konsep sufisiensi melalui argumentasi epistemik dalam ekonomi politik dan filsafat hukum. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana konsep sufisiensi dapat mendefinisikan kembali hubungan antara ekonomi, etika, dan ekologi, mengadvokasi pendekatan yang lebih seimbang terhadap keadilan sosio-ekologis bagi manusia dan alam.

Kata Kunci: Sufisiensi, Efisiensi, Ekonomi Politik, Etika, Keadilan.

A. Introduction

As a historically established hegemonic structure, capitalism grows on the grounds of efficiency as its structural imperative.¹ More than an operational principle, it is a rational consequence of the exploitative logic of capitalism.² Within this structure, efficiency acts as a *conditio sine qua non* for the survivability of the capitalist mode of production, inherent in the dynamics of capitalism.³ However, efficiency is not exclusive to capitalism; it is a universal imperative for any system of production. What sets capitalism apart is its ability to perfect and amplify efficiency, even in its most basic forms.⁴ Without efficiency, the structure of capitalism collapses, as efficiency has become the ontological prerequisite that sustains the structure of production, distribution, and accumulation of capital, without this, capitalism's legitimacy and continuity would be destroyed. Pavón-Cuéllar critiques efficiency as a violent structure that reduces being to possessing and accumulating under neoliberalism.⁵ He argues that this acceleration excludes the subject, leaving no time for existence beyond labor and consumption.⁶ Heretofore, Rossi proposes three ontological "dispositifs" of capitalism: embeddedness, dispossession, and subsumption, which contribute to capitalism's process of subjectification.⁷ These perspectives collectively suggest that efficiency has become a prerequisite for sustaining capitalism's structure, potentially at the

1 Coleman Rainey, Monika Egerer, and Dustin Herrmann, *Restoring Soil and Supporting Food Sovereignty across Urban–Rural Landscapes: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, vol. 1 (Florida: CRC Press, 2020).

2 William Mitchell and Martin Watts, "Efficiency Under Capitalist Production: A Critique and Reformulation," *Review of Radical Political Economics* 17, no. 1–2 (1985): 212–20; Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism, Foreign Affairs* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985).

3 Sudha Vasan, "Ecological Crisis and the Logic of Capital," *Sociological Bulletin* 67, no. 3 (2018): 275–289, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0038022918796382>; Mariko Lin Frame, *Ecological Imperialism, Development, and the Capitalist World-System: Cases from Africa and Asia, 1st Ed.*, 1st ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023).

4 Edward Tverdek, "The Efficiency Imperative: Five Questions," *Science & Society* 68, no. 4 (2004): 447–74.

5 David Pavón-Cuéllar, "Ontología Del Capitalismo: Violencia Estructural y Reducción Del Ser al Goce Del Capital," *Castalia: Revista de Psicología de La Academia* 39 (2022): 9–18.

6 David Pavón-Cuéllar, "The Subject Lagging Behind the Acceleration of Neoliberal Capitalist Discourse," *International Review of Theoretical Psychologies* 1, no. 2 (2021): 123–34.

7 Ugo Rossi, "On the Varying Ontologies of Capitalism: Embeddedness, Dispossession, Subsumption," *Progress in Human Geography* 37, no. 3 (2012): 348–65.

cost of human subjectivity and environmental sustainability.

The concept of Kaldor-Hicks efficiency, central to neoliberal policies and international economic governance, has exacerbated existing inequalities and contributed to the widening wealth gap, particularly in recent decades.⁸ As a key element embedded in the global economic architecture, it has played a determinative and instrumental role over the past three centuries. From a historical-structural perspective, it has catalyzed three industrial revolutions, triggered geopolitical dynamics that culminated in two world wars,⁹ as well as formed the foundation that sharpened the ideological-economic competition between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, as it was fundamentally an ideological conflict rooted in competing economic and political philosophies¹⁰ which both ideologies put efficiency as its ultimate pillar. Furthermore, efficiency has operated as a key driver in the development of third-world countries in Asia and Africa through the schemes of ‘intercontinental trade’ global capitalism¹¹ as neoliberal globalization has allowed capital’s unfettered access to and exploitation of nature across the planet, and neoliberal development policies have reinforced a contemporary form of ecological imperialism where the environments of the Global South are enclosed and exploited, and local communities are dispossessed of their land and livelihoods.¹² Efficiency also deepened antagonism in the US-China trade war as the evolution of the world economy has seen significant changes in industrial structures with the rise of China challenging the US-led capitalist order,¹³ and accelerated the phenomenon of global economic slowdown, a downward shift of its growth path and a consequent decline

8 Eli Cook, “Efficiently Unequal: The Global Rise of Kaldor-Hicks Neoliberalism,” *Global Intellectual History* 9, no. 1–2 (2024): 247–69.

9 Alexander Anievas, *Capital, the State, and War: Class Conflict and Geopolitics in the Thirty Years’ Crisis, 1914-1945* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2014).

10 David Engerman, “Ideology and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917–1962,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 20–43.

11 Patrick Karl O’Brien, “Intercontinental Trade and the Development of the Third World since the Industrial Revolution,” *Journal of World History* 8, no. 1 (March 1997): 75–133

12 Mariko Lin Frame, *Ecological Imperialism, Development, and the Capitalist World-System* (Oxford: Routledge, 2022).

13 Terutomo Ozawa, *The Evolution of the World Economy* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016).

despite technological progress, which Milenko Popović describe as a secular stagnation.¹⁴

It is self-evident that the exploitative application of capitalist efficiency—heedless of ecological limits—has resulted in significant planetary degradation. Foster *et al.* (2010), for instance, argue that capitalism’s pursuit of individual wealth at the expense of public and natural wealth creates an irreparable “ecological rift.”¹⁵ This rift leads to unsustainable agricultural practices and unequal exchange between core and periphery nations.¹⁶ Moreover, Sudha Vasan views the contradictions between capitalism and efforts to address planetary boundaries, noting that solutions often shift problems rather than resolve them.¹⁷

A recent assessment identified nine planetary boundaries that were scientifically designed to keep the biosphere in equilibrium.¹⁸ These boundaries encompass a range of environmental processes, including climate change, ocean acidification, stratospheric ozone depletion, biogeochemical cycles (nitrogen and phosphorus), freshwater use, land-use change, biodiversity loss, atmospheric aerosol loading, and chemical pollution. In fact, six of these boundaries have already been exceeded, pushing Earth into a state of planetary risk.¹⁹ The global nitrogen-phosphorus imbalance, driven by intensified agriculture and industrialization, poses severe risks to ecosystems and food security.²⁰ Land use changes and chemical pollution further disrupt natural

14 Milenko Popović, “Technological Progress, Globalization, and Secular Stagnation,” *Journal of Central Banking Theory and Practice* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 59–100, <https://doi.org/10.2478/jcbtp-2018-0004>.no. 1 (January 1, 2018)

15 Vasan, “Ecological Crisis”; Jason W. Moore, “Ecology, Capital, and the Nature of Our Times: Accumulation & Crisis in the Capitalist World-Ecology,” *Journal of World-Systems Research* 17, no. 1 (2011): 107–46; John Bellamy Foster and Brett Clark, “The Expropriation of Nature,” *Monthly Review* 69, no. 10 (2018).

16 Foster and Clark, “The Expropriation.”

17 Vasan, “Ecological Crisis and the Logic of Capital” 7-12.

18 Katherine Richardson et al., “Earth beyond Six of Nine Planetary Boundaries,” *Science Advances* 9, no. 37 (2023).

19 Johan Rockström et al., “A Safe Operating Space for Humanity,” *Nature* 461 (2009): 472–475.

20 Josep Peñuelas and Jordi Sardans, “The Global Nitrogen-Phosphorus Imbalance,” *Science* 375, no. 6578 (January 21, 2022): 266–67, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abl4827>.

processes,²¹ while ocean acidification approaches a tipping point.²²

The transgression of multiple boundaries underscores the urgency of addressing anthropogenic impacts on the Earth system to maintain planetary homeostasis and ensure a safe environment for human development.²³ In this respect, the ecological crisis poses a significant threat to human civilization and biodiversity, necessitating a shift in ethical frameworks.

In the context of national-state developmentalism of the Global South, the application of the concept of efficiency becomes morally challenged when we question the internal contradictions that arise: How can it encourage industrial growth, while many small local industries die out due to unfair competition? How can it stimulate GDP growth while income inequality continues to rise, marginalizing the lower middle class who are increasingly worse off?²⁴ Metropolitans as capital hubs are prioritized, while villages, vital for agrarian and food resources, face development stagnation. Growing cities pressure rural areas, driving land use changes and intensified agriculture near urban centers. The urban-rural divide is further complicated by soil degradation and food insecurity, which span both landscapes and disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.²⁵ The push for greater industrial electrification as a symbol of industrial progress is causing environmental degradation that reduces the quality of life and lowers life expectancy due to uncontrolled pollution from fossil-based power plants, as externalities from coal-based power generation negatively impact life expectancy and increase infant mortality.

21 Vasan, "Ecological Crisis"; Bert Olivier, "Nature, Capitalism, and the Future of Humankind," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 2 (2005): 121–35; Moore, "Ecology, Capital, and the Nature"; Richard York, Brett Clark, and John Bellamy Foster, *The Ecological Rift: Capitalisms War on the Earth* (New York: NYU Press, 2010).

22 Richardson et al., "Earth Beyond."

23 Johan Rockström et al., "A Safe Operating Space"; Richardson et al., "Earth Beyond."

24 Chris Pinney, "Economic Growth and Inequality: Why It Matters and What's Coming Next," *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance* 26, no. 2 (June 2014): 30–39, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jacf.12064>

25 Julia M. Gohlke et al., "Estimating the Global Public Health Implications of Electricity and Coal Consumption," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 119, no. 6 (2011): 821–26; Mohammad Mafizur Rahman, Rezwana Rana, and Rasheda Khanam, "Determinants of Life Expectancy in Most Polluted Countries: Exploring the Effect of Environmental Degradation," *PLOS ONE* 17, no. 1 (2022).

The ecological realities of the planet today make clear the imperative to deconstruct the hegemony of efficiency as the central paradigm in the economic system and replace—if not compliment—it radically with the principle of sufficiency, which operates on a more fundamental basis of morality. Sufficiency principles such as restraint and precaution address critical environmental trends and engage with overconsumption, compelling decision-makers to consider long-term risks and externalized costs.²⁶ The idea of sufficiency corridors proposes a space between meeting basic needs and avoiding excess, suggesting a transformation that subordinates techno-economic approaches to a sufficiency framework.²⁷

The central question that arises is whether the principle of sufficiency can entirely replace the principle of efficiency within a structure dominated by capitalistic logic. Ideally, it should, given that the two principles are fundamentally incompatible both ontologically and epistemologically. In contrast to the exploitative efficiency paradigm, sufficiency seeks to redefine the human-nature relationship by prioritizing moral and ecological considerations at its center. It emphasizes doing well within ecological constraints rather than maximizing production and consumption.²⁸ This principle challenges the dominant efficiency-driven, expansionist logic of modern society and capitalism.²⁹

Sufficiency is not merely a technical revision of efficiency. Rather, it represents a new framework that reimagines the relationship between economics, ethics, and ecology. As Jungell-Michelsson & Heikkurinen argue, sufficiency is linked to the concepts of capital complementarity, social metabolism, and altruism. It serves as both a means and an end to align production and consumption with ecological limits, necessitating a systemic shift across economic scales and actors.³⁰ This is not merely a euphemism

26 Princen, “Principles for Sustainability: From Cooperation and Efficiency to Sufficiency,” 33–50.

27 Richard Bärnthaler, “When Enough Is Enough: Introducing Sufficiency Corridors to Put Techno-Economism in Its Place,” *Ambio* 53, no. 7 (July 2024): 960–69, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-024-02027-2>.

28 Thomas Princen, “Principles for Sustainability: From Cooperation and Efficiency to Sufficiency,” *Global Environmental Politics* 3, no. 1 (2003): 33–50.

29 Princen, “Principles for Sustainability.”

30 Jessica Jungell-Michelsson and Pasi Heikkurinen, “Sufficiency: A Systematic Literature Review,”

masking capitalist exploitation but a paradigm that, while not yet fully implemented, has transformative potential in reformulating the concept of justice. However, resistance to this shift is expected, as it contradicts deeply ingrained societal norms and structures.³¹ Furthermore, the implications of adopting the principle of sufficiency will influence discourses in political economy and law. The limitations of the study include the need for further research on the implementation of the principle of sufficiency, as well as the need for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between efficiency and sufficiency.

This whole dynamic, in essence, exposes a fundamental problem that is often derivative in developmentalism, revealing its contradictory nature in the pursuit of progress. The crisis reflects the exhaustion of the prevailing model of accumulation in an efficiency-intensive economy.³² Without a comprehensive approach, efficiency will only exacerbate the detrimental nature of capitalism,³³ triggering a multidimensional crisis that further undermines the very essence of humanity.

In this article, we aim to bridge the gap between the epistemic discourse of political economy and jurisprudence. The first dimension is political economy, which requires the re-examination of outdated theories in it to expose, for example, the structural contradiction, inconsistencies, and incoherencies in the economic interaction between state, market, and society, which have been the result of the logic of capitalist efficiency. The second dimension is jurisprudence, which will focus on the epistemic assertion of legal formulation and the court's application of the principle of economic efficiency, primarily through the writings and critiques of leading legal scholars. This assertion would open a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between power

Ecological Economics 195, no. 1 (2022): 1–13.

31 Thomas Princen, "Sufficiency and the State: A Prospective Project," *Frontiers in Sustainability* 3 (2022): 1–12.

32 Gemma Cairó-i-Céspedes and David Castells-Quintana, "Dimensions of the Current Systemic Crisis: Capitalism in Short Circuit?," *Progress in Development Studies* 16, no. 1 (January 2016): 1–23; Arif Dirlik, "Developmentalism," *Interventions* 16, no. 1 (January 2014): 30–48.

33 Jason Hickel et al., "Imperialist Appropriation in the World Economy: Drain from the Global South through Unequal Exchange, 1990–2015," *Global Environmental Change* 73 (2022): 1–13; Jason Hickel et al., "National Responsibility For Ecological Breakdown: A Fair-Shares Assessment Of Resource Use, 1970–2017," *The Lancet Planetary Health* 6, no. 4 (2022): 1–8.

practices, written law, and legal dogmas, principles, and theories. Therefore, the concept of sufficiency is not merely a theoretical idea but could serve as a transformative conundrum that challenges and redefines existing dominant structures.

This article will explore the epistemic assertions twofold: first, it revisits outdated theories within political economy, examining the structural inconsistencies in the economic interactions between the state, market, and society, driven by capitalist efficiency logic. Second, the article explores jurisprudence, focusing on the epistemic foundations of legal formulation and the application of economic efficiency by courts. It engages with the critiques and writings of leading legal scholars to understand how the principle of sufficiency can challenge and transform existing legal frameworks. This dual approach—philosophical analysis of political economy and jurisprudential analysis of legal practices—aims to provide a deeper understanding of the interplay between power, law, and socio-ecological structures.

B. The Political Economy of Sufficiency

In this section, we re-examine the nature of political economy, from the dimensions of resource use, growth and development, market structure and governance, and inequality. Rather than demonizing the principle of efficiency, we aim to critically assess the principle of efficiency, emphasizing how, despite driving growth and progress, it in parallel undermined ecological systems and, more importantly, failed to elevate the social standards of many societies, whereto welfare economics generally aspires.

Sufficiency, in its literal sense, entails an adoption that not only touches on various scholarly doctrines, but also crosses the boundaries of traditional methodologies, from political economy to jurisprudence, including its internalization into linguistic studies as it addresses challenges in translation and interpretation across cultural boundaries.³⁴ Indeed, sufficiency means to be adequate. However, interpreting it as adequate can lead to complacency and stagnation—whereto the imperative to dismantle the hegemony of efficiency requires a significant paradigm shift. The translation of political concepts

³⁴ Margarita Georgieva and Ivan G. Iliev, “Linguistics as a crossroad between law, politics, and conflict,” *Opera Slavica*, 30 no. 2 (2020): 49–53.

between languages can be problematic, with competing theories suggesting either universal translatability or linguistic relativity.³⁵ Many studies also present sufficiency as a dual concept (voluntary and obligatory) that challenges consumerism and requires a reorganization of consumption priorities.³⁶

Jorgensen argues that consumption and concomitant environmental degradation are problems embedded within the context of hierarchical inter-state relationships and intra-national characteristics in the modern world-system.³⁷ This is a common topic in Anthropocene studies or anthropogenically caused ecological change. But what specific human activities contribute to this degradation? This lies in the economics of resource use.

A tool to quantify the aggregate environmental impact of production and consumption, specifically measuring land and water use, as well as waste assimilation is now available with the Ecological Footprint (hereinafter referred to as EF). The EF for a particular population is defined as the total “area of productive land and water ecosystems required to produce the resources that the population consumes and assimilate the wastes that the population produces, wherever on Earth that land and water may be located.”³⁸

Based on EF, many studies found that global resource consumption and ecological degradation continue to exceed sustainable levels, driven primarily by high-income nations. Sellés study shows that the top 20 countries account for over 70% of global resource consumption across categories like energy, fisheries, and forestry.³⁹ High-income nations are responsible for 74% of excess material use, with the US and EU-28 countries contributing 27% and 25%, respectively.⁴⁰ As of 2003, humanity’s ecological footprint surpassed

35 Richard Oliver Collin, “Moving Political Meaning across Linguistic Frontiers,” *Political Studies* 61, no. 2 (2013): 282–300.

36 Hélène Gorge et al., “What Do We Really Need? Questioning Consumption Through Sufficiency,” *Journal of Macromarketing* 35, no. 1 (March 2015): 11–22.

37 Andrew K. Jorgenson, “Consumption and Environmental Degradation: A Cross-National Analysis of the Ecological Footprint,” *Social Problems* 50, no. 3 (August 2003): 374–94

38 William E. Rees, “Eco-Footprint Analysis: Merits and Brickbats,” *Ecological Economics* 32, no. 3 (March 2000): 371–74.

39 Hendrik Selles, “The Relative Impact of Countries on Global Natural Resource Consumption and Ecological Degradation,” *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology* 20, no. 2 (2013): 97–108.

40 Hickel et al., “Imperialist Appropriation”; Hickel et al., “National Responsibility.”

Earth's biocapacity by 2.9 billion global hectares, with carbon absorption representing nearly half of the total footprint.⁴¹ This unsustainable trend is pushing several planetary boundaries beyond safe limits.⁴²

Drawing from Sellés study, the global distribution of natural resource consumption and ecological degradation is markedly imbalanced, with the top 20 countries—including China, the United States, India, Brazil, and Russia—contributing to over 70% of global resource use across all categories and more than 74% of ecological degradation in key indicators.⁴³ These nations collectively consume 75% or more of global resources in multiple sectors, underscoring their significant ecological footprint. As a result, approximately 60% of the planet's ecosystem services have been degraded, primarily due to unsustainable patterns of resource exploitation. Conservation efforts, however, remain inadequate, with only 12.7% of terrestrial areas and 1.6% of oceanic areas under formal protection, falling short of established global targets. Furthermore, half of the planet's most critical biodiversity areas remain unprotected, highlighting the pressing need for more robust and equitable strategies for resource management and environmental conservation.⁴⁴

Within the framework of global inequality analysis, we must understand the deepening phenomenon of a progressive slowdown in human living standards globally, even with indications of regression in some regions.⁴⁵ Income inequality has risen in most OECD, transitional, and many developing countries since the 1980s, with 70% of 73 studied nations showing worsening inequality.⁴⁶ This phenomenon, which can be empirically traced through indicators such as the increasing prevalence of substandard

41 Justin Kitzes et al., "Shrink and Share: Humanity's Present and Future Ecological Footprint," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 363, no. 1491 (2008): 467–75.

42 Arjen Y. Hoekstra and Thomas O. Wiedmann, "Humanity's Unsustainable Environmental Footprint," *Science* 344, no. 6188 (2014): 1114–17.

43 Hendrik Selles, "The Relative Impact of Countries on Global Natural Resource Consumption and Ecological Degradation," *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology* 20, no. 2 (2013): 97–108.

44 Selles, "The Relative Impact."

45 Mark McGillivray and Anthony Shorrocks, "Inequality and Multidimensional Well-Being," *Review of Income and Wealth* 51, no. 2 (2005): 193–99.

46 Giovanni Andrea Cornia (ed.), *Inequality Growth and Poverty in an Era of Liberalization and Globalization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

housing, the degradation of educational accessibility and affordability, and the phenomenon of mass malnutrition – in India, wealth-based inequality in child malnutrition accounts for about 25% of overall inequality, with between-group inequality contributing the major part⁴⁷ – reflects a fundamental failure in the distribution of wealth. Poverty alone explains more than half of the inequality in malnutrition, justifying the poverty-nutrition inequality linkage.⁴⁸ Moreover, limited access to adequate health infrastructure emphasizes the paradox of modern development in an era of economic efficiency. This reality is not an anomaly but rather a logical consequence of applying the principle of efficiency that has dominated contemporary economic discourse. This principle, both in its classic *laissez-faire* formulation that assumes that individual economic actions will naturally reach an equilibrium point in the market system, as well as in the variant of social economics – that emphasizes the role of state intervention to efficientize the public sector, has proven to have failed to meet basic human needs universally – as in the present context of global markets and of pluralistic societies it is illusory for a democratic state to aim at implementing at the same time economic efficiency and social justice.⁴⁹

Furthermore, the current discussion on growth-welfare trade-offs in developing countries has not progressed to evaluate secondary needs, such as access to electricity, retirement security, and the various elements of social safety nets that characterize the modern welfare state. Many suggest that policymakers should reconsider the perceived trade-offs between growth and welfare and instead focus on integrating social safety nets and basic needs fulfillment into comprehensive strategies for economic development and poverty reduction. Herein lies the weakness of the efficiency principle in practice, which overemphasizes growth without taking into account the structural inequalities inherent in the global economic system. Therefore, it is

47 Debaprasad Sarkar and Sushil Halder, “Overall Inequality Verses Wealth Based Inequality in Child Malnutrition: An Empirical Illustration for India,” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2014, 1–32.

48 Ellen Van de Poel et al., “Socioeconomic Inequality in Malnutrition in Developing Countries,” *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 86 (2008): 282–91.

49 Feriel Kandil, *Economic Efficiency and Social Justice: A Prudential Approach for Public Action I*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2005).

necessary to develop a new paradigm that goes beyond the limits of efficiency. The principle of sufficiency, which emphasizes the fulfillment of human needs within socio-ecological limitations, prospectively offers an alternative in the discourse of development that is in harmony with ecology.

Make no mistake about it: inefficient economic activities will lead to significant economic drawbacks, undermining overall productivity and resource allocation. Thus, sufficiency acts as a complementary principle. It is about doing well within ecological constraints, challenging the dominant principle of limitless efficiency.⁵⁰ This is actually in line with the concept of welfare economics which has repeatedly relied on a fairy tale: the myth that one can achieve resource efficiency for the process of economic growth, and thereafter repair the damage caused, through the desired distribution of wealth and income through the so-called ‘redistribution of income and wealth altogether’—forms of redistribution that have somehow been purged of all incentives and disincentives.⁵¹ This redistribution is in line with the principle of sufficiency, as it includes restraint and precaution, which are necessary when biophysical underpinnings are compromised, addressing environmental criticality and responsibility evasion. However, achieving redistribution effectively requires first realizing efficiency. While efficiency addresses the optimal use of resources, sufficiency serves as a guiding principle for economic activities, ensuring that ecological and moral limits are respected throughout the process, even from its earliest stages.

Within the relation of state, market, and society, the role of the state becomes more dominant to ensure a fair distribution of resources to meet the minimum needs of each citizen, even though it may be at the expense of market efficiency.⁵² The sufficiency principle challenges the liberal idea that the free market is the best allocator of resources - in some real cases, this assumption is not proven.⁵³ Murphey further contends that the claim of optimal

50 Princen, “Principles for Sustainability.”

51 William J. Baumol, *The Free-Market Innovation Machine: Analyzing the Growth Miracle of Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

52 Princen, “Sufficiency and the State.”

53 _____, “The Illusion of Free Markets: Punishment and the Myth of Natural Order.” *Choice Reviews Online* 49, no. 01 (September 1, 2011): 49-0538-49-0538.

resource allocation in market economies is based on a fallacy and may become a liability to classical liberalism.⁵⁴ Lyon (2021) stated that the assumptions supporting the view (free market economy) are far too simple. A more realistic set of assumptions suggests the need for a variety of regulations.⁵⁵ Thus, the fulfillment of sufficiency lies in more active government intervention.⁵⁶ This is relevant in situations where social inequality is high and government intervention is directed towards distribution and access to basic needs. By this scheme, the principle – whether applied in the economic process or being a guiding principle in the judicial proceedings – aims to promote sustainability and social welfare,⁵⁷ encouraging more inclusive governance and greater state intervention⁵⁸ in the management of the economy, both to enforce regulations and to provide basic services to the people.⁵⁹ In development policy, this principle often conflicts with rapid economic growth⁶⁰ – yet it is useful in the context of optimizing policies on poverty alleviation, food security, and environmental protection,⁶¹ although this would require slower and less competitive economic growth.

The capitalist pursuit of efficiency is unable to fully see the limitations of nature as an absolute postulate in economic activity.⁶² Efficiency is a central concept in growth economics. However, the assumption that natural resources can continue to be exploited without taking into account the ecological carrying capacity is flawed.⁶³ In the context of modern economics, efficiency

54 Harcourt, *The Illusion*; Dwight Murphey, “Do Market Economies Allocate Resources Optimally?,” *Journal of Markets and Morality* 2, no. 2 (1999): 290–96

55 David Lyon, “The Free Market Fallacy,” *Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group* 64, no. 1 (2021): 36–50.

56 Violetta Igheski, “Equality, Sufficiency, and the State,” *Dialogue* 46, no. 2 (2007): 311–341.

57 Diana Mincyte et al., “Thomas Princen, *The Logic of Sufficiency*,” *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy* 3, no. 1 (April 2007): 79–86.

58 Marco Rudolf and Mario Schmidt, “Efficiency, Sufficiency and Consistency in Sustainable Development: Reassessing Strategies for Reaching Overarching Goals,” *Ecological Economics* 227 (2025).

59 Prasopchoke Mongsawad, “The Philosophy of the Sufficiency Economy: A Contribution to the Theory of Development,” *Asia-Pacific Development Journal* 17, no. 1 (2012): 123–43.

60 Charles M. A. Clark, “Development Policy and the Poor, Part 2: Preferential Option for the Poor,” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 80, no. 4 (September 2021): 1131–54

61 Y. Hossein Farzin, “Sustainability, Optimality, and Development Policy,” *Review of Development Economics* 14, no. 2 (May 2010): 262–81.

62 Cook, “Efficiently Unequal.” 247–55.

63 Kallis; Timothée Parrique, “The Political Economy of Degrowth” (Université Clermont, 2020),

is often identified with the over-exploitation of natural resources, leading to environmental degradation. Economic efficiency, in the long run, accelerates the rate of ecosystem destruction,⁶⁴ erodes biodiversity,⁶⁵ and weakens nature's regenerative capacity,⁶⁶ creating profound risks to ecological sustainability.

Ecological ethics demanding recognition of the moral limits of exploiting nature cannot be reconciled with the dogmatic pursuit of economic efficiency.⁶⁷ It has emerged from a dual foundation: the factual and the moral. The factual root of ecological ethics lies in the recognition, as evidenced by the successive reports of the Club of Rome, that our planet's finite resources cannot indefinitely sustain the global civilization's commitment to ever-expanding consumption. This unsustainable trajectory threatens the planet's livability for both humans and other species that have inhabited it since the extinction of the great reptiles.⁶⁸ Therefore, efficiency is no longer an instrument of progress but a destructive force that threatens the survival of human civilization if not prudently managed within the framework of ecological ethics.⁶⁹

In ecological ethics, there is a moral obligation to recognize and maintain ecological equilibrium. Efficiency, which tends to pursue maximum economic growth, often ignores the limits set by nature. Such thinking has traditionally focused on short-term economic benefits but fails to take into account the long-term impacts on fragile ecosystems – which has only become a specialized discourse since the 1970s following the Club of Rome's discovery of 'The Limits of Growth.'⁷⁰ As a result, the principle of efficiency is not in line with humanity's moral obligation to preserve the environment for future

<https://theses.hal.science/tel-02499463>.

64 Martin Oliver Reader et al., "Biodiversity Mediates Relationships between Anthropogenic Drivers and Ecosystem Services across Global Mountain, Island and Delta Systems," *Global Environmental Change* 78 (January 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2022.102612>.

65 Johan Rockström et al., "A Safe Operating Space."

66 Foster and Clark, "The Expropriation of Nature." 1-12.

67 Eva Pechočiaková Svitačová, "Finding Solutions to Ecological and Environmental Crisis with a New Ethics," *Studia Ecologiae et Bioethicae* 22, no. 1 (2024): 5–20.

68 Johan Rockström et al., "A Safe Operating Space"; Richardson et al., "Earth Beyond."

69 Ignacy Sachs, "Civilization Project and Ecological Prudence," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 3, no. 1 (August 1977): 1–18.

70 Donella H. Meadows et al., "The Limits to Growth. A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind,," 1971.

generations.⁷¹ Ecological ethics asserts that the protection of the planet is a duty inseparable from the well-being of humanity. In a political-economic context, efficiency cannot continue to be treated as an absolute variable that will solve everything, but rather as one aspect in the midst of increasingly uncertain social turbulence.

Sufficiency, grounded in prudent resource use, could prospectively address unsustainable resource use, market failures, and inequalities stemming from the traditional political economy. The excesses of efficiency lead to an increase in entropy that destroys the natural harmony between humans and nature.⁷² In contrast to efficiency, which discourages indefinite exploitation, the principle of sufficiency guides that welfare does not depend on material accumulation alone but on the balance between human needs and the ecological carrying capacity. Efficiency assumes that output optimization can be achieved without regard to long-term impacts on natural resources and social balance, which in practice, is unproven and tends to accelerate ecological deterioration. If, we are to say that efficiency is the kinetic energy that drives the wheels of industry and capitalism, then sufficiency is the moral gravitational force that seeks to restrain social entropy.

C. Jurisprudence and Sufficiency

The changing landscape of legal studies, influenced by internationalization and globalization, has sparked debates about methodology and interdisciplinary approaches, incorporating insights from economics, sociology, political sciences, psychology, history, and linguistics.⁷³ This principle, in turn, requires a radical paradigmatic reconstruction to overthrow the hegemony of the principle of efficiency.

The function of law lies in its strategic role as a normative foundation in formulating and directing policies to achieve social goals in the form of a just society.⁷⁴ The issue of social goals is generally the study of legal

71 David DeGrazia, *Taking Animals Seriously, Taking Animals Seriously* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

72 Georgescu Nicholas Roegen, *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

73 Philip Langbroek et al., "Editorial: Methodology of Legal Research: Challenges and Opportunities," *Utrecht Law Review* 13, no. 3 (2017): 1–8.

74 Dana Burchardt, "The Functions of Law and Their Challenges: The Differentiated Functionality

politics, not just a regulatory instrument, but also a force that directs the legal status quo, charting the direction of legal development in accordance with the *res publica*,⁷⁵ i.e., the public interest that is safeguarded and protected. As Satjipto Rahardjo states, “(Law is) the main tool in designing the future of society through a framework of rules that regulate social interaction and maintain public order.”⁷⁶ However, *quaestio iuris* often arises in the context of a mismatch between formulated legal policies and the needs of society in general and ecological ethics in particular, which often leads to systemic injustice.⁷⁷

The principle of sufficiency is relevant because legal policy must be designed not only as a tool for development and a driver of economic growth, but also capable of protecting basic needs and restraining the rate of natural destruction, in accordance with the principle of *summum bonum*, the highest good pursued by law. In many cases, inequitable access to justice and weak law enforcement reflect the failure of legal politics to create a balance between legal certainty and law enforcement (*certitudo juris*) and substantive justice (*aequitas*).⁷⁸ Therefore, the design of responsive, inclusive legal politics,⁷⁹ and uphold the principle of sufficiency⁸⁰—which is not only applicable in the economic domain—as a complement to the principle of efficiency is becoming increasingly urgent, especially in the face of ecological change. The principle of sufficiency, like any other principle, can influence the legal process, from the formulation of laws to the materials and sources for judges in deciding cases. A simple indicator to fulfill this principle, for example, is to pay attention to the feasibility and adequacy of legal substance in the context of

of International Law,” *German Law Journal* 20, no. 4 (2019): 409–29

75 Claudia Moatti, “Res Publica, Forma Rei Publicae, and SPQR,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 60, no. 1 (2017): 34–48.

76 Satjipto Rahardjo, *Negara Hukum Yang Membahagiakan Rakyatnya*, ed. Urfan (Yogyakarta: Genta Publishing, 2009).

77 Moatti, “Res Publica.”

78 Shai Agmon, “Undercutting Justice – Why Legal Representation Should Not Be Allocated by the Market,” *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 20, no. 1 (February 28, 2021): 99–123, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470594X20951886>.

79 Nofit Amir and Michal Alberstein, “Designing Responsive Legal Systems: A Comparative Study,” *Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal* 22, no. 2 (2021): 264–87.

80 Gillian Brock, *Sufficiency and Needs-Based Approaches*, ed. Serena Olsaretti, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

ensuring the standard of basic needs of the community and environmental protection.⁸¹

The concept of sufficiency rests on substantive justice, which goes beyond mere quantitative dimensions of justice. The utilitarianism paradigm, for example, focuses on achieving the greatest happiness for as many individuals as possible.⁸² In contrast, John Rawls' theory of justice emphasizes the importance of the social contract and original position, which relies on rationality as the basis of social order.⁸³ Substantive justice, according to Rawls, is aimed at achieving fair equality of opportunity and the difference principle, namely the distribution of resources that provides the greatest benefit to the most disadvantaged groups. However, Rawls' thinking tends to focus on the creation of ideal institutional structures, often ignoring the reality of systemic injustice in everyday life.⁸⁴ Ronald Dworkin, in his framework, offers a perspective that bases justice on the concept of rights as trumps, which asserts that the rights of individuals cannot be sacrificed in favor of the interests of the majority.⁸⁵ This underscores the importance of respecting human rights in every public policy decision.

In the context of substantive justice (*aequitas*), deontological discourse refers to Aristotle's classical notions of distributive justice-which ensures that resources are allocated proportionally-and corrective justice, which aims to right wrongs or injustices that have occurred.⁸⁶ To keep the principle of sufficiency in place, it is necessary to apply procedural justice that ensures the legal process is fair, transparent and free from ambiguity. In Kantian ethics,

81 Jutta Brunnée, "International Environmental Law and Climate Change: Reflections on Structural Challenges in a 'Kaleidoscopic' World," *Georgetown Environmental Law Review* 33, no. 1 (2020): 113–34.

82 Hossein Askari and Abbas Mirakhor, "The Utilitarian Conception of Justice and Its Critics (Bentham to Hayek)," in *Conceptions of Justice from Islam to the Present* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 131–53.

83 Samuel Freeman, "The Law of Peoples, Social Cooperation, Human Rights, and Distributive Justice," in *Justice and the Social Contract* (Oxford University Press New York, NY, 2006), 259–96.

84 Freeman, "The Law of Peoples, Social Cooperation, Human Rights, and Distributive Justice."

85 Anthony R. Reeves, "Ronald Dworkin's Theory of Rights," in *Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy*, ed. Mortimer Sellers and Stephan Kirste (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2017), 1–6.

86 Izhak Englard, "The Starting Point Aristotle's Classification of Justice," in *Corrective and Distributive Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1–10.

procedural justice is a manifestation of respect for individual freedom and autonomy, as reflected in the universal rules of law.⁸⁷ Rawls distinguishes between perfect procedural justice and imperfect procedural justice, reflecting that justice is not always achieved through perfect procedures.⁸⁸ In some cases, violations of formal procedures can be a means of achieving substantive justice. In line with this view, Lon L. Fuller through the concept of internal morality of law emphasizes that procedural justice requires consistency, transparency, and fair application of legal rules.⁸⁹

In the postmodern era, systemic injustice often occurs in the form of structural bias, limited access to justice, and weak law enforcement. These injustices, for example, manifest in policies that negatively affect vulnerable groups, as in the case of the global race to exploit nickel as a raw material for electric vehicle energy. Greenwashing policy models show a bias that ignores the impacts on vulnerable communities and the environment.⁹⁰ Within the framework of the principle of sufficiency, a close link between substantive justice and procedural justice is required. This interaction can be realized through principles such as due process which affirms respect for individual rights, proportionality which considers the substantive impact on the rights of vulnerable groups, and balancing to balance legal certainty (procedural) with social justice (substantive).⁹¹

The principle of sufficiency has a deep relevance in the design of legal policy, which should not only function as an instrument of development and an accelerator of economic growth, but also as a protector of the fundamental needs of mankind as well as a guardian of environmental sustainability. In this framework, the law must be based on the principle of *summum bonum*—the

87 Mark Dimmock and Andrew Fisher, “Kantian Ethics,” in *Ethics for A-Level*, 1st edition (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2017), 30–47.

88 Martin Gustafsson, “On Rawls’s Distinction between Perfect and Imperfect Procedural Justice,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 34, no. 2 (June 1, 2004): 300–305.

89 Kristen Rundle, “Fuller’s Internal Morality of Law,” *Philosophy Compass* 11, no. 9 (September 6, 2016): 499–506, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12338>.

90 Trissia Wijaya and Lian Sinclair, “An EV-Fix for Indonesia: The Green Development-Resource Nationalist Nexus,” *Environmental Politics* 34, no. 2 (2024): 252–74.

91 Tanto Lailam and Putri Anggia, “The Indonesian Constitutional Court Approaches the Proportionality Principle to the Cases Involving Competing Rights,” *Law Reform* 19, no. 1 (2023): 110–27.

highest good which is the ideal and final goal of the existence of the law itself. In the political perspective of law, sufficiency plays a central role, linking the fulfillment of fundamental human needs with environmental sustainability, both of which are essential pillars of the concept of sustainability.⁹² To illustrate, the issue of environmental sustainability has been a global concern since Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* in 1962. Through a poetic narrative style, Carson described the destructive impact of pesticide use, presenting a vision of spring losing its charm due to ecosystem damage. She shows how pesticides have the potential to damage the food chain and leave long-term, detrimental effects on the environment. Carson's work emphasizes that excesses in pesticide use create ecological vulnerabilities. Similarly, legal policies must be built based on rational reasons that not only refer to scientific considerations, but also include social dimensions, so as to be able to realize holistic and equitable policies.

In the context of legal politics, the adage *bonum commune communitatis*—the common good as the goal of the community, should be the normative foundation. Issues such as the environment, gender equality, and the protection of vulnerable groups should not be ignored in the policy and regulation formulation process. This principle demands substantive justice that ensures that every policy is oriented towards collective and sustainable welfare. In lawmaking procedures, the principle of sufficiency emphasizes the importance of meaningful participation. Formally, this participation involves parties who are directly affected by the policy to be regulated. This involvement provides space for vulnerable groups to voice the problems they face, so that the resulting policies reflect the real needs of the community. In this regard, Arnstien asserts that citizen participation is an instrument for controlling power, distributing authority, and creating partnerships between communities and power holders.⁹³ However, reality shows that insufficient systems are often controlled by elites, which in Winters' view can be referred

92 Rudolf and Schmidt, "Overarching Goals."

93 Avtor Zadnja, "Organizing Engagement," *Najboljše Spletne Igralnice*, January 29, 2025, <https://organizingengagement.org/models/ladder-of-citizen-participation/>.

to as oligarchies.⁹⁴ Legislative decisions are often made in a hurry and ignore the precautionary principle in order to accommodate the economic interests of a few parties. Therefore, public engagement is crucial to ensure that the legislative process does not only benefit certain groups but is also oriented towards collective welfare. In developing Arnstein's concept of participation, Robert Silverman introduces a distinction between organic grassroots participation and instrumental participation, which is more directed.⁹⁵ Both are important to ensure that citizen participation reflects authentic aspirations that support sustainability.

When the principle of sufficiency is integrated into the needs of society, law no longer merely functions as a normative instrument to regulate social order. It evolves into a dynamic system that reflects the complexity of social, economic, political realities, as well as ecological balance. In this context, the interpretation of ecological justice becomes relevant, as criticized by Naomi Klein in her work *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*.⁹⁶ Klein sharply explores the root causes of the climate crisis that stem from the global capitalist system, especially through an economic growth model based on the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.⁹⁷ Many developing countries, including Indonesia, face challenges in adopting a more environmentally friendly economic system. Instead of supporting the sustainability paradigm, the policies taken tend to lead to liberalization that reaffirms the logic of capitalism. Changes to the Minerba Law, the Job Creation Law, and the construction of the new National Capital City (IKN) are clear examples of how capitalist thinking is institutionalized through regulations and policies. This phenomenon actually contradicts Klein's idea of transitioning to an equitable economy. He also highlights the false solutions that are often proposed, such as tax subsidies for electric vehicles, which essentially do

94 A. Jeffrey Winters, *Oligarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

95 Mark Robert Silverman, "Caught in the Middle: Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and the Conflict between Grassroots and Instrumental Forms of Citizen Participation," *Community Development* 36, no. 2 (2005): 35–51

96 Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015).

97 Klein, *This Changes Everything*.

not solve the root of the problem. A more substantive solution would be to strengthen public transportation and limit private vehicle ownership. In his work, Klein also introduces the concept of “Blockadia,” a global movement against environmentally destructive natural resource extraction projects.⁹⁸ This concept highlights how communities directly affected by such projects play a leading role in the struggle for ecological justice. One obvious example is mining projects that not only exploit natural resources, but also deprive indigenous communities of their customary land rights. Through Blockadia, Klein illustrates collective resistance as an attempt to integrate social justice with ecological justice, creating a synergy capable of bringing about a new, more sustainable order.

In the legal process, the application of the principle of sufficiency as the foundation of distributive justice can be observed in depth in the case of *Port Elizabeth Municipality v Various Occupiers*.⁹⁹ The case began when a number of homeless individuals set up temporary shelters on government-owned land in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. The Port Elizabeth Municipality applied to the court to evict the occupants on the grounds of unlawful possession of the land. However, the tenants opposed the eviction action arguing that it would place them in a state of homelessness, contrary to Section 26 of the South African Constitution. This article guarantees the right to adequate housing and prohibits evictions without just cause. In its judgment, the court emphasized that the issue of eviction cannot be viewed solely through the lens of property law, but also as a human rights issue that demands a holistic approach, including sensitivity to the socio-economic complexities surrounding the parties involved.

This decision not only affirms the position of the law in protecting vulnerable groups, but also reflects the realization of the principle of sufficiency, which requires the state to ensure the distribution of sufficient resources to meet the basic needs of society. In this view, the law acts as an ethical instrument that not only enforces rules, but also upholds substantive

98 Sibon Chen, “The Rise of Blockadia as a Global Anti-Extractivism Movement,” *The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability* 26, no. 12 (2021): 1423–28.

99 Chen, “Blockadia.”

justice. As Amartya Sen states, justice is not just about perfect institutions, but also about eliminating real injustices in the world.¹⁰⁰ This case sets a valuable precedent in strengthening the protection of the right to housing in South Africa, demonstrating that the courts can play a critical role in promoting inclusive social reform. With courts as a space for constitutional reflection, legal processes can transcend technical boundaries towards upholding fundamental rights through a justice-based approach that is mindful of the human context.

At this culmination, legal politics acts as a vital normative foundation in formulating policies and guiding judges in deciding cases, aiming to achieve substantive and inclusive justice. Through the integration of the principle of sufficiency, law focuses not only on certainty and order, but also on meeting the needs of diverse communities, as well as accommodating various socio-ecological interests. The critique proposed by thinkers such as Shapiro, Sen, and Tushnet leads us to the conclusion of the need for legal adaptation and responsiveness to complex social realities. In the face of changing epochs, law must be able to transform dynamically, not only to regulate but also to prosper.

Law, in its most general critique, no longer functions as an instrument that reflects the needs and interests of society as a whole, but rather as a tool for the interests of political and economic elites. Legal processes, such as legislation that tends to be top-down and lacks active participation from the community, further exacerbate this injustice.¹⁰¹ These are only a few aspects of legal politics. Deep reforms to the politics of law are needed to restore the essence of law as a just and inclusive instrument. This reform should focus on strengthening the principles of sufficiency in every stage of legislation.¹⁰² The law must be a mechanism that accommodates the interests of all elements

100 Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2011). xvi-260.

101 Cristina Mititelu, "Citizen Participation: Rationales and Approaches," in *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*, ed. Ali Farazmand (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 1–13.

102 Wim Voermans, Hans-Martien ten Napel, and Reijer Passchier, "Combining Efficiency and Transparency in Legislative Processes," *The Theory and Practice of Legislation* 3, no. 3 (2015): 279–94.

of society and creates substantive justice that reaches all levels. Sufficiency requires that the law not only maintain social order but also serve as a means to promote welfare and human rights in a just and sustainable manner, connecting relevant economic practices with the changing realities of society.

D. Conclusion

Capitalism operates on the principle of efficiency as a structural imperative that supports the survivability of its mode of production. This principle is more than just an operational tool; it is an integral part of the logic of accumulation and exploitation inherent in capitalism. Without efficiency, the capitalist system would lose legitimacy and continuity. However, the logical consequence of capitalist efficiency applied exploitatively without regard to ecological limits is environmental meltdowns, such as climate crisis, biodiversity degradation, and biogeochemical imbalances. We suggest the concept of sufficiency to challenge and transform existing dominant structures, prioritizing moral and ecological considerations over efficiency. Sufficiency, therefore, needs to be adopted as a complementary principle to efficiency, which is exploitative in nature. Sufficiency puts moral and ecological constraints at the center of considerations in economic progress. Although this principle has yet to be fully implemented, it has the transformative potential to redefine the relationship between economics, ethics, and ecology, and to create socio-ecological justice for humans and nature.

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