

# Research on Green Party's Ecological Priority Values from the Perspective of Ecocentrism

—Take the European Green Party as the example

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**Abstract:** Since the establishment of the first Green Party in Europe -- the Green Party in Britain in 1973, it has become a rookie in European politics, and has exerted a significant influence on all aspects of European society. Based on the philosophy of ecocentrism, the Green Party opposes excessive economic growth, pays attention to ecological balance, emphasizes environmental protection and maintains human peace. In order to keep the ecological balance and to achieve harmony between man and nature, Values of “ecological priority”, is proposed based on the irreplaceability and irrecoverability of nature and ecosystem. Such value concept, as the core of Green Party’s values, advocates that all human economic activities, communication mode, life style should conform to the ecology and promote the “green” development of society.

## 1. Introduction

Since it was founded more than 40 years ago, the Green Party has become a political force that cannot be ignored in European politics with the development of its policies and movements. The key to the Green Party's vigorous development lies in its ecological centralism philosophy and a set of green policy propositions. The green philosophy criticizes the previous philosophy of anthropocentrism and highlights the ecological center. Based on ecological center philosophy, the Green Party puts forward its pursuing green value that ecology comes before everything. The value of ecological priority is to readjust the way of human survival and development, to abandon the infinite growth of population and economy, and to reduce the pressure that human survival has exerted on nature by taking ecological affordability as the criterion.

## 2. Relationship between ecocentric philosophy and green movement

### 2.1 The rise of ecocentric philosophy

The vitality of the Green Party lies in its ecological philosophy and a series of green policy propositions. The ecological priority view of the Green Party, quite different from traditional philosophy that regards human as the center, puts forward the ecological centrism world view of “the unity of nature and human” on the basis of ecological philosophy, This world outlook of ecocentrism is not achieved overnight, but has experienced a long and tortuous process from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism. This process mainly includes the following stages: dominance of anthropocentrism -- the gradual formation of the ecological view of Marxist philosophy -- the establishment of the philosophy of ecological centralism.

In the view of ecocentric philosophers, ecocentric philosophy mainly includes the following contents: the diversity of species and life forms constitutes the basis of sustainable development of nature. Therefore, human beings have no right to destroy such diversity and harmony among each other; like human beings, all existence in nature has its inherent value and meaning. Human beings have no right to deprive other species of the right to exist for their own survival. It is human's excessive exploitation and intervention of the nature that cause ecological destruction. To improve the quality of life and to live in harmony with nature, human beings must control the number of population.

The Green Party's ecological priority values, based on the philosophy of ecocentricism, provide not only the fundamental basis for its existence in philosophy, but also a theoretical basis for its continuous development in green practice. The establishment of ecological centralism provides a powerful theoretical weapon for the implementation of ecological priority concept.

## **2.2 The relationship between ecocentric philosophy and the green movement**

Marx once pointed out in *Introduction to Hegel's Criticism of Philosophy of Law* that the weapon of criticism cannot replace the criticism of the weapon, and that material force can only be destroyed by material forces. He also believed that once the theory has been mastered by masses, it will become material force. The dialectical relationship between theory and practice revealed by Marx here is also applicable to the relationship between ecocentric philosophy and the green movement.

On one hand, the birth of ecocentric philosophy provides a theoretical basis for the rise and development of the green movement. Ecocentric philosophy demonstrates the importance and inevitability of the green movement. It is precisely the scientific ideas and views provided by ecocentric philosophy that make the Green Party win the support and approval of the public and defeat other political forces. It is precisely with the establishment of ecocentric philosophy that the Green Party not only seriously attacked the traditional liberal ideology and traditional socialist ideology which have ruled the west for hundreds of years, but also forced other ideologies to repair and improve their theoretical system in accordance with the green thinking. That is to say, without a set of complete scientific philosophical theories and propositions, the green movement cannot develop and sustain, let alone grow.

On the other hand, the vigorous development of the green movement enriches and develops the philosophy of ecocentrism. In the 1970s and 1980s, with the vigorous development of the green movement, a large number of ecological philosophical works were published. The green movement puts forward a series of problems to be solved, expands the thinking scope of green ecological philosophy, and promotes the enrichment and development of green ecological philosophy. It is under the guidance of ecocentric philosophy that the green movement continuously tests and demonstrates a series of viewpoints put forward by ecocentric philosophy. As a result, ecocentric philosophy is constantly sublimated and developed in the interaction with green practice.

## **3. The main content of the Green Party's ecological priority values**

Traditional thinking is challenged by the belief that “ecology comes before everything”, put forward by Green Party on the basis of irreplacability and irreversibility of nature and ecosystem.

Firstly, the greens reject the material growth priorities advocated by other parties. Green thinks, with the development of machine industry, the human production activities is developing forward by leaps and bounds due to influence of the priority principle of physical growth. However this developing process has caused a series of serious negative consequences, such as ecological imbalance and a threat to the survival of mankind. The Green Party criticized this insistence on material growth as the first value, because it holds that such idea puts the cart before the horse that material growth is regarded as the measure of social progress and material consumption as the standard of happiness. It is people's fanatical pursuit of materials that leads to environmental pollution and ecological destruction. Some countries are even engaged in continual wars in order to compete for resources; People become morally bankrupt for material gains and crimes increase. Harmonious and friendly relationships between humans have been replaced by simple monetary relation. In the Green Party's view, all the negative effects of growth priority can be avoided (or at least reduced) by redefining our value goals in accordance with the principle of ecological priority, abandoning the endless pursuit of material or limiting the pursuit of material to the most basic survival needs. The Green Party also proposes that new economic development projects should be remade such as limiting the total economic gross and preventing the transference of waste and high-polluting industries to backward countries. We will adjust the economic and industrial structure, curb and reduce energy-intensive and polluting industries, and develop clean industries.

Specifically, we can take the following measures. Develop durable and reusable products and reduce disposable goods; Develop renewable clean energy sources, such as solar energy, power of wind and tidal power, and reduce the consumption of exhaustible energy sources such as oil, natural gas and coal; Adjust the urban development plan by reducing the occupation of farmland and road construction; Adjust tourism and reduce disturbance and damage to wildlife reserves.

Secondly, the Green Party demands the control in the number of the total population and change in lifestyle: getting rid of the previous pursuit of comfortable life style. Green theory holds that the earth's natural resources and ecological capacity have a certain limit, and it cannot indefinitely meet people's growing demands for more and more materials. Consequently, the greens argue that population must get controlled and consumption get reduced, especially consumptions that may cause pollution to environment. In addition, they called on human beings to adjust their ways of life, re-establish new standards of quality for life and pay attention to social harmony.

Finally, the Green Party believes that all countries should focus on the common values of all mankind and readjust their development goals according to the ecological affordability. The Green Party demands that countries in the world should form a new development mode according to the principle of ecological priority, so as to reduce the friction caused by competing for resources and the pressure on resources and ecological environment. Countries should implement different development strategies according to their own conditions in order to protect our earth and ecological resources.

Some green thinkers also propose to redefine national boundaries or establish eco-economic circles in line with the principle of ecological priority. That is to say, in this ecological community, people arrange production according to different natural conditions and ecological characteristics, and the system is self-sufficient. The scale of production is limited to meet people's basic needs, and there is no conflict between each other to compete for resources, and there is no difference between the rich and the poor. It is believed that this kind of community that meets the ecological requirements will realize the true harmony between man and nature and between man and man, and man can bid farewell to war from now on.<sup>[1]</sup>

In addition, the policies formulated by the Green Party also fully reflect the "green concept" of the Green Party, and "green" runs through all policies. For example, in terms of economy, the Green Party advocates a thorough transformation of the current economic system and economic behavior guided by the principle of ecological priority. The establishment and implementation of a new economic model should be in accordance with ecological and social requirements, namely, the establishment of "green economy". In terms of social policy, the Green Party proposes "a new full employment mode", which gives priority to women in employment and earnestly protects the rights and interests of ethnic minorities and immigrants. In terms of foreign policy, the Green Party holds that the western countries should change the way of communication with the third world countries, reduce the exploitation of the third world countries, increase the economic aid to the third world countries, and help them overcome poverty and backwardness. To this end, the Green Party proposed to strengthen exchanges and cooperation between the north and the south, and advocated to attach importance to human rights, to maintain peace, to oppose military intervention, and to protect ecology, sustainable development and other specific measures.

#### **4. Comments on the Green Party's ecological priority values**

##### **4.1 Significance of progress**

The influence and effect of the green ecological priority concept is not only reflected in the number of votes or greens parties. Instead more importantly, it challenges the traditional political values, economic development mode and human interactions, and prompts the green transformation of traditional political parties and men's reflection on traditional politics, economy, culture and human exchanges model. It has played a positive role to adjust people's ways of thinking and behaviors. Due to the influences of the Green Party and its ecological priority view, environmental issues are gradually attracting global attention. With the holding of the conferences about

environment in United Nations and other countries, environmental issues are being paid more and more attention to by the world. Since the UN conference on the human environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden on June 5, 1972, there have been more and more international conventions and cooperation on environmental protection and resource utilization, all of which focus on how to protect and improve the world's environment and maintain our common homeland. Countries around the world have conducted fruitful cooperation in protecting the ozone layer, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting biodiversity.

It can be said that it is precisely because the Green Party has been a pioneer in the era of ecological civilization that the upsurge of resource and environmental protection has arisen in the west and even the whole world. The world political theme and international order have been reorganized about resource and environmental issues, and our living environment has been increasingly improved as well.

#### **4.2 Historical limitations**

Like the western political forces, the Green Party shows multiple characters, combining both truth and paradox. Its main limitations include: the Green Party's ecological value priority view puts forward that people should dilute class interests, national interests and national interests, which is highly unrealistic and divorced from reality at present; The greens' radicals advocate an immediate abolition of nuclear power, which is currently impossible in Western Europe; Some members of the Green Party oppose global integration, modern industrial production and Commodity Exchange, and advocate the so-called "deep ecological school" that goes back to family yard economy and complete self-sufficiency, which is not feasible in reality. Some green radicals oppose the progress of modern science and technology, believing that the progress of science and technology has led to human's excessive demand for nature. We know that technology, as an effective tool for us to know and transform nature, is of no value itself. It is not technology but the capitalist mode of production, the unreasonable social system, and the pursuit of ideas that cause excessive destruction to nature etc. As for these deficiencies and defects of the green movement, we should look at them dialectically, neither overgeneralization nor denial of its valuable things.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Green Party has got a rapid development and plays an increasingly important role in the European politics since its birth. A series of values and policies put forward by the party is in accordance with the development trend of the world and public opinions. Especially its core value concept of "ecological priority values" has a significant impact for Europe and even the whole world. The Green Party and its value proposition have not only made great contributions to the development of "green economy" and "green path" in Europe, but also had a positive impact on the development model of the whole world. We should evaluate and affirm the achievements of the Green Party's ecological priority view, and at the same time we should have a full understanding and discrimination of its radical utopian color. Only in this way, can we have a scientific judgment of the Green Party's ecological priority values and extract its scientific and reasonable components to provide useful reference for the construction of ecological civilization in China.

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