

Mechanisms of Marxist Environmental Philosophy in Shaping College Students' Ecological Values

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Abstract

This study, grounded in Marxist environmental philosophy, examines its role in shaping college students' ecological values. Drawing on the core tenets of Marxist environmental philosophy, the paper analyzes the current status of students' ecological awareness and demonstrates how this philosophy guides cognition, emotion, and practical action. By fostering in-depth reflection, cultivating ecological urgency, and advancing their engagement in ecological civilization practices, the research proposes practical pathways to bridge theory and application. It underscores that Marxist environmental philosophy not only provides a theoretical framework for students but also serves as a pragmatic compass for ecological civilization development, ultimately contributing to harmonious society-nature coexistence.

Keywords

Marxist Environmental Philosophy; College Students; Ecological Values; Mechanism of Action; Practical Paths.

1. Introduction

Amidst historical evolution, global ecological crises have escalated with unprecedented urgency, casting shadows over sustainable development worldwide. Nurturing a new generation with scientifically grounded ecological values has emerged as an imperative priority. Marxist environmental philosophy, a cornerstone of Marxist theoretical discourse, offers a rational framework for addressing contemporary environmental challenges through its scientific worldview and methodology. This study investigates the intrinsic mechanisms through which Marxist environmental philosophy shapes college students' ecological values, seeking to establish both theoretical foundations and actionable strategies for enhancing ecological civilization education in higher learning institutions.

This study employs Marxist environmental philosophy as an analytical lens to achieve theoretical-pedagogical integration through systematic interpretation of its core tenets. By contextualizing its principles within contemporary ecological education frameworks, the research conducts a critical diagnosis of current trends, challenges, and gaps in college students' ecological value formation. The analysis further elucidates the paradigm's capacity to enrich ecological discourse through its dialectical materialist foundations.

Building on this theoretical groundwork, the investigation delineates the shaping mechanisms across three interconnected domains:

- 1. Cognitive Internalization:** Facilitating epistemological alignment with ecological truths through dialectical reasoning;
- 2. Affective Mobilization:** Cultivating eco-ethical consciousness by bridging Marxist human-nature dialectics with emotional engagement;
- 3. Praxis Orientation:** Translating theoretical awareness into concrete ecological stewardship through action-driven pedagogical interventions.

The study culminates in proposing a multidimensional implementation framework for ecological civilization education, including: Curriculum redesign integrating Marxist eco-philosophical modules; Experiential learning programs fostering campus-to-community ecological praxis; Institutional mechanisms for sustained value internalization.

These strategies advance Marxist environmental philosophy's contemporary relevance while operationalizing ecological education through three synergistic pathways: theoretical innovation, pedagogical revitalization, and behavioral transformation. Ultimately, the research aims to equip new-generation students with systematized ecological values, positioning them as proactive agents in global sustainability governance.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Marxist Environmental Philosophy

Amidst the dialectical interplay of historical progression and material reality, Marxist environmental philosophy emerges as a critical framework within ecological discourse. Grounded in dialectical and historical materialism, this paradigm transcends surface-level analyses to systematically deconstruct the human-nature dynamic. By interrogating the ontological unity between socioeconomic development and natural systems, it provides a scientific epistemological framework for navigating contemporary environmental crises—one that reconciles anthropocentric necessities with ecocentric imperatives through revolutionary praxis.

Marxist environmental philosophy constitutes a dialectical synthesis that reconceptualizes the human-nature relationship. Its foundational propositions include:

1. Ontological Unity: Humans exist not as discrete entities but as co-constitutive participants within natural systems, forming an organic totality governed by reciprocal material exchanges.

2. Praxis-Mediated Dialectics: Productive labor serves as the historical-materialist mechanism through which humanity interacts with nature. This transformative praxis operates under natural law constraints, analogous to thermodynamic principles governing energy conversion.

3. Structural Critique: The capitalist mode of production institutionalizes ecological alienation through its growth imperative, engendering irreconcilable contradictions between capital's infinite accumulation logic and nature's finite carrying capacity.

4. Ecosocialist Horizon: Communism envisions the transcendence of ecological contradictions via planned metabolic restoration, achieving sustainable human-nature synergies through collective stewardship.

This paradigm positions humanity as a conscious component within Earth's metabolic systems. Labor constitutes the mediating process through which socio-natural relations evolve, simultaneously enabling anthropogenic environmental modification and imposing bio-physical limitations on human agency. The dialectic manifests as a feedback loop: transformative actions incur natural counterforces that recursively shape societal development trajectories.

3. Analysis of the Current Situation of College Students' Ecological Values

The cultivation of ecological values among college students remains suboptimal within the current historical context. This predicament stems from multifaceted challenges that demand systematic analysis and urgent resolution.

Within higher education institutions, ecological civilization education lacks systematic integration. Curricula resemble fragmented knowledge points rather than a comprehensive framework, with weak connections between theoretical foundations and practical applications. Current pedagogical approaches exhibit three critical limitations:

1. Course content often remains superficial, neglecting the philosophical, socioeconomic, and historical dimensions of ecological issues.
2. The absence of interdisciplinary integration prevents students from synthesizing discrete knowledge into coherent value systems.
3. The disconnect between theoretical instruction and practical engagement hinders the internalization of ecological values.

The imbalance in institutional priorities constitutes a fundamental barrier. Many universities disproportionately emphasize professional skills while marginalizing ecological civilization education within curricular structures. Typically confined to optional lectures or sporadic activities, such education lacks continuity, systematic planning, and rigorous assessment mechanisms. This structural neglect sends two detrimental signals:

1. It fails to cultivate sustained student engagement by omitting motivational pedagogical designs.
2. It inadvertently reinforces the perception of ecological education as peripheral, thereby undermining its transformative potential in value formation.

Prevailing consumerist ideologies function as cultural mechanisms that systematically reinforce materialistic values through two interconnected processes:

1. The societal valorization of luxury consumption patterns incentivizes college students to prioritize immediate gratification over environmental stewardship, effectively suppressing awareness of ecological limits.
2. Dominant utilitarian paradigms cultivate excessive individualism, diminishing capacities for intergenerational justice considerations and collective ecological responsibility.

College students navigating value crystallization face dual pressures from conflicting sociocultural influences. While theoretically receptive to ecological principles, three structural barriers impede substantive engagement:

- 1. Epistemological Limitation:** Superficial understanding of ecological crises persists due to inadequate access to specialized knowledge systems and participatory learning frameworks.
- 2. Praxis Disconnect:** The absence of interest-aligned engagement pathways prevents the translation of conceptual awareness into sustainable practices, resulting in progressive motivational attrition.
- 3. Institutional-Existential Tension:** Unresolved contradictions between aspirational values and pragmatic realities generate systemic value formation obstacles.

Addressing these multidimensional challenges through Marxist environmental philosophy constitutes both an educational necessity and civilizational imperative. This approach provides: Methodological frameworks for transcending current pedagogical limitations; Historical-materialist tools for reconciling anthropocentric-nature relationships; Revolutionary praxis models for sustainable societal transformation.

4. Theoretical Framework of Marxist Environmental Philosophy for Ecological Value Formation

Marxist environmental philosophy provides a dialectical-materialist framework for reconstructing ecological consciousness through three foundational dimensions:

- 1. Establishing a Dialectical Ontology:** This philosophy deconstructs the anthropocentric-nature dichotomy by positing humans as immanent participants within natural systems. Through its materialist conception of nature-society metabolism, it systematically dismantles anthropocentric fallacies, fostering: Reverential understanding of ecological interdependencies; Scientific alignment with natural laws; Stewardship ethics grounded in historical materialism.

2. Reconceptualizing Praxis: The theory redefines human agency as co-evolutionary praxis, emphasizing: Productive forces development within ecological boundaries; Transformative conservation through labor-nature dialectics; Internalization-externalization mechanisms for converting ecological cognition into sustainable behaviors.

3. Critical Value Reconstruction: Marxist analysis exposes capitalism's structural role in ecological alienation, enabling: Systemic critique of accumulation-driven environmental degradation; Revolutionary consciousness for eco-socialist transformation; Intergenerational responsibility embedded in historical teleology.

This tripartite framework equips students with: Epistemological tools for decoding ecological contradictions; Methodological principles for sustainable praxis; Ethical compass for eco-civilization construction.

5. Operational Mechanism of Marxist Environmental Philosophy in Ecological Value Formation

Marxist environmental philosophy facilitates ecological value construction through tripartite cognitive-affective-practical mechanisms:

1. Cognitive Restructuring Mechanism

Critical Consciousness Development: Deconstructs anthropocentric epistemologies through dialectical materialist analysis of human-nature relations.

Systemic Crisis Decoding: Provides historical-materialist frameworks for analyzing root causes of ecological degradation.

Praxis-Oriented Problem Solving: Establishes scientific methodology for addressing environmental contradictions.

2. Affective Mobilization Mechanism

Ecological Alienation Exposure: Reveals capitalist production's destructive ecological consequences through concrete historical analysis.

Eco-Socialist Vision Projection: Articulates communist society's sustainable human-nature metabolism as historical necessity.

Ethical Commitment Cultivation: Fosters intergenerational responsibility through labor-nature dialectical understanding.

3. Praxis Transformation Mechanism

Lifeworld Engagement: Guides daily ecological praxis through materialist consumption/production critiques.

Professional Integration: Catalyzes disciplinary innovation via ecological modernization imperatives.

Collective Action Facilitation: Mobilizes participation in eco-civilization construction through revolutionary praxis theory.

This mechanism operates through:

Epistemic paradigm shifts →

Ethical consciousness raising →

Sustainable behavior institutionalization.

4. Ultimate Outcome

Internalized eco-values manifesting as: Critical consumption patterns; Professional ecological innovation;

Active citizenship in environmental governance.

6. Conclusion

Marxist environmental philosophy establishes a theoretical-practical framework for ecological value formation through tripartite cognitive-affective-behavioral interventions.

1. Mechanistic Contributions

Cognitive: Establishes dialectical human-nature relations through historical materialist analysis.

Affective: Cultivates ecological consciousness via alienation critique and socialist visioning.

Behavioral: Institutionalizes ecological praxis in personal-professional domains.

2. Strategic Imperatives for Higher Education

Implementing tripartite strategies yields multidimensional impacts: Curricular integration of eco-dialectics; Campus ecosystems as living laboratories; Community-engaged conservation initiatives.

This educational paradigm produces graduates with eco-civic competencies essential for: Decarbonization governance; Circular economy innovation; Environmental justice advocacy.

3. Prospective Directions

Advancing theoretical-practical synergies requires:

Deepening Marxian ecological epistemology;

Developing innovative pedagogies for value internalization;

Scaling youth-led sustainability movements.

Such advancements will empower students as stewards of planetary sustainability, actualizing Marx's vision of human-nature co-evolution.

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