

Theoretical Connotation and Practical Path of People's City in the Perspective of Ecological Civilization

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Abstract. "People's city is built for the people and by the people" provides new directions and research perspectives from the overall and strategic perspective of the future development of cities, and expounds on the development concept of global cities of excellence. Based on the political assertion of social contradictions, the paper begins with an analysis of the relationship between the city and the people, the essentials of environment and development, and the realistic demands of the goal of excellence from a values perspective. This study puts forward the theoretical model, basic connotation, and object task. And then, establishes the measurement indicators of people's city development from the perspective of decoupling development theory. Finally, the four aspects of ecology, humanities, innovation, and governance, extract the policy path to the promotion of people's city development.

Keywords: Sustainable Development; People's City; High-quality Life; Decoupling Development.

1. Introduction

The President of China proposed the idea of ecological civilization with green as the keynote. Its core connotation is reflected in the ecological concept of putting people first, living in harmony with nature, and green-oriented development, including green development and performance outlook, production mode and lifestyle, etc. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the country has established people-centered governing conception and policy agenda, which has an extensive social influence on protecting the people's fundamental interests. These lead to the following three issues: first, how to establish a link between people's city and ecological civilization by examining the process of urban development from a people-centered perspective, to interpret the theoretical connotation of people's city; second, how to identify measurement indicators for assessing the development effectiveness of people's city from the view of ecological civilization; third, how to promote the construction of people's city based on ecological civilization. Therefore, we attempt to explore the theoretical connotation, measurement indicators, and policy path of people's city from the perspective of ecological civilization.

2. Theoretical Connotation of People's City in the Perspective of Ecological Civilization

2.1 Theoretical traceability and connotation

The report on the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China points out that the principal contradiction facing Chinese society is between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing need for a better life. This assertion encompasses the dialectic of the growth of people's needs and development. After years of development and change, the relationship between cities themselves and the external world is constantly complicated. On the one hand, as the internal and external environment of cities is changing, such as global warming and ecological resource degradation, the traditional development model is unsustainable, which would shift to an intensive approach by the force of resource and environmental constraints. On the other hand, anti-globalization and unbalanced and inadequate development are also reducing people's expectations about their personal lives. In the past, humanists separated human beings from nature,

and simple naturalists neglected human development and well-being needs. Now China is facing the contradiction between the resource environment and development in modern cities that western societies have experienced. At present, the constraints on ecological civilization dynamically subject the pursuit of a good life in all aspects, two of the most superficial ones are ecological capacity and resilience. How to break through the narrow development concept, unify social value standards, breakthrough development limitations, and achieve a higher level of people's well-being, ecological balance, and social equity? It is necessary to re-examine the inherent essential characteristics of cities, respect universal values and differentiated features from the perspective of urban economy, social culture, and ecological environment, and gain insight into urban stage contradictions and visionary goals. From the development dimension of people's city, we show the dialectical relationship between human, economic, social, and cultural development and nature in cities.

2.2 People's City's Goals and Tasks

Based on the previous section, we clarify the two main goals of the people's city under the perspective of ecological civilization: to have a high-quality life and to develop in a high-quality way.

High-quality life reflects people's aspirations for a better life, which emphasizes people's happiness, sense of access, and satisfaction. Quality of life presents different levels according to the development stage related to income, consumption, and material possessions. In the survival and comfort stage, the level of material consumption and the quality of life increase simultaneously. After reaching the affluence stage, the role of economic growth in improving the quality of life continues to decline, and extravagant consumption brings less sense of gain. Marx proposed that a good life means the harmonization of man's relationship with himself, others, society, and nature, highlighting its value, interaction, social and natural tendencies[1]. Xi Jinping's outline of the study of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era points out that a better life lies not only in better education, more stable jobs, satisfactory income and reliable social security, higher levels of medical and health services, but also in more comfortable living conditions and beautiful environment, and a richer intellectual and cultural life[2]. Since the foundation of New China, the evolution of the principal contradiction facing Chinese society has clarified the social relations in different development stages. It also outlined the changing of the good life, whose goals have changed from rapid economic growth to coordinated economic, environmental, and social development; from material and cultural needs to the promotion of economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological progress.

High-quality development promotes the realization of high-quality life. Its core lies in the unification of high economic competitiveness and high ecological civilization competitiveness, which is improving economic competitiveness and achieving high-quality life in an ecological civilization way. This establishes a dynamic logical relationship between high-quality development and the economic, environmental, and social aspects of ecological civilization. Early in the 1970s, basic understanding shows that environmental sustainability and capacity would limit economic growth. Environment and development have become two closely linked communities in the topic of ecological civilization, laying the theoretical foundation for high-quality development. After 1990, Steady State Economics (SSE) and Strong Sustainability (SSE) theory emerged and enriched the basic concept of high-quality development. Studies tended to emphasize the systemic role of ecological limits on economic and social development rather than mere efficiency, highlighting the maximization of output under natural input constraints[3]. The rise of circular economy theory, which emphasizes the life cycle material flow process, has promoted the formation of the green development concept of ecological civilization. The core content of ecological civilization has expanded from natural resource input limits to environmental bottom-line constraints. Through front-loaded guidance on resource and environmental conditions, the harmonious development of man and nature should be forced[4] under the perspective of factor constraints, such as natural

resources like land, material cycles throughout the entire life cycle, and pollution emissions. The concept of high-quality development is more systematic. Currently, we are promoting a new UN eco-civilization-oriented globalization in dimensions of economic, social, environmental, and governance. On economic development, stand for the concept of reform and opening up to build an open world economy; on social culture, emphasize the concept of community of human being's destiny and harmony exists in diversity. Respect the right of each country to choose its development model; on ecological environment and emissions, form a mature green development and lifestyle through self-revolution, build an ecological civilization, and propose carbon neutrality by 2060 to achieve zero carbon goals. on governance, provide more global public goods, and assume the responsibility of a large country.

3. Measuring Indicators of People's City Development in the Perspective of Ecological Civilization

In the context of ecological civilization, we established the harmonization between high-quality development and high-quality life indicators under ecological and environmental constraints, considering the constraints and promotion of systemic factors, and the internal linkage between the elements of high-quality life measurement and those of ecological bottom-line constraint.

High-quality life and high-quality development indicators. According to the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, combined with happiness economics and steady-state economics, we corresponded the economic, social, cultural, ecological, and governance dimensions to the five development dimensions of the people's city. They are expressed in indicators including income (quality of life), equity (opportunity to excel), governance, culture (sense of belonging), and vitality (warmth)[5]. Taking the Human Development Index (HDI) to represent the quality of life by income, health, and education indicators can compensate for the limitations of income as the only indicator. To face the issue of equity, the indicator, measurement method, and point of measurement must be more than just income, average, and present. Brundtland Report pointed out the limitations of measuring equity by monetary distribution alone and proposed a new idea from the resource appropriation perspective. Urban density is used as the vitality indicator. Urban vitality is a critical factor to create a sense of belonging and warmth, while density and diversity are necessary for it. The China Integrated City Development Report (2018) introduces urban density as an indicator to test the development vitality and quality of cities, which shows that urban vitality requires a continuous inflow of population. Governance is represented by the degree of public participation. This indicator is reflected in the structure and state of urban governance. The former lies in the depth of public participation, and the latter lies in the breadth of it. both of them directly affect the realization of governance modernization[6]. The percentage of the foreign population in a particular industry or region is used as the indicator of social and cultural belongingness. Cultural belongingness is the degree of tolerance, openness, and attractiveness that a city or society shows to heterogeneous cultures. People's Spontaneous choice of their living places and social circle is beyond personal thought and cultural context, which requests social-emotional recognition as the basis.

Ecological constraint indicators. Ecological constraints reflect resource and environmental limits. The scale of urban construction, ecological, and residential land is used to express the three basic spaces of production. Ecology, and living; carbon emissions, pollutants, and solid waste emissions are used to express environmental bottom-line indicators. Urban energy, water, and raw material inputs are used to express resource ceiling indicators.

4. The development path of people's city from the perspective of ecological civilization

4.1 Spatial Path

The core idea is to build an "ecological city" with smart growth, green development, intelligent concepts, and ecological resilience, which emphasizes the material flow in space and the creation of artificial space in the natural environment. In principle, the future growth of artificial spaces that meet the needs of living, working, and sightseeing, should be achieved without losing ecological scale and quality. At the city level, the key points are the central city function improvement, infrastructure, and public service facility supply, the main task is to coordinate production, life, and ecology, and the goal is to consolidate central cities' radiation function and agglomeration effectiveness. At the regional level, strengthen the connectivity between the central city and the new city in the urban and metropolitan areas.

4.2 Social Path

Reinforce the creation of social relationships. Promote the fitness between urban physical and social space based on the social network composition, lifestyle of residents, and the urban development stage. Enhance social integration to maintain long-term emotional linkages. Create a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable social living space by preserving urban culture and activating local humanities. Weaken the spatial differentiation of society. Concerning the division of social space and class, advocate a shift from social exclusion to social inclusion and sharing. Strengthen comprehensive development and weaken social class division in the overall spatial structure[7]. Optimize community support. Focusing on the elderly, middle-aged, and young children, shift the 15-minute living circle to a 15-minute walking circle. Eliminate shortcomings in medical, educational, and elderly care, which means strengthening the communities' social service function, and enhancing the balanced development of different living circles in the rationing of public service.

4.3 Innovation Path

The core idea of the innovation path is the construction of an "innovation city" with talent development, innovation, entrepreneurship, and intelligent manufacturing as the carrier. We need to reconstruct the idea of the smart city which not only emphasizes digital agglomeration and information flow but also responds to global urban upgrading. It is to integrate intelligent functions, smart manufacturing, architecture, transportation, healthcare, education, and distribution into city and community life. To enhance the smart competitiveness of cities globally, and to highlight the importance of the people-oriented "perceptible city", we should promote urban development and urban governance through digital flow.

4.4 Governance path

Create a humanistic city that can achieve mutual benefits, sharing, and green based on stakeholder analysis. About the governance structure, forming a coordinated governance model for government, enterprises, and society, building a cross-governmental cooperation mechanism, and strengthening shared governance among government, social organizations, and the public. About the governance model, the government and social organizations should open up communication channels, to improve the democratization agenda of grassroots communities and build an orderly structure for community safety, management and operation. Strengthen communities' ecological power of living, leisure, and work, the cultural power based on social stability and cultural identity, and the political power which makes the laws and rules work efficiently. About the governance guarantee, improve regulatory, guiding, and participatory policy formulation and action measures, clarify and expand the ways of public participation to increase the governance participation.

5. Conclusion

The people's city from the perspective of ecological civilization sublimates the connotation of the global city in its goal, which has the generality of the world global city and the uniqueness of the Chinese version one[8]. Not only does it embody the unity of development and ecological civilization, but it also focuses on the decoupling of a high-quality life and high-quality development under ecological constraints; not only does it integrate the spirit of urban humanity and innovation, but it also points out the essence of green and resilient development; not only does it meet contemporary urban construction and regeneration needs, but it also matches the long-term strategic requirements; not only does it inherit the spirit of traditional harmonious development between man and nature, but it also breaks through the limitations of unbalanced and inadequate development. Thus promoting the development of people's city is an effective way towards ecological civilization. In the future, academics and policymakers must conduct more in-depth exploration and cooperation in various aspects such as the theoretical connotation, indicator systems, and policy measures.

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