

Research Progress of Xi Jinping's Ecological Civilization Thought

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Abstract Through CNKI literature search, this study summarizes the research progress of ecological civilization thought from both foreign and domestic directions. It is found that in the past 20 years, the research process of ecological civilization can be divided into three periods: 2003–2007, the primary development period; 2008–2012, a period of smooth transformation; 2013–2023, a period of steady development. 2012 is the year of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the meeting included the construction of ecological civilization into the strategic layout of China's economic and social construction "five in one", so far, the construction of ecological civilization has been comprehensively promoted and entered a huge development period. Therefore, 2012 is a turning point in the research process of "ecological civilization", from a stable development period to a steady development period. Related research continues to heat up, and the quantity of literature increases significantly. The research on ecological civilization in domestic academic circles can be roughly divided into two categories: one is the research on ecological civilization thought as the direct research object; the second is applied research that combines a certain field or discipline with ecological civilization. Generally, after the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, with the formation of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought and under the guidance of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought, the construction of ecological civilization has continued to advance and achieved considerable development. In the future, under the macro-control of the government, research trends will gradually focus on "ecological civilization", "green development", "beautiful China", "carbon neutrality" and "new era". Guided by Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought, we will strive to achieve the goal of beautiful China.

Key words Ecological civilization construction, Ecological civilization thought, Ecology

0 Introduction

In the world, ecological crisis has posed a severe challenge to the survival and development of human beings. Under this international background, China has comprehensively promoted the construction of ecological civilization, which demonstrates China's firm will and determination to advocate the construction of Community of Shared Future for Mankind. The prosperity and decline of ecology are directly related to the rise and fall of civilization. China's 5 000-year excellent traditional cultural practice further confirms that the progress of human society must be based on a good natural environment. For sustainable development, mankind must choose the construction of ecological civilization, and the sustainable development of the Chinese nation also needs the support of ecological civilization construction. Ecological civilization construction is an important path to open a new realm of human civilization, and it is also the only way for the Chinese nation to move towards a new stage of sustainable development. In order to comprehensively and objectively grasp the research status of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought, the paper has carried out systematic research from domestic and foreign aspects, aiming at comprehensively grasping the research progress of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought and predicting the future development trend of this field.

1 Overview of foreign research

As a subject term, ecological civilization was originally pro-

posed by German professor Iring Fetscher in 1978 and officially adopted by American scholar Roy Morrison in his works in 1995^[1]. At that time, people reached a consensus on a series of global environmental problems caused by industrial civilization, thus kicking off the prelude of global environmental protection, and the idea of sustainable development was formed. Ecological civilization is based on respecting and maintaining nature, and is regarded by academic circles as a new social form emerging after industrial civilization. It emphasizes the harmonious coexistence and comprehensive and sustainable prosperity and development between man and nature, man and society, man and environment, man and economy^[2].

Regarding the research on the necessity of ecological civilization construction, Marx pointed out that human civilization needs orderly development, otherwise if it is allowed to develop freely, its destructive power will be enormous^[2]. Rachel Carson expressed her desire to protect the natural environment and oppose all kinds of behaviors that damage the natural ecology^[3]. In addition, scholars such as Josef Huber and William Leiss have studied the measures for the construction of ecological civilization. They generally believe that the root of ecological crisis lies in the excessive control of nature by human beings, human beings should abandon the misconception of conquering nature, and should establish a new concept of mutual relationship with nature. At the same time, they believe that various ways in which the state and the government participate in the governance of the ecological environment can play a moderating role^[4].

Regarding the research on the necessity of ecological civilization construction, Marx emphasized the necessity of orderly development of human civilization, pointing out that if it is allowed to develop freely, it will lead to devastating consequences and great

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destructive power^[2]. Rachel Carson also emphasized the importance of protecting the natural environment and opposed all actions that damage the natural ecology^[3]. In addition, scholars such as Josef Huber and William Leiss have made in-depth discussions on the strategies of ecological civilization construction, and generally believe that the root of ecological crisis lies in the excessive control of nature by human beings. They advocated that human beings should abandon the misconception of conquering nature and establish a new concept of mutual relationship with nature. At the same time, they believed that various measures taken by the state and the government in managing the ecological environment can effectively alleviate ecological problems^[4].

2 Overview of domestic research

In China, Professor Ye Qianji, a famous agricultural economist, ecological economist, educator, and the pioneer of China's ecological civilization, clearly put forward the concept of ecological civilization for the first time in the late 1990s. He believed: "The ecological civilization is the harmonious coexistence between man and nature. Human beings take it from nature and use it for nature. While transforming nature, we should protect nature, and maintain a harmonious and unified relationship between man and nature."^[1] Since then, with the development of research, ecological civilization has been regarded as the inevitable trend of the development of human civilization, and it is a social form that follows the objective law of harmonious coexistence between man and nature, man and society, man and environment, man and economy, and comprehensive sustainable prosperity and development^[5].

2.1 Analysis of literature quantity based on CNKI Through the collection, collation and analysis of relevant literature, the academic circles have carried out extensive research on "ecological civilization" in the past 20 years, especially since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the research literature on ecological civilization has shown a steady upward trend (the data comes from CNKI) as shown in Fig. 1.

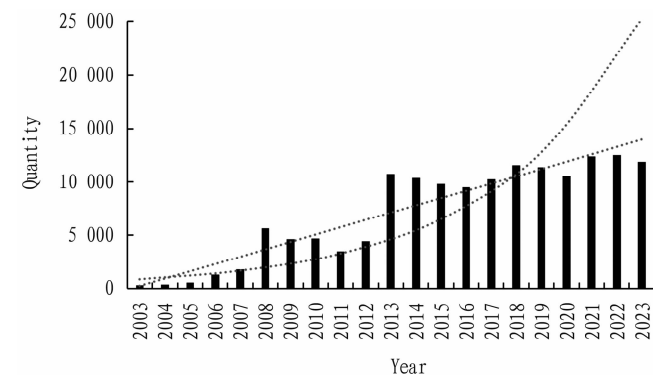


Fig. 1 Statistics on the literature quantity on "ecological civilization" from 2003 to 2023

Looking at the research situation in the past 20 years, combined with the corresponding research background, the research process of "ecological civilization" can be divided into three peri-

ods: 2003 – 2007 is the primary development period; the period from 2008 to 2012 is a period of smooth transition; the period from 2013 to 2023 is a period of steady development, as shown in Fig. 1. In the primary development period, the research on "ecological civilization" was basically maintained at the level of less than 2 000 articles per year; in the period of steady development, the research on "ecological civilization" was basically maintained at the level of about 5 000 articles per year; after 2012, the number of articles increased significantly, exceeding 10 000 annually, there were local fluctuations, but it still showed an upward trend. On the whole, the number of ecological civilization research articles showed an increasing trend from 2003 to 2023, and the research enthusiasm continued to rise. This shows that as the country comprehensively promotes the construction of ecological civilization, many scholars have carried out research on ecological civilization under the macro guidance of the government's strategic deployment. 2012 is the year of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. This meeting incorporated the construction of ecological civilization into the "five-in-one" strategic layout of China's economic and social construction. So far, the construction of ecological civilization has been comprehensively promoted and entered a period of great development. Therefore, 2012 is a turning point in the research process of "ecological civilization", from a period of transitional development to a period of steady development. Related research continues to heat up, and the number of articles increases substantially.

In terms of literature source categories, 900 articles on "ecological civilization" have been published in PUCPC journals, 892 articles in CSSCI journals, 523 articles in AMI journals, and 2 articles in EI (Fig. 2).

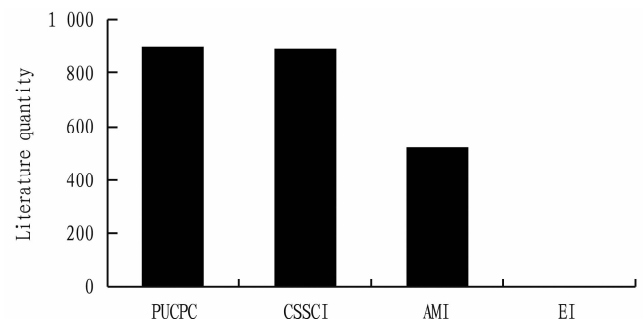


Fig. 2 Statistics on the quantity of research literature on Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (source: CNKI)

From the perspective of issuing institutions, the top 20 units, except those affiliated to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, are all universities. The distribution of research institutions is detailed in Fig. 3 (due to space limitations, this article only lists the top 20 units). It can be seen that universities are the main force engaged in the research of "ecological civilization".

2.2 Literature analysis based on CNKI research topics The research on ecological civilization in domestic academic circles can be roughly divided into two categories: one is the discussion of ecological civilization thought as the direct research object; the other

is the research that combines the concept of ecological civilization with specific fields or disciplines.

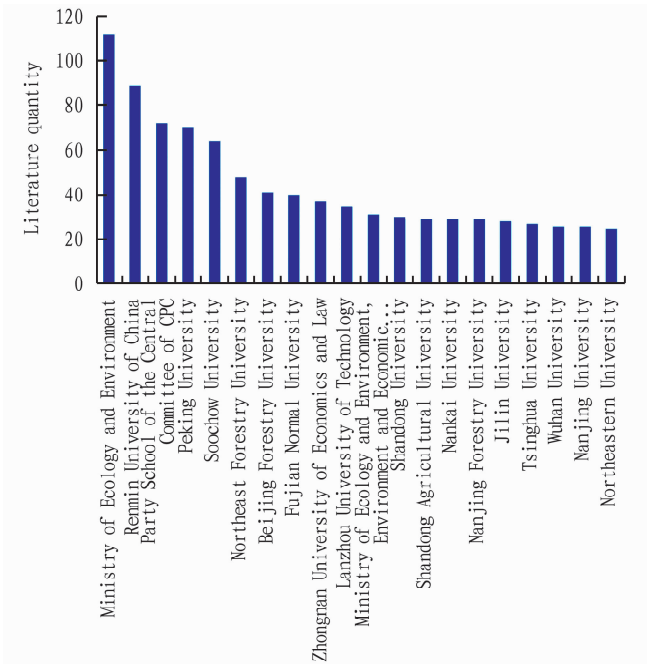
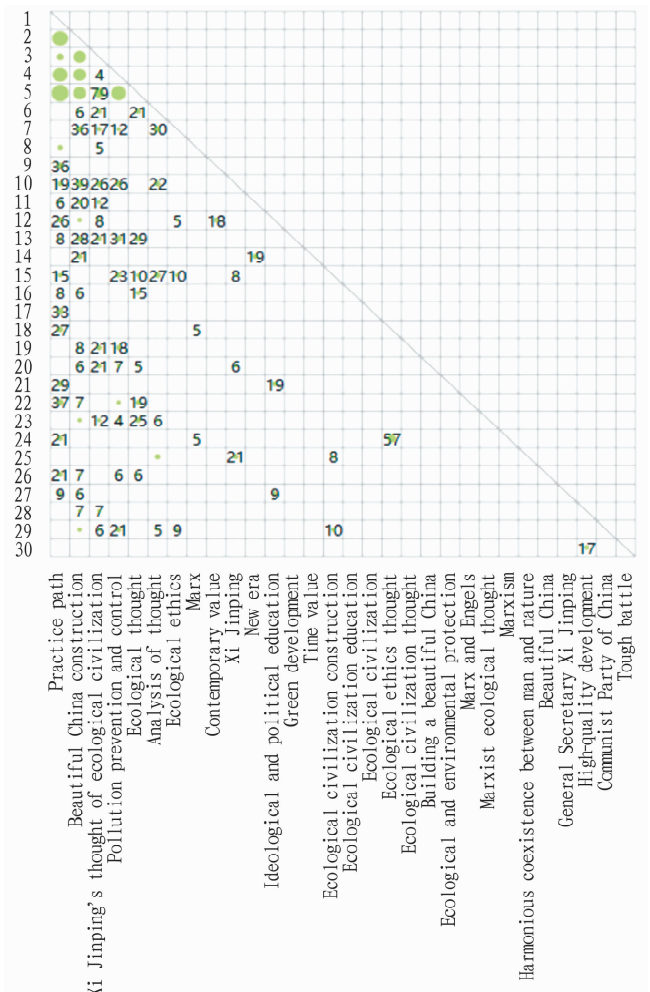


Fig. 3 Overview of research institutes of ecological civilization thought (source: CNKI)

2.2.1 Research on ecological civilization thought. Through CNKI, it is found that the total quantity of research literature with ecological civilization thought as the direct research object is 9 544, involving 6 209 academic journals, 1 972 dissertations, and 1 363 books, conferences and newspapers. The research scope involves the theoretical research of ecological civilization thought, the source, historical formation, world outlook, methodology, theoretical basis, content composition, contemporary value and significance of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought. Through the co-occurrence matrix analysis of the research literature on ecological civilization thought in Fig.4, it can be found that scholars have paid more attention to "Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought", "green development", "ecological civilization construction", "ecological thought", "ecological ethics", "harmonious coexistence between man and nature" and "beautiful China", that is, these aspects are also research hotspots in the field of ecological civilization construction. From Fig. 4, we can also find the research trends and development trends in the field of ecological civilization in different periods. For example, the government leads the construction of ecological civilization from the macro level and provides strong support for comprehensively promoting the construction of ecological civilization.

Wang Yuchen^[6], Chen Junxiang *et al.*^[7], Fang Shinan^[8], Li Yongqiang^[9], Li Chengmao^[10], Chen Jun^[11], Li Jun *et al.*^[12] conducted research on the source, historical formation, world outlook, methodology, theoretical basis and significance of the times of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought. Scholars believe that Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought inherits and carries forward Marxist ecological thought, is the Chinese practice of Marxist

ecological thought, inherits the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation, is a concrete manifestation of the concept of nature, green development, system, people's livelihood, rule of law and global win-win, is the fundamental principle for us to move towards a new era of ecological civilization and realize the Chinese dream, and is the foundation and action guide for the current ecological civilization construction.



NOTE 1. Practice path; 2. Beautiful China construction; 3. Xi Jinping's thought of ecological civilization; 4. Pollution prevention and control; 5. Ecological thought; 6. Analysis of thought; 7. Ecological ethics; 8. Marx; 9. Contemporary value; 10. Xi Jinping; 11. New era; 12. Ideological and political education; 13. Green development; 14. Time value; 15. Ecological civilization construction; 16. Ecological civilization education; 17. Ecological civilization; 18. Ecological ethical thought; 19. Ecological civilization thought; 20. Building a beautiful China; 21. Ecological and environmental protection; 22. Marx and Engels; 23. Marxist ecological thought; 24. Marxism; 25. Harmonious coexistence between man and nature; 26. General Secretary Xi Jinping; 27. Beautiful China; 28. High - quality development; 29. Communist Party of China; 30. Tough battle.

Fig.4 Co-occurrence matrix analysis of the quantity of literature on ecological civilization thought (source: CNKI)

Wu Haijiang^[13], Liu Haijuan^[14] *et al.* carried out research on the content composition of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought. They believe that Xi Jinping's thought on ecological civilization scientifically responds to the theoretical and practical issues of what ecological civilization is, why to build ecological civilization, and how to build ecological civilization, and is an important theoretical basis for building a modern and powerful country in the new era.

Chen Jianming^[15], Hu Changsheng *et al.*^[16] carried out research on the value of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought. They believe that Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought is rich in connotation, contains profound contemporary value, has important contemporary significance for the development of human civilization, and has important value for building a community with a shared future for mankind. The book *Promoting Ecological Civilization and Building a Beautiful China* compiled by the National Cadre Training Textbook Editing and Review Steering Committee^[17] pointed out that Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought embodies a high degree of historical consciousness and theoretical consciousness, and is the unity of Marxist dialectical materialistic view of nature and social history, and has created a new realm of popularization of Marxism in China in accordance with the enrichment and development of the characteristics of the times.

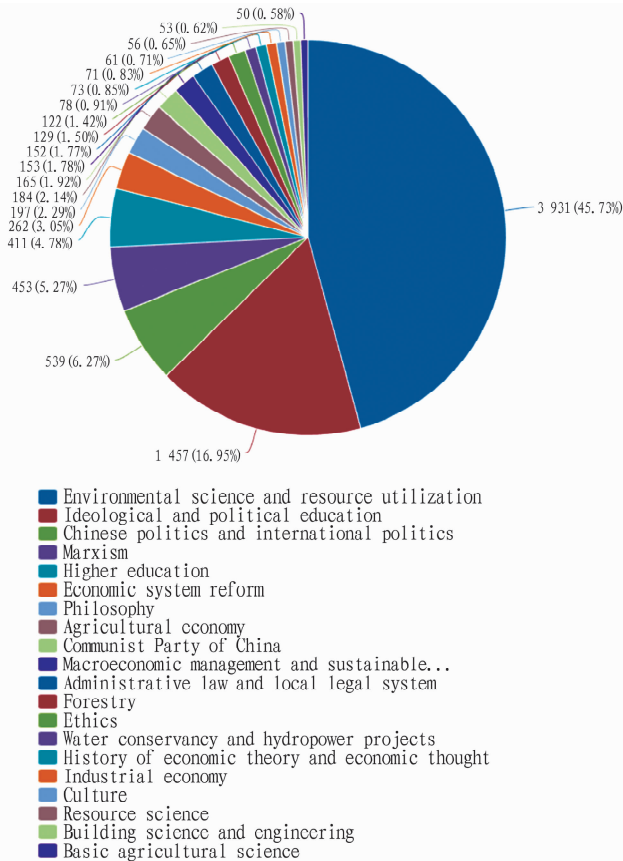


Fig. 5 Research on the combination of ecological civilization thought with a certain field or discipline (source: CNKI)

2.2.2 Research on combining ecological civilization with a certain field or discipline. As shown in Fig. 5, we can see that the

two disciplines of environmental science and resource utilization, ideological and political education and ecological civilization have received the most extensive research, accounting for more than 50%. In accordance with the analysis in Fig. 4, in terms of "pollution prevention and control", "ecological governance" and "green development", academic circles strive to combine theoretical research with practical application, macro-strategy and micro-strategy, and accelerate the promotion of ecological civilization construction in various regions of China according to local conditions under the guidance of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought.

Zang Yuduo *et al.*^[18], Wang Jiarui *et al.*^[19], guided by Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought, put forward the practical path of rural construction, and put forward suggestions such as opening up the path of transformation from "lucid waters and lush mountains" to "invaluable assets" in the new development stage, coordinating the management of landscape, forest, farmland, lake, grass and sand system, building beautiful countryside suitable for working and living, and promoting the harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

Cheng Jinhua *et al.*^[20], Wang Chunyi *et al.*^[21] carried out research on integrating Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought into regional ecological civilization construction. They believe that the current construction of ecological civilization should be guided by Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought to accelerate the construction of ecological civilization in all regions of the country according to local conditions.

Some scholars conduct research on combining ecological civilization with a certain discipline. Wang Cheng^[22], Yu Li *et al.*^[23], Hu Yanhua^[24] and Zou Baifeng^[25] think that innovative integration of ecological civilization education into ideological and political education and professional course teaching in colleges and universities is an important way to strengthen national ecological civilization education. In this way, we can promote the development of ecological civilization education in colleges and universities, inject new vitality into the construction of ecological civilization in China, further enhance college students' deep understanding of Xi Jinping's thoughts on ecological civilization, and comprehensively optimize the form of education and teaching and reform the teaching content based on the development situation of the times.

The integration of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought with daily teaching can effectively convey the concept of ecological civilization and cultivate talents for the construction of ecological civilization in the new era.

3 Research trends

It can be seen from Fig. 6 to Fig. 8 that there are three stages of the development of "ecological civilization": in the primary development period (2003 – 2007), the research topics mainly focused on environmental protection, green development and ecological ethics; in the period of smooth transition (2008 – 2012), the research topics mainly focused on "ecological civilization" and "environmental rule of law"; during the period of steady development (2013 – 2023), the research topics mainly focused on

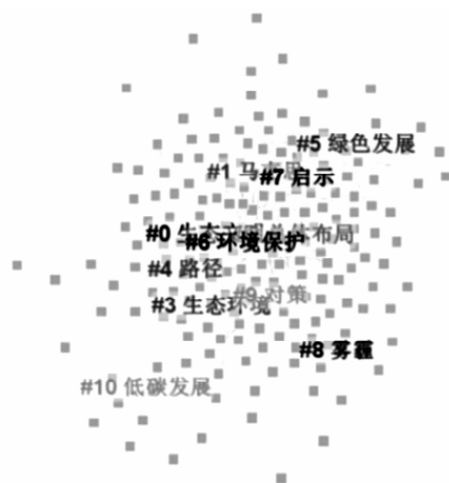


Fig.6 Cluster analysis map of research topics from 2003 to 2007

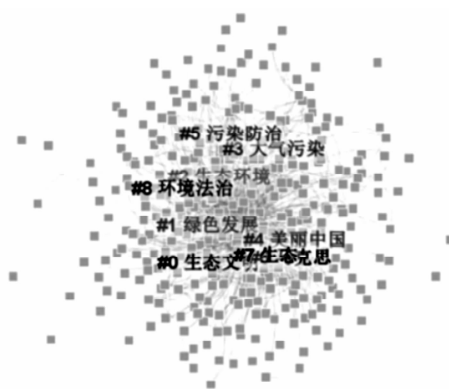


Fig.7 Cluster analysis map of research topics from 2008 to 2012

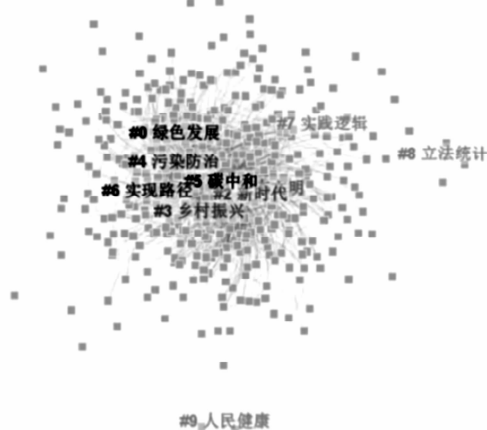


Fig.8 Cluster analysis map of research topics from 2013 to 2023

"green development", "carbon neutrality" and "rural revitalization". It can be seen that the research topics in different periods are constantly changing, and the focus is different, showing a trend of mutual integration and coordinated development. Overall, since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, with the formation of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought and under the guidance of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought, the construction of ecological civilization has continued to

advance and achieved considerable development. In the future, under the macro-control of the government, research trends will gradually focus on "ecological civilization", "green development", "beautiful China", "carbon neutrality" and "new era". Guided by Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought, we will strive to achieve the goal of beautiful China.

4 Conclusion

Although significant progress has been made in the construction of ecological civilization, there is a long way to achieve the goal of sustainable development. Building ecological civilization is a new mission entrusted by the times. Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought scientifically sheds light on why and what kind of ecological civilization should be built and how to build ecological civilization. It is highly scientific, theoretical and practical. The construction of ecological civilization is a long-term and complex project. We must adhere to the guidance of Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought and continue to work hard to build a harmonious and beautiful China, realize the "Chinese Dream" of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and write a beautiful chapter.

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