

PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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Defining the problem: how political philosophy becomes environmental political philosophy. It is assumed that political philosophy is not represented by a purely conceptual analysis of basic political categories (justice, equality, freedom, etc.), but by everyday and habitual political decisions and the actions that follow them. The aim of transforming political philosophy is to articulate it as an instrument of change in the management of society. At the present time (Anthropocene) nature cannot exist as a technological program. A closed, clear, obvious and unambiguous ontological determination of nature is not admitted in its specifically capitalist construction. Context triumphs over nature, and it is only the context of the appreciative economy that puts the terms “nature” and “value” in context.

Keywords: Political philosophy – Environmental philosophy – Neoliberalism – Global governance – Inequality – Reasonable society – Environmental order

Introduction

The question to be considered here is how political philosophy can become environmental political philosophy. Let us presume that political philosophy is represented by more than a purely conceptual analysis of basic political categories (justice, equality, freedom, etc.), because the purpose of environmental political philosophy is not to provide the conceptually normative ideas resulting from such an analysis. On the contrary, attention shifts towards regular, everyday, ordinary political decisions and the associated negotiations which take place without the need for individual justification. Explicative progress lies in the systematic integration of environmentalist perspectives into political decisions, whether or not they are to be accepted or rejected. The goal of the transformation of political philosophy into environmental political philosophy is therefore to make it act as a tool to change the organization of society. It can be understood as a *project of social organization*.

These processes take place in the environment of complex modern capital-dominated societies, which can be collectively labelled using the historical term “capitalism.” I am basing this on a negative determination of capitalism: capitalism is

not merely a system of (re)production, exchange and rent-seeking. It very quickly escaped its theoretical conception as represented by classical political economy and became a social, intensely aggressive order. The attempt at a coherent totalitarian whole, undisturbed by external regulations and adhering to the ideal of autonomous economies (exclusive market self-regulation) was so successful throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, that it managed to subjugate political democracy.

The totalitarian whole of capitalism also includes the living and natural environment. It has taken the natural conditions of life, with their cultural transformations (nature and culture), and embodied them in the form of a single complex artificial global environment of material bodies acting independently and capable of constructing our human, organic and technical world. In our current historical configuration, nature has disappeared as a fact of its own, existing independently of human thought and action. Instead, it has become a program without an alternative, replicating our technocratic view of things; its purpose is not to protect the natural world or develop culture as a form of human survival, but to create a construct wherein nature and culture mutually implode. Nature becomes the outcome of social relations, the product of cultural actions, whose multiple layers correspond with its diverse forms. Cultural action based upon these social relations is perspectivist, and for it nature cannot exist otherwise than as a technological program. A closed, clear and unambiguous ontological determination of nature is not permitted in its specifically capitalist construction.

I. On the Road to Decivilization

We assume that terms such as HP growth, productive investment, balanced budget, privatization, rising productivity, debt, fiscal policy, inflation, liquidity, conjuncture, social and income inequality, consumption and consumerism, and profit have meanings that should help in the self-definition of Western societies in the 21st century. If we attempt such a self-determination, we discover that in the current context, the “world” is made up of a globalized capitalist structure, characterized by a) a steady decline in economic growth, b) a permanent increase in debt, c) a consistently widening inequality in the area of income and wealth distribution. These tendencies, described among others by W. Streeck (2013, 2021), are entirely ignored by the verbal idolatry of the Washington consensuses, Chicago Ordo-liberalism and other “scientific” programs for the preservation of economic and political neoliberalism. Its trend towards disintegration could be seen in the early crises of the 21st century; from 2008 onwards it, however, entered a more permanent state with serious geoeconomic and geopolitical repercussions.

Western societies, built on the neoliberal doctrine, are losing their hegemony in the very globalized capital world that they have created and made their own to

dominate others. All the forces they are capable of unleashing, in this radical process of loss of power and hegemonic world domination, are spent on saving what remains: first and foremost military supremacy, allowing them to keep the other civilizations and cultures in a perpetual state of tension. The final bastion of hegemonialism is the threat of war, of large-scale military conflict, repeatedly bringing back militarism as one of our tools of civilizational self-understanding, along with all its constitutive antagonisms. The last normative justification for militarism, allowing it to act as a legal power and maintain hope for the hegemonic position of the West, was best expressed by Pierre Bourdieu's "principle of sufficient unreason."¹ We have no real reasons for the further militarization of Western civilization: but even that is enough for us to continue carrying it out and present it as legitimate power overcoming the geoeconomic forces of today's mundane order. The West's historical reasoning, devastated by colonialism, is incapable of thinking otherwise because it functions as a phenomenon of power, always thinking the same thought: achieve dominance regardless of victims.

Militarism also puts into stark relief the fact that neoliberalism is not one of the theories interpreting the premises on which today's capitalism is based. Neoliberalism is an oligarchic economic practice of corporate capitalism that has deeply permeated the political systems of Western countries and adapted them to its needs. Most noticeable is its stranglehold that has immobilized politics and, instead of serving as a tool for governing society, has transformed it into an entertainment spectacle, causing institutional (power, police) protection of the market economy from the political interference of the (democratically elected, legitimate and traditional) public. Neoliberalism did not bring about the *depoliticization* of the economic and social environment; quite the opposite, the institutional clutter associated with the transfer of collective decision-making irresponsibility in economic policies from national to supranational bodies and back gives the illusion of multiple democratic checks. Neoliberalism has caused the *de-democratization* of economic governance, which has spread to the elimination of political democracy from the totality of decisive social processes. Central banks have a more important position than governments, which are their own subject of economic policy, regardless of the fact that they escape any (democratic) checks and answer to no one. The issue is not just with nation states, but also supranational communities: The EU has no common economic policy, but has placed members of the eurozone under a single central bank. This neutralizes policies (the entire sphere of "the political," but especially economic policy) in individual states,

¹ See Bourdieu (2001, 119) ("Prinzip des zureichenden Nichtgrundes").

without contributing to the stated goal of achieving overall stability, which disappeared under the rule of the free market.

Utilizing the de-democratization of societies in favor of a banking technocracy, which would ensure the rule of likeminded, centrally organized experts, isolated from the public, was another failed attempt to reformulate the theory and practice of governance (the exercise of power). Like the state sponsored mercatocracy, nurtured by economic schools divorced from social reality (Friedrich A. von Hayek, Milton Friedman, etc.), even expert technocracy cannot overcome the stagnation of an excessively centralized, globalized capitalism. All that remains is to forge new paths to world government: this happens both theoretically, for example, with concepts of so-called *global governance*, as well as practically, by mass militarism. For corporate capitalism to save itself, it must sacrifice a significant portion of itself on the expenses of the military-industrial complex conceived as its shield. Militarism holds corporate capitalism alive; militarism is, however, incompatible with environmentalism, which means that environmentalism is incompatible with capitalism.

Political philosophy itself, oriented towards the critical analysis of governance in late modern societies, will never reach the holders of accumulated power (banks, national agencies deciding economic policy, reserve funds, meetings of top political representatives, etc.). This limited finding concerns the economic neutralization of democracy, as corporate capital overcomes democracy and replaces it with other (coercive, forceful) forms of plutocratic control of the employee classes. If the subject of research in political philosophy remains our current market conformist (i.e. extinct) democracy, then it loses its purpose: its closing statement could be that the capitalism of post-industrial countries has successfully and efficiently destroyed and removed all institutions that might have slowed it down by limiting its “free” operation (beginning with the free self-regulating market). The causes and course of the process whereby capitalism “ends its historical existence in the form of a self-reproducing, sustainable, predictable and legitimate social order” will continue to elude us (Streeck 2015, 10).

Another factor is the most dangerous aspect of corporate capital, its lack of basis in theory or doctrine; all it requires is the primitive instinctive desire for accumulation, possession, and self-enrichment. If it were governed by a theory with explicitly formulated premises, it would be amenable to a critical analysis of what it does and how, its doctrinal basis, its goals, assumptions and expected consequences. But where simple instincts are at play, argumentation becomes pointless: our instincts are immune to criticism. Usually, when we come across such an apparently visceral approach without reason or reflection, it is in cases of open intolerance – of hatred towards eaters of pork, wearers of headscarves, believers in another god, those with another skin color – with

no theory behind them.² But corporate capital is not intolerant, just as it is not even tolerant; it stands outside these categories and is not subject to the criteria of normative (practical) philosophy. It is based on instinct, which by far precedes any doctrinal expression. This is also why it is incomprehensible and untamable via theory, like any power without form. The lack of shape and form of corporate capital represents the limits of critical theory, beyond which it becomes symbolic. Capital has learned from the mistakes that accompanied the work of groups leading to both Washington consensuses and other accords: unlike them it does not formulate the theoretical principles and tenets of its operation. It increases its effectiveness by being inexpressible through premises, therefore formally unamenable to criticism, because it reaches no conclusions. It is pure imperialism, into which it passes, just as Oswald Spengler wrote in 1933, the gradually disappearing *Occident*, making way for an old-new empire.

The spread of pure imperialism is an identical process to the spread of decivilization. In its basic outlines, this can be described as the disintegration dynamics of cultures, societies, publics and subjects in the context of regressive modernism. If cultures or societies disintegrate, there is still hope the original potencies in will evolve into alternate forms, just as the cultures destroyed by evangelizing European colonialism transformed into new and today largely distinct cultural formations (typically Central and South America, Sub-Saharan Africa, etc.). If the same disintegrative process touches the autonomy of the subject, an entirely different situation arises. Cultural anthropology (Norbert Elias) has above all devoted itself to the constitution of the autonomous subject, which may be considered the fundamental feature of the process of civilization. Decivilization, conversely, is defined through the demise of the autonomous subject (the danger of social decline pushing the negative processes of individualization in post-neoliberal capitalism operates permanently and *en masse*). Decivilization is the sediment of regular confrontational practice in the environment and becomes habitual: it strips us of the need to think and make decisions, and significantly suppresses the role of affect so that in the end we do not know why we

² Behind the often fanatical manifestations of intolerance and disrespect for others stands simple visibility: others express their differences, display their otherness, just as those who belong display visible signals of their belonging. Anti-Islamists know nothing of Islam, the Koran or Sharia; if someone told them a Muslim wants to go down “the path to the water-hole” (the content of the word “sharia”), they would have no idea how to interpret this. But they will strictly condemn visible signs (clothing, behavior, customs). An example from a similar context would be the Jesuit missionaries to China in the 17th century; under the influence of the missionary method of accommodation (Matteo Ricci), they went so far as to dress themselves in Mandarin garb and, following the customs of the imperial court, soon enjoyed the favor and respect of the Chinese. In ancient Rome the visible (derogatory) mark of the first Christians was the cross, and so on. This is not, however, superficiality, but rather the significant and culturally distinctive ability of visible symbols to stand in for theories and create networks of clear and simple relations.

act the way we do. Habitual behavior can be taken so far that it equates mindless indecision with freedom; this depends on the imaginings of freedom that seep into societies in an absorbable media form. Decivilized behavior eliminates rational and value-rational behavior, at the core of these is the choice of appropriate means to achieve the chosen goal or goals.

II. The Ecological Modernization and Revitalization of Capitalism

Inequality kills. Capitalism is the source of deep, irreparable social inequality between people. Capitalism therefore kills. A revitalized capitalism will renew its powers, among other things its ability to kill. Is this syllogism too simple? Possibly, yes, as the situation is much more complicated. Because it is not just inequality that kills but even the egalitarian mass consumption of capitalist commodity production that is consuming the planet, all its riches and resources, as if they were the hereditary and structural property of the profit-accumulation system. We are just as equally being killed by the egalitarian principle of private property, derived from commodity thinking; that anything on this planet is tradable, because it can become a privately owned capitalist commodity (solar energy, wind, water, even the atmosphere – traded in the form of emissions permits, but also human thought, fantasy, talent, and art). We're being killed by a system created for the protection of capitalism's global hegemony: all the military technology actively being deployed twenty-four hours, seven days a week (spy satellites, patrol bombers, atomic submarines, aircraft carriers, armored fighting vehicles) produce an immense amount of pollution, whose parameters are state secrets that avoid even scientific measurements, statistics and predictions. Apart from the relativizing the results of scientific studies concerning the current environmental burden on planet Earth,³ this once again demonstrates that the interests of capital have a higher degree of protection than the interests of people in restoring nature and the environment we live in.

Inequality arises as the result of very specific economic and social mechanisms. The different views there are of inequality don't result from inequality itself, but rather from different theoretical analyses of these mechanisms, i.e. the acceptance of various premises related to the existence of inequality. There is a general consensus concerning the principles of social inequality; similar agreement can be found in the belief that the factors responsible (not exclusively, but significantly) for social inequality cannot be

³ When the Kyoto Protocol was drafted in 1997, the USA obtained an exception that they would provide no information on the consumption of oil products and pollution caused by the US military. During the presidency of Donald Trump, subsequent to the withdrawal from this treaty, partial information did come to light, but since 2020 this situation has once more become an information blackout. As a result this means all the "Green Deals" and similar attempts, whose very purpose is to annoy the public and incite them against any warning voices, are the games of politicians and exercises in political powerlessness.

blamed on individuals, among whom there are those advantaged or disadvantaged at the starting line. Here, half a century earlier, the field opened for normative philosophers such as John Rawls to investigate whether it was possible to create just conditions for the entry of each individual into economic and social relations. Similarly, research into the mechanisms of distribution began to appear in politico-economic theories, followed by direct state intervention in the production process and functioning of the market, that would question the current accumulation of profits by the owners of capital. After those fifty years (Rawls' primary work was published in 1972) the result is unambiguous and measurable: inequality has incomparably deepened at the mundane, regional and national level and is now considered irreversible. With this fact in mind, I find it difficult to acknowledge that Rawls' theory of justice, Habermas' theory of communicative action, Dworkin's theory of constitutional law or Held's theory of democracy are in principle anything more than evidence of the failure of sociological, philosophical and political science research in the political sphere.

Given how strong, impenetrable and politically-aligned the system of power is that such a small sliver of the economically advantaged have created in their defense, this conclusion can be considered plausible. For political philosophy, this primarily means shifting its focus to the problems of survival in a situation of deteriorating economic (income) and social (especially in healthcare, schools and security in illness and old age) inequality within liberally globalized capitalism. The world economic order, as it has been formed since the end of the Cold War, does not require the world's poor; it cannot monetize them, and, on the contrary, they represent a burden to be gotten rid of. Against these attempts, political philosophy may once more ask the question of unconditional basic income, new taxation systems, the transfer and allocation of resources and investments. But clearly, no direct results are to be expected; pushing through such proposals might be possible at a transnational political scale, but this would require international politics to actually function as a geo-economically aware geopolitics, instead of being overwhelmed with repeated military escalations and threats of war.

From the position of environmental political philosophy, the problem of inequality is expanded and significantly complicated by that fact that social and economic inequality is further compounded by the inequality in living conditions and that of the natural environment. Here it is no longer important whether or not the lower income classes earn twice, ten times or a thousand times less than the rich, or whether or not investment in the poorest countries will be one quarter or one half of a percent more than military investment: the decisive factor is the *tendency* to create conditions incompatible with leading a good (above all healthy) life. In parallel to the spread of environmental risks, we can see a decrease in life expectancy, an increase in mortality

from commonplace diseases, with the health of the entire broader population being under threat. In countries with high levels of inequality, this tendency is many times stronger than in the relatively more stable countries (in Europe, for example, Scandinavia). Some of the economic statistics of inequality may surprise or frighten us because they paint a completely different picture of the world that we live in than the one created by excluding uncomfortable truths. The fact that women own only 2% of global assets will probably take many people's breath away.⁴ But we have to remind ourselves that the mass extinction of human populations due to environmental risks is already under way and will not be stopped by a progressive tax, Kuznets Curve, sustainable growth or other academic idea. Alarm at this state of affairs will alternate with expert criticism that is ultimately toothless; it lacks any plan to put these ideas into practice, and it is not even capable of formulating a sufficiently attractive utopia to appeal to the broader disaffected social classes. Today, nobody is bothered by this criticism, least of all the people who know their actions will lead to human death and yet who continue on just as before. They can always just spit out the phrase "humanitarian crisis," to obfuscate both the crimes and the perpetrators.

Frequently, discussions of ways to stop these risky asymmetric processes presume that change will come via a greening (ecologisation) of capitalism, i.e. the further development of the potential of artificial human cultures, specifically those elements enclosed within the boundaries of the economic system. "Greening" can be understood as a process of capitalist transformation, in other words the discovery and implementation of a new form of capitalist economic reproduction of everyday societies, which will meet certain environmental and social criteria known in advance. People are looking for new forms of reproduction of capitalist societies because all the current attempts have led to today's parallel ecological and economic crises (Dörre 2014). The subject of change is modern capitalist pro-growth society, which means much more than just replacing the primary parameters of economic activity, but rather a more complex reversal of the principles we use to paint our picture of the world and our place

⁴ Cf. Schmelzer, Passadakis (2011, 25). This fact should presumably lead to a change in thinking concerning gender issues. It may be important how airplane passengers address each other, whether or not greetings are gendered and what more neutral terms we can replace *he, she, it* or *der, die, das* with. It may be proper to fire even a Nobel Prize Winner from their job if they disregard the prominent role of women in the history of modern physics. Nevertheless (in my purely private opinion) much greater concerns could be raised tackling the *global socio-economic* situation of women, which is deteriorating in proportion to the increase in global inequality. Women's dependence on the real owners of capital and the wealth they extract is deepening. In the interest of women, deglobalization, the capability of politico-psychological reaction to the neoliberalism embedded in our economic relations, as well as the derived protective measures for women (i.e. half of humanity), should stand against the *real-life* erosion of their sovereignty. Backed by two percent of global wealth, this will, however, be incomparably more difficult than carrying on with our current squabbles, supported conversely by all the people this does not harm.

within it. From its very beginnings, capitalist modernism has been fixated on escalation, carrying on from the Post-Enlightenment correlation between the rationalist entitlements of humanity to subjugate all available natural resources (i.e. the right to sustained culturalization of the natural environment) and emancipating oneself from nature's power (progress). When escalation – i.e. the logic of escalating relations between capital and nature – became a structural factor in the continuous dynamization of capitalist society, it was titled “growth.”

“Growth” is the sum of the processes of economic, ecological and social reproduction taking up an increasing percentage of natural resources and providing them for capital use, whose form and contents represent a decisive civilizational factor. We can see growth as primarily economic (the accumulation of goods production and maximization of consumption), which in its own interest (capital accumulation) creates tools to stabilize itself and thereby also stabilize a pro-growth society: it creates a technical and technological civilization which has, through the gradual assimilation of all other civilizations, taken control of the globe and established the capitalist society of global imperialism. Its solidification of power (police, army and the so-called security forces complex) will play a primary role in any attempt at reform, including efforts at greening. But even before that, there is another problem associated with the operation of pro-growth economies: Is it possible to stabilize modern capitalist society in some other way than through economic growth?

The first answer that comes to mind is of course politics. But the question is how can politics be possible, when we are in an environment of a global capitalist political economy, characterized by a decline in the political power of nation states, the substitution of politics for dictatorships of post-election coalitions, populism, loss of regulatory ability in the social sphere and an orientation towards self-preservation at a supranational political level (the EU in Europe, the African Union, ASEAN in Southeast Asia, the Eurasian integration of Central Asian republics and Russia, or China, founded on multi-vector politics, UNASUR the Union of South American Nations, etc.). While in all parts of the world there are undoubtedly many reasons to develop robust alternatives to the valorization economies of corporate capitalism, there are incomparably fewer practically viable options. Politics (if it is to be understood as the activity of the political parties in government or opposition) is not promising in this respect because it is not actually politics.

The political philosophy of the Anthropocene can enter into transformative discussions (similarly about the “greening” of capitalism) to the degree it is able to formulate its normatively strategic intentions in capitalist societies undergoing multi-level economic, social and environmental crises, without being dependent only on government policy analyses. It will therefore first need to form a *conception* of the

social relations requiring change. At the same time, this is not about establishing the prerequisites for its own political action, meaning ensuring practical and social effectiveness of contextual knowledge theses. Many activities (resistance movements, alternative movements, etc.) lack a clear context they can relate to through their critical activities, yet cannot be denied a certain effectiveness. Political philosophy cannot, however, be confused with civil resistance movements; it cannot “mobilize the masses,” but rather its purpose is to achieve as broadly and profoundly as possible, an understanding of the immanent dynamics of capitalism, the contradictions it grows from, the causes of social conflict, the source of capitalism’s vast ability to regenerate even after catastrophic systemic crises, the logic of its adaptability to ever new (almost continuously in crisis) environments, the potential means of transformation and possibilities for the suppression of capitalist hegemonialism, all determined from the perspective of environmentalism.

If politics, democracy or a combination of both are not enough to deal with our environmental problems, does repoliticization offer a better chance? Society free from the dictates of accumulation and economic growth is undoubtedly one of the primary ideals of environmentalism. But is this idea sufficiently political not to fall between the flotsam and jetsam of responsibilities, moral turns and new solidarities overflowing the already turbid polemics concerning degressive growth? We’re looking for a way to process the polyvalent crisis of economic growth and social stagnation, and at the same time we can’t rule out that this pathway will lead through a new repoliticization of social relations requiring change. Redistribution, whose various forms are at the center of the vast majority of our current disputes and professional polemics, is not a political, but rather a politico-economic and socio-political factor. We can set it aside in our next discussion, but this only moves us onto the next problem: what is the element capitalism has depoliticized (pushed out of or stifled through politics) that is required to revive political philosophy in the direction of active environmentally reconstructive action?

Looking back at two centuries of the development of European and then Euro-Atlantic civilization, we can see there was an explosion in economic growth with no historical equivalent. The evolution of societies is commonly explained using the variation – selection – retention scheme, but the development of modern capitalism was different: a discontinuous change, relatively localized according to changes in the flow of capital. These then corresponded to the qualitative diversity in production and the dynamics of capitalist innovation, which have been and are the most abrupt in economic history. In the processes of social (not only economic) innovation, ever new products, forms of organization and reorganization, technologies, needs and interests constantly emerge. In Western Europe, the original location of that “Faustian system,” as capitalism is sometimes referred to due to its inherent dynamics, between the years

1820 and 1998 the real gross social product grew by an average of 1.51% *per capita* each year (Maddison 2001, 28). Staggering numbers – with staggering consequences that are nothing to celebrate. Whatever that one and a half percent growth means (as any economic figure it is somewhat uncertain and easy to manipulate), it has its price: fossil fuels consumed, raw materials, minerals, megatons of poisonous substances in the air, soil and water, the spread of desertification, warming, mass death (namely women and children) by starvation and illness – basically that thing we call “our world.” It has become a means of payment, a universally tradeable currency whose value rises alongside the use-value of the world, of which there is less and less due to capitalist consumption.

The factor we are looking for to take further active effect in the environmental reconstruction of political philosophy is a dynamic – a dynamic of transition to a new, normatively fundamental level of mundane social environmental integration. Capitalism has its own dynamic and will therefore probably better understand the dynamic of environmental change over revolution; the revolutionary aspects of the contemplated greening of capitalism consist of returning it to its primary and basic purpose of satisfying profane human needs. However, the more dynamic the necessary individual steps are before human societies make their way to this origin, where a new history of work, money, capital, stability, culture and nature can begin to be written, the higher will their added value be in limiting the severity of ecological damage.

III. The Environmental Philosophy of a Politically Rational Society

Repoliticization is not the same as political radicalization. Repoliticization is a new and practical use of reason: to know the things we are capable of because we have done them ourselves. For the same reason, our current politico-economic order is knowable and changeable; because we have made capitalism, we can learn to rationally understand it and find alternatives to it. Corporate capital is the most serious obstacle to a rational noetic comprehension of its own capital production and reproduction, the internal and external forces that keep it moving and the principles forming the politico-economic subject of the illegitimate usurpation of economic power. Overcoming this obstacle, i.e. achieving a rational insight into the principles of factual and symbolic power of 21st century corporate capitalism is a necessary condition for the development of political economy’s science-based environmental utopianism. It’s not enough to say money rules the world: there’s another someone who rules the money.

Corporate capitalism is power. Power needs not appeal to reason, for it asserts itself as will, regardless of rational justification. It remains, as an instinct, a will, an urge and a force, a *fascinosum* whose influence remains undiminished, despite all efforts. To put forward a proposal to limit corporate capital (in the name of saving the

environment or humanity, the reason no longer matters very much) will be, as all previous research into the changes collectively described as the Anthropocene, most likely necessary; but this will not be possible without new methods of revision, without innovative methodological implications of environmental political philosophy and without its hypothetical-argumentative reconstruction, based on experiences we as yet lack.

The principles for the transformation of political philosophy into environmental political philosophy can be formulated under the following points:

1. The principles that make the transformation of political philosophy into environmental political philosophy possible are its competences, which cannot be assumed by other humanities or social sciences in the current conditions. Environmental political philosophy is a) competent with respect to contemporary economic and political ambivalences because it incorporates the methods and insights of ecological political economy; b) competent with respect to economic and political transformation because it is able to formulate normative and reflexive principles for substantial and radical social change; c) It is competent to carry out an environmental analysis of European modernity and contemporary (post-industrial) capitalist modernity because it is able to analyze hegemonic political projects and economic exclusivist theories; d) It is normatively competent because it is able to articulate values with a very broad social reach, especially in the area of practical, ecologically acceptable ways of living well.

2. Environmental political philosophy can thus be considered competent to develop environmental-ecological policy, but it is not competent concerning the future. The future belongs to the future, and to talk about it is misguided. Environmental political philosophy has no future dimension.

3. Environmental political philosophy does not create an ideal theory, which is considered by representatives of contemporary political theory and scientific theory as alienated from reality, authoritarian, ideological and non-political. This usually means Rawls' conception. This is not to say that environmental political philosophy denies the relevance of normative theory to the practical problems of politics, environmentalism and ecological political economy. It formulates practical recommendations and focuses (under partially idealized assumptions about the responses of individuals, groups, classes, and societies to environmental stresses) on improving interpersonal coexistence and achieving the "good life" on a prosaic scale.

4. Environmental political philosophy necessarily pursues particularistic interests because it is situated in the historical context of the power conflict between labor and capital. It does so on the basis of falsifiable findings of the social sciences (political economy, sociology, political science) and its own attitudes and preferences derived

from findings formulated in environmentalist research (IPCC reports, etc.), i.e. it exploits empirical limitations. Therefore, it cannot be defined as an ideology.

5. An environmentalization of political philosophy that could trigger a degressive ecological reform of capitalism does not rely on any “green growth,” “green economy,” “economically balanced growth,” on new technological solutions (digitalization), decarbonization, etc. These are self-delusions; unless they are accompanied by economic and political framework conditions, such as ecological tax reform, a strict and sanctioned cap on resource consumption and emissions, a different type of rationality evident in cultural change (the reduction or elimination of statist consumerism, a significant reduction in working hours, the reduction and elimination of social inequality, strengthening of the role of labor in the relationship between labor and capital, rebuilding the economies of economically underdeveloped countries), there can be no question of a permanent and stable economic system.

6. Normative political theory identifies as correct a policy that guarantees every individual the right to free self-determination; because such a determination goes beyond the realm of human privacy, self-determination is defined in terms of the correlation between private and political autonomy. Because it is an interval, we cannot define political theory (or democracy) simply as the domination through power (albeit achieved through electoral success) of the universal over the particular and vice versa.

7. The way of life of the global North, which presupposes a fundamentally unrestricted and politically, forcefully and legally secured access to resources, nature, living space, labor and the possibility of its exploitation anywhere in the world, is considered imperialist by environmental political philosophy.

8. Among the options offered by current economic and political practice (a) business as usual guided by neoliberal policies of social austerity, b) progressive solidaristic productivism based on economic degression and social democratic economic policy, c) socio-ecological transformation), environmental political philosophy opts for socio-ecological transformation.

9. Environmental political philosophy is open to the principle of environmental justice. It is unacceptable that the individuals, nations and cultures that have been and/or still are most affected by the problem of global capitalist social inequality should bear the enormous additional costs of dealing with the immediate consequences of ecological pollution and the climate crisis; this task belongs to those most responsible for these risky impacts on planet Earth, i.e. the global North.

10. Environmental political philosophy makes universal claims based on general, rationally mediated norms; however, agreement on norms also takes into account the possibility of preserving dissent, especially in relation to the claimed universality.

11. Environmental political philosophy does not think of the outcome of its ecological, economic and political activities as a “coming democracy”; its actions are essentially a rational experiment whose outcome cannot be accurately predicted.

12. Environmental political philosophy is very reticent about many of the activist moves that are thematized in the context of a degrowth economy (communal housing and rural squats, consumer-producer cooperatives, permaculture and subsistence organic farming, alternative non-monetary commodity exchange systems, including political proposals for the creation of multiple levels of confederal direct democracy); it understands the term “degrowth” in Giorgos Kallis’ moderate intention.⁵

13. Environmental political philosophy not only considers the concept of “growth” in an economic sense but also understands it in the spirit of Harald Welzer’s social psychology as a “mental infrastructure” (Welzer 2011). That is, the consumerist actions of individuals and the pro-growth orientation of society are anchored deep in psychic and socio-psychological structures where they take shape as culture-wide dimensions; the critique of growth then naturally appears as a critique of a two hundred year-long and successful social model for which there is no adequate replacement.

14. Environmental political philosophy is not applied moral theory. Moral judgments are only possible on the basis of moral criteria that are demonstrably (de)formable. Extra-moral or amoral explanatory factors are not relevant for moral judgments. The origins and causes of moral phenomena are revealed by genealogical analysis, but this does not constitute an argument for the moral relevance of moral attitudes. Only propositional theorems serve that purpose.

15. Environmental political philosophy is indeterministic. It understands the role of regulatory ideas in the real life of individuals and societies, and places particular emphasis on the idea of the “good life.” The “good life” is not a moral norm, but an alternative kind of human action that is based on standards of rationality.

16. Environmental political philosophy requires a new anthropology of work. Driven by corporate capital, *Homo laborans* does not perform work but merely enters into a perpetual, ongoing state in which each step in the making of a product builds on the previous one, and the previous one serves the next, becoming the preliminary act in a chain of repeated activities. Work is a false notion that never ends with the satisfaction of a given need but operates as an unrestricted and endless activity without any specific production goal; its purpose is the continuous production of “value.”

⁵ Kallis (2011, 878): “Sustainable degrowth is a multi-faceted political project that aspires to mobilize support for a change of direction, at the macrolevel of economic and political institutions and at the micro level of personal values and aspirations. Income and material comfort is to be reduced for many along the way, but the goal is that this is not experienced as a loss of well-being.”

17. The transition to an environmental order (i.e., an order with a civil, non-criminal relationship to planet Earth) is an act of structural rationality, thus precluding any form of anarchism. Environmental political philosophy justifies cooperation as a tool to create the environmental order, although it understands the objection that cooperative action is always a manifestation of irrationality (it may go against the best interests of the individual involved). Environmental political philosophy is the theoretical foundation for this; it relies on the experience that at the level of *civil relations*, contracts (even if partially enforced by state sanctions) are honored reliably enough to make cooperative action worthwhile. Environmental political philosophy seeks agreement, cooperation in the formulation and achievement of economic and environmental goals, and the creation of a social order that can be unbiasedly defined as a culture of trust.

Conclusions

With a growing awareness of environmental threats, clearly visible from the second decade of the 21st century, an unsettling notion is permeating consumer complacency: we are ever more thoroughly and mercilessly scuttling the boat we are sailing on and have no backup. We remain societies of the controlled, but the paradox of those kept in cages is cooperation, solidarity and partnership. Partnership under threat is beginning to be the hallmark of social discourses outside of the politically distorted mainstream media, outside the official speeches of politicians, who, ensconced within their megalopathic visions, lack the sensitivity required for simple progressions of thought in the worlds of both consumption and work. So long as the movement of Western – as well as large non-Western – societies continues in the current direction, towards a culture of negative emotions, where socio-economic problems resonate, where there is a loss of opportunities, where people are exposed to a general pointlessness or even superfluousness, where militarism and the constant threat of war with no concept of peace and self-discipline are the basic or perhaps only form of social self-actualization and individual self-determination, then perhaps environmentalism may become the shared way of life between partners in danger.

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