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A Prognostic View on the Ideological Determinants of Violence in the Radical Ecological Movement

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Abstract: Ecologically motivated violence that manifests itself in the animal-rights and environmental forms is not a declining phenomenon. The fluctuating increase of the number of ecologically motivated crimes during the last 50 years, the multiplicity of the methods used (arson, food poisoning in supermarkets, destruction of equipment, attacks with the use of incentivized devices) should make us look at eco-extremism as a dynamic and difficult to grasp phenomenon. The paper is of both explanatory and prognostic nature; its goal is to present the genesis and essence of ecological radicalism, as well as to formulate the predictions for the future. In these forecasts, I wish to depart from the frequent, albeit somewhat simplistic, argument that, since the environmental extremist groups have not yet resorted to direct violence (targeting humans), and the animal-rights groups have reached for it very rarely, this state of affairs will continue in the future. This claim does not necessarily have to be true. I argue that some aspects of ideology can induce, in certain circumstances (a growing ecological catastrophe, further departure from the anthropocentric perspective), a change of the potential of radicalism within the environmental and animal-rights movements. In the case of animal-rights groups, the principle of not causing harm to people may be openly rejected, and in the case of environmental groups, the actions aimed at the annihilation of the whole human species may be undertaken.

Keywords: ecoterrorism; environmental extremism; animal-rights extremism; deep ecology; ecologically motivated violence

1. Introduction

We live in the shadow of the coming crisis. However, this crisis will be different from all the previous ones, for it will cover all spheres of life and will be total in its nature. It is a crisis of paradigms; the paradigms, like anthropocentrism or dichotomism, that for centuries, brought forth achievements of our civilization. These paradigms, however, have eventually led to the threat of self-destruction.

In 1962, Rachel Carson emphasized the need for attention to the emerging ecological crisis, by describing the impact of insecticides (such as DDT or aldrin) on the natural environment and the life support system over the longer term [1]. According to Carson, the greed and egoism of the lethal pesticide industry cannot be easily stopped, just as it is the case with the pursuit of technological progress that has become a permanent element of the post-war world. Therefore, the natural world, and consequently, human beings, are in mortal danger, and this cannot be easily reversed. Many ecological thinkers, such as Clarence Morris, Lynna White, and Christopher Stone followed this way of thinking, as well as numerous radical environmental and animal-rights organizations (Earth First!, Earth Liberation Front, and Animal Liberation Front).

British scientist James Lovelock presented a slightly different vision of the catastrophe (disaster) in his Gaia hypothesis in the early 1970s [2]. According to this hypothesis, the Earth is not merely a collection of living and inanimate entities, but a living superorganism that manipulates the Earth's atmosphere for its benefit, and strives for optimal harmony that promotes the development of life [2].

It is in Gaia's interest to keep all life on Earth in the state of dynamic balance (homeostasis). When this balance is disturbed, e.g., due to pollution or collision with a meteorite, it usually leads to the extinction of species, but not necessarily to the disappearance of life on Earth. The reason might be the fact that the earth will be able to adapt to new conditions and will survive; however, this adaptability may not necessarily be applied to its individual parts that have not developed such capabilities.

Although both concepts differ in the way that they see the future of the ecological system (according to the first, it will degrade, while the second states that it will cope), there is something that undoubtedly links them together, namely the belief that a catastrophe caused by humanity will destroy the foundations of its existence, and thus the whole species. Indeed, the changes that have been taking place in the world do not engender optimism. The surface temperature of our planet has risen by 1 °C over the past 150 years [3]. The effects of global warming include climatic anomalies such as floods, drought, desertification, cyclones, and hurricanes. In many regions of the world, progressive soil degradation occurs, which is manifested by erosion, loss of organic components, desertification, acidification, salinity or alkalization (excessive accumulation of sodium compounds). The increased emission of sulfur oxide (SO₂) contributes to the formation of acid rain, which then cause the degradation of forests, vegetation, and diseases of animals and people [4]. As many as 50% of the animals that once shared the Earth with us have already disappeared. A significant population decrease has been observed in another 30% of species. In recent years, most of them have lost over 40% of their natural habitat area, and almost half of them have lost more than 80% of their areas of occurrence in 1900–2015 [3]. Modern meat production, mass-scale fishing, and modern chemistry-based agriculture destroy the natural environment, and in moral terms, they bring forth the death and suffering of millions of animals. All these changes are brought forth because of human activity. Unfortunately, that is not all. Mass deforestation and the destruction of meadows destroy habitats of wild animals that massively move near human homes. This, in turn, results in the occurrence of numerous zoonoses, such as Spanish flu, AIDS, measles, Nipah disease, Ebola hemorrhagic fever, swine flu, SARS, MERS or COVID-19 [5].

Radical ecologists believe that humans are destructive beings, who use and misuse nature in the process of satisfying their non-vital needs. Being part of nature, they, of course, are entitled to protection, but as misusers, they deserve condemnation, and perhaps even exclusion from the biological community. The aim of this paper is to discuss the risks posed by eco-terrorism, and to investigate which branch of the ecological movement will radicalize and hence create new threats.

It should be noted that many researchers have doubts regarding the usage of the term "terrorism" concerning radical animal rights and environmental groups. Among such scholars, there is, for example, Christopher C. Harmon, according to whom activists whose actions are motivated by the will to protect animals and natural environment do not usually have an inclination towards acts that could be described as "terrorist." This means that they do not seek to destroy the social order, and are usually opposed to all forms of bodily integrity violations. Their goal is not to generate a sense of threat, but to stop the activities of certain classes of people (vivisectionists, entrepreneurs, foresters). It is in this narrow-range mode of operation that they try to influence the policy of a given country or region [6]. A similar opinion is expressed by Leonard Weinberg and Paul Davis [7] or Bron Taylor, according to whom "despite the frequent use of revolutionary and martial rhetoric by participants in these movements, they have not, as yet, intended to inflict great bodily harm or death" [8].

Of course, environmental activists, who construct their conceptual framework on a different philosophical basis than their opponents, do not accept the term "terrorism" to be used to describe their actions. They argue, taking a completely "non-anthropocentric" position (egalitarian in relation to sentient beings or holistic in relation to the natural world), that the use of the term "terrorism" to denote activities that do not target natural (the environmentalist perspective) or sentient beings (the animal-rights perspective) is an abuse originating from the traditional (anthropocentric) moral perspective. This perspective leads to the erroneous perception of violence and terrorism as something that can occur only in relation to human beings and their property, and not in relation to other

non-human beings. If we abandon this erroneous factor, which is based on our harmful habits of thought and perspective, we will have to recognize that the “real terrorists” are not those who fight for “oppressed beings” (animal and natural), but rather those “that promote or defend the exploitation of the natural world” [9].

The term “terrorism” is not neutral. This word has strong negative connotations and is associated with the need to take decisive defense measures to combat it. Therefore, even if we do not revise our conceptual framework and do not take the non-anthropocentric position, we will have to recognize that using this term to refer to groups that operate according to the non-violence principle must give rise to a feeling of inadequacy, or even injustice. It is especially so when we compare their “violent” actions with the activities of such groups as the Islamist Al-Qaeda or the anti-abortion Army of God, which are undoubtedly much more brutal. Moreover, the radicalism of the animal-rights and natural environment defenders is not particularly “impressive” when compared to other types of radicalism born in Western civilization (e.g., religious, nationalist, single issue, far right, and far left), both in terms of the numbers and violent nature of attacks [10].

At this point, it should be noted that the environmental activists are often the target of “terrorist” attacks. According to David Helvarg, the author of *The War Against the Greens*, some of these attacks in the US are organized by the robust Wise Use movement, that gathers farmers, property developers, hunters, SUV users, miners, free-market advocates, and religious fundamentalists. This movement, in Helvarg’s opinion, is, in fact, not a grassroots campaign, but a kind of “astroturf”, behind which big business hides [11], as well as those who are responsible for a series of acts of violence, such as intimidation, arson, assault, rape, and even murder towards people involved in the environmental movement [11]. Carl Deal, in his book *The Greenpeace Guide to Anti-Environmental Organizations*, expresses a similar opinion [12]. Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) that studies and analyzes the actions of Wise Use, lists on its websites a number of acts of violence perpetrated by supporters of the Wise Use ideology, among which there are shooting at buildings, beating and intimidating, and planting bombs [13–15].

2. Methodology

The goal of the paper is to provide a narrative, based on interdisciplinary research, review on the topic of eco-terrorism. The study was carried out on the philosophical, political, sociological, and historical level. The basis of the entire research process was, of course, analysis and synthesis. The analytical method was deployed to examine original source texts, and all types of other studies (scientific and non-scientific). The purpose of the analysis of the source texts was to extract the truth about a given document, and to ascertain on its basis, as well as on the previously acquired knowledge, what the actual facts were. The goal of the analysis of the secondary literature was to, apart from expanding knowledge about the phenomenon, extract “alternative truths” and confront them with the author’s own research intuitions. With the use of synthesis in the research process, the author intends to go beyond the mere merging of reconstructed fragments of the studied phenomenon, and to create a complete, and most importantly, meaningful and rich picture of the whole.

The paper is based on many sources that can be classified into a few groups. The first one are scientific works. Some concern the phenomenon of eco-extremism, others broadly understood security. The second group of sources includes reports of analytical centers and statistical materials. Some reports come from government agencies, some from private agencies. The third group of sources consists of propaganda materials of the discussed groups and the so-called narrative sources, namely “testimonies” (i.e., confessions of environmental radicals). These materials are posted on websites or published in a traditional form. The fourth group consists of documentary sources (official documents, court records, trial transcripts, official letters). The fifth group of sources includes press releases and news agencies reports. There are difficulties related to all those sources because, as it happens, various sources often give contradictory information (sometimes it is due to the imperfection of human memory, and sometimes it stems from a deliberate bending of facts in the sake of one’s own, usually ideological,

interests). It also happens that the authors are not neutral in their approach, which often leads to a distortion of the image of a given phenomenon. Therefore, in my research, I had to place great emphasis on identifying the most reliable data and distinguishing between facts and ideological propaganda, which I did by relying on my knowledge about the authors, the source of materials, and socio-political context.

3. Results

3.1. *The Characteristics of Ecoterrorism*

The belief of human superiority over all other beings [16] was rarely negated within the European culture. However, everything changed in the 1970s, when, within the framework of the culture, an extremist trend appeared that changed gentle activism into unprecedented committed radicalism. Today, ecologically motivated violence is no longer a marginal phenomenon. The data published by the FBI shows that among 112 attacks carried out between 1986 and 2005 in the United States, classified as terrorism, 57 were organized by groups or individuals motivated by environmental or animal-rights ideologies, such as Animal Liberation Front, Earth Liberation Front, Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, Arissa, Animal Rights Militia, Band of Mercy, Justice Department, Animal Liberation Brigade, Vegan Dumpster Militia, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, Direct Action Front.

Although, in the United States, there were only nine attacks in 1986–1997, the number grew to 48 in 1998–2005 [17]. The total number of incidents in the USA between 1979 and 2008 committed by ecological extremists was around 2000, and their total cost was estimated at \$110 million [18]. These statistics do not include minor vandalism attacks, or small acts of violence against people, or, finally, botnet swarm attacks [19]. R. L. Young's doctoral dissertation examined the period, 1993–2003, and identified over 1400 incidents of terrorism committed by environmental and animal rights extremists [20], while Varriale-Carson, LaFree, and Dugan documented 1069 criminal incidents committed by these groups between 1970 and 2007 [21].

According to the data of the Foundation for Biomedical Research, in 1981–2005, there were 529 ecology-related crimes committed in the United States, including 53 arson attacks, 123 thefts, 36 bombings, 238 acts of vandalism, and 79 cases of harassment. A particular increase in crimes occurred after 1999. In 1998, there were only seven registered incidents of that kind, but in 1999, the number grew to 27, and the trend continued—in 2000 there were 28 of them, in 2001—42, 2002—17, 2003—101, 2004—99, 2005—82, and so on [22]. According to the data presented by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, in the United States alone, there were 239 attacks between 1995 and 2010—arson (38%) and bombing attacks (62%), perpetrated by environmental (54.8%) and animal-rights extremists (45.2%)—mainly the ALF (Animal Liberation Front) and the ELF (Earth Liberation Front). More than 42% of these attacks resulted in severe financial losses [23,24]. These data indicate an increase in the number of incidents in 1995 through 2001, a variation in the number of incidents until 2010, and a relatively stable level after 2010 [24].

According to the data gathered by AnimalRightsExtremism.info, there were 27 serious incidents worldwide between April 2012 and 5 September 2016 [25]. In 2010–2019, animal rights organizations carried out approximately 2521 prohibited acts, including sabotage, arson, “liberation” actions (in 2019—264, in 2018—306, in 2017—225, in 2016—124, in 2015—139, in 2014—214, in 2013—241, in 2012—251, in 2011—387, in 2010—370) [26]. The Global Terrorism Index states that attacks on facilities and infrastructure were the most common form of terrorist attacks in the US between 2002 and 2018, with a total number of 239 attacks. The majority of attacks were carried out by animal rights and environmentalist groups. It should be stressed, however, that these types of attacks result in very low casualties and rarely have loss of life as the main goal [27]. According to William Braniff, the Director of National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, between 2000–2009, animal rights and environmentally motivated terrorist attacks were carried out by Animal Liberation Front (Coalition to Save the Preserves, Earth Liberation Front, Environmentalists, Revenge of the Threes,

Revolutionary Cells, Animal Liberation Brigade). In 2010–2019, in the US, there were six terrorist attacks that can be attributed to Animal Liberation Front, one attributed to the Justice Department, and three to environmentalist groups. One deadly attack was carried out by an anonymous person driven by broadly conceived ecological ideology [10]. Of course, these statistics are highly selective and do not take into account the attacks carried out in Europe and other various parts of the world.

3.2. *Reasons for the Emergence of Ecological Extremism*

The reasons for the emergence of environmental and animal-rights extremisms seem to be different. The sources of the former could be found in the early 1960s, when the correlation between the increase of exploitation of natural resources and the growth of prosperity started to be questioned for the very first time. Moreover, more and more people (mainly in the U.S.) began to realize that the possibility of an ecological crisis is real, and when it occurs, it will threaten all the species living on the earth. This emerging environmental awareness quickly resulted in protective activities. As early as in the second half of the 1960s, the consumer movements in the United States started to demand the right for “the natural environment that would correspond to the needs of the human body and high quality of life.” More and more organizations were established to lobby for the natural environment. Despite the high activity of these movements, their actions did not bring forth expected results, or the results did not satisfy all of the members, who increasingly demanded more radical forms of fighting for the conservation of the natural environment. The 1979 decision of the U.S. Forest Service to use 36 million acres of forest areas for commercial purposes; the so-called RARE II (“Roadless Area Review and Evaluation II”) was, as it seems, a turning point in the formation of green extremism. The decision was a great shock for some environmental activists. It not only showed the lack of ecological awareness of the agency, but also demonstrated the weakness of the traditional environmental organizations that were not able to oppose it, or did not want to, due to e.g., their relationship with large corporations and government agencies, as well as large internal bureaucracy. Because of general dissatisfaction caused by this decision and the unfavorable climate around the “legal environmental organizations”, several groups were established, the sole purpose of which was to decisively (and not necessarily lawfully) combat the growing indifference towards the natural environment [28].

The emergence of the animal rights extremism is more difficult to picture, since it is problematic to point out a turning point that could be considered to be an “ideological trigger” of the animal-rights radicalism. It is so probably because the process of becoming radical was evolutionary, not revolutionary; it was a consequence of ever stronger and courageous demands regarding broadening moral horizons, so they included all previously discriminated groups of beings, including those who are unable to articulate the liberation postulates themselves. The animal rights movement was born in the 19th century in England, and although initially, the source of its motivation were not animals but human beings, more precisely, their spiritual and moral development; the movement relatively quickly tried to reject this “narrow anthropocentric perspective” in order to entirely equalize the respect of the interests of all sentient beings. This was the path that facilitated a formulation; in the 1970s, the most radical (and yet very catchy) claim of the modern “liberation movement” so far, namely that the discrimination of a creature only because of its belonging to a particular species is a superstition as immoral as racism or sexism. In contrast to the environmental extremism, which constituted to the influence of an eco-systemic threat, the radical movement of animal protection came into being, because of an altruistic development of moral awareness.

In the second half of the 20th century, this development brought about a real abundance of radical animal-rights groups fighting for a total ban on exploitation and killing of animals. The activities of radical groups defending the rights of animals, as well as those fighting for protection and conservation of the natural environment, are often analyzed together under the umbrella terms “ecological terrorism” or [29–31]. Such an approach is justified by the fact that many organizations belonging to the two movements closely cooperate, because their objectives, in many respects, confluence. Despite the convergence of the goals and quite similar intra-organizational structure (leaderless resistance model),

there are some ideological differences between the radical environment activists and animal rights defenders that prevent them from a complete organizational convergence. Such differences also mean that some researchers (such as Wayman Mullins, Kenneth Dudonis, David Schulz, Sean Eagan) distinguish between ecoterrorism or environmental terrorism, understood as violence in defense of nature, and animal rights terrorism, understood as violence in the defense of animals [32–34]. The Earth Liberation Front and the Animal Liberation Front are, respectively, the most prominent representatives of those two types.

The Earth Liberation Front (ELF) was founded in England in 1992, by former members of Earth First!. The group's aim is to restore the original ecosystems, which in the opinion of the group's members, have been destroyed as a result of immoral and selfish human activities. According to Earth First!, adopting an uncompromising view, based on the philosophy of deep ecology attitude towards the natural environment, is a necessary condition to achieve this goal. Moreover, such an attitude should be expressed by direct actions. The ELF's attacks are aimed primarily at timber companies, institutions promoting genetic engineering, construction companies, car sellers, and power generating and distribution businesses, as well as, it is worth emphasizing, all structures that embody the "greed and injustice of the capitalist state" [35]. This last point requires a short elucidation, for the ELF does not only want to destroy the capitalist system, but also to remove profit as a motive for action from all spheres of social life [36].

The Animal Liberation Front (ALF), the largest extremist animal-rights group, was founded in 1976 by Ronnie Lee. The main goal of the group is to fight all forms of human exploitation of animals. Their attacks are aimed primarily at the meat production, food, pharmaceutical, fur, zoological industries, as well as research institutions. In the first period of its activity, the most frequent method used by the group was sabotage: freeing animals, inserting sticky substances into holes in locks, destroying equipment, painting on windows or breaking them. This relatively mild period of the ALF's activity ended in the 1980s, when the group began to organize acts of economic sabotage, like arson, planting explosive and incendiary devices, devastating laboratory equipment, or bricking up windows in butcher shops. The radicalism of the ALF grew in the mid-1980s, when the group started attacking people. The attacks most often consisted of threats, intimidation, and relatively minor cases of assault and battery, although sometimes, more drastic acts of violence also occurred (planting explosive devices in the homes of people working in companies exploiting animals) [37].

3.3. Ideological Basis as a Source of Radicalism

The ideological foundation of the radical environmental and animal rights movements is undoubtedly anti-anthropocentrism that manifests itself in the belief that the human being is not a unique and superior element of the world. Human beings, therefore, should not occupy a privileged place among other beings. However, the category of "other beings" is not shared by the two ecological radical movements. According to the animal rights activists, it is limited to sentient beings (who possess the so-called interests), and according to environmentalists, it includes all-natural creatures (including those inanimate as well).

Another difference is the placement of moral value. In the case of environmental radicals, this placement is of holistic nature, i.e., it is based on the belief that nature is not a mere collection of living and inanimate beings, but a biogenic whole that is infinitely more perfect than its individual human or non-human forms of existence [38]. This whole is not an aggregate—it possesses peculiar characteristics that cannot be reduced to the characteristics of its constituents (i.e., it is not merely a sum of the properties of its individual parts). Analyzing this claim from an ethical perspective, may lead to the conclusion that nature as a whole has a higher moral value than the individuals that constitute it. It is well reflected by the words of Aldo Leopold from his *A Sand County Almanac*: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" [39]. Hence, nature is, primarily, entitled to respect and protection, and its less perfect parts should be considered in the second place. The practical dimension of this claim refers to

the threat posed by environmental extremists, which may be the gradation of beings (certain parts of the whole that belong to the lower levels of the food chain have higher moral value than the ones that are on the top, e.g., the existence of oceanic plankton or soil bacteria is essential for the functioning of the ecosystem, while the existence of humans or tigers is not necessary). Secondly, due to the integrity of the ecosystem, the life of the representative of the endangered species should be given a higher value than the life of the human being, whose species is not threatened with extinction. Thirdly, since the human being threatens the entire ecosystem and does not seem to be necessary for its functioning, it can be stated that it would be better for the ecosystem if the human species disappeared entirely from the surface of the planet.

From the perspective of prognostic considerations, it should be acknowledged that the above claim may also lead to a hypothesis that, as long as human activities do not directly threaten nature as a whole, but merely harm certain parts of it that do not possess a full autonomous moral value, it can be expected that the environmental organizations will use non-threatening forms of persuasion. It is especially so because of their strong conviction of the sanctity of all life, including human life precluding such attacks. Still, for many radical environmentalists, the human beings are “problematic”—they are, indeed, a part of nature, but, at the same time, go beyond it through their hostile actions towards nature. As part of nature, they are obviously entitled to protection; as the beings that destroy nature—condemnation, or perhaps even exclusion from the biological community. These two perspectives of looking at the human being overlap and intersect. However, this standoff does not have to be permanent. It may change as soon as a severe ecological crisis occurs; one that will not pose a threat to some parts of the ecosystem, but to nature as a whole, which is given almost divine status by environmentalists. Then, one can expect a significant radicalization of their actions, that might target not only individual people, but all humankind.

Of course, the belief that human activity threatens the ecosystem as a whole is always a subjective, to a certain degree, conviction. Moreover, apparently, such a subjective conviction guided the actions of the R.I.S.E group [40], which, in 1972, hoping for the annihilation of the human species [32], decided to reach for, in their opinion the most reliable remedy—pathogens (corynebacterium diphtheria, neisseria meningitides, salmonella typhi, shigella sonnei) [40]. The pathogens were to be sprayed in supermarkets and large buildings using special aerosols, and for contamination of the water supply system of Chicago. It was not the only case of using a biological weapon by an environmental group. In 1981, a not well-known group called Dark Harvest Commando in protest against anthrax contamination, during World War II, of a small Gruinard Island located close to the Scottish mainland, placed a package containing the soil taken from the island in front of the Chemical Defense Establishment in Porton Down in Wiltshire. A few days later, a similar package was dropped off at the conference of the ruling Conservative Party in Blackpool [41].

The animal rights movements place moral value in individuals. A distinctive feature of their ideology is what could be called an “individual approach”, which is manifested in the belief that the life and well-being of the individual has the priority. A person has the right to defend them even if, in consequence, it will necessarily lead to an infringement of the well-being of the ecological community they are a part of. Moral value is attributed here, above all, to individuals [42]. The latter category, according to the defenders of animal rights, includes all living beings capable of feeling pleasure and suffering, and thus has interests [43]. Among such beings, there are, of course, human beings and animals. Killing morally significant individuals (the one possessing moral value) is treated as the greatest crime that has to be firmly fought against. The consequences stemming from the adopted by the animal activists’ assumptions are unequivocal. If we accept that animals, as well as people, have the same capacity for suffering and the right to equal treatment, then we must also recognize that their often cruel exploitation is evil and comparable to what slaves experienced at plantations or prisoners in concentration camps [44]. If it is additionally accepted that this evil must be necessarily opposed with the use of all possible and adequate means, then using violence against humans begins to appear as the supreme moral obligation [37].

Still, the evil that the animal rights activists fight against is rather individual, not collective in nature. In their writings, there are not many references to the collective responsibility or catastrophic visions of the end of the world. “Animal executioners” have names and addresses; they are concrete people who must be stopped or even “neutralized” at any cost. There have been several attempts of such “neutralization.” One dramatic attempt of resorting to violence in the United States was an incident involving an activist, who in November 1988, was apprehended at the premises of the United States Surgical Corporation (a company that used dogs for testing surgical staples), while she was planting a high-class explosive device equipped with a radio igniter at the parking spot of the head of the facility. In February 1990, the Dean of the Veterinary School of the University of Tennessee was shot to death on his private farm. A month earlier, local police received a warning from the FBI National Crime Information Center that animal rights extremists threatened to murder the Dean in the next 12 months. On 6 May 2002, another activist committed a murder, which was intended to protect the “weakest part of society”, in which, as it seems, he included animals [45]. In spite of the attacks of that type, humanity, according to animal-rights extremists, is not an impediment to the liberation of animals. People and animals can live in peace and harmony. Therefore, it seems impossible that the radical animal-rights activists would be willing to target humans. On the other hand, it is plausible and should be assumed that violence against individuals blamed for the oppression of animals is unlikely to diminish. On the contrary, it can even, given the growing willingness to challenge anthropocentrism, significantly escalate and radicalize.

4. Tactics

However, the differences between the two types of groups are not limited merely to ideology. They also manifest themselves in relation to violence and the tactics derived from it. In its struggle for “restoring ecological balance”, the environmental movement employs, almost exclusively, indirect violence that is based on acts of ecological sabotage, whereas animal-rights groups, apart from indirect violence, use also, although in a limited scope, direct violence targeting human beings.

- a. **Sabotage:** Sabotage, also known as ecotage (ecological sabotage) or “monkeywrenching” (from a monkey wrench, the most popular tool of saboteurs), is a common tactic to both types of groups, and involves a variety of methods, among which the most commonly used are: setting fire to tourist centers in construction, “tree spiking” (inserting long metal rods into the trunks of trees that are to be cut down. When the saw chain hits such a spike, it is torn, and its pieces often hurt the loggers). Destruction of machines and equipment, knocking down billboards, removing signs from the ski trails, dismantling power lines (environmental groups), releasing animals, destruction and setting fire to laboratories, walling up windows in butcher stores, destroying equipment used for transport or the slaughter of animals (animal-rights groups). “Monkeywrenching is believed to be more than just sabotage. It is revolutionary, Jihad, which even affects innocent bystanders, because in these desperate hours, bystanders are not innocent” [8].
- b. **Arson:** The most spectacular method of ecotage has always been arson. This method was used in a famous attack on the Vail Ski Resort in Colorado on 19 October 1998. Its purpose was to protect the land inhabited by lynxes, and resulted in the destruction of the restaurant, four hotel buildings, and three chairlifts. Monkeywrenchers caused damage assessed at \$12 million. Burning down the Vail Ski Resort is no longer the most costly act of environmental sabotage. Another arson attack that caused a total burn down of a residential complex and a crane in San Diego on 1 August 2003, resulted in losses at around \$50 million. The most costly case of sabotage motivated by animal-rights ideology in the United States was undoubtedly the arson attack on the University of California Veterinary Diagnostic Center in Davis on 16 April 1987, in which several buildings and 18 vehicles were destroyed, with a cost of about \$3.5 million [46]. This attack was the first classified as “domestic terrorism” by the FBI [47]. In June 2006, ALF members claimed responsibility for a firebomb attack on a UCLA researcher. A firebomb was planted on the doorstep of a house occupied by a 70-year-old tenant. However, it failed

to ignite. The attack was used by the acting Chancellor of UCLA, to constitute the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act. In December 2015, the ALF admitted that they had organized an arson attack on a clubhouse operated by the Fox Terrier Association in Germany, in consequence of which, the building burned down. This attack came after an incident in June of the same year, when the ALF released several foxes from an enclosure on the club's plot [48]. In June 2015, another arson attack took place—fire was set to two trucks belonging to Harlan Laboratory in Mississauga, Canada. The activists accused Harlan of supplying research animals and animal feed for vivisectionists [49].

- c. **Direct attacks on humans:** Sabotage actions are not the only ones that radical environmentalists carry out. Some of them who belong to a not a very numerous group fighting for animal rights reach for more violent forms of persuasion, namely, the attacks directly targeting humans. There are two groups that should be mentioned here—the Animal Rights Militia (ARM) and the Justice Department (JD). The ARM's actions have always been organized as single, isolated attacks, and their primal aim was to intimidate “animal enemies.” The first action carried out by the ARM probably took place in England on 30 November 1982. Explosives were sent to the offices of the leaders of four major political parties. Three of them were disabled, but the fourth one exploded in the hands of an official, and caused minor injuries [50]. Another ARM's action consisted of poisoning of Mars candy bars on 18 November 1984, which forced the company to withdraw the “suspicious” batch of products from the stores, and a loss of £3 million. A similar action was carried out by the Canadian ARM in 1992 [51]. At the beginning of the 1990s, the ARM's attacks became more violent. The most common practice was planting incendiary bombs in stores. Other attacks reported are; threats to kill (1998), poisoning (2006), contamination (2007) [48,52]. The ARM also took responsibility for attacks in Sweden, mainly against vivisection personnel and fur farm owners. The actions involved planting firebombs at a McDonald's restaurant in Gothenburg in 2011, bomb threats, letter bombs, and vandalism, targeting fur companies and vivisection personnel. According to the Animal Liberation Press Office, in 2011–2012, there was a wave of ARM-claimed attacks in Sweden, which occurred after the arrest of a young animal rights activist, who was sentenced to prison in 2011 [48].
- d. **Other methods:** The methods used by the animal-rights group Justice Department were in many respects similar to those employed by the ARM, i.e., beatings, blackmail, and relatively harmless bomb attacks. The first action of the JD consisted of sending several package bombs to people who practiced “bloody” off-road sports, such as hunting or fishing. The packages did not reach the recipients—the explosion occurred at the sorting office in Watford. In 1996, the JD attacked representatives of the leather industry with the allegedly soaked in HIV infected blood razor blades. In 1999, yet again, the Justice Department Anti-Fur Task Force sent a letter containing razor blades to the representatives of the American fur industry. In February 2009, two scientists from Wake Forest University in North Carolina experimenting on animals received letters with razor blades covered in rat poison [53]. A similar action took place on 22 November 2010, when the Justice Department at UCLA sent bloody AIDS tainted razor blades to a neuroscientist and animal researcher. The North American Animal Liberation Press Office posted an anonymous communiqué from the group, who claimed that they had carried out the action because the scientist used primates for government-funded testing of drug addiction [54].

5. Discussion

It is undoubtedly the fact that the sensitivity of society to environmental problems has considerably increased over the past few decades. Nobody now negates the need to care for the welfare of our planet and its inhabitants. Despite sustained development and the increasing popularity of the environmentalist movement, as well as eco-friendly legislation adopted by many governments, the destruction of the natural environment progresses rapidly. Oil stains, clusters of trash in the oceans, the mass felling of Siberian and Amazon forests, air pollution, water poisoning, soil degradation, not to

mention the greenhouse effect, are the facts to which, despite the declared indignation, one gets no real widespread and spirited reaction. Environmental and animal-rights activists often see this incapacity for self-restraint as a manifestation of destructive property intrinsic to human nature, which leads to a global ecological disaster/catastrophe. The catastrophe could be avoided not only by rejecting the anthropocentric culture, but also everything that it has created (modern medicine and agriculture, technology, industrialism). There is much skepticism regarding human nature and the possibility of the voluntary abandonment of anthropocentrism, which could foster the occurrence of a hostile attitude towards the human species and the readiness to eliminate it, at least partially [55].

Moreover, the times when animals were considered to be only tools whose sole purpose was to serve humans have already happened. More and more people are willing to see in animals the beings that, due to their ability to experience suffering, must be respected and protected, and even have the right to life and unfettered development. Ninety years ago, when industrial production changed farming into agribusiness, the living conditions of breeding animals have dramatically deteriorated. In those who are sensitive to the suffering of animals, such a state of affairs must necessarily cause frustration and outrage, which can easily lead to a desire to punish those who are responsible for that suffering. Here, as well, it is anthropocentrism (speciesism) that is blamed for that situation, but because of a strong individualistic attitude and a lack of a holistic approach, this “placing blame” is never of a total nature, i.e., it does not encompass the whole species. This is why the response to the evil that is experienced by sentient beings (animals) has to be individual (attacks on particular human individuals).

Can ecological radicalism change its nature or intensity? As it seems, the number of sabotage actions have not significantly changed. Due to a slow overcoming of anthropocentrism, one should instead expect the opposite trend. However, one thing should be noticed—over the past twenty years, radical ecological organizations have constantly broadened the scope of their goals. Nowadays, these organizations do not limit themselves to attacking forest-felling companies, ski resorts, high-voltage power lines, or laboratories where experiments on animals are carried out. More and more often, large corporations, private houses, SUVs, as well as various symbols of capitalism, become the subject of attacks [46]. The anti-capitalist attitude is obviously nothing new among the radical environmentalists and animal-rights activists. It was there before, but open criticism of capitalism and globalization occurred in the late 1990s, especially after the protests in Seattle in the fall of 1999, when people closely associated with anarchism and alter globalism started to have more influence on these movements. For them, the liberation of the earth has become closely linked to the abolition of capitalism and social liberation. The way to achieve that was not a slow reform, but a revolutionary spurt, preceded by mass attacks on the elements of the capitalist system [56]. The actions of the ELF can be comprehended as acts of revolution, not reform. The liberation of the Earth equals the liberation of every one of us [28,57]. Paradoxically, the broadening of the scope of objectives by incorporating the social ones that are specifically human (and hence pro-anthropocentric) can in fact, lead to the intensification of actions, but rather not to their brutalization. Such a situation in the case of environmental groups can even become an ideological safeguard against anti-human activities, which, in the era of the ecological catastrophe and relatively easy access to means of mass destruction, will become more than probable.

The word “jihad” used by many activists should be understood as the “jihad of the sword” but also, and perhaps even above all, as the “jihad of the heart”, which is a profound transformation in the way of thinking and feeling, and which must arise in the minds of all monkeywrenchers. It seems that although many interpretations of Islam propagate the intrinsic value of animals [58] and there are even calls for Islamic eco-jihad [59], the above mentioned activists had in mind rather a common perception of the word as a wide-ranging fight against the enemy. The actions of destroying machinery and objects that pose a threat to nature are such a fight. It is, however, not only a strategy, but an attempt to reorganize the world; an attempt of introducing an order that initially existed in the world, and which was lost by the people at some moment in time. The destruction of machinery is not violence but

the only appropriate and necessary way of restoring these machines to their original form, their true unadulterated nature, which has been brutally taken away from them. Animal-rights radicals speak in a similar vein. In April 1989, the Animal Liberation Front organized a raid on the University of Arizona in Tucson, in the result of which, 1200 animals were liberated, and material losses stemming from the destruction of several buildings that were set on fire amounted to \$250,000. After the action, the activists released a statement in which they claimed that the Arizona raid was conducted as “an act of mercy and compassion for the individual animal victims and also as part of a larger international campaign against the scientific/medical industry’s misguided, anti-human, anti-earth, profit-oriented practices of vivisection, bio-technology, and synthetic pharmaceutical research” [60]. It is worth noting that the ALF always considered its sabotage activities to be completely violence-free [61]; violence can occur only in actions involving attacks on living beings capable of feeling joy and sadness. Military-type actions targeting objects used for inflicting suffering to animals are, in their opinion, purely defensive, and cannot be compared to bloody acts of terror.

As we observe emerging risk factors that may affect the future occurrence of public health emergencies, we may not forget the impact of eco-terrorism on the future development of the world. The actions conducted by eco-activists may be isolated but may also extend to a larger magnitude than we may be able to handle, resulting in major incidents and disasters. These actions should be taken into serious considerations, and contingency plans should also include suggestions to mitigate the impact of these actions. Whatever the causes, sabotage, arsons, direct violence, threats, bombs, etc. are all methods used in eco-terrorism. As we label these acts as instruments for terrorists, we may also consider that eco-terrorism might be easier to perform and the enemy may not be as visible as we believe.

6. Limitation

There are a few limitations to this study. This narrative review is an evidence-round up, on eco-terrorism, and not a systematic evidence-based investigation. Although this review may not have the same value as a systematic review, given the fact that the topic is seldom discussed, it still gathers enough information for further studies or a systematic review. Having this in mind, the selection of the literature used might be biased and based on the author’s preferences.

7. Conclusions

Although the environmental extremist groups have not yet resorted to direct violence (targeting humans), and the animal rights groups have reached for it very rarely, the phenomenon itself and some aspects of ideology can induce, in certain circumstances, such as a growing ecological catastrophe, further departure from the anthropocentric perspective, a change of the potential of radicalism within the environmental and animal-rights movements. In the case of animal-rights groups, the principle of not causing harm to people may be openly rejected, and in the case of environmental groups, the actions aimed at the annihilation of the whole human species may be undertaken. This change may result in more extensive actions, and eventually major incidents and disasters. The will and threats from all radical organizations should be taken into serious considerations, and preventive measures should be established to prevent a future catastrophe.

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