ECOTOPIA OR A NEW VISION: DO ECO-CITIES CREATE UNJUST SUSTAINABILITY IN CHINA?

A Research Proposal by:

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Abstract

The proposed research focuses on the issue of social justice and urban sustainability in the context of Chinese eco-cities. Chinese government has started the initiatives of eco-cities to mitigate the severe environmental problem in the rapid process of urbanization. In most current literature, however, the eco-cities are perceived as profit-seeking projects that merely “turns green to gold”. It is argued that they are more economic-oriented rather than green driven and therefore the realization of sustainability is yet a fantasy. Nevertheless, to review the development of eco-cites, a systematic study is urgently needed. Firstly, we need to clarify why so many projects are initiated with overseas partners involved, investigating the mechanisms of policy mobility in green urbanism. On top of this, we will evaluate the sustainability of eco-cities on a more solid basis, with a typology of eco-cities developed and typical target cases chosen to study. Most importantly, the social justice issues, which is not yet fully discussed in the context of Chinese eco-cities, will be examined. The study attempts to provide an answer to the question that to what extent, the eco-cities have created and cement social injustice with its particular institutional arrangements.