

Government as an alternative force in promoting ecological farming in China

Abstract: There is a huge debate regarding the driving forces of ecological modernization: the “environmental capacity” of states or the social and environmental movements. In the sector of ecological farming, unlike in many Western countries where the support has come from civil society, in China it is the government that has been a driving force over the past two decades. Rather than engaging directly in the sector of ecological farming, Chinese government plays important roles by creating and enforcing appropriate institutional arrangements including input and output markets, taxes, subsidies, property rights, certification and supervision systems, production structure, and trade. This research fills the gap of ecological modernization study, which often contains little detailed analysis of the forms of institutional adaptation or change that are required by addressing issues of government roles and institutional arrangements in promoting ecological farming in China. The challenges and limitations of strong government intervention are also investigated based on previous studies and data obtained on my seven-month fieldwork in China.

Key words: ecological farming, government force, and institutional arrangements