

Final Report: UAS Senior Research Stay at Peking University

Dr. Berthold M. Kuhn

Department of Political and Social Sciences, FU Berlin

“Collaborative Governance for Sustainable Development (可持续发展):

Discourses and Practices in China”

March 5th to March 27th 2016

During my three weeks UAS senior research stay in Beijing (March 6 to March 26, 2016) I attended workshops, conferences and met with researchers of Peking University, Tsinghua University and Beihang University as well as with civil society and business experts.

My research focuses on “How sustainable development discourses contribute to collaborative governance in the P.R. China covering the following aspects.

- evolution of sustainability discourses
- key drivers of the discourse
- transfer of knowledge and
- impact of discourses on collaborative governance arrangements

My research stay was very well supported by Peking University (Office of Planning, School of Government, School of Marxism), German Embassy (Ms. Kundermann, First Counsellor, Scientific Cooperation) and Ms. Beate Rogler, FU Berlin representative in Beijing.

Ms. Beate Rogler and me met on the first evening upon arrival (March 6, 2016) and discussed my research stay and opportunities for networking with several departments of Peking University.

Peking University’s School of Marxism organised a start-up workshop on Sustainable Development and Environmental Politics on March 8 to launch and facilitate my research stay at Peking University. The workshop focused on discourses and practices related to sustainable development, with special emphasis on the concepts of ecological civilisation and ecomarxism.

Subsequently, I conducted a series of interviews with influential policy advisors at Tsinghua University, including Hu Angang and Qi Ye. As well as with NGOs activists, including the Ma Jun from the renowned Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs (IPE) and experts from the China Youth Climate Action Network and Greenovation Hub.

I was invited to the presentation of the Blue Book for Low Carbon Development by Tsinghua University, School of Public Policy and Management (where I had worked as a Resident Guest Professor). Prof. Qi Ye discussed the findings with a panel of experts including Nicholas Stern, Chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics and author of the Stern-report on the Economic of Climate Change. I was also invited to other expert talks and meetings with foreign visiting professors, e.g. David Dresen, Professor at the College of Law whose talk focused on climate disruption and the economic dynamics of law.

I conducted many of my meetings together with WANG Dongping, UAS junior fellow and FU Berlin Ph.D. candidate. I provided her with access to experts and she helped me in preparing the meetings.

My talks with academics and practitioners of different disciplinary background covered the following aspects:

- Understanding of discourses related to sustainable development, in particular ecological civilisation, green development, green growth, de-growth, ecomarxism, low carbon and recycling economy.
- 13 Five Year Plan's green targets (much more pronounced and more detailed than in the previous plans, but since the 11 Five Year Plan we see a steadily growing commitment to green issues)
- Issues related to the critical timing of green reform policies in the context of the economic slow-down (“The New Normal”), air and water pollution.
- China's local experimentation with green innovations (low carbon cities, low carbon communities), and its efforts and challenges to mainstream green policies.
- Challenges to harmonise the different dimensions of environmental, social and ecological development, e.g. coal policies, environmental analysis and social challenges related to phasing out of China's dependency on coal.

- Training and teaching challenges related to the complexity of sustainable development and climate protection policies
- Participation and governance issues and the importance of public debates complementing experts' involvement in policy making in China (limiting influence of lobbyists, e.g. in agricultural and food policies, enforcement of environmental regulations, transparency)

With the support of the German Embassy, I organised a concluding lunch meeting on March 24, 2016 at Zhili Hui Guan, Beijing, with academics and practitioners in the field of sustainable development and climate policy. Ms. Beate Rogler, FU Berlin representative also attended the meeting.

