

## **The Chinese Are Coming! The Political Economy of Renewable Energy**

**Department of Politics, Language & International Studies, University of Bath, UK**

**Geoffrey C. Chen**

### **Abstract**

Scarcity of natural resources has long deemed a dilemma for sustaining China's economic growth. As the basic element of industrial operation, the lack of strategic resources has caused the country to rely on exploitation of coal and to import large quantities of energy. The consequences of burning fossil fuels are that China has become the leading emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG), surpassing the United States, and has produced over one-fifth of the global GHG emissions. Nonetheless, in recent years, a growing trend of integrated market-oriented policy instruments of renewable energy has reached a certain level of positive outcomes. Apart from tackling human-induced environmental disturbances by top-down solutions, the country has introduced a series of climate strategies with the aim of mitigating global warming. China has multiplied its wind energy capacity at a double-digit rate since 2005. Nearly half of all newly installed wind power plants in the world are situated in China; in solar energy, the country has achieved a 45% world market share. Drawing on analyses of primary information collected from the wind and solar power industry, the article investigate renewable energy deployment in different regions by comparing the patterns and changes of the governance in the sector. The renewable initiatives based on state intervention and collaborative endeavour amid private enterprises and non-governmental organisations are discussed. It also explores the extent to which the emerging theory of Environmental Authoritarianism is capable of capturing the current transformation of renewable energy expansion in China. The institutional configurations, social contexts, potential barriers relating to effective implementation, and the evolving relationships of central and local governments affecting the process of interaction and various actors are also examined.

Keywords: Sustainable Development; Renewable Energy; Political Economy