

Abstract

This thesis investigates the factors that can sufficiently explain China's policy change on climate change issue. We utilize interest-based theory in environmental politics and constructivism to explore the drivers behind China's climate change policy formulation. The theories are tested by process tracing the historical development of China's policy on climate change. The analysis is further complemented by other explanatory factors based on empirical findings, including domestic policy process and the impact of non-state actors. The study finds out that China's climate change policy has experienced positive changes with growing policy stringency. The result shows that China's climate change policy cannot be sufficiently explained by the interest-based theory, the factor regarding ecological vulnerability can be only partially confirmed. Instead, international norms can provide plausible incentives for policy change through the process of socialization. The final policy outcomes are also connected to the interest of the most influential domestic political actor. The study results help us to better understand the environmental politics in China and provides guidelines to predict China's role in international climate change negotiation after the Conference of Parties in Paris.