

## **The Green Leap Forward? Precarious Labour in a Greening China**

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Building upon research from the forthcoming book *One Road, Many Dreams*, (Drache, Kingsmith, Qi) this paper examines the tensions between China's increasingly comprehensive environmental provisions and its labour policies in the context of China's shifting expenditures from production to services. In accordance with its commitments to Paris Climate Accord, China's trade agreements and policy initiatives under the framework of the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) Initiative have taken a more flexible approach and showed greater willingness to prioritize substantive environmental provisions. However, recent attempts by China to bring its heavy industries in line with these new environmental regulations and to initiate a sustained effort to move towards a greener economy has resulted in the laying off of thousands of heavy industry workers, (Guo, 2017). In an attempt to address this problem China has initiated a transition towards an economy with a larger service industry, which the government claims, will "help facilitate a joint strategy of stringent pollution control combined with job growth," (PRC, 2017). The paper discusses President Xi's vision of "the ecological civilization" in relation to benchmark environment and labour provisions to highlight the ways China maintains an inflexible position on labour rights, while also positioning itself as a leader against environmental degradation. It concludes with the increasing strain between precarious work and a "greening China" by surveying how current labour policies are plagued by a series of problems that will negatively affect China's greener ambitions lest in considering new models of "employment configuration" (Swider, 2015).

**Keywords:** *labour rights, environmental provisions, precarious work, labour policies.*