“Politicization” of Landscape and Changing Communities
—Experiences of Life-World in Western Development in China—

Sanae YAMAMOTO

ABSTRACT

Spatial turn in globalization has accelerated the mobilization of local people. This paper aims to clarify how local communities in China change and how their life-world is constructed by different actors in the process of national development. This paper focuses on “politicization” of landscape, which means the process where a nation-state politically constructs landscape and power politics among different actors. In a case study of a project of constructing terrace paddies in “Western development” in China, this paper analyzes local spatial turn of life-world by power politics.

Even though they choose to be peasants in rural area or “migrant worker” (nongmin gong) in urban areas, local people in western development areas must live with the same discrimination. They are excluded from getting opportunities of having formal jobs and welfare in urban areas, and are oppressed to participate in development projects in rural areas. In this process, the local community generates and shares discrimination without solidarity. Whether in an urban area or rural area, local people with little hope experience overpowering oppress and exclusion and are living in space without roots through trans-local mobilization.

Trans-local life-world has generated dynamism where local people reject the image of peasants that nation-state and urban people demand and seek for an alternative life. By this means, a local community has gained experiences in order to counter the “politicization” of landscape, exclusion and discrimination in local communities and urban areas.

Key Words: development, “politicization” of landscape, community