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Evaluating the trends of China's ecological civilization construction using a novel indicator system

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Abstract: Ecological civilization construction has become one of the key strategies to address China's serious resource and environmental issues. However, how to define and how to assess ecological civilization (*EC*) are worth further exploring. This paper constructed a people-oriented *EC* indicator system, composed of a set of indicators, viz. Degree of Physiological Equilibrium (*DPE*), Degree of Psychological Imbalance (*DPI*), Degree of Imbalance of Human and Environment (*DIHE*), Degree of Human Development (*DHP*), Disharmony Degree of Economy and Environment (*DDEE*), and a composite index-Ecological Civilization Index (*ECI*), and then the indicator system was used to investigate the trends of China's *EC* construction during 1980-2010. Based on the reference year 1980, the study revealed that: (1) Physiological equilibrium of Chinese people has been slightly disturbed; (2) Psychological balance of Chinese people has been broken seriously; (3) The balance between human and environment has been destroyed greatly; (4) China has achieved great progress in promoting human development; (5) this country has improved the relationship between economy and environment obviously, despite that this improvement pace still falls behind speed of economic growth; and (6) China's *EC* level has declined during this study period. Therein, psychological problem and conflict between human and environment are the key obstacles to China's *EC* progress. China's government should further emphasize reform of its income distribution system and transformation of its economic development mode in the future.

Keywords: China's Ecological Civilization; Degree of Physiological Equilibrium; Degree of

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