

# **Re-approaching the Garden City: from Social Reform back to the Disciplining Characters of Planning – Weiqi Chu**

The Garden City theory is considered to be the foundation of the modern urban planning system. However, most existing research appears focused on the value of its social reform. In this paper, we begin with the issue of whether Garden City social reform represents the cornerstone of modern urban planning, which pays attention to the true value of theory to determine the most appropriate methods for defining and developing future garden cities.

Firstly, from the perspective of specific development history of urban planning, we research relevant theories of the Garden City birth period, combined with other social reform theories. Secondly, we study practical application of the Garden City in various countries, especially, the United Kingdom and the United States over the past century to determine what role social reform plays in the Garden City, and if it is embodied in practice as a form of spatial patterns instead of social reform.

Then, we attempt to reassess the theoretical interpretation of the Garden City and verify the origin and deep logic of social reform theory, providing logical explanations on whether social reform that most researchers focus on is consistent. Finally, from an urban planning perspective, we suggest that the real value of the Garden City lies in the best overall effect from spatial pattern intervention. Such a view recognizes that the essence of planning is to help realize overall city development by optimizing its physical space, which means realizing overall optimization locally. Under this premise, the Garden City theory promotes an independent discipline of urban planning.

**Keywords:** Garden City, physical space, social reform

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