

## Eco-Cities in Challenging Environments: Pollution As A Polylemma in The Uae

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**Abstract :** Eco-cities have become part of the broader and universal discourse and embrace of sustainable communities. Given the ideals and 'potential' benefits of eco-cities for people, the environment and prosperity, hardly can an argument be made against the desirability of eco-cities. Yet, this paper posits that it is necessary for urban scholars, technocrats and policy makers to engage in discussions of the pragmatism of implementing the ideals of eco-cities, for example, from the political, budgetary, cultural and other dimensions. In the context of such discourse, this paper examines the feasibility of one of the cardinal principles and goals of eco-cities, which is the reduction or elimination of pollution through various creative and innovative initiatives, in the UAE. This paper contends and argues that, laudable and desirable as this goal is, it is a polylemma and, therefore, overly ambitious and practically unattainable in the UAE. The paper uses the mixed method research strategy, in which data is sourced from secondary and general sources through desktop research, from public records in governmental agencies, and from the conceptual academic and professional literature. Information from these sources will be used, first, to define and review pollution as a concept and multifaceted phenomenon with multidimensional impacts. Second, the paper will use society's five goal clusters as a framework to identify key causes and impacts of pollution in the UAE. Third, the paper will identify and analyze specific public policies, programs and projects that make pollution in the UAE a polylemma. Fourth, the paper will argue that the phenomenal rates of population increase, urbanization, economic growth, consumerism and development in the UAE make pollution an inevitable product and burden that society must live with. This 'reality' makes the goal and desire of pollution-free cities pursuable but unattainable. The paper will conclude by identifying and advocating creative and innovative initiatives that can be taken by the various stakeholders in the country to reduce and mitigate pollution in the short- and long-term.

**Keywords :** goal clusters, pollution, polylemma, sustainable communities

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