

## **Global diffusion of knowledge and national welfare state development: the introduction of statutory accident insurance in China**

**(Globale Wissensdiffusion und nationale wohlfahrtsstaatliche Entwicklung: Die Einführung der Arbeitsunfallversicherung in China, since 2005)**

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Research on global social policy is based on the assumption that international organisations increasingly become social policy actors ('socialisation of global politics') and that national social policies are increasingly influenced by such global actors ('globalisation of social policy') (Deacon). In the absence of a world state which could intervene international policies by hard law, international organisations largely rely on soft, knowledge-based ways of influencing national policies. Processes of global diffusion of knowledge characterize the operation of global social policy. When inquiring into the impact of global social policy, therefore, we have to investigate the actors, the policies, the channels and the outcome of global processes of knowledge diffusion.

The basic characteristics of the industrial accident insurance created in Germany in 1884 are currently being transferred to China. In the process, the idea of individual social rights which is alien to both the Confucian and the sino-communist tradition is entering China. The doctoral thesis aims to describe and explain this unlikely policy transfer with reference to the concept of the global diffusion of knowledge.

The research question is: To what extent is the current development in China a case of global social policy – to what extent and in which ways is the development an outcome of global processes of diffusion? How come that a country like China adopts a model from Germany which originated more than 100 years earlier under entirely different social conditions? More generally, the study also addresses the question to what extent industrial accident insurance has become an issue in global social policy, not only in China.

The neo-institutionalist theory of world society and world culture developed by John W. Meyer serves as a theoretical framework. Based on an empirical policy study which included interviews with the key actors, the author shows that the concept of industrial accident insurance has become part of world politics and world culture and that the introduction of industrial accident insurance in the Peoples Republic of China is indeed the outcome of a global diffusion of knowledge. Some international actors, such as the ILO and ISSA, spread ideas and values about "a comprehensive security for employees" into China. The carrier of the German statutory accident insurance DGUV (German Social Accident Insurance) is the most important sender of ideas and has transferred the German model of statutory accident insurance to China. The Chinese epistemic community has set up a broad international network and aimed to adopt a modern industrial insurance system combining the three pillars "prevention, compensation and rehabilitation" simultaneously.

### **Publications:**

Leisering, Lutz und Liu Tao, 2010: Globale Wissensdiffusion in der Sozialpolitik. Die Einführung einer Arbeitsunfallversicherung in der Volksrepublik China. In: Zeitschrift für Sozialreform 56, Heft 2, S. 173-205 (Schwerpunktheft „Globale Sozialpolitik“, Hg. L. Leisering)

Liu Tao, 2010: Globale Wissensdiffusion und nationale Adaption im Bereich der wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Entwicklung. Eine Fallstudie zur Entwicklung der Arbeitsunfallversicherung in der VR China (Dissertation, Universität Bielefeld)