

Project 4

Globalization of the Welfare State? World Society, Transnational Social Policy and 'New Welfare States' in Transitional Countries (with special reference to China)

Funded by: Hanse Institute for Advanced Study, British Council

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Project Summary:

In the debate on globalization the welfare state is often seen as a check to economic prosperity. To compete in global markets nation states need to retrench and deregulate their welfare states. Conversely, some observers view social security systems as a necessary and productive shield against the risks citizens are facing when their national economy becomes exposed to the vicissitudes of global markets. Both perspectives have in common that they look at the impact of economic globalization on national welfare states.

By contrast, the research group focuses on the globalization of welfare statism itself: Will the welfare state – like the other core institutions of Western societies, market and democracy – shape the social structure and culture of a global society?

The hypothetical term 'globalization of the welfare state' covers four aspects of inquiry: the rise of international and transnational social policy; the emergence of 'new welfare states' in non-Western countries; global diffusion of knowledge and policy learning; and the emergence of new ways of living, especially the institutionalisation of a modern individualised 'life course' in the wake of state social policy.

Conferences:

"Globalization of the Welfare State? The Emergence of Transnational Social Policy and 'New Welfare States' (with special reference to China)", 6-8 February 2004, Hanse Institute for Advanced Study, Delmenhorst, North Germany

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