

EastAsiaNet Workshop

“Framing Risk: Hazard Perceptions as a Crucial Factor in Imagining East Asia”

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The perception of East Asia in public debate today is increasingly shaped by the notion of risk. The ongoing rise of East Asia as an economic powerhouse in the global economy, geo-strategic interests, and demographic developments are only a few examples of phenomena that create risk-inherent opportunities and threats, inside and outside the region. The Korean peninsula, Japan and the Greater China region constitute a focal point in worldwide political and corporate strategies, as well as in academic research. Even though the concept of risk is elusive, in that there exist various definitions and ways to categorize it, it nevertheless represents a powerful structural term that affects the ways in which states, societies and individuals deal with the imagined opportunities and imprecise fears that arise from East Asian dynamics.

The 21st century is often referred to as the Asian century indicating a potential shift of powers and the emergence of a new global order. In the EU the formulation of policies towards East Asia, such as the 7th Framework Programme, aim at promoting a better understanding of the region as a strategy to embrace the upcoming challenges.

In this context knowledge and knowledge production undoubtedly are crucial factors to identify and mitigate risks – that is to seize real opportunities and to comprehend the true nature of threats. What is perceived as risk, however, depends not only on “true” hazards, as framed in probabilistic concepts, but also on mental models and shared beliefs, or collective imaginaries. The embeddedness of risk in formal and informal institutions such as laws, norms or values has a significant impact on public and individual image creation. Thus knowledge about East Asia also depends on the cultural and societal context in which it is created.

Risk as a contingent concept may constitute a promising approach for East Asia studies to reflect on its own research biases and to address a distorted understanding of the region in public debate. EastAsiaNet as a network of European research schools, therefore, devotes its inaugural workshop to perceptions of risk and their impact on our understanding of East Asia. The overall goal is to initiate a discourse on European East Asia Studies as a first step towards formulating a research agenda and curriculum that facilitates cutting-edge research and responds to the increasing interest in and need for knowledge on contemporary East Asia.

The Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies at Lund University hosts the workshop to be held 1 – 2 June 2007 and invites scholars from member institutions and their respective universities to submit proposals (500-800 words) on theoretical papers as well as case studies dealing with hazard perceptions as a crucial factor in imagining East Asia and by extension, discussion of the notion of risk as a key to

deconstructing East Asia studies. Topics include but are not restricted to societal, political, economic, cultural, religious, demographic and environmental risks in contemporary East Asia, strategies of individuals, groups or other entities to deal with regional risks as well as disciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary reflections on the impact of risk and its perceptions on the curriculum and research agenda in European Studies on East Asia.

Abstracts

Risks and Opportunities: Class Difference in China

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The economic growth in China since 1978 has realigned all aspects of livelihood and the distribution of wealth, leading to widening social disparities. Growth has to a large extent been attributable to higher degrees of efficiency, asset control, technological innovation and risk control in corporate and public management and regulation. While growth has provided significant new opportunities and prosperity to large groups in society, the logic of efficiency has exposed vulnerable groups to greater hazards in the pursuit of their livelihoods. The paper argues that exposure to hazards is an important feature of class-based allocation of resources in Chinese society during the reform era.

Hazard Perceptions in East Asia: “Danger” versus (?) “Risk” as a Tool for Political Purpose

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The experience of East Asian megalopolises confirms the general view that research on hazards related to natural disasters has concentrated on the role of nature and of nature-related dangers. Too little attention has been to man-made hazards, or “unnatural” disasters (Hewitt 1998: 231), that human beings bring upon themselves because of the risks they take, which they attempt to minimise by means of hazard management (Blakie et al. 1994, Burton et al. 1978/1993, Geipel 1992, Pohl 1998, Flüchter 2003).

This consideration and the question of the vulnerability of the growing mega-urbanizations or hazard prone areas, respectively (Parker and Mitchell 1995, Messerli 2000) form the background for this paper. Agglomeration-related risks are taken by the human beings, either voluntarily because of the opportunities (agglomeration economies) which they perceive as being more important than the involved risks so that they prefer to live in the mega-urbanizations, or of necessity

because they are a marginalized or a fatalistic population group, respectively which cannot but survive in disaster prone areas.

Traditionally, in the East Asian languages there seems to be no difference of the terms “danger” (Gefahr) and “risk” (Risiko) both for which the Japanese or Chinese language, respectively has only one word: kiken or waiwei, respectively. In East Asian languages “risk” (e.g. risuku in Japanese) in contrast to “danger” is then understandable when being used as a loan word borrowed from the English. The semiotic unity of “danger” and “risk” typical for East Asia as a whole (?) involves the problem that “risk” is used for political purpose. For example, in case of a hazard like earthquake, typhoon, tsunami, el niño the political decision makers can refer to the “danger” of the nature as an alibi, in order to turn away their failures or errors in the hazard management, e.g. in urban planning and disaster prevention strategies.

A Localist Perspective of Risk in East Asia: Peasant Burden and Regime Stability in China

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There can be no doubt about the fact that in popular and scholarly discourse alike, China is increasingly being perceived as a risk to “our” security, living standard, and physical well-being. First of all, China’s economic growth, subject of much admiration of the Western world, is at the same time considered a risk to employment security and, relatedly, to the sustainability of our social systems. Second, China’s hunt for energy is clearly perceived as a potential security risk not only on the regional, but also on the global level. Third, the massive environmental pollution that accompanies uninhibited economic growth is seen as a threat to the global ecological system.

However, these fears are assuaged by the presence of another category of risk, namely the risks China itself faces. Whereas countless media reports have proclaimed the 21st century not as Asia’s, but specifically China’s century, some scholars speak of “growth without miracles”, a “trapped transition” or even predict “the coming collapse of China”. The assumptions are frequently based not on macro-economic indicators, as is the case with the visions of China’s future grandeur, but on events and developments at the micro, i.e. local level. In the early 1990s, many social scientists saw China’s direct village elections as a harbinger of China’s democratic transition. Several years later, violent peasant protests were read as indicators not only for the regime’s rapidly declining legitimacy, but also for a lack of the Centre’s control over China’s numerous counties, townships and villages.

Implicitly, if not verbally, such accounts denied actors at the central and local level the capacity to address such risks, and policies to that effect tended to be derided as ineffective – often without further inquiry into their nature. My paper seeks to provide a better insight into the dynamics of policy formulation, policy implementation and policy outcomes in the face of grave risks to regime stability. To that effect, it provides an analysis of the risk that peasant burden and the resultant widespread

peasant protests pose to regime stability, and policies addressing this risk, namely the Rural Tax and Fee Reform (RTFR).

It starts off by tracing how the problem of “peasant burden” came to be perceived as risk by relevant political and social actors at the central and local levels. Since the mid-1980s, there was a growing concern that excessive extraction from the peasants might lead to rural instability. From the early 1990’s on, individual local-level governments reacted to this risk by spontaneously reforming tax and fee structures, often in violation of central regulations. Similar to previous policy innovations, however, the central leadership closely monitored these developments and several years later, one of these models was adopted nation-wide.

Although peasant burden was indeed reduced as a result of the RTFR, the programme bore many flaws, and new problems surfaced. Given that subsidies from the centre to offset the losses incurred by local governments were sparse, many local governments quickly found themselves lacking vital fiscal resources. This led to drastic reductions service provision in some localities, and to increased indebtedness in others. Some continued to illegally extract resources from the peasants, and many applied a combination of these measures. Obviously, the initial reform programme had failed.

The centre reacted by modifying the RTFR programme almost beyond recognition by abolishing the agricultural tax and playing a much greater role in financing the costs of the reform. Although many problems that urgently need to be solved still remain, peasant burden no longer posed a risk to stability. Instead, new arenas of contention have sprung up, such as the expropriation of peasant land and the emergence of a “new underclass” (D. Solinger) in China’s cities. The central government in turn now has started to address these problems.

The analysis shows that even in the absence of coherent strategies of risk management, risks can be mitigated, at least temporarily, simply by “muddling through”, by shifting problems from one arena to another. From an exalted position of Western administrative science, such strategies, which combine increased centralization with harsh crackdowns and informal meddling, must be considered “bad governance”. However, China has successfully averted implosion, although it has so far been unable to leave the “danger zone”.

To sum up, this paper seeks to contribute to the workshop by showing that, first, China must be perceived not only as an increasingly important regional and global player, but also in terms of the risks it is facing itself. Furthermore, it seeks to highlight not only the capacity of governments at all levels to address these risks, but also the obstacles and difficulties they meet in the process. More generally, it seeks to apply a localist perspective of risk, risk perception and risk “management” and thus contribute to a more nuanced picture of the “China threat”.

Perceptions of Risk from Chinese Points of View

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Civil Society in China cannot yet play the same role it plays in Europe as part of the Public Sphere envisaged by Jürgen Habermas, but we can speak of a kind of “default” Civil Society in China, that would include those members of the intelligentsia who act as advisers to the government while working in academic circles, and thereby influence both short to mid-term policy decisions, as well as mid to long-term policy, or who act as opinion-makers who can influence policy-makers.

This has been a traditional role for the intelligentsia in China, but it has acquired new characteristics in the context of reform and opening up in the present age globalisation, and in the new context of market driven mass media and mass culture that has confined the intelligentsia to various forms of ivory towers, removed from the halls of power. Various groups of these leading intellectuals, as well as the influence created by their publishing policies, configure epistemic communities that contribute to the construction of the cognitive patterns that define government domestic and foreign in contemporary China.

Part of the social constructivism that they are engaged in includes the establishment of paradigms of risk and methods for calculating risk. The risks under consideration include traditional and non-traditional elements of risk: traditional security issues and contemporary human security issues.

An analysis of the perceptions of risk, both internal and external, which are being developed by some of the leading Chinese thinkers, contrasted with the perceptions of risk being utilised by Euro-American thinkers, can provide us with new insights into the perceptions of both sides, and their consequences, and might help us to develop new models and paradigms for risk analysis and risk management.

This analysis will be carried out through case studies of the main themes to be found in the theories of Hu Angang, Wang Shaoguang and Wen Tiejun in the field of economic policy; in the views of Wang Hui and Yu Keping on social movements, emerging civil society and democratisation; and in the proposals for new theories of foreign policy by Qin Yaqing; as well as the contrasting views of Euro-American policy and opinion makers such as the Rand Corporation, David Shambaugh, Michael Yahuda, and the policy statements on China of the EU Commission and the US Department of State.

Keywords: China, risk, risk analysis, risk management, epistemic communities, modernisation, modernity, paradigms, critique, comparative sociocultural studies, postcolonialism, postmodernism, social constructivism

Attribution Error in Risk Perceptions: North Korea and the World

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Everyone knows that North Korea is unpredictable. Since the Korean War (1950-53) this country has been at odds with more or less the rest of the world, and greatly in disagreement with the USA, hitherto the power hegemon in East Asia. The American approach towards North Korea has been to contain it, to be present and visible in South Korea, and in Japan and Okinawa, making it suicidal for North Korea to repeat the efforts of “liberating” the South by military power. The North Korean response has been to further build up military capability in order to be able to stand up against the superpower, to defend its territory and independence. Which made it necessary for the US and South Korean forces to modernize and expand their forces, and so on and so forth.

As long as this ongoing spiraling movement happened within a context informed by differences in political and economic interests the end of the power play was hard to predict. War was obviously a possible outcome, if not necessarily the intended one. Economic exhaustion was possible as well, and with it political bankruptcy, as it happened in Soviet Union and in the former Eastern European communist countries. In the case of North Korea the economic collapse was not followed by political exhaustion, however, neither by an obvious military weakness. In stead of seeing a crumbling North Korea bowing for the archenemy the USA, an economically weakened North challenged the US by playing a military game. From condemning North Korea, backed by most of the rest of the world, including China, the US in a matter of months decided not only to sit down with North Korea at the negotiation table, but even to agree with them on major issues which up until now had kept both parties outside the reach of the other.

It is not yet possible to point at clear and obvious reasons for the change of attitude that have been observed, or even to establish which of the parties involved that made the largest concessions. This paper suggests that the six-party talks, initially by the US seen as a tool to pressure North Korea to give in, has a stake in the more flexible position characterizing the main adversaries in this conflict. From this preliminary observation the paper suggests that “hard facts” such as economical interests and political power in international relations to make sense should be discussed within a political culture approach. In doing so the above problems between North Korea and the USA may be seen as the outcome of attribution errors; that the parties attribute the other with certain – often for them negative – intentions, why accord always will be difficult to reach. Within an approach where it is advisable to observe “the other” through lenses specially made to identify and understand aspects of a given culture, what seemed to be unpredictable may turn out quite straight forward. Based on such an approach it is more likely that risk perceptions turn out to be correct and thus useful, if the aim is to find solutions and ease conflicts.

Mediating Risk in Japan: Crossing national boundaries and the role of the state

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The context of this paper is the paucity of research on risk in Japan. It is as if Ulrich Beck's *Risk Society* (1992) has failed to exert any influence on scholars working in Japanese Studies. In Japanese, work on risk does exist (eg. Tachibanaki), but here the reverse seems true: Beck has perhaps exerted too much influence in setting the parameters for the understanding of risk. This has meant that the multifaceted role the state plays in mediating risk has been ignored almost completely, with the limited amount of work that has been carried out focusing either on the market or society as the other two main mediators of risk in Japan. As a result, we know little about the complex and changing relationship between the state, risk and the citizen.

The paper will examine this relationship by focusing on the postwar Japanese state and the citizen. The main question addressed is: how has the Japanese state mediated the citizen's exposure to external risks? In the context of a more pro-active military role and the pressures of globalization, the citizen is increasingly being required to deal with a range of risks, yet the role of the state in this process remains under explored. In order to elucidate the role of the Japanese state, the paper will investigate risk under the Koizumi administration. More specifically, it will explore how the state responds to the risks faced by citizens who cross the sovereign territorial boundaries of the Japanese state. We are interested particularly in examining the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in mediating risk, as a core part of the Japanese state. The specific questions to be addressed are linked to four inter-related processes: 1) risk articulation: what are the risks to citizens who travel overseas? How are these risks articulated for different parts of the world? 2) Risk boundary setting: what are the boundaries to risks to citizens who travel overseas? How were these boundaries set during the Koizumi years? 3) Risk standard setting: what are the standards of risk set? How are these standards mediated. And 4) Risk regulation: what are mechanisms of regulation? How are these used by the state? The argument is that, as a result of Koizumi's support for the US 'war on terror,' the state is increasingly expecting the individual to shoulder the costs of risk, particularly in the context of 'self-responsibility,' suggesting how the state's role in mediating risk is central to our understanding of how the citizen's responded to risk during the Koizumi years.

Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*, translated by Mark Ritter, (London: Sage, 1992).

Tachibanaki Toshiaki, ed., *Risuku shaki o ikiru*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004).

China's Environmental Crisis: Implications for a Globalized World.

China's recent rapid economic growth has come at a tragic cost of environmental degradation. Various factors, including the conflict between economic development and environmental concerns, insufficient government regulation of China's environment, and lack of public awareness regarding such issues have hindered China's effort to find a proper balance between economic prosperity and its environmental health.

Global interdependency among nations has steadily increased, especially in the past 25 years. It is unlikely that this tendency will diminish in the coming years. We all share one planet, and by the calculations of many of the environmental organizations, we are well past a reasonable level of sustainable environment and resource use, which is causing severe environmental impacts on earth. Today's emerging economic powerhouses among nations, and growing populations in poorer nations, lay fair claim to a greater share of nature's wealth and of human knowledge. But this is likely to be a sustainable claim only if there are major adjustments in the well-entrenched economic ways of richer nations, and a better track record of environment and development performance on the part of all nations. China is rewriting the rules on environment and development, affecting perspectives of the entire world. No other nation has risen so fast in terms of global economic influence, and none among large developing nations has ever had to cope with poverty reduction, job creation and building of urban and rural infrastructure on the scale of China.

China influences the world's economy and its environment. In turn, China's domestic environmental situation is, of course, affected by changes and treaties taking place elsewhere. There is no doubt that China is actively engaged in seeking a better relationship between environment and economic and social development within the country, regionally and globally. Since the 90's, there has been an increasing national effort and, especially since the turn of the century, a considerably greater commitment of funding for environmental protection and management. In fact, such expenses are projected to total US\$243 billion between 2006 and 2010. But the actual results to date are not as gratifying as China's authority had hoped, in terms of environmental performance. Important environmental goals have not been met, a matter that worries the highest levels of government, but is often of less concern at local levels where GDP growth is the matter of greatest preoccupation. For example, the fixed targets for reduction of big pollutants such as sulphur dioxide were not met during the 10th Five-Year Plan (2001–2005), while economic goals were –on the contrary- well surpassed. This trend continued into 2006 as urgent targets for energy efficiency and pollution reduction were not met.

Until recently, there was limited interest in the international implications of China's environment and resource use. In the early 1990s, when double digit Chinese economic growth rates were common, the international implications were limited because development was starting at such a modest level, domestic consumption was very low and exports and imports were still limited. At that time, not many people believed that China could maintain very high growth rates over the coming decades, or that a country that traditionally had quite low (and inefficient) energy use could quickly start influencing the world price of key natural resources like oil, cement, forest products, minerals and agricultural commodities. Nevertheless, this influence

accelerated dramatically once China became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, with a rapid increase in imports and exports, but also with more affordable cars for Chinese citizens, leading to higher demands for oil and electricity.

Today, China is being watched with attention and concern by every country in the world for a variety of reasons: balance of payments issues with the U.S.; market opportunities for export-oriented countries; high stock values of international resource companies; fear of losing jobs as industrial production and some service sector jobs move to China; fear of hard-won environmental and social performance of the last 30 years being threatened and nullified; and worry that pollution and other environmental impacts from China's rise will directly and dramatically affect human health and ecosystems elsewhere.

China, in the future, will likely wish to be seen as a responsible, wealth-creating country, willing to shoulder its share of international burdens, but in return, expecting from the world to recognize that it is also still a developing nation.

This duality needs to be respected, certainly in relation to environment and development.

At a global level, it is proper to expect that China will move towards considerably more action to reduce carbon emissions, control pollution and intensify efforts to be a good steward of resources at home and abroad. It should be in China's best interests to insist that other nations do their share as well in order to save the eco-system of our, dangerously at risk, planet.

Risk, Representation, Repression: Manipulation of the Fear of the Chinese Other

Gregory Lee

China and Chinese people, geographically located in Asia or outside of Asia, have over the past century and a half frequently been represented as a menace and a risk to the survival of Western "values" and "way of life", to Western "civilization".

While this way of imagining China and Chinese has evolved and been nuanced in recent decades – from Yellow Peril, to Red Terror, and more recently, to potential even inevitable menace to the economic well-being of the West - media and other textual representations frequently "recycle" the basic tenets of an "imaginary" concerning China that dates from 19th- century discourse based on the narratives and "scientific" racist discourse of the time.

This paper will resume historically these representations, but will focus on contemporary articulations of fears relative to China and Chinese people in Europe.

The texts evaluated will include advertising images, newspapers articles, and texts referring to China's recent economic evolution. In the economic sphere, the representations of Chinese as "cheap labour", whether in Europe as immigrants or in China as a "delocalized" workforce constitute a particular concern: the Chinese

worker as “victim” or “predator”? Similarly, the image of China as environmental “polluter”, and human rights “violateur” will also be assessed.

While reactions brought about by such representations tend to be limited to verbal aggressiveness in texts, the historical and long-term impact tends to the construction of an always available set of clichés and stereotypical depictions that can be reproduced to produce a predictable effect. However, less recent history (the exclusion of Chinese from US citizenship in nineteenth and twentieth-century United States) and more recent events (ethnic riots involving Chinese and Italian police in Milan in April 2007) illustrate the potential violent and radical outcomes of textual representational strategies.

Risk perception in Japanese business – an exploration of some major issues

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Risk is not objectively given, but is perceived and negotiated with certain preoccupations and interests in mind. This position of cultural risk theory is particularly relevant for regional studies. Hook and Takeda (2007) propose a risk-life cycle for the study of Japanese politics, which covers the articulation, boundary setting, standard setting, and regulation of risk. In politics, the state is the main actor in their view, shaping the four stages with respect to its political purposes. They would agree that the economic system (the “market”) and society may follow their own risk-life cycles with respect to external and internal challenges, which makes this approach attractive for economics and business studies, among other, as well. In my paper, I want to look at some of the implications if one wants to look at Japanese business from this point of view.

From an institutional economist’s perspective, a good starting point is to look at the major actors that shape a risk-life cycle (although, of course, also their world view and interests can be questioned). Whereas in politics one would look at the purposes of politicians, in business one might want to take a close look at the enterprises, or in an individualistic turn at owners/shareholders and other stakeholders, particularly senior managers. Why and how might they want to shape risk perception and risk management both of their enterprises and possibly of the economy at large? The latter distinction is particularly meaningful, because business may be interested in shaping risk-life cycles in at least three contexts: with respect to company employees and their interaction with the company (e.g., wage demands, work attitude), in how company employees approach business strategy and projects (e.g., risk averseness in investment projects), and with respect to influencing public policies (e.g., spreading fear of a downturn to avoid higher taxes or stricter regulation).

One aspect in business that may be more important than in politics is the interaction/competition among enterprises. Some phenomena of risk-life cycles in business can only be understood with this in mind, for instance when public policy-related cycles are discussed.

It makes sense to ask whether from the business literature on Japan one can develop some hypotheses on which risks are particularly perceived and stressed – and which are neglected. This could lead to proposing a number of case studies, which may be helpful to better understand risk-life cycles in Japanese business. For instance, the high degree of risk perception with respect to M&A of Japanese firms by foreign enterprises and funds may be such a promising case study.

Finally, if time allows I would try a small empirical contribution to the beginning debate on such issues. Foreign businessmen in Japan frequently suggest that Japanese managers often display a high sense of crisis – and some would add that Japanese salarymen can also display a somewhat overbearing attitude if things go well. In terms of business optimism and pessimism, Japan's tankan report and Germany's ifo business climate report can be used to measure and to compare such sentiments, as they are based on similar methodologies. Are the amplitudes of optimism and pessimism larger in Japan than in Germany? If so, some possible reasons might be suggested.

China Enters The World - No Risk Foreseen

An analysis of China's Accession to the World Trade Organization through Chinese sources

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The paper will address the question of China's accession to the World Trade Organization through an analysis of Chinese sources. It is part of a bigger study, aiming at evaluating which messages are contained in the rhetoric of Chinese official discourse on China's WTO accession.

As it is widely known, China has been pursuing this accession for a number of years - fifteen years if we count from 1986 – when China was granted the observer status in the former GATT - to 2001, when – on December 12th – China was officially admitted to WTO. The path to the accession has been uneven: at first, the event represented a risk for Chinese economy that was still in the wake of the economic reforms and far from having a prominent position in the world economy. During the '90s the SOEs reform entered a delicate phase. After the first experiments, which had taken place in Sichuan province and in Shenzhen, the incorporation process extended to the whole country: the Third Plenary Session of the 14th Central Committee (1993) and the 15th Party Congress (1997) marked PCC's biggest efforts to separate state and enterprises. As a matter of fact, only the leaders of the export-oriented provinces, which hosted the most competitive industries, had a positive attitude towards the reformers. In many developed cities, administrators had doubts about reforms: for instance, Shanghai Mayor Xu Kuangdi supported WTO because the municipality counted for a large percentage in Chinese export, but, on the other hand, he feared that – Shanghai having a large concentration of SOEs in the city – WTO might be a threat to local economy.

As China's importance in the world economy grew bigger, more problems started to emerge at the domestic level. Entering WTO represented a risk for many Chinese companies. First, because they were not prepared to meet international competition; secondly, because bigger Chinese companies might take advantage of smaller ones. Economic globalization brings also to merging and conglomeration and China had to choose which direction to take.

The paper is based upon a selection of Chinese papers and other published material, which have been analysed by using a Critical Discourse Analysis' approach. It is very interesting to notice how Chinese official discourse highlights the event as a fundamental victory of China in the international arena. Thanks to the ambiguous acronym coined for China's WTO accession (Zhongguo ru shi 中国入世), 'China enters WTO' turns into 'China enters the world'. The event is portrayed as a step that China cannot avoid. The language is neutral and transmits the information as 'a simple fact of life'. In this general mood of soft and neutral language, evaluating how is risk portrayed, represents a hard, but very challenging task: Chinese official discourse confines risk to a very limited part of the question and softens the tone when it comes to describe the disadvantages coming out from WTO accession. On the other hand - when it comes to the advantages - we observe a flourishing of triumphant metaphors, while the language becomes more appealing and dedicates more space to the future benefits that can derive from the change. It is the rhetoric of 'double victory' (shuang ying 双赢), where present victory is China's (re)gaining its place in the world, and future victory is the more vaguely described victory of Chinese economy and Chinese people.

Social Risk, Citizenship and Livelihood: A Study of Migration and Health in China

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Rapid economic growth and urbanization in China during the past three decades or so are frequently perceived as a success story in a predominant neo-liberal discourse, whereas problems of exacerbating inequalities, social exclusion and the associated increase in vulnerabilities and social risks as well as their consequences for the country's social and human development are often downplayed. Relatively less attention has been paid to the 'losers' in China's reform process, including the majority of rural migrants with low skill levels, farmers who have lost land and livelihoods (without sufficient compensation) as a result of urban development programs, and many rural families and communities who have to shoulder the burdens of covering the risks for their migrant members - risks created by free market and an inadequate social safety net. This paper looks at a specific dimension of the emerging social risks in the context of China's transition and globalisation, that is, those in relation to citizenship of migrants manifested, in particular, in issues related to migration and health. It examines the intersections of migration, health, livelihood sustainability and poverty for migrants and their families, and explores the main factors, such as existing institutional arrangements, structures and power, that have affected the risks of migrants to ill health, and thus, shaped their health and

wellbeing outcomes, livelihood and its sustainability, as well as poverty/development in China.

China and the inherent risks involved in the SCO's future development

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In June 2001 the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or SCO was formally inaugurated. The SCO had as of 2001 as its full members China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Since that time Mongolia, India, Pakistan and Iran have been accepted as observers. There is speculation that Turkmenistan, following its recent change of regime, may also join the SCO in some way in the near future. The US, the European Union, and Japan significantly have not been permitted any form of affiliation with the SCO.

Through its full members, the SCO currently covers more than three fifths of the Eurasian landmass and represents one quarter of the world's population. If we include its observers within the limits of its outreach, the thus expanded organisation includes approximately half the world's population as well as four openly declared nuclear powers. Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are four of the top twenty countries in the world in terms of proven natural gas reserves.

China has become, in tact with its economic development, one of the world's major consumers of oil and gas. In fact, China and India together have less than 2% of the global gas reserves. Compared with Russia (27%) and Iran (15%). China has significant security concerns in Xinjiang, and potentially with infiltration from Central Asian countries.

This paper examines the risks involved for China in the future development of the SCO, an organisation in which each member is treated as an equal, where full consensus is required for decision-making, and where each member possesses a veto. The SCO which came into existence as a forum in which to ratify China's borders with neighbours, has rapidly developed into an organisation attracting global attention and, possibly, aiming at playing a global role. What are the risks and opportunities offered by membership in the SCO to China intent on its 'peaceful rise'?

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The modernization of the banking sector, and particularly the big four state owned commercial banks (SOCB), is a top priority of the Chinese reform agenda. Three of the four state banks found foreign strategic investors as minority shareholders and domestic banks now face more competition from international banks since the country's WTO commitments came fully into effect at the end of 2006. The banking reform is supplemented by a shift from economic regulation to prudential regulation. A comprehensive approach to reform aims at pushing China's state banks into the league of global leading financial institutions within a few years. But is this aim feasible despite prevalent state dominance, or is state-guidance the only way to achieve this target? To shed light on the role and impact of the state in promoting sound risk management practices this paper focuses on the political economy of law implementation. Two main conclusions are drawn: (1) the direction of action is significantly different from reform outcomes due to weak incentives to enforce respective policies and as a consequence NPL accumulation continues (2) on a more general level banking regulation in China illustrates that a normative approach based on international best practice is insufficient to address the issue of financial stability in many emerging and developing countries because it neglects the role of institutional embeddedness.