



LSE-PKU Summer School **Beijing, China**

LSE-PKU Summer School 2019

LPS-PP201 | Policy Innovation in Contemporary China: From 'Big Society' to Social Credit Scores

Course Outline

INSTRUCTOR

Dr Timothy Hildebrandt

Associate Professor in the Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics
Dr Timothy Hildebrandt is Associate Professor of Social Policy and Development. Trained as a political scientist, his current teaching and research is interdisciplinary, engaging in debates and contributing to literature in the fields of development, sociology, political science, social policy, health policy, and Asian studies. Tim's areas of expertise include state-society relations, Chinese politics, political communication, civil society, sexuality, and social policy. Currently, he is engaged in several research projects, most notably a nationwide longitudinal study on volunteerism and civic participation in China. His book *Social Organisations and the Authoritarian State in China* (Cambridge 2013) is widely recognised as one of the key works on the topic. His research has appeared in various academic journals, such as: *China Quarterly*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, *Review of International Studies*, *Voluntas*, *Development & Change*. Tim is also frequently interviewed by media outlets around the world, including *BBC*, *CNN*, *The Guardian*, *South China Morning Post*, among others.

COURSE OVERVIEW

China's meteoric rise as an economic superpower has improved the well-being of most its citizens. But development has also brought with it a number of new challenges, affecting some more than others and heightening the inherent difficulties that come with managing any society with diverse interests and needs. To address complex social, economic, and environmental problems, China has cultivated a long history of developing, testing, and implementing a wide range of macro and micro level policy innovations.

The course uses tried and tested innovations, like the 'big society', and brand new ones, such as the Social Credit system set to launch in 2020, as lenses through which students explore key questions: How do states organize and manage societies? Why are some policy innovations employed over others? How can states, societies, and markets work in cooperation to address pressing social problems? How successful are these schemes, and how might they differently affect particular groups? And, how can we anticipate (and potentially minimise) the unintended effects of planned social management policies? The first half of the course historically contextualises 'big society,' using it as a case study to examine key actors in social management: the decentralised state, bureaucrats, and local politics; NGOs and social organisations; the family as fundamental unit of society; and the market. The second half introduces the latest policy innovation in China, the Social Credit system—a private sector-inspired innovation (e.g., think Uber ratings) in which citizens are awarded points for good behaviour and deducted for bad, with overall goals of making citizens 'better' and governance easier. In the following days, we highlight some key areas that Social Credit is designed to improve. In so doing, we also examine potential unintended consequences.

Throughout the course, we draw upon a number of empirical examples including demographic challenges, family planning policies, elder care, health care, environmental protection, gender, and sexuality—paying particular attention to the most vulnerable in society, and those who are frequently 'unseen' by states in social management schemes. This course draws upon literature from a variety of fields, including political science, sociology, economics, public health, psychology, and social policy. Finally, illustrative of LSE's commitment to doing research-led teaching, the instructor draws upon his leading research into state-society relations and NGO development, as well as his current ongoing research into the effect of policy innovations like Social Credit on notions of citizenship, trust, and loyalty in China.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Understand the concepts social management and policy innovation generally, and their application to China particularly.
- Appreciate the difficulty in managing diverse societies, and the costs and benefits that come with policy innovations designed to improve it.
- Learn about the wide variety of actors involved in social management, across sectors, in both formal and informal spheres.
- Understand how innovations have affected various groups in society, and affected social problems themselves, whether intended or not.
- Apply these understandings to analyse newly emerging policy innovations and theorising the (un)intended effects they could have in a number of important areas.

DAILY SESSION THEMES

Day 1: Introduction: social management, policy innovation, & how states manage societies
Day 2: 'Small state, big society': the Chinese state under decentralisation
Day 3: NGOs and GONGOs: social organisation growth and hybridization
Day 4: De-familisation and re-familisation: the changing use of the family in policy innovation
Day 5: Markets and the private sector: from rival to partner
Day 6: The roots (and early verdict) on the Social Credit scheme
Day 7: Citizenship and volunteerism
Day 8: Happiness and mental health
Day 9: Trust, privacy, and inequality
Day 10: Conclusion

PREREQUISITES

None

ASSESSMENT

Two assessment components; a mid-term essay and a final exam (with both components accounting for 50% each).

READINGS

Timothy Hildebrandt. (2012). *Social Organizations and the Authoritarian State in China*.

Timothy Hildebrandt. (2018). The one-child policy, elder care, and LGB Chinese: A social policy explanation for family pressure. *Journal of Homosexuality*,

Anthony Spires (2018). 'Chinese youth and alternative narratives of volunteering,' *China Information*.

Smart, A., & Lin, G. C. S. (2007). Local capitalisms, local citizenship and translocality: Rescaling from below in the Pearl River Delta Region, China. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 31(2).

Feng, Z., Liu, C., Guan, X., & Mor, V. (2012). China's rapidly aging population creates policy challenges in shaping a viable long-term care system. *Health Affairs*, 31(12), 2764-2773.

Chow, N. (2006). The practice of filial piety and its impact on long-term care policies for elderly people in Asian Chinese communities. *Asian Journal of Gerontology & Geriatrics*, 1(1), 31-35.

Teo, Youyenn. (2010). Shaping the Singaporean family, producing the state and society. *Economy and Society*, 39(3).

Bütschi, D., & Cattacin, S. (1995). Nonprofit organizations facing state incitement strategies; policies related to alcohol problems and HIV/AIDS in Switzerland. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 24(3), 193-212.

Haiqing Yu (2017) 'Philanthropy on the move: Mobile communication and neoliberal citizenship in China' *Communication and the Public* 2(1): 35-49

Fengshi Wu (2003) 'Environmental GONGO autonomy: unintended consequences of state strategies in China,' *The Good Society* 12(1): 35-45

Jude Howell (2012) 'Civil Society, Corporatism and Capitalism in China,' *Journal of Comparative Asian Development*, 11(2): 271-297

Jennifer Y. J. Hsu, (2014) 'Chinese Non-governmental Organisations and Civil Society: A Review of the Literature,' *Geography Compass* 8(2): 98-110