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Riding over socialism and global capitalism: changing education governance and social policy paradigms in post-Mao China

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Abstract

In coping with the challenges of globalization, various reform measures, in the field of social policy, have been initiated in post-Mao China. Strategies such as privatization, marketization, commodification and societalization have been adopted to redefine the relationship between the state, the market and other non-state sectors involved in social policy provision and financing. In particular, the restructuring of state-owned enterprises and the de-monopolization of the state in social policy provision has inevitably led to significant changes in the post-Mao welfare regime. This article has chosen a theme 'riding over socialism and global capitalism' to examine how the Chinese government reinvents its social policy delivery by adopting new governance strategies to cope with the growing impacts of globalization. With particular reference to higher education, this article focuses on how the three major aspects of higher

education governance, namely, provision, financing and regulation, have changed since the economic reform started in the late 1970s. This article concludes by asking whether the introduction of new governance strategies and new reform strategies in education have weakened the state capacity.

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Notes

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* Both provision and financing of transformed institutions are held by the private sector; the institution preserves its public nature in the form of its ownership instead of provision.

** Education conglomerates often participate as the 'people' side in a state-owned and people-run (guoyou minban) school.

1. Part of the points outlined above are modified from So ([2003](#)), p. 4; while some other points are developed by the author.

2. 'Positive coordination' refers to an 'attempt to maximize the overall effectiveness and efficiency of government policy by exploring and utilizing the joint strategy of options of several ministerial portfolios'; while 'negative coordination' is designed to 'ensure that any new policy initiative designed by a specialized sub-unit within the ministerial organization will not interfere with the established policies and interests of other ministerial units' (Scharpf, [1994](#), pp.38-39).

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