

Sussex China Seminar Series

Perspectives on Social, Technological and Environmental Dynamics in a Changing China

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'Home-keeping' policies in China - the political translation of international scientific standards into local biomedical research practice

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Abstract

In this lecture on science innovation in China's regenerative medicine sector, Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner shows that the mechanisms by which generalized values and standards are translated into national policies and practices are disturbed and disabled by other translational processes linked to nation-state policies. She coins these 'national home-keeping'. 'National home-keeping' refers to forms of policy-making that try to accommodate universal standards created and agreed elsewhere, and not conducive to economic and scientific development at home.

Using the example of stem cell research and therapy in China, seven bionetworking models show how diverging forms of standard setting and application result from an interaction between the state institutions and actors of diverging status at various levels of governance and funding. Local factors 'disturb' the large-scale implementation, moderation and oversight of standard implementation enough to weaken the authority of dominant standards in China. Margaret argues that the inclusion of more 'dissident' scientists in the 'global' formulation of standards could prevent undesirable home-keeping politics and institutional paralysis.

Biography

Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner is Professor in Social and Medical Anthropology at the University of Sussex. Her work focuses on nationalism and processes of nation-state building in China and Japan and on biotechnology and society in East Asia. She prides herself in conducting regular fieldwork in China and Japan in the local language. She currently directs the projects Bionetworking in Asia, and is the author of various monographs, including *The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: Shaping the Reforms, Academia and China* (Brill Academic Publishers, 2007), *Academic Nations in China and Japan: Framed by concepts of nature, culture and the universal* (Routledge/Curzon, 2004), and *Global morality and life science practices in Asia: Assemblages of Life* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2014). Volumes she edited include *Frameworks of Choice: Predictive & Genetic Testing in Asia*, University of Amsterdam Press, 2010; *Human Genetic Biobanks in Asia: Politics of Trust and Scientific Advancement*, Routledge, 2009; 'Stem Cell Research in Asia: Looking beyond formal regulatory exterior's, *New Genetics and Society*, 2011; The quality of offspring in Asia – the new reproductive technologies, *Health, Culture and Sexuality*, 2009); and, Experimental ethics, *Biosocieties*, 2014). For a full list of publications, see:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/anthropology/profile192052.html> .