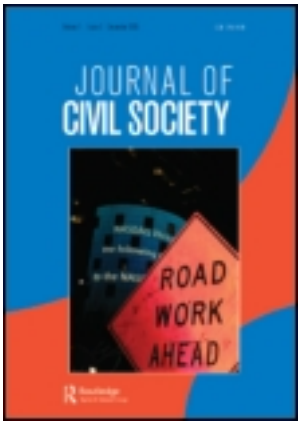

Journal of Civil Society
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcis20

Beyond Civil Society: An Organizational Perspective on State-NGO Relations in the People's Republic of China

Carolyn Hsu [a]

[a] Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY, USA

Available online: 13 Dec 2010

To cite this article: Carolyn Hsu (2010): Beyond Civil Society: An Organizational Perspective on State-NGO Relations in the People's Republic of China, Journal of Civil Society, 6:3, 259-277

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2010.528949

Journal of Civil Society
Vol. 6, No. 3, 259–277, December 2010

Beyond Civil Society: An Organizational Perspective on State–NGO Relations in the People's Republic of China

CAROLYN HSU

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY, USA

ABSTRACT *In the last two decades, the People's Republic of China has witnessed an explosion of NGOs. What will the implications be for state–society relations? This article, drawing upon research conducted at seven Chinese NGOs, critiques two approaches to analysing this problem: the civil society framework and the privatization perspective. It then proffers a third way: an approach based on organizational analysis. Both the civil society and privatization perspectives assume a zero-sum game between a monolithic state and NGOs/citizens. Yet empirical evidence reveals that Chinese NGOs are often much more interested in building alliances with state agencies and actors than in autonomy from the government. From an organizational perspective, this makes sense. As organizations, both NGOs and state agencies need to ensure a constant supply of necessary resources for the firm to survive, and their strategies for achieving this goal will be constrained by their actors' own institutional experiences and the cultural frameworks extant in their society. Alliances between Chinese NGOs and state agencies can help both types of organizations secure necessary resources and gain legitimacy.*

KEY WORDS: China, non-governmental organization, civil society, privatization, organizations

Introduction

Prior to the 1980s, the non-governmental sector (Salamon & Anheier, 1997) essentially did not exist in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Even as late as 1996, scholars reported that China had almost no NGOs working in the areas of social welfare, development, or environmental protection (Howell, 1996, p. 207). However, in the last two decades, the PRC has witnessed an explosion of NGOs. Although there are no reliable numbers available, it is probable that tens of thousands of Chinese NGOs now exist, with poverty alleviation, educational equality, the environment, and health care as the most popular areas of focus (Ma, 2006; Spires, 2007). Not surprisingly, a number of scholars, both from the West and from within China, are examining the rise of Chinese NGOs

Correspondence Address: Carolyn Hsu, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY 13346, USA. Email: chsu@colgate.edu

ISSN 1744-8689 Print/1744-8697 Online/10/030259–19
DOI: 10.1080/17448689.2010.528949

and contemplating what the implications will be for state–citizen relations in the PRC. This article first examines two approaches to analysing this problem, both of which predict NGO–state tensions and conflict: the civil society framework and the privatization perspective. Yet empirical evidence reveals that the relationship between Chinese NGOs and the state is often one of strategic alliances and interdependence. The second half of this article offers a third framework for examining state–NGO relations, one based on organizational analysis which is able to provide an explanation for this lack of antagonism.

So far, the most popular approach for scholars has been to use the analytical framework of *civil society* (Ma, 2006; Saich, 2000; Spires, 2007; Wu, 2002; Zhang, 2007; Zhang & Baum, 2004). In these studies, the central question is whether Chinese NGOs are sufficiently autonomous to create a robust Tocquevillian civil society in China—or whether they are in reality just pawns of an authoritarian state. The civil society framework in its current manifestation is rooted in Western neoliberal assumptions that private/market initiatives are always preferable to state action. Critics of neoliberalism offer an alternative view: the *privatization* perspective. They argue that when states outsource formerly public services to private, non-transparent agencies such as NGOs, citizens lose their ability to hold anyone accountable for their services (Wood, 1996). As such, the recent rise of Chinese NGOs may be seen as a larger shift towards *privatization* in the PRC, where the state devolves its responsibilities onto individuals and the market (Li & Ong, 2008). The problem with both the civil society and privatization perspectives is that they assume a zero-sum game between a monolithic state and NGOs/citizens. Yet the people who run Chinese NGOs tend to view the state as a resource-rich conglomeration of competing actors and agencies, and therefore the best source of alliances available for NGOs. Indeed, in many of the arenas where Chinese NGOs work (education, environment, health care), increased NGO involvement has gone hand-in-hand with increased state investment.

The third approach, which examines NGOs from an organizational perspective, provides an explanation for the lack of antagonism between NGOs and the state. As organizations, Chinese NGOs are primarily interested in maintaining a supply of the resources they need to remain viable and to serve their constituencies as well as possible (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The strategies NGO actors construct to obtain the resources will be shaped by their institutional experiences and influenced by the cultural frameworks they draw upon to interpret their options (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Hsu, 2006). According to my interviewees, the purpose of their NGOs was not to weaken or replace the state, but instead to strengthen the state and help it fulfil its responsibilities to its citizens. In turn, state agencies were willing to build alliances with NGOs, not necessarily to control them, but to obtain benefits which met the organizational needs of the state agencies.

This article is based on participant-observation research conducted from 2004 to 2008 at five Chinese NGOs (China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF), Golden Key, Global Environment Institute, Amity, and Innovation Center for Energy and Transportation (ICET)). I also researched two NGOs based in China but founded by Westerners (one British and one Chinese-American). I interviewed the NGO founders, administrators, employees, volunteers, and beneficiaries. Although most of the organizations were based in Beijing, their projects tended to be located in poor, rural areas in the provinces. I travelled to seven rural counties in four different provinces (Yunnan, Hunan, Gansu, and Heilongjiang) to interview beneficiaries.

The Rise of Chinese NGOs

The rise in indigenous Chinese NGOs has drawn considerable scholarly attention in part because China has very little tradition of these types of organizations (Hsu, 2008). Prior to the 1949 communist revolution, social welfare tended to fall primarily under the purview of kinship-based organizations or state intervention (Smith, 1998). There were brief periods when civic organizations flourished (Brook, 1997; Rankin, 1993; Smith, 1987), but non-kin-based autonomous organizations were never a dominant feature of Chinese society before 1949, and they disappeared almost completely from the 1950s until the 1980s. Under Mao Zedong, organizations that had been independent prior to the revolution, including political, social, and religious groups, were either absorbed into the government or disbanded. No new autonomous organizations were permitted to form during this time period.

In lieu of private social groups, the government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) established organizations that were to serve various segments of society, such as the Women's Federation and the Youth League. Most analysts do not classify these organizations as NGOs, but instead give them the oxymoronic label of 'government-organized NGO' or GONGO. Fortunately, for Chinese citizens, the Maoist regime saw social welfare services as central to its political legitimacy. In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the party-state was highly successful in providing primary education and basic health care to an impressively large portion of its citizens, especially given China's poverty at the time (Whyte & Parish, 1984).

The market reforms, which began in 1979, undermined the socialist welfare system from several different directions. Decollectivization in the countryside and the rise of private businesses in urban areas meant that a growing portion of the population no longer accessed social welfare benefits through collectives and party-state work units, but instead formed a potential customer base for market-based goods and services. In the 1980s and 1990s, China's economy grew enormously, but unevenly, as the eastern and southern coasts boomed but the rest of the country was left behind. These inequities touched off enormous waves of migration as tens of millions of rural residents travelled to the cities. These changes shifted the burden of social welfare from the central government to the local government, local communities, and individual households (Adams & Hannum, 2005; Davis, 1989; Tsang, 2001).

The market reforms also made it possible for independent associations and organizations to emerge. Between 1978 and 1989, the government regulations for social organizations were relatively lax (Ma, 2006, p. 62). Students and intellectuals took advantage of these circumstances to form numerous associations. This flourishing of associational life contributed to the 1989 student protests centred at Beijing's Tiananmen Square. After the student movement was violently suppressed, the Chinese party-state clamped down on citizen autonomy, implementing a series of new regulations for social organizations such as NGOs, placing them under the authority of the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MOCA). The post-Tiananmen backlash drove most nascent NGOs out of existence and drove the remainder underground. Surveying the Chinese NGO scene in the early 1990s, Howell (1996) reported the existence of GONGOs, popular membership organizations (calligraphy clubs, literary societies), and illegal dissident groups, but almost nothing in the field of development and social welfare.

Regulations covering NGOs were confirmed and codified in 1996 and slightly revised in 2004 (Ma, 2006, p. 63). Currently, all NGOs are required to register with MOCA or one of

its local bureaus. Since 1998, in order to register, an NGO must have a 'supervisory agency', a government institution or GONGO in the same field as the NGO (Ma, 2006, p. 64). According to government policy, supervisory agents exercise day-to-day oversight over the NGO. In Chinese NGO slang, they are referred to as 'mothers-in-law'. NGOs with more than three Communist Party members are required to establish a party cell (Spires, 2007, p. 7). Compliance with these regulations is highly uneven.

Although the 1989 student protests and the ensuing backlash against social organizations dealt a severe setback to China's nascent NGO sector, the Chinese party-state continued to withdraw from its previously dominant role in social welfare services (and often neglected to step up its efforts in response to changing social conditions). More and more foreign and indigenous NGOs emerged to fill the gap. One decade into the twenty-first century, NGOs play significant roles in educational reform, poverty alleviation, and environmental protection in the PRC. But even in 2008, none of my rural interviewees were familiar with the term 'NGO', and the concept was not very well known even in cities. All of the NGO beneficiaries I interviewed in rural areas assumed that the organizations were state or party agencies. One NGO employee ruefully admitted to me that neither her husband nor her close friends really understood what NGOs were. The very term 'non-governmental organization' (*fei zhengfu zhuzhi*) is awkward in Chinese because it could be easily translated as '*anti*-governmental organization'.

Yet despite these liabilities, more and more Chinese NGOs are being established. By 2008, NGOs had gained significant popularity among certain segments of the population, especially the urban educated elite. Professors at Beijing's top universities reported that their students often discuss the possibilities of finding jobs in the NGO sector. Even before graduation, students would volunteer at NGOs. The NGO leaders I interviewed in Beijing said that volunteers were the only resource they had in abundance.

In 2007, CYDF/Project Hope started a volunteer teaching programme where top college students were given temporary teaching jobs at China's poorest rural elementary schools. I interviewed six participants in this programme, all of whom attested that many students at China's top colleges had competed for slots. In just the first few weeks following the devastating May 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, officials estimated that nearly 150,000 volunteers poured into the region, most of whom were Chinese citizens (Wang, 2008a). Some came with established organizations, but most were individuals willing to join or start projects on the fly. The earthquake and its aftermath have inspired many people in China to found their own NGOs.

The Battle over Neoliberalism: Civil Society Versus Privatization

Seeking Signs of Civil Society in Chinese NGOs

The majority of the research on Chinese NGOs utilizes frameworks based on the concept of civil society (Ma, 2002, 2006; Saich, 2000; Spires, 2007; Wakeman, 1993; White, 1993; Zhang & Baum, 2004). Civil society, of course, is a term which comes from Western political theory. Pre-modern Chinese conceptions of governance and society were not predicated on a division between state and society, and it is difficult to even translate the term 'civil society' into Chinese (Ma, 2006, pp. 18–22). Yet since 1989, it has become a relatively popular topic for Chinese intellectuals as well as for Western researchers of China, thanks to the fall of Marxist–Leninist regimes in the West and

the Tiananmen democracy movement in Beijing (Brook & Frolic, 1997; Kang & Han, 2008; Ma, 2006, Chapter 1). Because the interest in civil society in China emerged in reaction to democratic movements which toppled (or attempted to topple) autocratic socialist governments, many scholars assume a link (sometimes unspoken) between civil society and democratization and tend to view the civil society as a wholly positive phenomenon.

Consequently, when researchers turned to the rise of Chinese NGOs, they were likely to frame the central questions as: *Are Chinese NGOs a sign of an emerging civil society in the PRC? Will this civil society be sufficiently robust to constrain the Chinese state and foster democracy?* The earliest wave of literature focused on trade associations, because they were quite common in China and because of the role of trade unions in the fall of communism in Eastern Europe (Pearson, 1994; Unger, 1996). In China, trade associations are usually established by local governments and are therefore GONGOs. Scholars concluded that the Chinese trade associations were not NGOs, but instead were evidence of *state corporatism*, a governing mechanism in which the state outsources some of the tasks it used to conduct directly, but it maintains most of its control. However, comparative research reveals that the Chinese state exerts more control over trade associations than social welfare NGOs, which are more likely to be grassroots organizations than GONGOs (Kang & Han, 2008, p. 194). There is ethnographic evidence that some social welfare organizations are highly autonomous, especially if they are small and located in rural areas (Spires, 2007; Zhang & Baum, 2004).

Even so, in 1996, an official in the MOCA estimated that less than half of China's social organizations were self-organized, self-governed, and self-supported (Ma, 2002, p. 306). Scholars concerned with the autonomy of NGOs also point out that Chinese government policies put all NGOs, including grassroots NGOs, under strong state supervision. On the other hand, compliance with these regulations has been highly inconsistent. Some grassroots NGOs (especially small, rural ones) do not register with the government at all, while others register as businesses or other types of organizations (Kang & Han, 2008, p. 48; Spires, 2007, p. 13). Even among officially registered NGOs (many of which were GONGOs), less than half of those required to have Communist Party cells had established them (Spires, 2007, p. 7).

In sum, Chinese NGOs range widely in their relationship with the state, but they are more likely to be autonomous if they are small, located far from political centres, and have a limited range of activity. For those seeking signs of civil society, the prospects are dim because truly autonomous NGOs are few in number and tend to be small, tenuous, and marginalized (Ma, 2002, p. 306; Spires, 2007, pp. 333–334). According to CIVICUS, China has the weakest civil society structure of all the countries in Asia, and therefore one of the worst in the world (Tandon & Kak, 2007).

The Limitations of the Civil Society Framework

This is not the first time that scholars have attempted to apply the Western theories of civil society to the Chinese case. In the mid-1990s, in reaction to the collapse of Marxist–Leninist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe, there was a proliferation of books and articles applying the civil society framework to China from historical, political, social, and cultural perspectives (Brook & Frolic, 1997; Chamberlain, 1993; Flower & Leonard, 1996; Huang, 1993; Madsen, 1993; Rankin, 1993; White, 1993). Although these offered a plethora of viewpoints, the general consensus was that civil society

theories, rooted in specific Western political experiences of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, did not offer particularly appropriate or useful analytic frameworks for examining Chinese society.

Western political thought offers not just one, but instead multiple theories of civil society, with different understandings of the relationship between state and society. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau conceptualized civil society as built upon a social contract between a strong society and relatively weak state. In the nineteenth century, with the ascension of bourgeois governments, Hegel and Marx insisted that civil society is a product of capitalism which serves to maintain the capitalist system. Tocqueville, in contrast, conceptualized civil society and the state in opposition to one another. For him, the key to successful democracy is civil society, which he defined as voluntary social and political associations. By participating in such associations, the populace can develop the skills necessary for democratic citizenship, as well as organize structures of power which can be used to keep the state in check. Many intellectuals in China discovered the idea of civil society through the twentieth-century work of Jürgen Habermas, specifically his concept of the public sphere (Madsen, 1993, p. 184).

The most prevalent late-twentieth-century conceptualization of civil society draws heavily upon Tocqueville's liberal-individualist model, which is why CIVICUS and China scholars tend to look for evidence of Tocquevillian voluntary associations in today's Chinese NGOs. This interpretation of civil society reflects contemporary political trends, particularly the rise of neoliberal ideology in the post-Cold War era. From a neoliberal perspective, government is the problem and markets are the solution, even for serving the poor or protecting the environment. The liberal-individualist model of civil society is appealing to neoliberals for two reasons. First, in theory, NGOs offer a way for governments to minimize their own direct involvement in the areas of social welfare and development and to open up those arenas to the entrepreneurial spirit of private initiative (i.e. NGOs) (Hulme & Edwards, 1996). Second, civil society should empower and organize individual citizens so that they can constrain state power.

One of the problems with this particular interpretation of civil society is that, although it is held up as the one true blueprint for successful, prosperous democratic nation-states, there is scant empirical evidence that any real society, even in the West, fits the model. Habermas himself believed that the public sphere flourished only briefly in the West. Late-twentieth-century scholars seeking evidence of Tocquevillian civil society in the USA have been disappointed (Bellah *et al*., 1991; Putnam, 2000). Post-socialist scholars debunk the myth that civil society destroyed communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Anderson, 1996; Buchowski, 1996; Hann, 1993; Spulbeck, 1996). If civil society is such a fragile and ephemeral state even in the West, it seems unreasonable to seek it in non-Western societies (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1999; Hann, 1996; Heinrich & Fioramonti, 2007; Kasfir, 1998; Sajoo, 2002).

The Privatization Perspective

The privatization perspective explicitly critiques the neoliberal assumptions underlying civil society approaches. This perspective sees the rise of NGOs as one part of a larger shift towards a neoliberal governmentality, where the state shifts its responsibilities to its citizens onto the private sector. As NGOs take over more and more social welfare

functions, the state is essentially outsourcing formerly public services to private, non-transparent agencies (Wood, 1996). Unlike state agencies, NGOs cannot be held accountable by citizens through political processes. A growing NGO sector may be seen as part of a larger trend of privatization in China that disempowers citizens rather than facilitating Tocquevillian democracy (Li & Ong, 2008).

In fact, there is scant evidence from Chinese history that a rise in associational life leads to a more responsive government, much less democratization. China has experienced periods of time when autonomous organizations were relatively popular: seventeenth-century charitable benevolent associations (Smith, 1987, 1998), nineteenth-century native-place associations, guilds, religious societies, and literary clubs, and early twentieth-century trade associations, sports clubs, youth groups, and political advocacy groups (Brook, 1997). These minor eruptions of civil society did not lead to democracy in China, and there is little reason to believe that they served as a restraint on government power. Associational life in pre-revolutionary China tended to increase when the state was weak, incompetent, and/or corrupt. In fact, local officials often encouraged (and coerced) local elites into forming 'voluntary' associations to provide social welfare services in times when the state was unable or unwilling to take care of its citizens (Rankin, 1993; Smith, 1998).

In contrast to the neoliberal view, the privatization perspective does not assume that a retreating state is necessarily weakening in power. Instead, it argues that privatization can be a strategy that allows the state to maintain control even while decreasing its own costs and responsibilities. It does this by persuading its citizens to choose to take care of themselves through goods and services purchased in the consumer market (Anagnost, 2004, 2008; Harvey, 2005; Yan, 2003). This not only lowers their expectations of the state, but it also fragments society into atomized, individualized consumers. According to the privatization perspective, NGOs are just another set of retailers, purveying goods and services which once were citizens' rights but have now become consumer products.

Although there is considerable evidence from China supporting the privatization perspective (Li & Ong, 2008), it is not much more accurate than the civil society framework in understanding the behaviour or effect of Chinese NGOs. In China, in the last decade, increased NGO involvement has gone hand-in-hand with increased state investment. Far from allowing the state to retreat from its responsibilities, Chinese NGOs seem to have the opposite effect. For example, one of the most visible areas of NGO work in China is in the arena of rural/migrant education. Since 1986, government policy declared that all citizens should have access to 9 years of free, compulsory education (primary school and middle school). However, at the same time, the state shifted more and more of the financial burden for education onto local communities and students' families. Schools compensated by charging students more and more fees (Tsang, 2001, p. 4). These trends disproportionately affected poor communities (Adams & Hannum, 2005, pp. 104–105).

In 1989, the CYDF launched Project Hope, a highly publicized campaign to help poor rural children stay in school through sponsorship programmes. Project Hope inspired a number of imitators, including GONGOs like the All-China Women's Federation's Spring Bud Program (Ross, 2006), foreign charities, and grassroots organizations (Sun, 2000, p. 16). As their advertising campaigns raised awareness about the problems in rural education, these organizations increased the scope of their activities to include renovating and constructing school buildings, donating supplies and infrastructure, and

teacher/staff training. In recent years, according to my interviewees at the organization, CYDF and other organizations began paying increasing attention to the problem of educating migrant children. Because the government only funded urban schools for each enrolled student who was a certified resident of that city, many schools charged high fees to non-residents. To meet the needs of migrant workers unable to pay exorbitant public school tuition fees and unwilling to leave their children in their rural hometowns, private entrepreneurs set up unaccredited, unregulated, and usually under-resourced schools in migrant neighbourhoods.

According to the privatization perspective, increased private funding in the educational sector should allow the state to continue to shrink its scope of responsibility in that area. Yet the opposite has been true. Over the last few years, the Chinese central government has reversed its policies and invested heavily in education. Moreover, it has chosen to invest specifically in those areas that attracted the most NGO activity: school fees, reconstruction, and migrant access. In March 2005, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao announced that all school fees would be eliminated for rural students in their 9 years of compulsory education (primary school and junior middle school) before the end of 2007. At CYDF's Beijing headquarters, an employee pointed out that the state would spend in 1 year as much money as Project Hope raised cumulatively in its 16-year history. In the rural areas where I conducted research, this policy had been successfully implemented by the first half of 2008. Parents, teachers, and administrators attested that schooling was actually free for schoolchildren in their communities. Urban schools became tuition- and fee-free in the latter half of 2008.

In 2007 and 2008, the central government also injected substantial funding into provincial and local government budgets to make grants available for renovating and reconstructing rural school buildings. This programme was designed and implemented *before* the devastating May 2008 Wenchuan earthquake drew national and international attention to the problem of China's shoddy rural schools. In August 2008, the Ministry of Education addressed the problem of migrant schoolchildren. It announced that urban schools would now be given state funding for every student enrolled, not just the ones with the proper city residential certificates. School districts which accepted non-local children would even be eligible for bonus funding (Wang, 2008b).

Although the privatization perspective explicitly critiques the neoliberal ideology underlying the civil society framework, it shares some assumptions with the very neoliberal narratives it denounces. It assumes that state and society are two separate and distinguishable entities. It also assumes a zero-sum game between them. If NGOs are increasing in number and impact, then the state must be in retreat (perhaps deliberately so). Both perspectives tend to view the Chinese state as a monolithic entity, rather than as a conglomeration of agencies and actors with potentially competing agendas.

Institutional Interdependence

The Organizational Approach

Both the civil society framework and the privatization perspective are based on Western political theories which assume division between state and society, and which seek to determine the current status of the zero-sum game between those two entities. Yet my interviewees at Chinese NGOs never brought up the issues of neoliberalism, civil

society, or democracy. They rarely mentioned the issue of autonomy (and only brought it up in the context of 'I know you foreigners are interested in this'). Their main concerns were maintaining organizational viability and serving their beneficiaries well. Organizational approaches offer a way to look at Chinese NGOs not from the perspective of Western political debates about civil society, but instead from the viewpoint of the NGO as an organization.

According to organizational theories, an organization's primary task will always be to secure a constant supply of necessary resources for the firm to survive. Unfortunately, NGOs are a new kind of organization in China, and the newer and more innovative an organization is, the greater the challenge it faces in establishing legitimacy and securing the flow of resources (Galaskiewicz & Bielefeld, 1998; Hagar, Galaskiewicz, & Larson, 2004; Hannan, 1988; Stinchombe, 1965). In constructing their strategies, organizational actors will tend to replicate their own institutional experiences and the strategies commonly used by other organizations in their field. Their strategies will also tend to fit the cultural frameworks extant in their society (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Hsu, 2006). All of these led Chinese NGOs to build relationships of institutional interdependence with state agencies.

Turning to the State for Resources

In order to survive, organizations need to secure a continuous supply of resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, pp. 24–25). These include not only material/financial resources, but also the support of various social actors: investors/donors, partners, employees, clients, and people who have power at other organizations (including state agencies) which affect the focal organization. My interviewees at Chinese NGOs spent most of their workdays on resources issues: managing fundraising campaigns, giving presentations to potential donors, writing grant applications, attracting and deploying volunteers, and dealing with the perennial problem of high staff turnover. They turned to multiple sources for financial resources, including donations from individuals and businesses (domestic and international), support from the local foreign community, contributions from foreign charities and international NGOs, and grants and donations from state and party agencies.

Although none of the Chinese NGOs I studied relied primarily on state sources for direct funding, all of their leaders insisted that cultivating good relationships with state agencies was the key strategy for securing organizational resources because of the state's capacity to permit or constrain access to even non-state resources. They pointed out that the PRC is a 'strong government nation'; despite the retreat of the state and the rise of the market in the post-Mao era, the Chinese state still maintained greater control than most other governments. For example, government regulations put strong constraints on Chinese NGOs in terms of what they were allowed to do to solicit private donations. However, these constraints could be loosened or waived for organizations with strong connections to influential government agencies. CYDF/ Project Hope, the organization that works in rural education, has such a close and entangling relationship with the Chinese Communist Youth League that scholars debate whether it should be classified as a GONGO or a 'real' NGO (Frolic, 1997, p. 60; Hsu, 2008; Ma, 2006, pp. 101–102; Sun, 2000). Since its inception in 1989, it has been allowed to conduct highly visible—and highly successful—fundraising campaigns using state-controlled media.

The Chinese state also controls NGO access to beneficiaries—to rural schools, disabled children, AIDS patients, environmentally vulnerable localities, and so on. In order to attract donations, grants, employees, and volunteers, NGOs must convince others of the organization's 'institutional account': an argument that the organization provides desirable, novel services, using methods which are innovative, reliable, and legitimate (DiMaggio, 1988). The state has the power to undercut institutional accounts by preventing NGOs from providing effective services. An interview with Peter Xu, the head of Golden Key, an NGO that helps poor blind and visually impaired children have access to schooling, reveals the role of state agencies as gatekeepers to beneficiaries:

> If the government said no, then there would be problems. At the present time, our relationship with the government is generally good. We can do what we want in a province as long as we get permission from the provincial Department of Education. We've been given permission to do whatever we want in Inner Mongolia, and that isn't easy to get! We get the best treatment, although they don't give us one cent. They've never said no to us, and this is very difficult to achieve in China.

Although they all relied on non-state funding, NGO leaders complained that these sources have their limitations. Both CYDF/Project Hope and Golden Key relied on private donations, but people at both organizations complained that extracting these kinds of funds in the PRC was an uphill battle because the Chinese do not have a cultural tradition of donating to charities like Westerners do. Xu Yongguang, the founder of CYDF, quoted 2002 statistics to me—in the USA, giving averaged $460/per person, in China about 12 cents (0.92 yuan) per person. Foreign sources of money, such as Western NGOs and foundations, were appealing to Chinese NGOs because they were perceived to be incredibly wealthy. But some of my interviewees did not know how to gain access to this money. Those who did obtain foreign funding had their own frustrations. Jin Jiaman, Head of Global Environmental Institute (GEI), complained, 'All these international NGOs have their own goals ... but the methods and goals are not suitable for the development of Chinese society'. Projects which did not fit Western preconceptions were difficult to fund, even if they offered innovative and locally appropriate solutions.

As a result, my Chinese interviewees were convinced that it was impossible to scale up their impact past a certain point except by working through state agencies. When NGOs partner with state agencies, they can gain permission to try out their strategies on a relatively small scale. If enough small-scale projects are shown to be successful, the state agency can then adopt the NGO's methods and implement them on a much larger scale. In essence, this allows the NGO to use state resources to serve their constituents. Jin Jiaman of GEI explained:

> If you really want to publicize and promote something and implement it all over China, you have to push the government to formulate and enact new laws, regulations and policies to implement your idea. So from my two year's experience, I feel that what Chinese NGO can do is come up with a new concept or a new idea, and you want to apply that locally. You can first make a demonstration. You do it on a small scale. When you have enough experience and get it to work well, you tell the government, and make the government something to copy and paste.

> So when at last the government is doing this copying and promotion, their effect is great, especially in China because here the government has tremendous power.

The Constraint of Institutional Experience

According to institutional theories, organizational strategies are shaped not only by external circumstances, but also by the institutional experiences of their members. Different organizations facing ostensibly the same circumstances still choose different strategies (Boies & Prechel, 2002). People become socialized in the practices of the organizations for which they work. Even after they leave the organization to work for or start up a new firm (such as an NGO), they carry a repertoire of skills, experiences, and expectations from the former organization with them (Clemens, 1997; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Kogut & Zander, 1992). Also, if the new organization asks its people to move too far outside their repertoires of competency, it is more likely to fail (Haveman, 1992). As a result, new organizations will tend to adopt (and adapt) the institutional practices with which their members are familiar.

The founders and employees of the first generation of Chinese NGOs had a great deal of institutional experience working with and through party-state agencies, but almost no experience working with non-state sources, such as private donors, foreign charities, or foundations. The earliest non-state Chinese NGOs in my sample were founded in 1985 (Golden Key and Amity Foundation), and most Chinese NGOs are less than a decade old. As a result, none of the founders of Chinese NGOs I interviewed had experience working in (or even with) an NGO before starting their own organization. Many of these leaders admitted to me that they did not even know what an NGO was when they founded their organizations.

Instead, their experience was in the state bureaucracy. Most of the founders of the first wave of Chinese NGOs had been former state or Communist Party cadres. After all, from the 1950s to the 1980s, all the mid- and upper-level positions in the Chinese occupational hierarchy involved working in the state bureaucracy, so any person above a certain age with a decent amount of education and ambition would have worked for the party-state. CYDF's Xu Yongguang was a cadre in the Communist Youth League, Golden Key's Peter Xu was an architect in a state enterprise before he lost his vision, and GEI's Jin Jiaman was a scientist in a state research institute. Except for the most recent hires, most of their employees had also worked for party-state agencies. I only interviewed one employee who worked in the NGO sector prior to coming to her current organization; the rest had either worked in party/government offices or in education.

Working for the state in a socialist, redistributive system gave these people highly developed repertoires of competency in negotiating government bureaucracy, building alliances with state agencies, and extracting state resources. These skills and techniques came so naturally to them that they often expressed bewilderment or even amusement at the bumbling behaviour of foreign organizations. Jin Jiaman described a project where GEI partnered with a local government agency in Yunnan Province to set up an eco-tourism site, only to find that an American-based environmental NGO had already been working on a similar project for 2 years, but without consulting the government. The obvious result, she pointed out, was that the government ignored all of the Western NGO's work. 'If there are two versions of the project', she explained, 'the government is always going use its own version'. In this case, the state's version was the one it

collaborated with GEI to design. If the Western NGO had just collaborated with the government from the beginning, it could have prompted the state to invest in eco-tourism much sooner. But instead, 'they used 400,000 [yuan] to do this, and it was a waste'.

In contrast, the founders and employees of Chinese NGOs have little institutional experience dealing with foreign funding sources, such as Western foundations and charities. When organizations tapped foreign money, it was usually only through a very narrow range of sources which they learned about through personal connections. For example, the founders of Golden Key are Christians and have built relationships with the expatriate Christian community in Beijing. One expatriate church donates funds and sends volunteers to the NGO and has also introduced it to several European charitable foundations that have a mission to serve blind and visually impaired people. All of Golden Key's foreign funding has come through these personal relationships. Similarly, the two environmental organizations I studied, GEI and ICET, know how to access Western funding because their leaders have good friends who work at American environmental foundations. Organizations without these connections are left in the dark. The head of the Heilongjiang provincial branch of Project Hope asked me to give a workshop to his employees on how to access and apply for Western grants, since no one in his organization had any idea how to do it.

Ideology and Cultural Frameworks

Organizations are not only shaped by the need for resources and constrained by the institutional competencies of their members, but also influenced by cultural considerations. 'Culture' here does not refer to an unchanging 'Chinese culture' forever opposed to and alien to 'Western culture'. Instead, from an institutional perspective, every society has a constantly evolving culture containing, at any given moment, a repertoire of explanatory frameworks (also called 'moral logics', 'institutional logics', or 'ideologies') commonly used by its members (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Ingram & Simons, 2000; Stryker, 2000). The civil society framework is a powerful explanatory ideology in the current Western cultural repertoire.

Cultural frameworks shape organizations in a number of ways. Institutional entrepreneurs draw upon their own repertoires of cultural frameworks as they found new organizations (Hsu, 2005). These extant cultural frameworks provide the raw materials for these entrepreneurs as they construct the new firm's institutional account—the narrative explaining the raison d'être for the organization (DiMaggio, 1988). Ideology also affects the firm's ability to attract investors, clients, and employees: social actors become 'converted' to the cultural framework of their own organizations and are less likely to work for or patronize a firm following a rival ideology (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Ingram & Simons, 2000).

In the PRC, the prevailing cultural framework for making sense of social welfare organizations assumes that the state is primarily responsible for taking care of its citizens. This cultural framework draws upon multiple narratives in the Chinese cultural repertoire. The dynastic-era political philosophy of the Mandate of Heaven posits a social contract between the state and society (DesForges, 1997). The ruling regime possesses its mandate to rule because it provides conditions of stability and prosperity to its citizens. If the regime becomes corrupt or incompetent and fails to maintain its role in the social contract, its political mandate will be revoked by Heaven, and its citizens will have the

right to overthrow the regime and install more righteous rulers. The 1949 communist revolution ushered in a regime which rejected this 'feudal' political philosophy, but also installed its own ideology of state responsibility. The narrative of socialist paternalism claimed that the advantage of Marxist socialism over all other alternatives was higher standards of living for all, predicating the legitimacy of the ruling regime on its ability to deliver progress and prosperity.

In the post-Mao era of market socialism, the government is no longer expected to supply cradle-to-grave paternalistic care for its citizens. Yet it still bases its political legitimacy on its ability to deliver a constantly increasing standard of living, albeit by giving Chinese individuals the opportunity to unleash their labour power and entrepreneurial ideas onto the global market. The role of the state is to provide citizens with the resources and conditions they need to compete successfully in the capitalist marketplace. The contemporary ideology of *suzhi* (quality) argues, first, that the salient characteristic for economic progress and social development is 'quality'—the 'quality' of an individual, community, or nation (Anagnost, 2004; Kipnis, 2006; Murphy, 2004; Yan, 2003). Second, it claims that 'quality' is not an inborn or innate characteristic, but instead is the product of external circumstances: good schools, hygienic and modern surroundings, proper nutrition and medical care, and access to new technology, ideas, and experiences (Hsu, 2007). The state's job is to provide the external circumstances its citizens need to become 'quality' workers, entrepreneurs, and professionals.

My interviewees from Chinese NGOs firmly believed that social welfare should primarily be the responsibility of the state, not the private sector or the NGO sector. Peter Xu of Golden Key told me, 'Our work is to promote the cause of the government ... it's the government's responsibility, not mine to provide nine years of compulsory education [to these children]'. At CYDF/Project Hope's Beijing offices, an administrator named Wang also agreed that it was the state which should be providing social welfare to all of China's children: 'We are doing now what should be done well by the government'.

Furthermore, most of the NGOs' clients and partners assumed that social welfare was the state's responsibility. This is why many of them assumed that the NGOs which served them were actually state (or Communist Party) organizations which were channelling private donations to public causes. For many of my interviewees, the purpose of NGOs and private charities is to fill in the gaps left by the state, which cannot take care of all of China's social welfare needs at the same time because those needs are so large, complex, and overwhelming. A teacher from a Project Hope-built school in Hunan Province explained, 'China is a developing country, and there are so many people and ... the government directs us strategically, but it's impossible to control every part of our society. So I think the charity needs to play an important role, and always will'.

Even though the founders and employees of Chinese NGOs generally believed that social welfare was primarily the responsibility of the state, they still insisted that the state needed NGO help to fill its responsibilities. Part of the reason was the sheer scope and scale of social problems in China. But a bigger problem was a ponderous and conservative nature of the Chinese state bureaucracy. Both Xu Yongguan (CYDF/Project Hope) and Jin Jiaman (GEI) explained that they left their party-state positions to start their NGOs because they were convinced that they would never be able implement their innovative ideas within the party-state bureaucracy. Jin had worked for a national research academy in the area of environmental science, but she explained:

> . . . there are various regulations and there are position ranks and levels and all of these will control what you want to do. So actually, if you have some ideas and you want to implement, it is almost impossible. It's very hard, and it's even harder than it is for us now as an NGO to push the government to do something. Because you, you have an idea here and you can do it. But [there] you cannot decide these things at all.

The top-down, hierarchical nature of state bureaucracies not only prevented officials from carrying out innovative ideas, but it also taught them to be risk-averse. Jin Jiaman pointed out that at least 50% of the ideas GEI tried had failed. As the head of an NGO, she found that a completely reasonable rate given her desire to find truly innovative and effective solutions. But such a rate of failure would be completely unacceptable for a state agency. The role of NGOs, then, is to help the state to fill its social welfare obligations to its citizens by drawing attention to areas of state neglect, by taking on the risks of testing innovative solutions, and by providing tested models for the state to adopt. In the words of Wang, at CYDF's Beijing office:

> That's why the Project Hope came into being. It helps to fill in the gaps that the government neglects. So many kids don't get education and we are so in need of schools. Project Hope answers the call. In future, we'll continue to play the role of a helping hand to the government. The government focuses on big issues. We'll help with those things the government can't really do or sometimes neglects.

State Agencies as Organizations

While the civil society framework and the privatization perspective tend to view the Chinese state as a monolithic entity, organizational theories provide insight as to how actual state agencies relate to NGOs. Like all organizations, state agencies need to secure a constant stream of resources to remain viable. Like all organizations, state agencies are shaped by the institutional experiences of their members and are influenced by the cultural frameworks of their society.

The problem of resources has been especially pertinent for state agencies because the post-Mao era has been a period of government downsizing in China. Under Maoist socialism (1949–1978), the Chinese party-state managed a socialist redistributive economy, collecting most of the resources produced by the economy and then redistributing those resources according to its designs. The government managed the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, ran all the hospitals and schools and most shops, and also controlled most of the labour market. All of this required a huge government bureaucracy. In the post-1978 market socialist era, the Chinese state has both decentralized and decreased in size, outsourcing many of its former tasks to privatized entities. This has resulted in mass layoffs and enormous anxiety in the state sector, as government agencies scramble to prove their value or risk being shrunk or eliminated.

In dealing with this problem, the strategies of state actors have been shaped by their institutional experiences and their society's cultural frameworks. They are aware that state agencies can gain legitimacy and be protected from downsizing if they can claim to be serving important social welfare needs. Once provided with this type of justification, they know how to obtain resources through the state bureaucracy. Chinese NGOs can help

meet these organizational needs by, first, drawing public attention to social welfare problems which require state intervention and, second, providing tested solutions which state agencies can then implement. NGOs also conduct the local research to provide state agencies with the information they require to demonstrate the efficient handling of social problems (Salmenkari, 2008).

For example, during the Mao Zedong era, the Communist Youth League served an important purpose in socializing China's young people, and also in identifying promising youths to become Communist Party members. The post-Mao state has been much less interested in ideological indoctrination, and Communist Party membership has waned in prestige. According to Communist Youth League interviewees who had been in the organization for a long time, it was not clear what the organization's purpose would be in this new depoliticized era.

When Xu Yongguang (a former Youth League official) founded CYDF and launched Project Hope, he decided to work through the Youth League, which has offices in every county in the country, to identify needy communities and help distribute the donated funds. In other words, according to my interviewees, although CYDF's central administration is autonomous, most of its labour is done by a Communist Party organization, the Youth League. This strange configuration makes it difficult for scholars to categorize it as a GONGO or NGO (Frolic, 1997, p. 60; Hsu, 2008; Ma, 2006, pp. 101–102; Sun, 2000). Regardless, what is clear is that Project Hope has given the Youth League a raison d'être and an admirable public face.

Project Hope was initially established only in China's poorest provinces, but Youth League offices in the remaining provinces soon begged to get on board. Gu Wei, an official in Heilongjiang Province's Youth League, described how his organization struggled to find its way in the reform era, until he discovered Project Hope. He offered CYDF payment for permission to start a Project Hope campaign there—essentially franchising the operation. When I asked why they did not just start their own charitable programme, he explained to me that Project Hope is a 'brand name'. It provided a story and a method which could imbue his organization with enough legitimacy to justify its existence and demand resources.

From an organizational standpoint, both Chinese NGOs and state agencies can benefit from partnerships with one another. These alliances can help both types of organizations secure necessary resources and gain legitimacy. As a result, we should not be surprised that Chinese NGOs tend to view the state as a conglomeration of actors and organizations with which they could potentially build mutually beneficial relationships, rather than a monolithic entity which must be resisted for the sake of autonomy. This perspective in no way posits that the NGOs and state agencies are equal partners in their symbiotic relationships. NGOs are much more dependent upon and vulnerable to state organizations than vice versa.

The Counterexample of Chinese NGOs Founded by Westerners

This perspective of NGO–state partnership contrasted strongly with the views of the two Westerners I interviewed who also started NGOs in China. Judy Shen's Children's Art Initiative (CAI) and Caroline Watson's Hua-Dan both served students in Beijing's migrant schools through art and drama programmes. Both leaders avoided interacting with state agencies as much as possible. When I asked Shen about CAI's relationship

with the state, she joked, 'I am flying low'. Later in the interview, she explained that she decided to start her own organization rather than work with previously established Chinese NGOs because she assumed they would be too 'tangled up' with the party-state and attracted 'too much oversight' from the state. 'There's no true independence', she complained. At the time of the interviews, both Shen and Watson were contemplating registering their organizations as businesses because they wanted their organizations to be legal, but also as autonomous as possible. Neither mentioned the possibility of lobbying the Chinese state to provide the services their organizations currently offered.

Like NGOs founded by Chinese citizens, the primary problem facing CAI and Hua-Dan was securing resources. But Shen and Watson had very different repertoires of institutional experiences to draw upon than their Chinese counterparts. Shen, who moved from China to the USA at the age of 6, has an American law degree and came to China on a Fulbright grant. Watson, a British citizen, grew up in Hong Kong loving the theatre and dreaming of ways to serve the poor. Neither has experienced building alliances with state agencies or extracting resources from the Chinese government. They are much more comfortable working with Western granting agencies or businesses. They also consciously apply business principles to their organizations. For example, Watson used the language of 'social entrepreneurship' and talked about Hua-Dan's 'quality product'. She hoped to make Hua-Dan a profitable business offering corporate training sessions for companies, allowing it to fund its own charitable projects.

Chinese NGO leaders make sense of their mission through the cultural ideology of quality (*suzhi*), where the state is ultimately responsible for establishing quality institutions to develop quality citizens. In contrast, both Judy Shen and Caroline Watson utilized the Western neoliberal cultural framework of individual self-esteem and self-empowerment. In addition to Caroline Watson, I interviewed several Hua-Dan employees and volunteers. I also attended several meetings and a Hua-Dan event at a migrant school. In all that time, I only heard one Hua-Dan member briefly mention the structural obstacles facing Chinese migrant students. Instead, Hua-Dan and CAI members focus on problems at the individual level: low self-esteem, depression, and lack of ambition. The discourse of self-empowerment they used assumed that all the resources these children need were internal and that these resources could be accessed with self-confidence, communication skills, and creative expression through arts. Shen explained:

> [The program gives migrants kids] a way of expressing their feelings, and a way of creating self-confidence. That's why we always end the camps with an exhibition in a public area. The kids come out and that just really boosts their sense of self. It [teaches] them a way to communicate with each other, with their peers, and that's really important, especially for this population.

Changes in state policy, like the new regulations granting migrant children access to state schools, had little effect on Shen's or Watson's visions. They explained to me that the Chinese educational curriculum is still flawed because it does little to develop students' self-esteem or creativity. Neither leader discussed any interest in working through the state bureaucracy to change its curriculum. In contrast to the Chinese NGO leaders I interviewed, neither Shen nor Watson mentioned any hope that their organization would provide a good example for the state to follow. Instead, they seemed to assume that the

purpose of an NGO in China was to work around the state, avoiding state interference as much as possible.

Concluding Thoughts

By moving away from theories based on Western political philosophy and instead examining Chinese NGOs using the tools of organizational analysis, we can understand why some Chinese NGOs relate to the state through the framework of potential institutional interdependence rather than resistance. Chinese NGOs may not be creating the kind of civil society that Westerners hope to find. Nevertheless, this model of institutional interdependence does signal a shift in state–citizen relationships in China to one where active and engaged citizens organize themselves and build partnerships with a responsive state.

Further empirical research needs to be done using organizational analysis to determine how common the framework of institutional interdependence is for Chinese NGOs. Different patterns may emerge for different kinds of NGOs, depending on their locale, their size, their sector, and the institutional experiences of their founders and members. In the wake of the devastating earthquake of May 2008, China is experiencing a huge rise in popular interest in volunteerism and service. A great deal of this energy is being channelled into starting new NGOs. A new generation of NGO leaders is emerging, a generation joining the NGO sector without prior state experience. Preliminary results from my research on these new leaders and organizations reveal that they tend to turn to the Internet and other forms of technology for resources, rather than to the state. Will these new organizations have a very different relationship with the state than older NGOs?

References

Adams, J. & Hannum, E. (2005) Children's social welfare in China, 1989–1997: Access to health insurance and education, *China Quarterly*, 181, pp. 100–121.

Anagnost, A. (2004) The corporeal politics of quality (*suzhi*), *Public Culture*, 16(2), pp. 189–208.

Anagnost, A. (2008) From 'class' to 'social strata': Grasping the social totality in reform-era China, *Third World Quarterly*, 29(3), pp. 497–519.

Anderson, D. G. (1996) Bringing civil society to an uncivilized place: Citizenship regimes in Russia's arctic frontier, in: C. Hann & E. Dunn (Eds) *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, pp. 99–120 (New York: Routledge).

Bellah, R., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W., Swidler, A. & Tipton, S. (1991) *The Good Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).

Boies, J. & Prechel, H. (2002) Capital dependence, business political behavior, and change to the multilayered subsidiary form, *Social Problems*, 49(3), pp. 301–326.

Brook, T. (1997) Auto-organization in Chinese society, in: T. Brook & B. M. Frolic (Eds) *Civil Society in China*, pp. 19–45 (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe).

Brook, T. & Frolic, B. M. (Eds) (1997) *Civil Society in China* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe).

Buchowski, M. (1996) The shifting meanings of civil and civic society in Poland, in: C. Hann & E. Dunn (Eds) *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, pp. 79–98 (New York: Routledge).

Chamberlain, H. B. (1993) On the search for civil society in China, *Modern China*, 19(2), pp. 199–215.

Clemens, E. S. (1997) *The People's Lobby: Organizational Innovation and the Rise of Interest Group Politics in the United States, 1890–1925* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).

Comaroff, J. & Comaroff, J. (Eds) (1999) *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).

Davis, D. (1989) Chinese social welfare: Policies and outcomes, *China Quarterly*, 119, pp. 577–597.

DesForges, R. (1997) States, societies, and civil societies in Chinese history, in: T. Brook & B. M. Frolic (Eds) *Civil Society in China*, pp. 68–95 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe).

DiMaggio, P. (1988) Interest and agency in institutional theory, in: L. Zucker (Ed.) *Institutional Patterns and Organizations*, pp. 3–22 (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Co.).

DiMaggio, P. J. & Powell, W. W. (1991) The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality, in: W. Powell & P. DiMaggio (Eds) *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, pp. 63–82 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).

Flower, J. & Leonard, P. (1996) Community values and state co-optation: Civil society in the Sichuan countryside, in: C. Hann & E. Dunn (Eds) *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, pp. 199–221 (New York: Routledge).

Friedland, R. & Alford, R. R. (1991) Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices, and institutional contradictions, in: W. Powell & P. DiMaggio (Eds) *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, pp. 232–263 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).

Frolic, B. M. (1997) State-led civil society, in: T. Brook & B. M. Frolic (Eds) *Civil Society in China*, pp. 46–68 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe).

Galaskiewicz, J. & Bielefeld, W. (1998) *Nonprofit Organizations in an Age of Uncertainty* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter).

Hagar, M., Galaskiewicz, J. & Larson, J. (2004) Structural embeddedness and the liability of newness among nonprofit organizations, *Public Management Review*, 6(2), pp. 159–188.

Hann, C. (1993) Civil society at the grassroots: A reactionary view, in: P. G. Lewis (Ed.) *Democracy and Civil Society in Eastern Europe*, pp. 152–165 (London: St. Martin's Press).

Hann, C. (1996) Introduction: Political society and civil anthropology, in: C. Hann & E. Dunn (Eds) *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, pp. 1–27 (New York: Routledge).

Hannan, M. (1988) Age dependence in the mortality of national labor unions: Comparisons of parametric models, *Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, 14(1), pp. 1–30.

Harvey, D. (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press).

Haveman, H. (1992) Between a rock and a hard place: Organizational change and performance under conditions of fundamental environmental transformation, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 37, pp. 48–72.

Heinrich, V. F. & Fioramonti, L. (Eds) (2007) *CIVICUS: Global Survey of the State of Civil Society* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian).

Howell, J. (1996) NGO-state relations in post-Mao China, in: D. Hulme & M. Edwards (Eds) *NGOs, States and Donors*, pp. 202–215 (New York: St. Martin's Press).

Hsu, C. L. (2005) Capitalism without contracts versus capitalists without capitalism: Comparing the influence of Chinese guanxi and Russian blat on marketization, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 38, pp. 309–327.

Hsu, C. L. (2006) Market ventures, moral logics, and ambiguity: Crafting a new organizational form in post-socialist China, *The Sociological Quarterly*, 47(1), pp. 62–92.

Hsu, C. L. (2007) *Creating Market Socialism: How Ordinary People Are Shaping Class and Status in China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press).

Hsu, C. L. (2008) 'Rehabilitating charity' in China: The case of Project Hope and the rise of non-profit organizations, *Journal of Civil Society*, 4(2), pp. 81–96.

Huang, P. C. C. (1993) 'Public sphere'/'civil society' in China?: The third realm between state and society, *Modern China*, 19(2), pp. 216–240.

Hulme, D. & Edwards, M. (1996) NGOs, states and donors: An overview, in: D. Hulme & M. Edwards (Eds) *NGOs, States, and Donors*, pp. 3–22 (New York: Saint Martin's Press).

Ingram, P. & Simons, T. (2000) State formation, ideological competition, and the ecology of Israeli workers' cooperatives, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 45(1), pp. 25–53.

Kang, X. & Han, H. (2008) Graduated controls: The state-society relationship in contemporary China, *Modern China*, 34(1), pp. 36–55.

Kasfir, N. (Ed.) (1998) *Civil Society and Democracy in Africa* (London: Frank Cass).

Kipnis, A. (2006) *Suzhi*: A keyword approach, *The China Quarterly*, 186, pp. 295–313.

Kogut, B. & Zander, U. (1992) Knowledge of the firm, combinative capabilities, and the replication of technology, *Organization Science*, 3(3), pp. 383–397.

Li, Z. & Ong, A. (Eds) (2008) *Privatizing China: Socialism from Afar* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

Ma, Q. (2002) The governance of NGOs in China since 1978: How much autonomy? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 31(3), pp. 305–328.

Ma, Q. (2006) *Non-Governmental Organizations in Contemporary China* (New York: Routledge).

Madsen, R. (1993) The public sphere, civil society and moral community: A research agenda for contemporary China studies, *Modern China*, 19(2), pp. 183–198.
Murphy, R. (2004) Turning peasants into modern Chinese citizens: 'Population quality' discourse, demographic transition, and primary education, *The China Quarterly*, 177, pp. 1–20.
Pearson, M. M. (1994) The janus face of business associations in China: Socialist corporatism in foreign enterprises, *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 31, pp. 25–46.
Pfeffer, J. & Salancik, G. R. (1978) *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective* (New York: Harper & Row).
Putnam, R. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster).
Rankin, M. B. (1993) Some observations on a Chinese public sphere, *Modern China*, 19(2), pp. 158–182.
Ross, H. (2006) Challenging the gendered dimensions of schooling: The state, NGOs, and transnational alliances, in: G. A. Postiglione (Ed.) *Education and Social Change in China*, pp. 25–50 (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe).
Saich, A. (2000) Negotiating the state: The development of social organizations in China, *China Quarterly*, 161, pp. 124–141.
Sajoo, A. (Ed.) (2002) *Civil Society in the Muslim World* (London: I.B. Tauris).
Salamon, L. M. & Anheier, H. K. (1997) *Defining the Nonprofit Sector* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
Salmenkari, T. (2008) Searching for a Chinese civil society model, *China Information*, 22(3), pp. 397–421.
Smith, J. H. (1987) Benevolent societies: The reshaping of charity during the late Ming and early Ch'ing, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 46(2), pp. 309–337.
Smith, J. H. (1998) Chinese philanthropy as seen through a case of famine relief in the 1640's, in: W. Ilchman, S. Katz & E. Queen (Eds) *Philanthropy in the World's Traditions*, pp. 133–168 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press).
Spires, A. J. (2007) China's un-official society: The development of grassroots NGOs in an authoritarian state, Doctoral thesis, Yale University.
Spulbeck, S. (1996) Anti-semitism and the fear of the public sphere in the post-totalitarian society: East Germany, in: C. Hann & E. Dunn (Eds) *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, pp. 64–78 (New York: Routledge).
Stinchombe, A. (1965) Social structure and organizations, in: J. G. March (Ed.) *Handbook of organizations*, pp. 142–193 (Chicago, IL: Rand McNally).
Stryker, R. (2000) Legitimacy processes as institutional politics, *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 17, pp. 179–223.
Sun, L. (2000) *Public Welfare NGOs and Governance: The Case of 'Project Hope'* (Civil Service and Governance Programme, Institute of Development Studies).
Tandon, R. & Kak, M. (2007) Civil society in the Asia-Pacific region, in: V. F. Heinrich & L. Fioramonti (Eds) *CIVICUS: Global Survey of the State of Civil Society*, pp. 91–110 (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press).
Tsang, M. (2001) Intergovernmental grants and the financing of compulsory education in China, *International Conference on Economics of Education,* June, Beijing, China: Peking University.
Unger, J. (1996) 'Bridges': Private business, the Chinese government and the rise of new associations, *The China Quarterly*, 147, pp. 795–819.
Wakeman, F., Jr. (1993) The civil society and public sphere debate: Western reflections on Chinese political culture, *Modern China*, 19(2), pp. 108–138.
Wang, X. (2008a) Ordinary people who make a difference, *China Daily*, June 5, pp. 3.
Wang, Y. (2008b) Free schooling for migrant kids, *China Daily*, August 27. Available at http://www.chinadaily.com/cn/
White, G. (1993) Prospects for civil society in China, *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 29, pp. 63–87.
Whyte, M. K. & Parish, W. L. (1984) *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).
Wood, G. (1996) States without citizens: The problem of the franchise state, in: D. Hulme & M. Edwards (Eds) *NGOs, States and Donors*, pp. 79–92 (New York: St. Martin's Press).
Wu, F. (2002) New partners or old brothers? GONGOs in transnational environmental advocacy in China, *China Environment Series*, 5, pp. 45–58.
Yan, H. (2003) Neoliberal governmentality and neohumanism: Organizing Suzhi/value flow through labor recruitment networks, *Cultural Anthropology*, 18(4), pp. 493–523.
Zhang, N. (2007) The emerging civil society in the backpacker communities in post-reform China. Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association, San Jose, CA, November 28–December 2.
Zhang, X. & Baum, R. (2004) Civil society and the anatomy of a rural NGO, *The China Journal*, 52, pp. 97–107.