

**Urban-Centric & Issue-Specific:**  
**NGOs Address the Education Needs of Migrant Communities in Beijing**

by  
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A thesis submitted to Dr. Alice D. Ba in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors Degree in International Relations with Distinction

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study focuses on the problems the Chinese state faces in providing social services, namely education services, for migrant workers living in slums on the outskirts of Chinese cities. Narrowing the study to focus on the migrant worker population in Beijing, observations are made about state-society relations, the urban rural divide, and the reasons for the state's political and financial support in education. The Chinese state has started expanding civil society by fostering the development of non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, that can help shoulder the burden of providing social services to migrant workers. Parallels are drawn between national and local policies for NGOs in order to observe how the state has promoted the NGO sector and specifically educational NGOs. The investigator employed a case study method and employed both document research and media analysis. Through these methods, this paper explores the two phenomena being observed in Beijing. The first phenomenon is an urban centric development of the NGO sector due to the consequences of the household registration system, also known as the hukou system. The second phenomenon is the state-led creation of space for issue-specific NGOs whose missions and goals align with state objectives and national priorities. There follows an in depth explanation of the NGO cluster zone being created in Beijing that would promote and support NGOs. Finally, a discussion about the different models of NGO development emerges that speaks to the relationship between the state and educational NGOs. Results support the assertion that there is a need for government

led development of the NGO sector and that the state is now more willing to create a space for NGOs to provide public services in Beijing and other urban centers.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

According to the World Bank, one third of the urban population in developing countries can be found living in slums.<sup>1</sup> That number amounts to close to one billion people in the world who live in urban slums, a number that's expected to double by 2030.<sup>2</sup> Combined with the new wave of urban growth, urban poverty and slums are a growing problem. Slums are often overcrowded, polluted, dangerous, and lack secure land tenure and basic services such as clean drinking water and sanitation. Most people in slums do not have easy access to schools, hospitals, or other public places for community gatherings, even though they often serve as the economic backbone to an emerging economy. They have no legal claim to the land they live on and do not adhere to zoning regulations. Mired by a system that structurally cannot support its needs, the population living in slums, poses a problem to governments that lack the proper resources to provide public services.

Occupied with the "grandest urbanization process in human history," China's growing slum population will only serve to exacerbate the nation's ability to provide for its people.<sup>3</sup> With rapid urbanization, the Chinese government must consider the

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Poverty and Slum Upgrading, last modified October 2011, <http://go.worldbank.org/D7G2Q70170>.

<sup>2</sup> *The State of China's Cities (2010/2011): Better City, Better Life*, report no. SOCC/10/ES 1 (Nairobi, Kenya: UN-HABITAT), 1, PDF.

<sup>3</sup> Rui Wang, "Sustainable Urban Development in China: A Literature Review on Issues, Policies, Practices, and Effects," last modified November 2009, PDF.

state's role in providing social services and programs to those living in slums and in extreme poverty. In China, many of the people living in slums are migrant workers who travel from the rural countryside to urban centers for seasonal work. With a current urbanization rate of 46.59% and projected rate of 65% by 2030, China faces serious problems in national strategic planning and providing social services to migrant workers on the fringes of its cities.<sup>4</sup> In 2010, there were an estimated 700-800 million people who were unable to settle legally in cities and access the most basic welfare and public services.<sup>5</sup>

In 1949 the state created a household registration system called the "hukou system", which eventually led migrant workers to be treated as second class citizens in Chinese society. Originally established to monitor population fluctuations and better distribute public services and goods in the cities, the hukou system was a central "institutional mechanism defining the city-countryside relationship" that established identity, citizenship, and proof of official status. It was a means to determine eligibility for food, clothing, shelter, education, and more importantly a means to guarantee employment. <sup>6</sup> The state budget originally served to supply urban areas with employment, housing, food, water, sewage disposal, transportation, medical facilities, police protection, and other life essentials. With the hukou system, these daily needs and public services were guaranteed by the government. The state accepted the

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<sup>4</sup> . The State of China's, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Kam Wing Chan, "The Household Registration System and Migrant Labor in China: Notes on a Debate," *Population and Development Review* 36, no. 2 (June 2010): 357, PDF.

<sup>6</sup> Cheng and Selden, "The Origins and Social Consequences of China's Hukou System," 644.



responsibility in feeding and taking care of the urban unemployed and later provided assistance to hundreds of jobless urban residents to resettle in the countryside. The state also attempted to move industry and schools away from major cities and simultaneously return thousands of people to their native places. In Beijing, the municipal government even established resettlement offices and reserved land and housing for migrants. A credit system was created for people to resettle in the countryside. People willingly relocated in response to the positive state incentives (with the exception of “criminals and class enemies” and cases of those needing “ideological re-education” and who were “questionable elements,” such as Kuomintang officials).<sup>7</sup> With a five mu of land guarantee and a loan of 560 catties of millet, migrants willingly moved out of Beijing. Initially, there were no barriers in re-entry to cities.<sup>8</sup>

According to the Ministry of Public Security, the hukou system regulations were a means to safeguard people's security and protect their freedom of residence and of movement. However, since the hukou system was established to prioritize the cities over the rural countryside, an enforced social hierarchy was created. Assuming localities would be able to feed the rural population, welfare and administrative resources were focused on ameliorating problems in urban areas. The state's ignorance of the rural countryside's problems led to the creation of a dual society, in which resources were centered in urban centers. Rural surplus labor slowly moved to the cities creating a “blind” influx, with the state unable to monitor the flow of migrant

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<sup>7</sup> Cheng and Selden, “The Origins and Social Consequences of China's Hukou System,” 648.

<sup>8</sup> Cheng and Selden, “The Origins and Social Consequences of China's Hukou System,” 649.

workers or adjust the distribution of resources. China's urban population increased to 14.6% in 1956, with a net gain of 34.6 million people, with 19.8 million of those being rural migrants.<sup>9</sup> Measures continually failed to stem the population flow to major cities.

Instead of providing a welfare system as originally intended, the hukou system only served to segregate the rural and urban populations, further widening income disparities and exacerbating the problems of rapid urbanization and economic liberalization. To gain access to the public service system found in urban centers, hukou conversion from "rural" to "urban" became subject to approval by the relevant local authorities and those from the rural countryside needed to fulfill stringent income and background requirements. In 1958, every Chinese citizen was subjected to the more stringent rules and regulations of the hukou system.<sup>10</sup> Those in the rural countryside were confined to a permanent exile which did not truly affect Chinese society until the 1970s.

In 2006, the Ministry of Agriculture estimated that Chinese farmers will migrate to cities at a speed of 8.5 million per year in 10 years, and the total migrant population will reach 300 million in 20 years.<sup>11</sup> As recently as 2012, the government said it would reform the hukou system, which creates a deep separation in Chinese society between urban and rural areas. However, substantial reforms in the hukou

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<sup>9</sup> Cheng and Selden, "The Origins and Social Consequences of China's Hukou System," 653.

<sup>10</sup> Cheng and Selden, "The Origins and Social Consequences of China's Hukou System," 662.

<sup>11</sup> "Protection 'Needed' for Migrant Workers," Fourth Session 10th National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, last modified March 14, 2006, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2006lh/161435.htm>

system have not emerged despite promises from state officials. Efforts to streamline the household registration process and relaxed restrictions on migration to smaller towns and cities have emerged in the early 2000s, but ultimately have not addressed systemic problems in providing public services. In the most recent 2010 census, a third of the total urban population in Beijing was a migrant worker.<sup>12</sup>

Thousands of migrants that work in Chinese cities such as Beijing are there illegally, without access to what were once guaranteed welfare programs and public services such as education, healthcare, infrastructure and social security programs. In delivering these services, local governments have had difficulty meeting the particular needs of migrant workers because of both the hukou system and inflexible NGO regulations. In recent years China has made futile attempts to reform the hukou system, but has made progress in addressing NGO regulations in order to meet the needs of migrant workers; health, sanitation, and education needs of migrant workers have been prioritized by the state and subsequently by NGOs.

Instead, NGOs have emerged as new social institutions that help the Chinese state tackle society's need for public and social services, particularly in urban settings. Moving into the 21st century, China has pushed forward establishing an NGO sector, which it indirectly controls with the creation of laws and regulations that focus on better governance. I will make further comments about how these laws have catered specifically to NGOs that address urban-centric issues and national planning targets. Of the different issues that have been prioritized by the government and seized upon by NGOs, I will focus on the education platform. I find that education is one key area

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<sup>12</sup> China Daily, last modified May 2011, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-05/06/content\\_12455057.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-05/06/content_12455057.htm).

that both policy makers and NGOs in China have been able to find points of mutual cooperation and benefit.

Educational NGOs have found a much easier time in seeking formal recognition compared to NGOs that do not adhere to national goals and values (i.e. NGOs that focus on labor rights, political rights, and human rights). The problems that NGOs address should indicate one of two things; that the state has failed in some capacity to address demands for social and public services and NGOs have voluntarily filled the cracks, or that the state has purposefully created a space and called for NGOs to render social and public services. In Beijing, the latter seems to hold true with a state-led approach to social problems in the education sector.

Beijing, in particular, has been subjected to many different policy reforms, giving the state the ability to test policy reforms in a controlled environment. Beijing has been the target of many reforms not only because of its growing migrant worker population but because it uniquely serves as both a provincial and national capital. Beijing's ties to international entities has naturally made Beijing the perfect incubator for new NGO reform policies, with financial support coming from a source other than the state.

Civil society cannot be monopolized by the state as globalization has quickened the pluralization of Chinese society and economic liberalization. However, NGO regulations can best illustrate the different pulls and pushes between the state and NGOs. Monitoring the particular regulations in Beijing will give us better insight into what national policies could emerge in the future. The successful policy reforms of NGOs in Beijing will determine the future success of national policies in the NGO sector.

Beijing in particular has been the most innovative in addressing the rule of law for existing NGOs and providing financial support to NGOs. The Beijing Civil Affairs Bureau has also made attempts to expand its relationship with NGOs. In 2010, Beijing spent as much as 100 million yuan to finance over a 300 social service projects, according to Chinese state officials from the Beijing municipal government.<sup>13</sup> I will explore both Beijing's willingness to address policy and its move in directly financing NGOs.

The research for this thesis employed two methods: document research and media analysis. Document research included government statements and any state-sponsored publications, such as those published by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China. Although these documents may be tailored to the state's perspective, I relied on the accuracy of the statistics being published from various government agencies and have reflected on these documents' credibility to interpret state rhetoric and action. Furthermore, these documents provided insight into the government's future plans as they serve to highlight national priorities and objectives. In contrast to state-sponsored publications, I have used news articles highlighted by both international news agencies and Chinese local newspapers to better understand state action from a third-party perspective. As part of my media analysis, I also used online blogs as a means to better understand the highlighted issues through the NGO perspective. Blogs provided a useful outlet for those who wished to criticize or otherwise highlight state actions towards the NGO sector. Although many of the blogs I used highlight the NGO perspective, they also

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<sup>13</sup> *Xinhua* (China), July 2010, 1, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-07/12/c\\_12325817.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-07/12/c_12325817.htm).

focus heavily on personalizing stories of migrant workers. Keeping in mind that NGOs are also biased and have chosen to highlight their own situation in civil society, they provide an important alternative view of NGO development.

Through these methods, this paper explores two phenomena being observed in Beijing. The first phenomenon is an urban centric development of the NGO sector due to the consequences of the household registration system, also known as the hukou system. The second phenomenon is the creation of a space by the state for issue-specific NGOs whose missions and goals align with state objectives and national priorities. Carefully examining educational NGOs in Beijing, I will analyze how the state and NGOs have adapted to address growing education needs within migrant worker communities on the outskirts of Beijing. I find that educational NGOs not only aid the state's initiatives but have found a mutually beneficial relationship with the state in urban centers.

These two phenomena are best highlighted through the state's incremental policy changes. I find that instead of sweeping reform policies that would push for national overhauls of the NGO sector, the state has chosen instead to adopt incremental change through controlled legislative experiments in Chinese cities. I explore these policy experiments and find that the state is ceding control to NGOs that align with national priorities and that the incremental policy changes in Beijing are indicative of the state's willingness to create a space for issue-specific NGOs in urban centers.

There follows an in depth explanation of the NGO cluster zone being created in Beijing that would promote and support NGOs. I will look at the development of the NGO cluster in Beijing as well as the closing of 24 migrant schools in Beijing at

the end of the summer of 2011. Exploring the latest developments of the NGO sector in Beijing will allow us to better understand if the relationship between the state and NGOs has taken a step forward or a step backward in addressing migrant children education needs in Beijing. The case study of Beijing emphasizes the very tenuous state-society relationship, but also highlights points of cooperation and the state's goals and intentions for NGO development.

Following the Beijing case study, I will highlight my own ideas about the nature of state-society relations in China as it relates to the urban center. This paper will examine whether the state has created a space for these organizations to operate within or if NGOs have managed to create a space of their own, or alternatively have chosen to fill the unintentional cracks within an overburdened system. I observe that NGOs have focused specifically on education for both political reasons and legitimate education needs in Beijing. More importantly, the discussion about state-society relations will touch upon how the autonomy of NGOs or lack thereof has influenced the development of the NGO sector in Beijing. Results support the assertion that there is a need for government sponsored space for educational NGOs so as to better address the migrant worker communities' needs for education.

For the purposes of this paper, the following terms identified in the literature will be defined under the umbrella term of NGOs. In the English literature, references to social organizations, civil society organizations, mass organizations, and non-profit organizations will be incorporated into the research as NGOs.

In official Chinese documents, references to *shehui tuanti* (社会团体) and *shehui zuzhi* 社会组织 are translated as "social organizations", *jijin hui* (基金会) translated as "foundations", *jingwai jinhui* (境外基金会) translated as "foreign

foundations", and *minban feiqiye danwei* (民办非企业单位) translated as civil non-profit organizations, will also be considered part of the NGO sector as well. In Chinese vernacular, *fei zhengfu gongsi* (非政府公司) translated as non-governmental corporations and *fei yingli gongsi* (非盈利公司) translated as non-profit organizations will also be classified as part of the NGO sector. Government-organized NGOs will also be discussed in relation to the NGO sector but these entities must be understood separately in Chinese civil society. They are a manifestation of the Chinese political climate and not organic within the NGO sector.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

To understand NGO development in China, I will address two main views in the literature. One, that NGO development is a state-led process or top-down process. Two, that NGO development is a bottom-up process, starting from the roots of society and eventually affecting national policy. There are distinct variations within these two broad perspectives, of which I will attempt to tailor towards the discussion of educational NGOs and more specifically to Beijing as an urban center.

For the Chinese state, development of the NGO sector through a state-led process is ideal in theory, but in practice the state has found difficulty divesting the state from civil society. Susan H. Whiting's work about institutional change and NGO development in Chinese politics provides insight into the Chinese NGO sector as it was developing from the late 1970s to the late 1980s. Arguing that the "NGO phenomenon in China reflects an attempt on the part of the government to divest itself of some of the burdens of socio-economic development without at the same time sacrificing significant political control," she explains that the "NGO phenomenon in China is best characterized as state-sponsored engagement in the political sphere and limited disengagement in the socio-economic sphere."<sup>14</sup> Within her research she has argued that China is in a state of transition with regards to its acceptance of the NGO

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<sup>14</sup> Susan H. Whiting, "The Politics of NGO Development in China," *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 2, no. 2 (November 1991): 17.

and nonprofit sector. Today, the literature also understands NGO development as an ongoing phenomenon. However, Whiting's assertions that NGO development is simply a state-led process seems contrary to other scholars work, such as Benjamin Read and Tony Saich, who provide evidence for the success of NGOs in mediation processes outside the state's purview. Their discussion about informal processes will later be analyzed to fully comprehend the difference in NGO development between rural and urban China.

Whiting also argues that the politics and culture surrounding NGOs are important aspects in understanding NGO development. In some instances governmental "control of NGOs may alienate the very people NGOs seek to mobilize into the development effort," but she confirms that these connections may not necessarily be negative and can contribute to the socio-economic impact of the NGO.<sup>15</sup> This paper will further explore the way in which the government has exerted indirect control and argue for the positive effects of government influence on particularly the education sector and NGOs that focus on education. Contrary to Whiting's assertions that government influence may alienate certain groups, I find that government support has provided many NGOs with a foundation of legitimacy within the communities they serve. I have observed that China has made attempts create a space in which NGOs have a certain degree of political control and autonomy, but that there must be a distinction made between rural and urban centric NGOs. Instead of the "state-sponsored" NGOs that Whiting observes, I observe the state has indirect influence on NGOs. I will further explore if this change from direct to indirect control is a voluntary or involuntary development in state-society relations.

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<sup>15</sup> Whiting, "The Politics of NGO Development," 22.

In understanding the role of NGOs, Whiting notes that "NGOs perform numerous functions in fostering the development of pluralism" and that they "provide 'training grounds for democracy' encouraging participation in and commitment to the system." Whiting continues to explain that "a strong non-governmental sector often indicates acknowledgement on the part of the government that some social functions are outside its legitimate purview."<sup>16</sup> In exploring the current environment of the NGO sector, I will find that Whiting is wrong in her assertions that NGOs would foster democracy or that the state has acknowledged that there are any functions outside of its legitimate purview. Instead, the state has only adapted laws and regulations to better accommodate NGO activity so that all NGO activity can be better monitored and evaluated by the state. More incentives have been created by the state to encourage NGOs to abide by rules and regulations, in which there are more benefits to adhering to regulations and acknowledging the role of the state in NGO development.

It must be noted that Whiting's arguments may generalize too much about the relationship between the state and the NGO sector, and that educational NGOs do not adhere to her generalizations about the entirety of the sector. In understanding how NGOs address education in Beijing, it will be important to understand what type of NGOs the government has permitted to exist and the reasons why the government has created a space for NGOs to meet certain social functions. For Beijing, the problems exacerbated by the migration of rural workers to urban settings are keys to understanding governmental policies designed to open a space for NGOs that have risen to the challenge in addressing these migrant workers' needs.

Alternatively, Fengshi Wu offers another model to understand the relationship

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<sup>16</sup> Whiting, "The Politics of NGO Development," 19.

between the state and the NGO sector. Wu argues that the state may be "co-opting" certain NGOs, a state-led model would be too "simplistic" and that arguments based on the "growth of genuine public participation" lacks an understanding the influence of the state in society.<sup>17</sup> Wu argues for a middle ground transformation model in which "GONGOs with access to international resources and the means to strengthen self capacity" will help with the formation of a stronger civil society. GONGOs are government organized NGOs that are created by the state in Chinese society, which Wu argues emerged from the reforms of the central State Council system in 1998. These reforms led to a boom in GONGOs to "absorb governmental officials who were laid off." Wu continues to explain that the establishment of GONGOs allowed the state "to receive international assistance from inter-governmental organizations or foreign NGOs."<sup>18</sup> When discussing the relationship between GONGOs and the state, Wu describes that part of autonomy is a GONGO's ability to "develop organizational capacity beyond the state's original design," which, Wu explains, as an "unintended" development.<sup>19</sup> Wu argues that the ability of GONGOs to mobilize "resources for self-capacity building" shows how these GONGOs are redefining their role and relationship with the government. Within her discussion, the emerging discussion about autonomy is important in our discussion. The "soft support" that these GONGOs lend to the state is important in the balance between the state and society, where again, I will assert that certain NGOs (educational or environmental) find themselves in a

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<sup>17</sup> Fengshi Wu, "Environmental GONGO Autonomy: Unintended Consequences of State Strategies in China," *The Good Society* 12, no. 1 (2003): 35, doi:10.1352/gso.2003.0031.

<sup>18</sup> Wu, "Environmental GONGO Autonomy: Unintended," 36.

<sup>19</sup> Wu, "Environmental GONGO Autonomy: Unintended," 41.

relationship with the state where neither entities have complete autonomy but overlapping goals and values that complement one another. Wu describes a very artificial relationship where the government has created a space for NGOs, a necessary precursor after which NGO activity and autonomy naturally arise.

Wu's understanding of NGOs refutes Benjamin Read's assumptions that civil society is organic in nature from the start. I will elaborate on how Wu's understanding of NGOs may apply to urban centers and formally recognized NGOs, but that Read's assertions are just as valid for NGOs that lay beyond urban centers. Read discusses very informal organizations at the local level, understanding that "authorities have yielded much greater space to a private sphere." His discussion revolves not around how NGOs have filled a space the government has purposefully left vacant, but around the NGOs that have developed to fill cracks in which the government has unintentionally overlooked. He pushes for a natural evolution of civil society, in which NGOs complement government priorities.

Read's research focuses on social organizations in community development and mediation. He discusses the development of Resident's Committees, or RCs, in the urban setting. Describing them as "quasi-governmental organizations," cities have learned to mobilize the services of ordinary people. Again, it can be observed that the Chinese government admittedly cannot control or regulate all aspects of the NGO sector and in fact has relieved some of its burden to a very informal sector (within certain limitations and expectations). However, although RCs play a very important role, they also exist because they commonly "maintain propaganda posters and chalkboards announcing policies, activities, or services." These organizations exist within the government's purview because their allegiance is to the party. They are an

extension of the "municipal's government's administrative apparatus", or as Read calls them, the "foundation stones."<sup>20</sup> Providing a wide range of services, both formal and informal, they can survive because they are not polemical in nature. Read also explores the role of grassroots institutions in mediating conflict at the local level. I find that the private schools in slum communities that cater to migrant worker children are one example of informal NGOs that have survived because they, too, are non-controversial. However, these private schools are permitted to exist simply because they do not require government support, and at the same time, address education needs. They are not necessarily the best-equipped organizations or even significantly ameliorate the scarcity of educational services for this demographic. While Read's assertions may still be true in the countryside, I find that cities are transitioning away from this model. In the Beijing case study, I show that the government has moved to allow the best-performing NGOs to continue in their operations, significantly reducing the NGOs that do not adhere to government priorities or government standards for NGOs.

Read finds that the countryside has adopted Villager's Committees, or VCs, to settle disputes (because the countryside lacks certain facets of formal legal institution found in urban settings). These institutions also facilitate national planning policy and work in conjunction with the police. They can also "allocate land, collect taxes and fees, provide for schools, roads, and other infrastructure and...sponsor significant

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<sup>20</sup> Benjamin Read, "Revitalizing the State's Urban 'Nerve Tips,'" *The China Quarterly*, no. 163 (September 2000): 808.

businesses."<sup>21</sup> These VCs have significantly more influence than their urban counterparts. These committees admittedly are most effective in the countryside. In understanding the success of the grassroots institutions at the local level, questions as to why these institutions are not as successful in an urban setting will be examined. I find that NGOs are not created equal, despite similar goals and activities. Location and the distinction between urban and rural NGOs are critical in understanding why existing literature conflict when it comes to the discussion of NGO autonomy and government control. Read's observations are critical in comparing the urban-rural divide, especially in the development of the NGO sector. His observations will be referred to again and best explain the discrepancy between rhetoric and action with our later case-study about the closing of 24 migrant schools.

Similar to Read, Tony Saich also discusses the role that social organizations play within society at the local level, and the infrastructure used by the Chinese government to support NGOs. In contrast to Whiting's argument of state-sponsored NGO activity and Wu's description of GONGOs, Saich and Read emphasize the organic nature of NGOs and the natural growth of civil society. More interesting is their discussion about how informal NGOs have developed outside the purview of the government, with or without the government's knowledge. Saich expands on Read's discussion of naturally arising civil society by discussing the dynamics between NGOs and the state.

Saich argues that because the state is "unable or unwilling to carry the same

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<sup>21</sup> Benjamin L. Read, "Mediating and Mediation Debate: Conflict Resolution and the Local State in China," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no. 5 (October 2008): 742.

wide range of services and functions as before, organizations with varying degrees of autonomy... have created an increased organizational sphere and social space in which to operate and to represent social interests, and to convey those interests into the policy making process."<sup>22</sup> He argues that state control has become increasingly limited, noting a discrepancy between rhetoric and practice of the expressed intent of the state authority. Saich explains that NGOs have reconfigured "the relationship with the state in more beneficial terms that can allow for policy input or pursuit of members' interests and organizational goals."<sup>23</sup> NGOs "negotiate" with the state. Highly restrictive legislation and organizational framework serves as a system for CCP leaders to ensure that social organizations articulate and reflect mutual interests held by the state and social organizations and also to justify thwarting any NGOs that may arise that do not share similar goals or values. Building upon Saich's research about the regulations and structures that exist to control NGO activity, an understanding of the registration of an NGO will be needed. I find that Saich's assertions may apply to NGOs that do not adhere to state goals or criticize the CCP's agenda, but do not apply to educational NGOs that align with state goals. Yes, there is a restrictive legislation process which serves as a system for authorities to ensure that NGOs reflect their mutual interests, but these bureaucratic mechanisms are not an example of direct influence as they are measures of indirect influence on part of the State. However, I find merit in Saich's description of an NGO's ability to "negotiate" with the state (an ability that is mainly reserved to NGOs who align themselves with

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<sup>22</sup> Tony Saich, "Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China," *The China Quarterly* 161 (March 2000): 124 .

<sup>23</sup> Saich, "Negotiating the State: The Development," 124 .



state goals).

Saich's discussion focuses on the way the Chinese Communist Party, which embodies the views of the government, plays a role in the expansion of social organizations. Saich's research also focuses on the ability of NGOs to play a formal role and the government's call for entities to carry out social welfare functions. The NGOs that Saich describes for the most part are recognized formally in a system that has adopted adaptive characteristics to make space for the growing NGO sector. The question as to whether or not these NGOs are completely autonomous entities will be explored through the comments on the development of NGO legislation. Saich argues for the continued dominance of the party-state which has not waned but has yielded to NGO development. Instead, the Chinese government has pushed for formal registration of NGOs, with a top-down approach in its attempt for control over the direction of these NGOs. In this discussion, the concept of a government organized NGO, or GONGO, is again introduced.<sup>24</sup> This evolution in state-society relations has granted NGOs a space in which to organize formally, so long as they adhere by certain rules. I find this to be true, but that GONGOs are less prevalent in the education sector, precisely for the reason that they aligned themselves with state goals long before any positive incentives were created by the state.

Understanding the culture of NGO development and observing which social organizations do *not* share the values and goals of the state will be important in understanding the success of existing social organizations. Saich discusses the "consistent fear that social organizations might become covers for groups engaging in political activities or to represent the interests of disgruntled workers and/or

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<sup>24</sup> Saich, "Negotiating the State: The Development," 136 .

peasants."<sup>25</sup> Calling for the state to cultivate "social intermediary organizations," he believes that many problems that the state faces in addressing state needs (social security coverage, pensions, medical and unemployment insurance) could be ameliorated with an expansion of the social organization sector. It will be important to note that Saich has observed that "those groups working in the field of education and environment have been permitted or have negotiated relatively free space."<sup>26</sup>

Educational NGOs are necessarily freer in their activity because their goals are prioritized by the state. The unequal distribution of state support, both politically and financially, has created a phenomenon in which educational NGOs have the potential to acquire the resources necessary to reach the level of professionalism and management needed to best address the needs of migrant worker children. More importantly, educational NGOs are in a better position to push their platform, not only on the national stage but on the international stage as well.

The author who best understands the current discussion of NGO development as it relates to the urban education sector is Jessica C. Teets. Teets discusses the rise of "consultative authoritarianism" as she has observed in Beijing. In this model, consultative authoritarianism "encourages the simultaneous expansion of a fairly autonomous civil society and the development of indirect tool of state control."<sup>27</sup> She posits the idea that the decentralization of public goods allowed local officials to embrace civil societies for their benefits. The relationship between the state and NGOs has evolved over the years to accommodate for a model in which neither the state nor

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<sup>25</sup> Saich, "Negotiating the State: The Development," 127 .

<sup>26</sup> Saich, "Negotiating the State: The Development," 137 .

<sup>27</sup> Jessica C. Teets, "Let Many Civil Societies Bloom: The Rise of Consultative Authoritarianism in China," *The China Quarterly* 213 (2013): 20.

the NGOs active in urban society have complete autonomy or control.

Teets distinguishes between the local and national levels of government in understanding state-society relations. The pressure on the local government to provide public goods motivated further collaboration with NGOs, especially to the large population of migrant workers. Even though Beijing is a wealthy city-province, officials lacked "models for service delivery that were not linked to state-owned enterprises, traditional practices of elder care by families, and stable migration practices governed by the hukou system."<sup>28</sup> In her model, there is officially-tolerated social pluralism and "mutual recognition of comparative advantage" from the government. There are more factors and participants in the policy making process, all of whom are enabled by the ease of internet forums and online resources. The control mechanisms used by the state are also more sophisticated, designed to provide positive and negative incentives to collaborate with state goals. Again, what Teets has observed may be singular to only Beijing. Ultimately, Teets' argument is focused on the development of an "operationally autonomous civil society" that is emerging within an authoritarian regime, leading to not a democracy but a system of resilient authoritarianism and better governance. This paper will find that all her assertions hold true, but only for urban centers such as Beijing. I feel that Teets' perspective about the NGO sector is limited in its view and does not accurately reflect upon the observations of other scholars such as Read and Saich. Yes, there is an expansion of a fairly autonomous civil society -- but for whom? I find that her model only holds true for NGOs that align with state priorities. I will expand on her theory to argue that the Chinese state prioritizes certain NGOs over others and the urban center over the rural

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<sup>28</sup> Teets, "Let Many Civil Societies," 26.

countryside. A study of the rise of NGOs addressing educational needs will best clarify this distinction.

The previous authors have held a continuing discussion about whether NGO development is a state-led phenomena or a bottoms-up process propelled by small grassroots movements. What the popular literature can agree upon is the fact that there is no such thing as *absolute* autonomy when it comes to state-society relations in China. Even Teets only go so far as describing civil society as "fairly autonomous." Exploring these different ideas, I will argue that NGO development is not necessarily a vertical process as it is an outward and three dimensional processes that encompasses many facets of state-society relations.

The second half of this thesis will explore the urban-rural divide and why the state and NGOs have seized upon the issue of education in urban centers. Two reasons emerge for civil society's focus on education in urban centers; funding and ease of organization, all of which tie back to government support.

To discuss the urban-rural divide, and understand the emergence of an urban-bias for NGO development, I will first sift through the literature's discussion about the household registration system, or "hukou" system. An understanding of the hukou system is vital as it ultimately gave rise to the phenomena of migrant workers.

The history of the hukou system and the emergence of migrant workers have been extensively examined by the work and research of Kam Wing Chan, Tiejun Cheng, and Mark Selden. Initially set up to aid the government in distributing resource and aid within the welfare system, control internal migration, and crime -- the "hukou" system has gone "beond simply controlling population mobility." NGOs have chosen to address growing needs of urban communities because the hukou system has

not only failed to address the welfare needs of the state but exacerbated the problem associated with rapid urbanization. Implemented in 1951 and extended to rural areas in 1955, the hukou system was a "mechanism of population migration and movements" and even guaranteed citizens rights of free residential choice<sup>29</sup>. The hukou legislation by the National People's Congress in 1958 was a result of escalating urbanization. The legislation granted state agencies greater authority in controlling mobility and migration flows in its ability to issue migration permits and enrolment certificates. The government's focus on controlling migration and managing urbanization problems might explain their ceding control over NGO development in addressing migrant worker needs.

Cheng and Selden further explore the consequences of the hukou system, also discussing evolving legislation and policy. They discuss the increase in population cities or urban centers, citing the movement of rural migrants to the city as one of the major reasons for rapid urbanization. Although these two authors focus on Shanghai, the policies of the First Five-Year Plan and the state's approach to industrialization can be used to understand Beijing's current state in both industry and the "pull" of Beijing. They better explore the deep urban-rural divide, of "two hierarchies for income, housing, grain, rations, education, medical and other services, education, employment, and retirement" concluding that cities are privileged over the countryside in almost every aspect of society. However, I will note that nonprofits have chosen to occupy

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<sup>29</sup> Kam Wing Chan and Li Zhang, "The Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: Processes & Changes," *The China Quarterly*, no. 160 (1999): 819.

spaces within cities, within the "urban sphere".<sup>30</sup> NGOs choosing to operate within cities despite the huge disparity between urban centers and the rural countryside can be an indication of a complex state-society dynamic that will be further explored in this paper and through a better understanding of the motivations of different NGOs working within cities, and more specifically Beijing.

Dorothy Solinger's work maps out the needs of migrant workers and the policies that have evolved in the last few decades. Urban employment, urban services, and the management of food supply lines are various reasons that Solinger believes the state has continued utilizing the household registration system. Notice the urban-bias in the discussion of public services. In this discussion, we must consider the changes in people's ability to migrate, modes of transportation, and the ease of mobility within China. Combined with rapid urbanization, Within Solinger's work notes the underlying trend that the household registration system has actually impeded the "planned growth of the economy," where the growth of migrant workers caught the Chinese government off guard.<sup>31</sup> More interesting is how Solinger ties the developments in the hukou system reforms in urban China, to the evolution of policy addressing migrant workers, a "segment of society that is often forgotten or discounted in the...post-1978 period of market reforms." She finds that migrant workers have enjoyed the benefits of economic reforms, seeing household disposable income

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<sup>30</sup> Tiejun Cheng and Mark Selden, "The Origins and Social Consequences of China's Hukou System," *The China Quarterly* 1994, no. 139: 667, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/655134>.

<sup>31</sup> Dorothy J. Solinger, "'Temporary Residence Certificate' Regulations in Wuhan, May 1983," *The China Quarterly*, no. 101 (March 1985): 103.

increases and a growing middle class.<sup>32</sup> However, she also highlights the high unemployment rate, accounts published by Human Rights in China, and studies that document accounts of grievance of those still surviving within a lower stratum.<sup>33</sup> The developments and legislation of the hukou system not only allowed for the emergence of migrant workers, but allows us to understand why NGOs are only now emerging to address migrant worker needs in urban centers.

Although many scholars would agree that the hukou system was initially established as an entitlement device, to better distribute resources, and to provide economic security under the collective-farming arrangement; many would agree that the hukou system has hampered fluid mobility and caused rural migrants to become "second-class" citizens.

Dongping Han argues that it was really the reforms in the 1980s which disposed of collective-farming and land was divided into individual households that brought upon the supposed problems of the hukou system. He argues that the hukou system actually prevented "the shantytowns that surround big cities in most developing nations" arguing that shantytowns have only arisen because people have lost their land.<sup>34</sup> To Han, the hukou system upheld the worker's "inalienable" right to land. For this paper, a discussion about the underlying reasons for the current state of migrant workers will be explored through both perspectives. A look of both body of literature will be analyzed to grasp a better understanding of the hukou system as it

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<sup>32</sup> Dorothy J. Solinger, "State and Society in Urban China in the Wake of the 16th Party Congress," *The China Quarterly*, no. 176 (December 2003): 943.

<sup>33</sup> Solinger, "State and Society in Urban," 947.

<sup>34</sup> Dongping Han, "The Hukou System and China's Rural Development," *The Journal of Developing Areas* 33, no. 3 (Spring 1999): 367.

underwent different changes throughout history. This evolution of Chinese society strongly influences the growth in NGO development as the Chinese government has adapted to rapid growth and growing urban centers.

Moving past the discussion of the urban-bias created by the hukou system, there is also an issues-bias that emerges in our discussion. NGOs that provide public services in urban centers have better access to funding and political support, but only NGOs that align with government policies and goals have found ease in organization and legislation that emerge to support their organization.

To compare the ease or difficulty in which educational NGOs have established themselves in urban centers I explore Joseph Y.S. Cheng, Kinglun Ngok, Wenjia Zhuang's work about the informal politics of China. Their work describes a stark comparison between educational NGOs and their observations of labor NGOs; their case study allows us to understand the challenges that are met when NGOs goals and vision conflicts with those of the government. Although these scholars have focused on the issue of China's Labor NGOs, the informal politics observed in their case study is still very relevant to the NGO sector as a whole. They discuss the fears and suspicions that grass-root agencies are actually a cover for "banned social/religious movement Falun Gong, and perhaps for unregistered lawyers."<sup>35</sup> They also continue to explain how NGOs within the informal sphere have difficulty gaining official approval because even those within a position of authority "need to exercise discretion" due to the political risks involved with supporting NGOs.<sup>36</sup> However the NGOs in which

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<sup>35</sup> Joseph Y.S. Cheng, Kinglun Ngok, and Wenjia Zhuang, "The Survival and Development Space for China's Labor NGOs," *Asian Survey* 50, no. 6 (December 2010): 1090.

<sup>36</sup> Cheng, Ngok, and Zhuang, "The Survival and Development," 1094.



they observe are labor organizations, which are considered polemical in nature to the Chinese state. These NGOs, unlike educational NGOs, have created tactics to gain legitimacy; "self restraint, limiting their own scale, and active coordination with government measures." An understanding of how NGOs can possibly survive in China is possible by understanding the literature that discusses the informal politics of the NGO sector and the NGOs that are prioritized by the state. I find that educational NGOs do not have to manipulate their objectives or original functions to the same extent as the labor NGOs that Cheng, Ngok, and Zhuang observe. Addressing education needs allows educational NGOs to bypass the need to adopt "strategies of negotiation, evasion, and feigned compliance in order to survive."<sup>37</sup>

Kinglun Ngok has a separate body of research that specifically addresses education policy. Narrowing the research to specifically how NGOs are meeting the education needs of migrants will be important to understand the political and economic atmosphere in which they are operating. Ngok better contextualizes the role of education in society and explains why education has been prioritized by the state. From his observations it is clear why the issue of education has emerged over other issues, garnering from both the state and NGOs. Kinglun Ngok traces the history of education policy from the time the Communist party took power in China, to the reforms in the late 1970s, to present day politics (a very similar path taken to understand the hukou system). Tying his discussion back to Cheng, Selden, Solinger and Han about NGOs urban-bias in providing services, we see how education is of vital importance to urban centers and national priorities. He asserts that present day education policy is strongly influenced by the "decentralization and marketization" of

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<sup>37</sup> Cheng, Ngok, and Zhuang, "The Survival and Development," 1083.

education. Decentralization was needed to allow "private organizations and even private individuals to operate schools" even if they did not have a greater say than the government in education matters. Ngok argues that "education restructuring is driven by resource scarcity and guided by principles of the global market economy" in China.<sup>38</sup> I agree with his assertions that the government has prioritized education as an essential tool for "economic modernization." I also agree that the educational system in urban centers have been "at the expense of the rural areas or poorer regions." His work will later be referenced in better understanding why education is prioritized over other issues by NGOs and the government.

At the end of this thesis, I will present an alternative suggestion about the relationship between NGOs and the state. Relevant to my own model, it is necessary to introduce Guobin Yang's body of work about environmental NGOs and more importantly the field perspective he advocates for. His model best underscores how difficult it is to work within certain restrictions, what challenges NGOs might face, and how certain NGOs have survived within the Chinese political environment.

Yang underscores the field perspective to explain the "causal factors of civil society development." The field perspective insists that "a patterned system of objective forces, a relational configuration endowed with a specific gravity which it imposes on all objects and agents which enter it."

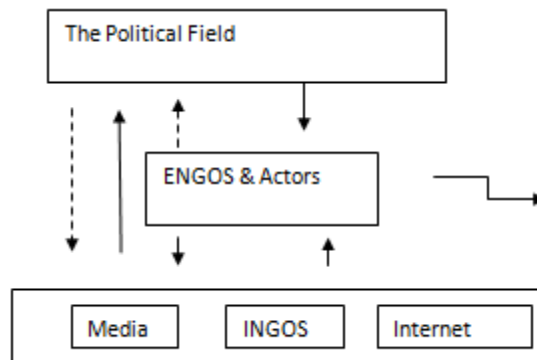
More simply put, the field perspective stresses inter-field relations, stresses the role of social actors, and would understand NGOs as interacting with "multiple

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<sup>38</sup> Kinglun Ngok, "Chinese Education Policy in the Context of Decentralization and Marketization: Evolution and Implications," *Asia Pacific Education Review* 8, no. 1 (2007): 145.

institutional fields."<sup>39</sup> In the case of China, NGOs are subordinate to the political field but are supported by mass media, international NGOs, and the internet.

Understanding how environmental NGOs can shed more light on how educational NGOs exist, noting that neither issue appears controversial to the state. In this discussion, Guobin Yang uses the term "GONGOS" as well to understand the seven types of governmentally-organized NGOs



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The organizational types of NGOs he lists out for environmental NGOs, I will argue are similar to the organizational types of NGOs that exist for educational NGOs. His model also incorporates a wide variety of factors that merit discussion.

The link between educational NGOs and environmental NGOs in structure and development must be linked to their ease in organization, the role they play in society, and the support they receive from social media, the internet, international NGOs. Yang also contributes to the discussion about NGOs in Beijing in his references to the 2001 International Conference on NGO Poverty Reduction Policy help in Beijing which issued a "Beijing Joint Declaration on Poverty Alleviation by Chinese NGOs." Calling

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<sup>39</sup>Yang, "Environmental NGOs," 48.

<sup>40</sup> Guobin Yang, "Environmental NGOs and Institutional Dynamics in China," *The China Quarterly*, 2005, 49.

upon NGOs to act as a "third force", Yang has noted the state's call for NGOs "to complement both market and government in providing assistance to marginalized groups."<sup>41</sup> I agree with his assertions that the state has formally recognized the need for NGOs in civil society.

I will address outstanding questions including; whether or not completely autonomous NGOs are vital to civil society. If NGOs serve to address needs that the state cannot need, I will explore why NGOs have focused on urban centers and not the rural countryside. I will explain why education is a prominent issue for both the state and NGOs in today's China.

I will attempt to understand the challenges currently face NGOs, and explore future challenges that NGOs will face. Furthering the work about the influence of the hukou system's history on migrant workers and the more recent legislation and reforms of China's congress will be critical in understanding the recent boom in educational NGOs in Beijing. An underlying discussion throughout this paper will be the closing of twenty-four migrant schools in Beijing, the causal factors and implications behind the actions of the Chinese government will be explored as a case study.

This paper will attempt to understand whether or not the plight of migrant workers in Beijing is representative of all migrant workers in China. Past literature is relevant to developing changes, improvements, and setbacks facing educational NGOs in the public space in Beijing. The discussion about how migrant workers emerged in Chinese society will play a role in the needs and space that NGOs have chosen to

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<sup>41</sup> Guobin Yang, "Civil Society in China: A Dynamic Field of Study," *China Review International* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 13, doi:10.1353/cri.2003.0057.

address in China, particularly those in urban areas. I will compare and contrast the space NGOs have occupied in rural and urban China, noting the effects of the hukou system, policy changes, and macro-economic policies have had on the city.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **State Develops the NGO Sector: Mechanisms for Indirect Control**

Through the changes in the NGO registration process, I see the Chinese state moving from exerting direct control on the NGO sector to a strategy of exerting indirect control in order to accommodate an expanding Chinese civil society.

Legislation, particularly in Beijing, has evolved at a much quicker pace than national legislation in response to the quickly expanding NGO need and influence. Pre-dating the national policy statements about NGO legislation reform, Beijing had already started instating plans in February 2010 to allow organizations in Zhongguancun Science and Technology Park to directly register to the Beijing's branch of Civil Affairs, without finding a sponsoring unit within a government department.<sup>42</sup> In an attempt to encourage innovation and creativity among these groups, Beijing local government has made attempts to promote this area known as "China's Silicon Valley."<sup>43</sup>

A sponsor free zone is a significant step on part of the state to make it easier for NGOs to operate within an artificial space. This attempt to attract more NGOs to a state-sponsored space with positive incentives derived from registration is an attempt to create an NGO cluster (a concentrated area of NGOs). Beijing is the second group

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<sup>42</sup>"China to ease NGO registration policy," China Daily, last modified July 2011, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-07/11/content\\_12878662.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-07/11/content_12878662.htm).

<sup>43</sup> Lan Fang, "A Sour Bloom for NGOs in Beijing," Caixin Online, last modified June 2010, <http://english.caixin.com/2010-06-04/100150131.html>.

of NGO cluster zones in China, after Shenzhen. Outside of the sponsor-free zone, NGOs have a very difficult time in being formally recognized. The need for registration has served as a major obstacle for NGOs in their ability and ease with which they can be formally recognized by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and local authorities.

This marks a key policy change since 1989, when regulations for the establishment of NGOs were first outlined. Without registration, NGOs face difficulties within the community they serve, facing suspicion and attacks due to a lack of affiliation. Funding by the state and international sponsors are also important benefits that come with registration, which include considerable tax breaks. However, recent policy changes reveal the state's willingness to relax its monopoly on providing public services, specifically in Beijing. Unlike national policy that requires a sponsoring unit, which is a quasi-governmental body to endorse NGO activity before formal recognition, there have been efforts in Beijing to streamline the registration process by eliminating the need for a sponsoring unit.

However, only four types of NGOs will be privy to the policy changes in Beijing. The NGOs that have the ability to by-pass the two-tiered system are industrial associations, technological organizations, charities, and suburban and urban community service organizations.<sup>44</sup> Of the urban service organizations in the fourth category, many have focused specifically on addressing problems associated with the people with the highest needs -- migrant workers in Beijing. However, whether or not certain services are considered controversial to the Chinese government remains to be

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<sup>44</sup> Wenting Xie, "NGOs cautious over new rule," The Global Times, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/772301.shtml#.UZPK8bWG2eG>.

seen in future developments. The specifics of these laws have yet to be published, and many within the Beijing NGO sector are wary that registration of an NGO would lead to a loss in freedom. If these policies are upheld and then expanded into other districts and areas in Beijing, not only will the NGO sector expand, but it will grow with the formal support of the government.

I observe that NGOs that focused on the environment and education have been deemed noncontroversial, and serve to benefit most from these changes in legislation. Because their services complement the goals of the state on a national level, they are relatively free to operate within the space that the state has created for them. There are two ways in which Chinese government policies could significantly aid migrant communities and aid national targets for compulsory education. First, the state could take steps to reform the hukou system which necessarily hinders migrant worker children from gaining access to the free public education system. Second, the state could take steps to support NGOs that address migrant education needs through public services. The state has adopted the latter approach.

The Beijing Municipality's Civil Affairs bureau has taken novel approaches to experiment with different local regulations. Not only did Beijing adopt a "human resource system" to help promote the professionalization of the NGO sector, but it also implemented a notice for charitable projects to be audited after completion. There is a push to make NGO registration and audit records public in order to raise transparency.

Not only is the state trying to lower barriers for NGOs to register in Beijing, but the state is also attempting to support the NGO sector through funding. In 2010, 100 million yuan was allocated to purchase services from NGOs. However, this funding was only available to registered NGOs. This attempt to formalize the NGO



sector by encouraging NGOs to register is one attempt by the state to bring grassroots organizations under the purview of the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

The Beijing Civil Affairs Bureau has also made an attempt to remove state employees from the NGO sector, to ensure "the voluntary and social nature of these organizations." It is possible that the dissolution of GONGOS will begin first in Beijing.<sup>45</sup>

The case in Beijing serves to highlight what the state might adopt for legislation policy in the future. Reforms in NGO legislation in Beijing highlight the Chinese state's marking feature of incremental policy reforms through public policy experiments. This evolution of policy will reveal a relationship between the state and NGOs where neither party has absolute autonomy and in which state-led reforms have served to benefit NGOs that do not conflict with state goals, i.e. educational NGOs.

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<sup>45</sup> Shawn Shieh, "NGO Law Monitor: China," The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), last modified May 2013, <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/china.html>.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Education and Reasons for Urban-Bias**

The focus on developing the education sector highlights an issue-bias in NGO development, particularly in urban centers such as Beijing. As Ngok acknowledges, in Mao's China, education was viewed as a tool for political indoctrination. The state prioritized education for "the purpose of making all people understand the party-state's policy statements and political discourses."<sup>46</sup> The state emphasized primary education, increasing literacy, and a tech-oriented higher education specifically for urban workers and peasants. The education of children in the countryside was dependent on not the state, but on rural collectives. This urban-biased policy created an education system that catered to an industrializing society. Even though education was treated as a public good at the time, the distribution of educational resources was uneven, leading to the current Chinese state's problems in providing educational services.

Education policy saw another shift with Deng Xiaoping's focus on changing education to meet the needs of China's modernization process. Education and economic developments were inextricably linked to one other. Education came to be treated as a consumption item where citizens were responsible for student fees outside of the public education system, leaving migrant workers without the means to pay for private tuition fees at a disadvantage. However, even though education is a priority of the state, Ngok notes that "government has no intention to monopolize education" due

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<sup>46</sup> Ngok, "Chinese Education Policy in the Context," 143.

to limited funding, which is why the expanding relationship between the state and NGOs has seen mutual areas of cooperation and benefit. However, this relationship has created an environment where the urban educational system has benefited at the expense of the rural areas. Both the NGOs and the state are guilty of neglecting the rural countryside despite the huge disparities in wealth between urban centers and the countryside. This neglect illustrates that NGOs may be voluntary in nature, but still responds to the same market demands and need for resources as all other entities. The state has also prioritized positive incentives in urban centers, allowing for a natural growth of NGOs in urban centers. The state's lack of action against non-state sponsored education is also one form of support for NGOs who operate in urban centers. But as I will present in the case study of Beijing, this form of support has moved beyond ignoring these operations to pushing these operations to act legitimately under the auspices of the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Education is a non-controversial issue, but more importantly a priority issue, to the Chinese state. NGOs working to improve education for migrant children will often find support from the government. The state reserves the right to limit speech and advocacy for specific organizations that might be seen to "negatively impact national security." There are broad categories of activities deemed unsavory by the Chinese government including: advocacy, legal assistance, labor, religion, and ethnic minority affairs.<sup>47</sup>

There are market and state centered explanations for the expansion of the NGO sector.

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<sup>47</sup> Shieh, "NGO Law Monitor: China," The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL).

Guobin Yang has stressed the field perspective in understanding the relationships between environmental NGOs and the government. In the field perspective, there is no absolute autonomy. The relationships are naturally unequal, with differences in influence, resources, and players. The social actors are the most influential players because their strengths lay in organizational entrepreneurship, with allies in "mass media, international NGOs and the growing field of new media - the internet."<sup>48</sup>

A similar case can be made with educational NGOs or any NGO that do not conflict with state policies and goals. NGOs that do not conflict with state policies tend to adopt a mixture of tactics to reach their goals. They avoid confrontational approaches and opt for more cooperation and participation for every stakeholder.

In the "2003-2010 National Training of Migrant Workers Plan," the state affirmed that the most important task of the whole party was national education for migrants, emphasizing the need to transfer "surplus rural labor to non-agricultural industries and urban areas."<sup>49</sup>

In 2011, China's Education Ministry reaffirmed its stance that public schools were not allowed to extract fees from the children of migrant workers as "contributions."<sup>50</sup> Specifying its support of migrant children education is one of many ways that the Chinese state has tried to ameliorate the consequences of the hukou

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<sup>48</sup> Guobin Yang, "Environmental NGOs and Institutional Dynamics in China," *JSTOR*.

<sup>49</sup> Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, last modified April 2008, [http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s3074/201001/xxgk\\_79139.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s3074/201001/xxgk_79139.html).

<sup>50</sup> "No extra education fees for migrants' children," China Daily, last modified September 2011, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-09/01/content\\_13600171.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-09/01/content_13600171.htm).

system.

In 2012, Beijing published plans to gradually allow migrant workers' children to enter senior high schools and sit college exams locally (instead of forcing them to return to their home province).<sup>51</sup> The state's intention in this initiative was to allow migrant worker's children to enjoy the same rights to education as their urban counterpart.

At the end of 2012, there was a controversial plan being discussed that would allow migrant workers' children to attend vocational colleges and then matriculate into universities in Beijing in 2014.<sup>52</sup> This falls directly in line with the Ministry of Education's announcement that the 2012 government work report stressed education as a priority, with 4% of the GDP being allocated to education. According to Chinese officials, this change in policy also fully embodies the determination of the state to develop education as a "central priority" with recommendations to further increase investment in vocational education.<sup>53</sup> Again, I find that the Chinese state's focus on education as a national priority falls in line with the development of an industrializing society. More importantly, there is a focus on education migrants in Beijing and other urban settings.

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<sup>51</sup> Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China, last modified December 2012, [http://english.agri.gov.cn/news/lxw/2012/201304/t20130409\\_12509.htm](http://english.agri.gov.cn/news/lxw/2012/201304/t20130409_12509.htm).

<sup>52</sup> Amanda Brown-Inz, "View from the Media: College Entrance Exam Woes for Migrant Children," China Development Brief: Objective, authoritative, impartial coverage of China's civil society, last modified February 2013, <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/?p=1862>.

<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, last modified March 2012, <http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s6299/201203/131670.html>.

## Chapter 5

### Development of NGO Clusters

The 2010 Beijing regulations that allowed NGOs to register directly with the Ministry of Civil Affairs only applied to certain districts, and the government reserved the right to exempt certain NGOs that were "special cases" in the case that they did not align with national policies.<sup>54</sup> However, much of the attention of this sponsor free zone has been focused on Zhongguancun a Science and Technology Park, considered China's "Silicon Valley." Currently, discussions are underway to make the entirety of Beijing the second "sponsor-free" zone, thereby creating an NGO cluster zone.

According to one blogger, more than ten social organizations were registered successfully after the 2010 announcement, but none of the registered NGOs were grassroots nonprofits. Fears that the government would only allow science and technological nonprofits and foundations to register disappeared when in 2011, the regulations were broadened to allow NGOs in the fields of charity, social welfare, and social services to directly register with the Ministry of Civil Affairs.<sup>55</sup> Conflicting reports have continually emerged about the new regulations being proposed and adopted. This development in 2011 marked the government's desire to attract NGOs aligned with state interests in developing sectors such as education, but concrete

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<sup>54</sup> Georgia Sparling, *China Philanthropy, a Blog of Social Venture Group*, entry posted September 2011, <http://blog.socialventuregroup.com/svg/2011/08/regulation-reform-for-chinas-nonprofits-.html>.

<sup>55</sup> Sparling, *China Philanthropy, a Blog of Social Venture Group*.

amendments to the 1989 Regulations have not yet been solidified.

Precedence to make an entire city a sponsor free zone was first seen in Shenzhen, the first city to establish an NGO cluster. In July 2009, an NGO cluster was created in Shenzhen by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Issuing the "Cooperative Agreement on Advancing Integrated Reforms in Civil Affairs," Shenzhen served as an experimental site. Shenzhen was created into a "sponsor-free" zone.<sup>56</sup> The two tiered NGO registration system was eliminated, and Shenzhen was given the ability to take over the regulation and management of both domestic and foreign foundations and NGOs. Beijing will be the second NGO cluster in mainland China, serving as an example of the state's attempt to create a space for NGOs. I contend that the creation of an NGO cluster would not only be in the state's best interest, but would best serve the growing education needs of migrant communities present in Beijing. The following points will further highlight why the state has chosen Beijing for its experimental policy regarding NGO development, and why education as a social service is particularly important to attract to the future NGO cluster.

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<sup>56</sup> Shieh, "NGO Law Monitor: China," The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL).

## **Meeting the Education Needs of the State: Beijing as an Experiment**

With the creation of an NGO cluster, the government can better attract NGOs that will address the public service needs in urban centers, namely education. Improvements in education in Beijing perfectly align to both local and national goals.

Dating back to 1978, China recognized the need to develop its education system and enacted a series of reforms to promote international communication and cooperation in the area of education. By 1985, the state enacted a "Decision on the Reform of the Educational Structure," unveiling a education reform plan that called for nine years of compulsory education and the establishment of a State Education Commission. The Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee discussed the topic of world educational development trends and China's educational reforms in 2006.<sup>57</sup>

In 2009, there were 260 million students enrolled with 13.9 million teachers in schools throughout China. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted a worldwide evaluation of student scholastic performance. Sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Chinese students received the best results in science, mathematics and reading.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, last modified July 2010, [http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe\\_2862/201010/109030.html](http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_2862/201010/109030.html).

<sup>58</sup> Sam Dillon, "Top Test Scores From Shanghai Stun Educators," The New York Times, last modified December 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/07/education/07education.html?\\_r=3&](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/07/education/07education.html?_r=3&).



In 2010, the same Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee was called upon again to discuss the prioritization of equality improvement as the core mission in education reform and development, emphasizing a scientific concept of educational quality.

In 2012, Li Liguo, the Minister of Civil Affairs, announced that it "recognizes the contributions of international NGOs in China's economic and social development and praises their contributions in fields like culture, education, health and poverty alleviation." This statement serves to highlight the state's emphasis on education. The state has reached out to international NGOs in part because the Chinese education system is the largest in the world, with 9.15 million students taking the National Higher Education Entrance Exam known as the gaokao (高考) in 2012. Investment in education accounts for 4% of total GDP in 2012.<sup>59</sup> As the nation's capital, Beijing is already home to many international NGOs and is in the best position to further attract NGOs with the development of an NGO cluster.

Furthermore, of these announcements listed by the Ministry of Education, education for migrant workers' children was only discussed in relation to Beijing. In 2009, General Secretary Hu Jintao visited the Haidian District of Beijing. Hu acknowledged the importance of migrant workers as a force in China's development endeavor and that efforts would be made to provide education opportunities for their children. With the focus on education, namely migrant worker education, Beijing serves as a perfect hub for the state to experiment with the creation of an NGO cluster. This special focus on migrant children education is of particular importance when

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<sup>59</sup> Xiaobo Sun, "Education reaches 4% of GDP," The Global Times, last modified January 2013, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/755161.shtml>.

understanding why Beijing was selected, as an industrial city and as the nation's capital where the state has the most influence.

### **Response to Legitimate Education Needs**

In China, rural migrant workers currently make up a third of the total urban population of 600 million. Of this population, 20 million of them are children. Providing public education for these children is a constant struggle in a culture that rejects them, especially in huge metropolises like Beijing. Beijing is home to 249,000 school-aged migrant children, a quarter of who are enrolled in one of the 300 to 400 private schools in the city.<sup>60</sup>

According to the hukou system, those living in Beijing without a household registration face fees as high as 3,000 yuan for each child to attend a public school. These fees are often impossible for the average migrant worker family to pay. Migrant workers are also more likely to have more than one child, increasing the likelihood that they will be able to pay for their children's education. They ultimately turn to one of Beijing's private schools, often times ill-managed NGOs on the outskirts of Beijing that charge a much lower fee for the student's enrollment.

In addition to credit constraints, migrant workers are also uninformed about the quality of education their children would receive from a private school. Many of these schools are not of the same quality of the nearby public schools. In reality, the disparities between private schools and public schools destine migrant worker children

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<sup>60</sup> Du Ding, "Beijing Education Commission responds to 'private migrant school' that they will not let a single student drop out of school," Xinhua News, last modified August 2011, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/edu/2011-08/17/c\\_121868694.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/edu/2011-08/17/c_121868694.htm).

to the same lives as their parents with no improvements in education. There are limited opportunities for economic or social mobility for migrant worker children in these private schools built for migrant worker children.

The few migrant worker children who are accepted into a public school often times face strong discrimination. In Beijing, a third of migrant children said they were not accepted by locals, with some reports indicating that 40-70% of children were claiming that they were being discriminated against.<sup>61</sup> The state faces difficulty in integrating migrant worker children into the public school system, often because schools report that the inclusion of migrant worker children could encourage societal tensions in the school. One study from the China Youth Research Center indicated that children in northeastern China found that migrant children had lower scores of self-acceptance, teacher-student interaction, and academic performance.<sup>62</sup> Migrant workers' children also do not receive the same emotional support from their parents as their local counterparts, are often neglected, and have a higher rate of criminal offense. In Beijing, 2005 records indicate that criminal offence rates for migrant children were three times higher than that for local children. These criminal offense rates are significantly higher for migrant-worker children precisely for the reason that they are not enrolled in schools in which they would not only be privy to a safe environment, but keep them from illegal activities.

Migrant worker children's rate of enrollment into a public school or a certified private school not only has a large impact on the national goals for compulsory

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<sup>61</sup> "The Children of Migrant Workers in China," China Labour Bulletin, last modified May 2009, [http://www.clb.org.hk/en/content/children-migrant-workers-china-3#part2\\_heading11](http://www.clb.org.hk/en/content/children-migrant-workers-china-3#part2_heading11).

<sup>62</sup> The Children of Migrant," China Labour Bulletin.

education, but overall public health and crime rates. Increasing the number of schools or education services for this population is critical to the Chinese state's goals of a harmonious society.

### **State Inability to Suppress NGO Activity**

China has an estimated 3 million organizations that remained unregistered due to the high bar and standards the Regulations mandated. Without a sponsor-free zone and the state's attempt to create an NGO cluster, almost 90% of NGOs will continue to lack legal status because they require a sponsoring unit under the "Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Organizations."<sup>63</sup> These unregistered organizations are required to pay the same tax as a private company when receiving public funds or donations. The Chinese government also acknowledged in 2012 that reforms were needed because "social management and public service" had fallen short. During a keynote speech at a Civil Affairs meeting, Premier Wen Jiabao foreshadowed future reforms of civil society in China. Wang Ming of Tsinghua University was widely quoted after the meeting recommending that "government should speed up the reduction of barriers for social organizations...especially in terms of registration."<sup>64</sup>

This year, in an official statement released by the Minister of Civil Affairs, Li indicated that "social organizations, including charities, industry associations and other independent groups, would no longer have to find government sponsors to obtain

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<sup>63</sup> Verna Yu, "NGOs fight uphill battle as Beijing tightens the screws," South China Morning Post, last modified March 2012, <http://www.scmp.com/article/715486/ngos-fight-uphill-battle-beijing-tightens-screws>.

<sup>64</sup> He Dan, "Wen encourages more participation in civil affairs," China Daily Asia Pacific, last modified March 2012, <http://www.chinadailyapac.com/article/wen-encourages-more-participation-civil-affairs>.

official registration that grants them nonprofit status."<sup>65</sup> China has pledged to boost the "development of the country's charitable causes" by allowing charities to play a larger role in society. Acknowledging that the obstacles were too high for certain charities to register for official status, China has publicly embraced the role of charities in society.

In response to both market forces and pluralism, the number of NGOs has grown in recent years to accommodate the increasing demands for public services and supplement social welfare programs. Officially recognizing NGOs started in the 1990s as a result of the World Bank's encouragement and the state's attempt to move away from a centralized economy. There has been undoubtedly a steady increase in NGO activity or at the very least a move to formally recognize these institutions on part of the Chinese government. The World Bank itself acknowledges that there are over a million "grassroots or community based organizations which are not officially registered."

In 1990, Whiting cites the Ministry of Civil Affairs' estimates of 100,000 NGOs working at the local level and almost 2,000 at the national level.<sup>66</sup> In 1993, Saich cites the China Daily's issue with estimates of 180,000 NGOs working at the local level, with 1,400 of those operating at the national level. In 1996, the official statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs showed similar statistics acknowledging 186,666 registered NGOs nationwide, 1,845 of which were operating at the national

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<sup>65</sup> Xiaodong Rong, "China vows to boost charities," China Daily, last modified March 2013, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013npc/2013-03/13/content\\_16306308.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013npc/2013-03/13/content_16306308.htm).

<sup>66</sup> Whiting, "The Politics of NGO Development," 17.

level.<sup>67</sup>

In 2002, the Ministry of Civil Affairs claimed 133,000 officially registered NGOs and 1,268 operating at the national level.<sup>68</sup> In 2006, the Ministry of Civil Affairs estimated 244,000 officially registered NGOs.<sup>69</sup> In 2012, Xinhua News reported statements from the Ministry of Civil Affairs estimating that the number of registered NGOs in China grew from 354,000 to 460,000 during the five years leading up to 2012.<sup>70</sup>

In 2012, the Central Government earmarked 200 million yuan to support NGOs, and financed 377 projects that benefited 1.85 million people, according to official surveys.<sup>71</sup> In Beijing, the city plans on financing 500 social projects with 80 million yuan, an increased 60% in expenditures compared to last year's spending.<sup>72</sup> Instead of limiting NGOs financially, I find that the state has emphasized purchasing services from NGOs that most efficiently allocate resources and services to the public.

In 2011, the state's attempt to close 24 migrant schools was the attempt of the

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<sup>67</sup> Saich, "Negotiating the State: The Development," 126 .

<sup>68</sup> "The World Bank and NGOs in China," The World Bank, last modified December 2004, <http://go.worldbank.org/A98AFNZLK1>.

<sup>69</sup> Chen Jie, "The NGO Community in China: Expanding Linkages with Transnational Civil Society and Their Democratic Implications," China Perspectives, last modified 2006, <http://chinaperspectives.revues.org/3083#tocfrom1n2>.

<sup>70</sup> "Number of NGOs in China grows to nearly 500,000," China Daily, last modified March 2012, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-03/20/content\\_14875389.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-03/20/content_14875389.htm).

<sup>71</sup> "Chinese government's NGO funding peaks in 2012," Xinhua, February 2012, 1, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-02/12/c\\_132166169.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-02/12/c_132166169.htm).

<sup>72</sup> "Examining the Development Situation of China Aged Industry in the First Year of the Industry," World Cities Scientific Development Alliance, <http://english.wcsdf.org/recently-news/examining-the-development-situation-of-china-aged-industry-in-the-first-year-of-the-industry/>.



state to reduce the number of private migrant schools which are considered illegal educational NGOs. Jonathan Hursh, founder of Compassion for Migrant Children, an NGO focused on providing educational services to those in slums, indicated that local officials "don't know what to do about the problem so they just lash out."<sup>73</sup> The state cannot handle the expansion of the NGO sector without reacting with reforms such as the NGO cluster in hopes that incremental policy changes will help reveal how the state should administer national policy in the future.

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<sup>73</sup>Peter Ford, "Beijing school closures leave thousands of migrant children without classrooms," The Christian Science Monitor, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2011/0826/Beijing-school-closures-leave-thousands-of-migrant-children-without-classrooms>.

## **Obstacles Facing NGOs in Beijing**

One key obstacle that this paper has chosen to highlight is the inability to secure land tenure in the Chinese state. This past summer, 24 migrant schools were closed in Beijing, leaving 14,000 migrant children stranded at the beginning of the semester. Local education authority cited safety reasons and substandard education as reasons for the closure, and within a few days' notice, many of these schools were bulldozed. The Beijing Municipal Education Commission "vowed that no student would go without an education" but has yet to follow through with action, affirming an act of institutionalized discrimination against migrant children.<sup>74</sup> However, within days of public outcry, state officials declared that all the affected children would be relocated into the public school system or nearby private schools that are subsidized by the state.<sup>75</sup>

The closings of the 24 migrant schools may cause some to speculate about the nature of state-society relations in Beijing. The closings should not be seen as the local government flexing its muscle or exerting its authority over the NGO sector. Instead, the closing of these schools as a means to exert authority seems contrary to the

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<sup>74</sup> Josh Chin, "Will School Closures Prompt Migrants to Flee?," The Wall Street Journal: China Real Time Report, <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2011/08/19/will-school-closures-prompt-migrants-to-flee/>.

<sup>75</sup> Chengcheng Jiang, "In Beijing, Students in Limbo After Migrant Schools Closed Read more: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2093175,00.html#ixzz2Tzi259as>," TIME World, last modified September 2011, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2093175,00.html#ixzz2TzgvBqN7>

government's recent support of NGO development and its willingness to embrace more flexible registration laws.

I analyze the circumstances in which the schools were closed down. Looking at historical and political context, I find that the closing of the migrant schools may have been a rash attempt on part of the state to enforce higher standards for educational NGOs. The push for more efficient NGOs and the government's support of NGOs that best deliver educational services is not a recent trend in Beijing.

In 1992, the first migrant school in China was actually established in Beijing and closed soon after.<sup>76</sup> In the early 1990s, there was time in which migrant schools were created, but school buildings were constructed on the fringes of Beijing. Even Jonathan Hursh, the CEO of CMC, has confirmed that many of these private schools opened for migrant worker children suffer from lack of sanitation, poor quality teaching, and ill equipped classrooms. The early 2000s witnessed a tuition war, in which migrant schools were consolidated if they could not offer lower tuition fees compared to the neighboring private school. This created a competitive environment at the expense of the quality of schooling. Lower tuition fees also meant schools had to open with lower operation costs and fewer salaried teachers.

In 2003, the first migrant school, Ming Yuan School, was offered the first legal license. This event set precedence for future schools, indicating that the government was willing to move to formally recognize schools. Since then, 60 private schools in Beijing have managed to obtain legal licenses. In recent years, the number of migrant

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<sup>76</sup> "Beijing Migrant Schools: 20 Years of Change," Compassion for Migrant Children, <http://www.cmc-china.org/uploads/History%20of%20China%20Migrant%20Schools%20%282011%209.pdf>.

schools in Beijing has decreased due to the state's initiative to reduce the illegal schools in slums.

In 2006, the City of Beijing announced "The City of Beijing School Board Notification Regarding Strengthening the Management of Schools Operated by the Floating Population," requiring that migrant schools increase consolidation and administration to avoid tuition wars. However, this notice was considered a suppression of migrant schools. In HaiDian, 15,000 students were merged into public schools.<sup>77</sup>

Before the closings in 2011, it was difficult for schools to obtain the certification needed to operate legally. However, it appeared that the supervision of such schools was relaxed enough for many NGOs or individuals to privately run one with no legal basis. After the recent closings in 2011, the state appears to have reversed its previous attitude about illegal private migrant schools. If the state pushes through with reforms, it can be surmised that a certain level of enforcement as a means of negative incentives will be needed. However, possible reasons for school closings have ranged from possible corruption in which local governments simply want to develop and profit from the land the schools occupied, such as in the southern district of Daxing in Beijing, to a push by the local government to streamline children into schools that have been renovated by the government in recent years.<sup>78</sup>

However, Beijing's push for school legalization is very similar for the push for NGO registration and management. The government's ability to exert indirect control is only possible if they proper combination of positive and negative incentives are

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<sup>77</sup> "Beijing Migrant Schools: 20 Years," Compassion for Migrant Children.

<sup>78</sup> Ford, "Beijing school closures leave," The Christian Science Monitor.

used. Despite the orders to close certain schools, there are private migrant schools that have resisted including the Dongba Elementary School whose headmaster, Wan Tian, has resisted the order to close. Students "volunteered to come in" and the school opened up regardless, indicating that for now, "it seems city officials have tacitly accepted his decision to remain open."<sup>79</sup>

The public outcry that arose from the closings of the school was not unwarranted. However, we must also consider the fact that these 24 schools were admittedly illegal. Referring back to Read's body of work and discussion about VCs and RCs, I find that private schools are part of the organic civil society that has emerged due to the government's inability to deliver educational services. The government permitting the Dongba Elementary School to operate despite warnings presents an interesting feature of the educational NGO sector's transition phase, as government ambitions are humbled by bottom-up processes and grassroots organizations. Again, I observe that these schools have long been tolerated despite their illegal status because they provide services that are deemed to align with national goals and priorities. The state's willingness to grant legal statuses to NGOs and private schools is a signal of the state's creation of a space for NGOs in urban centers where they can at the very least exert indirect control. This balance between government directed space and organic civil society represented by private migrant schools, will continue until NGO policy changes are administered throughout Beijing. This back and forth of interaction between seemingly brash government intervention and NGOS serve to highlight the tenuous and dynamic relationship of consultative authoritarianism. NGOs such as these private migrant schools would be best served in

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<sup>79</sup> Jiang, "In Beijing, Students in Limbo," TIME World.

a state-sponsored space, but I observe that the government's open willingness to accept civil society is restrained by their incremental policies and strategic policy experiments. Full acceptance of NGOs will only come after careful consideration from the state in how to best create a space for these NGOs to operate within.

Much of the outcry was from schools that were closed down, where the administrators and teachers were ousted from their posts without warning. It is widely accepted that many of these private schools have teachers who are ill-qualified to teach themselves, lacking the proper certification needed. These schools also lack the proper certification, but manage to rake in fees from migrants who have no other choice but to enroll their children in a private school because they are not entitled to a public school education. Often times these private-schools' educational quality cannot meet state standards, lack the proper sanitation and safety requirements of a normal school, and violate certain security regulations as needed according to education regulations. Compassion for Migrant Children's website also discusses the educational standards of migrant schools, noting that "over 65% of teachers have no teaching experience" in these schools.<sup>80</sup> In a formal interview published by TIME, Jonathan Hursh, the CEO of CMC was quoted saying, "To be fair to the government, they tore down some of the schools, but maybe some of the schools should have been torn down."<sup>81</sup>

Although the sudden closure of 24 migrant schools may seem an egregious move on part of the state, the reasons for their closures all seem to have groundings in

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<sup>80</sup> "Statistics," Compassion for Migrant Children, [http://www.cmc-china.org/index.php?page=statistics&hl=en\\_US](http://www.cmc-china.org/index.php?page=statistics&hl=en_US).

<sup>81</sup> Jiang, "In Beijing, Students in Limbo," TIME World.

already existing laws and regulations. The simple fact that the Chinese state has chosen to enforce these laws now simply indicates a push for indirect control in all facets of the NGO sector and congruent with trends in NGO legislation and private school legislation.

The recent legislation that has emerged has chosen to highlight activity that would be deemed unsavory by local authorities, including the Beijing Civil Affairs Bureau announcing its "Measures for Managing Seminars, Forums, and Activities by Social Organizations." NGOs are prohibited from organizing seminars or forums. Legal social organizations must also report to their sponsoring unit.

Another possible obstacle facing NGOs in Beijing is the lack of political willpower needed to actually follow through with measures addressing systemic problems. More than often, migrant workers are unable to bring their platforms to the forefront of politics. Without a forum to voice their concerns, the Chinese government will continue to look the other way in addressing the hukou system. NGOs that can provide research and policy recommendations are often ignored because of the cultural attitudes towards these organization. NGOs that are advocacy groups as opposed to service oriented groups are regarded upon with suspicion both in and outside the government. Furthermore, research from public universities is often tailored to fit the agendas of politicians and the Communist Party (the party in power). Accountability and transparency are also problems, as there is a complex system of bureaucracy in place.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Different Educational NGOs in Beijing**

Currently in Beijing, there are many operational NGOs that are addressing education needs of migrant communities. A few will be highlighted here and serve as examples of NGOs who have developed a dialogue with the state, how they align to state policies, and why they have continued to survive in the environment of an authoritarian society. These NGOs have all benefited from a national focus on education and state-led reforms of the NGO sector, and also provide insight into NGO development in Beijing and the discussion of "consultative authoritarianism" as discussed by Jessica Teets.

The Narada Foundation is one NGO that enjoys a healthy and dynamic relationship with the state. Well respected for its activities, Narada takes existing migrant schools and professionalizes the staff and teachers. Their New Citizen School initiative to invest in schools for migrant children in Beijing was one project in which a school was ordered to close down by the Chaoyang District education authorities without explanation. Narada is currently considering legal action to recover compensation for its investment in renovating the school.<sup>82</sup> One possible explanation for Narada's school closing could be linked to the unsafe nature of their school. Even if education initiatives conform with national policies and goals, the areas in which

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<sup>82</sup> Shieh, "NGO Law Monitor: China," The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL).



private schools are built may be in districts in which the state plans to redevelop more than 10 million shanty dwellings that are found in urban slums, such as the ones on the outskirts of Beijing.<sup>83</sup> Despite this event, the Narada Foundation has only chosen to highlight the positive relationship it has with the Ministry of Civil Affairs. In 2009, the Narada Foundation posted a speech that was optimistic about "government-directed, social participation," in which Chinese public charities are "bolstered by two pillars: One, top down effort led by the government; two, bottom-up effort initiated by grassroots."<sup>84</sup> The Narada Foundation noted their hopes that the two (government and grassroots) would combine their efforts and resources to find a "win-win situation."<sup>85</sup> One article featured on their news feed highlights the fact that they were one of 88 foundations that passed through the annual inspection conducted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs.<sup>86</sup> Further projects, including the fifth New Citizen School, highlight how more social resources are being mobilized from "families, society and government."<sup>87</sup> In 2010, the Narada Foundation hosted a symposium to discuss "Emerging Leaders in Philanthropy" which brought together personalities from both the NGO sector and those representing the state; such as Mr. Kang Xiaoguang, a

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<sup>83</sup> "Urbanization is 'free choice', Li says," Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China, last modified March 2013, [http://english.agri.gov.cn/np/201304/t20130403\\_11975.htm](http://english.agri.gov.cn/np/201304/t20130403_11975.htm).

<sup>84</sup> The lesson from relief and reconstruction work for 512 Earthquake," Narada Foundation, <http://en.naradafoundation.org/html/2012-11/82.html>.

<sup>85</sup> "The lesson from relief," Narada Foundation.

<sup>86</sup> "Narada Foundation Passed Through the Annual Inspection by the Ministry of Civil Affairs," Narada Foundation, <http://en.naradafoundation.org/html/2012-11/89.html>.

<sup>87</sup> "The Fifth New Citizen School Launched in Wenzhou," Narada Foundation, <http://en.naradafoundation.org/html/2012-11/83.html>.

trustee of the Narada Foundation and Ms. Yang Yuan, from the Chinese Academy of Social Science (a research institution directly under the State Council).<sup>88</sup> Other forums featured on the Narada Foundation's website included an announcement about Peking University's Public Communication Forum which was co-organized by the Narada Foundation, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, the China Red Cross Foundation, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs. These forums, that the Narada Foundation has chosen to highlight, provide examples of the "consultative authoritarianism" which Teets described, where NGOs have the ability to interact with the state in an official capacity and create a pattern of interaction and dialogue.<sup>89</sup>

The Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Center's development of its Beijing Migrant Children's Education Plan to create the Beijing Migrant Children's Care alliance has also received overwhelming support. The Maple Center has found itself working with the Beijing Municipal Construction to promote their model of training teachers and volunteers.<sup>90</sup> Established in 1988, this center has quickly grown from its original research capacity to encompass a variety of service and community projects. They frequently enjoy a strong relationship with the government. Receiving strong support from the state, they have also found ways to incorporate their input into state policy. One recent article highlights the Maple Center's proposal submission to

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<sup>88</sup> "The 2009 Peking University Public Communication Forum Held in Beijing," Narada Foundation, last modified June 2010, <http://en.naradafoundation.org/html/2012-11/84.html>.

<sup>89</sup> "The 2009 Peking University Public Communication Forum Held in Beijing," Narada Foundation, last modified June 2010, <http://en.naradafoundation.org/html/2012-11/84.html>.

<sup>90</sup> China Daily, last modified January 2013, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/micro-reading/dzh/2013-01-22/content\\_8088919.html](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/micro-reading/dzh/2013-01-22/content_8088919.html).

the CPPCC National Committee "on improving legislation and strengthening family care assistance for those households who have lost their ability to live independently," referring to those in old age without old-age support. They have also enjoyed joint activities with government entities, most recently in May 2013, with their joint efforts in launching the "Migrant Children Family Education Forum."<sup>91</sup> Held at the China Youth Training and Senior Center of the National People's Congress, multiple nonprofits including the Beijing Maple Women's Psychological Center delivered speeches regarding education for migrant children. Their continual interaction with the government and the government's overwhelming support displays the state's growing need for urban community service groups that focus on providing educational services.

Compassion for Migrant Children, another NGO operating in Beijing, has taken upon itself to establish migrant schools on the outskirts of Beijing. Compassion for Migrant Children is focused on establishing community centers in the heart of slums, creating education and social programs for the communities it serves. Not only has their founder been cited by several state-approved news channels but recently took steps to formally be recognized, under the auspices of a sponsoring unit affiliated with the social welfare branch of the Chinese government. As a registered NGO, CMC openly states that it "partners with NGOS, community leaders, and the government to leverage resources" in order to fulfill their mission of providing educational services.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *China Daily*, 1, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqcj/2013-05/16/content\\_16504254.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqcj/2013-05/16/content_16504254.htm).

<sup>92</sup> "About Us," Compassion for Migrant Children, <http://www.cmc-china.org/index.p>  
"About Us," Compassion for Migrant Children, [http://www.cmc-china.org/index.php?page=about-us&hl=en\\_US.bhp?page=about-us&hl=en\\_US](http://www.cmc-china.org/index.php?page=about-us&hl=en_US.bhp?page=about-us&hl=en_US).

Hua Dan's Magic Storybox Experience is one NGO operating on the outskirts of Beijing. Caroline Watson, founder of the NGO, has created the "Magic Storybox Experience" in an attempt to provide migrant worker children a chance to express themselves through art. With an "elaborate and fantastical mural of a cityscape" the NGO focuses on a heavily theatrical workshop to help children improve their communication and conflict resolution skills.<sup>93</sup> The NGO focuses on inspiring confidence in migrant worker children and developing their sense of creativity. This NGO has also been highlighted on the Beijing Civil Affairs Bureau website as an innovative NGO, marked by its focus on the arts. Since 2007, they have provided performances and workshops to over 1,700 migrant children. They provide teacher training to integrate an art curriculum into current private migrant schools and also coordinate programs to foster "better communication skills" between migrant children, parents, and teachers.<sup>94</sup> Hua Dan's CEO, Caroline Watson, was recognized at the Forum for Young Global Leaders of the World Economic Forum in 2011. Subsequently, Hua Dan was invited to "deliver an interactive and participatory workshop for 300 Young Global Leaders."<sup>95</sup> This forum was held at the 'Summer Davos' in Dalian, indicating CAI as both an internationally and domestically recognized NGO. Using language similar to that of Li Liguang of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, CAI carefully notes "its role in shaping the future of China's economic and

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<sup>93</sup> "Power play for migrant kids," in *Migrant Resource Network*, previously published in *China Daily* (Beijing, China), March 2010, [http://www.mrn-china.org/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=285&Itemid=91&lang=zh](http://www.mrn-china.org/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=285&Itemid=91&lang=zh).

<sup>94</sup> Hua Dan, <http://www.hua-dan.org/programmes/children/>.

<sup>95</sup> Hua Dan.

social progress" which is reminiscent of his statements about the growing role of NGOs in Chinese society.<sup>96</sup> CAI provides for an excellent example of not only an NGO that aligns with national priorities, but ones that conforms to the language being used by the state. Its ability to participate in an international forum hosted in China allows us to register its ability to influence Chinese policy and state officials. More importantly though, in 2008. Hua Dan began steps to create a Corporate Social Responsibility consulting program and currently provides its services to 13 corporate clients.<sup>97</sup> Hua Dan reflects how an NGO can influence other sectors by creating initiatives that promote information sharing and constant dialogue.

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<sup>96</sup> Hua Dan.

<sup>97</sup> Hua Dan.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Concluding Statements**

The Beijing case study highlights a recent transition not observed by many scholars: a gradual transition to better incorporate educational NGOs that are not formally recognized (through legislation, funding, and the removal of educational NGOs that do not adhere to regulatory standards). The Chinese state, and more specifically Beijing, not only has prioritized education but has pushed for higher standards and more efficient provision of educational services by the NGO sector. The other NGOs highlighted in the last section are marked not only for their ability to operate within Beijing, but their ability to garner international recognition from foreign volunteers.

In understanding the evolution of the NGO sector, I contend that educational NGOs do not need to negotiate with the state when a space has already been created in Beijing for those NGOs that align with the state's national goals. Any entities existing outside of that space will gradually move to be formally recognized as the government creates positive incentives where the benefits of registration outweigh the cons. In Beijing, where the ease of NGO registration is also being addressed, the space for educational NGOs will only widen. I appreciate Teets' ideas about consultative authoritarianism, and for the most part agree with her assertions about state-society relations in which a civil society will push for not only better governance, but also resilient authoritarianism. The creation of an NGO cluster zone ultimately confirms the government's acknowledgement of civil society's need for better governance as

argued by Teets. However, I find that there are no operationally autonomous civil societies emerging within this regime.

Instead, I believe that a middle ground between Teets' and Saich's ideas best reflects the relationship between the state and educational NGOs in Beijing. The local government in Beijing has shown considerable efforts in addressing policy reforms in regards to NGO laws and regulation. There is an ongoing dialogue between the state and NGOs, in which the state has acknowledged the need for NGOs to provide educational services. The ways in which to deliver those services are constantly being negotiated, highlighted by the public outcry with the mass closing of the 24 migrant schools.

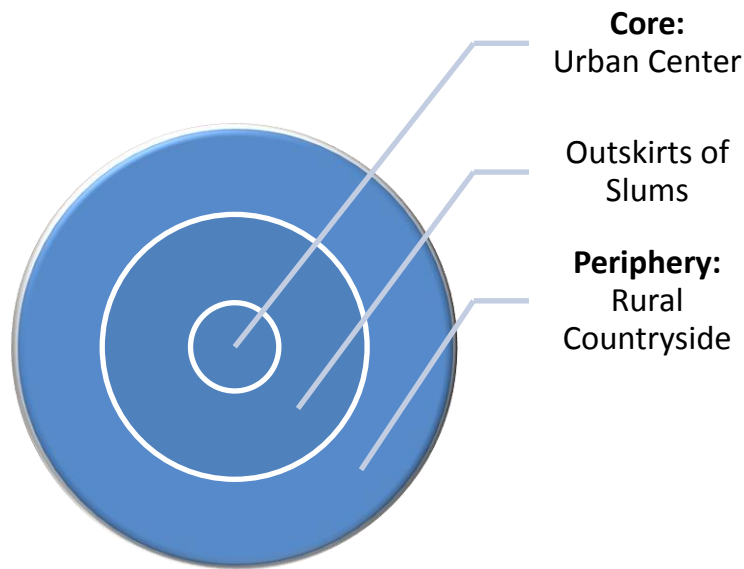
The creation of a sponsor-free space signals the government's acknowledgement of a need for NGOs in civil society. This creation and push for a sponsor free zone that would ultimately create an NGO cluster affirms Wu's assertions about the state's artificial development of the NGO sector. The creation of positive incentives in the form of financial support signals the government's willingness to create a space for NGOs. Again, we conclude that the most accurate reflection of the space between educational NGOs and the state is with Teets and Wu's model, but this only pertains to NGOs in the urban center. Again, I clarify that this space has only been created for specific NGOs that cater to specific issues such as education, and only in urban centers where there is a concentration of resources in the form of political support and funding.

I would like to comment further on the greater nature of the relationship between the state and the NGO sector, using recent legislation and developments in Beijing as a foundation. As noted by comments by NGO directors, state officials, and

migrant workers, there are many more inputs in state-society relations than as explained by Teets or Saich. Guobin Yang's model with media and the internet better explains the variety of factors and influences on the relationship between the state and NGOs. The different NGOs being promoted on the Ministry of Civil Affairs website best exemplify the use of the media and internet on part of the state to express explicit support of certain NGOs working on providing educational services. In return, these NGOs have also chosen to highlight the partnership that they enjoy with the state and the different venues in which they enjoy dialogue with the state.

In understanding the dynamics of NGOs and the state in Beijing, I believe that state power can be best represented by the idea of a three dimensional Mandala system in which power is concentrated in the core and diffused out towards the periphery. Instead of advocating for a model where the state exerts direct control, the model where the state exerts indirect control complements the Mandala system model. Power from the state radiates out, its influence petering out as we leave urban centers. Similarly, there is not a top-down approach, as there is a set of reforms and policies that influence NGOs and entities that are closest and most influential to national goals and policies. Those who reside the furthest from national goals do not enjoy the same benefits as those close to the core. I find that NGOs in Beijing have the ability to tap into the funding resources that the state offers. I believe a complex version of the Mandala system has emerged in the modern Chinese state, where NGOs that exist beyond the purview of the urban center will have the greatest autonomy, as highlighted in the VCs in the rural countryside. However, again, I acknowledge that there are significantly more inputs and players in the model, as Guobin Yang notes in his perspective field.





I believe we will observe a Chinese state that makes urban-biased policy changes and pushes to recognize NGOs operating within government-set parameters and focused on national priorities. NGOs that enjoy the space are most likely to pay the largest tributes to the state, as they are subjected to constant interaction with the state (where both parties benefit). However, NGOs that exist within the rural countryside suffer from not only lack of funding, but lack of attention from the core as well. Perhaps they enjoy more autonomy (a topic that could be explored in a different paper), but their distance from the core hurts them in both finding channels for funding and channels for influence. I find that the resources and influence offered by the state in the form of positive incentives only serves the urban center, where there has been a push to expand the NGO sector's initiatives to provide public services.

## Chapter 8

### Updated: Developments

As recently as March 2013, the Associated Press has reported that the Civil Affairs Minister Li Liguó announced restructuring plans that would allow nonprofits to play a greater role in society. NGOs that are "charities, community service groups, industry associations and groups that work in science and technology," can now directly register with the Ministry of Civil Affairs.<sup>98</sup> The experimental policy that was seen in Beijing and select urban centers is now being implemented on a national level, albeit only for a few select groups. This new provision which is being applied on a national level would allow NGOs to operate "legally, raise funds domestically and become eligible for some tax exemptions."<sup>99</sup> Li Liguó has promised that these four types of NGOs "will no longer need to find government sponsors in order to obtain the official registration that grants them nonprofit status."<sup>100</sup> He also confirmed that "the role our country's social organizations will play economic and social development will be expanded and strengthened."<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Gillian Wong, "China Says It Will Give Nonprofits a Greater Role," *Associated Press*, March 2013, 1, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/china-says-it-will-give-nonprofits-greater-role>.

<sup>99</sup> Wong, "China Says It Will," 1.

<sup>100</sup> Wong, "China Says It Will," 1.

<sup>101</sup> Wong, "China Says It Will," 1.

The State Council also confirmed in March that these four kinds of NGOs could directly apply for registration "from the Ministry of Civil Affairs without needing a government partner."<sup>102</sup>

The Ministry of Civil Affairs hopes to "set up a mechanism to process registrations and supervise and regulate independent groups."<sup>103</sup> Details about how the ministry will assess these applications have not yet been released. By the end of 2013 though, the legislative amendment is "expected to assist the registration of hundreds of thousands of NGOs." Wang Jianjun, director of the Bureau of Administration of NGOs under the Ministry of Civil Affairs is highly optimistic about the "major breakthrough."<sup>104</sup>

However, the Associated Press has expressed skepticism about whether the government's "apparent gesture of inclusion" will improve the conditions for those organizations who promote issues deemed "sensitive" or controversial.<sup>105</sup> And the Global Times, also voiced its agreement that "organizations involved in political and religious affairs" will not be included.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Wong, "China Says It Will," 1.

<sup>104</sup> He Dan, "New rules for NGOs to improve operations," China Daily, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-04/17/content\\_16413055.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-04/17/content_16413055.htm).

<sup>105</sup> Wong, "China Says It Will," 1.

<sup>106</sup> Liu Dong, "NGOs spring free from official bonds," *The Global Times*, May 2013, 1, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/782160.shtml#.UZmgn7WG2eE>.

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