

ABSTRACT

Title of the
Dissertation

CONSTRUCTING CIVIL SOCIETY IN TRANSITIONAL
CHINA: CASE STUDIES OF ONE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY
AND ONE NON-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTE FOR
PEASANT EDUCATION

Yan Liu, Doctor of Philosophy, 2007

Directed By:

Professor Jing Lin, Department of Education Policy and
Leadership, University of Maryland

The political shift in China in the last two and a half decades, from an emphasis on ideological orthodoxy and centralized economic control, to an emphasis on national economic development for modernization, has made it possible for non-governmental actors to enter into fields previously controlled by the government and to take initiatives in making social changes. This dissertation examines the capacity that non-governmental organizations demonstrate in their fight against all odds and their promotions of a civil society in China, using two non-governmental organizations working in the field of education as examples. The cases are analyzed from a historical institutionalism perspective to show how organizations' actions are affected by the contextual factors and meanwhile how their actions influence the institutions. In the case studies, the interaction between the society and the state government is carefully studied; moreover, the associational, ideological and cognitive dimensions of the civil society construction in China are comprehensively examined.

Two non-governmental institutions are examined in this study. Their increasing participation in educational practices provides alternatives to the educational model in

government-managed organizations. The dissertation also examines the development of the two organizations and pays special attention to the constraints imposed on the organizations by the existing political and educational system: The government is alert to their increasing power and attempts to restrain it. However, both organizations were successful in negotiating spaces for their survival and gained increasing influence in the society. Case analysis showed that the most important feature in the state-society interaction in China is trust-building which requires sophisticated strategies. While sticking to their non-state identity, these organizations have made significant efforts in establishing channels of discourse with the government, and won their trust in this way. Overall, the civil society groups in China showed divergence in their goals and practices from other countries, but also share certain convergence in their features and strategies for the redefinition of state-society boundary.

In the dissertation, a dynamic interaction between the institutional factors and the agency of social actors is discovered. The institutional contexts shaped the social actors' vision and strategies, and the institutional environment was also transformed by the action of social groups. The direction of political and social reform is co-steered by the state-government and the society, instead of being determined by the government alone.

CONSTRUCTIING CIVIL SOCIETY IN TRANSITIONAL CHINA: CASE
STUDIES OF ONE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY AND ONE NON-GOVERNMENTAL
INSTITUTE FOR PEASANT EDUCATION

By

Yan Liu

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2007

Advisory Committee:

Professor Jing Lin, Chair
Professor Steve Klees
Professor Hanne Mawhinney
Professor Margaret Pearson
Professor Carol Anne Spreen

© Copyright by
Yan Liu
2007

DEDICATION

To

My Beloved Parents

Shenghuai Lin

And

Yunying Liu

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank Professor Jing Lin, my adviser, for her invaluable guidance during the research and writing of the dissertation. The dissertation writing would be much harder without her help. I would also like to thank Professor Hanne Mawhinney, my advisor for the beginning two years of my doctoral study. She always encouraged me, while I was struggling in academic research. She also guided me in the research methodology. Thank Professor Steven Klees, for my interest in civil society began from taking his classes. Thanks are also due to Professor Margaret Pearson for her insight of Chinese economic and political systems. And I would like to thank Professor Carol Anne Spreen for her valuable comments of my preliminary research findings.

I am very grateful to Jinyu Zhou, for our constructive discussion during the drafting of the dissertation. I would also like to express my gratitude to the staff of the Dingxian Institute of Peasant Education and the Yuhua University. They contribute their valuable time to my interview. Special thanks are also to Dr. Nisha Thapliyal for her sharing of her thinking of civil society with me.

Special thanks are due to Guohua Kuang for his help with the reading of the whole draft. Thank Dr. Jun Luo, Dr. Nisha Thapliyal, Linchun Li, Lan Gao for their help with the editing of the document. Also, I would like to thank the faculty and staff in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland, who provided invaluable help to me during my six years of study in the United States.

Finally I would like to thank my parents for their unconditional support to my endeavors.

Yan Liu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
ACRONYMS	xiii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Social, Economic Changes and Civil Society.....	1
1.2 Objectives of This Research	5
1.3 Conceptual Framework for This Research	8
1.4 Research Methodology	11
1.5 Significance of the Study	12
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	14
2.1 Theories of Civil Society	14
2.1.1 Classic Theories of Civil Society	16
<i>Locke</i>	
<i>Scottish Enlightenment Theorists</i>	
<i>Hume and Kant</i>	
<i>Hegel</i>	
2.1.2 Contemporary Revival of Civil Society	24
<i>Neo-Libertarian Civil Society</i>	
<i>Habermasian Civil Society</i>	
<i>Critical Theory: Marxist and Neo-Marxist theory of Civil Society</i>	
2.2 Civil Society Movement in 20th Century	32
2.2.1 Associational Base of Civil Society	36
2.2.2 Ideological Base of Civil Society	37
2.2.3 Cognitive Base of Civil Society	38

**CHAPTER 3 HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN CHINA,
AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY41**

3.1 Definition of Civil Society for this Research	41
3.2 Normative Discussion of Civil Society in China	43
3.3 Empirical Research of Civil Society in China	53
3.4 Civil Society Development in Contemporary China	59
3.5 Historical Institutionalism	66
3.5.1 Political Regime and Regulative Structure	69
3.5.2 Political Culture	72
3.5.3 Social Structure	74
3.6 Implication for My Study	76

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY78

4.1 Qualitative Methods and Case Study Justification	78
4.2 Data Sources and Data Collection Strategy	83
4.2.1 Interview Pool Selection	85
4.2.2 Fieldwork	86

The Private University
The Institute of Peasant Adult Education
Issues of Entry, and Ethics
Data Collection Procedures

4.3 Data Analysis Procedures	92
4.3.1 Case Analysis Strategies	92
4.3.2 Comparison of Cases	94
4.4 Internal and External Validity	95

4.5 Limitation of the Study	97
 CHAPTER 5 EDUCATION AND SOCIETY IN THE HISTORY: A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE98	
5.1 Culture and Education System in Chinese History	99
5.1.1 The Establishment of Orthodox Moral System and “Rule by Virtue”	99
5.1.2 The Establishment of KeJu System and Unification of Learning	100
5.1.3 Modern Education System and National Strengthening	103
5.1.4 The Consolidation of Public Education System and the Unification of Learning	105
5.2 History of Private Higher Education in China	106
5.3 History of Adult Education in China	113
 CHAPTER 6 EDUCATION FOR MODERNIZATION: DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY119	
6.1 Xi’an City: History and Today	120
6.2 The Founding of the Private University as a Process of Examining Life and Society	123
6.3 Groping the Way in Wildness: the Initial Development between 1992 and 1994	129
6.3.1 Search for Physical Space	129
6.3.2 Curriculum Structure	132
6.3.3. Administrative Structure	133

6.3.4 University-Government Interaction: Keeping Low Profile by the University vs. Indifference of the Government	134
6.4 Establishing an Order: Stable Development between 1994 and 2000	137
6.4.1 Construction of a University Campus	137
6.4.2 Academic Construction: toward a Comprehensive University	139
6.4.3 Administrative Structure	142
6.4.4 Property Right and the Finance System	144
6.4.5 University-Government Interaction: Expanding Influence by the University vs. Imposing stringent regulations by the government	146
<i>Capital Requirement and Land Use Right</i>	
<i>Characteristics of Private Schools: For Profit or For Non-Profit</i>	
<i>Academic Status of Private Schools</i>	
<i>Voices from the Private University</i>	
6.5 Rising above the Water between 2000 and Now	156
6.5.1 Marching toward a high-level university	156
6.5.2 University- Government interaction: Independence required by the Private University vs. Inclusion of the Social Groups by the Government	160

CHAPTER 7 SEESAWING BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND CONTROL:

CASE ANALYSIS OF THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY164

7.1 Factors Engendering the New Spaces for Action	165
7.1.1 Development Ideology of the Government	166
7.1.2 Availability of Resources	167

7.1.3 Access to Ideas	169
7.1.4 Leadership of Intellectuals	171
7.2 New Spaces of Action and its Meaning	173
7.2.1 Self-Organizing Public Activities	174
7.2.2 Cultural Building	176
7.2.3 Restructuring Social Network	178
7.3 University-State Interaction	180
7.3.1 Source of Conflict	180
7.3.2 Strategies in Dealing with Tension between the State and the Society	183
7.3.3 Responsibility vs. Power: The Role of Government	186

CHAPTER 8 EDUCATION FOR AWARENESS: DEVELOPMENT OF AN

INSTITUTE OF PEASANT EDUCATION192

8.1 Dingxian County: History and Today	193
8.2 Sources of Inspiration for Adult Education	196
8.3 DIPE's Ideas of Rural Construction	199
8.3.1 Peasant Organization	200
8.3.2 Ecologic Economy	202
8.3.3 Restoration of Cultural Life in Rural Society	204
8.4 Establishment of PIPE in 2003	205
8.4.1 An Encounter between the Villagers and Intellectuals	205
8.4.2 Registration in the Government	207
8.4.3 The First Workshop on Peasant Cooperative	208

8.5 Goal Setting between 2004 and 2006	209
8.5.1 The Economic Cooperative	212
8.5.2 Ecological Economy	216
8.5.3 Ecological Architecture	221
8.5.4 Institute-Government Interaction: Tension over the Boundary of Activities	225
8.6 Peasant Organization stumbling on the Road between 2004 and 2005	227
8.6.1 Thriving Growth of Peasant Cooperative	227
8.6.2 Internal Conflicts	233
8.6.3 External Pressures	235
8.7 Withstanding the Pressures between 2005 and Now	242
8.7.1 Program Adjustment	242
8.7.2 Institute-Central Government Interaction	246

CHAPTER 9 FROM GOVERNMENT DEMAND TO SELF-ORGANIZATION

-- CASE ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTE OF PEASANT

EDUCATION	251
9.1 Factors Enabling Self-Organization	252
9.1.1 Development Ideology of the Government	252
9.1.2 Availability of Resources	254
9.1.3 Access to Ideas	254
9.1.4 Leadership of Intellectuals	256
9.2 New Center of Power	257
9.2.1 Public Space for Collective Action	257

9.2.2 Cultural Building	258
9.2.3 Restructuring Social Structure	260
9.3 Institute-Government Interaction	261
9.3.1 Autonomy and Control	261
9.3.2 Financial Interest	264
9.3.3 Whole Perspective vs. Linear Perspective	265
9.4 Strategies of Dealing with State-Society Tension	266
9.4.1 Reconstructing Identity	267
9.4.2 Seeking Common Interests and Building Trust	270
9.4.3 Promoting State-Society Collaboration	271
9.5 Change and Continuance	272
CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION	275
10.1 Contextual Changes Engendering Public Space	276
10.1.1 State Power	276
10.1.2 Diffusion of Ideas	278
10.1.3 Access to Public Resource	279
10.1.4 Intellectuals Leadership	280
10.2 State-Society Tension	287
10.3 Strategies in Dealing with State-Society Tension	291
10.3.1 Problem-Solving Attitude	292
10.3.2 Trust-Building	293
10.3.3 Self-Strengthening of the Civil Associations	294
10.4 The Nature of Civil Society Development	296

10.4.1 The Associational Dynamics of the Emerging Civil Society	300
10.4.2 The “Apolitical” Politics of the Emerging Civil Society	302
10.4.3 The Cognitive Prerequisite of Civil Society	305
10.5 Limitations and Implications for Future Research	311
BIBLIOGRAPHY	313

ACRONYMS

AEA	Adult Education Authorities
BCP	Bureau of Commodity Price
BSESI	Beijing Social and Economic Science Institution
CCCPC	Central Committee of the Communist Party of China
CPC	Communist Party of China
CCTV	China Central Television
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee
DAE	Department of Adult Education
DIPE	Dingxian Institute of Peasant Education
ETC	Economy and Trade Commission
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GONGO	Government-Owned Non-Government Organization
HESSEGC	Higher Education Self-Study Examinations Guidance Committee
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-government organizations
NPC	National People's Congress
OERNGS	Office of Education Run by Non-governmental Sectors
PED	Peasant Education Division
SEC	State Education Commission

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social, Economic Changes and Civil Society

The Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CCCPC), in December 1978, marks the decisive break with the past and the beginning of China's reform era. It was at this meeting that Deng Xiao Ping effectively rose as the paramount leader after the demise of China's Cultural Revolution¹, thereby creating the potential for more flexible and pragmatic policies away from the highly rigid and orthodox implementation of Marxist theory in China. The earlier years of reform (1979~1983) were characterized by a shift of administrative priority from ideological control and class struggles toward economic development, and reintegration of human resources². State-Planned economic policies³ still dominated the economic activities of the country during this period. In 1984, a reform toward modest market economy was initiated by the then Premier Zhao

¹ It was launched by the Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong on May 16, 1966, officially as a campaign to rid China of its "liberal bourgeoisie" elements to continue revolutionary class struggle. Vice-Chairman Lin Biao and Mao's wife Jiang Qing, acting on Mao's instructions, organized a mass youth militia called the Red Guards to overthrow Mao's perceived enemies and seize control of the state and party apparatus, and to enforce Mao's cult of personality. The movement for criticism of party officials, intellectuals, and "bourgeois values" turned violent. In the chaos and violence that ensued, many revolutionary elders, authors, artists, and religious figures were purged and killed, and millions were persecuted and possibly as many as half a million people died (Harding, 1997). The Cultural Revolution also caused economic disruption, and altered the country's moral, historical, and social perceptions in their entirety.

² During the Culture Revolution in 1960s and earlier 1970, millions of urban youth were sent to countryside to receive "physical and spiritual re-education" from local poor peasants. In late 1970s, these intellectual youth were allowed to return to the cities. In addition, thousands of intellectuals and officials who were politically oppressed during the Cultural Revolution were "rectified" and rehabilitated from 1978 to early 1980s.

³ During 1950s to late 1970s, the economy in China featured the state mandating enterprise what to produce and how much to produce, and the state was responsible for buying the outputs and redistribution.

Ziyang, which featured price system reform and expanding autonomy in management of state enterprises. As economic reform deepened gradually, corruption, as a result of government officials using their political power to manipulate resources and opportunities for personal benefits, became a serious social problem, which led to the Tiananmen Square incident in June 1989⁴. The government's policies marked a shift back to the pre-reform conservative policies of tight state control on the society and economy. But, at the beginning of 1992, the speech given by the then paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping in his visit to Shen Zhen, a southern coastal city, and other coastal regions, stimulated a new round of economic reform and opening to the world⁵. The term "socialist market economy" was officially recognized and the existence of "diverse ownership systems" was encouraged by the state (Naughton, 1996). Chinese politics embarked again onto an era of relaxing control of the state and granting of more autonomy to the society.

What happened in China in recent years attracted the attention of political and economic researchers. Among the communist countries that have undertaken the transition from a centralized planning system to a free market system, China has treaded a unique path. China did not take the "shock therapy," which was suggested by the International Monetary Fund, and which was adopted by Soviet Union and

⁴ In June 1989, hundreds of thousands of college students gathered in Tiananmen Square, protesting corruption and incapability of government for containing corruption and demanding for political reform, democracy and freedom.

⁵ In the spring of 1992, Deng made his famous southern tour of China, visiting several Special Economic Zones such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and spending the New Years in Shanghai, in reality using his travels as a method of reasserting his economic reform agenda after his retirement from office. On his tour, Deng made various speeches and generated large local support for his reformist platform. He stressed the importance of economic construction in China, and criticized those who were against further economic and openness reforms. He asserted that the advantage of one regime is to see whether it develops the production capacity and promote the living standard of people (Zhao, 1993).

some other communist countries. The “shock therapy” approach features a series of rapid, fundamental reforms to dismantle the former communist economic structure and to eliminate as many dysfunctions in the political structure as quickly as possible. Instead, China’s approach was for gradual, evolutionary changes and the country completed the transition from a highly centralized, state-dominated economy to a market-oriented economy taking more than two decades. In this way, it avoided the social unrests and instability that occurred in other transitional countries, while simultaneously achieving a high rate of economic growth. This economic achievement has been cited by many to justify the stagnancy in many areas of China’s political reform. Until today China remains a one-party system and the suffrage system has not been established. However, researchers have pointed out that delaying democratic reform has had negative effects on the country’s economic development and social stability (Halperin, Siegle and Weinstein, 2005). Some researchers believe that even though delaying political reform in China is justified during its transitional period in order to efficiently mobilize social resources and achieve high speed of growth, it is not a long-term strategy after all (Mok, 2000).

Inspired by the global civil society movement that is sweeping many countries (Cohen & Rai 2000; Colás, 2002), researchers turn their attention to the “third sector” or “civil society sector” that may become the force to push for democracy, as is the case in Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia and other Eastern Europe countries. To challenge the stereotypical assertion that Chinese culture is inimical to democracy and that civil society can not develop in the Chinese context, researchers traced the existence of civil society in the history of contemporary China, to argue that civic

culture and civic associations has a longer tradition in China than people have presumed. Recently, with the deepening of China's economic reform which is, for example, legalizing the protection of private ownership under a socialist framework through revision of the constitution, some phenomenal social changes are taking place, further encouraging the search for civil society in China. Researchers are examining non-governmental activities of independent intellectual groups, and study popular resistance against the authority to argue for an emerging civil society that has the capacity of reconstituting a new, post-communist social order in China (Goldman, 1999; Nathan, 1990; Strand 1990; Perry 2001). However, other researchers are skeptical about this optimism. They argued that what happened in China has a long distance from what is conceptualized as a "civil society" or a "public sphere" as seen in the West, for in China, autonomy of social organizations and intellectual groups was limited; popular resistance was easily pacified or co-opted by the government; there is a lack of a united front among different social classes; and most importantly, there is no critical discourse on the political structure (Wakeman, 1993; Chamberlain, 1993; Huang, 1993). Critics regard that the presence of a strong party-state and the political culture that emphasized unity and stability over power sharing and freedom are primary obstacles to the existence of civil society in China.

According to Marx, civil society is not a natural thing or ideal imagination, nor is it a fixed feature of any political regimes. The existence of civil society is itself an object of historical development. Civil society development is a dynamic process: It keeps responding to political and social changes, while at the same time it contributes to political and social changes. In China, there has been lack of political willingness

and cultural resistance in copying the western model of state-civil society dichotomy. However, this does not mean that China rejects all discourses of civil society or excludes possibilities of constructing alternative models of civil society. Actually both the state and the society are exploring, fumbling and testing new possible ways of interacting with each other.

1.2 Objectives of This Research

This study is an effort to study the nature of civil society in China. The overarching research question is: *What is the nature of civil society in China, with the tension between the party-state's emphasis on control, and the quest of social forces for autonomy and democracy? And how has the state-society relationship changed along with the broad economic and social transformations since 1978?*

This study intends to study two non-governmental educational institutions. One is a private university located in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, which focuses on training talents to meet the increasing market demand for high-skill professionals; the other is an institute for rural development located in Dingxian, Hebei province, which worked with the local people to experiment on ecological economy and cooperative economy. By looking at their struggle for survival, their negotiation with the government, and their efforts to expand and carve a space for their institutions, we want to achieve an understanding of the nature of civil society and the change of state-society relationship in China.

The University, since its emergence in Europe in Middle Ages, is deemed as a site of intellectual training, a hotbed of ideas and innovation, and reflection of social

progress. Autonomy and academic freedom is highly valued in an ideal university. However, in Communist countries universities have been administrated and regulated by the party–state for nation building and ideological control. During the transition to a market-oriented economy, as a result of increasing demand for higher education and the financial constraints of the government, social groups are encouraged to establish and run higher learning institutions. These educational institutions help to address diverse social needs and concerns. However, for fear of losing control on how universities educate people, the party-state imposes strict constraints on these non-governmental universities, one of which was preventing them from becoming formal, comprehensive and prestigious universities by limiting their roles to preparatory or technical postsecondary training institutions. However, the private university described in this dissertation succeeded in applying for upgrading to the status of a comprehensive university with bachelor degree programs.

Adult education in rural areas in China has gone through several stages. During the Anti-Japanese War and the War of Liberation, adult education is a mass social movement initiated by the Communist Party to mobilize political awareness. After the economic reform was launched, adult education entered a new stage and become a new arena of different interests: the mainstream adult education managed by the government branch focused on agriculture technology or employment-oriented skills that was thought necessary for citizens to be engaged in modern production, such as computer skills and driving; during 1980s, groups of scholars and students went to rural areas to facilitate villagers to hold competitive elections, nominate candidates and elect their village leaders. Hence, adult education is imbedded in this process to

transfer knowledge of electoral procedures and to cultivate village citizenship. Recently, participatory development is a popular method used by many international and domestic non-government organizations as a way to promote democratic decision making. Thus, since the economic reform adult education has shifted from the state-dominated arena to a sphere with multiple actors and groups, people bring diverse meanings into adult education and connect it with distinct goals. These goals are not conflicting to each other, but they reflect the different understanding of the rural problems and the relationship between the rural society and the whole political and economic context. The Dingxian Institute on Peasant Education focuses on adult education for forming peasant organizations and experimenting on an ecological economy. Since peasant organization is such a sensitive subject in China, the government keeps a close eye on the Institute. But the Institute has succeeded in facilitating the establishment of dozens of peasant organizations around the country.

These two educational institutions have different academic goals, with the former focusing on skill training to enable its students to become more competitive in the job market, and the latter focusing on training peasants with both skills development and critical thinking to make them leaders for rural development. Both institutions are recognized to be successful in achieving their academic goals. And both institutions have been negotiating with the government for autonomy and support for a long time. By comparing these two cases, I hope to explore the multiple dimensions of state-society conflicts in the process of modernization. I intend to investigate the politics of these two institutions in their establishment and development process, and relate these processes to the broader concept of civil

society development. Specifically, the following subset of research questions will be asked: 1) How did the non-governmental educational institutes connect their academic goals with social problems and concerns? 2) How did the non-governmental educational institutes try to carve out a space for their development? 3) How did they relate to the state? 4) What institutional contexts have been affecting how politics play out between the state and non-governmental educational institutes? And generally the answer of these questions will lead to the overarching question: *What is the nature of civil society in China? How the relationship between civil society and the state evolves over time?*

1.3 Conceptual Framework for This Research

To construct a conceptual framework one needs to build a connection among normative construction of civil society, the structural features of civil society, and the institutional contexts. For this dissertation research, first, theories of civil society are reviewed, which have emphasis on different normative dimensions of civil society. Classic philosophers and thinkers of civil society, including Locke, Kant, and Hegel, focused on ethical construction of civil society and attempted to address the problem as to how individual being and social being are compatible in the rising market economy and what principles guide human interaction and association. Marxist and Gramscian theories focused on the real working of power in civil society. They drew our attention to the influence of institutional frameworks, such as means of economic production or forms of cultural production, on human interaction. Marx and Gramsci influenced the civil society movement in 20th century that focused on reforming institutions in society, and also inspired new-leftist theorists who emphasize

participatory structure of decision-making and a more inclusive civil society. Neo-Liberals emphasize the “voluntary” nature of civil society. They argue that civil society’s role is to promote self-determination and ensure less state coercion. Habermas focuses on communicative aspect of civil society. The Habermasian public sphere is a sphere that is open to all people who are engaged in rational and critical debate and agree to collaborate toward a resolution. For Habermas politics can be just only when the full range of views and interests are represented publicly. In sum, I find that the richness and ambiguity of the meaning of civil society enables the concept to serve diverse intellectual and political interests. These theories would help me to notice what normative construction is echoed in China, and what role that “civil society” is playing in social change associated with the primary social concerns as well as the primary intellectual and political goals at that time.

To study the nature of civil society, an empirical research can help identify multiple elements indicative of the existence of civil society. Richness of social activities and initiatives outside of the state is one popular indicator used by researchers to assert the existence of civil society and its capacity of self-organization; the capacity of social groups and non-governmental organizations to circulate alternative norms and values and to mobilize people to act in accordance with these values is another indicator of civil society and its capacity to reconstitute a new social order; last but not the least, the consciousness among individuals and groups about the differentiated interests between the society and the state, and the shared identity of being part of civil society and being capable to joint together for common interests, is increasingly regarded by researchers as an important indicator for a mature and

enduring civil society. When I examine private higher education institutions in China, these categories will provide theoretical tools to evaluate their actions, initiatives, and projects, and to draw connection between these actions and initiatives with the nature of civil society.

These lead to the next issue this study intends to explain: why certain normative dimensions and practical elements of civil society are present and others are missing in the case of China? The building of civil society is closely connected with the conditions provided by socioeconomic contexts. Instead of viewing civil society as carrying fixed characteristics, we should take a more constructive view toward the elements of civil society. The constituents of civil society, the attributes and roles associated with civil society are influenced by institutional contexts, including political and social structure and political culture, which is not stable in a country in transition. This study will adopt historical institutionalism as the theoretical framework that emphasizes the influence of institutional structures, such as political structure and political culture, on people's value and choices. In contrast to the rational choice model that presumes people are self-interest seekers, historical institutionalism asserts that people are rule-followers with the rules pre-set by normative, regulative or even geographic environment. For this study, I hope to construct the relationship between institutional contexts and state-society relationship in China to add to the richness of civil society literature as well as to enrich the discourse for understanding civil society formation and development overall.

1.4 Research Methodology

This study uses case study methodology to examine the politics involved in the development of two private higher education institutions, and investigate the implication of this dynamic process in the evolvement of state-society relationship and the construction of civil society in China. The exploratory nature of this study and the emphasis on multifaceted social processes call for a qualitative research approach in order to generate data that account for the relative social complexities of the research questions. In contrast to quantitative methods that downplay the various ways that individuals, institutions, and social environments interact with each other and attempt to explain and predict phenomenon by calculating the level of relevance to some key factors, qualitative methods focus on the occurrence shaped by the context and on the meaning that people have constructed during the interaction with the environment. For this study on the development of private higher education institutions, the goal is not only to describe this process, but also to find out how the process is going on and why it is going on in certain ways in a specific time and place. Thus, qualitative inquiry is appropriate to explore this highly contextual occurrence.

Case study is used for studying complex contemporary phenomenon in its natural setting. In case study, as well as in other qualitative traditions, the researcher is the primary instrument for collecting data, although other instruments, such as questionnaire or interview protocol, can be used to guide the data collection. Interviews were the essential source for this study. In this study, I interviewed the president and faculty in Xi'an Yuhua private university, founders, faculty and volunteers in Dingxian Institute for Peasant Education, and officials in charge of

regulating and accrediting private educational institutions. My attempt is to understand how the state and institutions interacted with each other as well as how institutional contexts influence the interaction.

There are two cases in this dissertation: one private university and one non-governmental institute for peasant education. The two cases represent different response to the modernization process and give a picture of the complexity of the social change in China. And their development illustrates the different pattern of state-society interaction in China.

1.5 Significance of the Study

First of all, the dissertation will contribute to theoretical understanding of civil society. It summarizes and criticizes previous theoretical and empirical account of civil society and conceptualizes civil society as complicate interconnected spaces and structures (market, legal system, associational network, and public sphere) which are respectively guided by certain normative principles (autonomy, liability, trust, or reason).

Second, the study is expected to enhance our understanding of the reality and the future of democracy in China. Previous studies on Chinese civil society took Tocquevillian perspective and articulated the increasing intensity of autonomous associations. However, the discussion on the connection between associational forms and democracy was absent in these studies. This study pays attention to the interplay of structural forces (e.g. the nature of the state, the strength and reach of political parties, or prevailing culture traditions) and initiatives of social groups, and explores

how the space of nonstate power and its capacity to establish democratic social order is shaped by both the structure and human agency.

Third, the study articulates that the development of civil society is not a linear and fixed path. In history, civil society was closely connected to the rise of a market economy and “bourgeois society.” In modern world, with the diverse political, economic and cultural environment, the evolvement of civil society becomes more complicated. When China opened itself to the world in 1980s, Chinese policy-makers, intellectuals and practitioners were exposed to different Western streams of development thinking as well as to thousands-of-years Chinese traditional cultures. By comparing institutions inspired by different missions and working with different populations, we have a wide-angle lens to observe the transformation of the Chinese society under the working of multiple local and global forces.

Fourth, among the research on Chinese civil society, many focused on environmental movements to demonstrate the emergence of civil society in China, while the education field was less discussed. Education institutions are usually sites of contestation among the interests of the state, the market, and the society. Thus it would be interesting to take educational institutions as cases to observe the dynamics of relationship between the state and the civil society. This study is expected to address this gap, using education as a site for the study of the development and nature of civil society in China.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter and the following chapter, I will describe and assess the literature that guides this qualitative research. This review encompasses literature in three central areas. First, literature containing normative discussion and empirical research on civil society is reviewed. Second, the theory of historical institutionalism that will guide the connection between systematic characteristics and civil society elements is presented. And some broader political and social contexts that may have an influence on the nature of civil society are discussed. Finally, the relationship among education, the state and society in China is discussed.

The literature review is to achieve the following purpose: First, to establish my conceptual framework that helps me to evaluate and explain the development of civil society and the change of state-society relationship; second, to facilitate me to analyze previous empirical studies, find out what factors have been examined and what have not, in order to aid my fieldwork as well as to justify the contribution of my study to the academic discussion of civil society.

2.1 Theories of Civil Society

The concept of civil society prospered during the 17th and 18th century in the West in efforts to rethink the social bases of order against the claim of absolutism. The theorists in this period argued for the inherent connectivity existing among people in a society that otherwise could be atomized by an individualized market.

Another main contribution made by theorists in this period is that they established the fundamental principles that guide people's interaction: equality of rights, mutual recognition, and reasoning in public sphere, which are repeatedly mentioned in contemporary discourse on democracy and democratization. After a lapse of more than 100 years in scholarly and political use, in 20th century the concept of civil society was revived in the global movement against statism, militarism, imperialism, and not least, capitalism, when the connectivity in the society is threatened by the overbearing state apparatus and invasive market, and the ideal of equality, reciprocity, and reasoning are in reality replaced by oppression, patronage, and imposition.

However, the civil society movement in 20th century was not just a testimony of the concept in its historical meaning. Owing to the work of Marx and Gramsci, the Leftists are exploring the institutional settings that produce these oppression, patronage and imposition. They called for fundamental reform of the institutional settings to create a more participatory and inclusive civil society. In middle and late 20th century the term of civil society was gradually embraced by mainstream neo-liberals as a rhetoric and strategy to shove off government intervention and to tout self-organization of society. In a word the concept of civil society in 20th century no longer refers to a unified ethical existence as theorists in 17th century prescribed, but has multiple levels, forms, identities, and antithesis. It has different ways of dealing with inclusion and exclusion. In this complicated situation, it is hard to achieve consensus on the definition of civil society. On one hand, it is often endowed with concrete organizational forms and norms; on the other hand it is an ideology, a utopia, a slogan, or a myth motivating people to seek for voice, equality, cooperation, justice,

development and democracy. It is no surprise that civil society was a language used by both the Left and Right, which take advantage of the rich but ambiguous implications of this concept to advertise their own political and social agenda.

2.1.1 Classic Theories of Civil Society

The idea of civil society became attractive to 17th and 18th centuries West European philosophical and political thinkers, as the result of phenomenal changes in ways of production and human interaction in this period, and of the consequent crisis of existing social order. As Seligman (1992) described,

The commercialization of land, labor, and capital, the growth of market economies, and continental revolutions, all brought into questions the existing social order and of authority. Traditional foundation of social order was seen to reside in some entity external to the social world—God, King, or even the givenness of traditional norms and behavior itself- those principles or order became increasingly questioned by the end of the seventeenth century. (p. 15)

The emergence of capitalism the free flowing of labor and capital promoted an awareness of individualism. Philosophical and political thinkers were thus facing the task of seeking and justifying principles of human interaction and association, integrating the “individual being” and “social being” and reconstructing the foundation of social order. The idea of civil society was conceptualized as a model for conceiving the workings of society and of social order within this major reorientation of European social thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

With an attempt to de-legitimize the fixed and hierarchical relationship in the system of feudalism, theorists in 17th and 18th centuries used the term of civil society to referring to a reality of social mutuality. Civil society theories during this time

focused on how individuals interact in the society, and how to deal with the dichotomy between the individual and the social, morality and reason, and the private and the public. The ideas of Locke, Scottish enlightenment theorists, Kant, Hume, and Hegel are introduced below to see how they tried to work on and solve these dichotomies. As I summarized at the end, these theories are not antithetical, but instead complimentary to each other, jointly presenting the structures of civil society institutions and the normative values that civil society institutions incorporate.

Locke

Locke expounds his theory of civil society in his *Second Treatise of the government* (1666). Similar to Hobbes, Locke imagines an original state of nature in which individuals rely upon their own strength. Civil society is the format of human associations when they leave this state of nature by entering into a social contract under which the state provides protective services to its citizens. Seligman (1992) says, for Locke, that society is a media for interaction between private individuals, “where the inconvenience and insufficiencies of the state of nature are rectified through the mutuality of contract and consent” (Seligman, 1992, p.22). The contract and consent are embodied in the Law of Nature, under which the freedom, equality and rights can be more securely realized than would be possible under the state of nature.

For Locke, then, “*civil society speaks to a society that is civil in that it has a political formation in which individuals, who have divinely bestowed characteristics and powers in the state of Nature, mutually decide to relinquish this power to the state for the good of all*” (Holst, 2000, p. 93). Authorities derive their power from the

transfer of this natural power by contract and consent of those who are governed, which may be withdrawn at any time. The structure or form of the government so established is a matter of relatively less importance, on Locke's view. What matters is that legislative power—the ability to provide for social order and the common good by setting standing laws over the acquisition, preservation, and transfer of property—is provided for in ways to which everyone consents (Locke, 1966, p. 66-71.) For Locke, civil society is coterminous with the political realm, and there exists no differentiation of civil society from the State which we will find in the thought of Hegel, Kant as well as later in twentieth-century writings.

Locke rooted the tendency of human being to associate not on psychological, logical, or historical base but on a religious vision. According to Locke, men united in the society by Godly dictate, since

GOD having made man such a creature, that in his own judgment, it was not good for him to be alone, put him under strong obligations of necessity, convenience, and inclination to drive him into society, as well as fitted him with understanding and language to continue and enjoy it. (Locke, 1966, p. 39)

Scottish Enlightenment Theorists

While for Locke men are united by Godly dictates, the thinkers during Scottish Enlightenment articulate that men are united by instinct, in that “they act in society from affections of kindness and friendship.” (Seligman, 1992, p. 27) Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith, John Millar, and Adam Ferguson were several prominent theorists in this school. The main question they attempt to address is whether the acquisitive ethics of capitalism could be made compatible with traditional virtues of sociability, sympathy and justice. The Scottish Enlightenment theorists believed that

human beings have natural sympathy and moral affection for each other, which bond individuals with rational self-interest together.

In Adam Smith's *the Theory of Moral Sentiment*, he argues that the moral basis of individual existence is the need for recognition and consideration on the part of others. "To be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency and approbation," are for Smith the driving force of "all the toil and bustle of the world...the end of avarice and ambition, of the pursuit of wealth." (Seligman, 1992, p. 27) Thus, economic activity is rooted in the non-economic needs for sympathy and appreciation. In this way the pursuit for self-interest and the need to achieve mutual recognition together drive human action in a collectivity. Social space of human interaction is conceptualized as a moral sphere, not simply as a neutral arena of exchange (Seligman, 1992, p. 31).

Hume and Kant

Hume rejects this mystified natural sympathy and challenged the unitary framework upon which the classic civil society theory had been based. Hume is the first person to make clear the distinction between morality and reason, private and public, and civil society and juridical society. He distinguishes "what is" from "what ought to be," with the former describing human action driven by moral sentiments, and the latter ascertained by reason. According to Hume, men interact with each other out of self-interest, and "reason has no place in a psychology of human motivation" (Seligman, 1992, p. 38). People establish and follow the laws, not so as to serve some universal good, but to maximize their self-interests in an enlightened manner. In his *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III *OF MORALS*, Hume wrote,

After men have found by experience, that their selfishness and confined generosity, acting at their liberty, totally incapacitate them for society; and at the same time have observed, that society is necessary to the satisfaction of those very passions, they are naturally induced to lay themselves under the restraint of such rules, as may render their commerce more safe and commodious. (SECT.II *Of the origin of justice and property*).

While theorists in Scottish Enlightenment were afraid that mere commerce and interest-motivated action would destroy the common ground of civil society and the sentiments upon which this ground rests, Hume referred his reader to self-interest as the sole guarantee of the social order. As Seligman (1992) articulated for Hume, “The universal good was nothing beyond the calculus of individual or particular goods, and the public good was supported solely by the workings of private interests” (p. 38). The implications of this thought were profound, leading to the notion that people, in using their reason to follow their self-interests, eventually achieve the interests of society as a whole.

While Emmanuel Kant echoes Hume in his relegation of ethics and morals to the private sphere, he advocates a public arena of rational, critical discourse. For Kant, the tendency for individuals to associate in society is not founded on any “natural” endowment, but on a universal Reason. Seligman (1992) says for Kant, “As mankind come into its own, the autonomy, freedom, and equality of each individual themselves engender - through a universal reason - the workings of the moral law.” (p. 42) Kant saw "Reason" as the fundamental factor for human action. It is in fact this "Reason" which differentiates us from other animals. In other words, we are able to conform our actions to our ideas of how the world might be or should be. Kant's point of view takes the individual in a different course of actions from what Hume prescribes. When using "Reason" to act, in the Kantian view, the person must

consider the full effects of his or her actions. For this, the person must ask if a specific course of actions can become a universal rule. Immanuel Kant's main principle regarding civil society was that people should treat other people as ends in themselves rather than means to the ends of others. In other words, we must consider how others would benefit themselves from our actions, rather than how we might use them only for our own benefit, and we must ensure that whatever means we use to pursue our own self-interests does not interfere with others' rights to pursue theirs. "Reason" serves as a guide for acting in a very altruistic manner, and bridges the distinction between private and public.

Central to the Kantian conception of Reason was the existence of a shared public arena where the workings of reason was substantiated. It was within the public arena of critical discourse that the individuals as ends was manifested, and that reason and equality was validated. In the public arena Rights and justice were ensured through the autonomous individuals following the dictates of the universal Reason. The public arena was for Kant the sphere of right, of mutual and rational consent to the individual and collective will. In Kant, a more rigorous vision of social differentiation developed. The state, as the embodiment of political society, is no longer viewed as coterminous with civil society, as the publicness of rational debate and critique is seen as the province of civil society in its distinction from the State. Kant objected to absolutist state by defending the role of autonomous and critical citizenry. For Kant, "the very legitimation of constitutional rule rests on the idea that its laws would be such that all the citizenry debated them, they would have arrived at the same through its very synthesis of Reason with the public realm" (Seligman, 1992,

p. 43). Thus, the public good is defined by private individual working publicly and mutually under the guide of Reason. In this way, the challenge raised by Hume is addressed by Kant, that given that people are motivated by self-interest in the private realm, how to posit general rules of justice for the juridical society.

Hegel

It was until Hegel who achieved the real synthesis between particularity and universal, self-interest and altruistic, and virtue and justice. For Hegel civil society is characterized by particularity of human being. Meanwhile, agreeing with Scottish Enlightenment thoughts, Hegel recognizes that people need to achieve mutual recognition through which individual as self-conscious is constructed and universal will is constructed. In his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel wrote,

In civil society each member is his own end, everything else is nothing to him. But except in contact with others he cannot attain the whole compass of his ends, and therefore these others are means to the end of the particular member. A particular end, however, assumes the form of universality through this relation to other people, and it is attained in the simultaneous attainment of the welfare of others. Since particularity is inevitably conditioned by universality, the whole sphere of civil society is the territory of mediation where there is free play for every idiosyncrasy, every talent, every accident of birth and fortune, and where waves of every passion gush forth, regulated only by reason glinting through them. Particularity, restricted by universality, is the only standard whereby each particular member promotes his welfare (Hegel, *Ethical Life*, Civil society, p. 89, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/pr/prcivils.htm>).

An important message imbedded in this paragraph is that the mutually conflicting particular interest in civil society cannot be overcome by the society itself. The conflicts in private domain can only be resolved in the State for universal value. For Hegel, the state is characterized by overarching universal norm, which arbitrates disputes and helps to achieve consensus.

Classical civil society theorists sought a normal order to replace the old hierarchical order characteristics of the feudal regime. According to these theorists, civil society as an end has two dimensions: ethical dimension and institutional arrangement dimension. The ethical dimension refers to the political and ethical values canonized in the social system, and the institutional arrangement refer to the political, economic and culture structure established to guard and maintain the cultural values. In fact, the civil society brought forward by Locke and theorists of Scottish Enlightenment, and what Smith, and Kant present, are not exclusive to each other, but constituent parts of a well-functioning civil society. The modern state with the legal and executive power has the liability to defend people's property, liberty and rights. And the state is constrained by the law not to abuse its power on the people. The market, public sphere, civil associations are formal or informal format of people self-organizing their activities under the guide of civil norms and values. The market is the format that people organize and coordinate their production and consumption activities to satisfy human's economic needs, and civil association is the format that people realize their needs for mutual care and for self-managing their social lives. The public sphere is the arena bridging the society and the state where people bring their concern toward political issue for discussion and for future action. These formal or informal structures are integrative in the establishment and maintenance of the imagined new social order, where people are free, equal, self-determining, and have their says on the public issues.

2.1.2 Contemporary Revival of Civil Society

Despite the phenomenal social changes in these two centuries, people are facing with the same oppositions that delineate the range of action: egoism and altruism, passion and reason, private and public, individual interest and social good. The classic idea of civil society still has an important influence on today's discussion. Adam Smith's well-known characterization of the market as an "invisible hand" directing individuals' selfish interests to the common good, and Hume's notion of public good as aggregation of individual good, were intellectual inspiration to neo-liberalism in 20th century. But as Seligman (1992) reminds, "the loss of the early, eighteenth-century notion of natural sympathy and moral sentiments made it increasingly difficult to root this individual in a community and so to present a coherent vision of society beyond its individual members" (p. 57). Establishing trust and cooperation to compensate the increasing alienation felt in contemporary capitalist society become a critical issue in 20th century. And Kant's notion of Reason and a public arena to substantiating this Reason has been re-elaborated by Jürgen Habermas in his conception of public sphere.

Neo-Libertarian Civil Society

Neo-liberal notion of civil society began with a critic of the failure of welfare state in 1980s. The intervention of the state was regarded as the source of the problem, not the solution. The corruption of government agencies, inefficient investment and expenditure, void planning of the market, and the monopoly of the state in some public service area was criticized. It is during this time the libertarianism was again touted, only devoid of ethical dimension. The government was facing the pressure of

decentralization. A market vs. state dichotomy was popularized in both Western domestic policy community and international donor agencies. The structural adjustment policies (SAPs) advocated, or even imposed, by the World Bank on many developing countries are the reflection of this way of conceptualization.

Robert Putnam's book *Making Democracy Work* (1994) drew the attention of policy community to civic institutions that could affect political outcomes. Putnam revived Tocqueville's thought who in his book *Democracy in America* (trans. 2004) established the importance of autonomous social associations to maintaining democracy in a society. According to his observations, Tocqueville inferred that associations improve the cohesion and solidarity, and the participation of associations in public affair can prevent the unlimited expansion and misuse of state power. Putnam adopted the term "social capital"⁶ to address the problem of an isolate society. From a development perspective, Putnam's theories could be used to argue that increasing the stock of social capital would be realized through strengthening civil society, and that the increased stock of social capital would bring economic and political benefits (Bjorn, 2004, p. 55). Salamon's (1996, 1997, 1999) global research on the "third sector" celebrates the emergence of a vigorous third sector around the world, especially in the developing world.

Partly due to influence by Putnam and Salamon, in the 1990s, the World Bank and other development agencies began to value civil society organizations for the

⁶ The concept of "social capital" was first clearly formulated by Pierre Bourdieu. In *The Forms of Capital* (1986) he distinguishes between three forms of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. He defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition."

implementation of their antipoverty programs. In “too close for comfort?” Edwards and Hulme (1996) note that in recent years the level of official funding for nongovernmental organizations in development efforts has increased dramatically. This expanded funding forms an integral part of the neo-liberal "New Policy Agenda" currently promoted by powerful donor agencies like the World Bank, USAID, and the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA). In this agenda civil society organizations have become the chosen instrument by donor agencies to provide an important complement to the market (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Howell and Pearce, 2001).

The neo-liberal discourse of civil society also has its audience in domestic policy community. The publication in 1998 of Anthony Giddens’s influential book devoted to the elaboration of the “Third Way” reflect the orientation of Bill Clinton and Tony Blair’s governments to search for an alternative way in-between capitalism and socialism, to look to the “*third sector*,” “*non-state arena*,” “*voluntary sector*,” or “*nonprofit sector*” as providers of welfare service. Giddens was defining a so-called socially responsible capitalism where “civil society is an intermediary sphere serving to complement rather than to replace the state” and “offers a third route to welfare provision, which is neither private nor state” (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p 67).

Howell and Pearce challenge the assumptions of neo-liberal model of civil society that civil society and market economies are positively related and that civil society and the market operate as separate, autonomous spheres. Howell and Pearce argue that the “definition of civil society as the arena of ‘nonprofit’ weakens the political functions of civil society as a critical eye on both state and market,” and neo-

liberals neglect the fact that “market economies can undermine the cohesive and integrating dimensions of civil society, creating and reinforcing processes of social exclusion” (p. 64) As Marx and Gramsci have earlier pointed out, with the economic domination and ideological control continuously in the hand of a small group of people, freedom and equality stay in rhetoric.

Habermasian Civil Society

Habermas's most complete exploration of his notion of the public sphere is found in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1989). In this book, Habermas traced the historical emergence of a bourgeois public sphere in the 17th and 18th centuries. The existence of public sphere enabled private people to come together as a public and talk about common concerns in conditions of freedom, equality and non-violent interaction. From the bourgeois public sphere Habermas saw the possibility that differences of interests are bracketed and citizens are engaged in rational and critical debate. Public sphere helps different groups to find a balance between personal autonomy and the demands of the social whole, thus resolving the dilemma that has lain at the heart of civil society thinking since the days of the ancient Greeks. Actually Habermas is decidedly Kantian in his dedication to reason, ethics, and moral philosophy. However, Habermas is worried that mass consumption of culture had been destructive to active and participative politics, as a small group of specialists “put their reason to use non-publicly and the great mass of consumers whose receptiveness is public but uncritical” (Habermas, 1992, 175).

For Habermas, all modern states face a crisis of legitimacy. To reach a legitimate normative consensus around a plurality of interests and positions assuming certain conditions are met – equality of voice and access, in particular, and a minimum of censorship so that the relevant information is available to all. Politics cannot be just unless the full range of views and interests is represented in a process in which all the protagonists agree to collaborate towards a resolution (Edwards, 2004, p. 60). In Habermasian public sphere, the boundary between civil society and political society is blurred. Cohen and Arato (1992) attempted to construct a tripartite conceptualization of civil society influenced by Habermasian ideals in which “the task is to guarantee the autonomy of the modern state and economy while simultaneously protecting civil society from state and economy and its reflexive influence over them through the institutions of political and economic society.” (p. 25)

Critical Theory: Marxist and Neo-Marxist theory of Civil Society

With a insightful observation of the huge inequity existing in modern capitalist society, Marx and Gramsci put an end to the classic concept of civil society and started the modern discussion on civil society. Marx rejects the mythical and abstracted reading of human nature that the eighteenth century theorists had produced. He points out that the network developed in economic production is the key to understanding civil society. Marx deems that the structure of economic production in capitalism creates an exclusive, patriarchal and repressive society. The civil society was a society of the bourgeois, and a large group, the proletariat class was excluded from the civil society. Disagreeing with Hegel, Marx regards the particular and separate interests that define life in civil society were not resolved in the state. Rather

the state, through the sanctity of property and its relations, is subservient to them. He regards the state is normally the state of the economically dominant class. Marx envisions the politics as some non-state form such like “commune”. When people are truly free, he said, they will see themselves as citizens of the whole political community, not "decomposed" into different, non-universal roles as a trader, a laborer, a Jew, a Protestant. Each person will be "a communal being" united with all other citizens, and the state will no longer be seen as an instrument to protect rights so that individuals can pursue their selfish ends but as the entity through which everyone would achieve "the human essence [which] is the true collectivity of man." (Marx, 1968, p. 74-76). Marxist theories inspired the worker movement in East Europe in early 20th century, which aims at expanding the range of citizenship and the inclusion of the working class into polity.

Antonio Gramsci was the first and most important Marxist to abandon the economic reduction of civil society to political economy and to insist on its autonomy and distinctiveness from the state. He used the term to describe a particular aspect of power-hegemony. According to Gramsci, the reproduction of the existing system occurs through a combination of two practices: hegemony and domination, consent and coercion. These operate through two different sets of institutional frameworks: the cultural and associational forms of civil society, and the legal, bureaucratic, police, and military apparatus of the state. Gramsci's distinction of culture was a great advance for radical theories; it called attention to the routine structures of everyday 'common sense', which work to sustain class domination and tyranny. As Gitlin comments, “It was Gramsci who, in the late twenties and thirties, with the rise of

fascism and the failure of the Western European working-class movements, began to consider why the working class was not necessarily revolutionary, why it could, in fact, yield to fascism." (Gitlin, 1994: 516).

Instead of prescribing a normative order of civil society, Marx and Gramsci drew our attention to the real working of power in the society, that control of capital, resources, voices, languages, and rules lead to domination and subservience, rather than equality and justice that is highly valued in the rising of capitalism. Marx and Gramsci's work brought new economic, political and cultural dimension to the concept of civil society. With other classic and modern theorists, their work inspired the civil society movement in 20th century, which consciously started to explore how the designing of modern institutions result in concentration of power and prevent the practice of those norms, making it clear that the realization of equality of human beings and social justice is not only a constitutional issue or ethical construction. The format and meaning of political and civic institutions is related to the process of power wrestling among multiple social actors and groups.

Theorists of the neo-pluralism/ neo-Marxist approach, growing up principally on the left in the late 1970s in Western Europe, further design specific economic and political structure for equal and inclusive participation. They argue for "power sharing" and devolution of decision-making power to grassroots level. This approach emphasizes the importance of autonomous powers within society both as a counterbalance to the state and corporate power and as spheres in which important forms of social action can be carried out (Keane, 1988; Mouffe, 1992). They articulate that social conflict can best be addressed at the level of neighborhood,

workplace, or community where everybody affected by the decision are included and interest can be equally expressed (Cohen and Rogers, 1995).

In contrast to the neo-liberals mentioned below, these theorists often puzzle over just how the sort of political framework most conducive to achieving the devolution of public power to society might best be achieved. As Keane (1988) puts it, democratization- the “road to socialism” - would mean attempting to redefine the boundaries between civil society and the state through two interdependent and simultaneous processes: the expansion of social equality and liberty, and the restructuring and democratizing of state institutions. Two conditions would be necessary for the successful enactment of these processes. First, the power not only of private capital and the state, but also of white, heterosexual, male citizens over (what remains) civil society would need to be curtailed through social struggles and public policy initiatives that enabled citizens, acting together in ‘sociable’ public sphere, to strive to equal power, and to maximize their capacity to play an active part in civil society; Secondly, state institutions would have to become more accountable to civil society by having their functions recast. State institutions must be understood as devices for enacting legislation, promulgating new policies, containing inevitable conflicts between particular interests within well-defined legal limits, and for preventing civil society from falling victim to new forms of inequality and tyranny (p. 14-15). From this perspective, the state is not excluded from the good function of the society, but both a condition and workout of it.

The contribution of the Marxist and neo-Marxist theories is that they go beyond the format of political and social institution to look at the real working of these

institutions. The power distribution in the society and the interaction among the various power holders and non power holders determines the ways the political and social institutions work. And for an authentic civil society to emerge from current society, one big characteristic is to be applied into action: redefining power relations and developing new structures and inclusion targeting at correcting old rules and structures.

Thus, other than discussing the normative format and value of civil society as classic theorists, contemporary scholars are concerned with identifying those elements that manifest the transition of society and the incipience of new social orders. The following paragraph summarizes the empirical research that describes different characteristics of the society when the civil society is in gestation.

2.2 Civil Society Movement in 20th Century

In Cohen's influential book, *Civil Society and Political theory* (1992), he presents four cases of civil society movement in 20th century. In Poland in the 1970s, Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik and other activists in the "Solidarity Movement" in Poland⁷ took up the notion of civil society as part of an effort to develop a third way after the failure of a potentially total revolution from below (Hungary in 1956) and the demise of a process of reform of the Communist system from above, both

⁷ Solidarity (full name: Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity") is a Polish trade union federation founded in September 1980 at the then Lenin Shipyards, and originally led by Lech Wałęsa. It was the first non-communist trade union in a communist country. In the 1980s it launched a broad anti-communist social movement. Adam Michnik, life-long dissidents and activist for human rights, was an adviser to the Solidarity trade union federation during the 1980s, and a negotiator for the Solidarity team during the Round Table negotiations of 1989 between representatives of the government, Solidarity and other groups that brought an end to communist rule in Poland. Jacek Kuron, as a dissident in the 1970s, led the struggle against Poland's communist party, and later became a government minister after 1989. Kuron was seen as the intellectual driving force behind the founding of the "Solidarity".

unlikely given the Brezhnev Doctrine, which posited the right of the Soviet Union to intervene anywhere in Eastern Europe in defense of “socialism” (Cohen and Arato 1992; Foley and Edwards, 1998). Michnik named it “new evolutionism”: emphasizing the self-organization of society and the self-limiting character of their “revolution”; it would not seize power but force structural reform. Rather than trying to change the government, Kuron and Michnik thought opponents of the regime could be united to change Polish society - by resisting the party's propensity to control every corner of social life. Each independent initiative by citizens, each example of self-organization by people acting outside of party control, Kuron declared, "challenges the monopoly of the state and thereby challenges the basis upon which it exercises power." (Ost, 1990, p. 64) The immediate task of opposition intellectuals, as Michnik (1985) wrote, was to build "a real, day-to-day community of free people." (p. 148) Stressing its break with revolutionary tradition which is undemocratic and inconsistent and only leads to dictatorial government which block civil society, the Solidarity movement in Poland aims at constructing a highly articulated, organized, autonomous, and mobilizable civil society (Cohen and Arato, 1992, p.1).

Paradoxically, the road to political change for Poland began with a dismissal of politics. The emphasis was decidedly on a dichotomy between society and the state, the Polish nation and the (imposed) Communist state. Independent self-organization did not, however, mean relinquishing the goal of reforming the state. Kuron and Michnik thought that the regime could be prodded to change. "Organized society is a power," Kuron wrote, "and a power every authority must reckon with." (cited by Zuzowski, 1992, p. 67-68) Michnik (1985) added, "Nothing instructs the authorities

better than pressure from below." (p. 142-144) Democracy and civil liberties were the ultimate prizes; activating and organizing the Polish people were necessary first steps.

In Latin America, the transition from military-bureaucratic authoritarian rule is seen as strongly dependent on the resurrection of civil society. Here,

civil society stands for a network of groups and associations between (in some versions, including) families and face-to-face groups on one side and outright state organizations on the other, mediating between individual and the state, private and public. Different from clan, clique, cabal, and clientele, the associations of civil society have themselves a public, civic quality related both to a recognized rights to exist" and publicly act in defense of justifiable interest (Cohen and Arato, 1992, p. 48).

Like the Polish activist intellectuals, the proponents of civil society in Latin America often translate "society against the state" into visions of a unitary society against the state and above the "dirtiness" of politics. And, like the Eastern Europeans who eschewed the party label in building their organizations, many Latin Americans nurture hopes for "nonparty parties" grounded in civil society.

Cohen and Arato (1992) noted parallel developments of the notion of civil society in France and Germany in the 1970s, both growing out of critiques of the totalitarian trend of the state and capitalism. Participants in the French "Second Left" and the German Greens movement observed that all social networks, associations, and solidarities disorganized under the administrative and commercial penetration into society. This view was expressed in Green Party's 1980 founding manifesto:

Both the capitalist and state-socialist form of concentration and monopolization of economic power yield destructive forms of economic growth which contaminate and destroy the very basis of human and natural life. Only by self-determination at the grassroots, the ecological, social and economic crises can be appropriately dealt with. (Jürgen Maier, 1990)

Both the French “Second Left” and the German Greens insisted on the need to reconstruct “political” society as well as civil society, with “the civil society referring to social ties cutting across class relations, and political society conceived in terms of movements and organizations directly engaged in defending civil society, articulating autonomy and conflict within society, and functioning as mediation between civil society and the state” (Cohen, 1992, p. 40). The reorientation to civil and political society relocates the locus of democratization from the state to society, with a hope to present a third way between social statism and liberalism, which, as Cohen points out, “despite their opposition, are seen as resembling each other in their effects on solidarity relations” Cohen, 1992, p. 40).

Civil society movement in this period imbued new meanings and implications to the term of civil society. It is no longer an entity consisting of a set of abstract rules, but consisting of spaces that can articulate social concerns, generate values and collective identities, and carry on social projects to address these concerns, values and identities. While at first sight the norms civil society activists upheld were not new, such as equality, justice and democracy, actually they went deeper to explore how the designing of modern institutions result in concentration of power and prevent the practice of these norms, making it clear that the realization of equality of human beings and social justice is not only a constitutional issue or ethical construction. Other contributions the civil society movement in this period has made include: it brought the attention to the agency of human beings in bringing about social changes; it testified that civil society could be the site where dominant values can be contested and phenomenal political and social change can be initiated; it explored necessities as

well as strategies to form alliances in society in order to fight against penetrating state apparatus and business corporations. In struggles over equality, justice, and democracy, the thinkers and activists sought to reform not only the polity, but also the institutions of civil society itself. The civil society movement reveals the paradox of the concept of the “civil society.” Civil society is not only an end that people are seeking for, it is also a venue of social groups to take collective actions and constructively contribute to the “civil society” as an end. Civil society is both the reason and the consequence, both “now” and “future.” As a venue, civil society has associational, ideological, and cognitive dimensions.

2.2.1. Associational base of civil society

Since Tocqueville, the richness of unofficial, autonomous, and self-regulated social activities and initiatives undertaken outside governmental structures and institutions is widely acknowledged to be essential to maintain civil society. These activities can include the publication of independent press, charity events, social movements, ecological and pacifist activities, and so forth. They represent what Gellner identifies as institutional pluralism, “which prevents the establishment of monopoly of power and truth, and counterbalances those central institutions which, though necessary, might otherwise acquire such monopoly” (Timanenu, 1995, p. 4). A weak civil society indicates an inordinately large area of opportunities for state interventionism and controls. A stronger civil society tempers such statist instincts, diminishes authoritarian trends, and imposes a certain social accountability on the government. Kelly and He (1992) echo this opinion that a strong civil society implies the presence of autonomous, self-organising associations and networks willing and

able to dissociate from the policies and values of the state. They regard that this socio-diversity is one of the important connotations of civil society. “Without this political diversity, all opposing forces tend to be penetrated by or reproduce the state” (p. 29).

In the four cases of social movements in Poland, Latin America, French, and Germany, the important move is to call for the establishment of alliance among people in all forms- clubs, networks of dissident intellectuals, labor unions, learning societies- which serve as effective sources of resistance to oppressive government. By associating themselves, people are able to gather resources to collaboratively conduct public activities, such as to build libraries and hospitals, advance the culture and art, protect the environment, defend the rights of the underprivileged, and meet social needs of every kind, not just waiting for politicians and bureaucrats, who were distance in both space and spirit, to do it for them. “Amongst the laws which rule human nature,” wrote Tocqueville in *Democracy in America*, “there is none which seems to be more precise and clear than all others. If men are to remain civilized, or to become more so, the art of associating together must grow and improve.”

2.2.2 Ideological Base of Civil Society

For others, such activities and initiatives outside the state are important but not sufficient conditions for the development of civil society. According to Gramsci, the oppression exists not only because the state or the dominant class control economic and political institutions, but also because they grip the intellectual and moral leadership. Concerning this intellectual and moral leadership, Strinati (1995) interpreted,

Dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the 'spontaneous consent' of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups. (p. 165)

This suggests that in studying non-governmental organizations attention needs to be paid to mobilizing potentials of organizations and their activities, that is, the capacity of raising and circulating alternative ideologies, norms, and values. If the dominated class wants to succeed in change the social order of oppression and subordination, it must develop a new ideology.

The Germany “Green Party” formed its powerful “Green ideology” based on environmentalism and sustainable economics and aimed at developing a sustainable society. Not only limited to environment concerns, the “Green ideology” also advocate participatory democracy wherever feasible. Considered to be an alternative to socialism, conservatism, and liberalism, it appeals to left-wing people, environmentalist, feminists, and other progressive and moderate groups who are dissatisfied with current economic and political system. Alternative ideology presents people another possibility beyond the current reality and call for people to act together for that different social reality.

2.2.3 Cognitive Base of Civil Society

For an emerging civil society to form and function outside the arena of the state-government, people needs to form a new identity. As Manuel Castells in his book *the Power of Identity* indicates, identity is distinguished from roles (for example, to be a worker, a mother, a neighbor, a socialist militant, a union member, a basketball player, a churchgoer, and a smoker, at the same time), “which is defined by norms structured

by the institutions and organization of society.” Identities “are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and by themselves, constructed through a process of individuation...In simple terms, identities organize the meaning, while roles organize the functions” (p. 6-7). Meaning for a person, is self-sustaining across time and space, and through which the person as a social actor identifies the purpose of his action. For the subordinate group, one problem is that they accept the identity of “the inferior,” “the second class of people,” or “the oppressed,” and they may aspire to make efforts to change the role to “the oppressor.” Thus to seek the transformation of overall social structure, people need to build a new identity that redefines their position in society.

Frentzel-Zagorska (1992), in his study of political transformation in Poland and Hungary, found out that in Poland model of transition “Among its unique characteristics, the most important was the spontaneous tendency of the emerging civil society to coalesce around a sort of powerful “mono-organisation.” This tendency stemmed from the logic of confrontation with the centrally organized power apparatus and from an awareness that the basic contradiction of the system consisted in the opposing interests of the corporate ruling elite and society at large” (p. 46). The study suggests that the elaboration and articulation of a collective identity plays a crucial role in the transition to a democratic and equal social order.

This chapter describes the classic and contemporary theory of civil society. Classic theory puts an emphasis on how to build a social order under the condition of social change, and on how to integrate the awareness of individual being emerging

out the rise of capitalism and the collectivity. The divide between civil society and government sets off civil society as non-governmental: that is, as distinct from the official, coercive, political apparatus. And the state was the agent for social justice. Marx, Gramsci, and neo-Marx theorists draw our attention to the real work of power in their society. Their work inspired the civil society movement in the 20th century, which consciously started and kept exploring its identity, constituencies, structures, and values. During the civil society movement, theorists and activists have explored the capacity of the old-fashioned theoretical distinction between civil society and state institutions to make new and different sense of contemporary social and political developments. The most important progress is that the civil society has increasingly been a site of bringing the voice of the people to the front. This changes the situation that the history of political thought has been mainly a history written from the above. Now ordinary people are participating in the generation of values, ideas and norms.

CHAPTER 3
HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN CHINA, AND
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY

3.1 Definition of Civil Society for This Research

Many researchers, following the path beaten by Salamon (1996, 1997, 1999), are inclined to characterize civil society in terms of a fundamental trichotomy of social sectors as the following:

1. State/government/public sector
2. Market/private enterprise/corporate sector
3. Civil society/non-profit activity/Third Sector'

This classification represents a way of reductionism. It brought convenience to the work of doing research on civil society; however, in the real world the lines between the three sectors are often blurred.

First, as Young (2001) points out, “many non-profit organizations charge for their services and / or run sideline commercial operations to support them, and / or depend very largely on government grants and subventions.” (p.1) Some organizations working on “fair trade” are working in the economic area. Second, we tend to expect professional and ethnic values to apply to teachers, doctors, engineers, scientists, managers, journalists and many others, whether they are working for a state, private sector or non-profit institution. Third, some individuals and companies in the business sectors (as well as many researchers and social activists) are increasingly concerned with the “social responsibility” and “corporate citizenship” of private companies. A growing, if by no means yet decisive, tide of opinion holds that

businesses in the global marketplace have duties that go well beyond simply maximizing profits for shareholders. Unless it turns out merely to be a short term fad, this debate about the corporations of the future may progressively erode the distinction between for-profit and non-profit activity. Lastly, but by no means least, there is global wave of calling for democratizing the governance. Brazilian cities have been the sites of significant experiments in participatory and deliberative governance. And gradually this movement will also blur the distinction between the political sector and the non-political sector.

Altogether, therefore, the current 'three sector' taxonomy, rest on rather flimsy theoretical foundations even in the West, without considering their extrapolation to non-Western societies where both state and market have evolved rather differently. In China, there is an increasing quest for clearer demarcation of functions and roles of the state, the market, and the non-profit sectors; however, at the same time, all political and economic institutions need a structural transformation in order to make progress in the path of democratization. And a “civil” society is the result of the reciprocal interaction of the state, the market, and the social groups and associations.

To take account of the complexity of the concept, this paper adopts an operational definition that is meant to guide research:

Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional

*forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy group*⁸.

The notion of civil society is exogenous to China. However, it has gained scholar attention of domestic and Western scholars doing China research. In this chapter, I will describe the scholarly discussing about the applicability of civil society to the ongoing social changes in China. I will also review research that uses the notion of civil society to study civil associations in historical and contemporary China. Finally, I will introduce the development of non-government organizations in recent years.

This chapter serves two purposes: First, to find out what has been done by Chinese intellectuals to develop and theorize the concept of “civil society” and to link it to the Chinese reality; second, to provide a general picture of the emerging civil society in China in recent years.

3.2 Normative Discussion of Civil Society in China

Western Enlightenment celebrated the individuality freed from the bonds of feudalism. In the center of Western theories of civil society there is the recognition of this individual existence, and the re-exploration of the relationship between

⁸ This definition is provided and adopted by the London School of Economics and Political Science. Available from http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm

individuals and the society based on this premise. Individuals are bearer of rights, and are morally and politically equal.

In China, market economy never got full development until recently. China was economically self-sufficient and politically isolated from the West before the Opium War in 1842. For thousands of years the society was under the control and regulation of the patriarchal state. Individuals are bound to their families, masters and lands. They cannot move freely or pursue what they want. Social order is maintained by the will of the high authority. In this context, the culture emphasized compliance from individuals.

It is still a myth that why feudalism had existed in China for thousands of years without being interrupted by capitalism before the Opium War, which strongly shook the belief in the superiority of Chinese culture and system held by both the ruler and the ruled. However, thousands of years of authoritarian rule and master-servant structure have more persistent influence on Chinese society than people can imagine. At first sight the “Westernization movement” in late 1890s and then the slogan of “we want science and democracy” in the “May Fourth Movement” in 1919 showed the preponderance of Western knowledge over Chinese knowledge in the Oriental-Western interaction during this period. However, a second look will show that Chinese tradition did not really recede. In 1898, Zhang Zhidong, an influential imperial bureaucrat in earlier economic modernization, publicized his *Chapter of Advise to Learn (Quan Xue Pian)* and advocated his opinion about the quest to learn from the West: “Western knowledge as usefulness, Chinese knowledge as essence” (*Zhong Xue Wei Ti, Xi Xue Wei Yong*), which then became the flag of Westernization

movement. In this statement, Western knowledge provides the skills and technology, but should not be allowed to replace the moral and political base of China in China's quest to become a strong country. Although reformists and revolutionaries criticized proponents of Westernization movement for their superficial and uncritical thinking about social change, surprisingly this approach was actually embodied in the system of all political parties, whether conservatives represented by Kang Youwei, or reformists, the Republic Party led by Sun Yat-sen and late Chiang Kai-shek, or the Communist party of China (CPC) led by Mao and his successors. Democracy is embraced as a tool for mobilization, and an instrument to achieve the goal of building an economically strong and militarily powerful China, rather than to contribute to individual fulfillment of the Chinese people. Thus the principles of democracy are adapted to suit this need, and when other principles are regarded to better serve this end, the principle of democracy would be abandoned by political leaders. (Zhao, 2000, p. 41)

CPC that has been the ruling party of China since 1949 adopted Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought as its orthodox ideology. Recall that Marx sees the conflicts in civil society only to be resolved when each person is "a communal being" united with all other citizens, and the state will be the entity through which everyone would achieve his individual good which is in harmony with common good. Marx designated a popular democracy here, and the politics take some non-state form such like commune. For Chairman Mao Zedong and the party he led, then, the Marxist idea of democracy is interpreted as collective rule by the Party in the unified interest of the people. Theoretically, the party is regarded as having no special interest of its own

and as acting solely on behalf of the most fundamental, unified, and long-term interests of the people (Ding, 2000, p. 112).

Ding points out how unity prioritizing over individual interest justifies the penetration of the Party into every corner of the society. Mao Zedong expounded on the structure of interests in socialist society as a structure of unity among three different kinds of interests- those of the state, the collective, and the individual- in which state ownership was regarded as the advanced form of public ownership, collective ownership as in transition toward state ownership, and private ownership as no more than a tolerated remnant of old society. Moreover, contradictions among people were considered “questions involving the distinction between right and wrong among the people,” indicating negative aspects of life; the positive aspects were related to unity (Ding, 2000, p. 112).

From 1978 to mid 1990s, although the rights of people are written in the constitution, the public talk of civil rights was a forbidden zone. For example, while the 1992 constitution prescribed freedom of speech and expression, the constitution also established an obligation for each citizen to uphold the four “basic principles” of party leadership, socialism, dictatorship of the proletariat, and Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought. If an act of speech is held to constitute counterrevolutionary incitement, it is regarded as a crime that may get a penalty of imprisonment of no less than five years. Zhao (2000) cites Andrew Nathan’s study of Chinese constitutional tradition which indicates,

The democratic rights of citizens in these constitutions were not derived from human personhood but were consistently regarded as a grant given by the communist state to the citizens, to enable the citizens to contribute their energies

to the needs of the nation. Communist leaders thus were able to add and withdraw rights casually. They could also write laws to restrict constitutional rights. In this situation, although some democratic rights were written in these constitutions, the Chinese people could hardly exercise the democratic rights prescribed there (Zhao, 2000, p. 45).

Consequently, partly due to the effective monitor and control of the Party system, and partly due to the effect of thousands of years of traditional culture which inculcate the ideas of compliance, respect for authority, and emphasis on unity and social order, there is rare incidence of organized resistance and theoretical challenge toward the dominant ideology and political system.

The market reform launched since late 1970s after the demise of Mao rationalized values contradictory to the claim of a unified interest. Under a more relaxing political atmosphere at the beginning of the reform, scholars began to reflect on the structural reasons that democracy failed to function in China. The “unity of interests” was criticized in early 1986 at a conference on political reform organized by *Chinese Social Science (Zhongguo shuihui Kexue)*, an influential journal published by the Chinese Academy of Social Science. One argument focused on the state-society relationship and suggested that the difference in interests between the state and society provided a basic motivation for democracy: to allow society to protect itself from the state. During the late 1980s, emphasis on the difference rather than the unity of interests as the foundation of democracy became well-established among scholars and gained some official acceptance, as was evidenced by the ensuing voice within the regime.

Ding (2000) in his article “the conceptual evolution of democracy in intellectual circles” summarizes academic discussion related to democracy. In early 1986, Zheng

Shiping, in an article publicized in *Political Science Research of (Zhengzhixue Yanjiu)*, suggests that the past measures of decentralization were ineffective because they focused only on the allocation of power among different levels of government, while the problem of excessive centralization could be solved only by “the return of power to society.” Yan Jiaqi, a leading scholar, supports this position and suggests that the state should give up its total control of society, allowing individuals and social organizations autonomy from the state. Su Shaozhi suggests the existing system in China was that of state socialism, under which the party “developed into an omnipotent structure in charge of everything.” Under this system social and political life became a “unified domain,” suffocating democracy and freedom. Rong Jian, using Marxist perspective to argue for the moment when the society regained its “self-consciousness,” the society would take back the power of the state. He further explains his idea of the two-step-process of returning power to society: economic self-determination and democratization in political arena. Another scholar cites Marx’s notion of communism as “communities of free people” as evidence that the kind of socialism Marx envisioned was built on the basis of a free contractual relationship between the government and the people (Ding, 2000, 112-116).

However, despite the academic discussion about the withdrawal of the state from the social sector, the leadership of the CPC over China is not challenged. In fact there was a “Neo-authoritarianism” school arising in late 1980s that argues for strong leadership from CPC. Sautman, in his article *Sirens of the Strongman* (1992), exhaustively tracks the origin and development of this school. First beginning in 1986 among some young intellectuals in Shanghai, then embraced by some leading

political scientists and policy adviser, such as Wu Jiaxiang, deputy director of the Investigative and Research Department of the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CCCPC), and Chen Yizi, director of the State Council's Institute for Restructuring the Economic System, the central proposition of this school is that in current situations of imperfect market mechanism, divergent interests and low culture level, "it is more feasible and realistic for some powerful leaders to push ahead with modernization than to implement democracy all at once" (Sautman, 1992, p. 76). In June 1988 the leading intellectual newspaper Guangming Daily published an article that used the example of the success of "Four Dragons" in East Asia to argue for a leader as capable as the strongmen in those countries. Wu Jiaxiang illustrates the reason supporting this proposition, "because the decline of traditional authority brings a decentralization whose beneficiaries are not ordinary citizens, but the intermediate social structure created by the old authority, i.e. the officialdom, which grabs power and plunges society into a state without authority, economic freedom or democracy, a liberal, 'enlightened,' 'brilliant' authoritative leader with centralized power is necessary to prevent this situation and remove the obstacles to real freedom (Quoted by Sautman, 1992, p. 78). In the neo-authoritarian system the political leader rather than the political structure is stressed. Moreover, the issue about the foundation of the authority is completely ignored in these discussions.

In 1980s a parallel discussion was going on which focused on justifying civil rights. Shen Yue, a Tianjin scholar, 1986, argued for civil rights through reinterpreting Marxist notion of "Burgeliche Gesellschaft." After scrutiny on Marx's work, she regards that the term of "Burgeliche Gesellschaft" in the work of Marx

actually refers to *townspeople society* (shimin shehui), instead of bourgeois society as previously incorrectly translated and misunderstood. Townspeople are transformed into citizens by their participation in market and bearing of rights and duties in the legal system. Thus civil rights are class-neutral. However, Xi Zhaoyong refuted that Burgeliche in Marx's work mainly referred to bourgeois. Shen Yue used Marx as the theoretical reference since Marxist thought was still the orthodox ideology and theoretical guide at that time. And bourgeois ideology is seen as threatening to CPC rule as well as to national solidarity and social order (Quoted by Ma, 1994).

Similar to the period of Western Enlightenment, Chinese intellectuals were putting efforts on constructing a framework for dealing with the relation between individuals and the society on which the social order is based. (Keane, 1988, p. 37) Liu Zhiguang and Wang Suli (1988), Chinese co-authors of one of the first essays published on the mainland to urge the creation of a civil society within a regime that had fed hitherto upon a deep-seated culture of "dependency on the state," in their essays deemed individualism as the legitimate basis of "civil awareness." (Ma, 1994, p. 184) Liu and Wang differentiated masses with citizens, with the former emphasizing subordination to rulers, while the latter emphasizing individual rights and equality. In contrast, another school neo-traditionalism represented by Ju Mingzhou, emphasized citizens' duties in civil societies. This school argued that without society there is no citizen. The presence of society enables the creation of citizens, and the formation of citizenry represents perfection of individuals. Thus citizens should first be conscious of his membership in the society and takes his responsibility to the society.

Ding (2000) regards that the meaning of civil society as explained by Chinese scholars during this period was a rather weak and passive one. Instead of a well-organized political society confronting the state, it was interpreted as a depoliticized sphere of social and economic life, while the state was given the power to dominate the political life of society. When intellectuals talk about “returning power to the society,” the power in their minds is often limited to economic self-determination. The focus then was not on the right of society to participate in the political process, but on limiting the state power to the political sphere. The emphasis was on separation rather than participation. Also the state rather than civil society is deemed as the main actor in as well as the site of democratization.

This situation got some twist since 1990s. In late 1992, Deng Zhenglai and Jing Yuejing published an article on civil society, in which they defined civil society as “a private sphere of autonomous economic and social activities based on the principle of voluntary contract, and a public sphere of unofficial participation in politics.” (Deng and Jing, 1992, p. 61) The inclusion of “a public sphere of unofficial participation” marked their difference from Wang Jiexiang and Rong Jian’s notion of civil society, which was economically free but politically passive. Deng and Jing envisaged a two-stage development of civil society: the first stage aimed at setting up a “dualistic structure” in the state-society relationship; the second was characterized by the “expansion of civil society from the private to the public sphere” and the development of “positive interaction” and democratic politics. In August 1993, more than forty scholars attended a conference on civil society in Shanghai. At the

conference, Guo Dingping argued that the development of civil society had to precede the transformation of the authoritarian system (Ding, 2000, p. 127).

Different with the claim “small government big society” which emphasized a reconstruction of economic structure, the discourse of civil society never received official recognition. From mid-1990 onward the debate on civil society petered out since the Tiananmen Square incident brought tension between the government and intellectual groups. Later the debate gradually revived, however, the discussion was reoriented toward a “civilized society,” emphasizing the civil behavior of citizens. This notion of citizenry is co-opted into official discourse calling for observance of law from citizens in order to establish a society based on “rule of law” (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p. 125).

In the international seminar held in Tsinghua University in 2000, Yao Xianguo and Yu Jianxin rejected the zero-sum relationship between the society and the state inspired by Locke’s and then developed by neoliberalism. They used the concept of social capital to emphasize the cooperation between the society and the state. They argued that social capital is not something rising and falling out of politics and the government. The formation of social capital depends on state building such as constitution, legality, juridical review, election, parliament, legislation, multi-party, etc. In the meantime, the accumulation of social capital can prevent the arbitrary intervention from the state on the society and contribute to the effective working of the state. Thus they suggest that two processes should be simultaneously going on: strengthen the capability of legislature and enforcement part of the state, and create an

environment conducive to the development of civil associations. This view is representative of the opinions expressed in other articles in this conference.

While advocating individual rights, autonomy, freedom and associational life, the Chinese domestic discussants of civil society hardly challenge the legitimacy of the state. Civil society in their mind is one that maintains a harmonious relation with the state, rather than a hostile rejection of it. Deng Zhenlai and Jing Yuejin (1992) in their article point out that the conflict in the society necessitates the intervention of the state, echoing the theory of Hegel. The civil society discussants emphasize a social life with mutual trust and cooperation. Less attention is paid to the power relation between the individual and the state and between different groups in the society. Meanwhile, it is noticeable civil society was translated as “*shi min she hui*” (*townspeople society*) that excludes rural population from their discussion instead of “*gong min she hui*” (civil society) that has broader inclusion.

3.3 Empirical Research of Civil Society in China

While Chinese scholars are mainly concerned with establishing a normative and prescriptive framework that address the foundation of social order and relationship between the society and the state, Western observers are more concerned with whether such a civil society ever exists in China and what its nature is. Compared to optimism of domestic researchers, Western scholars hold ambiguous view toward the prospect of civil society in China. Especially after the tragedy on June 4, 1989, China watchers became more skeptical of such a development, emphasizing the fragility and weakness of the incipient civil society. Some scholars questioned the applicability of

such a concept, to a society and culture so different with the West where the concept originates.

Inspired by the emergence of semi-autonomous associations in the reform years and the debate over civil society, scholars such as Rowe (1993), Rankin (1993), Huang (1993), and Strand (1990) have explored its historical antecedents in late Qing and republican periods. In the late Qing period, the central state was weakened by internal crisis and external invasion; Chinese officials, intellectuals and average citizens had access to Western political knowledge and social values; and there is an embryo commodity economy, all these were believed to be conducive to the emergence of civil society in modern sense. Scholars explored the richness of associational lives in this period. In his book which studied nineteenth-century Hankou, a commercial center in China, Rowe (1993) argued that local merchant guilds played an active role in the management of local social and economic affairs. Similarly in a case study of Zhejiang province, Rankin (1993) argued that the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864) led to a change in the balance between the state and local elites, and the local elites took over responsibility for the provision of welfare services, the construction of roads and public buildings, and the supervision of irrigation systems, thus assuming public roles.

Rankin preferred to using Habermasian concept of public sphere over civil society because he thought that civil society is more related to Western history of political development and democratic ideals, and the term of public sphere is “less embedded in Western political theory of historical literature and is more adaptable to other parts of the world” (Rankin, 1993, p. 159). Particularly, Rankin finds an overlap

of meaning between Western usage of public sphere and the Chinese term, *gong* or public, in parallel to notions of official (*guan*) and private (*si*). Rankin found that the meaning adhering to the words public are broad and ambiguous: “it may denote the state, civic associations and activities outside the state, consensual or broadly held opinions and values, publicity to project status or aura, openness and common availability, or the existence or pursuit of some general good” (Rankin, 1993, p. 159-160) Thus he found it is perfect to be used in Chinese context to analyze associations, activities, exchanges, facilities, services, and opinions out of state control at that period. Rankin used the term public sphere broadly to refer to an intermediate arena where officials and the populace engage in open public initiatives. As Rankin noted, “such spheres require a state presence, a degree of autonomous or voluntary social involvement, some social impact on policy, and legitimizing idea of the common good” (Rankin, 1993, p. 160).

In the previous review of Western theories of civil society, we have known that Habermas developed the concept of public sphere to refer to a sphere of critical, rational debate that, under the particular historical circumstances of the rise of capitalism in France, Germany, and Britain, became the locus for a political challenge to public authorities. Comparing with the public sphere in the mind of Habermas, we find what’s missing in Chinese context is the “rational and critical communication.” Political communication is going on only within a small group of intellectuals. These intellectuals are more or less connected to the old political structure, and attached to traditional values, so their discussion could hardly be described as critical. The participation in reform is limited to the elite. The elite is consisting of liberal officials

and old gentry with open mind, whose role are different with that of bourgeois in the Western transformation. In fact, Rankin suggested, “the late imperial public sphere was local rather than national, linked to the rise of commerce and commoditization rather than capitalism, consensual rather than confrontational, and characterized by management of local affairs rather than public discussion.” (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p. 127) This public sphere served for the goal of maintaining social solidarity, social order and security more than for promoting justice and democracy.

This role of civil society was reiterated and confirmed by Brook’s study. Through a survey of local sources, Brook (1997) demonstrated the richness of civic culture in Shanghai over the past four centuries, where voluntary organizations have formed around the principles of locality, occupation, fellowship, and common cause. Brook links the expansion of autonomous group formation to state crisis, arguing that such voluntary organizational activity not only compensates for the weakness of the state but serves to stabilize state-society relations (Howell, 2001, p. 127).

In his critical review of Rowe’s and Rankin’s accounts of local elite activism, Wakeman (1993) remained skeptical of the degree of local autonomy, arguing that such activity was officially sponsored and patronized from above and embedded in the complex interlinkages between the bureaucracy and local guilds and associations. Civil society in modern China has a long distance from Western definition of civil society and Habermasian’s public sphere. Wakeman cites Habermas’ definition,

By “public sphere” we mean first of all a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public sphere is open in principle to all citizens... Citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion; thus with the guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely, and express and publicize their opinions freely (p. 111).

And then Wakeman cites Philip Huang's notes,

In the context of Western European history, Habermas' study of the rise of the public sphere is tantamount to a study of the roots of democracy... From the standpoint of the roots of democracy, it was not merely the expansion of the public realm of life that was crucial, but rather its expansion in the context of the assertion of civic power against state power (p. 111).

While this broad participation of citizens in public affair, civil society for democracy, and assertion of civic power against state power are all lacking in findings of studies on Chinese civil society. Wakeman criticizes that Rowe's conclusion of the similarity between Chinese urban society and Western capitalist society is not supported by convincing evidence. Wakeman also comments on the student protest in Tiananmen Square in 1989, thinking "the incipient elements of civil society failed to come together in a sustained and organized way" (p. 112)

Strand (1990) echoes Rankin in the existence of a civil society in the republican period. He noted that restaurants, bathhouses, markets, temples, and brothels in the republican period served a similar role with salons and coffee shops during the emergence of Western capitalism, in these places discussions occurred and a public space was created; the spread of new media such as newspapers and telephones helped to circulate ideas and opinions; the formation of professional associations such as lawyer's guilds and chambers of commerce from 1903 onward pointed to the emergence of a limited public sphere. For Strand this sphere was limited because such associations reflected a mixture of dependence and autonomy, representing social interests, yet at the same time imprinted with state power (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p. 127). Chamberlain (1993) defines civil society in a way that makes it roughly

equivalent to what might be called incipient democracy (p. 223). He concentrates his attention on Chinese phenomenon with the wished-for civil society.

Huang (1993) provides a positive interpretation of this difference between Chinese and Western path of civil society development. Huang used the term “third realm” to refer to a sphere between state and society, with both participating. He stated “The twin processes of modern societal integration and modern statemaking in late Qing and Republican China, limited though they might have been in contrast to the West, led to greater interpenetration of the two and expanded third-realm activities” (p. 229). Huang mentioned that the democracy in early-modern and modern Europe “was born of a high degree of both modern societal integration and modern statemaking” (p. 230). He pointed out that the example of the new chambers of commerce illustrated well the simultaneous involvement of state and society in the new institutions of the third realm, a process making for statemaking and societal integration.

In agreement with Huang, Culp in his studies of the elite-managed educational institutions in Republican period when a weakened and delegitimized bureaucracy caused the devolution of power into the hands of local elites groups, find “it may more productive to see state and social forces interacting in an institutionalized third realm that was a product of merging processes of state building and proliferation of elite voluntary associations” (Culp, 1994, p. 473).

The compromised autonomy of many of these associations and their complex ties with the state inhibited the emergence of a civil society that offered an alternative locus of power challenging state authority. Other characteristics of civil society such

as citizen rights, legal protections, and an effective constitution limiting state power were relatively weak. However, the research of these scholars challenged the assertion of Max Weber that China's failure to develop capitalism was owing to the absence of urban political autonomy and to the dominance of particularistic attachments to native-place kith and kin, and also challenged the famous assertion of "clash of culture" by Huntington who regards that Chinese culture is inimical to Western idea of democracy and civil society can't develop in Chinese context. The presumption of a uniquely unchanging "traditional" China, which so dominated scholarship of the 1950s and 1960s, was still a powerful influence in the field. Rowe and Rankin's argument was framed in this context (Huang, 1993, p. 221).

3.4 Civil Society Development in Contemporary China

In one-party system, the transition of leaders can imply the possibility of transformation in economy and politics. This is what happened in 1970s' China. With the rise of Deng Xiaoping and his pragmatic approach, the emphasis of the state shifted from ideological control to economic development. However, conditions disadvantageous to the development of civil society still exist: the Communist Party doesn't want its legitimacy to be weakened or its authority to be threatened by new powers; Chinese political leaders is unwilling to make change to the fundamental political structure, which is reflected in such political slogans as "constructing socialism path with Chinese characteristics" and "constructing market economy with Chinese characteristics." Chinese intellectuals and the middle class, with their intricate connection with the old system and the ruling party, play an ambiguous role in pushing for democracy. Meanwhile the creation of a political and social

environment advantageous for the development of civil society is hopeful under three changes: 1) with the withdrawal of the state from the social sphere, the third sector is encouraged to fill the blank; 2) with the economic decentralization and marketization, the pervasiveness of party apparatus is reducing, and the control of the Party is declining, thus many social initiatives are tolerated; 3) with the openness to the international environment and China's integration into world affairs, the third realm got support both financially and theoretically.

A focus of academic debate is if there is a middle class or a bourgeois class in China. Howell and Pearce (2001) posit that as a result of restructuring of the social fabric, grater social differentiation, and increased mobility, there is a process of class reformation. A new domestic bourgeoisie is in the making, composed of an expanding group of private traders, private entrepreneurs, and Chinese managers in foreign companies as well as Chinese owners of overseas businesses (p. 131). However, different from the middle class emerging in 17th and 18th century in Western societies, this group has closer connection with the state; it is difficult to find a common identity for this group; they are not spiritual or moral leader of other classes; the members in this group usually do not directly confront with the authority of the state, nor do they have political agenda of democracy issue; they are rational and pragmatic, not risking their careers. (Pearson, 1997)

NGOs come from three sources in China: First, they are transformations from mass organization, such as All China Women's Federation, All China Youth Federation China Association for Science and Technology, and China Disabled Person's Federation. They were established in Leninist-Maoist era to oversee and

mobilize particular constituencies and served as “transmission belt” of government policy. In 1980s, they were transformed into parastatal non-profit sector (also called GONGO) to advance charitable, research, information and polity objectives. The second category is traditional membership associations, such as culture centers, sports and recreation clubs, student societies, professional association, and etc. The third are organizations established by intellectuals or activists who saw the emerging social crisis and the need for non-governmental intervention. Despite of their great contribution to maintaining social stability and vitality, their roles are not officially and socially recognized until the publication of *Civil Society in the Making: 250 NGOs* by the Chinese Development Brief in 2001 (Young, 2001).

The rules governing the formation and activities of social groups were enacted in the wake of the Tiananmen incident of 1989. The State Council Order No. 43, promulgated in October 1989, was entitled The Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Organizations, to replace the “provisional measures” of 1950. It required that no social organizations might carry out their activities before approval for registration has been granted. The timing of its formulation indicated the government’s concern at that time about the emergence of social groups outside government control. During the weeks of political storm leading to the Tiananmen Square incident, quite a few unregistered organizations, e.g., the Beijing Workers’ Autonomous Federation and the Beijing Students’ Autonomous Federation, had been engaged in agitating activities that challenged the Communist Party’s authority. The regulations have been implemented effectively. In 1991, a nationwide investigation was conducted. Some social organizations are disbanded. According to the

pronouncement of the state, these organizations had deviated from the correct political line, used unlawful means to make profit, or avoided government management, causing elements that threatened social stability (Zhang, 1995).

Even in the golden time of forming association between late 1970s to 1980s, when there is no law governing the formation and activities of social organizations, free associationism was far from being really achieved. Although there was no system of national regulation until 1989, they tended to be regulated in an ad hoc manner at sectoral or local levels and were often established under the umbrella of a state department. The unit system, the party network, the nomenklatura system did not change much since Maoist era⁹. As Nathan (1997) said, “The unit system tied both rural and urban residents to a work or residential unit that controlled virtually all functions of their lives. This include jobs, education, marriage, housing, medical care, recreation, and political education.” (p. 55). Thus, people actually do not have much privacy in their lives. Nomenklatura personnel system enabled the party to control the appointment and promotion of officials. Thus if officials failed in identifying “dissidents” and repressed their action timely, their political career will fail. Using social mechanism of control including control of media and party network, the state can guide the thinking of people. As a result, even during 1980s, those unregistered association cannot reach a broad population. Their activities are only limited to a small group of core members.

⁹ The nomenklatura were a small, élite subset of the general population in the Communist countries who held various key administrative positions throughout the governmental system, as well as throughout the party's own hierarchy. The Communist party has the authority to make appointments to these key positions.

Autonomy of semi-governmental and non-governmental organizations is a major focus of research in this period. The mass organizations is observed to have transformed from “transmission belt” in Maoist era to service-oriented, working style, activities and structures, adopting new ideas and openness to global norm and trend. For example the All-China Federation of Trade Unions has set up legal departments to assist worker with contractual issues and to deal with labor disputes. The All-China Federation of Women has conducted research into discrimination against women in the workplace, has pressed for legislation to protect women’s interests, and has expanded international networks (Howell, 1996).

Though the tight regulatory framework makes the process of registration more complicated, people continue to organize in ways that bypass the regulations or require less formalities such as affiliating with another association or forming networks (Saich, 2000). Merle Goldman (1991), Andrew Nathan (1990), Michel Bonnin and Yves Chevrier (1991) have discerned a nascent Chinese civil society in the successful creation of networks of independent organizations “outside state control” by such intellectuals as Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming in the period preceding the spring of 1989. Gu (2000) studies four intellectual groups, The Development Group led by Chen Yizi, the Beijing Social and Economic Science Institution (BSESI) founded by Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao, The Cultural Academy founded by young scholars in Beijing University, and the editorial committee of the *Toward the Future* series led by Jin Guantao and his wife Liu Qingfeng. These four groups represent different scholarly schools and have distinct mission. Gu illustrates that these intellectual organizations either avoid this restraint

by registering as for-profit corporations or minban institute, or possessing great level of decision-making autonomy by gaining support of high-rank reformist bureaucrats, and argues for the emergence of independent intellectual public sphere. However, Chamberlain (1993) criticizes that these organizations are missing the thesis of “popular consciousness.” He cautions that “The constituent elements of a nascent civil society are relatively limited in number, largely urban based, mainly centered in the intellectual-student community.”

Echoing the global civil society movement, popular resistance in China is another focus of research as symptom of civil society. Evidence showed that resistance and protest against authority arose during the economic reform (Perry, 2001; Saich, 2000). As victims of reform and government corruption, urban workers who were laid off and farmers who are further marginalized by economic liberation, spontaneously organized protests and complaint activities, seeking compensation and fair treatment from the government. Due to the strong state control and lack of legal organization for coordination and collective bargaining, these protests are just ephemeral phenomena. They are easily oppressed or pacified, with leaders being imprisoned or under supervision for very long time. And in these protests, people aggregated without long-term goal. (Wakeman, 1993)

Following the Eastern European model of civil society vs. dictatorial state model, writers such as Gold (1990), Ostergaard (1989) and Strand (1990) saw the “Tiananmen Square incident” as indicative of an emerging civil society. Chamberlain (1993) reports that this temptation comes from

the manifestly high level of political awareness and sophistication among student involved in the demonstrations; the insistent student demands for autonomy; the warm support given to students not only by “white-collar” professionals but also by the bulk of ordinary citizens; the seeming ability of the demonstrator to police and govern themselves in the midst of chaotic conditions; the aura of goodwill and “civility” pervading the streets of Beijing (p. 199).

For Sullivan (1990) the hallmark of civil society is the capacity of once alienated groups within society to overcome their differences and present a solid front in the face of an intransigent regime. Chamberlain is skeptical of the “emergence of a cohesive popular consciousness” and points out the fragility of such united front and lack of enduring change. Compared to old tradition of protesting the state, Chamberlain recognizes that there is increasing request and practice of open discussion in the process, and the goal is compatible with the global democratic project; for openness, less corruption, democracy. However, he observes no shared identity among the participants that ties them together. Discussion and decision-making is still limited to a small group.

In Chinese history, there are not many records of collaboration across classes. Peasants’ strikes happened a lot of times in history, and occasionally there are intellectual protests against the authority. But only in times of national crisis, there is formation of alliance among different classes. The Communist Party of China (CPC) was once very successful in utilizing national crisis to mobilize workers, peasant, students, intellectuals, and even capitalists to work together for the same goal. But in most of the time, the line between different groups is clear. In contemporary China, urban citizens are blaming village migrant workers as the source of chaos and crimes, and similarly, “white collars” do not believe that they have similar interest with workers in factories. Due to the lack of communication among different groups, there

is absence of consensus. This further reduced the motivation to challenge the state's transgression, because with the possibility of acquiesce of other groups to state's transgression, there is greater chance for the challenge to fail (Weingast, 1997).

3.5 Historical Institutionalism

While the theories and empirical research on civil society provide a framework to evaluate the feature of civil society, historical institutionalism provides a framework to analyze the process of the formation of civil society. The transition of society involves the restructuring of the power system and the struggle between these power holders. Historical institutionalism “represents an attempt to illuminate how political struggles are mediated by the institutional setting in which [they] take place.” (Steinmo, Thelen, & Longstreth, 1992, p.2) Among a variety of theories that explain how preferences are formed among individuals and groups or why one alternative is preferred over another, there are two kinds of explanations especially competing with each other: rational choice institutionalism, and historical institutionalism. Both theories acknowledge the impact of institutional circumstances on shaping individual choices. However, rational choices model views actors as self-interest seekers, that during collective decisions each actor attempts to maximize his own interest. Institutions set down the rules of game, such as whether it is a zero-sum game or win-win game, and how much to win or to lose, and players try to maximize their benefits within the rules (North 1990, and Bates 1989). Historical institutionalists agree with rational institutionalists on the constraining effect of institutions, but they want to go further and argue that institutions plays a much greater role in shaping politics than that suggested by a narrow rational choice model.

According to historical institutionalism, individuals are not so much as all-knowing, rational maximizers, but more as rule-following “satisficers” (Hall 1986, and Skocopol, 1985). This is largely due to the limited reasoning capacity of human beings and lack of information and knowledge about alternative. As Thelen and Steinmo (1992) convincingly address, people don’t stop at every choice they make in their lives and think to themselves, “now what will maximize my self-interest?” Instead, most of us, most of the time, follow societally defined rules, even when so doing may not be directly in our self-interest.

Rational choice and historical institutionalism also diverges on the issue of preference formation. Rational choice institutionalists have a difficulty to operationalize self-interest, that in many cases they just make assumptions about what that self-interest is, such as certain benefits or certain positions, and in many cases they avoid this difficulty by focusing on strategies players adopt. And institutions primary provide a context imposing constraint on strategies. This is quite different from historical institutionalists, who argue that not just the strategies but also the goals actors pursue are shaped by institutional context. Thus, historical institutionalism is especially helpful in analyzing that how the change of institutional contexts impacts the shift of interests and values, which is essential in the transition of society.

Historical institutionalists work with a definition of institutions that includes both formal organizations and informal rules and procedures that structure conduct (Steinmo & Thelen, 1992, p. 2). Key to their analyses was the notion that institutional factors can shape both the objectives of political actors and the distribution of power

among them in a given policy (p. 6). One feature typifying this new institutional perspective is its emphasis on what Hall (1986) refers to as the “relational character” of institutions. More important than the formal characteristics of either state or societal institutions per se is how a given institutional configuration shapes political interactions.

Historical institutionalists often disagree on what is counted as institution. Some are more focused on formal structures and legislature system. For example, Immergut’s (1992) comparative analysis of health care policy in France, Switzerland and Sweden illustrates how a nation’s electoral rules and constitution provide the institutional rules of the game in which political battles are fought. Weir’s (1992) study of evolution of employment policy from 1920s to the 1980s summarizes the organization of political institutions such as parties, legislative and legal processes are instrumental in determining how groups define their policy interests. Their studies ignore the importance of social structures and informal social norms to forming preferences and choices. Steinmo and Thelen (1992), in their book *Structuring Politics*, offer their view of how broadly the institutional net should be cast, emphasizing that social structures and norms are accountable as institutional contexts for behaviors and choices.

Thus the term “institution” can encompass a wide range of meanings. For example, Peter Hall’s (1986) definition includes “the formal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating practices that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of the polity and economy.” John Ikenberry (1988) breaks down his definition into three distinct levels that “range from specific characteristics

of government institutions, to the more overarching structures of state, to the nation's normative social order." Another widely used definition is provided by Scott (1995) who distinguishes three institutional pillars: "Institutions consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior. Institutions are transported by various carriers- cultures, structures, and routines- and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction." As Thelen and Steinmo (1992) comment, historical institutionalists lack the kind of universal tool kit and universally applicable concepts on which other more deductive theories are based. Rather than deducting hypotheses on the basis of global assumptions and prior to the analysis, historical institutionists generally develop their hypotheses more inductively, in the course of interpreting the empirical material itself. Each researcher would get a different set of institutions and interactions among institutions that accounts for decisions, policies and organizational changes. And this kind of exploration would also be a task in my study. I would use both the previous literature and my own fieldwork to construct the framework of institutions that are relevant to the development of civil society.

3.5.1 Political Regime and Regulative Structure

Researchers recognize the most determinant context is political regime and party structure, which decides how far the reach of the state could be achieved. The common sense is that civil society is relatively weak in authoritarian state and one-party state compared to democratic state and multiple-party state. Structures of political and civic participation are essential for the constitution of a public space (Hahn, 1995). Variations within the political regime include the difference of

constitutional rule, electoral rule, and importantly, the level of centralization and decentralization, which influence the legitimacy of social activities and the range of these activities.

The Communist Party of China (CPC) is the party in power in China. The CPC has both central and local organizations. At the top is the Central Committee and, when it is not in session, the Political Bureau (Politburo) and its Standing Committee exercise the power of the Central Committee. Both the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee are elected by the plenary session of the Central Committee. In reality, the Politburo oversaw the operations of the government and made all major policy decisions. The state administrative organs of the People's Republic of China include the central and local administrative organs. The central administrative organ is the Central People's Government, better known as the State Council. Local administrative organs are local people's governments at four levels: the provinces (autonomous regions and centrally administered municipalities), cities and prefectures, counties and townships. The administrative organs are under the leadership of the CPC, with the Secretary of the Party Committee as the highest authority in each level of government. In China all the government officials are appointed by the CPC Organization Department. People can elect for the deputies of local People's Congresses. Each local People's Congress then conducts an election for the next higher level of People's Congress, culminating in elections for the national legislature body: the National People's Congress (NPC). NPC is the nominal highest organ of state power, with the rights of legislation, decision, supervision, election and

removal. However, the nomination of the candidates the NPC is still largely determined by CPC.

Researchers find that economic reform of China results in increasing decentralization which changes the relation between the central government and local government. Dittermer & Hurst (2002) are concerned with the change of power balance between central and local politics. They observed that during early the reform era, the state apparatus devolve greater decision making authority to local levels, in part because of uncertainty or opposition to reforms and in part because the central state itself was quite weak in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. This shift of decision-making power results in variety of political control model depending on local political and social climate, and consequently variety of possible spaces allowed for civil society development.

Researchers find that economic reform also impacted the use of monitoring and control mechanism. Walder (1994), a leading political scientist in Harvard University, in his theoretical discussions on institutional change in communist regime, argues convincingly that economic liberation has created alternative channel for officials to obtain material benefit and thus officials are less motivated to obey the command from their superiors. And while economic liberation also increase the cost for monitor and control, such inspective and control actions declined. Minxin Pei (1994) in his study on the transition of Communism in China and Soviet Union has argued that “reform in the communist systems tends to generate and accelerate the decay of the key institutions it seeks to preserve and revitalize” (p. 49).

3.5.2 Political culture

Political culture constructs the persistence of certain mental forms that tend to direct, inspire, and orient individual responses to significant and often divisive issues, including the attitudes toward the state, bureaucracy, change, minorities, and so forth (Timaneanu, 1995, p.7). Thus there is no doubt that political culture has a strong influence on civil society development. Jeffrey Hahn (1995) points out that even the most committed activists would fail in their democratic actions in the absence of a supportive political culture. Timaneanu articulates that creating an open society out of authoritarian traditions and habits are indeed the most daunting political and social tasks. According to Timaneanu, a psychological readiness for change is essential for civil society to emerge, survive and sustain.

Kelly and He (1992) point out that the communist hegemony over mainland China radically reinforced the age-old tradition of unitary, non-competitive politics, and has created a highly centralized, state-dependent society. Civil society in China has lacked ideological validation and legitimacy. An example is that rather than choosing to support democratization based on the renewal of civil society, the post-Marxist trajectory of the intellectuals is from the party-state democracy towards the “new authoritarianism.” (Kelly and He, 1992, p. 33; Sautman, 1992).

Feng Chen (referred by Dittermer 2002, p. 21) echoes this view and points out that despite its far more elastic contours and attendant loss of popular credibility, Marxist ideology continues to legitimize the absolute control of Communist party and rationalize regime maintenance of control over the masses and perhaps to encourage a more long-term perspective on elite political theorizing and collective

agenda setting for the future. In the contrast, Dittermer observed that orthodox ideology is increasingly subsumed by local political culture.

In the society, Confucianism has dominated China for thousands of years. About the role of Confucianism in Chinese politics, scholars have different judgment. Some thought the “min ben” thought in Confucianism shows respect to public will. “Min ben” means treating the welfare of the common people as the basis of the wealth and power of the polity. It is reflected in the classic Chinese statement *min wei bang ben* (people alone are the basis of the state). Such a conception, however, presupposes a distinction between the ruler and the ruled, and exhorts the ruler to pacify the common people in order to achieve the stability of their ruling. Guang (1996) comments that “Minben is very much a paternalistic idea. It seeks to ensure the welfare of the common people in order to keep the rulers in power, not to extend to the people autonomy and power of participation in government” (p. 423). Other scholars including famous political scientist Samuel Huntington argues that Confucianism is inimical to democracy. “Confucianism's insistence on the importance of equality over freedom, sympathy over rationality, civility over law, duty over rights, and human-relatedness over individualism seems opposite to the value-orientation of the modern West” (Tu, 2001, p. 13).

Sen argues in his discussion on global roots of democracy, that diversity is feature of most cultures in the world, and culture is not resistant to change. There is evidence that political attitudes and political behavior of people change recently. Shi Tianjin (1999) finds that economic growth makes people to have more confidence in asserting their own interest and more efficacy in political participation. And Chinese

intellectuals, inspired by civil society discussion in the West and global civil society movement, and encouraged by loosened ideological control by the state, began to criticize “unity of interests,” attempted to justify civil rights, and argued for “returning power to the society” (Ma, 1994).

What is worthy of noticing is that in an authoritarian regime where the political and social institutions are in the control of the ruler, the political culture is primarily shaped by the need of the ruler, and the existing political and social institutions, such as the administrative structure and the education system, keep reinforcing the political culture to solidify the power of the ruler. Thus, in ancient China, even though Confucian thought mentioned the importance of the people’s welfare, the political institutions reinforced the ruler’s interpretation of Confucius theory that emphasizes the compliance of the people to the emperor and his officials. In Chinese history, political culture shifts when there is phenomenal change in political contexts or when the state is relatively weak, such as in the late Qing Dynasty and in late 1970s.

3.5.3 Social Structure

Fewsmith (1999) identifies and distinguishes two political models in analyzing the relationship between social and political change. The model of elite politics sees politics as limited to a small group within the state agencies and thus politics are relatively autonomous from society and hence resistant to change. The other model emphasizes mutual penetration and interaction between the state and society, and thus the structural change within the society would influence the power balances and change of policy orientation. Scholars who study contemporary China have discovered changes in social structure after the economic reform has created potential

to change the political scenery. There emerged a “middle class” comprising business elites, professionals, and intellectuals in China (Dittmer & Hurst, 2002). Although the members in this group usually do not directly confront with the authority of the state, or have political agenda of democracy, due to their possession of valuable resources, expertise, and knowledge, they nevertheless have more negotiation power with the state.

Institutions shape people’s attitudes and preferences, and reversely people’s preference shape the institutional design. It is especially compelling to look at the moments of institutional change. Conflicts over institutions and their outcomes reflect the change of interests and power relations in the society. To the relevance of my research, neo-institutional theories adopting a historical perspective do not assume an essential relation between the state and society. The degree and strength of autonomy and capacity of multiple political actors, including the state, to act are constrained by historical context and current forces. And the actions the state and the society take affect subsequent rounds of political choices. Humans both make and are made by their own history. Thus, rather than viewing human choice as bound by static institutional constraints, historical institutionalists see choice bound by history itself. Discussion of the nature of civil society and the state-society relationship relies on the understandings of the interactions between human and institutions in a real world.

Thus, in the following chapters, besides examining the contextual factors enabling the emergence of the public space and the increasing activities conducted by social groups, the researcher will pay attention to the following aspects:

1) *The interactions between the society and the state.* Past research has focused on the organizational structure of social associations or forms of social actions, but does not pay enough attention to how the state and social groups interact with each other. The respective power of the state and the social groups, and the way they interact using their power directly impact the results of the social groups' efforts and the feature of the civil society.

2) *The outcome of social actions and state-society interaction, especially the institutional change in political, social and cultural aspects.* We not only pay attention to the actions taken by social groups, but what consequence that their actions lead to, which should be an essential part in our observation and description of transition to civil society.

3.6 Implication for My Study

I intend to study the nature of civil society and the change of state-society relationship in China. The literature review in this and the previous chapter provides me certain conceptual lens to observe such a civil society, for example, if it focuses on self-determination, or political rights, or participative structure of policy-making. And the literature also provides theoretical tools to describe the associational, symbolic (if the civil society groups have capacity to generate alternative values) and cognitive (if there is such consciousness of civil society differentiated from the state) dimensions of civil society. Educational institutions, with the state, market, society all involved, are good examples to observe how the society interacts with the market and the state.

Historical institutionalism provides a framework to explain the nature of civil society and change of state-society relationship. In this study, I will study two cases: one is a private university in urban city whose programs are more market-oriented, and another is a non-governmental open university in rural village that focuses on educating peasants with both development skills and critical thinking. By studying the similarity and difference of the two institutions in academic missions, educational values, strategies to survive and expand, connection with other social groups and organizations, and ways of interaction with the government, it expects to understand how institutional contexts, such as regulative structure, local political culture, and social networks, that impact on the nature of civil society in China.

Many previous studies of Chinese civil society emphasize the initiatives of the society, and the interaction between the state and society is rarely discussed. However, both the state and society changes in response to contextual transition, and they are mutually molding each other in their interactions. I hope to explore civil society development in China while viewing civil society both as arenas responsive to institutional transformation as well as arenas that construct values and carry out actions which can bring change to institutional contexts.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses case study methodology to examine the establishment and development of two non-governmental higher education institutions and their interactions with the government, and thus contribute to the broader theory about the evolvement of state-society relationship. Moreover, the exploratory nature of this study and the emphasis on multifaceted social processes calls for a qualitative method in order to: 1) generate data that accounts for the relative social complexities of the research questions; 2) render conclusions regarding the theoretical relevance of this study.

In this chapter I will first offer a justification for using a qualitative case study approach to answer the research questions, and I will describe what my case is. Next, I will describe the data sources that will be utilized in the study. Finally, I will talk about some validity issues in conducting the research.

4.1 Qualitative Methods and Case Study Justification

Many analysts of political culture pursued their projects through statistical interpretations of large-scale attitude surveys. These surveys provide information about people's attitude toward democratic concepts and practices. For example, to study the political culture in rural Botswana, Parson (1977) surveyed 1,060 households in rural Botswana to get information about: 1) the knowledge of the actors in, and the processes and activities, of the political system; 2) the participation in voting; 3) the evaluation of the services and policies of the government. In another

study, Shi Tianjian conducted a survey to study the political attitudes of people in Beijing, China after the economic reform. Shi Tianjin (1999) finds that economic growth made people to have more confidence in asserting their own interest. However, survey has its limitation. First, people's knowledge of the political system is a potential source that directs people's behavior, but not a good indicator of their real behavior in the reality, just like a people familiar with Kantian thought probably not behave in a way guided by the thought. Often there is gap between what people believe and what people do, either because he is constrained by the surrounding condition, or he chose the way that benefit him most instead the way he though most correct. Second, survey shows a snapshot of the society, but not a live picture of how actors interact with each other to make the society function or make the society transform.

There is another method often used to study civil society, the historical method: many well-known studies on civil society are conducted by historians, such as the study of the public life in Zhejiang province after the Taiping rebellion (1851-1864) conducted by Rankin (1993), and the study of the nineteenth-century Hankou by Rowe (1993), and the study of rise of the bourgeois public sphere since the 18th century by Jürgen Habermas (1989). Data resources include documents, sound recording, pictures, artifacts, and other original work that was created at or near the time being studied, narrative accounts by people who experiences the time being studies, and secondary historical records.

Compared to survey or historical study, qualitative research enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individual or place and to be highly

involved in actual experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research expands the range of knowledge and understanding of the world beyond the researchers themselves. It often helps us see why and how something is the way it is, rather than just presenting a phenomenon. For this study about the development of non-governmental educational institutions, the goal is not only to observe this phenomenon, but to find out how this phenomenon happens and why it happens in specific time and place. Miles (1983) asserts that qualitative methods are a bona fida area of scholarly research because they attempt to gather comprehensive and “rich” data from multiple sources. A qualitative study, then, might investigate a problem that is otherwise difficult to depict through numbers or survey data.

Compared to historical method, case study focuses on contemporary phenomenon within real-life contexts (Yin, 2003). It provides a systematic way of looking at the phenomenon, and as a result the researcher may gain a sharpened understanding of why the instance happened as it did, and what might become important to look at more extensively in future research. It does not aim at obtaining a big picture of the history, but an in-depth understanding of specific issues bounded by time and space.

Prior research documents the validity of using the case study method in analyzing similar civil society organizations or activities. Morgan and Bergerson (2000) used case study methodology to study the process of introducing and implementing lay boards at a number of higher educational institutions. This study revealed how internal and external forces influenced the process, and how multiple actors, values, structures, and interactions were involved. Gu (2000) studies four

cases of the development of intellectual groups and argues for the emergence of intellectual public sphere in China. The four cases illustrate different relationships that intellectuals have developed with the state in 1980s and 1990s. Culp (1994) used case study methodology to investigate educational associations and institutions in two counties: Jianshan and Lanqi, in order to understand local politics in Republican China. Case study can explore complex occurrence to achieve a holistic understanding of the occurrence.

In addition, the case study technique is appropriate for exploring a topic on which little empirical research exists. Often qualitative studies are undertaken because there is a lack of theory, or existing theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon. There are thus no hypotheses to be deducted from theory to guide the investigation. Qualitative investigators build toward theory from observations and intuitive understandings gained in the field (Merriam, 1998). Since the politics of non-governmental education institutions has rarely been studied before, case study technique will contribute to theory development for this phenomenon.

In deciding which cases to study, probabilistic sampling is not necessary or even justifiable since statistical generalization is not a goal of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). On the contrary, it is what we can learn from the case, not whether it is representative or not, that determines the case selection (Stake, 1995). In my study, I chose two cases: one is a private university in *Xi'an*, the capital of Shaanxi province; another is a non-governmental open university in *Ding xian*, a rural county in HeBei Province. These two institutions are chosen for study because first, they illustrate the social efforts to break the monopoly of the government in managing the

formal and informal education. Each is a pioneer institution in their respective area, the area of private higher education and the area of peasant adult education, and their experiences tell a comparatively complete story of state-society interaction in these two areas; second, despite all kinds of difficulties, both institutions sustain to today; third, both institutions have complex social networks with the government, traditional educational institutions, and other non-governmental organizations, which would be valuable to the study of state-society relationship; fourth, both institutions have certain influence in their respective area as well as in policy-making. Thus, through the case we can gain an understanding of how they expand their influences. In this study, the cases are bounded both by location (two provinces) and by the time period beginning from the establishment of the universities through the time of my fieldwork.

Personal familiarity with the two institutions and the consequent trust between the researcher and the people in the two institutions are additional reasons for choosing the two cases. Since 2002, the researcher has been involved in a project on “Improving the quality of private higher education in China through policy advocacy and accreditation system,” led by Professor Jing Lin and Fengqiao Yan and sponsored by the Ford Foundation. By participating in this project, I have had chances to talk with people of the private university on phone, and visited the campus in 2005. So, I am not a complete stranger to them. For another Institute for peasant adult education, I knew one of the founders before the institute was established, and became a volunteer of the Institute since its existence. The trust between the two institutions and the researcher help me gain entry into the two organizations and obtain access to necessary information.

These two institutions are working respectively in an urban and a rural area; they have different ownership structure and administrative structure; they have different academic missions, and have developed different systems of recruiting professors and admitting students. They have different visions about the social order and thus choose to focus on different groups and adopt different education methods to approach the vision. The differences reflect the multiple and parallel processes of “development models” that are experimented in contemporary China. In the implementation of the government’s “open door” policy, China since the early 1980s has been exposed to diverse ideas, institutions, practices, and models from the world, which are different or even contradicting, and individuals and social groups got their inspirations from different sources. People are pursuing the modernization path and simultaneously contemplating on the problems of modernization. In contrast to the common sense that “civil society” is one unitary field, civil society is the aggregate of multiple and overlapping spaces which have different structures and develops in different paces. Simultaneously, the revelation of any similarity of politics of these two institutions may demonstrate the influence of a more overarching institutional context such as political culture on state-society relationship.

4.2 Data Sources and Data Collection Strategy

I used interviews and documents as primary sources for data collection in my study. Yin (2003) identified interview as “essential sources of case study information” (p. 89), because interview can focus directly on case study topic and can provide perceived causal inferences. In addition, Murphy contends that interviews are the best qualitative data source when “you are interested in examining issues of a

process—how decisions were made” (p. 77). According to Murphy, interview data may be used to determine how complex events occurred, who was involved, and what the program or policy means to key participants and influentials. For example, Pearson (1997) used interviews to investigate the attitude and involvement of business elites in politics.

Yin (2003) mentioned that “Interviews will appear to be guided conversations rather than structured queries...Your actual stream of questions in a case study interview is likely to be fluid rather than rigid” (p. 89). Thus, I used open-ended questions in interviews to ask respondents about factual data as well as their opinions about events. The interview protocol is derived from the overarching research question and subquestions (See Annex 1-4). The interview helped me to get information about who are involved, how they are involved, what factors impact their preferences, what, how and why certain actions are taken, what the interaction among different actors are like, and how they perceive the relationships between the state and social groups.

Document analysis provides critical information about historical events and the institution’s development. The case related documents include website of both organizations, meetings notes, project proposals, government regulations, brochure of workshops, evaluation reports, and the organizations’ newsletters, yearbooks and research journals. Documents are primary data sources in some research on organizational change in China (Saich, 2000). Documents can cover a broad range of information, such as names, times, events, decisions, and outcomes, even though they may not be always accurate and may even carry some biases. Document is also useful

“to corroborate an augment evidenced from other sources” (Yin, 2003, p. 87). To ensure validity, the analysis has considered the source of documentation, the authorship of the documents and the intended use of the documents.

4.2.1 Interview Pool Selection

I used purposeful sampling to construct my interview pool. Merriam (1998) explains, “purposeful sampling is based on the assumption the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p 61). The aim of the fieldwork was to describe and analyze the evolvement of state-society relationship from the stories of two educational institutions. Key informants with special knowledge of the development of the two educational institutions were consulted. For the purpose of my study, I interviewed 1), Founders and administrators in the private university in Xi’an; 2), Founders and administrators in the Institute for Rural Reconstruction in Ding Xian; 3), Officials in local and central government who are in charge of approving and accrediting private higher education institutions. The founders and administrators in both educational institutions helped me to know the stories behind their survival and development, and to understand the how institutions interact with the government. The interview with the president and faculty in both educational institutions also helped me learn about their educational values and their perception toward the role of education in a changing society and in politics. The interview with officials helped to obtain an understanding toward the relationship between the state and educational institutions from the perspective of the government.

4.2.2 Fieldwork

Yuhua University

The fieldwork of Yuhua University was primarily conducted between May and June in 2005. In May 25, 2005, with other researchers of the Ford project, the researcher went to Yuhua University. The Ford project had provided certain research grant to teachers in the project's two participating private universities in order to improve the quality of teaching and management at the universities. A conference was held for the private university faculty to present their papers. The researchers listened to the presentation of teachers about their research design and findings. In addition, as a part of the Ford Project which was to evaluate the quality of Yuhua University, the researchers conducted group interviews with teachers, staff and students in each educational institute. This focus group was not a representative sample of teachers and students in each university. It consisted of people who were willing to participate in the focus group and talk with the researchers. 12 teachers and 17 students participated in the group interview. In this group interview, the researchers mainly asked about why they chose to work in the university and their feelings about the university. Although this is not in the fieldwork plan of the researcher, the group interview helped the researcher understand if the teachers and students feel the same way about the university as the administrators told us.

After other researchers of the Ford project left, the researcher of this dissertation stayed for another two weeks and conducted interviews with the key informants. The founder was not in Yuhua University at that time, but was pursuing his doctoral degree in Britain. And the researcher interviewed him through phone before and after

the visit to the private university. During the two-week stay in Yuhua University, the researcher interviewed the deputy president, and then through the introduction of the deputy president, interviewed the other six administrators, among them, two co-founders of Yuhua University who are also in the Board of trustees, one Vice President, the Dean for academic programs, one administrator for student affair, and one editor in the research center. These people were selected for their knowledge in each of the important transformation stage of Yuhua University.

The researcher also interviewed two municipal government officials in Xi'an city where the private university is located. The government officials were the Director and Assistant Director of the Office of Education Run by Non-governmental Sectors (OERNGS). They were selected because the Office was the direct supervising government branch of the private university.

For the private university, secondary data are also collected from the following

- 1) Website of the university which provides background information about the university, such as organizational structure, academic programs, personnel, and etc.
- 2) Yearbook, which provides key events of the university over the years
- 3) Government regulations, including regulation issued by the provincial and central government.
- 4) Articles about how the regulation is drafted, written by the Office of Education Run by Non-governmental Sectors.
- 5) Research publications of the research center in Yuhua University, which show the research capacity of the university, as well as the research focus of the University.
- 6) Newspaper reports about the university.

Dingxian Institute of Peasant Education

From the end of June to the end of July, 2005, the researcher visited the Dingxian Institute of Peasant Education (DIPE). The researcher interviewed the president, and interviewed the other seven administrators, among them, two founders of the Institute and also the members in the board of trustees, the assistant of the President, the Director of Office, the Chief of Staff who was in DIPE from the very beginning, one for the research, one responsible for ecological agriculture and one responsible for the ecological architecture, altogether eight people. The interviewees were selected according to their involvement in and knowledge about each of the important working area of DIPE.

The researcher interviewed two municipal government officials in Ding Zhou city where the institution is located, one is in OERNGS, the direct supervising government branch of the Institute, and another is in the Bureau of Agriculture which has cooperative relationship with the Institute.

For DIPE, the case related documents were collected from the following

- 1) Website of organizations, which provides background information about the university, such as organizational structure, academic programs, personnel, discussion topics, key events, and etc.
- 2) Notes of meetings and workshops, which provide detailed records of each workshop and meetings.
- 3) Journals written by volunteers, which provide information about the experiences of the volunteers in the Institute.
- 4) Newsletters regularly published by the Institute.
- 5) Newspapers co-edited by the Institute and the villagers.
- 6) Evaluation reports written by scholars and volunteers students.

- 7) Media report of the Institute.
- 8) Publication of the Institute.
- 9) Government regulations about peasant cooperative and non-poisonous farming.

When the researcher was on site, there was a workshop on peasant economic cooperative, and a workshop for ecological architecture. The researchers observed how the workshop was conducted, how students participated in the discussion, and how students responded to the content of the workshop. The observation provides the researcher a chance to obtain close-up examination of the Institute's practice, and also triangulates the information obtained through notes of meetings and workshops taken by volunteers and the Institute's staff before. In DIPE, the researcher also talked with villagers and participants of the workshop in an informal way. Although this is not in the fieldwork plan of the researcher and is not included in the data analysis, the informal conversation with the participants helped the researcher understand the views of villagers toward the Institute.

Issues of Entry, and Ethics

Compared to the limited access to information and the relatively tight control over Chinese society during 1950s and 1960s, a condition that severely handicapped many areas of American research on contemporary China, China's political liberalization in the post-Mao era has opened up the availability of data source for research. Harding (1993) writes, "Chinese officials began to make themselves available for interviews...and limited opportunities opened up for fieldwork in

China,” particularly for those who had institutional and personal contacts in the country (p. 26). However, afraid to be involved in any kinds of trouble, or not seeing the necessity of being studied, many organizational leaders, and government officials and staff may refuse to be interviewed or to provide documents for research projects.

In Xi’an city, with the Ford Project and the connection of the primary investigators of the Ford project with the government, two government officials in OERNGS accepted my interview. When I called the other government officials, they were unwilling to undergo the interview in the excuse of either being too busy or they are not the right person to talk with.

In Dingzhou city, due to the tension between DIPE and OERNGS¹⁰, and due to the sensitivity of the local government toward visitors from abroad¹¹, the government officials explicitly stated they do not welcome me or any reporters or researchers. But some local government officials visited DIPE during the workshops, and the researchers took the opportunity to talk with two officials.

The lack of primary source from the government about the attitude and opinion is partly compensated by talking to other people inside as well as outside the two educational institutions to know about how government interact with Yuhua University and deal with issues such as land, tax, program registration, and accreditation, as well with DIPE to deal with issues such as land, registration, grant application, and etc.

¹⁰ The Institute is organizing workshop on peasant cooperative, which is regarded by the municipal government to be beyond the range of operation stipulated on the Institute’s license. The detail of the government-Institute tension will be described in Chapter Eight.

¹¹ There is a conflict between the local government and the villager on the use of land, which led to fight between the two sides. The government is wary of visitors from outside the city, especially from abroad, who may expose the issue to the media.

Before the interviewing, the researcher disclosed the purpose of the research to interviewees, and obtained the consent of the interviewee in sharing the information for research purpose. For ethical concerns, the researcher will protect the anonymity of the informants. In the dissertation, for clarity reasons, only the function of the interviewee has been displayed, i.e., the president, head of village, chief of staff, etc.

Data Collection Procedures

The interviews made use of three recording methods: audiotaping (using digital voice-recorders), photography, and taking written notes.¹² The researcher took written notes in all interviews regardless of whether or not the interviews were audiotaped. If allowed by the interviewees, the interviews were recorded on digital voice-recorder with high storing capacities. This enabled the possibility to check accuracy of the written notes after the interview was conducted. However, when the interviewees explicitly expressed that they do not want their words to be audiotaped or they felt uncomfortable when there was voice-recorder around, the researcher would only take notes of the conversation. The two institutions were photographed, to facilitate description and analysis of the setting.

Self-reflective notes were recorded in a field journal, which was consulted throughout the drafting of the dissertation. Also, notes and recordings were subject to in-the-field analysis, and enabled consequent fine-tuning of interview questions.

¹² Most case study researchers recommend using written notes, because of the time-consuming transcription of audiotaping (Stake, 1995).

4.3 Data Analysis Procedures

4.3.1 Case Analysis Strategies

After the field work, the field notes and recordings were transcribed. All interviews were fully transcribed. Every interview is stored as a file labeled with time and name of interviewee. The other information was stored by the source of information. Simultaneously, reading through all collected information, including written notes of interviews, documents, observational fieldnotes, and etc, is necessary for obtaining a sense of the overall data (Tesch, 1990; Creswell, 1998). During the general review of all information, reflective notes and preliminary findings in the form of memos were written down.

After the transcription of fieldnotes and interviews, the multiple sources of data from both cases are organized in a chronological order to unfold the evolution of state-society relationship over time. The state-society relationship is not a static state and the development of civil society is in a dynamic changing process in the transitional period of China's economic and political changes. Events are labeled, such as "getting registered", "getting approval for land use right", "planning workshop", etc, that identified a move of the organization for practicing its missions or interacting with other groups. For interactions, key actors involved are highlighted, such as "with the government", "with other social organizations", "with the media." The researcher keeps reviewing each event, writing summaries and memos, and drawing meaning from it.

In order to discuss the state-society relationship, government-organization interaction is the focus in the data analysis. The responses of the government toward

the move of the organizations are summarized into short statements, and the researcher looks for correspondence between these statements and establishes patterns. The strategies that the educational institutions adopted in interacting with the government are also analyzed in this way. Finally, based on the patterns of government-organization interaction, the chorological description of events is packaged into several development stages, each stage representing a characteristic of government-organization interaction. Although in some situations the government attitudes shift from time to time, and the organization strategies are not so clear-cut and overlapped in different stages, the development stage still presents a picture of evolution along the time.

The literature of civil society provides categories for analyzing the nature of civil society. As discussed in the chapter of literature review, civil society as an end has two dimensions: the ethical dimension and the institutional arrangement dimension. Civil society as a venue has three dimensions: ideological, cognitive, and associational dimension. These are categories abstracted from the literature review and will be the analytical tool in the data analysis. What these categories fail to do is to describe how the civil society utilizes these ideological, cognitive, and associational resources and turns them into negotiation power during their interaction with other political actors. There is a tie missing between the civil society as a venue and civil society as an end. This is the goal of the data analysis in this research, which attempts to explore the pattern to portray the strategic dimension of civil society.

4.3.2 Comparison of Cases

The contexts of the two cases are compared to examine what changes in the environment relate to the emergence and development of the organization. However, it is not the researcher's attempt to disclose the causal relationship between the contextual elements and the civil society development. In the field of comparative politics, John Stuart Mill described two approaches for doing comparison: "Method of Agreement" and "Method of Difference." These two methods present a logic way to reveal the causation. However, the identification of independent variable and dependent variables in civil society development and the discussion of the causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables is not the purpose of this research. Instead, the research is to identify meaningful events that mark the evolution of state-society relationship and draw a picture of civil society in China from the consequential events and networks of actors involved in the events. Thus, the description and comparison of contextual elements is to present the direction of change rather than a static cause-effect connection.

The "ideological," "cognitive," "associational," and "strategic" dimension of civil society in both cases are compared. From the comparison, patterns across cases will emerge. The aggregate analysis of the two cases is a pattern-searching process that displays convergence as well as divergence of the characteristics in multiple units of the society. And the researcher will interpret the patterns in a meaningful way that people can learn from the cases about how Chinese society evolves in a rapidly shifting domestic and global environment.

4.4 Internal and External Validity

The data collection and data analysis described above demonstrate that the researcher is a key instrument in these processes. Given the limitations of human's understanding and the consequent distorted description or interpretation of data from interviews or documents, and the possible bias that the researcher could bring into the data collection and analysis, the researcher must employ certain measures to ensure the validity of what is reported. The following section will talk about some control strategies for the validity of the case study.

Internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality (Merriam, 1998). *Triangulation*, the process whereby multiple data sources are used to develop converging lines of inquiry, recommended by Yin, Merriam and Stake, will be used to avoid bias and distortion, and thus to increase the internal validity. I triangulated some background data from the document and from the interview on the validity of time, location, participants, and decisions. However, when there is a conflict between different interviewees, triangulation is not a useful strategy and may reduce the rich information and implication imbedded in this conflict. Under this conflict, I used a more constructive method, exploring data relevant to the interviewees, such as their respective position in the network, their relationship with others, and their ideologies to fully understand why there is such conflict.

Member checks, also recommended by the three authors, can enhance internal validity. This process requires that the researcher verify data content and interpretations with the source, particularly if the data are derived from interviews or observations. This verification builds in another filter for catching missed or

misconstructed perspectives by both the researcher and data sources throughout the duration of the study. If the interviewee agreed to check and help, I brought the transcript back for their review.

Yin recommended investigators think about rival models and make sure their models are more relevant to understand or explain the phenomenon. Basically, a case study involves an inference every time an event cannot be directly observed. An investigator will “infer” that a particular event resulted from some earlier occurrence, based on interview and documentary evidence collected as part of the case study. However, if the researcher sticks on one model of explanation, he might ignore intentionally or unintentionally those evidence that do not fit in this model. Having all the rival explanations and possibilities considered would prevent this “theory bias.” For this case, literature review has helped lay out multiple possible factors that may address the institutional change, and I kept open to other possibilities of factors emerging during the fieldwork, and ultimately to approach the reality in possible maximum level.

External validity is “establishing the domain to which a study’s findings can be generalized” (Yin, 2003, p. 34). Because it is impossible for a case study to follow the same procedures in sampling as experiments and surveys do, and because of the small number of cases to be studied, generalizing from the cases to the whole population is problematic at best. Case study has a different argument for generalization, called an analytic generalization (Yin, 2003; Becker, 1990). In analytic generalization, the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to a broader theory rather than to the whole population. As suggested by Yin, a previously developed

theory can be used as a template to compare the empirical results of the case study to the previous findings. And the findings of case study can help to extend and refine theories by specifying the conditions under which a theory holds.

4.5 Limitation of the Study

There are three limitations in this study. First, because of the difficulty to get access to some important informants, especially government officials, the study risks missing key perspectives from government officials and their narration about experiences of involvement in this process.

Second, the study focuses on the perspectives and narratives of the founders and administrators when studying the development of the institutions, and sees them as the new actor who entered into the public space and interacted with the state, thus ignoring the experiences of students in the institution whose attitudes and ways of participation may also reflect the social change and state-society relationship in the transitional period. Hopefully, future studies will pay attention to students' experience in the educational institutions.

Third, this study aims primarily at contributing to the theory of civil society development, and thus it has limited implication for policy advocacy. However, it may help facilitate mutual understanding between the state and the society and facilitate future interactions. Despite these limitations, this topic is still worthy of studying, because little is known about the nature of civil society development in China, especially in the area of education.

CHAPTER 5

EDUCATION AND SOCIETY IN CHINA:

A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Pusser (2003) reminded that historically when centers of power began to consolidate the administrative, symbolic, and coercive bases of their power, they took an interest in the educational system. He wrote,

The historical patterns have varied considerably, but there is one clear relationship: As the state has emerged and consolidated its administrative base of power through the creation and expansion of bureaucracy, it has begun to exert control over education and to use education to sustain not only the administrative bureaucracy but also the symbolic and coercive bases of power (p. 122).

This statement could well explain the relationship between the political system and education in China. For thousands of years the need of political system has a deep influence on education system. Seeing through the difference of educational systems in different countries and regimes, observers would find surprising similarities in the use of education for political goals. The transformation in a system or society requires reformers to work against the prevailing force of the time and change the structure of education. Thus, before we go into the specific cases to explore the working of non-governmental education organizations, the researcher perceives a need to review the cultural and education system in Chinese history to catch a glimpse of the force that sustains social continuity or propels changes. After this, the researcher describes the history of private higher education and adult education which has great relevance to today's private higher education and adult education.

5.1 Culture and Education Systems in Chinese History

5.1.1 The Establishment of an Orthodox Moral System and “Rule by Virtue”

In their book “China: A New History,” Fairbank and Goldman (1998) covered the breath of the country’s history, from the earliest archaeological records to the present. With thousands of archaeological finds in the Yellow River, dubbed the “cradle of Chinese civilization,” the Chinese writing system was developed in the Shang (商) dynasty (1700-1027 B.C.), as revealed in archaic Chinese inscriptions found on tortoise shells and flat cattle bones. Following the Shang dynasty is the Zhou (周) dynasty which lasted from 1027 to 221 B.C. It was philosophers of this period who first enunciated the notion that the ruler, as the "son of heaven" governed by divine right, rule the country by the "mandate of heaven.” The early decentralized rule of Zhou dynasty invites comparison with medieval feudal system in Europe, but the effective control of Zhou dynasty depended more on familial ties than on feudal legal bonds. The Zhou amalgam of city-states became progressively centralized and established increasingly impersonal political and economic institutions. These developments, which probably occurred in the latter Zhou period, were manifested in greater central control over local governments and a more routinized agricultural taxation.

One important event in this period is the invention of the “li” (禮) system, a complicated ritual system. The system infiltrated to all aspects of social life, prescribing the style of clothes, buildings, music, equipment, and etc., for each class of people in different kinds of situations. This system ensures the hierarchical order in the regime. The system was at crisis at late Zhou when the authority of the king was

challenged by the increasing power of vassal states. Living in the disorganized period of the feudal Zhou dynasty, Confucius called for the revival of the “li” system, taking it as a model of ideal politics. In his view, the breach of this system is because of the swelling of personal desires. Thus he created moral principles that both the ruler and the ruled need to follow, with the essence being the continence of one’s desires that do not conform to the “li,” and to cultivate a true love for others. According to Confucius, good politics can only result from the rulers’ sincere love for his people and the latter’s sincere respect for the ruler reciprocally. The so-called political principles which he proposed are primarily ethical in nature. Compared with Greek political thought, the Confucian doctrine did not touch upon the institutional arrangement for maintaining the ethical ideal. However, Confucius ideas have influenced Chinese political and cultural values for more than two thousand years. Till today Confucianism did not lose its relevance and we heard the appeal for “rule by virtue” from both politicians and scholars constantly.

5.1.2 The Establishment of the Imperial Examination (Keju) System and Unification of Learning

During constant wars among the vassal states, one state, the Qin (秦) state, got stronger by relying heavily on Legalist¹³ scholar-advisers. In 221 B.C. the king of Qin dynasty subjugated the six other vassal states and imposed Qin's centralized, nonhereditary bureaucratic system on his new empire. Centralization of power is

¹³ In Chinese history, **Legalism** was one of the four main philosophic schools in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period (Near the end of the Zhou dynasty from about the sixth century B.C. to about the third century B.C.). It is actually rather a pragmatic political philosophy, with maxims like "when the epoch changed, legalism is the act of following all laws", and its essential principle is one of jurisprudence. "Legalism" here can bear the meaning of "political philosophy that upholds the rule of law", and is thus distinguished from the word's Western sense.

accompanied and consolidated by standardizing legal codes and bureaucratic procedures, the forms of writing and coinage, and the pattern of thought and scholarship. The imperial system initiated during the Qin dynasty set a pattern that was developed over the next two millennia.

The Qin Dynasty abolished the feudal system of landholding and established the unified “county” administrative system to strengthen the control of the central government in the whole country. The local officials are directly appointed by the central government. Since then the power of the central government reached the county and even village level. The Han (汉) Dynasty (202 B.C. -220 AD) further established the “review and recommendation” system, and government officials in every level can recommend talents with moral virtue or academic excellence or technical creativity to the central government. Following that, the Sui (隋) Dynasty (581-618) initiated the most influential education system in China, the Imperial Examination, or Keju (科举) in Chinese. The Keju system enjoyed a long and dominant position in the history of ancient Chinese education, and it lasted more than 1,300 years until the last examination during the Qing (清) Dynasty (1636-1912) in 1905.

In the Keju system, talents were recognized and selected for future positions in civil service through a series of national examinations. It interwove closely the three essentials for state officials, those of learning, examination and administration. In order to pass the examination, people need to learn Confucian classics required by the government. Some scholars regard Keju as a great invention of ancient China and a fairer system, because it enabled children from poor families to have opportunities to

attend the government examinations and to participate in governing the country. Thus regardless of parental social or economic status all males were eligible to take part in the exams and therefore realize their potentials if placed in important government positions. Actually, the invention of the Keju system is not simply a mechanism of education reform, but mainly a political reform. Between Han and Sui dynasties, there was a lengthy period when the nation was again separated into several small kingdoms. It was during the Sui Dynasty that the many separate states were again unified into a whole. To enforce the centralization of power, and to reduce the influence of powerful aristocratic family clans that prospered between Han and Sui Dynasty, the emperor realized the need for a strong, well educated civil service system, one that employed the most qualified talents directly from the whole of the society. Thus Keju was a system which mainly served for the political need of the state.

The Keju system was perfected in Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), when the content and format of examination were well established. The examination system became the organizer of social classes, when the social status of the scholar class who got “degrees” from passing different levels of examination was higher than the class of merchants, farmers, soldiers, or handicraftsmen. Passing the national examination was the only way for the non-royal members to gain high social status. And the national examination system in turn promoted the establishment of official schools and private schools. While the education institutes established by the central government mainly enrolled children of government officials, the schools opened by local government enrolled students from all social classes in local areas, and there

were also many private schools owned by families or instructors who had officially recognized “degrees.” Despite of their difference in ownership and source of students, the curriculum of these schools were centered on the subjects and classics listed by the national examination. Thus the state controlled the minds of people through unifying the examination system and maintaining exclusive control of the “degree” issuing system.

5.1.3 Modern Education System and Strengthening of the Nation

In the eighteenth century, European countries, beginning from Portuguese, then Spanish, then British and French, began to trade with China, importing textile to China while exporting tea and silk and porcelain from China back to Europe. By the early nineteenth century, British merchants imported opium into China, in spite of the fact that opium was prohibited entry by imperial decree. In 1839 the Qing government, after a decade of unsuccessful anti-opium campaigns, adopted drastic prohibitory laws against the opium trade. This touched off “The Opium War,” as the British retaliated. The Chinese were disastrously defeated, and their image of their own imperial power and the cultural superiority of Chinese civilization was tarnished beyond repair.

The rude realities of the Opium War, the unequal treaties, and the mid-century mass uprisings caused Qing courtiers and officials to recognize the need to strengthen China. Chinese scholars and officials had been examining and translating books introducing "Western learning" into the country since the 1840s. Under the direction of modern-thinking scholars and reform-minded officials, Western science and languages were studied, special schools were opened in the larger cities, and arsenals,

factories, and shipyards were established according to Western models. Students were sent abroad by the government and on individual or community initiative in the hope that national regeneration could be achieved through the study and application of Western science and technology. It is from that time that Western science and technologies, theories of political institution, social institutions and economic models were systematically introduced to the Chinese intellectual communities, and scholars and social activists began to think about and seek for the path of China to prosper. And failure of reform from the top convinced many Chinese that the only real solution lay in military revolution, by which to sweep away the old order and erecting a new one.

The Republican Revolution broke out on October 10, 1911, and on January 1, 1912, the Republic of China was established. Influenced by the incessant war, the input of the government in education was not stable, but the Republican government followed Western models, especially American university models, to establish one national comprehensive university in each province. However, instead of focusing on the goal of “individual development” and “citizenship awareness” in liberal arts education that was embraced by American universities in the nineteenth century, the universities under the regulation of the Republican government focused on “practical” curriculum that aimed to train talents that advance the country’s economic, military, and technological development (Hayhoe, 1996).

5.1.4 The Consolidation of Public Education System and the Unification of Learning

When socialist China was founded in 1949, the CCP government adopted the Soviet model of education, taking all private schools and universities back to the government. Same as other state owned organizations during this period, the university was a “work-unit” in a multi-tiered hierarchy linking each individual with the central Party to implement the Party policy. The first higher education conference held in June 1950 set the main task of the country’s higher education system, which was to “serve the country’s economic construction, which is the foundation for all the other constructions” (Hayhoe, 1996, p. 75). In accordance with the centralized economy and control by the rigid political system, higher education planning was centralized in the hands of the state. With the state government taking care of running and administrating colleges and universities, and with excessive uniformity and a rigid system of management, Chinese colleges and universities had no autonomy in their own development. Institutions responsible for the same field of study and training specialized personnel for the same profession had the same course outlines and unified textbooks fixed by the central government. The enrollment quotas for each specialty were set by the government and had to be filled every year. Moreover, the government arranged the national unified placement for college graduates, and graduates had no choice but to go to the job assigned to them by the government. The allocation of resources and personnel was under central planning. More than 80% of the funding came from central and local government. Academic freedom was greatly restricted. More seriously, many distinguished intellectuals were exiled in the anti-

rightist movement of 1957, creating immeasurable loss to the nation and nearly destroying the higher education system, which took decades to recover.

5.2 History of Private Higher Education in China

Modern higher educational institutions were introduced into China at the beginning of 20th century. In Ruth Hayhoe's book: *China's Universities 1895-1995: A Century of Cultural Conflict* (1996), she describes the influence of a range of foreign countries on Chinese higher education system in one hundred years. Economically self-sufficient and politically isolated from the outside world, traditional Chinese education system was very different from Western systems. It was until the Opium War that the door of China was open to the outside. Facing the national humiliation caused by the defeat in the war, facing also challenges of economic expansion from Western countries and future military threat, the Qing government had to make the choice to adapt itself to the new developments of the world. As a result, the Self-Strengthening Movement and the Westernization Movement, led by comprador bureaucrats in the latter half of the nineteenth century, were waged which aimed at introducing Western systems and technologies to build a strong Chinese state that could survive and prosper in a hostile international environment. As a by-product of this movement, Western ideas and institutions were also introduced by a group of Chinese intellectuals who had the chance to observe the emergence of Western democratic systems in the nineteenth century (Zhao, 2000).

In the early 1900s, institutions supported by the government were in small number, and they were high-level training institutes "to provide education in specific areas (especially practical knowledge such as engineering and military) needed to

deal with the Western incursion,” hence they were not universities in the Western sense (Hayhoe, 1996, p. 36-37). Western churches were main supporters of these institutions. Other supporters of higher education were provincial gentry, scholar-bureaucrats, and industrialists, who hoped to contribute to strengthening and development of China. Some of the best and most famous of these became the basis for modern universities, such as Beiyang Gongxue, set up in Tianjin in 1895, and Nanyang Gongxue, established in Shanghai in 1896 with the support of industrialist Sheng Xuan-huai. The last few years before the collapse of the Qing dynasty (1909~1911) witnessed a rapid proliferation of modern schools, mostly private or gentry-run schools. As Hayhoe mentioned, the gentry in this period hoped to see revolutionary changes rather than the stability espoused by conservative officials.

Privately-supported higher education institutions reached their peak under the Republican Party in 1912-1927, when the absence of a strong central government led to possibilities of vigorous experimentation at all levels. Although most institutions were of low quality, some prominent institutions emerged, among them include Nankai University by Zhang Boling, Nantong University by Zhang Qian, Jimei Specialized School and Xiamen University by Chen Jiageng, Fudan University, and some others. In 1930, China had thirty-nine universities and seventeen colleges, among them fifteen were national-level institutions, eighteen were provincial level, and twenty-three were private. These institutions depended on the contributions of the founders or donations collected from the society. Student fee covered part of the cost (Hayhoe, 1996).

This period, as Hayhoe mentioned, saw the first real effort to establish a “university,” in the sense of the defining and establishing values of autonomy and academic freedom. Cai Yuanpei was a leading role in pushing for autonomy and academic freedom in a university¹⁴. When Cai became Chancellor of Beijing University, he remarked in a letter about the policy of Beijing University on academic freedom:

1. With respect to academic theories, the example of universities all over the world will be followed, that is, all ideas and opinions will be tolerated and accommodated in accordance with the principle of ‘freedom of thought’. [...] Inasmuch as different schools of thought can uphold their views and have not fallen into disuses in the process of natural selection, they will be allowed to develop freely in spite of their conflicting natures.
2. With respect to the teaching staff, scholarship will be the main criterion for their appointment. Their work of teaching will also be guided by the principle of freedom of thought (Gao, 1984, vol. 3, p. 271).

Cai thought that the enterprise of schooling should be entirely given over to independent educators, uninfluenced by any political party or church (Gao, 1984, Vol. 4, p. 177). So he promoted professor committees directing the university and students’ committees for their self-regulation. He even recommended that the Chinese Government establish university districts in various regions of the land, with each district having a university to supervise all levels of district schooling. Control of the university and district educational affairs would rest with an education committee, organized by university professors.

However, when the Nationalist Government was established in 1927, the goal of democracy was conceding to the national need for economic construction and

¹⁴ Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940) was known for being the Republic’s first Minister of Education, Chancellor of Beijing University, and the founder and first president of the Academia Sinica, China’s highest national research institute.

political stability. Hayhoe mentioned that “university autonomy and academic freedom on European lines were neither easily acceptable in terms of their epistemological connotations, nor practically possible, given the series of political and economic crisis the nation was passing through” (Hayhoe, 1996, p. 59). For example, in legislation passed in April of 1928, the aims of higher education were expressed as follows: “Universities and professional schools must emphasize the applied sciences, enrich the scientific content of their courses, nurture people with specialized knowledge and skills, and mould healthy character for the service of nation and society.” An important consideration in these regulations was the registration and control of private institutions to ensure they served the Nationalist Party’s ends.

After 1949, under communist leadership and with new political and administrative structures, private universities met difficulty in student enrollment and their funding and their scale were shrinking. From 1951 to mid 1950s, the government adopted the Soviet Model and began the process of readjustment of higher education system, and all private higher education institutions were joined with or changed into public owned universities.

Since the 11th National Party Congress¹⁵ in 1977, China embarked onto the path of modernization. As a strategy for human resources development, education has increasingly become a priority in the government development policy. In April 1978,

¹⁵ The central leading organ of the Chinese Communist Party is the National Party Congress and the Central Committee it elects. The Party's Constitution stipulates that the National Party Congress is held once every five years. The Central Committee is accountable to and reports its work to the National Congress.

a major national education conference was held that abandoned the Cultural Revolution goals of class struggle and adopted modernization as the main goal for educational development. The unified national College and University Entrance Exam for higher education was restored in 1977. From 1978 to mid 1980s, higher learning institutions expanded their enrollments and diversified their programs. During this period public universities were still predominantly dependent on government funding. However, since late 1980s there were “within-plan” students and “out-of-plan students,” the former paying no tuition or only a small sum of tuition by those students from high income families, and the latter paying a larger sum of fees for their enrollment in the university. This strategy was adopted for expanding student enrollment without placing greater financial burden on the government.

Due to financial constraint, the state gradually adopted a decentralization policy and a large share of financial responsibility for funding a university was passed from the central government to local government and to the education institutions themselves. To further mobilize social resources, the state began to encourage non-state groups and organizations to establish and manage educational institutes. As early as 1982 the revised Constitution wrote, “The state encourages the collective economic organizations, state enterprises and institutions and other sectors of society to establish educational institutions of various types in accordance with law.” This provides a legal basis for the operation of private higher education. The same policy was specified in the document entitled Resolution on Reform of the Educational System, issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CCCCP) on May 27, 1985, which stipulated that “local authorities should encourage and give

guidance to the establishment of schools by state enterprises, social organizations, and individuals.” Private educational organizations run by multi-property ownership system were growing and evolving due to the new spaces created by these policies.

The majority of all kinds of private educational organizations, which appeared at this time, were “exam-assisting” organizations to help those students who intended to pass the national examinations to obtain higher education certification through self-study. The National College-Level Self-Study Examination system was established in 1981 by the government for individuals, mainly in urban areas, who could not get into the formal higher education system but who wanted to achieve higher learning credentials through studying on their own. The examination is written with the same standards as a regular university would adopt. While the exam is beneficial for the learners, it is also a reflection of government’s policy to train more talented people for the country's modernization drive. To implement the exam, the government has established national, provincial, municipal, and minority nationality regional committees, called the Higher Education Self-Study Examination Guidance Committee (HESEGC). The committee designates full-time regular higher education institutions as testing universities, which under the supervision of the committee, develop the study materials, conduct the examinations, and award certificates to students who pass subject tests. Those who have completed and passed the tests for a series of required courses for undergraduate or professional study in a certain discipline, receive college or sub-college diploma from the state examination organization and the testing university.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, most of these self-study-assisting private institutions were small, had limited capacity of enrollment, and were not qualified to give graduate certificates and diplomas on their own (Yan, 2003). But the private higher education sector had been undergoing rapid growth because of the high social demand for higher education. China is a nation that attaches great importance to education, and people perceive receiving good education as the way to a decent life and high social status. Parents have high expectations toward their children in education. However, only a very small group of people could receive higher education because of the small number of public higher education institutions. In the third national census in 1982, of the one billion people in the country, only four million held bachelor degrees, comprising only 0.4% of the whole population. In 1982, the formal higher education institutions enrolled 315,000 students and adult higher education institutions enrolled 291,000 students, a number far from meeting the social demand for higher education (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1982, 1983). And private universities filled the gap between demand and supply. As one administrator put it,

It is the state that provided the soil so we can sow the seed, but it is the market that provides sunshine, water and fertilizer for the university to grow healthily. The biggest patron of private universities in China is neither the state, nor enterprises, but the market. It is the market that welcomes it (the private university). And it is completely because of the identification of market need that we succeed” (Personal conversation, June 16 2005).

After more than two decades of development, China now has 1,230 private universities. In China, among 10 university students, one is studying in a private university. In March 2005, the Ministry of Education (MOE) held a press conference and Hanjin, the head of department of education planning and development in MOE, announced that by 2004, 1.4 million students were attending private universities, accounting for 10.47% of the national total, an increase of 3.16% from the previous year.

5.3 History of Adult Education in China

It is since the late Qing Dynasty that adult education originated and prospered in China. With China facing crisis of external invasion and civil strife, in 1920s and 1930s, prestigious scholars such as Tao Xingzhi, Liang Shuming, Yen Yangchu (James Yen as his English name), and other famous scholars promoted adult education to train manpower for national self-strengthening and development. They collectively initiated the famous Chinese Rural Reconstruction Movement. Similar with those entrepreneurs and social activists who founded private universities during the same period, leaders of the Chinese Rural Reconstruction Movement hoped to carry on social reform through educating and training the common people. The series of direct social-reform activities focused on the curriculum. For example, Yen Yangchu designed the content of rural reconstruction as “art and literary education,” “livelihood education,” “health education,” and “citizenship education.” It was regarded highly crucial that the education of those who bear the direct responsibility of the present society coincide with their real life situations. The goal is to eliminate illiteracy and to improve livelihood, and more importantly, to motivate rural citizens

to run their own schools and thus actively participate in their communities. As Puhhsia (1944) phrased, direct social reform and education are but two phases of the same thing. Yen Yangchu said,

What is most gratifying is this, that after people had learned to run their own people's schools, their modern farms, their cooperatives, their health clinics, they demanded that they should run their own government. Is there anything more natural and more inevitable? [...] To me self-government is the inevitable result of a people who are educated and capable of carrying on their own social and economic welfare. (Buck, 1945)

For Yen, self-government was a natural extension of people taking responsibility for their own development as a content of citizenship education.

Yen, Liang and Tao all believed that the fundamental path of reforming China is reforming the rural society, since China has the majority of its population residing in the rural area. Liang's theory is that the disperse peasants can organize themselves with the help of intellectuals. The ultimate goal is to construct a self-sustaining and self-governing rural society. Yen and Tao gave mass education a grand political cause: to build the country into a democratic country.

Among these people, Tao founded the Xiaozhuang Normal School to train teachers for mass education, and later organized the "Work and Study League" in many regions; Liang established the "Rural Reconstruction Research Institute" and later established around 70 experimental zones in Shandong province to carry out educational activities and reform policies; and Yen founded the Mass Education Advancement Society and chose Dingxian village in Hebei as the experimental site for carrying on social reform and educational activities. Besides these highly

acclaimed leaders in adult education, there were also groups of social activists who conducted adult education in multiple forms.

However, the most influential and large scale adult education was initiated by the Communist party that used adult education to awaken the consciousness of the peasants and urge them to rise up to fight for their own sake. During 1930s and 1940s, many labor union schools, peasant schools, peasant movement workshops were established in cities and villages. In a time when the Communist Party of China (CPC) was struggling to survive and lacked strong public support, adult education became a powerful instrument to promulgate its Marxist ideology and mobilize the masses to form worker-peasant alliance and to join in CPC. The guiding principle of the adult education campaign by CPC was the "mass line," which required that adult education be seen as a mass social movement, to be duly carried out by the people but vigorously directed and controlled at all levels by CPC. Indeed, adult education was a powerful weapon for CPC to carry on the revolution.

During the period of People's Republic of China, adult education continues to be adopted by CPC as the key instrument for the country's transition from feudalism and capitalism to communism, and an instrument for consolidating the proletarian dictatorship and training personnel for national economic development. In early 1950s, a Literacy Committee was set up at each government level. As the situation changed, and in order to meet the demands of literacy and post-literacy education, in 1983, Adult Education Authorities (AEA) was set up to replace the Literacy Committees at all government levels. This is a national organization which bears the management responsibilities for literacy education, and for primary, secondary and

higher education for adult cadres, workers, peasants, and out-of-school children and adolescents. Since peasant illiterates constitute the major proportion of China's illiterate population, within each AEA there is a unit specially designed for peasant education. For example, a Peasant Education Division (PED) has been set up in the Department of Adult Education (DAE) of the State Education Commission (SEC) and in all education commissions of provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions directly under the leadership of the Central Government. Within the peasant education department of a prefecture or a city or county, there is an education office (or section), while in townships there are usually professional personnel in charge of peasant education. And there is a leading group in charge of literacy and post-literacy programs in each village. The above peasant education bodies are responsible, in rural areas, for literacy and post-literacy programs and for primary, secondary, cultural and technical education as well as for various short-term training courses. In literacy and post-literacy education, SEC is in charge of the strategies, policies, overall planning, establishment of goals and arrangement of meetings to exchange experiences and appoint high-level personnel and units, while the authorities of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government, as well as the prefectures are charged with the drafting and implementation of concrete policies and detailed plans, while also compiling textbooks, training management personnel and summarizing experiences gained.

The literacy campaign and vocational education served three functions - eradicating illiteracy, creating a new type of citizenry who championed the leadership of CPC and its policies, and developing a new intelligentsia from the working classes.

Adult education in all has been a state-managed campaign which succeeded in effecting mass behavioral changes (Lin, 1963). Effectively, there were no social groups outside of the government carrying out adult education between the year of 1949 and 1976.

Adult education took a big shift after the economic reform was launched in China. The Decisions of the State Education Commission Concerning the Reform and Development of Adult Education, approved by the State Council in June 1987, clarified priorities and major tasks of adult education in the 1990s. It identified post-secondary training, or in-service training, as the top priority on the national adult education agenda. A new development in literacy education in China, is that literacy is integrated with teaching of skills to promote a commodity economy in rural areas. Adult education covered higher learning, and secondary and primary education. Forms of learning included full-time classroom teaching, self-learning with audio-visual materials, full-time, part-time or spare-time learning. Certified education for adults includes one year university courses, short-term special college courses, specialized secondary schools and general secondary schools. Non-certified education for adults includes literacy education, the training of applied technologies in the rural areas and continuing education. Funding for adult literacy work comes from funds raised by village and township governments, urban communities, and other organizations. Funding also comes from budget for staff training and education in enterprises and state organizations. In addition, social forces and individuals are encouraged to give financially on a voluntary basis (Lofstedt, 1990).

However, because of the decline of government subsidies in adult education in rural areas, the agriculture sector has suffered severe setback since 1980s and is lagging far behind in the provision of adult education. Primary education and literacy classes for adults disappeared, and there is no training institute for adults in rural sites. In most rural areas the only way for adults to get access to education is to register for agricultural schools of radio and television

Summary

The history of the establishment of education system in China well reflects the instrumental use of education by the government, and the advance and retreat of the power of the government and the social forces in the field of education. From reviewing the history, we find that the development of education is closely related to the economic needs of the country. Before the Qing dynasty, China has a strong state-government, and education strongly serves the political need of selecting talented people to help the emperor govern the country. In the late Qing dynasty, facing a weak state-government, social forces took up the task of education and promoting it as a force of social reform. In socialist China education was used as a powerful political tool for mass mobilization and literacy campaign. Now in the drive for modernization and facing economic competition from other countries, the government calls for the participation of the social forces in the provision of adult education. It is the first time in the history that the government actively sought for the cooperation of the society, and it is the first time in the history that a strong government meets with a sprouting society.

CHAPTER 6

**EDUCATION FOR MODERNIZATION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
PRIVATE UNIVERSITY**

I chose one private university as the case in this study because the emergence of private universities breaks the monopoly of the government in the formal education area. China is still a one-party system, and in the policy level, there is rarely any chance for the common people to provide their input about what kind of education should be provided by educational institutions, what standard to be enforced, and what teaching method to be adopted. And private universities provide an opportunity for social groups to provide alternatives in educational ideas and practices, and influence the society through educational activities.

The establishment and development of private higher education institutions in China have made contributions to providing higher education to the masses in China (Lin, 1999). More importantly, private higher education institutions have made innovations in curriculum and program design, administrative structure, student management and campus culture, which have been gradually recognized in the academic circle. However, looking back on the path that private universities have traveled through, it is not a smooth development. For example, private universities have suffered from the ambiguity and lack of support from the government, for at the beginning, there were no government administrative units assigned to manage and take responsibility for the establishment and development of private universities, no specific laws to stipulate the rules of running and managing the private universities,

and no institutional management to ensure that private universities enjoy similar benefits as public universities. Today, private higher education institutions have been incorporated into the government administrative system and are overseen by MOE as well as local government educational offices. And in 2002, the Law of Promoting Private Education was enacted. However, during the two decades in between, private higher education institutions have struggled hard for their status, for autonomy in management and for their rights.

This chapter describes the development of one private university, Yuhua University, and its interaction with the state-government, which reflects the process of social groups in the education field to strive to provide public good while negotiating room for survival and development.

6.1 Xi'an City: History and Today

As Yuhua University is located in Xi'an City, Shaanxi province, it would be helpful to provide the context in which the university has developed. Located in central China and landlocked, Shaanxi province is adjacent to seven other provinces: Shanxi, Henan, Hubei, Sichuan, Gansu Provinces and Ningxia and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Regions. Shaanxi serves as the vital industrial, transportation, and communication juncture to link the central parts of China with the southwestern and northwestern parts of the country. Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi, is one of the oldest cities in the world with a vivid and rich history and culture. It is not only the birthplace of the Chinese Nation, but also the birthplace of human civilization in Asia and the cultural center of prehistoric civilization. Over a period of more than 2000 years, Xi'an had been capital for thirteen dynasties. Along with Rome and

Constantinople, this city was a world leader in culture and trade and played a vital role in bridging the gap between the East and the West. As such, Xi'an has a wealth of historical and cultural resources.

According to China Statistical Yearbook 2006, Shaanxi province ranks third in terms of overall research and development strength after Beijing and Shanghai (the China Statistical Bureau, 2006). The province boasts more than 2,000 science and technology research institutes, of which 50 are recognized as conducting research recognized as first rate in the country. The province's largest number of R&D institutes and personnel are concentrated in Xi'an city (Shaanxi Statistical Bureau 2005).

Since the 1980s, especially in 1990s, the number of private higher education institutions increased rapidly in Xi'an. In 1984, there was only one private higher education institution in Xi'an with only 300 students, and in 2000, there were 66 private higher education institutions with more than 107,491 students in total, accounting for more than 20% of all the students in higher education institutions in Xi'an. In 2005, of the 18 higher education institutions nationwide that had more than ten thousand students, six were located in Xi'an. Thus Xi'an has been known as the "silicon valley" of China's private higher education (The Shaanxi Education Office, 1984, 2000, 2005).

The fast development of private higher education in Shaanxi can be attributed to its rich educational and research resource of the area, which provides a big pool of part-time and full-time faculty for private universities. And Xi'an's adjacency to seven provinces and regions which has a large pool of potential students but few

higher learning institutions gives the private universities the needed student sources. In addition, Shaanxi is a big province, however, the GDP of the whole province is less than the GDP of Suzhou, a middle-sized city in Jiangsu province in eastern China. With the rise of private education in Shaanxi, the Shaanxi government has come to see private universities as a source of revenue and an engine to stimulate other service areas in Shaanxi. It is believed that the professional training or vocation training programs offered in the private universities of the province could cultivate more talents needed by the province's modernization process. Thus, while other provincial governments still held an ambiguous attitude toward private education, Shaanxi government has showed tolerance toward its development. Private universities in Shaanxi province, because of the government's attitude, have found it easier to obtain land than those in Beijing city or Guangdong province to build their campuses.

The university studied here is called Yuhua University. Yuhua University was established in 1992 and registered with the Ministry of Education (MOE). It was a small institution with only a few hundred students and no campus in 1992. Now located in Xi'an High-tech Development Zone, this university has a land of 333 acres and buildings with total space of 685,000 square meters. It has developed into a comprehensive university with a student population of about 40,000, and a full-time faculty and staff of 1,728, and is one of the largest private universities in China. The university has 7 colleges, 17 departments and 79 programs in foreign languages, Chinese, law, business administration, humanities, social sciences, science, engineering, information technology and medicine. The administrative structure of Yuhua University is that the president is in charge of daily affairs under the

leadership of the Board of Trustees. In March, 2005, Yuhua University was accredited by MOE as an undergraduate degree granting university that would confer bachelor's degrees independently, which is a status only two other dozen private universities enjoys in the country.

6.2 The Founding of the Private University as a Process of Examining Life and Society

The development of private higher education in Shaanxi, most of all, benefit from having a group of entrepreneurial scholars who devote their talents and energy to higher education. In the complex and disadvantageous environment of private universities, these individuals have played many roles: as educators to establish education goals and set up academic as well as administrative structures in their universities; as entrepreneurs to mobilize and manage resources; as public relation professionals to coordinate the relationship with other economic and academic parties; and as politicians to negotiate with and win the trust and support of the government.

Dr. Wang¹⁶, the founder and president of Yuhua University, is one in this group. Born in 1958, he went to college after the state government restored the national college entrance examination system in 1977 which was disrupted during the Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976). After he earned his bachelor degree in law in 1985, he worked in the Higher Education Research Center in a public University, and did research on vocational higher education. At that time the government just restored the vocational higher education systems of other countries, and the research center received a lot of research work to study how to establish a vocational higher

¹⁶ All the names of people mentioned in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

education system in China to satisfy the practical need of the country's economic development at that time. In 1992, he founded Yuhua University, and developed the institution from having less than one hundred students to one with more than 30,000 students in one decade.

At the initial stage, Wang was not completely dedicated to the school, but went abroad to expand his own business in other areas. Before he founded the private university, he founded the Xi'an Studying Abroad Center that provided consulting service to those people who wanted to go and study abroad, and from 1992 to 1994, he went to Singapore to manage a business there. Wang said that from late 1980s to early 1990s he was primarily concerned about earning money. In the early 1990s, a university teacher earned around RMB 800 yuan (100 U.S. dollar) per month, while at that time the price of a color TV and a refrigerator cost thousands of yuan. Thus this level of salary could not afford him a decent life. To earn money and live a better life was a big incentive for Wang to establish the university. The second incentive was to put his many ideas toward education and society into practice, for which the university he worked for did not provide such opportunities. Wang, in his late 20s and early 30s, had attended the retirement party of many professors; he was depressed to see those professors spending their whole life in the same university teaching the same courses year after year. And he decided that he would not want to live that kind of life.

The two-year experience of doing business abroad changed Wang's thought and life, and he came to the conclusion that although making money is important, money is not everything. "Survival is like a doorsill, once you cross it, money is no

longer significant.” After having made more than what he could spend in his whole life in early 1990s, he began to think about the position of human being in the society and in the world. At that point he felt further wealth accumulation was not what he wanted, and he hoped to explore the deeper meaning in life and accomplish goals that benefit not only himself but other people. So he refused the offer of two million yuan to sell his school. Based on his observation of the gap between China and other developed countries in providing decent and humane life for people, he decided he would devote his remaining life in developing the training institute into a famous University, with which to influence China’s educational system. After he came back from South Asia, he went to Peking University to audit classes on education and other social science areas. While devoting the majority of his time to running his university, he often visited other countries to learn about different education systems. In 2003, he went to Britain to pursue doctoral degree in education administration.

Wang’s vision of Yuhua University was greatly influenced by the Western system of private university as well as well as the practices of other private universities in China. He regards that the development of private higher education relies on the construction of the external environment and internal system of the university. External environment should be based on the society upholding principals of fair competition, policy protection, and freedom of development. Fairness is the principal that should be applied to all social activities including education in the society. He criticized that the government neither understood nor supported private universities; instead the government held doubts or was indifferent to the development of private education. On the side of government policy, he thought that

the government needs to recognize the role and contribution of private institutions to education, and draft policies to provide private universities authentic support in tax, land use, and finance; the government should loosen its regulation in student enrollment and clarify its definition of the status of private education. Wang articulated that diversity should be valued, that is, higher education institution could have different ownership forms and different structures, and the government should recognize their respective advantages and strongpoints, and evaluate them according to their distinctive situations, instead of holding biases toward the “private” institutions while favoring the “public” ones (Huang, 2003; interview with Wang, September 2006).

Internally, Wang insisted that the private education system should be established on the principal of serving the mass, upholding the people-centered principle, and providing holistic education. He notes many Chinese students are excluded from public universities because they failed in the fierce competition to pass the national entrance examination for colleges; they and many people are in disadvantaged positions in the country’s economic, political and cultural system, for they can only be engaged in doing simple manual labor. Private higher education institutions can fill in the space left by the elite-oriented public higher education, and extend access to the higher education to a broad population. Wang regards that among all the qualities that a person have, “personality” is the fundamental indicator of one person. It is a combination of inborn attribute and acquired characteristics that determines the direction of development of one person. The role of education is to help the students to understand themselves and construct their own knowledge and

skills structure based on that understanding. Wang envisions that the current “degree-oriented” education will gradually lose its place and “capability-oriented” education will be given priority in the making of a knowledge society. The “people-centered” education will lay a foundation for the life-long education for a person. Wang regards the trend of education will be integrative education and interdisciplinary education. “One specialty and multiple skills” is a good model for current private higher education (Huang, 2003; interview with Wang, September 2006).

Wang is influenced by educational ideas of other countries with regard to the role of the government in private education development as well as the goal of education set by other private universities. And local pioneers in private universities also provided inspirations for Wang. The president of Peihua Women University, one of the oldest private higher education institution in Shaanxi province founded in 1984, was involved in the Xi’an Peihua Women’s Vocational School in the late 1940s. Peihua’s founder explored the model of “supporting education through enterprises, and combining enterprise with education” (以产养学，产教结合). Wang adopted this idea and found his own business enterprises to support the teaching and learning endeavor of Yuhua University. Wang also learned from the president of Xi’an Translation University, Deng Zuyi, who made a breakthrough in the development of his private university by loaning money from banks and buying huge acres of land for rapid expansion, turning the university from a no-name school into a major player in a short time. Deng also inspired Wang in other areas. For years, Deng has been making efforts to fight against government discriminations against private education institutions and has called for public awareness on the issue. Deng has formulated the

concept of building a “harmonious” Xi'an Translation University. The nature of being harmonious means that a private university should not be money-oriented. It has to be public-spirited and spend all tuition fees collected from students on benefiting the students themselves. Deng proposed the model of “English (as a language tool) + major knowledge+ modern skills.” He caused a debate by claiming to open a subject area that the students would study for five years but will not rely on the government giving them degrees to find jobs. Deng explained, “the goal is to challenge the traditional idea of ‘education for degree’ and to authentically provide high quality education to students. To avoid degree-oriented education means to step out of the outmoded framework and design the curriculum and textbooks according to the needs of the society.” Deng’s model has inspired other private universities, including Yuhuan University led by Wang.

Integrating global and local experiences and ideas, Wang crystallized his educational philosophy which is that the higher education system should “include big and small universities, should evaluate a university’s teaching according to their specific missions and goals, should encourage learning for both the old and young people, and should promote education without limitation of the national boundary” (In Chinese: 校无大小、教无高下、学无长幼、育无国界). Wang explained his ideas in the following: First, China does not only need comprehensive universities such as Beijing University and Qinghua University, but also needs small-scale and flexible universities such as private universities. Each has its own advantages. The society and government should assess a university according to the needs of the society and the effectiveness of the university in meeting those needs. Second, the

state accreditation agency should evaluate a university's educational effectiveness and quality of education according to its educational goals and types of education offered. That students who study in a vocational training program of a private university, who gets his graduation certificate and finds a good job, and that graduate students enrolling in an elite public university who obtain his doctoral degree, should both be seen as the success of their respective programs. The vocational education programs of a private university, and the doctoral education programs of a public research university, have different focuses and thus should be measured by different evaluation standards. The government or the society should not evaluate a university's quality of education using the same academic requirements for elite public universities and private universities. Third, higher education system should make efforts to achieve the goal of life-long learning. It should break the limitation on the age of students, and implement flexible instructional methods to make learning a process not restricted by age and occupation. Wang regards that private universities have the advantages in facilitating life-long learning due to its flexibility and autonomy. Lastly, universities should reinforce their collaboration with universities in other countries. And Huang states that private university can respond more quickly to the trend of higher education in the global environment.

6.3 Groping the Way in Wildness: the Initial Development of Yuhua University between 1992 and 1994

6.3.1 Search for Physical Space

As a researcher in a public university since 1985, Wang observed there existed a big gap between the current education system and the needs of the society, and he

proposed to reform to the existing curriculum and programs. At that time, Wang was often invited by private and public education institutes to do consulting work, providing assistance in designing vocational education curriculum and programs. He found out that the bureaucracy of a public university makes it reluctant to change. It took almost four to five years to see any obvious changes in public educational institutions, while in contrast private university was more responsive to the suggestions from research findings and more willing to adopt recommended solutions to current problems.

In 1988 Wang and his colleague Wu, while still working as researchers in the public university, were invited by the provincial Economy and Trade Commission (ETC) of Shaanxi province¹⁷ to take charge of its subordinate school providing training for the trade business. According to the memory of Wang,

The establishment of the school is not the product of government plan but of the society's needs. One vice president of ETC applied for a license in the MOE, but he was unable to enroll one single student. So they invited us to take over the school. I reimbursed him (the vice president) RMB 800 yuan for the registration fee and I got the license. I saw the gap between the need of foreign companies and current curriculum offering in public universities and so I applied my ideas into the design of the school and its programs. At that time, individual persons were not allowed to establish and own school. So the training school still belonged to the ETC" (Interview with Wang, September 23 2005).

At the beginning, the institute possessed neither teaching building, nor dormitory, nor laboratory facility, and had no teachers. Its assets include one school title, one seal, and 600 yuan of debt. According to Wang and Wu's observation of the needs of the society, the training school should be focusing on training people who intended to work in foreign-China collaboration companies. Wang went to Beijing to

¹⁷ the Economy and Trade Commission of Shaanxi province is a government branch.

collect teaching materials and edited textbooks by himself. They used their own money to do advertisement for the school, and visited all the public higher education institutions in Xi'an in order to recruit foreign teachers when the employment of foreign teachers was strictly controlled. They used their social network in Xi'an and persuaded entrepreneurs to invest in the training school. Through establishing and working in this training school, Wang not only found an opportunity to earn money, but also an opportunity to apply his theory gained from research into practice. In 1992, the number of full-time students in the school reached 500, and capital based on the fixed asset reached hundreds of thousands yuan. However, at this time, due to the change of the administrative structure in the Shaanxi province, the school's parenting organization transformed from ETC to the Bureau of Security, which wanted to claim back the school. But the success of the training school inspired Wang to establish his own university.

In 1992, Wang, Wu, and another colleague, Cao, began to establish and run their own training institute. Similar with many other private universities established during that period, they began with establishing short-term rental relationship with other organizations for offices and classrooms. In the first year, Wang, Wu and Cao, the three co-founders of the Institute, rented spaces in one middle vocational school specializing on leather manufacturing as offices and classrooms and enrolled 800 full-time students, who mainly took classes for the preparation of the national self-study higher learning examinations for academic diplomas and degrees. The Institute also held short-term training classes and night school in the rented classrooms of a vocational school of architecture. In 1993, the number of full-time students doubled,

and the Institute moved all the classrooms and offices to the vocational school of architecture, and rented two floors in a hotel for students' dormitory, while also renting a building of a public university for teachers' dormitory. The founders realized the current space they had would limit the expansion of the Institute.

To explore the idea of a new campus, Wang made contact with Lian, the former Dean for Teaching and Learning in Xi'an Translation University who later founded his own school. Lian's school was in the courtyard of the Training Division of Xi'an military district. The school had a large space but a small number of students. In December 1993, Lian's school and Wang's Institute merged into one institute, and Lian became the administrative vice president of the Institute. The school by now had two teaching facilities in two districts, respectively in the architecture middle school and the Training Division of Xi'an military district.

6.3.2 Curriculum Structure

In this initial stage the curriculum structure was similar to that Wang and Wu established in the training institute of ETC, that is, they mainly focused on training students for employment in the business and trade field. Programs included accounting, business administration, hotel management, and public relations. The Institute provided professional skill training to high school graduates and college graduates and recommended them to companies after the training. With the increasing reputation of the Institute, many companies asked the Institute to train talents for them. In September 1992, the Institute signed contracts with the Xi'an Paging Center in training staff in paging service; in October 1992, again the institute provided training to personnel in the international business service and office automation

system. In March 1993, it signed a contract with the Lanzhou military district in training service personnel; also in March 1993, the foreign business investment consulting service center in Xi'an commissioned the Institute to hold training workshop in international business, international accounting, office automation system, international finance and investment. In May 1993, the Institute cooperated with Xi'an Jewelry Corporation to establish new programs and courses in the field of jewelry.

The institute gradually shifted from a part-time training institute into a full-time vocational training sub-college. Since the Institute was not permitted to issue its own diplomas and degrees, its students needed to take the national higher learning self-study examinations for academic diplomas and degrees. Not designed for the purpose of providing higher vocational education, the national self-study system focused on basic theories and concepts in each field. Besides the knowledge required in the national self-study system, the institute added a large amount of skill training courses, such as public relation, language, photography, calligraphy, cosmetology, truck driving, and etc, in order for the students to have both the academic diploma and the specific skills, and to be more competitive in the job market.

6.3.3 Administrative Structure

In the initial stage, the Institute did not establish a formal administrative structure. The highest administrative leaders were primarily the founders of the Institute. And as founders, they took charge of everything from the institute's macro planning strategies to the most trivial housekeeping, including fundraising, public relations, supervising of the construction of campus buildings, advertisement, teacher

recruitment, student enrollment, textbook editing, etc. One administrator commented that to be successful the founders of private universities in 1990s need to play several roles simultaneously: politicians, educators, entrepreneurs, and social activists. They need to be politicians to be good at dealing with all kinds of people, groups, and build networks both outside and inside the Institute; they need to be skillful in coordinating the economic and political relationships among them; they need to be educators to understand the principles for offering good quality education, and to apply all kinds of strategies to improve teaching and learning; they need to be entrepreneurs to be familiar with school management, cost calculation, and resources flow; they need to be creative and risk-taking, to have vision in the future, and most importantly, to be able to salvage the school out of all kinds of difficult situations. They need to be social activists to be engaged in numerous social activities to express their views, increase their influence, and win sympathy and support (Interview with one vice president for student management, June 16, 2005).

6.3.4 University- Government Interaction: Keeping Low Profile by the University vs. Indifference of the Government

When asked why the private higher education institutions can grow in such a rapid speed in Xi'an province, President Wang gave an unexpected answer: because the government did not pay attention to private education and neglected its development. Thus private education could have certain space to develop. According to Dr. Wang, *“the neglect of the government is the government’s biggest support to the private universities.”*

At the beginning stage, despite the tone of encouragement on the government document, “private” is a dangerous word in the mind of many government officials. The repeated and often swift-shifting of political policies during the years between 1949 and 1976 made the government officials uncertain of the real intention of the central government about private education. Due to the ambiguity in the government policy and lack of law on private education, at the local level, attitudes of local governments varied. Afraid of being held responsible for any problems, the government officials in some regions discouraged the establishment of private education institutions. Thus, for the private education institutions in Xi’an Province, the neglect of the government was really a blessing to them.

However, President Wang also pointed out that the neglect of the government made it very difficult for Yuhua University to gain necessary support and official recognition. From early 1980s to early 1990s, there was no organizational arrangement in the government structure for dealing with private institutions. No specific government administration office was designated to manage the registration of a private university. In some provinces the government designated the Adult Education Authorities to supervise private universities. It took two years for Wang to succeed in getting Yuhua University officially registered, since the relevant government offices shifted the workload and responsibility to each other.

Chen Baoyu’s description of the administrative system during this period echoes the experience of Wang. He illustrates:

The state education administration departments from the top level to provinces and cities assigned very few people to oversee private education, unequal to their task. For example, the State Education Commission is a state organization

with 700 employees; the office directly administering private schools is a low level office with only three staff. From the position of the office to the number of people, it is hard to imagine how they can shoulder the task of planning and managing nearly 70,000 private universities, secondary schools, primary schools and kindergartens (cited by Lin, 1999, p. 148).

For a long time, there was no law or regulation concerning the status of private universities in the education system and their operations. Thus, whether to approve their entry into the system, their program structure, their personnel recruitment, or their student enrollment is up to the judgment of individual government officials. In Shaanxi government, except for the difficulty in registration, in this initial stage the government did not intervene much in the program structure, personnel recruitment and student enrollment, which was appreciated by founders of private universities.

However, people in private universities felt unfairness in the government's differential treatment toward public universities and private universities. The government did not collect tax from public educational organizations. However, the government collected taxes from private universities whether they are registered in the Department of Education or in Bureau of Industry and Commerce, except for a very few schools that can issue their own diplomas and degrees. In addition, private universities cannot get any government grant or research funding, or preferential price in land acquisition. And teachers and students in private universities are not permitted to enjoy benefits as those in public schools, such as obtaining student loans, getting discount price in train tickets, having subsidies in health insurance, etc.

During this time of period, Yuhua University kept a low profile as a strategy for survival. It did not make large-scale advertisement, nor make public complaints, nor call for policy change. Instead, the founders primarily used whatever personal

connections and resources they had to ensure the continual existence of the university. They appointed professors mainly through personal relationships and recommendations of acquaintances, and enrolled students through sending recruitment staff to the high schools nearby. They tried not to get too much attention for themselves. At this point, what they did was not to produce an impact on the education system or on the society, but to build up their own strength to survive.

6.4 Establishing an Order: Stable Development between 1994 and 2000

6.4.1 Construction of a University Campus

Before 1994, Yuhua University had not entertained the thought of establishing its own campus. In 1994, Wang came back from abroad and dedicated himself to the goal of building the institution into a comprehensive university that could rival with public universities. To reach this goal it obviously did not make sense to rely on renting spaces for classrooms. They were at the mercy of the landlord, for if the landlord wanted to stop the rental contract, the university could not be sustained. For the founders, it was very important to maintain the stability of the university. Thus in 1994 the private university signed a long-term (ten years) land rental contract 1) with a spinning factory and invested 600,000 yuan to construct a teaching building; 2) with a thread-making factory to construct a residence building; and 3) with an architecture vocational school to use its classrooms, dormitories, dining halls, and playgrounds. Although many people doubted the worth of the investment, soon Wang proved that his decision was right. Since there was no official or unofficial accreditation system set up for private universities at that time, students evaluated the quality of private universities based on their observations of the infrastructures of the schools. Thus the

investment on the infrastructure attracted a large number of students for Yuhua University. In the following semester, 2,400 new students enrolled in the university.

In 1995, Wang took another big step in campus building. That year, Wang met Gu, the Chair of Yuhua Corporation. Yuhua Corporation was a village-owned Corporation located in Yuhua village. The village managed agricultural products, commercial businesses, restaurants, a travel agency, and real estates businesses. To develop the travel business, the Corporation applied for a loan of RMB 40 million yuan to construct a theme park. Due to the failure of management, the park could not make a profit, and the Corporation needed to pay millions yuan of interest to the bank every year. Wang persuaded the Corporation to invest the land in the development of the university as a form of cooperation. According to the agreement, the Corporation contributed its land, buildings, and lake in the park to the University, and the Institute helped the Corporation by paying half of the interest of the bank loan. The Corporation sent representatives to join in the University Board of Trustees and participated in the decision-making of the university development. Through the cooperation, the Institute saved money in building their own campus. The chair of the Corporation, Gu, also had a wish: to establish a high-quality university and middle school in the Yuhua district, he thus consequently supported the idea of Wang. Wang said of their collaboraton: “We can only cooperate with those who have authentic concern in education and wish to make contributions to education. It won’t work out if the cooperation is based on obsession for personal benefit.” Wang regards that the cooperation with Yuhua was based on their common understanding of education which would really benefit the development of the university. The cooperation with

Yuhua Corporation enabled the university to have a campus with a land of 190 acres. On the campus the university constructed buildings with total space of 180,000 square meters, which could accommodate more than 10,000 students. After the development of campus buildings in 1994 and 1995, the number of students enrolling in the university increased from 800 to 6,000. The success of the Institute set a model for other private universities in Shaanxi province that began to give priority to infrastructure buildings since the middle 1990s.

6.4.2 Academic Construction: toward a Comprehensive University

Wang frankly recognized that the initial stage of the university was the stage of “original capital accumulation.” The key to its survival is the expansion of the enrollment by a large scale, as they received no government funding to help with school building constructions and other instructional needs. Since 1996, Wang decided that the focus of the college should shift to maintaining and improving the quality of teaching by maintaining a restraint on the number of students enrolled. Wang intended to limit the number of student enrollment to be around 4500 per year from the year 1996 to 2000.

With the possession of its own campus, though it continued to look for more spaces, Yuhua University gradually shifted its focus to constructing teaching facilities, such as libraries that now have 1.2 million books, internet connecting to classrooms and dormitories, a satellite digital transmission system, computer centers, an audiovisual teaching center, and a considerable number of science laboratories. The University focused on funding for the teaching needs, while contracting the logistics work to the market, hiring companies to manage logistics in places such as dormitory

buildings, dinning halls, and bathhouses, which was an innovative strategy at that time. They asked companies to bid for constructing the dinning halls, and after the construction was completed, the contractors could run it for 15 years, and the college would not collect administrative fees, but it would require the contractor to control the profit range to be around 15%~20%, while the profit range in the society is generally 35%~40%. The current student apartments were also constructed by real estate companies. But concerning the discipline of students, the university assigned supervisors for the management of dormitories. This way, the University could use its limited financial resources in the construction of libraries and other infrastructures of the campus.

Initially most of the academic programs offered by the university were majors in humanities and businesses, such as language, management, law, advertisement, etc. This was due to the fact that the university did not have enough funding to support engineering majors which require substantial financial investment in laboratories and equipments. With the upgrading of the university and improvement of its financial capability, the university began to establish majors in science and engineering and became a comprehensive university. In 1998, it merged with Xi'an Institute of Science and Technology, which greatly strengthened its capacity in the field of science and engineering. Now the university has seven colleges and seventeen departments, covering arts, business, social science, engineering, agriculture science and medical science. However, English, computer technology, and business administration are still its brand programs.

Despite its expansion of programs, the University continued its emphasis on training students with practical operational skills. Forty percent of the classroom instruction time is given to lab experiments or practical projects. Internship in factories, companies or corporations is encouraged and for some programs is required. In addition, the University asked companies to be involved in the design of curriculum, or invited company managers, engineers, and designers with rich practical experiences to give instructions. For example, the Financial Director of one famous corporation was appointed as the instructor of the accounting class and he designed the curriculum based on his knowledge and the accounting system of that corporation. But one teacher also pointed out that such teaching method is outdated in some programs. Because students of these programs eventually need to go through the national unified higher learning self-study examination to get their graduate certification, so the teachers still have to arrange their instruction according to the required knowledge of the national examination.

Besides emphasizing practical operational skills, the University also emphasizes the cultivation of four core abilities in students: critical thinking, learning ability, communicating skill, and collaboration skills. According to a vice president, how to employ pedagogies to cultivate these abilities is in the discretion of the professors and teachers who design and teach the curriculum.

Most of the faculty were part-time teachers who are either retired teachers or currently employed teachers in public universities. The recruitment of part-time teachers saved cost for the private university since there is no need to provide the faculty with housing, health insurance, and retirement pension. Also the recruitment

of part-time teachers provided more flexibility since the private universities need to frequently adjust the program structures according to the needs of the market. However, there are also problems. For example, part-time teachers lack a strong commitment to teaching in private universities, and as they have high mobility, retention is a serious issue. In order to improve the quality of education, a stable team of full-time teachers are necessary. From 1993 on, the university began to recruit university graduates and provide training opportunities for them. Beginning 1997, it began to employ its own graduates to take positions in the administrative offices, and provide them opportunities to take courses for Master's degree.

In 1996, the University established a research center called "Higher Education Research Center." The research center is focused on doing research on educational theory, educational systems and models in other countries and in China, and educational practices in history and in contemporary times. It is the first research center established by a private university, and it published a quarterly journal called "Research on Higher Education", which has gradually gained reputation in the academic circle.

6.4.3 Administrative Structure

During this period the University established a formal administrative structure. The public universities are under the leadership of the Communist Party Committee, and the Party Secretary of the Committee is the highest authority in the university. The private university is, by legal requirement, a system with the president in charge under the leadership of the Board of Trustees. According to government regulations, private universities should also have a Communist Party Committee and establish the

position of Party Secretary, but the Party Secretary is not necessarily the highest authority in the University. In the University, the Board of Trustees consists of founders, investors, and the Party Secretary. The Board of Trustees is responsible for making decisions about the direction of the university, fund raising, the university's development plan, appointments in the University Affairs Committee and the appointment of main academic leaders in each program.

The executive responsibility is taken by the University Affairs Committee under the leadership of the president. The University Affairs Committee establishes an administrative system and implements the education goals of the university. The Committee invites celebrities in all fields to constitute an advisory board to advise the university's development plan. The academic leaders are primarily retired famous professors in public universities who are known for their deep knowledge and rich research experiences in their field. The academic leaders are responsible for designing teaching plans, selecting teaching materials, formulating policies about academic development, and directing their programs' teaching activities.

The colleges and departments in the University have great autonomy. They have power to appoint faculty, determine the use of budget, establish new programs, and design curriculum. Although the University Affairs Committee has the ultimate power to approve the budget and program establishment, it seldom intervenes with the concrete operations of the colleges and departments.

Compared to public universities, the organizational structure and management procedures in the University are simpler, and the decision-making power is more

decentralized. President Wang compared private universities with public universities in this way:

Public universities and private universities have differences in their focus of work. Private universities emphasize more on efficiency and effectiveness, and the administration is to serve the goal of enhancing students' academic performance. But the public universities have to maintain complicated routines and its administration structure is often overstaffed. Oftentimes, the maintenance of routine work takes more energy than the efforts put into improving students' academic performance. In addition, the complicated administrative procedures impose limits on the autonomy of academic professionals in the university.

6.4.4 Property Right and the Finance System

In 1995, the co-founder of the Institute, Wu, parted way with Wang and founded his own University. To appreciate his contribution to the Institute, Wu was allowed to claim part of the Institute's assets as the start fund for his new organization. According to Wang, the property right of the Institute was not clarified from the beginning. And under that situation, he had to show support to his partners. This incident forced Wang to deal with the issue of property right. To prevent the same kind of situation or potential dispute in the future disposal of assets, he persuaded all members in the Board of Trustees to give up their stock of the Institute. To recognize the contribution of those founders, Wang kept the position of Lifetime Trustee for them, which means they have lifetime benefits such as having an apartment for free, a monthly salary and health care, and perks such as having the use

of the university's cars after retirement. In this way, no one "owns" the University, and when the founders or trustees leave the university, the existence and the survival of the University will not be affected. Wang explains, "it is important to build the consensus that we are not making money from this (running the university), but making contributions to the society." For those education institutes that merged into the University, Wang also required that the original founders give up their stocks. Wang said he would not merge with any education institute whose president was not willing to give up his stock.

For Wang, the boundary between "private" and "public" is not that clear. "From the very beginning, I have never thought that the university is my own university. University of social forces means that the university is supported by all of the social members¹⁸. Everyone contribute a little to the university, whether it is land, money, or knowledge. People come together to build the university, and the university is of the people." Wang notes that when people realize that the school is not a "private" school, they tend not to fight over personal gains, but are more willing to take responsibility doing things from the perspective of "public good" and the common interest.

The finance management of private universities is a sensitive issue. After exploration in the initial stage, the Institute established a strict finance system. It implemented a two-level financial auditing system consisting of the Board of Trustees and the University Affairs Committee: the Board of Trustees is responsible to back-check the financial accounting of the University Affairs Committee as well as of each college and department monthly and annually. It also regulated that all the

¹⁸ In Chinese, "minban universities" are used to name universities such as Yuhua, and literally minban means "run by social forces"

accountant cannot be the relatives of the members in the Board of Trustees and the University Affairs Committee. Wang emphasized the point that the goal of the school is not for profit-making, but for public common good, and he hopes that this idea is embraced by all the members of the university.

Students in private universities could hardly apply for student loans, as banks in China would provide this service only to public university students. In 1997, a vice president of the University helped the University to get a grant of three million yuan from the Cihui Buddhism Foundation as a source of scholarship to students from low income families. In 1999, the University established its own student aid fund. Members in the Board of Trustees each donated fifty thousand yuan and every teacher donated ten percent of their annual salary to the fund on a voluntary basis. Thus every year around 200 to 300 students from low income families can obtain financial aid from the fund. One board member said the next step is to establish an alumni association of the University and call for donations from the alumnus to help with the development of the University.

6.4.5 University - Government Interaction: Expanding Influence by the University vs. Imposing Stringent Regulations by the Government

Capital Requirement and Land Use Right

During the development stage between 1994 and 2000, Yuhua University made many aggressive moves to improve the facility and quality of education of the organization as well to expand its influence, including signing long-term contract

with corporations for expanding its campus, adjusting its program structure and establishing new programs, increasing the number of teachers, and establishing an education research center to influence the theories and practices of higher education. The expansion of the private universities in Xi'an city during this period elicited the attention of the government, which began to implement measures to place private higher education under its regular administrative control. In 1996, the People's Congress of Shaanxi province passed the Regulation on Schools Run by Social Forces in Shaanxi province. This is the first provincial-level regulation on private education. The Regulation stipulates the requirements for running a private university or school, procedures of establishing new programs, the right to school assets, and the mechanisms of internal management. This change in government attitude reflects that the government has attached certain importance to the development of private schools/universities and the rights they should have. For example, Article 35 of the Regulation articulates that private universities should get the same treatment as public universities in raising fund and purchasing of teaching facilities. And if private universities have the need to use land, the government can give it certain priority in the allocation of land. And Article 37 says that teachers in private universities have equal status with teachers in public universities. However, the government also placed a lot of restrictions on private universities. For example, Article 9 states that in order to apply for the license of running a university, the founders need to have ownership of fixed and stable teaching sites and teaching facilities, have a stable source of funding, and have qualified full-time and part-time teachers, accountants, and administrative staff. While in reality, many private universities are unable to meet

such requirements. Many began with nothing and depended on taking out loans and renting classrooms for their initial survival and development. They solved the problem of campus building and teacher recruitment with only a small amount of capital investment. The Regulation hence on the one hand gives private universities some protection as they now have laws to refer to and rules to observe, which is a good thing, but also it means the space for private universities to survive is narrower, and individuals and social groups need to have much stronger financial capacity at the beginning in order to establish and run a private higher learning institution.

Wang, as well as administrators in other private universities, complained that without measures taken by the government to provide practical support, the new government regulations imposed constraints on them and discourage the efforts of the private universities. The regulation on land transfer and land use is one example. In China, the government owns the land. People do not have the ownership of the land, but only the right to use it. When people want to transfer their use right, they need to get the approval from the government. Wang's university, as well as many other private universities did not want to buy the use right of the land for three reasons: First, it costs a huge amount of money to buy the land's use right and the university cannot afford the expenditure and the transaction tax; second, if the university applies for loan, the procedures of applying for bank loan is very complicated and the bank would quite possibly not approve the application; third, even if the bank approves, the interest of the loan is higher than annual rental fee of the land. Thus, many private universities signed long-term rental contract with other organizations to use their land, or in the case of Wang, they cooperated with villagers in running Yuhua University.

However, these forms of cooperation were regarded as inappropriate by the government. In 1997, the central government enacted a regulation to forbid any organizations to use agriculture land for commercial or industrial use. However, it does not mention the land used by private universities. According to this regulation, private universities need to buy the land first and change it to “non-agriculture” land later. However, many private universities neither can afford the cost of commercial land nor can get support from the government to do so.

In the collaboration of the private university and Yu Hua Corporation, the use right of the land is not transferred and still belongs to the peasants in Yu Hua village, and the Corporation applied and got the approval to use the land for educational purpose. However, this kind of cooperation did not have precedent in Shaanxi province, and the provincial government insisted on dealing with the issue on its own logic: the University must have the land license to build the university, and to have the license, it must purchase the use right of land and to pay the tax for transferring the use right. If the University does not get the license, then it is illegal for it to construct buildings and run the university on the land. With a strong determination to have their own campus, Wang ignored the warning of the government and decided to build the university campus in Yu Hua district. In the national land investigation in 1997, the national Department of Land Management found out that Wang violated the land policy, and Wang might be subjected to several years of prison. But at the end, the government decided to give him a milder penalty: a fine of one million yuan, since the private university is being run for public good. Wang joked about this

penalty: “I will not cry for the losing of money. The university is the nation’s university, and the penalty is also given to the nation.”

Characteristics of Private universities: For Profit or For Not For Profit

In the years of 1994 to 1996, the university was in a status of losing money. It was until 1997 when the Bureau of Commodity Price (BCP) permitted the increase of tuition by 1/3 that the Institute was able to pay off its debt and began to make a profit. In the Regulation on Schools Run by Social Forces, Article 6 stipulates that social groups can not run educational organizations for the goal of profit-making. This is a tricky regulation. All private universities have no funding from the government and their operation depends on tuition. In some private universities, extra profits are distributed to owners or shareholders, and in other universities, extra profit is made in order to expand their scale and improve the quality of education. But the Regulation does not consider possible modes private universities may use to redistribute the profit, and what fundamentally distinguishes non profit making activities and commercial activities. In a word Article 6 in the Regulation does not clearly define what operational model is considered as nonprofit. In many regions BCP standardized the tuition for private universities as a way to constrain the profit-making of these institutions. Administrators of private universities complained that the government ignores the difference of private universities which differ in their conditions, investment in infrastructures, and cost of operation. One administrator said, “Private education, especially private higher vocational education, needs more investment in experiments, internships, and practices, and different majors vary in their education cost. The government standardizing the tuition led to deficiency of many schools.”

And he suggested that the government should give the decision making power on tuition to the school, and the schools only need to put on records in the BCP and government education offices. And the government offices can assess if the price is reasonable according the university's investment in infrastructure, operation cost, and the education quality provided by the school. (Interview with an administrator on teaching and research, June 19 2005)

Academic Status of Private Universities

Private universities enjoy relatively more autonomy than public universities in program establishment, admission, funding and other matters. However, they are still under highly centralized control from the government, as the central government continues to dominate the approval of degrees and diplomas, and set strict quotas for enrollment of students in certain subject areas. On October 1, 1997, Regulation on Schools Run by Social Forces issued by MOE was implemented. It is the first national level regulatory and administrative law on private education. The issuance of this regulation marked a new development era, in which the government intended to indirectly rule private education by law and guide private education into the government-administered developmental track. According to the regulation, MOE is responsible for making overall plans for education run by non-governmental sectors, and set the establishment standard of private universities.

Following the regulation, private universities need to apply to MOE to get the qualification to issue diploma and academic degrees. But when asked why private universities have such difficulty to get the approval to issue bachelor degrees, one government official mentioned that private universities lagged behind public

universities in terms of the qualification of their faculty and the condition of teaching facilities. He added, “private higher education institutions should focus on vocational training, that is what our country currently most needed” (Interview with a government official in OERNGS, Shaanxi, June 20 2005). The regulations serve to strengthen the control of the state government in the private sector.

The discriminatory treatment they receive in the national unified degree system is always the bottleneck for private higher education institutions. MOE is the only agent that has the power to accredit the country’s educational institutions, and ranked them into first-class, second-class and third-class bachelor’s degree universities. Below that there are the associate degree vocational and technical colleges which the MOE classifies private universities to be. This classification limited what kind of students private universities can enroll.

Since 1991, MOE gave some provinces the qualification to examine and approve private universities to enroll students who would get graduation certification through the means of applying a “Certificate Examination.” In the Certificate Examination system, the university has the authority to organize tests for 30% of the courses, and for the other 70% courses, students fulfilled them by taking the national higher learning examination for self-study. This policy enabled private universities to attract some students. However, in 2004, MOE declared to cancel the “Certificate Examination” and forbade private universities to enroll students under this category. The reason is that as an executive branch, it is beyond the MOE’s power to initiate such system. Therefore the “Certificate examination” system was terminated as demanded by the State Council. The abrupt policy change pushed many private

universities to the edge of bankruptcy since they could not adjust programs timely to avoid the loss of students.

What has been a threatening factor for private universities is that public universities have established the so-called “second tier colleges” or “independent colleges” since the middle 1990s. These are institutions that capitalize on the teaching resources of public universities and operate like pseudo private universities. They offer very similar programs as private universities. The government has given them beneficial policy by accepting whole sale that they are undergraduate degree granting institutions, thus edging out the advantage of private universities from the very beginning, as most of them were still allowed only to provide tertiary degrees. The expansion of the second tier colleges rake in huge profit for public universities, while driving many private universities out of business. In order to keep their enrollment scale, many private universities find themselves having to lower their admission scores substantially. By doing this, their academic quality was jeopardized and their reputation was affected, leading to the creation of a vicious circle.

Compared with public universities, private universities have to meet rigorous requirement and go through much more difficult application and examination procedures to get the qualification to issue their own degrees. This restriction not only influences their recruitment of high-quality faculty, but also their recruitment of students. For a long time, private universities have been allowed to admit students only after all public universities have admitted theirs since they are at the lowest echelon of higher education institutions. In this situation, whatever efforts they make, the room for quality improvement is limited. But for the “independent colleges”

owned by the public universities, they can enroll good students due to the fact they can grant bachelor degrees from the beginning and bank on the reputation of the public universities they affiliate with. And the procedures for “independent colleges” to apply for the establishment of new programs or adjustment of old program structure are much easier than private universities, since the administrators in the public universities are the “insiders” of the government system. A sense of crisis has been looming large for many private universities, which have grown from scratch since 1980s to find their market niche. Now the public universities and local governments joining force in setting up independent colleges has instantly taken away their advantages – that as private institutions they maintain a closer tie with the needs of the economy and have highly flexible administrations and programs.

Voices from the Private University

With its increasing influence, Wang was elected to be the executive trustee in the higher education society in Shaanxi province, Director of Vocational Education Society in Shaanxi province, as well as the Vice Chair of Intellectuals’ Society in Shaanxi province. Wang was able to express his opinions in more occasions. And these professional associations provided chances for people to exchange ideas with each other. But Wang said, “when people get together, they complain a lot about current situations. But we rarely take collective action. We don’t want to provoke the anger of the government.”

Wang said, with the increasing number as well as expanding scale of private universities, the government has taken private universities more seriously and would more frequently have conversations with people in private universities for their

opinions. So now administrators of private universities have more opportunities to let their opinions be heard by government officials either through informal or formal channels. And Wang found out sometimes the informal conversation is more useful than formal conversations in advancing understanding between the government officials and private universities.

Wang mentioned that one important strategy for private universities is to improve their quality of education and also take efforts in other affairs to establish a good reputation and gain the trust of the government. In 2001, several provinces nearby Shaanxi suffered from big flood. In cooperation with the local government, Yuhua University decided to enroll around four hundred students from disaster areas and exempt their tuition. This initiative got praise from local government and also got broad media coverage. Starting in early 2000s, the private university called for improving the credibility of private universities. With more and more private universities coming into the higher education scene and the consequent heated competition, private universities were criticized for making dishonest advertisement to students and parents. Some private universities boasted that their employment rate of graduates could reach 98% which was not true. Wang and his university initiated a collective manifesto and called for other private higher education institutions to join in. The manifesto declared that private universities would not do misleading advertisement, and publish their phone numbers so that they can receive feedback and evaluation from parents, the public and the media. The manifesto received good comments from the media, including the China Central Television (CCTV), as well as the government.

6.5 Rising above the Water between 2000 and Now

6.5.1 Marching toward a New Stage in the Development of the University

Besides continuing his strategies of cooperating with business enterprises to mobilize funding and resources, such as cooperating with one real state company and one medical company in order to obtain RMB 20 million yuan in investments in the university every year and to have sites for internship for its students, Wang even considers cooperating or merging with public universities.

My goal is not a small-scale professional school, but a comprehensive University. If a University cannot make distinctive contributions in knowledge creation, it can hardly be recognized by the society. In the international arena, everyone knows Peking University because of its accomplishments in knowledge and values creation. However, under current condition, a private university can not accomplish high-level academic achievement. The advantage of a private university is its capacity to mobilize resources. If we can cooperate with a public university, taking charge of the undergraduate / industrial education, and leaving the graduate education to the public university, the university may undertake fundamental change. (Interview with Wang, September 20, 2005)

When asked if he would worry that the cooperation with public university may lead to the loss of power and control of the university, Wang said he would not worry about that. He explained it is because he didn't view Yuhua University as his own university. What he cares about is the development of the university, not personal power or personal control of the university. He articulated that the key is to establish a mechanism to guarantee the prosperity of the university. When the mechanism is established, it will not matter whether the university belongs to the government or non-governmental social groups, because the leaders of the university must follow the rules and laws set in the mechanism. And if the head violate the rules, other people will be against him.

After 2000, Wang further emphasized the research role of the university. From 2001, the research center was renamed as “Qi Fang Education Research Center”¹⁹, and its goal is to widely absorb ideas from all around the world, and to become the think tank for private universities. Besides Xi’an, the research center established branches in Beijing and Shanghai, and invites many famous scholars from outside the university as the advisors and part-time researchers of the research center. Convening scholars in East China Normal University and Beijing Normal University in 2001, the research center planned and accomplished the editing and publishing of the “Qi Fang Private Education” series, consisting of six books on “exploration of private education,” “introduction to private education,” “history of Chinese private education,” “policy analysis of Chinese private education,” “the report on the development of Chinese private education,” and “overseas private education.” In 2003 and 2004, the research center called for public application to the research grants provided by the center, and it was the first time that private research centers in the country set up such grants. More than 100 researchers from 50 educational institutions applied and 19 scholars got the grant. From 2002 to now, the center has held domestic and international conferences and forums independently or collaboratively with other academic institutions. In 2002, the center started publication of the journal “Research on Private Education”, focusing mainly on the theory and practice of private education in China and other countries. In 2003, as a primary drafter, the research center participated in the drafting, discussion and finalizing the version of the Law of Promoting Private Education of Shaanxi province.

¹⁹ Qi fang in Chinese traditional medicine means using different prescriptions for different kinds of illness.

And during the enacting of the national Law of Promoting Private Education, it participated in the investigation organized by the National People's Congress (NPC), the Ministry of Education (MOE), and Shaanxi government, providing advice for the eventual passing of the Law.

The Dean for academic programs in Yuhua University explained the research role of the university is not only to improve its status and influence, but also to facilitate the teaching and learning in the university. Collaborating with the Ford Project mentioned previously, Yuhua University in 2004 offered a research grant that faculty could apply for. And the teachers chose a diverse range of topics for their research: new model of student management that cultivation of personality; teacher training; the development of multiple-intelligence of students; and multi-dimensional system of student evaluation. From these topics we could observe the administrators' and teachers' efforts and creativity in developing the talents of students. The campus culture of Yuhua University is metaphorically dubbed as "transforming fish into dragon" (yu hua long), since the university is located in Yu (fish) Hua (transformation) district. Wang said the university believes that every student could excel in the society. Although they are not the "top students" in the traditional definition, in fact they have great potentials that are not explored in the traditional system of education. One staff in the student management office said similar words: "Although our students are not good at traditional school examination, many of them are talented. If we give them opportunities, they could make great achievement." Yuhua University encourages the development of students' interests and personality. Students are able to obtain support from the university faculty and staff when they participate in

science competition or art contest. One researcher in the research center, Yun Gong, once a student in Yuhua University, said he likes the university very much because of its free environment and its emphasis on personal development. He was given great autonomy to work on the university newspaper. Later he participated in the national “Challenge Cup” contest of extra-curricular scientific work; for this he acquired technical support from the university and was given flexibility in allocating his time. There are several other students who got support when they participated in regional or national talent shows. This is not common in public universities. One staff in the Administration Office of Student Management said that “the university attached great importance to the development of students’ abilities. The university leaders regard that the university’s strength is represented by the performance of its students.”

Along the years one big change in Yuhua University is that the students gradually get involved in the operation of the university. Students are encouraged to provide suggestions about the university’s management. For example, one student told the researcher, “whenever we called the Vice President responsible for student management to tell him our thoughts about the university, he listened to us patiently and gave us timely response.” In the construction of the dining room, study room, and the new library, the university collected feedback from the students and made adjustments to the original plan. And the Student Union and the Student Newspaper is also a channel for students to voice their opinions to the university authority.

6.5.2 Yuhua University-Government Relation: Independence Required by the Private University vs. Inclusion of the Social Groups by the Government

With the increasing number of private universities and their expanding scale, the presidents of some private universities became famous and were elected as representatives in People's Congress, or Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee (CPPCC). Wang is a representative in Xi'an Municipal People's Congress and Shaanxi Provincial People's Congress in 1998, and then the National People's Congress (NPC) in 2003 and 2007. His nomination and being elected is connected to his increasing reputation in the field of private university. There are three other presidents of private universities (in the whole country) who are in NPC and more are in the provincial or municipal People's Congress or CPPCC. As representatives, they have opportunities to formally participate in political decision-making. They can propose a bill directly to the Congress or participate in the discussion of the establishment of new laws. Wang told us that in the informal meetings with government officials, the administrators of private universities often express their opinions about current policies. However the impact of such informal advocacy is unknown.

In Shaanxi province, private universities have developed into a sizable scale and gained high social reputation, which attracted the attention of the government. Shaanxi provincial government began to realize that the development of private universities is an opportunity to make it a famous brand of Shaanxi province and a way to showcase the achievement of the provincial government under economic reform in these years. In 2004, the Shaanxi provincial government provided a lot of

support to the four private universities in Xi'an that applied for the qualification to issue bachelor degrees, scrutinizing their application materials and making bountiful suggestions as how to make modifications. And when the four private universities succeeded in their application, *all* the top leaders of the provincial government attended the celebration convention, which is an honor that even well-established public universities rarely have.

The government often does not trust the education quality of private universities, regarding them as lacking educational experiences and capacity. However, with the development of private universities and the social recognition of their quality, some private universities begin to see that they do not have to place the government recognition as the only or the most important factor for the survival of the university. They view the recognition of the larger society as another indicator of success. For example, Xi'an Translation University issued its students the graduate certification in the oral translation program that is not officially recognized by government. However, the president of Xi'an Translation University was confident that the students would still find good jobs since the market and the society recognize the quality of education and training students receive in this program. His confidence got through the test of the market. Wang told us that when private universities obtained social reputation and recognition, it is easier for them to get the recognition from the government.

To break from the pattern that private universities are still clustering at the bottom of the national higher education pyramid as a whole, private university presidents perceive that one prerequisite is the establishment of an accreditation system that assesses private universities based on their distinct roles in the economy,

and their strength and merits with respect to their services to the society. Since the beginning of this century, many private universities have called for and attempted to collaborate with research institutions for the establishment of independent or semi-independent accreditation agencies, and some research organizations are also brewing the idea as they see a potentially big need. The private education research center in Yuhua University is doing a research on the existing accreditation system in other countries, and is actively designing the accreditation system and accreditation standards that suit China, as a guide for interested semi-independent and independent accreditation agencies to adopt. An accreditation system, which involves multiple parties other than only the government, will assist the public in judging the merits of private higher learning institutions; meanwhile, it will decrease the excessive control of the government over the private sector of higher education. In a word, the involvement of third party will allow private universities alternatives in seeking social recognition, mobilizing social support, and establishing a sphere for public participation and discussion in its development.

Summary

In the present chapter, a case study is performed to illustrate the development of a private university in China since 1990s. The policy change in the later 1980s enabled the emergence of private universities. Both the number and the scale of private universities have been increased rapidly because of the high social demand on post-secondary education such as vocational higher education. However, the development of private university also experienced resistances from both existing administrative system and the legal system. Benefited from their increasing influence

on society and education system, private universities like Yuhua are gaining the trust and recognition from the government, which helps with the changing of the administrative system and legal system to be in favor of private universities.

CHAPTER 7
SEESAWING BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND CONTROL: CASE
ANALYSIS OF THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

The rapid growth of private higher education institutions was witnessed during more than one decade from 1990s to 2000s. According to the educational statistical communiqué issued by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 1991 and 2005, 450 private higher learning institutions existed in 1991, and the number reached 1,329 in 2005. The 1993 government document, “Outline of Chinese Educational Reform and Development,” stipulated that the state will “change the structure of government monopoly of running schools, establish step by step a system centered around government’s operation of schools, with the help of social forces.” And in the Outline, the government should adopt the attitude of “*active encouragement, strong support, proper guidance and sound management*” toward schools and universities established according to law by social organizations and individual citizens. In the case of Yuhua University, we found it takes several years for the government to establish a system with “proper guidance and sound management,” and there are evidences to show that government is making efforts toward “active encouragement and strong support,” although it is not clear how long this process would take.

It is the state government that took the initiative of allowing non-governmental individuals and groups to run educational organizations. However, the institutional support from the government has far lagged behind the development of non-governmental education organizations. Non-governmental individuals and social

groups, through their efforts, remind the government of problems in the current system, and also remind the government that private universities have become a force that cannot be neglected. In 2000, for the first time, MOE discussed and then accredited one private higher education institution, the Yellow River University of Science and Technology to issue bachelor's degree. In 2002 and 2003, MOE accredited seven more private higher education institutions as undergraduate institutions. In 2005, 17 additional private higher education institutions were granted such qualification. Thus despite the popular opinion of the government officials that private universities only provide low-quality vocational education, the government has to recognize that private higher education institutions have worked on their quality and made contributions to the field of education. The drafting and enforcement of the Law of Promoting Private Education also reflects the response of the government toward efforts made by private universities in institutional building. This chapter analyzed the factors leading to the new spaces for civil society actions, the meaning of the new spaces in social development, and the changing model of state-society interaction because of the entry of new actors into the social system.

7.1 Factors Engendering the New Spaces for Action

The replacement of the central state planned economy with a market economy enables non-governmental social forces to self-organize themselves, carving out autonomous spheres, increasing their influences and negotiating with the state-governments. From the case of Yuhua University, the prerequisites in the self-organization process of the society are the loosened state control, accessibility of public resources, and the diffusion of ideas. And the intellectual and entrepreneurial

leadership of key founding members is the key in integrating all these transforming factors to initiate the self-organization process and to achieve social change.

7.1.1 Development Ideology of the Government

Before 1977, China was under extremely tight control by a group of leftist government leaders. The political atmosphere took a huge shift in 1977. Deng, the leader after the demise of Mao, was a pragmatic statesman rather than an ideologue. His well-known “cat theory” (Whether it is a white cat or a black cat, whoever catches mice is a good cat) shows his lack of interest in “isms,” but his pragmatic emphasis on what can make China competitive in the world economy. This shift in focus influenced all aspects of the Chinese society, including the recruitment of government officials that gives more weight to their competency more than their loyalty to the “socialist” cause, the evaluation of local officials primarily based on their achievement in promoting the local economic development, and the adjustment of the formerly egalitarian policy to accelerate the pace of economic development. Thus, local government officials became pragmatic and placed economic development on the top of their priority list, and shows support to groups, organizations and corporations that can make contribution to local economic development, while keeping their eyes wide open on every social activity to determine if it aligns with the “socialist” and “Marxist-Leninist” line, as Deng’s other doctrine is “stability surpasses everything.”

Mr. Lu, a scholar-type government official in the provincial Office of Education Run by Non-Governmental Sector (OERNGS), said that in the initial stage the government did not interfere with private universities since private universities were

thought to do public good and would not harm the socialist development cause. According to Lu, private universities had poor conditions and unqualified teachers at the initial stage, and it was the relaxed policy environment that enabled these organizations to survive. Lu observes, “private higher education will not have today’s success without the support of the government” (Interview with Mr. Lu, June 19 2005). And administrators in the private universities also agreed that the laissez-faire attitude is the biggest support to the private universities. Thus, founders of the private university had a lot of freedom to organize resources and recruit teachers and conduct educational activities without the notice of the government.

7.1.2 Availability of Resources

The state-government in China does not only have a dominant control on the society through administrative structures and the chain of commands for policy making and implementation, but also through the possession and allocation of resources. In socialist China, all the land of the country belongs to the state, and individuals and corporations can only use them for a certain period of time, that is, they have only “use right.” Thus, actors and organizations are dependent on the government for resources, such as housing, production materials, job opportunities, and information and monetary resources. Dependent on the government for survival and success, civil society actors and organizations are therefore rendered powerless according to the definition given by Max Weber in his *Basic Concepts in Sociology*: “ ‘Power’ is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out one's own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests. ” (Weber, trans. 1962)

The state-government of China released a part of its control over resources during the economic reform era in order to build up a market-oriented economy where private ownership can thrive. Especially after the mid-1990s, many resources can be accessed and acquired by social groups, such as production materials, information, and monetary resources. This means that civil society actors and organizations could decrease their dependency on the state-government by acquiring resources through diverse channels. As a result, their ability to resist state control increased since their survival is not completely determined by the resource distribution of the government.

In the case of Yuhua University, several categories of resources are needed for organizing educational activities: space and land, facilities, knowledge and information, and human resources. Although the ownership of land still belongs to the state-government, the regulation about the use of land is loosened. Thus civil society actors can negotiate with the government on the use of the land, the land's use right of which was bought or rented, to organize and conduct public activities for their own benefits. Also the actors have access to knowledge and information so they could edit textbooks and design programs. On the other hand, that people in the society have more monetary resources due to business undertakings ensures the university has relatively stable funding resource.

Human resource is another important resource for non-governmental actors to organize social activities. If people do not have choice on their career, it would be very difficult to gather people for sustained society-initiated activities. In the case of Yuhua University, the university was able to recruit its own teachers. However, the

private university has no right to grant title to its own faculty, and teachers in private universities could not enjoy the benefit of health insurance and pension as teachers in public universities did. These make the private universities much less attractive to highly qualified teachers and scholars. In this case, the private universities developed through the recruitment of part-time teachers from public universities. Xi'an has many higher education institutions, which provided a favorable condition for the development of private universities. People in the public universities retire around the age of 60, while people at this age are at the peak of their career and still have energies. The private university recruited these retired professors, who bring their rich knowledge and experiences to the private universities. For example, it invited the former president of Northwestern Politics and Law Institute, who was also the legal consultant of the provincial government, as the leading professor of the university's law program; the vice president of the Shaanxi Financing Institute who is also the economic consultant of provincial government as the leading professor of the economics program; and a famous professor from the Northwestern Industrial University as the leading professor of Yuhua's computer science program. This strategy helped the private university to improve its education quality in an unfriendly official environment.

7.1.3 Access to Ideas

One important outcome of China opening itself to the world again after forty years of isolation its door is the increasingly frequent and inevitable encounter with different policies, practices, cultures, values, norms, conventions, and etc from outside the country. With the assistance of new technology, especially the highly

advanced communication and transportation technology, there are many opportunities for exchange of ideas and learning. In the political and economic area, there are increased discussions on pluralistic systems, autonomy, freedom of research, civil society, and the call for human rights.

In the case of Yuhua University, the founders of the private university got aspirations from the models of private universities in other countries. As researchers in the academic field, Dr. Wang and Mr. Wu have had many opportunities to get access to diverse educational ideas and educational practices around the world. Wang and Wu even have experiences of staying abroad and examining the actual implementation of educational ideas and practices in other countries. These experiences affected their leadership styles and the management of their universities. In technical aspect, the founders designed programs and curriculum based on their knowledge of professional training programs abroad. In conceptual aspect, the founders were influenced by the autonomy that universities enjoyed in American and European countries, and they expected that private universities in China also have similar level of autonomy. In one of the book series edited by Wang, he systematically reviewed the education system in Western countries. In the Western countries, whether the private university is for public good or for private benefit is not the criterion for determining if its existence is justified. Private universities have a control on its own property, which is the guarantee for the minimal autonomy of the private university. For the purpose of examining its profit-making or non-profit status, the government can establish a financial check and audit system to supervise the financial situation of the private university and to determine whether to grant tax

exempt privileges. Besides, the government can also establish effective channels for students and parents to appeal through the legal system if their interests are harmed.

In the personal interview with a vice president of the university, he expressed that government encouraging the existence of private universities and granting them autonomy would contribute to the construction of social and cultural pluralism. He reminded that there is a connection between cultural pluralism and private education in the history of Western countries. Private universities provided people with more choices who thus could find a good fit between their personal interests and campus cultures. In one of Dr. Wang's articles (2003), he also mentioned that civil society as the primary actor in public area would engender a shift to ethnic and cultural pluralism that increasingly characterizes modern societies.

Recently, scholars and private universities' administrators look upon the accreditation systems in United States as an exemplary model of the future accreditation system in China. Private universities in China have been complaining about the unfairness of the government in evaluating public universities, in treating "independent colleges" and private universities differentially. They believe that the government should transfer more power to the third-party organization to carry out the accreditation function.

7.1.4 Leadership of Intellectuals

Individual leadership plays an important role in social change engendered by the private universities. However, the space for individual leader is closely connected to the contextual conditions. When all the resources, including material resources and institutional resources, were under the control of the state-government, the only path

of the individuals to realize their ideas of social change was to get the recognition of the rulers in power and to preach their ideas to them. This was exactly the life pursuit of the “scholar-official” class in the ancient China as well as in the socialist China period. In this context, leaders with independent political or cultural thoughts could hardly be found.

The official endorsement of a market economy has not only fostered the emergence of a private sector, but also created far more socio-economic opportunities for Chinese citizens. In the new market setting, many people acquire, through setting up their own businesses or schools, social and economic independence from the state-government. This independence enables them to seek alternative ways to make an influence on the society. In the case of Yuhua University, Dr. Wang found that the public university he worked in provided limited opportunities for him to make any influence in the society, but he could make a significant difference in the private sector. He would be able to mobilize resources to accomplish things in his own plan. He broke the existing hierarchical structure and built a new social network around the University. For example, his cooperation with the companies, public schools, and factories in classroom renting, program design and student training has reflected a new kind of relationship and network outside of the state’s control. Through these relationships and networks, his vision of education impacted on the higher education system in the country.

Wang’s role in the development of Yuhua University is crucial. The most important feature of a leader in the context is not his knowledge of education, which is also very useful, but his determination to make a difference and his courage and

fearlessness to break the norm and conventional procedures. Wang envisions Yuhua University to be a comprehensive university that could have a position in the higher education system in China, going way beyond the government's definition of private universities as merely vocational training colleges; he envisions that the university should be the result of the cooperation of a variety of social groups and organizations, and he did attract many people and organizations to join his team. In the transitional period to a new order, leaders are those who are able to persuade followers to embrace innovative or revolutionary ideas, and thus to alter or break the "frame" or interpretive scheme by which individuals locate, perceive, and label occurrences in their life consistent with the status quo.

7.2 New Spaces of Action and its Meaning

The relaxing of control of resources, labor, and information from the monopoly of the state saw the emergence of multiple non-state organizations that bear different structures and values. With the emergence of a non-state sphere, a variety of suppressed social interests have the opportunity to be expressed and realized in multiple ways. In the network around the private university, people aspiring for fulfilling their self values find venues to realize their interests. Shaped by these interests, the homogenous and wholly "public" under the socialist regime was replaced by multiple "publics" where individuals have a vital role in determining social outcomes. The private university is one of these "publics," and founders with strong visions and social values sought followers, supporters, and collaborators in setting up its own management system, making rules, and conducting social activities. In this public space cooperative effort is required to bring about commonly desired

outcomes. The diverse “publics” provide the fundamentals for the appearance of pluralism in power and culture. The diverse “publics” carry the following functions: the capacity of mobilizing resource to conduct public activities; the capacity of culture buildings, and the capacity of restructuring social networks. With the input of new resources, new persons, new ideas, and new alliances, the public space is expanding, and institutions like Yuhua University have the power to influence changes in the society.

7.2.1 Self-Organizing Public Activities

With possibility of access to educational resources that previously were completely controlled by the state-government, including land, facilities, teachers, and students, the civil society social forces are able to autonomously organize themselves outside the dominant official sphere. In this case, the founders of the private university were able to construct a campus, a physical space where administrative, academic and student activities can proceed with limited state intervention. And it is not only a physical space, but also a public space where people are able to identify their own interests and other’s interests, and collaborate with each other based on the convergence of their interests in order to achieve their common goals. Public space helps different people to find a balance between personal interests and the demands of the collective as a whole. In state-owned institutions in China, people for a long time are placed on a fixed track. They are not allowed to innovate, nor are they required to take risks. What is used by the state to motivate people was abstract and loft ideals: Individuals need to give up their personal interests and focus on serving for the nation and the Communist cause unconditionally. Individuals

harboring high self aspirations could not find any means to explore their personal interests and aspirations. When the state receded a little bit from its total domination of public affairs, people are able to carve out a space where they have more control on their own lives and seek for self actualization. More importantly, the relaxed control loosened the fetters on one's thinking. People can authentically think about what they want, look for meanings of life, explore diverse ways to fulfill their interests in life, and develop their own life paths. They are able to seek the best way to achieve life fulfillment and self actualization. In this private university, the founders and senior administrators chose to work together because they are able to achieve their self-interest through the private university, either the self-interest being the realization of one's ideas toward education, or obtaining social status, or serving others through education. And by working with each other, a collective interest of the group was formed based on the understanding of the role of education in making positive social change and their own roles in this process.

With cooperation in this space people are able to establish an academic system with its own distinct features, such as adopting a decentralized administrative structure for the university, instituting market-driven curricula, and providing professional development opportunities for its faculty. The founders extended the space of autonomy to a broader sphere through establishing connections with the other individuals, groups and organizations outside the University. The network it reached consists of the corporations from which it rented the land, the companies it contacted for employment of its students, other schools and universities for cooperation in academic programs, and the scholars for cooperation in research.

Through the networking, the university succeeded in carrying on education activities and head towards its expected academic goals.

7.2.2 Cultural Building

During the centralized state-planning economy era before 1978, culture production was a state-administered process. In the absolute compulsion the education system became an intellectually dismal place, where minds became calcified, regimented and constrained. Apathy ruled the day. Independent initiative was met with strange glances. With the emergence of an autonomous space, alternative channels have been opened in producing and molding the social culture. The primary incentive for Dr. Wang and the other founders to leave the public university and found their own educational organization was to put their own educational ideas into practice and to influence the education system. The emphasis on skills rather than political correctness, on capacity rather than credential, and on uniqueness in personality rather than the “standard good student model,” all challenged the orthodox educational practice, and these gradually were accepted by other private educational institutions. Taking advantage of their new found autonomy, other individuals in the University also participated in co-building the understanding toward “education” and toward the idea of “university.” One teacher in the University’s industry design program told the researcher that different from his past colleagues in the public university, he rarely gave students exams, instead, he evaluated students from their practical works. Another teacher teaching Chinese said she tried using an interdisciplinary methodology in her class, and her experiments

were encouraged by the university's administrators. People's participation not only influences their own life, but also influences the environment they live in.

The private university not only contributes to the pluralism of educational ideas and practice, but also contributes to the pluralism of social culture making. Different from the traditional culture that emphasized hierarchy and obedience required from the subordinator to the superior, the private university aspires to create a culture that emphasized mutual understanding and consensus-building. In this case, out of self-interest, people stepped out of the governmental unit and pursued their self-interest. Thus the individual interest is justified. On the other hand, people's self interests and goals are framed by the interaction with others and other's opinion toward them. In the process of exchanging resources, information, labor and services, people identify their own interests as well as the interests of others. The process of transferring and sharing resources is also a process of people being aware of their mutual connections and developing the consciousness of the necessity of co-dependence. People cooperate with each other not because they are required to do so but because of the awareness of the co-dependence between them. The cooperation between the university and other companies, corporations, schools, and academic institutions were all based on voluntary agreement and mutual benefits.

Internally, people carried their own plan when they came to the university, but they sought mutual recognition, and in this process, some fundamental commonness were recognized and kept, and rules were set for future communication and interaction. For example, the founders in the university were willing to give up their property right to the university after the discussion about the "public" vs. "private"

characteristics of the university. Though not everyone agreed with it at the beginning, based on the common concern in the role of education for serving public good, they finally reached the consensus that accepting this rule would benefit the university's students as well as the larger public (Interview with one founder, June 17 2005). This is because everyone bears certain obligation toward the community in that he has a sense of belonging and hope to get recognition from other community members.

Some administrators and teachers expressed that they like to work in the private university because they like the culture here. Their personal opinions would be respected even though they are not the high-level decision makers. This culture also influenced their expectation toward the government behavior. They expected that the government consult the opinions of people in the private university and consider more carefully of these opinions when they make policies concerning private education (Interview with a vice president and an administrator of student management, June 18, 2005). Although it is uncertain that how the university culture would influence the broader political or social culture, a trend of diversification of culture could be observed in this case.

7.2.3 Restructuring Social Network

The former state-planning system in socialist China determined not only the production and distribution of each product, but also the production of labors it needed and the role of each person to play in the society. It bound each person to a fixed post or location, and individuals could hardly change their life and career according to his own will. In addition, the relationship of social groups was defined by the government, for example, peasants and workers were “partners” and “friends,”

bourgeois and landlords were “enemies,” and intellectuals were those “who need help and re-education” from the proletarians. And even marriages were evaluated by the government as appropriate or inappropriate based on the couple’s family background.

With the gradual retreat of the state-government from some domains of public affairs, new forms of social networks were constructed as a result of voluntary association. The “partnership” among groups is not defined by a supreme political entity, but defined by the social members according to their own judgment. In this case, partnership exists between diverse social groups in all forms: resource sharing, contractual relationship, and academic cooperation.

During the era of economic reform, the CPC government realized the close connection between the country’s schemes of modernization and the need for science and technology, and has taken many measures to improve the social status of intellectuals. However, the current status of intellectuals has different characteristics with the status of intellectuals in the imperial China. In the past the intelligentsia served for the interest of the state and assisted the ruler in governing the country, and thus gained their high status in the society. Since the economic reform was launched, the existence of non-governmental sphere provides the intellectuals a new choice other than directly serving the state-government. In the case of Yuhua University, the intellectual groups in the university have more autonomy and interact with the state-government in a more equal status as compared to those working in the governmental organizations. In sum, the new space enables the participation of social members in reconstructing and shaping the social network and government-intellectual relationship.

7.3 University-State Interaction

When Yuhua University was very small, there was minimal interaction between the university and the government. The university expected little government intervention, and the government thought it would not bother with paying attention to the educational organization. But with its scale expanded and the number of teachers and students rapidly increased, the university attracted more attention from the government. The self organization of the society enables the birth of rising new power. The private university, by mobilizing its own resources, establishing alternate social institution, and establishing a broad social network, hence has been able to produce a great influence on the society. In this process, unavoidably, conflict and divergence rise up between the existing power holders and the new actors in resource allocation, the status of the new comer, the realm of power it should have and key values it holds.

7.3.1 Sources of Conflict

Conflict emerges when the new actors aspires for certain social status that is not granted by the state government. In the socialist state-planning system, it was the state that defined the status of each organization. Since the private universities were not in the system, they were automatically placed in the lowest echelon. A lot of problems the private universities encountered were due to this reason. For example, the students in private universities did not have the benefit of applying for student loans or getting discounted student tickets as the students in public universities while taking public transportation, and the teachers in the private universities did not have the health and retirement benefits as those in public universities, and private

universities had many more hurdles to jump through in getting their organization registered, getting approval for using land, and applying for new programs. And the factor most threatening the development of private universities was that they could only enroll those students who were not qualified to enter public universities. Seen as “outsiders,” the private actors were excluded from the mainstream circle as regular players and were not allowed to enjoy the benefits that members in the original system have. However, private actors would not accept that they are the second class of citizens. The founders and administrators of private universities are aware that they will lose attractiveness to students, teachers, and other partners or collaborators if they do not improve their status and acquire benefits for the university as well as members in the university.

As the private university developed, the realm of power inevitably became the arena of major conflict. With its financial independence, private universities have greater autonomy than public universities, especially in the recruitment of faculty and staff. However, the state government still controls the way and the result of education through multiple channels, such as, the establishment of the position of a party secretary in the private university’s administrative level, the implementation of required curriculum on Marxist theory and moral education, the registration of new programs, and the government accreditation of degree-issuing qualifications. Applying these regulations and constraints to private universities manifests the intention of the government to incorporate private universities into its realm of control. This contradicts the interests of the private universities, who want to set their own rules and standards in their practicing of educational activities. Currently, their

educational ideals are subject to enormous constraint in implementation, because the trustees and administrators have much restricted decision-making power. They can hardly decide the standard of students they want to enroll in, or the standard of students qualified for graduation. These are two keys to the quality improvement of the university, and thus are the main issues on which Yuhua University has strived for more participation and influence in politics and the academic arena. The resolution of this conflict may take a long time, because it demands basic change to the government administrative system, a change that the government would be resistant to.

Difference in world-views and values is another source for protracted conflict. The emergence of private universities founded by normal people brings an awareness of anti-elitism to the education system. For a long time, there is a common understanding among the government and the general public that knowledge belongs to and should serve the nation state, and that people carrying knowledge belong to and serve the nation state. Thus the quality of knowledge, such as central and marginal, true and false, useful and useless, and the status of people, such as noble and humble, are uniformly assessed and decided by the state. However, people in the private sector refuse to hold these dichotomies as absolute and permanent, and instead they see the value of knowledge rests on the individual choice and social need. The state is no longer the sole authority to set up and interpret the legitimacy of knowledge; instead, it is held that the location of authority shifts to each individual and social organization. This emphasis on the value of individual choice is a challenge to pre-established hierarchy and order. The debate on accreditation of

private universities is one manifestation of such conflict. Private universities considered that instead of MOE who favors public universities, the evaluation result will be more fair and legitimate if the evaluation is based on the judgment of a third-party organization and on public choice, such as, how many good students choose to enter the university.

7.3.2 Strategies in Dealing with Tension between the State and the Society

Conflict is not necessarily negative. It can be a factor for constructive progress or a cause for disruption. In the case of Yuhua University, the tension between the state and the society became a constructive force in pushing for institutional building of private universities. For its survival and development, the university was seeking for ways to make its complaints heard and situations understood. And when the complaints from private universities increased, the government recognized it needed to take the problems seriously. During the centralized planned economy the government used to be the only power in the economic and political system, and problems occurring in the system were possibly either not discovered or intentionally neglected by the government. But now the autonomous social groups would not accept whatever the treatment imposed on them, and the government is under pressure to consider the request of the society for institutional change. Both the social groups and the government take a practical stance: showing the attitude of understanding to the other side and trying to seek for a peaceful solution to address the concerns of both sides.

Tolerance is one distinct feature in Chinese culture. People tended to show high level of toleration when they received unfair treatment. On one hand, it is the result of

the inculcation of Confucius culture for thousands of years that emphasizes hierarchy and order, and that the people in low levels should show their respect and obedience to the people in high levels. On the other hand, it is the result of calculating the cost of resistance that prevents people from confronting with the authority. People choosing to defend their own interests will risk their career, jobs or even lives under the old authoritarian regime.

In the case of Yuhua University, at the beginning toleration to the indifference or even discrimination of the government was almost the only choice, since people in the private sector did not have other alternative channels to get things straightened out. So they had to accept the treatment they received from the government, made their best effort to establish personal relationship with the government, and won its trust in order for the university to get approval for its founding and to sustain.

As time passed and Yuhua University had grown, the university still depended on the government for obtaining social recognition and status. Even with its increasing influence, adopting a tolerant attitude became a strategy for the university's development which the founders consciously took. As Wang said, "there is no need to act in the 'diamond cut diamond' way. The goal is to get things done and improved, while standing opposite to the government only gets things stuck." Wang, other administrators in the university, and founders of other private universities all expressed that they thought the government has been making its efforts to improve the situation and private universities need to have certain patience and give the government a little more time for its improvement. But they also took opportunities of informal occasions or formal meetings to actively talk with

government officials in order to make the government understand their situation. The goal is to achieve a mutual understanding in both sides. The strategy is effective and the government official expressed that “it is not easy for private universities to sustain until today. They encountered many difficulties, including financial shortage and government strict regulation, and some of them survived and the other failed. Despite of the shortcomings still existing in current private universities, we must recognize they made great efforts.” (Interview with one government official, June 18, 2005)

With the accumulation of resources and the building of social network, Wang and other founders chose negotiation or some form of joint problem solving as ways to handle their conflict with the government. He persuaded the authority that they are for the “common good,” though he insisted that people have a say about the definition of “good” and the path to achieve that “good.” Such negotiations can lead to the harmonization of the two points of views, in such way they see each others no longer as a threat, and both parties see the possibility of reaching an agreement that promotes the interests of both or allowing both to be accommodated within one polity. For Wang, the negotiation with the state-government enables his visions of education to be institutionalized in policy and in law. The government also realized that private universities have become a force that cannot be neglected, and consequently some founders of private universities were selected as members of the CPPCC, or deputy to the NPC.

Thus establishing mutual understanding and building trust is the most important strategy adopted by the social groups when interacting with the government. But people in the private sector like Wang are also aware that their status does not come

from the closeness to the government, but from their influence in the society. So they want to keep an independent status in educational ideas and institutional building.

However, despite its seeming effectiveness, Wang's wisdom of "doing good things and making contributions first so as to become qualified to negotiate with the government" may not help the participation of other social groups. One reason for the disadvantageous position and low social status of some social groups, for example, the peasants, is social deprivation, that is, the group members are denied access to the tools for self-sufficiency. These include capital, education, information, health, employment, and a responsive support system. For these groups they can hardly improve their status and be included in decision-making without changing the power structure first.

7.3.3 Responsibility vs. Power: The Role of Government

Privatization of higher education is being subjected to huge criticism in the past decade. With a clear inspection, the criticism can be classified into two categories: first, the criticism is on the politicization of privatization (Apple, 1999; Geo-Jaia, 2004;). The privatization policy negatively affects matters of equity in and delivery of education, the ability of most public colleges to hold down tuition costs is directly related to the state funding they receive. The government cutting down its financial support to college and universities and the consequent high cost of receiving college education force many students to give up the idea of going to colleges. The second stream of criticism is questioning the intention of those who run private schools. Privately run schools are regarded to place profit-making as their priority and pay less attention to the improvement of quality (Carnoy, 1998; Lin, 1999).

The privatization policy since early 1980s related to the acceptance of human capital theory by the state-government. With technology playing greater role in productivity in contemporary world, the attention of economists shifted from physical to human capital, that is, human being themselves are capital and are seen as a key determinant of economic performance. The primary implications in education derived from human capital theory are: Education is an important allocator of jobs and income; educational institutions play a central role in the development of human capital, providing trainings that raise knowledge and improve work skills and enhance employability; there is direct relationship between coverage of education and levels and speed of development. Getting access to education and acquisition of knowledge and skills thus becomes an investment decision of both individuals and the collectivity, and this investment would overall increase earnings of individuals, while strengthening the economy and raising the standard of living.

Increasingly used in official language, human capital theory provided a kind of modern rhetoric and enabled educational policies to be more scientifically based. In the document on “Decision on Development of Higher Vocational Education” issued by Shaanxi province in 2006, the government decided to “implement the scientific development concept, and place development of professional education as the foundation of economic development and the strategic emphasis in the education work.” It explains, “Promoting higher vocational education, and accelerating the development of human resources is the strategy of developing Shaanxi into an economically prosperous province. It is the key measure to push for the industrialization, to advance the employment and re-employment, and to solve the

“Three-Nong” problems²⁰. It is the key path to improve the quality of populations, and to transform the pressure of population into the advantage of human resources, to improve the comprehensive competitive ability of Shaanxi province, and to construct the harmonious society. It is the necessary part to implement the education plan of the Community party, to follow the education rule, and to accomplish the sustainable development of education cause.” The higher vocational education is connected with economic prosperity, employment, elimination of poverty, maintenance of social stability.

Consequently, the government recognizes that it benefits the economic development if there are more educational institutions that increase opportunities for more people to receive education. However, the government was also convinced that instead of increasing government investment in education institutions, it is more cost-effective for the beneficiaries of education, namely the students, to pay for their education. The government hence implemented the privatization policy, requiring public universities to financially support themselves, and also encouraging non-governmental groups to run educational organizations. Indeed, since 1980, the percentage of government education investment in the GDP has not increased, and even reduced in a few years. In such way the government shirked its responsibility in funding education.

On the other hand, the government has greatly delayed establishing institutional rules to support the entry of non-government actors in the existing education system so that the government kept the control of education to itself. Although non-

²⁰ The “Three Nong” problem refers to Nong Ye (agriculture), Nong Cun (rural society), and Nong Min (peasants).

governmental actors agreed it is a good policy to allow non-government actors to enter the educational field, they complained that the government did not grant autonomy to them and simultaneously failed to fulfill its responsibilities of funding education of all types. As one economic entity, the government achieves the maximum benefit for itself: having all the power and make the minimal spending.

In their interaction with the government, the non-government actors strives to talk with the government with the aim of transforming the role of the government, from a “taking-all-under-its-control” dominator to a power-sharing authority with increasing legal responsibility and improved functions of welfare support and service delivery. Education should be the right enjoyed by all the people and the government has the responsibility to ensure the education right to be enforced. But there is a difference between the government sponsoring education and the government running education. The government running education will subject education to political interests rather than academic interests, especially in a non-democratic system. Non-governmental schools provide channels for the people to input their educational ideas into the cultural system.

In response to the criticism about the poor quality of private schools, it cannot be denied that many private investors deem running education as a profit-making activity. In China, there are many private universities that charge high tuition and are of poor quality. And Apple is correct to say that, in general, reliance on the market in education “did not encourage diversity in curriculum, pedagogy, organization, clientele, or even images” (p.9). However, there have been positive examples in which non-government schools did encourage all these. In China, education for

migrant students and innovative programs for disabled students are initially provided by non-governmental schools.

There would be a long way before the completion of transition from a society with a unitary power agency to a society with plural power agency, but it is a trend that seems impossible to be reversed, because the government has lost its ideological ground to be the solo power in the nation, and the social groups have accumulated forces to exert pressure, even though in a mild way, to press the government to continue the pace of transition.

Summary

Institutional analysis shows that the change of political and economic structure has a visible impact on the pattern of state-society interaction. The government is less capable to control every social activity, and the non-governmental organizations are financially more capable and culturally more independent to carry on their activities. Although their behaviors are framed by the rules in the existing system, (e.g., in this case the university's strategies in student enrollment, teacher recruitment, and dealing with property right were limited by the education and legal system,) they do not passively accept institutional rules. Instead, they constructed a space of public discussion of the reform of the education system, talked with the government officials to further their understanding of the private education, and sought or even created alternative mechanisms for social recognition of their status other than the government recognition. In the transitional period of China which occurred in a global context, the interaction between the macro-structure and the social behavior is reciprocal: The transformation of macro-structure is influencing the change of social

behavior, and simultaneously the action of social members is influencing the macro-structure.

CHAPTER 8

EDUCATION FOR AWARENESS:

DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTITUTE OF PEASANT EDUCATION

The historical problems facing rural areas in China still exist in rural society today: rural areas lack financial and educational resources, rural peasants are exploited in the economic system, and peasants are not organized and powerless both economically and politically (Lin, 1993, 1999). Thus the goals and methods adopted in the Rural Reconstruction Movement in late Qing era that focused on livelihood education and self-governance still have relevance today. However, adult education in rural areas also faces new challenges in the reform era in China today. The political and economic systems are driven by the need for political control and the need for modernization – these needs also dominate the function carried out by education. A tension exists in the cultural environment between the often conflicting appeals of modernization values such as growth and individualism and post-modernization values such as sustainability and cooperation. The Dingxian Institute of Peasant Education (DIPE) described in the present case is located in Zhaicheng village, Dingxian County, Hebei province. The development of DIPE reflects the efforts of Chinese intellectuals to influence social change especially for rural societies. DIPE works to address the problems facing rural areas taking inspiration from historical practices to respond to contemporary cultural and political reality. The Institute collects mainstream and non-mainstream ideas, and attempts to explore a set of comprehensive solutions to a dearth of rural problems. This chapter first introduces

the program structure of DIPE, then describes the pressures encountered by DIPE-facilitated peasant organizations in their process of development, and finally discusses the evolution of government-Institute interaction in different stages, which is explored further in the analysis of the nature of civil society development in the next chapter.

8.1 Dingxian: History and Today

Before the twentieth century, Dingxian County was an obscure place, out of sight of historians. It acquired a place in the modern Chinese history because of events that transpired in the early 20th century. In 1904, one squire in Zhaicheng village, Dingxian County, Mi Chunming and other village heads led villagers to establish schools, organized literacy education society for peasants, and established a series of rules for the education and development of the entire county. These “public rules” included an education promotion plan, crop preservation rules, forest preservation rules, well digging promotion rules, public well and fountain preservation rules, and student loan regulations. In 1908, one villager proposed the whole village to buy cotton seeds together and distribute them among peasants to save the cost of transportation of buying seeds separately. Based on this experience, the village decided to establish economic cooperatives which included a financial cooperative, a consumer cooperative, a purchasing cooperative, and a marketing cooperative. This might be the first peasant economic cooperatives in Chinese history. The village also established a committee for assessing the quality of agriculture products. In 1914, the Head of Dingxian County suggested to build Zhaicheng into an exemplar self-governance village. Zhaicheng became the first village in China to

write its own self-governance organization plan. Following this, it established a charity fund, a clinic, and other economic, cultural, and social organizations. The reforms adapted by the village had far-reaching influence in other regions during the Nationalist Government era. When the Head of Dingxian County became the Head of Shanxi province, he promoted Zhaicheng's experience of village self-governance in the whole province. In 1928, the Nationalist government issued its county organization law, and two chapters on village self-governance referred to the Shanxi experience.

Zhaicheng village became an important base of rural reconstruction in China under the Nationalist Government (1911-1949) because of James Yen (1893~1990). Yen was born in China in a venerated scholarly family. He graduated from Yale University in 1918. Two days after his graduation, he went to France to provide service to Chinese laborers there. While there, Yen created textbooks to teach the illiterate laborers. He articulated, "I began to realize that what these humble, common people of my country lacked was not brains, for God has given that to them, but opportunity...They had potential powers waiting for development, waiting for release." (Buck, 1945) In 1920 he went back to China to dedicate his life to mass education and rural reconstruction, and founded the Chinese mass education association.

In 1925, James Yen met Mi Digang, son of Mi Chunming, and mentioned that he wanted to find a site for his rural reconstruction experiment that included education and development projects. Mi Digang invited him to come to Dingxian County. In 1928, the experiment began, and the mass education association led by

Yen established a branch in Zhaicheng village to conduct literacy education and social investigation. Later they moved the headquarters of the mass education association to Dingxian. Hundreds of intellectuals followed Yen to Dingxian, including those who held important positions in the government. It was the first time that “intellectuals go back to the rural areas.” James Yen’s plan included the establishment of a mass university, a mass publishing house, and a mass film studio. Due to change in political circumstance in 1940s, his plan was unfinished. After 1950s, James Yen continued to promulgate mass education and rural reconstruction in Southeast Asian countries.

This unique history has a marked influence on Zhaicheng village. To this day, the village has preserved its patrol team for public safety and still maintains certain village public property including lands and houses, and recruits electricians responsible for maintaining the electrical infrastructure of the whole village. The village committee has the capacity to organize public activities, such as one for planting trees surrounding the village. This is quite different from other rural villages where no public property is left after the implementation of the household contract responsibility system²¹ that began in 1978 in the country, and most village committees have lost their authority as well as mobilization capacity among the villagers.

Like the historical “Ding Xian experiment,” the establishment of DIPE is the result of the village committee actively seeking cooperation with intellectuals. The

²¹ Household contract responsibility system contains two features. First, farmland is still owned by the public. Second, production and management are entrusted to individual farming households through long-term contracts. During the contract period, the farmers pay taxes to the State and collective reserves to local governments, and keep all the other produce for themselves.

history of Zhaicheng village makes it a good site for a contemporary experiment in rural construction. Besides, Zhaicheng village is located in Hebei province, which surrounds the capital of the nation, Beijing, and thus it has access to intellectual resources. DIPE attracted scholars and student volunteers to contribute their ideas and time to the Institute.

8.2 Sources of Inspiration for Adult Education

The President of the Institute, Dr. Fang, is a senior policy analyst working in the government. In 1980s, he worked in the Central Government Rural Policy Research Center, also called State Department Rural Development Research Center. According to the category set up by Hamrin and Cheek (1986), he is an establishment intellectual who directly served rulers, as compared to a non-establishment intellectual who did not serve the state. At that time, he was doing research on rural development, and provided advice to the policy makers. During the five consecutive years from 1982 to 1986, all the Central Government No. 1 Document, which is the most important government document outlining the most critical issues the government have identified and decide to work on that year, pinpointed the need for the policy of rural reform. In the early 1990s, the concern about rural development diminished. Fang is among the intellectuals who first raised the “Three-Nong Problems”: Nong Ye (agriculture), Nong Cun (rural village), Nong Min (peasants), and repeatedly emphasized in the intellectual circle on the critical importance of these problems. His and others’ efforts made the government once again to shift its focus to rural society. After eight years of not mentioning rural policy as the key issue,

beginning from 2004, the central government has mentioned “Three-Nong” problems in its No. 1 Document for four years in a row.

Viewed as an expert on agriculture and rural society, Dr. Fang was often consulted by government leaders in each level, from the State Department to the county-level officials. However, he was also a maverick in the establishment intellectual circle. He was famous in the circle for “doing research with feet,” a style meaning that he did a lot of fieldwork and data collection with first-hand materials which was different from other establishment intellectuals who “do research with brain,” relying on reading second hand materials primarily. When he was the Editor-in-Chief of the China Reform Magazine, he brought his strong concern about rural society to the magazine by opening a special version called “China Reform - Rural Society version.” This version of the magazine reported the poverty of peasants, the corruption of local governments, the lack of welfare mechanisms in the rural areas, etc. which was in conflict with the “beautiful pictures” the establishment intellectuals attempted to paint as a result of the reform. The rural society version also explained the CPC central government policies and laws to the peasant so that they have legal instruments to defend their rights. Fang said, “we do this (transferring legal knowledge to peasants) not for encouraging peasants to rebel, but just giving them basic treatment as citizens.” The magazine offices received many peasant activists who went to Beijing to appeal to higher authorities for help or justice on many issues. And Fang was called by the peasants as the “voice” of Chinese peasants. For his sympathy toward the peasants and the “negative” tone of report in the Reform magazine, Fang was forced to leave the China Reform Magazine in 2005.

In 2003, Fang founded DIPE to practice his ideas of social reform. An early source of inspiration was the “Rural Construction Movement” in the 1920s and 1930s. The rural construction movement was a way of transferring technology, inculcating the idea of self-governance, and constructing a prosperous and democratic nation. A second source of inspiration came from the “New Rural Society Campaign” in Japan and Korea. In these two countries, the government ensured that all peasants had their own land, and provided financial and legal support to peasants. Furthermore, peasants were organized in multiple levels and cooperated in multiple areas including: purchasing and marketing, loans, insurance, processing, storage, agriculture-related industry, technology and information service, medical service, etc. The “New Rural Society Campaign” greatly improved the conditions of rural society in both countries. The third stream of inspiration came from civil society practices around the world. The normative concepts and strategies employed by some civil societies around the world for rural development (such as empowerment, participation, ecology, and sustainability) were embraced by DIPE. A fourth source of inspiration came from the domestic revival of concern for rural society and rural development which began in the late 1990s. Chinese theorists began to analyze rural problem and seek solutions for rural problems from multiple perspectives, including property rights, governance structure, bureaucratic system, household registration system, welfare system, preservation of traditional culture, all of which created a vibrant environment for academic discussions and practical explorations.

8.3 DIPE's Ideas of Rural Construction

Fang's central idea is the deconstruction of modernization. According to Fang, it is impossible for China to copy the path of Western modernization. To achieve the level of industrialization and urbanization seen in advanced Western countries, a country needs to invest substantive material resources, which in Western countries was accomplished by colonization and plunder of other countries through war. According to Fang, China has tried to achieve industrialization and urbanization through the internal exploitation of the rural society. Beginning in the 1950s, China adopted the Soviet model and devoted a large proportion of national resources for large-scale heavy-industry construction. Heavy industry is a form of capital-intensive industry, and in order to accumulate the necessary capital, the state chose to sacrifice the interests of the peasants. Capital that could have been invested in agriculture was invested in urban construction – this created a “price gap” between the heavy industry and agricultural sectors. Specifically, to develop its heavy industry, the state monopolized the purchase and sale system, including the purchase and sale of agriculture products, equipment, and resources such as fertilizer and pesticide. All these broadened the economic gap between the urban city and rural areas, and deepened inequities in economic and social status between urban and rural residents.

The country's first ten years of rapid economic development at around 9% annual GDP growth was the process of depriving peasants of their benefits. With the industrialization of agriculture (which features regionalized cultivation and specialized production) through the investment of commercial and financial capital the exploitation of peasants was aggravated. In addition, the peasants were required to

take more risk because of the regionalized cultivation and specialized production system. Neither the government nor the companies involved provided necessary insurance measures to offset the increased risk for rural peasants. Fang explained that in China the government is an economic entity and seeks the maximum benefit for itself. If the exploitation continues, it definitely will cause the bankruptcy of peasants. If China continues to follow the Western path of modernization and urbanization, people will see an increase in the number of slums in urban cities as well as pollution of environment on the scale seen in Latin America. Fang argues that China needs to recognize its own reality and seek its own development path. The reality is that for a long time the majority of the Chinese population sustained themselves in the traditional agricultural area. The principle of rural reconstruction should be based on this demographic and economic reality. For Fang, members of the rural society deserve to be treated as equal human beings and citizens. The rhetoric of modernization can no longer be allowed to sacrifice the peasants.

8.3.1 Peasant Organization

Since the 1990s the central government began to pay attention to rural areas, and have issued policies that benefit rural areas, such as reduction or exemption of agriculture tax. However, Fang regards that the problem of rural areas are not really addressed, because the power system and benefit structure is not changed. The basic elements of agriculture do not stay in rural areas: resources especially land are gradually occupied during the expansion of urban cities, labor force flow to urban cities, and capital flows to urban cities too. In addition, many economic fields related

to agriculture are not accessible to the peasants, such as marketing, finance, processing, transportation, etc.

Today absolute poverty and illiteracy have been largely eliminated in rural China. However the process of urbanization keeps marginalizing rural areas. Fang believes that peasants are the biggest minority group in the world, and this phenomenon won't change if peasants aren't organized. He states, "dispersed peasants cannot establish normal contractual relationship with the external body through negotiation" (Interview with Fang, August 2006).

After many years of investigation in rural areas, Dr. Fang concludes that the reason for the marginalization of rural society is that peasants are isolated from each other, which have three consequences. First, they are unable to collect money to expand their production, or attempt to engage in the business of processing, manufacturing, finance, or market sale, and thus unable to compete with those who have abundant funds. Their influence to the economic system is minimized. Second, peasants lack opportunities to communicate with others beyond their immediate neighborhood, and thus do not get information about the production activities of the others. The lack of information leads to a disadvantaged position of peasants while interacting with the other economic body in the economic system. Third, they lack organizational power to express their common interest. For example, when the education rights of their children are violated, or when they are cheated during the trade of fertilizer, pesticides, and agriculture equipments, the action they can take is limited and usually has no results. In sum, when they are faced with the external highly-structured power system, they are in an extremely disadvantageous position.

To change this situation, Fang believes that peasants need to organize themselves. The key principles are that the organization is to be owned by people, managed by people, and its benefits are shared by people. The goal of the cooperative is not only to satisfy the economic needs of its members, but also to cultivate certain cultural and moral values, such as mutual help, voluntary participation, and self-determination.

8.3.2 Ecological Economy

Modernization was based on intensive exploitation of resources from nature. The modernization process of developed countries was accompanied by their exploitation of natural resources from their colonized lands. Currently many developing countries are on the way to depleting their resources in the race to modernization. The modernization of China also repeats this model: China has become the second largest consumer of petroleum in the world. More and more huge and environmentally unsustainable dams are being built to satisfy the need for electricity. The expanding transportation system occupies large acreage of agrarian land and simultaneously results in serious pollution of the air.

The current economic system does not include these social and environmental costs in the calculation of production cost. People are happy to see the growth of GDP, but at the same time nature is being destroyed and the populace is suffering from the consequence of this detrimental form of economic growth. One deceptive assumption of modern economics is the existence of infinite natural resources. Holding this assumption is dangerous. Fresh air and fresh water is more and more rare today. The reserve of mineral resources is diminishing. According to an increasing amount of

evidence, the life-span of livable area for organic bodies in the biological circle is measured by decades, not hundreds of millions of years (Meadows, 1972).

Although the slogan of sustainable development is often heard in the media, official documents, conferences, and business press around China, people use it as a fashionable word to glorify their speech or actions without knowing what it means. In a better situation, people may be aware that the word is connected with saving water or planting more trees. However they are not aware that for sustainable development their high-production-high-consumption model needs to be changed. In many ways the goal of modernization and rapid economic growth threatens the sustainability of the ecological system, especially when the goal is expected to be achieved in a condensed time frame.

In the last few decades, rural areas have been confronted with new problems accompanying with the process of modernization. While the average family income has improved due to increased production and increasing commercialization, the cost to the environment has been great in terms of water pollution, and reduction in soil fertility, vegetation area and diversity of species. These conditions are not a good omen to rural areas because the land is all that the peasants can rely on. The environmental degeneration will be fatal to their survival and production activity. They are the direct victims in this collective plunder and destruction of nature.

According to Fang, it is a mistake that all levels of government use GDP growth as the only indicator of development. China has paid the price for this model. Fang argues that the government must change this kind of thought and working style. For

example, DIPE has adopted a bottom-up strategy to work with rural communities to change the conception and living style of the common people.

8.3.3 Restoration of Cultural Life in Rural Society

In the reform era, the “household contract responsibility system” was implemented in the agricultural sector. Land was contracted to individual peasants, factories and agriculture equipments were either contracted or sold out, and there was no public asset anymore in many villages. The function of many village committees has been reduced to collecting tax and all kinds of fees from the peasants. Due to the large numbers of peasants who defaulted on the submission of taxes and fees, many village committees carry a huge amount of debts. Most village committees have neither the financial capacity nor the moral authority to carry out public undertakings.

Villagers themselves have gradually lost the sense of being in a community and have become less concerned with public affairs. The long-term and mandatory command that the state should replace local forms of commune and community, e.g., the traditional lineage family which maintained social order in rural China has removed the cultural and ethical base of cohesion in rural society. Today, old people are keepers of traditional art and skills in villages. However, when getting rich becomes the dominant goal, and money making becomes the dominant language in the rural life, the older people are marginalized in the rural social order. Young people find jobs in the urban areas, and their advantage in earning capability makes them become significant figures in rural society. In reality, they are a long distance from rural life and “not present” in the rural cultural life. Working in urban cities as migrant workers, they cannot actively participate in the construction of rural culture.

Today rural society is no longer a cultural concept, but instead a regional (relative to the urban) or economic (relative to the developed) concept. It has gradually become a desert of culture. Rural life has gradually lost its distinctive cultural and spiritual meaning. The popularity of gambling and lotteries and the increasing crime and violence are evidences of the absence of rural culture and spirit. Responding to this phenomenon, Fang thought it is important to revive the cultural function of the rural society.

8.4 Establishment of DIPE in 2003

8.4.1 An Encounter between the Villagers and Intellectuals

Qin was a reporter for the “rural society version” of the China Reform Magazine. As a proponent of James Yen’s thought on mass education, Qin was also a founder of the Research Society on James Yen in Beijing. During the Spring Festival of 2003, Qin led a team of university student volunteers to conduct research in Zhaicheng village. On the eve of the spring festival, Qin wrote a couplet on the door of the house he lived in: “平民教育诚可嘉，乡村建设慨而慷” (“Following the path of mass education, being engaged in rural construction with great passion) with the banner “继往开来” (“Inherit past traditions and break new grounds for the future”). The secretary of the party branch in the village, Mi, saw the couplet and was surprised that there were still people who remembered James Yen and wanted to inherit his willingness to develop rural China. Several days after the spring festival, the party secretary with several village committee members went to Beijing to visit the son of James Yen. The following is the conversation during that visit, which catalyzed the foundation of DIPE.

Mi said, “the five thousand villagers in Zhaicheng village respected Mr. Yen very much, and hopes to continue his great cause. The village has an abandoned middle school. We planned to buy it to build an agriculture technology school, and we will make a sculpture of Mr. Yen. We hope to get your support.”

Mr. Yen replied, “I am too old (81 years old at that time) to do this thing. To continue the cause of Mr. Yen, you need to work with Qin and Dr. Fang in the China Reform magazine.”

Qin said, “There are too many agriculture technology schools now. We should make it into a mass education school. Only in this way can we revive the spirit of Mr. Yen.”

Mi responded, “Well, we’ll plan it together.” (Qin, 2003)

Since then Mi decided to choose the China Reform Magazine as the collaborative partner. After contacting Dr. Fang, the village collected 390 thousand RMB to buy the unused school in the village as the working site of DIPE. In March 2003, the James Yen Institute of Rural Reconstruction was founded, staffed with persons from several organizations: the China Reform magazine, the UK Action Aid, and the Community Service and Development (CSD) research center in Hongkong.

In July 29 2003, Qin came to DIPE and started the planning work of the Institute. Because the school site had been abandoned for many years, there was no running water and electricity, and the buildings and dormitories looked dilapidated. The villagers helped to clean and refit the campus. In August, one newspaper in Hebei province used four pages to report the story of James Yen and DIPE, and DIPE

has since entered into public sight. In August 25 2003, DIPE registered in the Bureau of Education in Dingzhou city. Several days later, the board of trustees was formed and the village committee members account for 30% of the Trustees. The first trustee meeting was held, and Fang was selected as the chair of the board of trustee as well as the president of DIPE, and Zhendong Yen, son of James Yen, was selected as the honorary president.

The Institute staff reached agreement with the village committee: first, DIPE is a public undertaking and its aim is not for profit- making. It will consider the economic needs of the village, but at least in the first three years the village cannot expect DIPE to bring direct economic benefit to the village. Second, the village is responsible for the investment in DIPE's buildings, and the other partner organizations are responsible for the investment in facilities as well staff during the operation of DIPE. Third, the village committee can not intervene in the programs and management of DIPE.

8.4.2 Registration in the Government

When DIPE was registered in the Bureau of Education in Dingzhou city, it specified its focus was to provide training to peasants, and the Dingzhou government thought DIPE was to hold training classes on agriculture technology for the local peasants. So at the beginning the local government showed a welcome attitude to DIPE, although it did not provide any material support. The government did not pay much attention also because the institution had very limited funding and staff and did not appear to be able to produce any big influence.

8.4.3 The First Workshop on Peasant Cooperative

DIPE had a limited budget and staff shortage, with only Qin and his wife as resident staff in the Institute for in October the three founding organizations had each only contributed 30 thousand RMB. In 2004, DIPE succeeded in getting a project grant of 400 thousand RMB from the Asian foundation. But it still worked on a tight budget.

On April 18, 2004, the first workshop on economic cooperative was held in DIPE. The recruitment advertisement was placed on DIPE's website and the "China Reform" magazine. Not surprisingly, there are many peasant rights activists among the participants in the first workshop. As the director of the office in the Institute said, "the first workshop was a summary of our previous work. Half of the students are already our acquaintances. These contacts are established when the peasant rights activists come to the magazine (the China Reform magazine) for advice or when we did investigation in the country" (interview with the Director of the Office, July 15 2005).

The first workshop lasted two weeks, and focused on introducing and sharing previous experiments in peasant cooperation. The majority of the cases shared are domestic cooperatives, and one is on the experience of India, the Kerala movement. It invited scholars and practitioners working on peasant cooperatives to discuss their experiences with peasants. Bai Lin is a pioneer working in peasant cooperative finance. He is an official in a municipal bank supervisory bureau but devoted most of his time in thinking about how to reform the finance system in rural areas. In 2001, while faced with a lack of policy support, he mobilized peasants in Li Shu County, Ji

Lin province to establish a peasant finance cooperative. Yu Shi is a famous economist as well as the founder of a highly influential non-government economics research institute in China, and he helped found a micro-credit mutual fund in Shuilongtou village, Shanxi province. Zhen Bang, a researcher in the World Economic and Politics Research Center in Social Science Institute, experimented on peasant cooperative in Shandong province. The Director of Office of DIPE said, “The workshop provides an opportunity to take retrospective view of the road we have been through, and gain confidence that it is a road we should continue to explore” (Phone interview with the Director of Office, February 15 2006)

In the whole year of 2004, DIPE explored a variety of ways for rural education and development. The initial curriculum scheduled by DIPE reflects the diverse aspects of rural society that the Institute staff pay attention to: sustainable development theory, hygiene system, modern farming methods, peasant cooperative, civic education, self-protection of rights, history, theory and practice of village construction and alternative economy, gender awareness and women rights, agriculture science, participatory method, communication, social psychology, and education science. However, DIPE cannot find enough instructors to teach these lessons, and peasants don't have so much time to be engaged in lessons with complex theories or lessons that last several months.

8.5 Goal Setting between 2004 and 2006

DIPE entered into a developmental stage since 2004. In 2004, the other two founding organizations, Action Aid and CSD respectively, sent one staff to DIPE, Liana and Tan. Liana who has been working in Hong Kong said, “working in a rural

area and putting the idea of rural development into practice are always my ideal. Hongkong is too small and crowded. Every non-government organization has only one small office to work in. DIPE not only has so many rooms for training and research, and also has such a big piece of land for doing agriculture experiments, which is a luxury to NGO staff in Hong Kong. I am glad that I am here” (Interview with Liana, July 19, 2005). Tan, the President of a student association about rural issues, said: “we always talk about theory, theory, and theory. Now it is time to do some real things and to see what would work” (Interview with Tan, July 20, 2005).

DIPE also recruited two other persons: Zhi You and Xiao Hui, both from a prestigious agriculture university, and both once the President of student associations concerned with rural problems. In 2004 the resident staff of DIPE added up to seven people. Although they have different backgrounds, they are all concerned with rural development. As one staff claims, “The Institute provides a space for idealist and social activists. Here is a group of people that would not feel comfortable in the urban cities and mainstream organizations. It is both a place for escaping (from urban life) as well a place for seeking partners and taking collaborative actions for change.” (Interview with one staff in the office of eco-farming, July 23, 2005)

The staffs were divided into two sides: one side holds that DIPE should focus on Zhaicheng village, experimenting ways to promote its development. Another side believed that DIPE should be a platform of training, academic discussion, and information exchange. At the end of 2004, the Institute spent one month in internal discussions, from mission and vision, to work focus and programs, and to details in practice. After the discussion, the Institute staff reached a level of consensus.

Considering its own capacity in human resources and expertise, it decided to focus on providing training to peasant leaders nation-wide, while also giving attention to local community development. The training would focus on two areas: economic cooperative and ecological economy. The focus on economic cooperative is primarily influenced by Dr. Fang, who believes that the key to revive rural China is through the peasants organizing themselves for their own improvement. The focus on ecological economy is influenced by the other two groups of people: one is Dr. Lu, the founder of CDS, who is also the trustee of DIPE. Dr. Lu has been concerned with environmental problems and gender issues for a long time. She has close contact with Asian and international NGOs and collaborate with them on these issues. And thus she brought the importance of ecological economy into the attention of DIPE. Another person is Mr. Xie, who is an architect from Taiwan. Xie helped the Thao tribe, the indigenous residents living near Sun Moon Lake for generations, to rebuild their homeland after the earthquake in Taiwan on September 21 1999. Different from the mainstream post-disaster construction work, Xie realized the key is to recover the tribe's faith in their homeland, and thus to prevent the migration of the tribal people and the consequent vanishing of their culture and the disappearance of the ethnic group. Thus he adopted the model of "cooperative house-building" model, mobilizing the tribal people to rebuild houses using local materials and simplified techniques. In April 2004, Xie visited DIPE, and proposed the practices of "ecological architecture" and "cooperative house-building" to the Institute.

Although Fang, Liu and Xie are the key persons in promulgating the ideas, these ideas were accepted by the staff after full discussion and debate. The priority given to

cooperatives and ecology is based on their integrative understanding of the economy, environment, social life, and culture in rural China. These aspects are interconnected in a complicated way. Economic cooperative is the institutional form that helps to integrate resources in rural society, and ecological economy is the value and way of life which sustain the rural society, enabling people to reconstruct the relationship between human and their environment. As one staff comments, “Finally we are confident about what we are doing. We do not intend to bring more capital or introduce foreign investment to advance economic growth, but to improve the livelihood of rural people, and to reconstruct a rural society with a new culture and social vitality. We hope they (the peasants) become the main force in local development instead of us.” (Interview with the assistant of the President, July 21, 2005).

8.5.1 The Economic Cooperative

Since the first workshop on economic cooperative, DIPE has held more than ten training workshops on peasant economic cooperatives. The Institute kept collecting and summarizing experiences of those cooperatives that were established with the help of DIPE. The current curriculum included lessons on the organizational structure, institutional rules, financial management and administration of cooperatives. In the past three years, the workshop attracted peasants and urban activists in grassroots organizations and also attracted village-level, town-level, or municipal government officials.

The staff in DIPE believes that peasants are the leaders and main actors in rural reconstruction. And to become main actors in rural reconstruction local people need

to know their problems and to seek for solution by themselves. One important activity in the training is to ask peasants to be divided into several discussion groups, e.g., economic group, environmental group, social welfare group, and culture group, to discuss the problems they observed in rural society, and to brainstorm the solutions. Peasants told the staff that before the training, they complain a lot about rural life, but seldom understood rural problems in a comprehensive way, nor did they consciously think about solutions, especially about what they themselves can do for these problems. But after each group presented its discussion they began to realize that many problems are connected. For example, in the environmental group, participants mentioned several problems: local villains have set up check points and extort vehicles passing through; garbage was thrown everywhere, and the drinking water is not clean. They analyzed the underlying reason is that people are not aware of the importance of environmental issues, and there is no joint efforts in the village to solve the problem. One village party secretary added that basically currently there is little government investment in the infrastructure construction in rural areas. Usually the county or municipal government officials concentrate their public financial investment in several towns to build up “exhibition models” to show outsiders and to boast of their achievements. Several other peasants discussed why the government did not pay enough attention to rural development, and they concluded that it is because peasants have low social status and do not have powerful social networks. Another peasant commented that it is because the peasants are not united. He said, “Today we seldom feel the existence of community in rural areas. No one is thinking about the provision of public good, or concerned with the environment, or considering the

impact of his action on the other people. No one is feeling guilty when he fells down the tree on the hillside, or pollutes the water. Due to the degeneration of the environment, rural areas no longer have pastoral beauty. It is not only that urban people see rural areas as a dirty, chaotic and uncultured place, but peasants also hold such opinion” (Zhou, 2005). Finally participants in this group concluded that it is important that the peasants should become united and start to work on the problems.

In the social welfare group, participants described the miserable lives that many old people or sick people are living in the village. They analyzed that these old and sick people are not taken care of because of their low income and the deterioration of ethical standards in the rural community. Participants provided different opinions and stated that the cost of medical treatment is too high for peasants who are not covered by health insurance. One participant mentioned that only when all people are concerned with public finance and participate in decision-making of financing health care and other important matters can the problem be resolved. During the one hour and a half discussion, participants also mentioned the increasing number of people suffering from “unknown diseases” because of industrial pollution. Many people also had occupational diseases and injuries from working in construction sites or mineral mines.

The team discussion is a process of people developing the consciousness that they are the principle actors for taking initiatives for rural development. At the end of the training sessions, there is a mock practice of forming cooperatives, in order to make participants realize the complexities and conflicting interests that can exist in

one small village and the possible obstacles they may encounter in establishing and maintaining an economic cooperative.

Besides equipping them with knowledge and information on cooperatives, another goal of the workshop is to develop the habit of self-management. On the first day and by their own will, students are divided into teams for discipline study, logistics and cheering. These teams are responsible for maintaining discipline, organizing discussions, make daily arrangement such as campus cleaning and maintenance, and cheering up participants respectively. Each team reports on their work at the end of a day. When the training workshop finished, students responded that the life in the Institute vividly taught them the necessity and the advantage of cooperation.

After students went back to their villages, some of them initiated peasant cooperatives and mobilized villagers to join them. DIPE provided 10,000 yuan as startup fund or as loan to some of these cooperatives. Currently there are about forty institute-facilitated peasant cooperatives located in Chongqing city, Henan province, Shandong province, Anhui province, Hebei province, Shanxi province, Sichuan province, Hunan province, Fujian province, Shaanxi province, Jiangxi province, Beijing, and Jilin province. Some cooperatives have a good reputation in local areas and have expanded to a certain scale, such as Jiang Zhuang cooperative in Shandong, and Lankao cooperative in Henan.

8.5.2 Ecological Economy

“Healthy land= healthy plant = healthy food= healthy human”

This slogan is written on the wall of the office for sustainable agriculture. It reflects their perception that land is the root of human life. The primary task of ecological farming is to restore the soil back to its healthy state. Different from the “non pollution farming” that uses chemical fertilizer and low-poison pesticides, ecological farming is a system that does not use any chemical fertilizer, pesticide, growth regulator, forage additive, or genetic engineering life-form or its product. The large amount of chemical fertilizer, pesticide, and herbicide used in agriculture seriously polluted the soil, water, air, and lead to the worry for food security. The essence of organic farming is to establish and restore the biological diversity and the healthy cycle of the agriculture ecological system, to maintain the sustainable development of agriculture. In this system, crop straw, animal dung, legume crop, and green manure are the primary sources of fertilizer; crop rotation and a variety of physical, biological and ecological measures are the main strategies to control weed and pests.

The staff experimented organic farming themselves in the Institute. They made compost using the dung of animal, the skin of fruits, and rotten leaves. They killed pests manually or through biological ways, such as pepper water or tobacco leaf water. In addition, they left weed on ridge and at the edge of field. There were peasants who could not understand why they did this and voluntarily offered to remove weeds for them. One peasant said in fury, “this is not like a cropland with so much weed!” Even

the village party secretary regarded that the institute's staff are a bunch of people who do not know farming.

The Institute staff explained the reason for not eliminating all weed in the cropland. After so many years of using pesticides and chemical fertilizer the soil has been highly polluted, and it usually takes four to five years to de-pollute and restore the fertility of the land. Weeds can absorb the residue of pesticide. Another important reason to preserve weeds is that the perished weed activates the microbe to metabolize and produce organic humus. The organic humus in the soil is related to the nutrition absorption of the plant.

Another staff gave a philosophical interpretation for the preservation of weeds. He regards weeds as part of the biological system, and as such that they are the symbol of diversity of forms of life. Weeds are not only the cure to the leanness of the earth, but also the cure to the weakness of the vegetables.

Vegetables are domesticated grass. In the space with only one life, their life force will only be weakened. So the space for weed is necessary. Weed is both the opponent and tutor of domesticated vegetables.....We need to respect the power of nature. In Mongolia, people worship the wolf because of its courage, cunningness, and the ability to embattle. The fight with the wolves keeps Mongolian people strong. Similarly the vegetables get strong in the competition with weeds. (Interview with one staff in the office of eco-farming, July 20, 2005).

Although the logic does not sound scientific, it reflects the universal perspective that the Institute staff holds toward the relation between things in the natural system.

The Institute staff also call for a new perspective for looking at pests. The existence of pests is a symptom of the feebleness of plants. Thus instead of using pesticide, the Institute adopted biological pest-killing as a short-term strategy, and

restoring the fertility of the soil and increasing the health of plants as a long-term strategy.

The Institute staff felt that people have lost their connection to their root: the earth. In the past people have a natural concern and care for the earth; but gradually this intimacy is lost and people do not perceive the earth as a life system, but only as something to earn a living. The eagerness to catch up with the pace of modernization has replaced the concern for the life of the earth. One staff in DIPE warned: “One alarming thing is the images that the modernization process created for the ‘developed’ and the ‘under-developed’ regions. High buildings and large mansions, concrete roads, the possession of cars, computers, and mobile phones, are all being seen as the symbol of modernization. If you don’t have these, you are seen as out of date. But people don’t think about whether they really need cars, concrete road, or computers.” (Interview with one staff, July 27 2006)

The Institute creates a different image of civilized life. Many visitors to the Institute were disappointed to see that the Institute did not have high buildings, but just rows of flat houses. Instead, there are many trees, bushes, and wild grasses growing around the buildings. Even the villagers say that the Institute does not look like an academic institution. However, for the Institute staff, the flat houses with bricks and tiles provide comfortable places for living and working. The trees, bushes, and wild grasses are necessary to restore a dynamic ecological system. Through maintaining a natural setting for the institute, the staff hope to elicit the attention of people in a monetized society to see the connection between human life and natural system.

Combining traditional Chinese farming culture and recent ecological theory, DIPE is exploring a sustainable agriculture model that considers both ecological protection and economic benefit. DIPE has a 26-acre farm land that grow wheat, corns, peanut, cotton, sesame, beans, tomato, potato, beans, green pepper, etc. In the breeding area, the Institute breeds donkeys, ducks and geese. A 20-cube-meter compost pond was established in the breeding area to make high-temperature compost using animal dung, life garbage, and crop straws. The Institute bought a donkey to substitute for modern farming machine, and developed energy-efficient irrigating method to replace the mass irrigating method.

There are scholars who criticized that as intellectuals, the institute staff's roles should be setting up bridges between the rural and urban area, and between experts and peasants, not experimenting farming themselves, which is a waste of their knowledge, skills and social networks. However, the Institute staff insists, "How do we promote the idea of ecological economy if we don't live this way?" They believe that a community should develop the ability to self-sustain their living.

Before 2005, DIPE did not give systematic instructions on eco-farming technology because they haven't accumulated enough experiences in eco-farming. In the workshop on cooperative economy, they introduced the concept of eco-farming, but since they cannot transfer useful practical skills, peasants responded with indifference to the idea. In 2005, DIPE invited experts from Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden²² to provide training, including the concept of organic farming,

²² Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (KFBG) nestles below Kwun Yum Shan (Goddess of Mercy Mountain) in Hong Kong. The Farm was established in the 1950s to experiment crop production and livestock breeding and to bring agricultural aid to poor farmers. Today, KFBG plays an active role in

designing of organic farm, how to inspect the component in the soil, how to make organic fertilizer, and how to control weed and pest. The training is for the staff and volunteers in DIPE, as well as peasants from around the country. After the training, some peasants showed willingness to practice the idea of organic farming.

In November 2006, inspired by the expert from Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, DIPE staff began to hold seminar on eco-farming for the first time. Seven peasant cooperatives as well as some non-governmental organizations that adopted the model of “community-supporting-agriculture” sent representatives to the seminar. The seminar lasted five days, and during the first three days the representatives exchanged their experience in traditional farming technology. From the change of rural environment, to pest prevention and cure in traditional farming, and to the skill of compost making and soil maintenance, peasants were actively engaged in discussion and contributed their ideas and experiences. They themselves began to talk about the harm of chemical fertilizer. The participation of NGO representative enables the peasants to understand the concept of eco-farming from the perspectives of consumers. One participant concluded that for the marketing of eco-farming, the key is not the price of the organic food, but the communication between peasants and consumers. The following two days focused on the “doing” of eco-farming. All participants made the nutrition liquid for the plants, and collected local microbe in the woods. In the final evaluation, many participants mentioned that they were most impressed by this activity because it is very useful and improved their confidence

promoting the conservation and biodiversity in Hong Kong and South China, allied with sustainable agriculture and creative nature education.

toward eco-farming. The Institute staff summarized that in the promulgation of alternative concepts, the availability of techniques is very important.

8.5.3 Ecological Architecture

Ecological architecture is another issue DIPE focuses on. Xie explained why he is so enthusiastic about promulgating ecological architecture and cooperative house-building in rural China:

In China, there are around 900 million peasants living in rural areas, and for most of them building houses is the most important thing in their lives. The cost for building houses received higher and higher, and most peasants spent all their savings for building a decent house. In the early time of the history people used natural materials and the community members all participated in house building. House building at that time is part of people's lives. The cost was very low; resources were efficiently utilized; and human resided harmoniously with the nature. But in "modern" villages, people adopt commercialized mechanism in building houses, utilizing industrial materials, professional equipment and techniques. Since the materials are expensive, and the building technique is monopolized by professionals, it is getting more and more difficult for peasants to build houses. The modern house-building aggravate the poverty of peasants. In addition, resources are over consumed, the environment is polluted and destroyed, and the health of people is threatened. The house-building is no longer a part of people's life, but a commercial and professional activity, and nature is no longer an environment to nurture people's life and spirit and thus to deserve their respect, but just a space to satisfy the desire of people. (Interview with Xie, July 24 2005)

In another conversation a few days later, Xie continued to expound his perspectives on modern architecture.

Without the concern for natural environment, modern architecture unscrupulously transforms the natural landscape, destroys the ecological balance, and alienates people from the land and the natural environment. It also changes the tradition that people help each other in the house building and community building. In addition, culture attached in traditional architecture is lost due to the change of building style" (Interview with Xie, July 29 2005).

For the Institute staff, adopting the same attitude with ecological agriculture, ecological architecture is not a work, but a way of life, a kind of “Tao.” One Institute staff explained why he thought ecological house-building is so important:

Architecture is another area where human closely interact with the environment. It is closely related to our perception of the human-nature relationship. That we see nature as a lifeless space that people can modify at their will, or we see it as a life system which has its own will, determines how and where we design and construct our buildings (Interview with one staff in the office of ecological architecture, July 25 2005).

To avoid the monopolization of the expanding commercialization in rural areas, and to establish the local independent house-building system, from 2004, Xie practiced ecological architecture in cooperation with DIPE staff in Zhaicheng village as well as other rural villages. They promoted it from three perspectives: 1) Environment. They hoped to design and construct houses that is “green” and in harmony with the environment, and advocate a healthy and friendly relationship between human life and the nature. 2) Economy. They advocated utilizing the extra labor in the village and local construction materials to build houses, so as to reduce the construction cost. 3) Social culture. Through mobilizing community members in participating and cooperating in house-designing and house-building, the Institute hopes to awaken the awareness of the community.

Xie and the Institute staff designed and constructed a building complex in the Institute. The first experiment is the ecological toilet built in front of the dormitory. The water-flushing toilet consumes a huge amount of water, which takes up 20~30% water consumption in urban cities. The infrastructure such as sewage system and waste water processing area needs astronomical amount of investment, and the

emission of waste water results in the pollution of the environment. Rural areas cannot afford the investment on the infrastructure for the water-flushing toilet. To decrease the investment on infrastructure and to reduce environmental pollution, Xie designed the dry urine-faeces-separated toilet that does not use water. The dry urine-faeces-separated toilet prevents and controls the spread of intestinal infectious disease and disease of parasite, and shortened the time of making non-pollution compost. The construction of the toilet used natural materials: crops straws, wood, grass, and mud.

Following the invention of the toilet, DIPE and the architect wanted to find a household to build an ecological house, but received no response from the villagers. The villager told them, “now we no longer use soil to build houses. If one household build houses like that, the son in that household won’t be able to get married.” Currently, the villagers use concrete to build houses covered with ceramic tiles on the external wall.

Thus, the Institute had to build an exemplary eco-house inside the Institute. But Xie adopted the form of “work camp” and recruited university students and peasants to the “work camp” so they can learn the concept of ecological architecture and the practice cooperative house-building from participating in the house-building process. The construction team used natural materials such as wood, soil, straw, bamboo, hay mattress, and a series of reed product (including: reed mattress, reed foil, reed board, etc.), and so on, and reduced the use of non-recyclable materials such as bricks and concrete. The function of warm-keeping in the winter is achieved through the local

traditional way, Kang²³, but they improved the traditional form and built the double-level energy saving Kang to suit the two-floor houses. With low energy consumption during production and processing, the building materials can reduce the emission of CO2 at maximum level. Most of the materials are wood and plant straw, which can reserve CO2 at maximum level.

Since March 2005, DIPE has held four training workshops on eco-architecture for peasants and university students, each lasting about one month. Peasants and students in the training workshop participated in the design and construction of eco-houses and auditoriums in the Institute. They asked for advices from local experienced people, and discussed and debated on technical issues. In the training workshop, students also did research on grass-mud wall, bamboo-woven plank, temperature-keeping window, and other architecture theories. Together with Xie, peasant and university students explored natural materials and their processing for better performance, and ways to simplify the technique so all people, including children and youth, women, and old men, can participate in the building process. In this way, the local culture of collective house building can be revived, which contributes to cultural diversity in the society.

After participating in the training workshop, the cooperative members in HeCun village, HeNan province, invited the Institute staff and the architect Xie to build houses for them. The Institute staff and architect Xie organized another work camp in the village consisting of student volunteers and local peasants. They designed a model

²³ Kang is a heat-able platform made of bricks, invented and used in northern China to adapt to the cold condition in winter. It is built like a large oven and people sleep on top. It is a place to sit, sleep, chat and eat.

of eco-house for the local village, which is a three-room-two-storied house with an attic. It adopts lightweight steel structure, grass-mud filled wall, and bamboo plank. The building provides spaces for three generations to live. In HeCun village, altogether four households built eco-house adopting this model, and the HeCun village cooperative construction team is the main force in the construction process.

8.5.4 Institute-Government Interaction: Tension over the Boundary of Activities

When the government found out that DIPE was focusing on peasant organization, and the participants were from around the country, they reprimanded that DIPE's work is out of its allowed boundary. According to the government policy, if an education institute is registered under the municipal department of education, its activity cannot be beyond the boundary of the city. To respond to the accusation, Dr. Fang visited the Bureau of Education in Dingzhou and stated that DIPE was providing free education to peasants, expecting that the government would show understanding and tolerance in the aspect of student enrollment and training. However the request was denied. Until Dr. Fang was appointed the Dean of School of Agriculture Economics and Rural Development in People's University, and DIPE put the tag "training base of 98/5 Project"²⁴ on the door, the training of the Institute became legitimate again. Since then DIPE has held training in the name of the People's University. The relationship between DIPE and the local government has always been tense, and it did not get improved along the three years. In 2006, the Institute did not get through the annual review of Dingzhou municipal Bureau of

²⁴ A government project that gives top universities a huge sum of money to build up their research capability to become "world class universities." It was named after the announcement of the then president Jiang Zemin in May, 1998, about China's aspiration to build internationally known universities through government support.

Education for this reason²⁵. However, DIPE was not mandated to close off. According to the Institute staff, the local government knew that Fang had close relationship with the central government, so it had reservation in harassing the Institute while taking actions against the Institute.

The local government was also angry that DIPE seldom reported to the Department of Education about their activities or invited them to visit the Institute and give instruction. One government official said, “Anyway I am the governor here. They should let me know what they are doing. Are they thinking they can do things without the support of the government?” (Personal Interview, July 30 2005)

What annoyed the local government even more is that there are many people from Hong Kong, Taiwan, or overseas countries who came to visit DIPE. In Dingzhou, the local government officials are wary of the media, being afraid that they will report negative news about the government. They are worried that the visitors to DIPE may hold hostile attitude toward the government and may say words unfavorable to the government after they leave Dingzhou. Especially after the June 11 event²⁶, the local government forbade anyone from foreign countries entering into Dingzhou. Even before the June 11 event, every time there are visitors from foreign countries, the government will send people to stay in the Institute and to watch their activities.

²⁵ Every year the provincial and municipal governments conduct an annual review about educational institutions run by non-governmental sectors to see if their programs follow the requirements of the government.

²⁶ In June 11, 2005, some local peasants occupied a factory because it impropriated peasants' land in illegal ways. Denying their wrongdoing, the factory's owner led a group of people to fight with the peasants. A passerby peasant took photos of the process and sent them to the media.

DIPE often invited officials of the Bureau of Agriculture in Dingzhou city to give lecture in its training workshop. However, the officials stated that “the development of DIPE has nothing to do with the government.” The government did not provide any financial support to DIPE. In addition, the government set obstacles when DIPE applied for project grant from the central government for the village. When the researcher went to interview the person in charge of adult education in the Bureau of Education in Dingzhou city, he did not want to say anything about the Institute. It implies that the relationship between DIPE and the local government is not harmonious.

8.6 Peasant Organization Stumbling on the Road between 2004 and 2005

8.6.1 Thriving Growth of Peasant Cooperative

The situation of peasant cooperatives is the tests of DIPE’s theory and work. Five peasant cooperatives were founded after the first workshop, including Zhaicheng village where DIPE is located. Zhaicheng villagers founded peasant cooperative on May 4 2004. Till 2006 there are about forty cooperatives initiated by the students of DIPE, located around the country. Generally the organization of these cooperatives follows the model of the Institute: the members’ convention is the supreme power body, and they elected the trustee board and supervisory committee. When the cooperative was formed, the cooperative members collectively drafted the “Statute of Cooperatives” to stipulate the organizational structure, function, duties and rights of its members, and the mechanism of profit-sharing. DIPE referred to the principles set

up by the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers²⁷ and provided a template of the statute, and those cooperatives adapted it to fit in their own considerations. Take the “Statute of Cooperatives” of Zhaicheng as an example to see how it reflects the key principles and cultural values of cooperatives.

Article 15 delineates the organizational structure, manifesting the principle “owned by people”: the members’ convention is the supreme body of power of the cooperative. It is constituted by all members. With its authorization, the representative convention can perform the function of the members’ convention. The representatives are elected by the members, serve a term of three years, and can be reelected and reappointed.

Article 16 manifests the principle “managed by people”: the members’ (representative) convention has the following power:

- 1) Deliberate and decide if to pass this statute, make decisions on critical issues like the dismissal of the cooperative, and the merging with other associations, etc.
- 2) Elect or dismiss the members in the trustee council and the supervisory commission.
- 3) Deliberate and pass the annual working report and financial budget report of the trustee council and supervisory commission.

²⁷ Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, founded in 1844 in Rochdale, England, by 28 Lancashire weavers. Influenced by the theories of Robert Owen, they opened a grocery store that was so successful that they were able to establish a cooperative factory and textile mill. It is considered the first successful cooperative enterprise. The Rochdale Pioneers are most famous for designing the Rochdale Principles, a set of principles of co-operation that combined a fixed interest on capital with a distribution of profits in proportion to purchases.

- 4) Deliberate and approve the guideline of production and management, development plan, and annual budget proposal.
- 5) Deliberate and determine the amount of total shares, the amount of each share, and the maximum share that each member can subscribe, and the standard of membership fee.
- 6) Deliberate and decide to expand the capital shares.

It is expected that the cooperative is not only an economic entity, but also a social and cultural entity that carry out work for the public welfare of the community. Thus besides dividend-distribution among the members, part of the profit is reserved for the commonwealth fund. However the fund is still owned by the members and how to use the fund is determined by the members.

At the starting period of the cooperatives, members had positive responses toward the cooperatives and their excitement was obvious, and they contributed a lot of time to the cooperatives. Nearly all members said the cooperatives were good. The starting period is the period when the trustees are most united and most confident in the cooperatives. The cooperative leaders were busy in drafting the constitution, discussing projects, organizing voluntary community service activities, and organizing art and entertaining activities. They were also enthusiastically reaching out for the development of economic cooperatives. In the first month after the establishment of the economic cooperative in Zhaicheng village, the eight trustees in the trustee board were busy doing the things listed above. They even do not have time to take care of their own cropland.

Among these cooperatives, the primary economic activity is collective purchasing of production materials, such as seeds, fertilizer, tools, etc. In this way, they can buy things in wholesale price rather than retail price. This activity is low-risk and for sure can benefit the peasants. Almost all the cooperatives choose this activity as the start-up program. For example, in Zhaicheng village, HeBei province, the cooperative members bought coal together in the winter at a price 20% lower than the retail price. In Jiangzhuang village, Shandong province, the cooperative signed contract with a seed company. The company transported the seed to the village, and sold the seed to the cooperative members and other villagers at the price of 2.9 RMB/ 500g, while the market price was 3.5 RMB/ 500g. In Nantang village, AnHui province, the peasant cooperative established relationship with the municipal Bureau of Commodity Price (BCP), and bought fertilizer and pesticides from it. In this way the quality of fertilizer and pesticides were guaranteed.

Collective marketing has higher risk and needs high-level organization. In Jiangzhuang village, pig-cultivating associations were established under the peasant cooperative. Rabbit-breeding associations were also formed which uniformly prepared forages for its members, and supervised the unitary epidemic prevention. The associations publicized advertisement in local TV station for marketing. The lowest selling price was prescribed to prevent vicious price competition. The pig-cultivating association in Zhaicheng loaned money to build a pig-production farm outside the village, established a management team and recruited a feeder to take responsibility for the farm. Other members provided labor for free. In the winter, members took turns to watch the farm.

In 2005, after DIPE invited experts from Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden to give instructions on eco-farming, several peasant cooperatives showed interests in practicing eco-farming in their villages. In Zhaicheng village, there were five villagers who were willing to practice eco-farming. Some of them have opposed the using of pesticides for a long time. However, they lacked opportunities and appropriate venue to discuss this issue with others. They felt they are the “minorities” in the village. Now, with a few people experimenting eco-farming together, even if they are still “minorities,” they felt their previous worries were justified, and they are not isolated any more. They felt that they are connected and they are more confident in insisting on not using chemical fertilizer.

DIPE chose peanut planting for them to experiment eco-farming, because as a legume crop, peanut needs less fertilizer and have stronger resistance to pests than other kinds of crops. The Institute adopted a mechanism to guarantee their benefit: if their income from peanut harvest is not as good as previous years, the Institute would compensate them.

In another village, Sun Zhuang village in Anhui province, the peasant cooperative chose to use 10 mu (or about 2 acres) of public land to practice eco-farming. The cooperative purchased human feces from the residence committee in the city, and then allocated to each villager to make manure. Mr. Wang, 68 years old, was the most passionate promoter of this project, because several years ago all the chicken he kept died for eating crops poisoned by pesticides.

In rural areas, finance is a big problem for development. Peasants have the habit of depositing their money in the bank. In Zhaicheng village with 2000 households,

there are about four million Yuan deposited in bank altogether. However, it is very difficult for peasants to loan money from the bank. To the bank the transaction cost is too high: usually the loan peasant asks for is small-amount, and it is difficult for the bank to investigate the real use of the loan and to assess the possibility of the debt being paid off. Thus the bank is not willing to provide loans to peasants. The consequence is that the money of rural areas is flowing to the urban city, impairing the capability of rural society to develop. In many rural areas, peasants borrow money from usurer or underground illegal bank. To solve the peasants' financial problem some peasant cooperatives initiated micro-loan program or form financial mutual-aid groups. For example, in Lan Kao, the financial mutual-aid group helps resolve peasants' financial difficulty in production and other aspects. It operates as micro-credit loan society. The applicant submits application explaining the amount, purpose, return period, and the warrantor of the loan, and then the cooperative convenes a meeting of five parties: trustee board, supervisory committee, advisory board, member representatives, and common members, having discussion based on the individual credit of the debtor and the purpose. The trustee board made the final decision.

The cooperatives play a role in promoting the formation of other kinds of local peasant organization, such as a women's association, an elders' association, arts and entertainment groups, etc. The cooperatives also mobilized villagers to participate in public work or commonweal affair. In Zhaicheng village, the cooperative trustees organized members to send commodity and food to the home of senior people during the Spring Festival, and persuaded villagers to give donation to one family whose

daughter contracted leucocythemia. In Jingjiang, Chongqing province, the cooperative leaders organized villagers to contribute money and labor to pave a gravel road.

8.6.2 Internal Conflicts

The honeymoon between the members and the cooperatives did not last longer than two months. When cooperative members found out that the cooperatives cannot meet their initial expectations, gradually they lost their passion and were less active in participation. And even trustee board members and supervisory committee members gradually lost their optimistic attitude toward the cooperatives.

People expected that the cooperatives can quickly make them rich when they joined the cooperatives. However, agriculture products do not have much space for added value. Even after cooperation, the profit obtained from uniform purchasing and marketing is limited. Unless the cooperatives are engaged in food processing or other kinds of industry, cooperation can hardly bring big change to the peasants' income. However, the cooperative members lack money, technique and management experiences to be engaged in such industry. And when cooperatives invest in food processing or other forms of industry, due to the fact that a big amount of money is involved, the management of the money will become an enormously sensitive problem and internal conflict will increase dramatically.

The concern of who benefit from the cooperative is a main factor for the internal conflicts. In Zhaicheng village, the cooperative decided to collectively buy the coal. Because it was the brother of the president of the trustee board who was responsible for buying the coal, other people doubted that he made the profit for

himself, and reprimanded the president. However, he felt wrongly reprimanded and explained that his brother devoted a lot of time and energy to the cooperatives, and even spend his own money for others' good (his brother paid for a high amount of mobile phone fee). Actually, this kind of dispute happens among many cooperatives. Many cooperative members have similar doubts that cooperative leaders use the collective money for personal benefit.

Financing problem haunted many economic cooperatives. At the initial stage, both trustees and cooperative members volunteered to offer their labor and time in the activities of the cooperative for no compensation. However, as time goes on, to maintain the enthusiasm of their members, some cooperatives considered giving certain compensation to trustees and members who contributed their labor. The compensation plan elicited debate among cooperative members. In Fengnan village, Chongqing province, the Chair of the board of trustees made a lot of phone calls for the cooperative, and so the trustee board decided to reimburse him the phone call fees. This led to complaint of some members who thought the Chair used the phone also for personal affair. Financing was not transparent in some cooperatives, which invited wide discontentment from cooperative members. And some cooperatives have been in debt since the income generated cannot cover the administrative cost. Some members expressed their dissatisfaction toward the decision-making process and complained that it is always the Chair of the board of trustees who made the decision and who did not consider the opinions of other people.

In addition, cooperative members gradually felt that participating in the cooperative does not bring real difference to their income and life. They began to

complain that the trustees do not have capabilities to bring in lucrative projects for them. One member in the Zhaicheng village cooperative said, “The cooperative has done nothing meaningful.” And according to the survey and case study conducted by the Institute staff, this kind of opinion is popular among many peasant cooperatives initiated by the students of the Institute (Interview with Fang, 2006).

One interesting finding is that the cooperatives that have relatively high level of internal cohesion are those that originated from peasants’ rights group. Some founders of economic cooperatives are peasants’ rights activists who once led peasants to guard for peasants’ rights in land issue and tax issue. The Nantang village in Anhui province is one of such cases. In 1990s, the unreasonable high tax and miscellaneous fees levied on peasants were beyond the affordability of the peasants, and government corruption enraged the villagers. The rights activists led peasants to overthrow the village government, and the leaders of the rights activists were elected to the leaders of the village. They have high prestige in the local area. After receiving the ideas of economic cooperative in the training workshop held by DIPE, they established an economic cooperative in the village. Despite a lot of difficulties that the other peasant cooperatives also experienced, the cooperative members are still making concerted efforts for the development of the cooperative. The long-term shoulder-to-shoulder cooperation during the rights defense campaign has built mutual trust among the members.

8.6.3 External Pressures

Story 1: Nan Tang village, Anhui province. The cooperative bought fertilizer from a fertilizer factory and sold them to its members. This irritated the fertilizer

dealers. They went to the municipal business administration bureau and accused the cooperative of engaging in illegal commercial activity.

Story 2: Nantang village, An Hui province. Currently Nantang peasant cooperative hasn't registered because the township government has an hostile attitude toward the cooperative. Since the leaders of the cooperative are previous peasants' rights activists, the township government officials consider these people as always "making trouble" and impeding the work of the government even though the cooperative members have transformed the focus of their work from rights-defending to rural development. With the help of some university volunteers, they decided to establish an "elder people society" under the cooperative. The goal of the society is that "old people are taken care of, old people enjoy life, and old people make contributions." The first activity was to select ten daughters-in-law in the village who take good care of their families and old people. In order to ameliorate the relationship between the cooperative and the government, they invited the town government officials to attend the award ceremony, and they plan to introduce the "elder people society" after the ceremony. However, when the head of the Society took out his speech draft, the official jumped up and left.

Story 3: Jiang Zhuang village, Shan dong province. During the period of the establishment of the cooperative, the village committee spread rumors about the initiator and proponents of the cooperative, and even threatened the family members of some cooperative members.

The above stories illustrate that beside the internal conflict, the development of the cooperative also encountered external pressure. Powerful families, the village

committee, upper-level government, and businessmen and companies are all involved in the politics around peasant cooperatives. When the peasant cooperatives were formed, the existing power holders viewed it as a new rising power, with the capability of contending with them. The government in each level primarily viewed it as a potential political body rather than an economic body. It is not surprising that the cooperative incurs dissatisfaction and even opposition from the existing power holders. The external pressures came from the following three sources.

First, many cooperatives can not get official recognition. In many areas, the local government is holding hostile attitudes toward peasant organizations, thinking the goal of organizing the peasants is to act against the government. Among the cooperatives that keep close relation with DIPE, only three registered in either the Department of Civil Administration or Department of Business Administration of their respective county government. In Nantang village, Anhui province, peasants formed a financial mutual-aid group. As a financial derivative organization from the cooperative, it helps to drive away the high-interest underground financial organization in the rural area, and explored a new system that fit in rural areas with clear property rights and strong supervision. However, it did not get official recognition from the local government. The cooperative members referred to the Central government No.1 Document to claim that their action is justified. The No. 1 Document regulates: *“to develop competitive rural financial markets, the relevant bureau needs to establish admission conditions and regulation mechanisms for new forms of financial organization and diverse forms of ownership. With the prerequisite of taking precautions against financial risk, local government should initiate*

experimental units as soon as possible. In those places which have such conditions, the government can explore micro-finance loan organization.” However the financial mutual-aid cooperatives did not get response from local government. The founder of the cooperative in Yongji city, Shanxi province was even interrogated by a police officer.

Compared to peasant cooperatives in the Western countries that can obtain financial and policy support from the government, peasant cooperatives in China seldom get any kind of support from the government. In comparison, those who have government connections are able to win support and favorable policy easily. For example, of a Vegetable Society in XinXing village, Hebei province, the primary managers are the officials working in township government and serving on the village committee. The township government provided 200 thousand yuan to build a trade market, and 1000 yuan for each greenhouse. The irrigation bureau helped build the underground DIPes; the electricity bureau installed the transformer; the transportation bureau built the main road; and the science and technology bureau examined and certified the quality of the non-pollution vegetables free of cost. All these services are not accessible if the cooperatives are initiated and run by common peasants. The state Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) has special funds to support the cooperatives. However, these procedures are complicated. The application documents have to go through village, township, county or municipal, and provincial government, and finally to the central government. Most of the funds were given to government-related or government-supported large-scale “cooperatives.”

Among the cooperatives supported by DIPE, the peasant cooperative in LanKao County is an exception because it has received government support. The key person who promoted the idea of cooperative in LanKao is Li Cen, a sociology professor in People's University, and deputy head of the county government. She persuaded the country government to fund the training workshop on cooperative in HeCun village and NanMaZhuang village. People chosen for the training are recommended by Bureau of Agriculture and village Communist Party branch. Thus the cooperatives in LanKao County have close connection with the local government. In NanMaZhuang village, the initiator of the cooperative is the head of the village committee. Although he is not the executive member of the cooperative, he plays an important role in its decisions. In Huzhai village, the head of the cooperative is the son of the secretary of village Communist party. The cooperative get support from the village council. HeCun village and NanMaZhuang appointed the secretary of the village Communist party as an independent supervisor, and the secretary of township Communist party as special counselor. The county finance bureau purchased equipment with a value of RMB 20, 000 for HeCun village. In NanMaZhuang village, the application for non-polluted rice project received support from the township party secretary and county agriculture bureau.

But even in Lankao, the cooperative and the local government are not always in the honeymoon. Fang used his network in the central government to obtain project fund directly from the state MOA for the peasant cooperative. However, this incurs discontentment from local government, since they thought the application does not follow the formal procedures. Although finally the cooperative in NanMaZhuang

village still got the project fund, 100 thousand Yuan, the relationship between the cooperative and the township and municipal government get tense. And He Huili, friend of Fang Tiejun, was elbowed out by other government officials.

Second, the peasant cooperative was viewed as competitor of the existing power body and thus their relationship with village committee is in tension. Many village committees have heavy debt, and they can hardly mobilize villagers to carry on the development work in the village. In many areas, the village committees do not have much authority among peasants. The emergence of peasant cooperative provides a channel to develop the rural economy and to organize social life in rural society. The village committees are uneasy about this situation because they thought that the cooperatives may take over the function of the Communist party organization and village committees, further reducing the authority of the local government in the village. In ZhaiCheng village, Hebei province, the party secretary said in dissatisfaction, “Peasants have the misconception that cooperatives can oppose the government, oppose the village committee, and contend for resources.”

One scholar analyzed the reason for the tense relationship between the cooperative and local government: “Currently the resources of village and the power to dispose the land is in the hand of village committee, and the township government can also dispose these resources through the control of village committee member. But once peasants are organized under the cooperatives, the capability of local government to dispose the public resources may be weakened” (Personal conversation, July 27 2005).

Third, the cooperatives also met resistance from the market. The peasant cooperative in NanMaZhuang village is one example. The cooperative initiated a non-pollution rice production project. The cooperative distributed seeds and fertilizer uniformly to members participating in this project, and the cooperative is responsible for taking precautions against and killed pests, applying for the rice brand, and selling the rice. It received the accreditation from the MOA. However, the cooperative members encountered a lot of unpredicted difficulties when they attempted to enter the market. First, they had to compete with the merchants who sold the fake non-pollution rice. They often failed in this competition because those merchants asked for lower price, and the consumers chose rice with lower price since they cannot identify what is authentic non-polluted rice. Second, they were often cheated and discriminated when they did sale promotion for their rice. Third, supermarkets or grocery store offered low price to their rice. In order to help sell the rice, Li Cen and other scholars advertise the rice in the academic circle, but the sales are still limited. So in a seminar held in a bookstore, Li Cen called for the support from attendants. This lecture received the attention of the media. After reports on TV and on the newspapers, some supermarkets contacted them and agreed to sell their rice for them. However, one problem of the supermarket is the long default of payment, while timely money in-flow was very important for the peasants to purchase necessary materials for farming in the next spring.

8.7 Withstanding the Pressures between 2005 and Now

8.7.1 Program Adjustment

The unmet expectation of the peasants led to tension between DIPE and local villagers. The party secretary of the village commented, “Peasants need money. They feel that their investment (in DIPE) does not get rewarded. What DIPE is doing looks illusive to them.” Peasants also responded coldly to the eco-farming and eco-houses, because they did not see much profit in the ecological economy. Disappointed by the Institute, one villager even said, “the Institute won’t last long if it continues its current working style.”

The media gave close attention to DIPE from its very beginning because of the high reputation of Dr. Fang and the avant-garde activities of DIPE. But noticing the disagreement and conflict between the villagers and DIPE, many outsiders gave negative comments about the Institute and thought it was not successful. In 2005, the “Phoenix TV”, a very famous TV station in China, reported negatively about DIPE. The cooperative tends to be the target of most of the negative comments. The village party secretary told the reporter, “We supported the Institute because we expected that it can bring change to the village. We expected that it would help us to accomplish rural restructuring and lead us on the path of getting rich. However, they have different thoughts. They help establish the peasant cooperatives, but it does not work well.” In the report, some cooperative members also expressed their disappointment toward the cooperatives. The report was titled as “Xiu Cai Xia Xiang” (scholars went to the village), implying that the staff in the Institute did not

understand what the peasants need, and only sat inside the Institute and designed programs out of nowhere.

The village requested the Institute to introduce some “real projects” to the village. Villagers believe that being engaged in industrial and commercial activity is the right way to getting rich. However DIPE responded, “Several international and domestic NGOs are conducting projects in rural villages. However, there are 800,000 villages in China, and it is impossible to do projects in all these villages. Different from these NGOs, we attempt to explore a way that can be generalized. We hope to find out those people who have the capacity and the passion toward the development of their hometown, and to encourage those people to explore the solution based on their experiences.” DIPE places “human” at the center of the development, and views itself as a base that provides inspiration to the local capable men and women and continuously cheers them up. However, there is disagreement between the village and DIPE on the focus of DIPE’s work.

When asked how they deal with these pressures, the Institute staff responded, “Whatever you do, there is always people who do not like it. We would not give it up because of opposition. But we also need to listen to what people say and think about what improvement we can make.” Since 2006, they tried to keep low-key. “It took five years for James Yen to experiments before promulgating his rural education method in Zhaicheng village. We also need to stand on solid feet and solve problems.”

In the workshops of peasant cooperative, DIPE began to put more focus on capacity training and finance management. They are aware that managing an

organization within democratic principals needs more organizational input. Democracy is not something on paper; practicing democracy needs concrete institutions and procedures. And on eco-farming, DIPE placed more emphasis on marketing strategy. Eco-farming is a non-mainstream concept and practice needs to be based on ultimate concern of the earth and the ecological system. However, it costs more time and money, but produces fewer yields at the beginning. Without wide social recognition of eco-farming, the practice of eco-farming takes high risk.

DIPE set up a “green alliance” consisting of several peasant cooperatives. These cooperatives need to promise to practice eco-farming. The hope is that through allying with each other they can have stronger negotiation power in the market and more easily get recognition from the consumers. Currently seven peasant cooperatives have joined the alliance. But according to one staff in the Institute, the fate of the “green alliance” is not optimistic, since “the market is unpredictable. The other business companies and retailers who have rich experience in the market will do everything to edge out the ‘green alliance’ stores. And nobody in the Institute is familiar with the existing market rule” (Interview with one staff, July 23 2005).

DIPE is also experimenting non-market strategies for promoting eco-farming in the villagers. They established connections between the urban community and the peasant cooperatives in a variety of ways, such as urban residents subscribe to a peasant’s land and buy the product produced on that land, or the community store purchase agriculture products directly from the peasants. The producers and consumers settle the price through consultation. The price should guarantee the reasonable production cost and life expenditure of the producers. This practice saved

the expensive expenditure in accreditation, and reduced the transaction cost in the process. Currently the accreditation power of “green products” is in the hand of the government, and peasants or companies that want to have the label of “green products” have to pay huge amounts of money to the government. The production-consumption relationship is built on mutual trust and mutual respect, and the peasants’ labor will get more recognition.

This year in 2007, the village party secretary showed a more positive attitude toward DIPE. DIPE has become more and more famous in the Chinese society, which has also made its location, Zhaicheng village, more famous. The party secretary now regards DIPE as an invaluable asset of the village. He plans to apply for the “Yen Yangchu” brand and uses the brand in the agriculture product, even though DIPE does not support this idea.

Despite the dissatisfaction expressed by some peasants toward DIPE, there are still many villagers who supported DIPE. One peasant noticed that the village was more vibrant after the establishment of the Institute. The existence of the economic cooperative, the women’s association and the arts and entertainment team made the village life more organized and animated. Several peasants said that the Institute is doing the right thing in promoting eco-farming. The party secretary also recognized that the villagers, especially the cooperative and association members, are different from the past. They are much more expressive, more concerned with public affairs, and more willing to share their ideas with others. The party secretary commented, “Even the children in our village are at a higher level (compared to other villages) in communicating with others.”

8.7.2 Institute-Central Government Interaction

President Fang has maintained a close relationship with high-level government officials. Despite the tense relationship with the municipal government of Dingzhou city, DIPE had close contact with governments at every level. The position of Dr. Fang inside the establishment system as well as his closeness to rural people and the rural communities – the grassroots - influenced his working style in DIPE. On the one hand, he had a good knowledge about the problems that peasants and rural society have. He believes that institutional reform in rural society is the only way out of the current problems. On the other hand, he emphasized that people should understand and have belief in the Party and in the government. He mentioned that the government has become more and more concerned about common people, and is working hard to draft and enact policies to resolve rural problems in the form of provisions for health care, education, and tax burden of peasants. But due to the internal political conflicts in local governments and different interests of multiple government departments, many policies are not well implemented.

DIPE is financially independent from the government. Ninety percent of its operational costs are funded by grants Asian Foundation, and the rest of the resources come from personal donations by Dr. Fang and the other two founding organizations, UK Action Aid and the Community Service Development Research Center. DIPE operates in complete independence from state control. Dr. Fang's connection with the central government does however allow DIPE to apply for project grants for the village. Usually the application for central government project grants need to be approved by the local government who then recommend the application to the central

government. Currently, DIPE bypasses the Dingzhou municipal government for central government grant applications to MOA in Beijing. However, objections from the municipal government prevented the village from actually receiving the grant they have been approved. The municipal government felt offended that the Institute had skipped their approval process. In response, MOA criticized the attitude of the municipal government and said, “if the application of the Institute was objected to again, the Ministry would not approve any application of the municipal government.” After Dr. Fang was appointed the Dean of School of Agriculture Economics and Rural Development at the People’s University, he applied for the “985 project” for the School and made DIPE an experimental site of the “985 project.” In summary, DIPE received benefits due to Fang’s connection with the central government.

The central government has closely watched Fang’s work with rural society especially the practice of peasant organizing themselves into associations. As the assistant to the president articulated, “Our idea of rural reconstruction has already created conflicts with the central government. The mainstream theory focuses on urban development, and from this perspective the solution for rural areas and peasants is to receive job opportunities in the town and city. The government doubts our motives for organizing peasants. They think the solution (for rural development) is resource allocation.”

To date, Fang has been successful in convincing the central government that their activity of peasant organization is an economic activity, which not only helps to advance the economic welfare of the peasants, but also helps to maintain the stability of rural society because these associations facilitate the transfer of government policy

to the grassroots level. He has emphasized this opinion in many formal official meetings, newspaper and television interviews, and academic seminars. According to Liana, the assistant of the president, the primary goal of DIPE is not public policy advocacy but she thought that it is natural for Fang to take the role of advocating policy in his position.

Recently, the central government has issued a law concerning the establishment of peasant economic cooperatives, calling for the support of local governments to these cooperatives. Some economic cooperatives have been organized under the leadership of local government with the reasoning of reducing” transaction costs.” When asked how he assesses this situation, Fang said that “it is inevitable” and currently what development organizations can do is to “occupy the territory as fast as possible” and mobilize peasants to organize peasants-led-peasants-managed cooperatives. He articulated that currently the government is still an economic entity rather than a “night watcher” for the malfunctions of the market. So the chief goal of the government’s policy is to maximize its own benefit. Recently the issue of food security has also received attention from the government. The central government issued a policy statement to encourage the use of “low-poison” pesticide and the practice of “non-pollution” farming. However, one Institute staff member commented that the policy is based on concern for urban people’s safety rather than for the welfare of peasants.

Currently the government is still monopolizing agricultural sectors such as insurance, finance, purchase and marketing to peasants. Peasants face a lot of difficulty in their attempt to enter these fields. To further rural development, the

government needs to open up the access to these areas. However, this process will not come soon since these are profitable areas for the government. It takes time for the government to become an entity outside of the market and to take responsibility for making regulations and adjustments. Fang also reminds peasants not to take radical actions, such as to establish regional or even national level peasant associations, because that will definitely cause the government to take action to suppress it (speech on a workshop not proper form of citation). He states, “The government reform is intended to solidify the rule of the Party in power. So we cannot expect the government to tolerate those initiatives that challenge its rule. We are reformists, and we won’t be engaged in any ‘battle’.” Fang is calling for the establishment of communication channels between the peasants and non-peasant - outsiders, including the government and the market.

Summary

In the present chapter, a case study is performed to illustrate the development of adult education in China. Instead of adopting the mainstream adult education model and focusing on training of skills, the Institute of Peasant Education described in this case focused on raising the peasants’ consciousness of the importance of organizing themselves, which elicited the attention from the government immediately. Despite of the central government’s doubt of the Institute’s education ideas and the local government’s attempt to ban the Institute from provision of training workshop on peasant cooperative, the Institute continued its educational practice and facilitated the establishment of more peasant cooperatives. Peasant organizations in the present case encountered a lot of obstacles, but it is undeniable that these organizations have

produced a positive effect on local cultural and economic life. The Law of Peasant Economic Cooperative in People's Republic of China was passed in the 10th National People's Congress on October 31, 2006, which manifested that the social groups' efforts in promoting peasant cooperative have gained the recognition from the government.

CHAPTER 9

FROM GOVERNMENT DEMAND TO SELF-ORGANIZATION

--- CASE ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTE OF PEASANT EDUCATION

In 1958, as a part of the grand scheme to reconstruct the Chinese society, the state initiated the “people’s commune” movement in the rural areas. Peasants were asked to put their lands together, share agriculture equipment, and work together. All the properties belonged to the communes, and the peasants earned work credit through contributing their labor. This was a mandatory state action. It met limited resistance from the peasants, which does not mean that the model was welcomed by the peasants, but that the peasants had little organizational structure to resist state order and authority. Qin Hui (2005) compared China with Soviet Union, which had a long tradition of having a village collective economy. However, when the Soviet state forced the village to be merged into “people’s communes,” it led to large-scale peasant revolt. While in Chinese rural society where there was no tradition of a collective economy, the resistance to “people’s communes” was small-scale, mainly in some areas where lineage influence was comparatively strong.

The “people commune” was not a voluntarily organized “collective economy” as many people assumed. Production plans, the sale and placement of products, the allocation of resources, and the nomination of leaders, were centrally determined by the government, instead of the “commune” members. This structure facilitated the state to draw resources from the rural society to accomplish the government’s strategy of capital accumulation for rapid industrialization of the country in the 1950s. We can

say, the rural economy was a form of “state economy,” the same as “state-owned industry” in the urban areas. After the economic reform was launched in 1978 which featured distributing land and resources back to the farmers in order to stimulate their motivation for production, the “people’s communes” gradually dissolved, and peasants returned to the status of working individually on their separate land.

Today, intellectuals perceived the “reorganization of the peasants” as the solution of development problems for the rural society. This campaign of “reorganizing” peasants is different from in the efforts during the people’s commune period. In this campaign, peasants are the main actors who choose whether to organize and how to organize. Thus compared to the private university, in the case of the Institute for Rural Peasants, it is not only the intellectuals who organize public discussions and collective actions, but also the peasants who participated in the self-organization effort to defend their interests and negotiate with other parties in the existing economic and political system. Thus the power redistribution process is influenced by multiple parties, the state-government, the Institute, the local government and the peasants. This chapter will analyze the factors enabling self-organization of peasants, the roles played by the Institute in constructing a civil society, and the strategies used by the Institute in interacting with the government.

9.1 Factors Enabling Self-Organization

9.1.1 The Development Ideology of the Government

Since 1980s, achieving rapid and comprehensive economic development has become the primary goal of the government. And this goal has been taking a more and more important position in the agenda of the government. Since the fading out of

Maoist-Leninist thoughts as the guiding ideology from the political stage of China in 1970s, it is through economic growth that the Communist party proves its ruling capacity and legitimates the one-party rule.

Rural development is the weak spot in China's overall economic development trend. Either agriculture restructuring or the growth of hundreds of thousands of township enterprises since the mid 1980s did not bring long-term development to the rural area. The urban-rural gap continues to enlarge. Thus the government is seeking for solutions that lead to tolerating a variety of non-governmental experiments in rural society. This is the reason that the central government permitted the initiation and the spread of peasant cooperatives when they were convinced that peasant cooperatives would contribute to improving the economic situation of peasants.

Local governments were more ambiguous toward the idea of peasant cooperatives. They are more interested in initiatives for local economic growth which would add to their claims of achievements under their governance. In the overall context of holding social stability as the top priority by the central government, local government officials are those who directly interact with people and any sign of social instability threatens their career more than the blame of slow economic growth in the local area. For conservative government officials, they do not want to take risks.

However, in the case of DIPE, it did not have difficulties to get registered, because the Bureau of Education considered it not an organization to create social problem but as a non-government technical school, which would help local development. And the successful registration enabled the Institute to organize its future operation.

Even when the local government knew that the Institute's training focused on peasant cooperative and frowned upon the Institute's work, it did not force the Institute to close off, because of Fang's relationship with the central government as well as the Institute's national reputation. On the other hand, the Institute's education activity were not impacted by the local government's attitude, because it has financial and personnel independence from the government.

9.1.2 Availability of Resources

In this case, the availability of the land is a key element of the establishment of the Institute. The villagers bought the use right of the public land and decided how it should be used. With the Institute in the village, education could be combined with daily living and agriculture production, and discourse could happen between peasants, students, scholars, officials, and social activists. Involving the public in the management of local resources instead of the government monopolizing all the resources is crucial in the construction in civil society. However, the property right of the land still belongs to the government despite of the fact that the land is in the village. In the rural area, that the government arbitrarily sold the public land to companies for personal benefit had been a huge corruption problem. How to establish a mechanism to give the public more power in the management of public common property is the future effort that the government and social organizations should make.

9.1.3 Access to Ideas

In this case, President Fang got inspiration from a range of international cooperative experiences, especially the experiences of Japan and South Korea. In many occasions, Dr. Fang described Japanese and Korean peasant cooperatives as a

model that Chinese scholars and practitioners on rural development can learn and borrow from. Japan and Korea's rural economy is based on the peasants who have small pieces of land, different from farmers in the United States and Europe. In these two countries, peasant cooperatives operate in multiple areas, including production, finance and marketing. And governments provide administrative and financial support to them. The rich knowledge that Fang had toward rural China enabled him to choose among many models the one he regarded appropriate for the rural areas in China. And this idea attracted the attention of peasants as well people from civil associations, inspiring a new round of public discussions on rural reform, and promoted the collaborative efforts toward alternative practice on rural development.

The concept and practice of ecological economy in the global civil society is another source of inspiration to the Institute. It provides a useful lens to inspect the problem that the Chinese rural society encountered in the modernization process, and it provides a solution as well. This idea convened a group of people who are concerned about the decaying environment, problems of globalization and urban-rural dichotomy.

The emerging of new political and cultural ideas is key for social change. People tend to adhere to the pattern in their behavior and in their interaction with others. Even if people sensed something is wrong, they seldom question the rules behind the phenomenon and therefore seldom challenge the routine. People are so immersed in existing institutions, customs, and collective sentiments that they tend to accept what existed as justified. However, the availability of new ideas provides a new perspective for people to look at the system, and to think that "another reality is

possible” or “another solution is possible.” New ideas are often a weapon that individuals, organizations, and social movements take upon to mobilize people and to challenge the existing system.

9.1.4 Leadership of Intellectuals

“Ideas compete for attention and legitimacy and the ones that gain ascendance do not win the day on their merits alone.” (BornsStein, p. 91). Generally, it is not only that ideas move people but also that people move ideas. With the availability of resources, awareness of self interest, ideas, and a more tolerating political environment, it is up to people to organize the resources, bring the ideas to the attention of the public, mobilize people to work on that ideas, and influence the policy.

In this case, the role of Dr. Fang is important. Although the experiment of micro-credit fund and peasant cooperative has been around in various forms for a few years, it is Dr. Fang, through his prestige in the research field as an alternative / grassroots economist, who brought the idea of peasant cooperative to the upfront of rural change.

Dr. Fang has high reputation among the peasant groups who viewed him as “the representative of the Chinese peasants,” because he understood them and spoke for them. So when looking for someone for cooperation, the villagers found Fang. And they showed trust to Fang even when the operation of the peasant cooperative was below their expectation. To cause fundamental social change is to ask people to change how they do their work and how they relate to others. It is predictable that there would be incalculable difficulties during such process. Trust is fundamental, as it is impossible for them to follow someone if they don’t trust him.

Fang also has a high reputation in the academic circle so that the Institute attracted scholars to volunteer their time and knowledge to the Institute's work. Inside the Institute, Fang calls for people holding different ideas together, to learn from each other, to discuss theories and practices, and to reach a certain level of consensus. In all, he plays a key role for the Institute to work cooperatively and to navigate during difficult times.

9.2 New Center of Power

The establishment and development of the Institute definitely set up a public space which has several functions: capacity of mobilizing resource to conduct public activities; capacity of culture buildings, and capacity of restructuring social networks. The space keeps expanding with the input of new resources, new persons, new ideas, and new alliances. With these capacities, the Institute has the power to influence the social reform.

9.2.1 Public Space for Collective Action

The establishment of the Institute attracted people with similar concern of social reform to come together. In the past, these people did not have choices but to adjust themselves to mainstream thinking. Now in the Institute, they could practice their innovative ideas in collaboration with others. It is a space where shared understanding is developed and where joint action based on such understanding is initiated. The Institute gives a different reward other than salary and promotion: the feeling of fulfillment. With a different mechanism from the government, the Institute is an arena outside the reign of the state-government where people allocate natural resources and

human forces and organize public affairs to serve both individual interests and common interests.

9.2.2 Cultural Building

Through its workshops for the peasants, and other multiple educational activities including editing newspapers, holding online forums, organizing academic seminars, the Institute has become a space of cultural building. First, the Institute aroused the awareness that the problem of rural society does not lie in the gap of knowledge or skill, but in power, which results in the lack of financial and social capital in the rural society. It changed the image of “rural society” by claiming that the poverty of rural area is not a burden for the country’s modernization, but a consequence of modernization. It brought a twist to the “modernization logic” that blames the disadvantaged areas for lack of capital, lack of a modern mind or lack of risk-taking spirit. The Institute brought the issue of “power of the powerless” on the table. The cleavage between the “powerful” and the “powerless” used to be clear and taken for granted. Now the Institute helps to justify that the “powerless” can strive for power by organizing and by making their interests be heard and taken care of.

The Institute also attributes new meaning to the word “development.” They remind people not to equate “development” with accumulation of materials, products, or wealth. “Development” should incorporate: the balance among different regions, the balance between growth and preservation, and the balance between human and nature. The seeking for balance is reflected in the Institute’s attention to rural society, in its practice of ecological farming and ecological architecture, and in its integration of economic organization with cultural organization.

The Institute cultivates not only the value of self-determination but also the value of community building. As one staff in the Institute articulated, “people always think that the villagers know nothing, and they should be taught, whether about how to grow crops or how to participate in democratic election. However, on the opposite, what the villagers really don’t know is that they have the knowledge and they have the creative ideas.” They just have no power to speak out their ideas and no network to practice their ideas. Instead of being told what to do by the government, peasants can determine for themselves about how to build their living environment and conduct their economic activities. Besides the importance of self-determination, the Institute also emphasizes the importance of learning to work with other people, only through which the community has the capacity for sustainable economic, political, and cultural development.

The Institute changed our understanding and practice of education in the following aspects: 1) Different from formal education institutions, the organizers of the Institute are both intellectuals and peasants; teachers are from different groups such as scholars, professionals and practitioners; the students are not a traditional group of students, instead, they include peasants, officials as well as university students. 2) The relationship between teachers and students is different. One peasant said initially he thought he was in some heresy group since he had never been in such a place where the teachers live with students, eat with students, do morning exercise with students, work in the cropland with students, and talk with students in such an amiable way. He was shocked when the teachers encouraged them to discuss what the problems in rural areas are and how to find solutions. He took some time to get used

to the concept that “there is no teacher, no student here. All are participants and actors in rural development.” 3) The curriculum is different, and the form of carrying on education is different: short-term workshops, hands-on work camps, and doing and learning in groups. 4) The goal is different: other than transferring knowledge and skill, the Institute regards education as a tool for arousing awareness of one’s identity and one’s position in the society . The Institute brought fresh understanding and a great level of diversity to the concept of “education.”

9.2.3 Restructuring Social Structure

Through organizing peasants, the Institute mobilized new constituencies for active participation and decision-making in the economic and political system; through working together with other intellectuals, it formed an intellectual circle that raises concerns and provides opinions in a more independent way than before; and through forming alliance with other non-government organizations, it established cross-region, cross-group coalitions that have potential to initiate joint actions, to alter understandings of interests and identities, to transform social practices and to even influence policies. The horizontal networks were developed to complement with the vertical relationship in the government system that dominates socialist China.

The Institute took a gradualist strategy, and did not want to achieve transformation overnight. Fang called himself a “gradual reformist” who did not want a revolution, but social reform taking a moderate pace. As he said, “we adjust our ideas and methods through practice.” “We spread our influence gradually, with every footstep in a solid ground.” “People are eager to see the result, a totally different thing from the past. We can give them result easily. We can mobilize hundreds of peasant

cooperatives and the outsiders would say we are successful. But things can not be done in such a way. The result will be shallow without good institutions to support it. And the development of institutions takes a long time.” “If the cooperative failed, it is hard to mobilize peasants for the second time” (Interview with Fang, July 15 2006). They do not expect that people would take in their ideas immediately, but wait for time to come when people recognize the values of the ideas and practice them by themselves.

9.3 Institute-Government Interaction

9.3.1 Autonomy and Control

Generally, the Institute values autonomy. It has financial independence from the government, and it designs and implements educational programs without government direction. It complements the governmental functions and makes independent contribution to the changes of the rural society.

The relation between the Institute and the government evolves over time. At the initial stage, the existence of the Institute did not elicit much attention from the government. The Institute was neither a partner nor a contender of the government because it seemed not to have high financial and organizational capacity to make real impact. And it got registered without much difficulty because it looked like a common technical training institute.

However, the development of the Institute is seen to have stepped out of the government’s expected track lately. It is not a traditional school as the government had thought. And in the Institute peasants are not students in the traditional meaning.

They are expected to take initiatives to make change in the local economic and social system. The Institute is potentially a place for mobilizing a social reform movement. These prospects upset the government, which is afraid that the movement would be out of the government's control and threaten the government's authority as well as the existing social order. This is the key factor leading to the tension between the Institute and the government.

As a new rising power, the Institute enters a realm where the power of the government used to predominate. Before the establishment of socialist China, the Communist party greatly expanded its scale and power by mobilizing the millions of rural peasants to support its cause. After 1949, the village-level Communist party branch has worked on organizing peasants for decades. Under the era of economic reform, while the government has significantly diminished its authority in the rural society in recent years, and lacked effective measures to direct their behaviors, the Institute gained the trust of peasants and was able to organize them for economic and social reconstruction, which is seen as threatening to the power of the government. It is the Institute instead of the government who influences the peasants' thinking and guides their work, which is considered as the institute having crossed a boundary. The mobilizing capability of the Institute makes the government alert to its activity. Thus the government began to keep a close eye on its practices. And correspondingly, the legitimacy of the peasant organization is in question.

With time passing by, the central government began to believe that if under appropriate direction, the organization of peasants could benefit peasants and enhance social stability in the countryside, which would benefit the government as well. The

government has been bothered by the recent increase in peasant protests in many regions. And they found that peasant cooperatives make peasants shift their attention to community construction and development rather than resorting to complaining and protesting to solve their problems. Furthermore, peasant organizations help reduce the transaction cost for the government to deal with the peasants. With the peasant organizations, the government could communicate with peasants in a more organized way, which helps the government to deliver policy or co-work with peasants for possible solutions on problems that peasants face with. Thus the central government shows a level of support to the idea of peasant organizations, as long as they are limited to the economic area.

However, the local government, in this case, is still upset by the practice of the Institute even though they found out the peasant organization is not confrontational and rebellious. It is not happy with the existence of the Institute because the local government has no effective measures to exert its power on the Institute or influence its practice. The Institute has no need to issue academic certificate or diploma, and also does not strive for status in the formal education system, because it never sees itself as a mainstream education institution. Thus it does not need to follow the government requirement for obtaining the qualification to issue academic degrees. Compared to Yuhua University, the adult education Institute has more autonomy in its organizational structures and program design. The Institute seldom reported to the government its education programs before the workshops are held, which irritated the local government because the government thought as the “parenting official” (父母官) of the local area, they have the right to know what is going on in the area, and to exert

an influence on it. The local government is not happy about the declining influence on local affairs. In the present case, they used their regulation power and failed the annual review of the Institute. However, due to the famous status of Fang in the government as well as in the academic sphere, they did not force the Institute to close off. And the failure to pass the review did not prevent the Institute from continuing its educational programs.

In addition, the self-organized peasant cooperatives were formed and conducted their activities without the direction of the government, and the government could exert very limited influence on what was going on. The village-level party secretary in Zhaicheng is on the board of directors of the peasant economic cooperatives, but he could not control the direction of the cooperative either, and the municipal government saw him as on the side of the peasants. Even though that the government is aware that peasant organization advances their economic situation and promotes local stability, they rather hoped it was the Party branch instead of the villagers themselves who took such initiative. Consequently they barred the Zhaicheng peasant economic cooperative from applying for government grant.

9.3.2 Financial Interest

Besides the tension between autonomy and control, conflict in financial interest is also a factor leading to the tension between the government and the peasant organization. Originally peasants were passively involved in the economic system, and they sell food or purchase requisites whose price is not determined by them. Now they enter the market as a collectivity and have potential power to negotiate and influence the price, which annoys some business organizations. In addition, they

became competitors with other dealers or companies in the market, and met resistance from these dealers and companies. These business dealers either directly adopted commercial strategies to beat peasant organizations, or used their relationship with the government to persuade the government into announcing the peasant organizations as illegal.

However, some government officials or big food processing companies also found out that by organizing peasants into economic cooperatives, the cost of transaction is actually reduced. This is why some local governments show enthusiasm toward the idea of peasant cooperatives. Thus, peasant organizations can be seen as collaborators of the government or contenders for financial profit.

9.3.3 Whole Perspective vs. Linear Perspective

One distinctive feature of the Institute is that it holds a the-world-as-a-whole perspective. In inspecting the problems of the rural areas, it did not only notice what is lacking inside the community, but also placed the rural society in the whole economic system, and concluded that the solution for the underdevelopment of rural society is to change the power structure of the system. This is a challenge to the input-output linear model. The institute focuses on interdependence among different elements in the world and aspires to promote a mutual-nurturing relationship among people and between people and nature. This stands in opposition to the belief of “national benefit beyond individual interests” as promoted by the state government, as well as to the preference of “individualism” as promoted by the liberalists. It is a conflict in both worldview and value system, and the resolution of this conflict would

be as difficult as the resolution of the conflict between the society and the state in the definition of the boundary of state power.

9.4 Strategies of Dealing with State-Society Tension

Conflict is the start of conversation. As a replacement of the social groups tolerating and accepting coercion from the authority before 1980s, open conflict between the civil society groups and the government represents the consciousness of the social groups to defend for their interests and values. To the Institute having conflict not necessarily leads to direct confrontation. The Institute does not want government intervention, however it recognizes that the peasant organizations need at least the recognition of the government to survive and develop. The peasant organizations can hardly conduct activities if the local government is against them. Thus it encourages peasant cooperatives to actively interact with and keep good relationship with local government to win their trust.

The founder and president of the Institute, Dr. Fang, recognizes that the majority of financial and organizational resources are in the control of the government, thus for his ideas about peasant organization to spread to the country and to be practiced in a broader scale, Dr. Fang hopes to influence the government's policy through establishing examples of well-functioning peasant organizations.

The Institute regards that it is important to seek for channels for discourse, for the different parties to understand each other. Thus the Institute creates opportunities for different people and organizations to talk with each other, such as encouraging people to exchange ideas and experiences in workshops, inviting government officials

to visit the village, presenting the village committee members and cooperative members in forums and seminars on rural development, and bringing urban consumers to meet and talk with the peasants. The channels of discourse serve multiple goals: to set everyone as an independent bearer of interests and to reconstruct identity, to build trust, and to encourage collaborations.

9.4.1 Reconstructing Identity

There are two different theories explaining the structural relations in traditional/historical rural China: one theory sees the rural society as a society dominated by a dichotomous relation of landlords vs tenants. Peasants were under the exploitation and suppression of the landlords. Since the Communist Party of China (CPC) liberated peasants from the landlord-tenant relationship, and distributed land to them, peasants become free. Another theory sees traditional rural society as a harmonious community with high consensus on values and high moral cohesion. The relationships in this community, including landlord-tenant relationship, rich people-poor people relationship, esquire-plebian relationship, kin head- kin member relationship, are based largely on agreement. The community order is maintained by custom and ethics; the kinship system ties the members in the rural society together.

Qin Hui (2005), a historian and a professor in Tsinghua University, believes that neither of these two theories provides a real picture of the Chinese traditional rural society. Both theories are not well supported by historical evidence in China, and cannot persuasively explain the hundreds of peasant revolutions in the history of China. Emperor Qin (259-210 BC) united China and established a kingdom with a complicated administrative system similar as that of the modern state. The

hierarchical administrative system enabled the power of the state to extend to the village level. In order to suppress lineage power, he dismissed the lineage families by force and relocated lineage family members to different places. Thus, in the rural area, the safe-guarding net that protected peasants from arbitrary state intervention was removed. Individuals were forced to face with the state's power directly. In such situation, the capability of the state to mobilize resources reached an unprecedented level. In the dynasties after Qin, the state kept strong control on rural society, except the period of Wei and Jin Dynasty, when the state was weak and fell into pieces, and the lineage grew strong.

According to Qin Hui (reference), the primary conflict in Chinese society is between the official and the common people. And among the common people, peasants are staying in the bottom of the society. They have nearly no economic or political power. The dismissal of lineage and other commune associations forced by the state in many areas removed potential protection from them and exposed peasants directly under the unrestricted state power. With the land as their only property, and nearly no social network, peasants was powerless in this confrontation. When the state power has no confinement, the absence of lineage and other commune associations does not mean that people have more individual freedom in the community. Lacking collective wills and collective actions, they can hardly make decision on their own living environment and their lives. The state has unlimited capacity to draw resources from the rural society, in the form of taxation, levy, or labor drafting. Only when the state exploitation was over the toleration limitation of

peasants, and combined with losses from natural disaster peasants would rise up and revolt.

Consequently, peasants are either attached to the state-government or they confront the state-government. In the history, they never interacted with the state-government in an equal status. The only exception is during the 1940-1970s, when peasants were regarded by the Communist Party as partners of the worker class, and peasants as a group had high political status, although in the authoritarian regime peasant as individuals did not have much decision-making power. During the economic reform in 1980s and 1990s, the political and economic status of peasants declined rapidly. The peasants either tolerate the existing living condition or go against the government, and their oppositions were usually repressed by the government. Peasant cannot find an effective way to change their condition.

The Institute encourages peasants to establish channels of discourses with the government officials. When peasants succeeded in establishing such channels and having conversation with government officials in a regular way, their identity is changed: from passive participants to active participants in the social-economic system, from subjects to citizens. Besides keeping silent or revolting, peasants found that they have a third choices: to state their interests rationally and to be heard, as well as listening to the rationale of others, and to work together for a solution that considers interests of both parties. In this way, peasants are neither the subordinates, nor the people who are always suppressed, but the people who can make change to the society in a constructive way.

And during the discourse, the government officials also changed. One government official said in a workshop, “in the past I thought, why these peasants are so difficult to regulate? Why they make so many troubles? Now I understand their situations. It (the problem in rural society) is very complicated, and we need to know more to find out solutions to these problems.” When the channels are established, the government officials have opportunities to listen to people who used to be regulated and not to be talked with, and to understand that these people have their interests that are justified in certain ways. Although certainly there is still much distance between the government officials and the peasants, this distance is possibly narrowing in the on-going discourses.

9.4.2 Seeking Common Interests and Building Trust

At the central government level, Fang made great efforts to gain the trust from the government. He tried to convince the government that they are holding similar goals. For example, recently “harmonious development” and “social stability.” have been proposed by the government as the result of increasing social unrests which arise from widening gaps of inequality under the economic reform. Fang mentioned that peasant cooperatives help peasant to deal with the market, and appease their accumulating discontentment. In addition, formulation of peasant culture and art organizations enrich the life of peasant,. Although it did not bring direct economic benefit, it helps enhance the stability of local areas.

When the Institute promoted ecological farming, the staff used the words popular in the international development circle, such as “sustainable development” or

“green GDP” to justify their initiatives. The strategy is not to outrightly criticize the government doing things in a wrong way, but to propose an alternative model that has theoretical underpinning or has been adopted in other countries. They tried to convince the government that this is not a goal pursued by the non-government organizations as opposed to the government, but a goal that benefit the whole country and can be pursued through the collective effort of the government and the society.

9.4.3 Promoting State-Society Collaboration

According to Dr. Fang, it is unnecessary to follow the state-society dichotomy model, or to place different social groups in each side of an invisible wall. Emphasizing that all groups are potential collaborators, the Institute welcomed cooperation with other non-governmental organizations, intellectual groups, student associations, and government branches. As a result, many local governments invited the Institute staff to hold training workshop in their territories. Recently the Danzhou municipal government in Hainan province asked the Institute to cooperate with the government in the construction of “new villages” in the city. The Director-General of the Institute went to Danzhou and was appointed as the Director of the Office of “New Village Reconstruction,” which will be co-operated by the government and the Institute for the coming five years.

Many peasant cooperatives also sought cooperation with local government. For examples, the peasant cooperative in Nantang village, Anhui province bought fertilizer and seeds from the agriculture supply and marketing branch of the government. The government has realized that the peasant cooperatives made contributions in terms of promoting cultural activities and peasants’ participation in

the public arena in local areas. However, the cooperation between the government and the peasant cooperative still stays in the superficial level.

In the macro level, the Institute believes they are providing policy-makers with evidence of experiments in rural areas so that policy-makers could refer to the effect of existing peasant cooperatives when they are searching for solutions for the rural problems. Although we do not know in which level the social experiments on peasant cooperative influence the legislation, from the newly enacting of the Law on Peasant Cooperative it is observed that the government and the society reach some common understanding in the importance of peasant organization.

9.5 Change and Continuance

The practice of DIPE is the combination of “transforming force” and “inertia force”. It challenges many development theories with an emphasis on marketization, industrialization and urbanization, and it illustrates peasant self-organization as the key for rural development. Only by organizing themselves can peasants defend their economic benefits. And a peasant cooperative is not to be treated just as a service organization, but should be allowed to enter the market area. The government should recognize that the peasant cooperative is an economic entity with a “non-profit” status. The Institute expects the government give the peasants more financial, legal and policy support, and also grant more economic power to the peasant organizations, which also means, the government should retreat from the monopoly of the agriculture-related field and share the economic benefit in these fields with the peasant organizations.

However, there is a paradox in Fang's attitude. Similar with Dr. Wang in the first case, Dr. Fang does not intend to confront the government outright. He does not expect peasant organizations to rise as a new political power. On one hand, peasants are convinced that they should organize for their wellbeing; on the other hand, peasants are not told that their isolated situation make them politically powerless and thus easily exploited by the government or other economic entities. This brings dilemmas to the identity of peasants. The peasant cooperatives do not immediately bring economic benefits to the peasants, but in the long term increases its status in the political and economic system, and consequently increases the peasants' negotiation capacity with other economic entities in the market, including the government. Fang did not mention it to peasants because he is worried that it would lead to the unrest of peasants and break the trust between the Institute and the government. In the workshop on peasant cooperative, the Institute staff intentionally emphasized economic benefit so that the peasants focus their attention on the economic benefits while ignoring the power of the collectivity in their long-term interaction with other parties. This prevents peasants from recognizing their collective interests and being devoted to collective actions.

Summary

Institutional analysis attempted in this chapter illustrates that the change of political and economic contexts impacts the shift of values and behaviors of intellectual groups. Intellectual groups have access to resources and diverse ideas, and more importantly, have gained certain level of autonomy to put their vision of social change into practice, in this case the establishment and operation of Dingxian

Institute of Peasant Education. The government held suspicious attitude toward DIPE's educational practice—training on peasant cooperative and ecological economy, but it did not force it to close off. Instead, the experiment of DIPE on peasant cooperative has gained increasing social influence. And convinced that the peasant cooperative benefits the rural economic development and social stability, the central government enacted the Law of Peasant Economic Cooperative to provide policy support to the economic cooperation among peasants. Analysis shows it is not the state government alone determines the direction of reform in the future, but the non-government sectors are also involved in participation of institutional reform.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

This dissertation studies two cases: a private university providing formal higher education to students who want to get academic degree, and an institute offering informal education to peasants interested in rural development. The former undertakes education to serve the mainstream market need and the modernization goal; the latter undertakes education to change the economic structure and promote a sustainable development model different from the pure “economic growth” model in the rural development. The two educational institutions are quite different in their missions, program structures, curriculum design, administrative structures, etc. Their differences exemplify the diversity of social reform ideas and practices in contemporary Chinese society.

Despite their apparent differences, both are the results of the government’s initiatives of encouraging multiple forms of property-ownership, and both take education as a way to change the society. Their establishment and development bear one common message, that is, *there is an emergence of public spaces that are not completely under the government’s control and there is a rise of non-state power in China*. Here we are not talking about dramatic changes such as the formation of oppositional party or new election system, but changes starting from people having gained an awareness of the value of participating in public affairs and having put their strong desire for social changes into actions. As new political and social actors, they shape the direction of the Chinese society together with the state-government and

market actors. The active and constructive participation of these social actors in facilitating institutional changes in the transitional period of China provides a promising prospect of civil society development in China. This final chapter will conclude previous discussions and give answers to my research question: *How has state-society relationship changed within the broad economic and social transformation in China? And what is the nature of civil society development in China?*

10.1 Contextual Changes Engendering Public Space

10.1.1 State power

One significant consequence of the central government's market reform is a form of social class stratification. From 1950s to late 1970s, the Communist Party of China (CPC) saw itself as the "party of the proletarians," and enforced the "proletarian dictatorship," the goal of which is to prevent other classes, mainly the "bourgeoisie," to usurp the power of the nation. However, with the ongoing economic reform, the representativeness of the party of the working class and the peasants is declining. The Party is absorbing members from the entrepreneur class who used to be viewed as the "bourgeois class." In addition, with the increasing number of unemployed workers and the increasing income gap between the "proletarian class" consisting of workers and peasants, and the "bourgeois class" consisting of entrepreneurs, managers, and intellectuals, the social status of workers and peasants are rapidly declining. Thus, the party is transforming itself from being a "Party of the proletarians" into a "Party of the people" inclusive of all social classes, and thereby it is losing its entitlement to a "proletarian" dictatorship over the society. To justify its

continual authority, it needs to focus on establishing an economic and social order that “the people” can accept. And the way to achieve this is to modify existing institutions or establish new institutions.

However, the state can still use the logic of economic development and the increase of national competitive power in the global environment to justify the Party-rule. In the middle of 1990s the theory of “neo-authoritarianism” got popular for this reason. The theory argues that the authoritarian rule by CPC is necessary for mediating and resolving the conflicts among diverse interests in the government system and in the society, and to guarantee the success of reform and the rapid growth of economic development. However, Kluver’s analysis shows that CPC no longer commands absolute authority over China’s population, and the massive economic and social changes have undermined the CPC’s dominance over the avenues of public discourse, such as media, economic organization, and public entertainment (Kluver, 1999, p. 21). Neither does CPC command the legitimate authority to control every social activity as it did in the planned economy era. This explains why we found that in both of our two cases government supervision of the organizations was not rigid, especially at their start-up stage. Since the Party no longer controls the salary and promotion of those in the non-governmental sector, its ability to direct them significantly deteriorates. This means people in these non-governmental organizations are less constrained by government agenda and have a degree of freedom to promote their ideas and influence public discourse.

10.1.2 Diffusion of Ideas

The founders of both education organizations got inspirations from the education practices in contemporary Chinese history. Private universities in the beginning of the 20th century focused on practical education, and Peasant Education activists at that time focused on self-governance of rural society. These two new educational organizations are partly a continuance of that history. But they also absorbed new concepts and practices from other countries. In the first case, Xi'an Yuhua University takes on the "human capital" perspective and connects education with employment and economic needs. Its program design is clearly after the vocational education model of some countries that emphasized learning-by-doing. In the second case, Dingxian Institute of Peasant Education takes the "human awareness" perspective, and connects education with helping peasants to become aware of their own situations and their relationship with others. And the Institute also integrates the concept of "ecological economy" with Chinese farming traditions into its education program.

In the context of globalization, people running diverse the organizations are also confronted by diverse and sometimes antithetical ideas, models and practices, which they evaluate according to their vision of the need for social change. Specifically, the autonomy enjoyed by non-governmental organizations in other countries makes the non-governmental organizations in China believe that there should be a boundary between the society and the state in exerting their respective power. The laissez-faire government in Western countries makes the social actors believe that the state-government in China should change its role from being the "parent" of a family to

that of an “arbiter,” from the role of “surveillancer” to the role of being “supporters,” and from the sole authority to one of multiple power-holders. President Wang in the Yuhua private university thinks that the government should not simultaneously be both the supervisor of the education system and manager of specific operations of a private educational institution. President Fang deems it inappropriate for the government to be the coordinator /regulator of the market and an economic entity in the market at the same time.

10.1.3 Access to Public Resources

In the state planned economy before reform was launched, all property belonged to the state-government. People did not own property, nor the use right of property. Decisions and implementation related to public affairs management were concentrated in the state, and individuals and groups out of the official arena had no way to organize socio-economic activities and exert influence on the economic and social arena. Working for the state government was the only way to participate in the decision-making process for public affairs. The growing of a market oriented economy due to the reform of reform and opening China to the world causes a flow of resources out of the control of state-government, which makes it possible for: 1) the construction of public space where people can socialize and work together on their common interests; 2) survival of people and organizations independently of state support; and 3) participation of the society in public affairs and the exertion of influence on social issues as well as policy.

Both of our organizations have brought significant material and human resources from the society to bear on problems of education and development. This

signals the increasing influence of civil associations in resource mobilization and redistribution. *The access to resources is one condition for the operation of non-government organizations, enabling its independence from the government.* Land is the key resource in these two cases. Access to land enables the organizations to construct a space where people can be organized and educational activities can be conducted. *Human resource is another key resource in both cases.* Xi'an, as a provincial capital with many research institutions, provided private universities with part-time teachers they need. Dingxian, due to its proximity to Beijing and its own history, attracts scholars and university students to work or teach in the Dingxian Institute of Peasant Education.

10.1.4 Leadership of Intellectuals

In scholars' discussions of social transformation in China today, there is a prevalent expectation, that the economic reform will catalyze the emergence of a middle class in China, which will in turn lead to the development of a democratic culture. This assumes that in a nation that is undergoing industrialization and that adopts a market-driven economy, the main body in the economic system is the middle class. In China, the development of private enterprises and the expansion of white-collar groups during the economic reform era seemed to predict the emergence of such a social class.

Change in the configuration of resources provides the condition for the gestation of a new social structure. The rare resources monopolized by the state not only included physical resources, but also included space where people are engaged in self-organized social activities. One consequence of 20 years of reform is the free

flow of resources and the emergence of public space autonomous from state control, access to which nurtured the development of new social groups: an enterpriser group and “white collar” employees who worked in technology-intensive industry. From the 1980s, these groups have rapidly expanded, with the enterpriser group consisting of previous government officials, university teachers, previous administrators of state-owned enterprises, discharged military officers, a small number of workers and peasants, and “white collar” employees consisting of university graduates. The emergence of these social groups means not only new forms of economic planning and production, but also new actors who can exert influence in the socioeconomic field. In other words, the Chinese society has seen a fundamental change in terms of who organize economic and social lives.

However, do these new actors form the “middle class” in the Western sense? The majority of the new private enterprise managers, especially those at the top of this group, come from the power center: they are either previous government officials, or are those having close familial or social ties to high-status government officials. They are familiar with the power structure and the culture of the power circle and their entering into the economic elite status come from their utilization of this familiarity and network to get rare resources and advantageous policy for themselves. They are the beneficiaries of the existing power system. There is a certain level of tension between the state and these new economic elites, because the close relationship between this new economic elite and the power center is based on personal relationship. From the perspective of the state-government, the behavior of this group may disturb the normal economic order, which elicits strong dissatisfaction

from other members of the society. To further economic development, the state has to take measures and create a fairer competition environment, and the economic elites are worried about losing the advantages they have been enjoying. Thus, even if they may not be the firm defenders of the current regime, they are not thereby supporters of political reform towards more equal distribution of power. In addition, due to their primary interest in profit, they are impossible to become the legitimate moral leaders of the society to call for change of the political culture.

The “white collar” group, although claiming autonomy and ideological distance from the state authority, are depoliticized. As enterpriser managers or technicians, their professional knowledge and skills are the guarantee of their quality life. There is no evidence that they have sufficient cohesiveness to form an independent class and to impact the government policy.

Sweeping generalization from these two social groups is not warranted; however, findings about them echoed previous research findings of the increasing influence of intellectual group on society (Bonnin & Chevrier, 1991; Gu 2000). The intellectuals have always enjoyed special social status in Chinese history as the carrier of the Chinese culture and assistants to the ruler of the country. As Cheek (1994) states, “the close relationship between members of the educated elite and the state has been a constant feature of Chinese history” (p. 184). Despite dynastic suppression, the continued existence of such scholar-officials enabled continuity of social structures and political ideologies across dynasties. But even though they served the state, Confucian intellectuals regarded it their responsibility to think and speak for the

people. Intellectuals have been defined by their inclination to speak truth to power and thus seek to humanize the power.

In the 1900s the role of intellectuals saw a dramatic shift. This change has two reasons: Their contact with the Western political system and culture inspired them to question the relationship between the ruler and the people; second, in the past, serving the state is the only way that intellectuals can apply their ability and wisdom to achieve their political aspiration. But in the 1900s intellectuals found multiple ways to contribute to national development. Between 1949 and 1976, however, intellectuals were seen as the potential allies of the bourgeoisies and the status of intellectuals descended to an unprecedented low level. But since 1976 the status of intellectuals rose gradually and they now enjoy influence on the society in multiple fields and through diverse channels.

In the two cases described in this dissertation, the president of the Yuhua private university made innovations in the university's program design, administrative structure, and student management, and influenced education policy through his social reputation and later his position in the political system; the founder of the Dingxian Institute of Peasant Education, although an established intellectual, adopts a different definition of "development" and practiced the alternative development model in the society. *Unlike their intellectual peers who express their opinions mainly through academic work and within the academic circle, these two founders reflected on their roles in the development of the country and within available public space took social actions that exhibit pioneering characteristics.* As the old ideological constraints break down and technology opens up avenues for the

dissemination of information, intellectuals are more prone to be influenced by Western conceptions of liberty, social discourse, and economic organization. However, Chinese intellectuals have demonstrated an ability to avoid slavish obedience to Western ideologies in the attempt to create a Chinese philosophical and cultural framework. In these two cases, these founders are influenced both by Western ideas and practices and by their own experiences with and understanding of the Chinese reality. They emphasize autonomy but also recognize that the state-government in China has great power and thus civil associations need to cooperate with the state-government in reforming the system. In their effort to promote new education and development ideas, they are considering how these ideas fit China's situation and help the national development.

Cheek (1992) uses the phrase "from priests to professionals" to describe the role change of the intellectual group in China. He states, "Although many still serve or hope to serve the current government, a significant group has been disestablished, forcibly alienated from the regime by its leaders, and has thus moved closer to professional autonomy." Gu (2000) describes the four intellectual groups and their relatively independent status in thinking and acting. Most of the intellectuals, whether on the left or the right of the political spectrum, and whether inside or outside the establishment, called for a variety of political and economic changes to alleviate the grievances induced by the economic reforms, or at least to channel the growing protest into less disruptive responses. The intellectual discourse in the 1990s was the most pluralistic it had been since 1949, less directed by the top political leadership and more diverse in challenging the party's policies (elite-based discourse). The

existence and expansion of public space provides conditions for such pluralism. Intellectuals either enter the political system to directly influence policy, or establish new practice standards in the society.

In our two cases, the intellectuals brought their concern toward the society and their vision of a new social order into their actions. *And in the process of taking action, they seek the alliance with other groups in the society. Having power of language, they have much more opportunities to express their voice either to the authority or to the common people.* Intellectuals help to bring things and events to the public, invoking rounds of public debate.

However, Cheek (1992) also reminds us that “Losing one’s position in the state bureaucracy does not make one instantly an independent professional.” Indeed, the tragedy of mainland China’s intellectual is, as David Kelly notes, is that they “refrain, as a stratum, an artifact of the system they oppose.” Compared to their Western counterpart, we found from the two cases that intellectuals are not so critical of the government’s policy. Compared to the intellectuals during the 1980s, the intellectuals after the 1990s showed a “soft” side. They acknowledge that the state are doing its thing and making the right move, and they are hoping that their practice will provide real-world experience to the state-government for policy-making or for institutional change. *Both founder-intellectuals in our case studies are collaborating with the government for the transition to a better society.*

How shall we evaluate this soft side? On one hand, the collaborating attitude helps establish channels of communication between the intellectuals and the state, justify the action of the intellectuals, and institutionalize the intellectuals’ practices

into policies and political economic structures. The intellectuals tried to establish a relationship with the state-government that would have permitted them to promote their blueprints for reforms. On the other hand, this soft attitude discounted their claim to hand power back to the people. In the case of the Dingxian Institute of Peasant Education, the staff emphasized the economic benefit of the peasant cooperative. But actually the form of peasant economic cooperatives carries a political meaning. Without the understanding of the rules of the power game in China, peasants got confused when they met obstacles from both the government and the market. And members tend to blame the leaders for the failure of operation. The founder and the staff in the Institute, however, transformed a political issue into a technological issue and thus failed to provide the peasants the ideological tool to further their collective action and stand firmly for their political economic interests.

The rural grassroots people are invisible and silent in China. They lack appropriate channels to let their voice be heard. Without the grassroots people rising up and speaking for themselves, the discourse in China is elite-based, which at least it is no longer state-dominated. Intellectuals are playing and will play an important role in shaping this discourse. Kluver (1999) believes that “as the influence of the Communist Party continues to wane, and is likely to continue to do so in the midst of the massive economic and cultural changes, China’s intellectual class is likely to play a key role in the formation of a new perspective,” and “although intellectuals as a class in China have, at least since the founding of the PRC, been limited in their abilities to contribute to a vibrant public discourse, they will in the future be a vital, energizing force to China’s emerging society”

10.2 State-Society Tension

Tensions between the state government and the social organizations in both cases emerge from the entrance of new actors in the existing political, economic and cultural system. The existing system is not a widely open system that has a lot of flexibility to accommodate new actors. It is a highly hierarchical, bureaucratic and closed system in which actors and form of networks are fixed. Although on paper the state-government encourages the entry of new actors into the economic and social system, it is selective about the actors it welcomes. It is receptive of those who have close relationship with the political elites. Such a system tends to be resistant to new actors who are not connected to the political circle, seeing them as outsiders and discouraging their entrance. The exclusion is more evidently observed in our first case, when there were few non-government educational organizations. The government not only regulated public universities, it also owned and managed them. Public universities are part of the government system. When private universities are established, they are seen as strangers who break into the system. It is like the emerging bourgeois class who wanted to enter the aristocrat class in the 17th century Europe. The difficulty that private universities met in registration and obtaining the use right of the land during its initial stage is part of the process that the government adapted itself to accommodate new actors. In our second case, the registration of the Institute and land use got approved without much resistance because by the year 2000, the number of non-government education organizations has increased dramatically and the government has been much more receptive to such organizations.

Although it is the state which gives the permission to the social actors, the state-society tension in the development stage of non-government education organizations reflects the lack of trust of the government toward such organizations. In our first case, the government did not have trust toward the founders of private universities on their motivation of establishing education organizations and their capacity for maintaining and improving education quality. The door was closed for the majority of private universities to gain the status of bachelor-degree issuing institutions. In our second case, the government not only lacks trust toward the Institute of Peasant Education, but also senses threat in the educational activities of the Institute for peasants. Consequently it failed in the annual review of the municipal Bureau of Education.

The entrance of new actors in the existing power system also led to tension over the boundary of power. China since 1949 used to have a strong state and a weak society, and the state had power over nearly all activities in the society and the society had no say in government policy. However, in the new economic context and situation the civil associations want to claim their autonomy as well as take part in the arena of public policy. Attempts by non-governmental educational organizations to expand the scope of their influence, and the attempts by the government to protect their ability to keep things under control apparently are not compatible under many situations. In our first case, the private university struggled for more decision-making power over student recruitment and diploma issuing, which had been an arena of state planning for decades. In our second case, the Institute of Peasant Education aimed at influencing the organizational structure of rural society and ways of economic

production through education, which also used to be an arena under government direction. When the educational organizations seem to get out of government control and gain autonomous status, the government used its regulative power to keep the institutes on the track they wanted. In our first case, when private universities were in expansion and showed their ambition of competing with public universities, the government used its power of approving new educational programs to limit the role of private universities in higher vocational training; and in the second case when the institute of adult education was expanding, the local government used its accreditation power to prevent it from carrying on activities that is not focused on agriculture technology.

From the two cases, we could see that the local government has a strong regulative power. Since the 1980s, the central government decided to devolve some fiscal power and regulative power to the local government. This decentralization and deregulation has two aims: first, to mobilize additional resources for public service; second, to promote efficiency by giving decision-making powers to those closer to the service receivers that are more familiar with their needs and have a better understanding of the local setting. Thus the attitude of local government has an impact on the development of non-governmental organizations. The two municipal governments showed similar attitude at the beginning stage, although the university took longer time to get registered. They both took a neglecting attitude toward the organizations once the organizations got approved to carry on education activities. But we found in the development stage the two local governments took different attitudes. Both governments subscribed to the development ideology. The Xi'an

municipal government took a supportive attitude toward the University after they saw the impact of the University on local development. Although the University's market-oriented curriculum design has not been applied in public universities before and is a new idea to the education system, the local government see the curriculum as fitting the marketization trend in China. With the deepening of market reform in China, this education model gets more popular and met the need of economic development. Consequently the model was recognized and even encouraged and supported by the government.

In the second case, the DingZhou municipal government expected the Institute of Peasant Education to be engaged in education activities that advance agriculture technology and skills and promote agricultural production, but disallowed it to pass the annual review when it clearly went in a different direction, because the government has no other way to control its educational programs. It is more difficult for the Institute of Peasant Education to be incorporated into the local administrative system since the Institute does not need to get government approval to issue formal academic certificates or diploma. The Institute tried to convince the government that in the long run the peasant cooperative will benefit rural development, however, for the local government the threat of possible social unrest once peasants are organized is a greater concern for government officials. Compared to the central government, the local government officials directly face complicated social conflict, and are thus more sensitive to the change of local power relation, which is typically regarded as a threat to their political career.

10.3 Strategies in Dealing with State-Society Tension

There are differences in the attitude and strategies of different intellectual groups who want to achieve social change. In 1980s, confronted with the multitude of problems of socialist experiment in China, people experienced cultural and psychological shock, and intellectuals lacked theoretical and practical instruments for reconstruction of the society. They lamented the loss of aesthetical, humanitarian, and moral values of the Communist leadership. They called for the moral rightness of the Party leaders and the universal and abstract value of “freedom,” “democracy,” and “human rights.” In late 1970s and 1980s, these words appeared in the Big Letter Wall Posters and underground literature²⁸. The criticism reached a climax in the late 1980s and, when combined with public reaction to corruption, led to the Tiananmen Square Incident of 1989. However, the intellectuals failed to propose concrete frameworks for the enforcement of these universal values.

Revisionist Intellectuals in the 1990s were politically and strategically more practical. They seldom targeted their criticism directly at the Party or individual political leaders. They recognized that for a considerably long period of time, the status of the Communist Party would be unshakable. At this time, the risk for challenging the Party ideology had reduced. However, intellectuals would risk their autonomy and their political prospect by direct political confrontation, which would constraint their further plan for social change. Revisionist intellectuals thus placed

²⁸ In November 1978, a spate of wall posters appeared in Beijing, spreading from the Xidan Wall (later called the Democracy Wall) to Wang Fujing Street and the TianAnMen Square. The posters were written in big letters, criticizing Mao and other leaders, or complaining about arbitrary political persecution and miscarriages of justice, or calling for democratic reform. In 1978 and 1979, democratic activists organized into groups and started to publish poorly printed, underground journals, to call for human rights, democratic reforms, and the necessity of learning from other countries.

more emphasis on the role of institution building in reconstructing a social order imbued with fairness and justice. Institutional reform may include the introduction of new organizational structures for good governance, the change of operation procedures to reduce opportunity to conceal corruption, establishment of inter-organizational networks, as well as more fundamental reforms seeking to change the attitudes and beliefs of those who work in an institution. They may take the high road or grassroots road, but in either way they did not see the government as a target of attack.

10.3.1 Pragmatic Problem-Solving Attitude

The founder/intellectuals take a problem solving attitude. They do not just pinpoint the problems and accuse the government for not taking the responsibility of tackling the problems. In these two cases, the actors are not satisfied with merely voicing complaints. They come out with ideas to address the problems and are trying to put their ideas into the practice and see how they work. They recognized that social problems are complicated, and problem-solving needs not only slogans, but a combination of ideas, resources, and innovative institutions. This attitude was welcomed by the government, since the reformist government facing these social problems also is exploring possible solutions to advance economic growth while simultaneously keeping a well-functioning society and letting people live in contentment so as to maintain its legitimacy of rule. For the social actors, adopting a pragmatic problem-solving attitude also implies that they choose not to be just onlookers pressing the government to do a good job. They are active participants in

public affairs. And it is the active participation of the social members in public affairs that truly keep the government sticking to its responsibilities.

10.3.2 Trust-Building

In order to mobilize social members to engage in institutional building efforts, the civil associations in our two cases made efforts to gain the trust of the state-government. In these two cases, the civil associations do not exclude the state-government from the process of civil society construction, but include it as an important actor with whom they need to collaborate on the reconstruction of social order. The state-government possesses most of the financial and intellectual resources and administrative capacity for enforcing or holding back reform initiatives. Thus civil associations tried to win the trust of the government in order that their practice can continue and their influence can spread. In these two cases, both organizations emphasize the primacy of achieving cooperative and peaceful solutions that are grounded in communication, coordination, and collaboration to find points of agreement and common ground. They established communication channel with the government to transfer their opinions, efforts, strategies, outcomes of practices, and suggestions. Their way of persuasion is in agreement with the official discourse in order to convince the government that they share the same goals with it.

Different with the theoretical model of the civil society in the West, the cases studied in this paper do not show a state-society dichotomy and “zero-sum” game between the state and the society. The ways that the state and social groups serve the public interests are not very far from each other. It is the state government that realizes the continuation of dictatorial rule would not promote development and thus

take initiative to enable the emergence of a non-state sector, and the non-state sector also realizes a confrontational attitude may not help to get things done in current political economic system. To achieve the systematic social change, they decided that can not work alone but need to involve the state government. In China, the transition to a democratic future would be a project conducted collaboratively by the state government and the civil society groups.

10.3.3 Self-Strengthening of Civil Associations

In China, there are problems with the current legal system: (i) a lack of laws to protect civil rights, (ii) a disregard for due process, and (iii) the lack of judicial independence—judges are appointed by the state and the judiciary system is without its own budget, making it difficult to curb the government's power and leading to corruption and abuse of administrative power. The consequence is that those who have political power enjoy their rights, and the rights of those who are disconnected from the political power centers are not guaranteed. While the government acknowledges the need for reform, it has yet to agree upon a method to resolve these problems. Reform means institutional change and the sharing of power with other entities, which would touch many government officials' sore spots. The institutional reform would meet a lot of resistance from inside the government.

One role of non-governmental organizations here is to set up new institutions, in the first case, the third-party accreditation agency that is in gestation, and in the second case, peasant cooperatives as well as the consumer-producer cooperatives. Non-governmental organizations rely on networking strategies to achieve incremental and widespread changes at many levels and locales, and foster social learning about

the importance of certain issues and enable multiple parties to identify common grounds. Non-governmental organizations realize that by reaching out to other social groups they can initiate innovations in institutional building and the government would gradually adapt to the existence of new institutions and finally recognize their legitimate status. The government is under pressure to implement institutional reform, and it has certain openness to new ideas. Under the prerequisite that its authority is not directly challenged, the government has maintained certain tolerance toward innovations in institutions, if they help advance economic development success and social stability. From this light, the government is seeking a peaceful transition to a new social order.

A strong state and a strong civil society are capable of reinforcing each other and providing better prospects for development than if either or both are weak. The state had decided to strengthen the part played by the society, and social forces get strong to assert themselves and create systems of self-help. When the civil society gets stronger, it creates a sphere of public opinions that cannot be ignored by the government. While a strong civil society provides a base of legitimacy of new practices and new institutions, civil associations are not trying to replace the state—they need the state for provision of certain services, financial and legal support, and institutionalization of new practices. The non-governmental sector is often offered as an alternative to state welfare policies, but it is not up to the task. Civil society associations alone cannot accomplish the task of serving the public. While civil society is valued as a sphere distinct from government, in actual practice, it must develop organizational ties to the state. There is tension between values and

institutions that must be overcome if civil society associations are to provide solutions to contemporary problems.

10.4 The nature of civil society development in China

For the economic and social changes in China, the Left and Right in the West have different explanations. The Right attributes the economic development in China to the market reform and privatization, and the Left regards that the economic development is due to the continual strong control of the state on the society which perpetuates and reinforces the advantage of socialism. In reality, however, China is neither a capitalist nor a socialist society. In the transition to the market economy, the state-government spun off many of its traditional social responsibilities to the market, such as the individual health, the redress of economic inequities, adult and continuing education, and the financial support of art production. But the party-state does not want its power to be restricted or challenged. Both before and after the reform, the participation of the common people in decision making is limited. The miracle of economic growth in China is related to the high mobilization capacity of the state-government to allocate resources and accumulate capital, the low “transaction cost” in the process of capitalizing resources, and the low resistance it encountered in the marketization process compared to its counterparts in Eastern Europe during their reform.

Thus it is misleading to attempt to understand the transition of China from either the “Left” or the “Right” Perspectives. The state-government neither promotes “freedom” as the “Right” expected, nor “welfare” as the “Left” anticipated. Both such “Left” and “Right” prospects may not be auspicious to China. Adopting the leftist

ideas, the government will reinforce its power but may not undertake its responsibility; adopting the rightist idea, the government will shirk its responsibility but not share its power with the society (Qin, 2006). Thus, without the participation of the social groups in the social/political change process, policy change will drive the government further away from delivering good service to its citizens and democratizing the state.

The party-state adopted market economy to advance the national economic development and accordingly to prove its capacity of continual rule of China. Nevertheless, the economic reform launched by the party also strengthened the capacity of social groups. What classic theorists of civil society did in the 17th and 18th century in western countries was to deconstruct the fixed and hierarchical relationship in feudal regime. And in China, the marketization process combined with the global diffusion of ideas is conducting the similar function: to deconstruct the hierarchical relationship existing in the central planned economy period. Scholarly discussion in China insists that the difference in interests between the state and society rather than the unity of interests provided a basic motivation for democracy. This awakening of individual interest is facilitated by the marketization process. People are claiming self-determination, resenting excessive centralization of the government.

Classic theorists of civil society in the 17th and 18th century in the West did not only deconstruct the old social order, but also attempted to reconstruct a social order. They constructed alternative sets of values to be followed by people, and alternative institutional settings in which people interact with each other. The goal is to channel

private interest into public interest in a way that serves justice. What classic theorists did not mention is that this reconstruction process needs more contemplation and organization than what the marketization can simply achieve. In a country that the resources are greatly controlled by the elites and the rules are mainly established and enforced by the powerful, the market is far from serving individual interest equally and fairly. The Marxist scholar in China referred to Marx's notion of communism as "communities of free people" as justification of their claim of the return of power to the society and a free contractual relationship between the government and the people. However, they neglected the fact that the state-government could hardly take this road by itself, since resistance would come first from those inside the Party who benefit from the monopoly of power. Thus, the "first sector"-the government, and the "second sector"- the market, could impossibly accomplish the task of reconstruction of social order embedded with equality and justice by themselves. The transition from a hierarchical society to civil society requires struggling of the powerless with the powerful to subvert the pattern of dominance and subservience. Echoing Marxist theory, civil society is not an abstract existence; it is the result of history, of long-time struggling, negotiation and power wresting.

And this is what is going on in China: struggling between the civil groups and the state government for the reconstruction of a new social order. The western theories of civil society and domestic discussion of differentiation of interest and the transfer of power to the people are useful because they provide ethical foundation and theoretical weapon used by civil groups to justify their existence, their autonomy, and their pursuit for fairness and justice. Civil groups are undertaking the task of

transferring the theoretical weapon into effective strategies to interact with the state-government to push for social change. It is true that civil groups are weak, and there is no evidence to show real challenges to the party-state to make it resign from power. However, the participation of civil groups is the key for the state to get out of the stagnation of political reform, and to get away from the “Left-Right” binary. The future of Chinese civil society is closely connected to what social groups participate and how they participate in the process of social reform.

The strategies to push for social changes are different across countries, across historical time, and across civil groups: the non-violence revolution in India, the “Solidarity Movement” in Poland, and the advocacy role of many international civil society associations. Many of China’s social groups enter the field of public affair without carrying a clear political agenda. However, when they conducted their activities, they found out that the institutional environment is out of sync of social development needs. And accordingly their continual practice is associated with discovery and pursuit of various institutional alternatives to the Party rule. On the surface the participation of social groups did not change the political structure of China, or it even seems that they consolidated the legitimacy of current regime. But, gradually the social groups’ practice is putting the authoritarian control of the party-state at risk.

The nature of civil society development in China in current stage can be summarized as “incremental adaptations”. From all signs it can be said that the system is most likely to be transformed through reform of the Communist Party rather than a replacement of it. However, the progress that civil society associations have

made in institutional building conveys such a message: each independent initiative by citizens, each example of self-organization by people acting outside of party control, challenges the monopoly of the state and thereby challenges the basis upon which it exercises power. A real, day-to-day community of free people will accumulate resistance to the party's propensity to control every corner of social life. The associational, ideological, and cognitive dimension of civil society groups summarized below demonstrates that we would not expect a dramatic political change in the near future, nor would we see collapse of the regime because of the opposition from the society, nor would we conclude that China is getting trapped in a 'partial reform' as Pei posited in his book *China's Trapped Transition* (2006). The civil society associations constructed a space where the awakening individual interest and dissatisfaction toward the monopoly of power by the Party-state are channeled into constructive force of institutional innovation.

10.4.1 The Associational Dynamics of the Emerging Civil Society

In some ways the transition of society in China in the 1990s did not look as dynamic as in the 1980s. There were no big-scale long-lasting protests or social movements, no loud slogans or eye-catching statements, but just a self-organizing space cautiously expanding its territory. The intellectual groups established new organizations and cooperated with other groups to make an impact. Although the Party-rule would not be challenged for now, the rise of new social forces would inevitably have social and political implications. The rise of new social forces has shifted the overall balance of the power structure, and led some social actors to speak publicly in the society or in the political circle. Through their economic and social

ventures the social actors and groups were involved in the overall process of social change.

However, despite efforts to cooperate with each other, the connection between different groups is quite loose. Civil associations seldom initiate collective actions for certain goals, and even avoid joint appeals for policy change. Different social groups share resources, experiences and tools, and communicate with each other in their visions for social change as well as in the activities they are conducting. However, they do not want to adopt a threatening attitude to the government by explicitly joining each other in proposing reform. Even though they have similar proposals, they prefer making recommendations separately. This definitely weakens their influence or even makes their initiatives invisible to the general public.

Chinese society is still an elite-based society. The intellectual group is the group that has the capacity to compete with the state-government in cultural building and institutional innovations, and they are not the marginalized group in the political and social system. Hence, they may be co-opted by the government or make compromises with the government and give up their stance of defending for the rights of those who are in a disadvantaged position. On the path toward a true civil society, those who are deprived of benefits need to associate themselves to defend their interests. In the second case about the Institute of Peasant Education, peasants associated among themselves under the facilitation of intellectuals. And the associations have impacts on peasants' economic and cultural life. Although we observed conflict within the peasant associations, it is a natural phenomenon in the transition to a democratic society. There is a learning process in which people figure out a way to get along with

each other, and co-work on the institutional forms and procedures that guarantee fairness and justice. It will take some time for a new form of organization that does not rely on political authority but on its promise of fairness and democracy for its operation to develop its capacity and gain the trust of people.

There isn't a wide coalition among peasants like the Movement for Landless Peasants in Brazil, or among the intellectuals like the "Green Party" in Germany, or among different social groups like the Solidarity Movement in Poland. These non-governmental associations are small and do not have close ties among each other. Thus, the social forces are growing but the society in general is still weak compared to the capacity of the state government.

10.4.2 The "Apolitical" Politics of the Emerging Civil Society

The emerging "civil society" in China and other countries finds itself in a dilemma: in the transition to a democratic society civil organizations should be prepared to challenge the right of the authoritarian state to rule, while for civil organizations to thrive it must be nurtured and sustained by a tolerant political environment.

When researchers discuss the state-society relation, they often refer to the distinct "Asian culture," e.g., the emphasis on respect of authority and hierarchy, to explain the lack of straightforward resistance to the state and the choice of acquiescence towards irrational or suppressive state actions. And they conclude that civil society organizations in China lack the ability to maintain an effective challenge to the authoritarian state.

However, we need to think over the complication of the role of “Asian values” in the formation of civil society. The choice of taking action is not only dependent on the traditional ethical values, but also heavily on the formal institutions that determine the consequence of taking actions. When people need to pay a high cost for resistance, such as their jobs or even their lives, people would be very prudent in deciding whether to act against the irrational state actions. But in a time when the status and reward of a person or institution is less reliant on the state recognition, respect toward the state authority may diminish. In these two cases, the educational organizations independently practiced their educational ideas and even challenged the government power in a certain way. The private university defied the government’s warning of not constructing buildings on the land, and later proposed the establishment of a third-party accreditation agency to replace the government accreditation office. The Institute of Peasant Education defied the government decision of discontinuing its education activity, and later support the peasant cooperative’s application for project grant against the will of the local government.

But both organizations do not form a political challenge to the government. What is especially noticeable in the transformation of China’s political structure is the position of intellectuals in this structure. Since usually intellectuals are bearers and transmitter of norms and values, their relationship with the state and social groups are closely connected to the pace and direction of civil society development. In the Solidarity Movement in Poland in 1980s, intellectuals have played significant roles in mobilizing people for social solidarity and social justice (Cohen, 1992). But in China traditionally intellectuals have a close relationship with the state and enthusiastically

served for the state interest. Kelly and He (1992) correctly point out that “it was the Confucian scholar-officials who traditionally articulated and disseminated the values which secured broad and lasting legitimacy for the imperial state. It was the Confucian intellectuals who functioned to hold the society together, and who believed in unity” (p. 33).

The creation of alternative political ideologies met not only with strong resistance within the Party but also with caution coming from the enduring traditions in the intellectuals' own political culture and political vision. Since the autonomy claimed by the social groups was only accepted by the regime as long as it did not mix with politics, the new autonomy was far from political freedom under the communist rule per se. This prevented the crystallization of any clear-cut conversion of the accepted social autonomy into a controversial and conflictual political autonomy. And the intellectuals themselves want to keep the deal with the state, that is, intellectual groups can enjoy their new autonomy as long as they do not challenge the legitimacy of the Party-rule. Thus many scholars call the current society as semi-civil society or pro-civil society (He, 1993; Zhu, 2004).

From a positive perspective, Chinese intellectuals tried to find a peaceful way to solve tension and conflict. This attitude helps to ease the possible conflictual relationship between the defensive state and the emergent social power, safeguarding the survival of the latter, as well as creating an environment for constructive negotiation between them. It gives time for the social institutions to develop into a mature stage and have more influences on the society. Timothy Cheek (1992) optimistically convince readers that intellectuals in China are moving from the

“priestly” deal of the early People’s Republic of China to a “professional” contract in China’s polity, but he reminds that the going will be painfully slow, much slower than what happened in Poland (pp. 199-200).

10.4.3 The Cognitive Prerequisite of Civil Society

In a system that supports slavery, slaves were attached to their owners and what they did served for the interests of the slave owners. In an imperialist regime, people were attached to the king and aristocrats, and what they did served the interest of the king or the nobles. The self-interest of the common people was subdued, which excludes them from the social connections for fulfilling mutual interests. In those circumstances, people’s identity was closely related to their relationship with people they were attached to, and voluntary collaboration based on shared identity and common understanding toward a certain public cause could hardly happen.

In the planned economy of socialist China, the “collective interest” was emphasized to the extreme so that whenever there was a conflict between individual interest and collective interest, individuals needed to sacrifice theirs. However, the collective interest was not specified by the people in the society themselves, but by the authority. And the collective interest was often used as an excuse to suppress the resistance of individuals or social groups to unfair treatment.

In the mainstream culture, obedience to the will of the ruler and the superiors was expected, which means hierarchy and inequality was taken for granted. People in advantageous position hardly held sympathy toward those in disadvantageous positions. Even people in the subordinate classes believed that they were destined to

serve the interests of others. And they could hardly take initiatives to change the rules of the society and to improve their lives.

Only when people realize that their self-interests are as equally valuable as that of others, and therefore deserve the same level of attention and respect, they would stand up and actively cooperate with others in social activities that satisfy their own interests as well as others. And they would collectively figure out what the “collective interests” are and how to achieve that. The awareness of self-interest is the prerequisite for cutting off attachment to others and establishing connections that are reciprocal. Only then civil society imbedded with the civic value of equality and participative decision-making would be possible.

It is assumed by mainstream economists that when people pursue their self-interest, they are non-cooperative and their behavior is narrowly self-serving. However, this is a misunderstanding of human nature. To achieve certain goals, people would consider the opinions of others toward them. The pursuit of self interest may well be compromised by considerations of the interests of others. In our first case, Wang connected his personal aspiration for social recognition with his action of serving the broader society. In our second case, peasants wanted to improve their lives and they invested in establishing the school for the benefit of the whole village.

How to coordinate the self-interest and public interest has been one of the themes in classic civil society theory. There are many factors involved: friendship and trust, moral obligations, and rationality. Through these mechanisms, members of a community accept certain rules of conduct as part of obligatory behavior toward others in the community, and form the sense of identity. After a person obtains the

sense of identity, it is the person's identity that motivates, limits, and directs his / her behavior. For the intellectual groups in the two cases, the identity of "intellectual" make them feel morally obliged to do something for the society. The internal conflict in the peasant cooperative implies that peasants had become aware of defending their self interest, but they had not figured out a way to coordinate their self-interests and integrate them into public interests. Lack of mutual trust is one reason for this situation. The lack of financial transparency and absence of effective decision-making procedures that prevent financial embezzlement and abuse of power is another reason. Institutional building is necessary in aggregating self-interests into public interests, where everyone's interest is equally valued. The failure of seeing the connection between the individual's interest and the group's interest is the third reason for the rise of this conflict.

Transformation comes only through one's awareness of the social, political and economic relations in and out of which one's existence is negotiated, and through one's taking action to challenge those structures and relations of exploiting and being exploited (Freire, 1970, p.33). The intellectual groups in our two cases have knowledge of principles and practices that advances a social order with more justice and fairness and have the cognitive capacity to apply it to public affairs. In our second case, intellectuals also want to cultivate core principles and practices of democracy among peasants in order to develop and maintain an active community of self-governing citizens. Randy Kluver (1999) argues that the civic discourse in China is elite-based, due to the culture "in which most ordinary citizens see social, political, and cultural questions as far from their concerns or abilities." Common people are

used to the thought that institutional change is the affairs of politicians or social elites. In our second case, when there was conflict in the peasant cooperative in Zhaicheng, the peasants did not actively work on institutional change to solve the conflict. Unless the common people have the consciousness of the separation of state-society interests and voiced their interests and take actions to defend for their interests, instead of relying on intellectuals to speak for them, a truly independent and constructive discourse cannot occur between the society and the state. The formation of civil society needs the collective efforts across social groups and social classes.

In conclusion, the society is still divided and dispersed and cannot become a real rival to the strong party-state. And sometimes the pursuit of economic benefit seems to distract people from the pursuit of democracy. But it is not evidence that China is stalled in its way toward the growth civil society. An array of actors, acting from modernization or post-modernization perspective, press for official action on issues such as the environment, the peasant poverty, the legal procedures, posing challenges for various levels of the party and the government.

The institutional analysis in this dissertation suggests great environmental impacts on the behavior of civil society associations, as the theory historical institutionalism predicts. The less coercive political atmosphere and loosened government control in daily economic and social activities encouraged far more participation of social groups in public affairs, and allowed civil society associations to take bold steps to expand their influence by reinforcing the cooperation of social groups as well as to advocate the deeper level of self-organization of the society in replacement of state control and planning. In this dissertation, it is also observed that

the cultural context has an impact on the behavior of the civil society groups. Influenced by traditional culture that respects harmony, the two educational organizations in this dissertation display surprisingly convergence in seeking for peaceful ways to solve the tension between the society and the state, instead of direct confrontation. But they also display divergence in the thinking of education and the way of social change due to the exposure to the diverse educational ideas in the global society.

The institutional analysis in the dissertation also suggests that civil society associations do not behave in a passive way to institutional rules. They also actively work to produce cumulative impact on the institutional building process. Both organizations have a set of strategies for influencing institutional building. The private university produced academic research work to influence the thinking of higher education, and the institute of peasant education organized seminars and forums to spread the ideas of peasant cooperatives and ecological economy. Both organizations worked on establishment of innovative voluntary organizations, in the first case, the third-party accreditation agency and in the second case, the alliance among agriculture producers and the consumer-producer cooperatives. The founders of both organizations played a role in advocating the policy-making. They realize that only through collaborative efforts with the government they are able to make constructive process in institutional building. The associations are not only the result of the history; they are also in the history and produce the history.

Certainly we observed the distance between the reality in China today and the ideal democratic country. The concepts of democracy and equal rights have not

widely adopted by members in the society; the state power is not effectively curbed; there is no direct election system for people to vote for and select their governors; the market is connected with political power; and civil associations is far from being strong enough to produce nationwide influence and directly impact policy. We not possibly observed dramatic political change in the near future. However we do see progress on the path toward civil society. People are gradually embracing (i) the value of self-determination, that is, people have the right to determine the rules governing their living environment; (ii) equity, that is, people should be treated fairly in the access to public resources and equal treatment in the laws; and (iii) collaboration, which based on voluntary consent rather than imposed command. While people are expecting the government to do a better job, the government, under social pressure, did enact laws to serve the interests of the public. Civil groups are working on reforming the market to make it equally accessible to all people and to ensure that economic exchanges be conducted in a fair way. The number of civil associations has been quickly increasing. They work on multiple fields in defense of the public interests, leading to pluralism in practice, institution, and value.

For the transition from a semi civil society to a real civil society, there are some unpredictable factors: if more grassroots groups are to be included in the discourse between the society and the state for social change; if the state government concede more power to the civil society groups or take more rigid steps toward them; if civil society groups associate themselves more closely, and the plural interests are to be channeled into a collective agenda about the direction of change; and if there is alternative political ideology accepted by the social members about the wide

participation in policy making. Due to these unpredictable factors, we expect that the progress toward civil society may not be linear and would go back and forth. But due to the scale and influence of civil society associations, even though they are elite-based and comparatively weak compared to the force of the state government, we can optimistically predict that it has been difficult for China to go back to the dictatorial rule as in the past thousands of years.

10.5 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

This study points out several areas for further research. First, the study focused on interaction between the non-governmental associations and the state government, but paid less attention to interactions between the non-governmental associations and the participants. The dissertation illustrates that the non-governmental organizations have crafted a space where cultural value is produced, public discussion is held, and state-society collaboration is formed. However, the study does not proceed to examine how the participants reacted to the education ideas of the non-governmental associations and how they reconstructed their own identities in this process. It would be meaningful to examine the effectiveness of the educational programs in influencing the students' attitude and behavior.

Second, the study did not look into the policy-making process. Negotiations and bargaining used to be going on among a small number of people in the state (Tsang, 2000)²⁹. Now more people are involved in the policy-making process. Due to the difficulty of access to policy-makers and the sensitivity of the issue of policy-making, the discussion of policy-making process is a blank field in academic research.

The examination of this issue will help reveal the real influence of non-governmental groups in policy. The researcher hopes to fill the blank with more social connections in the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Apple, M. (1999). Rhetorical Reforms: Markets, Standards, and Inequality. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 1(2).
- Bratton, M. (1989) The Politics of Government-NGO Relations in Africa. *World Development and Change*, 17 (4). 569-587.
- Buck, Pearl (1945, Reprinted in 1984). *Tell the People: Talks with James Yen About the Mass Educational Movement*. Published by International Institute of Rural Reconstruction.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1986). The Forms of Capital. Trans. Richard Rice. In J. C. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Carnoy, M. (1998). National voucher plans in Chile and Sweden: Did privatization reforms make for better education? *Comparative Education Review*, 42(3): 309-337.
- Chamberlain, H. B. (1993). "On the Search for Civil Society in China." *Modern China*.
- Cheek, Timothy (1992). From Priests to Professionals: Intellectuals and the State Under the CCP. In J. N. Wasserstrom and E. J. Perry (Eds.) *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China*. Boulder: Westview Press. 124-45;
- Cheek, Timothy (1994). From Priests to Professional: Intellectuals and the State under the CCP. In Jeffrey Wasserstrom & Elizabeth Perry (Eds.) *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China: Lessons from 1989*. Boulder: Westview Press. 2nd ed: 184-205

- Cohen, J. L. and A. Arato (1992). *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge, MA & London: MIT Press.
- Cohen, J. and Joshua Rogers (1995). *Associations and Democracy*. London: Verso.
- Cohen, Robin and Shirin M Rai (2000). *Global Social Movements*. London: the athlone Press.
- Colás, Alejandro (2002). *International Civil society: Social Movements in World Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Culp, Robert J. (1994). Elite Association and Local Politics in Republican China: Educational Institutions in Jianshan and Lanqi Counties, Zhejiang, 1911-1937. *Modern China*, 20 (4), 446-477.
- Ding, Yijiang (2000). The Conceptual Evolution of Democracy in Intellectual Circles' Rethinking of State and Society. In S. S. Zhao (Ed.) *China and Democracy: Reconsidering the Prospects for a Democratic China*. New York: Routledge.
- Dittmer, L. and W. Hurst (2002). "Analysis in Limbo: Contemporary Chinese Politics amid the Maturation of Reform." *Issues & Studies* 38(4): 11-48.
- Edwards, M. and D. Hulme (1996). "Too Close For Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organizations." *World Development*, 24(6), 961-973.
- Edwards, M. (2004). *Civil Society*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Fairbank, John King & Goldman, Merle (1998). *China: A New History*. Belknap Press.
- Freire, Paulo (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum Publishing Co.

- Gold, T. B. (1990). The Resurgence of Civil Society in China. *Journal of Democracy*, 1 (1), 18-31.
- Gu, Edward X. (2000). Plural Institutionalism and the Emergence of Intellectual Public Spaces in China. In S. S. Zhao (Ed.) *China and Democracy: Reconsidering the Prospect for a Democratic China*. New York: Routledge.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1992). Further Reflections on the Public Sphere. In Craig Calhoun (Ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Translated by Thomas Burger. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hahn, Jeffrey W. (1995). Changes in Contemporary Russian Political Culture. In Vladimir Tismaneanu (Ed.) *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Hall (1986). *Governing the Economy*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Halperin, M. H., J. T. Siegle, et al. (2005). *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace*. New York, Routledge.
- Hamrin, Carol and Timothy Cheek (Eds.) (1986). *China's Establishment Intellectuals*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Harding, Harry (1993). The Evolution of American Scholarship on Contemporary China. In David Shambaugh (ed.). *American Studies of Contemporary China*. M. E. Sharpe.
- Harding, Harry (1997). "The Chinese State in Crisis, 1966-9," in Roderick MacFarquhar (Ed.) *the Politics of China: The Eras of Mao and Deng*. New York: Cambridge University Press: 242-4.

- He, Baogang. (1993) *The dual roles of semi-civil society in Chinese democracy*.
Brighton: University of Sussex Institute of Development Studies.
- Howell, J. (1996). The Struggle for Survival: Prospects for the Women's Federation in Post-Mao China. *World Development*, 24 (1), 129-143.
- Howell, J. and J. Pearce (2001). *Civil Society and Development: A Critical Exploration*. Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner.
- Huang, Philip (1993). 'Public Sphere' / 'Civil Society' in China? The Third Realm Between State and Society. *Modern China*, 19 (2). 216-240.
- Huang, Teng (2003). The Development Ideas of Private Higher Vocational Education. *Education and Vocation*. Vol. 13
- Ikenberry, G. J. (1988). Conclusion: An Institutional Approach to American Foreign Economic Policy. In G. J. Ikenberry, D. A. Lake and M. Mastanduno (Eds.). *The State and American Foreign Economic Policy*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- Immergut, E. M. (1992): The rule of the game. S. K. Steinmo and K. Thelen. (Eds.) *Structuring Politics: Historic Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Keane, J. (1988). *Democracy and civil society: On the predicaments of European socialism, the prospects for democracy, and the problem of controlling social and political power*. London: Verso.
- Kelly, David and Baogang He (1992). Emergent civil society and the intellectuals in China. In Robert F. Miller (Ed.). *The Developments of Civil Society in Communist Systems*. North Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

- Klees, S. (1999, April). Privatization and Neoliberalism: Ideology and Evidence in Rhetorical Reforms. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 1,(2).
- Kluver, Randy & Powers, John (1999). *Civic Discourse, Civil society, and Chinese Communities*. Stamford, CT: Ablex Publishing Corporation
- Liu Zhi-guang and Wang Su-li (1988). From “Mass society” to “Civil society”, *Xinhua Wenzhai*, 11 (119), 9.
- Lin, Jing (1993). *Education in Post-Mao China*. New York: Praeger.
- Lin, Jing (1999). *Social Transformation and Private Education in China*. New York: Praeger.
- Lin, Vincent (1963). *Adult Education in People's Republic of China, 1950-1958*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.
- Locke, John (1966). *The Second Treatise of Government* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Lofstedt, Jan-Ingvar (1990). *Human resources in Chinese Development: Needs and Supply of Competencies*. (IIEP Research Report No. 80). Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Ma, Shu-yun (1994). The Chinese Discourse on Civil Society. *The China Quarterly*, 137, 180-193
- Marx, Karl (1968). *Selected Essays* (H. J. Stenning. Trans.). Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press.
- Meadows,Donella; Meadows, Dennis; Randers, Jorgen; and Behrens, Williams (1972).*The Limits to Growth*. New York: Potomac Associates

- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass.
- Michnik, Adam (1985) *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Miles, Matthew (1983). Qualitative Data as an Attractive Nuisance. In Van Maanen, J (Ed.) *Qualitative Methodology*. Sage, 117-134.
- Mouffe, C. (Ed.). (1992). *Dimensions of radical democracy: Pluralism, citizenship, community*. London: Verso.
- Nathan, Andres J. (1990). *China's Crisis: Dilemma of Reform and Prospects for Democracy*. New York: Columbia University
- Nathan, Andrew J. (1993). Is Chinese Culture Distinctive? *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 52 (4), 923-936.
- Nathan, Andrew J. (1997). Maoist Institutions and Post-Mao Reform. In A. J. Nathan (Ed.) *China's Transition*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- National Bureau of Statistics of China (1982). *Statistic Communiqué of census in 1982*. China Statistics Press.
- National Bureau of Statistics of China (1983). *Statistic Communiqué of implementation of national economic and social development plan in 1982*. China Statistics Press.
- National Bureau of Statistics of China (2006). *China Statistical Yearbook 2006*. China Statistics Press.

- Nordtveit, Bjorn Harald (2004). *The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Developing Countries: A Case Study of Public-private Partnerships in Senegal*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of Maryland, College Park
- Ost, David (1990). *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press
- Ostergaard, C. S. (1989). Citizens, Groups and a Nascent Civil Society in China: Towards an Understanding of the 1989 Student Demonstrations. *China Information*, 4 (2), 28-41.
- Pearson, M. M. (1997). *China's new business elite [computer file]: the political consequences of economic reform*. Berkeley, CA, University of California Press.
- Perry, Elizabeth and Mark Selden (Eds.) (2001). *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Pusser, Brian (2003). Beyond Baldrige: Extending the Political Model of Higher Education Organization and Governance. *Educational Policy*, 7 (1), 121-140.
- Putnam, Robert (1994). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press.
- Rankin, M. B. (1993). "Some Observations on a Chinese Public Sphere." *Modern China* 19(2): 158-182.
- Qin Hui (2005). *Ten Debates of Tradition: the Institutions, Culture and their Reform of Local Society*. Shanghai, China: Fu Dan Press. p.368.
- Qin Hui (2006). *The Advantage and Crisis of China in Globalization*. Presented at the "Transition of China in Globalization", Columbia University, August 2006
 [online]: <http://www.china->

village.org/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=4658&newsnameID=22&newsname=%E7%A7%A6%E6%99%96.

Rowe, W. T. (1993). The Problem of “Civil Society” in Late Imperial China. *Modern China*, 19 (2), 139-157.

Saich, T. (2000). Negotiating the State: the Development of Social Organizations in China. *China Quarterly*, 161, 124-142.

Salamon, Lester M. and Helmut K. Anheier (1996). *The emerging non-profit sector: an overview*. Manchester, UK & New York: Manchester University Press.

Salamon, Lester M. and Helmut K. Anheier (1997). *Defining the non-profit sector: a cross-national analysis*. New York: Manchester University Press.

Salamon, Lester M. (1999). *Global civil society: dimensions of the nonprofit sector*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies.

Sautman, Barry (1992). Sirens of the Strongman: Neo-Authoritarianism in Recent Chinese Political Theory. *China Quarterly*, 129, 72-102.

Scott, W. R. (1995). *Institutions and Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications.

Seligman, A. B. (1992). *The Idea of Civil Society*. New York, The Free Press.

Shaanxi Educational Office (1984). *The Educational Statistical Yearbook of Shaanxi province*. China Statistics Press.

Shaanxi Educational Office (2000). *The Educational Statistical Yearbook of Shaanxi province*. China Statistics Press.

Shaanxi Educational Office (2005). *The Educational Statistical Yearbook of Shaanxi province*. China Statistics Press.

- Shaanxi Statistical Bureau 2005 (2005). *Shaanxi Statistical Yearbook 2005*. China Statistics Press.
- Shi, Tianjian. 1999. Mass Political Behavior in Beijing. In M. Goldman and R. MacFarquhar (Eds.) *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Skocopol, T. (1985). Bringing the state back: strategies and analysis in current research. *Bringing the state back*. P. B. Evans, D. Rueschmeyer and T. Skocopol. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 3-37.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Steinmo, S. K., K. Thelen, et al. (1992). *Structuring Politics: Historic Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Strand, D. (1990). Protest in Beijing: Civil society and Public Sphere in China. *Problems of Communism*, 39(3): 1-19.
- Strinati, Dominic (1995), *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*. London: Routledge,
- Sullivan, Lawrence (1990). In Michel Oksenberg, Lawrence R. Sullivan, Marc Lambert (Eds.) *Beijing spring, 1989: confrontation and conflict: the basic documents*. Armonk, NY:M.E. Sharpe.
- Tesch, R (1990). *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. Bristol, PA: Falmer.
- Tsang, M. (2000). Education and national development in China since 1949: Oscillating policies and enduring dilemmas. *China Review* 2000.

- Tocqueville, Alexis de (Trans. 2004). *Democracy in America*. Trans by Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Penguin Putnam.
- Wakeman, F. (1993). The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate. *Modern China*, 29 (2), 108-137.
- Weber, Max (trans. 1962). *Basic Concepts of Sociology*. Chapter VI, Section 1 [Online]
http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/method/basic/basic_concept_frame.html on November 28, 2006
- Weingast, Barry R. (1997). The Political Foundation of Democracy and the Rule of Law. *The American Political Science Review* 91 (2):245-263.
- Weir, M. (1992). Ideas and the politics of bounded innovation. In S. K. Steinmo and K. Thelen (Eds.). *Structuring Politics: Historic Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- Young, Nick (August 2001). *Civil Society in the Making: 250 NGOs*. *Chinese Development Brief*. Special Report.
- Zhao, S.S. (1993). Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour: Elite Politics in Post-Tiananmen China. *Asian Survey*, 33 (8), 739-756
- Zhao, S. S. (2000). A Tragedy of History: China's Search for Democracy in the Twentieth Century. In S. S. Zhao (Ed.) *China and Democracy: Reconsidering the Prospects for a Democratic China*. New York: Routledge.

- Zhou (2005). Meeting notes of workshop on peasant cooperative. *The Institute of peasant education*. Unpublished.
- Zhu, jiangang (2004). Grassroot NGO and the Growth of Chinese Civil Society. *Open Times*, 6, p. 36-47
- Zuzowski, Robert (1992). *Political Dissent and Opposition in Poland: The Workers' Defense Committee "KOR"*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Geo-Jaia, Macleans A (2004). Decentralisation and Privatisation of Education in Africa: Which Option for Nigeria? *International Review of Education*. 50 (3), p. 307-323.