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**Social organizations “going out”: analysis of China’s
civil society in a cross-border dimension**

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List of acronyms

ACYF	All China Youth Federation
BINGO	Business-friendly international non-governmental organization
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CANGO	China Association for NGO Cooperation
CDB	China Development Brief
CFPA	China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation
CISAR	China International Search and Rescue Team
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPPCC	Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference
CSWF	China Social Welfare Foundation
CWDF	China Women’s Development Foundation
CYDF	China Youth Development Foundation
CYLC	Communist Youth League of China
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (of the United Nations)
ENGO	Environmental non-governmental organizations
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GEI	Global Environmental Institute
GONGO	Government-organized non-governmental organization
GR-NGO	Grassroots non-governmental organization
IAF	Indian Air Force
INGO	International non-governmental organization
LWF	Lutheran World Federation

MEP	Ministry of Environmental Protection
MOC	Ministry of Commerce
MOCA	Ministry of Civil Affairs
NEOC	National Emergency Operation Center
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ONGO	Overseas non-governmental organizations
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
TFN	Transforming Nepal
UN	United Nations
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
WTO	World Trade Organization

前言

中国的社会组织发展正越来越呈现出国际化的趋势。这是中国近年来政治、经济、社会变化的一个结果，也是中国在世界舞台上发挥越来越大作用的一个表现。1978年开始实施的“改革开放”政策是中国社会主义现代化建设的转折点，自此以后，中国的政治、经济体制都呈现出新的面貌。在邓小平同志的领导下，中国全面深化改革，完善和发展中国特色社会主义制度。除了政治、经济方面之外，“改革开放”政策对社会方面也产生了深远的影响。随着国家经济的迅速发展，开始出现越来越多的社会组织，同时中国政府也给予他们越来越多的支持。在中国，社会组织答题可以分为三种类型：社会团体、基金会、民办非企业单位。随着改革开放的不断深入，国家政府的能力有限，无法满足人民的所有需求，因而许多民间组织就应运而生了。从八十年代起，社会组织开始承担更多的社会责任，在社会组织产生以前，很多相关事务原本是由政府来管理的。同时，社会组织还给社会的许多方面提供各种各样的服务以及发挥人道主义作用。换言之，随着中国社会的进步发展，社会组织发挥的作用越来越重要。在中国有限政府的背景下，政府不断放权，鼓励社会组织等其他社会主体的发展完善，也为它们的发展提供了良好的机会。但是，中国政府对社会组织的影响还是很大，而且由于在中国社会组织的先天发育不足，对政府的依赖还是过去突出。经过多年的发展，中国政府和社会组织间形成了一种特殊的关系：双方在履行社会管理职能上互相补充。政府在社会管理上不能做到面面俱到，因而非政府组织是政府的合作伙伴，它们能广泛参与公益慈善、环境保护、社会福利等项目，从而推动本国经济社会的发展。在过去的四十多年里，中国社会组织不断发展壮大：2017年它们的数量超过了七千多个。此外，近十五年来越来越多的中国社会组织开始参与国际事务并日益发挥着越来越重要的作用，它们与世界各地的国际组织取得联系，走出国门开

展紧急人道主义援助、可持续发展、环境保护、扶贫、社区发展等活动。这与江泽民主席在 2000 年提出的“走出去”战略密切相关。中国政府鼓励国内企业实施“走出去”战略，对外进行直接投资。此战略的主要目的是提高中国在全球经济中的地位，扩大中国的国际影响力。尽管实施“走出去”战略的主体是政府和企业，但很多社会组织也积极响应号召。

本文主要论述了中国社会组织“走出去”的趋势与现状，由三个章节组成，分别探讨了以下内容：中国民间社会与社会组织的特点；中国社会组织“走出去”是必然趋势；中国社会组织在 2015 年尼泊尔地震后所采取的人道主义援助。

本人在第一章着重阐述了中国社会组织发展的背景以及它们的主要特点和类型。首先，我们将介绍世界各国对 NGO (Non-Governmental Organization, 非政府组织) 的定义。之所以在论文开头对 NGO 这个概念进行解释，是因为它是中国在九十年代从欧美引进的。因而，在进行详细分析之前，我们要先介绍 NGO 与中国社会组织之间的异同。之后，我们将介绍中国社会组织发展的条件、它们的主要特点以及类型：比如基金会、社会团体、社会服务机构等。在这一章的最后，我们将探讨中国政府制定的相关法律对社会组织的影响。特别是最新颁布的一些法律，如 2016 年的《慈善法》与 2017 年的《境外非政府组织境内活动管理法》。

第二章的主要内容是中国社会组织“走出去”的前提条件与目前的发展形势。本人参阅了相关文献，将中国社会组织“走出去”的原因归结为以下两点：第一，社会组织在公共事业管理中对政府职能起到了补充作用。因而，它们在一定程度上得到了中国政府的支持。通过政府的支持，社会组织能够具备开展国外活动的条件，并取得更多的成果。第二，一些政治外交因素在推动社会组织“走出去”方面发挥了重要的作用。这点跟中国从五十年代开始进行的对外援助活动有很大关联，同时中国在世界舞台上也发挥着越来越重要的影响。经过四十多年的对外开放，中国在可持续发展与环境保护方面所承担的国际责任越来越大。在这种背景下，中国政府鼓励社会组织参与到更多的国际事务中。之后，本人还将介绍一些与社会

组织国际化相关的历史背景、重要事件、所面临的挑战以及它们在海外的主要活动领域。

最后，本人在第三章对中国社会组织在 2015 年尼泊尔大地震后开展的人道救援活动进行了个案分析。之所以把它单独拿出来分析，是因为这是中国民间社会第一次真正意义上开展国际紧急救援，也是中国许多社会组织机构联合开展国际援助活动。第三章分成两个部份。第一，本人通过“响应能力”、“筹款”（包含“资金来源”与“资金总额”两部分）、“活动领域”、“受益人的数量”以及“地域覆盖范围”五个指标对进行在尼泊尔展开活动的 7 个中国社会组织机构进行评估。第二，根据评估的结果，本人将社会组织的业务能力分成三个等级（高、中、低）。同时，本人通过“中国社会府组织与政府的关系”、“它们与国际非政府组织的合作”、“它们与当地政府与非政府组织的合作”、“其它中国民间组织的支持”、“中国企业的支持”以及“宗教团体的支持”这 6 个方面探讨哪些因素在支持社会组织开展紧急救援、灾后安置过渡以及灾后重建活动中发挥了最重要的作用。通过对该个案的分析，本人希望明确“中国社会组织与政府的关系”在中国社会府组织开展尼泊尔救援活动中所发挥的重要作用。

Introduction

Since the implementation of the “Reform and Opening up Policy” (改革开放政策, *Gaige Kaifang Zhengce*) in the late 1970s, China has undergone a major economic development process which radically transformed the country and marked a crossing point for its future growth. The more liberal approach of President Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 towards economy, along with the adoption of market economy policies on the model of Western capitalist systems, brought about a series of deep transformations that influenced every aspect of the country’s life, including its social sphere. In fact, the years following the implementation of Deng’s policy saw the emergence of new actors and stakeholders which, driven by the increasing level of liberalization of the country’s economic system, began to exert a growing influence on China’s policy-making processes. The role played by new rising forces led to deep transformations of the country’s social tissue, and contributed to radically altering the dynamics existing between the Chinese state and civil society. Such social changes primarily resulted in the creation of new organizational spaces that, at odds with the pre-existing Maoist corporative system, were no longer set up under the authority of the state, but were rather emerging spontaneously, according to a bottom-up model. The emergence of new areas falling outside the state’s influence, that served as platforms for the aggregation and expression of civil society’s increasingly diversified interests, laid the foundations for the establishment of modern social organizations in China, which were understood as forums of mass associationism that could provide new opportunities of representation and participation for the citizens. Although during the last decades of the 20th century the gap between the state and social spheres in China has been increasingly widened, and the relationships between the two have been undergoing a continuous process of transformation and negotiation, the country’s political system is yet to be considered an authoritarian one. This means that the state’s degree of control on society is still fairly high, and that it is not possible to make considerations on China’s society actors and organizations without taking into account political factors. The conditions that accompanied the emergence of civil society in contemporary China, including the liberalization of the national economic system and the differentiation of society’s interests, resulted in the establishment of a peculiar relationship between the society and the state. In fact, the background against which

China's civil society organizations developed, is that of a tight and symbiotic state-society relationship: over the years ensuing the implementation of Deng's policy and their development, social organizations were invested with the responsibility of relieving the state from some of its functions, since this alone could no longer meet and sustain the needs of an increasingly pluralized society. Nevertheless, it is in this context that China's civil society organization have been undergoing a consistent and continuous growth over the years. According to some estimates, in 2017 there were as much as 700'000 social organizations operating throughout China, whereas in 1988 their total number amounted to 4'000 units. As it has also been the case for organizations of this type in other countries, the development of China's civil society did not stop at the country's borders. In recent years, Chinese social organizations have indeed become increasingly interested in expanding their work abroad and in bringing their own contribution to the definition of a global civil society. Although the roots of the internationalization of Chinese civil society can be traced back up to the 80s, the actual process of going out did not took shape until the early 2000s. This appears to be one of the consequences of the introduction of the so-called "Going Out Strategy" (走出去战略, *Zouchuqu Zhanlüe*). The strategy, launched by Jiang Zemin 江泽民 in 1999, was aimed at encouraging domestic firms to invest in overseas projects and also constituted a stepping stone for Chinese social organizations willing to expand their interests abroad and to engage in disaster relief, development and advocacy projects worldwide.

The main purpose of the thesis project is to analyze the internationalization process of Chinese social organizations, along with the preconditions that made it possible and its features and implications. In order to efficiently carry out the task, it is primarily essential to address the subject by incorporating the actuality of Chinese non-governmental organizations (referred to as "social organizations" in the work) into the global context. This approach inevitably implies the need to investigate the phenomenon from an international perspective and to take into account all the factors that characterize and diversify various contexts. To this end, it is crucial to proceed in gradual stages: an overview of what is commonly and *globally* accepted as non-governmental organization is a necessary prerequisite for providing an effective analysis of the Chinese third sector, of the different types of organizations that are part of it and of the series of phenomena that characterize it. Therefore, in Chapter 1 we will proceed to define what is commonly and internationally understood as NGO and we will provide instruments useful for

recognizing their characteristics and for classifying them on the basis of various criteria. Concurrently, we will address the subject by integrating it into an analysis of the Chinese political context and of the role of civil society in China. The definition and classification of NGOs provided in the first paragraph will be held in consideration when, in the same chapter, we will be moving towards the description of the main features of Chinese non-governmental organizations, their development and the legislative framework against which such organizations are regulated (with particular emphasis on the most recent normative measures). The analysis will be carried out with the aims of both assessing the conditions of contemporary China's civil society and understanding the peculiar features of the relationship between the organizations that are part of it and the State, in order to subsequently describe the implications such relationship has when social organizations expand their interests beyond the country's borders.

Chapter 2 focuses on the definition and description of the internationalization process of Chinese social organizations. The analysis begins in the first section with an introduction of the preconditions that constituted the basis on which such process has begun, namely China's integration into the global context and the development of the country's foreign aid system. The first of the two factors is described through an analysis that goes over the years in which China has started to become a global power. It proceeds from the introduction of the "Reforms and Opening Up" policy in the late 70s, continues with the implementation of the "Go Out Strategy" and the country's admission into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the early 00s and finally leads up to the description of the main features and aspirations of China's most ambitious international project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, 一帶一路, *Yi Dai Yi Lu*). The second factor is addressed by taking into account the different positions assumed by the Chinese leadership towards the national foreign aid program over the years, from the first projects during the 50s, to the publication of the first "White Book" on foreign aid in 2011 which comprehensively describes the features of contemporary China's foreign aid management and sets new goals for the future. The gradual integration of China into the global context and the development of its foreign aid system, along with the emergence of a domestic civil society discussed in the previous chapter, are to be considered as the *condicio sine qua non* for the initiation of the internationalization process for Chinese social organizations. The analysis is carried out on the basis to the assumption that the phenomenon of Chinese social organizations "going out" is the result of the conjunction of factors that are both endogenous and exogenous to China: the definition of a civil society, which is carving

out its own space in China by building a complementary relationship with the State, combined with the rise of global China and the increasing volume of its foreign aid and created indeed favorable conditions that laid the foundations for the social organizations' expansion abroad. The second section of the chapter focuses on the definition of the internationalization process of social organizations itself. It provides considerations on the political factors that drive social organizations to "go out" and outlines the main turning points in the history of the phenomenon and the key moments that contributed to its framing. Subsequently, the chapter looks at the hurdles that social organizations encounter when expanding their interests overseas and tries to assess the current situation of such organizations, by providing numbers and data that help to understand the extent of the phenomenon and its development over the recent years. The third and last section of Chapter 2 zooms in on the very concept of Chinese social organization "going out" and seeks to deliver a complete description of the main features of domestic social organizations abroad by providing several examples. Furthermore, an analysis of the priority fields of intervention, extrapolated from a research work conducted by Huang Haoming 黄浩明, is presented.

Finally, Chapter 3 presents the intervention of Chinese social organizations in the humanitarian response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake. The case study is aimed at carrying out an analysis of the operational capacity of seven organizations involved in the disaster relief mobilization in order to assess the significance of the *state-organization relationship at the domestic level* factor among others that sustained their work in the international setting. In this section, we primarily proceed to present an account of the features and extent of the international and Chinese governmental humanitarian response to the Nepal crisis, along with an introduction to the international practices that regulate disaster relief work and to the subdivision of such work into different phases: emergency relief, post-disaster recovery and post-disaster reconstruction. Subsequently, bearing in mind that different organizations operated on different scope levels, corresponding to the three stages of the humanitarian response mentioned above, research work on five indicators of the operational capacity of social organizations, namely *responsiveness*, *fundraising capacity* (which is further divided into two aspects: *sources* and *volume*), *fields of intervention*, *number of beneficiaries* and *geographic coverage* is carried out. Finally, after some adjustments that are to be made in relation to the number social organizations analyzed, which are reduced to five, and to the operational capacity indicators taken into account, that are also reduced from six to four, we proceed to search

the correlation that links the different levels of operational capacity achieved by the organizations and the factors that sustained such capacity. A list of underlying factors, namely *state-organization relationship at the domestic level*, *partnership with international non-governmental actors*, *creation of collaborative networks with local social actors*, *support from other Chinese social organizations*, *support from companies* and *support from religious groups and organization*. The purpose is to understand whether and to what extent the first factor, *state-organization relationship at the domestic level*, is to be considered as paramount for the achievement of a high operational capacity level. In other words, the questions we attempt to answer are the following: does a higher level of collaboration with state actors at the domestic level result in a higher operational capacity of social organizations involved in humanitarian work in Nepal? Are there other factors that are to be taken into account? Which ones?

Chapter I - NGOs in the world and in China

1.1 NGOs in the world

1.1.1 The notion of non-governmental organization

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are distributed worldwide and, over the course of the twentieth century, their role has been gaining increasing significance. Since the 1980s and 1990s, a period which coincided with the earlier phases of the globalization process, the revolution of telecommunications and the adoption of neoliberal economic policies on a global scale, the numbers of such organizations have been constantly raising¹, to the point that it has been estimated that there are at least 10 million NGOs currently active worldwide,² approximatively employing 40 million people³. The notable and uninterrupted global development of non-governmental organizations is primarily due to the outbreak of the democratic notions according to which social and institutional infrastructures are to be considered as crucial for what regards one country's economic growth and welfare, and as long as the necessity of new forms of international cooperation determined by global threats such as terrorism, mass migrations and climate changes is concerned. Hence, the non-governmental sector, often referred to as "third sector", is today extremely wide-ranging and steadily growing throughout the world, not only in traditionally liberal and democratic environments such as the United States and European countries, but also in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian political systems like China. While in the former contexts NGOs generally act as interpreters of an advanced and healthy civil society, in the latter, where the official leadership is not often prone to

¹ Lewis D. (2010). "Nongovernmental Organizations, Definition and History". In Anheier H.K., Toepler S. (eds) *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*, p. 1060

² NonProfit Action. "Facts and Stats about NGOs Worldwide". *NonProfit Action website*. Retrieved February 22, 2019, from <http://nonprofitaction.org/2015/09/facts-and-stats-about-ngos-worldwide/>

³ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2003). "The Non-profit Sector in a Changing Economy, Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED)". *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development website*.

Retrieved February 13, 2020, from <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264199545-en.pdf?expires=1581605154&id=id&accname=ocid194685&checksum=CD6C7410E410FDDFE12F4B97DFE2E35C>

recognize the legitimacy of entities and institutions that fall outside the sphere of governmental control, such organizations are nonetheless in some cases contributing to the redefinition of the relationship between the state authority and the society and are therefore characterized by specific traits, which often do not find direct correspondence with their western counterparts

The term non-governmental organization was officially coined in 1945, when the United Nations, by means of Article 71 of the Constitutional Charter, sanctioned that “the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may make suitable arrangements for consultation with *non-governmental organizations* which are concerned with matters within its competence”⁴, thus conferring to NGOs the status of observers during UN assemblies and meetings between member states. Since then, and in particular during the 80s and 90s, many international organizations and institutions have attempted to provide a universally acceptable definition of non-governmental organizations, in order to standardize and streamline such concept. In the 1995 World Bank-NGO report, which specifies the terms of cooperation between the non-governmental sector and the World Bank, NGOs are defined as private organizations that pursue initiatives aimed at alleviating sufferings, at advocating the interests of poor people and at protecting the natural environment. NGOs are also understood by the World Bank as entities aimed at providing basis social services and at engaging in activities that contribute to the development of a community. Finally, the World Bank also defines the term NGO as referring to every non-profit organization that is independent and not directly linked to or supported by governmental institutions of all kinds⁵. What particularly stands out from such definition is that NGOs are commonly understood as non-for-profit entities that can concurrently carry out *advocacy* and *policy making* work, the former meaning the task of defending the rights or ideas of certain communities or parts of society, and the latter referring to the effort put by NGOs into supporting peace or development causes, as well as into engaging in service provision initiatives. For what regards their finance, such organizations should be sustained with funds provided by foundations and philanthropists or with money collected through fundraising activities.

⁴ United Nations, “United Nations Charter”, San Francisco, 26 June, 1945, Art. 71.

⁵ Malena C. (1995, March 31). “Working with NGOs: a practical guide to operational collaboration between the World Bank and nongovernmental organizations (Report number 15013)”. *World Bank website*. Retrieved March 13, 2019, from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/814581468739240860/Working-with-NGOs-a-practical-guide-to-operational-collaboration-between-the-World-Bank-and-nongovernmental-organizations>

The range of activities often undertaken by NGOs is particularly broad and encompasses a large set of fields, such as democracy building, conflict resolution, cultural preservation, political analysis, research and information exchange.⁶ NGOs, along with other types of associations, foundations and non-governmental entities constitute what is often referred to as “civil society” or “third sector” (the first two being the governmental and business sectors). The expression civil society, as understood by western thinkers and observers, commonly refers to the domain of formal and informal associations located halfway between the state and the other constituent parts of society, namely individuals and families. As stated by the World Bank, the civil society sphere comprises a large agglomeration of non-profit and non-governmental organizations that play a role in the public lives of citizens and give voice to the interests and values of their own members⁷.

Since the NGO realm appears to be exceptionally wide-ranging, with different kinds of organizations engaging in extremely diversified activities and operational sectors, the task of providing an unambiguous and universal definition of non-governmental organization is indeed very complicated. The expression “NGO” itself can bear several connotations depending on the different circumstances in which it is employed, whereas the boundaries of such concept are often blurred and unclear, due to the wide spectrum of typologies, purposes and methodologies that fall into the sphere of non-governmental organizations. In this respect, it is worth mentioning a description provided by the World Bank in 1990 on the variety of non-governmental organizations and the complexities of their definition:

“The diversity of NGOs goes beyond any simplistic definition. NGOs include many groups and institutions that are entirely or partially independent from governments and that pursue humanitarian or cooperative objectives rather than commercial ones. They are private agencies in industrialized countries that sustain international development, indigenous groups organized on the regional or national scale or groups or volunteers created at the village level. NGOs comprise charitable and religious associations that mobilize private funds for the purposes of development, food distribution and for the promotion of the community organization. They also include independent cooperatives,

⁶ Lewis D. (2010). *Op. cit.* p. 1061

⁷ Mandell C.R., Reuben W., Thindwa J., Garrison J., Gears C., Monico C. (2005). “Issues and options for improving engagement between the World Bank and civil society organizations (Report number 34160)”. *World Bank website*. Retrieved March 14, 2019, from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/914211468322455786/Issues-and-options-for-improving-engagement-between-the-World-Bank-and-civil-society-organizations>

community associations, women's groups and pastoral associations. Groups of citizens aimed at raising awareness and exerting political influence are also to be considered as NGOs"⁸.

Despite the possibility to define some requirements that are to be met by non-governmental organizations in order for them to be considered as such, and the vast array of definitions we can rely upon, none of these is capable of giving a complete and exhaustive picture of such concept, which is nonetheless hostile to any generalization attempt. If the assumption according to which NGOs are essentially private and non-profit organizations created on a voluntary basis is to be considered reliable, it is also true that the expression "non-governmental organization" refers to a wide-ranging and blurry analytic category which includes a plethora of entities that feature different traits and objectives. In fact, organizations that are part of such category play very diverse roles and take various forms depending on the different geographical, social, political and cultural contexts in which they operate. For instance, the term NGO can describe at the same time small entities consisting of few members and big organizations with dozens of offices worldwide, which can be formal and informal, and organizations provided with a rigid structure or characterized by a flexible bureaucracy. Nevertheless, in addition to the different dimensions and types of organizational structures, what makes any attempt of defining and generalizing the concept of NGO even more complicated are the political, social and cultural differences across various contexts, along with the vast array of categories employed to describe such organizations.

1.1.2 Types of NGOs

One consequence of the difficulties that may be encountered while attempting to provide a universal definition of the various roles played by NGOs, of the activities they undertake and of the features they assume in different contexts worldwide is the tendency to classify them on the basis of different analysis criteria, thus avoiding the risks related to oversimplification. One of the most common of such classification criteria, is based on

⁸ World Bank. (1991, January 31). "Cooperation between the World Bank and NGOs: 1990 progress report (Report number 9433)". *World Bank website*. Retrieved March 13, 2019, from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/413861492971066351/Cooperation-between-the-World-Bank-and-NGOs-1990-progress-report>

the *orientation* and *level of operation* of such entities. *Orientation* is understood as the kind of activity an NGO engages in, whereas *level of operation* refers to the scale on which the organization works. The orientation criterium is the most popular among scholars and experts. On this basis, NGOs can be divided into 4 different categories: *charity-oriented NGOs*, *service-oriented NGOs*, *participation-oriented NGOs* and *empowerment-oriented NGOs*⁹. Before listing their main features, it is worth pointing out that an organization can present more than one orientation and therefore simultaneously engage in activities of different nature. *Charity-oriented NGOs* are organizations involved in critical geographical areas or in impoverished and disadvantaged contexts, in which they provide humanitarian aid or basis services to the population. They operate according to a top-down scheme aimed at sustaining the weakest and poorest sections of a country's population or at contributing to the implementation of relief work in the aftermath of natural disasters or in conflict areas. Charity-oriented NGOs imply a minimum level of participation from the beneficiaries, which are not requested to directly contribute to the implementation of the project. It is worth pointing out that such orientation has characterized the majority of NGOs in the 1960s-70s. *Service-oriented NGOs* are mostly engaged in the provision of services to other organizations or to the population¹⁰. Such organizations can provide for the delivering of medical assistance, family planning, education, legal support and other services. The aforementioned type of orientation requires that the project is elaborated by the organization and that the beneficiaries participate to some extent in receiving and implementing it. *Participation-oriented NGOs* generally carry out self-help projects whose implementation involves the direct participation of the beneficiaries through contributions in the form of funding, assets, materials, labor force, etc. Such category also comprises cooperatives, which the International Co-operative Alliance defines as "autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically-controlled enterprise"¹¹. Finally, *empowerment-oriented NGOs* usually assist the development of a clear comprehension

⁹ Cousins W. (1991). "Non-Governmental Initiatives". Presented at *The Urban Poor and Basic Infrastructure Services in Asia and the Pacific*. Manila 1991, January 22-28. Manila: Asian Development Bank

¹⁰ Vakil A.C. (1997). "Confronting the Classification Problem: Toward a Taxonomy of NGOs". In *World Development*, 25 (12), 2063

¹¹ International Cooperative Alliance. "Cooperative identity, values & principles". *International Cooperative Alliance website*. Retrieved February 23, 2019, from <https://www.ica.coop/en/cooperatives/cooperative-identity>

of the social, political and economic factors that affect the lives of the beneficiaries and are aimed at strengthening the awareness of their own potential and rights. Organizations of this kind can be spontaneously created by communities or be built up with the help of external actors and third parties, such as operators of other NGOs, that can intervene in quality of facilitators.

	NGO orientation			
	Charity-oriented	Service-oriented	Participation-oriented	Empowerment-oriented
Participation level	Zero-Minimum	Low	Medium-high	High

Table 1 - NGOs orientations and participation levels.

From the aforementioned classification, based on the type of activities undertaken by non-governmental organizations, it is clear that, according to an ascending scheme, different types of orientation imply different degrees of participation that are to be expected from the beneficiaries. From an almost non-existent participation for what regards *charity-oriented organizations*, that usually operate according to a top-down scheme, we move to spontaneous and voluntary intervention of the individuals addressed by the work of *empowerment-oriented NGOs*, whose main purpose is to enhance the beneficiaries' ability to autonomously organize and gather their interests and aspirations.

Besides being classified on the basis on the orientation criterium, which refers to the activities in which non-governmental organizations engage and allows to operate a distinction of the various participation degrees for every category of organizations, NGOs can also be labeled by using their operation level as a benchmark. Such criterium

classifies non-governmental organizations on the basis of the scale on which they work and tends to create mutually exclusive categories. In light of this classification, NGOs can be once again subdivided in four categories: *community-based NGOs*, *citywide NGOs*, *national NGOs* and *international NGOs*¹². There is a vast array of *community-based NGOs* that spans from women's associations to those aimed at facilitating the access to primary public services for disadvantaged citizens and at improving their life conditions. *Citywide NGOs* comprise associations of local and community organizations and entities such as educational groups, chambers of commerce, etc. Finally, if the membership or the activities of an organization are confined to a specific country, they are referred to as *national NGO*, whereas when their interests also expand beyond the country's borders, we are dealing with *international NGOs*¹³. The majority of NGOs operate on the domestic level, but the biggest and best known organizations, which at times can benefit from funds provided by governmental institutions or maintain relationships of different nature with them, are *international NGOs*. Examples of such organizations are Greenpeace or Oxfam International or big foundations such as Ford Foundation or Rockefeller Foundation. *International NGOs* are usually aimed at implementing their own projects or at engaging in lobbying activities on governments and national or international institutions. In addition, both national and international non-governmental organizations often cooperate with their local and city-level counterparts, or fund and support their initiatives and projects.

The difficulties related with finding a globally acceptable definition of non-governmental organization which is at the same time capable to comprehensively encompass the multiplicity of characteristics that diversify such entities, result in different criteria that serve as a base for their classification as well as in a complex terminology and a long list of acronyms. Among such acronyms, the most frequently employed ones NGOs on the basis of their degree of dependency from governmental institutions, the level on which they operate and the sector in which they are mostly involved, such as: GONGO (government-organized non-governmental organization), INGO (international non-governmental organization), BINGO (business friendly international non-governmental organization), ENGO (environmental non-governmental organization).

¹² Cousins W. (1991). *Op. cit.*

¹³ Sunga L. S. (2005). "Involvement in international Human Rights Monitoring". In G. Cohen-Jonathan & J. F. Flauss (Eds.), *Les Organisations Non Gouvernementales et le Droit International des Droits de l'Homme = International Human Rights Law and Non Governmental Organizations* (p. 43). Bruxelles: Bruylant.

Among these, the most interesting as regards to the thesis work are GONGOs. The GONGO acronym appears to be terminological paradox, since the term “non-governmental organization” is hereby associated to the expression “organized by the government”. Such contradiction defines a type of organization that is usually very common in authoritarian political contexts as the Chinese one, in which the control on the third sector is generally very strict and is at times instrumentalized. Such organizations are usually created or sponsored by the government and their purpose is to implement projects aimed at promoting various interests, and oftentimes at controlling liberal and democratic forces¹⁴

1.2 NGOs in China

1.2.1 The notion of NGO in China

As already discussed in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2, the attempt to give a universal definition of non-governmental organization appears to be an arduous challenge and may lead to ambiguities and confusion. In fact, the category under discussion comprises a vast array of organizations that are primarily defined and diversified by the social, political and cultural context in which they operate and feature different characteristics according to the geographic area that is taken into account. Therefore, in order to analyze the development of the Chinese third sector and its internationalization process, it is primarily necessary to adapt the general definition of non-governmental organization to the Chinese context. Providing a definition of what is generally understood as NGO in China is a key factor for presenting a complete picture of the current situation and incorporating the actuality of the Chinese third sector into the international context.

The term NGO has begun to be extensively used in China when, in the occasion of the “Fourth World Conference on Women” held in Beijing in September 1995, an “NGO

¹⁴ Hasmath R. & Hildebrandt T. (2019). “Conceptualizing Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organizations”. *Journal of Civil Society*, 15(3), 274.

forum” was organized with the purpose of establishing a constructive dialogue among various domestic and international non-governmental organizations on the theme of women’s rights. It was in this international context that Chinese organizations, which had undergone a process of development in the previous years, began to get in touch with the global context and to recognize themselves as an integral component of the flourishing cross-border NGO movement¹⁵. The “Fourth World Conference on Women” has indeed made a valuable contribution to the definition of the Chinese non-governmental sector and has at the same time participated in the actual introduction of the notion of NGO in China. The very term non-governmental organization has itself been borrowed from the international context and, given the multiplicity of meanings it has and of ways in which it can be used in transcultural contexts, it is hardly surprising that such term in China encompasses a broad variety of different meanings, which at times refer to notions that cannot be fully assimilated to what is commonly understood as NGO in western countries. Although it is usual for governmental institutions to make use of the English term non-governmental organizations and of the acronym NGO when engaging in dialogues with foreign actors¹⁶, at the domestic level, private, non-for-profit and non-governmental organizations usually fall within the realm of “social organizations” (社会组织, *shehui zuzhi*), expression that is at times used as a synonym for “people’s organizations” (民间组织, *minjian zuzhi*). The lack of direct correspondence between the international Anglo-Saxon terminology and the Chinese one is partially due to the broad semantic variety and to a high degree of ambiguity, which result in a very rich and complex taxonomy. In order to fully address such complexities and avoid generalizations, it appears necessary to dismiss the term NGO when discussing the subject of civil society organizations with reference to the Chinese context. On the contrary, it is preferable to employ the aforementioned expression “social organization”, which is best suited to conceptually encompass the multitude of entities that fall under such definition.

Chinese social organizations comprise several subcategories: social groups (社会团体, *shehui tuanti*), foundations (基金会, *jijinhui*), social services organizations (社会服务机构, *shehui fuwu jigou*) and public institutions (事业单位, *shiye danwei*). Social groups are considered to be the non-governmental and non-for-profit association forms whose

¹⁵ Hui Q. (2004). “NGO in China : The third sector in the globalization process and social transformation”. Qinghua University.

¹⁶ Howell J. (1995). “Prospects for NGOs in China”. *Development in Practice*, 5(1), 10.

characteristics most closely match the international definition of NGO offered above. They are private organizations, essentially based on a membership system and created by individual volunteers. Article 2 of the “Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Groups” (社会团体登记管理条例, *Shehui tuanti dengji guanli tiaoli*), enacted in October 1998, defines Social Groups as “non-for-profit organizations created on a voluntary basis from Chinese citizens with the purpose of fulfilling the members’ desires and aspirations and of carrying out the activities described in their constitutive acts”¹⁷. Foundations, regulated by the “Regulations on the Management of Foundations” (基金会管理条例, *Jijinhui guanli tiaoli*), are non-for-profit entities that financially support charitable and public interest initiatives through donations coming from individuals, entities with legal personality or other organizations¹⁸. Foundations authorized to carry out public fundraising projects are defined as “public foundations” (公募基金会, *gongmu jijinhui*)¹⁹ and are usually assimilated to GONGOs (governmental organized non-governmental organizations) such as China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA, 中国扶贫基金会, *Zhongguo Fupin Jijinhui*) or Soong Ching Ling Foundation (中国宋庆龄基金会, *Zhongguo Song Qingling Jijinhui*). As a consequence of the 2016 Charity Law (慈善法, *Cishan Fa*), whose effects on Chinese social organizations will be further discussed later in this chapter, the distinction between public and non-public foundations has nevertheless been abolished, thus allowing every social organization with “charitable status” to carry out public fundraising activities. Social services organizations, known generally with the name of “non-enterprise units” (民办非企业单位, *minban feiqiye danwei*) until the introduction of the 2016 Charity Law, are defined by the “Provisional Regulations on the Registration and Management of Non-enterprise Units” (民办非企业单位登记管理暂行条例, *Minbam feiqiye danwei dengji guanli zanxing tiaoli*) as “non-for-profit organizations with legal personality composed of individuals, enterprises, institutions or other types of association which utilize non-State capitals in order to

¹⁷ Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Groups (社会团体登记管理条例; *shehui tuanti dengji guanli tiaoli*), 8th Standing Committee Session of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 1998, Art. 2

¹⁸ Regulations on the Management of Foundations (基金会管理条例; *Jijinhui guanli tiaoli*), 38th Session of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 2004, Art. 2

¹⁹ Regulations on the Management of Foundations (基金会管理条例; *Jijinhui guanli tiaoli*), 38th Session of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 2004, Art. 3

financially support non-for-profit activities of social interest”²⁰. Finally, public institutions, as stated by Article 2 of the “Provisions on the Registration and Administration of Public Institutions (事业单位登记管理暂行条例, *Shiye danwei dengji guanli zanxing tiaoli*), are “social services organizations sponsored by government organisms or other organizations, that utilize State-owned assets in order to financially sustain non-for-profit activities of social interest”²¹. Public Institutions therefore pursue the same objectives of social services organizations and share with them the same implementation methodology, despite utilizing State-owned assets rather than private ones to fund their own projects. For this reason, public institutions usually share a high degree of collaboration with state bodies and at times tend to identify with them. Public schools and universities, research institutes and social protection institutes are indeed associated to the aforementioned category of social organizations.

The promulgation of the Charity Law in September 2016, introduced a further class of social organizations with legal status, namely “charitable organizations” (慈善组织, *cishan zuzhi*). The new term refers to legally registered non-for-profit social organizations (social groups, foundations and social services organizations)²² that engage in charitable initiatives, such as assistance work for poor and disadvantaged people, aid in case of emergencies or natural disasters, promotion of education, science and culture, etc.²³ The new law provides that social organizations already registered at the Ministry of Civil Affairs (民政部, *Minzheng bu*) prior to its the implementation can, upon registration request, be recognized as charitable organizations.

²⁰ Provisional Regulations on the Registration and Management of Non-Profit Enterprises (民办非企业单位登记管理暂行条例; *Minban feiqiye danwei dengji guanli zanxing tiaoli*), 8th Standing Committee Session of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 1998, Art. 2

²¹ Provisional Regulations on the Registration and Management of Public Institutions (事业单位登记管理暂行条例; *Shiye danwei dengji guanli zanxing tiaoli*), 8th Standing Committee Session of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 1998, Art. 2

²² Charity Law (慈善法; *Cishan Fa*), 4th Session of the 12th National People’s Congress, 2016, Art. 9

²³ Charity Law (慈善法; *Cishan Fa*), 4th Session of the 12th National People’s Congress, 2016, Art. 3

Chinese social organizations 社会组织 / 民间组织				
Social Groups 社会团体	Foundations 基金会		Social Services Organizations 社会服务机构 or Non-profit Enterprise Units 民办非企业单位	Public Institutions 事业单位
	Public 公墓	Non- public 非公募		

Table 2 - Types of Chinese social organizations

In addition to referring to the categories presented above (social groups, foundations, social services organizations and public institutions), the expression social organization, in the broader sense, also defines the so-called “mass organizations” (群众组织, *qunzhong zuzhi*), referred to as “people’s organizations” (人民组织, *renmin zuzhi*) as well. Such entities, like the Communist Youth League of China (中国共产主义青年团, *Zhongguo Gongchanzhuyi Qingnian Tuan*) or the All-China Women’s Federation (中华全国妇女联合会, *Zhonghua Quanguo Funü Lianhehui*), actually constitute an extension of the state power and are an integral component of the institutional foundations upon which the socialist political system of the People’s Republic of China, which regards political mobilization as necessary condition for the preservation of stability, is based. Mass organizations are one of the instruments through which the state is able to impose its own authority over the population, and essentially serve as a link between the bureaucracy of the communist state and the masses²⁴. The classification of the different typologies of social organizations provided in this section helps to put such entities in conceptual order and to highlight which category among these features traits that come closest to the international definition of NGO, namely social groups, defined as voluntary

²⁴ Barnett A. D. (1951). “Mass Political Organizations in Communist China”. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 277(1), 78

and private non-for-profit organizations based on a membership mechanism. Nonetheless, in addition to differences among typologies of organizations determined by their nature, purposes and methodologies, it is nonetheless possible for us to carry out an analysis of Chinese social organizations by taking into account the influence exerted by the state on such entities and the usage it derives from them. In fact, the role played by governmental institutions in the creation and management of Chinese social organizations determines, as already pointed out in regards the international context, the distinction between two notions: GONGOs (government-organized non-governmental organizations) and GR-NGOs (grassroots non-governmental organizations). It has already been pointed out that some public foundations fit into the vast array of organizations labelled as GONGOs, hybrid entities that are located halfway between the governmental and non-governmental sectors and that are most common in authoritarian political contexts, but also find room in environments that boast a longer and more solid democratic tradition.

It has been argued that, for what concerns the Chinese case, GONGOs are part of a governmental deliberative strategy aimed at creating a corporatist system able to plunge its roots in civil society²⁵, thus exerting control on the liberal and democratic pressures originating from below. GONGOs are in fact organizations created or sponsored by the state with the purpose of providing services that the state itself is not able to take care of. Such organizations serve the same functions as non-governmental organizations, though at the same time posing less political and economic risks, since their dependency relationship with the state power directly incorporates them into the corporatist Chinese state system and allows an instrumental employment of such organizations. In the existing literature on the matter, the acronym GONGO is often used in juxtaposition with the expression grassroots NGO, which refers to base-level non-governmental organizations. In politics, the term “grassroots” refers to everything that is deep-rooted at the popular level or that proceeds in a bottom-up fashion, and in this case it indicates organizations that are spontaneously born in a community. As the name itself suggests, grassroots NGOs operate according to a bottom-up scheme, are created at the local and community levels and are entirely voluntary, private and independent from every type of governmental institution²⁶. When discussing the political context of contemporary China,

²⁵ Hsu J. & Hasmath R. (2013). “The Chinese corporatist state: Adaptation, survival and resistance”, p. 76. Oxford: Routledge.

²⁶ Panda B. (2017). “Top Down or Bottom Up? A Study of Grassroots NGOs Approach”. *Journal of Health Management*, 9(-), 263.

the terminological contrast between the terms GONGO and grassroots NGO is among the most recurring. This gives evidence of the fact that Chinese non-governmental organizations, either government-organized or grassroots, are in fact two antithetical representatives of an emerging civil society, whose expansion contributes at perpetually modifying its relationship with the state. Besides the different types of social organizations described above, which are officially recognized by the state and legally registered at the Ministry of Civil Affairs, it is worth mentioning that there is a great multitude of informal organizations registered as for-profit enterprises or not registered at all. Some of such organizations, albeit not recognized by the law, are able to gain legal status by leaning on public institutions, such as universities or research institutes²⁷. In this regard, a report on the policy environment for Chinese NGOs published in July 2018 by NGO CN²⁸ (发展交流网, *Fazhan Jiaoliu Wang*), which surveyed 680 civil society organizations in 10 cities across the territory of China, showed that 60 organizations had not legally registered at the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and that 27 had registered as commercial enterprises. The percentage of unregistered organizations thus accounts for 19% of the total 680 surveyed. Although it can be argued that such report is biased, given the small number of organizations taken into account, and the exact number of unregistered organizations appears impossible to be precisely estimated, it is plausible that the total percentage of unregistered organizations is higher than what is shown in the survey. In addition, when asked to point out the factors preventing them from legally register, the majority of the 60 unregistered organizations indicated that the registration times are too long, the costs are too high and that it is very difficult to find a Professional Supervisory Unit that could sponsor them. This underlines the shortcomings of the legislative system that regulates the Chinese third sector, which appears to be exceedingly cumbersome and does not constitute a reliable guarantee of legality. Such issue will be further discussed in the next sections of the work.

²⁷ International Center for Non-Profit Law. "Civic Freedom Monitor: China". *International Center for Non-Profit Law website*. Retrieved September 5, 2019, from <https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/china>

²⁸ NGO CN. (2018, July 3). "Minjian gongyi zuzhi zhengce huanjing youyidu diaocha baogao fabu" 民间公益组织政策环境友善度调查报告发布 (Survey on the benefit of the regulatory environment of social welfare organizations). *NGO CN website*. Retrieved September 5, 2019, from <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.org.cn/news-21524.html>

1.2.2 The emergence of China's civil society

Over the last decades, civil society in China has experienced a consistent and continuous growth: according to relatively conservative estimates, there are about 500'000 legally registered social organizations currently operating on the territory of the PRC²⁹, whereas other studies, which appear to be more optimistic, report that in 2017 there were more the 700'000 such entities legally registered in China, showing a dizzying growth of their number comparing to the total 4,446 organizations registered in 1988³⁰. Nevertheless, if non registered organizations are also taken into account, different estimates agree on the fact that the amount of such entities can rise up to 3 million units, even though the precise number of unregistered organizations appears impossible to assess.³¹

In the first section we argued that the growth of global civil society and the outbreak of non-governmental organizations worldwide during the 1980s-90s were mostly due to the incipient globalization process and to the adoption of neoliberal policies, that led to an inevitable decline of the concept of the welfare state and ultimately opened new possibilities for the development of third sector organizations. Since China, being an authoritarian socialist country, experienced a different history and development than that of western and liberal countries, it is evident that the paradigm according to which the emergence of a civil society is to be understood as the consequence of the establishment of neoliberal notions does not apply to its specificities. On the contrary, Chinese social organizations, born and developed in an authoritarian political context, challenge the western considerations on the notion of civil society itself, and this is due to the process that led to their outbreak in China.

Before the emergence civil society organizations in China, a form of citizen association was represented by the so-called mass organizations (群众组织, *qunzhong zuzhi*), whose

²⁹ Corsetti, G. (2019, August 2). "How Many NGOs Are There Really In China?". *China Development Brief website*. Retrieved November 18, 2019, from <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/articles/how-many-ngos-are-there-really-in-china/>

³⁰ Hsu J. & Hasmath R. (2018). "Rethinking Global Civil Society in an Era of a Rising China". Presented at the *Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action Annual Conference*. 2017, November 15-17. Austin, USA. Retrieved November 18, 2019, from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3222747

³¹ Hsu C., Chen F. Y., Horsley J. P. & Stern R. (2016). *The State of NGOs in China Today*. Brookings Institution. 2018, December 15. Washington DC, USA. Retrieved November 17, 2019, from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2016/12/15/the-state-of-ngos-in-china-today/>

definition has been provided in the previous section. Such entities, which can be considered to be the direct manifestation of the corporatist state model envisioned by Mao Zedong, were directly set up by the Communist Party in order to impose control over the vast population of the People's Republic of China and to boost political participation among the masses³². The mechanism of mass organizations in Mao's China was essentially based on the "mass line" principle (群众路线, *qunzhong luxian*), a method that implies reciprocity between the party and the masses. The former had the duty to produce policies and make decisions, whereas the latter were expected to receive and implement the leadership's guidelines and to consequently give back suggestions to the party, which in turn had the responsibility to interpret them and elaborate them into new policies. Given the fundamental role they played in the theoretical and practical functionality of the Maoist communist regime, it is evident that mass organizations, although representing the aspirations of the people and being intended to serve as lifts for grassroots perspectives, were therefore an integral component of the corporatist state.

During the post-Maoist era, the introduction of market policies and the initiation of an opening up process, carried out by Deng Xiaoping, led to the creation of new organizational spaces that were no more set up under the authority of the State. This laid the foundations for the establishment of social organizations, understood as forums of mass associationism that provided new opportunities of representation and participation for the citizens³³. In addition, the pre-existing mass organizations also underwent a process of reform, which often resulted in the creation of secondary organizations which later evolved in what today are usually referred to as government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs). Grassroots social organizations established in this period, as well as GONGOs set up in the wake of the reform of pre-existing mass organizations, thereafter took over the role that was previously played by mass organizations in Maoist China. They were invested with the responsibility of relieving the State from some of its functions, since the implementation of Deng's reforms had led to an increasing pluralization of society's interests, that the state alone could no longer meet and sustain. This contributes to explain the reasons why the main objective of Chinese social organizations is not to act as supervisory mechanisms in charge of checking the activities of the state, as it is the case for their western counterparts. On the contrary, they

³² Howell J. (1995). *op. cit.*

³³ *Ibid.*

often share a high degree of intimacy with official institutions³⁴, to the extent that it has been argued that civil society and the state have come to establish a complementary relationship³⁵, in which they do not oppose each other, but rather cooperate in order to fill the gaps created by the adoption of market economy policies and by the country's opening up to the world during Deng's era. Ultimately, Chinese social organizations reflect the Chinese institutions' notion of norms and rights, which often clash with classic western conceptions³⁶ and therefore imply that a different set of knowledge instruments are to be used when carrying out an analysis of their development and current situation.

1.2.3 China's civil society and the state

The development of the Chinese third sector from the 1980s until today, along with the constantly increasing number of social organizations operating across the country, did not only contribute to the change of the political and economic structure of the nation, but also catalyzed a social transformation process that served as the basis for the definition of a new relationship between state power and society. In the case of China, whose history and development feature peculiar traits that cannot be analyzed through western lenses, the emergence of civil society should not be intended as a precondition for the construction of a democratic and liberalized political system, but rather as an intermediate place where the state-society relations are negotiated and modified³⁷. In this regard, overcoming the classical western Tocquevillian of society allows us to analyze the emergence of the Chinese civil society not as strictly functional to the development of a democratization process, but in terms of the broadening of a space located between the state sphere and society, in which the dynamics between these two forces are constantly evolving. The political, economic and social transformation started in China at the end of the last century, which has been reflected in an increasing pluralization of political and social processes, has indeed contributed at modifying the state-society relationship, transforming the post-Maoist Chinese authoritarian state model into what Andrew Mertha

³⁴ Hsu J. & Hasmath R. (2018). *Op. cit.* p. 82

³⁵ Hildebrand T. (2013). *Social Organizations and the Authoritarian State in China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 36

³⁶ Hsu J. & Hasmath, R. (2018). *Op. cit.* p. 84

³⁷ Scott, W. (2012). "Introduction". *Journal of Contemporary China*, 21(76), 551–567.

refers to as “fragmented authoritarianism”. The political system of contemporary China differs from the monolithic authoritarianism that had characterized the country until the implementation of Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms: although China is still an authoritarian-style regime, it nonetheless managed to respond in a more sensitive way to the various demands of contemporary society. The categories that were previously excluded from the policy-making process, or played a peripheral role, namely the so-called “political entrepreneurs” (the media, NGOs and individual activists) managed to make their own way through intricacies of Chinese political structures thanks to the inability of the institutions to efficiently adapt to the changes of society, to the lobbying activities of influential groups and to the new aspirations of the citizens³⁸.

The development of a market economy and the consequent opening of cracks in the political systems have contributed to the diversification of the interests of society and to the construction of new spaces falling outside the state’s reach, grey zones in which emergent socio-economic actors have begun to aggregate and to give life to various organizations that have laid the foundations for the development of China’s third sector. Nevertheless, Chinese authoritarianism, albeit “fragmented” and therefore more open at receiving the pressure of liberalization than ever, still exerts a considerable influence on the relations between the state and civil society. Within such relations, social organizations are constantly subject to great pressure from the institutions and are strictly controlled by official bodies, that dictate the growth potential of social organizations and decide how much operating space and autonomy they should be granted. The relationship of dependency between social organizations and the state in China is the symptom of a type of associationism that, although increasingly autonomous and currently undergoing a considerable process of development, appears to be still incorporated into the state-party system and greatly dependent from the consensus granted by it. In this regard, the normative framework regulating the Chinese third sector results to be direct expression of the state authorities’ desire to harness the potentialities of the growing civil society and to strictly control them. The changes in the regulation applied over the recent years and the consistent expansion of the legislation on the matter are in fact the proof of the attitudes adopted by the different administrations, which share the intention to create a

³⁸ Mertha, A. (2009). “Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0: Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process”. *The China Quarterly*, 200, 1008

solid regulatory framework capable of comprising every single entity of which the Chinese civil society is composed.

1.2.4 The development of Chinese social organizations' legislative framework: from Deng's reforms to Xi's era

The expansion of Chinese third sector is, as already pointed out above, one of the consequences of the economic reform program started by Deng Xiaoping at the end of 1978. The creation of a market economy and the opening up of China to international trade and finance required by the “Reforms and Opening Up” policy have led the Chinese political élite to a mindset reframing: during the 80s the state had in fact realized that it was no longer capable of providing single-handedly all the services that a liberalized and privatized society requires³⁹. From a close to zero degree of tolerance towards social organizations at the time the People's Republic of China was founded, during the 80s the Chinese leadership moved to promoting a liberalization process controlled by social organizations themselves, thereafter seen as a bridge capable of connecting the interests of the state and of society. In the aftermath of Deng's reforms, social organizations came to be perceived as entities that are de facto incorporated into the state system and their role was therefore understood as providing assistance to the government's work with the purpose of accompanying contemporary China along the transition process that was taking the country towards the realization of a market economy.

Nevertheless, the developmental history of Chinese social organizations from the period of Deng's reforms has always been characterized by two opposite tendencies. While on the one side we have the government's desire to instrumentalize the role of social organizations for the provision of services and welfare to the population, on the other side there is the necessity to tighten the institutional control and supervision over such organizations, since they can represent sources of dissent and opposition that are to be dealt with carefully. In the light of the 1989 Tiananmen square events, governmental bodies were indeed forced to reconsider their control and management policies with regards to the various organizations that had developed earlier. During the spring of 1989,

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 1012

students and workers took the streets and showed to the government their abilities to organize social protest movements falling outside the control of the institutions and aimed at constructing a more democratic and liberal society. That same year there was an attempt at containing the expansion of Chinese social organizations with the introduction of the “Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Groups”. The Regulations, which is the second legal document produced by the People’s Republic of China on the matter of social organizations, provided the creation of a double registration, or double management, system (双重管理体制, *shuangchong guanli tizhi*) for such organizations, which were henceforth required to gain the support of a sponsoring Professional Supervisory Unit (usually affiliated to the state or the party) in order to be definitively approved and registered at the Beijing’s Ministry of Civil Affairs or local bureaus⁴⁰. The end of the 1980s was also characterized by the introduction of supplementary provisions aimed at monitoring and rationalizing the work of social organizations, such as the “Regulations on the Registration and Management of Foundations”, that gave a legal definition of foundations and determined this kind of organization’s roles and possibilities, with emphasis on the control and supervision function performed by the state.

The 90s then saw the establishment of the market economy system and the government decision to streamline the bureaucratic apparatus of the state by realizing the “small government, big society” (小政府, 大社会, *xiao zhengfu da shehui*) aspiration. This tagline pointed out the willingness of the state to fully legalize social organizations and to promote their development, allowing such entities to carve out a broader space in which to operate and represent the interests of society in the policy-making process⁴¹. If on the one hand the government decided to make room for the development of social organizations and to decentralize the state’s authority, on the other hand it realized the unquestionable necessity to tighten the control on such organizations. In 1996, the then President Jiang Zemin 江泽民 convened a special plenum of the Standing Committee of the Politburo in order to discuss several amendments in regards to the control and management of social organizations. The session, which was the first one of such kind in the history of the Chinese Communist Party, contributed to the clarification of the state’s position for what concerned the procedures to follow in order to harmonize and monitor the development of social organizations. The following years saw in fact the creation of

⁴⁰ Wang, M. (2001). “The Development of NGOs in China”. *The Non-Profit Review*, 1(1), 57

⁴¹ Saich T. (2000). “Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China”. *China Quarterly*, 161(-), 138

more complete and detailed normative documents than the regulatory system established in 1989⁴². Among these, what particularly stands out are the 1998 “Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Groups”, one of the main legislative documents on social organizations ever produced in the history of the People’s Republic of China. The Regulations, taking as a reference the ones introduced in 1989, reaffirmed the freedom of association in accordance to Article 35 of the Constitution and stated “the protection of the rights and interests of social organizations and the reinforcement of the double registration and management system of social organizations” as their main objectives⁴³. In the Regulations, the willingness to contain the expansion and growth of social organizations and to circumscribe their work is sanctioned not only by the reiteration of the double registration and management system, but also by several provisions that prevent organizations that engage in activities of the same kind to register in the same administrative area and to autonomously open local branch offices⁴⁴.

In 1999, the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People’s Congress produced the “Public Welfare Donations Law” (公益事业捐赠法, *Gongyi shiye juanzeng fa*), a provision created with the aim of standardizing the behavior of donators and beneficiaries and at defining the non-for-profit activities that fall into the sphere of public welfare.

Starting from the 2000s, the government’s efforts to create and ameliorate a uniform and comprehensive control system for social organizations resulted in a series of revisions of the relative legislation and in the adoption of different measures. The work of coordination and reinforcement of the state control made the “innovation of social management” (社会管理创新, *shehui guanli chuangxin*) the focal point of the 12th quinquennial plan (2011-2015). The kind of innovation provided by the administration of Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 was functional to the preservation of the social order and required the requalification of the role of social and mass organizations through the so-called “joint government” (共同治理, *gongtong zhili*) practice, according to which some governmental functions could be carried out by social organizations under the Party’s supervision⁴⁵. According to Hu Jintao, the meaning of social innovation was to adopt a

⁴² Ma Q. (2002). “The Governance of NGOs in China since 1978: How Much Autonomy?”. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 31(3), 316

⁴³ Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Groups (社会团体登记管理条例; *Shehui tuanti dengji guanli tiaoli*), 8th Standing Committee Session of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 1998, Art. 1

⁴⁴ Hildebrandt T. (2013). *Op. cit.* p. 42

⁴⁵ Fewsmith, J. (2012). “Social Management as a Way of Coping with Heightened Social Tensions”. *China Leadership Monitor*, 36

series of reforms aimed at lowering the barriers for the registration of social organizations, implementing programs for their incubation and their development and creating standards that can serve as guidelines for the expansion of the third sector. The program of Hu Jintao and the then Prime Minister Wen Jiabao 温家宝 was based on the notion according to which the incorporation of social organizations into the corporatist state system, along with a policy of opening up, could contribute to the legitimation of the state's authority and to sustain its proper functioning. The result of such measures was the increasing number of medium-sized, moderate and reformist social organizations, that managed to survive and multiply and to gain a certain degree of legitimacy⁴⁶.

The elimination of the legal grey zone in which social organizations had operated over the previous decades is one of the main objectives of the political approach of Xi Jinping 习近平 in this regard. As early as 2013, Xi had already introduced new ideas on the concept of civil society, centered on a Maoist interpretation of society and very distant from the “joint government” principle introduced by the Hu-Wen administration. In the so-called “Document Number Nine” were in fact discussed the “Seven Dangers” (七不说, *Qi bu shuo*), deriving from an excessively westernized vision of the Chinese contemporary political context, along with the condemnation of an uncontrolled civil society which was viewed as antagonizing the state authority and thus very dangerous. Xi's administration made the fight against the ideological influence of western countries one of the pillars of its political line. This reflected on the government's approach towards social organizations and, from a legislative perspective, it translated into the adoption of some of the most relevant measures concerning the regulation and the control of such entities: the 2016 Charity Law and the 2017 Overseas NGOs Management Law)

1.2.5 Charity Law and public welfare

The Charity Law (慈善法, *Cishan Fa*) was promulgated on March 16, 2016, in the occasion of the Fourth Session of the Twelfth National People's Congress and became

⁴⁶ Froissart, C. “Changing Patterns of Civil Society Comparing the Hu-Wen and Xi Jinping Eras”. In W. W. L. Lam (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Communist Party* (pp. 352–353). Abingdon: Routledge. Retrieved from <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315543918.ch22>

officially effective on September 1 of the same year. As already pointed out in section 1.2.3, the law provides the establishment of a new category of social organizations, namely “charitable organizations”, non-for-profit legal entities that engage activities of assistance for the poor and the disadvantaged, special support for weak groups (elders, orphans, people with disabilities, etc.), aid in emergency situations (natural disasters, humanitarian and health crisis), education, scientific and cultural promotion, reduction of environmental pollution, awareness-building on ecological causes and other initiatives in accordance with Article 3 of the law.

One of the most innovative features of the Charity Law is the fact that it provides the elimination of the double registration system for charitable organizations, which are no longer requested to gain the support of a sponsoring unit in order to be legally registered at the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Organizations such as social groups, foundations and social services organizations (the latter referred to as non-business enterprises until the introduction of the law under discussion) that had already been registered at the Ministry and that engage in the charitable activities enumerated in Article 3 of the law can submit their application in order to be granted the status of charitable organizations, in compliance to the dispositions of the “Measures for the Designation of Charitable Organizations” (慈善组织认定办法, *Cishan zuzhi rending banfa*). Organizations not yet registered as social organizations can at the same time register as such and submit the request for being granted the charitable status. The promulgation of the Charity Law also sanctions the possibility for charitable organizations to engage in public fundraising initiatives, a possibility that up until this moment had been prerogative of public foundations. Article 22 of the Charity Law states that public fundraising activities can be carried out by organizations that have been legally registered for at least two years, upon subscription of their fundraising plan to the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Public fundraising initiatives also comprise online fundraising, which is regulated by the double standard of control decreed by the Ministry of Civil Affairs in July 2017. The introduction of the Charity Law represents the first attempt by the government to regulate the domestic charitable organizations and to officially define the boundaries and the characteristics of the charitable sector. The main objective of the law is to clarify the situation and to grant transparency for what regards the registration and work of charitable organizations. The streamlining of the registration procedure provided by the Charity Law and the possibility for recognized organizations to engage in public fundraising activities, although conferring to the state and party a wide margin of discretion, can nonetheless determine

the expansion of the charitable sector and an increment of donations. However, the equation between charitable sector and public welfare⁴⁷, along with the restriction of the officially recognized charitable activities, impose serious limits for grassroots social organizations engaging in activities that differ from the ones enumerated in Article 3 of the law. Non charitable social organizations, whose contribution to the public welfare is no more regarded as important as the charity-oriented ones, inevitably loose legitimacy and tend to be marginalized in favor of the latter⁴⁸. In addition, it can be expected that an increasing number of organizations is going to be more motivated to reconsider the activities they engage in and their priorities in order to obtain the privileged status of charitable organization. The primary consequence of the introduction of the Charity Law is obvious and consists in the sharp distinction between charitable and non-charitable organizations, while the previous categorization of Chinese social organizations loses its original meaning.

1.2.6 The impact of the Overseas NGOs Management Law on Chinese social organizations

In the aftermath of the introduction of the Deng's reforms and the adoption of market economy policies, China began to open up to overseas non-governmental organizations (ONGOs), giving such organizations the opportunity to greatly expand on the whole territory of the PRC, Hong Kong and Macau. 1996, in particular, was the milestone year during which most of the overseas non-governmental organizations still active today in China began to officially register. By efficiently establishing cooperation relations with governmental and non-governmental actors in China, ONGOs engaged in a great variety of activities covering different matters, from poverty and disaster alleviation, to community development, to environmental protection. The expansion of ONGOs in China was aimed at taking advantage of the fertile and unspoiled ground the country

⁴⁷ International Center for Non-Profit Law. "China's 2016 Charity Law FAQs". *International Center for Non-Profit Law website*. Retrieved November 16, 2019, from <https://www.icnl.org/wp-content/uploads/China-FAQ-Charity-Law.pdf>

⁴⁸ Froissart, C. (2017). *Op. cit.* p. 372

represented for the construction and development of a global civil society⁴⁹. The proliferation of foreign NGOs in China continued unceasingly until the present day and, although there is not official data on the number of foreign non-governmental organizations currently operating on the territory of the PRC, at a press conference in the occasion of the 12th National People's Congress on 4 March, 2016, the former vice-foreign minister Fu Ying 傅莹 stated that at that time there were more the 7'000 legally registered foreign NGOs.⁵⁰

The Overseas NGOs Management Law (境外非政府组织境内活动管理法, *Jingwai feizhengfu zuzhi jingnei huodong guangli fa*), ratified by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on April 18, 2016 and came into effect on January 1, 2017, represents the first official attempt to provide a comprehensive set of norms aimed at regulating the activities of foreign non-governmental organizations in China. The law consists of a total of 54 articles divided into 7 sections and contains several measures for the management and control of foreign non-governmental organizations (referred to as ONGOs, overseas non-governmental organizations) in China, including provisions on their registration, supervision and the management of their activities on the territory of the PRC. As stated by the law, an ONGO is a foundation, social group, think-tank or another type of non-governmental organization with headquarters in a foreign country⁵¹. The provisions contained in the Overseas NGOs Management Law are officially aimed at regulating and managing the activities undertaken by foreign NGOs (referred to as ONGOs, overseas non-governmental organizations) on the territory of the People's Republic of China in order to facilitate and ameliorate communication and cooperation between different actors⁵².

The most outstanding measure of the Overseas NGOs Management Law, as it is also the case for other legislative measures that regulate non-governmental and non-for-profit activities on the Chinese territory, consists in the different state institution in charge of the registration of foreign organizations. Whilst in the case of domestic social

⁴⁹ Ma, Q. (2006). "Globalization, International Non-governmental Organizations and the Development of China's Non-governmental Organizations". *Open Times*, 2006(2)

⁵⁰ Feng, C. (2017). "The NGO Law in China and its Impact on Overseas funded NGOs". *Cosmopolitan Civil Society: an Interdisciplinary Journal*, 9(3), 98

⁵¹ Overseas NGOs Management Law of the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国境外非政府组织境内活动管理法; *Jingwai feizhengfu zuzhi jingnei huodong guangli fa*), 20th Session of the 12th Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2017, Art. 2

⁵² Overseas NGOs Management Law of the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国境外非政府组织境内活动管理法; *Jingwai feizhengfu zuzhi jingnei huodong guangli fa*), 20th Session of the 12th Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2017, Art.1

organizations, regardless of the fact that they are granted the charitable organization status or not, the competent institution is nonetheless the Ministry of Civil Affairs, for what regards overseas NGOs the task is carried out by the Ministry of Public Security. In conformity with the double registration system provided for domestic social organizations, prior to submitting their registration request at the Ministry or the local bureaus, overseas NGOs are required to gain the support of a sponsoring supervisory professional unit. The aforementioned procedure is only valid for organizations that intend to open a permanent branch office on the territory of the People's Republic, whereas if foreign NGOs want to engage in temporary activities (whose length should not exceed one year) they are requested to enter into an agreement with a partner Chinese organization, whose function is to submit the NGO's registration application and not to supervise its work⁵³. The provision that obliges overseas non-governmental organizations to register at the Ministry of Public Security mirrors the government's attitude towards such organizations, which are to be regulated and controlled primarily because they pose a threat to national security. According to the law's dispositions, overseas organizations are prohibited to engage in activities that threaten ethnic unity and the safety of the nation, as well as to harm the interests of China and those of citizens, of legal persons or other Chinese associations⁵⁴. The mindset of the state leadership on the subject fits perfectly into the political line pursued by President Xi Jinping, that condemns every kind of foreign and western influence on Chinese society. In this sense, the Overseas NGOs Management Law represents one of the many instruments that the Chinese state has in hand in order to push back foreign countries' interferences, of which ONGOs constitute an expression that could be potentially harmful for China's internal stability. The law is itself the integration of a series of provisions on national security adopted by the Xi Jinping administration and aimed at reinforcing the principle of "rule by law", like the 2014 Espionage Act, the 2015 Counter-Terrorism Law and National Security Law and the 2016 Cybersecurity Law⁵⁵.

The Overseas NGOs Management Law has several implications that directly interest Chinese grassroots social organizations. Since such organizations do not maintain any kind of relationship with official bodies and institutions, or at least it happens in just a

⁵³ International Center for Non-Profit Law. "China's Overseas NGO Law FAQs". *International Center for Non-Profit Law website*. Retrieved November 18, 2019, from <https://www.icnl.org/wp-content/uploads/China-FAQ-Overseas-NGO-Law.pdf>

⁵⁴ Overseas NGOs Management Law of the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国境外非政府组织境内活动管理法, *Jingwai feizhengfu zuzhi jingnei huodong guangli fa*), 20th Session of the 12th Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2017, Art. 4

⁵⁵ Feng, C. (2017). *Op. cit.* p. 98

few cases and to a limited extent, the majority of them is therefore sustained by funding streams coming from overseas non-governmental organizations and rely on their partnership and support. The registration system provided for ONGOs by the law, which leaves a broad margin of discretion to the Ministry of Public Security, imposes several restrictions to the work of such organizations in China which are expected to significantly cut down their number and to compromise the relations between them and their Chinese counterparts. The deterioration of the relationship between ONGOs and grassroots Chinese social organizations can result in a further marginalization of the latter that, in a social context where the control of institutions and official bodies is increasingly tighter, see their own development possibilities and perspectives constrained.

Chapter 2 - The internationalization of Chinese social organizations

2.1 Global China: a framework for the internationalization of Chinese social organizations

2.1.1 China's integration into the global context

The “Reform and Opening-up Policy”, ratified by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, greatly contributed to the definition of the characteristics of contemporary China, a country that from the last decades of the 20th century began to look beyond its national borders in order to find the means to consolidate a staggering domestic economic growth and whose global position has gradually become more consistent, to the point where it now ranks as the second biggest economy in the world by nominal GDP, with a projected growth estimated at 6,1% as of 2019⁵⁶. The economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping led to the adoption of market policies aimed at constructing the so-called “socialism with Chinese characteristics” (中国特色社会主义, *Zhongguo Tese Shehui Zhuyi*) and paved the way for the global rise of the Chinese economy. Over the years ensuing the implementation of the policy, several economic arrangements and measures coordinated the process of internationalization of the country's economy and the ongoing economic, political and institutional change set up by Deng's reforms.

The launch in 1999 of the “Go Out Strategy” (走出去战略, *Zouchuqu Zhanlüe*), an internationalization agenda aimed at boosting the overseas investments of domestic firms, pointed out China's desire to make globalization a stepping stone for the country's future development and highlighted its competitiveness on a global scale. The introduction of the strategy was motivated by the need to make the Chinese market able to absorb the shocks coming from international economic crises, such as the Asian financial crisis in

⁵⁶ International Monetary Fund. (2019, April). “World Economic Outlook Database, April 2019”. *International Monetary Fund website*. Retrieved November 21, 2020, from <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/CHN>

1997. In order to maintain a stable growth rate based on export, the authorities decided to transform the country's economic system by focusing on the diversification of Chinese outward investments, rather than on opening to inward investments from other countries. By implementing measures that would favor the internationalization of domestic firms, the "Go Out Strategy" has greatly contributed to the complete integration of China into the global economic system. In 2015, the value of China's foreign direct investments (FDI) reached 145,67 USD billions, and the country became the second overseas investor in the world⁵⁷. The implementation of the aforementioned policy coincided with China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), ratified on the December 11th, 2001. The obtainment of the long-awaited access to the international organization has led to an increasing liberalization of the commerce directed to the other members and marked one very important step ahead towards the full realization of the Reform and Opening up policy initiated by Deng in the late 70's.

The last major effort that China put in increasing its economic and political influence on a global scale is the launch of the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI), that also goes by the name of "One Belt One Road" (一带一路, *Yi Dai Yi Lu*). BRI, announced by President Xi Jinping during his two official visits in Kazakhstan and Indonesia, respectively in September and October 2013⁵⁸, represents a model of economic, political and cultural cooperation designed with the purpose of creating solid relations between China and many other Asian, African and European countries. It is a strategic initiative aimed at stimulating the development and economic growth of more than 60 countries through major investments in the fields of infrastructures, telecommunications and industry⁵⁹. The ultimate objective of the project is to build a vast collaborative network among different contexts based on two main trajectories that run on both land and sea: the "belt" (带, *Dai*) is a land route that follows the path of the New Silk Road, connecting China and Europe, whereas the maritime "road" (路, *Lu*) links several ports in the Indian Ocean to the ones in the Mediterranean Sea along the XXI Century Maritime Silk Road. The name of the project is self-explanatory: the whole rhetoric is explicitly referred to the evocative

⁵⁷ Li Y. (2018). "China's Go Out Policy: a Review on China's Promotion Policy for Outward Foreign Direct Investment from a Historical Perspective", IWE Working Papers 244, Institute for World Economics - Centre for Economic and Regional Studies- Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

⁵⁸ People's Republic of China State Council. (2015, March 28). "Chronology of China's Belt and Road Initiative". *People's Republic of China State Council website*. Retrieved November 21, 2019, from http://english.www.gov.cn/news/top_news/2015/04/20/content_281475092566326.htm

⁵⁹ Liu, W., Dunford, M. (2016). "Inclusive Globalization: Unpacking China's Belt and Road Initiative". *Area Development and Policy*, 1(3), 333

suggestion of the ancient Silk Road, whose spirit the Belt and Road Initiative wishes to bring back to life by handing back to China a dominant position in the global trade flows. The formalization of the initiative, on the occasion of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2017, points out the desire of the authorities to guide China into a new global dimension, in which its renewed influence can finally contribute to shaping the processes of globalization.

The escalation that led China to a more complete economic integration into the international context resulted in a radical shift in the country's attitude towards foreign affairs, and involved a series of geopolitical implications. Today's China, unlike the Maoist one, owns the appropriate means to play an active role on a global scale and, over time, it rose to a position in which it can actively contribute to the reformulation of international rules and practices. The reform and opening up policy and its following evolution, in the form of diverse arrangements and measures, resulted in a shift in perspective: the world is no more seen as a target for the Maoist revolution, but it is rather to be conceived as an ensemble of opportunities that are not to be missed in order to sustain domestic growth⁶⁰. In the post-Mao era, China went from being a *revolutionary* to becoming an actual *stakeholder* in the international system⁶¹, and such transformation comes with an increasing degree of international accountability for the country.

2.1.2 *The development of China's foreign aid system*

The ever-increasing influence of China on global governance has resulted in building higher expectations in terms of the major responsibility role that the country is called to play internationally. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the formula "responsible great power", a much recurring phrase that refers to the intention (or necessity) that China has of projecting a positive image of itself beyond the country's borders, by becoming aware of the obligations and duties that come with a renewed pivotal position on the international stage and by meeting the global community's increasingly high expectations. Such conception of international responsibility had been set forth by former President Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 in 2004, when he proposed the introduction of an international strategy

⁶⁰ Wang H. & Rosenau J.N. (2009). "China and Global Governance". *Asian Perspective*, 33(3), 28

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 28

built on the notion of “Pacific Development” (和平发展, *Heping Fazhan*), aimed at creating a stable international environment in which China could preserve and enhance its own domestic economic growth and development. The priority of Chinese authorities in this context is that of maintaining and strengthening a communist system based upon a sound economy (and economic growth) and, consequently, diplomacy and foreign affairs become means to achieve this⁶². The recognized role of foreign affairs is to mitigate the widespread feelings of concern related to the abrupt rise of China on the global arena, and foreign aid is one of the soft power tools in the hands of the authorities. The volume of Chinese outward foreign aid has considerably increased in recent years: between 2004 and 2014 China engaged in 4300 foreign aid projects in 140 countries all over the world, for a total financial value of 350 billion US dollars, just below United States’ total of 390 billion US dollars⁶³. Chinese foreign aid had begun to develop since the first years of the People’s Republic, when such concept was borrowed from the Soviet Union. The first foreign aid programs were firstly implemented in the 1950s, with the aim to provide assistance in the post-conflict reconstruction in North Korea. From the 1950s to the 1970s, foreign aid was regarded as an actual diplomatic tool designed to prevent China from being locked down in a dangerous international isolation. In this first phase, China’s foreign aid featured a very strong political value and, from an economic standpoint, it was aimed at allowing the recipient country to develop its own strategy and to obtain a certain level of self-reliance. The concepts of non-conditionality of China’s foreign aid and of economic independence of the beneficiary countries are embodied in the “Eight Principles of Foreign Economic and Technical Assistance” (“中国对外援助的八项原则”, *Zhongguo Duiwai Yuanzhu de ba xiang Yuanze*). The Principles, which were enunciated by then Premier Zhou Enlai in 1964, include: mutual benefit; no conditions attached to the aid provided; no debt burden for the recipient country; assistance in the development of the recipient country’s own economic system; implementation of projects that need less capital and provide a quick return of interests; high quality of the aid provided; ensure that the recipient country learns how to use the technology provided by China and guarantee that Chinese experts are treated equally to

⁶² Hirono M. (2018). *Exploring the Links between Chinese Foreign Policy and Humanitarian Action: Multiple Interest, Processes and Actors*, HPG Working Paper. London: Overseas Development Institute

⁶³ Fuchs A. & Rudyak M. (2019). “The Motives of China’s Foreign Aid”. In K. Zeng (ed.) *Handbook on the International Political Economy of China* (p. 408). Cheltenham: Elgar

local ones, without privileges⁶⁴. In the aftermath of the launch of Deng Xiaoping's reforms in the late 1970s, China's foreign aid partially lost its initial political value and became essentially instrumental to the pursuit of certain economic interests. Deng translated the concept of mutual benefit included in the "8 Principles of Foreign Economic and Technical Assistance" into a totally new economic dimension. In the occasion of his official visit in Tanzania in 1983, Premier Zhao Ziyang 赵紫阳 introduced the so called "4 Principles of Sino-African Economic and Technical Cooperation" ("中国同非洲国家经济技术合作的四项原则", *Zhongguo tong Feizhou Guojia Jingji Jishu Hezuo de si xiang Yuanze*) which stress the concepts of common development and mutual economic benefit, marking both the theoretical and practical abandonment of the autarkic Maoist rhetoric and policies in terms of foreign affairs.

Starting from the 1990s, China's foreign aid became increasingly important in view of the country's commercial strategy, and the concept of international assistance underwent a radical process of transformation, becoming a suitable channel for the promotion of international trade and overseas investments. Over this period, Chinese foreign aid was greatly inspired and shaped by the Japanese experience, that had already built a model based on the so called "trinity" of aid, investments and trade, which entailed the granting of concessional loans from the government and its involvement in joint venture projects. The Japanese model of aid was therefore explicitly aimed to link aid, trade and investment interests and, as it has always been the case for China since its first involvement in aid projects, the Japanese were aware of the necessity of developing the recipient country's self-reliance by steering away from political issues. Needless to say, because of the conceptual affinity between the Japanese and Chinese point of view, this model was considered very valuable by China and represented the foundation on which the "Great Strategy of Economy and Trade", introduced by Wu Yi 吴仪 in 1994, was established⁶⁵.

In the 2000s and 2010s, with the introduction of the "Go Out Strategy", the access to the WTO and the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative, the expectations on China's ability to take responsibility for its international rise have resulted in more pressure on

⁶⁴ Chen, D. (2010). "Nuli kaichuang yuanwai gongzuo jumian – shenru guanche luoshi quanguo yuanzhu gongzuo huiyi jingshen" 努力开创援外工作局面 – 深入贯彻落实全国援助工作会议精神 (Strive to initiate new progress in foreign aid work - Thoroughly carry out the spirit of national working conference on foreign Aid). *Seeking Truth 求实 (Qiushi)*, 19, 43

⁶⁵Johnston L. & Rudyak M. (2017). "China's 'Innovative and Pragmatic' Foreign Aid: Shaped by and now Shaping Globalization". In Song L., Garnaut R., Fang C., Johnston L. (eds.) *China's New Sources of Economic Growth: Human Capital, Innovation and Technological Change*, 2(-), 445, Canberra: ANU Press

the country's foreign aid system. In 2011 the Chinese government published the first ever comprehensive bilingual (Chinese and English) "White Book" on foreign aid, which confirmed that the main focus is set on African countries, where China is mostly committed in the implementation of food security and poverty alleviation programs.⁶⁶

2.2 Defining the internationalization process of Chinese social organizations

2.2.1 Political considerations on the drivers for the internationalization of Chinese social organizations

Today's China can be regarded as an international power. As already described in section 2.1, the opening-up to the world since the late 70s, along with the transformation of the country from an aid recipient to an aid donor in recent years, represent two factors that imply a much deeper involvement of the Chinese government in foreign issues. Nonetheless, state agencies and businesses are not the only actors involved in the aforementioned process of internationalization: they have rapidly come to understand the role Chinese social organizations can play in the provision of foreign aid to developing countries, as well as in the shaping of China's image in global governance. The expansion of the participation of domestic social organization abroad, namely their internationalization process, constitutes an increasingly relevant ingredient of the process of globalization of modern China. One of the leading utilitarian factors that drive Chinese social organizations to internationalize, pointed out by Li and Dong (2018)⁶⁷, is related to the complementary nature of the relationship between domestic social organizations and the State and the close connections that link the two parts. Namely, the government encourages Chinese social organizations to "go out" in order to provide assistance in the

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Li X. & Dong Q. (2018). "Chinese NGOs are "Going Out": History, Scale, Characteristics, Outcomes and Barriers". *Nonprofit Policy Forum*, 9(1), 7

achievement of certain political goals⁶⁸. Needless to say, the governmental tendency to push for the internationalization of non-governmental organizations is also connected to the concept of “great responsible power”, according to which China’s international accountability is directly proportional to the increasingly important role it plays in the global context.

In the eyes of state actors, social organizations “going out” constitute a soft power instrument able to smooth China’s international image as a rapidly growing power, that is currently the world’s second biggest economy and is likely to eventually hold a dominant position in global governance. This can be considered as one of the main reasons for the Chinese government to increasingly be willing to sustain the internationalization of domestic social organizations, which is nonetheless related to a series of intrinsic features of social organizations themselves that are also to be taken into account. Social organizations “going out” are believed to play a relevant role in enhancing the relations between China and the world with their ability to bring innovative skills and resources to the country’s set of soft power instruments. Such organizations are understood as able to contribute to the creation of new partnerships and sources of legitimacy, shifting the focus on people-to-people relations rather than on government-to-government dynamics.⁶⁹ In this respect, in an interview with *China Development Brief* (中国发展简报, *Zhongguo Fazhan Jianbao*), Wang Xingzui 王行最, the executive vice-president of China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA, 中国扶贫基金会, *Zhongguo Fupin Jijinhui*), one of China’s most active internationalized foundations, stated that Chinese social organizations feature four characteristics that make them particularly suitable for sustaining the work of the government in foreign aid programs. In the words of Wang, domestic social organizations are indeed professional, neutral, innovative and are distinguished by a keen ability to penetrate into the communities of the recipient countries⁷⁰. This definition reflects the previously mentioned positive contribution that Chinese civil society organizations can bring to the work of the Chinese

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Bannister T. (2015, November 2). “China’s Own Overseas NGOs: the Past, Present and Future of Chinese NGOs Going Out”. *China Development Brief website*. Retrieved February 15, 2019, from <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Special-Issue-Chinese-NGOs-Going-Out-PDF-final.pdf>

⁷⁰ Luo B. (2017, May 2). “China NGOs need to play a greater role in global governance: a Q&A with Wng Xingzui”. *China Development Brief website*. Retrieved from <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/articles/chinese-ngos-need-play-greater-role-global-governance-qa-wang-xingzui/>

government or firms abroad. Chinese social organizations are undergoing a process of professionalization and specialization at the domestic level, and innovation is in fact a much recurring term when discussing this matter. The deeper access to local communities is guaranteed by the inherent non-governmental nature of the organizations under consideration, which contributes to lowering the entry barriers to the community level, and therefore supposedly allow them to operate more efficiently as long as the people's most basic needs are concerned. It is necessary to point out that such optimistic view of the added value that social organizations can bring to the government work overseas is mainly referred to those relatively few entities that do not suffer from lacks of resources and personnel, namely GONGOs such as CFPA itself. The notion carried out by Wang is again focused on the complementary relationship between Chinese social organizations and the State at the domestic level and, according to many scholars and professionals, this distinctive kind of relationship between social and state actors can be successfully exported abroad. Nonetheless, what draws attention in this context is the employment of the adjective "neutral", which seems to clash with the very concept of civil society. In fact, when discussing the features of social organizations or international NGOs, little room is usually left for this term. On the contrary, civil society is usually understood as a force which is in constant opposition with the state, or at least not affiliated with it. Indeed, little connection can be found between impartiality and the traditional notion of civil society that views it as an essentially political yet non-governmental space in which political and social interests are articulated, and which is aimed at catalyzing institutional transformations⁷¹. Given the aforementioned symbiotic state-civil society relationship in China, the "neutrality" of social organizations Wang Xingzui refers to is therefore to be considered as a hallmark of Chinese civil society organizations, pointing out the core features and the orientation of domestic social organizations "going out". As will be further discussed below, it is worth noticing that most internationalized Chinese social organizations are service-oriented in nature or, in other words, that service-oriented organizations are most likely to internationalize. The orientation of social organizations can be indeed considered as a driving factor for the internationalization of such entities itself, since the government is more likely to enhance the cross-border expansion of organizations operating in the fields of poverty alleviation, education or healthcare services provision, rather than that of advocacy-oriented ones, which can antagonize

⁷¹ Hsu J. & Hasmath R. (2018). *op. cit.* p. 23

certain domestic state or social actors or, in turn, be antagonized by them. Hence, it can be stated that one of the main factors that drive the internationalization of Chinese social organizations is political in nature: it concerns the intimate relationship between the State and civil society organizations in China and implies the government's tendency to encourage social organization to "go out" in order to make China's rise less threatening in the world's eyes.

2.2.2 Major turning points in the history of the phenomenon

The development of domestic social organizations in China is rather recent and dates back to the late 70s, figuring as one of the effects caused by the introduction of the economic reforms by Deng Xiaoping and the adoption of forms of market economy. If compared to Western countries' civil societies, which generally boast a longer and richer history, Chinese civil society appears to be at a very early stage of its development. As a result of this, it can be argued that, in the past, many organizations may not have had the necessary experience or resources that could allow them to internationalize⁷². Therefore, as it is also the case for the development of Chinese civil society, the process of Chinese social organization "going out" clearly seems to be still in its infancy.

Although the roots of the internationalization of Chinese civil society can be traced back up to the 80s, the actual process of going out did not take shape until the early 2000s. Over this period of more than twenty years, some Chinese social organizations mainly responded to the donations that international agencies made to China by establishing links with some governmental agencies, which sought to take advantage of such donations. In this period several organizations begin to actively acquire external resources and some of them start to go abroad with the aim of raising funds for domestic projects.⁷³ The beginning of this phase matches with the first years ensuing the introduction of Deng's reforms and the behavior of social organizations shows features that closely follow the governmental tendency of opening-up to the world to actively seek and import resources and experiences from other contexts. The launch of the "Go Out Strategy" in the late 90s,

⁷² Bannister T. (2015). *op. cit*

⁷³ Li X. & Dong Q. (2018). *op. cit.* p.9

marked a turning point for the Chinese State policy on the internationalization of national firms: many Chinese state-owned and private companies and businesses began to actively go abroad in this period. Again, the governmental tendencies are in this phase paralleled by the behavior of civil society actors: 2004 is in fact the year in which the first Chinese social organizations, fostered by the introduction of the “Regulations on the Management of Foundations” designed for the purpose of standardizing the organization and activities of domestic foundations⁷⁴, began to internationalize by actually “going out”. In the same year, the GONGO China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) proposed a systematic strategy for its internationalization agenda and, in the wake of the Indian Ocean tsunami, implemented its first overseas program. As of 2005, CFPA had already implemented aid programs in 12 countries and regions⁷⁵. The biennium 2004-2005 also saw the involvement of China’s main GONGOs in humanitarian projects worldwide: the Red Cross Society of China (中国红十字会, *Zhongguo Hong Shizi Hui*) and the China Charity Federation (中华慈善总会, *Zhonghua Cishan Zonghui*) both participated in fundraising activities for the 2004 tsunami and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan⁷⁶.

While laying out the history of the internationalization of Chinese social organizations, it is worth noticing that the pivotal moments in the development of the process usually consist of natural disasters and humanitarian crises. As it is the case for the 2004 and 2005 events in the Indian Ocean and Pakistan, which brought about a reaction from domestic social organizations, the 2015 Nepal earthquake also represented a major turning point in the history of the phenomenon. In the case of China, the importance of natural disasters for the building of civil society is valid for what regards both the process of internationalization of social organizations and their domestic development. Events such as earthquakes, floods, etc. can act as catalysts that boost the reaction of civil society actors, provide new opportunities for its growth and contribute to raise awareness among the population.⁷⁷ Similarly to the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, which is often referred to as a

⁷⁴ Regulations on the Management of Foundations (基金会管理条例; Jijinhui guanli tiaoli), 38th Session of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 2004, Art. 1

⁷⁵ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. “Our International Work”. *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation website*. Retrieved December 12, 2019, from <http://en.cfpa.org.cn/index.php?file=article&cmd=list&cid=12>

⁷⁶ Brenner D. (2012). “Are Chinese NGOs Going Out? The Role of Chinese NGOs and GONGOs in Sino-African Relations”. *Journal of Public and International Affairs*, 2012(23), 29

⁷⁷ Bannister, T., & Wu, W. (2015, April 29). „Chinese NGOS Cross the Himalayas: from Tangshan to Wenchuan to Nepal?”. *China Development Brief Website*. Retrieved February 13, 2019, from <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/articles/chinese-ngos-cross-the-himalayas-from-tangshan-to-wenchuan-to-nepal/>

very important moment since it caused the first ever mass involvement of Chinese social organizations and presented to the people the importance and effectiveness of the intervention of non-state actors in the alleviation of humanitarian crises, the 2015 Nepal earthquake can also be considered a watershed moment for the development of Chinese civil society and its internationalization process. In fact, the aftermath of the 2015 Nepal earthquake saw the greatest intervention of Chinese social organizations abroad until that time. Many GONGOs and NGOs quickly responded to the crisis not only by engaging in fundraising initiatives on various online platforms and by sharing information on the situation among society, but also by actively participating in on-site disaster relief operations. The mass involvement of Chinese social organization in the 2015 Nepal earthquake humanitarian operations, along with their increased operational and organizational capacities, indicate the achievement of a higher degree of maturity by such organizations, which for the first time were able to carry out highly effective work abroad. In fact, the majority of the Chinese social organizations which until that time had decided to “go out” only succeeded in carrying out one-off international projects, which were limited in funds, resources and potential, and were organized without coordinating with other actors⁷⁸. It can be therefore stated that, although the “going out” process of Chinese social organizations is very recent and still at a developmental stage, especially when compared to that of Western NGOs, events like the rapid and coordinated response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake bode well for the future development of the phenomenon and can provide a very valuable set of instruments and experiences to be shared with other Chinese organizations interested in internationalizing their work.

Along with the important role played by the Nepal natural disaster for the internationalization of Chinese social organizations, another major turning point for the process is represented by the 2009 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), in the occasion of which the closing communiqué by the Chinese government expressed the intention to promote the involvement of Chinese NGOs in Africa. FOCAC is a platform established by China and several African countries and serves as a mechanism for collective consultation, dialogue and cooperation between developing countries.⁷⁹ It was

⁷⁸ Lu B. (2016, March 24). “Zhongguo jijinhui zouchuqu de qushi yu xianzhuang” 中国基金会走出去的趋势与现状 (Chinese foundations going out: tendencies and current situation). *China Development Brief website*. Retrieved November 22, 2019, from <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.org.cn/news-18448.html>

⁷⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China. (n.d.). “Characteristics of FOCAC”. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China website*. Retrieved November 23, 2019, from <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zflt/eng/gylt/ljj/t157576.htm>

first held in Beijing in 2000 and its main aim is to officialize and institutionalize China-Africa relations.⁸⁰ The 2009 Forum has marked the intention of the Chinese leadership to add a non-governmental dimension to the Sino-African relations, which until then had been essentially based on government-to-government dynamics. The importance of such event is to be stressed in light of the great role Africa plays as main recipient of Chinese foreign aid and of the close and friendly diplomatic and commercial relations linking China and several African countries. In fact, after the 2009 FOCAC, several social organizations began to turn their attention towards Africa. To give a few examples, in 2010 CYDF started “Project Hope in Africa” (希望工程走进非洲, *Xīwàng gōngchéng zǒujīn*), a project aimed at enhancing education development that as of 2015 launched 23 primary schools in five African countries (Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda and Namibia)⁸¹, while the following year CFPA inaugurated the “Africa-China Sudan Abu Ushar Friendship Hospital” (阿布欧舍医院, *Ā'bù'ōushè Yīyuàn*) in the context of the “Maternal and Children Health Network Establishment Project”. It can be stated that the 2009 FOCAC laid the foundations for Chinese social organizations’ international engagement in African countries and led to the strengthening of the cooperation between Chinese and African non-governmental actors, making the continent one of the main targets for the implementation of international projects.

2.2.3 Main hurdles to the internationalization of Chinese social organizations

As already mentioned above, the internationalization process of Chinese social organizations appears to still be in its infancy, and its development is currently at its early stages: it is in fact lagging behind and not keeping pace with the national “going out” strategy pursued by Chinese firms and businesses. At the present date, only a few Chinese foundations and independent organizations are actually engaging in activities abroad, and even fewer are carrying out long-term projects or have opened international offices. While this is partially due to the relative delay in the starting of the process, which can be said

⁸⁰ Tremann, C. (2018, September 26). “Beijing Changing Norms of Development, Cautiously”. *ISPI website*. Retrieved December 2, 2019, from <https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/beijing-changing-norms-development-cautiously-21284>

⁸¹ China Youth Development Foundation. “Xiwang gongcheng zoujin Feizhou” 希望工程走进非洲 (Project Hope arrives in Africa). *China Youth Development Foundation website*. Retrieved December 4, 2019, from <https://www.cydf.org.cn/xwgczejfz/>

to have actually begun only in the early 2000s, other factors contribute to hindering the organizations' international development. The hurdles Chinese social organizations need to overcome in order to undergo a process of internationalization are diverse and related to a series of factors, ranging from legislative impediments or confusion, to insufficient funding, to shortages in professional staff. Like many scholars and observers underlined, one of the core problems concerning Chinese social organizations potential to actually "go out" is inherently linked to the political and regulatory environment that surrounds Chinese civil society organizations⁸². Policies and regulations that rule the sector were developed and introduced in a period when China was still mainly receiving donations from the outside. As a consequence, there is no normative basis Chinese social organizations can rely upon in order to set up and coordinate their internationalization process⁸³. One example of this fact is the so-called Law of the People's Republic of China on Donations for Public Welfare (中华人民共和国公益事业捐赠法, *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Gongyi Shiye Juanzeng Fa*). Adopted in occasion of the 10th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the 9th National People's Congress on June 28 1999 and effective from September 1 of the same year, its primary objectives are to promote the development of public welfare and to encourage donations and to regulate them by protecting the lawful rights and interests of both the donor and recipient. Although such law is to be considered relevant in view of the normative framework of Chinese civil society and charitable activities, it introduces norms that only regulate inward donations to China and set the conditions for tariff relief. In fact, issues concerning outward donations from domestic institutions and organizations to other countries are not brought up by the law.

Nonetheless, the regulatory confusion is not only due to a legislation that does not keep pace with China's transition from being a donation-receiving country to a donation-giving one, and is not up to date with the phenomenon of Chinese social organizations "going out". Indeed, neither measures adopted in recent years, such as the Charity Law and the Overseas NGOs Management Law, promulgated respectively in 2016 and 2017, offer reliable landmarks for Chinese organizations seeking to internationalize. As already described in Chapter I, Charity Law's main purpose is to lay down a normative basis for charitable organizations, and the law's most innovative breakthrough consists in the elimination of the double registration system for charitable organizations. One more,

⁸² Lin J. & Zhang J. (2016). *Op.cit.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

however, since the aforementioned rule does not mention international charitable work, it does not provide social organizations with instruments that enable them to set up and coordinate an internationalization process which can be considered efficient from a legislative point of view. On the contrary, given that the Charity Law, by equalizing the charitable sector with the notion of public welfare, tends to marginalize all the other organizations that do not match the features of a charitable entity, it constitutes a further obstacle hindering both the domestic and international development of grassroots and independent organizations.

For what regards the Overseas NGOs Management Law and its potential effects on the internationalization of domestic social organizations, it can be stated that such a norm embodies the Chinese government's suspicions towards foreign NGOs, often viewed as tools through which western powers can exert their influence on China. Created with the official aim of facilitating communication and cooperation, the shifting of the official organ in charge of the registration of ONGOs (overseas non-governmental organizations) from Ministry of Civil Affairs to the Ministry of Public Security unveils the actual intention to tighten control over foreign non-governmental organisms. One of the effects of the introduction of this law may be the reduction of funding streams for not registered Chinese social organizations coming from ONGOs. This will most likely result in preventing Chinese organizations from developing at the domestic level and will have a particularly significant impact on those that use international funding to engage in work beyond the country's borders. Furthermore, the law is also expected to have negative implications for what regards the cooperation and the exchange of skills and knowledge between Chinese domestic organizations and international NGOs. If it is considered that international links and networks of partnerships are to be taken into account as key factors for the "going out" process of social organizations, as pointed out by both Deng Guosheng 邓国胜⁸⁴ and Huang Haoming 黄浩明⁸⁵, the effects of such legislative measure turn out to be much unfavorable for the international development of Chinese civil society.

The bottom line of the discourse on the faults of the legislative framework concerning the internationalization phenomenon of social organizations is that, as it is the case for

⁸⁴ Deng G. (2017). "Trends in Overseas Philanthropy by Chinese Foundations". *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 30(4), 682

⁸⁵ Huang H. (2013, June 1). "Woguo shehui zuzhi guojihua zhanlüe yu lujing yanjiu" 我国社会组织国际化战略与路径研究 (Strategies for the Internationalization of Chinese NGOs: a Study by Huang Haoming). *China Development Brief website*. Retrieved October 12, 2019, from <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/articles/huang-haomings-strategies-for-the-internationalization-of-chinese-ngos/>

the previous ones, the two most recent provisions, namely the 2016 Charity Law and the 2017 Overseas NGOs Management Law, do not primarily focus on the matter per se. This contributes to the creation of legislative pitfalls that disadvantage independent organizations that are often not registered and do not engage in service-oriented activities and benefits a few charitable-driven government-sponsored entities. As stated by the executive director of the China Association for NGO Cooperation (CANGO, 中国国际民间组织合作促进会, *Zhongguo Guoji Minjian Zuzhi Hezuo Cujin Hui*) Huang Haoming, since a sound legislative framework is fundamental for the international development of social organizations, the Chinese government should strategically prioritize this topic and provide a stable and reliable legal basis by coordinating efforts from different Ministries (Civil Affairs, Commerce, Finance) and other departments. What Huang pragmatically proposes is the deployment of a co-funded model between the government and civil society: while social organizations are appointed to carry out the projects, the government can supervise their work and assist them in the management of funds.

Apart from the burdens of the legislative framework of Chinese social organizations, other reasons why the process of “going out” is still in its early stages are related to the difficulties such organizations must deal with in terms of fundraising⁸⁶. Such hardships are mainly due to the fact that donations are affected by popular opinion and, since China still has its own major developmental and sustainability problems to solve, very often individuals prefer to financially support domestic projects over international ones. This tendency is exemplified by the case of CFPA. In spite of being the biggest Chinese foundation engaged in international work, in 2014 it received only RMB 4,39 million for projects overseas, accounting for 0,7% of the total donations it managed to collect the same year. The case is self-explanatory and implies that organizations like this one need to adjust the way they address the public in order to ensure stable funding sources: they must frame their overseas work in a way that is acceptable by Chinese donors⁸⁷. Unsurprisingly, it can be noted that the public is generally more keen to donate money to those organizations that engage in humanitarian aid activities in the aftermath of natural cataclysms. This is mainly due to the fact that China itself is a disaster-prone country with a long history of dealing with natural disasters. Furthermore, over the recent years events

⁸⁶ Li X. & Dong Q. (2018). *Op. cit.* p. 8

⁸⁷ Bannister T. (2015). *Op. cit.*

such as the 2008 Sichuan earthquake have shown how crucial civil society's reaction and intervention could be in solving a humanitarian crisis.

According to a survey conducted in 2016 by the Global Environmental Institute (GEI)⁸⁸, out of 20 organizations that stated their intention to “go out”, when asked to indicate the main obstacles preventing them to do so, 14 chose “inadequate financial support” and 8 chose “insufficient experience”. These two elements, that have already been pointed out in the present section, are linked to the fact that the process started relatively late, to problems in ensuring stable funding sources and, ultimately and more generally, to faults in the legislative framework. In addition, it should be underlined that, in the survey by GEI mentioned above, 13 organizations chose “lack of human resources” among the main challenges they encounter in “going out”. The fact that resolving issues related to human resources is a top priority for organizations seeking to “go out”, is also testified by another survey carried out by Deng Guosheng and published in 2017, which focuses on the case of the internationalization of Chinese foundations. The lack of professional staff can be said to have a dual nature: it is both a consequence of the shortage of funds and the lack of experience and legislative support, and a factor that hinders one organization's potential to internationalize. It is evident that, when an organization intends to engage in overseas work, a deep knowledge of the target foreign country or region is requested in order to supersede cultural and language barriers and thus efficiently providing contributions to international development. Clearly, this can only be achieved if the organization's staff is highly prepared and experienced in international work, but Chinese social organizations generally struggle in recruiting highly skilled and specialized personnel because of the low wages they are able to offer⁸⁹, which very often do not match the degree of specialization and amount of work requested and appear to not be competitive enough when compared to other professional areas. The problem of low wages for social organizations' personnel is also exacerbated by legislative burdens: for what concerns foundations, as provided by the Regulations for the Management of Foundations, the annual administrative expenses of such organizations cannot exceed ten percent of the total expenses, thus resulting in further budget constraints that prevent non-governmental organizations from constituting an enticing alternative for young and well-trained professionals.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Lin J. & Zhang J. (2016). *Op. cit.*

⁸⁹ Li X. & Dong Q. (2018). *Op. cit.*

⁹⁰ Deng G. (2017). *Op. cit.*

One more factor that is to be taken into account when discussing the obstacles Chinese social organizations encounter in setting up and pursuing the “going out” process is related to a major tendency in the organization’s leadership. Generally, the decision of Chinese social organizations to engage in international initiatives appears to be inherently associated to the leader’s aspirations and interests⁹¹, rather than based on a wide consensus among members or on a systematic strategy. Hence, the international undertakings of one social organization are not the result of a collectively designed policy on which all or most members agree upon. This can bring negative side effects such as the inability to receive an effective response and full support from the organization’s members, inconsistencies between the international strategy and the actual amount of resources and skills the organization is able to invest in its implementation and the undervaluation of certain risks. It is clear that the consequences of such tendency undermine the potential development of its overseas work, which is not likely to be fully expressed under such circumstances.

2.2.4 The present situation of the international development of Chinese social organizations

The several hindering factors that Chinese social organizations must deal with when expanding their interests beyond the country’s borders offer a realistic picture of their current development status as regards their international work. According to the Ministry of Civil Affairs, in 2012 the number of Chinese social organizations classified as “international or involved in international affairs” accounted to 556, representing only 0,11% of the total number of 499’000 organizations registered at that time⁹². Nonetheless, if it is beyond doubt that Chinese social organizations’ internationalization process is still at its earliest stage, its development in recent years still appears to be note-worthy in terms of numbers. A developmental analysis of such process can start from taking into consideration a research on the state of affairs of the internationalization of Chinese foundations, carried out by China Development Brief⁹³ and published in 2015. The study

⁹¹ Lu B. (2015). *Op. cit.*

⁹² Bannister T. (2015). *Op. cit.*

⁹³ Lu B. (2015). *Op. cit.*

has highlighted the fact that, as of 2014, 37 foundations can be considered to have internationalized, accounting for only 0,92% of the total 4005 domestic foundations in China. The research worked out an analysis of the scale of Chinese foundations “going out” based on five different aspects concerning internationalization, namely funds, personnel, projects, branches and branding of international projects. By doing so, it found that the majority of such organizations can be said to have internationalized only for what regards one or two of those aspects, whereas none of them achieved the internationalization of all the five aspects.

Out of the 37 foundations surveyed, only 5, namely 13,5% of them, can be said to have achieved the internationalization of their personnel, which is understood as staff permanently stationed in the target foreign country; 18 of them, accounting for the 48,6% had implemented overseas projects up to the research’s publication. In addition, one of the main outcomes of the work is that only 4 foundations, accounting for 10,8% of the total foundations “going out” surveyed, are actually branding the “going out” process, such as CFPA in the case of the “Maternal and Infant Health” (母婴平安, *Muyin Ping’an*) project and CYDF in the case of the “Project Hope in Africa” (希望工程走进非洲, *Xiwang Gongcheng Zoujin Feizhou*). Furthermore, as of 2014, only one foundation had opened a branch office abroad, namely China Children and Teenagers’ Fund, (中国儿童少年基金会, *Zhongguo Ertong Shaonian Jijinhui*) which inaugurated its London branch in 2006. As it is clear from this 2015 research on the status of Chinese social organizations’ international development, the relevance of the process seems to be neglectable due to the few foundations actually “going out” and the minimum amount of resources invested in the implementation of overseas projects. In fact, it can be stated that in this moment Chinese foundations “going out” find themselves striving in a condition of “four lacks”, as they are unable to ensure a stable source of funds, have not set up long-term programs abroad, are in shortage of local personnel and have still not managed to open permanent overseas branches.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, since 2014 the development of the “going out” process of foundations has been consistent and steady. A 2017 research work from Deng Guosheng⁹⁵, in which the scholar has submitted questionnaires to 82 of the 500 foundations enlisted in the Chinese Foundations 500 Directory issued by the Chinese Foundation Center (基金会中心, *Jijinhui Zhongxin*), showed a positive trend for what

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Deng G. (2017). *Op. cit.*

regards the internationalization of such organizations, at least in terms of sensitiveness towards the matter. Out of the 82 public and non-public foundations that responded to the survey, most of them consider “going out” as necessary (56,8%), even though according to the 45,6% the timing is still not mature. From 2014, the number of foundation that have opened overseas offices began to rise. For instance, in 2015 CFPA had already inaugurated its first overseas office in Myanmar and by 2019 the total number of such branches reached five in as many countries in Asia and Africa. Concurrently, also the Chinese Women’s Development Foundation (CWDF, 中国妇女发展基金会, *Zhongguo Funv Fazhan Jijinhui*), established an office in Nevada, USA, although without permanent staff on the spot. As can be seen from the quantitative analysis of numbers, although the internationalization of Chinese social organizations is still going through the first stages of its development and is currently not keeping pace with the “going out” process of Chinese firms, its evolution can be nevertheless said to be consistent and to show a positive overall trend.

2.3 Defining Chinese social organizations “going out”

2.3.1 What types of social organizations internationalize?

As already described in Chapter I, the umbrella term “social organization” (社会组织, *shehui zuzhi* or 民间组织, *minjian zuzhi*) encompasses several subcategories: social groups (社会团体, *shehui tuanti*), foundations (基金会, *jijinhui*), social services organizations (社会服务机构, *shehui fuwu jigou*), referred to as non-business enterprises (民办非企业单位, *minban fei qiye danwei*) until the introduction of the 2016 Charity Law, and public institutions (事业单位, *shiye danwei*). In addition to this classification, produced on the basis of the organizations’ different regulations, purposes, tasks and methods of operation, Chinese social organizations can be further categorized into two distinct groups, on the basis of the varying intimacy level of the relationship they maintain

with the political leadership: GONGOs (government-organized non-governmental organizations) and GR-NGOs (grassroots non-governmental organizations).

When attempting to identify the general traits of Chinese social organizations “going out”, it is firstly necessary to point that, according to the existent literature, foundations appear to be most prone to extending their interests beyond national borders and carrying out charitable activities abroad. The reasons of this are to be sought in the very concept of foundation in China: such organizations are defined by the 2004 “Regulations for the Management of Foundations” as legal entities of non-profit nature which engage in charitable activities by using donations from a natural person, a legal person or another organization. Therefore, foundations are only allowed to carry out charitable work, while membership organizations, because of the small amount of revenues coming from donations, are not likely to engage in overseas charitable activities and are mostly involved in mutual beneficial activities. In addition to the nature of Chinese foundations itself and their legislation, what renders such entities particularly suitable for undergoing an internationalization process is the significant amount of donations they receive annually, which in 2012 amounted to RMB 30.57 billion.

This is sustained by many examples of Chinese foundations involved in charitable projects or development cooperation programs in African or South-East Asian countries. The already mentioned China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA, 中国扶贫基金会) was the first Chinese foundation to actually “go out” in 2004. CFPA is currently working in international aid and advocacy programs worldwide, it is involved in long-term projects in 5 countries in Africa and Asia and, as of 2019, it counts 3 permanent offices in Nepal, Myanmar and Ethiopia⁹⁶. What is worth pointing out, is that in the early stage of its international development CFPA did not participate first-hand in aid or advocacy projects abroad nor sent any staff to foreign countries, and that its international involvement was rather limited to donations to international NGOs, which were then free to decide how to allocate the funds⁹⁷. This was also the case for the organization’s first project abroad, implemented in the wake of the Indian Ocean tsunami. While it can be stated that the organization’s interest in carrying out projects abroad has been growing with time, given that CFPA’s primary objective, when established in 1989, was to deliver

⁹⁶ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. “Our International Work”. *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation website*. Retrieved November 29, 2019, from <http://en.cfpa.org.cn/index.php?file=article&cmd=list&cid=13>

⁹⁷ Deng G. (2017). *Op. cit.*

assistance to impoverished people and disaster victims in China and that international work was generally not taken into consideration by social organizations at that time, the organization's "going out" pace since the early 2000s has been steady and consistent, to the point that CFPA is today the main Chinese foundation involved in projects abroad. What makes the case of CFPA particularly worth to be analyzed are two main features that contribute to explain the reasons why its international development has been so successful up until now. The first feature, as already pointed out above, is that the organization is a charitable foundation. The second feature, perhaps even more explanatory and relevant than the former as far as the analysis of the internationalization of Chinese social organizations is concerned, is that CFPA is in all respects a GONGO. Considering that the foundation is registered at the Ministry of Civil Affairs under the supervision of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development (国务院扶贫开发领导小组办公室, *Guowuyuan Fupin Kaifa Lingdai Xiaozu Bangongshi*)⁹⁸, it is clear that it has indeed very intimate relations with the Chinese institutions and that its activities, both at the domestic and international level, are endorsed and supported by governmental actors. Suffice to say, CFPA's executive council's chairman himself Zheng Wenkai 郑文凯 is the former deputy director of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, position he left in 2016.

The fact that CFPA, the first Chinese social organization to ever internationalize and the one with the most undergoing projects worldwide, is at the same time a foundation and a GONGO is not an exception to the dominant trend that regulates the internationalization process of such organizations. In fact, the combination of the two features also applies to other major organizations involved in projects abroad. The Beijing based China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF) is a public foundation established in 1989 and registered at the Bureau of Civil Affairs under the supervision of All China Youth Federation (ACYF, 中华全国青年联合会, *Zhonghua Quanguo Qingnian Lianhehui*)⁹⁹, an official federative body, led by the Chinese Communist Party, which

⁹⁸ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. "Jijinhui jianjie" 基金会简介 (Introduction to the foundation). *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation website*. Retrieved December 28, 2019, from <http://www.cfpa.org.cn/about/introduction.aspx>

⁹⁹ China Youth Development Foundation. "Our History". *China Youth Development Foundation website*. Retrieved December 28, 2019, from <https://en.cydf.org.cn/OurHistory/>

includes 52 organizations aimed to advocate the rights of young people in China¹⁰⁰. CYDF's signature program is Project Hope, aimed to constructing, rebuilding and expanding the teaching and living facilities and improve infrastructures for education in rural or disadvantaged areas¹⁰¹. Such project has also been exported abroad, both in Asian and African countries. In 2015 the organization contributed to the post-disaster reconstruction activities in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake¹⁰² and, as of 2018, a total of 23 primary schools were commissioned in 5 African countries (Burundi, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania)¹⁰³.

It can be observed that the majority of the Chinese social organizations “going out” appear to share the same characteristics. As it is the case for CFPA and CYDF, China Women's Development Foundation (CWDF), focused on the protection and advocacy of women's rights and involved in the 2015 Nepal earthquake emergency and post-emergency operations, is also both a foundation and a GONGO. In fact, it was set up in 1988 by the state-led All-China Women's Federation¹⁰⁴. As shown by data from the period 2013-2015, GONGOs are more likely to internationalize than GR-NGOs. According to the Ministry of Civil Affairs, in 2014 the number of international or internationalized GONGOs had reached 516, while in 2015 there were still as few as 7 international GR-NGOs, out of a total of 329'000 such organizations in China.¹⁰⁵ While it can be stated without incurring in the risk of generalization that the majority of Chinese social organizations working abroad are both foundations and GONGOs, it is also true that there are some exceptions to this norm. One of the most notable examples in this respect is the Global Environmental Institute (GEI, 永续全球环境研究所, *Yongxu Quanqiu Huanjing Yanjiusuo*). GEI, registered in Beijing in 2004, is a grassroots organization (registered as non-for-profit enterprise unit) focused on the promotion of

¹⁰⁰ ACYD Australia-China Youth Dialogue. (2015, April 2014). “All China Youth Federation”. *ACYD Australia-China Youth Dialogue website*. Retrieved December 28, 2019, from <https://acyd.org.au/partners-2/all-china-youth-federation->

¹⁰¹ China Youth Development Foundation. “The Hope Project”. *China Youth Development Foundation website*. Retrieved December 28, 2019, from <https://en.cydf.org.cn/Thehopeproject/>

¹⁰² China Youth Development Foundation. “2015 nian nianbao” 2015 年年报 (2015 annual report). *China Youth Development Foundation website*. Retrieved November 23, 2019, from <https://www.cydf.org.cn/uploadfile/2017/0817/20170817030527593.pdf>

¹⁰³ China.org.cn. (2018, July 24).” Full text of the Program for China-Africa People-to-People Friendship and Partnership (2018-2020)”. *China.org.cn website*. Retrieved November 23, 2019, from http://www.china.org.cn/china/2018-07/24/content_57817899.htm

¹⁰⁴ China Women's Development Foundation. “About China's Women Development Foundation”. *China Women's Development Foundation website*. Retrieved November 23, 2019, from <https://www.cwdf.org.cn/en/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=lists&catid=79>

¹⁰⁵ Zhang W. (2017). “The Internationalization of Chinese NGOs and Their Engagement with the United Nations”. *China Report*, 53(3), 318.

sustainable development¹⁰⁶. Since the beginning of GEI's international experience in 2005, initiated with the implementation of the "Biogas and Organic Agricultural Project" in Sri Lanka¹⁰⁷, the organization's overseas work currently encompasses several areas of intervention related to issues such as sustainability along the Belt and Road, Chinese investments in South-east Asia, China-Africa and China-Myanmar timber trade and corporate social responsibility training for enterprises. The organization is currently engaged in projects in 6 countries in Asia (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and the Lower Mekong Region), and 4 countries in Africa (Cameroon, Congo DRC, Uganda and Mozambique)¹⁰⁸. In addition to this, GEI is also active at the domestic level in carrying out research and advocacy work for the expansion of Chinese social organizations' work abroad. Albeit independent and non-governmental in nature, GEI relies on the support of many governmental and civil society partners in order to carry out its domestic and international work. Among others, it has indeed established relations with the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP), the State Forestry Administration and its founder, now executive director Jin Jiaman 金嘉满, is herself a former member of the government think tank Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences, established and directed by the MEP. The relations between GEI and several official institutions are particularly important to underline because they accounted to the fifteen percent of the total funding in 2009, while the organization's major financial share comes from international actors such as the United Kingdom's Department of International Development and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund¹⁰⁹. The particular case of GEI is explanatory in several ways. It primarily proves that although government-organized foundations are most likely to "go out", independent organizations are also to be taken into account when analyzing such process of internationalization, since some of them are able to efficiently carry out work abroad. In addition, it shows that what is most important for this type of organizations is the network of relations, on both national and international level and with both governmental and non-governmental actors, that they are able to create in order to collect funds and to gain support for their "going out" process. Needless to say, given that the majority of Chinese GR-NGOs do not share such ability to create and take advantage

¹⁰⁶ Global Environmental Institute. "Our Story". *Global Environmental Institute website*. Retrieved December 1, 2019, from <http://www.geichina.org/en/about-us/introduction-to-gei/>

¹⁰⁷ Lin J. & Zhang J. (2016). *Op. cit.*

¹⁰⁸ Global Environmental Institute. "Overseas Investment, Trade and the Environment Program". *Global Environmental Institute website*. Retrieved December 1, 2019, from http://www.geichina.org/upload/file/project_flyer/oite_2017.pdf

¹⁰⁹ Brenner D. (2012). *Op. cit.*

of domestic partners, it is not surprising that as of 2016 only two independent organizations, apart from GEI, have carried out researches or projects abroad, namely the Social Resources Institute (SRI, 社会资源研究所, *Shehui Ziyuan Yanjiusuo*) and Green Watershed (云南省大众流域管理研究和推广中心, *Yunnan Sheng Dazhong Liuyu Guanli Yanjiu He Tuiguang Zhongxin*)¹¹⁰.

The overview of the different types of Chinese social organizations “going out” provided above offers several examples that allow us to outline the main inherent features enhancing or hindering their international potential. What stands out as particularly noteworthy is the fact that, whilst government-organized foundations are most likely to undergo an internationalization process because of the stable financial and policy support they can rely on, independent organizations with considerable domestic and international partnerships are as well suitable for developing projects abroad.

2.3.2 Priority fields of activity abroad

One particular feature of social organizations, both GONGOs and GR-NGO, that stands out as exceptionally interesting for the analysis of the internationalization process of Chinese third sector is their field of activity. As already pointed out, the majority of Chinese social organizations “going out” engage in the area of environmental protection. This fact is evidenced by a research carried out by Huang Haoming and published in 2013. Such work highlighted the fact that, out of the twelve types of intervention proposed by the survey, when developing an internationalization strategy, social organizations “going out” tend to prioritize seven sectors, listed below in decreasing order: environment (生态环境, *shengtai huanjing*), education (教育, *jiaoyu*), social service (社会服务, *shehui fuwu*), sanitation (卫生, *weisheng*), scientific research (科学研究, *xueke yanjiu*), culture (文化, *wenhua*) and agricultural and rural development (农业与农村发展, *nongye yu nongcun fazhan*). The figure below shows that the seven priority sector received more than 60% of response during the survey. The last five, in order of response,

¹¹⁰ Lin J. & Zhang J. (2016). *Op. cit.*

are: employment (职业与从业者, *zhiye yu congyezhe*), law (法律, *falv*), sports (体育, *tiyu*), business services (工商服务, *gongshang fuwu*) and religion (宗教, *zongjiao*).

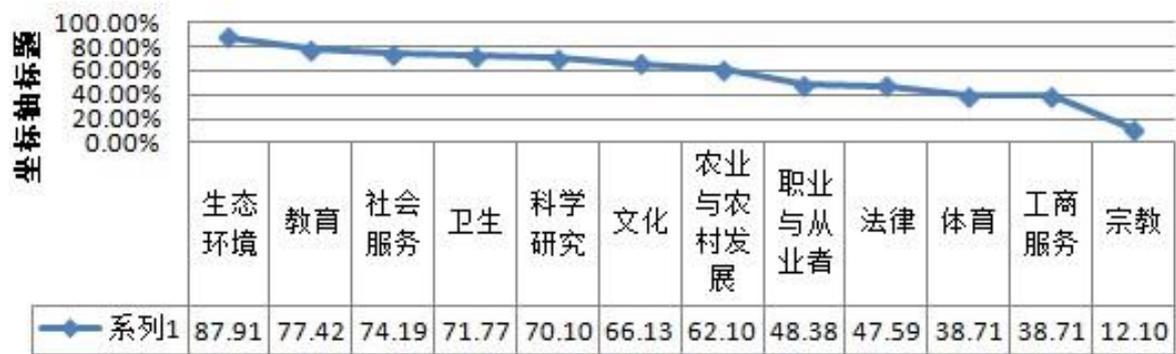


Figure 2.3.2. Huang’s survey on priority sectors of intervention.¹¹¹

The outcomes of the survey show that the first priority for Chinese social organizations “going out” is to engage in environmental protection activities, accounting for 87,91% of feedbacks. Nonetheless, education and provision of social services are still among the most relevant sectors, respectively accounting for 77,42% and 74,19% of the total response. On the contrary, social organizations seem less prone to engage in international work related to issues usually perceived as sensitive, such as religion, which in this case received only 12.10% of the total response. The fact that organizations undergoing a process of internationalization primarily choose to engage in fields of work the fit into the realm of environmental protection or provision of services, even though the extent of the second sector is not further specified in the aforementioned research, bears several implications and can be explained by taking into account some political factors. Such interventions are in fact more likely to be endorsed or at least not opposed by the State and therefore service-oriented organizations “going out” are more likely to gain the support of governmental actors rather than the advocacy-oriented ones, or the ones that work in politically sensitive sectors. In other words, the commonality of interests between social organizations and the State appears to be a relevant factor which enables the former to successfully set up and pursue the internationalization process. The reasons of this

¹¹¹ Huang H. (2013). *Op. cit.*

tendency are once more to be sought in the complementary nature of the relationship between civil society organizations and governmental actors in China. Such complementarity translates into an interdependent relationship between the two parts, in which the state recognizes the relevance of the work of social organizations both domestically and internationally, but whose power of supervision and control often manifests by directly steering their priorities and behavior in the case of GONGOs, or by pulling legislative levers in the case of GR-NGOs. On the other hand, according to the organizational perspective theorized by Carolyn Hsu, Chinese social organizations are not willing to contravene the leadership's guidelines since their priority is not the construction of a western-style civil society in open contradiction with the state, but rather the obtainment of secure resources.¹¹² What drives this approach of social organization in China is that by doing so they ensure their own viability and are thus capable to lay the foundations for their own internationalization process, which would otherwise be hindered by financial and political factors. The government's interest towards activities in the fields of education and social services provision, the latter intended here as the delivery of developmental assistance to disadvantaged areas and sectors of the population in developing countries, results in the fact that such initiatives as usually carried out by GONGOs, such as China Youth Development Foundation for what regards the field of education and promotion of literacy, and China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation and China Women's Development Foundation for what concerns the implementation of developmental projects in the form of poverty alleviation and medical assistance for women and children respectively. Nonetheless, the low degree of political sensitivity attached to operational fields related to environmental protection also allows grassroots organizations to engage in such activities, such as the Global Environmental Institute and Green Watershed, two of the few non-GONGO social organizations to have actually undergone an internationalization process.

In addition to carrying out environmental protection activities and engaging in the provision of social services, the majority of social organizations tend to "go out" in order to undertake humanitarian aid and disaster relief initiatives. This has already been pointed out before in regards to the 2015 Nepal earthquake, which can be considered to be a milestone in the development of the internationalization process of such entities. This

¹¹² Hsu C. (2010). "Beyond Civil Society: An Organizational Perspective on State-NGO Relations in the People's Republic of China". *Journal of Civil Society*, 6(3), 267

fashion is related to the fact that China itself has a long history of dealing with natural disasters and that the Chinese public is inherently prone to support emergency relief activities, rather than initiatives related to international development cooperation. Furthermore, beside the fact that such activities are more likely to gain public support, it can be stated that the intervention in humanitarian crisis in the emergency phase, namely during the 72 hours after the event, or in the post-emergency phase, which usually lasts for a few weeks, is often detached from the implementation of post-disaster reconstruction programs. Given that the contribution to relief efforts in the first two phases is usually confined to the provision of emergency material supplies or to rescue work, it is evident that the involvement in such activities requires the investment of a much smaller amount of resources in compared to the implementation of development or service-provision programs, which often requires a set of preconditions that the majority of social organizations simply cannot afford to have.

Chapter 3 - Case study: Chinese social organizations in Nepal

3.1 The international and Chinese humanitarian response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake

3.1.1 International humanitarian response

On April 25, 2015 at 11:56 local time, Nepal was severely struck by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake. The seismic event, whose epicenter was less than 80 kilometers northwest of the capital Kathmandu, mainly affected the central region of the country, where it resulted in more than 8'800 casualties and at least 22'000 injured people.

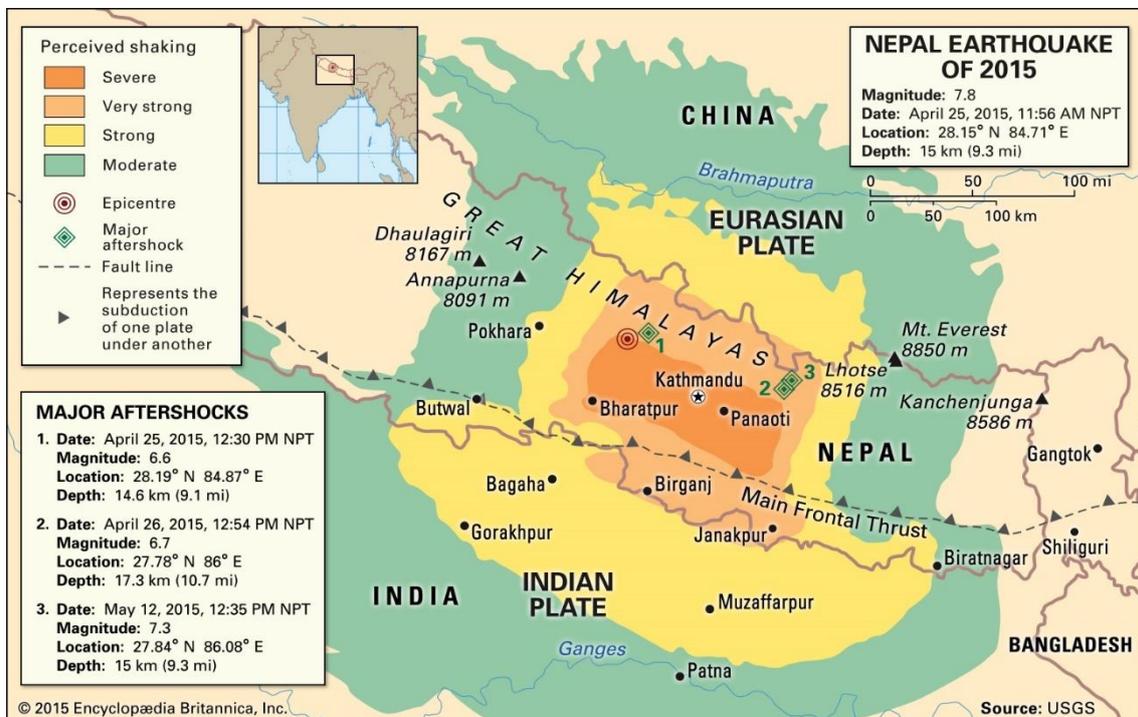


Figure 1 - 2015 Nepal earthquake effects¹¹³

¹¹³ Rafferty J.P. (2015, April 27). "Nepal's Magnitude 7.8 Earthquake". *Encyclopedia Britannica website*. Retrieved December 12, 2019, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nepal-earthquake-of-2015>

The earthquake represented the most significant event of such nature in Nepal in more than 80 years, since the 8.3 magnitude earthquake that in January 1934 hit the country's major urban centers, including Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, as well as the northern part of India¹¹⁴. According to estimates by the international NGO Mercy Corps, which had been working in Nepal for several years prior to the disaster and already had staff stationed in the country, the April 25 earthquake and the over 300 aftershocks that came after (including a major 7.4 magnitude quake on May 12) affected an overall number of 8 million people (nearly one-third of Nepal's total population) and damaged or destroyed over 1 million buildings across the interested areas. Out of the total 75 districts in Nepal, more than 50 reported damages of variable severity and casualties were also registered in the neighboring areas of Tibet and India¹¹⁵. For what regards economic losses and damages for the country, the Nepalese government estimated a total damage value of approximately USD 7 billion in 2015¹¹⁶, distributed primarily in the social and economic activities and productive sectors, followed by infrastructures¹¹⁷.

In the aftermath of the disaster, the Nepali government's response to the crisis was extremely quick. Right after the first quake, the government set up the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) and declared a state of emergency, thus allowing Ministers from various departments to directly take decisions and to set the guidelines of relief operations. During the first meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers held on April 25 at 16:00 p.m. local time, the leadership formally asked for the aid of the international community. This swift request for international help was partly due to a combination of several preexisting internal conditions, such as domestic conflicts, political instability, corruption, etc., along with the lack of governmental capacity in dealing with disasters and humanitarian aid. These factors hindered the ability of the government to organize

¹¹⁴ The Economic Times. (2015, April 25). "Nepal earthquake: Eerie reminder of 1934 tragedy". *The Economic Times*. Retrieved from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/nepal-earthquake-eerie-reminder-of-1934-tragedy/articleshow/47053535.cms>

¹¹⁵ Mercy Corps. (2016, March 14). "Quick facts: What you need to know about the Nepal earthquake". *Mercy Corps website*. Retrieved December 13, 2019, from <https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/nepal/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-nepal-earthquake>

¹¹⁶ Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission. (2015). "Nepal Earthquake 2015: Post Disaster Needs Assessment". *Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission website*. Retrieved December 13, 2019, from https://www.npc.gov.np/images/category/PDNA_volume_BFinalVersion.pdf

¹¹⁷ European Institute for Asian Studies (2016). "The Crisis Response to the Nepal Earthquake: Lessons Learned", p.44

and coordinate a joint intervention by different domestic actors and made aid from foreign countries crucial for orchestrating the first operations of disaster relief.

The international response to the Nepal crisis was one of the biggest disaster relief and humanitarian aid operations that year, and proved to be overly swift and effective: in the first 3-4 hours following the April 25th 7.8 magnitude quake, 37 countries physically sent personnel to the struck areas, accounting for a total force of more than 4000 people which included high-skilled doctors and engineers and high-specialized professional rescue teams¹¹⁸. Out of the 37 rallying countries, 17 of them also sent their military teams in order to assist in the search and rescue phase. Such forces, which have the resources and the capacities to coordinate search and rescue operations and to assist the providers of humanitarian aid in the preliminary phases, gave a valuable contribution to the overall response quality. This is linked to what was considered to be the main challenge rescue teams were faced with: the access to the most remote and isolated regions, which was made possible only by the intervention of foreign military air forces.

Within the first 72 hours, half of the 4000 personnel sent from abroad had already started their work on the ground or had at least entered the country and, in a very short time, 76 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams consisting of staff coming from all over the world were activated and began their operations in the struck regions¹¹⁹. In a timeframe of just six hours, India was the first country to intervene. Through the so-called “Operation Maitri”, from April to June the country sent rescue teams, equipment and material, along with some aircrafts of the Indian Air Force (IAF), that gave a valuable contribution to the search and rescue operations¹²⁰. Rescue teams were also timely sent by other neighboring countries: China, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan all responded within 24 hours. Starting from April 29th the launch of the Nepal Earthquake Flash Appeal by the Humanitarian Country Team contributed to delivering humanitarian assistance to a total of approximately 3.7 million people across the country¹²¹. The Flash Appeal sought to collect USD 422 million to sustain disaster relief operations and over the time of a few months international donations had already reached over 50 per cent of the total

¹¹⁸ Shrestha, P. & Pathranarakul, P. (2018). “Nepal Government’s Emergency Response to the 2015 Earthquake: A Case Study”. *Social Sciences*, 7(127), 38

¹¹⁹ Cook, A.D.B., Shrestha, M., Htet, Z.B. (2016). *International Response to 2015 Nepal Earthquake: Lessons and Observations*, NTS report n. 4

¹²⁰ European Institute for Asian Studies. (2016). *Op. cit.*

¹²¹ Ovesen, P. & Heiselberg, S. (2016). “The Humanitarian Response to the 2015 Nepal Earthquake”. *UN Chronicle*, 53(1), 140

amount (USD 241 million out of the total USD 422 million were collected before September 30, 2015, leaving out USD 181 million).¹²²

Nevertheless, the contribution of the international community did not come only from different countries' governments and their military forces or from international organizations. According to a UN report published in 2016¹²³, the joint efforts of both the Nepalese government and the United Nations managed to collect the help of more than 450 humanitarian agencies. Among these there were several civil society actors and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), including the aforementioned Mercy Corps, the International Federation of Red Cross, Médecins sans Frontières, Oxfam, Save the Children and many more. As it is the case for the international NGO Mercy Corps, the majority of the non-governmental institutions that responded to the Nepal crisis had already established permanent offices in the country and had created solid links with local communities and the government. This is partially due to the fact that, since its unique morphology and geographical location make Nepal one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, and the country has a long history of natural disasters (floods, landslides and earthquakes), numerous NGOs had collaborated with the local government in order to set up disaster management mechanisms, such as the National Disaster Management Center, and to establish areas used for practicing disaster relief operations, such as the staging area near Kathmandu's airport, that could be operated by the UN¹²⁴. Preparing to disasters ahead of time proved to be a crucial factor in organizing and coordinating a humanitarian response of such scale: in fact, the overall quality of the aid provided by international NGOs to Nepal in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake proved to be very high. One of the reasons for this can be traced in the very role NGOs are expected to play worldwide: the fact that they usually work as links between state and the communities affected by the disaster, allows them to efficiently bridge the logistic and communication gaps that national governments and international organizations are not able to make up for. A further contribution brought by NGOs in the humanitarian response is related to such organizations' ability to raise global awareness

¹²² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2015). "Nepal Earthquake Humanitarian Response Report". *Humanitarian Response website*. Retrieved December 18, 2019, from <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/nepal/document/nepal-earthquake-humanitarian-response-report>

¹²³ Ovesen P. & Heiselberg S. (2016). *Op. cit*

¹²⁴ Cook A.D.B., Shrestha M. & Htet Z.B. (2016). *Op. cit.*

on the crisis and to motivate people around the world to donate money in order to sustain long-term relief operations¹²⁵.

3.1.2 China's humanitarian response

In the aftermath of the April 25th earthquake, the first countries to respond to the crisis by sending out material aid and personnel were Nepal's neighbors: India, China, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Although China's response was not as large as India's, which was also the first one to intervene, the country was still one of the most timely and major providers of humanitarian support during the emergency relief efforts and throughout the subsequent recovery and reconstruction phases. The response of China's leadership and institutions was immediate: a few hours after the first quake on April 25th, Chinese President Xi Jinping sent his condolences to his Nepali counterpart Ram Baran Yadav, showing the solidarity feeling shared by the whole nation and stating that his country was ready to provide help to those in need¹²⁶. Besides President Xi's show of support to Nepal's government and population, Chinese Deputy Minister of foreign affairs Liu Zhenmin 刘振民 also declared that the two countries are closely related and mutually dependent, thus reiterating the fact that the two nations are historically tied by very close diplomatic relations, and stating China's preparedness to do anything in its possibilities in order to efficiently provide aid and relief to the struck regions. Within the day after the disaster, the Director General of China's Earthquake Disaster Emergency Relief Department Zhao Ming 赵明, through the China International Search and Rescue Team (CISAR) had already sent a total of 62 personnel from different fields of expertise, including 40 rescuers, 12 seismologists and 10 medical workers¹²⁷. This first emergency intervention was immediately followed by the dispatch of a second rescue group

¹²⁵ European Institute for Asian Studies (2016). *Op. cit.*

¹²⁶ China Daily 新华网 (Xinhuaawang). (2015, April 26) "China prepares relief supplies for quake-hit Nepal". *China Daily*. Retrieved December 18, 2019, from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015-04/26/content_20542514.htm

¹²⁷ China News 中国新闻网 (Zhongguo Xinwen Wang). (2015, April 26). "Zhongguo guoji jiuyuan dui chufa, Niboer zhu hua gantan huannanzhijiao" 中国国际救援队出发 尼泊尔驻华大使感叹患难之交 (The Chinese international rescue team has left for Nepal, The Nepalese Ambassador in China states that China and Nepal are friends in adversity). *China News*. Retrieved December 18, 2019, from <http://www.chinanews.com/shipin/cnstv/2015/04-26/news565076.shtml>

composed of 58 people, which a few days after carried a total of 13 tons of aid material and began to set up a makeshift temporary hospital. For what regards funding, the day after the disaster the Chinese leadership promised that the country would donate a total of USD 3,4 million (RMB 23,8 billion) of aid, an amount of money that very soon rose to USD 6.4 million (RMB 44,8 billion), when the second batch of humanitarian aid was dispatched¹²⁸. As already discussed in the previous section, since most of the struck regions were extremely remote and further isolated by severe damages to the country's infrastructures and therefore only reachable by air, the dispatch of military forces and aircrafts proved to be a key element in the Nepal earthquake disaster relief operations. In fact, such strategy was shared by a total of 17 countries, including China: in addition to the providing medical experts, engineers and rescue teams composed of high-skilled and experienced staff, the country also responded to the crisis by sending soldiers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) on the field. Within two days, a total of 170 soldiers of the PLA were sent to Nepal together with rescue dogs, vehicles and material equipment¹²⁹. As of May 7th, three weeks after the first magnitude 7.8 quake, China had sent more than 500 PLA personnel to Nepal, resulting in one of the most relevant deployment of military contingents in a disaster relief mission. Along with them, China also dispatched no less than eight transport aircrafts and three helicopter, which proved to be vital for the search and rescue operation in remote regions. Overall, the PLA contributed to the delivery and allocation of emergency material and commodities, to the transportation of equipment and people, to the search and rescue operations and to the provision of medical assistance to the injured¹³⁰. China's intervention in the wake of the Nepal earthquake can be considered to be one of the country's main efforts in terms of aid provision to a foreign country and was quite simple to predict. The leadership's swift reaction to the disaster, from both a rhetorical and practical point of view, perfectly fits into the Chinese geopolitical and diplomatic strategies in the region. Such a strong commitment to the disaster relief operations reflects the strong links between the two countries and to the great strategic importance of Nepal in the eyes of China, a country that came to be

¹²⁸ Krishnan, A. (2015, April 29). "China to triple Nepal aid, boosts rescue efforts". *India Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/nepal-earthquake-2015/story/nepal-earthquake-china-to-triple-aid-rescue-efforts-250781-2015-04-29>

¹²⁹ T Tiezzi, S. (2015, April 28). "After devastating earthquake, China rushes aid to Nepal". *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <https://thediplomat.com/2015/04/after-devasating-earthquake-china-rushes-aid-to-nepal/>

¹³⁰ Southerland M. (2019). *The Chinese Military's Role in Overseas Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief: Contributions and Concerns*, staff research report of the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission

fundamental particularly after the annexation of Tibet into the People's Republic of China in 1950. The aftermath of the event saw a radical change in the geopolitical balance of the region: Nepal, which started to fear the expansionist policies of the PRC, signed a Treaty of Friendship with India, thus allowing the southern neighbor to exert an increasing influence on the Himalayan country. After a few years, another event contributed to the political instability of the area: after the unsuccessful Tibet's uprising in 1959, the Dalai Lama successfully sought asylum in India, causing outrage among the Chinese and further exacerbating the relationship between the two giants. Over the years, while the acrimony between India and China and the geopolitical instability in the region were worsened by concurrent factors (the situation even came down to a brief border war in 1962), the small landlocked country came to assume a prominent position as a buffer state that was undoubtedly under the predominance of India, but was also increasingly drawing the interests of China. To the present day, the situation has not changed much. China's interests continue to be primarily driven by the leadership's willingness to maintain stability in the Tibetan region, particularly in the wake of the Tibetan riots in 2008, right before the beginning of the Beijing Olympics, which brought the issue to the attention of the international community¹³¹. Many observers agree upon the fact that China's diplomatic interests and Nepal's strategic position acted as major political drivers for the country's prompt and generous response to the 2015 earthquake. Furthermore, if we add the fact the Nepal also plays an important role as one of the countries included in the Belt and Road Initiative launched in 2013, and that in 2014 China became the country's main provider of foreign direct investments, the geopolitical logics that lay behind the Chinese intervention appear to be even more evident. Undoubtedly, the 2015 Nepal earthquake represented a valuable occasion for China to prove its international commitment and showed that the country is becoming more aware of the increasing accountability that derives from the predominant position it now occupies on a global scale. Whilst China's response to the crisis can be seen as the result of geopolitical considerations, factors inherent to the country's own history of natural disasters are also to be taken into account. In this sense, it is important to notice that China, being one of the world's most disaster prone countries, has matured a very long experience of dealing with similar events. Large-scale disaster such as the Tangshan and Wenchuan earthquakes, respectively in 1976 and 2008, inevitably provided the country with a valuable set of

¹³¹ Bibek C. (2017). "Disaster Relief as a Political Tool: Analyzing Indian and Chinese Responses after the Nepal Earthquakes". *Strategic Analysis*, 41(6), 540

skills that over time maximized its capability to carry out a swift and effective response to humanitarian crises, at both domestic and international levels¹³².

3.1.3 Different stages of China's humanitarian response

One important aspect of China's response to the Nepal earthquake is that, besides being one of the first countries to engage in disaster relief operations, its engagement in the crisis did not end when the emergency relief phase was concluded. In fact, China's intervention was not limited to the swift response to the disaster and to the provision of emergency assistance in the form of delivery of emergency supplies, dispatchment of rescue teams, high skilled personnel and the army and donation of money, since it also carried out long-term activities and implemented various projects of different nature over time. In addition to promptly responding to the overseas crisis within the so called "Golden 72 Hours", an expression indicating the time frame in which the chances to find and rescue trapped people are higher¹³³ and roughly corresponding to the first phase of emergency response, China also engaged in the following rehabilitation phase of crisis management. Crisis management corresponds to the first section of the disaster management cycle, which encompasses the sum total of humanitarian work related to both post-disaster crisis management and risk management. Crisis management refers to the range of activities undertaken by humanitarian actors in the aftermath of a disaster and includes emergency response and post-disaster rehabilitation activities. Emergency response is aimed at meeting the basic needs of the affected population and at providing emergency supplies and first aid assistance, in order to mitigate the suffering and avoid further casualties. Post-disaster rehabilitation is further divided into recovery and reconstruction. Recovery is aimed at rehabilitating the population and at normalizing the situation by restoring infrastructures and communications and by providing temporary housing, grants and services. Reconstruction includes activities such as the restoration of facilities (schools, places of worship, etc.) and the implementation of long-term capacity

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Jang H, Lien Y, Tsai T. (2009). *Rescue information system for earthquake disasters based on MANET emergency communication platform*, 623-627. Proceedings of the International Conference on Wireless Communications and Mobile Computing: Connecting the World Wirelessly, IWCMC 2009, Leipzig, Germany, June 21-24, 2009

building programs aimed at enhancing the population’s livelihood and at sustaining the development of communities¹³⁴.

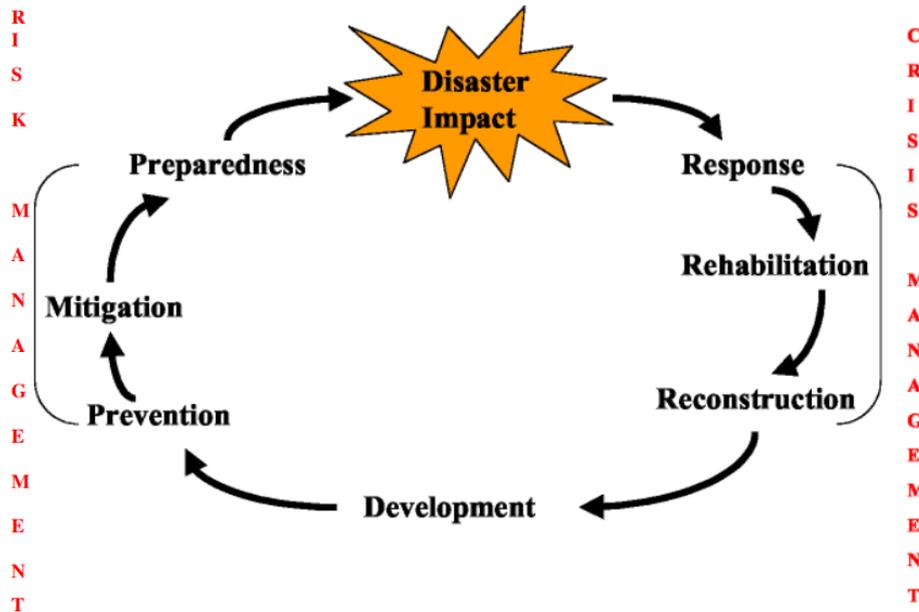


Figure 2 - Disaster management cycle¹³⁵

Few months after the earthquake, in June, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi 王毅 pledged that the country would donate a total of USD 483 million (RMB 3 billion) to help Nepal with the construction of new infrastructures, the rehabilitation of the victims, the implementation of capacity building projects and the reconditioning of sites with historical and cultural value. Broadly speaking, the intention of China was to guide the Himalayan country throughout the recovery and reconstruction phases. Wang Yi also stated that China will provide low-interest loans, interest-free loans to Nepal and that national enterprises and non-governmental actors would be by all means encouraged to engage in the implementation of long-term reconstruction programs.¹³⁶ In fact, as of May 2019, a total of twenty-five reconstruction projects are being implemented thanks to the

¹³⁴ Khan H., Vasilescu L.G., Khan A. (2008). “Disaster Management Cycle – a Theoretical Approach”. *Management and Marketing Journal*, 6(1), 48

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ China Daily 新华网 (Xinhuanet). (2015, June 25). “China donates 483 mln USD to Nepal for post-quake rehabilitation, reconstruction”. *China Daily*. Retrieved December 20, 2019, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/nepal/china-donates-483-mln-usd-nepal-post-quake-rehabilitation-reconstruction>

aid provided by China and, as stated by the Nepali National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) Chief Sushil Gyewali while visiting the reconstruction site of the Durbar High School in Kathmandu, most of them are near completion¹³⁷.

3.2 The humanitarian response of Chinese social organizations

3.2.1 A civil society response of major proportions

The previous section showed that China was among the countries that provided the quickest and most effective response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake. Nevertheless, what is most striking about the Chinese response to the humanitarian crisis is that, besides the compassionate statements of solidarity made by the country's leadership and the provision of material aid, personnel and even the mobilization of the army, it also featured the widespread participation of civil society actors into the relief operations. In other words, the Chinese government and the country as a sovereign nation were not the only contributors: the country's civil society actors and organizations also actively took action, to such an extent that, according to many observers, the earthquake should be considered as a watershed moment in the process of internationalization of Chinese social organizations. The seismic event caused the largest participation of Chinese domestic civil society organizations in an overseas disaster relief project of all time, and even encouraged numerous organizations that had not previously planned to expand their work abroad nor had ever engaged in international operations, to actively and first-handedly partake in the humanitarian response. Among the most striking features of the Chinese civil society response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake is the rapidity with which domestic organizations got involved in the disaster relief operations: some organizations actually began to respond to the crisis within an hour after the earthquake and by the following day they had already begun to organize on-site operations. More than a dozen Chinese

¹³⁷ China Daily 新华网 (Xinhuanet). (2019, May 24). "Nepal views China's post-quake reconstruction projects as great learning for future". *China Daily*. Retrieved December 28, 2019, from http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/25/c_138087135_2.htm

civil society organizations contributed to the disaster relief operations, from the world famous China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, One Foundation and Amity Foundation to the smaller Lingshan Charity Foundation and China Social Welfare Foundation; from organizations focused on information disclosure and sharing, such as the Zhuoming Disaster Information Center (卓明灾害信息服务中心, *Zhuoming Zaihai Xinxi Fuwu Zhongxin*) and the Anping Public Communication and Social Development Charitable Fund (安平公共传播公益基金, *Anping Gonggong Zhuanbo Gongyi Jijin*) to rescue groups that operated in close contact with social organizations, like the Blue Leopard Rescue Team (蓝豹救援队 *Lanbao Jiuyuandui*) and the YB Mountain & Water Rescue Team (云豹救援队 *Yunbao Jiuyuandui*). Highly specialized and experienced personnel was very rapidly sent to the affected areas with the tasks of helping local and international rescue teams in emergency operations, dispatching emergency supplies and providing medical assistance to the population.

The participation of social organizations was also important in terms of the funds they managed to collect by means of direct donations from citizens or through online charitable platforms. Among such platforms, the ones that were most actively involved in fundraising activities, collecting the most highest amounts of money by the largest number of donators, were the online charitable fundraising platforms of Tencent Gongyi (腾讯公益, *Tencent Gongyi*), Alipay Gongyi Platform (支付宝公益平台, *Zhifubao Gongyi Pingtai*) and Alibaba Charity Foundation (阿里巴巴公益基金会, *Alibaba Gongyi Jijinhui*). In terms of the overall amount of funds that social organizations managed to collect among social and business actors, it is useful to mention a survey conducted by the China Charity Information Center (CCIC, 中民慈善捐助信息中心, *Zhongmin Cishan Juanzeng Xinxi Zhongxin*), an online information gathering and sharing platform established in 2006 by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and published on May 14th, 2015. According to the survey, as of May 12th, three weeks after the first quake, China had raised a total of RMB 238 million for the disaster relief operations (including both donations and the value of material goods provided). Out of the total amount of funds gathered by the country, the portion collected by governmental actors and institutions accounted for 55% (a total of RMB 114 million); whereas organizational funds, including also donations coming from tourism business and religious groups, accounted for RMB

49 million, 24% of the total amount¹³⁸. In addition, at the time of the publication of the survey in mid-May (three weeks after the first quake), three online fundraising platforms, including the aforementioned Tencent Gongyi and Alipay Gongyi as well as Sina Gongyi (新浪公益, *Xinlang Gongyi*), managed to raise a total amount of RMB 30 million from more than 530'000 people.

Another important aspect for what regards the public's support to the humanitarian response of Chinese social organizations is pointed out by a survey conducted in May by the China Philanthropy Times (公益时报, *Gongyi Shibao*), a Beijing-based online magazine that, in collaboration with the charity fundraising platform Sina Gongyi and Wenjuan.com (问卷网, *Wenjuan Wang*), carried out an online survey platform focused on the creation and distribution of questionnaires¹³⁹. According to the survey, out of the total 1106 internet users that participated, 70% of them said that the intervention of Chinese social organizations in the humanitarian response to the Nepal earthquake is highly valuable and that it should be supported and encouraged. In addition to this, 40% of the participants also pointed out the fact that they would be happy to donate money to social organizations involved in the disaster relief operations such as foundations, although half of them would dedicate some time doing research work about the organizations' accountability. Finally, 23% of the interviewed expressed their willingness to even observe the behavior of the organizations in order to find out how the donated money is spent. Although the survey carried out by the China Philanthropy Times, given the small number of people interviewed, does not provide a comprehensive and universal outlook on the public response to the international work of Chinese social organizations, its outcome is nonetheless relevant in several ways. Firstly, the high percentage (70%) of people that responded positively to the activities of Chinese social organizations in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake shows that the Chinese people increasingly becoming more aware of the importance of the work of social organizations, even when their activities go beyond the country's borders and do not directly interest Chinese citizens.

¹³⁸ China Charity Information Center 中国慈善信息中心 (Zhongguo Cishan Xixi Zhongxin). (2015, May 14). "Zhongmin fabu 4.25 Niboer qiangzhen juanzeng baogao" 中民发布 4.25 尼泊尔强震捐赠报告 (Funds report of the 4.25 Nepal earthquake). Retrieved December 20, 2019, from http://www.360doc.com/content/15/0514/22/21099750_470530905.shtml

¹³⁹ China Philanthropy Times 公益时报 (Gongyi Shibao). (2015, May 14). "Yi diaocha: jin qi cheng wangyou rentong dizhen rendao jiuyuan wu guojie" 益调查: 近七成网友认同地震人道救援无国界 (Charity survey: almost ten percent of the fellow netizens approve of the humanitarian response without boundaries to the earthquake). *China Philanthropy Times*. Retrieved December 20, 2019, from <http://www.gongyishibao.com/html/yaowen/7994.html>

Secondly, it also highlights the fact that Chinese people are more concerned with the organizations' accountability than they were before, showing an increased interest towards the activities of civil society organizations and a growing awareness as for their role in disasters as the Nepal earthquake. It is worth pointing out that the two aforementioned implications of the survey are both to be considered positive as far as the public response to the international work of Chinese social organizations is concerned. The significance of this becomes evident if we consider that one of the factors that hinder the organizations' potential to "go out", discussed in the second chapter, is the public response to the international involvement of domestic social organizations itself. One of the reasons why the civil society response to the Nepal crisis managed to win the support of the vast majority of the Chinese public can be linked to the fact that China is unfortunately very familiar with earthquakes and natural disasters in general and that, as a consequence, Chinese people happen to have a higher degree of sensitivity towards such events and tend to be more easily involved emotionally, even when the disaster affects a foreign country and the victims are not fellow countrymen.

In summary, it could be said that the involvement of Chinese social organizations in the aftermath of the 2015 Nepal earthquake represented a groundbreaking and unprecedented event. This holds true for what regards the number of organizations that engaged in the relief activities, the total amount of money collected by social organizations through different fundraising means, and the widespread approval and support from the Chinese public. As will be further discussed in this chapter, such enhanced operational capacity in cross-border humanitarian work has been made possible by different factors, some of which are to be sought in China's own history of dealing with natural disasters, while others appear to be entirely new and determined by the specific circumstances.

3.2.2 The first highly coordinated overseas operation by Chinese social organizations

One of the features that make the Chinese social organizations' humanitarian response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake particularly noteworthy for what regards the analysis of their internationalization process, is the fact that they have shown an unprecedented ability to efficiently organize and coordinate their work. Such coordination was made

possible by the creation of networks and alliances that worked as communication platforms between different organizations and also between organizations and the media. Some of them already existed at the time of the outbreak of the humanitarian crisis, whereas others were promptly created ad-hoc¹⁴⁰. Among these, one of the most important has been the China NGO Consortium for Nepal Earthquake 2015 (4.25 尼泊尔地震中国社会组织信息协同平台, *Zhongguo Shehui Zuzhi Xinxi Xietong Pingtai*). It was set up by the Disaster Relief Coordinating Alliance (基金会救灾协调会, *Jijinhui Jiuzai Xietiaohui*), founded right after the 2013 Ya'an 雅安 earthquake by some of the most relevant domestic organizations, such as China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF), China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA), One Foundation and others. At the time of the first meeting, held at Beijing Capital University a few hours after the first quake on April 25th, the Consortium was composed by a total of thirteen Chinese social organizations, six international partners and two academic institution. The list of founders included domestic organizations with both a governmental and grassroots background, such as the aforementioned CYDF, CFPA and One Foundation, plus others like China Women's Development Foundation (CWDF), China Social Welfare Foundation (CSWF), Amity Foundation and Lingshan Charitable Foundation. The international partners comprised the United Nation Development Program China and the Chinese branches of large international NGOs, such as Save the Children and Mercy Corps. Finally, the two academic institutions were the Beijing Capital University and the Sichuan University. After the establishment of the Consortium, the members came to common understandings regarding the implications of a mass response to the Nepal disaster and worked to determine the direction of their cooperation. As for what can be considered as the manifesto of the Consortium, it was primarily made clear that the peculiar morphological features of Nepal and the language and cultural barriers would make the relief operations exceedingly difficult, and that therefore only experienced and high-skilled personnel were allowed to intervene. Furthermore, the members agreed upon the importance of keeping a steady communication between the rescuers and the local actors and between the same members of the Consortium, and upon the necessity of verifying every piece of

¹⁴⁰ Bannister T. (2015). *op. cit.*

information before they are made publicly accessible¹⁴¹. These statements made the main purpose of the China NGO Consortium for the 2015 Nepal Earthquake very clear: it primarily served as a platform aimed at carrying out a safe and methodical response to the disaster, while concurrently attempting to provide a channel of communication among Chinese social organizations, INGOs and international agencies.

Alongside coordination platforms such as the Consortium, what constituted a further innovation as regards the intervention of domestic social organizations beyond China's borders has been the participation of information gathering and sharing mechanisms. Among these there was the Zhuoming Disaster Information Center (卓明灾害信息服务中心, *Zhuoming Zaihai Xinxi Fuwu Zhongxin*), a non-governmental and voluntary entity established in the wake of the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, specialized in disaster information management and optimization of disaster relief work efficiency. For the Information Center, which participated to the Nepal earthquake humanitarian response as a member of the Consortium, such overseas intervention represented the first operation beyond China's border. Moreover, it was also its first ever emergency (level 1) intervention. Within forty minutes from the first quake, the Information Center promptly responded by starting gathering information on the disaster on the disaster, and at 6:34 p.m., four hours after the first quake, the first report was released. In addition to publishing information and news on the earthquake and the humanitarian response on a daily basis, it positively contributed to the translation work of data and information concerning the earthquake. According to the director Hao Nan 郝南, the Information Center mainly worked thanks to the contribution of more than 300 online volunteers, who actively worked with the aim of optimizing the communication and information sharing among the actors involved in the disaster relief operations¹⁴².

The creation of systems aimed at facilitating the collection and exchange of data and information proved to be crucial for the quality and effectiveness of the response of Chinese civil society organizations, which most likely could not have achieved the same results otherwise. In fact, the thoroughness and precision with which the operations of

¹⁴¹ Disaster Relief Coordinating Alliance 基金会救灾协调会 (Jijinhui jiuzai xietiao hui). (2015, April 28). "4.25 Niboer dizhen Zhongguo shehui zuzhi xinxi xietiao pingtai gongshi" 4.25 尼泊尔地震中国社会组织信息协同平台共识(China NGO Consortium for the 2015 Nepal Earthquake consensus). *Disaster Relief Coordinating Alliance WeChat*.

¹⁴² Beijing Times 京华时报 (Jinghua Shibao). (2015, May 11). "Xinxi jiuzai zhuli gongyi zuzhi lianhe jiuyuan Niboer" 信息救灾助力公益组织联合救援尼泊尔 (Disaster Information Center and charitable organizations joint forces to help Nepal). *Beijing Times*. Retrieved February 16, 2020, from <http://gongyi.sina.com.cn/gyzx/2015-05-11/100152576.html>

different organizations were organized and orchestrated represent one of the main highlights of relief work of Chinese social organizations in Nepal. The Nepal earthquake gave such organizations the chance to show the high grade of maturity that they have come to achieve in recent years, thanks particularly to the experienced civil society matured in dealing with humanitarian crises at the domestic level. In this sense, a description of the response of social organizations to the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake appears to be rather explanatory as regards the development of their networking capabilities. In that occasion, a multitude of social organizations of different types, including both GONGOs and grassroots organizations, participated in the disaster relief operations by raising and donating money, providing material and actively contributing to rescue operations. A response of such dimension constituted an unprecedented event and showed features that can be also observed in the case of the 2015 earthquake. A survey carried out by Beijing Normal University revealed that, out of 64 organizations that participated in the humanitarian response, only 28% of them operated alone, whereas the majority collaborated with three or more other organizations in networks that also included enterprises and informal volunteer groups. Among these cooperation mechanisms there were the Sichuan NGO Earthquake Relief Coordinating Center (四川地震民间救灾联合办公室, *Sichuan Dizhen minjian jiuyuan lianhe bangongshi*) and the 512 Voluntary Relief Services Center (512 民间救助服务中心, *512 minjian jiuzhu fuwu zhongxin*), both based in Chengdu and set up by social organizations. Such data prove the fact that the establishment of channels of communication among societal and other actors and the creation of networks between them is to be considered as a precondition for the successful outcome of disaster relief operations. For what regards the case of the 2008 earthquake, it suffices to recall that only a few days after the disaster, an appeal to non-governmental actors to join forces in order to carry out a highly efficient response was supported by nearly 160 organizations across the whole country¹⁴³.

Ultimately, we can state that Chinese social organizations have successfully managed to export the aforementioned model of mutual cooperation and networking abroad. The high quality and effectiveness of the humanitarian response provided in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake are partly due to the development of such organizational capacity.

¹⁴³ Shieh S., Deng G. (2011). "An emerging civil society: the impact of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake on grass-roots association in China". *The China Journal*, 65(-), 187

3.2.3 Which organizations are we taking into account and why?

In order to provide insightful and reliable considerations on the overseas work of Chinese social organizations in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake, which are structured on an assessment of the operational capacity of such organizations and on the analysis of the factors that sustain their capacity, seven organizations of different sizes, backgrounds and with different levels of intimacy with the Chinese leadership were selected: China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA, 中国扶贫基金会, *Zhongguo Fupin Jijinhui*), China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF, 中国青年发展基金会, *Zhongguo Qingnian Fazhan Jijinhui*), China Women's Development Foundation (CWDF, 中国妇女发展基金会, *Zhongguo Funü Fazhan Jijinhui*), China Social Welfare Foundation (CSFW, 中国社会福利基金会, *Zhongguo Shehui Fuli Jijinhui*), Amity Foundation (爱德基金会, *Aide Jijinhui*), One Foundation (壹基金, *Yijijin*) and Lingshan Charity Foundation (灵山慈善基金会, *Lingshan Cishan Jijinhui*). The main reason that drove us to choose these organizations is linked to the fact that they come from different backgrounds and feature different characteristics. Major and smaller GONGOs, independent organizations, laic and faith-based foundation are all included in the list, offering a comprehensive insight to the whole spectrum of China's civil society organizations working abroad.

- *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation*

Founded in 1989 and registered the same year at the Ministry of Civil Affairs, CFPA figures among the major Chinese organizations involved in poverty alleviation and reduction work, and its fields of expertise encompass medical care programs for children and their mothers, microfinancing, disaster relief, community development, capacity building, etc.¹⁴⁴ CFPA was the first Chinese social organization to actively engage in international work when, in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, it raised money for the affected population. The international history of CFPA is very rich and successful and over the time the organization has proved to be able to efficiently work in

¹⁴⁴ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. "Jijinhui jianjie" 基金会简介 (Introduction to the foundation). *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation website*. Retrieved January 5, 2020, from <http://www.fupin.org.cn/about/introduction.aspx>

an international environment. Evidence of this is given by the fact that in little more than a decade CFPA has implemented disaster relief and developmental and medical initiatives in ten countries across the world. In addition, the foundation also managed to establish three branch offices in Nepal, Myanmar and Ethiopia. Among Chinese social organizations, CFPA is undoubtedly the most committed to the implementation and development of international projects. As already pointed out also in the previous chapter, given the fact that the organization works under the direct supervision of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, CFPA is in all respects a GONGO. After the introduction of the Charity Law in 2016, the organization has been granted the public foundation status, thus enabling it to carry out public fundraising activities.

- *China Youth Development Foundation*

CYDF is a Beijing-based national public foundation established in 1989 under the professional supervision of the All China Youth Federation, an official body which comprises a total number of 52 organizations whose focus is the protection and advocacy of young Chinese people. Because of the close relations between CYDF and All China Youth Federation, which is a state institution directly led by the Chinese Communist Party, the foundation features the typical characteristics of a GONGO. The intimacy of the relationship that CYDF maintains with the leadership is embodied by the chairperson of the foundation, He Junke 贺军科, and his curriculum vitae. In fact, He is at the same time Chairman of the same professional supervisory unit of the foundation, the All China Youth Federation, Alternate Member of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and First Secretary of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC)¹⁴⁵. In addition, other names among the leading panel either come from an institutional background and currently maintain very close links with organizations such as the aforementioned CYLC and ACYF, or are affiliated to the CPC or to other official bodies. CYDF's network comprises 38 local branches which cover the whole national territory and is specialized in capacity building and education projects for

¹⁴⁵ China Vitae 中国名人录 (Zhongguo Mingern Lu). "He Junke Career Data". *China Vitae website*. Retrieved January 6, 2020, from http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/He_Junke/career

young people and in the provision of aid services¹⁴⁶. The organization's core program, Project Hope, has been extensively carried out both inside and outside China's borders: as of 2018, a total of 23 primary schools had been commissioned in Burundi, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and Tanzania, making CYDF's successful work abroad one of the distinctive traits of the foundation.

- *China Women's Development Foundation*

The organization, set up by the All-China Women's Federation in 1988, is a national public foundation focused on the advocacy of women's causes and on the improvement of women's lives. CWDF's main projects are mainly dedicated to poverty alleviation; medical assistance and health; and to the promotion of female entrepreneurship. Some of the core programs of the foundation include Water Cellar for Mothers, which refers to the construction of water supply facilities, and Health Express for Mothers, which as of 2014 had supplied a total of 1'385 mobile clinics and provided various health assistance services in more than 30 cities nationwide¹⁴⁷. In addition, CWDF has also focused its attention on relief initiatives in the aftermath of natural disasters and humanitarian crises, such as the provision of emergency supplies, the collection of funds through various means and the engagement in recovery and reconstruction projects¹⁴⁸. In this sense, the 2015 Nepal earthquake represented the first occasion in which CWDF has engaged in international work by actively participating in the joint humanitarian relief efforts of China's civil society organizations. Given the fact that CWDF was set up under the professional supervision of the All-China Women's Federation, the foundation can be considered as a GONGO. In fact, the All-China Women's Federations, a mass organization whose objectives center around the promotion of Chinese women's rights and of sex equality, is an official institution whose links with the state leadership are very close. The Federation is in fact led by President Shen Yueyue 沈跃跃, who also holds the office of vice-chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

¹⁴⁶ China Youth Development Foundation. "Our Mission". *China Youth Development Foundation website*. Retrieved January 6, 2020, from <https://en.cydf.org.cn/OurMission/>

¹⁴⁷ China Women's Development Foundation. "About China Women's Development Foundation". *China Women's Development Foundation website*. Retrieved January 6, 2020, from <https://www.cwdf.org.cn/en/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=lists&catid=79>

¹⁴⁸ China Women's Development Foundation. "Emergency Relief Projects". *China Women's Development Foundation website*. Retrieved January 6, 2020, from <https://www.cwdf.org.cn/en/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=lists&catid=46>

and boasts a very long political career, at both provincial and federal levels. The strong connection between the All-China Women's Federation and CWDF leaves no doubts about the level of intimacy that the foundation shares with the country's political élite.

- *China Social Welfare Foundation*

Registered in 2005 and directly sponsored from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, CSWF is a national public foundation specialized in work related to various spheres of China's society, from education to community development¹⁴⁹. The organization's leading board chairman is Qi Xuelin 戚学林, who covered different official positions such as secretary of the Party committee and general office deputy director of MOCA¹⁵⁰. Information concerning CSWF's registration under the supervision of MOCA and the official positions held by the chairman may suggest that the links between the organization and the state are close enough for it to be considered a GONGO. The intervention in the humanitarian relief operation in Nepal is CSWF's first ever operation beyond China's borders.

- *Amity Foundation*

Amity Foundation, founded in 1985 by Bishop Ding Guangxun 丁光训, is a faith based independent social organization headquartered in Nanjing. Its main activities, among others, include poverty reduction, medical education, environmental protection and disaster relief. While during its initial stage, the foundation's work was mainly sustained by overseas Christian churches and was focused on the development of the Jiangsu province, during the 90s and the 00s Amity underwent a major development process, which led it to be China's main independent social organization in 2010¹⁵¹. In the same year Amity launched its first international project: a biogas training program in Micronesia. Since then, international work became one of the main focuses of the

¹⁴⁹ China Social Welfare Foundation. "Zhongguo shehui fuli jijinhui jianjie" 中国社会福利基金会简介 (Introduction to China Social Welfare Foundation). *China Social Welfare Foundation website*. Retrieved January 8, 2020, from <http://www.cswef.org/cswef/pages/introduction.html>

¹⁵⁰ China Social Welfare Foundation. "Hui lingdao jianjie" 领导简介 (Introduction to the leading board). *China Social Welfare Foundation website*. Retrieved January 8, 2020, from <http://www.cswef.org/cswef/pages/huilingdaojianjie.html>

¹⁵¹ Amity Foundation. "History". *Amity Foundation website*. Retrieved January 29, 2020, from <https://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/history>

organization, which, before engaging in humanitarian operations in Nepal, had also implemented various projects in North Korea, Kenya and Madagascar. In addition to this, in 2015, the first Amity overseas branch office was inaugurated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Over the course of its history, Amity has always featured a strong international vocation, and has numerous partner organizations and institutions in Europe, America, Asia and Oceania¹⁵². Finally, Amity Foundation is also member of ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together), an international coalition of Christian churches and faith-based organizations. Born in 2010 as the result of the merge between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), ACT Alliance has been carrying out advocacy and humanitarian assistance work in more than 120 countries across the world¹⁵³.

- *One Foundation*

One Foundation was originally founded in 2007 by Li Lianjie 李连杰 with the name of Red Cross Society of China Jet Li One Foundation Project (中国红十字会李连杰壹基金计划, *Zhongguo Hong Shizi Hui Li Lianjie Yijijin Jihua*). In its initial phases the organizations was therefore closely linked with the Red Cross and, under its authority began to implement various charity projects across Mainland China. In 2008, with the support of the Red Cross Society of China and the Shanghai Department of Civil Affairs, the Shanghai Jet Li One Foundation Charity Fund (上海李连杰壹基金公益基金会, *Shanghai Li Lianjie Yijijin Gongyi Jijinhui*) was successfully registered as a non-public foundation. As the Red Cross Society of China Jet Li One Foundation Project's executive organ, the Shanghai Charity Fund carried out different kinds of projects, regularly reporting to its parent organization. Finally, in December 2010, the Shenzhen One Foundation Charity Fund (深圳壹基金公益基金会, *Shenzhen Yijijin Gongyi Jijinhui*) was able to register as a public charity foundation at the Shenzhen Department of Civil Affairs, thus definitively ending its partnership with the Red Cross and the government. With an initial endowment amounting to RMB 5 million coming from several domestic

¹⁵² Amity Foundation. "30th anniversary – Footprints of Love". *Amity Foundation website*. Retrieved February 2, 2020, from https://www.amityfoundation.org/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/30th%20Anniversary.pdf

¹⁵³ ACT Alliance. "About". *Act Alliance website*. Retrieved February 2, 2020, from <https://actalliance.org/about/>

foundations, in 2011 One Foundation began to work as an independent entity, no more affiliated with Chinese state actors¹⁵⁴.

- *Lingshan Charity Foundation*

Lingshan Charity Foundation is a Buddhist faith-based public foundation established by the Lingshan Cultural Tourism Group (灵山文化旅游集团, *Lingshan Wenhua Lüyou Jituan*) and the Wuxi Xiangfu Temple (无锡相符寺, *Wuxi Xiangfu Si*) and registered in 2004 at Jiangsu's Department of Civil Affairs. It is primarily involved in youth education, community governance, social innovation, disaster management, and other activity fields. Since its establishment, Lingshan Charity Foundation has always maintained a close relationship with Buddhist faith-based and faith-related groups and organizations all over China¹⁵⁵. As regards the organization's overseas work, apart from Nepal, over the years Lingshan engaged in disaster relief operations and development projects in different countries and continents. In Ethiopia, it implemented the "Smiling Children" food provision project (微笑儿童, *Weixiao Ertong*), whereas different cultural and educational programs are currently being carried out in Northern Thailand.¹⁵⁶

3.2.4 *The three scope levels of Chinese social organizations' work in Nepal*

As already described in section 3.1.3, China's humanitarian work in Nepal was not circumscribed to the emergency relief phase, but was further perpetrated and was articulated to cover the following two phase of crisis management, namely post-recovery rehabilitation, which is further divided into recovery and reconstruction. Nevertheless, Chinese institutions were not the only actors to pursue long-term operations in Nepal,

¹⁵⁴ One Foundation. "Yijijin jieshao" 壹基金介绍 (Introduction). *One Foundation website*. Retrieved February 2, 2020, from <http://www.onefoundation.cn/index.php?g=home&m=page&a=index&id=35>

¹⁵⁵ Lingshan Charity Foundation. "Jianjie" 简介 (Introduction). *Lingshan Charity Foundation website*. Retrieved February 2, 2020, from <http://www.lingshanfoundation.org/show?id=1>

¹⁵⁶ Lingshan Charity Foundation. (2017, August 3). "2017 Lingshan Taibei guoji zhiyuanzhe" 2017 灵山泰北国际志愿者 (Lingshan international volunteers in Northern Thailand). *Lingshan Charity Foundation website*. Retrieved 2 February 2020, from <http://www.lingshanfoundation.org/newsDetail/122>

since the intervention of several Chinese social organizations was also extended beyond the emergency response stage of crisis management. As far as civil society organizations are concerned, it is important to point out that the three involvement stages described above reflect the different scope levels at which such entities operated. In fact, the analysis of the behavior of non-governmental actors in the aftermath Nepal earthquake indicates that various social organizations differ with regard to the timing and duration of their intervention. In this sense, if crisis management work is subdivided in three different stages, a categorization of social organization on the basis of their scope level requires that their intervention should also be organized on three levels, which can be named after the corresponding stages of the disaster management cycle: *emergency relief*, *post-disaster recovery* and *post-disaster reconstruction*.

	CFPA	CYDF	CWDF	CSWF	Amity Foundation	One Foundation	Lingshan Charity Foundation
Emergency relief	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Recovery	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Reconstruction	✓	✓			✓		

Table 3 - Scope levels of Chinese social organizations

Out of the seven organizations taken into account, five of them, namely CFPA, CWDF, CSWF, Amity Foundation and One Foundation, engaged in operations that can be referred to the emergency response scope level. In collaboration with several rescue teams, these organizations carried out search and rescue operations, offered first aid medical assistance and provided emergency material and basic commodities, such as food and drinking water. In particular, CFPA and One Foundation remarkably stood out for the

swiftness of their involvement in disaster relief operations. The majority of the five organizations that quickly mobilized after the outbreak of the crisis, also decided to extend the duration of their work and thus can be said to have operated on different scope levels. The work of some of them, namely CFPA, Amity Foundation, entirely covered the three scope levels and CFPA even managed to establish a permanent branch office in Kathmandu on August 13th, 2015¹⁵⁷. The Nepal office is the third one set up by the organization worldwide. The case of CFPA exemplifies a peculiar tendency of charitable work by social organizations, where an emergency relief effort articulated on different scope levels translates in permanent involvement aimed at implementing capacity building, advocacy and development projects.

The only organization that limited its intervention to the emergency phase was CSWF, whose search and rescue team Blue Leopard Rescue that was engaging in its first international work, was the first team to reach Nepal from China. CSWF completed its emergency relief operations about a week after the first quake and, on May 2nd, the organization's rescue team had already moved back to China¹⁵⁸. Among the organizations taken into consideration, Lingshan Charity Foundation and CYDF did not engage in emergency relief operations and their intervention was respectively circumscribed to the recovery and reconstruction scope levels. In fact, although by April 26th, the day following the first quake, Lingshan Charity Foundation had already started to set up a humanitarian team, the organization planned to concentrate its operations over a period of eight days, from May 1st to May 9th. The foundation's work did not focus on search and rescue operations, nor on the provision of emergency supplies, but rather on the re-establishment of wireless communication and on survey work¹⁵⁹. For this reason, despite the relative rapidity of action and coordination, the intervention of Lingshan Charity Foundation is to be referred to the post-disaster recovery level. As regards

the case of CYDF, the organization decided to directly settle on the third scope level, namely post-disaster reconstruction. In fact, on June 17th, CYDF signed a memorandum for the "China-Nepal Friendship Hope School" financial aid project (中尼友好希望小

¹⁵⁷ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. (2015, August 17). *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation website*. Retrieved January 13, 2020, from <http://en.cfpa.org.cn/index.php?file=article&cmd=show&artid=88>

¹⁵⁹ Lingshan Charity Foundation. (2015, April 28). "Lingshan Cishan Jijinhui - Huanghuashe Niboer lianhe jiuyuan di yi qi jianbao" 灵山慈善基金会 - 弘化社尼泊尔联合救援第一期简报 (The 1st report of the Lingshan Charity Foundation - Honghua Charity Foundation jointed humanitarian effort in Nepal). *Lingshan Charity Foundation WeChat*

学), which started the collaboration aimed at building a perfectly earthquake-proof elementary school in the Patan area¹⁶⁰.

3.3 Analysis of the operational capacity of Chinese social organizations in the humanitarian response to the Nepal earthquake

3.3.1 Methodological approach to section 3.3

The aim of this section of the thesis is to carry out an assessment of the operational capacity of Chinese social organizations that engaged in the humanitarian response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake. In order to efficiently carry out an analysis of the operational capacity of Chinese social organizations, a total of five indicators pointing out different elements of such capacity are individuated: *responsiveness*, *fundraising capacity* (which is further divided into two aspects: *sources* and *volume*), *fields of intervention*, *number of beneficiaries*, and *geographic coverage*. Nevertheless, the fact that the seven social organizations taken into account operated on different scope levels implies that it is not possible to associate each organization to the entire list of operational capacity indicators. As a consequence, the foundations that did not immediately engage in the emergency relief phase, such as CYDF and Lingshan Charity Foundation, cannot be analyzed in terms of their *responsiveness*, given the fact that they intentionally settled their intervention on the other two scope levels. It is therefore important to point out that there is no intention to standardize the operational capacity analysis, since it is evident that different organizations do not share the same scopes and do not expect the same outcomes.

¹⁶⁰ Zhou S. (2015, June 17). “Niboer zaiqu jiang jian Zhong-Ni Xiwang xiaoxue” 尼泊尔灾区将建中尼希望小学 (China and Nepal will build an elementary school in an earthquake affected area). *Xinhuanet News*. Retrieved January 13, 2020, from http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2015-06/17/c_1115649105.htm

Operational capacity indicator	Description
Responsiveness	Swiftness of intervention
Fundraising capacity	Two aspects: <i>sources</i> and <i>volume</i> of the funds collected by social organizations
Fields of intervention	Range of activities carried out by social organizations operating on different scope levels
Number of beneficiaries	Number of people that benefited from the humanitarian work of social organizations
Geographical coverage	Degree of penetration in the territory, number of areas reached by the organizations

Table 4 - Indicators of operational capacity

3.3.2 Responsiveness

The *responsiveness* indicator is to be understood in terms of response time: it refers to the swiftness with which Chinese social organizations operating at the emergency relief scope level engaged in the humanitarian response. It has already been anticipated that the Chinese civil society response to the Nepal earthquake was characterized by an unprecedented rapidity of intervention, with CFPA and One Foundation standing out as the most responsive organizations. The 7.8 magnitude quake struck Nepal on April 25th at 06:11 a.m. local time. The first emergency meeting was organized by the One Foundation Emergency Alliance (壹基金救援联盟, *Yijijin Jiuyuan Lianmeng*) at 02:21 p.m. Beijing time, only 10 minutes after the earthquake¹⁶¹. Meanwhile, five members of the One Foundation rescue group already stationed in Nepal joined forces with the Tibet team and by the following day they had already begun search and rescue operations. In addition, on April 27th the first rescue group was joined by the YB Mountain & Water Rescue Team (云豹救援队, *Yunbao Jiuyuandui*) and by the Red Star Rescue Team (红星救援队, *Hongxing Jiuyundui*). On April 28th, two teams of the One Foundation

¹⁶¹ Bannister T., *op. cit.*

Emergency Alliance composed by a total of eight members, reached Kathmandu and joined the relief effort. As regards the provision of emergency supplies, the swiftness of the organization's involvement was also remarkable. In fact, by April 28th, One Foundation's partner China Merchants Logistic Group (招商物流集团, *Zhaoshang Wuliu Jituan*) had prepared a total of one thousand sleeping bags which were sent from Chengdu to Kathmandu. In the meantime China Eastern Airlines (中国东方航空, *Zhongguo Dongfang Hangkong*), another major partner of the foundation, was also shipping sleeping bags and tents from the cities of Kunming, Xichang and Xi'an to Nepal¹⁶². Within the "72 Golden Hours" timeframe, a total of three rescue teams were sent to Nepal by One Foundation and, by April 28th, a total of 26 people were involved in emergency relief operations on behalf of the organization¹⁶³. Within 30 minutes after the seismic event, CFPA had already set up a humanitarian aid program, the "Humanitarian Aid – Nepal and Tibet Earthquake response" (人道救援 – 尼泊尔大地震及西藏地震响应救援, *Rendao Jiuyuan-Niboer da dizhen ji Xizang dizhen xiangying jiuyuan*). The following day, at 03:00 p.m. Beijing time, CFPA personnel that had departed from Capital Airport at 09:30 p.m., met with the Blue Sky Rescue team (蓝天救援队, *Lantian Jiuyuandui*) in Guangzhou and together left for Kathmandu. Here, various rescue groups sent from CFPA and coming from Xiamen and Lhasa organized a joint intervention aimed at carrying out search and rescue work and at providing first aid assistance to the affected population¹⁶⁴. Besides One Foundation and CFPA, other organizations also managed to organize a quick response to the crisis. Among the ones that have been analyzed, CWDF, CSWEF and Amity Foundation also stand out for their responsiveness. At 03:00 p.m. Beijing time of April 25th, CWDF reached out to the Tibetan Women's Association (西藏自治区妇女联合会, *Xizang zizhiqu Funü Lianhehui*) in order to learn about the situation of women and children after the earthquake. In addition, it convened an emergency meeting of the management board and set up the "Emergency Relief Group

¹⁶² One Foundation. (2015, April 28). "Yijiaren 72 xiaoshi xingdong: chengong soujiu liang ming beikunzhe, qi cheng jieli zhuanyun wuzi – bobao 004" 壹家人 72 小时行动: 成功搜救两名被困者, 七城接力转运物资 – 播报 004 (One Foundation 72 hours of activity: two victims have been recovered and material has been sent from seven cities). *One Foundation WeChat*.

¹⁶³ One Foundation. (2015, April 29). The One Foundation's first 72 hours in Nepal. *China Development Brief website*. Retrieved January 18, 2019, from <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/news/the-one-foundations-first-72-hours-in-nepal/>

¹⁶⁴ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. "2015 niandu baogao" 2015 年度报告 (2015 Annual Report). *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation*. Retrieved January 20, 2020, from <http://www.cfpa.org.cn/information/institution.aspx>

for the Nepal and Tibet Earthquake” (4.25 尼泊尔西藏地震紧急救援小组, 4.25 *Niboer Xizang dizhen jinji jiuyuan xiaozu*). Meanwhile, it also established 8 fundraising channels and started sending emergency material to the affected women and children of Nepal¹⁶⁵. As regards CSWF, on April 25th at 02:30 p.m. Beijing time, its rescue team Blue Leopard started to gather information about the disaster through the Nepal embassy in Beijing and created a task force composed of a total of eighteen people from different areas of expertise such as medical, communication, rescue groups and disaster management, which split into three groups. At 01:20 a.m. of April 27th, the first group landed in Kathmandu and by 07:00 a.m. it had reached the CSWF base camp in Tamil, where it waited for the second group which had planned to arrive in the afternoon. In the meantime, the third group was preparing body bags, disinfectants, water sanitation equipment and drinking water, which reached Nepal from Kunming later in the evening. The CSWF team engaged in search and rescue operations for a total of five days, before leaving the country on May 2nd¹⁶⁶. Personnel sent from Amity Foundation reached Kathmandu on April 27th at 05:00 p.m. and rapidly started to distribute waterproof blankets, drinking water, food and cooking utensils to four-hundred families. On the following day, Amity convened a meeting and decided together with ACT International to start an evaluation and survey work in three different districts and, by the end of the same day, it had already purchased a total of more than 1800 items, including blankets and bottles of water, that were dispatched starting from April 29th.

3.3.3 Fundraising capacity

The *fundraising capacity* indicator outlines two different attributes of the social organizations' financial support to the emergency relief and to the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction activities, namely the *sources* and the *volume* of the funds that such

¹⁶⁵ China Women's Development Foundation. (2015, April 29). “Wulian wang + jiuzai – Zhongguo Funü Fazhan Jijinhui jiuzhu zaiqing zai xingdong” 互联网+救灾 – 中国妇女发展基金会援助灾情在行动 (Internet + Aid - China Women's Development Foundation Humanitarian Relief is in Action). *China Women's Development Foundation WeChat*.

¹⁶⁶ China Social Welfare Foundation. (2015, April 27). “Lanbao qidong Niboer dizhen jiuyuan, shouci tachu guomen” 蓝豹启动尼泊尔地震救援 首次踏出国门 (Blue Leopard Rescue has begun humanitarian relief operations in Nepal – first time abroad). *China Social Welfare Foundation WeChat*.

organizations allocated for the humanitarian response. As regards the main *sources* of the funds, they can be divided into two main categories: public fundraising activities through online platforms or direct transfer, and partner entities, such as companies, partner social organizations, or institutions of different kinds. Different *volumes* of funds were collected by social organizations from the aforementioned sources. The analysis of the fundraising capacity is carried out by taking into consideration the *volume* of funds coming from different *sources*, in relation to the total seven organizations included in the research work. This section is further divided into two subsections, the first corresponding to the *public fundraising source* and the second to funds coming from *partner entities* of different kinds. The *volume* of funds is assessed separately in relation to both sources.

- *Public fundraising*

The majority of the social organizations taken into account, five out of seven, have engaged in public fundraising activities. In this sense, a great contribution was given by several online fundraising platforms, such as the already mentioned Tencent Gongyi and Alipay Gongyi, that served as channels through which the funds were easily and rapidly transferred from the donors to the organizations, that subsequently decided how to allocate them. The effectiveness and successfulness of the fundraising activities carried out by social organizations is mainly due to the rapidity with which the several online platforms set up programs aimed at collecting money for the disaster relief operations. Tencent Gongyi was the first one to establish a fundraising channel on April 25th at 05:40 p.m., followed by Sina Weibo Gongyi at 06:00 p.m. and Alipay Gongyi at 06:48 p.m. on the same day. In addition to utilizing the online platforms provided by Chinese technology companies, social organizations also enabled donors to directly wire money through bank transfers. In terms of *volume* of the public funds gathered by social organizations through online platforms during the emergency relief phase, CFPA had already collected a total of RMB 868'725 on the Tencent Gongyi platform by 25th April and, over a timespan of five days, the amount of money collected by the foundation through Tencent had already reached a total of RMB 2.2 million¹⁶⁷. CWDF also managed to quickly enable public fundraising channels. Three days after the first quake, the organization had collected a

¹⁶⁷ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. "2015 niandu baogao" 2015 年度报 (2015 annual report). *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation website*. Retrieved December 18, 2019, 2020, from <http://www.cfpa.org.cn/information/institution.aspx>

total of RMB 720'000 via different platforms, such as Tencent, Alipay, Sina, Zhong Chou Wang, Youku and others. Only through Tencent, within a month the organization managed to collect a total of RMB 877'548 from a basis of more than 14'000 donators¹⁶⁸. Amity Foundation, another major organization that engaged in public fundraising activities, in a matter of few hours over the emergency relief phase had already collected a total of RMB 1.5 million from online platforms, including Tencent, Alipay, Taobao and Suning¹⁶⁹. The swiftness with which the organization managed to raise such a big amount of money is further indicative of the vital role played by online fundraising platforms in China's civil society response to the Nepal earthquake. In sum, by May 22nd, exactly one month after the earthquake, Amity Foundation had managed to gather a total of RMB 2.07 million only from the public¹⁷⁰. On the other hand, the Shenzhen-based One Foundation's public fundraising activity has delivered even more impressive results. By 6:00 p.m. of April 26th, the day after the first quake, the organization had already gathered a total of over RMB 5 million from the public through internet platforms, such as Tencent, Alipay and Alibaba¹⁷¹. Moreover, as of May 8th, over a timespan of less than two weeks, the organization's total sum of money coming from public fundraising activities amounted to more than RMB 11,1 million¹⁷². Finally, Lingshan Charity Foundation's public fundraising activity began on April 27th, when it opened the "Rescue the Pure Land Nepal" (驰援净土尼泊尔, *Chiyuan Jingshi Niboer*) channel on Tencent, through which more than RMB 100'000 were gathered by the end of the day¹⁷³. By July 25th, the

¹⁶⁸ China Women's Development Foundation. (2015, April 29). "Wulian wang + jiuzai – Zhongguo Funü Fazhan Jijinhui jiuzhu zaiqing zai xingdong" 互联网+救灾 – 中国妇女发展基金会援助灾情在行动 (Internet + Aid - China Women's Development Foundation Humanitarian Relief is in Action). *China Women's Development Foundation WeChat*.

¹⁶⁹ Amity Foundation. (2015, April 27). "Aide Jijinhui Niboer dizhen jiuyuan ribao – 4 yue 27 ri" 爱德基金会尼泊尔地震救援日报 – 4月27日 (Daily report of Amity Foundation's humanitarian work in Nepal, April 27th). *Amity Foundation WeChat*.

¹⁷⁰ Amity Foundation. (2015, May 22). "Zhenhou 28 tian – Niboer, Aide congwei likai" 震后28天 – 尼泊尔, 爱德从未离开 (28 days after the earthquake – Nepal, Amity has never left). *Amity Foundation WeChat*.

¹⁷¹ One Foundation. (2015, April 26). "Yijiaren Niboer dizhen 24 xiaoshi: 8 zhi jiuyuandui dida, shoupi wuzi zhuanyun – bobao 002" 壹家人尼泊尔地震24小时: 8之救援队抵达 首批物资转运 – 播报 002 (One Foundation's first 24 hours in Nepal: 8 rescue teams have arrived and the first batch of material has been shipped – report 002). *One Foundation WeChat*.

¹⁷² One Foundation. (2015, May 8). "Yijijin yu Jiuzhu Ertong Hui lianhe zhenzai 4552 ge shuidai zai Niboer fafang" 壹基金与救助儿童会联合赈灾 4552个睡袋再尼泊尔发放 – 播报 011 (One Foundation and Save the Children joint humanitarian response, 4552 sleeping bags have been delivered to Nepal – report 011). *One Foundation WeChat*.

¹⁷³ Lingshan Charity Foundation. (2015, April 27). "Lingshan Cishan Jijinhui juanzeng 50 wan yuan yongyu Niboer dizhen qianqi jiuyuan" 灵山慈善基金会捐赠 50 万元用于尼泊尔地震前期救援 (Lingshan Charity Foundation has collected RMB 500'000 to be used in the humanitarian response to the Nepal earthquake). *Lingshan Charity Foundation WeChat*.

organization's fundraising activity through the platform managed to collect a total of RMB 92'432 from more than 1'200 donors throughout China¹⁷⁴.

Among the seven foundations analyzed, two of them, CSWEF and CYDF, did not engage in public fundraising activities. CSWEF's Deputy Secretary Xiao Longjun 肖隆君 stated that financial support to the organization's work in Nepal would have been entirely provided by the Ling Xiong Love Fund (凌雄大爱基金, *Ling Xiong Da Ai Jijin*), a charity fund created in 2014 by CSWF and the Shanghai Zheshang Industrial Group Ltd. (上海浙商实业集团有限公司, *Shanghai Zheshang Shiye Jituan youxian gongsi*)¹⁷⁵. As for the case CYDF, it was agreed that the construction of the HOPE elementary school in Patan would be jointly supported by both Chinese and Nepali funds, while the labor force would be provided by Chinese enterprises in the country¹⁷⁶.

- *Partner entities*

In terms of funding *sources*, a major contribution was also given from third parties of different kinds, including companies, social organizations and various groups and institutions, which transferred money to the foundations involved in Nepal in order to sustain their humanitarian activities. In the case of CWDF, a few days after the earthquake, the Beijing based transportation company DiDi Chuxing Technology Co. (滴滴出行, *DiDi Chuxing*) declared that it would donate RMB 1 million to the organizations in order to support the implementation of its "Health Express for Mothers" project in Nepal, while by April 28th Beijing Yi An Fang Cheng Investment Management Ltd. donated a total of RMB 1 million to the organization¹⁷⁷. As regards One Foundation, by May 8th, the money collected by companies accounted for the 18% of the sum total of donations (RMB 2.6

¹⁷⁴ Tencent Gongyi. "Jinji chiyuan Jingshi Niboer" 紧急驰援净土尼泊尔 (Rescue the Pure Land Nepal fundraising program). *Tencent Gongyi website*. Retrieved January 31, 2020 from <https://gongyi.qq.com/succor/detail.htm?id=2874>

¹⁷⁵ China Social Welfare Foundation. (2015, April 29). "Lanbao jiuyuan dui san pi gong 13 ming duiyuan dida Jiademandu touru jiuyuan" 蓝豹救援队三批共 13 名队员抵达加德满都投入救援 (Three groups of the Blue Leopard rescue team, for a total of 13 members, reached Kathmandu and engaged in rescue work). *China Social Welfare Foundation website*. Retrieved January 20, 2020 from <http://www.cswef.org/index.php/cswef/news/detail/id/173.html>

¹⁷⁶ China Youth Development Foundation. "CYDF annual report 2015". *China Youth Development Foundation website*. Retrieved January 21, 2020, from: <https://www.cydf.org.cn/uploadfile/2017/0817/20170817030527593.pdf>

¹⁷⁷ China Women's Development Foundation. (2015, April 29). "Wulian wang + jiuzai - Zhongguo Funü Fazhan Jijinhui jiuzhu zaiqing zai xingdong" 互联网+救灾 - 中国妇女发展基金会援助灾情在行动 (Internet + Aid - China Women's Development Foundation Humanitarian Relief is in Action). *China Women's Development Foundation WeChat*.

million out of RMB 14.2 million). Such amount of money came from a series of domestic companies with different backgrounds, such as hotel industry in the case of Home Inn (如家酒店, *Rujia Jiudian*), and travel industry in the cases of Tuniu.com (途牛旅游网, *Tuniu Lüyou Wang*) and LY.com (同程旅游, *Tongcheng Lüyou*). Similarly, as of May 22nd, almost one million RMB were donated to Amity Foundation by various companies, accounting for 27% of the total funds collected up to that date.

The contribution of other Chinese social organizations proved relevant especially in the case of One Foundation. The Dunhe Foundation (浙江敦和慈善基金会, *Zhejiang Dunhe Cishan Jijinhui*), established in 2012 and approved by the Civil Affairs Department of Zhejiang, provided One Foundation with a total of RMB 500'000, coming from a pre-existing anti-disaster fund. In addition, the Shenzhen C Foundation (深圳市创想公益基金会, *Shenzhen Shi Chuangxiang Gongyi Jijinhui*), also transferred a total of RMB 100'000 to One Foundation¹⁷⁸. The collaboration with other social organization proved relevant also for the fundraising activity of Lingshan Charity Foundation, which starting from April 27th, partnered with the Suzhou Honghua Foundation (苏州弘化社基金会, *Suzhou Huanghua She Jijinhui*) and created the “Lingshan-Honghua jointed Nepal Emergency Relief”¹⁷⁹. Nonetheless, the two organizations cooperated throughout the entire duration of Lingshan Charity Foundation’s intervention in Nepal, and Honghua also contributed with its own personnel and material. For this reason, a clarification needs to be made in this case: unlike the other cases, in which one organization directly involved in the relief work received grants from other organizations to be invested in disaster relief operations, Lingshan did not merely constitute an intermediary entity through which Honghua contributed to the humanitarian response, because both organizations engaged in onsite operations firsthand.

Finally, the support from religious institutions and groups mainly refers to the contribution coming from faith-based organizations such as research institutes and Christian churches. In the case of Amity Foundation, several thousand RMB were

¹⁷⁸ One Foundation. (2015, May 8). “Yijijin yu Jiuzhu Ertong Hui lianhe zhenzai 4552 ge shuidai zai Niboer fafang” 壹基金与救助儿童会联合赈灾 4552 个睡袋再尼泊尔发放 – 播报 011 (One Foundation and Save the Children joint humanitarian response, 4552 sleeping bags have been delivered to Nepal – report 011). *One Foundation WeChat*.

¹⁷⁹ Lingshan Charity Foundation. (2015, April 28). “Lingshan Cishan Jijinhui - Huanghuashe Niboer lianhe jiuyuan di yi qi jianbao” 灵山慈善基金会 – 弘化社尼泊尔联合救援第一期简报 (The 1st report of the Lingshan Charity Foundation – Honghua Charity Foundation jointed humanitarian effort in Nepal). *Lingshan Charity Foundation WeChat*.

donated by the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (金陵协和神学院, *Jin Li Xiehe Shen Xueyuan*), the Huai'an Christian Church (淮安基督教中心堂, *Huai'an Jidu Jiao Zhongxin Tang*), the Nanjing Saint Paul Church (南京圣保罗堂, *Nanjing Sheng Baoluo Tang*) and the Shaanxi Christian Church (陕西基督教, *Shaanxi Jidu Jiao*) during the first phases of the disaster relief activities¹⁸⁰. The funds coming from religious groups are evidently justified by the fact that Amity Foundation, being one of the main Christian-based social organizations in China and a member of the international protestant coalition ACT alliance, shares a high degree of intimacy with several religious institutions and churches throughout China and the world.

3.3.4 *Fields of intervention*

The *fields of intervention* operational capacity indicator refers to the variety of onsite activities undertaken by Chinese social organizations in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake. Different organizations operating on different scope levels engaged in a series of activities ranging from search and rescue operations in the emergency phase, to the rehabilitation of communications, and to the restoration or construction of buildings in the reconstruction phase. For this reason, the analysis of the *fields of intervention* indicator is carried out in view of the previously described distinction among the emergency relief, recovery and reconstruction scope levels.

- *Emergency relief*

Organizations involved in the emergency relief phase engaged in a series of activities of different nature. A few hours after the seismic event, CFPA's personnel carried out inspections aimed at assessing the extent of the damages caused by the quake. On April 28th, three days after the earthquake, inspection work in three districts (Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan) was also implemented by Amity Foundation in collaboration with

¹⁸⁰ Amity Foundation. (2015, April 27). "Aide Jijinhui Niboer dizhen jiuyuan ribao" 爱德基金会尼泊尔地震救援日报 – 4月27日 (Daily report of Amity Foundation's humanitarian work in Nepal, April 27th). *Amity Foundation WeChat*.

ACT international. In this phase, CFPA, CSWEF and One Foundation all engaged in search and relief operations, performed by several teams of specialized staff affiliated with said organizations, such as CFPA's Blue Sky Rescue, CSWEF's Blue Leopard Rescue and One Foundation's YB Mountain and Water Rescue and others. CFPA, Amity Foundation and One Foundation also rallied to provide emergency supplies to the affected population. Food and drinking water were delivered by all three organizations, along with emergency material, such as waterproof blankets, sleeping bags, makeshift tents, cooking utensils, medical supplies and other equipment aimed at assisting the population in overcoming the first hours following the disaster. In the case of CWDF, the staff also engaged in the provision of emergency supplies for the affected population but, in conformity with the organization's policy, its main targets have been children and women. The organization is in fact specialized in implementing relief and capacity building projects specifically developed for these two categories of beneficiaries. Besides food and drinking water, the material provided by CWDF included shoes, clothing for children and sanitary towels for women. In addition to delivering emergency supplies and engaging in search and rescue operations, CFPA and CSWF personnel also provided medical assistance to the injured and contributed to the sanitation work. In particular, CSWF also had body bags, disinfectants and water purification equipment flown in from Kunming on April 27th. Ultimately, the variety of activities in which Chinese social organization operating on the emergency relief scope level engaged can be summarized as follows: inspection work, search and rescue operations, emergency supplies delivery and medical assistance and sanitation.

	CFPA	CWDF	CSWF	Amity Foundation	One Foundation
Inspection work	✓			✓	✓
Search and rescue operations	✓		✓		✓
Delivery of emergency supplies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
First aid medical assistance/sanitation	✓		✓		

Table 5 - Fields of intervention of organizations involved in the emergency relief scope level

- *Post-disaster recovery*

Activities carried out by Chinese social organizations in the post-disaster recovery phase are more diversified than those pertaining to the emergency relief stage. In fact, unlike emergency relief operations, which tend to be highly standardized and applicable to different crisis scenarios that imply the saving of human lives and the provision of assistance to survivors, post-disaster recovery activities are indeed more wide-ranging and varied. This is mainly due to the fact that the involvement in such phase of the humanitarian response requires the planning of an intervention which needs to be adjusted to meet certain territorial and cultural conditions, that are not always replicable and therefore require a deep knowledge and understanding of the country's morphological features and of the population's needs in a particular moment.

In addition, this phase is also characterized by the enhancement of a tendency which can also be identified in emergency relief activities: in order to maximize their efficiency, organizations dedicated to different sectors mostly tend to engage in operations pertaining to their fields of expertise. For instance, One Foundation and CWDF, both specialized in children welfare, mostly engaged in activities aimed at providing assistance to this particular category, leaving out other activities falling into other organizations' area of

expertise. In particular One Foundation, among other activities, has carried out the construction of 32 service points for children (儿童服务站, *ertong fuwu zhan*), serving as places where children can play and study in a safe and controlled environment and receive proper psychological counseling and assistance.¹⁸¹ In addition to this, the organization also delivered “back to school bags” (返校包, *fanxiao bao*) and other school material to children and teachers in order to facilitate the resumption of school activities in the affected areas, and continued to provide medical assistance and to implement sanitation work, along with contributing to the installation of two temporary sanitary facilities¹⁸². On the other hand, CWDF, in collaboration with the United Nation Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), from April 27th to June 6th pursued an observation and study program with the purpose of assessing the needs of women and children. The outcome of the inspection work highlighted the lack of proper lightning in the temporary accommodations and the high humidity level of the soil as the main problems people are faced with in the post-disaster recovery period. Accordingly, the organization decided to focus on the delivery of solar lamps and anti-humidity mattresses, together with towels and disposable tampons for women. Such material has been dispatched in 3 different areas of Kathmandu in collaboration with the local NGO Lumanti of Nepal. Finally, in concomitance with the celebrations for the Children’s Day on June 1st, CWDF and the Chinese Children’s Hope Foundation (儿童希望救助基金会, *Ertong Xiwang Jiuzhu Jijinhui*) have agreed upon joining forces to deliver material for a total value of RMB 50’000 to children, along with various kinds of food¹⁸³.

Amity Foundation and CFPA, on the contrary, concentrated their efforts on the construction of temporary accommodations for the population, often realized with materials such as bamboo or sheet metal. In addition to this, Amity Foundation also engaged in the delivery of material used for the construction of temporary sanitary facilities and of basic commodities, whereas CFPA contributed to sanitation activities and

¹⁸¹ One Foundation. (2015, July 30). “Diqiu buzhi yi, dan haizi de jia zhi you yi ge” 地球不止一个，但孩子的家只有一个 (Earth isn’t only one, but a child’s home is). *One Foundation website*. Retrieved January 20, 2020, from <http://www.onefoundation.cn/index.php?m=article&a=show&id=831>

¹⁸² One Foundation. “Yijijin 2015 nianbao” 壹基金 2015 年报 (One Foundation 2015 report). *One Foundation website*. Retrieved January 20, 2020 from <http://www.onefoundation.cn/index.php?m=info&a=show&id=737>

¹⁸³ China Women’s Development Foundation. (2015, June 17). “Zhongguo funü fazhan jijinhui yijing luoshi Niboer Xizang jiuzai zijin wuzi 107 wan yu yuan” 中国妇女发展基金会已经落实尼泊尔西藏救灾资金物资 107 万余元 (CWDF already provided material aid to Nepal for a total value of more than RMB 1.7 million). *China Women’s Development Foundation website*. Retrieved January 21, 2020, from <https://www.cwdf.org.cn/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=26&id=3200>

continued to provide medical assistance¹⁸⁴. Lingshan Charity Foundation, which directly placed its operations on the recovery scope level, implemented inspection work and focused on the rehabilitation of wireless telecommunications in the affected areas. In addition, it also engaged in the delivery of different kinds of food to different communities.

Organization	Post-disaster recovery activities
CFPA	Construction of temporary accommodations; Medical assistance; Sanitation
CWDF	Inspection work; Delivery of material for women and children;
Amity Foundation	Construction of temporary accommodations; Delivery of basic commodities; Delivery of material for the construction of temporary sanitary facilities
One Foundation	Construction of 32 service points for children; Construction of 2 temporary sanitary facilities; Delivery of school material; Medical assistance; Sanitation; Psychological counseling for children
Lingshan Charity Foundation	Inspection work; Rehabilitation of telecommunications; Delivery of material; Medical assistance

Table 6 - Fields of intervention of organizations involved on the recovery scope level

¹⁸⁴ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. “Nepal: the Nepal Post-Disaster Projects”. *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation website*. Retrieved January 21, 2020, from <http://en.cfpa.org.cn/index.php?file=article&cmd=show&artid=125>

- *Post-disaster reconstruction*

Activities falling into the sphere of the post-disaster reconstruction scope level primarily refer to work aimed at the restoration or ex-novo construction of structures and buildings which would serve as means for the implementation of capacity building programs. The main purpose of such work is the rehabilitation and the empowerment of the affected population through the enhancement of the education and health systems, the creation of recreational and gathering spaces and the provision of new skills and know-hows related to sectors such as personal hygiene and disease prevention. On this scope level, the degree of diversification of activities undertaken by social organizations appears to be increasingly higher than the previous ones. Out of the seven social organizations taken into account, three of them engaged in activities referred to the post-disaster reconstruction scope level, namely CFPA, CYDF and Amity Foundation.

CFPA's post-disaster reconstruction efforts covered two main sectors, education and health, through the implementation of a total of seven programs. As for education, besides delivering school furniture for the restoration of education buildings, the organization also provided assistance for the construction of brand-new computer rooms. On the other hand, for what concerns healthcare and sanitation, CFPA provided psychological counseling services, free screenings for viral hepatitis, aid for people with disabilities and also implemented an ad-hoc program, WASH, focused on personal hygiene training. In addition to this, on August 13th, CFPA successfully registered at the Nepal's Social Welfare Council, becoming the only Chinese social organization involved in the humanitarian response to the Nepal earthquake to have opened a branch office in the country. The office, established with the purpose of sustaining the post-disaster reconstruction activities in the fields of education and healthcare, has also been implementing projects such as the microfinance Nepalese Women Occupation Support Program and is currently active in carrying out capacity building programs in various areas¹⁸⁵.

At the beginning of September 2015, Amity Foundation, in collaboration with the local grassroots NGO Transforming Nepal (TFN), started an inspection work in three areas of Nepal in order to assess the needs of the population in the post-disaster reconstruction

¹⁸⁵ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. (2018, November 28). "CFPA Nepal office launches the Microfinance Project". *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation website*. Retrieved January 21, 2020, from <http://en.cfpa.org.cn/index.php?file=article&cmd=show&artid=165>

phase. After the assessment, Amity decided to focus on projects aimed at the reconstruction of several basic facilities and at the overall improvement of people's livelihood. In October, Amity Foundation, in partnership with the Chinese Jiangsu Christian Charity Fund (江苏基督教爱心公益基金, *Jiangsu Jidu Jiao Aixin Gongyi Jijin*), started the reconstruction of the Bethel Church in Bhaktapur. Since the preexisting structure was no longer completely safe after the earthquake, Amity contributed to the building of a new temporary place of worship, which is expected to last for at least ten years. After facing several challenges due to a shortage of electricity and to the raising prices of the construction materials, the new two-story building, with a total surface of 160 square meters, was completed and handed out to the Bhaktapur community in April 2016, when the "Bethel Assembly" project was officially concluded. The assessment work carried out in September highlighted the fact that, since that many male members of families were forced to migrate to the cities in order to find an occupation, many women and young people would suffer the consequence of a lack of skills related to farming, raising livestock and other activities. Accordingly to the outcome of the survey, Amity Foundation, in collaboration with Transforming Nepal, designed a project mainly focused on these two categories, aimed at improving food security, empowering the status of vulnerable groups (including ethnic minorities), and increasing the revenues and the overall livelihood of several communities. Finally, as for the education field, Amity started a scholarship program which prevented sixty disadvantaged students to abandon school, along with a monthly-organized workshop which offered them spiritual and material support. The purpose of such program was to encourage young people to continue their studies, which are to be considered as a necessary condition in order to ensure a more solid and comfortable future¹⁸⁶.

As already mentioned in section 3.2.4, CYDF concentrated its humanitarian response efforts on the post-disaster reconstruction scope level. On June 17th 2015, a date that marked the 60th anniversary of the China-Nepal diplomatic relations, CYDF signed the memorandum for the beginning of the "HOPE Financial Aid Project". The project, aimed at reconstructing the Jim elementary school in Patan, received the endorsement of the Chinese Ambassador in Nepal, the director of the Embassy's cultural office and the Nepali Minister of Education. At the time of the signature of the memorandum, it was

¹⁸⁶ Amity Foundation. "Survivors have a long way to go in restoring their livelihoods". *Amity Foundation website*. Retrieved January 21, 2020 from <https://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/survivors-have-long-way-go-restoring-their-livelihoods>

declared that the majority of the funds needed for the construction of the school, namely 500'000 out of the total 800'000 US dollars budgeted for the project, would be provided by China, while the remaining value would be financed by the Nepali part. It was also agreed that the construction work would be carried out by Chinese enterprises operating in the country. In addition to rebuilding the school according to anti-seismic regulations, the project also included the employment of Chinese teachers sent directly from the Confucius Institute Headquarters (国家汉办, *Guojia Hanban*), who would be permanently working in the school¹⁸⁷.

Organization	Post-disaster reconstruction activities
CFPA	WASH project; Hepatitis B+ screenings; School reconstruction program; School support program; Construction of computer labs; Psychological counseling; Support for the disabled
Amity Foundation	Inspection work; "Bethel Assembly" project; Livelihood programs; Scholarships for students
CYDF	HOPE elementary school project

Table 7 - Fields of intervention of organizations involved on the reconstruction scope level

¹⁸⁷ China Youth Development Foundation. "CYDF annual report 2015". *China Youth Development Foundation website*. Retrieved January 21, 2020, from: <https://www.cydf.org.cn/uploadfile/2017/0817/20170817030527593.pdf>

3.3.5 Number of beneficiaries

This indicator refers to the number of people that benefited from the organizations' work on the three different scope levels. Considering that the main target of the humanitarian work of social organizations is the affected population, this indicator it proves helpful to understand the extent of the organizations' commitment to the humanitarian response and to assess the efficiency of their operations. The numbers listed below refer to the total amount of individuals that were interested by the intervention of the analyzed social organizations over the emergency relief, post-disaster recovery and post-disaster reconstruction scope levels.

The emergency relief response of CFPA, which engaged in all the fields of intervention mentioned in the previous section, namely inspection work, search and rescue operations, delivery of emergency supplies and first aid medical assistance and sanitation, has approximately interested a total of 155'700 individuals¹⁸⁸. The number of people that benefited from the organization's post disaster recovery activities amounted to 21'700, whereas on the post-disaster reconstruction projects have interested a total of 13'900 people. CSWF's search and rescue operations managed to pull out one survivor from rubble, while a total of 40 people benefited from the organization's first aid medical assistance. As already mentioned before, CSWF's operations were circumscribed to the emergency relief scope level. The Jim elementary school, restored by CYDF within the context of the China-Nepal Friendship Hope Elementary School Financial Project, is expected to host a total of 560 elementary students of the Patan area. Amity foundation, whose humanitarian response activities covered all the three scope levels, offered assistance to approximately 4989 families, for a total number of 29'921 individuals¹⁸⁹. The 2015 official report of One Foundation states that a total of 131 people benefited from the organization's emergency relief operations, interested a total of 131 people, including 27 children, in both Nepal and Tibet. On the other hand the number of Nepalese people that benefited from the organization's post-disaster recovery activities,

¹⁸⁸ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. "2015 niandu baogao" 2015 年度报告 (2015 Annual Report). *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation*. Retrieved January 20, 2020, from <http://www.cfpa.org.cn/information/institution.aspx>

¹⁸⁹ Amity Foundation. "Survivors have a long way to go in restoring their livelihoods". *Amity Foundation website*. Retrieved January 21, 2020 from <https://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/survivors-have-long-way-go-restoring-their-livelihoods>

including the construction of service points for children, the installation of temporary sanitary facilities, the delivery of supplies and medical assistance etc., amounted to a total of approximately 18’000, including 2’500 children¹⁹⁰.

Lingshan Charity Foundation, in addition to contributing to the rehabilitation of wireless telecommunications, also engaged in the delivery of different kinds of food to an estimated minimum of 200 families¹⁹¹.

Organization	Estimated total number of beneficiaries
CFPA	191’300 (individuals)
CWDF	n.a.
CSWEF	41 (individuals)
CYDF	560 (individuals)
Amity Foundation	29’921 (individuals)
One Foundation	18’000 (individuals)
Lingshan Charity Foundation	200 (families)

Table 8 - Estimated total number of beneficiaries

¹⁹⁰ One Foundation. “Yijijin 2015 nianbao” 壹基金 2015 年报 (One Foundation 2015 annual report). *One Foundation website*. Retrieved January 22, 2020 from <http://www.onefoundation.cn/index.php?m=info&a=show&id=737>

¹⁹¹ Lingshan Charity Foundation. (2015, May 6). “Lingshan Cishan Jijinhui - Huanghuashe Niboer lianhe jiu yuan di ba qi jianbao” 灵山慈善基金会 – 弘化社尼泊尔联合救援第八期简报 (The 8th report of the Lingshan Charity Foundation – Honghua Charity Foundation jointed humanitarian effort in Nepal). *Lingshan Charity Foundation WeChat*.

3.3.6 Geographical coverage

Nepal is composed of 5 development regions, which are further divided into a total of 14 administrative zones. The lowest administrative units are the districts, which amount to 77. The epicenter of the April 25th earthquake was located in a remote area of the Gorkha district, about 80 kilometers from Kathmandu¹⁹². The most affected areas are part of the Bagmati administrative zone, where the capital city is also located.

The *geographical coverage* indicator provides information concerning the level of geographical penetration reached by the seven social organizations taken into account. Since Kathmandu constitutes the main transport hub in Nepal, with the only international airport of the country situated only 5 kilometers from the city center, all the organizations established here their operational headquarters and began their humanitarian work in the capital district. Nevertheless, while the majority of them only operated in Kathmandu and in the surrounding areas, a number of them managed to carry out work in remote areas, isolated by the infrastructural damages caused by the earthquake. The humanitarian relief activities of CWDF and CSWEF were in fact circumscribed to the area of Kathmandu, with CWDF's operations also spreading to 13 surrounding districts. In the same way, CYDF's Jim elementary school is located in the Patan district, only 8 kilometers from the capital and part of the Kathmandu Valley. On the contrary, the response of CFP, Amity Foundation and One Foundation on the three scope levels was more comprehensive and widespread, since they managed to carry out emergency relief activities and to implement various projects in different areas, often isolated and distant from the area of Kathmandu. The three maps below serve as indicators of the extent of the geographical coverage of the three foundations just mentioned. The target symbol shows the location of the epicenter of the earthquake, whereas the colored pins correspond to the areas covered by the intervention of the organizations in question.

¹⁹² Swann G., Gutiérrez P., Torpey P. & Blight G. (2015, April 29). "A graphical guide to the 25 April 2015 earthquake in Nepal". *The Guardian*. Retrieved February 16, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2015/apr/29/extent-of-the-destruction-from-nepals-earthquake>

- *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation*

In the emergency relief phase, CFPA’s drones, which worked for a total of 200 hours, have inspected an area spanning over 1300 kilometers. During this stage, CFPA’s intervention covered a total of sixty areas of the Bhaktapur district, which is part of the Kathmandu Valley and is located about 180 km east of the epicenter of the earthquake. In the post-emergency phase, CFPA also managed to reach a series of remote and isolated areas in the Lamjung, Dhading, Nuwakhot, Kavrepalanchok, Sindhupalchok and Dolkha districts. Six of the total districts are situated outside the Kathmandu valley and, out of this six, two of them are located in the Bagmati administrative zone.¹⁹³



Figure 4 - CFPA’s geographical coverage map

- *Amity Foundation*

Not unlike other social organizations, Amity Foundation started its emergency relief operations in the Kathmandu Valley, which includes the districts of Kathmandu,

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Bhaktapur and Lalitpur. Subsequently, it carried out post-disaster recovery work, such as the dispatchment of construction material and various essential goods, in a series of villages dislocated in different districts, some of which located hundreds of kilometers from the Kathmandu Valley. As of May 10th, Amity Foundation has provided aid to areas located in the districts of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Nuwakot, Kavrepalanchok, Sindhupalchok, Rasuwa, Gorkha, Lamjung, Dhading and Dolkha. Two of these, namely Gorkha and Lamjung, are situated outside the Bagmati administrative zone, in Gandaki.



Figure 5 - Amity Foundation's geographical coverage map

- *One Foundation*

One Foundation's rescue personnel also began to work in the capital city area, carrying out emergency relief activities across the Kathmandu Valley, which also includes the districts of Bhaktapur and Lalitpur¹⁹⁴. The organization continued to engage in relief operations in this area over the following days, before also moving to other districts. On May 1st, One Foundation reached the village of Bhotechaur, in the

¹⁹⁴ One Foundation. (2015, April 26). "Yijiaren Niboer dizhen 24 xiaoshi: 8 zhi jiuyuan dui dida, shoupi wuzi zhuanyun" 壹家人尼泊尔地震 24 小时: 8 支救援队抵达 首批物资转运 – 播报 002 (One Foundation's 24 hours in Nepal: 8 rescue teams have arrived and the first batch of emergency material has been shipped – report no. 2). *One Foundation WeChat*.

Sindhupalchok district¹⁹⁵ and, during the ensuing post-disaster recovery stage, the foundation’s staff also managed to bring aid to remote and isolated villages in the districts of Gorkha, Kavrepalanchok, Nuwakot and Dolkha.



Figure 6 - One Foundation’s geographical coverage map

In conclusion, what can be noticed from this section is that more than half of the social organizations under analysis have circumscribed their humanitarian work to the Kathmandu Valley, and this is hardly surprising. In fact, the Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur districts, apart from being the infrastructural core of the country, are also the most densely populated ones and, since the epicenter was only 80 kilometers away, they have also counted the highest number of casualties and the most severe damages. Among the organizations taken into consideration, only three of them, CFP, Amity Foundation and One Foundation had the means to carry out operation outside of the Kathmandu Valley, bringing aid to people living in remote and poorly connected areas. In particular, Amity Foundation’s outcome appears to be the most remarkable one: the number of

¹⁹⁵ One Foundation. (2015, May 1). “Yijiaren zhenhou di 6 tian: Jilong xiao fuke, Jiademandu jiuyuan xiang chengwai kuozhan” 壹家人震后第 6 天:吉隆学校复课 加德满都救援向城外扩展 - 播报 007 (Six days after the earthquake, lessons have been resumed at the Gyirong school and the rescue teams in Kathmandu are moving outside the city – report no. 7). *One Foundation WeChat*.

different geographical areas it covered, more than ten, is in indeed the highest. In addition, the furthest district it reached, Lamjung, situated more than 180 kilometers from Kathmandu.

3.4 Analysis of the factors underlying the operational capacity of Chinese social organizations in Nepal

3.4.1 Methodological approach to section 3.4

The last section of the thesis project aims at finding the causal relationship that links the operational capacity indicators to the factors underlying such capacity, in order to ponder the significance of the *state-organizations relationship* factor among others that contributed at sustaining the organizations' humanitarian work in Nepal. The main purpose is therefore to find out whether a high degree of intimacy with the state leadership at the domestic level is to be considered as a necessary condition for Chinese social organizations seeking to develop a higher level of operational capacity in the context of the humanitarian response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake. In view of this goal, the outcome of the work carried out before, which was aimed at assessing the operational capacity of the organizations and at classifying them on the basis of their *responsiveness, fundraising capacity, fields of intervention, number of beneficiaries* and *geographical coverage*, is hereby analyzed in relation to a series of five sustaining factors.

Primarily, it is important to point out that some adjustments to the data concerning the organizations' operational capacity were made in order to efficiently carry out such task. Figure 3.4.1, presented below, summarizes the outcome of the research work related to five of the total seven Chinese social organizations analyzed, along with four of the total six indicators deployed to carry out the operational capacity assessment work. The organizations included in the table are CFPA, Amity Foundation, One Foundation, Lingshan Charity Foundation and CSWF, whereas the operational capacity factors are the number of *fields of intervention*, which refers to the degree of diversification of the

activities undertaken on the three scope levels; the total *number of beneficiaries* that the social organizations managed to assist; the extent of the *geographical coverage*, which in this context is to be understood as the number of areas outside of the Kathmandu Valley that the organizations managed to reach.

	Fields of intervention (number, divided by scope level)	Number of beneficiaries	Geographical coverage (number of districts outside the Kathmandu Valley)
CFPA	4	177'473	6
	3		
	7		
Amity Foundation	2	29'000 +	8
	4		
	4		
One Foundation	2	18'000 +	5
	6		
CSWF	2	41	0
Lingshan Charity Foundation	4	200 (families)	0
CYDF	1	560	0

Legend: Operational capacity level A
 Operational capacity level B
 Operational capacity level C

Table 9 - Classification of social organizations on the basis of operational capacity levels

As may be noticed, one social organizations and two operational capacity indicators have been excluded from the list. The fact that CWDF is not featured in the above figure is due to the lack of information regarding the *number of beneficiaries* indicator in this particular case. The lack of data prevents such organization to be considered in relation to the factors underlying their operational capacity, since the partial outcome would not allow to carry out a reliable categorization. Similarly, the *responsiveness* and *fundraising capacity* operational capacity indicators are also not included in the list. The former, as already pointed out in section 3.3.1, analyzes the intervention of social organizations in terms of the rapidity with which they engaged in emergency relief activities, and therefore can be only referred to those whose operations fall into the first scope level. For this reason, given the fact that some organizations, such as Lingshan Charity Foundation, did not engage in emergency relief operations, the *responsiveness* indicator could not be applied to the total seven organizations taken into account, and was consequently expunged from the definitive list. On the other hand, the *fundraising capacity* indicator was discarded for two main reasons. Primarily, information about the sources and volume of funds were lacking in the cases of CYDF and CSWF. Moreover, unlike other factors, the *fundraising capacity* does not contribute to the assessment of the onsite capacity of social organizations.

In addition, the table also features a distinction of the remaining five social organizations in three different groups, each one corresponding to a varying level of operational capacity. Such distinction, performed on the basis of the data collected during the course of the operational capacity research work, implies that, in the light of the number of the remaining three indicators, namely the number of *fields of intervention*, the *number of beneficiaries*, and the extent of the *geographical coverage*, CFPA and Amity Foundation belong to the level A, One Foundation placed itself on the B, whereas CSWEF, CYDF and Lingshan Charity Foundation are situated on the last level, C. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that such outcome by no means constitutes a performance quality assessment. In fact, the categorization of social organizations in different groups on the basis of the operational capacity only proves helpful in view of the analysis work of the factors underlying such capacity, which are described below. Such work is carried out by pointing out which factors sustained the work of a given organizations on a given operational capacity level, in order to assess which drivers have exerted the greatest influence on the outcome of the various organizations' humanitarian work in Nepal.

3.4.2 Factors underlying the operational capacity of social organizations

While the previous section's object of study have been the indicators of the operational capacity of Chinese social organization in the humanitarian response to the Nepal earthquake, the focus will now shift to the analysis of the factors that sustained such operational capacity. The six factors that have been individuated during the research work are 6 and are listed as follows: *state-organization relationship at the domestic level*, *partnership with international non-governmental actors*, *creation of collaborative networks with local social actors*, *support from other Chinese social organizations*, *support from companies* and *support from religious groups and organization*. The purpose is to understand whether and to what extent the first factor, *state-organization relationship at the domestic level*, is to be considered as paramount for the achievement of a high operational capacity level.

The *state-organization relationship at the domestic level* factor refers to the intimacy level of the connections between a social organization and China's official leadership. The relevance of such factor, which constitutes the main focus of this section, is linked to the very nature of the relationship existing between the state and civil society in the country. As already discussed in the previous chapters, in the last decades Chinese social organizations and the State have developed a complementary relationship in which they do not happen to antagonize and oppose each other, creating a tension which is typical of the state-society relationship in more liberal and democratic contexts, but rather collaborate and coexist in a symbiotic relationship¹⁹⁶. This kind of connection between governmental and civil society actors in China tends to also exert a certain influence on the internationalization process of domestic social organizations. It has been argued that one of the drivers of the internationalization process of Chinese social organizations is the complementary nature of the relationship between the two parties itself. In fact, according to Li and Dong (2018)¹⁹⁷, social organizations are often encouraged to "go out" by the government, in order to achieve certain political goals. This is one of the reasons why, compared to more independent, non-government affiliated organizations, GONGOs are more likely to internationalize. However, the question we attempt to answer is the following: does a close connection with the official leadership result in a higher level of

¹⁹⁶ Hildebrand T. (2013). *op. cit.*

¹⁹⁷ Li X., Dong Q. (2018). *op. cit.*

operational capacity for social organizations operating in international settings? Or are other underlying factors also to be taken into account? In order to assess one organization's level of intimacy with the state leadership, it is possible for us to look at which type of organization we are dealing with, namely a GONGO or an independent one. Among the foundations under analysis, CFPA, CSWEF and CYDF happen to maintain the closest relationship with institutional actors. In fact, the three organizations benefit from the government's solid support and feature current and former CPC members among their leaders, along with functionaries from state institutions such as the NPC and the CPPCC. Consequently, while the three aforementioned organizations can be examined in relation to the *state-organization relationship at the domestic level* factor, this is not possible for the remaining three, which are independent and not affiliated with the government.

The second factor, namely the *partnership with international non-governmental actors* one, refers to the cooperation of Chinese social organizations with NGOs and non-for-profit, non-governmental entities from across the globe. The international humanitarian response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake, which proved to be extremely swift and effective, resulted to be the major disaster relief operation that year. In fact, along with the provision of aid from many governments throughout the world, several international NGOs, such as Save the Children, Mercy Corps, Médecins sans Frontières and many more, rallied to Nepal in order to bring their contribution to the humanitarian activities¹⁹⁸. Multiple Chinese social organizations engaging in the disaster relief operations partnered with such international actors, in order to maximize the efficiency of their intervention. As noted by Jock Baker and Yue Hao, two technical experts that provided on-the-ground support to Chinese social organizations in Nepal, the collaboration with international non-governmental organizations proved crucial for the work of several domestic social organizations, which used such partnerships as means through which bring about a swift and effective contribution¹⁹⁹.

Creation of collaborative networks with local governmental and non-governmental actors indicates the level of penetration of Chinese social organizations at the local level in Nepal. It refers to the several communication and cooperation channels established by

¹⁹⁸ Cook A.D.B., Shrestha M., Htet Z.B. (2016). *International Response to 2015 Nepal Earthquake: Lessons and Observations*, NTS report n. 4

¹⁹⁹ Chen L. (2015). "Chinese Foundations and NGOs Cross Border to Help Nepal". *The Asia Foundation official website*. Retrieved January 26, 2020, from <https://asiafoundation.org/2015/06/10/chinese-foundations-and-ngos-cross-border-to-aid-nepal/>

Chinese social organizations with local civil society actors and governmental institutions. As pointed out by Jock Baker in an interview to China Development Brief few days after the beginning of the humanitarian relief operations, the cooperation with the Nepali government has been very close²⁰⁰. On the other hand, some organizations also partnered with local nongovernmental actors in order to more deeply penetrate into the country's social tissue and to come into contact with the communities, which constitute the main target of the humanitarian work of social organizations.

The *support from other Chinese social organizations* factor refers to the fact that, in carrying out humanitarian relief work, many social organizations benefited from the collaboration with other non-governmental and non-for-profit entities in various sectors, such as fundraising, provision of supplies, logistics, personnel, etc. The significance of such factor is foreshadowed by the fact that, as already mentioned in the previous sections, one of the main features of China's civil society response to the Nepal earthquake has been the unprecedented high degree of organization and cooperation among social organizations²⁰¹.

The *support from companies* factor shares the same specifications with the previous one, although in this case the supporting entities that collaborated with social organizations are business companies and enterprises, rather than non-for-profit organizations.

Finally, the *support from religious groups and organizations* factor addresses the fact that some of the Chinese social organizations taken into account have received support by domestic, local and international religious groups and organizations. Evidently, such factor has proved of major significance in the cases of faith-based social organizations, such as the Christian Amity Foundation and the Buddhist Lingshan Charity Foundation.

²⁰⁰ Bannister T. (2015, May 20). "Learning from Nepal: an Interview with Humanitarian Relief Expert Jock Baker". *China Development Brief website*. Retrieved January 26, 2020, from <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/articles/learning-from-nepal-an-interview-with-humanitarian-relief-expert-jock-baker/>

²⁰¹ Bannister T. & Wu W. (2015). *op. cit.*

Factors sustaining the operational capacity	Description
State-organization relationship at the domestic level	Level of intimacy of the relationship between the organizations and Chinese state actors (GONGO or independent organization)
Partnership with international non-governmental actors	Establishment of collaborative relationships with international NGOs, such as Mercy Corps and Save the Children
Creation of collaborative networks with local governmental and non-governmental actors	Degree of penetration into the receiving society, significance of the collaboration with the local government, NGOs and social groups
Support from other Chinese social organizations	Collaboration with partner Chinese social organizations in terms of personnel, material, etc.
Support from companies	Collaboration with Chinese, local or international business enterprises
Support from religious groups and organizations	Collaboration with Chinese, local or international faith-based organizations, coalitions, churches or groups

Table 10 - Factors sustaining the operational capacity of social organizations

3.4.3 Operational capacity levels and sustaining factors

The six factors highlighted above are here associated with the three different levels in which the six Chinese social organizations under analysis have been classified on the basis of their operational capacity, determined in this sections by the *fields of intervention*, *number of beneficiaries*, and *geographical coverage* indicators. The association of the operational capacity level with the corresponding factors is the result of the research work on the behavior of Chinese social organizations in the context of the humanitarian response to the Nepal earthquake.

- *Operational capacity level A: CFPA and Amity Foundation*

The two organizations that placed themselves on the highest operational capacity level, namely CFPA and Amity Foundation, have both carried out activities that covered the whole range of scope levels: emergency relief, post-disaster recovery and post-disaster reconstruction. Since the organization is a GONGO of major proportions, the case of CFPA makes it necessary to primarily take into consideration the *State-organization relationship at the domestic level* factor. It has already been pointed out that the internationalization of a Chinese social organization is very often conditional on the political support offered by the official leadership. In fact, in section 2.2.1, the assumption, shared by a number of scholars and experts²⁰², that political drivers are among the main factors that encourage one social organization to “go out” and sustain their operations abroad is presented. In this sense, since the organizations under discussion is in all respects a GONGO, it appears legitimate to uphold the truth of the aforementioned assumption: the high operational capacity level achieved by CFPA, which is also the only Chinese social organization to have opened a permanent branch office in Nepal after the earthquake, can be considered to be causally related to the governmental support from which it benefits at the domestic level. In other words, it might be assumed that the effectiveness and overall success of CFPA’s intervention in Nepal is primarily due to the fact that the organization shares a high level of intimacy with the State leadership. The *State-organization relationship at the domestic level* factor exerts a major influence on CFPA’s performance at both levels, domestic and international. Within China’s borders, the CFPA is the country’s biggest social organizations working in the field of poverty alleviation, with 80 employees in the Beijing headquarters and a total of 200 permanent staff in the various branch offices²⁰³. As regards CFPA’s cross-border work, it has already been said that the organization is most committed in the international development of its projects, and that, since the first overseas intervention in 2004, the results have been outstanding. Unsurprisingly, CFPA’s intervention in Nepal has turned out to be the most effective among the ones analyzed in the work. In 2015, the number of individuals that benefited from CFPA’s international work in Nepal amounted to 177’473, accounting

²⁰² See Li X. & Dong Q. (2018); Hsu, J. and Hasmath, R. (2018)

²⁰³ Asian Development Bank. (2005). “People’s Republic of China: NGO-Government Partnerships in Village-Level Poverty Alleviation”. *Asian Development Bank website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/80210/38234-prc-dpta.pdf>

for 78,17% of the total number of 227'029 people helped by the organization's international work in five foreign countries, and for the 4,43% of the sum total of people that were interested by the organization's work that year²⁰⁴. In addition, CFPA also managed to extend its working range to not less than 15 different areas across the country, deploying a total of more than 400 staff members over the three stage of the crisis management.

In this section, we argue that an international intervention of such proportions is not merely the outcome of the government's support to the organization at the domestic level, but it is rather determined by a series of contributing factors. First of all, the analysis of the factors underlying the organizations' work has highlighted that, in carrying out emergency relief work, CFPA has profited from the collaboration with Mercy Corps, a major international NGO²⁰⁵. With projects implemented in more than 40 countries all over the world, Mercy Corps is a leader global humanitarian organization specialized in poverty reduction and disaster relief²⁰⁶. The collaboration between the two organizations was established in 2001, when they started working together on the implementation of microfinance projects in China²⁰⁷, and then developed in a solid partnership relationship. Thereafter, CFPA and Mercy Corps have often joined forces to carry out poverty reduction work and to set up highly-effective humanitarian responses to natural disasters, such as the 2008 and 2013 Chinese earthquakes²⁰⁸. In the particular case of the 2015 Nepal earthquake, Mercy Corps played a vital role in providing assistance to CFPA in terms of logistics and dispatchment of material resources in the emergency relief phase²⁰⁹.

In addition to cooperating with a major international NGO such as Mercy Corps, CFPA also established connections with local social actors and NGOs. For instance, in the post-disaster recovery phase, CFPA and a local organization joined forces for the

²⁰⁴ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. "2015 annual report" ("2015 年度报告", 2015 niandu baogao). *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <http://www.cfpa.org.cn/information/institution.aspx>

²⁰⁵ Liu X. (2017). "Reflections on the experience of NGOs participating in international relief work". *Global Poverty Reduction Inclusive Growth Portal*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <http://www.iprcc.org.cn/South/content/index/id/5249.html>

²⁰⁶ Mercy Corps. "Our History". *Mercy Corps website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <https://www.mercycorps.org.uk/u/about-us/our-history>

²⁰⁷ Mercy Corps. (2005, May 10). "Working Together to Fight Poverty". *Mercy Corps website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/china/working-together-fight-poverty>

²⁰⁸ Mercy Corps. (2014, April 1). "Mercy Corps welcomes President of China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation to board of directors". *Mercy Corps website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <https://www.mercycorps.org/press-room/releases/mercy-corps-welcomes-president-china-foundation-poverty-alleviation-board>

²⁰⁹ Liu X. (2017). *Op. cit.*

establishment of temporary accommodations for more 2000 residents of the Bhaktapur district in the Kathmandu Valley, where emergency supplies, drinking water, food and medical assistance were also provided to the victims of the earthquake²¹⁰. Besides cooperating with social actors at the local level, CFPA also managed to create a viable and successful collaborative network with Nepali governmental institutions. In fact, the establishment of the permanent branch office in Nepal on August 13th, 2015 was the result of an agreement between the foundation and the local Social Welfare Council (SWC)²¹¹. What is particularly striking in this sense is the rapidity with which CFPA registered in Nepal and opened its local office, which maybe would have not be possible without governmental support. According to Jock Baker, such capacity of establishing relations with the local government is partly due to the fact that Chinese social organizations are very much used to create relationships of this kind at home, and thus can more easily take advantage of such connections at the domestic level²¹².

In conclusion it can be confirmed that, besides the *State-organizations relationship at the domestic level* factor, which can still be described as the political driver that encouraged CFPA to engage in such an extensive humanitarian response and that sustained its operations, other factors are nevertheless to be taken into consideration. The *partnerships with international non-governmental actors* and the *creation of collaborative networks with local governmental and non-governmental actors* factors have indeed played a fundamental role in supporting the organization's work during the emergency relief phase, when it partnered with the international NGO Mercy Corps; in the post-disaster recovery phase, during which the work of CFPA was indeed facilitated by local social actors; and also in the post-disaster reconstruction phase, when the establishment of the branch office, along with the implementation of reconstruction programs, were made also possible by a positive collaboration with the local authorities.

Unlike CFPA, Amity Foundation is an independent non-governmental organization not closely related with the Chinese official leadership. Therefore, although the two organizations settle on the same operational capacity level, the *State-organization*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. (2015, August 17). "China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation Officially Registered in Nepal". *China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <http://en.cfpa.org.cn/index.php?file=article&cmd=show&artid=88>

²¹² Bannister T. (2015, May 20). "Learning from Nepal: an Interview with Humanitarian Relief Expert Jock Baker". *China Development Brief website*. Retrieved January 26, 2020, from <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/articles/learning-from-nepal-an-interview-with-humanitarian-relief-expert-jock-baker/>

relationship at the domestic level driver is not to be considered relevant in relation to this organizations, and thus other factors are to be taken into consideration. First of all, it is of fundamental importance to highlight that Amity Foundation is a member of ACT Alliance, a global coalition of 156 churches and religion-related organizations across 120 countries of the world. As a result, it seems reasonable to assume that religious groups and institution would have played a key role in relation to its humanitarian work in Nepal. Actually, the *support from religious groups and organizations* factor, among others, enabled Amity Foundation to carry out such an efficient humanitarian response work and to reach such a high operational capacity level over the three scope levels in which it engaged. Amity Foundation coordinated its humanitarian efforts with another member of ACT alliance, the Nepali branch of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)²¹³. Established in 1984, the local office of LWF has been working on programs related to disaster relief and risk reduction, sustainable livelihoods and community-led advocacy and capacity building²¹⁴. LWF's and Amity Foundation's personnel gathered as soon as the 13 Amity staff members coming from the Nanjing headquarters reached Kathmandu and the two groups coordinated joined forces to carry out emergency relief activities, including the provision of emergency supplies to the affected population. Such cooperation also made it past the first month of humanitarian work, and has also continued up to the post-disaster recovery phase, when Amity Foundation and LWF organized the dispatchment of material for the construction of temporary facilities, such as accommodations and lavatories, along with the distribution of water containers and solar lamps. Finally, another important contribution from the Christian religious world came from the Chinese Jiangsu Christian Charity Fund (江苏基督教爱心公益基金), a fund set up to facilitate the partnership between Amity Foundation and all Jiangsu's Christian Churches, which sustained the foundation's work for the reconstruction of the Bethel Church in the Bhaktapur district.

On the other hand, during the post-disaster reconstruction phase, Amity Foundation paired up with Transforming Nepal (TFN)²¹⁵, a local NGO affiliated with Nepal's Social Welfare Council and specialized in the implementation of poverty reduction and

²¹³ Amity Foundation. "Stand with the People of Nepal". *Amity Foundation website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <https://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/stand-people-nepal>

²¹⁴ The Lutheran World Federation Nepal. "About Us". *The Lutheran World Federation Nepal website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <https://nepal.lutheranworld.org/>

²¹⁵ Amity Foundation. "Survivors have a long way to go in restoring their livelihoods". *Amity Foundation website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020 from <https://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/survivors-have-long-way-go-restoring-their-livelihoods>

advocacy projects for marginalized communities²¹⁶. In collaboration with TFN, Amity Foundation carried out needs assessment work in several districts and started a series of reconstruction, livelihood and education programs across the country. Furthermore, the cooperation between the two organizations continues to this day: on July 29th, 2018, Amity Foundation and TFN signed a memorandum of understanding in Kathmandu for a strategic partnership focused on the implementation of medical care, poverty reduction and education projects in Nepal²¹⁷. The *creation of collaborative networks with local governmental and non-governmental actors*, particularly referring to local non-governmental actors in this case, has therefore proven decisive as far as post-disaster recovery and reconstruction activities carried out by Amity Foundation are concerned.

In summary, it can be stated that, although CFPA and Amity Foundation both placed themselves on the highest operational capacity level, such outcome was not the result of the same sustaining drivers. Apart from featuring the same *creation of collaborative networks with local governmental and non-governmental actors* factor, their humanitarian work in Nepal has been nevertheless supported by different factors: the *State-organization relationship at the domestic level* and the *partnerships with international non-governmental actors* for the former the *support from religious groups and organizations* with regards to the latter. What is important to point out is that the fact that, since Amity Foundation does not feature the *state-organization relationship* among the factors sustaining its work, this cannot be considered as a necessary condition for a Chinese social organization to achieve a high operational capacity level in an international setting.

²¹⁶ Transform Nepal. "About Us". *Transform Nepal website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <https://transformnepal.org.np/about-tfn/>

²¹⁷ Amity Foundation. (2018, August 8). "Amity continues to work in Nepal". *Amity Foundation website*. Retrieved January 27, 2020, from <https://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/amity-continues-work-nepal>

Operational capacity level A	
Organization	Factors sustaining the operational capacity
CFPA	State-organization relationship at the domestic level
	Partnerships with international non-governmental actors
	Creation of collaborative networks with local governmental and non-governmental actors
Amity Foundation	Support from religious groups and organizations
	Creation of collaborative networks with local governmental and non-governmental actors

Table 11 - Factors sustaining the operational capacity level A

- *Operational capacity level B: One Foundation*

One Foundation stands alone on the second operational capacity level, indicating the fact that, although the organization settled its humanitarian operations on the first two scope levels, without engaging in post-disaster reconstruction work, its outcome has nevertheless been noteworthy. One Foundation is an independent non-governmental organization: although being originally founded in 2007 as the Red Cross Society of China Jet Li One Foundation Project (中国红十字会李连杰壹基金计划), and thus being closely linked to the government in its early years, in 2011 it was registered as an independent public foundation and officially ended its collaboration with the Red Cross Society, which was managing its funds until that time²¹⁸. Therefore, as far as this organizations is concerned, the *State-organizations relationship at the domestic level* factor is not to be included into the list of factors sustaining One Foundation’s operational capacity. On the contrary, the analysis of the operational capacity of such organization

²¹⁸ Zhang Y., He D. (2012, January 12). “Jet Li’s One Foundation goes public”. *China Daily*. Retrieved January 25, 2019, from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-01/12/content_11831843.htm

pointed out that the one the drivers to be taken into account is the *partnership with international non-governmental actors* one. The non-governmental actor is, in this case, the international NGO Save the Children. Established in London in 1919 and specialized in the implementation poverty alleviation, disaster relief and other development and advocacy projects for children, it began to work in Nepal in 1976, and since then it managed to employ more than 400 permanent staff members²¹⁹. The establishment of the strategic partnership between One Foundation and Save the Children dates back to 2011 and, since then, the two organizations have continued to jointly carry out disaster preparedness and relief projects in China²²⁰. Their collaboration in the humanitarian response to the Nepal earthquake fully covered the two scope levels in which One Foundation engaged. In the emergency relief phase, for instance, the Chinese foundation worked through Save the Children in order to efficiently develop a needs-assessment work and to swiftly dispatch emergency supplies to the Nepali population²²¹. During the post-disaster recovery phase, thanks to the support of One Foundation, Save the Children delivered school material for children and teachers across 9 districts. Furthermore, One Foundation provided Save the children with hundreds of folding beds, which were later dispatched in 3 different districts. Finally, the two organizations also joined their forces in order to provide material for the construction temporary facilities and to install 32 service points for children across the country²²². The collaboration with Save the Children proved vital for the overall performance of One Foundation in several field, including the provision of emergency supplies and the construction of temporary facilities. In fact, by working as a team, the two organizations managed to bring benefit to a very high number of people: although One Foundations' intervention in Nepal was not pursued after the end of the recovery phase, it nonetheless reached a total number of 18'000 individuals in 9 areas of the country, an outcome that can be compared to the performance of Amity

²¹⁹ One Foundation. "4.25 Niboer ji Xizang dizhen – Yijiaren zhenzai yizhounian baogao" 4.25 尼泊尔及西藏地震 - 壹家人赈灾一周年报告 (Report for the Anniversary of the 4.25 Nepal and Tibet earthquake). *One Foundation website*. Retrieved January 28, 2020, from <http://www.onefoundation.cn/Uploads/201710/59e065c79e9c5.pdf>

²²⁰ Save the Children. "Yu Yijijin hezuo jianli zaiqu ertong fuwuzhan" 与壹基金合作建立灾区儿童服务站 (Establishment of service stations for children in collaboration with One Foundation). *Save the Children website*. Retrieved January 28, 2020, from <http://www.savethechildren.org.cn/news/307>

²²¹ Chen L. (2015). *Op. cit.*

²²² One Foundation. "4.25 Niboer ji Xizang dizhen – Yijiaren zhenzai yizhounian baogao" 4.25 尼泊尔及西藏地震 - 壹家人赈灾一周年报告 (Report for the Anniversary of the 4.25 Nepal and Tibet earthquake). *One Foundation website*. Retrieved January 28, 2020, from <http://www.onefoundation.cn/Uploads/201710/59e065c79e9c5.pdf>

Foundation, which, on the contrary, extended its involvement in Nepal to the post-disaster reconstruction phase. In addition to benefiting from the strategic partnership with the international NGO Save the Children, One Foundation also took advantage of its collaborative networks with Chinese companies, especially for what regards logistics and material dispatchment. By April 28th, the China Merchants Logistic Group (中国招商物流有限公司, *Zhongguo Zhaoshang Wuliu youxian gongsi*) had prepared material which was to be sent from Chengdu to Kathmandu. In the meantime, with the collaboration of another partner company, China Easter Airlines (中国东方航空, *Zhongguo Dongfang Hangkong*), sleeping bags and tents were shipped from the Chinese cities of Kunming, Xichang and Xi'an to Kathmandu²²³. What we are drawing attention on here is the significance of the *support from companies* factors, whose role has been fundamental as long as the logistics of emergency material is concerned. Finally, although the *fundraising capacity* indicator has been expunged from the list of indicators that served as a basis for the analysis work in this last paragraph, it is nonetheless worthwhile noticing that, RMB 2.6 million out of the total RMB 14.2 million collected by the organization (18%), came from various business companies.

In conclusion, according to the analysis carried out in relation to the factors sustaining One Foundation's humanitarian work in Nepal, the *partnership with international non-governmental actors* and the *support from companies* ones seem to have played a major role. They served as facilitators for One Foundation's emergency relief and post-disaster recovery operations and enabled such organization to place itself on the medium operational capacity level, achieving an overall performance that can be compared to other organizations whose operations covered the entire range of scope levels.

²²³ One Foundation. (2015, April 30) "Yijiaren zhenhou di wu tian: 12 zhi duiwu 34 ren yiran fenzhan, wuzi yi da Niboer" 壹家人震后第五天: 12 支队伍 34 人依然奋战, 物资已达尼泊尔 – 播报 006 (Five days after the earthquake, 34 staff members of 12 rescue teams began their operations. Emergency material has already reached Kathmandu – report n.6). *One Foundation WeChat*.

Operational capacity level B	
Organization	Factors sustaining the operational capacity
One Foundation	Partnerships with international non-governmental actors
	Support from companies

Table 12 - Factors sustaining the operational capacity level

- *Operational capacity level C: CSWF and Lingshan Charity Foundation*

The three organizations that placed themselves on the operational capacity level C, namely CSWF, Lingshan Charity Foundation and CYDF, share one common feature: they circumscribed their humanitarian operations to one scope level. CSWF responded quickly to the crisis and engaged in emergency relief operations since the first hours following the earthquake, but after a week, its search and rescue team, Blue Leopard Rescue (蓝豹救援队, *Lanbao Jiuyuandui*), had already left Nepal. On the other hand, although by April 26th Lingshan Charity Foundation had already started to mobilize, its team, composed of a total of six members, had not reached the affected areas until May 1st. Once the staff arrived in Kathmandu, they immediately started to work on the rehabilitation of telecommunications, and it is therefore evident that Lingshan Charity Foundation's main aim was to carry out recovery operations. Finally, CYDF was the first Chinese social organization to engage in the post-disaster reconstruction phase. The organization set up a reconstruction project for an elementary school in Patan (Kathmandu), without getting involved into the first two phases.

Lingshan Charity Foundation is an independent Buddhist social organization. As it might be expected, being Nepal a predominantly Buddhist country, Lingshan primarily took advantage of its close links with the local religious groups in engaging in the humanitarian response to the earthquake. In fact, as soon as the team of six people sent by the foundation reached Nepal on May 1st, it immediately set up its operative base in a Buddhist temple and, thanks to the lama's support, the morning after at 05:00 it had

already started its operations²²⁴. The importance of the *support by religious groups and organizations* factor, in relation with Lingshan Charity Foundation, is further justified by the fact that the main target of the organization's work have been the members of the Nepali Buddhist clergy. Another factor that proved vital for the humanitarian work of the foundation has been the *support from other Chinese social organizations* one. During the scheduling of the operations, as well as throughout the whole duration of the on-field work, Lingshan Charity Foundation has been closely cooperating with a second faith-based social organization, namely the Suzhou Honghua Society Charity Foundation (苏州弘化社慈善基金会, *Suzhou Huanghuashe Cisha Jijinhui*). This organization provided two of the total six members of the first team sent to Nepal²²⁵ and also set up its own emergency relief team, the Nepal Medical Relief group (尼泊尔医疗救助小组, *Niboer Yiliao Jiuzhu Xiaozu*), which contributed to the purchase of medicinal products for a total value of RMB 9800, that was shipped to Kathmandu on May 5th. On the same day, upon arrival, the group gathered with the first team and, the next day, they begun to jointly dispatch the material²²⁶. Moreover, Honghua's medical assistance work was not concluded when the first team has returned to China on May 9th, and also expanded their range to some remote areas of the Sindhupalchok district, bringing benefit to hundreds of people²²⁷.

Unlike Lingshan Charity Foundation, CSWF is directly affiliated with China's official leadership, therefore in all respects a GONGO. It is in fact directly sponsored by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and its leading board is composed by people that are either

²²⁴ Lingshan Charity Foundation. (2015, May 2). "Lingshan Cishan Jijinhui - Huanghuashe Niboer lianhe jiuyuan di wu qi jianbao" 灵山慈善基金会 – 弘化社尼泊尔联合救援第五期简报 (The 5th report of the Lingshan Charity Foundation – Honghua Charity Foundation jointed humanitarian effort in Nepal). *Lingshan Charity Foundation WeChat*.

²²⁵ Lingshan Charity Foundation. (2015, April 28). "Lingshan Cishan Jijinhui - Huanghuashe Niboer lianhe jiuyuan di yi qi jianbao" 灵山慈善基金会 – 弘化社尼泊尔联合救援第一期简报 (The 1st report of the Lingshan Charity Foundation – Honghua Charity Foundation jointed humanitarian effort in Nepal). *Lingshan Charity Foundation WeChat*.

²²⁶ Lingshan Charity Foundation. (2015, May 6). "Lingshan Cishan Jijinhui - Huanghuashe Niboer lianhe jiuyuan di ba qi jianbao" 灵山慈善基金会 – 弘化社尼泊尔联合救援第八期简报 (The 8th report of the Lingshan Charity Foundation – Honghua Charity Foundation jointed humanitarian effort in Nepal). *Lingshan Charity Foundation WeChat*.

²²⁷ Lingshan Charity Foundation. (2015, May 11). "Lingshan Cishan Jijinhui - Huanghuashe Niboer lianhe jiuyuan di jiu qi jianbao" 灵山慈善基金会 – 弘化社尼泊尔联合救援第九期简报 (The 9th report of the Lingshan Charity Foundation – Honghua Charity Foundation jointed humanitarian effort in Nepal). *Lingshan Charity Foundation WeChat*.

CPC's bureaucrats, or in any case linked to the state power²²⁸. However, because of its restricted scope, in turn due to the fact that Nepal was the organization's first international work, its operations were circumscribed to the emergency relief phase and mainly focused on search and rescue and first aid medical assistance. Unlike the majority of the other foundations under analysis, which have drawn on a series of factors and have taken advantage of the several opportunities offered by collaborative networks with actors of different kinds, CSWF has not engaged in partnerships and collaborations that could have widened the scale of its intervention in Nepal. The only partner the organization joined forces with has been a rescue team, the Blue Leopard Rescue (蓝豹救援队, *Lanbao Jiuyuan Dui*), which handled the organization's five days emergency relief work in the country. Although it was impossible to collect data about the total *volume* of funds collected and used by the organization, it is nonetheless important to draw attention on the fact that, in raising money for the humanitarian response, CSWF did not rely on public fundraising activities and that its work has been financially sustained by the charity fund Ling Xiong Love Fund (凌雄大爱基金, *Ling Xiong Da Ai Jijin*), created in 2014 by CSWF in collaboration with the Shanghai Zheshang Industrial Group Ltd. (上海浙商实业集团有限公司, *Shanghai Zheshang Shiye jituan youxian gongsi*)²²⁹. Therefore, although *fundraising capacity* has been ultimately excluded by the definitive list of operational capacity indicators and, consequently, information about the funds cannot be taken into account in assessing the relevance of different factors sustaining such capacity, it could be said that, in terms of budget, the *support from companies* factors has nevertheless had a certain weight in making CSWF's intervention in Nepal possible.

Similarly to CSWF, CYDF is also to be considered a GONGO, given the fact that the organization is directly supervised by the All China Youth Federation, and that it *de facto* represents and extension of the Federation itself. For what regards its post-reconstruction work in Nepal, one main consideration of political nature is to be made. Firstly, the construction of the Jim elementary school in Patan was greatly made possible by the support of Nepali governmental actors and institutions. In fact, the signing of the

²²⁸ China Social Welfare Foundation. "Jiegou jieshao" 机构介绍 (Introduction to the organization). *China Social Welfare Foundation website*. Retrieved January 30, 2020, from <http://www.cswef.org/cswef/pages/introduction.html>

²²⁹ China Social Welfare Foundation. (2015, April 29). "Lanbao Jiuyuan Dui di san pi gong 13 ming duiyuan dida Jiademandu touru jiuyuan" 蓝豹救援队第三批共 13 名队员抵达加德满都投入救援 (Three groups of the Blue Leopard rescue team, for a total of 13 members, reached Kathmandu and engaged in rescue work). *China Social Welfare Foundation website*. Retrieved January 30, 2020, from <http://www.cswef.org/index.php/cswef/news/detail/id/173.html>

Memorandum of Understanding that actually inaugurated the project on June 17th, had received the endorsement of the PRC's Ambassador in Nepal, of the Director of the Chinese Embassy's Cultural Bureau and of Nepal's Minister of Education. Moreover, if we add the fact that the inauguration of the "China-Nepal Friendship Hope School" financial aid project (中尼友好希望小学, *Zhong-Ni Youhao Xiwang xiaoxue*) coincided with the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the official China-Nepal diplomatic relationships, it appears evident that the project is driven by inherent political and diplomatic aspects that mainly refer to the close relationship between the two countries' official leadership. The political drivers underlying CYDF's reconstruction project, are related to dynamics unfolding both at the domestic level (China) and in the receiving country (Nepal). In this case, two factors, namely *state-organization relationship at the domestic level* and *creation of collaborative networks with local governmental and non-governmental actors* are relevant in terms of the social organization's operational capacity. The significance of the former is pointed out by the involvement of Chinese diplomats in the establishment of the project and by the fact that Chinese language teachers, that will be permanently working in the structure, are expected to be sent by Confucius Institute Headquarters (国家汉办, *Guojia Hanban*). The latter is evidently important because of the relevant role played by local governmental actors, mainly related to the Ministry of Education, in making the inauguration of the project possible²³⁰. Although the *fundraising capacity* factor has not been included in the list and is not to be taken into consideration in view of the present analysis, it is nonetheless worth noticing that, as it was also the case for CSWF, CYDF did not engage in public fundraising activities in order to collect funds for the reconstruction project. In fact, as stated in the MoU signed by the two parties, the funds required by the project would be jointly provided by China and Nepal. The cases of CSWF and CYDF appear to be particularly noteworthy because, in spite of being both GONGOs and therefore theoretically more likely to achieve a good performance level in an international setting, its operations have been nonetheless limited in scope.

²³⁰ China Youth Development Foundation. "CYDF annual report 2015". *China Youth Development Foundation website*. Retrieved January 21, 2020, from: <https://www.cydf.org.cn/uploadfile/2017/0817/20170817030527593.pdf>

Operational capacity level C	
Organization	Factors sustaining the operational capacity
Lingshan Charity Foundation	Support from religious groups and organizations
	Support from other Chinese social organizations
CSWF	State-organization relationship at the domestic level
CYDF	State-organization relationship at the domestic level
	Creation of collaborative networks with local governmental and non-governmental actors

Table 13 - Factors sustaining the operational capacity level C

Conclusions

The thesis focused on the analysis of the preconditions, features and current situation of the “going out” process of Chinese social organizations. Starting from the description of the main characteristics and peculiar aspects of the concept of social organization in China, in comparison with that of NGO worldwide, the first two chapters of work have shed light on the fact that the complementary relationship between China’s state actors and civil society could work as a catalyzer for the internationalization process of the country’s third sector. Bearing in mind such considerations on the political drivers of the internationalization process of Chinese social organizations, the work has subsequently attempted to assess the extent to which the collaboration between social organizations and government actors at the domestic level has played a significant role in their humanitarian response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake. The main objective of the last chapter of the thesis work has been the evaluation of the influence exerted by the relationship between the Chinese leadership and social organizations at the domestic level on their cross-border work, with particular regard to the emergency relief, post-disaster recovery and post-disaster reconstruction activities carried out during the humanitarian response to the 2015 Nepal Earthquake.

The case study included in the last chapter has allowed us to carry out an analysis of the operational capacity achieved in Nepal by Chinese social organizations, which, on the basis of five different indicators, namely *responsiveness*, *fundraising capacity*, *fields of intervention*, *number of beneficiaries* and *geographic coverage*, have been subdivided into three different operational capacity levels. Consequently, a list of factors underlying the social organizations’ operational capacity individuated during the course of the analysis work, namely *state-organization relationship at the domestic level*, *partnership with international non-governmental actors*, *creation of collaborative networks with local social actors*, *support from other Chinese social organizations*, *support from companies* and *support from religious groups and organization*, has been presented. The evaluation of the relationship between the three operational capacity levels and the six factors individuated over the course of the case study analysis bears several implications. In the first place, it has been observed that the *state-organizations relationship at the domestic level* factor did not constitute a necessary precondition nor a guarantee for the

achievement of a high capacity level by the Chinese social organizations that responded to the 2015 earthquake. This is suggested by the fact that, among the two organizations that ranked on the highest level, namely CFPA and Amity, the former is a GONGO, while the latter an independent social organization. Consequently, it can be argued that the outstanding performance of the two organizations was not due to a close relationship between these and the Chinese state, but rather to a series of other factors, all related to the capacity of one social organization to establish a profitable network of connections and partnerships with a series of domestic, local or international actors coming from all sorts of backgrounds: from major international NGOs to small local social groups, from faith-based organizations to businesses of different kinds and sizes. In the particular case of Amity Foundation, the achievement of a high operational level was made possible by two main factors: *support from religious groups and organizations* and *creation of collaborative networks with local social actors, support from other Chinese social organizations*. The significance of concurring factors over the *state-organization relationship at the domestic level* one is further confirmed by the case of One Foundation, which was granted the status of independent public foundation since 2011. Despite having only extended its scope to the emergency relief and post-disaster recovery levels, One Foundation nonetheless managed to achieve a capacity level that can be paralleled to that of the two aforementioned organizations. It is important to point out that One Foundation's success in Nepal was mainly due to the creation of collaborative networks with international NGOs and to the support granted by Chinese companies, not to the support from the Chinese government. Finally, although the intervention of CSWF, CYDF and Lingshan Charity Foundation was limited in scope and therefore did not result in a high operational capacity level, the three cases nonetheless offer some valuable insights. Firstly, the case of Lingshan proved the importance of the *support from other social organizations* factor: throughout its work in Nepal, it closely collaborated with the Suzhou Honghua Society Charity Foundation, which greatly contributed to the implementation of post-disaster recovery activities. In addition, the case of CYDF showed that its relationship with the Chinese government allowed the organization to also gain the support from local governmental actors, which endorsed the post-disaster reconstruction project and made its realization possible. The outcome of the analysis work suggests that, at odds with the conception that views the potential capacity of Chinese social organizations as conditional on a high degree of intervention and influence by state actors, the unprecedented operational capacity level achieved by some organizations was

due to a series of factors that are not directly correlated to the level of intimacy between one organization and the state. This may suggest that the *state-organizations relationship at the domestic level* alone, although being a potentially positive driver for the internationalization process of a social organization, does not constitute a guarantee of high operational capacity, which is instead to be understood as the result of a series of contributing factors.

To conclude, we can state that in an authoritarian political context as China, in which the state influence on civil society is still prominent and far from being completely eradicated, the significance of the internationalization of social organizations is not to be neglected. Although partly a result of governmental aspirations, such “going out” process could nonetheless contribute to the achievement of a higher degree of independence for Chinese civil society actors and organizations and allow them to play an active and significant role in the definition of a global civil society. In this sense, the outcome of the thesis, which showed how several independent social organizations were able to carry out an unprecedentedly effective humanitarian response in a cross-border dimension, allows us to take an optimistic point of view as far as a future shift towards a higher level of autonomy of Chinese civil society in an international setting is concerned.

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