

## **Interpretation of the Rise Background of Chinese NGO after Reform and Opening Up-Based on the literature review**

**Kong Chao**

School of Public Administration, Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu, China-614031.

### **\*Corresponding Author:**

Kong Chao

Email: [kongchao0909@163.com](mailto:kongchao0909@163.com)

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**Abstract:** After the reform and opening up, the different types of NGO have risen in China. The research about NGO has been a hot spot in China and many scholars research the rise of NGO from different aspects. By summarizing the research of different Chinese scholars from the political level, the economic level, the social and cultural dimensions of four different levels, a more comprehensive understanding of the rise background of Chinese NGO after reform and opening up can be gotten.

**Keywords:** Chinese NGO; Rise Background, Reform and Opening Up, Literature Review

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### **Introduction**

The NGO stands for non-governmental organizations. It is lawful, non-governmental, non-political, non-profit, private voluntary nature organization. It committees to social welfare and take the organizational structure of the implementation of network-based self-management of social organization. In the late twentieth century, there was a wide range of global development of NGO. Except government and enterprise, NGO became an important third-party force and it had a significant impact in the economic, social and political fields, which known as "global associational revolution"[1].

### **1. The Rise Background of NGO in Western Countries**

This concept of NGO firstly appeared in the Western countries. Currently, NGO plays an important role in Western countries. At the same time, the development of NGO in western countries are also stay at the forefront in the worldwide.

Professor Yinhong Zhao thinks that: Since the 1950s, "double failure" of the government and the market, and other global issues which have become increasingly serious are the direct causes of making the NGO to develop rapidly[2]. In detail, the major cause is the crisis of the modern welfare state. Since the 1980s, people in western country gradually realized that the increasingly large social welfare spending undermines private investment, and it is so overburdened and bureaucratic that government can not afford it. And the bureaucratic government can not complete heavy society tasks. The author reason is the crisis of

economic development. The oil crisis of the 1970s and economic recession in the early 1980s makes people rethink the objectives and means of economic growth, and encourages people invested a great deal of attention to some new development ways like participatory development. The new development ways focuses on improving the enthusiasm of the general public by operations of lots of NGO. It also makes people fully aware of the superiority of NGO. It also make people understand the government is limited to serve as the driving force for development. Except that, the Western countries have difficulty to solve emerging global problems like global environmental protection. Public participate in it by join in NGO.

### **2. The rise process of NGO in China**

After the founding of new China in 1949, China seated up the socialist public ownership of economy and a planned economy system. And the implementation of the Party's centralized leadership as the core content of the highly centralized political system is finished. At the same time, all civil society organizations generated before 1949 almost entirely disappeared. For example, civil society temple organizations and other rural farmers longstanding originally established voluntarily were disappeared. Only a few special groups (such as the "Democratic League", "Nine Three Society" and other organizations which helped the Communist Party of China were kept as the Democratic Party) retained. Although the trade unions, communist youth league and women's federation developed as a "mass organizations", the number and variety were also very limited. In the early 1950s, There were only 44 national associations in

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China and less than 100 in 1965, local communities and only 6000 or so. These communities are very monotonous categories, mainly including trade unions, the Communist Youth League, women's federations, federations and other six categories organizations. Until China started reform and opening up in 1978, there was a substantial change.

Since the reform and opening up, the number of NGO are rapidly increasing in China. So far ,the National social organizations has grown to more than 1,800 and is further growth. Like other western countries, the Chinese NGO got much development in quantity, and its the scale of activity has grown.NGO are making the change of the long-standing social habits that government need to deal with all social programs in China .And it is increasingly playing its proper function and role. In recent years, a large number of NGO plays a significant role safeguarding the interests of women and children, protecting the interests of consumers, raising environmental awareness, vocational training to help laid-off workers re-employed, etc[3].

All in all, the rise of NGO is substantially synchronous with the pace of reform and opening up in China. As China began reform and opening up, the political, economic and social policy has undergone a significant shift, NGO also began to rise in the country.

### **3. The Rise Background of Chinese NGO**

Because of the unique historical development, the Rise background of NGO in China is different from Western countries. Many Chinese scholars have been studied about it. Based on the literature review, it will interpret the rise background of China's NGO from the political, economic, social and cultural levels to get a comprehensive interpretation.

#### **3.1 The Rise Background on Political Level**

Whether in China or in the Western countries, the rise of NGO is closely linked with national political environment. Therefore, in order to understand the rise of NGO in China, it is necessary to analyze the associated political environment.

From the concept of "political space conversion", professor Zuyun Liu elaborates the relationship between the rise of NGO and political environment in China. Since the founding of new China, the short history of the process of transformation of political space has a very striking similarity to the political space conversion of modern Western countries which is a long period. It can think that from 1978 to today, China have copied the over 200 years of historical context of western countries just during about 30 years . The political space has gone through the hierarchy of the opposition space to the infinite space without focus ,and then to the cyberspace, even though the form of cyberspace has just begun.

(1) From the founding of new China to the Third Plenary Session in 1978, the political space characteristics of China are: state and government are filled of the double space of the national spirit and practice in a sacred and mysterious way the space . National individual space and the State overall space are deployed with the opposition in a practical way, although they are uniform in surface. This is a political unification of positioning space.

(2)The Chinese leader Xiao Ping Deng began to disassemble the political space after the Third Plenary Session. Until the 1990s,the politics presents the characteristics of an infinite space without focus . At this time, the political space present the characteristic of a large degree of transition, thus showing the infinite characteristics. The historical role of this period to the political space conversion of China is much like to the damage to the space of the middle ages that Galileo made, as well as paving the way for the work to form a new political space.

(3) Since the 1990s, the political space of China began a second conversion, that bases forming space layout had begun. Along with the curtain opened, a remarkable phenomenon is the rise of NGO and it present a surging trend. And it is the same to the western countries that NGO has become necessary bases for people to join in the political space[4].

Scholar Jiangsheng Wu and Yuju Su think that: In fact, the rise of NGO in China and the modernization choice both are the government-leded. It is not same with the Western countries which as a result of social development of the natural evolution. Since reform and opening up, the government is committed to changing the "strong countries and weak society" pattern. The state and government power gradually quit from the economic, social and political spheres. Government decentralization power to the community, so that the boundaries between the government and the market, between state and society can be gradually cleared. The Government divert the public affairs which government can not deal effectively and the market do not want to deal to the social organization. This situation provides a broad space for the rise of NGO. In the process of rapid development of NGO, the Chinese civil society will be nurtured and developed, which in turn will speed up China's political reform, promoting China's modernization process[5].

#### **3.2 The Rise Background on Economic Level**

Weisbrod is a pioneer of NGO economic theory. He believes NGO is a private manufacturer of public goods. His theory explains why the private provision of public goods can exist in the economic activities. Weisbrod believes that government provision of public goods is mainly to meet the needs of the voters. The reasons for government act in this way is that it not only can avoid the "free rider" problem, but also can meet

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the needs of high homogeneity. For those with higher heterogeneity of high demand or public goods demand, the government can not meet. It can be provided by NGO[6]. Other economic theories to explain the NGO development include asymmetric information theory and clubs effects.

To analyze the rise of NGO in China from the real economic terms, the rapid development of China's economy after the reform and opening up is the most important background.

Accompany with the start of reform and opening in 1978, the political, economic and social life and cultural attitudes consequent dramatic changes brought spring to the rise of NGO in China. Reform led to social subjects differentiation. The companies began to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy. Rural households also became independent economic units. Such change that enterprises and farmers formed the dominant position must be accompanied by new interests and demands and power generation. Reform prompted the structural differentiation. Individual economy, private economy and foreign capital participation in joint ventures and wholly owned companies, are become new social component. They do not have an established position in the original organization system, it organized a new social organization to protect their benefits, such as self-employed associations, private entrepreneurs associations. Reform also caused a dramatic interest differentiation, widening the income gap. Interest Differentiation in the organization's performance is the formation and strengthening of the people's community concept emerged group identity. At the same time, the development of new forms of social organization ,breaking the old lack of an organized system of self-development and reforming as a new economic and social conditions coincide tissue formation, becomes an important part of organizational differentiation. Self-employed workers make up the association of individual workers is an obvious example.

### 3.3 The Rise Background on Social Level

NGO as the social organization, The rise is inevitable related to social level background . Professor Zheng Hua said: social background comes from economic reform and political spheres, but changes in the social sphere have a greater impact on the rise of NGO[7].

The first factor is the amplification of social needs . After the reform and opening up, diversified interest subjects release huge energy and diverse needs which Contain in all levels of Chinese society. It needs new forms of organization to meet them the needs of public goods and services. On the other hand, the government also needs to have an intermediary organization to communicate links between government and between them, in order to reduce government costs and increase

the efficiency of public policies to promote social stability.

The second factor is the increasing of social problems including floating population, women and children problems, unemployment, the formation of the urban poor, the elderly problems, etc. The problems are not solved by the market itself. Because the power of government is limited, Dealing with these issues through the government individually is unrealistic. As a result, people began to look for third partment to solve these problems except market and government. And it provide space for the survival and development of NGO.

The third factor is the government capacity. On the one hand, the government wants to get rid of the traditional management model that the government manage all the social affairs as soon as possible. On the other hand, both the organizational structure and the efficiency of collaborative relationships are far from achieving the requirements to let the government leave away from some areas. It would also give the rise conditions of NGO. For example ,Professor Guodong Ma think the reason of the rise of environmental NGO in China is the environmental NGO received a huge space that transferred from the government for development on the basic of many advantages in environmental protection of environmental NGO[8].

In addition, in some specific social issues, high efficiency of NGO also contributed to the rise of it. For example, some non-governmental charity have a better effort to help the special difficulties families than the government, which makes a large number of non-governmental charity organizations to be trusted by the people in China[9].

### 3.4 The Rise Background on Cultural Level

The rise of NGO in western countries closely link to western culture. Likewise, the rise of NGO in China also closely link with the culture of China . From 1966 to 1978 due to the "Cultural Revolution", the impact of the NGO has been established before almost lost . And there were no new NGO. However impact of the "Cultural Revolution" is far more than this. The "Cultural Revolution" limited freedom of speech ,and the folk spontaneous "cultural association" has been badly hit. At the same time the "Cultural Revolution" deeply affected the pace of Western culture into China. The domestic is basically hard to get understand Western culture. Western NGO organization is difficult to enter China. The wave of Western NGO development naturally unable to drive the development of Chinese NGO.

Professor Wang Ming and Xijing Jia who is the one of the most professor in NGO field think that: Chinese has tradition of social self-organization and voluntary

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association. After the reform and opening up, accompany with the reform of economic and social development and the government gradually withdraw from many areas of social control, there are more opportunities to join in the management of society. And there are various forms of citizen participation in the economic, social and even political process ,which makes people feel more and more enthusiastic. During this process ,the free power of people is recognized and independent spirit is nurtured. Volunteer services gradually become the social habit. All of this process lay an important cultural foundation for the rise of Chinese NGO[10].

#### **4. Conclusions**

All in all, since reform and opening up in 1978 ,there was a rise of NGO in China. It maintained a rapid development speed in general, and showed a trend of continued rapid development. In order to analyze the rise background of NGO in China, it is inevitably to consider the unique situation of political, economic, social and cultural of China. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the rise background of NGO when all the political, economic, social and cultural level background are considered.

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