

Min Ji

Chinese Foundations and Grassroots Social Organizations

Characteristics and Interactions



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edited by

Taco Brandsen

Gemma Donnelly-Cox

Matthias Freise

Michael Meyer

Filip Wijkström

Annette Zimmer

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Abstract

The 2008 Wenchuan earthquake increased the need for disaster relief and reconstruction projects in China. This disaster created an upsurge of Chinese grant-making foundations, which, in turn, gave rise to expectations. However, the majority of grassroots SOs in China face an existential crisis of survival due to a shortage of funding from such foundations. A gap still exists regarding the interaction between foundations and grassroots SOs in China. The research questions and purpose of the study seeks to explore how do Chinese foundations interact with grassroots SOs and why do Chinese foundations act the way they do.

This study employs well-documented empirical investigations conducted in China. A mixed methods approach is based on documentary analysis, face-to-face interviews and participatory observation. Coding were implemented based on the themes through the lens of two methodological approaches, evolution of cooperation and resource dependency theory. This research is conducted with anecdotal evidence accumulated over a 10-year period from 2008 to 2019 when the Chinese foundations started their interaction with other SOs.

My findings show that Chinese foundations interact with grassroots SOs in six different ways, namely special funds, joint fundraising, high-engagement grantmaking, making grants to projects, making grants to organizations and making grants to individuals. However, Chinese foundations' grant-making logic does not overlap with the needs of grassroots SOs, because they do not fully understand each other's difficulties and because their focus and path of development are not the same, resulting in less interaction. In addition, due to the fact that their needs differ greatly, possible cooperation relations would be imbalances, thus foundations are reshaping and changing organizational growth and working approaches through grantmaking. The cooperation between two organizational forms is still in its infancy. This study does not provide new and inspiring insights for scholars, but also speaks to the practitioners working in China's third sector.

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List of Acronyms

<i>ACWF</i>	All-China Women's Federation
<i>CCAFC</i>	China Charities Aid Foundation for Children
<i>CCTF</i>	China Children and Teenagers' Fund
<i>CCTV</i>	China Central Television
<i>CFDP</i>	China Foundation for Disabled Persons
<i>CNIs</i>	Civil non-enterprise institutions
<i>CSCLF</i>	China Soong Ching Ling Foundation
<i>CSOs</i>	Civil society organizations
<i>Grassroots SOs</i>	Grassroots social organizations
<i>NGOs</i>	Non-governmental organizations
<i>NPFs</i>	nonpublic fundraising foundations
<i>PFs</i>	public fundraising foundations
<i>RMF-1988</i>	Regulations for the Management of Foundations in 1988
<i>RMF-2004</i>	Regulations for the Management of Foundations in 2004
<i>SUF</i>	Shanghai United Foundation

