Achieving Collaborative Welfare Provision for Orphans: A Case in Rural China

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the scope and number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other charity foundations have been bourgeoning in China. While each of these organizations has its own unique agendas and target recipients, they are bounded by the common goal to improve certain human conditions for disadvantaged individuals or population groups. By using a case study methodology, and analyzing first-hand data from in-depth interviews conducted with various stakeholders, this article sheds light on some of the current barriers in implementing effective orphan care policies in rural China, and illustrate how NGOs can complement government efforts in providing adequate care for orphans. Organizational theory is used as a paradigm through which the relationship between the State and NGOs is analyzed. Implications for future child welfare development in China are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, civil society organizations in the People's Republic of China (PRC) have been actively promoting social development imperatives such as improving environmental standards, promoting human rights and advocating for disadvantaged population groups such as rural migrants and orphans afflicted with HIV/AIDS. These organizations, both local and international ones, have intensified their level of involvement at a time where the PRC continues to wrestle with long-standing and emerging social and environmental problems, some of which are negative externalities resulting from the combination of rapid economic growth and the retrenchment of welfare provision for the general public.

Among the many social development challenges that confront China today, this article focuses on child welfare development in rural China, with particular emphasis on welfare provision for orphans. Findings are presented from a qualitative field study conducted in a local community of Butuo County, in Liangshan prefecture, Sichuan province.

Previous studies on international non-governmental organization (INGO)-State collaboration in the PRC are mainly in the domains of environmental protection, human rights, and poverty alleviation (Ron, Ramos, & Rodgers, 2005; Yang, 2005; Yu, 2006). There is a dearth of research concerning the impact of INGOs on the development of child welfare practices in China, and even fewer studies have looked at the dynamics between INGO and the State at the local, and community levels.

There are, however, several exceptional and prominent international agencies such as Half the Sky Foundation, UNICEF and SOS Villages that are pushing forward the child welfare agenda. For example, Half the Sky Foundation has introduced the Reggio Emilia approach towards orphan care to 31 cities across China, and has provided training programs for child welfare workers (see www.halfthesky.org). Similarly, the SOS Children's Villages, which began its work in China in mid-1980s, have established a series of "children villages" in ten locations across China, with each of these villages organized in a "home-like" environment and providing

developmental needs for orphaned children (for details, see www.sos-childrensvillages.org).

It must be duly acknowledged that local Chinese NGOs are also contributing to the country's child welfare development, yet as globalization continues to intensify our interdependence and connections, the "global forces" seemed to have made considerable impact in the field. The collaboration process between these agencies and the State, however, is less explored. At present, while there are several prominent models of orphan care in China, it is rather less known as to *how* these international organizations have brought about these changes.

In retrospect, INGOs were once regarded with high skepticism, mistrust, and suspicion. They were seen as instruments, disguised under the façades of "charity", "international aid", and "social development", and designed by the West to undermine China's political regime (Gu, Humphrey, & Messner, 2008). Not until the 1990s did China allow itself to integrate and engage with the world. Today, China has signed on as many as 266 international treaties and is home to more than 130 intergovernmental and international organizations (G. Chan, 2006, p. 70). According to a Xinhua news report (2012-03-20), the number of legally registered local and international NGOs totaled at around 460,000 in 2012. Indeed, since the early 1980s, China has continued its engagement with the world, and has achieved significant improvement for the wellbeing of its people, although development has been uneven.

Although this may seem encouraging, these organizations operate under heavy State supervision, sometimes at the costs of its own autonomy and decision-making powers. Three types of NGOs are legally "allowed" to operate in China: social organizations (社會團體或社團), private non-enterprise units and foundations (民辦非企業單位或基金會), or external branches of international NGOs (國際 NGO 的分支機構). Under China's current laws and regulations on NGOs, these organizations are required to register under a related governmental department (usually a department under the Ministry of Civil Affairs).

Since all NGOs must technically operate under the supervision of the Chinese State, several assumptions are made in this paper. Firstly, NGOs and state departments can be perceived as organizations themselves, each having their own agendas to pursuit. Secondly, due to China's regulation on NGOs, these organizations all share a relationship with the State. Thirdly, the nature of these relationships may differ from one organization to the next—these can range from mutual existence, to coordination, to collaboration, to partnership. Together, these various relationships have produced different results in the child welfare sector. As such, the objectives of this paper are to:

1) Identify the type of relationship that Fu Hui share with the local government of Butuo;
2) To examine how collaboration is carried out in the context of welfare provision for orphans;
3) Examine the advantages and costs of collaboration between the State and INGOs using an organizational perspective;
4) Identify an unique care model for orphans in rural Butuo area

Using an organizational perspective and integrating concepts derived from collaboration theories, the purpose of this paper is to highlight some major findings from the case study of Liangshan and to discuss their implications for INGO-State collaboration in the child welfare sector, and to a greater extent, China's future social development agenda.

Theories on Collaboration

Social scientists have long been contending the theories and models pertaining to collaboration. Different theoretical perspectives have been employed in conceptualizing "collaboration". Among many others, these include theory of transaction cost economies, exchange theory, organizational learning, public administration, and institutional theories (Barringer & Harrison, 2000; Osborne & Hagedoorn, 1997; Thomson & Perry, 2006).

In public administration literature, there are two main competing theories in understanding collaboration. Although much of the literature in this domain is generated from the US, they are useful in conceptualizing the collaboration process in the context of INGO-State relation in China as well. These competing ideologies consist of the classic liberalism perspective and the civic republicanism perspective (Perry & Thomson, 2004).

Advocates of the classic liberalism perspective argue that organizations or actors enter collaboration based on self-interest, the ultimate objectives of which are to achieve their own personal agendas and goals (Thomson & Perry, 2006). In this school of thought, actors are expected to negotiate and bargain among different potential collaborators, and arrive at a collaborative relationship that best serve their own personal interest. Collaboration, argued by Bardach (1998), is only effective when parties are self-motivated, and when collaboration is expected to yield better organizational performance. This is not unlike transaction cost economies (Williamson, 1979), which assumes that actors make rational decisions based on maximizing efficiency and minimizing costs.

Contrastingly, proponents of the civic republicanism perspective claim that actors in collaborative relationship may well be acting on something more other than simply individual needs and desires. Civic republicanism emphasizes participation, community-sharing, and collective identities. As such, collaboration is seen as an integrative process that acknowledges and treats differences as the basis for deliberation (Thomson & Perry, 2006), in order to arrive at "mutual understanding, a collective will, trust and sympathy" (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 126), and ultimately to enact and implement those shared preferences and goals.

In the context of rural China, providing adequate child welfare services are problematic due to institutional deficiencies and poor infrastructure. Both civic republicanism and classic liberalism, while useful in its depiction of certain collaborative relationship in public administration, do not satisfactorily offer a theoretical foundation through which collaborative relationships between the State and international charity organizations can be analyzed.

Characteristics of Different Forms of Collaboration

The term "collaboration" has been interpreted in various ways, the most succinct of which is perhaps the one provided by Chrislip and Larson (1994, p. 5), which defined collaboration as:

> "…A mutually beneficial relationship between two or more parties to achieve common goals by sharing responsibility, authority and accountability for achieving results. It is more than simply sharing knowledge and information (communication) and more than a relationship that helps each party achieve its own goals (cooperation and coordination). The purpose of collaboration is to create a shared vision and joint strategies to address concerns that go beyond the purview of any particularly party"

Chrislip and Larson (1994) allude to the fact that there are different degrees of collaboration. Indeed, there are different characteristics associated with various forms of inter-agency or inter-organizational interactions. For example, Bowen (2005) claims that collaboration is the midpoint of a continuum. At one end of the continuum is *cooperation*, which suggests that stakeholders coexist, with some sharing of ideas and information. At the other end of the spectrum is *partnership*, where parties become interdependent, exhibiting high levels of trust (Vangen & Huxham, 2003), communication (Mohr & Nevin, 1990), and effective conflict resolution techniques (Monczka, Petersen, Handfield, & Ragatz, 1998). Collaboration naturally sits between the two, where there is good communication but not total interdependence.

In the field of social development, collaboration may be considered as a strategic alliance struck between parties in attempt to promote positive social change. Different parties may play different roles in collaborative relationships, including that of the funder, assembler and partners (Himmelman, 1994). Having synthesized what some of these scholars have presented as effective models of collaboration, Table 1 shows the incremental levels of interactions between actors and stakeholders, and the respective characteristics at each stage. This table also serves as an inquiry framework to which questions during the author's fieldwork were posed to relevant individuals according to these categories.

Table 1. Different forms of working relationships and their characteristics			
	Cooperation	**Collaboration**	**Partnership**
Communication	Minimal	Good	Very good

Trust	Low	Middle	High
Commitment	Independent	Middle	High
Shared vision	Minimal	Yes – agreed upon	Yes – clearly defined
Sustainability	Minimal	Stable but conditioned by both internal and external factors	Long-term sustainability
Intensity of Engagement	Low -----------------------Middle------------------→High		

The Organizational Perspective

Together with the concepts drawn from collaboration theories, an organizational perspective is used as a paradigm through which relationship between the Chinese State and the Charity Foundation, Fu Hui, is analyzed. As such, both the State and Fu Hui will be perceived as organizations operating in the context of child welfare provision. This paper argues that from an organizational perspective, both INGOs and the State can benefit from one another by entering into a collaborative relationship. While such a conclusion may not be generalizable to depict the dynamics between all other INGOs and the State, it nevertheless illustrates a potential way in which the State can engage with an INGO in order to produce positive developmental results.

There are two main competing perspectives within organizational literature that warrants some analyzes.

Instrumental Perspective

Proponents of the instrumental perspective argue that public organizations (i.e. State agencies) are tools and instruments for realizing particular goals that are important to society (Christensen, Laegreid, Roness, & Rovik, 2007), such as improving the standards of child welfare. In other others, organizations are a means to an end. Members of public organizations are assumed to be making decisions and carrying out tasks based on instrumental rationality—the idea that leaders choose a certain course of action after considering all alternatives, and choosing the most efficient way to arrive at the organization's goals based on rational calculation.

Cultural Perspective

While the instrumental perspective is based on the idea of logic and consequence, and of rationality, proponents of the cultural perspective argue that organizational culture—including informal norms, attitudes, beliefs and values—are important elements that affect organizational behavior (Ostroff, Kinicki, & Tamkins, 2003; Schein, 1996). Analysts from a cultural perspective would seek to understand how organizational participants experience and make sense of organizations (Schneider, 1987), and argue that organizational culture plays an important role in shaping individual and group behaviors. Schein (1992, p. 12) suggest that organizational culture can be perceived as:

> "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it evolved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered value, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems."

Through the process of socialization, the accumulation of these informal culture, values, and attitudes will eventually lead these organizations to exhibit institutional features; organizations are subsequently described as *institutionalized organizations* (Christensen et al., 2007). The presumption is that individuals will act, not out of rational deliberation or assessment, but instead will make decisions based on *matching*—whether a particular decision "fits" the organizational culture (Ibid.). A question that one might ask based on the concept of *matching* is: "what am I expected to do in a situation like this?" This significantly differs from instrumental rationality.

Engagement of INGOs as Failure of the State? Negotiating an INGO-State Relation

Since the 1980s, the Chinese government has been increasingly outsourcing public services to private agencies or other Chinese NGOs (Han, 2011). Wood (1996) argues that while outsourcing public welfare services to the private market or agencies allows the government to downsize its responsibility, citizens lose their ability to hold the government accountable for services. However, as mentioned earlier, Chinese NGOs and private agencies are still heavily monitored by the State. In fact, what is significantly distinctive among Chinese NGOs from Western ones is that Chinese NGOs are required to operate under the supervision of either a government institution or a government-organizations NGO (GONGO) active in the same field as the NGO (Ma, 2006).

Unlike the United States, where collaboration is deeply rooted in the public administration system (Thomson & Perry, 2006), collaboration between the State and civil society, especially that of INGOs is relatively new in the PRC. Not until the 1990s did international organizations truly mushroomed in China. Some of the more prominent INGOs that have been active in the domain of child welfare include Save The Children, UNICEF, SOS Villages, and World Vision. Their increased presence in the PRC may signal the government's growing willingness, or perhaps more accurately, *concession*, to allow growing numbers of international organizations and charity foundations to intervene in domestic welfare affairs. From the INGOs' standpoint, it can also be argued that they too, are compromising a part of their autonomy in exchange for the ability to access, and to operate, in a nondemocratic environment.

However, rather than romanticizing the relationship between the State and INGO, or the impact of INGO on social development in the PRC, Tsai (2011) cautions us not to take the growing number of non-state actors as an accurate reflection of the legitimacy of, or the independence of civil society. While ordinary citizens may welcome the expansion of non-state sector, the Chinese government remains somewhat reserved towards this phenomenon. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), being a one-party regime, may see these non-state actors as political competitors, and therefore fear the loss of legitimacy in the eyes of citizens. After all, the State is *supposed* to play a leading role in providing welfare for its people, and not "outsiders" (Cook, 1993). Salamon (1987) even suggests that non-state provision reflects government 'failure'.

Salamon's (1987) suggestions may be discouraging and would most definitely be rejected by Chinese authority, but it offers insights as to why INGOs have their specific roles and functions (i.e. as a funder, watchdog, convener, etc.) in contemporary China. It is self-evident that both NGOs and INGOs are present, either to provide services or perform functions that are not yet in place, or to supplement government services that these agencies perceive as inadequate. Today, scholars examining the Chinese government's attitude towards foreign NGOs have arrived at different conclusions. For instance, Yin (2009) contends that collaborating with

INGOs will allow the Chinese government to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the international community, and hence should be encouraged. Contrastingly, Zhao (2006, p. 8) argues that while INGOs may have bring positive impact on China's social development, the Chinese government is also wary that foreign NGOs would "undermine national security and political stability" (by spying and gathering intelligence on military, political and economic conditions) and promote foreign practices that are incompatible with China's cultural and environmental conditions.

Nevertheless, rather than attributing the presence of INGO as a "substitution" for the State or a reflection of the State's "failure" in providing adequate care, this paper posits that INGOs *can* work complementarily to the State, and become *agents* of social change.

Child Welfare Development in the PRC

Although China has experienced unprecedented economic growth over the past few decades, and has subsequently lifted millions out of poverty, wealth did not spread evenly across different regions and population groups. On the one hand, market reforms have drawn in more resources that were previously unavailable in the centralized planned economy. These include increased financial resources, and extended latitude for international organizations and civil society to thrive. On the other hand, due to deregulation and privatization that underlie economic reforms, the central government's ability to implement and enforce effective and adequate care for disadvantaged children has been weakened (Shang, 2002). Indeed, due to decentralization, local governments have now assumed a more pivotal role in welfare provision for its local residents (Adams & Hannum, 2005). This is problematic, not least because resources are starkly uneven across localities.

Accurate statistics regarding the number of Chinese orphans are extremely hard to procure. A government official allegedly stated that the number of orphans was around 140,000 in 1990 (WuDunn, 1991, p. 1). More recently, according to the Stocking Report (2011, p. 13) that was conducted by the Beijing Normal University, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the One Foundation, the number of orphans and abandoned children in China increased from around 574,000 in 2005 to around

712,000 in 2010. Despite continual growth in the country's GDP, the number of abandoned children is increasing, a trend that perhaps reflect the inadequacy of social welfare policies and child welfare programs in contemporary China.

The surprisingly low number of orphans is often criticized as inaccurate and unreliable. A registered non-governmental organization (NGO), All Girls Allowed (2012), asserts that there were at least 17 million orphans in 2007 alone while a report made by UNICEF (2008) states that there are over 21 million orphans in China. There are several possible explanations for the huge discrepancies in numbers.

Different definitions of Orphans

In China, the definition of "orphans" has changed over the past few decades. For example, the MCA referred orphans as children who are under the age of 14, and whose both parents are deceased in 1992. However, the definition of orphan was revised to refer children under the age of 18, who had lost their parents through death or abandonment and/or are unsupported by others in 2006 (Liu & Zhu, 2009). The latter definition is considerably broader and may provide some explanation regarding the discrepancy in orphans-related statistics. At present, there are generally two classifications of orphans: "actual orphans" (*shuanggu*) refers to children under 18 who have lost both parents to death while the "form orphans" (*dangu*) include children who receive no parental care due to abandonment, children whose parents are missing for more than 4 years, and children who receive no family care (Liu & Zhu, 2009)

International agencies such as UNICEF (2012) defines orphans as "a child who has lost one or both parents". Thus, statistics may vary depending on the terminology applied. This broader definition of orphans may explain why the number of orphans put forth by UNICEF is much larger than that of the Chinese government.

While child abandonment continues to be a social problem that confronts the country, it must be acknowledged that the government had repeatedly affirmed its commitment towards improving child welfare by ratifying and enacting a series of international protocols, national policies, and legislations. Among them are the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of Child (ratified in 1991), the PRC Law of Adoption (1991), the PRC Law on the Protection of Minors (1991), the PRC Law on Maternal

and Infant Health (1994), Provisions of the Prohibition of Using Child Labor (2002), the National Program of Action for Child Development in China (2001-2010; 2011-2020), and the Strengthening the Protection of Orphans (2010) issued by the State Council, which details the rights of orphans in the areas of care arrangement, basic livelihood (public financial support), medical rehabilitation and education.

Despite these efforts, there appears to be a stark contrast between rhetoric and reality.

Public Provision for Orphans: Differences between Rural and Urban Areas

Welfare for orphans and abandoned children has gained considerable attention in the public policy arena in recent years. While many urban areas such as Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing have already began experimenting with different forms of orphan care found to be more beneficial to child outcomes—such as establishing small group homes and promoting foster care—orphans in rural areas have been neglected rather significantly, not least because rural areas have considerably less resources compared to their urban counterparts.

In retrospect, there is a considerable body of literature dedicated towards analyzing the urban-rural dichotomy in terms of welfare distribution (see Park (2008); Sicular, Yue, Bjorn, and Li (2007); Kanbur and Zhang (2005); Lu (2002)). Most of these studies reaffirm the notion that urban and rural inequality is widening in terms of both welfare distribution and economic progress.

However, fewer studies have analyzed the discourse on welfare distribution in terms of public provision for childcare, especially orphan care, though several studies have provided valuable insights into the way in which orphan care and child welfare are operationalized in China's rural areas. For instance, Shang (2008) explored the role of extended families in procuring welfare for orphaned children in rural areas in Southern China, and argued that the State is urgently needed to improve the quality of care for these children despite support from relatives.

As a result of income inequality between rural and urban areas, and between coastal and inland regions, the availability of, and the access to resources are stratified across rural and urban population groups. To illustrate one possible implication of income inequality on children's wellbeing, Yi and associates (2011) examined the infant

mortality rate between rural and urban areas in Gansu province. Unsurprisingly, it was found that rural areas had an infant mortality rate 2.5 and 2.8 times higher than urban infant mortality rate (Yi et al., 2011, p. 477).

Without any major allocation or redistribution mechanism in place, children in urban areas will disproportionately enjoy higher quality of care and resources. Indeed, studies such as the one conducted by Adams and Hannum (2005) found that the provision and availability of welfare services very much depend on local communities, especially local community financing. The authors also found that children who lived in wealthier communities are more likely to have health insurance and better access to education. By the same token, although there is still much room for improvement in child welfare in both urban and rural areas, wealthier cities have at least more capacity to push forward new initiatives and programs designed to improve the wellbeing of disadvantaged children whereas rural areas have much poorer abilities. My research has led me to observe that Street Offices with better economic income can afford to provide more welfare services in the urban city of Guangzhou as well. this was consistent with Chan's (1993) study in the late 1980s in Guangzhou.

However, it must also be cautioned that urban areas are faced with complex problems of their own. The plethora of disadvantaged children groups such as street children, migrant children, children of domestic abuse point towards the limitations of urban welfare provision for children as well.

Research Approach

This research is part of an ongoing research project that began in late July 2011. A qualitative exploratory case study was conducted in Liangshan prefecture in Sichuan province. Relevant personnel including government officials who are working closely with Fu Hui, as well as administrators and directors of the Fu Hui Education foundation were interviewed. While the organizational perspective is used as an inquiry framework to analyze the relationship between the government and Fu Hui, the author seeks to expand the theory through its application in the unique area of Liangshan.

Site Selection: The Case of Liangshan

This research began in October, 2012 in Butuo county, a rural area of 1,865 sq km in Liangshan prefecture, Sichuan. According to Heifer International, an NGO based in Hong Kong, the average annual per capita income in Butuo capita is only RMB 1000 (Heifer, 2013), which is far below China's newly revised rural poverty line of RMB 2,300 per annum. Residents of Butuo mostly rely on subsistence agriculture for economic survival.

Child abandonment is a serious issue in Butuo township, and in the greater Liangshan prefecture in general. Liangshan Prefecture has a population of around 4.73 million. The area is also heavily affected by HIV/AIDS. According to a Xinhua news report (2011), there is approximately 21,565 cases of AIDS in the year 2010. The virus is contracted due to a combination of socioeconomic factors such as poverty, problems with drug use (needle-sharing) and unprotected sexual contact. The Xinhua news report claims that Chen Lunan of the local MCA reported that there are currently 8,000 orphans in Liangshan, and about 3,000 parents have died of AIDS (Xinhua, 2011). The children who are subsequently left behind are usually cared for by older relatives such as grandparents and extended family members.

This study began in Butuo county, one of the counties within Liangshan prefecture. It has population of approximately 140,000, most of whom are of the Yi minority group.

Having a dominant minority population has significant implication on the welfare of children. To begin with, because members of minority groups do not need to abide by the One Child Policy, most Yi families have two or more children. Unfortunately, given the high levels of poverty, more children suffer the consequences of resource deprivation. Moreover, when a parent, especially the father, leaves or abandons/dies, it further exacerbates the problem of poverty for his family, thereby further jeopardizing the safety and wellbeing of minors and women.

Although Liangshan prefecture is an autonomous prefecture under Chinese law, national policies pertaining to child welfare are still legally recognized, meaning that residents in Butuo county are equally entitled to public provision of orphan care as the rest of the country. The differences, if any, between political rhetoric and reality will be explored in subsequent sections of this paper.

History of Fu Hui Education Foundation

Fu Hui is an international non-profit charity foundation established in 2004 in Canada by a group of Hong Kong migrants to Canada, and has been serving disadvantaged children in China since 2005. It is intended to provide better educational opportunities for children, mostly in the rural areas of Shaanxi Jiangxi, Sichuan, Liangshan, and Guangdong. By way of offering scholarships and sponsorship, the number of children who have benefited from Fu Hui had totaled at 3,000 in addition to 1,300 sponsored orphans between years 2005 to 2009.

What is distinct in Fu Hui's own organizational operation is that it follows a "zero-administration-cost" policy. That is to say, all workers within Fu Hui are acting voluntarily, without pay, and have to pay for all of their personal travel expenses if they go on field trips to China. Their headquarters in Hong Kong is bought by a special donation and salary of a few full time staff were also donated by their Board Members. All donations solicited from the community donors are therefore channeled directly towards recipients without administration costs.

Since 2006, Fu Hui established the Liangshan Orphans Program, which provided food, clothing, medical insurance, and hired nannies for orphans aged 7 to 11. This signified an expansion in the organization's agenda, evolving from an educational-directed purpose to one that is inclusive to a child's other developmental and survival needs.

Service recipients (orphans) of the Liangshan Orphans Program will generally be sent to attend a boarding school, where Fu Hui will be in charge of the daily needs such as food, clothing and adequate medical insurance for orphans.

To date, the author has travelled to Butuo three times as one of Fu Hui's volunteers, each visit comprising 10 to 14 days. The author has conducted home visits in order examine the level of deprivation that these children are suffering from. Nine in-depth individual interviews have been conducted, each ranging from one to three hours. This is part of an ongoing research.

Obstacles to Ensure Welfare Rights for Orphans in Liangshan

Successful policy implementation depends on both external and internal factors. External factors may include adequate infrastructure, institutions and resources (John,

2011) that will enable implementation while internal factors may include personal motivation, local bureaucracy and networks.

While the examination of external factors is beyond the scope of the study, it is still necessary to acknowledge that the combination of unequal investment in rural areas and the lack of an adequate income distribution mechanism can account for some of the socioeconomic setbacks in the area.

It is against such macro factors that the local Butuo government of Liangshan prefecture is struggling to provide child welfare services for disadvantaged children. Take the PRC Compulsory Education Law (1986) as an example. While the national legislation stipulates that every child in the country have the right to education, and must attend nine years of schools, enforcing this policy has been problematic in the context of Butuo. There are several reasons for the implementation gap.

Firstly, a large majority of orphans and abandoned children in Butuo are cared for by extended relatives or grandparents. As in the case for rural China, kinship care remains to be the dominant form of care for orphans (Shang, 2008). While this may seem ideal, the situation becomes problematic when relatives are struggling to make ends meet themselves. Secondly, although the PRC law made education free, the reality is that there are additional incurred costs. These include transportation costs, costs on books, and also opportunity costs—foregone production output that the child would otherwise be able to offer in their homes with their help to farm.

This problem has not gone unnoticed. The central government had issued the "two exemptions and one allowance" (两免一补) policy (2006) in response to these problems, which required local governments to provide the necessary books and teaching materials for students. However, the author's field observation indicates that these financial assistance have not yet reached the general public. One of the major reasons why such policies cannot be put into effect is the *mismatch* between policy stipulations and availability of local resources to carry out those stipulations. As one government official shared:

"The thing is, our local government is required to 'match' what the central government had ordered us to do. But how can we match those funds when we don't have enough money?"

The issue of insufficient funding allocation continues to surface throughout the field study. Local governments simply do not have the capacity to enact these policies.

Consequently, impoverished individuals are deterred from sending children to school. What's more, because Butuo is a mountainous area, where residential dwelling can be long distances away (up to 7 hours walking distance) from the locations of school, it is logistically difficult to send these children to attend classes regularly.

Fu Hui Enters: Why Collaborate?

Set within the context of such policy gaps and difficulties in implementing policies intended to improve the livelihoods of disadvantaged children, why would the government choose to collaborate with an international nonprofit rather than delegate the tasks to government officials from various departments?

Organizational theorists such as O'Toole and Montjoy (1984, p. 450) contend that organizations tend to develop "routines and standard operating procedures, whereby personnel interact in regular and predictable ways to solve regular and predictable problems". While these procedures should increase an organization's efficiency in the Weberian sense, these standardizations may also be perceived as bureaucratic constrains to problem-solving. The authors propose that such limitations may be overcome if collaboration with another actor coincides with their own goals, or that collaboration may bring in new resources that are otherwise unavailable.

In confronting the child welfare problem in rural China, it appears that local governments, as organizations, had become entrenched in their own bureaucratic processes, such that their abilities to confront social problems in innovate and flexible ways have been hampered. For instance, while child welfare should be specifically under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA), the reality in Liangshan reflects a far more complex process. One of the more pertinent bureaucratic problems

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within the local government is the lack of communication between different government departments. For example, the author found that the "official" registered list of orphans procured by the Education Bureau is far different than the one provided by the MCA. As one government official from the Education Bureau shared:

"The list is so problematic … [the MCA] may not have the accurate list as we do."

Frustration can also be observed with another government official, who explained that surveys and reports conducted by the Education Bureau at schools are sometimes repeated by the MCA, without either of them informing each other. Redundancy hampers effectiveness.

These implicit criticisms and complains of the procedures and 'working culture' of the local governments have significant implications on enacting child welfare policies. To say the least, given the inaccurate list of orphans, eligibility to monthly assistance for orphans (now at RMB 1000 according to Liangshan government documents) becomes problematic. Inaccurate registration is one of the major obstacles impeding the successful implementation of this particular policy. The lack of communication between government departments also created unnecessary duplicative practices that are surely ineffective.

The cultural perspective of the organization theory can be drawn out at this point. While there are explicit rules as to what the Education Bureau should and should not do, it appears that the government, as an organization, has acquired some institutional characteristics, one of which is that it is common not to openly communicate with other departmental agencies or to share information.

Table 2 outlines some of the barriers that have impeded the progress of child welfare development.

Table 2. Barriers to Effective Policy Implementation			
Elements to Barriers	**Characteristics**	**Consequence**	**Child Outcome**
Poverty	Extended kinship already deprived of resources	Poor or lack capacity to care for orphans	Neglect; resource deprivation ; child labor

Registration	Poor registration techniques; parents died of AIDS not reported because of monthly cash subsidy	Creates problems with eligibility Some children do not have a *hukou* account	Orphans cannot receive assistance accordingly
Policy Loopholes	Lack of contextualization of national policy	Local government cannot 'match' and carry out what national policies dictate due to poor local resources	Children intended to benefit from national policy do not
Organizational Culture	Lack of communication and shared information between inter-governmental department; HIV/AIDS numbers is regarded as state secret	Redundancy; ineffectiveness; lack of audit and public accountability commitments; children orphaned from poverty and AIDS are invisible	Provision of welfare is fragmented for children and can be inconsistent; needs of orphans ignored as not every child goes to school in the area due to poverty and ignorance
Geographic isolation	Households are sometimes located in mountainous regions	Potential service recipients are unaware of their rights or simply too far to reach	Children living in more remote areas are prevented to access services and resources they are entitled to
Socio-cultural mismatch	Sociocultural perceptions on "childhood", "gender equality", and "child rights" do not match what the national government had conceptualized as child rights	General unawareness of the public (especially elderly caregivers) of the significance of education (especially for girls), caregiving responsibilities, medical care, etc.	Children are deprived of the opportunities to attend schools, receive adequate financial assistance and medical care

From an organizational perspective, it makes sense for the Education Bureau to strategically align itself with Fu Hui. Firstly, as argued by O'Toole and Montjoy (1984), one of the motivating reasons why actors may consider collaboration is when the other party can bring in new resources that would otherwise be unattainable. Alluding to the instrumental perspective, Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and subsequent scholars such as Townley and associates (2003) posit that organizations must ensure its own resource supply in order to serve their constituencies in a sustainable manner. This seems to be the case for the Butuo government. Cooperating with other local government departments such as the MCA will not bring in more resources. What Fu Hui offers is financial support, and a management model (skills transfer) that was previously unavailable. One government official shared:

"[Fu Hui] introduced a new management model…How we monitor the quality of the service, people management, how we should hold people accountable, how we should write reports and track developmental targets of children…"

The government gains several types of resources by collaborating with Fu Hui. That which is measurable is naturally the financial support received from Fu Hui. Fu Hui sponsors as many as 1,400 in the Liangshan area in their daily living expenses. The government also gains a set of skills, through skills-and knowledge transfer, to carry out improved monitoring and reporting techniques. As Salmenkari (2008) argues, NGOs can provide state agencies with information, and innovative techniques required to demonstrate efficient handling of social problems. This has enabled better deliverance of the service for orphans at primary school age.

Symbolic Rewards

What is not measurable is the political and moral legitimacy in the eyes of the people. In recent years, the Chinese government had put heavy emphasis on *suzhi* (quality), which is the salient characteristic for economic progress and social development (Hsu, 2013; Kipnis, 2006; Yan, 2003). To achieve this, however, the State is expected to create the condition in which economic progress and social development can thrive. These include the provision of good schools, proper nutrition, adequate medical care, and access to new technology, ideas, experiences (Hsu, 2013).

Hence, as an organization, it makes sense for the local Butuo government to enter into collaboration with Fu Hui since such collaborative relationship will precisely lead to

the betterment of nutrition, medical care, clothing, hygiene, and access to technology for orphans and disadvantaged children in the area.

For Fu Hui, an organization whose mission is to improve the lives of orphans and disadvantaged children in the area, it also makes sense to enter collaboration with the local government. At the very least, it will allow them to gain legitimacy, access, and security to operate in this environment. Without the "permission" of local government, it would be close to impossible to access these communities.

Organizational theorists also posit that organizational actors must seek to ensure a constant flow of resource supply necessary to both survive and achieve its mission, sometimes in a highly competitive environment (Lopez, Peon, & Oras, 2005; O'Toole & Montjoy, 1984). These scholars also argue that organizations tend to formulate their own strategies that will most likely fit the cultural frameworks extant in their society (Hsu, 2013; O'tool and Montjoy, 1984).

Strategizing based on Instrumental-Rationality

Being a relatively new philanthropic organization, Fu Hui is constantly soliciting support from the public: meeting with potential donors, giving presentation of its projects, appealing to friends and families for volunteers, managing fundraising campaigns and so on. And although it does not heavily rely on the government for funding, members of Fu Hui insisted repeatedly on how important it was to establish good relationship with the government. It is an "essential element"- in the words of an interviewee- for the organization to succeed. Ultimately, however, large-scale change must be enacted by the State. As one member of Fu Hui shares:

"Our way of doing things [having established special classes for orphans in schools] convinced the local government that it could work. Now they are learning how to do it…we hope that one day they would know how to do it themselves…or that other organizations can do similar things using a similar model…"

From an organizational stance, collaboration is beneficial to both parties at both tangible and symbolic levels. Yet, as with any decisions, there are trade-offs. These are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. The Costs and Benefits of Collaboration
Local Government

	Gains	Losses
Tangible Level	Financial Resources A set of management skills and techniques	Significant time investment; at times, doing beyond what is "officially required"
Symbolic Level	Legitimacy in the eyes of the people; image of 'responsible government' Personal satisfaction	- Loss of full decision-making power - Exposure of current organizational deficiency (as a govt. agency)
Fu Hui		
	Gains	Losses
Tangible level	Physical access to communities Provision of shelters for children by the government –shared cost	Potential financial loss due to poor reporting techniques (in some cases)
Symbolic level	Fulfilling organization's vision Validation and political approval to operate in the area Personal satisfaction	Compromise autonomy Comprise some decision-making power

Outcomes for Child Welfare: Schools as De Facto Child Welfare Institutions

The result of this collaboration is the inception of a unique care model for orphans and disadvantaged children in the area. In light of these logistical problems and policy gaps, the Butuo Education Bureau had become the de facto administrator for the care for orphans. While there is in fact a welfare institution in Butuo managed by the MCA, one government official from the Education Bureau hinted that due to resource constrain, the facility is poorly run. It is unlikely that outsiders can access this facility. Instead, boarding schools have been established so that orphans and other disadvantaged children living in remote areas can reside in these schools. These children usually go home during long holidays.

While the Education Bureau is responsible for providing these children with adequate shelter and their education in classrooms, Fu Hui is responsible meeting their daily needs, including clothing (several sets of uniforms and blankets), nutrition (ensuring that children at least have 3 meals of meat per week), transportation coverage, medical insurance (purchased from local governments by Fu Hui on behalf of the children). The organization also hires "nannies"—mostly women and a few men, who live in the schools with these children to look after them.

Fu Hui has introduced a series of measures in order to ensure adequate quality of care for children. For example, nannies undergo training before serving these children, and are required to complete a detailed check-list on a daily basis for reporting and monitoring purposes. The list include items such as whether the children have had three meals that day, whether they have showered that day, whether anyone was sick that day, whether they have worn uniforms that day and so on. In order to minimize the risks of inaccurate reporting on the part of the nannies, government officials who are collaborating with Fu Hui randomly conduct "spot checks". Members of Fu Hui also conduct these unexpected checks at random times throughout the year to ensure that their services and goods have been appropriately distributed to the students.

These orphans are usually recruited at the age of 6, so that they can attend primary 1 by age 7. Both members of Fu Hui and the Education Bureau conduct home visits together to validate the identity of the orphan. Once these orphans qualify, they are sent to specific boarding schools at the start of the term, so that they can begin their education career. Orphans are designated to attend what Fu Hui dubbed as "Starlet classes", with each class numbering at around 40 – 50 orphans.

Due to long traveling distances, these children reside at schools. It is within these 'boarding schools' that Fu Hui tends to the children's daily needs. In 2012, Fu Hui has established this care model in 13 schools in the Liangshan area, with each of this school being host to a different number of "Starlet classes". 1,556 orphans are benefiting from this care model at present.

Although the living conditions for these orphans are still far from ideal, there have been significant and encouraging improvements at the very least. Fu Hui has provided them with adequate shelter, food and medical care. It is unrealistic to expect huge changes overnight.

Instrumental Rationality or Organizational Culture Through Leadership?
Although the instrumental perspective provides some form of rationalization as to why the local government and Fu Hui chose to enter into collaboration, it does not fully explain why this particular working relationship has been relatively successful. Similarly, while Fu Hui and the Butuo Education Bureau have signed an official

contract that outlines the details pertaining to their collaboration, it does not necessarily mean that collaboration would yield to better outcomes and results for child welfare provision.

These considerations, along with field observations, have led the author to hypothesize that collaboration success is significantly shaped by personal characteristics within these respective organizations. Indeed, Abdulla and Shaw (1999) have argued that certain personal attributes are conducive to higher organizational commitment. This paper contends that only when both organizations (in this case, the government and Fu Hui) are highly committed that collaboration would succeed.

In organizational literature, the debate pertaining to *commitment* is largely centralized between two propositions: whether the bond between the individual and the organization is a necessity (rational choice), or whether its nature is motivated by something beyond rationality such as feelings, personal values and goals (Abdulla & Shaw, 1999). This parallels with the dichotomy found between the instrumental and cultural perspective of organizational theory. Mowday and associates (1982) suggest that organizational commitment is an internalization of the values and goals of the organization, a personal willingness and desire to work on behalf of the organization in order to achieve whatever the organization had set out to achieve. To date, organizational commitment has expanded to include subcategories such as "normative commitment", "emotional commitment" and "continuation commitment" (Atak & Erturgut, 2010), with each of these categories affecting in varying degrees, individual behavior within the organization.

Indeed, from the interviews so far conducted with the directors and members of Fu Hui, as well as the officials that are closely working with Fu Hui, it appears that these individuals are generally highly committed to their work. At times, such commitments even appear to be 'irrational' from say, an economic standpoint. This reflects the limitations of instrumental rationality in its power to explain certain choices and decisions. For instance, one government official shared:

"I can easily find a job in the city where the pay is three times higher…but when I look at the improvements we have achieved so far…I don't want to leave…"

Similarly, another official attributes her decision to remain in Butuo to the sentiments and bond that have developed between some children and herself. Such satisfaction was not derived from economic benefits, but by a sense of emotional commitment. Such sentiments can be found within members of Fu Hui as well, who receive no salary and yet continuously work for the organization. There are as many as 40 long-term volunteers for the organization. As the director of Fu Hui shared:

"Sometimes, I don't even know who's helping who. When I see the change we have made, I feel so happy…it's contagious."

The internalization of these values, beliefs and goals are apparent in both organizations, and the individuals in these organizations. Such personal traits and beliefs can, to a large extent, account for both organizational and collaboration successes.

Discussion and Conclusion

Employing the organizational theory is a useful way in which to analyze the relationship between INGO and State relationship. As organizations, both Fu Hui and the local government have their own organizational needs to fulfill. There may be differences in motivation and interests in the collaboration relationship between the government and Fu Hui, such that the local government may seek to gain legitimacy from the public, while Fu Hui aims to push for better accountability and child welfare management. These exhibiting qualities seem to resonate with the classic liberalism perspective under collaboration theory, and mirror the instrumental perspective of organizational theory. Nevertheless, as a result of their collaboration, a unique care model for orphans is produced. Both actors adhere to previously established procedures and honor the contractual agreement with each other, arriving at the ultimate goal to improve the conditions for orphans in the area. In addition, there are both costs and advantages for both parties to enter into collaboration.

To effectively implement child welfare policies, it is crucial to contextualize, and take into account both external and internal factors. Many areas in rural areas still lack the proper infrastructure and resources to carry out national policies that are intended to

improve the livelihoods and wellbeing for orphans and disadvantaged children. These deficiencies need to be rectified immediately lest the wellbeing of orphans and disadvantaged children become further jeopardized.

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