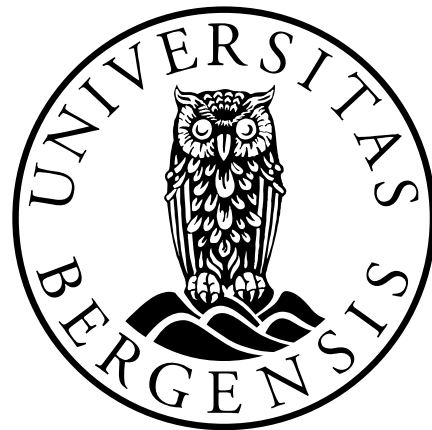# Growing Despite the Odds

How NGOs Shift Scale in an Authoritarian Regime

Hilde Mortensen Sandvær

Master's Thesis in Comparative Politics

University of Bergen

Department of Comparative Politics

June 2016

Year: 2016

Title: Growing Despite the Odds

How NGOs Shift Scale in an Authoritarian Regime

Author: Hilde Mortensen Sandvær

Abstract

Similar non-governmental organizations in a similar context should, according to structural analysis have the same outcome. Why can we then observe differences in scale shift between similar organizations that are active in the same authoritarian context? Based on this puzzle, this thesis aims to explain what conditional factors that facilitate Chinese non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to shift scale. The Chinese authorities have strategically constructed regulations to control the spread of collective action, but the NGOs influence in China's public sphere is still growing.

By using social movement literature, I conceptualize a framework based on three variable groups from the theoretical approaches of political opportunity structure, the strategic approach and cultural framing. Through a double paired comparison the possible explanatory variables are discovered and further discussed. Data and information is based on fieldwork, where interviews with NGO leaders and employees have been conducted. In addition to what has become an extensive body of literature on NGOs, collective action and civil society.

The analysis finds support for the micro level strategic variables and therefore concludes that in regards of this study, Chinese NGOs are able to shift scale due to having experienced actors that make strategies in terms of cooperation, as well as framing clear defined tactics to solve the problems they identify. The thesis thus follows the critique of the structural approach, and argues for including more micro level dynamics, such as collective actor's strategic choices and decisions, when studying contentious politics, as posed by more recent social mobilization scholars.

Acknowledgements

I owe my gratitude to a number of people for supporting me through the last year, which truly has been an experience and in many ways an adventure.

My deepest gratitude is to my supervisor, Teije Hidde Donker. I have been fortunate to have an advisor who gave me freedom to explore, who was there for me when I was in the field, and who has steadily guided me through the learning process of doing research and writing a master thesis. I also owe Hans Jørgen Gåsemyr, Kathinka Fürst, Gørhild Heggelund and Elizabeth Plantan, my sincere thanks. Thank you for your extensive and valuable insight of China, for giving me feedback on my thoughts, and for the very interesting discussions over coffee in Beijing.

Next, I want to thank the informants from the Chinese NGOs who despite my terrible Chinese accent said yes to open the door and spend their valuable time with me. Listening to your struggles, triumphs and thoughts, I have grown highly admirable of your work. For me, as a consequence, China has become even more fascinating and interesting. 我要真诚地感谢所有对我的论文提供了帮助的人。

Through my excitement and frustration, my friends in Beijing have been there for me through the whole process. And when returning home to Bergen, my fellow students at Sofie Lindstrøms have kept the enthusiasm and motivation up all the way to this moment. Albertine Eikås Halkjelsvik, thank you for your insightful comments, Fredrik Sandvær, for your English being better than your sister's, and Nils Henrik Nilsen, for always being there for me when I need it most. I am truly grateful for all the family and friends that has helped me through the last year's struggles and accomplishments. Thank you.

Hilde Sandvær
Bergen, June 2016

iv

Table of Contents

List of figures

List of Tables

List of acronyms

CCP	The Chinese Communist Party
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organization
GONGO	Governmental Organized Non-Governmental Organization
MOCA	Ministry of Civil Affairs
MSSD	Most Similar System Design
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
POS	Political Opportunity Structure
PPA	Political Process Approach
PRC	The Peoples Republic of China
SMO	Social Movement Organization
SMS	Social Movements Studies
SOE	State Owned Enterprise

1. Introduction

1.1 The aim of the study and the theoretical contribution

Why do so many cases of local contention fail to spread, while some becomes of regional, national or even international interest and effect?

The process of scale shift, or movement spread, has not received the same level of attention as either emergent mobilization or movement recruitment. Furthermore, the research that has been done on spread of contention tends to reproduce the structural bias inherent in the field (McAdam 2002, 22). In order not to follow this lead, this thesis will examine what conditional strategies of interaction and framing that facilitate contention to spread, when structural factors are strategically built to hamper the spread of collective action. The puzzle and research question is thus the following:

> *Similar non-governmental organizations in a similar context should according to structural analysis have the same outcome. Why can we then observe differences in scale shift between similar organizations that are active in the same authoritarian context?*

To explore this question, the thesis will adopt an analytical framework based on social movement studies (SMS). The study will focus on groups of explanatory variables based on the theories of Political Opportunity Structure, The Strategic Approach, and Cultural Framing. The authoritarian context will further relate to the Chinese political context, and the thesis therefore aims to explain what conditional factors that facilitate Chinese non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to shift scale. The Chinese authorities have strategically constructed regulations to control the spread of collective action, but the NGOs influence in China's public sphere is still growing. The question will be explored by focusing on one of the most active areas of Chinese civil society and activism, namely environmentalism.

1.2 The scope: Civil Society in China

The early 90's saw an eruption of NGOs in China, and with this dramatic change in China's institutional landscape and power structures, scholars began to ask if a «civil society» was emerging in Mainland China (Howell 2012, 280, Ma 2005, 4). The consequence has been an impressive body of literature that seeks to understand the new state-society relationship and the growing role of the NGOs in China's public sphere (Ma 2005, 4). Within the existing literature there are various macro level, state centric, theories on the causes of the rise of activism and NGOs in China (Mol and Carter 2006, Mol 2006). Furthermore, most researchers have focused on the NGOs autonomy and role in promoting democracy, and thereby asked whether Chinese NGOs would push to create a robust civil society to counter the authoritarian Chinese Communist Party, and lead China in a transition towards democracy (Hsu and Jiang 2015:101-103). This is not in the intention of this research.

By studying Chinese environmental NGOs, this thesis seeks to uncover the opportunities and challenges Chinese NGOs are faced with in their effort to develop and expand in the Chinese constrained context. By concentrating on the Chinese civil society the thesis takes an area studies approach to social movement studies. Though being situated in a regulated political environment, NGOs have been flourishing the last two decades- Furthermore, as China's civil society is going through rapid socio-economic and cultural changes, it is an interesting context for the study of social movements. While the interviews conducted for the research do not offer a national representation of the NGO sector, they do provide useful descriptions of the NGO's leaders and employees choices, and key strategies, in relation to authorities, other organizations, and the general public.

1.3 Exploring how NGOs shift scale

With Social Movements Studies as the theoretical framework, I will generate hypotheses based on the theories of Political Opportunity Structure, The Strategic Approach, and Cultural Framing to explore possible explanatory variables to the dependent variable of scale shift. Data have been gathered through an extensive fieldwork in Beijing and Shanghai during the spring of 2016. 20 interviews, with 22

different informants have made the basis for a sample of 13 Chinese environmental NGOs. A double paired comparison of four cases that shares similar estimated probability to conduct a shift in scale will enable to explore variations among the cases in regard of the possible explanatory variables. The analysis demonstrates how the cases do not vary in respect of the variables connected to political opportunity structure. However, the analysis finds support for the micro level strategic factors. I therefore find that the answer to why we can observe difference in scale shift between similar organizations that are active in the same authoritarian context, in this study, is that NGOs with experienced actors that make strategic choices in terms of cooperation with authorities and other organizations, as well as suggesting clear defined strategies to solve the problems they identify are able to shift scale. As the four cases are situated in the same political context, but still show differences in the outcome of scale shift, the thesis argues that macro structural factors are not sufficient in explaining why organized contentious politics shift scale.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is structured as following. In the *second chapter*, I will review the relevant literature of Social Movement Studies to establish the basis of the theoretical framework. After giving a historical description of the theoretical development, the theories will be situated in the Chinese context. Followed by a discussion of the implications connected to using the concepts and theories in a non-democratic context. This will enable the conceptualization of the framework, where the hypotheses will be generated.

In *the third chapter* I will discuss the methodology of case studies and paired comparison that is applied in this thesis. I start by presenting the implications for the research question, before discussing the different trade-offs related to qualitative analysis. The strengths and weaknesses with paired comparison and process tracing will then be elaborated. After this, relevant qualities connected to conducting fieldwork will be discussed, as well as the justification of the case selection.

The fourth chapter will further provide the context needed for understanding civil society and mobilization in China. This I provide by starting with an historical brief of the political and social developments in China. The Chinese state will then be

described in order to further understand today's relationship between the state and the civil society. The chapter will then finish with the more contexts specific characteristics of environmentalism and NGOs operating in China.

In *Chapter five,* I conduct the analysis starting with a more detailed description of the cases for the paired comparison. Following this I analyse the cases in a double-paired comparison in regards of each variable connected to the generated hypotheses. The results will be consecutive summed up in tables as well as all together in a concluding section.

Turning to *chapter six*, I will start with discussing whether some possible explanatory variables have been left out of the analysis. Following this will be a discussion of to what extend the findings travel to the rest of the sample, and thereby strengthening or weakening the answer to the research question. Last in this section, a brief discussion concerning the question of what this study says for social movement studies in general, will be considered and answered.

Finally, *Chapter seven* will function as the conclusion of the thesis by summing up the conducted research, the findings, and present suggestions for further research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Social Movement Studies

While giving attention to a topic that is important and interesting in a political sense, the study's goal is also to make a contribution within the framework of existing social science literature. This chapter will place the study in the broader theoretical framework of social movement studies (SMS) to explore the question of «*Why can we observe difference in scale shift between similar organizations that are active in the same authoritarian context?*»

To explain why some NGOs achieve scale-shift while others do not, the thesis will adopt an analytical framework based on social movement studies (SMS). The study will focus on three groups of explanatory variables based on the theories of: 1)

Political Opportunity Structure, 2) The Strategic Approach, and 3) Cultural Framing. The political opportunity structure refers to the political context, and the external environment of contentious action. While the political process model emphasized informal network resources in mobilization, such as churches, colleges and informal friendship networks (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, 3-4). Last, cultural framing refers to the process of creating meaning to the actions of a movement (Snow et al. 1986). The variables generated from the political opportunity structure theories will then be macro level structural indicators, while the others will be micro level non-structural, strategic, indicators connected to the organizations and their leaders' choices and decisions. The purpose of using SMS as a theoretical framework is to narrow the number of explanatory variables of the analysis. In the creation of a theoretical framework later in this chapter, each variable is assigned a set of indicators, which will measure the variations across the cases being analysed. The indicators are carefully selected to further narrow the focus, and the selection will be justified by reviewing the SMS literature.

The chapter will first explain how organizations work as collective actors and why we should study them. This is followed by a historical description of the development of the social mobilization field. Next, the theories will be situated in the Chinese context, and the implications of using the theories in a non-democratic context will be discussed. The last part will then generate the hypotheses to be used in the study based on the theoretical framework.

2.2 Movements as organized activity

At its most elementary level, collective action consists of any goal-directed activity engaged in jointly by two or more individuals. It involves the chase of a common objective through joint action, and often including the belief that working together enhances the possibility of achieving the objective (Snow, Soule and Kriesi 2004, 6).

Joint action of any kind implies some degree of coordination, and thus organization. Collective action therefore often involves NGOs and networks. NGOs will here, on the basis of Salamon and colleagues (1999, 4) characterisation, be understood as organizations that have an institutional presence and structure; institutionally separate from the state; who do not return their profits to their

managers or to a set of «owners»; fundamentally in control of their own affairs; and last, that membership in them is not legally required and they attract some level of voluntary contribution of time or money. NGOs are further a part of the greater «civil society», that will here be understood as a separate sphere outside the boundaries of the market and the state (Salamon et al. 1999).

Scholars of contentious politics have increasingly understood the relevance of organizations to understand the course and character of movement activity (Snow, Soule, and Kriesi 2004, 9, Clemens and Minkoff 2004, 167). Some scholars of social movement studies use the term social movement organizations (SMOs), to embrace a broader range of organizations of a diverse scale and character. From formalized ones, with formal membership criteria, written rules and fixed procedures; to professional ones, with a full time leadership, paid staff, and a very small or non-existent membership base. Also grassroots organizations, with a strong participatory orientation, low levels of formal structure and where the organizations existence depends on the members' willingness to participate (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 140-149, Bratton 1989, 571, McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1213, Clarke 1998, 37). Social movement scholars have further argued that these organizations are fundamental not only for assembling and developing the resources necessary for effectively intensifying movement campaigns, but also the key to initiating, sustaining and also the realization of a movement's objectives (Clarke 1998, 37, McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1213) In this way, organizations have been understood as a critical unit of analysis for understanding the operation and development of social movements.

One can further distinguish between organizations that seek to *reform* or *transform.* Transforming social movements oppose state regimes and seek to replace them with alternative regimes. Reforming social movement organizations in contrast, do not oppose state regimes per se, but seek to alter their policies, as is the case with environmentalist movements (Hasenfeld and Gidron 2005, 10). Another differentiation that is worth noticing is that some may try to mobilize the largest possible support from the general public, while others may desire to mobilize smaller and more carefully selected groups of committed activists. In this sense there is a basic alternative between the mobilization of people's «money» or «time» (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 141). This distinction will be important when talking about the outcome of scale shift.

2.3 The development of the social movement field

The western social movement cycle of the 1960s civil rights and New Left movements in the U.S, and the «new» social movements in Europe of the 1970s and 80s can be said to be the starting point of the social movement theories we use today. Three main scholarly approaches developed in response to these movements: 1) A structurally based *political process model*; 2) A rational choice perspective and its related *resource mobilization* variation; 3) and a constructivist approach which draws on an older «collective behaviour» approach, and also on the more general cultural turn in social science (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 14). All three constitute the foundation which political process approach (PPA) is based. The following section will take a quick look at the evolution of these main schools of thought.

2.3.1 The Political Process Approach

American scholars such as Eisinger (1973), Tilly (1978), McAdam (1982), and Tarrow (1989) are known for the development of a political-structural approach in response of the 1960s movements in the U.S. The main fundament of the PPA is the *Political Opportunity Structure* (POS), which implies that political opportunity structures influence the choice of protest strategies and the impact of social movements on their environments (Kitschelt 1986, 58). In *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Tilly (1978, Chapters 3,4 and 6) elaborated a set of conditions for mobilization, first and foremost opportunities and threats to challengers, and facilitation or repression by authorities. In this connection, scholars began to distinguish between *open* and *closed* structures, understood as differentiating between political systems that allows for easy or more difficult access to the political system (Kriesi 2014, 273). Also Europeans started focusing on political institutions. Kitschelt (1986) added the distinction between *input* and *output* structures, referring to the openness in the input phase, and the capacity in the output phase. A third structural distinction has been between strong and weak states. For example, in addition to the degree of democracy or non-democracy, Tilly (2006, 16) added a capacity dimension by classified different regimes as high-capacity nondemocratic, low-capacity nondemocratic, high-capacity democratic and low-capacity democratic.

Another development that encouraged work on the organizational dynamics of collective action was the *Political Process Model*. Developed by scholars that identified with the general framework of PPA, but who criticised it for being «structural biased» (Kriesi 2004, 77). The political process model emphasizes more on informal network resources in mobilization, such as churches, colleges, and informal friendship networks. One of the characteristics is further their common dissent from the resource mobilization equation of social movements with formal organization (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, 4). Movement scholars have increasingly turned their attention to other research agendas concerning the organizational dynamics of social movements. These studies have focused on «organizational infrastructures» of countries, specification of the relationship between organizational form and the type of movement, and third, assessment of the effect of state structures and national «organizational cultures» (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, 4). Wishing to put more emphasis on dynamic mechanisms, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001, 43) have further stressed that «opportunities and threats» are subject to attribution, rather than structural factors, arguing that: «No opportunity, however objectively open, will invite mobilization unless it is a) visible to potential challengers and b) perceived as an opportunity».[1]

2.3.2 Rational Choice and Resource Mobilization

In the mid-1960s, a new perspective that applied the logic of the market entered the study of contentious politics, known as Rational Choice Theory. In *The Logic of Collective Action*, Olson (1965) argued that rational people, driven by individual interest, might very well avoid taking action when they see that others are willing to act on their behalf. In this way he introduces the problem of the «free rider»: The larger the group, the more people will prefer to «free ride» on the efforts of the individuals whose interest in the collective good is strong enough to pursue it (Tarrow 2011, 24). Olson's solution was that a group or organization must give incentives or impose constraints to make activists act (1965, 51). Olson however seemed to limit the motivations for collective action to material incentives, and thereby ignoring the thousands of people who were demonstrating in the 1960s on behalf of interests other

---

[1] See also Ho and Edmonds (2008, 8)

than their own (Klandermans 2004, 363). His theory was named *collective action*, and has been criticized for lack of attention towards historical and institutional context, or to interactions among actors (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 10).

 Resource mobilization theory was thus developed as a response and «solution» to Olson's free-rider problem. McCarthy and Zald (1977) focused on the resources available to collective actors in advanced industrial societies. They agreed that the problem of action was real, but argued that personal resources, professionalization and financial support available to citizens in these societies provided them with an answer to the dilemma (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 10). The solution was therefore professional movement organizations that provided the resources to implement the incentives suggested by Olson. Also this perspective has been met with criticism, as organizations were suggested to be a precondition for mobilization. However, they ignored the self-production of grassroots organizations and seemed to ignore that many of the new movements of the 60s and 70s lacked formal organizations when they emerged (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 11, Tarrow 2011, 25).

2.3.3 Cultural Framing

The 1960s movements, especially the women's and gay and lesbian movements, and those who studied them focused heavily on the importance of naming and on the development of new identities through practice (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 11). Snow and colleagues (1986, Benford and Snow 2000) adopted Goffman's (1974) concept of framing. They focused on the processes through which collective actors align their frames with – or seek to transform – cultural understandings. Frame articulation, frame alignment, frame bridging, expansion, transformation and diffusion are dynamics and mechanisms that Snow and colleagues developed to describe the connection between collective action frames and general cultural understanding (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 12). Snow et al. (1986, 464) frame-alignment and refers to the linkage of individual and organizations interpretive orientations, such as some set of individual interests, values and beliefs, as well as organizations activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary. This they refer to as an important factor for mobilization.

2.3.4 Summarize

To summarize, the three major paradigms of Social Movement Studies all had expressions in different schools of study of contentious politics from the 1960s to the 1990s. The structural paradigm had its reflections in the political process model. The rationalist paradigm was best reflected in the recourse mobilization approach and its derivatives. And last, the cultural turn was best reflected in the study of framing and the construction of collective identities (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 14). The following section will take a closer look at the criticism of the structural paradigm.

2.4 Critics of the structural approach

Political opportunities structures and the political process approach have increasingly been criticised for its emphasis on structural factors, and the vagueness in conceptualising political opportunity structure. For example, in *Dynamics of Contention*, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) call for a move away from static structural models to a search for the dynamic mechanisms and processes, which shape contentious politics. *Mechanisms* are referred to as «a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations» While *processes* indicate «regular sequences of such mechanisms that produce similar transformations of those elements» (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 24). A mechanism approach involves going down to a more concrete level in order to find building blocks and individual-level concepts that can help us understand institutions (Jasper et al. 2012, 29). The micro level approach will further allow us to examine strategies and culture more closely.

Goodwin and Jasper (1999, 42) further argue that POS and PPA have taken a structural turn, as analysts tend to view resources as pre-existing structures rather than dynamic element in movements. In this way the SMS have been dominated by structural metaphors, such as finding «cleavages» among the elites; the right «frames» must be discovered; and «windows» of opportunity must open (Jasper 2004, 1). For example, although Snow et al. (1986) introduced frames as a fundamentally strategic feature of recruitment, they are generally used in a strategic way as a cluster of meanings, and thereby talking about the existence of different types of «frames»,

rather than the different ways of doing «framing» (Jasper 2004, 3) This is because, as Jasper (2004, 6) argue, one tends to overlook the strategic choices that NGOs and their leaders make in the interaction with other actors «because we have been trained instead to see deterministic structures that eliminate choices».

Scientists that have studied strategy, and especially constrains, have also applied a structural approach. This approach assume that we already know what the players want, and therefore that we only need to examine what prevents them from getting it, rather than asking how actors develop goals. It is however important to notice that we cannot understand constrains or structures unless we understand the intentions of those being constrained (Jasper et al. 2012, 28). Furthermore, strategic, physical and cultural constrains are imposed at micro level. Individuals and groups succeed and fail to achieve their goals through interactions with others in micro settings. Even structural constrains like laws, emerge from local interactions among legislators, lobbyists, staffs and others (Jasper et al. 2012, 28).

By asking *«why we can observe difference between similar organizations that are active in the same context in whether they shift scale or not»* this thesis will thereby follow the argumentation of exploring more non-structural, strategic, explanations in order to explain movement processes such as scale shift. Before turning to the variables that are able to control for the macro levelled structural factors and micro levelled strategic factors, in order to explain the different outcomes of the cases, we need to clearly define the dependent variable of scale shift.

2.4 The dependent variable: Scale-shift

The vast majority of contentious action never outgrows the local, categorical, or institutional context in which it first emerges. However, in major episodes of contentious politics, some degree of scale shift naturally occurs. Scale shift is here referred to «a change in the number and level of coordinated contentious actions leading to broader contention involving a wider range of actors and bridging their claims and identities» (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 331). It can also generate a change in meaning and scope of the claim (Tarrow 2005, 121). Scale shift will in this thesis count as a shift from local level to national level, but also from local level to regional/municipality level, and from regional level to national level, or the reversed.

Downward scale shift is when a generalized practice is adopted at a lower level (Tarrow 2005, 121). The notion of a distinctly *national* scale of contention can however be misleading as national contention can be overwhelmingly local in its location of action, as for example in the Tiananmen square protests of 1989 (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 341). Even when the action is more geographically dispersed, national contention consists of an aggregation of local conflicts. Therefore, what characterises a conflict as national is not its location of action, but the broader social/political implications of the struggle (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 341).

According to McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001, 332) scale shift consists of two, sometimes linked, pathways: diffusion and brokerage. *Diffusion* involves the transfer of information along established lines of interaction, while *brokerage* involves the linking of two or more currently unconnected social sites. Contention that spreads primarily through diffusion will usually remain narrower in its geographic, and, or, institutional scale than contention that spreads through brokerage. This is because brokerage and coalition formation draws previously segmented actors together and will most likely expand the conflict (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 333-334). Based on the same logic, diffusion is more likely to facilitate mechanism of movements to spread, because actors who are connected through lines of interaction are already more likely to attribute similarity to themselves, and also because diffusion requires less investment of time and energy (McAdam 2002, 26).

The two pathways both lead to scale shift trough two additional mechanisms: attribution of similarity and emulation. *Attribution of similarity* refers to «the mutual identification of actors in different sites as being sufficiently similar to justify common actions» conflict (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 333-334). This implicates that information alone will not lead someone to adopt a new idea, cultural object, or behavioural practice. Rather, it depends on at least a minimal identification between innovator and adaptor. The final mechanism mediating scale shift is emulation, defined as collective action modelled on the actions of others (McAdam 2002, 26).

Summarized, I understand scale shift in this thesis as collective action growing out of the local context where it initially started. Thereby, shifting scale from, for example, sub-district to district level or to municipality/province level, or even to national or international level. Localized collective actions achieve broader contention

when information concerning the action reaches a geographically or institutionally distant group, through diffusion or brokerage. This, on the basis of the information, defines itself as similar to the insurgents, namely attribution of similarity, as to motivate emulation, leading in the end to coordinated action between the two sites (McAdam 2002, 24).

2.5 Can one talk about Social Movements in China?

Despite the variation in regime distinction, China mostly comes out as a non-democratic, authoritarian regime, and according to Tilly (2006, 27), high-capacity non-democratic regime. Prescribing a wide range of institutions and performances, but tolerate only a narrow range of institutions and performances, while forbidding many (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 60). The question therefore naturally arises if it is fair to extend the use of theories developed in U.S and Europe, and based on western democracies, in an authoritarian and non-western context?

In asking whether more NGOs and increased networking have paved the way for collective action in the form of social movements, Hans Jørgen Gåsemyr (n.d.) finds that coordination challenges and political restrictions prevent mobilization of actual movement campaigns. However, he still argues that social movement concepts are still valuable tools for assessing the Chinese civil society. The danger of «concept stretching» of the term «social movements» in also an issue in *Contentious Politics,* by Tilly and Tarrow (2007). In their book they criticize the narrow-mindedness of the concept, as the term has developed through studying Western democratic contexts (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, Chapter 6, Goodwin and Jasper 1999, 52). Drawing heavily on non-Western materials, and combining the knowledge developed from those examining revolutions, democratization and interest group politics, they therefore develop the broader field of *contentious politics*. To avoid the criticised notion of stretching the term «social movements», this thesis will rather draw on the perception of contentious politics, rather than the term «social movements». Contentious politics is here understood as «episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claim and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claim and (b) the claim would, if realized, affect the interest of at least one of the claimants» (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 5-6). Using the term

«episodic», excludes regularly scheduled events such as voted, parliamentary elections, and associational meetings. «Public» further excludes claim-making that occurs entirely within well-bounded organizations, such as churches and firms (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 5). Furthermore, to increase the level of context sensitivity, we will now turn to the discussion of applying these concepts in an authoritarian context.

2.5.1 The search for a Chinese civil society

It was against the backdrop of the 1989 democracy movement in China, that scholars began to apply the theories and concept of civil society to the Chinese case. The scale of the protest seems to share similarities with the collapse of the former Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and scholars of China started to ask if a «civil society» was emerging in Mainland China. Using western theories and concepts to try to understand China's state-society relationship (Howell 2012, 273, Ma 2005, 16). State-centred, and normatively assuming there was a link between civil society and democratization, the literature focused on the areas of conflict between society and the state. Almost all types of nonconformity or anti-regime behaviour were cited as evidence of an emerging civil society (Saich 2011, 256). In this way the civil society was seen as a counter to the authoritarian Chinese Communist party, as reflected in *the conflict perspective*. The democratic optimism was however soon over with the crackdown on the student movement in June 1989, and the banning and restrictions of organizations that followed.

The beginning of the 90's however saw an eruption of NGOs in China. While there were only 4,446 properly registered NGOs in China in 1988 (Spires, Tao, and Chan 2014, 1), by the second quarter of 2014 the number had grown to over 560.000[2] according to the Ministry of Civil Affairs (2014). Researchers estimate further that there are between 2-8 million more unregistered organizations (Hsu and Jiang 2015, 101). Many scholars believe that the vast majority of the registered NGOs were in fact

---

[2] In total the number was 561,736 organizations. This includes all three categories: 294.000 social organizations (社会团体 *shehuituanti*), 264.000 non-profit enterprise units (民办非企业 *minbanfeiqiye*), and 3,736 registered foundations (基金会 *jijinhui*) according to numbers from Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China: http://files2.mca.gov.cn/cws/201407/20140724192549450.htm (Accessed 23.05.16).
.

governmental organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs), and research so far has focused primarily on these groups' relation to the state 1988 (Spires, Tao, and Chan 2014, 10). This has led several scholars to raise serious doubts concerning the autonomy and legitimacy of the Chinese NGOs, arguing for example for a «*state-led civil society*». Among these is Frolic (1997, 48), arguing that the term accounts for Chinese authoritarianism where changes in civil society are created from the top down. The civil society is created by the state to help it govern, co-opt and socialize potentially politically active elements in the population. This view does not portray the civil society as against the state, but rather as lead by the state.

Another theoretical framework that has been applied in trying to explain state-society relations in China after 1989 is corporatism. For example, Saich (2011, 260) emphasize that the theory of *corporatism* «captures well the top-down nature of control in the system and how citizens are integrated into vertical structures where elites will represent their perceived interests». The corporatist theory has been useful in revealing that Chinese NGOs rarely neither are oppositional with a goal of democratic reform or revolution; nor simply puppets of a corporatist state as the «conflict perspective» and «state led society» suggests (Hsu and Jiang 2015, 104). The scholars of corporatism has further demonstrated the complex, fluid, and multidirectional relationships Chinese NGOs have with state actors and agencies (Hsu and Hasmath 2014, Hsu and Jiang 2015, 101). And casted doubt over the applicability and usefulness of using the civil society concept in China by criticizing the overestimation of autonomy possessed by civil associations (Howell 2012, 275). The corporatist approach has however been criticised by several scholars for being insufficient as it misses important elements of change, and oversimplifying the complexities of the dynamics of the interaction and representation (Saich 2011, 260, Howell 2012, 276).

2.5.1 The civil society vis-à-vis the authoritarian state

Another concept issue that matters when assessing NGOs and contentious politics in China is the concept of civil society. By many definitions, autonomy from the state is often a prerequisite of a functional civil society. Diamond (1994, 5) define civil society as «the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating,

(largely) self-supporting, [and] autonomous from the state […]». In this view the main functioning of the civil society organizations is to check and balance the state, and it is because of its independence, that associations are able to energize resistance against an authoritarian regime (Foley and Edwards 1996, 39). This perspective is rooted in Tocqueville's (1988) analysis of civil society in the United States, *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville concluded that the foundation of the American democracy was built on free and voluntary associations.[3] As a consequence of believing that civil society can lead to a regime transition in authoritarian regimes, many democratization and development scholars has applied a «conflict perspective» where state-society relationship in non-democratic states, is fundamentally assumed to be characterized by chronic conflict, resolvable only through a removal of the authoritarian context (Foster 2001, 86). Keane (1998, 6) for example, defines civil society as «permanently in tension with each other and with the state institutions that 'frame', constrict and enable the activities» of civil society. In this view the independent organizations are conceived as the true representatives of social interests, and therefore work against the state in its struggle for democratization. Co-opted NGOs on the contrary, are not functional in the civil society as they are not independent, and therefore used as tools of the authoritarian state for domination of civil society (Foster 2001, 85). According to these views, civil society does not exist in China, as NGOs are not totally independent or act as if they are in conflict with the state. In applying the concept of civil society to the Chinese context the thesis will therefore use a broader definition of civil society, and in line with Salamon et al. (1999, 3) refer to civil society as a separate sphere outside the boundaries of the market and the state.

2.5.2 The «N» in NGOs

The term «NGO» was already defined in the beginning of this chapter, but in the Chinese context it is worth distinguishing more clearly between the different types. In Western notion, non-governmental organizations are formal, private, and non-profit-distributing, but they are also self-governing and voluntary (Salamon and Anheier

---

[3] Scholars who has followed this view are for instance Meyer and Minkoff (2004, 1476), who has linked the emergence and role of the civil society to the process of democratization.

1992, 134). Chinese NGOs are at this point in time, not this type of organization. They do not have the degree of organizational autonomy that NGOs in democratic countries do (Ma 2005, 9). This however does not make them governmental organizations, and students of NGOs in China should therefore not be limited to the narrow understanding of the criteria clarifying NGOs. This is because in the Chinese context we also find governmental organized NGOs, and semi-NGOs.

The term *governmental organized non-governmental organizations* (GONGOs) refer to the many organizations that have in recent years been created at various administrative levels by and in support of the Party and state (Ho 2008, 24). What mainly distinguishes GONGOs from NGOs is that GONGOs are often established by those with strong connections to the government. Leaders are normally state appointees, more or less fully financed by the government, and required to adhere to government policy (Schwartz 2004, 7). Some scholars also see the necessary of implementing a third category: semi-NGOs, also called quasi-governmental organizations. *Semi-NGOs* are characterised as organizations that are not registered with the Ministry of Civil Affairs, but are indirectly affiliated with the government (Schwartz 2004, 5). While some scholars only view NGOs that have no state funding and no governmental ties as truly non-governmental, and therefore also apply the semi-NGO definition, this study will recognise NGOs with some degree of governmental contact and funding as still being non-governmental. The criteria used for classifications of NGOs will further be elaborated in the methodological part.

2.6 Conceptualization of the Framework

To answer the question of «*Why can we observe difference in scale shift between similar organizations that are active in the same authoritarian context?*» The goal of the thesis is thus to examine how the mechanisms and processes that characterize contention at one scale shift to another scale. To single out relevant independent variables and formulate the hypotheses, we next turn towards the political opportunity structure, the political process model, and cultural framing.

2.6.1 Political Opportunity Structure

The political opportunity structure argues that activists do not choose goals and strategies in a vacuum, but in a political context. It refers therefore to the external environment of the contentious action, including the features of regimes and institutions, and changes in those features (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 49). The political context has an impact on the repertoire of contention from which the activists choose their strategies (Tilly 1978). It therefore also affects the longevity, content and outcomes of social movements, over time and across contexts (Meyer and Minkoff 2004, 127). In POS one often talk about movements' political opportunities and threats. The thesis will follow Tarrow's (2011, 32) definitions where opportunities refers to «consistent – but not necessary formal, permanent, or national – sets of clues that encourage people to engage in contentious politics» Threats are further referred to as «those factors – repression, but also the capacity of authorities to present a solid front to insurgents – that discourage contention». «Objective» opportunities, however, do not exist, since opportunities must be *perceived* and *attributed* to become the source of mobilization (Tarrow 2011, 164). In the POS literature, several dimensions of regime properties reappear. Summed up and compromised these are often: 1) Fragmentation or concentration of power; 2) The regime's openness, capacity and tendency for repression; 3) The availability of influential allies and instability of current political alignments (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 57-58, McAdam 1996, 27). The following hypotheses are based on these three dimensions.

The first indicator is connected to whether there is fragmentation or concentration of power. Referring to the multiplicity of independent centres of power within the regime (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 57). In pursuit of order, Bratton (1989, 573) found in his study of African countries, that most African governments, mostly authoritarian, attempt to eliminate independent centres of power. NGOs generally seek to organize autonomous and participatory action, while the states basic function is to maintain the political order. Bratton (1989, 573) therefore argues that political centralization represents an attempt by political leaders to control the development of associations through co-opting and containing existing associations. In this way authorities secure their political monopoly. An argument is that collective actors in centralized states, with effective policy instruments, target the top centre of the political system, while decentralized states have a multitude of targets at the base that the collective actors can aim at (Tarrow 2011, 175-176). The latter thus creates serious problems for corporation, cohesion and coordination, especially when forces

in the civil society are focused on seizing parts of the state apparatus and using them for their purpose (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985, 56) Therefore one assumes that NGOs in decentralized states have more opportunities, and thus the opposite that:

Hypothesis 1: *Concentration of power is not favourable for NGOs to shift scale.*

The dimension concerns the regime type and capacity. As Tilly and Tarrow (2007, 108) states: «if episodes of contention end differently it is because their claim making interacted with very different regimes». A regime is here understood as «repeated, strong interactions among major political actors including a government» (Tilly 2006, 19). The argument is that a democratic context is more favourable for civil society than a nondemocratic context. The reason is that states with constitutions that provide freedom of association are more likely to tolerate NGO activity than authoritarian regimes that don't (Bratton 1989, 575). Regime openness therefore also refers to the openness to other, new and non-governmental actors (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 57). Bratton (1989, 573) further claim that authoritarian states will try to prevent independent organizations by setting up alternative governmental associations of its own. This indicates that the regime is not open to new non-governmental actors.

Building on regime openness, a discussion of whether the regime has a high or low capacity following. Using the dimension of governmental capacity combined with the degree of democracy or non-democracy, Tilly (2006, 16) distinguishes between four types of regimes: High capacity nondemocratic, low capacity nondemocratic, high capacity democratic, and low capacity democratic. High-capacity authoritarian regimes control the development of independent civil society organizations, repress dissent, and as a result, produce few and mainly unsustainable social movements (Tarrow 2011, 180). The argument is that people do not attack strong opponents when opportunities are closed, as is the situation with high-capacity authoritarian regimes (Tarrow 2011, 165). Including both regime openness and capacity, the hypothesis that follows is therefore:

Hypothesis 2: *Being a high capacity autocratic regime has a negative effect on the NGOs possibility to shift scale.*

The availability of elite support is a third important aspect of the political opportunity structure theory. It refers to that influential elites, including government authorities, powerful businesses or international organizations, may remain uninvolved in response to movement challenges, or they may aid or repress a movement in a more or less unified way (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, 253). Challengers can be encouraged to take collective action when they have allies who can act as friends in court, as guarantors against repression, or as their negotiators (Tarrow 2011, 166). In democratic regimes, *instability of political alignments* is measured most often by electoral instability. The change in government creates uncertainty among supporters and encourages challengers to try to exercise marginal power (Tarrow 2011, 165). Stable alignments, as often found in authoritarian regimes, generally mean that many political actors have no potential allies in power. In this way, political opportunity structure varies somewhat from one actor to another. This means that while one actor can have many available allies, another may have few (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 57). In sum we can suggest the third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: *Elite allies and instability of political alignments are favourable for the NGOs opportunity to shift scale.*

2.6.2 The Strategic Approach

While the POS framework emphasize the structural conditions for movements to flourish and expand, there are as mentioned other directions in the PPA framework that look for more non-structural and strategic explanations in studying collective action (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, Jasper 2004, Goodwin and Jasper 1999, Meyer and Staggenborg 2012). Goodwin and Jasper (1999, 53) for example argue that political opportunities and mobilization structures are heavily shaped by strategic considerations. This means that activists can create their own opportunities and mobilization structures. This however, depends on the strategic considerations and choices the NGOs leaders and activists make, that further depends heavily on interaction between movements and other players, such as authorities, opponents and the media. Following Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 7) strategic action is here understood as the attempt by social actors to create and maintain stable social spheres

by securing the cooperation of others. For NGOs, strategic choices are connected to claims, issues, allies, frames, resources, tactics, identity and presentation of self (Meyer and Staggenborg 2012, 4). Activists do however not have infinite possibilities to choose from. They have to choose from a limited repertoire of contention (Tilly 1978). Choices are constrained by general social norms of claim making, the group's resources, goals and identity. As NGOs make strategic decisions with audiences, including authorities, movement opponents and supporters, organized allies and potential allies, decisions that appeal to one audience may provoke response from another (Meyer and Staggenborg 2012, 5).

According to the above-mentioned definition of strategic action, the NGOs make strategic choices in who, and who not, to interact and cooperate with. This includes state actors. State actors often use various forms of certification, meaning the validation of actors, their performances, and their claims by external authorities (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 121). In order to cooperate with state actors, NGOs often have to establish ties, for example formal legal ties such as registration with governmental agencies. This results in an overall certification of the dominant view as well as the establishment of ties between state actors and NGOs (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, 14). This means that the organizations are able to access resources and allies in order to stabilize their sphere, and grow even further. Building on this we assume that:

Hypothesis 4: *NGOs that actively seek contacts among and cooperation with governmental agents have a greater possibility to shift scale.*

Furthermore, NGOs have to make the choice of whether or not to seek cooperation with other NGOs. According to Tarrow (2005, 143-160) and Keck and Sikkink (1998) NGOs are most likely to shift scales when local and national, or international, activists are connected to one another. This results in new arenas, targets, claims, and identities. NGOs are then more likely to adopt some of the demands and tactics of the other groups and allies they interact with, while more isolated groups may lack the motivation to expand their strategic repertoire to the regional or national scope (Rootes 2006, 784). In addition, cooperating organizations can coordinate resources and strategic specialization to improve the action (Meyer and Staggenborg 2012, 14). This means that having a strategy of reaching out to other organizations or networks,

domestic or international, will increase the NGOs possibility of shifting scale. Based on this we can generate hypothesis 5:

Hypothesis 5: *NGOs that reach out to other organizations and networks for cooperation and resources have a greater chance of shifting scale.*

In addition to interaction, scholars such as Goodwin and Jasper (1999), and Fligstein and McAdam (2011) argue for also taking psychological factors into account when examining NGOs strategies. It is recognised that certain individuals are especially skilled at inventing new tactics, and knowing how to time an action or response (Goodwin and Jasper 1999, 53). These are known as skilled actors. Having social skills is understood as how collective actors possess a highly developed cognitive capacity for reading people and environments, framing lines of action, and mobilizing people through these frames (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, 7). They also have the ability to transform their own individual and group's self-interest to consider the interest of multiple groups, in order to mobilize support from other groups. In this way they are able to build political coalitions or have enough resources to produce a hierarchical field (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, 7). Through their tactics, NGOs can further constantly test the stability of the field by probing through their repertoire of actions to assess the overall vulnerability of incumbents or targets. Tactics of incumbents may include imitation, co-optation or merging. While tactics of NGOs may on the other hand include building niches or taking advantage of crisis of other NGOs (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, 14). NGOs agents develop such tactics through organizational learning and experience, and this establishes the basis for the next hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: *NGOs with experienced actors using strategic tactics have greater chance of shifting scale.*

2.6.3 Cultural framing

What factors make identification to environmentalism more likely? Several scholars have focused on the NGOs strategic framing of injustice and grievances, their reasons

and motivations connected to the development of collective actions (Zald 1996, 261). *Cultural framing* refers to perceptions of the environment that shapes the goals and ideology of contentious action. A framing process is further understood as the act of creating meaning to the actions of a movement (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996). In the context of social movement organizations, this means that the message, activity and the goal that the NGO attempt to achieve, are strategically made to be congruent and complimentary to the directed target's interests, values and beliefs (Snow et al. 1986). Targets of framings can both be internal, such as members and activists, and external, including bystanders, opponents and authorities. Related to the dependent variable of scale shift, the focus is on the NGOs ability to engage people, and I will therefore analyse the frames directed towards the general public.

According to Snow and Benford (1988, 219) successful framing depends on three elements: *diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing*. The argument is that by pursuing these core framing tasks, NGOs are able to first, unify movement actors by facilitating agreement, and second, foster action. In this way they are able to «move people from the balcony to the barricades» (Benford and Snow 2000, 615). The last three hypotheses will hence be based on Snow and Benford's three dimensions of framing, that will enable us to compare the internal structure of the NGOs choice of frames. First of the three dimensions, *Diagnostic framing* involves identification of a problem and the attribution of blame and causality (Snow and Benford 1988, 200). Regarding attribution of blame, several case studies focus on the development and articulation of «injustice frames» or identifying «victims» of a given injustice and centring on their ill treatment (Benford and Snow 2000, 615). Others, such as Gerhards and Rucht (1992, 580), in studying protest campaigns in West Germany, found that the range and multitude of the problems defined by the frames, created leverage for their cases to focus on several problems. They therefore generate the hypothesis that the larger the range of problems a frame covers, the larger the range of social groups who can be addressed with the frame. Consequently, this increases the mobilization capacity of the frame. Building on this and drawing further to the relation of scale shift, the next hypothesis will be formulated as:

Hypothesis 7: *NGOs whose frames include a larger range of problems will have greater chance of shifting scale.*

Frames help interpret and define the problems for action, and also suggest action pathways to solve the problem (Zald 1996, 265). In this regard *Prognostic framing* implies a proposed solution to the identified problem that specifies what needs to be done (Snow and Benford 1988, 199). This involves a plan of attack and strategies for carrying out the plan (Benford and Snow 2000, 616). The argument laying the basis for hypothesis 8 is therefore that to be able to mobilize people and shift scale, NGOs must successfully frame the strategies as usable and appropriate for the social change task (McCarthy 1996, 149).

Hypothesis 8: *The closer the NGOs framing come to giving solutions to the defined problems, as well as usable and appropriate strategies to reach the solutions, the higher the possibility of shifting scale.*

Consensus of the problems, causes and solutions does however not lead to mobilization itself. Motivations for participation in specific actions must also be created. *Motivational framing* thus according to Snow and Benford (1988, 199) refer to a call to arms for engaging in ameliorative or corrective action. By using value laden words and phrases, and appealing to generally recognized moral norms, the mobilization capacity of a frame is assumed to be increased (Gerhards and Rucht 1992, 583). In relation to scale shift we therefore in the last hypothesis assume that:

Hypothesis 9: *The prospect of shifting scale increases if the NGO's framing contains motivational elements appealing to moral norms.*

The nine hypotheses are summarized in Table 1), and will lay the basis for the analysis in chapter five. Before conducting the analysis, the selected method for the study however needs to be justified.

Table 1) Summery of hypotheses

Theoretical approach	Hypotheses
Political Opportunity	(H$_1$) *Concentration of power is not favourable for NGOs to shift scale.*

Structure	(H2) *Being a high capacity autocratic regime has a negative effect on the NGOs possibility to shift scale.*
	(H3) *Elite allies and instability of political alignments are favourable for the NGOs opportunity to shift scale.*
The Strategic Approach	(H4) *NGOs that actively seek contacts among and cooperation with governmental agents have a greater possibility to shift scale.*
	(H5) *NGOs that reach out to other organizations and networks for cooperation and resources have a greater chance of shifting scale.*
	(H6) *NGOs with experienced actors using strategic tactics have greater chance of shifting scale.*
Cultural Framing	(H7) *NGOs whose frames include a larger range of problems will have greater chance of shifting scale.*
	(H8) *The closer the NGOs framing come to giving solutions to the defined problems, as well as usable and appropriate strategies to reach the solutions, the higher the possibility of shifting scale.*
	(H9) *The prospect of shifting scale increases if the NGO's framing contains motivational elements appealing to moral norms.*

3. Method

As Wood (2007, 124) point out: «without careful attention to research design, field research may merely confirm preconceptions with which the researcher went to the field». This chapter will therefore give insight to the research design, process and implications. I shall first explore the research question and its implications. Thereby justify the selected method of case study, and later paired comparison. Mapping out the methodological strengths and weaknesses will further display the implication of the research. Next, a presentation of data gathering, case selection and ethical consideration will give insight to the fieldwork that has been conducted for this research. Lastly, I will present the cases selected for the paired comparison, and give a short presentation of the strategy for the analysis.

3.1 Implications for the research question

«*Why can we observe difference in scale shift between similar organizations that are active in the same authoritarian context?***»** The reason for asking this question is to identify explanatory variables that can explain variations in NGOs that experience scale shift and those who do not. Hence it is an explanatory research question. «Similar contexts» refer here to the use of most similar system design, where the cases are chosen from the same or similar political, social, cultural and historical context. This facilitates the possibility for searching for differences that may be the explanations for the different outcomes of the cases.

As this study attempts to explain the behaviour of NGOs, the organizations comprise the cases. The cases are further situated within a bounded system, that here is the Chinese Civil Society. The dependent variable of the study refer to the outcome of «scale shift». Assessing the NGOs capability to shift scale further link the study to the theoretical framework of contentious politics. Therefore, analysing existing theories of SMS have generated the independent variables. They refer to the explanatory or causal factor that the outcome is believed dependent on. Since the research question is explanatory, and seeks to understand the underlying mechanisms

that lead to the specific outcome of scale shift, the method of case study is a suitable approach to exploring aspects of the complex causality.

3.2 Case study as research design

There are several trade-offs between case study design and large-N cross case design. According to Gerring (2007, 37), the decision of using one over the other should, be based on the research goals. For this study, the goals can be identified as 1) examining causal mechanisms that leads to the specific outcome of scale shift; 2) describing a field that is evolving and therefore have not been studied severely yet; and 3) laying the basis for generating new hypotheses. As the following discussion of the designs strengths and weaknesses will demonstrate, these goals are best accomplished with use of case study analysis. The study follows Gerring (2007, 94) understanding of *case study,* as the qualitative method of small-N analysis, where the research is holistic. The study is also «thick», as it is more or less comprehensive in its examination. Case study further utilizes a particular type of evidence, and the method of evidence gathering is naturalistic. Finally, the case study research investigates the properties of a single observation, or properties of a single phenomenon instance, or example. The case study research designs further pose some strengths and weaknesses in comparison to large-N studies that will further be elaborated.

3.4.1 Causal insight and internal validity

While large cross-case study only explain the occurrence or non-occurrence of scale shift, case study might help to explain specific features of the scale shift. Why it occurred, when and in what way? These are questions that large-N analysis aren't able to answer, and since the research question for this study is implying the answer to these questions, a small-N is therefore the most suitable method for this study In this way, there is a trade-off concerning the type of causal insight. While large cross-case analysis favour causal effect, case study favour causal mechanism. Causal mechanism refers to that X must be connected with Y in a plausible fashion, if not, it is unclear whether a pattern of covariation is truly causal in the nature, or what the causal interaction might be (Gerring 2007, 102). This is the situation with statistical

analysis, where all contextual factors that are not codified in the variables selected will be omitted, and therefore possibly leave out many contextual and intervening variables. In case studies we can however more easily identify what conditions present in a case activate the causal mechanism because we examine the causal mechanisms in the individual cases in detail (George and Bennett 2004, 21). Consequently, the internal validity is much higher. This means that the study is better able to support a given causal chain, and exclude alternative paths (Yin 2009, 42-43).

Case studies also allow a researcher to enhance the conceptual validity over a smaller number of cases. Whereas statistical analysis run the risk of «conceptual stretching» by taking together dissimilar cases in order to get a larger sample, the detailed considerations of contextual factors in the case study makes it easier for the researcher to identify and measure the indicators that best represent the theoretical concepts that is being measured (Bennett and George 2004, 19). A tradeoff is however the lack of representativeness, also known as external validity, because it includes only a small number of cases of a more general phenomenon (Gerring 2007, 101).

3.4.2 Availability and reliability of data

NGOs in China are in process of creating a new organizational field, the institutional constraints are not yet established and the civil society is still taking form (Hsu and Jiang 2015, 101). In a field that is growing, but also changing rapidly, the second goal of describing the NGOs development in China is therefore important, as new and updated information is greatly needed. In addition to NGOs in China being a relatively new and changing phenomenon, the outcome of scale shift is also a rear phenomenon. As most movements do not outgrow their local context the few cases that do are of great interest. We therefore need to know as much as possible of the ones that shift scale. However as for the selected authoritarian context of China, relevant information is more limited, or not always reliable. The case study research, and moreover fieldwork, facilitates the opportunity to fact check, consult multiple sources, go directly to primary sources, and overcome whatever biases that may affect the secondary literature (Gerring 2007, 114). This indeed enhances the reliability of the research. However, it is also important to note that there has been a significant

trade-off in terms of this study's reliability, as I have chosen to anonymise the informants and the organizations. This is to be able to talk to the informants about their relationship with the government, and for them to be honest in their answer. The anonymization enables the informants to share their thoughts and strategies more freely, but at the same time the reader is not able to crosscheck the information presented without seeking out the author for the sources. This is a consequence of doing qualitative research, but it has also allowed gathering of important and detailed information that would not have been able to access in other ways.

Connected to the above argument that we need to know more about how NGOs in China operate and change, the third goal is to lay the basis for generating new hypotheses for further studies. As already stated, the question asked for this study is explanatory in character. Therefore, case study is more suitable since they are more useful for producing new hypotheses, where cross-case study is better for testing existing hypotheses (Gerring 2007, 98). This is due to the exploratory identification of new variables and hypotheses through the study of deviant or outliner cases (Bennett and George 2004, 20) The case study has therefore an advantage in the exploratory stage where it allows one to test a multitude of hypotheses (Gerring 2007, 100).

3.3 Paired comparison and process tracing

The thesis follows Tarrow (2010) in arguing that paired comparison is a comparative analysis with advantages that both single-case and multi-case comparison lack. Therefore, to be able to increase the advantages connected with case study design, but also reducing some of the disadvantages with single-case study, the analysis will use a paired comparison method of four chosen cases from the sample of the total 13 Chinese NGOs.

First, paired comparison requires deep background knowledge of the cases being examined, and therefore provides an intimacy of analysis that is almost never available to large-N analysis. Next, it distances from single-case studies in the way that it can be understood as similar to testing due to its ability to compare the impact of variables or mechanisms on the outcome of interest over more than one case. However, it is still not an experiment in terms of the random assigned subjects and the

treatment of control groups. Because of this we have to carefully match the confounding variables that we already know about (Tarrow 2010, 243-422).

In this way process tracing becomes relevant. By using dual-process tracing, it reduces the possibility that an assumed influential variable is as crucial as it might seem from a single-case study alone. As Tarrow (2010, 240) puts it: «If we want to know why a particular outcome emerged, we need to understand how it occurred». This means that in order to find out why some NGOs are able to scale shift while others do not, the study will use process tracing. *Process tracing* is known as the attempt to trace the links between possible causes and observed outcomes (Bennett and George 2004, 6). This implies laying out the mechanisms and processes to demonstrate how independent and dependent variables are connected (Tarrow 2010, 240). By breaking down large or complex political processes into their mechanisms and processes, the researcher is able to apply a closer examination and thereby hold with a greater substantive theoretical certainty that particular moving factors could only have moved exogenously (Franzese 2007, 66). In this way process tracing is used to help analysts who work with a small number of cases to avoid mistaking a spurious correlation for a casual relation (Mahoney and Villegas 2009, 76).

It is however worth noting that the critique of paired comparison is similar to the criticism of case studies in general: 1) Expanding the scope conditions of a theory too far; 2) atheoretical case selection; 3) the absence of enough degrees of freedom to reliably choose among alternative explanations for the outcome; and 4) that it is not representative (Tarrow 2010, 246-249). In regards of the first critique this is why the theoretical chapter has clearly conceptualised the framework and explicit raised this issue. Second, the last section of the methodological chapter is devoted to explaining the method of choosing the cases as well as justifying the case selection. In regards of critique three, the discussion raises the question of whether we have missed some explanatory variables in the analysis. Last, the fact that the findings are not representative is first and foremost a trade off when being able to study the cases and their decisions in detail. However the discussion will also control some of the findings in the comparison by examining other cases in the sample and explanations from the literature.

3.4 Fieldwork: Interviews and data triangulation

3.4.1 Why do fieldwork?

There are several advantages of doing field research. One of the greatest advantages is that fieldwork facilitates personal interaction with research subjects in their own setting. In this way it is often the only source of sufficient description of some political processes that are not evident in other documents or available by other sources. For example, it is only through in-depth face-to-face interviews that one can get insights and understand the process by which people reach decisions, what choices they are confronted with, their beliefs concerning the likely consequences of different choices and their analysis of the path that was and was not taken (Wood 2007, 124-126). The way subjects ramble, hesitate and stumble as they formulate their answers, often indicates how they think and reason through the issues presented (Chong 1993, 868-869, Gerring 2007, 103). Since this study focuses on how the NGOs are framing and using different strategies towards different actors, face-to-face interviews gives this insight, that other methods are not able to capture.

Of course it is important to note that there is always a danger in self-reporting that the person interviewed, either through interview or survey, may interact strategically with the field researcher. Especially data gathered in interviews with political actors are often difficult to interpret and verify, particularly their argued reason for doing something (Wood 2007, 124). The author has also been aware of the risk of being biased by preconceived notions, including those who derived from theory. Being open for contradictory evidence and cross-checking the information by triangulation have therefore been important measures to overcome these challenges (Yin 2009, 69).

3.4.2 Conducting interviews

The fieldwork was conducted in February and March 2016. 13 environmental NGOs based in Beijing and Shanghai were visited and employees interviewed. Follow up interviews and email exchanges were conducted in April and May. In total 20 interviews where conducted with 22 different informants, some in pairs and some

twice. All the interviews where conducted by the author in English, and by assistance of an interpreter in Chinese in four of the interviews. The interpreter also transcribed the interviews afterwards. The transcriptions have been crypted and treated with high caution. To further triangulate the information gathered from the informants, news articles, reports, secondary literature sources, international NGOs and other researchers have been cross-examined for verification, expertise and additional information.

The informants interviewed where either founders, leaders, in charge of communication or ordinary workers at the NGOs. They were asked about the NGOs history, its development, challenges, networks and communication. The interviews lasted from about half an hour to two hours each. Using semi structural interviews, and open-ended questions, the informants where able to where able to decide, to a certain degree, the course of the interview. The questions also changed over the process to reflect the increased understanding of the problem. However, to be able to compare the cases, some standard questions were always asked.

3.4.3 Ethical considerations

Doing fieldwork in an authoritarian regime poses some ethical concerns. Although all the informants agreed to be recorded during the interview, the recordings and transcriptions have been handled very cautiously using encryption and coding names. After careful considerations I decided to keep organizations and individuals anonymous in the thesis.[4] The environmental movement is however not as sensitive for political authorities as other issues, and the policy domain in general has been characterised by scholars as low profile (Kriesi, Koopmans, and Duyvendak 1995, 96-100). This means that it is a policy domain where resources are low and therefore not threatening the survival of the government. Even though there are some sensitivity in studying state-civil society relations in China, environmentalism in general is not as sensitive and therefore contributes to the fact that the people working in the NGOs

---

[4] Several authors mention these organizations openly in their work. However, due to protecting their anonymity the thesis will not directly refer to these references, and materials naming the NGOs specifically will be provided if enquired.

can talk about their work and relations more openly, in contrast to for example their human rights activist colleagues.[5]

3.5 Method for choosing the cases

3.5.1 The sample

The requirements for the NGOs chosen for the sample was that the organizations 1) had to be Chinese and 2) focus on environmental issues, or at least have environmental issues as some part of their work. I also followed Spire et al. (2014, 2) requirements for qualifying as grassroots NGOs that 3) the group had to have been up and running for at least two years; and 4) it was not founded by a government agency. Many of the groups engaged in social service delivery, but some are engaged in advocacy work. Focusing on NGO based in the municipalities Beijing and Shanghai narrowed the selection further.

Because there is no list available of all NGOs in China, the cases for the sample were found by using information from multiple sources: web searches, receiving information and contacts from other scholars, and a snowball procedure during the data collection process. The few lists available online are often incomplete and only mention registered NGOs. Snowball sampling has therefore been particular useful in reaching out to other, not as well known, NGOs.

The overall sample of NGOs studied in this research varies in size, budget, geographical power and their ability to have legitimacy in their statements. They range from national NGOs, covering the entirety of China, to regional and local NGOs, that mainly focus on their own region, city or district. Even though their headquarters where in Beijing and Shanghai, many also served in provinces as far away as Yunnan, Sichuan and Guangdong. The oldest NGO in the study has been around for 23 years while the youngest, only four years. They mostly secure their budgets from a mix of domestic and international funding.

Even though all of them classify as Environmental NGOs, or having the environment as an important part of their work, their focus area also vary greatly.

---

[5] It is also important to notice that the degree of whether or not an issue is sensitive also relates to where in China one operate. For example, labour rights activism is more sensitive in Guangdong, and environmental advocacy is more sensitive in Yunnan than in other regions.

Some focus on environmental conservation, protection or advocacy, others on environmental education, training and spreading awareness. While the interviews do not offer a national representative sample, they provide a description of the development and interactions of NGOs in two of China's most important cities. While choosing the cases for the sample followed the above-described criteria, the cases for the paired comparison need to be comparable, and therefore more carefully selected.

3.5.2 Using Most Similar System Design

How to choose the cases for paired comparison from the above sample? Random sampling is unreliable in small-N research since small sample sizes tend to produce estimates with a great deal of variance (Gerring 2002, 87). Therefore, to make sure that the cases for the paired comparison will provide leverage to the research question the cases was chosen more carefully. The reference of «similar contexts» in the research question suggests the use of most similar system design (MSSD). Originally proposed by John Stuart Mill in *System of Logic* (1843) as the methods of similarity and differences. This involves choosing cases that are similar on specific variables other than the dependent variable and one or few possible explanatory variables (Gerring 2002, 90). In most-similar system design common systemic characteristics are conceived of as «controlled for», whereas intersystemic differences are viewed as explanatory variables (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 33). This minimizes the differences between the cases that are being compared and makes it easier to distinguish the possible explanatory variable(s) that leads to the specific outcome.

The most–similar system method, as with other methods of case selection, is prone to problems of non-representativeness and biases in the case selection process. This is why the cases chosen for the paired comparison are more or less typical cases, and will hopefully increase the study's representativeness. Also, in exploratory research, a second case can confirm an exploratory finding from a single case, such as in paired comparison (Gerring 2002, 131-139). Another important implication is that although the number of differences among the cases is limited, there will always be more than one difference. Therefore, even though MSSD focus on related variation, the experimental variables cannot be singled out (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 34). However, we can assume that some differences can be determinants.

Exact matching is thus often impossible since there often are not two similar cases with the exact same score on a contentious variable. However, by focusing on sharing a similar estimated probability, one can look for cases that would have had the same possibility for conducting scale shift. Matching then means to choose the cases that facilitates, rather than inhibits, thick description (Gerring 2002, 136). The cases will be presented more detailed in the analysis, but a short introduction of the basis for comparing Environmental NGOs (ENGOs) should be given here.

- NGO1 is a national covering NGO, based in Shanghai they focus on maritime environmental issues.
- NGO2 is a Beijing based NGO, focusing on environmental protection activities and awareness for students and youth.
- NGO3 is a Shanghai based grassroots community organization, focusing on community development.
- NGO4 is also a Shanghai based organization, focusing on garbage classification.

Due to anonymity they have been given the names NGO1, NGO2, NGO3 and NGO4. None of them are outliers or extreme cases in the NGO landscape. They are situated in Beijing and Shanghai, cities that already have high population organizational activity compared to other place in China. They do not have a large amount of resources, famous leaders, or much influence in political decision-making. Despite this I will argue that NGO1 and NGO4 have been able to shift scale, while NGO2 and NGO3 have not, and therefore there will be a paired comparison between NGO1 and NGO2, and NGO3 and NGO4.

3.5.3 Why compare NGO1 and NGO2?

NGO1 and NGO2 have approximately the same amount of employees, and none of them are big NGOs with lots of resources. They also have many of the same types of focuses and activities. They both seek to spread environmental information and awareness to the public. They further aim to protect water and soil from pollution. In terms of activity, they organize and engage citizens in clean-ups. Another similarity is

that they give attention to environmental issues in China as a whole. They seek to be national in scope and mobilize people form not just their own community, district, or region, but from all over China. The fact that they are based in different cities of China will further hopefully display the regional difference in China. Although they share the same structural and contextual factors, we see a difference in the outcome of scale shift, where NGO1 have been able to become national in focus and scope, while NGO2, despite attempts, are struggling in mobilizing people.

3.5.4 Why compare NGO3 and NGO4?

Focusing both on waste and garbage classification, and targeting the communities and neighbourhood committees, NGO3 and NGO4 have many similarities in focus and goals. Both based in Shanghai, and even registered in the same district, provides the same local context. With NGO4 emerging out of NGO3 they also share many of the same volunteers and networks. By freezing these similarities, it will be easier to distinguish what makes them different, and furthermore what makes NGO4 able to reach and engage so many more people with their program than NGO3 is able to. Also here I will argue for a difference in the outcome of scale shift. NGO4 cannot be classified as a national NGO, but at least its programs and mobilization can be characterised as covering a regional level, while NGO3 still haven't evolved much out of its local district.

4. History And Context

To put today's political and social situation in China into perspective the first section of the chapter provides a historical overview of state-society relations, social movements, reforms and decentralization of the Chinese state from the establishment of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 to today. Next, will be a section that will give an overview of the structure of the Chinese state and how power and responsibility has evolved through reforms. Drawing on this background, the Chinese

state-civil society relations will be discussed, and further the variances regarding issue and region in state-NGO relations.

4.1 Political history

4.1.1 Civil Society during the Mao-era (1949-1978)

In the Republican era, before the end of the Chinese civil war, China is said to have had a reasonably strong NGO sector. It is estimated that around 26 thousand social organizations existed in the Nationalist areas of China by that time (White 1996, 19). Other argue that autonomous organizations were never a dominant feature of Chinese society even before 1949 (Hsu 2010, 261). After the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) victory over Kuomintang (Nationalists) most social organizations were however abolished or replaced with government-created mass organizations. It is estimated that in 1965 only around a 100 NGOs remained at the national level, and around 6.000 at the local level (Chan 2005, 25). The remaining organizations were completely dominated by the state and no new autonomous organizations were permitted to form (Heurlin 2010, 232, Hsu 2010, 261).

The CCP leadership took on the Soviet notion that bigger was better. That it was vital with fast growth regardless of quantity, and that being modern meant being urban and industrialized. With this thought followed land reform, collectivization of the Chinese countryside, and increased party penetration into every aspect of society (Saich 2011, 43). Further, Mao's pursuit for «continuous revolution» created chaos in China's political and economic system. Turmoil came from his mass campaigns, such as the anti-rightist campaign and the Cultural Revolution. The campaigns isolated China from the rest of the world (Economy 2011, 15). The greatest chaos was however created with The Great Leap Forward. The disastrous implementations of expanding agricultural output led to massive famine and splits within the senior ranks of the Chinese leadership (Saich 2011, 46).

Despite economic and political turmoil, the Maoist regime saw welfare services as central to is political legitimacy and through the 50s, 60s, and 70s, the party state

provided primary education and basic health care to the citizens. However, changes in society such as decentralization, and waves of migration shifted the burden of the social welfare from the central government to the local government and individual households (Hsu 2010, 261). The decentralisation reform of 1956-57 set off a massive delegation of economic management and planning powers from the central government to the provinces. What followed onwards were cycles of administrative decentralization and re-centralization, and tension between central agencies and local governments and party committees The reliance on administrative decentralization as a strategy continued well into the 1980s. A reform in the early 1980s enabled the provincial and local governments to retain a larger portion of fiscal revenues than before. It was described as a means to boost the local enthusiasm and foster local economic growth (Li 2010, 178-180).

4.1.2 Changes in society as China undergo reform (1978-1986)

Mao's death in 1979 offered a window of opportunity for a radical break from the past. The reform programme launched by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 affected every aspect of life in China and left no institution untouched (Saich 2011, 67). The party began to relax the tight state control over the economy and the society, and led to significant liberalization compared to previous regimes. This marked a shift from a state-directed, command economy to a more market-based economy (Economy 2010, 16). The socialist development strategies were abandoned, and the state began to allow private industry, cut back on welfare provision and relinquished their monopoly on rural development (Heurlin 2010, 224).

This change in development strategy further affected state-society relations. While in the 1970s the state was suppressing independent social organizations, the state shifted in the 1980s to actually encourage and form new NGOs. For example, as the state began to liberalize its economy and relaxed its monopoly on investment in infrastructure and rural development projects, the incentive for the state to allow development NGOs to emerge became stronger. In this way the government could be seen as abandoning their exclusionary strategy in favour for a more corporatist approach towards the NGOs (Heurlin 2010, 224-233).

The same tendency can be seen in the welfare sector. At the core of the reforms in the early 80s was «freeing up» enterprises from government control (Li 2010:179). This changed the previous system where the workplace (单位 *danwei «work unit»)* had ensured total control over society, and been the main provider of welfare for the citizens (Saich 2011, 246). However, as the State Owned Enterprises (SOE) began to decline and shed workers, the state had to face the increasing demand for social welfare services and a declining ability to provide them. This gave the state the incentives to allow formation of social welfare NGOs (Heurlin 2010, 232).

Looking for a way to still ensure control over society, the government further invested in corporatist institutions, such as GONGOs, to govern the NGOs that emerged (Heurlin 2010, 227-232). Additionally, freeing up enterprises created numerous of new private businesses that again led to the emergence of entrepreneurs as a new powerful group. As the private businesses had few ties to the state, the CCP therefore lacked direct connection and control over this emerging section of society. Organizing business associations, a type of GONGO, therefore became an additional and effective way of monitoring, regulating and incorporating entrepreneurs. It provided the state with an extra incentive to expand the civil sector (Heurlin 2010, 232).

4.1.3 How the protests of 1989 changed state-society relations (1986-1990)

The mid 80s experienced economic troubles and political instability when problems emerged in the industrial sectors connected with the transition to market-influenced economy (Saich 2011, 75). Worsening economic conditions, in addition to concern over lack of political reform, led to the student demonstrations of 1986, and eventually to the demonstrations of 1989. Students and intellectuals had taken advantages of the relatively tolerant governmental regulations for social organization between 1979 and 1989, and formed numerous associations (Hsu 2010, 261). This gave the students resources to be able to protest. Further, as a result of the more liberalized policies and abuse of public positions and private accumulation from public function, corruption had sprung up and was the worst than it has ever been since 1949. This was an issue that found sympathetic response in the broader society and contributed to the scale of the protests (Saich 2011, 76-81). The leadership was

divided about how to handle the peaceful demonstrations, but the removal of Premier Zhao gave the opportunity for a tough response by the orthodox party members. The demonstrations had by this time spread to other segments of society, and also workers and critical intellectuals were forming autonomous organizations. The leaders saw this as a threat to the regime and used this as an excuse to push for clearing off Tiananmen Square by military troops (Saich 2011, 81-83).

The crackdown of the movement in the summer of 1989 led to banning of many independent organizations such as trade unions and workers' organizations as well as student unions that were assumed threatening to the regime. Other social organizations such as business, academic, science and technology were on the other hand able to continue to operate, although under more constrained regulations (Howell 2012, 273). The party remained defensive and implemented a series of new regulations for social organizations, placing them under the authority of the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MOCA) that tightened controls on the registration of social organizations (Hsu 2010, 261; Heurlin 2010, 233). Many of these regulations still stand today.

4.2 The Chinese state

After twenty years of reforms and open policy, China's one-party state apparatus remains almost unchanged. The government is still fully controlled by CCP, which continues to uphold Marxism and Leninism as its ideological basis (Ma 2006, 4). However, an often-conducted mistake is to view the Chinese party state as one unit. This view is too simplistic. As Hsu and Jiang (2015, 104) puts it: «NGOs do not have relationships with «the state» because there is no such thing as «the state in China». Instead as this section will demonstrate, the party state ranges from local, to regional, to national level, with party institutions and state institutions parallelised. As well as competing agendas between different regions, districts, departments, individual officials and governmental agents.

Governmental agents are here understood as members of organizations with the power to deploy their organizations' resources, to act or speak on behalf of their organizations, and include both individuals and subdivisions of the government (Tilly 2006, 19). Governments or governmental agents will further be referred to as either

40

central or local. The «centre» includes the State Council and its commissions, ministries, and leadership, small groups in Beijing, as well as the Party Politburo, Secretariat, and the organs of the Central Committee. While the «locales» consist of the provinces and lower level units. All levels below the central will here be referred to as «local» government, specifying «provincial», «county» and «township» when necessary. These distinctions will be important in mapping out the interactions between the NGOs and the different levels and agencies of the authorities.

4.2.1 The different theoretical explanations of the Chinese State

Many concepts have been applied in trying to describe this complexity of the Chinese political system and the complicated ties between the state and society. Terms such as Consultative Authoritarianism (Teets 2014), Fragmented Authoritarianism (Mertha 2009, Lieberthal and Lampton 1992, Li 2010), Deliberative Authoritarianism (He and Warren 2011, Han 2014), Decentralized Authoritarianism (Landry 2008), and Responsive Authoritarianism (Weller 2012, Rooij, Stern, and Fürst 2014), have been applied in order to try to rationalize why and how the Chinese government have opened up for greater social input through channels such as: direct village election, public hearing, access to courts, social media and in some cases allowing protests. As Rooij et al. (2014, 4) puts it in explaining these developments in state-society relations: «the Chinese government is walking a fine line between tolerating (and sometimes even encouraging) societal participation, expression and agency one the one hand and controlling the society on the other».

4.2.2 The structure of the state

China's one-party system constitutes of institutions where the state and the Chinese Communist Party are tightly intertwined from the central government at the top of the hierarchy, and all the way down to the village level at the bottom (Tsai 2007, 29). Vertically, the state consists of four levels of government: central, provincial, county and township. The most important administrative level is the province/municipality level (Saich 2011, 179-180). Beijing and Shanghai are however municipalities under the central government and therefore stand at the provincial level. Under the

41

municipalities you will find districts and townships, in the same way as with the provinces. Each level of government deals with and supervises only the level directly beneath it (Tsai 2007, 29). Outside the formal governmental levels, but under the district there is also a sub-district/village level, who further administrate villagers' or neighbourhoods'/community committees, that is functioning as a governmental taskforce (Saich 2011, 225). See Figure 1) for summery of the levels.

The three levels of government below the centre – provinces/municipality, counties/districts and townships – and also village level, are organized in the same way as the centre with government and party organizations paralleling each another (Saich 2011, 180). For example, the village governments are officially divided into two formal organizations: the village Party branch and the village committee. However, they typically work together as one group. Villagers elect officials in the village committees in direct village elections. While officials in the village Party branch are appointed by the party-state. Village Party branch members are appointed by the Party committee in the township and approved through a vote by the village's Party members (Tsai 2007, 29). Often the two organizations consist of largely the same people. The same person may for example be both the Party secretary and the village head (Tsai 2007, 30).
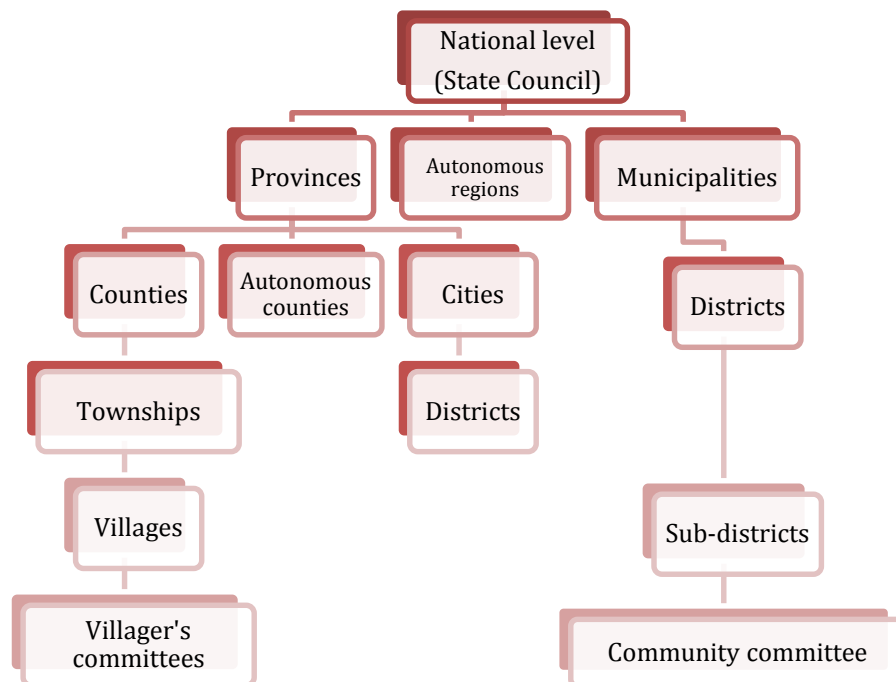
Figure 1) Levels of formal and informal governmental levels in the PRC

4.2.3 After decentralization - The changes in power and responsibility

While on discussion of central-local relations, the 1950s-1980s concentrated on division of resources, the critical question in the reform era over who should have the powers to regulate. From the 1980s to the 1990s the central, provincial and local levels were competing not only for direct control over tax revenues, investment, credit, enterprises and resources. They were also increasingly competing for regulatory powers over the emerging market activities, and powers to define which level should have which regulatory power (Li 2010, 180). The decentralization process that has been described above was the most important element that shifted power away from central government agencies to those at lower levels, especially financially (Saich 2011, 195). The economic reforms required the state to reduce administrative interference and lead to a major redistribution of power both vertically and horizontally. Not only did this make the relationship between the centre and local levels more complex, but also with increased control of financial resources, the local level got more capacity to be more creative than in the past (Saich 2011, 183). Local officials are now portrayed as entrepreneurs fostering business opportunities and mobilizing resources Gerring (2007, 37).

With more local resources however, came also more responsibility. A shift in discussion went from who should get the revenues in the reform era, to who should have the expenditures in the aftermath. This shift came when the Chinese government at the turn of the century declared that it would take a more constrained role as market regulator and provider of public goods. This sparked the debate over how to divide the responsibilities over specific services between governmental levels (Li 2010, 180). Who should have the main responsibility, who should have something to say, and who should pay for the expenses? The responsibility was moved down to the local levels. As one of the consequences for example, village officials have almost complete formal authority and discretion over issues within the village (Tsai 2007, 29).

4.3 Regulating the Chinese Civil-Society

China has attempted to control social organizations and their actions through various regulatory measures NGOs currently have to register with the Ministry of Civil Affairs or its subordinate institutions at regional or district level, as well as finding a sponsoring governmental agency (主管部门, *zhuguanbumen, «department responsible for the work»*), or as some calls it, a mother-in-law (婆婆, *popo, «mother-in-law»*) (Hildebrandt 2011). Making the agency accountable for the NGO, and if «something goes wrong» (Han 2014, 176). This dual registration system has often proven to be an obstacle for NGOs and voluntary associations. Finding a governmental institution that wants to be held responsible for the NGO has not been easy for many. Especially when it often involves having already established connections, such as *guanxi* (关系, *guanxi «relations»),* with people in the institutions for them to want to take on the responsibility. This has led many NGOs and voluntary associations to avoid registration or rather register as a legal entity such as research institute or a company, even though they are not (Ho 2008, 9). Therefore, inhibiting a «grey» legal zone, but at the same time running the risk of being declared illegal (Spire et al 2014, 3). Without registration, and consequently without legal status, NGOs will face difficulties accessing funding, obtaining legal protection and interacting with government organizations (Schwartz 2004, 5). Also after registration the NGOs must still make sure to uphold the registration status (Hsu and Hasmath 2014, 520). Registration must be renewed annually, with the possibility of being rejected. Especially if the NGO is argued to oppose the basic principles of the constitution, harm national unity and security or national interest, social interests, or the interest of other organizations and citizens, or carry out acts contrary to social and public morals (Schwartz 2004, 5).

An additional limitation is that regulations specify that only one organization can exist in a jurisdiction within a given functional administrative sector at each level (Wu and Chan 2012, 13, Han 2014, 176) Meaning that a district, or municipality, can claim that they already have an organization established in the environmental protection area, and therefore denying similar NGOs to register in that district. Further, NGOs cannot establish branch offices other places in the country (Schwartz 2004, 5), and existing laws that forbids NGOs to have nationwide membership base and cross-regional NGO alliances (Wu and Chan 2012, 10). These regulations limit

the NGO population, as well as hinder NGOs from expanding their operation and obtaining greater scale and impact across the country. Some districts however allow more than one environmental NGO to register. Local policy changes have allowed some test groups in Beijing and Shenzhen, and also certain types of social organizations, to register without a supervisory-agency (Spire et al 2014, 3; Howell 2012, 288-289)[6]. Still, in general, all these regulations, and the possibility of getting sanctioned if not followed, make the NGOs act carefully, avoiding strong criticism directed towards the government (Schwartz 2004, 5).

4.4 Environmental policies and activism

Chinese central government leaders have shown a great awareness of environmental problems and are pushing for sustainable development and environmental progress through comprehensive environmental laws (Ran 2013, 18). The national focus is on developing globally competitive green technologies with domestic intellectual property. Consequently low-carbon governance has become a national priority and one of the most important components of China's environmental governance (Lo 2015, 153). While the laws and policies are made at the top level, carrying out environmental protection, implementation and monitoring, is largely a sub-national responsibility. Due to lack of incentives for Chinese government officials to act, environmental protection often loses to the more attractive goal of economic development (Schwartz 2004, 1). Because of this Economy (2010, 115) argues that it is quite common for local governments to distort, ignore or even challenge central government initiatives connected to environmental protection for the sake of local interests. Therefore, recognising the local government's limited capacity in environmental protection, the state is turning more and more towards Environmental NGOs (ENGOs), to carry out some of the burden (Schwartz 2004, 1). For example Rooij (et al. 2014, 7) argues that the Environmental Protection Bureau (EPB), China's main environmental agency has been ineffective, pointing to its struggle to implement

---

[6] In September 2008 the Shenzhen government was trying out a pilot registration system where social organizations could register directly under the Civil Affairs bureau and therefore no longer need to name a governmental sponsoring agency. This also piloted in Beijing in February 2010 (Howell 2012:288-290).

environmental laws due to lack of sufficient funding, staff and autonomy. He's arguing that these shortcomings have created demand and the space for new actors, such as ENGOs, to play a role.

ENGOs from their side have launched various high-profile campaigns during the last two decades, establishing themselves as an increasingly important actor in Chinese environmental governance (Han 2014, 177). While most of the earlier ENGO campaigns has been characterised as relatively politically neutral conservation projects or educational programs, ENGOs in the mid-2000s have gradually began to pursue policy-relevant goals and play advocacy roles. Then it is however often through networks, because such tasks require more than a single organization (Han 2014, 177-179). Environment has become a high-profile issue in the Chinese media (Wu and Chan 2012, 12). In addition, about 60 percent of respondents wanted the government to give priority to environmental protection when boosting economic growth, a survey polled among more than 8,500 resident in 35 cities (Yang and Calhoun 2008). Earlier surveys have shown the same ranking environmental protection as among top concern, and in 2002 another survey showed the about the percentage viewing environmental protection as «extremely important» (Wang 2014). Yet rather than influencing environmental policies, the main focus for the majority of China's ENGOs is environmental education and rising awareness (Ho and Edmonds 2008, 8). Since environmental policies are made at the central level of governance, and most ENGOs in China lack the strength and influence decision-making at this level.

4.5 Regional differences

Many scholars have demonstrated the differences connected to regional location when it comes to NGO development. In provinces such as Guangxi, Heilongjiang and Gansu, NGOs face persistent political obstacles to improve their work quality. While governments in Guangdong and Shanghai have attempted to strengthen the role of civil affairs bureaus in leading the reform of regulating NGOs (Ho 2008, 29). Events such as the Sichuan Earthquake in 2008 has further functioned as a rear window of opportunity for NGO and civil society development in Sichuan Province (Wu and Chan 2012, 16). Informant 13, from NGO9 highlights some differences: «At the

institutional level Sichuan is much easier to work with because the government of Sichuan is more open, is more open to international or domestic NGOs, because they have giant panda and they have work with WWF since 1980s, so the officers are more experienced, and Yunnan is different. But at the personal level Yunnan people is frank and much easier to work with. As long as they trust you» (Beijing, 04.03.16).

An argument is that it is easier for NGO to operate and flourish in the bigger more developed parts of China. In more rural and developing areas the term «NGO» is still a new idea for many. As one of the informants explained it: «a lot of people in China, if you talk about NGOs, they don't know what "NGO" is» (informant 17, 11.03.16). Informant 13, from a national Beijing-based NGO, confirms this: «the government in South China is more friendly to NGOs. […] Like Guangdong, Shanghai, […] than the areas in the West, because the provinces in the West are less developed». This was also mentioned by Informant 12, saying that «towards those west areas they do not think social problem is a big issue, economic development is the biggest issue», and that the coastal more developed part of eastern China «they are more openhearted more developed and civilised», and also therefore more open towards NGOs (04.03.16). In Mandarin, the term NGO, (非政府组织, *fei zhengfuzuzhi, «non-governmental organization»*) can be translated as «anti-government organization», and can therefore possibly influence the perception among people and government officials on the NGOs nature. This is more usual in places where governmental officials, or locals, are not already familiar with the concept of NGO. Both Beijing and Shanghai are however quite developed urban areas. Nevertheless, there are some prevailing differences between the two municipalities.

4.5.1 Beijing's environmental NGOs

Beijing, the capital and political centre of China, is home to a mass of formally registered NGOs and unregistered grass roots NGOs focusing on local and national-wide issues. They have the highest amount of ENGOs (Wu and Chan 2012, 15), however many are not NGOs, but rather GONGOs: «They have a lot of NGOs in Beijing, but not private ones. You call them NGOs but actually they are mostly founded by the government», Informant 12 (04.03.16) explains. Furthermore several informants, especially those based in Beijing, mentioned that they believe that

47

Beijing-based NGOs experience a more challenging atmosphere than the areas of south China (Informant 12, Beijing, 04.03.16; Informant13, Beijing, 04.03.16). «I think Beijing is the most difficult place to get registered, politically. They want social stability here so NGOs to seek government will have a background check» Informant 12 (Beijing, 04.03.16) expresses. Spire et al. (2014, 3-4)[7] found that over half of the NGOs they studied in Beijing were registered as businesses, the highest percentage among the locations they studied. This could be an indicator of a greater degree of political caution in the capital, than other places. Based on their finding they suggest that Beijing groups are more likely to be under pressure to maintain a government tie in order to conduct their work. Similar Saich (2011, 255) stresses that diversity and experimentation are best seen away from the political centre where concerns with political obedience are less strict.

4.5.2 Shanghai's environmental NGOs

Before 2002 there were no registered environmental NGOs in Shanghai compared to Beijing. According to Wu (2013, 91) there were between 6-10 ENGOs in Shanghai a few years ago, compared to Beijing who had and probably still has, over 15 ENGOs. The high concentration of organizations in Beijing is also due to a high population of GONGOs. Lee (2007, 272) points to three explanations for the small number of organizations in Shanghai. The first being that the citizens generally acknowledge that the Shanghai government has made significant progress in environmental protection, and therefore argue that environmental activists feel that there is little space for ENGOs to play a role. The second factor Lee points to is the small number of international NGOs, that gives local Shanghai NGOs fewer opportunities to develop skills of organizing and managing projects from international NGOs. The last point he argues is the Shanghai government's tight control and censorship over media, that has not promoted public environmental awareness in Shanghai. They are not just fewer, but also less able to influence policies due to lack of capacity (Lee 2007, 269). The NGOs-state relationship is consequently largely at the local district level. However, as the study later will reveal, the fact that Shanghai Municipality has set specific targets

---

[7] Their data is gathered from Beijing, Guangdong and Yunnan. However not Shanghai.

that the districts must accomplish, in for example garbage classification, has pushed the districts to reach out to ENGOs for recourses and expertise.

5. Analysis

The chapter will be divided in tree parts. The first part will tell the story of the cases. The second part, the analysis, will be structured chronologically according to the hypotheses connected to political opportunity structure, the strategic approach and cultural framing, as presented in the theoretical chapter. Connected to each hypothesis there will be a double comparison of the cases. After every group of hypotheses, a table will summarize the findings. In the end Table 5 will summarize all the results. The last part will then be able to answer the puzzle by summarising the analysis and its findings.

5.1 The Cases for paired comparison

As stated in the method, the cases share a similar estimate of probability due to their common structural and contextual factors. A presentation of the four selected cases will provide the basis for the comparison, and also define whether or not the NGOs have been able to shift scale.

5.1.1 NGO1

In the second half of 2000s, NGO1 carried out its first international coastal clean-up. The cleaning was widely recognized by the Chinese government and society, and led to the development of a greater project, that now is the NGOs most featured activity. NGO1 was further formally registered five years later in one of Shanghai's districts as a civil non-enterprise unit. The founders were already experienced with civil society and organizational management, and was able to register the NGO through personal contacts in the governmental system (Informant 6, Shanghai, 24.02.16). NGO1's mission is further to secure a cleaner ocean. They carry out and organize marine environmental protection actions such as clean-up projects, while also raising and promoting public awareness of marine conservation. In later years NGO1 also started

scientific research on coastal cleaning, and has recruited a team of researches consisted of volunteers that regularly monitor selected coastal sites. Recently, they have also carried out an education course design to promote children's awareness for marine environment protection.

When it comes to governmental relations, NGO1 has communication with all levels of government, but cooperation is mostly limited to the local district level. This involves cooperation on projects, and advising local governmental officials about the managing of maritime issues and cleaning. They also receive small funding from local governmental departments and agencies. Though most of the funding comes from international companies through the clean-up activities. Only a couple of years after the first clean-up, NGO1 became China's general coordinator for international coastal cleanings. The first year's activities had around 70 volunteers to clean up the coastline, collecting 638 marine litter items (ML). The second year participation grew to about 300 volunteers collecting 3.978 ML. The year 2011 had over a thousand volunteers collecting over 30.000 ML, and the participation peaked in 2013 with 4500 volunteers, collecting over 40.000 ML (NOWPAP 2013)(NOWPAP 2013; ICC 2014). In 2014 they further started the building of marine waste detection sites in a dozen coastal cities (China Development Brief n.d. a).

NGO1 also assist other coastal organizations in carrying out clean-up activities and are assembling GONGOs, NGOs, academics and media in discussion and forums (NOWPAP 2016). One of their outspoken goals is to build a national co-work network between all the maritime supporters and for all the NGOs working on maritime protection (Informant 7, Shanghai, 24.02.16, NGO1 2015). Out of their local base in Shanghai NGO1 have developed some national-wide programs, especially in marine litter monitoring. Also worth mentioning is that they are representing Chinese environmental NGOs in international conferences. These factors makes it possible to say that NGO1 has grown out of its local context, and has thereby gone through a scale shift.

5.1.2 NGO2

Established in the middle of 1990s, NGO2 first started out as a loose network of student environmental unions from various universities, managing the organization by

turn. Later the network institutionalised as a Beijing based NGO, with some part-time employees from the middle of 2000's, and since 2010 they have had a full time leader and one or two full time employees in charge and running the organization. Thus even though NGO2 was started in the 90's, long before NGO1, it was institutionalised around the same time. Also, while NGO1 registered quite quickly, NGO2 only registered last year. Their mission is still to be a network and connection between student environmental groups across China, and in more general the goal is to promote environmental awareness among students and youths, and help them to grow up practising environmental protection (NGO2 2016).

NGO2s activities mainly involve workshops and seminars, as well as spreading information about China's environmental issues. Their last project involves protecting a reservoir that inhabits Beijing's main water source. This they do by organizing fieldtrips and volunteering work. NGO2 does not receive any governmental funding, and has all its funding from abroad funds or companies. The organization has little communication with governmental agencies except from registration, asking for data and information, and sometimes attending meetings and training. At the time they do not have any cooperation with governmental agents at any level either, but they are in an application process for project cooperation and funding (informant 9, Beijing, 02.03.16). Except from arranging activities different places in China, NGO2 is at this point in time not able to mobilize a greater amount of students to their environmental protection activities. Also their ability of presenting a student network across the country has decreased, and their connections to the students are, according to themselves, fewer now than they were before (Informant 9, Beijing, 02.03.16). Informant 9 further stated that they at the moment are struggling to survive: «I think our organisation is on the line of survival. I think it is hard to survive» (Beijing, 02.03.16). All together this means that NGO2 has not, at this point, been able to complete a scale shift.

5.1.3 NGO3

Local students who wanted to help vulnerable groups in the community were the basis of NGO3 formation in the beginning of twenty-first century. The NGO was further able to registered in mid 2000s as a social organization at district level in Shanghai.

The NGO started out as a volunteer community organization focusing on offering community services, promoteing community participation and sustainable development of society. Among their services is giving legal aid and education to disadvantaged groups. Only a year after formation NGO3 started their program focusing on environment protection and awareness in Shanghai's communities (China Development Brief n.d. b). The environmental protection program mainly works with garbage classification, where they in exchange for small gifts collect harmful waste from local residents. Later the program has targeted families in promotion of living environmental friendly. In addition, the program also involves giving out a newsletter; showing movies; holding seminars and lectures; and organizing ecological tours (Informant 3, Shanghai, 23.02.16). Informant 3 measures the success of the program in two ways: «One is [that] we have persisted in doing these activities without giving up since 2009. The other one is that we get the recognition from the residents and we also find they have changed their attitude thinking about not throwing rubbish at will anymore. And then we find our project is worthy and meaningful» (Shanghai, 23.02.16).

Even though NGO3 has been able to engage local people in various programs and activities, they have not grown out of their community level focus. Governmental cooperation is limited to their registered district, sub-districts and also their sponsoring governmental agency. An argument for why they have not done a shift in scale can however be that they particularly focus on the community level. Yet they are expressing themselves that they «truly want to cover a wider area» and «the wider, the better» (informant 3, Shanghai, 23.02.16), so even though the focus on the community level is strong, NGO3 also want to expand and gain more influence. However, at this point NGO3 is not able to mobilize other places than inside their own district and mostly community, and this means that NGO3 has not been able to shift scale.

5.1.4 NGO4

NGO4 emerged out from NGO3, and had its first garbage classification project in Shanghai in 2009. The project received formal government recognition. By focusing on waste reduction, recycling and community building, their main activity is garbage

classification. In this regard they are developing models of garbage classification, and conducts consultancy and training of community committees. In the governmental system they mostly communicate with the district level, but they also have cooperation with different agencies and departments at municipality level. Their models have been recognised by governmental officials, and their first classification project got listed as one of three models in Shanghai (Informant 4, Shanghai, 23.02.16). The garbage classification program has now been recognised and fully implemented in four districts in Shanghai. Informant 4 (Shanghai, 27.04.16) explains that it grew from covering 1 community in 2009, to covering 46 communities in 2015, and 91 communities in 2016. Altogether 70 state departments, foreign enterprises, schools and industries have been provided training, consultation and directions through this program (NGO4 n.d). In this sense NGO4 has been able to grow out of the community they started in and also their own district, to cover several whole districts in the municipality and have some leverage at the Shanghai Municipality level. However, they have not been able to establish interaction with the national level, and Informant 4 make it clear that they now focus on Shanghai's communities: «Once we make some good results in small communities, then we have opportunities to have stronger influence even over the whole nation. When we do that well in cities, then we will think about the implementation in countries» (Shanghai, 27.04.16). Their vast development in covering communities, as well as having cooperation at municipality level, makes the basis for arguing that NGO3 has been able to undergo a scale shift from sub-district and district level to municipality level.

5.2 Political Opportunity Structure

How does the political context lead to opportunities for the NGOs to shift scale? The puzzle stated earlier: *«similar social mobilization organizations in a similar context should according to structural analyses have the same outcome»*. Since the four cases under comparison have had different outcomes, in despite their similarities, the variables connected to the POS theory will not vary and therefore function as control variables. Because of this, all the NGOs will be compared together in regards of the hypotheses connected to POS. The results will at the end be summarised in Table 1.

5.2.1 Concentration or fragmentation of power

H₁ *Concentration of power is not favourable for NGOs to shift scale.*

The decentralization of the Chinese state described in the history chapter, does not imply that China's local levels have become independent from the centre. The central leadership has compensated for the loss of micro-control by strengthening macro-control through securing access to resources, such as information and technologies that are not available at lower governmental levels (Schwartz 2004, 1). Further, the fact that the centre retains control over appointments, transfers, dismisses or punishments of provincial leaders, strengthens the argument that the Chinese government still is a top-down system. More specifically in the environmental protection domain, the central government holds the responsibility of developing laws and policies, while the implementation is made in lower levels. As Informant 3 states: «in China, it is always like the lower level follows the higher level» (Shanghai, 23.02.16). This indicates that the power is highly concentrated in the top leadership. Since, according to the informants, none of the compared NGOs have access or interaction with officials at the national level (Informant 3 Shanghai, 23.02.16; Informant 4 Shanghai, 23.02.16; Informant 6, Shanghai, 23.02.16; Informant 9, 02.03.16) In sum, one might assume that the centralised Chinese system is not favourable for NGOs to shift scale, but contradictory to the hypothesis, NGO1 and NGO4 have been able to shift scale. However, since the four cases are situated in the same political context, concentration of power does not vary between them. The concentration of power in the Chinese political system, can therefore not explain the different outcome of the cases.

5.2.2 Regime openness and capacity

H₂ *Being a high capacity autocratic regime has a negative effect on the NGOs possibility to shift scale.*

Despite the variation in regime distinction, China mostly comes out as a nondemocratic, authoritarian regime, and according to Tilly (2006, 27) a high-capacity nondemocratic regime. As already discussed, the literature states that lacking

freedoms such as freedom of expression and assembly is not favourable for NGO activity or development, and the Chinese government has earlier shown its capability and willingness to hinder and shutdown mobilizations, associations and unions (Saich 2011, 81-83, Howell 2012, 273). As shown in the history and context chapter, the Chinese state is controlling and co-opting NGOs through extensive regulations, connected to registration and funding, as well as monitoring through responsible governmental agencies. Existing laws that forbids NGOs to have nationwide membership base and cross-regional NGO alliances, also hinders mobilizing and growth. Despite the arguments of this having negative effects on NGOs in regards of shifting scale, the instance is the same as above: The four cases are situated in the same political context. The variable therefore does not vary and cannot be an explanation for the cases' different outcomes.

5.2.3 Elite allies and political alignments

H₃ *Elite allies and instability of political alignments are favourable for the NGOs opportunity to shift scale.*

Both NGO2 and NGO3 state that they do not have any personal relations or alliances inside governmental agents at any level (Informant 3, Shanghai, 23.02.16; Informant 9, Beijing, 02.03.16). NGO1 and NGO4, on the other hand, say that they have personal relationship with governmental officials in Shanghai's districts, and that this has helped them in the registration process (Informant 6, Shanghai, 23.02.16; Informant 4, Shanghai, 23.02.16). They both believe that having these kind of relationships inside the governmental system is an advantage, but at the same time they express that their communication strength with the governmental agents is still very low. Also, even though NGO1 and NGO4 have some allies at the local level, they do not have this at a higher level of government and due to the above discussion of centralized power in China, one cannot say that any of the compared NGOs have strong elite allies, neither political nor economic. Furthermore, as the history chapter has shown, politicians in China are not so in favour of an independent civil society, or independent organizations. Raising this issue during the interview, Informant 6 from NGO1 emphasized the differences between the «Western» and the Chinese political

context: «in [Western] concept, governments should support NGOs to develop, through funding, tax or other conveniences. But actually, in China, government doesn't like NGOs very much» (Shanghai, 23.02.16). He elaborates that: «[f]or most of officers, keeping the present development smooth and steady is the best way to choose. So when we want something changed, most of them, and a few of them who hate us, will say no to us. Only a few of them who support us will encourage us. So the resistance is much stronger than the supportiveness» (Informant 6, Shanghai, 23.02.16). The political alignments are further highly stable as China is a one-party regime where power does not alternate. In this way, while the GONGOs have many allies because of their governmental nature, the more independent NGOs, such as our compared cases, have none or very few allies in the governmental system. Since there is no variance, this also cannot be an explanation for the varying outcomes.

Table 2) Structural variables of NGO1 and NGO2, NGO3 and NGO4

Cases	Concentration of power (H_1)	Regime type (H_2)	Elite allies and alignments (H_3)	Achieved scale shift (Y)
NGO1	High concentration	High capacity autocratic	None elite allies and stable alignments	YES
NGO2	High concentration	High capacity autocratic	None elite allies and stable alignments	NO
NGO3	High concentration	High capacity autocratic	None elite allies and stable alignments	NO
NGO4	High concentration	High capacity autocratic	None elite allies and stable alignments	YES

5.3 The Strategic Approach

How do the NGO's interaction, networks and skills create opportunities for the NGOs to shift scale? Strategic considerations shape the NGO's opportunities and mobilization structures and therefore also their possibility to shift scale. The next group of hypotheses will examine the strategic decisions NGOs are facing in interaction with authorities, other organizations and how they use skilled and experienced actors in creation of strategies for interactions and framing.

5.3.1 Strategy towards government

H₄ *NGOs that actively seek contacts among and cooperation with governmental agents have a greater possibility to shift scale.*

NGO1 explains that they have communication with all levels of government, however more seldom at national level (Informant 6, Shanghai, 23.02.16). Cooperation, on the other hand, is mostly limited to the local level. This is not that surprising since most of the environmental protection responsibilities are given to the local governmental level, and it is here regulations and implementations are made. The cooperation mainly consists of getting funding for the activities and reporting, but they also corporate on a coastal clean-up project. In asking about NGO1s strategy towards the government, Informant 6 (Shanghai, 23.02.16) is clear: «Firstly, we will communicate with government more forwardly to let them know what we have done because knowing more will reduce more misunderstandings. Secondly, we need to find more cooperation with them and higher levels, like Shanghai and central, because if the level is higher, we can get more recognized in their system». This is due to the Chinese governmental structure where the lower levels of government follow the top levels guidance. Informant 6 emphasizes that the communication is not too frequent, and further that their communication strength is very low: «Theoretically speaking, protecting the ocean is very important. But the beach clean up is not a matter for them [the government] at present. They need to manage more bigger things» (Informant 6, Shanghai, 23.02.16). Because of this, the Shanghai officers do not have the motivation to get in touch with them, but this hasn't stop NGO1 in reaching out to governmental officials, not just for environmental protection issues, but also in effort to influence policies regarding social organizations. Especially the policy regarding that NGOs need to pay taxes for donations, and NGO1 has taken this issue to Shanghai officers in order to push for policy change (Informant 6, Shanghai, 23.02.16).

Turning to NGO2, also they underline that they have very little communications with governmental agents, and in comparison to NOG1 seemingly much less. At the moment NGO2 also does not have any cooperation or receive funding from governmental agents, and Informant 9 only refers to one governmental cooperated project some years ago. When asked why their communication and

cooperation with the government is so rare, Informant 9 (Beijing, 02.03.16) answer that they have a focus towards engaging youth, rather than doing advocacy directed towards the government. Informant 9 however believes that having a closer government relationship would help NGO2 grow, and they have therefore just applied for cooperation. This is due to their impression that it is easier to get funding from governmental agents, than from foreign funds. However, Informant 9 has some concerns: «I don't think it is easy to do the governmental projects because they are strict and have a lot of things, and has a lot of rules» (Beijing, 02.03.16). However, NGO2 need more access to resources in able to create activities and survive: «We want to get more foundation from the government, and we will do more things, we will focus more on our goal, to help youth growth in environmental practice and so we will have more work on the students and to build a good network for the students and the NGOs» (Beijing, 02.03.16).

In sum, NGO1 have clear strategies and goals in regards of governmental cooperation. They further want to increase the interaction in able to influence policies higher up in the system. NGO2, on the other hand has not had a strategy of reaching out to the governmental agents, but as it now lacks resources, they are starting to consider the government as a possible funding source.

Turning to our comparison of NGO3 and NGO4 we can also observe some differences in strategies towards governmental agents. NGO3 mostly cooperate with sub-district and community committee at the local level. Informant 3 (Shanghai, 23.02.16) explains that they do not have any interaction with municipality or national level except from registration and reporting. When asked about if they have any strategies towards the government Informant 3 replies: «Not too much, because we only need to talk to the sub district office. And if they said OK, then the community committee would follow their mind» (Shanghai, 23.02.16). Their local focus is due to their activities targeting the community level, but also their strength: «after you are registered, you mainly develop your activities just in this place. That's to say, you mainly talk to the nearest sub-district office then. As to Shanghai municipality, they are in charge of bigger things. For us, we are too small and our activities cannot cover the whole city. It is impossible for us now». Informant 3 however believes that to be able to grow as a NGO «one key factor is whether they have some relationships with government». However, as she explains, their greatest challenge in the interaction «is

whether we can get recognition from the government» (Shanghai, 23.02.16) and they have not made any clear strategies in how to acquire this recognition.

Also NGO4 cooperate mostly with the local level, but a difference is that NGO4 more targets the district government, and also several districts in Shanghai. «Our first case [garbage classification program] in Shanghai was reported to Shanghai municipality and then it was listed as one module of three modules in Shanghai», Informant 4 (Shanghai 23.02.16) explains. At this moment the garbage classification model has been implemented in four whole districts in Shanghai, and NGO4 is looking for possibilities in expanding to more districts. When convincing the district governments, NGO4 emphasize the short-time results from previous programs. As Informant 4 explains: «we had some successful results, so the government will say "Oh yeah you can do this". I think this is our strategy» (Shanghai 27.04.16). When further asked about challenges in their governmental interaction, Informant 4 (Shanghai 23.02.16) does not believe that there are any, since they already have cooperation and some influence in the district.

Summing up, NGO3 does not have a clear strategy towards any governmental level, except from some interaction with sub-districts about their already established projects. NGO4 however have expanded their governmental cooperation, and are seeking to expand it even more. Their goal is to cover the entirety Shanghai, and their strategy is to reach out to districts and convince them by their successful results.

5.3.2 Building coalitions and networks with other organizations

H₅ NGOs that reach out to other organizations and networks for cooperation and resources have a greater chance of shifting scale.

NGO1 is part of an extensive international network of maritime protection and cleaning and participate in conferences outside of China. Trough such networks and forums they have established continuous contact with organizations other places in Asia, such as Japan and Korea (NGO1 n.d.). In addition, they have been establishing networks and exchanging experience with European NGOs through exchange programs (EU-China NPO 2015). Domestically they assist other coastal organizations in carrying out clean-up activities, and as mentioned they are building a national co-

work network and are assembling GONGOS, NGOs, academics and media in discussion and forums. Cleanings are often organized trough corporate partners, and NGO1 is therefore working closely with the corporate sector to access funding and volunteers (NGO1 2011a; NGO1 2011b).

NGO2 does not have the same capacity as NGO1 in making platforms and forums to gather NGOs, but they participate in network, and have cooperation, with other domestic ENGOs. Informant 9 and Informant 10 (Beijing, 29.04.16) explain that NGO2 have cooperation with approximately 15 local NGOs, as well as a few national NGOs, regarding information sharing. Further they work more closely with a national Beijing based NGO, with whom they cooperate on a student-training project, and get research assistance. They have not reach out to any international NGOs or networks.

In sum, NGO1 have, to a greater degree than NGO2 made, a strategy of reaching out to domestic and international NGOs in order to create networks and establish cooperation.

In terms of cooperation, NGO3 and NGO4 cooperate closely with each other, because of the fact that NGO4 grew out of NGO3. Because of the close cooperation NGO4 have been able to benefit from NGO3's volunteers (Informant 4, Shanghai 27.04.16). This has helped NGO4 in having resources from day one, while NGO3 in many ways had to build up their volunteer base by themselves. Both also have some cooperation with other ENGOs in Shanghai, but NGO4 have in addition participated in exchange and established cooperation with NGOs outside of China. Informant 4 in NGO4 strongly believes that Chinese NGOs cooperating and creating networks is an important prerequisite for promoting environmental protection action in whole China: «[if] we do that well in our own place first, then we support each other and build an action network, becoming bigger and stronger to influence the government. Because China is too large, one person could nothing with his own strength» (23.02.26). In this way NGO4 is seeking other organizations to establish cooperation outside of their own district and region.

In sum, NGO4's strong belief in creating networks as an important factor for gaining advocacy strength has been a motivational factor for them to seek more cooperation outside of their district. NGO3 has however limited their organizational cooperation to other NGOs within their district.

5.3.3 Using strategies developed by experienced actors

H₆ *NGOs with experienced actors using strategic tactics have greater chance of shifting scale.*

As already explained in the theoretical chapter, skilled actors possess a highly developed cognitive capacity for reading people and environments, framing lines of action, and mobilizing people through these frames. They are able to build political coalitions and mobilize support from other groups (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, 7). NGO1s leader have long background as volunteer in Shanghai's civil society and is part of the first generation of NGO leaders in Shanghai. Originally he and the other founders meant to build an organization focusing on CSR, but since they already had some advantages in marine litter cleaning they made this as their focus. Informant 6 explains his thoughts: «We need to improve ourselves on base of our advantages rather than shortcomings» (Shanghai, 23.02.16). Their interest in CSR however became important in recruiting companies to their cleanings. In addition to target companies, staffs also work strategically towards governmental agents. When NGO1 first tried to register at a Shanghai municipality level agency it got rejected because of «unfamiliarity». However, by using personal contact in other governmental agencies they were able to meet the director of the former agency and establish communication. NGO1 have since worked strategically towards this bureau through other agents and public meetings, to explore possibilities for cooperation (NGO1. n.d.).

NGO2 does not have as thoroughly prepared strategies in cooperation, mobilization and framing. This can be due to their struggle with shifting leadership, and high draft of employees. In the first fifteen years, the NGO2's leader position rotated among the student in the student unions, and it was not until 2010 a full time professional leader was established. Informant 9 further explains that one of their greatest challenges is to keep skilled staff for a longer period of time: «people in NGOs they flow very quickly. They will go to other NGOs because our salary is not so good, and is hard to survive in Beijing, so people are not so stable here […] Few people stay for a long time in this organization and a lot of things maybe have changed» (Beijing, 02.03.16). She further explains that when valuable skilled staffers leave, their abilities and connections follow them to the new work place: «[…] a lot of

resources are taken away when people left this organisation» (Beijing, 02.03.16).
Informant 9 believes this is a great obstacle for the NGOs possibility for expanding.
The fact that the staffs do not have good insight in for example where to get funding
or how to test pollution increases the NGOs need for professional support. Informant
9 believes that if they had skilled people working in the NGO for a longer time they
could be focusing more directly on environmental protection and «maybe we would
do things to influence policy, it's hard to say. Because now we are also on the
survival line and we should first survive and to do more things. When I came to this
organisation it's really strange, I had the same curiosity as you why a so old
organisation still like young organisation» (Informant 9, Beijing, 02.03.16). Informant
10, also from NGO2, adds that the low volunteer base is another challenge «[…] we
don't have enough volunteers to do the labour work needed to expand […] Out of the
100 people we train maybe one or two will further work – it's too small» (Beijing,
29.04.16). Moreover, Informant 9 adds: the «[v]olunteers now is youngsters, students
at schools, and actually they don't have much experience», while the older more
experienced volunteers have left, (Beijing, 29.04.16).

On this variable we see great differences between NGO1 and NGO2. NGO1's
leader and staffs seem to have clear strategies in how to access resources, information
and experience through networks with other NGOs and governmental agents. NGO2
on the other hand, lack a stable and experienced staff, and therefore also the
knowledge to make such strategies.

There are also differences in strategies between NGO3 and NGO4. NGO3 was
founded and built by university law graduate students, although many of these have
moved further to other organizations and occupations (NGO3 2010a; NGO3 2010b;
NGO3 2015a). NGO3 did not at that time, and still does not have a clear outspoken
goal. Informant 3 explains that they: «[…] just have like a vision, which is to help the
vulnerable groups in community» (Shanghai 23.02.16). Including environmental
protection in this vision, NGO3 decided to focus on what they believed was a major
problem for the life in the city, namely public garbage. When this program did not get
prominent, the group now called NGO4, left NGO3 and decided to cannel all its focus
to Shanghai's garbage problem: «Because garbage classification had been a popular
topic in China for a long time, but nobody had managed to do it. So we just thought
we could make it the first successful case in China», Informant 4 (Shanghai, 23.02.26)

explains. This mean that the group believed that this goal was not possible inside NGO3, and that creating a NGO for itself, that only focused on the garbage problem, and not the community itself would increase the chance of succeeding. NGO3 further lost a resourceful and motivated group when the group that established NGO4 in 2009, left the organization. NGO4's directors and staff all have university degrees from within and outside of China. Many of them have been in the NGO since their registration four years ago. The staff have also long records of organizational work, as well as experience in various occupations (NGO4 n.d.). Their strategy has been to focus on garbage classification and develop a model that can be implemented in communities through community committees. When registering the organization, NGO4s staff turned to their governmental connections: «[…] we had advantage, and we know some government, they will help us to quickly get legal» Informant 4 says characterizing their registration process as easy (Shanghai 23.02.16).

Based on this we find that the founders and leaders of NGO3 have not been able to make clear and oriented strategies. This led the group now NGO4 to part from the organization. NGO4 has further been able to take advantage of NGO3's volunteers and experience, and build a niche that focus on a clear goal and uses thoroughly prepared strategies and networks to reach their goal.

Table 3) Strategic variables of NGO1 and NGO2, NGO3 and NGO4

Cases	Strategy towards government (H_4)	NGO networking and cooperation (H_5)	Using strategies developed by experienced actors (H_6)	Achieved scale shift (Y)
NGO1	Seeking communication and cooperation	Part of a larger international network of NGOs	Skilled actors making strategies	YES
NGO2	Lacking strategies towards government	Some cooperation with domestic NGOs	High staff flow, and limited experience	NO
NGO3	Lacking strategies towards government	Some cooperation with domestic NGOs	Unclear goal and lack of overall strategy	NO
NGO4	Seeking communication and cooperation	Cooperation with domestic and foreign NGOs	Skilled actors making strategies	YES

5.4 Cultural framing

How does the way NGOs identify the problems and the scope of the problems affect their opportunities to shift scale? To what degree do they have to propose a solution to the problem? And what norms and values mobilize people? Given that framing is a conscious and often strategic act of social construction, it offers important insight to how actors mobilize. Framing the society's problems and the NGO's way of solving these problems can be important for the mobilization, attracting sponsors and cooperation, and therefore also the NGOs opportunity to shift scale. By examining the following hypotheses, we will find if this is the situation in the four selected cases.

5.4.1. Problem identification and range

H7 *NGOs whose frames include a larger range of problems will have greater chance of shifting scale.*

In relation to the wider movement of environmentalism, NGO1 have chosen to focus on environmental protection and conservation of the ocean and other water resources. The course of action that they present is a series of initiatives connected to garbage cleaning, classification, monitoring and arising public awareness of protection (China Development Brief n.d. a). The problem is hence narrowed down to cover marine environment issues, and their framing is therefore not as wide as NGO2's.

By encouraging youths to promote energy conservation, protect rivers, manner recycling, and bring attention to illegal wildlife and climate change, NGO2 problematize a large range of problems connected to environmentalism (Global Greengrants Fund 2009). The course of action that they present is spreading awareness and information through fieldtrips, workshops and activities such as watching movies. Through these activities they raise the attention to water quality, planting organic crops and picking litter. In this way their frames cover numerous diverse issues, and according to the hypothesis they can therefore potentially address many social groups. However contradictory to the hypothesis, NGO1 have been able to mobilize and shift scale, while NGO2 have not.

The same situation can be said about NGO3 and NGO4. NGO3 frames that they want to help vulnerable groups in the community, this includes giving legal service, educating migrant children and promoting environmental protection. Though focusing on the community as a unit, they raise a wide range of issues that can be related to people in communities all over China. According to the hypothesis they therefore should appeal to many different social groups. However similar to NGO2, this is not the situation.

While parting from NGO3, NGO4's founders choose to limit their focus to only one of the problems that NGO3 raises. Choosing environmental protection, and further garbage classification. Thereby NGO4 narrowed rather than expanded the frame. NGO4 has further been able to channel their resources to develop a concrete garbage classification program that has been successful in covering several districts, in contrast to NGO3 who mostly operate in its own district. This is in contrast to the hypothesis that claims that the wider range of problems covered by the frame, the wider range of social groups one attract. The difference between the cases in problem identification and range related to H_7 can therefore not explain why NGO4 has shifted scale, or why NGO3 has not. It is however interesting to see that the situation is contradictory, and there may therefore be some other factors connected to this.

5.4.2 Proposing solutions

H_8 The closer the NGOs framing comes to giving solutions to the defined problems, as well as usable and appropriate strategies to reach the solutions, the higher the possibility of shifting scale.

Citizens and companies should clean; researchers should monitor; governmental agents should support the established projects; and media, authorities and organizations should get together in discussions and find solutions to reduce marine pollution. The solutions presented by NGO1 are more or less clear and directed towards the goal of securing a clean blue ocean. The cleanings are practical, appropriate and easily accessed for the public who is targeted.

NGO2 on the other hand has been focusing more on spreading information and awareness than actually proposing solutions to environmental issues. As

Informant 9 explains: «we normally organize the activities to let people know the environment, and we are not good at teaching them how to solve those environment problems» (29.04.16). During their fieldtrips they pick some litter or plant some organic crops, but in light of the above discussion of problem identification, they propose a much larger range of problems than they are able to give solutions to.

When proposing solutions to the problem the NGOs rise, NGO1 provide clear and manageable actions to the public. NGO2 however have been focusing more on environmental awareness, and have not to the same degree proposed a solution to how the public can change the environmental situation.

Through promoting garbage classification, both NGO3 and NGO4 have somewhat the same solution in tackling the problem of garbage waste. However, while NGO3 is promoting recycling through spreading information and awareness, NGO4 has actively trained neighbourhood committees and implemented a garbage classification program directly in the communities. NGO3's harmful waste exchange is however limited to a specific time and location, and people therefore have to actively seek out the organization, or wait for them to show up somewhere close by. NGO4's solution can therefore be said to be much closer and constant to the public than NGO3's solution. This is in line with the hypothesis, arguing that the closer the NGOs framing comes to giving solutions and appropriate strategies to the defined problems, the better is the possibility for scale shift.

5.4.3 Motivational framing

H9 *The prospect of shifting scale increases if the NGO's framing contains motivational elements appealing to moral norms.*

Talking about their mission, NGO1 focus on the water and ocean as the source of life not only affecting the life in the ocean but also people's life. In recruiting people to their clean-up events, NGO1 focus on their successful results, how much that have been gathered, and using language that praises the volunteers for their work. They also appeal to social values as they highlight the great feeling you get after such a cleaning. Sometimes they also picture the volunteers as saviours by emphasizing that

animals, such as birds and turtles, survive because on these activities (NGO1 2011a; NGO1 2011b; NGO1 2012). The clean-up events in itself are also promoting a change in people's behaviour by focusing on the problem of littering. As discussed earlier, NGO2s framing covers a wider range of issues than NGO1. However even though the frames range from the global to the local, they are in the same way as NGO1 connected to environmental protection. NGO2 uses arguments such as «it is better to see once than to hear a hundred times» (百闻不如一见, bǎi wén bùrú yī jiàn), in order to attract participants to their fieldtrips. NGO2 focus mostly on learning about the environment and nature, and they believe that through increasing youth's awareness they will affect youth's everyday life. For example, by expressing that people living in Beijing should want to know where their drinking water comes from they appeal to people's conscious to mobilize for safeguarding the surroundings of the city's water source. Through their fieldtrips they further encourage the growing of organic crops and picking litter. In this way NGO2 is targeting both the conscious of people as well as their social norms and behaviour, in a similar way as NGO1. Therefore, one may say that both NGOs present motivational factors connected to environmental protection, and through their activities appeal to social norms and behaviour.

There are also similarities in NGO3 and NGO4 regarding motivational framing. Informant 4 argues that neither organizations nor the government have been very successful in motivating Chinese people to recycle garbage: «one problem of doing garbage classification in China is that even though the government has spent much money and done propaganda many times, there are still few people doing it» (23.02.16). The fact that the government has tried, but not succeeded in persuading people one would assume makes them especially welcoming towards NGOs that are trying to convince the Chinese people to recycle. As a motivational factor NGO3 target the family. They appeal to family values, and frame their message of recycling as improving the family life (NGO3 2015). They further give away small gifts in exchange for the harmful waste people bring to them. NGO4 on the other hand, does not directly communicate with the residents. The communication goes indirectly through the community committee, who is trained by NGO4, and then further instructs and encourages the residents. By using the community committee, NGO4

might not need to use the time and energy of building trust among the residents. If the committee already have a high level of trust among the residents it can be an important source of legitimacy. However, their programs focus on spreading, information, creating awareness, and making the people responsible for their own garbage. In this way they are as the previous discussed NGOs also pushing for a change in people's behaviour, and appealing to public norms and values of recycling and thus protecting the environment.

In sum, similar to NGO1 and NGO2, NGO3 and NGO4 have many of the same motivational frames. NGO3 and NGO4 target the same people when appealing to the public values of recycling, and through their activities and programs they are encourageing people to change behaviour when it comes to garbage classification.

Table 4) Framing variables of NGO1 and NGO2, NGO3 and NGO3

Cases	Problem identification and range (H$_7$)	Proposing solutions (H$_8$)	Motivational framing (H$_9$)	Achieved scale shift (Y)
NGO1	Narrow problem identification	Clear solution	Targets public values and behaviour	YES
NGO2	Large range of problems	No clear solution	Targets public values and behaviour	NO
NGO3	Large range of problems	No clear solution	Targets public values and behaviour	NO
NGO4	Narrow problem identification	Clear solution	Targets public values and behaviour	YES

5.5 Results

By carefully analysing the four cases against each hypothesis while comparing them in pairs, we have been able to discover some useful differences between the cases. Through summarizing the results we will be able to answer the question of *why we can observe difference in scale shift between similar organizations that are active in the same authoritarian context.* Table 5 summarizes the findings.

Table 5) Summery of variables and findings

Cases	Concentration of power (H_1)	Regime type (H_2)	Elite allies and alignments (H_3)	Strategy towards government (H_4)	NGO networking and cooperation (H_5)	Using strategies by experienced actors (H_6)	Problem identification and range (H_7)	Proposing solutions (H_8)	Motivational framing (H_9)	Achieved scale shift (Y)
NGO 1	High concentration	High capacity autocratic	No elite allies, and stable alignments	Seeking cooperation	Part of a larger international network of NGOs	Skilled actors making strategies	Narrow	Clear solution	Targets public values and behaviour	YES
NGO 2	High concentration	High capacity autocratic	No elite allies, and stable alignments	Lacking strategies	Some cooperation with domestic NGOs	High staff flow, and limited experience	Large	No clear solution	Targets public values and behaviour	NO
NGO 3	High concentration	High capacity autocratic	No elite allies, and stable alignments	Lacking strategies	Some cooperation with domestic NGOs	Unclear goal and lack of overall strategy	Large	No clear solution	Targets public values and behaviour	NO
NGO 4	High concentration	High capacity autocratic	No elite allies, and stable alignments	Seeking cooperation	Cooperation with domestic and foreign NGOs	Skilled actors making strategies	Narrow	Clear solution	Targets public values and behaviour	YES

Even tough concentration of power arguably does not favour scale shift (H_1), and therefore also the centralised Chinese system, NGO1 and NGO4 have been able to shift scale. Nevertheless, the four cases are situated in the same political context, and concentration of power does not vary between them. The variable can therefore not explain the different outcome of the cases. The same account for the second variable connected to regime type (H_2) as with the previous. Since the Chinese regime is a high capacity autocratic regime, and the four cases are situated in the same political context, the variable cannot explain the different outcomes of the cases. As Table 6 display, also the third variable of elite allies and political alignments (H_3) does not differentiate between the cases. «Resistance is much stronger than the supportiveness» as Informant 6 explain, and the NGO's therefore lack elite allies. Political alignments are further highly stable and therefore do not create opportunities for the NGOs to get possible other allies in power. Since there is no change or difference between the cases, the variable, as the previous cannot explain the difference in outcomes. Summing up the structural variables, none of them are able to explain the difference of outcome in the compared cases, as indicated in the puzzle.

Turning to the group of strategic variables we however find some variation and explanations. In regards to the fourth variable of having a governmental strategy (H_4), NGO2 and NGO3 have not been actively seeking interaction with governmental agents. NGO1 and NGO4, on the other hand, have both planned strategies of seeking communication and cooperation with different governmental agents, and preferably at higher levels. The variable of making or not making a governmental strategy, therefore seem to have some explanation value among the cases. In regards of the fifth variable of reaching out to other organizations and networks for cooperation and resources (H_5) both NGO1 and NGO4 have a strong belief in creating networks as an important factor for gaining advocacy strength. As the analysis also display, they have to a higher degree than NGO2 and NGO3, reached out to domestic and international NGOs in order to create networks and establish cooperation. Reaching out to other organizations and networks therefore seem to be able to explain why NGO1 and NGO4 have been able to shift scale, while NGO2 and NGO3 have not. Sixth, we have analysed the experiences of actors and their use of strategic tactics (H_6). The analysis demonstrates that both NGO1's and NGO4's leaders and staffs have clear strategies in how to access resources, information and experience through networks with other NGOs and governmental agents. This is more absence in NGO2 and NGO3, and

NGO2 however express that one of their greatest challenges is having a stable and experienced staff. Having experienced actors using strategic tactics may therefore seem to have had an effect on the difference between the NGO's that shifted scale and those who did not. Summing up the factors of strategic choices, we can say that having strategies towards the authorities and other organizations, especially international organizations, as well as having experienced and skilled actors that make and carry out these strategies can explain why NGO1 and NGO4 have been able to shift scale while NGO2 and NGO3 have not.

Turning to the last group of variables, connected to framing, the analysis displays some interesting findings. Contradictory to the hypothesis that the NGOs that include a large range of problems will have greater chance of shifting scale (H_7), NGO2 and NGO3 have not shifted scale. However, NGO1 and NGO4 have been able to channel their resources and experience in creating successful programs in their niches, and therefore been able to shift scale. This means that the wide framing that H_7 emphasis can not explain the outcome of the cases in terms of scale shift. The analysis of the second framing variable, in terms of promoting solutions, as well as appropriate strategies to reach the solutions (H_8), can however explain the contradictory finding of H_7. The analysis displays that NGO1 and NGO4 provide well-defined and manageable actions, in line with their focus, and near the public. Though NGO2 and NGO3 identify a wider range of problems, they are however not able to promote a well-defined strategy to solve these problems. H_8, and also H_6, may therefore be an explanation for why H_7 could not explain the outcome: that NGO2 and NGO3 do not have the capacity or experience to cover the wide range of problems they frame. Examining the last variable, the motivational elements the NGOs use in order to attract and mobilize the public (H_9), all the four NGOs have some kind of motivational framing that refers to people and animal's health and living. Through their framing and actions they target public values and also encourage change in behaviour. Since motivational framing does not vary much between the cases it can therefore not explain the difference in the outcome.

The results are therefore, as presented in Table 5, that the structural factors connected to H_1, H_2 and H_3, cannot explain the different outcomes in the cases. The strategically variables in relation to H_4, H_5 and H_6 can explain the difference in the outcome. While in terms of framing, the variable connected to H_8 can explain the difference, while H_7 and H_9 cannot. The answer to *why we can observe difference in*

scale shift between similar organizations that are active in the same authoritarian context, is in this study that some NGOs have experienced actors that make strategic choices in terms of cooperation with authorities and other organizations, as well as suggesting clearly defined strategies to solve the problems they identify. Due to the choice of paired comparison we can only say that this accounts for these four cases, however taking a step back to look at the rest of the cases in the sample, we are able to explore to what degree these findings might relate or not to other cases.

6. Discussion

Are there any possible explanatory variables that we might have missed in the comparison? How well are the findings supported or contradicted by examining the cases from the rest of the sample? And what does this paired comparison between ENGOs in China say for social movement studies in general? This chapter will try to answer these questions one by one. First, we need to consider if there might be other explanatory variables that have not been covered by the hypotheses and the analysis. Next, a discussion of the findings from the analysis related to the rest of the ENGOs in the sample, as well as literature on Chinese NGOs, will show how robust these findings are in answering the research question the Chinese setting. Last, the question of what the findings in this study would say for social movement studies in general will be raised and discussed.

6.1 Have we missed any possible explanation factors?

The study has taken an organizational approach in examining factors related to political opportunity structures, strategic choices, and framing, that may have led NGOs to shift scale. However there might be some other explanatory variables that are not included by the nine hypotheses. (Wu 2013, 91) found that location, issue area, age, and having some form of registration, were statistically significant predictors of receiving financial support from foundations. Even though all the chosen organizations problematize some aspects of environmentalism, their issues range from garbage classification to marine protection. Informant 16, from a national Beijing

based NGO express that the government's prioritization can affect what projects they are more supportive of. As she explains, at the moment «the central government is emphasising on eco system services, so they would like to do some kind of projects like that» (Beijing 07.03.16). That some issues receive more support, while others are more sensitive, can have influence on governmental relations. Informant 17, also from a national Beijing-based NGO explain: «I think for last year, air pollution was very sensitive, because our colleague went a lot of times to the police». However, none of the compared NGOs topics are especially sensitive, and in terms of NGO3 and NGO4 they both focus on garbage classification in Shanghai, so the difference should be minimal. NGO1 and NGO2 deals however with different issues, they also operate in different cities and consequently interact with different local governments. This may affect their governmental relationship. Another approach to studying NGOs is a more state centric approach. As this study only has been focusing on the organization's views, the government's attitudes and strategies may be able to explain more how governmental strategies varies in regards of place and issue.

In regards of age, older groups are supposedly more likely to receive governmental funding Spires, Tao, and Chan (2014, 5). However, this is not the situation in the paired comparison, as NGO2 and NGO3 are older than NGO1 and NGO4. Registration however may have had some impact on NGO2, since they only required legal status by registration last year. Having some form of registration increases the likelihood of receiving money from both Chinese and foreign foundations, and giving the political sensitivity of sponsoring a NGO that lacks official governmental approval, this is not surprising (Spires, Tao, and Chan 2014, 5). Regional differences, governmental priorities and registration status may therefore be other possible explanatory factors of why NGO1 have shifted scale and NGO2 not.

6.2 To what extent does the findings travel?

The analysis demonstrated that some NGOs are able to shift scale despite the power of concentration, being situated in a high-capacity authoritarian regime, and having no elite allies and stable alignments. As the four cases were situated in the same political context, but still showed differences in the outcome of scale shift, the thesis argues that macro structural factors are not sufficient in explaining why organized

contentious politics shift scale. More interesting in these cases are the micro level factors that differentiate between the cases, and it is for this reason that we turn to the further discussion.

6.2.1 «We cannot let them think that we're against them»

The analysis found that the NGOs that had strategies of seeking contacts and cooperation with governmental agents shifted scale. Does this mean that governmental cooperation is a prerequisite for NGOs in China to shift scale? Some of the smaller NGOs in the sample believe this (e.g. Informant 3, Informant 9, Informant 11 and informant 12). Informant 3 (Shanghai 23.02.16) for example, considers personal relations with governmental actors a key factor for the development of some NGOs. She argues that a nationwide Beijing-based NGO developed very well because the founder had close governmental ties and was very powerful. The organization that Informant 3 is talking about, NGO12, is however stating that the organizations are trying to minimalize governmental cooperation and funding. «Maybe if you get some money from the government you have to listen to the government but we don't want to listen to the government», Informant 17 (Beijing, 11.03.16) explains. She elaborates that this is because they have different perspectives on how to handle the issues: «[…] you know we have different methods and different ways, the government program is not always the way we […] want to do it» (Beijing, 11.03.16). The two different perspectives of NGO3 and NGO12 are reflected in Hsu and Jiang's (Spires, Tao, and Chan 2014) study. They found that NGOs had two different orientations concerning cooperation with the state. Some viewed the state as the best source of resources for their organization, while others saw state involvement as possibly leading to risky tangles and obstacles. Consequently, the first group were seeking alliances with governmental actors in order to access state resources, exemplified with NGO2 and NGO3. While the second group developed resource strategies that avoided state attention as much as possible, exemplified by NGO12, but also NGO13.

NGO13 is a Beijing-based NGO who supports environmental activists in doing grassroots activism. As this sometimes is in conflict with the government, NGO13s strategy is to keep a low profile. Therefore, instead of being dependent on

governmental resources, they utilise Internet-based crowdfunding as resource strategy (Informant 20, Beijing, 06.05.16). In regards of NGO12, the organization has already gone through a process of scale shift, and as explained does now apply a resource strategy that enables them to be less dependent on governmental resources. Informant 17 still underlines that as a NGO in China, «we can't make the strategy of not talking with the government at all, because in China the government is always [top down]» (Beijing, 11.03.16). She raises an issue that Informant 11 (Beijing, 04.03.16) confirm: «We cannot let them think that we're against them». None of the NGOs in the sample expresses a hostile approach to the government. As Informant 12 explains, if their strategy had been confrontational «we couldn't do anything» (Beijing, 04.03.16). This is also emphasized in the literature. (2015, 110) in her study of legitimizing strategies of Chinese labour NGOs, argue that grassroots NGOs survival and development are not a question of establishing autonomy and avoiding state control, but rather about gaining legitimacy: «In contrast to other social institutions, Chinese NGOs cannot rely on a cognitive taken-for-grandness, but must actively legitimize their identity and actions in the face of official and public distrust concerning who they are» Gleiss (2014). Similar to this, Hildebrandt (Gleiss 2014, 363) finds that organizational leaders believe that registration increases independence. According to him, NGOs do not see strong governmental relations as necessarily a good thing, but rather crucial for viability as they try to avoid anything that might make the government unhappy. Informant 17 underlines this when stating: «We cannot say "no". "No" for the government, those words are not good» (Beijing, 11.03.16).

This discussion further relates to the broader theme of «embedded activism», proposed by (2011, 976). The concept captures the apprehensive and interactive relationship between local governmental agencies, contextual factors and NGOs. Ho and Edmonds (2008) emphasize that activists need to adopt a non-confrontational strategy that avoid any hints of organized opposition against the central party state. However, as they and some of the NGOs note, this is much less the case when dealing with local authorities. Informant 12 explains that while policies are made at national and provincial level «[…] district level is kind of experimental field. You can collect data and form your own models and write your report, then you can give to [higher governmental levels]» (Beijing, 04.03.16). So although macro level policies remain vague and out of date, the local authorities have become more diversified and responsive to NGOs Ho and Edmonds (2008, 3). This explains why even the NGOs

that have shifted scale still target local authorities (e.g. NGO1, NGO4, NGO9, NGO10, NGO11 and NGO12).

Data from the rest of the sample, as well as the literature, does therefore not undermine the finding that having a strategy of cooperation towards the government is favourable for NGOs to shift scale. It however emphasizes that NGOs in China need to establish legitimacy, and therefore cannot be confrontational towards the government. The discussion further displays that Chinese NGOs, even though they have shifted scale or not, still largely work with local governments, as there is more room for influence and experimenting at this level. NGO12 has further illustrated that after shifting of scale, one may not be as dependent on governmental cooperation and funding in order to uphold one's scope.

6.1.2 Charismatic leaders builds bridges

The analysis further found that the NGOs that actively reached out to other organizations and networks for cooperation and resources had been able to shift scale. Drawing on the sample, some of the nationwide NGOs are key links in cross-regional networks (e.g. NGO1 and NGO12). NGO12 has what they instead of branches call «member groups» all over China. They emphasize the importance of good relationships between organizations: «We support also our friend NGOs, and also working together, because if you want some activity to influence more people you have to have a loud sound. More NGOs working together is [therefore] very important». This is also emphasized in the literature. «No local NGO is found surviving in complete isolation» (Wu and Chan 2012, 12) states as he finds that networking with peer organizations is crucial to grassroots environmental NGOs in Guangdong and Guangxi. Moreover he elaborates that NGOs have woven extensive inter-organizational networks with international and domestic NGOs, emphasising particular Beijing, Sichuan and Shanghai. Moreover, Wu (2013, 98) emphasize that ENGOs in China have pushed and effectively become an institutional platform for cooperation among government, businesses, communities, media, and international organizations (e.g. NGO1). In addition to gather elites and intellectuals, both NGO8 and NGO12 express that they help smaller, and especially not registered NGOs in receiving funds that they otherwise cannot access due to lack of registration status

(Informant 11, Beijing 04.03.16, Informant 17, Beijing 11.03.16). This also relates to how Chinese NGOs interact with international organizations. Ma (2005, 117) discusses how some Chinese NGOs have received significant funding, up to 85 percent, from international organizations. Moreover he supports NGO8's and NGO12's actors' claims by emphasising that «in some cases, bigger NGOs function as intermediary organizations to channel international funding into smaller local groups» Yang (2005, 57-58). This observation is much in line with the thought of how transnational advocacy networks operate (Yang 2005, 57).

The analysis further demonstrated that the NGOs that had shifted scale, also had leaders and staffs with clear strategies in how to access resources, information and experience through networks with other NGOs and governmental agents. In the literature, (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 12-13) exploring Chinese NGOs in general, and Ma (2005, 122) ENGOs more specific, argues that the major success of many prominent NGOs is due to a forceful leadership of individuals. «In the case of NGOs development in China, we see clearly how the cultural capital possessed by intellectuals has helped the success of pioneering NGOs, and in many cases, how those intellectuals are skilfully trading their expertise, social networks, and social, even political, status in exchange for other forms of capital» Economy (2011, 145-164). In the last decade, some NGOs leaders and employees have gained new skills and knowledge through training programs organized by foreign foundations and NGOs (Ma 2005, 122). This is also the instance in several of the cases from the sample (e.g. NGO4, NGO5, NGO7, NGO8, NGO12), that with enthusiasm talk about their trips to other countries in Asia, Africa, US and Europe, to learn from other NGOs.

«What is striking about the [successful] social organizations […], is their heavy dependence on a strong and charismatic leadership, which can prove problematic in the long run» (Spires 2012) stresses. NGO2 is an example where this has been problematic as there has been little continuation and stability in the leadership. As already mentioned, they expresses that one of their greatest challenges is having a stable and experienced staff. Their concern is also shared with Informant 12 in Beijing-based NGO8: «you find the problems and you provide the solutions, and you want to execute those solutions, but we always lack funding and human recourses» (Beijing 04.03.16). Both further blame competition with other organizations in attraction of human resources, and especially the unfair competition

with GONGOs: «You try to attract human resources. Like people with high education background, but we have to compete with those GONGOs, they have much better salaries and benefit packages» (Beijing 04.03.16). The claim of great resource is supported by Spires' Ho (2001, 914) analysis of organizational funding, which found that less than 6 percent of funding from US foundations went directly to grassroots NGOs. The vast majority, 85 percent, went to governmental-controlled organizations such as GONGOs. There are definitely those institutions and organizations that are set up by the state to attract foreign funding (2011, 316). However, it is important to note that some of these organizations can also play a crucial and positive role in Chinese environmentalism because they already have the governmental connections and resources needed.

6.1.4 Self-censorship through tactical framing

The analysis did not find support for the framing variable of identifying and raising a wide range of problems and issues. However examining the sample there are other cases that can contradict the findings in the analysis, and rather support the hypothesis. NGO11 and NGO12, both national Beijing-based NGOs, cover a wide range of issues through their programs, such as waste management, climate change, environmental education, legal and policy advocacy, and biodiversity and conservation. In contrast to NGO2 and NGO3, they have both shifted scale to become nationwide. However, examining them more closely reveals that they do not experience the same problems as NGO2 and NGO3 in terms of resources and experienced staff. In addition, they also provide quite clearly defined and appropriate strategies to reach solutions to each issue they identify. This indicates that including a wider range of problems potentially can mobilize a wider and more various group of citizens, however as NGO2 and NGO3 demonstrate, the wide framing is not enough alone to shift scale. The success in mobilizing also heavily depends on having experienced and skilled actors in tactically choosing frames that propose clear and practical solutions to the problems that are being raised.

The comparison further demonstrated that the four cases used motivational framing connected to public values and encouraging behavioural change through their framing and actions. The same type of motivational framing can be seen in other

cases in the sample (e.g. NGO7, NGO9, NGO10). Informant 12 explain that in promoting education for migrant children they don't frame the education as a «right», but rather as something that will benefit the stability and growth of society in the long run: «[W]e try to say it's not about human rights, it's about education. We want the kids to go to school, that's it. […] So we're trying to be practical. Not ideological. Yeah, we try to avoid those radical vocabularies, we're trying to avoid those sensitive areas, but we always focus on the problem» (Informant 12, Beijing 04.03.16). This is similar to what Gleiss (2014) found in her study of labour NGOs. She explains that NGOs construct their identity and work, as social, not political in nature, and therefore underlining that they are non-governmental and not anti-governmental organizations. This is also in line with how Ho and Edmonds (2008) argue that there is a «de-politicization of environmental politics» in China. Which is exemplified by the NGOs that focus on promoting environmental awareness through education (e.g. NGO3, NGO8 and NGO9). Even though experience from the East and Central European countries have proven that environmental questions is inseparably linked to politics, environmental activists in China try to avoid any suggestions that political objectives are involved in their frames. Ho and Edmonds (2008) point to three aspects of the way the environmental NGOs frame their non-confrontational strategy. The first is that the activists portray themselves as partners, rather than opponents of the central authorities. Second, they avoid highly sensitive environmental issues such as nuclear energy and agricultural biotechnology. And third, they avoid connotations with broad, popular movements. These characteristics are also reflected in NGO12, who carefully choose what words they pick and use in communication with the public. Informant 17 emphasize that: «we want to push more people to participate […], but «public participation», these words in China are a kind of sensitive words […]. Sometimes if we publish articles in our WeChat with those words it is not allowed» (Beijing 11.03.16). This means that NGO12 rather use self-imposed censorship in their framing, rather than having their message blocked by the authorities. The self-imposed censorship does however not necessarily mean that it limits participation. Ho and Edmonds (2008, 8) argues that the features of non-confrontational strategy does not really hamper environmental activism, but rather enables it. Ordinary people do not want to engage in activities that might upset the government, and frames that are not confrontational may therefore gather a greater number of society groups. The strategic framing through self-imposed censorship thus

allows the NGOs to mobilize rather than being censored. This can be the reason why none of the cases from the paired comparison chose to base their frames on «injustice», «rightfulness» or call for «public participation», words that have strong political meanings, and can be seen as confrontational towards the regime. This might be the reason why they rather focus on promoting public values, as the comparison demonstrated and why environmental NGOs, such as NGO1 and NGO4, are successful in using strategies to gain access to state resources and cooperation, and also mobilize a greater number of the public people through their activities.

In sum, The NGOs leaders and employees have to carefully calculate what elements that will resonate as robustly as possible and thereby draw the highest number of potential recruits as possible. Examples from the sample support the assumption presented in the analysis that framing a broad range of problems is not sufficient by itself for shifting scale. The NGOs also heavily depend on having experienced and skilled actors to tactically choose how to frame and propose clear and practical solutions to the problems that are being raised. When choosing the frames, the actors must also be careful on what arguments and words they draw on in the framing, as for example frames connected to social justice might be censored by the government, and appear intimidating to the public.

6.3 What does this say in general for Social Mobilization Studies?

The analysis and discussion have demonstrated and deliberated why we find difference in that some NGOs have shifted scale, while others have not, despite operating in the same political context. Structural factors such as power of concentration, operating in a high-capacity authoritarian regime, and having no elite allies and stable alignments, are hence insufficient when explaining why some collective actions shift scale. The thesis thus follows the critique of the structural paradigm posed by more recent scholars. The theoretical chapter emphasized the shift scholars have made towards turning originally posed strategic dynamics into static variables. Such as analysing whether certain «frames» are present or not, instead of focusing on «framing» as the strategic process of choices that it is. In this way, the reasoning of the critique is the overemphasis of structural macro factors in studying contentious politics. This study has shown that we also need to take a closer look at

the micro level factors, such as strategic decisions, that differentiate between mobilizations. The collective actors and their strategies of who to cooperate with and how, as well as how to frame the problems and its solutions, makes great difference in some mobilizations. As many of the SMS theories and concepts were developed in western democratic setting, other non-western settings can shed light on the theories and evaluate the usefulness of the concepts. It is only in later years that the field of social mobilization has began to focus on collective action in authoritarian non-western regimes, and this thesis has therefore attempted to contribute in this development.

7. Conclusion

The thesis has been exploring the question of *why we can observe differences in scale shift between similar organizations that are active in the same authoritarian context.* By applying the theoretical framework of Social Movements Studies I have generated hypotheses based on the theories of Political Opportunity Structure, The Strategic Approach, and Cultural Framing to explore possible explanatory variables. Through an extensive fieldwork in Beijing and Shanghai, I have conducted altogether 20 interviews, with 22 different informants. Based on this I have had a sample of 13 Chinese environmental NGOs. Out of the sample, four NGOs for the paired comparison were chosen based on their shared similar estimated probability to conduct a shift in scale. In this way I have been able to focus on the differences among the cases in regards to the possible explanatory variables. The paired comparison analysis demonstrated how the cases did not vary in respect of the variables connected to political opportunity structure. They could therefore as the puzzle indicated, not explain the difference of the outcome in the compared cases. In regards of the variables connected to the strategic approach, having experience and skilled leaders and employers choosing well thought through strategies towards the authorities and other organizations, explained why the cases shifted scale. In regards of framing the analysis did not find support for framing a wide range of problems in the cases that shifted scale. As motivational framing did not vary between the cases, this could neither be seen as an explanation factor. However, posing clear and practical solutions to the problems identified predominate in the cases that shifted

scale, and is therefore seen as an explanatory factor. Summed up, in regards of this study, the answer to the research question is therefore that NGOs with experienced actors that make strategic choices in terms of cooperation with authorities and other organizations, as well as suggesting clear defined strategies to solve the problems they identify seem to be able to shift scale despite the authoritarian context.

As the discussion further displayed, many aspects indicate that the findings in the analysis can travel to other cases in China. However, as the methodological chapter stated, there is a trade-off between internal and external validity. Due to limitations in the amount of cases, the findings lack representativeness. This means that I don't have the leverage to say that these findings accounts for the whole NGO sector in China, or in authoritarian regimes in general. The detailed findings therefore need to be further tested. Considering the analysis demonstrates that wide framing is not enough alone to shift scale, but that it also heavily depends on having experience and skilled actors proposing clear and practical solutions, the link between these variables could be further tested. I would therefore propose that: *Framing a wide range of problems can potentially mobilize a wider and more various group of citizens, but in order to shift scale the NGOs must choose frames that propose clear and practical solutions to the problems that are being raised.*

It is also important to note that there has also been a significant trade-off in terms of the study's reliability. In order to talk to the informants about their relationship with the government, and for them to be honest, I have chosen not to mention either their, or their organizations, names. This has enabled the informants to share their thoughts and strategies more freely, but at the same time the reader is not able to crosscheck the information presented without seeking out the author for the sources. This is a consequence of doing qualitative research, but it has also enabled the gathering of important and detailed information that would not have been able to accessible in other ways.

By studying NGOs in an authoritarian regime, this study contributes to the theoretical field that long has been both democratically focused and state centric. The findings demonstrate that we need to take a closer look at the choices and strategies that are made in interaction between different actors in an authoritarian context. Thereby, moving away from the heavy emphasis on macro structural factors towards including micro level strategic factors when assessing contentious politics. The thesis has demonstrated that the collective actors, and their strategies of who and how to

cooperate, as well as choosing the right framing, makes great difference in some mobilizations. In an authoritarian regime such as China, collective actors cannot sit and wait for a window of opportunity in terms of regime change. However, the micro level strategic factors, they can, and they are, doing something about.

8. Appendix

8.1 Interview guide (English)[8]

1. How did the NGO originate?

2. What are your NGOs main goals?

3. What are the main environmental fields the NGO work with?

4. So, your office is based in Shanghai – is it here you also normally do you project or do you have some projects outside of Shanghai?

5. How often does the NGO get in touch with the Shanghai Municipality / Shanghai's Governmental Bureau / Shanghai Environmental Protection Bureau / Other Governmental organized NGOs / Ministery of Civil Affairs

6. Is it then the government that get in touch with you or you that contact the government?

7. When do you feel that you most succeed in influencing policymaking? (and when do you feel that you don't?)

8. What would you say have been the greatest challenges in communicating with the government?

9. Does the state sometime look to the NGOs for ideas or co-operation? (borrow or stealing ideas)

10. Have you ever been in touch with the Government in Beijing?

11. Are you registered? And if the case, how?

12. How does you being registered or not affect the communication with the Shanghai Municipality or the Shanghai Environmental Protection Bureau?

13. Have you or other key people in the NGO any former experience with working in Shanghai Municipality or other governmental agencies?

14. Does your NGO get in touch with other Shanghai local or international NGOs for tactics or cooperation when communicating with the Shanghai Municipality/SEPB?

15. What do you think is the most important tasks for the NGOs in China?

---

[8] This questionnaire was used in Shanghai. The questionnaire varied some due to type of organization and place. The questions also changed over the process of the fieldwork …

16. Do you think the communication has changed over the years the NGO has existed?

17. What do you think of Shanghai Governments environmental protection?

8.2 Interview guide (Chinese translation)[9]

1. 此非政府组织是如何发起与开展工作的？

2. 你们组织的主要目标是什么？

3. 你们组织主要工作于什么环境领域？/你们组织是怎样对环境保护作出贡献的？

4. 你们的办公场所在上海？或者你们也在上海之外的地方开展项目？

5. 你们与市政府、环保局、其他的政府组织的非政府组织、民政局等联系的频率是怎样的？

6. 然后是政府去联系你们还是你们去联系政府？

7. 什么时候你觉得你们在影响政策制定上最成功？那什么时候觉得不成功呢？

8. 你认为在与上海市政府机构交流过程中最大的挑战是什么？

9. 国家有时向你们组织寻求一些想法或者合作吗？借鉴你们的想法还是剽窃？

10. 你们曾与北京的政府机构取得联系吗？

11. 你们注册过吗？如果是以下这样情况：

12. 注册以来你们觉得怎么样？或者说没有影响与上海市政府或上海市环保局的沟通交流？

13. 组织里面比较重要的人物在之前又没有与上海市政府或其他政府机构的交流合作经验？

---

[9] The translation was conducted by an interpreter and she translated the questions and answers to and from the informants.

14. 你们组织有没有和其他上海民间或者国际非政府组织交流过与政府合作的

战略战术？

15. 你认为这些组织在中国最重要的任务是什么？

16. 你认为你们组织存在这些年里面，与他方的交流合作方式有没有变化？

17. 你认为上海政府的环境保护做的怎么样？

8.3 Follow-up questions[10]

1. Can you describe the NGOs development since you originated?

2. How many volunteers did you start out with and how has this number changed over the years?

3. To what degree would you characterize your program as successful?

4. How much of your funding is governmental funding?

5. What is your strategy towards the government?

6. Do you have any cooperation with other NGOs and on what and how do you work with them?

7. Are you part of any international network?

8. What do you focus on when speaking to them about environmental protection?

9. To what degree do you promote a solution – and what kind of solution do you promote?

10. How do you convince people to follow this solution?

---

[10] These questions also varied in regards to what had already been said in the first interview, and also being more specified to each of the NGOs and their activities.

8.4 Overview of interviews and codes

Name code NGOs	Name code Informants	Date of interview	NGO based	Type	Assistance
NGO1	Informant 6	23.02.16	Shanghai	Chinese	With interpreter
	Informant 7				
NGO2	Informant 9	11.03.16, 26.04.16	Beijing	Chinese	Non
	Informant 10				
NGO3	Informant 3	23.02.16	Shanghai	Chinese	With interpreter
NGO4	Informant 4	23.02.16, 27.04.16	Shanghai	Chinese	With interpreter
	Informant 5				
NGO5	Informant 1	03.02.16, 25.04.16	Beijing	Chinese	Non
NGO6	Informant 8	24.02.16	Shanghai	Chinese	With interpreter
NGO7	Informant 2	23.02.16	Shanghai	Chinese	Non
NGO8	Informant 11	04.03.16	Beijing	Chinese	Non
	Informant 12				
NGO9	Informant 13	04.03.16	Beijing	Chinese	Non
NGO10	Informant 14	05.03.16	Beijing	Chinese	Non
NGO11	Informant 15	07.03.16	Beijing	Chinese	Non
	Informant 16				
NGO12	Informant 17	11.03.16, 26.04.16	Beijing	Chinese	Non
	Informant 18				
NGO13	Informant 20	06.05.16	Beijing	Chinese	Non
NGO14	Informant 19	13.04.16	Beijing	International	Non

9. Literature

Benford, Robert D, and David A Snow. 2000. "Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment." *Annual review of sociology*:611-639.

Bratton, Michael. 1989. "The politics of government-NGO relations in Africa." *World Development* no. 17 (4):569-587.

Chan, Kin-man. 2005. "The development of NGOs under a post-totalitarian regime: The case of China." *Civil life, globalization, and political change in Asia: Organizing between family and state* no. 4:l.

China, Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of. 1016. *社会服务统 计 季 报* 2014 [cited 23. May 1016]. Available from http://files2.mca.gov.cn/cws/201407/20140724192549450.htm

China Development Brief n.d. a. [NGO1] Accessed 17.02.16. Url available on demand. [11]

China Development Brief n.d. b. [NGO3] Accessed 17.02.16. Url available on demand.

Chong, Dennis. 1993. "How people think, reason, and feel about rights and liberties." *American journal of political science*:867-899.

Clarke, Gerard. 1998. "Non‐governmental organizations (NGOs) and politics in the developing world." *Political studies* no. 46 (1):36-52.

Clemens, Elisabeth S, and Debra C Minkoff. 2004. "Beyond the iron law: Rethinking the place of organizations in social movement research." In *The Blackwell companion to social movements*, 155-170. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Della Porta, Donatella, and Mario Diani. 2006. *Social movements: An introduction*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Diamond, Larry Jay. 1994. "Toward democratic consolidation." *Journal of democracy* no. 5 (3):4-17.

Economy, Elizabeth C. 2011. *The river runs black: the environmental challenge to China's future*: Cornell University Press.

Eisinger, Peter K. 1973. "The conditions of protest behavior in American cities." *American political science review* no. 67 (01):11-28.

EU-China NPO. 2015. «2015 "Social and Environmental Justice" Twinner». Accessed 23.05.16. Url available on demand.

Evans, Peter B., Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. 1985. *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fligstein, Neil, and Doug McAdam. 2011. "Toward a general theory of strategic action fields." *Sociological theory* no. 29 (1):1-26.

Foley, Michael W, and Bob Edwards. 1996. "The paradox of civil society." *Journal of democracy* no. 7 (3):38-52.

---

[11] Due to protection of the anonymity of the sources will webpages or documents that name the NGOs directly not be linked to in the thesis. The documents and links will however be provided if requested by the reader.

Foster, Kenneth W. 2001. "Associations in the embrace of an authoritarian state: state domination of society?" *Studies in Comparative International Development* no. 35 (4):84-109.

Franzese, Robert J. 2007. "Multicausality, context-conditionality, and endogeneity." In *The Oxford handbook of comparative politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, 27-72. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Frolic, B Michael. 1997. "State-led Civil Society." In *Civil society in China*, edited by Timothy Brook and B Michael Frolic. New York: ME Sharpe.

George, Alexander L, and Andrew Bennett. 2004. "Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences." In *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Gerhards, Jürgen, and Dieter Rucht. 1992. "Mesomobilization: Organizing and framing in two protest campaigns in West Germany." *American Journal of Sociology*:555-596.

Gerring, John. 2002. *Case study research : principles and practices*. West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Gerring, John. 2007. "The case study: what it is and what it does." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Charles Boix and Susan C. Stokes. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gleiss, Marielle Stigum. 2014. "How Chinese labour NGOs legitimize their identity and voice." *China Information* no. 28 (3):362-381.

Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*: Harvard University Press.

Goodwin, Jeff, and James M Jasper. 1999. Caught in a winding, snarling vine: The structural bias of political process theory. Paper read at Sociological forum.

Gåsemyr, Hans Jørgen. n.d. "Networks and Campaigns but Not Movements: Collective Action in the Disciplining Chinese State". *Forthcoming in Journal of Civil Society.*

Han, Heejin. 2014. "Policy deliberation as a goal: The case of Chinese ENGO activism." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* no. 19 (2):173-190.

Hasenfeld, Yeheskel, and Benjamin Gidron. 2005. "Understanding multi-purpose hybrid voluntary organizations: The contributions of theories on civil society, social movements and non-profit organizations." *Journal of civil society* no. 1 (2):97-112.

He, Baogang, and Mark E Warren. 2011. "Authoritarian deliberation: The deliberative turn in Chinese political development." *Perspectives on politics* no. 9 (02):269-289.

Heurlin, Christopher. 2010. "Governing civil society: The political logic of NGO–State relations under dictatorship." *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* no. 21 (2):220-239.

Hildebrandt, Timothy. 2011. "The political economy of social organization registration in China." *The China Quarterly* no. 208:970-989.

Ho, Peter. 2001. "Greening without conflict? Environmentalism, NGOs and civil society in China." *Development and Change* no. 32 (5):893-921.

Ho, Peter. 2008. "Self-imposed censorship and de-politicized politics in China." In *China's embedded activism: Opportunities and constraints of a social movement*, 20.

Ho, Peter, and Richard Edmonds. 2008. *China's embedded activism: opportunities and constraints of a social movement*: Routledge.

Howell, Jude. 2012. "Civil society, corporatism and capitalism in China." *Journal of Comparative Asian Development* no. 11 (2):271-297.

Hsu, Carolyn. 2010. "Beyond civil society: An organizational perspective on state–NGO relations in the People's Republic of China." *Journal of Civil Society* no. 6 (3):259-277.

Hsu, Carolyn L, and Yuzhou Jiang. 2015. "An institutional approach to Chinese NGOs: State alliance versus state avoidance resource strategies." *The China Quarterly* no. 221:100-122.

Hsu, Jennifer YJ, and Reza Hasmath. 2014. "The local corporatist state and NGO relations in China." *Journal of Contemporary China* no. 23 (87):516-534.

Jasper, J, G Maney, R Kutz-Flamenbaum, D Rohlinger, and J Goodwin. 2012. "Choice points, emotional batteries and other ways to find strategic agency at the microlevel." *Strategies for social change*:23-42.

Jasper, James. 2004. "A strategic approach to collective action: Looking for agency in social-movement choices." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* no. 9 (1):1-16.

Keane, John. 1998. *Civil society: Old images, new visions*. USA: Polity Press.

Keck, Margaret E, and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy networks in international politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kitschelt, Herbert P. 1986. "Political opportunity structures and political protest: Anti-nuclear movements in four democracies." *British journal of political science* no. 16 (01):57-85.

Klandermans, Bert. 2004. "The demand and supply of participation: Social-psychological correlates of participation in social movements." *The Blackwell companion to social movements*:360-379.

Kriesi, Hanspeter. 2004. "Political context and opportunity." *The Blackwell companion to social movements*:67-90.

Kriesi, Hanspeter. 2014. "Social movements." In *Comparative Politics*, edited by Daniele Caramani. Oxford University Press.

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Ruud Koopmans, and Jan Willem Duyvendak. 1995. *New Social Movements in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*, *Social Movements, Protest, and Contention*. Minneapolis: Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press.

Landry, Pierre. 2008. *Decentralized Authoritarianism in China: The Communist Party's Control of Local Elites in the Post-Mao Era.* . Cambridge Cambridge University Press.

Lee, Seungho. 2007. "Environmental movements and social organizations in Shanghai." *China Information* no. 21 (2):269-297.

Li, Linda Chelan. 2010. "Central‐local relations in the people's Republic of China: Trends, processes and impacts for policy implementation." *Public administration and development* no. 30 (3):177-190.

Lieberthal, Kenneth, and David M Lampton. 1992. *Bureaucracy, politics, and decision making in post-Mao China*: University of California Press Berkeley.

Lo, Kevin. 2015. "How authoritarian is the environmental governance of China?" *Environmental Science & Policy* no. 54:152-159.

Ma, Qiusha. 2005. *Non-governmental organizations in contemporary China: Paving the way to civil society?*: Routledge.

Mahoney, James, and Celso M. Villegas. 2009. "Historical Enquiry and Comparative Politics." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McAdam, Doug. 1982. *Political process and the development of Black insurgency 1930-1970*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

McAdam, Doug. 1996. "Conceptual origins, problems, future directions." In *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, John D McCarthy and Mayer N Zald. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McAdam, Doug. 2002. "Beyond structural analysis: Toward a more dynamic understanding of social movements." In *Social Movement Analysis: Netwoek Perspective*, edited by Doug Mario Diani and McAdam. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McAdam, Doug, John D McCarthy, and Mayer N Zald. 1996. *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings*: Cambridge University Press.

McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, John D. 1996. "Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting, and inventing." *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings*:141-51.

McCarthy, John D, and Mayer N Zald. 1977. "Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory." *American journal of sociology*:1212-1241.

Mertha, Andrew. 2009. ""'Fragmented authoritarianism 2.0": political pluralization in the Chinese policy process." *The China Quarterly* no. 200:995-1012.

Meyer, David S, and Debra C Minkoff. 2004. "Conceptualizing political opportunity." *Social forces* no. 82 (4):1457-1492.

Meyer, David S, and Suzanne Staggenborg. 1996. "Movements, countermovements, and the structure of political opportunity." *American Journal of Sociology*:1628-1660.

Meyer, David S, and Suzanne Staggenborg. 2012. "Thinking about strategy." *Strategies for social change* no. 37:1.

Mol, Arthur PJ. 2006. "Environment and modernity in transitional China: frontiers of ecological modernization." *Development and Change* no. 37 (1):29-56.

Mol, Arthur PJ, and Neil T Carter. 2006. "China's environmental governance in transition." *Environmental politics* no. 15 (02):149-170.

NGO1. 2011a. «2011 年 11 月 18 日净滩活动短讯». Website of NGO1. Accessed 23.05.16. Url available on demand.

NGO1. 2011b. «2011 年 11 月 10 日净滩活动短讯». Website of NGO1. Accessed 23.05.16. Url available on demand.

NGO1. 2012. «还君干净海岸线». Website of NGO1. Accessed 23.05.16. Url available on demand.

NGO1. 2015. «国内第一份海洋环保组织名录发布». Website of NGO1. Accessed 23.05.16. Url available on demand.

NGO1. 2016 «"NGO1"与政府合作情况». (Document presented by NGO1). Document available on demand.

NGO2. 2016. «看见北京饮用水源地，当一天果农». Website of NGO2. Accessed 23.05.16. Url available on demand.

NGO3. 2010a. «会员介绍». Website of NGO3. Accessed 23.05.16. Url available on demand.

NGO3. 2010b. «会员介绍». Website of NGO3. Accessed 25.05.16. Url available on demand.

NGO3. 2015a. «会员介绍». Website of NGO3. Accessed 25.05.16. Url available on demand.

NGO3. 2015b «"NGO3"社区环保宣传项目» Website of NGO3. Accessed 25.05.16. Url available on demand.

NGO4. n.d. «团队介绍». Website of NGO4. Accessed 25.05.16. Url available on demand.

NGO4 n.d. [NGO4 brochure] Document available on demand.

NOWPAP. 2013. International Coastal Cleanup and Workshopon Marine Litter Management. In *NOWPAP workshop*. Okinawa, Japan.

NOWPAP. 2016. *Efforts by Non-governmental Organizations to address marine litter* [Url available on demand] 2016 [cited 23 May 2016].

Olson, Mancur. 1965. "The logic of collective action Cambridge." *Mass.: Harvard* no. 1971.

Przeworski, Adam, and Henry Teune. 1970. "The logic of comparative social inquiry."

Ran, Ran. 2013. "Perverse incentive structure and policy implementation gap in China's local environmental politics." *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* no. 15 (1):17-39.

Rooij, Benjamin, Rachel E Stern, and Kathinka Fürst. 2014. "The authoritarian logic of regulatory pluralism: Understanding China's new environmental actors." *Regulation & Governance*.

Rootes, Christopher. 2006. "Facing south? British environmental movement organisations and the challenge of globalisation." *Environmental Politics* no. 15 (5):768-786.

Saich, Anthony. 2011. "The Governance and Politics of China."

Salamon, Lester M, and Helmut K Anheier. 1992. "In search of the non-profit sector. I: The question of definitions." *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* no. 3 (2):125-151.

Salamon, Lester M, Helmut K Anheier, Regina List, Stefan Toepler, and S Wojciech Sokolowski. 1999. "Global civil society." *Dimensions of the Nonprofit sector. Baltimore*.

Schwartz, Jonathan. 2004. "Environmental NGOs in China: roles and limits." *Pacific Affairs*:28-49.

Snow, David A, and Robert D Benford. 1988. "Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilization." *International social movement research* no. 1 (1):197-217.

Snow, David A, E Burke Rochford Jr, Steven K Worden, and Robert D Benford. 1986. "Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation." *American sociological review*:464-481.

Snow, David A, Sarah Anne Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi. 2004. *The Blackwell companion to social movements*: USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Spires, Anthony J. 2011. "Organizational Homophily in International Grantmaking: US-Based Foundations and their Grantees in China." *Journal of Civil Society* no. 7 (3):305-331.

Spires, Anthony J. 2012. "Lessons from Abroad: Foreign Influences on China's Emerging Civil Society*." *China Journal* (68):125-146.

Spires, Anthony J, Lin Tao, and Kin-man Chan. 2014. "Societal support for China's grass-roots NGOs: evidence from Yunnan, Guangdong and Beijing." *China Journal* (71):65-90.

Stuart Mill, John. 1843. "System of logic." *Ratiocinative and Inductive, Cosimo, New York, NY*.

Tarrow, Sidney. 1989. *Democracy and disorder : protest and politics in Italy 1965-1975*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Tarrow, Sidney. 2005. *The new transnational activism*: Cambridge University Press.

Tarrow, Sidney. 2010. "The strategy of paired comparison: Toward a theory of practice." *Comparative political studies* no. 43 (2):230-259.

Tarrow, Sidney G. 2011. *Power in Movement*. 3rd ed. (rev. & updated). ed, *Cambridge studies in comparative politics.*: United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press - M.U.A.

Teets, Jessica C. 2014. *Civil society under authoritarianism: The China model*: Cambridge University Press.

Tilly, Charles. 1978. *From mobilization to revolution*: McGraw-Hill New York.

Tilly, Charles. 2006. *Regimes and Repertoires*. London: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd.

Tilly, Charles, and Sidney Tarrow. 2007. *Contentious politics*. Boulder, Colo: Paradigm Publ.

Tocqueville, Alexis, de. 1988. *Democracy in America*. Translated by George Lawrence. New York: Harper Perennial.

Tsai, Lily L. 2007. "Solidary groups, informal accountability, and local public goods provision in rural China." *American Political Science Review* no. 101 (02):355-372.

Wang, Hongyi. 2016. *Protecting environment tops public concerns in poll*. China Daily 2014 [cited 29. May 2016]. Available from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-05/16/content_17511326.htm.

Weller, Robert P. 2012. "Responsive Authoritarianism and Blind-Eye Governance in China." *Socialism Vanquished, Socialism Challenged: Eastern Europe and China, 1989-2009*:83.

White, G., Howell, J., et al. . 1996. *In search of civil society: Market reform and social change in*
contemporary China. . New York: Oxford University Press.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2007. "Field Research." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wu, Fengshi. 2013. "Environmental activism in provincial China." *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* no. 15 (1):89-108.

Wu, Fengshi, and Kin-man Chan. 2012. "Graduated control and beyond: The evolving government-NGO relations." *China Perspectives* (3):9.

Yang, Guobin. 2005. "Environmental NGOs and institutional dynamics in China." *The China Quarterly* no. 181:46-66.

Yang, Guobin, and Craig Calhoun. 2008. "Media, civil society, and the rise of a green public sphere in China." *China's Embedded Activism: Opportunities and constraints of a social movement*.

Yin, Robert K. 2009. Case study research: Design and methods, 4th. California: Sage Inc.

Zald, Mayer N. 1996. "Culture, ideology, and strategic framing." *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings*:261-274.