The Role of Civil Society in Burma and China

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Abstract

Today, China is much different than it was twenty years ago. Civil society development is one of the reasons why China has changed and the lives of Chinese people have improved. The Chinese government used to see foreign influence over its civil society as a threat to its sovereignty. However, civil society groups that operate in China have made a huge impact on the lives of the Chinese. Therefore, the government came to realize that the role of these organizations is very important for its country’s stability and for the building of individual capacity. In this paper, the case of China and the role of civil society groups will be examined as a model for Burma to find out whether the lives of the Burmese could be changed similarity to those in China.

This research paper focuses on analyzing the movement of civil societies and their struggle in China as well as in Burma. Since the power of China is rising in global politics, it has significant influence in some Asian countries like Burma and other neighboring countries. This paper uses the conceptual approaches of political culture and civil society in Burma and China by using different primary and secondary sources from various academic disciplines. The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of civil society in analyzing change in Burma in order to build a democratic society. The ultimate objective of my proposed project is to eventually train and educate professionals who work in Burma and China in the civil society sector. This project help us understand how important civil societies are in building stable societies in Asia. The project’s outcomes include submitting a paper for Transnational Studies 400 course and presenting at the Undergraduate Scholar Forum 2011, as well as doing field research via a participant-observation interview in Washington, D.C.

**Introduction**

“Let him sleep! If he wakes, he will shake the world”. This famous saying refers to the giant China. The power of China is rising in the world and the fact is hard to deny. The role of China in global politics is also a very interesting since it will shape other countries and their economy with its influence. However, China is practicing the open door market policy, is still ruled by one party system of Communist party. Since the economy has developed, the issue of immigration, health care, the environment, education and welfare affect the civilians. While the Chinese government is focusing on its economy, civil society organizations play all parts in stabilizing the society and promoting the lives of civilians. However, the Chinese government looked at the civil society as a threat to its power and sovereignty, especially to the ones with foreign aid. On the other hand, the Chinese government also received the advantage of civil societies and their activities. Nevertheless, it does not mean the government makes it easier for them to exist or work in China. The struggle and challenges of restrictive laws for civil societies will be analyzed in their research paper for both cases of China and Burma.

Burma is one of the countries which is influenced by China and its economic power. However, Burma has a different a political system than China and it is similar in that power is centralized in the authorities in both countries. To be able to understand the reasons why the governments of China and Burma act the way they do and a brief political background of these countries will be looked at first. Burma also has restricted rules and regulation on civil society even though it is encoring them. In this paper, the successful stories of how the civil societies are operating within the limits of the regime in Burma and communist government in China will be discussed.

**Definition and movement of civil society**

Civil society is the collection of non-governmental organizations and institutions that cooperate with local communities based on the interest and determination of independent individuals and groups. The interest of civilians could be diverse and it depends on their needs such as trade unions; processional associations, press associations for media freedom, lawyers and judges associations for a independent judiciary, social change organizations for improving better life styles; and environmental organizations to protect nature. In order to bring the social and political change, sometimes, members of different civil society’s organizations work together from the interests of individual to collective interest. Civil society organizations are funded by individual donors and businesses in the purpose to work independently from the government’s control and they handle the issues that government sector cannot address by itself. Civil society organizations are also known as non-governmental organizations or non-profit organizations and are mainly ran by volunteers. NGOs work effectively in the society where the government has been less involved in private lives.

Even during in the French Revolution, civil society groups were one of the thrusts to bring the change. “Napoleon both preserved and perverted the aims of revolution. He recognized the gap between the social groups with political power and civil power.”[[1]](#footnote-1) He relied on the power of people to win over the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie were the smallest group of the population in France and he managed to shake the rest of the angry population to come together to bring out the people power. Throughout the 19th century in France, the artisan practiced the strategy for immediate change from the French Revolution. The power of people is the strongest drive when they come together as a whole in any country’s history. To bring the people power, the grass-root foundation is began with the people to people diplomacy within society. Same nation who live under the oppress regime or authority share the same feeling toward their leader and country. Therefore, knowing how to bring the people as a whole is a too.

**Civil Society as a conceptual framework**

According to Wiarda, civil society can be defined as a vast web of intermediary association of labor union, farm groups, business association, Boy and Girl Scouts, or religious body. He also points out that civil society organizations can be found with various mixed forms of state control/ freedom predominating. However, operating in third world countries as a civil society can be very challenging with the different nature of politic and their legal systems. They need to understand the local, national and regional condition and prepare to adapt them. On the other hand, Wiarda highlighted that “In order to function effectively, NGOs must comprehend how Third World governments, fearing unrest and instability, are extremely hesitant to move to unfettered freedom of association, use the process of regulation and licensing of civil society group to control and/or co-ot them.”[[2]](#footnote-2) His point holds true in the case of the civil society movement in Burma and China. The governments of Burma and China do not have any law and regulations on the books for civil society organization to exist. Therefore, it is essential to understand the nature of politics and the troubles that could be faced for civil society organizations in Burma and China need to be looked at closely. To be more conceptualized; five reasons out of Wirada’s twenty reasons to be cautious about civil society will be apply in these case studies.

Theory Vs Reality

In theory, civil society encourage democratic, pluralist, private-sector oriented, Tocquevillian, non-bureaucratic, Madisonian participation. However, in practice, sometime, some civil society organizations are economically corporatists who sap the money out of international donors without providing enough information or real situation why there is a need for their existence. In reality, there is so much to be done in Burma and China with the force of civil society with the needs is real. Some civil society organizations are actually operating to help the civilians; however, their bureaucratic expense is higher than the actual project’s expense.

Risks and Benefits

The governments in Burma and China is obviously benefit from the operation of civil society organization. On the other hand, they are also aware of the risks that these organizations could bring into their countries. Civil society organizations could transfer the political power to the people and they could lead the breakup of a state, especially, when the local government is weak. Therefore, both government of Burma and China, look at them as threats to their sovereignties.

A Weak Popular Base

In third world countries, the local people are not used to with the movement of civil society therefore, most of the time they are member of only one organization or association. In the case of Latin America, 13% of its population are members of a civil society group in any form including political parties, labor group, peasant groups, women’s groups, community group, religious groups and other group of all kinds. However, they tend to be members of one group. There is no web of multiple or crosscutting groups’ membership. They tend to join as they are stereotyped as a military officer, as a student, and as a unionist. In this case, it would be the same in Burma since the civil society groups are not very popular yet and the community projects are ran by students as groups of students, artists, religious groups and government control groups.

Outside Sponsorship and Control

This is one of the main reasons why the Burmese government is questioning the humanitarian aid from foreign governments especially from Untied States. With the short-term political goals, the U.S. government and its sponsorship international organization funds a lot to local NGOs with the U.S. national interest. They normally fund the quick-win projects and after the goals are achieved, the funds dry up and the leaves the country. Every INGOs or local NGOs, who are funded by a foreign country in China, need to summit their financial report annually with detail to the central government.

Central Vs Local Controls

The encouragement of civil society’s activities could be used wrongly by the central and local authority. Participating in an association or an organization should be free choice. However, in the third world, the local authorities force the civilians, scholars and elites to register as a member of their civil society group. Especially in Burma, the Union Solidarity Development Party was just a civil society organization run by the state government before. After announcing the election in 2010, it was transformed to be a political party and the government forced the scholars, top businessmen, and the community respected people to be its members.

**NGOs in China**

The role of foreign NGOs is very important for China in the process of stabilizing its society. The emergence of civil society in China helps to solve the gaps between different social classes, ethnic groups, and religions. It also evinces the shared interests within the large population. After the late1970s, the Chinese government became more flexible than the traditional centralization of state power. The Chinese government’s reform and liberalizing policies allowed civil society organizations to participate in the process of reconstruction under the restricting rules and laws. The result of this policy has benefited the Chinese society as well as the government, even though Chinese government sometime considers foreign NGOs as threats to its sovereignty.

Reform and opening-up policy

The small state, big society is the Chinese government’s strategy to implement this policy. It means the state only takes charge of matters, which the society cannot or will not take on, such as the courts, police, and public service. Society, in turn, assumes responsibility for the other matters and the people themselves will have to find solution for social problems.[[3]](#footnote-3) As the result of this policy, China has benefited significantly after it realized that it needed to correspond with the international community to develop its society. Immigration’s social problems, health issues, environmental consequences and education in rural areas are the side effects of economic development in China. These are the areas where the Chinese government wishes to receive help from civil society organizations. However the foreign NGOs defy touching the sensitive issues of democracy, human rights, labor, or religion while Chinese NGOs are struggling to carry out their organizational activities as a legal entity. The Chinese government does not encourage foreign NGOs in many cases contrary to their small state, big society strategy.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs and local Civil Affairs department at county and higher levels are the government agencies in charge of registration and management of social organizations.

The Chinese NGOs must meet these requirements to be able to register as civil society organizations:

* Possession of more than 50 individual members or 30 group members: a total of more than 50 members are required if a social organization consists of both individual and group members;
* possession of a standardized name and corresponding organizational structure;
* possession of a fixed domicile; and possession of full-time staff suitable for its business;
* Possession of lawful assets and sources of funding: a national social organization shall have a business fund of more than 100,000 Yuan, while a local social organization, and a trans-administrative-district social organization shall have a business fund of more than 30,000 Yuan;
* Possession of the ability to bear civil liabilities independently.[[4]](#footnote-4)

However, there is no legal frame work or registration law for the foreign NGOs. The China Development Brief indicates that more than 490 international NGOs are in China.[[5]](#footnote-5) In fact, it is impossible to calculate the numbers of foreign NGOs since many of them do not have office or staff permanently based in China. The Social Organization Administration Bureau within the Ministry of Civil Affairs is responsible for the registration and annual inspection of foreign NGOs in China.[[6]](#footnote-6) Directly under the Ministry of Commerce, the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (“CICETE”) has been cooperating actively with international NGOs and Chinese enterprises through its associate body, the China Association for Non-governmental Organization Cooperation (“CANGO”).[[7]](#footnote-7) In turn, CANGO acts as an intermediary agency and partners with foreign NGOs, bilateral and multilateral organizations, and even Chinese NGOs to enhance fundraising, provision of technical support, and capacity-building of grassroots NGOs in China.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Benefit for the Chinese government

The Chinese government receives advantages and disadvantages from foreign NGOs. They contribute a great extent to China’s economic and social development in the fields of environmental protection, humanitarian aid, poverty alleviation, development assistance, health, education, and family with new technologies and ideas. Hongying Wang, Wilson Center Fellow and associate professor at Syracuse University, said that “The foreign NGOs reduce the financial burden on the government, especially the welfare function; they help in the planning and coordination of the market economy; they create a channel for orderly political participation; they provide a forum for training and learning about best practices; and they respond to pressures from international organizations.” Furthermore, Foreign NGOs supported and participated theoretical debates on and experimentation of the original economic reforms. They have also facilitated the preparation of theory, policy, and human resources for economic reform in China through, for example, offering economic support, engaging scholars and experts, providing training opportunities and arranging exchanges with foreign universities and research institutes.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Nevertheless, the Chinese government’s attitude toward foreign NGOs is not always positive. The Chinese government looked at them as a threat when foreign NGOs were involved in the political activities and leading to adoption the Western ideas of liberty, democracy, and human rights. The Chinese government opposes working with any NGOs for “Free Tibet” movement or Taiwanese’s independent. Still it believes that the government has the power to control or cancel any organization which is a threat to state sovereignty. A constant concern of the Chinese government is that some NGOs supported by the governments of Western countries may have a motive to subvert the rule of the Chinese Communist Party through “peaceful transformation.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Liqing Zhao, a researcher at the Institute of International and Strategic Studies of the Central Party School of the CCP, wrote that foreign NGOs “undermine national security, “destroy political stability” “foster corruption,” as well as “propagate foreign practices.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

Current status of foreign NGOs

The current status of foreign NGOs in China is fairly high. Even though some of them do not have local office, they are involved heavily throughout the Chinese communities. It is not necessary to have an office in China for the temporary projects since they are supposed to leave China after the mutual goals are achieved. According to the Directory of International NGOs Working in China, there are over 70 NGOs which have representative offices in China. There are at least 200 international organizations which have donated funds to projects in China.[[12]](#footnote-12) In fact, it is very important for foreign NGOs to build good relationships with the Chinese government to make advocacy change during their stay. Foreign NGOs need to build the Chinese government’s capacity as well as the communities. Thus, the Chinese government will only be as strong as its society. Foreign NGOs are indeed playing a significant role in some parts of political reform in China. For instant, Carter Center, International Republican Institute, and Ford Foundation have been played very important role in the village election and self-government with funding, training and technical support as well as assisting the design of programs and development strategies. “In 1994, IRI became the first western organization permitted to observe Chinese village elections. Since then, IRI has observed close to 60 elections in provinces throughout the country.”[[13]](#footnote-13) It shows the accountability of Chinese government and its transparency although the central government does not like the idea of large political reform.

The Chinese government is aware of the result of its reform and opening-up policy as well as seeking to formulate its own set of laws on foreign NGOs. The balance between who engages reform is a big concern for China. Since China and Russia used to share a common political ideology, Chinese scholars and government caught the attention of Russia President Vladmir Putin’s Federal Law No. 18-FZ. The new law provides broader grounds for denying registration to organizations. Both foreign and national NGOs will also have to provide detailed reports to authorities of any foreign funding and how such funds are spent. Furthermore, the legislation will give officials the power to close any non-profit organization involved in “political activities”. [[14]](#footnote-14) Nevertheless, the Chinese government needs to establish a legal work frame with just law and regulation to provide lawful status for foreign NGOs. It will also lessen confusion and barriers for them and will make it easier to carry out their work in China. Chinese government and society have observed the benefits of foreign NGOs in their society. This reform and opening-up policy should only be used to move the country forward instead of establishing more restriction, and limited regulation for foreign NGOs and its own society.

**NGO in Burma**

The movement of civil society in Burma has begun with volunteerism which rapidly developed after the Nargis cyclone in May 2008. More than 100,000 were killed during Nargis and thousands of families lost their homes and countless children turned into orphanage within a few days and nights. The Burmese military government rejected humanitarian aid from outside the country. Therefore, youth and other civilians have come together to help the communities that were affected by the Nargis to build the houses again, donating shelters, food and water. On the other hand, Buddhist monasteries became orphanages. There are now more than 1,500 local NGOs are operating to reestablish the communities disturbed by the Nargis; however, these NGOs are not registered. After two years of this event, 105 foreign non-profit organizations are registered to work in Burma in the case to develop social change. According to the Councilor of Myanmar/Burma Embassy, Kyaw Win said “most of the foreign NGOs come to Burma with a reason of missionary and social change. The Burmese government welcomes them if they are coming to help the civilian without political intention” (Interview with Councilor Kyaw Win).

Most of the INGOs who work in Burma are scholarship foundations, health care organizations, and care centers. Even though, the local NGOs and INGOs are working under the watch of Burmese military government; they are still able to accomplish the need of education, health care, environment awareness, and human rights issues without the political innovation label. These NGOs bring the communities together to discuss about the needs and how to implement them without being disturbed by the government. Therefore it helps to build the community closeness and finding the local solution how to make the projects work instead of these INGOs guide them how to do or what to do.

Change within the communities

The international non-profit organizations are working inside and outside Burma to bring the change. The civil society’s movement began outside Burma with exiled political groups who are working to change the democratic form of government in Burma by living in neighboring countries: Thailand, India, Japan and Malaysia. Foreign NGO come with projects to educate the Burmese exile political groups in Thailand. The reasons why INGOs did not work in Burma were because they didn’t want to cooperate with the military government who violate human rights, more than that reason, in the past; they didn’t get permission from the Burmese military government to work either. Most of the foreign NGOs who came to Thailand to work with exiled Burmese political groups, tried to do capacity building, empowering orientation, participatory orientation and service orientation. Since early 1984, the Thailand-Burma Boarder Consortium began to provide basic humanitarian assistance for Karen refugees from Burma who arrived to Thailand as the result of civil war.[[15]](#footnote-15)

After working more than a decade from outside Burma to make a change, the INGOs came to realize that change has to come from within the society. International Rescue Committee and Red Cross have been trying to work in Burma with service orientation. More than a dozen international NGOs and several U.N. agencies have carried out programs since the mid-1990s. [[16]](#footnote-16)

Most of the NGOs are charitable orientation for the needs of a community such as donating food, medicine and building schools for orphanages. Some other foreign NGOs who do not wish to register, try to work with the local community to build capacity and empowerment. People to people politics are the best way to make a change by raising the education level of civilian. The way they do it is by bringing the community together to operate a check and balance system within their own groups with a micro-financing. For instance: someone from a small community will take charge to loan $ 100 to someone who would like to run a business this month and then this person will return the loans next month when he/she ears some profits. That $100 will be loaned to another family from the community and that money will go around running the local businesses. On other hand, the leader who is in charge for loaning will be watched by the other members of the community because that money wills the main resource to keep the families survive. As the result, it will bring the trust and closeness with the community and power balancing.

However, building the infrastructure in Burma is a lot more complicated than capacity building by the civil societies. Everyone who would like to build new roads, community housing and water resources need the permission from the local authorities.

“They need to discuss and emphasize the need of a community when they propose. They usually have to bribe the local authority to implement the project otherwise, if the government representative came and order that the project that they were working on is not a necessity, and then they have to stop from wherever the process may be. The authority would not care the needs of the people even in the health care project” said by anonymous social worker from Burma.

Especially, the foreign NGOs have to leave from the country when the lease is over and they do not get an extension from the government. Success also depends on the INGOs’ local representatives’ diplomatic s between the government and the INGOs, how clever he or she may be. Therefore, some INGOs and most of the local NGOs are not willing to register as civil society organizations and most of them are volunteer groups from university and high school. The youth groups travel around the country on vacation trips and then they will go to help some areas which were hit by Nargis cyclone or very poor area. They usually collect money from individual donors who are their friends to do projects such as donating food, clean water, clothing and medicine. There are more than 1500 groups like this in Burma. It was even a surprise for the councilor of Myanmar/Burma Embassy to learn about these unofficial groups during an interview.

The councilor from Embassy of Myanmar understands that change needs to happen. However, it will be hard to make a change when the public and government do not have the same level of education. As long as the people and the government of Burma have a low level of education, it is hard for them to effect change due to their lack of confidence. [[17]](#footnote-17)The change will not come only from the people but also from the government. The problem with the Burmese government is that they are isolated among the international communities. They do not see how far Burma is behind in the international standard of living and education. The government need to be educated as well as the public. The government needs to take the responsibility of its own people and at least welcome and open to the civil society groups who are willing to help to develop the country. However, the military juntas always question humanitarian aid from foreign countries. Why are they willing to help us? What is their interest? What do we have to give back in return and will we be look down upon the international community by receiving all the aid like in Africa?

Even though, the government is not official welcoming the INGOs, they are not looking at them as a threat like in China. It appreciates the benefit for the people since they do not have to be in charge of developing its own country and the lives of civilians. The government let the INGOs enter Burma if they are not going to be involved in politics. The mentality of the Burmese military government is that they are afraid of someone is going to be more influential than them and take him or her as a leader. Since the NGOs are helping the needs of local people, the government will be taking less of a leadership role within civilians. However, the government would not disturb the NGOs unless they are doing their activities with the political intention. For instance, a famous Burmese actor Kyaw Thu gives free funeral service to the poor who cannot afford it. His organization is very popular in the whole of Burma and he has many followers. However, he is not disturbed by the government since he does not relate his service with the political activities. Nevertheless, democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi is deemed to be a threat to the government on any activities she does even visiting some AIDS patients. Councilor Kyaw Win said “whatever she does, she does with the political intension since she is trying to win over the general.”

Community Respond

The communities’ response on these humanitarian effort is generally positive in Burma. The government and local appreciate the benefit. However, the acceptance to the INGOs is dependant on the local community. The councilor Kyaw Win pointed out that “some missionaries campaigned aggressively to pursue membership of Christian religion after they help the communities. Some areas in Burma are very strong Buddhist believer and they are not happy with the aid from the missionary when that happens.” They would generally work with the donors and NGOs whoever is willing to help to develop their areas. Some tourists who visit to Burma are usually they know what it is going on this country already and they are willing give a hand to help. They would travel somewhere in Burma where aid is needed and build housing or provide medicine or based on the need, without putting their name on the records as long as they can provide what the local people need. On the other side, the community members will keep it quiet from the local authority on who came to help them or what they have been doing to promote their community.

### Nevertheless, the members of local communities are willing to hide the AIDS patients who are not even accepted to be treated at the hospital. The AIDS patients are looked down on since there is too little awareness about this illness and normally people in Burma think that the people who have AIDS because they violate the morality and slept with a prostitute. Therefore some local authorities came where they are being hid and told them to leave. That is why it is a community’s secret to help an AIDS patient. The local authorities think that they should be in the care center if they are affected by HIV/AIDS. They become excluded from the community. However, by hiding the patients and helping each other out could also bring the community chose among the people. They are getting used to doing local activities without reporting it the authorities. According to the World Health Organization, currently Burma ranks 19 in the world AIDS population with 240,000 HIV/AIDS patients. Most of the HIV/AISD patients are hidden and many people in Burma do not know how to find them to help. The only well-known caring center for them is sponsored by National League for Democracy which is a big threat to the Burmese government as it is the political party lead by Aung San Suu Kyi. On December 6th , 2010, the Burmese Ministry of Information sent out the black list of artist who visited to this center. According to Irrawaddy news agency, “ Accompanying Kyaw Thu were along writer Than Myint Aung, film director Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi, popular vocalist Than Thar Win, punk-rock singer Kyar Pauk (aka Han Htoo Lwin) and rapper Annaga. They donated food and clothing at the HIV/AISD shelter.” Later on a official from Cherry FM told Irrawaddy news agency that they received a letter from the ministry with the list of these artist who visited the shelter and were told not to air any program mentioning about them.[[18]](#footnote-18) Even though they just participated in social work to support other human beings without any political intension, these artists were banned to entertain just because they visited to the HIV/AIDS shelter which runs by NLD party. Some artists, journalist and writers are very independent and they are the windows for the people to alert the political field. Sometimes, they take the role of watchdogs for the country and they make fun of the juntas with their comedy. However, the authorities try to create divisions between intellectuals, singers, and movie stars by rewarding those who cooperate and punishing those who refuse. Musicians and movie stars who sing propaganda songs or perform in propaganda movies may receive cell phones, cars, or other luxuries. Those who say no are threatened with performance bans.[[19]](#footnote-19)

### Society’s harmony

To bring the real stability in Burma within the local community through civil society is achievable. As Rome was not built in a day, it will take time for Burma to become a stabile society. To be able to do so, the people from different professions, classes, regions, ethnic and organizations need to come together to take individual responsibility to build a strong rooted society in harmony. Everybody in Burma seems to understand that change must come. But the question is how we are going to do that since the juntas are very powerful. An anonymous government official once said, “The juntas are very stubborn and they are also isolated. Therefore, they do what they want with the paranoia. Therefore, there must be some people within the government need to pursue by using soft power instead of criticizing them and going against them.” His point may be right; it could be the only way to make a change. Another point is that since these juntas are soldiers, they were not educated to run the country. They did not learn how to solve the problems that Burma is facing with economic, education or social development; they were trained to fight at the wars and protect the country as soldiers. They are power-fool even though they do not have clue how to run the country. However, at least, they should let the local NGOs and INGOs develop local community. According to the International Crisis Group, international non-government organizations have been trying to help to develop Burma and its civilians. However, they found it hard to reconfiguring with the government to change some policies at the national level to ensure sustainable development. It is only because the regime’s concern for the political impact coming from changes and the frequent disinterest of ministers with military backgrounds. [[20]](#footnote-20)

Compare and contrast of civil society movement in China and Burma

First of all, the government systems in both countries are very centralized. The entire power of the countries are stored in small group of people. Addition, both governments of China and Burma have good diplomatic relationships and the Chinese government supports the juntas and protects them in the international community. On the other hand, Chinese businesses are also dominating the market in Burma as well as other parts of the world. In January, 2007, the UN Security Council’s resolution SC/8939 on Burma failed to be adopted by the vetoes of China and Russia. [[21]](#footnote-21) China would like to invest in a country with a stabile market economic even though it does not care for working with any kind of government, especially, since it is not democratic form of government either. China also plays a big role in the process of stabilizing Burma because it is a very good support system for the juntas and they do not care about the economic sanction of the United States or other counties as long as China and Russia are saving their back. While both governments of Burma and China are also benefiting from the civil society organizations in the area of education, health and social development. Therefore, they will not spend the national budget on their own people. However, the civil society organizations are putting efforts forth to help local communities; both governments still believe that they have power to control and cancel any organization.

The reform and opening up policy of the Chinese government has significantly helped the country’s development. It gave opportunities to the government and citizens to enjoy a better economy and life style. The rising economic power of China is a fact that cannot be ignored in the world any longer. However, when the power of the United States was rising in the 19th Century, it stood as a just nation in the international community who respect of human rights and liberty. Of course, United State history includes a lack of basic women rights; slavery and Native American were also mistreated. There it gave the idea to think whether China is struggling with its own sense of world leadership like the U.S. did. Does the China just taking the advantage of weak states around the world for its own benefit? Would China be a block for Burma to bring change?

**Conclusion**

As China is the model to look at in the case of civil society movement in Burma, Burma needs to learn many lesson and experiences from China. The Chinese government’s reform and open up policy has advantage and disadvantage for civilians. Chinese life styles have changed with China’s rapid economic growth. Even though, China is referred to as a rich country in the world now, more than half of the population is living under the poverty line. Chinese families’ migrants to a better place for jobs and the movement of immigration are another important issue. The problem with the immigration issues is the education for the children. On the other hand, environmental side affect is a hug problem in China too while the Chinese government is concentrating on the production. However, the local people are the only one suffer from the environmental effect at the end of the day and the Chinese government does not have effective environmental policy. Therefore, international environmentalist and other civil society organization are the one helping the civilians for their health and lobbying the Chinese government on this issue.

To bring the stability to Burma, the role of civil society is very important as well as the political change. Well functioning civil society organizations run better in the democratic society. However, as long as the Burmese military government is not giving the space for civil society to help the local community and watching on their activities, it is really difficult for them to work in Burma. The Burmese military government should not diatribe the local NGO while they are trying to support each other with social cooperation without political intension. The government should appreciate the benefit of these NGOs operating in Burma to improve health care, education and other forms social development. However, the government should be the one taking care of its civilians and all these matter. Even though, they do not want to empower the people, the government should be more engaged in these substances to improve the lives of people in Burma.

On the other hand, Burma also needs a economic reform policy like in China to attract foreign investment. Whether the US government’s economic sanction on the Burmese juntas is effective or not, it is certain that the people are suffering from unemployment. Even though, the business from the United States had pulled out from Burma in 1996, the foreign investment from China, India, Thailand, France and other Asian countries must still dealing with the military dictators. Therefore, the removing the economic sanction from the U.S. is a debatable issue whether it will really benefit the people from the bottom or again the government and its relative businessmen. In what circumstance, Can the American business operate in Burma by ignoring the human rights violations? Are we going to engage with another monster like what President Nixon engaged with China? What is the role of Burmese democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi is going to play when the economy is reopened? On the other hand, Burma should be aware of the cost and benefit of the open economy before the society is running into chaos by learning the lesson on immigration, education, health care and environmental consequences from the disadvantage of Chinese industrial economy.

To be able to run the country without chaos, the government and civilians need to work together with harmony to develop a stable society. The civil society organizations in Burma and China need to empower the people by helping to build capacity as well as that meets the needs of its civilians helping the government to run a good society. The governments and the public are needed to be educated equally to build a strong country. The governments of Burma and China should really appreciate the role of civil society organizations in their countries and they should not over exercised power of control or cancel any organization at anytime. At the same time, the existence of independent organizations is very important as is the need of good principles and practice. In order to do so both governments from Burma and China, need to be more open-minded to work with the civil society organizations. In addition, they need to establish the laws and regulations for NGOs to be legal and operated smoothly. Therefore, clear policies would help the NGOs to run better and with less confusion and frustration. On the other hand, both governments also need the willingness to reform the policy on health care, education as well as politic. In conclusion, the both countries, China and Burma, need to understand the important role of civil society.

**Future Research**

After I studied the role civil society in Burma and China, I found out that the government authorities are above the laws. The written laws are not practical anymore in both country, espeically in Burma. There is no law and regulation for NGOs in both countries. It must be very farstating to work in a country without rule of law. In the Future, I would like to reseach about when Burma/Myanmar become unlawful state. I would like to research how these states become failed. Does it mean the governments are weak to run their states without law or are they stronger than laws? What are the consequences of unlawful states?

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