Learning to Dance: Lessons from the Interactions of Grassroots Organizations, Community and Government in China

Civil society in China has expanded rapidly over the past decade, yet in many circles the relationship between nonprofits and government is presented as a zero-sum game defined by control and compliance. This paper examines the experience of five grassroots organizations in China to explore the dynamic relationship between government, nonprofits and community in China. It highlights the mutual influence among these 3 protagonists and identifies critical skills developed by the nonprofits in their interactions with government.