Google recently announced plans to re-enter the Chinese market, despite the Chinese government’s heavy-handed control. While at first glance, Google’s aggressive change appears to be a betrayal of moral values, the move is actually in line with both economic and moral standards. While not ideal, the move back into China was ultimately the right decision for Google to make.

First of all, the ethical dilemma China presents is not Google’s battle to fight. The issue is completely political. In order for the world to see improvement, Chinese policy must be addressed from a political standpoint, not an economical one. The United States government has leverage in negotiations for change, whereas Google has comparably none. Therefore, while a sort of business boycott may appear noble, the move would be no more than a gesture and would change nothing. Thus even if Google made sticking to its morals the absolute first priority, the decision whether or not to serve China is effectively meaningless. With the knowledge that Google’s action either way will make no difference compared to the action of the US government, it is clear that morally—past intangible sentiment—there is no dilemma whether they get involved or not.

While keeping out of China would cause no real improvement towards an overall solution or a betterment of anyone’s lives, Google entering China would. Currently, past its purchase of the heavily-controlled Baidu, Google has no stake in China. If Google entered the market, however, it would soon begin to harness some real power. The more Chinese citizens use Google’s products, the more influence the company would have to negotiate improvement for the consumers’ welfare. From this perspective, it’s clear that Google’s real responsibility lies not in abandoning the citizens
of China to be catered to by some other, immoral company, but in serving the Chinese citizens in whatever capacity they can until they start having the influence to instigate positive changes.

That leads to the point that if Google is not serving the Chinese, there will always be a lesser substitute in its place. Google has proven that it is the most efficient, consumer-friendly company in its various fields, or it would not have the huge market dominance that it enjoys. If it does not enter China, then the only effect will be that the people will be forced to utilize lesser companies with uncompetitive products. This would be not only bad for Chinese consumers, but also bad for the rest of the world. Google would most likely be utilizing the money it makes in the Chinese market in ways more beneficial to the world than any of the other gimmick companies that wish to take Google’s place in China.

Furthermore, as technology progresses towards the 2020s, Google’s products are expanding past search. Phones, wearables, and cars are all less controversial markets that Google is hoping to serve. Therefore, there is no justifiable reason for Google to leave the Chinese consumers entirely abandoned, as “A Big Decision” proposes.

It is important to remember that in this case, ends can justify means. While the conceptual morality may not appear completely sound, in reality the trade-off between entering or keeping out of the Chinese market is hugely in favor of entering. Once in China, even with handicaps Google may have the power to cause improvement in the future, while as an outsider it has none. At the very least, Google should be allowed to enter its uncontroversial products in the Chinese market, like the App Store and wearables, as it currently is trying to do. Ultimately, the fact is that the Chinese market is now more than twice as large as the American population. If Google does not serve them, someone else—an entity that is probably less moral than Google—assuredly will.
Bibliography


Kastrenakes, Jacob. “Google may return to China with a censored App Store.” *The Verge* 4 Sept. 2015.
