

Rethinking Gender, Migration, and Power: the Emergence of a
Disciplinary Order in Contemporary China

by

Lisi Feng

Bachelor of Arts, the Southeast University, P.R. China, 2002

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

The FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(SOCIOLOGY)

The University of British Columbia

October 2005

© Lisi Feng, 2005

Abstract

Since its implementation in 1958, the household registration system in China has been powerful state institution to determine rural peasants' mobility to urban areas. For more than two decades, rural-to-urban mobility had been stifled. It was not until the post-Mao regime initiated economic reforms that rural peasants were able to work in urban areas. The household registration system has decisively transformed China into a dualistic society where rural and urban areas are distinctively divided. In addition to the rural-urban division, another great social divide in China is the one between women and men. Under Mao's regime, improved gender relations were achieved to a certain extent by socialist organizations that controlled most aspects of daily life. However, since the reforms were introduced in 1978, Chinese women have not benefited from the process of reform to the same extent as men; the subordination of women has been reinforced and increased in numerous ways. The thesis does not suggest specific strategies to overcome the distinctions between urbanites and peasants, men and women, as this must be created in relation to specific social, cultural, and economic circumstances. Rather, it adopts a qualitative research method to provide a general analysis of how institutional changes and structural reforms in China reshaped social relations and gender relations in particular. By doing so, it is intended to facilitate the pursuit of a fairer and more tolerant society.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Abstract..... | ii |
| Table of Contents..... | iii |
| Acknowledgements..... | v |
| Chapter One: Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1 A Review of Contemporary Research..... | 9 |
| 1.2 Theoretical Framework..... | 13 |
| 1.3 Methodology..... | 17 |
| Chapter Two: The Institutional Context: Household Registration System– a Transition | |
| From Suppression to Discipline..... | 21 |
| 2.1 Summary..... | 30 |
| Chapter Three: The Cultural Context: Construction of the Migrant Body..... | 33 |
| 3.1 The Construction of Peasant Identity in Recent Chinese History..... | 34 |
| 3.2 Cultural Alienation of Peasant Migrants..... | 38 |
| 3.3 Migrants as Subjects..... | 43 |
| 3.4 Rural Women Migrants: the Targets of Discipline..... | 47 |
| 3.5 Summary..... | 57 |
| Chapter Four: The Pearl River Delta: the Bout between the Rural and the Urban Forces..... | 58 |
| 4.1 Economic Takeoff of the Pearl River Delta..... | 61 |
| 4.2 Socioeconomic Status of Temporary Women Migrants in the Pearl River Delta.. | 64 |
| 4.2.1 Competing With Less Education..... | 69 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 4.2.2 Segregation of Urban Labor Market..... | 70 |
| 4.2.3 Structural Constraints..... | 72 |
| 4.2.4 Deprivation of Institutional Resources..... | 74 |
| 4.2.5 Summary..... | 75 |
| 4.3 Local Sentiment and Perception of Rural Migrants..... | 76 |
| 4.4 Rural Migrants as Objects to Be Disciplined..... | 80 |
| Chapter Five: Dongguan: A Snapshot of the Disciplinary Power on Rural Migrants..... | 85 |
| 5.1 From Rural to Urban: the Economic Transformation of Qingxi Town in Dongguan..... | 89 |
| 5.2 The Techniques of Regulating the Female Migrant Body..... | 91 |
| 5.3 Women Migrants' Anxieties and Frustration..... | 96 |
| Chapter Six: Conclusion..... | 101 |
| Notes..... | 104 |
| Bibliography..... | 106 |

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Graham E. Johnson, for his continual support, encouragement, and guidance during the researching and writing of the thesis. His profound knowledge about China has been a constant source of inspiration. I also wish to thank my thesis committee member, Professor Dawn Currie, whose feedback and suggestions have been of tremendous help. I am grateful to both professors for reading drafts of the thesis with infinite patience and kindness.

In China, my gratitude goes to the Research Institute for Guangdong Development at Zhongshan (Sun Yat-Sen) University, which provided a wonderful opportunity for me to take a fieldwork visit to Qingxi Township (Guangdong province, China). I would like to thank the Qingxi township government, who was generous in hosting and arranging the field-trip. Finally, I am grateful to the labor migrants and all others whose input has contributed to the thesis.

Chapter One: Introduction

Throughout the 1950s, China implemented a series of laws, regulations, and programs whose effect was to differentiate residential groups and control rural-urban migration. Among those state strategies, the household registration system was the most significant in affecting the lives of Chinese— indeed, in determining their fates. In mainland China, all China individual's personal household registration status has to be recorded in this system. Before China started economic reform and the open-door policy in 1978, work was collectivized and assigned by the central state, private ownership was diminished and commercial activities were kept at minimum level. Because daily life and work of Chinese living in both rural and urban areas were increasingly subject to state control, without registration in this system, one could not establish eligibility for food, clothing or shelter, obtain employment, go to school, marry, and enlist in military services (Cheng and Selden 1994: 644). It decisively transformed China into a dualistic society where rural and urban areas were distinctively divided. It was next to impossible for peasants from rural areas to search job opportunities in urban areas.

In the wake of enormous social and economic changes since 1978, it became more and more evident that the restricted rural-urban mobility was incompatible with the expanding demands for cheap labor forces in China. In an effort to relax control on China's internal migration, the central government made a series of adjustments to the household registration system, which had been the most powerful institution to discourage rural-urban migration. As a result, rural-urban mobility was significantly increased. According to official and unofficial reports, at least 100 million peasants have left the rural hinterlands to seek employment and business opportunities in the urban centers.

In spite of the amplified freedom in rural-urban migration, the rural-urban divide remains China's largest social divide. It is extremely difficult for rural workers to be assimilated into and permanently reside in the host society. Providing cheap labor and services for the receiving areas, rural migrants are not entitled to the same legal rights as permanent urban residents and are subject to pervasive social discrimination, cultural alienation, and economic exploitation.

In addition to the rural-urban division, another great social divide in China is the one between women and men. For the most part, the Chinese government under Mao's leadership maintained the view that true gender equality would go hand in hand with socialism. Theoretically speaking, Communist intervention in gender relations was able to reduce women's vulnerability and powerlessness embedded in Chinese structural arrangements of family and work. In practice, improved gender relations were also achieved by the socialist organizations that controlled most aspects of daily life. Since the reforms were introduced, however, Chinese women have not benefited from the process of reform to the same extent as men; the subordination of women has been reinforced and increased in numerous ways. With the removal of the central planning mechanisms that ensured wage equality and with the transformation to a market-oriented economy, the differences between genders were pushed to an extreme. Women are put at disadvantage position because they still have to live up to the traditionally defined gendered role as mother, care giver, wife, and in many cases, breadwinner, while men continue to occupy the patriarchal position in family and workplace. Women are now encouraged to step out of the private sphere and participate in economic activities in the public sphere. Chinese ideology concerning gender roles and gender divisions of labor, however, has not been challenged, which means that some aspects of women's subordination to men are left untouched and some are being

exacerbated. The usual expectation that women will marry and take responsibility for the domestic sphere when they are in their twenties is in conflict with their migration process, which poses profound psychological affliction in them. Moreover, norms of gender proprieties as well as stereotypes associating women's behaviors remain dominant, which subjects women to moral sanction and social surveillance.

Women's increasing participation in economic production does not necessarily lead to their empowerment, which is especially true for those from rural areas; rather, their subjugation is reproduced as market forces take over state command. Rural women who are drawn to the system of economic production may be under less direct patriarchal control, but are subject to new forms of hierarchical subjugation and social constraints. They work for the lowest wages in poor and often unsafe conditions and in occupations that urbanites frown upon. Moreover, their work seems to be concentrated on a few industrial sectors. Even when working in the same industries, women migrants are less likely than men to occupy positions of power and high salary. While emerging market forces open up new avenues for rural women to break through the constraints of the household registration system to work in cities, booming towns and counties, multiple layers of political, social and cultural obstacles still exist between migrants and the host society, directly contributing to the marginalized positions of women migrants. Dislocated from their home places, those rural women working in the urban areas lack the necessary human and social capital to compete for better jobs, as well as sufficient cultural and institutional capital to be assimilated into the host society.

This thesis does not suggest specific strategies to overcome social inequality. This must be created in relation to the specific circumstances with which individuals and groups are

confronted at any particular moment and with regard to the interests and constraints of those involved (James and Salville-Smith 1994: 6). Rather, it focuses on the social, economic, as well as cultural contexts that shape the experiences of temporary migrants and women in particular. Instead of identifying the causal factors, I intend to illustrate how social, cultural and economic factors inform one another in a dialectical manner to shape gender and migration experiences. I aim to provide a general analysis of how institutional changes and structural reforms in China have reshaped social relations, especially gender relations and reproduced gender inequality in a period of increased spatial mobility and commercialization. By doing so, I intend to call for attention to the identities, values, and social positions of migrant women from their own perspective and thus facilitate the pursuit of a fairer and more tolerant society. More specifically, the thesis addresses the following interrelated questions: how does the state continue to regulate rural-urban mobility and classify rural migrants into a distinct group of subjects for renewed forms of social control and normalization? What are the institutional mechanisms and organizational structures involved in this classification process? How can we conceptualize the state-migrant relationship in order to make sense of women migrants' diverse experience? How does this state-migrant relationship reshape gender relations and gender division of labor, and perpetuate the subordination of women to men?

The above questions are probed in the following ways. First, the classification of migrant group is placed at the center of my inquiry to illuminate how a renewed form of state-migrant relation is artificially constructed by state institutions and mechanisms and consequently determines the subordinate positions of migrants in China, especially temporary women migrants. By temporary migrants, I refer to those who have moved, either temporarily or long-term, away

from their registered place of residence without a corresponding transfer of official residence registration (Arianne and Tamara 2004: 1). Temporary migrants lack local household registration status and affiliations with the state and local government, thus are considered to be inferior and “out of control”. They are distinguished from those permanent migrants, who are of primarily urban origin and whose relocation to another city has been officially sanctioned by being conferred local household registration status. Those permanent migrants come to town, blessed with either funds or the social connections to enable them to enjoy entrée to at least some of the benefits of the genuine urbanites, while temporary migrants are braving the odds without monetary means or ties to the influential (Solinger 1995: 116).

I argue that the process of classifying migrants into those with and without local household registration and subordinating one social group to another is consequence of the disciplinary power of the state over urban space. In essence, it is a manifestation of the unbalanced power relation between the state and the migrant population. Decentralization of decision making power and the extension of market economy have created the physical, social and economic space for individuals to seek personal improvement more flexibly than had been true for several decades. However, it does not mean that the state completely retreats from the public and private spheres of people’s lives. Nor does it grant individual freedom to escape entirely from government supervision and intervention. Rather, barriers set up by the powerful state authority are still existent to select or legitimize who can be staying in permanently and ultimately assimilated into the receiving societies. The process of selection or legitimization is made possible through the constantly reworking of the household registration system, the process of cultural alienation, the establishment of an elitist educational system, and the strengthened

segregation of urban labor market.

In the thesis, I will look into the institutions that dichotomize Chinese society into urban and rural, and the cultural context in which peasants are dehumanized and alienated, in an attempt to explore the process in which temporary migrants, especially women migrants, are alienated and marginalized in the receiving society.

Second, this thesis provides a qualitative account of how the volatile state-migrant relation affects temporary women's migratory experience. It is important to note that the social group of migrants is highly hierarchized according to the various kinds of resources or capitals they hold, including cultural capital (i.e. knowledge, skills, and other cultural acquisitions, as exemplified by educational or technical qualifications), economic capital (i.e. material wealth in the form of money, stocks and shares, property, etc.) (Bourdieu 1991: 14), social capital (i.e. social connections, networks, and the embedded resources) (Lin 2000: 286) and so on. Considering that socialist institutions and practices are still lingering in Chinese society, I add the concept of institutional capital to my discussion. According to Lin, institutional capital is the capital of mobilizable resources embedded in work units, organizations, party apparatus, work sectors, and occupations; capturing it requires entering and becoming part of these organizations, and the chance of entering these organizations depends on a combination of cultural and economic capitals (Lin 2000: 287). While focusing on gender, I maintain that the hierarchical arrangement within the migrant population is conditioned by the changing power relations between the state and the migrants and perpetuated by the uneven distribution of cultural, economic, social, and institutional capitals among migrants.

I do not claim that all temporary women migrants are put at the bottom of this hierarchy, as

this claim runs the risk of generalizing the heterogeneous experience of women: some do manage to accumulate a considerable amount of new wealth and fulfill their dreams of prosperity. However, economic achievement cannot be automatically translated into social recognition and upward mobility in the social hierarchy. Monetary accumulation does not stand for the empowerment of women migrants. It is worthwhile to highlight the fact that economic exploitation as well as cultural deprivation of temporary women migrants as a whole are, if not actually accepted, at least considered inevitable and natural, thus remains unchallenged. Increased chances to enter the workplace do not serve immediately as a social catalyst for women's empowerment. Compared with men, women have limited accessibilities to resources and rewards, the condition of which leads to gender inequality. This is arranged around unfair social structure and gender relations. Unlike many other studies of the migrant population that are motivated by concern about the causes of rural-urban migration and its economic impacts, this thesis is mainly concerned about the impacts of social arrangement on the experience of temporary migrants, and women in particular.

Third, while analyzing the ongoing reconfiguration of state-migrant relation and its impacts on determining migrants' socioeconomic position and shaping their experience in the receiving society, I situate a locally grounded analysis in the rapidly growing area of the Pearl River Delta region in Guangdong province. Migrants' experience in the host society will be represented at a micro-level. In China, the most appropriate sites for studying migration are cities and towns that have received large numbers of permanent and temporary migrants, and where changes in local economy have exerted great pull forces for the influx of migrants. The study of rural-urban migration must be tackled within the context of rapid socioeconomic changes and the

exacerbated rural-urban differences by the presence of migrants. For these reasons, I have chosen the Pearl River delta region for my analysis. This area has benefited immensely from its ties and proximity to Hong Kong, a major source of foreign investment into China since the late 1970s. The number of private enterprises, foreign funded firms (including those invested by entrepreneur from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and the oversea), and township and village enterprises has significantly increased.

Services such as domestic work, hotels, restaurants, repair shops, and hair salons have expanded side by side with factories (Fan 2002:110). Both economic transformation and infusion of foreign investment have accelerated the demands for cheap labor force. The influx of migrants, the majority of which are women from adjacent provinces and the mountainous areas of Guangdong province, has timely served those demands. Most of them have taken up low-paid, low-skilled jobs such as domestic workers, restaurant servants, and factory workers. Drawing on interviews with migrants themselves, the study produces first-person accounts of migration experience. Interviews with government officials, managerial personnel, entrepreneurs, and academic researchers were also conducted. This invaluable source of qualitative data can shed light on individual-level meanings and experiences in relation to social, political and economic changes at the macro-level.

In discussing my fieldwork findings, I have made comparisons with the findings about migration from other scholars. Combined with my personal experience of growing up in the Pearl River delta region, the study is expected to offer new insights into the hard reality concerning rural-urban migration, trying to bring to light the rupture between political rhetoric and the actual operation of state institutions and mechanisms.

1.1 A Review of Contemporary Research

The large-scale rural-urban migration has fascinated many scholars in the West as well as those in China in various disciplines ranging from anthropology and history, to economics, sociology and urban planning. Literature on internal migration in China has been accumulated at an unprecedented rate. However, most existing scholarship on China's migration tends to focus on its structural causes, the general profile of the migrant population, and migratory trends (Li 2002: 275), supported by assembling demographic data and quantitative data derived from census. Centered on large cities in China, they are concerned primarily with the macro-level demographic, economic, and political effects of migration, and with how the influx of migrants into urban areas should be managed (Gaetano and Jacka 2004: 2). Relatively few scholars have sought to understand how rural-urban migration in China is experienced by migrants themselves, and even fewer have focused on the circumstances of female rural rural-to-urban migrants or examined the impact of gender on the experience of migration (Gaetano and Jacka 2004: 2). Some English literature may discuss migrants' motivations for migration, aspects of their lives in the cities, their personal evaluation of their work and living conditions, relations with residents and authorities, and changes in personal values and social status (Gaetano and Jacka 2004: 32). However, most of those researchers base their discussion on data collected through large- and small- scale questionnaire sample surveys, which confines them to providing a rather general view of migrants' situations.

It is not until recent years that some authors began to adopt a qualitative approach and conduct extensive interviews with migrants, which generates thorough understandings of individuals' values and perceptions. In her impressive work about the dynamic interactions

among markets, labor migrants, and the institutions of state socialism, Solinger carried out nearly 150 hours of interviews in China with city officials, scholars, and over fifty migrants in six major cities (Solinger 1999: 14). In combination with extensive documentary research, Solinger describes urban household registration status as an emblem or a badge of (urban) citizenship because household registration virtually defines rural migrants in the cities as noncitizens and bars “the great lot of them from enjoying any of the welfare benefits and social services that urbanites received as their natural birthright (Solinger 1999: 5)”. She highlights the profound effects of the household registration not solely in economic terms, but also in political and cultural terms (Zhang 2002: 276). However, by treating social processes as autonomous dynamics among market, social classes, migrant population, and institutions, the self-determining or voluntary aspect of individual actions is lost. Individual migrants are viewed as the products of social structures instead of active agents. Moreover, her work provides a rather broad-brush view of the situation of migrants in major provincial-level cities across China, where experiences of those working in medium- or small-sized cities, towns and counties are largely missing. In fact, a close examination of the growth dynamics of China reveals that Chinese urbanization has been driven more by the spontaneous growth of industrial and commercial production from the grassroots than by forces of urban sprawl, or the relocation of population and manufacturing from large cities (Lin 1997: 5). Areas that develop most rapidly are actually those medium- and small-sized cities, towns, and counties in the Pearl River delta, where the global meets the local to revolutionize the socioeconomic landscape and bring in waves of migrants. Research on the relationship between rural women’s migration and the rapid social, economic and cultural changes in those areas can undoubtedly deepen our understanding of

relevant issues.

More recently, Li Zhang (2001) has written a detailed ethnography of Zhejiangcun, a community of rural migrants, mostly from Wenzhou, living in Beijing. Zhang is particularly concerned with the relationship between power and the production of social space. By examining the ways in which migrants are reshaping the urban landscape, remaking local power structures, and producing new forms of citizenship within Zhejiangcun, she explores how space, power, and identity continually intersect to reconfigure the state-society relationship in a period of increased spatial mobility and marketization. Her book offers fascinating insight into the profound social and political repercussions of economic transformations.

While Solinger's analysis in *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China* (1999) is placed on a macro, structural level, Zhang's ethnographical study delves more deeply into the micro processes through which the relationships among space, power, and the state are actually played out in the making and remaking of a migrant community (Zhang 2001: 12). With Zhang's ethnographic research method, rural migrants are able to articulate how they experience in their everyday lives the wide range of difficulties and dilemmas caused by the existing social structure. The influence of gender relations and the unique circumstances of women migrants are touched on within the household level. Discussion about women migrants is confined to the setting of relatively small, household-based garment manufacturing within Zhejiangcun, where residential place and workplace are combined in a shared physical space and where the spatial boundaries between workplace, market, and home are significantly blurred. Though analysis at the household level can provide in-depth understanding of the patriarchal order and gender domination, it misses out the social and cultural factors introduced by globalization and the

powerful institutionalized mechanisms set up by the state to determine individual access to resources.

Besides the outstanding contribution made by Solinger and Zhang to the understanding of Chinese migrant populations in the context of rapidly social, cultural and political changes, more and more feminist-inspired writers are also making efforts to examine gender inequality in socially, locally, and historically contextualized terms. They provide rich accounts of gender politics, the social organization of local labor markets, and labor discipline as experienced by women migrants themselves. For example, in her ethnographic study of two gendered regimes of production in two factories in the south China, Lee (1995) identified two patterns of disciplinary practices— “localistic despotism” and “familial hegemony” — each of which serves to control women workers with distinctive techniques. In parallel with Lee’s studies, Pun carried out participant studies about the ambiguous identities experienced by migrant women workers in foreign-invested factories in Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. She argued that new social identities and relations of domination were created by the interplay among party-state, the capitalist market, and China’s patriarchal arrangements. As well, a burgeoning literature on the productive and reproductive labor of women migrant workers under other social, political, and cultural contexts has informed us about the diversities in experience and modes of domination. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to cover all the works on Chinese internal migration and gender issues. Inspired by Solinger’s comprehensive treatment of the dynamic interactions among market forces, migrants, and the lingering state institutions from a structuralist perspective and by Zhang’s ethnographic research method which enables migrants to voice their perception of migratory experience, this thesis is an attempt at building upon insights offered by

previous scholarship and at enriching research on how rural women's migration transforms social relations and especially gender relations from women's perspective. Instead of contextualizing migration in core Chinese cities, the thesis tackles issues of migration against a backdrop of dramatic social and economic growth taking place in smaller cities, towns and counties.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Before exploring the interactions between state and labor migrants, I shall examine conventional theories of labor migration. Based on capitalist market economies, theoretical approaches have often been applied to the analyses of China's internal migration. Among those theoretical frameworks, neoclassical and structuralist theories of migration have been influential. Both theoretical categories dichotomize economies and spaces into urban cores and traditional rural peripheries (e.g., Wood 1982; Kearney 1986; Shrestha 1988; Goldscheider 1987). In general, these geographical concepts of core and periphery describe a nationwide pattern of uneven development favoring the coastal regions over the interior provinces, though within these regions cities are advantaged over the countryside (Murphy 2002: 12).

In the view of neoclassical theorists, the process of migration involves the spatial redistribution of labor from low-productivity peripheries to high-productivity cores as well as the diffusion of resources from the latter to the former (Murphy 2002: 12). At the macroeconomic level, it is motivated by the following chief economic factors: lack of income-earning opportunities, high-person-to-land ratios, generalized economic depression, and inequalities in the distribution of and access to land and other resources between regions, villages, and families (e.g., Connel et al. 1976; Lee 1985; Mazumdar 1987). Peasants are pushed out of their homes by economic necessity, pressure on the land, and lack of local opportunities for earning a living. At

the individual level, it is an outcome of migrants' rational considerations of the relative benefits and cost- mainly financial but also psychological (Todaro 1976) - against the "expected" allures of the city. According to neoclassical view, migration is an investment in human capital and a result of rational calculations of costs and returns (e.g., Schultz 1961; Sjaastad 1962; Todaro 1969).

Whereas the neoclassical perspective emphasizes the rational-choice, cost-benefit calculations of the individual migrants, structuralists reject neoclassical theories as ignoring the institutional and structural factors that mold the alternatives of migrants' calculations. Structural explanations of migration puts migrants' relocation in the larger context of institutional and market processes, arguing that migration is an result of uneven capitalist expansion, adverse terms of trade in agricultural and industrial goods, and biased government policies affecting regional patterns of development (Murphy 2002: 13). The bulk of research employing structuralist perspective has focused on the existence of the urban labor market, which is segmented into two sectors: the formal and informal sectors, or the primary and secondary sectors. Rural migrants who are unable to find work in the formal sector have to cluster in the informal sector, one that marked by labor-intensive production, unskilled labor, low productivity and income, and poor job security and protection (Harris and Todaro 1970; McGee 1982; Gupta 1993). Along with the formal/informal or primary/secondary dichotomy in the labor market, institutional factors are also identified to be central to the investigations of migration. Empirical studies in China as well as in other capitalist countries have shown that migrants and the marginalized subpopulations in society are most likely to be subject to institutional constraints, such as migration restrictions and discrimination. Those constraints further illustrate the

inadequacy of investigations that rely solely on neoclassical explanations, and suggest that a structural perspective is necessary for understanding the interaction between migration and the state institutions.

In grappling with the central research question in the thesis— about the ways state institutions reproduce women migrants' subjugation and determine their migratory experience under the context of rapidly changing social, cultural, and economic urban societies— I find both neoclassical and structuralist theories relevant and useful. Notions of unevenness of spatial development between the urban cores and the countryside help explain the forces that draw peasants out of their homes. Structural and institutional conditions structure rural migrants' accessibility to desirable jobs in the urban areas. In the Chinese context, institutional affiliations with the state can be translated into great opportunities in the urban society; conversely, temporary migrants' lack of these affiliations renders them marginalized position. Both neoclassical and structuralist theories are suggestive in understanding migrants' experience. However, I must make a major supplement to them both: in China, cultural norms, values, traditions and ritual practices play a significant role in shaping one's perception or understanding of his or her experience and the ways people negotiate realities. They embrace not only symbolic expression but also the structural relations that delimit migrants' relations to the host society. Migrants' experience must be seen as the product of the working and reworking of culture and political economy. Migratory behavior is neither entirely programmed by an infinite variety of cultural rules, nor compelled by externalized political and economic forces (Siu 1989: 13); rather, it is the result of cultural, political and economic factors.

Informed by neoclassical and structuralist approaches to the study of the migrant population,

I am also guided by two important theoretical points in making my analysis. First culture is integral to the social organization of domination. According to Bourdieu, culture reproduces class domination to the extent that the dominating classes can impose their cultural values, standards, and tastes on the whole society, or at least install their cultural preferences as the standard of what is the highest, best and most legitimate in national culture (Seidman 1998: 155). The dominant culture contributes to the legitimation of the established order by distinctions (hierarchies) and legitimating these distinctions (Bourdieu 1991: 167). This process of legitimization in essence is an arbitrary imposition of the power relations (Bourdieu 1991: 222) among different social groups. Building on Bourdieu's insights into the dynamics between culture and social inequality, I maintain that to better understand how labor migrants are conceived to be of lower class or lower quality in China today, one must ask: what are the cultural preferences in urban societies? How is the rural culture perceived against those urban cultural definitions, norms and values? What political and cultural ramifications do those distinctions entail?

Second, in his various sketches of sexuality, prisons, madness, and the human societies, Foucault delineates the emergence of a disciplinary social order. He argues that social order is maintained less through a hierarchy of ruler and ruled than through an apparatus of disciplinary techniques and discourses. Power in a disciplinary order is manifested less in the form of repression than in the production of subjects or social selves who are positioned as objects of normalizing control (Seidman 1998: 245). The same is true of China today. Through the establishment of the officially sanctioned criteria of right and wrong conduct and thought, the Chinese socialist state imposes its disciplinary power to regulate individual behaviors. Those

who fall outside the normalizing criteria are stigmatized or deviant population. For example, in China a stable people-place relationship is largely considered to be a normal way of life and as a basis for social stability (Zhang 2001: 32). Migrants' spatial mobility, however, destabilizes this relationship and, therefore, migrants are largely treated by the state and by the host societies as a threat to social stability. Their presence is almost tantamount to being potential crime. For example, the explanation for migrant crime presented by many city dwellers is that because migrants are not permanently attached to any urban community they do not have any moral responsibility for the places that they "pass through" (Zhang 2001: 33).

In sum, informed by Bourdieu's conceptual work of culture and Foucault's power relation, this thesis examines how institutionalized mechanisms and notions of cultural apparatus are woven together to construct labor migrant population as unregulated and formless entity that requires social control and surveillance. This kind of social control and surveillance in return reinforces the dominant power of the state and its affiliated apparatuses while reproduces the dominated positions of migrants.

1.3 Methodology

My primary research site is Qingxi, a fast growing township in Dongguan municipality¹ which hosted a significant amount of foreign invested manufactories and migrant workers. I first learned about Qingxi through a research project carried out by Guangdong Development Research Institute in Zhongshan University. A research team consisting of graduate students from Sociology and Business Management departments in Zhongshan University was sponsored by the Qingxi local government to explore strategies of developing Qingxi into a more preferable place for life and work. I was honored to be a member of the research team.

The research project was operated from three perspectives: that of entrepreneurs, of managerial personnel, and of labor migrants, and explored how these three distinctive social groups experience life and work in Qingxi. The whole team was divided into three groups, with each group responsible for collecting data in relation to entrepreneurs, managerial personnel, and labor migrants respectively. I was in the group studying labor migrants and in June 2004, we conducted a fieldtrip to Qingxi, where we visited a number of foreign-invested and township enterprises. Most of the qualitative data for my thesis was derived from that trip. In all, we carried out twenty three in-depth interviews with labor migrants, both with and without local household registration status, and a number of informal conversations with migrants from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Enterprises we visited were selected and arranged beforehand by local officials, while interviewees were chosen randomly at the production shop floor by their managers or directors. Our request that we be allowed to talk to women engaging in work along the production line and from outside the Pearl River delta was granted in each visit. The questions we asked were about miscellaneous aspects of migrants' experience in Qingxi, such as the decision-making process concerning migration, income, work conditions, their perception of identities and social relations, and future plans. A topic guide was devised to set out the key topics and issues to be covered during the interview. However, the structure was sufficiently flexible to permit topics to be covered in the order most suited to the interviewee, and to allow response to be fully probed and explored (Ritchie and Lewis 2004: 141). While tape recorded, I also took notes of nuances, hesitation, emotion and non-verbal signals imbedded in conversation by the migrants. In most cases, interviews were conducted in Mandarin. Cantonese was also used when interviewees were from adjacent areas to the Pearl River delta region.

Observations in the research fields and some of the qualitative accounts derived from interviews with key informants as well as informal conversations with women migrant workers have informed the discussion in the thesis.

Located in the intersection of Dongguan, Shenzhen and Huizhou, Qingxi occupies a strategic position as the economic linkage of the special economic zone and the Pearl River delta. Known previously as the “Siberia of Dongguan”, it remains isolated and impoverished due to its weak economic base and backward social as well as physical infrastructure. When economies of towns and cities nearby had been reinvigorated by the inflow of external investments, Qingxi was the least ideal place for investors in spite of its rich land resources and advantageous location. In order to find the way out, local government recognized the important potential of Qingxi’s geographical position and dedicated to the development of transportation infrastructure. After transportation was identified as the key to revitalize the local economy, all possible efforts were made, and all possible resources were mobilized. In the early 1990s, large-scale road construction was carried out, resulting in the significant improvement of the physical investment environments. Two accompanying effects are the massive inflowing of export-processing factories and labor migrants, which significantly reconstruct the social, economic and political landscape of Qingxi. Since the early 1990s, a substantial amount of investment from mainly Hong Kong and Taiwan has been pouring into Qingxi, accompanying which is the remarkable increase of export-processing factories and employment opportunities. In response, tides of rural peasants have been coming to Qingxi in search of jobs and economic opportunities. According to Statistical Yearbook of Dongguan 2001, some 350,000 migrants have been residing in Qingxi. The number is significant compared with an indigenous population of only 31,000. The majority

of those migrants are unmarried female at the age between 15 and 25. Though situations in Qingxi are not representative of the whole migrant population, the development process of Qingxi incorporates factors that determined the life chances of transient peoples. Migrants' life and work experience in Qingxi epitomizes the ways in which state power persistently reproduce unequal distribution of resources and opportunities between temporary migrants and local residents, and between men and women under the context of rapid social, economic as well as cultural changes in China.

Chapter Two: the Institutional Context: Household Registration System – a Transition from Suppression to Discipline

Large-scale rural-urban migration has been a central component of social and economic changes in contemporary China. It is important to note that the context of migration can not be thoroughly understood without a close examination of the household registration system, as well as the historical and political settings from which it arose. Here I make the contention that the Communist state continues to play a salient role in shaping people's everyday lives and their understanding of their diverse experiences, despite the accelerating market forces in the economic sphere. At the same time, the ways in which state power operates have indeed changed. The state exercises its power no longer through oppression or restriction but through discipline or regulation. Before economic reform, the state coercively prohibited urban in-migration. As economic reform progressed, the market demands for cheap labor force calls for state's relaxation on peasants' mobility. In order to accommodate its blueprint of economic development, the state now allows peasants to migrate to urban areas, on the premise that they are regulated and disciplined by expanding bureaucratic mechanisms to control their movements. Urban areas now become sites where rural and urban forces contest with each other with state power in place.

As Myron Cohen has argued, a rural/urban divide and the notion that urban life was superior to rural life were not features of traditional China, but emerged only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Cohen 1993: 156). Actually, during the heyday of a dynasty, Chinese society was a high-mobility system (Skinner 1971: 275), in which peasants were able to climb up the social hierarchy through exploiting business opportunities in economic central places or taking advantage of the opportunities for education and bureaucratic service in

the administrative central places (Skinner 1971: 275). High rates of upward mobility increased peasants' social and cultural versatility; peasants were exposed to diverse customs, alien values, and exogenous norms- elements originating not only in other communities like their own but also in cities, elements drawn not only from other little traditions but also from the great tradition of the imperial elite (Skinner 1971: 277). In this way, the demarcation between the rural and cities was rather insignificant. As Ch'ing dynasty wore on, foreign imperialism and industrialization brought about a functional and physical distinction between cities and the surrounding countryside (Stockman 2000: 46). This rural/urban distinction was accompanied by new discourses in which the countryside and its "peasants" were marked as essentially different from and inferior to urbanites (Cohen 1993: 154-157). Peasants were widely portrayed as prime examples of the backwardness and oppression within traditional society, serving as a metaphor for the nation's ills (Jacka and Gaetano 2004: 14). Despite the superiority of the urban areas and the inferiority of the rural, migrants were not treated as a distinct social group that needed to be put under spatial control and legal regulation.

Subsequently, when the Communist Party under Mao Zedong came into power, "peasants" continued to bear the cultural baggage of being poor and uncouth. In spite of the Maoist rhetoric of dedicating to the abolition of the inequalities between the city and the countryside, mental and manual labor, and workers and peasants, voluntary labor migration to the cities came to be seen as a national problem that needed to be treated. The rural migrants coming into cities could not be fully absorbed by urban industries, thus exacerbating the urban unemployment. It was believed that peasants should remain on the farmlands so that they could continue to provide enough food supplies for urbanites. Peasants' movement into urban areas was considered to be

undermining China's industrialization and nation-building process. Further, it has been clearly expressed in Confucianist ideology that peasants are attached to their native land. The idealized images of spatially bound social life constructed by Confucius and Taoist texts are often invoked today as a desirable moral way of life for peasants (Zhang 2001: 33). Peasants' spatial mobility goes against this Chinese culture and is viewed as potential threat to the traditional way of maintaining social order. Therefore, it should be restricted.

Eventually, the divide between rural and urban was reified in the late 1950s, with the repeal of *baojia* (household registration and surveillance) system and the introduction of the household registration system. Under the *baojia* system, local populations were required to register with a given locality and then divided into units, usually composed of ten households each, with members mutually responsible for seeing that everyone in the *baojia* unit maintained good order. If a violation occurred and caught the attention of officials, everyone in the *baojia* unit would be punished for the crime of one of its members (Fei 1992: 63). This pattern of organization in China during late-imperialist and the Republican periods has significant implications for consolidating central power and maintaining rather static communities. In the same spirit, the household registration system was instituted in the late 1950s to classify people according to place of residence and as belonging to either agricultural or nonagricultural households. In contrast to the purposes of *baojia* system, which were merely to extend the central government's power into each household (Fei 1992: 144) and keep track of the population, the household registration system was set up to check free flows of resources, including labor, between industry and agriculture, and between cities and the countryside. It served to dichotomize China into a privileged urban society and an underprivileged rural one.

Under the household registration system, all China nationals' personal household status is classified by two related parts: residential location and registration classification (Fan 2002: 106). Registration location is based on one's presumed regular residence. Each citizen is required to register in one and only one place of regular residence. The most common categories of the place of household registration are urban centers (cities, towns, or industrial and mining areas) or rural settlements (villages or state farms). The local regular household registration defines a person's rights for many activities in a specified locality (Chan and Zhang 1999: 821). For example, many types of urban jobs, even in the present day of reforms, are still limited to local household registration status holders only. As for registration classification, it refers to as "nonagricultural" and "agricultural" categories. With the introduction of a nation-wide state monopoly and rationing system for grain in 1955, citizens living in the urban areas and engaged in non-agricultural activities at that time were classified as non-agricultural population; others as agricultural population. This classification was used to determine a person's entitlements to state-subsidized food grain and other prerogatives. While the non-agricultural population was entitled to state-subsidized but rationed grain supply (Chan and Zhang 1999:822), agricultural households had to rely on their own food supply.

Indeed, were it not in combination with other aspects of the central command system under Maoist regime, the household registration system could not have been able to effectively prevent rural-to-urban migration. For most of the years since the Communists took power in 1949, the state followed the Soviet practice of state socialism, developing a centrally controlled system in which the state monopolized nearly all of the nation's political, economic, and social affairs (Lin 1997: 22). In order to carry out the national development strategy, which was to seek high rates

of industrial output, the state assumed the practice of providing jobs and subsidized food and housing for all urban residents. At the same time, the countryside was left on its own. Unemployment insurance or any national welfare programs were absent there. To ensure that the state would not be burdened by the expansion of urban population, measures were subsequently adopted to keep peasants in the villages. In August 1955, two months after establishing the household registration system, the State Council's "Provisional Measures Governing Grain-Rationing in Cities and Towns" established "provisional" rationing (Cheng and Selden 1994: 657), which basically remained unchanged until the early 1980s. Under the complex ration system, which was soon extended from grain to most other foods as well as to cotton and cloth, urban residents were provided with grain-supply cards. With grain-supply cards, they were able to draw local or nation-wide grain tickets in local grain stores as appropriate within the limits of their specified ration (Cheng and Selden 1994: 658). In contrast, peasants who planned to travel had to bring their own grain to state grain stations where they could exchange it for grain tickets. Any change in family members as a result of marriage, birth, death, separation, school, job change, migration, etc., required presentation of the household registration books to arrange for additions, reductions, or transfers in grain supply (Cheng and Selden 1994: 658). In this way, household registration was intimately tied to access to food through rationing.

Not only sharply distinguished urban and rural position and status through accessibilities to resources provided by the state, the household registration system also differentiated the basis for recording residence in city and countryside. While in cities, public security organs kept a register of each household, in the countryside the co-operative (collective, usually the brigade) maintained a single register with the names of all households and individuals. In other words, a

separate record was kept for each urban household, while rural households were simply recorded as part of the larger village collective (Cheng and Selden 1994: 663). This regulation explicitly linked the registration status with collective membership for rural residents. To forfeit the collective membership would result in loss of land allocation and jeopardize the pooling of agricultural income paid to the whole rural family, not the individual. Consequently, peasants were reluctant to leave their land for fear that their lifelong subsistence would be lost.

In addition to reifying the rural-urban divide, the institutional structure of the household registration system also reinforced gender inequality. In the case of a husband and wife living and working in different cities, in a city and a village, or in two different villages, separate household registrations were required, with children normally registered with their mother, the partner overwhelmingly more likely to occupy a lower rank in the household scale (Cheng and Selden 1993). Under the premises that transfer to urban household registration status for the purpose of family union was difficult to obtain and that it was men who were more often called upon in their roles as cadres, skilled technicians, industrial workers within state-owned enterprises, military personnel, and postsecondary students or scholars, a great proportion of rural women were found to be confined in the countryside. While men were able to move upward through fulfillment of state's human resource needs, women were left with little ground for achieving social mobility.

It was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that the state realized the incompatibilities between coercive measures to prohibit rural to urban migration and the increasing demand for cheap labor force in the urban areas. To adjust to new circumstances, controls on rural-to-urban migration were relaxed. Previously, natural villages, or village neighborhoods, village-alliances,

and historic marketing areas became production teams, brigades, and communes- units of production and management in the collective system of production (Johnson 1997: 733). During the period of economic reform and transition to a market economy, the commune system was dismantled and replaced by the household responsibility system, under which each peasant household was allocated a piece of land and required to fulfill specified state quota in return for land allocation. In this way, peasants were given freedom to decide what to grow on the basis of geographical advantages and individual specialties. In addition, efforts were made by the peasants to diversify their products, which resulted in an overall improvement in rural incomes and agricultural productivity. As a result of increased economic capital and higher level of productivity, many peasants found themselves underemployed in the rural areas. Moreover, the shortage of suitable land and the relatively limited alternative agricultural employment opportunities have produced tremendous pressures for releasing peasants from rural areas. Together with the dismantlement of the commune system, the policy of food rationing was also abolished in the early 1980s, which made it possible for peasants to find work in urban areas. Food grain and other foodstuffs have become readily obtainable without ration coupons in free markets.

Meanwhile, the growth of urban economy stimulated a huge need for unskilled workers at low cost, especially in enterprises of non-state-owned property and the construction and service sectors. Hectic urban construction, vibrant township and village enterprises and mushrooming private business seem to create an endless demand for low-cost migrant labor (Chan 1994: 144). Jobs in those fields are characterized as lacking job security and welfare benefits, of low status and low skill level, and physically exhausting. Largely rejected by urbanites, they are, however,

considered by peasants to be avenues to escape the backward countryside and seek their fortune in urban areas. Not surprisingly, demand for those jobs has grown rapidly for rural migrant workers who are willing to accept the poor working conditions and cheap wages.

Though obstacles for peasants to work in urban societies were removed to meet the economic needs, the central government is still concerned about urban overpopulation, and thus far a series of supplementary regulations have been added to the household registration system, with the purpose of tracking and policing migrants and restricting their settlement in certain urban areas.

In order to be able to work in urban areas, people aged 16 and over who intend to stay in urban areas other than their place of household registration for more than three months are required to apply for a temporary residence certificate (Chan and Zhang 1999: 832) at the destination. The application process often involves other cumbersome registration and documentation paperwork (such as for work permits and family planning permits) and payment of administration fee (Solinger 1999: chapter 3). First the workers have to be in possession of a certificate from the home place's government allowing them to leave and go into the city. Then, the workers have to be issued a temporary work permit. Next, factory's leaders wishing to employ peasant laborers are to take this permit to the public security bureau, which will dispense a temporary residence certificate before the workers will be entitled to sign a contract with the employer (Solinger 1999: 83). In order to comply with the family planning policy, a married woman migrating into the city has to bring along a pregnancy certificate² from her home government, which makes her eligible for transferring to the urban version of that certificate. Should she arrive without the necessary documentation from home, she would be ordered back

to take care of the procedure in order to be eligible for applying for a residence certificate and any other sort of work license (Solinger 1999: 83). At the same time, citizen identity card was introduced in 1985 and became mandatory for everyone over sixteen years of age in 1989. Citizen identity card shows one's registered regular address and should be carried about by all citizens. In this way, local authorities can readily identify outsiders by examining their cards and use this practice to achieve its desirable objectives of social control.

Apart from these two innovative uses of temporary residence certificate and citizen identity card to regulate migrants, other complicated bureaucratic procedures are set up by local governments to extract revenue, and either attract or repel migrants. To receive employment, migrant has to apply for an employment registration card issued by the labor recruitment service in the original place of his or her household registration and an employment permit at the destination. Some urban regulatory organs also require that migrants have a certificate of good health before they can register for other permits (Gaetano and Jacka 2004: 18). Application fees for those certificates vary distinctly from cities to cities, depending on local market needs for labor migrants. On top of the costs of permits and certificates, miscellaneous fees are also charged arbitrarily by various administration bodies and unscrupulous employers, all of which make migration costly.

In recent years, the central government has moved further toward relaxing rural-to-urban controls and lifted the privileges associated with local urban household status. The household registration system has been undergoing a series of reforms. However, it remains highly selective to be conferred a local urban registration status, except in the case of those involving reunions of family members of urban intellectuals and cadres living in different locales (Chan 1994: 144). As

part of the effort to develop small towns and cities, in 2001 the State Council declared that all urban areas having a population of less than 100,000 should grant a local urban registration to those with a stable job and a fixed residence in the city (Gaetano and Jacka 2004: 19). As temporary labor migrants can only pick up those unstable and undesirable jobs, it is virtually impossible for them to obtain local urban registration status. Since the late 1980s, the practice of selling urban residency rights has also become a popular means to raise funds for local construction of physical infrastructure and other purposes. The price of an urban household status varies regionally and changes with time, largely depending on the location and urban administrative status of the place. It ranges from a few thousand to some 50,000 yuan (Chan and Zhang 1999: 838). This practice actually created a market for those who can afford to buy a local urban household status while it excluded those peasant migrants who lack the economic capital to be legally recognized in the urban areas.

2.1 Summary

To sum up, the rural/urban distinctions are continuing themes. Before the Communist regime took power in 1949, rural-to-urban migration was actively encouraged or at least permitted rather than restricted. Indeed, privately organized geographical mobility predominated in both the late imperial (ca. 1700-1911) and Republican (1912-49) periods, despite their continuation of an ancient tradition of registering the population (both for land taxation and for local, mutual self-patrols through the *baojia* system) (Solinger 1999: 28). By contrast, when the Communist regime came into power, invisible walls between the urban and the rural were set up through the implementation of the household registration system and relevant laws and regulations, thus institutionalized the distinctions between the rural and the urban. The subsequent political, social

and cultural ramifications were that peasants' mobility was stymied for decades and stereotypes against peasants have developed to justify on-going prejudice and social exclusion.

Whereas urban in-migration before Chinese economic reform in late 1970s was coercively stifled by the strict implementations of the household registration system, rural commune, and food rationing, Chinese strategies concerning urban in-migration have been constantly subject to changes as economic reform progressed. Denying the presence of migrants in urban areas would only threaten the national blueprint of economic development and industrialization. The state thus wields its power on migrants not so much through suppression as through discipline or regulation. The post-Mao regime by no means intends to repudiate the household registration system, which is instead constantly reformed and made more flexible to accommodate the new need of regulating peasants on the move. As market demand for migrant labor to fill in low-end, dirty, and dangerous jobs increases, peasants are allowed to enter the urban areas. However, their arrival in the urban areas has not led to the dissolution of social division between the urbanites and the rural peasants. The household registration system and its affiliated policies and practices still linger and the remnants of decades of state efforts to divide rural and urban areas continue to shape fundamental aspects of social structures and social relations. The state institutions and mechanisms remain salient features that characterize contemporary China.

In all, this section of the thesis outlines historically the development of the household registration and relevant state policies concerning rural-to-urban migration. Those state institutions and regulations contribute to the construction of rural migrants' marginal status in urban society and their sense of identities. The weakening of intrusive and oppressive modes of state power is accompanied by a simultaneous strengthening of a regulatory power, buttressed by

the expansion of local bureaucratic apparatuses. This disciplinary power of the state subjugates migrants as undesirable subjects or outsiders in the urban society. While chapter one sheds light on the institutional background for internal migration in China, chapter two will turn to discussion of migrants from the cultural prism. Though the historical content has been laid out at a level of generalization that may obscure regional variations and administrative diversity, it is expected to provide strong relevancy for the rigorous analysis of the cultural continuity in the next chapter. By exploring changes in culture- specifically, in images of peasants and women and the appropriation of culture between urban and rural, and between men and women, chapter two serves to illuminate how the household registration system and relevant migration policies are interwoven with the cultural reconstruction of peasants and women as subjects to be disciplined, which has contributed to alienating them, and deepening the bifurcation effects between the urbanites and the rural incomers and between men and women.

Chapter Three: the Cultural Context: Construction of the Migrant Body

Decades of institutional barriers for peasants to migrate to urban areas has now been replaced by an era of heightened rural-to-urban mobility and increased interaction between the rural and the urban. However, the demographic circulation between the rural and the urban has not yet resulted in an increasing degree of cultural and social tolerance but in an acute cultural alienation and social discrimination. Institutional dichotomization is matched by the cultural division between the urbanites and the peasants, in which urbanites assert urban cultural superiority on the basis of their perceptions of peasants' material weakness and cultural impoverishment, while peasants continue to hold the prejudice against urbanites who bracket peasants with the cultural and moral stigmas of being uncivilized and uncouth.

On the basis of my own life experience in China, I found the notion of ethnicity useful and appropriate as a point of departure for an analysis of rural migrants' conditions in urban areas. Comprehensive reading of relevant literature and the fieldtrip to Qingxi town also confirm that ethnic traits single indigenous people out from rural in-migrants and are manipulated to fuel local xenophobia and social discrimination. With respect to peasants on the move, their dislocation from their native places, their inabilities to speak local dialect and conform to local standards of living are the most significant sources of differentiation. The categorization of rural migrants based on ethnic criteria provides the foundation for stereotyping treatment of outsiders. In this chapter, I will examine the process in which distinctions between rural and urban were invented. While looking into the reasons why peasants are culturally alienated in urban areas, I also argue that the process of cultural alienation involves a complex process of objectifying peasant migrants as subjects for state disciplinary practices. Realizing that gender relations are

fundamental to social relations, I explore as well in the final part the ideological framework that structures gender divisions of labor and gender roles, so as to pave the way for discussion in subsequent chapters about the anxieties and pressure women migrants have to cope with.

3.1 The Construction of Peasant Identity in Recent Chinese History

The distinctions between rural and urban were not invented by the Communist state; rather, they derived from a long-term historical process involving a complex deployment of political, spatial, economic and social structures of dominance. Therefore, it is necessary to put contemporary issues of rural-to-urban migration in the context of the historical conditions in which ideological conceptions about rural peasants were generated. Rather than attempting a comprehensive history, this section of chapter two focuses attention on certain issues regarding the interactions among peasantry, urban society, and state power. By analyzing how images of subordinated peasants have been created as factually “backward”, this part is intended to highlight the differentiation of rural and urban as a consequence of power relations, as well as to pave the way for the discussion developed in subsequent parts of the thesis.

During the seventeenth century, the countryside was romanticized as a “repository of wisdom and virtue” by urban dwellers (Zweig 1989: 17). Peasants were not treated as destructive force that baffles the process of civilization and social advancement; their rootedness to land and seclusion apart from the hustle and bustle of market centers was idealized as a desirable moral way of life. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, rural Chinese society took on a distinguishable character. With Enlightenment ethos coming to China first in the form of Social Darwinism and later in Marxist theory (Kipnis 1995: 113), peasants were associated with feudalism and reduced to be objects distinctively separated from those living in

cities. They were viewed as backward because they participated in a feudal mode of production and lacked revolutionary impetus, which was in sharp contrast with the industrial and revolutionary urban residents. Later on during the turmoil years of wars against foreign invasion and Chiang Kai-shek regime, Communist party members were forced out of the cities and had to retreat into the countryside. At that time, communist leaders began to regard cities as corrupt and evil places morally distinct from the pure and innocent countryside. They rejected Marxist orthodoxy that peasants are not able to constitute a revolutionary class and adopted the notion that poor peasants possessed the potential for revolution. Subsequently, peasants were mobilized by Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Zedong to fight for liberation. They listened to Chairman Mao, and followed the communist party. It was not mere rifles that won the war, but the blood and sweat of thousands of peasants and their will (Ru 1983: 371-372). Paradoxically, after the Communists won the revolution war, peasant steady faith in the Communist party was betrayed. The Maoist government adopted the Soviet development model, which is characterized by the strong commitment to the Communist ideology and a centrally planned economic system dominated by state-owned enterprises in the cities. Full urban development became a practical and ideological priority of the Maoist government at the expense of rural development. While urbanites could enjoy all kinds of social welfare benefits provided by the state, peasants were abandoned and had to rely on themselves. Further, China's perceived inferiority was deflected onto the backwardness of rural "peasants" and modernization was believed to lie on the strengthening of an industrial base in urban areas. Assertion about the inconsistency between peasantness and China's future of industrialization became conflated with other intensified cultural distinctions between the rural and the urban. Consequently, in 1958, rural and urban

people were institutionally divided with the reinforcement of the household registration system.

During the years between 1958 and 1978, the rural-urban interaction created a rather paradoxical context of moral superiority and material inferiority for peasants. In rural areas, poor peasants, though deprived of the material prosperity of urbanites, could declare themselves morally superior (Kipnis 1995: 117) to their urban counterparts. Antagonistic confrontation between peasants and urban residents was practically unheard of. Peasants were less likely to be targeted in political campaigns and moral inculcation. Their way of life was not considered to be negative; rather, it was complemented as plain and frugal, something of moral purity. During that period, frugality and comfort were praised worthy instead of extravagance and stylishness. Peasants with their humble appearance were not frowned at by urban people; on the contrary, their dress style and their lifestyle were glorified as simple and innocent. Moreover, it was perhaps due to the restrictive regulations to prevent rural peasants from entering cities that competition for limited urban resources and employment opportunities was nonexistent; hence, there was no fuel leading to direct antagonism between rural and urban people.

Whereas poor peasants were able to enjoy at least a moderate stake in the status quo with their moral justification before China initiated reforms in 1978, the post-1978 era saw the inflated official rhetoric to denounce the size and the quality of peasant population as detrimental to the glorious project of modernization. Focusing on the presumed low physical and educational quality of the peasants, their ignorance, excessive size, lack of discipline, and economic impoverishment, the state replaced exhortations to learn from the revolutionary spirit of poor peasants with advocacy to supersede or transform them. As the late premier Zhao Ziyang put it in his speech at the Thirteenth Party Congress,

the primary stage of socialism is the stage for gradually casting off poverty and backwardness; it is the stage of gradually replacing a country where farming based on manual labor forms the basis and peasants constitute the majority, with a modern industrial nation where non-peasant workers constitute the majority [Zhao 1987: 10-11].

For a long period of time, peasantness had been associated with poverty and feudal practices.

From Zhao's point of view, peasants should get rich, thus eliminating the stigma of material impoverishment. More importantly, they should be transformed into a working class, freeing themselves of the cultural blemish of uncivilizedness. Ambiguous enough was that there was no implementation of policies that effectively pulled peasants out of poverty. The transformation of them was totally left on their own. Meanwhile, political propaganda coincided with urban perceptions of peasants. Following the Cultural Revolution and later the increasing exposure to capitalist ideology, urban intellectuals have developed their own, often derogatory, objectifications of rural people (Kipnis 1995: 121). Peasants were reduced to be subjects placed under the question and scrutiny by the social elite. In the infamous television series *Heshang* ("The River Elegy"), a group of urban intellectuals portrayed Chinese peasantry as followed:

In the vast backward rural areas, there are common problems in the peasant make-up such as a weak spirit of enterprise, a very low ability to accept risk, a deep psychology of dependency and a strong sense of passive acceptance of fate. No wonder that some scholars sigh with regret: faced with the [psychological] make-up of people such as this, not to mention the many limitations of government policy, even if a great economist like Keynes were to come back to life, what could he do about it? It's not the lack of resources, nor the level of GNP, nor the speed [of development], but rather this deficiency in the human makeup that is the essence of this so-called notion of "backwardness." And the decline of the makeup of the general population is caused precisely by the rapid increases in its numbers. This truly is an agricultural civilization caught in a vicious cycle. Do we still have any reason to praise or to be infatuated with it? [Bodman and Wan 1991: 169-70].

As far as those urban intellectuals are concerned, the blame of China's economic backwardness was laid onto the massive size of the rural poor and their deficiency of both material and spiritual qualities. The mass of poor peasants was seen by some members of intellectual elite as a serious

obstacle blocking China's path to attain prosperity and power. Clearly, this prevalent ideological conception of rural inferiority is carried on and now used to justify state's proposed need to subject peasants to the disciplinary practices of the state.

Since the end of 1970s, with massive rural migration on a scale unprecedented in modern China, the urban bias against peasants has become more and more outward. Official rhetoric has become obsessed with the potential social instabilities labor migrants might invoke. The presence of rural peasants in urban areas agitated the urban public, who feared that the pouring of more and more peasants would put great pressure on urban infrastructure and resources, in spite of peasant migrants' enormous economic contribution. Implicit in this urban fear was the fear over the social and cultural pollution of urban space rural migrants might bring about.

In sum, while looking into the historical conditions in which peasant identity has been constructed, an important linkage between peasantness and the exercise of power became evident. That peasants are associated with the primordial conditions of China is one of the ramifications or consequences of power relations among the state, the urban and the countryside. Concepts of peasants' backward, uncivilized, and impoverished characters should not be interpreted without tracing back its social and political origins throughout China's recent history.

3.2 Cultural Alienation of Peasant Migrants

I have opened my discussion in this chapter with an account of the historical construction of peasant identities as a way of showing how backwardness and impoverishment is conceived to be intrinsic in peasantry. I have also demonstrated how this conceptualization process involved the constant reconfiguration of power relations among peasantry, urban society, and the state. While the first section of this chapter is intended to illuminate the process in which distinctive

social and cultural meanings have been introduced into peasantry as a consequence of the wielding of power, this section will deal with the question of by what means the supposed notion of peasants' backwardness or even destructiveness has been able to carry on since they are allowed to enter urban areas. Their arrivals have not yet changed the urban mentality concerning rural people; on the contrary, the urban prejudice against peasants has become intensified as the two social groups are brought together to compete for limited urban resources. Instead of social integration, peasants working in urban areas are more alienated or isolated with urban people's own justifications.

According to Bourdieu, culture is integral to the social organization of domination and pivotal to the dynamics of social inequality (Seidman 1998: 155). He claims that people fight over controlling the production and circulation of cultural values and norms as a means to legitimize their dominant position. Those who do not fit the legitimate standards of culture are alienated or dominated. Building on Bourdieu's insights, I bring culture into the center of my analysis and suggest that in the context of China, cultural traits are invoked to draw an imaginary or symbolic boundary between rural and urban. As a cultural heritage of a group, ethnicity can be used as a starting point for the analysis of how subordination of rural migrants can be achieved. The signs of ethnicity in racially disparate societies include language, dress/ costume, custom, facial features, foods, religious practices, and skin color (Solinger 1995: 120). In the case of China, ethnic criteria of language and place of origin take on special connotations for peasant migrants and urbanites. They provide significant basis for stereotyping treatment of migrants by urban people. In so far as local urbanites identify themselves on the bases of local dialect and local origin, non-local people are all viewed as foreign.

Pronounced linguistic diversity is characteristic of Chinese society and it largely explains how people are divided based on language differences. People from various cities, town or counties do speak more or less different dialects, which are in many cases incomprehensible for people from other places. Many regions of China boast and try to sustain their own dialects. Peasants who transport themselves to other linguistically disparate areas are unable to speak or understand the local dialect, which serves as a barrier for them to interact with the local community. This kind of language difference forms a basis for local discrimination against rural peasants. For example, in the Pearl River delta region, Cantonese is recognized as the legitimate or dominant language and people from this region share almost the same linguistic expressions and lexical system. The imposition of Cantonese language as legitimate or normative is synonymous with building a “linguistic community” (Bourdieu 1991: 46) and wielding symbolic violence on people outside this “linguistic community”. People who are unable to speak Cantonese are mocked as bumpkins and despised. Local people, especially those of younger generation, are unwilling to pick up Mandarin or other regional dialects. Though there are regional dialects within the delta region, people from within the region are more or less able to speak Cantonese. In this regard, one’s ability to speak Cantonese provides a pretext for assimilating or dissimilating one person into this linguistic community. Rural incomers are segregated and subordinated in relation to this Cantonese community. Further, language competency is indicative of one’s educational level and socioeconomic status. Migrants who receive higher levels of education and who hold more social and economic capital have more aptitude to adopt local language, thus a higher chance to be assimilated into the local urban society. In contrast, those who are deprived of educational opportunities and denied access to

skilled and prestigious jobs are less likely to be able to speak local dialect. Hence, those who lack social, cultural, and economic capital tend to have lower chance to be able to interact with local urban culture. In this way, language serves, to a certain extent, as the catalyst for the hierarchization within urban society, with rural labor migrants occupying the lowest stratum. In brief, language heterogeneity not only operates to demarcate local people and rural outsiders; it also fosters hierarchical arrangement in the urban society.

Another ethnic feature that divides rural and urban, or local and non-local societies is one's place of origin. Long traditions of localism founded on dialect and local ritual practices have imbued the Chinese with strong sentiments for his or her native place, which provides another explanation for labor migrants being treated as outsiders. As G. William Skinner suggested, Chinese communities "went through a characteristic cycle from an open structure during the dynastic heyday to closure during the period of interdynastic chaos" (Skinner 1968: 280). The progressive closure of villages and intervillage local systems in traditional China represented the cumulation of rational responses to an increasingly unstable and threatening external environment, and conversely that their progressive opening up represented the cumulation of rational responses to an increasingly stable and benign external environment (Skinner 1968: 280). This tradition of rational responses to external conditions developed in the Chinese a sense of local chauvinism expressed as xenophobia. With regard to rural-to-urban migration, local urban people recognize a strong bond between themselves and their local communities; in their point of view, migrants are more or less foreign, depending on the geographical distance and cultural variations between migrants' home areas and the host locality. Therefore, they refuse to treat migrants equally well as their local community members. As for migrants themselves,

distinctions are also existent within the migrant population, on the ground of their geographical origins. It should be emphasized here that the definition of one's native place is complex and fluid. There are many different ways of defining a common place of origin: by village, township, county, region, or province, depending on the context. Migrants have the tendency to form ethnic groups among themselves according to spatial demarcation, and associate mainly with the same ethnic group members. In this case, they further alienate themselves from the urbanites and other ethnically discrete communities in the host society. In all, the division based on place of origin involves a complex process of association and disassociation, in which two solitudes emerge between locals and outsiders (Johnson ?). On the part of local urban people, profound parochialism rationalizes the subordination or isolation of migrants. They are reluctant to treat migrants equally because they perceive migrants as transients or outsiders who can not fit into their local community. Meanwhile, migrants' tendency to associate within their own ethnic communities hampers them from socially and culturally interacting with the urban community, thus further alienating themselves from the local urban people.

Other ethnic divisions between rural and urban also exist, based on social customs, cuisine, regional rituals, and the like. Nevertheless, they are not so operative as language and one's place of origin in terms of drawing imaginative boundaries between rural and urban. The political implication of language barriers and strong sentiments to native places is that urban space is remade in ways that a sense of difference between rural and urban people is reinforced and subjection of migrants in urban areas is considered justifiable. In addition, linguistic heterogeneity and differences in place of origin function to fragment the migrant population into disparate ethnic factions and migrants tend to socialize within their own ethnic communities. To

a great extent, this kind of tendency further distances migrants from the urban communities.

3.3 Migrants as Subjects

Having explored the linkage between peasants' backward images and power relations, as well as the ways in which they are alienated in urban areas, I push my argument further in this part to explore how cultural alienation contributes to making peasant migrants into subjects and relegates them to the discipline of the state when they dislocate themselves from their native places.

In his analysis of the phenomenon of power, Foucault created a history of the different modes by which human beings are made subjects. He pointed out that human beings are made subjects through the appeal of scientific inquiries, by dividing subjects inside himself or from others; subjects also comply with this objectivization by learning to recognize themselves as subjects (Foucault 2000: 326). Following Foucault's contention, I thus deal with the issue of labor migrants' objectification at two levels: at the level of individual bodies, and at that of China's political culture. My intent is to demonstrate the modes in which state power subjects peasant migrants to discipline so as to ensure social control and ideological domination.

Accompanying with the unleashing of peasants from rural areas is a proliferation of discourse on the floating population in official reports, census, surveys, news reports, journal articles, and scholarly research. The primary focus of such scientific knowledge about migrants is on two sets of interrelated issues: (1) the demographic background, economic activities, mobility, speed of growth, and spatial distribution of the floating population; and (2) the social impact of this migration and possible strategies regulating the migrant population more effectively (Zhang 2001: 29). Implicit in those scientific discourses is that migrants are

indistinctively defined as “objects” capable of production and consumption.

While the state’s vision of “building China into a powerful and prosperous country” has become the motif of China’s political culture, positive aspects of migration in relation to this vision have been evaluated. Migrants’ contribution to China’s economic development is well recognized. They are perceived as productive bodies, whose productivity is pivotal to the realization of China’s industrialization and modernization. Their ability to labor is constantly incited or manipulated to sustain the running of national economy. Paradoxically, migrants are also consuming bodies. Their consumptive ability is portrayed as detrimental to the modernization process, draining away the economic vitality of the nation. Their consumer activities in the urban areas are frequently accused of being responsible for the deteriorating of urban environments, the lowering of urban living standards and the contamination of urban morality. It is precisely because of this perception that migrants as producing and consuming machines are indispensable to building a modernized nation, that their productivity and consumption should be charted through the disciplinary strategies of the state.

Embedded in official rhetoric and in the scientific knowledge concerning migration, it can be discerned the power of the state to categorize and discriminate between the rural migrants and the urban dwellers. As it has been discussed in previous parts of the thesis, the division between rural and urban is a socially constructed process involving the complex interplay among political, cultural, and economic forces. Initially, rural peasants were not treated as a socially and culturally distinct group that required stringent regulations and discipline until recently in Chinese history. As nation building adopting the strategy of developing a strong industrial base in urban areas was identified as the priority of the Communist state, peasants came to be depicted

as baffling elements that undermine the blueprint of industrialization and modernization. Peasantry has been attached distinct political and cultural meanings. They have been associated with “backwardness”, “feudality” and “underdevelopment”, which are deemed to be unable to represent the advanced productive forces.

This kind of negatively conceived images is distinguished from the images of urban residents as progressive, capitalistic, and flourishing. Further, discourses portraying rural and urban are constructed in binary oppositions, in which peasant migrants are considered undesirable and subordinate while urbanites are defined as superior. Such kind of dichotomization with one branch subjugated to the other is fundamental to the maintenance of the dominant cultural norms and values. The dualistic portrayal of rural peasants and urban people has profound ideological effects. It shapes the popular imagination of city dwellers about rural migrants, and legitimates urbanites to judge rural in-migrants from an authoritative distance. Meanwhile, the dichotomizing way of thinking authorizes the state to sort people into a hierarchical order of social control, with peasants on the move being the most important targets.

Indeed, objectifying migrants as subjects would not have been possible without the compliance of migrants themselves. They actively comply with the power of the state by enthusiastically embracing the project of modernization. While “making money” and “getting rich” have become popular mottos for Chinese people since reform, this impulse is clearly felt among migrants, as they are most responsive to the ups and downs of economy. They migrate to places that can promise better economic gains. In this process, they internalize the social and cultural constraints that are imposed upon them. For examples, many labor migrants in our interviews indicated that they had to leave their children in their hometown under the care of

grandparents due to financial reasons; because they did not have local household registration status, few of them could afford to pay the higher school fees (in the form of tuition fees or “donations”). Also, because they had to work long hours, they were unable to commit themselves to taking care of the children. When asked if they socialized with local people, the unanimous answer was “no”. Explanations were various but a recurrent theme was that migrants had different consumptive practices from local people. Because of their low wages, labor migrants could not afford the lifestyle local people enjoyed; in their leisure time, they could only engage in activities such as watching TV in their dorms, sleeping, window-shopping, chess playing, etc. so as to keep their expenditure minimal. On the one hand, they allow themselves to be drawn to striving for a future of prosperity, as it is represented as desirable, or something glorified by the mainstream society. They make use of every means to gain some control over their fate. On the other hand, they formulate their own modes of strategies to make compromises in order to accommodate themselves to the gap between social restrictions and their own interests. They make concessions to social constraints in order to make the most of economic opportunities offered by migration. Cognitive of the social positions they occupy, migrants tactically niche themselves in the social structure. Essentially speaking, labor migrants are active creators of their own fate. However, to a greater extent, they are also docile recipients of power relations that reaffirm the social positions they are supposed to be occupying. Their concerns over bringing their children with them and their reluctance to associate with local people demonstrate that they have accepted and internalized who they are, which prevents them from moving beyond a social reality infiltrated with the power of the state.

To sum up, snared in the web of state power, migrants are objectified as subjects to be

governed by the Communist state. Their abilities to produce and consume are focal concerns of the state, whose power is wielded to take care of migrants' embeddedness with national economy and resources. While migrants are drawn to the magnificent project of China's industrialization and modernization, they are equally positioned in a complex web of power relations, which construct the social niche they are supposed to occupy. To a great extent, migrants are voluntary actors conscious of what they want to achieve in life. However, rendered docile by the state, they reconcile themselves to the harsh reality by forfeiting their personal interests. In this way, one must remain skeptical about how labor migrants can walk beyond the constraints of the state and move upward in the social ladder.

3.4 Rural Women Migrants: the Targets of Discipline

Rural women migrants constitute a significant portion of the migrant population. Understanding rural women migrants' anxieties, fears, and perceptions of their identities can not be possible without looking into the subculture of the rural society in which particular norms, values, and popular beliefs are attached to rural women. As an insider to Chinese popular culture, but outsider to the rural subculture, I am intrigued but at the same time disturbed by the rigid gender roles, the gender divisions of labor, and the very limited social autonomy of women outside the family in rural China. I am also surprised at how people take things for granted and thus perpetuate the subordinate positions of women. In the above parts of this chapter, I have described the distinctive social and cultural meanings attached to peasanthood. I have also revealed the rationales for the alienation of peasant migrants by urban society and the ways in which peasant migrants are objectified as subjects for discipline. In the whole process of defining peasanthood, alienating rural migrants, and objectifying migrants for discipline, peasants are

marginalized and rendered powerless in front of the powerful state. However, rural women migrants should receive special attention, given the fact that the patriarchal social system remains unchallenged. Migration interrupts the conventional life course of rural women, namely, getting married at the age of 20s and then giving birth. To a great extent, their migratory experience helps illuminate the durability of patriarchic culture and the persistence of a social hierarchy that rejects dramatic routes to gender equality, and, in broader terms, social equality. Certain historical conditions and cultural changes will be discussed in this part.

It is widely recognized that in traditional China, women were culturally defined as inferior to men, and in reality subordinated to men in various ways. This devaluation and subordination of women could be attributed to the gender divisions of labor, shaped by conceptual dichotomies between “outside” and “inside”, and “heavy” and “light” work. For example, the poetic depictions of “men plough while women weave” and of “men in charge of the outside of family while women in charge of the inside” strike root in the hearts of the Chinese. Women were confined at home, taking care of the family chores, with limited interactions with non-family members, thus being deprived of economic and social power within the family. With the lapse of time, the gender divisions of labor undergo tremendous variation. Instead of being restricted to the inside of family, women are now drawn into the productive labor force outside the family sphere. However, their liberation from the family and participation in economic productions has not yet brought about equal treatment with men. Situations of rural women, especially those displaced from their rural home and now working in urban areas, poignantly proves this point. To a great extent, investigation into rural women migrants captures a revealing moment in the complex gender relations as well as the forces that shaped those relations in China. Studies of

rural women migrants also allow us to identify the relationships of power and inequality that structure gender roles in China. Discussion of the comprehensive aspects of women migrants is beyond the scope of this section. My focal point here is to investigate the cultural continuities and discontinuities in relation to the gender divisions of labor, with the purpose of making explicit from a cultural perspective the reasons why rural women migrants become the targets of social discipline and surveillance.

Before the establishment of China in 1949, women's liberation barely reached the rural areas, where gender divisions of labor were mainly shaped, and indeed continued to be shaped, by certain Confucian doctrines and patriarchal structures. In traditional Confucian thought, social order and harmony require each person to understand and to abide by his or her rights and obligations in relation to others (Woo 1994: 289). Women were viewed primarily as members of a family and of a community, instead of as autonomous, isolated individuals. According to Confucian ideals, men should rule the outside sphere of the family while women are the sole bearers of chores within the domestic sphere. Women's movement was ideally restricted to the bounds of the home. The most visible expression of this ideal was the practice of footbinding, in which a young girl's feet were wrapped tightly to prevent them from growing beyond three-inch stumps. This meant that for the rest of the girl's life walking around would be slow and painful (Jacka 1997: 22), and that their mobility could be significantly limited within the boundary of home areas. Meanwhile, men were primarily judged in terms of their achievement in the "public" sphere or the "outside" of family, while women's virtues derived from their roles as daughters, wives and mothers in the families. Filial piety was of primary importance for men and women alike but women at the same time had to be chaste before marriage and loyal to their husbands

after marriage. Such a cultural gap in the virtues of men and women could be expressed by “feudal morality and ethics”, particularly with its “three obediences (to father before marriage, to husband after marriage, and to son after the death of husband), and four virtues (morality, proper speech, modest manner, and diligent work)”, and the notion that “the absence of talent in a woman is a virtue”. The ideological dichotomies of “inside” and “outside”, “virtuous” and “virtueless” have contributed to the cultural perception of women as subordinated to men and shaped the structures and process through which labor was divided between men and women. Further, Chinese society remained patrilineal, that is to say, descent is established through the male line, which renders girls less valued, since only sons are entitled to carry on the family name. Marriages in rural China were most commonly arranged by the older generation or by matchmaker, and were usually patrilocal, which means that the woman joined the man’s family upon marriage (Jacka 1997: 22). Since a family would lose its daughters’ labor power when the girls married off, there was no point in investing in the girls’ education beyond simple literacy. Patrilocal marriage also largely explained why parents tended to pile household chores on their daughters, whose femininity and domestic skills could be best trained in this way. Daughters taking up the responsibilities of domestic work also meant that boys could be freed to study and pursue desirable career in the future. In brief, the above-mentioned Confucian ideals in relation to women’s roles in families and the rural social practices enslaved rural women physically and mentally to a patriarchal family system, under which they were subordinated to their fathers before marriages and to husbands after marriages.

With the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, fundamental transformations in rural women’s lives took place. The Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao

Zedong adopted the orthodox Marxist approaches to gender issues and held that women's liberation was dependent on their involvement in economic production and the reduction of their domestic workload. However, some of the assumptions on which the original Marxist approach to women's liberation was based were at odds with the Chinese situation (Jacka 1997: 34). Efforts to draw women into "productive" labor and reduce their domestic work have been lopsided, with the latter receiving far less attention than women's participation in non-domestic production. This is a consequence of the Communist Party's reluctance to prioritize the issues of gender equality and bring about dramatic changes to the foundations of rural social structures.

Throughout Chinese Communist Party history, while the party has always claimed to be committed to gender equality, a concern for gender equality for its own sake has been subordinated to other concerns, in particular, peasant support for the revolution, economic growth, and class struggle, and has been modified, downplayed, or compromised in strategies designed to achieve these latter goals (Jacka 1997: 28). Having sought to reform certain aspects of society, the Communist Party accommodated or made use of other aspects³ in order not to jeopardize the support of the poor peasantry, who played a crucial role in the maintenance of social stability and the successful implementation of state policies concerning urban development. Peasants had resisted strongly any attempts to dismantle the Confucian family ideals and any threats that might undermine the traditional family structure. Any fundamental changes to rural family structures or attitudes might cause social unrest. The Communist Party could not afford the risk to upset the ideological framework that upheld the social structures in rural society. It is true that in China under the Communist State, women have been drawn into non-domestic production at an unprecedented scope. Nevertheless, because the patriarchal social

structure remained intact, rural women were not truly liberated. For example, virtually no attempt was made to challenge the continued practice of patrilocal marriage in rural areas, which had a whole host of negative consequences: the mistreatment of young daughters, a reluctance to invest in girls' education, and the resulting inability to cope with problems in life on the part of many young women after marriage.

Although rural women were able to work outside the family after the founding of New China, their domestic workload was not yet shared by men, which meant that women shouldered a double burden of work inside and outside the family. It left untouched the notion that domestic work was women's responsibility, not men's. Women's entry into "production" is merely a concurrent effect of China's nation building, rather than the achievement of an independent social movement to emancipate women for women's own sake. Their position in the economy, their cultural devaluation, and social structures and practices, such as patrilocal marriages remain unquestioned. Although very major improvements in women's lives have been made, these improvements have not yet brought about ideological transformation in regard to the "proper" place of women in the family and the society.

After Mao's demise in 1976, Deng Xiaoping rose to prominence. He promoted goals and strategies very different from those espoused under the Maoist regime, and introduced policies for radical economic and social reform at the end of 1970s, which lead to reconfiguration of notions of womanhood and women's social status. Since then, the rhetoric of "what men can do, women can do" has been abandoned, and "natural" or "biological" differences between the sexes have been given primacy in public discussion, in a way that affirms the inevitability and desirability of particular gender divisions of labor within "production". Whereas during the late

Maoist period women were encouraged to behave like men, the ideology now insists that women and men are fundamentally different, and each have their special characteristics and abilities. It is asserted that such special abilities or talents should be brought into play in fields relevant to gender roles.

The idea that women should or could behave like men, as fermented feverishly during the Cultural Revolution, has now been explicitly rejected as an ill-conceived attempt to challenge human nature. Women are no longer encouraged to overcome an inferior biology through superhuman physical achievement, as were the Iron Girls⁴ during the ten years of Cultural Revolution. Instead, female capacities for intellectual development and female contributions to national economic development are stressed and women are encouraged to pursue traditionally female work. There is now a vast amount of media articles and other forms of popular culture offering advice for girls by explaining female capabilities and describing proper female roles. Young women are encouraged to develop their own talents and character, in spite of physical limitations and social obstacles they might meet along the way. But while exhorting young women to accomplish all they can, those media subtly communicate the conviction that girls are inferior to boys in intellect, physical ability, and emotional stability (Honig 1988: 14). Clothed with scientific garb, those popular discourses contribute to a greater degree of gender divisions of labor in the economy. They help to legitimize the limiting of educational and career opportunities for girls, and trap women in jobs where femininity can be best exercised and manipulated. Combined with the rise of commodity economy and consumerism, the emphasis on gender differences has left women more vulnerable, given that their roles as females are exploited no less relentlessly than before.

Dislocated from rural home to urban areas and immersed in the masculine culture, rural women migrants are trapped by the cultural inheritance of Confucianism and the materialistic climate in the urban areas. Attitudes about female virtues remain consonant with those in traditional Chinese culture. Preservation of virginity, the ticket to a legitimate romance and a respectable marriage (Honig 1988: 66), remains to be the sole responsibility of women. Caught up in alien urban environments and lacking any support network, rural women migrants become the victims of the highly masculine culture of male dominance. In many cases, when they fall prey to male sexuality and lose their virginity, women migrants are the ones to be stigmatized as being unable to manage the sexual desires of men. Moreover, the majority of rural women migrants are working in factories and service sectors, which usually provide collective dorms for female workers. Living with their female workmates, rural women migrants do not follow the traditional family patterns of living with their husbands or family members. Their dislocation from home and participation in work outside the households creates the impression that rural women migrants are rootless, without any constraints of conventional codes of female conduct and moral responsibilities.

Such images are in discord with the social expectations of women as filial daughters and loyal wives. On the one hand, rural women migrants continue to be expected as the guardians of social morality and the carriers of conventional womanhood. On the other hand, pervasive images of mobile women bodies driven by the market forces have shaped the urban public's attitudes toward those rural women migrants and have reinforced a fear that they might "pollute" the cities morally. Indeed, such urban fear has its materialistic genesis. Influenced by the gendered culture and excessive consumerism in urban society, many rural women migrants are

enticed to go astray from the conventional codes of moral behavior. The desire to beautify themselves can hardly be satisfied with their meager salary earned as factory workers, waitresses, or domestic workers. To gratify the female vanity, many of them have brought into full play their femininity and gone so far as to become prostitutes or mistresses, causing themselves lifelong psychological infliction or physical burden. In this way, it is not surprising that the presence of rural women migrants is always tinted with a stigma of moral pollution. They are often associated with licentious, crude, shrewish, obstinate, and unruly behaviors. In this scenario, rural women migrants are perceived as an inferior group poisoning the traditional Chinese womanly virtues and threatening the urban family structure. As far as the defenders of urban morality are concerned, the regulation of rural women migrants becomes justifiable.

In retrospect, significant achievements in relation to women's situations have been made by the Communist State. It is undeniable that women's status has been improved in comparison with that before the founding of New China. Chinese women are no longer shackled by feudal practices, such as foot-binding, and arranged marriages. The great increase in women working outside the family, however, has not yet resulted in gender equality, due to the fact that the ideological framework guiding the roles of women within the family remains unchanged. For example, although during the Cultural Revolution, a uniquely concentrated attempt was once engendered to challenge the obstacles that Confucianism continued to create for the realization of gender equality, one must remain cynically skeptical about the extent of the successes, since no concrete and effective measures were taken to involve men in domestic work. The Confucian ideology that buttresses the gender divisions of labor remains powerful especially in rural society, in spite of its constant reconfiguration and readjustment throughout history. Under such cultural

context, young rural women who traverse the boundaries of the rural and the urban must contend with the contradictions posed by their position as “floaters” away from the families, and the social expectations of women as filial daughters and faithful wives.

Indeed, migrant women workers continue to be holders of family responsibilities, as they have to constantly remit money home for family expenses such as housing, parent hospitalization, and sibling education or marriage. Probably unwithered familial bonds can be explained by the fact that they are sojourners in the urban areas, and they have to return to their original places eventually. It is of primary importance for women to maintain strong economic as well as emotional linkages with their families. As rural migrants encounter all kind of difficulties and dilemmas, many of them tend to develop a strong sense of nostalgia for home that is romanticized and idealized. As expressed by many of my informants, homesickness is the biggest challenge at the beginning of migration, but after a few years away from home, such a sentiment is usually diluted. Moreover, spatial separation of rural women from the natal households or their husbands invites a lot of dilemmas and psychological pressure, as they are very likely to have trouble adjusting to rural conditions when they go back to their rural home, which is in sharp contrast with the flashy world of urban areas. Rural to urban migration also brings rural women migrants into a complex web of power, which, rather than static, always requires a great deal of cultural and political forces to keep in place. Gender inequality cannot be probed solely from the perspective of economic determinants. Instead, a fuller understanding requires an account of how gender relations are reshaped by constitutive social, cultural, and economic factors in the whole process of social production, which is permeated with power. In the preceding analysis of this part, I have demonstrated the changing cultural context under

which rural women's identities and values are constructed. Under such changing cultural perceptions of women, we also witness a proliferation of discourse on gender differences, which is by no means an accident. It is intrinsically linked to the changing modes of domination- a focus that is shifting from oppressing women to regulating women through social sanction and Confucian moralization.

3.5 Summary

The conceptualization of peasants as backward and primitive derived at a particular time in recent Chinese history and has been employed by the state to regulate peasant migrants in a rapidly changing context of social order. In this process, discursive forms of cultural alienation take place as peasants arrive in urban areas and serve to define the social position of peasant migrants in the society. Meanwhile, peasant migrants are made into subjects to be disciplined by the Communist State. Their productive and consumptive abilities are central concerns of the state, which produces a series of dichotomized discourses to authorize their disciplinary power. In response, peasant migrants internalize this kind of state power and develop their own strategies to reconcile with social realities.

As for rural women migrants, the participation in and contribution to economic production are of course important for them to gain power and enhance their social status. However, it is certainly not the only determinant factor of empowerment. Their involvement in economic activities has not yet been translated automatically into socially recognized values, as societal beliefs about women's roles have not yet been transformed. By solely emphasizing that poor rural women can achieve proper economic independence through migration, we might fail to discern that some of them might be further disempowered as the traditional standards of women's virtues remain in

place, which function to regulate rural women migrants morally.

Chapter Four: the Pearl River Delta: The Bout between the Rural and the Urban

In this chapter, I will focus on the lives and struggles of temporary migrants in the Pearl River delta region. Although I will focus on those working in foreign-invested factories, my analysis will consider the broader geopolitics of the Pearl River Delta and its rapidly changing social, political, and economic climate since reform policies were introduced.

During the leadership of Mao Zedong, the Chinese Communist state was committed to two grand revolutionary missions: to abolish national poverty and to develop an industrialized economy. To achieve those ambitious goals, a national strategy was implemented to seek a high rate of industrial growth through heavy investment in key industries, such as the production of iron and steel, while investment in light industry and agriculture was minimal. Raw materials and resources were allocated by the central government to facilitate the development of heavy industry. This kind of imbalanced economic investment was made by the state according to its blueprint of rapid industrialization, without considering actual market demand. Worse was that economic development was achieved at the expense of minimizing people's consumption needs. Commodity circulation was strictly constrained by the state and consumption activities were suppressed. As a result of the emphasis in the development of heavy industry and neglect of people's consumption, there was a great gap between what had been produced and what people actually needed. While the production of capital goods increased, there was little improvement in people's living standard. Under such economic and political circumstances, Guangdong, particularly the Pearl River delta region, was excluded from the national development agenda of the Maoist regime, as it had relied heavily on the commercial agriculture as the backbone of the

regional economy, and is located on the frontier of South China, which was considered vulnerable to possible military invasions by the enemies overseas (Lin 1997: 39).

With the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution and the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, Deng Xiaoping returned to power. The post-Mao government under Deng indicated that the national objectives should be reoriented to increase productivity, raise per capita income, and upgrade the standard of living. Motivated by a pragmatic vision, the Chinese government started to restructure the unbalanced relationship between production and consumption, emphasizing the improvement of people's living standard, instead of emphasizing political correctness.

One significant move made toward restructuring the national economy was to introduce a dual track economic system so that market forces were allowed to come into play. Economic activities were no longer planned by the central government. Instead, supply and demand was determined by the commercial market. In the industrial sector, commodities could have both a state-set planned price and a free market price, depending on the nature and properties of the enterprises. The production of raw materials, such as petroleum, coal, hydroelectric power, iron, and steel were still under the control of the state. Large state-owned enterprises that were involved in the production of those materials were allowed to produce more and surplus products were sold in the emerging market when the compulsory state quota plan was met. State-owned enterprises engaged in the manufacturing of consumer goods were able to make their production plans according to market demands and then sell at market prices, as long as they handed over to the state a certain amount of their profits. Unlike those state-owned enterprises, enterprises that were collectively or privately owned were then free to explore profitable ventures in consumer-goods production and market their products according to market demand.

In parallel with the dual-track system in industry, a dual-track system was also created in the agricultural sector. Under the new system, peasants were no longer restricted to the production of food grain, which was previously designated by the state in terms of varieties, quantities and selling price. Although peasants still need to fulfill the obligation of state quotas for the production of grain and cotton, they were now able to sell their products to the state at two different prices: one contracted with the state and the other determined by the commercial market. The consequence of this has been to increase productivity and commercial activities in the rural economy, as peasants were able to sell extra products at market price after they had met the state quota. Moreover, commodity farming, which was formerly constrained by the state plan, was now encouraged. Commodities such as vegetables, livestock, aquatic products, and dairy products became plentiful in the market, as they were more marketable and profitable than food grain.

Accompanying the increasing supply of agricultural products was the sudden explosion of consumer demand, which opened up an enormous market that the traditional state industry was unable to satisfy. Such a huge lucrative opportunity had been seized by peasants who set up a great number of township and village enterprises in rural areas. With the dominance of the state planned economy in the agricultural sector giving away to the growth of market economy, the developmental landscape of China was restructured. Traditional industrial regions supported by the state plan started to withdraw from the main stage of national development while numerous small towns and counties began to grow rapidly, given that they launched appropriate initiatives to revitalize local commercialization and industrialization.

In addition to restructuring in the economic sphere, another significant feature that characterizes Chinese approach to the growth of the national economy was the changing relationship between the state and the localities. Instead of keeping a tight control, the state gave governments at provincial levels the autonomy and freedom to make economic decisions, so long as the Communist sovereignty was not threatened. In return, government at lower administrative levels gained augmented decision making power from the provincial governments, which means local areas were given more flexibility to implement specific strategies to revive marketing, trade, manufacturing, and service industry. In this way, areas where local governments had more initiatives and where local conditions were more favorable for a market economy experienced more dramatic transformative changes.

4.1 Economic Takeoff of the Pearl River delta

Under such circumstances, Guangdong probably has benefited most. As compared with other regions, it has a number of advantages in developing a market economy. First, it has a well-established tradition of engaging in commercial activities, consumer-goods manufacturing, and the production of agricultural commodities. Second, its geographical proximity to Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau is an advantageous factor in bringing in external capital and information about the world market. Third, it is the home of the majority of overseas Chinese and thus has the extensive overseas connections for attracting external investment, obtaining overseas remittance, and promoting export industry. Fourth, Cantonese, the dominant group in Guangdong, have historically been regarded as opportunistic, and enterprising. A mercantile Cantonese culture significantly fostered Guangdong's success in innovating and reforming its economic structure.

In spite of the above mentioned advantages, the speed of developing a socialist market economy would not have been able to exceed that of other regions without the special policies and favorable measures given to Guangdong. In 1979, Guangdong, together with Fujian, was identified as the locale for practicing an “open door policy” and developing Special Economic Zones, in an attempt to try bolder experiments with structural reforms. Guangdong’s authority over foreign trade and investment had been substantially enlarged. It was granted more flexibility to manage existing branches of foreign trade companies, create provincial foreign trade corporations, use its own foreign exchange to import, and manage the foreign trade of locally produced goods. Foreign investors in Guangdong were offered investment incentives such as tax concessions, and duty-free import of raw materials and machinery. Moreover, the province also enjoyed more freedom and privileges in financial matters, including greater discretion over foreign exchange loans and the power to set up its own financial corporation in order to absorb foreign capitals for its own development. In short, favorable macroeconomic environments were created for Guangdong to develop its own economy, speed up market-oriented economic reforms, and establish links with the global economy.

Consequently, Guangdong’s economy, which had always performed below the national average in the last decades after 1949, changed dramatically to outperform other provinces. During the past decade, its economy has grown by more than 14 percent per year on average, and the province has accounted for about half of the country’s total GDP growth. Guangdong alone generates more than 40 percent of China’s foreign trade in terms of value (Ye 2002: 30). Guangdong’s economic takeoff can be attributed to its economic core- the Pearl River delta region. The Pearl River delta region contains two of the three Special Economic Zones (SEZs) of

Shenzhen and Zhuhai and its regional center of Guangzhou. Some scholars felt it appropriate to include Hong Kong and Macau in the definition of the Pearl River delta region. For the purpose of analyzing the development issues in the thesis, however, I will exclude Hong Kong and Macau, on account of the differences in institutional and economic arrangements. Although the Pearl River delta was unable to take full advantage of its long tradition of commercialized production before 1978, nonetheless it was the major provincial producer of cash crops such as fish, sugarcane, silk cocoons, fruit, and vegetables. In the wake of rural reform, its agricultural sector flourished under the newly liberalized policies and its entrepreneurial energies were released in the boom of light industry, trade, service industry, and manufacturing production. In 1990, the delta area produced 74 percent of the province's total exports, or nearly 25 percent of the national total (Liao, Wong, Sung, and Lau, 1992: 3).

Despite the overall phenomenal economic growth and structural changes taking place in Guangdong, the process of economic transformation is spatially uneven. Economic activities are spatially distributed and the magnitude of economic development has varied significantly among cities, towns and counties. Guangzhou, the traditional economic center of Guangdong province, has lost its dominant position to the Guangzhou-Hong Kong-Macau area, where production activities and direct foreign investments, including those from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau, are concentrated. With the large bulk of incoming external investments, the previously rural towns and counties in that area are now experiencing a large increase in manufacturing production and a simultaneous decline in the share of agricultural production, which signifies the advent of a structural transformation from an agricultural-to an industrial- based economy. Unlike the traditional industrialization process characterized by capital intensive modern

machinery in many western countries, the economic transformation that took place in the Pearl River delta has been fuelled by the dynamic growth of township and village enterprises and foreign-invested factories in previous rural areas.

4.2 Socioeconomic Status of Temporary Women Migrants in the Pearl River delta

With the economic takeoff of Guangdong, especially its Pearl River delta region, waves of migrant workers, young women between the age of 18 and 25 in particular, have been pulled into those areas. Due to the lower level of education attainment, migrants from rural areas generally lack the human capital to compete for better jobs. Meanwhile, because of the structural constraints in the urban labor market, it is very difficult for labor migrants to move upward by securing jobs in industrial sectors where welfare benefits and labor protections are provided. Without local household registration status, labor migrants are outsiders deprived of any institutional resources, thus lacking any negotiating power when there are labor disputes and violation of human rights. All of these factors determine that labor migrants occupy very low socioeconomic status in the urban society.

According to the 1990 census, Guangdong was the most attractive destination of inter-provincial migrants and had one of the highest levels of inter-provincial mobility among all provinces (Fan 1996: 36). The census records a natural total of 35.3 million internal migrants between 1985 and 1990, of whom 4.4 million, or 12.5 percent, were in Guangdong. Temporary migrants were especially prominent in the province, as illustrated by a rate of 4.6 percent compared with the provincial average of 1.9 percent (Fan 2002:110). The 1997 Temporary Population Survey reports a total of 37.3 million temporary migrants who had registered with local Public Security Bureaus, of whom 28.7 percent or 10.7 million were in Guangdong (Fan

2002: 111). However, it is widely known that census-type surveys underestimate the actual volume of migration, especially that of temporary migration. Although it is required by state regulations that anyone staying in town longer than three days should register with the local authorities and obtain proper certificates for temporary residence, many labor migrants do not comply, or choose to avoid the cumbersome application procedures and fees. According to a 1996 survey, 79 percent of migrant workers circumvented the rules and neglected to register with the Ministry of Public Security after arrival (Gilley 1997: 87). The 1997 survey also underestimates the number of temporary migrants, because it excludes those who did not register with local authorities (Fan 2002: 111). Regardless of the inconsistencies in estimates, Guangdong and its cities are clearly prominent destinations of both permanent and temporary migrants.

Since the late 1970s, Guangdong has benefited from its geographical location and favorable state policies. With the establishment of special economic zones and economic and technical development zones, Guangdong, especially the Pearl River Delta region, has attracted large amount of foreign investments, including those from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and overseas. The inflow of foreign capital and the increase of private enterprises, foreign funded firms, and other non-state-controlled businesses put great pressure on labor supply, especially the supply of cheap labor. In 1990, there were 25,389 registered foreign-invested enterprises in China; 12,232 of them were in Guangdong. Workers employed in this type of enterprises were 3.26 million nationwide, and 1.71 million of them were in Guangdong (Tan 2000: 295). At the same time, many new jobs are created, such as domestic workers, restaurant servers, construction workers and factory workers (Fan 2002: 107), all of which are at the lower end of the occupational stratum and shunned by urbanites. Beside the “pull” for labor exerted by urban areas, the “push”

from the countryside has been further exacerbated by the increasing magnitude of surplus agricultural labor due to improvements in agricultural productivity (Shen and Spence 1995: 370). In response to the pull and push for labor, the state widened the door for rural people to work in the urban areas, only on the premise that peasants will not stay in the cities permanently. The expanding labor market and the marketization of goods and services make the survival of peasants in the city possible, but the temporary household status put them at disadvantage in various ways.

Coming from rural areas all over the country, temporary migrants in the Pearl River Delta region tend to work in foreign invested companies, joint ventures, township and village enterprises that produce consumer goods, such as toys, clothing, and footwear (Tan 2000: 296). What has made this area conspicuous is its high concentration of temporary women workers. According to 2000 national population census, it was estimated that there were over 10 million migrant workers in Guangdong, more than 60% of whom were women (Tan 2000: 296). Such a phenomenon is not found in other regions of China and probably does not exist elsewhere in the world (Tan 2000: 292). The sex ratio of male to female migrants is usually 2:1; however, in the Pearl River Delta region, the sex ratio is reversed. In areas such as Dongguan, where external trade and processing industries are more developed, feminization of the labor market is even more striking.

Despite the large volume, temporary women migrants are usually engaged in the new-economy sector, which is mainly represented by foreign-invested enterprise, and by private, family-owned, and individually owned enterprises. Women migrants are more subject to exploitation and violation of human rights in those economic sectors. For instance, most of the

laborers do not have contracts with their employers, which minimizes their negotiating power with respect to work conditions and benefits. It is common for migrant laborers to work long hours, the average number of which per day totals 11 to 12 hours. Working for lower than the minimum wage limit set by the local government, labor migrants are also charged certain amount of money as a deposit, which will not be returned to them until they have worked for a certain period of time. Wage payments are often delayed one or two months or even longer, as a way to prevent workers from changing jobs. Moreover, part of the workers' wage may be withheld by the factories until the end of the year; industrial injuries happen from time to time, sometimes without reimbursement from the employers (Kerr, Delahanty and Humpage 1996: 43-45). In the Pearl River Delta region, single female migrants are socially constructed as "maiden workers", emphasizing their "single status, immaturity, imminent marriage, consequent short-term commitment to factory work, low job aspirations, and low motivation to learn skills" (Lee 1995: 385). In spite of their insecurity and harshness, those jobs are very important to temporary migrants, who have little access to institutional resources and whose opportunities mainly lie within this occupational sector (Fan 2002: 105). In contrast, state-sponsored and selected migrants to the city are given urban citizenship and all the concomitant benefits. These include those migrants who have close institutional ties with the state, such as those who move to work in jobs assigned by the state and return migrants from previous state-sponsored migrations, skilled and educated migrants such as professionals, and university students, who are among the most competitive and privileged groups in China (Fan 2002: 107). Because permanent migrants are highly selected, they have greater access to a well-established and standardized labor market and their jobs are more secure and stable. According to a questionnaire survey conducted in

Guangzhou, which included 305 nonmigrants, 300 permanent migrants, and 911 temporary migrants (Fan 2002: 111), state-owned enterprises accounted for 57.1 percent of permanent migrants while only 16.4 percent of temporary migrants (Fan 2002: 116). These figures well support the notion that permanent migrants occupy higher position in the labor market hierarchy than temporary migrants. Specifically, as temporary migrant women in the Pearl River Delta region are displaced from institutional resources and crowded into the undesired segments of labor market, they are even more marginalized and pushed more and more to the bottom of the social hierarchy.

With the infusion of foreign investment, especially the exodus of capital from Hong Kong, the Pearl River delta region became increasingly integrated into the global economy and began to share in some potent internationalized cultural forms (Johnson 1997: 132) within the context of the Cantonese language. Driven by the dramatic economic transformation, certain cultural and social values have evolved, under the process of which a strong sense of Cantonese identity is developed. Though Cantonese identify themselves as part of a larger Chinese culture, they are more proud of their cultural distinctiveness, such as the Cantonese language, way of life and Cantonese cuisine. Under such social and cultural context, it is not surprised that rural women migrants are constructed as “maiden workers” subject to a disciplinary regime in the workplace.

In the following parts of this chapter, I will examine the factors that contribute to the lower socioeconomic positions women labor migrants occupy. Then, I will discuss the cultural context of the Pearl River delta region with the purpose of highlighting the strong sense of localism, which excludes labor migrants instead of allowing them to be assimilated into the local culture. In the end, I will make the claim that the lower socio-economic status and the cultural exclusion

go hand in hand to relegate labor migrants to a regime of social discipline characterized by hegemonic control rather than despotic domination.

4.2.1 Competing With Less Education

Historically in China, females had less access to schooling than males (Li 2004: 123). After the Communist Party took power in 1949, large-scale campaigns were launched to improve literacy rates as part of the socialist revolution to liberate the people from oppression and ignorance (Edwards and Roces, 2000: 77). Since women constituted the majority of the illiterate population, such campaigns benefited Chinese women greatly. From 1950s to 1970s, improvements were achieved in providing access to schooling for girls at the level unprecedented in Chinese history.

However, when the economic reforms began in the early 1980s, gender inequality in education resurged. Between rural and urban areas, coastal and inland regions, and men and women, there are substantial educational disparities, the reasons of which are to be found in the separate administrative and funding arrangements for rural and urban education (Knight and Song 1999: 153), as well as the institutional tradition of prioritizing the urban areas. In urban regions, local governments have more capacities to raise revenue and attract public funding; thus they are likely to devote more resources to education (Knight and Song 1999: 122). In contrast, given the high urban-rural income disparity, the rural regions are at great disadvantage in terms of investment in education. Moreover, children of educated parents may be at a competitive advantage, not only because they tend to inherit greater natural abilities but also because they have better opportunities to acquire out-of-school human capital. For instance, they may receive more stimuli from the household environment, absorb more favorable attitude, and have better access to books or other learning resources (Knight and Song 1999: 122). Contrarily, children of

poor, uneducated households are often at a disadvantage, especially girls. When educational provision is limited and opportunity cost of schooling is high in rural areas, there is no doubt that many girls are taken out of schools by their families in order to work on family farms or sideline enterprises (Kerr, Delahanty and Humpage 1996: 33).

As education is subsidized by the government and urban residents could enjoy welfare benefits including low-cost education up to middle school level, educational aspiration is generally high in urban areas with women enjoying broadly equal educational opportunities with men. In contrast, the gender gap in education is conspicuously wider in rural areas, where most young women do not pursue education beyond junior middle school level. Discontinuing girls' education is an effective strategy of saving family expenditure and creating opportunities for male siblings. In essence, girls become surplus labor during the several years between school and getting married. Meanwhile, factory employment opportunities in the cities, especially in those rapidly developing regions, act as a tempting economic incentive to keep many young rural girls from continuing their schooling beyond the mandatory nine years of education. As a result, when they enter the urban areas, women lack the necessary skills or qualifications to compete in the urban job market.

4.2.2 Segregation of Urban Labor Market

On account of the great differences of educational attainment between rural and urban areas, urban people have an advantage over rural migrants in the competition for places in the upper rungs of the occupational ladder, which can be well illustrated in the case of the Pearl River delta region. In the area, women migrants from poor rural areas are highly concentrated in a few industrial sectors. They are engaged in the semi-skilled, labor intensive, and lower paid

industries such as garment, footwear, and toy factories. According to Tan (2000), the average monthly salary for a migrant woman worker in Guangdong is 300 to 500 RMB (US \$37-62), while the minimum wage line set by the local government is about 500 RMB (Tan 2000: 297), varying from city to city.

As cheap labor, women workers not only receive low pay but also work for long hours. They are forced to work extra shifts or hours, often up to 10 to 12 hours a day, and have no guarantee of even one day off per week during peak seasons of orders. In addition to the low economic return, temporary women migrants are usually employed on short-term contracts, and are discharged or not rehired if they marry or become pregnant. Even though the state set up the Labor Law to guarantee women workers maternity leave and protection for their health, implementation of those protective regulations has been ineffective, as an institutional mechanism that represents the interests of labor migrants is lacking. In addition, many employers take advantage of the availability of a cheap labor force and refuse to pay maternity leave. Compared with male migrants, women are more exposed to health threats, since the majority of them are working on the production lines in footwear and garment factories, where the chemical fumes, unbearable heat, and long hours of standing detrimentally affect their physical health (Tan 2000: 299). Very likely, they own nothing at the end but the skills of monotonous production line work and deteriorated bodies, which offers them few options other than returning to their home villages after the sojourning journey.

Because of their marginal position in education and low skill training in employment, temporary women migrants lack access to the human capital that can enable them to further develop themselves. The fact that women migrate largely independent of men also illustrates the

lack of social capital that can provide them opportunities to move upward in the urban social hierarchy. A large number of temporary women migrants came to work in the Pearl River delta region without any relatives in Guangdong province. The primary source of labor market information for them is others from the same village or county. While high proportions of permanent migrants can use information through advertisements, former school mates or relatives in Guangdong, the majority of temporary migrants have to rely on the information provided by their fellow villagers and search for jobs by themselves (Fan 2003: 38). With the absence of a large social network, the job prospect for temporary women migrants remains dim.

4.2.3 Structural Constraints

The development of human and social capital is not entirely the result of choices and actions. To a great extent, their cultivation is constrained by social structure and institutional arrangements. Once located in a particular segment of population, certain constraints and opportunities almost automatically apply (Lin 2000: 287). Rather than eliminate choices, however, constraints set boundaries among the different segments. For instance, peasants can break through the rural-urban divide and work in the urban areas; temporary migration has become a popular option for rural residents. As outsiders in the urban society, however, they are penalized once they transgress rural-urban social boundaries, especially women under existing patriarchal arrangements. To illustrate how women are confined by the boundaries between the rural and urban, women and men, I will look into the structural factors that limit their mobility in the urban social hierarchy. This problem is not exclusively women's, but it is more pronounced for them, as their work is more segregated than that of the male counterparts.

In the Pearl River delta region, jobs are segmented into two sectors: the formal and the

informal sectors, or the primary and secondary sectors (Fan 2002:104). In the secondary sector, jobs are less stable and employers tend to minimize their commitments and responsibilities toward laborers; in contrast, employment in primary sectors is organized in an internal labor market with non-priced mechanisms and well-defined career ladders (Fan 2002: 104). Employees in the primary sectors have better skills, more bargaining power, and more desirable income, benefits, job security, and career development opportunities than those in the secondary sector, which is marked by labor-intensive production, unskilled labor, low income, and poor job security and protection.

There is a common saying that it is easier for women than men to find jobs in the Delta areas. Perceived not only as having better motor skills than men, but also as more docile and easily disciplined, a significant number of rural women are employed by foreign invested factories. While men occupy higher administrative levels, women workers have to be concentrated in labor-intensive, gender-specific activities, such as sewing, assembling, knitting, and handicrafts- jobs requiring low skills under poor working conditions. Called “maiden workers”, those women migrants have to toil on the production lines for extended hours. Moreover, general living conditions for them are dismal. For instance, if they are lucky, eight people share a tiny room lined with bunk beds; if unlucky, up to one hundred workers share a single hall in a warehouse (Tan 2000: 295). The place they live in is so cramped that only their bunk bed space is their own, and personal belongs are usually put at the common areas in the room. As well, labor recruitment is also driven by the widely accepted correlation between young age and productivity. Older women are considered less appealing than young girls, who are more dexterous in terms of dealing with assembling work. In short, women from rural area are

segregated and discriminated against by virtue of the kinds of work they perform. With few opportunities to find jobs in the primary sectors, rural women migrants have to take advantage of work opportunities in the secondary sectors. Their work patterns and substandard living conditions prevent them from further developing themselves, which decisively contributes to their lower socio-economic status.

4. 2.4 Deprivation of Institutional Resources

The combination of structural constraints and lack of human as well as social capital is a concurrent effect of the deprivation of institutional capital for temporary women migrants. According to Lin, institutional capital is the capital of mobilizable resources embedded in work units, organizations, party apparatus, work sectors, and occupations. Capturing it requires entering and becoming part of these organizations, and the chance of entering these organizations depends on a combination of human and social capital (Lin 2000: 287). For temporary women migrants, they do not possess human capital, which can provide the skills and knowledge for performing specific jobs and tasks; they also need social capital to gain recognition and acceptance of the society's dominant values (Lin 2000: 287). By refusing to grant urban household status to temporary migrants, the state has cut its affiliations with them, so that temporary migrants have to rely on wage employment for their livelihood. Basically, it is stated that people aged 16 and over who intend to stay in urban areas other than their original place of household registration for more than three months are required to apply for a temporary residence certificate (Chan and Zhang 1999: 832). In addition, as I have already discussed in the previous chapters, in order to be able to work in urban areas, migrants are often required to complete other cumbersome registration and documentation paperwork (such as for work

permits and family planning permits) and pay administration fees (Solinger 1999: 68). Under the premise that women are paid less than men, together with high registration fees, it is very likely that many of them neglect to register and take up unofficial work. Much worse is that many of them are engaged in prostitution, which is made economically and culturally possible by the increased sexualization of Chinese values. With the labyrinthine administrative system and gendered culture, staying in the cities is made difficult and full of uncertainties for temporary women migrants. To sum up, the state and its institutions and policies, particularly the household registration system, have done little to mediate the rural-urban dichotomy. By refusing to take an active approach to incorporate temporary migrants into urban society, the state has effectively distanced itself from temporary migrants and perpetuated a dualistic urban society.

4.2.5 Summary

The marginal position of temporary women migrants cannot be well understood without considering the dynamic interaction among education attainment, job placement, and state institutions. On the one hand, women migrants themselves lack the necessary education and training to compete for better jobs. On the other hand, the state not only refuses to intervene into their unequal treatment, it also participates in producing and reinforcing such social inequality, thus further depriving rural women of any opportunities for better occupational placement. By keeping the household registration system in place, the Chinese state has critically determined the opportunity structure that shapes individuals' migration to cities and their participation in the urban society. By briefly analyzing temporary women migrants' educational conditions, their employment, and the structural constraints, I have shown that the household registration system acts as a nation-wide sorting mechanism that legitimizes the correlation between various

opportunities in life and residential status. The opportunity structure it shapes has led to a socioeconomic hierarchy in the migration population, under which temporary women migrants occupy the lowest place. After analyzing the social and economic conditions of labor migrants, women in particular, through a structural lens, I will turn to discussion of the cultural context of Guangdong and draw the conclusion that the low socioeconomic status of labor migrants, together with the irreconcilable urban prejudice against them, a regulatory regime is devised to transform a disorderly into an orderly kind of floating.

4.3 Local Sentiment and Perception of Rural Migrants

Throughout history, Guangdong has been culturally distinct from other parts of China. It is linguistically diverse. Its dominant language (Cantonese) and its lesser ones (Hakka; Ch'ao-chou) are not merely mutually unintelligible but very distinct from Mandarin that is spoken throughout most of China (Johnson and Johnson 1976: 7). Its linguistic distinctiveness, together with its own forms of music, customs, literature, dress, and food have developed in Cantonese to greater or lesser degrees a local sentiment, a potent social force expressed as deep and widely spread xenophobia. Localism has socially set Guangdong apart from the North of China as well as culturally distinguished itself from the North.

Indeed, the unique pattern of feeling and thought that is shared by Cantonese is a pattern which derives from their long commercial heritage (Vogel 1969: 21). Cantonese are worldly people of affairs, shrewd bargainers, knowledgeable in technology, frank in criticism, oriented to defending their own interests. They are proud of their cleverness, quickness, worldliness, and technical skill just as northerners criticize them for their selfishness, hot temperament, crudity, and lack of restraint (Vogel 1969: 21).

Up to the time of its incorporation with the People's Republic of China, Guangdong was relatively autonomous and distant from both the Imperial and the Republic states on account of its remote location from the capital. Though the administrative governments shouldered the responsibility for municipal affairs, they did little beyond supervising tax collection and the maintenance of peace (Vogel 1969: 25). With the absence of an active and effective administrative body during the imperial era and the Kuomintang regime, a variety of guild, clan, and benevolent associations assumed responsibility for local business affairs, which is very different from most parts of China. Rather than specialized organizations in pursuit of specific economic or political goals, those associations were groupings based on diffuse personal ties of people with the same home town, the same school, or the same surname (Vogel 1969: 25). Selection of administrative staff in those organizations was not based on competence but on kinship or friendship. To oversimplify, most businesses had two classes of personnel. High-level people in the company were related by blood or friendship to the owners while low-level workers were not hired through close friends, were not trusted by management, and were given very menial positions (Vogel 1969: 26). In Guangdong, the essential fabric of social structure, which was based on personal relationships among people of the same village, the same surname, and the same lineage, gave Guangdong marked cultural implications.

In the contemporary era, social groups based on kinship and friendship have given way to more specialized associations and bureaucracy that were structured by common political or economic interests. Although social organization is not so much dependent on nepotism or localism as it used to be, local sentiments are still deeply rooted in Guangdong as a result of the longstanding social arrangements loaded with local pride and contempt against northerners. Such

sense of Cantonese identity and strong prejudice against northerners has been carried on and can easily be detected as the arrivals of rural peasants further fuel such sentiments.

In Guangdong, especially its Pearl River delta region where Cantonese culture dominates, the general attitudes of urban residents towards rural incomers are still heavily loaded with prejudice. The dominant discourse tends to invoke the negative aspects of labor migrants by emphasizing their unstableness with derogatory terms such as *mangliu* (people blindly floating into the cities), *xiangxia ren* (people who come from the countryside), *liumin* (mobile people). In the cultural context of China, while *mangliu* overamplifies peasants' irrationality in the process of migration, *xiangxia ren* emphasizes migrants' identity as peasants, which has long been associated with impoverishment and uncivilizedness. *liumin* (mobile people) tends to be associated historically with landless and jobless peasants forced out of their homelands. Since these drifting, impoverished peasants may turn to banditry, they are considered a main source of social instability. Given the history of the cultural semantics of floating, calling migrants *mangliu*, *xiangxia ren* or *liumin* calls up a host of derogatory meanings (Zhang 2001: 34).

As migrants' discontentment with urban discrimination has become more and more insuppressible, some lenient terms have been used recently to name migrants, such as *nongmin gong* (peasant worker), or *waidi ren* (people from other places). For women migrants, *dagong mei* (working girl) or *wailai mei* (girls from other places) are widely used within the context of Cantonese language now, though in some areas certain humiliating names are still popular, such as *xiangxia lao* (country bumpkin) and *chou nongmin* (stinky peasants). Actually, in the eyes of the Cantonese, people from outside the province are all considered northerners, and thus subject to stereotyped treatments.

In particular, as urbanites experience increasing crime in a time of instability and uncertainty brought about by market reforms, their frustrations can be easily channeled toward migrant newcomers (Zhang 2001: 33). Labor migrants are blamed for creating a number of social problems, such as overcrowding, high rate of unemployment, poor hygiene, and disorder, and in addition engaging in crime and other law-breaking activities. Especially in the congregating zones of the floating population, it is assumed that gambling, prostitution, drug use, and drug trafficking have emerged in an endless stream, creating many new problems for government control of social order and security (Zhang 2001: 139). As for women labor migrants, the general attitudes of urban people often involve the stereotype that women migrants are responsible for the worsening problem of prostitution and extramarital relationships.

The popular perception that links migrants to crime and social instability is reflected in newspapers, magazines, or the Internet, which are especially interested in spicy, exaggerated anecdotes about crime, drugs, prostitution and social disorder associated with the migrant population. For instance, every year as the peak travel season during the Spring Festival starts, a series of traffic bottlenecks is the limelight in media reports. Deep concerns about pressure into public transportation facilities and social security problems brought about by the departure of labor migrants are constantly expressed in the press. As the traditional Chinese Spring Festival approaches, TV news, radiobroadcast, and Internet articles are obsessed with reporting the flow rate of passengers in major railway stations and long-distance bus stations. Numbers of passengers that travel by train and by bus are estimated everyday and compared with those in previous years. Due to overloading of passengers or any other contravention of traffic regulations, reports about traffic accidents are more frequently heard. Statistical data about traffic accidents

and traffic flow rate during Spring Festival are reported daily in major newspapers, such as *Yangcheng Wanbao* (YangCheng Evening News), *Nanfang Ribao* (Nanfang Daily), *Nanfang Dushi Bao* (Nanfang City Paper), *Xinkuai Bao* (New Express), and other locally circulated newspapers. With those news reports or estimated figures in relation to the transportation of rural migrants back home, urban residents are led to blame the social problems on the magnitude of labor migrants and accordingly impute the concurrently increasing number of theft, robbery, and home break-in during Spring Festival to the high turnover of labor migrants. The information produced and the pictures depicted by the press are raw materials used by the urban public to shape its knowledge, imagination, and action toward the migrant population in negative ways.

4.4 Rural Migrants as Objects to Be Disciplined

In urban public discourse, the migrant population is portrayed as an amorphous flow of undifferentiated laborers without order. Labor migrants are often referred to not as living individuals with their own desires, dreams, and intentions, but as flocks of unregulated labor driven by the market. In my interviews with some government officials in Qingxi town and in everyday conversations with Cantonese people, they frequently echoed troubling assumptions about the social instability and insecurity labor migrants bring about. I was told by some official in Qingxi that the problem of high crime rate had been given much attention, as migrant population was nine times more than the local population; the high turnover rate of labor migrants was claimed to be responsible for the social ills and, therefore, the regulation of them was of profound significance for social stability. Paradoxically, stringent policies to exclude peasants from entering the urban areas will not only jeopardize the local economy but also cause political chaos. Without the provision of cheap labor force, especially that of women migrants,

the economy in Guangdong, particularly the Pearl River delta region would have gone bankruptcy, as the economic takeoff of Guangdong is largely dependent on cheap laborers as incentive to attract foreign investment. In regard to the indispensable role the migrant population plays, the pragmatic concerns of the government mark a critical shift from denying the presence of migrants in cities to bringing "out-of-place" migrants back under state control, which began in the early 1990s and can be clearly reflected in social commentary:

Clearly, expelling [pai] does not work, and blocking [du] does not work either. The key is to pay special attention to regulating [guan] so as to establish an effective social control network, formulate proper rules and laws, and eventually make the floating population part of an efficient way of ordering our society (Chen 1988: 24).

Given that labor supplies were unevenly distributed and the continuous flow of peasants into the coastal areas was said to bring intolerable pressure on urban infrastructures, in 1994 the State Council issued a regulation that employers were not allowed to recruit any new labor migrants within one month after the Spring Festival. In the same spirit, at the end of 1995, Guangdong put into effect the "six prohibitions" ("*liu buzhun*"), namely within one month after the Spring Festival:

- 1) Employers are prohibited from recruiting new labor migrants from outside Guangdong province;
- 2) Labor migrants who visit home during the Spring Festival are prohibited from introducing new labor migrants to work in Guangdong;
- 3) Private employment agencies are prohibited from providing job introduction services to labor migrants who are from outside Guangdong province;
- 4) Job fairs or human resource markets of any kinds are prohibited;
- 5) Any county government labor bureaus stationed in Guangdong are prohibited from exporting

laborers into Guangdong;

6) Organizations, individuals, and agencies of any kinds are prohibited from publishing or distributing any kind of recruitment information; in the case of an urgent need for extra labor supply, official permission has to be obtained from local labor bureaus (Nanfang Daily 2002).

To put it simply, the practice of the “six prohibitions” was to prevent the absorption of further cheap labor force within one month after the Spring Festival. It was claimed that the purposes of implementing such a practice were to relieve pressure the transportation of labor migrants back home during the Spring Festival brought about and to safeguard the economic interests of labor migrants, as employment competition was fierce right after the Spring Festival. However, from the beginning of its implementation, the policy of “six prohibitions” was called into question by the public opinion, which maintained that the policy restricted labor migrants’ free mobility and undermined labor migrants’ free choice of employment. The implementation of such a notorious practice reflects the prevailing discrimination against labor migrants, based on the perceived physical, economic, and cultural inferiority of peasant migrants. The restriction of peasant migrants’ right as free laborers and their freedom of employment competition were legally sanctioned by the government and thus formally institutionalized. The resulting discrimination was systematic and legal. Rationalized by an ideology stressing the superiority of local urban society and the inferiority of the migrant population, the practice of discrimination was justified by the assumption that the regulation of labor migrants was crucial for urban social order. When explaining the reasons for introducing the “six prohibitions”, the government constructed the rationale through the lens of an urban elite class. This gaze made labor migrants desires, anxieties, and needs all but invisible, reinforcing ideological as well as legislative

discrimination against this group of people.

At the end of 2003 the problem of labor shortage emerged in the Pearl River delta region, which was particularly felt in enterprises invested by entrepreneurs from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau. By the end of 2004, labor shortages had become a serious problem detrimentally affecting many enterprises in Guangdong and raising concern from the public. In order to tackle this problem, at the beginning of 2005 right before the Spring Festival, the provincial government of Guangdong revoked the policy that within one month after the Spring Festival it was prohibited to absorb new labor force from outside Guangdong province. Policies in relation to labor migrants' employment after the Spring Festival were revised as followed:

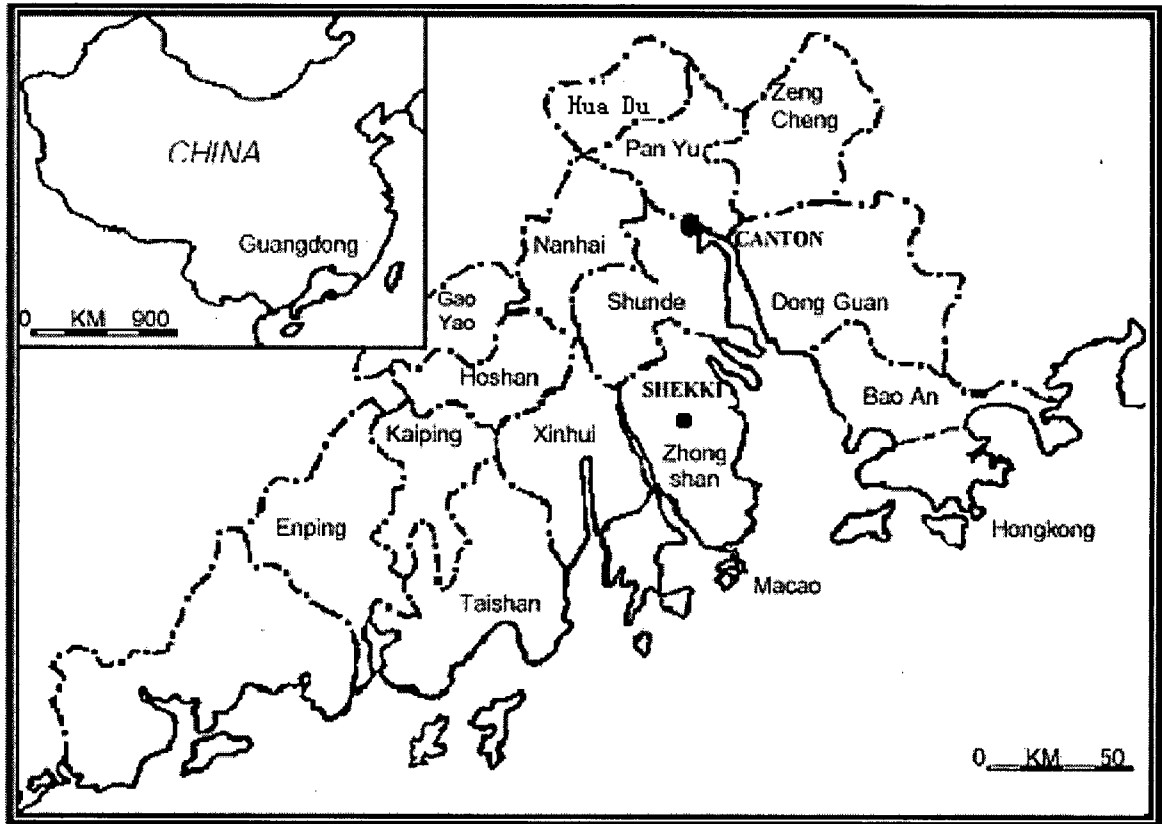
- 1) To withdraw the regulation that within one month after the Spring Festival employers are not allowed to recruit new labor migrants and to give employers the autonomy of labor recruitment based on local conditions;
- 2) To give enterprises the flexibility to decide how much percentage of labor migrants are granted holidays to visit home during the Spring Festival;
- 3) To strengthen the circulation of information about the supply and demand of labor, to designate certain employment introduction agents to register job application, to provide job vacancy information, and to introduce migrants new jobs free of charge;
- 4) To encourage weekly events that provide employment counseling for labor migrants, and to support different kinds of job fairs to invite applications for jobs;
- 5) To actively cooperate with relevant departments to investigate and deal with cases of delayed payment of labor migrants' salaries;
- 6) To actively cooperate with transportation departments to regulate the orderly floating of

migrant population and to ensure stability during the peak traffic season of Spring Festival (Yangcheng Evening News: 2005).

It was alleged that the repeal of the “six prohibitions” was made under serious consideration of protecting the legal rights of labor migrants. However, the allegation made by the government invites doubt and is indeed self-contradictory. In spite of continuous criticism the “six prohibitions” invited, the government stood aloof and the regulation remained unchanged for nearly 10 years. Its abolition did not come until Guangdong was confronted with serious labor shortage problem. Moreover, if the withdrawal of such practices is for the purpose of protecting the interests of labor migrants, as declared by the government, then the launch of it undoubtedly violates the legal rights of labor migrants. Essentially speaking, any moves concerning the mobility of laborers and their choice of employment cannot be dismissed as incidents based merely on the longstanding urban discrimination against labor migrants. They also reflect a strong tendency in China that individual interests are always subsumed under the developmental strategies of the government. When the legal rights of rural migrants are incompatible with social ordering, they are restricted by compromising their spatial mobility and freedom of choice. When migrants withdraw from participating in economic production as a means of resisting the violation of their rights, posing a threat to the local economy, their spatial mobility is encouraged to accommodate the economic trajectory promoted by the government. In this process of manipulating migrants’ labor power and spatial mobility, a series of regulation and practices characterized by hegemony rather than coercive oppression is involved. Those regulations and practices reduced labor migrants from real human beings to objectified entities whose desires and needs are obscured.

Chapter Five: Dongguan: A Snapshot of Rural Migrants' Marginalization in the Pearl River Delta

Map1. The Pearl River Delta



In spite of the significant economic achievement in the Pearl River delta as a whole, the level of marketization varies significantly from place to place. Observations in various locations across the Pearl River delta region suggest that significant diversity of spatial transformation exists within the delta, which requires scrutiny of local particularities. Since I took a fieldtrip to Qingxi in Dongguan city during the summer of 2004, I decided to take a snapshot of Dongguan and further illustrate how rural migrants are marginalized and subject to a disciplinary regime marked by urban hegemony rather than coercive suppression. In this way, I intend to provide an avenue for their experiences to be empathized.

Among the economic transformation patterns of towns and counties in the delta area, the most significant and exciting one is that of Dongguan, which has now developed into a city. Before economic reform, Dongguan was predominantly an agricultural-based county, focusing largely on grain production. Located in the center of Guangzhou-Hong Kong corridor (Johnson 1997: 737), Dongguan has ready access to both the export outlet of Hong Kong and the traditional urban center of Guangzhou. From 1979 onwards, Dongguan has made full use of its geographical advantages and implemented favorable land use as well as foreign investment policies, with the goal of attracting foreign capitals including those from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau for the revitalization of local economy. It actively sought investment resources and entrepreneurial skills in Hong Kong, and its natives who had prospered abroad were identified and encouraged to become involved in the economic transformation of their ancestral points of origin (Johnson 1997: 738). Fuelled by the kinship ties with emigrants to and the cultural resemblance with Hong Kong, Dongguan received substantial amounts of capital notably from Hong Kong investors, and flourished in terms of export-processing industry.

At the initial stage of economic transformation, industrial activities took the form of “three supplies and one compensation” (sanlai yibu), namely, processing on the basis of imported raw materials, assembling on the basis of imported parts, manufacturing on the basis of imported stipulated designs as well as compensation trade. Such arrangement requires investors to supply raw materials, components or parts, and models for what is to be processed, while the Chinese provide labor, land, buildings, electricity, and other local utilities necessary for production (Lin 1997: 173). Given the large rural population and the weak industrial base on the eve of economic reform, this kind of development pattern effectively created employment opportunities for the

transfer of rural laborers to non-agricultural industry. Also, it effectively facilitated the accumulation of capital and technology for the restructuring of economic activities. As a result, Dongguan has been successfully transformed from an agricultural-based county to an industrial city with export-oriented manufacturing and processing industries as the dominant impetus to development.

In addition to the utilization of foreign capital, most notably from Hong Kong and Taiwan, another critical contributing factor is the creation of a transportation infrastructure as a necessary means to attract foreign investment. It was reported that from 1980 to 1987, a total of 1.034 billion yuan (US \$216 million) was raised by the local government through various channels for infrastructure development (CCP Team 1989: 39). As a result of heavy investment in the infrastructure, four major highways and a network of ten subsidiary highways, an effective telephone system (including a cellular network), augmented electricity generating capacity, and a modern water supply system have led to a transformation of the physical landscape (Johnson 1997: 738). The creation of such a good infrastructure has significantly reduced transactional costs for investors and, therefore, underpinned the rapid inflow of overseas investment (Lin 1997: 175).

With the economic transformation and the improvement of physical environments, cheap laborers from the less-developed areas of Guangdong and the interior provinces mainly of Hunan, Sichuan, Guangxi, Hubei, and Jiangxi began to flock to Dongguan. Since the mid-1980s, immigration of outside labor has grown substantially at 43 percent per annum. By the end of 1990, "outside labor" (wailai gong) had reached 655,902 persons, which almost equaled the local labor force (CCP Team 1989; 6). By 2000, the migrant population had increased to 2,527,848

while the local population was only 1,526,090 (Statistical Yearbook of Dongguan 2001). In some towns of Dongguan such as Qingxi, migrant population is more significant, and is about nine times more than the local population. Considering that the numbers of migrant laborers far exceed the local population and have a high employment rate, they are the backbone of Dongguan's economy. In fact, of all factory jobs created by the export-processing industry from 1979 to 1990, 85 percent was taken by migrants (Yatai Jingji Shibao 1992, August 2).

Among those migrants, the presence of women is particularly prominent, which can be explained by the development patterns of Dongguan. As processing and assembling activities are technologically unsophisticated and low skilled, many factories involved in this kind of manufacturing do not require the handling of heavy machinery. Instead, they are predominantly labor intensive in nature. The rapid expansion of export production has opened sufficient room for the employment of women who are generally considered nimbler than men for such jobs as toy making, apparel sewing, or electronic products processing (Lin 1997: 178). A growing number of women have, therefore, joined the army of laborers and play an indispensable role in the process of Dongguan's industrialization. In 1989, of the 166,000 workers employed by export-processing firms, 130,000 were women, accounting for 78 percent of the total work force (CCP Team 1989: 159). In many shop floors, workers are almost entirely female with only a few men responsible for repairing machinery, maintaining factory security, loading and unloading finished products or imported materials, and doing managerial work (Lin 1997: 178). Such an interesting phenomenon of feminization outside of the domestic sphere is an effect of economic transformation and has profound implications for social as well as cultural transformation taking place in Dongguan. It involves the dynamic interaction of gender, migration and power, and

investigation of such a phenomenon helps illuminate the social relations characterized by a disciplinary social order.

Although the economic transformation of Dongguan as a whole is based on the development of export-processing industry, the level and patterns of industrialization in different towns of Dongguan vary, with each town implementing their own development strategies and specializing in distinctive industrial fields. For example, Humen town of Dongguan is specialized in the manufacturing of garment and Houjie town has the largest scale of furniture production of Dongguan. In this case, to generalize the industrialization process of Dongguan as well as the impacts of this process on labor migrants' lives runs the risk of neglecting diversity and particularity. While it is useful to provide a general description of the transformation process, it is also crucial to distinguish the particular features of development at the township level and contextualize migrants' experience at a microlevel. Therefore, in the remaining part of this chapter, a general picture of Qingxi's economic takeoff will be described. Then research findings about the hopes, desires, anxieties, and dilemmas of rural women migrants working in the foreign invested factories will be presented and discussed.

5.1 From Rural to Suburban: the Economic Transformation of Qingxi Town in Dongguan

Located at the intersection of Dongguan, Shenzhen, and Huizhou, Qingxi occupies a strategic position as the economic linkage of the special economic zone of Shenzhen and the Pearl River delta. Known previously as the "Siberia of Dongguan", it remained isolated and impoverished due to its weak industrial base and dilapidated transport infrastructure. In the past, there was only a winding trail of six meter's width connecting Qingxi and the outside world (Zhou 1993: 139). People depended on agricultural cultivation and lived in a plain style where they started to work

at sunrise and rested at sunset. Even in a few years after reforms were introduced, while economies of towns and cities nearby had been reinvigorated and transformed into fast developed areas as a result of opening to the outside world, Qingxi remained the least ideal place for investors in spite of its rich land resources and favorable location. Without a strong industrial base and well-developed physical infrastructure, Qingxi was confronted with great challenges for the primitive accumulation of capital for industrialization.

The local government was aware of the latent potential of Qingxi's geographical position and in order to find a way forward, they became dedicated to the development of a transportation infrastructure. After transportation improvement was identified as the key to revitalize the local economy, all possible efforts were made and all possible resources were mobilized to achieve this goal. By the early 1990s, large-scale road construction was carried out, resulting in the significant improvement of the investment environment. In April 1992, about 30 million yuan (about US \$3.7 million) was invested to build the Qingfeng highway, which is eleven kilometers long and 36 meters wide. Within one year after the Qingfeng highway was completed, about 200 foreign invested enterprises were set up in Qingxi. The number far exceeded the total number of foreign invested factories in the ten years before the construction of Qingfeng highway (Zhou 1993: 140). With more than 100 kilometers of first-rate highways completed by the middle of 1990s, the geographical potential of Qingxi has been given full play. One consequence of large-scale road construction is the enhanced accessibility of Qingxi, which invited a large number of investors mainly from Hong Kong and Taiwan to set up factories. The majority of those factories primarily involve the assembling and processing of household appliances, electronic and computer components, while departments in charge of logistics, finance, research

and development are usually located in Hong Kong or Taiwan.

The most significant outcome of the flourishing of foreign invested enterprises has been a disproportionate increase in employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector and the subsequent afflux of rural migrants. From 1995 to 2000, the non-local population increased by 285%, with an average annual rate of 30.96%. In 2000, the migrant population reached 190,000 while there were only 31,042 natives (Statistical Yearbook of Dongguan 2001). In the interview with local government officials in 2004, I was told that for the time being, the local population remained about 30,000 while the migrant population was about 300,000, the majority being young women migrants from 17 to 25 years of age. When exposed to the demands of international capitalism and local hegemonic culture, such a magnitude of female migrant population provides living sites to look into the techniques of regulating the female body and the ways the female migrant subjects respond to those techniques.

5.2 The Techniques of Regulating the Female Migrant Body

In Guangdong, women migrant workers are indistinguishably named *dagongmei* (working girls), which means “working for the boss”, or “selling labor”, connoting commodification and a capitalist exchange of labor for wages. *Mei* means single, unmarried, and younger sister and denotes a lower status in Chinese cultural context. As women, peasants, and migrant workers, the ambiguous and overlapping identities of the *dagongmei* embody how state institutions, the patriarchal culture, and global market forces in the case of the Pearl River delta region work hand in hand to produce new relations of power and domination. It is my main concern in this chapter to explore how women migrant workers’ subjectivity is constructed. Turning a young and mobile rural body into a docile and productive body involves a series of disciplinary techniques,

which include the production of discourse homogenizing women migrants, the formation of a surveillance gaze, and the arrangement of private and public space.

In the process of interviewing government officials and managerial personnel, I was interested in a specific discourse emphasizing the productive power of women migrant workers while devaluing the problematic nature of peasantness and womanhood at the same time. On the one hand, it was assumed that the *dagongmei* are willing to endure the harsh working conditions when paid less than urban workers. Described as a productive and functional social body whose labor power could be extracted by the capitalist production “machine”, they were homogenized as objects driven merely by materialistic pursuit. As long as their economic needs were met with relatively low salaries⁵ they were supposed to be willing to sell their labor and toil for extended hours without asking for rest or holidays. Except for economic ones, their other desires and needs are claimed to be trivial. As one manager put it, “it is not necessary to grant labor migrants much leisure time, as they come here to earn money. Actually they are more willing to work than to rest, as they have nothing to do except to work. If they are given too much leisure time, they are certainly bored. By extending their working hours, they are indeed pleased as they can earn more and go back to their home earlier after saving sufficient amount of money”. In a sense, this kind of discourse is constructed under the mask of satisfying migrants’ economic needs, which are coincident with the capitalist mode of production, and reduces migrant workers from real human beings to objectified commodity.

While maneuvering migrants’ productive power, on the other hand, the unitary image of “female migrant workers” is constructed through hegemonic discourses. Young working girls in foreign-invested factories, as I was told, are uneducated, uncivilized, and thus in need of

discipline. They are ready to spit on the floor, to leave their work position at will, and to steal property from the factories. Because of their clumsiness and retardedness, they are slow in picking up new skills and prone to breaking production machinery. Carrying with them the undesirable habits of the rural areas, women migrant workers are considered to be unable to conform to the rhythms of urban life. They tend to be treated as a homogenous group of ignorant and uncouth characteristics. This image of a powerless, uneducated, and low quality group is juxtaposed with local residents, and other Hong Kong or Taiwan workers, who are held up as modern, sophisticated and reliable. Moreover, in Chinese cultural context, young women incarnate docility and diligence. The image of them is often inscribed with a homogenous construction: dexterous, shy, passive, and hard-working, which is contrasted with urban workers who are born imaginatively to be individualistic, competitive, and most important of all, achievement-oriented and self-disciplined. One production line leader explained to me: "those *dagongmei* are troublesome; they have no idea how to do their work and feel too shy to ask, so you have to meticulously give them instructions on how to do this and do that." Essentially, what the line leader said demonstrates a power relation characterized by hegemonic domination. To a great extent, such kind of power relation bears a resemblance of that in the patriarchal system.

Although the production of hegemonic discourses plays an important role in creating the social group of working girls, everyday forms of regulatory power are also essential in gaining compliance on the part of those female workers. In the social space of foreign invested factories, a ubiquitous gaze is created to monitor migrant workers. Discursive practices, such as setting daily, weekly, or monthly target for production, and recording time when migrants come and leave work, are adopted to ensure the discipline of labor workers, so that their productivity can

be maximized. The basic technique of disciplining the productive power of laborers is to introduce a program of living schedule. Time-tables are widely deployed in the factories I visited to schedule work and rest. Dinner time is rigidly designated and workers are required to punch a time card whenever they leave or enter the workplace. If they fail to observe the schedule, they will be fined. For example, I was informed by many migrant workers that their salary would be docked if they were late for work, the amount of deduction depending on how late they were. Sometime, one minute late for work means loss of one day's salary. Anyone found to punch a time card for their friends or fellow villagers would be fired immediately. In addition to the management of time, the art of mobilizing collective energies also functions to manipulate labor power. Signs to promote production efficiency and daily productivity are commonly found in many factories. Daily production quotas are strikingly posted on the shop floor. Interestingly, some so-called suggestion boxes are placed in the factories, the practice of which is, as I was told, to facilitate the coordination at the workplace and effective management; employees of any rank, whether ordinary workers in the production line, or technicians, or managerial persons, are encouraged to report anyone who breaks the rules of the factory. In this way, mutual surveillance is diffused throughout the workplace.

Another important technique to regulate women migrant workers is through the art of arranging private and public space. Given that women workers in foreign-invested manufactories are mostly confined to the production line and live in collective dormitories provided by their employers, the boundaries between private and public spaces in this context are blurred. Both public and private spaces can be referred to respectively as the factory shop floor and the workers' dorms, which are usually located in the factory compound. Once entering the factory,

the unequal power relations can be discerned through the spatial arrangements, which are not just setting for disciplinary actions, but themselves are part of the manifestation of power and authority. During the fieldtrip, upon arrivals at the factories, we were received by administrative staff at high level and usually led into the meeting rooms elegantly decorated with marble floors, luxurious furniture and sometimes bright and clean showcases displaying the kinds of products exported abroad. Sitting in the room comfortably cooled by air conditioners, we were then given brief introductions about the overall developments of the factories, the organizational structures, developmental strategies and expectations into the future. After explaining the purposes of our research, we were usually granted permissions to visit the production shop floor, though in some cases, our request to see the working conditions of labor migrants was kindly declined as our presence, and was explained, would interrupt the normal operation of the assembling line.

The manufacturing section and the administrative section in the factories were clearly divided, and sometimes situated in different buildings. In striking contrast with what we felt in the meeting room, the production sections in the factories were permeated with sweltering heat of summer and that emitted from the intense operation of machines. Noise from the running of engines was unbearable and there was no air conditioning at all. Workers were rigidly fixed in specific positions, and mechanically repeating the same work. Most of them were female, although once in a while we could notice several male workers walking around or checking something. Besides the contrast between the working conditions of the labor migrants and those under which administrative staff work, another phenomenon regarding the spatial arrangement in the field of factories also poignantly demonstrates the unbalance power relations and labor migrants' marginal status. To my surprise, in many factories we visited, washrooms were even

classified into several categories, such as those reserved for “VIPs”, those for the use of managerial staff, and those for ordinary workers. Physical appearance and facilities differed in different categories of washrooms, with the conditions of those used by ordinary labor workers filthy and wretched. The living conditions of workers were also said to be appalling. Regrettably we were refused permission to visit the dormitories of workers, on the ground that most of them off shift were very likely to be resting and did not want to be disturbed by our presence. In spite of that, from the work space labor migrants occupy, it is not difficult to imagine the conditions of their collective dorms. In short, foreign-invested factories can be interpreted as a social space with two opposite meanings — they are avenues through which women migrant workers are ushered into the urban flashy world, but those factories are also dismal zones where the women migrant bodies are pinned down to their specific space, functioning to the speed of capitalist production machine.

To sum up, this part explores the techniques of regulatory power over the female migrant body. Through a series of homogenizing discourses, the surveillant gaze within the factories, and the spatial arrangements of the private and the public spaces, women migrants’ marginality is constructed, in the process of which the transformative forces of Chinese society, in the name of modernization, collaborate with global market forces to produce docile and productive female bodies.

5.3 Women Migrants’ Anxieties and Frustration

Leaving home for the first time and entering the urban world can be frightening but exciting experience for young women migrants. Prior to departure, they tend to hold romanticized versions and high expectations of modern, urban life as portrayed in movies and television shows

(Zhang 2002: 281). Many of the women migrant workers I met began their migration journey in their late teens and early twenties. They usually left home with a few friends or had some friends working in Qingxi for quite some time, who were able to introduce jobs to them when they arrived. In spite of such informal networks existent in the destination, migration is still a great challenge for rural people who have never been out of their natal villages. In my interviews with labor migrants, a sense of anxiety and frustration out of the harsh reality and urban prejudice were most commonly expressed. Because they came to work in Qingxi without the qualifications to apply for local household status, migrants had to live in the shadow of the household registration system, no matter how long they had been working in Qingxi, and lead a rootless and unstable life without being able to enjoy the urban rights and social welfare benefits. Some of them had been changing jobs constantly because of the unbearable working conditions and unfair treatment by employers. I was surprised at how conscious my migrant informants were of their subordinate position; they had already internalized the low structural position in the host areas. For example, the following reply from a young women migrant worker represents the common view of how migrants perceive themselves after working in Qingxi for a few years: "Of course I am an outsider (*waidi ren*). I am always an outsider, because I could not get a local household status. It is impossible for us to get that (local household status), no matter how many years we stay here. Our work here is temporary. It is impossible for us to stay here permanently, since we do not have the local status." Without local household status, these people are treated as secondary citizens or aliens with fewer rights than local residents. I was told by all my informants that they did not have any labor insurance or medical insurance. If they were sick, medical expenses had to be paid out of their own pocket. Almost all the migrant workers told me

that they could not afford to go to the hospital. Only when absolutely necessary would they go to the clinic set up by the factory. The only reasons why they went to clinics inside the factory compounds are that their costs are much less than those in hospitals and workers do not need to ask for permission if they go to the factory clinics, which will otherwise lead to deduction of wages. However, conditions in those factory clinics are very poor and services are inferior. Some of my informants complained to me that their illness was worsened after taking medicine prescribed in those clinics, so sometimes they would rather buy over-the-counter medicine which was expensive. Fear of sickness was always their top concern, not only because sickness generates high costs in medical treatment but also because it can lead to the loss of wages. In the case of chronic illness, serious consequences could be expected.

Besides the rootless and unstable life labor migrants are living, another source of feeling anxious and frustrated comes from their uncertainty about the future, especially about their future family life. Unlike the majority of permanent urban residents who enjoy job security, state-subsidized schooling for their children, medical care, and so on, the reality rural labor migrants are dealing with is dismal. Migrants as a whole are viewed by officials and local residents as a social problem leading to the urban ills. Their low socioeconomic status determines their limited choices in terms of marriage. Due to the institutional and cultural barriers, most rural women migrants have little social contact with local residents, not to mention opportunities for dating and marriage. They tend to socialize with friends from the same native place and find potential spouses within that circle. It is very unlikely that rural women migrants are able to marry holders of local household status. Though a small number of them can manage to do that, these men they are married to tend to lack the attributes desired by urban permanent residents,

such as wealth, decent jobs, young age, and high levels of education. In such case, it is possible that this kind of marriage has little involvement of love or mutual feelings. Women migrants lacking permanent local residential status are considered socially disabled, and therefore, desired only by urban men with physical or other kinds of limitations. Some of those rural migrants who want desperately to remain in the local urban areas permanently are willing to enter this kind of marriage out of pragmatic calculations. However, for those who refuse to acquire stability at the expense of their youth and love, sense of embarrassment and anxiety is frequently felt. In my conversations with women labor migrants who were at their mid-twenties, they appeared to be reluctant to go into matters about dating and marriage, but a recurrent concern could be detected. They expressed that marriage was an inevitable stage in life, but they also acknowledged the difficulty of dating or finding spouses, as they had to work for long hours and could not afford time and money to nourish a romantic relationship. Uncertainties about the future also prevent them from emotionally investing in a romantic relationship, thus delaying courtship and marriage.

The operational structure in foreign-invested enterprises also functions to add to the anxieties and frustration of women migrant workers. Organizational arrangements in relation to household residential status within foreign-invested factories are like a pyramid, with rural women workers densely distributed at the bottom. Upward in the pyramid of prestige, there are, first, the level of line-leaders, foremen, and supervisors, who are usually natives or permanent migrants holding college or university degrees, and then Hong Kong or Taiwan managers and bosses occupying the highest level of the pyramid. The operation within the factories is often infused with negative sentiments against people from each level of the pyramid, which is most

evident at the lower levels of the pyramid. Nepotistic practices by local line-leaders, foremen, and supervisors abound and impinge on workers' material interests (Lee 1995: 384). In our interviews, many of the women workers explained to me that preferences of assigning difficult and easy tasks, applications for job leave, and promotion opportunities were given to local people or people who have certain kind of relationship with those local line leaders, foremen, and shop floor supervisors. Moreover, sexual harassment as well as verbal abuse of women workers is not uncommon.

Although the migrant women I interviewed said that they were never physically assaulted by their employers, they did have the experience of verbal insult by the production line leaders, who mostly were local people, or at least had some kind of relationship, such as friendship or kinship with people at the upper level. When asked if they could complain about their unfair treatment by line leaders or shop floor supervisor to the managers or bosses, those women workers explained to me: "they speak Cantonese and we do not understand Cantonese. How can we complain to them? Actually it is useless to complain, since they are the same kind of people as the line leaders. They will not care us ordinary workers." Though aware of the unfair treatment of ordinary women workers and the nepotistic practices prevalent within the administrative staff, Hong Kong or Taiwan managers are usually tolerant of such practices, as what concerns those managers is not the suffering of the migrant workers, but how to effectively control them and bring out maximum profits. With the absence of avenues to voice their frustration, those migrant women workers have no other choices but to put up with all kinds of frustration and worries in order to make a living in the host areas.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Based on a synthesis of empirical studies and broader literature on gender and migration, this thesis has sought to enrich our understanding of the ways in which the subjugation of labor migrants, particularly that of women migrant workers, is reproduced under the context of rapidly changing social, cultural, and economic urban societies. As well, it has offered a new interpretation of migrants' marginalization by adopting a theoretical framework that grounds our knowledge of migrants' diverse experience historically, institutionally, and culturally. Although the thesis will not be able to explain every facet of China's internal migration, it is quite clear that many of the Chinese features identified in this study are common to areas under similar conditions. The set of contentions put forward is definitely an important, if not the most important, dimension of the marginalization process of labor migrants. In many ways, this thesis can be read as a case study of power relations, an important and broad topic that has not yet been fully understood nor adequately addressed in the studies of China's rural-urban migration and gender issues. While revealing the ongoing interplay among the urban societies, the state, and the migrants within a local context of the Pearl River delta region, it has brought to light the emergence of a disciplinary order in contemporary China with lingering socialist practices and longstanding ideological perceptions of peasants.

This thesis has also contributed to the existing theoretical framework on migration and gender. While the structural categories employed in theoretical work are necessary in unmasking oppressive systems of power, they cannot tell the whole story if we want to understand people's lived realities (Currie and Thobani: 2003: 164). In this case, I complement the structuralist approach to migration by incorporating the cultural elements to ground my critiques and

arguments. By bridging the micro level of migratory experience with the macro level of state policies, institutions, economic development and cultural apparatus, the thesis has introduced a new theoretical approach to the studies of migration in China. By retaining the presence of women migrants as social actors, this approach helps to challenge the intrusive political rhetoric that promulgates the desirability or at least the inevitability of modernization and legitimizes the abuse of women's productive and reproductive labor.

Due to the fact that primary source was derived from the project funded by the Qingxi local government, which stipulated specific research objectives, there were constraints to develop interview questions more relevant to the empowerment of women migrants. The lack of an independent research dedicated to the study of gender, migration, and power also confines the discussion to several aspects of women migrants' living experience and a wider range of their fears, the perceptions of identities and the sense of social belongings still needs to be explored. As mentioned in the methodology part, the project was carried out from the perspectives of foreign investors, the managers, and the labor migrants respectively. Because of the marginalized position of labor migrants and the alleged little weight of their voices, studies of labor migrants were treated as a trivial part of the project, which thus limits the depth and scope of my primary sources. Moreover, although the thesis acknowledges the ethnic and regional differentiations that fragment the migrant population, sufficient analytical attention to class and the global forces has yet to be paid.

To sum up, as modes of domination and resistance in relation to migration become more and more diversified and complicated, it is necessary for scholars interested in the field of China's rural-urban migration and gender inequality to move outside the established knowledge

about the dichotomized rural and urban, male and female. With the massive bulk of rural migrants working in urban areas, the social and cultural boundaries between rural and urban are blurred and prevalent theoretical approaches are not enough to uncover the diverse expressions of women migrants' needs and interests. To resolve this problem, we should abandon thinking at the grand level and avoid dichotomizing the rural and urban as autonomous realms of actions. Rather, understanding of the dynamic social interactions involved in migration and gender inequality should be captured through locally grounded empirical research. In these small voices we can discover a world that is silenced or marginalized by conventional discourses (Currie and Thobani 2003: 167). In this way, concrete knowledge about social inequalities can be built, so that relevant and effective political actions can be taken for the pursuit of a tolerant and egalitarian society.

Notes

1. Previously, Dongguan was a county. In 1985, it was upgraded to a county-level prefecture. Then in 1988 as there was a major administrative reordering in Guangdong province, all former prefectures were designated “municipality” (*shi*). The former communes, which had been abolished as local government units in 1983, were renamed *zhen* (“township”), with towns being urban areas within the townships. See Johnson (1997: 735-6) and Chan (1994: 19-33).
2. Issued by the home government of a married woman migrant, a pregnancy certificate indicates both that she is married and the number of offspring she has. After the woman migrates to urban areas, she has to acquire an urban version of that certificate from a family planning commission of the city street. See Solinger (1999: 83).
3. This can be clearly illustrated by the land reform during the 1940s. During the land reform period, peasant women were to have equal rights with men to land allotments, a move that would give women the economic independence necessary for their empowerment. This potential effect of land reform was blocked, however, due to the family-oriented nature of rural society. Women’s land was considered family land, and land reform authorities, unless strongly challenged by a local women’s group, automatically gave women’s land deeds to the male family head. See Jacka (1997:28-9).
4. Iron girls were groups of young women who took on the most difficult and demanding tasks at work. Their prototype was a group of young women in Dazhai, China’s model agricultural brigade. Perceived as having seemingly boundless reserves of energy, the iron girl model

was propagandized during the Cultural Revolution with an ambition to reconstruct the gender division of labor and to overcome gender constraints. See Honig (1988: 24-5).

5. In spite of the relatively low salaries received by labor migrants, economic benefits on the parts of migrants themselves as well as of the rural society are significant. For detailed discussion on this matter, see Murphy (2002).

Bibliography:

1. **Anagnost, Ann.** 1997. *National Past-Time: Narrative, Representation, and Power in Modern China*. Durham: Duke University Press.
2. **Bodman, Richard W.; and Pin P. Wan,** trans. 1991. *Deathsong of a River: a Reader's Guide to the Chinese TV Series, Heshang*, by Su Xiaokang and Wang Luxiang. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
3. **Bourdieu, Pierre.** 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Edited and Introduced by John B. Thompson. Translated by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
4. _____. 1998. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
5. _____. 2001. *Masculine Domination*. Translated by Richard Nice. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
6. CCP Team (Chinese Communist Party, Central Committee Special Investigation Team). 1989. *Dongguan Shinian (Dongguan's Ten Years)*. Shanghai: People's Publishing House of Shanghai.
7. **Chan, Kam Wing, and Zhang, Li.** 1999. "The Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: Processes and Changes". *China Quarterly* 160: 818-815.
8. **Chan, Kam Wing.** 1994. *Cities With Invisible Walls: Reinterpreting Urbanization in Post-1949 China*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
9. **Chen, Youquan.** 1988. "Liudong Erbaiwan" (Two Million Floating People) in *Shanghai Tan* (The Shanghai Beach), No. 8: 24.

10. **Cheng, Tiejun, and Selden, Mark.** 1994. "The Origins and Social Consequences of China's Hukou System". *China Quarterly* 139: 644-68.
11. *Cong nong cun zou xiang cheng shi: Dongguan xian dai hua zhi lu* (From Country to City: the Road to Modernization of Dongguan) 1994. Ren Min Chu Ban She.
12. **Currie, Dawn H. and Thobani, Sunera.** 2003. "From Modernization to Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities". *Gender, Technology and Development* 7(2): 149-79.
13. *Dong guan gai ge kai fang ji shi: 1979-1992.* 1993. Dongguan shi ren min zheng fu ban gong shi, Dongguan shi dang an guan he bian.
14. **Dutton, Michael R.,** 1992. *Policing and punishment in China: from patriarchy to 'the People'*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
15. **Edwards, Louise, and Mina Roces,** 2000. *Women in Asia: Tradition, Modernity, and Globalization.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
16. **Fan, C.Cindy.** 1996. "Economic Opportunities and Internal Migration: A Case Study of Guangdong Province, China". *The Professional Geographer* 48 (1): 28-45.
17. _____. 2002. "The Elite, the Natives, and the Outsiders: Migration and Labor Market Segmentation in Urban China". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92(1): 103-124.
18. _____. 2003. "Rural-Urban Migration and Gender Division of Labor in Transitional China". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27 (1): 24-47.
19. **Fei, Xiaotong.** 1992. *From the Soil, the Foundations of Chinese Society: a translation of Fei Xiaotong's Xiangtu Zhongguo, with an introduction and epilogue.* By Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng. Berkeley: University of California Press.

20. **Feng, Wang.** 2000. "Gendered Migration and the Migration of Genders in Contemporary China". In *Re-drawing Boundaries: Work, Households, and Gender in China*. Edited by Barbara Entwisle and Gail E. Henderson. Berkeley: University of California Press.
21. **Foucault, Michel.** 2000. *Power*. Edited by James D. Faubion. Translated by Robert Hurley and others. New York: The New Press.
22. _____. 2003. *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège De France 1974- 9175*. Edited by Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni. Translated by Graham Burchell. London. New York: VERSO.
23. **Gaetano, Arianne M., and Jacka, Tamara.** 2004. *On the Move: Women in Rural-to-Urban Migration in Contemporary China*. New York: Columbia University Press.
24. **Gilley, Bruce.** 1997. "Migrant Workers Play a Key Role", in *China in Transition*. Hong Kong: Review Publishing Co.: 85-92.
25. "Guangdong yu jie jue 'mingong huang', shinian zhaogong jinling yizhao jiedong" ("Guangdong Intends to Settle 'Labor Shortage', And Ten Years of Employment Prohibition Is to Be Revoked"), in Yangcheng Wanbao (Yangcheng Evening News), Jan. 12, 2005.
26. **Honing, Emily and Hershatter, Gail.** 1988. *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980s*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
27. **Jacka, Tamara.** 1997. *Women's Work in Rural China: Change and Continuity in an Era of Reform*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
28. **James, Bev, and Saville-Smith Kay.** 1994. *Gender, Culture and Power: Challenging New Zealand's Gendered Culture*. Auckland; New York: Oxford University Press.

29. "Jiehou nanxia mingong jiuye nan, Guangdong sheng laodong baozhang bumen chongshen 'liu buzhun'" (Labor migrants facing difficulty of finding work after the Spring Festival and Labor bureau of Guangdong reaffirms the "six prohibitions") in *Nanfang Ribao* (Nanfang Daily), Jan 15, 2002.
30. **John, Bauer. Wang, Feng. Nancy E. Eiley. and Zhao, XiaoHua.** 1992. "Gender Inequality in Urban China: Education and Employment". *Modern China* 18:333-370.
31. **Johnson, Elizabeth and Johnson, Graham.** 1976. *Walking on Two Legs: Rural Development in South China*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.
32. **Johnson, Graham E.,** 1992. "The Political Economy of Chinese Urbanization: Guangdong and the Pearl River Delta Region" in *Urbanizing China*. Edited by Gregory Eliyu Guldin. New York: Greenwood Press.
33. _____, 1995. "Continuity and Transformation in the Pearl River Delta: Hong Kong's Impact on Its Hinterland" in *the Hong Kong- Guangdong Link Partnership in Flux*. Edited by Reginald Yin-Wang Kwok and Alvin Y. So. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe.
34. _____, 1997. "Links to and Through South China: Local, Regional, and Global Connections" in *Hong Kong's Reunion with China: The Global Dimensions*, edited by Postiglione, Gerard A. and Tang, James T.H. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe.
35. **Johnson, Graham E., and Woon, Yuen-fong.** 1997. "Rural Development Patterns in Post-Reform China: the Pearl River Delta Region in the 1990s" in *Development and Change* 28 (4): 731-752.
36. **Kerr, Joanna. Delahanty, Julie. and Humpage, Kate.** 1996. *Gender and Jobs in China's New Economy*. The North-South Institute.

37. **Kipnis, Andrew B.** 1995. "Within and Against Peasantness: Backwardness and Filiality in Rural China" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 37, No.1: 110-135.
38. **Knight, John and Song, Lina.** 1999. *The Rural-Urban Divide Economic Disparities and Interactions in China*. Oxford: University Press.
39. **Knight, John, Song, Lina and Jia, HuaiBin.** 1999. "Chinese Rural Migrants in Urban Enterprises: Three Perspectives". *The Journal of Development Studies* 35: 73-104.
40. **Lee, Ching-Kwan.** 1995. "Engendering The Worlds Of Labor: Women Workers, Labor Markets, And Production Politics In The South China Economic Miracle". *American sociological review* 60: 378-397.
41. **Liao, Pak Wai, Yu-jim Wong, Yun-wing Sung, and Pui-king, Lau.** 1992. *China's Open Door Reform and Economic Development in the Pearl River Delta: a Survey Report*. Hong Kong: Nanyang Commercial Bank.
42. **Li, Danke.** 2004. "Gender Inequality in Education in Rural China" in *Holding Up Half the Sky: Chinese Women Past, Present, and Future*. Edited by Tao Jie, Zheng Bijun, and Shirley L. Mow. The City University of New York: The Feminist Press.
43. **Lin, George C.S.,** 1997. *Red Capitalism in South China: Growth and Development of the Pearl River Delta*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
44. **Lin, Nan.** 2000. "Understanding the Social Inequality System and Family and Household Dynamics in China". in *Re-drawing Boundaries: Work, Households, and Gender in China*. Edited by Barbara Entwisle and Gail E. Henderson. Berkeley: University of California Press.
45. **Murphy, Rachel.** 2002. *How Migrant Labor is Changing Rural China*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

46. *Qualitative Research Practice: a Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. 2003.
Edited by Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
47. **Ru Zhijuan**. 1983. "Wo dui chuangzuo de yidian kanfa" (My view on creative writing). In *Ru Zhijuan xiaoshuo xuan*. Chengdu: Sichuan Renmin Chubanshe.
48. **Seidman, Steven**. 1998. *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory in the Postmodern Era*.
Massachusetts: Blackwell Publisher Inc.
49. **Shen, J. and N.A.Spence**. 1995. "Trends in Labor Supply and the Future of Employment in China". *Environment and Planning C* 13: 361-377.
50. **Shen, Y.M., and C.Z. Tong**. 1992. *Zhongguo renkou qianyi* (China's population migration).
Beijing: Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe.
51. *Si lu yu kua yue: Dongguan gai ge kai fang tou shi*. 1993. Guangzhou shi: Guangdong ren min chu ban she.
52. **Solinger, D.J.** 1999. *Contesting citizenship in urban China: Peasant Migrants, the state, and the logic of the market*. Berkeley: university of California Press.
53. *Statistical Yearbook of Dongguan*. 2001. China Statistics Press.
54. **Tan, Shen**. 2000. "The Relationship between Foreign enterprises, Local Governments, And Women Migrant Workers in the Pearl River Delta". In *Rural Labor Flows in China*. Institute of East Asian Studies.
55. *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China: the Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China*. 1995. Edited by Deborah S. Davis, et al. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; New York: Cambridge University Press.

56. **Vogel, EZRA F.** 1969. *Canton under Communism: Programs and Politics in a Provincial Capital, 1949-1968*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
57. **Woo, Margaret Y.K.** 1994. "Chinese Women Workers: The Delicate Balance between Protection and Equality", in *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State*. edited by Christina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
58. Yatai Jingji Shibao (Asia-Pacific Economy Daily), August 2, 1992.
59. **Ye, Zhang.** 2002. "Hope for China's Migrant Women Workers". *The China Business Review*. May/June 2002; 29: 30-36.
60. **Zhang, Li.** 2001. *Strangers in the City: Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks within China's Floating Population*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
61. _____. 2002. "Urban Experiences and Social Belonging among Chinese Rural Migrants" in *Popular China: Unofficial Culture in a Globalizing Society*. Edited by Perry Link, Richard P. Madsen, and Paul G. Pickowicz. Lanham, Boulder, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.
62. **Zhou, Wen yuan and Zhong, Jianhui.** 1993. Si Lu Yu Kua Yue: Dong Guan Gai Ge Kai Fang Tou Shi. Guangzhou Shi: Guangdong Ren Min Chu Ban She.
63. **Zweig, David.** 1989. *Agrarian Radicalism in China 1986-1981*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.