

Contemporary Tiger Girls: Women and Enterprise in the
People's Republic of China, 2003-2005

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

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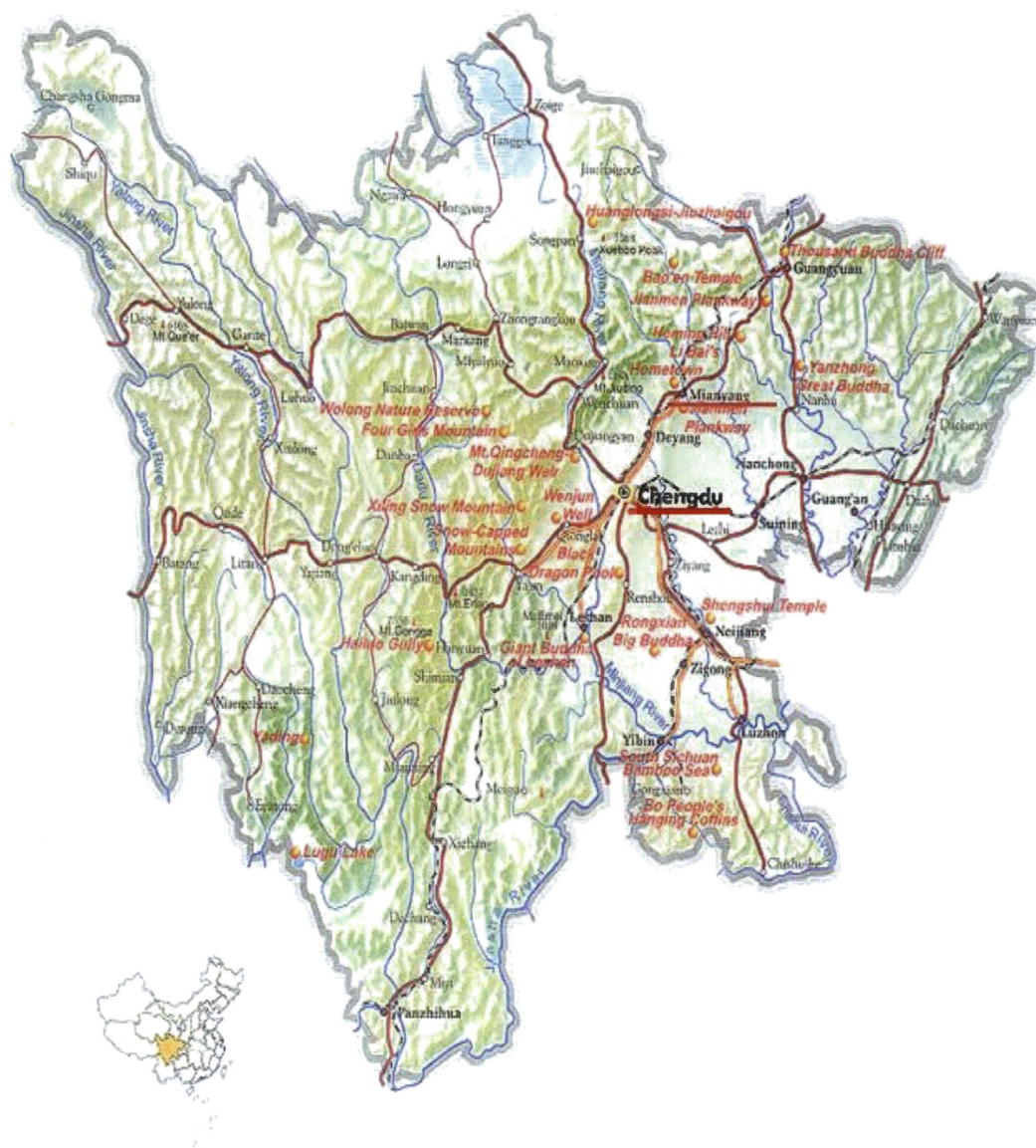
People's Republic of China



Shanxi Province



Hainan Province



Sichuan Province

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Abbreviations

ACWF	All-China Women's Federation
ACFIC	All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
FIC	Federation of Industry and Commerce
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMP	Gross Material Product
PPCC	People's Political Consultative Conference
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
SELA	Self-Employed Labourers Association
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
STC	Science and Technology City
UFWD	United Front Work Department
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States (of America)
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WEA	Women Entrepreneurs' Association
WF	Women's Federation

Abstract

The existing scholarship on women in China suggests that gender inequality still exists against the background of the country's reform and opening in recent years. However, the situation of women in enterprise ownership and leadership seems to indicate that under the surface of women being disadvantaged, some of them are playing a more active and significant role in China's economic development.

Based on a series of interviews with women enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners and women managers conducted in three localities in three difference provinces of China, this research aims to discover the deeper socio-political realities of leading women in enterprises. By analyzing information on these women's personal experiences, career and families, this thesis investigates their status at work and at home, as well as their connections with local politics. The research results suggest that although traces of gender inequality can still be found in these women's lives, they appear to be actively engaged in the business establishment and operation and gradually casting off the leash of domestic responsibilities. At the same time, these women have developed strong connections with the Party-state, not necessarily in their own right, but largely through their family ties. The research has also highlighted that the varied socio-economic development of each locality has its effects on these women's development.

Introduction: Tiger girls and private enterprise

The title of this thesis comes from a story told by cadres of the local Women's Federation of Jiaocheng County, Shanxi Province, during the first part of fieldwork conducted in 2003. In the poor mountain areas of this county, it was difficult for a girl to find a husband who could provide her with a comparatively well-off life. As a result, some mountain girls left their home for the lower and more fertile ground at the centre of the county, to look for husbands for themselves. However, these girls ended up, instead of marrying a rich husband, setting up their own business and becoming entrepreneurs. Considering Chinese women's traditional passive role in marriage of waiting for parents or matchmakers to choose the husbands for them, these girls' initiative was very impressive. Cadres of the local Women's Federation referred to these girls as 'the tiger girls who had come down from the hills'. Then the cadres talked about themselves. Being government cadres, which is not common for women, they also play major roles at home by tending the families and doing household works. They started to joke with each other by calling themselves 'tiger girls' as well.

In China, capable—especially shrewd—women have long been compared to tigers. For example, in the famous story of *Shuihu Zhuan* (The Water Margin)¹, one of the rare female characters, Gu Dasao, was nicknamed 'the Tigress', because of her hot temper and leading position at home—both were uncommon for a woman of that time. Several centuries later, in his novel *Luotuo Xiangzi* (Camel Xiangzi)², Lao She named the heroine 'the Tiger Girl' for her boldness and masterfulness. In the Chinese language, the term 'female tigers' is used to refer to strong and forceful women, but always as a depreciation, because the image contradicts the ideals of gentle and

¹ By Shi Nai'an in Song Dynasty.

² By Lao She in 1936.

obedient women in China's tradition. There is a popular song called 'Women Are Tigers'³ warning men against the charm (and power) of women.

The last three decades of the People's Republic of China has been characterized by decentralization, marketization and privatization. What might be expected from a developing country like China with a significant number of women in the labour force? Do the traditional values of male superiority still stay the same in the background of China's great social change? The notion of 'tiger girls' seems to reflect one of the alternative paths that is now becoming available to the modern Chinese woman. The social development and changes in recent China have provided women with access to education, employment, and independent income. Consequently, they are casting off obedient and subordinate roles and gaining more and more individual power and strength outside the home. However, it may be that to some extent these tigers are still leashed by the tradition of male dominance, both at work and at home. For example, the image of *nüqiangren* (a forceful woman) nowadays is still found undesirable by both sexes, as it implies a tough rather than gentle woman who emphasizes her career more than her family.

Chinese women in the reform era have drawn a lot of scholarly attention, not least because recent social change has had significant effect on women's status. Undeniably China's reform, opening-up and the subsequent reforms in other social aspects have provided women with more opportunities. However, despite the claim of government and in particular the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) that women's status has improved in the reform era and that women are enjoying equality with men in the fields of politics, economy, culture, society, and the family,⁴ the existing scholarship points to the opposite. It indicates that reform, though creating more opportunities for women in China, has not lifted Chinese women's status higher

³ Lyrics by Shi Shunyi, music by Zhang Qianyi, sung by Li Na, issued in 1998.

⁴ The General Office of The State Council of The People's Republic of China *Zhongguo Funu de Zhuangkuang* [Women's situation in China] at <http://test.china.org.cn/ch-book/funvzhuangkuang/woman.htm>; The All-China Women's Federation *Funü Fazhan de Jiben Zhuangkuang* [Basic Situation of Women's Development'] at <http://www.women.org.cn/womenorg/funvyanjiu/jibenzhuangkuang/women.htm>.

than before. Instead gender disparities still exist in terms of education, employment, political participation and family. In general, scholars examining the status of women in post-reform China suggest that women still remain poorly represented in China economic development. Although there have been real improvements, these are improvements brought by the reform to the general population of the country, rather than to women alone.⁵

Considering the scale of China and the complexity of the issue of women's status itself, it may be over-generalizing to conclude that women are simply disadvantaged or victimized in the economic reform. Could Chinese women's apparently poor representation at this stage of economic development be superficial? Under the surface of women being disadvantaged, could there be a group of women seeking and succeeding to play a more active and significant role in China's economic development? In other words, is there any truth to be found in the alternative sub-plot of the 'tiger girls' story?

Some previous research suggests there may be more positive answers to these questions. A survey of local elites conducted in the northern province of Shanxi from 1996-1998 indicates that the new enterprises of the reform era are often family businesses with the husband representing the family in the outside world and the wife playing an active role at the back.⁶ This survey suggests that instead of being victims of China's reform, some women are significant—although sometimes invisible—contributors to the process of change.

This thesis takes that initial survey as its starting point and intends to test the wider applicability of its findings. While the previous survey was based on questions asked

⁵ For example Louise Edwards 'Women in the People's Republic of China: new challenges to the grand gender narrative' in Louise Edwards and Mina Roces (ed) *Women in Asia: Tradition, Modernity and Globalisation* Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 2000; Tamara Jacka *Women's Work in Rural China: Change and Continuity in an Era of Reform* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997.

⁶ David S G Goodman 'Why women count: Chinese women and the leadership of reform' in *Asian Studies Review* Vol.26 No.3, September 2002, p.331-353.

of the husbands about their wives, the research in this thesis focuses on the women themselves. Its goal is to understand the deeper realities of woman entrepreneurs, and by extension the role of leading women in the workforce. Research was conducted in three different localities in China, each with different economic features and at different administrative levels: Jiaocheng County, Shanxi Province in North China, an area of low foreign economic involvement but nonetheless considerable non-state economic development; Qiongsan District of Haikou in Hainan Province, an area of considerable migration and external investment; and Mianyang City in Sichuan Province, a former heavy industry centre that is now one of China's major light industrial bases, particularly for white goods and televisions.

Research was based on a series of interviews with women enterprise owners, alongside two control groups—wives of enterprise owners and women managers. The two control groups were chosen, because they too occupy leading social and economic management positions without necessarily being enterprise owners. Comparing women enterprise owners with the two other categories of leading women would help to better understand the socio-political situation of the former, while attempting to control for family and ownership. At the same time it also becomes possible to make statements about women in leadership positions more generally at the local level of reform and economic change.

It seems appropriate to refer to the subjects of this research as 'tiger girls' because of their outstanding ability, as well as their great individual courage. At the same time, it is impossible to understand tiger girls separately from their immediate environment. Enterprise development cannot be understood, as the results of this research all too clearly exemplifies, without considering both family background and political circumstances. The enterprises they own or work in invariably have very close relationships with local government and society, and indeed the patterns of enterprise development that emerge tell us much about the relationship between government and society.

By analysing information concerning the interviewees' enterprises, career, education and work experience, as well as their families, this research aims to illustrate the contributing factors which have shaped the women as economic actors and their achievements, to investigate the status of these women at work and at home, and to examine these women's involvement in and connections with local politics. Overall there are two key findings. One is to confirm the views of other scholars that there is gender inequality in these women's lives, while at the same time highlighting that the situation might not be as bad as is often described for Chinese women in general by the existing scholarship. Another is to emphasize the importance of local politics. These women were closely connected to the Party-state—not necessarily in their own right, but through other family members and their participation and relationships of influence.

The Valuing-Men-and-Debasing-Women Tradition of China

As Maurer-Fazio, Rawski and Zhang have said, 'in China...there is a strong historical tradition of male dominance and female subordination'.⁷ In China's past, the male was regarded as stronger, more active and more dominant than the female.⁸ Such inequality started at the very beginning of a girl's life. The birth of a son was attached great importance in Chinese tradition, as he was the one to continue the patrilineal line and to ensure the family's future. On the other hand, the birth of a daughter was undesirable, as she was bound to marry into another family and thus was considered 'goods on which one lost money'.⁹

⁷ Margaret Maurer-Fazio, Thomas G. Rawski and Wei Zhang 'Inequality in Rewards for Holding Up Half the Sky: Gender Wage Gaps in China's Urban Labour Market, 1988-1994' in *The China Journal* No. 41, January 1999, p.84.

⁸ See Cherlyn Skromme Granrose 'Images of women and government in the Chinese cultural heritage: a brief overview' in Cherlyn Skromme Granrose (ed) *Employment of Women in Chinese Culture* Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2005, p. 35-48.

⁹ Margery Wolf *Revolution Postponed: Women in Contemporary China* Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1985, p.1.

Although boys could freely leave the family house and run around in the neighbourhood, it was not uncommon for girls to be almost completely confined to their household and made to help with household tasks. Girls' education was regarded by their families as a waste of money, especially as no man wanted to marry a wife who was better-educated than himself. In the former society, Chinese girls had no right to choose their own husbands. They had to depend on their parents and go-between to arrange the marriage. It was not uncommon for some girls never to see their husbands before the wedding day.

In the second stage of her life as a wife, a woman had to move to live with her husband's family and thus remained under their authority. After marriage, a woman's task was to please her husband and in-laws. Failure to do so might cause her to be returned to her parental family, which was regarded as a great disgrace. Moreover, she was expected to 'get pregnant and bear a son within a year after she married'.¹⁰ Only after giving birth to a son, could she secure her position in the new family, otherwise she would have to face the hostility of her husband's family or even let her husband marry secondary wives.

Should her husband die or leave her, a woman was not expected to remarry, even if she was still very young, whereas it was a common practice for men to do so. If a widow had married out of her husband's family, she would then have lost her claim to the family's property and also the connection to her children.¹¹ She was required to stay in her husband's family and remain chaste until the end of her days.¹²

Throughout her life, a woman was governed by the Three Obedience and Four Virtues: as an unmarried girl a woman must obey her father and her brothers, as a married woman she must obey her husband, and as a widow a woman should obey

¹⁰ Margery Wolf, p.8.

¹¹ See Mary Gallagher 'Women and gender' in Howard Giskin and Bettye S Walsh (ed) *An Introduction to Chinese Culture through the Family* State University of New York, Albany, 2001, pp. 89-105.

¹² See Denyse Vershuur-Basse *Chinese Women Speak* Praeger Publishers, Westport, 1996.

her son; and maintain propriety in behavior, speech, appearance and employment.¹³ By today's standards, women appear to have been victims of such oppression with no access to economic independence, education and political participation.

The gender division of labour in traditional China was shaped by such ideals and family structures. The idea that women were to serve and be subordinate to men was expressed through the belief that women should be confined to their family and home. Commonly-heard phrases such as 'man outside, woman inside' (男主外女主内) and 'man tills, woman weaves' (男耕女织) and the descriptor for a wife as 'the inside person' (内人) and a husband as 'the outside person' (外子) all have their origin in the labour division of the traditional Chinese agricultural economy, in which men went out to work and socialize, while women stayed at home to look after the household.¹⁴ Such 'inside' versus 'outside' notions reinforced the Confucian definition of women's virtue in terms of limiting their interaction with people outside the family.

Modern China: Gender Equality or Inequality?

Undeniably, the social development and changes since the establishment of the People's Republic of China have to a large extent led to the dissolution of these traditions. Under the communist ideology of women's liberation, *The Constitution of the People's Republic of China* enacted in 1954 was written with provisions that women enjoy equal political, economic, social and family rights as men.¹⁵ Thus women have gained a legal status previously denied them. *The Marriage Law* passed in 1950 emphasized equality between women and men. *The New Marriage Law*

¹³ See Elisabeth Croll *Changing Identities of Chinese Women: Rhetoric, Experience and Self-perception in Twentieth-Century China* Hong Kong University Press, London, 1995.

¹⁴ See Tamara Jacka, 1997; Barbara Entwisle, Susan E. Short, Zhai Fengying and Ma Linmao 'Household economics in transitional times' in Barbara Entwisle and Gail E. Henderson (ed) *Re-Drawing Boundaries: Work, Households, and Gender in China* University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000.

¹⁵ Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui [The National People's Congress of China] *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Xianfa* [The Constitution of the People's Republic of China] 4 December 1982 at <http://www.people.com.cn/item/faguiku/xf/F01-A1010.html>.

passed in 1980 and revised in 2001¹⁶ further recognized women's rights. Now women have access both to education and to work. They have the right to own property, as well as the free right to choose their partner. In the 1990s, more laws, acts and administrative measures were passed to protect women's equality in health care, education, political rights, employment and so on.¹⁷ With such legal protection, the education of girls, free choice of husband, the ability for women to work outside the home even in hard labour when necessary, as well as the election of women leaders have all been realized.

In the last few decades, China has seen a series of major social changes, which have also contributed to women's liberation. From 1949 to 1979, China built up and developed a planned economic system where production and distribution of goods and services were put under strict central-control. In 1979, Deng Xiaoping's announcement¹⁸ that a market economy could exist within communism marked the start of China's reform and opening-up. Since then, the Central Government has taken several steps to maintain rapid economic growth, including opening the market to foreign trade and inviting foreign investment, permitting the existence of a private economy, promoting ownership reform in state-owned enterprises, as well as initiating agricultural reform.¹⁹ The sudden emergence of cooperative enterprises,²⁰ joint ownership enterprises,²¹ share holding enterprises,²² private enterprises, and foreign funded enterprises has provided women with more employment opportunities than ever before.

¹⁶Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui [The National People's Congress] *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Hunyinfa* [the marriage law of the People's Republic of China] at http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2003-01/21/content_700622.htm.

¹⁷ See Fang Yong-Qing, Cheryl Skromme Granrose and Rita V. Kong 'National Policy Influence on Women's Careers in the People's Republic of China' in Cheryl Skromme Granrose (ed) *Employment of Women in Chinese Cultures: Half the Sky* Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Cheltenham, 2005, pp. 49-83.

¹⁸ CCTV 'Zhonggong Shiyi Jie Sanzhong Quanhui Yilai Dashi Ji' ['Great Events since the 3rd Plenum of the 11th CCP Central Committee'] at <http://www.cctv.com/news/other/20031010/101389.shtml>.

¹⁹ Fang Yong-Qing, 2005, p.50.

²⁰ Cooperative enterprises refer to enterprises based on cooperative system, funded by employees being share-holders.

²¹ Joint ownership enterprises refer to enterprises established and jointly funded by two or more units with same or different ownership.

²² Share holding enterprises refer to enterprises established by two or more parties holding stocks.

Many women turn to the newly emerging industries to seek employment or simply to start their own business. At the same time, the implementation of China's One-Child Policy since 1979 and the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Policy since 1986 have also contributed to women's employment in the reform era. To have only one child each household has reduced women's burden of housework, while the nine years compulsory education has equipped them with the basic literacy to seek employment outside the home. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, by the end of 2001, women made up 37.8 percent of the total national employment and 41.5 percent of the employment in units of types of ownership other than state-owned and urban collective-owned. In industry, women are mainly employed in the wholesale and retail trade and catering services (52.1 percent employees being women as against 47.9 percent men) and manufacturing (45.6 percent employees being women, 54.4 percent men).²³ According to The People's Daily website, among the female labor force in China, approximately 20 million are enterprise owners or legally responsible individuals and an impressive 98.5 percent of their enterprises are making a profit.²⁴

Chinese women in the reform era have drawn significant scholarly attention. Despite the view of the Central Government and the ACWF that women's status has improved in the reform era and women are enjoying equality with men in the fields of politics, economy, culture, society, and the family, the existing scholarship points to the opposite.²⁵ These scholars' research suggests that China's reform, though creating more opportunities for women in China, is gendered. Women continued to be discriminated against in education, employment, political participation and household tasks.

²³ Zhongguo Guojia Tongji Ju [the National Bureau of Statistics of China] *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian* [Statistical Yearbook of China] Zhongguo Statistics Publication, Beijing, 2002, pp. 136.

²⁴ 'Nuxing huati xilie fangtan: chenggong nuxing' ['A series of interviews on the issue of women: successful women'] at <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/14641/14643/29161/>.

²⁵ The General Office of The State Council of The People's Republic of China *Zhongguo Funu de Zhuangkuang* [Women's situation in China] at <http://test.china.org.cn/ch-book/funvzhuangkuang/woman.htm>; All-China Women's Federation *Funu Fazhan de Jiben Zhuangkuang* [Basic Situation of Women's Development] at <http://www.women.org.cn/womenorg/funvyanjiu/jibenzhuangkuang/women.htm>.

Education

Despite state policy intended to improve the education level of both genders, there still remains traditions and pressures to keep girls out of school, especially in rural areas.²⁶ First of all, there is a continuing belief in China that women are intellectually inferior to men. This belief is more commonly held in rural areas. Even if women and men are equally intelligent, some peasants are reluctant to invest in education for their daughters, because usual practice is that daughters leave the parental home after marriage and thus education for daughters is only ‘an expense occurred on behalf of other families’.²⁷ In higher education, institutes sometimes demand that women students have higher scores in entrance examinations than their male counterparts in order to limit their numbers. For those women students who succeed to make their way to universities and colleges, they are affected by the traditional gender-typing that men are better at science and technical subjects. As a result, there are significantly less women students enrolled in science and technology.²⁸

Employment

Women are discriminated against in recruitment.²⁹ As is pointed out by Honig and Hershtatter, ‘The labour surplus enables work units to be selective, and they showed a clear tendency to select men’.³⁰ Various reasons have worked to the disadvantage of

²⁶ See Ellen R Judd *The Chinese Women's Movement between State and Market* Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2002; Tamara Jacka, 1997; Elisabeth Croll, 1995; Mary Gallagher, 2001; Carrier Liu Currier ‘Reanalyzing the Politics of Reform: Economic Development in Beijing’ prepared for presentation at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the WPSA, Denver, 27-29 March 2003; Karen Korabik ‘Managerial Women in the People's Republic of China: the Long March Continues’ in Nancy J Adler and Dafna N Izraeli (ed) *Competitive Frontiers: Women Mangers in A Global Economy* Blackwell, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 114-126; Fang, etc., 2005, pp. 49-83.

²⁷ Tamara Jacka, 1997, p.77-8.

²⁸ Elisabeth Croll, 1995, p.134.

²⁹ See Karen Korabik, 1994; Mary Gallagher, 2001; Stanley Rosen ‘Chinese Women in the 1990s: Images and Roles in Contention’ in Tsu-chien Lu and Maurice Brosseau *China Review 1994* Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 1994.

³⁰ Emily Honig and Gail Hershtatter *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980's* Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1988, p. 244; Barbara Entwisle and Gail E Henderson (ed) *Re-Drawing Boundaries: Work, Households, and Gender in China*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000.

women in employment. Some employers claim that women are not as strong as men, so they are not physically suited to the jobs. Women are also disadvantaged, as men were traditionally regarded to 'be more willing to take risks and be innovative'.³¹ Some think women to be less preferable, because they would be burdened with pregnancy, maternity leave and nursing and thus are less reliable and less efficient. Moreover, the market economy demands more talented and better-educated people. As women are disadvantaged in education and technical skills, they are less competitive in job hunting and promotion. Last but not least: on the one hand, the government's regulations and laws have succeeded in providing women with certain protections in the workplace; on the other hand, they also make women less desirable and less productive in the eyes of employers. As there is little state-supported social welfare to support women who give birth and need child care facilities, employers are unwilling to bear this burden, because it will increase their costs.

Women are more easily laid-off. In the reconstruction of the economy, some workers are laid-off because their skills do not meet the requirements of the changing market. In this process, women make up a larger proportion of those laid-off, due to their lack of education and employment experience. 'As far as the market enterprises are concerned, the female labour force only plays a role as a regulator in the labour market. Whenever the supply of labour exceeds demand, women workers are the first to be removed'.³²

Women are discriminated against in retirement.³³ Working women in China are encouraged by the state policy to retire at an earlier age. While men are allowed to retire at 60, women cadres are required to retire at 55 and women manual workers

³¹ Stanley Rosen 'Women and political participation in China' in *Pacific Affairs* Vol. 68 Issue 3, Fall 1995, p. 6.

³² Fang Yong-Qing et al, 2005, p.71.

³³ See Bian Yanjie, John R. Logan, and Xiaoling Shu 'Wage and Job Inequalities in the Working Lives of Men and Women in Tianjin' in Barbara Entwisle and Gail E Henderson (ed) *Re-Drawing Boundaries: Work, Households, and Gender in China* University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000; Wang Qingshu 'The history and current status of Chinese women's participation in politics' in Tao Jie, Zheng Bijun and Shirley L. Mow (ed) *Holding Up Half the Sky: Chinese Women Past, Present, and Future* The Feminist Press, New York, 2004.

50.³⁴ First of all, the practice of having women retire earlier means inequality itself. Moreover, women are discounted, because they retire earlier. As a result, their opportunities to promotion and salary increase is more limited compared to their male colleagues.

Gender disparities still exist in payments.³⁵ Women earn significantly less for their work than men, because they are generally poorly represented in the senior ranks of their occupation and they also predominate in the less well-rewarded light industrial, handicraft, service and less skilled occupations.

Scholars examining women's position in China's reform also suggest that they only play a role as a reserve pool of labour, drawn into and taken out of the workforce according to the current economic situation or official strategy.³⁶

Political participation

Chinese women do not play a role equal to men in politics.³⁷ Firstly, women's access to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) membership is limited³⁸, while Party membership is a significant criterion of access to political positions. As a result, women constitute a very small proportion of senior government officials and are under-represented on the political stage. When they do attain leadership positions, they tend to be deputies to men and serving in generally considered to be 'less important' departments such as family planning, health and education.³⁹ At the same time, when people choose a woman to be a leader at the upper level leadership, the

³⁴ Fang Lee Cooke *HRM, Work and Employment in China* Routledge, London, 2005, p.126.

³⁵ See Fang Yong-Qing et al, 2005; Mary Gallagher, 2001; Margaret Maurer-Fazio et al, 1999; Elizabeth Croll *Chinese Women Since Mao* Zed Books, London, 1983; Wolf, 1985.

³⁶ Cherlyn Skromme Granrose, 2005; Beverley Hooper 'Women and consumerism in post-Mao China' in Krishna Sen and Maila Stivens (ed) *Gender and Power in Affluent Asia* Routledge, London, 1998.

³⁷ See Jude Howell 'Women's political participation in China: struggling to hold up half the sky' in *Parliamentary Affairs* Vol. 55 No. 1, January 2002, p. 42-56; Stanley Rosen, 1995, p. 315; Fang Yong-Qing et al, 2005; Karen Korabik,; Marc Blecher *China: Politics, Economics and Society* Frances Pinter, London, 1989.

³⁸ Karen Korabik, 1994.

³⁹ Jude Howell, 2002; Stanley Rosen, 1995.

candidate is often assumed to combine the following features: she is not a member of the CCP, she is an intellectual, and she is a member of a minority nationality or of a domestic (formally approved but non Communist) party. In sum, women's opportunities to pursue a political career at the higher levels are further limited.

Noticeably, a significant glass ceiling exists on women's way to the higher end of the ladder of political power. Scholars examining women's representation in political power have reported that there is a decline of the number of women in the national leadership, such as the Politburo, the CCP Central Committee and the National People's Congress and its Standing Committee.⁴⁰ Those who in the leadership have tended to be assigned responsibilities related to women and children's work.

Household tasks

Women have to bear the double burden of career and household tasks.⁴¹ In China (as elsewhere) 'it is commonly assumed, by both men and women, that housework is primarily women's responsibility'.⁴² In addition to their jobs outside the home, working women are delegated with household tasks as well. And their domestic roles are viewed as important as, if not more important than, their careers. Though child care tasks and household chores are labour-intensive and time-consuming, they are continued to be unrewarded and defined as 'non-productive' and 'non-work'.

In short, the existing scholarship has indicated that although the process of China's reform has created new opportunities for women, it has also functioned to further disadvantage them.⁴³ As is suggested by Jacka, 'in general sense Chinese women

⁴⁰ See Jude Howell, 2002; Stanley Rosen 1995; Marc Blecher, 1989.

⁴¹ See Margery Wolf, 1985; Norma Diamond 'Collectivization, kinship and the status of women in rural China' in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* Vol. 7, No. 1, 1975; Karen Korabik, 1994; Tamara Jacka, 1997.

⁴² Emily Honig and Gail Hershatler, 1988; Tong Xin *Shehui Xingbie Yanjiu Daolun—Liangxing Bupingdeng de Shehui Jizhi Fenxi* [Introduction to Gender Studies—Analyses to the Dynamics of Gender Inequality], Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, Beijing, 2005.

⁴³ Louise Edwards, 2000; Mary Gallagher, 2001; Philip P. Pan 'Thoroughly Modern Women Disconcert Many in China' in *The Washington Post* Tuesday 26 December 2000, p. A20; Denyse Verschuur-Basse, 1996.

have not benefited from the process of reform to the same extent as men, and in numerous ways the subordination of women has been reinforced and increased since the reforms were introduced'.⁴⁴ Although there have been real improvements for women, these are a result of general improvement for all China's citizens and do not relate to specific policy initiatives directed at raising the status of women. These scholars tend to criticize the Chinese government for failing to tackle issues related to gender disparities. Although the CCP government is driven by a version of the ideology of women's liberation, when production and national policy conflicts with women's rights, it is always women who lose out.

However, as Whyte⁴⁵ points out, there has been no systematic assessment of whether Chinese women have gained or lost ground relative to men during the reform era, because such an assessment would involve multiple realms, indicators, measures and data. Some of the factors might indicate that women have been harmed by recent change, while others might lead to opposite conclusions. Therefore, it is simplistic to say that reform mainly harms women. He argues, 'If more systematic evidence can be assembled, I think it is very unlikely that such evidence would lead to a simple answer about whether women's situation relative to men has improved or deteriorated in the reform era and as a result of those reforms'.⁴⁶

Goodman's 1996-98 survey of the provincial and local elite in Shanxi⁴⁷ confirms Whyte's suggestion. This survey suggests that the role some women play in China's economic reform may be either unacknowledged or de-emphasized. Instead of being 'victims' or 'losers' of the reform, these women are important—though somewhat 'invisible'—contributors to it. The survey indicates that the new enterprises of the reform era are often family affairs, run on the joint effort of both the husbands and

⁴⁴ Tamara Jacka, 1997, p.1.

⁴⁵ Martin K Whyte 'The perils of assessing trends in gender inequality in China' in Barbara Entwistle and Gail E Henderson (ed) *Re-Drawing Boundaries* University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000.

⁴⁶ Martin K Whyte, 2000, p. 165.

⁴⁷ David S G Goodman 'Why women count: Chinese women and the leadership of reform' in *Asian Studies Review* Vol.26 No.3, September 2002.

wives. While the husbands are designated (and the officially recognized) entrepreneurs, wives are frequently also active in the enterprise, in many cases as book-keepers and business managers. Therefore, Chinese women's apparent lack of participation in reform is at least partly not true, 'with women's role in the leadership of reform rarely if ever acknowledged within the People's Republic of China (PRC), and as a result less likely to be reflected in any account of the process of change'.⁴⁸ Goodman's research indicates that wives of the new rich play a significant role in economic activities, particularly in family business.

Goodman's research is innovative because it suggests the invisible role private entrepreneurs' wives play in China's economic development under reform. However, as his findings are incidentally achieved from questions asked of Shanxi's new rich entrepreneurs about their wives, it is still necessary to test their wider applicability. After all Shanxi is an inland province, and the phenomenon of the less visible women entrepreneurs might be a result of particular local values. Moreover, it is interesting to see what results might be obtained from interviews conducted directly with those women, instead of their husbands. It is very possible these women's reflection on their own jobs would be different from what is reported through their husbands' eyes.

This research follows up Goodman's initial survey by extending the research in a number of different ways:

- Instead of focusing on a single province, this research was conducted in three different provinces at different levels of economic development: Jiaocheng in Shanxi, an economic suburb of the provincial capital in a middle ranking economic production province; Qionghua in Hainan, a county recently incorporated into the provincial capital in China's largest Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at the physical leading edge of 'openness' to the outside world; and Mianyang in Sichuan, a town two hours north of the provincial capital in

⁴⁸ Goodman, David S G 'Why women count: Chinese women and the leadership of reform', September 2002.

a Western Region province known for its heavy industry in the past but now the centre of TV manufacture in China;

- Instead of interviewing male entrepreneurs about their wives, this research is based on interviews directly with women themselves;
- This research focuses on three different categories of women: women enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners, and other women who occupy management positions in the enterprises. Although the second and third categories of women were chosen originally as control groups to aid explanation of women enterprise owners and their roles in both the enterprise and the wider society, in the event, as this thesis details, surveys in the three localities generated wider findings about the roles of women in enterprises and at home, and in the dynamics of local politics.

Local Politics in China

The dynamics of local politics in China has changed with the reinforcement of China's local government and the emergence of a new rich group of entrepreneurs.

Under the planned economy, the state government in China exercised a strong hold in allocating resources and planning production, as well as in exchanging products.⁴⁹

Economic development was under strict control of the state, while local governments had no right to develop the economy according to their own plan. Moreover, the state government also kept a firm hand on the income and expenditure at all levels of administrative units. In these circumstances, local governments had no incentive to increase the fiscal income of the state.

In order to promote local economic development, the fiscal reforms of the 1980s gave local governments more rights to plan and manage the local economy and to allocate resources. Local governments were also allowed to keep and spend a negotiated

⁴⁹ See Anita Chan, Richard Madsen, and Jonathan Unger *Chen Village Under Mao and Deng* University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992; Edward Friedman, Paul G. Pickowicz, Mark Selden and Kay Ann Johnson *Chinese Village, Socialist State* Yale University Press, London, 1991.

percentage of local revenue.⁵⁰ Fiscal reform succeeded in mobilizing local governments to develop the local economy by providing them with material incentives. But on the other hand, in pursuing the maximization of local income, local governments sometimes sacrificed the interests of the state by reducing the proportion of revenue it received.

To improve its income while keeping local governments' initiative in developing the local economy, the state government implemented a new taxation system in 1990s. Under the new system, the state and local governments set up their different taxation bureaus and taxed separately. As the state-owned sector became the only source of the state government's income, local governments turned to non-state-owned enterprises, including those in the private sector. To increase their income, local governments encouraged and facilitated the development of non-state-owned enterprises more than ever before.⁵¹ The power of local governments increased with their income. As the state loosened its stronghold, local governments maintained a firm hand on the allocation of credit and granting of licenses to enterprises, and remained a source of information and technology.⁵²

The prosperity of the non-state sector has created the group of new rich in China—owner-operators and managers of these enterprises.⁵³ These people have

⁵⁰ See Marc Blecher and Vivienne Shue *Tethered Deer* Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1996; Bruce J Dickson *Red Capitalists in China: The Party, Private Entrepreneurs, and Prospects for Political Change* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003; Oi, Jean C *Rural China Takes Off* University of California Press, Berkeley, 1999; Ray Yep *Manager Empowerment in China: Political Implications of Rural Industrialization in the Reform Era* Routledge, London, 2003.

⁵¹ Zhang Pengcheng 'Shilun fenshuizhi xia de difang caiyuan jianshe' ['A tentative discussion of local fiscal resources under the taxation division system'] at http://www.lib.szu.edu.cn/AD_bxzy/BD_sdxw/rw/1996/960403.htm; Ping Xinqiao 'Zhongguo Jingji Gaige Zhong de Caizheng Fenquan' ['The division of fiscal power in the economic reform of China'] at <http://www.xslx.com/htm/jjlc/ljj/2002-3-10-12611.htm>; Qiao Xinsheng 'Jingti minying ziben yu difang zhengfu de "miyue xianxiang"' ['Be cautious of the "honey moon phenomenon" between private business and local governments'] at <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/paper1631/9861/906255.html>.

⁵² Jean C Oi, 1999.

⁵³ David S G Goodman 'The Party-state, capitalist revolution and new entrepreneurs', in Richard Robison and David S. G. Goodman (ed) *The New Rich In Asia: Mobile Phones, McDonald's And Middle-Class Revolution* Routledge, London, 1996, p. 225-242; Qin Yan *Zhongguo de Zhongchan Jieji* [China's Middle Class] Zhongguo Jihua Chubanshe, Beijing, 1999; Li Peilin, Li Qiang and Sun Liping *Zhongguo Shehui Fenceng* [Social Stratification in China Today] Social Sciences Academic Press, Beijing, 2004; Zheng Hangsheng and Li Lulu

taken advantage of the country's economic reform and had a quick accumulation of capital in less than the last three decades. The existing scholarship has portrayed the style of the new rich class in China as very fashion-conscious—in terms of more than just clothes and personal appearance. As personal wealth increases, the new rich in China, like the middle-class elsewhere, invest in houses and cars, especially luxury cars; and they also tend to follow trends that are more specific to the time and place. For instance, the ownership of a mobile phone became a potent status symbol, and was worn or carried accordingly. During the 1990s China's new rich were also prepared to go to McDonalds restaurants to 'pay much more than most Chinese will earn in a fortnight for a hamburger'.⁵⁴

The economic reform has not only created wealth for China's new entrepreneurs, but also raised their status in local communities. The new rich contribute to the local economy by increasing local income, local employment and local taxation. As a result, they are now regarded by the local government as partners, rather than 'class enemies'. On the other hand, entrepreneurs also seek to establish special relationships with local government to make better use of capital, resources and information controlled by the government, as well as to ensure their political security.⁵⁵ As a result, reform has created 'a system of increasing dual dependency, with entrepreneurs depending on administrators for favours, and administrators depending on entrepreneurs for income'.⁵⁶

Dangdai Zhongguo Chengshi Shehui Jiegou [Social Structure of Cities in Contemporary China] Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, Beijing, 2004; Zheng Hangsheng (ed) *Zhongguo Shehui Jiegou Bianhua Qushi Yanjiu* [Studies of Changing Trends in China's Social Structure] Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, Beijing, 2004; Lu Xueyi (ed) *Dangdai Zhongguo Shehui Jieceng Yanjiu baogao* [Report of Research on Social Classes in Contemporary China] Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, Beijing, 2002.

⁵⁴ *China Daily*, 21 July 1992, 2. Quoted from David S. G. Goodman, 1999, p. 226.

⁵⁵ See Eric W K Tsang 'In Search of Legitimacy: The Private Entrepreneur in China' in *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice* Vol. 21, No. 1, 1996, p. 21(10).

⁵⁶ Ethan Michelson and William L Parish 'Gender differentials in economic success: rural China in 1991' in Barbara Entwistle and Gail E Henderson (ed) *Re-Drawing Boundaries* University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000, p. 134-156.

As a group the new rich are characterized by a strong local identity. According to Goodman's research on entrepreneurs in Shanxi,⁵⁷ most of them work and live in their native place, and even prefer to marry wives from the same place. Their life and work has very little mobility. Consequently, these new rich entrepreneurs are involved deeply with local politics by promoting the local economy through investment, the importation of ideas and technology as well as by developing local ties to access more economic and political resources controlled by local government.⁵⁸

On the other hand, none of the existing scholarship has paid special attention to the involvement of women entrepreneurs in local politics. It would be interesting to see how women private entrepreneurs in contemporary China are ranked in their community. Are these 'tiger girls', 98.5 percent of whose enterprises are making profits according to the website of The People's Daily,⁵⁹ members of the new rich? As China's GDP keeps increasing at a rate of 7 to 8 percent each year, mobile phones and McDonalds restaurants are no longer symbols of wealth as in the 1990s. What is the life style of China's women entrepreneurs nowadays? How do these women interact with the Party-state? Are they involved in local politics? Do they cultivate local ties? And how? These questions are left unanswered by the existing scholarship, but they are examined in this research so as to better understand the roles of these women in their local community and its politics.

Research Localities

Most of the existing literature on China's economic development and women's affairs focuses on data from a single locality. At the same time it is clear that China is

⁵⁷ David S G Goodman 'Localism and entrepreneurship: history, identity and solidarity as factors of production' in Barbara Krug (ed) *China's Rational Entrepreneurs: the Development of the New Private Business Sector* Routledge, London, 2003; Wang Fenggui 'An institutional logic in the development of the private enterprises in China' at <http://www.gdaib.edu.cn/gx/xuebao/doc/4-13.htm>.

⁵⁸ Goodman, David S G 'Localism and entrepreneurship: history, identity and solidarity as factors of production', 2003.

⁵⁹ 'Nüxing xilie huati fangtan: chenggong nüxing' ['A series of interviews on women's issues: successful women'] at <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/14641/14643/29161/>.

characterised by uneven development. Urban versus rural, as well as North versus South, and East versus West are significant developmental dichotomies. Considering the variability of socio-economic conditions across the PRC, research was undertaken in three different localities in three different provinces: Jiaocheng County in Shanxi Province, Qiongsan District in Hainan Province, and Mianyang City in Sichuan Province. Shanxi is located in North China, Hainan in South and Sichuan in West. The three provinces were chosen to represent different stages of economic development as Shanxi is less developed and interior. Hainan is China's largest Special Economic Zone and its economy is characterised by a heavy degree of foreign investment. Sichuan is included within the Campaign to Open Up the West of the CCP government.

Table 1.1 Research localities: Population 2003

<i>Locality</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>
Jiaocheng ⁶⁰	213283	81240 (38.1%)	132043 (61.9%)
Qiongsan ⁶¹	345763	144339 (41.7%)	201424 (58.3%)
Mianyang ⁶²	5275000	1172000 (22.1%)	4103000 (77.8%)

Table 1.1 shows the population of Jiaocheng, Qiongsan and Mianyang by the end of 2003. As the figures show, Mianyang's population is some 24 times of that of Jiaocheng and 15 times of that of Qiongsan. This is understandable, as Mianyang, as a city, is at a higher administrative level than its two counterparts and there are 7 counties/county-level cities and 2 districts under its jurisdiction.

⁶⁰ Figures from Shanxi Sheng Tongjiju [Shanxi Province Bureau of Statistics] *Shanxi Tongji Nianjian* [Shanxi Statistical Yearbook] Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe, Beijing, 2004.

⁶¹ Figures from Haikou Shi Tongjiju [Haikou City Bureau of Statistics] *Haikou Tongji Nianjian* [Haikou Statistical Yearbook] Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe, Beijing, 2004.

⁶² Figures from Sichuan Sheng Tongji Ju [Sichuan Province Bureau of Statistics], *Sichuan Tongji Nianjian* [Sichuan Statistical Yearbook], Beijing: Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe, 2004.

Table 1.2 Research localities: GDP 2003

<i>Locality</i>	Unit=100 million yuan				
	<i>Gross Domestic Product</i>	<i>Primary Industrial sector</i>	<i>Secondary Industrial sector</i>	<i>Tertiary Industrial sector</i> ⁶³	<i>Per Capita GDP (yuan/person)</i>
Jiaocheng ⁶⁴	9.2537	0.8596 (9.3%)	6.1631 (66.6%)	2.231 (24.1%)	4406
Qiongsan ⁶⁵	21.81	5.78 (26.5%)	6.62 (30.4%)	9.41 (43.1%)	6308 ⁶⁶
Mianyang ⁶⁷	396.58	81.14 (20.5%)	156.65 (39.5%)	158.79 (40.0%)	7574

Table 1.2 details GDP of Jiaocheng, Qiongsan and Mianyang in 2003. Jiaocheng is apparently the least economically developed of the three, with its GDP being less than a half of that of Qiongsan's and only some 2 percent of Mianyang. Taking population into consideration, Jiaocheng's GDP per capita still cannot rival Qiongsan and Mianyang (4,406 yuan as opposed to 6,308 and 7,574 yuan respectively). Being a medium sized county in one of China's less economically developed province, it is understandable that Jiaocheng is not as wealthy as Qiongsan—a district of the capital of the biggest SEZ of the country and Mianyang—the second largest city of the most developed province in Western China.

At a closer look, the three locations show different features in their economic development. The secondary industrial sector counts for a significant part (66.6%) of Jiaocheng's economy, which corresponds to the fact that Shanxi is the country's heavy industry basis. Mianyang's secondary industrial sector is better developed, which reflects the fact that Mianyang has seen the establishment of a significant number of industrial enterprises during the PRC's three Western Region development

⁶³ According to the definitions used by the National Statistical Bureau of China, the first industrial sector includes agriculture, forestry, fishery and husbandry. The second includes mining, manufacturing, production and supply of electricity, gas and water, and construction. The third includes all other industries not covered by the first and second.

⁶⁴ Figures from Shanxi Sheng Tongjiju, 2004.

⁶⁵ Figures from Haikou Shi Tongjiju, 2004.

⁶⁶ Calculated from figures provided in Haikou Shi Tongjiju, 2004.

⁶⁷ Figures from Sichuan Sheng Tongji Ju [Sichuan Province Bureau of Statistics], *Sichuan Tongji Nianjian* [Sichuan Statistical Yearbook] China Statistics Press, Beijing, 2005.

schemes. Although Qiongsan is weak in industry, the proportion of its tertiary sector is bigger than the other two localities.

Social Surveys

This research is based on a series of interviews conducted from 2003 to 2005, with women private enterprise owners, alongside interviews with two control groups—wives of private enterprise owners and women managers. The term ‘enterprise owner’, applied to either the interviewee or her husband, refers to the individual under whose name the enterprise is registered with the local Administration for Industry and Commerce. In other words, ‘ownership’ refers to the formal legal ownership of the enterprise. Some interviewees reported that they were the *de facto* owners of the businesses, which were not registered under their names. However in the approach of this research, they fall into the category of managers, because if functional rather legal definitions of the three categories were taken, the research would be subject to the researcher’s individual assessment and thus it might be difficult to maintain academic subjectivity.

Table 1.3 shows the number of interviewees encountered in each location. In October 2003 and May 2004, 62 women were interviewed in Jiaocheng, including 25 enterprise owners, 27 wives of private enterprise owners and 10 of those in management positions. In October 2004 and May 2005, 53 were interviewed in Qiongsan, including 22 enterprise owners, 20 wives of enterprise owners and 11 managers. In July 2005 and October 2005, 56 women were interviewed in Mianyang, including 21 enterprise owners, 20 wives of enterprise owners and 15 managers. These interviewees were all identified with the help of local government officials, especially cadres of the local Women’s Federation (WF). Those interviewed were asked about the size and industry of their enterprises; their and their husbands’ education, career and family background; their rank, responsibility and room of action in the enterprises; their reflection on women’s involvement in enterprise

establishment and development; as well as their domestic responsibilities. Throughout the thesis there is a tendency to accept what the interviewees said due to the absence of contradictory facts. Nonetheless, in assessing and analysing information derived from the interviews, it is probably prudent to retain a degree of scepticism.

Table 1.3 Research localities: Categories of interviewees

<i>Locality</i>	<i>Enterprise owners</i>	<i>Wives of enterprise owners</i>	<i>Managers</i>	<i>Total</i>
Jiaocheng	25	27	10	62
Qiongsan	22	20	11	53
Mianyang	21	20	15	56
Total	68	67	36	171

In addition to interviews with women in business, 29⁶⁸ local cadres and notables were interviewed to achieve an overview of the development of each local society—especially the local private economy and the role of local women in that development—from both Party-state and non-Party-state angles. This group of interviewees includes officials of the local government, the People’s Political Consultative Conference (PPCC), the Township and Village Enterprise Administration Bureau, the Administration for Industry and Commerce, the Local-Chronic Office, the Historical-Relics Administration, the Foreign Affairs Office (FAO), the Organization Department of the CCP Committee, the Federation of Industry and Commerce (FIC); the United Front Work Department (UFWD), the Statistics Bureau, the Tourism Bureau, the Investment Bureau, the Reception Office, as well as leaders at different level in the local WF; and notables such as religious figures, lawyers, and actresses. These interviewees were asked to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages for the future development of their locality.

The interviews were supplemented by a close monitoring of related materials such as newspapers and journals at country, province and county levels; government report at

⁶⁸ 10 local officials/notables were interviewed in Jiaocheng, 10 in Qiongsan, and 9 in Mianyang.

each level; publications of women's federation at each level; official documents of local history; records of official meetings; county archives; as well as media including television and the internet.

Table 1.4 Interviewees: Year of birth

<i>Place</i>	<i>1936~ 1945</i>	<i>1946~ 1955</i>	<i>1956~ 1965</i>	<i>1966~ 1975</i>	<i>1976~ 1985</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	2 (2.9%)	10 (14.7%)	25 (36.8%)	25 (36.8%)	6 (8.8%)		68
Wife of enterprise owner		11 (16.4%)	24 (35.8%)	26 (38.8%)	5 (7.5%)	1 (1.5%)	67
Manager		4 (11.1%)	18 (50%)	10 (27.8%)	4 (11.1%)		36
Total	2 (1.2%)	25 (14.6%)	67 (39.2%)	61 (35.7%)	15 (8.8%)	1 (0.6%)	171

Table 1.4 and Table 1.5 detail the interviewees' year of birth. The interviewees have been classified according to their year of birth, in order to reflect the wider trends of China's social change. The periodization is 1936~1945 (the period of the Anti-Japanese War); 1946~1955 (The PRC's pre-socialization period); 1956~1965 (The pre-Cultural Revolution era); 1966~1975 (The Cultural Revolution); and 1976~1985 (The post-Cultural Revolution period). The majority of the interviewees were born between 1956 and 1975. This is a generation which has experienced the early socialist construction of the People's Republic of China, the Cultural Revolution, and China's Opening-up, economic reform and subsequent reforms in many aspects of society. They have lived both in a highly centralized system where the Central Government dominated all social aspects and in an era when privatization is becoming more common. The three categories of interviewees—enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners and managers—are not much different in age, although the category of managers appeared to be slightly older—this category has the least percentage (38.9%) of those born after 1966.

Table 1.5 Research localities: Interviewees by year of birth

<i>Locality</i>	<i>1936~ 1945</i>	<i>1946~ 1955</i>	<i>1956~ 1965</i>	<i>1966~ 1975</i>	<i>1976~ 1985</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Jiaocheng		16 (25.8%)	26 (41.9%)	20 (32.3%)			62
Qiongsan	2 (3.8%)	6 (11.3%)	12 (22.6%)	20 (37.7%)	13 (24.5%)		53
Mianyang		3 (5.4%)	29 (51.8%)	21 (37.5%)	2 (3.6%)	1 (1.8%)	56
Total	2 (1.2%)	25 (14.6%)	67 (39.2%)	61 (35.7%)	15 (8.8%)	1 (0.6%)	171

There were age differences among the interviewees in the three research areas. As Table 1.3 shows, the Jiaocheng interviewees were the oldest group with the least percentage (32.3%) of those born after 1966. Those from Qiongsan were the youngest, with the highest percentage (62.2%) of those born after 1966.

Table 1.6 Interviewees: Place of birth

<i>Category</i>	<i>The same place</i>	<i>Other county/county-level jurisdiction of the same city</i>	<i>Other city of the same province</i>	<i>Other province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	37 (54.4%)	7 (10.3%)	19 (27.9%)	5 (7.4%)	68
Wife of enterprise owner	36 (53.7%)	6 (9.0%)	12 (17.9%)	13 (19.4%)	67
Manager	23 (63.9%)	2 (5.6%)	5 (13.9%)	6 (16.7%)	36
Total	96 (56.1%)	15 (8.8%)	36 (21.1%)	24 (14.0%)	171

Table 1.6 provides information about the interviewees' place of birth. In these samples the majority (56.1%) of the interviewees had moved around little during the course of their lives. They were born, brought up and lived in the same location. For those who did move, 29.9 percent of them moved within the one province. Only 14 percent of the interviewees were inter-provincial migrants. Comparing the three different categories of interviewees, enterprise owners had the least mobility, as only 7.4 percent had moved between provinces.

Table 1.7 Interviewees: Industry sector

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Enterprise owners</i>	<i>Wives of enterprise owners</i>	<i>Managers</i>	<i>Total</i>
Commercial farming	4 (5.9%)	9 (13.4%)	4 (11.1%)	17 (9.9%)
Mineral processing		1 (1.5%)		1 (0.6%)
Food processing	1 (1.5%)			1 (0.6%)
Real estate		6 (9.0%)		6 (3.5%)
Manufacturing	13 (19.1%)	21 (31.3%)	12 (33.3%)	46 (26.9%)
Telecommunication			1 (2.8%)	1 (0.6%)
Clothing/textile	2 (2.9%)	2 (3.0%)	3 (8.3%)	7 (4.1%)
Retail	18 (26.5%)	14 (20.9%)	7 (19.4%)	39 (22.8%)
Advertisement	1 (1.5%)			1 (0.6%)
Theatre		1 (1.5%)		1 (0.6%)
Pharmacy	1 (1.5%)	2 (3.0%)		3 (1.8%)
Service	16 (23.5%)	5 (7.5%)	3 (8.3%)	24 (14.0%)
School/kindergarten	6 (8.8%)		2 (5.6%)	8 (4.7%)
Restaurant/hotel	6 (8.8%)	6 (9.0%)	3 (8.3%)	15 (8.8%)
Insurance			1 (2.8%)	1 (0.6%)
Total	68	67	36	171

Table 1.7 provides information on the industry sectors where the women interviewees operated. The majority (53.9 percent) of the interviewees were engaged in tertiary industries, such as retail, advertisement, theatre, pharmacy, service, school and kindergarten, restaurant and hotel, as well as insurance. Comparing the three categories of interviewees, it is evident that few women enterprise owners were operating in the traditionally male-dominated business sector of manufacturing.

Table 1.8 provides data on the size of the enterprises in which these women operated. China Statistics Bureau classifies enterprises into large-, medium- and small-sized, according to a series of criteria related to their economic activity, including: number of employees, annual output value, annual turnover, and fixed capital.⁶⁹ This classification is not used here, because the criteria set by the Statistical Bureau of China are too broad to reflect differences in the samples collected in this research. For this reason the interviewees' businesses have been classified according to the standards adopted by a survey conducted by the United Front Work Department of

⁶⁹ Guojia Jingji Maoyi Weiyuanhui [National Economy and Trade Commission] 'Guanyu yinfa zhongxiao qiye biao zhun zhanxing guiding de tongzhi' ['Notice on the temporary standards of medium- and small-sized enterprises'] at <http://www.setc.gov.cn/qygyfz/200303070004.htm>.

CCP, All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC) and Private Business Institute of China in 2005.⁷⁰ According to the 2005 survey, enterprises with a capital of less than 1 million yuan are labelled as small-sized, those with a capital of 1 million to 10 million yuan are medium-sized, those with a capital of 10 million to 100 million yuan are large-sized and those with a capital of more than 100 million yuan are extra large-sized.

Table 1.8 Interviewees: Enterprise assets

						Unit=yuan
<i>Size</i>						
<i>Category</i>	<i>~999,999</i>	<i>1million ~ 9.99 million</i>	<i>10 million~ 99.99million</i>	<i>100 million ~</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	39 (57.4%)	15 (22.1%)	3 (4.4%)	1 (1.5%)	10 (14.7%)	68
Wife of enterprise owner	27 (40.3%)	20 (29.9%)	7 (10.4%)	3 (4.5%)	10 (14.9%)	67
Manager	14 (38.9%)	3 (8.3%)	3 (8.3%)	10 (27.8%)	6 (16.7%)	36
Total	80 (46.8%)	38 (22.2%)	13 (7.6%)	14 (8.2%)	26 (15.2%)	171

Except for 26 interviewees who were reluctant to reveal the detailed circumstances of their businesses, interviewees generally provided figures for the assets of their enterprises. A majority (69 percent) of these women were operating small- or medium-sized enterprises, with capitals of less than 10 million yuan. On a closer look, women enterprise owners had the highest proportion involved in small-sized business and lowest proportion in large- and extra-large business. In comparison, the women managers interviewed were more likely to be working in larger-scale enterprises.

⁷⁰ '2005 Zhongguo siying qiye diaocha baogao' ['Survey of 2005 investigation of China's private enterprises] at <http://www.southcn.com/finance/gdmqgc/gdmqyyrl/200502030218.html>.

Table 1.9 Interviewees: Highest educational level

<i>Category</i>	<i>Under junior middle school</i>	<i>Junior middle school</i>	<i>High school /secondary technical school</i>	<i>College /University</i>	<i>Postgraduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	6 (8.8%)	16 (23.5%)	25 (36.8%)	21 (30.9%)		68
Wife of enterprise owner	9 (13.4%)	22 (32.8%)	20 (30.0%)	14 (20.9%)	2 (3.0%)	67
Manager	4 (11.1%)	8 (22.2%)	12 (33.3%)	10 (27.8%)	2 (5.6%)	36
Total	19 (11.1%)	46 (26.9%)	57 (33.3%)	45 (26.3%)	4 (2.3%)	171

During the interviews, all the interviewees were asked about the highest educational level they had achieved. Most of the interviewees were literate, and as can be seen in Table 1.9, the majority (88.9 percent) had received the Nine-Year Compulsory Education and were thus equipped with basic literacy.⁷¹ Moreover, 28.6 percent of the interviewees had received higher education.

Compared to the general situation of the female population in China, the interviewees in this research were much better-educated. According to the Sample Survey on population changes in 2003 by the Statistical Bureau of China, only 51.3 percent of China's female population aged 6 and over had finished junior middle school and only 4.6 percent had been to colleges and universities.⁷² This result suggests that the new rich women interviewed in this research had a much better education background than the female population in general.

At a closer look, the wives of enterprise owners interviewed were not as literate as those women who were enterprise owners and managers. A bigger proportion (13.4

⁷¹ Since 1986, the Chinese government has pursued a Nine-Year Compulsory Education Policy and people having completed nine years of primary school and junior middle school education are considered to be equipped with the basic literacy required to seek employment.

⁷² Calculated from figures provided in *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian* [China Statistical Yearbook]. Zhongguo Guojia Tongji Ju [the National Bureau of Statistics of China] *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian* [Statistical Yearbook of China] Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe, Beijing, 2004.

percent as opposed to 8.8 and 11.1 percent of the other two categories) of this category was illiterate and less had received higher education (23.9 percent to 30.9 and 33.4 percent of the other two categories).

Table 1.10 Interviewees: Previous profession

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Enterprise owners</i>	<i>Wives of enterprise owners</i>	<i>Managers</i>	<i>Total</i>
Peasant/rural housewife	3 (4.4%)	10 (14.9%)	1 (2.8%)	14 (8.2%)
Worker	25 (36.8%)	30 (44.8%)	17 (47.2%)	72 (42.1%)
Opera singer		2 (3.0%)		2 (1.2%)
Professional	7 (10.3%)	8 (11.9%)	4 (11.1%)	19 (11.1%)
Cadre	6 (8.8%)	9 (13.4%)	4 (11.1%)	19 (11.1%)
Business people	26 (38.2%)	8 (11.9%)	10 (27.7%)	44 (25.7%)
Information not available	1 (1.5%)			1 (0.6%)
Total	68	67	36	171

Table 1.10 provides information about the various professional backgrounds of the interviewees. The majority of these women used to be peasants, rural housewives and workers—these professions have less requirements for a high educational level. Only 11.1 percent of them had been employed as professionals. This corresponds to the overall educational background of these women. Understandably, the lack of higher education limited most of the interviewees from seeking employment as professionals.

Women enterprise owners' previous background as business people stands out. Some 38.2 percent of these women had worked as business operators and managers before they started their current business. Presumably these women were advantaged by their business background, which provided them with necessary knowledge, business networks and experience.

Entrepreneurs, wives and managers

This thesis contains three main sections detailing the specific analysis of each of the three research areas. The sequence of the sections is arranged according to the dates when survey was undertaken in each location: Jiaocheng in October 2003 and May 2004; Qiongsan in October 2004 and May 2005; and Mianyang in July and October 2005.

In each section the first chapter introduces the specific locality by analysing its economic features and social development. This chapter also provides an introduction to the women interviewed in the locality, by providing information about the scale and sector of their businesses, their year and place of birth, as well as their education and work experience.

The second chapter of each section concentrates on the issue of gender. It describes and analyses the interviewees' responses to a series of key questions about the development of the original idea for the business, the division of enterprise responsibilities, the making of executive business decisions and the allocation of domestic responsibilities. The information provided by the interviewees facilitate investigation of the extent to which traditional gender roles remain entrenched in modern business in China; in short, they allow determination of whether the entrepreneur or her husband is really the 'boss' of the enterprise in which each woman is involved.

The third chapter of each section examines these women and their family's interactions with the local Party-state, by looking at the interviewees and their family members' CCP membership, Party-state leadership positions, as well as other political connections in terms of appointments, titles and honours from the Party-state.

The first section examines Jiaocheng. Chapter 1 analyses and describes the economic development of Shanxi Province, emphasizing its close relationship with the Party Centre. During the Anti-Japanese War, Shanxi was the location of three of CCP's major base-areas. This relationship was reinforced in early 1960s, in the campaign of 'In Agriculture Learn from Dazhai'. Moreover, due to its vast coal reserve, the province has been developed as the major coal supplier and heavy industry basis of the country. As a result, the province's economy has been characterized by strong central control.

This chapter also introduces the education background and work experience of the Jiaocheng interviewees. The interview results suggest that higher education is not an important element in the making of these tiger girls, but literacy still matters for women seeking higher positions in private enterprises or setting up their own business. These women's work experience corresponds to their educational background. Limited by their education level, most of the interviewees used to be engaged in jobs requiring less literacy.

Chapter 2 examines the roles the Jiaocheng interviewees played at work and at home. It is shown that these women took responsibility for a high proportion of primary business activities such as purchasing, production, sales, personnel and finance, and tend overall to be deeply involved in management and daily business operation. As the chapter describes, domestic work remains the responsibility of these women as well.

Chapter 3 examines the Jiaocheng interviewees' positions in local politics. Although the Jiaocheng interviewees did not own much political resources, they had developed a close proximity to the local Party-State through their family ties. As the chapter details an impressive proportion of the women interviewed had family members who were CCP members or held state positions at different government levels.

The second section of this thesis analyses women entrepreneurs, wives and female managers in Qiongzhan. Chapter 4 describes the economic features of Hainan Province and the background of Qiongzhan interviewees. It highlights the province's pioneer role in China's economic reform. Since it was established as the country's biggest SEZ in 1988, the province has undergone a series of bold economic reforms, which brought both successes and failures. Before its economy declined in early 1990s, the island of Hainan was a major destination for mainland migration, not least because of its rapid development. Nowadays, with an improving economy, Hainan remains a constant receiver of domestic migration. Those interviewed in Qiongzhan emphasised the importance of migration in their lives. Most of these women were literate, but only a small proportion had received higher education. The Qiongzhan interviewees had not shown an obvious professional tendency, but most used to be employed in non-labour professions.

As Chapter 5 indicates, as in the other localities, the Qiongzhan interviewees were actively involved in the establishment, operation and strategic planning of their businesses. These women were burdened by their domestic duties too. When comparing the three categories of interviewees, wives of enterprise owners took the least responsibilities in the enterprises, but had to shoulder the most domestic tasks at home.

Chapter 6 is concerned with the Qiongzhan interviewees' political capital, which they gained such capital through their or their husband's family ties. As in their counterparts in Jiaocheng, these women derived more connections with the Party-state through their family ties.

The third section examines women entrepreneurs, wives and managers in Mianyang. Chapter 7 provides an introduction to Mianyang's economic development in the background of China's Western Region development programs. Due to its geographic location, the city had become a centre of China's national defence during the Third

Front Construction Project. In the current Campaign to Open Up the West, the city is designated to be developed as a 'Science and Technology City (STC)'. As a result, the economy of Mianyang is characterised by its industrial development, especially now in high-tech sectors. As Chapter 7 indicates, the women interviewees of Mianyang were characterised by their high level of higher education. Consequently, this group is also characterised by a white-collar professional background. The chapter also suggests that the Mianyang interviewees were a significant part of the 'new rich' enjoying a comparatively more luxurious life style.

Chapter 8 details the roles these women played in their enterprises. As in Jiaocheng and Qiongsan, the interviewees indicated that they played a central role in business management, operation and development. However, unlike the interviewees of Jiaocheng and Qiongsan, the Mianyang women had less of a domestic burden. Although some of them still had to do housework, this group had received considerable help from their families, as well as often being able to employ assistance.

Chapter 9 shows that family ties were also a major source of political connections for the Mianyang interviewees. In contrast though to those interviewed in Jiaocheng and Qiongsan, those interviewed in Mianyang had more political connections in their own right, not least through CCP membership. Though not holding leadership positions in the Party-state, some of them had obtained membership in the local FIC, the Self-Employed Labourers Association (SELA) and the WF. This finding is not so surprising given their apparent business success and status as 'new rich'.

Inequality, politics, and localism

The overall findings of this research project are quite clear on the two central points of gender inequality and relations between the new rich and local politics. There is gender inequality but it is often overstated and is clearly changing. More startling

perhaps is the extent to which all business development, even when gendered, has to be seen in a context of local politics centred on the Party-state. The research project also highlights the need to approach China as a series of localities that both have much in common but also have their own stories of development.

The Half Empty Cup of Gender inequality

The interviewees' reflections on the roles they play at the enterprises and in their families suggests that gender inequality exists in their lives, but that the situation might not be as bad as described for the general female population in China in the existing scholarship.

Gender disparities can be seen from the interview results. Firstly, they show that some of the interviewees were still affected by the traditional practice of having the husband represent the family to the outside world. When asked who had developed the original idea for their business, a small minority of the interviewees revealed that the enterprises were established on the basis of an idea developed by themselves or joint efforts with their husbands, but were registered under their husbands' names. And most regarded it as more convenient to have their husbands represent the family or their marriage on the public stage as the enterprise owner.

Secondly, the sexual division of labour of 'men outside, women inside' exists in these women's enterprises. Some of the interviewees mentioned the 'outside' and 'inside' notion when talking about their work. They regarded responsibilities such as management, production and administration as 'inside' work, and responsibilities such as entertaining clients, dealing with government departments and settling debts as 'outside' work. 'Inside' work was taken care of by women, while 'outside' work remained with men. Some of them even commented that socialization with the male-dominated world had resulted in adverse gossip and slander about their own behaviour.

Thirdly, the interviewees still had to bear the double burden of work responsibilities and domestic tasks. This is commonly regarded by the interviewees' as a disadvantage of women in business. A majority of these women reported that they had to shoulder the responsibilities of cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, shopping and child care at home.

Although the interviewees still had to face gender inequality, the interview results show that the situation was improving. Firstly, these women were able to take the initiative in the establishment of the business. Most of the women interviewed were playing an equal role with their husband in developing the ideas on which their enterprises were built. Secondly, the interviewees were actively engaged in the business operation and strategic planning. Often in comparison to their husbands, these women were playing a more substantial part in the management and daily operation of the enterprises. When encountering difficulties, they sought advice from their husbands, family members, friends and colleagues, and in many cases they made the final executive decisions. In general, these women were the *de-facto* bosses of their business. Lastly, although domestic work still remains the responsibility of the women, the burden was reduced by assistance from various sources. In many cases, the interviewees reported to have their husbands, parents and parents-in-law to share the housework. Besides, these new rich women were also able to afford to employ maids to assist with the housework.

Enterprise Development and the Party-state

The kind of interaction between women entrepreneurs and the Party-state analysed in this thesis suggests the importance of networks of influence. In his research on male private entrepreneurs in China, Wank argues that their businesses are facilitated by their personal ties with the government acquired through these entrepreneurs' family

background or prior experiences in school, the army, and political campaigns.⁷³ As to women entrepreneurs, existing scholarship does not provide an explanation. Korabik claims that women managers lack access to these kinds of special relationships. She refers to special relationships as ‘men’s networks’ and argues the lack of such networks makes it difficult for women managers to effectively run enterprises except on a small scale.⁷⁴ However, the interview results of this research suggest that such special relationships may also be established between women entrepreneurs and the Party-state through their family ties.

Table 1.11 Interviewees: Family and CCP membership⁷⁵

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Sibling</i>	<i>Father-in-law</i>	<i>Mother-in-law</i>	<i>Sibling-In-law</i>
Enterprise owner	15 (22.1%)	19 (27.9%)	3 (4.4%)	28 (41.2%)	9 (13.2%)	18 (26.4%)	27 (39.7%)	4 (5.9%)	19 (27.9%)
Wife of enterprise owner	13 (19.4%)	18 (26.9%)	5 (7.4%)	26 (38.8%)	5 (7.5%)	25 (37.3%)	26 (38.8%)	8 (11.9%)	21 (31.3%)
Manager	11 (30.6%)	12 (33.3%)	2 (5.6%)	12 (33.3%)	3 (8.3%)	12 (33.3%)	17 (47.2%)	4 (11.1%)	6 (16.7%)
Total	39 (22.8%)	49 (28.7%)	10 (5.8%)	66 (38.6%)	17 (9.9%)	55 (32.1%)	70 (40.9%)	16 (9.4%)	46 (26.9%)

Table 1.11 provides data on the CCP membership of the interviewees and their family members. Calculated from the figures provided by the Central Government, by the end of 2005, some 2.1 percent of China’s female population was CCP members.⁷⁶ Compared with women in general, the interviewees have significantly more active participation in politics. However, the percentage of those interviewees with CCP membership was clearly lower than that of their husbands, their fathers, their fathers-in-law, their siblings and their siblings-in-law. In other words, those who were not CCP members themselves, were wives, daughters, daughters-in-law, sisters and

⁷³ David LWank, 2001, p. 54.

⁷⁴ Karen Korabik, 1994, p. 122.

⁷⁵ Probationary CCP membership included.

⁷⁶ According to the Central Government, by the end of 2005, China’s female population was 633.81 million. See ‘Zhongguo Renkou Xianzhuang [The current situation of China’s population]’, http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-07/26/content_17363.htm, accessed on 27 November 2006.

By the end of 2005, China had 13.573 female CCP members. See ‘Zhongguo nüganbu duiwu yi yu 1500 wan ren, zhan zong ganbu shu de 38.9% [China has more than 15 million female cadres, accounting for 38.9% of cadres in general]’, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2006-08/24/content_5003594.htm, accessed on 27 November 2006.

sisters-in-law of CCP members. This suggests that these women were closely connected to the Party through their families.

Table 1.12 Interviewees: Family and leadership

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Sibling</i>	<i>Father-in-law</i>	<i>Mother-in-law</i>	<i>Sibling-In-law</i>
Enterprise owner	7 (10.3%)	11 (16.2%)	1 (1.5%)	17 (25%)	4 (5.9%)	9 (13.2%)	15 (22.1%)	4 (5.9%)	5 (7.4%)
Wife of enterprise owner	3 (4.5%)	11 (16.4%)		14 (20.9%)	2 (3.0%)	6 (9.0%)	10 (14.9%)	2 (3.0%)	12 (17.9%)
Manager	4 (11.1%)	4 (11.1%)		6 (16.7%)		2 (5.6%)	8 (22.2%)	1 (2.8%)	3 (8.3%)
Total	14 (8.2%)	26 (15.2%)	1 (0.6%)	37 (21.6%)	6 (3.5%)	17 (9.9%)	33 (19.3%)	7 (4.1%)	20 (11.7%)

Table 1.12 shows the Party-state leadership positions the interviewees or their family members had ever held. These positions includes leadership in villages and neighbourhoods, leadership at various levels of government and CCP committee, as well as leadership in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the People's Congress, the People's Political Consultative Conference (PPCC), the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC), the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), the All-China Labour Union (ACLU) and the People's Court. These positions are those that ensure access to resources, loans, and raw materials as well as information and business contacts.

As is illustrated in Table 1.12, the interviewees themselves were not so politically involved as the rest of their family. Though higher than the percentage in the general population, only 8.2 percent of these women had been working as leaders of the Party-state. Instead, their interaction with the Party-state came through their families and their marriages. 21.6 percent of them were daughters, 15.2 percents were wives and 19.3 percent were daughters-in-law of cadres at different levels in the government as well as other organizations. This, again, indicates the interviewees' close interaction with the Party-state through family ties.

Local differences

While the main point of this research has been to examine the role of women in enterprise development as well as the determinants of that role, research has also highlighted the varied ecology of China's socio-economic development. It seems clear that there are differences between the three research locations that significantly effect the opportunities available to women entrepreneurs, wives and managers. In particular, the evidence from the interviews is that there are significant differences in mobility, business development and educational and career backgrounds.

Table 1.13 Research localities: Interviewees' place of birth

<i>Locality</i>	<i>The same place</i>	<i>Other county/county-level jurisdiction of the same city</i>	<i>Other city of the same province</i>	<i>Other province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Jiaocheng	52 (83.9%)	6 (9.7%)	4 (6.5%)		62
Qiongshan	22 (41.5%)	2 (3.8%)	14 (26.4%)	15 (28.3%)	53
Mianyang	22 (39.3%)	7 (12.5%)	18 (32.1%)	9 (16.1%)	56
Total	96 (56.1%)	15 (8.8%)	36 (21.1%)	24 (14.0%)	171

A comparison of the women interviewees in the three localities (Table 1.13) indicates that those in Jiaocheng had very little spatial mobility in their lives—83.9 percent of them were living in their birth county and none came from outside the province. Considering the fact that Jiaocheng's per capita GDP in 2003 was 4,406 yuan, less than a half of the national average,⁷⁷ it is understandable that such an economically-underdeveloped county would not attract a big floating population of migrants looking for work. On the other hand, Qiongshan had the highest percentage of inter-provincial migrants, which corresponds to Hainan's history of migration. Interviewees in Mianyang had greater mobility within the province—presumably, as the second biggest city of the province, it is a major destination of within province migration.

⁷⁷ The national per capita GDP in 2003 was 9,101 yuan. Zhongguo Guojia Tongji Ju [the National Bureau of Statistics of China] *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian* [Statistical Yearbook of China] Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe, Beijing, 2004, p.53.

Interviewees from the three localities are also clearly differentiated by their industrial involvement (Table 1.14). Compared to their counterparts in Jiaocheng and Mianyang, women in Qiongsan had significantly less involvement in manufacturing (3.8% as opposed to 33.9% and 41.1% respectively), but the most involvement in retail business (34.0% as opposed to 24.2% and 10.7% respectively). This corresponds to the different industrial structures of the three localities and the fact that Jiaocheng and Mianyang both have stronger industrial backgrounds.

Table 1.14 Research localities: Interviewee's industry sector

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Jiaocheng</i>	<i>Qiongsan</i>	<i>Mianyang</i>	<i>Total</i>
Commercial farming	9 (14.5%)	4 (7.5%)	4 (7.1%)	17 (9.9%)
Mineral processing	1 (1.6%)			1 (0.6%)
Food processing	1 (1.6%)			1 (0.6%)
Real estate		3 (5.7%)	3 (5.4%)	6 (3.5%)
Manufacturing	21 (33.9%)	2 (3.8%)	23 (41.1%)	46 (26.9%)
Telecommunication			1 (1.8%)	1 (0.6%)
Clothing/textile	5 (8.1%)	2 (3.8%)		7 (4.1%)
Retail	15 (24.2%)	18 (34.0%)	6 (10.7%)	39 (22.8%)
Advertisement			1 (1.8%)	1 (0.6%)
Theatre			1 (1.8%)	1 (0.6%)
Pharmacy	1 (1.6%)		2 (3.6%)	3 (1.8%)
Service	7 (11.3%)	10 (18.9%)	7 (12.5%)	24 (14.0%)
School/kindergarten		4 (7.5%)	4 (7.1%)	8 (4.7%)
Restaurant/hotel	2 (3.2%)	9 (17.0%)	4 (7.1%)	15 (8.8%)
Insurance		1 (1.9%)		1 (0.6%)
Total	62	53	56	171

Table 1.15 Research localities: Enterprise assets

						Unit=yuan	
<i>Size</i>		<i>1million ~ 9.99 million</i>	<i>10 million~ 99.99million</i>	<i>100 million ~</i>	<i>Information available</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Category</i>	<i>~999,999</i>						
Jiaocheng	30 (48.4%)	20 (32.3%)	5 (8.1%)	2 (3.2%)	5 (8.1%)		62
Qiongsan	34 (64.2%)	3 (5.7%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	14 (26.4%)		53
Mianyang	16 (28.6%)	15 (26.8%)	7 (12.5%)	11 (19.6%)	7 (12.5%)		56
Total	80 (46.8%)	38 (22.2%)	13 (7.6%)	14 (8.2%)	26 (15.2%)		171

As Table 1.15 details through an examination of enterprise assets, interviewees in Qiongsan appear to be involved in smaller business (with the most in small-sized and the least in large and extra-large enterprises), while Jiaocheng and Mianyang interviewees were operating bigger business (with less in small-sized and more in large and extra-large enterprises). This would seem to reflect the fact that Qiongsan has a stronger tertiary sector, while Jiaocheng has a significant heavy industrial sector, and Mianyang has strength in science and technology industrial development.

Table 1.16 Research localities: Interviewee's highest education level

<i>Locality</i>	<i>Under junior middle school</i>	<i>Junior middle school</i>	<i>High school /secondary technical school</i>	<i>College /University</i>	<i>Postgraduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
Jiaocheng	7 (11.3%)	25 (40.3%)	26 (41.9%)	4 (6.5%)		62
Qiongsan	9 (17.0%)	13 (24.5%)	18 (34.0%)	12 (22.6%)	1 (1.9%)	53
Mianyang	3 (5.4%)	8 (14.3%)	13 (23.2%)	29 (51.8%)	3 (5.4%)	56
Total	19 (11.1%)	46 (26.9%)	57 (33.3%)	45 (26.3%)	4 (2.3%)	171

When the highest educational level of the interviewees in the three research areas is considered (Table 1.16), the educational level of the Mianyang interviewees' clearly stands out. An impressive 57.2 percent of these women had received higher education, and the percentage of them without basic literacy was as low as 5.4 percent.

Table 1.17 Research localities: Interviewees' previous profession

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Jiaocheng</i>	<i>Qiongsan</i>	<i>Mianyang</i>	<i>Total</i>
Peasant/rural housewife	8 (12.9%)	4 (7.5%)	2 (3.6%)	14 (8.2%)
Worker	27 (43.5%)	24 (45.3%)	21 (37.5%)	72 (42.1%)
Opera singer	1 (1.6%)		1 (1.8%)	2 (1.2%)
Professional	2 (3.2%)	3 (5.7%)	14 (30.3%)	19 (11.1%)
Cadre	9 (14.5%)	7 (13.2%)	3 (5.4%)	19 (11.1%)
Business people	14 (22.6%)	15 (28.3%)	15 (26.8%)	44 (25.7%)
Information not available	1 (1.6%)			1 (0.6%)
Total	62	53	56	171

Table 1.17 provides details of interviewees' previous profession in each of the three research areas. Corresponding to their higher education level, those interviewed in Mianyang had the lowest percentage with a manual background and the highest percentage with previous employment in professional jobs. The Mianyang interviewees' higher educational level and professional background reflects the city's background of development in science and technology, and in many cases the interviewees reported they had been assigned to work at the city's state-owned enterprises and research institutions on graduation from university.

Part 1

Jiaocheng County, Shanxi Province

Chapter 1

Industrial heartland and women entrepreneurs

Jiaocheng County is located in the centre of Shanxi Province, just south of Taiyuan, the provincial capital. Its geographical and economic location in the Taiyuan Basin means that Jiaocheng's development has been centrally related to Shanxi's political economy. Like the province the county's development has been dominated by the influence of the Communist Party-state and heavy industry.

Shanxi Province

Shanxi is located in northern China. It is a medium sized province, with a population of 33.35 million, ranked 19th among the country's 31 provincial level jurisdictions for population.¹ The province has been developed under the influence of Party-state control for a long period, not only because of its geographic location—it is one of the closest provinces to Beijing, but also because of the significant roles it played in the CCP's success in the War of Resistance to Japan (1937-45), its pioneering position in the Great Leap Forward era and its enormous coal reserves. From the 1950s onwards, the province was developed by the Central Government as its heavy industry base for coal and power. As a result, the province's economy has been characterized by strict central control and planning for almost 50 years. Though rich in natural resources and strong in heavy industry, the province of Shanxi remains one of the less developed provinces in China. By the end of 2004, the province's GDP was about 304 billion *yuan*, 18th of the provincial level jurisdictions.²

¹ Zhongguo Guojia Tongji Ju [the National Bureau of Statistics of China] *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian* [Statistical Yearbook of China] Zhongguo Statistics Publication, Beijing, 2005.

² Zhongguo Guojia Tongji Ju, 2005.

Close relationship to the Central Government

Shanxi's affiliation with the Party-state dates back to as early as the late 1930s, and the beginning of the War of Resistance to Japan. In 1937, while Japan had occupied North and Central China and the Kuomintang Government had retreated to the interior and set up a capital at Chongqing, the Communist Party remained active in their base areas in the Chinese countryside. The CCP had a particularly strong presence in Shanxi, where three (Jin-Cha-Ji, Jin-Sui and Jin-Ji-Lu-Yu) of the eight major CCP base areas were located. The province was also the base of one of the most elite CCP military troops at that time, the 129th Division led by Liu Bocheng and Deng Xiaoping, known colloquially as the Liu-Deng Army.³ During that period, a great number of cadres were sent to Shanxi by the CCP Central Committee in Yan'an. The province played a crucial role in the success of the war, as well as in the development of the CCP's leadership as a result.

The nexus between Shanxi and the Party Centre was further strengthened during the Mao-dominated Era, in particular with Shanxi being the home of the Dazhai Brigade, the national model of agricultural production.⁴ The originally small and poor brigade located in the Taihang Mountain region became known in the late 1950s and early 1960s as a model of agricultural self-reliance for turning its infertile soil into productive land by relying on manpower and hard work. In 1964, one of the most tenacious slogans of the Mao era—'In Agriculture Learn from Dazhai'—was raised by the Central Government to promote independence, hard-work and a close relationship between Party leaders and ordinary peasants.

³ See David S G Goodman *Social and Political Change in Revolutionary China* Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Oxford, 2000.

⁴ See Mitch Mesner 'Dazhai: the Mass Line in practice' in *Modern China* Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 27-62.

Dazhai became a political model representing revolutionary vigor ⁵ and its influence lasted until the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Another important element reinforcing the Party-state's influence in Shanxi after 1949 was the role played by four Shanxi natives in the country's top leadership—Peng Zhen, Bo Yibo, Hua Guofeng and Chen Yonggui. All were members of the Political Bureau of the CCP: Peng was also a leading member of the CCP Secretariat and the first major victim of the Cultural Revolution. Bo Yibo was a major economic planner and Vice-Premier of the Central Government. Hua was Mao's anointed successor as Party and government leader. Chen Yonggui, the head of the village of Dazhai, became Vice-Premier of the Central Government in charge of agriculture. Although Deng Xiaoping was not a Shanxi native, he had been the leading official in the Jin-Ji-Lu-Yu Base Area of the War of Resistance and his advisers and supporters during the reform era were disproportionately drawn from that border region.⁶ While it is impossible to quantify how much these people affected the development of the relationship between Shanxi and the Beijing, it would be reasonable to expect the attitude of top central leaders to their home province to also strengthen Beijing's influence in the province.

Last but not least, due to its enormous coal reserves, Shanxi has been a major preoccupation of the Central Government for decades. Shanxi is the biggest coalfield in China. Coal is found in 94 of its 118 counties and county-level cities, and coal mines have been established in 91 of them.⁷ The annual coal production of Shanxi counts for some one-fourth of that of China as a whole, which makes the province the country's most significant coal producer. As coal accounts for

⁵ Judith Rae Shapiro *Mao's War Against the Nature: Politics and Environment in the Revolutionary China* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, p. 96.

⁶ David S G Goodman *Deng Xiaoping and the Chinese Revolution* Routledge, London, 1994, p. 44ff.

⁷ 'Shanxi ziyuan gaishu' ['General information of Shanxi's resources'] at http://www.sxcoal.gov.cn/sxcoal_new/new_website.co?action=detail&&id=205.

some 76 percent of all the energy consumed in China,⁸ such great reliance on coal results in Shanxi's position as a major heavy industry base in the Central Government's strategy for economic development. In the 1950s, Shanxi received substantial investment from the Central Government: 2.1 billion *yuan* during the period of the First Five Year Plan.⁹ At the same time, the Central Government located 52 keystone industrial projects in the province, including 16 of the 156 projects designed and constructed by the USSR.¹⁰ Shanxi's role as a source of energy production means that the Central Government has to maintain control as 'many of China's long-term industrial plans have been built around supplies of coals from Shanxi'.¹¹

Emphasis on Heavy Industry

It is less known that Shanxi's specialization in heavy industry started well before the development of the PRC's economic strategy. The foundations of Shanxi's heavy industry development were laid under the direction of the provincial warlord Yan Xishan in the 1920s and 1930s.¹² In order to modernize the economy of the then-underdeveloped province, Yan adopted a series of strategies to build the heavy industries to produce weapons, machine tools, locomotives, railroad cars, steel rails, electric motors, iron boilers, agricultural machinery and hydraulic equipments. Yan claimed that Shanxi's future prosperity lay in its coal reserves and consequently attached great importance to the province's coal industry. Under his governance, the province succeeded in nearly doubling its output of coal.¹³ He

⁸ Elspeth Thompson 'Reforming China's coal industry' in *The China Quarterly* No. 147, p. 726.

⁹ Shaun Breslin 'Shanxi: China's powerhouse' in David Goodman (ed) *China's Regional Development* Routledge, London, 2005, p. 137.

¹⁰ Feng Linping 'Ershi shiji xiabanye Shanxi jingji jianshe de lishi kaocha' ['A historical review of Shanxi's economic construction in the second half of the 20th Century'] in *Cangsang* [Vicissitudes] Issue 3, 2004, p. 31.

¹¹ Shaun Breslin, 2005, p. 144.

¹² See Donald G Gillin *Warlord Yan Hsi-shan in Shansi Province 1911-1949* Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1967.

¹³ Donald G Gillin, 1967, p.179.

built his own railway—the Tong-Pu Railway, which extended the length of the province north to south, making cheap coal transportation available to outside the province. Yan also invested to build a modern steel mill in Taiyuan, which is still in operation and remains one of the major steel producers of China.

These were the foundations on which Shanxi's economy was developed after 1949. In early 1980s, the province was further developed as a major centre for China's energy industry. In 1982, the State Council set up the Shanxi Energy Base Office 'to provide energy and raw materials for production units in the Eastern Coastal Region'.¹⁴ Since then, the province has remained at the core of the planned economy, with a substantial proportion of its economy staying in state-ownership, in contrast to the impact of economic reform elsewhere. Until recently most of its industry was state-owned and the private sector was underdeveloped. By the end of 2001, the non-public sector accounted for 9 percent of the province's GMP —15 percent less than the national average.¹⁵ Shanxi has a large number of large-scale state-owned enterprises, including the Taiyuan Iron and Steel Plant built on the basis of Yan Xishan's steel mill, the Pingshuo Mine—the biggest open-cast coal mine in the world, several large thermal power plants, and the Shanxi Aluminium Company with the country's largest aluminium smelter.¹⁶ In addition to coal, the province also produces the largest quantity of coke, steel, electricity and aluminium in China.

Unsurprisingly, most of the energy Shanxi produces does not stay within the province. 70~80 percent of China's inter-provincially transported coal comes from Shanxi alone. Moreover, 23 percent of the electricity generated is transferred to other localities, including Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shaanxi and Inner Mongolia.

¹⁴ Shaun Breslin, 2005, p. 135.

¹⁵ 'Mei zhang fu zhai' ['The debt from coal'] at <http://www.scol.com.cn/economics/cjxw/20030424/200342485351.htm>.

¹⁶ See David S G Goodman, 'King coal and Secretary Hu: Shanxi's third modernisation' in Hans Hendrikse and Feng Chongyi (ed) *The Political Economy of China's Provinces* Routledge, London, 1999.

Some one-fourth of Beijing's live electricity supply is provided by Shanxi.¹⁷ As an energy producer, Shanxi's economy depends greatly on coal and related industries, which creates an economic dilemma as coal production does not create enough wealth because of strict Central Government price controls. Although the Central Government has increased coal prices, recent adjustments have been less than the increase in the cost of coal production caused by new technology, machinery and transportation. Moreover, because coal production has been less affected by the market, in recent years Shanxi has had an annual overstock of 60 to 70 million tons of coal,¹⁸ which again leads to reduction in the coal price. In the early 1990s the Central Government introduced elements of coal price liberalization, but Shanxi has only marginally benefited if at all because most of its customers are state-owned enterprises who are not able to afford coal sold at market prices.¹⁹ Without improvements in the economic situation of these enterprises liberalized coal prices might leave Shanxi caught in debt triangles.

The result of Shanxi's development as an energy base is that the province has been left with a greatly imbalanced economic structure. Though there had once been a growing light industrial sector, it started to decline in mid 1980s against the background of the Central Government's emphasis on Shanxi's role as a major energy producer.²⁰ By the end of 2002, light industry accounted for only 14.7 percent of the province's gross output value of industry—10 percent lower than in 1985.²¹ Presumably, given the Central Government's need for energy production Shanxi dares not risk diverting resources from coal production.

¹⁷ Dong Quangeng and Wang Xi 'Shanxi—nengyuan zhonghuagong jidi licheng' ['Shanxi—the development of the heavy industry base'] in *Shanxi Nengyuan Yu Jieneng* [Shanxi Energy and Energy Saving] Issue 9, 2005, p.8.

¹⁸ Zhou Xuehui 'Fangkai meitan jiage dui Shanxi jingji de yingxiang he duice' ['The effects of coal price liberalization on Shanxi's economy and solutions'] in *Qianjin* [Forward] Issue 10, 1994, p. 12.

¹⁹ See Elspeth Thompson, 1996.

²⁰ 'Pingpai—Shanxi jingji shanxi de tong' ['Brands—the pain of Shanxi's economy'] in *Jizhe GuanCha* [Journalist Observation] Issue 10, 2001, p. 9.

²¹ Shanxi Sheng Tongjiju [Shanxi Province Bureau of Statistics], *Shanxi Tongji Nianjian* [Shanxi Statistical Yearbook] Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe, Beijing, 2003, p. 15.

Somewhat more dramatically, Shanxi's economy has developed at the cost of its natural environment. In the mid 1980s, under the guidance of the provincial Coal Resource Commission, township collectives and individuals living in rural and suburban areas were actively encouraged to diversify from agricultural activity to coal extraction.²² Large numbers of peasant-run mines were set up to accelerate the province's coal production, alongside the state owned large scale coal mining enterprises. Unlimited mining has caused ground sinkage and loss of underground water. The Fenhe River, the once wide and deep tributary of the Yellow River running through Taiyuan has been reduced to a trickle as the underground water system feeding the river has greatly decreased. The lack of water has long been a major problem for Shanxi and the tremendous demands of heavy industry have worsened the already scarce supply. Moreover, industrial waste water has caused pollution of the water system, over- and underground. According to reports by the State Environmental Protection Administration of China,²³ in 2003 and 2004, Linfen, Yangquan and Dadong were the three most air-polluted cities in China—all centred in the province's major coalfields. There was no improvement in the following year, when the three cities still remained the most air-polluted and Shanxi accounted for 16 of the 43 most air-polluted cities in China.²⁴ In 2006, Linfen was ranked in the list of the top ten most polluted places in the world by the Blacksmith Institute, an environmental NGO based in New York.²⁵ It seems that Shanxi is caught in a difficult position: on the one hand, it has to meet national economic development demands for energy; on the other hand, it has to protect the environment not least to ensure the sustainability of resources.

²² Shaun Breslin, 2005, p. 141.

²³ 'Woguo shige daqi wuran zui yanzhong chengshi mingdan' ['The ten most air-polluted cities in China'] at <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-09-10/05333633878s.shtml>; 'Huanbao zongju gongbu woguo shida kongqi wuran chengshi mingdan' ['The State Environmental Protection Bureau of China published the list of the ten most air-polluted cities in China'] at <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1027/3440162.html>.

²⁴ 'Huanbao zongju gongbu zhongguo chengshi huanjing zonghe zhengzhi dingliang kaohe jieguo' ['The State Environmental Protection Bureau of China published the results of a quantitative test on improvement of China's urban environment'] at <http://news.cctv.com/society/20060905/100142.shtml>.

²⁵ 'Top ten most polluted places in the world, 2006' at <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0934286.html>.

Despite its development as a heavy industry base, Shanxi has not been the focus of the Central Government's several regional development strategies adopted since the introduction of reform. In the early reform years the eastern coastal areas were the focus of emphasis. Certainly, like other inland provinces, Shanxi was not included in this scheme and thus not able to enjoy any of the favorable policies the eastern provinces were given. In 1999, realizing the consequent regional inequality, the Central Government decided to switch its focus to the western areas and started the Campaign to Open Up the West. 11 provinces were included in the designated Western Region, including Shanxi's neighbouring provincial jurisdictions of Inner Mongolia and Shaanxi, but excluding Shanxi itself again. Even among the less favored Central China area (including Shanxi, Hubei, Anhui, Jiangxi, Henan and Hunan), Shanxi's development receives less assistance from Central Government. In 2004, only 3.2 percent of Shanxi's total capital investment came from the Central Government's budget. The percentage was lower than those of the other five Central China provinces (Hubei 8.7 percent, Jiangxi 5.6 percent, Anhui 5.0 percent, Hunan 4.2 percent and Henan 3.9 percent).²⁶

In June 2006, the Central Government issued a new document to accelerate the economic development of Central China.²⁷ In order to promote the development of the middle area, four city groups (Wuhan City Group, Wanjiang City Group, Zhengzhou City Group, Changsha-Zhuzhou-Xiangtan City Group) of the six provinces have been selected to be the major focus for economic development in the region. Around these city groups, economic networks will be set up to promote the provincial development. As a result, these city groups will receive

²⁶ Shanxi Sheng Tongjiju [Shanxi Provincial Bureau of Statistics] 'Shanxi yu zhongbu shengfen jingji shehui fazhan de bijiao yanjiu' ['A study comparing Shanxi's economic and social development with that of the other middle-China provinces'] at http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjfx/dfxx/t20061030_402361341.htm.

²⁷ See "'Jueqi" yu "longqi" zhongbu liusheng yanyi chengshi qun daxi' ['Rise' and 'upheaval': the six provinces in middle China are playing roles in the development city groups'] at http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2006-09/08/content_5063501.htm.

large investment and favorable policies. Unfortunately, Shanxi is not home to any of these city groups. Although it has played and is still playing a significant role as the power house of China's national industrial production, Shanxi's own development seems to be neglected by the Central Government.

New Strategies for the Provincial Leadership

Considering the problems facing Shanxi's development, the provincial leadership has recently adopted a series of new strategies to adjust its imbalanced economic structure and attract more investment. The highly-imbalanced economic structure, the over exploitation of coal reserves, the worsened natural environment, the safety problems occurred in coal production (especially the constantly occurring mine disasters of the last few years²⁸) have all motivated the Shanxi Government to reflect on its policies regarding the coal industry. In the past, increased production seemed to be emphasized to the exclusion of all else. Now more and more importance is attached to a balanced economic structure, sustainable development, environmental protection and safety in production. Since late 2004, the provincial leadership has adopted strict measures to close a large number of small-sized coal mines.²⁹ In early 2006, the provincial government approved legislation requiring coal mine owners to buy coal exploitation rights in order to engage in coal production, instead of simply obtaining permission through the allocation of the Party-state.³⁰ The government believes that by doing so, coal mine owners would be motivated to adopt modern techniques, employ the more scientific exploitation of resources and thus ensure the more sustainable use of

²⁸ For example, the Lingshi Mine Disaster occurred in February 2004, the Shuozhou Mine Disaster occurred in March 2005 and the Zuoyun Mine Disaster occurred in May 2006.

²⁹ See 'Zhengfu banghe xiaomeikuang guanti Wenzhou chao mei tuan qianwan touzi dashuipiao' ['The government urged to close small-sized coal mines and as a result Wenzhou investors lost their investment of several million yuan'] at http://www.ce.cn/cysc/ny/meitan/200601/13/t20060113_5816583.shtml.

³⁰ Shanxi Sheng Renmin Zhengfu [The People's Government of Shanxi], 'Shanxi sheng meitan ziyuan zhenghe he youchang shiyong banfa' ['Measures of integrating coal resources and selling exploitation rights'] at <http://www.cctd.com.cn/detail/06/03/28/00060047/content.html>.

coal resources. In addition to this, in March 2006, Yu Youjun, Governor of Shanxi Province claimed that in the next Five Year Plan, Shanxi would not aim at any increase for its coal production.³¹ This was the first time ever the provincial leadership had made such a statement. It indicates that Shanxi is taking protecting its advantages in coal reserves into consideration and planning for a more sustainable local development.

Recently the Shanxi Government proposed a new scheme to develop the province as ‘a new energy and industrial base of China’ and obtained approval and support from the Central Government.³² Instead of solely focusing on the coal industry, under the new scheme the emphasis in Shanxi’s economic development will fall on a variety of competitive industries such as coal and electricity, stainless steel and magaluma production, machinery manufacturing, chemistry and medicine, new material manufacturing, agricultural products and animal by-products processing, as well as tourism and services. More attention will be paid to the adoption of modern technologies, the sustainable use of resources and environmental protection. Moreover, instead of mainly depending on investments from Central Government, the Provincial Government will turn to more diversified sources of investments, including the private and foreign funded sectors. By doing so, Shanxi expects to eliminate the negative effects resulting from the former strategy of developing Shanxi as an Energy Base, to improve the local economy, and to achieve a more sustainable development.

Since the 1990s, the Shanxi leadership has worked to create strong feelings of a Shanxi identity both inside and outside the province.³³ One of the major practices

³¹ Zhao Lisheng ‘Meitan yilai zonghezheng: Shanxi jingji fazhan qianzai de youhuan’ [‘Syndrome of coal dependence: the underlying problem of Shanxi’s economic development’] in *Shanxi Caizheng Shuiwu Zhuanke Xuexiao Xuanbao* [Journal of Shanxi Finance and Taxation School] Vol. 8, No. 2, 2006, p. 5.

³² ‘Zhanlue guihua conghe rushou’ [‘Where to start the strategic planning’] at http://www.ccgov.org.cn/zhggcyl/gcyl20060323_034.htm.

³³ See Goodman, David S G ‘Structuring local identity: nation, province and county in Shanxi during the

was to promote Hongtong County in the Linfen Region of South Shanxi as the origin of all Han Chinese. Another such effort was to advertise the provincial capital Taiyuan as the root of all Wangs within China and overseas.³⁴ Moreover, the Shanxi leadership has also taken measures to publicize Shanxi's role as the national financial centre during the late 1800s and early 1900s and the tradition of the native Shanxi bankers originally based in the Central Shanxi Basin. Despite popular image of the province and its people as conservative, isolated and not open-minded, Shanxi Government hopes that the new Shanxi identity could promote the province's long established tradition of commercialization, as well as national and international interactions. Furthermore, the promotion of Shanxi identity is expected to be able to attract tourists as well as investments from inside and outside the province. Recently, the Provincial Government held a series of investment promotion meetings in Hong Kong. The Provincial Governor Yu Youjun visited major Hong Kong merchants such as Li Jiacheng, Li Zhaoji, Zeng Xianzi and Zheng Yutong.³⁵ By doing so, the provincial leadership hopes to attract overseas investments and create an international market for local enterprises. For the same purpose, Shanxi is planning to set up a *jinshang yinhang* (native Shanxi merchants' bank) to mobilize local individual savings.

Within the province, great expectations have been attached to these new strategies. However, it is still questionable how much improvement they will actually bring about. After all, Shanxi is currently producing as much as 550 million tons of coal every year. According to the Statistics Bureau of Shanxi, this figure is already close to its full capacity.³⁶ Despite all the new measures to be taken, the 'new

1990s' in *The China Quarterly* No.172, December 2002, p.837-862.

³⁴ Li Peng and Wang Hongwei 'Bingzhou cangsang liangqian wubai nian zhi "tianxia wangshi chu Taiyuan"' ['The 2500 years' history of Taiyuan—the root of Wangs allover the world'] at <http://gb2.chinabroadcast.cn/773/2003-8-5/123@280194.htm>.

³⁵ Cheng Bizhong '1.6 wanyi: Shanxi touzi dayuejin' ['160 trillion yuan: Shanxi's Great Leap Forward in investment'] at <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2006-11-07/184311450748.shtml>.

³⁶ Zhang Jun 'Shanxi mei jiao chanliang jiejin jixian' ['Shanxi's coal and coke production is approaching its full capacity'] in *Shanxi Qingnianbao* [Shanxi Youth Daily] 24 November 2006.

energy base' is still an energy base in any case and the energy industry will still play a significant role in the new scheme. If the province manages to attract more investments, the large-scale coal and other related heavy industry enterprises will still be the major receivers of these investments. Even if the province could realize a 'zero increase' in coal production, it would not help much to improve its imbalanced-economic structure and save its coal reserves.

Jiaocheng County

Jiaocheng County, consisting of nine townships, is under the jurisdiction of Lüliang City, the least economically developed district of Shanxi Province, although Jiaocheng itself is located near the provincial capital, Taiyuan, and is in many ways an economic suburb of the provincial capital. A highway built in 2003 links Jiaocheng and Taiyuan at a distance of 20 minutes' drive. Located on the eastern side of the Lüliang Mountains and the western edge of the Taiyuan Basin, Jiaocheng's land areas include both a mountainous area and a plain area. Unsurprisingly, the mountainous area is less developed; while the plain area is the county's agricultural and industrial centre, as wealthy as the rest of the Taiyuan Basin. The county has resources of coal and iron and has developed its industry accordingly.

Before the fieldwork was conducted in Jiaocheng in 2003, it was assumed that the county's economy would be dominated by the state-owned sector, not least because of its historical close ties to the Party-state. However, it turned out (quite surprisingly) that the county's industry is completely non-state-owned. Actually, even in as early as 1985, only 22.74 percent of the county's industry was owned by the whole people, while a majority of 64.84 percent was collectively owned.³⁷

³⁷ Jiaocheng Xianzhi Bianxie Weiyuanhui [Jiaocheng County Chronicle Editing and Composing Committee] *Jiaocheng Xianzhi* [Jiaocheng County Gazetteer] Shanxi Guji Chubanshe, Taiyuan, 1994.

By 1995 when ownership reform took place in the county, two thirds of its industry was already privately owned. Currently, according to the Director of the Jiaocheng Enterprise Administration Centre,³⁸ more than four fifths of Jiaocheng's enterprises were private. The only exceptions were the county's tobacco company, oil company and running water company, which were collectively owned instead. The high profits brought by tobacco production ensure the country government's revenue, while water and oil are resources crucial to the country's economic production. Thus, understandably, the state maintains control over aspects of the economy that is regarded as more crucial to either its own income or security.

During the fieldwork conducted in Jiaocheng in October 2003 and May 2004, 10 local cadres and celebrities, as well as 62 women enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners, and women managers were interviewed by the research team. During the interviews, six of the local cadres and celebrities answered questions about the advantages and disadvantages that might facilitate or hinder the future development of Jiaocheng.

Interview results suggest that Jiaocheng's geographic location is its most significant advantage. Four of the interviewees said that Jiaocheng is benefiting from its close distance to Taiyuan. In their view, such closeness enables Jiaocheng to receive more investment, information and modern technologies from the provincial capital. The newly built highway connecting the two places will further promote such communication.

Jiaocheng's natural resources were also commonly regarded as an advantage facilitating the county's development. During the interviewees, three of the interviewees mentioned Jiaocheng's abundant mineral resources, forest areas and

³⁸ Personal Interview, 18 May 2004.

tourist attractions. They suggested that the country should make full use of these resources and develop its economy accordingly.

According to the interviewees, Jiaocheng has several well-grounded industries, such as date production and iron casting. In the long-term these industrial advantages might become Jiaocheng's economic pillars. These officials also talked about Jiaocheng's urban construction, transportation system and the establishment of a new industrial park. Moreover, the county government was said to play a supportive role in providing services to the local enterprises. According to the interviewees, these developments would make Jiaocheng a friendly environment for business development and attract more investment to the county consequently.

As to the disadvantages hindering Jiaocheng's development, most of the interviewees believed that the county was disadvantaged by its natural environment. As is the case in most areas of Shanxi Province, Jiaocheng is suffering a water shortage, which is limiting its agricultural development. The regional inequality of the county's mountainous and plain areas was also mentioned by the Jiaocheng cadres and celebrities. As one of them said, 'the county has a mountainous area much bigger than the plain area, with many fewer villages and a much smaller population. The mountainous area is not likely to be able to achieve a comparatively well-off living standard in the next 20 to 30 years. The poor mountainous area might become a burden to Jiaocheng's future development'.

Remarkably, the local people were also seen to be another major hindrance in the county's development. According to these cadres and celebrities the local people were 'conservative', 'timid', 'not liberal-minded' and 'unmotivated'. They are

unwilling to take risks and meet challenges, but just have a ‘muddling-along’ attitude towards life. Moreover, they were described as ‘not willing to leave the county for better opportunities elsewhere’.

Some interviewees were concerned that while the county is emphasizing heavy industry development, there is no strategy on the sustainable use of natural resources. Moreover, the county government does not attach much importance to environmental protection. These might make Jiaocheng less competitive in its long-term economic development.

The interviewees also mentioned that due to its currently poor economic condition, the county is not able to attract or retain talent and investment. This might also hinder Jiaocheng’s future development.

Jiaocheng women entrepreneurs, wives and managers

During the fieldwork conducted in Jiaocheng in October 2003 and May 2004, 25 women enterprise owners, 27 wives of enterprise owners, and ten women working in private enterprises as managers, workshop leaders, shareholders or defacto managers were interviewed. In the interviews, these women provided information on their background, their career and their families. By way of introduction to the interviewees, this section considers their background and activities, not least to illustrate what has shaped these women as enterprise owners or leaders. The results suggest that higher education is not an important element in the making of these women’s careers, but education still matters for those who are seeking higher positions in private enterprises or setting up their own business. In general, the interviewees seem to have a low education level, which corresponds to their work experience.

Table 2.1 Jiaocheng interviewees: Industry sector

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Enterprise owners</i>	<i>Wives of enterprise owners</i>	<i>Managers</i>	<i>Total</i>
Commercial farming	2 (8%)	4 (14.8%)	3 (30%)	9 (14.5%)
Mineral processing		1 (3.7%)		1 (1.6%)
Food processing	1 (4%)			1 (1.6%)
Manufacturing	6 (24%)	11 (40.7%)	4 (40%)	21 (33.9%)
Clothing/textile	2 (8%)	2 (7.4%)	1 (10%)	5 (8.1%)
Retail	7 (28%)	6 (22.2%)	2 (20%)	15 (24.2%)
Pharmacy		1 (3.7%)		1 (1.6%)
Service	6 (24%)	1 (3.7%)		7 (11.3%)
Restaurant/hotel	1 (4%)	1 (3.7%)		2 (3.2%)
Total	25	27	10	62

The interviewees' current business activities included cosmetic retail, fashion sales, building materials production, glass crafts production, food processing, cloth manufacturing, studio work, stationery and gifts production, jade carving, steel casting, coal and coke production, magnesian alloy production, hotel operation, department store management, farming, motorcycle sales, and brick manufacturing, as well as supermarkets and pharmacy development. As Table 2.1 illustrates, higher proportions of these women were engaged in manufacturing and commercial farming. This corresponds to Jiaocheng's emphasis on heavy industry development and the county's advantages in mineral resources and abundant forest areas. Retail and service were also dominant industries of the interviewees. This is understandable, as these two business areas are commonly regarded as 'women's businesses'.

On a closer look, a significantly higher percentage of women enterprise owners were engaged in the service sector than those in the two controls groups. This might suggest that when women set up their enterprises, they tend to choose businesses such as running beauty parlours, hair dressing salons, photography

studios, or the like, rather than taking up the traditional ‘men’s trades’ of coal and coke production, steel casting and brick manufacturing.

Table 2.2 Jiaocheng interviewees: Enterprise assets

Unit=yuan						
<i>Size</i>		<i>1million</i>	<i>10 million~</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Information</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Category</i>	<i>~999,999</i>	<i>~ 9.99 million</i>	<i>99.99million</i>	<i>million ~</i>	<i>not available</i>	
Enterprise owner	15 (60%)	7 (28%)	1 (4%)		2 (8%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	10 (37.0%)	10 (37.0%)	3 (11.1%)	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	27
Manager	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)		10
Total	30 (48.4%)	20 (32.3%)	5 (8.1%)	2 (3.2%)	5 (8.1%)	62

The Jiaocheng interviewees’ enterprises varied from shops with capital of 50,000-60,000 yuan and three employees, to larger enterprise groups with capital of 120 million yuan and 2,000 employees. Table 2.2 details these women’s enterprise assets. As the figures show, except for 5 interviewees whose relevant information was not available, the majority (80.7 percent) of these women’s enterprises are small- and medium-sized, and only 2 out of the 62 were running businesses with assets higher than 100 million *yuan*.

Again the three categories of interviewees have shown differences in the size of their business. Comparing with the enterprises for the two control groups, it seems that the women enterprise owners’ businesses were at the early stage of their development, as this category has the higher percentage of enterprises with assets less than 1 million *yuan* and the lower percentage of enterprises with 10 million *yuan* or more.

Year and place of birth

Women's education and employment in China closely follows wider trends of social change. On the one hand, with the country's reform and opening-up, education has become more widespread and more affordable in China and the significance of education is increasingly emphasized both by individuals and society in general. On the other hand, the state has loosened its control over employment and population flows. Consequently, it would be reasonable to expect that older and younger generations of interviewees have different educational backgrounds and work experience. To test this hypothesis, as part of the interviews the women entrepreneurs, wives of enterprise owners and managers were asked to reveal their age in order to provide a more comprehensive profile.

The respective ages of the 62 women interviewed in Jiaocheng County are detailed in Table 2.3. 66.7 percent of the total number of interviewees was born before the Cultural Revolution, with the youngest born in 1973, and the oldest born in 1946. The majority of these women (41.9 percent) were born in the pre-socialization period of 1956 to 1966, with a slightly smaller proportion (32.3 percent) between 1966 and 1975, during the Cultural Revolution.

Table 2.3 Jiaocheng interviewees: Year of birth

<i>Category</i>	<i>1936~ 1945</i>	<i>1946~ 1955</i>	<i>1956~ 1965</i>	<i>1966~ 1975</i>	<i>1976~ 1985</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner		6 (24%)	10 (40%)	9 (36%)			25
Wife of enterprise owner		8 (29.6%)	10 (37.0%)	9 (33.3%)			27
Manager		2 (20%)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)			10
Total		16 (25.8%)	26 (41.9%)	20 (32.3%)			62

Although the average ages of the three categories of interviewees were close to each other, women enterprise owners seemed to be comparatively younger than the other two categories, as this category has the highest percentage of those born since the start of the Cultural Revolution. This statistic might suggest that women are increasingly starting to set up their businesses at a relatively early age.

Table 2.4 Jiaocheng interviewees: Place of birth

<i>Category</i>	<i>The same place</i>	<i>Other county/county-level jurisdiction of the same city</i>	<i>Other city of the same province</i>	<i>Other province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	20 (80%)	4 (16%)	1 (4%)		25
Wife of enterprise owner	23 (85.2%)	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)		27
Manager	9 (90%)	1 (10%)			10
Total	52 (83.9%)	6 (9.7%)	4 (6.5%)		62

Apparently, the women interviewed in Jiaocheng were a group with very limited social mobility. When asked about their places of birth, the majority of women revealed that they had moved around little during the course of their lives. An

impressive 83.9 percent of them were Jiaocheng natives, and had been born, brought up, and worked for the majority of their working lives in the one county. A few of them were from neighboring areas under the jurisdiction of Lüliang City and came to work in Jiaocheng during their early 20s. The others, though not born in the Lüliang area, all moved to Jiaocheng County in their childhood and had spent most of their life in the county ever since.

One of the few ‘outsiders’, Zhang—the *defacto* owner of a stationary shop, was born in close-by Fenyang City (48 kilometers away from Jiaocheng) and moved to closer Wenshui County (19 kilometers away from Jiaocheng) with her parents in her early years. At the age of 24, she married a man from Jiaocheng and thus moved to Jiaocheng. Though not a Jiaocheng native, Zhang had been living in the county for almost 20 years and had even picked up a Jiaocheng accent. Presumably, after living and working in the county for so long, these women were deeply involved in the local community and had cultivated local ties, especially where they had married in to the county.

Educational Background

Does education play an important role in the making of Jiaocheng women entrepreneurs? Do women need an excellent educational background to be able to set up and run their own business? In cosmopolitan areas such as Beijing and Shanghai, higher education is more likely a necessity, as more university graduates go to these places to seek opportunities and thus there is more severe competition. However, interview results with women enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners and women managers in Jiaocheng County tell a different story. They suggest that higher education is not an important element in the making of these women’s careers, as only a small percentage of the interviewees had been to

junior college or university. However, education does matter when women look for leading positions in private enterprises or to set up their own business.

During the interviews, women in Jiaocheng County were asked about the highest education they had received. Since 1986, when the Chinese government enacted the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Policy, people having completed nine years of education are considered to be equipped with the basic literacy required to seek employment. As is shown in Table 2.5, 11.3 percent of the women entrepreneurs interviewed in Jiaocheng County did not possess this basic level of literacy, having only completed primary school or else dropping out of junior middle school. Nearly half of the women interviewed in Jiaocheng County (48.3 percent) had received education at a higher level than the compulsory schooling, but 41.9 percent of them had only been to senior middle school or secondary technical school. Among the four women with higher education background, three had finished junior college through the provincial Party school by correspondence. Only one of the sixty-two interviewees had passed the entrance examination to university and completed the four years of formal university education.

Table 2.5 details the educational background of the three categories of women enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners and women managers. In comparison, women managers seemed to be the best-educated group, as all of them were equipped with the basic literacy of junior middle schooling. And this category also had the largest proportion with senior middle school or secondary technical school education (60 percent) and the largest proportion with higher education (20 percent). Women enterprise owners, though not as well-educated, were nevertheless more literate than wives of enterprise owners, as a significantly higher percentage of the former (48 percent) had finished their formal after junior middle school education than the latter (37 percent).

Table 2.5 Jiaocheng interviewees: Highest education level

<i>Category</i>	<i>Under junior middle school</i>	<i>Junior middle school</i>	<i>High school /secondary technical school</i>	<i>College /University</i>	<i>Postgraduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	4 (16%)	9 (36%)	11 (44%)	1 (4%)		25
Wife of enterprise owner	3 (11.1%)	14 (51.9%)	9 (33.3%)	1 (3.7%)		27
Manager		2 (20%)	6 (60%)	2 (20%)		10
Total	7 (11.3%)	25 (40.3%)	26 (41.9%)	4 (6.5%)		62

The interview results indicate that higher education is not an important element on these women's way to entrepreneurship, as only a small percentage of the interviewees had been to junior college or university. However, literacy does matter when women look for leading positions in private enterprises or set up their own business.

Table 2.6 details the highest education level of the Jiaocheng interviewees by the three age groups of those born in 1946~1955, 1956~1965 and 1966~1975. It is reasonable to have assumed that the younger generation of women entrepreneurs must have been better educated than the older, as both socially and individually there is increasing emphasis on the significance of education nowadays. The interview results partly support this view, as the interviewees born between 1946 and 1955 turned out to have the biggest percentage without the basic literacy and the smallest percentage with education level higher than the compulsory schooling. However, the youngest group of women born since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution was not much better educated. Though 95 percent of these younger

interviewees had finished the compulsory schooling, none of them had been to college or university.

Table 2.6 Jiaocheng interviewees: Highest education level by year of birth

<i>Age</i>	<i>Under junior middle school</i>	<i>Junior middle school</i>	<i>High school /secondary technical school</i>	<i>College /University</i>	<i>Postgraduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
1946~	5	7	2	2		16
1955	(31.3%)	(43.8%)	(12.5%)	(12.5%)		
1956~	1	10	13	2		26
1965	(3.8%)	(38.5%)	(50%)	(7.7%)		
1966~	1	8	11			20
1975	(5%)	(40%)	(55%)			
1976~						
1985						
Total	7 (11.3%)	25 (40.3%)	26 (41.9%)	4 (6.5%)		62

There are two possible explanations for the overall low education level of women entrepreneurs in Jiaocheng County. First, young people nowadays, after finishing higher education, tend to seek work opportunities in the better-developed areas of China such as the four municipalities of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Chongqing, or the rich Southeast coastal areas or at least the provincial capital Taiyuan, instead of staying in their native county of Jiaocheng. Secondly, about a decade ago the state-government's policy regulating the population floating was much stricter and students were still assigned employment upon graduation, which also limited the mobility of the better-educated women born before the Cultural Revolution era.

Work experience

Table 2.7 shows the varied occupation background of the Jiaocheng interviewees before they started to work in the enterprises where they worked when interviewed. As is detailed in the table, while only two of these interviewees had a professional background, the majority (56.4 percent) of them used to be peasants, rural housewives or workers. Their previous work included employment as blue-collar factory labourers, waitresses, tailors, beauty specialists, hair dressers, and shop assistants, as well as one opera singer—none of which requires a good educational background. This also contributes to the overall low educational level of these women, and limits them from seeking employment in more professional jobs. Comparing the three categories, the business background of women enterprise owners clearly stands out, as 36 percent of this category used to be employed as business managers or had run their own business before the establishment of their current enterprises. Presumably, the knowledge and skills accumulated in the previous profession as business manager/operator or business owner had contributed to the establishment and operation of their current business.

Table 2.7 Jiaocheng interviewees: Previous profession

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Women enterprise owners</i>	<i>Wives of male enterprise owners</i>	<i>Other women leaders</i>	<i>Total</i>
Peasant/ rural housewife	2 (8%)	6 (22.2%)		8 (12.9%)
Worker	8 (32%)	13 (48.1%)	6 (60%)	27 (43.5%)
Opera singer		1 (3.7%)		1 (1.6%)
Professional	1 (4%)	1 (3.7%)		2 (3.2%)
Cadre	4 (15%)	2 (7.4%)	3 (30%)	9 (14.5%)
Business people	9 (36%)	4 (14.8%)	1 (10%)	14 (22.6%)
Information not available	1 (4%)			1 (1.6%)
Total	25	27	10	62

Li, the only interviewee with a university background, majored in stockbreeding

at university. After graduation in 1982, she was assigned to work in one of Jiaocheng's government departments. After several transfers, she was promoted to be the vice-director of another department in 1998. Not long before the promotion, Li set up a private chicken farm, which was registered in the name of Li's father-in-law, as she and her husband both had government positions. Though nowadays private entrepreneurs are allowed to join the Party, they are not allowed to take positions in government departments. However, Li was the *defacto* farm manager.

Tian—the wife of the owner of a coke company, was another example of the educational level impacting professional opportunities. After finishing her junior middle school education, Tian returned to her home village and started to work in the fields. After getting married, she moved to the county town. Limited by her educational level and peasant background, she did not find a permanent job there and stayed at home doing housework and looking after her working husband and five children, born over nine years. Only after her husband set up his enterprise in 1994, did Tian leave home to work (in the enterprise). Now she is the second ranking leader (the first being her husband) and Chief Financial Officer of the group with a capital of 120 million yuan.

Widowed women entrepreneurs

There is a commonly heard phrase, 'behind every successful man, you can always find a woman.' The interviews with women entrepreneurs in Jiaocheng County suggest that behind every one of these successful women, there is always a man to be found. 56 out of the 61 interviewees were married. The remainder were either divorced or widowed. When asked about their husbands and their activities, these women suggested that husbands might 'help me with housework', 'cook for me',

‘we make decision in business together’, ‘we never quarrel’, ‘when I encounter difficulty in work, I go to him for help’, or ‘when there are different opinions, the one who is more reasonable makes the decision.’

Despite the majority of happy wives, there were several single women entrepreneurs who were running their enterprises alone without the backing of a helpful man behind them. Among them, three used to be wives behind their entrepreneur husbands. After the death of their husbands, these women had no choice but to take over the enterprises and enter into business on their own. They were the owner-operators of a steel factory, a brick factory and a repair shop respectively, none of which is viewed as a ‘womanish’ trade in their part of the world. These women recalled their husbands’ death, the initial difficulties in entering an unknown business and the inconvenience of being a businesswoman, with tears.

Zhang took over her husband’s steel casting factory after he died of liver cancer in 1995. ‘In the first several years without my husband, I was all in a flutter. Whenever I saw people, I wanted to cry.’ Despite the sadness and nerves, she managed to develop the enterprise from a factory with 300,000 yuan’s capital into one with 1 million yuan’s fixed assets and 1 million yuan’s circulating fund. Although the figures are not exactly equivalent, they indicate the scale of activity. Zhang talked in an articulate and straightforward way, because ‘I am forced to behave like this.’

When talking about her husband, Jia could not keep from crying. After he died in a car accident, Jia was left with her husband’s brick factory in 1999, when she ‘didn’t know anything and had to completely depend on people’s help’. Nonetheless, the enterprise from an initial capital of 200,000 turned into a fixed

capital of more than 500,000 yuan and a circulation capital of 30,000~40,000 yuan under Jia's management.

Another widowed entrepreneur, Liu, used to stay at home, while her husband was operating an automobile repairing factory. Her husband's death in 2002 forced her into the business. Liu indicated that the factory was not as profitable in her hands as before her husband's death. 'Sometimes I cry alone, but I still have to solve the problem myself.' Not long before being interviewed, Liu bought into a restaurant and a second-hand tip-truck in the hope that the two new businesses could turn more of a profit.

The three widows invariably talked about the inconvenience and difficulty they encountered after their husbands' death. Zhang said, 'it is not easy for a single woman to do business outside [i.e., in the public (male) world]. I can't entertain people at the dinner table by drinking, so I can't help but pay more money than others...It's so difficult for women to do things alone'. Jia expressed a similar opinion. She said, 'I don't drink and don't want to entertain people, so it is difficult for me to do things. And when I first took over the business, people looked down upon me as I was a widow.' Liu admitted that she never felt there was any difficulty before her husband's death. But when she started to take over the business, she found innumerable difficulties in her way. As a widow, she became the target of personal slander and gossip. Moreover, in what is supposed to be an economic environment characterized by fair competition, she was often treated unfairly. Compared with others, these widowed women are taking a tough road to entrepreneurship.

In general, the interview results suggest that higher education is not an important element in the making of these women entrepreneurs, as a great proportion of

them were barely equipped with the basic literacy and few had received higher education. However, literacy still matters for women seeking higher positions in private enterprises or setting up their own business. It is additionally worth noting that the younger category of women entrepreneurs were not better educated than the older, which might be the result of the improving mobility of contemporary Chinese society enabling well-educated youth to look for opportunities in the well-off areas. These women entrepreneurs' work experience corresponds to their education background. Limited by their education level, most of the interviewees used to be engaged in jobs requiring less literacy. One specific group formed by the experience of becoming entrepreneurs is suggested by the interviews and examined in this chapter: where widowed women took over their husbands' enterprises after their death it is clear that they experienced considerable hardship in running the business on their own.

* * *

Interview results indicate that these women had limited social mobility. Most of them were born, brought up and had only worked in the one county of Jiaocheng. They had a low level of higher education and little experience in professional or managerial jobs. While comparison is still to be made with QJongshan and Mianyang, these indicators suggest that Jiaocheng's relative low level of economic development may make it hard to attract people to the county from elsewhere in Shanxi or indeed in China as a whole. Instead, it seems more likely that people with a better education and professional background might leave the county to seek opportunities elsewhere.

When comparing the situation of the three categories of interviewees, the women enterprise owners tended to choose the traditional 'women's industries' of retail and service. Accordingly, the size of their businesses was also smaller.

Both the women enterprise owners and the managers turned out to be better-educated than the wives of enterprise owners, which seems to suggest that literacy level matters when women seek employment in senior managerial positions in enterprises or establish their own businesses. As to these women's previous work experience, the women enterprise owners appeared to have a strong business background. Understandably, previous managerial knowledge and skills had facilitated the establishment and operation of their current businesses.

Chapter 2

Women and economic leadership

This chapter examines the role undertaken by women in their workplaces - especially in the economic leadership of enterprises - and in their families. The interview results suggest that women in entrepreneurial leadership in Jiaocheng had been able to achieve a high degree of status in their enterprises. Even when her husband ‘owned’ the business on paper, a woman entrepreneur often ‘ran’ the business in practice, both on the level of daily business operations and on the level of long term strategic planning. In many cases, the interviewees acted as a significant source of leadership and direction in their businesses—they were the *de facto* bosses of their enterprises.

Starting and operating the enterprise

Although the situation is beginning to change, it is still common in China for wives’ positions in the workplace to be perceived as lower in prestige than those of their husbands.¹ This perceived gender bias was partly reflected in the Jiaocheng fieldwork. Many women were introduced to the research team by the Women’s Federation as ‘enterprise owners’ and indeed were running the enterprises themselves. When talking about the business, they also referred to it as ‘my business’, instead of ‘my husband’s business’. But in many cases it turned out that the enterprises were actually registered in their husbands’ names.

Table 3.1 shows the extent to which the original ideas for these women’s enterprises were developed by the wife or the husband alone, were jointly developed by husband and wife, or were developed by a third party. Two of these

¹ Karen Korabik, 1994, p.120.

women reported themselves to be *de facto* operator-owners of enterprises that were registered under their family members' names for certain reasons.

Table 3.1 Jiaocheng interviewees: Who developed the original idea for the business?

<i>Category</i>	<i>Woman's own idea</i>	<i>Husband's idea</i>	<i>Couple developed the idea together</i>	<i>Third party's idea</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	14 (56%)	4 (16%)	4 (16%)	3 (12%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	7 (25.9%)	15 (55.6%)	2 (7.4%)	3 (11.1%)	27
Manager	2 (20%)		2 (20%)	6 (60%)	10
Total	23 (37.1%)	19 (30.6%)	8 (12.9%)	12 (19.4%)	62

It is apparent from Table 3.1 that of the 62 enterprises surveyed, 23 were established on the basis of a concept or idea that was developed by the woman interviewed, 19 were set up as the result of a concept developed by the husband, eight were established on the basis of an idea developed together by husband and wife and twelve were developed by a third party. Overall, the figures suggest that the interviewed women and their husbands played roughly equal roles in developing the ideas on which the enterprises were built.

As might be expected those who owned enterprises had played a much more significant role in the establishment of the business than those from the other two control groups. As the figures show, an impressive 72 percent of the women enterprise owners were also the originator of the business idea, whereas only a small minority (16 percent) of husbands was solely responsible for generating the original business idea. In contrast, a quarter of the women who were married to enterprise owners reported themselves as the originator of the business idea, with their husbands listed as the responsible party in over half of all cases. Four of the ten women working in leading positions in an enterprise reported themselves to be the originator of the business idea. At the same time, they were also the *de facto* owner of the business, which seemed to be the reason why they were able to put

their ideas into practice. The six women in this category who cited their bosses as responsible for the idea underlying the enterprise were working in positions that did not involve high-level executive decision-making, such as production manager, workshop leader, personnel manager, or accountant.

In general, the interview results suggest that if a man wants to start a business, he prefers to be registered as the owner himself. But if this is not possible for some (e.g. legal) reason, one solution is to have his wife registered as the enterprise owner. Of the eight cases in which the husband alone or the couple jointly came up with the original idea but the enterprises were registered under the name of the woman, three husbands had government positions when the enterprise were established and thus could not be the owner, as it is prohibited for a government official to own a private business. Alternatively, wives may be registered as owners of a business devised by their husbands simply as a matter of convenience or due to unexpected circumstances. For example, one husband owned an enterprise already and consequently had the second one registered under his wife's name. Another husband died after the enterprise was established and consequently the business passed to the wife. In yet another case the husband was working full-time in another city when the business started.

If a woman has an idea for a business, in some cases she may perceive it convenient or necessary for her spouse to act as the enterprise owner. Interviewees rationalised this scenario variously as: 'man has the priority (in business)', 'it doesn't matter (who runs the business), as we are a family', 'it is the tradition of China to have a man at the front', 'a man should decide on the big issues', or just simply 'it should be (registered under) a man's name'. One of the interviewees suggested that she had lost her identification card when the time came for the enterprise to be registered, and hence the business had to be

registered under her husband's name. It is possible that this was a truthful response, but also possible that the woman in question was wary of registering the business under her own name for other reasons (for example, she may have been ashamed of entering the traditionally male-dominated business milieu).

Chang, a woman who ran a restaurant in a town of Jiaocheng County, talked about her role in establishing the business. Coming from a poor family, she chose to enter the restaurant business in 1995 to improve her family's financial situation. The restaurant was set up with a loan of 40,000 yuan. To save money, she designed the building, drew up the blueprint and bought building materials all by herself. As she explained, 'I didn't even discuss it with my husband. He didn't care about it anyway and always responded to my questions by saying "I don't know."' During the interview, Chang's husband was on the side carefully cleaning the floor of the restaurant, which was the job assigned to him by his wife. Though Chang played a dominant role in both the business and the family, the restaurant is registered under her husband's name. That was because, she said, 'women in business are likely to be negatively judged by society. Older people would say I overpower my husband'.

Table 3.2 illustrates the different types of work performed by women in leadership in the surveyed enterprises. The collected data show clearly that in general these women were more deeply involved in management and daily business operation than their husbands. Specifically, in 32.2 per cent of cases, the interviewees had formal responsibility for purchasing activities (while their husbands are responsible in 21 per cent of cases). These women were also responsible for enterprise production in 29 per cent of cases (compared with their husbands' 17.7 per cent), for sales in 51.6 per cent of cases (16.1 per cent), for personnel in 54.8 per cent of cases (14.5 per cent), and for finance in 56.4 per cent of cases

(16.1 per cent).

When questioned on their relatively low involvement in purchasing activities, a common response from the women interviewed in Jiaocheng was that they felt awkward dealing with suppliers and establishing business connections. This line of work was consequently allocated to their husbands or to other staff members in the enterprises. Enterprise production (of goods) is another activity in which these women displayed relatively low involvement (though still high compared with their husbands). One possible reason is that goods production is usually not regarded as a ‘women’s business’. Many of the female enterprise owners had chosen to develop beauty salons, cosmetic stores, clothes stores, gift stores or supermarkets, which do not involve goods production. And in their husbands’ enterprises, wives are likely to be kept away from production.

Table 3.2 Jiaocheng interviewees: Division of enterprise responsibilities

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee’s husband</i>	<i>Interviewee and husband</i>	<i>Third party</i>	
<i>Purchasing</i>					
Enterprise owner	12 (48%)	4 (16%)		9 (36%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	7 (25.9%)	7 (25.9%)	2 (7.4%)	11 (40.7%)	27
Manager	1 (10%)	2 (20%)		7 (70%)	10
Total	20	13	2	27	62
	(32.3%)	(21.0%)	(3.2%)	(43.5%)	
<i>Production²</i>					
Enterprise owner	10 (40%)			15 (60%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	4 (14.8%)	10 (37.0%)	2 (7.4%)	11 (40.7%)	27
Manager	4 (40%)	1 (10%)		5 (50%)	10
Total	18	11	2	31	52
	(29.0%)	(17.7%)	(3.2%)	(50%)	

² Production in this thesis refers to the production of goods, rather than services.

Sales					
Enterprise owner	16 (64%)	2 (8%)		7 (28%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	12 (44.4%)	8 (29.6%)	3 (11.1%)	4 (14.8%)	27
Manager	4 (40%)			6 (60%)	10
Total	32	10	3	17	62
	(51.6%)	(16.1%)	(4.8%)	(27.4%)	
Hiring and Firing					
Enterprise owner	20 (80%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	3 (12%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	11 (40.7%)	8 (29.6%)	3 (11.1%)	5 (18.5%)	27
Manager	3 (30%)		1 (10%)	6 (60%)	10
Total	34	9	5	14	62
	(54.8%)	(14.5%)	(8.1%)	(22.6%)	
Finance					
Enterprise owner	14 (56%)	4 (16%)	1 (4%)	6 (24%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	16 (59.2%)	6 (22.2%)	3 (11.1%)	2 (7.4%)	27
Manager	5 (50%)			5 (50%)	10
Total	35	10	4	13	62
	(56.5%)	(16.1%)	(6.5%)	(21.0%)	

The awkwardness in interacting with suppliers and business colleagues reported by women entrepreneurs was attributed by many interviewees to the fact that they were ‘shy’, ‘timid’ or ‘conservative’, consistent with traditional stereotypes of Chinese women,³ though most came across in interviews as direct and straightforward. In a small county in North China like Jioacheng, to run a business, for a woman, is far from conservative. And a woman needs to be the opposite of ‘shy’ or ‘timid’ to do it.

Although sales and personnel jobs require these women to deal with other people as well, the statistics suggest that perhaps these duties are considered more

³ Constance D Clark ‘Foreign marriage, “tradition,” and the politics of border crossings’ in Nancy N Chen, Constance Clark, Suzanne Z Gottschang and Lynn Jeffery (ed) *China Urban: Ethnographies of Contemporary Culture* Duke University Press, Durham, 2000, p.120.

suitable as 'women's work' than purchasing and production. As with Goodman's 1996-1998 survey of the provincial and local elites of Shanxi Province, the Jiaocheng fieldwork shows that financial affairs continue to be a major responsibility of women entrepreneurs.⁴

Overall, the interviews evoked responses consistent with the prevailing gender role stereotypes of women in China that women are more attentive, patient, dexterous and gentle than men.⁵ Indeed, when the interviewees reflected on the important personal characteristics that had helped them in the business, the terms 'attentive', 'patient', 'dexterous', and 'gentle', were mentioned repeatedly by both the interviewees and their husbands as virtues that advantaged them in dealing with customers and employees.

Women enterprise owners and the wives of enterprise owners tend to assume different kinds of business responsibilities. While the data suggest that both participated in daily business operations more than their husbands, it is clear (albeit unsurprising) that enterprise owners played a more active role than enterprise owners' wives. Compared with enterprise owners' wives, a higher percentage of women enterprise owners were in charge of the enterprises' purchasing, producing, selling and personnel either on their own or under the help of their husbands. However, the participation of women enterprise owners in the enterprises' financial affairs was not as high. Around 70 per cent of wives of enterprise owners were more or less in charge of their business's financial affairs, whereas the percentage of female enterprise owners in this position was only 60 per cent. This suggests that female enterprise owners tend to delegate troublesome financial affairs to others; similarly, male enterprises owners tend to trust their wives with the responsibility for financial matters.

⁴ David S G Goodman 'Why women count: Chinese women and the leadership of reform' 2002, p. 331-353.

⁵ Karen Korabik, 1994, p.120.

Making business decisions

According to the director of a provincial Association of Women Entrepreneurs Association, nowadays ‘many private enterprises still maintain the traditional “husband number one, wife number two” management mode’.⁶ In order to clarify whether women entrepreneurs, despite their prominent role in daily business management, are still only occupying a secondary position in their enterprises, the Jiaocheng interviewees were asked about the decision-making process in their enterprises.

Table 3.3 Jiaocheng interviewees: Person responsible for strategic planning in the enterprise

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee’s husband</i>	<i>Interviewee and husband</i>	<i>Third party</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	19 (76%)	1 (4%)	4 (16%)	1 (4%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	2 (7.4%)	14 (51.8%)	8 (29.6%)	3 (11.1%)	27
Manager	2 (20%)		2 (20%)	6 (60%)	10
Total	23 (37.1%)	15 (24.2%)	14 (22.6%)	10 (16.1%)	62

Table 3.3 shows exactly who in the enterprise takes charge of making big decisions such as reinvestment or developing new projects. Although the interviews generally revealed that the women in enterprise leadership were playing a major role in the enterprises’ management and operation, their participation in the strategic planning was less prominent. It is apparent from Table 3.3 that female enterprise owners played a dominant role in strategic decision-making for their enterprises. An overwhelming proportion of these women (76 per cent) had sole responsibility for strategic planning. Their husbands,

⁶ Xu Peng ‘Diaocha xianshi: nannü shouru chaju muqian you kuoda qushi’ [‘Surveys show that the wage gap between genders is expanding’] at <http://business.sohu.com/82/63/article214226382>.

on the other hand, scarcely interfered in the big decisions.

Wives of enterprise owners played a negligible role in strategic planning compared with their husbands, who were responsible in 51.8 per cent of cases. Nonetheless, wives of enterprise owners tended to play more active business roles than the husbands of female enterprise owners. Overall, 37 per cent of wives of enterprise owners were making strategic decisions either on their own or together with their husbands. It is apparent from Table 3.3 that four of the ten women working as enterprise managers were also responsible for their enterprises' strategic planning. These four reported themselves to be the *de facto* operator-owners of the enterprises, whereas the remaining six who were not responsible for strategic decisions were only senior employees. On the whole some 37 per cent of the women interviewed were solely responsible for making strategic planning decisions for their enterprises, and 22.6 per cent made strategic decisions jointly with their husbands.

Another question asked during the interviews was 'When you feel you have a difficult decision to take or action to perform, to whom do you go for advice?' Table 3.4 suggests that women entrepreneurs' husbands tend to be the most important source of help in decision-making, as 54.8 per cent of interviewees reported seeking their husbands' advice when they encountered difficulty in their work. Other family members, colleagues, and friends were also listed as advisors. A small proportion of women did not like to ask for other people's help or did not have anyone to help in such a situation and thus had to handle such difficulties on their own. Around 44 per cent of female enterprise owners and 30 per cent of leader/managers reported seeking their husbands' advice, while the remainder sought advice from a variety of sources. However, wives of enterprise owners demonstrated a great dependence on their husbands, with a substantial 74 per cent

of them turning only to their husbands for advice when difficult decisions needed to be made.

Table 3.4 Jiaocheng interviewees: Main advisor to the interviewee

<i>Category</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Colleague</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>No-one</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	11 (44%)	4 (16%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	20 (74.1%)				5 (18.5%)	2 (7.4%)	27
Manager	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)			4 (40%)	10
Total	34 (54.8%)	6 (9.7%)	4 (6.5%)	2 (3.2%)	8 (12.9%)	8 (12.9%)	62

Table 3.5 indicates who—the interviewee, her husband or a colleague—would be called upon to make the final ‘executive’ decision in cases where there are different opinions as to how to proceed with a particular plan or action. In no cases were family and friends of the interviewee reported as participating in final decision-making. It is clear from the table that female enterprise owners tend to make final decisions in these circumstances, with a majority of 76 per cent making ‘executive’ decisions to decide an issue when they and their sources of advice could not achieve agreement. Eight percent reported making final decisions with the aid of their husband and only 12 percent reported letting their husband decide for them. Wives of enterprise owners, though not as active as women enterprise owners in business management, also appear to play a significant role in making ‘final’ decisions for the enterprise, though in the majority of cases their husbands make these decisions.

Women managers working in enterprises were the only category of interviewees reporting that their colleagues made executive decisions in the absence of a

consensus. Those colleagues who made the final decision were invariably these women's supervisors or bosses. This finding was unsurprising, given that several of these women were senior employees of the enterprises and thus not in a position to make final decisions on big issues.

Table 3.5 Jiaocheng interviewees: Final arbiter in enterprise

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee's husband's</i>	<i>Interviewee and Husband (jointly)</i>	<i>Colleague</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	19 (76%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)		1 (4%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	8 (29.6%)	14 (51.9%)	4 (14.8%)		1 (3.7%)	27
Manager	1 (10%)		2 (20%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	10
Total	28 (45.2%)	17 (27.4%)	8 (12.9%)	3 (4.8%)	8 (12.9%)	62

On the whole, almost half of the women in entrepreneurial leadership reported making final decisions on big issues by themselves, about 13 per cent made these decisions jointly with their husbands and only 27.4 per cent were resigned to accepting their husband's decision as final. Combined with the fact that a substantial proportion of women entrepreneurs appear to be solely or jointly responsible for strategic planning, this suggests that the so-called 'husband number one, wife number two' management mode does not apply to Jiaocheng's women interviewees.

‘Inside’ versus ‘outside’ work

Although economic development has greatly changed women’s status in China, many traditional stereotypes about gender roles have persisted. One of these persisted values is the ‘men outside, women inside’ stereotype of the traditional Chinese agricultural economy, in which men went out to work in the fields and were responsible for affairs that occurred outside their households, while women were limited to the ‘inside’ sphere to look after the family. Economic development and the ‘opening up’ of China has to some extent dissolved this stereotype. Nowadays it is not uncommon to see a group of women sitting in an expensive restaurant drinking alcohol, enjoying themselves at a karaoke centre or even relaxing at a health and fitness centre—venues formerly dominated by male clientele. However, the ‘man outside, woman inside’ cliché still affects the division of labour in economic production, although understandings of ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ have altered. To till in the fields, for example, is no longer considered an ‘outside’ activity in rural China, as people start to seek employment outside their home village and those left ‘inside’ the village have to take care of agricultural production.

Given the traditional image of Chinese women as shy and demure creatures confined to the home, to set up and run a business is certainly not something that can be described as ‘inside’. But interviews with the entrepreneurial women in Jiaocheng revealed that the sexual division of labour in their enterprises was still affected by the ‘man outside, woman inside’ stereotype. Although some interviewees claimed that ‘what men can do, women can do as well’, many mentioned the ‘inside’ versus ‘outside’ and ‘home’ versus ‘out’ divisions when they were talking about their jobs. These women regard activities such as management, production, personnel, and basic administrative duties as ‘inside’

work suitable for women; and consider entertaining clients, establishing business connections, dealing with government administrative units, demanding payments for debts and purchasing as ‘outside’ work—i.e. the rightful province of men. In keeping with tradition, the tasks labeled as ‘inside’ work tend to be taken care of by the women themselves whereas the ‘outside’ jobs tend to be allocated to their husbands.

There are, nonetheless, at least partial exceptions to this general pattern. Li, one of the interviewees who ran a chicken farm, said she was in charge of the ‘outside’ work of the enterprise such as obtaining loans and establishing business connections, and her husband was responsible for ‘inside’ work such as production and finance, because ‘he is very introverted’. Wu, a motorbike storeowner, shares the so-called outside duties with her husband. She was in charge of responsibilities of dealing with government administrative units and purchasing, while her husband’s major duties entailed tasks involving social interaction, as ‘he has a tender personality’.

Those tasks assigned to the husbands generally require extensive connections with markets, clients and official circles. These Jiaocheng interviewees’ limited social mobility in life may have limited their ability to establish networks that could provide them with the connections needed for developing their businesses. Their lack of access to such networks is one further possible reason why these women depend on their husbands for handling ‘outside’ arrangements.

Another reason why these entrepreneurial women were reluctant to involve themselves in activities labeled as ‘outside’ is social pressure. Many interviewees reported that they did not drink and smoke, and thus did not know how to entertain clients at the dinner table. Several claimed that their limited contact with

the world outside the enterprise made them less sociable in turn, and some expressed fears that excessive involvement with the male-dominated business world would open them to slander and gossip.

Family and housework

The words to a popular Chinese song ‘常回家看看’ (‘Always come home’), released by singer Chen Hong in 1999, exemplify the social expectations of a woman’s role in Chinese households. The lyrics are as follows:

找点空闲

(find some leisure)

找点时间

(find some time)

领着孩子常回家看看

(take your children and come home) [...]

生活的烦恼和妈妈说说

(talk to mother about troubles in your life)

工作的事情和爸爸谈谈

(discuss with father your problems at work)

The clear implication of this song is that whether or not the mother is working, she is not the one to talk about work with—that is the father’s area of expertise. A similar example is a washing powder commercial by Procter & Gamble shown on Chinese television in the late 1990s. In that commercial, a group of young housewives are shown washing clothes together happily. After finishing washing, they proudly display the items they have been cleaning to the audience—each of them is holding a man’s shirt in their hands. Even though nowadays many women

are working outside of the home as much as their husbands, housework is still assumed to be a woman's task.

Karen Korabik's study of Chinese women managers found that the vast majority of women managers are married and have children, because in China almost all women face a dual burden in that society expects them to have families as well as to participate in production.⁷ This is effectively the situation faced by the entrepreneurial women in Jiaocheng. While five of the interviewees were either divorced or widowed the rest were all married, and all of the 62 interviewees had at least one child. Though these women are pursuing successful careers, each still regards a happy family as the main goal of her life. During the interviews, many women entrepreneurs indicated that they disliked the term '*nüqiangren* (a strong or capable woman)'. In the 1980s, this term was generally considered a compliment. But today, many people use it to describe women who have placed their careers before their families. As one of the interviewees intimated, 'I hate to be called *nüqiangren*. I'm just a woman with a successful career. I want to be regarded as an understanding wife and a loving mother'.

Table 6 shows that a large proportion of the women interviewed took responsibility for doing housework, with 41.9 per cent reporting that they do it alone and 27.4 per cent reporting that they do it with help from other people. Interviewees reported that their greatest source of help was their husbands, with 19.4 per cent of husbands sharing domestic responsibilities with the interviewee and 4.8 per cent of husbands solely responsible for housework. Maids and family-in-law were also reported as sources of help with housework, though the percentage is not high. Interestingly, none of the women entrepreneurs reported receiving help from their parental family. This could reflect the Chinese tradition

⁷ Karen Korabik, 1994, p. 123.

of patrilocal marriage, whereby a daughter is bound by custom not to live at her parents' home once she has married.

Across the three categories, women working as managers in enterprises displayed—in proportional terms—the greatest equality with their husbands in terms of housework, as 60 percent reported sharing that responsibility with their husbands. Wives of enterprise owners sustained the heaviest burden of domestic work, with 63 per cent having to do it alone. Women enterprise owners were the least troubled by housework, with only 24 per cent of them having to do it alone, and a considerable proportion receiving support from their husbands. These findings are consistent with the fact that women enterprise owners tend to have the most responsibilities at work, whereas wives of enterprise owners tend to have limited responsibilities in their husbands' enterprises.

Nevertheless, the interviewed entrepreneurial women reported difficulty in maintaining their dual roles as successful career women and understanding wives and loving mothers, given the double burden of running a business and taking care of a family. When discussing the disadvantages hindering them from achieving greater success in business, many mentioned their family responsibilities. For instance, a number of women were not able to take business trips because they had to take care of the children and because housework consumed a great deal of their time and energy. This was a recurring theme in the Jiaocheng interviews. A typical comment made by interviewees was: 'if women could get rid of the family tasks, they would do better than men!'

Table 3.6 Jiaocheng interviewees: Who does the housework?

Category	Interviewee	Interviewee's husband	Interviewee and husband (together)	Interviewee and friend (together)	Interviewee and mother-in-law (together)	Interviewee and daughter-in-law (together)	Parents-in-law	Maid	Information not available	Total
Enterprise owner	6 (24%)	3 (12%)	5 (20%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)		1 (4%)	2 (8%)	5 (20%)	25
Wife of enterprise owner	17 (63.0%)		1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)		1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	27
Manager	3 (30%)		6 (60%)						1 (10%)	10
Total	26 (41.9%)	3 (4.8%)	12 (19.4%)	2 (3.2%)	2 (3.2%)	1 (1.6%)	4 (6.5%)	3 (4.8%)	9 (14.5%)	62

* * *

In a nutshell, despite the Chinese tradition of valuing men and belittling women, the Jiaocheng interviewees had been able to achieve a high degree of status in their enterprises. Even when her husband technically ‘owned’ the business, a woman entrepreneur often ‘ran’ the business in practice, both on the level of daily business operations and on the level of long term strategic planning. These women took responsibility for a substantial proportion of primary business activities such as purchasing, production, sales, personnel and finance, and tended overall to be more deeply involved in management and daily business operation than their husbands.

A majority of these women were engaged in long term strategic planning, either by themselves or jointly with their husbands. When encountering difficulties, they sought advice from various sources, including their husbands, other family members, colleagues and friends. And when consensus about a particular issue could not be reached, in many cases they took the initiative to make final ‘executive’ decisions. Thus, in practice, many of the entrepreneurial women in Jiaocheng acted as a source of leadership and direction in their businesses—they were the *de facto* bosses of their enterprises.

However, traditional stereotypes of gender roles still seemed to have an effect on the roles the Jiaocheng interviewees played, both at work and at home. The division of labour between husbands and the wives in the enterprises remained broadly consistent with the ‘man inside, woman outside’ tradition, as women in business tended to be in charge of tasks that do not require extensive interaction with the wider world. At home, domestic work still remained the responsibility of a substantial proportion of the women entrepreneurs. But in many cases, help from their husbands, families-in-law and maids, reduced that burden.

The three categories of women interviewed display differences. Those women who work in senior positions in enterprises did not have as many responsibilities as women enterprise owners and wives of enterprise owners and their involvement in decision-making is the least. Women enterprise owners play the most active role in the enterprises' operation and make important decisions for the businesses. Their responsibilities in their households were consequently the least. Wives of enterprise owners, though subordinate to their husbands when it came to making decisions, were nevertheless active in the operation of their enterprises and in long term strategic planning. Being 'off the stage', they supported their husbands by taking care of the financial side of the business and by doing housework at home.

Political connections and the importance of family

During the last three decades, China has seen the fast development and emerging prosperity of the private economy. Previously, in the mid-1950s, the Central Government had managed to all but eliminate the private sector of the economy. Over the next 20 years or so, the economy remained dominated by the state sector. The collective sector became the non-planned (as in outside the state plan) state sector and the existence of the private sector remained exceedingly small with only occupations such as ice-cream sellers, tinkers and itinerant barbers left.¹ With reform, the state sector has decreased in scale and scope; and both the collective and private sectors have boomed. According to the statistics of the first economic survey conducted by the National Statistics Bureau of China, by the end of 2004, China had altogether 179,000 state-owned enterprises accounting for 5.5 percent of the country's total number of enterprises; 343,000 collective enterprises (10.5 percent); and 1,982,000 private enterprises (61 percent)..² The All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC) forecasted in 2005 in *Shiwu Qijian Minying Jingji Xingshi Fenxi Baogao* (An Analysis on the Situation of the Private Economy during the 'Tenth Five-Year-Plan') that by 2010 the private economy will contribute more than 75% of the country's GDP.³ Moreover, the private sector has also become a major source of employment for workers laid-off from state-owned enterprises and the country's increasing surplus labour force.

¹ See David S G Goodman 'Collectives and connectives, capitalism and corporatism: structural change in China' in *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* Vol. 11, No. 1, March 1995, p. 12-32.

² Zhongguo Guojia Tongji Ju [The National Statistical Bureau of China] 'Diyici quanguo jingji pucha zhuyao shuju gongbao' ['A report on the major figures obtained in the first national economic survey'] at http://www.stats.gov.cn/zgjpc/cgfb/t2005/1206_402294807.htm.

³ Liu Jing 'Quanguo Gongshanglian shoufa niandu minying jingji fazhan fenxi baogao' ['All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce published its first analysis on the development of China's private economy'] at http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2005-12/10/content_123447.htm.

In these circumstances, the government, the CCP and officials are all attaching great importance to the private sector, not least because of the decline of its state-owned economy. The government has to depend on the private sector for ensuring employment and generating revenue. Furthermore, private enterprises are also a major source of fund for social welfare.⁴ The Party is paying attention to the private sector, so as not to ‘shut itself off from the best supply of human resources’ of China.⁵ For some officials, to establish links with private enterprises and to cultivate personal relationships with the new rich private entrepreneurs not only confers high status, but also provides substantial benefits. The private sector has become so important to economic development that some local governments and officials regard the growth of the private sector as a central agenda item in their political activities. For example, the Henan Provincial Government has stated that the development of its non-state owned sector—of which the private sector constitutes a substantial part—would be regarded as a significant goal for the development of its departments and institutions.⁶

The last few decades have seen dramatic changes in the Party-state’s attitude towards private entrepreneurs. When the PRC was first established, private entrepreneurs were regarded as the ‘national bourgeoisie’ who were to be ‘educated and united’. At that time, they were given positions in the coalition government.⁷ But by 1953 they had come to be regarded as exploiters to be

⁴ Qin Yan, 1999.

⁵ Bruce J Dickson, 2003, p. 38.

⁶ Henan Renmin Zhengfu [People’s Government of Henan] ‘Guanyu guanche 2005(3) hao wenjian guli zhichi he yindao feigongyouzhi jingji fazhan de shishi yijian’ [‘Opinions regarding carrying out 2005(3) document by State Development and Reform Commission on encouraging, supporting and directing the development of non-state owned economy’] at <http://www.smehen.gov.cn/info/Show.aspx?id=87070>.

⁷ Bruce J Dickson, 2003.

eliminated.⁸ Several years later, they were labeled as ‘class enemies’ to be ‘struggled against’ and ‘beaten down’. In the post-Mao era, when China’s reform started, the private economy and private entrepreneurs re-emerged. In 1982, it was written into *The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China* for the first time that the individual-owned economy was a necessary supplement of the public-owned economy.⁹ In 1997, the Party’s 15th Congress further confirmed that the ‘non-public economy is a significant component of China’s Socialist Market Economy’, and this was written into *The Fifth Amendment of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China* in 1999.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the Party is willing to recruit private entrepreneurs as members to promote its major task of economic development. For some time there was no ideological justification for those who used to be regarded as exploiters of the working class to join the Party, as the Party had long claimed itself to be representing the interests of the working class. In 2000, however, the problem was solved. Jiang Zemin (President of the PRC at that time) raised his ‘Three Represents’ Theory, which asserts that ‘the Party should represent the developmental needs of the advanced social productive forces, the promotion of advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the greatest majority of people’.¹¹ In his 1 July 2001 speech, Jiang said that talented people who are from other social classes (other than workers, peasants, intellectuals, armymen and cadres) but who meet the criteria for CCP recruitment

⁸ Li Qing, *Zhongguo Gongchandang Dui Ziben Zhuyi he Feigongyouzhi Jingji de Renshi yu Zhengce* [The CCP’s Recognition and Policies on Capitalism and Non-State Economy] Zhonggong Dangshi Chubanshe, Beijing, 2004.

⁹ Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui [The National People’s Congress of China] *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Xianfa* [The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China] 4 December 1982 at <http://www.people.com.cn/item/faguiku/xf/F01-A1010.html>.

¹⁰ Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui [The National People’s Congress of China] *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Xianfa Xiuzheng An* [Amendment of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China] 15 March 1999 at <http://www.people.com.cn/item/faguiku/xf/F01-A1050.html>.

¹¹ Speech by Jiang Zemin. Jiang Zemin ‘Zai xinde lishi tiaojian xia women dang ruhe zuodao “Sange Daibiao”’ [‘How can CCP achieve the “Three Represents” under new historical circumstances’] 25 February 2000 in Guangdong Province at <http://www.kxdj.com/kxdj2005/html/160/125.html>.

should be admitted to the Party.¹² Private entrepreneurs are apparently included in this extended category.

On the other hand, despite the fast expansion of the private sector and its current significance in China's economy, private entrepreneurs still have to depend on the government and local officials for the development of their businesses, as 'the imperfect market mechanism developed in China has yet to uproot the bureaucratic influence on the economy'.¹³ Though China has been developing a market economy for some 30 years, the traces of a planned socialist economic system can be seen everywhere. Government and officials still retain influence. Though having much more freedom in comparison with state-owned enterprises, private enterprises are still restricted by laws, regulations and rules of governments and have to pay taxations and different kinds of administration fees. Moreover, different levels of government control resources, loans and some raw materials, and are an important source of business information and business contacts.¹⁴ Inevitably individual official's attitudes and predispositions may determine outcomes as regulations and rules are implemented, and in a system relatively lacking in mechanisms of public accountability the personal effect may well be magnified. Consequently, in the eyes of many private entrepreneurs a close affiliation with the Party-state and its officials is necessary.

Personal relationships are, of course, an important way to establish such affiliations. According to the 2005 survey of China's private entrepreneurs by the United Front Work Department (UFWD) of CCP, ACFIC and Private Business Institute, expenditures on entertaining all levels of officials accounted for as much

¹² Jiang Zemin 'Zai qingzhu jiandang bashi zhounian dahui de jianghua' ['Speech on the 80th anniversary of CCP'] at <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20010702/501591.html>.

¹³ Ray Yep, 2003, p. 80.

¹⁴ Ray Yep, 2003; Bruce J Dickson, 2003.

as 15.2% of the total profit made by their enterprises in 2003.¹⁵ Besides personal relationships, a major means for private entrepreneurs to establish connections with the government is through political participation, such as joining the Party and/or taking positions in the Party and the government. And in contrast to the pre-reform era they are welcome to do so nowadays. During the interviews, the Jiaocheng interviewees were asked questions about their and their family's CCP membership, leadership in all levels of government, and other Party-state relationship, as well as other forms of political connections.

Family members and CCP membership

Table 4.1 details the Jiaocheng interviewees and their family members' CCP membership. As the interview results show, 12.9 percent of these women reported themselves to be CCP members. Considering the fact that by the end of 2005 only 2.1 percent of China's female population was CCP members,¹⁶ it is obvious that the Jiaocheng interviewees had a more active interaction with the Party. However, it can be seen from the figures that these women's family members—especially their husbands, fathers, fathers-in-law, siblings and siblings-in-law had much more active participation in CCP (32.3 percent, 33.9 percent, 37.1 percent, 32.3 percent and 30.6 percent of them being CCP members respectively).

According to the Organization Department of the CCP Central Committee, by the

¹⁵ '2005 Zhongguo siying qiye diaocha baogao' ['Survey of 2005 investigation of China's private enterprises] at <http://www.southcn.com/finance/gdmqgc/gdmqyyrl/200502030218.html>.

¹⁶ Calculated from figures provided by the Central Government of China. According to the Central Government, by the end of 2005, China's female population was 633.81 million. See 'Zhongguo renkou xianzhuang [The current situation of China's population]' at http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-07/26/content_17363.htm.

end of 2005, China had some 70.8 million Party members,¹⁷ 5.4 percent of the country's general population.¹⁸ In comparison to this, the percentage of Jiaocheng interviewees having family members with CCP membership is impressively high. It illustrates that although 87.1 percent of the interviewees were not CCP members themselves, in many cases they were the wives, daughters, daughters-in-law, siblings and/or siblings-in-law of CCP members. In other words, it seems safe to argue that compared with the general population, the Jiaocheng interviewees were a group with stronger Party connections, either directly or indirectly. While most of them were not immediately CCP members themselves, a substantial proportion of these women were nevertheless able to acquire such connections through their family ties.

If we turn to the Jiaocheng interviewees' children, we will find that in six cases, the interviewees reported to have at least one child with CCP membership. The percentage (9.7 percent) of the second generation of these women being Party members is not impressive, when compared with the situation of these women's husbands, fathers and fathers-in-law. This might be due to the fact that most (36 out of 62) of the women interviewed did not have adult children¹⁹ at the time when the interviewees were conducted. However, this figure is still higher than that of the general population of China. Moreover, if we only take the adult children of the interviewees into consideration, some 23 percent of them had obtained CCP membership.

The interview results revealed that few of the mothers or mothers-in-law of the

¹⁷ 'Zhongzubu zuixin tongji: quanguo dangyuan zongshu wei 7080 wan ming' ['According to the latest statistics of the Organization Department of the CCP Central Committee, there are 70.8 million CCP members in China'] at http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2006-06/19/content_4713671.htm.

¹⁸ Calculated from figures provided in *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian* [China statistical yearbook]. Zhongguo Guojia Tongjiju, 2005.

¹⁹ Aged 18 years or above when the interviews were conducted.

Jiaocheng interviewees' were members of the CCP (both were 3.2 percent). This corresponds to the gender inequality in CCP participation in China. However, these percentages are still higher than those of the general female population.

Table 4.1 Jiaocheng interviewees: Family members and CCP membership²⁰

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Sibling</i>	<i>Father-in-law</i>	<i>Mother-in-law</i>	<i>Sibling-In-law</i>
Enterprise owner	3 (12%)	7 (28%)	2 (8%)	9 (36%)		5 (20%)	6 (24%)	1 (4%)	6 (24%)
Wife of enterprise owner	2 (7.4%)	9 (33.3%)	3 (11.1%)	11 (40.7%)	2 (7.4%)	11 (40.7%)	11 (40.7%)	1 (3.7%)	11 (40.7%)
Manager	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)		4 (40%)	6 (60%)		2 (20%)
Total	8 (12.9%)	20 (32.3%)	6 (9.7%)	21 (33.9%)	2 (3.2%)	20 (32.3%)	23 (37.1%)	2 (3.2%)	19 (30.6%)

On a closer look, apparently women managers had a higher percentage of CCP members (30 percent as opposed to 12 percent and 7.4 percent respectively for enterprise owners and the wives of enterprise owners). This high figure is understandable as most of those interviewed as managers were either senior employees of private enterprises or managers of state-owned enterprises, where CCP membership is still an important criteria for recruitment and promotion. As to the other two categories of interviewees, interview results show that women enterprise owners had more direct connection with the Party than the control group of wives of enterprise owners.

When looking at the family members of these three categories of women, women enterprise owners again did not turn out to have better indirect Party connections than the two control groups. Those who were managers had the highest percentage of husbands and fathers-in-law who were also CCP members, while the wives of

²⁰ Probationary CCP membership included.

enterprise owners turned out to have the highest percentage of fathers, siblings and siblings-in-law who were CCP members. Moreover, two wives of enterprise owners reported that both their parents were CCP members, which did not occur in the other two categories of interviewees. Women enterprise owners' comparatively weak connections with the Party-state were somehow out of anticipation, as assumably such connections should be very helpful in these women's interaction with the Party-state during the establishment and operation of their business. This might be due to the fact that the scale of research is not broad enough to reflect the general situation of private enterprise owners.

Despite the Central Government's now friendlier attitude towards private entrepreneurs, none of the interviewees with CCP membership joined the Party after Jiang Zemin gave his watershed speech in 2001. Instead, it seems that their business success, the accumulation of individual wealth and the rising political status of China's private entrepreneurs did not inspire the interviewees to seek connections with the Party on their own initiative. Actually, among the eight interviewees who had obtained CCP membership, six of them joined the Party earlier in the 1970s and 1980s when they were working as local cadres or managers of state-owned enterprises. In one case the interviewee obtained her CCP membership in 1989 when she was a village primary school teacher. Li was the only one of these women who joined the Party as a private enterprise owner. She set up her individual business photocopy shop in 1997. After three years, she joined the Party. However, this case can hardly be taken as an example of women entrepreneurs being motivated by Jiang's speech to join the Party, as this interviewee had another identity as a local cadre. While running her own business, she was also a deputy township head.

Compared with their wives, husbands of Jiaocheng interviewees have taken more

initiative to obtain their CCP membership at the same time as their private wealth increases. In the 20 cases where the interviewees' husbands were reported to be CCP members, 16 of them joined the Party when serving as cadres, administrative staff members or managers of state-owned or collective enterprises, or PLA soldiers. Among the four exceptions, two interviewees' husbands joined the Party in the 1990s, one as a manager of a private enterprise and the other as the owner of a private enterprise. Two interviewees reported that their husbands had handed in their CCP membership application in 2002—one year after Jiang Zemin delivered his 2001 speech—and had become probationary CCP members when the interviews were conducted.

During the interviews, several women mentioned their and their families' experiences in the 1960s. In the years 1959-1961, inflated statistics, and poor economic policies combined with abnormal amount of rainfall, caused China to suffer a widespread famine, which the Party-state referred to as 'Three Years of Natural Disasters'. In 1961, in order to solve the problem of grain-supply shortage, the Central Government decided to reduce its urban population.²¹ To this purpose, a major strategy adopted by the Central Government was to urge the rural migrants that had rushed to the urban areas to be employed at factories during the Great Leap Forward campaign to return to their home villages. In 1962, the Central Government claimed that in the next two years it would reduce the urban population by 20 million,²² which was referred to as the campaign of '1962 Population Reduction' (六二压). By the end of 1963, some 17.5 million urban workers with a rural background were sent back to their villages. Among the

²¹ Liu Songlin 'Qianxi 1957 zhi 1963 nian guojia zhigong renshu bodong de yuanyin ji qi lishi jingyan jiaoxun' ['An analysis of the causes of fluctuation of number of employees in State-owned enterprises and the lessons'] in *Dangshi Zongheng* [Contemporary Chinese history] Issue 1, 2003, p. 40-42.

²² Liu Wusheng 'Min yi shi wei tian—Zhou Enlai guomin jingji kunnan shiqi zhua liangshi gongzuo jishi' ['Food the first necessity of man—a report on Zhou Enlai's work on the issue of grain during the period of economic difficulties'] in *Xiangchao* [Tides of Xiang River] issue 1, 2004, p. 14.

women interviewed in Jiaocheng, seven reported their fathers and one reported her father-in-law to have fallen victim of the '1962 Population Reduction' campaign, by losing their urban jobs and related welfare and being returned to the home village. Moreover, during the interviews, two women bitterly recalled their families being 'struggled against' during the Cultural Revolution, because of their landlord class background. None of these nine interviewees had CCP membership. Although they did not say this directly, it is likely that their family's misfortune during that era had at least partly led to their decision (or choice) not to obtain CCP membership.

Interestingly, one interviewee reflected on her CCP membership regretfully. Working at the county's institute of forestry studies, Song joined CCP in 1984. When the interview was conducted, she worked as the head of the institute and had been a member of the county PPCC for two years continuously. However, she revealed that if she had not been a CCP member, she could have been appointed as member of the prefecture PPCC. Although CCP membership has long been considered as a significant criterion for promotion and appointment in senior positions in China, sometimes the government looks for females from non-Party, intellectual and/or an ethnic minority background to occupy leadership positions. When talking about her missed chance, Song said, 'I would rather not have had CCP membership.'

Family members and Party-state leadership

Table 4.2 shows the extent to which the interviewees in Jiaocheng came from families who had members also involved in the leadership of the Party-state. As interview results show, almost 10 percent of these women had been working in positions of leadership at various levels of government and CCP committees.

Unfortunately the exact percentage of Party-state leaders in the general population of China is not available, but presumably, the figure of the Jiaocheng interviewees is higher than that of the general population. On a closer look, two of these women reported themselves to have backgrounds as directors of village women's federation, dealing with women issues, usually regarded as generally the 'less important' of government matters. The rest, although in charge of the more prestigious responsibilities of science and technology, legislation and Party affairs, or working as the township head, all invariably reported themselves to hold deputy positions. This would seem to correspond to information already available about the limited political career opportunities for China's female population.

Table 4.2 Jiaocheng interviewees: Family members and Party-state leadership

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Sibling</i>	<i>Father-in-law</i>	<i>Mother-in-law</i>	<i>Sibling-In-law</i>
Enterprise owner	3 (12%)	6 (24%)		5 (20%)		4 (16%)	4 (16%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)
Wife of enterprise owner	1 (3.7%)	8 (29.6%)		6 (22.2%)	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	6 (22.2%)		7 (25.9%)
Manager	2 (20%)	2 (20%)				1 (10%)	3 (30%)		1 (10%)
Total	6 (9.7%)	16 (25.8%)		11 (17.7%)	1 (1.6%)	8 (12.9%)	13 (21.0%)	2 (3.2%)	9 (14.5%)

Comparing each of the three categories of interviewees, it is clear that the women managers had more such political capital than the other two categories of women enterprise owners and wives of enterprise owners (20 percent, compared to 12 percent and 3.7 percent respectively). Although the interview scale is not large enough to be representative of the general population, or even statistically significant, it is reasonable to assume that a Party-state leadership background would bring these women more opportunities to achieve a senior leadership positions in an enterprise, as on the one hand, a position of Party-state leadership

is widely regarded as an indication of individual excellence, and on the other hand, in order to strengthen their relationship with the Party-state and to facilitate the business operation, private enterprise owners also prefer to employees with a background as a local government official.

Nowadays it is more and more common for private enterprises to employ incumbent or retired government officials as senior employees or advisors.²³ This leads to a relationship of mutual benefit: the officials depend on the entrepreneurs for extra income, and the entrepreneurs depend on the officials for their experience in and relationships with government. This phenomenon is reflected in the experience of one of the interviewees, Cheng, a retired government officer working in a private enterprise as a manager. Cheng had started to work in the county government in 1976. During the next 23 years, she worked at different positions in various departments.. From 1976 to 1985, she was an officer of the county's Bureau of Commerce, in charge of personnel affairs. Then she was transferred to the Personnel Bureau of Jiaocheng County. In 1986, she started to work in the Party Committee of the office of the county government and was later promoted to be the Party vice secretary. On formal retirement, she was working in the Organization Department of Jiaocheng CCP Committee. Considering her leadership experience, it was understandable that right after retirement, she was offered a position by one of the biggest private enterprises of the county, to work as the office director and director of women's affairs. Cheng's responsibilities in the enterprise include personnel affairs and reception (of visiting guests and government officials). Although she did not participate in the enterprise's strategic planning on important issues such as production and sales, she was invited to attend all the important business meetings.

²³ Zhang Jianjun 'Zhongguo minying qiyejia de zhengzhi zhanlue' ['The political strategy of China's private entrepreneurs'] at <http://www.pkubr.com/showarticle.php?aid=46>.

Despite having gained some political capital themselves, these women were not so politically involved as their family members. The interview results show that 17.7 percent of these women's fathers had held leadership positions in the Party-state at various levels. 12.9 percent of them reported that they had at least one sibling working as a leader at some level of the Party-state. These women's marriage had brought them even greater political resources. Impressively, more than a quarter of these women's husbands had a leadership background. Moreover, 21 percent of them reported that they had a father-in-law and 14.5 percent to have at least one sibling-in-law with a leadership background. This suggests that there may well have been a strong connection between these women's network of influence and their family ties.

Unlike the situation of their male family members, only a very few cases did the Mianyang women report that their mother or mother-in-law was a Party-state leader (1.6 percent and 3.2 percent respectively which, again, corresponds to the fact that women are underrepresented on the political stage in China.

None of the interviewees' next generation was a Party-state leader. The possible reason might be that most of these women's children were still university or school students at the time when the interviews were conducted. As to the few adult children of the interviewees who worked in the Party-state, they were invariably at the early stage of their career and still not able to have been appointed to a leadership position.

Sometimes private entrepreneurs are the recipient of 'appointments in the Party-state system' (政治安排) - made by the government. If they are successful (normally measured by their wealth), they are provided with leadership political positions accordingly. As China's private entrepreneurs are still not allowed to

hold positions in government departments, such political arrangements normally lead to positions in the local People's Congress and PPCC. By co-opting successful private entrepreneurs into the leadership system, the Party-state intends to better motivate the private sector. On the other hand, leadership positions such as chair or member of the standing committee of the People's Congress or PPCC ensure frequent and substantial political duties. As the People's Congress and the PPCC are coming to play increasingly significant roles in China's politics, it is likely that private entrepreneurs in such leadership positions will participate actively and obtain great influence in local politics.

During the interviews, three wives of enterprise owners reported that their husbands had been appointed to positions of leadership in local government. Tian's husband was the owner of a coal and coke group with a capital of some 200 million *yuan*. His enterprise contributed more than 10 million *yuan* to the county's annual taxation. At the same time, he was also a member of the standing committee of the county's People's Congress. Fan's husband was the owner of one of China's third biggest cattle breeding enterprises, with a capital of 50 million *yuan*. At the time when the interview was conducted, he was a member of the standing committee of Jiaocheng PPCC. Another interviewee, Shi was wife of the owner of a chemical industry enterprise. Her husband was also the honorary chair of the county's PPCC. Shi did not reveal the capital of her husband's enterprise, but according to officials of Jiaocheng Women's Federation (WF), it was 'sizable'. Considering the sizes of these entrepreneurs' businesses and the contribution they may be assumed to have made to local revenue, it is far from surprising that they were offered leadership positions in local politics. Shi's husband was a nephew of Hua Guofeng, Mao Zedong's immediate successor and the former President of the PRC. His higher political position might be the result of his family's political connections and background rather than the consequence

of his business success.

In most cases, the leadership positions held by the Jiaocheng interviewees and their family members were at village or county level. Many of these women were running business that provided services that at least partly fell into their family members' administration, either in terms of function activities or in terms of geographic area. Presumably, these women's personal or family ties with the Party-state had facilitated their business development. For example, Zhang—a clothes shop owner's wife—had a brother who was a cadre in the Jiaocheng Labor Bureau, a brother who was a cadre in the Jiaocheng Agricultural Bureau, a brother-in-law who was head of Jiaocheng Women and Children Health Station, a sister-in-law who was vice-director of the Jiaocheng Agricultural Bureau, as well as a brother-in-law and a father-in-law who were cadres in the county's forestry bureau. Her shop was one of the more successful traders in the county. All the county's government departments and factories were their clients. When reflecting on her involvement in business, Zhang revealed that she did not see herself to be any different from men. She said, 'whatever men can do, women can do too'. Considering the possibility of such a profound relationship with the county and even the province governments, it was not likely she would encounter much disadvantage in business.

Another interviewee, Li was the *de facto* owner of a chicken farm. At the same time, she was also vice-director of Jiaocheng Science and Technology Bureau and a representative to the People's Congress of Jiaocheng. And her husband was vice-director of Jiaocheng Livestock Bureau—the government department directly in charge of commercial farms. Li reported that she did not feel any difficulty as a woman in the business world, because 'I am an expert in my trade and thus have the advantage'. But she was also aware that her business had benefited from her

and her husband's government positions—at least 'it is very easy for me to seek help from specialists—they are all my colleagues'.

Family members and Party-state connections

Apart from membership of the CCP and the holding of leadership positions in the Party-state some of the interviewees and/or their family members had a professional background in local government, as a junior member of staff. Moreover, these women also reported themselves and/or their family members to have other kinds of Party-state connections, including: membership of other political parties, membership of the People's Congress, membership of the PPCC, membership of the Federation of Industry and Commerce, membership of the Chamber of Commerce, membership of the Women Entrepreneurs' Association and membership of vocational associations. While in other political seasons these would not have necessarily been seen as being part of the Party-state, the PRC's Leninist heritage ensures that sanctioned political parties and other mass organizations are all controlled by the CCP-state.

The interviews have revealed that membership of other political parties (over and above the CCP) ²⁴ is also pursued by private entrepreneurs. There are two possible reasons for this phenomenon: firstly, most of these parties (such as the China Association for Promoting Democracy, China Democratic League, the Jiu San Society, the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang, the Chinese

²⁴ The [People's Republic of China](#) (PRC) is formally a multi-party state under the leadership of the CCP. The [People's Republic of China](#) (PRC) is formally a multi-party state under the leadership of the CCP. Eight registered minor parties are the [Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang](#), the [China Democratic League](#), the [China National Democratic Construction Association](#), the [China Association for Promoting Democracy](#), the [Chinese Peasants' and Workers' Democratic Party](#), the [China Party for Public Interest](#), the [Jiu San Society](#), and the [Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League](#).

Peasants' and Workers' Democratic Party, and the China National Democratic Construction Association) claim that they are organizations of higher-level intellectuals and professionals. Therefore, membership of these parties suggests higher education level and even higher social status. And secondly, these democratic parties have been commonly regarded as a short cut to governmental leadership positions. As the PPCC is mainly composed of members of the democratic political parties and non-CCP members,²⁵ membership of these parties would thus provide an easy access to the local assemblies. Zhao, wife of a private enterprise owner, revealed that her husband joined the China Association for Promoting Democracy in 2004, six years after he established his magnetic material company. At the same time, Zhao's husband was also member of Jiaocheng People's Political Consultative Conference.

'By the nomination of the Party-state, some successful private entrepreneurs are able to become members of organizations such as the People's Congress, the PPCC, the Federation of Industry and Commerce and so on. With such identity, they are able to participate in relevant political activities...Nowadays, this is the most significant and standard means of political participation of private entrepreneurs in China'.²⁶ While the National People's Congress and local people's congresses are 'the organs through which the people exercise state power',²⁷ the PPCC provides non-CCP party members, people with ethnic

²⁵ 'Zhongguo Zhongyang guanyu jianqian Renmin Zhengxie gongzuo de yijian' ['Opinion of the Central Committee of CCP on reinforcing the work of the People's Political Consultative Conference'] at http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2006-03/01/content_215306.htm.

²⁶ Mao Mingbin 'Lue lun siying qiyezhuzhu jieceng de zhengzhi canyu fangshi ji qi tedian' ['Discussion on the means of private entrepreneurs' political participation and its features'] in *Lanzhou Xuekan* [Lanzhou Academic Journal] Issue 5, 2004, p. 33-4.

²⁷ See the website of the National People's Congress of PRC, <http://www.npc.gov.cn/zgrdw/english/aboutCongress/aboutCongressDetail.jsp?id=Introduction>, accessed on 12 February 2007.

minority backgrounds, all trades and professions access to political participation,²⁸ and the FIC aims to promote the interaction between the Party-state and entrepreneurs from the non-public sector.²⁹ During the interviews, one enterprise owner, one wife of an enterprise owner and two managers reported themselves, while three enterprise owners and four wives of enterprise owners reported their husbands to belong to such organizations. Again, it seems to suggest that in family-owned business run jointly by the husband and the wife, the husband tends to represent the family in the outside world and thus obtain more political resources. Kang, the owner of a clothing shop, revealed that she was once offered membership in the county's PPCC earlier, but she refused. 'I'm too busy with my shop and family,' she said, 'so I don't have time for it.'

The interview results suggest that private entrepreneurs also realize their political participation by joining the Chamber of Commerce, the local association of entrepreneurs and enterprises, as well as vocational associations. One interviewee reported her husband to be a member of the Jiaocheng Chamber of Commerce. Two interviewees were members of the provincial Women Entrepreneurs' Association. One interviewee's husband was leader of the county's Association of Private Enterprises. And two interviewees were leaders of the county's Association of Date Processing Industry. Membership in such organizations can not only bring them certain political power, but also provide them with business and political network, which in turn enables them to achieve more individual wealth.

Another means whereby the Party-state co-opts private enterprise owners, not

²⁸ See the website of the General Office, National Committee, Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, <http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/htm/jianjie/jianjie.htm>, accessed on 12 February 2007.

²⁹ See the website of All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, <http://www.chinachamber.org.cn/English%20zy/introduction/htm>, accessed on 4 January 2007.

least because of the publicity that is generated, is to award honours to themselves or to their enterprises. Four of the enterprise owners reported that they had been recognized by the local government as a ‘Model Worker’, an ‘Outstanding Party Member’ as well as a ‘Capable Person to Acquire Wealth’. One interviewee revealed that her and her husband’s pig farm was honoured by the local government as ‘the Model Demonstration Park of Agricultural Science and Technology’. Presumably, such honours also enhance these women’s connection with the local Party-state.

Table 4.3 Jiaocheng interviewees: Family members and Party-state connections

<i>Category</i>	<i>Enterprise owner</i>	<i>Wife of enterprise owner</i>	<i>Manager</i>	<i>Total</i>
Interviewee	8 (32%)	4 (14.8%)	3 (30%)	15 (24.2%)
Husband	11 (44%)	14 (50%)	2 (20%)	27 (43.5%)
Children	3 (12%)	3 (11.1%)	1 (10%)	7 (11.3%)
Father	11 (44%)	13 (48.1%)	2 (20%)	26 (41.9%)
Mother		4 (14.8%)		4 (6.5%)
Sibling	5 (20%)	14 (50%)	4 (40%)	23 (37.1%)
Father-in-law	5 (20%)	13 (48.1%)	5 (50%)	23 (37.1%)
Mother-in-law	2 (8%)	2 (7.4%)		4 (6.5%)
Sibling-in-law	6 (24%)	11 (40.7%)	1 (10%)	18 (29.0%)

These various Party-state connections have provided the Jiaocheng interviewees with considerable political resources. As Table 4.3 illustrates, almost a quarter of these women possessed a Party-state connection of some kind. Although the figure for China’s population in general is not available, it seems safe to conclude that these women are a group with considerable political power. Nevertheless, the interview results suggest that their families have delivered even greater political resources. Impressively 43.9 percent of the women’s husbands and 41.9 percent of their fathers were reported to have Party-state connections. The percentage of their siblings, fathers-in-law and siblings-in-law with Party-state connections were 37.1 percent, 37.1 percent and 29 percent respectively. Again, the interviewees’

mothers and mothers-in-law seemed to be less political involved comparing with other family members.

Interestingly, seven of these women reported to have at least one child with their own close involvement in the Party-state. Considering that only 26 out of the 62 interviewees had adult children, the proportion is not small. In his 1996-8 research on the local elites in Shanxi,³⁰ Goodman suggests that there is a three generation pattern in which local cadres often came from a peasant background, and that their children become business people based on the networks of influence their parents have established. The Jiaocheng fieldwork seems to suggest a follow-up pattern: the fourth generation of the local elites, i.e. children of the new rich entrepreneurs, turn to the political sphere again to seek political recognition and thus to further facilitate the family business. However, more research needs to be done to testify this tendency.

There are clearly differences in the political connectivity of the three categories of women. Women enterprise owners appear to have more political resources themselves. Wives of enterprise owners, though the category with the least personal political capital, had the most significant Party-state connections through their parental family and marriage. In comparison, the category of managers seemed to be the least politically connected.

* * *

On the whole, the Jiaocheng interviewees had developed strong connections with the Party-state. One indicator of this is the much higher CCP participation rate compared to the general population. These women also reported that they had held

³⁰ David S G Goodman 'The localism of local leadership: cadres in reform Shanxi' in *Journal of Contemporary China* Vol.9, No.24, 2000, p.159-183.

positions in the local government, either as cadres or as junior staff members. Some of them had been rewarded by the local government with recognition as a 'Model Worker' and similar awards. At the same time, the interview results have clearly shown that these women derived more political capital from their family ties, as their family members – especially their husbands, fathers and fathers-in-law – had more involvement in the Party-state system, in terms of their CCP membership, leadership background in the local government, as well as other political titles. In short, the Jiaocheng interviewees' families played a major role connecting these women with the Party-state.

When the three categories of interviewees are examined separately, women enterprise owners turned out to have the most individual political capital, although the percentage of them with CCP membership and Party-state leadership experience was not the highest. In other words, they were connected to the Party-state by their previous experience as junior staff members in the local government. On the other hand, wives of enterprise owners, despite their comparatively weak personal connections to the Party-state, were the category with the most family members being politically involved.

Part 2

Qiongsan District, Hainan Province

The paradoxes of paradise

Being China's largest SEZ, Hainan's economy is featured by foreign investments. Qiongzhou used to be a county level city of Hainan Province, having jurisdiction over 26 townships. In 2002, it was brought under the jurisdiction of Haikou City under the Provincial Government's 'Greater Haikou' Scheme.

Hainan Province

In China the name Hainan conjures up images of a paradise island, with coconut palms waving in the breeze on white sand beaches against the background of the deep blue sea and sun-kissed. Those who live in China's inland temperate areas would surely find its island scenery as well as its tropical fruits and plants very exotic. Off the southernmost coast of Guangdong Province, Hainan is isolated from the mainland by the Qiongzhou Straits and South China Sea. The fact that it is geographically closer to Vietnam, Laos and some other Southeast Asian countries than to many parts of China makes this island remote and foreign. Moreover, Hainan does have strong overseas connections. According to the Hainan Foreign Affairs Office, there are some 3 millions Hainan natives living in more than 60 countries around the world, though mostly congregated in Southeast Asia.¹ And there are over 1 million returned overseas Chinese and their dependents now living in Hainan: the highest proportion of overseas Chinese in the total population of any province.² By June 2005, Hainan had received more than 9.4 billion US dollars' foreign investment, more than 80 percent of which

¹ See http://www.hkwb.net/news/read.php?news_id=1896&news_type=11.

² Feng Chongyi and David S G Goodman 'Hainan Province in reform: political dependence and economic interdependence' in Peter Cheung, Jae Ho Chung and Zhimin Lin (ed) *Provincial Strategies of Economic Reform in Post-Mao China: Leadership, Politics and Implementation* An East Gate Book, Armonk, 1998, p.342-371.

came from overseas Hainan natives.³ Such a strong connection has even left traces in Hainan's dialect and cuisine. In the daily speech of Hainanese villagers, there is vocabulary imported from English, French and Malay. And the local people's use of lime as a cooking ingredient is Southeast Asian rather than Chinese.

It is less well known that Hainan Province is also the biggest province of China in area, as it not only includes Hainan Island itself, but also Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha Archipelagos, as well as their surrounding sea areas. On the island, there are some 60 kinds of mineral resources, while the sea area has rich petroleum and gas reserves. The humid and warm climate of the island has also made it an ideal place for agriculture. However, Hainan did not receive as much attention as these resources suggest it deserves until the late 1980s. In ancient China, this remote island which 'it took even a bird half a year to reach' (鸟飞犹是半年程)⁴ had for a long time been regarded as an uncivilized 'barbarous place, where there were only miasmas and pestilence' (蛮荒之地, 瘴病之乡). Emperors thought it was 'the end of the earth' (天涯海角) and sent their exiles here. The situation was not much improved after the foundation of People's Republic of China, as Hainan remained the biggest depressed area of Guangdong Province to which it belonged at that time. Due to Hainan's location in the front line of the country's coastal defenses, the Central Government deliberately left it undeveloped and poor. Hainan was suffering from poverty until it became a separate province and the biggest SEZ of China in 1988.

Hainan: The Reform Laboratory

³ 'Hainan biao zhang 164 ming hua ren hua qiao gang' ao tong bao' ['Hainan government awarded 164 overseas Chinese, including those living in Hong Kong and Macau'] at <http://www.chinaqw.com.cn/news/2006/0224/68/17984.shtml>.

⁴ 《登崖州城作》 (A poem written on the gate tower of Yazhou) by the Tang Dynasty Prime Minister Li Deyu: 独上高楼望帝京，鸟飞犹是半年程。青山似欲留人住，百匝千遭绕郡城。

Hainan's reform can be dated back to as early as 1983. After seeing the successful result of the opening of the SEZs of Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou and Xiamen, the Central Government had its eyes on Hainan — after all its significant geographic location, good natural environment and rich resources are not insignificant — and decided to change its old plan of not developing Hainan as the outpost of the national defense. Thus, Hainan was granted a series of favorable policies that would open it to foreign investment, some of which were even 'more special than the Special Economic Zones'.⁵ However this great opportunity for Hainan was almost immediately ruined by the so-called 'Car Scandal'. At that time, the Hainan Government took advantage of its favorable policies to import 16,000 Toyota Cars from Japan under the guise of allocating them to subordinate departments, while the cars were in fact resold beyond the island at a higher price in order to make some easy money. Not long after, Hainan had to pay for this short-sighted behavior, as an outraged Central Government decided to take back the policies as a punishment.

The further opening of Hainan came back on the agenda of Central Government in 1987 for a second time. This time the government decided to attempt to develop Hainan as a model show window of reform. Firstly, Hainan has a varied economic and social structure. Its comparatively well-off cities and undeveloped countryside, agriculture as the dominant economy and developing industry, rich coastal and poor inland areas, as well as the Han and ethnic groups made the island a somewhat miniature version of China as a whole. Secondly, Hainan was one of the least economically developed regions in China at that time. As its GDP counted for a very tiny part of the national GDP, even if local experiments with reform failed that would hardly affect the national economy at all. Moreover,

⁵ Lu Bing and Xu Bing *Zhongguo Da Tequ De Shinan Biange* [The Reform of China's Big SEZ in Ten Years] Central Communist Party School Press, Beijing, 1998, p.8.

Hainan's isolated location as an island would make the failure easier to handle. But on the other hand, any success might have a profound effect on the rest of the country. Last, but not least, Hainan shares similar geographic features, area, climate and natural resources with Taiwan. Success in Hainan would be a good example of 'the superiority of the socialist system' and thus accelerate the Central Government's effort to reunite Taiwan and the Mainland.

As a result, Hainan was separated administratively from Guangdong in 1988 and established as a province and the biggest SEZ. Since then, Hainan has been on a zigzag course of reform. A lot of novel ideas were first raised and practiced in this big reform laboratory, which, though in the end they have failed or been abandoned, have provided precious experience for the country's wider and further reform later on. Hainan was the first province to practice the concept of a 'market economy' and claim public ownership would not be the dominant sector in its economy in 1988. Though it is a commonly accepted idea in China nowadays, under the once again conservative atmosphere in China after 1989 the Central Government slowed its steps on reform and a market economy was equalized to capitalism. Consequently, the Hainan Government withdrew from promoting ideas related to the development of the market economy and non-public ownership.

The Provincial Government's innovative experiment of 'small government, big society' in 1988 also proved short-lived. The point of the concept was to have a small but efficient government and allow individuals and enterprises to have a high degree of autonomy. The practice of 'small government, big society' was not unsuccessful, as the simplified Hainan Provincial Government was much smaller than the administration of the former Hainan Prefecture (under Guangdong Province). However, there was no corresponding reform carried on at the central

level, so many Central Government departments did not have subordinate units in Hainan. As a result, the Hainan Government was not only unable to send officials to attend meetings held by some ministries, but also was unable to obtain funds from these ministries. Although several years later the Central Government carried out a series of nationwide measures to downsize the administrative structures, Hainan had to abandon this new idea at that time.

The ‘Yangpu Zone’ accident was another abandoned effort in Hainan’s reform. Yangpu was an ideal natural port, but due to a lack of money the Hainan Government had to leave it undeveloped for years. After being favored by the Central Government’s policies, the SEZ government came to the idea of leasing the land out to a foreign company at low prices for 70 years and thus developing Yangpu with foreign investment. The investor would in return enjoy exemption from customs duties. This currently widely accepted mode was severely attacked by the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference in 1989, who compared it to the Qing Government’s surrendering its sovereign rights over Hong Kong to Britain under humiliating terms. And this, in turn, was echoed by media across the country. Though after carefully explaining to the Central Government, Hainan finally obtained the approval in two years, the shocked investor had already withdrawn the investment and consequently Yangpu had lost a good opportunity to develop.

These failures do not mean that Hainan’s reform was not without its successes. On the contrary, the early 1990s saw a great leap forward in the province’s economy. In the first several years of its opening, Hainan had received ‘one hundred thousand talented people coming down to Hainan’ (十万人才下海南) who were attracted by the blossoming of the newest and biggest SEZ. Coming with them

was more than 40 billions yuan in investment.⁶ A big proportion of the investment went to the construction sector, as the island at that time had barely any transport infrastructure by way of ports, roads and airports. Real estate construction became another hot spot, as all the enterprises and individuals arriving in Hainan needed to be housed. People soon found real estate returned high profits and as a result more investment was put into that business. At the same time, because China's stock market was not yet established, many speculators came into the Hainan real estate investment market as well to pursue quick money. The inexperienced SEZ government was not able to direct the investment into other industries. In 1992, investment on real estate made up 34.7% of Hainan Province's investment in total fixed assets and this small province with a population of only 6 million was ranked the third among all the provinces in the sales amount of real estate with the fastest growing rate of real estate construction.⁷ Undeniably, the rapidly expanding real estate business had a positive effect on the SEZ's development and contributed much to Hainan's local revenue. It also promoted the development of related sectors of the economy such as commerce, service, architecture, construction materials and transportation. However, in 1993 considering the problems in the national economy the Central Government straightened its control over the financial market, especially over the investments in real estates, which was unfortunately the basis of Hainan's economic development. As a result, Hainan's economic development had a sudden low tide in the following years. 1995 saw the province's lowest annual growth rate in GDP — 4.2%, even below the national average.⁸ A large number of buildings under construction remained unfinished — 'broken tail buildings' (烂尾楼) - and were still a visible disgrace in 2005. In addition the island's related sectors of commerce, service and recreation all ground to a halt. Even the new rich Provincial Government had to worry about

⁶ Zhang Chuanxuan and Zhang Jiang 'Hainan tequ yuan he da er bu qiang ['Why is Hainan SEZ big but not strong'] at <http://www.soa.gov.cn/leader/11841b.htm>.

⁷ Lu Bing, 1998, p.236.

⁸ Lu, 1998, Bing, p.262.

not being able to pay its staff their salaries.

At the same time, with the market economy being promoted across China, reform has been widely carried on since Deng Xiaoping's inspection tour to Shenzhen in 1992. The difference between Hainan and the mainland on policies and economic structure has become increasingly less. Is the used-to-be 'more special than the SEZs' Hainan still special now? What advantages has it left in economic development? After the real estate bubble broke, the Hainan Government readjusted its emphasis into tourism, agriculture and industry. From 1998 to 2001, the average annual growth rate of Hainan's GDP was 8.6%, once again above the national average.⁹ In 2003, the province received more than 12 million tourists from China and overseas, and the income from tourism was 93.55 billion yuan. Hainan has become one of the most popular tourist destinations in China.

Agriculture remains the biggest sector of the province's economy, with its GDP being 251.35 billion yuan — 36.34% of the provincial GDP. Being advantaged by its unique tropical climate, Hainan has become the country's greenhouse for fruits and vegetables. Industry has always been Hainan's weak point, but it still managed to grow from 12.89% of the province's GDP in 1988 to 17.82% in 2003.¹⁰ By June 2005, Hainan had received more than 9.4 billion US dollars' foreign investment.¹¹ Foreign companies such as Mazda, Sundiro and Holiday Inn have played a key role in Hainan's development in the industry, tourism and service sectors. Moreover, under the improving economic circumstances, many of the notorious broken tail buildings have also been redeveloped with new

⁹ 'Hainan zhujian zouchu "paomo jingji" yinying, chongxian huanfa xin de shengji' ['Hainan gradually coming out of the shadow of "a foam economy" and glowing with vigour again'] at http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2002-09/26/content_576254.htm.

¹⁰ Hainan Sheng Tongjiju [Hainan Province Bureau of Statistics] *Hainan Tongji Nianjian 2004* [Hainan Statistical Yearbook] China Statistics Press, Beijing, 2004.

¹¹ 'Hainan jiang dali yin waizi zhongdian fazhan 10 chanye' ['Hainan will make a great effort to attract foreign investment and emphasize the development of 10 industries'] at <http://www.hn.chinanews.com.cn/hnnew/2005-11-01/30051.html>.

investment.

Despite these achievements, this province still has a long way to go in its reform. The inexperienced government, the discontinuity of its policies over the repeated changes of leaderships, as well as the short-sightedness and bureaucracy of some officials have become obstacles to the island's further development. In 2003, the Sanya City Government nullified all the contracts and agreements it had signed with the Bahaili Company and signed a new agreement with another company to develop Xidao Island, even though Bahaili had invested more than 10 million yuan in 2000 and developed the island into a popular tourist spot. Similarly, in 2004 an 82 years old Taiwanese went down on his knees to the Haikou City Government begging for mercy and approval for the construction project on land he had bought from them at a price of 20 million yuan 13 years beforehand. The repeated occurrence of such stories has given Hainan an ill repute as a poor investment environment.

Moreover, though Hainan has jurisdiction over two-thirds of China's sea area, the development of the latter has largely been ignored. In 2000, the total fishery output and value of Shandong, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Guangxi, Fujian and Liaoning was respectively 38 times and 32 times of that of Hainan, though the sea area of the seven provinces together is only a half that of Hainan.¹² And the rich petroleum and natural gas to be found in the South China Sea has also been left untouched under Hainan's jurisdiction. Fortunately the SEZ government has realized these weaknesses and determined to make improvement. In 2005, the Provincial Government adopted new regulations to improve the investment environment. In addition, it determined that the sea industry is part of Hainan's natural advantage, and that its development will be emphasized in future.

¹² Zhang Chuanxuan and Zhang Jiang 'Hainan tequ yuan he da er bu qiang ['Why is Hainan SEZ big but not strong'] at <http://www.soa.gov.cn/leader/11841b.htm>.

Mainlanders in Hainan

Throughout China's history, migration to Hainan from the mainland has been fairly constant. The Li minority group—a now well-accepted indigenous Hainan people, were the earliest migrants to the island, having come from what are now Guangxi and Guangdong Provinces thousands of years ago.¹³ Since then, the island has been a major destination of domestic migrants from the mainland. Earlier Chinese people went to the island to seek a shelter from the many wars, when being demobilized from the army or to do business. China's government in history also used the island as a destination for exiles. In the Qing Dynasty, there were as many as 10,000 domestic migrants moving to Hainan every year.¹⁴

After the foundation of the People's Republic of China, Hainan came under the jurisdiction of Guangdong Province. Supervised by the newly founded CCP government, population flow to the island became highly controlled and organized. In this period, the first domestic migrants from the mainland to the island were demobilized People's Liberation Army soldiers who came across the Qiongzhou Straits in 1950 to 'liberate' the island from Nationalist control. In addition, the central government—in order to accelerate the 'communist construction' of Hainan—decided that a part of the army should be transferred to Hainan to assist with local public works. The next tide of immigration to the island took place in the mid-1950s under the impetus of the newly established planned economy system. With its market being isolated from the rest of the world, the government laid its eyes on domestic areas for resources and Hainan was thus chosen as China's basis for rubber plantation. As a result, people were sent from all over the country to engage in the new business and the island was turned into the centre of

¹³ 'Hainan de yimin' ['Migrants in Hainan'] at <http://www.hi.chinanews.com.cn/html/hainanxt/103.html>.

¹⁴ 'Hainan de yimin' ['Migrants in Hainan'] at <http://www.hi.chinanews.com.cn/html/hainanxt/103.html>.

China's rubber production. During the politically turbulent years of the 1960s 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution', the central government sent large numbers of educated youths¹⁵ to the remote island of Hainan in order to develop and defend the border areas (when the Cultural Revolution ended, most of these migrants returned to their home cities in the mainland). Large state farms were established and managed militarily with the arrival of the educated youth. The 1970s saw a new tide of population movement to Hainan. As the central government had advised people to 'take grain as the guiding principle' (以粮为纲), many mainlanders were attracted to the island to start up farms. However this fashion had passed by 1980.¹⁶

In the early 1980s migration to the island had slowed, not least because of its poorly developed economy. The isolated and underdeveloped island was no longer a destination fancied by domestic migrants, who were instead attracted to the burgeoning economies of newly established SEZs such as Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Xiamen. However, the year 1988 was a milestone in Hainan's history, when the island was established as a SEZ. Domestic and international investment picked up in response to a new raft of favourable economic policies, and migration to the area increased in tandem. From 1988 to the early 1990s when Hainan's economy was blossoming, a huge number of mainlanders came to the island seeking economic opportunities. Compared with previous population movements to Hainan, this new tide of migrants was bigger in number and brought greater changes to the island, both in terms of economic development and in terms of changes to local society. For instance, the ability to speak modern standard Chinese (普通话 or Mandarin Chinese) has become established as 'one of the most important factors for appointment in government and other professions' in

¹⁵ In the late 1960s and early 1970s Mao Zedong declared that privileged educated urban youths should be sent to mountainous areas or farming villages, to be reeducated by the poor and lower-middle peasants. As a result, many secondary school graduates and students were mobilized and sent 'up to the mountains and down to the villages' ('上山下乡') i.e. to rural villages and to frontier settlements.

¹⁶ 'Hainan de yimin' ['Migrants in Hainan'] at <http://www.hn.chinanews.com.cn/html/hainanxt/103.html>.

Hainan’,¹⁷ even though most native Hainanese speak modern Chinese with a strong accent.

However, the break of the real estate bubble in Hainan in early 1990s had effects not only on the province’s economic growth, but also on migration to the island. With shrinking investment, declining economic growth, the non-native population in Hainan dropped from a constant 500,000 in the first 10 years after the SEZ’s establishment to 200,000 in 2002.¹⁸ The provincial government has implemented a series of policies to attract and retain more qualified personnel in recent years. Non-natives can now get a Hainan residence registration by buying real estate on the island and new-born babies can be registered at either of their parents’ place of residence, instead of only the father’s.¹⁹ The provincial government has even considered abandoning the boundary between rural and urban residence in the case of Hainan.²⁰ With such favourable policies, as well as the improving economy, Hainan still remains a province based on migration. Domestic migrants to Hainan mostly come from the neighbouring south and southwest provinces of China, in order to seek work opportunities and to start their own businesses.²¹

At the same time, the uneven economic development in different parts of the island has had effects on the population distribution. Mainland migrants have generally chosen to live in the better developing north and east part of the island, and numerous Hainan natives from the central and southern parts of the island have also left their hometowns for the island’s ‘better-off’ areas (the provincial capital Haikou received as many as 400,000 domestic migrants alone each year in

¹⁷ Feng Chongyi ‘Seeking lost codes in the wilderness: the search for a Hainanese culture’ in *The China Quarterly* Vol.160, 1999.

¹⁸ Liao Xun ‘Zenyang yingdui Hainan dangqian de rencai liushi’ [‘how to deal with the current brain drain in Hainan’] in *Xin Dongfang* [The New Orient] Vol. 11, Issue 1-2, 2002.

¹⁹ ‘Tequ Hainan huji yaobuyao “te”’ [‘Should the Special Economic Zone Hainan’s residence registration be “special”?’] at <http://www.hailou.gov.cn/news/shownews.asp?id=10721>.

²⁰ ‘Hainan jiang tongcheng “jumin hukou”’ [‘Hainan will unify residence registrations’] at http://www.chinapop.gov.cn/rkxx/rkxw/t20060126_55534.htm.

²¹ ‘Hainan sheng’ [‘Hainan Province’] at http://www.cpirc.org.cn/rdzt/rd_gs_detail.asp?id=685.

recent years²²).

Qiongzhou in the Scheme of 'Greater Haikou'

Qiongzhou is now a part of Haikou, the provincial capital, though historically the relationship was the other way round: Haikou had originally been the port for Qiongzhou, the long term prefecture centre. Under the PRC Qiongzhou had been a county level city of Hainan Province, having jurisdiction over 26 townships. In October 2002, it was brought under the jurisdiction of Haikou City and became one of the 4 county level districts of the provincial capital, under the Provincial Government's 'Greater Haikou' Scheme in order to promote the economic development of and increase investment in the province. Most of its old townships have now been put under the jurisdiction of the adjacent Longhua and Xiuying districts, while Qiongzhou has been left with only 8 townships and a street neighborhood.

Qiongzhou has a history that can be dated back to 627 AD when it was established as a county in the Tang Dynasty. Later on, Qiongzhou was for a long time the established capital of Qiongzhou Prefecture (now Hainan Island). That is why its downtown area is still called 'prefecture city' (府城). During the National Revolution in the 1920s and the Liberation War of the 1940s, Qiongzhou was the center of Hainan's participation in political changes and contributed many people and material resources to those events. After the PLA liberated Hainan, Qiongzhou was chosen as the location of the Hainan Military Control Commission. Because of its history, Qiongzhou has long been the political and culture center of Hainan and is honored as the province's only 'National Historical and Cultural Famous

²² Wang Shaobing 'Wailai liudong renkou chao baiwan, Minjian: jiaqiang Hainan chuzuwu guanli' ['Migrant population exceeding 1 million, China Democratic National Construction Association suggestions to strengthen control on Hainan's leasing houses'] at http://www.hq.xinhuanet.com/tbgz/2004-02/26/content_1687473.htm.

City'. The first institution of higher learning in Hainan – Qiongtai Shuyuan;²³ the famous upright Ming Dynasty official Hai Rui;²⁴ and 'the Flag of Qiongya People'— the first Hainan CCP Committee Secretary — Feng Baiju,²⁵ are all sources of pride to Qiongzhan and its people. By comparison, Haikou has an unimpressive past. When Qiongzhan was established as a county, Haikou was only its port located outside the county town. At the time when Qiongzhan County became the capital of Qiongzhou Prefecture, Haikou was only the location of the local garrison.

Qiongzhan gradually lost its ranking to Haikou, when Haikou was chosen as the location of the newly-founded Hainan District Government in the 1950's. This might be a result of the 'Anti-localism Struggle' carried out in Hainan in that period. Not long after the establishment of PRC, Feng Baiju's long-established local power and some of his local strategies had caused suspicion and mistrust at the Central. Hainan was said to have become Feng's 'independent kingdom' and many local cadres were replaced by cadres sent from the mainland by Beijing to control the island. As a 'local chief', Feng was dismissed and sent to the countryside. Considering that Qiongzhan was Feng's hometown and the place where he obtained substantial support, it was not surprising that Qiongzhan was replaced by Haikou as the new centre of Hainan. Haikou was subsequently

²³ Founded in 1710 A.D., by Jiao Yinghan.

²⁴ Hai Rui was born in Hainan in 1514. He started his official career in 1553, with a position as clerk of education in Fujian Province. He built his reputation on uncompromising adherence to an upright morality, scrupulous honesty, poverty, and fairness. He submitted a memorial impeaching the Jiajing Emperor himself in 1565 and was sentenced to death in 1566. He was released after the Emperor died in 1567. He was reappointed under the Longqing Emperor, but soon forced to resign in 1570 after complaints were made over his overzealous handling of land-tenure issues. Hai Rui's fame lives on in modern times. An article entitled 'Hai Rui baguan' ['Hai Rui dismissed from office', written by Wu Han in 1959 and later made into a Peking Opera play, was interpreted by Mao Zedong as an attack on his reputation and is remembered as the spark that ignited the Cultural Revolution.

²⁵ Feng Baiju (1903-1973) was the most important communist leader in Hainan. In the 1930s, he led the Qiongya CCP Committee to fight against the National forces and the Japanese invaders. He was the organizer of the Qiongya Column, the major military force in the Liberation War. Because of the significant role Feng played in Hainan's liberation, he was described by Zhou Enlai as 'the Flag of Qiongya People'. After the PRC was established, Feng was appointed as Secretary of Hainan CCP Committee and Chair of Hainan People's Political Consultative Conference. For more information on Feng Baiju, see Wu Zhi and He Lang *Feng Baiju Zhuan* [A Biography of Feng Baiju] Dangdai Zhongguo Chubanshe, Beijing, 1996.

developed as an industrial city and Qiongzhan as an agricultural county (though becoming a county level city in 1994). When Hainan Province was established in 1988, Haikou was chosen as the capital.

All the same, due to its glorious past, Qiongzhan could never play an appropriate second fiddle to Haikou before its incorporation in 2002. After 1949 though Haikou was a prefecture level city and Qiongzhan only a county, they were both under the direct administration of the Provincial Government. As a result, the two adjacent cities had their own separate rules and policies and neither was willing to make concessions to the other even when administratively desirable, which in turn sometimes caused confusion. For example, due to the different sizes of the sewerage lines of the two cities, Qiongzhan had to dispose some of its sewerage into a lake located in between them rather than into Haikou's sewerage system. A village located on the boundary of the two cities had not had postal service for 10 years, due to the conflict between Qiongzhan and Haikou's administrative power. The two cities' conflict intensified in 2001 when Haikou government detained more than 100 Qiongzhan taxis, claiming they were causing pernicious competition in Haikou's taxi market and an indignant Qiongzhan administration asked the Provincial Government for reconsideration, requesting Haikou to make economic compensation accordingly. At the end the Vice Governor of the province had to be called in to arbitrate.²⁶ Such problems led to the idea of developing a 'Greater Haikou.'

The idea of Greater Haikou was to combine Qiongzhan with Haikou, by turning the former into a district of the latter. As a result Haikou's population increased from 800,000 to 1,500,000 and its land area from 240km² to 2,300 km². The new Haikou City was supposed to have more reasonable municipal construction

²⁶ Zhong Weizhi 'Da Haikou zhengjiu Hainan' ['Would a Greater Haikou save Hainan?'] in *Jingji Guancha Bao* [The Economic Observer] 22 October 2002 at <http://www.eobserver.com.cn/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=1940>.

planning, more resources, as well as a more efficient administration system, which would greatly promote its economic development. It is hoped that a bigger and stronger Haikou City would become an equivalent of the nearby cosmopolitan cities of Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Hong Kong, and be attractive for more investment to come to Hainan and consequently promote the province's development. A demand for a Greater Haikou had been around since the collapse of the real estate bubble. But troubles in reconstructing the City Government and identifying and relocating redundant officials, delayed the scheme's implementation until 2002.

What are the effects of the 'Greater Haikou' scheme on Qiongshan? Ten local officials or celebrities of Qiongshan were interviewed on the advantages and disadvantages they saw in its future development. The interviews clearly demonstrated Qiongshan people's pride in their past. 40% of these interviewees recognized Qiongshan's glorious history as an economic advantage, because Qiongshan is thus blessed with a solid cultural background and its many historical sites enables Qiongshan to develop tourism as an important component of its economy accordingly. Being a part of the 'Greater Haikou' is also accepted as an advantage to Qiongshan. 30% of interviewees thought Qiongshan received more financial support from the province now it was part of the provincial capital. All the same, even though Qiongshan had been part of Haikou for two years by the time the interviews for this project were undertaken, it is still somehow regarded as a separate city. 30% of those interviews reported that Qiongshan has an advantageous location, because 'it is located close enough to the provincial capital of Haikou'.

At the same time, most of those interviewed (60%) thought the 'Greater Haikou' scheme had put Qiongshan into a disadvantageous position. First, Qiongshan is

not the central emphasis in Hainan's development. After the city merger, the rich industrial areas of Qionghshan are all put under other districts' jurisdiction and what is left to Qionghshan is only the poor agricultural area. Second, the change of leaderships has resulted in discontinuity in Qionghshan's development planning. The Qionghshan Government had developed a series of policies to encourage investment and promote its industrial development and had worked out a plan to develop a new industrial district. However, after the merger, Qionghshan lost the option to develop a new industrial district and the continuation of the new policies is also in doubt. Third, as some of the interviewees said,²⁷ 'the administrative relationship from the top to the bottom is not completely sorted out', so the local Qionghshan Government is 'not able' and it is 'not convenient' for it to handle certain issues. Consequently Qionghshan is left in a somewhat unadministrated condition and the public security there is poor. During the research team's two (separate) months in Qionghshan, we were warned many times about the dangers of robbery and thievery taking place downtown.

The 'Greater Haikou' scheme is an inevitable result of the province's development, but it apparently benefits Haikou more than Qionghshan at the moment. What Qionghshan gets from it now is paradoxical. On the one hand, being a part of Haikou and Hainan, it will certainly benefit from having its development considered in both these wider contexts. On the other hand, much of the early stage in the development of the 'Greater Haikou' seems to be at the expense of Qionghshan. Fortunately, the disadvantages caused to it by the 'Greater Haikou' scheme are short-term and temporary and Qionghshan still has a promising future as 'Greater Haikou' develops further.

Hainan: open or conservative?

²⁷ Interviewed on 9 May and 12 May 2006.

During the two fieldwork visits to Hainan, the research team encountered its many contradictions. The many buildings under construction, the wide streets with coconut palms and beautiful flowers on the side, the new buses, as well as the luxurious hotels, restaurants, pubs and cafés are all showing that the island is becoming modern and fashionable. However, the garbage on the filthy streets, the rampaging motorcycles and cars, and the poor public security still suggest backwardness. Likewise, Hainan is both an open and conservative place. It is one of the first several places to become ‘open’ in China’s reform. It has a strong connection with overseas. And its development is supported by much foreign investments. All these mean that Hainan is much more open than many other provinces in the country. However, the separated location from the mainland, the local accent and living habits so different from other places in China mean that Hainan people are also (and remain) somewhat isolated from the outside world.

Before conducting the fieldwork in Qiongzhusan, there was an expectation that the local people would be both open-minded and modern. But to the contrary, many of those interviewed turned out to be conservative and traditional. Many of the women entrepreneurs interviewed were too shy to talk. When they were asked questions, they gave very brief answers in a low voice. And some were even too scared to be interviewed. Compared with the situation in the other two fieldwork sites, Shanxi and Sichuan, the highest refusal rate was in Hainan when interviews were requested. The local cadres were nice in a ‘traditional’ way, as they insisted on accompanying the research team around all day everyday, treated us to many meals, took us out for sight-seeing trips in their car (and at their unit’s expense) and put large amounts of food on our plates every now and then even when we were obviously very full. At the same time, they were obviously very cautious in dealing with a foreign-funded research project. After the local Women’s

Federation read through our research outline and interview questionnaire and agreed to help arrange the interviews, the director of the district met us and forbid us to ask interviewees about their children and their housing and other benefits from the government. There was a general concern that the research might (unwittingly) reveal an unsuccessful result in the One Child Policy or touch on hot issues such as corruption, and thus 'cause bad international effects for Qiongsan' according to the secretary of Qiongsan District Party Committee. With the same concern, the district government refused to provide us with any statistical data, though the statistical yearbooks were easy to get from both the Haikou and Hainan Governments. It took the district Women's Federation a month to make sure we were reliable and would not cause any political trouble. As a result in the first month we only managed to do several very gingerly arranged interviews and had to rely on personal connections to assist in finding interviewees at all.

Fortunately, with the development of its economy, Hainan is having more contacts with the outside world, brought along by the many mainland migrants attracted to work and live on the island, as well as foreign and domestic people coming with investment and tourism. For example, Bo'ao, a former fishing village, has recently become the site of The Asia Forum. Another interesting indication of a similar trend is that Sanya successfully hosted the 53rd, 54th and 55th Miss World Contests from 2003 to 2005. It is reasonable to expect such contacts will eventually change Hainan's conservativeness and 'traditional' outlook.

Qiongsan interviewees: who are they?

From October to November 2004 and during May 2005, 53 interviews were conducted with women entrepreneurs in Qiongsan District, Haikou City, Hainan Province. The fieldwork was undertaken with the assistance of the Qiongsan

Women's Federation. The intention was to base the fieldwork on Qionghshan District itself, but in practice, the research team was taken not only to the townships of Qionghshan, but also to other districts of Haikou, at least partly because of Qionghshan's close working relationships with other parts of the provincial capital. The interviewees included 22 enterprise owners, 20 wives of enterprise owners and 11 women who were not enterprise owners but had taken leading and managerial positions in an enterprise. Most of these women were employed in Qionghshan District, while some had their enterprises located in other districts of Haikou. The interviewees were asked about their industry sector, assets, year and place of birth, highest education level, and profession background. This section examines these issues in order to draw a profile of those interviewed.

Table 5.1 Qionghshan interviewees: Industry sector

Industry	Enterprise owners	Wives of enterprise owners	Managers	<i>Total</i>
Commercial farming	1 (4.5%)	2 (10%)	1 (9.1%)	4 (7.5%)
Real estate		3 (15%)		3 (5.7%)
Manufacturing	1 (4.5%)	1 (5%)		2 (3.8%)
Clothing/textile			2 (18.2%)	2 (3.8%)
Retail	8 (36.4%)	6 (30%)	4 (36.4%)	18 (34.0%)
Service	6 (27.3%)	3 (15%)	1 (9.1%)	10 (18.9%)
School/kindergarten	3 (13.6%)		1 (9.1%)	4 (7.5%)
Restaurant/hotel	3 (13.6%)	5 (25%)	1 (9.1%)	9 (17.0%)
Insurance			1 (9.1%)	1 (1.9%)
Total	22	20	11	53

The women interviewed in Qionghshan had business and industrial issues across a range of activities, including commercial farming, real estate, manufacturing, clothing/textiles, retail sales, service industries²⁸, schools/kindergartens, restaurants/hotels, as well as insurance. Table 5.1 details the industry sectors these

²⁸ The activities the interviewees were engaged in include photocopy studio, body shaping salon, photography studio, gymnasium, make-up studio, hairdressing salon, beauty salon, automobile repair and truck rental.

women were engaged in. As the figures show, a large proportion of the interviewees were congregated in the retail and service sectors (34.0 percent and 18.9 percent respectively), both being regarded as ‘women’s industries’ traditionally. The proportion of them engaged in the restaurant/hotel business also stood out (17.0 percent). And only as little as 3.8 percent of their enterprises fell into the male-dominant sectors of manufacturing and real estate.

Comparing the three categories of interviewees, a higher percentages of women enterprise owners and managers were engaged in the retail sector (36.4 percent and 36.4 percent, as opposed to 30 percent). Moreover, the percentages of women enterprise owners engaged in service activities and school/kindergarten business were also higher than the two control groups. On the other hand, a higher percentage of wives of enterprise owners reported their husband’s enterprises to be involved in commercial farming, real estate, manufacturing, and restaurants/hotels. This seems to suggest a gendered tendency in business operations.

Table 5.2 Qiongsan interviewees: Enterprise assets

Unit=yuan						
<i>Size</i>	<i>~999,999</i>	<i>1million ~ 9.99 million</i>	<i>10 million~ 99.99million</i>	<i>100 million ~</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Category</i>						
Enterprise owner	16 (72.7%)	1 (4.5%)			5 (22.7%)	22
Wife of enterprise owner	12 (60%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)		5 (25%)	20
Manager	6 (54.5%)			1 (9.1%)	4 (36.4%)	11
Total	34 (64.2%)	3 (5.7%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	14 (26.4%)	53

Table 5.2 shows the assets of the Qiongsan interviewees’ enterprises.

Unfortunately, 14 of them refused to reveal the relevant information during the interviews, which prevented the interviewers from obtaining a more general picture of these women's business activities. Nevertheless, the available information has shown that except for a few exceptions, almost all of these women's businesses were small-sized, with capital of less than 1 million *yuan* (64.2 percent). This seems consistent with the knowledge that the majority of these women were running retail sales and service activities.

The three categories of women enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners and women managers were again different from this perspective. Compared with the two control groups, the size of women enterprise owners' business was clearly smaller, as none of them were running business with a capital of more than 10 million *yuan*, only one running business with capital of more than 1 million but less than 10 million *yuan* and the rest all running business with capital of less than 1 million *yuan*. This, again, reflects these women's concentration in the retail and services sectors.

Year and place of birth

The ages of the women interviewed in Qiongsan varied greatly, with the oldest of them being 62 years old in the year of the fieldwork and the youngest being 22. Their years of birth are illustrated in Table 5.3. As can be seen, a large majority (85 percent) of these women was born after 1955, i.e. they were under 50 years old in the year when the interviews were conducted. The biggest age group of the interviewees in Qiongsan was those born between 1966 and 1975, which makes up 37.7 percent of the interviewees, while 3.8 percent of them were born between 1936-1945, 11.3 percent were born between 1946-1955, 22.6 percent were born between 1956-1965 and 24.5 percent were born between 1976-1985.

A possible explanation of the age distribution of the Qiongsan interviewees is that those born before 1966 were less likely to have taken advantage of Hainan's recent economic reform. At the same time, the younger group born after 1975 had not accumulated enough experience and funds to set up their own business yet.

Table 5.3 Qiongsan interviewees: Year of birth

<i>Category</i>	<i>1936-1945</i>	<i>1946-1955</i>	<i>1956-1965</i>	<i>1966-1975</i>	<i>1976-1985</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	2 (9.1%)	4 (18.2%)	4 (18.2%)	6 (27.3%)	6 (27.3%)	22
Wife of enterprise owner		1 (5%)	4 (20%)	12 (60%)	3 (15%)	20
Manager		1 (9.1%)	4 (36.4%)	2 (18.2%)	4 (36.4%)	11
Total	2 (3.8%)	6 (11.3%)	12 (22.6%)	20 (37.7%)	13 (24.5%)	53

In comparison, wives of enterprise owners seemed to be the youngest category of the interviewees, with the majority (75%) being born after 1965. The category of enterprise owners, were generally older than those in the control groups, as the only two interviewees born before 1946 and four of the six born between 1946~1955 fell into this category

Table 5.4 details the Qiongsan interviewees' birth places. Though some interviewees emphasized in the interviews that they were originally from Haikou rather than Qiongsan, the two places were grouped together, as Qiongsan is no longer a separate county, but a district of Haikou. According to their birthplaces, the interviews can be grouped into Qiongsan/Haikou natives, provincial migrants (who moved to Qiongsan/Haikou from the nearby counties and cities of Wenchang, Qionghai, Sanya, Danzhou, Ding'an, Tunchang, Wanning and Qiongzong) and interprovincial migrants who came from other provinces rather

than Hainan. As can be seen from the statistics, less than a half of the women entrepreneurs interviewed were from Qiongsan/Haikou, while the majority of them were interprovincial (28.3%) or provincial (26.4%) migrants. The interprovincial migrant women came from 12 provinces in north, middle, east, southwest and south China. In the sample, the largest number of the migrant interviewees were from Hubei and Jiangxi.

Table 5.4 Qiongsan interviewees: Place of birth

<i>Category</i>	<i>The same place</i>	<i>Other county/county-level jurisdiction of the same city</i>	<i>Other city of the same province</i>	<i>Other province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	9 (40.9%)		9 (40.9%)	4 (18.2%)	22
Wife of enterprise owner	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	9 (45%)	20
Manager	8 (72.7%)		1 (9.1%)	2 (18.2%)	11
Total	22 (41.5%)	2 (3.8%)	14 (26.4%)	15 (28.3%)	53

As illustrated by Table 5.4, women enterprise owners, wives of male enterprise owners and other women who were taking leadership positions in their enterprises displayed different levels of mobility. When comparing the three categories of women, it is apparent that wives of male enterprise owners were more mobile, as this category had the smallest percentage of Qiongsan/Haikou natives (35 per cent) but the biggest percentage of inter-provincial migrants (45 per cent). The category of women enterprise owners, on the other hand, had the highest percentage of intra-provincial migrants. The third category of interviewees (other women who take on leadership positions in their enterprises) exhibited the least mobility, with most being Qiongsan/Haikou natives who were born and brought up, and subsequently worked, in the same location. The fact that few migrant

women fell into this category may be a reflection of the difficulties migrant women face in obtaining leadership positions in locally run enterprises.

Among all the single women interviewees,²⁹ there were only two divorced women, neither of whom was a Hainan native and both of whom migrated to the island after divorcing their husbands. This seems to reveal a particular kind of inter-provincial migrant entrepreneur in Hainan: those who come to the island to escape a previous life and start anew, in this case after ending an unsuccessful marriage. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Hainan provides this opportunity for many people and for diverse reasons, both men and women.

Ma, one of the divorcees, came from Guizhou province. She was in her forties in the year when she was interviewed. She was wearing fashionable clothes, an exquisite watch, well maintained hair style and make-up. Before migrating to Hainan, she was a medium level leader in an enterprise in Guizhou. Her first job in Hainan was as manager of a four-star hotel. In 2000, she became a senior insurance agent. Within four years, she had established good relationships with both her supervisors and clients and her business had been so successful that she had won many sales awards. Ma's family was no great burden: she had a casual worker to help with housework and her daughter was working in Guangzhou as an assistant lawyer. In her spare time, she went to the gym, travelled to Southeast Asia and Europe, and also hosted parties for big enterprises and associations in Hainan. Apparently she was enjoying her new single life in Hainan. As to her unsuccessful marriage, Ma chose to forget it, saying that: 'it was too long ago. I don't remember it anymore'.

Another divorcee, Fang, came from Beijing. Like Ma, Fang also wore fashionable

²⁹ Among all the Qiongzhan interviewees, two were divorced and four were single.

clothing and and make-up. Fang divorced her husband in the early 1980s. In the early 1990s she was invited by an enterprise owner to come to Haikou to manage a restaurant for him. During the low tide of Hainan's economy, the enterprise owner withdrew his money and left Hainan. Fang took over the business with another person. In 1998 the business partner also withdrew his money, and Fang invested 40,000 yuan to become the sole owner of the business. Since then, the restaurant has not developed significantly, remaining quite small and shabby compared with its splendid neighbours. But Fang still managed to pay the wages of her eight employees, as well as the expensive tuition fees for her son who had been studying in a university in Canada for three years. She had not seen her son since he went to Canada, as she was not able to afford the travel expenses. A single woman's life was not easy for her. She said it was very difficult for a woman to do things: 'If possible, I would choose to be a man in my next life'. Customers refused to pay bills and employees did not do as she required, 'just because I'm a woman'. Even the air-conditioner in the restaurant had been destroyed many times by people from the street. Hence Fang harboured ill-feeling towards the Hainan natives, though she had lived on the island for more than a decade. In spite of all these difficulties, Fang expressed a preference for her independent life: 'since I have chosen a single life, I wouldn't pass the pressure on to others.'

Educational and professional background

Education is not only one of the most significant indicators of women's status, but also an important factor that affects their development. During the interviews in Hainan, the interviewees were asked about their education background and work experience. There two factors are examined here to see the roles they played when these women set up their business and made their way to entrepreneurship.

Table 5.5 shows the highest educational level of women interviewed in Qiongsan/Haikou. It would be reasonable to expect that these women were well-educated, as education has become more widespread and more affordable in China and the significance of education is increasingly emphasized both in society and by individuals. This hypothesis is partly endorsed by the Hainan fieldwork, as all of the interviewees had been to schools for significant periods and a significant majority (83 percent) of the interviewees had finished the 9 years of compulsory education. However, only 24.5 percent (13 out of 53) of these women have received college, university or postgraduate education. These findings seems to suggest education matters in assisting women to exercise entrepreneurship, but that higher education is not a necessary factor for success.

Table 5.5 Qiongsan interviewees: Highest education level

<i>Category</i>	<i>Under junior middle school</i>	<i>Junior middle school</i>	<i>High school /secondary technical school</i>	<i>College /University</i>	<i>Postgraduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	2 (9.1%)	5 (22.7%)	8 (36.4%)	7 (31.8%)		22
Wife of enterprise owner	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	8 (40%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	20
Manager	3 (27.3%)	4 (36.4%)	2 (18.2%)	2 (18.2%)		11
Total	9 (17.0%)	13 (24.5%)	18 (34.0%)	12 (22.6%)	1 (1.9%)	53

There are clear differences among the three categories of interviewees—women enterprise owners, wives of male enterprise owners and other women who are taking leadership positions in the enterprises. As Table 5.5 illustrates, women enterprise owners were the best educated category, as they had the lowest

proportion without the basic literacy of the nine years compulsory education. Moreover, 7 out of 22 (31.8 percent) of them had received higher education, the highest percentage among the three categories of interviewees. In comparison, those women who have leadership positions in their enterprises were the least educated, as this category has the biggest proportion without basic literacy and the lowest proportion of those having been to college and university. It shows that literacy might be more important when these women set up and run one's own business than when they were employed in others' enterprises. Noticeably, those women who were not equipped with the basic literacy were all born and brought up in the countryside. This certainly corresponds to the inequality of the circumstances of rural and urban education in China.

Table 5.6 Qiongsan interviewees: Highest education level by year of birth

<i>Age</i>	<i>Under junior middle school</i>	<i>Junior middle school</i>	<i>High school /secondary technical school</i>	<i>College /University</i>	<i>Postgraduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
1936-1945	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)			3
1946-1955		1 (20%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)		5
1956-1965	2 (16.7%)	3 (25%)	6 (50%)	1 (8.3%)		12
1966-1975	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)	20
1976-1985		6 (46.2%)	3 (23.1%)	4 (30.8%)		13
Total	9 (17.0%)	13 (24.5%)	18 (34.0%)	12 (22.6%)	1 (1.9%)	53

Table 5.6 illustrates the education background of different age groups of these women. As is shown in the table, those who were born after 1965 had a much greater number of people with higher education than those older ones. Among the younger women, those who were born during 1976-1985 were better educated

than those born between 1966-1975, as the former were all equipped with the basic literacy of the nine years compulsory education, while the latter has the biggest number of those who had not finished basic education. Moreover, those born during 1976-1985 also had the highest percentage with experience of higher education. These differences in the education received by different age groups correspond to the reform of China's education during the last three decades, as with the introduction of nine years compulsory education and higher education reform, the illiteracy rate is becoming smaller for the younger population and higher education is becoming more accessible.

Interestingly, the Hainan interviewees evinced widely different attitudes towards education. Tan, one of the interviewees, was born in 1950. She finished high school education in 1968 and then was sent as an 'educated youth' to work in the countryside. Then she started working and got married. When she was 40 years old and a mother of three children, she decided to continue her education. Tan returned to university education by correspondence at Hainan University in 1990, while at that time her youngest child was only four years old. She finished the course three years later and then started her own kindergarten business.

Chen, another woman enterprise owner, was born in Hubei Province in 1972. She went to Hainan to try her luck with her elder brother in 1988 when the island was just opening up. By that time she had not yet finished her high school education. After working there for several years, she decided to pursue higher education and took a college course in fashion design in Beijing from 1996 to 1998. Now Chen is running her own image design studio in Haikou.

On the other hand, Huang, a restaurant owner, was born into a rich family in Qiongzhan in 1965. Both her parents were doctors at the local township clinic. In

1980, Huang dropped out of primary school in year five, as ‘I didn’t want to study anymore’. She said that it was not a problem for her family to afford her education and all her brothers and sisters have finished high school, but she decided at that time that she would rather run a business. After leaving school, Huang immediately started a small business selling watermelon.

Hu, another restaurant owner, was another who had a negative attitude towards education. She was born in 1976 into an economically comparatively better-off family in Qiongsan, with her father being a senior teacher of a township primary school and her mother director of the township’s women’s federation. Hu started working right after finishing junior middle school and was employed selling clothes. After getting married, she started a clothes business with her husband and they set up a restaurant in 2003.

Contrary to the experience of those who did not want to continue with their education and left school accordingly, two of the interviewees had to quit their universities to start working, as their families were not able to afford their education. One of them was born in 1980 and the other in 1978. After leaving university, they both worked as tourist guides and then became colleagues. In 2004, they started their cosmetics businesses together.

Table 5.7 Qiongsan interviewees: Previous profession³⁰

³⁰ In the case of wives of entrepreneurs, it refers to their employment before their husbands’ business was set

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Women enterprise owner</i>	<i>Wife of enterprise owner</i>	<i>Manager</i>	<i>Total</i>
Peasant/rural housewife	1 (4.5%)	2 (10%)	1 (9.1%)	4 (7.5%)
Worker	8 (36.4%)	10 (50%)	6 (54.5%)	24 (45.3%)
Professional	2 (9.1%)	1 (5%)		3 (5.7%)
Cadre	1 (4.5%)	5 (25%)	1 (9.1%)	7 (13.2%)
Business person	10 (45.5%)	2 (10%)	3 (27.3%)	15 (28.3%)
Total	22	20	11	53

Table 5.7 shows the previous profession of the Hainan interviewees. Apparently statistics do not indicate an obvious professional tendency for these women, as only three out of 53 of these women reported that they had a professional background (as a librarian, teacher, or doctor). Instead, a considerable proportion (52.8 percent) of these women fell into front-line categories such as peasant/rural housewife and worker (including the professions of factory worker, shop assistant, sales person, tourist guide, beauty specialist/hair dresser, child care, accountant/cashier), which neither require a higher level of literacy, nor need much professional knowledge. This result reflects the fact that almost all of these women had been equipped with basic literacy, but only a small proportion had received higher education. As Table 5.7 indicates, previous experience in business seems to be relevant to these women's careers and roads to entrepreneurship, as more than a quarter of them (28.3 percent) had a professional background in business management. Presumably, a previous experience as manager or business operator had provided these women with necessary knowledge and skills to run their own business. A substantial proportion of these women (13.2 percent) also reported themselves to have had earlier employment in local government.

The three categories of interviewees were again differentiated by their professional background. Women enterprise owners had the most experience in business management and operation (45.5 percent) but were the least experienced

up. Some of them were still employed in the same job at the time when the interviews were conducted.

as peasant/rural housewife or worker (4.5 percent and 36.4 percent respectively). Wives of enterprise owners, on the other hand, had the lowest proportion with a business background (10 percent). However, noticeably, this category had the largest percentage (25 percent) with a background in government service. At the time when the fieldwork was conducted, all of them still retained their positions in either the Haikou or Qionghshan Governments while participating in business. Their network of relationships in government is presumably helpful to the operation of their business. The category of managers did not have experience in professional employment, while having the biggest percentage (54.5 percentage) with a background as a worker.

Zeng, born in 1979, was the owner of a clothes shop. After graduating from a secondary technical school when she was 20, she became the operator of a seafood restaurant owned by her father. Four years later, she started to work in a sales company. With the knowledge and skills she accumulated in management and sales, she opened her own shop in 2004. At the time of interview (in 2005) Zeng's business was making a profit and she planned to expand her shop.

Another interviewee, Li, ran a glasses shop with her husband. Li has not received much former education, as she quit primary school in her early years. After getting married in 1987, Li and her husband left their hometown in Zhejiang Province to engage in business. They first traveled around in North China and then moved to Hainan to run a glasses and clothes business. In 2000, the couple opened the current glasses shop with an investment of more than 100,000 yuan. Though both of them are not very educated (Li's husband had only completed junior middle school) with their previous experience they managed to keep the business successful over the years.

These women's work experience indicates a high degree of upward social

mobility: many moved from manual labor to a non manual profession; or changed positions from assistant to management. Moreover, their businesses grew in size. One such upwardly mobile interviewee was Guo. She was born in 1954. After leaving high school in 1972, she worked at an automobile repair factory subordinate to the Hainan metallurgy system. Because of her outstanding work performance, she was soon promoted from a manual labor position to be an accountant. Then she was sent by the factory to study at a secondary technical school. After that she was promoted to work at the headquarters of the Hainan Iron Mine as an auditor. Then yet again, because of her good work performance, she was sent to study at a junior college audit course. Not long after she finished higher education, Guo quit her job to go and work at a hotel as its chief sales officer and then the general manager. Several years later Guo quit again to work as an independent insurance agent. In 2003, Guo moved on to set up her own business, a company that now has a registered capital of 1 million yuan.

Unlike those who started with management positions or small businesses, several interviewees first worked as apprentices to learn hairdressing, tailoring or beauty treatment. Several years later, these women opened their own hairdressing salon, tailor shop or beauty salon and had their own apprentices. Though most of these women had not received much education, the skills and knowledge they accumulated when they were employees helped them to be successful employers.

He was born in 1974 and had a junior middle school education. After leaving school in 1989, she became an apprentice at a hairdressing salon to learn hairdressing skills. She worked there for 7 years and in 1996, she opened a small salon with the several thousand yuan she had saved from her salary. When the business started, He had a shop of about 20m² and three apprentices. At the time of interview the shop had been expanded into more than 40m² with a fixed capital

of 50,000 yuan. At that time He employed five assistants.

Another interviewee, Wang, was born in 1978 in Gong'an City, Hubei Province. After finishing junior middle school, she went to seek opportunities in the provincial capital Wuhan City. After having several casual jobs as waitress and typist, Wang went to Hainan in 1999 as her sister was running a factory there. As she was not a graduate from higher education and had limited work experience, she only found employment in a beauty treatment salon. Starting as an apprentice, she became a beauty specialist. Wang's business partner, Chen, was the only one among these women who had benefited from higher education. Chen was born in 1978 and has been to college. After graduating in accounting, she started to work as a salesperson in a medicine company. In 1999 she quit her job to learn beauty treatment skills at a salon and her position changed from apprentice to beauty consultant. Wang and Chen were colleagues in the same salon. In 2005, they left the salon to start their own business. Their salon has an area of more than 400 m² and a registered capital of more than 100,000 yuan. It deals with hairdressing, therapeutic massage and beauty treatment, with Wang being in charge of the beauty treatment business and Chen in charge of the rest. At the time when interview was conducted, they had more than 20 employees working for them.

Hu, born in 1963, finished junior middle school in 1981. After leaving school, she worked at her brother's tailor workshop as an apprentice. When she had learnt the necessary tailoring skills, Hu left her brother's shop 1986 and started her own tailoring business. At the beginning, Hu did not have any employees and did the cutting, sewing and selling work all by herself. Due to the lack of capital, she had to buy cloth on credit and return the money after sales. Now Hu owns a workshop of more than 40m² and has more than ten employees.

In a similar case, Wang, was born in 1975. She had only a primary school education, as her family was too poor to afford her tuition fees. After leaving school, she became an apprentice at a tailoring workshop in her home town. Several years later, she was employed in her brother's tailoring workshop. After having saved some money, Wang opened her own workshop in 2001 with an investment of 20,000 yuan. At that time, the workshop had only a tiny room and seven employees. Now Wang's workshop has developed into one on three levels with an area of more than 400m² and a capital of 300,000 yuan. The annual turnover was more than 100,000 yuan. With the money she had made, Wang bought a van for the business. With the expansion of the business Wang went on to rent a storefront with three rooms in Haikou and engaged in the wholesale clothes business. When interviewed, Wang had 29 employees working for her.

* * *

Unlike those interviewed in Jiaocheng, the Qiongsan interviewees were mainly congregated in retail and service sectors and consequently their businesses were of a smaller size, which reflects Qiongsan's weakness in the industrial sector. The Qiongsan interviewees were certainly more socially mobile than their counterparts in Jiaocheng, for many were inter-provincial migrants.

Similar to the situation in Jiaocheng, the Qiongsan interview results suggest that while literacy may be an advantage to entrepreneurship, higher education is not a necessary condition. Among the three categories of interviewees, those who were the enterprise owners were better educated than wives of enterprise owners and other women who are taking managerial and leadership positions in their enterprises. The comparison of the education background of different age groups has shown that the youngest category of women entrepreneurs who were born during 1976-1985 was the best educated, which accords with other knowledge of

the improvements in China's education system.

The majority of the interviewees had a background in non-manual labor professions though some used to be employed in trades based on specific skills and technical knowledge. Interviewees indicated that skills and knowledge from business-related professions were helpful on their way to establishing businesses. Comparing figures for the three categories of interviewees it can be seen that management experience was more relevant to enterprise owners and (as might be expected) those who were taking management positions in their enterprises.

Hainan men and ‘Old Father Tea’

Interestingly, many famous figures in Hainan’s history are women. Xian Furen (Ms Xian), honored by Zhou Enlai as ‘the first female hero in China’s history’, achieved her glory in Hainan about 1,500 years ago, by suppressing rebellion in the island and laying the foundation for a united Chen Dynasty. Huang Daopo, a Hainan native, was the first person to introduce advanced spinning skills from the deft Li female spinners on the isolated island to women on the mainland. The Red Detachment of Women,¹ made famous after 1949 and through Jiang Qing’s Modern Revolutionary Ballet of the Cultural Revolution is widely known as a symbol of women’s force during China’s Liberation. And the famous Song sisters (Song Ailing, Song Qingling and Song Meiling)² also add to Hainan’s glory as island natives. These capable women have endowed the island with a ‘maternal civilization’ (母性文明) with the virtues of a ‘soft, peaceful and natural beauty’, according to writer and scholar Yu Qiuyu.³

Nowadays, Hainan women are still making contributions to the island’s development. Many mainlanders are surprised to find that in Hainan women are a main part of the island’s labor force. They not only labor in the fields and do housework as their mainland sisters, but also are employed in such ‘male jobs’ as butcher or tricycle driver,⁴ while their lucky husbands enjoy more comfortable lives.

¹ *Red Detachment of Women* is the title of a [novel](#) by Liang Xin. it depicts the liberation of a peasant girl in [Hainan Island](#) and her rise in the [Communist Party](#). It is one of the so-called [eight model plays](#), the only plays, ballets and operas permitted in China during the [Cultural Revolution](#).

² The Song Sisters were three women whose husbands were amongst [China's](#) most significant political figures of the early [20th century](#). Song Ailing, eldest of the [Song sisters](#), was the wife of [Kong](#) Xiangxi, who was the richest man in the early 20th Century [Republic of China](#). Song Qingling was the second of the Song sisters, who married Sun Yat-sen, the first provisional [president](#) when the [Republic of China](#) was founded in 1912. After the establishment of the [People's Republic of China](#), she became the [Vice President of the People's Republic of China](#). Song Meiling, the youngest, was married to the leader of the [Kuomintang](#) (KMT), Generalissimo of the Chinese armies, and later [President](#), [Chiang Kai-shek](#).

³ Feng Chongyi, 1999, p 1044.

⁴ ‘Yifang shuitu yang yifang ren, Hainan nüren mianmian guan’ [‘A place raises a people, Hainan women’] at http://hq.xinhuanet.com/news/2004-07/20/content_2522835.htm.

In the past, due to the island's unique geography, men used to support the family by fishing. When their husbands were away at sea, women had to shoulder more manual and menial tasks - housework, farm work, as well as taking care of the family. The tradition lasted so long that even nowadays when men do not go fishing on such a scale anymore, their wives still remain the main labor force. Besides, the good climate and fertile soil on the island provide abundant food. As a result Hainan men have developed a relaxing and easy-going attitude towards life. The cultural practice of 'old father tea' (老爸茶) – usually experienced in constantly open community teahouses, somewhat similar to 'pubs' in early Twentieth Century England – is peculiar to the island. The description implies a place for the elderly, but more and more young men are becoming customers as well. In the low price and easy atmosphere of the 'old father tea' tea houses, with a pot of tea for several *yuan* customers can spend a whole day chatting or simply reading newspapers. That's why these sparsely furnished shops are filled with numerous Hainan men all the time.

Such a relaxed attitude has caused many hot discussions on the internet of whether mainland girls would be happy when married to Hainan husbands. In 2005, it came to wider notice when Liu Hairong, a representative from the Hainan People's Congress, suggested at the 3rd meeting of the 10th National People's Congress that the tradition of having women laboring outside and men enjoying tea at tea houses should be changed. She admonished Hainan men to 'treat women nicely and take more significant responsibilities in production and at home'.⁵

In terms of this project's fieldwork, the distinctive life style of Hainan men first became obvious when the director of Qionghua Women's Federation provided an overview of employment on the island and pointed out that diligent women are its main labor force. This is an unusual situation compared to the mainland. Later on, the contrast between the easy-going Hainan men and the hardworking Hainan women was repeatedly reinforced in the interviews, as will become clearer. In this

⁵ 'Renda daibiao Liu Hairong guiquan Hainan nanren: yao shandai nüren' ['Liu Hairong, Representative of the People's Congress admonished Hainan men to treat women nicely'] at http://www.hinews.cn/pages_xw.php?xuh+33945.

chapter the established questions about gender differentiation at work are discussed, especially as they were answered through the interviews in Qiongsan. In addition, from the start it was clearly going to be interesting against this women-laboring and men-relaxing background to see how much burden of work in the family the interviewees were carrying. By considering the establishment and operation of these women businesses, the divisions of enterprise responsibilities, as well as their families and housework, this chapter aims to reveal these women's roles and status at home and in their enterprises and illustrate whether they were indeed shouldering more responsibilities than their husbands.

The establishment of the business

Table 6.1 summarises the responses of the interviewees when asked about the genesis of the business in which they now worked. In particular, they were asked to identify the source of the idea which lay behind the development of the business: either themselves or their husbands alone, husband and wife together, or a third person. As can be seen, except for three interviewees where information is not available, in most cases (27 out of 53) the interviewees were involved in the formulation of the original idea for the business either solely or together with their husbands. On the other hand, the husbands of these women were also a significant source for the development of the original idea, as 16 (30 percent) of these women now were involved in a business based on the husband's idea. Else wise, three interviewees (one enterprise owner and two wives of enterprise owners) reported that they or their husbands were running a business based on suggestions from family members (such as sisters and brothers).

The three categories of interviewees showed significant differences in their relationship to the early development of their enterprises. Enterprise owners were the category that had taken the most active part in the start of their business. Among the 22 women who had the enterprises registered under their names, an impressive 86.4 percent (19 out of 22) of them had developed the business by

themselves from conceptualization right through to implementation.

Table 6.1 Qiongsan interviewees: Who developed the original idea for the business?

<i>Category</i>	<i>Women's own idea</i>	<i>Husband's idea</i>	<i>Couple developed the idea together</i>	<i>Third party's idea</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	15 (68.2%)	1 (4.5%)	4 (18.2%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	22
Wife of enterprise owner	2 (10%)	14 (70%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	20
Manager	5 (45.5%)	1 (9.1%)		4 (36.4%)	1 (9.1%)	11
Total	22 (41.5%)	16 (30.2%)	5 (9.4%)	7 (13.2%)	3 (5.7%)	53

Wives of enterprise owners were those who showed (apparently) the least initiative in the start of their husband's enterprises. Only three of them participated in the original development of the business, while 70 percent of their businesses were established at the initiative of their husband. For example, one of the interviewees Su, had leased a counter in a shopping center together with her husband. Before the start of the business, Su wanted to sell clothes and house appliance. Her idea was turned down by the husband, who planned to sell cosmetics. So the business was established according to the husband's plan and registered under the husband's name, while Su is the operator, selling cosmetics.

Those women managers interviewed had also played a key role in the early development of the business where they now worked. Six of these women reported that they were actually the *defacto* owners of a business developed based on their or their husband's original ideas, but where for various reasons the business was registered under the name of other family members. Five developed the original idea for the business on their own, but for various reasons had the enterprises registered under the name of their family members or business partner. Zheng is the manager and *defacto* owner of a kindergarten. When she decided to start the business, she had the kindergarten registered under her daughter's name, because 'she is younger and thus can have better opportunities'. Another interviewee Fu runs a cosmetics business, that started with a capital of 500,000

yuan. Though she was the one to initiate the business, because of the lack of funds, she found herself a business partner and registered the business under his name. Now they each hold 50% of the share of the enterprise. In one case, the original idea for the business came from the husband, but as both the husband and wife had permanent jobs⁶ at the time when the enterprise was established, the business was registered under the name of a relative, though it is managed by the wife. The remaining four of the eleven women managers were employed to work in enterprises where they had no direct economic interest and had not been involved in the early development of those enterprises.

Operation of the enterprise

Interviews in Qiongzhan revealed information suggesting that all the women, in each of the three categories, played an active role in the operation of their enterprises. Except for nine wives of enterprise owners, all these women were substantially involved in the operation and management of the business. Among the exceptions, one worked in her husband's enterprise as an ordinary staff member and did not participate in management affairs. Another three, though not working in their husbands' enterprises, still knew about the business and gave advice when their husbands encountered difficulties at work.

Table 6.2 summarizes information about the personnel location of various different kinds of decision-making within the enterprise. This includes decisions about the major responsibilities: purchasing, sales, production, personnel and finance. Interview results show that on the whole these women were least active in the production process. Somewhat alarmingly at first sight Table 6.2 suggests that in 39 cases, nobody was responsible for production. This reflects the fact that the majority of these women was engaged in tertiary industry and were running businesses such as schools, kindergartens, shops, restaurants, gym, medical company, hair-dressing and beauty treatment salons, as well as transportation businesses, which provides service rather than being engaged in production. On

⁶ The interviewee did not give details of her and her husband's jobs. However, it was assumed that they were government positions, as public servants are not allowed to own private business in China.

the other hand, among the fourteen women who were running farms, clothes processing workshops or factories, eight had to take care of production either solely or together with their husbands.

Data in Table 6.2 indicates that purchasing was a major responsibility for these women. 47.2 percent (25 out of 53) of them were responsible for decision making on purchasing by themselves and another 7.5 percent (4 out of 53) took these decisions together with their husband. The percentage of the interviewees responsible for sales was even higher, with 64.1 percent of them being in charge either alone or jointly with their husbands. Personnel management appears to be another important responsibility for these women. Five of the interviewees were running small businesses with no employees except themselves and their family members and thus did not need to deal with hiring and firing. Among those interviewees whose businesses had substantial personnel management, the majority (30 out of 53) were directly responsible for this activity.

Among the various enterprise responsibilities, finance seemed to be the most important task undertaken by the women interviewed in Qionghshan. As is shown in Table 6.2, 30 (56.6 percent) of these women were in charge of finance on their own and 6 (11.3 percent) shared responsibility with their husband, while only nine of the women entrepreneurs' husbands were taking care of finance affairs alone.

Table 6.2 Qionghshan interviewees: Division of enterprise responsibilities

	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee's husband'</i>	<i>Interviewee and husband</i>	<i>Third party</i>	<i>No one</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Purchasing</i>							
Enterprise owner	16 (72.7%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)		1 (4.5%)		22
Wife of enterprise owner	2 (10%)	11 (55%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	20
Manager	7 (63.6%)	1 (9.1%)		2 (18.2%)	1 (9.1%)		11
Total	25 (47.2%)	14 (26.4%)	4 (7.5%)	4 (7.5%)	5 (9.4%)	1 (1.9%)	53

<i>Sales</i>					
Enterprise owner	17 (77.3%)		2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	22
Wife of enterprise owner	6 (30%)	8 (40%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	20
Manager	7 (63.6%)			3 (27.3%)	11
Total	30 (56.6%)	8 (15.1%)	4 (7.5%)	6 (11.3%)	53 (9.4%)
<i>Production</i>					
Enterprise owner	4 (18.2%)			18 (81.8%)	22
Wife of enterprise owner		3 (15%)	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	20
Manager	2 (18.2%)		1 (9.1%)	8 (72.7%)	11
Total	6 (11.3%)	3 (5.7%)	2 (3.8%)	3 (5.7%)	53 (73.6%)
<i>Personnel</i>					
Enterprise owner	16 (72.7%)	1 (4.5%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	22
Wife of enterprise owner	1 (5%)	10 (50%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	20
Manager	6 (54.5%)	1 (9.1%)		3 (27.3%)	11
Total	23 (43.4%)	12 (22.6%)	7 (13.2%)	6 (11.3%)	53 (9.4%)
<i>Finance</i>					
Enterprise owner	19 (86.4%)		2 (9.1%)	1 (4.5%)	22
Wife of enterprise owner	6 (30%)	8 (40%)	3 (15%)	3 (15%)	20
Manager	5 (45.5%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)	4 (36.4%)	11
Total	30 (56.6%)	9 (17.0%)	6 (11.3%)	8 (15.1%)	53

Comparing the three categories of interviewees, it is obvious that enterprise owners played a more significant role in all aspects of the operation of the business. Except for production, the participation rate of women enterprise owners in various kinds of decision making in the enterprise operation was impressively high: 86 percent in purchasing, 86 percent in sales, 82 percent in personnel and 95

percent in finance. The interviewees who took positions of enterprise leadership or management played a substantial role in the business as well: 63.6 percent involved in purchasing, 64.1 percent in sales, 54.5 percent in personnel and 54.6 percent in finance. In distinct comparison, but unsurprisingly, wives of enterprise owners were the category with the least involvement in enterprise decision making: 15 percent dealing with purchasing, 5 percent with production and 30 percent with personnel. All the same, even wives of enterprise owners took part in both financial management (45%) and sales (40%) alone or together with their husband.

The interviews undertaken in Qiongsan also suggest that in general, the husbands of the women interviewed took a lesser role in the operation and management of the business than their wives. As can be seen in Table 6.2, for each broad area of enterprise responsibility, the participation rate of the husbands was generally lower than that of their wives. On the other hand, enterprise owners were more active in the enterprise operation than their wives. This would seem to indicate that the formal ownership of the business matters in the division of enterprise responsibilities between a couple, at least to the extent that these activities are codified, either in law or within the enterprise..

Strategic planning in the business

With the prevalence of different gender traditions, especially practices related to valuing-men while debasing-women, could those women who were interviewed really retain a leading position in a business where their husband was also involved? Though the interviewees were active in the operation of the business, would the situation change when it came to strategic planning, and questions such as investment, development, and change to a new project? Table 6.3 shows responses to questions about responsibility for strategic planning in these women's enterprises.

The women interviewed still appeared to play an active role in the making of important strategic decisions about the business. 23 out of 53 (43.4 percent) of

these women were the person who develops strategy for the enterprise, almost double the number of husbands responsible (12 husbands, or 22.6 percent). In addition, 13 (24.5 percent) of the interviewees shared strategic planning responsibility with their husband. Thus it seems safe to conclude that the majority of the interviewees were significantly involved in strategic planning.

Table 6.3 Qiongsan interviewees: Person responsible for strategic planning in the enterprise

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee's husband</i>	<i>Interviewee and husband</i>	<i>Third party</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	17 (77.3%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)			22
Wife of enterprise owner	2 (10%)	10 (50%)	8 (40%)			20
Manager	4 (36.4%)		2 (18.2%)	5 (45.5%)		11
Total	23 (43.4%)	12 (22.6%)	13 (24.5%)	5 (9.4%)		53

The three categories of women interviewed were again different in this regard. Women enterprise owners were once again the category with the most dominant role, as an impressive 20 out of 22 (91%) of them took care of strategic planning in their businesses. Those interviewed as managers were active in strategic planning as well, which might be due to the fact that six of them reported themselves to be the *defacto* owner-operators of the businesses. Compared with the other characteristics of their involvement in business operations, wives of enterprise owners evinced more involvement in strategic planning, with 50 percent of them being having responsibility for this key function. At the same time, most of the wives of enterprises owners claimed that they were engaged in strategic planning alongside their husband.

The interviewees were asked ‘when you feel you have a difficult decision to take or action to perform, whom do you go to for advice?’ Table 6.4 summarizes the responses to this question and the resources these women depended on when in such a situation: husbands; other family members such as parents and siblings; as well as colleagues. A small proportion of these women did not seek advice, either

because they did not like to ask for others' help or because they did not have anyone to help in such a situation and thus had to depend on themselves to solve problems.

Table 6.4 Qiongsan interviewees: Main advisor to the interviewee

<i>Category</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Colleague</i>	<i>No one</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	12 (54.5%)	3 (13.6%)	2 (9.1%)	5 (22.7%)		22
Wife of enterprise owner	11 (55%)			9 ⁷ (45%)		20
Manager	5 (45.5%)	1 (9.1%)	3 (27.3%)	2 (18.2%)		11
Total	28 (52.8%)	4 (7.5%)	5 (9.4%)	16 (30.2%)		53

As is shown in Table 6.4 most of these women (53%) would turn to their husbands for help when they encountered difficulties. When looking at the details of the three different categories of women entrepreneurs, differences were again apparent. Women enterprise owners and those who had management positions in the enterprises sought advice not only from their husbands, but also from family members and colleagues. The wives of enterprise owners when they participated in their husband's business depended exclusively on their husbands when in difficulty. One of the possible explanations for this acute difference might be that two of the enterprise owners and managers were divorced and four were single, so the absence of a husband meant they had to turn to other sources for advice.

Table 6.5 provides information about who was in the position to make executive decisions when there were differences of opinion within the enterprise. Women enterprise owners were not surprisingly the most empowered to take final decisions within their enterprise, 77.3 percent of them made final decisions alone when there were different opinions. Women managers are also recorded as being active final decision makers. This doubtless reflects the function in this case of many of them as the *defacto* owner-operator of the business. In no cases were family members brought in to assist decision making. Wives of enterprise owners

⁷ These women did not participate in the business.

had the least power when there were different opinions, as only one out of the twenty of them was able to make final decision alone in such situations and another four said they acted together with their husbands.

Table 6.5 Qiongsan interviewees: Final arbiter in enterprise

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee's husband</i>	<i>Interviewee and husband</i>	<i>Colleague</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	17 (77.3%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)			22
Wife of enterprise owner	1 (5%)	15 (75%)	4 (20%)			20
Leader/manager	6 (54.5%)		2 (18.2%)	2 (18.2%)	1 (9.1%)	11
Total	24 (45.3%)	17 (32.1%)	9 (17.0%)	2 (3.8%)	1 (1.9%)	53

Women's involvement in business

In general, the Qiongsan interviews suggest the women interviewed were playing a more active role in their enterprises than their husbands, in the establishment, operation and strategic planning of the business. Noticeably, wives of enterprise owners were playing more active roles in the business operation than husbands of female enterprise owners. The interviews revealed that all of these women's enterprises were making a profit, more or less. However, these capable women's self-reflection on their involvement in business was not very optimistic. During the interviews, all the interviewees were asked about the three most important advantages and the three most important hindrances, in their view, to women in business. 14 out of the 53 interviewees (26 percent) thought women were completely disadvantaged in business and have no advantages at all. 7 of them held the opinion that women are more advantaged than men. 10 considered women and men to be equal in their abilities and thus could not (or would not) identify advantages and disadvantages. And the rest of them thought men and women have both advantages and disadvantages in the operation of enterprises.

The interviewees raised a great variety of what they thought to be women

entrepreneurs' advantages and disadvantages. The most mentioned merits of women were patience and charity. Some interviewees also mentioned that women are far superior in running restaurants, clothes shops, as well as beauty salons and studios (23 of the 47 interviewees were running such businesses). They explained the industry advantages as 'women are better at bargaining', 'as a woman (running a clothes shop), I know what my customers want', 'women know how to talk to people' and 'women have a better sense of beauty'. This might be a reason that most of the interviewees were engaged in service and retail industries, or perhaps a fairly obvious piece of self publicity – maybe these women were just boosting their positions. Notably, most of the female advantages mentioned by the interviewees were about personality: tenderness, flexibility, being considerate as well as careful and patient.

On the other hand, the major disadvantages seen by these women were their lack of physical strength, lack of socializing abilities and the burden of their families. Undoubtedly, women may generally be weaker in physical strength, but as one of the interviewees said, 'physical strength doesn't matter in the running of a business'. When talking about their disadvantage in socializing, they meant that it was not considered socially acceptable for them to go to restaurants and karaoke bars which were popular places for businessmen to entertain their business partners. Most of the interviewees also had to do housework and took care of their husbands and children at home.

Interestingly, the women interviewees as a whole gave some contradictory answers to some of these questions. Some of them said that it is easier for women to get special favors when dealing with people, while others said women are disadvantaged as they are not favored at all and can be easily bullied. Some people thought women were gullible and some thought they were always skeptical to a fault. Some thought women more resilient, while some had the opposite view. Some believed women do not think in a balanced way, while some thought they are more considered in their perspectives. And some thought women are more communicative, while some thought they are less. To the extent that there are

conclusions to be drawn from this analysis, it seems that the perceived merits or demerits of women in business might well be individually determined and related more to individual interviewee perspectives.

The Burden of Housework

Despite women's active part in the labour force and their significant contribution to the family income, nowadays they are still stereotypically regarded as the one to look after the household. For example, according to Zhang Xianliang, a PRC writer:

照顾男人是女人的一种美德，在做家务事，她们的温柔与体贴是一种美，也是她们的一种享受……，家务活是女人干的
(‘It is a virtue of women to look after men. Their tenderness and consideration in doing housework are beautiful. And it is their enjoyment as well.... Housework should be done by women’).⁸

Another writer Sha Yexin thinks that:

有些事物或劳动，对大部分妇女来说是种天职，是种权利，如日常生活中的烧菜煮饭、洗衣浆裳亦如是
(‘Certain tasks or labors, to most women, are an inclination and a right. These include the daily work of cooking and washing.’)⁹

Though social service provision such as child care centers and kindergartens have eased some of their burden, women still have to do the cooking, washing, cleaning, educating children after school and so on.

As is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Hainan women seem to be more affected by the double burden of their work responsibilities and family roles. In

⁸ Zhang Yong ‘Dangdai zhongguo funü jiating diwei dexianshi yu pinggu’ [‘The reality of and comment on contemporary Chinese women’s status in their families’] in *Funü Yanjiu Luncong* [Discussions on women’s research] Issue 2, 1994, p.14.

⁹ Zhang Yong, 1994, p.14.

the island's men-relaxing tradition, women are a major labour force who even have to take up employments traditionally regarded as men's responsibilities, when their husbands enjoy themselves in the teahouses. In their families, it is even less unsurprising to find women taking care of the most, if not all, domestic tasks. The situation of the Qiongsan interviewees seemed to fit well into the general picture of Hainan women's diligent roles at work and in their families.

Among the 53 women interviewed in Qiongsan, 47 were married and 46 had at least one child. As already mentioned, some of these interviewees noted in their interviews that they were disadvantaged by the double burden of taking care of the household and operating a business. As can be seen from Table 6.6, except for eight women where information was not available, more than a half of the rest (24 out of 47) had to deal with housework alone at home. Some of these women's families provided help to release them from the pressure of the dual burden: nine of the interviewees had family members such as adult children, sisters, parents and parents-in-law to do housework for them, reflecting the Chinese tradition of an extended family living together. Some comparatively better-off interviewees (eight out of 53) had employed maids to take care of the household for them. The interviewees' husbands, on the other hand, had not provided much help in this aspect. Only 4 of all these women's husbands were reported as sharing the burden of housework with their wives and none of them took responsibility alone at home.

There were few differences between the different categories of women with respect to their participation in housework, and their husbands were only marginally differentiated. Compared to the other two categories, the male enterprise owners were the ones with least responsibilities at home, as none of them was involved in housework to any extent. The generally low participation of the Qiongsan interviewees' husbands in housework (as well as in business operation) might very likely be a result of the local tradition of the island of women laboring and men relaxing. Among the 53 women entrepreneurs, wives of male entrepreneurs and other women working at leading positions in enterprises

who were interviewed in Hainan, 38 were married to Hainan husbands (the rest being married to mainland husbands or being single or divorced). When asked about their husbands and families, 8 (21.05 percent) of the 38 women commented 'Hainan men are lazy', 'Hainan men don't work', 'Hainan men don't know how to cherish their wives' or 'Hainan women work very hard'. One male entrepreneur's wife said (more than somewhat ruefully) that her husband who is from Hubei Province had already adopted Hainan men's bad and lazy habits.

Table 6.6 Qiongzhan interviewees: Who does the house work?

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee's husband</i>	<i>Interviewee and husband (together)</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Sister</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Parents-in-law</i>	<i>Maid</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	9 (40.9%)		3 (15.5%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	5 (22.7%)	22
Wife of enterprise owner	11 (55%)			1 (5%)		1 (5%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)		20
Leader/manager	4 (36.4%)		1 (9.1%)				1 (9.1%)	2 (18.2%)	3 (27.3%)	11
Total	24 (45.3%)		4 (7.5%)	2 (3.8%)	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	4 (7.5%)	8 (15.1%)	8 (15.1%)	53

* * *

In general, this chapter has discussed the roles Qiongsan interviewees play in their enterprises and at home. The interviews reveal that these women had actively participated in the establishment, operation and strategic planning of their business. Their daily enterprise responsibilities included purchasing, sales, personnel and finance. When encountering difficulties, their husbands, family members and colleagues were all sources for advices. Compared to women enterprise owners and other women who were taking leadership positions in enterprises, wives of male enterprise owners were the category with the least responsibilities in the business operation and also the least involvement in the establishment and decision-making of the enterprise.

On the other hand, most of the interviewees had to shoulder the dual burden of business and family. The majority of them had to take care of their households after work, though sometimes their family and maids provide help as well. However, these women's husbands had comparatively limited involvement in household tasks.

In a nutshell, the Qiongsan interviewees were shouldering more tasks than their husbands both in their enterprises and at work, which seems to correspond to the women-laboring and men-relaxing tradition of the island. As was discussed in Chapter Two and will be discussed in Chapter Eight, the Jiaocheng and Mianyang interviewees were both taking major responsibilities in their enterprise, while having to take care of household tasks at the same time. In other words, the double burden of work and domestic responsibilities seems to be faced by women in general rather than just being a locality-specific phenomenon.

The limited influence of the party-state

Hainan has long found itself distant from the national capital, both geographically and politically. As mentioned previously, the remote island had historically been regarded by the emperors as a place for exiles. Some commentators even describe the culture of Hainan as a ‘culture of exiles’ (谪宦文化) because, ‘Chinese culture was first propagated to the island by exiles from the mainland and this particular way of propagation has its consequences’.¹ After the establishment of the PRC, the relationship between Hainan and Beijing was always tense, not least because of Hainan’s long struggle for provincial autonomy - from both the Central and Guangdong Governments - finally realized in 1988.² Owing to this physical and political distance, the Central Government has in some ways less influence in Hainan. In particular it is reflected in the fact that after the events of June 1989 in Beijing, quite a number of former democratic activists from northern China came to seek asylum on the remote island. In such circumstances, it might not be so surprising to find that Hainan people have generally not developed strong affiliations with the Party-state. Government positions, for example, are not particularly appealing or held in high esteem, as seems to be the case elsewhere. There is a widely spread story that Hainan parents tell their children to study hard, because otherwise ‘you will have no choice but to work at the government after graduation’.³

In this chapter, the Hainan interviewees’ and their families’ connections with the Party-state, in terms of their CCP membership, leadership background in local

¹ Feng Chongyi, 1999, p. 1044.

² See Feng Chongyi and David Goodman, 1998, pp.342-371.

³ Hu Wei ‘Jiaru WTO hou woguo renli ziyuan mianlin de tiaozhan yu duice’ [‘The challenges China faces in the aspect of human resource after entering WTO and the solutions’] in *Tansuo yu Zhengming* [Exploration and Contestation] Issue 1, 2002, p. 8-12.

politics and their other Party-state relationships, are examined. The interviews reveal that, compared with their mainland counterparts, the women interviewed in Hainan turned out to have looser affiliations with the Party-state. Considering the island's political distance from Beijing, this seems to be more than just a coincidence. However, like interviewees from the other two locations, these women may still have obtained considerable political connections through their family.

Family members and CCP membership

Table 7.1 details the Qiongsan interviewees' and their family members' CCP membership. As the figures show, these women, like their counterparts in Jiaocheng, had a more active involvement in the Party than China's general population and the country's female population as a whole: 15.1 percent were members of the CCP, compared to 5.4 percent of the population as a whole and 2.1 percent of women. Although not as high as the percentage of the Mianyang interviewees (41.1 percent, see Chapter 9 for details), this percentage is slightly higher than that of those interviewed in Jiaocheng (12.9 percent). However, it would be difficult to build too much on this observation. Some of the interviewees introduced to the research team by the Chair of the local WF turned out to be her personal friends and colleagues, who had both CCP membership and positions in the local government, which made the research results even less representative than was the case in either Jiaocheng or Mianyang.

Table 7.1 Qiongsan interviewees: Family members and CCP membership

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Sibling</i>	<i>Father-in-law</i>	<i>Mother-in-law</i>	<i>Sibling-In-law</i>
Enterprise owner	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)	1 (4.5%)	7 (31.8%)	3 (13.6%)	6 (27.3%)	7 (31.8%)		3 (13.6%)
Wife of enterprise owner	5 (25%)	3 (15%)		8 (40%)	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)
Manager	1 (9.1%)	2 (18.2%)	1 (9.1%)	5 (45.5%)	1 (9.1%)	2 (18.2%)	3 (27.3%)	1 (9.1%)	2 (18.2%)
Total	8 (15.1%)	7 (13.2%)	2 (3.7%)	20 (37.7%)	6 (11.3%)	16 (30.2%)	20 (37.7%)	5 (9.4%)	9 (17.0%)

While these statistics might seem to suggest these women had a close individual connection with the Party, what they said during the interviews appeared to point to the opposite. Unlike their counterparts in Jiaocheng and Mianyang, the interviewees in Qiongsan were the only one of the three categories of interviewees that explicitly expressed unwillingness to have joined the Party. This is unsurprising considering Hainan's distance from the Central political power. It seems that in the comparatively light political atmosphere of the island these women attached less importance to CCP membership and could express their opinion more freely. When asked about CCP membership, seven of the Qiongsan women (13.2 percent) from a range of age groups told the research team that they were not willing and chose not to join the Party, for a variety of reasons.

Family experience during the Cultural Revolution was one of the major reasons that held these women back from joining the Party. Although such a situation is by no means unique to Hainan, during fieldwork those interviewed on this island were the only ones surveyed in the course of this project who explicitly told the research group that their family's suffering in that period had made CCP membership undesirable. Tan, an interviewee born in 1950, did not join the Party because her parents 'did not want us to join any such organizations'. Tan's father

was born to a poor local family. In his youth, he went, like many other Hainanese, to Southeast Asia—in his case Singapore—to seek economic opportunities. In the 1940's, he returned to Hainan to set up two banana plantations with his savings. A decade later, when the Central Government adopted a new policy to socialize the means of production and essentially to eliminate any medium or large scale private sector, Tan's family was forced to chop down their banana plantations, and even more punitively 'was not permitted to run any other business either'. When recalling this, Tan said, with obvious fear, 'it would have been a disaster if any of us had membership of any party'. Considering the family's experience, it is understandable that Tan remained unwilling to get involved in politics at all, and certainly to be involved in the CCP's activities.

In a similar case, Sheng was born into a cadre family in Hubei Province in 1966. Her father worked as manager and Party secretary at a company of the local Materials Bureau and later became director of the Party office of the bureau. During the Cultural Revolution, his family was classified as middle peasants and thus criticized and denounced. Sheng said even in the 1990s her father forbade her to join the CCP, because he thought 'it would bring too much trouble'.

Some women chose not to obtain Party membership because they thought it would be a burden. Wang, born in 1956, was one of the educated youths sent 'up to the mountains and down to the villages' in the 1970s.⁴ During the early 1980s, she worked as the manager of a township supply and marketing cooperative. Later, she was promoted to be the chair of the Women's Federation of the township. At that time, the secretary of the township's CCP committee tried to persuade her to join the Party, but she refused.

⁴ In the 1960s, the Central government released a regulation calling on young people in cities to take part in construction work in the countryside, as Mao Zedong thought that the countryside was a wide place where people could fully develop themselves. In the following years encouraging young people to move to villages in rural areas was considered an important government task. This movement is called 'Up to the Mountains, Down to the Villages' (上山下乡).

Guo, born 1954, set up her body shaping studio in 2003. Before that she had been an employee of a state-owned iron mine, a manager of a private hotel, and then an insurance dealer. Though she refused to reveal details about her business, it was presumably not that small with a registration capital of some 1 million *yuan*. Guo was not a Party member. She said, 'I used to think of joining a non-CCP Party to start my political career, but then realized it would be too exhausting for me'. To her, 'the ultimate choice is to stay away from the Party-state'.

The interviews in Qiongsan seemed to unearth a lack of political enthusiasm among some business people. Fu was one of the youngest interviewees, born in 1978. Like the women of older generations, whose cases have just been discussed, she was not a CCP member. When talking about CCP membership, Fu was very straightforward. She said, 'Here in Hainan, except for those who are in the Army or work at the government, no one wants to join the Party anymore'. To emphasize this attitude to separation from the Party, she said, 'I know some CCP members who quit the Party after they started their businesses'.

Huang, born in 1960, was the owner of a restaurant. She held a similar attitude to Party membership as Fu. Huang was not a CCP member herself. And she had no idea whether her family members had obtained CCP membership or not. She said, 'Nowadays, in business circles nobody talks about joining the Party'.

Li, another interviewee born in 1965, was a migrant to Hainan from Zhejiang Province. She and her husband were running a watch, clock and glasses retail business on the island. When asked about her CCP membership, Li revealed that she was not a Party member. She said, 'None of those (migrant business) people like me is a Party member. And Party members won't want to come out (in their hometown) to do business'.

In the case of one Party-member interviewee, the same tendency can be perceived. Han was born in 1968. After graduating from a secondary technical school in 1990, she started to work at a state-owned enterprise in Hainan. In 1999, due to the reform of state-owned enterprises, Han was transferred to work at the Qiongsan Government where she still held her current position when interviewed. Han joined the Party in the same year, after she became a local cadre. She said, 'I didn't want to join (the Party) when I was working at the enterprise'.

There are two possible reasons for such political separation. To business people in the private sector, having no Party group in the enterprises might mean more freedom for themselves. At the same time, it might also suggest that the Party-state does not want cadres to be involved in the private economic sector.

In addition to those who chose not to join the Party, three interviewees reported that they were not able to obtain their CCP membership, invariably as a result of their family's poor class status. One of them had a family with overseas connections, as her father was a Malaysian Chinese who escaped to China in 1949 as a result of the local anti-Chinese campaign.⁵ Another interviewee was the daughter of an intellectual. Her father was 'beaten down' as one of 'the stinking people ninth category' (臭老九)⁶ during the Cultural Revolution. The other came from a family with a landlord background. Each of the three reported that they had applied for but been refused CCP membership at some stage and in each case the reason for refusal was political unreliability because their family's history and background.

⁵ In the years of 1948-1960, The Communist Party of Malaya, which was mostly Chinese, was alarmed at the special guarantees of rights for Malays (including the position of sultans) and began a guerrilla insurgency, which was supported by only a minority of the Chinese. British efforts to suppress the insurgency militarily were unpopular, especially their relocation of rural Chinese into tightly controlled 'New Villages'.

⁶ During the Cultural Revolution there were nine categories of alleged counter revolutionaries opposed to Chairman Mao and the CCP. The first eight included landlords, traitors and other counter revolutionaries. The ninth category were the always unreliable intellectuals, hence their political description of 'the stinking ninth category' (of counter revolutionaries.)

The Qiongsan interviewees' lack of CCP membership and their unwillingness to be politically involved might also be related to the specific economic activities they were engaged in. After all, a large proportion of these women were running small-scaled enterprises in retail and service sectors, while the Party-state seems to concentrate on large businesses and the traditional 'old-fathered' sector of manufacturing industry.

Like their counterparts in Jiaocheng, the families of the women interviewed in Qiongsan had a higher level of Party connection than they themselves directly enjoyed. 37.7 percent of them reported that their father was a member of the CCP, and 30.2 reported that at least one of their siblings was a CCP member. We need to distinguish these women's parental and marital families here, because even though marriage brought these women a high degree of Party connection, in comparative perspectives these connections were not so impressive compared to those of their parental families. While 37.7 percent of them had a father-in-law in the Party, only 17 percent of them had at least one sibling-in-law within the CCP. The Qiongsan interviewees had mothers and mothers-in-law who had lower participation rates in CCP membership than those of other family members (11.3 percent and 9.4 percent respectively). Nevertheless, these participation rates remained higher than that of the general population and female population of China. In Qiongsan, one enterprise owner, one wife of enterprise owner and one manager reported that both their parents had obtained CCP membership.

As to the next generation, out of the 14 interviewees who had adult children, two reported having at least one child with CCP membership. Compared to Jiaocheng and Mianyang, only 13.2 percent of the interviewees reported their husband to be a CCP member, the participation rate being lower than that of these women themselves (15.1 percent). This seems to suggest that these women had a more

active involvement with the Party than their husbands, which seems fit well into the bigger picture that generally Hainan women had more participation in the workforce.

From the Qiongsan interviews it is clear that none of the interviewees or their husbands with CCP membership had joined the Party once they had become enterprise owners, operators or managers. What is more, none of them joined the Party after Jiang Zemin's 2001 speech that officially endowed private entrepreneurs with rights to obtain CCP membership. This, again, seems to suggest a far looser connection between these business people and the local Party organization than might otherwise have been expected, especially by comparison with Jiaocheng and Mianyang.

Altogether only eight respondents were themselves CCP members. In three cases, they joined the Party during the Cultural Revolution as activists of a rural Party-state work team. Two obtained their CCP membership when studying at universities or colleges. Another three women held public service positions when they became CCP members. As to their husband, seven of them were CCP members. Except for one interviewee's husband whose details were not available, four women reported that their husband had joined the Party when serving in the PLA. One interviewee's husband joined the Party when a university student. During the interviews conducted in Qiongsan, only in one case did an enterprise owner report that her husband was currently applying for the Party membership. However, this can hardly been taken as an example of private entrepreneurs taking the initiative to join the Party: he was working full-time as a cadre of the local taxation bureau and had very little participation in his wife's business.

Before the fieldwork was undertaken, it was assumed that women enterprise

owners would have a high participation rate in the CCP: it is a common assumption that a well established connection with the Party might facilitate the establishment and operation of an economic enterprise. However, when considering the three different categories of interviewees, enterprise owners turned out to have fewer apparent connections with the Party than either the wives of enterprise owners, or women managers, both in terms of their own participation rates or through their family members. For women enterprise owners, 9.1 percent of those interviewed in Qiongsan had joined the CCP. 9.1 percent reported that their husband was a CCP member, 31.8 percent reported that their father and 31.8 percent reported that their father-in-law was a CCP member. All these participation rates were lower than the equivalent figures for the wives of enterprise owners where participation rates were 25 percent for themselves, 15 percent for their husband, 40 percent for their father, and 50 percent for their father-in-law. At the same time, in the category of women managers, 18.2 percent reported that their husband and 45.5 percent reported that their father had CCP membership, both percentages being higher than those of the enterprise owners as well. Comparing the situation of the enterprise owners with the wives of enterprise owners and the women managers, once again, these statistics seem to indicate the impression of a rather loose relationship between local private enterprise owners and the Party.

On the other hand, the wives of enterprise owners turn out to have the most Party connections among the women interviewed in Qiongsan. When compared to the women enterprise owners and managers, an impressive 25 percent of these women were CCP members. In addition, 40 percent reported that their father, 40 percent reported that at least one sibling, 50 percent reported that their father-in-law, 20 percent reported that their mother-in-law and 20 percent reported that at least one sibling-in-law was a CCP member. At the same time, it is

necessary to be careful in building too much from these observations. As already indicated, those interviewed in Qiongsan were even less randomly selected than appears to have been the case in either Jiaocheng or Mianyang. The five CCP members were certainly not randomly selected. Instead, they were colleagues of the Chair of Qiongsan WF and all had public service positions as well.

Family members and Party-state leadership

Table 7.2 illustrates the interviewees' and their family members' work experience in Party-state leadership positions. Compared with their Party connections, these women and their family's leadership experience was not so significant. Only five of the 53 interviewees (7.5 percent) reported having held such positions. However, similar to their Jiaocheng counterparts, the families of these women turned out to have more experience of Party-state leadership. 20.8 percent had a father who they reported had held such a position; 5.7 had a mother in the leadership of the Party-state; and 7.5 percent had a sibling with such an experience.

By comparison, the leadership experience of the husbands of the women interviewees was not so impressive. Only three (5.7 percent) of these women's husbands had experience as a Party-state leader. These women's in-laws had more leadership experience than their husbands. 13.2 percent of interviewees reported that their father-in-law, 3.8 percent reported that their mother-in-law and 13.2 reported that at least one sibling-in-law had Party-state leadership experience. However, the participation rates were not as high as for their parental family.

Table 7.2 Qiongsan interviewees: Family members and Party-state leadership

<i>Place</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Sibling</i>	<i>Father-in-law</i>	<i>Mother-in-law</i>	<i>Sibling-In-law</i>
Enterprise owner	3 (13.6%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	4 (18.2%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)		2 (9.1%)
Wife of enterprise owner	1 (5%)	1 (5%)		4 (20%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)
Manager	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)		3 (27.3%)			1 (9.1%)		2 (18.2%)
Total	5 (9.4%)	3 (5.7%)	1 (1.9%)	11 (20.8%)	3 (5.7%)	4 (7.5%)	7 (13.2%)	2 (3.8%)	7 (13.2%)

When considering the three different categories of interviewees, the Party-state leadership experience of enterprise owners was clearly greater than that of the wives of enterprise owners, or women managers. 13.6 percent of enterprise owners had experience of positions of leadership in the Party-state, as opposed to 5 percent for the wives of enterprise owners and 9.1 percent of women managers. At the same time, in so far as the data can be interrogated to this level of analysis, their family members had a lower level of experience in the leadership of the Party-state, as the husband, father and sibling-in-law had very low levels of experience in the leadership of the Party-state.

As might be expected, the wives of enterprise owners interviewed in Qiongsan had exposure to Party-state leadership experience almost exclusively through their family. Only one (5 percent) reported that she herself had any background of experience in the leadership of the Party-state. At the same time, 20 percent of the wives of entrepreneurs had a father with this kind of background, 10 percent had at least one sibling, 15 percent had a father-in-law, 10 percent had a mother-in-law and 15 percent had at least one sibling-in-law who had been a leader of the Party-state.

The women managers interviewed in Qiongsan fell in between the other two categories with respect to the extent of their and their families leadership experience. However, these women had fathers (27.3 percent) and siblings-in-law (13.2 percent) who had a higher rate of experience of leadership than was the case for either enterprise owners or the wives of enterprise owners. So it seems safe to claim that this category of women also has good Party-state connections.

If one takes a closer look at the specificities of the leadership positions obtained by those interviewed in Qiongsan, four of them were in charge of women's affairs and one was the secretary of the Youth League. These are all positions considered less import than leadership positions in industry, agriculture, and the economy. As to those women's family members who were reported to have held leadership positions, in most cases (20 out of 38) they were holding rural leadership positions, such as the village head, the leader of a village production team, village cadre in charge of women's affairs, chair of the village poor peasants' association, township head and directors of township government branches. All these positions were at comparatively low leadership levels. For those who did make it to the higher-level urban leadership positions, they were put in charge of less prestigious affairs such as environmental protection, culture, water resource management, land resource management, education and railway affairs. Only five interviewees reported that their family members were holding or had held leadership positions in the public security apparatus, in the foreign trade system, or in the county government office - these departments being more powerful and more relevant to these women's business than the other positions mentioned above.

In addition to leadership positions with less power and in less relevant responsibilities, none of the Qiongsan interviewees had reported themselves or

their family members to be leaders of the People's Congress or PPCC. In other words, there was no such offer from the local government. On the one hand, this seems to correspond to the fact that these women were running small-sized businesses, the majority (64.2 percent) having capital of less than 1 million *yuan*, while such political glory always comes hand in hand with business success. Presumably, without accumulation of considerable personal wealth, the political status of these women could not improve significantly. At the same time, as the Party-state still remains a strong influence on the economy, political capital certainly facilitates the private business owners' business operation. Therefore, in comparison with their Jiaocheng and Mianyang counterparts, the Qiongsan interviewees' less wealth might also a result of their lack of political recognition. On the other hand, the absence of any leadership experience of this kind among the Qiongsan interviewees and their families might simply reflect the loose connection between the local Party-state and private entrepreneurs

During the interviews conducted in Qiongsan, only one interviewee, Chen, turned out to have prominent Party-state leadership background. Chen was born into a cadre family in Hunan Province in 1973, her father being the director of the department of culture in her home city. After graduating from a military medical university, she was assigned to work at Sanya Garrison Command as a company commander and cadre of the garrison command's department of politics. She remained in the position until she was transferred to work at the Qiongsan Government. Chen's parents-in-law were retired cadres who 'joined the revolution in 1938'. Both of them were reported to have been members of the 'Qiongya Column' (琼崖纵队)⁷ and to have taken part in the PRC liberation of Hainan. Chen's sister-in-law was also a military officer, with the rank of division commander. Chen's husband was the owner of one of the biggest enterprises

⁷ During the Anti-Japanese War in 1944, the Qiongya people's Anti-Japanese Independent Column was set up in Hainan Island as an anti-Japanese guerrilla force, with Feng Baiju as the commander and political commissar. It grew into an army of 7,000 towards the end of the war, liberating three-fifths of the island.

encountered amongst the Qiongsan interviewees or their husbands – a construction company with capital of some 14 million *yuan*. The company was one of the major constructors of Meilan Airport – the biggest airport in Hainan. According to Chen, the company had won the bid to construct a whole runway for the airport. Chen did not comment on the family's role in this, but presumably, substantial leadership experience would facilitate the operation of the business.

Family members and Party-state connections

Table 7.3 sums up the Qiongsan interviewees' and their family members' various connections to the Party-state. In addition to CCP membership and leadership positions in the Party and various levels of government, a considerable proportion of the interviewees and their family members had been working as junior staff members at the local government. The Party-state connections of the Qiongsan interviewees examined in this chapter also include membership of the local People's Congress, appointment as a representative to local Party congresses, leadership in vocational associations, as well as honours awarded by the Party-state especially those requiring an element of public performance (such as appointment as a 'model worker').

The percentage of interviewees with Party-state connections of this kind was significant. More than one fifth (22.6 percent) of the women interviewed in Qiongsan turned out to have such connections. Even so their family members had a higher level of involvement with the Party-state. 13 (24.5 percent) of these women reported that their husband had a level of Party-state connection of this kind. As to the other family members of these women, their parental families seemed to have had more such connections, with an impressive 39.6 percent reporting that their father and 35.8 percent reporting that at least one sibling had

such connections. Their marital families, although having less political resources, had also brought the interviewees considerable Party-state connections. 35.8 percent of these women had a father-in-law and 30.3 percent had at least one sibling-in-law in the Party-state system. In comparison, the political involvement of these women's children, mother and mother-in-law were not so significant (3.8 percent, 13.2 percent and 9.4 percent respectively).

Table 7.3 Qiongsan interviewees: Family members and Party-state connections

<i>Category</i>	<i>Enterprise owner</i>	<i>Wife of enterprise owner</i>	<i>of Manager</i>	<i>Total</i>
Interviewee	6 (27.3%)	5 (25%)	1 (9.1%)	12 (22.6%)
Husband	5 (22.7%)	6 (30%)	2 (18.2%)	13 (24.5%)
Children	1 (4.5%)		1 (9.1%)	2 (3.8%)
Father	8 (36.4%)	7 (35%)	6 (54.5%)	21 (39.6%)
Mother	3 (13.6%)	3 (15%)	1 (9.1%)	7 (13.2%)
Sibling	6 (27.3%)	9 (35%)	4 (36.4%)	19 (35.8%)
Father-in-law	5 (22.7%)	11 (55%)	2 (18.2%)	18 (34.0%)
Mother-in-law	1 (4.5%)	3 (15%)	1 (9.1%)	5 (9.4%)
Sibling-in-law	6 (27.3%)	8 (40%)	2 (18.2%)	16 (30.2%)

If each of the three categories of interviewees is considered separately, it is apparent that women enterprise owners have more active political involvement. 27.3 percent of these women had Party-state connections themselves, as opposed to 25 percent of the wives of enterprise owners and 9.1 percent of women managers. As to these women's spouses, 30 percent of wives of enterprise owners reported that their husbands were connected to the Party-state, compared to 27.3 of women enterprise owners, and 9.1 percent of women managers. In other words, both female and male enterprise owners turned out to have more Party-state connections than those who did not own enterprises. This seems to support the assumption of a close relationship between business and politics. Unsurprisingly, from the Qiongsan interviews it would seem that male enterprise owners had better connections in local politics than female enterprise owners: very possibly a

reflection of the gender inequality in political participation in China.

Despite their strong personal connections with the Party-state, women enterprise owners did not have the highest level of family ties into local politics. The wives of enterprise owners had the highest percentage with Party-state connections brought by their father-in-law (55 percent as opposed to 22.7 percent for women enterprise owners and 18.2 percent for women managers), and siblings-in-law (40 percent as opposed to 27.3 percent and 18.2 percent). Women managers had fathers with a high level of connection to the Party-state (54.5 percent as opposed to 36.4 percent of enterprise owners and 35 percent of wives of enterprise owners); and were also well connected through their siblings (40 percent as opposed to 27.3 percent and 18.2 percent).

In comparison to their counterparts in Jiaocheng and Mianyang, the Qiongsan interviewees reported that they had very few political appointments offered by the Party-state. In only three cases did interviewees report that they were deputies and representatives to People's Congresses, Party Congresses and various mass organization congresses and activities.⁸ At the same time, these women also turned out not to have as many honours awarded by the Party-state as the Jiaocheng and Mianyang interviewees. Only two of the interviewees reported that they had been designated 'Excellent Party Member', 'Model Labourer' or some similar award. Except for one interviewee, none of them had obtained such a title or honour after they or their husband had established their own business. On the one hand, this again seems to suggest a loose connection between the local Party-state and private entrepreneurs. On the other hand, it could also be taken as

⁸ Mass organizations are organizations that the CCP used to mobilize the mass. These organizations, affiliated directly and indirectly with the CCP, are without exception headed by and permeated with Party cadres. They constituted a united front of support for the Party line and policies and conveyed the impression desired by the Party that the broad strata of the population endorsed and was unified behind the communist leadership. Such organizations include: The All-China Federation of Trade Unions, The Communist Youth League of China, The All-China Youth Federation, The All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce and so on.

a reflection of the less successful business practices of these particular interviewees.

The limited political glories were concentrated in a few interviewees. Wang had been manager of a state-owned department store since 1978. Due to her outstanding performance at work, she was awarded the provincial-level title of ‘model labourer’ in 1994. She was also elected as member of Qiongzhusan People’s Congress and representative to the Qiongzhusan Party Congress. Another interviewee, Wu, had been an activist in the local Party-state work team during the Cultural Revolution. In 1970 she was nominated as a county-level ‘model worker’. Before starting her own business in 1999, she was working at the local supply and marketing cooperative and ‘had been awarded the title of “Excellent Party Member” many times.

Only one of the 53 women interviewed in Qiongzhusan reported her husband as having this kind of political standing through his participation in Youth Association and only one reported her siblings to be designated as ‘Excellent Party Members’. In other words, in the majority of the cases, the political glories belonged to the interviewees themselves. This seems to correspond to these women’s more active roles both at work and at home.

* * *

To sum up, compared with the general population the Qiongzhusan interviewees turned out to be a group with strong Party-state connections. Corresponding to their more active role in their enterprises and family, these women had also developed more political involvement than their husbands, in terms of their CCP membership, leadership experience in the Party-state, as well as political honours. Similar to the Jiaocheng interviewees, those interviewed in Qiongzhusan derived

political resources through their family ties, as their family members (mainly father, siblings, father-in-law and siblings-in-law) were reported to have considerable connections with the Party-state.

At the same time there is a need for wider perspective. The political connections of the Qionghsan interviewees seem to be looser than those of their Jiaocheng counterparts. The Qionghsan interviewees expressed some considerable indifference to CCP membership. Compared with interviewees in the other two places, these women had not been and were also not as much involved in Party-state leadership. Moreover, there was no obvious effort from the side of the local government to co-opt such business people into politics. On the one hand, it seems to reflect Hainan's historical status as a somewhat remote and isolated island (both geographically and politically) for exiles. On the other hand, these women's less significant political involvement could also be a result of their involvement in the retail and service sectors of the economy and even possibly their more general lack of business success and consequently lower position on the ladder of personal wealth.

Part 3

Mianyang City, Sichuan Province

Industry and wealth

Sichuan's development has been shaped by the Central Government's First Five Year Plan, The Third Front Construction Project and the Campaign to Open Up the West. Mianyang is the second largest city of the province. It became the centre of China's national defence industry during the Third Front Construction period. As a result, its economy features a strong science and technology industry sector.

Sichuan Province

Sichuan Province has long been known as China's 'heavenly kingdom' (天府之国) because of its good climate, fertile soil and advanced agricultural technologies. The Chengdu Basin in the centre of the province is protected by the surrounding mountains from many wars in the past and thus had been an asylum for escape in ancient times. Nowadays, Sichuan's significance in China's development is undeniable, not least because of its large population, its vast area and its ethnic diversity. By the end of 2004, Sichuan had a population of 86 million,¹ ranking it third among China's provinces. The province's land area is 485,000 km², ranking it fifth among China's provinces.² Sichuan has the largest Yi Nationality population, the second largest Tibetan population and the only Qiang Nationality population in China, all of which adds to the province's profile as the Central Government emphasizes ethnic solidarity.

Sichuan is also exceptional in that it is the home province of Deng Xiaoping, the chief designer of China's reform. Deng left his home county of Guang'an at the age of 16. Though he subsequently spent most of his life in other provinces and even overseas, he retained a strong Sichuan accent and frequently made reference

¹ Sichuan Sheng Tongji Ju, 2005.

² Xin Wen 'Xibu dakaifa yu Sichuan dakaifang' ['The West Development and Sichuan's opening'] in *Juece Zixun Tongxun* [Communication on Decisions and Consultation] Issue 2, 2004.

to his Sichuan nativity.³ Because of his close attachment to Sichuan, Deng was so concerned with its development that he had the province inspected many times after he assumed a leadership position in the Central Government. In 1982, he even took the visiting president of the DPRK, Kim Il Sung, with him to Sichuan. His statement to the leaders of Guang'an County in 1986, 'You must construct Guang'an well', still remains the motto of that county.⁴

Deng Xiaoping had complimented Sichuan as 'the Home of Reform'.⁵ In 1957, as well as during the Great Leap Forward⁶ period, two districts (Yusi and Fuji) of Luxian County had adopted household contracting – the start of a process of marketization – against the background of national centralization.⁷ During the Cultural Revolution, the practice again spread in Yuxi District, as well as Jinqiao Village in Jinzhao County. In the late 1970s, with Deng Xiaoping obtaining the *de facto* administrative power of the country and Zhao Ziyang appointed as First Party Secretary of Sichuan, the province started its surge of decentralization.⁸ In 1977, Jinyu Commune of Guanghan county was the first to adopt a system of group contracting. As a result of the initial success in Guanghan, the system spread widely and was approved by the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. Guanghan was also the first

³ For example, Deng said, 'I'm from Sichuan' in 1952 on an inspection trip in the province. In 1987, when meeting a delegation from Yugoslavia, Deng said 'Sichuan is my home place'. See Li Xueming 'Deng Xiaoping yu Gaige Zhi Xiang' ['Deng Xiaoping and the home place of reform'] in *Maozedong Sixiang Yanjiu* [Research on Mao Zedong Thought] Vol. 21, No. 6, 2004; Hu Xueju 'Bashu wenhua yu Deng Xiaoping' ['Sichuan culture and Deng Xiaoping'], in *Maozedong Sixiang Yanjiu* [Research on Mao Zedong Thought] Issue 1, 1995. Deng was also in charge of the Southwest and Sichuan's development from 1949 to 1952.

⁴ See Tan Weimin and Chen Qiang 'Yiding yao ba Guang'an jianshe hao—laizi Deng Xiaoping guxiang de baogao' ['You must construct Guang'an well—a report from Deng Xiaoping's home place'] in *Chengxiang Jianshe* [Research on urban and rural areas] issue 4, 1999.

⁵ Li Xueming, 2004.

⁶ The Great Leap Forward was an economic and social plan initiated and led by Mao Zedong, carried out from 1958 to early 1962 which aimed to use China's vast population to rapidly transform mainland China from a primarily agrarian economy dominated by peasant farmers into a modern, industrialized communist society. The plan is generally agreed to have failed in its intentions, leading to millions of deaths plus widespread economic dislocation, and is widely regarded both in and out of China as an unmitigated disaster.

⁷ Dali L. Yang *Calamity and Reform in China: State, Rural society, and Institutional Change Since the Great Leap Famine* Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1996, p. 117.

⁸ See Chris Bramall 'Origins of the agricultural "miracle": some evidence from Sichuan' in *The China Quarterly* No. 143, 1999, p. 731-755.

‘structural reform experimental county’ in the nation,⁹ because of its pioneering practice in restructuring communes. In 1980, Xiangyang Commune of the county was officially nominated as a township and the commune government thus became the first township government of China.¹⁰ By the end of 1982, every people’s commune in Guanghan had been reorganized and redesignated as a township, which made it prominent in China’s process in reform and opening. Similarly for urban China, in the mid-1980s Sichuan was the first province to experiment with converting state firms into joint stock corporations.¹¹

Sichuan and the Three Western Development Schemes

Sichuan’s development cannot be separated from China’s three western development strategies, which have shaped or will develop its economy, especially its industrial base. The first Western Development Project can be dated back to as early as the beginning of the 1950s. Since 1952, the Central Government of China has been setting plans of national development every five years. In the First Five Year Plan, the newly established government emphasized the development of heavy industry. Considering the situation at that time, the country’s only industries were all located in the eastern coastal area, the Central Government committed to change the unbalanced regional distribution of industry. From 1952 to 1957, a great majority of newly built industrial projects, including the 156 projects constructed with the help of the USSR, were located in the less-developed central and western provinces of Sichuan, Yunan, Xianjiang, Shaanxi, and Gansu.¹² With the construction of these new projects, a railway network was built to connect the major West China cities, still an important part of the transportation system now after half a century.¹³ The First Five Year Plan included the Central Government’s first attempt to develop its vast western area. During this period, Sichuan was chosen as one of the major industrial areas in the

⁹ Vivienne Shue ‘The fate of the commune’ in *Modern China* Vol. 10, No. 3, 1984, p. 261.

¹⁰ Li Xueming, 2004.

¹¹ Christopher A McNally ‘Sichuan: driving capitalist development westward’ in David Goodman (ed) *China’s Campaign to ‘Open Up the West’* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004.

¹² ‘Lun Woguo Sanci Xibu Kaifa’ [‘Discussion on the three Western Development Strategies of China’] at http://www2.scut.edu.cn/party_sch/llyd/llxp/sbkf.htm.

¹³ Zou Lan ‘Xibu Dakaifa yu Guoji Jingyan Jiejian’ [‘To Open Up the West and reference to international experiences’] at <http://www.zisi.net/htm/wwzh/2005-05-24-28888.htm>.

West. A railway connecting its major cities of Chengdu and Chongqing,¹⁴ as well as several key projects constructed within the province added considerably to the performance of the Sichuan economy.

The second attempt to develop the West was the Third Front Construction Project, which lasted twelve years and involved 13 provinces in the Southwest and Northwest of China, from 1964 to 1975. The notion of 'first', 'second' and 'third' fronts was developed by the Central Government in 1960s and referred to China's politico-military situation in the wider region. The 'first' front referred to the coastal and border areas of China. The 'third' front referred to the underdeveloped rear areas of Southwest and Northwest China, which includes Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, and Qinghai. And the areas between the 'first' and 'third' fronts are the 'second' front. In the early 1960s, the PRC and the USSR ended their once friendly relationship, which led to armed conflicts on China's northern border. In 1962, the Chinese and Indian militaries exchanged fire on the western border of the PRC. Later, the American Government became engaged in the Vietnam War, which was taken as threatening China's Southeast border. Moreover, there was also the fear that Kuomintang forces on Taiwan might launch an attack on mainland cities, especially the coastal cities.¹⁵ Understandably, border turbulence caused strong or even over- reaction on the part of the PRC Government, especially as they lacked diplomatic communications with other countries and were shunned by the Western world. The threatened PRC Government felt they might face multiple wars and thus started to reconsider its national defence system.

In 1964, the Central Government decided to shift the focus of its work from improving the living standard of the people to improving its national defence abilities. To prepare protection in the event of war, the Second and Third Fronts were chosen as the location for the development of the national defence industry.

¹⁴ Chongqing City remained under the jurisdiction of Sichuan Province until 1998, when it was established as China's fourth municipality directly under the Central Government.

¹⁵ Barry J Naughton 'The Third Front: defence industrialization in the Chinese interior' in *The China Quarterly* No. 115, 1988, p. 351-386.

The important factories, universities and research institutions, and government departments on the First Front would be moved to the Second and Third Fronts. All new projects would be dispersed and located in hidden terrains in the mountains, away from the front line of conflict with the outside world. With the Third Front being the rear area of the country, most of the new or moved projects and institutions were located there and the new strategy of the Central Government was thus known as 'The Third Front Construction Project'. The idea at that time was that when war broke out and China's Northeastern and Eastern industrial bases were destroyed, the Third Front—with Sichuan being its focus—would maintain the country's industrial production and sustain it throughout any war.¹⁶

In the Third Front Construction Project, China invested some 205 billion yuan in the thirteen provinces of the Western Region: more than the total GDP of the whole country in the years 1953 to 1963.¹⁷ Answering the call to 'Send Excellent Personnel and Excellent Equipments to the Third Front' millions of factory workers, cadres, intellectuals, as well as army soldiers and officers left their hometowns to work in the mountains of the West, which included the country's future leaders Hu Jintao (currently President of the PRC, working in Gansu from 1968 to 1981) and Wen Jiabao (currently Premier of the PRC, working in Gansu from 1968 to 1982). Although the construction of the Third Front helped to decrease the imbalance of economic development between East and West China, the cost was extraordinarily high and distorted further industrial development across the PRC for many years afterwards.

Sichuan became Southwest China's industrial base during and throughout the Third Front period. It was selected to be the focus of China's Third Front Construction Project for several reasons. Firstly, Sichuan borders seven other provinces and thus is a major link connecting the vast Western area. Secondly,

¹⁶ Ning Zhiyi 'Lun sanxian jianshe yu Sichuan jingji kuayueshi fazhan' ['Discussion on Third Line Construction and the leaping economic development of Sichuan'] in *Zhonggong Dangshi Yanjiu* [Research on the History of CCP] Issue 4, 2000.

¹⁷ Hu Jianhua 'Tashang xiri shenmi de jindi' ['Stepping onto the mysterious forbidden region in the past'] at www.gmw.cn/02blqs/2003-11/07/26-7139D0F2B8A0AA2748256E3E0020777A.htm.

Sichuan is located in China's outback. Its complex geographic conditions make it an ideal place for fortifying. Thirdly, the many mountains within Sichuan corresponded to the Central Government's strategy to have national defence projects built in mountainous areas. Fourth, the large population in Sichuan provided a sufficient labour force for construction. Fifth, Sichuan's rich natural resources and fertile land provided sound foundations for discrete industrial development. And lastly, the industrial projects constructed in Sichuan during the First Five Year Plan had equipped it with a reasonable industrial foundation.

From 1965 to 1975, the Central Government invested more than 30 billion yuan in Sichuan, approximately half of the country's total investment in the province in the years 1950 to 1985.¹⁸ According to the strategy of the Central Government, within the years of the Third Front Construction Project, there were to be 300 medium- and large-scale factories from the national defence industry, steel industry, metallurgy industry, power industry, machine industry and chemical industry established within the province of Sichuan.¹⁹ The construction of industrial projects led to the emergence and prosperity of medium-sized cities such as Mianyang and Deyang.²⁰ Nowadays, more than 40% of the province's fixed capital originated during the Third Front Construction Project.²¹

Another benefit Sichuan had received from the Third Front Construction Project was the improvement of its transportation. As a mountainous province, Sichuan had long been known in terms of 'it is more difficult to get to Sichuan than to enter heaven'.²² Understandably, the poor transportation conditions had hindered the province's communication with other areas. During the Third Front

¹⁸ 'Sanxian jianshe de chengjiu yu wenti' ['The achievements and problems of the Third Line Construction'] at <http://sss.scsti.ad.cn/sc/dg3.html>.

¹⁹ Ding Bing 'Xin zhongguo qian sanshi nian shengchan jianshe de weida chengjiu burong fouding' ['The great achievements of the first 30 years of new China's production and construction are not deniable'] at http://www.edu.cn.20030512/3084442_1.shtml; Luo Yuxiang and Zhang Zuohua 'Liangshan yao zai xibu kaifa zhong shixian xin de kuayue' ['Liangshan must realize a new great-leap in China's western great opening-up'] in *Sichuan Dangshi* [History of CCP in Sichuan] Issue 4, 2000.

²⁰ Ning Zhiyi 'Lun sanxian jianshe yu Sichuan jingji kuayueshi fazhan' ['Discussion on Third Line Construction and the leaping economic development of Sichuan'] in *Zhonggong Dangshi Yanjiu* [Research on the History of CCP] Issue 4, 2000.

²¹ 'Sanxie jianshe yu wenhua dageming' ['The Third Line Construction and the Cultural Revolution'] at http://www.bashu.net/history/dangdai/dangdai_03.htm.

²² See *Shudaonan* [The road to Sichuan is difficult] by Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai.

Construction Project, two railways were built, which, together with two other railways built in the First Five Year Plan, established a transportation system that connected Sichuan with the rest of the country.²³

The Third Front Construction Project also promoted the development of science and technology in Sichuan. The single province of Sichuan saw the development of China's major nuclear power base, a satellite launch centre, national-level research centres and laboratories, as well as many colleges and universities,²⁴ where there were the most advanced technology at that time as well as some of China's top scientists and technicians.²⁵

Despite all the benefits the Third Front Construction Project brought to the west of China, it also had inevitable negative effects on both the area's and the country's economic development.²⁶ Firstly, the scale of the Third Front construction and the nature of terrain in which it was carried out made it a very expensive project. It reduced the Central Government's investmental capacity in the rest of the country. Secondly, the enterprises established under the rash project were poorly planned and designed, which led to operational inefficiency. Moreover, given China's economic situation and development level at the time, it was simply beyond the country's capacity to complete the overall project. As a result, in the late 1970s, having increased its communications and improved its relationship with the Western countries, the PRC Government started to seek to shift its industrial focus.²⁷ In 1980, Deng Xiaoping brought forward a new strategy of national development: to have the eastern coastal area opened first, and

²³ Barry Naughton, 1988.

²⁴ 'Xinde zhonghuagongye shidai: xibu de jiyu yu tiaozhan' [The new age of heavy chemical industry: the opportunities and challenges facing the West'] at <http://www.cuew.com/servlet/ManageNews.ShowSubNews?id=4307>.

²⁵ Ning Zhiyi 'Lun sanxian jianshe yu Sichuan jingji kuayueshi fazhan' ['Discussion on Third Line Construction and the leaping economic development of Sichuan'] in *Zhonggong Dangshi Yanjiu* [Research on the History of CCP] Issue 4, 2000.

²⁶ See Barry Naughton, 1988.

²⁷ Li Caihua 'Sanxian Jianshe tiaozheng gaizao de lishi kaocha' [A historical research on the adjustment of the Third Front Construction'] in *Dangdai Zhongguo Lishi Yanjiu* [Research on Contemporary Chinese History] Issue 3, 2002.

to develop the central and western areas at a later stage with the new technology and investment that integration with the global economy would bring.²⁸

The next three decades saw development centre on the eastern seaboard. As a result, there has been increasing inequality between the rich coastal provinces and the inland provinces. In order to meet this problem, the Central Government started its third West Development Scheme in 1999—the Campaign to Open Up the West.²⁹ In the new context, the redefined West of China refers to the provincial jurisdictions of Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Sichuan, Chongqing, Yunnan and Guizhou.³⁰ In 2001, three autonomous prefectures of three provinces were included into the scheme as well, which are: the Siangxi Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Hunan Province, the Enshi Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Hubei Province, and the Yanbian Korean Autonomous precture of Jilin Province.³¹ The objectives of the Campaign to Open Up the West are to accelerate the area's infrastructure construction, adjust its industrial structure, to improve its eco-environment and to rejuvenate the country through science and technology.³² Unlike the Third Front Construction Project, the Campaign to Open Up the West will not have such a strong theme of state- and central planning. Instead, the idea is that central and local governments will create a favourable environment for the area's development and encourage capital (especially non-governmental investment), technology and personnel to move into the West, driven by market demand.³³

²⁸ Li Shantong (ed) *Xibu Dakaifa yu Diqu Xietiao Fazhan* [To Open Up the West and Harmonious Regional Development] Shangwu Yinshuguan, Beijing, 2003.

²⁹ See David S G (ed) Goodman *China's Campaign to 'Open Up the West'* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004.

³⁰ Embassy of People's Republic of China in Canada 'Xibu dakaifa jichu sheshi jianshe quanmian pukai' ['The infrastructure construction in West China has started completely'] at <http://www.chinaembassycanada.org/chn/zt/xbdkf/wxzl/t28268.htm>.

³¹ Heike Holbig 'The emergence of the Campaign to Open up the West: ideological formation, central decision-making and the role of the provinces' in David Goodman (ed) *China's Campaign to 'Open Up the West'* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004. Autonomous areas are territorial administrative units with substantial national minority populations.

³² Ning Zhiyi 'Cong lishi de bijiao zhong kan Sichuan kuayueshi fazhan' ['Sichuan's 'leaping' development from the view of historical comparison'] in *Sichuan Dangshi* [History of CCP in Sichuan] Issue 4, 2000.

³³ David S G Goodman 'The politics of the West: equality, nation-building and colonisation' in *Provincial China* Vol.7 No.2, December 2002, p.127-150.

In this new scheme, Sichuan has become a focus again, not least because ‘it is the west’s largest provincial level jurisdiction in terms of both population and the size of its economy’.³⁴ What is more, as a multi-national province, Sichuan can play a role in discussions about China’s nationality unity. Being located in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, it is necessarily significant in any consideration of the environmental protection of the vast Yangtze River Drainage Area. Predictably, as the Campaign to Open Up the West progresses, Sichuan’s development will be further promoted and the province will play a higher profile role in the economy of the Western Region and the whole of China.

Mianyang: Science and Technology City

Mianyang, the site of research for this project, is located 91 km to the north of Sichuan’s provincial capital Chengdu. Under its jurisdiction, there are 7 counties/county level cities and 2 districts. At the establishment of the PRC, Mianyang had an urban area of only one km² and a population of 2.86 million. At that time, the whole city had no industry except for a firepower plant.³⁵ After half a century, Mianyang has grown into a medium sized city with a total area of about 20,000 km² and a population of 5.29 million (2004).³⁶ It is now regarded as the ‘Second Capital of Sichuan Province’³⁷, contributing 7% to the province’s economy in 2004.³⁸ During the last four decades, Mianyang has played a central role in Sichuan’s development.

The development of Mianyang cannot be separated from the Third Front Construction Project. With Sichuan being the centre of the country’s Third Front

³⁴ Goodman, David S G ‘The Campaign to “Open Up the West”: national, provincial-level and local perspectives’ in David Goodman (ed) *China’s Campaign to ‘Open Up the West’* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004.

³⁵ Cui Xinhua *Sichuan Chengshi Jingji* [The Urban Economy of Sichuan] Sichuan Kexue Jishu Chubanshe, Chengdu, 1985.

³⁶ Mianyang Shi Tongji Ju [Mianyang City Bureau of Statistics] *Mianyang Tongji Nianjian* [Mianyang Statistical Yearbook] Mianyang Statistic Bureau, Mianyang, 2005.

³⁷ Zhou Jianming and Chi Jian ‘Chengshi fazhan zhanlue de jishu luxian chutan—yi Sichuan Mianyang weili’ [‘An attempt to discuss the technical strategy of city development—taking Mianyang, Sichuan as an example’] in *Chengshi Fazhan Yanjiu* [Research on Urban Development] Issue 2, 1998.

³⁸ The percentage is calculated according to data on Sichuan Sheng Tongji Ju, China Statistics Press, Beijing, 2005.

Construction at that time, Mianyang was the focus of Sichuan's development. Being located in China's hinterland, Mianyang had the steep Longmen Mountains to its northwest and the mountainous area of the Sichuan Basin to its south. Its location corresponds to the requirement of Third Front Construction to have new projects built in sheltered mountainous areas. Moreover, Mianyang had a national railway (Chengdu to Beijing) and a national highway (from Chengdu to Xi'an) running across it, while local highways connected all of its subordinate counties and half of the townships. Mianyang's geographic features and convenient transportation system had made it an ideal place to locate the national defence industry. During the 16 years of the Third Front Construction, more than 40 national defence enterprise and military research institutions were set up or moved to Mianyang.³⁹ This one small county (Mianyang was only proclaimed as a city in 1985) became the home of the China Academy of Engineering Physics, the China Aerodynamics Research and Development Centre, the China Gas Turbine Institute, and the biggest wind-tunnels of Asia, as well as other national keystone enterprises and institutions engaged in electronics, magnetics, IT and chemistry. These enterprises and institutions were equipped with the best technologies and personnel at the time and ranked at the top in their fields within China or even in the World.⁴⁰ China's nuclear weapons industry was also based here, though large scale testing occurred elsewhere.

In the early 1980s, with the Central Government shifting its emphasis from national defence to economic development, Mianyang's economy was adversely affected, as its many Third Front enterprises had to face a shrinking market. In this environment the Mianyang Government attempted to encourage the various local national defence industry enterprises to transform themselves into civil industries. Fortunately, the attempt turned out to be successful, which facilitated the city's economic development. Before the mid 1970s, Mianyang barely had

³⁹ Wufeng 'Jun zhuan min: guofang sanxian qiye de zhanluexing zhuanban' ['From military to civil: the strategic change of the Third Line national enterprises'] at <http://www.mianyang.gov.cn/MYGOV/150607817122775040/20050812/44969.html>.

⁴⁰ Wufeng 'Jun zhuan min: guofang sanxian qiye de zhanluexing zhuanban' ['From military to civil: the strategic change of the Third Line national enterprises'] at <http://www.mianyang.gov.cn/MYGOV/150607817122775040/20050812/44969.html>.

any non-national defence production, but after the early 1980s the city gradually became a major producer of televisions, antennae, ultra sound machines and consumer goods related to fairly advanced technology.⁴¹ The Changhong Group was developed from a factory that used to produce military radar equipment. During the 1980s it imported television production lines from Japan turning itself into China's biggest television set producer.⁴² Another one-time radar equipment factory of the Third Front, has given birth to the Jiuzhou Houseware Group, having successfully developed digital products for civil use and become one of the country's keystone enterprises. Nowadays, there are more than 16,000 scientists and technicians working in the various former Third Front research institutions, amounting to a quarter of the city's total population. Amongst other things, this means that one in every four people in Mianyang is an intellectual. Even more impressively, in this one city there are 25 academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Engineering—China's two highest research institutions.⁴³ In 1999, Mianyang's GDP was 31.1 billion yuan, ranking it as the fifth among all the cities in the 12 western provinces and the second in Sichuan Province (after only Chengdu).⁴⁴

Mianyang took a further step in its development when in 2000 the Central Government announced that as a once-only decision Mianyang was to become a 'Science and Technology City (STC)' ⁴⁵ on the basis of the city's solid science and research environment. The many research institutions and technology enterprises set up during the Third Front Construction Project made this medium-sized city unique in the 12 western provinces. In 2001, Mianyang was officially named by the Central Government as China's STC. Its immediate goals were to develop an electronic and information industry as a crucial support

⁴¹ Wufeng 'Jun zhuan min: guofang sanxian qiye de zhanluexing zhuanban' ['From military to civil: the strategic change of the Third Line national enterprises'] at <http://www.mianyang.gov.cn/MYGOV/150607817122775040/20050812/44969.html>.

⁴² Changhong will be further discussed later.

⁴³ Fang Hua 'Mianyang: xibu xinxiu' ['Mianyang: the rising star of the West'] in *Ditu* [Atlas], Issue 2, 2004.

⁴⁴ Fan Yuhai and He Yang 'Mianyang shi ge hao difang' ['Mianyang is a good place'] in *Dangjian Zazhi* [Party Construction] Issue 12, 2000.

⁴⁵ He Zhongping 'Zhongguo keji cheng wunian chenfu: Mianyang yangben' ['The five years ups and downs of the Science and Technology City of China: taking Mianyang as an example'] at <http://www.southcn.com/finance/hot/200603210240.htm>.

industry and to change traditional industries into more high-tech activities. The Central Government hopes to make Mianyang a model of development through science and technology for the whole of the Campaign to Open Up the West.

The development of China's Science and Technology City is clearly a long-term project, but it has already brought benefits to Mianyang. In 2000, after the Central Government made its determination Mianyang soon had its first university — the Southwest University of Science and Technology. Less than one year after the establishment of the university, the Ministry of Education established it as one of the thirteen universities in the West to be given special favours in the Campaign to Open Up the West and one of China's top universities—the University of Science and Technology, China—was appointed as its tandem partner.⁴⁶ Moreover, in 2001, despite the fact that a national-level high-tech zone had already been built in the city in 1995 and has been developing well ever since,⁴⁷ three other development zones were established in Mianyang as a major part of the construction of the STC. These are the Modern Agricultural Science and Technology Demonstration Zone (focusing on the development of agricultural science and technology) the Pioneer Park (focusing on the conversion of military into civil production) and the Economic Development Area (focusing on the development of electronic, automobile, magnetism and medical industries).⁴⁸ All these new zones received favourable policies from the provincial and local governments, in order to attract more investment and talented people into the construction of the STC.

⁴⁶ Jiaoyu Bu [Ministry of Education] 'Bawo duikou zhiyuan jiyu, cujin xuexiao kuaisufazhan—Xinan Keji Daxue duikou zhiyuan qingkuang huibao', ['To seize the opportunity of support and facilitate the rapid development of universities—a report on the activities of Southwest University of Science and Technology'] at <http://www.moe.edu.cn/edoas/website18/info11950.htm>.

⁴⁷ Shu Di 'Xiang Xinshiji Tingjin—ji Mianyang gaoxin jishi kaifaqu' ['Progress into the new century—on Mianyang High-Tech Zone'] in *Zhongwai Fangdichan Daobao* [Real Estate in China and Overseas] Issue 3, 1997.

⁴⁸ <http://www.myagri.org/docc/index.php>, <http://www.meda.gov.cn/default.asp>, <http://www.mykcy.gov.cn/web/index.asp>.

What has Changhong brought to Mianyang?

The Changhong Group has its origins in the state-owned radar factory built in Mianyang in 1958, as a major project of the Central Government's First Five Year Plan to develop the West. In 1970s, it started to develop television technology. One decade later, as national defence was no longer the country's major task, the Central Government gave the factory to Mianyang City Government. At that point, Changhong started to be crucial to Mianyang's economy. In 1984, its production value counted for 25.3% of the city's total industrial production value.⁴⁹ When the Third Front Construction Project came to a halt, Changhong, like many other China's military enterprises built in that period, shifted to civil production. In 1985, it imported a colour TV production line from Japan, which made the enterprise the most advanced and the biggest colour TV manufacturer in China. This was the beginning of a very successful twenty years.

According to Li Desheng, director of Mianyang Statistical Bureau, in the 1990s and 2000s, the Changhong Group contributed 40% of Mianyang's total taxation from industry and agriculture..⁵⁰ According to Chen Hong, deputy director of Mianyang Planning Commission, the Group's development from one single production area to five production areas has greatly promoted the expansion of the city's urban area. The enterprise (now more than 30,000 employees) also accounts for five to ten percent of all Mianyang's employment.⁵¹ Mianyang's only railway station is even regarded as 'Changhong's exclusive station'. In 2003, the Group brought Mianyang Railway Station so much profit that the railway station provided 28 trains with more than 1,500 carriages for Changhong's sole use.⁵² When the City Government started to build its High-Tech Zone, it asked Changhong to pay for the construction. Since Mianyang took over responsibility

⁴⁹ Cui Xinhuan, 1985.

⁵⁰ Gao Xiaoyong 'Mianyang: wei Changhong er tong' ['Mianyang: Pain for Changhong'], in *Nanfeng Chuan* [Window for the Southern Breeze] Issue 2, 2005.

⁵¹ Cai Rao 'Changhong shoucuo: zhengfu yu qiye qinmi zhi tong' ['Changhong encountering failure: the pain brought by the close relationship between government and enterprise'] in *Huaren Shikan* [Chinese Times] Issue 4, 2004.

⁵² Gao Xianrong, 2005.

for the original factory at the heart of the enterprise, one mayor, one secretary of the City Party Committee, and one vice mayor have all come from Changhong.

For its part in return, the Mianyang Government has supported the company's development. There is a saying in the city that 'there is nothing Changhong cannot achieve in Mianyang'. From 1986 (shortly after Changhong was put under Mianyang's administration) to 1997, the City Government provided more than 1.5 billion yuan back to Changhong through tax returns.⁵³ When Changhong sought to expand its production area, the government gave it 800,000m² of prime land in the High-Tech Zone. In the mid 1990s, when Changhong's transportation was limited by the city's railway, the government invested hundreds of thousands yuan to renovate its railways station. As the Changhong Group is given special treatment in Mianyang, it reports directly to the mayor, rather than the official in charge of the department of industry. When the enterprise needs to discuss something with the government, it simply gives the government a call and then the appropriate officials call at the enterprise to attempt to solve any problem.⁵⁴

The government's over-dependence and emphasis on Changhong soon presented a dilemma. The enterprise started selling televisions to the U.S. at a low price in 2001, in order to further develop its overseas market. Changhong's new strategy worked well at the beginning, as it sold 340 million US dollars worth of products into the American market, 10.7 percent of the province's exports that year. However, what had seemed to be a promising future soon turned out to be a disaster. By the end of 2004, it had a bad debt of more than 460 million US dollars uncollectable from its agent in the U.S.⁵⁵ To make things worse, the U.S. International Trade Commission imposed tariffs of 20% to 78.45% on exports of Chinese colour televisions in the same year, victimizing Changhong to some extent.⁵⁶ As a result Changhong retreated from the U.S. market and the enterprise's failure had a direct effect on Mianyang's economy. In the past, with

⁵³ Zhang Weirong 'Mianyangshi jingji kaocha de jidian sikao' ['A few reflections on inspection of Mianyang's economy'] in *Zhonggong Sichuan Shengwei Shengji Jiguan Dangxiao Xuebao* [Journal of Sichuan CCP Committee provincial office] Issue 4, 1997.

⁵⁴ Cai Rao, 2004.

⁵⁵ Gao Xiaoyong, 2005.

⁵⁶ 'China IT weekly briefing' *USITO IT Weekly* 21 May 2004.

the mighty Changhong at its back, Mianyang's economic growth remained the second highest among cities in Sichuan. In September 2004, Mianyang's monthly GDP growth was 11.6%, ranked lowest in the province.⁵⁷

The Mianyang Government is trying its best to help Changhong out of its dilemma. In 2005, the City Government asked all its offices and departments to give practical support to Changhong. According to Tan Li, Secretary of Mianyang CCP Committee, the government should do 'whatever the policies allow and whatever we can' to promote the Group's development.⁵⁸ The city's newly constructed Economic Development Area has provided Changhong with an area of 5 km² and planned to invest 480 million yuan in related construction. Fucheng District, where Changhong's headquarter is located, has also saved an area of about 1 km² for the Group's future use and invested 10 million yuan on its construction every year.⁵⁹ In 2005, several Sichuan banks provided the enterprise with a loan credit of 8.5 billion yuan.⁶⁰ At the same time, the City Government has also realized it should not be so dependent on Changhong for its future economic development. On reflection the government has established new targets for its development: to construct a city of science and technology; to develop the economy of subordinate counties' and to build a 'harmonious' Mianyang. In the first half of 2005, it had acquired a record investment of more than 7 billion yuan.

Mianyang's advantages and disadvantages

Mianyang is the third and last fieldwork locality for the project. In July and October 2005, the research team conducted fieldwork in the city and interviewed nine local cadres and celebrities, as well as 56 women in enterprises.⁶¹ During the interviews, Mianyang's cadres and celebrities were asked to reflect on the

⁵⁷ Gao Xiaoyong, 2005.

⁵⁸ Wang Xiaoyang 'Mianyangshi lingdao shenru Changhong gongsi xianchang bangong' ['Top officials of Mianyang go to work on site in Changhong Company'] at http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2005-05/19/content_2974787.htm.

⁵⁹ Li Yongbin 'Gongye qiangsheng: Changhong anqi "longtou" zhutui quyu jingji jueqi' ['The industrial province: Mianyang raises its head and promotes the development of local economy'] at www.wccdaily.com.cn/2006/03/24/200603244051944406218.htm.

⁶⁰ Gao Xiaoyong, 2005.

⁶¹ The situation of these women entrepreneurs will be discussed in later sections.

advantages and disadvantages that facilitate and hinder Mianyang's future development.

Five out of the nine of the interviewees regarded Mianyang's natural environment as its clear advantage. The mountains surrounding the city make it a basin and one of the Yangtze River's feeder rivers runs across the district. The good climate and water supply are good for the city's agriculture and perhaps explain Mianyang's designation as one of 'China's Civilized Cities', as one of 'China's Hygienic Cities' and so on.⁶² Although the city is not regarded as one with many natural resources, two of the interviewees mentioned Mianyang's resource of tourism. Though having not many tourist sites itself, Mianyang is located on the way to one of Sichuan's most popular tourist attractions Jiuzhaigou Valley.⁶³ The Mianyang District also boasts the ancestral home of the most famous Chinese poet, Li Bai, of the Tang Dynasty.

Five interviewees nominated its strong science and technology background as one of Mianyang's comparative advantages. They mentioned the city's many electronic enterprises, research institutes, institutions of secondary and higher education, as well as educated personnel brought to Mianyang at various times through the three West Region development schemes. The interviewees also thought that the Central Government's designation of Mianyang as its only Science and Technology City was an advantage that would attract investment.

Two interviewees believed that the city's leadership was part of its advantage. They pointed out that the current blueprint of Mianyang's development had been drafted in 1985. Since then, the city has changed its leadership five times, but the scheme has not been abandoned, permitting the city to develop at a steady pace. Mianyang's other advantages mentioned by the interviewees included its proximity

⁶² Chen Yi 'Mianyang keji cheng' ['The science and technology city of Mianyang'] at <http://www.teaya.com/my/>.

⁶³ Jiuzhaigou Valley is a nature reserve in northern Sichuan. It is known for its many multi-level waterfalls and colourful lakes, and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992.

to the provincial capital Chengdu, its development as the second city of Sichuan, and its long history and rich culture.

When it came to the city's disadvantages, it seemed that the interviewees compared Mianyang with the rich coastal cities rather than other medium-sized western cities. Six of these cadres and celebrities said Mianyang's major disadvantage was its location. As the city is located in China's inland West, compared with the eastern coastal cities in provinces of Guangdong and Zhejiang, the city does not have the convenience of exporting its goods by sea. An official from the local Investment Bureau further mentioned that unlike the coastal cities, the local government of Mianyang has strict policies on its land use, which makes it less attractive in investors' eyes.

In the minds of four interviewees, Mianyang people's personality hinders the city's development. In their eyes, the local people are not open-minded. They are too conservative, do not take risks, and are too easily satisfied. One official talked about the popularity of the game of *mahjong* in Mianyang and thought that local people's indulgence in the game had made them less competitive.

Three interviewees talked about Mianyang Government's over-dependence on the one enterprise Changhong. They pointed out that there is consequently an imbalance in the city's industrial development. There is a single very large enterprise that constitutes the majority of Mianyang's industry and the remaining enterprises are mostly small- and medium-sized. When Changhong's business declines, the city's unemployment rate will immediately increase. One interviewee mentioned the establishment of Mianyang as the STC as disadvantageous, because 'it has consequently put too much pressure on the local government to find good projects and obtain investment'.

Mianyang certainly seems to bear out Sichuan Province's long-established reputation in other provinces as a place of leisure. Sichuan people are famous for their delicious cooking, many tea houses and their passion for 'chatting,' playing

mahjong and card games generally. There is even an old saying in China: ‘Don’t go to Sichuan when you are young’ (少不入川), which warns people of the seductive nature of its pastimes. When the research team arrived in Sichuan, we soon found that the many local traditional tea houses and western cafes were always occupied by people playing card games, regardless of whether it was a weekday or the weekends, during the day or at night. When walking around the city, we often saw dozens of people sitting in front of traditional Chinese square tables playing *mahjong* together.

Mianyang interviewees: a general profile

In August and October 2005, two series of interviews were conducted with women in enterprises in Mianyang City, Sichuan. Altogether 21 women enterprise owners, 20 wives of enterprise owners and 15 women who were working in the enterprises as managers were interviewed. During the fieldwork, the interviewees were asked questioned about the size and operation of their enterprises, as well as their family and personal life. This section will look at the industry sector and assets of these women’s businesses, as well as their educational and professional background, with the aim of providing an introduction to the industrial context in which these women worked, and their general profile.

Industry sector and assets of enterprises

Table 8.1 illustrates the industrial sectors where the Mianyang interviewees’ enterprises operated. Unsurprisingly, a large proportion (37.4 percent) of these women were operating in sectors traditionally regarded to be more suitable for women, including restaurants/hotels (7.1 percent), retail (10.7 percent), service industries (such as beauty salon and hair dressing salon, 12.5 percent), and school/kindergarten (7.1 percent). However, even more of them were engaged in male dominated sectors of manufacturing and real estate (41.1 percent and 5.4 percent respectively). Notably, 22 of the interviewees’ enterprises were involved in science and technology—they were doing businesses in the electronic industry,

the chemical industry, the biological materials industry, the telecommunications, and high-tech bio-medical industries. This seems to correspond to Mianyang's development as the centre of national defence technology during the Third Front period and the fact that nowadays the city is putting an emphasis on technical industries and becoming a city of science and technology.

Table 8.1 Mianyang interviewees: Industry sector

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Enterprise owners</i>	<i>Wives of enterprise owners</i>	<i>Managers</i>	<i>Total</i>
Commercial farming	1 (4.8%)	3 (15%)		4 (7.1%)
Real estate		3 (15%)		3 (5.4%)
Manufacturing	6 (28.6%)	9 (45%)	8 (53.3%)	23 (41.1%)
Telecommunication			1 (6.7%)	1 (1.8%)
Retail	3 (14.3%)	2 (10%)	1 (6.7%)	6 (10.7%)
Advertisement	1 (4.8%)			1 (1.8%)
Theatre		1 (5%)		1 (1.8%)
Pharmacy	1 (4.8%)	1 (5%)		2 (3.6%)
Service	4 (19.0%)	1 (5%)	2 (13.3%)	7 (12.5%)
School/kindergarten	3 (14.3%)		1 (6.7%)	4 (7.1%)
Restaurant/hotel	2 (9.5%)		2 (13.3%)	4 (7.1%)
Total	21	20	15	56

Table 8.2 illustrates the size of the enterprises in which these women operated. Except for seven of the interviewees who refused to reveal the circumstances of their business, all the women interviewed in Mianyang answered questions regarding the assets of their enterprises. The figures they gave varied from tens of thousand to billions *yuan*. As can be seen from the table, these women's enterprises were more sizeable than those of their Jiaocheng and Qiongsan counterparts. Impressively, a majority (58.9 percent) of their enterprises had capitals of more than 1 million *yuan*. In every sense, the Mianyang women seemed to fall into the class of new rich in China. A comparison of the three categories of interviewees shows some differences: a slightly higher proportion of the wives of enterprise owners (25 percent) than women enterprise owners (14.3 percent) reported they were involved in large- and extra large-sized businesses with capitals of at least 10 million *yuan*. Though the survey's limited scale and scope is not sufficient to reflect the general situation of private entrepreneurs' gender differences related to the possession of capital, it might indicate the possibility that female enterprise owners do not have as many opportunities and as

much capital to develop their businesses as male enterprise owners, which invites more future studies.

On the other hand, a high proportion (66.7 percent) of the category of women managers was working at bigger enterprises. This is understandable, as the research team was introduced to managers of several of Mianyang's major state-owned and collective enterprises by local contacts who were obviously well-placed within the Party-state. Two of the interviewees were a manager and a department director of Changhong Group. Another was a department director in the Jiuzhou Group—another major state-owned enterprise in the city, which has a capital of 2.2 billion *yuan*. One interviewee worked as a manager of the state-owned telecommunication enterprise that had a capital of 900 million *yuan*. One was the manager of a subordinate enterprise belonging to the Ministry of Nuclear Industry of China, with a capital of 200 million *yuan*. One interviewee was the director of the city's biggest hotel owned by the government, with a capital of 200 million *yuan*. Another interviewee was a department director of a collective enterprise owned by a suburban township with its capital being 220 million *yuan*.

Table 8.2 Mianyang interviewees: Enterprise assets

Unit=yuan						
Size	~999,999	1million ~ 9.99 million	10 million~ 99.99million	100 million ~	Information not available	Total
Category						
Enterprise owner of Wife enterprise owner Other	8 (38.1%)	7 (33.3%)	2 (9.5%)	1 (4.8%)	3 (14.3%)	21
	5 (25%)	8 (40%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	20
	3 (20%)		2 (13.3%)	8 (53.3%)	2 (13.3%)	15
Total	16 (28.6%)	15 (26.8%)	7 (12.5%)	11 (19.6%)	7 (12.5%)	56

Year and place of birth

As shown in Table 8.3, except for one interviewee (who refused to reveal her age), the Mianyang interviewees have been grouped according to whether they were born during 1946~1955, 1956~1965, 1966~1975 and 1976~1985. The majority of those interviewed in Mianyang were born between 1956 and 1975. This is a generation which experienced the early socialist construction of PRC, the Cultural Revolution, and China's later Opening-up, economic reform and subsequent reforms in many aspects of society. They have lived both in a highly centralized system where the Central Government dominated all social aspects and in an era when privatization or at least marketization is becoming more common. The three categories of enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners and women managers turned out to be not that different in this respect.

Table 8.3 Mianyang interviewees: Year of birth

<i>Category</i>	<i>1936~ 1945</i>	<i>1946~ 1955</i>	<i>1956~ 1965</i>	<i>1966~ 1975</i>	<i>1976~ 1985</i>	<i>Information not available</i>
Enterprise owner			11 (52.4%)	10 (47.6%)		
Wife of enterprise owner		2 (10%)	10 (50%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)
Manager		1 (6.7%)	8 (53.3%)	6 (40%)		
Total		3 (5.4%)	29 (51.8%)	21 (37.5%)	2 (3.6%)	1 (1.8%)

Table 8.4 details the birth place of the women interviewed in Mianyang. Compared to those in Jiaocheng, the Mianyang women have shown much more social mobility. Only a minority (39.3 percent) of them were living and working in the same place where they were born. On the other hand, Mianyang interviewees demonstrated a greater tendency to intra-provincial mobility and less inter-provincial mobility than their Qiongsan counterparts. 32.1 percent of these women reported they had been born in other cities within Sichuan and 16.1 percent that they were born in other provinces.

As to the intra-provincial migrants, two reported they had been assigned to work in Mianyang's state-owned enterprises after graduating from universities. Another two reported that they had moved when their husbands had been assigned to Mianyang. These observations resonate with Mianyang's background of a strong state-owned sector and its development as a research centre for national defence technology. One interviewee moved from her city of birth to Mianyang during the Third Front construction in the 1960s, when her father was transferred to work in one of the newly established enterprises. The other intra-provincial migrants invariably revealed that they had left their city of birth for better development and opportunities in Mianyang. Presumably, Mianyang's development as the second economic centre of the province and the country's only STC also attracts members of the floating population from within the province.

Table 8.4 Mianyang interviewees: Place of birth

<i>Category</i>	<i>The same place</i>	<i>Other county/county-level jurisdiction of the same city</i>	<i>Other city of the same province</i>	<i>Other province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	8 (38.1%)	3 (14.3%)	9 (42.9%)	1 (4.8%)	21
Wife of enterprise owner	8 (40%)	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	4 (20%)	20
Manager	6 (40%)	1 (6.7%)	4 (26.7%)	4 (26.7%)	15
Total	22 (39.3%)	7 (12.5%)	18 (32.1%)	9 (16.1%)	56

Comparing the categories of interviewees, enterprise owners have the highest intra-provincial migration rate (42.9 percent, as opposed to 25 percent of wives of enterprise owners and 26.7 percent of women managers), and the lowest inter-provincial migration rate (4.8 percent, as opposed to 20 percent and 26.7 percent). On the other hand, wives of enterprise owners and women managers have not shown much difference from each other.

Educational background

Table 8.5 provides detail on the highest education level achieved by the Mianyang interviewees. Undoubtedly, these new rich women of Mianyang are a very literate group. As the figures show, only three of them had not finished junior middle school education and thus were not equipped with basic literacy. Junior middle school, high school or secondary school graduates accounted for 37.5 percent of these women, while the rest had all been to college and university. This is a group of women with an educational background in higher education. As is shown in the table, more than half (57.1%) of these women had received education above high school level. This suggests these categories of the new rich have a much better education background than the general female population, as the proportion is some 38 times that of the female population of Sichuan Province ⁶⁴, and 12 times that of the female population of China. Moreover, women interviewed in Mianyang also turned out to be better educated among the three categories of interviewees from the three places, as this proportion is some 9 times of that of Jiaocheng interviewees (6.5 percent) and twice as much as that of Qiongsan interviewees (24.5 percent).

Table 8.5 Mianyang interviewees: Highest education level

<i>Category</i>	<i>Under junior middle school</i>	<i>Junior middle school</i>	<i>High school /secondary technical school</i>	<i>College /University</i>	<i>Postgraduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner		2 (9.5%)	6 (28.6%)	13 (61.9%)		21
Wife of enterprise owner	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	10 (50%)	1 (5%)	20
Manager	1 (6.7%)	2 (13.3%)	4 (26.7%)	6 (40%)	2 (13.3%)	15
Total	3 (5.4%)	8 (14.3%)	13 (23.2%)	29 (51.8%)	3 (5.4%)	56

When taking a more detailed look at the enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners and managers, each of the three categories shared the characteristic of an

⁶⁴ Calculated according to figures provided by the 2003 *Sample Survey on Population Changes* by the National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1.5% of the province's female population had received higher education beyond the level of high school. See Zhongguo Guojia Tongjiju, 2004.

educational background in higher education. Only a few were illiterate. There were though differences between the three categories. Women enterprise owners were the most literate category, as all of them had received the nine years compulsory education and are thus equipped with basic literacy. Moreover, this category had the highest percentage with a higher education background. 61.9 percent of them had been to college or university. Wives of enterprise owners and women managers did not have the same high rate of higher educational experience (55 percent and 53.3 percent respectively) and a higher illiteracy rate (10 percent and 6.7 percent respectively.) As the samples were largely self-selective, there is the possibility that the higher education level of Mianyang interviewees in general might simply indicate that these women were willing to be interviewed because of their better educational background. However, the difference between the three categories of interviewees also seems to suggest something about the social composition of China's entrepreneurs, i.e. the entrepreneur group might be composed of those who are better educated.

Table 8.6 Mianyang interviewees: Highest education level by year of birth

<i>Age</i>	<i><Junior</i>	<i>Junior</i>	<i>High/ Secondary</i>	<i>College/ University</i>	<i>Postgraduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
1946~1955		2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)			3
1956~1965	2 (6.9%)	3 (10.3%)	7 (24.1%)	15 (51.7%)	2 (6.9%)	29
1966~1975	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	4 (19.0%)	13 (61.9%)	1 (4.8%)	21
1976~1985		1 (50%)	1 (50%)			2
Total	3	8	13	28	3	55 ⁶⁵

Table 8.6 examines the highest educational level compared to date of birth for the Mianyang interviewees. The figures indicate a bipolar distribution pattern in the 1956~1965 and 1966~1975 age groups: on the one hand, all the college and university graduates fell into these two age groups; but on the other hand, these two groups also include all the illiterate interviewees. However, the data of this

⁶⁵ One of the interviewees refused to reveal her date of birth and so was not included in the statistics here.

research is not sufficient enough to reflect the difference in the education reception among different generations of the general population.

The Mianyang interviewees' educational background reflects wider trends of China's social change. In 1966, schools were closed and students were encouraged to join the Red Guard units. One year later, schools were re-opened, but the educated youths (junior middle school and high school students) were called upon to work in the mountains and countryside. From 1970 to 1976, the compulsory entrance examination to universities was abolished, and factory workers, peasants and army soldiers (instead of high school graduates) were sent to universities to receive higher education.⁶⁶ The majority of these women were born after 1960 and thus their education had not been much affected by the Cultural Revolution which from 1966 to 1976 severely disrupted the educational process. The few interviewees born in the 1940s and 1950s had almost all (three out of four) fallen victim of the Cultural Revolution in this regard.

One of the interviewees, Gu, was born in 1947. When the Cultural Revolution started in 1966, she was a high school student. Her school was closed and she joined the Red Guard. In 1967, answering the call of the Central Government, Gu went back to work in her village as a educated youth. After that she was not able to return to her school to finish her high school study. Similarly, Xie, born in 1953, graduated from junior middle school in 1972. Then she was sent to work in the countryside. Two years later, she managed to go back to her home town and find a job as a factory worker, but was never able to return to school. Another interviewee, Li, was born in 1959. She finished her high school education in 1976 when the Cultural Revolution was about to end. But as the Central Government did not resume the university entrance examination until 1977, Li was not able to continue her study after graduation and was sent to work in the countryside as an educated youth. As a result, Li was one of those who have not had an opportunity to study at university or college.

⁶⁶ Disheng 'Wenge zhong de tingke fuke he zhaosheng' ['Schools closed, re-opened and student admission during the Cultural Revolution'] at <http://lnds.nen.com.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=375>.

In the 1950s, in order to educate the vast population of factory workers and peasants, China started to develop its vocational education system. To this end, thousands of secondary technical schools and vocational schools were set up within the country to educate professionals. The development of vocational education was interrupted by the Cultural Revolution when almost all the secondary technical schools and vocational schools were closed and students were mobilized to join the revolution. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Central Government decided to resume the interrupted vocational institutions of education, in order to educate more professionals and technicians for economic construction. Consequently, old schools were re-opened and new ones established.⁶⁷ Because it takes shorter time to finish a program in a secondary technical school or a vocational school than to move through college or university in the early years of China's reform, the country greatly depended on vocational education to provide the much needed professionals and technicians. Until the mid 1990s, vocational education played a significant role in China's economic development. By that time, most secondary technical school and vocational school students were allocated employment at graduation. As a result, these schools were popular with young people at that time, as they meant permanent jobs and stable incomes. Later, as college and university education has been increasingly emphasized in the job market, vocational education has gradually lost its popularity.⁶⁸

Mianyang's interviewees reflect the development and decline of China's vocational education. Twelve reported their experiences of studying at secondary technical schools and vocational schools in the 1980s and early 1990s. At that time, people with a vocational education background were advantaged in the job market and their qualifications could lead to better positions and higher status. Most of the interviewees with vocational background at that time were appointed to white-collar positions in the government or state-owned enterprises. However, as higher education was increasingly emphasized and a vocational education

⁶⁷ Zhongguo Jiaoyubu Zhiye He Chengren Jiaoyusi [Adult and vocational education department, China Ministry of Education] 'Zhongguo zhiye jiaoyu' ['China's vocational education'] at <http://www.edu.cn/20010827/208328.shtml>.

⁶⁸ Zheng Hangsheng and Li Lulu, 2004.

background lost its advantage, these women also sought higher education to obtain better individual development. Seven of the secondary technical school or vocational school graduates interviewed went on to college and university at a later stage.

One of the interviewees, Yang, was born in 1964. Having finished a course in grain engineering at a secondary technical school in 1984, she was sent to work at Deyang City Grain Bureau as a cadre. After working in the position for several years, she went to a college to study and received a Bachelor's degree in 1990. Another interviewee, Yuan, was born in 1964. She studied analytical chemistry at a vocational school in early 1980s. After that she was allocated to work at a state-owned factory as a technician and later was promoted to be a department director. Finding her education background not advantaged anymore, she took a junior college course at the Party school from 1993 to 1995.

Although their higher education background clearly stands out when examining the Mianyang interviewees' education level, the higher education they received was not necessarily of the best quality. None of them had been to any of the top universities in China. Ten had received higher education for adults through radio and TV universities, higher education by correspondence course, employees' universities, cadres' colleges, and self-teaching courses. Most of these forms of adult education (except for higher education by correspondence, which was introduced in 1950s) were introduced in China in 1980s as supplements to general higher education and to provide opportunities for those in employment to continue their study in their off hours.⁶⁹ Students can receive degrees from higher education for adults, but these degrees are not as valued as more regular university degrees. It is easier to gain admission to these adult education courses and such courses are easier to finish. In addition, nine of those interviewed had a higher education background from a junior college course, and thus did not have a degree.

⁶⁹ 'Gaodeng jiaoyu xunsu fazhan' ['The rapid development of higher education'] at <http://www.china.org.cn/chinese/zhuanti/162671.htm>.

For these new rich women, management and accounting were the most commonly taken courses at universities.⁷⁰ Presumably a background in management and business is seen as an advantage in the establishment and operation of their business. Chinese language and literature was another popular major,⁷¹ which corresponds to the stereotype that the male is generally acknowledged to be good at science and technical subjects, while females excel at languages and literature.⁷² However, contradictory to the stereotype, some of these women also have backgrounds in mechanical science, electronics, computer science and engineering,⁷³ all of which are more usually (even if incorrectly) acknowledged as women's weak points. Some of those interviewed also studied law and medicine.⁷⁴

In addition to formal higher education, the new rich women interviewed in Mainyang had also participated in training programs of various kinds. Some of them said they were taking such courses regularly. The most popular training courses were management courses delivered by Party schools and universities and tailored to entrepreneur needs. Those without any higher education background were keen to attend the courses in order to improve themselves. Ren, for example, was a senior manager of an enterprise with a capital of more than 100 million *yuan*. Having only completed high school, Ren was a frequent participant in those management courses for entrepreneurs. She revealed in the interview that 'the greatest regret of my life was the lack of higher education'. As a result, she took the training courses as an opportunity to improve herself.

Some of the better-educated interviewees attended such courses for the purpose of networking. Yin was the owner of a company with a capital of 500,000 *yuan*. She had finished a junior college course in law and then a Bachelor's course in

⁷⁰ Seven interviewees reported they had studied management and five accounting.

⁷¹ Four interviewees reported they had an educational background in Chinese language and literature.

⁷² Beverley Hooper 'China's modernisation: are young women going to lose out?' in *Modern China* Vol. 10, No.3, July 1983, p. 324.

⁷³ One interviewee reported they had studied mechanics, two electronics, two computer science and one engineering.

⁷⁴ Four interviewees reported they specialized in law and three in medicine.

Chinese language and literature in the early 1990s. In 2003, she attended a management class organized by the Beijing Institute of Technology. She said, 'the class did not teach much and does not count as an educational qualification. I attended it mainly to make friends and develop my network'. Another interviewee, Deng, was the owner of a beauty surgery clinic and a beauty treatment school. She received her Bachelor's degree in medicine from Chengdu Traditional Medicine University in 1987. Recently, she finished a course on economic management at the Provincial Party School. The course also served as an opportunity for socializing. She revealed, 'all my classmates were cadres such as county heads and so on. Such relationships make things easier (for me)'.

In addition to management and business, language and professional skills have also proved to be useful to these new rich women. Some of them reported having taken training courses in English and professional skills. Yang was running an enterprise with a capital of 500 million *yuan* together with her husband. Having finished a secondary technical school course in 1980s and received a bachelor's degree in 1990, she was one of the more literate among the Mianyang interviewees. In 1996, she went to Beijing to spend a year there following an English course at Beijing Foreign Studies University, one of China's best universities in foreign language teaching.

Another interviewee, Li, was born in Mianyang in 1972. She was orphaned when she was nine. Then she had to quit primary school to make a living by growing and selling vegetables. In 1993, she went to the provincial capital Chengdu to study beauty treatment and became a beauty specialist. In 1994, she took a beauty treatment course. Li's lack of formal education was made up by her professional training. One year later, she opened her own beauty treatment shop.

On the one hand, the interviews with women in Mianyang have revealed that education background has played a significant role in their path to higher social status and greater wealth. On the other hand, the possession of higher status and greater wealth can facilitate their pursuit of knowledge as well. Ten of those

interviewed in Mianyang reported that they had obtained their higher education after the establishment of their business. Understandably, their leadership positions in the enterprises gave them a more flexible schedule to fit their study in. And their high income made higher education more affordable.

Cooperation between knowledge and wealth

The Mianyang interviewees indicated that knowledge can be combined with wealth to create greater wealth for them, achieved through cooperation between enterprises and research institutions or individual researchers. Such cooperation normally takes the form that research institutions or researchers are in charge of new product invention and development, while enterprises invest in, promote and sell the products. Enterprises provide the financial capital, while research institutions or researchers provide the human resources and intelligence. Three of the interviewees reported being involved in such cooperation with local universities. Their enterprises were all engaged in high-tech product development.

Yang is the owner of a technological company concerned with degradable plastic containers. She established the company in 2002 with a capital of 1 million *yuan*. The business is in cooperation with a local university. The university develops and produces the products and Yang's company promotes and sells them.

Zhang and her husband were running and operating a high-tech engineering company. The couple started the business in 1998, with an investment of 200,000 *yuan*. A professor from the Southwest University of Science and Technology cooperated with the couple and was in charge of new technology development.

Jun was the owner of a company dealing with environment protection projects such as sewage processing, lampblack treatment and environmental assessment. The company was established in 2003 with a capital of 500,000 *yuan*. She cooperated with Sichuan University and Xi'an Jiaotong University. Through the cooperation, the company invested capital for the universities to conduct research

and develop new technology, and the company was responsible for business promotion.

Although all three of the women had completed some form of higher education, none of them had studied a relevant technology. Yang had a Bachelor's degree in Chinese language and literature, Zhang had completed a junior college education in medicine and Jun had qualified from a junior college in law. In each case they had to completely depend on their cooperators for technical support. As technology is crucial to their business success, they laid much importance on this technical development and cooperation with a local partner. Yang indicated that as the business was still in a start-up mode that all employees of the company (including herself) were currently receiving a low salary. Sufficient resources were provided to the technical department to ensure continued development. Although Yang was the sole founder and chair of the board of the company, she only held 60 percent of shares and had given the rest to the researchers and technicians in order to increase their sense of belonging to the company. Zhang and her husband had given their partner 40 percent of shares as a reward for its intellectual contributions, although the partner had not made any cash investment in the business. Jun said, 'I dare not open my mouth when discussing business affairs with those doctors and professors. I dare not make decisions on whether to undertake a project without asking for their opinion. As to technical problems, they won't yield to me even a little bit'.

Chen's story is another example that illustrates how knowledge became wealth. Born in 1962, Chen finished her junior middle school education in 1981 and became a peasant. In 1988, she and her husband (who did not finish junior middle school) invested more than 100,000 yuan to contract some lands from their village and set up a seedling nursery. One year later, the business failed, as they were not able to find a reliable market for the seedlings and the couple lost their investment. After due consideration, they realized that the failure was caused by the lack of adequate communications infrastructure. At that time, they had no telephone, pager, mobile phone or facsimile and had to contact buyers by mail. This tedious

and slow method of communication had driven clients away. As a result, the seedling nursery was closed and the couple had to become engaged in processing in order to make money.

In 1990, they put all their savings into the seedling nursery business again. This time they started to advertise their seedlings in local newspapers with a loan of 1,000 *yuan* and borrowed a pager from a relative so that clients could find them more easily. After selling out of the first seedlings, they bought a mobile phone, even though at that time mobile phones cost several times the average annual income. With the establishment of an information network, their annual turnover was 3 million *yuan* and the couple made their first profit of more than 1 million *yuan*. In September 1990, China was officially connected to the Internet. In the early days, the Internet was viewed as an experimental system and Internet accounts were highly restricted, mainly to computer scientists.⁷⁵ However, not long after the new technology of the Internet was introduced into China, Chen and her husband advertised their business on the Internet with the help of others. Although they did not have their own computer and had to go to Internet cafés to access the Internet at that time, the couple was among the first Chinese people to make use of the new technology. In 1994, when the Internet became more pervasive in China, the couple registered their own website to promote their products. They were, again, among the first to do so in China.

Since then, the Internet has become a major means for them to obtain information and communicate with clients. With a more effective communication network, their business developed considerably. By 2002, their seedling nursery had developed from the original area of 600 *mu*⁷⁶ into a larger area of 6,000 *mu*. By that time, their business was constrained within the one province of Sichuan. But soon the modern means of communications provided them with an opportunity to expand their enterprise into an inter-provincial business. In 2002, the couple learnt from the website of the Ministry of Forestry that the Central Government sought

⁷⁵ Bryce T McIntyre 'Let a hundred modems bloom: the Internet in today's China' in Sandhya Rao and Bruce C. Klopstein (ed) *Cyberpath to Development in Asia: Issues and Challenges* Praeger, Westport, 2001, p.68.

⁷⁶ One *mu* equals to 667 square metres.

to improve the environmental conditions of the western provinces and intended to develop ecological forestry in Ningxia Province. A favourable policy was that with every *mu* of ecological forest, the planter could get a subsidy of 50 *yuan* from the government. Chen and her husband soon took the opportunity and invested 2 million *yuan* to set up a branch in Ningxia to engage in ecological forestry. In 2004, after seeing the information on its website that the Ministry of Forestry would encourage the development of ecologic forestry in Xinjiang, they expanded their business to Xinjiang. Now the couple's enterprise has developed into one with a capital of 150 million *yuan*.

Work Experience

‘Since China’s opening and reform, social stratification has changed. [...] Many people are frequently floating among different ownership systems, different trades and different regions. People’s profession and identity are always changing. Such changes will continue.’

---Jiang Zemin ⁷⁷

Table 8.7 provides details of the previous occupations of the interviewees before the establishment of their enterprises. The interview results show that the Mianyang interviewees had varied professional backgrounds in agriculture, industry, beauty treatment/hair dressing, education, management, business, medicine, law and business. Corresponding to their higher education level, as high as 25 percent of these women reported they had been professionals, including librarians, teachers, translators, technicians, doctors/nurses or lawyers/law-officers. These women’s professional background and experience in management also stands out. Twelve of these women used to be employed as business manager/operators. And another three reported they had their own business before the establishment of their current enterprises. Presumably, they obtained knowledge in administration and business from such occupations. Generally, the

⁷⁷ Jiang Zemin *Lun ‘Sange Daibiao’* [‘Discussion on “the Three Represents”’] Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, Beijing, 2001, p.168.

data seem to suggest that those women in Mianyang were advantaged by their professional and management backgrounds.

Table 8.7 Mianyang interviewees: Previous profession

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Women enterprise owners</i>	<i>Wives of male enterprise owners</i>	<i>Other women leaders</i>	<i>Total</i>
Peasant/rural housewife		2 (10%)		2 (3.6%)
Worker	9 (42.9%)	7 (35%)	5 (33.3%)	21 (37.5%)
Opera singer		1 (5%)		1 (2.8%)
Professional	4 (19.0%)	6 (30%)	4 (26.7%)	14 (25%)
Cadre	1 (4.8%)	2 (10%)		3 (5.4%)
Business people	7 (33.3%)	2 (10%)	6 (40%)	15 (26.8%)
Total	21	20	15	56

The three categories of interviewees are not clearly differentiated in terms of their work experience, except that less wives of enterprise owners had a background as managerial professionals or manager/operators than the women enterprise owners and those taking management positions in their enterprises. It seems to suggest that, not unreasonably, managerial background matters when women set up their own business or look for leading positions in other enterprises.

Some (25 out of 56) of the Mianyang interviewees' work experience describes an upward tendency of transferring from manual labour to white-collar professions, from lower to higher positions, and from employees to employers. Tian, for example, was wife of a farm owner. In 1979, after finishing high school, she joined the labour force to become a worker in a silk factory in Zongjiang. In 1987, she was transferred to another silk factory and was promoted as deputy workshop leader, because of her competence. In 1996, the factory where she worked went bankrupt, so Tian applied for a position at Mianyang PPCC and was accepted. In 1998, she was promoted to be a department director at Mianyang PPCC. She remained in this position when her husband set up his business in 2002. Another interviewee, Zhang, though not having a manual labour background, also showed a similar upward tendency in her work experience. After graduating from university in 1991, Zhang was assigned to work at the Changhong Group as a technician. Later on, she was promoted to be a chief technician. Not long after, she was promoted again to work as an assistant department director. In 2001, 10

years after she started her career at Changhong, she became the director of a subordinate factory of the group. Another interviewee Zhang left school in 1993. After that she was engaged in short-period casual employments such as recyclable garbage purchaser, worker at a firecrackers factory and then a plastics factory, keeper of a game player shop and shop assistant of a non-staple food shop. One year later, she started to work at a hairdressing salon as an apprentice to learn beauty and hair treatment. In 1997, she set up her own business on the basis of her savings and skills.

'Xiahai' and 'Xiagang'

When the Mianyang interviewees were asked to reflect on the start of their businesses, two expressions were much in evidence: *'xiahai'* (下海) and *'xiagang'* (下岗). Both reflect the process of China's economic reform.

In 1992 and 1993, new expressions were created in the Chinese language. One such expression is *'xiahai'* ('jumping into the sea'), meaning to leave the firm and life-long tenure in the work unit in order to take up a private occupation.⁷⁸ Being inspired by Deng Xiaoping's speech when inspecting South China in 1992 which encouraged people to be more daring in taking advantage of China's reform and opening, cadres, state-owned factory workers, school teachers and many others who had permanent positions voluntarily quit their work to 'jump into the sea of business'. During the interviews, seven of the Mianyang interviewees reported that they too had been daring 'jumpers' who quit their more secure jobs as factory workers, technicians, school teachers, government officials and doctors in order to engage in business in the early 1990s.

Deng, the owner of a beauty treatment school and a beauty surgery clinic, reported that she used to be a doctor in a hospital in Guangyuan City, Sichuan. In 1992, she

⁷⁸ Flemming Christiansen and Klara Foti 'Transitions from the public to the private: different strategies for the labour market in the transforming Chinese and Hungarian economies' in Gerry Rodgers, Klara Foti, Laurids Lauridsen and Laurids Fauridsen (ed) *The Institutional Approach to Labour and Development* Routledge, London, 1996, p.218.

was chosen as a member of a delegation organized by the local Youth League Committee and Youth Association to inspect China's southern coastal area. The delegation visited the more economically-developed cities of Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Guilin. Deng said, 'I was very much inspired by the economic reform carried on in those cities'. On the one hand, 'I saw the vigorous economic development over there, while it was inanimate here (in Sichuan)'. On the other hand, 'I felt I couldn't exert all my ability in my work unit'. So Deng 'decided to come out and achieve my self-value'. Shortly after the inspection tour, she quit her job and set up a beauty salon. Nowadays, her business has grown into one with a capital of 600,000 *yuan*, some twelve times that of her starting fund.

Another interviewee, Ren, used to work at a state-owned factory. She started her work as a technical worker in 1980. Later on, because of her capabilities, she was promoted to be the secretary of the factory's Youth League. By the end of 1992, she had become a department director in charge of the factory's client reception. Although it was almost certain that Ren would be promoted to higher positions, she quit her job and 'jumped into the sea' in 1993, 'because I didn't have freedom and felt depressed in the factory'. After giving up her 'iron rice bowl'⁷⁹ Ren went to work as a manager of a private real estate company. Her venture turned out to be successful. Now she is a senior manager and shareholder of a private enterprise with a capital of more than 100 million *yuan*.

Over the past two decades, the contribution of state-owned enterprises to China's total industrial output has declined significantly.⁸⁰ To reduce the unwieldy state-owned sector, in 1995, the Central government began privatizing, closing, and declaring bankrupt small state-owned enterprises and collective enterprises. After 1999, the government applied these same policies to medium sized state-owned enterprises and some large ones. Such reforms result in a great number of '*xiagang*' (laid-off) workers. In the absence of an adequate welfare

⁷⁹ The 'iron rice bowl' is a Chinese idiom referring to the system of guaranteed lifetime employment in state enterprises.

⁸⁰ See Edward S Steinfeld *Forging Reform in China: The Fate of State-owned Industry* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.

system and a favourable reemployment environment, for the majority of these workers, to be laid-off puts them in a serious economic plight.⁸¹ However, for a minority of them, ‘*xiagang*’ offers opportunities, since the market rewards individual effort and capability.

In order to improve the difficult reemployment environment, governments at both the central and local levels enact numerous policies to help laid-off workers secure new jobs. One common practice is to offer a tax reduction or exemption to those firms that hire laid-off workers or to self-employed laid-off workers. In addition to implementing this policy, many local governments also gave such firms favourable treatment, such as cheap or free access to business sites and electricity. Other policies include the provision of reemployment capital and free or subsidized use of state assets such as land.⁸² By taking advantage of such policies and exerting themselves some workers manage to succeed after being laid-off. Two of the Mianyang entrepreneurs interviewed reported such stories. Yongshun Cai revealed in his book that ‘due to the lack of skills and funds, most self-employed laid-off workers ran the same type of business,’ largely restaurants and retail businesses.⁸³ However, those interviewed in Mianyang have shown more creativity and daring in choosing their types of business.

Yang started to work at a clothes factory as an ‘underage worker’ when she was sixteen years old. After working there for nine years, the factory where she worked was declared bankrupt and consequently Yang was laid-off. ‘In the first three years after “*xiagang*”, I tried all kinds of employments. I sold shoes and jewellery, worked as an operator at a paging centre and then became an accountant at a company selling toilet-ware’. In order to improve the economic condition of her family, she started an ice-cream wholesale business in her neighbourhood in 1999, with a capital of 20,000 *yuan* provided by her parents. Three months later, inspired by a houseware store in the neighbourhood, Yang switched to the houseware business, with a further investment of 25,000 *yuan*

⁸¹ Cai Yongshun *State and Laid-Off Workers in Reform China: The Silence and Collective Action of the Retrenched* Rouledge, Abingdon, 2006.

⁸² Cai Yongshun, 2006.

⁸³ Cai Yongshun, 2006, p.25.

from her parents. However, due to severe competition in the trade, Yang's store did not make much profit and she started to look for another type of business. 'This time I wanted to find a more permanent engagement'. In 2003, after careful consideration, she chose environmental protection as her new focus. As a laid-off worker, Yang received help and support from the Mianyang Industrial and Commercial Administration Bureau and Mianyang Business-Establishing Service Centre in the establishment of her environmental protection technology company.

Shen was laid-off from a state-owned enterprise in 1999. 'At that time, I felt society had abandoned me. On the first Women's Day after I was laid-off, I walked past the gate of the factory and was surprised to find people celebrating the day. I realized the work unit didn't notify me and my husband (who worked at the same factory) didn't let me know either. I felt lost and burst into tears'. After then, Shen determined to start her business in order to 'find my lost self'. She first took up retail business, but was cheated and lost her money. After due consideration, she changed to a funeral and interment business—'a business that others find undesirable'. Like Yang, she received help from the local employment centre. This time, Shen's effort was not futile. In 2004, Shen was recognized nationally at the Reemployment Commending Ceremony organized by the Ministry of Labour and was received by Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. During the interview, Shen appeared not to be the helpless and lost laid-off worker anymore. She said confidently, 'my action has touched the society. (When seeing my success) People would think, "whatever Shen can do, I can do as well"'. Shen did not feel abandoned either. 'As long as you sustain the effort, you will certainly receive attention from the government'.

* * *

Compared with their Jiaocheng and Qiongsan counterparts, the interviewees in Mianyang were wealthier, better educated and more managerially experienced. Firstly, most of these women were operating medium-sized or larger enterprises, with a focus on manufacturing, as well as science and technology. Secondly, they had a considerable background in higher education. Thirdly, corresponding to

their educational background, the Mianyang interviewees' experience in professional jobs and management experience also stands out.

Unlike the Jiaocheng interviewees, the women interviewed in Mianyang seemed to have been more mobile. However, unlike the interviewees in Qiongsan, those in Mianyang migrated more within the province of Sichuan rather than across different provinces. The migration pattern of the Mianyang interviewees could be seen as the result of the city's development as a science and technology centre and its prosperity as the second important economic centre of the province.

The educational and professional experience of the Mianyang interviewees reflects the impact of social change in China after the Cultural Revolution. Educational reform has brought the introduction of vocational education and adult education. Economic reform has resulted in the growth of private businesses alongside state-owned enterprise reform.

The interviews conducted in Mianyang have also revealed how knowledge facilitated the increase of wealth, achieved through cooperation between enterprises and research institutions or individual researchers.

The challenges of work and family

Sichuan women have a reputation for being hardworking and tough.¹ That would seem to be one reason maids from Sichuan are often popular in the house-keeping market elsewhere around China in the homes of the new rich. At home, they are good ‘assistants of their husbands and teachers of their children’, while ‘at work they are diligent and capable. Sometimes they even have a much broader view than men.’² It is also claimed that Sichuan women maintain the tradition that ‘men are in charge of outside affairs and women in charge of inside (that is household) affairs’.³ There is though a new twist. Sichuan women’s ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ division is that ‘when being with their husbands alone, they are dominant, but in front of others they are obedient’.⁴ It is said that ‘Sichuan women are so clever that they know men are vain. (By playing the supporting role in front of others) they make their husbands servile at home’.⁵ By looking at Mianyang interviewees’ responsibilities at work and in their families, this chapter hopes to shed some light on the roles these women play. As in the investigation of women in Jiaocheng and Qiongsan, it reports on responses in interviews (undertaken this time in Mianyang) with enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners, and women managers to questions about the origin of the enterprise, ownership of the enterprise, the role of the interviewee in the enterprise, and the provision of housework.

¹ Zhu Yu ‘Sanba tebie cehua: fanxian Sichuan Nüren’ [‘Special topic for Women’s Day: discovering Sichuan women’], in *Sichuan Ribao* [Sichuan Daily] 8 March 2004.

² ‘Jiedu Sichuan nüren: wo de fengqing ni yongyuan doudong’ [‘Understanding Sichuan women: you always know my charms’] at www.sc.xinhuanet.com/content/2005-08/09/content_4837108.htm.

³ ‘Jiedu Sichuan nüren: wo de fengqing ni yongyuan doudong’ [‘Understanding Sichuan women: you always know my charms’] at www.sc.xinhuanet.com/content/2005-08/09/content_4837108.htm.

⁴ ‘Jiedu Sichuan nüren: wo de fengqing ni yongyuan doudong’ [‘Understanding Sichuan women: you always know my charms’] at www.sc.xinhuanet.com/content/2005-08/09/content_4837108.htm.

⁵ Gu Fei ‘Shenzhen nüren zhi Sichuan ban: yiban shi meili, yiban shi mala’ [‘Sichuan women in Shenzhen: beautiful and spicy’] at <http://a.travel.21cn.com:8080/lieqi/lieqidetail.php?id=36398>.

The development of the original idea for the business

Table 9.1 details whether the original idea for the business was developed by the women or their husbands alone, or through a joint effort of the wife and the husband, or by a third party. Except for two interviewees where the information is not available, 19 out of the 54 (33.9 percent) interviewees worked in enterprises where the business was established as the result of their own idea. Eight interviewees' enterprises were the result of their husband's suggestion. Six couples developed an idea for the business together; and 21 of the interviewees worked in businesses which had come from ideas developed by a third party.

As might be expected, given that not all the women interviewees worked in their own or their family's own business, there were different pathways to the development of the original business idea that generated the enterprise in which they now worked. More than three quarters (16 out of 21) of the female enterprise owners had developed the idea by themselves, and none of them reported that their husband participated in the establishment of the business. The second category, wives of enterprise owners, reported that only three (out of 20) of their enterprises were established from their idea. Five of these women's businesses were established based on a joint effort between husband and wife. The interview results appear to suggest that some of the Mianyang interviewees were still affected by the practice of having the husband represent the family to the outside world.⁶ Although these women were involved in the development of the original business idea, they chose to have their husbands present themselves on the public stage as the legal owners of the business.

⁶ Margery Wolf, 1985, p.192.

Table 9.1 Mianyang interviewees: Who Developed the Original Idea for the Business?

<i>Category</i>	<i>Women's own idea</i>	<i>Husband's idea</i>	<i>Couple developed the idea together</i>	<i>Third party's idea</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	16 (76.2%)			5 (23.8%)		21
Wife of enterprise owner	3 (15%)	8 (40%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	20
Manager			1 (6.7%)	14 (93.3%)		15
Total	19 (33.9%)	8 (14.3%)	6 (10.7%)	21 (37.5%)	2 (3.6%)	56

Shang was wife of the owner of a trading company. The business started in 1996, based on an idea developed by Shang alone. She was in charge of business operations as well, while her husband 'is not responsible for anything but money'. But she still preferred to have her husband represent the enterprise in the outside world. The company was registered under Shang's husband's name from the beginning, despite Shang admitting that 'many people only know me (as the owner of the business), so it is not very convenient to have him as the legal owner'.

Another interviewee, Zhang, had a similar situation. Her electronics company was established in 2003, on the basis of Zhang's idea. When asked about the business operation, Zhang revealed that she was the one to make major decisions and she held more than 90 percent of the company's shares in her own right. However, her husband was the one who appeared in public, as the chair of the board of directors of the company.

Two of the Mianyang interviewees' enterprises started as joint ventures between themselves and other parties, the original idea being developed by the latter. Several years later, the business partners withdrew their fund and left the interviewees or their husbands as owners and operators.

The last category of interviewees, women who work as managers in enterprises, have not surprisingly played little role in the development of the business in

which they now work. Fourteen of the enterprises with which they were associated were established on the basis of an idea developed by a third party. This was largely the product of a situation where eight of these women had been staff members of state-owned or collective enterprises, and where the original idea for the enterprise had come from either government or the collective. A further six had been recruited to work in private enterprises as managers and leaders, and had not been involved in the business at its establishment either. The only exception was Wu, the shareholder of a mobile phone shop, who developed the original idea for the business together with her husband. Because of the lack of funds, they had been forced to invite two investor partners to join the business. Though the shop was not registered under Wu or her husband's name, she took an active role in the business.

The interviews results revealed another pattern: the interviewees or their husbands had started their business by growing out of the state into the private sector. During the last two decades, China has seen the reform of state-owned and collective enterprises.⁷ Beginning in 1985, the state government began to lease and sell some small state-owned enterprises to individuals. In March 1993 the First Session of the Eighth National People's Congress endorsed the idea of leasing or selling small state-owned enterprises to collective enterprises or private individuals. In reality, the majority of such small state-owned enterprises were being transferred into private activities.⁸ The 15th National Party Congress in 1997 once again highlighted the importance of the reform of state-owned enterprises through the introduction of schemes for share-holding, leasing, contracting, and selling.⁹ Four interviewees in Mianyang (or their husbands) had moved from

⁷ See Shahid Yusuf, Kaoru Nabeshima and Dwight H. Perkins *Under New Ownership: Privatizing China's State-owned Enterprises* Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2006.; Edward S Steinfeld, 1998; Chu-Yuan Cheng 'Mainland China's Modernization and Economic Reform: Process, Consequences, and prospects' in Bih-Jaw Lin and James T. Myers (ed) *Forces for Change in Contemporary China*, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1997.

⁸ Wang Yanlai *China's Economic Development and Democratization* Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, 2003.

⁹ Jiang Zemin 'Gaoju Deng Xiaoping lilun weida aizhi, ba jianshe zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi shiye quanmian tuixiang 21 shiji' ['Hold high the great flag of Deng Xiaoping's theories and promote the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics'] in Zhonggong Zhongyang Wenxian Yanjiushi [The CCP Central Documentary Research Office] *Shiwu Da Yilai Zhongyao Wenxian Xuanbian* [Selection of Important Documents Since the 15th National Party Congress] Renmin Chubanshe, Beijing, 2000, p.23.

being directors of state-owned enterprises into the owners of private enterprises in this way.

Jing was transferred from her position as a cadre of Mianyang CCP Committee Publicity Department to work at one of the city government's newly founded companies in 1994. Three years later, when the company was being encouraged to separate from the government, the business was sold and official appointments ended. As a result, Jing resigned her public position, bought shares in the company and became the enterprise's owner.¹⁰

Yao started to work at a state-owned traditional Chinese medicine factory in 1990, as the factory director and named legal official. In 2000, in the high tide of state-owned enterprise ownership reform, her factory was contracted out, with Yao becoming the contractor. In 2004, when the factory's reform was taken further, Yao bought it outright and became the private owner of the business. Over the last 15 years, the factory has developed from one with an investment of 300,000 *yuan* into one with a registration capital of some 5 million *yuan*.

Ying used to be an accountant of a department of Mianyang City Government. In 1994, when the government established a real estate company, she was transferred to work in the company as the director. In 1998, a share-holding system was adopted in the company in order to promote its separation from the government. Consequently, Ying bought 30 percent of the company's shares, while Mianyang Government held 60 percent. With the further withdrawal of state-owned capital, the reform was implemented further. By the time when she was interviewed, Ying held 51 percent of the shares and was the major shareholder, chair of the board of directors and general manager of the company. At the same time, the city government had reduced its holdings to less than 20 percent of the shares.

Xie's husband used to be a cadre of Mianyang Government. In 1994, Mianyang City Government established a company with a combined investment of several

¹⁰ See page 260 for the fuller story of Jing's career.

million *yuan* from the government itself, a real estate company and China Construction Bank. Xie's husband was transferred to work at the company as its director. In 2000, the two investors - the real estate company and the China Construction Bank - withdrew their capital, and Xie and her husband bought their shares. Xie's husband became the legal nominee of the company and the chair of its board of directors. Together the couple held shares of five to six million *yuan*.

The operation and management of the business

Table 9.2 illustrates the interviewees' operation and management responsibilities in the business operation. As shown throughout Table 9.2, overall these women took an active role in the operation and management of their enterprises. The overwhelming majority reported that they were involved in making decisions on a range of strategic and senior management tasks, including purchasing, sales, personnel and finance in their enterprises. The interviewees' executive participation in production was comparatively low. A possible reason for this might be that 25 of their enterprises were engaged in retail and service industries which do not involve production processes.

On a closer look, the three categories of interviewees exhibited significant differences in the exercise of their initiative in the business. The category of female enterprise owners had a high participation rate in all the business management responsibilities of purchasing, sales, personnel and finance (85.7 percent, 90.5 percent, 95.2 percent and 90.5 percent respectively). This suggests that these women were playing a central role in their enterprises.

In comparison, as a category the wives of enterprise owners played a less active role in business operation and management, with only 25 percent (five out of 20), 30 percent (six out of 20), and 25 percent (five out of 20) responsible alone for decisions on purchasing, sales and personnel respectively. A few of this category of interviewees shared these responsibilities with their husbands. Finance is a common responsibility shouldered by these women in their husbands' enterprises,

with 45 percent (nine out of 20) taking care of financial affairs in the enterprises either by themselves or together with their husbands. It suggests that male private enterprise owners tend to entrust their wives with the crucial financial control, which happened in all the three localities.

Table 9.2 Mianyang interviewees: Division of enterprise responsibilities

	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee's husband'</i>	<i>Interviewee and husband</i>	<i>Third party</i>	<i>No one</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Purchasing</i>							
Enterprise owner	18 (85.7%)				3 (14.3%)		21
Wife of enterprise owner	5 (25%)	10 (50%)	2 (10%)			3 (15%)	20
Manager	4 (26.7%)			10 (66.7%)		1 (6.7%)	15
Total	27 (48.2%)	10 (17.9%)	2 (3.6%)	10 (17.9%)	3 (5.4%)	4 (7.1%)	56
<i>Sales</i>							
Enterprise owner	19 (90.5%)	1 (4.8%)		1 (4.8%)			21
Wife of enterprise owner	6 (30%)	13 (65%)	1 (5%)				20
Manager	5 (33.3%)			10 (66.7%)			15
Total	30 (53.6%)	14 (25%)	1 (1.8%)	11 (19.6%)			56
<i>Production</i>							
Enterprise owner	7 (33.3%)				14 (66.7%)		21
Wife of enterprise owner	2 (10%)	10 (50%)	2 (10%)		6 (30%)		20
Manager	3 (20%)			7 (46.7%)	5 (33.3%)		15
Total	12 (21.4%)	10 (17.9%)	2 (3.6%)	7 (12.5%)	25 (44.6%)		56

<i>Personnel</i>					
Enterprise owner	20 (95.2%)			1 (4.8%)	21
Wife of enterprise owner	5 (25%)	11 (55%)	4 (20%)		20
Manager	8 (53.3%)			7 (46.7%)	15
Total	33 (58.9%)	11 (19.7%)	4 (7.1%)	8 (14.3%)	56
<i>Finance</i>					
Enterprise owner	19 (90.5%)			2 (9.5%)	21
Wife of enterprise owner	8 (40%)	11 (55%)	1 (5%)		20
Manager	7 (46.7%)			8 (53.3%)	15
Total	34 (60.7%)	11 (19.7%)	1 (1.8%)	10 (17.9%)	56

Those women who work in the enterprises as leaders or managers were not actively involved in the purchasing and sales either. This corresponds to their positions as only senior employees of the enterprises, not dealing directly with those aspects of business operation (which remained the prime responsibility of the owner.) The most usual leadership tasks for them at work were management of personnel and financial matters (53.3 percent and 46.7 percent respectively).

As has been revealed by published research on Chinese women, there has long been the traditional gender division of labour that sees ‘man outside and women inside’ the home.¹¹ The Mianyang interviewees seemed to be hardly affected by the tradition. Firstly, none of the Mianyang interviewees mentioned the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ labour division when describing their responsibilities. Moreover, unlike their Jiaocheng counterparts, the interview results show that the Mianyang women did not regard purchasing as ‘men’s work’, although it does involve

¹¹ Tamara Jacka, 1997; Barbara Entwisle and Gail E. Henderson, 2000; Arianne M Gaetano and Tamara Jacka (ed) *On the Move: Women and Rural-to-Urban Migration in Contemporary China*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2004; Wang Zheng ‘Gender and Maoist urban reorganization’ in Bryna Goodman and Wendy Larson (ed) *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labour and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China* Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, London, 2005.

dealing with the world outside of the enterprise. It seems possible that Mianyang interviewees' greater wealth had made a difference here.

Enterprise decision-making

The Mianyang interviewees were asked to identify the responsibility of strategic decision-making in their enterprise, in order to clarify the extent to which they exert leadership. As is shown in Table 9.3, these women played a prominent role in making important decisions about reinvestment and new project development. The interview results show that a majority of 55.4 percent (31 out of 56) of the interviewees directed such processes, either alone or jointly with their husbands.

Comparing the three categories of women, female enterprise owners were again the most active group in enterprise strategic decision-making. An overwhelming 95.2 percent (20 out of 21) of these women were solely responsible for strategic planning in their enterprise. The only exception was an interviewee (Zhang) who established an advertising company jointly with friends in 1998. The business was registered under Zhang's name and Zhang was the general director. However, she almost did not participate in the operation of the business at all. She said, 'I'm not in charge of any decision making at all. The business is managed by my friends. I only go there occasionally to meet old clients'. Zhang was the only one of this category who reported that she did not to make strategic planning for her enterprise. Her inactive participation could be the result of her other role locally as a well-know lawyer. Her work, as well as her position as a member of the Mianyang PPCC, had left her too busy to take detailed care of the business on a regular basis.

Wives of enterprise owners, although not actively involved in the operations of the business, had nonetheless a surprisingly high participation rate in the enterprises' strategic planning. Nine out of the 20 were involved in making strategic decisions. Notably, only three of them made such decisions alone, while

in their own reports the other six were involved in decision-making together with their husband.

Table 9.3 Mianyang interviewees: Person responsible for strategic planning in the enterprise

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee's husband'</i>	<i>Interviewee and husband</i>	<i>Third party</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	20 (95.2%)			1 (4.8%)		21
Wife of enterprise owner	3 (15%)	10 (50%)	6 (30%)		1 (5%)	20
Manager	2 (13.3%)			13 (86.7%)		15
Total	25 (44.6%)	10 (17.9%)	6 (10.7%)	14 (25%)	1 (1.8%)	56

The last category of interviewees, those working in enterprises as senior leaders or managers, seemed not to have much to say when it comes to strategic planning in their enterprises. This is understandable, as most of them were senior managers and would not be expected generally to be involved in strategic planning. Two interviewees, however, were solely responsible for their enterprises' strategic planning. Both of them were also shareholders and co-owners of the business concerned. Although these women were the functional owners of the enterprises, according to the approach of this research that they were categorized as managers of the enterprises.

During interviews, the women were asked, 'When you feel you have a difficult decision to make or action to take, who do you go to for advice?' Table 9.4 shows that the Mianyang interviewees had a variety of sources for advice, including their husband, other family members, friends or colleagues. Eight of these women either had no one to seek advice from, or did not like to ask for others' help. The interviewees' husband tended to be the most important source for support in the situation of difficulty, as 37.5 percent (21 out of 56) of the interviewees reported that they would seek their husbands' advice and suggestions when encountering difficulties at work. Colleagues were the second important source for advice, as 17 out of the 56 interviewees reported seeking advice from colleagues.

As is indicated by Table 9.4, ten female enterprise owners reported seeking advice from their husbands. Another major source of advice for them was their colleagues. Six of these women reported that they would discuss their difficulties with their senior employees, instead of their husband, as their husband did not participate in the business at all.

Table 9.4 Mianyang interviewees: Main advisor to the interviewee

<i>Category</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Friend</i>	<i>Colleague</i>	<i>No one</i>	<i>Situation not encountered</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	10 (47.6%)		1 (4.8%)	6 (28.6%)	4 (19.0%)		21
Wife of enterprise owner	10 (50%)	1 (5%)			2 (10%)	7 (35%)	20
Manager	1 (6.7%)		1 (6.7%)	11 (73.3%)	2 (13.3%)		15
Total	21 (37.5%)	1 (1.8%)	2 (3.6%)	17 (30.4%)	8 (14.3%)	7 (12.5%)	56

The husband was also the major source of advice and suggestion for wives of enterprise owners, when they encountered difficulties in the business operation. But none of these women had the same interaction with employees of the enterprises. Seven wives of enterprise owners were identified as not having any positions in their husband's enterprise and thus no experience of encountering difficulties. However, this does not mean that these women were completely held back from the operation of the business. Most of these women (five out of seven) said that when their husband encountered difficulties in the business, they themselves (the wife) served as the source of advice.

For those women who had leadership positions in enterprises as managers, it seems that most of them preferred to discuss their problems at work with their bosses, subordinates or fellow leaders, rather than with their husband. Only Wu, the shareholder of a mobile phone shop who had developed the original idea for the business together with her husband, reported she discuss her work problems with her husband.

In the interviews, the Interviewees were asked, 'After discussion, if there are different opinions, who is the person to make final decisions?' As detailed in

Table 9.5, an impressive majority of 67.9 percent (38 out of 56) of the Mianyang interviewees reported they were responsible for final ‘executive’ decisions in the enterprise either by themselves or jointly with their husbands, when there were different opinions regarding a certain plan or action. In no cases were the interviewees’ family members or friends involved. While this could certainly have been the case, these women’s words should be taken with cautiousness, as this could simply be self-boosting after all.

Table 9.5 shows that after discussion, an apparent majority (81.0 percent) of the enterprise owners would make the final decision alone and two would do so together with their husbands. Only two of them reported that their husbands were responsible for such decisions. The interview results seem to suggest that husbands of these enterprise owners were playing an inactive part in the final decision-making, while again we need to retain a degree of scepticism here.

Table 9.5 Mianyang interviewees: Final arbiter in enterprise

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee’s husband’</i>	<i>Interviewee and husband</i>	<i>Colleague</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	17 (81.0%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (9.5%)		21
Wife of enterprise owner	4 (20%)	8 (40%)	8 (40%)		20
Manager	6 (40%)		1 (6.7%)	8 (53.3%)	15
Total	27 (48.2%)	10 (17.9%)	11 (19.6%)	8 (14.3%)	56

Although the category of wives of enterprise owners did not have as much initiative (as the female enterprise owners) they also played an active role in making final decisions. The interviews revealed that some 60 percent of these women made final decisions either alone or jointly with their husbands (or at least these interviewees thought they were making the final decisions).

For those who work in the enterprises as senior managers, although the roles they play in leadership were limited, they seemed to have a great potential for final decision making. Six of the fifteen (40 percent) reported that they were able to

make final decisions alone. But still a majority (53.3 percent) were not in a position to take such decisions and had to listen to their supervisors' direction.

The interviews with Mianyang women entrepreneurs show that the majority of wives of enterprise owners participated in business operations to some extent. In comparison, the husbands of enterprise owners seemed to play a much less active role in their wives' enterprises. Only three of the husbands of female enterprise owners had positions in their wives' enterprises, but decision-making was invariably the wife's responsibility.

For example, Mao was the owner and operator of a medical instrument company. She was running the business together with her husband. All the major decisions in the business operation were made by Mao, while her husband was only in charge of new product development. Although Mao discussed matters with her husband when she encountered difficulties in the business, after discussion she was 'certainly the one to make the final decisions'.

Another interviewee, Shen, a laid-off worker, set up her domestic service company in 1999. Five years later, her husband was also laid-off from his factory. So Shen had him work in her company as the general manager, while she herself was the chair of the board of directors. Shen's husband is in charge of the company's daily operation, but all the major decisions are made by Shen alone.

Similarly, Jiang was the owner of a restaurant chain. The business was established by Jiang in 1987 when her husband was working at a state-owned factory. In 1993, he quit his job to join her company. When interviewed Jiang was the chair of the board of directors and her husband a branch manager. Although the couple discussed their work together, Jiang was the one to make the final and executive decisions for the enterprise.

The Mianyang interview results suggest that female enterprise owners tend to keep their husbands away from the business, while there is a joint effort of

husband and wife in male enterprise owners' businesses. For those women who are working in enterprises as managers, although they play a necessarily limited role in the business operation, they nonetheless exercise considerable initiative. In general, these women have high status in their enterprises.

Advantages and disadvantages of women's involvement in business

Despite their apparent leadership positions in the enterprises, these women did not seem to have much self-assurance when reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages of women's involvement in the establishment and development of enterprises. Only two of the 56 interviewees thought women were totally advantaged and had no disadvantages in business operations. Another six of them thought women and men were equal and women had neither advantages nor disadvantages in business. On the other hand, fifteen interviewees thought women were disadvantaged and had no clear advantages.

During the interviews, the most frequently mentioned female advantage in business was said to be their personality. Twenty of the women interviewed described themselves as careful, considerate, tender, caring and amiable, which corresponds to the conventional stereotype of the Chinese female.¹² Such virtues, as reported by these women entrepreneurs, enabled them to 'treat their employees or subordinates as family members and run their enterprises as families'.¹³ Moreover, five interviewees said women were more advantaged in certain trades (notably the service industries and clothing) as they have better knowledge of the business.

Twelve of the interviewees revealed that as females, they received special favours and support from male colleagues and cadres when doing business. Such favour, of course, worked to these women's advantage. One of the interviewees, Ying, said, 'it is easier for women to do things outside—you know what I mean'.

¹² Elizabeth Croll, 1983.

¹³ Li, interviewed on 27 July, 2005; Che, interviewed on 11 October, 2005; Jiang, interviewed on 13 October, 2005.

Another interviewee, Lin, was more straightforward. She admitted that ‘youth and beauty are a woman’s passport’.

Three interviewees said that it was easier for women to get recognition from society, and that individual woman’s success would more likely bring attention, admiration and honour. This might help explain these women’s active political participation, which seems to have been a particular feature of life in Mianyang, and which will be discussed in the following chapter.

As to the disadvantages for women entrepreneurs, eleven interviewees mentioned that physical strength and energy was their weak point, which limited the development of their business. Moreover, women holding leadership positions in business were also commonly regarded (by 15 interviewees) as a group who were timid, indecisive, short-sighted and less capable of logical thinking, which made them less successful than their male counterparts.

Interestingly, on the one hand, the Mianyang interviewees thought one of their advantages in business operation was their communication skills, as six of them said that it was easier for women to deal with costumers and business partners, as they were more communicative and articulate. However, on the other hand, they also thought one of women entrepreneurs’ weak points was communication. The reason for such a polarized answer might lie in these women’s different individuality. Or it could suggest that communication is such a hard job for these women that while some of them were good at it, some did not even bother with it. Ten of the interviewees reflected that they found it hard to entertain customers, business partners and cadres outside their offices, as it was ‘inconvenient’ (to be read as inappropriate) for women to go to entertainment centres, and they did not drink and smoke and could not joke as freely as men. Moreover, socialization with males might cause gossip and innuendo, as well as jealousy from male customers, business partners and cadres’ wives.

The Mianyang women entrepreneurs' domestic responsibilities were also mentioned during interviews as a disadvantage hindering enterprise development.

Domestic Responsibility

In their study Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter concluded that 'A wife's independent income. [...] sometimes inadvertently put her in a seemingly more powerful position.'¹⁴ Do the Mianyang new rich women's higher social status, income and leadership roles in the enterprises have the same impact on their families? Or do their family roles hinder them from fulfilling their enterprise responsibilities, as some of the interviewees were just mentioned as having said? Although direct answers to these questions might be hard to obtain, they might also be indicated by the allocation of domestic tasks in these women's family. Traditionally, domestic tasks such as the preparation of food for the family, cleaning the house, washing family members' clothes, family shopping and child care have long been regarded as women's work in China.¹⁵ No matter whether they work or not and what job they have, 'for the majority of Chinese women, rural and urban, it is still within the context of the family and in their performance of familial roles that they are judged'.¹⁶

Apparently, the emphasis on women's domestic roles have to certain extent still had an impact on the Mianyang interviewees, as the dual tasks of business management and domestic responsibilities were also recognized by these women as a disadvantage that hindered the development of their business. Eight interviewees revealed during the interviews that their roles as wives and mothers had limited their development of work responsibilities.

Table 9.6 indicates who of the interviewee's family was responsible for domestic duties. 25 out of 56 (44.6 percent) of these women had to do housework in their

¹⁴Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter, 1988, p.179.

¹⁵ Tamara Jacka, 1997; Margery Wolf, 1985.

¹⁶ Margery Wolf, 1985, p. 182.

non-enterprise work time, either by themselves alone or with the help of others. The interview results show that they obtained considerable help from their husbands with domestic tasks. Compared with their Jiaocheng and Qiongsan counterparts, it was more common for these women to hire one or several maids to do the housework (41.1 percent, as opposed to 4.8 percent and 15.1 percent respectively), which corresponds to these interviewees' higher status in the community (to be discussed in next chapter) and greater wealth. Occasionally, parents and parents-in-law also served as sources of help. Eight of the interviewees reported that they had more than one source of help.

Female enterprise owners shared the least domestic tasks at home. This is not surprising, considering that these women played more crucial role in their enterprises than the other two categories of interviewees. This category also turned out to enjoy the most sources of support for housework, including husband, parents, parents-in-law and maids. An impressive majority (66.7 percent) of them had maids to do the work at home. Only four of this category of interviewees reported that they were required to undertake domestic tasks at home, alone or with help from other family members.

On the other hand, wives of enterprise owners — the category with the least business responsibilities — shared the heaviest burden of domestic responsibilities at home, as a majority of 70 percent (14 out of 20) of them were engaged in housework either alone or with others' help. Those who were working as managers in their enterprises were also troubled by domestic responsibilities. More than a half (eight out of 15) of this category reported that they did housework. Compared to female enterprise owners and wives of enterprise owners, these women received the most help from their husbands for these tasks. In general, the interview results seem to suggest an inverse ratio between the interviewees' responsibilities in the enterprises and their chores at home: those who shouldered more responsibilities in their enterprises participated less in domestic tasks.

Some interviewees seemed to have difficulties in maintaining a balance between their role as an enterprise owners/leaders and their role as ‘a virtuous wife and good mother’. Tian, the owner of a cosmetics chain said at the interview that she had stopped doing housework. She had a maid coming to clean her house regularly and her husband was taking care of all the daily domestic tasks. Her seven-year-old son was living with his parents-in-law and was sent over to Tian’s house for weekends every several weeks. She said, ‘I don’t see my son often. I’m too busy to take care of him’. Another interviewee Shen had a similar situation. Being the owner and director of a domestic service company, Shen was spending most of her time on her work and had to hire a maid to live with and take care of her seven-years-old daughter. Shen picked her daughter up from the maid’s place once a week so that they could spend some time together.

On the other hand, some interviewees put more emphasis on looking after their families rather than engaging in work for the enterprise they owned or were employed by. Wang was the owner of an art training school, with 14 staff members, more than 40 students and a registration capital of 300,000 *yuan*. Although the business was only established in 2005—one year before the interview was conducted, it was making a constant profit and growing. Wang was very confident that it would expand into one with an annual profit of 1 million *yuan*. ‘As long as I put effort in it,’ she said, ‘it will grow very fast’. However, she also revealed that, ‘I’m not very sure whether I want to run a larger-sized business, because it will take up too much of my time, that I would rather spend with my family’. Wang said that her family was her major focus, so she did not want it to be affected by her career. She scheduled her time according to the activities of her husband and daughter. ‘I only go out when my husband is out’.

Table 9.6 Mianyang interviewees: Who does the house work?

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee's husband</i>	<i>Interviewee and husband</i>	<i>Interviewee, husband and parents-in-law</i>	<i>Interviewee, parents and maid</i>	<i>Interviewee and parents-in-law</i>	<i>Interviewee and children</i>	<i>Husband and parents</i>	<i>Husband and maid</i>	<i>Husband, parents and maid</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Parents-in-law</i>	<i>Maid</i>	<i>Information not available</i>	<i>Total</i>
Enterprise owner	2 (9.5%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)		1 (4.8%)			1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	10 (47.6%)		21
Wife of enterprise owner	6 (30%)	1 (5%)	4 (20%)		1 (5%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)						5 (25%)		20
Leader/manager	4 (26.7%)	2 (13.3%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.7%)									4 (26.7%)	1 (6.7%)	15
Total	12 (21.4%)	4 (7.1%)	8 (14.3%)	1 (1.8%)	2 (3.6%)	2 (3.6%)	1 (1.8%)	1 (1.8%)	2 (3.6%)	1 (1.8%)	1 (1.8%)	1 (1.8%)	19 (33.9%)	1 (1.8%)	56

* * *

As was the case in Jiaocheng and Qiongsan, the women interviewed in Mianyang also had to shoulder the double burden of entrepreneurial responsibilities and domestic tasks. However, the Mianyang women showed more substantial involvement in the business operation, management and decision making of their enterprises, and turned to others more readily to obtain help with household work — often through the employment of maids and assistance.

In this respect, the category of enterprise owners were differentiated from the other two categories of interviewees, the wives of enterprise owners, and women managers. Women enterprise owners carried the most business responsibilities and had the least burden of housework. On the other hand, wives of enterprise owners, the category with comparatively less involvement in business operation, had the most household responsibilities.

Interview results suggest that for some of the interviewees, the roles of a successful business woman and a traditional ‘virtuous wife and good mother’ seem to be in conflict. When they found it hard to keep a balance between these two, some chose to emphasize their entrepreneurial responsibilities, while some tended to give up their business success in favour of their families.

Chapter 9

Women in politics

By looking at the Mianyang interviewees and their family members' CCP membership, Party-state leadership positions and other Party-state relationships, this chapter examines these new rich women's interaction with the local Party-state. Similar to the situation of interviewees in Jiaocheng and Mianyang, a close affiliation with the Party-state is essential in these women's business operation, because it not only ensures access to capital, resources and information, but might also suggest higher status and bring political security.

Personal relationships with government officials are certainly, an effective way to achieve closer operational integration with the Party-state. This can be illustrated by the story of Deng, the owner/operator of a vocational training school. During the interview, she told the research team that she had cultivated a good relationship with the local government through work. Deng's school cooperated with Mianyang Women's Federation to provide domestic service courses for girls seeking employment as maids. As a result many local officials asked for her help to find capable and reliable maids. When Deng Xiaoping's family asked the provincial governors of Sichuan to find them local maids who could cook authentic Sichuan dishes, they came to Deng's school. The one-hour interview with Deng was interrupted many times by calls from local officials. Deng talked with them over the phone as a friend.

At the same time, the interviews in Mianyang suggest that the women interviewee's connections with the Party-state were mainly obtained through their own political participation: they were members of the CCP, held leadership appointments in local government; and served in a variety of positions in the

Party-state. This was in contrast to the picture that emerged from interviews in both Jiaocheng and Qiongsan, where, on the whole, women only achieved such political status and security through their family connections, usually their father or their husband. Of course, this is not to say that in Mianyang too, the interviewee's family ties were also not another major source of Party-state connections.

Family members and CCP membership

Table 10.1 details the Mianyang new rich women and their family members' CCP membership. As the figures illustrate, the Mianyang interviewees were closely affiliated with the Party, both individually and through their families. 40.1 percent of these women reported themselves to be Party members. This percentage is significantly higher than the situation encountered amongst either Jiaocheng or Qiongsan interviewees (12.9 percent and 15.1 percent respectively). More impressively, it is more than seven times the CCP participation rate of the general population of China (5.4 percent) and 19 times that of China's female population (2.1 percent).

Table 10.1 Mianyang interviewees: Family members and CCP membership

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Sibling</i>	<i>Father-in-law</i>	<i>Mother-in-law</i>	<i>Sibling-In-law</i>
Enterprise owner	10 (47.6%)	10 (47.6%)	1 (4.8%)	12 (57.1%)	6 (28.6%)	7 (33.3%)	14 (66.7%)	3 (14.3%)	10 (47.6%)
Wife of enterprise owner	6 (30%)	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	7 (35%)	1 (5%)	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	6 (30%)
Manager	7 (46.7%)	6 (40%)		6 (40%)	2 (13.3%)	6 (40%)	8 (53.3%)	3 (20%)	2 (13.3%)
Total	23 (40.1%)	22 (39.3%)	3 (5.4%)	24 (42.9%)	9 (16.1%)	19 (33.9%)	27 (48.2%)	9 (16.1%)	18 (32.1%)

Like their Jiaocheng and Qiongsan counterparts, women interviewed in Mianyang were further connected with the Party through their parental and marital families, although these family connections were not much stronger than the ones these women directly enjoyed. 39.3 percent of these women's husbands were CCP members at the time when the interviews were conducted. This percentage is slight lower than that of the women interviewees themselves. One obvious explanation is that new rich women in Mianyang are more likely to have joined the CCP on their own initiative, separate from their husbands.

Father and father-in-law were, again, sources of substantial CCP connections, as 42.9 percent of these women had a father and 48.2 percent had a father-in-law who were CCP members. Moreover, 33.9 percent of these women reported at least one of their siblings and 32.1 percent reported at least one of their siblings-in-law were CCP members. Mothers and mothers-in-law of the Mianyang interviewees did not have as high CCP participation rates (16.1 percent in both categories). Nonetheless, the percentage is still higher than those of China's general and female population.

As to the next generation, 5.4 percent (three) reported that they had at least one child who was already a CCP member. This merely average proportion is of course misleading given that only 19 of the 56 interviewees had adult children at the time when interviews were conducted in Mianyang.¹ In effect 15.7% of the women interviewed who could had adult children who in turn were members of the CCP – a far higher proportion though one to be treated carefully since numbers are small. Across the generations then it is hard not to conclude that the Mianyang interviewees and their families were exceptionally well connected to the CCP.

¹ Aged 18 years or above when the interviews were conducted.

When the CCP participation rate of each of the three categories of interviewees is examined separately, as might be expected from the earlier studies of both Jiaocheng and Qiongsan, differences can be detected. Overall, compared with the general population, all the three categories had active interaction with the CCP individually. However, on a closer look, the categories of enterprise owners and managers had shown more initiative in joining the Party than wives of enterprise owners (47.6 percent and 46.7 percent respectively, as opposed to 30 percent). It is not hard to understand why enterprise owners had the highest CCP participation rate, because CCP membership always provides a measure of political security for the entrepreneur, and connections with the Party would be helpful when these women interact with the Party-state in the establishment and operation of their business. The high percentage of the category of managers with CCP membership can be explained too, as seven of the fifteen were taking leadership positions in state-owned or collective enterprises, where CCP membership is most usually a significant criterion for promotion.

The CCP connections these women gained through their family are also to be differentiated according to the category of interviewee. Again, enterprise owners appear to be the category of those interviewed with the most connections through the family to the Party. A high percentage had a father (57.1 percent) or a mother (28.6 percent) in the CCP. More over, four of this category reported that both their parents had CCP membership, while only one wife of enterprise owner and two managers had both parents being CCP members. The entrepreneurs' marriages had also substantially reinforced such connections, as the percentages of these women with husband, father-in-law and siblings-in-law in the Party were all impressively higher than for the other two categories of interviewees (47.6 percent, 66.7 percent and 47.6 percent, compared to 30 percent, 25 percent, 30 percent for wives of enterprise owners and 40 percent, 53.3 percent; and 13.3 percent for

women managers, respectively for husbands, fathers-in-law and siblings-in-law for each of the three categories of interviewees.)

The families of those working in enterprises as managers also enjoyed strong connections with the CCP. This category of interviewees has the highest percentage of siblings and mother-in-law in the Party (40 percent and 20 percent respectively). Their husband, father and father-in-law's Party participation rates were also considerable (40 percent, 40 percent and 53.3 percent respectively).

In comparison, wives of enterprise owners appeared to be the category of interviewees enjoying the least familial connections with the Party. The proportion whose husband, father, mother, a sibling, and father-in-law were CCP members were all lower than those of the other two categories of interviewees (30 percent, 35 percent, 5 percent, 30 percent and 25 percent respectively of wives of enterprise owners interviewed.)

The statistics from the Mianyang interviews seem to suggest that male and female members of the new rich, especially enterprise owners, had different attitudes (or at least behaviour patterns) towards CCP membership. Unusually, those female enterprise owners interviewed seemed to be more actively involved with the Party than their male counterparts. 47.6 percent of the female enterprise owners interviewed during fieldwork reported themselves to be Party members, while the reported proportion of the male enterprise owners was only 30 percent. At this stage there is a need for caution in drawing any firm conclusion about the gendered pattern of CCP participation for China's new rich private entrepreneurs. The scale of the fieldwork is limited and this finding though worthy of further investigation may not be replicated across the rest of the PRC. In particular, it would be reasonable to expect that these outcomes might be related to the

relatively high level of economic development of Mianyang generally (especially if compared to Jiaocheng and Qiongsan) or some ecological aspect of the Mianyang sample itself, not least the support of the Party-state in access to the most successful local women business people.

A closer look at these interviewees' path to CCP membership suggests a variety of possible experiences. Six out of 23 joined the Party as staff members of state-owned enterprises. Thirteen out of 23 became CCP members when they were working as cadres, PLA soldiers, public school teachers, public university lecturers, doctors of public hospital, or university students.

In contrast to their Jiaocheng and Qiongsan counterparts, the Mianyang interviewees demonstrated initiative in seeking membership of the CCP when in business as private enterprise owners or managers. The importance here is that generally for the Mianyang interviewees, business success was seen as the entry condition for CCP membership by the women themselves as much as by the CCP. Two of those interviewed joined the Party after establishing their businesses – both after Jiang Zemin's 2001 speech that officially included private entrepreneurs in the category of potential CCP recruits. Another two interviewees became Party members after obtaining senior management positions in private enterprises.

Jiang was the owner of a restaurant chain with a capital of 'several million *yuan* without doubt'. She joined the Party in 2002, 15 years after the start of her business. Jiang also revealed that a Party branch and a labour union had been established in her company.

Shen used to be a staff member of a state-owned factory. After being laid-off in 1999, she set up her own business. At the time of the interviews she was the

owner of a funeral and interment chain with branches all over the province and in Beijing. Shen did not apply for CCP membership when she was still employed in the state-owned enterprise. But as her business success expanded and her personal wealth grew, she decided to pursue a closer Party connection. Shen submitted her CCP membership application in 2005 and at the time when the interview was conducted, she was on probation as a candidate for membership.

Yang used to be staff member of a public vocational school. In 1995, she quit her job to seek business opportunities. Like Shen, Yang did not want to join the Party until she had achieved success in the private sector. In 2000 she became a Party member when working as the executive manager of a private enterprise. When the interview was conducted, Yang owned a high-tech industry company with a capital of some 8 million *yuan*.

In a similar case, Xie used to be a staff member of a collective factory. In 1991, she left the factory to join in a private company where she started as a manual worker. In 1999, Xie joined the Party as the general manager of the company.

In two similar cases, both interviewees reported they had established Party branches in their enterprises, although they were not CCP members themselves. This seems to be another means by which these new rich women can achieve connections with the CCP. The Party branch of one of these women's enterprises was even honoured as an 'Advanced Grass Roots Party Branch' by the local district CCP committee in 2006. This was regarded as one of the enterprise's major achievements of the year and reported in the enterprise's publicity. Both of the interviewees were running extra large-sized businesses, one with capital of 100 million *yuan* and the other with capital of 500 million *yuan*. This seems to correspond to Dickson's analysis of the CCP's co-optation strategy in private

enterprises where the larger and wealthier enterprises would be more likely to have Party organizations in them and the size and wealthy of these enterprises make them more visible targets for Party building.² By the same token, none of the small- or medium-sized enterprises approached in the fieldwork reported having Party branches.

Despite the Mianyang interviewees' strong enthusiasm to participate centrally in the Party run system, interviews with some women also seemed to suggest the local Party committee's inefficiency in forging links with these members of the new rich. When asked, Tian, owner of a cosmetic chain, told the research team that she was not a CCP member. She further commented that 'I haven't obtained membership in the past and wouldn't know where to lodge my application'. Unlike Tian, Yang - owner of a high-tech company - had joined the Party in early 1990s when working as a teacher in a local middle school. Yang said, 'I don't know whether I still have my membership' because she had not been in contact with the Party organization nor paid her membership fees for years. However, she argued, 'Do I have to be a Party member to love the Party?'

The Mianyang interview results revealed another form of interaction between these new rich women and the Party: all levels of Party school had started to offer special classes and programs for private business people, which several interviewees had attended. During the interviews, seven interviewees reported to have participated in training classes, or higher education courses delivered by the local Party school at provincial or city level. The classes and courses were generally related to management, finance, law and philosophy, mostly designed to cater to people in business. While five of these women were CCP members, two were not. Presumably, such Party school courses also serve as a link between the

² Bruce J Dickson , 2003, p. 113-114.

CCP and non-Party member private entrepreneurs. Moreover, they can certainly be seen as a sign of the CCP further opening its doors to the private sector.³

Family members and Party-state leadership

Experience of employment in leadership positions within the Party-state system is another significant element of political capital the new rich can enjoy. Table 10.2 illustrates the Mianyang interviewees and their family members' experiences in Party-state leadership positions. The Party-state leadership experience of those interviewed in Mianyang does not appear to be as high profile as their membership of the CCP. Only five of the 56 interviewees (8.9 percent) reported that they had any Party-state leadership background. Instead, these women's male family members (especially their husband, father and father-in-law) appeared to be sources of any such connections, as 12.5 percent reported that their husband, 26.8 percent reported that their father and 23.2 percent reported that their father-in-law had some leadership experience within the Party-state.

Table 10.2 Mianyang interviewees: Family members and Party-state leadership

<i>Category</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Sibling</i>	<i>Father-in-law</i>	<i>Mother-in-law</i>	<i>Sibling-In-law</i>
Enterprise owner	2 (9.5%)	4 (19.0%)		8 (38.1%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (9.5%)	8 (19.0%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (9.5%)
Wife of enterprise owner	2 (10%)	2 (10%)		4 (20%)		1 (5%)	1 (5%)		2 (10%)
Manager	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)		3 (20%)		1 (6.7%)	4 (26.7%)	1 (6.7%)	
Total	5 (8.9%)	7 (12.5%)		15 (26.8%)	2 (3.6%)	4 (7.1%)	13 (23.2%)	3 (5.4%)	4 (7.1%)

Where the women interviewed did have leadership experience it was no surprise

³ See Bruce J Dickson, 2003.

to find that some had been allocated the kinds of position generally and widely across the PRC regarded as reserved for women – a common practice of designating some portfolios, such as ‘women’s affairs’ as being ‘less important.’. One enterprise owner’s wife, for example, was the vice chair of the city’s Women’s Federation.

At the same time, in Mianyang some the interviewees had also been allocated more substantial responsibilities. Prior to the establishment of her enterprise, one interviewee was director of one of the most important departments of the Party-state system - the propaganda department - of Mianyang CCP committee. Another interviewee was the Party secretary of a township government’s enterprise office before she became senior manager of a collective enterprise. In the cases of the other two interviewees with such experiences, their leadership positions came as a bonus related to their business success.

Shang was the *de facto* owner and general manager of a trading company, while her husband acted as the board chairman. Shang’s business started in 1991, with an investment of 9,000 *yuan*. In fourteen years it had grown into a large company with capital of some 100 million *yuan*. As a result of her business success, Shang was offered a position as an executive member of Mianyang FIC.

Another interviewee, Deng owned a vocational school. The business started in 1994 with an investment of 40,000 *yuan* and six employees. In 2005 when the fieldwork was undertaken, the school had a capital of 600,000 *yuan* - more than ten times the initial investment. Moreover, the number of staff had increased more than five times. Considering Deng’s entrepreneurial achievement, as well as her close personal relationship with local cadres,⁴ it is not really that surprising that

⁴ Discussed in beginning paragraphs on page 243.

she also became an executive member of the city's Federation of Industry and Commerce.

The Mianyang interviewees reported that their family members had experiences in a variety of Party-state leadership positions. In eleven cases, the interviewees' family members had been village or township cadres. More commonly (23 out of 43), these women's family members held Party-state leadership positions at county or city level. While some had served in the less politically sensitive departments of forestry, sports, education, urban planning and taxation, most were in charge of issues of Party organization, public security, employment, taxation, industry and commerce, as well as business planning: positions of considerable power and relevance to the private sector of the economy. In nine cases, the interviewees' family members were officials of the PLA.

In contrast, the interviewees' mothers and mothers-in-law's Party-state leadership experiences were more in keeping with observations elsewhere about women in politics. One interviewee's mother and two of the interviewees' mothers-in-law were directors of grass-roots women's federations, two at village-level and one neighbourhood-level organisation. Again, this seems to reflect the already known information about the pattern of women's leadership responsibilities: in less important matters such as women's affairs and at lower-levels.

When the experiences and backgrounds of the three categories of interviewees are examined separately, as might be expected, enterprise owners were the category with the most involvement in and connections to Party-state leadership. 9.5 percent of this category of interviewees had experiences as Party-state leaders. Although this percentage is slightly lower than (remarkably) that of the wives of enterprise owners (10 percent), a relatively high proportion of the husbands,

fathers, mothers, siblings, and mothers-in-law of the female enterprise owners had been Party-state leaders (19.0 percent, 38.1 percent, 9.5 percent, 9.5 percent, and 9.5 percent respectively).

As just noted, wives of enterprise owners had the highest proportion (10 percent) of such leadership experiences themselves. However, their family members did not turn out to be as well positioned in the Party-state system. None of their mothers or mothers-in-law were reported to have served as a Party-state leader and their siblings and fathers-in-law had the least leadership experience of all the categories of interviewees in Mianyang (5 percent for both.)

Mianyang's women managers appear to have had the least individual exposure access to leadership positions - only one of these women reported to have had experience as a Party-state leader: the lowest percentage (6.7 percent) of the three categories of interviewees. Moreover, these women's husbands also had the least leadership experience (6.7 percent). However, these women's apparent lack of exposure to Party-state leadership was somewhat mitigated by their father-in-law's work experience. More than a quarter of these women reported that their father-in-law had previously been a Party-state leader, the largest proportion for any of the three categories of interviewees in Mianyang.

Family members and Party-state connections

In addition to their participation in the CCP through membership and their participation in the Party-state through serving in leadership positions, the interviewees had other means to establish connections with the Party-state. Table 10.3 details the Party-state connections of the Mianyang women interviewed and their family members. As can be seen from the table, when appointments, titles

and honours from the government were taken into consideration, these women's political capital was considerable. A majority (58.9 percent) of the interviewees reported to have an individual connection with the Party-state of any type, far more than was the case for their family members. It seems safe to conclude from this that the Mianyang interviewees had more direct Party-state connections in their own right, compared to their Jiaocheng and Qiongsan counterparts who comparatively lacked such individual political capital and had to derive it through their family ties. The Mianyang interviewees' more personal active involvement with the Party-state is very likely also a result of their more high profile business success. This too is in contrast to the experiences of those interviewed in Jiaocheng and Qiongsan.

Table 10.3 Mianyang interviewees: Family members and Party-state connections

<i>Category</i>	<i>Enterprise owner</i>	<i>Wife of enterprise owner</i>	<i>Manager</i>	<i>Total</i>
Interviewee	14 (66.7%)	9 (45%)	10 (66.7%)	33 (58.9%)
Husband	10 (47.6%)	11 (55%)	7 (46.7%)	28 (50%)
Children	1 (4.8%)	2 (10%)		3 (5.4%)
Father	12 (57.1%)	8 (40%)	8 (53.3%)	28 (50%)
Mother	7 (33.3%)	3 (15%)	4 (26.7%)	14 (25%)
Sibling	7 (33.3%)	9 (45%)	8 (53.3%)	24 (42.9%)
Father-in-law	14 (66.7%)	6 (30%)	7 (46.7%)	27 (48.2%)
Mother-in-law	4 (19.0%)	3 (15%)	4 (26.7%)	11 (19.6%)
Sibling-in-law	10 (47.6%)	6 (30%)	3 (20%)	19 (33.9%)

Although nowadays private entrepreneurs are allowed to join the Party, they are not allowed to take positions in government departments. In order to co-opt successful private entrepreneurs, one of the most usual practices of the Party-state is to appoint these people as representatives to the People's Congress or the PPCC. Such appointment is also pursued by private entrepreneurs, as it is commonly regarded as a significant indicator of one's higher political status. The interview results showed that such co-option was common among the new rich women. In

one case, the interviewee was a representative to the county-level People's Congress, and five others reported themselves to be representatives to Mianyang People's Congress. Moreover, one interviewee was a representative to the local district Political Consultative Conference and another to the higher-level Mianyang Political Consultative Conference.

Memberships of other organizations, such as the FIC, the SELA and the committee of WF are also common among the Mianyang interviewees. While all three institutions claim to be nongovernmental, they are all directly led by the government, and the FIC and the WF even have their officials appointed by the government. Presumably, such positions and memberships also serve as a link between the new rich women and the Party-state. Two of the Mianyang interviewees reported that they were members of the FIC, two were members of the SELA and three were members of the committee of the WF at district or city level. All these political roles can be regarded as indicators of the interviewees' political and social status for several reasons: first, these new rich were co-opted to the political associations because of their professional excellence, their possession of wealth and their social reputation;⁵ on the other hand, these roles added to their social reputation and presumably their possession of wealth later. Moreover, such roles are commonly regarded as a kind of social recognition.⁶

In a few cases, the interviewees' connections with the Party-state were realized through other institutions. Two interviewees reported that they were a representative to the district and city Party Congress. One was a member of the local district labour union. Another interviewee was a member of the provincial

⁵ Li Guoping and Huangqing 'Siying Qiye zhu de Xingqi: Yanjiu Zhongguo Shehui de Bianqian de Yige Shijiao' ['The Rise of Private Entrepreneurs: a Perspective to Look at China's Social Change'] at www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk_wzdetails.asp?id=3835.

⁶ Qin Yan, 1999, p138.

Association of Women Entrepreneurs (AWE). Although the AWE is a nongovernmental organization, it is subordinate to the WF. Moreover, it claims to be of the organisation for ‘successful women entrepreneurs, outstanding management personnel, as well as directors and managers of famous enterprises’.⁷ It seems reasonable to regard membership in the AWE as another point of connection to the Party-state, as well as a sought-after honour.

In two cases, the interviewees reported having been awarded individual honours by the Party-state. One had been honoured as an ‘Outstanding Young Pioneer to Start a Business’ by the Provincial Youth League Committee and another as one of the ‘Ten Outstanding Females’ jointly nominated by the propaganda department of Sichuan CCP Committee and the provincial WF. Another kind of interaction between the Mianyang interviewees and the Party-state is for these women to be recognized as ‘Observers’ (监督员) or to have their enterprises honoured as ‘Observer units’ (监督单位) or ‘Cooperative units’ (合作单位) of government departments. Two interviewees reported themselves and two reported their enterprises to be observers or cooperators of departments such as the Taxation Bureau, the Bureau of Quality and Technical Supervision. All these honours and titles, again, not only represent their professional excellence and business success, but also reinforced their connections with the Party-state.

These women’s family, on the other hand, also appear to be a significant source of Party-state connections. The husband and the father of half of these women had considerable involvement in local politics. 48.2 percent had a father-in-law, 42.9 percent had siblings, 33.9 percent had siblings-in-law, 25 percent had their mother and 19.6 percent their mother-in-law with such connections. Although their family members were not as politically involved as the women themselves, they certainly

⁷ See the website of China Association of Women Entrepreneurs at <http://www.cawe.org.cn/>.

provided sufficient supplement to these women's political capital. Worth noticing, besides CCP membership and Party-state leadership, the Mianyang interviewees' family members obtained their Party-state connections mainly by holding junior staff member positions in the local government, while only two wives of enterprise owners reported that their husbands were a representative to the local Political Consultative Congress and one mentioned that her husband was a representative to the local People's Congress. In contrast, nine women enterprise owners, three wives of enterprises owners and seven women managers reported that they had received such political glory themselves. This seems to reinforce the image of these new rich women's as having been successful in business, and that success resulting in a high status and performance in local politics.

To date it seems that the children of the Mianyang women interviewees are possibly likely to be more distant from the Party-state than their mothers, though of course this may change as the grow in greater numbers into adulthood. Only a limited number were already adults and of those only 15.7% had already joined the CCP, and perhaps more significantly given that there are prudential age limits on entry to the Party, none was reported to have taken any position in the Party or government organisation at all at any level. Instead, nine of the 56 interviewees had sent their children to schools and universities overseas, including the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. Certainly, due to the limited scale of the fieldwork, these children's lack of political involvement could possibly be group-specific and might not be accurately regarded as more widely representative. At the same time, it might also suggest the trend (observed elsewhere⁸) that political participation or recognition is no longer the major

⁸ David S G Goodman 'The localism of local leadership: cadres in reform Shanxi' in *Journal of Contemporary China* Vol.9, No.24, 2000, p.159-183.

pursuit of the next generation of the new rich. Instead the children seem to be more concerned with economic endeavour, openness and global vision.

Not surprisingly the three categories of women interviewees are to be differentiated in terms of their individual family connections to the Party-state. Individual enterprise owners and managers appear to enjoy more ipolitical involvement than the wives of enterprise owners (66.7 percent and 6.7 percent, as opposed to 45 percent). The wives of enterprise owners interviewed reported that connections with the Party-state were brought by their husbands in a larger proportion than was the case for enterprise owners and managers (55 percent, as opposed to 47.6 percent for enterprise owners and 46.7 percent for managers).

When these women's other family members were considered, the families of enterprise owners again had the strongest Party-state connections. 57.1 percent of female enterprise owners reported that their father, 33.3 percent reported that their mother, 66.7 percent reported that their father-in-law and 47.6 percent reported that their siblings-in-law were connected to the Party-state - all exceeding the corresponding percentages of the other two categories of interviewees. The families of managers were better politically connected through their siblings (53.3 percent, as opposed to 33.3 percent for enterprise owners and 45 percent for wives of enterprise owners) and mothers-in-law (26.7 percent, as opposed to 19.0 percent for enterprise owners and 15 percent for wives of enterprise owners). In comparison with the other two categories of interviewees, family members of wives of enterprise owners had the least political participation, but the actual rates were still considerable.

Jing: a case study

The story of one of the interviewees, Jing, provides a good example of how these new rich benefited from their connections with the Party-state to create their wealth.

Born in close-by Chengdu City (two hours by road) in 1963, Jing was orphaned when she was little and brought up by her uncle in Mianyang. In 1982, after finishing a university degree in Chinese Literature and Language, she was allocated to work at Mianyang People's Procuratorate. Soon she was transferred to work as a department director at the city's Youth League Committee. In China, the Youth League Committee is regarded by many as the 'express way' to higher positions, as the Youth League's major task is to cultivate excellent young leaders for the Party. As one of those future-to-be higher leaders, Jing was sent to do another university course on philosophy at the city's Party School. In 1989, when she received her second degree, she was promoted to work as a department director in the Mianyang CCP Committee Propaganda Department - another politically mainstream department of the CCP.

It was expected that Jing would make her way quickly up the CCP ladder, had she not been inspired by Deng Xiaoping's famous speech on inspecting South China in 1992. After the Tian'anmen Demonstration, the Central Government leadership took up a conservative attitude towards China's opening and reform, focusing on stability rather than a fast development of the country. Against this background, Deng Xiaoping (who officially resigned his last remaining leadership position in the Central Government in 1990) made a speech when inspecting the Special Economic Zone of Shenzhen, which encouraged people to be 'more risky and

more daring to make experiments in reform and opening'.⁹ With the speech re-establishing and reinforcing the tone and speed of China's reform, economic development became the country's major task again. Reassured by his speech, people took the risk to 'jump into the business sea' and to set up their own business, among whom there were many cadres. Jing was one of these.

Encouraged by Deng's speech, Jing invested 10,000 yuan to establish a clothes shop and employed an assistant to operate the shop during weekdays when she had to work. This business turned out to be a success and made a profit several times the original investment within one and a half years. Despite her business success, Jing sold the shop in 1993, as she thought 'to run a small business didn't match my literacy and status'. This is understandable, as the first people who took advantage of China's economic reform were those who were at that time regarded as marginal groups, including young people waiting for allocation to employment, those fired from their former job, former prisoners not wanted by other work units, former Red Guards returned to their home cities, handicapped people not wanted by other work units, as well as others who were not able to get into secondary or post secondary schools, and some housewives who had never worked and had no other source of income.¹⁰ By running their individual business, these people became the first to get rich in China's reform. However, their profile remained low despite their relative wealth. Not wanting to be regarded as one of those marginal people, Jing shut her shop, as she 'aimed at a bigger success'.

In the high tide of China's economic reform in the early 1990s, many local government departments also 'jumped into the business sea' by setting up their

⁹ Deng Xiaoping 'Dengxiaoping Nanxun Jianghua' ['Speech Given When Inspecting the South'] at <http://www.oklink.net/lszl/dangdai/dxp01.html>.

¹⁰ Thomas B Gold 'Guerrilla interviewing among the *getihu*' in Perry Link, Richard Madsen and Paul G Pickowicz (ed) *Unofficial China: Popular Culture and Thought in the People's Republic* Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1989.

enterprises, despite the Central Government's prohibition against government departments becoming involved in business. By the end of 1990, the inland province of Sichuan had established more than 700 enterprises in the more developed coastal areas of Shenzhen, Hainan, Guangdong, Fujian and Shanghai, in order to share in the benefits of rapid economic development in these places.¹¹ The government department where Jing served followed the trend in 1994 and set up a company, intending to speculate in real estate in Pudong District, Shanghai. Inspired by her previous successful attempt in business, Jing requested to be transferred to work in the new company. However, the new business proved a failure, as one year earlier when considering the problems in the national economy the Central Government had strengthened its control over the financial market, especially over investments in real estate to prevent real estate speculation.

Consequently, Jing's company switched its focus to trading. In 1994, Mianyang City Government started to construct a new highway and needed some asphalt. Jing's company managed to obtain the business. According to Jing, that was 'because we had a good credit', but she also admitted that 'the government favoured us'. Thus, the new company had its first success. Since then, the government has entrusted Jing's company with all its asphalt business and the company soon became the biggest asphalt dealer within the province. Such cooperation between the government and the enterprise owned and run by one of its departments led to considerable success: the company of six or seven people made an annual profit of 1 million yuan.

In 1997, the Central Government required government departments to separate

¹¹ Hong Lijian 'Sichuan: disadvantage and mismanagement in the Heavenly Kingdom' in David Goodman (ed) *China's Provinces in Reform: Class, Community and Political Culture* Routledge, London, 1997, p. 199-231.

completely from their enterprises. As a result, Jing's department sought to sell the business and withdrew its officials from the company. After some consideration, Jing resigned her position in government, bought shares in the company and became its owner. The company soon had its second significant development.

In the same year, the CCP had its 15th Congress, which decided to further carry out the reform of state-owned enterprises. In late 1997, the State Council released new measures, encouraging local governments to have small-sized state-owned enterprises restructured, sold or declared bankrupt.¹² In 1998, Jing heard from her husband (who was working at the local Economic Planning Committee) that the City Government planned to sell some state-owned enterprises. She took her time to choose a gate and window factory and bought it with a loan of 3.6 million yuan. As Jing agreed to provide employment for the former employees of the factory, she enjoyed favourable treatment from the government and was exempted from paying for the land. The land and buildings of the factory were worth over 10 million yuan. One year later, Jing sold the land again to a real estate development company and made another sum of money.

Nowadays, Jing's business has developed into one with a capital of some 70 million yuan and an annual output of 70 million yuan. The company has 100 full-time employees and casual construction workers. Despite her close relationship with the government and her business success, Jing does not have any formal position in the local People's Congress, Political Consultative Conference, or business associations. She said, 'as I resigned my position in government, I don't value such things. Otherwise I could have stayed in the government to be an official'.

¹² Yang Shujin 'Zhongguo guoyou qiye gaige de wenti yu zhanlue' ['The problems and strategies of China's State-owned Enterprise Reform'] in *Dangdai Zhongguo Yanjiu* [Modern China Studies] Vol. 62, Issue 3, 1998.

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To conclude, the Mianyang interviewees had stronger connections with the Party-state than their Jiaocheng and Qiongsan counterparts. Firstly, a higher proportion of the Mianyang interviewees were CCP members and they had certainly shown more determination in obtaining Party membership. Secondly, despite their lack of Party-state leadership experience, these women were closely involved in local politics by appointments, titles and honours from the Party and governments at different levels. They are, among interviewees from the three research localities, the only group that enjoyed more individual rather than familial political capital, although these women's families also seemed to have additionally contributed greatly to their political connections and political capital.

Amongst the three categories of interviewees, enterprise owners appeared to have the most political capital. This, as elsewhere, reinforces the observations about the strength of relationships between the Party-state and the new entrepreneurial classes. A good relationship with the Party-state is necessary for both the establishment and operation of a business in China nowadays and is thus pursued by private business owners. At the same time, the business success of the new rich also attracts political glories, not least since this becomes a channel for both activation and control by the Party-state.

Conclusion: Enterprise leadership, politics and the local

Despite the continued influence of belief in a tradition that values men more highly than women, marketization of the economy in China has undoubtedly brought women more employment and life-style opportunities. Gender inequality still exists in aspects of education, employment, and political participation, as well as within families. Nonetheless, the circumstances surrounding a specific group of women – those in enterprise ownership and leadership, especially within the private sector of the economy – seems to indicate that some women have played, are playing and more than likely will play a significant and increasing role in China's economic reform, even as unacknowledged or de-emphasized as it might sometimes appear to be.

The research project that has led to this thesis was designed to explore the socio-political situation of women in ownership and leadership positions in enterprises, as a consequence of China's reform and economic change. The thesis is based on a series of interviews with women in enterprise ownership or leadership, conducted in three localities in China during 2003-2005: Jiaocheng County in Shanxi Province; Qiongsan District of Haikou City in Hainan Province; and Mianyang City in Sichuan Province. The interviewees contacted in each of the three locations met one of three broad criteria, that provided the basic analytical categorization for the thesis: they were either women enterprise owners, wives of enterprise owners, or those who worked in enterprises as managers. By analyzing information about their enterprises, personal experiences and families, this thesis explores the roles these women play at work and at home, as well as their and their family's positions in the local political environment.

A recent article in *China Daily* quoted data from a poll conducted by Grant Thornton, an accounting firm in Hong Kong, that 91 percent of companies in mainland China have women holding senior management positions.¹ Based on this, it claims that 'China businesses focus on capability and performance when appointing senior management, and not on gender'. Notwithstanding the impressive figure, it seems over-simplistic to conclude that gender disparity has been overcome in business management in China, especially when no further information about the percentage of women at all senior level positions and their actual responsibilities in the companies was provided. As this thesis reveals, the situation of women in enterprise ownership and leadership is a far more complicated picture than the *China Daily* assertion would seem to imply.

The central findings of this thesis relate to the interviewees' work and family responsibilities, as well as their involvement in the local politics, in the context of change and potential change in the long established gender disparity. On the one hand, inequality can be detected in these women's work responsibilities, family roles and political participation. Nonetheless, these women appear to be taking more and more initiative in their businesses and gradually casting off the burden of the traditional family role. Although gender inequality can still be detected in these women's political participation, it seems to be mitigated by their family connections with the Party-state. The third finding of this research is more precise but nonetheless important, and emerged from comparing the experience of interviewees across the three localities. It suggests that in ways that require further research and elaboration the different socio-economic features of each locality may significantly effect the opportunities for and the development of women and their roles in the wider society.

¹ Diao Ying 'Poll: women hold senior positions' in *China Daily* 8 March 2007, p.1.

Business and household responsibilities

The examination of the management and operation of the interviewees' businesses revealed a distinct perceived gender bias in terms of the establishment of the business and the division of functional responsibilities within the enterprise. It is clear that in many cases in all three locations, if a woman wanted to start a business, she often preferred that her husband acted as the formal and officially recognized owner of the business, and the one who represented the family to the outside world. In many cases this was regarded by the women themselves as 'more convenient' or 'proper'. This is an obvious reflection of the tradition of a 'men outside, women inside' division of labour.

Within enterprises, the women interviewees had major responsibilities for purchasing, sales, production, personnel, and finance. On the whole, these women had a low participation in the leadership and organisation of production. Possibly this reflects the fact that a large proportion of the interviewees were engaged in the activities long regarded as more appropriately 'women's business' in China, such as those within the retail and service sectors, all of which do not involve the production of goods. This too in some senses echoes the tradition of 'men outside, women inside' division of labour. In the eyes of some interviewees, management, production, personnel, and basic administrative duties were regarded as 'inside' work taken care of by these women themselves; while activities such as entertaining clients, establishing business connections, dealing with government administrative units, demanding payments for debts and purchasing were 'outside' work assigned to their husbands. One reason that these women kept away from the 'outside' sphere was social pressure: entertaining clients, for instance, is often regarded as inappropriate as a woman's activity. The women themselves perceived that such activities might turn them rather too quickly into

targets of gossip and slander.

Although still affected by traditional views on women's roles in society, the interviewees had nonetheless often achieved a high profile in their enterprises. Interview results showed that these women and their husbands had played roughly equal roles in developing the original idea for the establishment of the business. As to the operation of the business, these women played more active roles in all the major business responsibilities than their husbands. The overwhelming majority of the interviewees reported themselves to be in charge of the tasks of purchasing, sales and personnel, while finance appeared to be the most important responsibility they usually and generally bore. The interviewees' roles in strategic planning for the businesses also turned out to be more prominent than that of their husbands, who mostly acted as the main source of advice when these women encountered difficulties at work. Moreover, the final arbiter in enterprise decision-making was often the wife. In short, it seems safe to conclude that the women interviewed had played substantial roles in their enterprises.

At home, the interviewees still seemed to be leashed by the traditional family role of being 'a virtuous wife and good mother'. Many of those interviewed regarded their family roles as a major disadvantage that hindered their career development. As the interview results indicate, housework still remained a major responsibility for these women. At the same time, it has become increasingly common to find husbands and other family members sharing the household burden. Moreover, it was also not unusual for these women to hire maids to help with housework.

The conclusions just summarised are of course those that are general, applying to the interviewees as a whole. Unsurprisingly, there are differences to be observed amongst the three different categories of interviewees: women enterprise owners,

wives of enterprise owners, and women managers. Women enterprise owners played the most significant role in the establishment of their enterprises, compared to the wives of enterprise owners and women managers, as well as in all aspects of business operation and management. They were also the most empowered in making strategic decisions about the development of the business. Consequently, they shouldered the least domestic responsibilities at home.

In comparison with the other two categories of interviewees, wives of enterprise owners participated less in their husband's business, as might be expected almost simply by definition. On the other hand, the wives of enterprise owners interviewed provided substantial support to their spouse by taking care of the financial affairs in the family business and by having responsibility for household tasks at home. As to those working in enterprises as managers, interview results show that they were actively involved in daily operation of the enterprises. However, they had played little if any role (as might be expected) in the process of establishing the enterprise where they now worked, or in strategic planning. Most of them were senior employees of the enterprises but not in a position to make executive decisions.

Politics

Compared to the general population of China, the interviewees as a whole appeared to have extremely strong connections with the Party-state. These women's political participation was realized in terms of their obtaining of CCP membership, holding leadership positions in the local Party-state, and in the award of various titles and honours from the Party-state system which led to a process of incorporation and political socialisation. At the same time, interview results indicate that these women were also well connected, and probably in

general better connected to the Party-state through their parental and marital families. Their families had an even more profound political involvement through membership of the CCP, the holding of leadership positions in the Party-state and the provision of honour in the political system. As their experiences bear more than adequate witness, such individual and familial political capital brought these women substantial opportunities in business.

In considering the interviewees' responses on their own and their family's political participation, traces of gender inequality were noticed. First of all, these women did not enjoy access to as much political capital as their male family members, such as their husband, father or father-in-law. Secondly, the women themselves did not seem to have had as much experience of Party-state leadership. Their limited leadership experiences were often at lower level, in deputy positions, or in departments considered to be less 'important' or 'powerful'. Thirdly, in some cases where the enterprise was run as a joint effort between husband and wife, the husband tended to represent the family on the political stage and accordingly obtained more political recognition. At the same time, a comparison between the interviewees' situation and that of their mother and mother-in-law suggests that the obvious gender bias in political participation is improving for the younger generation.

The relationship between economic and political leadership at the local level is obviously very close. The interviewees and their families had clearly shown a desire to develop connections with the Party-state. On the other hand, as the research indicates, the CCP and the government are also seeking to co-opt people in the private sector of the economy in a number of ways. The means of such co-option revealed in the thesis include offers of leadership and membership positions in the local and provincial levels of People's Congresses and People's

Political Consultative Conferences; appointments as representatives to or members of other congresses or organizations led by the Party-state; awards from the Party-state; as well as through recognition of 'observer' or 'cooperator' status with government departments. Understandably, political glory seems to go hand in hand with business success. In many cases, the interviewees reported (not without pride) that they or their family members (mostly their husband) had such titles. To them, these meant political recognition, security and reliability, which would in turn facilitate their business development; while on the side of the Party-state, this is an efficient way to activate the private economy and mobilise initiative.

As might be expected, women enterprise owners turned out to enjoy the most political capital (of the three categories of interviewees) in their own right. Those who worked in enterprises as managers ranked second in this aspect. Wives of enterprise owners had the least individual Party-state connections, but (again unremarkably) their husbands were reported to have a high level of connectivity to the Party-state. This, again, reinforces widely perceived knowledge about the close relationship between the Party-state and private entrepreneurs in China.

There were remarkably few differences amongst the three categories of interviewees in terms of the political connections of their family members. The only exceptions were that more enterprise owners reported that they derived their political connections from their father, while those wives of enterprise owners interviewed had the highest proportion of fathers-in-law involved in the Party-state system.

The importance of locality

One of the more intriguing results to emerge in this thesis has been the extent to which local culture seems to play a role in the socio-political development of each locality where research was undertaken. While it is clear that each research location was chosen because of a distinctive socio-economic set of characteristics, the extent to which those interviewed were differentiated by local characteristics was both notable and necessarily leaves considerable room for further research. Given that interviews were undertaken in all three localities with the assistance of the Party-state, it might have been assumed that there would be a higher degree of conformity in interview responses and results.

Shanxi Province is very much a CCP heartland region. It played a significant part in the CCP's success in the Anti-Japanese War. Since the establishment of the PRC, because of its vast coal reserves, it has served as the country's powerhouse. As a result, the province's development has featured strict central planning and control. Despite its role as the national energy base, Shanxi has not been the focus of the Central Government's regional development strategies in recent years. Nowadays, it ranks as one of China's less economically developed provinces. Jiaocheng County is under the jurisdiction of Lüliang City, the least economically developed district of Shanxi Province, although Jiaocheng itself is located near the provincial capital, Taiyuan. Like the rest of the province, Jiaocheng has rich resources of coal and iron and thus its economy is dominated by a strong heavy industry sector. Likewise, it is also faced with the problem of achieving more balanced and sustainable development.

Hainan Province is by far the least mainstream of the areas visited, often regarded during recent decades as a territory for pioneers. It has strong overseas

connections, which have brought the province considerable foreign investments. Located at the very southern end of China, the island had long been isolated from the mainland and served as a destination for exiles. In 1988, it was established as a province and China's largest SEZ. In the first several years of its 'opening', Hainan was the county's model of reform practice and experienced rapid economic growth. As a result, Hainan attracted a large number of mainland migrants to seek opportunities in the island. But the break in the real estate bubble in the early 1990s led to considerable slow-down in Hainan's economic development. Qionghshan used to be a county level city of Hainan Province. In October 2002, it was brought under the jurisdiction of Haikou City and became one of four county level districts within the provincial capital, under the Provincial Government's 'Greater Haikou' Scheme, in order to promote the economic development of and increase investment in the province. Local cadres commented that the merger had impaired Qionghshan's already weak industrial development.

Sichuan by contrast despite its location in the west of China has long been part of the country's cultural centre. Since the establishment of the PRC its development cannot be separated from the three western development schemes, which were designed at least in part to shape or reinforce the provincial economy, especially its industrial base. In the Central Government's First Five Year Plan from 1952 to 1957, several key projects were constructed within the province. From 1964 to 1975, Sichuan was chosen as the focus of China's Third Front Construction Project. As a result, it received vast investment from the Central Government and became home to a large number of the country's national defence projects. In the third west development scheme - the 'Campaign to Open Up the West' - started in 1999, the province has become a major focus once again. Mianyang is the second largest city of Sichuan. During the Third Front Construction, the city became the

centre of China's national defence technology and the location of many state-owned enterprises. In 2001, the Central Government officially named Mianyang as China's Science and Technology City, with the hope of making it a model of development for the whole of the Campaign to Open Up the West.

There are observable differences amongst the women interviewed in their individual development and involvement in local politics that would clearly seem to be shaped by regional differences in history and development. The extent and nature of the interviewees' spatial mobility seemed to be a result of such localism. Hainan interviewees had the largest proportion of inter-provincial migrants. Being the largest SEZ of China, it has been expected to provide an easier and more open environment. Its early years of economic blossoming also added to the island's profile as a place of opportunities. Unsurprisingly, these made the island attractive in the eyes of people from the less economically developed mainland provinces. Mianyang interviewees had demonstrated a higher level of intra-provincial migration. This is partly a result of the city's development as the science and technology centre, as some interviewees reported that they had been assigned to work in the city's state-owned enterprises after graduation from universities. Moreover, it is understandable that being Sichuan Province's second economic centre (after the provincial capital of Chengdu) Mianyang would attract people from the less developed areas of the province. Those interviewed in Jiaocheng, on the other hand, were distinctly less mobile. Most likely this might be related the county's lower level of economic development, compared to Qiongsan and Mianyang, but this is quite clearly a matter for future research.

The opportunities available to interviewees in the establishment of their enterprises seemed also to be affected by specific local features. Interviewees in Jiaocheng and Mianyang had both shown more engagement in manufacturing,

although it is not traditionally regarded as a ‘woman’s sector’. Moreover, a considerable proportion of Mianyang interviewees reported that their enterprises were involved in science and technology. This corresponds to Jiaocheng’s obvious ecology centred on heavy industry, and Mianyang’s background in the national defence industry and its current emphasis on technological development. On the other hand, Qiongsan interviewees were mostly engaged in the retail and service sectors, which reflects Qiongsan’s apparent lack of industrial development.

In Mianyang those interviewed were running businesses of considerably bigger scale than those in Qiongsan which were smaller. Those in Jiaocheng were ranked somewhere in between. Although the samples for interview were not randomly chosen, they were all accessed through the Women’s Federation of the Party-state. The scale of enterprise contrast between the three localities suggests that local characteristics of socio-economic development might be related. Mianyang is the most economically developed of the three localities, with major science and technology based industrial development. Qiongsan has a stronger tertiary sector.

Local differences also seem reflected in the accounts of the interviewees’ personal development, particularly in terms of their educational and professional experiences. Those in Jiaocheng had the lowest percentage with a higher education background and accordingly the least experience of employment in a professional or managerial capacity. It seems likely that the low level of economic-development in the county has made it hard to keep or attract talent. In contrast, the Mianyang interviewees turned out to be the best educated group (of the three localities) with the strongest background in professional positions. Again, this likely reflects the city’s emphasis on science and technological development.

Local differences can be also detected in the information generated about the interviewees and their family members' political participation. Interviews with women in Qiongsan had clearly indicated that these women had a looser affiliation with the Party-state than in the other two locations where research was undertaken. Although their CCP participation rate did not rank the lowest, these women were the only group that explicitly expressed reluctance in joining the Party. Moreover, unlike their counterparts in Jiaocheng and Mianyang, none of this group had obtained their Party membership after they became private enterprise owners. Moreover, these Qiongsan women reported that they had fewer offers of political appointment or titles from the local Party-state. On the one hand, such relatively loose connection between the interviewees and the local Party-state seems to correspond to Hainan's spatial and political distance from the PRC Centre. On the other hand, it might also be taken as an indication of the local government's lower efficiency in co-opting the new class of private entrepreneurs. Elsewise, it might simply be a result of these women's less successful business ventures.

Jiaocheng and Mianyang governments had both shown more initiative in consolidating their relationship with the private sector by appointing individual entrepreneurs to leadership positions in the Party-state system or by offering them various political titles and awards. Moreover, in both localities private entrepreneurs had also shown more enthusiasm in participating in the Party-state as some of the interviewees reported that they or their husband had applied for CCP membership after they entered the private sector of the economy. This seems to reflect both Jiaocheng and Mianyang's historical and existing strong connections with the CCP and even possibly their understanding of the political centre. Presumably, in such a context, politics is more emphasized in all social aspects and thus political capital would be found more desirable in the eyes even

of those in the private sector.

The circumstances of the Mianyang interviewees are particularly worth noticing, as they had shown an exceptionally higher degree of involvement in local politics. These women's political capital not only largely exceeded that of their Jiaocheng and Qiongsan counterparts, but also turned out to be greater than that of their family members. This could of course be the result of sample selection. Generally, in Mianyang the research team was introduced to bigger enterprises than had been encountered in the other two localities. As might be expected, the greater business success these Mianyang women achieved would certainly have attracted more attention from the local government. On the other hand, this might also suggest that the local government in Mianyang is making more effort to mobilize the development of its private economic sector, and to harness its outcomes to political purposes.

In general, the relationship between local socio-economic patterns of development and the nature of business development, including individual entrepreneurial activity, is one area highlighted by this thesis where more questions are raised than answers provided. While this thesis has focussed primarily on the role of women in enterprise development, it is also clear that there is further research to be undertaken investigating the complex of relations that link local conditions to both business experience and individual life chances.

The impact of wealth

Another area highlighted in the thesis for future research is the question of individual wealth and in particular its relationship to both business and political opportunities. The thesis has presented a picture of women in enterprise

ownership and leadership, focussing on these women's responsibilities, their participation in politics and the local specificities of their experience. Another apparently important factor has been left rather unexplored – the impact of these women's personal wealth. Generally speaking, the interviewees examined in this thesis fall into the category of China's new rich. The interviews found it difficult (for understandable reasons about disclosure) to discover direct indication of their wealth in many cases, such as their income. At the same time it is fairly clear from their apparent life-styles, individual behaviour and the scale of their economic activities that these are generally the economically well off, even in Qiongsan where the scale of economic activity was smallest and the nature of enterprises was largely confined to the retail and service sectors.

Research has only marginally considered the importance of individual wealth to personal and business development. At the same time, several findings are fairly clear. The wealthiest Mianyang interviewees had developed the strongest connections with the Party-state and were the most actively involved in local politics. The experience of the children of interviewees in Jiaocheng and Mianyang suggests that personal wealth may also play other roles in determining socio-political development at the local level.

In Jiaocheng there was a clear indication that the children of the interviewees tended to turn to the political sphere to seek political recognition and thus to further facilitate the family business. In Mianyang, it seemed that political participation or recognition was no longer the major concern of the next generation. Instead they were sent overseas to achieve openness and global vision. Considering the similar political environment of the two places – both have long been under close central control and might thus be assumed to have engendered strong political sensitivities among their local social elites – wealth seems to be an

answer to explain the difference in the behaviour of the children of interviewees: Mianyang being considerably wealthier than Jiaocheng, a feature certainly reflected in the samples interviewed in each location.

This difference suggests that wealth brings political recognition and safety, which in turn facilitate the accumulation of further wealth. At the same time, when a considerable amount of personal wealth has been accumulated, political status is not then a major concern any more. For the moment this must remain only a bold hypothesis, with more research needing to be undertaken to investigate more thoroughly the relationship between wealth and political capital.

Similarly interesting is the impact of the new rich women's wealth on their once traditional roles. As the interview results indicate, the wealthiest Mianyang interviewees had the least burden of household tasks. On the one hand, they would certainly be more able to afford hiring a maid to assist with housework. At the same time, these women also reported that they enjoyed the most help from their family members. Does wealth play a role here too? As the family's major income earner, would these women be expected to have less commitment to the traditional values of China?

Unfortunately, this thesis and the research on which it is based cannot provide answers to these questions. They are the starting point for future studies on how the entrepreneurship of these women facilitates their accumulation of personal wealth; how wealth, in turn, impacts on their participation in local politics; and how wealth interacts with the more traditional gendered expectations for women.

List of interviews

Jiaocheng

Women enterprise owners

Interviewee JA1

Married

Born in 1966 in Fengyang County, Shanxi Province

Junior middle school education ('chuzhong' 初中)

Manager of a clothes factory

Interviewed on 6 October 2003

Interviewee JA2

Married

Born in 1965 in Jiaocheng County, Shanxi Province

Junior middle school education

Owner of a glass factory

Interviewed on 7 October 2003

Interviewee JA3

Divorced

Born in 1965 in Jiaocheng County

Junior college education ('dazhuan' 大专)

Owner of a food processing company

Interviewed on 8 October 2003

Interviewee JA4

Married

Born in 1969 in Jiaocheng County

High school education ('gaozhong' 高中)

Owner of a clothes shop

Interviewed on 14 October 2003

Interviewee JA5

Married

Born in 1953 in Jiaocheng County

Junior middle school education

Owner of a textile shop

Interviewed on 14 October 2003

Interviewee JA6

Married

Born in 1972 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Owner of a beauty salon
Interviewed on 15 October 2003

Interviewee JA7

Married
Born in 1971 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Owner of a photography studio
Interviewed on 15 October 2003

Interviewee JA8

Married
Born in 1959 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Owner of a jade carving factory
Interviewed on 16 October 2003

Interviewee JA9

Widowed
Born in 1955 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle education
Owner of a steel casting factory
Interviewed on 16 October 2003

Interviewee JA10

Widowed
Born in 1951 in Jiaocheng County
Complete half a year of high school education
Owner of a department store
Interviewed on 16 October 2003

Interviewee JA11

Married
Born in 1966 in Wenshui County, Shanxi Province
Secondary technical school education ('zhongzhuan' 中专)
Owner of a textile shop
Interviewed on 27 October 2003

Interviewee JA12

Married
Born in 1971 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education

Owner of a convenience store
Interviewed on 27 October 2003

Interviewee JA13

Widowed
Born in 1960 in Jiaocheng County
Primary school education ('xiaoxue' 小学)
Owner of a brick factory
Interviewed on 17 May 2004

Interviewee JA14

Married
Born in 1967 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Owner of a machinery factory
Interviewed on 17 May 2004

Interviewee JA15

Married
Born in 1960 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Owner of a restaurant
Interviewed on 18 May 2004

Interviewee JA16

Married
Born in 1954 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Owner of a food shop
Interviewed on 19 May 2004

Interviewee JA17

Married
Born in 1964 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Owner of a tailor shop
Interviewed on 19 May 2004

Interviewee JA18

Widowed
Born in 1955 in Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province
Dropped out of primary school
Owner of an automobile repairing factory

Interviewed on 19 May 2004

Interviewee JA19

Married

Born in 1952 in Jiaocheng County

Primary school education

Owner of an automobile fitting and repairing factory

Interviewed on 20 May 2004

Interviewee JA20

Married

Born in 1959 in Fangshan County, Shanxi Province

High school education

Owner of a hairdressing salon

Interviewed on 21 May 2004

Interviewee JA21

Married

Born in 1963 in Jiaocheng County

High school education

Owner of a birds farm

Interviewed on 21 May 2004

Interviewee JA22

Married

Born in 1970 in Jiaocheng County

High school education

Owner of a farm

Interviewed on 21 May 2004

Interviewee JA23

Married

Born in 1963 in Jiaocheng County

High school education

Owner of a photocopy shop

Interviewed on 24 May 2004

Interviewee JA24

Married

Born in 1968 in Jiaocheng County

Secondary technical school education

Owner of a photocopy shop

Interviewed on 24 May 2004

Interviewee JA25

Married
Born in 1961 in Fenyang County, Shanxi Province
High school education
Owner of a photocopy shop
Interviewed on 24 May 2004

Wives of enterprise owners

Interviewee JB1

Married
Born in 1946 in Jiaocheng County
Completed one year of junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a glass factory
Interviewed on 7 October 2003

Interviewee JB2

Married
Born in 1972 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Wife of the owner of a clothes shop
Interviewed on 14 October 2003

Interviewee JB3

Married
Born in 1953 in Gujiao City, Shanxi Province
High school education
Wife of the owner of a photography studio
Interviewed on 14 October 2003

Interviewee JB4

Married
Born in 1967 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a cosmetics shop
Interviewed on 14 October 2003

Interviewee JB5

Married
Born in 1970 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a gift shop
Interviewed on 15 October 2003

Interviewee JB6

Married
Born in 1968 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a tailor workshop
Interviewed on 15 October 2003

Interviewee JB7

Married
Born in 1973 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Wife of the owner of a shoe shop
Interviewed on 16 October 2003

Interviewee JB8

Married
Born in 1960 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a coal and coke processing group
Interviewed on 16 October 2003

Interviewee JB9

Married
Born in 1961 in Jiaocheng County
Secondary technical school education
Wife of the owner of a motorcycle shop
Interviewed on 27 October 2003

Interviewee JB10

Married
Born in 1963 in Jiaocheng County
Secondary technical school education
Wife of the owner of an ox farm
Interviewed on 27 October 2003

Interviewee JB11

Married
Born in 1964 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a pharmacy
Interviewed on 28 October 2003

Interviewee JB12

Married
Born in 1971 in Jiaocheng County
High school education

Wife of the owner of a clothes shop
Interviewed on 28 October 2003

Interviewee JB13

Married
Born in 1958 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Wife of the owner of a plastic building material factory
Interviewed on 17 May 2004

Interviewee JB14

Married
Born in 1964 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a brick factory
Interviewed on 17 May 2004

Interviewee JB15

Married
Born in 1954 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a machinery factory
Interviewed on 17 May 2004

Interviewee JB16

Married
Born in 1967 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Wife of the owner of a magnetism material factory
Interviewed on 18 May 2004

Interviewee JB17

Married
Born in 1962 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a graveclothes and coffin factory
Interviewed on 18 May 2004

Interviewee JB18

Married
Born in 1954 in Jiaocheng County
Junior college education
Wife of the owner of a steel casting factory
Interviewed on 19 May 2004

Interviewee JB19

Married

Born in 1953 in Jiaocheng County

Junior middle school education

Wife of the owner of a chemical industry company

Interviewed on 19 May 2004

Interviewee JB20

Married

Born in 1952 in Jinzhong City, Shanxi Province

Primary school education

Wife of the owner of a chicken farm

Interviewed on 19 May 2004

Interviewee JB21

Married

Born in 1961 in Jiaocheng County

High school education

Wife of the owner of a glass factory

Interviewed on 20 May 2004

Interviewee JB22

Married

Born in 1955 in Jiaocheng County

Primary school education

Wife of the owner of a glass factory

Interviewed on 20 May 2004

Interviewee JB23

Married

Born in 1966 in Jiaocheng County

Junior middle school education

Wife of the owner of a restaurant

Interviewee JB24

Married

Born in 1954 in Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province

Junior middle school education

Wife of the owner of a glass factory

Interviewed on 20 May 2004

Interviewee JB25

Married

Born in 1965 in Jiaocheng County

Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a pig farm
Interviewed on 21 May 2004

Interviewee JB26

Married
Born in 1969 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a shoe factory and shop
Interviewed on 21 May 2004

Interviewee JB27

Married
Born in 1960 in Lin County, Shanxi Province
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of an orchard and pasture
Interviewed on 21 May 2004

Women managers

Interviewee JC1

Married
Born in 1963 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Manager of a plastic building material company
Interviewed on 6 October 2003

Interviewee JC2

Married
Born in 1960 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Manager of a clothes factory
Interviewed on 6 October 2003

Interviewee JC3

Married
Born in 1950 in Jiaocheng County
Junior college education
Manager of a glass factory
Interviewed on 8 October 2003

Interviewee JC4

Married
Born in 1963 in Jiaocheng County

Technician school ('jixiao' 技校)
Manager and *de facto* owner of a gift shop
Interviewed on 15 October 2003

Interviewee JC5

Married
Born in 1971 in Jiaocheng County
Secondary technical school education
Manager and shareholder of a clothes shop
Interviewed on 15 October 2003

Interviewee JC6

Married
Born in 1959 in Wenshui County, Shanxi Province
University degree ('daxue' 大学)
Manager and *de facto* owner of a chicken farm
Interviewed on 27 October 2003

Interviewee JC7

Married
Born in 1955 in Jiaocheng County
Secondary technical school education
Director of a state-owned forestry institute
Interviewed on 19 May 2004

Interviewee JC8

Married
Born in 1964 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Manager of a glass factory
Interviewed on 20 May 2004

Interviewee JC9

Married
Born in 1963 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Manager of a glass factory
Interviewed on 20 May 2004

Interviewee JC10

Married
Born in 1970 in Jiaocheng County
Junior middle school education
Manager and *de facto* owner of a chicken farm

Interviewed on 21 May 2004

Cadres and notables

Interviewee JD1

Married

Born in 1945 in Nanning City, Guangxi Province

University degree

Former chairman of Jiaocheng Political Consultative Conference (Zhengxie 政协)

Interviewed on 5 October 2003

Interviewee JD2

Married

Born in 1949 in Jiaocheng County

Dropped out of junior middle school

President of Jiaocheng History Research Institute (Shizhi Yanjiuhui 史志研究会)

Interviewed on 5 October 2003

Interviewee JD3

Married

Born in 1943 in Jiaocheng County

Junior middle school education

Former director of Jiaocheng Cultural Relic Administration Institute (Wenwu Guanli Suo 文物管理所)

Interviewed on 5 October 2003

Interviewee JD4

Married

Born in 1960 in Jiaocheng County

University degree

Director of Jiaocheng County CCP History Office (Dangshi Yanjiushi 党史研究室)

Interviewed on 5 October 2003

Interviewee JD5

Married

Born in 1969 in Jiaocheng County

Secondary technical school education

Director of Xiajiaying Township Women's Federation (Fulian 妇联)

Interviewed on 7 October 2003

Interviewee JD6

Single

Born in 1964 in Lin County, Shanxi Province

MA degree

Abbot of Xuanzhong Temple (Xuanzhong Si 悬中寺)
Interviewed on 8 October 2003

Interviewee JD7

Married
Born in 1958 in Jiaocheng County
High school education
Vice-county magistrate in charge of foreign affairs
Interviewed on 9 October 2003

Interviewee JD8

Married
Born in 1957 in Jiaocheng County
Junior college education
Chair of Jiaocheng Women's Federation
Interviewed on 9 October 2003

Interviewee JD9

Married
Born in 1964 in Jiaocheng County
Secondary technical school education
Director of Tianning Township Women's Federation
Interviewed on 17 May 2004

Interviewee JD10

Married
Born in 1956 in Jiaocheng County
Junior college education
Director of Jiaocheng Administrative Centre of Enterprises (Qiye Guanli Zhongxin 企业管理中心)
Interviewed on 18 May 2004

Qiongshan

Women enterprise owners

Interviewee QA1

Married

Born in 1950 in Qionghai City, Hainan Province

University degree

Owner of a vocational school

Interviewed on 25 October 2004

Interviewee QA2

Married

Born in 1972 in Zhangjiajie City, Hunan Province

University degree

Owner of an art school

Interviewed on 25 October 2004

Interviewee QA3

Married

Born in 1945 in Qiongshan District, Hainan Province

Dropped out of junior middle school

Owner of a farm

Interviewed on 26 October 2004

Interviewee QA4

Married

Born in 1973 in Shanya City, Hainan Province

High school education

Owner of a typing and photocopy shop

Interviewed on 2 November 2004

Interviewee QA5

Married

Born in 1956 in Qiongshan District

High school education

Owner of a furniture store

Interviewed on 2 November 2004

Interviewee QA6

Married

Born in 1953 in Qiongshan District

High school education

Owner of an office equipment factory

Interviewed on 2 November 2004

Interviewee QA7

Married

Born in 1954 in Sanya City

Junior college education

Owner of a beauty salon

Interviewed on 3 November 2004

Interviewee QA8

Married

Born in 1957 in Qiongsan District

High school education

Owner of a kindergarten

Interviewed on 3 November 2004

Interviewee QA9

Married

Born in 1980

Dropped out of university

Owner of a cosmetics company

Interviewed on 26 April 2005

Interviewee QA10

Married

Born in 1960 in Ding'an County, Hainan Province

High school education

Owner of a restaurant

Interviewed on 9 May 2005

Interviewee QA11

Married

Born in 1943 in Qiongsan District

Junior middle school education

Owner of a flower shop

Interviewed on 9 May 2005

Interviewee QA12

Married

Born in 1965 in Qiongsan District

Secondary technical school education

Owner of a fruit store

Interviewed on 9 May 2005

Interviewee QA13

Married

Born in 1977 in Jiangxi Province
Junior middle school education
Owner of a clothes shop
Interviewed on 9 May 2005

Interviewee QA14

Married
Born in 1969 in Wanning City, Hainan Province
Junior college education
Owner of a photography studio
Interviewed on 10 May 2005

Interviewee QA15

Married
Born in 1972 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province
Junior college education
Owner of a make-up studio
Interviewed on 11 May 2005

Interviewee QA16

Married
Born in 1974 in Qionghai District
Junior middle school education
Owner of a hairdressing studio
Interviewed on 13 May 2005

Interviewee QA17

Married
Born in 1972 in Qionghai District
Primary school education
Owner of an office equipment store
Interviewed on 13 May 2005

Interviewee QA18

Married
Born in 1979 in Qionghai City
University degree
Owner of a clothes shop
Interviewed on 13 May 2005

Interviewee QA19

Single
Born in 1978 in Wenchang City, Hainan Province
Junior college education
Owner of a beauty salon

Interviewed on 14 May 2005

Interviewee QA20

Single

Born in 1979 in Wenchang City

Secondary technical school education

Owner of a clothes shop

Interviewed on 14 May 2005

Interviewee QA21

Divorced

Born in 1954 in Beijing City

High school education

Owner of a restaurant

Interviewed on 15 May 2005

Interviewee QA22

Married

Born in 1976 in Qiongsan District

Junior middle school education

Owner of a restaurant

Interviewed on 18 May 2005

Wives of enterprise owners

Interviewee QB1

Married

Born in 1965 in Qiongsan District

Dropped out of high school

Wife of the owner of a super market

Interviewed on 28 October 2004

Interviewee QB2

Married

Born in 1959 in Qiongsan District

High school education

Wife of the owner of a timber factory

Interviewed on 3 November 2004

Interviewee QB3

Married

Born in 1980 in Wenchang City

Junior middle school education

Wife of the owner of a cosmetics shop

Interviewed on 27 April 2005

Interviewee QB4

Married

Born in 1973 in Jiangxi Province

Completed two years of junior middle school education

Wife of the owner of a clothes shop

Interviewed on 9 May 2005

Interviewee QB5

Married

Born in 1976 in Jiangxi Province

Junior middle school education

Wife of the owner of a clothes shop

Interviewed on 9 May 2005

Interviewee QB6

Married

Born in 1969 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province

Dropped out of junior middle school

Wife of the owner of a restaurant

Interviewed on 10 May 2005

Interviewee QB7

Married

Born in 1978 in Haikou City, Hainan Province

University degree

Wife of the owner of a gym

Interviewed on 10 May 2005

Interviewee QB8

Married

Born in 1966 in Jiangsu Province

Junior college education

Wife of the owner of a medicine company

Interviewed on 11 May 2005

Interviewee QB9

Married

Born in 1966 in Taizhou City, Zhejiang Province

Dropped out of primary school

Wife of the owner of a clock and glasses shop

Interviewed on 13 May 2005

Interviewee QB10

Married

Born in 1965 in Qiongsan District
Completed five years of primary school education
Wife of the owner of a restaurant
Interviewed on 13 May 2005

Interviewee QB11

Married
Born in 1972 in Haikou City
Secondary technical school education
Wife of the owner of a bar
Interviewed on 13 May 2005

Interviewee QB12

Married
Born in 1970 in Hunan Province
High school education
Wife of the owner of a restaurant
Interviewed on 14 May 2005

Interviewee QB13

Married
Born in 1973 in Yiyang City, Hunan Province
Studying for a MA degree
Wife of the owner of a construction company
Interviewed on 15 May 2005

Interviewee QB14

Married
Born in 1966 in Jiangsu Province
University degree
Wife of the owner of a real estate company
Interviewed on 18 May 2005

Interviewee QB15

Married
Born in 1964 in Qiongsan District
High school education
Wife of the owner of a real estate company
Interviewed on 19 May 2005

Interviewee QB16

Married
Born in 1971 in Qiongsan District
High school education
Wife of the owner of a cafe

Interviewed on 19 May 2005

Interviewee QB17

Married

Born in 1966 in Qionghai City

Secondary technical school education

Wife of the owner of an orchard

Interviewed on 20 May 2005

Interviewee QB18

Married

Born in 1955 in Nanning City, Guangxi Province

High school education

Wife of the owner of a farm

Interviewed on 20 May 2005

Interviewee QB19

Married

Born in 1967 in Qionghai District

Junior middle school education

Wife of the owner of a motorcycle repairing shop

Interviewed on 20 May 2005

Interviewee QB20

Married

Born in 1968 in Wenchang City

Secondary technical school education

Wife of the owner of a transportation business

Interviewed on 20 May 2005

Women managers

Interviewee QC1

Married

Born in 1958 in Qionghai District

Dropped out of junior middle school

Manager and *de facto* owner of a kindergarten

Interviewed on 25 October 2004

Interviewee QC2

Married

Born in 1978 in Sanya City

Dropped out of university

Manager and share holder of a cosmetics company

Interviewed on 26 April 2005

Interviewee QC3

Married

Born in 1977 in Qiongsan District

University degree

Manager and share holder of a children's clothes shop

Interviewed on 30 April 2005

Interviewee QC4

Married

Born in 1965 in Qiongsan County

Secondary technical school education

Manager and *de facto* owner of a book store

Interviewed on 9 May 2005

Interviewee QC5

Divorced

Born in 1961 in Heilongjiang Province

Junior college education

Manager of an insurance company

Interviewed on 10 May 2005

Interviewee QC6

Married

Born in 1946 in Qiongsan District

Junior middle school education

Manager of a department store

Interviewed on 13 May 2005

Interviewee QC7

Single

Born in 1983 in Qiongsan District

Junior middle school education

Manager of a restaurant

Interviewed on 14 May 2005

Interviewee QC8

Single

Born in 1978 in Gong'an City, Hubei Province

Junior middle school education

Manager of a beauty salon

Interviewed on 14 May 2005

Interviewee QC9

Married

Born in 1966 in Qiongsan District
Primary school education
Manager of a lychee farm
Interviewed on 18 May 2005

Interviewee QC10

Married
Born in 1963 in Qiongsan District
Junior middle school education
Manager and *de facto* owner of a cloth processing workshop
Interviewed on 18 May 2005

Interviewee QC11

Married
Born in 1975 in Qiongsan District
Primary school education
Manager and *de facto* owner of a cloth processing workshop
Interviewed on 18 May 2005

Cadres and notables

Interviewee QD1

Married
Born in 1954 in Qiongsan District
Secondary technical school education
Chair of Qiongsan District Women's Federation
Interviewed on 23 October 2004

Interviewee QD2

Married
Born in 1967 in Qiongsan District
High school education
Chair of Fucheng Township Women's Federation
Interviewed on 26 October 2004

Interviewee QD3

Married
Born in 1973 in Hainan Province
University degree
Vice-Chair of Qiongsan District Women's Federation
Interviewed on 28 October 2004

Interviewee QD4

Married
Born in 1965 in Wanning City

University degree
Director of the Organization Department of Qiongzhan CCP Committee (*Zuzhi Bu* 组织部)
Interviewed on 9 May 2005

Interviewee QD5

Married
Born in 1954 in Longhua District, Hainan Province
University degree
Director of Qiongzhan Federation of Industry and Commerce (*Gongshang Lian* 工商联)
Interviewed on 9 May 2005

Interviewee QD6

Single
Born in 1964 in Jiangxi Province
Junior college education
Abbot of Taihua Temple (*Taihua Si* 泰华寺)
Interviewed on 11 May 2005

Interviewee QD7

Married
Born in 1954 in Qiongzhan District
Junior college education
Director of the United Front Work Department of Qiongzhan CCP Committee (*Tongzhan Bu* 统战部)
Interviewed on 12 May 2005

Interviewee QD8

Married
Born in 1948 in Wenchang City
Secondary technical school education
Director of Qiongzhan Local History Office (*Difangzhi Bangongshi* 地方志办公室)
Interviewed on 12 May 2005

Interviewee QD9

Married
Born in 1962 in Meilan District, Hainan Province
Junior college education
Director of Qiongzhan Statistical Bureau (*Tongji Ju* 统计局)
Interviewed on 17 May 2005

Interviewee QD10

Married

Born in 1957 in Qiongsan District

University degree

Director of Qiongsan Tourism Bureau (Lüyou Ju 旅游局)

Interviewed on 17 May 2005

Mianyang

Women enterprise owners

Interviewee MA1

Married

Born in 1974 in Jiangyou City, Sichuan Province

Vocational school education

Owner of a high-tech company

Interviewed on 20 July 2005

Interviewee MA2

Married

Born in 1971 in Zigong City, Sichuan Province

High school education

Owner of a beauty salon

Interviewed on 20 July 2005

Interviewee MA3

Married

Born in 1975 in Mianyang City, Sichuan Province

University degree

Owner of a cosmetics chain

Interviewed on 21 July 2005

Interviewee MA4

Married

Born in 1962 in Deyang City, Sichuan Province

Junior college education

Owner of a cosmetic shop and beauty salon

Interviewed on 22 July 2005

Interviewee MA5

Divorced

Born in 1963 in Mianyang City

University degree

Owner of a high-tech company

Interviewed on 25 July 2005

Interviewee MA6

Married

Born in 1970 in Chengdu City, Sichuan Province

University degree

Owner of an art school

Interviewed on 26 July 2005

Interviewee MA7

Married

Born in 1963 in Mianyang City

High school education

Owner of a kindergarten

Interviewed on 26 July 2005

Interviewee MA8

Married

Born in 1964 in Mianyang City

Junior middle school education

Owner of a pharmaceutical company

Interviewed on 28 July 2005

Interviewee MA9

Married

Born in 1959 in Mianyang City

High school education

Owner of a pharmacy chain

Interviewed on 29 July 2005

Interviewee MA10

Married

Born in 1963 in Chengdu City

University degree

Owner of an engineering company

Interviewed on 29 July 2005

Interviewee MA11

Married

Born in 1963 in An County, Sichuan Province

University degree

Owner of an agricultural company

Interviewed on 2 August 2005

Interviewee MA12

Divorced

Born in 1961 in Neijiang City, Sichuan Province

University degree

Owner of a vocational school

Interviewed on 3 August 2005

Interviewee MA13

Married

Born in 1971 in Shehong County, Sichuan Province
Junior college education
Owner of an environmental protection technology company
Interviewed on 5 August 2005

Interviewee MA14

Married
Born in 1972 in Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province
University degree
Owner of a body shaping studio
Interviewed on 10 October 2005

Interviewee MA15

Married
Born in 1967 in Mianyang City
Junior middle school education
Owner of a restaurant chain
Interviewed on 13 October 2005

Interviewee MA16

Married
Born in 1963 in Yibin City, Sichuan Province
High school education
Owner of a restaurant chain
Interviewed on 13 October 2005

Interviewee MA17

Married
Born in 1973 in Pingwu County, Sichuan Province
Junior college education
Owner of a domestic service company
Interviewed on 17 October 2005

Interviewee MA18

Married
Born in 1963 in Neijiang City, Sichuan Province
Secondary technical school education
Owner of a medical equipment company
Interviewed on 17 October 2005

Interviewee MA19

Married
Born in 1969 in Guangyuan City, Sichuan Province
Junior college education
Owner of an advertisement company

Interviewed on 18 October 2005

Interviewee MA20

Married

Born in 1969 in Mianyang City

Secondary technical school education

Owner of a clothes shop

Interviewed on 20 October 2005

Interviewee MA21

Married

Born in 1963 in Mianyang City

Junior college education

Owner of a clothes shop

Interviewed on 21 October 2005

Wives of enterprise owners

Interviewee MB1

Married

Born in 1964 in Mianyang City

University degree

Wife of the owner of a trading company

Interviewed on 22 July 2005

Interviewee MB2

Married

Born in 1964 in Luzhou City, Sichuan Province

Junior college education

Wife of the owner of a high-tech company

Interviewed on 28 July 2005

Interviewee MB3

Married

Born in 1962 in Mianyang City

Junior middle school education

Wife of the owner of an agricultural company

Interviewed on 28 July 2005

Interviewee MB4

Married

Born in 1966 in Mianyang City

Vocational school education

Wife of the owner of an electronic equipment company

Interviewed on 4 August 2005

Interviewee MB5

Married

Born in 1964 in Mianyang City

Completed one year of junior middle school

Wife of the owner of a gardening company

Interviewed on 4 August 2005

Interviewee MB6

Married

Born in 1968 in Mianyang City

Junior college education

Wife of the owner of an electronic equipment company

Interviewed on 9 October 2005

Interviewee MB7

Married

Born in 1977 in Santai County

High school education

Wife of the owner of a plastics and electronic equipment company

Interviewed on 9 October 2005

Interviewee MB8

Married

Born in 1965 in Chongqing City

University degree

Wife of the owner of a trading company

Interviewed on 9 October 2005

Interviewee MB9

Married

Born in 1966 in Mianyang City

Junior college education

Wife of the owner of an electric equipment company

Interviewed on 10 October 2005

Interviewee MB10

Married

Born in 1964 in Chongqing City

MA degree

Wife of the owner of a feed company

Interviewed on 10 October 2005

Interviewee MB11

Married

Born in 1964 in Mianyang City
Junior college education
Wife of the owner of a real estate company
Interviewed on 11 October 2005

Interviewee MB12

Married
Born in 1965 in Chongqing City
Dropped out of junior middle school
Wife of the owner of a performing art agency
Interviewed on 12 October 2005

Interviewee MB13

Married
Born in 1975 in Santai County
University degree
Wife of the owner of an electronic equipment company
Interviewed on 16 October 2005

Interviewee MB14

Married
Born in 1968 in Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a wire and cable company
Interviewed on 18 October 2005

Interviewee MB15

Married
Born in 1963 in Deyang City
University degree
Wife of the owner of a farm
Interviewed on 18 October 2005

Interviewee MB16

Married
Born in 1976 in Suining City, Sichuan Province
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a hair-dressing and beauty salon
Interviewed on 19 October 2005

Interviewee MB17

Married
Born in 1953 in Santai County
Junior middle school education
Wife of the owner of a real estate company

Interviewed on 20 October 2005

Interviewee MB18

Married

Born in 1952 in Zongjiang City, Sichuan Province

Secondary technical school education

Wife of the owner of a pharmacy

Interviewed on 21 October 2005

Interviewee MB19

Married

Birth date not available, born in Mianyang City

High school education

Wife of the owner of a construction material company

Interviewed on 21 October 2005

Interviewee MB20

Married

Born in 1964 in Jiange City, Sichuan Province

University degree

Wife of the owner of a trading company

Interviewed on 22 October 2005

Women managers

Interviewee MC1

Married

Born in 1963 in Chongqing City

University degree

Manager of a private vocational school

Interviewed on 19 July 2005

Interviewee MC2

Married

Born in 1966 in Yili City, Xinjiang Province

University degree

Manager of a TV factory

Interviewed on 20 July 2005

Interviewee MC3

Married

Born in 1967 in Meishan City, Sichuan Province

University degree

Manager of a TV factory

Interviewed on 20 July 2005

Interviewee MC4

Divorced

Born in 1969 in Yanting County, Sichuan Province

Vocational school education

Manager of an automobile repairing company

Interviewed on 21 July 2005

Interviewee MC5

Divorced

Born in 1963 in Mianyang City

High school education

Manager of a mechanics company

Interviewed on 25 July 2005

Interviewee MC6

Married

Born in 1947 in Mianyang City

Dropped out of high school

Manager of an investment company

Interviewed on 26 July 2005

Interviewee MC7

Married

Born in 1963 in Shehong County

High school education

Manager of a packing company

Interviewed on 2 August 2005

Interviewee MC8

Married

Born in 1964 in Mianyang City

University degree

Manager of a electronic equipment company

Interviewed on 5 August 2005

Interviewee MC9

Married

Born in 1960 in Gansu Province

Vocational school education

Manager of a telecommunication company

Interviewed on 11 October 2005

Interviewee MC10

Married

Born in 1966 in Mianyang City
University degree
Manager of an electronic equipment company
Interviewed on 13 October 2005

Interviewee MC11

Married
Born in 1962 in Deyang City
Junior middle school education
Manager and shareholder of a mobile phone shop
Interviewed on 17 October 2005

Interviewee MC12

Married
Born in 1972 in Mianyang City
Dropped out of primary school
Manager and share-holder of a beauty salon
Interviewed on 19 October 2005

Interviewee MC13

Married
Born in 1962 in Mianyang City
University degree
Manager of a hotel
Interviewed on 19 October 2005

Interviewee MC14

Married
Born in 1968 in Changzhi City, Shanxi Province
MA degree
Manager of an engineering equipment company
Interviewed on 19 October 2005

Interviewee MC15

Married
Born in 1964 in Jiange City
MBA degree
Manager of an oil and fat chemical company
Interviewed on 20 October 2005

Cadres and notables

Interviewee MD1

Married
Born in 1957 in Zigong City

High school education
Deputy Chair of Chenkang Township People's Congress and Director of Chenkang Women's Federation
Interviewed on 18 July 2005

Interviewee MD2

Married
Born in 1968 in Chongqing City
University degree
Deputy-Chair of Mianyang Women's Federation in charge of publicity
Interviewed on 19 July 2005

Interviewee MD3

Married
Born in 1954 in Mianyang City
Dropped out of high school
Director of the organization and publicity department of Mianyang Women's Federation
Interviewed on 19 July 2005

Interviewee MD4

Married
Born in 1966 in Nanchong City, Sichuan Province
Junior college education
Deputy-director of Fucheng District Foreign Investment Bureau, Mianyang City
(*zhaoshang ju* 招商局)
Interviewed on 25 July 2005

Interviewee MD5

Married
Born in 1959 in Suining City
Junior college education
Chair of Fucheng District Women's Federation, Mianyang City
Interviewed on 1 August 2005

Interviewee MD6

Married
Born in 1965 in Chongqing City
Dropped out of junior middle school
Vice-director of Mianyang Arts Theatre
Interviewed on 12 October 2005

Interviewee MD7

Married

Born in 1969 in Guangyuan City, Sichuan Province
Junior college education
Partner of Sichuan Henlian Law Firm
Interviewed on 18 October 2005

Interviewee MD8

Married
Born in 1963 in Deyang City
University degree
Deputy-Chair of Mianyang Women's Federation in charge of the protection women and children's rights
Interviewed on 18 October 2005

Interviewee MD9

Married
Born in 1968 in Guangyuan City
University degree
Vice-director of the Reception Office of Mianyang CCP Committee and Mianyang Government (jiedai bangongshi 接待办公室)
Interviewed on 20 October 2005

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