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**FERTILITY DECLINE AND THE TRANSFORMATION
OF WORKING CLASS FAMILY LIFE
IN
TIANJIN, CHINA, 1963-1970**

By

DANNING WANG

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New
York**

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

4/25/2002
Date

Jane P. Schneider
Professor Jane Schneider
Chair of Examining Committee

4/26/2002
Date

Louise D. Lennihan
Professor Louise D. Lennihan
Executive Officer

Professor Jane Schneider

Jane P. Schneider

Professor Gerald Creed

Gerald W. Creed

Professor Shirley Lindenbaum

Shirley Lindenbaum

Professor Joan Mencher

Joan P. Mencher
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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Chapter One

Introduction

Because of the internal contradiction between state-controlled industrialization and the increasing cost of massive urbanization, created by the Stalinist industrialization model, the Chinese state, instead of the individual families, first felt the massive urban population pressure and employed a series of strategies to deal with it in the 1950s and 1960s. The micro level socioeconomic constraints that catalyzed individual Chinese urban families to adopt contraception were in fact created by the state's strategic urban policies and the local interactions that developed in the wake of socialist urban management. Family size and living standards were sensitive to the social and economic pressures generated by the frozen salary system, the state controlled employment system, the restrictive consumption standards, and local scrutiny. What this dissertation addresses is how human reproduction was regulated by the state for its encompassing control over female urbanites' public/private lives and how the double burden imposed by the state on female urbanites was intensified by the state's restrictive urban control. It shows that the urban fertility transition in the 1960s was not the direct result of a state's birth planning campaign, nor was it a straightforward outcome of industrialization and urbanization processes as argued for western societies. Instead, it was the individual families' culturally justified reaction to a series of structural constraints that emerged through the development of Chinese socialism.

1. China's Urban Fertility Transition in the 1960s

Detailed evaluations of demographic data have confirmed that urban China experienced an early fertility transition in the 1960s when the state's family planning policy had just been launched and was not yet strictly enforced¹. Compared to that of its rural counterpart, this transition came a decade earlier and it took a shorter period of time for fertility to reach replacement level. By the late 1970s, when the state launched its one-child policy, rural China still had a Total Fertility Rate higher than 3, but the dramatic fertility transition in urban China was already virtually over (illustrated in Table One and Chart 1). The 1960s became the breaking point for China's urban fertility transition.

In China's second largest industrial city, Tianjin, the fertility rate declined 45% between 1963 and 1964, and the trend was continuous. After a small rebound in 1967 and 1968, the total fertility rate kept on dropping and reached 1.858 before the onset of the strict national family planning program in 1970 (illustrated in Table Two and Chart 2).

It is generally agreed by most commentators/observers that major socioeconomic changes created the historical background for China's urban fertility transition in the 1960s². Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (the PRC) in 1949, China experienced enormous social changes. After years of precarious life and social turmoil, the socialist economic system was able to provide a stable family life with universal medical services in urban China, which led to a sharp decline of the mortality

¹ See, for instance, Banister 1987; Coale 1984; Coale and Chen 1987; and Peng 1991.

² See Banister 1987, Lavelly and Freedman 1990, and Whyte and Parish 1984.

rate. The Marriage Law issued in 1950 transformed family life by forbidding family arranged marriage, polygamy, and mercenary marriage, and increasing marriage age. Statistical data showed that, after the founding of the PRC, the mean age at first marriage of Chinese women continuously increased (see Chart 6). In addition, women were encouraged to receive more education, to join the labor force, and to work outside the home. All these socioeconomic factors are related to fertility decline.

Some studies also point out the impact of economic hardships on the fertility decline in the 1960s. In the highly state controlled urban economy, urbanites' employment and material life depended solely on the state's arrangement. Urban Chinese had no alternative other than decreasing family size to increase family income. Once the state restricted its compensation system in the 1960s, urbanites deliberately reduced family size to increase the percentage of salary earners in each household as an efficient way to maintain a high-income level (Walder 1986).

Finally, the state's two birth planning campaigns in the 1950s and 1960s are frequently quoted as being responsible for the transition. During the First Birth Planning Campaign (1954-1957), the state legalized abortion and appropriated funds to accelerate research and development of contraceptive methods and products. During the Second Campaign (1962-1965), the state focused on promoting contraceptive knowledge and increasing the distribution of low-cost contraceptive devices among urban populations.

Although they acknowledge these various social changes and their impact on demographic behaviors, both scholarly and general explanations of China's urban fertility transition are state-centered. An extremely active and intrusive state deliberately promoted birth planning. The First and, especially, the Second Birth Planning Campaign were identified as the proximate causes of the transformation of reproductive behavior³ (Coale 1984, Pasternak 1986, and Wolf 1986). After all, major social and economic changes, i.e. the availability of universal medical service, marriage age increase, women's participation in the labor force, and the decline of mortality rate, had all gradually emerged in urban China after 1949. The urban fertility rate, however, did not drop until 1963, a year after the vigorous launch of the Second Birth Planning Campaign in the cities.

This political argument is based on the coincidence of the launch of the Second Birth Planning Campaign and the onset time of the urban fertility transition. Proponents of this argument interpret the onset as resulting from the extremely effective implementation of a coercive state policy at the local level. Support for this argument came from investigations of state management. The administration's intensive investment in the Second Campaign and the large administrative network were credited for the successful implementation of the state's policy. In the cities along the eastern coastal areas, where the state started family planning programs earliest and allocated the highest budgets towards the policy, local cadres were more committed to the implementation than their colleagues in the interior provinces. As a result, seven eastern coastal provinces

³ The legal regulation on increasing marriage age was treated as another indicator of the state's primary role of the urban fertility transition (Banister 1987).

and municipalities, including Tianjin, constituted the first group where the total urban fertility rate declined earlier and faster than the interior urban areas⁴ (Peng 1991 and Sun 1990).

However, this state-centered argument could not explain why the Chinese urban population immediately and voluntarily responded to the state's policy and changed their reproductive behaviors by utilizing contraception to reduce their family size. Unlike the massive local resistance to the coercive one-child policy in rural China after 1978⁵, urban dynamism has not been factored into the analysis of the urban fertility transition. In addition, critics pointed out that although temporal correspondence between the implementation of the family planning policy and the dramatic decline in fertility "leaves little doubt that a casual connection exists between the two, ... closer inspection suggests that the linkage between policy and practice is far from tight" (Greenhalgh 1989:10). First, the administrative organizational mechanisms in both campaigns were inadequate because no single central agency existed either at the state or at the local level (Banister 1987 and Tien 1973). It remained unclear what motivated the local cadres to commit to birth planning programs among their daily affairs. Second, statistical analysis of the state's impact on the fertility transition demonstrates that the effects of family planning budgetary investment on fertility were minimal (Poston and Gu 1987). Moreover, the underlying rationale for birth planning, especially for the Second Campaign, was for maternal and child health (White 1994b). The state's deliberate advocacy of the small family was only officially formulated and socially justified in its Third Birth Planning

⁴ These seven regions are Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong, and Fujian.

Campaign in 1971. Therefore, the demographic impact of both campaigns on fertility in the 1950s and 1960s deserves more investigation. We need a multi-causal understanding of this momentous transition to investigate how the state's family planning policies interacted with the other socioeconomic conditions in the process of the implementation.

Demographer A. J. Coale once postulated that fertility transition only occurred when populations were simultaneously “ready, willing, and able”. “Readiness” refers to the economic advantage at the household or individual level which motivates fertility control. “Willingness” encompasses the moral acceptability or the legitimization for such action. “Ability” refers to the availability and acceptability of methods of birth control (Coale 1973). According to this multi-faceted fertility transition model, we need a synthesized explanation to describe what socioeconomic, political, and cultural changes prior the 1960s prepared the urban Chinese to be “ready, willing, and able” for a new demographic behavior and how they accomplished it. The two birth planning campaigns demonstrated the state's acceptance of birth control method and its effort making contraceptive devices locally available among the urban populations. The state's encompassing control over the urban economy that left individual families with little alternatives illustrated the economic advantages for individual households to get “ready” for controlled fertility. We are still unclear how the local cultural context justified the innovative idea and transformed it to be a morally non-risk move for each family. In addition, why would the urbanites in the prosperous eastern coastal areas live under more

⁵ Numerous studies recorded this local resistance and its impact to the change of the state's policy. See, for instance, Greenhalgh 1994, Greenhalgh and Li 1995.

economic constraints and utilize contraception earlier⁶? How to perceive the economic constraints locally and understand the local dynamism remained unanswered.

China is an enormously vast and differentiated country. Local variations exist not only in terms of geography and natural resources, but also in terms of local history. Different from the conventional Demographic Transition Theory which linked fertility decline to industrialization and urbanization in the western countries⁷, the early fertility decline in China occurred in a deurbanizing setting in the eastern coastal region. In order to accumulate more funds for industrialization and to overcome the paradox created by the socialist industrialization design -- the internal contradiction between state-controlled industrialization and the increasing cost of massive urbanization -- the Chinese state heightened its urban control in the prosperous eastern coastal region in the 1960s. The state deliberately froze the size of cities via forced out-migration and reduced their production marketing system. It further froze urban salaries and repressed urban consumption. Local urban residents were continually requested to sacrifice private benefits and material lives for the country's empowerment. Urban families were compelled to define their domestic life according to the public interest. This added a new political and social concern in domestic life among the working class families who were the main urban residents, and intensified the pressure of the double burden on female urbanites in particular. While confronting the numerous structural constraints associated

⁶ Statistical analysis of the distinct geographic pattern in urban fertility transition showed that the first group of urban population to finish fertility transition was located in the highly developed eastern coastal urban centers where residents enjoyed the highest living standard in Chinese history (Poston and Gu 1987).

⁷ Demographic Transition Theory is a synthesis of ideas and empirical correlation, formulated by the earliest writers, e.g. Thompson, Lorimer, Notestein, and Davis in the 1940s, which build up straight-forward linkage between demographic and economic change (Davis 1963).

with workplaces and local neighborhoods, individual families actively responded in both public and private arenas to negotiate benefits along a sensitive boundary between the public and the private. Among many of the individual families' strategies, perceptions regarding the appropriate number of children for each household consciously changed. Human reproduction, being highly regulated by both the state and local cultures, became a contestation domain within which local negotiation and resistance were organized.

2. Theoretical Premises

Current developments in the demographic studies of fertility transition emphasize local variations and no longer treat fertility transitions as a uniform phenomenon that always follow the same process. Since the 1970s, the Princeton European Fertility Project and the World Fertility Survey have challenged the conventional Demographic Transition Theory. Empirical data of fertility change, collected from the historical European countries and the contemporary less-developed countries, demonstrated contradictions from the predictions of standard demographic transition theory. The expected associations of socioeconomic variables and fertility did not show in these countries' fertility transition. Instead, fertility declines began about the same time in a number of countries that were at quite different levels of socioeconomic development (Coale & Watkins 1986 and Cleland & Hobcraft 1985).

In criticizing the demographic transition theory, Hirschman described that “society, (to the early social scientist) works ... like a regression equation. The task is to find the right set of predictors, solve the equation, and discover what factors are most important in predicting social outcomes” (Hirschman 1994:226). Among the set of “predictors”, listed by Frank Notestein, a major pioneer of this theory, economic factors are the most important. The presumption is that with economic development, caused by industrialization, the living standard was raised and mortality rate went down. Under the high pressure of mass population, the new idea about small family size emerged and became possible. Under the umbrella of industrialization and economic development, Demographic Transition Theory has room for many casual variables as the predictors which all related to fertility change. There is no differentiation and stratification among these factors. In addition there are no immediate factors between these economic variables and fertility decline. This makes the theory become a totality which generalized the experience of Western Europe and North America to the rest of the world.

In searching for the other social determinates beyond the well-studied course of economic development, localized demographic studies identify local features, especially local culture, as shaping the onset time, speed, and completion. Numerous demographic studies on the issue of local culture and its impact on fertility decisions have been conducted. As one example, in their study of the French fertility transition of the late 18th century, Lesthaeghe and Wilson raise questions about the historical change of secularization and its impact on fertility behavior. They argue that the political and cultural forces that led to a decline in support for traditional religious parties were part of

a larger shift in the moral code that also legitimated nontraditional reproductive behavior. Both socioeconomic structure (the mode of production, indexed by labor force composition) and secularization (vote for socialist or nonreligious parties) were important forces that led to more rapid decline in marital fertility (Lesthaeghe and Wilson 1986).

Additionally, Coale and Watkins' work emphasizes the local cultural settings and the diffusion of contraceptive information in local communities (Coale and Watkins 1986). Knodel and van de Walle's geographic analysis of regional fertility transition in Europe was stimulated by the recognition of local variations and local characteristics. They grouped targeted populations according to region and sought to find the impact of cultural determinants, indicated by language, tradition, and religion, on family decision-making regarding contraception (Knodel and van de Walle 1979). In Knodel's microdemographic studies of fertility transitions outside Euro-American settings, he also emphasized the importance of local systems of meaning and the mediating role of family and kinship relations in demographic events. Changes in these institutional regimes form a social context for individual fertility strategies (Knodel 1977).

Demographer McNicoll's institutional analysis of fertility transition also focuses on regional features in understanding fertility transition. McNicoll's "institution" does not refer to the tangible public entities like prisons or hospitals but to "clusters of behavioral rules governing (or, to put it more neutrally regularities describing) human actions and relationships in recurrent situations" (McNicoll 1994: 4-5)⁸. He further

⁸ In this dissertation, I follow McNicoll's definition of "institution" and differentiate it from the meaning of "organization" which refers to the public entity.

clarifies that “[s]uch rules may be written or unwritten, but are publicly known even if unexpressed; sanctions for violating them may be dictated by external authority or self-imposed. An essential feature of institutions is that they persist, generating a society’s distinctive patterns of social organization and the texture of social life” (ibid. p. 5). These rules are inherited from the past and are constantly transformed to fit current social situations. McNicoll argues that to understand the fertility transition of a particular society at a certain time period, it is important to investigate the content and alteration of these institutional endowments, in particular, community structures, family systems, and sex roles. The fertility transition of different societies is shaped by such local institutional endowments and therefore appears highly idiosyncratic (ibid.).

While fully recognizing demographic studies of the wider dimensions of individual experience and the relevance of contextual factors at the community and social organizational level, anthropologists, the experts at studying human culture, have criticized the demographic application of the culture concept in fertility studies. In his call for a “thicker demography” to interpret the impact of culture towards fertility transition, Fricke points out that demographers treat culture as a static and totalizing entity. They rarely display the varying nature of cultural patterns, and assume that culture functions in society as a coercive enforcement. As a result, demographers ignore the active agency of local populations and portray them as passively suffering from coercive cultural constraints and incapable of affecting their endowments. In addition, the dialectical interactions between regional cultural forces and local social, political, and

economic conditions are also rarely addressed. In short, we do not know how culture transforms and matters locally (Fricke 1997).

Current developments in the anthropological study of social dynamics recognize people's agency, their role as human actors, shaping cultural and organizational rules. Anthropologists recognize that human beings are active agents and never passively obey the lifeless body of laws, regulations, morals, and conventionalities. They perceive, interpret, and construct and are capable of selecting cultural tools to solve problems. Culture, from this perspective, is only an "underlying framework for these individual characteristics" (Taylor 1985) and a set of symbolic systems for people to apply for "communicat[ing], perpetuat[ing], and develop[ing] their own knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz 1973). In addition, actors' strategic selection of cultural resolutions is not value free. Fricke further applies Geertz's concept of "models for reality" to explain the interaction between human actors and regional culture (Fricke 1997).

As models for reality, cultural patterns offer not just symbolic systems for people to manipulate, but also a set of established subjective motivations, or a range of accepted values, for actors to select. In any cultural context, there is a common ground of values defining the bounds of the community and forming an overall motivation for the actors within. There are "limits to the range of acceptable statements and actors can be assumed to want to convey meanings from the range of values available to them" (ibid:254). In Fricke's application of these models, human behaviors are treated as forms of a statement

regulated by the same cultural features and presented by the same agency. Similar to language, behaviors are statements or symbols of relationships and subject to interpretation within each community. Actors consciously select culturally acceptable behaviors to solve problems encountered in daily life. They fully understand that their actions have cultural meanings in the local community and can affect others' behaviors. In other words, individual behaviors and preferences count in the process of manipulating symbolic systems, but only within the culturally shared common ground. Culture defines not just what to do, but also why to do, how to do, when to do, and with whom to deal.

In his effort to understand individual behaviors within social and cultural constraints, Alexander postulates that we view individual behaviors as strategies carried out within constraints and with resources that are culturally and materially defined. The cultural level both constructs and provides evaluative meaning for the social reality of actors. The social system provides normative constraints and guidelines and allocates social resources. Individuals pursue strategies in terms of these larger contexts and in terms of their own life experiences within these contexts (Alexander 1988, 1990).

The utilization of contraception is a form of human behavior that is an active and strategic reaction to multi-faceted social and cultural constraints. The social context sets up normative regulations and allocates social resources which individual actors use in their daily lives. The cultural context provides moral acceptability, legitimization, motivation, and evaluation of the actors' behavior. The cultural context also provides the common ground of values upon which the social system sets up its foundation. As a

result, an individual utilization of contraception is never value free and can only be understood within the local cultural and social contexts. It also needs to be studied within the local interaction of power distribution, resource allocation, and social relationships (Greenhough 1995). Any attempt to impose a generalized universal pattern could overlook the importance of local dynamism and misunderstand its process. When demographers identify variables that are proximately determinative to demographic outcomes, these behaviors' localized meanings might be ignored. Fertility transition is then reduced to being a generalized set of behaviors and values based on European and North American experience.

3. Historical Background

After the establishment of the PRC, the communist government faced a severe crisis created by a languishing domestic economy and limited foreign investment. Nationwide resistance against the Japanese invasion (1937-45) and the following bloody civil war (1945-49) severely damaged the rural agrarian economy, urban industrial system, and national commercial and financial structures. Western aid and investment for economic recovery and development were out of the question due to ideological divergences and America's economic embargo of the PRC. This hostile international environment and unstable domestic security intensified the severity of the economic crisis.

The Stalinist model of a centrally controlled socialist economy offered an alternative strategy to the new Chinese government. Mao and his followers believed that, in contrast to a problematic capitalist system, a centrally controlled economy would have the power to efficiently utilize national resources to uplift China's economy from its current predicament. Through rapid industrialization, China would no longer be a poor agrarian society. Besides ideological affinity and promised, but limited, financial and technological support from the Soviet Union, China's adoption and modification of the Stalinist model also provided a self-reliant development strategy that allowed the state to amass development capital within the economy. The state was to collectively organize the nation's agricultural production and centrally control its agricultural surplus to accumulate a large amount of capital for industrial development. In the city, the model allowed for quick industrialization and urbanization at low cost. By centrally controlling the urban employment compensation system and assigning food rations to urban residents, the state guaranteed a minimum standard of living and retained most industrial profits to maximize capital for development.

The construction of a socialist society in China started around 1955. In urban areas, this was represented by the socialist transformation of capitalist industrial and commercial enterprises which ended in 1956. The elimination of private ownership over the means of production was a goal proclaimed by the communist regime. By 1956, when the primary course of the economic transformation was completed, the Chinese urban economy contained a predominant state sector, a dependent collective sector, and a tiny private sector. This balance was reflected in the distribution of the urban labor force by

sectors. By the end of 1956, 81% of the urban labor force worked in the state-owned enterprises, while 18.5% worked in the collective-owned enterprises, leaving only 0.5% of the labor force work in the individual-owned sector (Bian 1994:25).

This transformation not only changed the ownership of the urban economy, it also rewrote the concept of labor in a new socialist setting and created a new pattern of labor management in urban China. The properties of a state organization are owned by “all the people” of the country. Therefore, every citizen has the right to work in these properties. The state, however, claims to be the only representative of the people in the country, and retains ownership rights over “all the people’s” firms. This defines labor as the commonwealth of the state and under the management of the state only. Laborers, as a national resource, not as a commodity, lost the freedom of job selection (Bian 1994:10). Through the job assignment system, state allocated urban youths, after their graduation from school, to different industrial and commercial sectors each year. Once allocated to a certain work unit, the staff member or worker cannot leave for another job without the permission of his or her employer, because the work unit is given the ownership right of the labor force.

The state’s control over the labor force was intensified by the role of the workplace in distributing living necessities and housing to its employees. Within three decades, the Chinese socialist state established a nationally controlled distribution system among its working class population. Enterprises provided employees and their families not only jobs and earnings, but also a wide array of goods, commodities, and services that

in other economies would be supplied through the market and a variety of institutions and government agencies. By doing so, the socialist state transformed labor into a factor of production whose cost did not restrain demand and, therefore, maintained labor costs under the central planners' control (Walder 1986).

Within each workplace, the living necessities, in the form of material rewards, were distributed along lines of a vertical patron-client relationship. This patron-client relationship bonded workers along the common ground of material and political interest, which made the vertical management of enterprises possible. Factory leaders and party cadres depended on a mixture of formal and informal loyalty – personal loyalty and loyalty to the party and its principles – to identify a small group of activists in each factory division, workshop, and work group along the vertical structure. Material rewards, mingled with personal ties and formal promotions, became an effective management apparatus in recognizing activists' work and political performance. By doing so, the factory and party branch developed a stable network in each factory unit and ensured the implementation of state policy and the party lines on the workshop floor. Workers who actively followed the party's political line kept a good relationship with the leaders, which guaranteed high productivity; gaining material rewards; they also moved up the socioeconomic ladder. Workers who could not meet these standards lost the chance to progress (*ibid.*).

The state's tight control over the national economy and the labor force enabled it to accumulate development funds domestically. However, it entangled the state into an

inextricable dilemma undermining its original design and endangering the national economy in the long run. From the beginning, the collective industrialization model presented a paradox between the state's urban policy and the increase in urban populations. The state's industrial policy created a privileged urban class, which not only enjoyed lifetime employment, but also received guaranteed living materials and social benefits from the state. The state's central economic design was extremely sensitive to the increase of urban population and the resulting increase in its expenses. A quickly expanding urban payroll could disperse the state's industrial capital to workers' compensation and social benefits. As the material promises that the state issued multiplied in tandem with an increased urban population, the patronage-based urban control apparatus became a heavy burden, undermining the state's capacity for further expansion. Eventually the finance system came under tremendous pressure and the national economy collapsed after the accelerated industrialization process in the Great Leap Forward ended in 1960.

In order to overcome this paradoxical condition, the state launched restrictive urban policies in the 1960s to reduce urban expenses. Along the eastern coastal areas, municipalities experienced a deurbanization process. The state organized out-migration and reallocated urbanites to the rural areas and/or the interior provinces. For those who stayed, salaries were frozen and there was no salary increase for 12 years between 1965 and 1977. In addition, the state launched a repressive campaign to cut back consumption in the urban areas. Meanwhile, the state culturally constructed the nation and the workplaces as the extended family for all of its citizens and requested that citizens

sacrifice their own domestic interests for the big family. In urban areas, this meant promoting an industrious, thrifty, and economical lifestyle. The state's advocacy was expressed in a strict political tone that formulated the crucial cultural and social constraints for the urbanites' daily behaviors in the 1960s. Via the workplaces, these restrictive urban policies were imposed upon local urban society. Combined with management regulations and guidelines, these new cultural and social constraints created a new structural framework for daily interactions in both the workplaces and the neighborhoods. Women experienced these constraints differently from men as both their public and private lives were regulated in the workplaces and motherhood became the important division point that separated them from the power structure. Within this historical context we examine the local perceptions of family size and the gradual changes in those perceptions during the 1960s.

4. Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation takes a local perspective to situate human reproductive behaviors in an historical and structural framework. It treats demographic behavior as the active response of citizens to the structural constraints they faced in daily life. Following the "model for reality", this work highlights the agency of individual actors and explores their fertility behaviors through the analysis of local urban community life in the 1960s. It recognizes that the motivation of any human behavior is culturally and structurally defined and that behaviors themselves are culturally tolerated. In order to reach these goals, this dissertation has three objectives.

First, it describes at the state level how the state responded to the pressures of increasing population by implementing various socioeconomic policies that affected local life in the 1960s. I also discuss the history of the family planning policy in the 1950s and 1960s to show that it was only one part of the state's series of restrictive urban policies. At the local level the program only minimally transformed the generally conservative attitude towards contraception.

Second, this research shows that human reproduction was the focal point through which the state declared its final control over women's public/private lives; it was also the central domain within which female urbanites and their family members organized their contestation, negotiation, and resistance to the state's imposing control. In contrast to the available studies of the fertility transition in urban China which emphasize state-centered coercion, this work postulates a gradually changing historical process of the state/society relationship in urban China. From women's perspective, female workers first embraced the socialist agenda, their working class social status, and the urban material benefits in the 1950s. Later on, in the late 1960s, the system entangled them within repressive institutions that controlled their public and private lives. Finally, this entanglement forced women to alter their domestic habits and behaviors in order to live a respectable life. Utilizing contraception was a crucial part of their active response to the socioeconomic and political constraints that they encountered on a routine basis.

The third objective is to show that at the cultural level, fertility behavior in China was never “natural” and “un-negotiable”. The general perception towards family size and composition has always held a high correlation with the sex composition and survivorship of children. Even in the high mortality rate regime, the extreme pronatalist Chinese culture tolerated conscious birth control once the family had enough sons to guarantee the continuation of the family line and to provide material benefits for the parents’ senior years. This crucial cultural background provided the context for the moral acceptability and the legitimization for the utilization of contraception. Once the state’s family planning campaign educated the urban population about birth control methods, highly motivated local residents faced no moral or practical barriers to contraception. A voluntary fertility transition was accomplished.

In Chapter One, I have raised the research question, reviewed studies of the early fertility decline in urban China, presented theoretical approaches to the fertility transition more generally, and provided the historical background under which the Chinese fertility transition occurred.

In Chapter Two, I explain why I chose Tianjin to illustrate the local dynamism in the fertility transition – what it represents regarding urban centers of the 1960s. Then in my description of my field site, the workers’ dormitory neighborhood of Xinfeng Factory in Tianjin, I exemplify the dynamic local reactions towards the state’s involvement in the workers’ domestic lives. Finally, I describe my research methods and how I was accepted locally.

Chapter Three presents the industrial history of China, and of Tianjin, to show how the internal contradictions of the socialist industrialization policy constrained employees' domestic life, harnessing it to a central plan in the 1950s and 1960s. I also use the case of Tianjin to demonstrate the local demographic impact of the state's de-urbanization policies in the eastern coastal areas, pursued in order to overcome the internal contradictions.

Chapter Four reviews China's family planning history and demonstrates why an immediate implementation was locally impossible. I then focus on the state's social campaign to repress urban compensation and consumption. This campaign vigorously defined collective vs. private interests and confirmed the state's version of the state-society relationship. It asked families to make sacrifices and distribute rewards and punishments accordingly. Ironically, the more people conformed to the state's discourse about sacrifice, the more they stood to benefit from the system. During this campaign, the state promoted the family image as representing the country, the society, and the workplaces. Later on, workers manipulated the family image in the factory settings for their own purposes and organized their own tactics to resist the structural constraints on their family lives.

In Chapters Five and Six, I present a gradually changed relationship pattern to explain how female workers became entangled in the state's involvement in their domestic lives and how they exercised their agency at each stage of the process to protect

their domestic life and interests. Motherhood became the important division point in their career development due to the imposed double burden from the state. Once becoming mothers, female workers were trapped in both public and private arenas and were systematically excluded from the power structure. The double burden they carried was further consolidated by the contradictory consequences of the state's policies of wage austerity and repression of consumption in the 1960s. Utilization of contraception was the crucial strategy that women applied to resolve the fundamental conflict they faced everyday. The unreliable state subsidy system and intensified local surveillance further reinforced female workers' choices of relying on themselves to improve family life.

Chapter Seven examines how the state broadcast of its family planning policy in a conservative era and how it could hardly compel local residents to comply. Socioeconomic constraints and their impact on women's reproductive health forced local populations to reconsider their family size and composition. Based on current demographic research revealing a high correlation between the sex composition of children, the survivorship of children, and women's fertility behavior, this chapter argues that cultural tolerance for conscious birth control existed in local settings in the 1960s; cultural values and practices created no moral barrier for the families that decided to utilize contraception. The early Chinese urban fertility transition thus occurred when populations were simultaneously "ready, willing, and able". Only when the populations reached this stage via their unique path under the background of socialist industrialization was the fertility transition accomplished. A voluntarily initiated fertility transition

explains the urban responses towards coercive birth control policy and demonstrates that urban populations took a unique pathway through the transition.

Chapter Two

Field Site, Research Methods, and Field Work

1. Field Site

Located in the northeastern part of the North China Plain, Tianjin is 30 miles west of Bohai Gulf. The largest seaport in northern China, it is the second largest industrial city in the country. Regionally, Tianjin was among the seven developed eastern coastal provinces whose urban fertility rate first declined in the 1960s. Compared to the interior provinces, these seven coastal regions enjoyed higher living standards in a more industrialized setting (Poston and Gu 1987). Data of the crucial development variables that have negative effects on fertility are available for Tianjin. Tianjin's infant mortality rate sharply dropped from 29.56 to 7.29 between 1958 and 1979 (see Table Three and Chart 3)⁹. An increasing number of women enrolled in schools and received more education at the elementary and professional levels (see Table Four and Chart 4). The rate of women's participation in the labor force was high. In 1949 and 1950, there were 52,278 and 56,118 female residents working in Tianjin respectively. In 1953, the number increased to 97,141 (TJ Demographic Data Collection 1986: 406, 408, and 410). Urban Tianjin's marriage age constantly increased from 1949 on¹⁰. A retroactive study of urban

⁹ The exceptional high infant mortality rate in 1959 and 1960 was due to the big famine.

¹⁰ See Pasternak's detail study of marriage custom and practice in Tianjin between 1930 and 1980. Using the neighborhood of Red Sky as research sample, Pasternak reconstructed patterns of marriage and fertility over a period of five decades. His study shows the substantial increase in marriage age, women's participation in the labor force, and women's income (Pasternak 1986).

life in the 1960s based on the local perspective can demonstrate the local meanings of these socioeconomic changes and improve our understanding of the impact of development on the fertility transition.

Politically, Tianjin was one of the eastern coastal cities in which the state first implemented its family planning program in the 1960s. The state provided financial and administrative supports for the Tianjin Municipal government to broadcast information on contraception and distribute free devices (Peng 1991 and Sun 1990). An ethnographic study can reveal to what extent the political campaign was effective at the local level.

Detailed census data verify that urban Tianjin's fertility decline followed the national pattern with the same onset time, speed, and trend. Tianjin's urban fertility transition began in 1964 (Banister 1987; Coale and Chen 1987; and Peng 1991). Tables Five and Six show the city's total fertility rates (TFR) and total age-specific fertility rate (TASFR) between 1950 and 1979. As indicated, both TFR and TASFR sharply declined in 1964 and the decline was 38% and 45% from 1963 respectively¹¹. A continuous fertility decline between 1964 and 1967 resulted in a lower-than-2 TFR within only four

¹¹ 1963's high fertility rate was a compensating phenomenon of famine recovery. 1964's sharp decline could be questioned as unreal only because 1963's fertility rate was extremely high. However, further detection using the census data proved that 1964's decline was indeed the beginning of a population transition. Comparing 1964's fertility rate to that prior to the famine with no effect from compensation, the decline was even sharper. In other words, the compensating births of 1963 did not return to the high TFR level prior to the famine. Controlled fertility had been a trend in urban Tianjin even during the famine recovery.

years. Additionally, urban Tianjin's TFR decline of 1964 triggered a continuous fertility decline in the next two decades and TFR has never been higher than 3 since then¹².

Between September 1996 and July 1997, I lived in Tianjin conducting ethnographic fieldwork to investigate the socioeconomic and political reasons behind its fertility transition. In addition to conducting archival research, I selected a working class neighborhood, Xinshuli, as my field site. Located in the center of the industrial Hebei District, Xinshuli is connected to Xinfeng Factory, a state-owned engine manufacturing enterprise, and has served as one of the factory's dormitories for more than fifty years. The neighborhood had 513 households with a total population of 1,909 in 1996. It included three housing projects for Xinfeng, two apartment buildings, rows of single-room houses, and a large area of compound houses.

Originally, Xinshuli was developed by a Japanese factory owner in 1944 when he moved his machine manufacturing enterprise to Hebei District. As part of the factory's construction, he built up rows of single-room dormitories with each room sized between 12 m² and 16 m². This dormitory area was rebuilt and expanded by Xinfeng in 1958, 1962, 1965, and 1976 for its employees. What was unique about the neighborhood expansion was that Xinfeng Factory owned the housing property. After 1949 when the communist government took over the factory and transformed it into a large-scale state-

¹² There were only three years' exceptions in 1968, 1976, and 1978. According to TJ Demographic Data Collection, the rebound in these three years was 51%, 4%, and 16% respectively. After 1968's rebound, the total fertility rate kept on dropping and reached 2.07 before the strict national family planning program in 1970. For a detailed description of 1970's "wan xi shao (marrying late, spacing birth, and having fewer children)" family planning program and its impact, see Banister 1987; Croll et. al. 1985; Coale 1984; and Peng 1991.

owned engine manufacturing enterprise, the state allocated an annual budget to the factory, dictated the design of its products, and controlled the marketing of them. An infrastructure construction fee was included in the annual budget. Xinfeng, therefore, had the sole right to construct and distribute dormitory houses among its employees. In Tianjin, by 1985, 57.1% of the city's property arrangements were identical to that of the Xinfeng/Xinshuli case and belonged to state-owned enterprises, the military, or the central government's local offices. Because of their higher administrative status, these state institutions and agencies were not under municipal control and could manage their property in Tianjin directly (Overall Annuals of Tianjin: 932).

With this unique administrative background, Xinshuli became the perfect research site for my investigation, testing the effectiveness of the state's implementation of the family planning program in urban centers. The physical and managerial attachment of the neighborhood to the factory allowed me to observe the local dynamic within one of the tightest state/society relationships. Every family in Xinshuli had at least one member working in Xinfeng Factory. The factory's predominant role was reflected in numerous aspects of local daily life. Basically, local residents were categorized according to their relationship with the factory. Among the senior residents, formal full-time employees and retirees of the state-owned section enjoyed the highest status in the neighborhood. Retired activists, cadres, and party members became neighborhood committee members to oversee local residents under the direction of the municipal and district governments. Most committee members were female retirees from Xinfeng. Their dominant public roles were similar to those of senior women in the conventional Chinese society who

were crowned with the highest status at home as the powerful mother-in-law¹³. What was different in this case was that, besides women's reproductive experience, female retirees' working experience in a state-owned enterprise added to their authority in the neighborhood. As local representatives, they became the mediating force between the factory and the neighborhood.

The state/society relationship in the neighborhood was dialectic and could not simply be explained by the straight-forward coercion-resistance model. Workers and their families actively utilized available resources to maximize family benefit. Their heavy reliance on the factory in daily life was not just the passive result of a decade's worth of encompassing state and local management, but also a conscious decision based on a detailed calculation of families' best interests. During the 1980s, when the state-owned industrial section still dominated the urban employment, many female workers sent their adult children to Xinfeng to replace them in their former positions as formal state employees. Parents sacrificed their seniority to maximize their families' benefit within the system. Since the 1990s, when the state retreated from supporting gigantic state-owned industries, workers' reliance on the factories became even greater. To the vulnerable senior retirees and laid-off workers, the state and the factory were still the strongest support that they could turn to.

When I arrived at Xinshuli in 1996, the city and the neighborhood were experiencing a painful transition. With the decrease in the state's investment in the state-

¹³ See Margery Wolf's classic description of the "uterine family" (Wolf 1972).

owned industrial sector after the economic reform, most state-owned enterprises were in deficit and faced bankruptcy. Massive lay-offs from the factories prevailed in the city. A newly developed economic zone featuring joint venture companies was emerging in Tianjin's suburbs along the seacoast. It had attracted educated youth from the urban center. In the city, the service industry, high-tech enterprises, and finance services lagged behind those of Beijing and Shanghai, and could not provide adequate employment opportunities. Large numbers of laid-off workers crowded into the placement centers looking for jobs. Some borrowed money from relatives to purchase automobiles and become self-employed taxi drivers, or to start their own food stands in the streets. Unlike Beijing and Shanghai where most of the street vendors, peddlers, and taxi drivers were rural immigrants, the streets of Tianjin were filled with laid-off local factory workers.

Compared to the other factories, Xinfeng's condition was still stable. There had been no major layoffs, and monthly salaries and pensions were still paid on time. The World Bank had issued loans to help Xinfeng pursue a joint venture with a British enterprise to develop new engine products. Young skilled workers and technicians who passed an enrollment examination could work in the joint venture branch and receive a higher wage. It was Xinfeng's older section that suffered most from the economic reform. Beginning in the mid-1980s, Xinfeng lost nearly half of the state's investment and was forced to find other financing sources for development. Xinfeng's private competitors, on the contrary, had received the state's financial support in importing advanced assembly line technologies from the west to produce competitive products and increase market share. At the same time, however, with roughly two thousand retirees, Xinfeng had to

devote substantial resources for pensions and medical benefits. Increased medical costs and continued deficits crippled the factory's ability to meet these requirements. Reimbursement for medical care was continuously postponed and the waiting list grew longer.

In order to stimulate productivity and increase earnings, Xinfeng transformed individual workshops into accounting units and allowed them to organize production. As long as each workshop finished its monthly quota for the factory, it could accept outside orders and reserve profits for its own employees. Xinfeng also privatized its public canteen and day care to further relieve the economic burdens.

As society reorganized during the period of economic reform, the state-owned enterprises lost their previous attraction and glamour. Skilled workers and technicians left for better-paid positions in joint venture or private enterprises. Well-connected cadres entered the government sectors for securer positions and guaranteed social benefits. Middle-aged workers collected early retirement packages and worked outside to earn extra income. Those who did come to work everyday were worried about their future. Among workers and retirees, the sense of security was gone.

Nowadays, residents call Xinshuli a "slum". The neighborhood's last expansion occurred in 1976 after a catastrophic earthquake. When the factory built two apartment buildings for its employees. After that, major housing investment from the state ceased. Xinshuli is now crowded with temporary construction and self-built rooms. The narrow

paths are especially cluttered with self-built storage sheds, piles of coal, wood, bricks, and discarded furniture. Families have constructed their own kitchens with red bricks and galvanized iron sheets. Most have lived in the neighborhood for thirty-some years. When they moved into their single-room dorms in the 1960s, they were either newly weds or young parents with infant children. Years later, although it was still the same neighborhood and the same living area, these young parents were now grandmothers and grandfathers, their children having married, moved into the attached self-built temporary rooms, and given birth to children of their own.

At the food stand where I had my breakfast every morning, the female owner, a former Xinfeng worker, talked about sending her seventeen-year-old son to the army. The rationale was that once he was in the army, her son became “the state’s people” (*guo jia de ren*). After few years’ service, the state would take charge of his life by arranging his employment so that he could “eat the state’s grain”. The reliance on the state was still there and was sought as an effective alternative to dealing with the lack of opportunity and resources in the reform era.

However, such reliance was also full of contest and negotiation. The first day I arrived in Xinshuli, several neighborhood committee members were arguing with two factory leaders over the fee charged for the factory’s bathhouse. They treated the factory’s collection of a fee as a betrayal of the workers, among whom were many of their own children. After a long workday, how could the factory charge workers for taking a shower? If the workers came home to bathe, where would they do it in their

crowded homes and why should the families boil hot water at their own expense? The women were furious and brought out other issues to support their arguments, for example the postponed medical reimbursements, the shelved new housing projects, and the increased monthly rents. One former model worker also challenged the ownership of the factory's property. She questioned why the workers and retirees were not informed when Xinfeng rented out a large piece of its property to outsiders. Where did the rent go? Shouldn't the workers and retirees benefit from this commercialization of a collective property by receiving a share of the rent? She cursed those who "stole" this income from the factory and from them. The factory's de-collectivization process had directly hurt these women and marginalized them in a re-stratification social process. The factory-a collective entity-that they were taught to depend on for so many years was abandoning them. They organized protests and petitions in the neighborhood to protect themselves from losing their benefits.

It was one of my goals to trace when and how this sense of belonging and commitment had become established among the locals, and to what extent the institutionalization of work and family life affected their decisions, even regarding such "trivial" things as where to take a shower. A retroactive research of this historical process can allow us to situate a drastic transition in fertility behavior within a local framework and to investigate what socioeconomic and/or political forces triggered the change.

2. Research Methods

It is a methodological challenge to use ethnographic research to answer a historical and demographic question. The challenge comes from the crucial questions that every demographer will raise: how do you legitimize the representativeness of your choice of 30 informants? How can you ensure the data's objectivity when oral history as a research method has had its reliability questioned? How do you justify the partiality, contingency, and incompleteness of your account?

Oral history as an ethnographic method to reconstruct local and personal history has been debated by anthropologists with regard to its reliability. It is commonly agreed that as a form of narrative, oral history is a subjective cultural construction actively composed by informants to formulate a meaning for their lives (Borneman 1993). The narrativization process, therefore, is highly sensitive to numerous factors, e.g. the social status of the informant and that of the ethnographer, the socio-political settings within which the oral history is composed, the state's version of the history, etc. Not only could the informants switch, categorize, and rearrange events in different sequences to highlight different meanings in different settings; they could also deliberately select and emphasize certain issues, and intentionally forget and skip some others, in order to tell a coherent story. In many cases, events also acquire significance through lies, distortions, misrepresentations, and the articulation of personal views of the world.

In addition, current anthropological understandings of local populations recognize their heterogeneity. Even apparently small-scale societies like the Nuer or the Yanomami have been deconstructed to reveal a pluralized people living within specific socio-economic and political historical nexuses (Borneman 1993). It is impossible to find an “average” informant and generalize his/her experience to represent the whole population. Whether the ethnographic study could contribute to our understanding of local life becomes, therefore, a big question mark.

In his excellent ethnographic investigation of German family life in East and West Berlin during the Cold War era, John Borneman provided us with an effective methodological and theoretical resolution to these challenges. Instead of focusing on individual narratives and experience, Borneman targeted generations – the experience and categories meaningful to a group of people faced with the same structural constraints. To him, the significance of any individual version of local history does not lie in its veracity and/or objectivity, but in its contribution to our understanding, from today’s perspective, of the structural constraints faced by a generation. To reveal such structural constraints “yields perhaps the only objectivity that is possible in much of social enquiry” (Borneman 1993: 43).

In contrast to the general grand forces, i.e. national and international political economic conditions and cultural heritages, the concept of structural constraints has a local perspective and is deeply felt by individual citizens in daily life. Only through their local impact do the grand forces produce the structural constraints, the social forces, and

the local surveillance that people experience in daily interaction with others. Different individuals, because of their unique social positions, gender roles, different stages in the lifecycle, and many other reasons, also experience structural constraints differently and, therefore, have different perspectives. Comparative ethnographic studies of these perspective-relative representations can reveal the generational structural constraints and explain the generational reaction towards these pressures.

Borneman's study relied on two research methods that were also my major tools in the field. First, he applied narrative analysis to discern the state's policies and regulations and understand why certain metaphors and tropes were applied by the state and for what purpose. These legal texts serially and chronologically reconstructed the state's biographical plan for its citizens. They also provided Borneman a historical context within which he situated individual accounts of the history for further analysis. The state's regulations set up the boundaries for its citizens and indicated a general behavior trend based on its own condition. Interacting with social norms and cultural heritage, these social rules formulated the institutional constraints for citizens. During the 1960s, China's restrictive urban policy was universal. Food rationing, urban household registration management, and migration control were implemented in all urban areas. Among the coastal metropolitan areas, large cities, such as Tianjin, were under severe central control. It was these restrictive state policies and regulations that created the general social atmosphere in the 1960s.

In the process of reconstructing local history in the 1960s, I benefited from the comparative studies of historical documents I gathered in Tianjin. During the past thirty years, China has experienced tremendous social transformations and conducted various social experiments in the name of modernity. Historical documents written in different historical periods take contrasting points of view in telling the same story. Comparative archival studies of these documents allowed me to perceive the powerful historical forces that shaped local life. For example, local newspapers in the 1960s provided vivid descriptions of the social atmosphere and political propaganda of the time, illustrating that the state was pressing for local sacrifice and contributions. Thirty years later, during the economic reform when the state withdrew from regional management and local autonomy was encouraged, regional histories took a local perspective to reflect the same historical experience, showing resources being seized from the local community. Meanwhile, Chinese histories written by western scholars provided an international framework to contextualize national and regional events (Firebank, San xian,). Overall this literature corresponded to the Cold War discourse that I found in the 1960s documents in China and to what I was told by my informants.

However, not every official rule mattered locally. Individual citizens would not automatically follow the state's direction, especially when some of the state's regulations were contradicted by the local conditions. Heterogeneous local reactions and practices could not just be explained from the state's perspective. Borneman's second research method was to depend on "statistically peripheral" experience to illustrate the dynamic aspects of local practices. By recognizing each individual's perspective and by constantly

comparing these individual accounts, he described and explained individual lives as they exemplify alternative responses to the problems of a generation. He classified the practices of individual agents to illustrate social continuities and discontinuities over time. By doing so, he was able to reveal the constraints as systematically and reliably as possible, and to present the experiences that are characteristic of one particular generation.

None of my informants was the “average” female worker of the 1960s. Each had her personal history, family background, and working experience. Their decisions on contraception were also made at varying points through their reproductive lifecycles. It is not my intention to detail each family’s decision making process and present them as varied models of what happened in the 1960s. What I intend to do in this dissertation is to depend on the individual accounts to reveal the structural constraints and the range of practices that belonged to one generation.

My core informant group consists of 17 female retirees who stopped having children in the 1960s while they worked in a large-scale state-owned enterprise in Tianjin. Structurally they represented the privileged working class population in urban China in the 1960s; statistically they were only a peripheral group compared to the total population of their generation. The significance of their individual accounts comes from a structural understanding of China’s socialist industrial system, which was internally stratified along the enterprise’s scale, ownership, administrative level, and regional location. My historical research specifies these women’s structural positions and recorded

their reactions to the grand forces with the concern of their unique structural perspectives. I then compared their practices with 13 other women's experiences in the 1960s. Those 13 women had no formal employment and depended on temporary jobs to contribute to their family life. In the socialist institutionalized decade when nearly every urban citizen had a social institution to belong to, these women represented another statistically peripheral extreme for their generation. Comparative studies of their oral histories within an historical context allowed me to identify the similar generational constraints that these two groups of women experienced at different structural positions. I was also able to recognize their different reactions to similar constraints. What I emphasize, however, is an identical practice – utilizing contraception – among the other various daily mechanisms applied by this generation of women to deal with their numerous problems in the 1960s. To reveal similarities in constraints and practices affecting a particular generation was the main task of this research.

3. Fieldwork

During the first several weeks in Xinshuli, I interviewed women identified for me by the committee in the local neighborhood committee office. The interview process was difficult. Formal office settings and lack of shared knowledge between my informants and myself blocked communication, and none of us wanted to raise the personal topic of contraception. We talked more about their work and family composition back in the 1960s. I gathered additional information from casual chatting with local residents before and after the formal interviews.

The neighborhood committee office is located in the center of the neighborhood and serves as a community center for local residents. Every morning around 8 o'clock, one committee officer came to open the door and clean up the tables and floor. Then she lit a small coal stove outside the office to boil water for the day. Later on, more officers came to work. During the day, various local agents and cadres visited the committee office, and committee members went to the neighborhood for various purposes. Between periods of formal work, they picked vegetables, watched over their grandchildren, and chatted with neighbors. The office door was always open and people came in and out constantly. Local residents came to make phone calls, pick up delivered milk and newspapers, wait for utility company agents to pay utility fees, and chat with their neighbors. Around 10 o'clock in the morning, vegetable vendors stopped by to sell vegetables in front of the office. Housewives and grandmas came to buy groceries for the day. In the afternoon, the office became an entertainment center. Three tables were set up for *Majiang* – the famous Chinese tile game. Senior men and women came to play till dinnertime. Small amounts of money circulated to stimulate the players' interests. People teased each other, complained, and shared good news around the *Majiang* table. Many other senior neighbors hung around with their grandchildren talking to each other. The neighborhood committee office was the place where the formal outside world met the local community. But after living and/or working together for thirty some years, these neighbors knew each other so well that the boundaries between the formal and ordinary worlds blurred and merged. Local residents played out their own daily social interactions right in front of me.

These senior women were interested in my project even though they all thought their current condition deserved more attention. Their recollections of the 1960s mixed with their perceptions of their current life and their criticisms of the reform era. Thirty some years ago when they moved into the neighborhood, it was such an attractive place and now it had become a crowded “slum”. Neighbors questioned each other about what had happened during these years and described to me what their life used to be.

Although I wanted to visit my informants’ homes and conduct my interviews there, my coordinators insisted that it was more convenient to talk to them in the office. At first, my understanding of their rejection was that, because of the crowded living condition and the seniors’ busy schedules, it might be intrusive for me to visit their homes and interrupt their daily schedules. Later on, however, I realized that there were some other serious concerns behind the rejection. The committee officers were selecting “model” informants for me and believed that when the informants were interviewed in the office – a public place - they would provide “positive” information for me. One officer also persuaded me to ignore those politically incorrect complaints and whining around the *Majiang* tables because those seniors had no “sense” of what they were talking about.

Such delicate concerns did not last very long since all of the committee officers lived under the same conditions and faced the same serious problems. Even though they tried to demonstrate a polished local picture to protect the state’s image locally, their

private interests were hurt by the same system and there were moments they needed to grumble too. One morning, a male retiree came back from the factory with several thousand un-reimbursed medical bills. His application for reimbursement had been postponed. In frustration and anger, he blamed the factory for “killing the donkey the moment it leaves the millstone” – betraying workers as soon as they retired. The committee officer sympathized with him because they all had un-reimbursed medical bills from the factory. In fact, they all belonged to a local network organized by families experiencing the same conditions. Once in a while, these families pooled their medical bills together, counted and prioritized the bills to figure out which family needed reimbursement most. Then they would sit in the factory leaders’ office together to request the payment for those families.

It was the same woman who asked me to ignore the local complaints who justified such collective action by quoting Lenin’s description of socialism, “Didn’t Lenin say that the socialist low wage was created by the state’s eight reservations for the employees’ retirement years? The state reserved pension, medical fees, housing compensation, and many others for the future. Now we are retired, but where are those funds?” Even a former model worker felt betrayed.

Aimei¹⁴’s appearance intensified my understanding of local life and catalyzed local acceptance of my project and myself. As a newcomer to the neighborhood, Aimei rarely came to the committee office and never played *Majiang* there. She was

¹⁴ All the names in this dissertation are fictitious.

accidentally selected to be my informant – her neighbor, my original informant, was busy that day and she recommended that Aimei talk to me. Walking into the office, Aimei was cautious and attentive. She was dressed in a new blouse and had seriously prepared for something formal. The committee officers were obviously no less curious about her than I was. They bluntly asked her who she was staying with, whether she was retired, where she worked before retirement, how much her pension was, and whether she was receiving her pension on time. After staying in the neighborhood for a while, I became familiar with these women's "blunt" style to strangers – people loved to question the strangers about their economic condition and the amount of their income when they first met them. In fact, that was also the whole city's conversation style – chatting about each other's economic condition before any serious talk. In the era when the conventional employment system and compensation system were quickly transforming, people depended on such informal information exchange to locate each other on the social ladder, identify each other, detect how well they themselves are doing, and determine their attitude towards each other.

What impressed me, instead, was Aimei's open attitude and direct answers with little hesitation. Retired from a bank and widowed, Aimei moved into the neighborhood to live with her first son who was a Xinfeng worker. Her monthly pension was 500 yuan¹⁵, about 100 yuan higher than that of Xinfeng retirees, and she had no problem receiving her pension and her medical reimbursement on time. The committee officers envied her condition and assumed the bank system would never treat its retirees like the

¹⁵ In 1996, the currency exchange rate between US dollars and RMB yuan was about 1:8.

factories did. They congratulated Aimei on her good luck. What Aimei emphasized, however, was her retirement as a laborer, not a clerk or cadre in the bank, and most of all, in contrast to the committee officers who had formally worked for Xinfeng since the 1950s and 1960s, she had worked as a temporary laborer for 24 years and only became a formal employee ten years before her retirement.

That day, Aimei opened her life to a bunch of strangers in a public place. We never got a chance to retreat to the separate office to conduct my interview and she decided to share her story with all.

In 1954, at age 16, Aimei came to Tianjin to look for a job. As the oldest child of five in a poor peasant family, she knew her parents could do little for her future. She worked in various households in Tianjin as a housemaid for two years. In 1956, when the state tightened household registration management and relocated unemployed rural migrants back to their home villages, Aimei became a vulnerable target because she had no formal employment and no urban household registration status. After learning of her intention to stay in the city, the family she was working with suggested that she marry an urban man to get urban status. They introduced Aimei to a vegetable salesman in a collective-owned grocery store. Two months later, Aimei married him. After receiving her urban status, Aimei worked at temporary jobs in different places for the next 24 years. During these 24 years, besides the time she took to give birth to four sons, she rarely took sick leaves or personal days because she was afraid that her employers would replace her.

The longest position she held was as a warehouse laborer in a trading bureau for ten years. The bureau deliberately kept temporary workers in these positions to stimulate the permanent employees' productivity. As a temporary laborer working for the city bureau, Aimei's salary was higher than her husband's. What she missed was the respectable social status associated with permanent employment and the institutional protection of a workplace. Because she was a temporary laborer, she could not negotiate on behalf of her personal interests and her workplace would not officially represent her in any social settings.

For 24 years, what Aimei wanted most was permanent employment and a daughter, and she lost in both cases. When her abusive husband beat her and handicapped one of her sons, her workplace did not have the responsibility to represent her in negotiating with her husband's workplace or to support her in her divorce application, as it would have had she been a permanent employee. For 24 years, Aimei's husband controlled all of her income and did not allow her to buy anything for herself. Because they were raising four sons and supporting her husband's family in a rural village, her husband sought every opportunity to save money and increase his income. He cooked three meals a day, bought cheap vegetables from his store, cut any "unnecessary" household expenses, and sold hand-made brooms on the black market. His illegal sales were detected by the city police, and the whole family was sent down to his home village for three years as punishment. Because of this unbearable economic burden in the 1960s, Aimei's husband sent away one of her sons and sterilized himself in 1962 without even

informing her. With no personal support from her natal family and her workplace, Aimei's last hope of having a daughter was never realized.

At the end of Aimei's life history, we all cried; only Aimei was still calm. She seemed to be removing a heavy burden from her shoulders and calmly told us about her husband's death, his last effort of increasing family income before his death, her final status transformation, her retirement as a permanent employee, and her good relationship with all of her daughters-in-law. I am still not quite sure what made Aimei so determined to tell us her story that day and exactly how her story touched the committee officers. Was it because Aimei was tired of being a marginal person and wanted to be accepted by her new neighbors? Was it because she did not want her new neighbors to misunderstand her current position and ignore her previous years' suffering and effort? I do not know.

What she told us, however, evoked so many crucial issues from the 1960s, which made people's lives totally different. These were the boundaries between rural/urban status, temporary job/formal employment, black market/formal income, and heavy economic burdens with limited alternatives for improving one's incomes. All of these determined Aimei's life. And even though the committee officers' lives in the 1960s were totally different from Aimei's extreme case, her story perhaps reminded them of the reasons for such a difference. In any case, I realized that after that day I was accepted by the local officers. I was able to visit my informants in their homes and talked to them separately. Little by little, seniors in the neighborhood told me more about what they had experienced.

Having been born and raised in Beijing, I too had personal memories about life before the economic reform. But compared to what my informants experienced, my life in the capital city was a privileged one. Through constant comparisons between current and previous conditions, between their generation and my generation, Beijing and Tianjin, their lives and the lives of others, I learned what they experienced, what they tried, and what they endured.

Chapter Three

National and Local Urban History

The socialist industrialization design had significant demographic consequences that were not anticipated by the Chinese party-state in its early years. The internal contradictions between the state's urban policies and the increasing urban population jeopardized the state's accumulation of industrial capital and forced it to design and implement de-urbanization policies in the 1960s. The eastern coastal areas, where Tianjin is located, were the major targets for the restrictive urban control. Large numbers of urban citizens from these areas were relocated to rural villages and interior provinces. Urban in-migration was channeled and organized by the state. In addition to the decline in mortality, the exodus from the cities constituted the demographic context for the urban fertility decline of the 1960s.

1. National Industrialization History and its Demographic Consequence in the 1950s

The investment strategy of China's first Five-Year Plan (FYP) (1952-57) followed the one prevailing in the Soviet Union from 1928 to 1937. Its major goals were to increase the rate of investment by reducing current consumption, to allocate investment resources overwhelmingly to heavy industry, and to build up large-scale, capital-intensive manufacturing. Up to the middle and end of 1955, this model adopted from the USSR dominated China's development. It stressed centralized planning and

control, and the development of major industrial centers. Consequently, rapid industrialization led to the growth of cities along the coast where major industrial centers and metropolises were located. From 1952 to 1955, the population of cities and towns increased about 20%; the population of cities that housed provincial administrations increased about 26%. The increase in urban population is due to two things: one is increased reproduction in the cities, another is the inflow of people from the countryside (Cell 1979: 64). The 1953 census confirmed that the urban population grew at a higher rate than that of the countryside with the migration from the countryside to the cities as the primary cause.

Critics of this Stalinist model with its concentrated focus on the coastal regions existed from the beginning among senior administrators. Mao and his supporters essentially advocated that all parts of China should be equal in the spread of services and resources, and ultimately develop at the same pace. Since there has been a great gap or contradiction between the cities and the countryside and between the coastal areas and the interior provinces, a much greater emphasis would have to be placed on the rapid development of the countryside and the interior (Cell 1979: 62).

In addition, the opponents worried that the ambitious plan would give the Soviet Union too much control over China's economy since the core of the first FYP was 156 Soviet-aided projects, which in total absorbed half of the investment resources. The other concern was the neglect of agriculture and agriculture-related consumption, which would lead to an unbalanced development pattern and finally threaten the welfare of the society.

Part of these worries were confirmed by the Soviet Union's reluctance to continue funding China's industrialization and their request for payment of their previous capital contributions - valued at about 400 million US dollars - in the ten years following 1955 (Fairbank 1986).

Starting in 1954 and 1955, the state rearranged the distribution of industrial projects. Large investment budgets were re-directed to the interior: among the 694 above-norm projects of the first FYP, 472 were situated in the interior provinces. As the result, industrial production in coastal areas decreased from 78% in 1949 to 65% in 1957 (Farina 1980: 486).

The rearrangement of the concentration of development, however, did not affect the nationwide urban population growth. Instead, urban population continuously grew as Mao determined to intensify the collective effort while increasing the pace of development to face the Soviet Union's challenge. The apparently successful collectivization of agriculture gave Mao more confidence in his plan. Under his campaign slogan "more, faster, better, and more economically", privately owned establishments in handicrafts and commerce were transformed to state ownership as urban China sped up realization of the second FYP, which targeted a more ambitious goal for industrial growth. By December 1956, during his visit to Moscow, Mao, without consulting his colleagues, declared that his "faster and better" plan would allow China's output of major industrial products to surpass that of England within about fifteen years. With this

optimistic view, after fighting with his opponents in the party and among intellectuals, Mao directed the Great Leap Forward to industrialize China in 1958 (Fairbank 1986).

The Great Leap Forward (1958-60) was based on Mao's belief in mass mobilization. By collectively mobilizing rural laborers and organizing agricultural production on a large scale in the people's communes, he believed the rural economy could make a breakthrough to rapid growth with little of the state's investment. The state, then, could continuously expand heavy industry with the capital accumulated from rural and urban production.

The Great Leap in industry between 1958 and 1960 was amazing. In 1958, 1959, and 1960 the state started 1,587, 1,361, and 1,815 medium and large-scale industrial projects, respectively. Two of the annual numbers surpassed the entire first FYP accomplishment – 1,384 medium and large-scale projects opened between 1952-57 (Fairbank 1986: 367). In 1958 alone, the state doubled its investment in state-owned units and the total amount reached 38.6 billion yuan¹⁶. This unprecedented increase in industrial investment was accompanied by an extraordinary increase in the urban labor force, the sector that was eligible for the state's urban benefits. By the end of 1960, the total employment in state units was 50.44 million, more than double the number in 1957.

In the eastern coastal regions, with the exception of 1955, the urban population kept on growing in the 1950s. Considerable discrepancies between living conditions in

¹⁶ In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the currency exchange rate between US dollars and RMB yuan was about 1:1.

the countryside and in the cities continuously enticed the peasants to leave their villages and head to the cities. The establishment of the people's commune abolished private plots and properties, and the transition from collective accounting ownership to state ownership hurt the better off peasants. Notwithstanding the state's later readjustments in its rural policies, a large number of peasants migrated to the cities to search for industrial employment during the Great Leap Forward.

This unprecedented increase in both industrial investment and urban labor force capacity placed tremendous demand for both grain and investment capital on the rural population. When Mao's rural collective experiment failed and could not provide sufficient agricultural products for the nation's ambitious plan, a massive famine took place; roughly 20 million Chinese died of starvation and malnutrition between 1960 and 1962.

The disastrous consequence of the Great Leap Forward directly affected the state's urban and industrial policies in the 1960s. The period of readjustment (1961-65) following the Great Leap Forward signified a fundamental shift of China's urban policy from one of social control to one of social mobilization, a trend that was carried further through the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). A deliberate de-urbanization process was conducted nationwide, particularly in the coastal regions. Immediate responses included cutting back unrealistic goals for industrial production, closing tens of thousands of construction and manufacturing enterprises, and resettling about 30 million urbanites in the countryside. The closure of construction and industrial projects reduced the state's

expansion bill and increased its budget revenues. The forced resettlement of unemployed and underemployed urbanites reduced the state's wage bill from 11.41 million yuan in 1960 to 8.2 million yuan in 1963. By sending millions of urban residents to the countryside, this de-urbanization policy served to relieve the government's economic burden from the ever-growing cities and provided an approach to resolving the rural/urban contradictions and the regional inequality between the coastal areas and the interior provinces (Cell 1979: 65).

2. National De-urbanization Process and the Migration Trend of the 1960s

In his report on Government Work presented at the third session of the Second People's Congress in March 1962, Premier Zhou Enlai declared de-urbanization a necessity and listed ten major tasks for carrying it out. He called for all families with rural roots who had migrated to the cities recently to return to their villages in the "Returning Home" movement (*hui xian yun dong*) (Farina 1980: 494). By the end of 1963, the government had reportedly decided to stabilize the urban population at 110 million (Cell 1979: 68). The major social mechanism facilitating such urban population control was the transfer of urban residents to the countryside¹⁷. The targeted groups included "unneeded" rural unemployed immigrants, "bad elements" such as rightist

¹⁷ The large scale transfer of urban residents to the countryside existed before this trend, but it was for different purposes. For example, by January 1961, it was reported that 590,000 cadres had been sent down from seven of China's coastal provinces alone. They were assigned to engage in manual labors in villages to assist agricultural production and receive re-education from the peasants to reform their ideology (Cell 1979: 68).

intellectuals, bourgeois elements, unemployed urban youths, residents under detention and former landlords and rich peasants. The effort to send the population out to the countryside in the early 1960s had a major impact on slowing the growth of city size. There was a net reduction of some 24.5 million over a period of only four years (ibid.: 69)!

The beginnings of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 marked the second stage of de-urbanization. The settlement of urban residents in rural areas continued and increased to a new level, and at this stage the emphasis was on urban youth. From 1966 to 1977, 17 million urban educated youths left the cities for the countryside (Farina 1980: 496). Besides reducing the pressure of the city population, this out-migration also had significant implications for maintaining high rural birth rates in the 1970s. Most young adults about to marry and bear children had moved to the countryside and increased the number of that cohort in the next decades (Cell 1979: 69).

The state's de-urbanization policy, especially in the metropolitan coastal regions, was further intensified by the Cold War conflict in Eastern Asia. Between 1965 and 1977, China carried out a massive development program in its remote interior south-western and western regions to create a gigantic self-sufficient industrial base, "the Third Front", to serve as the nation's reserve should it be drawn into the war. The state centrally directed this program and organized resources from the developed coastal regions to support the newly constructed large-scale defense and industrial plants in the hinterland. Concentrating on a perceived external threat from the Nationalist force in Taiwan, backed

by American naval power, the state did not think any successful resistance could be organized in the coastal cities in a potential nuclear war. By withdrawing the nation's industrial facilities and urban population to the "second" and the "third front", the war of resistance could be organized. The state's determination to carry out this massive plan was reinforced by America's increasing military involvement in Vietnam in 1964 and the possibility of a confrontation with the Soviet Union along China's northern frontier. Mao's original egalitarian development plan was reemphasized along with the concerns about national defense. The concentration of the nation's industry in a few coastal urban conurbations, i.e. Shanghai, Beijing-Tianjin, and Shenyang-Dalian, made the country extremely vulnerable in a large-scale war. Mao advocated moving existing factories inland and connecting them via railroads in the interior provinces with maximum speed. Till 1971, the construction of "the Third Front" was the nation's top priority in its industrialization efforts. During the period of 1964 and 1965 and in the third FYP, the state's total investment in the Third Front rose from 38.2% to 52.7% of its national investment. Roughly 140 billion yuan went into the Third Front construction from 1963 to 1975 (Naughton 1988). The state sacrificed the coastal regions' industrial investment, urbanization, and industrial output for the Third Front.

For seven years, the construction of "the Third Front" was under strict government control and depended heavily on industrial and human resources in the coastal regions – a gigantic reservoir of resources and incubator of technology for the hinterland. The strategic design was to "clone" key enterprises and major industries in the hinterland and scatter them throughout the remote mountain areas to avoid concentration.

Beginning in 1964, many factories in Shanghai, Tianjin, Beijing, and Shenyang were moved completely to the hinterland. Many other enterprises in these regions simply split their human resources and assets and built similar factories in the hinterland from the outset. Organized internal migration facilitated such a massive transition of national resources. De-urbanization accelerated in the coastal regions, and its efficient execution depended upon the strengthening of various urban control policies issued in the 1950s. During the 1960s, except for a brief period when peasants were allowed to sell their products in the urban free market after the big famine, urban migration control was tightly in the hand of the state and not loosened even in the political and social turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. The policies facilitating urban control were intensified. The state controlled urban employment system eliminated the free job market in the cities and strictly forbid unofficial changes in occupation. Food rationing reached a new level and was applied to a longer list of consumable items. Control of agricultural products and their distribution channels in the cities enabled the state to shut down free markets and direct them to the hinterland. In addition to these restrictive adjustments, the state launched social campaigns to repress urban consumption in order to further reduce urban expenditures in the coastal conurbations. In addition, the state froze the urban compensation system. For 12 years between 1965 and 1977, there was no salary increase in the coastal regions. Meanwhile, the state started to redefine urban family life and requested individual families to sacrifice their daily consumption for the nation's industrialization and national defense. State propaganda emphasized threats to the national security, thus justifying the restrictive urban control. It was in this historical

context that the state launched its second family planning program and widely distributed contraceptive knowledge and devices in the coastal regions.

3. Tianjin's Industrial History in the 1950s

Tianjin was among China's first group of cities to access the western industrialized world. Its modern industry emerged when the city became a treaty port in the late Qing Dynasty after China was defeated by the west in the Second Opium War in 1858. The imperial government was determined to develop its own defense industry to arm its military force. As a city well endowed with natural resources Tianjin became an industrial center in the late 19th century. After its industrial base was severely damaged during the Boxing Movement in 1900, Tianjin's local industry was revitalized, especially between the two World Wars (1914-1936) when the western powers battled in Europe and ignored their oversea territories. This period was known as the "golden age of Tianjin's national industry". By the end of the 1930s, the city had become an international metropolis and the nation's second largest center of textile manufacturing, second only to Shanghai. It was also the center of food processing, a packaging industry, and banking and finance for northern China.

During World War II (1937-45), the Japanese military took over Tianjin. The Japanese confiscated numerous factories, merged banks, controlled railroads, and plundered raw materials in the city and its surrounding regions. They transformed the city

into an industrial base for the ongoing invasion of China's hinterland. Japanese entrepreneurs opened new textile and armament factories in Tianjin solely to facilitate their military actions. The exploitation of local resources severely damaged Tianjin's industry and economy which could hardly recover during the bloody civil war (1945-49) that followed.

When the People's Liberation Army (the PLA) marched into Tianjin on January 15, 1949, Tianjin's industry was described as "at a standstill". "The structure ... was inefficient: small enterprises dominated the economy; equipment was mostly obsolete; and manufacturing methods were antiquated." Industrial technology and production knowledge were limited and inefficient. Basic machinery and knowledge were imported from overseas and could not be reproduced locally (Yick 1995: 63-65). Heavy industry was minimal and rudimentary; 88.32% of the city's industrial output was produced by light industry organized in small private enterprises (Tianjin History: 248). In 1949, there were 142,100 workers in manufacturing, 30.78% of Tianjin's total population, working in 4,708 factories in the city (TJ Demographic Data Collection 1986: 282).

The communist take-over of Tianjin was rapid and smooth. The underground communist members worked with the labor unions to protect the factories' property to avoid major damage to the industrial base. By April 10, 1949 when Liu Shaoqi visited Tianjin, the transition was already near its end¹⁸. Tianjin was the center of development in the new regime's ambitious plan for industrialization. National leaders who advocated

¹⁸ The transition of Tianjin's industrial system right after 1949 was recorded in the collection - Liu Shaoqi in Tianjin, Tianjin: Tianjin People's Publish, 1993.

the Soviet model, including Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, stressed the importance of centralized planning and control, and the development of major industrial centers. Along with Shanghai and the industrialized northern provinces, i.e. Liaoning and Jilin, Tianjin entered the expanding socialist stage of its industrialization.

From the beginning, the central government firmly controlled the industrialization process in Tianjin. With its intensive investment, Tianjin's total urban area doubled in the 1950s. The state enlarged three marginal districts, Hongqiao, Hebei, and Hedong, for the establishment of 11 industrial centers. Each industrial area had its own leading industries, all of which were large-scale state-owned enterprises. Metallurgy, machinery manufacturing, petrol-chemical smelting, and various other modern industries were introduced to the city. Taken as a whole, they transformed the city's appearance and nature. Gradually, heavy industry's weight in the city's total industrial output increased. By 1986, its percentage reached 45.45% compared to 11.68% in 1949 (Tianjin History: 248).

The state's central plan and keen supervision facilitated massive urban expansion and accelerated industrialization. The state designed each factory, dictated its projects, and assigned investment capital accordingly.

The massive scale of industrialization created numerous job opportunities attracting a large number of rural migrants to Tianjin. In the 1950s, Tianjin's non-agricultural population increased at an average annual rate of 5.15%. Between 1949 and

1957, the city's non-agricultural population increased by 906,254. Most of the new immigrants were employed in manufacturing. Within only three years, Tianjin's total manufacturing workers doubled, reaching 288,500 in 1952 (TJ Demographic Data Collection: 382).

Once employed, workers received salaries, free medical services, a food quota, housing, and utilities from the factory. The state's urban compensation system faced tremendous challenge from the suddenly increased state payroll. A series of urban problems emerged together with such rapid urban expansion¹⁹. Similar to what happened in other urban centers, Tianjin reported school shortage, food shortage, and housing problems to the central state, requesting more funds for urbanization.

In July 1953, the central government conducted its first census in order to develop a comprehensive economic plan. An unexpectedly large national population, rapidly increasing fertility rate, and large urban population, forced the central government to take further steps to avoid a "growing conflict between the ambitious plans for development and the short-term dilemmas of rapid urban growth, tight food supplies, and the uncertain rural political climate" (White 1994: 262-3). The household registration system and food rationing for urban residents became efficient social mechanisms in blocking rural in-migration and identifying unemployed urbanites for out-migration. In June 1955, the

¹⁹ China's urban population problem existed before the establishment of the new state. For years wars brutally damaged rural agricultural production. Millions of rural migrants rushed to urban centers for job opportunities. Urban unemployment was high and inflation soared. One of the urban policies to stabilize the economy after 1949 was to urge unemployed rural migrants to return to their rural origins. However, land reform created a second migration to urban centers and urban populations continually increased.

State Council established a permanent identification system and household registration system in both rural and urban China to issue residency status to each citizen. Two months later, in August 1955, the postulation of *Provisional Measures Governing Grain-Rationing in Cities and Towns* marked the beginning of food rationing for urban residents (Cheng 1991).

As the experimental city for developing the state's restrictive policies, Tianjin started early in issuing food and cloth vouchers to urban residents according to their urban residency status, sex, age, and occupation. In 1954, each Tianjin urban resident received 3-3.7 *chi* (about 2.7 to 3.4 feet) of cotton cloth annually. In 1955, each urban resident received on average 29.32 *jin* (about 28 pounds) of grain per month (Tianjin History: 532 and 548). A systematic coordination between workplaces and the municipal government in settling new employees was established. Each factory's personnel division worked closely with the state's social agencies in assigning resources to their employees according to their social and demographic status. The city's Public Security Bureau provided urban household registration for every formal employee. The city's Grain Bureau distributed food quotas to the formally registered urban residents. By replacing private food markets with centrally controlled food distribution channels and assigning food rations according to the household registration, the state quickly cut back food resources for rural migrants

Meanwhile, Tianjin's municipal government channeled unemployed rural migrants back to their home villages. In 1955, the organized out-migration in Tianjin was

so massive that the city's population grew at a negative rate; some 215,426 Tianjin residents moved out of the city (see Table Eight).

However, such restrictive urban policy did not stop the influx of rural migrants. Better living conditions, generous social benefits, and employment opportunities kept on attracting rural migrants back to Tianjin. Compared to the harshness of rural life, modern urban life offered residential areas called "the new districts". With "upstairs, downstairs, electricity, and telephone", they represented a new way of living. In 1956 and 1957, there were 390,006 in-migrants in Tianjin most of whom sought jobs in factories, construction sites, and service industries (TJ Demographic Data Collection: 254). Once again, the state's original design of bringing urbanites' wage and consumption patterns under central control put the state into a predicament whose awkwardness is illustrated by Tianjin's housing construction in the 1950s.

According to the state's policy, a major fraction of industrial investment was allocated for housing construction. Large-scale state-owned enterprises constructed their own dormitory apartments and single-room row houses for their employees. The Municipal government also received funding from the central government to build up workers' villages for the workers. Between 1949 and 1957, Tianjin totally constructed 3,353,000 square meters' housing with the state's funds. However, because of the large increase in its working class populations, the city's per capita living space was still lower than the level of 1949 (Overall Annual of Tianjin: 972).

In order to release the tremendous economic burden imposed by the city's expansion, the state determined to launch the de-urbanization policy in Tianjin. Compared to the other coastal regions where the de-urbanization era started after the big famine, Tianjin suffered earlier from the withdrawal of government funds. In February 1958, the city lost its administrative status as a central municipality and was downgraded to the capital city of Hebei Province. According to local history, this administrative change was officially described as an outcome of Mao's advocacy for the independent development of each province as a totality (Tianjin History: 5). As a provincial city, Tianjin lost its eligibility to compete with Shanghai and Beijing for central investments. Between 1958 and 1965, the central government allocated 181% more financial and material investment to Beijing, enabling it to become northern China's transportation, business, finance, and trading center. Tianjin, a former national and international metropolis, served a predominately agricultural province for the next ten years until January 1967, when the government reinstated Tianjin's "central municipality" status.

However, this downgrade of Tianjin's administrative status did not halt the influx of rural migration. In 1958, 1959, and 1960, peasants kept on moving into Tianjin and worked in the neighborhood industries developed during the Great Leap Forward.

Only after the Big Famine in 1961, did the central government decide to end the ever-growing urban expansion once and for all. Various forms of urban control intensified. Organized out-migration from urban centers to the countryside persisted in the 1960s, intensified by various political campaigns and a threatening international

environment. The targeted populations included intellectuals, skilled workers, technicians, educated youths, and rural in-migrants. Eastern coast metropolitan areas became centers of organized out-migration. The total number was so large that during the 1960s the size of these urban centers remained unchanged. Under strict urban control, the urban population in Tianjin ceased growing; indeed it decreased. The de-urbanization processes of the 1960s were best illustrated in Tianjin.

4. Restrictive Urban Control in Tianjin in the 1960s

Tianjin provides a good illustration of the restrictive urban management policy of the 1960s. Throughout the decade, spontaneous in-migration was nearly impossible. The household registration system was tightened up and the employment system was under the state's control. With the farm market being shut down, urbanites became increasingly dependent on the state for food and daily necessities. The encompassing urban control was consolidated.

Table Seven and Chart 5 show the fluctuation in total population, especially the non-agricultural population – people who had urban registration status - in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. As we can see, in the 1950s, Tianjin's non-agricultural population continually increased. The average annual rate was 5.15%. But in the 1960s and 1970s, the average annual rate dropped to -0.53% and 1.17% respectively. Both the total

population and the non-agricultural population decreased as the result. Between 1960 and 1980, the net increase in Tianjin's non-agricultural population was only 196,770.

The decrease in Tianjin's urban population was created by tight in-migration control and forced out-migration. As indicated in Table Six, Tianjin's total in-migration in the 1960s was 388,441 and that was only 24.7% of the total for the 1950s. In addition, there were three major organized out-migrations in the 1960s. One happened after the famine, during the readjustment period when a large number of laid-off workers and unemployed urban residents were sent to their original villages in the "returning home movement". Between 1961 and 1965, the state relocated 215,630 Tianjin urbanites in this way (Tianjin History: 1180). During the following "Third Front" construction period, the state moved factories to interior provinces in order to protect the nation's productivity in case of war. 151,287 Tianjin urban residents moved with their factories to other provinces at this time. The third large out-migration happened during the Cultural Revolution. Between 1966 and 1970, 368,954 middle school and high school graduates were sent out to the countryside to participate in agricultural production, and that created the largest out-migration in Tianjin history (Tianjin History: 1180).

These various out-migrations each had specific purposes and propaganda. But the real effect was the same – the direct reduction of the urban population and the state's investment in Tianjin. As shown in Table Six, Tianjin's total net migration during the 1960s was -485,761. In other words, its out-migration exceeded its in-migration causing a loss of nearly a half a million people over the course of a decade.

It was against this historical background that the state introduced a family planning program for further urban population control. However, it took two decades for the state to incorporate its fertility goals into its central economic plan and to formulate a target-oriented policy to compel the local cadres enforcing its implementation. During these two decades, local utilization of contraception remained voluntary. The urbanites' motivation to control family size and the availability of a social justification for such behavior need to be understood from a local perspective.

Chapter Four

Family Planning Advocacy And The State's Restrictive Urban Policies in the 1960s

The Chinese state's national policy to control urban population growth through Family Planning underwent a long process of initiation, justification, and dissemination. Family Planning was not finally centralized as a state regulation relating to the national economic plan until the 1970s. After a rudimentary phase in the 1950s, birth control and birth planning policies remained socially, rather than politically, advocated throughout the 1960s. Local officials in charge of family planning programs in individual cities were not compelled to implement the policy with a target-oriented approach. Utilization of contraception among the local populations was voluntary. It was the change of the country's socioeconomic and political context as a result of the Great Leap Forward, rather than the state's two family planning campaigns, that affected individual families' domestic lives and motivated the use of birth control.

1. Justification of Birth Control at the Government Level

The central government's pronatalist policy between 1949 and 1952 was directly copied from the Soviet Union. Under persistent demand from the working class and professional women, the state soon reversed this policy, legalizing abortion and granting access to contraceptives in 1952.

Increasing social problems, such as shortage of food and housing, continually reminded the state's central planners of the urgency of population control in urban China. In 1954, Chairman Liu Shaoqi declared the state's endorsement of birth control. He further explained that, as a predominantly agricultural society with a large national population, China could not follow the Soviet Union's pronatalist policy, which was developed after it lost some of its massive population in the world wars (Sun 1990). In 1956, the central government launched its first family planning campaign to promote contraception at the local level.

The idea of developing comprehensive birth planning and defining population goals as part of the centralized state plan emerged in 1957. Vice Premier Chen Yun called on communist party members not to give birth to a third child (White 1994:269). In the same year, Mao Zedong, who keenly believed that comprehensive planning, propaganda, and grass-root mobilization were the keys to socialist development, proposed incorporating birth planning as part of a nationwide agenda for industrialization. To Mao, despite a centrally planned economy, humanity still remained in an anarchic stage, inept at managing itself. If humans could plan the production of textiles, the production of household goods, the production of steel, why couldn't they have plans for the production of themselves? Mao suggested establishing a committee to research this issue and to formulate a ten-year implementation plan of birth planning policy. His desire to unify social organizations and regulate the anarchy of the market and the means of production expanded to the domain of birth control and birth planning. He intended to create a balance between population growth and social development by the universal

implementation of a birth planning policy. Mao's proposal laid the foundation for the official doctrine of comprehensive birth planning that would emerge in later years (White 1994).

However, in the 1950s, birth planning was still a "creative" idea circulating at the government level, and there were few detailed procedures regarding its implementation in cities and localities. In addition, the central government's endorsement of birth control encountered ideological opposition from conservative medical societies, many of whose members were trained in Catholic mission hospitals and medical schools. Fierce resistance from the male-dominated local communities also disabled the policy's implementation. Consequently, the state's antinatalist policy focused on voluntary birth control in these years. The State Council instructed the Department of Light Industry to organize the production of contraceptive devices, i.e. IUDs, contraceptive pills, and condoms, and placed the Department of Commerce in charge of their distribution (Sun 1990).

As China moved toward the target of accelerating its development through the Great Leap Forward in 1958, its massive population was increasingly treated as an asset instead of an economic burden. When the political propaganda for the Great Leap Forward was developing, it became extremely risky for policy opponents to express any pessimism regarding the country's population problems, or its capability of accomplishing a major breakthrough based on mass mobilization. Birth control advocates in the central government retreated from their convictions. Those who refused to back

down, like the economist Ma Yinchu, were criticized for being China's "Malthusians" (White 1994b).

During the Great Leap Forward, exaggeration of agricultural output quickly erased Mao's pessimism about population problems. It convinced him that a sharp increase of agricultural products could exceed the production of population and finally solve the food shortage in urban areas. By then, the state's first family planning campaign had collapsed and its local effect was limited. Birth control and birth planning were eliminated as doctrines while the state no longer compelled local cadres to take the policy seriously.

Then, a new crisis emerged. Unrealistic expectations of accelerated agricultural development created a disastrous famine in China between 1960-61 when roughly 20 million people died of starvation and malnutrition. It proved that food shortage would be a persistent problem in urban China and could not be solved by accelerating agricultural production. During the subsequent economic adjustment period between 1962 and 1965, implementation of birth control policy once again became a priority of the central government. The state launched its second family planning campaign in 1962. The severe domestic conditions caused by the famine and the threatening international environment produced by the break up of the alliance with the Soviet Union reinforced the collective model of China's economic development. Birth control policy, as a crucial part of this model, was justified at the government level. Opponents in the local administration and medical societies withdrew from their ideological positions. Production of contraceptive

devices increased dramatically. The state issued subsidies worth millions to keep the price of contraceptive devices low. Under the direction of the central government, dissemination of contraceptive knowledge and devices was organized through a systematic network at the local level (Sun 1990).

However, the goal of spreading contraceptive knowledge remained problematic. Local societies were continually conservative about the issues of sex, contraception, and reproduction. It had already taken years for the central government to justify its endorsement of contraception at the government level and among the medical societies. It was challenging for the state to build up implementation teams formed of cadres, medical professionals, and urban activists who were willing to educate the local residents with a culturally tolerable narrative on contraception. Since the state's first family planning program, debates inside the government over legalizing contraception and its social impact were centered on the dissemination issue. Liu Shaoqi agreed to avoid a public campaign on the birth control issue and to limit the dissemination of contraceptive knowledge only among the targeted population (Sun 1990). In the 1960s, when the central government decided to promote its policy, the rhetorical narrative for such promotion remained a problem. Premier Zhou Enlai suggested systematically educating adult citizens, 18 years old and above, with scientific knowledge on personal hygiene and human reproduction. He insisted that there was no reason to keep it a secret. Widespread reproductive knowledge could transform the conservative social atmosphere and enable the acceptance of contraception in urban centers. During the 1960s, the health and welfare of women and children continued to be the primary justification for family

planning and birth control programs. Mao's original proposal of defining a population goal as the crucial prerequisite to successful economic planning was not accomplished until the end of 1975. Forcing birth planning upon individuals was morally impossible. Between 1966 and 1969, the Cultural Revolution marginalized the family planning program (White 1994b). Birth control and family planning remained voluntary throughout the 1960s.

After the interruption of the Cultural Revolution, the state resumed its family planning program. In 1970, Premier Zhou Enlai included birth planning in the draft of the country's fourth Five-Year Plan, arguing that "birth planning isn't a health question, it is a planning question. If you can't even plan the rate of population increase, how can you have any national plan? (White 1994b:276)" The state launched the "wan xi shao (marrying late, spacing birth, and having fewer children)" campaign to persuade couples to delay and plan childbirth in 1971. It promoted late marriage and childbearing, extended spacing between children, and fewer children for each couple. The popular wisdom was that "one is proper, two are perfect, and three are excessive." The campaign evoked Mao's comprehensive proposal of the 1950s which linked population planning directly to the nation's economic development.

In her analysis of China's birth planning history, Tyrenne White pointed out the profound implications of the policy change in the 1970s. The state made a conceptual transition in its attitude towards birth control and birth planning policies from social advocacy to firm state regulation. In the 1950s and 1960s, however, the population

policies remained on the periphery of Chinese politics. Her studies pointed out that there was a long and gradual history of the policy's formulating, evolving, and finally translating into a state-enforced program that totally controls citizen's reproductive life. During this long historical process, population control program had always been a supplemental policy that serves the primary political and economic goals of the nation (White 1990, 1991, 1994a, and 1994b). It was only in the 1970s that the state

...redefined population goals as part of the centralized state plan and the crucial prerequisite to successful economic planning. The shift ...compelled local leaders to take population targets seriously as part of the national economic plan. ...[I]t also meant that the regime would apply to birth control goals the same target-oriented approach that was the standard tool of policy implementation in the material sector, where numerical targets were routinely used to set production levels and determine standards of performance in production units. With population planning thus linked to the primary obligation of the socialist state – the production, allocation, and distribution of material goods – childbearing became subject to those same mechanisms of depersonalized centralized planning. Under this rationale, women were production instrument subject to the structure of state monopoly and supply, and children became a planned product of the socialist state (White 1994b:276).

What surprised western scholars was that such an obligatory and intrusive program of state-enforced contraception and birth limits was not massively resisted by urban women in the 1970s, and that the urban fertility decline maintained its previous momentum and dropped further. This dissertation argues that, beside the family planning programs, other social changes shaped urban residents' perceptions of family life in the 1960s and catalyzed the adoption of birth control at the local level. Couples deliberately used contraception to control family size. By the time the state enforced its birth control policy in the early 1970s, the urban fertility transition in the coastal areas was already over.

Similar to the birth control and population control policies, social campaigns repressing urban consumption were initiated by the central government in the 1950s as a crucial step to keep industrialization at low cost. This campaign was closely related to other urban policies and in two decades dramatically transformed China's urban life. The state's apparatus effectively promoted these policies at the local level nationwide. During the next two decades, a set of new social standards and moralities was established in urban China that transformed urban families' perceptions regarding domestic life and family size.

2. Repressing Urban Compensation and Consumption

Repressing urban compensation and consumption, as themes of de-urbanization, were elements of the centrally controlled Stalinist development model. In order to have a long-term development plan at minimal cost and to maximize investment capital accumulated from both agricultural and industrial production, the state needed to incorporate urbanites' compensation and consumption into its comprehensive economic plan.

Centrally controlled urban compensation was carried out by a set of standard wage ranks for different jobs and corresponding monthly wage payments supplemented

by a “regional price subsidy” to reflect regional difference²⁰. In this standardized wage system, established in 1956, there were 8 ranks for industrial workers. According to their technical skill, education, and seniority, each worker in state enterprises and collective factories was ranked along the scale and received the corresponding monthly wage payments. Between 1956 and 1958, both piece-rate (*jijian gongzi*) and bonus (*jinagjin*) systems were used as incentive methods in factories. However, the flexibility and differentiation in the compensation system created by the piece-rate and bonus systems were eliminated during the Great Leap Forward. Moreover, the economic collapse during the great famine further contributed to the freeze of the national wage system until 1963 when the economic recovery was underway. In 1963, there was a nationwide urban wage adjustment. Workers of all ranks received promotions and wage increases. Piece rates and bonuses resumed in factories to induce higher productivity (Korzec and Whyte 1981).

Two years after this compensation adjustment, in 1965, however, the state heightened its central control and froze the wage system again. While the momentum of the Cultural Revolution was building up and the state’s heavy investment in the “Third Front” was increasing, the political attack on material life in urban centers was formulated. In its searching for egalitarianism in urban life, the Cultural Revolution targeted the urban wage system for fundamental reform. In factories, piece rates and bonuses once again were eliminated. There was no salary increase in the next twelve years, except a small-scale adjustment in 1971 (*ibid.*). This longest period of wage

²⁰ The best description of the Chinese wage system is Christopher Howe’s *Wage Patterns and Wage Policy in Modern China 1919-1972*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973, and Michel Korzec and Martin K. Whyte’s “Reading Notes: The Chinese Wage System,” in *China Quarterly*, vol. 86, pp. 248-273.

freezes (1965 – 1977) shed the darkest shadow upon urban working class family life, especially for those young workers who were employed in the late 1950s, worked at the lowest ranks, and received the lowest payments in the 1960s when most of them launched their nuclear families and became parents.

Compared to the central control of urban compensation, official control over urban consumption was a far more complicated and difficult task. It was mainly achieved by transforming the state into the dominant distributor of agricultural and industrial products as well as social services for urban residents. Since the mid-1950s, the state purchased, merged, combined, and eliminated private industrial companies, collectivized the circulation system of industrial commodities and agricultural products, and transferred the service industry to collective ownership. By 1958, in most urban centers, the socialist transformation of business ownership had been completed and the state controlled nearly every domain of commodity and service distribution, e.g. housing, medical services, food, utilities, and most daily material needs. The state also incorporated entertainment, hotel management, restaurants, repairing, and retail businesses into a government-owned network. In 1956, there were 1,563 private and 366 state-owned grocery stores in Tianjin; by 1958, all private stores had been incorporated into the municipal management system (Tianjin History: 538). The effect of eliminating the urban market economy and simplifying the circulation of consumer products was also reflected in Tianjin's employment distribution. In 1949, 33.02% of Tianjin's urban employees worked in the service industry; by 1975, that number fell to only 12.59% (TJ Demographic Data Collection 1986: 383).

The next step towards controlling urban consumption was to simplify state controlled production and distribution channels in order to reserve most industrial profits for the development of heavy industry. Consumption-oriented light industry was marginalized in the state's overall design. The state's practical principle for light industry's layout was to avoid repetition and waste. Each region had one or two designated factories producing commodities for the region. Cross-regional trade and exchanges of commodities were limited. Unified designs of consumer products emphasized utility over aesthetic appeal. Clothes, for example, lacked variety; a complete range of sizes was not available. Twenty years later when China opened its door to the western world, its cities' homogeneous outlook was sharp and intense. Wherever western tourists went, they found the same design of daily necessities with every middle-aged man dressed in a dark blue Mao suit.

Additionally, in order to design a precise industrial plan, central planners needed to detail their calculation of urban consumption for allocating production budgets. This consumption-production chain linked urban consumption to resource availability, manufacturing capability, production scale, storage space, and the lifecycle of commodities. Consumption was contained in the framework of production and was required to be coordinated with local production. Otherwise, any overstock would create serious financial problems for the central government. In order to find the balance point between consumption and production, the state required regional industry and urban

management “to have one hand gripping production and the other grasping consumption” (Tianjin History: 527).

Unified distribution channels for agricultural and industrial products did allow the state to reserve a large surplus and profits for investing in heavy industry. However, it drastically damaged urban market networks and diminished colorful and heterogeneous local life in all aspects. The state’s central control of food distribution in Tianjin provided a vivid illustration of how socialist urban management transformed local urban life.

Between 1953 and 1954, the central government implemented a mandatory purchase and distribution system to unify the grain markets in urban centers. In October 1955, the Tianjin municipal government implemented food rationing. A designated grain store was set up in each neighborhood to sell monthly staple rations, i.e. rice, flour, and cornmeal, to local residents. By 1958, the municipal government declared its elimination of private retail food stands and grocery stores. State- and/or collective-owned grocery stores took over food distribution. The policy allowed the state to cut back the food resources for unorganized rural immigrants in urban centers and also enabled the state to collectively control urban food consumption. As the de-urbanization process intensified in the 1960s, the food rationing system quickly expanded to cover cooking oil, sugar, meat, eggs, tofu, and many other daily food items. During the severe food shortage between 1960 and 1961, even pastry and vegetables were sold with vouchers (Tianjin History: 545-550).

The unified purchase and distribution system had severe consequences for the availability of seasonal agricultural products. Large amounts of perishable groceries, such as vegetables, fruits, and seafood, were damaged and wasted in the prolonged purchasing and distributing process run by city officials. Official food retail networks lacked the flexibility of the private market and circulation system that previously allowed individual retailers, vendors, and storeowners to purchase agricultural products directly from farmers and wholesalers to meet the urban demand. Before the state's takeover, hundreds of scattered food markets and vegetable stands in Tianjin managed to provide various fresh groceries to urbanites and enriched residents' daily life. In 1958, these private stores and vendors were replaced by state-run retail networks. After 1960, the city's Commerce Bureau became the only organizer of grocery distribution. Food distribution was organized according to administrative level from municipal to district and then to local grocery stores. Consequently, delicate and fragile vegetables, such as bamboo shoots, lotus roots, garlic bulbs, and snow beans, gradually disappeared from the local market and were replaced by turnips, onions, potatoes, and cabbage. An elaborate local food culture was soon replaced by simplified food consumption (Tianjin History: 536-8).

However, collective management could hardly regulate and change urban residents' consumption interests, appetites, and tastes. The state, therefore, initiated a campaign to direct urban consumption. A typical case happened in Tianjin in 1960 when one local vegetable store was allocated more eggplants than leeks on a particular weekend. Most northern residents loved to eat leek dumplings as a weekend treat. The

model sales woman, Zhang Shizhen, actively solicited the recipe for eggplant dumpling and successfully sold all the eggplants²¹.

Creative sales techniques were helpful in completing “sales tasks” – selling available allocated products to urbanites. But they could hardly meet another requirement – coordinating consumption for planning production. In a perfect scenario, a grocery store would have a rough estimate of local consumption and report to its superiors for grocery production plans. Model grocery stores coordinated with restaurants and the public canteens in local factories, schools, and other institutions to calculate the amount and kinds of groceries they needed for daily consumption. Grocery sales teams also helped cooks in restaurants and canteens to calculate a precise number for reporting.

Collective management and calculation of consumption reached its height during the Great Leap Forward, a period of accelerating collectivism in urban China, via replacing household chores with collective efforts. Urban residents were encouraged to eat in public canteens in their workplaces and neighborhoods. Housewives in each neighborhood were organized to provide free or low-cost services, such as housekeeping, taking care of seniors, infants, and patients, for employed neighbors. Such an unrealistic plan to replace housework with collective management quickly failed. No family would regularly give its home keys to neighbors for free cleanings and laundry. Low-budget public canteens could not provide high quality food to fit various appetites. It was also

²¹ Zhang Shizhen’s experience was broadcast nation wide and she was promoted to work in municipal government in the 1960s. Her story is published in *Dang Quzhong de Guanjiaren, Zuo Shengchan de Cujinpai* (Mass’s Butler, Production’s Promoter), Tianjin: Tianjin People’s Publish, 1960.

unrealistic to provide freshly cooked meals 24 hours a day to workers who had three shifts and different dining schedules. A large amount of food was wasted; complaints emerged; and the experiment failed.

In the 1960s, the state's restrictive urban policies in repressing consumption were further reinforced by the campaign of transforming eastern coastal urban centers from "consumption heaven" to "production base" (Tianjin History: 7). The state consistently advocated savings, thrift, and economy in urban consumption. By publicly criticizing extravagant lifestyles and actively promoting the model household, the state advocated an industrious and economical lifestyle with a set of social standards reflecting the theme of "diligently and frugally constructing the country and managing the household (*qin jian jian guo, qin jian chi jia*)". Each urban family should save all possible consumer goods and increase bank savings to assist the country in accumulating capital. The theme of repressing domestic consumption and the advocacy of a frugal and uplifting family life lasted for more than two decades, eventually replaced by consumer-driven advocacy after Deng's economic reform in 1978. Compared to other political and ideological social movements in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, this campaign has been ignored by most Chinese studies not only because it was mainly about trivial household chores, but also because of its persistence with little fluctuation for three decades. However, from the local perspective, it was this campaign and its political economic background that added a new layer of social constraint by installing a new set of social standards locally. It not only materialized the state-and-family relationship, but also formulated a new citizen identity based on domestic behaviors.

3. The Social Campaign for Frugality in Urban Domestic Life

Beginning in 1956, newspaper articles started to criticize “unrealistic” expectations that living standards would sharply increase as wishing that “one jump could reach the sky”. Families without a budget plan were left without money at the end of each month. There were also reports that working class families indulged in elaborate ceremonies and enjoyed fancy hobbies, such as hunting. In some cases, families purchased large commodities on credit and applied to the factory labor union’s subsidy for daily consumption. In 1958, the Tianjin municipal government eliminated selling on credit as a form of dumping overstocked products. However, there were still reports that families did not manage their households properly and wasted too much of their income. Workers diverted their attention from work to solve family feuds created by financial problems.

The state’s promotion of the new urban frugality targeted the above “petty-bourgeoisie lifestyle”. Diligently and frugally managed “proletarian” households should be simple, economical, and spiritually uplifting. Peaceful domestic life could release family members from mounting daily household chores and allow them to concentrate on work and study. Harmonic conjugal relationships should be built upon sharing the same communist ideal, based neither on materialist goals nor on physical attraction. Elaborate wedding and burial ceremonies were criticized as “feudal (*feng jian*)” and “superstitious (*mi xin*)”. Extravagant dowries and bride prices, as the symbols of mercenary marriage, should be eliminated. People who paid too much attention to apparel, food,

entertainment, and hobbies were labeled petty bourgeoisie. Parents should educate children to follow the state's advocacy and be devoted to socialist construction.

During the Cultural Revolution, with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution as its full name, urban consumption history was fiercely criticized as “old fashioned” -- the “bourgeoisie culture” carried over from the old exploiting society. The slogan was to destroy this traditional ideology and perspective and to establish revolutionary ones. Heterogeneous and colorful local cultural and urban life were under severe attack and were eliminated and replaced with an austere, industrious, and thrifty “proletarian style”. With the military force engaged in local administration to resume regular social order after the turmoil in 1966 and 1967, standardized military style and a uniformed military culture dominated language, fashion, and the management of factories and schools. Luxury products and entertainment centers were replaced by standardized basic services. Conventional social customs were criticized as “feudal” and “backward”. Restaurants either served as public canteens or simply shut down. In 1957, there were 7,846 restaurants and food stands scattered in Tianjin and by 1978, only 820 of them survived (Tianjin History: 554). Movie theatres were mostly shut down and there were few movies in the cinemas in the 1960s. In Tianjin, between 1966 and 1976, there were only 106 movies shown to the public, compared to 1,258 movies in the market between 1953 and 1962 (Tianjin History: 1152). As addressed above, elaborate local gourmet food gradually disappeared. Enjoying gourmet food and entertainment was labeled as a petty bourgeoisie activity. The linkage between lifestyle and class position was so much emphasized that a decade later, when the economic policy totally reversed to a consumer-driven market economy, reopening restaurants and providing gourmet food needed to be

justified as “even proletarians have the right to enjoy gourmet food after a tense but productive day”.

The state used the image of the “big family” in constructing its campaign propaganda and rationale. In this narrative, the country was portrayed as the big family for all Chinese citizens. Internationally, it had the unchallenged right to represent its population in the outside world. Collectively, the state protected the nation from foreign imperialist invasions and exploitation; the state led the citizens to struggle for independence in the global network; and the state created development designs to empower the nation. Domestically, it had the responsibility of leading the country’s industrialization and enriching citizens’ family lives.

The narrative implied a prioritized right for the state and a reciprocal relationship between the state and the citizens. On the one hand, the state reserved the surplus from production for future industrial investment and the capability of guaranteeing universal benefits, taking care of senior citizens, and assisting with the education of the young generation in urban areas. On the other hand, only when the big family achieved prosperity and strength could each small family and its members find happiness. The more the citizens participated in the socialist construction, the better off the country would be. It was said that the communist revolution was meant to bring a stable and prosperous life to all citizens. However, when industrialization had just started, it was not yet time for individual citizens to indulge in luxury consumption. The state urged urban residents to prioritize national and collective interests over personal ones by postponing

an ostentatious and extravagant lifestyle and by increasing saving deposits as well as economizing on a daily basis.

In Tianjin, municipal governments and women's associations organized seminars in which model housewives and mothers would teach about advanced household management techniques. The theme of planning was emphasized in managing nearly every aspect of daily life, i.e. time, income, consumption, and dinner menus. Model households planned the domestic economy to insure that monthly expenses stayed within a monthly income limit while still allowing the family to put savings in the bank. Planned family life also allowed model families to maintain a good quality of life under food and commodity rationing while still saving extra grain, utilities, cotton cloth, and other controlled daily necessities. With the principle of frugal household management, well-planned daily life enabled individual urban families to support socialist construction in multiple ways. Advanced techniques included setting up a monthly budget for consumption, measuring food before cooking, soaking laundry before washing in order to save detergent, and re-tailoring clothes for younger children to avoid purchasing. Some model families ate simple meals during the weekdays and had good food during the weekend. Other families purchased large amounts of vegetables when the price was low, and pickled them for winter when fresh vegetables were scarce and expensive.

Families living on debt were condemned by the society. Capable housewives and "advanced" employees should not depend on the state's subsidies for daily expenses. Families consistently trapped in debt and domestic problems were called "not good at

living (*bu hui guo*)” and “not good at planning (*bu hui suan ji*)”. Neighborhood committees and coworkers were responsible for helping these families solve domestic problems before simply turning to the state for assistance.

The decade of the 1960s began with the Soviet Unions’ withdrawing its financial and technological support and China’s preparing for war with the United States in Vietnam and the Taiwan Strait. The Big Famine of 1960 and 1961 endangered domestic stability and the national economy. It was the state’s priority to regenerate the economic development plan interrupted by the unrealistic acceleration of the Great Leap Forward. Urban population control, including migration control and birth control, was reaffirmed as national policy. Disciplining urban residents’ economic habits became a political task. Arduous striving, diligence, and frugality were advocated as central to the communist tradition and principle values for the new era. As 1964 arrived, the campaign for urban domestic life aimed at replacing feudal and superstitious conventions with a new socialist ideology, morality, and custom. The party declared that domestic lifestyle was a class issue in an era when class struggle still existed. Selecting particular lifestyles was not just an issue of supporting the construction of socialism; it became part of class identity specifying the citizen’s and the family’s social position.

The political intonation of the campaign was intensified during the Cultural Revolution when a planned economy served the purposes of national defense. Many factories moved to the Third Front to protect productivity. Repressing urban compensation and consumption was justified again by an unstable international security

environment. Urban populations were organized to dig underground tunnels to reserve food and commodities for the perceiving war. Contrary to the general impression that China's administration collapsed during the Cultural Revolution, neighborhood management and urban migration control were continuously effective in those years. Conflicts among urbanites led to detailed investigations of each family's class background. Workplaces coordinated with neighborhood committees to investigate urbanites' political origin and family background. When it was necessary, workplaces and neighborhood committees even sent officers to other provinces for such investigations. Local scrutiny over residents' political and economic life intensified in the 1960s. Urban residents' domestic life was incorporated into the political arena. Everyday life became a political statement.

It was in this historical context that the harmonic relationship between the state and the working class population deteriorated. Local social structure, i.e. family management and neighborhood arrangements, effectively transmitted the state's socioeconomic and political demands to the people. In the process of daily interactions among the stratified working class population, new social norms and standards formulated and regulated access to collective assets. Through work disciplines and cultural regulations, these new norms and standards linked individual families' private lives to collective arenas and transformed domestic behaviors into part of the public assessment. In order to gain local respect and manage domestic life within a restrictive economic range, the working class population reacted to public pressure by rearranging

their work patterns and domestic lives. Utilizing contraception to control their family size and composition was one of the outcomes of the grand social change.

Chapter Five

Motherhood And the State's Control of Public/Private Lives Through the Workplace

The state's firm control of urban consumption was accomplished by its totalitarian supervision over urbanites' private life in the public settings where urban employees depended on their workplaces, system of distribution, for household goods. However, men and women experienced the state's control differently. To male employees, conscious prioritizing of the state's interests and unconditional sacrificing of private time and personal energy were the primary requirements for advancing and being rewarded in the system. To females, however, the state's final control over their public/private lives was gained through its right of overseeing women's reproductive health. Female workers' daily lives were shaped and constrained by a contradictory gender discourse that assigned multiple interests and values to their reproduction. As the individual, familial, and political interests in reproduction were so different, reproductive issues constituted a focus for contestation that women and their families constantly manipulated and negotiated for a better living.

Previous studies of Chinese women's participation in the labor force failed to explain why women insist that they were liberated by the socialist revolution when, after years' of implementing gender equality policies, the prevailing sexual division of labor still existed and they were exhausted by the double burden of home and workplace. Having confirmed women's genuine sense of liberating, Lisa Rofel argues that the state's gender policy erased a traditional binary opposition of public outside and private inside

and opened a social space – public workplaces – for Chinese women. The state's advocacy of working outside eliminated the conventional discriminatory view that treated women's outside activity as socially deviant and culturally shameful (Rofel 2000). My study furthers this approach to show how the state socialist system converted the public workplaces into a social space where female workers' behaviors, both public and private, were evaluated. Especially when a female worker's reproductive trajectory overlapped with her productive one, the new system created contradictions and tensions for her. The institutionalization of women's reproductive life contextualized their decision-making process regarding contraception in the 1960s.

1. The State's Control over Public/Private Lives in the Workplace

The intrusion of the state's institutions into what was formerly a private sphere of family consumption was completed by transforming urban workplaces into an all-encompassing urban management unit, via which the state distributed crucial living resources. As the sole distributor of living resources, the state was able to change household goods into rewards and distribute them among urban employees according to the public principles established by the state. In so doing, the state further changed and even reversed the familiar public/private distinction of the urban world in China. The workplace, far from being a public site for only production, was transformed into the place where the final control of the employees' private behaviors – consumption in particular - was accomplished.

In the 1960s, the general political theme in urban workplaces was the state's moral stance which required employees to sacrifice private interests on behalf of the collective ones. Continual political campaigns, numerous social volunteer programs, and various production quotas gave those who were willing to sacrifice private time and energy the opportunity to out-perform others. The material rewards were only distributed to those who made the greatest sacrifices and adhered most closely to the state's demands. This all-encompassing management principle erased the existing institutional forms of the public/private dichotomy and legitimized the involvement of the workplace in employees' personal life. Besides detailing and regulating the standards for the distribution of living resources, the workplaces also took an interest in employees' family lives and their use of private time. This concern was the immediate result of the factory's social nature in the socialist economy (Wang 1995).

The state's effort at eliminating public/private distinctions in order to build the socialist nation as a "giant new family" existed in all of the socialist states and it had a profound significance for gender relations in the socialist system. In Eastern European countries in the 1950s, the state's commitment to the "homogenization and equalization" of the populace and the labor force defined women primarily as workers and rearranged the preexisting gender relations that structured male dominance in households, politics, and workplaces (Gal and Kligman 2000:47). In urban China, a similar process of incorporating women into the labor force in the late 50s allowed women to have new public identities by depending on the state as employees in state-owned enterprises. In contrast to the earlier patriarchal pattern, women were no longer restricted to the private

domain nor exclusively depended on husbands and fathers for social status. As workers, employees, and union members, they could directly participate in public life and represent their own interests in public settings.

However, different from the Eastern European countries where the gender discourse sharply switched back to preexisting gender stereotypes in the 1960s as these countries were threatened with a decreasing birthrate, China's gender discourse was contradictory from the beginning. Women's roles as producer/reproducer were simultaneously emphasized in the state's discourses on gender.

On the one hand, based on Engels' theoretical premise that the introduction of women into social production was a precondition of their liberation, women's participation in the labor force marked their emancipation from the traditional patriarchal system. Their successful entrance into the public domain could radically alter the balance of power in the household. As wage earners, women could command new respect and gain a voice in family decision making. With its persistent support for employing women in all sectors of the urban economy, the state encouraged women to liberate themselves from their subordinate positions at home and gain public social status equal to that of their male counterparts. Since the May Fourth Movement in 1919, women's liberation in China, including the physical liberation as in the form of eliminating foot binding, has been linked with the modernity project in nationalist discourse. The Communist Party inherited this legacy, combined it with the modernity task, and built its legitimacy as women's liberator in its revolutionary movement. The Marriage Law of 1950 sought to

endorse the independent right to women in spouse selection, divorce, and inheritance. The state's gender policies were formulated as countering the culturally-based gender differences and were integral to the party-state's ideology – “fundamental pillar” – since 1949 (Wang 2000).

On the other hand, even with the strong ideological commitment to gender equality, the Communist state could not bring itself to abandon the strengths of the family system for ensuring social stability, caring for the old and disabled, and raising new generations of useful citizens. Additionally, during the Resist the US, Support North Korea campaign (*kangmei yuanchao*) at the time of the Korean War, maintaining national stability was the country's priority during wartime. The state's commitment to women's liberation by encouraging work outside the home would surely challenge the male-dominated society. Thus, although the Marriage Law was well-intentioned and its implementation had successfully reduced the incidence of arranged marriages and increased the domestic autonomy of young women, its implementation weakened when it began to threaten family stability and to generate political disaffection. Between 1950 and 1953 when the implementation of the Marriage Law was launched locally, both men and senior women fought to regain control over their daughter, wife, and daughter-in-law. Women who dared to divorce and claim their share of family property were severely punished, resulting in an estimated 70,000 to 80,000 suicides and murders of women in three years (Croll 1978 and Davin 1976). The state then retreated from enforcement and left untouched the system of exogamy and patrilocal residence in rural China, whereby a man stayed in his own village and obtained rights to live and work there by dint of birth –

whereas a woman had to move to her husband's family, losing her rights in her parents' village and looking after his parents instead of her own (Gupta et.al. 2000). Women's reproductive roles in economizing, raising patriotic children and encouraging their husbands to increase production were emphasized as making essential contributions to national construction.

The state's scientific definition of gender in human reproduction resolved the contradictions in the conflicting gender discourse and allowed the state "to move women into tasks of production or reproduction depending upon the 'national' interests (Goldstein 1998:174)." By broadcasting scientific obstetric and gynecological knowledge in the prenatal health care campaigns in the early 50s and two family planning campaigns in the late 50s and early 60s, the state used a physiological definition of gender to open women's bodies to state management. Nationwide training programs were organized to replace local midwifing practice with a uniform birthing method. Officially trained midwives, delivery nurses, and physicians worked with propagandists, activists, and cadres to build up a huge network of organizations and personnel to transfer the power of controlling women's reproductive life from local practitioners, mother-in-laws, and family relatives to state institutions – hospitals, factory clinics, neighborhood clinics, and propaganda teams. To accommodate birth in the infrastructure, the state also promulgated laws and policies to protect women and infants' health and required workplaces to incorporate birth and childcare concerns into their management. Factories built female toilets and changing rooms. In the employees' benefit package, women's hygiene products were covered and regularly distributed. Health insurance covered birth and

contraception fees. Daycare centers accepted children from two-month old to school age. The state gave women 57-day maternal leaves and required factories to assign less arduous tasks for women during pregnancy. By doing so, the state seamlessly combined women's productive and reproductive statuses and officially legitimized the state's control of women's productive and reproductive lives in the public settings.

The intervention of the state into reproductive issues blurred the distinction between public and private boundaries in the workplace. But before female workers entered their reproductive lives, they benefited from joining the labor force. Their benefits were further consolidated by their choice of marrying within the system and/or marrying up to the elite groups because of their advanced political status. The state recognized women's wide scale acceptance of the system and channeled it to serve the state's further intrusion into workers' private lives. As a strong social institutional force, the workplace could represent its employees when necessary. It also gained the capability to restrain employees' private behaviors in the public arenas. When female workers became mothers, the solid institutional control already formulated and paved the way for incorporating their reproductive behaviors into the factories' daily management. The restrictive 1960s intensified such constraints for female workers and transformed their reproductive lives as well.

2. Women's Participation in the Labor Force in the 1950s, its Significance, and the Case of Xinfeng Factory

In the 1950s, women's participation in the labor force was not only glorified by the state, but was also highly appreciated by families and by women themselves. Being employed in the urban sector provided women with a privileged urban status, lifetime employment, and a set of guaranteed social benefits. Besides the material benefits, working and living in urban China also signified a higher social status. The working class, as the vanguard of the proletariat, represented the most advanced social and political power in China's socialist society, upon which the party-state depended for socialist construction and modernization. While the state prioritized and expanded its industrial investment in the 1950s, there was a parallel social campaign in urban China glorifying the working class, industrialization, and, most of all, women working in public arenas. The campaign advocated that each adult urbanite should participate in the labor force to achieve both economic independence and political advantage. It was shameful to become "parasites" or "exploiters". The typical slogans were that "we all have two hands and we should all work"; "it is tasty to eat food earned by ourselves"; and "work is glory". By 1956 when the socialist transformation of the urban economy was completed, state-owned enterprises became dominant in the industrial sector. Compared to other sectors, i.e. collective-owned and private enterprises, state-owned enterprises were larger in scale, received more state investment, and provided better social benefits and higher social status to their employees. To be a worker at a state-owned factory was prestigious.

The state's advocacy and large-scale recruitment of female workers eliminated the "shame" of working outside. Women with various social backgrounds worked in the industrial section. Educated youth chose science and technology as college majors. Industrial centers, like Tianjin, attracted top college graduates to work in factories, research institutes, and universities as technicians, researchers, and teachers. The high-school and middle-school graduates who passed exams in Chinese, math, and political study became state sector workers. Female students chose to work in the factories instead of becoming clerks, teachers, or nurses. Many female workers in private enterprises also transferred to the state-owned sectors because of the better compensation and strong labor unions. State-owned factories provided better protection for female employees. Sexual harassment was strictly forbidden, as were lay-offs due to marriage, pregnancy, or handicap. Factories organized night schools for workers. Many female workers received their formal education in the factories. During the Great Leap Forward, a large number of rural migrants joined the urban labor force. Among them were many factory workers' wives and female relatives who used to live in rural villages.

Before 1949, the sex ratio among Tianjin's working class population was unbalanced. Most male workers lived in factory dorms and artisan workshops, and left their wives and children in home villages. Workers and artisans regularly sent home remittances and visited home during various holidays in the year. In contrast to the decaying living condition in urban slums, the home villages were perceived as suitable for raising a family. Single workers and artisans went back to their home villages to

marry the bride selected by their families. Married workers who moved to the city could hardly find a stable job for their wives, and family life was constantly threatened by the precarious economic conditions. Connections were important in locating a job. Most job opportunities for women were in the tobacco and textile industries. Women who found jobs would quickly be laid off once they were sick, married, or pregnant. Many women hid their marriage status when applying for a job and hid their pregnancy in order to keep their jobs. Once being laid off, women depended on odd jobs or working as domestic servants for family income (Hershatter 1986).

After 1949, the state's urban policy significantly improved the working class's living environment and their material lives. As we have seen, the gap between rural and urban living standards was further enlarged by the state's collectivization in rural areas. Peasants who lost their land, tools, animals, and decision-making rights in agricultural production rushed to the cities for jobs that were compensated by the state. In order to double their benefits in the industrial sector, male workers searched for jobs for their wives and rural relatives. During the Great Leap Forward, factories loosened their recruiting standards and required no standard exam. Rural and urban female residents depended on connections to distinguish them from hundreds of applicants and quickly located a position. Women without connections followed newspaper ads and tried their luck in different factories.

According to the women I interviewed in Xinfeng Factory, state-owned factories were the top choices. Besides material benefits and high social status, working in the

state-owned factories also offered significant political advantages. The advanced political image of the proletarian working class allowed workers to find new social and political identities in the new regime. By joining the working class, the children of “problematic” family backgrounds, i.e. landlords, bourgeois, and members of urban secret societies, deliberately chose their own political positions and promoted their social status for further career advancement in the 1950s. Indeed, the state-owned factories recruited a fair number of these former elites.

Jiahua, a retired tool maintainer in Xinfeng Factory, was born in Tianjin and her grandfather was the head of the local secret society before 1949. Her family owned a large piece of real estate in Tianjin, and she was able to finish her middle school education. By 1953, most of her family’s property was confiscated by the state and her grandfather was jailed. Jiahua passed her entrance exam and became a worker in Xinfeng in 1956. Her employment gave her a new identity that allowed her to separate from her family.

Lilan’s father was the chief manager of a German company in Shanghai, and he was categorized as a comprador bourgeoisie after 1949. In the various social campaigns in the following years, Lilan’s father became a target and finally he was tortured to death during the Cultural Revolution. Young Lilan determined to shape her own life and career in the new system. She passed the college enrollment exam and received her engineering degree at a top university. After graduation, she came to work in Xinfeng as a technician.

Working in the industrial section allowed young women, such as Jiahua and Lilan, to gain a new political position and to pursue their own lives with hope.

Marginal women in the previous era also directly benefited from working in the factories. The New Marriage Law issued in 1950 forbade arranged marriages, polygamy, and mercenary marriages. According to the state's regulation, in rural villages, a divorced woman could receive a piece of land in the Land Reform to support herself. The state's implementations of the Marriage Law and the Land Reform were strongly resisted by the male-dominated local societies. Thousands of divorced rural women were severely punished in villages and could not receive their property share in the Land Reform. Coming to the city and working in a factory provided an alternative for divorced village women. A stable income and factory dormitory enabled them to be economically independent and save money for their children living in their natal villages with their parents.

Daughters of rural widows could also escape from a marginal and vulnerable social position and find their own respect in the new urban system. Wenping, a retired female cadre from Xinfeng, still remembered the pride she felt when she started to teach in Xinfeng's high school. All of her adult students, most of whom were men, respectfully called her "teacher" in the classroom and in the factory. As the only daughter of a rural widow, her grandfather's wealth allowed Wenping to finish her high school education. After her grandfather's extended family divided, Wenping's and her mother's share of the property was sharply reduced. As a well-educated rural woman, Wenping could

hardly find a suitable spouse, nor could she work independently in the village to take care of her mother's senior years. When she heard that the city needed teachers in 1949, she reported to the city bureau and was assigned to Xinfeng, teaching in the night school.

The positive side of working in the state-owned enterprises was reconfirmed by the popular standards of spouse selection in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Conventionally, the popular belief was that women should marry up into families better off than their natal ones. The economic and social status of each family was carefully examined and evaluated in the matchmaking process. This conventional practice was maintained and reinforced in the urban settings after 1949 when a new set of standards was applied. People working in the large-scale state-owned enterprises, as the top work units in the socialist industrial system, enjoyed the best compensation package and the highest social status, and therefore, became the best candidates for marriage.

For female state-sector workers, the practical strategy of maximizing economic benefits through marriage was to marry a coworker or a worker from the same hierarchical level. This cultural and social expectation was made possible by the factories' promotion of occasions for gender mingling. In Xinfeng Factory, the labor unions hired female cadres to take charge of daily work and design programs to implement the state's gender policy. Workers who participated in sports competitions, political studies, and volunteer programs started to date each other. The rate of marriage within Xinfeng Factory, as in the other factories, was high.

Gradually, male workers' marriage criteria changed too. Compared to their female coworkers, men, who were not restrained by the "marrying up" convention, had a wider selection of potential spouse. As state-sector employees, it was proper for them to select spouses from all social strata, whereas it would be perceived as inappropriate for women to marry into the lower ranks of the employment hierarchy. However, instead of marrying rural women chosen by their parents, male workers preferred to date urban girls or their coworkers. Female workers' perfect candidates were coworkers, technicians, teachers, or cadres in the city. During the 1960s, when the state emphasized class struggle, citizens' class backgrounds determined their political lives and became another crucial concern in spouse selection. Female workers with a proletarian family background were highly respected in the society. Their political status and social prestige enabled many of them to break the class barriers and "marry up" into the elite group.

Wenping was a happy woman with a respectable marriage. She married a cadre from the city bureau. Her wedding was held in the bureau's meeting hall and Xinfeng's top leaders and managers all attended the ceremony. It was a simple but stylish wedding. There was no elaborate banquet, nor fancy ceremonies. The couple treated their guests with tea, watermelon seeds, and candies. Their guests presented a piece of red silk printed with all their signatures as their gift to the couple and wished them the best for a happy married life. But before the wedding Wenping received an imported wristwatch, an extreme luxury item back then, from her husband. She kept that as a secret for years.

For those female workers with the “problematic” family backgrounds, working in the factory allowed them to find suitable dates who met all of the criteria. Marrying within the factory insured the new couple’s social and cultural status. Marrying up into a proletarian family was a further step in purifying their political background and was highly appreciated.

Both Jiahua and Lilan married in Xinfeng Factory. Jiahua married a coworker who she met in the factory’s basketball court. As Xinfeng’s female basketball team leader, Jiahua actively helped the labor union organize various competitions after work. Jianjun, her future husband, was the male team leader and the two frequently cooperated in these competitions. Once in a while, they also went shopping together for the teams. Before the two recognized their mutual attachment, rumors already circulated in the factory that they were courting. They both happily accepted the fact and started to date each other. Jiahua truly loved Jianjun. Besides the same interests, hobbies, and personalities, Jianjun’s “pure” family background was a plus in the eyes of Jiahua. Jianjun was from a poor urban family in Tianjin. His proletarian family background was advantageous for him and his wife. After marriage, Jiahua moved into her mother-in-law’s crowded house and lived with her husband’s extended families for several years before they received their own dormitory space from the factory. Jiahua kept up a good relationship with her husband’s family. In her own words, “life was poor, but was without political pressure.” She has only happy memories of the first several years before her daughter was born. As a handy family man, Jianjun took care most of the household chores and allowed Jiahua to spend more time in the factory as an activist.

Lilan married a young technician who was also from Shanghai. As in Jiahua's case, Lilan's husband also had a better political background than she did. Once married, the two worked together and raised two children. During the Cultural Revolution, when Lilan's father was tortured to death in Shanghai, she and her own nuclear family were protected by her husband's good family roots, avoiding physical attacks from the Red Guards.

3. The State's Involvement in Workers' Private Lives

This wide scale acceptance of the industrial system in the 1950s went hand in hand with the state's advocacy of hard work and unselfish sacrifice on behalf of its industrialization plan. While providing the encompassing economic benefits and high social and political status to the working class in the urban areas, the state reciprocally requested workers' political loyalty, sacrifice, and contribution. Those who benefited most actively reacted to the state's advocacy by becoming activists. If Xinfeng Factory is a guide, many of these activists were female workers. Women gained a sense of moral superiority and a more autonomous sense of self-worth and self-esteem from participation in the labor force.

Female workers' enthusiasm was politically rewarded in the system. Massive propaganda efforts used female role models to alter the view that women were intellectually and otherwise inferior to men, and to encourage people to think of women

as having the same rights and duties as men. Significantly, these role models were workers or peasants: a major departure from the pre-Revolutionary days when gender equality was the domain of the educated urban elites. In the 1950s, a few outstanding urban workers received much public attention and later went on to be elected as political leaders. The same was true of what came to be known as “Iron Girls Teams”: groups of young women who took on the most difficult and demanding tasks at work to show that they could be as strong as men. They received enormous publicity and quickly became standard fixtures in every factory and collective farm.

Factories in Tianjin mobilized “Ten Big Brothers and Sisters” competitions to organize female activists for competition with men in meeting the production targets. Those who enthusiastically participated were rewarded as national models and went to Beijing to receive golden medals from Premier Zhou Enlai. Several Xinfeng female models, including Wenping, gathered with hundreds of female models and heroines in Beijing to celebrate women’s liberation and contribution to industrialization. Thirty years later, Wenping still had photographs of herself with the Premier and other senior administrators in Beijing. After the honoring ceremony, these female models worked one day at the construction site of the Grand People’s Convention Hall, a grand monumental building located at the western side of Tian’anmen Square which later housed the people’s congress. There were 30 grand meeting rooms in the building dedicated to each province in the country. Wenping and her female coworkers from Xinfeng Factory worked in the Tianjin Hall to symbolize their participation in the construction of the socialist future.

Despite discriminatory job assignments and allocation of resources such as housing in the workplaces, female workers seriously emphasized the communist ideal of equality between men and women and the slogan that all jobs were equally important to the revolution to emphasize their rights of working outside home²². The state recognized such acceptance and encouraged more participation in the public activities. The attempt to equalize all work by making it “public” went to extremes during the Great Leap Forward when the state set up childcare facilities, socialized laundry, cooking, and other household tasks. The state advocated the view that “family welfare is also the worker’s welfare.” In order to increase workers’ productivity, their private lives were targeted for fundamental change. Public evaluation of employees’ public and private lives defined employees as members of the socialist and emphasized the priority of collective interests. Employees’ political awareness and enthusiasm in both public settings and private domains were highly appreciated. In order to ensure the employees’ productivity and their political loyalty, the employers had the responsibility of assisting employees in establishing nuclear families and maintaining a harmonious family life. For example, during the early 1950s, before large numbers of women were hired by Xinfeng Factory, its labor union organized social gatherings with textile factories of Tianjin for the purpose of creating opportunities for its single male workers to meet female textile workers. After 1956, when many single women were hired, the labor union in Xinfeng Factory regularly

²² In her studies of women’s resistance in the workplaces, Wang Zheng pointed out that in Maoist egalitarianism, income differentiation, including that based on skill, was relatively small in China’s low-income, high welfare, lifetime urban employment system. Therefore, gendered job assignments were not perceived as discriminatory (Wang 2000).

organized sports competitions and entertainment activities to encourage young workers to mingle and organize stable families.

Additionally, the labor union also mediated family disputes, bolstered by its institutional status and power, thereby ensuring that the employees would not be distracted by domestic turmoil. In this process, the workplace transmitted the state's initiatives and social standards into workers' private lives. In other cases, the factory replaced the family, representing young activists by visiting their dates' workplace and investigating their political background before engagement. By replacing the family, the factory, which played a predominant role in one's political life, was perceived as more reliable in understanding the future spouse's political and social potential so that young workers' careers as well as their political lives could be secured.

This direct involvement restrained any intolerable behavior and attitude, and the restraint was justified by the prevailing political atmosphere – workers should prioritize collective interests and concentrate on working. In one Xinfeng case, a male worker's prolonged courting with a woman from the neighboring factory was detected by his coworkers and the foreman. In order to help him increase his productivity, the workshop decided to become involved, questioning him about further steps. It turned out that this handsome worker was hesitating to marry his girlfriend, hoping to find a more beautiful date. The workshop head and the labor union cadres persuaded the worker to change his mind because his behavior was regarded as irresponsible and reckless. The cadres urged him to “take a correct attitude towards love and marry the girl soon”.

For female workers, the contradictory gendered social expectations towards their social roles harnessed their productive/reproductive lives in the factories. When female workers' reproductive trajectory overlapped with their work, the constraints intensified. To be a wife, a worker, and a mother simultaneously was a new experience for female urban Chinese. Women faced multiple social expectations in public settings and were required to comply with multiple public regulations and cultural rules at the same time. Moreover, the basic mechanisms of industrial management lacked flexibility for women committed to fulfill their responsibilities in the factories. Daily interactions among coworkers generated pressures on working mothers and forced them to hustle between public and private roles. Consequently, they were excluded from the factory's power structure and were positioned in a subsidiary category. The first several years after marriage and the process of becoming a mother vividly illustrate in the dilemma of female workers and their families and showed to what extent the workplaces could affect daily schedules, time tables, and family lives.

4. Conflicting Roles: Worker vs. Mother

Factory workers were organized into work groups in the state-owned enterprises - each team consisting of seven to ten workers. Everyday, team leaders assigned the workload to each member and checked the quantity and quality of work. Work group management bound individual workers and their work to a group via which the factory

and workshop counted productivity, heightened work discipline, and evaluated political performance. Each year, besides selecting model workers, the factory also assessed group performance and rewarded model groups. By having workers organize into work groups, individual performance was directly linked to group benefits and group responsibility. One person's violation or lapse in discipline could damage the entire group's reputation. One person's lack of productivity could impede the team leader's ability to spur other group members' achievements. In addition, group pressure also forced individual workers to out-perform or at least maintain the average speed. During competition time, the peak production period when group members worked together to win contests and share honors, tremendous peer pressure forced individual workers to advance the group's interests.

Group management was sensitive to members' domestic lives. Coworkers who were familiar with each other could quickly sense personal problems based on fluctuations in work pace, temper, and work output. Any delay of work because of domestic issues placed the worker in an awkward position. Working mothers' breastfeeding experience illustrates this intertwining of personal and social forces in daily life.

In the 1960s in Tianjin, breastfeeding was the major way to feed newborns. Formula was available in the stores but was not widely accepted. People believed that breast milk was best for the newborn. Xinfeng Factory designated two 30-minute breastfeeding breaks, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, for new mothers until

the baby was one year old. Most working mothers complained that the break was too short. Even though their babies were kept in the on-site factory daycare center, the 30-minute break included the time they spent on the round trip to and from the daycare. Any delay would lead to financial fines that were deducted from the mothers' monthly salaries. Group members' tolerance and understanding were crucial because they determined the extent of violation and oversaw the punishment. During the peak period of productivity competition, working mothers' daily allotment of one-hour for breastfeeding already diminished their group's potential. Any further extension of the time range would jeopardize its collective interests and benefits. Such contradictory social expectations and strict work discipline forced female workers to calculate their daily schedule in minute detail, saving time for both their productive and their reproductive roles. The stress and anxiety from their tight schedule are well expressed in the words of this Xinfeng Factory woman:

I was running around everyday. Early in the morning, I got up at 5:30 to catch the bus to work. The baby was still sleeping when we left home. In winter, it was dark and cold outside, but I never wore any cotton jacket. Carrying the baby and running to catch the bus exhausted me. I was always sweaty when I arrived at work. After sending her to the daycare center, I had my breakfast in the workshop right before the work time. During the breastfeeding breaks I went to feed her in the daycare center. I also added one more feeding during my lunch break. It was hard, especially when she was little and could not suck fast. I cried many times while feeding her. What could I do?

As noted above, working mothers were systematically excluded from the factory's power structure. They could not contribute private time and energy for the factory's political campaigns, volunteer programs, and many other social events. In return, they lost the opportunity to be rewarded by the system in the long run. Female

workers, therefore, were trapped in an awkward secondary position in which they could hardly improve their work performance or increase the benefits their family received from the factories.

The tightly interrelated public and private domains in female workers' daily life affected their reproductive behaviors. The work place transmitted a whole set of social standards and norms to individual workers. Social advocacy, mingled with work discipline and local culture, formulated the social constraints placed upon the working class and female workers in particular. In order to meet each social requirement and take care of public and private life simultaneously, female workers and their families had to strive on a daily basis to negotiate and compromise with nearly every aspect of their domestic lives.

5. Intensified Constraints in the Cultural Revolution

During the Cultural Revolution, the institutionalization of Chinese urban life reached a new level. Nearly every urbanite belonged to an institute. Via workplaces, schools, and neighborhood committees, the state engaged with the urban populations and supervised their behaviors. Mao's class struggle campaign and the threat of the Cold War intensified the state's involvement and supervision of the citizens' private lives. "Rightists", former landlords, capitalists, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, and their children all became class enemies and came under keen surveillance in their workplaces

and neighborhoods. The country was preparing for war with the USSR and the US. People were mobilized to “be prepared for war, be prepared for natural disaster.” Major factories and research institutes in the coastal area built up satellite branches in the interior provinces and transferred advanced equipment there to protect it against damage during an anticipated invasion. Military forces become involved in urban institutional management. After a brief period, the bonus system that had been installed after the famine to stimulate productivity and enhance readjustment was replaced by the political revitalization program, which then predominated in factories. Instead of increasing material rewards to workers, Mao emphasized austere political doctrines in factory management. The threat of the Cold War legitimized political domination at the local level. The nation asked its citizens to sacrifice even more for the collective interest. It was the state’s priority to defend the country. Successful experiments in testing nuclear bombs demonstrated its determination against strong foreign forces.

How the Cultural Revolution affected life in urban China, especially for the working class, deserves more detailed investigation. Most general accounts emphasize that during this period the state’s administration collapsed and the legal system was crippled. Extremists occupied various state agencies; the state’s policies and regulations could not be implemented locally; and local urban management was in chaos. However, these descriptions overlook one fact – political chaos during the Cultural Revolution did not affect the restrictive urban policy. Many crucial aspects of daily life remained the same. Rural residents were kept away from the cities. The household registration system and food rationing remained intact. The state’s control of employment and its monopoly

over the distribution of resources for everyday life never changed. At the same time, large-scale social campaigns were efficiently organized. The largest organized out-migration of educated youths happened at this time. From the local urban perspective, the Cultural Revolution represented the tightening up of various restrictive urban policies designed after the Big Famine.

Ethnographic data collected during fieldwork strongly suggest that experiences of local people during in the Cultural Revolution were directly related to the previous period of economic readjustment. Pressures accumulated in those years were suddenly released in the political struggles, but the newly established revolutionary forces applied the same mechanisms when it came to organizing the daily life of the factories. The same set of work disciplines and managerial structures prioritized the collective and public interests over those of individuals and families.

The economic crisis created by the Great Leap Forward terminated the “more, faster, better, and more economic” movement of industrialization, but the unrealistic expansion had already brought tremendous economic loss. Between 1958 and 1962, the state’s investment in Xinfeng Factory was three times that of the first Five-Year Plan. The factory was greatly enlarged and its production soared. Yet, because of the crude techniques of the time, nearly all products were defective or unusable. Engines piled up in the factory yards and no one even tried to fix them. The waste was astonishing. Many workshops constructed in the expansion years were in bad shape and not suitable for installing new equipment. The readjustment period in Xinfeng beginning in 1963 started

with quality control, product inspection, examinations of techniques, and the application of technological knowledge, which focused on quality, machinery, accuracy, and precision. The factory organized competitions based on new techniques. Engineers and technicians worked with workers on the shop floor to inspect product quality; required that did not meet the standard had to be reprocessed. The workers' performance was under strict surveillance. These new requirements created tremendous pressure, especially for those who had barely received any formal education. Personal connections and social networks could not protect individuals from these exams and inspections. Nor could political slogans substitute for technical knowledge. Political extremists and activists faced public humiliation. Workers with education, experience, and technological skills distinguished themselves. Sometimes, the process could be so embarrassing and humiliating that some workers cried and apologized for their poor performance publicly. During the same period, work discipline was also tightened up. Work hours were precisely calculated and sick days and personal days were accurately counted. Workers with low attendance were criticized and financially penalized.

The Cultural Revolution, with its political revitalization, released the previous pressure and tension, transforming the atmosphere of the factories. In the name of a political campaign, the factory administration was dismissed. Factory leaders, technicians, and engineers became vulnerable public targets and lost their previous control in Xinfeng. Their "bad" family backgrounds and politically incorrect behaviors set them up for criticism. The pressures they had brought to bear on the political extremists reverberated back on them. Political opportunists played a major role in the

factory during the Cultural Revolution. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the mechanisms they utilized to control the others were the same - work discipline was still tight; workers' behavior was still under keen scrutiny; the general atmosphere remained tense and harsh. What was different this time was that political rather than technical standards dominated factory management. Factories regularly organized political discussions. Every workplace put up posters and blackboard journals to spread the Party line. Loudspeakers insured that the central government's voice could be locally heard.

Additionally, the Cultural Revolution brought a new twist of constraint to female workers by conveying the message that real revolutionary heroines are totally committed to the revolution and disinterested in being wives and mothers. Media eliminated women's femininity and motherhood in the propaganda. Revolutionary heroines were portrayed as dressing in homogeneous military uniform and acting like men. Women's reproductive roles were abolished in the public settings. The state's campaigns regarding family planning and prenatal health care were interrupted. Women were primarily defined as workers and they were required to follow the same work discipline as their male counterparts. Moreover, both men and women were organized to participate in mandatory political studies, various spontaneous political programs, and social programs in their spare time, with no compensation. For example, during the summer, Xinfeng workers were organized to fight floods for days and nights in the countryside. Workers also went into the countryside to help the peasants harvest, marched in organized political parades to celebrate Mao's political doctrines, and shoveled snow in the winter. Political activists took these political tasks as opportunities to show their enthusiasm. Common

workers dared not miss the programs for fear of being criticized. They sacrificed their private time and energy to be part of the political zeal.

Constantly harassed by this tremendous political pressure, workers developed an enormous resentment of the state's control. Indeed they consciously withdrew from work efficiency and spent more time each day dealing with domestic routines. In every aspect of their private lives, workers actively negotiated with the state to maximize their benefits and to resist the state's imposing control. As we will see in the following chapter, these "tedious" daily routines were not easy to handle either – behind each task, there was a broader social significance and historical background. Especially for young females who had just married and become mothers in the 1960s, it was extremely difficult to find the equilibrium between work and family and to live a socially and economically respectable life. It was in this dynamic negotiation process that workers' reproductive lives were contested and transformed.

Chapter Six

Transformation of Working Class Family Life and Local Reactions

The state-sponsored programs of prenatal health care and postpartum services constituted a pivot or hinge, channeling women's productive/reproductive capacities and allowing the state's intervention in both domains according to further regulations. Being able to design benefits for women in both domains entitled the state to direct women towards production or motherhood. In the restrictive 1960s, the state's generally ascetic political atmosphere prioritized women's productive role and emphasized sacrificing personal interests for the collective good. Women's reproductive behaviors created a fundamental conflict with their production schedules and collective interests and brought anxiety and dissatisfaction in their daily lives.

The negative impact of giving birth was further consolidated by the state's wage austerity and its unreliable subsidy system that promised to support workers in times of financial hardship. The cohort entering employment after 1957 became the victims of the state's compensation policy and was forced to raise growing families with fixed income for 12 years. Women's employment and income became essential to maintain a basic standard of living. At the same time, consumption repression and the lack of development of light industry meant relying on women's mothering roles to compensate for the lack of public social services. The state's political and economic decisions had sustained the traditional definition of women as household laborers and reinforced the contradictory

social expectations of gender by imposing on women a sex-differentiated double burden at home. To resist all the constraints, women and their families transformed workplaces into an extension of their domestic lives, worked on “informal” jobs at home, rearranged the domestic division of labor, and modified daily expenditures. Among these strategies, utilization of contraception took hold. By consciously controlling their family size, women and their families found a resolution to the fundamental conflicts that they were forced to face in their daily lives in the 1960s.

1. The Impact of Wage Austerity and the Unreliable Subsidy System

The cohort enrolled in the labor force during the Great Leap Forward began at the bottom of the national pay scale and most of them did not accumulate enough skills and experience to be promoted in the 1964's payroll adjustment. Their opportunities for further raises were totally eliminated by the wage freeze between 1965 and 1977. During the two decades (1957 –1977), however, this cohort entered childbearing age and suffered most from the wage austerity, being forced to raise a growing family on a fixed income (Walder 1986).

The economic difficulties of raising large families were further intensified by the unreliable subsidy system in each workplace. In the 1960s, most urban couples still wanted to have both sons and daughters. Couples would have more children in order to have a son whenever they could find extra hands for housework and afford the economic expenses. What was socially intolerable was when the domestic economic burden drove a

couple to turn to the workplace for financial support to compensate for their growing families. In such cases, the public vs. private boundary was crossed and collective assets were utilized to serve individual families because of their individual private interests. Frequent breastfeeding breaks, multiple maternal leaves, arriving-late and leaving-early already jeopardized the hard work and the collective claims of coworkers. Individual reliance on the state-sponsored emergency welfare program further created unequal access to the collective assets and was publicly criticized and condemned. Local community leaders discriminatorily labeled such conduct as “eating the factory (*chi chang zi de*)” - a selfish behavior that took advantage of the collective entity. Locally, the distinction between collective dependency on the factories' social benefits and individual reliance on the factory's financial subsidy system was clearly drawn. To rely on the system individually was a taboo. Having too many children would not only bring economic strain, because such strain could lead to emergencies, it was also perceived as “selfish”, “backwardness”, and “not making progress”. The boundary was effectively maintained by the mechanism of group assessment of financial applications. In searching for an effective way to eliminate selfish conduct, group meetings in the workshops applied prevailing social standards to evaluate individual families' income, living standards, and consumption style.

According to official regulations, families under extreme economic hardship could apply for financial aid from the factory. To be eligible for help from the Xinfeng Factory, the average monthly household income had to be less than 8 *yuan* per capita and family members' household registration status also determined the amount of the subsidy.

A rural status family member would receive the difference between his/her average monthly income and 10 *yuan* per month. For an urban resident, the level was lifted to 15 *yuan* per month. In other words, if a family of six had a total monthly income of less than 48 *yuan* and they all had urban household registrations, they were eligible to receive 42 *yuan* per month to bring the total monthly income to 90 *yuan*.

Financial application was reviewed monthly in shop floor group meetings, with grants being made by cadres who also worked for the factory labor union. The public assessment was extremely humiliating since most coworkers were also neighbors and were familiar with each other's family lives. Subsidized factory dormitory space was distributed among workers with priority based on application time, family size, and employment time. Families with different economic backgrounds lived next to each other. Crowded living conditions and shared public areas constantly exposed families' daily lives to their neighbors with the result that differences were noted. Neighbors shared public water pipes, latrines, and cooking spaces, and socialized in the same public area. Neighbors knew each family's income, family composition, daily schedule, and even cooking habits. Differentiation in domestic and socioeconomic conditions generated tensions in group evaluations. Economic evaluation of a family's qualification for financial support directly addressed the family's consumption style and daily behaviors. State advocacy, cultural practice, and social norms combined to formulate a public context for domestic behaviors. Private family life was under surveillance no less than public performance in the factories. An "extravagant" or "excessive" consumption style would not only lead to public criticism, but also deleted a family's eligibility for extra

financial support from the state. Families with financial difficulties further lost their choices regarding consumption. In order to avoid such public assessments, families were cautious about public standards, and turned to regulate themselves. Wenping told me that she deliberately made two new jackets that were exactly in the same color and style for her husband since she did not want her neighbors and coworkers to think of them as “spending too much” and showing off.

Back then quite few families would spend money excessively (da shou da jiao). People would talk about that. Girls who just made new shirts for themselves wouldn't dare to wear them publicly. They would wear blue outfits to cover the new shirt and only had the shirt's collar shown.

Public assessment could lead to spontaneous charitable donations. By exposing private habits and personal interests to the public, the group members were sometimes moved to provide “collective” help to individual families that were struggling, lessening their reliance on the factory. One workshop cadre recalled:

Some families were not good at planning (bu hui guo) at all. One family ran out of their cloth ration in the summer and could not purchase cloth for tailoring summer clothes. They used their quilts' coversheet to make shorts and tops. What would they do in the winter?! Sleep under the quilt without a coversheet? We all went to help them. I gave some of my cloth vouchers to them.

In order to sustain private habits and preferences, families were willing to give up support from the state. During my conversations with them, the women of Xinfeng Factory were specific about the distinction between collective dependence and individual reliance, and emphasized their efforts at being financially independent. They also emphasized their efforts of domestic management, how they fought against the negative

images that overshadowed them for years. Families deliberately avoided an “extravagant” lifestyle by not indulging in too much dining, dressing, and recreation. Every month, families planned carefully for spending.

At the beginning of each month we received our salary, and we separated it in different piles (fen dui). Each pile was for one purpose. After that, there would not be much left. Our total monthly income was 103 yuan and for more than ten years we received exactly the same amount every month. Not a penny less, not a penny more. Every month, we sent 10 yuan to my parent-in-law; 30 yuan for kids' daycare; 15 yuan for rent and coal; about 30 yuan for food; and roughly 10 yuan to cover other necessities. We planned very carefully and knew little about consumption. By the way, there was not much time for shopping (guang shang dian). If there was any spare money, we saved it for emergencies. When kids were sick, we needed extra money to cover the medical fees. Yes, the factory did reimburse the bills. But when it was at night, where to find money for hospital visits when the factory office was closed?

Under the restrictive state regulations and local scrutiny of the 1960s, employment for female urbanites was no longer a choice for a better living or glamour, but a necessity to maintain a respectable living. Women contributed nearly half of the family income; the material benefits they received from their workplaces were crucial to their families. Even though the gendered assignment of women's work discriminatorily lowered their income below their male counterparts, women's incomes were essential. No family would sacrifice half of its income by keeping the wife at home to focus on housework. In addition, the state controlled the job market and the employment system did not allow husbands to earn extra income by working on a second job and/or changing to a better-paid position. Urban families solely depended on the couples' salaries to make a living. Ironically, the social system which was designed to free women from their inferior social status in fact subordinated them more closely to a new social discipline –

the workplace. Women were fully conscious of their new social position. Even though they were systematically excluded from the power structure because of their motherhood, it was their priority in the 1960s to hang on to formal employment and its accompanying social benefits.

The general social atmosphere affirmed female employees' choice. Women who did not have formal employment suffered more economic difficulties and social stigmatization in the 1960s. Having no job meant being "idle" and "useless" in society. "Staying at home" and "being idle" were equivalent to being a "parasite". Regardless of having discriminatorily laid off 20 million women in the readjustment period after the Big Famine (Sun 1990), the state continued advocating for women's social independence rooted in their formal employment and encouraged housewives to work in neighborhood committees and mutual aid groups that served the community and society at large. Numerous newspaper articles portrayed model housewives liberating themselves from this peripheral status by working outside the home and "earning their living with their two hands".

Popular stereotypes stigmatized unemployed women's volatile employment history, lifestyle, personality, and reproductive life and portrayed them as irrational, aimless, and unable to plan ahead. They were described as "enjoying meat stew at the beginning of each month, and having no penny to buy maize by the end"; "eating a lot at the beginning of the month, and having nothing to eat at the end, but only sleep". They were the people who "are not good at study (*bu xue xi*)", "have no culture (*mei wen*

hua)”, and politically “do not advance themselves (*bu qiu shang jin*)”. They were said to be enjoying “doing nothing (*dai zhe*)”, “being idle (*xian zhe*)”, “playing around (*tan wan*)”, and indulging in sex. Staying at home was perceived as a way to devote more time and energy to taking care of large families. Such large families were attributed to an “irrational” and “unplanned” reproductive life which created a vicious circle -- “the poorer they were, the more they reproduced (*yue qiong yue sheng*)” and “the more they reproduced, the poorer they were (*yue sheng yue qiong*)”. Negative local representations disqualified underprivileged single-income families for the state’s financial help. Stereotypes not only ignored the political economic history that directly created these women’s unemployment and underemployment, they also ignored their constant effort to deal with economic difficulties.

Yang Dama²³ loves to play *Majiang*. Every afternoon, right after lunch, she is always the first one walking into the neighborhood committee office ready to play, and she was familiar with my work. When she finally agreed to talk to me about her family life in the 1960s, she started by saying, “why do you want to interview me? I was useless then. I stayed at home as an idle woman (*xian ren*).” With many other women, Yang Dama considered her formal employment to have begun in 1970. By saying this, she ignored her two-year formal employment in a collective factory between 1958 and 1959, nearly seven years of a precarious work history at various temporary jobs between 1963 and 1970, and her effort at bearing and raising seven children between 1947 and 1962.

²³ *Dama* is the northern Chinese way to call a senior woman.

Yang Dama's husband had worked in Xinfeng since 1944 and was a senior skilled worker with a higher salary than that of the new workers employed in the 1950s. Her family life was considered above average in the 1950s. When the state advocated women's full participation in labor force, Yang Dama registered with the Labor Bureau and was assigned a job in early 1958. By the end of 1959, however, when the economic adjustment of the Great Leap Forward began, she lost her formal employment because of her low education level and demanding household obligations as a mother of five. Between 1959 and 1962, Yang Dama had two more children. Once urban salaries were frozen in 1965, her husband's 90-yuan monthly income, which did not rise for the next 12 years, had to support the family of nine, on top of sending monthly remittance to her father-in-law in the countryside. During the 1960s, Yang Dama constantly worked on temporary jobs to sustain the large family and was proud that they never applied for a subsidy from the factory. As a senior skill master, her husband was highly respected in the factory and trained numerous apprentices. They both felt that they should keep their financial difficulties to themselves to avoid the humiliating assessment process.

In the 1960s, the Yang family spent nearly all of their income on purchasing food, but still rarely ate fruit, meat, or eggs. They exchanged their flour and rice quota for that of maize with neighbors to have a larger amount of staple food at a lower price. Even though the monthly quota for meat was limited, they could not afford to purchase all of it. To save more money, they prioritized grain and vegetables over meat, eggs, dairy products, and fruits. During the Big Famine, Yang Dama measured out food before cooking it and cooked according to each family member's quota to ensure fair shares.

I made steamed maize buns in different sizes according to my husband and kids' grain quota. Everyone could only eat his [or her] own share. Otherwise, we would not have enough food. It was tough. Kids were all growing then. They all ate a lot. If I didn't do it that way, they would fight for food²⁴.

Unintended consequences and contradictions arising from the application of social policies bound women with their employment and workplaces. The ascetic policies of the 1960s also emphasized women's productive roles at work. Unlike most of the socialist Eastern European countries where to varying degrees the state retreated from its attempt to regulate families directly, responding to the increasing economic crises of the centralized economies by loosening up, China intensified its central control over living material and slowed down the development of light industry, thereby supporting a consistent increase in heavy industry and the defense industry. The state further intensified its tone in demanding citizens' sacrifice for the nation's sake. Women as the hands that hold up half of the sky should focus on their revolutionary tasks at work and restrain their personal and private interests.

Different from the Eastern European countries, China's bifurcated gender discourse inclined to the production side²⁵. Paradoxically, undeveloped light industry had brought a countervailing demand on women's mothering role at home to satisfy

²⁴ Yang Dama no longer measures her food, but still keeps the habit of skipping one meal and dining twice a day.

²⁵ During the 1960s, in order to increase the national birth rate, the state's gender discourse in Eastern European countries switched back to the conventional stereotypes to reinstate motherhood as a crucial responsibility of women to the state. State also tolerated "black", "informal", and "second" economies allowed women to play an important role in the private and familial economies to provided the services that the central state could not delivered (Gal and Kligman 2000).

family members with goods and services that the official economy failed to provide. Besides nurturing, caring for and educating the young, and maintaining domestic harmony, women also needed to be cooks, cleaners, seamstresses, and nursemaids at home. Once again the state's political and economic decisions were self-contradictory and unintentionally recreated motherhood by sustaining an unequal gender relation in the domestic domain. Women were forced to participate in both productive and reproductive roles at once. Their doubly burdened time schedule and tight monthly income were sensitive to any increase in family size. Women and their family members started to develop strategies to face the daily challenge of such tremendous constraints.

2. The Impact of Consumption Repression and the Underdevelopment of Light Industry

A lack of domestic appliances such as gas stoves, refrigerators, washing machines, and sewing machines, forced married women to handle daily chores manually. They cooked each meal, sewed clothes, and made shoes for family members and to save money. Cooking, food shopping, laundering, and sewing occupied most of the employed women's spare time. In their own words, "*there was another day after work*". The limited urban transportation system and crowded housing conditions intensified the hardships of daily life. As the primary figures in the household, women were trapped by numerous chores in addition to giving birth and raising children. This dilemma was reflected in their daily management of time, energy, and family income. They created various

techniques to deal with their mounting domestic work. The salary freeze also forced each family to carefully plan monthly budgets in order to meet its various needs.

a. Cooking and Food Shopping

Cooking was a time consuming chore with no gas stoves in the 1960s. Families used coal stoves to cook each meal. In winter, they used the same stove for heating, and cooking became relatively easier since they did not need to fire up the stove (*sheng lu zi*) everyday. In the other seasons, firing up stoves with coal, firewood, and paper was time-consuming. Many families only cooked several times a week to save time for other housework. In the northern part of China where local people are fond of cooked wheat food, families steamed buns, made noodles, and cooked pancakes as staple food. Without refrigeration, cooked wheaten food is easy to store at room temperature. Even during the hot summer, families would only cook twice or three times a week. Instead of stir-frying vegetables, many households ate fresh salad with fried soybean sauce and minced meat served as dip. The same fried soybean sauce with minced meat could also be eaten with noodles.

With no refrigerators, grocery shopping had to be done frequently. Women stopped by the grocery store every day to buy vegetables for dinner. The vegetables were seasonal and lacked variety. Due to the state's prohibition of long-distance food transportation, all vegetables consumed by Tianjin residents were grown locally. Every winter when the average temperature in northern China was below zero centigrade (32 F),

no fresh vegetable was harvested from the frozen fields. Stored and preserved vegetables, mainly potatoes, cabbages, and onions, dominated each family's dining table. In October, local grocery stores sold large numbers of cabbages for winter storage. Each family purchased several hundred pounds for the whole winter.

Dining out was rare. Even though the factory canteen's prices were subsidized, few families ate in the canteen. Because of inflation control and the state's policy on reducing industrial costs, the canteen was managed with the factory's subsidy and it only collected payment for the cost of raw materials. Food prices were amazingly cheap according to the 1990s' standard. Workers spent 0.05 yuan for a stir-fried vegetable; 0.10 yuan for a stir-fried vegetable with meat; 0.20 yuan for a bowl of stir-fried liver; and 0.40 yuan for a bowl of dried shrimp. Steamed buns cost 0.20 yuan for one *jin* (1.1 lbs.). Even though purchasing staple food such as rice and cooked wheaten food required grain vouchers, seafood and meat were sold without vouchers in the canteen. Employees with better economic conditions purchased seafood and meat dishes from the canteen after they used up their monthly meat vouchers. However, to most working class families, tight monthly budgets did not allow such expenses.

b. Laundering and Sewing

Clothing the family members neatly and properly was a major domestic task for women. Most families spent six to eight hours per week on laundering. With no washing machine and no hot water, laundering was a tough job that not only required physical

strength but also willpower. In order to avoid such heavy work, many people simply wore their uniform, provided by the factory, all day long.

Aside from the Spring Festival, few families purchased clothes for family members. When their children were young, mothers retailored clothes for each child. Each year, before and after the winter, mothers also detached, washed, and sewed cotton jackets for family members. Many families made shoes for children. Mothers did the sewing. The bigger the family, the more needle work there would be. Each night, after the children went to bed, mothers started to do needle work and many of them worked till midnight.

3. Household Strategies

a. Transforming the Workplace to a Domestic Arena²⁶

Ascetic political revitalization during the Cultural Revolution intensified the daily pressure for working class families. Endless political studies, numerous political tasks, and spontaneous social programs occupied most of the workers' spare time. Fixed

²⁶ Female workers' conscious transformation of the public space of the factory into the private space of the home is not unique to socialist China. In her ethnographic research, Cairoli recorded how the female workers in the Moroccan garment industry deliberately adopted the same strategy to "assuage the contradiction" inherent in their participation in the current capitalist global economy (Cairoli 1998: 187). By actively behaving inside this "home" as kinswomen and using the assumptions and practices associated with family, women gained the power to "transform the factory rather than allowing the factory to transform them" (ibid.: 181). Their acts resolved the fundamental inadequacy of defining women's public roles in local ideology.

income with constant public assessment over workers' consumption restricted their spending. Mounting housework forced couples continually to work at home. Workers' spontaneously transformed the workplace into a domestic arena to resist the state's hegemonic control. By the end of the 1960s, low productivity prevailed in every workshop in urban centers. Even the tumultuous ideological propaganda could not eliminate such phenomena and increase productivity. Workers slept during the endless political studies. Many prolonged their sick leaves because of trivial physical problems. Those who had connections with hospital doctors could easily receive a doctor's note for the sick leaves. Those who did not have such connections slowed down their working pace. Factory leaders could hardly punish any of the activities since most workers still followed work regulations and schedules.

Female workers communicated and exchanged experience and techniques on household management while working. During breaks and in their spare time, coworkers and close friends tailored, knitted, made shoes, and shared receipts. They also did laundry during the break, and purchased groceries during the lunchtime. By doing so, they formed a bond of sisterhood with their coworkers and built up a sympathetic and tolerant social environment. They learned from each other, inspired each other, and developed numerous creative ways to face the constraints. Managing domestic life became a collective task which worked well. It also allowed women to rely on time, energies, and goods of the state enterprises for family use. To counter the state's intervention into the domestic arena, workers also deliberately crossed the public/private boundary to relieve the

pressure. Once the factory's water, soap, uniforms, electricity, and time were used by all the workers for family purposes, it was no longer treated as stealing.

One female clerk recollected how she spend most of her work hours on tailoring and learning from her coworkers:

We always talked about family things at work. I learned how to remake cotton jackets for younger kids to make them fit. My office mates showed me how to do that. I changed my first son's clothes for the second one. I also learned how to make shoes and outfits from my colleagues. When I was not sure what design I wanted, they also told me to visit the stores and remembered the designs from the stores' commodities. Then I came home to draw my own blueprint. When I was making shoes, I was not sure about the size. I sneaked in the stores to draw the size on a piece of paper. It was hard and fun to learn all these. I needed to think about it (zhuo mo) all the time. I also took apart some old shoes to see how they were made.

Sometimes, we talked about where to get cheap vegetables and other stuff. After work, a bunch of us just rushed to the stores to get a good price.

Meanwhile, workers also manipulated the dominant doctrines to serve their own purposes. The state's claim to provide encompassing care for workers' families further blurred the public/private division. Factories organized programs to assist employees in the domestic domain. Workers actively participated in these programs to maximize their benefits from the workplace. For example, each workshop officially organized a mutual aid groups that allowed workers to accumulate small amount of savings. Even though there was no interest on these savings, it provided an opportunity for workers to husband their money safely for future expenses. Many workers deposited one or two yuan right after receiving their salaries. At the end of each year, they cashed in their account to get

an amount that was big enough to buy New Year's presents for children and family members.

I deposited two yuan to the mutual aid group every month. Before the spring festival, I cashed 24 yuan to buy new clothes for my kids. Or, it was enough to buy a large piece of furniture for the family. It was helpful. Otherwise, two yuan was nothing in a month and could be easily spent on something.

Pursuing domestic interests at the workplace was intensive but never without the factory's criticisms. Workers needed to know the right context to do so. Otherwise, their words could come back against them in a formal way. They carefully selected their partners and audience before which they would divulge family information when seeking help and moral support. Sharing domestic information became a dynamic social process within which workers selectively identified themselves and audiences to discuss particular family issues in a specific way. Under different scenarios and/or with different audiences, similar conversations could have different meanings and different results. Workers carefully controlled the process in order to maximize the support that they expected and to defend their activities.

People who were not married and had no kids could never understand our life. It was easy for them to criticize us as 'womanishly fussy' (po po ma ma) and 'not striving to make progress' (bu shang jin) since we always talked about family stuff. But what could we do? Wasn't the party advocating diligently and frugally managing each household? It was a way to support the construction too.

b. Working on Temporary Jobs

Unemployed “idle” women constantly worked on odd jobs and temporary jobs for extra income. None of these jobs guaranteed long-term employment nor did they provide medical or pension benefits. The payment was mostly based on pieces and could be as low as one yuan per day, but even the minimum pay could make difference.

One housewife recalled:

I earned about 20 yuan a month back then and it was closed to a first grade worker's salary and it was enough to buy the maize for the whole family for a month. That was a lot of money.

Generally, there were two kinds of temporary jobs: laboring on construction sites and in warehouses, or processing products at home. Loading and unloading products in warehouses was male labor and received the highest monthly payment, although a few women did meet the physical challenges. More often women labored on construction sites as builders' assistants, smashing stones, moving bricks, and loading cement. Work regulations were strictly imposed and workers lost daily income if they had sick leaves or personal leaves.

Most housewives chose to work at home processing a wide range of products for which they were paid by pieces. They sewed gloves, washed cotton thread, fixed shoes, processed accessory parts, or cleaned vegetables. Processing work paid lower than

laboring outside, but its working hours were flexible. Conventionally, Tianjin was the major export port for northern China and walnuts were one of its major commodities. Gathered from surrounding rural villages, walnuts were processed in Tianjin before being shipped overseas. Processing walnuts was a major seasonal odd job for Tianjin housewives and children before and after 1949. The lowest payment ever reported was for cleaning vegetables. For cleaning each *jin* (1.1 lbs.) of green beans, women received only 0.01 *yuan* payment. In order to maximize their incomes, women either increased their productivity or extended their working hours.

One housewife remembered her payment and hard days 30 years later:

I got 0.1 yuan for each pair of shoes that I fixed. It's a job that needed skills. At first, I could only fix one pair a day. Later on, I was able to fix 10 pairs a day. I rarely slept before 12 o'clock back then. After the kids went to bed, I simply worked several more hours to have more pairs fixed.

By working at home, unemployed women transformed their households into places where intensive productive work was managed which allowed them to earn the precious incomes. The production/reproduction and public/private distinctions were reconfigured by participants and were more complicated in practice. Major activities of production, consumption, and reproduction were all conducted at home. Besides, women also heavily relied on their husbands' formal employment for material benefits and social identities. They lived in the factory dormitory with the factory underwriting both rent and utilities. The factory also reimbursed half of the medical bills for a worker's spouse and children. With a written confirmation of their financial difficulties issued by the factory

labor union, workers' children could go to school for free and finish a basic nine-year education. Since these services were provided to all employees, relying on them was not perceived as "taking advantage" of a collective asset. In other words, the public/private and production/reproduction distinctions were thoroughly blurred.

c. Modifying Family Relationships and Daily Expenditures

Besides spontaneously resisting and manipulating the official system, working class families also modified themselves in order to meet the standards. In doubly employed families, family relationships changed. Female workers forced their husbands to participate in daily household work and participate in a division of labor in handling household chores. Couples worked together for cooking, shopping, and handling the coal stove. Men's typical household jobs included installing heating stoves before winter, purchasing hundreds of pounds of coal and vegetables for storage, firing up coal stoves, and washing large pieces of clothes and bed sheets. Handy family men also cooked, babysat, and sewed and knit. Families disputes were frequent if there was no such cooperation. Both the factory and the state encouraged married men to work at home under the direction of their wives. Most men, however, complained that their wives controlled the family life too tightly.

Women's participation in the labor force also changed their relationship with their parents and their in-laws. Grandparents' help was appreciated. Whenever housing

conditions allowed, grandparents would move in and help out their married children.

They babysat sick grandchildren, cooked, and sewed for them.

Women also turned to their daily schedule and consumption practices to squeeze out extra time and energy. When talking about her daily routine in the 1960s, a 65-year-old lady gave me a lecture on the characteristics of various coals and how that affected her cooking and time arrangement.

Coal balls (mei qiu) are hard and the fire is strong. It is good for cooking. But I needed to light the stove everyday and that was too much work. Coal blocks (feng wo mei) are softer but the fire is weaker too. It took longer to stir fry vegetables and the dish was not that tasty. But at least I didn't need to light it everyday and it was more convenient. On the other hand, a coal ball stove needs more coals and the expense was bigger.

Daily domestic expenditures were also precisely calculated to keep them below the monthly income. For example, to save money, people walked to places because even a bus fare could break the family's budget. A 67-year-old woman concluded narrating her early years with this reference to a ticket fare.

It was tiresome in those days. I needed to think about everything. Every time I spent money I needed to double check whether it was worthy or not. If a place was within five bus stops, I would not take the bus and saved that five-cent ticket fare for some other things. In the summer, five cents could buy one jin of tomatoes or cucumbers. Don't you think that is tiresome?!

Many close friends in the factory and the neighborhood also initiated short-term investment groups (*qi hui*) for mutual benefit. Such small-scale financial arrangements enabled families to raise contingency funds when the socialist economy totally eliminated

commercial credit. In the cities the socialist compensation system emphasized low salaries for employees and high dependency on the state, and that eliminated the possibility of large private savings. Informal financial groups (*hui*) were short term and irregular. They collected emergency funds quickly. Each member contributed a small amount to the group and was, therefore, entitled to take turns to utilize the whole amount for family needs. Because the investment groups were organized among friends, members could avoid the public humiliation of opening their consumption style and private domestic lives up for scrutinizing by the official system. Alternative financial resources also enabled members to purchase commodities and enjoy some distinctive consumption in an ideologically egalitarian society.

Everything needed vouchers then. People could not just go to the store to buy a bike or a watch. You needed a voucher besides money. The factory gave vouchers once in a while for large pieces [commodities] (da jian). I remembered I once got a bike voucher but we did not have that amount of savings to buy it. But we did not want to miss the chance either. I started a hui. Six of us pulled 60 yuan together to help me buy the bike.

While tightening their daily expenses, families constantly needed to find an equilibrium between their private interests and public opinion in order to render their lifestyle socially and culturally acceptable. A series of spending priorities guaranteed respectability. “Earning respect (*yao mia*)” counted heavily in their daily behaviors and was particularly important during the holiday season when it was a cultural convention to celebrate and honor the hard work of the past year. On the New Year’s Eve, having fish, meat, and dumplings on the dinner table not only symbolized a fruitful end of a hard-working year, it also represented a good omen for a better future. Families with various

economic and financial backgrounds celebrated the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year). No matter how difficult their life during the rest of the year, every family managed to save some money for good food and new outfits for the holiday season. They were willing to sacrifice some during the normal days and save money for a proper celebration. It was considered shameful if families could not properly dress their children and have good food for the holiday dinner. Even thirty years later, women were proud of their efforts to celebrate the holiday properly.

A mother of four daughters recalled:

No matter how hard, I managed to make new outfits for my girls. It was ridiculous (bu xiang hua) to not dress up girls in the Spring Festival. People would laugh at the parents.

A mother of seven children told me:

We had good food for the Spring Festival. At least there should be meat. We could not eat meat in normal days. But for the Spring Festival, we had. It was a comfort for our hearts. I did not want other people to say that we could not afford a good holiday.

Families with extreme difficulties dyed old clothes for their children before the Spring Festival to make them look new. It still hurts thirty years later when they reflect upon these details.

That was when birth control became another effective way of controlling domestic life. Birth control methods were formally introduced to local populations and

justified among the local community. Friends, family members, and people under similar conditions talked about contraception in a non-offensive way. While sharing domestic strategies, friends and family members constantly evaluated each other's domestic conditions in order to contribute ideas and support. Creative innovations, novel social standards, and the state's advocacy were cautiously raised, evaluated, and commented upon as new criteria for public assessment and novel alternatives for improving family life. The fertility transition in the 1960s developed out of the citizens' negotiations with the state as to where the collective vs. private boundaries should be set in everyday life.

Chapter Seven

Utilization of Contraception among Working Class Families

After the end of the Big Famine in 1961, the Chinese government took a firm stand on implementing the policy of birth control and family planning in urban areas, but the state's propaganda focused on requesting individual families to sacrifice for the collective good and the implementation mechanisms were not fully established locally. Besides a few activists who responded to the campaign and utilized contraception, general acceptance of contraception came from the concerns about women's reproductive health and families' socioeconomic struggles. Under the social, economic, and political constraints in the 1960s, urban families, their female members in particular, actively applied the innovative contraceptive methods to resolve the daily conflicts brought about by the contradictory state policies and the unintentional consequences of the state's grand socioeconomic design. Their conscious utilization of birth control was locally justified and also followed the conventional cultural rules regarding family size and composition. By voluntarily utilizing contraception, women and their family members gained a rare and precious possibility of self-control over family life in the context of a totalitarian regime, and further won an effective weapon to resist the state's hegemony over their private domestic lives. During the era of political zeal of the Cultural Revolution, urban families deliberately retreated from political and public life, spending more time and energy taking care of family issues. Besides cooking, tailoring, and laundering, many couples managed to bear one more child to raise. The baby boom in 1967 and 1968 took

place in the context of the prevailing local resentment of the state's political revitalization. Under the political and socioeconomic constraints imposed by the state, urban couples felt they had to take back their time and energy. Ironically, most of the available time and energy resulted from the state's intensified local mechanisms – frequent and prolonged political study sessions and sex-differentiated roles in production and political campaigns. Men and women took advantage of the less physically stressed conditions and invested the reserved time and energy in a more reliable resource – their children. The availability of the contraceptive knowledge and the state compensated contraceptive devices allowed couples to utilize a socially acceptable innovation for their own purposes, and facilitated their own design of the private arena.

1. Tianjin's Official Distribution of Contraceptive Knowledge and Devices in the 1960s

Starting from 1962 on, the state and the Communist Party established administrative systems in major cities to carry out the implementation of family planning program. Tianjin, as the second largest metropolis, received proportionally more funding from the central government to set up offices, hire personnel for the network, and subsidize services provided to urbanites.

In September 1962, the Tianjin Municipal Government issued a document titled “Suggestions for Actively Promoting Birth Planning” in response to the central

government's call. In November, the Tianjin Branch of the Communist Party decided to provide free abortion and sterilization to residents, and suggested that "it is reasonable [for each family] to have two children and families with good condition could have three" (Tianjin History: 1183-4).

Tianjin's administration system for birth planning was formally established in January 1963 by both the municipal government and the Communist Party Tianjin branch. The secretary of the Party's culture and education division led the Tianjin Birth Planning Committee. The committee consisted of cadres from labor unions, women's associations, public health officials, the Youth League, and the Party Branch. The Tianjin Municipal Birth Planning Office was under the supervision of the deputy mayor. Following this party vs. government organizational pattern, each district, bureau, and workplace also established birth control offices. In addition, the city designated 200 coordinators in different neighborhoods to assist with the implementation of birth planning (Tianjin History: 1185).

In July 1963, after the establishment of the official network, both the party branch and the municipal government issued documents demanding the further implementation of birth planning policies at various administrative levels. The government also formulated detailed regulations on providing free sterilization, abortion, and implanting the IUD among urban women. Tianjin became the first city in China to provide free contraceptive devices and services (Tianjin History: 1184).

Between 1962 and 1964, the state's birth planning policy and the municipality's regulations were announced only within institutions and workplaces. Due to the conservative social atmosphere, Chairman Liu Shaoqi's earlier instruction to avoid a public campaign on birth planning was still effective. In Tianjin, the government prohibited the publishing of birth control advice in the newspaper, the broadcasting of contraceptive knowledge on the radio, and the posting of publicity material in workplaces. Only in 1964 did the government organize a large exhibition of information on contraception and showed it in various districts. Workplaces organized married employees to see the display. Also in 1964 the government began to reward model workers for excellence in birth planning and held seminars to spread information on contraception (Tianjin History: 1186).

The state's birth planning policy was promoted as helping to accelerate the construction of socialism and to improve individual family life. The socialist country was a giant family for all citizens. Only when the big family achieved prosperity and strength could each small family find happiness. In order to make progress in the workplaces, employees should handle domestic chores and child issues well. The state advocated that families with many children utilize birth control and eradicate this "remnant of feudalism". It was said that in the new society men and women were equal and it was "feudal" to regard men as superior to women. Any families insisting that they have many children in order to have sons to carry the family name and to guarantee stable economic lives for their senior parents should eradicate their "feudal" thoughts. In the new society, the country, as the big family, had the capability of taking care of senior citizens. The

more citizens participated in the construction of socialism, the better off the country would be, and the more citizens would receive in their senior years. Employees should replace the concerns of their small families with the collective interests of the big family. Focusing on personal interests was “selfish” (*zi si zi li*), “benefiting oneself at the expense of others” (*sun ren li ji*), and “forgetting the past suffering” (*wang ben*) (Tianjin Daily, 5/22/1964).

Around 1963, Xinfeng Factory organized meetings with cadres, activists, party members, and the Youth League members to transmit party policy and called upon the leaders and cadres to utilize birth control methods in order to set up models for the masses. The factory adopted the municipal regulations regarding full reimbursement for medical expenses for abortion, sterilization, and implanting IUDs. It also provided paid sick leave for married employees who underwent these medical procedures. The factory clinic coordinated and assisted employees’ birth control needs. The clinic explained knowledge about contraception to workers, referred them to proper hospitals, and distributed free contraceptive devices, i.e. condoms and contraceptive pills.

Several male factory leaders were sterilized after the meeting and I had the opportunity to interview the wife of one of them, Yin Dama. For her and her husband, accepting contraception was a natural step in their family history. As rural Hebei Province residents, both Yin Dama and her husband witnessed how villagers became a second class population under the Japanese occupation and how the underground Communist Party led villagers to resist the Japanese invasion. After moving to Tianjin,

her husband worked in a factory but their family life was under the threat of double-digit inflation and precarious employment conditions. It was only after the establishment of the People's Republic of China and its effort in stabilizing urban life that the Yin's family life was improved. Her husband became a factory activist and was promoted to be a manager. Yin Dama studied in the factory's night school to learn reading and writing skills. In her own words, *"if it were not because of Chairman Mao (who gave us the opportunities), I would still be an illiterate and could not read and write."* Raising two daughters and studying at night school, Yin Dama was too busy to work. She missed the opportunity for employment in 1958 and had two more daughters before 1964. By then her husband was a factory administrator but his salary was tight for a family of six. When the state and the factory advocated birth control, they decided to go along despite the fact that they did not have a son yet.

We had four daughters already and we considered them as our chuan ren (continuers). My husband was a factory leader. He needed to set an example. Without the Communist Party, there would not be us. This is my country. The country got better, we could be better off too. After the big earthquake in 1976, the state provided us everything. Now my husband retired and every month he received a pension from the factory. Which government could still pay us even when we are not working?

Yin Dama had implanted an IUD in 1963, but she suffered severe side effects and bled constantly. She then had the IUD removed and her husband decided to undergo sterilization in 1963. The couple was married in the conventional way - arranged by their families. Now they experienced the grand social revolution and became the beneficiaries of the new system. Their sincere and humble effort was recognized by the new system and they paid full gratitude to the state and became its loyal supporters. Utilizing

contraception was one way to show their respect for the new system while at the same time improving their own family life.

However, to most workers and their families, the state's and the factory's expectation was not as relevant to their decision making on reproductive issues as were their cadres in the factory. Most factory administrators and cadres did not follow the state's birth planning policy right after its initiation. On the contrary, given that the state's family planning campaign was launched in a socially conservative era in the 1960s, topics of sex and contraception were still taboo in public. Reproduction appeared as a public topic only when couples got married and families celebrated newborns. Reproductive knowledge was exclusively limited to married people. Even female hygiene was an intimate topic only discussed between mothers and daughters or among close female friends. Pregnancy was a private issue and women were embarrassed to appear in public during pregnancy.

Back then, people were all very conservative. Nobody talked about these things (contraception and reproduction) publicly. Who was like the kids in these days? They now know everything. Anything can be shown on TV now. Those commercials of feminine napkins and tampons! Young women do not know how to hide personal stuff either. Kids know a lot these days. When girls have their first period, they can take care of themselves. Not like us, we knew nothing, just crying and panic. Before, our parents avoided talking about these things with us. When we grew up, we also hid personal stuff from the rest of the family members. It was shameful for a girl to be reckless.

Back then we were embarrassed by our pregnant appearance. We wore big outfits to cover the belly and hide the signs. When we walked in the street and in the workshop, we tried to avoid encountering people. It's just so embarrassing. It's so different from now. Nowadays, young women seem to make an announcement in

the street. Look at the way they walk, swaggering around. Are they afraid of no one knows they are pregnant?! They don't want to dodge at all.

Transmission and justification of contraception among the working class population took a different path from the rigid official form and its accusatory tone. Rather than in the formal settings, i.e. meetings and exhibitions, local transmission of birth control knowledge happened in daily social interactions and conversations among friends, relatives, coworkers, and neighbors. The innovative information and novel ideas were spread and justified among the local population by commentaries relevant to local life. This dynamic social process translated a state policy into a meaningful message for the local community. It helped to overcome the conservative social atmosphere under which the topics of sex, reproduction, and contraception were still taboo. Even though the state raised the importance of birth control to the level of loyalty to the motherland, it was indeed the double burden imposed on female urbanites in a non-pronatalist era that initiated the utilization of contraception among urban families.

The state's "iron rice bowl", designed to meet major necessities including subsidized housing and utilities, never equally distributed crucial resources among the employees. The social benefit was never free of obligation. Different from the western modernization process, the Chinese bureaucratic state became the decisive force in the employees' domestic arena. The state applied its political doctrine in distributing crucial resources. Wage austerity in the 1960s consolidated the state's control and intensified the socioeconomic hardship faced by urbanites. To raise a growing family on a fixed income and with minimum financial support from the state became the greatest challenge to

individual families. Couples formed economic partnerships at home and depended on each other's salary to sustain daily life. Doubly burdened women were trapped in the highly regulated workplace and labor-intensive home. Additionally, taxing daily schedules and inadequate food supplies conflicted with the cultural regulations on postpartum recovery and threatened women's reproductive health. The psychological impact of this was enormous and drove women and their family members to rearrange prenatal schedules, to extend the spacing between births to allow for an adequate rest, and to control family size. Conscious birth control prevailed. Couples utilized the methods distributed by the state to work for their own relief and to gain self-control over their private time, energy, and family lives.

2. Women's Reproductive Health and Fertility Behaviors

In local views, the process of having children represented a depletion of woman's health and her internal energy. The first postpartum month was perceived as crucial in recovering the new mother's health and energy from the loss in delivery. A series of elaborate cultural rules restrained the mother's behavior and guaranteed a nutritious diet during this month. The key point was to avoid cold, wind, movement, and emotional fluctuation. The mother should avoid walking, sitting, lifting heavy objects, bathing, washing hair, brushing teeth, and going outside for one month. It was believed that after delivery, the woman's body was loose, open, and vulnerable. Coldness could easily invade into her bones and damage her health. Any violation of these norms would lead to

physical pains in her senior years. During this month, the family should have a helper to take care of the household chores. Besides breastfeeding her baby, the new mother should rest for the whole day. As for food, the new mother's diet emphasized high calories from eggs, meat, and dairy products. Cold and raw foods should be avoided. She should frequently drink hot brown sugar water and date soup to replenish the blood that she lost during delivery. She should also drink fish soup, chicken soup, and bone soup to induce adequate breast milk for the newborn. Spicy ingredients and medicines that could damage the quality of her breast milk should be avoided. In northern China where the average winter temperature is below 0 centigrade and heating depends on coal stoves, it was necessary to protect both the mother and newborn from getting cold.

The cultural rules of *Zuo Yue Zi* (one-month postpartum rest) were widely accepted by urban families. It was the mothers' basic right to demand the essential care they deserved. Bitter memories of the rules being broken were frequently mentioned in Xinfeng Factory women's conversations with me regarding their present health, family relationships, and lives. Different treatments within this month were held to be responsible for contrasting physical conditions "*like the difference between heaven and hell*". Inadequate rest, improper diet, or immediate return to domestic and factory work damaged women's health. Thirty years later, they precisely remembered what they ate in those special days and how much they ate. Most women complained about their inadequate postpartum recoveries to symbolize their physical sacrifice for the society at large as well as their personal family.

I had no one to help me after I had the babies. The first several days I had my sister, my mother, and even neighbors come over to help around. After that, I needed to do the housework all by myself. What could I do? He [her husband] needed to go back to work and other kids needed to eat. That destroyed my health and I never really recovered again.

I had six children and there was no extra treatment for me during my yue zi. I just followed the daily diet as the others.

I had two kids, but I only ate one chicken in my two yue zi. After I gave birth to my first daughter, I had one. In my second yue zi, my husband cooked me one chicken, but my brother ate it. He came to visit me and he was so hungry. He was young and growing. We could not say no to him. But what about me? I just lacked too much nutrition and lost too much energy.

There was also a popular belief that women's one-time inadequate postpartum rest and its depletive result could be corrected or compensated for by a second good postpartum recovery following the next child. But a close birth interval damaged women's health. Once returning to work, breastfeeding during the work hours forced women to bustle between home, workshop, and nursery, following a hectic daily schedule. Female workers envied housewives for having enough time to be with newborns and to recover. In order to protect their reproductive health, women and their family members planned their maternal leaves in minute detail and utilized contraception to extend birth intervals or to cease childbearing altogether.

Women reserved all of their 56-day maternal leave for postpartum recovery and worked full-time until the delivery day. Many left for the hospital directly from work. They endured the hardship of working throughout each pregnancy and taking care of

family chores at the same time. The fatigue of this prenatal experience catalyzed their determination to apply contraception.

I worked till the last day of my pregnancy. After the second trimester, the manager assigned me to a new position as a tool maintainer. It was supposed to be an easier task so I could rest more. But I still needed to work around and be there on time everyday. My feet were all swollen. After work, I picked up the first one from the daycare and cooked for the family. I had contractions that day right before dinner while I was stirring fry cabbage for dinner. My husband was not home yet, so I brought my first one to the hospital with me. Who would take care of her? ...After the second one, my husband and I decided to have no more.

The single wage earner families suffered more from economic and social pressures, and were among the first local group to adopt contraception. With few alternatives for improving family life, these families actively reacted to a state policy designed for different purposes. Both husbands and wives enthusiastically tried various methods. Before any effective device was available, housewives extended breastfeeding time to avoid conceiving. Once the contraceptive devices were available, members of these especially stressed families were the first group to implant IUDs, take contraceptive pills, and use condoms.

My husband was thrilled when he got a box of condoms from his best friend at work. He was amazed by them and glad to know that he could get them free from any drug store. Later on, the factory distributed them free at work too. It was effective.

I learned about condoms from my sister-in-law after I had my second daughter. We lived in one compound house and were very close. She told me the idea and showed me one that she got from her work. Several months later, my husband's factory started distribution too and we received them regularly with no cost. I took pills before but I lost my period and constantly felt uncomfortable. After getting the new idea, I gave up the pills.

I tried the IUD and pills, but none of them worked well. I worked on a construction site to riddle gravel. It was a tough job but the pay was good. Once I had IUD implanted, I was continually bleeding. Maybe my work was too tiring, or the ring (IUD) did not work. I then went to the hospital to get rid of it.

Significantly, there was little resistance from grandparents regarding contraception. In many cases, young couples' parents were still in rural villages living with their brothers. Monthly remittances were sent home to support senior parents. Financial independence and their increasing role in compensating seniors gave adult children autonomy in family decisions on reproductive issues. During my fieldwork, I heard of only one case in which a mother-in-law burned the condoms her son had brought home. Mostly, grandparents not only allowed the adult children to manage their own reproductive lives, they also actively helped out with household chores whenever possible. To maintain family life within the socioeconomic limit became equally as important as having male descendants to continue the family line.

It is widely acknowledged that Chinese culture is an extremely pronatalist one. Traditional beliefs emphasized having sons to continue the family line and promoted large extended families due to "more sons, more happiness, and prosperity." It was assumed that control of marital fertility, as the conscious check of family growth in the high-mortality regimes of the past, was impossible. However, detailed studies have shown that unchecked "natural fertility" never existed in the Chinese history, whether in rural or urban China. Traditional beliefs were never fully carried out in local social reality (Buck 1956). Chinese women's fertility behaviors have always been highly correlated

with the sex composition and the survivorship of their children. Even in a high-mortality regime, once couples had two to three sons to ensure that one or two of them would be likely to survive to adulthood, get married, and bear sons of their own, they would be ready to stop childbearing and turn to other matters to develop their families, i.e. to prepare their children's marriage and take care of grandsons. In the traditional society where the living standard was generally low, the hardships of raising a large number of children were well known and were verified by numerous incidents of abandoning children, selling children, and infanticide. For the wealthy and better off families, the disadvantage and unhappiness of having too many sons was rooted in the Chinese inheritance regulations. Equal distribution of family wealth and property among the male descendants quickly diminished the family's property into smaller pieces and reduced its power. Contradictory to general belief, bringing up more sons did not necessarily imply happiness, nor did it indicate prosperity automatically. As a result, deliberate birth control existed and its role in maintaining a very low rate of long-term population growth could not be ignored. Demographic studies of the historical census data showed that women's birth intervals were relatively long and women's age at last birth was relatively young. The spacing and stopping behavior was not only related to physiological factors, social norms, and customs, but was also clearly affected by people's intentional control of their reproduction. Local perceptions of family size have always been highly correlated with socioeconomic concerns, such that the family sizes were deliberately maintained in a manageable range (Zhao 1997).

In the 1960s, in Xinfeng Factory, after having one or two sons, most families stopped childbearing and turned to focus on working at home and in the factories.

Wenping had two children and they are both sons. She and her husband decided on the sterilization after she accompanied one coworker to have an abortion in the local hospital.

I was there because her husband was on a business trip for the factory. She was so pale and weak after the procedure and we were both shocked by the pain. I insisted to call a taxi for her to come home. That day was rainy and cold. After I came home, I talked to my husband about the procedure and I told him I didn't want to have more kids. It was dreadful, I was afraid that I might go through the same thing. Besides, we already had two sons and we both worked. They were enough for us to take care of. He agreed.

Both Jiahua and Lilan had two daughters when they decided to stop childbirth regardless of having no son. After her second daughter was born in 1965, Jiahua's husband, Jianjun, changed to work the night shift so he could stay at home to take care of house work and their children while Jiahua worked in the factory during the day. Lilan sent her two daughters back to Shanghai for six years to stay with her parents-in-law so she and her husband could focus on working.

Many other couples waited until they had at least one son before stopping, but the mounting housework and cost burdened them more. Shuhua was an accountant and she moved to Tianjin with her husband after he left his military position to work in the city as a cadre. They had three daughters before her son who was born in 1962. After having her son and finding the fulfillment, the couple stopped childbearing. Suyun did not wait for her dream son. She had four daughters in six years and decided to stop in 1964 to maintain a minimum living standard. Suyun had no job in the 1960s but she had a good

relationship with her husband and they both enjoyed life. Their humorous attitude and sunny personalities helped them to overcome daily hardships. They called salt sugar and transformed this normal ingredient into a luxury item for internal comfort. They also called sweet potatoes meat and enjoyed the “regular” consumption of this “luxury” food. Suyun’s husband loved to listen to Peking Opera and they managed to purchase a radio by cutting other daily expenses. However, their sunny attitude and consumption choices were controversial locally.

According to the criteria we were eligible for applying the subsidy in Xinfeng, but we never did. We would rather cut some expenses by ourselves. Otherwise, there was no freedom. Even when you had zhaguozi²⁷ for breakfast, people would say, “how could you eat zhaguozi while on subsidy?!”

The couple deliberately avoided applying for financial aid from Xinfeng Factory and sought to control their family size.

3. The Spread of Contraceptive Knowledge and Utilization of Contraception

The state’s distribution of contraceptive devices and knowledge facilitated a social transformation in fertility behavior. The state’s endorsement of birth planning justified an existing demand in local settings and provided new methods for accomplishing the goal. The availability of effective methods of birth control coincidentally occurred when urban families lived under tremendous socioeconomic

²⁷ A kind of deep fried pancake which is a popular breakfast item in northern China.

constraints and urban women's reproductive health was threatened by the imposed double burden and inadequate food. The state's determined social engineering and the aggressive accumulation of development capital within its borders prepared the urban Chinese to be "ready, willing, and able" for new demographic behavior and the fertility transition.

Very quickly, the availability of contraceptive devices became known among the locals. Workers knew where to receive free contraceptive devices in the factories and in the city. An official advocacy quickly became a local topic. Contraception provided new alternatives for individual families to rethink their family life. Messages about ordinary families utilizing novel methods spread quickly and convinced more to follow. Both men and women were open to the new ideas. Neighbors learned from each other to figure out the new methods.

A female worker recalled how her curious neighbors found out about her birth control strategy after the birth of her first daughter.

My husband regularly went to the drug store to get the condoms and none of us talked about this in the factory. One day a next door neighbor Dama came to me with great concern. She asked me why I hadn't had any kids five years after my daughter (was born). She was afraid that I was sick and infertile. Back then it was normal for couples to have kids every two years. I told her what happened and she was so relieved and curious.

Between 1963 and 1964, 203,990 Tianjin residents received free sterilization or IUD implants in local hospitals (Sun 1990:145). Contraceptive pills were introduced in

mid-1960s and were subsidized, keeping the price low in factory clinics and local pharmacies. Of all the methods, the condom was the most popular and effective, according to the women I interviewed. Frequent reports of severe side effects from IUD implants and birth control pills kept couples away from them. Women hesitated to implant foreign objects in their bodies. Many reported bleeding after the implantation. Those who took pills reported missing periods and interrupted menstrual cycles. Unplanned pregnancies led to abortions. Female and male sterilization were associated with negative stereotypes among the populace. People suspected that after sterilization both men and women would lose energy or have their internal circulation system interrupted.

Xinfeng Factory organized regular distributions of free condoms to both male and female married employees in each workshop. The labor union designated a female cadre to be in charge of the distribution. Every month, she worked with female representatives in each workshop to give out packaged condoms along with other sanitary products to male and female workers. Each married worker received his/her quota and the representative kept a record of the distribution. There were extra distributions before major holidays and employees' home-visits.

For female representatives, it was hard to overcome the embarrassment at first, especially when many were still single. Nevertheless, they took it as a political task assigned by the factory and relied on the factory managers for encouragement and recognition. Unexpectedly, there were few cynical remarks and the workers rarely

laughed at them. Coworkers' cooperative attitudes and immediate acceptance relieved them of their worries. One representative recalled,

It was hard for both sides. Hard to say who was more embarrassed. We were all blushing. Later on, it became a routine and we all took it easily.

Both men and women interpreted the contraceptive devices as an opportunity to improve their lives. The adoption of specific contraceptive methods demonstrates couples' attitude towards contraception. In their studies of birth control history in rural Sicily, Schneider and Schneider reported that coitus interruptus was most effective among local artisan couples. While working together, artisan couples formed companionships and communicated with each other about the issue of contraception (Schneider and Schneider 1996). In the Chinese case, men's and women's cooperation in contraception was determined by the socioeconomic constraints they faced together on the daily basis. As victims of wage austerity and the repression of consumption, both men and women relied on the state system for daily necessities. Doubly burdened women for the first time in Chinese history won the opportunity to negotiate with the state directly. Men, however, depended on their wives' incomes to meet expenses. Couples formed partnerships in the restrictive urban economy in the 1960s. By voluntarily utilizing freely distributed condoms to control family size, a crucial factor affecting the standard of living, couples gained a rare sense of self-control, at the same time searching to maximize their benefits from the system in the time of asceticism.

Voluntary utilization of contraception in the 1960s was also demonstrated by the baby boom during the Cultural Revolution. During this moment of political revitalization, urbanites deliberately resisted the imposed political constraints and the state's invasive power in their domestic lives by spending more time and energy on household work. A flexible factor, family size and composition reflected couples' time and energy limits. Any improvement of their daily schedule could lead to the reevaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of another child.

4. The Fertility Rebound of 1967 and 1968

Demographic data show that during the Cultural Revolution there was a fertility rebound, specifically between 1967 and 1968. Tianjin's total fertility rate rose from 2.8 to 3.6. The most frequently quoted explanation is that during the Cultural Revolution, the state's administrative network was paralyzed and was unable to effectively direct family planning programs and distribute birth control devices. This argument presupposes the claim that the early fertility decline in urban China was a direct result of the state's effective implementation of its birth control policy - once the administrative system was paralyzed during the Cultural Revolution, fertility rebounded (Wolf 1986 and Peng 1991).

However, local investigation does not support this explanatory framework. Even under the tight social control that urban Chinese experienced, human reproduction could

not be accounted for only from the state's perspective. Local negotiation, compromise, and evaluation constantly determined people's fertility behaviors. Urban residents evaluated their daily lives and considered numerous social conditions before formulating their reproductive decisions. The correlation between family decisions about family size and socioeconomic conditions was not new in China. As noted above, the balance between the advantages and disadvantages of large joint families have been constantly weighed and assessed among family members in the Chinese past. Common economic interests can lead to the pooling of family labor, capital, and resources. Suspicion of each other's motivations and disagreements over the distribution of joint products could also catalyze family divisions with the result of challenging cultural expectations. Faced with multiple constraints, family members framed and planned their strategies accordingly. Their decisions directly affected the joint phase of the family cycle and its length (Cohen 1976, Pasternak 1983, Wolf 1985, and Harrell 1993). In nuclear families, family size and composition has also been sensitive to various socioeconomic and political constraints. Deliberate birth control existed in the high-fertility regime before the implementation of the coercive state policies (Zhao 1997). Family members actively applied various culturally justified methods to limit family size and composition, to meet the challenge of multiple constraints.

The heavy domestic burden, rigid family economy, and the constrained work and family life of the 1960s similarly forced couples to limit family size within a manageable range. Family decisions were based on the comprehensive considerations of family income, time, and energy. Any improvement of these conditions could lead to a change

of birth control decisions. For example, in the 1960s, some couples received their assigned dormitory rooms in Xinshuli. Moving there from neighborhoods in the other districts saved time from commuting. Couples could come home for lunch and have extra hours for housework. In this context, it was possible for less exhausted couples to have more children, preferably a boy. Gan Dama is an example. The couple and their two daughters used to live in Xinfeng's dormitory in the Hongqiao District. Everyday, Gan Dama spent at least two hours on the road. Once they moved into Xinshuli, it was quite a relief for her and her family. The couple had two more children with the fourth as a son. Gan Dama came home for lunch and breastfeeding everyday. After the birth of her son, the couple stopped childbearing in 1969.

During the Cultural Revolution, the output quotas of the factories decreased and the administration spent more time on organizing political debates, campaigns, and studies. Workers were frequently required to participate in political campaigns and sit in meetings and group study sessions in the workshops. Workers spent their days studying political doctrines and Marxist and Leninist theories. Political studies were not as physically demanding as working. Workers slept, knitted, and chatted during the study sessions. Many extended their sick leaves with falsified doctor's notes. Prevailing resentments and cynical attitudes towards the political campaign formed the relaxing atmosphere for workers with less political commitment. Whenever they were criticized by the political activists or party members, workers insisted that they were following the state's advocacy – love the factory as home (*ai chang ru jia*). By manipulating the advocacy to serve for their own purposes, workers were able to justify their deliberate

violation of the state's rules: transforming the workplaces into an extension of their domestic domain. Besides, couples spent more time and energy at home on household chores. Sex-differentiated arrangement in production and political campaigns also allowed female workers to reserve more time and energy for their own household lives. In the summer and autumn men were organized to work in the surrounding villages to assist the harvest and the hydraulic projects. Women were assigned to cook and fix tools at home for those who worked in the field. In this less physically demanding context, it was possible for couples to consider having another child. In one office in Xinfeng Factory, 11 of 12 female officers were pregnant around the same time. One woman recalled,

When we were all pregnant around the same time, our office head was quite annoyed. But what else could he do?

Other women's recollections also reaffirmed the childbearing pattern,

Among the kids of female workers, many were rabbits and then many were sheep and monkeys.

In the Chinese zodiac system, the year of 1963 was the year of Rabbit and the year of 1967 and 1968 were years of Sheep and Monkey, respectively. This coincided with the two baby booms in the 1960s in Tianjin and urban China. The specific five-year spacing pattern formed a unique kind of family that people recognized locally – families with siblings five-year apart. The availability of contraception allowed workers and their families to plan their private lives in an imposing hegemonic era. Regardless of the

state's invasion into their private lives, urbanites managed to apply/reject the socially acceptable strategy of contraception to gain control over daily arrangements and to maximize benefits to themselves in the system.

5. Conclusion

This dissertation has adopted a holistic framework, currently developed in historical studies of fertility transition and anthropological studies of human reproduction, to understand the early fertility transition and the dynamics of the “politics of reproduction” in urban China in the 1960s (Greenhalgh 1990 and 1995; Ginsburg and Rapp 1995; and Kertzer and Fricke 1997). This dissertation was also inspired by similarly holistic demographic studies of fertility transition in Europe, China, and other regions (Bongaard and Watkins 1996; Greenhalgh 1989; Kertzer 1995, Kreager 1986; Lesthaeghe 1992; Lesthaeghe and Wilson 1986; and Schneider and Schneider 1996). By paying extra attention to the state/society relationship, this dissertation historically contextualizes the urban Chinese people's reproductive decisions in a political, economic, and cultural framework. It emphasizes that individual reproductive activities are never separate from other aspects of social life, and that the state's regulation of population growth was always tightly related to restrictions in other domains. The state's policies on industrialization, migration, gender equality, social services, urban management, and consumption, indirectly, but crucially, affected urban fertility during the 1960s.

In evaluating the impact of the state's family planning policy on the fertility decline, this dissertation relates the family planning policy to the volatility of the nation's industrialization process. As an organic part of China's comprehensive political and economic design for development, the policy was constantly shaped by the nation's overall socioeconomic condition. The state's enthusiastic promotion of family planning and birth control in the 1960s was determined by its effort to overcome the internal contradictions in the socialist industrialization design. In the conservative 1960s, however, the state's broadcast of contraceptive knowledge and the distribution of contraceptive devices did not transform the social and cultural expectations of women's reproductive lives and appropriate family size and composition, but did increase the availability of birth control methods at the local level. When individual families compelled by the socioeconomic constraints, sought to consciously control family size, they were able to access adequate and effective birth control methods.

From the local perspective, reproductive behaviors are seen here as the active adaptation of cultural attitudes and behaviors to changing and diverse political and economic circumstances. In other words, reproductive behaviors have never been merely a passive reaction to political pressure or economic constraint. This is an arena where individual actors, small groups, and local communities display a remarkable degree of activism and agency in the domain of reproductive control. To understand fertility transition requires a combination of macro- and micro- concerns and an understanding of the dialectic relationship between the grand constraints and local reactions. The case of the urban Chinese in the 1960s illustrates that human reproduction is highly sensitive to

various forms of power distribution, from the highly organized powers of the state and international forces to the local level, where human reproductive activities are regulated and organized in the context of gender relations, marriage customs, and the culture of parenting.

The early urban fertility transition in China was thus neither a direct outcome of the state's family planning policy, nor a sudden reevaluation of family size based on economic concerns. In the post-revolutionary period, the state was extremely active and was developing its eventual one-child policy, but the state/society relationship was never direct and linear. The state imposed socioeconomic policies to local populations but these were reconfigured along gender lines in both public and private arenas. Human reproduction became a focal point for local contestation and manipulation. In order to make a socially respectable living, urban families meticulously modified their lives and actively assessed their benefits from the state across the sensitive public vs. private boundaries. Among many of their strategic adjustments, perceptions changed regarding the appropriate number of children for each household.

Table One: Total Fertility Rates in Urban and Rural China, 1950-79

Year	Urban	Rural	National Total	Year	Urban	Rural	National Total	Year	Urban	Rural	National Total
1950	5.001	5.963	5.813	1960	4.057	3.996	4.015	1970	3.267	6.379	5.812
1951	4.719	5.904	5.699	1961	2.982	3.349	3.287	1971	2.882	6.011	5.442
1952	5.521	6.667	6.472	1962	4.789	6.303	6.023	1972	2.637	5.503	4.984
1953	5.402	6.183	6.049	1963	6.207	7.784	7.502	1973	2.387	5.008	4.539
1954	5.723	6.390	6.278	1964	4.395	6.567	6.176	1974	1.982	4.642	4.170
1955	5.665	6.391	6.261	1965	3.749	6.597	6.076	1975	1.782	3.951	3.571
1956	5.333	5.974	5.854	1966	3.104	6.958	6.259	1976	1.608	3.582	3.235
1957	5.943	6.504	6.405	1967	2.905	5.847	5.313	1977	1.574	3.116	2.844
1958	5.253	5.775	5.679	1968	3.872	7.025	6.448	1978	1.551	2.968	2.716
1959	4.172	4.323	4.303	1969	3.299	6.263	5.723	1979	1.373	3.045	2.745

SOURCES: Xiao Wencheng et al. (1984): 59; Fertility Survey (1984): 159-73. Sited by J. Banister, 1987, p. 243.

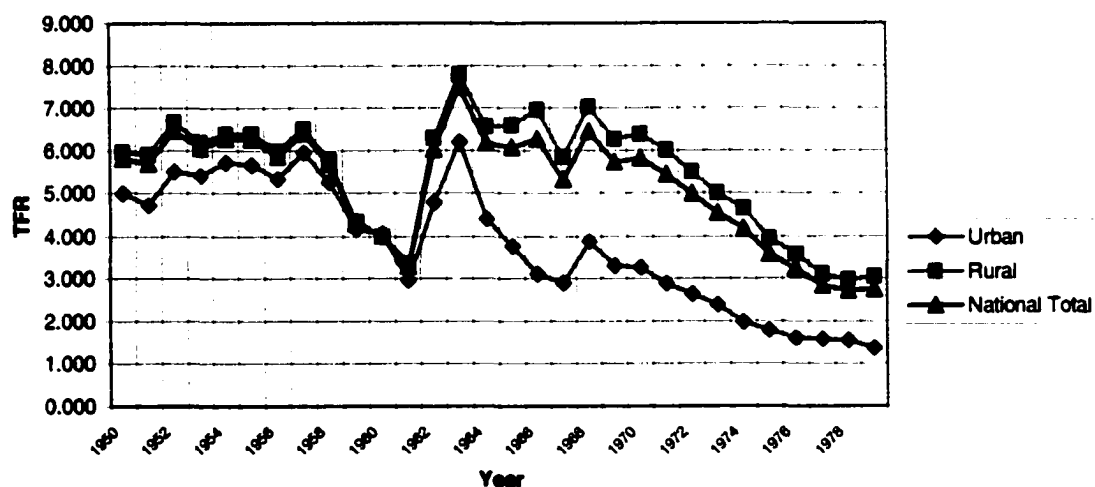
Chart 1: Total Fertility Rates in Urban and Rural China, 1950-79

Table Two: Total Age-Specific Fertility Rates in Tianjin's Urban and Rural Areas, 1950-79

Year	Tianjin	Urban	Rural	Year	Tianjin	Urban	Rural	Year	Tianjin	Urban	Rural
1950	6.202	5.856	6.891	1960	5.864	5.596	6.264	1970	3.355	1.858	5.149
1951	6.346	6.617	5.815	1961	3.963	4.434	3.281	1971	3.307	1.828	4.475
1952	6.968	6.466	7.938	1962	5.975	5.472	6.674	1972	2.732	1.810	3.920
1953	6.062	5.932	6.308	1963	7.426	6.296	8.955	1973	2.301	1.704	2.941
1954	7.072	6.324	8.459	1964	4.664	3.484	6.744	1974	1.977	1.783	2.291
1955	7.915	7.401	8.838	1965	4.385	2.629	6.929	1975	1.977	1.365	2.540
1956	7.184	7.278	7.027	1966	2.883	1.567	4.778	1976	2.006	0.977	2.952
1957	7.714	7.603	7.893	1967	2.905	1.463	4.853	1977	1.678	1.159	2.201
1958	6.851	7.234	6.260	1968	3.338	2.041	5.078	1978	1.668	1.181	2.251
1959	4.706	4.039	5.710	1969	3.389	2.550	4.491	1979	1.509	0.989	2.110

SOURCES: *Basic Data on Fertility in the Provinces of China, 1940-82*, by Coale and Chen, 1987, pp. 37-41.

Chart 2: Total Age-Specific Fertility Rates in Tianjin, 1950-79

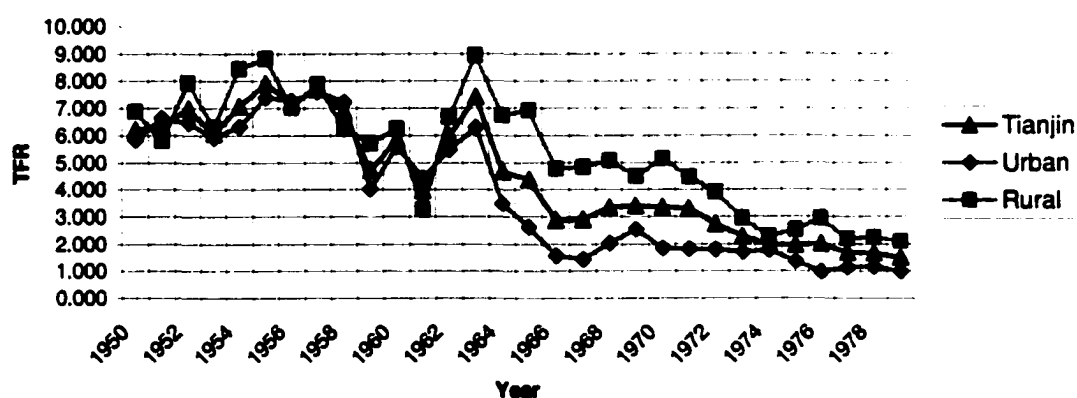


Table Three: Tianjin Infant Mortality Rate, 1958-83

Year	1958	1959	1960	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Infant Mortality Rate	29.56	39.97	34.72	14.88	10.43	8.45	7.29	6.94	6.07	6.28	7.4

Data Source: Compilations of Tianjin Demographic Data (1949-1983). Tianjin: Nankai University Press. p. 143.

Table Four: Tianjin Women's Educational Level, 1949-60

	1949	1950	1951	1953	1958	1960
College	2,492	2,365	3,752	4,100	7,070	8,544
High School	18,901	14,199	23,115	27,678	67,453	93,949
Primary School	51,637	61,899	64,935	88,821	280,168	232,022

Data Source: Compilations of Tianjin Demographic Data (1949-1983). Tianjin: Nankai University Press. p. 348.

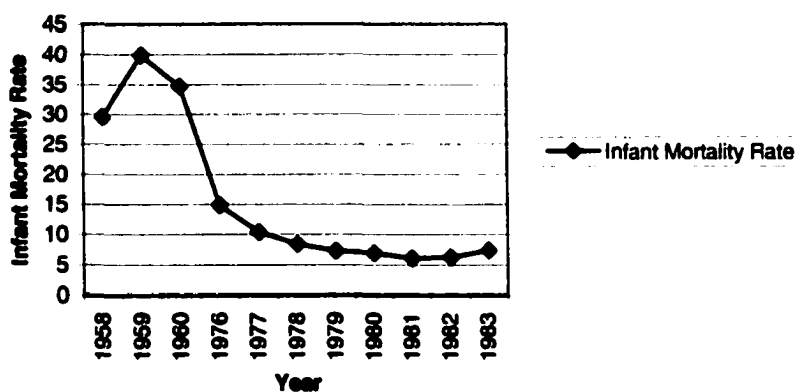
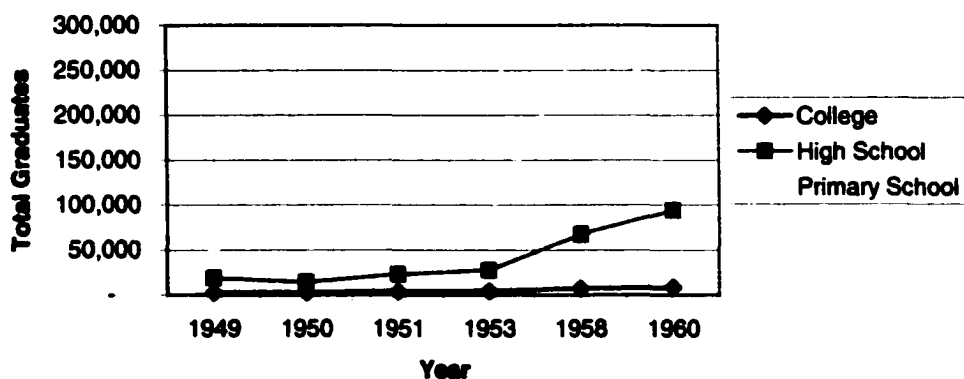
Chart 3: Tianjin Infant Mortality Rate, 1958-83**Chart 4: Tianjin Women's Educational Level, 1949-60**

Table Five: Total Fertility Rates in Tianjin, 1950-79 (with calculation)

Year	Tianjin	Urban	Change	Rural	County	Year	Tianjin	Urban	Change	Rural	County
1950	5.38	5.45		8.99	3.56	1965	3.76	2.10	-34%	5.55	6.01
1951	5.29	5.22	-4%	9.29	3.60	1966	3.34	1.83	-13%	4.49	5.71
1952	5.82	5.48	5%	10.51	3.92	1967	2.95	1.68	-8%	4.11	4.84
1953	5.90	5.32	-3%	10.90	3.70	1968	3.81	2.53	51%	5.48	5.35
1954	6.01	5.88	11%	10.77	3.87	1969	3.76	2.25	-11%	4.71	5.25
1955	6.04	5.75	-2%	10.72	4.25	1970	3.31	2.07	-8%	4.73	4.69
1956	5.64	5.43	-6%	10.18	3.74	1971	3.31	1.84	-11%	4.16	4.42
1957	5.72	5.54	2%	9.75	4.06	1972	2.81	1.81	-2%	3.33	4.20
1958	5.57	5.33	-4%	9.19	4.07	1973	2.42	1.64	-9%	3.14	3.34
1959	4.03	4.09	-23%	6.72	3.37	1974	2.05	1.25	-24%	2.83	2.82
1960	4.67	4.33	6%	5.95	4.61	1975	1.94	1.12	-10%	2.78	2.63
1961	3.38	3.29	-24%	3.15	3.37	1976	1.91	1.16	4%	2.38	2.77
1962	5.12	4.58	39%	6.30	6.18	1977	1.70	1.06	-9%	2.23	2.34
1963	6.32	5.20	14%	8.22	7.29	1978	1.90	1.23	16%	2.37	2.59
1964	4.42	3.20	-38%	6.12	6.29	1979	1.66	1.03	-16%	2.04	2.45

Data Source: Compilations of Tianjin Demographic Data (1949 - 1983). Tianjin: Nankai University Press, p. 210.

Table Six: Total Age-Specific Fertility Rates in Tianjin, 1950-79 (with calculation)

Year	Tianjin	Urban	Change	Rural	Year	Tianjin	Urban	Change	Rural
1950	6.202	5.856		6.891	1965	4.385	2.629	-25%	6.929
1951	6.346	6.617	13%	5.815	1966	2.883	1.567	-40%	4.778
1952	6.968	6.466	-2%	7.938	1967	2.905	1.463	-7%	4.853
1953	6.062	5.932	-8%	6.308	1968	3.338	2.041	40%	5.078
1954	7.072	6.324	7%	8.459	1969	3.369	2.550	25%	4.491
1955	7.915	7.401	17%	8.838	1970	3.355	1.858	-27%	5.149
1956	7.184	7.278	-2%	7.027	1971	3.307	1.828	-2%	4.475
1957	7.714	7.603	4%	7.893	1972	2.732	1.810	-1%	3.920
1958	6.851	7.234	-5%	6.260	1973	2.301	1.704	-6%	2.941
1959	4.706	4.039	-44%	5.710	1974	1.977	1.783	5%	2.291
1960	5.864	5.596	39%	6.264	1975	1.977	1.365	-23%	2.540
1961	3.963	4.434	-21%	3.281	1976	2.006	0.977	-28%	2.952
1962	5.975	5.472	23%	6.674	1977	1.678	1.159	19%	2.201
1963	7.426	6.296	15%	8.955	1978	1.668	1.181	2%	2.251
1964	4.664	3.484	-45%	6.744	1979	1.509	0.989	-16%	2.110

Data Source: Basic Data on Fertility in the Provinces of China, 1940-1982, by Coale and Chen, 1987, Tianjin Section.

Table Seven: 1949-80 Tianjin Total Population and Non-Agricultural Population Data

	Total Population	Increase Rate	Non- Agricultural	Increase Rate		Total Population	Increase Rate	Non- Agricultural	Increase Rate
1949	1,895,702		1,835,696		1971	2,937,376	1.10%	2,877,382	1.28%
1950	1,919,149	1.24%	1,867,365	1.73%	1972	2,971,387	1.16%	2,913,489	1.25%
1951	2,067,785	7.74%	2,021,529	8.26%	1973	2,991,173	0.67%	2,929,442	0.55%
1952	2,175,522	5.21%	2,130,794	5.41%	1974	3,001,330	0.34%	2,938,248	0.30%
1953	2,317,316	6.52%	2,279,061	6.96%	1975	3,045,593	1.47%	2,983,073	1.53%
1954	2,461,553	6.22%	2,426,182	6.46%	1976	3,039,127	-0.21%	2,978,538	-0.15%
1955	2,459,201	-0.10%	2,426,009	-0.01%	1977	3,038,558	0.02%	2,977,902	-0.02%
1956	2,603,474	5.87%	2,570,762	5.97%	1978	3,142,537	3.42%	3,082,132	3.50%
1957	2,774,110	6.55%	2,741,950	6.66%	1979	3,314,332	5.47%	3,254,980	5.61%
1958	2,917,693	5.18%	2,877,647	4.95%	1980	3,395,577	2.45%	3,338,211	2.56%
1959	3,069,494	5.20%	3,025,008	5.12%					
1960	3,184,656	3.75%	3,141,441	3.85%					
1961	3,165,437	-0.60%	3,116,939	-0.78%					
1962	3,151,859	-0.43%	3,103,253	-0.44%					
1963	3,249,269	3.09%	3,190,266	2.80%					
1964	3,309,548	1.86%	3,253,414	1.98%					
1965	3,309,135	-0.01%	3,250,773	-0.08%					
1966	3,241,491	-2.04%	3,184,557	-2.04%					
1967	3,266,947	0.79%	3,198,874	0.45%					
1968	3,227,347	-1.21%	3,167,845	-0.97%					
1969	3,078,216	-4.62%	3,010,834	-4.96%					
1970	2,905,463	-5.61%	2,840,896	-5.64%					

Data source: Tianjing History, p. 1178.

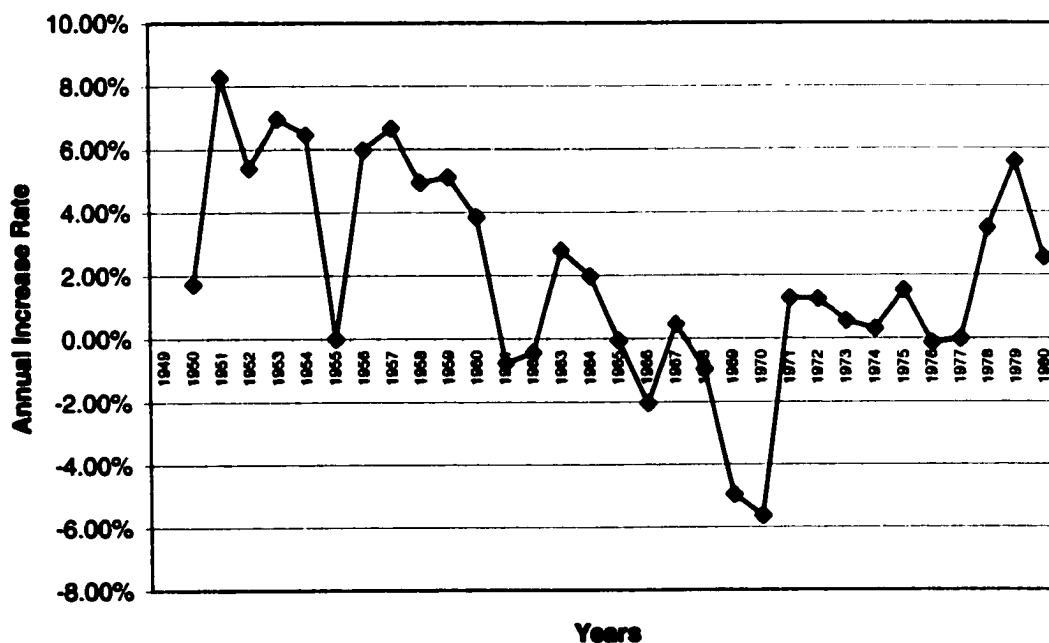
Chart 5: 1949-80 Tianjin Total Non-Agricultural Population Annual Increase Rate

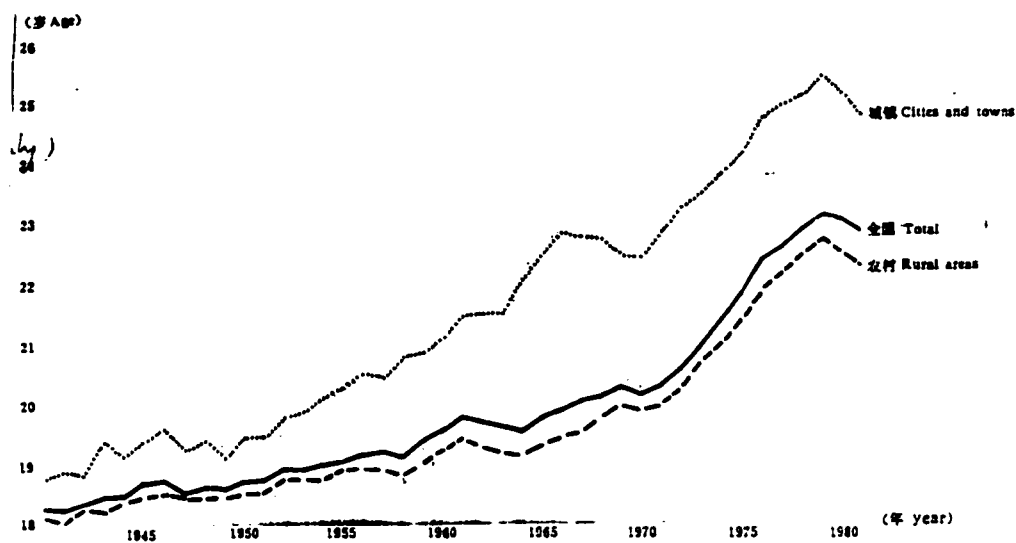
Table Eight: 1949-80 Tianjin Urban Migration Data

	Urban				Urban		
	In	Out	Net		In	Out	Net
1949				1971	22,300	15,833	6,467
1950				1972	32,195	17,522	14,673
1951	235,958	175,424	60,534	1973	36,123	24,005	12,118
1952	193,458	167,638	25,820	1974	39,197	33,847	5,350
1953	195,692	138,445	57,247	1975	46,927	20,802	26,125
1954	162,390	108,059	54,331	1976	29,857	21,176	8,681
1955	126,286	215,426	-89,140	1977	34,452	34,641	-189
1956	221,038	161,046	59,992	1978	81,714	21,610	60,104
1957	168,968	83,823	85,145	1979	143,289	34,736	108,553
1958	136,937	102,647	34,290	1980	51,977	24,933	27,044
1959	132,070	57,112	74,958	Total	518,031	249,105	268,926
Total	1,572,797	1,209,620	363,177				
1960	118,186	64,859	53,327				
1961	42,476	91,232	-48,756				
1962	25,910	107,483	-81,573				
1963	28,329	29,349	-1,020				
1964	45,566	37,446	8,120				
1965	36,814	69,616	-32,802				
1966	16,116	93,741	-77,625				
1967	14,270	8,572	5,698				
1968	18,928	90,473	-71,545				
1969	19,760	187,287	-167,527				
1970	22,086	94,144	-72,058				
Total	388,441	874,202	-485,761				

Data Source: Tianjin History, p.1178.

Chart Six

女性平均初婚年龄变化动态
Dynamics of Female Mean Age at First Marriage



Data Source: Chart for One-Per-Thousand Population Fertility Sampling Survey in China

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