Nancy E. Riley

Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone

Laboring in Paradise

Springer

Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone

Nancy E. Riley

Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone

Laboring in Paradise

Springer

Nancy E. Riley
Department of Sociology/Anthropology
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, ME, USA

ISBN 978-94-007-5523-9 ISBN 978-94-007-5524-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5524-6
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012953097

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

For Bob and Maggie, for everything.

Acknowledgments

This book has been a long time in the making and I am grateful for all the support I have had along the way.

I will be forever thankful to all those in Dalian who shared their stories with me. Their friendliness and openness made my fieldwork a pleasure and their perspectives taught me a great deal about many things. I thank the Fulian (Women's Federation) of the Dalian Economic Zone for sponsoring my research and for providing all the support and encouragement they did; Xiao Wang was especially helpful whenever I was in the DEZ.

I thank my wonderfully supportive colleagues at Bowdoin College, including Krista Van Vleet, Craig McEwen, and Susan Bell. I am especially grateful to Sara Dickey for all the tea and chocolate and the many helpful conversations I have had with her about this work over the years and to Deb DeGraff, whose different perspective on these issues allowed me new insights. Lori Brackett has provided wonderful support at work, for this project and everything else. The Bowdoin librarians were also always ready to find materials for me. Outside of Bowdoin, Susan Greenhalgh, Kathy Ferguson, and Elisa Johnston have all been people to whom I have turned for advice. Penny Martin, Dharni Vasudevan, Krista Van Vleet and Deb DeGraff offered me both friendship and writing space, both much appreciated. My parents, Francis J. Riley and Marion Riley, were supportive from the ground up.

My work has been supported by several fellowships and grants. Thanks to the University of Hawai'i Women's Studies Program and to the Rockefeller Foundation for a Rockefeller Fellowship and for conference funding where I presented this work. Early fieldwork was supported by the Committee for Scholarly Communication with China (CSCC) and the Wenner-Gren Foundation. Additional funding came from large and small grants from Bowdoin College, including a Kenan Fellowship in the early stages and a sabbatical leave later on. The East-West Center (Honolulu) provided me a home and friendly colleagues at two different times while I was writing. I also want to thank anonymous reviewers whose constructive advice made this manuscript much stronger than it would have been otherwise. Thanks to staff at Springer Publishing, including Evelien Bakker, Bernadette Deelen-Mans, and A. Lakshmi Praba for their help in publication and to Bob Gardner, for indexing.

My life in the field was made immeasurably more pleasant by the wide range of support I have received from the Ghalili family in Dalian. Thanks to Nikka, Sacha, and Dima and especially to Ladon and Foad. From warm hospitality, incredible food, help when I was ill, to helping me make contacts in the field, I could not have accomplished what I did without their support. May we all have friends like these.

A friend once told me that if she could have any wish in the world, it might be a few days alone every now and then, away from her busy work and family life. Just to think, to write, and to think some more. She told me this as I was about to leave for three days just like that, three solid days of writing and thinking, away from the demands of my regular life. My friend's wish underscored how grateful I am for those times I had, that my family allowed me to carve out, to go off and write and think. It was those periods of times, and the other kinds of supports and understanding on the part of my family, that made it possible to finish this book. I will be forever thankful and appreciative for that understanding. I owe a great deal to Bob Gardner for all his help and support in all of my work, and to Maggie who has been with me for most of the journeys of this book, figurative and literal, having spent much time with me in the field, and often waited patiently for me to get home from work.

Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction

Huiyang was in her early 30s when I first met her; over the course of several hours of interviews, I came to see her as the success story that so many rural migrant women aspire to. She had grown up in a poor rural family, one of four children. Her family was classified as "peasant," with a rural hukou. She managed to graduate from middle school, at the age of 16, but was unable to pursue further education because of her family's straitened circumstances and the lack of schooling in her rural region. Huiyang found small jobs for several years after graduating, working first in agricultural jobs, and then finding ways to earn small amounts selling goods in a local market. She described her earlier life as very difficult: "I was always worried about not selling enough, and if I did not sell enough, I did not have enough money. I was always worried, always had to work, I worked all the time. I started work early, and finished late in the evening. I used to ride a bike then, and carry 100 jin [over 100 lb] or more of things every day." When she was 28, Huiyang managed to land a job in a big factory in the Dalian Economic Zone and has worked there since. In her conversations, she makes it clear how important her family life is to her. She had married someone whom a relative had introduced to her and they have a 10 year old daughter. She and her husband have bought an apartment in the Zone. Perhaps most importantly, they both now have urban hukou, allowing them access to urban services; her daughter goes to school in the Zone and Huiyang has dreams that her daughter will eventually be able to attend university, something completely unavailable to Huiyang herself as a rural peasant.

By the standards of most in this region, Huiyang epitomizes success: a rural migrant who has achieved official urban status, whose daughter has a promising future in front of her. She herself assesses her life very positively. Huiyang works at least 8 hours a day on an assembly line at an American-owned factory; there, she makes a salary considered good relative to the salary she might earn at another factory and much more than she ever imagined making when she had been living in the village. Her hours at the factory are bookended by hours spent in housework and childcare, work for which she is nearly solely responsible. In spite of this very busy life, she insists her life is great and not at all difficult. "I don't have any worries…

N.E. Riley, *Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone: Laboring in Paradise*,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5524-6_1,

Look at me," she insists, "I never wake before 5 and I usually am asleep at 10. It is not tiring work at all!"

Huiyang's positive assessment of her life in the Dalian Economic Zone (DEZ) and the efforts she put into achieving it represent the experiences of many women there, most of whom are rural migrants. In my research, I have sought to understand the perspectives of Huiyang and other rural migrants. Many of them talked about the promise of a new life, a different and better life, than they had left behind in rural villages, and the efforts it took or would take to reach their goals. This project focuses on the family lives of married women who have migrated from rural villages to urban spaces. I argue that Dalian women[1] live their lives amid two major inequalities: as women, they must grapple with long-standing and deeply embedded gender inequalities; but in their conversations, they are even more focused on a second inequality, that of the urban/rural divide. These inequalities are central to understanding Dalian women's lives and we will see how they have influenced their lives, their choices, and their futures. But equally important is the discourse of modernity in contemporary China, a discourse that has been constructed through gender, family and the urban/rural divide. This force is best analyzed at the societal level, but it nonetheless has a powerful impact on individuals. A close examination of Dalian women's lives illuminates both the new promises and beginnings in the lives of these women and in China more generally but also indicates the continuation of past practices.

The Dalian Economic Zone, where this research takes place, is part of southern Liaoning Province in Northeast China and on the coast of the Yellow Sea. The Zone lies some 35 km northeast of Dalian city. Shenyang, a major industrial city, is situated about 350 km north of the Zone. Northeast China is known for having some of the heaviest industrial investment anywhere in China. Shenyang is considered one of the most polluted cities in the country[2]; the city's water and air have been collecting the output of factories and enterprises for years. Between and around these urban areas are numerous villages where peasants grow rice, apples, and vegetables for the urban market.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, when most of this research took place, the Dalian Economic Zone was hardly a bustling place. The Economic Zone is relatively new. First opened in 1984, for most of the last 25 years, it remained a relatively quiet space. The ornamental trees lining the streets are still small, the buildings clearly recently built. The Zone counts many wide boulevards and streets but only in the last few years have the streets begun to take on the bustle and energy usually seen in urban areas; for much of the past couple decades, these streets often seemed nearly

[1] In this book, I sometimes use a shorthand, "Dalian women" to describe these women. But I refer – always – to women who live and work in the DEZ.

[2] Shenyang has been making progress since 1988 when it was named one of the ten most polluted cities in the world by the World Health Organization, but it is still a city with environmental problems.

deserted and even now, there are stretches of wide boulevards with few people to be seen. The area is designed as an industrial zone, and there are areas where nearly the only structures visible are large box-like factory buildings. In other places, abandoned construction sites litter the landscape. Other areas are more populated but during the winter months, the winds howl often and strongly enough that people rush from building to building. There are neighborhoods here, and these are increasing in number and in population density, but they still lack the long and complex histories of neighborhoods in most Chinese cities; neighbors often don't know each other or their families very well. Nevertheless, lives are shaped, created and enjoyed amidst this sometimes harsh physical environment; here and there, people shop and gather and eat. The streets are paved, often lined with cobbled sidewalks; tall buildings house families, children, fathers, mothers, friends, and relatives. Around any of the several schools in the Zone you can find small vendors selling snacks to the students, and at certain times of the day, the streets are full of colorfully dressed children and their parents on their way to or from school. The big market is always busy, and in the morning and evening, there are many small stands where farmers and others sell goods to those shopping for evening meals. Bicycles and small motorcycles swish to and fro, ringing bells and horns as they make their way through the crowds. There is now a large, bustling shopping center with modern stores, including a KFC and even a Starbucks. Office workers, in fashionable outfits and business clothes, bustle from their office to restaurants for lunch meetings or just an informal get-together with colleagues and friends. At certain times of the day, hundreds of factory workers, most of them young women, leave the factory grounds together to make their way to the small markets or food stalls. Some wear their factory uniforms and others are dressed in colorful, fashionable street clothes, with heeled shoes, faces made up, and carrying pretty bags.

But for all these markers of urban, the Dalian Economic Zone is also different from other urban areas, including Dalian city. In fact, it is much easier for rural migrants to reside here than in the city; the restrictions on living in the city are much greater, and these different rules of residence for outsiders reflect the differences between zone and city. The Zone is not a full-fledged city, lacking at least the historical weight of Dalian city. But it also a more transient place, with rural migrants, many of them on short-term work contracts and residence permits, making up a large proportion of the population.

In spite of any of the DEZ's limitations, many migrant women see their lives in the Dalian Economic Zone as successful. In the Dalian Economic Zone, women carve lives out of sometimes unfriendly environments. Most of these women are rural migrants, with no formal or official promise of what their future holds, living on temporary or non-existent work and household permits, and seemingly at the mercy of factory management who orders their lives in severe ways, in ways that seem very different from the lives they left in their home villages. But when asked, most of these women see themselves as very lucky, clearly seeing the area as a place of enormous possibility both for themselves and their family members. While most arrive in the Zone on temporary work permits, most hope and work toward more permanent settlement.

What is it about the Dalian Economic Zone that would push Huiyang and all the other rural migrant women with whom I talked to make every effort both to get to the zone and to find a way to stay there? From my own perspective, the DEZ was not a very charming or attractive place, but several women I talked to described it as "paradise." To understand how these migrant women came to see the DEZ so positively requires an understanding of social, economic, and ideological forces both large and small, near and far.

In this book, my purpose is to examine the lives of these migrant women, particularly married women, who work in factories and other jobs in the Dalian Economic Zone (DEZ). But before I began to hear the stories of women, I had a different set of research questions; those evolved once I began fieldwork and listened to women talking about their lives. I started this project focused on a question about power in families. I asked: how do these new jobs affect women's power in their families? I was particularly interested in various issues of power in this context of a new economic zone: women's interpretation of power in their own lives, the sources of power they claim, the hindrances and obstacles they face to achieving power, and the ways they assert their power.

In the course of my fieldwork, I quickly realized that while that question was still relevant and an important one to examine, in order to answer it, I had to broaden my perspective and shift my focus in ways that addressed other important issues in the lives of Dalian migrant women. When Dalian women talked about and assessed their lives, they did not focus on the questions of gender and family inequality that were the driving questions of my research. Rather, in interviews and conversations, they turned again and again to how well they had succeeded (or not) in their quest to become urban residents. As I listened to their stories and to their dreams and frustrations, it became clear how even the most intimate spheres of their lives were shaped by wider social, political, and economic forces. Thus, my project took a slightly different turn, in order to bring these different spheres of social life together. I came to understand the necessity of employing an approach that brings together micro-level politics with larger political, ideological, and discursive influences (see also Ferguson 1999). Understanding the micro-politics of family power would not be possible without recognizing and addressing rural migrant women's desires and the ways they were focused on urban residence. Together, they allow us insight into both the most far-reaching and the smallest levels of social life in China today.

I reframed my research question in order to understand why Dalian women were so focused on achieving urban residency and on the differences—the inequalities—between rural and urban areas, that when they talked about other issues in their lives, it was often through that lens. How, I began to ask, does gender inequality—at work, but particularly in their families—relate to these issues of urban and rural inequality? Gail Hershatter's advice is relevant here: she suggests that scholars take note when gender matters to participants and when it seems to recedes (Hershatter 2007: 116); she argues that "we need to track when and by whom it is used or discarded, as well as attending to how and why it is entwined with or displaced by other categories" (117). That perspective became central to my project, as I sought to understand how gender was entwined with other inequalities and categories, particularly the urban/rural divide and modernity.

Thus, while this book, and the research on which it is based, examines the issues of women's power in a changing Chinese society, it is not possible to ask as simple a question as whether or not these women have power or whether these new jobs and new urban lives give them more power. And while it may be easy to compare the scenes of rural and urban China and see those differences as the obvious reason women move to work in the factories or want to acquire a permanent urban residency, I argue that it is not simply urban/rural differences that underlie women's behavior and goals. There is no simple binary, with urban areas posited as good against the backward rural villages; many women envision Dalian as paradise for a variety of reasons that are enmeshed in very complex constructions. My goal is to tease apart those complexities to understand the gendered nature of modernity and power as these play out in urban and semi-urban environments and to explore how they influence women's constructions of identity and success. Women's power, the ways they define that power and how they use, resist, construct, and shape power, is influenced not only by their own decisions, determinations, and skills but by the way that power has been constructed and resides in and through the social structures in which they live (Allen 1999). We can think of women as performing gender, but they do so in ways that reflect that social landscape; women are constructing themselves and their lives using pieces of the world around them, often in new and creative ways.

This study looks at multiple levels of influences on the lives and futures of Dalian women to understand why women see the Dalian Economic Zone as paradise. It focuses on the lives of individual women, and builds on their own stories, examining individual-level characteristics such as the role of education or family background. We have to address and attend to the details of these individual lives; it is important that these women are rural migrants working in an Economic Zone, and mostly married. Their lives and experiences are situated within a number of overlapping and crosscutting social, political, ideological, and historical conditions. But it is also necessary to be attentive to the influences and features—the social, political, economic and ideological landscapes—that lie outside these individual lives, at the community, national, and even global levels. These features are complex, contradictory and complementary and women in Dalian adapt to them and adapt them in novel fashion, crafting paths and lives for themselves that reflect the different resources and influences around them. As individuals, women live their lives and plan their futures within these larger social structures, structures that shape the paths that they take or do not follow. The larger structures by no means determine outcomes, but we can nevertheless see the power—the constraints and opportunities—of these larger structures and issues in lives of individual women. Particularly key have been the two inequalities of gender and rural/urban residence.

Gender shapes the lives of all women and men in China today and plays a role at the national, village, family, and individual levels. Gender influences the hopes, opportunities of, and expectations for village women and often plays a role in women's decisions about their future (Hershatter 2007; Judd 1994). Equally important is the enormous urban/rural divide in China today, which has become a defining feature of the Chinese social landscape (Attane 2002; Solinger 1999). This divide has an economic component, as urban China receives the greater share of resources and attention

of China's plans for future economic growth. But the division between rural and urban China is also symbolic and is tied to constructions of modernity and development; these too influence women as they make decisions about their lives or even imagine the possibilities. While these overarching structures play influential roles in women's lives, individual women experience and address these differently, bringing to the mix their own characteristics, hopes, plans, and skills.

This study focuses primarily on married women working in the Dalian Economic Zone in multinational and Chinese factories. Their lives and strategies suggest the ways that identity is crafted, constructed, and shaped by forces as far away as the state and as individual as a woman's access to education, the roles her husband plays in the family and household, or her own personal goals. In spite of the contrasts with rural areas, women working in this economic zone do not lead easy lives. Most of them work in factories and other enterprises for long hours at low pay, at least by the standards of industrialized countries. Their working lives are similar to women's lives in other economic zones around the world (see Fernandes 1997; Freeman 2000; Kim 1997; Lee 1998). As these and other scholars have noted, understanding the connections between the workers in these economic zones and larger issues of globalization, world capitalism, and labor struggles is central to placing the overarching design of these economic zones and the workers in them. Pun (1999, 2005), for example, has examined how rural migrant women "become dagongmei" ("working girls") in China's Shenzhen area. She argues that these (mostly unmarried) women and their experiences are linked to the state's and market's construction of class in contemporary China and the ways that rural migration is linked to the needs of national development and global capitalism.

My work complements the work of these and other scholars (Chang 2009; Jacka 2005b; Sun 2009a); the women in Dalian, like the women in all other economic zones in China (and elsewhere) represent and mirror key issues in global capitalism today. Nevertheless, my focus is different than that of some other scholars. My interest is less in their lives at work than in their family lives. And, again, my primary concern is the lives of married women; as we will see, their marital status influences their relationships with many social, economic and political institutions in key ways. Their roles as mothers bring responsibilities and create pathways toward their goals that are directly tied to those roles. Nevertheless, these Dalian women, like those Pun and others have written about, are similarly influenced by "industrial capitalism [which] simultaneously manipulates wants, lacks, and desire and enshrines them among the Chinese peasantry, who not only dream of becoming industrial producers but also modern consumers" (Pun 2005: 13–14). I argue, however, that for these married women, their position as mothers influences what kind of producer and consumer roles they see for themselves.

In Dalian, as elsewhere, women's power in their families is not equal to that of their husbands. While many have argued that economic access can translate into family power (Blumberg 1991), for these women in Dalian, their work—though regular, relatively high paying and in an urban setting—does not necessarily translate into equality at home. While they have a certain independence in some areas of their lives, their lives are much more circumscribed than their husbands' and, in most

ways, gender inequality is as deeply rooted here as it is elsewhere—in China and outside it. At the same time, these new jobs, and this new urban space give women access to new forms of power and the ability to maneuver in ways that might have been previously unavailable to them. Women in Dalian combine these new opportunities and structures with old structures to create new lives for themselves. Most notable, perhaps, is the way that many have taken on the mantle of leaders in their household, using new opportunities to find and promote opportunities and successes of family members, particularly their children.

The women who make it to the Economic Zone and find work are often the ones that are most able to strategize wisely and successfully. Migration brings difficulties and dangers, and these women are the ones who have made it through the obstacles. But even within these successes, their stories are not ones of widespread or single-direction change, or absolute equality with men around them, but contain the complexities and contradictions that mirror the environments in which they live. Their conversations underscore their belief in their ability to make and achieve goals, to assess the situation and find and follow a path to those goals. In their descriptions about work, for example, they use the language of rights and responsibilities, easily discussing what they see as their rights in that arena.

But their discussions and language about their families and their roles there are different in tone and perhaps goal as well. Here women do not strategize, plan, or carry out their own plans in the same way that they do in their work arenas. In interviews with me, women regularly report that their lives are busier and much less easy than are their husbands', and they acknowledge that by many measures, their husbands retain more power than they do—economic control but also more control over their own time. But at the same time, women apparently do not address perceived inequalities within the household in the same ways that they might outside it. About work, women speak of rights and responsibilities, about what they are owed and what they need to do to get what is their due. When they speak of home, however, they are much more likely to simply shrug their shoulders at the inequalities and burdens they face there. While gender inequality seemed strong and obvious to me as an outsider, women themselves often responded in ways that suggested that gender inequality is not a major concern in their lives. These apparent paradoxes raise questions of how women perceive their role and position in their households and families, and how gender is enacted in family settings. Women are hardly just acquiescing to the inequality in their households. Rather, they seem to be focused on other ways and routes to achieve what they consider to be satisfying, successful lives. At the same time that they describe difficult, tiring lives, they also report satisfaction in their lives. Dalian's Economic Zone has given them new opportunities to reconstruct themselves into modern, successful women.

The Dalian Economic Zone invites such reconstructions and reimaginings. Here, the power of modernity and the influence of that force on the imaginations of rural women is easily apparent. One of several sites of government early efforts to modernize the country using a capitalist model, these sites have taken on symbolic importance. The DEZ is full of factories owned by foreign enterprises, and the women who are working in them are thus connected to globalization on a daily basis. In that way,

but in many others as well, rural women have access to modernity in the DEZ; even if actual acquisition of many the elements of modern life are out of their financial reach, they are nevertheless living a modern life. The physical surroundings themselves underscore their new relationship to modernity; women in Dalian often mentioned the significance of high rise buildings, paved streets, and numerous stores. Most of those working in factories are not able to buy the stuff of modernity, or actively take part in consumption. But as Schein (2001) has argued, the influence of consumption and its association with modernity is felt well beyond those who can actually afford to consume at a particular level. For these Dalian women, then, living in the city, and working at urban jobs, represents a relation to modernity and a modern status that was unavailable in the village. As well, they are closer, at least physically, to the promise of a consumerist, modern life. This promise, this potential, rather than current behavior, may be another reason that, as we will see, children become the focus of women's efforts to attain urban, modern, status. It is significant that the large proportion of those working in the zone are migrants from nearby rural villages. The potential of moving from a rural, un-modern status to a modern, urban status was part of the social landscape of the DEZ. The women at the center of this study are thus part of a huge trend in China, in which millions of peasants are moving to urban areas, crossing, deal with challenging the urban/rural divide.

While rural/urban residence is important, that does not negate the importance of gender, either in the process of migration nor in these women's lives. Rather, gender is apparent and present all along the way—in the migration process itself and in the ways that women think about their lives and their futures. When trying to explain why women do not contest inequality in the household (as Huiyang—whose story began this chapter—did not in hers), one could argue that women are willing to sacrifice their own individual goals for the good of the family; indeed, the ideology of the family, and of gender, lends support for this explanation and I believe this is part of the explanation. That may be especially true in China where identity is closely tied to the family and where the state and other social institutions have not promoted a separate identity for individuals outside their families. This family identity is also particularly strong for women. But I argue it is not as simple as women giving up their own goals for their family. Rather, in their family roles and in the attention and energy they give to their families, Dalian women are using this normative family identity to achieve their own goals, to construct and present themselves as successful, modern women. In this way, the findings of this research differ from that of others (but see Lee 1998 for similarities). Mary Beth Mills, writing about young migrant women in Bangkok, describes these women's "contested selves;" "their attempts to pursue thamsamay aspirations [to be modern women] were fundamentally at odds with their obligations as young women to rural kin" (Mills 1999:135). The Dalian women at the heart of this study, in contrast, seemed to have found ways to dovetail their own interests in modern life with the expectations of and obligations and responsibilities as mothers. They use their status as married women to justify their attention to acquiring the status of modern women.

How women construct this identity and the importance of the urban in doing so is a key piece of this project and my argument. Here, Judith Butler's arguments

about gender as performativity and the expansion on those ideas by other scholars help to illuminate how rural women might see Dalian as presenting more opportunities for themselves (in addition to those that urban areas give to women's children). The expected scripts for women in rural areas are likely to differ in major ways from the scripts acceptable for single women living in urban areas. Urban areas may appeal to rural women because of the gender scripts available there; urban areas are likely to offer a wider variety of acceptable scripts than do rural areas. So another way to understand the attraction of these urban spaces for women is to recognize how women can employ different spaces to enact their own gender performance and even produce or reproduce new gender scripts out of the social landscape of the urban.

But even as an urban setting might allow a revised gender performance, that setting is not without constraints. The gender performances women enact are "never fully self-styled, for styles have a history, and those histories condition and limit the possibilities" (Butler 1990: 139). As we recognize the strategies that these individual women have developed and used in various areas of their lives, we also see the ways their strategies are constrained. "Just outside the circle of the spotlight are inequalities, historical developments, and differences that structure (without determining) presentations women variously interpret" (Weston 1993: 17). Or, as Weston has expressed it, these women are "caught between the rock of structure and the hard place of agency" (Weston 1993: 12). When we look at these rock-like structures that lie beyond the individual, we can begin to understand the gender performances of rural women working in multinational factories and struggling to make a living for themselves and their families. Those structures include the historical influence of elements of gender and family ideology and the kinds of languages and discourses in general that are and are not available to such women in China. Ferguson (1999) argues that we need to be attentive both to individual levels and reactions and to these larger socio-political structures that surround and influence any individual performance or experience. These different levels are sometimes in tension with one another, but I argue that they also sometimes work together in the lives of Dalian women. Their experiences underscore how even modernity is gendered, in the way it proceeds, how it is propelled or slowed by the presence or absence of state policies, and the spaces that imagination of modernity opens up or closes.

Scott (1985, 1990) and deCerteau (1984) properly call our attention to the kinds of resistances, the "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985) of those without formal power. Indeed, we can see those resistances in the lives of women working in the economic zone. These instances of resistance, however, are directed toward certain people and not others, enacted in some situations and not others. Abu-Lughod (1990) has argued for using resistance as "a diagnostic of power" (42), a way of seeing the (sometimes contradictory) forms of power which influence women's lives and to which they resist. In that way, understanding the direction and place (and absence) of resistance provides important information about the discursive landscape of the lives of rural women living in the economic zone, providing links between the individual lives of Dalian women and the larger social and ideological landscape. One of the main goals of this research has been to understand power—how

is it constructed and used and by whom—and in Chap. 5, I sketch out an understanding of power that allows for attention to issues of power at all levels of society.

Thus, all of these processes—women's strategies, the organization of work, migration patterns, and the process of modernizing—are deeply gendered. While women did not always speak quickly or comprehensively of the role of gender in their lives, women did speak about their children, especially their daughters; the ways they spoke about their roles as mothers demonstrate the interconnections between gender, women's roles as mothers, and modernity. These conversations, where women constructed themselves as successful women at least partly through their efforts to promote and make possible their children's successes, reflect the power of discursive structures in individual lives. Their talk and the way they often see themselves and act as mothers and family members reflects an engagement with a deeply engrained legacy of a gender discourse in which woman is constructed through family; to be a good woman, even in China today, is to be a good mother and wife. Thus, their new lives in this urban area do not necessarily to prompt them to seek "liberation" or independence from the constraints of family. At first, we might see this as women simply acquiescing to these responsibilities and bonds. But I argue that they are using their role as mothers to construct themselves as modern, successful women. Thus, they act to combine new opportunities with long-standing expectations. My findings complement those of others (Yan 2006; Hansen and Pang 2010) who have argued that while individualization has increased in China, most people do not act strictly on an individual basis, nor is such behavior necessarily the new norm. In contemporary China, family continues to be a highly valued and central social institution to most Chinese, particularly in this time of receding government and Party involvement in the lives of individuals. Indeed, policies and events have underscored the centrality of family to Chinese society. But even given the weight and influence of these long-standing discourses of gender and family, Dalian women's decisions and actions are not simply the old way of being female. Rather, they can be seen as a kind of resistance to hegemonic images of women as subordinate; in these new, expanded roles, women show how able they are in negotiating modern institutions such as Public Security, schools, and factories, and to do so in a way that furthers their own interests and goals. But at the same time, the ways that women are more likely to make these efforts on behalf of their children rather than themselves also indicate how they may reinforce some of the very gender and family ideology that has constrained their lives in the past. As Abu-Lughod (1990) has argued about Bedouin women in Egypt, women in Dalian are operating in a shifting zone of power relations, one that encompasses both old forms of power and new ones created by the increasing connections to a wider, including global, society.

The Dalian Economic Zone is an especially appropriate place to see these struggles, contradictions and successes. In that zone, the rural/urban dichotomy and hierarchy is very obvious, both within the area itself, and within women's lives. So too are the strong influences and even tensions among foreign (which includes western, but also Japanese) and Chinese enterprises and values. While some of those differences are emphasized by the Chinese government to underscore national interests, others are seen by the women themselves as creating both tensions and

opportunities in their lives. In this kind of zone, which is relatively new and deliberately created and which does not have the weight of history that is found in other living areas, there appears to be space—physical and symbolic—for new ideas, structures, and norms. Indeed, in some ways, this zone embodies characteristics that scholars have ascribed to cities across the world: "the anonymity of the city makes for a social milieu in which acting is the norm, in which the self is always being presented differently.... It is cities that are portrayed as the settings where new states of mind could come into being" (Schein 2001: 227; Visser 2010). A kind of frontier mentality exists in the DEZ; government rules (residency, family planning regulations, or traffic rules) are not as rigidly enforced as they are elsewhere. At the same time, there is also not the same kind of deep and historically based family, kin, or community networks that Chinese citizens find in other places. These characteristics suggest that people may have a different sense of their ability to choose which rules to keep and follow, and which they might ignore or even leap over. It is also a place where observers can test whether some rules and norms have a longer arm or stronger teeth than others.

Although these Dalian women cannot represent all Chinese women, or all rural migrants, they are an important group to study at this juncture in Chinese history. Understanding the complexities of their lives, and the ways that they negotiate them will allow us to understand better how the powerful and huge changes occurring in China—which are having an impact in nearly all spheres of Chinese society—affect individuals across China.

Through an examination of these Dalian women's lives, this volume takes up the broad social issues of modernity, gender, family, and rural/urban dichotomy. While these issues will be dealt with separately, it is nevertheless with an understanding that they act on the social landscape not independently of one another, but rather, work together—simultaneously constructing and conflicting with one another. So while I address these separately in the next chapters, at the end of the book I will return more fully and directly to the ways that they act together.

In Chap. 2, I describe the Dalian Economic Zone and discuss both the government's intention in setting up such zones and the ways that these zones can be seen as borderlands of both capitalist and socialist practices (Lee 2000) and as sites of both exploitation and opportunity. For rural migrants who make up much of the population of these zones, these zones offer very different social and work opportunities than do their home villages. Chapter 2 also discusses my research methodology and connects it with recent discussions in social science regarding conduct and interpretation of interviews, the role of outsiders in the creation of knowledge, and challenges of doing an ethnographic project in an urban environment.

Chapter 3 looks at the urban/rural divide in contemporary China, discussing how this divide has been constructed particularly through state policies such as the hukou system and the prohibition of most migration between 1949 and the early 1980s, influences that continue to shape social life today. Material differences between rural and urban are pronounced but they are bolstered and deepened by an ideological divide that sees rural as lesser: backward, unenlightened, and incapable of contributing to China's position in the modern world. While economic reform has changed

the nature of urban/rural separation in some ways, especially as villagers began to be permitted to travel to and even live in urban areas, many elements of the old urban/rural inequality remain today. Without official hukou (residency permit), peasants living in urban areas remain marginalized in nearly all spheres of their lives.

In Chap. 4, I examine the role of gender in the lives of Dalian migrants, looking at how gender has influenced their lives in childhood, work, schooling, migration, marriage, and relationships with family members (daughters, in-laws, and parents). I argue that past and present national discourses surrounding gender—and their connections to those of work and family—have had important influences on the paths that women in Dalian have taken; the state, in both the gender issues on which it has focused its attention and those it has not, has played a key role.

In Chap. 5, I address the complexities of power. Here, I argue that we have to go beyond the question of whether these jobs or salaries give women more access to power within their families. While access to wages and jobs is one important source of power, discursive elements of power are also important and sometimes have an even stronger effect on women's lives. These give voice and authority to some individuals and pathways and block other routes from effective navigation, even making it difficult to see alternative routes as options. Depending on how we measure power in the family, we could argue that women, even those receiving high wages at what are considered good jobs, are not able to achieve parity with their husbands. Husbands nearly always have better access to monies for their personal use, more time away from family or work responsibilities, and do significantly less work around the home. I explore how family discourse and relative silence around family inequality make it difficult for women to attempt gender parity within their families. Because of the close connection between definitions of successful and proper women and family, such efforts would require new definitions of womanhood and motherhood. In addition, women would have to find ways to disassociate themselves with family members which might undermine their own goals of being successful modern women. But women are able to assert their own power and achieve some of their personal goals through other means. This chapter examines some of these ways that women assert their own power or resist structures of power.

Chapter 6 brings together the themes and findings from past chapters to discuss the ways that contradictory, complementary and parallel changes are evident in women's lives and the paths they choose, with particular attention to modernity. Constructions of modernity, consumerism, family, work, and gender all play roles in Dalian women's lives. In this chapter I take up the ways that women imagine modernity, the force of that imagination, and their perceived place in that new modern society, exploring the different meanings of modernity for these women. I argue that urban areas offer rural women new imaginations, a place where women are not simply blindly accepting of this new space, but rather using new and old regimes and constructions to further their own lives.

Chapter 7 concludes and summarizes my findings. The results from this study in Dalian underscore the importance of social, political, and economic context for any of the questions raised here. The particular setting of these women's lives is key to

understanding these different pathways: they are rural people in a society where urban dominates; they are working class, with limited education and other personal resources; they often work in factories run by foreigners; and, importantly, they are women in a male-dominated culture.

Women's power is not determined by their wages or access to a regular income, although that has certainly been a factor in women's lives. But those changes and access are part of a larger picture. That larger context includes the urban/rural dichotomy that has existed in China for centuries, has been deepened by government policies in the past 50 years, and continues to be a factor in rural peasants' lives. Particularly with China's move to a market economy and its increasing efforts to be part of the world economy, the continuing role of the state, constructions of modernity and the way that individuals within the country address issues of modernity are also key factors in Dalian women's lives.

But these recent changes are vying for attention with older discourses; particularly important for the women in this study are those related to family and gender. It is through families that individuals achieve success. Thus for Dalian migrant women, identification of success is still primarily through the family, not as individuals. For women to seek an individual pathway to success is not likely to work in a society where family dominates social organization and individualism is still not highly valued, even under the influence of the new market economy. In addition, those whom women would resist—such as family members—are also the very people who can help them achieve their own goals. Dalian women, however, are not simply is pawns in these social and economic changes. What this study demonstrates is how women manipulate, use, and shape the larger discourses of gender, family, modernity, and success to achieve their goals. Being a good mother is still important, but Dalian women achieve a particular version of successful motherhood when they achieve a modern (which necessarily includes urban) status for themselves and, most notably, for their children. In this process, other routes of resistance and even success, such as resistance to gender inequalities at home, are of less interest, are less accessible, and less useful to women. In this way, Dalian women use selected pieces of contemporary and earlier discourses to define themselves as successful women.

Chapter 2
Doing Research in the Dalian Economic Zone

In an interview with me, Liming, a woman from the province of Heilongjiang who was now selling fruit on the street in the Dalian Economic Zone, explained that an economic zone has a special status; because she had managed to move there to live, even without having acquired a permanent residency permit, she is viewed as a success by her friends back home. When I asked her why, she explained "Because I live in the DEZ, [my status] is considered higher, more successful. The DEZ is even better than Harbin [a city in Heilongjiang]… This is a development zone, it is really developed and Harbin is just a city. So coming here is better, there are more opportunities for people here."

Liming, like many other Chinese—laborers and others—sees these zones as places of opportunities. But however they are perceived in the localities themselves, Asian economic zones often conjure up quite different images in the west. Many westerners imagine these areas as full of factories that exploit their workers, where workers labor for long hours at low wages and with little time away from their machines. Because of assumed "nimble fingers" and "docile bodies," it is women who are most often laboring under these conditions. How do we reconcile two competing versions of economic zones?

An important difference between these two perspectives on economic zones is from where they arise; these zones can seem exploitative to those who are concerned about the deepening global economy and its "race to the bottom," as businesses seek to produce goods with the largest profit margins and lowest labor costs possible. On the other side, economic zones appear very different to many Chinese who often see them as sites of new opportunities and a better life, particularly compared to rural areas. In addition, these zones have had an important place in shaping both China's economic growth and its identity as a modern player in the world economy. Recognizing the symbolic importance of the economic zones helps to explain the attractiveness of these areas to many across China and the reasons for the steady stream of rural migrants who have headed to these areas.

In this chapter, I address the site of the research—economic zones, the role of economic zones in China's modernizing and development projects, and the image and reality of Dalian's Economic Zone in particular. In the second half of the

N.E. Riley, *Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone: Laboring in Paradise*, 15
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5524-6_2, © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

chapter, I describe and situate my research and methodology, and discuss the ways that several factors—notably that this is urban ethnography, that I was a foreigner collecting these data, and that it is a feminist project—have likely influenced the process and outcome of this work.

Chinese Economic Zones

The Dalian Economic Zone was created in 1984. Like the other 13 designated coastal areas at the time, Dalian's zone was modeled after the four Special Economic Zones (SEZ) created in 1979. These four zones (in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shantou in Guangdong Province and in Xiamen in Fujian Province; a later SEZ was opened in Pudong, Shanghai) were meant to be the first sites for changes in the economy after economic modernization became a goal in the late 1970s. While the SEZs received special (and early) consideration beyond that given to the next phase of zones (including Dalian's), in their designation as sites for special consideration and resources, they shared some regulations, goals, and expectations with all of the zones. These zones were similar in some ways to those being established in other countries throughout the world. In China, as in other places, it was hoped that these zones would attract foreign investment, but in such a way that that investment could be used to promote national and even local economic growth. The Chinese zones used lower tax structures, better infrastructure, flexible wage and labor policies, and promise of reduced bureaucracy to attract foreign investors and enterprises to relocate to the area. One of the first goals of the government in setting up these zones was to take advantage of recent worldwide trends of industry relocation from industrial countries to less industrialized areas of the world. China's leaders hoped that setting up these zones would allow an easier transition of technology to China and would, at the same time, be an avenue for the employment of rural underemployed residents (Wu 1999).

The evidence from other societies suggested that these goals were indeed possible to meet, especially on a short term basis. Economic zones have been set up in countries across Asia beginning in the 1970s and continuing through the present. While the goals and strategies around these zones have differed in different places, they do share some common features. In places such as Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore, economic zone development was believed to increase foreign investment, generate employment, and increase exports (Chen 1994). Assessments of the early stages of many zones suggest that these zones were able to attract new foreign investment, and that the output of the zones contributed to the total foreign investment in many areas. Employment opportunities have been more mixed; rapid turnover, low wages, and a high percentage of female workers have meant that employment opportunities have often been limited. While employment and foreign investment have started strong and then faltered in economic zones in Asia, two other important goals for most countries—technology transfer and domestic integration—seem to have had the opposite trend; these often start slowly but increase over time (Chen 1994). Another outcome of Asian economic zones has been the development and strengthening of ties

across borders. For example, Shenzhen, in south China, had immediate and strong connections to Hong Kong. Singapore established an economic zone that strengthened its ties to Johor, Malaysia and Riau in Indonesia (Peng 2002–2003). Thus, evidence about the role and success of economic zones from other parts of Asia is mixed, with early successes in some areas and later successes in others.

Of course, China did not see itself as just like other Asian countries. While unbridled capitalism might undergird the economies of its neighbors, in the 1980s, capitalism in China was still seen as taboo in many ways. The long struggle toward a socialist system made it difficult to see capitalism as other than connected to "pain and suffering [and] the brutal exploitation of hapless workers" (Crane 1996: 165). And so the Chinese government's development of the Economic Zones proceeded with an attempt to walk a fine line between the capitalist principles that underlay much of the zones' functions, organization, and processes, and general socialist principles still at the center of China's development, even as the zones were given a certain autonomy. Unlike those in other countries, the Chinese SEZs were controlled centrally by a socialist government. Much larger than those in other Asian countries, the Chinese zones also had a wider range of enterprises and businesses within the zones, including industrial businesses but also agriculture, tourism, science and education facilities.

But at the same time, these zones provided the space and the rationalization for economic and even social reforms. At first, the zones were touted as merely an extension of post-Mao reforms, but even as they theoretically were centrally controlled, their relative autonomy allowed the country to experiment with new economic policies and systems. The zones were seen by many as a way to move slowly toward the opening of the economy; their separation from the rest of the country, both geographically and economically, was meant to allow the government to control how foreign investment influenced China (Wu 1999). "Official and popular documents referred to SEZs and Coastal Cities as 'catalysts' for the development of interior regions, 'classrooms' for learning new skills, and 'corridors of development'" (Hoffman 2010: 36). The language used to describe these areas suggests the ways these areas have taken on particular meaning to many; "mouths," "windows," and "hinges" are often used to describe these areas (Hoffman 2010: 36), suggesting the ways they are seen as places that can act as entry and exit points—between interior and coastal China, and between China and other countries—for goods, people, and new ideas.

After four decades of experience with the original four SEZs and later experiences with smaller economic zones (including Dalian's), assessments of their success have varied. Some have pointed to the pace of economic development within the zones as evidence of their success (Ge 1999); from this perspective, these zones have fueled economic change and opening throughout the Chinese economy, and thus have had an impact far beyond their geographical boundaries. Others have described the performance of these zones—in light of their original goals—as fairly poor (Park 1997; Crane 1990). Foreign investment was not as high as was hoped; in Shenzhen, for example, domestic investment, rather than foreign investment, has driven more of the growth seen there, suggesting that the Chinese economy

has had to bear a large part of development costs. Technology transfer was not significant; while millions have been employed in enterprises housed in the zones, these jobs are mostly at low levels, and have not provided the skill training that was once an imagined outcome of zone development. From reports and assessments of different zones, it is clear that the various zones in China have had different successes and problems. Different locations have contributed to different outcomes, with those zones more strategically situated enjoying more success due to their access. Another contributing factor is the local management of each zone; while the area itself is designated as a special zone by the central government, local institutions, both state and private (such as the multinational corporations which make up the businesses) also play a role (Wei and Leung 2005). One of the problems facing all the zones located in the eastern coastal region may be increasing competition from investment in interior areas. Those areas are poorer and are receiving some government attention. But it is the relative high costs of doing business in the coastal areas that may make these interior areas attractive to foreign and domestic investors (Leggett 1998). Rising land prices alone in coastal Economic Zones may encourage such moves. Global economic slowdowns after 2005 also affected the economic health of the zones, as the demand for China's exports slowed. Evaluations of China's coastal economic zones has been mixed and will likely continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

However the zones have been evaluated economically, as separate spaces that would be the first connectors to the outside, modern, often western economies, the zones have nevertheless continued to represent an important space, both physical and discursive, in contemporary China. It is here that we can place Liming's version of the DEZ, described at the beginning of this chapter. Zones are seen by many across China as the site of foreign firms, consumer goods, fashions, and business deals. Because these phenomena are linked to visions of China's future, the zones are seen as places of "exciting visions of newness, opportunity and progress" (Crane 1996: 160). In this way, zones are seen as politically safe but still exciting places where socialism and capitalism, Chinese and foreign, and even rural and urban entities mix and produce new forms. In this way, these economic zones have acted as harbingers of China's future. "A significant part of China thus becomes, symbolically, as well as empirically, a newly industrializing economy highly integrated into world markets through a dynamic export-oriented manufacturing sector, brimming with growth and success, where entrepreneurial social forces are liberated by the recalibration of state power, where ideology is subsumed by pragmatism, and where modern vestiges of Confucian culture—thrift, hard work and education—are economic advantages. The description of an "East Asian model', and its aura of positive accomplishment, now makes sense for China" (Crane 1996: 164). Zones in this way connect the visions of Chinese planners who hope the newness and sense of innovation will attract outside, especially foreign, investment. And those same presumed characteristics of these zones attract laborers, who seek to create new lives in these zones, and to do so through work in these, often foreign, enterprises.

But with this positive attraction and the influence that the zones have had on the image of the Chinese economy as progressive and future-looking have come negative

impacts. Especially key are the ways that these zones incorporate capitalist morality and vision into their assessment of success and progress:

> In constructing a distinct national economic identity, SEZs reconstitute economic difference; they create new 'others' as mirrors for themselves. Where once 'capitalists', 'landlords' and 'imperialists' were antagonists, the 'other' can now be conceived of in terms of the poor, the unemployed, and the unsuccessful. SEZ advocacy, in hiding inequalities and failings, rationalizes inequality and redefines failure. If zones and the free-wheeling economic practices they instill are taken to be grand opportunities for prosperity and progress, then anyone who founders in them is liable to be represented as inherently inferior. SEZs thus authorize a discourse drawn more from traditional ('peasants are backwards') and market ('your economic failure is your own fault') languages than from socialist ideology, languages that justify the gap between rich and poor (Crane 1996: 166)

Also important is the way the development zones are built on and reinforce gender inequalities that exist in China and the underlying differences between rural and urban across the country (O'Donnell 1999; Pun 2005). As Chap. 3 describes in detail, the rural/urban distinction can be thought of as a state-induced and -supported class system. While rural migrants make up much of the population and labor force of the SEZs and other economic zones, they do so while retaining their rural class standing. They live in an urban area, but are not afforded access to most urban resources and institutions. That the large proportion of factory workers are women (and young women as well) is important in both the ways the state addresses labor and living issues in the economic zones and the ways that these zones are seen by the Chinese at large. Because women (and rural peasants) make up such a large proportion of these transplanted migrant workers in the factories undoubtedly contributes to the zones being seen as half-way areas, and may be one of the reasons that the state is less involved in monitoring and enforcing labor regulations (Judd 1994).

Economic Zones: Sites of Exploitation and Opportunity

Economic zones are the destination of many rural migrants seeking work, especially women. Of all extra-provincial female migrants, fully half of them go to the export processing zones in Guangdong province, especially to those in the Pearl River Delta region (another quarter go to coastal cities) (Tan 2004: 248). The draw of economic zones to rural migrants brings us back to the question that began this chapter, how zones are sites of exploitation or opportunity. There are many reports, often carried out by outsiders and/or reported in the western media, about the miserable lives of Chinese workers, especially those who work in factories. Many of the reports about Chinese Economic Zones (Rosen 2002; Pun 2005; Andors 1988; Chan 2002) are accurate reports about conditions and many of these negative images are, in fact, true, especially when viewed from the perspective of the west. But there are caveats to this assessment. First, much of this literature is couched in the overall experience of an increasing global economy and the so-called "race to the bottom" where businesses in the west close up shop there

and move to a place where they can produce the same goods for the lowest costs. The increasing number of factory and other manufacturing jobs in China are, indeed, connected to the loss of jobs in the United States in the last couple decades (Rosen 2002). Certainly, when viewed from the perspective of western business, the wages and sometimes standards at these factories are often below the standards found in the west. Recent reports (Duhigg and Barboza 2012) about the Foxconn Factory in South China, for example, have pointed out the terrible working conditions, low wages and other labor violations that are behind the manufacture of many Apple and other "American" products. And certainly, workers in nearly all factories in China are paid less than workers in the U.S. (Chan and Siu 2010). But because of the very different living standards and costs of living in these two parts of the world, these relative assessments are less useful for understanding the lives of women in Dalian.

Secondly, while such reports might describe some factories, not all factories engage in such exploitative and abusive practices. Thus, painting a picture of factories in Chinese economic zones as all bad is not accurate; different localities and especially different factories have very different conditions. Anita Chan (2001), for example, has documented abuses and lack of rights for many places in China. She cites reports (often published in the Chinese press) of poor environmental and working conditions, forced labor, physical assault, and constraints on the right to organize. But Chan also argues that most of the abuses that are found in these factories producing for export markets are found not in western-owned factories (including Japanese) but in Chinese or ethnically Chinese (Hong Kong or Taiwan) factories. Western firms do not have same reputation as others for mistreating workers; "Not one case of a Western-owned enterprise surfaced in my collection of documentation. In contrast, many workers at Asian-owned, labor-intensive enterprises are paid below the minimum wage… and experience harsh discipline and abuse" (Chan 2001: 11).

The conditions in Dalian appear similar, and factories in the DEZ present a mixed record. In discussions with me, both workers and managers in Dalian repeatedly pointed to the very different conditions in different factories within the DEZ; most argued that Chinese-owned (and sometimes, they argued, Korean-owned) factories had the worse conditions and lowest pay. On the one hand, most factory management—of any nationality—did not welcome labor unions; one western factory owner explained the ways that he kept any labor union out, claiming that his workers "did not need a union." In addition, it is not insignificant that these factories employ women—and often young, single women—into these jobs. As Rosen (2002) argues, while such jobs might given women some freedom and independence—for single women from their parents or for married women from their husbands—the wage levels for this work rarely mean that women can support themselves on their own, or (in the case of separation or divorce) support themselves and their children independently of a man's wage. However, many Dalian factories did not follow the practices in other areas of hiring only young single women who are then let go after a few years of work; many (but by no means all) factories have married workers

who have worked at the factory for many years.[1] But when talking to factory managers, I also heard regular and repeated familiar justifications for hiring women workers—the ways that women are more obedient than men, or are able to this kind of work (close work involving "nimble fingers") better than are men. The women themselves often explained the sexual division of labor in the area using these justifications. Jiali, a young factory worker, told me that the reason a Japanese factory in the area hired only young women is that "those young women are good at manipulating small pieces, so they need to divide people that way." Nevertheless, despite any shortcomings in the factories or in the DEZ, most workers described themselves as lucky to be doing factory work and were able to distinguish better and worse conditions among the factories in the zone. Even those working outside factories were able and willing to rank factory conditions and pay scales, noting that at most American, German, and Japanese factories, the living and working conditions were quite acceptable.

It may not be possible to reconcile the two different images, of economic zones as sites of exploitation or opportunity; even suggesting that these issues have only two sides simplifies what is going on in the DEZ. Distinguishing between the intentions and goals of the factory owners and the workers themselves is important. What is important to remember here, however, is that the women who work in Dalian see those factories through a very different lens than do many others, especially westerners. One of the key components to assessing their work and to understanding their own assessment of their situation is the comparison they most often used. I never heard any worker compare her life with that of a worker outside of China. Their former rural status meant that they most often compared their lives in the Dalian zone with their lives in the villages from which they came. In that comparison, factory work looked very good. Worker after worker told me how good factory jobs were. Huanyue made a clear statement about money: "the salary is higher, that's why the jobs are better [here]." Huiying (whose story began this book) insisted that compared to farm work, factory work was not hard at all: "With my work," she said, "I don't worry about anything. Look at me, I never wake up before 5 and I am usually asleep before 10. It is not tiring work at all." "Everything is better now than before," said Jiangli, when describing her new life in the DEZ. Thus, the higher salaries, greater opportunities and the fact that factory work was easier than farm work were all part of women's assessment of the Dalian Economic Zone. Their implicit and often explicit comparisons with rural life were at the center of their interpretation and assessment of the DEZ and their lives there. At the same time, looking at the lives of these rural migrant workers underscores the need for a broader assessment. To return to Liming's story, she was hardly successful, even by her own standards.

[1] It is not clear whether the DEZ had a higher proportion of factories that employed married women than did other economic zones. Because of my own interest in married women, I sought out the factories where these women were employed. In recent years, as the pool of potential laborers from rural areas shrinks, many other zones have been hiring or retaining older workers.

Yes, she argued that by simply having gotten to the DEZ, her status was seen as higher than that of her friends who were still in Heilongjiang. But her life in the DEZ was difficult indeed. She and her husband worked long hours but had a very uncertain financial life and future. She wanted her son to be able to attend school in Dalian, but could not afford the higher rates charged of those without residency permits. She reported to me, with great disappointment, that her family would likely have to give up and return home, that the financial difficulties they faced were too much to overcome. Still, in the same breath, Liming insisted on the many opportunities that the DEZ afforded migrants like herself. I address the complex issues behind the ways women like Liming assess the DEZ in a later chapter.

The Dalian Economic Zone

Assessing Dalian's success is not a straight-forward task. The four original Special Economic Zones have received the largest share of attention, both from the Chinese government but also from those analyzing the impacts and outcomes of economic zones (but see Cao et al. 1993). Indeed, there are some fundamental differences between those four and the many zones established sometime afterward. These latter economic zones opened in several waves. In 1984, China opened 14 zones (in Dalian, Qinhuangdao, Tianjin, Yantai, Qingdao, Lianyungang, Nantong, Shanghai, Ningbo, Wenzhou, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Zhangjiang, and Beihai) connected to major cities along the east coast. The regulations in these zones regarding foreign investment, tax breaks, and infrastructure were similar to those in the four original zones, but these zones were smaller and had fewer protections from the central government. Dalian and the other smaller economic zones were likewise designed to encourage foreign investment and thus also offered investors stronger and more reliable infrastructure than did the urban centers, as well as tax breaks and government support in hiring and business promotion. These zones represented the next stage in the opening of the coastal areas to foreign investment and trade. Eventually, some 53 economic zones were established in China, mostly connected to eastern cities.

These economic zones are also seen as separate from other parts of the social and economic landscape. While individuals can pass into and out of the smaller zones without the permission needed in the larger zones, their difference from urban centers is probably best exemplified by the status of rural migrants in these two areas. Economic zones are generally considered "semi-urban" areas and residents given official permission to live there are not granted urban hukou (residency permits) but, rather, permits specifically for the area (Wang 2005).

After Dalian's economic zone (DEZ) was officially established in 1984, it was slow to take off. The site was first developed where a village once existed; in the process, land had to be developed, agriculture shifted to other areas, foreign businesses brought in, and workers hired (Wang 2007a; Dalian Jingji Kaifaqu 1994). By the late 1990s, when this research project began, the Dalian Economic Zone had been successfully carved out of the agricultural land from which it began.

It comprises 28 km^2, located about 35 km north-northeast of Dalian city. Infrastructure—including communication systems, electricity, shipping facilities, and water supplies—is relatively good, and most services, including markets, hotels, restaurants, banks, schools, and medical care can be found in the zone. In 1995, Dalian University moved its main campus to the zone, and thus joined the Northeast Minorities University as one of the two main education institutions. Has the Dalian Economic Zone been successful? This is a difficult question to answer, partly because of the lack of outside assessment of its economic or other achievements. As one of many economic zones connected to cities (e.g. those near Tianjin and Qingdao), it goes largely unnoticed in the larger studies of China's economic zones. Within the local region, however, the DEZ continues to function as a separate-but-connected economic area, with outside investors and industrial output on a steady increase since its inception (china-dda.com). In 2000, the official population was 200,000; by 2008, the population had doubled to 487,000 (Dalian Development Area 2012; Jiang and Chen 1994). However, it should be noted that these population figures do not include "temporary" migrants.

In 2006, the DEZ had 2,200 foreign businesses, ranging from food processing to the manufacture of small motors and small electronic appliances. The largest proportion of foreign corporations was Japanese, comprising some 30% of the businesses in the area, but Korean (which had the second largest proportion), Hong Kong, US, and Taiwan businesses were also well established (Dalian 2008). Most of the businesses are small to medium sized, with no more than two or three hundred employees and some with many fewer. Among the larger businesses are US Pfizer Pharmaceutical Company, Japan's Mitsubishi, Canon, and Toshiba companies, and France's Total Company. Dalian leaders were very excited when, in 2007, Intel announced it would open a computer chip plant, creating 1,500 new jobs for Chinese workers; the plant became fully operational in late 2010 ("Intel's chip plant to operate…" 2010; "Intel chip plant opens…" 2010).

Dalian provides a very interesting window from which to view the pervasive urban/rural dichotomy. The zone lies about 35 km from Dalian city and until the last few years, transportation was available but not inexpensive. One could take a minibus between the two areas for a one-way fare of 5 yuan (less than 1% of the official minimum monthly pay). A good highway was established between the city and the zone in the late 1990s and in 2002 a light rail connection was developed. These trains are full of commuters during morning and evening rush hours. But, while there was certainly regular traffic between the zone and city, most workers lived near their place of work; most of those who live and work in the zone do not go to Dalian city on a regular basis; this is especially true for the types of workers in this study, who could not easily afford the cost of traveling every day. Further, official permission to live in the zone did not extend to the city, where stricter residential permits were in force.

The DEZ is a fairly new area, and that newness gives it particular features compared to other places in the area. One of the most important for any study of social activity in the area is the lack of strong neighborhood history or community. Most workers and residents were originally from areas outside the zone and thus do not

have long-established roots or family history in the area. While neighbors are sometimes close and residents are in regular contact with others from their initial villages, several spoke about the relative lack of long-held bonds within neighborhoods. Dalian is certainly not unusual in its recent and widespread construction projects, but unlike other areas, this zone was not rebuilt or modified from previous settlements but was created out of agricultural land. Thus, even the kinds of structures that exist are very new to the area and nearly all residents have lived in the area for only a relatively short time.

Fangyin, an office worker who had lived in another city previously, talked about the difference between relationships formed there and in the DEZ. She talked about the newness of everything, the ways that people don't know each other well. This is in contrast to other, more established cities where people "go to school together, and grow up together, and they are in the same danwei (work unit) working together, so they are really familiar. Your children grow up together, everyone knows each other." When I asked if such close ties were good or bad, she said "Well, it's good, because you really know each other, you can be in each other's houses all the time, you can be outside together, it is very familiar. And here it is hard to have friends…"

We can see that economic zones in China represent a peculiar mix of urban, rural, socialist, and capitalist economic forces. While economic zones (either the SEZs or the smaller ones like Dalian's) are no longer as special as they used to be, they do retain some features that distinguish them. They continue to house a large proportion of China's manufacturing (especially light manufacturing) and the workers who are employed at these sites. And they are often newer areas of settlement, without the generations-long history that is part of other communities. As "hinges," situated between interior and coastal China and between China and other countries and as sites of new structures—both physical and symbolic—they are excellent venues to study gender and modernity in contemporary China.

Doing Research in the Economic Zone

This research was conducted over the course of several years, in small and large periods of time during a time of rapid change in the Dalian Economic Zone. I first went to Liaoning in 1994 and spent about 2 months developing a research plan. Part of that time was spent in the Dalian Economic Zone, talking with the area's leaders and doing some preliminary interviews in rural areas near the zone. The bulk of formal interviews on which this study is based occurred during a 10 month period in 1997. In addition, I spent several other 2–3 month periods, and a couple shorter periods of time, doing further interviews, follow-up interviews, observation, and unstructured interviews during the course of the years 1994–2000; I returned in 2007 and 2009 for brief (1–2 months) periods of follow-up work. The in-depth interviews that I conducted were formally set up and scheduled; with nearly all respondents, I had repeated interviews and was thus able to talk to each woman for anywhere from 2 to 18 hours, stretching over many meetings. In addition, I conducted

both formal interviews and informal, unscheduled interviews with other people. There were times when I deliberately chose to talk to a particular person (a woman who supervised children near my apartment, a waitress in a restaurant I frequented, factory managers), but at other times, I started conversations with strangers. Informal interviews might happen at bus stops or in the market, for example; they were focused on topics similar to those in the in-depth interviews, but the conversations were more spontaneous and were not necessarily ongoing in the same way. Beyond that fieldwork, I have spent time reading published documents about Dalian, often available through official sources (those produced by the Dalian government) or other institutions (such as the media).

This method of data collection and information gathering differs from many others and needs some discussion. First, there was never a specific community in which I lived and worked. In that way, urban ethnographies are very different from community ethnographies. Although I did do series of interviews within individual factories, and in that way came to know and be known by many workers in that factory, my goal was not to become familiar with a community, a neighborhood, or even a factory. Working in Zambia, Ferguson (1999: 21) describes this kind of fieldwork in the following way: it is ethnography without being a "thick ethnography of a delineated space [or history]… For my analytic object here is…a mode of conceptualizing, narrating, and experiencing socioeconomic change and its encounter with a confounding process of economic decline. It is this encounter that I seek to map, and it is in the service of such a mapping that I draw together diverse sorts of evidence bearing on both the complexities and counterlinearities of social and cultural change in the region, and the ways that such processes have been understood by mineworkers and researchers alike." In a similar vein, I used this method to understand a process, that which migrant women underwent in their families. While the lack of community connection in urban ethnography has definite drawbacks, it also has advantages, perhaps particularly so in a society like China's. In my position, I was in many ways less of a outside threat because I was not connected to a coherent group. While that meant that I was less easily supervised by Chinese authorities (and my sponsoring agency, the Dalian Zone Fulian [Women's Federation] took a hands-off position on my research, even as they were very supportive in helping with logistics and in their initial visa sponsorship of my work), it also meant that I was not likely to engage with a consistent group of people on a daily basis.

The people who were most concerned about what I was doing and what I was talking about in my interviews were the factory managers. Many of these managers were foreigners, and their concern was not really about my research topic. They seemed to be primarily anxious about two things: industrial espionage and unwanted publicity about the work environment of the factory. Several of them told me that they worried about industrial espionage because there had been incidents of it in other parts of China. Which aspects of work life concerned them differed from factory to factory, and I often learned from informal conversations outside of the factory or my interviews about the background of these concerns. For example, at one factory at which I interviewed, the manager asked me not to ask about salary because he thought it might "cause trouble"; others told me that workers at that factory were

paid at higher levels than were workers at most others. In other factories, managers seemed to be worried that I would ask about working conditions, or satisfaction at work. Because these were not the focus of my work, I agreed to stay away from these topics. Many times, respondents raised issues that were related to these areas. At those times I listened, but did not probe or ask for further information. But from people well outside my research interviews, I learned about factory conditions at many of these factories, and learned that some of the managers most anxious that I not ask about these issues were, not surprisingly, in the middle of or recovering from, labor unrest in their factories. For example, at one point in my stay in Dalian, there was a labor strike at one of the Japanese-owned factories. I heard about this from friends in the area and heard about how the workers were striking for better work and living conditions; later, workers who I interviewed also talked about the strike in more detail.

I found respondents through several means. In some cases, I went to the head of a factory (often after an introduction by some other person) and asked him (they were all men) if I could recruit respondents through the factory itself. In many cases, the managers not only agreed, but allowed workers to "take a break" (paid) to talk to me. I was rarely allowed onto the factory floor, and interviewed in small rooms loaned to us for our interviews. I also met respondents through friends, through interviewees, and on my own, through my conduct of daily life. In many cases, I interviewed women in public places in the Economic Zone, in my own apartment, or in theirs. Some of these interviews were the second, third, or fourth interviews with women whose first interview had been within the factory. Women easily agreed to be interviewed, often suggesting that we get together again. They were nearly always quite forthcoming, ready to answer any question I asked, and to volunteer different kinds of information on their own.

The interviews with 38 women, done in multiple, extensive, formal interviews, form the bulk of my analysis, although I draw from the informal interviews in some places. All of these 38 women worked in the zone in some capacity. The ages of the interviewed women ranged from 22 to 48, with most of them in their late 20s or early 30s. All but two of the women I interviewed were married; although single women make up the largest proportion of Zone workers, some 20% of these workers are married. Most (about 85%) of the women I interviewed worked in factories, but I also interviewed women who worked in service jobs, in professional, fairly technical jobs, or who sold food in the marketplace. Although some of the women who worked in higher status jobs (such as lawyer, government bureau worker, and some teachers) grew up in an urban area, most of the workers whom I interviewed, and most of those working at foreign factories and in service jobs, come from rural backgrounds. During the course of the interviews (I usually interviewed each woman for about 3–5 h, in two to three separate sessions but I had even more interviews with several women), I asked women about many aspects of their lives, including experiences growing up; they talked about their marriage and work, about their children, husbands, and other family members, and their lives at home and work. I was especially interested in understanding the role of power in these women's lives: what kind of power they have, relative to whom, the source of any power or author-

ity they or others around them did have, how they use that power, and their own impressions about their power and authority at work and home. I did not ask directly about power but during my interviews, I spent a great deal of time gathering information that might indicate women's relative power in the household (including information about time use, responsibilities for housework, control of money, and involvement in household decisions) and how that was related to relative positions outside the house (e.g. differences in salaries or status between husband and wife), household configuration, educational background, and other factors. I also conducted interviews with factory managers, with government employees, and with several people who worked in local media outlets. I conducted informal, unscheduled interviews with a wide range of people, from workers in offices, stores, restaurants, and hotels to other people I met in my daily life in the DEZ.

All interviews were conducted by myself, in Chinese, without any supervision. The Fulian did not intervene in the interviews in any way, only occasionally helping me in the early stages of finding respondents. My Chinese language ability, while not perfect by any means, was sufficient for these interviews; people from the Dalian area often have very strong accents, and because of either that or my own general language inadequacies, I occasionally had to ask a respondent to explain something to me, using more simple language. But in general, I had no trouble with communication, and sometimes my obvious non-native status and language stumbles gave me more legitimacy to ask the kinds of questions I was asking. It probably seemed reasonable that someone who was clearly a foreigner wanted to learn the details of some of these phenomena, details which were likely to be taken for granted by most Chinese.

The Dilemmas of Feminist Research

This project is overtly feminist. Given the vast literature and numerous disagreements on what constitutes feminist research, such a statement needs explanation (DeVault 1999; Edwards and Ribbens 1998; Olesen 2005). Among the characteristics and goals of research that have been claimed as feminist are: a more equal relationship between the researcher and the researched, the importance of listening to and making available otherwise silenced voices, making explicit connections between research and social change, and a focus on women's oppression (Kelly and Regan 1994). But recent discussions of these issues make clear that what makes research feminist is not so easily clarified or isolated.

While there is certainly not widespread agreement on how to characterize feminist research (Maynard 1994; DeVault 1999; Harding 1991; Reinharz 1992; Fonow and Cook 1991), an area of widespread agreement lies in the importance of the connection between theory and method. Where research may be more or less feminist lies in the epistemological and methodological aspects of the project, and it is in these aspects of the project that I have borrowed heavily from feminist theorists and scholars.

One aspect of research that has been shaped by feminist scholars is the choice of research topics. Focusing on research topics allows us to see the contributions of feminist scholarship to our understanding of China. This research—which has used a variety of approaches and addresses broad array of topics—all take gender as a central focus. Some (Barlow 2004) have a theoretical focus. Others (Connelly et al. 2010) examine issues of labor force or economy. An important strand of work has examined China's birth planning policy and its effects on women and girls (Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005; Greenhalgh 2008; Fong 2004; White 2009). And many have focused on issues closely related to those I explore, looking at migrant women, factory workers, or other workers (Pun 2005; Lee 1998; Hanser 2008; Yan 2008; Jacka 2005a, b). All of these works, and many others, have been central to our understanding of women's lives in China and form a basis of my own work.

For many scholars, there is increasing—and now widespread—recognition that the details of daily life are important sources of information about any society and, as well, deserve close examination in their own right. In addition, feminist scholars (and others; see Edwards and Ribbens 1998; Seidman 1992) argue that in these small, seemingly mundane details of ordinary life lie clues and reflections of the larger social order (Mills 2000), an order that is gendered in many ways (Aptheker 1989; Hershatter 2007; Milwertz 1997). Thus, researchers can work to understand the gendered nature of society through the daily lives and details of people's lives (Aptheker 1989; Edwards and Ribbens 1998). To think of these "private" issues as separate from other, public, issues, is to draw arbitrary and misleading divisions between pieces of lives that are very much integrated (Smith 1987). Research in many societies has shown the intricate and close connections between large public institutions, such as the state or the economy, and the lives of women and others in families and households (see Allison 1991; Anagnost 1994: Ali 2002). Yan Hairong (2008), for example, has demonstrated that attitudes toward rural women who work as domestic workers in urban China are shaped by the ways that the Chinese state attempts to construct itself as a modern country. My interest in the daily lives of women factory workers in Dalian and the ways that those lives are connected to large social, political and economic issues in China and beyond is in this tradition. This kind of approach is feminist less because of the methods that a researcher uses than because of methodology and epistemology.

Harding (1991:2) has argued for distinguishing among epistemology, methodology, and method. It is difficult to claim that one or another method—the technique used to gather information—is feminist; method techniques are, after all, often shared by researchers from a wide range of ideological, theoretical, and epistemological perspectives and have a history of development and use outside of feminist research. Thus, although scholars have debated whether positivist and even quantitative approaches can be feminist (see Jayaratne and Stewart 1991), I find such debates less than useful; here, it is not the qualitative nature of this study that I argue makes this a feminist project. A more compelling argument for me is how feminist research asks particular kinds of questions and counts as evidence particular kinds of information. Nevertheless, I have read, pondered and adopted arguments and approaches that are widely discussed in feminist literature about method. Several aspects discussed in

this literature were relevant to my own project and my decisions about method. One in particular is the relationship between interviewers and respondents (see Wolf 1996; Stacey 1988; Skeggs 1994; Zavella 1996). For example, many wonder about how much interviewers should reveal about their own lives in the context of any interview. Some argue that any revelation is likely to bias the respondent while others argue that such revelations make the interview setting less one-sided and more interactive. My own decision was to answers questions when asked by a respondent and even, at times, to offer examples from my own life, in order to provide examples or to elicit responses. My examples, of course, were carefully chosen and I often chose not to reveal all details of a particular event. But I found myself more comfortable in a more give-and-take relationship during the interview, not necessarily because that seemed more feminist (I don't think that these kinds of revelations change the roles, status or power differentials of the interview setting) but because it was easier and seemed to allow most respondents to relax.

The ethnographer/interviewer role has been heavily critiqued in other ways as well, both from feminist perspectives and from other perspectives, and these discussions were useful to me in thinking about my own role as a researcher in China. I am aware of the potential and actual power differential between me—a white, well-educated, American woman—and most of my respondents—often rural Chinese women with relative low levels of education, often working in foreign factories—and the ways that such differences influenced every aspect of my research and the knowledge that we produced (Glucksmann 1994). I see my contribution as one piece of knowledge that is situated in a particular place, and created for a particular use and audience (Haraway 1988; Narayan 1989; Edwards and Ribbens 1998).

How, then, to treat the testimony of the women who talked to me about their lives? Interviews, of course, must be interpreted carefully. What a person says in an interview may not resemble how she acts (Kitzinger 2004; Mason 2002). Nevertheless, I argue that how a woman constructs her life in an interview is an important indicator of how she constructs her life, the social norms she sees as important, and how she sees herself fitting into the world around her (see Hansen and Pang 2010 (quoting Furlong and Cartmel 2007) on such interviews as showing how respondents "put together the pieces of life's jigsaw."). In addition, the language women used in these interviews—the words they used, the social structures they referred to—allows us insight into the discourses available and less available to them. In interpreting the life stories of older rural women, for example, Gail Hershatter (2011: 29) found places where there was "no public language" for some of the values or work that women ascribed to or performed, forcing them to find other ways to express themselves. In the interviews I conducted, the ways that women used different vocabulary for different areas of their lives (the language of rights and responsibilities for activities outside the home but not within it, for example) became signals for me of the ways that public discourse and structures shaped the lives, visions and desires of these Dalian women. Related to these issues is another, how closely interviewing mirrors "reality" and whose reality. I found it problematic to assume that respondents operate as vessels of information and that

my role is to mine for that information (Singleton and Straits 2002; Warren 2002). Such an "excavation" approach assumes that the respondent sees the social world and can talk about it in an unproblematic way and that the job of the interviewer is to collect that information as thoroughly and accurately as possible. There are several problems with such an assumption, problems that go beyond even the important issues of good interviewing skills, or selective memory or reporting on the part of respondents. Such an approach also assumes a static, fixed world, one that can be captured in an interview, rather than seeing values, ideas, stances as always changing, fluid, and deeply contextualized. I chose, instead, to see the interview as a site of the production of knowledge. During that particular act—and the interview itself is a cultural performance bearing the imprint of the social worlds around the interviewer and interviewee—the two (or more) people involved create knowledge. For that reason and others, my interviews focused on routine daily experiences and attempts to understand the meanings of those actions. At the same time, I saw these interviews less as accurate reports of all that happened and more as sites of knowledge construction (Mason 2002). Necessarily, then, my interpretations of the data I gathered are a central aspect of this project.

But this approach raises further questions. Some feminist scholars have argued that if we see researchers and researched as partners in knowledge creation, then respondents should be given a voice in the interpretation of the results, at some stage in the research process (Wolf 1996). In this way, respondents will not be "objects" of research. My stance is more similar to Glucksmann's argument: "Whatever interest those being researched have in the content of procedure of the research process, their relation to it is quite other than that of the researcher whose prime object, unlike theirs, is to produce knowledge, even if she intends to 'give it back' in some form. However much the researcher aims to avoid treating the people she is researching as 'objects', and however 'good' the rapport appears to be, there can be no getting away from the fact that those being researched are the 'subjects' of the research. The line between being a subject and an object in this context is a pretty fine one, and exists, more likely than not, only in the researcher's head" (Glucksmann 1994: 156).

But there are other, more epistemological and methodological questions that the interview method raise. The interview method can overstate the role of individuals and has the danger of seeing the social world as a collection of rational, individualized acts, thus "giv[ing] too much epistemological privilege to the idea of the individual, articulate, rational actor." As Mason (2002: 236) cautions, "Can interviews, whether with carefully selected ranges of individuals, or with groups, ever tell us about those elements of the social which appear to go beyond or operate outside individuals—whether these be discourses, or institutions, or systems? Can they tell us about elements of the social which are not accessible through talk?"

In this project, my goal is to construct an understanding of the gendered social world that comes from and is linked to the testimonies and perspectives of these Dalian women but which also uses other, sometimes complementary and sometimes alternative, perspectives, to understand that social world. "Developing an alternative reference… would seem to be an essential requirement for a critical appreciation of

what people say. Otherwise, the only alternatives would be to accept [a woman's account] at face value or to treat it as… text, and both of these would imply abandonment of analysis at the level of social structure" (Glucksmann 1994: 160). Thus my analysis is based on both the stories women told me, the conversations I had with many others about these issues, and my own observations while in the field. But I also use data and information beyond my fieldwork, in an attempt to understand and interpret the social world of these Dalian women and women like them. My assumption is that through asking about and listening to women talk about their everyday lives and experiences, I can understand how they make sense of the social world around them. In these ways, I attempt to link the everyday lives of women in Dalian factories with the larger social and discursive structures that are connected to them.

Chapter 3
Urban as Paradise: Understanding the Urban/Rural Divide

"Leaving the rural area is really important for girls," insisted Chanquan. Over the course of several hours of interviews with me, Chanquan elaborated on her efforts to get to the city and to find a way to stay there permanently. As a single woman, she saw one after another route to her goal close down. As a poor villager, she was unable to access an educational route out. She had not been hired into a job that might give her an urban hukou. And she was about ready to marry a man who also had a rural hukou. At some points in her conversations, she was frustrated and sad about her failures along the way, and at other points, showed herself to be absolutely committed to achieving her goal of urban residence. She spoke with passion and resolve.

Why are women like Chanquan, so full of dreams about the city and think it worth so much effort on their part to settle permanently there, even in the face of the hardships and difficulties faced by migrant women in cities? In order to understand the decisions, behaviors, and preferences of women like Chanquan and other migrant women in the Dalian area, we have to look closely at the divide between urban and rural areas. This divide constitutes one the most important and deepest inequalities in Chinese society today. Divisions and inequalities between rural and urban areas are not new and not unique to China; nevertheless, the force of this divide is especially powerful in China today for several reasons. The inequalities between rural and urban social and economic life are glaringly obvious in nearly all spheres; those differences are central factors in the attraction of urban life among many rural residents. In addition, while urban and rural differences are found in many societies, China's rural-urban divide was created, maintained, and encouraged by the state, giving added institutional weight to these differences. The state's intervention in urban construction and in privileging urban areas operated both materially and discursively. For decades, cities have been key sites of China's modernizing project and even though the goals for its modernizing project have changed over the different political periods since 1949, in each period, the city has been a key component. In addition, the state's prohibition of movement between rural and urban for several decades effectively locked rural residents into place and cut off many avenues to achieving their goals. While most women are focused on their own

N.E. Riley, *Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone: Laboring in Paradise*, 33
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5524-6_3, © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

individual struggles and successes and not on the larger social or economic structures which shape their experiences, it is imperative to recognize how these individual lives have been heavily influenced by the institution of the state. Indeed, the complexities and intricacies that women navigate through are often explicitly dictated by state practices. In this chapter, I will explore and analyze issues raised by the respondents in interviews and in other settings in order to elaborate on the construction and maintenance of the divide between urban and rural and the ways that this divide has shaped the lives of Dalian women, indeed of most people in China today. Even though the migrant women I spoke with rarely discussed or even mentioned these larger social structures, they nevertheless bumped up against those at every turn, and the urban/rural divide shaped nearly all the decisions they made. Their lives and stories underscore the compelling material and discursive reasons that women like Chanquan and nearly every other woman in this sample did and will do whatever they can to make their way out of their village and into the city.

Urban/Rural Differences

The most obvious differences between rural and urban areas are the material differences and disadvantages faced by rural residences. These were some of the first things that Dalian women mentioned when I asked them what they liked about the DEZ. In a group interview with five workers (four women and one man) from one factory, the workers discussed the obvious differences in Dalian. One woman mentioned the difficulties of having to live in a cash economy and the ways that that meant that everything costs money. Before, in her village, she did not always have to have cash, but now she had to be ready to pay for everything, even the smallest thing costing money. But others in the group were quick to point out the other side of urban life. The Zone was more developed than any rural area they knew, with roads and tall buildings. Running water had eliminated one of the most onerous tasks of rural areas, drawing and carrying water from wells or streams. That job, in China and in many other societies, falls mostly to women and so it is not surprising that women often used this difference to emphasize the better life in an urban area. But men too recognized these modern conveniences as important. About the urban area, one male factory worker argued, “It is better, you have electricity, water.” He went on to say that now you can buy many of the things you used to make, and that makes daily life easier. He thus turned around the earlier comment about the disadvantages of a cash economy.

Dalian migrants nearly always measured their lives in the DEZ against their lives in the village and that comparison is key to understanding their assessment of their experiences and why a number of them described their lives as paradise. When I asked one woman about her relative socio-economic standing, she saw herself as much less well off than most urbanites. But she emphasized a comparison with other villagers (where she saw her and her family as having been more or less average), highlighting her new, raised, status by a comparison to them. Overall—and nearly

to the individual respondent—when compared to rural life, urban life is better. As Lina argued, "Compared to our lives as peasants, this is not hard, this is not really tiring. Life as a peasant is really hard. THAT life makes you tired!"

The regulated life in urban areas had disadvantages. Jiangli said "As a farmer, you can move around. Your life is your own in so many ways. You can plant when you need to, and you can talk to people, you know, stop working and talk, or just talk to people while you are working. There is no set schedule. That is not true for workers. You get up every day at the same time, you go to work, come home from work at the same time. Much more regularized." But even those demands of factory life were seen as positive by many. Lirong parsed comparisons of factory and farm work from a different perspective: "This kind of job, it is always go to work, come back from work, so regulated. Your time is really not your own. So that is a problem. But once you get married, and then you have a child, well, this job is better, it is more stable… it is better after you are married to have this kind of work, for the stability."

And though they knew they worked long hours, they still believed this work was easier than farm work. When I told Huiying, (a factory worker) how some urban women have described their lives as hard and tiring, she responded "No, [my work] can't be considered tiring. I think the difference might be the environment in which you are born. I am used to it. No, this work is really not tiring at all… It is just work, but it is not hard. Before, I never thought I could have a job like this one." When I asked Lina about whether farming gave a worker more freedom, she seemed incredulous: "Freedom? No! There wasn't any freedom, you just had to work and work. Really, the differences are too big to compare!" and declared that she could not think of any advantages of an agricultural life over an urban industrial one. Lina's assessment spoke to just how strongly these migrant women saw the daily experiences of urban life as radically better than a comparable rural life.

The differences between urban and rural life that these women point to are not completely new to contemporary China; rural poverty has always been present in China, but by the early twentieth century, these differences became more marked. As treaty ports and other cities grew in importance and size in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the numbers of migrants increased as peasants and others flocked to the cities to seek out new opportunities. Daily life differed radically in urban and rural areas: in the cities, there was more diversity of lifestyles and more freedom for experimentation, whether that was in clothing, hairstyles, or living arrangements. But these rural/urban differences and, especially, inequalities grew deeper and more extensive after 1949. And they have been exacerbated since the economic reforms of the 1980s. Immediately after the privatization of the economy and the disbanding of the communes in the very early years of economic reform, poverty in rural areas declined significantly (Oakes 2000). Those initial gains have been offset since 1984 and the gap between rural and urban incomes has widened considerably. The Gini coeffficient (a measure of inequality) had risen to 0.38 by 1988 to 0.46 by 1995 (Knight et al. 2004). And inequality continues to grow: between 1991 and 2004, annual rural household income growth lagged well behind that of urban, 4.9 versus 7.7%, respectively (Wang 2010). Scholars have noted that

much of the inequality is between regions, with the eastern provinces and cities much better off than the western areas of the country (Sicular et al. 2010). Part of the reason for these area differences is the differential resources given to different regions of the country by the central government who has privileged the eastern, metropolitan areas all along, and continues to put a larger share of the resources for infrastructure, developing industry, and other investments into those areas. As we will see, in these ways, the state has contributed in a number of ways to the increasing attraction of urban living for Chinese peasants. In addition to these regional priorities and differences, the state also continues certain subsidies for urban residents such as pensions, public housing, and other public services, making the differences between urban and rural income levels even greater (Li and Luo 2010).

In addition to these differential state investments, it is increasingly difficult for peasants to survive through farming alone. Faced with increasing population pressure on the land, peasants have turned to non-farm activities to survive. Indeed, growth of rural-based industry (town-village enterprises, or TVEs) in the early 1980s was a key state strategy to deal with excess labor and land shortage in rural areas. These industries did absorb some labor, and increased profits to townships, villages, and individuals alike, but only in certain parts of the country; shortages of supportive infrastructure such as transportation and communication—especially in poorer areas of the country—contributed to weaknesses in these enterprises, making TVEs an unreliable source of income or jobs.

At the same time agriculture work was often unprofitable. The changes in agriculture organization after the economic reforms meant that peasants had greater say in what they grew and that they no longer had to sell a portion of their harvest to the state. And crop yields increased significantly across China. But along with these changes, the state placed high taxes on agriculture output and also set up and controlled a price structure that made agricultural profitability very difficult and caused farm prices to drop. Peasants faced other difficulties because of the further cutbacks in state investments in the countryside. In addition to taxes imposed by the central government, local authorities began to charge peasants taxes and fees for community services such as road repair, hospitals, and infrastructure construction that used to be provided by the country or provincial government.

Along with these income disparities, rural areas also faced declining services. Health care, no longer covered by the local government, declined in both its quality and availability. Reports suggest that the division between the provision of health care for rural and urban residents is large and growing (Beach 2001). Health expenditures for urban residents is some four times greater than for rural residents and the government share of these expenditures is greater in urban than rural areas (Yip 2010). Not surprisingly, the health consequences of these inequalities are becoming increasingly apparent. Immunization programs, for example, no longer have the wide coverage they once had, especially in rural areas (Riley 2004). Life expectancy, which has always been lower in rural areas, is now even more differentiated: In 1982, the life expectancy was 70.9 years for urban residents and 67 for rural; that gap increased by 1996 with life expectancies rising to 74.3 years in cities and 68.8

in rural areas (Attane 2002); in 2000, life expectancy in urban areas was 75.2 and 69.6 in rural areas (China Human Development Report 2007)

A similar gap between rural and urban areas exists in education. Rural schools are often poorly staffed and lack resources—books, materials, buildings, or good teachers—that good urban schools have available. The always-large gaps between rural and urban schools—as measured in money spent on schools, in curriculum development, and in structures—actually increased in the 1970s and 1980s (Hannum 1999). School fees have increased to compensate for the lack of state funding for schooling, but the quality of schooling remains low. Opportunity costs have also increased, as children's labor is needed on the family farm or in the family enterprise. These changes and the increasing expenses associated with schooling have meant that in many poor areas, parents remove their children from school at young ages or do not send them at all. Consequently, there is a high and growing rate of illiteracy and semi-literacy in many rural areas,

In addition to these important material differences, there are also discursive differences between rural and urban, underscoring an ideology that constructs rural and the people who live there as backwards, non-modern, ignorant, and less deserving of government or societal resources. As we will see, this discourse plays a very important role both in the movement of rural migrants into the city generally and into the DEZ specifically and in what happens to them once there.

It is these discursive and material disadvantages that rural migrant women in Dalian must continue to navigate. As is clear from their conversations above, they see these differences clearly, and those inequalities were central to their motivation to migrate to Dalian. These differences between rural and urban and the disadvantages and shortages rural residents face help to push women out of their villages and make their way to urban areas. For some rural families, these challenges encourage them to diversify their incomes by sending some family members to the city to work while others maintain the family farm. But these rural deprivations are also felt by individuals who see little future for themselves in their villages and seek better opportunities in the cities.

Indeed, at the same time as the poorer resources push villagers out, the better resources in cities are equally attractive. The state's relaxation of restrictions on migration since the 1980s has meant that there are few official barriers to such moves. With little government rationing and plentiful private markets, it is now easy to buy food anywhere in China. In the DEZ, open markets and privately owned stores abound, with many entrepreneurs hawking their goods and services. Jobs are no longer assigned by the state, but are under the control of local authorities and even the heads of enterprises, and individuals are able to find work on their own. As is true in most urban areas, there is now open housing available, even if the cost makes such living arrangements prohibitive for many rural migrants. Other services can be procured for a fee; although the costs of schooling and health care are high and out of reach for many migrants, it is nevertheless now possible to purchase these services, something that was not true in the recent past when without an urban hukou, no amount of money would allow such access.

The relaxation of rules on movement, the availability of goods and services on the market, and the continuing (and growing inequalities) between rural and urban

areas have all been factors in the massive migration that got under way shortly after the economic reforms began in the early 1980s and is currently underway across China today. It is difficult to find accurate measures of migration because much of it is undocumented but some of the best estimates suggest that something like 130 million rural residents are living in cities in China (PRB 2002). The numbers of people who live in a place different from their legal hukou (in Chinese, a category of people termed renhufenli) is very high; the government estimated that in 2005 migrants constituted over 11% of the total national population (Li and Li 2010) and 20% of those living in urban areas (Gao and Riskin 2009). Most migration is from rural to urban areas, and from western areas to eastern areas, that is from China's poorer to its wealthier areas (Riley 2004). Migrants have taken up jobs as construction workers, nannies, and factory workers. One government official estimated that in the mid-1990s, 40% of the construction workers in Beijing were migrants (Guang 2003).

Migrants in the City

> "It was exciting today. We went out to Dong Fang Market and had a drink in a modern and expensive cafe. An ugly local guy bullied us but we fought back… Why do the local people never treat us as human beings? Now that I'm out in the world, I find myself one hundred times more worthless than in the village." (Yue, a rural migrant, recounted by Pun 2005: 161).

While reaching the city and securing jobs and housing is an enormous accomplishment, migrant women still face hardships in their daily lives in the city; as Yue's story suggests, urbanites often discriminate against them. Anthropologist Mary Douglas has argued for considering how "dirt [is] matter out of place" (Douglas 1966: 44), referring to how location shapes the interpretation and acceptance of nearly anything or anyone. Her insights are useful here: however negatively peasants are seen when they reside in rural areas, it is when peasants move to the city that they are viewed as most threatening. In the city, they are "out of place," intruding on the space of urbanites. As Douglas argues, such displacement is seen as threatening to the proper ordering of a society and Sun (Sun Wanning 2009a, b: 622) goes on to point out the result of such threats: such migration has "given rise to a greater need for exclusion and boundary keeping at a symbolic level." While the government did lift many of the restrictions on movement after 1980s, that change did not mean that migrants have an easy time in the city. Rural migrants living in cities face huge challenges and outright discrimination. That such a high proportion of those living in the Dalian Economic Zone are migrants may soften the discrimination that many rural migrants face in China. Most of the people with whom Dalian migrants interact—shopkeepers and those on the streets—are migrants themselves and this likely makes daily life a bit easier. However, it is not that urban life is not challenging for these women, especially as migrant workers, often without proper urban residency permits. In interviews with me, Dalian migrants reported poor treatment, both as

workers and as migrant residents. One woman indignantly described how city people put peasants down, snub them, and think of them as lower class citizens, even after they make a successful move to the city. In my conversations with these migrants, many asserted strongly that rural people are "better," "nicer," "more moral" and their tone and insistence seemed to be arguing against others'—urban residents'—assumptions about peasants.

Because their lives differ markedly from both rural residents and urban hukou holders, some scholars have argued for acknowledging migrants as a third category (Wang 2010). The government takes little responsibility for these migrants, and because services are still distributed according to hukou status, rural migrants are at a serious disadvantage. Less than 5% of migrants in cities receive pension, health, or unemployment insurance (Gao and Riskin 2009). Without an urban hukou, they are blocked out of jobs in some of the industries with the highest salaries and most security, such as state industry, education, or government administration; migrants with rural hukou usually take jobs in the service industry (such as store clerks, domestic work, or childcare), construction work, or in the informal sector. Migrants do work in industry, and in some areas (such as many economic zones), it is migrants who predominate in industry. But these industries are ones that are less supervised by authorities and often employ workers without the benefits that accrue through state industry work. Migrants without urban hukou are also sometimes hired by state enterprises but only as temporary workers and without benefits; they sometimes fill in gaps in workers and then are let go when demand wanes (Davin 1999: 99). But in general, without an urban hukou, many jobs are not available for rural migrants.

Services are also not easily available because in urban areas they are distributed at no or low cost only to those with official urban hukou. Everything from housing to health care to education comes less easily and at a greater price to rural migrants. Housing continues to be in short supply in most urban areas. Most housing is state-owned and is rented to urban residents through their workplace (danwei) for a small fee. Some danwei are offering this housing for sale but again, only to their own workers. There is an increasing supply of privately owned housing for sale and rent in many urban areas, but sometimes it is necessary to show an urban hukou to obtain it. Even when that is not the case, most of this housing is financially out of reach of most rural migrants. In the Dalian Economic Zone, land is not as scarce as it is in some large urban cities, and new housing is being constructed constantly. Much of the housing in the Economic Zone is owned by companies or the government and leased to residents/workers, and indeed, many workers in private, joint, or foreign enterprises are housed by the companies in worker dormitories. Most of these workers in the DEZ are rural migrants who are under contract to the enterprise. But for other rural migrants in the zone, housing is difficult. While Dalian might have a higher proportion of its housing available for sale or rent on the open market than many urban areas, nevertheless the prices of these apartments (and occasionally houses) are very high, and thus usually not easily available to migrants. Health care too is distributed according to hukou status, with rural migrants having to access services at a greater cost than do urban migrants.

Urban living is thus far from easy for rural migrants. Nevertheless, as Dalian women were quick and constant in pointing out, there were many advantages in urban areas compared to rural. This constant, always implicit, and sometimes explicit comparison is important to keep in mind, just as Dalian women do when they assess their own lives. But also important to understanding both the depth and range of urban/rural inequality and its effects on Dalian women's lives are two key characteristics that distinguish China's urban/rural inequality. The first is the role of the state, which has been profound, deep, and long-lasting. The second is how important ideologies and the discursive inequalities have been in maintaining the divide and in promoting rural migration to cities. The first, the role of the state and its enormous influence, suggests the weight of such inequality on rural women. Examining the discourse around urban and rural underscores how pervasive this divide is in China today. I address these issues in the next two sections before returning to the lives of Dalian women.

The Role of the State

Through a range of policies, the Chinese state created, maintained, and has encouraged rural/urban differences and inequalities. The movement of millions of rural migrants into cities, including the Dalian women who at the heart of this study, can be directly attributed to state intervention, which increased dramatically after 1949. While events in the past, such as floods and wars influenced migration and meant that migration was not necessarily voluntary, the state played a much smaller role in shaping migration than it plays today. There were times when rural people were forced to resettle in new areas because of government rules or orders, but before 1949, migration was generally voluntary and no government in either the Qing or Republican periods prevented intra-rural or rural-to-urban migration (Cheng and Seldon 1994). After 1949, the Chinese state created and maintained a class system based on residence, and its design for a planned Chinese modernity was constructed on this urban/rural divide.

In spite of State and Party rhetoric to the contrary, rural/urban differences were greatly magnified and institutionalized after the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949. For the following several decades, urban/rural became "the most important social distinction in modern China" (Potter and Potter 1990: 297). On the one hand, during China's civil war, the Chinese Communist Party leaders believed that it was in the rural countryside and with peasant support that they would ensure their victory. Whereas the May 4th movement of the 1920s was centered in the cities, the leaders of the Communist Revolution—however much it was connected to those early protests and social movements—saw the Chinese revolution as a peasant revolution. Much of the focus of early post-1949 reform was on rural areas, including land reform and efforts to change peasant life. One of the purported major goals for the early CCP was to change the "three great differences"—that between

urban and rural, between blue and white collar workers, and between industry and agriculture (Attane 2002).

But at the same time, the Chinese government underscored the rural-urban divide in a number of ways. driving "a wedge between city and country that was novel in Chinese history" (Solinger 1999: 27). This division was created, underscored, and strengthened through a series of directions that placed increasing limits on the rural population and increasing control with the local and central authorities.

The Hukou System

Chanquan, whose story began this chapter, was not only passionate about her goal of moving to the city; she seemed nearly fixated on securing an urban hukou. When I asked her about her ideal job, she immediately responded, "I would like to work for some big danwei, you know, one that might be able to change my hukou. I really would like to work someplace a long time, and then get a city hukou." Later in our conversation, as we talked about marriage prospects, she again made clear her desire to live in the city: "If I marry a man with a city hukou, then I could change my hukou." Chanquan structured her life—from work to the contacts she made to marriage prospects—around the possibility that her choices and actions might give her a way to secure that all-precious urban hukou and allow her to settle permanently in the Dalian Economic Zone. However, it came out through my interviews with her that she had not succeeded in reaching her desired goal. Too poor to continue far in school, unable to land a good (read: factory) job, and now engaged to a peasant man, Chanquan was worried that she would not be able to achieve her dream of urban residence. When I asked what she thought would happen to her, she responded, with great frustration "Well, I just don't know, my head hurts from trying to think up a solution!"

Chanquan's focus on an urban hukou reflects how it was the hukou system—a particular form of population registration—that institutionalized the material and discursive inequalities between rural and urban; it is that system and its legacies that continue to constitute a central part of migrant women's constructions of success and underlie Dalian migrant women's great efforts to acquire urban status. The hukou system developed in different ways in the decade after 1949, gradually becoming a highly restrictive system, affecting the lives of all most Chinese citizens; under this system, the population was divided into two groups, "peasants" and "non-peasants." Each person was assigned a hukou—residency permit—and all Chinese were monitored and counted through local registration. With membership in either category came certain rights, responsibilities, and restrictions. The hukou system did not permit any movement without permission from the local authorities; movement was especially restrictive for the rural population who were kept on the land and unable to leave. It was this part of the population and this direction of movement (rural to urban) that the state particularly wanted to control.

From that time through the present, these groupings did not reflect occupation or land use as much as they were and are political divisions. This household registration (hukou) system was meant to facilitate central planning, help establish and maintain social order, slow migration from rural to urban areas, and allow for the organization of production and urban services (Solinger 1999: 37). By dividing the country's tasks between rural and urban, the hukou system, combined with state control over all means of production and distribution, also facilitated the industrialization of the country, creating a clear production and distribution system and a pathway toward a modern China. Rural peasants would supply food to urban workers, allowing cities to be the bases for China's modernization. But this was not a simple division of tasks; it was based on a hierarchical system—a "spatially defined status hierarchy" (Cheng and Seldon 1994: 645)—in which urbanites were favored and rural peasants were disadvantaged. With the new restrictions on movement and the prevention of peasants' movement to the cities, the state could fully undertake the responsibility for feeding, clothing, and housing urban citizens; services such as health care and education were also provided to state employees in the cities. Rural residents were not given the same resources; there, the argument was for self-sufficiency. Peasants were to grow their own food through collective farming. Health care and education were also provided through local (usually county) authorities.

By distributing nearly all goods and services through the hukou system, the state maintained tight control over the daily lives of its citizens and locked people into a specific place: only through the local authorities of the place to which s/he was assigned could an individual collect any daily or larger necessity—including food, job assignment, permission to marry, and services. Most goods and services were rationed, especially in urban areas. During the 1960s, 1970s, and much of the 1980s, there were no private sources for most of these items; state-supplied and distributed items were often in short supply as well. Thus, it was only through the ration system that urban dwellers could procure both the necessities of daily life, such as rice, or luxuries, such as bicycles. Those without the necessary ration coupons and government permissions had no way to survive in the city. For rural dwellers, collectivization of the land and other means of production meant that peasants worked and earned collectively, and the harvest and other resources were shared by the peasant collective.

Not only were urbanites advantaged under the hukou system, but rural areas were particularly disadvantaged in several ways. First, they were not provided government support in food or employment or other aspects of life. In addition, in order to feed the urban industrial machine, peasants were forced to sell to the state a certain (large) percent of their harvest every year, and at an artificially low price. The proportion of harvests they were allowed to keep amounted to a smaller amount than urbanites had on average, even though farming usually required a higher caloric input than did industrial work (Oi 1989).

Now that it no longer forbids movement between areas, the government's role in migration may be different than it was earlier but it continues to shape migration in key ways. Although the system and its processes did not completely change overnight, by the mid 1990s, most goods and services were available on the market.

With this new distribution system, people were no longer tied to a particular location in the same ways. With these reforms, migration exploded, with increasing numbers of peasants moving to the cities to look for better jobs and opportunities. But as Dorothy Solinger argues, while things changed, much remained the same. "A closer look reveals that these migrants remained confined within the rubric of the state's persisting imperative: to ally urban growth and productivity with cost-saving, and as a 'socialist' state, to provide for the city dweller while reserving the ruralite as docile, disposable trespasser, and drudge. Statism and urban bias, though more masked than before, retained their wonted power to inform the relation between the Chinese migrant and the state" (Solinger 1999: 45).

The state has retained a central role in the shaping of rural and urban life and shapes migration behavior as well. First, while the government has relaxed many of its restrictions on movement, the country continues to be organized through the hukou system.[1] This lack of official urban residency influences all aspects of a migrant's life. While the government now allows and sometimes encourages movement, especially to fill labor needs of urban enterprises, it also takes little responsibility for movers. The result is that now, peasants—as migrants—can contribute to city needs, but, consistent with earlier decades, the current government still owes them nothing once they arrive in the cities (Solinger 1999). Those without official urban hukou have less access to urban schools, services, jobs, or housing, sometimes not allowed access but increasingly, having to pay extra for such services. The official justification for naming migrants "floaters" (liudong) rather than "migrants" is that they are not permanent resettlers but rather will "float" and move from place to place, rural to urban and back again. This description may hold true for many peasants living in the city. But what is not captured in the distinction between the terms "floaters" and "migrants" is the role of state rules in their decisions to stay in the city. Migrants live lives constantly shaped by the hukou system and their continued second-class status within it. If they return to their village after a short period of time, it may be part of their own scripted plan, but it may also be a function of being an unauthorized migrant and the related difficulties—in finding housing, in employment, and in their general treatment and instability—that sends them out of the city. This new migration does not reflect any major change in the underlying structure and organization of the society, but rather has "made floaters out of farmers" (Solinger 1999: 45).

The Chinese government has a stake in this rural-to-urban migration; still focused on industrializing and modernizing the country, it has an interest in providing the cheap labor needed by urban enterprises in their quest for financial growth (see Pun 2005). The central government shapes and even encourages some migration to support this modernizing project. Local governments, such as that in the DEZ, are also involved in recruitment of rural workers. Ning tells her story of her recruitment to a Japanese factory in the DEZ in 1988. At 22, she was living in a village a few hours from the zone when DEZ recruiters, including personnel from the factory,

[1] See Chan and Buckingham (2008: 64) on how the hukou system remains "alive and well."

came to the village and gave young women an exam. Ning was one of several women who were recruited at the time, soon after the DEZ was established. She began working at the Japanese factory and has remained at the same plant ever since. Her family remains in the village; her daughter is currently living with her mother there, and Ning returns most weekends to visit. Rural migrants also provide the labor needed for new kinds of services and goods that used to be provided by the state; the flexibility and low costs of this labor supply make this source especially appealing. Rural leaders were often supportive of such migration as well, seeing it as a way to deal with rural labor surplus and as a source of income through migrant remittances (Solinger 1999).

Hukou restriction is not as severe in Dalian's economic zone as it is elsewhere, including in Dalian city proper, but it is nevertheless difficult and expensive to procure permanent hukou designation in the DEZ. The usual routes of such a change are through one's workplace, if an employer is willing to argue for and pay the cost of obtaining an urban hukou for an employee (when done, usually only after long-term employment at the same organization) or through the payment of fees by wealthy individuals (either through the purchase of hukou status or, more often, through the purchase of land within the zone).

The state's construction and maintenance of the urban/rural divide in Dalian and throughout China provides a necessary backdrop to the stories of these migrant women. The ways that the state created and has maintained a deep and long-lasting inequality between rural and urban is central to understanding why Chanquan, Ning and others exert so much effort endure and the hardships they do, in order to make it in Dalian.

The Role of Ideology

Urban life provided clear material advantages to Dalian migrant women; running water, regular wages, better job opportunities and better marriage prospects were all pieces of the assessments migrant women made in their new lives. But the pull of the city was not only about these material aspects; important too were the discursive aspects of the urban. In discussions with these women in Dalian, we can see reflected the overall belief among most Chinese that equates urban with modern and modern with progress and the desire of these women to be part of that progressive, modern life. The tall buildings that many mentioned certainly represented those aspects of urban life such as electricity, central heating, and running water. But of course, tall buildings stand for a lot more than their physical elements (Esherick 2000). For these women, as for most in China, to be successful, one had to be urban.

The material and political inequalities between rural and urban are even more entrenched by the discourse surrounding them, a discourse that maintains and constantly recreates a deep rift between urban and rural. These discursive influences contribute to how and why these Dalian women found rural/urban inequality the most salient inequality in their lives. While Dalian migrants clearly wanted the

material benefits that come with urban living and, especially, with an urban hukou, they also wanted the status and respect that is constructed as part of urban—and solely urban—life.

It should come as no surprise that on top of, or alongside, this economic disparity there has existed an ideological one; throughout recent history, the ideological view has helped to strengthen and justify the material inequality. As in other societies, urbanites often see rural peasants as less than urban residents—lacking urbanites' skills, talents, or morals—and less deserving of the privileges granted urban residents. In fact, the hukou system and its results have been equated with class and even race systems found in other societies (Pun 2005). Like class, hukou reflects "differences between groups of individuals which create differences in their material prosperity and power" (Giddens 1997: 581).

State policies have obviously contributed to the creation and maintenance of these ideologies but other social institutions are also involved. Media reports about migrants and migration reflect popular discourse, often focusing on the misfit between migrants and urban life. In recent years, in press and in people's conversations, the term "suzhi" is often used to discuss rural/urban and other inequalities and differences (Jacka 2009; Sigley 2009). "Suzhi" translates as "quality" but has much stronger connotations of "educational credentials, high culture, science and technology, modernity, and progress" (Hsu 2007: 21). In this construction, urban has suzhi while rural lacks it. Guang Lei (2003) points to a column in a Shanghai newspaper which discussed rural migrant women and the cheap sandals they wore on the streets of Shanghai. Their sandals, the columnist had suggested, represent the migrants' misfit with Shanghai life. Guang argues that these kinds of arguments are regularly made in the popular press or in popular culture and point to the ways the "anxieties about class, gender, and modernity… were frequently projected onto debates about proper dress and behavior for women" (Guang 2003: 629). Rules and ideology about proper femininity are challenged by these outsider bodies, revealing "an urban middle-class and bourgeois identity under the threat of economically mobile peasants. The more fluid the class categories in the cities, the more important it became for the middle class to acquire symbolic capital by sharpening their cultural distinctions vis-a-vis outsiders" (Guang 2003: 631). Women, as the keepers and teachers of culture and proper behavior, become particular targets of urban anxiety. Thus, both the construction of rural migrants as outsiders and of lower class and status and the view of rural areas as backward and un-modern become ways for mobile urbanites to assert their difference and advanced standing.

Another way of looking at the role of discourse is through what Louisa Schein (1997) has termed "internal orientalism" in China today; although she focuses mainly on the role of ethnic groups (minzu) in this process, she notes that internal orientalism also involves peasants. Orientalism is a productive process; it involves the construction of one group (in this case peasants) in a manner that describes another (urbanites) and in this way builds on, underscores and produces particular social arrangements and policies. While it does not follow that the subordinate/subaltern group is passive in this process, the systems of discursive and economic power in this process are such that one of the only routes subalterns have to assert

their own desires is within—rather than against—this system of domination, that is, to achieve success as represented by the system.

Another important aspect of this internal orientalizing is the way it is connected to China's relationships with the world outside its borders. Seen from this perspective, attitudes towards peasants (and other "inferior" groups, including minorities) are linked to China's inferior status relative to the rest of the world's nation states; key here have been particular historical events in China's experience: the humiliating way that western powers carved up China's eastern ports and established foreign ports in the nineteenth and early twentieth century; the scars left from China's involvement with Japan during World War II; and the failures of the Communist leaders, particularly the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution—all of which left China worse off relative to the world's standards of modernization.

More recently, China's focus on industrializing and modernizing has also played a role in this internal orientalism. In order to construct itself as a modern, successful state, China has used its internal differences to produce a particular image. "The influence of these images and encounters dovetailed with the prevailing state discourses of modernization (xiandaihua) and civilization (wenming) that were deployed as China's leaders tried to distance themselves from the chaos of the Cultural Revolution…In the eyes of [some Chinese, China seemed] humiliatingly backward (luohou) on a scale of progress held to be universal." (Schein 2000: 22). Labeling peasants as backward, uneducated, dirty, and non-modern helped to construct urban residents as the opposite: modern, educated, progressive, successful. Thus, backwardness was projected onto more oppressed members of Chinese society—including women, minorities and peasants—in order to escape the stigma felt by the Chinese relative to the modern, superior, West (Chow 1989: 153–4). Modernity was central to this internal orientalizing. "The valorization of 'modernity,' thick with its connotations of First World prestige and an infinitude of material abundance was… an ideological complex that saturated Chinese society as it has the transnational arena" (Schein 1997: 88). In China, modern has become equated with urban, and urban with modern.

Thus, rather than diminishing as the hukou system changed since the 1980s, the division of rural and urban and internal orientalizing has proceeded into the "new" society; China's continuing quest to be accepted as a modern, civilized nation structures the current situation, and influences the continuation of the old system of privileges and disadvantages that had always been part of the hukou system. In fact, rural migrants are now seen as threats not only to the country's quest to be modern, but to the stability of urban life. The increase in migration happened at the same time that the socialist state was dismantling many of the pillars of support that urbanites had grown up with and had come to expect. Even as many of them welcomed some of the changes that the market economy brought, they also mourned the loss of old practices. The guarantees under the planned economy—of food, housing, and, especially, employment—could no longer be counted on. With a growing economy and population, some resource systems—water, power, transportation—were taxed and made urban life more difficult than it had been in the past, at least in these aspects. Rural migrants became scapegoats for the ills of the new society.

Scapegoating migrants followed easily from the established attitudes of urban residents toward rural peasants and the deep physical and material divisions between the two. As in any social system, outsiders are more easily seen as threats. In China, the ideological divide and the internal orientalizing that had been underway for decades contributed to urbanites' attitudes about who deserved what under the new regime. The hukou system, deeply etched onto the Chinese social landscape, underscored the privileges accrued to those (legitimately) living in urban areas and the disqualification of rural peasants to even the most basic services and resources available in cities. Women in Dalian navigate through this maze of discursive and material, economic and political differences and inequalities, finding a pathway for themselves from rural to urban.

Gender

In this process of migration and urban resettlement, gender plays a key role. Today, women comprise over 47% of the intra-provincial migrants (NPFPC 2009). They account for some 37% of rural migrants who move to cities, 46% of rural-to small town movers, and 53% of rural-to-rural migrants (Davin 1999: 29).[2] More recent analyzes of migration patterns show that gender differences are strongly influenced by age; migration rates for the very youngest women and men are similar, and there is an increasing gap between women and men's migration rates at older ages, with the oldest women much less likely than their male peers to have migrated (Mu and Dominique van de Walle 2009). These migration patterns reflect gender norms in China today, which have discouraged women from moving far from home; they often are seen as tied to their families. (Intraprovincial moves by women are often for marriage, as women move from their villages to those of their husbands.)

Because Dalian migrant women frequently compare their lives in the DEZ to what they had or might have in the rural area, it is useful to consider some of characteristics of rural China. For one, high levels of migration, especially of rural men have resulted in a feminization of much of rural China (Judd 1994; Jacka 2012) and mean that in many areas, it is women who are undertaking agricultural work. Women contributed only 13% of total agricultural production in the 1930s, but this figure rose to nearly 43% in 1982 and to between 50 and 60% by the mid 1990s, with many areas reporting the figure at 70–80% (Guldin 2001: 167). Between 1980 and the 1990s, the percentage of villagers working away from the farm rose from between 10 and 20% to 25%; fully 38% of male farmers worked off the farm compared to 16% of women (Guldin 2001). The feminization of agriculture affects rural areas as women, children, and the elderly take on greater burdens in farming. Mu and

[2] The census data on migrants are not complete, of course. The census data collection is most likely to miss the least stable migrants; collecting data on any migrants who are without official sanction is difficult.

van de Walle (2009), for example, found that rural women are likely to be undertaking more strenuous work than are their male counterparts, who are more likely to be involved in off-farm labor. This process of selective and mass migration from rural to urban areas has an ideological impact as well; imbalanced sex ratios in the countryside, along with the large proportions of children and elderly in rural areas (Riley 2004; Mu and van de Walle 2009), dovetails with the deeply gendered internal orientalizing that constructs modern as urban and masculine while seeing rural as feminine, weak, and backward. Rural women then carry a special burden in China, as elsewhere. Women are seen as the keepers of tradition; it was that tradition that undermined China's attainment of the status of modern and successful.

When women do migrate, they are more often involved in short moves. In a culture where it is considered generally unacceptable for women to live outside of family supervision, short moves allow them to use contacts in the new place to maintain close ties with home. They are much less likely to be part of the migrant group whose lives are most unstable, those who move without job prospects, or who move from place to place. The patterns also reflect the differentials in job opportunities for women and men and the way that jobs (particularly "modern" (read: urban) jobs) are seen as more suitable for men than women. Guang and Kong (2010), for example, used an experimental designed study to examine discriminatory attitudes and behavior towards migrants and women; they found clear evidence of discrimination toward both male and female migrants. But gender discrimination was particularly apparent, even for urban women; female migrants endured a double burden. When women do move into cities from rural areas, they are more likely to take jobs that are secured in advance and include accommodation. Factory jobs and domestic work are two types of jobs to which women migrate (Jacka and Gaetano 2004) and usually include housing, making these jobs more acceptable to women and to their families. In interviews with me, Dalian migrants underscored the importance of type of job, with factory jobs ranking very high. Not only were there material benefits associated with these jobs such as higher pay and housing, but they also carried less stigma that alternative jobs such as waitressing. Married migrant women, in particular, may face additional scrutiny. They can be seen as a greater threat than male migrants both because their movement may seem to violate even more boundaries than rural men's and because as the keepers of tradition and the teachers of the next generation, they play a large role in how migrants enter and adapt to urban life.

The Role of Education

Jiangli spoke passionately about education, about her inability to achieve enough education and her intention that her daughter receive as much as possible. "I know now that is school is important, the most important thing, it is so important!" she exclaimed. "I tell my daughter this, I really want her to study and go far in school."

Many women in Dalian spoke in similar ways, with similar passion as did Jiangli when discussing education. Education can be seen as the keystone, bridging issues

of urban/rural difference and the aspirations of migrant women through migration. In the hukou system, status (peasant or non-peasant) is inherited. Thus, it is effectively an inherited ascribed status (Potter 1983), a status that one is born into (rather than "achieved"), with children inheriting their mother's classification. Again, the hukou system and its results have been equated with class and even race systems found in other societies (Pun 2005). Like class, hukou reflects "differences between groups of individuals which create differences in their material prosperity and power" (Giddens 1997: 581), in China, a class system based on residency. Because people are born into a hukou status, and thus it is more than an achieved status, there are some similarities with racial inequalities in other societies.

Mobility—at least from rural to urban categories—is very difficult. Even the one route to social advancement that had been available to rural settlers in the past—education—has become comparatively unavailable. Rural schools are often located at great distances for most students. Liwei was only one of the many who discussed the sometimes insurmountable difficulties of attending school beyond a certain grade. She talked about how she had wanted to go further in school (beyond her middle school education) "but I couldn't," she said. "It would have cost 1,000 kuai to go, and we just didn't have the money. I would have had to come to high school here in the DEZ [area] and that would have cost too much." Focusing on her ability to overcome similar hardships, Bingqing was clearly proud that she had graduated from high school, an accomplishment reached by only 2 out of the 300 students who began high school in her area. But Bingqing also described the burdens her education placed on her and her family. "It was really [expensive]. My parents had to spend 40–50 kuai a month while I was in school. I went to high school in Jinzhou [a nearby town], so I stayed there all week, came home about once a month, and it cost my parents a lot of money. Yes, it really was expensive."

As we have seen, rural schools are notoriously poor, often lacking in basic facilities and personnel, as Huiying made clear: "I was a good student and I studied. But you know it is hard to get much education in rural areas. For example, look at how few graduate from college. Of people my age, in my village, very few college graduates, very few." Because rural schools—whose quality and even numbers—cannot begin to compare to urban schools, especially in some urban areas, they are not able to provide students with the background they need to compete in the national examinations that are the gateways to upper level education. University enrollment rates reflect these disparities: between 2000 and 2003, 68% of university students came from urban areas and only 32% from rural (Hannum et al. 2010), despite the much higher percentage of the population living in rural China. These large and growing gaps in schooling have thus contributed to the increase in "barriers to social mobility for rural children, both relative to urban children and in absolute terms" (Hannum 1999: 209). Many have argued that the Chinese educational system today is a two-tiered one. In urban areas, parents with resources can use education to further their children's futures. But in rural areas, educational resources are scarce and few families are in a position to take advantage of any that exist. Rural parents do not always see schooling as necessary, an attitude that is underscored by the failure of rural schools to provide a pathway out of rural areas. Thus education is the means of advancement

for some urbanites but nearly useless as a way for others, especially rural residents, to move up the class ladder (Attane 2002). In essence, the peasants have been locked into a social status, with little chance of mobility.

We can see how migration can be seen as a route of mobility; in such a situation, one of the only routes to mobility in this system is physically moving out of the rural, lower-tiered category. Of all the advantages that urban residency might provide, urban education was the plum and was nearly always at the top of migrant women's list. Indeed, nearly every woman with whom I spoke who had children mentioned the importance of access to education when talking about the advantages of urban areas. Even Jie who does not yet have a child, talked about the importance of urban schools for the child she planned to have in the future, pointing to schools as one of the major reasons she had wanted to move to the city: "Everything is different in an urban area. The schools, especially. If I want to have a child, then my child can go to school in an urban school. The schools in urban areas are much better than rural [schools]." Dalian women see such schooling as too late for themselves, but hope that it will provide their children a pathway toward success, a way to escape their rural status and become part of the new, modernizing China. Hansen and Ping (2010: 49) heard similar descriptions of the importance of education among rural residences in their samples, finding a "dominant perception of education as the major criterion… as a marker for success versus failure" and a widespread regret among older residents about not having gone further in their own education. This attention to and eagerness about schools speaks to the continuing role of education as a pathway for social mobility, even as it is nearly unavailable to rural peasants who do not migrate.

But such a route of social mobility is not easy, even for rural migrants who live in the city. Education in cities is strictly controlled, and is a cornerstone of the inequality that exists in China. Without urban hukou, rural migrants are unable to place their children in urban schools without paying high enrollment fees. While available, resources in urban areas cost such migrants more, and often more than they could afford. The costs of schooling were a particular concern to many Dalian women. Many said they could not afford the higher costs of school charged to those without urban hukou, and would have to either move back to the village or send their children to inferior rural schools. Given the importance of education to these women, this possibility was particularly hard to bear, because they saw urban schools as essential to a good future.

Thus, women saw the barriers and difficulties of being rural migrants in the city. Even so, they assessed their lives as positive. Their optimism mirrors the high optimism found among migrants throughout China; Wang Feng (2010) found that a higher percentage of migrants believed that life will be better in 5 years than either rural residents or urban residents with legal hukou. In my interviews with Dalian women, it was clear that their positive outlook is influenced at least partly by the distance they had come already and the future they could now imagine; when considering the barriers in front of them, their focus was on how to get around them. With the lifting of the strict hukou and movement restrictions, they felt they now had at least a chance of success. Their successes so far—especially their move out of the

village—gave them encouragement that they would find solutions. Hardly the so-called "blind migrants" [mangliu] of urban bias, people who just drift (or "surge") into cities with vague hopes of improving their lives, these women showed themselves to have clear strategies that they constructed, worked hard to deploy and used to reach their goal to be successful, modern—urban—women. Even when they did not always succeed in their efforts, they continued to look for other means to do so. While the Dalian Economic Zone may hardly be considered "paradise" to those with access to other material goods or higher status, migrant women in Dalian assess their lives within a framework that includes the difficulty, hardships, and relative disadvantages of rural life, where urban life is the only road to being considered successful—by themselves or by others. The Chinese state has institutionalized urban and rural differences to a point where there exists a system of differential citizenship (Wu 2010); material and discursive privileges are meted out based on residence, with those in rural areas severely disadvantaged. In such a system, Dalian could indeed be considered a paradise. These strategies and the distances they had already come help to explain how it was that Dalian women were so much more focused on rural and urban inequalities and less so on gender issues. But as we will see in the next chapter, gender played an important role in their experiences.

Chapter 4
"It's Just Women's Lot:" The Role of Gender

Gender shapes the lives of women and men in all societies and this is as true in Dalian today as it is anywhere else. Nevertheless, Dalian women rarely discuss issues of gender and even when specifically asked, often claim that their lives have not been influenced by issues of gender. How do we explain this seeming contradiction? One explanation is that gender inequality does not necessarily seem to be the most salient inequality for all women everywhere at all times (Hershatter 2007). For these women, as we saw in the last chapter, their status first, as rural peasants and then, as rural migrants in the city, may be more important in shaping their lives and their own perspectives. It is not that we need to rank the inequalities in some hierarchical order (hooks 2000) but rather, recognize that they may become relatively more or less important in different settings or times. Nevertheless, as we will see in this chapter, gender is, indeed, important in these women's lives and has shaped all aspects of their lives, from when they were growing up through marriage and work and into their present family circumstances.

This chapter focuses on these issues of gender. As will become clear, in order to understand the role of gender in Dalian women's lives and in the lives of Chinese women generally and to understand how and why these Dalian women deal with the question of gender as they do, we need to examine gender at several levels. Gender operates at the individual level, and is shaped and shapes the particular circumstances of individual women. We will see that how gender influences lives is tied to particular circumstances of time, place, and person. However, we also need to focus beyond differences between women and men in their daily lives or potential future lives or the differences in roles or opportunities accorded them. Rather than being a simple inequality, gender is a complex force, in China as in any society. Gender's larger role is as an organizing principle, acting on several levels in a society, influencing individual lives, social institutions, and social organization generally. Examining gender's influence must address the multiple levels at which gender operates, the ways those differences create and are created by societal and cultural norms, expectations, patterns of behavior and ideology, and the inequalities that result. Dalian's lives reflect past legacies and the ways that they continue to shape contemporary Chinese society. Far from being a theoretical or abstract exercise,

N.E. Riley, *Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone: Laboring in Paradise*,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5524-6_4, © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

tracing how gender has been constructed in China's historical and recent past allows us to understand the ways that Dalian women strategize, and use, address, and challenge those legacies and constructions in their daily lives. Even as there have been momentous changes in this and related areas of social life, both the consistencies with and reaction to the past have been an important part of current social organization and lives. In particular, the themes of gender segregation, the centrality of the family in Chinese social life, the role of the state in shaping family and gender practices, and the lack of separation between "public" and "private" spheres are all elements of constructions of gender in contemporary Chinese society that have deep historical roots.

Examining the role of gender in the lives of Dalian women allows us to address some key issues that have drawn attention among scholars of contemporary China, among them: Does socialism liberate women? Are women in China better off under new economic reform? How do past events and processes influence gender today? In a society in which family remains an important social institution, what role does it play in the recent social and economic changes and how are old and new norms and values operating today? and, especially important for this group of women, how has migration influenced role of gender?

There are several existing frameworks that have shaped our understanding of women's lives in China. Many scholars (Andors 1983; Wolf 1985) have argued that women in China have been oppressed, whether by the state, family patriarchy, social organization or other influences. Just as many scholars have argued against such a framing, but Chinese women as oppressed nevertheless remains a commonly used frame. Recently, scholars have begun to write about women's power, either as reconceptualized (Ko 2001, 2005; Mann 1997) partly in reaction to the "oppressed Chinese women" framework (Bray 1997) or as arising out of changing circumstances in China in recent decades. Some scholars today write about "girl power" (Yan 2006), the ability of young women to influence family and community in new ways. The results from my research suggest that no one framework completely explains women's lives. As we will see, the lives of Dalian women involve assertions of power and indications of deep inequality; interpreting and making sense of their lives and of the role of gender in China today necessitates looking beyond existing frameworks and requires the use of several lenses, including some that have been developed as part of feminist work both inside and outside of China.

We turn now to the stories of Dalian women and the ways that their lives reflect key gender issues in China today.

Growing Up

Dalian women grew up under a variety of circumstances. Because of the focus of this project, most, but not all, of the women here grew up in rural environments, in peasant families. In interviews, they discussed how their lives were shaped by the

limited resources of their families, by the way those resources were distributed among family members, and the responsibilities they had as family members, and as daughters.

Jiali, who grew up in the area of Liaoning now occupied by the Economic Zone, described her family as poor, necessitating her own early work in a nearby orchard. Because of the family's circumstances, she had to leave school early. Her early school-leaving and subsequent wage earning allowed her younger brother and sister to continue in school. "I came from a poor family and my family needed my income," Jiali explained, "that's the way things are in rural China." Because of her work, her siblings were able to graduate from high school, something she was unable to do herself. Many other women also talked about the very difficult lives they and their families led in poor rural areas, where money was tight, and opportunities scarce. Lina, originally from a nearby rural area, stated emphatically, "Life as a nongmin [peasant] is really hard, that life makes you tired!" And Fangyin became emotional, even 30 years later, about how difficult it was for her family when she was a child, as they struggled to deal with illness in the family and even the ability to find adequate food, saying, "even now, I cry at the thought of it, we really had a hard life!"

While some scholars have pointed out how daughters are treated differently than sons and expected to give more to their parents before marriage, in the form of wages or work (Greenhalgh 1985; Fan 2004; Lee 1998), many women in this study saw their position differently. Underlying the stories many women told was a value that the family was prioritized above the individual and that as daughters, they subscribed to this belief (for similar findings, see Hansen and Ping 2010). For example, in my probing of Hairou's work and wages when she was single and still living at home with her family, I asked her about how she was paid. She explained that her salary was given directly from employer to her parents. And when I probed further, she expressed frustration at my seeming to not understand, finally spelling it out: "My mother [actually received it] but it doesn't matter who got it! It is all one household, so it does not matter WHO gets the money!" On this subject, Xiahe conceded that girls and boys might act differently. When I asked her if daughters might feel more pressure than sons to give their wages to their parents, she explained, "Yes, I know what you are talking about. And girls really are different than boys. They are much more likely to be obedient and everything, so maybe that is why I gave more money to my parents." Still, she insisted, it was her own decision, claiming, "I did not need more money than I kept" (see Zhang 2007 and Shi 2009 for similar findings). When living at home and working as an unmarried woman, Lirong too gave her salary to her parents; she explained that she gave it in its entirety, and when she needed money, she asked them for some money. "They had control of it," she said. But she insisted that all the children in the family "knew we should give it to them, we were living at home, and so when we got any money, it went to our parents." Presumably, Xiahe's and Lirong's sense of duty was shaped as much by social norms around them as their own feelings about their families; what we cannot easily discern here is whether such a sense of loyalty and duty were different for daughters and sons.

However, if we look at the distribution of resources from other perspectives, we can see obvious gender differences. Schooling was an especially important and scarce resource for families, particularly those in difficult financial conditions. As was apparent in Chap. 3, it was seen as an important route out—out of poverty, out of a rural environment, and for some, out of the family. Some women argued that education was "the most important thing." Bingqing, whose story is detailed below, explained why education was so important to her: "I really wanted to get a lot of education… If I had high education, then I could get a job. Farmwork is so hard, I did not want to do that kind of work… [my high school degree] was how I got the job in the restaurant."

Several, like Jiali above, had to leave school to earn money for their parents, money that was sometimes used for the education of their siblings (particularly their brothers). In some situations, it is easier to see how norms about sons and daughters come to be accepted and even justified. In Daoyun's family, for example, the boys all went further in school than did the girls. When I pointed that out, and wondered why that had happened, Daoyun attributed that to the boys being smarter than the girls and asserted that there was no difference between how boys and girls were treated in her family. But other women were able to continue in school, and were supported in their efforts to get an education by family members. Fangyin, who we saw above grew up sometimes in desperate poverty, and as the eldest child had great responsibilities at home, saw education as her ticket out of that situation. I asked about the difficulty of her trying to continue her studies in the midst of her family's difficulties. She responded, "Yes it was [difficult], but I just studied while I was doing the housework. When I was cooking dinner, I would think about the lessons I had to learn, or if I had to go out on an errand or something, I just studied in my head. I was always studying. I liked school and wanted to continue." Her parents disagreed about her need for schooling. "My father wanted me to stop, because he said he needed me at home. But my mother really disagreed, she said look at us, we have no education, it is really important for the children to get education, and so she insisted that I stay in school." In her family, all of the children managed to get at least a high school education, and Fangyin herself went on to graduate from university.

There were a few women in my sample who were able to earn more education than their siblings, including brothers. Bingqing was the only child in her family of four children who went to high school and actually sat for the university exam. When I asked about how that happened, she explained "Well, I guess I was the smartest!… well, I mean I was pretty good in school and I really liked studying and going to school and my brothers didn't. You know, it is unusual for the girl in the family to do this, to get so much education, and I guess that was because I really was a good student." Indeed, Bingqing said that of 300 children who grew up in the village around the same time, only two ended up finishing high school. "And the other one was a boy." But Bingqing's situation was a bit more complicated than she described at first, as became apparent when I asked about her parents' attitudes in this process. She told me "My father really wanted me to go to college." I asked her "Your father did? And your mother?" And she explained,

"My mother thought it was not necessary. You know, in the countryside, most parents think that boys need education but that girls do not. My mother thought it was important for me to get married, that kind of thing. She thought it was a waste for me to go to school. But my father, he thought I should go, that I should even go to college."

There were obvious exceptions, like Bingqing, but most of the women in this sample stopped school after middle school, and most of them received less education than their brothers. That pattern is the general one seen in China today, particularly in rural areas. Recent data show that the proportion of students who are girls has increased since the early 1980s, but that proportion is still lower than that of boys. In addition, the higher the level of education, the lower the representation of girls. Thus, national statistics show that the proportion of girls at primary schools has increased from 44.6% in 1980 to 46.2% in 1990 and to 47.6% by 1999. At high schools, that proportion has risen from 39.6% in 1980 to 45.9% in 1999. At the university level, the proportion of females was only 39.2% in 1999, but that was a significant increase from their 23.4% representation in 1980 (Li 2004). Levels of illiteracy have declined, but females are still more likely than males to be illiterate, with estimates suggesting that women make up 71% of illiterates in China (Li 2004). These statistics indicate that girls have increased their representation in schools, but are not equal to boys in education in China. But in certain areas, particularly in poor and rural areas, girls are even further disadvantaged. There, because of school fees and because families need children's contributions, girls are much more likely than boys to either not enroll in school or to drop out early; when families have to decide which children to educate, girls more often lose out (Li and Tsang 2003; Hannum et al. 2010; Zhang and Hannum 2007). The costs around education, the distances needed to travel to the less accessible schools, the missing income from children not working, and the assumed inappropriateness of schooling to rural life all contribute to parents' decisions to remove children, and especially girls, from schools. Many children—perhaps particularly daughters—are unable to achieve their educational goals because of family difficulties (Li and Tsang 2003). Consider how Chanquan described to me her own schooling experience, right after she explained that her younger brother will soon be taking the university exam (gaokao):

NR: I am wondering why you did not continue in school.
CQ: Well, I wanted to, I wanted to go to high school. But I.. well, I think I would have passed the exam. In fact, from here now, I really know I would have passed that exam.
NR: But you did not take it? Why not?
CQ: The year I was to take it, my father was in a bad accident. With a train. He was really hurt. The household was really chaotic (luan) then, my mother always at the hospital. My father recovered, but it was a very bad year.
NR: Oh, so you couldn't take it then…
CQ: No, my teachers were really disappointed. They knew I would do well. I really was a pretty good student. But I just didn't have the heart to take it, I could hardly study.

NR: How about the next year? Could you have taken it the next year? Can you do that, just delay a year, especially because of all that happened in your household?

CQ: Yes, I could have taken it, I was allowed to. And my teacher really wanted me to.... But you know, our family. My father's accident cost a lot of money. Even after he left the hospital, it was very expensive, and we just did not have the money. I could not bear to spend all that money. It is expensive you know, school costs about 1000 kuai a year. and we just did not have that money then. And then for the exam, there are more expenses, you have to make sure your guanxi is good… (trails off) I just couldn't do it.

NR: Is it too late now? It sounds like you wish you had done it.

CQ: Oh, yes, it is too late now. I couldn't do it at such an old age! I do wish I had. I really have paid for not going further in school.

Chanquan's story underscores the burden of schooling expenses on poor families, both the actual costs of education and the opportunity costs also involved. Xiahe, who grew up in a rural area near the DEZ, described the obstacles she encountered to stay in school. Her parents wanted her to be educated, but the structural difficulties were acute. She would travel back and forth to high school in a neighboring town, traveling 10 km each way by herself, occasionally by bike, but more often walking, often in the dark. After detailing the difficulties, she exclaimed, "Ni yinggai yuanyi xue!" You have to want to study!

In addition to enrolment differentials, often caused by events in families, such as that which befell Chanquan's family, and the difficulties of even keeping children enrolled in school or getting to school, reports indicate the girls are not treated equally within schools. Lack of role models, a funneling of girls and boys in different career directions, and the differential treatment of girl and boy students have all been named as part of the inequalities in schooling (Tong and Su 2010; Hong and Qian 2010). Fangyin, who overcame a difficult early life to graduate with a university degree, described these kinds of obstacles, "I think it did influence me. You know, all the leaders are men, all the university teachers are men and everything, that was important." But it was only after I asked about role models and whether that might have been an influence that she spoke about this, at first insisting that "it did not matter that I was a girl." Later, she again explained that it did not matter that she was a girl because "I was like a boy when I was young, I ran around all the time with boys, all my friends were boys, it was like I was a boy." Clearly, her path through a very gendered system was to adopt the preferred—male—persona, at least while she was young. In addition to the challenges women faced in schooling, because of the discrimination and difficulties that women face in employment, women are less motivated to continue on in education, unconvinced that further education will help their own standing and careers (Ma Wanhua 2004). Thus, education is seen by many in China as a ticket to a better life but many rural women are unable to take this path, whether because of family difficulties or because, as girls, they were not given priority for schooling opportunities.

Migration

Given the difficulties women face in their rural villages and homes, both as part of the rural population and, more specifically in some situations, as girls, migration might seem like a good alternative. Dalian women described their hopes that such a move would be advantageous in any number of ways, from better work opportunities, more money, or giving them the opportunity to meet a "better" husband.

While some migration of young single women comes about because of pressure by families who might be looking for income from their new jobs, much of it is initiated by young women themselves, with young women taking on new responsibilities and independence (Zhang 2007). In this sample of Dalian women, nearly all of them spoke of their decision to migrate to Dalian as solely their own, with different amounts of encouragement and support from parents. One indication of how much this was an individual versus a family decision is apparent in discussions of remittances sent home. While some of them, even most of them at some time, sent home part of their wages when they were unmarried, they rarely described any pressure to do so from their parents. Here, as in other work situations, they felt they owed their parents and families such contributions. Bingqing, who had received a high school education, talked about how after she started working, she gave most of her money to her parents. I asked her if her parents had asked her to do that, and she answered, "No they did not ask me to, not like that. I felt I had to. It would have been embarrassing not to. They had spent so much money on my education, I really wanted to give them as much money as possible." In other families, parents insisted that the young women keep their salaries for later needs, such as those at marriage. Daoyun said her parents insisted they did not want "her" money. Others gave a regular portion of their salary to parents until they got married, and then stopped this contribution. Hansen and Ping (2010: 53) found a similar attitudes among rural youth, who explained that support for parents was simply the custom (xiguan) and "not to be further explained or discussed."

Women migrated to the cities for better work and higher wages (or even the opportunity to earn an individual wage) but there were other reasons as well. One of the reasons mentioned by several was the possibility of marrying a man who offered more to them than might men in their own village. Whether it was through potential spouses or jobs or something less specific, as I will discuss in more detail in Chap. 6, migration and urban living was seen by nearly all of these respondents as giving them an opportunity to gain a foothold into a modern life. At least one woman spoke about how her mother recognized this, and supported her decision to migrate because of that. Chanquan described her mother's anxiety about Chanquan's being alone in the city "She worried because I was only a girl, and new to the city. I didn't have much money, I didn't know very many people. I had spent all my life with my parents, and here I was all alone. A girl!" Nevertheless, Chanquan explained, her mother knew "it was really hard for girls in the countryside… and leaving the countryside is really important for girls.... Girls have to be at home and always

working, and then they marry, but they move to their husband's house and everything. It's awful! So my mother thought it was important for me to go to the city. Though she was really worried about me and my being alone in the city, it was also important." In many ways, it is because they are rural that such migration is so important, but as always, gender played an important role. Girls in rural areas often had fewer resources than boys, especially related to education or good jobs. In addition, at marriage, their lives were subject to much larger change, as they would move to their husbands' family's house and village. Thus, migration was seen by many—young women themselves but also by parents—as necessary to achieve success in life.

Women's description of rural areas underscored just why they thought it was necessary to get away. They regularly described life in the countryside as difficult, much more difficult than their lives today. "Compared to our lives as peasants, this is not hard, this is not really tiring! Life as a farmer is really hard!" Much of those difficulties stem from the hardships of rural areas and agricultural work in particular, as we saw in Chap. 3. But also involved is a belief that life in the city is not just less hard for them but a better life, one that involves more successes, and more potential for successes. I will take up these issues again in Chap. 6. But here, it is important to recognize that as women evaluated and assessed their life in Dalian today, they always used as a reference point their previous life in the countryside. In that comparison, they found their life today more compelling, interesting, and promising.

Life is, in fact, quite different for women in rural and urban areas of China; it is not necessarily that gender differences are lesser or even more muted in urban areas, but they may take different forms. It is clear from the stories of rural migrant women that their lives in rural areas were quite shaped by gender, and that there were fewer opportunities—for schooling, good jobs, or to take the lead in family matters—than men had. But as we will explore in more detail in the next chapter, women in urban areas are not necessarily any more equal to their male counterparts, and most indicators suggest that women have less power than men in urban areas as well. There is some irony when we take into account another change occurring across China today. As discussed in the last chapter, many rural areas in China today have a high proportion of women compared to men and there has been a subsequent overall "feminization" of farming. Rural men leave their villages to work in urban areas more often than do rural women; women, then, are left to run family farms and households (Judd 1994). The irony is that these women are often in charge of households, farms, and communities (Jacka 2012; Shih 2011).

At the same time, the overall economic level of rural areas is also important. Rural areas are becoming increasingly poor relative to urban areas, with some parts of China experiencing extreme poverty. Women have been particularly vulnerable to such poverty; because poverty in China is concentrated in rural areas, and women are more often found in rural areas, women are more likely to be poor. In addition, more women than men work only in farm occupations, without supplemental income from non-farm work; 82.1% of women only farm while 64.7% of men are engaged only in farm labor (Women's status improved but problems linger (2001); Mu and van de Walle 2009); studies have shown that it is these rural workers who are most vulnerable to the deepest levels of poverty (Brenner 2001; Yao 1999: 126; Riskin et al. 2001). Given the declining quality and accessibility of health care and

schooling in rural areas, it is clear that women face serious challenges in their efforts for advancement in the years and decades ahead. These and other issues underscore the vast differences between rural and urban areas of China, differences that are part of the construction of gender in China generally, and that influence the lives of migrant women in Dalian's economic zone. Thus, while the gender ratio in rural areas suggests that some rural women have more independence and even power than have rural women in the past, and perhaps more than most urban women, comparing power and autonomy in these two very different situations is more complicated than that. We will take up these issues again in the next chapter.

Work

Women's work has always been at the heart of any discussion of gender in China. A central plank of the Chinese Communist Party's liberation project in 1949 focused on women's labor force participation; that process was viewed by some as an interesting experiment, a way to test the argument that it was women's ties to the house and family that were at the heart of their oppression, both in China and in Western societies as well. Drawing from Friedrich Engels' argument that women's involvement in production would mean the end of their private labor in the family and household, and would lead to women's equality with men, early CCP and PRC leaders' efforts to reduce gender inequality focused on getting women into the paid labor force.

In some ways, Communist leaders had amazing success in their endeavors. Women entered the labor force in record numbers. Today, women's labor force participation rates in China are some of the highest in the world. Even as early as 1956, most areas were reporting between 60 and 75% of women were involved in collective labor (Johnson 1983: 162). Women's labor force participation rates have stayed fairly steady: in 1990, fully 90% of urban women of employment age were in the paid labor force (Bauer et al. 1992) and overall labor force participation rates for women are reported today to be around 73%. But a different perspective reveals some of the significant weaknesses in these early strategies, weaknesses that continue today. First, women may have entered the labor force in numbers that matched men's involvement, but their place in the labor force was significantly different from men's. They tended to work in certain segments of the labor force, usually those that were not as well-compensated or had lower status. In addition, when they did work in fields along with men, they were more likely to be at the bottom of the hierarchy. Thus, women were horizontally and vertically stratified, in ways similar to women working in capitalist economies. One of the major differences between women's and men's work experiences was related to the likelihood of working in state industries. These industries, which gave their workers higher salaries and, especially important, better benefits (health, education, housing, food, and other privileges), were seen by the state as priority areas of development. Throughout the first decades of the PRC, women were much less represented in these industries, and much more likely to be found in collective or neighborhood enterprises. These

latter had fewer benefits, poorer housing (and sometimes none at all), lower salaries, and fewer social services such as schools or health centers. (Bian 1994).

In addition, throughout most of the years between 1949 and the 1980s reform era, little attention was paid to house work. Women were indeed working in the paid labor force, but they continued to have near-complete responsibility for family and house work. Much of the time, the state stance on this issue was that women's interest in getting help in the house was selfish and bourgeois (Young 1989a, b; Wolf 1985). Thus, women were left with a double burden, fully employed outside the house and responsible for the full-time job of family and household as well. There has been little state investment in this area of production, and women continue to do the bulk of housework and childcare. Jean Robinson has argued that women's household burdens have been twisted by the state to provide support for government programs.[1] For example, in order to help women's liberation, the state increased production of washing machines in the 1980s. As a consumer durable, such an investment furthers the state interest in developing a consumer society. "In this context, the production of washing machines epitomizes the dilemma of Chinese sex roles, as reinforced by government policy. Women are being urged to train themselves in science and technology in order to upgrade their contributions to productive labour…Yet the reward for that labour is an appliance, which though useful in the performance of private duties, nevertheless remains tied to women's roles in mothering, not in wage work" (Robinson 1985: 46). We can see that the roots of women's double burden in Dalian today lie not only in old Confucian structures that confined women to the household but equally so in where the CCP and Chinese state have put their efforts or avoided dismantling the old social order.

Dalian women's lives and even attitudes reflect the legacies of these earlier processes and rhetoric, and even a difference in generational perspectives on these matters and events. In an interview with three workers from the same factory, I addressed the role of work in women's lives and asked if they would quit their jobs if their husband made enough money for the family. All three insisted that they would not, that they would continue to work, but the reasons they gave were not about different gender roles. One woman insisted that her family would always need her salary and the other said she liked her job. When I probed further and asked them if they thought their jobs gave them more status at home, the two younger women, who were both in their mid to late 20s, insisted that work and domestic status were unrelated, that if they stayed home, they would have the same status at home. Here, the third woman, 15 years older than the other two, jumped in and pointed out that that kind of statement reflected a difference in generation. Clearly feeling strongly about this, she asserted that women needed to work in order to maintain their status at home; otherwise, she insisted, the husband would be out in the world, and the wife would be at home and she would have no standing (diwei) at all. The younger women listened to her but it was very clear that though they wanted and expected to work in the future, they did not buy into her arguments

[1] For a parallel argument about South Korea, see Nelson (2000).

about the consequences of not working. In another group interview, this time with four women and one man, I asked a similar question and received similar replies. The women insisted they would work no matter how much their husbands earned and their explanations suggested just how much a norm women's work has become in China. While one woman wondered aloud, "What is there to do at home? Working is something to do," another was more explicit: "Chinese women would always want to work, they would never want to stay at home." Here again, when I probed, their reasons for working were not about establishing or maintaining a place in the family, but more directly about their own relationship to work outside the home. "Working is just working," said another of the women, "you do something." For these women, the rhetoric about women's liberation through labor force participation may not be convincing to them, but nevertheless, it is clear that the state's push to get women into the labor force has not only succeeded but has normalized women's labor in ways not seen in other societies. In one interview, however, Ying, a woman in her late 40s who now works cleaning houses, seemed to understand how family power and her own role in the family is influenced by work; she rued having turned over her own business (selling doufu) to her husband several years before. "That was a big mistake… I was really stupid to give him that job… If I had not, I would have my own life, my own money, I could do whatever I wanted to with my money, I could give the money to MY family. But I can't… Now look at where I am. If I had not done that, I would not be here, you can bet that. I would not be taking care of someone else's house." She felt that her power and independence was severely diminished once she lost control of her business. We will explore further the connections between salary, work, and household power in the next chapter.

Women are active in the Chinese labor force, but they continue to be segregated in certain sectors of the workforce, and their wages and statuses continue to trail that of men. In fact, the gap between women's and men's wages widened during the 1990s; whereas in 1990, women's income was 77.4% of men's, by 1999, women earned only 70% of what men did. In farming, forestry, and fishery industries, women made only 59.6% of men's salaries. When we look at women's experiences in urban areas, we see similar patterns, with women making 25% lower salaries than do men (Cohen and Wang 2009). These numbers are partly related to the way that women are employed. They continue to be employed in lower paying jobs than men, and when in the same industry, in lower-paying positions than are men. They are more likely to be laid off than men, and make up a larger percentage of laid off workers across the country (Wang 2004). Women report regular sex discrimination, and are also likely to face age discrimination that is related to gender (so that women are subject to age discrimination at higher levels and at earlier ages than are men (Honig and Hershatter 1988)). Here again, the experience of Dalian women mirrored the general trends.

Dalian women had clear ideas about what work they preferred to do, and why. As we have seen, they often compared their work in the DEZ with previous farming work; while the jobs that most of these interviewees did were not exciting or even interesting, they were nevertheless seen as better than farm labor. But even within the DEZ, they assessed jobs carefully. Factory jobs varied depending on

the ownership and tasks of the company and some were better than others, with better salaries, cleaner working or living conditions, or a more stable economic environment (which meant they received their pay more regularly). In general, though, factory jobs were seen as good jobs because they provided steady, predictable work. In comparison, other jobs were not as desirable. Several women mentioned that waitressing was not good work. Part of the problem with that kind of work, they explained, was that wages were often not as reliable, steady or as high as factory work. But even more significant to most was how waitressing brought women into contact with male strangers, something seen as potentially dangerous and disreputable. "We meet all kinds of men… it's just not a good job for a woman," explained one waitress. Other jobs are more attractive, but their limited educational background put many of those jobs—such as office work—out of their grasp. Other desirable jobs were also hard to find. Liwei wished she could find a sales manager job, where it would be more "quiet, with fewer people around." She was not likely to land such work, she said; "they want tall, beautiful women for that. And also, younger." Thus, these Dalian women's job opportunities—like women's throughout China (see Hanser 2008)—were constrained by their own backgrounds and by the ways that gender, age, and particular physical traits shape the labor market.

Other women are hindered in securing or succeeding in jobs in business or the market. Here, the way public spaces are gendered and the need for guanxi (connections) in many kinds of jobs, are crucial for the kinds of opportunities on which women miss out. Many jobs, of course, require workers to spend time in public places, time spent meeting colleagues, inspecting workplaces, or traveling to work or meetings during the day. The public space of the DEZ is gendered. During most days, women can be found in public areas, in places like the large public markets, buying goods for their households. But in the evening, the restaurants and other public places are frequented much more often by men than women. Men gather in groups of friends and coworkers to discuss personal or professional issues, usually over drinks and food. In their interviews with me, women frequently reported not feeling comfortable going out in the evening.

In China, public appearances are often part of the development of strong guanxi ties, ties that are central to good work relations and women have less access to such guanxi networks. Guanxi has long roots in Chinese society, and has been at the heart of social practice for many years (Yang 1994). Guanxi is a system of interpersonal relationships that are used in many situations in current Chinese society. Guanxi is an important resource that can be accumulated and exchanged and is used in all aspects of life, from the smallest, everyday aspects to the most important events in a person's life (Riley 1994). "Thus, for successful string-pulling (la guanxi) one's network ideally should contain everyone from store clerks who control scarce commodities to cadres who have final say over such things as housing allotments, residence permits, job assignments and political evaluations needed for Youth League or Party membership" (Gold 1985: 661). Having less access to such ties and being constrained in their ability to mix in public spaces to the same extent men do

restricts women's ability to be successful in jobs in businesses or small, entrepreneurial, enterprises.

Once hired, women's and men's wages also differed substantially. While I do not have statistics that allow me to compare women's and men's wages in the DEZ, what was very clear is that hiring practices differed for women and men. While some Dalian factories keep women workers on after marriage, many others let women go after they marry, or—even more common—hire only women whose age (under 22 or so) suggests that they are not yet burdened by responsibilities for husbands or children. They are given short contracts (depending on the factory and the year, for somewhere between 1 and 3 years) and then are not rehired when they reach an age when marriage and childbearing is likely to take place. When hired, women and men were hired into different jobs and, especially at the factory level, rarely worked side by side. This gender segregation was one way that both factory managers and workers themselves justified the different pay scales for women and men. Most of the women I talked with were resigned to the different experiences that women and men have in the workforce. They described the differences matter-of-factly, "Women and men have different jobs, and these do not pay the same. Women and men just do different things," said one woman. Or, as another woman in another interview stated simply, "In China, the women do the women's work, the men do the men's work." Jiali, a factory worker, explained, "Young women are good at manipulating small pieces, so they need to divide people that way."

In fact, women seemed uninterested in exploring gender inequality in these areas and a discussion about bias in housing allocation suggests that they may have a different lens on gender inequality in the workforce. When a group of women working in a Japanese factory explained the allocation of housing through the company and how men were given housing subsidies more readily than were women, I expressed surprise, and wondered aloud how fair that was. To me, it represented the continuing unequal distribution of not only wages but benefits as well, and another example of the gendered hierarchy of the Chinese workforce. But these women seem less bothered by the difference in allocation. Why does it matter, they argued, when they still had access to that housing—through their husbands? As long as they were able to procure such housing, they were less concerned whether it was given to women or men, or whether it seemed to represent gender inequality. While it may well be an indication of women's continuing lower status in the workforce, it is at the same time more evidence of the ways that women in households access money—their own or their husband's salaries—less often as individuals than as mothers/wives.

One interesting theme that arose in several interviews was how women insisted that though they earned lower wages and often had lower status than men in the workplace, they were equal to and often better than men in their ability to work and work well. For example, in a discussion with a group of women and men working in the same factory, I asked about why women were making less money and had lower positions than men. One woman said, "Yes, their salary is higher, but they can't work. Look at us—we're better than him (pointing to her male supervisor) but he

makes more than us." Another said, quite bluntly, "women are better able, they are better able to do everything than are men." Fangyin, a professional worker whose colleagues were all men, insisted not only that "I really am better than nearly all of them," but also that "they also know that I am very good, and they respect that." However, others expressed their doubt about how well women can perform certain jobs. Bingqing, who has a lower-level supervisory role in a Japanese-owned factory, only oversees the work of women; I asked her about that division and she replied that "women are not good at supervising." When pressed further, she thought a bit more and responded, "well, they are not able to supervise men." I continue to ask about this issue and she finally resorted to describing the reality of her own situation: "It just doesn't happen. At our workplace, there is no woman who supervises any men. All women supervise only women, and it is mostly men supervising women." The experience of these women in their unequal pay and job access, their seeming acceptance of those inequalities, and in the contradictory statements about women's abilities, may partly reflect individual attitudes and experiences but also suggests the power of the discourse surrounding women's work in China, a topic developed further below.

For many years, the state has closely regulated labor and the workplace. In the early decades of the People's Republic, one of the most important actions that the Chinese government undertook to safeguard women's position in the workforce was to pass and enforce a series of benefits and allowances given to women workers. Many of these have allowed women to balance their work and family lives more easily. Thus, women are guaranteed paid maternity leave of 3 months (depending on the type of employment), allotted time during the workday for breastfeeding, the provision of childcare centers (often at a work site), and the ability to take time away from work to provide care for ill family members. In addition, the government oversaw the wage schedules for many industries, and made it difficult for employers to pay less than a certain amount to their workers. These rules and regulations remain in effect today. The All-China Women's Federation, which has always been charged with overseeing the plight and needs of women workers, continues to see this as its responsibility. But the economic reforms have taken the teeth out of enforcement, especially in many development zones. As we saw in Chap. 2, particularly in foreign-owned firms, the Chinese government has less power and, perhaps, less incentive, to ensure the fair treatment of women workers. Consequently, women working in private or jointly-owned enterprises are less likely to receive these benefits or assurances and women working in the DEZ are only partially able to rely on state oversight to help them in their efforts. Nevertheless, women found ways to resist poor working conditions, participating in everything from work slowdowns to actual strikes in order to improve their work situations or wages. This willingness to assert what they saw as their rights as workers (in relation to their bosses, many of whom were foreigners, at least in the factories) is an interesting contrast to women's reluctance to assert their rights as women workers. I will address this issue in the next chapter, and discuss how rhetoric of the state and Party, both in the past and today, shape how women perceive, accept, or resist different inequalities—as workers or as women workers—in their status at work.

We can see that even with their high labor force participation, women and men have very different experiences within the labor force. Dalian women's experiences reflect the overall situation of women workers in China, facing limitations in what work they do, in the wages they earn, and the benefits accrued them. However, as in other societies, these women are less likely to look to structural inequalities to explain the gender differences they deal with. In their explanations for such differences, they often either insist such inequalities do not matter or they attribute them to individual differences. Nevertheless, though they may focus on the different individual characteristics behind the gendered workforce, the patterns suggest that structure and discourse have been important factors shaping the lives of Dalian and other women workers.

Marriage

Just as women's lack of labor force participation was seen by early Communist leaders as a key piece of women's subordination, so too were old styles of marriage considered to be detrimental to women's achieving equality with men. Consequently, early reforms focused on changing marriage practices, outlawing arranged marriage, marriages at very young ages, and allowing divorce. But while some things about family and marriage did change, many things did not. Family is still the central organizing structure for most Chinese citizens, and marriage, as the beginning of a new phase of family life, remains a key event in the lives of nearly all Chinese. Today, over 95% of men and over 99% of women marry before the age of 40 (Junar statistics 2012). Marriage remains a strategy of social mobility for many young people, but particularly so for women (Tan and Short 2004; Lavely 1991; Ebrey 1991). Dalian women sometimes described marriage and their own experiences around marriage in just these terms. As the exchange below indicates, Lirong was very straight-forward in describing why she married her husband:

NR: How is it that you came to decide that he was the right person to marry?
LR: Well, it was not very complicated. At that time, I was fairly old already. I had no housing, housing was the big issue. And he had housing. His danwei had given him housing. So I married him.
NR: So the housing was really important in your decision to marry?
LR: Yes, it was probably the most important thing.
NR: And you, you did not have housing at the time?
LR: No, of course not, it was only given to men, so you had to marry a man who had housing.

For many Dalian women, social mobility included, and sometimes focused on, migration from village to city. For example, Chanquan explicitly named marriage as one of the three ways that village women could move successfully and permanently to the city. After explaining that it was too late for her to use education to create such a route, and that she had been unable to land a permanent city job, she followed with

"And then there is through marriage. If I marry a man with a city hukou, then I could change my hukou [and live in the city]." Earlier in the interview, she had explained how her own view of marriage as leverage into the city was shared by her mother, saying "leaving the rural area is really important for girls. My mother really wanted me to find a city boy." But Chanquan also seemed realistic about her chances, explaining that she had to realize that many urban men saw her status as too low for them, and would "never have someone like me." Not all city men are like that, she argued, but many are, and it was necessary to "find one who does not look down on rural women;" if that was impossible, it might be better to find someone like herself, which would mean a rural man.

Some women were more successful than others in pursuing this pathway. Chanquan, for example, felt that she had failed because she would end up marrying not a city boy at all, but a man who was also a villager. She was deeply disappointed that her hopes to use marriage to leave the village permanently had been unfulfilled. But Yimin was successful in her efforts in this regard. A 26 year old migrant from a rural area in a nearby province, Yimin was now engaged to a young man who had a Dalian city hukou. In an interview with me, she said she had migrated to the DEZ partly because she hoped to find a "better" husband. When I asked about what "better" meant, she explained it was not really about money, and his wages might not be that much better than they would be back home. Rather, she explained, men in the city have higher status, which included—but was not solely based on—better jobs and in addition, and importantly, his hukou status would pave the way for her to become a permanent city resident.

Other women might not have found a husband with a better hukou, but still felt that moving to the DEZ gave them an advantage in marriage proceedings (see also Tan and Short 2004). While even most rural women are no longer subject to strict arranged marriage as was true in the past, nevertheless, many of them meet potential spouses through introductions by friends and family; that was true for a number of the women in my sample. But migration also gave some Dalian women the chance for a different marriage process. As other researchers have found in other parts of China (Jacka 2005b; Beynon 2004), many women who migrated to the DEZ had more freedom in mate choice than they would have had, had they remained in the village. Daoyun waited for nearly a year before she introduced the man she had met at work to her parents. Even in situations where women married men from their home village, and even when they were introduced through family members, their migration may have given them an edge or some space in the proceedings. One woman described such a marriage process, where her parents introduced her to her future husband, but she continued working in the city and saw him occasionally, on trips home. They married after an extended engagement and lived separately from either set of parents after marriage; eventually, he moved to the DEZ as well. Yujie met her husband through an introduction by her mother's friend, but the decision to marry him was hers. She described the characteristics that made him attractive to her "I had heard he had a good family, his sisters were good, and he came from a good background. And I could tell by looking at him that he was a good person. I mean he was not perfect. He is not tall, taller than I am, but not by much. And he

really is not all that good looking. But you know, good looking on the outside but without a good looking heart ("xinlin bu hao kan"), what good is that? This man had all the right characteristics. He was honest, had a good background, his education was not too little. I knew he would be good at home (zai jiali hao). I really thought, this is the one."

Marriage was an important turning point for women, as it often indicated where they would end up living and migration clearly influenced the marriage process for many migrant women. It allowed women to meet new people, be on their own, have a group of friends away from home, and gave women more independence in many aspects of daily life. Bingqing, who herself split up with her first boyfriend, who was from her village, and later married a man she met in the city, described how her co-workers in the DEZ factory would talk to each other about their marriage prospects and how that influenced their decisions. "All of my coworkers were not married, so we were a big group of unmarried women. Every time one of us was going to get married, everyone was interested—who is he? what's he like? that kind of thing. But we all married pretty late.... I think once we started working, our attitudes changed. Some girls, when they began to work, they said that the local boys were not good enough, that they would not marry them. So they wanted to find a better man to marry." However the odds against marrying a city man, many rural migrant women still clung to marriage as a strategy for finding a way to leave the village and become a permanent urban residence. Because these women, at least, saw urban residence as a necessary piece of a successful life, their marriage goals often included using marriage to secure urban residency. Shannon May (2010) found that for some families, parents see their daughter's marriage to an urban man not only as a means of social mobility for the daughter herself but also as a household strategy meant to allow the family increased economic security and status, a foothold into an urban area and life. Marriage as mobility continues to be important for women, and rural-to-urban migration is now tied to that strategy.

Family

Marriage strategies were important to develop and follow because marriage was the beginning of a new phase of family and it is obvious that family remains the central social institution shaping these women's lives. They strove to take the lessons they had learned as children—about hard work, hardship, the importance of education, or others—to create a good life for themselves and those who would be part of their new families.

Dalian women had only minimal control over one important aspect of family formation, that of childbearing. State control of childbearing is extensive and restrictive in China. The Chinese state began restricting births nation-wide in 1980, allowing urban women only one child; rural women were generally limited to two. Scholars have debated whether the massive decline in fertility since those early restrictions is strictly about the policy or whether preferences for numbers of children have

changed outside of the policy (Whyte and Gu 1987; Lavely and Freedman 1990; Poston and Gu 1987), but in China today, whatever the reasons, fertility is very low (standing at 1.6 in 2010 (World Bank 2012)); only around 30% of Chinese women have more than one birth ("Family planning still…" 2011).

Son preference is widespread in China; because of it and the restrictive birth policies, the sex ratio at birth reached an astonishingly high of 120 by 2000 (Riley 2004). That number reflects the ways that girls are "missing," the victims of abandonment, non-reporting at birth, infanticide or, increasingly, sex-selective abortion (Zeng et al. 1993). Although there may not be definitive answers about the exact numbers and fate of the missing girls, there is little doubt about the existence of the phenomenon and possible underlying causes (Coale and Banister 1994). As a measure of gender preference and discrimination, these sex ratios speak very strongly. Parents often prefer sons for very practical reasons. Girls and women are discriminated against in the labor market, in schooling, and in the political sphere; sons, on the other hand, are likely to meet better fortunes. In addition, one of the major contributors to the discrimination of girls before and at birth, and in their early childhood is family structure and practice. In spite of the many family changes in the last six decades, sons remain of vital importance to most families. It is through males that family lineage is traced and it is sons who care for their parents in their old age; rural peasants, who do not usually have retirement pensions, are particularly dependent on their children in their old age. Marriage practices reflect these traditions; daughters continue to marry out of their families and into their husbands' families. Now, in a time where families are restricted in how many children they can bear, daughters can threaten family continuity, stability, and survival; if a couple has no sons, they may end up without financial and other support. These practices, coupled with continuing discrimination against women, give men and boys important advantages throughout their lives and make parent investment in sons more effective than investment in daughters. The missing girls phenomenon is perhaps the clearest evidence of Chinese women's continuing struggle for equality and the structural barriers that have impeded it.

Some of these issues were evident in the lives of Dalian women, but I did not see much evidence of either the negative effects of the birth planning policy nor a preference for sons.[2] Among the women in my sample, some women were able to have two children, but many women, especially those migrant women who had secured an official urban hukou, were limited to one child. When I asked them about how many children they would like to have if there were no government restrictions, very few of them chose to imagine such a scenario. Those that did said it would be nice

[2] It is very possible that the women I spoke to would be reluctant to report certain events or issues to me. I would not expect anyone to tell me about an abortion, abandonment, or killing of a daughter, given both the illegal nature of those actions and how they are sanctioned by the general society. But it is also possible that Dalian women, who, as we will see, have stronger ties to their parents after marriage than do women in some other parts of China, are less likely to see sons as more advantageous than daughters to the same extent as in other parts of China.

to have two children, a boy and a girl. No woman admitted a preference for a son, although a couple women did tell me that their husbands had been hoping for a son. In fact, many women who had daughters spoke passionately about their hopes for their daughters, as I will discuss later in this chapter. In general, however, my efforts to get women to talk about preferences for numbers or sex of children did not get very far. They seemed to see it as a non-issue, something they had little control of, and were accepting of the restrictions they lived within. It also did not seem to be an issue that caused much tension between husbands and wives, possibly because there were few decisions to make. Having at least one child is strongly normative in China and the assumption that all couples will have one and only one child may be so widespread that that is rarely a subject of discussion; the national birth planning policy makes discussing how many children to have a moot issue. That may explain the exchange between Lirong and myself after she told me she only wanted one child.

NR: What about your husband? How many kids do you think he would want [if there were no restrictions]?
LR: I don't know. We never talk about this. He has never raised this issue. We never talk about this.
NR: So you don't really know his opinion?
LR: No, this is something that never comes up.

In this way, the birth planning policy, even as it has affected women and girls nationwide, and been the source of great gender discrimination, may actually have eliminated a source of tension and disagreement among couples in many families. The policy, and the limited number of children that families may have, may also be part of the increased attention that mothers give to their children (Milwertz 1997; Fong 2004).

Mothers and Daughters

As mentioned above, no woman in my sample expressed a preference for a son. In fact, many of them said they preferred a daughter; not coincidentally, the most outspoken on this issue were those who were the mother of daughters. For many women, it was not easy for them to talk about how gender shaped their own lives. But in their discussion of daughters, it was easier for them to talk about issues of gender, gender discrimination, and the experiences of women.

Undoubtedly shaped by their own experiences as daughters, Dalian women spoke, often passionately, about their intentions and goals for their children and the important role that mothers play in children's lives. Fangyin, the mother of twin sons, spoke warmly and gratefully about the influence of her own mother in her life, saying, "She worked hard to give me chances. And she had a lot of influence. I know without her my life would have been very different." That is likely part of the reason she argued for the important role that mothers play in general: "Mothers are… really important…they are the ones that take care of the children, they know what the kids need and everything, so that is what they do, they are really important."

Other women spoke about the influence they have over daughters in particular. A Korean Chinese woman spoke to me of her dreams for her daughter, who was now 15 years old. She talked about all the ways that she encouraged her daughter, pushing her to do better in school, helping her through difficult times, always being on her side. She insisted that she had to do that, to take that role, that otherwise her daughter might have the kind of difficult life that she herself had had, one of hardship and few hopes. She wants her daughter to avoid that and feels it is her responsibility to help her. Many women saw some jobs as more fitting for women than others and encouraged their daughters towards those; for example, one mentioned how office work was cleaner and easier for women, and better than other jobs. Another explained she wanted her daughter to find "some job that fits her as a girl, not too hard." But however different they saw women and men in the workforce, all the women I spoke with argued that girls should get as much education as boys. Education was a scarce resource in the lives of these women when they were growing up and for many, it was a key path out of their early lives. That they saw education as important, particularly for girls, is not surprising. Huiyang, who herself had gone only as far as middle school, spoke strongly about the importance of parents' paying for their children's education. She intended to do everything possible to ensure that her daughter, now 10 years old, gets as much education as possible. When I wondered aloud about how some parents might not be able to afford to pay for that education, she quickly responded, "You have to find a way to pay the fees. That is just true, you have to do that… If you don't pay, think about the future! Forever your child will say, you did not pay for my schooling. Just think about the influence on the future. No, parents have to pay, they just have to." Jiangli said, simply, "I know now that schooling is the MOST important thing, it is so important. I tell my daughter this."

Mothers of daughters sometimes spoke in ways that are similar to those Vanessa Fong (2004) has written about, seeing their daughters as their "only hope." Jiangli spoke passionately about her hopes for her daughter. "You know, I have only one child. I really want a lot for that one child. I want her to have a good job. She needs education." And that role—as mothers of daughters—at times brings particular responsibilities. Women know the difficulties that women face as women and try to prepare their daughters for that, even beyond the cajoling and encouragement in school that many undertake. Jiali, who fought hard to attend high school, tells her daughter she has to be better than the boys. She explained, "There are still differences, men get better jobs, with better pay, because they say women can't do that." She takes that into account as she advises her daughter, "I tell her she has to make more effort than men, because she is a woman, that she should really work hard, that she can do it, but men are given advantages." Here, we see that some women feel their role as mothers to daughters includes preparing them for an unequal, gendered, world.

It is from their role as mothers—and as mothers of daughters—that we most easily see how Dalian women understand the gendered nature of the social world they live in, and their own responsibilities in it. They take their role as mothers seriously, and understand the powerful influence they can have in their children's lives. It is not only when asked about mothering that these Dalian women reveal the importance of this role to them. As we will see, their role as mother shapes much of their lives, from the goals they set to their interpretations of their own lives.

Parents and Parents-in-Law

Dalian women are embedded in several different family configurations, and we have seen that their relationship to their children is one of the most important. These women also spoke at length about their relationships to their own parents and their husbands' parents, and the ways they act to maintain those connections. The family configurations in which they are involved suggest they are able to manage these family relations to their advantage.

For centuries, the most accepted pattern of marriage throughout most of China was for a new bride to move to her husband's family's house and village, and to lose close touch with her own family and parents. It was this marriage practice that saw women disadvantaged in several ways: parents, knowing they would lose their daughters at marriage, were less likely to invest in daughters, seeing them as "spilt milk," recipients of wasted resources who would not benefit the family in the long run. Such marriage practices have been behind parents' preference for sons; sons, who are likely to remain with their parents, are necessary in order to guarantee care in their old age. For daughters, such marriage practices were often psychologically difficult (Wolf 1972). In their own families, they often did not feel a part of the family; at marriage, often arranged to a man they did not know, they were forced to move to a new household and were subject to the control of their parents-in-law, particularly their husbands' mother. In these new households, they often had no one to turn to for support or love until they bore children and began to create their own, "uterine" families (Wolf 1972).

While this was the predominant pattern of marriage, there were many variations. Ellen Judd (1989) documents that women in Northeast China (Shandong) were more likely than in other places to continue ties to their niangjia, their mother's household. In Dalian, most of the women in my sample had strong and close ties to both their own parents and to their husband's parents. Many of them talked not of parents or parents-in-law per se, but of mothers and mothers-in-law, suggesting that in Dalian, as Judd found in Shandong, it was the relationship between different generations of women that these women were most focused on.

Some of the practices revealed in interviews were not surprising. For example, most women talked about giving money to their parents-in-law on a regular basis, either at New Year's or more often. That practice seems to reflect a general expectation that, once grown, sons will support their parents financially. As has been true across China for centuries, many women spoke of how they had lived with their parents-in-law immediately after marriage. However, even arrangements that seem to follow old patterns reveal how post-nuptial practices and relationships have been shaped in new ways in Dalian and how migration has contributed to those new configurations. Dalian women's relationships with their mothers-in-law (Popo) have familiar aspects but do not always follow the normative pattern. While they help to support them, through financial contributions and help in their lives, these daughters-in-law also often benefitted in numerous ways from good and regular relationships with their parents-in-law, particularly their mothers-in-law. Bingqing had a great deal of contact with her popo. Her parents-in-law live just a few minutes away and her own

household and that of her popo's are intertwined in many ways. Her popo's house seems to be a center of family life for three generations of the family. Her popo takes care of her son while she is working; she and her husband pay for all the food, but it is her popo who cooks dinner every night. As she described this situation, she explained that her mother-in-law is a very good person and they get along well. She thought the arrangement they had set up was good for everyone, for her young son, for herself, and for her parents-in-law as well. Her husband is their only child living near them and without this arrangement, they would be "just two old people, they would probably not eat well, this way they eat well." In many ways, their set-up sounds like a classic post-marriage arrangement, with mother-in-law and daughter-in-law living and working closely together. But Bingqing's situation in Dalian gives her more advantage than daughters-in-law have had in other circumstances. Her relationship with her popo allows her to work outside the house and have good childcare, for which she pays her popo weekly; that money exchanges hands here, for food and childcare, suggests how what appear to be old-style family configurations have been brought into the market economy, and the ways that women are able to rely on and shape those configurations to meet their own needs. Yimin, who had yet to marry, had already begun to think about plans around future childbirth and childcare. Speaking to the continuing reliability of these family ties, she and her popo had already made arrangements for her popo to care for her child, once the baby was born at some later date.

In addition to their in-laws, most of the women in this sample maintained close ties with their own parents, even long after marriage. Nearly every woman sent money to her parents, and often amounts equal to those sent to their husband's parents. They talked about these as their own decisions, and in that way can be interpreted as a place where they are able to assert their own priorities. Xiachen gives the same amount to her parents that her husband gives to his parents, and she quickly added that that was appropriate: "they both need the same things, so to me there should be no difference… they are the same and we have to give them the same amount. They both need to eat, or need clothes or things. That's true!" But as was true in many such situations in Dalian, Xiachen also had a good relationship with her popo, who watches her daughter during the day and who was, she volunteered, a "really good person and she does a great deal for us… I can't complain about her at all!"

Beyond financial support of their parents, many women had gone further and had found ways to bring their parents into the city, often setting them up in nearby apartments. For example, although it is her popo who cares for her daughter daily, Xiachen's parents also live nearby, and Xiachen manages to visit them (she spoke of these visits as visits to her mother) every day. Thus, Xiachen's daily life involves both her parents and her husband's parents; interestingly, Xiachen's husband does not visit her parents very often, though they live quite close; that was a common pattern for Dalian women, with women closely involved with mothers and mothers-in-law but their husbands having less contact with their wives' parents and close involvement with their own parents.

These post-nuptial living arrangements reveal the ways that old and new patterns exist simultaneously and the ways that these women are able to benefit from these

complex configurations. Adult children continue to feel responsible for their husbands' parents; that is true even when relationships are not easy. Ying, for example, did not get along with her mother-in-law, particularly in recent years. Nevertheless, she also stressed the importance of supporting her and her own mother. With great animation, she said to me, "You write that down, that we really do take care of our old people here, you write that in your book! We have to do that. And it is a good thing to do." Mothers-in-law continue to be important members of women's households and daily lives. But these relationships have been shaped by urban living, by the new needs of working daughters-in-law. Mothers-in-law in Dalian, as in other places in China, often provide needed support for their sons' families, through child care or even daily preparation of food and laundry. Women in Dalian benefit from those contributions and in their talk, were quick to acknowledge them, often making clear how much they appreciate their mothers-in-law. But in Dalian, women are also creating new arrangements involving their own parents, and particularly their mothers. The practice of contact with parents after marriage may not be new to this area of China (see Judd 1989). But the forces of migration and urban living have shaped them in new ways. Women's parents often move to live near their daughters, and while they also offer support for them in their daily work, they are also being supported—financially and otherwise—by their daughters. Women's lives are thus embedded in a variety of family relationships; they can often count on the support of their husband's parents but they also have the support of their own family. As these women age, these same relationships might mean that these women will be burdened with the care of up to four elderly people, but for now, they seem to appreciate the wide and deep family ties that anchor their lives. These arrangements may also foretell future living arrangements: older people in Dalian seem to be able and willing to maintain residences separate but near their children, perhaps moving in only when they are unable to live alone (see Thogersen and Ni 2010).

Alternative Family Forms: Mistresses and Prostitutes

Recent research across China has revealed that since the economic reforms, there has been an increase in both prostitution and the number of men who maintain either second households or relationships with mistresses. While my work did not encounter these explicitly, I did see their shadow and the indirect influence these practices may have on women in Dalian today. In one case, we can see how such arrangements are part of how young women strategize to get ahead today. In the second, it is apparent how the possibility of their husband's taking a mistress might contribute to the ways married women interpret their own lives.

Chanquan is a single woman who at 24 considers her life to be moving away from her goals and hopes. As a waitress in Dalian, she has found at least a temporary way to avoid returning to her village. However, it is a tenuous existence she has in Dalian, and she spoke with me of the mismatch between her hopes and the realities of her life. She saw few opportunities for being able to stay permanently in Dalian;

that had been her singular goal in much of her decisions and actions. In the course of our interviews, Chanquan revealed that she had been approached by a customer at the restaurant, a man who offered her money for her "companionship." In her conversation with me, she struggled to make sense of that offer and her own relationship to such arrangements. She insisted that she "did not believe anything he said," but she also was clearly looking for support for her own decision not to accept such offers. While she insisted she would never do something like that, the way that she spoke indicated that it weighed on her greatly, and I was actually not convinced that she had not at least been tempted by this man. She exclaimed, "Well, girls do that, that is really awful, don't you think it is awful to do that kind of thing?" When I did respond as negatively as she might have hoped, she continued, "Even if someone was really poor, you can find a way—an honest way!—to make a few kuai to eat, you don't need to do that. I will tell you, there are two kinds of these women. One of them, they just accompany a man everywhere, they just go here, go there. There is another, all they can think of is money, they want more and more things, and see this as a way of getting these things. Those are the worst!! Don't you agree, aren't they awful??!!" In her description of women who would "just sell their bodies, you know, their bodies," as she described it, she seemed to be as intent on distancing herself and perhaps the temptation it offered. As a poor rural migrant who had been unable to find her way to success in the city, Chanquan epitomized the vulnerability of young women to sex work, which pays women at rates higher than they can make in any other work.[3] Chanquan may have stuck to the proper, socially accepted path here, but she and others could be easily tempted to consider alternatives to trying to achieve social mobility or even just access to a decent income through sex work and prostitution.

Married women too are aware of these alternative arrangements and one woman I talked to seemed to interpret life against those alternatives. During an interview with Rong, who worked as a tailor in the DEZ, she repeatedly framed her appreciation of her husband by describing the bad behavior he does not engage in. Although it was clear that she did not always know everything that he was engaged in (for example, he bought a motorcycle without her knowledge; she only found out later), she told me she was sure he would never do something like have a mistress, and for that she would remain grateful. She told me that many men have mistresses today, and they spend a lot of money on them. In fact, a woman at work liked him, but, she assured me, "he would not have any of that." And she followed that story with a statement of how she was very satisfied and happy in her marriage because he does not do any of these bad things. She repeated how grateful and happy she was because of what her husband did not do throughout the interview. Here again, whether or not her husband has a mistress, the possibility of such an arrangement influences Rong's

[3] Zheng Tiantian (2007, 2009) has documented the lives of migrant women who work as hostesses in Dalian city and strategize to resist the label given to them as second class citizens. Her work illustrates another setting where women use an unequal social system and their low status within it to procure resources and higher status; see also Ogasawara (1998) about this process among Japanese Office Ladies.

views of her own marriage. From the way she spoke to me, it was clear that she was more forgiving of his behavior in other ways, because at least she did not have to deal with his mistress. Yujie also mentioned the ways prostitutes and mistresses can threaten marriage and lead to divorce, explaining "Prostitution is on the rise, so men go out and use prostitutes, and then the wife finds out and wants a divorce. Or else, the husband finds a girlfriend outside of the marriage, you know, not a prostitute. The husband has some young girlfriend, and he comes home and sees his wife and looks at her, and thinks, oh what an old hag, pretty soon he wants a divorce."

Thus, though not directly involved in these recent extra-marital arrangements, the lives, decisions, and even outlooks of Dalian women are nevertheless influenced by their presence in the society at large. They see themselves and their marriages as more vulnerable because of their presence, and act to distance and protect themselves as much as possible from them.

Interpreting the Role of Gender in Dalian Women's Lives

There are a number of lessons about the role of gender that we can take from learning about the experiences of Dalian migrant women. Are these women exploited? Or is there evidence of new sources of "girl power"? The experiences of these women in Dalian allow us some insight into the debate about whether women are better off under the economic reforms. Assessing how women have fared through these economic reforms requires multiple perspectives and an acknowledgment of the mixed effects these changes have had on women's lives. Women have been able to take advantage of new opportunities that have come about in the last 20 years. Indeed, for these women, the relaxation of restrictions on mobility has allowed them to migrate to the city in hopes of a better life. But we have seen that women remain subordinate in the workforce, receiving lower salaries and positions than men. Indeed, economic reforms seem to have had a mixed outcome on gender equality (see Cohen and Wang 2009; Wang Feng 2007). In these households, we are also able to examine how rural women's domestic lives have and have not changed since their move to the city, giving us new perspectives on gender and power.

In this situation, there is evidence of continuing, and even unexamined, gender inequality in nearly all areas of women's lives. Growing up, women often had less access to resources than did their brothers. As workers in the DEZ, they continue to receive lower wages and fewer benefits than men at work. At the same time, these women found ways to assert themselves and to seek out better opportunities for themselves. Many of them fought to stay in school, some with the support of parents, particularly mothers. Their reasons for migrating were often about their interest in finding alternatives to an expected life as rural women, and they see their lives as urban residents—whether permanent or not—as significantly better than the alternative rural life they would have had.

While it is true that some researchers have found that because of the higher proportion of women in rural areas, some women in rural households now seem to

be able to wield power that may actually be greater than that controlled by these migrant women living in cities (Jacka 2012; Shi 2011; Yan 2003), Shannon May (2010: 902–3) adds another important piece to this picture. She points out that when migrant women return to the village because they have been unable to find a way to stay in the city, their adjustment back to rural life is particularly difficult. She argues that "city life may have made both men and women internalize a labour hierarchy that privileges disciplined, waged labour over agricultural self-employment… [but]…it is only women who are subjected to both devalued market labour and to the burden of domestic labour. Unlike in the city, where service infrastructure delivers gas to the room for heating or cooking, and water for drinking and cleaning, in [the] village the primary burden of daily subsistence infrastructure provision rests on women." Considering this comparison between their lives in the city and those that they imagine wait for them in the village, the efforts that Dalian migrant women make to secure an urban residence make sense.

It is in marriage and post-marriage processes that these women seemed to have been able to create their own pathway. Many of them met potential husbands and made decisions about marriage on their own, with parents being involved only later in the process. And after marriage, as we have seen, women use their network of family members—including not only their parents-in-law but their own parents as well—to help them in their daily lives and to balance their family and work demands. In these ways, they have been active in creating new structures and patterns in their lives, ones that give them more support and sometimes, greater independence.

Women also indicate their intention to be active in shaping the futures of their children, and it is here that we are able to hear how they believe gender is important in shaping the lives of young women. They work to encourage their daughters to succeed, and many mothers warn them of the challenges—as women—they will face. Here is some of the best evidence of their own experiences with gender inequality.

At the same time that women exert their agency and actively work to shape their lives, carving out as successful a life as they can, it is also clear that an important focus is changing intergenerational relationships and inequalities. They describe relationships with parents and parents-in-law in which they are not subordinate actors but often active and equal, relationships which they have often shaped to their own advantage. On the other hand, as we will explore in more detail in Chap. 5, these women seem less intent and less active in trying to change gender inequalities within their own households, and seem resigned to different roles and power differentials that shape their daily lives. That the largest changes these women have been part of seem to be intergenerational rather than intra-generational (Yan 2006) reflects key elements of Chinese society today, particularly the lesser support for gender equality in many realms of society.

Making sense of the ways that women often deny or overlook the ways gender has shaped their lives requires stepping back from their individual stories and taking into account the context of these stories. We have seen that they do not speak very often about the gender inequalities they face at work, although they are aware of them; their comments about how able they are compared to men, in spite of lower

pay and status reflect that awareness. As we will see in the next chapter, they are perhaps even more reluctant to speak to or criticize inequalities at home. But we have also seen, as they talk about their daughters' futures, that they are often aware of gender inequalities their daughters are likely to face. What might explain these seeming reluctances and even contradictions? There are several possible reasons.

First, it is obvious from how women frame any evaluation of their current lives that their frame of reference is always a comparison to rural life. It is not unimportant that they see rural life as much harder, and feel lucky to be where they are and reluctant to complain about many of the new arrangements they live within.

But women also seem to see any difference between women and men, between themselves and brothers or male peers, as an individual issue, and often tie those differences to characteristics of individuals, rather than seeing them as part of a larger social pattern. Many women were quick to argue that any difference that seemed to be about gender inequality—whether that was differences in education achievement between the girls and boys in their families or differences at work—was really about individual differences. Thus, Daoyun insisted that the boys in her family received more education than the girls because they were smarter than the girls. Fangyin, who is one of the few women in her office, did not focus on how differences in gender norms or access to education or job opportunities might have shaped that pattern. She insisted that she was able to succeed as an individual. When pressed, she did acknowledge that gender might matter for some women, explaining, "Oh, I do think that women have it harder… you take a poor woman, or one without education, and sure, that will make a difference, since she will have it twice as hard. So yes, I think it matters." But at the same time, she insisted gender did not have an influence in her own life.

Their relative silence on gender might also be something more straight-forward, reflecting the fact that gender is not necessarily always the most salient issue for all women. Gail Hershatter (2007: 117) has argued that at such a moment, when gender recedes from a place of priority, we need to "track when and by whom it is used or discarded, as well as attending to how and why it is entwined with or displaced by other categories." I will take up this issue in Chap. 6, as we examine how the priority of gender seems to recede when modernity and the achievement of success in a modern world takes priority in the lives of migrant mothers.

Women may also be reluctant to challenge gender inequality within their own households because such actions might threaten their own goals and plans for themselves and their families, particularly their children. We saw that women viewed mistresses and prostitutes as potentially threatening to the stability of marriages, including their own. But even if they were not facing those outside threats, they might well see family unity and harmony as vital to achieving success and be reluctant to disturb that unity. I will discuss this in more detail in a later chapter, but here, it is important to recognize the priority of women's goal to find permanent urban residence and how other issues might take a necessary back seat to that goal.

Finally, we need to consider the ways that constructions of gender reflect long-standing and deeply engrained norms about acceptable behavior and demands of women and men, and how those are intertwined with other cultural values and

norms. Many women in Dalian seem to accept the different—and even unequal roles—for women and men. Consider Bingqing who first told me that her husband never goes out in the evening, but later said that he goes regularly to play mahjong with friends. When I asked her about that discrepancy, she shrugged her shoulders and did not think it needed explanation or even attention: that's the way things are: men go out in the evenings, women do not. Her husband's behavior and Bingqing's easy acceptance of it underscores the normality of this gender pattern. In this way, it is important to recognize that these women's lives and attitudes reflect patterns and norms at the level of society. Bingqing was not alone in the ways that these norms shape her interpretation of what occurs in her own life and family, and what kinds of behavior are worthy of questioning or challenging. Of course, in a similar way, we have to be aware that however these women interpret their own experiences as influenced by individual characteristics, these individual experiences are also shaped by those overall patterns and norms.

We have seen that many practices and even government policies have long favored men or male dominance, but so too have discourses surrounding these practices. Discourse is particularly important because of the way that it reflects unspoken, sometimes unexamined, influences on social behavior and outcomes. Attention to discourse means examining the "hegemonic or dominant ideologies [that] define what is permissible, even thinkable; they serve as the standard against which actions are measured, producing codes, regulations, and laws that perpetrate a particular ideology… Dominant ideologies generate discourses that stabilize, normalize, and naturalize behavior" (Blackwood 2000: 5). Discourses come from and lead to material conditions, providing spaces for individuals to construct their lives and identities, and challenging or upholding the accepted norms, values, and expectations for women and men. Discourse, then, moves our examination from the individuals making decisions, employing strategies, planning their lives, and constructing their identities to the larger social arena in which these individual actions take place. It underscores the ways that individual behavior cannot be the sole way of understanding gender.

Tani Barlow (1994) has pointed to two different ways that "woman" (funu) has been constructed in China in the past, constructions that are important to today's understanding of gender. In the late dynastic Chinese discourse, "funu"—woman—was constructed in and through the family. In other words, there was no generic category "woman," but rather only positions for different kinds of women within the family; in fact, Barlow argues, there was no definition of woman outside of the family: it was through their roles as daughters, wives, mothers, and mothers-in-law that women had identities as female. Sex identity did not depend on anatomical difference; rather, the categories of woman available at that time were actually constructed from these kinship roles. Partly because of an interest in defining women outside of family roles, a new way of understanding gender developed in the Republican era, based on western-origin scientific language that constructed gender as a binary, one half of which was seen as weaker than the other.

These early discourses are important because of the influences they have had on notions of gender even in China today. After 1949, when gender became a key part

of revolutionary discourse, the Communist Party wanted to distinguish its construction of woman (funu) from earlier notions (both Confucian based and that of the early twentieth century, which was considered to be bourgeois), but it nevertheless relied on those earlier discourses, partly because of the way family was still central to Communist society organization.

One of the most important pieces of post-1949 gender discourse was the way that gender came to be seen as, at its base, a biological and physiological difference, with social and psychological factors working on top of this basic difference to shape women and men in further ways (Evans 1997). These differences—and gender discourse in general—have been translated into policies, and have received other kinds of attention by the state in the organization of family and work, and in the daily lives of women and men in countless ways. "In the name of science, [the state] has legitimized a sometimes rigid code of normative sexual and gender conduct based on highly selective and didactic distinctions between right and wrong, normal and abnormal" (Evans 1997: 34). And while the emphasis has changed over the last 50 years, and women now have a greater range of subject positions to choose from, Evans argues that that change is minimal and involves tone and emphasis more than substance (Evans 1997: 53). What is consistent with earlier constructions is the way that the state has continued to emphasize the importance of marriage and reproduction to the state/country's goals and futures, and the ways that gender is constructed both through the family and through those state goals. Women are constructed as wives and mothers; while women were encouraged—and sometimes required—to be workers outside the home, this gender construction and its emphasis on women's reproductive and family roles at least partly explains the inequalities found in the labor force, where employers often see women as less committed workers than men because of their competing familial roles. For the entire last century—whether under Republican China rule or that of the Communist Party, women's first and most important identities have been familial. "The almost universal practice of marriage and motherhood in China, and the common assumption of a biologically grounded correspondence between marriage, sexual intercourse, and reproduction, reinforce the image of the 'natural mother.'" (Evans 1997: 122).[4]

Indeed, Dalian women regularly expressed beliefs that reflected this discourse. After initially insisting that women and men could have the same roles and responsibilities in all aspects of their lives, Fangyin then focused on the importance of motherhood and saw women's roles as unique there. She insisted that women and men had to have different roles with children, because women are mothers and mothering behavior is "natural;" she said "mothers are much closer [to their children], more capable than men in that way. It is in their hearts." Jiangli also used the term "natural" to talk about the role of women in children's lives, insisting of course she did

[4] Since the Cultural Revolution's emphasis on the similarities of women and men, Chinese feminists have been debating these issues of equality and difference and whether promoting gender difference (sometimes as "strategic essentialism" (Spivak 1990)) is the best strategy for promoting gender equality. For more on these debates, see: Zhong (2007), Barlow (1989), Li (1988), Meng Yue and Dai Jinhua (1989), Yang (1999).

all the childcare at home because "the mothers always are the ones to do that. It is natural, it is mothers who should." But it was not only their roles as mothers that Dalian spoke about as natural. Several women also described their husband's greater power in their household as the proper way; Yimin ascribed her husband's dominance as reasonable and she seemed ready to accept that, since "he is the man, and men do that." Mirroring earlier thinking and norms about motherhood and women's roles (Glosser 2003; Barlow 2004), many Dalian women see their roles and responsibilities as mothers not only as a duty but also as a source of power within the family and within the society generally, as we will see in the next chapter.

Chapter 5
"A Woman has to struggle to get what she wants": Gender and Power

The lives of migrant women in Dalian reflect the challenges they face from two inequalities in which they are situated: their rural and migrant status, on the one hand (Chap. 3) and their position as women (Chap. 4). These two structures exert a powerful force in these women's lives. Nevertheless, Dalian migrants report general satisfaction about their lives. I argue that one of the major reasons for this satisfaction is that, as married women and mothers, they have been able to navigate through challenges and potential roadblocks to achieve their goals. Examining their strategies takes us to an examination of power. In this chapter, I examine women's power, attempting to explicate issues of power in a general sense and to understand the role of power in the lives of women in Dalian. In my approach I will be trying to balance at least two different levels of power—those that occur on the individual level and those that are better measured at the wider, community or societal level. I will demonstrate that keeping both of these levels of interaction and influence in mind is key to understanding how women negotiate and strategize with those around them. For most of this chapter, I will focus on power of women as women. But as is clear, these women, as all women, are involved in criss-crossing structures of power and inequality. As we have already seen, rural/urban inequalities and class structure are both important in these women's lives. I take up these issues and their interactions at the end of the chapter and explore it further in the next.

Understanding and Measuring Power

The extensive literature on power suggests both the difficulty of finding a single definition or even approach to studying this complex issue and the way that power is differently created, supported, resisted and differently integrated in different settings, and even for different players within one setting. Thus, understanding power and the way it is created and shaped among a group of poor farmers in Malaysia (Scott 1985) will require different tools than would understanding power

N.E. Riley, *Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone: Laboring in Paradise*,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5524-6_5,

within a married couple in the Netherlands (Komter 1989) or migrant women in Northeast China.

One of the most important distinctions for understanding the lives of women in Dalian is the difference between power-over and power-to (Allen 1999). To have power-over is to be able to affect the behavior of another in some key way, whether intentionally or not. Allen argues for recognizing how some can have power over another in a particular context (and not in another) and how this power might be achieved through decisions or non-decisions and both directly or indirectly. Thus, as Komter (1989) has argued, a lot of the power that men have in marriage is power-over not only through overt domination of their wives, but even through the ways that women anticipate their husbands' action, nonaction, or reaction and act accordingly, for example by doing (or not doing) something to avoid their husbands' anger.

Power-to, in contrast, describes the ability to act in spite of the domination of others. It is the ability to attain a goal or object. When scholars and others talk of "empowerment," this term comes closest to power-to in equivalent meaning (Kabeer 1999). Thus some women, even in the face of difficulty and even prohibition, have found ways to achieve goals—to go to school, to work, or to assert their own needs in households where their needs and interests are not accounted for.

Foucault's analysis of power (1980) has expanded our understanding of power, recognizing the ways that power is relational, productive, and found in the smallest elements of social life.

> Modern power, as first developed in disciplinary micropractices, is not essentially situated in some central persons or institutions such as king, sovereign, ruling class, state, or army. Rather it is everywhere. As the description of panoptical self-surveillance demonstrated, it is even in the targets themselves, in their bodies, gestures, desires, and habits. In other words, as Foucault often says, modern power is capillary. It does not emanate from some central source, but circulates throughout the entire social body down to even the tiniest and apparently most trivial extremities. (Fraser 1989: 24)

Thus, at the same time as we take account of the influence of larger structures, scholars have worked to understand agency among subordinates. Women are not powerless, even as they may have less power than men. James Scott has argued that we need to look for the hidden transcripts of subordinate groups. These hidden transcripts are sites "for nonhegemonic, contrapuntal, dissident, subversive discourse" (Scott 1990: 25). In his approach, Scott argues against false consciousness; it is not that subordinates are unaware of their situation but rather, we need to learn to read their scripts of resistance. He also argues against some concepts of hegemony; that kind of approach, he argues, naturalizes existing power relations and does not adequately attend to what is occurring below the surface. In his disagreement with Gramsci's stance on hegemony, he says that we should not assume that hegemony is so overwhelming that subordinates cannot imagine a different world. When we look and listen for the hidden transcripts of subordinates, we see that it is not so. Thus, Scott reminds us that to understand power and resistance, we need to look beyond the large and public demonstrations of resistance and should also be careful about assuming that public transcripts are the end of the story. Scott's perspective

has had an important influence on scholars examining power, even as those focused on issues of gender may see some difficulties in adopting his perspective completely.

Power at the Micro Level

We also must recognize that power operates at different levels of society. One focus of research on women's power is at the micro level. Here, scholars have examined the power of women relative to men at the individual level, within families, or within schooling or the workplace. Within education, scholars have examined school enrolment rates, retention and graduation rates, the kinds of programs in which girls are enrolled, and the different ways that boys and girls are treated in classrooms. Comparisons of women's and men's earnings, administrative responsibilities, hiring, promotion, and lay-off rates are all measures useful in determining how women fare as women in the workplace.

Looking at women's power in the family, scholars have examined control of and access to money and family finances, the distribution of resources such as education, money, and land, decision making power, distribution of housework and childcare responsibilities, access to leisure time, and how disputes and disagreements are settled. Many scholars (Blumberg 1991) have found that when women have control of income and money, they are more likely to have a larger say in family decisions. Others (Chafetz 1991) have argued that division of household labor is at the heart of gender stratification. Still others (Seymour 1992) have noted the importance of discretionary or leisure time, seeing that as a key measure of women's power in the family.

Komter's examination of "hidden power in marriage" suggests that both "manifest" and "latent" power is visible in married relationships and behaviors; her focus gives us access to hidden transcripts of wives and mothers. If we look at manifest—or overt—power, we examine who ultimately makes decisions, or who controls participation in decision making. Our assumption here is that power is exercised in a direct, observable way. Latent power is more difficult to measure. To see latent power, we have to examine not only decisions, but non-decisions as well. In addition, power is evident if we take into account the ways that the needs and wishes of the more powerful are anticipated by those with less power, or topics are not even raised, for fear of negative action. Here, then, the exercise of power is not necessarily based on observable conflict, but often on a more hidden agenda. Komter found that in her sample of couples (from the Netherlands), both manifest and latent power were evident, and women invariably had less power than men on most measures. For example, husbands and wives used different methods to try to make changes in the household. Women used cautiousness and more indirect means to effect change while men used reasoning and ignoring or avoiding issues; Komter's study found that the most effective methods for change were the most direct ones, and those methods were used by men more often than by women. These kinds of actions tend

to work to the advantage of husbands because the status quo of traditional gender roles, beliefs, and practices is confirmed as a result.

One of the most fruitful areas of research in terms of women's power in families has been that examining the link between women's work in the labor force and their roles and power in the family. Blumberg (1991) and others (Coleman 1991; Blumstein and Schwartz 1991) argue that, ceteris paribus, when women earn a regular wage outside the family, they will have more say in household purchases, be more involved in household decisions, and have fewer childcare and housework responsibilities within the household. There are many obvious pathways for such an influence (Treas 1991). One of the most important is simple access to cash; when women are paid a wage directly (and not through other family members), they have a greater potential to control that money. But this work has many other potential influences. Women who work outside the home and who are paid for that labor are more likely to learn about and interact with societal and community institutions that can enhance their standings. Government offices, banks, schools, training programs, even stores and places of recreation are more likely to become familiar and potential resources. That kind of increased interaction outside the household, and the power to earn cash income, can increase women's self-esteem, making it easier for them to assert themselves and their needs at home. Other household members are also more likely to see women's outside work and the connections and resources it brings as potentially changing and are therefore more likely to grant respect and esteem to working women. And when women are working outside, and contributing in this manner to the family, they have less time to do housework; this time conflict can force a change at home, and make it imperative that other family members contribute to the household labor.

But even as researchers have seen this link between paid work and women's roles and power in the household, it is also clear that the link is not always clear or even manifest. In most societies, women's work does not always give them increased power, and even when women work outside the home, they do not have power equal to men in the household, including their husbands. Several researchers (Blumberg 1991; Coleman 1991) have demonstrated how women's economic power gets "discounted" by a number of factors that intervene at the individual, family, and societal levels. And it is in these findings that we can see the complexities of measuring women's power in their families and households and the problems with a focus at the individual level.

These measures and results are important in that they give us information on daily behaviors but they don't always allow us to see the influences at the larger societal level. Some of the problems lie with the difficulties of measuring power at any level. But there is a larger picture and influence that needs to be addressed as well.

The Macro Level

While labor force involvement has the potential of giving women access to power within the household (and beyond), it doesn't always do so. Again, Coleman's (1991) argument that women's economic power gets discounted at both the macro

and micro levels by the existing overall gender stratification is relevant here. "Greater relative male control of the macro levels means that economic, political, legal, religious, and ideological factors… act to nibble away at the amount of economic power a woman actually can realize from any given amount of micro-level economic resources" (Blumberg 1991: 100; see also Chafetz 1991). This discounting makes it clear just how interrelated and interconnected are the micro and macro levels. While it is useful to measure things at the individual level, it is also easy to miss the ways that the larger community and society are operating. It is that larger background that gives those micro level behaviors context; even as those individual interactions are shaped by that context, they also, in turn, shape the larger power structures. It may be difficult to measure, but many scholars have argued that it is the larger, macro level that is the most influential on women's position within the family. Chafetz (1991), for example, distinguishes resource power (the ability of person or group to extract compliance, even in face of resistance) from definitional power. Definitional power, which is connected to resource power, is the ability to impose values, norms, standards of judgment, and situational definitions on others. This kind of power influences how behavior is interpreted. In addition, this larger context underlies systems of authority, and the ways that authority legitimates inequality, and general agreement (among both women and men in this case) about the responsibilities and privileges accorded to different members. It is the larger social world, then, that gives authority to different models of power and thus to different methods of achieving goals, on what kind of power-to and power-over is available or possible, what routes and subjects of resistance are conceivable or more effective; all of this will depend on context, and on where a person is in that context (de Certeau 1984).

The importance of the larger context is evident in another way. A focus on the individual level is less likely to take into account the different meanings of similar behaviors. Brenner (1995), for example, shows how Javanese women control money in the household. While in some cultures, this might be accurately interpreted as evidence of their power, Brenner argues that the meaning of monetary control is quite different in Java. In this culture, women's control of money does not mean they have power; there, power is exhibited through being able to stay away from dealing with the messiness of money (see also Errington 1990). Even individual behaviors that are dictated by larger societal norms and values can be sources of power; Evelyn Blackwood's research in Indonesia (2000) has underscored how the key roles that women play in their family mean that they are central in the creation and negotiation of social identities.

Multi-level Approaches to Understanding Power

These perspectives on power are useful in the ways they describe and underscore the variety of perspectives available, and the sheer difficulties of measuring and understanding power, especially those aspects that exhibit themselves in more

subtle, often hidden, ways. While we can think of different levels—macro and micro—of power's influence, an important caution comes from Blackwood who argues that we cannot really talk about levels of power, "since all these arenas are connected and multiply constructed" (Blackwood 2000: 187).

In examining the lives of women in Dalian, I focus on several key issues from this literature and work on power. First, I rely on Foucault's (1980) idea of how power exists not just in one or two positions but in many interlinked nodes. Secondly, I draw from Lila Abu-Lughod's arguments about using resistance as "a diagnostic of power" (Abu-Lughod 1990: 42). She suggests that by tracing resistance and its pathways, we learn about power. Thus, in a reverse way of thinking about how where there is power, there is resistance (Foucault 1980), we can think: where there is resistance, there is power. This perspective allows us to move away from more abstract notions of power to strategies of power in particular situations, and to the different forms of power that play a role and the ways that people are caught up in them. In addition, "practices are more fundamental than belief systems when it comes to understanding the hold that power has on us" (Fraser 1989: 25).

An ethnographic approach is especially useful in seeing pathways of power. Such an approach suggests a focus on daily behaviors and practices and these daily practices allow us to see the ways that power is maintained, contested, and changes. We can see households in Dalian as "political arena[s] constituted by particularly dense bundles of rules, rights and obligations governing relations between women and men, elders and juniors. The rules defining property rights, labor obligations, resource distribution, and so forth are culturally variable, but they are not fixed and given. Rather, they are potentially subjected to contestation, and must be constantly reinforced and reiterated. Accordingly, we need not only to ask what the rules are, but how they are constructed, maintained, reinterpreted, and on occasion challenged in everyday practice" (Hart 1992: 121–2).

But at the same time, these daily behaviors reflect the larger gender rules, expectations and other norms and values that exist, are perpetuated, and are created at the level of the society. While we must be attentive to and look for evidence of individual agency—individual acts of power and resistance—we also have to recognize how they are part of larger forces. Just as women's economic role and power in the family is discounted by what is happening well outside the family, so too are any behaviors at the household level connected to the larger social system. So while we strive to see power in daily acts and at the household level, we also have to balance that with a recognition of how those households are enmeshed in larger systems of power and stratification. We have to keep in mind the dangers of limiting our sights and analysis to the local level and the ways "these small acts tend to be seen as small resistances thrown up against superior forces…. A more encompassing definition sees power invested in the ability to constitute and reconstitute (create and shape) social practice" (Blackwood 2000: 187). The "challenge is to understand not only how the rules and the terrain of domestic contestation are defined and limited by larger political-economic structures, but also how domestic struggles channel and inflect certain of the forces through which these structures are themselves transformed" (Hart 1992: 122).

In her study of women's veiling practices in Cairo, MacLeod works to find a balance between seeing women's agency and recognizing the constraints these women live among. Even as women create new ways to achieve their goals, give new meanings to old elements of society, or resist successfully, she argues that ideology remains an issue. Her definition of ideology focuses on the strong influence of this aspect of society: Ideology, she argues, is an "overarching arena for both thought and behavior, a discourse that shapes the way people tend to think about and act on opportunities for change…. Ideologies transcend the old dualities of the world of ideas versus the world of objective institutions, or superstructure vs. base. Ideologies are articulating principles that organize beliefs, behavior, social structures, and social relations within a certain perspective of the world, into a hegemonic formation" (MacLeod 1991: 75).

And that is the challenge: recognizing women's power and agency by attention to the hidden transcripts and the pathways women create and use to achieve goals while at the same time giving proper weight and attention to the overarching social structures that make some paths easier than others, and make some strategies more necessary and more effective than others. The lives of women in Dalian reflect many of these issues and subtleties of power.

Women's Power in Dalian

Women interact with others—men, other women, coworkers, family members—in several different spheres. Here, we take up issues of power at work, in household economics, housework, childcare, and as they relate to women's use of time.

Work

All of the women I interviewed, like nearly all of Dalian women generally and the large majority of women across China, work in the paid labor force. Because there are few alternatives to women's paid work (it was, after all, required by women during most years after 1949), that women work does not in itself have a significant meaning in China. Nevertheless, women's work is a central part of family finances and organization and clearly affects their role in the family

As we saw in the previous chapter, within the labor force, these women have jobs that reflect women's general subordinate role in the society, with salaries, positions, and general control less than men's. While there were several examples in this Dalian sample of women making as high or higher a salary than did their husbands and although this sample is too small to measure the relative wages of women and men, we can expect that relative wages in the DEZ are similar to those throughout China, where women, on average, earn about 75 % of what men make (Cohen and Wang 2009).

What has changed for these migrant workers since moving to the DEZ is the organization of both their work and the money they and other family members receive. Compared to when they worked in the village, they now have more regular, routinized work, and they are paid a regular salary, rather than receiving wages as part of a family, as happens in many agricultural settings. Women have more access to cash than they did when they worked in the fields as part of their families. In a village model, families often collect monies at the end of harvest season, and family members are not paid independently but earn their cash as part of a household. Thus, women's active and, especially, direct role in wage earning sets up a different kind of economic organization in the household in the DEZ, even as there were a variety of arrangements around control of money among these households. This change in organization implies significant changes for women. But the difficulty of translating that work into power in the household underscores the continuing inequalities that women face in the workforce and the very different expectations of and for women and men in families.

Family Economics

In Dalian families, economics is one realm where we can clearly see the complexity of the power of different family members. When we look closely at the relative roles that husbands and wives play in these Dalian families, we see patterns that reflect some of the same gender inequalities that have existed in rural and urban areas for decades and even centuries.

In some households, wives and husbands kept separate pots of money, with each of them able to spend their own wages fairly independently. Many other women reported that they and their husbands "pooled" their money. Their previous lives as rural peasants is important here, as income pooling is the norm in rural families where there is little discretionary income and where wages are earned and received as family members. But on further questioning, this pooling was rarely equal. Some women talked about keeping the money in a place where it was accessible to both. Jiali, for example, described how she and her husband came home on pay day and put their wages into a common drawer and then took from the drawer what they needed for different expenses over the month. But sometimes this pooling only later reveals differences between women and their husbands. Huiying began by saying that "we put everything [salaries] together." And then went on to explain that she uses the money to buy household items and doesn't "bother with his money." ["wo bu guan ta de qian"]. When asked to explain what she meant, she said "he just uses his money, I don't pay attention to his money." After being pressed further, Huiying elaborated that the "extra" money—"the money we don't need"—is put into a drawer, but in the end, it appears to be extra cash from her salary, and not his. That extra money she deposits in the drawer is used for household expenses. The extra money from his salary, on the other hand, is spent by him and used for his own expenses, such as small treats and cigarettes. "He is always buying those," Huiying

says, some—but not all—of which he brings home for the family. In other situations, it is even clearer about the differences in how a husband and wife spend money. At first, Bingqing, for example, said that she and her husband pooled their separate wages. But while Bingqing rarely went out after work, her husband played mahjong once a week, and bet considerable sums (60–100 kuai) during those games.

In an interview with me, Fangyin first explained that she and her husband pool and distribute their earnings together; but again, when asked to elaborate, it was clearly not divided or spent equally.

NR: How do you do that [divide the money]? Are you each responsible for some purchases or what?
FY: Well, every month, [after taking out some money for expenses]…we each take "ling qian" [spending money] for ourselves, for the things we need to buy or whatever during the month.
NR: And do you each take the same amount, or do you take different amounts or what?
FY: No, he takes more, he needs more than I do.
NR: Why, why is it that he needs more?
FY: Well, you know he has other expenses, as a man his expenses are different than mine. He has to go out sometimes, you know, and eat or drink or whatever, he has to invite someone someplace, and then, if he has no money, well, that would be embarrassing.
NR: And you? Does that happen to you? That you need that kind of money?
FY: No, not really, so he takes 500 kuai each month, I take 100–200, and that seems about right.

Most women in Dalian discussed how they were active in many economic decisions in the family and how they made independent decisions about how they spent money. But for the most part, women did not use their wages for extras for themselves. Women were generally unable to name any kind of luxury purchase that they bought specifically for themselves, although a couple women did say that they bought clothing for themselves. To some extent, this spending pattern reflects the fact that most of these families do not have a lot of discretionary income. Most of their buying involves household necessities of things like clothing and school supplies needed by family members. But not all of it. And when we look at the breakdown of spending, we see a pattern many researchers have seen in other societies: women tend to be responsible for buying household necessities (and are also responsible for the budgeting this requires). In addition, most of the extras that Dalian women buy are for their children. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to keep part of their wages for themselves, are more likely to buy small luxuries (such as cigarettes or drinks) for themselves, and are less involved in buying daily household necessities. In addition, many women mentioned that their husbands go out regularly with friends: to eat, drink, or for other activities. From this perspective, women's access to money in Dalian does not change the balance of family responsibility; for the most part, women are responsible for household expenses, and men have more access than their wives to any discretionary money the household has.

Another area of family economics where gender differences are revealed revolves around larger decisions. In most cases, women play a lesser role in the decisions surrounding and, especially, the actual purchases of, large household items (refrigerators, motorcycles, televisions and the like). Women regularly reported that they discuss these purchases with their husbands, but the buying of them (and even the decision about model, price, and sometimes whether to buy it) are usually the purview of their husbands. It is clear that women play a role in these decisions but these decisions seem to follow a gendered pattern, with men doing the work outside the household, and women contributing in the early stages.

In some households, women seem to have very little control over how money is spent. Rong, for example, has a steady income from her own job. But she and her husband—who makes considerably more than she—keep their wages separate. She uses hers for family purchases, from food to school supplies for their child. If she runs out of money for such needs, she will then ask her husband for some of his money. He, on the other hand, spends much of his money on himself. Rong often does not know how he spends his money; he even bought a motorcycle—a major, expensive item for their household—without her even knowing he was saving for it, or had intended to buy it.

Occasionally, however, even as men make the large purchases, women assert their own decision making power, as this interview exchange with Haiou makes clear:

NR: So what does your husband take care of?
HO: Well, he takes care of the big things. He will be the one to buy some of the big things in the house.
NR: Like what? Do you have a refrigerator? (HO: Yes), TV? (HO: yes), washing machine? (HO: yes, but it is broken).
HO: We also have a tape player.
NR: And he bought all those?
HO: Yes, we talk about it but he buys it.
NR: Do you have a motorcycle?
HO: No, He wants one but I won't let him.
NR: You won't let him have one?
HO: No, they are too dangerous, I don't want him riding one. So I won't let him buy one.
NR: What does he say?
HO: (laughs). Well, I just won't let him. It's too dangerous.

Haiou was explicit in her role in some purchases; she was not the only woman who seemed to have as much, if not more, control over household economic decisions than did the men in their families. Xiachen, for example, explained how she controls the distribution of money in her household:

NR: What do you do with your [plural] wages? Do you keep them separate or combine them?
XC: We combine them.

NR: Oh, you combine them. How do you do that? Do you put them in one place, or what?
XC: (little laugh) He gives his wages to me.
NR: Oh. All of it, or part of it?
XC: All of it. When he gets it, he brings it home and gives it to me. When he needs money, he asks me and I give it to him.
NR: Like every week, you give him a set amount, or what?
XC: No, whenever he needs some, he asks and I give it to him, If he needs some money today, he asks for it.
NR: How did you decide that, how did that arrangement come about?
XC: Well, we are used to doing it that way.
NR: Yes, but not everyone does it that way. I am wondering how you two decided this was the best way to handle your money.
XC: Well, he doesn't care much about money, so I need to. So since we got married, we have been doing it that way.
NR: And where do you [singular] keep the money—do you put it in the bank, or keep it at home, or what?
XC: We put some in the bank, but mostly we just put it in the drawer at home, and I take out what I need, or take out what he wants.

Later in the interview, Xiaochen explained how her husband does not pay attention to her spending ("I just buy whatever we need and he never asks, and I never tell him. I don't talk about money with him."). But she regularly asks about his purchases: "I ask him what he uses it for. I give it to him, but first I ask him why he wants this much money or that much money. I always ask him. He tells me."

In purchases too, some women have key roles. Bingqing described how she wanted a stereo and convinced her husband to buy one. "I wanted it more [than he did]. I thought we should buy one, but he did not, and so we talked about it, and then he agreed and we decided to buy it…. I told him it was something I really wanted, and it would be good for our child as well. And it was not that expensive. Gradually, he came to agree."

In addition, even when women did not control the household income, in interview after interview, they told me about their purchases for their families, and the things that they needed to buy, especially for their children. These families did not have a lot of disposable income, but women found ways to buy school supplies, new shoes, and, when possible, treats for their children and these purchases were all taken from their own salaries.

These stories underscore the great variation in the role of women in economic decisions and purchasing in their families. But there are important patterns here. From these women's stories, we can see that having access to cash is important and in some households, women really do play a major role in decisions about how cash is used. It is important to recognize how individual wages can give women independence and sometimes control in household spending. But more often, women did not have equal control over household income. Importantly, we can see that access to money does not always translate directly into (or reflect) an equal role in the family

overall. In addition, women spend money—theirs and their husbands'—differently than do men, most often using their new-found cash access to buy things for their family, especially their children.[1] In that way, women's new access to wages has not been followed by an automatic shifting of gender roles within the family.

Housework and Childcare

A second area of importance in understanding women's power is housework and childcare. Women in Dalian do the vast majority of housework and child care. In spite of their long working hours (nearly always as long as their husbands' hours), they are responsible for almost all the work at home, from cooking to cleaning to childcare. Women expressed little hope and even interest in changing this arrangement; they seemed resigned to this division of labor. Although I did not necessarily expect to find that men were sharing these tasks equally with women, I was surprised at how women did not often seem to question the unequal roles and labor of husbands and wives, but rather, seemed to accept it.

For example, Haiou, like most women, spoke easily about these unequal roles. I asked Haiou about her husband, who had different days off than she did. Haiou had talked about what she did on her own days off; she mostly took care of household and family tasks. The following conversation discussed her husband's time off from work.

NR: When your husband is off, what does he do?
HO: Well, mostly nothing.
NR: Nothing?
HO: He hangs around with his friends. [She talked about what he did on his days off.]
NR: Does he do anything around the house on those days?
HO: No, nothing. He does no housework, he doesn't even know how to cook, he doesn't wash clothes, he does nothing at home. (Laughs)
NR: How about buying vegetables?
HO: Nah, [he] doesn't even buy food,.
NR: How do you feel about that? Is that ok with you, this division of labor at home?
HO: Sure, that's ok. He can't do anything anyway [the word she uses—neng—means he is incapable of doing it], so I don't even bother to try. I am tired of course, I am always tired, having to do all the housework, running home to cook the meals (after I stop for food), taking care of our child. But that's the way, isn't it? Men just don't do that. It is not worth it to complain, since it won't change anyway. So I just do it. We all do. It's just women's lot.

[1]Milwertz (1997: 126) also found that in Beijing, women were much more likely to spend more money on their children than on other family members, including themselves.

Xiaochen explains why she doesn't usually try to get her husband to do work around the house. After she described how she did nearly all the housework, I asked her "Do you ever ask your husband to help you?" She replied, "Sometimes I do, and then he helps me. (She pauses here, and then goes on in a different voice) Well, I do ask him, but whenever I do, he never does it well. If I ask him to cut vegetables, he cuts them, but they are terrible, all thick and useless. He just can't cook! So I don't bother with that, I just do it myself!" I ask, "And, say, washing clothes?" Xiaochen replies, with clear exasperation, "Well, HE can't wash clothes!" When I asked whether she wished her husband did more, Yujia replied, "Well, I guess so [looking frustrated] but if I ask him to do something, he never does it right, and then I just have to do it all over again. So why bother with it at all?!"

Haiou, Xiachen and Yujia all recognized the very unequal division of labor at home, but were not ready to discuss it at great length or to challenge it. It is interesting to remember that Haiou, who here seems to have given up on changing the division of labor at home, had earlier talked about her veto of her husband's motorcycle purchase. There was an occasional woman who had requested and received some help from her husband but the housework and childcare patterns we see in these households reflects a near-universal model of women putting in long hours working at home, in addition to their full time jobs outside the house. And as in the cases above, most just shrugged their shoulders about that inequality, not seeing it as something worth trying to address. As Lina put it, "I just do it." In an interview with Chanquan, who was single at the time, she expressed her dislike of housework. I asked her if she thought she would do all the housework after marriage. She responded, "No, I hate that stuff, he will have to do it. Sometimes he tries to get me to wash his clothes, and I tell him, forget it. I just won't." But when I encouraged her to continue on this topic, she was very reluctant, finally saying "Oh, I don't know, I can't even imagine my life like that!" Chanquan's difficulties in envisioning her future household are similar to many young women interviewed by Harriet Evans (2008: 112) who expressed their own "contradictions between a critique of and a complicity with normative images of the modern feminine woman."

Time

Related to these measures of women's responsibilities for household work is the issue of time. We can think of time as a resource that is unevenly distributed among family members. Thus, a measure of women's power is use of time and whether they have any time to claim as their own. Research in other settings (Seymour 1992) makes clear that time is a resource that women often relinquish to others. In this Dalian sample, women had much less "free" time than did other household members, including and sometimes, especially, their husbands. Women began their days earlier than others; all but one woman in the sample rose earlier than all other household members to begin making breakfast and get the household ready for work and school, by at least half an hour, and often by an hour. They came back from work

outside the house to more household chores, including cooking, cleaning, and child care responsibilities. They were very unlikely to leave the house for leisure activities. Men, on the other hand, were regularly away in the evenings after work, visiting friends, playing mahjong, or just hanging out. Some women reported watching television in the evening before going to bed, but most women reported days of near-complete work from the time they woke up until the time they went to bed.

Resisting Inequality

As is clear from these interviews, by some standard measures of power in the household, women hold less power than their husbands. This unequal division is evident in economic decisions, spending of cash, household and childcare responsibilities, and in the amount of leisure time available. Other measures, however, give us a different sense of women's power and we can see that while they are subordinate in some ways, they are also able to assert themselves and their wishes.

While women do not necessarily have equal access to money in the household, this is more complicated than a simple inequality and suggests that women's wages have increased their role in directing where household money goes. We have seen that women do express their needs and desires in household purchases, even if there are times when their say has less weight that their husbands'. In another area, women more clearly assert control over spending. Nearly all women in this sample gave money to their parents, as we saw in Chap. 4. As we might expect, all of these couples contributed money to their husband's parents, reflecting the very strong and widespread expectation that sons take care of their parents. But in this sample, nearly all women also gave money to their own parents. Sometimes that sum was smaller than that given to their husbands' parents, but just as often, it was nearly equal. And it did not appear that there was very much disagreement about doing this. Women clearly felt able to make such a decision. There are a least a couple positive ramifications of these contributions. This economic contribution underscores that these Dalian women have a say in cash expenses within their household. It also reflects the continuing ties that women have with their natal families. Such ties could strengthen women's position in their households after marriage by providing them with options outside their husband's family and points to how women have access to resources—time, money, or general support—from their own families. As Judd (1989) has argued, this pattern suggests that women are operating outside of or as a supplement to the patriarchal family model.

A second indication of changes in gender expectations was the apparently equal attention that mothers are giving to their daughters and sons, again as we saw in Chap. 4. While I do not have the same kind of information on fathers, we can presume that fathers paid similarly equal attention to their daughters and sons; at the very least, women were able to assert their own beliefs in such equality, so that daughters were receiving what sons do. In no case was it apparent that mothers felt that daughters deserved less—whether that be food, education, attention, interest, or

planning for the future. As mentioned in Chap. 4, in all of my interviews, women spoke forcefully and clearly about their desires for their children, and there was never a hint of any disparity in how daughters and sons should be treated. This suggests just how things might change in the future. Many of these women had received less education than had their brothers. But now, in this generation, girls were given opportunities equal to boys. Having only one child, parents seemed eager to invest in their daughters as they would in sons; their dreams and plans for their girls were far-reaching and large. The conversations I had with women in Dalian mirror those reported by Vanessa Fong (whose research site was Dalian city). She argues that urban daughters have actually benefitted from the one-child policy. Without sons, the parents of these single daughters are more likely to shower their daughters with resources from education to consumer purchases and to link their own hopes and dreams to the success of daughters in ways that resemble the attention placed on sons in former times (Fong 2002, 2004).

Interpreting the Findings

What should we make of these findings?[2] By many standard measures, women do not have as much power in their families as do the men. This is true in spite of the fact that they earn relatively high salaries (although not usually as high as their husbands) and have a steady income. Even with these new jobs, women carry most of the household and child responsibilities. They have less leisure and spend less money strictly on themselves. As is true of women in many other societies, the money they do spend is as likely to go toward purchases for their children as anyone else.

But that is not the end of the story, as this chapter's opening arguments make clear. We need to evaluate more complex indications of power to examine whether women are exhibiting power in other ways. The most relevant arguments are those that point to women's roles in identity development (Blackwood) and those that draw our attention to hidden transcripts (Scott) and hidden power (Komter). While women in Dalian have an unequal stake in the family in some ways, they clearly have a part in shaping most family decisions and plans. Their role is evident in nearly every aspect of their lives and the lives of their families. For example, by far the most common reason that women give for moving to Dalian to begin with is to give their child(ren) opportunities available only in the urban areas. Schooling, access to jobs, better health care—all of these are more available and of higher quality in Dalian than they were in their villages of origin. And while women themselves

[2] My findings mirror the findings of others working on these issues in contemporary China, especially if we assume there are likely to be variations within the country and among different groups. Most researchers have found that women do the vast majority of child care and housework within families, even as they do have a role in family decision making (Zuo and Bian 2005; People's Daily 2002; Zuo and Bian 2001; Kim et al. 2010; "Women's status...." 2001).

benefit, either directly or indirectly, from these same services, it is their role as mothers that seems to be a central motivating factor. This same focus underlies much that women do in their households and in the community at large. That is, as I will discuss in more detail below, it is especially as mothers that women evaluate their lives and their opportunities. When they talk about their accomplishments, women first and foremost spoke about their children, about what they have been able to provide for their families because of their jobs, or their efforts generally.

James Scott's (1990) attention to hidden transcripts and, especially, Aarfke Komter's (1989) discussions about hidden power in marriage are also useful in considering women's power in Dalian families. Some of the women I spoke with talked about the ways they acquiesce to their husbands. When asked what happens when she and her husband disagree, Lirong said "I just give in to him. If he wants something, I just say 'ok'. I don't really want to fight, don't want all that trouble, so I just agree." But many others spoke of other ways of dealing with actual or potential disagreement, and from these perspectives, we recognize that while women sometimes exert their own wishes, as Haiou did in the case of her husband's purchase of a motorcycle, it is often in indirect ways that women assert themselves. In their interviews, many made clear that in their daily lives they do what they themselves think is best. Sometimes, they address disagreements with their husbands head on; more often, they sidestep the disagreement or discussion they expect to get from their husbands and find ways to achieve what they want. Xiahe summarized disagreements between herself and her husband this way: "We live our lives…. Sometimes what he doesn't know won't bother him, so I just do it. I just don't tell him. He is the same way. Sometimes we just don't bother to create a fuss." While Komter rightly points to the ways that these kinds of indirect means underscore the inequalities between wives and husbands, Scott's insights suggest another way to understand this kind of approach. Women in Dalian have recognized the kinds of constraints they live within and operate around them fairly effectively. They appear to be resigned to the different roles that husbands and wives are expected to fill in their community, but go beyond and outside those expectations to do what they want to do.

Nevertheless the larger social structures are apparent in the daily lives of these women and their families. It is these larger expectations and constraints that discount women's access to resources and limit women's power-over and probably account for women's use of indirect means rather than direct means to achieve goals. Komter's research has suggested that direct means are more effective in achieving goals, so whatever the successes of Dalian women, we can assume they would be greater or more easily attained if direct means were more easily available to them.

This is not to say that women do not have and use power in their families, but rather points to the ways that they operate within the existing structures. James Scott (1990) is accurate in suggesting that we should not assume that hegemony is so overwhelming that subordinates cannot imagine a different world; hidden transcripts show that that is not so. Nevertheless, there is an overarching and deeply penetrating system of beliefs, structures, and expectations around gender, families, and work that influences women's position and strategies in their families. As discussed in the previous chapter, assumptions about gender have developed over the

course of history and are deeply embedded in policies, social institutions, and beliefs, even those that may not seem to be focused on gender. It is against this background that women strategize and act and it is this background and these structures that make some scripts and pathways more likely to be successful. Indeed, the context makes even consideration of some paths and strategies more likely than others. In women's manipulations of their environment, we can see the traces (and more) of these larger social institutions and structures. These "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985) are significant and sometimes effective but they also underscore the discourses and power hierarchies that shape the lives of people in Dalian.

Just as Abu-Lughod argues that we can see power by finding resistance, if we examine the different strategies and even language that Dalian women use in different spheres of their lives, we can trace the discourses available and influential in women's lives. Such an examination allows us to connect the daily lives of individual women to larger societal and community norms and expectations and to pinpoint the ways that women's power at the individual level is discounted by larger social forces. We can see that the strategies that women (and men) choose to achieve their goals or even to get through their daily lives necessarily differ in different spheres of their lives, at least partly because the available and prevailing discourses, expectations, and norms make some strategies and languages more available and more readily useable than others. Looking at how women talk about work and family in different ways highlights the prevailing discourses and structures around and through which women operate.

The Language of Rights

When talking about work, women use the language of rights and responsibilities. There, women speak about themselves as individuals, and speak easily and openly about the rights and responsibilities that come with the kinds of jobs they have, both the rights and responsibilities of individuals and the rights and responsibilities of employers. As workers, they were expected to keep a regular schedule, to make sure they did what was expected of them from their bosses. Several women spoke of the difficulties of dealing with a sick child in this kind of work and living environment; whereas a mother who farmed might find a way to schedule her activities around a sick child, or be able to ask a family member to watch the child while the mother worked, such a solution is more difficult in an urban factory setting. But they accept these difficulties as part of their new lives.

But along with the responsibilities they have to their workplace, they also feel strongly that they have rights as workers. They spoke with indignation about what they saw as slights on the part of their current or past employers, actions that ranged from low salaries to poor living conditions to something they interpreted as a lack of respect toward workers. It was important that both employees and employers recognize and uphold their rights and responsibilities. For example, a woman working at a Japanese multinational factory spoke of what she expected from the company,

and what she was supposed to give in return. The firm, she argued, was obliged to provide maternity leave and did so. But she pointed to other areas where it was not keeping up with worker expectations. For example, workers complained (as a group) when the food they were getting was sub-standard; another interviewee who had worked there in the past claimed that the food had made her ill. Because of the way the firm treated workers, she left to find work elsewhere. An informant later told me that many workers in that factory left around that time; they felt they were being mistreated. In fact, women often looked around for job openings at places they thought might give them more of whatever they were seeking—higher salaries were a major incentive to switch jobs, but job switches also occurred to get better work schedules, nicer living quarters or a more welcoming work environment. Although labor strikes are prohibited in China, there have been a number of strikes by factory workers in Dalian, organized efforts to demand workers' rights.[3]

This language of rights also reflects the ways that factory and other "modern" kinds of work have also been individualized. In a change from the past, when the collective was the focus, factories, which are now more focused on production, stress the individual nature of such work. Workers are hired, evaluated, and treated as individuals in ways that differ from earlier decades; as Lisa Rofel (1997) has pointed out, even the spatial layout of the factory emphasizes individual work and achievement. It is thus not surprising that women also used the language of the individual when they talked about their own strategies regarding work; women frequently spoke of their individual desires, and of their efforts to reach those desires. Hansen and Pang (2010) also found that the young people they spoke with assessed their successes and failures in individualistic terms. Dalian women's conversations were also full of descriptions in their goals and of their often carefully planned efforts to reach those goals. They delineated obstacles they have encountered along the way, and how those obstacles were dealt with; women were actively engaged in explaining to me their own role in shaping their lives. In these conversations about work, their focus was on the individual, on their own negotiations through the world of work. Importantly, however, while they asserted their rights and responsibilities as workers, they did not do so as <u>women</u> workers. This distinction is critical, as I will discuss below.

Women do not use the kinds of languages or strategies employed around work in their family lives. While they regularly acknowledged the unequal roles and statuses of themselves and their husbands, they did not question those differences but, rather, seemed to accept it. The contrast with their discussions of work made the absence of rights language here particularly noticeable. In their families, they did not seem ready to assert themselves as individuals, to claim rights equal to other family members or to ask that others fulfill responsibilities equally. As we have seen, there they speak of "women's lot," and seemed generally resigned to the way things are.

How do we explain the differences in these two approaches? The methods and choices women use to achieve their goals or to focus on changing elements of their

[3] These strikes in Dalian are similar to labor strikes, movements, and actions that are becoming increasingly common throughout China (Chan 2001).

lives can be partially explained by the ways social, political, and economic discourses shape and influence some aspects of the society more than others; over the last 50 years, the state and other institutions have played a powerful role in shaping the social and ideological landscape of both urban and rural China, giving women certain tools and support for addressing some aspects of inequality and making change and resistance in other areas more difficult. Particularly central to the issues here are the available and prevalent discourses of family, work, and gender that exist in China today—indeed that have existed for decades—that help to explain why women employ different strategies at work and at home.

The strategies and approaches women employ at work fit well within the discourse of work in China over the last decades. Sixty years of socialist rule and rhetoric have provided easy access to language and space for workers to assert their rights as workers. This kind of approach was at the very foundation of the People's Republic of China; workers, especially manual laborers, were glorified and revered. The State and Party constructed a system built around workers and work units, using this system to safeguard the status of workers and to insure that workers receive their due. Given that many of the women in the Dalian DEZ work at businesses owned by foreign firms (thus in some ways, representing the capitalist world), it might be even more acceptable for women workers to engage in actions such as protests, complaints and resistance.

That women do not assert themselves as gendered workers in that arena reflects the absence of such discourse promotion by the state. In the last decades, attention to gender has rarely—if ever—been promoted ahead of other state goals. Whatever the government's rhetoric about gender equality, and the steps it did make toward achieving that goal, efforts toward gender equality have often taken a backseat to issues that have been seen as more important, more immediately pressing, or just less threatening to the Chinese government or parts of the Chinese citizenry. During the Cultural Revolution, the Party and government made a conscious effort to expand the economic and political roles of women, arguing that "women hold up half the sky"; the Party and government believed gender equality could be achieved by making women into honorary men, arguing that "women can do whatever men can do." At the same time, the ways that gender continues to organize society and individuals' lives were seen as irrelevant to the priority of class revolution; issues that were related to women's lives were considered unimportant or worse. Thus, the fact that women were completely responsible for housework and childcare on top of their public working roles, was not discussed; if women raised this issue, they were silenced with suggestions that they were anti-revolutionary, selfish, or bourgeois. The Cultural Revolution took place decades ago, but has had a deep and long-lasting impact on Chinese society, both in what happened at the time, and how people have reacted to it long afterward, as we have seen in how femininity has been constructed partially against the rhetoric of that time. But the language of the Cultural Revolution in terms of language of workers' rights also reflected a long standing centrality of the worker—an ungendered worker—in China since 1949 that continues to shadow discourse today. Changes brought about by economic reform have not necessarily created acceptable and easily occupied spaces and language for a gendered critique by women. Although we might look for changes in gender inequality during the

economic reform era, we can also see that the movement toward capitalism has, in some ways, undermined some of the progress women have made toward equality. And factory work has not served as a way to challenge prevailing gender norms, either at work or at home.

This lack of space for women's assertion of themselves and their needs and rights as women also helps to explain women's strategies at home and their apparent reluctance to challenge gender inequalities there. Another key influence is the way that gender continues to be constructed through family; thus understanding the role of gender necessitates examining the discourse of family as well. The enduring power, place, and centrality of the family in Chinese society is the backdrop against which Dalian women act. To challenge the prevailing norms at home, then, women would have to confront discourses about family and gender simultaneously; here again, there is little available space or language to do so. In spite of whatever reforms undertaken in recent years, neither the fundamental role of the family, nor the responsibilities of women (and men) to fulfill their familial duties have been truly questioned. The role of the family in society and its relationship to the state have remained constant throughout the last century, even as other elements of families have undergone change. Early marriage reform, in the 1950s, was focused less on changing the role of the family as an organizing principle of society as it was on breaking down the power of the patriarchs within it (Stacey 1983; Johnson 1983). Neither did later changes challenge the importance of family to all aspects of Chinese society. As we have seen, women's and men's roles within the family were likewise for the most part left unchallenged, and women merely added work in the labor force to their work at home. We can see that the roots of women's double burden in Dalian today lie not only in the old Confucian structures but equally so in where the CCP and Chinese state have put their efforts in dismantling the old social order.

In this way, throughout many different political eras, the family has continued to be seen as fundamental to the nation-state and the basis of social stability and it is within this family ideology that women act. A woman's challenge to gender inequalities, especially those at home, would have to address some of the most intimate relationships in her life, relationships and structures that remain central to Chinese life today. The strength, depth, and long-standing nature of these norms make this avenue of resistance or change an extremely difficult one to travel. In addition, challenging structures and roles at home might threaten her ability to achieve overall economic stability and status; these households pool income and the individuals within them see their fortunes and futures as closely tied with one another. Individual goals that ignore the needs of other household members, or even see those members as competitors, would go against accepted norms of behavior in Chinese society today, particularly for women.

With women's roles tied firmly to family stability and family stability viewed as fundamental to state order, it is not easy for women to extricate themselves from this powerful ideology nor to assert themselves as women, particularly within the family and women may not see an attempt to do so as in their own best interests. To resist this ideology would mean asserting a new version of womanhood, given that womanhood in China is so closely connected to family. As we saw in the last chapter, part

of the strength of this ideology has been a connection to bie/differences, that produced complementary roles within the family. As recent historians have argued, Chinese society and family has been and is still built on complementary gender roles in a way very different from that seen in the west. Indeed, some family scholars (McDonald 1994; Edgar 2004) have questioned whether we should assume that putting the well-being of individuals before that of the family group is necessarily a better strategy, or one that will be sought after in all societies, even those undergoing the kinds of changes like those seen in China. What Blackwood observes about Indonesian women is true for Chinese women as well: women's "sense of self derives from being a complementary family person" (Blackwood 2000: 13). We can see how women actually derive power from these gendered roles, especially their role as mothers. What Blackwood found in Indonesia is useful in recognizing how women's family roles might be a source of power. She argues that in this role, women are involved in a process central in any society: that of creation and negotiation of social identities: "The negotiation of social identities… is one of the basic processes through which the social order is legitimated and explained…. Social identities bestow certain claims, entitlements, and rights to individuals and groups, which in turn privilege or disadvantage them in everyday practice." She elaborates, in creating shared identities or generating material, cultural, or social value, women control social relations and their meanings (2000: 12). Thus, as I argue further in the next chapter, traditional roles, even those that have been seen by some to constrain women's opportunities, can also be seen and used by women as sources of power.

However, how women describe and perhaps see their roles and power in the family is complicated. On the one hand, they see themselves as filling important roles. In Chap. 4, we saw that many women pointed repeatedly and with passion to the importance of the role of mothers in families. Nevertheless, they seem to be recognizing gender roles as not only complementary but as unequal as well. Women are not always consistent in recognizing their own importance or even right to equality within their family. Writing about Northeast Chinese villages, Judd argues "At the household level…women commonly hold substantial authority and are at least tacitly recognized as doing so…. The pattern here again is one in which women commonly and spontaneously speak of themselves as running households and making major decisions, such as finding a good marriage match for their child, but, when asked about the role of their husbands, also commonly show deference to his decision-making power" (Judd 1990: 9–10). In interviews with me, many women deferred to their husbands in many spheres. It is not just that they accept the unequal division of labor in the household, or the ways husbands use resources such as money or time more than they do. When I asked Yimin if she and her husband were equal, she began by saying they were, but then continued and said that he was "stronger" than she, and had more power in their relationship and at home. And finally concluded that was ok, "because he is the man, and men often do." Komter reminds us of the importance of this kind of move: "When the idea of normalcy and rightness of prevailing patterns in gender relations characterizes both husbands' and wives' perceptions and experience in marriage, inequality in marital power is confirmed in an unobtrusive and invisible way, automatically as it were, without brute power" (Komter 1989: 213).

An acceptance of gender segregation may help to explain women's resignation to what seems to be gender inequality. Gender segregation has long organized Chinese society and is related to earlier assumed gender differences (bie). But feminist historians have argued that such segregation did not automatically mean subordination. While Western feminists have often equated gender segregation with women's oppression (Bray 1997: 271), "spatial seclusion did not in itself imply the inferiority or dependence of women; whether seclusion translated into dignity or oppression depended in part on… the extent to which the secluded women were seen as participating in the world outside" (Bray 1997: 271–2). Indeed, women played key roles in their families, often making significant contributions through their farm work or handicraft sales, but also through their administrative and managerial capacities. Given the central role of the family in Chinese social organization, these skills and roles meant that women, far from being isolated and weak, should be recognized as key participants not just in their families but in the general society. Zuo and Bian (2005: 617) argue that such a division of household labor may be attributable to a collectivist value of family organization; such a division "enables families to meet their collective needs more efficiently and promotes harmonious marital relations through recognition of and respect for the doers' rights." Similarly, Judd (1994) argues that today village women, whose activities are regularly segregated from men's, have a great deal of power; women's power at the household level is important because in these villages, that arena is considered women's purview and considered important to the smooth functioning of the community. While women in Dalian are not living in a village setting, it is important that most of them came from such a background, and thus are likely to have grown up in such a situation. The Economic Zone is obviously organized differently than is any village, but activities—inside factories, and even at home—remain relatively gender segregated.

Nevertheless, while the importance of women and families has long been recognized, Chinese women were not considered equals to men in the past, and societal structures that remain in place today reflect that belief. Earlier, Chinese scholars and philosophers may not have seen gender differences or inequalities as rooted in essential biological differences, but they nevertheless saw gender hierarchy as a part of social organization, a hierarchy that existed along with others such as socioeconomic class, age, and generation. "Between men and women, there are only differences" one slogan stated (Fei 1992); and because of that, and because social harmony and stability was (and still is) a central goal of Chinese society, many believe that women and men have to live separate lives to achieve harmony and avoid conflict. Dalian women continue to avoid conflict in their families, often relinquishing decision making or other power to their husbands in order to avoid stirring the waters, and, in the process, reinforcing patterns of gender inequality that have existed for a long time. And while gender segregation does not necessarily equate to gender inequality, when we couple norms of segregation with new roles for women, it often means that women have heavier burdens, as they work both inside the house—in the traditionally accepted roles for women—and outside the house, in roles that used to belong only to men. In addition, while social organization in the past centered on the family and underscored women's importance to the society,

since 1949 the state's focus on women's roles outside the family and the neglect of those inside the household has served to undermine some of the important work women continue to do.

Thus while women have important roles within the family and household, the combination of gender segregation and male dominance influences the ways that women see themselves in families and the roles they play there. Mayfair Yang (1999) has demonstrated that economic reforms since the 1980s have not changed the difficulty of women asserting themselves as women. While the state's official version of gender is no longer one of erased gender differences such as existed during the Cultural Revolution, and although women have roles in the public sphere, public space is still very much male today. Capitalism and increased western contact have not necessarily made gender equality more attainable. Now, women are indeed more often seen as different from men than they were during the Cultural Revolution, but within the new capitalist framework they are also seen as commodities, their bodies, faces and voices now seen as useful for sale themselves and for the selling of other products. Women thus are struggling to find their own voice, walking a line between "the two powerful masculine forces of the state and the market" (Yang 1999: 64).

We should not be surprised that women do not easily see themselves as a group separate from others, especially in their families. Equally important is the way that differentiating themselves by gender from the rest of their family would mean sublimating other goals and concerns to a particular version of gender equality. In addition, to separate themselves from the family might well mean that they would be unable to achieve their own goals of becoming modern, urban citizens; such an effort may be best undertaken as a member of a group, and even more likely to be achieved if all are pulling together.

The experiences of Dalian women underscore how the routes of resistance are necessarily different for any group and are influenced by a variety of things, including the ways that different social institutions shape individual lives. The state, the local, national and global economy, the family and other institutions, and historical legacies are all involved in this process. While we should be cautious about assuming that women do not have the vocabulary to even name their oppression (Scott 1990), it is also the case that if a woman's goal is to succeed, her best or most effective option might be to do so within the constraints of the society. Here again, Abu-Lughod's (1990) argument linking resistance to power is relevant; power—and resistance—are part of the society and are likely to follow regular routes of society and norms. Looking at women's daily lives suggests how women's efforts to resist structures of domination differ from that of other groups. These particular women are situated differently from other groups in key ways: they are rural people in a society where urban dominates; they are of a certain socio-economic class; in factories, they are Chinese working for foreign owners; and they are female in a male dominated culture. Women in Dalian are thus enmeshed in several ideologies and systems that shape both structures of power and resistance.

We need not think of women as trapped in a system nor that they would necessarily be better off outside of it. Rather, understanding the development and continuing power of family ideology and the gendered nature of that ideology allows us to

understand the routes of power and resistance for women in Dalian. Asserting themselves as individuals, as individual women, would mean working against the power and strength of an entire social ideology and system. Such an a pathway is likely to be full of obstacles and impossibilities. Examining how women address the inequalities and challenges they face in different areas of their lives encourages us to recognize how the power that women have and use as individuals is embedded in the larger social structures. We can see, then, just how women's access to resources and other sources of power get discounted by these larger ideologies and make it difficult and perhaps foolhardy to resist in certain ways. Ideologies of gender, family, and modernity form the backdrop of Dalian women's strategies; as we will see in more detail in the next chapter, women have adapted their strategies to these prevailing discourses, using them as a way to further their own goals. We will see that they use the system to make a life for themselves that is successful and that addresses their own interests as effectively as possible.

Chapter 6
Performing Gender in a Modern Economic Zone

Despite long hours of often monotonous labor in difficult conditions, women working in the Dalian Economic Zone in Northeast China refer to the zone and their lives there as "paradise." Whether or not the DEZ is truly a "paradise" is less important than how such a statement reveals how positively some women feel about where they are living. They speak glowingly of their lives in Dalian, ready to point out how they lucky they are.

In this chapter, I analyze the issues explored previously to help explain how women working in the Dalian Economic Zone come to think of this area as paradise. Women's lives in Dalian are shaped by multiple ideologies and practices; the Dalian Economic Zone itself is a site of intersections, both physical and ideological, that also help to explain the views of women working in the area and to highlight key issues in China's social landscape as well. Women in contemporary China operate and strategize within many systems of inequality; as we have seen, two of the most central to the lives of women in Dalian are gender inequality and the rural/urban divide. As I elaborate on and analyze further below, material differences between rural and urban underlie the constraints rural life presents to women migrants and the lure of the city, even as migrants face hardships in the city. But another major factor in women's views of rural and urban and their lives in the city is the power of the discourse of modernity in contemporary China and the influence of that discourse on Dalian women's lives is the focus of this chapter. Modernity has been part of national discourse in China for centuries. It was central to discussions of the collapse of dynastic China and the rise of Republican China. And even as the Chinese Communist Party hoped that China could carve its own unique path to modernity, modernity has been central plank of the state/party platform since 1949.

Modernity in contemporary China is constructed through and on the urban/rural divide, through gender and through family. Thus, while we have seen the importance of the discourse of urban and rural and its construction as a "spatially defined status hierarchy" (Cheng and Seldon 1994: 645), the ways that urban space is a signifier of modernity in contemporary China play as crucial a role in how women in Dalian see the city and their role in it. Modernity is also gendered, in the ways that it has been constructed and promoted by the state and in how women's and men's lives,

N.E. Riley, *Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone: Laboring in Paradise*, 107
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5524-6_6, © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

and gender itself are all shaped by those modernizing processes. Family too has been part of the modernizing project in China, partly but not solely because of the ways that gender is constructed through family.

Women act and strategize against and through these interwoven constructions of modernity, the urban, family and gender. This chapter thus brings together the themes and findings from past chapters to discuss the ways that contradictory, complementary and parallel changes are evident in women's lives and the paths they choose, with particular attention to modernity. In this chapter I take up the ways that women imagine modernity, the force of that imagination, their perceived place in that new modern society, and how gender shapes the spaces that imagination of modernity opens up or closes. I argue that rural migrant women in Dalian are using normative structures, particularly the roles and expectations of mothers, to find a place and to construct themselves as modern, successful, women. In doing so, they both challenge and acquiesce to these social constructions, indicating both the constraints they live within and their ability to act within those constraints.

The Constraints of Rural Life

The women in this study spoke regularly and easily about their eagerness to leave their rural homes and their strong interests in moving to the Dalian Economic Zone. Indeed, the difficulty of those moves and the many obstacles along the way, from securing a job to finding a way to stay in the zone permanently, underscore the determination these women had to making this process a successful one. As we have seen throughout this study, rural women move to urban areas for a variety of reasons. There are both push factors out of rural areas as well as pull factors into the urban centers.

Many women in Dalian talked about how much harder life and work in rural areas is. In spite of their difficult work schedule in the Economic Zone, most women still found their new work easier than their old, agricultural, work "The life of a peasant is really hard… you just had to work and work," said Lina, now working in a factory. The financial difficulties of making ends meet from farm activities also meant that women appreciated the regularity and level of economic compensation of factory jobs. The responses of these Dalian migrants reflect what many others have seen; as Judd found in other parts of northern China, "manual agricultural work is the least preferred rural occupation—it is unremunerative, physically demanding and low in prestige" (Judd 1990: 53). For these women, urban areas are clearly a place to escape many of the difficulties and hardships of their rural past lives (see also Hershatter 2011).

There are obvious structural constraints to rural lives as well. Because urban areas are given state favor over rural areas, many aspects of life are better in urban areas. There are better schools, more adequate health care, more extensive infrastructure, and wider job opportunities, to name just some of the most obvious attractions. As we have seen, Dalian migrant women particularly valued schooling

because they saw a good education as a way to achieve social mobility. Because of the poorer schooling in rural areas, education is not an easy route out of those areas; while some Dalian women were able to use education to their advantage, many more in this study and among rural residents across China are not able to achieve an education that would allow them success in the modern world. In addition, rural residents are disadvantaged in both new and old ways by the changes that have occurred since economic reform. The relative lack of access to new forms of investment (government, business, and foreign) in rural areas and increases in taxes and fees make surviving on rural land difficult. Income gaps between rural and urban areas are also large and growing, making the disadvantages that rural residents face even starker and the attractions of urban centers more obvious.

Another push factor in rural areas is the increased power and new sources of power for rural cadres. Using new means ("this time [working to boost development] with cell phones and Mercedeses as the perks" (Guldin 2001: 81)), these local officials have become leaders in new businesses and enterprises. They continue to wield a fair amount of power and control and have important influences in the lives of individuals in their local areas. Thus, for those residents who want an alternative to this local power structure, migration may be their best alternative for finding new opportunities and a way out from under these new power regimes.

The lifting of restrictions on rural movement have allowed peasants to leave some of these disadvantages and seek out better economic opportunities elsewhere. Better networks of communication and infrastructure in recent years have meant that there is increased contact between rural and urban areas, which may increase migration.[1] These push factors out of rural areas are behind the very high levels of migration across China, mostly in the obvious directions—from rural to urban and from poorer to wealthier areas.

As we have seen, these rural/urban differences have been reinforced by government policies that have privileged cities and made it clear through policies and rhetoric that it was in urban areas that development and modernity would be established and developed. In 1978, for example, Deng Xiaoping put into place the "ladder step doctrine" which gave government priority to the development and support of eastern coastal areas, with the assumption that progress there would eventually travel to the poorer, more western and rural areas (Friedman 2005a, b).

It is against this historical and recent background of gender inequalities and urban/rural divide and restrictions on movement that women in Dalian see their own situation and residency. Most of the women working in the Dalian Economic Zone come from much poorer rural areas. While the lives of rural peasants have undergone transformations that make new things possible—everything from owning a television to running a small store to increased family control over farming—peasants continue to be barred in central ways from the resources available in urban areas. Women face particular constraints in this agricultural setting because of gender

[1] Guldin (2001), however, also sees this increased contact and easier travel as potentially leading to fewer permanent moves as rural residents have increased access to elements of urban life.

inequities. Peasant women have even less access than men to resources such as schooling, training, or work. In addition, rural farming has been re-organized into a system structured by families; thus the gender and age inequalities are likely to be experienced differently by women and men.

Because of the high levels of migration from rural to urban areas, China's rural areas have become "feminized," as males migrate to the cities and leave much of the farming responsibilities to women, the elderly, and others without the means to migrate (Judd 1994). Chu (2010) argues that the process of feminization of rural areas has meant that men face particular pressure to leave the village because masculinity has come to be associated with movement out. Women are also affected by this connection between migration and masculinity: "as it became impossible for young male villagers to prove their masculine worth in [the village], it also became increasingly difficult for young women to find suitable marriage partners remaining at home" (Chu: 251).

Migrants in the City: Constraints and Opportunities

Rural migrants do not have an easy life in the city. Most of the women working in Dalian factories don't have the money to take advantage of the bright lights of the city. The lives of these workers—as is true for most migrants throughout China—are consumed by their daily work and struggles to make ends meet. They work long hours, and their pay is not enough to provide much money beyond basic expenses. So although they can see the bright lights, and enjoy walking around the shopping areas during their time off from work, they are usually not able to actually participate in much of what the city seems to offer. While many see their factory work as better than the farmwork they would be doing at home in the village, it is nevertheless monotonous and uninteresting. Dalian women did see value in work but it was those things that went along with work—such things as having a cash income, being able to see friends at work—rather than the work itself that they enjoyed. For most married women workers, their lives extend beyond the factory or workplace, unlike the reports of single women factory workers, which often describe a more narrowly defined life, caught between factory floor and dorm (see Chan 2002; Pun 1999, 2005; Chang 2009). At the same time, as we have seen, these Dalian women, married and usually with children at home, have to balance long days outside the home with their many responsibilities at home. In addition, rural migrants face discrimination in the cities, as discussed in Chap. 3. Pun Ngai argues that in urban areas, new workers are easily identifiable as outsiders "not because of their lack of skill or speed at work, but because of their appearance and inappropriate behavior in the industrial space." (Pun 2005: 3). And because of their perceived outsider status, many urbanites—in stores, cafes, and on the streets—treat them badly. In the DEZ, with its high proportion of rural migrants, migrant women may face less of this discrimination than do migrants in other areas, even in Dalian City. But as was clear from their assertions defending rural people, these Dalian women know how

they rank in this rural/urban hierarchy, and how migrants are viewed in the system. And their status as mothers might make them particularly vulnerable to scrutiny and criticism; in China as in other cultures, as the embodiment of the next generation in their roles as mothers, these women represent a watershed point between moral standards and cultural threat.

Nor are women likely to find gender equality in the cities (Inkeles et al. 1997). As we saw, urban women face increasing gender inequality at their jobs, in terms of wages, hiring practices and lay-offs (Cohen and Wang 2009). In families too, evidence shows that women in urban areas continue to be disadvantaged. Choe et al. (1995), for example, found that discrimination against girl children "is more or less uniform across families with different socioeconomic characteristics" (62); their findings suggest that the urban setting does not necessarily bring gender equality, even at the basic level of health care and food distribution. Women in urban areas are as equally responsible for housework and childcare as are women in village China. That unequal division of labor holds both for women who are originally from urban areas and for women who have recently moved to urban areas ("Women's status…" 2001; People's Daily 2002; Evans 2008; Zuo and Bian 2001).

In spite of all of the negative aspects of urban life, particularly for rural migrant women, most migrants see their lives as improved in the city. That appeal is best understood when we remember the role of the urban in Chinese society and the ways that these women are able to participate in that life. We have seen that urban areas are favored over rural in a number of ways and provide certain kinds of material and economic advantages. Access to running water and regular electricity, better health care, good schools, a variety of stores and goods, better transportation and communication networks, and available services all make urban life more appealing than rural living. That the average rural household spends 55% of its income on food while urban households spend 46% (Attane 2002) suggests the greater discretionary income that urban households often have. Diets themselves differ markedly in rural and urban areas, with urban residents having a much greater variety of food and getting more protein from red meat and fish. As we saw in Chap. 3, the gap in life expectancy between rural and urban areas is actually expanding.

But the appeal of the urban goes beyond these material aspects. China is like many societies, where cities have long been recognized as places for the new; "in any society, the city is the locus of the modern. In the discourse of the early twentieth century, the 'modern' city was always set against the 'backward' countryside" (Esherick 2000:1). The attraction of the city may be especially strong for people living in villages. Ashis Nandy, writing on Indian urban spaces, describes the journey from the village to the city, "from the seemingly familiar, uterine, even if routinely oppressive narrow fantasy life of the village to what looked like the liberating anonymity and non-traditional vocational choices of the colonial city. As the city became the epicentre of new forms of adventure in ideas and creativity, it also offered to open up the opportunities of defying a conventional, pre-formatted life and experiment with new cultural experiences and with refashioned extended selves" (Nandy 2001:72). The city, then, seems to promise a sharp contrast with the shape of daily village life. Indeed, Fei Xiaotong (1992) writes about village China

in nearly opposite ways to such a description of the city, describing the way that rural life is rooted "in the soil" and how routines there make for very different expectations; rural people, Fei argues, are enmeshed in the customary of local life and their lives are interdependent with those of family and other villagers to such an extent that it is difficult to see life beyond the village. From this perspective, the city is, in contrast, "identified with history, with progress, becoming" (Nandy 2001). Because foreign presence in China has been especially tied to cities over the last several centuries, cities not only represent a Chinese modernity, but cosmopolitan centers that span foreign and Chinese modalities. By making urban living unattainable to most rural residents for several decades, the state's policies and restrictions on who can live where have only served to deepen this divide and difference.

Urban areas offer people freedom from village social norms and expectations that they may perceive as constraining. In addition to the different norms that might be available in a city, cities also offer a kind of anonymity and a chance to try out new possibilities. The Dalian Economic Zone is different from other urban areas; being newly created, the neighborhoods are not well-established, and the bonds between neighbors are not as long-lasting nor as deep as might be found in older city neighborhoods. While some Dalian residents pointed to the negative side of the relative lack of long-held bonds within neighborhoods in the zone, this same lack of deep bonds between neighbors may be seen positively by those who are looking to establish themselves as new people without the constraints that neighbors or family might impose. In addition, of course, urban areas are usually more cosmopolitan than rural areas, with more and deeper connections to the world beyond Dalian and even beyond China. While there were not as many foreigners living in the Economic Zone as there were in Dalian City, the zone still had a foreign presence and foreign connections. Indeed, it promotes itself strongly along those lines (Hoffman 2010; Riley 2011; Wang 2007b).

Gender and the City

Urban areas have appeals for women that are similar to those for men, but gender adds another layer to this urban/rural divide. When I asked women about why the city was so attractive to them, they pointed to the many differences between rural and urban life. Some of these differences were about convenience—the convenience of running water, central heating, and better electrical service. "Look at all these tall buildings!" one woman exclaimed when I asked what she liked about the city. For her and others, those buildings represented and signaled not only the visual attraction of modern urban but also all the conveniences they held. Those conveniences, like running water, electricity, or gas-powered cooking appliances, can make their household responsibilities less burdensome.

Other times, women talked about the better opportunities available to them in the city. Several of them talked about the ways that their own goals and lives were restricted in numerous ways by rural residence. We saw how women saw educational

opportunities as difficult to come by in rural areas and as particularly important, whether or not they had been able to get the education they wanted. The city also offered jobs that were unavailable in rural areas, jobs that had a higher status than rural—usually farming—jobs, with regular pay, and cleaner conditions (see also Lee 1998 on migrants in southern China). And while most women talked about missing their families, the city also offered opportunities to get away from the more restricted rural lives and families and gave women more freedom in making decisions on their own. The opportunities around marriage are also important; several women discussed the better prospects for marrying a man of a higher status in the city. In Chap. 4, we heard Bingqing describe how rural migrant women often underwent a change in how they viewed prospective husbands (see also Gaetano 2008). Like many others, once she had moved to the DEZ, she broke off her engagement with a man from her village and eventually married a man she had met in the zone. Not only were these marriage decisions about social mobility, but they also related to the different family organization in rural and urban areas. Thus, Chanquan pointed to the ways that for girls, marriage in rural areas is particularly hard because they have to move to their husband's house after marrying; she linked her own goals (in the city) to avoiding such a life. Chanquan argued "…it is really hard for girls in rural areas. I mean girls really have it hard…girls have to be at home and always working, and then they marry, but they move to their husband's house and everything. It's terrible!"

The issue of gender norms and expectations seems to underlie many of the intentions of women in both Dalian and other urban areas of China. As I will discuss in more detail below, urban China, with its very different structures, constraints, and opportunities, offers what some women perceive as a totally different cultural world. Urban spaces allow different gender performances (Butler 1990) and that difference from rural life is attractive to many migrant women in Dalian.

Chinese Modernity: Place, Gender, Family

One of the most important reasons that urban areas offer rural residents otherwise unavailable advantages and opportunities is connected to the ideology of modernity. In China, to be modern is to be urban and to be successful is to be modern. But modernity is experienced differently by different groups of people. Dalian women's statuses as women, rural migrants, and mothers all play a role in their engagement with modernity. Women's desires, and the way those desires play out, are thus clearly related not only to material differences between rural and urban areas and between women and men but also to huge discursive and ideological divisions between rural and urban, and the role of gender and family in them. The ways that Dalian women speak most readily about urban and rural differences and inequalities point to how success is possible in urban areas in a way that in ways not possible in rural. In this way, the urban landscape appears to be "an enormous field of multiple new possibilities and expectations, a whole new civilization" (Tang 1996: 116).

At the same time, modernity and Dalian women's engagement with modernity and with the urban is tied to and constructed by gender and family. Their role as mothers is key to how Dalian women engage with modernity.

In any society, modernity is a messy process. It is, as Marshall Berman has described it, "an environment that promises adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world—and at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are…it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish" (Berman 1982: 15). These contradictions and ambiguities may be especially strong in places like China, which for centuries has resisted—and not always successfully—western influences and incursions.[2] China strives hard to be modern but at the same time wants to achieve its own brand of modernity (Rowe and Kuan 2002).

As in other places, modernity in China should be recognized as contested terrain. Scholars analyzing modernity in China have reminded us that many of the struggles that China is undergoing currently have been part of China at least since it first began to make efforts toward modernization in the late Qing (Lu 2001). In particular, the ongoing tension between Western influence and an alternative Chinese modernity can be seen in the early twentieth century; at that time, there was much debate about whether and how China could be modern without being western. Wang Hui has labeled Mao's later socialist project "a type of modern anti-capitalist modernization theory" (Wang 1998: 14), meant to avoid a capitalist-driven modernization, while still prescribing a path toward modernization. Thus, the legacies of China's modernity project are important in today's version of modernity, even as current conditions, in China and beyond, have shaped it in new ways.

There is a growing literature on modernity in China but for this discussion, two key issues are most salient: first, the depth and extent of the debates on modernity reflect the continuing tensions and the many perspectives on the path that China is and should take toward modernity. Secondly, as Rofel (1999) reminds us, modernity is powerful because "nation-states organize the body-politic around it…Modernity leads government leaders, development agents, intellectual elites, subaltern workers and peasants, and women—those who represent political power as well those who are the objects of its operations—to act in the name of the desire it engenders" (Rofel 1999: 13, 17–18; see also Knauft 2000; Dirlik 2002; Schein 1999). Thus, however we define it theoretically, we have to remember too that modernity and its imagination influences the daily lives of Chinese citizens like these Dalian migrant women. Place, gender, and family have been involved in constructions of Chinese modernity and help in our understanding and analysis of Dalian women's engagement with modernity.

[2] But this same reluctant connection to the west is true of other places as well, as the example of India, and its efforts to create an "alternative modernity" (Prakash 1999) suggests.

Place

We have seen how, as places that have attracted government attention, efforts and resources, urban China has come to be seen and accepted as the location for any modern expectation, desire, or plan, whether on the part of the state or for individuals thinking about their own place in China's future. The urban/rural divide is so deep and strong in China that it is inconceivable to most that a rural area could ever be a site of modern practice. The yearning for modernity, then, focuses on urban spaces and compels any rural resident who aspires to be successful to find a way to move out of the village and into a city. In this model, it is there, in the city, that success can be imagined, envisioned, sought after, and achieved. In this process, modernity in China today is strictly confined to particular spaces.

An important piece of modernity construction in China has been consumerism. Scholars and others debate the universality and difference of the consumer revolution in contemporary China compared to other societies (Kendall 2002), but coming as it has from a state-controlled economy, China's experience as a developing consumer economy necessarily differs from other Asian nations. Some have argued that it is in consumer culture that we can most clearly see how China has been brought into the global economic world. Others argue that China continues to exert its own mark on these new consumer changes. As in the debates around modernity, these theoretical questions are significant for many reasons, but for our purposes here, what is most important is the widespread and growing consumer involvement in China today. The availability of and range of goods and services increased sharply after the market reforms in the 1980s. Washing machines, bicycles, loaves of bread, clothing in a variety of styles and colors, toys, soft drinks and cigarettes are just some of the many goods that became available on the market. By the late 1990s, larger items, such as cars and housing, were being offered for sale, albeit at prices that only a small percentage of the population could afford. And with these goods and services came an increasing differential in who could acquire these new goods, or even the basic means of feeding and housing their families. The state has been heavily involved in the creation of this new consumer culture. Its role is most easily seen in the breakdown of its support for all workers; with the increasing marketization of the workplace, workers were no longer guaranteed a basic living wage or livelihood. State spending on housing, health, education, and pensions and where and how it builds infrastructure have all been influential in China's growing consumerist society. "Indeed, it could be said that the state, in the process of allocating resources, legitimating property, and defining social obligations, establishes the very notion of private as opposed to public consumption" (de Grazia 1996: 9). The combination of changes in state support and the rising consumer culture have all contributed to increased inequality among different groups in China and a growing visible difference among socio-economic classes across China.

Consumerism plays a central role in China's path to modernity. "Consumption will be China's locomotive of economic growth," declared an article Beijing Youth Daily in 1999 (quoted in Yan 2000: 159). While most obvious in urban areas, the

new consumerism and its effects can be seen throughout China. "The general culture of consumption—an acute commodity desire linked to social status—has saturated all sectors of Chinese society, regardless of what specific changes in actual consumption patterns have taken place" (Schein 2001: 225–6). In this culture, in which affluence "is coded as modernity" (Schein 2001: 225), to be successful is to be someone able to buy the things that indicate success—whether clothes, housing, or education. Consumption is a much larger part of urban than rural life, and urban wages—which are more regular, earned individually (rather than by families farming together on family land), and higher than rural—are seen as a key component to success in a consumer society. Indeed, the markers of success are nearly all urban and about consumption. Part of individuals' imaginary modernity, then, is likely to involve remaking themselves through consumption (see also Pun 2005). The ability to consume is, of course, unequally distributed. Here again, groups with fewer economic resources—especially the poor and rural peasants—are marked by their lack of purchasing power, whether that is apparent in terms of clothing, housing, or luxury goods (Yan 2000).

Many have argued that consumption can be a site of identity assertion, even of resistance. Scholars working outside of China have argued that consumption has been a source of identity as well. We will see how this plays out for women in particular, but for all Chinese citizens, the recent consumer culture has been an important shift. Farquhar (2002: 3) points out that we can also see new consumer values in China as a kind of resistance to an earlier time of enforced controlled and limited distribution of goods; the kind of self-indulgence that this new consumption involves is "not at all socialist and inimical to Maoism." And in a place such as China, where individual expression has for decades been discouraged and sublimated to the needs of the group, consumerism may allow people a place to express their individual tastes and desires.

Gender

In addition to place, gender has also played an important role in Chinese constructions of modernity. "For China, the trope of women has been a key signifier at historical junctures where modernizing was at stake" (Schein 2000: 128). As in other societies (for example, see Mani 1987 on India), women's improved position in the new regime has been a way of asserting cultural superiority. China's alternative modernity during the Maoist years depended heavily on a Chinese version of gender that stressed women's labor force participation, "speak bitterness sessions" that allowed women to voice their oppression, and an assertion that women hold up half the sky. Even though, as we have seen, these were often more rhetorical than acted on, the state's emphasis on these images speaks to the importance of gender. And, as in other areas of society (Greenhalgh 2008), the socialist state relied on science, grounding many of its arguments about gender in the rhetoric of science. The state's discourse of the Four Modernizations (industry, military, agriculture, and science

and technology) has inscribed its version of the universal efficacy of science, progress, and rationality (Rofel 1997: 158), all considered masculine characteristics (Harding 1986). As in other societies, science acts to tighten connections between the state's version of gender and its rhetoric and programs of modernization.

Gender is also involved in the spaces that imagination of modernity opens up or closes. The paths the state and other institutions follow reflect ideologies and intentions regarding what aspects of life will be supported or discouraged and the roles that women and men play in them; in addition, these roles have different, gendered meanings. In this new economy, economic risk-taking reflects this kind of gendering; becoming a capitalist or an entrepreneur is "a sign of daring, the site of risk, glory, individual achievement, and masculine strength" (Rofel 1999: 55). On the one hand, the market economy offers new possibilities and opportunities to anyone. But on the other hand, women's already subordinate position means that these opportunities are more often provided to men than women. In effect, women's discrimination in new industries—and the state's silence on this discrimination—becomes part of the new market economy. As Schein (1997) has argued, understanding the urban/rural divide as a kind of internal orientalism allows us to see how rural is constituted as feminine—represented as backward, uncivilized, and uneducated—to the urban's masculinity. We can see two outcomes from such a discourse: constructing minorities, peasants, and women as backward "stressed the vanguard role of the Han urbanites on the road to progress" (Schein 1997: 89). And secondly, rural migrants might thus see it as doubly necessary to move away from the interwoven stigmas of rural and female.

As consumers, women play a central role in the modernist project; the new consumer culture in China generally, and to which these rural migrants are newly exposed, provides both opportunities and constraints. In her study of working women in the US at the beginning of the twentieth century Enstad (1999:6), argues that "consumer culture offered working-class women struggling with extremely difficult material and ideological constraints a new range of representations, symbols, activities, and spaces with which to create class, gender, and ethnic identities." For these women, who were often immigrants, being able to remake themselves through the purchase and wearing of goods was an important part of their self-esteem and new identity as Americans and as independent workers. Not only was shopping and purchasing a form of entertainment and a way of making connections with other working women, but it also allowed women to imagine a different life, one in which they were "ladies," of a higher social class than their own, and also allowed them to stress their femininity and difference from men of their own class. Enstad (1999: 69) argues that "while such products could not emancipate people from oppressive labor or class structures, as wish images, they engaged a potentially revolutionary or egalitarian impulse within the imagination." Many researchers (Freeman 2000; Enstad 1999) have noted that in a society undergoing rapid change (or in a city where people do not usually know each other), appearance (aided through the purchase of clothes or other goods) can be important in how it influences how a person is judged and treated; the reaction of the Shanghai newspaper columnist who harshly criticized the clothing of women migrants (see Chap. 3) underscores

the symbolic meaning of fashion. And Pun (2005) describes the way young migrant factory workers in Shenzhen use newly bought fashion to blend into the urban social landscape. Thus, without ignoring the capitalist-produced hierarchies that are part of any consumerist behavior and limit its potential for change, we can also see how individuals might use the available consumer environment to "make dreams and identities—including political identities—within their limited arenas and with the resources available" (Enstad 1999: 206).

Urban China, with its larger numbers of available goods and services and its higher numbers of citizens who can buy those consumer items, are sites of increased commodification. Women in China consume differently in the city than they do in rural areas—because there is more available, and because consumerism plays a different role in urban and rural areas. One of the major differences between rural and urban China is the larger role that cash plays in cities. "Money was the secular God of the new metropolis, the calling card that enabled progress to be purchased" (Ewen 1985: 23). Again, it is important to keep in mind that Dalian factory workers do not regularly have a lot of discretionary cash to spend on the available goods or services that surround them, but it may be that small purchases take on importance. As Wolf (1992) found in her study of rural factory workers in Indonesia, the ability to buy something as small as soap can influence how women see themselves in this consumer age. Indeed, in Dalian, women participated in the consumer world in a variety of ways, large and small; and the symbolic meaning of this consumer involvement was evident in their daily talk. In their conversations, both formal and informal, with me, they regularly talked about the many conveniences of urban areas and the ease of buying a variety of foods and goods. These ranged from bus service in the area (which made it possible to take a bus into Dalian City), school supplies for their children (one mother described the many different pencil boxes available in the Economic Zone and compared those to the one or two designs available near her village), to vegetables in the market. We need to acknowledge that these purchases were "not simply act[s] of consumption; [they were] acts of transcendence, the realization of a new social status" (Ewen 1985: 67). Women in Dalian were not always able to buy the things they admired,[3] but the availability itself seemed to reinforce these women's sense of themselves as new urban residents. This sense was partially enabled by the way public spaces have allowed different classes of people—with different means of purchasing—to mingle in a seemingly single—urban—community. As I will discuss in more detail below, the women I spoke to were more likely to purchase things for their family than themselves, but that in itself might prompt a certain self-image. "Status did not so much define what one could consume; what one consumed helped to define one's status." (Freeman 2000: 259–60, quoting Mintz). For rural migrant women in Dalian, "to 'be modern' was to consume or reproduce rather than to produce, to watch rather than to do, to be

[3] There is an interesting irony here: As was true for some women in early industrializing United States (Ewen 1985), women in Dalian were often producing what they themselves could not afford to consume.

urban rather than rural, masculine rather than feminine, to do things mechanically or with machines rather than with one's body, and to standardize or routinize rather than to improvise" (Schein 2000: 253).

Even though migrant women cannot afford to buy much of what is offered for purchase in the city, they can be "consumers" in other ways. For example, Sun Wanning (2008) makes a compelling argument for how migrant women use urban consumption spaces—like supermarkets and shopping malls—without actually making purchases. Rather, these places offer them an anonymous, safe place in which to explore the new sights, sounds—and products—of the city. As Sun comments about one migrant, "going to the supermarket was not just a chance for her to get out of the house, but was also a regular learning experience for her—a free tutorial in consumer culture (Sun 2008: 483)."

But there are other ways to think of women's involvement in consumerism in China as well. Mayfair Yang argues that contemporary urban China, with its emphasis on consumerism, on the buying and selling of goods and people, has put new constraints on women. During the Cultural Revolution gender was "erased" (Yang 1999) and women's position, desires, and needs were subsumed under a model built on men's lives. In contrast, since those years, we may be seeing an over-compensation for that erasure and a subsequent emphasis on the differences between women and men that have resulted in new pressures. Through the market, women seek ways to assert themselves as feminine and different from men. Make-up, fashion, and products, specifically for women, are all part of the new economy. In addition, women's bodies and faces adorn billboards and advertisements and are used to sell products of all kinds. No longer is the ideal woman the "iron maiden" of the Cultural Revolution years; the new model is the svelte, sexy, and fashionable—and clearly urban—woman. In this way, Chinese women are entering the global economy through feminization (Ferry 2003). In this era, where success is equated with modern and modern is necessarily urban, today's consumer society offers opportunities to some women while many others—among them, those who are too old, not pretty or sexy enough or too poor to participate—are left out.

Family

Dalian women did not often or easily speak of themselves as strictly—or only—gendered migrants. When they did discuss gender and its role in their lives, it was usually as gendered family members that they spoke. In their way of assessing their lives, we see how a significant aspect of gender's role in modernity is constructed through discourse of family. In fact, their role as married mothers likely explains a difference between the findings of this study and other studies of migrant women, most of which focus on single women (Gaetano 2008; Pun 2005; Lee 1998; Jacka 2005a).

Other researchers heard women express more dissatisfaction with their lives as migrant women but even their assessments of their lives in the city point to their role

as family members in shaping how they see their lives in the city. Single migrants describe the great difficulties they face, pointing to the difficulties of finding a suitable job with adequate pay and living conditions, the ways they are treated badly on the job by employers (Chan 2001) and by other urbanites in their daily lives (Solinger 1999; Pun 2005). Their lives are often narrowly circumscribed by the demands of their work, and revolve mostly around the factory floor and the workers' dormitories where they live. Nevertheless, in spite of all the difficulties they face, migrant women report they would prefer to stay in the city. Jacka (2005a, b), for example, found that many in her sample of young unmarried migrant women in Beijing were nostalgic for their home villages but still, they did not want to return to them. Indeed, for all its difficulties, migration has positive things to offer young women. For many single migrant women, still tied to their families of origin, family is often something they are trying to get away from. Migration offers them a kind of liminal space in which they can eschew both pressures from their parents and the kinds of constraints they will likely face once they—inevitably—marry (Gaetano 2008; Murphy 2002). Jacka (2005a, b) is correct in being cautious about assuming that single migrants have a lot of "choice" about their decisions; their families are often under financial pressure when they "choose" to migrate. Nevertheless, even as they are not simply individuals but are indeed family members, they also have a different relationship to their families than do married women. As one single migrant woman explained to me, "Marriage is not a good thing. It really changes your life. You lose your independence. You no longer can do what you want. And also, then you are at home, your whole perspective changes, it is focused on home. And then kids, they are so much worry and trouble." Thus, before reaching the stage of marriage (as this woman did a few months later), it makes sense that young single women act, and think, of themselves as individuals in this context (see also Yan 2006; Evans 2008).

But married women migrants are in a different situation. The Dalian women at the heart of this study are constructing themselves not only as modern women—as do others—but as modern married women, as part of their families. They see their roles as wives and mothers as central to their identity. Thus the challenges they face and the successes they enjoy are different than those of single migrant women. Consider how Chanquan, a single migrant, explained to me her hopes for her future. After discussing how she was not able to pursue her education dreams because of her family's financial troubles, she explained, "I have very few options now. There are only two ways, really, to change your hukou. One is work, and that looks impossible really, that will never happen. There is no way I will get a job where they would change my hukou. And then there is through marriage. If I marry a man with a city hukou, then I could change my hukou."

Chanquan, who obviously assessed the resources and constraints around her carefully and had attempted to plan her life around them, saw education, a job, and marriage as resources to finding success and achieving her goals. But like other migrant women, she saw herself more as an individual than did the married women I spoke with in Dalian. As such, she evaluated her experiences as an individual.

The married migrant women in Dalian assess their lives and the city around them differently because they have a different family status. They too see education,

marriage, and jobs as important, but these are differently configured in their own versions of migrant life. Their job is very important in their assessment of their lives: it got them to an urban area, whether or not it has gotten them or will get them a permanent urban hukou. Education is also important to them; they regularly mentioned their own lack of education, but saw education as key—for their children's success. And rather than seeing marriage as a possible ticket to an otherwise elusive urban status, as Chanquan did, above, they see their marriage as a different kind of resource. Their husbands may not give them higher status, but they represent a partner with whom they can work together to achieve their shared goals. They have achieved one important leg of their model of success, urban residence, and can use that and their family to achieve success. Thus, for these married women, being a wife and mother is key to how they construct their lives.

That these Dalian women see themselves so centrally as mothers and wives and most often see gendered influences through those roles reflects the ways that family has also been a central pillar of the Chinese state's vision of modernity. Throughout the last century, as the Chinese state has changed, as revolutions have come and passed, the family has been consistently central to any state projects focused on modernizing China. As Susan Glosser has argued, even revolutionary movements like the New Culture Movement in the early twentieth century, although radical in their goal of dismantling the joint family and giving more power to younger family members, remained true to the ways that family and society are related. Like their predecessors, twentieth century family reformers—whether New Culture Movement, Nationalist, or Communist—argued that an ordered and modern society was built on a stable family. They all worked toward building "a family system that constitutes a seamless, unitary social order centered on the home and bounded by the outer reaches of the imperium. In China, this understanding of the family's place in society, coupled with concern for the nation's survival, charged the conjugal family ideal with a significance quite different from that of its western counterpart. Although the Chinese xiao jiating [small family] was sometimes described as a refuge from a harsh world, more often it resembled a training ground for national struggle. The primary purpose of the xiao jiating was to instill the independence, productivity, and civic concern that the beleaguered state needed" (Glosser 2003: 4). The role and centrality of the family to China's modern identity remains evident today, though we need not assume that China's modernity will necessarily bring with it a simple western version of family (though western bias might suggest otherwise). The "centripetal force" of the family (Fei 1992)—a long and deep part of China's history that has been reinforced and reinscribed by some state policies in recent decades—will not necessarily, easily, or simply, transform into families where "unfettered individualism" (Edgar 2004) is expected, common, and accepted and the well-being of individuals takes precedence over the well-being of the family as a whole (McDonald 1994; Yan 2009).

One influence that may embed mothers further into family roles is the way the post-1949 state has focused on public roles of women and often ignored their domestic roles. Whereas in Imperial China, families and women's work within them were seen as central to good social order, after 1949 it was the public realm that "was to be the

locus of social change, the designated sphere of valued activity, the place where citizens would naturally invest their loyalty and love." (Hershatter 2011: 185) Hershatter calls this process "making the visible invisible," as the state effectively ignored the domestic and women's roles in that realm, creating "a silence about the productive and affective activity taking place in the domestic realm, an important sphere of gendered relations (185)." Nevertheless, in spite of this continuing state silence on the domestic sphere, that sphere has continued to play a prominent role in what women did, how they saw themselves, and the pride they took in their achievements. Hershatter (2011) documents how in describing themselves and their lives, older rural women continue to draw upon "an older language of virtue" (29), combining "culturally durable notions of 'the good woman'" (28) that harken back to imperial notions of virtuous wives and good mothers. "Several of the qualities the women emphasized—industriousness, competence, the ability to manage human relationships deftly—drew on culturally durable notions of "the good woman," even though the physical and social locations of these virtues were no longer confined to the household and might indeed be performed in the service of the collective." (Hershatter 2011: 28) The durability of these values is also apparent in how similar Susan Glosser's description of an ideal mother in the early twentieth century is to today's ideal.

> In the traditional ideal, a good mother modeled ethical behavior for her children by working hard, running a frugal household, and submitting to family and patriarchal authority… The good wife labored tirelessly in the home, making sure it ran smoothly and economically, and provided her husband with little source of aggravation. She did not enter or interfere in the world outside the home… The modern ideal still expected women to devote themselves to productive labor in the home, but it also called upon mothers to taken an active role in forming their children's moral and civic virtues and provide them with the foundations of a formal education.... Women retained primary responsibility for the household, but the conjugal family ideal transformed both the scope and the implications of their duties there. Whether through their frugal consumption of time and money, their reproductive labor in the home, or active production, women's labor was presumed to have an indirect but important impact on the well-being of the polity. (Glosser 2003: 16–17).

Indeed, being a good wife and mother is expected of all women in China even today (Milwertz 1997; Young 1989a, b).

For women in Dalian, then, these processes of modernity are important pieces of the social background. Women—those in Dalian and elsewhere, rural and urban women—act and perform within these constructions, borrowing, resisting, acquiescing, and reconstructing them. The gendered aspects of modernity—within and outside the family—and the way the modern is constructed as urban are two important issues in their experience with these processes. The media play a central role in this imaginary. Through radio, newspapers, magazines, and especially television, images of urban life, and its contrast to the "backward" world of rural villages, is easily and widely available. Fashion, housing, kinds of jobs, street scenes and much more flood rural worlds with images of something very different from village life. And this media invasion occurs alongside the many ways that rural life and inhabitants are devalued and viewed as second class.

Because of the ways that modernity has become equated with urban, urban areas offer rural women new imaginative landscapes. It is not that Dalian women are

dupes of the old regime but, rather, that they are finding ways to use new regimes and constructions to further their own lives. Gregory Guldin (2001), in his study of changing peasant culture, found that villagers often perceived more prosperous, urban areas as offering "wenhua shenghuo," or a more cultured life; this new life was reflected and symbolized by the different housing, goods and economic opportunities available in these urban areas. Here again, we see how "suzhi," "quality," is equated with urban. It is telling that in these same places, when women who returned to the village from urban areas, they saw themselves as having been exposed to and influenced by this new cultured life. Others around them also saw them as changed, both physically—they had a greater variety of clothes of new styles and they were more likely to wear makeup—and in other ways. Villagers said that these women seemed more daring about trying new things, their thinking was more open, and even their demeanor and speech patterns were different (Murphy 2002).[4] Writing about rural women in Thailand, Mary Beth Mills asserts that geographic mobility is tied to 'fantasies of identity' (citing Moore 1994: 66), "ideas about the kind of person one would like to be and the sort of person one would like to be seen to be by others" (Mills 1999: 15–16). We can see, then, the power of the discourse of modernity.

Modernity in the Lives of Dalian Migrant Women

The performances that rural women enact in the Economic Zone are shaped—and often in contradictory ways—by discourses of modernity, consumerism, urban/rural inequalities, gender and family. Women in the DEZ use these different threads and discourses to construct their own lives; these elements of the social backdrop are crucial pieces in understanding Dalian women's pathways, obstacles, and the ways that they assess their own lives and the world around them. James Ferguson's description of performance helps us to contextualize these lives; he argues that performance should be understood as "specific and semiotically complex forms of social action that must be interpreted in the context of material life and social relations…Gendered subjectivities, as well as a range of masculine and feminine styles, emerge not simply as a mechanical effect of structure (the old 'sex roles' of

[4] Yan Hairong cites a photograph and "poem" originally published in Anhui Ribao titled "The transformation of dagongmei" which similarly reflects the ways migrant women are sometimes seen by rural women. The photo shows two women at a bus station; given the caption, they are rural migrants who have been in the city and clearly on their way back to their village. The poem suggests the kinds of changed images such women represent:

> When they left they carried 'snakeskin' bags
> When they returned they had leather bags and shoes
> Instead of zaijian they said 'bai-bai'
> Village neighbors mistake them for 'little foreigners.' (cited in Yan 2008: 145)

functionalist sociology) but as a form of self-fashioning in which there is room for subversion, ambiguity, and play. At the same time, however, such self-fashioning does not imply a free creation by an individual, for gender is a performance crafted under a 'situation of duress,' and in response to social and economic compulsion" (Ferguson 1999: 94).

Importantly, most women in this study saw themselves as successful. Though they may not be evaluated highly by the standards of permanent or long-standing urban residents, the simple fact that they are living and working in the Economic Zone—and not in village China—means they have achieved a key element of success. This new environment means that they have available to them resources and materials to formulate a different kind of self-image and lifestyle—even as their goals will necessarily be constrained by their marginal status. Thus though many of the markers of modernity are out of reach, the largest one—urban residence—helps to define these women as successful and allows for a different kind of gender performance. If, in China, one can only be modern in an urban area, and can be successful only if one is modern, then urban is the place for these and other women to make their mark, their fortune, and their successes.

Notably, Dalian women construct themselves as successful modern women through their roles as mothers. They don't use the new consumer markets or modern urban areas to construct themselves as liberated individual women; their goals are not individual goals of autonomy or independence as they are for some women in other locations or for some single women in China. Rather, they use their success and capabilities to project themselves as capable, modern *mothers.* In fact, being good mothers and wives are some of their most central goals. While we might at first want to assume that Dalian women have not been able to break out of the old constraints and expectations that tie women and their goals to their families, it is more accurate to see their behavior as a way of using the world around them in new ways.

Because family continues to be a major organizing structure in Chinese society, women's continuing role and identity in and with the family are important elements in women's strategies.[5] The continuing pervasiveness of the value of good mothering is also part of women's lives today. Indeed, these norms and expectations remain strong and are behind the continuing unequal responsibilities of women at home and in childcare and help to explain Dalian women's focus in their own lives. In their family roles and in the attention and energy they give to their families, Dalian women are using this normative family identity to construct and present themselves as successful, modern women, and in their actions we see the roles of place, family, and gender as they interact with discourses of modernity. In women's construction of themselves as successful women and mothers, the role of place in modernity is key: the construction of "good mother" is different in urban and rural areas; being

[5] In her study of silk factory workers, Rofel found that the youngest cohorts saw marriage as a way to express themselves as feminine, a place where they could find freedom from state influence and a place to be modern (Rofel 1999).

able to deal with modern society, being able to access urban things, and being able to provide that vital access to modern life to family members are all becoming parts of the definition of good wife and, especially, a good mother. Dalian women have achieved this goal, and use those successes to construct themselves as modern women. While there are examples in which individuals' goals conflict with their roles as family members (see Mills 1999 on Thailand, for example), the findings in this study mirror those from other researchers. For example, Hansen and Pang (2010) found that young people in Shaanxi and Fujian were both very individualistic and determined to uphold their responsibilities to their parents and sibling. They talked about wanting freedom to "come and go" and follow their desires but at the same time, and particularly as the time for marriage approached, they looked to their parents and siblings for guidance and as needing their contributions: "they emphasized their closest family as the only collective of importance to them, while at the same time arguing strongly for their own interests, rights, and aspirations as individuals" (Hansen and Pang 2010: 60). Like these young people in Hansen and Pang's study, Dalian women seemed to have found ways to dovetail their own interests in modern life with the expectations of and obligations and responsibilities as mothers.

When we see women's strategies in this light, it is clearer why women are less resistant to inequalities they experience within their families. Family is, for them, the source of another identity and success, that of a modern urban woman; resistance within the family might not only bring criticism about their inattention or lack of success as mothers, but resistance might also induce divisions that would make it difficult for family members to work in ways that are necessary for any of them to achieve to success. In their discussion of the behavior of young people, Hansen and Pang (2010: 47) argue for seeing such behavior as a useful strategy: "[Their] sense of obligation should not be mistaken for altruism. It was based on practical and realistic assessments of how to live a life with room for individual choices and the pursuit of individual interests, while at the same time ensuring that the family remained a stable source of security. The family was crucial as it was usually the sole source of social security for the individual in case of disease, the need for care, loss of property or unemployment, and it constituted a collective of indisputable social, emotional and psychological importance…"

The legacy of gender inequality, particularly in the domestic sphere, has also played an important role in how Dalian women have constructed their lives. Because the state generally ignored the domestic sphere, there is little state- or society-supported discursive space for women to assert themselves as individuals within the family context, making the language and paths to do so difficult to find for most women.

Here, the differences in the social positions occupied by married and single women become important in understanding the new individualization that many scholars have seen across China and how that has had less relevance for married women. As scholars have argued, young rural women have been able to assert themselves as individuals, leading to what Yan (2006) has labeled "girl power." Young women have been able to "disembed" (Yan 2010) themselves from family relationships and obligation, through such processes as new youth-controlled marriage

practices, a larger say in bridewealth negotiations, or early division of family after marriage (Yan 2005, 2006). For all the hardships they face as migrants, young women's participation in migration to cities has also been part of their assertion as individuals, triggering a disruption of their regular ties and responsibilities to their families (Zhang Hong 2007).

But while single migrant women have been able to forge pathways as individuals, it should be noted that the family structures they are challenging at this point in their lives are generational (as daughters) more than gender inequalities and their ability to dodge family pressures and responsibilities is likely to be temporary. As Yan (2006: 120) found, for all the changes that girl power signals, it "challenges patriarchal power instead of androcentric power. Because of this, girl power has not brought about radical changes in gender equality." At marriage, women face a different set of pressures than they did as single women and marriage often brings with it new ways of operating within the urban (or rural) community (Gaetano 2008; Yan 2006; Connelly et al. 2010).

For married migrant women, family has a different meaning. Married migrant women in Dalian see their own fate and success as closely tied to that of other family members. Most often, when they spoke of their role in the family, they spoke of using their own resources (many of them newly acquired through their jobs) to ensure some better situation for their child, whether it was better schooling or access to urban amenities. Thus, they see their newly acquired positions and resources as allowing them to make important contributions at home but not as resources that would allow them to challenge the male-dominated organization of the household. They did not speak of using these newly acquired resources to balance inequalities within the family nor to confront the established gender roles and norms of the wider society.

For married women to challenge gender differences in their lives at home would require that women step away from the normative ways of succeeding in Chinese society. To confront and challenge gender inequalities would require questioning the authority of male dominance more directly; this authority is reinforced in the ideological hegemony that gives more attention, weight, and power to males in nearly all spheres of Chinese social life. The weight of this normative male dominance has existed for centuries, was relatively unchallenged after 1949, and remains in place even after economic reforms over the last couple decades. Thus, these cultural values and norms, authority structures, and even acceptable routes of resistance are deeply ingrained in all aspects of Chinese society, including family life, and have been further reinforced by state policies and programs (Stacey 1983; Hershatter 2011). Evans (2010) argues that the greater expectations that mothers will develop good relations and communication with their daughters is not, as some have argued, a sign of greater equality and a new kind of family life, but can be seen as a reinscription of women's role as the keepers of good relations in the family, the guardians of the domestic sphere. In this social environment where there is, at best, silence about gender equality in the family, we can understand why it would be difficult for a woman to successfully challenge the gender inequalities she faces at home. In addition to this social normative weight against such action, challenging

structures and roles at home might threaten her ability to achieve overall economic stability and status; these households pool income and the individuals within them see their fortunes and futures as closely tied with one another. Individual goals that ignore the needs of other household members, or even see those members as competitors, would go against accepted norms of behavior in Chinese society today.

This strategy also helps to explain why women buy few items for themselves alone, but purchase things—clothing, school supplies, special foods, and household goods—for their families. They use their success, then, to reinscribed and re-invent themselves as good mothers. While many single women migrants making purchases for themselves in urban stores "offer[s them] a 'taste' of a cosmopolitan lifestyle and, more important, their self-affirmation as modern gendered subjects" (Pun 2005), married women in Dalian consume differently: they consume for the family. They indeed use consumerism to construct identity but in this case it is as consuming mothers.[6]

These Dalian women demonstrate that success is possible for migrant women. But in looking for efforts toward and indications of women's success, we find them not in assertions of themselves as individuals. Nor have these women used the new opportunities around them to construct themselves as wholly new kinds of women. Rather, as for women in the past, being good wives and mothers are also central goals and the strategies that they use involve using new structures to fashion themselves as successful in these roles. Thus, Dalian women have come to see themselves as successful not by throwing off family constraints but rather through those family constraints. The way that they perform those roles—those gendered familial roles—will be different in an urban area than in the rural areas. And today, what constitutes a good mother and wife has taken on new forms, as they have in other periods of Chinese history. Being able to deal with modern society, being able to access urban institutions and buy goods and services available in the urban sector is becoming part of the definition of a good wife and, especially, a good mother. Thus, Dalian women's successes are not separate from or in conflict with the goals and lives of other family members but rather enmeshed with them.

This kind of connection between women's goals and familial roles is not unique to contemporary China. Jennifer Johnson (2002), writing about mothers in contemporary Baltimore (USA), talks about how some women see their work not as conflicting with their familial roles ("the work or family" conflict) but rather as part of those roles (thus "work for family"). Ellen Ewen (1985), writing about immigrant women in late nineteenth century New York City, argues that mothers saw their lives in the factory not as separate from their family lives, but rather, as part of their family role; the logic of the family prevailed. In Dalian, women's familial responsibility—the very construction of success as operating through the family—has been reinforced by the discourses of gender, family, and modernity that operate in China today. Here we see clearly how the boundaries between public and private, between

[6] For an interesting discussion of how similar contradictions are part of the ways that infant feeding is constructed to make "modern consuming mothers," see Gottschang (2001).

the household and the outside world, are not strongly delineated but porous. Thus, Dalian women have used the material and discursive elements of the society around them to their own purposes, constructing themselves as modern women through the very family responsibilities and roles that have, in other circumstances, worked to constrain women. The experiences of Dalian women suggest a corrective to some arguments about modernity. As modern women, we might expect individualism to be at the center of their strategies. That these women are not focused on individual goals suggests how modernity is seen and constructed in different ways and that these differences will be influenced by other ideologies of gender and family.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

The Dalian Economic Zone is one small place in China and we must use care in generalizing beyond it. Nevertheless, there is much to learn from the situation there, about power, gender, families, and the ways that social and economic changes challenge and acquiesce to hegemonic discourses.

Looking at a group of women who have relatively recently begun working at waged jobs in factories, this study has examined women's power in their families. It found that when we look at this issue at the individual level, the results of these new jobs are mixed. That is, after women move to the city and secure a job, they do have access to more resources than they would have had in the rural area. This is especially true for the group of women on which this study focused: these women, already married and most of them with children, often had more secure jobs than did many of the single women working in DEZ.

These women are fully participating members of their families, with access to their own salaries and, as often, the salaries of their husbands. Many of them make, or contribute to, economic decisions taking place in the household. And most of them have enough say in the use of household income that they contribute money regularly to their own parents. At the same time, women remain unequal in their households. They are less likely than are their husbands to spend any of the household income on things for themselves. Particularly notable is the way that the structure of the household and its required work—housework and childcare—continues to be the responsibility of women. That means that these Dalian women work two shifts of work, one outside and one inside the home, and they have little free time. Women's roles and burdens at home are reflected in what goes on in the public spaces in Dalian. While women spend their evenings at home with children and household work and concerns, restaurants and other public areas are populated by men; men use that time to socialize, with friends or business contacts. At work, women continue to be more likely to be in subordinate, lower-paying jobs than men. These divisions indicate that women's new jobs have not changed long-standing gender organization.

But these women are by no means powerless. We can see some of their actions as the hidden transcripts of subordinate groups, ways to assert themselves in many

N.E. Riley, *Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone: Laboring in Paradise*, 129
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5524-6_7, © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

and various places in their lives. But the power of Dalian women goes beyond such hidden transcripts. If we focus only on the public sphere, we miss a great deal about the roles of women and men. Perhaps the most important—and potentially powerful—role these women play is as mothers. They are often the parent who has most say and control over their children, and are clearly involved in planning for their children's futures. As Evelyn Blackwood has argued, this kind of power is about women's role in the production of meaning; "in creating shared identities or generating material, cultural, or social value, women control social relations and their meanings" (Blackwood 2000: 12). She goes on to explain just how important this role is, "Social identities bestow certain claims, entitlements, and rights to individuals and groups, which in turn privilege or disadvantage them in everyday practice" (p. 14). Thus, this power gives women a number of sources of power, among them making decisions about the services that they themselves or other family members will provide, and to whom, and for what return; their position also allows them "to define a need and what would satisfy it" and to socialize family members, especially children, to recognize the rights of different groups of people, including women.

While gender is an important and necessary lens with which to view the lives that Dalian women have made, we have also seen that a gender lens is not enough to understand what is happening in Dalian and in other parts of China. These women often saw the inequalities surrounding gender as less important to their lives than those they faced as rural peasants. In China, urban/rural inequalities dominate the lives of rural migrants in key ways. Gender complicates these inequalities, but we have seen that one of the ways that women assert themselves as women and mothers is through their efforts to succeed in moving from their village to the city. As we review the outcomes and potential futures of these and other women, the rural/urban divide is a key component.

Dalian Women's Challenges to Inequality

Whatever individual women do and do not do, can and cannot do, in their own lives and within their families, we must also look at whether and in what ways their actions challenge wider norms. One of the key findings of this study is the weight and importance of the larger social environment on individual lives. For example, the women I spoke to felt that gender was less significant an inequality than urban/rural differences and that perception influenced the routes they took in their own lives. Again, gender is involved in all aspects of their lives; we have seen that gender actually helps to shape the inequalities between urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, the cross-cutting, conflicting, and reinforcing systems of inequalities and constructions suggest the complexities of understanding the outcomes that women experience. Here, this study leads us to two central questions: First, in what ways does this migration and do these women challenge existing norms, norms about gender, norms about rural peasants? Second, this research has demonstrated that women choose to challenge certain aspects of their lives and particular inequalities and

barriers they face, and leave others alone. That suggests a question raised in other contexts (see Ong and Peletz 1995): at what sites are people compelled to challenge hegemony and why?

A first response is that women in Dalian have not been able to use their new work and wages to restructure their lives or their position relative to others around them. In many ways—and as others have found elsewhere in China (see Judd 1990, 1994; Milwertz 1997; Pun 1999, 2005)—these women end up caught in the old systems of oppression and inequality. It may be that these new factory jobs have less potential to challenge established gender norms in China than in other societies. Whereas women's work outside the house is itself a challenge to the established gender order (at both work and, especially important for this analysis, at home) in some societies, this is not the case in China, where it has been expected—even required—that women will be full-time workers for much of their lives. Thus, Chinese women are not necessarily precipitating a shift in household roles, responsibilities, or authority when they become factory workers; urban and rural women have been contributing to their families through waged labor for decades.

Several researchers have argued that participating in the structures of inequalities can serve to deepen those inequalities. Mary Beth Mills has argued that in Thailand, rural women's desires to be modern underscore and reinforce the "hegemonic portraits of the cultural marginality of rural Thai life" (Mills 2001: 46). Solinger (1999) too argues that even as rural migrants challenge many established systems of control through their abilities to overcome or go around the barriers put up against rural migration, their efforts are, at the same time, an indication of their belief in the systems and in the ideological beliefs about the differences and hierarchies between rural and urban areas; in addition, rural migrant women's very actions—their efforts to move out of rural areas and into cities suggest that they do believe that socio-economic mobility—through physical mobility—is possible. Wang Feng (2010) also found that even in the face of great inequality, rural-to-urban migrants were more likely than either urban or rural residents to be optimistic about the future. Guldin (2001) has documented a kind of reinforcing process, describing the ways that rural residents see returned migrant women with a new respect earned by their exposure to the more modern urban areas. As Mills (2001: 46) argues about the ideologies of modernity, such support in the systems of oppression is not unusual, but rather, "a fundamental feature of hegemonic systems, perpetuating relations of authority by implicating subordinate as well as dominant agents in their production and reproduction. The efficacy of this ideological convergence of modernity and gender…lies in its ability to direct the imaginations of individual women into practices and desires that individualize their choices—as consumers and performers of [modern] identities—that offer little opportunity to construct more collective expressions of critique or dissent."

Are rural women better off in urban areas? This question, of course, is not possible to answer in any all-encompassing way. Women migrants have membership in two key inequalities—gender and rural/urban; distinguishing between rural/urban inequality, and gender inequality which is felt throughout the population, whether migrant or not, is key to trying to understand the current social landscape in China

today. Women migrants face most of the same gender inequalities faced by non-migrant women, including those living in cities. As we saw in Chap. 4, gender inequality continues to be pervasive across China, and some believe that certain dimensions of gender inequality have actually worsened in the post-1980s reform period. At any rate, it is certainly not true that urban areas are centers of gender equality. Thus, as much as rural migrant women move to cities with hopes that their lives will improve, it is not certain that in terms of gender equality, they will be better off. Choe et al.(1995)'s findings that discrimination against girl children "is more or less uniform across families with different socioeconomic characteristics" (62) underscore the continuing gender inequalities and their outcomes in urban areas. Other research ("Women's status…" 2001; Milwertz 1997) has found that among urban residents, women put in double days, struggling with their jobs outside the home and then returning to the responsibilities of housework and childcare. These and many other findings suggest that urban areas are not models of gender equality. Whether they are more gender-equal than the rural areas from which these women came is a separate question, and also difficult to measure. Certainly, gender constructions can be different in rural and urban areas, and many women in this study and in others see their opportunities as women to be greater in urban areas.

The burdens that migrant women endure as migrants further complicate the question of whether rural women are better off in urban areas. We have seen that migrants are often treated with scorn, discrimination, and significant legal and administrative harshness. If they stay in the city, they may have to do so as permanent rural migrants, unable to find a way to change their hukou to urban. And as rural migrant women, some of the challenges these women face are the results of the ways that these dual inequalities—gender and urban/rural—interact and multiply, creating special difficulties for women migrants.

Thus, the answer about whether they are better off is not easy to answer in any definitive way. But that rural women consider Dalian much preferable to alternatives (especially rural residence) is also not surprising. While gender inequality may be no less pervasive there than in other places, urban areas nevertheless offer women new scripts for their lives and dreams. And as we have seen, key to these new gender scripts is the cross-cutting influence of the ideology of modernity. That pull from, that faith in, modernity and what it can offer is a major factor in how these migrant women assess Dalian and their lives there. Indeed, in the overwhelming influence of the discourse of modernities, both on the lives of these women, and on the structure and development of Chinese society more generally, we are able to see the importance of those structures that lie above the individual level but influence individual lives.

This brings us to the next question of the ways that some hegemonies are more likely to be challenged than others. I would argue that this is not a question of which hegemony is more important than another, but rather, which ones are more likely to be challenged. As we have seen, there are any number of reasons why some are better targets than others. Carolyn Hsu (2007: 10) has argued that it is easier to follow already existing pathways; these pathways are often social institutions and Hsu argues that, "Institutions are patterns of practices… they are established procedures

that are so ingrained that people find it much easier to follow them than to deviate from them. A common analogy is a road, or a system of roads. Just as travelers find it easier to follow existing roads than to bushwhack their own path, social actors find it easier to participate in their society's institutions rather than inventing their own practices." Another element in women's focus is how disruptive of wider social norms a challenge would be. Thus I have argued that women are less likely to challenge gender inequalities in their families partly because of the intimate nature of family relationships and the difficulties of restructuring such close ties.

Equally, if not more, important is the weight of family ideology that has been long-standing in China. The ways that families are central to societal organization and to individuals' lives and the state support for families mean that to act in any way that would weaken the family would go against long-standing and deeply held norms. The construction of discourse around families, therefore, is so powerful and pervasive that attempting to deconstruct that discourse would take a monumental effort. Such an effort, even if successful, might easily disrupt women's own goals. On the other hand, thinking about pathways and forging new ones lends support to why urban areas might be attractive to rural women. When socialist institutions were dismantled, many roads were destroyed, but few were replaced (Hsu 2007); thus, people had to create their own pathways, and there were likely to be a greater variety of possible pathways, including some leading to and within urban areas.

Discourses surrounding urban/rural differences are also powerful. The state plays a role in all these discourses. We have seen that active and missing state policies and laws have helped to shape the lives of all citizens in China. Whether it is state birth planning regulations, laws about marriage age, control of private property, or state contributions to infrastructure, the state has played a fundamental role in shaping discourses of gender, geographical residence, and family. But the state's less obvious role is just as powerful. Ellen Judd calls this state power "grounded" state power, found in all aspects of social life and argues that its "effects are not produced by governmental decree…. Rather they work through intermediate, customary dimensions of rural social life" (Judd 1994: 252). And, Judd reminds us, "household and village are created and recreated in structures internally structured by the presences of state power…. Thus, it is not a passive constraint imposed from the outside but a productive force operating from within the constituent elements of everyday life" (Judd 1994: 252).

But at the same time, social and economic reform has meant that there are cracks in the solid foundations of those discourses. Any society is a dynamic, evolving, entity, but as Carolyn Hsu (2007), writes about stratification in contemporary China, in stratification systems in societies like China—which is relatively unstable as it undergoes rapid change—there may be more variety of possible paths for individuals to follow. In such times, it is not certain what will be valued nor what the rules of allocation will be and that may mean that individuals are freer to try new ones. As we saw, the DEZ's relatively new neighborhoods also may help to encourage women to experiment with new identities. At the same time, it is also clear these evolving stratification systems will not necessarily come to look like those in the west.

Gender is intertwined in all these discourses, events, and changes. The legacies of historical events, structures, and ideologies remain influential today. The state is also implicated in these discourses, both in the ways it has supported women's entry into the paid labor force, and the ways that policies and immanent state power makes it difficult for women to challenge gender inequalities in their lives. With economic and social reforms in the last couple decades have come new challenges for gender equalities. While these changes have created some new opportunities for women, in other areas, they have also served to reinforce old norms. The outcome is that overall, social and economic changes, and particularly the turn to more capitalist markets and a consumer society, have not provided women with easy access to paths to gender equality.

This study has underscored the complexity of understanding how new economic opportunities impact women's family lives. In some areas, we can see that women are able to use these new situations to further their own goals. But we also see that women's actions and even the goals themselves are circumscribed in key ways by the discursive environment in which they live. Once again, this study underscores the importance of context. Power—how it manifests itself, the access that different groups have to power, even its very meaning—has to be evaluated within the specificities of any society. We have seen here that success too is socially constructed, so that different groups and different societies will have different ideas about what constitutes success and the best ways to go about trying to achieve success. These and other issues such as gender construction and the role of families are shaped by many local institutions and practices. We have examined how history, the state, social norms, economic organization and economic changes have all contributed to the shape of these social institutions. The state plays a key role, here as elsewhere, shaping the discourse of any ideology, opening and constraining pathways, making some pathways more effective than others, and in both direct and indirect ways, influencing Dalian migrants lives and decisions.

The Future

Over the last two decades, the Dalian Economic Zone has undergone enormous change. From a small village, it first changed into a quiet economic zone. And in the last several years, the zone has taken off. There are more stores, more services, more people from different places doing different things. But many things have not changed as quickly. Scholars and activists working across China have been nearly unanimous in pointing out how the urban/rural divide has not only not disappeared, but may have deepened as the country has moved into the twenty first century. Many (Wang 2010; Guang and Kong 2010; Whyte 2010) have suggested possible solutions to the problems created by such reforms but no one has predicted that these problems will disappear anytime soon. The gender inequality that these Dalian migrants currently face is also likely to be an enduring feature of Dalian and Chinese society. Women may move into new areas of the economy, and we might hope that husbands

and fathers will take on a greater share of the work at home. But the discursive and material structures that have such a long history in China and have been reinscribed by changes and policies in contemporary Chinese society will continue to exert pressures on women that mirror those we have seen for these Dalian women. Balancing the attractions and difficulties of modernity in China will likely be part of women's lives for a long time, and, as is true of the migrant women at the heart of this study, rural migrants will embody many of the contradictions inherent in these processes.

This volume has argued that for at least some women, being able to take advantage of China's modernity does not translate into a focus on themselves or on seizing these new opportunities to use exclusively for themselves. Rather, these women use those new opportunities to strengthen long-held normative roles of mother and wife. Whether that continues to be true in the future is not certain. Perhaps privatization and all that it brings, especially a focus on the individual and on oneself, will take further hold. Indeed, there is much evidence that there is an increasing focus on the individual across China. A deepening consumerist culture, with its focus on individual goals and happiness, seems opposed to earlier values of self-sacrifice and dedication to a group beyond oneself. The decreasing influence of the Party and the fewer state or Party activities in daily life suggests that the "submission of the individual to an officially endorsed collectivity" (Yan 2000: 184) has diminished. On the other hand, there is also evidence that family has not only remained a strong and important institution to individuals but that its importance may have increased in context of fewer collective activities. What seems to be taking shape, at least for now, is a tension between the pulls of individual identity and action and membership in and responsibility to the family. Individuals—including these Dalian migrant women—are finding ways to their own, individual, goals at the same time that they accept and value family as the key social institution in their lives and are ready to act for the good of that group as well (see also Hansen and Pang 2010; Milwertz 1997). Individuals appear to be achieving a careful balancing act that juggles both individual and family, a balancing that reflects the long legacies of the value of family and collective in Chinese history even as it confronts the new market economy and the values produced there. Sara Friedman (2005a, b): 323) has pointed out how both the state and the market have played roles—in different parts of China, different roles and emphases—in shaping family structure, dynamics, and behavior. She argues for attention to "how both market and state forces call on individuals to produce themselves as new kinds of subjects through transforming intimate life." These kinds of observations underscore the variety of models of state and market influence and highlight how the form of privatization and neoliberalism that is taking hold in China should not be expected to look like that found elsewhere (Ong and Zhang 2008; Hsu 2007). China's economic and social system is rooted in its own history and priorities. We have seen that any new developments are entangled with those that have come before. How mothers fare in these developing social structures, and the pathways they take is not easy to predict.

Beyond Dalian

Even as our understanding of these processes of economic change, modernity, migration, and gender constructions must necessarily be local, there are also some lessons to be learned that can be taken outside this context. It is clear that measuring power at the individual level gives us only a partial picture of what is going on in individual lives. Often, when we hear about whether or not someone or some group has power, focus is at this individual level. Do they have power over? power to? As important as these questions and this perspective is, we need to understand the discursive level as well. This larger framework gives us vital information about the issues, ideologies, and practices that shape lives at the individual level, and reminds us of the strength and challenges of interview-based research. Interviews with Dalian migrant women give us important stories and perspectives from key players in the changing social landscape. But individuals do not usually focus, discuss, or perhaps even notice those larger social structures. They are focused on daily lives and struggles, and tend to see failures and successes as products of individual behavior, action, and resources rather than part of a larger social world. It is up to a researcher to connect those individual pathways and decisions with the larger structures shape women's lives.

This research provides a potential corrective to some feminist research, particularly some based on western societies, which focuses on what constitutes power and success for women. Many western feminists see women's autonomy as a major goal. Indeed, in many societies, women's lack of autonomy is an indicator of women's subordinate position. But in other places, autonomy is not the ideal for anyone, men or women. As Evelyn Blackwood (2000: 13) points out about Indonesia, women's "sense of self derives from being a complementary family person." The importance of complementary roles has always been central to Chinese social organization, particularly in families. When we reconsider the historical record regarding women's roles, recognition of the importance of interacting, complementary (while also hierarchal) organization gives us a different appreciation for women's lives; while constrained in many ways, in some Chinese eras, and among some socio-economic and geographically-located elements, women were able to use gender complementation and segregation to their advantage, becoming powerful members of their families and thus their communities.

This kind of social organization helps to explain the ways that Dalian women see mothering as a pathway to success. In that way, they use the existing social norms, organization, and ideologies to achieve their personally-orchestrated version of success. This kind of strategy and construction of identities mirrors an older generation of silk factory workers studied by Lisa Rofel (1999); in the process of taking factory jobs in Hangzhou, these workers appropriated the socialist discourse of liberation in order to challenge a gendered culture of space (what is defined as inside or outside) that was at the center of definition of proper femininity. In a parallel fashion, women in Dalian have appropriated discourses of family and gender and what constitutes a "good woman" or "good mother" to fashion an identity of success. Thus, these

Dalian women see themselves as liberated not *from* family constraints but *through* family constraints. In this case, it is less a liberation from gender oppression as from a rural subordinate position.

These results suggest that we need to use caution as we try to understand what is happening in any society. We might expect that presented with new opportunities, migrant women would focus on themselves; we have come to expect that individualism is part of such social features in market economies. Carolyn Hsu's warning about the dangers of "looking for what is not there" is relevant here. She argues that in their examination of societies—perhaps especially transitional ones like China's—scholars sometimes focus on what they expect to be present and, in the process, miss what is present. In Western societies, and perhaps beyond, there is a dominant ideology that expects individualism to be a central feature of market economies (even those with "socialist characteristics") and a proper and necessary goal of any individual involved in such an economy; the morality of western industrial capitalism is "that human beings are independent, rational individuals who compete with one another to maximize economic gains" (Hsu 2007: 9). From that perspective, we would likely expect that the access and opportunities that these migrant women have in urban areas would mean they would turn away from or resist a morality that continues to put family first. But when we look closely, we see that women use the "new" and "old" structures together to create new, stronger, more powerful identities. Not to be used strictly for themselves, but to use for their families. What is happening in China reminds us that social change does not produce universal results across societies; we must be wary of expecting that "neoliberalism is an inexorable process that renders all national spaces intelligible or commensurable in accord with predetermined universal norms... rather than... a configuration that is at once universal and particular" (Ong and Zhang 2008: 9).

The lives of these Dalian migrant women may also offer us new perspectives on the meaning of feminism and its successes and failures in China. If women are using new resources to shore up their traditional positions as mothers and family members rather than to assert their independence from those institutions, we need not assume that constitutes some failure of liberation. Instead, it reminds us of the many varieties of feminisms and feminist goals. "To move in a different direction [from eurocentric feminism] requires pulling apart the singularity of the Chinese woman and then holding that multiplicity in tension with a refusal to establish a unitary referent for what constitutes feminism" (Rofel 1999: 52). While two centuries apart, the lives of these Dalian women and those of upper class women in the Qing dynasty share some common features and provide a new lens through which to examine gender and power. Historians (Bray 1997; Ko 2001) have shown us that women had more power in the past than we once believed; that power was rooted in the family; and the family itself was the central organizing institution in Chinese society. In perhaps similar ways, contemporary women are finding ways to use the ideologies of family, gender, and even gender segregation and discrimination to define, find, and increase their own power; indeed, women are able to find the many sites of power and resistance in such a strategy, taking advantage of the conflicts and inconsistencies in the social fabric around them to find ways to achieve success in their lives. These outcomes

give further weight to current Chinese feminists' arguments that women's power lies in (or can lie in) the family. Success, then, is found not by overturning family constraints but through them. Such a perspective also makes it clearer why Dalian women seemed less concerned about power vis-a-vis men and were more focused on other issues and challenges in their lives.

That said and noted, we must return again to the power of discourse in shaping the lives of individuals. Weston's description of women "caught between the rock of structure and the hard place of agency" (Weston 1993: 12) is worth noting here. That is, women are individuals who operate in a discursive environment that makes some paths, responses, and strategies more likely, more available, and more visible than others. Discourses of gender and family, for example, underlie all individual decisions these women make; no aspects of life have been too private or personal to escape such influence. Divisions between public and private spheres, never very strongly delineated in China historically, have been further interwoven since 1949, as the state "obliterated distinctions between private and public and absorbed the most interior aspects of the private world into the political realm. The private became more political than anyone could have ever anticipated" (Glosser 2003: 174). As we watch China turning more and more to a market economy, we might assume the state will withdraw from family intervention. But "post-socialist" states are more complicated than such a description implies. On the one hand, the removal of state support for families may make families even more important to individuals and communities, as the central social institution shaping individuals lives (see Belanger and Barbieri 2009, on Vietnam). On the other hand, even in a market economy, the state—what it does and does not do—will continue to be a key factor in family and gender constructions.

The lens of gender, while certainly not the only possible lens, allows us insight into larger issues concerning China and other societies and is another argument for the outcome of putting gender at the center of analysis (Hershatter 2007; Mann 1997) to illuminate the processes underway in any society. In this case, a focus on gender allows us to see the history of modernity and modernizing projects in new ways. We have seen that Dalian women's lives, experiences, and strategies are intimately tied to discourses of modernity in contemporary (and modern) China. Women's focus beyond themselves and their allegiance to and identity through their family roles is connected to what goes on at a distance from the Dalian Economic Zone and yet is tied to such spaces and events. Thus, Ong's (1997) observations that China's new definitions of and efforts toward modernity and nationalism entail reviving elements of Confucianism (see also Wang 1998; Dirlik 2002; Lu 2001) and a complicated relationship to individualism as well help to explain the paths and strategies of Dalian women. Here, then, is the argument for recognizing the ways that individual women live, strategize, and form their identities and successes through interactions with other people and with institutions around them as well as through their place within and negotiations with surrounding discourse. These strategies and negotiations are sometimes tenuous, often contradictory, and we can see from them the multiple pressures and influences among which women in China live.

References

Abu-Lughod, L. (1990, February). The romance of resistance: Tracing transformations of power through Bedouin women. *American Ethnologist, 17*(1), 41–55.

Ali, K. (2002). *Planning the family in Egypt*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Allen, A. (1999). *The power of feminist theory: Domination, resistance, solidarity*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Allison, A. (1991, October). Japanese mothers and obentos: The lunch box as ideological state apparatus. *Anthropological Quarterly, 64*(4), 195–208.

Anagnost, A. (1994). The politicized body. In A. Zito & T. Barlow (Eds.), *Body, subject, and power in China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Andors, P. (1983). *The unfinished revolution of Chinese women*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Andors, P. (1988). Women and work in Shenzhen. *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, 20*(3), 22–41.

Aptheker, B. (1989). *Tapestries of life: Women's work, women's consciousness, and the meaning of daily experience*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Attane, I. (2002, April). A half century of Chinese socialism: The changing fortunes of Chinese peasant families. *Journal of Family History, 27*(2), 150–171.

Barlow, T. (1994). Theorizing woman: funu, guojia, jiating. In A. Zito & T. Balow (Eds.), *Body, subject, and power in China* (pp. 253–289). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Barlow, T. (2004). *The question of women in Chinese feminism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bauer, J., Feng, W., Riley, N. E., & Zhao, X. (1992, July). Gender inequality in urban China: Education and employment. *Modern China, 18*(3), 333–370.

Beach, M. (2001). China's rural health care gradually worsens. *Lancet, 358*, 567.

Belanger, D., & Barbieri, M. (2009). Introduction: State, families, and the making of transitions in Vietnam. In M. Barvieri & D. Belanger (Eds.), *Reconfiguring families in contemporary Vietnam* (pp. 1–44). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Berman, M. (1982). *All that is solid melts into air: The experience of modernity*. New York: Penguin Books.

Beynon, L. (2004). Dilemmas of the heart: Rural working women and their hopes for the future. In A. Gaetano & T. Jacka (Eds.), *On the move* (pp. 131–150). New York: Columbia University Press.

Bian Yanjie. (1994). *Work and inequality in urban China*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Blackwood, E. (2000). *Webs of power: Women, kin, and community in a Sumatran village*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Blumberg, R. L. (1991). Income under female versus male control: Hypotheses from a theory of gender stratification and data from the third world. In R. Blumberg (Ed.), *Gender, family, and economy: The triple overlap* (pp. 97–127). Newbury Park: Sage.

N.E. Riley, *Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone: Laboring in Paradise*, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5524-6, © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

Blumstein, P., & Schwartz, P. (1991). Money and ideology: Their impact on power and the division of household labor. In R. Blumberg (Ed.), *Gender, family, and economy: The triple overlap* (pp. 261–288). Newbury Park: Sage.

Bray, F. (1997). *Technology and gender: Fabrics of power in late imperial China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Brenner, S. (1995). Why women rule the roost: Rethinking Javanese ideologies of gender and self-control. In A. Ong & M. Peletz (Eds.), *Bewitching women, pious men: Gender and body politics in Southeast Asia* (pp. 19–50). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Brenner, M. (2001). Reexamining the distribution of wealth in rural China. In C. Riskin, R. Zhao, & S. Li (Eds.), *China's retreat from equality: Income distribution and economic transition* (pp. 245–275). Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

Cao Baihua et al. (1993). *Dalian Ershiyi Guoji Chengshi: Beifang Xianggang.* Dalian Chuben She.

Carlsson, F., & Qin, P. (2010). Is it better to be the head of a chicken than the tail of a phoenix: Concern for relative standing in rural China. *Journal of Socio-Economics, 39*, 180–186.

Chafetz, J. (1991). The gender division of labor and the reproduction of female disadvantage. In R. Blumberg (Ed.), *Gender, family, and economy: The triple overlap* (pp. 74–94). Newbury Park: Sage.

Chan, A. (2001). *China's workers under assault: The exploitation of labor in a globalizing economy*. Armonk: ME Sharpe.

Chan, A. (2002). The culture of survival: Lives of migrant workers through the prism of private letters. In P. Link, R. Madsen, & P. Pickowicz (Eds.), *Popular China: Unofficial culture in a globalizing society* (pp. 163–188). Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Chan, K. W., & Buckingham, W. (2008, September). Is China abolishing the hukou system? *China Quarterly, 195*, 582–606.

Chan, A., & Siu, K. (2010). The mechanisms underpinning low wages and excessive overtime in Chinese export factories. *Critical Asian Studies, 42*(2), 167–190.

Chang, L. (2009). *Factory girls*. New York: Spiegel and Grau.

Chen Xiangming. (1994, Fall). The changing roles of free economic zones in development: A comparative analysis of capitalist and socialist cases in East Asia. *Studies in Comparative International Development 29*(3), 3–25.

Cheng, T., & Seldon, M. (1994, September). The origins and social consequences of China's hukou system. *China Quarterly, 139*, 644–668.

China-Dalian.com Dalian Trade and Economic Corporation Bureau. Accessed 1 June 2012.

China Human Development Report. (2007). *Development with equity*. Beijing: China Translation and Publishing Corporation.

Choe, M. K., Hongsheng, H., & Feng, W. (1995). Effects of gender, birth order, and other correlates on childhood mortality in China. *Social Biology, 42*(1–2), 50–64.

Chow, R. (1989). 'It's you and not me': Domination and 'othering' in theorizing the third world. In E. Weed (Ed.), *Coming to terms: Feminism, theory, politics* (pp. 152–161). New York: Routledge.

Chu, J. (2010). *Cosmologies of credit: Transnational mobility and the politics of destination in China*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Coale, A., & Banister, J. (1994, August). Five decades of missing females in China. *Demography, 31*(3), 459–486.

Cohen, P., & Wang, F. (2009). Market and gender pay equity: Have Chinese reforms narrowed the gap? In D. Davis & F. Wang (Eds.), *Creating wealth and poverty in postsocialist China* (pp. 37–53). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Coleman, M. (1991). Division of household labor: Suggestions for future empirical consideration and theoretical development. In R. Blumberg (Ed.), *Gender, family, and economy: The triple overlap* (pp. 245–260). Newbury Park: Sage.

Connelly, R., Roberts, K., & Zheng, Z. (2010). The Impact of circular migration on the position of rural women in China. *Feminist Economics, 16*(1), 3–41.

Crane, G. (1990). *The political economy of China's special economic zones*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.

Crane, G. (1996). 'Special things in special ways': National identity and China's special economic zones. In J. Unger (Ed.), *Chinese nationalism* (pp. 148–168). Armonk: ME Sharpe (East Gate Books).

Dalian Development Area Official Website. Accessed 2012 at: http://www.ddz.gov.cn/

Dalian Jingji Jishu Kaifaqu. (2008). Fazhan Baogao (Annual Report). Dalian Jingji Jishu Fazhan Gaige Ju. Dalian Kaifaqu (Dalian Development Area) website at 2008.dda.cn. Accessed 1 June 2012.

Dalian Jingji Kaifaqu Yanjiu suo. (1994). *Dalian Jingji Kaifaqu, 1991–1994*. Dalian Kaifaqu Yanjiu Yin.

Davin, D. (1999). *Internal migration in contemporary China*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

de Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

de Grazia, V. (1996). *The sex of things*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

DeVault, M. (1999). Talking back to sociology: Distinction contributions of feminist methodology. In M. DeVault (Ed.), *Liberating method: Feminism and social research* (pp. 25–45). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Dirlik, A. (2002, January). Modernity as history: Post-revolutionary China, globalization and the question of modernity. *Social History, 27*(1), 16–39.

Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Duhigg, C., & Barboza, D. (2012, January 25). In China, human costs are built into an ipad. *New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/26/business/ieconomy-apples-ipad-and-the-human-costs-for-workers-in-china.html?pagewanted=all. Accessed 1 Apr 2012.

Edgar, D. (2004). Globalization and western bias in family sociology. In J. Scott, J. Treas, & M. Richards (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to the sociology of families* (pp. 3–16). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Edwards, L. (2004). Constraining women's political work with 'women's work': The Chinese communist party and women's participation in politics. In A. McLaren (Ed.), *Chinese women, living and working* (pp. 109–130). London: Routledge/Curzon.

Enstad, N. (1999). *Ladies of labor, girls of adventure*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Errington, S. (1990). Recasting sex, gender and power: A theoretical and regional overview. In J. Atkinson & S. Errington (Eds.), *Power and difference: Gender in island Southeast Asia* (pp. 1–58). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Esherick, J. (2000). Modernity and nation in the Chinese city. In J. Esherick (Ed.), *Remaking the Chinese city* (pp. 1–16). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Evans, H. (1997). *Women and sexuality in China: Female sexuality and gender since 1949*. London: Chiron Publishers.

Evans, H. (2008). *The subject of gender*. Lanham: Rowman and Littliefield.

Evans, H. (2010, December). The gender of communication: Changing expectations of mother and daughters in urban China. *China Quarterly, 204*, 980–1000.

Ewen, E. (1985). *Immigrant women in the land of dollars: Life and culture on the lower east side 1890–1925*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Family Planning Still Needed. (2011, May 18). *China Daily*. Accessed at: http://www.china.org.cn/china/2011-05/18/content_22586657.htm. Accessed 24 May 2012.

Farquhar, J. (2002). *Appetites: Food and sex in post-socialist China*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Fei Xiaotung. (1992). *From the soil: The foundations of Chinese society.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ferguson, J. (1999). *Expectations of modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fernandes, L. (1997). *Producing workers: The politics of gender, class, and culture in the Calcutta jute mills*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Ferry, M. (2003). Advertising, consumerism, and nostalgia for the new woman in contemporary China. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies, 17*(3), 277–290.

Fong, V. (2002, December). China's one-child policy and the empowerment of urban daughters. *American Anthropologist, 104*(4), 1098–1109.

Fong, V. (2004). *Only hope: Coming of age under China's one-child policy*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
Fonow, M., & Cook, J. (1991). *Beyond methodology: Feminist scholarship as lived research*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Foucault, M. (1980). *The history of sexuality*. New York: Vintage.
Fraser, N. (1989). *Unruly practices*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Freeman, C. (2000). *High tech and high heels in the global economy*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Friedman, J. (2005a). *China's urban transition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Friedman, S. (2005b). The intimacy of state power: Marriage, liberation, and socialist subjects in southeastern China. *American Ethnologist, 32*(2), 312–327.
Furlong, A., & Cartmel, F. (2007). Young people and social change: New Perspectives, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
Gao Qin., & Riskin, Carl. (2009). Market versus social benefits: explaining China's changing income inequality. In D. Davis., & F. Wang (Eds.), *Creating wealth and poverty in postsocialist China* (pp. 20–36). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Ge, W. (1999). *Special economic zones and the economic transition in China*. Singapore: World Scientific.
Giddens, A. (1997). *Sociology*. London: Polity Press.
Glosser, S. (2003). *Chinese visions of family and state, 1915–1953*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Glucksmann, M. (1994). The work of knowledge and the knowledge of women's work. In M. Maynard & J. Purvis (Eds.), *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective* (pp. 149–165). London: Taylor and Francis.
Gold, T. (1985). After comradeship: Personal relations in China since the cultural revolution. *China Quarterly, 104*, 657–675.
Gottschang, S. (2001). The consuming mother: Infant feeding and the feminine body in urban China. In S. Gottschang & L. Jeffery (Eds.), *China urban: Ethnographies of contemporary culture* (pp. 89–103). Durham: Duke University Press.
Greenhalgh, S. (1985, June). Sexual stratification: The other side of 'growth with equity' in East Asia. *Population and Development Review, 11*(2), 265–314.
Greenhalgh, S. (2008). *Just one child: Science and policy in Deng's China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Greenhalgh, S., & Winckler, E. (2005). *Governing China's population: From Leninist to Neoliberal biopolitics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Guang Lei. (2003). Rural taste, urban fashions: The cultural politics of rural/urban difference in contemporary China. *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique 11*(3), 613–646.
Guang Lei., & Fanmin Kong. (2010). Rural prejudice and gender discrimination in China's urban job market. In M. K. Whyte (Ed.), *One country, two societies: Rural-urban inequality in contemporary China* (pp. 241–264). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Guldin, G. (2001). *What's a peasant to do? village becoming town in southern China*. Boulder: Westview Press.
Hannum, E. (1999, May). Political change and the urban-rural gap in basic education in China, 1949–1990. *Comparative Education Review, 43*(2), 193–211.
Hannum, E., Wang, M., & Adams, J. (2010). Rural-urban disparities in access to primary and secondary education under market reforms. In M. K. Whyte (Ed.), *One country, two societies: Rural-urban inequality in contemporary China* (pp. 125–146). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Hansen, M. H., & Pang, C. (2010). Idealizing individual choice: Work, love, and family in the eyes of young, rural Chinese. In M. Hansen & R. Svarverud (Eds.), *iChina: The rise of the individual in modern Chinese society* (pp. 39–64). Copenhagen: NIAS Press.
Hansen, M. H., & Svarverud, R. (Eds.). (2010). *IChina: The rise of the individual in modern Chinese society*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.
Hanser, A. (2008). *Service encounters: Class, gender, and the market for social distinction in urban China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies, 14*(3), 575–599.
Harding, S. (1986). *The science question in feminism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge? Thinking from women's lives*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Hart, G. (1992). Imagined unities: Constructions of 'the household' in economic theory. In S. Ortiz & S. Lees (Eds.), *Understanding economic process* (Monographs in Economic Anthropology, no. 10, pp. 111–129). Lanham: University Press of America.
Hershatter, G. (2007). *Women in China's long twentieth century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Hershatter, G. (2011). *The gender of memory: Rural women and China's collective past*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Hodgson, D. (2001). Of modernity/modernities, gender, and ethnography (Intro to her book). In *Gendered modernities: Ethnographic perspectives*. New York: Palgrave.
Hoffman, L. (2010). *Patriotic professionalism in urban China*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Honig, E., & Hershatter, G. (1988). *Personal voices: Chinese women in the 1980s*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
Hooks, B. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Boston: South End Press.
Hsu, C. (2007). *Creating market socialism: How ordinary people are shaping class and status in China*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Inkeles, A., Montgomery Broaded, C., & Cao, Z. (1997, January). Causes and consequences of individual modernity in China. *The China Journal, 37*, 31–59.
Intel's chip plant to operate in Dalian. *China Daily*, 2010-03-26. Accessed online at: www.chinadaily.com.cn/business.
Intel chip plant opens in Dalian. *China Daily*, 2010-10-26, http://dalian.chinadaily.com.cn/2010-10/26/content_11461017.htm. Accessed on 1 Apr 2012.
Jacka, T. (2005a). Finding and place: Negotiations of modernization and globalization among rural women in Beijing. *Critical Asian Studies, 37*(1), 51–74.
Jacka, T. (2005b). *Rural women in urban China: Gender, migration, and social change*. Armonk: ME Sharpe.
Jacka, T. (2009). Cultivating citizens: Suzhi (quality) discourse in the PRC. *Positions, 17*(3), 523–535.
Jacka, T. (2012). Migration, householding and the well-being of left-behind women in rural Ningxia. *The China Journal, 67*, 1–21.
Jacka, T., & Gaetano, A. (2004). Introduction: Focusing on migrant women. In A. Gaetano & T. Jacka (Eds.), *On the move: Women in rural-to-urban migration in contemporary China* (pp. 1–38). New York: Columbia University Press.
Jayaratne, T., & Stewart, A. (1991). Quantitative and qualitative methods in the social sciences: Current feminist issues and practical strategies. In M. Fonow & J. Cook (Eds.), *Beyond methodology: Feminist scholarship as lived research* (pp. 85–106). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Jiang Zhixue., & Chen Zhangjiang. (1994). *Dalian Jingji Kaifaqu: Renkou Fajan.* Xinhua Chubanshe.
Johnson, K. (1983). *Women, the family, and peasant revolution in China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Johnson, J. (2002). *Getting by on the minimum*. New York: Routledge.
Judd, E. R. (1989). Niangjia: Chinese women and their natal families. *Journal of Asian Studies, 48*(3), 525–544.
Judd, E. (1990, Spring). "Men are more able": Rural Chinese women's conceptions of gender and agency. *Pacific Affairs, 63*(1), 40–61.
Judd, E. (1994). *Gender and power in rural north China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Junar Statistics. (2012). Accessed: http://www.junar.com/datastreams/22602/percentage-ever-married-china/. Accessed 24 May 2012.
Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievement: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change, 30*, 435–464.

Kelly, L., Burton, S., & Regan, L. (1994). Researching women's lives or studying women's oppression: What constitutes feminist research? In M. Maynard & J. Purvis (Eds.), *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective* (pp. 27–48). London: Taylor and Francis.

Kendall, L. (Ed.). (2002). *Under construction: The gendering of modernity, class, and consumption in the Republic of Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Kim, S. K. (1997). *Class struggle or family struggle? The lives of women factory workers in South Korea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kim Won, S., Fong, V., Yoshikawa, H., Wat, N., Chen, X., Deng, H., & Li, Z. (2010, December). Income, work preferences, and gender roles among parents of infants in urban China: A mixed method study from Nanjing. *China Quarterly, 204*, 939–959.

Kitzinger, C. (2004). Feminist approaches. In C. Seale et al. (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice* (pp. 125–140). London: Sage.

Knauft, B. (Ed.). (2000). *Critically modern: Alternatives, alterities, anthropologies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Knight, J., Li, S., & Song, L. (2004). The rural-urban divide and the evolution of political economy in China. Unpublished paper, Department of Economics, University of Oxford.

Ko, D. (2001). *Every step a lotus*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ko, D. (2005). Cinderella's sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Komter, A. (1989). Hidden power in marriage. *Gender and Society, 3*(2), 187–216.

Lavely, W. (1991). Marriage mobility under rural collectivism. In R. Watson & P. Ebrey (Eds.), *Marriage and inequality in Chinese society* (pp. 286–312). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lavely, W., & Freedman, R. (1990, August). The origins of the Chinese fertility decline. *Demography, 27*(3), 357–367.

Lee, C. K. (1998). *Gender and the south China miracle*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lee, C. K. (2000). Pathways of labor insurgency. In E. Perry & M. Selden (Eds.), *Chinese society: Change, conflict, and resistance* (pp. 41–61). London/New York: Routledge.

Leggett, Karby. (1998). China's economic zones losing luster. *Wall Street Journal - Eastern Edition*. 232 (126):pA10 (12/29/98).

Li Danke. (2004). Gender inequality in education in rural China. In T. Jie, B. Zheng., & S. Mow (Eds.), *Holding up half the sky* (pp. 123–136). New York: Feminist Press.

Li Danke., & Mun C. Tsang. (2003, September). Household decisions and gender inequality in rural China. *China: An International Journal 1,2*, 224–248.

Li Limei., & Li Si-ming. (2010). The impact of variations in urban registration within cities. In M. K. Whyte (Ed.), *One country, two societies: Rural-urban inequality in contemporary China* (pp. 188–215). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Li Shi., & Luo Chuliang. (2010). Reestimating the income gap between urban and ruralhousehold in China. In M. K. Whyte (Ed.), *One country, two societies: Rural-urban inequality in contemporary China* (pp. 105–121). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Li Xiaojing. (1988). *Xiawu de Tansuo.* Zhengzhou: Henan People's Publishing House.

Liang Zai., & Zhongdong Ma. (2004). China's floating population: New evidence from the 2000 census. *Population and Development Review 30*(3), 467–488.

Lu, S. (2001). *China, transnational visuality, global postmodernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Ma Wanhua. (2004). The readjustment of China's higher education structure and women's higher education. In T. Jie, B. Zheng, & S. Mow (Eds.), *Holding up half the Sky* (pp. 109–122). New York: Feminist Press.

MacLeod, A. (1991). *Accommodating protest: Working women, the new veiling, and change in Cairo*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mani, L. (1987). Contentious traditions: The debate on sati in Colonial India. *Cultural Critique, 7*, 119–156.

Mann, S. (1997). *Precious records: Women in China's long eighteenth century*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Mason, J. (2002). Qualitative interviewing: Asking, listening, and interpreting. In T. May (Ed.), *Qualitative research in action* (pp. 224–241). London: Sage.

May, S. (2010). Bridging divides and breaking homes: Young women's lifecycle labour mobility as a family managerial strategy. *China Quarterly, 204*, 899–920.
Maynard, M., & Purvis, J. (Eds.). (1994). *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*. London: Taylor and Francis.
McDonald, P. (1994). Families in developing countries: Idealized morality and theories of family change. In L. J. Cho & M. Yoda (Eds.), *Tradition and change in the Asian family* (p. 2027). Honolulu: East-West Center.
Meng Yue., & Dai Jinhua. (1989). "Xingbie yu jingsheng xingbie—guanyu Zhongguo funu jiefang" *Fuchu lishi dibiao*. Zhengzhou: Henan People's Publishing House.
Mills, M. B. (1999). *Thai women and the global labor force: Consuming desires, contested selves*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
Mills, C. W. (2000). *The sociological imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Mills, M. B. (2001). Auditioning for the chorus line: Gender, rural youth, and the consumption of modernity in Thailand. In D. Hodgson (Ed.), *Gendered modernities: Ethnographic perspectives* (pp. 27–51). New York: Palgrave.
Milwertz, C. (1997). *Accepting population control: Urban Chinese women and the one-child family policy*. Richmond: Curazon.
Moore, H. (1994). A passion for difference bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Mu, R., & Dominique van de Walle. (2009, October). *Left behind to farm? Women's labor re-allocation in rural China* (Policy research working paper 5107). The World Bank, Development Research Group.
Murphy, R. (2002). *How migrant labor is changing rural China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Nandy, A. (2001). *An ambiguous journey to the city: The village and other odd ruins of the self in the Indian imagination*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Narayan, U. (1989). The project of feminist epistemology: Perspectives from a nonwestern feminist. In A. Jaggar & S. Bordo (Eds.), *Gender/body/knowledge: Reconstructions of being and knowing* (pp. 256–269). New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
Nelson, L. (2000). *Measured excess*. New York: Columbia University Press.
NPFPC (National Population and Family Planning Commission). (2009). *A Study of the gendered identity of female migrants in contemporary China*. Accessed at: http://www.npfpc.gov.cn/en/publications/pdetail.aspx?publicationsid=100427160253280893
O'Donnell, M. A. (1999). Path breaking: Constructing gendered nationalism in the Shenzhen special economic zone. *Positions, 7*(2), 343–375.
Oakes, T. (2000). China's market reforms: Whose human rights problem? In T. Weston & L. Jenson (Eds.), *China beyond the headlines* (pp. 295–326). Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
Ogasawara, Y. (1998). *Office ladies and salaried men: Power, gender and work in Japanese companies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Oi, J. (1989). *State and peasant in contemporary China*. Ithaca: University of California Press.
Olesen, V. (2005). Early millennial feminist qualitative research: Challenges and contours. In N. Densin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 276–278). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Ong, A. (1997). Chinese modernities: Narratives of nation and of capitalism. In A. Ong & D. Nonini (Eds.), *Ungrounded empires* (pp. 171–202). New York: Routledge.
Ong, A., & Peletz, M. (1995). Introduction. In A. Ong & M. Peletz (Eds.), *Bewitching women, pious men: Gender and body politics in Southeast Asia* (pp. 1–18). Berkeley: University of California Press.
Ong, A., & Zhang, L. (2008). Introduction: Privatizing China: Powers of the self, socialism from afar. In A. Ong & L. Zhang (Eds.), *Privatizing China* (pp. 1–19). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Park, J.-d. (1997). *The special economic zones of China and their impact on its economic development*. Westport: Praeger.
Peng Dajin. (2002–2003). Subregional economic zones and integration in East Asia. *Political Science Quarterly 117*(4), 613–641.
People's Daily. (2002). Women remain devoted to housework despite rising social status: Survey. Accessed online at: http://english.people.com.cn/200203/07/eng20020307_91651.shtml

Population Reference Bureau. (2002). *China's economic reforms likely to increase internal migration*. www.prb.org. Accessed 2 Sept 2005.
Poston, D. L., Jr., & Baochang, G. (1987). Socioeconomic development, family planning and fertility in China: A subregional analysis. *Demography, 24*(4), 531–551.
Potter, S. H. (1983). The position of peasants in modern China's social order. *Modern China, 9*(4), 465–499.
Potter, S., & Potter, J. (1990). *China's peasants: The anthropology of a revolution*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Prakash, G. (1999). *Another reason: Science and the imagination of modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Pun Ngai. (1999, July). Becoming dagongmei: The politics of identity and difference in reform China. *The China Journal 42*, 1–18.
Pun Ngai. (2005). *Made in China: Women factory workers in a global workforce.* Durham: Duke University Press.
Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Riley, N. E. (1994, November). Interwoven lives: Parents, marriage and Guanxi in China. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 56*(4), 791–803.
Riley, N. E. (2004). China's population: New trends and challenges. *Population Bulletin 59*(2). Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau.
Riley, N. E. (2011, November). *Creating and exhibiting modernity: The Dalian economic zone's exhibition hall*. Presented at spaces and flows conference. Monash Center, Prato, Italy.
Riskin, C., Renwei, Z., & Shi, L. (2001). Introduction– The retreat from equality: Highlights of the findings. In C. Riskin, R. Zhao, & S. Li (Eds.), *China's retreat from equality: Income distribution and economic transition* (pp. 3–22). Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.
Robinson, J. (1985, March). Of women and washing machines: Employment, housework and the reproduction of motherhood in socialist China. *China Quarterly, 101*, 32–57.
Rofel, L. (1997). Rethinking modernity: Space and factory discipline in China. In A. Gupta & J. Ferguson (Eds.), *Culture, power, place: Explorations in critical anthropology* (pp. 155–178). Durham: Duke University Press.
Rofel, L. (1999). *Other modernities: Gendered yearnings in China after socialism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Rosen, E. I. (2002). *Making sweatshops: The globalization of the US apparel industry*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Rowe, P., & Kuan, S. (2002). *Architectural encounters with essence and form in modern China*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Schein, L. (1997, January). Gender and internal orientalism in China. *Modern China, 23*(1), 69–99.
Schein, L. (1999, August). Performing modernity. *Cultural Anthropology, 14*(3), 361–396.
Schein, L. (2000). *Minority rules: The Miao and the feminine in China's cultural politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Schein, L. (2001). Urbanity, cosmopolitanism, consumption. In N. Chen et al. (Eds.), *China urban* (pp. 225–241). Durham: Duke University Press.
Scott, J. C. (1985). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Scott, J. (1990). *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Seidman, S. (1992). Postmodern social theory as narrative with moral intent. In S. Seidman & D. Wagner (Eds.), *Postmodernism and social theory* (pp. 47–81). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
Seymour, J. (1992). No time to call my own: Women's Time as a household resource. *Women's Studies International Forum, 15*(2), 187–192.
Shi Lihong. (2009, June). 'Little quilted vests to warm parents' hearts': Redefining the gendered practice of filial piety in rural North-eastern China. *China Quarterly 198*, 348–363.
Shi Lihong. (2011). The wife is the boss: Sex-ratio imbalance and young women's empowerment in rural Northeast China. In S. S Dan., & Y. C Chen (Eds.), *Women and gender in contemporary Chinese societies* (pp. 89–108). Lanham: Lexington Books.

Sicular, T., Ximing, Y., Gustafsson, B., & Shi, L. (2010). How large is China's rural-urban income gap? In M. K. Whyte (Ed.), *One country, two societies: Rural-urban inequality in contemporary China* (pp. 85–104). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sigley, G. (2009). Suzh, the body and the fortunes of technoscientific reasoning in contemporary China. *Positions, 17*(3), 538–566.

Singleton, R., & Straits, B. (2002). Survey interviewing. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 59–82). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Skeggs, B. (1994). Situating the production of feminist ethnography. In M. Maynard & J. Purvis (Eds.), *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective* (pp. 72–92). London: Taylor and Francis.

Smith, D. (1987). *The everyday world as problematic*. Boston: Northeastern Press.

Solinger, D. (1999). *Contesting citizenship in urban China: Peasant migrants, the state and the logic of the market*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Spivak, G. (1990). *The postcolonial critic*. New York: Routledge.

Stacey, J. (1983). *Patriarchy and socialist revolution in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stacey, J. (1988). Can there be a feminist ethnography? *Women's Studies International Forum, 11*, 21–27.

Sun Wanning. (2008). Just looking: domestic workers consumption practices and a latent geography of Beijing. *Gender, Place, and Culture 15*(5), 475–488.

Sun Wanning. (2009a). *Maid in China.* London/New York: Routledge.

Sun Wanning. (2009b). Suzhi on the move: Body, place and power. *Positions 17*(3), 617–642.

Tan, S. (2004). Leaving home and coming back: Experiences of rural migrant women. In J. Tao, B. J. Zheng, & S. Mow (Eds.), *Holding up half the Sky* (pp. 248–258). New York: Feminist Press.

Tan, L., & Short, S. (2004). Living as double outsiders: Migrant women's experiences of marriage in a county-level city. In A. Gaetano & T. Jacka (Eds.), *On the move* (pp. 151–174). New York: Columbia University Press.

Tang Xiaobing. (1996). New urban culture and the anxiety of everyday life in contemporary China. In X. B Tang., & S Snyder (Eds.), *In pursuit of contemporary East Asian culture* (pp. 107–122). Boulder: Westview Press.

Thogersen, S., & Ni, A. (2010). He is he and I am I: Individual and collective among China's elderly. In M. Hansen & R. Svarverud (Eds.), *IChina: The rise of the individual in modern Chinese society* (pp. 65–93). Copenhagen: NIAS Press.

Tong Xin., & Su Yihui. (2010). Gender segregation in the process of college student job seeking. *Chinese Education and Society 43*(5), 90–107.

Treas, J. (1991). The common pot or separate purses? A transaction cost interpretation. In R. Blumberg (Ed.), *Gender, family, and economy: The triple overlap* (pp. 211–224). Newbury Park: Sage.

Visser, R. (2010). *Cities surround the countryside*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Wang Fei-ling. (2005). *Organizing through division and exclusion: China Hukou System.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Wang Feng. (2007). Boundaries and categories: Rising inequality in post-socialist, Urban China. Stanford University Press.

Wang Feng. (2010). Boundaries of inequality: perceptions of distributive justice among urbanites, migrants, and peasants. In M. K. Whyte (Ed.), *One country, two societies: Rural-urban inequality in contemporary China* (pp. 219–240). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Wang Guodong. (2007a). *Cong MaQiao zi Chu Fa* [From Horse Bridge to Development]. Dalian: DongRuan Dianzi Chuban Shi.

Wang Guodong. (2007b). *Zai Xin Shiji ji Jueqi* [Arising into the New World]. Dalian: DongRuan Dianzi Chuban Shi.

Wang Hui. (1998, Summer). Contemporary Chinese thought and the question of modernity. *Social Text 55*, 9–44.

Wang Qingshu. (2004). The history and current status of Chinese women's participation in politics. In T. Jie, B. Zheng., & S. Mow (Eds.), *Holding up half the Sky* (pp. 92–106). New York: Feminist Press.

Warren, C. (2002). Qualitative interviewing. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 83–102). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Wei, Y., & Leung, C. (2005, Winter). Development zones, foreign investment, and global city formation in Shanghai. *Growth and Change, 36*(1), 16–40.
Weston, K. (1993, Fall). Do clothes make the woman? Gender, performance theory, and lesbian eroticism. *Genders, 17*, 1–21.
White, T. (2009). *China's longest campaign: Birth planning in the People's Republic, 1949-2005*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Whyte, M. K. (2010). The paradoxes of rural-urban inequality in contemporary China. In M. K. Whyte (Ed.), *One country, two societies: Rural-urban inequality in contemporary China* (pp. 1–25). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Whyte, M. K., & Gu, S. Z. (1987, September). Popular response to China's fertility transition. *Population and Development Review, 13*(3), 471–493.
Wolf, M. (1972). *Women and the family in rural Taiwan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Wolf, M. (1985). *Revolution postponed*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Wolf, D. (1992). *Factory daughters: Gender, household dynamics, and rural industrialization in Java*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Wolf, D. (Ed.). (1996). *Feminist Dilemmas in fieldwork*. Boulder: Westview.
Women's status improved but problems linger. (2001, October). *China Population Today 18*(5), 11–15.
World Bank. (2012). *Fertility rates*. Accessed at: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN. 24 May 2012.
Wu, W. (1999). *Pioneering economic reform in China's special economic zones*. Aldershot/Brookfield: Ashgate.
Wu Jieh-min. (2010). Rural migrant workers and China's differential citizenship: a comparative institutional analysis. In M. K. Whyte (Ed.), *One country, two societies: Rural–urban inequality in contemporary China* (pp. 55–81). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Yan Hairong. (2008). *New masters, new servants: Migration, development, and women workers in China.* Durham: Duke University Press.
Yan, Yunxiang. (2000). The politics of consumerism in Chinese Society. In: T. White (Ed.), China Briefing 1998–2000, pp. 159–193.
Yan, Yunxiang. (2003). *Private life under socialism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Yan Yunxiang. (2005). The Individual and Transformation of Bridewealth in Rural North China. *Journal of the Royal Anthropology Institute 11*(4): 637–657.
Yan, Yunxiang. (2006). Girl power: Young women and the waning of patriarchy in rural North China. *Ethnology, 45*(2), 105–123.
Yan, Yunxiang. (2009). Introduction: The rise of the Chinese individual. In Y. X. Yan (Ed.), *The individualization of Chinese Society* (London School of Economics monographs on social anthropology, Vol. 77, pp. xv–xl). Oxford: Berg.
Yan, Yunxiang. (2010). Introduction: Conflicting images of the individual and contested process of individualization. In M. Hansen & R. Svarverud (Eds.), *IChina: The rise of the individual in modern Chinese society* (pp. 1–38). Copenhagen: NIAS Press.
Yang, M. M.-h. (1994). *Gifts, favors, and banquets: The art of social relationships in China*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Yang, M. M.-h. (1999). From gender erasure to gender difference: State feminism, consumer sexuality, and women's public sphere in China. In M. F. Yang (Ed.), *Spaces of their own* (pp. 35–67). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Yao, S. (1999, August). Economic growth, income inequality and poverty in China under economic reforms. *Journal of Development Studies, 35*(6), 104–130.
Yip, W. (2010). Disparities in health care and health status: The rural-urban gap and beyond. In M. K. Whyte (Ed.), *One country, two societies: Rural-urban inequality in contemporary China* (pp. 147–165). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Young, M. (1989a). Chicken little in China: Women after the cultural revolution. In S. Kruks, R. Rapp, & M. Young (Eds.), *Promissory notes: Women in the transition to socialism* (pp. 233–247). New York: Monthly Review Press.

Young, M. (1989b). Virtuous wives and good mothers: Women in Chinese society. In C. I. Tu (Ed.), *Tradition and creativity: Essays on East Asian civilization* (pp. 20–40). New Brunswick: Transaction Books.

Zavella, P. (1996). Feminist insider dilemmas: Constructing ethnic identity with Chicana informants. In D. Wolf (Ed.), *Feminist Dilemmas in fieldwork* (pp. 138–159). Boulder: Westview.

Zeng Yi, Tu Ping, Gu Baochang, Xu Yi, Li Bohua., & Li Yongping. (1993). Causes and implications of the recent increase in the reported sex ratio in China. *Population and Development Review 19*(2), 283–302.

Zhang Hong. (2007). China's new rural daughters coming of age: Downsizing the family and diring up cash-earning power in the new economy. *Signs 32*(3), 671–698.

Zhang Yuping, Grace Kao., & Emily Hannum. (2007). Do mothers in rural China practice gender equality in educational aspirations for their children? *Comparative Education Review 51*(2), 131–157.

Zheng, T. (2007). Performing media-constructed images for first-class citizenship: Political struggles of rural migrant hostesses in Dalian. *Critical Asian Studies, 39*(1), 89–120.

Zheng, T. (2009). *Red lights: The lives of sex workers in postsocialist China*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Zhong, X. (2007). Who is a feminist? In D. Ko & Z. Wang (Eds.), *Translating feminisms in China* (pp. 215–246). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Zuo, J., & Bian, Y. (2001). Gendered resources, division of housework, and perceived fairness: A case in urban China. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63*, 1122–1133.

Zuo, J., & Bian, Y. (2005, Autumn). Beyond resources and patriarchy: Marital construction of family decision–making power in post–Mao urban China. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 36*(4), 601–622.

Index

N.E. Riley, *Gender, Work, and Family in a Chinese Economic Zone: Laboring in Paradise*, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5524-6, © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013