Transnationalizing Intersectionality:

Gender, Class and Heteronormativity in Neoliberal China

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation integrates humanities with social science methodologies within a critical framework, seeking to explore the relationship between the neoliberal restructuring and the intersection of gender, class and heteronormativity in contemporary China. In this project, neoliberalism is conceptualized as an art of governance centering on the intersection of race, gender, class and sexuality to create market subjects and sustain market competition. Focusing on China's recent socio-economic and cultural upheavals, this dissertation tries to address these questions: 1. How have class inequalities, binaristic gender and heteronormative discourses been employed intersectionally by the Chinese state to facilitate China's social transformation? 2. How has this process been justified and consolidated through the intersection of gender, class, sexuality and race? 3. How do the marginalized groups respond to these material and cultural practices? Building on the discursive analysis of China's televised 60th anniversary ceremony and *If You Are the One*, a popular Chinese reality show, as well as the data from the interview, focus group and participant observation of more than 100 informants, it is found that the intersection of gender, class and heteronormativity is central to China's neoliberal transition. A group of flexible and cheap laborers have been disarticulated and rearticulated from the population as the voluntary servitude to China's marketization and re-integration with the global economy. New controlling images, such as the bourgeois nucleus family, are created to legitimize this process. However, these disparate material and discursive practices have entailed contradictions and conflicts within the intersectional biopolitical system, and created contingent spaces of

ungovernability for the marginalized groups. Building on these discursive analyses and empirical data, I reconceptualize intersectionality as a multi-dimensional-and-directional network to regulate and manage power for social organization and regulation, which grounds the biopolitical basics for the neoliberal economy. Thus I argue that we need to engage with the dynamics between the intersectional biopolitical structure and people's emerging experiences to construct a grounded utopia alternative to the neoliberal dominance for substantive social changes.

DEDICATION

To my mother Yan Suhua, father Zhang Hongshu and my friend Ronald Shultz

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Chapter One

The Gendered, Classed and Sexual Prisms to Understand Contemporary China

Introduction

In 2008, in the wake of the neoliberal rule of deregulation, a financial crisis

exploded in the U.S. and soon escalated into worldwide economic meltdowns. Called

"Great Recession" by commentators,[1] the detriment of this crisis is only secondary to that

of Great Depression, and sees no ending in the industrialized world yet. The development

locomotives of capitalism have been noticeably stalled since then: while the U.S. is

struggling with the fluctuating figure of unemployment rate, the persistent weakening of

the Eurozone has impacted its core members, such as Germany and France, as the

International Monetary Fund (IMF) warns.[2] The decelerated growth, burst bubbles and

loss of jobs have exacerbated many people's quality of life to such an extent that it has

infringed upon their dignity as human beings—consequently, massive protests and

uprisings occur on a transnational scale, to name a few, the Occupy Wall Street

movement in the U.S., and the violent protests in the U.K. and Europe. Scholars have

been tracking and researching these grassroots movements to scale other dimensions of

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[1] For instance, see Wessel, D. (2010, April 8). Did Great Recession live up to name. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303591204575169693166352882.html

[2] Best-news.us. (2013, April 18). IMF warning: European economic crisis spread to the core countries such as Germany and France. Retrieved from http://www.best-news.us/news-4340794-IMF-warning:-European-economic-crisis-spread-to-the-core-countries-such-as-Germany-and-France.html

socialities and humanities alternative to the reigning global capitalism and neoliberalism. For instance, an indigenous movement in Australia as what Elizabeth Povinelli calls "late liberalism," refers to "the effects of anti-and postcolonial and new social movements on how difference is treated in liberal worlds" (2011, p.101). For another, as a consequence of the Great Recession and its Ponzi casino economy, the development of post-neoliberalism largely signals the failure of neoliberalism. As we can see, both a populist version (a la Hugo Chavez) and a social democratic version of post-neoliberalism are launched in Latin America, endeavoring to remediate the effects of neoliberalism and deepen democracy.

The People's Republic of China seemed an exception to this globalized crisis and its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 10.3 percent, reaching a record of over six trillion dollars in 2010. China's double-digit growth rate for nearly thirty years has been the world's envy.[3] For instance, in contrast to other areas devastated by the flight of capital unbridled by neoliberalism, only Shanghai, a coastal city in eastern China, has attracted twice as much foreign direct investment as India, another development powerhouse, each year (Chen, 2009). One glimpse will help us see the bigger picture, "at some point in the mid-1990s half of the world's cranes were working in the Pudong New Area…of Shanghai" (Chen, 2009, p. xvi). Different from the deeply troubled developed

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[3] From 1979 to 2004, the average growth rate is 9.6 percent. People.com.cn. (2001, January 9). *Zhong guo GDP shu ju xiu ding: 1979-2004 nian jun zeng zhang 9.6%.* (The adjusted GDP growth rate of China: the annual growth at 9.6 % from 1979 to 2004). Retrieved from http://finance.people.com.cn/GB/1037/4011263.html. From 2002 to 2012, this number rises to 10.6 percent. Xu, Y. (2012, June 25). *Shi nian lai wo guo GDP zeng zhang jin si bei nian jun zeng zhang lv 10.7 %* (The average annual growth rate reached 10.7 % in the past decade). Retrived from http://finance.qq.com/a/20120625/002394.htm

countries, the 2008 crisis only gave a brief pause to the fully charged Chinese economic

machinery. With the 586-billion-dollar worth stimulus package in 2009, the Wen Jiabao

administration reclaimed its confidence that the PRC would take the lead in the recovery

from the financial crisis.[4] In 2010, China leapfrogged Japan and gained on the U.S.,

becoming the second largest economy in the world.[5] By 2012, China had overtaken the

U.S. as the largest economy in international trade.[6] By contrast, the largest capital

sending country and economy, the U.S. has turned into a huge debtor matrix, closely

bounded with its major creditor China through the so-called "economic marriage." Sixty

years ago, "only Socialism can save China" from the combined exploitation by capitalism

and imperialism, as the Chinese Communists avowed. Ironically, many Westerners now

believe that "only China can save capitalism" from its impending bankruptcy, as we have

seen at the beginning.

The "exceptional" case of China is championed by some Western scholars as the

"Beijing Consensus" (BC) in its full distinction to the intellectual/pragmatic scaffold of

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[4] *8020rc.com*. (2009, January 2). *Zhong guo shuai xian zou chu wei ji shi zai bi ran*
(China will lead the recovery from the economic crisis). Retrieved from
http://www.8020rc.com/news/19/18746.html

[5] Li, Z. Z. & Wang, H. (2011, February 14). *Ri ben gong bu GDP shu ju bei zhong guo
gan chao ju shi jie di san* (Japan's released GDP data shows it has been overtaken by
China and regressed to the world No. 3). Retrieved from
http://finance.sina.com.cn/j/20110214/08519369574.shtml

[6] Shi, X. H. (2012, February 11). *Zhong guo chao guo mei guo cheng wei shi jie zui da
mao yi guo* (China surpasses the U.S. and becomes the world No. 1 in international trade).
Retrieved from http://world.people.com.cn/n/2013/0211/c57507-20479666.html

the global restructuring,[7] the "Washington Consensus" (WC). Though there is no

consensus over what the BC means, different from the laissez-faire market in the Western

societies, it is considered featured by the larger policy toolkit, more controlled resources,

and long-term planning by the state, as well as the higher allegiance of enterprises to the

government.[8] As the consequence of the 2008 crisis, a plethora of academic efforts are

directed at neoliberalism and its relationship to the Great Recession and the increasingly

authoritarian political ecology (see in Duménil & Lévy, 2011; Chomsky & McChesney,

2011). As many scholars maintain (see in Harvey, 2005; Stiglitz, 2003; Hardt & Negri,

2000; Sassen, 2007; Hardt, 2010), the current crisis takes it root in the dominant rule of

liberalization and globalization of sovereignties-economies as mandated by the WC. By

contrast, Joshua Cooper Ramo (2004) obliges China's bliss to the BC framework that has

configured a unique trajectory of development external to the global restructuring, thus

saving China from the rampant recession.[9] This stance is also endorsed by the Chinese

authority. In an editorial by *The People's Daily*, a major mouthpiece of the party-state,[10]

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[7] Ramo, J. C. (2004). The Beijing Consensus: Notes on the new physics of Chinese power. *The Foreign Policy Center*. Retrieved from http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/244.pdf

[8] Bennhold, K. (2011, January 28). What is the Beijing Consensus). *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/01/28/what-is-the-beijing-consensus/. This argument ignores the BC's similarity to the WC: the austere streamlining of the government structures, tightening of budget and the disruption of the public sectors undertaken by the state.

[9] Ramo, J. C. (2004). The Beijing Consensus: Notes on the new physics of Chinese power. *The Foreign Policy Center*. Retrieved from http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/244.pdf

[10] Ren, Q. & Xi, F. (2012, June 11). *Xin zi you zhu yi de shi zhi* (Unpacking the essence of neoliberalism). *The People's Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2012/07-11/4023108.shtml

the BC discourse is reiterated to validate the Chinese exceptionalism and reject the reality

that China's development is deeply embedded in the global restructuring, as Deng

Xiaoping's policies require. Lampooning the skyrocketing social inequalities and

antagonism in the Western societies, this piece, however, turns a blind eye to China's

own social problems, e.g. the massive insurrection and rebellion that show no signs of

halt, particularly after 2010.[11] Like the economic transformation, as I see it, these

grassroots resistances are part and parcel of the worldwide struggles with the

exacerbating economic injustice and social inequalities. Even the Chinese economy

proves not impervious to the global market: its growth decelerated to 7.8 % in 2012, and

would continue on the slack track in 2013, as forecast by the IMF.[12]

This analytic framework of the BC versus the WC is embedded in the widely

circulated approach to China's recent socio-economic transformation within academia,

which is polarized on the issue of Socialism/capitalism. In contrast to the Soviet Union

and Eastern Europe where the abrupt suspension of planned economy was accompanied

by the political overhaul, China's state-controlled marketization has given rise to heated

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[11] In September 2011, the conflicts between the people of Wukan, a village in south China shocked the world. To show their determination to fight with the embezzlement of the collective land property by the local officials, over 20,000 villagers elected their own government and organized the fight against the armed suppression by the police. Thereafter, several massive insurrections were kindled by the corrupted governments and enlarging class inequalities across China, from Zhongshan and Zengcheng in Guangdong Province to Zhili and Zhuji in Zhejiang Province, and then to Shifang in Sichuan Province, Qidong in Jiangsu province, which mobilized tens of thousands people to fight against the complicit control of the state and market.

[12] Orlik, T. (2013, May 29). IMF Forecasts Lower China Growth, Warns on Debt. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retried from
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323855804578512310920944442.html

debates over its politico-economic ontology. The dazzling speed and scale of capital

accumulation and development under the directive of the Communists not just arouses

envy from the Western politicians, but also poses a theoretical conundrum for many

Communist ideologues and bureaucrats that deem economic base to be the ultimate

engine of social development and political change. In response, Deng coined a

terminology, "Socialism with Chinese Characters,"[13] to sidestep this controversy. This

highfalutin yet confusing term is not so much the consolidation of jurisprudential *status*

quo of China as an attempt at harnessing the ideological legacy and legitimacy

foundation of the Socialist state to stabilize the economic transition. In the international

geostrategic arena, this binaristic framework attests to the residual Cold-War episteme

and new demand of finding another Communism deputy to strengthen the capitalist

solidarity, oblivious to the fact that the Chinese Communists are probably the most

staunch ally and savior of capitalism. In a speech delivered at the Occupy Wall Street

movement, Slavoj Žižek made this point clear, "If Communism means the system which

collapsed in 1990, remember that today those Communists are the most efficient ruthless

capitalists."[14] In this regard, it is not difficult to understand why both the BC and WC

frameworks have invited so much criticism, and many scholars call for attention to the

intertwined nature between China's marketization and Western countries' WC-guided

economic restructuring (see in Dirlik, 2006; Kennedy, 2010; Naughton, 2010).

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[13] As posited by Deng, the market is not the hallmark of capitalism, and Socialism can also rely on the market for the economic development. This ideology lays the foundation for the creation a Socialist market economy dominated by public sectors.

[14] Occupy Wall Street. (2011, October 9). Today Liberty Plaza had a visit from Slavoj Zizek. Retrieved from http://occupywallst.org/article/today-liberty-plaza-had-visit-slavoj-zizek/

Some other scholars, both from within and outside China, try to situate China's development in the global context to scrutinize the nuances and intricacies of its socio-economic upheavals through the lens of neoliberalism (see in Wang, 2003, 2009; Pun, 2005; Ong, 2006; Zhang & Ong, 2008; Rofel, 2007; Yan, 2003, 2008). As Wang (2003), Ong (2006) and Rofel (2007) argue, the party-state adopted and adapted neoliberalism as an exigent rationale to address the legitimacy crisis entailed by Mao's stringent "class struggle" policy in the late 1970s, in tandem with Margaret Thatcher's liberalizing reform in the U.K.,[15] and successfully avoided the drastic political tumult and reshuffling. The convergence between China's reform and neoliberal restructuring in the global context is not just chronological, but also epistemic. However, China's neoliberalization is distinguished in that different from the (liberal) Western democracies, the Communist Party still holds reign and monopoly over the Chinese society. As Zhang and Ong (2008) suggest, the key to China's socio-economic transition is the creation of proper subjects for the new social relationship organized through the market. However, their work has not revealed the specific mechanism through which these subjects are (re)created. In this project, building on Michel Foucault's concept of neoliberal governmentality, Daivd Harvey's notion of accumulation by dispossession and feminist scholarship of intersectionality, I conceptualize neoliberalism as an art of governance centering on the intersectional biopolitics of identities to create market subjects and market competition. Building on this framework, I want to explore the articulated relationship between

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[15] As other scholars point out, this was not a completely voluntary decision of the party-state, but a result of impoverished peasants' struggle to push their interests. See in Bernstein, T. P. (1999). Farmer discontent and regime responses. In M. Goldman and R. Macfarquhar (Ed.), *The paradox of China's post-Mao reforms* (pp. 197-219). Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

China's neoliberal transition and identities of gender, class and sexuality to see how

specific neoliberal subjectivities are (re)produced for China's social transformation. To

do so, a brief review of China's socio-economic transition since 1978 is needed to

elucidate this relationship.

China's Neoliberal Transition

China's neoliberal transition was initiated by Deng Xiaoping's pronouncement of

reform and opening up at the end of 1978. Though Deng is widely hailed as the major

architect of reform and opening up in China, China's transition was "heavily

experimental in nature rather than relying on a blueprint approach" (Huang. 2008, p. xv).

The reform first started in rural areas by replacing the collective economy of the People's

Commune with the family-based farming system. The unleashed productivity soon

yielded bountiful produces that peasants were allowed to sell in the market after turning

in the tax grain. Though this policy effectively narrowed the income gap between

urbanities and rural residents by raising the price of agricultural commodities through the

market, it was resisted by the disgruntled urban citizens troubled by the rising living

expenses (Naughton, 1995). The party-state was then compelled to launch reform in cities,

and special economic zones were first established in southern China in 1984 to

experiment with the market mechanism. In these specially zoned-out extra-sovereign

territories, tax break, favorable legal support (e.g. delegitimizing workers' union,

differential treatment of Chinese and foreign citizens) and cheap or even free supply of

land property were provided to attract transnational capital (Ong, 2006; Rofel, 2007). As

Mary Elizabeth Gallagher (2005) notes, the foreign sector served as a laboratory for

difficult and politically sensitive reforms, particularly those about state-owned enterprises.

Then the successful experiences of how to create and maintain the market for foreign

corporations and joint ventures were expanded on a wider scale. The success stories of

these companies reduced people's worry over the threat to the Socialist regime by the

reduction of public ownership, creating a buffering zone for further ideological

reformulation (Gallagher, 2005).

In the late 1980s, the reform in urban areas started with the so-called two-track

price system.[16] This price dichotomy not only created perfect conditions for rent seeking

of government officials, but also reproduced competing interest groups who had been

unified by the centralized Socialist economy.[17] As Wang (2003; 2009) suggests, in 1988,

tremendous inflation burst as a result of the lifted price control, leading to a large-scale

social mobilization that finally turned into the Tian'anmen Square movement—the first

massive uprising against neoliberalism, well predating the 1999 Seattle and 2000

Washington protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the IMF.

Thereafter, marketization was suspended for three years, and then resumed by Deng's

1992 southern tour. As Fulong Wu, Jiang Xu and Anthony Gar Yeh (2007) contend, the

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[16] As Wang states, the dual-price structure included state-plan prices that applied to means of production and market prices that applied to consumer items. See in Wang, H. (2009). *The end of the revolution: China and the limits of modernity*. London and New York: Verso.

[17] As Wang (2009) shows, a broad array of corrupt and underground activities were carried out by state cadres and official organs who could manipulate this system and economic reform for their own interests. Besides, workers, particularly urban workers suffered from inflation, and students were disgruntled about the corrupt Communist bureaucratic system. These were the major groups involved with 1989 Tian'anmen movement.

opening up of Pudong area in Shanghai in 1993 marked China's full-scale marketization and re-integration with the global economy.

Thereafter, China's socio-economic transition was deepened through privatization and deregulation in a wide swathe of public sectors as well as state abdication of welfare provisions. For instance, welfare for urban residents, such as education and medical care were largely relegated to the market (Li and Zhong, 2009). Accordingly, the budget spending on them kept dropping:

> [T]otal government health expenditures (excluding outlays for the government insurance program that covers government employees only) were still 0.8 percent of GDP in 1986, but declined to only 0.5 percent in 1993. Current outlays for education were still over 2 percent of GDP in 1985, but had declined to 1.66 percent in 1994 (Naughton, 1999, p. 38).

The Zhu Rongji administration (1997-2002) accelerated the reform by privatizing a number of non-performing state-owned enterprises (SOE), and fostering a housing market via a broad array of financial reforms in mortgage. Millions of workers, mostly women, were laid off and thrown into the misery of struggling and striving (Davin, 2004). At the same time, as the state retreated, the market edged in as the major allocator of housing. Land, "whose monetary value had been neglected since 1949, suddenly assumes a very important role in the overall Chinese economy" (Li, 1996, p. 3). Therefore, Zhu's policies sowed the seeds from which a gigantic housing bubble was later developed, though his successor Wen Jiabao reaped most of the criticisms. When Wen came into

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power in 2002, housing was chosen as the major growth pole of the Chinese economy (Wu, 2002). By the end of 2010, a bubble no smaller than the one at its acme in the U.S. in 2007 had been foisted on Chinese people as one of the new "Three Huge Mountains" (the other two are medical care and education), in contrast to imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism in pre-Socialist China.

China's entry into the WTO at the end of 2001 promoted its marketization and accession to the global order of capital to a new level. For instance, thereafter the term "Made in China" became popularized around the world with the remarkably increasing volume of export commodities.[18] Despite the overwhelmingly laudatory discourse of this deal in Chinese media, the party-state had to largely revise its traditional view of sovereignty, and make a number of concessions to gain the membership of the U.S.-controlled supranational neoliberal entity (Rofel, 2007). Thereafter, contrary to the triumphant story of the benefits of globalization, China demoted from the ranks of the most egalitarian societies, at least in terms of people's income in Mao's era, to one of the most unequal in the distribution of wealth and opportunity. For instance, the Gini coefficient—a measure of income inequality commonly used by economists and institutions from absolute equal 0 to absolute unequal 1—grew from around 0.23 in 1980 to 0.47 in 2005 according to China Statistical Yearbook, far above the internationally

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[18] Xiao, D. (2011, November 11). *Ru shi shi nian zhong guo jing ji jing li de shi da bian hua* (Ten changes of the Chinese economy ten years after China's entry into the WTO), *International Herald Leader*. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2011-12/11/c_122401910.htm

acknowledged alarm level of 0.40.[19] The result of a recent research shows that this

number reached 0.61 in 2012—a figure very rarely seen in other countries.[20] The gender

gap of income also enlarged. In 2010, urban women's income decreased to 67.3 percent

of that of men's from 77.5 in 1990. For rural women, this number witnessed a larger

reduction, from 79 percent in 1990 to 56 in 2010.[21]

China's economic reform has not only widened social inequalities, but also entailed

ideological crisis. As Wang (2003, 2009) notes, as early as the mid-1980s, a series of

debates over the nature of reform were carried out among intellectuals. The dispute and

debate between neoliberal scholars and New Leftists became a frequent scenario in

Chinese academia and media since then (Leonard, 2008).[22] As Harvey (2005) points out,

liberalization of economy in the U.S. proceeded upwardly as the intellectual

reformulation in major programs of economics funded by big corporations and private

funds preceded and trumpeted the economic restructuring. By contrast, China transitioned

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[19] China Statistical Yearbook. (n. d.) 1980-2005 *zhong guo ji ni xi shu bian hua qu shi* (The development of China's Gini-coefficient between 1980 and 2005). Retrieved from http://www.docin.com/p-284329851.html

[20] Beijing Times. (2012, December 10). *Bao gao cheng zhong guo jia ting ji ni xi shu da 0.61 shou ru cha ju shi suo shao jian* (Reports show that China's Gini-coefficient reaches 0.61, unparalleled in the world). Retrieved from http://business.sohu.com/20121210/n359957132.shtml

[21] China Daily. (2012, November 28). Income gap between the sexes widening. Retrieved from http://english.sina.com/china/2012/1127/531563.html

[22] New leftists are different from old leftists in that the former recognize the drastic tragedy entailed by Mao's practices of Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, and acknowledge the positive effects of the economic reform (see in Wang, 2003). In contrast, old leftists insist on Mao's trajectory and calls for the rejuvenation of Mao's policies.

from Socialism to neoliberalism in an opposite direction. As the architect of China's modernizing project, Deng had both iron fists and charisma to design and enforce the neoliberal policies, and popularize the neoliberal ideology in a pellucid way. For instance, he adroitly translated the Western discourses of neoliberal tenets into such brisk popular slogans as "focusing on the central task of economic construction" (market fundamentalism), "white cat, black cat, whichever catches mice is a good cat" (market pragmatism), and "the rich leads the poor, finally realizing the common prosperity" (rising water will lift all boats). In another instance, Deng talentedly animated China's pockets-and-bits experiments of neoliberalism by calling it "crossing the river by groping the stones." These ideologically inflected discourses have permeated Chinese people's vernacular languages and daily regimentation through repetitive citation, cross-referencing and performances by mass media. In my conversations with many workers, it was not uncommon to see that they would invoke these slogans to describe their daily life. Thus the Chinese neoliberal practices and ideology have been mutually strengthened in a self-referencing-and-fortifying matrix that begs a more sophisticated theoretical framework to reckon with. As the works of Ong (2006), Rofel (2007) and Yan (2003) indicate, Michel Foucault's concepts of governmentality would be useful for the case of China. Foucault's challenge of the reified understanding of the political system and economy is especially helpful to unpack China's Communist-directed marketization.

The Foucauldian Concept of Neoliberal Governmentality

In *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008), Foucault explicitly critiqued the transcendental narrative about the predetermined progress of human societies, particularly Marxist

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historical materialism that sees economic base as the ultimate engine of social development. Aligning himself with the critical camp of philosophy blazed by the scholars like Hegel, Nietzsche, Weber and Frankfurt School scholars, Foucault argues that rather than striving for a categorical understanding of Truth, philosophy should primarily center on "an ontology of the present"—engaging with the contingencies and specificities of the moment we are currently inhabiting to see what we can learn and do (2011). As he suggests, instead of using the logic of capital as *a priori* for a deductive explanation of capitalism, we need to see how capital is deployed, directed and reproduced to constitute and sustain our current system and conditions that *happen to be called "capitalism"* (Foucault, 2008).

Building on this vantage point, Foucault (2008) contends that neoliberalism is not another stage of capitalism, but rather a type of governmentality, or an art of governance with a self-coherent agenda to organize, regulate and manage societies. As he sees it, governmentality is the reasoned way of governing best, the calculation of governing practices to maximize economic and political profits for societies. An independent domain of practice, governmentality is in a dialectic relationship with state, which is both the object and product of specific governing practices. Guided by no transcendental rules, governmentality is historically contingent and exigently malleable and there is no definitive boundary between different types of governmentality (Ong, 2006). Foucault further clarifies governmentality as "the techniques and procedures by which one sets about conducting the conduct of others" (2011, p. 4), or "an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future" (1982, p. 789).

In other words, to govern is "to structure the possible field of action of others" (1982, p. 790). On this account, there would be a plethora of governing subjects other than state/government as the only entity that "governs."

As Foucault (2008) notes, liberalism is a type of governmentality that first took form in the mid-18th century—the ascending era of capitalist economy. Under this logic, governance needs to be well balanced—"not too much, not too little"—to sustain a self-organized free market. It is also Euro-centric because with a premise of the "perpetual development of Europe," it is meant to regulate the "zero sum" rivalry between European states so the competition won't result in drastic collision and even wars. It lays the cognitive foundation for the contemporary neoliberal script of globalization that deems non-EuroAmerican areas the exploitable market and source of labor and raw materials. In contrast to the liberal governance that presumes a naturalistic, autarkic and free market, neoliberalism is new in that it posits an interventionist role for multifarious governing entities to create, maintain and promote market competition (Brown, 2005).

Foucault (2008) also criticizes Marx's inattention to laborers as corporeal beings. As Foucault puts it, the theoretical difficulty of Marxism lies in its discussion of labor as the abstracted medium for value production and extraction. Contrarily, Foucault dexterously extends the analytical scope of labor beyond the domain of production, situates the issue of labor in the larger framework of politico-economic regimentation, and approaches labor as laborers with corporeal substance as the central target of governance. Human body and its sum total, the population entered "the order of knowledge and power, into the sphere of political technique" in Europe in the 17th

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century (Foucault, 1990, p. 142). An agent of transformation of human life, this knowledge-power termed by Foucault as "bio-power" is "without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism" (1990, p. 141). In this regard, well-calculated mechanisms and technologies to prepare and structure human beings for the market relationship is pivotal to neoliberal governmentality as its *raison d'être*. As Foucault (2008) says, at the core of neoliberal governmentality is the creation and engineering of what neoclassic economists call "*Homo Economicus*"—a rational and self-reliant human being à la enterprising subject directed by the maximization of personal interests and self-preservation through market competition. The administration of bodies and calculated management of life thus become the central tenet of neoliberal governing agenda as what he calls "biopolitics" (1990). The disciplines of bodies and the regulations of population constitute the two poles of biopolitics. Scientific, medical, legal, and cultural discourses as well as institutionalized systems were created to study, differentiate, stratify, hierarchize and engineer human beings as "population" to better govern the society. To name a few, clinic, asylum, prison and sexuality are the social system instituted under the aegis of biopolitics.

In *The History of Sexuality Volume One* (1990), Foucault demonstrates how the development of burgeoning capitalistic economy in Europe from the 18th to 19th century was made possible through the regulation and adjustment of bodies and population by controlling and normalizing the spectrums of sexual possibilities. As he illustrates, all sexualities (particularly homosexuality) except for that between heterosexual couples were delegitimized to normalize heterosexuality as the only acceptable social rule, which

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could guarantee the reproduction and supply of more capable subjects for capitalist economy and market competition (Foucault, 1990). This argument is instrumental to the understanding of sexuality as a conduit for China's socio-economic transition in the reform era, when it is constructed a new category (rather than activity) to classify and regulate the Chinese population.

As China moved away from Socialism, it turned to the "Asian model" of development in the late 1970s (Goldman & Macfarquhar, 1999), whereby market, labor and capital accumulation are under the strict control by the state (Ong, 1999). As two contingent variations of neoliberal governmentality, the difference between the Western and the Asian model is pragmatic rather than teleological—to liberalize the economy by an unleashed market penetrating other social domains or state-regulated capital accumulation and calculated marketization of public sectors (Stiglitz, 2003; Cheah, 2007). In China's case, as Zhang & Ong (2008) suggest, as the Socialist politico-ideological foundation of the state still persists, the key to China's neoliberal transition is the creation and regulation of new subjects for the market relation.

It is interesting to note that in tandem with the twin pillars of reform and opening-up, was Deng's pronouncement of Planned Family in 1978. Actually, the biopolitical management of population is not new in China. In the 1950s, the government took a pronatalist position to sustain the supply of labor for Socialist construction. Though the birth control started in some cities in 1960, it was "during the decade of the 1970s when, as a result of both explicit government birth control campaigns and altered definitions of ideal family size, China's total fertility rate fell from 5.8 in 1970 to 2.7 in 1978" (Davis &

Harrell, 1993, p. 14). As a biopolitical governing technology, Planned Family is not simply about the control of population growth, but also the regulation of its quality in relation to the calculated economic growth. As Article 25 of the 1982 Constitution amendments stipulate, "the state implements the birth control to manage the population in accordance with the economic development."

In the early 1990s, China's accelerated marketization witnessed another interesting phenomenon—the proliferation of the Western discourse of homosexuality (Rofel, 2007). As a label to categorize human differences rather describing a type of human behavior, this cultural shift did not mark the beginning of Chinese homosexualities, nor did it increase same-sex intimacies and encounters that had already left behind a history of thousands of years. It brackets off the people who are so labeled from the society with a perpetual imprint of derogatory meanings. Though the proliferation of this discourse was to a great extent related to the state concern about the spread of HIV, the construction of sexuality as an identity in the context of China's marketization and globalization highly reverberated with Foucault's descriptions of sexuality and Europe in its burgeoning era of capitalism. His theorization alerts us to the convoluted relationship between sexuality, economics and political regime in contemporary China notwithstanding, the contextual complexity and historical singularity of China's neoliberalization beg closer scrutinization. Focusing on the formation and reformation of my own sexual identity with China's socio-economic transition, I will further elaborate on this relationship later in this chapter.

Identity-Induced Accumulation by Dispossession

Except for sexuality, Foucault leaves a theoretical lacuna by under-discussing how race, gender and other identity categories also underpin biopolitics as its basic parameters to govern human beings (Stoler 1995). Contradictory to the neoliberal ideology that embraces a free market, labor market is actually segmented through race, gender, and class in its spatio-temporal deployment (Harvey, 2005). As Margaret Somers (2008) astutely points out, the essence of market is that unequal subjects are transacting equal values through an exchange relationship. In this sense, such categories of embodiment as race, gender and class constitute the fundamental dimensions of biopolitics for its exercising and functioning (Giroux, 2004, 2008). As Martin Manalansan (2003) indicates, heteronormativity is also a significant caliber to organize the transnational labor migration and movement in the context of globalization. The unequally structured labor market through identity categories, however, is often glossed over by a euphoric rhetoric of "global division of labor" to garner the comparative advantages of different countries to maximize the benefits of capital.

Feminism and critical race theories prove instrumental to dismantle the gendered and racialized logic of labor division (Mohanty 2003; Davis 2005). Though neoliberal globalization has been polarizing and splintering class relations across the world, other scholars emphasize that this proletarianizing process is also racialized and gendered, unequally impacting the life of people of color (Winant, 2004), and women (Mies, 1999). For instance, feminist scholars have been striving to unpack the deleterious effects of globalization from women's experience. As Sassen (2007) notes, the first two generations

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of feminist scholarship of globalization has documented women's encounter with globalization, and globalization's negative effects on women (see in Hawkesworth, 2006; Naples & Desai 2002; Bayes et. al. 2001). Other scholars, however, call for a more nuanced framework to dislodge the relationship between globalization and gender. As Haleh Afsha and Stephanie Barrientos (1999) contend, women are not merely victims of globalization, but sometimes players involved in this process. Rather than a unified and homogenizing project, globalization is multi-faceted, both excluding and including different groups of women. In the case of China, through her years-long ethnographic work of an export-processing factory, Pun Ngai argues that "[t]he biopower of the factory machine is not only interested in molding a general [proletarian] body but also a particular sexed body, a feminine body to fit the factory discipline" (2005, p. 136). Though these scholars seek to configure a more complex understanding of gender and globalization, gender still equals "women" in this approach (Scott, 1986). As an analytical category of globalization, gender analysis needs to be broadened to unpack how globalization is enabled and enacted through the gendered biopolitical governance targeting both men and women. Likewise, we also need to investigate how neoliberal globalization is proceeding *thorough* other biopolitical categories, such as race, class and sexuality.

David Harvey's concept of "accumulation by dispossession" (2003) proffers a useful instrument to rethink the relationship between neoliberalism, corporation globalization and identity categories. As Harvey (1982) sees it, the root of neoliberal globalization is the overaccumulation of capital—the saturated market and shrinking

demand vis-à-vis over produced commodities—which left little space for capital reproduction in the industrialized countries in the late 1970s. Besides over-consumption (see in Baudrillard, 1998; Jameson, 1984), another outlet to the overaccumulated capital is what Harvey calls "accumulation by dispossession"—"to release a set of assets (including labor power) at very low (and in some instances zero) cost" (2003, p. 149), particularly in non-Western countries. The overaccumulated capital can seize hold of such assets and turn them into profitable use. Though accumulation by dispossession takes place in various and contingent forms, such extra-market systems/cultures as "kinship structures, familial and household arrangements, gender and authority relations" definitely play an important role (2003, p. 146). As Mies (1999) shows, the migrating capital keeps looking for young and healthy women around the globe with the nimble and swift fingers for cheap manufacturing jobs. In Africa, the reconstitution of the gender relationship is said to be fundamental to facilitate this process—men need to undertake more housework so their wives can take more jobs outside home (Marchand & Runyan, 2010). Harvey thus contextualizes and historicizes the linkage between identity categories like gender and neoliberal global restructuring. However, in his introductory work to neoliberalism (2005), focusing on the negative effects of marketization on women and people of color, he fails to explore the specific mechanism of how capital is reproduced through these categories as conduits, leaving room for further discussion.

Like Foucault, Harvey also critiques the narrative of lineal social progression. As he opines, accumulation by dispossession is not the "primitive" or "original" stage of capitalism as Marx posits, but central to the whole process of capitalist development. It is

not exclusive to capitalist societies, either. Socialist/Communist states also used it to fulfill "the equivalent of primitive accumulation [of capitalism] in order to implement programs of modernization" (2003, p. 165). As he writes,

> "The recognition that primitive accumulation may be a necessary precursor to more positive changes raises the whole question of the politics of dispossession under Socialism. It was, within the Marxist/Communist revolutionary tradition, often deemed necessary to organize the equivalent of primitive accumulation in order to implement programs of modernization in those countries that had not gone through the initiation into capitalist development. This sometimes meant similar levels of appalling violence, as with the forced collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union, and in China and eastern Europe" (2003, p. 165).

As can be seen from the above quote, Harvey's theorization is not just instrumental to clarify the relationship between identity categories and neoliberal globalization, but also foregrounds the contingency and exigency of governmentality—as state-sponsored biopolitics could apply to different political systems. This elucidation is particularly significant to the case of China as it disrupts the myth of biopolitics as "only applicable to capitalism." In other words, biopolitics by the party-state would be the central site of inquiry to investigate China's transition from Socialism to neoliberalism in my work. On this account, a historicized review of the biopolitical control of Chinese population by the Maoist regime is required for the further query of China's neoliberalization.

During Mao's reign (1949-1976), the state-imposed class hierarchy was designed

for the centralized economy and Socialist ideology. Building on the Stalinist model, the

economic system prioritized industry over agriculture because the party-state believed

industrialization was *sine quo none* to the building of Communism. Like the former

Soviet Union, industrialization highly conflated with urbanization in China since 1949

(Zhang, 2004), supported by the supply of subsistence and raw materials from rural areas.

Then the generated profits were redistributed to rural areas. Dorothy J. Solinger calls this

economic system "circular resource allocation system" (1999, p. 222). At the center of

this system was the Communist bureaucracy that worked vertically to direct the flow of

resources between different sectors and areas.

Different from the Soviet Union, China's major problem, however, was its

oversupply of laborers (Oakley, 2002). To maintain the social stability, the party-state

created a registration system called *Hukou* in 1953 to prevent migration into urban areas.

In this system, people are dichotomized into urban/rural resident based on the place of

birth. It was not put into practice until 1958 when Mao's Great Leap Forward policy

ended up with the disaster of famine and millions of hunger-stricken people endeavored

to escape to cities for survival (Whyte, 2010). Through the systems of state-controlled

food rationing, housing, education and medical care, migration from rural areas into cities

was almost impossible in Maoist China. As Cheng Li shows, "the annual interstate rate of

moving in the United States is 4 percent. But in China, the annual cross-province

movement rate was as low as 0.12 percent in the 1980s" (1997, p.130). As Fei-ling Wang,

a long-time observer and expert of China's *Hukou* system, contends, "it undoubtedly

creates and perpetuates some of the most rigid and unfair sociopolitical and economic discrimination and injustice in the world through administratively excluding the majority of the Chinese people from vibrant and prosperous urban centers" (2010, p. 336). As a system of "internal colonization" (Solinger, 1999), *Hukou* efficaciously helped organize the flow of resources and wealth under the directive of the state by classifying and hierarchizing Chinese population into different strata.

As a result, this state-imposed registration system created a huge class gap between urban/rural residents. The former enjoyed lots of welfare benefits, such as free housing, medical care and education, while the latter almost had none (Solinger, 1995, p. 126). It also created big internal inequalities within working class, between urban state-employed, collective enterprise employees, and rural temporary workers (Whyte, 1999). Moreover, to facilitate the collectivization of economy and shore up the revolutionary promise, "[a]ll Chinese families were classified in the early 1950s into class-origin categories based on their economic standing, property, participation in labor, and other characteristics before 1949 (Whyte, 2010, p. 6). Thus "the class order in China…is clearly a function of governmental policy" (Solinger, 1995, p. 126).

Gender was another governing technology to organize Socialist economy and construct Socialist ideology. On the economic level, like many Eastern European countries (True, 2003), the party-state integrated women into public labor *en mass* to eradicate the bourgeois root of gender inequality, which effectively involved numerous women in the social production. On the policy level, the marriage system was reformed to grant women more agencies about their choice of husbands (Croll, 1983; Yan, 2003).

On the ideological level, the party-state crafted such masculinized images as "Iron Girls" and "The Red Detachment of Women" (Yan, 2008) to show that women were now "equal" to men, as the state's Socialist imprint in its distinction to Western capitalism. As Dai Jinhua (2009) avers, these liberated Chinese women, however, are defined by revolutionary male norms. Even the generic rubric "women" was a Maoist ideological product (Barlow, 1994). Regardless of these state initiatives and policies, gender inequality persisted through the intact patriarchal relations that were never undermined in Mao's era (Stacey, 1983; Andors, 1983; Wolf, 1985; Yan, 2003). Patriarchy was upheld by the patrilocal system sedimented from the feudalist tradition in which married women had to relocate to live with their husbands. Moreover, sexual division of work was still common in both public and private sectors. Overall, women had to take the "double burden" of working both outside and inside home (Hoing & Hershatter, 1988).

What is often ignored in the above analyses, however, is the fact that as two seemingly paralleled systems, class and gender actually intersected with each other for the social control in Maoist China. On the one hand, class stratification was perpetuated through gender difference: the state assigned class status was inherited through the male line, while residential status would pass to the children through their mother (Whyte, 2010). Meanwhile, in its intersection with gender, the residence-based class hierarchy further complicated the effects on Chinese citizens. For instance, in urban state-owned enterprises that enjoyed the most welfare benefits, men greatly outnumbered women; in contrast, the gender ratio was more balanced in urban collective enterprises with much less benefits (Davin, 2004). Even within state-owned enterprises, women did not have

equal access to state-provided welfare, such as free housing, as their male counterparts (Davin, 2004). On this account, it is evident that class and gender were employed by the party-state as the intersectional governing technologies to organize the Maoist politic-economic apparatus, which has been greatly under-discussed by sinologists. Feminism of color provides me the much-needed tool to interrogate the overlapping relationship between gender and class.

Feminist of Color Scholarship on Intersectionality

Feminist of color scholarship of intersectionality has contributed significantly to the discussion of biopolitics by revealing the co-constituting relationship between categories. As the most important contribution feminism makes to academia so far, the concept of intersectionality is formulated through the politics of difference that is largely indebted to U.S. women of color and Third World women (Sandoval, 2000). As the consciousness deriving from the daily struggle with social domination, intersectionality takes its intellectual root in the contradictory experiences between the subjectivities of women of color and the social norm of identities (Brown, 1992). For example, as a poor black woman subject to racial segregation and economic hardship plus sexist discrimination, Sojourner Truth's claim "Ain't I A Woman" shows how she was excluded from the normative discourse of (white) womanhood for her blackness and class status (Brah & Phoenix, 2004). In her piece under the same title, bell hooks (1981) challenges the racist foundation of women's second wave movement, and calls into question the universal rubric of "women." Also, in what she calls "hegemonic feminist theory," Gayatri Spivak (1985) criticizes the homogeneity of women's experience

encapsulated in white middle class women that tenaciously reproduces "the axiom of imperialism." As the examples of the consciousness of "outsider within" (Collins, 2000) and "la mestiza" (Anzadula, 1999) indicate, the contradiction between women of color's experiences and normative identities is the quintessential intellectual quarry of the intersectionality scholarship.

Intersectionality unveils the fluidity and contingency of identity categories, and the overlapping social structures of inequalities and power. This consciousness can be traced back to the first wave of black feminism in the late nineteenth century. As Sojournor Truth's earlier example indicates, African American women are acutely aware of how different forms of subjugation overlap with each other to shape their daily reality. Using the metaphor "intersectionality," Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) first popularizes this concept and describes how the "gray area" has been built in anti-discrimination laws through the interstices between race and gender. As she illustrates, when both categories meet, intersection happens—the laws would not cover the specific issue of black women. The additive approach—"add and stir"—therefore does not apply to black females, whose experience is qualitatively different from that of black males or white females. In this regard, it reveals how identity categories are manipulated by hegemonic forces as discrete and fixed, entailing an "Oppression Olympics" among subjugated groups and silencing the discussion of intra-group differences (Shields, 2008). Furthermore, it shows that "subjectivity is constituted by mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, class, and sexuality" (Nash, 2008), opening up a multiple-axis analytical framework to scrutinize

the multi-layered, interlocked social realities, as what Patricia Hill Collins (2000) calls "matrix of domination."

As a concept rooted in women of color, particularly African American women's lived experiences, intersectionality relies on race and gender as the two commonly-employed analytical pillars. As many scholars have been trying to elucidate, race and gender are not separate or paralleled but co-constitute and reinforce each other to uphold the social system of hierarchy (see in Eng, 2001; Brown, 1996; Williams, 1996; Rockquemore, 2002; García-López & Segura, 2008; Glenn, 1999, 2002; Kitch, 2009; Collins, 2000; Alcoff, 2005; Smith, 1999; McClintock, 1995). Naturalized as the corporeal basics of human body, race and gender provide the analytical leverage for the early intersectionality scholarship.

Besides race and gender, class is also approached as a cultural category which could spawn discursive effects on the body rather than index of economic status. In this regard, scholars try to investigate the intersectional relationship between class, gender and/or race to see how these different parameters constitute the social system that impacts different marginalized groups (see in Bettie, 2006; Adair, 2001; Steedman, 2006; Pascoe, 2007; Mann, 2007). As can be seen, race, gender, and class have become the paradigmatic triad for feminist studies in particular and critical studies in general. The intersectional analysis of race, gender and class has informed new perspectives of analysis of culture, society and human beings (see in McClintock, 1995; Bettie, 2002; Acker, 2006).

Informed by the concept of intersectionality, other identity categories have also been incorporated into the investigation of the social hierarchy through a multi-axis perspective. To name a few, these categories include but are not limited to sexuality (see in Halberstam, 1998; Collins, 2004; Pascoe, 2007; Somerville, 2000; Ferguson, 2004; Eng, 2010; Puar, 2007; Duggan, 2003; Briggs, 2002), nationality (see in Ramirez, 2007; McClintock, 1991; Grewal, 2003; Kauanui, 2008; Smith, 2005), able-bodiness (see in Garland-Thomson, 1997, 2000; Felstiner, 2007; Soldatic & Fiske, 2009), and citizenship (see in Ong, 1996, 1999; Glenn, 2002; Hart, 2006; Smith & Marmo, 2011; Yuval-Davis, Anthias & Kofman, 2005; Nuys, 2002; Ngai, 1999; Lee, 2010).

Though intersectionality is often applied to certain multiply oppressed groups, such as African American women (Nash, 2008), other scholars use it as a lens to investigate the social structure of inequalities (see in Kitch, 2009; Somerville, 2000; McClintock, 1995; Glenn, 2002; Collins, 2000, 2004; Ferguson, 2004). As Collins (2000) states, identity categories intersect with each other to create a social structure of inequalities and power as what she calls the "matrix of domination." In this regard, this concept would be useful for me to construct a new perspective to probe how different categories overlap with each other to constitute the intertwined social systems as the basis structure of biopolitics for the control and regulation of human bodies and population (Spade, 2013).

Moreover, though widely accepted as the most important contribution that academic feminism has made (McCall, 2005), intersectionality has also invited a plethora of critiques. The contestation between intersectionality and transnational feminism, two dominant intellectual rubrics in women, gender and sexuality studies, is worth

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mentioning here. As Tomlinson (2013) notes, one critique of intersectionality tries to replace it with transnational feminism as the renewed and most-up-to-date framework for the feminist inquiries. As I argue in the dissertation, intersectionality and transnationalism are not mutually exclusive with each other. Building the case of China as an example, I will demonstrate that intersectionality is particularly valuable in the context of neoliberal globalization in that "capital as it functions now depends on and exacerbates racist, patriarchal, and heterosexist relations of rule" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 231). In the conclusion, I will get back to the major critiques of intersectionality and try to reconceptualize it for the analysis of neoliberalism in a transnational context.

The Theoretical Frame and Central Thesis

Through a synergistic reading of Foucault's concept of neoliberal governmentality, Daivd Harvey's notion of accumulation by dispossession and feminist scholarship of intersectionality, I thus conceptualize neoliberalism as an art of governance centering on the intersectional biopolitics of identities to create market subjects and market competition. From this vantage point, I want to explore the articulated relationship between China's neoliberal transition and identities of gender, class and sexuality. Using China as a case example, I hope to reveal the identity-based mechanism through which neoliberalism as a type of governmentality is practiced and enacted. As feminist scholarship of intersectionality suggests, as identity categories are all historically and contextually constructed rather than static and fixed, this structure is highly mutable and contingent, and may vary in forms and dimensions in different time and place. For instance, "ethnicity" has disparate meanings at different historical moments and in

different regions in China. (Honig, 1992). In this regard, rather than reiterating the grand narrative that sees neoliberal globalization as a unified and homogenizing project, I hope to conceptualize a more complex and contextualized framework to understand China's neoliberalization through the variable contours of the intersection of identity categories.

Moreover, to fully understand how neoliberal governmentality functions, as Foucault (2011, 2012) suggests, we also need to scrutinize the formation of different forms of discourses and the constitution of the subject's mode of being via these discourses. Simply put, the discursive production provides an important domain to examine how these normalizing technologies are articulated with social institutions to delimit and differentiate possibilities of actions for different groups, and people's subjectivization by these discourses are important instances of disciplinary technologies of self-regulation and individualization, which motivate and direct people to realize these possibilities by internalizing the scripted ways of being. Instead of taking a reductive approach to neoliberal globalization and assuming a concomitant universal resistance (see in Hardt, 2010), I want to engage with the lived reality of how peripheral groups internalize, negotiate and resist the neoliberal governing logic, and then construct a contingent space for social change. If Chandra Mohanty (2003) is right about neoliberal globalization as commonly but differently impacting people across the world, this work would be necessary for us to orchestrate a common ground for further inquiries and activist efforts. In this regard, I hope my project contributes to a materially and culturally integrative framework to address the issues of economic injustice and cultural recognition of identities. I also want to respond to the critique of feminist scholarship of

intersectionality, and reconceptualize it as a metaphor (rather than a one-fits-all framework of solutions to all social problems about identities) to analyze the dynamics between the identity-based social structure and people's emerging experiences for a transnational context to challenge the dominion and hegemony of neoliberalism. Moreover, I would seek to engage with the big questions that have widely been discussed across (inter)disciplines through a feminist lens, and make the voice of feminism resound louder and wider within academia.

Similar to many feminist efforts, this project is informed by my experiences as a transnational subject constituted by the gendered, classed, sexualized and racialized biopolitics. Building on self-reflexivity as a feminist method, the situated interrogation of my own categorized experiences will help me develop the theoretical discussions of neoliberalism and identities into concrete research questions.

Feminist Reflexivity

Since its institutionalization in the 1970s, academic feminism has distinguished itself from other traditional disciplines for its persistent challenging of neutrality and objectivity as the so-called foundation of scientific knowledge. As a result, it is widely accepted that far from neutral and objective, knowledge production is sexually based (Grosz, 1993), socially situated (Haraway, 2003), inflected by pre-constituted standpoint (Harding, 1993, 2006, 2007), and laden with power dynamics (Butler 2004; Gannon & Davies, 2007). In this regard, feminist scholars contend that lived experience is an important site for novel knowledge production. Among them, Gloria Anzaldúa proffers a

good example. In her classic work *La Borderlands* (1990), Anzaldúa invokes her experiences of multiply indexed identities to produce a transgressive understanding of the system of inequalities and an inclusive consciousness of social justice for all subjugated groups. With the poetic descriptions of her various moments of crossing the physical and psychological borders that straddle the U.S./Mexico boundary and various identities, Anzaldúa carefully mellows these experiences into a border socio-historical picture of the struggles of Chicano/a. As she demonstrates, only by transgressing these socially imposed external and internal borderlands and actively negotiating with the contradictions emanating from the competing material and ideological forces of colonialism, militarism, sexism, racism and homophobia, can she (and other Chicanas as well) develop a transformative consciousness to build solidarity among all peripheral groups.

Feminist scholars have also designed specific methods to mobilize lived experiences for new knowledge. For instance, Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith Cook (1991) identify reflexivity as an important feminist method for this purpose, which requires intensive critical engagement with researchers' own values, beliefs, and perspectives, as "a potentially transformative process for researchers, participants, and the larger community of knowledge builders" (Hesse-Biber & Brooks 2007, p. 422). Reflexivity has been widely employed in dissertations produced by women and gender studies majors (Fonow & Kitch 2012). However, as Joan Scott (1986) argues, personal experience could not be simplified as a natural foundation of knowledge because it is also socially and culturally embedded. On this account, using reflexivity in a static,

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dehistoricized and decontextualized way, most of these efforts fail in their feminist claim

of transforming knowledge production (Fonow & Kitch, 2012). As Jacqueline Martinez

(2006) holds, rather than approaching reflexivity as a temporally and spatially indexed

process of inquiry, these scholars use it as a catch phrase to reinforce their established

perspective as the unconscious vantage point, failing to bring their emerging lived

experiences into a sustained dialogue with the changing socio-cultural contexts that

continuously reshape their experiences. By re-inscribing the preexisting cultural

presumption and standpoint, this approach also fails to grapple with the underlying

structure of power for new knowledge production.

In response to these critiques, I use semiotic phenomenology as a feminist method

to perform organic and embedded self-reflections to further the understanding of the

intertwined relationship between China's socio-economic reform, the ongoing project of

globalization and the interfaces of identity categories that vary with these processes. As

defined by Richard Lanigan (2009), semiotic phenomenology is a method "in which the

expressive body discloses cultural codes, and cultural codes shape the perceptive body—

an ongoing, dialectical, complex helix of twists and turns constituting the reflectivity,

reversibility, and reflexivity of consciousness and experience." Simply put, it centers on

the reflection of culturally indexed bodily experience to generate a sustained dialogue

between our emerging experiences and the shifting socio-cultural norms. As Martinez

suggests, among variable philosophical trajectories of phenomenology, semiotic

phenomenology posits a goal to "explicate the structural (semiotic) constraints that limit

and enable human conscious awareness and the experiences created by virtue of being

persons located in time, place, and culture" (2006, p. 297). In other words, it enables a

reflexive framework for a synchronic analysis of our situated bodily experience, challenging us to investigate the culturally and physically located norm within certain historical moment that continues to shape our perceptive body. Also, as she states, semiotic phenomenology takes the Peircian approach to semiotics, which relies on a diachronic engagement to grapple with the ongoing signifying process (semiosis) formulated through the sign system. Drawing upon Peirce's categories of Firstness (vague awareness that has not come into the culturally indexed perception), Secondness (the perceived experience through an established sign), and Thirdness (the creation of a new sign by articulating the newly perceived experience with another sign), Martinez argues that, since the subtlety and intricacy of human experience are beyond established cultural norms, the contradiction between the perceived experience and cultural norms is an important site for knowledge production. Semiotic phenomenology foregrounds researchers as a site of inquiry, and thus proffers an instrument for me to reflexively engage with the dialectics between my expressive body and the cultural system of identity categories to better understand the relationship between China's socio-economic transformation and the shifting contours of gender, class and sexuality.

In this regard, situating my personal Odyssey in the process of global restructuring, I scrutinize how my neoliberal subjectivity has been shaped and reshaped by the gendered, classed, sexualized and racialized biopolitics. This methodological endeavor resonates with Foucault's argument (20011) that querying "the ontology of self" is crucial to the analysis of neoliberal governmentality. With a deconstructive and contextualized reading of my meritocratic and marketized subjectivity that has been cast

and recast by various biopolitical technologies, I will develop my crude curiosity about China's marketization and accession to the global network of capital into a manageable research agenda. As Ong astutely points out, overseas Chinese "have been the forerunners of today's multiply displaced subjects, who are always on the move both mentally and physically" (1999, p. 2). In this regard, my experiences of dislocation, relocation, displacement and transgression, coupled with the proper academic training in theories and methodology, will become the intellectual forays for reflexivity to produce new understandings of neoliberalism, corporate globalization and identities. By pushing the boundaries of my established perspectives, I develop the abstract theorizing of the intersectional biopolitics of neoliberal governmentality into concrete research questions and appropriate research methods.

Deconstructing My Neoliberal Subjectivity in China

Different from the U.S. norm of hyper masculinity (Kimmel 1996), one culturally distinguished characteristics of Chinese genderscape till recently is the soft, literary manhood (Louie, 2002; Song, 2004). This cultural norm of masculinity takes root in the Confucian tradition that valorizes male literati of the gentrified class as the central figure in the political order of the feudal state. In feudalist China, the patriarchal gender relationship was the important discursive resource to consolidate and legitimize the state system and the subject-monarch relationship (Bray, 1997). Many subjects internalized their constructed feminine role (subordinate to the "masculine" monarch) through the performance of the softened masculinity, which turned into a cultural standard of manhood among the ruling class (Zhang, 2008). Moreover, in contrast to the Western

dimorphic gender system premised on compulsory heterosexuality (Butler, 2006), the traditional Chinese aesthetics of manhood was to no small extent calibrated by the male homoerotic relationship. The positive portrait of ancient Chinese gay men as "young with feminine face and fragile body" in literatures further reinforced soft and literary masculinity as the normative gender discourse in Chinese history (Wu, 2003). In this regard, as Tani Barlow (1994) notes, traditional Chinese gender system is not as distinctively demarcated as in the Western context despite its equally oppressive patriarchal system, if not more so. In the Maoist era, the ambiguous gender line was revamped for a Socialist version of "gender equality" largely at the expense of men: women were masculinized as equal to men in public sectors of employment, and they also gained more agencies in the private domain of marriage (Croll, 1983; Yan, 2003). Meanwhile, in its intersection with social class, gender was co-opted by the Maoist ideology with the embrace of revolutionary working class and peasant masculinity as the symbolic face of the Socialist state. For example, the imagery of workers operating machines is a central symbol of the new political regime. Even so, soft masculinity never completely lost its cultural values during Mao's reign (Wang, 2003).

As the state's focus shifted from Socialism to neoliberalism in the late 1970s, the gentrified soft, literary masculinity that had been kept at bay prevailed again. In an article of the Chinese idols in different eras, the author suggests that in the early 1980s, the imagery of men of letters replaced the working class/soldiers to become the new caliber

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of Chinese masculinity.[23] In *Desiring China*, Rofel (2007) also illustrates how the educated men were valorized as the central figure that could not only lead and support the family, but also salvage the country from the traumatizing Maoist monopoly over economy and culture. My boyhood conflated with this cultural shift. Born into a working class family in the hinterland of China in the late 1970s, my embodied soft, literary masculinity was the only cultural capital for me to distinguish myself from my peers from the similar class background. This gender performance was further referenced and reinforced by my outstanding scholastic achievements at school. As the class gap had not yet been recreated by Deng's reform policies, the embodied masculinity provided a symbolic stamp connecting me to the imagined elite class status.

As China's marketization accelerated, it not only reshaped the socio-economic ecology, but also reconstituted the genderscape. In the late 1980s, a multitude of gender discourses mushroomed to disseminate an essentialized notion of sexual difference. As an important mechanism to re-integrate China with the global capitalism, the restructured mass media played a big role in this process (Zhao, 2008). On the one hand, there was the proliferation of discourses of gender differences—female images with emphasized feminine and sexual features started to dominate mass media (Croll, 1995; Evans 1997; Honig & Hershatter, 1988). On the other hand, a discourse of "remasculization" became prevalent in mass media, seeking to recover men from the traumatizing experience in Mao's era and reconstruct the so-called macho images of men in post-Mao China (Rofel, 2007; Zheng, 2009; Lu, 2000). This discursive shift also conflated with the Western

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[23] *Luoyang Web*. (2007, August 15). Dream lovers in different eras. Retrieved from http://lady.lyd.com.cn/w.asp?id=474

cultural penetration spearheaded by such media spectacles as the hyper masculine icons, like Rambo and Zorro. When these muscular and tough Westernized images of masculinist heroes were widely celebrated by general Chinese, the soft, literary masculinity was stigmatized as too "creamy" (*naiyou*, which means "not tough and manly enough" in Chinese), and lost its currency in the media market.

The habituated gender subjectivity, however, had been deeply inscribed onto my daily regimentation of identity and become an essential hermeneutic horizon of feeling, thinking and behaving for me (Alcoff, 2005), rendering me out of tune with the socio-cultural wave in China's swift social changes. Though my "not manly enough" gender identity became a delegitimizing mark for me, my self-consciousness formulated through this gendered disciplining was not flexible enough to keep abreast of the new trend, placing me in incessant anxiety and struggle throughout my adolescence. My trouble with gender underlay all my choices later.

The Westernized dimorphic gender discourse needs to be further deconstructed through a queer lens. As Foucault's (1990) description of the burgeoning European capitalism indicates, to subject a diverse spectrum of desiring modalities to the reproductive zealotry to satisfy the increasing demand of labor for capitalist market, all desires outside the heterosexual nucleus family needed to be policed and disciplined. In this regard, Siobhan Sommerville (2000) argues that the notion of pathological homosexuality was invented at the end of the 19th century to reinforce the patriarchal family institution predicated on a clarified gender line in Western societies. As Foucault writes, in the 19th century, the sodomite as a temporary aberration was turned into

homosexual as a species, through "a certain way of inverting the masculine and the feminine in oneself" (1990, 43). In other words, homosexuals as an identity were not only produced as the abnormal inversion of the heterosexualized gender order, but also the boundary of heterosexuality to normalize the latter as "compulsory and natural." Therefore, hinged on the newly constructed identity of "homosexuality," heteronormativity and dimorphic gender configuration co-constituted and reinforced each other to guarantee the heterosexual familial matrix running smoothly for the burgeoning capitalist economy. For example, as Kimmel (1996) shows, in the mid-19th century, the nucleus family became an important site for the professing of gender and sexual protocols to boys in the U.S. Their sexual desire needed to be correctly directed (towards the opposite sex), and appropriately released (for procreation and not wasted in masturbation). As many people assumed, learning how to manage one's sexual desire was the premise to become a rational and self-disciplined man for market competition, and only with economic success could a man fulfill his responsibility as the family provider. In other words, through the stringent policing over their sexuality, the boys were not only recreated as the self-reliant subject for the market economy, but also the gendered being to perpetuate the nucleus family as the foundation of the capitalist economy and society.

In the early 1990s, a discourse of homosexuality was introduced into mainland China through media products, further naturalizing the (unequal) difference between men and women. For the first time, homosexuality as an identity, in its distinction to homosexuality as activities, was constructed in China (Rofel, 2007), becoming an

important thermometer to assess the socio-economic changes. While China extended its reform from "dots and bits" experiments to a full-fledging project and strove for the unlimited accession to the global economy, (non)coincidentally the increasingly visible homophobic frenzy accompanied the restructuring of the genderscape to reconstitute the social norm. Learning from mass media, people started to reclassify themselves and others with the category of sexuality as part of the biopolitical control of the population. Not surprisingly, my carefully concealed sexual desire (for men) became fathomable through my questionable soft masculinity, which subjected me to constant voyeuristic scrutiny on a daily basis. Like C. J. Pascoe's (2007) description of the U.S. high schools, homophobic slurs became a popular rhetoric among Chinese boys and adolescents to assert their manliness in the early 1990s. For these (heterosexual) boys, it was just a rhetorical swordplay about masculinity competition. For me, it was a gendered and (hetero)sexualized biopolitical tutelage and surveillance that haunted me throughout my pubertal years. Only until the new century did I finally come to terms with my "perverse" sexuality. This agitated and stressed experience later became the most important impetus stimulating me to strive for emancipation with personal achievement—the essential argument of meritocracy.

During the same period, the idea of meritocracy and individual freedom ascended and started to replace the Socialist notion of equality and social justice. In the 1990s, while released from the collective duties and missions, people needed to become responsible for their own well-being as the state retreated from welfare provisions to enhance its administrative efficiency. Like the "pulling yourself up with your bootstraps"

stories in the Western societies, the successful experiences of self-made economic

accomplishments by poor farmers, such as the ten-thousand-Yuan household, were

repeated by mass media, beckoning more people to join the auspicious Socialist market

economy. For people having been living under the stricture of the Maoist state and

collectivized social production, this rhetoric was truly appealing as it tempered with their

long-subdued individualistic ambition for the new market relationship. For the youth

from the poor/working class background like me, hard work and competition became the

legitimized and touted means to success, outlining a prospect of social mobility. As I

recall now, the constant stress and anxiety emanating from my non-normative gendered,

sexualized and classed identities were the primary subjectivizing mechanism that called

on me for individual freedom, and directed my dislocation across China and relocation to

the U.S. for the maximization of personal interests and self-preservation.

As China's marketization accelerated and intensified after the mid-1990s, a direct

result was the restoration of class inequalities (Harvey, 2005). Meanwhile, gender was

not only (hetero)sexualized, but also became classed. As Tiantian Zheng (2009) points

out, the 1990s has seen the prevalence of a discourse of entrepreneurial masculinity that

centered on the control of women's body and sexuality, consuming power and

enterprising capacity to shore up the masculinist superiority. As China was increasingly

rewired with the world economy after Deng's 1992 Southern tour, its genderscape also

blended into the global backdrop, in which the business masculinity becomes a

transnational cultural norm (Connell, 1998, 2005). In this regard, it is not difficult to

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understand why my inferior class background further delegitimized my gender identity for the inability to participate in conspicuous consumption like a "real man."

Not until the late 1990s had I truly felt for the first time the transformative power of marketization on class, gender and sexuality with my relocation across China for education. As neoliberalism was first adopted as "exception" in coastal and urban regions (Ong, 2006), at that time its social effects had not been felt as concretely in my hometown—a small town in hinterland China—as in the Eastern metropolitan constellations where my university is located. During my college years, in our dormitory that accommodated eight young adults, the bedtime talk was often dominated by the heterosexualized bloating of masculine power or more accurately, the masculinity competition of which money usually made the final decision. The roommates from the affluent areas kept increasing the stakes of this competition by showcasing how they could capitalize on their consumption capacity to impress girls and dwarf their rivals. As one of them claimed, he and his girlfriend(s) could easily spend 50 dollars in a karaoke bar overnight—a sum enough for a whole month of feeding to me. It made it clear that the intersection of manliness and (hetero)sexual virility was hinged upon a bourgeois lifestyle. In contrast, the lack of economic resources deprived the rest of us the entitlement to participate in (or at least pretend to participate in) this "real men's talk." For the marginalized members, the meritocratic narrative that "more education will bring a better life" seemed the only viable solution to our troubled gender, sexual and class identities, beckoning us into the neoliberal dream with more investment of time and

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energy in studies. Among them, I became the lucky one: in 2004, my arduous work finally bore the fruit with the admission to a top-rated graduate program in Shanghai.

A center of the global metropolitan constellations, Shanghai, due to its advantaged geopolitical location and thick history of bourgeois legacy and colonialism, becomes a "hub" that mediates transnational capital and the bountiful raw materials and laborers in interior China with the economic reform (Sassen, 2009). As the "dragon head" of the cartographic territory, Shanghai is embraced by the state as the spearhead that directs China through the fierce global competition (Wu et al., 2007). This positioning also places Shanghai in the epicenter of multifarious ideological and discursive forces unleashed by the liberalizing effects of market economy. As Cheng Li (1997) notes, the zealotry for Western modernism and bourgeois lifestyle gleaned from Shanghai's wartime colonial legacy re-thrives after held at bay by the Maoist state for 30 years. As numerous people from other parts of China, particularly rural areas are magneticized to Shanghai for opportunities, the ethnocentrism of Shanghai natives coupled with the colonist discourse of Western modernity is translated into explicit nativist discrimination against less-developed Chinese areas in general and migrants from these areas in particular.

As a new immigrant in Shanghai, I partially internalized the colonial legacy of Western supremacy in Shanghai local culture, but at the same time, my meritocratic dream was shattered by the compounded classist, nativist marginalization and enlarging social inequalities. Like many others, this complicated emotion was crystalized as a critical perspective of the polarized anti-Communist outrage (through the anxieties over

my gender, sexual and class identities) and American apologist expectation for emancipation. As Stanley Rosen (2003) notes, in contemporary China, urban Chinese youth have developed two disparate images of the United States: a highly negative view of American hegemonism abroad alongside a highly positive assessment of American values and lifestyles at home. Like millions of young people who are antagonistic to the party-state but never have a chance to really experience the American life, the romanticized longing for the American life and the despaired alienation from the Shanghai urban life blended into a polarized hermeneutic interface for me. In Shanghai, every year millions of people come from other areas for prosperity and social mobility, only to find our neoliberal meritocratic dream get razed by the reality: the skyrocketing housing price, the overt discrimination and even the right to love disenfranchised by the market logic.

Though blessed by the graduate degree from an elite university and the government-issued *Hukou* as the recognition of my "Shanghaineseness," like other migrants, I could not find a job to afford a small condo as the dwelling. As news reports repeat recently, myriad young people are "escaping from *Bei Shang Guang*" (an acronym for Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, the three major metropolises in China) after finding their striving would never yield the desired outcomes since the market has been distorted by nepotism and bureaucratic power. Consequently, many of them impute these problems to the Communist ideology and bureaucracy. Swung by the transnational discourse of neoliberalism that liberalization, deregulation and democratization of economics and politics (as Westerners have been doing) would achieve a prosperous and

equitable society, they submit to the idea of human rights and personal freedom, which is often manipulated by neoliberal ideology to further the self-serving market rule in the Western societies (Harvey, 2005). Distressed by the Party's failed promise of building social equality and harmony, they displace the failed meritocratic dream in the Chinese context onto the uncharted "liberated" Western world, particularly the U.S. As a sturdy member in this camp, I submitted my application materials for several U.S. graduate programs, and half a year later, set on the journey to "the land of opportunities" for the renewed hope of emancipation and freedom.

Reflecting on My Racializing Transformation in the U.S.

As a new category imposed by the U.S. politics and culture, race became the most significant caliber of my identity and intellectual transformation. When I checked the box that said "Asian/Pacific Islander" in order to get the entry into the U.S. territory, though I had little clue of what it meant, my body was already invested with new meanings that would translate into tangible effect and affect for me in the new context.

As Howard Winant writes, race is "a concept that signifies and symbolizes socio-political conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies" (2004, 155). Sally Kitch (2009) further pushes this argument and suggests that there is a gendered foundation of racial formation in U.S. history. As a racial category, Asian is also founded on gender and sexual ideology for its early formulation. As for Chinese and Japanese, two pioneering immigrant groups later categorized as "Asian," the manipulation of the discourses about the sexuality of Chinese and Japanese women first

classified them as two different ethnic groups, and then conflated them as one race (Lee, 2010). In contemporary U.S. society, David Eng (2001) contends that the intersection of race, gender and sexuality renders Asian men the "racial castration" with queering effect. Not heterosexual enough, Asian men are considered a threat to the heteronormative white masculinity (Collins, 2004). This intersectional relationship, however, produced novel and even "freeing" experiences for me. I was happy to find that my questioned gender and sexual identities in China were legitimized by my new racial identity—my favorite flamboyant and "girly" shirt that might look problematic for other racial groups were acceptable for me *as an Asian man*, as a cohort member told me. My American dream of emancipation from the (Communist-foisted) gender and sexual norm seemed preliminarily realized.

Like gender, class and sexuality, the meanings of race need to be deconstructed through a contextualized and politico-economic lens. The values laden with "Asian" have been shifting with the U.S. politico-economic agenda. Different from its derogatory connotation of promiscuous "yellow peril" that would pose threat to the U.S. civilization in the late 19th century (Reddy, 2003), or the pollution of the racial purity of white Americanness in the early 20th century (Nuys, 2002), the racialized meanings of Asian seem to have been whitened as the title "Model Minority" suggests. However, this racial "reformation" needs to be teased out in the context of the biopolitics-induced neoliberal policies since the 1970s. In the globalized industrial hierarchy, the U.S. biopolitical agenda has sought to attract technological professionals from other countries, particularly Asia to strengthen and perpetuate its dominion in new "knowledge economy" (Ong,

2006). The economic success of *one segment* of new Asian immigrants, usually well-educated middle class professional men, has been racialized in cultural terms to justify this process—"Asians" are culturally attuned for success in the free market, in stark contrast to "lazy" blacks and Latinos (Maeda, 2005). Mari Matsuda (1996) directly calls this racial myth an instrument of the distributive, gender, and racial injustice for neoliberal restructuring. Though "Model Minority" provides a discursive instrument for the self-pride and solidarity of Asian Americans, it also reproduces the racial biopolitics to fuel the neoliberal governance. Students from Asia usually have no clues about how much Asian Americans have benefited from the civil rights movement spearheaded by African Americans. It is common to see that these students hurl racist slurs against other minorities to signify their elevated status in the racial hierarchy. With the egregiously high concentration in the labor-intensive industries, the U.S. people of color have been unequally impacted by the flight of capital for cheaper and submissive labor, and bear the most brunt of neoliberal restructuring. Moreover, their embodied phenotypical difference becomes the corporeal justification for the biopolitical rearticulation of human beings that has been cast and recast with the varying needs of avaricious capital.

The above critique of racialized neoliberal biopolitics in the U.S. seems cogent and coherent as *ex post facto* thought. It, however, did not pop up as a natural result of the theoretical and methodological training until the contradictory bodily experience from the cleavage between the racial ideology and the lived reality marked a liminal space for my intellectual transformation. One day I got an email from a student in our program inquiring about the graduate course of statistics that I would teach. I was quite shocked

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because my training did not qualify me for any courses about statistics, not to mention a graduate one. Almost simultaneously, it occurred to me that before this incident, I had been told quite a few times by other students that "I don't belong to the class about humanities as an Asian man." This time I did not just simply shrug off this unexpected message as an innocuous coincidence as usual. It rather carved out a new horizon that animated the racial boundary entrenched in the U.S. political economy. Obviously, the racialized and gendered values invested in my name already prescribed a trajectory for me inadvertently, even before I set my feet on the "land of opportunities." To certain new immigrants from Asia, this trajectory might seem freeing and empowering as it pre-positions them in an avenue with more access to economic/professional success (than other minority groups). However, it is not essentially different from the trajectories prescribed for their less educated, impoverished immigrant ancestors. No matter it is an IT engineer, a railroad builder, a gold miner or a laundry shop worker, the wobbling interface of the prescribed trajectory is fundamentally directed by the varying needs of capital and market. Contrary to the myth of "Model Minority," Asians are far from being "whitened" to be a member of the club of racial superiority. When neoliberalism takes its toll in the economy, new Asian immigrants are situated in a no safer zone than our ancestors. For instance, as the widely-circulated China-bashing discourses in the wake of the 2008 crisis testifies, like the poor workers in the 1860s and early 20th century, new immigrants from China would often be manipulated as the scapegoat for the chaos entailed by ruthless and brutal capital that pays no heeding to ethical values other than profits and market share. Contrary to the highly propagated notions of freedom, equal opportunities and human rights, the U.S. economic prosperity and vitality have been

generated and perpetuated by the differentiation, classification and hierarchization of human beings through categories and categorizations. This novel understanding of biopolitics and the U.S. economy dismantled the romanticized imagination of the U.S. exceptionalism. It needs to be further reckoned with for more new understandings of neoliberalism, corporate globalization, identities that can be fathomed with concrete research questions and methods.

Research Questions

Through a historicized and contextualized analysis of my intellectual changes along with the formation and reformation of my various identities, I extend my scope from comparative/binaristic to relational and transnational, and link my gendered, sexualized, classed and racialized subjectivities embedded in different geopolitical and socio-cultural contexts with each other through the lens of global restructuring.[24] It challenges me to further query the relationship between identities, neoliberalism and corporate globalization to see how the globalized neoliberal economy is enacted and enabled through the intersectional biopolitics. As Foucault (2008) suggests, the subjection and subject-making to extend the values and relations of markets for the broader organization of politics, economy and society through biopolitics are key to the art of neoliberal governance. In so doing, neoliberal governmentality integrates totalizing sovereign power with individualizing disciplinary power for its implementation (Foucault 1979), and the technologies of subjective individualization with procedures of objective tantalization (Foucault 2011; 2012). In this regard, Foucault (2011; 2012) argues that to

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[24] Here I follow the example of Anzaldua's classics (1999), *La Borderlands*.

fully understand how neoliberal governmentality is exercised, we need to scrutinize the dynamics between the formation of different forms of discourses to sustain the overall governing structure as well as the constitution of the subject's mode of being through disciplinary technologies.

However, as Giorgio Agamben (2000) argues, Foucault fails to clarify how these two different types of power are integrated with each other in the daily practice of governmentality. As he writes, "what is the point at which the voluntary servitude of individuals into contact with objective power?" (2000, p. 6). As Agamben points out, biopolitics is the linkage, and "the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power" (2000, p. 6). As the critical review of my experiences indicates, by laying out multiple possibilities and psychological tendencies of action via the intersectional gendered, sexualized, classed and racialized parameters of biopolitics, people are recreated as voluntary subjects geared up for self-preservation and market competition. Therefore, the first question I want to address in this project is: how have the state-imposed class inequalities, binaristic gender and heteronormative discourses been employed intersectionally by the state to disarticulate and rearticulate the population to facilitate China's neoliberal transition and accession to the global system of capital? Guided by this question, I seek to fathom the basic mechanism of biopolitics that undergirds China's transition from Socialism to neoliberalism.

Also, as Brown (2005) puts it, different from the Marxist doctrine that views ideology as determined by economic infrastructure, neoliberal ideology sometimes converges with, but more often than not diverges from neoliberal governing practices. As

Caren Kaplan and Interpal Grewal (1994) suggest, neoliberal ideologies take "scattered" forms, varying from locations to locations. In the U.S., the political legacy of liberalism has been translated into an "anti-big-government" discourse and fetishistic rhetoric of individual freedom to legitimize the encroachment of public areas, like education, health care, by market. Also, as suggested earlier, the alterable cultural contour of identities provides a fundamental repository for the justification of neoliberal practices. For instance, the racialized image of new Asian immigrants as "Model Minority" is an important ideological justification for the U.S. neoliberalism (Matsda, 1996), and the iconizing discourse of hyper masculine hero is the new pivotal point to legitimize China's *suis generis* practices of neoliberalism (Zhang, 2013). On this account, I want to investigate: in countries like China where there is less liberalist legacy, how do the intersectional contours of race, gender, class and sexuality help produce new discourses to legitimate its marketization and re-integration with the global economy?

Marginalized groups, however, are not the passive subjects that can be fully manipulated by neoliberal governmentality, and the multiple parameters of biopolitics leave out a plenitude of ruptures and fissures for them to challenge the neoliberal dominance. In 2010, a grass-roots music band composed of two poor migrant male workers became an Internet sensation in China. As the band name—*Xu Ri Yang Gang* (meaning macho men in the rising sun) and their super masculine rendition of a sorrow-stricken song indicate, they tried to resist the social marginalization and valorize their status as the validated Chinese citizens through an effusive performance of hyper masculinity. On the one hand, they have internalized the transnational masculinist

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hegemony of neoliberal subjectivity (Zhang, 2013). On the other hand, the symbolic weight of hyper masculinity as the central neoliberal ideology was mobilized by them to turn the state's neoliberal practices on its head. This strategy worked quite well—after the homemade video was posted online, it aroused overwhelming resonance from all walks of the Chinese society, registering nearly ten million hits within a short time.[25] They were even invited to perform at the 2011 Spring Festival Gala, a significant "ideological state apparatus" (Althusser, 2001) in China. Building on this example, I want to investigate: how do the marginalized groups internalize, negotiate with and challenge the material and cultural practices of neoliberal governmentality to create livable space for them in China?

To further clarify the intrinsic connection between these three questions that unites them into a coherent project, I would draw on Charles Sanders Perice's theorization of the sign system to illuminate the process of knowledge making through the signifying economy (Merrell, 1995). As Peirce points out, the process of knowledge production proceeds on three interconnected levels between the objective structure and subjective experiential bodies: the crude level that he calls "Firstness" where people's bodily experience not yet coded by established cultural terms has not entered their consciousness; the intermediate called "Secondness" whereby the bodily experience has been perceived via certain signs; the abstract level that he terms "Thirdness" in which different pre-

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[25] Xie, L. & Geng, H. (2011, November 11). *Hu nan sheng wu shu ji cheng ting nong min gong chang "chun tian li" re lei ying kuang* (Secretary of Hunan provincial committee of the CPC claimed to be move into tears by the migrant peasant vocal duo). Retrieved from http://news.163.com/10/1111/01/6L6119FA00014AED.html

constituted concepts, notions, norms and ideas articulate with each other to make new meanings (Merrell, 1995). As we can see, by excluding personal experiences from knowledge making in the name of "neutrality and objectivity," modern scientific approach is only restricted to the third, abstract level. Precluding the bodily experiences from discussion, concepts from books interconnect with each other to create a continuing process of knowledge making on an abstract level. It not simply leaves out a vast terrain as sites for novel knowledge, but also further marginalizes those groups who have been historically excluded from the white male dominated academia. Moreover, as neoliberal globalization is deeply intertwined with the racialized, gendered, sexualized and classed biopolitics, it is imperative for us to explore people's lived reality of internalizing, negotiating with and resisting the biopolitical structure of neoliberal governmentality to deepen our understanding of its intrinsic mechanism of functioning, exercising, and (re)production. Only by actively engaging with the dynamics between the intersectional biopolitical structure and people's responses to it, can we generate transformative knowledge of neoliberalism and corporate globalization for substantive changes.

As I argue, feminist concept of intersectionality provides an effective instrument for this purpose. Though this concept is deeply situated in the U.S. historical and socio-economic background, as Jennifer Nash (2010) argues, rather than designating a "one-fit-all" transcendental paradigm to solve all problems related to identities in all cultures and societies, intersectionality is more of a metaphor for us to refresh our knowledge of the emerging contradictions between the intersectional biopolitical structures of neoliberal governmentality and people's daily life. To perpetuate this structure for the vested

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interests, the privileged groups try to maintain these identities as paralleled and separate

for social control. As Collins observes, we "[s]egregate people into boxes of ghettos,

barrios, closets, and prisons, rank the boxes as being fundamentally separate and unequal,

and keep the entire system intact by forbidding individuals to get to know one another as

fully human beings" (2004, p. 248). In this regard, intersectionality is of particular import

for us to reveal the operative mechanism of neoliberalism and corporate globalization,

and locate possibilities for substantive changes.

Methods and Data Collection

Guided by these questions, my research proceeded along two trajectories: one is

about the intersectional biopolitical structure of neoliberal governmentality in China; the

other is the grass-roots response to the material and cultural practices enacted through

this structure. In light of the different purpose and nature of the two trajectories, I will use

mixed methods: Foucauldian discursive analysis for the former, and the qualitative

methods of interview and focus group for the latter.

1. Discursive Analysis

Discourse is not just rhetorical, but also material: it is the manifestation of specific

ideologies and supported by concrete social structures and institutions (Foucault, 1972,

1990). Discourses can be created and upheld through multiple venues, to name a few,

laws and official proclamations, public debate and mass media. Interconnecting

discursive formations with social institutions, juristic apparatus and administrative system,

discursive analysis is instrumental to reveal the basic biopolitical structure of neoliberal

governmentality. I choose the 2009 televised ceremony of China's 60th anniversary, and *If You Are the One*, a reality TV show as the primary sites of inquiries.

As an important nationalistic ritual, the 2009 ceremony was live broadcast to millions of Chinese households by China Central Television (CCTV), one of the most important mouthpieces of the party-state. Though Chinese mass media are increasingly marketized with China's neoliberal transition, CCTV is no doubt still a state-controlled monopoly centered on the propagation of the Party line (Zhao, 1998). As Zhao writes, the ceremony is a meticulously framed media spectacle showcasing "the achievements of China's modernization and the glories of another 'New' China, made this time during the reform era starting in 1978" (2010, p. 8). Zhao's conclusion makes clear the statist and nationalist nature of this ritual. While China's neoliberal practices have deeply transformed the class relationship and the discourse of class struggle becomes a taboo in Chinese media, the triangulated relationship between class (as classless society), gender (as gender egalitarianism) and state (as the Socialist state) needs to be revamped to reconstitute the power structure. Thus gender becomes the pivot to reconstruct Chinese nationalism and identity (Zhang, 2013). In this regard, this nationalistic ritual is an ideal site to explore how new discourses are produced through the intersection of gender, class and sexuality by the totalizing sovereign power to reformulate the Chinese statehood and citizenship for the justification of neoliberal transition.

According to the data of Nielsen, *If You Are the One* has been the most popular TV show since its first broadcasting in Jiangsu Star TV (Jiangsu Wei Shi) in 2010. It has reached a large audience pool among Chinese overseas as well, which can be attested by

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the heated online discussion after each episode is shown. As Alex Chan (2002) notes, in its neoliberal conditions, the party-state recognizes its declining ability to control what people think, and shifts its focus from political propaganda to setting social agenda. For instance, "some ideologues have found that talk show hosts in the newly commercialized media outlets are more effective ideological workers than those in the Party's ideological departments" (Zhao 1998, p. 8). Meanwhile, as China is getting more open to the Western world, particularly after its accession to the WTO, the party-state has gained experiences to tailor the transnational cultural products and capital to its own politico-economic agenda (Fung, 2008). Media discourses are employed as important disciplinary and normalizing technologies by the state for China's neoliberal transition. Based on the British TV program, *Take Me Out*, this dating game show transforms the original script that highlights intimate interaction into a TV arena where male and female participants are competing with each other to get the attention from the opposite sex. Featuring young and attractive women propagating the "love for money" ethnics, this TV show has entailed massive social debate over what should be a "good" gender relationship in contemporary China. On this account, it is a good site to see how different disciplinary and normalizing biopolitical technologies are employed to create neoliberal subjectivities and legitimize the process of neoliberalization.

2. Qualitative Methods of Interview and Focus Group

Defining my work as exploratory not for generalization and prediction, I use qualitative methods to examine people's daily reality of internalizing, negotiating with and challenging the biopolitical structure (Singleton & Straits, 2005). Since I focus on

media representations as governing technologies to explore the biopolitical system of Chinese neoliberalism, semi-structured interview with questions about the media products, *If You Are the One*, is a viable method to explore people's daily encounter with neoliberal governmentality (Babbie, 2008). Since the 2009 ceremony is a state-sponsored media spectacle, it would probably force interviewees into expressing the "politically correct" answers, I do not use this material for interviews. As the British cultural studies scholars argue (e.g. Hall 1980; Morley 1992), drawing upon their discursive repertoire and daily experience, people have disparate schemes of media interpretations, and can generate their unique meanings of cultural products. As people tend to be more frank about their feelings while situated in the group dynamics, focus group is a good method to induce interpersonal communication for more information (Morgan 1997; Farley 1994; Edmunds 1999; Krueger 1994). The effectiveness of the mixed method of interview and focus group has been proved by my field group. Groups composed of people who are familiar with each other, such as friends, relatives, would usually turn into lively, energized and frank conversations with each other. In this regard, I combined interviews with focus group to better understand the daily reality of my informants. As suggested by Morgan (1997), I started with some interviews to get some basic idea of my informants, and then used this information to guide the group discussion. Building on the new information from the focus group, I then redesigned my interview questions. In this way, I used the two qualitative methods complementarily for data collection.

As my research is an exploratory project, I did not use random sampling techniques (Singleton & Straits, 2005). I narrowed the range of informants down to the

poor/working class people "who are working in Jiangsu province" for two reasons: 1. As one of the earliest opened-up regions to transnational capital, Jiangsu province heavily relies on export-oriented economy. The statistics shows that export accounted for 43 percent of the GDP of Jiangsu in 2010, compared with the number of 18 percent for Japan in 2008.[26] Thus it provides a good place to explore China's export-oriented economy to understand how it fuses with the global economy. 2. As a program of Jiangsu Star TV, *If You Are the One* has the highest coverage of audience in Jiangsu. Using convenience and snowball sampling technique, I used my personal internetworks and found two groups of workers as my primary research subjects: male construction workers in both Wuxi and Hai'an, and female apparel workers in Hai'an.

1) Male migrant workers in the construction industry

Housing is chosen as the most important growth pillar of the Chinese economy since Premier Wen came into power (Wu et al., 2007). Through the intersection of state-imposed registration certificate *Hukou* and gender difference, most of rural migrant male workers are concentrated in the construction industry (Li, 1997). Particularly after 2008, after the U.S. housing bubble burst, billions of dollars flooded into the Chinese market, particularly Shanghai and its adjacent areas, shoring up new demands of labor for construction work. Pulled by the inrush of capital, more rural men go to these areas for jobs. As the peripheral group in the urban environment, they have to confront the overt discrimination and dehumanizing domination by the state on a daily basis. On this

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[26] See Wang, X. Z. *GDP ju shi jie di er bei zhi yi yi bu da* (China's GDP ranked the world No.2 but with no essential improvements). *China Economic Weekly*. Retrieved from http://www.jsass.com.cn/xzsd/152/1137.html

account, through the formal interviews, casual conversations and observations, I tried to understand how are they are struggling with the intersectional biopolitics of neoliberal governmentality in the daily life.

2) Female workers in apparel factories in Hai'an

Within the global system of labor division, jobs of "sunset industries"—labor-intensive industries such as textile and apparel making are now outsourced to other places with cheaper labor. Since they are less educated and skilled, more flexible and submissive, women of color in the Third World countries are often the primary target of transnational capital (Mies, 2007; Hawkesworth, 2006). Adjacent to Shanghai, Jiangsu province's pillar economy is its plethora of export-processing plants, which attract numerous female workers from other less developed rural areas. These female workers have to negotiate with the neoliberal normalizing technology that highlights their domestic role, and the disciplinary technology that seduces and coerces them to be independent subject in the market. Thus I concentrate on the female apparel workers in Hai'an as another marginalized group to probe the effects of the intersectional biopolitics.

I have interviewed thirty one female workers and twenty nine male workers, and been to their work place and dormitories for observation. I have also talked to some owners and managers of the apparel factories and housing development corporations, local peasants, businessmen doing international trade, owners of family mill of apparel making, labor contractors, and a labor trafficking agent via formal interview or casual conversation. The length of the interviews/conversations ranges from fifteen minutes to

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132 minutes, and all of them were recorded with an audio device. I have also done three focus groups with the women workers, and three with the male workers, which include 6-8 participants to match the general requirement of this method (Morgan, 1997). As a result, my informant group ended up with over 100 research subjects.

In this chapter, I have briefly reviewed China's transition from Socialism to neoliberalism, and examined this process through the lenses of gender, class and heteronormativity. Using my own self formation and transformation along with this process as an example, I try to concretize the abstract discussion of the relationship between the identity categories and neoliberal restructuring into the specific research questions and methods. In the next chapter, I will focus on China's televised 60th anniversary ceremony to elucidate how the triangulation of gender, class and sexuality has been manipulated to (re)produce various discourses for the justification of China's transition from Socialism to neoliberalism.

Chapter Two

Queering China's National Body

Since the 2008 crisis, China has been the center of limelight for its remarkable economic performance.[27] In some Westerners' eyes, however, China's prospect is polarized—collapsing as another Soviet Union or overtaking the U.S. as the new locomotive of the global economy. For Panos Mourdoukoutas, a longtime contributor to the *Forbes Magazine*, China is the Messiah to salvage the troubled capitalist world. Indeed, Mourdoukoutas hails China as the next candidate (after its predecessor Japan) to save the world economy.[28] Acting like a benevolent lender to the U.S. and Europe, China seems to be performing well in this role.[29] Unlike Mourdoukoutas, others hold a more pessimistic view. For example, *The Wall Street Journal* published one article recently,

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[27] In contrast to the capitalist world that was deeply mired in the Great Recession, China's GDP growth reached a surprising number of 9.2 percent and 0.2 increase compared with the year before. *Website of China Central Government*. (2011, January 11). *Zhong guo 2009 nian GDP zeng zhang lv tiao cheng wei 9.2 %* (China's 2009 GDP growth rate recalculated as 9.2%). Retrieved from http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2011-01/11/content_1782547.htm

[28] Mourdoukoutas, P. (2011, August 18). Can China save the world economy? *Forbes*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/panosmourdoukoutas/2011/08/18/can-china-save-the-world-economy/

[29] Up to April, 2013, China holds 1264.9 billion dollars of the U.S. treasury, ranking the No. 1 among its creditors. Website of the U.S. government. (n. d.) Major foreign holders of security treasuries. Retrieved from http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/data-chart-center/tic/Documents/mfh.txt. As the European debt crisis got worsening in April, 2012, the Chinese government and the EU concluded a flurry of business agreements, including an up to four million purchase from Airbus and multi-million-dollar investments. Martina, M. & Rinke, A. China says willing to buy EU bonds amid worsening crisis. *Reuters*. Retrieved from http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/30/us-china-europe-idUSBRE87T0BY20120830

claiming that "China, once a catch basin for the world's money, is now watching cash

stream out."[30] The *Forbes Magazine* also warns against the potential of a meltdown of

China's banking system that could jolt the globe.[31] For an economy heavily reliant on

foreign direct investment (Harvey, 2005), this is a particularly dangerous sign.[32] However

mild this pessimism, it is nonetheless rebuffed by the Chinese authority as ever. As

Premier Wen proclaimed in October 2012, regardless of the negative external and

internal environments, the positive changes indicated by the improved industrial and

financial indexes signaled that Chinese economy had been stabilized and poised for a

bright future.[33]

   Wen's claim well encapsulates the triumphalist rhetoric that has long been

endorsed by the party-state to galvanize and gentrify its sturdy practices of neoliberalism,

which culminated with the high-profiled celebration of the PRC's 60th anniversary in

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[30] Frangos, A., Orlik, T. & Wei, L. L. (2012 October 15). In reversal, cash leaks out of China. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443507204578020272862374326.html

[31] Fontevecchia A. (2013, June 17). China: Massive credit bubble fueled by shadow banking and securitization could collapse banks. *Forbes*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/afontevecchia/2013/06/17/china-massive-credit-bubbled-fueled-by-shadow-banking-and-securitization-could-collapse-banks/

[32] In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005), Harvey suggests that distinct from other booming Asian economies, such as South Korea and Singapore, the case of China is very distinctive in that it heavily relies on foreign direct investment. Harvey's view is corroborated by Deng's twin polices of reform and opening up guiding China's socio-economic transformation. The flight of transnational capital that has penetrated many sectors would no doubt devastate the Chinese economy.

[33] Wen, J. (2012, October 17). The new positive changes showing that Chinese economy has been stabilized. *China News Web*. Retrieved from http://finance.chinanews.com/cj/2012/10-17/4256048.shtml

2009. As the fourteenth grand commemoration of the foundation of Socialist China, the significance of this extravaganza is doubled for its conflation with the 30th anniversary of "reform and opening-up," the milestone that re-embarked China on the track to abundance, prosperity and vibrancy. As President Hu Jintao's inaugural speech at the ceremony avers, this event marks that "a modernized, globally oriented and futurist China is rising majestically in the Eastern quarter of the world."[34] Through China's premiere flagship media monopoly CCTV, the symbolic grandiosity of this occasion was further elevated and disseminated to millions of domestic and overseas Chinese households to glorify the socio-economic accomplishments by the neoliberal practices.

Though the government refused to release the expenditures on the festive event, its organizing committee located in the former offices of the Olympics organizing committee, which was also composed of the similar staff members, indicates the state's determination to re-create some of the glitz of the 2008 Summer Olympics. Different the audience for the Olympics from that mainly features international viewers, this show primarily targets domestic and overseas Chinese audience. In this regard, it is meant to be constructed as the spectacle "that presents itself simultaneously as all of society, as part of society, and as instrument of unification" for Chinese citizenries and diaspora (Debord 2006, p. 118). With regard to televisual spectacles, drawing upon Benedict Anderson's (1991) notion of "imagined community," John Hartley argues that they are "one of the prime site upon which a give nation is constructed for its members" (1987, p. 124).

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[34] Hu, J. (2009, October 1). Speech at China's 60th anniversary ceremony. Retrieved from http://www.xinhuanet.com/zhibo/20091001/

Enabled by the modern broadcasting technologies, numerous Chinese households and Chinese overseas simultaneously participated in this jubilation of nationalistic pride via television as the privatized means of nation-state building (Hartley, 1987). In so doing, the party-state labors to recreate the PRC as the unified socio-cultural and political constant through the spectacle-induced inculcation of people's identification.

Some sinologists have identified gender as a crucial component in the making of Chinese nation-state. For example, as Gilmartin et. al (1994) suggest, gender provides the language and categories through which family, state, and other social arrangements are articulated and justified in Chinese history. In the neoliberal conditions when the social structure has been greatly reshaped, as Zhang (2013) argues, gender replaces class and becomes the fundamental site for the reconstitution of the disturbed power triangulation of class, gender and state, and valorizes neoliberalism as the new imprint of the Chinese statehood. In this regard, in this chapter, centering on the ceremony as a nationalist spectacle, through the deconstructive reading of its symbolic economy, I want to map out the specific intersectional mechanism of gender, class and state to investigate the visual/discursive tropes invested in the nation-state building.

Gender has also been revealed to be an instrumental conduit to rearticulate the Chinese population for the neoliberal social relationship, and reconfigure the citizenry for the new nation-state unity. For instance, as a type of biopolitical technology, gender has contributed to the reproduction of the proletarian echelons (Pun, 2005), and citizens-cum-consumers (Yang, 2012). It also proves fundamental to the legitimation of the new inequalities in urban China by masking the class distinctions (Hanser, 2005). On this

account, the state-sponsored spectacle of the 60th anniversary bears the analytical import that begs further reckoning to explore how the Chinese citizens are restructured by the biopolitics of gender and class to consolidate the neoliberal political order.

This analysis, however, ushers in other concerns and problematics: if we accept the feminist claim that all categories are fluid and porous, how can we employ gender and class as the central categories in the analysis of the intersectional mechanism of nation-state building without reducing them to the *only* parameters of this intersection? If we only employ gender and class as the categories of norm to examine the structure of social control, how to achieve social justice that is at the core of feminism? If the ceremony is a technology through which subjects are called into being or "hailed" for nation-state building by the identification through categories, what would be other dimensions of socialities and alternative forms of being? As for these questions, using gender as an example, Judith Butler suggests that "it is important not only to understand how the terms of gender are instituted, naturalized, and established as presuppositional but to trace the moments where the binary system of gender is disputed and challenged, where the coherence of the categories are put into question, and where the very social life of gender turns out to be malleable and transformable" (2004, p. 216). Thus she calls for a strategy of "working within the categories."

Echoing Butler, Jose Esteban Munoz (1999) further clarifies this strategy as "working on and against," of what he calls "disidentification." As he writes, it is "a strategy that tries to transform a cultural logic from within, always laboring to enact permanent structural change while at the same time valuing the importance of local or

everyday struggles of resistance" (1999, 11-12). As the essential imprint of queer of color

analysis, as Roderick A. Ferguson (2004) suggests, disidentification would help unravel

the hidden linkage between seemingly antagonistic formations by unpacking their mutual

identification with certain categorical values. Therefore, building on a "queering" reading,

I want to uncover heteronormativity as the hidden pivot that anchors the contested

symbiosis of gender, class and state in neoliberal China and dislodge heteropatriarchy as

the hegemonic linchpin for China's transition from Socialism to neoliberalism. By

dismantling the naturalized and reified categorical norms for social control and

stabilization, as Butler (2004) argues, this theoretical criticism itself is transformative for

feminist scholars to imagine alternative dimensions of living. I will first start with a brief

introduction of the anniversary ceremony to familiarize my readers with this analytical

milieu.

The live broadcasting of the ceremony by CCTV started at 10:00 a.m., October 1st,

2009, and lasted for about four and a half hours. The whole festive ritual is composed of

two parts: a military parade followed by a civilian parade of around eighty minutes, and

an evening gala. In the first part, during a span of one and half hours, a budget of roughly

forty four million dollars was allocated by the government to produce a militant glitz for

patriotic demonstrations and nationalist pride.[35] Arrayed into square-shaped legions, a

display of fifty two new types of military hardware, including the most up-to-date ZTZ99

main battle tanks and J-10 fighter aircraft, marched along the potted-flower-decorated

Chang'an Avenue to receive the applause and appreciation from the audience. Standing

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[35] Ria Novosti. (2009, January 30). China to hold frugal 6oth anniversary. Retrieved from
http://en.rian.ru/world/20090130/119888198.html

onto a Hongqi HQE limousine specially designed for the event, President Hu became the fourth leader in the PRC history (following Mao, Deng and Jiang) to deliver an inspection of the troops, reasserting the Party's grip over the military force, Chinese territory, sovereignty and people.

As for this militant demonstration of national cohesion and political allegiance, Carole Pateman (1988) and R. W. Connell (2005) suggest that state, nationalism, revolution, political violence are all best understood as masculinist projects for their involvement with masculine institutions, processes and activities. Moreover, Cynthia Enloe contends that "nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope" (1990, 45). With its blatant invocation of male chauvinistic power, militarism is inherently tied to the construction of nationalism (Nagel, 1998). Rather than adding more to the critical arsenal of masculinity and nationalism, the aim of this chapter, however, is to chart the specific mechanism through which the biopolitics of class, gender and sexuality is exercised intersectionally to normalize China's neoliberalization. As such, I will leave the military demonstration out and center on the civilian parade as a primary domain for analysis.

In the hiatus after the parades, multiple programs boasting China's socio-economic and political accomplishments were shown to reinforce the constructed identification and nationalist glory, which was wrapped up by a festive gala. Evening theatrical performances of this kind, such as the annual CCTV premiere *Spring Festival Gala*, have been the fundamental ideological instrument for the reproduction of the Chinese party-state (Lv 2003, 2007). On this account, not quite different from other performances, the

gala does not bear the distinctive and paramount symbolic value as the parades, a once-in-a-decade extravaganza, for this research. Hereafter this chapter will center on the civil parade for analysis.

Different from the demonstration of power and loyalty in the military parade, and festive commemoration of the regime by the gala, the civilian parade seeks to (re)construct the history and future of the PRC. As the CCTV anchors pronounced during the broadcasting, "100,000-strong representatives from all walks of the Chinese society and other countries comprise thirty-six parading groups, sixty effusively ornamented floats and six mini shows, and through the mosaics of these proceeding sceneries, people can piece up a panorama of the glamorous history of the PRC." Unified under the theme of "Striving Forward with Motherland," the civilian parade is structured into three parts: "Thoughts," "Accomplishments" and "Prospect." As suggested by their titles, these parts focus on the representation of the politico-ideological essence, socio-cultural achievements, and the bright future of the PRC respectively. They are further grouped into seven organizational categories. In a chronological order, these categories are meant to represent the PRC's sixty-year history and depict a brighter prospect of the state, as can be indicated by their titles—"Foundational Struggling Efforts," "Reform and Opening-up," "Centennial Leap Forward," "Scientific Development" (as the "Thoughts" part), "Dazzling Achievements," "Splendid China" (as the "Accomplishments" part), and "Brighter Future" (as the "Prospect" part). The four sections of the "Thoughts" part are especially dedicated to the four top leaders of the PRC—the founding father, Mao Zedong, the architect of "reform and opening-up," Deng Xiaoping, his successors Jiang

Zemin and Hu Jintao. On this account, a deconstructive reading of these parts will be conducive to a genealogical reading of China's politico-ideological transition along with the shifting focus of national economy. The four sections are divided up and linked with each other by four mini shows that epitomize the core values during the four leaderships. In other words, they constitute the central framework for the organization of the reconstructive and futurist orchestration of the state, as well as my deconstruction of the ceremonial ritual.

Gender as the Centralized Signifier

Led by the national flag and badge, the civilian parade begins with a group that emblazons an image of Chairman Mao. Grounded in the narrative and visual tropes with the Socialist imprint, this section endeavors to bring the audience back to the PRC's foundational era. In this part, the three parading groups are named "Fighting Fearlessly," "Creating New China," and "Painstaking Pioneering Efforts" respectively. As these utopian flavored titles indicate, Mao's era is characterized by the dauntless and highly romanticized zeal for the building of a new country out of the wrecks and ruins from the wars. Gender and class were the fundamental categories to the construction of the Socialist state.

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Friederick Engels (2010) expands Marx's emphasis on economics/structure to the private sphere—gender relationship to retheorize the societal developments for human beings. Building on the basics of historical materialist framing of social production as the ultimate determinant of

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societal progress, Engels argues that production includes not just material production, but also reproduction of human beings and emphasizes the crucial role of women in human history. As he contends, gender relationship is the earliest, if not the original, form of class struggle, in that men could appropriate women's labor for free through their dominance in the gender relationship warranted by the unequal division of labor in the private domain. This gender-based appropriation, coupled with men's exclusive possession of means of production, grounds the material foundation that consolidates men's control of private property as *raison d'etre* of various forms of patrilocal marriage to the detriment of women. In other words, women's equal participation in public work is crucial to the building of a classless society. As a core ideologue and theorists for Communism and international Socialist movement, Engels's theorization was later adopted as a blueprint to guide the socio-economic construction by many Socialist states, such as those in Eastern Europe, to incorporate women into public work *en mass* (True, 2003).

In Maoist China, gender intersected with class for inter-normalization to consolidate the newly founded Socialist state. As Engels (2010) asserts, since proletariat have no private property to pass on to their descendants, and are less invested in sustaining the privatized social production system, their gender relationship and marriage are built on true love and equality rather than the utilitarian control of women for the patrilineal continuation. Gender equality is therefore embraced by him as an essential distinction between Socialism and capitalism. Building on Engels, the Maoist state required women to equally contribute to the Socialist construction in public like their

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male peers. By normalizing and homogenizing the equal rule of gender, proletariat was also legitimized as the dominant class to lead the construction of the Socialist state. Linking gender equality with the Socialist state, the working class consolidated its political and hegemonic control during Mao's reign. Simply put, class became the pivot of the triangulated power structure of class, gender and the state.

However, the ideal of gender equality, when translated into practices, was simplified as the refashioning of women's image based on the masculinized norm. For instance, informed by Engels's theory, a notion of ''sublime'' beauty–de-sexed, militarized, and masculine later became the only acceptable form of proletarian femininity in the former Soviet Union (Xu & Feiner, 2007), which signaled the equality between men and women via the identical gender code. Likewise, in Maoist China, as Dai Jinhua notes, the liberated women were often "defined by revolutionary (male) norms" (2002, p. 119). Just as a popular slogan says, women were supposed "to face the powder and not to powder the face." This gender ideology could be best exemplified by the classic image in the 1960s—"iron girl brigades" or crack teams of female agricultural and industrial workers as the models of the Socialist future. Pictured with vigorous bodies, strong arms, and robust physiques, these women's youth and gender enabled them to represent "the forefront of history" and "the spring time of Socialism" (Chen, 2003, p. 276).

It is not surprising to note that in the civilian parade the reconstruction of Maoist China hinges on the symbolizing of the classed linkage between gender and state as well. This symbolic economy is enacted through a blending of the specially designed makeup,

dressing and hair style, hue combination, and demeanors of the parade

participants/performers. For instance, the identical blue/white color and similar apparel

style are applied to both male and female participants/performers in tune with their

identical hailing gesture over the revolutionary victory, effectively blurring the gender

difference and foregrounding the shared working class identity of the

participants/performers. The centralized symbolic position of class is further buttressed

by the summary mini show—*Ansai* Waist Drum Performance by 1,000 performers-cum-

peasants. According to the Communist propaganda formula, Mao's trailblazing

theoretical contribution is the reframing of Marxist doctrines for China's historical

specificity and contextual contingency, efficaciously mobilizing millions of impoverished

peasants as the adamant and reliable ally of the working class against Japanese invaders

and Nationalists.[36] Thereafter, influenced by the Soviet realism,[37] the Maoist

representation of Chineseness was centered on "the depiction of workers as paragons of

strength" with the teleological ends of furthering the Socialist state (Li 2008). Like the

working class power often highlighted by the exaggerated heroic postures, the image of

rough and tough peasants was also used to epitomize Maoist China (Wang, 2003).

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[36] Chen, X. (2012, June 30). *Mao Zedong dui ma ke si zhu yi zhong guo hua de li shi xing gong xian* (Mao Zedong's contribution to the localization of Marxism in China). *Guangming Daily*. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2012-06/13/c_123273949.htm

[37] Soviet realism, or Socialist realism is a style of realistic art further developed in the former Soviet Union, which later became a dominant style of artistic production in other Socialist countries, including China. With a clearly pronounced goal of servicing the Socialist economy and regime, this style often focuses on the representation of the life of the proletariat.

In this mini show, over 1,000 male performers are reproducing a cultural event of drum performance, which is quite common during the season of harvesting in northwest rural areas. Their peasant identity is made clear by the specialty attires for northwestern Chinese farmers, the choreographic design that mimics a festive event of the harvesting season. Cross-referencing with other signifying devices, such as the preceding masculinized female workers whose images still linger with the audiences, this visualized codification of the Maoist ideal of the poor/working class is central to the reconstruction of the Socialist state.

In contrast, the representational emphasis shifts from the poor/working class to the proliferation and reconstitution of gender differences as the parade proceeds into China's reform era. This switch is visualized through a more diversified spectrum of color, contrastive apparel and hair style along the gender line, and the reformulated performing pattern. For example, "Youthful China," the mini show dedicated to Deng's era, features a group of young people in a ballroom-dancing-like performance. It distinguishes itself from the rest of the parade with the particular gender trope by pairing each male performer with a female partner rather than arraying them into one gender undifferentiated group. Juxtaposing male dancers with their female partners, this representational strategy reproduces and reinforces the gender difference via the cross-referencing between the robust, virile male bodies and the delicate, agile female bodies. The exotic postmodernist style of the costumes further engenders the performers by sexualizing their youthful body notwithstanding, it leaves little traces of class identity on their body, such as the cultural index of workers, peasants or bourgeoisie. Moreover,

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framing the young performers in partner dancing charges the show with overt hetero-romantic underpinnings.

The engendering symbolic regime is also applied to the mini shows that extol Jiang's and Hu's leadership. The one dedicated to Jiang features a group of young men waving colorful fans and marching forward against the strong wind, called "Crossing the Century." As the CCTV anchors said during the parade, these able-bodied, virile and vigorous young men who are waving fans and clearing obstacles one after another to stride towards their destination symbolize the super power of the Yangtze River that spearheads China through negative external environments into an auspicious new century. In this framing, China's transformation at the turn of the new century is said to be enabled by the young men's masculinity. When the parade proceeds to the show for the then incumbent President Hu Jintao, the gendered representational focus also shifts with a close-up on the emphasized curvaceous body of the female dancers. In so doing, the parade reaches its first crescendo to commemorate the past accomplishments and envision the brighter prospect, which I will further examine in the next part.

Interestingly, the engendering visual and narrative trope can also be found in the reconstructive effort about Mao's era. For instance, the masculinizing stricture over women's self-fashioning is reduced by the softened but awkward reframing of their body—revolutionary female proletariat in a modernist feminizing skirt. In the following *Ansai* Waist Drum Performance, the classed underpinning of the show is diluted by the CCTV anchors' gender saturated comment. As they said during the parade:

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With a history of over 2000 years, *Ansai* Waist Drum was a wartime

product. Now it has shed traces of conflicts in China's new era blessed by

peace and development, expressing the peasants' visceral joy for a

harvesting season and bountiful life. The intensive drums, staunch steps,

variable patterns and macho yell indicate *the masculine beauty* of loess

plateau men. The bold dancing posture and brilliant smile fully express

Chinese people's jubilance over their emancipation and democratic

political participation.

As a retrospective representation of the PRC's history, it is not surprising to see

that this ritual is duly filtered through a contemporary ideological prism. In *Theses of the*

Philosophy of History, Walter Benjamin (1969) astutely points out that all histories are

perceived through certain presumptions of the past that are inevitably constituted by the

ideology holding reign then. As he writes, "our image of happiness is thoroughly colored

by the time to which the course of our existence has assigned us to" (1969, p. 253). In

other words, the gendered reformulation of the working-class-based Maoist construction

of the state again verifies the centralized position of gender in this nationalist ritual. To

excavate the textured meaning of this symbolic switch from class to gender, further

scrutinization is required by situating it in the contemporary socio-economic upheavals in

neoliberal China.

In stark contrast to the anchors' Socialist-realism-informed appropriation of the

peasant heroes and joyful images of village life for the reinforcement of the Communist

rule (Hung, 1996), as the *de jure* "master of the country" according to the Chinese

Constitution, peasants have borne the major brunt of China's neoliberal restructuring and ironically dropped to the bottom of the social ladder. Many of them live in extreme poverty and misery. As Chin-Chuan Lee notes, "the beleaguered peasants, who comprise 70 percent of the national population and 50 percent of the labor force, have found their income in dramatic decline since 1997" (2003, p. 8). After China's accession to the WTO in 2001, the issue of unemployment is further exacerbated for peasants. As a result, the income ratio between urbanities and rural residents has galloped from 2.5 to 1 in 1980 to 3.28 to 1 in 2005. According to the International Labor Organization, only in three countries did this number exceed 2 as of 2005.[38] As the 2005 World Bank data reveals, 55.62 percent of the one-billion-strong rural inhabitants live on less than 2 dollars a day, which is considered conditions of extreme poverty.[39] Moreover, 41.4% of the national wealth is owned by 1 % of Chinese families, and of them, mostly urban residents.[40] As Harvey (2005) argues, neoliberal restructuring has recreated class inequalities in post-Socialist societies, such as China and Russia.

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[38] Hu, X. (2011, September 30). *Zhong guo cheng shi jie cheng xiang shou ru cha ju zui da de guo jia* (China becomes the country with the largest rural/urban inequality). *China Economic Weekly*. Retrieved from http://money.163.com/11/0920/01/7EBV0K7800252G50.html

[39] The World Bank. (n. d.) People living on less than 2 dollar a day. Retrieved from http://data.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/gstable2.pdf

[40] Xia, Y. (2010, June 8). *Zhong guo cai fu xiang shao shu ren ji zhong 1% jia ting zhang wo quan guo jin ban cai fu* (Wealth accumulated by small group of people 1% families owning nearly half of China's wealth). *China Web*. Retrieved from http://news.sohu.com/20100608/n272636720.shtml

The widening class gap after China's switch to neoliberalism has resulted in various forms of resistance, ranging from strikes, protesting suicides, appeals to higher authorities for help, violent revenge to massive uprising. For instance, in 2011 the suicide epidemic in a Guangdong located factory of Foxconn, the major contracted manufacturer of Apple, appalled the whole world.[41] The individual anxiety, hostility and despair permeating the Foxconn workers (or more appropriately, "Islaves" in an Applist term) channeled through the sporadic incidents later conflated and upgraded into large-scale strikes and bloody conflicts with management.[42] In January 2012, in a Wuhan-based factory of Foxconn, over a hundred workers threatened to commit suicide together after a futile marathon of negotiation with management.[43] Ironically, acting as an endearing ally, the state takes the side with capital to crack down these resistances to clear the obstacle for capital and its corporatized local deputies. It is worth reiterating here Louis Althusser's (2001) argument that oppressive state apparatuses cannot forestall all revolts and rebellions. The antagonism temporarily deferred by violent suppression will only accumulate and accrue into a threat with higher stakes for the state. To ward off the potential of massive tumult and chaos, it now costs the government more money to

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[41] China.org.cn. (2010, December 8). Foxconn suicide epidemic. Retrieved from http://www.china.org.cn/business/2010-12/08/content_21503685.htm

[42] NetEase. (2012, September 24). *Fu shi kang tai yuan gong chang bao fa da gui mo sao luan* (Massive revolts outburst in Taiyuan Foxconn). Retrieved from http://tech.163.com/12/0924/10/8C5KPPIR00094MOK.html

[43] *Xinhua Network*. (2012, January 12). *Fu shi kang bei bo fa sheng lao zi jiu fen bu fen yuan gong yang yan ji ti zi sha* (Foxconn said to have labor-management conflict some employees posed threat of collective suicide). Retrieved from http://news.sohu.com/20120112/n332026451.shtml

preempt domestic uprising than upgrading the military defensive capacity.[44] As a result,

the Maoist discourse of class and class struggle has to be silenced and even tabooed, in

mass media.[45] As China's neoliberal practices have deeply reshaped the class relationship,

and the state has abdicated its promise of building social equality, the disturbed power

triangulation of class, gender and state needs to be revamped for social stabilization. In

the next part, I will further investigate how and why gender becomes the central

normalizing technology to recreate the neoliberal Chinese nation-state from the historical,

symbolic and political perspectives.

Engendering the Neoliberal Chinese Nation-State

Gender is inherently intertwined with the (re)formulation of the Chinese nation-

state, providing the language and categories for the articulation and justification of family,

state and other social arrangements in history (Gilmartin et al., 1994). Since pre-modern

China, the gender relationship has been a crucial discursive and practical repository for

male monarchs to legitimize their way of ruling and organizing the feudalist system

(Zhang, 2013). As early as the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE), the social norm for

women prescribed by the Confucian classic, *Three Obediences and Four Virtues for*

Women laid the gendered foundation for the ideologico-political organization of the

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[44] For instance, to stifle the potential uprising, all pigeons in Beijing are mandated to be caged, and taxis windows closed during the CCP's 18th national congress. Kaiman, J. (2012, November 1). China congress: toy helicopters and pigeons vanish in security crackdown. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from
http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/nov/01/china-party-congress-restrictions

[45] For instance, a soap opera exposing the class inequality was soon banned by the Chinese authority after triggering large-scale repercussion (Liang, 2010).

state.[46] Codified by a female Confucian theorist, Ban Zhao, the gendered norm justifying women's subordination to men provided a referencing point for the submission of subjects to the emperor to normalize the feudalist political hierarchy. For example, in the Song Dynasty (960 CE to 1279 CE), a group of thinkers developed this Confucian doctrine into a new philosophical system that depicts "the family as the microcosm of civic virtues and skills: one learned to govern the state by managing one's own family" (Bray, 1997, p. 42). In other words, the gender relationship provided the hands-on rationale for the monarch to regulate and organize the political system of the imperial state.

The imperative to construct a modern state was heightened as the imperial order was disturbed by the Western colonial intrusion and grassroots rebellion. From the sixteenth century on, the feudalist state was challenged by a two-pronged threat deriving from the Western colonial pressure on the one hand, and domestic resistance on the other. Gender, again, became the primary domain for launching the pressing project of building a modernist state since the late nineteenth century, and women's body and sexuality were mobilized by male literati as the privileged signifier to elaborate on how to build a modernist Chinese state. For instance, as Lydia Liu (1994) suggests, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, two leading male scholars in the late Qing Dynasty, attributed China's socio-political crisis to the "uneducated and backward" Chinese women, and insisted that

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[46] In Confucian cannons, the three obediences require that a woman should obey her father before marriage, her husband when married, and her sons in widowhood. The four virtues include morality, proper speech, modest manner and diligent work. This idea was first proposed by a female historian, Ban Zhao.

the only way to build a modern Chinese nation-state should be to enlighten and emancipate these women. Likewise, since the late nineteenth century, Shanghai, the metropolitan vertex of competing ideological forces in modern Chinese history, has witnessed varied streams of discursive efforts centering on female prostitutes' sexuality to compete for the moral advantages to construct the modern state, providing a site that "embraced populations from various nations, regions, and classes, and harbored political agitators ranging from Christian moral reformers to Marxist revolutionaries" (Hershatter 1997, 7).

After the feudalist system was subverted in the early twentieth century, both Nationalist and Communist intelligentsia invoked gender to articulate their competing envisioning of how to build the state. For instance, the Chinese Communists defined "women's status as equal citizens as a marker of China's arrival at modernity," and the Nationalist Party incorporated the mobilization of women for emancipation as an indispensable part of the National Revolution in the 1930s (Gilmartin, 1994). After the 1949 peasant revolution, gender became a central territory for the Socialist economy and ideology. As Tani Barlow (1994) points out, compared with class, gender was a much safer category in that gender inequalities were considered "non-antagonistic contradictions," and people would not use it to analyze social injustice during the Maoist era. In this regard, it is not hard to see why gender would replace the Maoist discourse of the working class/peasant as the centralized signifier in China's prime celebration of its (contested) neoliberal accomplishments, which again attests to Lynne Segal's observation

that "the metaphorical utilization [of gender] is always intensified in times of crisis, or in the consolidation of new regimes of power" (1999, 43).

The relationship between gender and nation has long been a key topic for feminist scholars, and they have proffered a plethora of insightful critique of nation building as a masculinist project. As Joane Nagel argues, "masculinity and nationalism articulate well with one another, and the modern form of Western masculinity emerged at about the same time and place as modern nationalism" (1998, p. 250). Women are often relegated to minor, often symbolic roles in nationalist movements and conflicts, either as icons of nationhood to be elevated and defended, or as the booty or spoils of war to be denigrated and disgraced (Enloe, 1990). Like pre-modern China, feminist theorists have noted that the Western nations are often likened to a family by the male authority to legitimate the state political order (McClintock, 1991; Skurski, 1994). Women are treated as a universal "empty signifier" across cultures, waiting to be invested and imbued with exigent meanings to create, concretize and police nation-state boundaries and collective imagination. Just as Caren Kaplan, Norman Alarcon and Minoo Moallem (1999) suggest, the defining lines of women vary with the differential needs of nation building projects. Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989) also identified the specific ways in which women are involved with nation building through ethnic, national and state processes and practices. These feminist endeavors have unpacked the nation-state building as masculinist construction.

Building on the above-mentioned framework, feminist scholars have proffered numerous examples to unravel the relationship between women and nation. For instance,

Shawn Michelle Smith (1999) demonstrates that in U.S. history, the modern bourgeois

conception of Americanness in its early distinction from the British aristocracy was first

consolidated through the angelic, ethereal and sacrosanct moral ideal embodied by "true"

middle-class women. In post-colonial India, Uma Narayan (1997) shows that women

were assigned different symbolic roles to move forward the fundamentalist national

movement and anti-colonialist struggle. In her review of Afrikaaner and African

nationalisms, Anne McClintock (1991) astutely unpacks nationalism's naturalness and

universality by unfolding the meticulously framed images of women as its fabrics. These

analyses are illuminating, inspirational and perspicuous, however, by prematurely

replacing gender with women,[47] the broader critical possibilities are precluded that

gender as a lens of societal relationship could have opened up. In these examples, gender

is approached as a category of analysis (qua women) rather than an analytical category

for the broader social relation and structure as suggested by Joan Scott (1986). Moreover,

the masculinist nature of nation and nationalism by no means utterly excludes women's

agency, as suggested by the revisionist historian Dorothy Ko.[48] Therefore, a closer

examination of gender, nation and state would be necessitated to unravel the specific

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[47] As a social system and parameter of power, gender would structure the society based
on the perceived biological/sexual differences between men and women. So it does not
just apply to women, but also men in general.

[48] For instance, Dorothy Ko argues that women were not just mere victims of male-
dominated Confucian culture. Relying on their agency, women created their own space of
survival and meanings. See in Ko, D. (1995). *Teachers of the inner chambers: Women
and culture in seventeen-century China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Also
see Ko, D. (2005). *Cinderella's sisters: A revisionist history of foot binding*. Berkeley,
CA: University of California Press.

mechanism that gender is highlighted for the normalization of China's neoliberal *status quo*.

A critical exploration of the signifying mechanism for knowledge making can help unravel the intertwined constructions of gender and nation for clarification. As Roland Barthes (1972) maintains, human signification activities proceed at two different but interrelated levels, namely, denotative and connotative. Building on this differentiation, Stuart Hall suggests that denotation is "widely equated with the literal meaning of a sign: because this literal meaning is almost universally recognized." In contrast, connotation is "employed simply to refer to less fixed and therefore more conventionalized and changeable, associative meanings" (2006, 168). Compared with arbitrary and unstable connotative level, denotative domain is more naturalized as "fixed." These two levels are interconnected in that a denotative category could become a fixated plateau for the signification of broader meanings, creating what Barthes calls "myth" (1972). In human histories, such categories as race, gender and sexuality, due to their intimate relation to body, are often naturalized to generate authentic meanings for political claims that are otherwise more open and subject to challenges and rearticulations (Findlay, 2000, p. 11). We can see that the manipulation, alteration and (re)configuration of the bodily categories often prevail when contestations, exchanges, distortions and cross-pollinations over the politico-economic assumptions of nation-state are intensified, as suggested by Segal using gender as an example (1999).

However, as Pheng Cheah (2007) points out, as a more recent historical construct, nation is not always welded to state, and this is particularly true when the party-state has

deviated from its earlier promise of leading the Chinese nation and people towards social justice and equality. As the neoliberal practices have fundamentally restructured the social relations and recreated social injustice, the party-state turns to the cultural categories of nation and nationalism for legitimation (Goldman & Macfarquhar 1999). As perceived by the Communists, nationalism will help renew and reaffirm the state-defined boundaries between "us" and "them" to reunify the fractured society by the economic reform. However, as Yongnian Zheng (2004) argues, there is always disparity between state-inculcated nationalism and populist nationalism in Chinese history. In as early as the May 4th social movement at the turn of the twentieth century, the anti-imperialist sentiment of the patriotic students ran counter to the policy of appeasement by the Chinese government, entailing massive nationalist movements against the state. More recently, in the state-organized nationwide anti-Japanese protests in 2012, the nationalist substantiation crossed the state-set boundary and turned into democratic and anti-corruption demonstrations in many places, having tremendously stretched the nerves of the Communist bureaucrats. As Chin-Chuan Lee suggests, "the authorities have tried to contain the popular contour within the official trajectory, fearful that an unrestrained spate of mass feelings might detour or even endanger the state's other policy interests and, worse yet, could turn inwards against the regime itself" (2003, p. 3). On this account, we need to further query the specific mechanism by which the sovereign power re-hyphenates the Chinese nation with the re-morphed state.

Pivotal to the construction of nation-state is the creation of a cogent concept of "people." As Agemben (2000) argues, the idea of "people" today is a social construct for

upholding the otherwise illusive concept of state. Different from race that is peculiar to the Western context for social formation (Winant, 2004), and sexuality tabooed in modern human societies (Foucault, 1990), as a category inherent to human procreation and development, gender seems a more general and "universal" parameter for the Communists to reconstruct an inclusive image of Chinese people to recuperate the splintered nation. As we can see in the parade, gender is employed to not only dampen the Maoist class ideology, but also subsume differences of class, ethnicity, religion and region undergirding the Chinese society into a homogenizing image of Chinese people. The recreation of an imagined Chinese national community *as a cultural construction* is enabled and enacted through the gendered performance, which needs to be tethered to the state *as a political entity*.

As a cultural category, the gendered national identity of Chineseness has not been incorporated into the political domain, and is thus unprotected by any sovereign power, fitting into what Agamben (2000, 2009) calls "bare life"—human beings as natural/biological entities undefined by the state for the political belongings. As Agamben suggests, the inclusion of bare life into the sovereignty constitutes the original nucleus of state formation. As he writes, "the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power" (2000, p. 6). Drawing upon Ferdinand de Saussure's theorization of linguistic formation as an analogy, Agamben clarifies how this works. Langue, as framed by Saussure as the intrinsic structure of a language system, comprises a stabilized structure for the day-to-day use of this language system as what he calls "parole." Despite the variable and alterable features of parole, langue is stable, constant,

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and therefore comprising the static and fixated underlying structure of a language system. Using the langue-parole relationship as an analogy, Agamben contends that the defining capacity of citizenry is the foundational source of sovereign power for the state. In other words, defining who to include and who to exclude is the essential index of the sovereign authority. Moreover, as Ong points out, citizenship is not simply a political identity wed to certain state, but also a process of subject-making entangled with the racial, gender and national dynamics. Terming this process as "cultural citizenship," she suggests it is "the cultural practice and beliefs produced out of negotiating the often ambivalent and contested relations with the state and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of belonging within a national population and territory" (1996, p. 738). Through a synergistic reading of these two theorists' works, now it is not difficult to understand how the Chinese state is (re)produced through the defining and redefining of the Chinese citizenry via a gender parameter, which can be further elucidated through a critical analysis of the mini show devoted to Hu, the then incumbent Chinese president.

The festive fervor of the civilian parade comes to the crescendo with the show designed as the footnote of the socio-economic achievements of the PRC in the past sixty years, particularly in its reform era. Titled "Blessing China," it also aims to delimit a futurist image for the PRC. Naming China as its direct object, this show establishes an interlocution between the audience and the state via the performers as the symbolic bridge. As the song accompanying it suggests, the real subject of the commemorating ritual is all Chinese people. To cite its lyrics:

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Today is your birthday, my China. In the morning I released a flock of white

doves. The doves are flying through high mountain ridges, bringing you an olive

leaf. We are celebrating your birthday, my China, wishing you free of suffering

and serene forever. The Doves are flying across the sky and ocean, bringing you

the nostalgia of your children far apart. A wish that the moon would always be at

the full and your children always be happy is recounted from your children far

apart. The doves are flying against the wind and through the rain, bringing you a

golden ear of wheat. A wish that you would prosper regardless of the bad weather

is chanted whole-heartedly by your children.

Titled *Today is Your Birthday, My China*, this song was composed for China's 40th

anniversary shortly after the 1989 Tiananmen massacre. It aims to recreate a caring and

protective parental imagery for the state and rebuild its affective connection with Chinese

people in its crisis of legitimacy after the militant suppression of the civilian protests. In

the post 9/11 U.S., the similar strategy was also employed by the Bush administration to

reclaim the sovereign power of the state through the constructed image of a masculine

paternalistic guardian for American people in return of their allegiance and abdication of

certain civil rights (Young, 2003). Compared with the "strong and dominant" fatherly

figure of the U.S. protecting its people, this song depicts China as a gentle and caressing

feminine figure with the unreserved love for her children, seeking to purge the memory

of the genocides that was still fresh on people's mind. By comparing the post 9/11 U.S.

with the post Tian'anmen China, we can see that as a parameter for the construction of

the state, the contour gender always varies with the exigency and contingency of the specific case.

When recycled twenty years later, the gendered meanings laden with this song has been reframed for the different politico-economic background. In the show, acting as the surrogate subject for all Chinese people, a group of young and attractive female dancers take the central position of the camera to dedicate their warmest bliss to the state's 60th birthday. As the close-ups move up and down with their curvaceous body, their femininity is foregrounded and reproduced through the highlighted flexible and nimble bearing, subordinate expression and posture. The specially designed petal-shaped costumes, coupled with the agile and lithesome choreography further reinforce their femininity as submissive and compliant (to the powerful and masculine state). Surrounded by these dancers is a float shaped into a peony. As this huge flower grows into full blossom, it unfolds and upholds a female dancer wobbling her tender sleeves ethereally and submissively to the absented and abstracted state, only to add to the feminizing flavor of this statist occasion. As the surrogate subject of the celebration ritual, the dancers' emphasized supple and delicate womanhood not only feminize all Chinese people, but also galvanize the superb masculine prowess of the state as the unspecified interlocutor. Anchored in the antithesis between the effeminate citizenry and the masculinized state, the entity of the Chinese nation-state is reimagined and re-stabilized through gender as the normalizing technology.

Here Foucault's theorization of governmentality (2008) is instructive to recognize the contingent and exigent significance of this gendered normalizing technology in

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contemporary China. As Foucault argues, the state is not a finished and static entity, but both the object and product of certain type of governmentality. On the one hand, one only governs a state that is already there, and one only governs within the framework of a state. On the other, "[t]he art of government must therefore fix its rules and rationalize its way of doing things by taking as its objective the bringing into being of what the state should be" (2008, 4). Simply put, the shape of the state is formulated and reformulated through certain ways of governing. As Hui Wang (2003, 2009) notes, well preceding the Seattle and Washington social protests at the turn of the new century, the Tiananmen social movement is probably the first massive social resistance to the detriment of neoliberal restructuring in the world. Thereafter, China's twenty years of neoliberal practices has fundamentally transformed the Chinese society, enlarging the pre-1989 mediocre level of social inequalities to one of the highest in the world. The new socio-economic conditions shaped by the neoliberal practices necessitate the reformation of the statehood by decoupling it from the previous module anchored in the Maoist rhetoric of the working class/peasant to a new imagery animated by gender. This change is not only indigenous to China, but common in the context of neoliberal globalization. As Chandra Mohanty (2003) notes, Anglo-Saxon masculinity is now reproduced on a worldwide scale with the accelerated neoliberal restructuring. In this sense, the new Chinese statehood is incarnated and infused with a new personality by the gendered normalizing technology. This technology has also reconstructed the Chinese citizenship and welded it to the new imagery of the state, recreating the nation-state imagination in China's neoliberal conditions.

However, as Roderick A. Ferguson (2004) points out, as a site of identification, this ritual would provide a terrain in which seemingly antagonistic formations, such as Socialism and neoliberalism would find unanticipated convergence with each other via their mutual identification with certain established social norms. As Munoz (1999) astutely argues, queer of color analysis provides the useful hermeneutic instrument of disidentification to decode the pre-constituted cultural identities from within. In this regard, by deconstructing the categories of gender and state through a genealogical reading of their formation in the history of the PRC, I will illustrate how the biopolitics of sexuality that is textured into the intersection gender and class, grounds the insidious linchpin between Socialist China and neoliberal China.

The Heteronormative Linkage of Socialist and Neoliberal China

In *The History of Sexuality, Vol. One*, Foucault (1990) demonstrates that sexuality is a biopolitical technology through which the European states regulated and managed the new modality of capitalist market economy. By delegitimizing all forms of sexual behaviors outside hetero-patriarchal nucleus families, the states could efficaciously direct social resources into the reproduction and nurturing of capable humans for the burgeoning market and capital. In the U.S., Jonathan Ned Katz (2010) finds that the concept of heterosexuality was first created by doctors in 1892 to normalize the desire with a monolithic other-sex inclination and procreative aim. Almost at the same time, the category "homosexuals" was used as the antithesis to the normative heterosexual desire, which defined a person whose general mental state is that of the opposite sex. On this account, Siobhan Sommerville (2000) is correct by arguing that the notion of deviant

homosexuality was first invented at the end of the nineteenth century in the U.S. to clarify and demarcate the gender line as an attempt to uphold the imperative heterosexuality.

Different from the Western societies, in pre-modern China, despite thousands of years of homoerotic/homoromantic practices, particularly between noble men, homosexuality as a derogatory identity had long been absent. In the literary tradition, the desire for sodomy and fellatio is often positively depicted as desirable and gentrified (Wu, 2002; Wang, 2002). In contrast to the draconian punishment of homosexuals in the modern Western societies, the juristic regulation of homosexuality in China had been remarkably lax and lenient until very recently. In *Sex, Law and Society in Late Imperial China*, Mathew H. Sommer (2000) challenges the popular conception that the year 1723 (during the reign of Emperor Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty) marked the watershed for the establishment of a sodomy law. With a detailed reading of a number of law cases, Sommer argues that the penalties for homosexual offenses were not more severe than similar heterosexual rapes, and it was homosexual rape instead of consensual sodomy that was on the focus of Qing law makers' attention. As for the establishment of a substatute detailing penalties for sodomy in 1734, he suggests that the impetus was to ensure that homosexual rape would not be over-punished compared to similar heterosexual cases. Sommer's review of the law system clearly demonstrates the relatively amiable social environment in pre-modern China. As Pan Suiming, the leading Chinese sociologist of sexuality, asserts, the austere punishment of homosexuals is a

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recent product by the Maoist state with the clearly pronounced purpose of protecting

procreation and women.[49]

The putative control of homosexuality is part and parcel of the calculated control

and regulation of population by the Maoist state. As Tyrsene White (1994) notes, from

the early 1950s, Zhou Enlai, the then incumbent Premier, began to conduct nationwide

investigation to plummet the living conditions of workers, and then found that

households with fewer children were enjoying better living standard. However, the

proposal of birth control was rejected by Mao because he preferred the idea of "birth

planning." As Mao saw it, incorporating the regulation of women's reproductive

capacities into the comprehensive social organization and designing, which he believed to

be within the reach of the party-state, would be conducive to his romanticized schemata

of constructing a new China. On this account, because of Mao's optimistic view about

China's overall capacity of agricultural and industrial productivity, "throughout most of

the 1950s the Chinese government took a decidedly pronatalist position and did little to

alter traditional expectations of marital fertility" (Davis & Harrell, 1993). Thereafter,

despite the failure of the Great Leap Forward and the ensuing nationwide famine, the

state did not readjust its planning focus, and promote birth control until after the 1960s.

The fertility rate then fell from 5.8 in 1970 to 2.7 in 1978 (Davis & Harrell, 1993). With

the imperative to encourage more procreation for the Socialist construction, it is therefore

not difficult to understand why the Maoist state would have legislated the rigid and

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[49] See the interview with Pan. Retrieved from
http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDA4MTY0MTY0.html

draconian punishment of homosexuals since its foundation. For instance, homosexuality was categorized as a type of neuropathy and crime called "hooliganism" in Mao's era.

The procreation imperative also informed and spawned the hetero-patriarchal norm in Maoist China. Different from Marx, Engels (2010) emphasizes that besides social production, reproduction also underlies human societies as the development foundation. Thus Engels brings back the issue of women to the politico-economic agenda of the state with the presupposition that they would take a central role in procreation to engineer social developments, naturalizing heterosexuality as an imperative for the Socialist state. As the ideological and intellectual scaffold of the Socialist states, this conception of historical materialism "along with liberal ideology, took normative heterosexuality as the emblem of order, nature, and universality, making that which deviated from hetero-patriarchal ideals the sign of disorder" (Ferguson, 2004, p. 6). On this account, though the Maoist state opened up more opportunities for women to work outside to facilitate the economy and sustain the Socialist ideology, it kept intact the hetero-patriarchal structure where women took a lesser position and major responsibilities of managing the household. As Maria Mies (1999) critiques, Engels's construal of gender and family is the co-optation of feminism by the male-controlled Socialist movements to compete for state power.

Marxism finds the linkage with its intellectual enemy liberalism on the issue of heteronormativity. With the urbanization and industrialization of Chicago in the early twentieth century as an example, as Ferguson (2004) illustrates, the liberal ideology also presumes heteronormativity as the foundation of social developments. The large number

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of poor and working-class immigrants would disturb the heterosexual normality and dimorphic gender system, thus threatening capitalism and market economy, as many bourgeois ideologues worried. Despite their heteronormative commonality, liberalism and Marxism diverge in their remedies to the sexual and gender alternatives. Liberalists seek to assimilate the working class sexual and gender deviants into the middle class familial paradigm, and Marxists trumpet the proletarian patriarchal family as the foundation of gender egalitarianism.

Heteronormativity also anchors China's transition from Socialism to neoliberalism. In the late 1970s, the Deng's administration inherited the Maoist concept of "birth planning," and translated it into a new version of Planned Family. Written into the law, this biopolitical regulation of the population hinges on the calculated management of women's reproductive capacity. As part of the 1980 constitutional amendments, Planned Family is stipulated as the basic state policy to manage the size and quality of Chinese population in accordance with the socio-economic development rather than the mere control of birth rate. Alongside the regulation of women's fertility is the management of gender and sexual norm. As we have discussed in chapter one, China's reform and opening up have witnessed the prevalence of an essentialized conception of gender difference. Meanwhile, the criminalization and pathologization of homosexuality by law has given way to other forms of policing, such as the popular culture (Rofel, 2007). No longer a type of crime, homosexuality is consolidated as a social identity which not only cordons off queerness as inferiority, but also marks out heterosexuals as normality.

As for the intersection of gender and sexuality, Judith Butler (2006) argues that premised on the presupposition of the compulsory heterosexuality, the dimorphic gender system is established through the repetitive performing of the unification of the gender of the performance, and the gender and anatomical sex of the performers. In this regard, in neoliberal China, the dimorphized genderscape is warranted by the heteronormativity that is achieved by overcoming the homosexual desire. In this regard, as we can see, in the mini show dedicated to Deng's era—the watershed between Maoist China and neoliberal China, by pairing men and women in ballroom dancing, a cultural milieu of the courting for a heterosexual relationship, gender is not just recreated as oppositional and complimentary, but also heterosexual and heteronormative.

As Marxism differs from liberalism in the disparate manifestations of heteronormative gender relationship, the hetero-patriarchy also takes different contours in Socialist and neoliberal China. In next chapter, I will focus on the bourgeois nucleus family as the neoliberal norm to interrogate the intersectional biopolitics of gender, class and sexuality that is mobilized to facilitate and legitimize China's neoliberal transition.

Chapter Three

Localizing Transnational Culture Industry of Love

In April 2010, according to CVSC-Sofres Media, an authoritative media research organization partnered with CCTV, *If You Are the One* (shortened as *IF* hereafter), within only three months after the inauguration, took over the laurel of the most popular entertainment TV program from *Happy Camp*, the decade-long king of the Chinese television market.[50] During the first half of 2010, the show kept breaking ratings records, with around 50 million watching every episode. As a parochial weekend night dating game show, on the viewing rate chart it is only secondary to *Network News Broadcast* and *Weather Forecast*, two flagships of CCTV mandated by the state for broadcasting on provincial level TV stations.[51] *IF*'s success in the attention market also translates into handsome economic returns—only in 2012, it seized commercial revenues totaling over 1,800 million Chinese Yuan (about 300 million U.S. dollars).[52]

As a televisual spectacle, the influence of *IF* extends well beyond media industry— it has escalated into a socio-cultural sensation via a bold strategy of incessantly

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[50] Yahoo.com. (n. d.). *If you are the one*: Entertainment program with social values. Retrieved from http://yxk.cn.yahoo.com/articles/20100522/33y7.html

[51] Wang, X. (2010). Exploring women's status through *If you are the one*. *Magnificent Writing*, 20, p. 19.

[52] *China Business Today*. *Wei shi guang gao hun zhan: Fei cheng wu rao 2012 nian xi jin 18 yi* (Provincial star Ts fighting for commercial market: If you are the one generated 1.8 billion Yuan in 2012). Retrieved from (http://biz.cn.yahoo.com/ypen/20130412/1701833.html. The commercial revenue of *IF* is also only secondary to that of *Network News Broadcast* and *Weather Forecast* in 2012.

tantalizing the audience by stirring up, fermenting, fueling and refueling controversies over morality of love, marriage, family and gender relation. In each episode, the program features four to five male participants who strive to take one of the twenty four women on the stage as his potential date within a three-round game. Despite its avowed programmatic specialization in dating game, the central tenor of this show, as stated by its producer, is not so much about coupling heterosexual partners as exhibiting the new generation's view on love in a spontaneous and non-concocted way.[53] For instance, Ma Nuo, a female contestant triggered a massive social debate over the ethics of gender relationship for her unscrupulous propagation of the "love for money" *telos* in the program. Moreover, the representation of the female guests with Ph.D. degree as the unlovable underdog in the TV bazaar of love and provocative flaunting of wealth by "affluent second generation" (*fu er dai*), also generated as much controversial attention, if not more. As Zhang (2010) states, this program bluntly flirts with and exposes the anxiety, tension and confusion of the post-80s and post-90s urban youth that are embedded in China's socio-economic upheavals through exaggerated visual and narrative tropes of their money-and-appearance driven love-seeking pragmatics. As Peijie Wang, the producer of the show claims, the show provides a lens for us to examine the Chinese

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[53] Wu, N. (2012, September 22). *Hun lian jie mu "fei cheng wu rao" de jia zhi fen xi* (Analysis on the value of TV dating game show if you are the one). Retrieved from http://www.jingyinglunwen.com/article/2012/0922/article_11549_2.html

society at large, and through it, "you can tell what China is thinking about and chasing after."[54]

IF is part and parcel of the increasingly commercialized Chinese media outlets, which, as Yuezhi Zhao (2009) maintains, are both the fruits of market reforms and the very means of China's marketization and re-integration into the global order of capital. The apparently state-controlled reorganization of the communication system along the market logic since the early 1980s is an integral part of China's transition to market mechanism as well as the global restructuring to formulate a truly global communication system (Zhao, 2003). In this regard, to better understand *IF* and its significance in and to China's socio-economic upheavals, we need to situate this cultural milieu in a broader context of the state-directed marketization of Chinese communication system. As Vincent Mosco contends, "communication is a social process of exchange whose product is the mark or embodiment of a social relationship" (1996, p. 72), and in this case, it essentially marks China's transition from Socialism to neoliberalism.

The commercialization of Chinese communication system, to a great extent, encapsulates China's experimental features of neoliberalization. As Zhao indicates, it was first initiated "as much from calculated neoliberal state policy initiatives from above as from the structural pressures of a developing market economy and the imperative for the modernization of the media system, the economic self-interest of media organizations and state media managers, as well as the state's desire to divest itself of the burden of

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[54] Wong, E. (2011, December 31). China TV grows racy, and gets a chaperon. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/01/world/asia/censors-pull-reins-as-china-tv-chasing-profit-gets-racy.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

financial subsidies" (2008, p. 77). The introduction of advertising into TV and the permission of private sellers of newspapers in the late 1970s signified the commercializing shift of mass media. However, mass media's liberalizing effects unleashed by market (though in a highly restricted way) kindled Chinese people's long-subdued passion for democratic discussion, which incurred serious concerns for the Communist leadership. As Zhao (1998) suggests, the 1988 documentary River Elegy (*He Shang*) had played a no small role in fermenting the massive challenge of the Communist bureaucracy and yearning for the Western democracy as a prelude to the 1989 Tiananmen Square movement. The crackdown on the movement then had the effect of suppressing democratic discourses of people's equal participation and re-imposed draconian political control on media (Zhao, 1998). Thereafter, not until the Party's unreserved embrace of a market economy in 1992 was the commercialization of mass media resumed and promoted to a full scale. As Chin-Chuan Lee (2000) states, since then China's media reformation has witnessed a scene full of "ambiguities and contradictions," resulting in the current mixture of the Party guidance and market logic.

Like other social sectors, the marketization of media proceeded under the directive of the party-state, first launched at the very top of the state media with the implementation of a business-oriented experiment. For instance, in the 1980s, with the new policy of "Public Institutions Operated as Enterprises," the government incentivized central party organs, news agencies, radio and TV stations for market activities for extra revenues, seeking to change the monopolistic state-supported modality. [55]As part of the

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[55] Ge, W. (2011, June 16). *Zhong guo te se chuan mei ti zhi: Li shi yan ge yu fa zhan* (Media system with Chinese characteristics—History and development). *Qiushi Theory*

neoliberal attempt at streamlining the government, the state was eager to dislodge its

financial responsibilities, and "used the core and affluent Party press as a sponge to

absorb the unprofitable, chaotic, and disobedient 'small papers' and magazines" (Lee,

2003, p. 10). Meanwhile, under the mandate of increasing China's soft power in the

global competition, the recentralization campaigns were introduced in an attempt to build

media conglomerates to compete for market shares at provincial, national and

transnational levels since the mid-1990s (Zhao, 1998). As designated by the state, market

competition would not simply optimize the reallocation of resources and reduce the

financial burden of the state, but also sharpen the overall competitiveness of the Chinese

communication industry. In this context, Jiangsu Broadcasting Corporation (JSBC), the

producer and distributor of *IF*, was established in 2001 with a goal set as "centered in

Jiangsu, excelling in Eastern China, taking the lead in the country and building the global

influence."[56] As a multi-media conglomerate, JSBC's businesses include television, radio,

film, newspaper, website as well as distribution of visual-audio products.[57]

    The restructuring of the media system pushed forward by headlong administrative

orders soon confronted an array of problems. To name a few, the issues arose from

budget plan to personnel regulation, from allocation of resources to the distribution of

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Web. Retrieved from
http://www.qstheory.cn/wh/whtzggyfz/201106/t20110616_87758.htm
[56] See the website of Jiangsu Broadcasting Corporation, http://www.jsbc.com/

[57] As the website of JSBC claims, it "incorporates 14 television channels, including 2
satellite television channels (Jiangsu Satellite Channel and International Channel), 7
terrestrial television channels (City Channel, Variety Show Channel, Film and TV
Channel, Public Channel, Channel Win, Children's Channel and Business Channel), 4
digital pay TV channels (Fashion Channel, Kid's Education Channel, English Education
Channel and Fortune Channel) as well as a mobile TV channel (Jiangsu Mobile TV)."
See the website http://www.jstv.com/jsbc_en/corporation/about_us/index.shtml

profits. As the state-engineered recentralization and conglomeration did not fully accomplish the marketizing goal of the communication system, after the 15th Party National Congress a new project called "cultural system reform" was initiated in 2003 to boost communication's commercialization through a strategy called "divestment." As Zhao notes, "by spinning off market-oriented operations from existing party-state media conglomerates and turning these operations into relatively autonomous market entities that are free to absorb outside capital and pursue market-oriented expansion" (2008, p. 112), the commercializing logic of media is deepened while the state control over media is also strengthened. For instance, in a media organization, the business part of the operation such as advertising, printing and distribution, would be severed from the hardcore editorial department. In this regard, "by allowing the media to internally differentiate into editorial, non-business section and business section, it emboldens the media to pursue profits in a more unabashed and effective manner" (Zhao, 2008, p. 112). *IF* is a good example of this "divestment" initiative. In this system, while Jiangsu Star TV, the flagship in the JBC group, holds control over the editing and producing right of the program, guaranteeing its "correct" political route, the marketing and advertising are outsourced to private capital, efficaciously fusing the program with the need of audience on the one hand, and the impulse of the advertising market on the other hand.

The "cultural system reform" is not simply a voluntary initiation adopted by the state to further China's neoliberal transition by transforming its media apparatus, but also a response to the demand of transnational media industry heightened by China's accession into the WTO in 2001. As the "last" most lucrative industry in China (Zhao, 2008), the highly protected media market has long been coveted by transnational capital.

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The entry into the WTO becomes a legitimate conduit for transnational media corporations to extend the scope and depth of their penetration into the Chinese market, both through and beyond the formal provisions of China's WTO accession agreements (Zhao, 2003). For instance, there is a demand that China gradually increases the annual quota of films imported from Western countries, particularly Hollywood, from 10 to 50 as part of its responsibilities as a WTO member (Zhao, 2003). Meanwhile, the Chinese political elites also use the WTO entry as both material and symbolic opportunities to pursue the "divestment" agenda in a way they can still sustain their reign. Within the new structure, foreign investment in software components, such as information infrastructure, service provision, and technological knowledge, is viewed as compatible with the state's agenda, but under no circumstances will the government relinquish its authority over the hardware components, such as editorial right (Lee, 2003).

To sidestep the state's control over the editorial core of the communication industry, transnational media corporations employ an array of flexible strategies. For instance, they try to extend their penetration and expand market share by selling copyrights rather than directly participating in production. This move also lends the Western experiences to Chinese media to create a shortcut to economic success. Two highly popular and profitable TV programs, *China's Got Talents* and *The Voice of China*, the Chinese version of their Western counterparts (e.g. *Britain's Got Talents* and *The Voice of America*), are two recent examples of this complicit relationship. In 2009, Hunan Star TV (the producer and distributor of *Happy Camp*), the primary rival of JSBC, bought the copyright of *Take Me Out*, a British dating game show from one of the largest transnational media juggernauts, Bertelsmann's RTL Group, turning it into a Chinese

version with the same name (hereafter *CTMO*). In January 2010, Jiangsu Star TV

followed Hunan Star TV's suit and launched the mimicry of *CTMO*, *If You Are the One*

as its own brand name program. This confrontational encounter of two major media

agglomerates soon resulted in an inflation of dating game shows—over fifteen programs

of this ilk mushroomed on China's provincial TV stations, producing a nationwide

televisual topology of love competition, or to borrow Max Horkheimer and Theodore

Adorno's term (2010), the "culture industry" of love. For Chinese media under the

stricture of the interlocked party control and market force, pushing the commercial

boundary of entertainment to the limit of certain universal human values (e.g. love) rather

than others (e.g. human rights) would be a politically safe and economically wise strategy

for the media corporations to maximize the profits without transgressing the Party line. In

this regard, love is instrumentalized for the commercialization of Chinese mass media in

particular, and China's neoliberal transition in general. As a result, "if the vulgar was

once denounced by both state Socialist and liberal cultural elites, 'kowtowing to the

vulgar' is now the mantra of the Chinese media industry" (Zhao, 2008, p. 87).

The restructuring of Chinese media system to simultaneously serve the party-state

and cater to market forces is thus at the core of China's neoliberal transition. It also

epitomizes China's specific mode of socio-economic transition under the mantra of the

"Asian Model," which is distinguished by strategic state planning and intervention for the

regulation of capital accumulation and labor market (Kang, 2012). Under this *suis generis*

modality of neoliberalism, the polarized understanding of Chinese media system through

either "Maoist nationalist" or "Western democratic" prism would not be conducive to our

understanding of the dating game shows like *IF* as an index of the contemporary Chinese

media culture. Both Yuezhi Zhao (2003) and Anthony Fung (2008) have unpacked these binaristic frameworks. As they see it, the party-state and its well-controlled communication system is neither external to the global changes nor completely subordinate to the democratic influence unfolded by the opening up of the domestic communication market. As Fung suggests, in times of globalization, the increasingly marketized and globalized Chinese media system will not inevitably undermine the Party's authoritarian control and lead to the Western (U.S. particularly) model of democracy. Rather, the transnational media corporations/capital and the Chinese state are interwoven with each other, "and the move of one party will also impinge on the subsequent strategies of the other" (2008, p. vx). Rather than an utterly passive receptor or absolutist self-reliant agent, the party-state is in actuality actively mobilizing and reshaping transnational media capital and culture to suit its own neoliberal tenor. By fusing the market needs with the Party line, the Chinese state has successfully transformed the Chinese media from a brainwashing state apparatus to "Party publicity Inc" (He, 2000, 2003). Jing Wang (2001) further relates this transformation to the broader domain of popular culture that has been cast and recast by the state politico-economic agenda. As she writes, "the state's rediscovery of culture as a site where new ruling technologies can be deployed and converted simultaneously into economic capital constitutes one of its most innovative strategies of statecraft since the founding the People's Republic." On this account, the multiplication of dating game shows like *IF* should be read as a hybridized form of "indoctriment" that is situated in China's neoliberal transition and re-integration with the global capital network.

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Following this framework and drawing from critical theory, this chapter seeks to elucidate the cognitive link between *IF* as an instrumentalizing media spectacle of love and neoliberal turn, and specify how this intellectual/policy transition is localized in the Chinese context through the biopolitical technologies. In so doing, I hope to lay bare how the localized biopolitical technologies are also part of the racialized, gendered, classed and (hetero)sexualized regulation of the global division of labor. Before I start, I want to emphasize that this fathoming of the state-sponsored biopolitics invested in the show does not rule out the agency and active voice of the participants and audience, as suggested by the British cultural studies theorists (see in Hall, 1980; Morley, 1983). In chapter five, I would further discuss the audience's (often contested) interpretations of this mediated biopolitical technology.

Instrumentalized Love

As modeled after *CTMO*, *IF* is a spin-off (if not the direct copy) of the British dating game show *TMO* with limited changes.[58] In the course of each episode, usually five (rather than four in *TMO*) male guests are brought onto the stage via a glamorously decorated love lift. The objective is also slightly altered as a man to gain a date with one of twenty four (rather than thirty) single women. Except for these alterations, *IF* outright resembles *TMO* in its programmatic settings. As can be seen, each selected woman stands on the stage underneath a light with a button of control in the front for them to signal their choice. At any point of the show, they can switch off their light as an indication of

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[58] Despite some slight changes of programmatic design, Jiangsu Star TV was charged by Hunan Star TV for its violation of the copyright. *Xinhua Daily*. (2010, April 8). *Fei cheng wu rao xian ru ban quan zheng duo zhan* (*If you are the one* gets into trouble for copyright issue). Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/dfpd/2010-04/08/content_9701054.htm

rejection. Every male guest needs to impress the women in a series of three rounds through prerecorded videos called *The First Impression of Love*, *The Second Thought on Love* and *The Final Decision about Love*. These videos usually cover such topics as male constant's statement of personal background, description of his ideal date and his families' or friends' comment on him. In the emulation of regular date, this love selection is reciprocal as every bachelor has the right to select his first-sight "attraction lady" before the game starts off. If, at the end of three rounds, there are still more than two lights left on, the bachelor's right will be upgraded as he will turn off all but two of the remaining lights and decide who would be his date. He can ask one question to the finalists before making a decision (of taking out one or none of them). If only one light is still on, he will have to make the decision whether to go on a date with that woman without asking his questions.

The program is scripted so that all male guests are in competition with each other though they might not participate in a confrontational encounter. The number of lights a man can keep on is the only token of victory in this game. If any contestant can keep all 24 lights on (the number was later reduced to 22) and take away a woman, he and his date would get a free trip to a fancy tourist resort reputed for romantic encounters as a trial of honey moon. For those lucky ones, a glorification of delightful scattering of pedals and blithesome music will add to the festivity of their victory—a blessing scenario only reserved for a bridegroom and his lifelong beloved one. Moreover, the number of the lights does not just determine a contestant's male right of selection, but also constitutes a verifiable token as the testimony to his masculine charisma—to the women,

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the audience and most important, his male competitors. As Michael Kimmel (1996) astutely points out, masculinity, to a great extent, is a homosocial construction among male peers. To testify and confirm one's masculinity, it necessitates both virtual and symbolic control of women in the presence of his male rivals (Connell, 2005; Pascoe, 2007). For instance, in the gendered spectacle sponsored by this show, the consolidation and confirmation of one's masculinity hinges on women's attentive and affective responses symbolized by the turning-on-and-off of lights-tokens.

Different from their male counterparts, the competition between female participants is staged as much more explicit and even vengeful—sometimes as an overt fight for a commonly coveted man, and more often than not a covert emulation for the title of the "attraction lady." As the rule states, in contradiction to the short stage life of men, women could stay until they finds their Mr. Right or opt to withdraw. Granted enough space and time, the selected women could maneuver the stage in their own favor to impress the participating bachelors as well as the myriad behind-the-screen backups by exhibiting their embodied beauty, glamor and/or virtue. If a woman is successfully matched up with a man, a substitute will be brought on with a self-introduction—it should be good enough to strike a lingering impression on male contestants and audiences. In this sense, the competition between female participants starts with their first appearance, and continues to ferment and intensify as the plots of the show unfold.

This script is interpreted by some commentators as "feminist subversion of the traditional gender paradigm because it enshrines the women to a domineering and

judging position (of men)."[59] This argument is not entirely persuasive because it ignores that the men also hold the right of selecting, not to mention concealing the social structure of gender, sexuality and class that all women have to put themselves through for self-censoring and posturing in return for applause and social recognition. As a new genre of reality show, Chinese dating game show is definitely a site of gender politics, but not as a confirmation of which party is taking the lead,[60] rather a televised arena with love staked as the ultimate prize. Actually, TV dating game show was introduced from Western societies into China in as early as the mid-1990s. As a revamped TV version of blind date—a traditional conduit for arranged marriage in the Chinese society, this old genre features men and women of equal number, often paired in a one-to-one interaction. This type of show had soon lost its appeal to a younger generation cultured in a liberal and individualistic environment, as well as competitiveness in the Chinese media market by the new century. A decade later, a revised version is, again, introduced to the Chinese market with the numeric equality replaced by a one-versus-multiple paradigm.[61] In the new script, every man and woman are motivated as fully charged warriors geared up to fight for their own love. To win, one must strategically maneuver and deploy the armament in their arsenal. The winners' success stories are collected and edited into

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[59] Zhan, N. (2010, October 21). *"Fei cheng wu rao" dian shi xiang qin jie mu xu shi hua yu fen xi* (Discursive analysis of the narrative paradigm of the TV dating game show *if you are the one*). *Media Today*. Retrieved from http://media.people.com.cn/GB/22114/52789/205766/13016741.html

[60] For instance, another representative of this dating game show fad, Shanghai Dragon TV's *One of Hundred* reverses *IF*'s script and puts a hundred men in a judging and selecting position of every female participant.

[61] Besides the British show TMO, the American popular TV program *The Bachelor* is another example of this new genre.

instructions with a "must-have" list of attributes/qualities for future contestants by viewers and fans of the program. Those who want to participate could easily find them online or in smart phone applications to maximize the hope of winning love—the ultimate stake for this competition, which can be and can only be acquired with certain socially recognized attributes as suggested by the instructions.

This new TV genre is a good example of what French philosopher Alain Badiou (2012) calls "love under threat." As he points out, love is a quest for truth and cannot be reduced to any approximations as has been represented by *IF*. Aligning himself with philosophers like Plato and Kierkegaard, Badiou insists that in the impulse of love resides a seed of universality, and it is marriage as a social institution that channels genuine love towards this fundamental and universal destination. Provided it is represented as an exchange of mutual favors, which can be calculated in advance as achievable trophy by this TV genre, love has been divested of its universal implication and truth value as claimed by Badiou (2012). This exchange rule also grounds the marketization/commercialization of love, as we can see from *IF*.

This philosophical contestation over love needs to be teased out in the larger context of academic debate over reason, the core question of Western philosophy. As Max Horkheimer (1947) points out, there are two trajectories of philosophical conceptions of reason in the Western civilization: objectivistic and subjectivistic. Until the transition to modernity in the Enlightenment era, the objectivistic concept of reason had been dominant in the Western societies. Just as ancient Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, state, reason is an objective capacity independent of human difference and variations that would lead us to the universal truth of nature. This

conceptual framework, as Horkheimer argues, grounds the epistemic foundation in the Western context for the discussion of such human values, as justice, equality, morality and of course, love. In other words, this framework of reason posits that as one of the transcendental human values, love, like social justice and equality, can only be accessed through human beings' universal ability endowed by critical reason. In contrast, the subjectivistic notion of reason rejects the claim to universal truth, and places human beings at its center, arguing that the only criterion of reason is whether a person has chosen the right way to fulfill a goal. Simply put, only achieved ends could justify reason. Like Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse (1964) attributes the current conundrum that haunts human societies to the replacement of objectivistic reason by subjectivistic reason that traces back to the Enlightenment era. As he suggests, as reason is instrumentalized as a means of domination and subjugation, human beings have lost the critical capacity for emancipation, justice and love. In this regard, the different construals of love provide us the framework to investigate the dominant episteme that holds reign in certain societies as well as the concomitant societal constructions and systems.

At its cognitive core, Horkheimer (1947) and Marcuse (1964) have, to a great extent, provided an insightful anticipation of the current neoliberal turn, and proffered a critical instrument to deconstruct multifarious neoliberal governing technologies in the context of globalization. On the theoretical level, the instrumentalist notion of reason lays the intellectual foundation for neoliberal ideology. As the core argument of this ideology posits, individuals should be enterprised as independent subjects or "Homo Economicus," so they will be able to compete in a free market. For the purpose of self-preservation and promotion, they would mobilize their reasoning ability and rationality to calculate gains

and losses and find the best means to maximize their profits. On a macro level, the social relation coordinated through individual competition will ultimately optimize the welfare and interests of human societies (Foucault, 2008). This cognitive frame has been multiplied into miscellaneous theoretical forays to justify and direct the neoliberal adjustment program to dismantle the public good and communal welfare in different countries. For example, China's attempt to commercialize education and medical care by Zhu's administration (1997-2002) seeks to transfer these public sectors from the state onto the shoulders of citizens. As self-responsible market subjects, the Chinese people are supposed to calculate their needs and find the optimum options in a way that their collective market-oriented activities would benefit the whole society. The vantage point of these neoliberal projects is hinged on the displacement of critical reason as the intellectual foundation of human values, such as justice, equality and love by instrumental reason.

IF provides another example for this intellectual transition.[62] In *IF* love is reconstituted as an achievable item rather than pure impulse laden with a transcendental value free from calculations and pragmatics for the making of neoliberal subjectivities. Love is represented as a site for people to explore, testify, orchestrate, prove and disprove their reasoning and calculating capabilities—the required qualities for the market-grounded human societies. Furthermore, love is reframed as an entity that could translate into market values. It would not only bring welfare and financial security for women

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[62] Here I am not arguing for the return to critical reason to retrieve human emancipation from neoliberalism. Nor am I romanticizing love as a transcendental entity as suggested by this philosophical camp. By this example, I want to highlight the differential construction of love as sites to understand the debate over the neoliberal society, and I will come back to this debate in the conclusion chapter.

through a conjugal bondage to a wealthy man, but also translate into real money in the

market. For instance, the producer persistently correlates the program with China's

burgeoning online dating industry in a win-win deal. Among *IF*'s several dating-website-

qua-commercial-sponsors, jiayuan.com exponentially boosted its traffic and completed

Initial Public Offering (IPO) on NASDAQ Global Select Market on May 12th, 2011.

After accumulating over seventy million dollars in the stock market, jiayuan.com became

one of the most successful representatives of China's "new economy," and turned into a

transnational corporation with a value totaling 329 million dollars.[63] If the

instrumentalizing transformation of love is realized through market exchange, it is

concretized through the gendered relationship of reciprocation, contestation and

confrontation in the program. By flirting with and garnering people's voyeuristic taste for

the private world of affect, emotion and sentiment, *IF* deploys gender as a disciplinary

technology of biopolitics to regulate, steer and engineer audiences along the cognitive

line of market logic. Though commercialization/commodification of love/sex are not new

to the Western and Chinese societies at all, by reforming of love as a terrain for

competition, this new genre of reality show bequeaths the endorsement to instrumental

reason that foreshadows the upcoming of the dominant neoliberal society. With the

differential investments in the love competition, neoliberalism has also been translated

into localized and contingent practices in different contexts. Transplanting the new dating

game show genre from the Western soil to the Eastern earth, the Chinese party-state has

meticulously trimmed and reshaped its contours to fit it into the politico-economic

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[63] Sina.com.cn. (2011, May 12). *Shi ji jia yuan IPO shou ri shou pan 10.52 mei yuan* (Jiayuan.com wrapped up at 10.52 dollars after its first of IPO). Retrieved from shouhttp://tech.sina.com.cn/i/2011-05-12/04055511496.shtml

schemata for China's *suis generis* neoliberalization, which I will further discuss in the next part.

Re-gendering the Hetero-Patriarchal Norm in Neoliberal China

After a trip to the U.K., a Chinese journalist expressed the astonishment after finding that different from *IF*, "male participants never talk about their income and female participants would not ask about it" in *TMO*.[64] Similarly, in the U.S. popular TV show, *The Bachelor*, though only men with an established career would be selected by producers as qualified "bachelors," each episode would nonetheless devote its time and space to the romantic and intimate interaction rather than merely boasting male/female contestants' material possessions as the attraction point (Dubrofsky, 2006). In contrast, *IF* is rarely equivocal about its "objectification" of male participants—through their physical attractiveness, and more important, accomplishments in economic terms. For instance, regardless of the open-ended nature of the self-introduction part for men to strike the women with "the first impression of love," this part has nearly been routinized as a statement of personal monetary achievements: job (and its location), education, income, savings, properties, car, etc. As my analysis of all episodes (up to September 22nd, 2012) shows, over one third of male contestants are framed in a driving seat while narrating their self-introduction, with the camera "accidentally" flashing over the wheel to give the audience a tantalizing glimpse of the brand label. In the episode aired on September 18th, 2010, a contestant appalled the audience by a well-designed "irony"—a soulful statement about his pursuit of Platonic love was right followed by a flaunting of the wealth and

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[64] Chao, L. (2010, July 13). *Qin lin yin guo fen xi fei cheng wu rao "yuan xing" cheng zhang* (An on-site analysis of the "archetype" of *if you are the one*).*Yangzhou Evening*. Retrieved from http://www.sosol.com.cn/html/2010/20107/2010713_197609_1.html

properties. Ironic as it was, this strategy proved effective and he kept five lights on till the end—a very good result among all participants. Successful experiences like this are collected and edited into instructions for future contestants of love by viewers/fans. Although these instructions differ in the "software" part—from the dressing and styling code, tactics of posturing and bearing, to narrative strategy for self-presentation, they all share the same set of "hardware": a good job/business, money, car and most important, property. In other words, the commonly "coveted" men are objectified through a quantified list of marketizable and exchangeable items. As we can see, a bourgeois dream typical of a Western middle class family is thus reproduced through and projected onto the redefined Chinese normative manhood.

Women on the stage are the present subject of this objectification of men. On January 17th, 2010, in the third episode after *IF*'s inauguration, Ma Nuo, a then 22-year-old attractive model placed herself in a huge vortex as she rejected an invitation from one of her admirers for a romantic ride on his bicycle. Her blatant claim that "I would rather cry in a BWM car" was soon disseminated both online and offline, fermenting a social debate over the ethics of love and marriage. In the 19th episode on April 18th, 2010, Zhu Fangzhen followed Ma's suit and threw a verbal bomb by stating that it would cost 200,000 Yuan (over 30,000 U.S. dollars) for a man to shake her hands. As she added, only who could make more than 30,000 dollars a month would be considered by her. This scenario refueled the already boiling controversy that Ma had kindled, and needless to say, *IF* became the center of social attention with a skyrocketing audience rating. Many people questioned whether this provocative and effusive discursive trope was a planted gimmick of self-promotion. In response, Meng Fei, the host of the program had to draw

upon *Network News Broadcasting*, the most authoritative Chinese news program for

comparison to claim *IF*'s authenticity.[65] Though this claim *per se* might be true, if we

take into consideration John Berger's (1972) argument that all images (as well discourses)

are man-made for certain purpose, a more rigorous critical reading of *IF*'s framing

techniques is needed to uncover how the biopolitics of gender and class functions in this

media sensation.

Not surprisingly, *IF* reaped a plethora of harsh criticisms for its bold framing

strategy, and even castigation by the state. Many critics lament that the controversial

figures represented by *IF* are the contributing factors to the deteriorating social morality,

expansive mammonism and fetishism, as well as bankrupt Socialist value of justice and

equality. For instance, a blogger calls for more stringent control of public figures like Ma

so that ethics and moral values could be restored.[66] In response to the overwhelming

condemnation, the State Administration of Radio Film and Television of China (SARFT)

issued two official documents on July 9th, 2010 to implement a stricter rule over TV

dating programs and talk shows about emotional affairs. As these documents mandate,

the pool of participants should be diversified to cover a wide range of social strata and

programs must adhere to the basic Socialist values and morals.[67] However, as the central

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[65] Meng, F. (2012, June 14). *Fei cheng wu rao zhen shi du jue dui chao xin wen lian bo.
If you are the one* absolutely more real than *The Network News Broadcasting*. *Forbes*.
Retrieved from http://www.forbeschina.com/review/201206/0017603.shtml
[66] Hong, X. T. X. (2010, June 8). *Feng sha Ma Nuo men cai neng zheng que yin dao she
hui jia zhi guan* (Banning figures like Ma Nuo will reestablish the correct social values.
Retrieved from http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4ac77e150100jqwm.html

[67] *China Youth Daily*. *Dian shi xiang qin jie mu cu su guang dian zong ju chu shou jian
du mo shi shi guan jian* (SARFT intervenes into the vulgar TV dating game shows and

entity that is actively facilitating and spurring the marketization of mass media, why would the party-state take a self-contradictory role to step on the brake?

As Foucault (2008) suggests, state is not a fixated and static entity. Rather, as both the product and target of certain governing practices, it is in a perpetual process of formation and reformation, contestation and experimentation. Though governing practices usually centralize a coherent politico-economic tenor, they are always contingent and mutable, and there is no clear-cut boundary between different types of "governmentality." When the Chinese state initiates its neoliberal experiments, the state *per se* becomes a site of contestation and conflicts, stretched between neoliberal and New Left camps (Leonard, 2008). In this regard, any reductionist assumption that the Chinese media system has been transformed into an utterly oppressive apparatus controlled by Communist bureaucracy and capital (see in Wang, 2009) would not be conducive to understand the complex meanings of *IF* in neoliberal China. On the one hand, as Anagnost (2008) points out, as the market logic of media precludes the Maoist discourse of working class and class struggle, mass media begin to embrace the discourse of "social strata" and dedicated themselves to the "the middle class," making the growth of this class a national project that signifies China's membership in the developed world. On the other hand, despite (neo)liberalists' dominance over the Chinese communication system, leftists and subaltern groups could still temper with the Socialist legacy to create a contingent space for social justice and equality (Zhao, 2008), as long as the marketizing tenor of mass media is supposed to be contained within the Party bottom line. "Socialism

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regulation is the key). *The People's Web*. Retrieved from
http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/11892265.html

with Chinese Characteristics," the exigent nomenclature coined by Deng to forestall the potential politico-ideological turmoil is thus not just nominal, but also materially tangible. As Arif Dirlik (2005) argues, whether to call the current Chinese system capitalist or Socialist will shape the social reality that it pretends to describe. As a result, Huang Han, a female social psychologist joined the program to counter-balance the sexual disequilibrium of this gender-politics-centered show. Moreover, as a professor of the School of the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee, Huang's presence symbolizes the undefined but omnipresent Party line circumscribing Chinese media. Huang's two male partners, the host Meng Fei and Le Jia, the on-site mentor also shifted their role into a gate-keeper to mitigate the social repercussion deriving from the ruthless "Jungle Law" of love as represented by *IF* earlier.

In addition, changes were made on the programmatic level so audience could see a more diversified pool of players for love. For instance, besides wealthy businessmen and professionals, teachers, graduate students, government officials, bus drivers and workers are incorporated to recreate *IF* as an inclusive and equal game court open to all social walks. In accordance, female participants' money-driven pragmatics of love is also muted, at least on an explicit, verbal level. The program carefully scrubs contestant information such as savings and salaries, too.

A more rigorous and in-depth reading of *IF*'s visual and narrative tropes, however, would help dismantle this "neutral and equal" claim, and untangle the intersectional gendered, classed and (hetero)sexualized nature of the neoliberal governing technologies invested in this cultural milieu. Rather than the direct (and biased) nomination by women (like Ma), the reconstitution of masculine norm is now notarized and warranted by the

"fair" result of the game, with women on the stage as its only judge. As the result verifies over and over again, who can smile the last would usually be endowed with such qualities as good education and job, high income, personal property and car, preferably nice-looking and tall. For instance, in the episode of August 21st, 2010, when a contestant stated that he preferred economically stable women as his date, the flashes from the switching off of the lights soon enlivened the stage, and surely embarrassed this man. In another episode, after a contestant argued for the subversion of men's breadwinner social role and confessed that he could not fulfill this ideal, lights flashed out one after another with no surprise. Moreover, on July 8th, 2012, after the video showed that a contestant shared a dormitory with a roommate, a dozen of women quickly turned him down. Numerous scenarios like this constitute a broader picture and send a clear message about the norm of Chinese manhood, in an equally efficacious way, if not more than the provocative pronouncement and theatric staging.

This codification of normative Chinese masculinity dovetails with the reconstruction of hegemonic masculinity within the context of neoliberal globalization. As Connell and Wood (2005) suggest, as the neoliberal market logic is transcending the nation-state boundaries with the quickened steps of globalization, flexible and affluent males, preferably having maintained a dynamical transnational business schedule, has become the new caliber of manliness. In the U.S, this imagery is re-incarnated in monetary, corporeal and phallic terms as "three bulges" of the wallet, muscularity, and crotch (Kimmel 1996). In the Chinese context, this brisk phrase is recast with Chinese characteristics as"*gao fu shuai*" (tall, rich and handsome). Antithetical to this norm is "*diao si*" (which literally means pubic hair), or "*ai cuo qiong*" (short, ugly and poor), a

traumatizing term of economically and physically marginalized men. As the buzzwords first popularized online, these discourses are now widely employed and deployed to describe gender relationship, marriage and class structure, as I have found in my field work. In a co-constituting relationship, gender is often invoked to articulate and legitimize the restoration of class privileges and soaring social inequalities, and conversely the recreated class privilege becomes the defining feature that would valorize men's sexual appeal. Gender and class are thus mobilized intersectionally to normalize and reproduce the market-driven social relationship.

The norm of Chinese masculinity is further encoded in an entrepreneurial essence. As the content analysis shows, the most frequently adopted strategy for men to impress their potential date and defeat their rivals is to declare and define an entrepreneurial ambition. As Meng complained in one episode, the program is full of the clichéd scenarios about promoting one's image as an emerging entrepreneur with global influence—developing his business into a listed corporation (preferably in New York) as the ultimate life goal. However, despite this pronounced critical gesture, Meng and his partners, Le and Huang, actually contribute to this entrepreneurializing codification of Chinese masculinity by fueling and refueling the meritocratic story of self-made men. The hosting team is explicitly negative about the high-sounding but loosely grounded entrepreneurial dreams, but they bequeath their endorsement to the surefooted "future entrepreneurs" who are fully charged and poised to start from scratches. For example, in the episode of May 28th, 2011, Zhang Zhaokun, a man at his early twenties trying to resurrect his family from the ruins of bankruptcy by building a small vegetable vending business, not only moved Le into tears, but also made Meng break the rules (for the first

time) to offer him a free trip to Hawaii with his date—a special treat only for the most popular male players. We can see how the "boot-strapping" logic of neoliberalism is reproduced and disseminated through this gendered storytelling line,[68] as a disciplinary technology to interpellate Chinese men into the entrepreneurial logic of neoliberalism.

Women are involved in this entrepreneurializing attempt to reshape the Chinese masculinity as well. In her studies of female sex workers in the red light districts in Northern China, Tiantian Zheng (2009) reveals how female's body provides an important site for domestic and transnational businessmen to build mutual trust and develop economic relationship by consuming women's sexuality together. As Zheng (2009) sees it, their "entrepreneurial masculinity" is thus recreated at the expense of women. Compared with the body of the sex workers, women on the stage use their lights/votes to valorize the entrepreneurializing spirits as the essential marker of normative masculinity. As we can see, contestants with an established business record buttressed by a clearly defined development plan usually get more applause and recognition from the women. Different from their mother and grandmother cultured in the Socialist doctrine of equality and social justice, these women are embracing entrepreneurship and market-driven un-scruple as the core values of their ideal dates. In the episode of September 12, 2010, the success of a "*fu er dai*" (the affluent second generation)—a dandyish dawdler typical of the wealthy youth kept three lights till the end—triggered a fierce debate over what is the defining attribute of a "good" man. After several rounds of rhetorical swordplay, women on the stage agreed that only who could put their entrepreneurial ambition into practice

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[68] In the Western societies, it is often used as a metaphor to describe the neoliberal ideology that people need to fully rely on themselves for social mobility and achievement, rather than questioning the systemic social inequalities.

would be qualified for this title. Besides this core value, they would also add "tall and handsome" to the list. The mediated moments of this ilk inter-reference with and reinforce the popular discourses of normative manhood as "*gao fu shuai.*" In other words, gender is invoked and deployed as disciplinary and pedagogical resources to reconstruct and normalize middle class lifestyle without overriding the Party line—the Socialist claim to "the classless society," even only as an ideological shibboleth to conceal the tightened Communist-capital complicity.

As Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1999) suggests, the constitution of gender is always relational and reciprocal. Even ensconced in the judging platform, women have never been saved from the voyeuristic male gaze, in both social and individual sense. In this show, every round is started with a man selecting his "attraction lady." In this scenario, the men could fully enjoy their male chauvinistic power (like the ancient emperors) to classify, stratify and objectify women. Sometimes this process only cost a few seconds, but sometimes it could turn into a humiliating and excruciating long gaze. It is not rare to see that the women would complain about how insulting it could be as they are judged and evaluated as an object with no humanly attributes. Different from the normative manhood plummeted in monetary/materialistic terms, the most popular women (unsurprisingly) seldom fail in corporeal measurements: a delicate, porcelain face plus a well-shaped curvaceous body. Though they are aware of these sexist and essentializing codifications of their femininity, sometimes they even consciously mobilize these attributes in their own favor. If the heavy make-up that almost leaves no traces of their natural beauty (or plainness) and the well groomed elegant, sometimes exotic dressing could be interpreted as the aesthetic need for broadcasting, the covert flaunting of female

anatomic attributes (e.g. the size of breasts) by some women is a good footnote of their internalized male-centered guidelines of femininity. *IF* gives us another example to show how the contour of femininity is wobbling with China's politico-economic waves as the essentializing and sexualizing conception of womanhood held at bay in Mao's era is unleashed again in China's reform era (Croll, 1995; Evans, 1997).

However, the reconstructed ideal of femininity is not just simple replication and duplication of the traditional womanhood delimited by the patriarch's taste and harem, but laden with new values of neoliberal logic. In one episode, when a male contestant stated that he wanted to find a virtuous housewife and obliging mother to carry on his patrilineal line, he invited harsh criticisms from both women on the stage and Huang, the female psychologist and mentor. As they strongly renounced, women are not the machine of reproduction for men, but individuals fully enjoying their humanity and independence. This contestant's voice is actually not "mainstream" at all. As for most male contestants, sexually appealing but intellectually uninformed women, like Ma Nuo, might be someone they can flirt with, but by no means the one they will bring home to see their mother. In the second round, "Love on the Second Thought," as the videos often show, many men define their "dream lady" as a sweet and helpless canary whose feminine comfort can burnish their masculinist ego when tarnished, and meanwhile, a reliable business partner who can lend a useful hand when needed. In other words, only women with these seemingly contradictory qualifications would fulfill men's envisioning of a bourgeois hetero-patriarchal family.

Liu Tingting, a general manager of a restaurant is a good example. Coming from an affluent family, Liu has good education and a high-paying job—a good model for a

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qualified and competitive market subject. Meanwhile, she nicely embodies a combination of sensitiveness, delicacy and considerateness required of a good "housewife." As one of the most lauded and popular female contestants, she has been called by viewers as "the three good girl"—good in physical, virtual and intellectual terms. Like the normative manhood, this ideal of Chinese femininity is generalized in a brisk triadic term, "bai fu mei" (white, rich and pretty). Different from the gendered, classed and (hetero)sexualized normative manhood, this ideal of femininity is also racialized as it embraces the transnational discourse of whiteness, or lighter skin as the laudable quality of womanhood (Glenn, 2008). In the Western societies, the racialized womanhood has been a central figure of the bourgeois hetero-patriarchal family.

This reconfiguration of Chinese femininity also needs to be unpacked in the global context. As Marchand and Runyan (2010) suggest, we need to interrogate gender as an analytical category in relation to the economic adjustment programs mandated by neoliberalism. As the group that has been historically relegated to the "private" sphere along the sexual division of labor, or what Harvey (2005) calls "extra-market" subjects, women's labor constitutes a vast operative space for the reproduction of capital. Not surprisingly, the biopolitical technologies of gender, class and race usually target women of color (especially in the global South), seeking to involve them with the global labor market to serve the cruising capital. In India, another development powerhouse in Asia, a micro-credit program called Mahila Samakhya sponsored by both the state and NGOs, seeks to "empower" low-caste, rural Indian women into capable market subjects (Sharma 2008). In the relatively developed Asian tiger economies, such as Singapore and Hong Kong, middle class housewives are the primary target of the disciplinary technologies of

gender—with the required professional and management knowledge and capacities, these women's biopolitical values could translate into convenient and bountiful resources for the upgrading of the economies in the global industrial hierarchy (Ong, 2006). For Chinese women who were exhorted to work outside together with men to achieve gender equality in the Maoist era, they are now reproduced as less valued, more exploitable proletarian subjects through the gendered technologies inculcating their subordination to male supervisors (Pun, 2005). As Pun (2005) demonstrates, the non-conforming women workers would otherwise be labeled as not "feminine and qualified for a heterosexual relationship" to solicit their obedience.

Apart from the market subjectivity, a reinforced role of women in domestic and reproductive work is also proliferated to "compensate for state retreat, or for state failure to provide social infrastructure and support" (Pettman, 1999, p. 212), thus creating a very contradictory gender rule for women. As Bayes et. al. (2001) suggest, while globalization fundamentally challenges the public/private divide by recruiting women into the global system of labor, they are often confronted with contradicting gender ideologies locally. In other words, as designated by the neoliberal writ, women should simultaneously step up both their productive and reproductive labor to meet the dual goal of expanding the market rule to more (and finally all) social sectors and streamlining the overloaded state machinery. For instance, in the U.S., "women are caught between neoliberal rhetoric which casts women as the 'new entrepreneurs' by devaluing women's traditional family roles and neoconservative views which emphasize 'family values' and cast women as selfish and irresponsible if they do not fulfill their mothering roles" (Marchand & Runyan, 2010). In contemporary China, this contradictory subjectivity is configured and

orchestrated through the intersectional biopolitics of gender and class, as we can see in *IF*. Through the co-constitution of gender, class and race, the normative womanhood is congealed as the combination of the feminized ideal for a middle class family and the marketized subject engineered for the personal social mobility.

We need to be aware that these gendered and classed technologies are premised on an assumption of the hetero-patriarchal relationship. Contingent upon an imagery of the bourgeois nucleus family, the symbolic contours of the new norms for masculinity and femininity are delimited within an imperative heterosexual desire, prescribing the oppositional but complementary roles for Chinese men and women. As we can see in the program of *IF*, within the alluded possibility of a hetero-patriarchal family, through the signifying mechanisms of inter-referencing and crisscrossing, the entrepreneurialized manhood and the womanhood that straddles the tension between a housewife and a market subject reinforce each other as the normative subjects for the neoliberal social relationship. Enclosed by the hetero-patriarchal imperative, this co-constituting process of signification precludes other gender articulations of mass media to dampen the threat and challenge to this bourgeois hetero-patriarchal ideal, such as gender-crossing performances embodied by the popular icons, Li Yuchun and Liu Zhu,[69] and the athletic, hyper-masculine national hero Liu Xiang (Zhang, 2013). These gendered, classed and

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[69] Li Yuchun, the champion of Super Girl's Voice (SGV, a reality TV contest show by Hunan Star TV) and cover image of Time Asia (2005, October 3), was probably the most sensational Chinese figure in 2005. With her transgressive embodiment of masculinity, she not only blurred the compulsory-heterosexuality-premised boundaries of gender, but also challenged the dominance of manhood by men. Liu Zhu, a controversial contestant in Happy Boy's Voice, the "boy" version of SGV, could have turned into the reversed version of Li Yuchun for his dazzling feminine beauty and performance without his forced drop-out of the show ordered by the state.

racialized discourses provide concrete parameters to police the boundary of the bourgeois nucleus family as the ultimate anchor of the market-driven neoliberal society. As we have seen in chapter two, gender is mobilized as a normalizing technology to mask the restored class inequalities and rejuvenate the splintered Chinese nation-state. In this chapter, with the example of *IF*, we have seen that gender provides both normalizing and disciplinary techniques to legitimize the class inequalities, and intersects with class to reproduce the neoliberal subjectivities. These classed and gendered subjects are unified by the heteronormative presumption into the ideal of the middle class hetero-patriarchal family as the basic unit of neoliberal China. Just as I have argued in chapter two, the shifting contours of the hetero-patriarchal family along the lines of gender and class provide the key anchor for China's transition from Socialism to neoliberalism. We should also note that, in this process, transitionality has become an increasing aspect in the globally reintegrated China. If we all agree upon the feminist claim that identity categories co-constitute and shape each other, we should also keep in mind that some categories, such as race, might not be a salient biopolitical category in China, but is definitely the crucial component of social control and regulation in the Western societies. In the global era that has seen increasing transnational travel and exchange of cultural values, the category with the Western origin, such as race, is also accruing its global impact. In the next part, I will further problematize as a transnational cultural spectacle, how *IF* is also undergirded by race as another biopolitical technology.

Troubling the Racialized Transnational Imagery of Chineseness

As China is expanding its economic prowess to act as the new growth locomotive, the party-state also tries to defy the U.S. hegemony in cultural spheres. In 2007, as the

report of the 17th CPC National Congress pronounced, the revitalization of "soft power" should match up with China's economic vibrancy. As part of this strategic initiative, Xinhua News Agency took over one of the most prominent billboards on New York's illustrious Times Square and launched a new round of propagation of China's "new perspective" in 2011.

Though the bold propagating endeavors (such as Xinhua) reap hostile responses from the Western societies,[70] the more covert strategy of "indoctriment" proves effective, at least among overseas Chinese. *IF* is a good example. Thanks to the digital communication technologies that have bridged the spatio-temporal gap, overseas viewers could now keep in line with the show's most recent plots like their domestic counterparts. It is not uncommon to see that the discussions of *IF* dominate the hot topics of portal websites for overseas Chinese, such as www.huaren.us and www.mitbbs.com. To further boost its transnational influence, Jiangsu Star TV aired several episodes especially designed for Chinese diasporic love pursuers from the U.S., Canada, Australia, the U.K, France as well as South Korea. This programmatic agenda well reflects what Hong Liu (2005) calls the new demographic pattern of Chinese diaspora since China's opening up. After halted for over 30 years, emigration from mainland China has witnessed a dazzling resurge since 1980. As for their distribution, the great majority of new immigrants go to North America, Australia, Europe, Japan, and Singapore, which is different from the old generations concentrated in Southeast Asia (Liu, 2005).

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[70] Haberman, C. (2012, January 10). Questioning a "new perspective" in Times Square. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/10/questioning-a-new-perspective-in-times-square/

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This new immigrant pattern is also part of the disarticulating and rearticulating initiatives of world populations under the aegis of neoliberalism. Since the 1960s, major industrialized countries that had turned their back on Asian immigrants have significantly liberalized their immigration policies. Starting with Canada in 1962, then the United States in 1965, Australia in 1973 and finally New Zealand in 1978, the restrictive immigration policies were abolished to allow the entry of new Asian immigrants (Stalker, 2000). The prevalence of neoliberalism since the late 1970s further accelerated the transnational reshuffling of populations. For instance, according to the statistics released by the U.S. government, the number of China-born immigrants soared from 366,500 in 1980 to 1,808,066 in 2010, an nearly 500 percent growth rate compared to the overall growth rate of immigration at 283 percent.[71] As the "free market" ideology contends, not only flows of capital, but also movement of labor should be ordinated through an unencumbered market so as to optimize the allocation of resources (though it often proves otherwise in reality). In the case of the U.S., as Ong (2006) suggests, to boost the "knowledge economy," the upper tier of the global division of labor that the U.S. prescribes for itself, favorable immigration policies are proffered to attract technological professionals, particularly from Asia, to brew and boil the red-hot "new economy." For instance, in contrast to the maximum of twelve months for humanities and social sciences majors, talents with degrees in science and technologies would have up to twenty nine months to find a job and stay in the U.S. The bipartisan dispute over the green channel for "STEM" professionals (science, technology, engineering and mathematics majors) is

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[71] McCabe, C. (2012, January). Chinese immigrants in the United States. *The Migration Information Source*. Retrieved from
http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/display.cfm?id=876

a recent example of the U.S. government's differential politico-economic investment in human bodies and populations. As a result, according to the 2010 data, immigrants from Asia, including India and Greater China (mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau) account for 53.9 percent of the high tech labor in the Silicon Valley.[72]

However, *IF*'s representation has largely distorted the demographics of Chinese diasporic communities in the Western societies. The programmatic rule of diversity mandated by the state is suspended in a transnational context: in the episodes for overseas Chinese, participants are unanimously represented as coming from the upper echelon. They are either medical, financial, law or technological professionals, or holding degrees from such elite schools as Harvard, Yale and Columbia, or owning a successful business. For example, in the first episode for the Chinese in the U.S., seventeen of the twenty four female participants have got or are getting a U.S. degree and more than half of them have a master's degree or above. Compared with the women, the backgrounds of the four male contestants are no less glamorizing: a young business owner, a Ph.D from Columbia University, an employer for a world top 100 corporations and a financial professional working for the Wall Street. This concocted and homogenizing representative pattern largely misrepresents an otherwise heterogeneous population of Chinese diaspora. As Liu (2005) observes, Chinese immigration usually proceeds along four tracks: students-turned-migrants, emigrating professionals, chain migrant and illegal immigrants, who can be further categorized into two types: those with "portable skills" (students-turned-

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[72] Swift, M. (2010, February 13). Blacks, Latinos and women lose ground at Silicon Valley tech companies. *San Hose Mercury News*. Retrieved from http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_14383730

migrants and professionals) and menial laborers (the majority of chain migrants and almost all illegal immigrants). Though tacitly obliterated from the camera, the latter accounts for a no small portion of overseas Chinese. According to U.S. official sources, approximately 100,000 Chinese entered the country illegally every year in the 1990s. Other resources show that around 30,000 to 40,000 illegal immigrants enter the U.S. annually and the numbers to Europe are roughly the same (Liu 2005). The data from a survey on migrants from Qingtian in Zhejiang province shows that among the 40,000 legal migrants leaving China between 1979 and 1995, workers and peasants accounted for over seventy-five percent. These people could only find jobs through the ethnic connections, and are concentrated in low value-added industries, such as restaurants and garment factories. In contrast to those with "portable skills," they can only earn a meager wage (Liu 2005). Due to the huge internal economic gap within Chinese diaspora, as the statistics shows, the average poverty rate for immigrant families from mainland China is higher than imagined— thirteen percent compared to around ten percent for average American families (Zhou & Kim 2001).

Behind this biased representation of otherwise heterogeneous overseas Chinese (at least in economic terms) is the restorative attempt at glorifying the transnational formation of class inequalities by Chinese mass media. In *IF*, this attempt is couched in the competition about gender and conjugal politics. Contrary to the "rising water lifts all boats" neoliberal rhetoric, and Deng's slogan that "the rich leads the poor, finally realizing the common prosperity," the rich that has accumulated wealth through political power renting and abusive embezzlement now turn their back against Chinese people. According to *The Report about Chinese Transnational Immigration*, more than seventy

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percent of the wealthy group with financial possessions over ten million Yuan (around 1.7 million dollars) have already emigrated to other (mostly developed) countries or considering it.[73] As Zhao writes,

> Many members of the Chinese political and business elite, meanwhile, have responded to state attempts to curb their excesses (through anticorruption campaigns, for example) by voting with their feet— obtaining foreign passports and sending their wealth and families abroad...Transnationality has thus become an increasingly important aspect of class reconstitution in a globally reintegrated China, where the most important divisions are 'not those of East or West, or Chinese and foreign, but new divisions along lines of generation, class, and region, with different access to power, wealth and knowledge, and different relationships to the forces of globalization (2008, p. 167).

Through its representation of gender politics and relationship, *IF* seeks to normalize this transnational formation of Chinese elites by embracing them as hotly pursued and highly coveted in the arena for love. Compared with other male contestants, the success rate of overseas Chinese is remarkably higher. On top of that, in general male contestants with an overseas background have got much more votes than their domestic counterparts. This selective representation also substantially enhances the charisma of overseas Chinese males by homogenizing

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[73] *The People's Web*. (2013, January 24). *Zi chan guo yi fu ren 27% yi yi min jin san nian chao 170 yi liu xiang guo wai* (27 % of China's billionaires already migrated with the flight of over 17 billion Yuan to foreign countries in recent three years). Retrieved from http://house.people.com.cn/n/2013/0124/c164331-20311381.html

them as well-educated and high-paid. For instance, two male contestants with a

degree from Harvard soon become the center of Chinese media attention after

their appearance in the show, and generated lots of discussions online and offline

about their legendary stories, special talents and skills, and of course, supreme

attractiveness to Chinese young women.

The flip side of the rosy picture of the transnational (middle) class

formation is "the export of Chinese workers as 'indentured labor abroad' by

government bureaucracies and the flight of tens of thousands of Chinese farmers

to the West through dangerous international human trafficking networks and their

enslavement in the sweatshops in New York, Los Angeles, and other global cities"

(Zhao 2008, p. 167). As Tastsoglou and Alexandra note, globally male workers

"constitute a higher proportion of migrants to 'developing countries' whereas

women comprise a majority of migrants to many 'developed' countries" (2006, p.

5). My findings through the interviews with Chinese workers largely support this

argument. As I would discuss in the next chapter, Chinese male workers are often

drawn by the infrastructure construction jobs in the global South (particularly

Africa and Middle East), and women are often migrating to developed countries

(e.g. Japan) to take the labor-intensive jobs despised by natives. Their stories will

dismantle the glorifying and romanticizing misrepresentation of Chinese diaspora

in general by *IF*.

The biased signifying economy of *IF* is embedded in the larger context of Chinese

media's restructuring for China's neoliberal transition and integration with corporate

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globalization. As Zhao (2003) notes, when China joined the WTO, the mass media unanimously embraced it as a cornerstone marking the watershed for China's rejuvenation while remaining fully reticent on the compromises and sacrifice of national interests the Chinese government had to cede under the pressure of the U.S. In the three episodes about Chinese diaspora in the U.S. aired between Oct 9th and Oct 23rd, 2011, the show evaded the surging Occupy Wall Street Movement mounted during the same time. While endorsing the success stories of a small portion of Chinese Americans, the show turns a deaf ear to the uproar from the subaltern groups in the U.S. who are suffering from neoliberal adjustment and the concomitant widening social gap. Most ironically, one episode celebrated Yang Kai, a young professional working for the Wall Street, as a highly desirable and so to speak, competitive subject in the bazaar of love,[74] while the national and transnational social movement was centralizing its barrage against the ruthless and avaricious financial capital that had capitalized on the global economy as its casino. The Chinese party-state is no doubt a winner in this game—it has successfully subjected a large swathe of its citizenries to the domestic and transnational capital to accrue its economic prowess, with which it turns the U.S., its most daunting rival in the global competition into a huge debtor-matrix as bargain for more shares of the globalized dividends of capital.

This representation of Chinese immigrants by *IF* needs to be further unpacked through the lens of race as another biopolitical vector of neoliberalism. In the U.S., the

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[74] Though Yang did not find a date in his first participation, he was invited again by *IF* (which *per se* is a recognition of his popularity) and successfully took away a pretty woman.

alterable cultural contours of race, gender and class provide a convenient repository to reproduce new normalizing technologies to legitimize its neoliberal practices. For instance, the racial myth of "Model Minority" is constructed through the disarticulation and rearticulation of the gender and class facades. As Mari Matsuda (1996) indicates, the success of certain affluent Asian professionals is racialized as an essential feature of the whole group's assimilation into whiteness, concealing the reality that neoliberal restructuring is unequally impacting blacks and Latinos. In Asia, the colonialist legacy of pan-Asianism has been appropriated to normalize neoliberal restructuring as well. For instance, former Singapore Premier, Lee Kuan Yew terms Singapore's state-controlled neoliberal governance as a "Pan-Asian Humanitarian Model." As this discourse posits, "Asians…value the ability to study hard and work hard to achieve a high level of saving and investment. They respect family ties, demonstrate a strong sense of discipline, and have a tendency to obey wise, strong leaders" (Oakley, 2002, p. 40). As Lee states, these "Asian" values are rooted in a Confucian tradition that has "demanded certain values, such as hard work, thrift, discipline, loyalty, obedience, and social coherence" (Li 1997, 259). Circulating across the Pacific Rim, the racialized discourses about Asians' success stories reinforce each other to consolidate the racial norm to perpetuate the neoliberal dominance. For example, Confucian values of Asian are now depicted as "the most recent incarnation of neoliberal enterprise values" in the United States (Ong, 2003, p. 14).

The selective and biased framing of new Chinese immigrants by *IF* not simply reproduces the racialized U.S. discourse of Asian as "Model Minority," but also reinforces the racial hierarchy as a venue of neoliberal biopolitics. As Ong (1999)

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suggests, new Chinese (mostly male) immigrants with good education and social networks could frequently travel across the Pacific Rim in pursuit of the opportunities opened up by the cruising capital, and turn these opportunities into tangible wealth and new capital. For instance, many Hong Kongese and Singaporean could draw upon their bi-cultural capacities (inherited from their colonial history) to act as "financial brokers" for transnational capital to locate, regulate and communicate with human resources in China (Pereira, 2004; Sum, 2002). As the racialized discourse of "Model Minority" suggests, these groups of new Asian immigrants could be promoted into the club of "whiteness" for their economic success. Antithetical to this story is the exacerbating living conditions of African Americans and Hispanics in the U.S. They are particularly hurt by the globalized economy as lots of low-paying and labor-intensive jobs are outsourced to Asia. The data shows that the median family income for whites outgrew that of blacks and Hispanics between 1975 and 2010, rising from 39,463 to 54,620 dollars, in contrast with 23,691 to 32,068 for blacks and 28,350 to 37,759 for Hispanics.[75] The economic recession has also unequally impacted African Americans and Hispanics. As the statistics by Pew Research Center indicates, "from 2005 to 2009, inflation-adjusted median wealth fell by sixty six percent among Hispanic households and fifty three percent among African American households, compared with just sixteen percent among white households."[76] This widening racialized economic inequality rooted in

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[75] *Infoplease*. (n. d.). Distribution of household income by race. Retrieved from http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0104552.html

[76] Kochhar, R., Fry, R., & Taylor, P. (2011, July 26). Wealth gaps rise to record highs between whites, blacks, Hispanics. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved

neoliberal restructuring is legitimized in tautological racial terms—African Americans

and Hispanics are undeserving market subjects, not because of their skin color, but their

"inferior" culture (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). The culture-based color blind racism is further

corroborated by the success story of Asian as "Model Minority," who are depicted as

"having transcending the color for their superior culture." The program of *IF* reinforces

this racial hierarchy as it has invited a number of whites for participation so Chinese

could now compete with (and even defeat) Caucasians in the arena for love. Meanwhile,

other racial groups are even not allowed to join the game—almost no blacks or Hispanics

have ever attended the show.

The ethno-racialized construction of Chinese diaspora is also important for the

party-state as it well serves the state's ethnicized policy of attracting foreign direct

investment (FDI). As Harvey (2005) notes, China's economic transition is different from

other booming Asian economies (e.g. South Korea and Taiwan) in that it heavily relies on

transitional capital. The ethnic network plays an important role here. As Ong (1999)

indicates, the global economy is highly ethnicized, not only through the ethnic networks

of labor trafficking, but also manifest in the avenues of capital flight built on the ethno-

racial relationship. The Chinese state is highly aware of this, and has been tempering with

the ethno-racial connection as part of its opening up policies. As David Kang shows, in

the last decade, approximately sixty percent of China's FDI was brought in by the

ethnic/diaspora Chinese, whose companies in the mainland account for about seventy

fromhttp://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/07/26/wealth-gaps-rise-to-record-highs-between-whites-blacks-hispanics/

percent of the country's foreign enterprises (2007, p. 6). Furthermore, the government is conscious of the important role of Chinese overseas in bridging the Chinese economy with the global network of capital. Many overseas students "are not only serving China from abroad or by returning, but after they return they play a leading role in many aspects of China's 'going out' strategy. These returnee entrepreneurs present many advantages to the Chinese economy" (Wang, Zweig, & Lin 2011, p. 414). Different from the U.S. racial hegemony that constitutes Asian as "assimilable" for their superior-culture-based economic success, the Chinese state seeks to recnstruct overseas nationalism by reiterating the ethno-racial tie between Chinese diaspora and the homeland well-preserved by the superior Confucian morality and ethics. This ethno-racial connection is often invoked by the state to attract investment from overseas Chinese. Furthermore, as many politicians have realized, an essential part of global economic competition is the contending over the biopolitical values of populations and human bodies,[77] this ethno-racial signifying economy is also mobilized by the Chinese state to garner the bountiful brain resources among overseas Chinese. As we can see, in the episodes for Chinese diaspora, the scenarios have been routinized in which overseas Chinese elites proclaim their allegiance to the motherland and determination to serve the country (be it in other countries or as a returnee), which is often summoned up by the unseverable ethno-racial relationship.

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[77] For instance, the recent legislating attempt to reform the U.S. immigration policies is a good example, which seeks to retain the international students in STEM to guarantee the U.S. dominance in the knowledge economy.

As we have seen, the ethno-racial identity has been an important technology to reinforce China's transnational competitiveness. However, the gendered, classed, heterosexualized and racialized biopolitical valuation of overseas Chinese elites is built on the biopolitical devaluation of domestic subaltern groups. Like the former, *IF* has produced and aired three episodes for domestic migrant workers, a particular group that has been disarticulated from the Chinese population by the gendered, classed and (hetero)sexualized biopolitics for China's neoliberal transition as I will discuss in next two chapters. On the surface level, this design manifests the program's "diversity" commitment—they are willing to open up their arena for all Chinese people, including this highly marginalized group. It might be read as a benevolent initiative to mitigate the media discrimination against Chinese working class, just as Dan Schiller (2008) contends, the working class and its subjectivity was for a long time a completely neglected topic in Chinese media. However, if the separate space for overseas Chinese is justified by their "diasporic" and "alien" status, it is problematic that these workers, as fully legal Chinese citizens, should be quarantined so as to be able to pursue their own love. Similar to China's neoliberalization, the alienating treatment of the legal citizens was also applied by the U.S. in the process of industrialization. In Chicago in the early 20th century, many people worried that new working class immigrants would disrupt the heterosexual and gender normality, posing threat to the social stability and prosperity (Ferguson 2004). In this regard, as Robert Parker (1950) notes, the appropriate paradigm of heterosexual reproduction and gender relationship would provide an anchoring point to assimilate these groups and stabilize the social order, as many people hoped.

In China's bustling and hustling modernization, domestic migrant workers also need to be cordoned off for the edification of proper sexual and gender code by the program of *IF*. It is necessary to disseminate and indoctrinate the "correct" hetero-patriarchal values among this "floating population" (Solinger, 1999) as a way to assimilate them into the Chinese neoliberal social order. Like the case of Chicago, liberalists are concerned that due to their "*di su zhi*" (low quality) — the popular discourse about the low biopolitical values of poor Chinese (Yan, 2003), the working class would destabilize the socio-economic equilibrium with their contagious sexual deviancy. In this regard, this program has relegated migrant workers to a paradoxical position—while they are involved with the hetero-patriarchal imagery, their participation is cordoned off in order not to disturb the bourgeois normativity. In other words, within the intersectional biopolitical structure, this particular segment of Chinese population needs to be rearticulated in the extraction of values for the neoliberal socio-economic relation through gender and sexuality, but at the same time, is excluded from the bourgeois normativity to control its subversive gender and sexual potentiality. In the next two chapters, I will center on the dynamics between the intersectional biopolitical system and the lived reality of this group to explore how they are reproduced as the voluntary servitude to China's marketization and re-integration with the global economy on the one hand, and how their consciousness of resistance is informed and enhanced by the innate contradictions and conflicts of the neoliberal system on the other hand.

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Chapter Four

Love-Impelled Chinese Workers

On Nov 19, 2012, Guizhou, a province located in reclusive southwest China, shocked the whole country with this heartrending news: in the dusty and dirty corner of a dustbin, five boys were found dead on a chilly late fall morning. The investigation later showed that they were suffocated while making a fire for warmth. Before coming to the end of their lives, they were still cuddling with each other for hope and support. Among them—Tao Zhongjing, Tao Zhonghong, Tao Zhonglin, Tao Chong and Tao Bo—the oldest was thirteen and the youngest only nine.[78] From their identical last name, we can see they come from the same family. Moreover, these boys share another important identity—they were suffering from economic difficulties at rural homes while their parents had migrated to cities for jobs and opportunities. As such, in death they encapsulate the misery and hardship of millions of "left-behind children" in today's China. According to All-China Women's Federation, there are approximately 58 million "left-behind children" now.[79] Different from the tragic life of these boys, other unattended children still kept the hope of seeing their parents as it was getting close to the Spring Festival, the most important Chinese holiday for familial reunion and joyfulness.

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[78] *Ifeng.com.* (n. d.) *Guizhou Bijie wu nan hai bei men si zai la ji xiang: Bu rang yi ge hai zi zai jie tou piao bo* (Five boys suffocated to death in dustbin in Bijie Guizhou: Don't let any children drift in the street). Retrieved from http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/gzllntms/

[79] Tatlow, D. K. (2012, June 1). China's "left-behind children." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://rendezvous.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/01/chinas-left-behind-children/

During the Spring Festival travel season every year, China keeps renewing the

record of population migration in human history since its unreserved switch to market

economy in the early 1990s. In 2006 the number of passengers exceeded China's

population, hitting over 2 billion.[80] Among these travelers, migrant workers constitute a

primary category. Attracted by the job opportunities in urban and coastal regions,

millions of poor farmers leave their home in pursuit of wealth, fortune and change.[81] As

Lin (2011) states, the recent landmark transition of the population from rural to urban

settlements underwrites China's social transformation. According to 2010 census figures,

there are as many as 221 million migrant workers, or 16.5 percent of the population.[82]

This massive migration is reminiscent of other industrial revolutions around the world. In

his study of the American industrial revolution, sociologist Daniel Bell raises a

provocative question, "who created America's economic miracle?" As he sees it, people

who contributed to the economic development of the United States in the nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries were usually from the poor, less educated and "relatively

uncivilized" part of the American society (cited in Li, 1997, p. 93). Like Bell, I argue that

it is the poor migrant workers as a newly crafted segment of Chinese population that

bolsters the backbone of China as "the world's factory" and shores up China's neoliberal

transition. Meanwhile, having undertaken most of the dirty, dangerous and devalued

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[80] Clifford. C. (2006, January 28). Two billion journeys in China's own great migration. *The Independent (Beijing)*. Retrieved from http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/two-billion-journeys-in-chinas-own-great-migration-524853.html

[81] See the award-winning documentary, *Last Train Home*.

[82] Hays, J. (2012, March). Migrant workers in China. *Facts and Details*. http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=150

work, these workers have the very acute consciousness of how they have been manipulated and exploited for the benefits of state/capital, as will be discussed in this and next chapter.

Rather than a spontaneous movement, this migration, however, is to a large extent organized and designed by the state. As Wang Hui writes, "the creation of today's market society was not the result of a sequence of spontaneous events, but rather of state interference and violence" (2003, p. 6). By constantly revamping its policies on migration, education, insurance, medical care, housing and other livelihood-related issues, the state has successfully reproduced and maintained these migrants "as floaters, as impermanent outsiders for whom the state was not responsible, in order to serve the state's own fiscal and modernization needs" (Solinger, 1999, p. 225).

As a migrating subject, my previous experiences of dislocation and relocation across China enable me to easily identify with the sorrow-and-struggle-laden journey driven by the market logic of neoliberalism. In chapter one, I have discussed how the identity categories of gender, class and sexuality constitute the foundational structure for the regulation and management of Chinese people in the service of neoliberal restructuring, which I call "the intersectional biopolitics." Since I am (luckily) assorted to a different social location from migrant workers by this structure, I hope to engage with the lived reality of how the migrant workers internalize, negotiate with and unsettle the biopolitical system to better understand the mechanism of neoliberal governmentality in contemporary China. In May, 2012, taking a flight from my hometown in the southwest

to Shanghai, I started another "migrating" journey across China in pursuit of clues for my question.

My final destinations are Hai'an, a small county to the northwest of Shanghai, and Wuxi, a metropolitan area about eighty miles west away from Shanghai. Though both areas neighbor on Shanghai, divided by the Yangtze River, the gap between them is not just geographic, but also has profound socio-economic consequences that have been shifting with China's modernizing trajectory since its forced opening up after the Opium War in 1840. As Emily Honig (1992) points out, from the mid-nineteenth century, when Shanghai's development as a commercial and industrial metropolis began, laborers, merchants and entrepreneurs from Guangdong, Jiangnan (the southern Yangtze Delta) and Subei (northern Jiangsu) flooded into the city. As part of the impoverished Subei area, Hai'an has been supplying laborers for Shanghai as it began to emerge as an international city since then (Honig, 1992). In contrast, as a core area of "Jiangnan," the most affluent and resource-abundant territory since the mid Tang Dynasty (around 780 B.C.), Wuxi has been at China's frontiers of urbanization and industrialization since the Westernization Movement in the 1860s. As the PRC resumed its grandiose marketization, Wuxi is going through a process of reconstruction, urbanization and gentrification like many other coastal cities. Hai'an and Wuxi thus provide great examples of laborer-sending and laborer-receiving areas for my research to investigate how biopolitical dissembling and reassembling of Chinese population is employed by the state to recreate a swathe of extractable laborers as the voluntary servitude for China's socio-economic upheavals.

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From May 2012 to early August 2012, I visited several factories and family mills of apparel, textile and silk in Hai'an and construction fields in Wuxi, attempting to get an endoscopic view about how farmer-workers manage their life and work on a daily basis. Moreover, living in a local farmer's family in Hai'an particularly provided me an opportunity to observe the peripherized groups' daily life as an "outsider within." Through formal interviews, casual conversations, group discussions and participant observation, I tried to understand how the intersectional biopolitics as the central mechanism of neoliberal governmentality helps the party-state disarticulate and rearticulate Chinese population to organize the labor market and extract labor values to sustain and propel China's neoliberalization. As I will elaborate next, this process has been undergirded by the redefining of the hetero-patriarchal values through the vectors of gender, class and sexuality.

Trussing the Market with the Bourgeois Hetero-Patriarchal Ideal

While staying in Hai'an, I found that despite the relatively underdeveloped local economy, people have maintained a surprisingly high monetary standard for conjugal relationship. Different from the Maoist praxis that values devotion and dedication to collective life and destroys the economic logic of family farms and businesses, the private nucleus family has been reconstructed as the basic unit of the post-Mao society (Davis & Harrell, 1993). As the essential signifier and legislating ritual of one's transition into this fundamental societal sphere, marriage has been invested with the significant meanings often accentuated in economic terms. Among its neighbors, Hai'an is the only one that fails to reach the top 100 list of the Most Developed Chinese Counties. Accordingly, the

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average income for working class people there is less than 2,500 Yuan (around 400 dollars) a month. On this account, I was astonished to hear that it is now the common practice that a man should at least own a property (a house in the countryside or a condo in the town preferably) if he is looking for a serious date. In the current market, a 100-square-meter condo (a little more than 1000 square feet) in the town would cost at least 600,000 Yuan. On top of that, to seal the conjugal deal, he needs to buy "four gold" (gold ring, earring, necklace and bracelet) for his future wife and pay extra 120,000 Yuan to her parents as betrothal gifts. The premium is much lower for a woman, though. Her family could buy a car as the dowry—*a voluntary offer* as the token of good wishes for their daughter and her husband rather than *a requirement*. Though this practice is not new at all, gifts were offered only as exchange of courtesy and gratitude between the two families. The materialized evaluation is now routinized as a pre-screening process to verify a man's qualifications for a heterosexual relationship to such an extent that it would probably impose a lifelong debt on a working class family. As a woman told me, "in the past, young women would send a match-maker to inquire about the material conditions of their date. Now they will ask themselves. Do you have a property? Where is it located? Do you have a car? What brand is it?"[83] Any undesirable answer would eliminate the man from further contact. An illustrative paraphrasing of Badiou's transcendental conception of love would help explicate how the otherwise abstract and elusive neoliberal market logic has concretized itself through the recasting of the mundane life of love, affect and marriage. "Love then moves beyond seduction and, through the *instrumentalized* (*serious* in the original) mediation of marriage, becomes a

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[83] An interview conducted in Hai'an, on May 30th, 2012.

way to accede to *exchangeable market values* (*the super-human* in the original)" (2003, p. 14-15). In other words, through the social institution of marriage, love has been reconstituted as a site to reproduce and perpetuate the market exchange rule.

This consumption-grounded gauge of hetero-patriarchal relationship provides a powerful engine for the market economy. While China resumed its transition to market economy in the 1990s, land, "whose monetary value had been neglected since 1949, suddenly assumes a very important role in the overall Chinese economy" (Li, 1997, p. 3). As Harvey (2003) states, the thrusting of land as public resources into the market and private sphere underscores what he calls "accumulation by dispossession," which essentially characterizes China's neoliberal transition. Building on the Socialist legacy of the collective value, the Chinese government reasserts its monopoly over the land, but at the same time sells its use right to developing corporations and citizens for a limited period (usually 50-70 years)—an awkward marriage between state ownership and commercialized use rights. Thereafter housing was chosen as a new growth pole of the economy (Wu, 2002), having propelled the economic development for more than a decade. In 2011, real estate investment accounted for thirteen percent of China's GDP, and the sector also feeds steel, concrete and dozens of other industries.[84] With a nationwide fetish of buying and selling properties, a huge bubble has been created, which

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[84] Yang, J. L. (2012, October 2). As China's economy slows, real estate bubble looms. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-10-02/business/35500560_1_home-prices-real-estate-chinese-home-buyers

slightly deflated in 2011 but restarted to inflate in 2012.[85] In contemporary China,

owning and exhibiting a nicely furnished private home essentially signifies the

(normative) middle class identity (Zhang, 2008). The cultural investment in properties is

further translated into rigid and stable demand that saves the bubble from busting by

titillating Chinese bachelors' yearnings for gender and sexual normativity. Sometimes

this agitation is pressured by their future wife, but more often than not is imposed by the

social norm of the hetero-patriarchal value usually incarnated through the bride's grim

parents. One day, when a young female apparel worker at her early twenties told me that

she did not care if her boyfriend had an apartment in the town or not as long as he truly

loved her, her older co-worker interrupted her, "your parents would not think so,

though."[86] Most of the older interviewees would agree with this jaded but realistic

woman. Though many of them strongly denounce the materialistic conception of

marriage, when it comes to their own daughter, their attitude is softened—they hope that

their daughter could marry a rich man so she won't suffer from economic difficulties (as

they did). As this example shows, the impetus for capital to reproduce itself in an

overloaded market is legitimated and realized by the paternalistic concern over the

younger generation's well-being in the heterosexual gender relationship. As the popular

discourse indicates, China's housing market has been supported by a "mother-in-law

economy." As a scholar points out, pressured by their "would-be" mother-in-law,

Chinese bachelors are contributing to the growth of GDP by two percent through the

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[85] Rapoza, K. (2012 December 18). Chinese expect their housing bubble to continue. *Forbes*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2012/12/18/chinese-expect-their-housing-bubble-to-continue/
[86] An interview conducted in Hai'an on June 6th, 2012.

purchase of commodities, such as condo, car and jewelry, as the socially sanctioned imperatives for the heterosexual conjugal relationship.[87]

The marketized touchstone for the conjugal relationship is imputed by many informants to the prevalence and proliferation of TV entertainment programs, such as *IF*. To them, this is a "younger generation thing." As they recalled, this discourse emerged and became popularized in recent three to four years. "No matter she is pretty or not, a girl will require that her future spouse should have a property, a car, and some savings. This is a new tendency," as one woman observed.[88] In their opinion, TV that tirelessly propagates stories of pretty young women marrying "*gao fu shuai*" (tall, rich and handsome men) has opened the Pandora's Box. *IF* in particular was mentioned again and again. As an older apparel worker angrily claimed, "it is like they are doing transactions!"[89] The bourgeois value of the hetero-patriarchal family coded in gender and sexual relationship by *IF* has obviously irritated older workers who do not fit into this norm. This program is especially rejected by the male subjects. As many women confessed, their husbands do not like this program, and sometimes even forbid them to watch it, because it would "teach them to become bad." For younger workers, programs like *IF* could interpellate them into the exchange-value-centered market subjectivity through the repetitive, identical and well-organized narrative tropes of romantic

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[87] *Enorth.com.cn*. (2013, February 23). *Zhong guo dan shen han gong xian 2% GDP zeng fu* (Chinese bachelors contribute to GDP growth by 2 %). Retrieved from http://news.enorth.com.cn/system/2013/02/23/010664710.shtml
[88] An interview conducted in Hai'an, on June 10, 2012.

[89] An interview conducted in Hai'an, on June 13, 2012.

relationship and marriage by mass media as the "culture industry" (Horkheimer &

Adorno, 2002). A young female worker told me that, after watching *IF*, a good friend of

hers started to complain about her boyfriend—"Gosh, my boyfriend is not good. He has

no money. I want to find someone who could take care of all my needs. If I have one

more chance, I want to find a rich man so I won't have to worry about my life

anymore."[90]

The property-centered protocol of heterosexual relationship beckons male workers

into the endless cycle of capital reproduction through an alluring invitation to join the

bandwagon of a middle class nucleus family dream. For most working class bachelors

that I interviewed, it is their biggest dream to make enough money to establish and

provide for their own family. Buying a property premises this dream. For the married

ones, upgrading their dingy and crowded cottage into a cozy and modernist home for

their wife and children is their unswerving responsibility, incentivizing them into ever

harder work. During America's industrial revolution, the private property was normalized

as the premise of citizenship for the emerging (white) American working class,

effectively bounding them with the fast running gear of machines through an entitlement

for political and civic participation (Glenn, 2002). In China's neoliberal transition, the

privatized notion of property works through gender and sexuality to make and remake

workers for the feeding of the growing appetite of capital. To the contrary of these

workers' dream, the paycheck accrued by their sacrificed health and spiritual well-being

can by no means match the skyrocketing housing price. In Wuxi, a construction worker

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[90] A focus group conducted in Hai'an, on June 20th, 2012.

could make around 100 Yuan a day in 2007 and 160 in 2012, a not-bad-at-all increase

rate. During the same period, the average urban housing price in China, however, soared

from 3445 to 5791 Yuan at a rate of sixty eight percent.[91] The increase of labor value

should not outpace the reproduction of capital—otherwise there would be "a crisis of

capital." In this regard, the booming housing industry and the swelling bubble of real

estate have obliterated the prospect of their property-founded hetero-patriarchal dream.

As cogs wedged into the fully running machine of capital, their menial work is not geared

towards breaking down this deadlock of capital-labor race, but rather pushes it to a higher

level and perpetuates their docility as its willing servitude via a gentrified hetero-

patriarchal mirage. For many poor workers uprooted from their impoverished hometowns,

such as Anhui and Sichuan, a viable alternative is to buy a bride from less developed

regions, such as Xinjiang and Yunnan. Ironically, by replicating the transnational mail

bride order in the Chinese context, the market logic of love and marriage is rejected by

embracing it.

The inter-generational linkage further congeals the bourgeois hetero-patriarchal

ideal into a nucleus family model to boost the labor market. As Foucault (1990) indicates,

in the ascending era of European capitalism, by constructing a homosexual other as well

as constricting the inappropriate heterosexual desire (e.g. children's sexuality), gender

relationship is normalized as oppositional but complimentary, through which the nucleus

family was consolidated to provide and foster more capable bodies for the market. In the

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[91] Zhao, Y. & Yang, Z. (2013, February 15). *Mei ti cheng Beijing fang jia shi nian zhang 365% Shanghai zhang fu 341%* (Media reports show that housing price in Beijing rose by 365% and 341% in Shanghai in the past ten years). *Yangcheng Evening News*. Retrieved from http://news.qq.com/a/20130225/001713.htm

U.S., based on the gendered model of "Self-Made Man" and his dependent wife as well as children, the nucleus family was valorized as the basic social unit to stabilize and sustain the market economy since the early nineteenth century (Kimmel, 1996). In contemporary China, the nucleus family as a disciplinary technology works differently. With a centralized role of children, it efficaciously disciplines and energizes the other two parties of this private space—parents—into voluntary subjects who are willingly sacrificing themselves for the family and children in particular, either working for extremely long hours or in super dehumanizing conditions. This conversation between me and two women workers would well illustrate this point.[92] Wang and Xu were at their early thirties, and had been in the industry of apparel and textile for over ten years. Different from most of the rural residents in Hai'an, Wang has two children to support. As they told me:

> Me: "What is the plan for your future?"

> Wang: "I really don't have any hope for myself."

> Zou: "Children are all her hope. Children are her sky."

> Wang: "Well, as long as my children are good, I will be OK."

These simple words express the hearty feelings of most workers. When I stayed in Hai'an, a male construction worker came to talk to me again and again after our first conversation. He repeatedly confided with me his long suppressed agony of seeing the alienated relationship between him and his son after working for years in cities. During

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[92] An interview conducted in Hai'an, on June 15th, 2012.

his 25-year experience as a migrant worker, it had been hard for him to find a listener as patient as me. Most of his co-workers had similar problems and it became too traumatizing to talk about these experiences with each other. As the masculine breadwinner for the family, these men's gendered role requires that they should save tears, sweat and sometimes blood all to themselves.

For poor rural people hoping for social mobility, leaving home for prosperous urban and coastal areas, or foreign countries, is an important way to change their life. In so doing, men hope to increase their economic capital to be qualified for a middle class nucleus family, and women want to enhance their marketable values to shoot for a better man. As I have discussed in chapter two and three, the redefining of the hetero-patriarchal family through the intersection of gender, class and sexuality anchors China's transition from Socialism to neoliberalism. In the next parts, I would illustrate how the intersection of multiple categories helps restructure Chinese population and reproduce a new social group for the profit carnival of capital and state, and shores up China's role of "the world's factory" as well as a "neo" neoliberal juggernaut poised to compete for resources, raw materials and opportunities in the global context. This process is pivoted on a politics of subjection and subject-making (Ong, 2006), which as I will demonstrate next, is enabled and supported through the bourgeois hetero-patriarchal norm.

Rearticulating Chinese Workers through the Intersectional Biopolitics

When China initiated the urban reform in 1984, together with other social policies, the party-state revamped and manipulated the Maoist *Hukou* system to reassemble the

class inequalities between urbanities and rural residents, attempting to direct the population flow from rural to urban regions required by the new market economy. As a result of the favorable policies provided to boost the coastal and urban economy after 1984, lots of job opportunities popped up there. Meanwhile, the income gap between urban and rural residents restarted to yawn. Since Mao's era, the state has played the critical role in (re)creating and maintaining this inequality for the politico-economic needs, as what Solinger (1999) calls "domestic colonialism," which still remarkably impacts rural people's life today. As a construction worker told me, though crop tax has been abrogated by Wen's administration, the expenses of fertilizers, equipment and other materials remarkably rise as a result of marketization. "After deducting the expenses of fertilizers and labor, you will only make several hundred Yuan per square acre. For my family, we can only make a couple of thousand Yuan a year. You know, it is far from enough to support my family," as a construction worker complained.[93] From 1984, the state started to lift the restriction of migration, allowing farmers to "freely" move to cities for the first time since Mao's implementation of *Hukou* system in 1958 to satisfy the need of the unleashed market force.

When the rural/urban and coastal/inland differences further widened with the accelerated pace of marketization after 1992, the state began to systematically permit or even encourage substantial labor mobility, so a continual supply of laborers could be maintained for the surging demand of capital. Therefore, "instead of only being allowed to operate in the nearest free-market pocket, individuals have increasingly been able to

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[93] An interview conducted in Wuxi, on July 15, 2012.

move long distances and dramatically change their status and occupation" (Naughton 1999, 40). As a result of these socio-economic policies, different "pull" and "push" factors were created to direct the flow of laborers through the deliberate drawing and redrawing of scopes of actions, as what Foucault calls "governance" (2011). For instance, such "push" factors as the decrease of farmland as a result of improper use, the inflated living expenses, the effect of agricultural modernization, and the household contract responsibility system adopted in 1978, as well as "pull" factors that included the widening income disparity, the increased demand of construction projects and the non-state sectors in urban areas highly delimited the scope of possible choices for the "freed" migrant workers. When I asked the construction workers why they left their home to work in cities, they unanimously responded that they did not have many choices because there were no jobs in their hometown, and they needed to support their family. On this account, by granting the "freedom" of moving to these workers, the state also slots them into a restricted recipe of possible actions under the directive of the oscillating needs of market.

By retaining and even strengthening discriminative policies against rural migrants through *Hukou* system while allowing them to stay in cities, the state further undermines the negotiating capacities of migrant workers and places them in the brutal complicit control by Communist bureaucrats and capital. Many construction workers complained to me that in cities they have no access to state-sponsored medical care allocated through *Hukou* system. When they get sick, they could only "hold it." As a worker lamented, because their job prospect is highly unstable (in terms of time, location and income),

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employers refuse to buy endowment insurance for them, leaving them particularly insecure and vulnerable. Unlike their urban counterparts, as rural residents, they are not entitled to pension, either. The anxiety and worry over their future life have turned many workers into self-responsible "money-making machines." In order to save enough money as their own "pension," several workers once tried to work for eighteen hours a day (from 3:30 am to 11:30 pm). If they had not quit it, this intense amount of work could have claimed their life, as they said. The elongated working hours could also turn into lifelong toiling. In the construction fields that I visited, it is not rare to see workers over sixty still undertaking dangerous work such as building scaffold and wood frame at a daunting height. At the same time, urbanities of the same age are probably enjoying their retirement life and playing with their grandchildren.[94] These workers' value is not just extracted through the direct enslavement by capital, but also via the state's totalizing power. "Workers are required to pay for the temporary resident permit and the work permit in one lump sum" by the government of the receiving place (Chan, 2001, p. 8) and are often treated as cash cows by their home government. As a worker from Anhui grumbled, because he is working outside, his family needs to pay the local government "security fees." Despite their legal citizenship, through an array of policies, the migrant workers are actually deprived of legal protection and turned into what Agamben calls "bare life" (2000) as the highly exploitable and vulnerable subjects for the benefits of state/capital.

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[94] In China, the legal retirement age for male workers is fifty five and female workers fifty.

Among other factors, *Hukou*-based education opportunities especially constrain the choices of rural residents, pre-embarking many of them on a trajectory for migration in the foreseeable future. Since the mid-1990s, the privatization and streamlining of education mandated by neoliberal restructuring has unequally impacted rural schools, not only shutting down a large number of them, but also reducing their educational quality by withdrawing investment (Goldman & Macfarquhar, 1999; Whyte, 2010). As a result, the percentage of rural students in key universities keeps dropping. During 1978-1998, about thirty percent of students at Peiking University, China's leading higher education institution, were from the rural area. In 2010, this figure decreased to ten. The case is similar for Tsinghua University, another leading school in China.[95] In our conversations, many workers expressed their regret that they had not studied hard enough at school, so they had to swallow the bitter fruit of which they sowed the seed. This self-blaming narrative echoes with the neoliberal ideology that individuals should be accountable for their own life rather than questioning the systemic injustice and inequalities. In this case, having internalized the neoliberal "bootstrap" logic, they do not see how class as a biopolitical category has been mobilized and manipulated by the state to narrow down their prospect of social mobility, and largely pre-determine their current ordeal. As part of China's neoliberal restructuring, education is now opened to both rural and urban residents through the market—ironically, by *Hukou* again. In Hai'an, if a rural family can

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[95] Pan, X. (2011, August 5). *Nei di nong cun xue sheng nan ru ming xiao bei da xue sheng zhan bi cong san cheng die zhi yi cheng* (It is gettering harder for rural students to go to key universities in mainland China and their percentage of Peiking University students drops from 30% to 10%). Retrieved from http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/detail_2011_08/05/8201640_0.shtml

buy a property in the town, they would acquire an urban *Hukou*, so their children can go to public primary and junior high schools there.

The disciplinary power anchored in state-imposed-and-organized class identity further reshapes the body of migrant workers, perpetuating their secondary citizenship and legislating their exploitation by the state-capital complicity through the corporealized stigma. Not surprisingly, all of my informants share experiences of being discriminated against in cities, in particular if they don't conform to the urban dressing code. Because of their rustic clothing, they are often derided by urbanities, asked to pay extra fees while taking a bus, and sometimes not allowed to enter a department store. Moreover, as their body has been reconfigured and inscribed with derogatory symbols through the daily toiling, more often than not, the well-groomed appearance and dressing cannot remove the etched mark on their body, just as a conversation between me and a woodworker shows.[96] In my third visit of one workers' temporary dwelling in Wuxi, I found that a worker did not go to work because he had vomited several times that day. Called "Lao Wei" by his co-workers, this man left his home in Anhui a few months ago to look for jobs in Wuxi. After running a street vending business with his wife for several years, Lao Wei became a construction worker. Mostly, he would take jobs that were to his home, but recently his hometown, Chaohu had been merged into another bigger city in Anhui and many jobs were thus suspended. When I asked how he felt as an alien in the urban space of Wuxi, and whether the local people could tell his working class identity, he told me:

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[96] An interview conducted in Wuxi, July 12, 2012.

Wei: "Definitely, especially for woodworker and bricklayer. They particularly despise us. For those working in the factories, it is not as this bad."

Me: "Is it because you have to work in the sunshine all day?"

Wei: "Yes. They can tell that we are woodworker and bricklayer at the first sight."

Me: "At the first sight？

Wei: "Dark! You are too dark! When you get off work and go to the street together with clean clothes…"

Me: "Even clean clothes won't work for you?"

Wei: "When we go to the street, they can immediately tell our (construction workers') identity from the way we talk and behave."

Me: "No matter how nicely you dress yourself?"

Wei: "It won't work that way. We are so dark, and they would look at us very differently. When we want to buy some clothes in the department store, the shop assistants just despise us, particularly if the clothes are expensive. If we ask about the price, they often ignore us."

Me: "Ignore you?"

Wei: "They told us, you migrant workers could never afford them, so why

bother to ask?"

In this example, we can see that the market's freedom and equality are suspended

when encountering the class boundary. Far from a domain of free and equal exchange,

market is in actuality fragmented and segregated through identities such as class, gender

and race (Somers, 2008). With the imposition by the state, class as a biopolitical vector is

employed and manipulated to thrust those labeled as such into the predatory "invisible

hand." As the value is extracted from their body, a stigmatizing symbol is simultaneously

corporealized as the perpetual stamp of inferiority, denial, margin and malignity, further

legitimizing and reinforcing their enslavement by capital and the state. A segment of

secondary citizens as what Solinger (1995) calls "floating population" is thus

disarticulated from Chinese population via this tautology of identity-ordinated market

logic, who have been both included in and excluded from China's marketizing process.

As Whyte (2010) notes, this manipulative treatment of China's floating population for the

politico-economic purposes through the state-sanctioned violence share striking parallels

with illegal immigrants in the United States and the former apartheid system in South

Africa.

Similar to Ruth Wilson Gilmore's conception of race (2007), class is also

the state-sanctioned and/or extralegal production and exploitation of group-

differentiated vulnerability to premature death for the welfare of the market. In

different modes of value extraction, capital predetermines the differential

embodiment of workers' "bare body": most construction workers have developed

"professional" health problems with their waist, lung and stomach for the long-lasting heavy and dirty work; many apparel workers are struggling with neck, shoulder and waist pain as they have to sit beside the sewing machine all day long; silk workers' listening is often damaged by the thundering noise from the machine. As a woman joked, when she went to see the doctor for her neck problem, he immediately found out her apparel worker identity.[97] Without performing any exams or checking, the doctor already knew what the problem was and how to treat it on the basis of his past (and rich) experience (of dealing with apparel workers). Also based on the past experience, a construction worker told me that, their job would reduce their life expectancy by at least five years. Thus as Jasbir Puar (2007) suggests, neoliberal governmentality not only relies on biopolitics to organize who to live and how to live, but also tempers with necropolitics to mandate who to die and when to die for the market.

Besides class, gender is another biopolitical category for the state to cast and recast Chinese working class with the pulsation of the market. In 1978, with China's economic reform, the "one child policy" was designated to "enhance the population quality" as part of China's modernizing initiative. As a result, eugenics was written into China's Constitution in 1980 as a fundamental national policy, attempting to control and regulate women's body in accordance with the state's politico-economic agenda. The draconian birth control policies, thereafter, successfully transformed the overflowing population from the burden into a bountiful reservoir of labor resources to ground China's ambitious

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[97] An interview conducted in Hai'an, on June 5, 2012.

plan to become "the world's factory." As Naughton (1999) contends, this resource constitutes China's core competitiveness in the restructured global division of labor, as the party-state consciously repositions itself to the lower niche of the industrial hierarchy. As he writes:

> There are few elderly—since life expectancies were low until recently—
> but also few children—because of strict limits on births. As a result, the
> share of the population in the young adult age bracket is quite high.
> China's population is usually adaptable, active, and resilient, because it is
> so young yet lacking a huge population of dependent children…The
> *median* age of the Chinese work force is now only thirty-two (it will
> increase steadily to forty in 2025). That means it is well positioned to cope
> with the dramatic social and economic changes occurring all around (1999,
> p. 43).

At the core of China's neoliberal restructuring, welfare provision has been stripped from the state side by side with the restored market-oriented family farming system. Meanwhile, because of the sediment of patrilocal marriage system, which had never been truly destabilized by Mao's gender egalitarianism policy, the birth control policy gave massive rise to infanticide of female babies across China (Honig & Hershatter, 1988; Perry & Selden, 2000; Zhan & Montgomery, 2003), at least in its early years of implementation. Ideally, the responsibility of nursing and supporting old people by the state (as the Maoist state discourse and Deng's earlier propaganda so claimed) should be transferred back to the family as the basic social unit. In practice, this responsibility was

usually placed on the shoulder of men as the head of the family, reproducing a socio-economic ground to increase men's values. This value was further accrued through men's comparative physical advantages in the restored family farming system, rendering women undesirable and negligible by both the state and family.

In the new market system, the undesirability and undervaluation of women translate into a sexually hierarchized stratum of labor value. According to the data of China Labor Bulletin, among over one million online job ads, around ten percent explicitly demonstrate a gendered interest for men, and for lower-end jobs, sexism against women is even worse—this number rises to twenty three percent.[98] After 1992, while the opening up of Pudong area in Shanghai marked China's full embracing of market economy, the city started to shed the labor-intensive and "sunset" manufacturing industries such as textiles and apparels—its former growth pole—to adjacent areas (Chen, 2009). In Hai'an, the small county with a population slightly less than one million, there are over 1,000 apparel, or textile medium-size factories (with at least fifteen workers). Most of their products will be sold to developed countries, such as Japan, the United States and Europe. In this multi-tiered industrial transference (from industrialized countries to metropolis in developing countries such as Shanghai, and then to underdeveloped rural areas), women in the Third World are unsurprisingly always placed at the very bottom of the global biopolitical structure of labor valuation. Of the fifty six apparel workers that I interviewed, only four are men. In this highly feminized domain, sexual hierarchy is further entrenched through the unequal division and pay of labor: the

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[98] *China Labor Bulletin*. (n. d.). Employment discrimination in China. Retrieved from http://www.clb.org.hk/en/view-resource-centre-content/110167#gender

higher rank, the more likely that the person would be a man with a better wage. Surprisingly, most women workers seemed to be fine with this issue. When I tried to hint at the topic of sexual segregation of labor, a number of them drew upon the naturalized conception of gender to justify it. As they claimed, lower paid floor work in an export-processing apparel factory is women's "natural" job because they are more attentive to details than men, and their husbands should undertake higher-paid but coarse work, such as construction and decoration, to provide for the family. Some women workers even told me that the men working in apparel factories are very "pathetic" because they cannot make enough money to support their family by doing this. When I further pressed the issue about the sexual division of labor and wage in their factory, they shifted to the societal rhetoric of gender difference for support. As they repeated, men usually have more education and so to speak, better qualifications for better jobs and pay. This natural-societal mutual construction of gender difference also effectively disciplines the male construction workers into willing subjects. As men, they are supposed to sell their "natural" strength in return of better life for their wife and children. As men, they would suffer from "masculinity in crisis" if they could not fulfill their gendered responsibility for the family. In stark contrast to this gendered polarization of job and pay, not too long ago, in Maoist China, men and women were exhorted to equally contribute to the construction of a classless society by the discourse of gender equality.

As China's economic reform has been initiated and accelerated, in multiple sites such as science, popular rhetoric, education and intimate relationship, the natural and societal discourses are proliferated as the inter-referential tropes to reconstruct and

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reinforce the gender difference to sustain the diversified market needs. As early as in primary schools, young women are told that they should pursue subjects that are "fit" for them because of their scientifically-verified natural difference from men (Honig & Hershatter, 1988). When women start to work, they are advised, and sometimes coerced to accept the unequal sexual division of labor and wage, and obey their male supervisors—any resistance to this rule would vitiate their feminine attractiveness and value in the marriage market (Pun, 2005). As we have seen in the earlier example, the gendered occupational and economic differences as a result of these "naturalized" gendered consultations, exhortations, and coercing leave women in a vulnerable position in the socio-economic system, who are often pressured to invoke their "natural" difference to seek for support from their husbands.

Xiao Wang, an intruder in a men's domain, scaffold building, is an interesting example of the gendered biopolitical disciplinary and normalizing technologies.[99] She came with her husband to Wuxi several years ago. Like most of the migrants, she had left her son with the care by her husband's parents at home in Guizhou. As the minority in the construction industry, though the number of women has been on the rise recently, they are usually relegated to a less important and paid position, often as the assistant to their husband, called "junior worker" (*xiao gong*). Different from them, Xiao Wang is one of the only two female scaffold builders—a hardcore field of men. As an alien to this highly masculinized domain with an austere requirement of strength, endurance and energy, though Xiao Wang does very well in her job (as verified by her supervisor), she

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[99] An interview conducted in Wuxi, July 6, 2012.

is often subject to gender-inflected slurs and backlashes from her male co-workers. Oblivious to her excellent performance, they often question her value as a qualified co-worker because of her female identity—"How can a woman be a scaffold builder? Can't your husband support you? Are you a real woman?" as she told me. Her husband also feels that he has lost his face by allowing his wife to do so, even though Xiao Wang can make more money and relieve his financial burden with her work. The young couple thus often run into quarrel because of the man's tarnished gender dignity. But Xiao Wang never gives in, "I am willing to do this. Don't belittle us (women). We can do an equally good job (as men)!" Though she successfully transcends the sexualized boundary of labor division and takes great pride in this achievement with a feminist gesture, she is paid less than her co-workers by doing the same job. To my great surprise, she nonetheless willingly accepts this unequal treatment, "you know, this is a men's job after all, so it is normal that they pay me less." By accepting the naturalized conception of gender as the legitimate foundation of wage differences, Xiao Wang's adamant subversion of the gendered societal arrangement of labor division is neutralized, and she is subsumed into the gendered biopolitical architect in its service of the endless cycle of capital reproduction. Just as Pun argues, "[t]he biopower…is not only interested in molding a general [proletarian] body but also a particular sexed body, a feminine body to fit the factory discipline" (2005, p. 136). In this sense, the remaking of Chinese proletarian is undergirded by gender (Yan, 2008).

However, as feminists of color keep reminding us, biopolitical categories such as class and gender never proceed in a paralleled mode, but intersect with each other for

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mutual construction and consolidation for social control and subjugation. Though this claim is embedded in U.S. history of racial, gender and class domination, if we use it as a toolkit to craft contextually contingent analytical instruments than a tool for universal solutions, it would help tease out the interwoven relationship between China's neoliberal transition, reconstituted labor market and the shifting contours of class and gender. For instance, different from urban residents that have more economic resources and educational opportunities, in poor rural families, the education of young women is often suspended to support their brothers' schooling. After quitting schools, young women often choose to, and sometimes are even forced by their parents to migrate to urban and coastal areas for jobs. It is quite common for them to work in sweatshops of electronics, apparels, socks and other consumption items for fourteen to sixteen hours a day. During my interviews, I frequently got saddened by some older women workers' stories: at the age of 15 (just finishing junior high school), they had to leave home and move to alien metropolises to make a living. Except for a small portion for subsistence, they would send the bulk of their income back home to support their families. The intersection of *Hukou*-based class inequality and gender difference has thus generated disparate effects on rural men and women, particularly impacting the life track of poor rural women. Moreover, the intersection of class and gender also delimits different possibilities of action choices for urban and rural women. Compared with urbanities (especially those working for the government) who still have access to certain forms of welfare, rural residents rely on the filial relationship for support when they grow old. Moreover, the reestablished family-based farming system increases the value of labor, particularly male laborers in the rural region. Therefore it is OK for urban couples to have only one child

(even if it is a daughter), but many rural families would struggle to avoid the forced abortion and draconian punishment by the local government, hoping to procreate at least one male baby. In this case, many rural women are forced to escape to other areas and join the "floating population."

Actually, the biopolitical differentiation of human bodies through the overlapped categories underlines the global pattern of labor division and movement as required by neoliberal restructuring, and needless to say, China's socio-economic transition as well. As discussed in chapter three, in global cities like Hong Kong and Singapore, native middle class housewives are the major target of biopolitical reassembling technologies for the industrial upgrading—through proper education and training, these women could become management and financial professionals to recreate the two cities as the "hubs" for transnational capital after their relative competitive edge of cheap labors was exhausted in the mid-1980s. The domestic work shed by the professionalized middle class women are then transferred to poor female immigrants from less developed neighbors, such as Philippines and Indonesia (Ong, 2006). Similarly, when the Chinese state tries to upgrade Shanghai into another hub city in the Asia-Pacific area as the interface between transnational capital and raw materials and labor resources in interior China, many well-educated urban women are slotted into advanced economic sectors, leaving less valued jobs to their biopolitical others—rural migrant women (Sassen, 2009). For example, rural women from Anhui account for over eighty percent of domestic workers in Shanghai (Yan, 2008). For poor rural migrant women, labor-intensive industries such as electronics and apparel making would be another position suiting their

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biopolitical value in the globalized industrial hierarchy. For instance, in the export-processing factories in southern China, eighty percent of the workers are rural women (Davin, 2004). For male migrant workers, the growing demand of dirty, dangerous and heavy construction/decoration work by China's urbanization would be an "appropriate" choice for them.

Building on the intersection of gender, class and sexuality, the hetero-patriarchal norm is congealed as the central biopolitical norm to control and exploit migrant workers. To them, heterosexual marriage is not just the ends of their hard work, but also the means through which they could transition from a biological being into a societal being. As a bachelor at his early forties recollected, he often falls prey to the ostracizing, marginalization and derision by his co-workers because of his poverty-foisted celibacy, which has also invited the questioning of his gender and sexual identities.[100] This man's misery well reflects the frigid reality of marriage market for poor migrants—the compounded effects of the *Hukou*-based class inequalities and gender ideology highly restricts their scope of marriage, and makes "marrying within the group" almost their only choice. For male migrants, their working class identity and gendered role of breadwinner makes it almost impossible to marry a worldly urban woman. As they said, this chance is less than one percent. For migrant women, their rural *Hukou* as well as despised jobs runs counter to the normative discourse of gentrified feminine delicacy and fragility, producing a nearly insurmountable barrier for them to "marry outside." In this regard, *IF*'s much criticized special episodes for migrant workers actually reveal the

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[100] An interview conducted in Wuxi, on July 8th, 2012.

harsh reality for poor workers. The media products also recreate this gendered and classed inequality by treating the migrants as the bracketed-off participants who should emulate the middle class gender and sexual protocols to become the qualified neoliberal subjects.

The hetero-patriarchal norm is further intensified into the nucleus familial paradigm, in which children become the center to calibrate the life choices for poor workers (Connelly, Roberts & Zheng, 2012). For migrant women, having no access to state-provided medical and care service, they have to move back home for help when getting pregnant. Leaving their children under the care by grandparents, many of them then go back to cities for work, but have to move back home again when their children grow up to six years old, an age for school. As they are concerned, their aged parents will not be capable enough to educate and culture their children. But when I asked them why they did not take their children with them to cities, they told me that the urban public education resources are restricted and super expensive for children without the urban *Hukou*. In addition, schools for migrant children are scarcely funded by the state, and what's more, often slashed by the local governments for the gentrification of the urban horizon.[101] For rural children living in cities, they usually have to go back home for school with their mother when growing up to the age for school. The vacancies left by these women would soon be replaced by younger women—China's huge population is providing a seemingly inexhaustible reservoir of laborers for the insatiable capital that is

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[101] Ma, H. (2011, August 16). *Beijing ding dian "qu di" nong min gong zi di xue xiao* (Beijing government clamped down scholars for migrant children). *21st Century Business Herald*. Retrieved from http://finance.ifeng.com/news/20110816/4396190.shtml

in constant need of young, nimble and adroit fingers to run the machine (Mies, 1999). As Janet Collins notes, many people have documented " the strategies that firms instituted, beginning in the 1970s, of recruiting mostly young, unmarried women without children and firing them when they married, gave birth, or simply reached a certain age" in the Western societies (2003, p. 13-14). In contrast, the reproduction of healthy and able-bodied laborers seems more "humane" in China—through the intersection of class and gender, a pool of "young, docile [female] labor force that can be worked hard with minimal health problems" is being (re)produced for labor-intensive industries (Davin, 2004, p. 78). When migrant women workers move back home, they usually take jobs in their hometown so they could take care of their children and contribute to the familial finance simultaneously. One day when I was doing the field research in a factory, a group of children jubilated into the workshop. A worker perceived my confusion and told me that they were the workers' children. After school, they would come to the factory and do their homework here until their mother finish work and take them home. Younger mothers would also take their toddlers to the work place. During my visit, it was very common to see that a child was taking a nap beside his/her mother, who was busy with operating the sewing machine.

This contradictory role for women as both capable market actor and caring housewife/mother is produced and circulated by and for neoliberal restructuring through the politics of subjection and subject-making. In an afternoon when I was interviewing a female worker in a grocery store outside a silk factory, our discussion about women

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workers intrigued the male owner so he joined our conversation.[102] He was quite baffled by women's increasing economic independence. Invoking a zero sum game theory, he contended that women have taken over the dominance of family at the expense of men. After he finished his shift, his wife (hereafter Li) came to manage the store. As an over fifty year old woman, Li had worked in the silk factory beside the store for over fifteen years, and then contracted this store and ran it with her husband. She was very interested in our topic about gender relationship and began to ventilate her subdued experiences by her husband's patriarchal control. As she said, when she was young, because of her distinguishing performance in the silk factory, the manager wanted to promote her to an important position and gave her more opportunities to develop and tap her talents for business. This opportune watershed for her career, however, met with strong opposition from her husband, who insisted that a virtuous woman should not keep such a high profile in the business world (for men), and should let their husband take care of them. After rounds of debate, quarrel and sometimes even fight, she finally quitted her job and chose to contract this small store. When I asked why she did so, she answered, "people like me would sacrifice us for the harmony of the family and happiness of our children. When my sons date girls, their girlfriend's families would say our family was not very harmonious…" Prioritizing the well-being of the family, particularly the children over her professional ambition, she made this decision, "actually I did everything for my sons. I am a woman. My husband is so sexist and can say anything (negative). Sometimes I am concerned about my face, so I just try to suppress myself."

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[102] An interview conducted in Hai'an, June 10, 2012.

This intense discussion over gender relationship, family and work attracted several

female workers and shoppers passing by the store, and they joined in our conversation.

Like Li, they all shared similar experiences about struggling with the dilemma between

their gendered and marketized role. While reconstituted as independent, self-accountable

subjects for social mobility, they also internalize the gender discourse about women's

prioritized liability to family. It is right through the seemingly paradoxical biopolitical

logic of gender and class that women's value is double extracted and appropriated by

capital and the streamlined state-as-capital-facilitator. As discussed in chapter three, with

the seductive and coercive advocacy of the U.S., neoliberal restructuring in the global

context has actually reshaped the life of many women across the world through this

biopolitical paradox. However, it is not an easy job to unpack and dismantle this specious

biopolitics of the globalizing process. Knowing that this interview would be included in

my dissertation, Li insisted that I should write these words of her into my work—"We

Chinese women are different from American women. We have big love (*da ai*) for our

family, but they only prioritize small love (*xiao ai*) for themselves." This is a sweeping

over-generalization of Chinese and American womanhood without seeing their

connectivity by globalization, well demonstrating the necessity of joint efforts and a

sincere dialogue for all the groups marginalized by and through this process. Only with

this can critical scholars and progressive people really understand the nuanced,

contingent, variegated biopolitics as the common ground for the subjugation of the

majority of the world population to the benefits of transnational capital (Mohanty, 2003).

Like the male owner of the grocery store, many male rural migrants also internalize their gendered role for the familial social mobility, so they often choose to stay in cities and continue to work while their wife and children move back home. As part of their masculine ethics, they usually save a small portion of their income for daily expenses, and send the bulk to the family. Among all the expenditures, education for children constitutes the primary category. Generally, a construction worker will spend half to two thirds of their income on their children's education—as they believe, this is a reliable and sometimes the only way for social mobility of their children and family. As Lao Wei showed me, he could make around fifty to sixty thousand Yuan a year, but would spend thirty five thousand on his two boys' schooling. Like him, many male workers have internalized the neoliberal meritocratic narratives. However, different from the Western stories of self-made success, for Chinese working class, it is their subjection fully motivated for the well-being and prosperity of the whole family rather than the personal fortune that constitutes the central incentive for poor male working class to tolerate the dehumanizing super exploitation and survive the unabashed discrimination in cities. This neoliberal subjection of Chinese working class is anchored in the intersectional contours of gender, class and (hetero)sexuality, ensuring an incessant supply of laborers for the hustles and bustles of China's industrialization-urbanization.

Though gender, class and sexuality constitute the primary categories for the biopolitical structure in China's neoliberal transition, sometimes other categories are also articulated with this intersectional system to further fragment Chinese workers for the diversified needs of capital, such as age. Every year, thousands of rural women leave

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Hai'an for Japan to take jobs in apparel and textile factories. As they told me, these jobs are usually despised by Japanese natives, except for thoe women over fifty, and so to speak, not quite employable for industrial capital. Compared with the older age pool of the Japanese workers, Chinese women are much younger— only those under thirty (extended to thirty five after the 2011 earthquake) would get the work permit. On this account, Chinese immigrant workers need to compensate their less valued biopolitical labels of nationality, class and ethnicity by their age advantage, so they can be elevated to the same level with their older, Japanese counterparts to compete for the attention of capital in the globalized chart of labor division. Chinese male agricultural workers in Japan provide another example. Like women, in Hai'an numerous young rural men go to Japan every year, but they are usually concentrated in agricultural economy. While they are working in higher-paying agricultural sectors in Japan, their less valued but state-stipulated farming work at home is usually transferred to their aged biopolitical others— their parents.

Regional difference is another parameter for the labor division and migration. Of the four male apparel workers that I interviewed, one is from Anhui. Different from other native male workers who feel distressed and alienated in this feminized industry, this man does not feel much pressure. As he contended, in his hometown, it is normal for men to work in apparel factories. His words were later verified by other people from Anhui. Regional difference also mediates the labor market for the construction industry. As a major laborer-sending area, it is ironic that Hai'an's construction fields are mostly populated by workers from other areas. Regional difference also characterizes labor

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division within the industry. In the construction fields that I visited, the types of work (e.g. woodwork, scaffold building and bricklaying) are usually divided by the origin of workers. Workers from relatively developed areas usually take higher-paying jobs that require more skills. Some people might take a reductive view, seeing regional difference as only the "natural" distribution of location for the people, however, it is also "the principle most often invoked as grounds for affiliation and assistance by men who left their homes to work in an alien environment" (Naquin & Rawski, 1987, p. 47). Places are constituted not only by their location and physical features, but also by the specific, often regulated forms of bodies that inhabit them (Sun ,2009).On this account, regional difference is an important biopolitical category to classify, manage and stratify the Chinese population.

In *Creating Chinese Ethnicity* (1992), Emily Honig's theorization of Chinese ethnic formation provides us a theoretical tool to understand how local origins become one of the important factors shaping Chinese ethnic identities, in similar ways as Chicano/a, Polish and Italian identities have been considered ethnic in the United States. American historian, Susan Jones Mann conceptualizes ethnic formation as historical process, and contends that it involves "the creation, invocation, and manipulation of notions of cultural distinctiveness to establish self/other dichotomies among people in a shared political and economic system"(1974, p. 9). Building on Mann's framework, Honig tries to elucidate that since the late nineteenth century, class and ethnicity have been co-constituting with each other in the formation and reformation of laborers for the differential economic needs. Through a historical review of the modern history of the

Subei people in Shanghai, Honig argues that people's origins intersect with social class, creating a new ethnicity-like identity for Chinese people. As she writes, "Class…was constituted through native place identities, and the construction of native place identities was part of a discourse about class. Furthermore, it was precisely because those identities were so inextricably linked to class that they assumed ethnic dimensions" (1992, p. 4).

Building on Honig's (1992) conception, we could see how origin-based ethnic identity intersects with other categories, such as class, to facilitate the diversification of the labor market for China's socio-economic transition. It is quite common to employ workers from other regions for the better control of labor in the local construction industry (as is the case of Hai'an). For migrant workers in the alien urban space where they lack a stable social network, the origin-based ethnic tie becomes an important relation for mutual support. Because they all come from rural areas, their *Hukou*-imposed class identity further reinforces this ethnic commonality, creating solidarity for them to survive the ruthless exploitation by capital and the state. During my visit in Wuxi, it was quite common to see that workers from the same place would watch TV, play Mahjong or cards and have other forms of entertainment during their limited and precious leisure time. They also share the same dormitory, and would take care of each other if someone gets sick. In this regard, multiple "ethnic enclaves" are created in the cities during China's process of economic transition (Zhang, 2001). As I have discussed earlier, construction work is highly unstable, so these workers have to constantly look for new jobs. The ethnic relation thus becomes the most reliable site to share the job information. As a result, the jobs in the construction fields are often divided along the ethnic lines. For

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capital, this relationship provides a convenient and costless channel to locate and renew labor for its reproduction.

However, the origin-based ethnicity also creates a contingent space for the resistance and subversion of the complicity of capital and the state. Taking the side with capital to better facilitate China's transition to market economy, the party-state removed the constitutional clause granting workers the right to strike in 1979 (Meisner, 1996). In other words, as the historical foundation for workers to negotiate with capital, class solidarity has been delegalized by the state. On this account, the ethnicized coalition is often mobilized by construction workers to challenge the super exploitation by capital. As one worker said, "it does not matter how skillful a worker is. The key is the number. The more people you have, the better price you can get."[103] Lao Zhang, a rural migrant from Anhui who has been working in Wuxi for over fifteen years, is the foreman of the woodworkers. Under his leadership, they have formed a stable team of about twenty workers who all come from the same area in Anhui. His team could often get a better price from the boss than other individual workers. In this regard, these workers invoke one identity (ethnicity) to unsettle the domination and exploitation based on another identity (class), creating a counter-biopolitical space to turn the biopolitical logic of neoliberal governmentality on its head. It thus enables what H. L. T. Quan (2012) calls "ungovernability."

In China, ethnicity is, however, a fluid and unstable category, whose meanings might vary with occasions. Besides one's origin of location, it might also denote

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[103] An interview conducted in Wuxi, on July 26th, 2012.

"nationalities," "minorities" that often refer to non-Han peoples, or phenotypical/genotypical differences (e.g. Russian and Uighur people in northwest China). For instance, in a transnational context, ethnicity (*min zu*) usually marks one's Chinese national descendant. Approaching ethnicity on this semantic level, we will see that it is deeply intertwined with the transnational movement of Chinese labor as China reintegrates with the global economy.

In the global hierarchy of economy, China's core competitive edge is its huge pool of docile and flexible labor (Naughton, 1995). Different from other industrialized countries that often hinge on technologies, capital and/or militant power for expansion, China's penetration into the global economy is distinguished by the transnational movement of legions of Chinese workers. This process is often facilitated through the ethnic relationship. Lao Qiu, a construction worker from a poor rural area in Sichuan who has been working in Angola for eight years is a good case in point.[104] After working for an Angolan general for quite a while, Lao Qiu has worked his way up to the management level to help his boss regulate and control workers from China. Moreover, he has built a social network there and commanded fairly good Portuguese proficiency. Relying on these social and cultural capitals, Lao Qiu has successfully introduced eighteen relatives, friends and acquaintances from his hometown to work in Angola and made "a good sum of money." This private type of ethnic network of job information has developed into a hugely lucrative public industry of transnational labor trafficking in China. Only in Hai'an, there are around twenty agencies specializing in this. Owners of these agencies

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[104] An interview conducted in Chengdu, Sichuan, on August 5th, 2012.

are usually former workers who have stayed in certain countries for quite a while like Lao Liu, and their major clientele body is usually the poor rural people in their hometown. To introduce a person to work in a foreign country, they would charge a service fee, ranging from 20,000 to 180,000 Yuan—the more developed the destination, the more you have to pay. Under the directive of the neoliberal market tenor, the ethnic ties with relatives, friends, fellow-villagers, or Chinese people in general thus become a conduit to their enterprising subjectivity. The state also actively capitalizes on the ethnicized relationship to facilitate the transnational migration of Chinese people for profits. Recently, sponsored by the Education Ministry, a program called *Summer Work and Travel* has been popularized among many Chinese universities. After paying 20,000 Yuan as the service fee to the state-run agencies, college students could get a chance to work in the U.S. during the summer, in a fast food restaurant, hotel, bar or theme park to enrich their "professional" experiences.

The transnational migration of Chinese working class is not just ethnicized, but also gendered and classed. As many workers who used to work in foreign countries told me, rural men are usually introduced to the Middle East or Africa for their sizzling infrastructure constructions while women would often usually go to developed countries, such as Japan, and take jobs in the "sunset" industries despised by the local people. For example, as Lao Qiu told me, about ninety-five percent of Chinese in Angola are men from rural areas, and most of them are concentrated in the construction industry. It again verifies Tastsoglou and Alexandra's observation that male workers "constitute a higher

proportion of migrants to 'developing countries' whereas women comprise a majority of migrants to many 'developed' countries" (2006, p. 5).

Ethnic relationship also becomes a fundamental mechanism to control these diasporic workers. Though it might sound ironic, actually when many Chinese workers arrive in a new country, they would be surprised to find that they have to work for a Chinese boss. As a result, workers might find their exploitation no less ruthless and unbearable than in the domestic context. In my interviews, many workers expressed the willingness to work for a foreign boss than a Chinese boss, because the former usually treat them much better. As Chan (2001) writes, "the majority of foreign investors are actually ethnically Chinese and they are largely the ones who mistreat mainland Chinese workers" (2001, p. 13). Many workers ascribe this form of exploitation to the ethnic relationship, "they are so familiar with Chinese people, so they know how to manipulate us in a much worse way than foreigners."[105] For example, "paying by piece" as a trick of exploiting workers and controlling labor cost with Chinese characteristics (as I will further discuss in the next part) has been introduced to a transnational context to further squeeze the values of Chinese diasporic laborers.

In this part, I have focused on the intersection of gender, class and sexuality to illustrate how the middle class hetero-patriarchal relation has been consolidated as the central disciplinary technology to recreate Chinese working class as self-reliant and voluntary neoliberal subjects for socio-economic transition. Also, focusing on the contingent meanings of ethnicity, I try to reveal the situated and variant nature of identity

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[105] A focus group conducted in Hai'an, on June 22nd, 2012.

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categories. In this regard, it is impossible to produce an exhausted list of the categories

that are articulated with the intersectional biopolitical system in the China's

neoliberalization in particular, and global restructuring in general—this is not the goal of

this project, either. Using these examples, I want to give readers a flavor about the critical

role of the wobbling intersectional biopolitics in the diversification, structuration and

organization of labor market for neoliberal globalization, which begs the joint efforts of

scholars from diverse cultures and backgrounds to further unfold and unpack its inherent

mechanism. Moreover, it would be highly misleading to assume that this system only

relies on disciplinary power in its daily exercising. In the next part, I will elaborate on

how totalizing sovereign power is also articulated in this process to recast and regulate

Chinese workers to increase China's clout in the global politico-economic chart.

Boosting China's Global Clout with Totalizing Power

In her book *Neoliberalism as Exception* (2006), Aihwa Ong challenges the

assumption that because neoliberalism has taken the reign at present, the ruling by the

state has shifted from a blatant and oppressive totality to a liberal and softening paradigm.

In another article that she co-authors with Zhang (2008), building on the criticism of

Hardt and Negri's homogenizing theorization of neoliberalism, Ong reasserts this

standpoint. As they write:

> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri maintain that in this capitalist 'Empire'
>
> [neoliberal globalization] the 'carceral logics' of disciplinary institutions
>
> and technologies are being left behind as 'mechanisms of command

become ever more 'democratic' regulatory forms acting upon the minds

and bodies of citizens.' Such claims, of course, are not sustainable in the

Chinese context, where, as we have argued, neoliberal practices of

regulation coexist with illiberal forms of industrial and state controls

(2008, p. 9).

The work by Joseph E. Stiglitz (2002), the Nobel laureate of economics, would

help us extend this China-embedded argument to the global context, as he suggests that

neoliberalism as an ideology often diverges from neoliberalism as practices. As the

former vice president and chief economist of the World Bank, Stiglitz has witnessed

numerous examples about how developed countries break the rule of free competition

and use their politico-economic advantages to coerce less developed countries into

accepting proposals highly detrimental to their national economy. As an ideology,

neoliberalism is deeply rooted in the philosophical tradition of instrumental reason which

sees self-serving-and-preserving motivated choices and actions as ethically justified and

warranted. In this regard, to put this ideology into practice, it already presupposes a

subject activated for maximizing its own benefits. Despite his universal interpretation of

neoliberalism, Hardt (2011) astutely points out that there are multiple subjects of

neoliberalism—individual, institutional, corporate, statist as well as supranational,

competing to protect and increase their benefits in the globalized context. For example, to

sharpen their competitiveness in the global market, neoliberal states such as the U.S.

often suspend the rule of democratic participation for its citizens and enforce the despotic

totalizing control in the service of the benefits of a small elite group (Brown 2005). The

recent Iraq War is a good case in point. China's example would further verify these insightful and perspicuous observations.

The reconstitution of sovereign power to foster and boost market mechanism is one of the central initiatives in China's neoliberal transition. As Wu et al. (2007) suggest, at the core of China's marketizing process is the rule that the state should be transformed from an omnipresent resource distributor to regulator of market, and then gradually to market actor. As the centralized function of planning and organizing of the Socialist state has been disintegrated, the state's novel role as both regulator and actor of the market is actualized and implemented through a two-tiered system of state structure. At the central level, the government seeks to promote the overall economic development while maintaining the political stability, which is unified through a nationalist developmental agenda. At the local level, provincial, municipal and county governments are restructured into direct market competitors, attempting to transform Chinese economy from backwater into vitality, longevity and sustainability, which is called "local state corporatism" by Wu et al. (2007).

To achieve this goal, the introduction of Tax-Assignment Reform (*fen shui zhi gai ge*) in 1994 played a crucial role, in which fiscal decentralization was designed to induce localities to cope with fiscal and economic affairs in ways propitious to market-oriented reform. In this new fiscal system, after the central state has captured a great share of fiscal revenues, local governments can keep the rest to their own use (Hsu, 2004). In this regard, "fiscal reform, especially the separation between central and local taxes, has defined the boundary of local revenue, and thus given a greater incentive for the local

government to mobilize the revenue, leading eventually to local corporatism" (Wu et al., 2007, p. 14). Activated as the entities fully charged for self interests and profits, local states strive to mobilize various resources and policies to foster their own enterprises to increase revenues (Huang, 2008), and attract foreign direct investment for further development (Gallagher, 2005), engendering the fierce competition with each other. In 2012, Foxconn, the major contractor of Apple headquartered in Taiwan, felt the overwhelming hospitality and cordiality from its ethnic fellows—after the labor cost soared in coastal areas, it was invited for relocations by several interior provinces, which were vying with each other to get the attention of Foxconn with tax break, better infrastructure facilities, and even free use of land and facilities.[106] In this regard, China's example well evidences Foucault's conclusion (2008) that the central tenet of neoliberal governmentality is the creation and maintenance of market competition.

Labor is the essential creator of values and commodities, and controlling labor cost is the most important factor on the to-do list of industrial capital. Even in countries like China with rich resources of labor, particular endeavors are required to restrain the labor cost. The totalizing sovereign power would provide the direct aide to reduce and control the labor cost to a minimum level. As mentioned earlier, the constitutional clause granting workers the right to strike was removed with China's opening up in 1979 (Meisner, 1996). Since 1984, part of the sovereign power was withdrawn from the special economic zones like Shenzhen and Zhuhai, granting multinationals the right to ban

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[106] *Jinan Daily*. (2013, January 30). *Tan ban jing li shu ci bo zhi: Fu shi kang yu Jinan mei yuan fen?* (Negotiation encountered problems: Jinan has no chemistry with Foxconn?). Retrieved from
http://www.ce.cn/cysc/newmain/yc/jsxw/201301/30/t20130130_21329062.shtml

workers' unions and disrupt their negotiating capacities (Perry, 1995). To increase their

attractiveness to the footloose transnational capital, local Chinese governments

manipulate their grip over the totalizing power in multifarious ways to police workers

and reduce labor cost for capital. Breach of duty on purpose is an important way. Though

the Labor Law of the PRC stipulates that the daily amount of work should not exceed

eight hours, as the workers in export-processing apparel, electronics and silk factories

told me, their routine is seldom less than eleven hours a day (usually from 7:30 am to

6:30 pm). In some factories, it is even normal to work for fourteen hours a day. These

workers cannot enjoy the legal holidays, let alone weekends. In most of the apparel

factories that I visited, workers will take a day after working for two weeks on ends—in

so doing, they could get a reward of 100 Yuan. In a silk factory in Hai'an, workers even

have to toil throughout the whole year, with only three days off during the Spring Festival.

To my great surprise, the compensation for this enormous amount of overwork is almost

close to none, if any—two Yuan per hour after the ten-hour shift. When I asked them

why they did not try to report this illegitimate manipulation to the government, some of

them told me they had actually tried many times with no results—the government would

tell them to wait, wait and wait, and then never got back to them. Actually, taking the

side with workers and righting the wrongdoings by capital runs counter to the neoliberal

logic of the local state as the active market entity. On this account, "while the central

government is more willing to enforce the law than local governments, in practice, it has

allowed the law to be eroded" (Chan, 2001, p. 13). The local state would also take an

interventionist role to disrupt any threat from workers that might unsettle its complicity

with capital. As a worker told me, if someone keeps complaining about the state-

sanctioned exploitation of workers and exposing its misbehaving to the public, they will probably be subject to some forms of suppression, such as incarceration, physical abuse, or even murder.

With the sanctioning by the state, "paying by piece" is a shrewd trick with "the Chinese characteristics" to sidestep the stipulations about working hours and work the extraction of labor values to its full capacity. As many workers told me, as a common practice in Chinese enterprises, paying by piece is scarcely heard of in other countries until Chinese investors start their businesses there. "You will only see "paying by piece in China. Even in Vietnam and Cambodia, workers are paid by time," a male apparel worker said.[107] Leaving the decision about when to work and how to work up to workers, this strategy not only circumvents the legal responsibility stipulated by the state, but also effectively engineers workers into self-accountable neoliberal subjects—"the more you produce, the more you can earn, so don't blame us." However, even this super exploitative trick would often be suspended for a better deal for capital. Ling has been working in a multinational corporation of electronics for over five years, and she has had encountered numerous experiences of this ilk.[108] "Last month we finished 12,000 pieces, they paid us 1,500 Yuan. We finished 15,000 pieces this month, but they still paid us 1,500 Yuan. They told us that the more we made, the poorer the quality would be." What's more, since the ration of workload depends on the amount finished previously, the perpetual reproduction of more profits—the essential logic of capital— has placed

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[107] An interview conducted in Hai'an, on June 9th, 2012.

[108] An interview conducted in Hai'an, on June 16th, 2012.

workers in a dilemma of "to starve or wear out." As Ling said, "it is very cruel that at some point you won't be able to sustain the increasingly intensified workload, and then you will have to quit it. But we have already devoted our youth and health to the factory…" Sanctioned by the state, this coerced turnover of labor force with no economic and legal liabilities effectively helps attract more transnational capital, and augment the profits for the local state.

As self-independent-and-responsible entities for market competition, local governments would also abuse the totalizing sovereign power (of the central government) to boost their own competitiveness in the market and increase their fiscal revenues. Recently, the enforced land grabs by local governments has increased the tension between government officials and immiserized farmer households to an unparalleled level, having triggered thousands of massive revolts by the marginalized groups. The use right of confiscated land then will be sold to developing corporations for commercial purpose—more often than not, corporations in close relationship with local government officials. With the tacit permission from the local government, these corporations could turn to violence, such as hiring hooligans, to coerce workers into enslavement. As many construction workers told me, in many inner areas, such as northeast China and Xinjiang, this practice is not uncommon. As Lao Zhang who had just come back from Hai'erbin told me, in the construction field where he had worked, the developer hired a group of gangsters to patrol the sites every day to ensure that everyone was doing their job.[109]

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[109] An interview conducted in Hai'an, on June 15th, 2012.

On the global level, assuming a more dominant position in the world economy, particularly after the accession into the WTO, the party-state is taking its new role as an avaricious competitor in the global politico-economic contest. For its rich raw materials and natural resources, Africa has become a highly coveted territory for global competitors, including China. As H. L. T. Quan (2012) notes, through the co-optation and manipulation of a discourse of the Third World solidarity and non-interference, the Chinese state is advancing and supporting a neoliberal economic program in Africa. What the Chinese government, Chinese companies and individual entrepreneurs are doing today in Africa is an externalization of China's own neoliberal practices in the past three decades (Jiang, 2009). As Chan (2001) argues, tight surveillance and deceptive propagation are the oft-employed strategies by the state to control the cost of Chinese laborers in the domestic context. In extreme cases, when migrants are lured to an isolated area with the promise of a job, then they are made to work in slave-like conditions and risked being shot if they try to escape. Underlying these dehumanizing practices is the abusing of totalizing sovereign power by the local states.

In the foreign context, this totalizing power is often employed by state-owned enterprises (SOE) as the corporate incarnation of the state. These enterprises are run like an independent kingdom with partial sovereign power over its own space. As Lao Qiu told me, these corporations usually have their own security guards to make sure that the workers will not leave their territory. With the excuse of protecting workers' personal safety, these Chinese SOEs would take away workers' passports to fully ground them to their territory. Millions of rural workers are attracted by the promise of a high wage and

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leave China to work in Africa for these state-corporations. However, many of them would often find that their actual wage is much lower than the one promised, sometimes even lower than what they can make in China. Through multiple coercive practices, such as pecuniary penalty, starvation and physical abuse, workers are often forced to work, and enslaved for the benefits of the Chinese state.

However and as suggested earlier, the intersectional biopolitical system of Chinese neoliberal governmentality is far from seamless, and its multi-dimensional-and-directional structure actually provides many possibilities for challenge and defiance. Moreover, the contestation and competition between different neoliberal entities also create many fissures and ruptures of the neoliberal system. As I have illustrated, many workers are acutely conscious of the state-sanctioned-and-organized exploitation. The next chapter focuses on how this consciousness is embedded in the interstices between the different parameters of the intersectional structure of biopolitics. I will also try to explore how these marginalized groups mobilize their emerging experiential perceptions and subjectivities that cannot be subsumed and contained by the neoliberal biopolitics to create contingent space of ungovernability (Quan, 2013).

Chapter Five

Gauging the Ruptures and Fissures of Neoliberal Apparatus

After the debut in the 2011 Spring Festival Gala, *Xu Ri Yang Gang* (meaning

macho men in the rising sun in Chinese), a migrant worker vocal duo by Wang Xu and

Liu Gang, reached their fame apogee. Half a year prior, they uploaded a homemade video

online of their performance of a saddening song in a disheveled makeshift dwelling, in

which they relied on their rendition to challenge the widening social inequalities. This

venturous move proved a watershed in their life, turning them from obscurity into an

Internet sensation—within three months, the video had registered tens of millions of

clicks.[110] The repercussion reverberated from the cyberspace into the real world, and even

aroused the attention of Communist bureaucrats. After viewing this video, the Secretary

of Hunan provincial committee of the CPC recommended that Party cadres should watch

it and pay more attention to poor workers.[111] In this crudely shot video, the two men's

toil-hardened masculinity constitutes the central symbolic device. As the self-chosen

band name indicates, their masculinity means to carve out a livable space for them in the

phantasmagoria of China's social upheavals. The furtherance of this message is activated

by their hoarse voice, spontaneous, hollering rendition and shirtless working class bodies.

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[110] Wei, Y. (2011, February 27). *Xu Ri Yang Gang "chun tian li" wei he zou hong, ta men you zen yang cai neng li yu bu bai zhi di?* (Why *Xu Ri Yang Gang*'s *In the Spring* becomes popular and how can they sustain their success?). *New Workers*. Retrieved from http://www.dashengchang.org.cn/Article/ShowInfo.asp?ID=342

[111] Xie, L. & Geng, H. (2010, November 11). *Hunan sheng wu shu ji cheng ting nong min gong chang "chun tian li" re lei ying kuang* (Secretary of Hunan provincial committee of the CPC claimed to be move into tears by the migrant peasant vocal duo). Retrieved from http://news.163.com/10/1111/01/6L6119FA00014AED.html

This masculinized audiovisual trope efficaciously captures popular attention. When shown to interviewees, it was the band's embodied masculinity that usually captivated them. As a construction worker commented, they admirably indexed the quintessence of the contemporary Chinese masculinity.[112]

If gender occasions a liminal attentive space for the two vagrant workers, it is the lyrics of their song that agitates ripples of empathy, grabbing and holding people's attention to the misery and ordeal that they went through. Titled *In the Spring*, the song seeks to uncloak the helplessness and despair of the subordinate groups covered up by the bustling and hustling process of industrialization. As the lyrics writes, "I still remember the spring years ago when I haven't cut short my hair. Without credit cards or girlfriend, without hot water at home, my only possession was a wooden guitar. But I was so happy, singing in the street and under the overpass, though no one else cared about my songs. If one day, I grow old in loneliness, please keep that old memory. If one day I die, please bury me in the spring, in the spring." For the rural migrants having left home for urban space, these words accurately capture their deeply-seated worries, anxieties and nostalgia vacillating with China's social transformations. In an afternoon when a worker and I were watching this video, the music caught the attention of his co-workers who happened to walk by. They stopped and asked about the song's name, and requested repetition so they could better enjoy it. Mesmerized by the melancholic and entrancing music, they soon got lost in nostalgic meditation, which temporarily freed them from the monetary and consumerist logic of the market and returned them to the spontaneous and genuine bliss.

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[112] A focus group conducted in Wuxi, on July 12th, 2012.

Gender provides a viable conduit for the two workers to ventilate their outcry against the social injustice thickened with China's marketization. It is particularly valuable because the public sphere for the discussion of class inequalities and struggle has been constricted as part of the state's conservative policies, as we have previously discussed. The sway sparked by this cultural endeavor kept fermenting to such an extent that the Chinese authority could no longer remain nonchalant and indifferent. As Dick Hebdige (2006) notes, one important strategy to subdue the subversive potentiality of subcultural practices is to redefine its "deviant" contours by the dominant ideology. By incorporating this grassroots band into the Spring Festival Gala—a central "ideological state apparatus" (Althusser, 2001), the party-state seeks to re-territorialize the challenges from subaltern groups within its ideological radar. Not surprisingly, almost all the interviewees expressed their preference of the original version to the one meticulously reframed for the festive fete. Even so, in the online voting for the most popular program of the Gala, this grassroots band left far behind other well trained professionals. Pressured by the collective clamor for social justice revealed by the far-flung support of the band, the state ordered that their name should be removed from the candidate list. Commercialization becomes another strategy to neutralize the band's unsettling potential (Hebdige, 2006). After their performance in the Gala, negative news was proliferated, highlighting either their disproportional commercial gains or bloated consumerist desire to dilute their subversive potency.

From this example, it is not difficult to see that the intersectional biopolitics is far from seamless and absolutely secured, and the multi-dimensional-and-directional

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structure leaves a plentitude of possibilities of ruptures and fissures for social changes. Navigating through the interstices of different parameters, peripherized people are able to locate and tease out contingent space for subsistence and survival. For instance, *Xu Ri Yang Gang* bears on gender to challenge the social domination based on class hierarchy, and generates an accumulative voice to compel the bureaucrats aloft to rethink about the social inequalities. In this regard, aside from exploring how the intersectional biopolitics operates in contemporary China, I also want to scrutinize how the marginalized groups live through this system and create an embedded territory of alternative being against the state-sponsored neoliberal biopolitics—or to borrow H. L. T. Quan's term (2013), a space of "ungovernability." Rather than reiterating the transcendental discourse of universal resistance to neoliberalism, I want to unmask its internal contradictions and conflicts and in so doing, construe a vantage point for the subjugated groups to build coalition across identity-based boundaries and make substantive changes. As we have discussed in the previous chapters, the intersectional biopolitics grounds the nexus of neoliberal material and cultural practices, informing and enabling multifarious disciplinary and normalizing technologies for China's social changes. In this chapter, I will explicate that the innate contradictions and conflicts are right rooted in the disparities between variant disciplinary and normalizing technologies, which, after years of practices, have deeply reshaped the Chinese population and labor market, actualizing new possibilities for democratic participation and political agency.

Rethinking China's Labor Crisis

A vital welfare that neoliberal globalization proffers to multinational corporations is the unfolded transnational territory for capital to cruise for cheap and subordinate labor while it is unbridled from the geopolitical particularity. As Manuel Castells (2004) suggests by the trailblazing notion of "Network Society," the compression of time and the substitution of real place by flows of information are realized with new communication technologies. On the one hand, digital technologies enormously accelerate the flows of information, removing the spatial gap and rendering the physical place ontologically untenable. On the other hand, due to the hyper-fast speed of information exchange, people across the world can share the information almost simultaneously, thus egregiously compressing the time and making possible an "ahistorical" era. Enabled by these technologies, multinationals could dexterously extend their operative scope to wherever they can find the most favorable hotbed for the reproduction of capital. In contrast to the hyper mobility of capital, labor is more bounded with the place for the individual and collective affective, cultural investment and needless to say, the control of im/migration by sovereignties. As Jane Collins (2003) suggests, the context of globalization has enabled and enacted a "new economy," whose essential feature is the capacity of capital to pit its spatial mobility against the geographic solidarity of labor to make positive use, in a way labor cannot, of distance and differentiation. In so doing, capital could reduce costs and augment profits by effectively disrupting the negotiating capacity of labor (Harvey, 2005; Ong, 2006).

The liberatory effect of globalization and technological breakthroughs not only energizes high technology enterprises, but also revives and restructures traditional "sunset" industries such as apparel making. As Collins (2003) illustrates, with high labor intensity and low capital requirements, apparel industries that first originated in the Western societies have been broadly distributed across the globe by particularizing and outsourcing different aspects of production. For instance, Liz Claiborne, a "branded marketer" of clothing headquartered in New York, provides an exemplar of this "new economy." While holding the control over marketing and branding, the corporation outsources other dimensions of production to different countries, such as designing, sewing and packaging, creating a horizontalized transnational business pipeline glued through the company's promotion capacity. With a portfolio of more than twenty-six brand names, it has successfully recreated and generated new profits from the "low value-added" traditional industry and developed itself into a global retail juggernaut.

Compared with the Western counterparts that are voluntarily mutating themselves to better reap the benefits of the globalized "new economy," as a primary capital-receiving destination, China's apparel industry is also going through a process of restructuring— not as much an autonomous choice as an expedient, *ad hoc* measure. After three decades, the flexible labor pool with few dependents disarticulated from the Chinese population by the birth control policy (Naughton, 1995) has taken on a new outlook: most of the "fatigueless" workers have reached their 40's or early 50's. As the neoliberal state has few provisions for their families, including children attending school and aged parents/parents-in-law in need of support and caring, they have to find new

ways to balance their jobs and familial responsibilities. In 2008, the financial crisis

witnessed an exodus of migrant workers, and thereafter many of them chose to stay at

home permanently. Like many people from the rural area, Xiao Li used to work for an

international apparel trade corporation in Shanghai. In 2010, he returned to Hai'an and

started his own family-based mill of apparel. As this young entrepreneur told me,[113]

middle aged native women now comprise the bulk of the workers in the labor-intensive

factories in Hai'an. Most of them quitted their higher-paying jobs in coastal and urban

areas and moved back home so they can take care of their families. Meanwhile, because

their parents/parents-in-law are growing older, they need to lend a hand during the busy

farming season. In this regard, these women workers want a job allowing them enough

freedom to fulfill the doubled responsibilities. During my visit in Hai'an, many factory

owners kept complaining that it was getting harder and harder to hire workers, so quite

often they had to decline some international clients to avoid the penalty for the failure of

fulfilling orders. Moreover, as the global market is still vacillating, it would be very

costly and risky to maintain and support a laboring team while the demand varies from

day to day. On this account, many large and medium sized factories would rather

outsource some jobs to small workshops or family mills. Having no fixated location and

factory buildings to manage, these workshops and mills are flexible to handle the

unpredictability of the market without the risk of bankruptcy for high maintenance

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[113] I had multiple conversations with Xiao Li while I stayed at his home during my visit
in Hai'an from May to early July, 2012.

fees.[114] Meanwhile, due to their smaller size, these workshops and mills usually specialize in one aspect of the production process, such as clothing proofing, sewing, or fixating buttons. Only in Dagong, a small town in Hai'an County, there are over 1,000 small businesses of this kind. As a result of the new demographics of Chinese laborers, the compartmentalization and horizontalization are becoming the new defining features of many export-processing industries in China—though on a different track from their Western counterparts.

After the 2008 global crisis, in contrast to the Western countries troubled by the flight of capital and bursting of financial bubbles, China's primary concern is the hovering labor crisis that would shake its foundation as "the world's factory." In 2012, Foxconn, the major contractor of Apple, announced that they would replace workers with robots for some floor work.[115] Like many other export-processing enterprises, the productivity of Foxconn is noticeably hampered by the labor shortage, which has impacted the quality and availability of Apple's new flagship product, Iphone 5. Despite many local governments' efforts to boost labor recruitment for Foxconn,[116] it is still hard

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[114] Many large and medium sized factories usually buy or rent a land property to build their own workshops and offices, which would be a large sum of investment. As these factories mainly rely on foreign orders, when the international market is slowing down, these extra fees would foist heavy financial burdens on the owners.

[115] *China Broadcasting Web*. (2013, Feburary 12). *Fu shi kang xuan bo zai nei di quan mian zhan ting zhao gong jia kuai ji qi ren shang gang* (Foxconn announced the halt of labor recruiting in China with its replacement by robots). Retrieved from http://tech.ifeng.com/it/detail_2013_02/21/22355759_0.shtml

[116] To attract Foxconn for relocation after the labor cost rises in coastal regions, many inner provinces proffer favorable labor recruitment policies for this company. For instance, the Sichuan government mandates that senior college students need to do the internship work in Foxconn in order to get their degree. *The Beijing News*. (2012,

to hire and stabilize a team to keep the machines fully running to the pace of the footloose transnational capital. In nutshell, Foxconn's hardship reflects China's impending problem in general, the so-called labor crisis. In as early as 1954, the Nobel laureate of economics, Arthur Lewis already foresaw this problem as the Gordian knot of industrialization. In his groundbreaking article, *Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor* (1954), Lewis proposes the highly influential concept of "Lewis Turning Point," and suggests that in the early stage of industrialization an economy will grow fast with foreign technologies and capital as well as plentiful, cheap, unskilled labor from the rural area. After the extra value of agricultural labor has been extracted, wages will start to rise and labor-intensive industries will become less profitable. Thus the national economy needs to transition to technology-intensive focus to sustain its development.

My field work has gathered more empirical evidence from China for "Lewis Turning Point." As I explicate in chapter four, the wage of blue-collar workers has been on noticeable increase in the past several years. In both Hai'an and Wuxi, the workers told me that after 2007 many bosses began to change their arrogant attitude and sought around for skillful people to work for them. Different from the old days when legions of migrants begged for jobs and were desperate to take any offers, bosses now have to compete with each other and provide the best terms to attract and keep the skilled workers. As a result, blue-collar jobs that are despised by urbanities can easily secure a

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September 7). *Da xue sheng bei bo qu fu shi kang shi xi, bu can yu wu fa bi ye* (College students forced to do internship for Foxconn, and otherwise cannot get the degree). Retrieved from http://sc.sina.com.cn/edu/cd/zypx/2012-09-07/095223343.html

monthly paycheck of over 6,000 Yuan, almost doubling that of a new college graduate.[117]

Many people ascribe this trend to China's slowing rate of population growth. As some

Chinese scholars aver, China's "population dividend" from the surplus labor will have

drained up by the end of 2013, and the arrival of "Lewis Turning Point" would definitely

slow down China's economic machinery.[118] According to National Informatics Center

and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the number of laborers in China will reach its

peak in 2013, amounting to over one billion, and then will drop thereafter.[119] Some

foreign sources nonetheless estimate the peak to come later, in between 2020 and

2025.[120] Moreover, laborers in the age group of 16 to 35 have dropped from 220.3 million

in 2012 to 210 million in 2013.[121] The decelerating population growth and the

concomitant decreased labor supply, as many people contend, are the root of China's

current economic conundrum. To these people, lifting the restriction of birth control (at

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[117] Zhao, Y. (2013, February 25). *Wai lai wu gong zhe ping jun xin zi gao yu ying jie bi ye sheng qi xin* (Migrant workers make more than new college graduates on average). *Eastern Broadcasting Station*. Retrieved from http://sh.sina.com.cn/news/b/2013-02-25/081535471.html

[118] Chang, H. (2012, August 24). *Zhuan jia: 2013 nian zhong guo ren kou hong li huo jiang xiao shi ren kou hong li ke neng zai lai* (Expert: China's population dividend would end in 2013, but will be regaid). *The People's Web*. Retrieved from http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2012/0824/c1001-18820528.html

[119] *Guangzhou Daily*. (2012, December 24). China's labor will exceed 1 billion and reach the peak next year. Retrieved from http://finance.people.com.cn/money/n/2012/1224/c218900-19993387.html

[120] *Free Exchange Economics*. (2013, January 31). China approaching the turning point. Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2013/01/growth-and-china

[121] *Guangzhou Daily*. (2012, December 24). China's labor will exceed 1 billion and reach the peak next year. Retrieved from http://finance.people.com.cn/money/n/2012/1224/c218900-19993387.html

least for well-educated urbanities) seems a viable solution to cope with China's new socio-economic situation.

However, the rise of labor cost obviously predates the decrease of labor supply (since 2013 in its earliest terms) by several years. Actually, the number of migrant workers broke the record, reaching 262 million in 2012.[122] In contrast to the "shortage" of this segment of labor, new college graduates has been in over-supply for quite a few years. By June 2013, only about thirty five percent of undergraduates have found a job, and this number is even lower for graduate students at twenty six percent.[123] According to Chinese media, 2013 is the toughest year of employment for college graduates.[124] Not surprisingly, their wage has not seen an equally remarkable increase as that of blue-collar workers. In this regard, there is no direct causal relationship between the increasing wage and the decrease of labor supply—at least it is not the exclusive and decisive contributing factor. The so-called labor crisis, if any, is relative at best, only pertaining to the traditional lower niche of the labor market. Despite its simplistic overgeneralization, this hypothetical causal relationship nonetheless foregrounds the inter-relationship between

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[122] *Enorth.com.cn*. (2013, February 23). *Zhong guo ji xu ling pao zhu yao jing ji ti GDP shou ci chao guo 50 wan yi yuan* (China continues to take the lead among the major economies with GDP surpassing 50 trillion). Retrieved from http://news.enorth.com.cn/system/2013/02/23/010664867.shtml

[123] *The Xinhua Web*. (2013 June 10). *2013 nian da xue sheng jiu ye bao gao: ben ke sheng qian yue lv bu zu si cheng* (2013 report of employment for college graduate: the rate is under 40 % among undergraduate students). Retrieved from http://news.eastday.com/society/2013-06-10/316582.html

[124] *Nanfang Daily*. (2013, June 19). "The most difficult year for employment": Listening to the stories of the senior students. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/edu/2013-06/19/c_124875107.htm

national economy and the state's biopolitical management of population, which calls for more rigorous critical scrutiny.

As I have found in my field work, contrary to the neoliberal canon of "*Homo Economicus*" that sees all human beings as rational subjects poised to optimize their economic returns, for many Chinese rural youth, the pursuit of leisure and freedom nonetheless outweighs the monetary concern. In the factories and construction fields that I frequented, it is very rare to see people under thirty working there. As many workers told me, very few young people are willing to take these jobs nowadays and they are concentrated in positions that would give them more leisure time, for instance, supermarket/department store salesperson, accountant, receptionist, corporation staff or engine assembler. Compared with factory and construction workers, however, these jobs are much less paid. For instance, a female salesperson for an "international" brand of consumer goods, such as P&G and Unilever, in a supermarket (working for eight hours a day), can only make around 1,500 Yuan a month, a little over half of what she can earn in an apparel factory (for twelve hours a day). Working on an engine or electronic components would earn a male worker approximately 3,000 Yuan a month, about half of a construction worker's wage. For these people, the calculation of their values is not exclusively determined by market logic, but also infiltrated through other considerations. As Lao Li, a farmer/construction worker who accommodated my visit in Hai'an told me, it is really difficult for people to discipline their children now because they are getting cannier than before, and in many cases, they know much more than their parents. As the new generation cultured in a liberal environment, the young people can no longer "eat

bitter" like their parents/grandparents. Lao Li's words, though quite plain and straightforward, pose an important theoretical question: what makes a neoliberal subject on earth in today's China?

Thorstein Veblen's (1979) insight that leisure would become an essential marker of the bourgeois lifestyle proved to be very accurate of the nature of the capitalist societies at the turn of the twentieth century. When China has transitioned from Socialism to neoliberalism, as discussed in the previous chapters, the bourgeois lifestyle has also been validated as the new social norm. In this regard, Veblen's contribution would be instrumental to the analysis of the contemporary Chinese society. As the state still claims its Socialist heritage, this ideological transformation has to be inadvertently implemented in less politically tumultuous and pernicious terms—through gender and sexuality particularly. Via the manipulation and alteration of gender and heteronormative contours, the reconfigured imagery of the middle class nucleus family has been laden with consumerist and hedonist values, conveying to Chinese people a message of what is normal in the neoliberal society. A job in a fancy department store or corporation, though not necessarily rewarding a person with much economic capital, will nonetheless amplify his/her cultural and social capital associated with the bourgeois norm. As some people ventilated to me, working in an extravagantly furnished, modernized department store would make them feel really "good and confident." This psychological saturation, as I see it, derives not from their command over economic capital, but from the perceived approximation to the normalized neoliberal personhood—even only as a tangential and evanescent broker who panders to others' bourgeois familial dream with an inventory of

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items to engender and (hetero)sexualize them as the qualified candidates. In other words, the loss of economic capital is over-compensated by the supplement of the gendered and sexualized cultural/ social capital, so the surplus value would inflate one's credentials as a core member of the neoliberal society. To the contrary, the worker's identity, no matter how handsomely rewarded in economic terms, would eliminate one from the symbolic and social network of the normalized neoliberal citizens. In this regard, the labor market, which is supposed to be solely determined and refereed by the "invisible hand" according to the neoliberal ideology, is also constituted through yearnings for other values. In contemporary China, these gendered and (hetero)sexualized desires have redirected the flow of labor from clusters with high economic returns to the ones more culturally and socially validated, which has contributed to the relative labor crisis to no small extent.

The gendered, classed and heterosexualized normalizing technologies as mentioned above, however, run counter to the disciplinary technologies that are also rooted in neoliberal biopolitics. As the central mechanism of Chinese neoliberal governmentality, biopolitics has helped (re)produce these technologies to facilitate and legitimate the socio-economic transformation, in such forms as ideologies, imageries, rules, laws, policies, administrations, social institutions and apparatuses. Different from the canonical Marxist construal that infrastructure/economic base pre-determines superstructure/ideology, as Stiglitz (2003), Harvey (2005) and Brown (2005) remind us, these neoliberal practices and ideologies do not necessarily converge with, but more often than not diverge from each other. In other words, there is an inherent schism between neoliberal normalizing and disciplinary technologies, regardless of their mutual

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biopolitical root. As we have discussed earlier, the state's disciplinary endeavor to reproduce and perpetuate rural migrant workers as expendable subjects for domestic and transnational capital, such as *Hukou* system, propagation and validation of heteronormativity and essential gender differences, is contradictory to its normalizing initiative centered on the promotion of the bourgeois nucleus family value. In this regard, the seemingly inexhaustible labor supply supposed to be guaranteed by the intersectional biopolitics of gender, class and heteronormativity according to the designation of neoliberal governmentality has been frustrated from within rather than without.

The contradictions and conflicts inherent in the intersectional biopolitics have also created new spaces of survival and subsistence for subaltern groups. One of the (unexpected) benefits of the relative labor crisis is the mitigation of the exploitation of rural workers by capital. As we have discussed in chapter four, many workers have to work for extremely long hours but cannot enjoy benefits, such as overtime payment, health insurance and pension. Sanctioned by the state, this super exploitation by capital has tremendously impacted their health, both physical and mental. In contrast, pressured by the continuing exodus of workers, many employers now have to proffer incentives to keep them down. For instance, though China's Labor Law stipulating overtime payment was passed in as early as 1994, it was not really implemented by employers until recently. With the implicit sanctioning by the local government, complaints from workers had remained futile, and sometimes would even incur brutal suppression by the police, as many interviewees told me. However, bosses are now compelled to offer overtime payment to incentivize workers for more and longer work to keep the assembly line going.

In Hai'an, a worker can make extra two Yuan per hour after a ten-hour shift in addition to the wage for the piece that he/she makes. Though it is still well underpaid according to the law, to many people, it is better than none. Moreover, as their negotiating capacity accrues with the increasing labor shortage, construction workers could request a month by month paycheck and do not have to wait till the end of the year to get fully paid.[125] This was completely unimaginable a few years ago, when many of them could not get their deferred wage back in full, and had to press for it with an act of suicide.

Becoming pensioner is another benefit of the labor crisis for rural workers. As the secondary citizens in the Maoist era, rural residents never had access to the state provided pension. To retain skilled workers, many large sized factories agree to contribute to the pension plan for their "formal" employees. In Hai'an, to become a "formal" employee, a worker needs to sign a contract with the factory boss that mandates a fixed work schedule. According to this schedule, the worker needs to work for at least eleven hours a day and twenty eight days a month. In other words, the welfare that any citizen is entitled to is abused as the exchange rate for the worker's enslavement by capital. To many of them, this is already a big advancement though. However, there are still many others holding a different view, dismissing it as only a strategy by the state to cope with China's aging population and labor crisis. As a study by the IMF indicates, the median age of the Chinese population will increase from thirty two years in 2005 to forty eight years in

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[125] As many workers told me, Wen Jiabao's administration also played an important role in promoting workers' negotiating capacity, which had been stringent with any arrears of workers' wage by employers. After the 2008 financial crisis, many workers also required the monthly payment in case of the vanishing of bankrupt factory bosses.

2050.[126] This problem will tremendously aggravate the burden on the pension system, with the number of pensioners soaring rapidly while the number of contributors grows more slowly. As some workers poignantly remarked, incorporating millions of rural residents would help the state produce a much larger pool of contributors to save the pension system from bankruptcy. During my interviews, this "conspiracy theory" interpretation of the state policy is very common, and many workers are unreserved with their criticism of the party-state.

In this part, we have seen that regardless of their mutual root in the intersectional biopolitics, disciplinary and normalizing technologies often run counter to each other, thus creating new spaces of subsistence and survival for the working class people. With China's swerve to market economy, many people's critical thinking has also been sharpened, not through formal education, but enlightened by the unfolded enormity and brutality of neoliberalism, as I will explicate in the next session.

Reformulating Chinese Proletarian

It was the busy farming season when I arrived at Hai'an. Besides harvesting crops, reaping cocoons especially makes it a busy time for the local farmers. Blessed by the favorable climatic and geographic conditions, the highly developed sericulture has established this small county a reputation as "China's Hometown of Cocoon Silk."

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[126] Dunaway, S. & Arora, V. (2007, May). Pension reform in China: The need for a new approach. *IMF Working Paper*. Retrieved from http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=995615

Compared with other farmers relying on crops as the sole income source in many places, thanks to this industry, Hai'an peasants enjoy a relatively better off life. For instance, the GDP of Hai'an reached 42.9 billion Yuan in 2011,[127] over half of that of Xining, the capital of an interior province Qinghai.[128] Lao Li's family is a good case in point.[129] During my stay at their home, they not only provided me with hospitable and cozy accommodation, but were also eager to share the exciting changes in their life with "the guest from the U.S." Breeding silkworms twice a year, they can earn about 12,000 Yuan (depending on the government purchase price), enough for basic expenses throughout the year. As each round only takes approximately one month, they have plenty of time for other earnings. With his wife undertaking most of the farm work, like many local men, Lao Li will do some construction work in cities. The revitalized market has emancipated people from the stringent control by the Maoist state, so they can motivate their intelligence and diligence to the full capacity for personal gains, as Lao Li suggested. As a result, the Li's now live in a modernly furnished two-story house, in stark contrast to their old stingy thatched shed, as shown in a faded picture. The Li's case is not unusual in Hai'an at all, where rows upon rows of modernized houses of generous style seldom fail to leave a dazzling impression on first-time visitors, including those from the

[127] *China's Statistical Information Web*. (2012, May 13). *Nantong shi hai'an xian 2011 nian guo min jing ji he she hui fa zhan tong ji gong bao* (The 2011 report on the national economy and social development of Hai'an County, Nantong). Retrieved from http://www.tjcn.org/tjgb/201205/24740.html

[128] *Xining Evening*. (2012, February 1). *2011 nian, Xining shi wan cheng di qu sheng chan zong zhi 770.70 yi yuan* (Xining's 2011 GDP reaches 77 billion Yuan). Retrieved from http://qh.people.com.cn/n/2012/0201/c182775-16711679.html

[129] I stayed at Xiao Li's home from May to early July, 2012. He and his families provided great accommodation and much information for me.

industrialized countries. As one of the areas first opened up to transnational capital,

Hai'an's new look attests to the transformative capacity of neoliberal economy.

According to the data of the government, in the past thirty years, the double digit growth

rate has magnified China's GDP from 364.5 billion Yuan in 1978,[130] to 51932.2 billion in

2012,[131] and reduced the population under the poverty line from 250 million in 1978 to

15 million in 2008.[132] As part of this socio-economic progression, Li's family seems a

suited footnote for the "rising water lifting all boats" capacity of neoliberalism.

The "liberal, open and fair" tenet of the market, however, is frequently suspended

and violated, which has exposed the brutality and enormity of neoliberalism and

enhanced people's consciousness of resistance. One day Lao Li and his wife came home

angrily. With the especially good weather, they had expected to make extra money from

the high yield of cocoons. To their dismay, the price offered by the local government was

so low that they even made less than the previous year. It further excruciated them that

the price in Dong Tai, a town nearby, was much higher. Irrespective of the free exchange

rule, the local government forbade farmers to sell their produce to private parties or

outside Hai'an, and ordered the police to patrol the border day and night. If anyone was

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[130] *China Financialyst*. (2009, November 24). *1978 nian yi lai wo guo GDP zeng zhang lv de li nian shu ju* (China's yearly GDP growth rate since 1978). Retrieved from http://www.chinafinancialyst.com/html/jrwz/09112416112853878.html

[131] National Bureau of Statistics of China. (2013, January 18). *2012 guo min jing ji fa zhan wen zhong you jin* (China's national economy developed with stability in 2012). Retrieved from http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjfx/jdfx/t20130118_402867146.htm

[132] People's Daily Overseas Edition. (2008, November 5). *Gai ge kai fang 30 nian: Jue dui ping kun ren kou jian shao 2.35 yi* (Thirty years after reform and opening up: The number of population in absolute poverty reduced by 2350 million). Retrieved from http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrbhwb/html/2008-11/05/content_132941.htm

caught on site, the items would be confiscated in total plus the heavy penalty for the

owner. To add to their furor, the government-appointed vender embezzled part of their

produce because he "needed to deduct the overweight of the soaked ones." In Li's words,

this was utterly "the violation of farmers' human rights." It was the first time that I had

ever heard the negative comment on the state from Li, a humble and satisfied Chinese

farmer/worker who always smiles at others. It is more interesting to see that someone

with an education of the fifth grade like Li would adeptly invoke the transnational

discourse of human rights to buttress his point. I could completely understand their agony.

For the prior week, Li and his wife had got up at 4 a.m. and stayed up till 1 a.m. to take

care of the silkworms and cocoons, leaving almost no time for sleep and eating. The

money earned by such toil was nonetheless easily usurped by the government. With

numerous futile protests, they had got used to the abusive treatment, but my arrival—as a

U.S.-trained scholar—kindled new hope for them. As Li kept imploring, I should do

something to help the farmers because my "U.S. identity" endowed me with the power

that the local officials would pay attention to. However, he did not know that as a

diasporic graduate student with no established social networks, I might be as equally

vulnerable as them, if not more so.

Like Lao Li, many Chinese believe that beyond an enfranchising and juristic

entitlement, the "U.S. identity" indexes the most formidable competitor for the Chinese

government in the geostrategic rivalry that has the moral, militant, technological,

diplomatic and economic restraints over the latter. In a focus group with the construction

workers,[133] when they got to know that there might be possibility of publication for my dissertation, they all hoped that I could publish it in the U.S. because "it is no use publishing it in China." In other words, the imperial deterrence of the U.S. would help aggrandize the influence of my work over the Communist autocrats to the extent that it could translate into tangible changes for them. To my surprise, the workers are not the only group endorsing this proposition, so are the bosses who have been benefiting at their expenses. For my field work, my embodiment of the "U.S. identity" has also brought some unexpected conveniences. During my visit in Wuxi, through my friend and host Daniel, I was invited for lunch/dinner by quite a few local businessmen who wanted to "make friends with the educated people from the U.S." To hear more alternative voice (other than the poor workers'), I accepted some of these offers.

One day, during a lunch with some entrepreneurs from the housing industry, after several rounds of toasting, two development corporation bosses started to divulge complaints about the government. Evasive of their complicit relationship with the local state to the detriment of poor workers, they harshly criticized the abuse of people's human rights by and rampant corruption in the government, and wished that my research could generate some pressuring reverberation on the Communist bureaucrats in the global community. To help with my research, they encouraged Yuan, a labor contractor with an experience of over twenty years in the industry to share with me more stories of poor workers. As someone mediating between capitalists and labor, Yuan had a perspicuous insight of the bloody and dehumanizing reality of the so-called Chinese economic pillar;

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[133] A focus group conducted in Hai'an, on June 20th, 2012.

as someone having worked all his way up from a menial bricklayer and built a strong

solidarity with the workers, he was anxious to disclose the horrendous stories tabooed in

Chinese media for the international audience, such as the corrupted officials, nepotistic

multi-tiered outsourcing of construction projects and violent grab of farmers' land by the

state. The lively and horrifying examples much agonized me. Like the other people, Yuan

imputed these problems to the freckled humanity of certain Communist bureaucrats, and

believed that the sustained and balanced surveillance of their power, particularly from the

Western societies, would suffice to find a solution.

Contrary to the assumption of these people, the social problems concomitant with

China's social transformation are far from merely individualized maleficence, external

and epiphenomenal deviances, but inherent in the logic of neoliberal governmentality *per

se*. As Foucault (2008a) puts forward, at the core of neoliberal governmentality lie the

creation and sustenance of market competition to maximize the politico-economic

benefits of the society. In this sense, multiple entities must be produced and motivated as

competing agents to uphold the game. To recreate and rejuvenate market economy

without drastic conversion of the political regime, one essential initiative by the central

government is to restructure local states into self-responsible market actors, as what

Mariana Mazzucato (2013) calls "entrepreneurial state." Guided by this rubric, economic

performance becomes the most important criterion to evaluate the political achievements

of local leaderships, and its quantification through GDP growth rate has invigorated the

inter-local-state competition into a battle without gun smoke. "Accumulation by

dispossession," as Harvey (2003) argues, characterizes China's neoliberal restructuring

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process, in which many extra-market entities are integrated for value production and assessing. As in many industrialized countries, land becomes an item critical for the Chinese housing industry, and needless to say, the most desirable, convenient but scarce resource for local officials to escalate their performances within a short term. To claim more and optimize the price value of the limited land property, enforced seizure and suppression of people's resistance become a common practice for the local states, defiant of the acrimonious admonition from the central government.

Developing a complicit relationship with the enterprises within the precinct, or "local state corporatism" in Wu et. al.'s term (2007), is another crucial strategy by the local governments to sharpen their edge for the GDP competition. Actually, many of these enterprises took their origin in the collectivistic Township and Village Enterprises (TVE) (Whyte, 1999; Huang, 2008), and have maintained tight connections with their former supervisors after privatization. For instance, having developed from several TVEs, the major silk enterprises in Hai'an could build on their amicable relationship with the local officials to acquire the raw materials, cocoons, at extremely low price to beat their competitors in the market. Accordingly, driven by the pressure to improve the annual report of tax revenues and growth rate, the local leaders would take every endeavor to promote the local enterprises, even by suspending the free exchange rule with administrative and even enforced means. In this regard, anything but simply individualized immorality and vices, these "un-liberal" endeavors are in actuality immanent to the logic of neoliberal governmentality, and would continue to haunt China's long march of modernization. As a result, diverse patterns of conflict and

resistance have exploded on a massive scale, from labor strikes, pro-democracy demonstrations, anticorruption protests, local electoral challenges, to even mass suicides (Perry & Selden, 2000).

In the global context, in contradiction to the contention that the nation-state boundaries have been rendered obsolete for the unencumbered migration of capital, the state has been restructured as powerful neoliberal agents for market competition. Centering on the creation and sustenance of competition, neoliberal governmentality can take variant forms, and there could be multiple subjects of governance as well (Hardt, 2011). As Hardt and Negri (2004) contend, the state is taking a central role along with multinationals and supranational organizations, such as the WTO and the IMF, in comprising the transnational ruling body in neoliberal globalization. In this light, the former primary expert of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz (2003) enumerates a handful of examples about the interventionist role of the Western states in the global market. For instance, to help increase the market share of Walmart in the global South, the U.S. government provided generous offerings to help it reduce its price and become "more competitive." The ban of Huawei, the China-based high-tech corporation and major competitor for Cisco, by the U.S. government for its alleged "threat to the U.S. national security" is a more recent example. As Stiglitz sees it, these are the divergences of neoliberal practices from its ideology. However, as a concept grounded in the Enlightenment concept of instrumental reason, neoliberalism embraces the self-serving subject with no heeding to others' well-being and the public good, who would strive for the accomplishment of a goal with any available means (Horkheimer, 1946). In these

examples, as the primary advocate of neoliberalism, like the entrepreneurialized Chinese local states, the U.S. government is enacting the rule of neoliberalism by sponsoring the interests of its "own" enterprises and amplifying its competitiveness in the global context through the financial and imperial clout. As the competition is intensified, particularly after the 2008 global crisis, the states driven by disparate self-interests have inevitably run into more head-on clashes.

As discussed earlier, there are also mutations and contingencies of the actualization of neoliberal governmentality in different contexts. The Chinese trajectory or the "Asian Model" distinguishes itself from the Western market fundamentalism in technical (rather than ontological) terms: the former has witnessed the encroachment of jurisprudence and polities by market values while the latter emphasizes the state-coordinated capital accumulation and labor market (Stiglitz, 2003; Cheah, 2007; Ong, 2006). After the 2008 global crisis, the competition between these two models has been heightened to a new level, as can be verified by the Obama administration's new diplomatic focus on "Return to the Asia-Pacific." In the geostrategic arena, this contestation is often congealed as the lash of China, Singapore and Malaysia (which are the major advocates of the "Asian Model") for the "bad human rights records" by the Western states. Just as Cheah (2007) maintains, the discourse of human rights is often invoked for the statist interests by Western politicians rather than the real concern over the impoverished Asian people.

However, the rivalry between states-qua-neoliberal-agents does hammer out new spaces of resistance for the subordinate groups, and proffers new rhetorical forays for Chinese working class to reformulate their proletarian identity in the context of

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globalization. During my stay in Wuxi and Hai'an, I could see that the U.S.-centric notion of human rights is highly popularized among Chinese workers as their critical artillery to prod the Communist bureaucrats for social justice. Many workers, particularly those who worked in other countries before, celebrate the industrialized countries as paradigmatic models to foreground the downtrodden human rights of workers by the party-state. Da Liu, a middle aged Hai'an native told me that he always watched TV and followed online news reports to see how the U.S. government criticized the Communist bureaucrats for their abuse of workers when working in the Middle East.[134] As he said, "people can enjoy human rights and freedom in the U.S, but there are no human rights and freedom in China. There is no election. I want to select the leadership but the government will not give me the opportunity. I want to elect a government that is really concerned about the people!" Building on his multiple drifting experiences, he also suggested to me, "don't ever come back to China unless you have a strong social network here. The U.S. society is open to free competition. When employers hire somebody [in China], they will check your background to make the decision." After he came back to China where most of the "toxic" online information has been screened off, international radio stations, such as German Wave and Voice of America become the new source of information for him. Just like Da Liu, nourished and informed by the transnational discourse of personal freedom and rights, many Chinese workers have formed a belief that all proletariats should coalesce around the common struggle about human rights to fight for social equality.

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[134] A focus group conducted in Hai'an, on June 20th, 2012.

Liu's argument also lays bare how Chinese working class position themselves oppositional to the party-state, which asserts the exclusive legitimate leadership to unionize and represent Chinese workers as their Avant Guard. Drawing on Marxist historical materialism, the Party adamantly rejects the discourse of human rights as liberal, Western, colonial and incompatible with "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics," and holds that in its distinction to the decadent and laggard capitalist society, only Chinese Socialism could portend the futurist avenue for human beings. As the propagation reiterates, this prophetic construal derives its "scientificity" from the CCP's role as the vanguard of proletariat—the most advanced group in human history that derive the "correct consciousness" from workers' disadvantaged position in the social production system. Contrary to this claim, however, as my field work shows, it is right through the "liberal and bourgeois discourse" that many Chinese workers are reclaiming their marginalized proletarian identity and struggling with the state control for social justice.

British theorist E. P. Thompson's (1964) reconceptualization of class is particularly useful for us to understand the paradox of Chinese working class and the Communist leadership. Drawing upon Raymond Williams's critical reading of the Marxist canon of "hegemony," Thompson (1964) argues that class is a social and cultural formation constituted from dimensions that start with, but move beyond social relations at the point of production. Class formation and reformation are always infiltrated and coordinated through heterogeneous, multifarious and conflicting ideologies, which as Williams (2006) theorizes, are by no means predetermined by economic base. To explicate the complexity

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and multiplicity of ideology, Williams proposes a model "which allows for this kind of variation and contradiction, its sets of alternatives and its processes of change" (2006, p. 135). Building on Williams, in his classic research of the British working class, Thompson also challenges the Marxist conception that the proletarian identity (and the "correct consciousness") is predetermined by workers' exploited position, and adroitly elucidates how a multitude of ideas, concepts and arguments also shapes its formation. For instance, the British workers' struggle for the freedom of press, a political proposition deemed essentially capitalistic and bourgeois by the Marxist classics, was central to the formation of their working class identity. As Thompson writes, "the degree to which the fight for press liberties was a central formative influence upon the shaping movement [of British proletariat]" (1964, p. 729). In China's case, if the contestation over the freedom of press is a prioritized theme for liberalists as Zhao (2008) suggests, the fight for human rights characterizes many workers' daily struggle with capitalistic exploitation and statist suppression.

In China today, despite the state's persistent denouncement of the liberal discourse of human right, it is unable to forestall its permeation as adequately as the Maoist regime because China's socio-economic transition is deeply intertwined with and cannot be separated from neoliberal globalization, not only for their chronological confluence, but also the intrinsic inter-dependence. On the one hand, the market needs to be expanded substantively and globally for the super productivity yielded by China's "seemingly inexhaustible labor supply." On the other hand, the cruising capital cannot find a better destination than China that has an excess of manipulable cheap labor. As the ruler (of

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labor) and the facilitator (of capital), the Chinese government and its Western counterparts are wed with each other in a precarious profit marriage—conspiring in the mutual extraction of labor values, but skirmishing and even conflicting as the competing agents driven by specific interests. To be rewired with the global market, China has opened its door not just for migrating capital, but also the Western discourses, such as personal freedom and human rights. As Harvey (2005) suggests, in the Western context, these discourses are recycled and re-wrought by neoliberal ideologues to legitimize and enact the "Jungle Rule" of market economy. The recent legislative attempt to grant "personhood" to corporations in the U.S. with its full-scale "natural" rights is a good example. As the global competition for raw materials and market escalates, it also becomes an important rhetorical arsenal for Western politicians to contrive moral and economic advantages over their geostrategic rivals. As the spotlighted executive of this complicit relationship of the transnational carnival for profits, the Chinese party-state has reaped criticisms for its "bad record of human rights" from both without and within, but with disparate meanings. For Western politicians, it is part of their "Carrot and Sticks" tactics to run the game with their Communist ally/rival. For Chinese workers, it is an empowering instrument to reformulate their proletarian identity displaced by the state control and recreate counter-narratives to the Marxist doctrines, which have been appropriated and manipulated by the Communist bureaucrats to perpetuate their role as the connecting tube (and beneficiary for sure) of the exploitative siphoning relationship between capital and labor. On this account, any reductive rejection or celebration of human rights would not be conducive to understand the complicated labor-Communist-capital relationship in the neoliberal and globalized China.

China's *suis genris* neoliberal governance has rendered other forms of contradictions and conflicts as well, wrenching out more possibilities to disband the Communist-capital conspiracy. To uphold its role as the market arbitrator and guarantor, the Party tempers with its Socialist legacy to reassert its monopoly over the society, as indicated by the term "Socialism with Chinese characteristics." In her studies of the migrant rural maids in Shanghai, as Yan Hairong (2008) avers, this expedient repackaging of China's neoliberal governance in the Socialist terms provides the rhetorical forays for the dispossessed workers and farmers to augment their appeal for social equality. The public performance of "red songs" (the revolutionary songs marked by the Maoist imprint) in urban areas across China recently would drive home this point. As I have seen, though the workers who self-identify as Socialist are noticeably outnumbered by the liberal-leaning ones, their criticism of neoliberalism and outcry for social justice are by no means any weaker. As one of the three self-identifying Socialists that I interviewed, Lao Wu and I had a conversation for nearly two hours—one of the longest during my visit in Wuxi—and I have learned much from this weather-beaten and sagacious worker.[135] Lao Wu had served in the Central Guard Unit for quite a few years, then retired and became a construction worker. As a victim of the rampant bureaucratic nepotism, he did not get the job that the government should allocate to veterans. Meanwhile, his field was reassigned to others after he joined the army. Thus he had to leave home for survival. When I met him, he just turned fifty eight and had worked in numerous construction fields for almost thirty years. Different from other workers tied to the grassroots background, he once got very close to the core of China's political

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[135] An interview conducted in Wuxi, July 26, 2012.

apparatus as a guard to senior Communist leaders. This special experience explains why

he has a particularly insightful understanding of China's socio-economic structure.

Rejecting the polarized conception of China as either Socialism or capitalism, he not only

debunks the dominant discourse of "Harmonious Society" propagated to mask the

surging social antagonism, but also dismantles the conjugation between the Communists

and capital. As he said,

> China is a capitalistic society in terms of administration, fiscal system, and
>
> social structure. It is Socialist in terms of political bureaucracy. Though it
>
> is called 'harmonious,' it is not harmonious at all. It is only a rhetorical
>
> device to mitigate social antagonism, and tell the general people not to
>
> revolt…The income gap between the rich and the poor is over hundreds of
>
> times. Bosses are having banquet in luxurious hotels while migrant
>
> workers are eating brined vegetables. How could it be a harmonious
>
> society?

Building on the Maoist discourse, [136] Lao Wu distills China's neoliberal

governance as the result of "the restoration of capitalism." Comparing the skyrocketing

gap between the rich and the poor to "the slave-master relationship characterizing the

capitalist society," he lamented that it is even worse than the exploitation of farmhands

by landlords in the old society. However, different from some frenzied Maoists who

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[136] During the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong harshly condemned his major rivals in the Politburo, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping as the leadership of capitalistic restoration. After coming back to power in 1978, Deng became the chief architect of China's neoliberal transition.

insist on initiating a new round of the "Cultural Revolution" and class struggle to purge the corrupted parts of and restore the Socialist tradition of the Dictatorship of the Proletarian,[137] he is unequivocal with the criticism of the statist Socialism during Mao's reign. As he mentioned, with the focus laid on collectivism and share of responsibilities, some people would inevitably milk the system, and stymie the efficiency of the national economy. Acknowledging the benefits from the liberalized economy, he argues that the market has successfully motivated people for their own benefits, granted them more freedom, thus having amplified the social productivity and bettered people's living standard.

Wu's argument encapsulates the central point of New Leftists, another camp at the critical forefront of neoliberalism in China. Welcoming the positive effects from the liberalized and revitalized market economy, New Leftists cast more attention to the structural problem and the exacerbated social gap between different echelons, and ascribe these issues to the domineering market values. Rather than a simplistic call for the return to the statist monopoly, their primary contestation with neoliberalism lies in how to bear on the Socialist legacy of the state to make the economic progress more inclusive, and how to shift its gear more towards the people rather than capital. As Wang Hui, the leading New Leftist scholar suggests,

> The characteristics shared by all members of this critical group is a
> determination to reveal the links between politics and economics, as well

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[137] For this information, please check some racial Maoist websites, such as http://www.wyzxsx.com/ and http://www.mzdsx.net/.

as to reveal the internal relationship between the forms of thought and

ideas of the intellectuals and the unequal process of development. This is

undertaken in order to extend political demands for democracy to the

realms of economics and other areas of society—to seek out a path of

reform that is more fair, more democratic, and more humanitarian (2003, p.

112-113).

We can see that different from many workers' appeal for the coalesced fight with

the statist control for their human rights, New Leftists endeavor to tackle the Socialist

tradition of the state to unwind its alliance with capital and prod it to take the

responsibility to address the widening social gap. Though these two camps strike a

common ground of debunking neoliberal governance for a better, more livable and equal

China, their different approaches are often polarized and opposed, turning into harsh

criticism and even virulent attack of each other. As Mark Leonard (2008) argues, the

contestation between New Right (liberalists) and New Left comprises the primary debate

in the Chinese society since the 1990s.[138] In this regard, an important question arises:

how to save the energy from internal fight and bridge these two camps for solidarity to

create a louder voice for social justice when the Communist-capital conjugation has been

renewed and strengthened?

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[138] Here by liberalists I mean the camp that calls for the values such as intellectual
freedom, the separation of powers, civil society and the rule of law, to address the social
problems concomitant with China's neoliberalization. With the focus laid on the political
values of liberalism for political change, this camp is different neoliberalists that
emphasize more deregulation, privatization and state abdication of welfare provisions to
push forward economic reform.

Moreover, as Harvey reminds us, "no matter how universal the process of proletarianization [of neoliberal globalization], the result is not the creation of a homogenous proletariat" (2003, p. 147). As Lao Wu told me, though he believes that the egregious exploitation of workers by the state and capital would lead to larger scales and higher levels of resistances and revolts, he does not think there would be any grounds to build coalition to subvert the system because of the (re)created differences among the workers. Wu's comment is very insightful because the proletarianizing process in China has been undergirded by many identity categories, such as gender, sexuality and region, as I have illustrated. For example, as discussed in chapter four, the case of the female scaffold builder, Xiao Wang indicates that gender not only reproduces hierarchy within the working class to further reduce the labor cost (of women), but also disrupts the connections between the workers to sabotage the potential collaboration to fight for communal benefits. Therefore, it poses another question: how to build coalition across these (re)produced differences to make substantive changes against the neoliberal dominance?

As I argue, the understanding of the central role of the intersectional biopolitics in China's neoliberal transformation would be pivotal to the building of solidarity among the groups marginalized by and for this process, who have been commonly but differently shaped and interconnected with each other by the multi-dimensional and multi-directional system of biopolitics. With years of practices, the control and management of the population through these interconnected categories and the concomitant policies have profoundly reshaped the Chinese society and created new possibilities for social change.

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In the next part, centering on the gender relationship that shifts with the familial paradigms in the rural area, I will further explicate my point. As I argue, the hetero-patriarchal family privides both a site for biopolitical control and a contingent space of ungovernability.

Reconstructing Rural Chinese Family and Gender Relationship

In the early 1950s, the restructuring of family in rural areas became a critical project to reorganize the people's living and livability in the service of the newly-established Socialist regime and economy. In the planned economy, through what Solinger (1999) calls "circular resource allocation system," the central government would play a pivotal role in directing the supply of subsistence and raw materials from rural to urban areas, and then use the generated profits to support the former. In so doing, the state needed to replace family as the primary organizer of the rural public life, and fortify its monopoly over the society. As Yan Yunxiang (2003) notes, during the first three decades of the PRC, rural collectivization and other Socialist practices brought an end to many of the public functions previously performed by family. Family was therefore privatized and ceased to be the hinge of public activities in rural China, and these functions then transferred to the state.

However, as Yan (2003) also contends, contrary to the intension of the Communist leadership, the practice of radical Socialism did not construct a new type of Socialist family. Though having lost most of its public functions, family kept its basic framework in the private sphere via the patrilocal tradition unaddressed by the state policies (Stacey,

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1983; Andors, 1983; Wolf, 1985). As Davis and Harrell suggest, between 1950 and 1976, this conjugal paradigm was formed and reproduced in a paradoxical environment—"the often repressive egalitarianism of Communism permitted more Chinese parents and children than ever before to realize core ideals of traditional Chinese familism, while at the same time the revolution eliminated many of the original incentives for wanting to realize those ideals" (1993, pp. 1-2). In other words, despite the favorable policies by the state, many rural families were reluctant to have more children to accrue and inherit their familial wealth, which was demoralized and even demonized in Socialist China.

Led by the nascent Socialist regime, the family reform was also closely related with the reformulation of the gender relationship. On the one hand, in the 1950s the state encouraged every couple to have more children with the ambition to increase the family size for the economic construction. Meanwhile, it mandated all people to participate in social production and share the output equally, and the massive inclusion of women in the public work was part of this initiative. On the other hand, as discussed in previous chapters, the family reform did not touch upon its private functions, and left the patriolocal residential tradition intact. In this arrangement, the relocation to one's husband's kin group would often cut a woman off her established social network, and subject her to a subordinate role for survival in the new environment. In this sense, the paradoxical family paradigm had contributed to and increased women's doubled responsibilities as caring mother/wife and (men-like) worker, farmer and soldier in Mao's China. Contrary to the popular idea that women enjoyed more freedom and equality at that time, when I asked some senior female workers, they told me it was not true and only

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made up for propaganda. As they said, when women got back home very tired after a whole day of toiling in the field, they had to finish all the housework with no space for negotiation with their husband.

Different from women's marriage-induced relocation, as many people recalled, "*dao cha men*" (marrying into the wife's family) was rarely heard of during Mao's reign. As a tacit rule, this arrangement has survived in Socialist China and persists till today. In both Wuxi and Hai'an, as many male workers avowed, they would never move into their wife's kin group, which would be an ultimate humiliation and denigration of their masculinity. To them, the patrilocal residence not only grounds a socio-economic leverage for the patriarchal dividends, but also signifies their superior status in the gender relationship. To further clarify this point, I will draw upon the case of Li and her husband (the couple running the grocery store discussed in chapter four) as an example.

In regard to the constant fight between Li and her husband, the seed of antagonism had already been planted when the man married into his wife's family. The conflict, however, did not fully explode until their first son was born, who was named after his mother's surname as the common practice in the matrilocal residence. As she said, "every time when my husband heard others calling his son by the last name, the smile on his face would immediately freeze into an angry look. He felt that he had no face at all." For Li's husband, as the quintessential patrilineal ritual, losing the right of naming the descendant has deprived him of the symbolic dominance over the family. On top of that, it is also hard for him, an outsider, to maintain the control over the important family issues, such as finance and decision making. As he repeated, he really hates to see that "nowadays

more and more women are holding control of their familial finance." Quite obviously, this emotion takes its root in his personal experience of the defeated patriarchal ego. The doubled disruption of his patriarchal status, both material and symbolic, has therefore translated into the excessive curbing of his wife's public activities as the psychological compensation, having entailed constant family fights. A long time witness of this gendered politics and tragedy, Li's son has grown into an adamant supporter of his mother and other women's rights, as Li proudly told me. However, when it comes to the matrilocal residence, this "feminist" man becomes very conservative and would leave no space for negotiation—he already broke up with one of his girlfriends on this matter.

Li's son was born and grew up with China's neoliberal transition, when the patrilocal family continued from Mao's reign into the new era, and some of its private functions were reinforced through the restored family farming system. To experiment with the market mechanism in the rural areas, family was reconstituted as the basic unit for agricultural production and market activities in the late 1970s. Within the patrilocal residence, this family-based initiative to boost the agricultural productivity, however, reinforced the socio-economic foundation of the gender inequality. It shored up men's superior status for their naturalized image as the mighty laborer and natural inheritor of the familial wealth. In contrast, "rural women married 'out' of their natal villages, and daughters could not easily substitute for a son either economically or in rituals of honor or mourning." (Davis 1995, p. 5). Moreover, the absence of the state in welfare provision added to the prejudice for sons, who were supposed to provide support and care for the parents when they grow old. In nutshell, China's early neoliberal practices strengthened

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the patrilocal paradigm and aggravated sexism against rural women, and their inferior status further legitimized the gender inequality between men and women.

The patrilocal residence also refracted the impact of the birth control policy, and the compounded effects have profoundly reshaped the demographics of Chinese population. As suggested by Davis (1995), compared with city families, it was harder for rural residents to tolerate the consequences of having only a daughter. As a result, the X-ray guided abortion of female fetuses became prevalent in many rural areas, creating a man-made gender imbalance of the demographics. According to CNN, in 2011 men accounted for 51.9 percent of the population, and the number for women was 48.1 percent.[139] Or simply put, 122 boys are born for every 100 girls, while in the natural conditions this ratio would usually be around 105-106 to 100. As estimated by some people, by 2020, there would be approximately 35 million Chinese men who cannot find female partners, a number slightly more than the population of Canada.[140] The gendered supply and demand imbalance further worsens the market competition for marriage, which has already been tilted against men as we have seen in chapter four. For hundreds of thousands of "non-qualified" working class bachelors, purchasing a wife in a less developed region or even country becomes a feasible option. For example, the economy of transnational bride hunting and trafficking thrives in Viet Nam recently, targeting

[139] Brooks, R. (2013, March 4). China's biggest problem? Too many men. *CNN*. Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2012/11/14/opinion/china-challenges-one-child-brooks

[140] McLaughlin, K. E. (2013, January 3). China and the worst-ever, man-made gender gap. *The Global Post*. Retrieved from http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/china/110615/china-and-the-worst-ever-man-made-gender-gap

Chinese workers as its primary clientele group.[141] However, the transregional and

transnational conjugal arrangement is often built at the cost of the women involved,

placing them in constant psychological and emotional crisis (Chen, 2010).

When the economic restructuring escalates and the birth control policy takes

tangible effects on demographics, the socio-economic and anthropogenic conditions of

family structure have also been cast and recast, enabling a new familial form. Compared

with the old tradition, this modality is more egalitarian in terms of gender because both

men and women will move out of their kin group and clan to establish a dwelling of their

own, and share with each other the responsibility to support their aging parents. On the

one hand, when the only-child generation grows up and dominates the marriage market,

the son-leaned filial support system loses its anthropogenic foundation. With no siblings

available to fall back on, men and women would seek help from their spouse for parental

care. On the other hand, since the housing industry becomes the growth pole of the

economy, the familial paradigm is reconstituted to help explore its primary target

market—households—for sustainable development. Taking this background into

consideration, it is therefore not hard to understand why the middle class nucleus family

with a private property as the independent dwelling has been valorized and circulated by

media products, such as *IF*, as the new social norm in neoliberal China. As discussed

earlier, the ownership of a property has become the touchstone to verify a man's

qualification for (heterosexual) marriage. Like the American youth, pressured by the

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[141] *Yahoo.com*. (2012, December 28). *Yue nan xin niang jing ji jing tian tan mi: zhuan pian zhong guo ren* (Investigation of the Vietnamese bride economy: Chinese bachelor as its primary cash car). Retrieved from
http://overseas.cn.yahoo.com/ypen/20121228/1518064.html

market-induced anxiety to become independent and normal, many Chinese youth are striving to purchase their own property before taking the step for marriage, even though their parents have enough room for them at home. In rural areas like Hai'an, this trend is becoming more pronounced recently, as many young people are trying to catch up with their "modernized" urban peers. Many young couples choose not to live with their parents, and buy a new condo in the city, or at least in smaller towns like Dagong to create their own home before getting married. Usually their new home would not be too far from their parents', making it for them to visit and help their parents when needed.

The new familial paradigm provides a prime example of how the intersectional biopolitics has created a contingent space of ungovernability for the marginalized groups (Quan, 2013). Abandoning the old patri/matrilocal frame, the new form has not only changed the way of habitation, but also shaken the socio-economic and symbolic foundation of patriarchy, creating a more livable space for women. As my interviews indicate, most of the people now do not care about the gender of their child. In addition, because of the fierce competition in the marriage market against men, it is not surprising to see that more people would prefer a daughter as a son could usually foist greater economic pressures on the parents. Some people even try to buttress this point with an essentialist argument—a woman will naturally be a better care-taker than a man. To testify whether my interviewees were induced to give me the "politically correct" answer, I reframed my way of inquiry. Rather than approaching the gender issue directly, I tried to gauge their opinion about education, the most important issue for children as perceived by many Chinese people. Since meritocracy has become the ruling ideology as

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neoliberalism gets entrenched in China, many people believe that education is a reliable and even exclusive conduit to social mobility for children from the rural/working class background. Different from the early phase of the reform when many rural families had to spare the limited resources of education for sons, as I have seen, almost all the interviewees are now willing to generously invest in their children's education, regardless of their gender. For instance, many people told me that they would buy the entrance to college if their daughter should fail in the exam. Others have spent large amounts of money sending their daughter to urban schools.[142] In contrast, when many of the female interviewees were at the age for school, they had to quit school to support their brothers' education. Besides education, the changed attitude towards abortion provides another "objective" evidence for the improved livability of girls/women. Though many young couples still want to have an X-ray exam performed to confirm the sex of their baby, it is usually for the satisfaction of their curiosity rather than the decision of abortion, as many people said. Thus the genderscape is exploited and deployed by the state/capital as a site for governing as discussed earlier, but itself also a contingent space of ungovernability.

However, like social class, the genderscape is often inflected by other categories, such as age and region. Overt sexism against women still persists among the older generation and in less developed areas. When the workers expressed their open attitude about gender, they would often add that this only applies to the younger generation like

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[142] As some people might argue, this narrowed gender gap of education is one effect of the "rising water" of the neoliberal economy. I would add that it is also engineered by the neoliberal ideology that sees all people as independent and self-reliant market subject.

them.[143] As an apparel worker told me, "when my child was born, it was lying on its stomach. My mother-in-law turned it over and found it was a boy, and then she grinned from ear to ear."[144] Different from this woman, another female worker was not so lucky—pressured by her mother-in-law, her husband divorced her after the birth of their daughter. Furthermore, compared with coastal regions like Hai'an, in the interior parts of China that have been less tapped by the neoliberal economy, the unconcealed bias against women still remains a salient social problem. As several workers from Guizhou, a hinterland in southwest China, told me, "if you have a son, others will respect you. If you don't have a son, other people will look down upon you and think you don't have any descendants of your own."[145]

As suggested here, the genderscape is always situated in and shifting with the larger socio-economic context, and closely bound with the organizational structure of family. However, I do not hope that my contextualized analysis of gender relationship and family would lead to a reductive conclusion that the gender inequality will automatically disappear as its old socio-economic foundation has been changed with the neoliberal practices. The uncritical celebration of the liberalizing effects of neoliberalism for gender inequality is definitely not my point. As Connell (2002) argues, as a parameter of the social system and power, gender is not only grounded in material relations, facts, realities, people's mundane activities and corporeality, but also modulated by ideas,

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[143] My interviewees all range between mid-20s to early 50s.

[144] An interview conducted in Hai'an, on June 2nd, 2012.

[145] An interview conducted in Wuxi, on June 28th, 2012.

cultures, knowledge, discourses and ideologies. Gender inequality is capable of altering its morph to cope with the changing socio-cultural climate and avoid harming its unequal core value. For example, as discussed earlier, when the Maoist appropriation of the masculinized images of women has lost its reign, the essentialist discourse of gender difference is endorsed and circulated by mass media in reform China (Hiong & Hershatter, 1988; Croll, 1995; Evans, 1997). As a key component of the intersectional biopolitics to regulate and organize the neoliberal society, the gender-informed imageries have tangible effects on our daily life as well. For instance, as we have discussed in chapter three, the heterosexual gender relationship has been restructured by the dating game show, *IF You Are the One*, to uphold the middle class nucleus family as the new norm of the Chinese society. As Adorno (1991) contends, as a media spectacle, this norm exercises a fascination over the people through the ceaseless play of the presented imageries. When accepting this mediated fabrication as real or "hyperreal" (in Adorno's term), and internalizing the invested values, people would lose their critical capacity to imagine and orchestrate an alternative sociality and are recreated as the soulless mass succumbing to the social domination by neoliberalism (Marcuse, 1964). Furthermore, as Ong and Zhang (2008) argue, in this process, people are reproduced as neoliberal subjects to implement and practice the market relationship to stabilize China's transition to neoliberalism. In this regard, the phantasmagoric mediated gender landscape begs more rigorous and in-depth inquiries to plummet its actualized biopolitical effects on Chinese people.

In contrast to the Frankfurters' pessimistic view of the "overwhelming and impregnable" effects of mass media, the British cultural studies scholars are more optimistic of the audience's active/participant role. As they contend, the general people can draw upon their daily experiences to negotiate with and subvert the media messages, and recreate their own meanings (see in Hall 1980; Fiske 1987, 1989; Morley 1983, 1992; Winship 1987; McRobbie 1991; Radway 1987). For instance, as I have found through the field work, despite the super popularity of *If* among the female workers, many of them do not endorse the social values laden with it, and dismiss the program as "propaganda." As loyal viewers, most of these workers have been following the program since its inauguration. However, the more they watch, the more critical they become. In other words, the increasing exposure to the plots of *IF* has rendered many working class female viewers in a procedural transformation from the frenzied followers/admirers to the sober observers. As an electronics worker said, she really liked the show when it was first introduced, but then she increasingly felt that this "reality" show was actually very fake and deliberately scripted.[146] Likewise, many other female workers contend that the program is only another site for self-promotion by certain participants. As one of them indicated, adding more "reality" stories to the prince-princess fairy tale collections to brainwash Chinese women, *IF* is not different from soap operas in nature.

As we can see, the debate over media and audience between the Frankfurters and the British cultural theorists helps us understand the central issue about China's neoliberal governmentality—the dynamics between the mediated middle heterosexual

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[146] An interview conducted in Hai'an, on May 31st, 2012.

gender spectacle at the core of Chinese neoliberal governmentality and people's daily encounter with it. In regard to *IF* and people's responses to it, this dynamics is centering on the intersection of gender, class and heteronormativity as the interface between the biopolitical regulation and control and people's emerging experiences. Far from the seamless, bounded and impregnable system, the multidimensional-and-multidirectional structure grounded in the overlapping categories is fraught with cleavages and crevices which would create contingent spaces for the marginalized groups, such as the poor rural women workers.

As discussed in chapter three, in the program of *IF*, predicated on a heteronormative framework, gender and class crisscrosses and inter-references with each other to constrict and delimit the symbolic possibilities of each other. As feminist intersectionality scholarship lays bare, the identity categories, such as gender, race, class and sexuality are never separate and paralleled, but co-constitute and overlap with each other. As sites of open and arbitrary meanings, what would be the normative gender and class relationship is always subject to differential articulations and interpretations. In the intertwined and interlocked relationship, the signifying attempt to define and normalize gender is pivoted on its inter-referencing and co-signification with class, and vice versa. For instance, by prioritizing and proliferating the images of the women adept at managing both business and home as the most desired subject for a heterosexual gender relationship, the program of *IF* also concretizes the meaning of social class in neoliberal China as "bourgeois" or "desiring to be bourgeois," in distinction to the Maoist norm of proletarian/working class. Likewise, when a lavishly lived and sustained way of being is

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reiterated to the audience for emulation, the women who can emulate "the caring guardian of and arduous contributor to this lifestyle" are authenticated as the crucial actor of this social relationship. In this regard, founded on the cross-symbolizing and mutual-warranting relationship, the normalization of gender and class is thus stabilized and solidified in the service of China's neoliberal transition.

However, the multiply layered social norm informed by the intersectional biopolitics is often presented as a monolithic and homogeneous standard for all social groups, and people's emerging experience that cannot be fully contained by any parameter(s) of this norm could unsettle the system as a whole. For instance, as the poor/class working, though many women workers could find their identitarian experiences with the imager of the "caring and loving mother/housewife," their daily experiences of struggling with survival, subsistence and statist oppression alienates them from the (middle) classed mandates for all women. Though this "partial" deviation from *one* of the multiple overlapped parameters of the neoliberal social norm might seem minor and trivial, it has actually led to the women workers' outright rejection of the contradictory womanhood/market subject as the essential disciplinary technology of neoliberalism. In this regard, the intersectional biopolitical system seems well fortified and trussed by its interconnected parameters, the multi-dimensional and multi-directional structure is fraught with fissures and ruptures by and through the interstices. Minor though these cleavages might seem, they could turn into substantive changes with the transformative potential against the neoliberal dominance in the long run. In the conclusion chapter, building on the forerunning discursive analysis and empirical data, I

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will reconceptualize intersectionality by the metaphor of network to help locate and articulate these crevices. Building on the novel understanding of intersectionality and neoliberal governance, I will ground a feminist utopia for the "post-neoliberal" society.

Conclusion

Intersectionalizing a Grounded Post-Neoliberal Utopia

Since its popularization by Kimberle Crenshaw's seminal works (1989; 1991), intersectionality has become the theoretical and (less so) methodological hallmark of U.S. academic feminism and increasingly influential in other areas, such as Europe (Yuval-Davis, 2006) and East Asia (Choo 2012). Building on this heuristic device, scholars have been striving to disrupt the monolithic and single-axis treatment of identity categories and subjectivities, produce complex and detailed understandings of the overlapping social structures of domination, and build vantage points to ground coalition politics for social justice and democracy.

While intersectionality has been widely accepted and applied in a variety of disciplines, as noted in chapter one, its theoretical nebulosity, disparate applications as well as methodological difficulties have given rise to a wide range of concerns and controversies. In her recent review essay, as Jennifer Nash suggests, "while the interdisciplinary push towards intersectionality has led to rich scholarship on identity and power, it has also produced an uncritical notion of intersectionality as a theoretical constant rather than as a dynamic theoretical innovation within a terrain of struggle" (2010, 2). Reifying intersectionality as a panacean remedy, many people try to resolve the difference-induced tensions within the feminist attempt of theorizing equality and equity and produce an exhausted list attentive to all differences. As Nash (2010) puts it, not only contradictions/conflicts would continue to underpin women, gender and sexuality studies

as the ultimate source of intellectual innovation, but also naming as the politics of

representation cannot replace daily struggle as the politics of social change.

Alongside the problematics of its application are the proliferated critiques of

intersectionality as this concept is generating more reverberation in both academia and

activist politics. As I see it, these critiques can be roughly grouped as follows:

First, extant intersectionality scholarship has challenged identity categories as *a*

priori by attending to the specific experiences of the multiply marginalized groups

notwithstanding, this approach falls short of possibilities of social change for its static

description of structural locations as the nexus of oppression. As Myra Marx Ferree

argues, "I share the critical view of intersectionality as a static list of structural locations

and as leading to a problematic form of identity politics" (2009, p. 85). Peter Kwan (2000)

also agrees with this critique about the preoccupation with the structural problems. In

response to this concern, Nash (2010) contends that intersectionality should be treated as

metaphor rather than fact as Crenshaw's own concession suggests. In this sense, Nash

calls for more attention to the specific mechanism of intersection through which different

forms of domination and oppression are replicated and reinforced, rather than using it as

a pre-designed multi-functional tool to gauge all identity-related problems. With regard to

Nash's contention for the return to intersectionality-as-metaphor, Jerome Chang and

Robert Culp (2002) even suggest we should interrogate the metaphor of intersectionality

per se, and unleash an imagining of alternative vision that would shed more light on how

identity categories and oppression operate together. Aligning myself with all these

suggestions, I contend that the transformative capacity of intersectionality lies in the

ways it keeps refreshing and alerting our attentiveness to the specific patterns of how different forms of social control and subjugation are organized and managed through the manipulation of categories, rather than proffering a prescribed panacea to all social problems about identities. Thus intersectionality would help reveal the mechanisms of how the society is organized and regulated.

Second, with the focus laid on the systemic, exterior inequalities and domination, intersectionality lacks attention to individual's interior psychic and subjective experiences. As Dorthe Staunaes (2003) avers, we need to bring the concept of subjectivity back to the investigation of intersectionality. Baukje Prins (2006) and Peter Kwan (2009) also express the similar concern that by foregrounding the social system of domination in ways that treat power as unilateral and absolute, this particular application of intersectionality would reinforce the assumption that the human subject is primarily determined by the social structure. While extending my endorsement to these critiques, I would also highlight that the social structure and personal subjectivity is not in an "either/or" relation, but co-constituting and interdependent on each other. While the system of inequalities might delimit various experiential and cognitive possibilities for different groups, it is also (re)created, altered, strengthened and subverted through the collectivized effects of the daily activities of the latter. In this regard, the reductive either/or logic would not be conducive to produce a comprehensive and grounded understanding of the specific mechanism of particular intersection and its actual social effects that are always conditioned by the structural/individual dynamics. In other words, the attempt to explore people's multiply constituted and indexed subjectivity should

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always be accompanied by the detailed charting of how the intersectional structure is operated and reproduced, and vice versa.

Third, as a U.S.-based notion, intersectionality is largely indebted to women of color and their struggle with the social injustice in the United States, which cannot be simplistically transplanted into a different context. As Mieke Verloo (2006) argues, different inequalities are dissimilar because they are differentially framed in different contexts. As the knowledge deriving from U.S. women of color's daily, this particular way of knowledge production makes intersectionality "a difficult project" with no consensus yet around whether it is a theory, a method, and/or a politics (Nash, 2010). I concur with this point because "political practice and socioeconomic context are shifting metrics that require a historicization of the 'event' of intersectionality, its emergence, and the thought that it moved and generated" (Puar, 2012, p. 53). In contrast to the concern over the cross-cultural applicability of intersectionality for its intellectual root in certain socio-cultural particularity, transnational feminism is highlighting the linkage of marginalized groups across the world by globalization. As Mohanty (2003) puts it, as neoliberal globalization is commonly but differently influencing the majority of the world population, feminist (and all critical) scholars should focus on the multiply manifested effects of globalization for social change. As noted by Tomlinson (2013), the different focus of intersectionality and transnational feminism has spawned contestations between each other. However, as I argue, these two feminist streams are not intellectually exclusive of each other, and should be combined with each other to fully understand how the neoliberal restructuring is proceeding by and through the intersectional structure of

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categories on the global scale. As Puar asked, "what does an intersectional critique look like—or more to the point, what does it do—in an age of neoliberal pluralism, absorption, and accommodation of all kinds of differences" (2012, p. 53)?

In response to these concerns, debates and controversies over intersectionality, I want to reconceptualize intersectionality to make it a more robust and flexible metaphor to explore the primary mechanism that facilitates and stabilizes the global neoliberal restructuring, understand the dynamics between the overlapping social structures and personal subjectivities conditioned by this process, and enable a grounded feminist utopia of the "post-neoliberal" world. I argue that built on a network of the interlocked, socially constructed parameters of categories, such as gender, race, class and sexuality, intersectionality is the basic mechanism that informs, enables, and enacts personal subjectivities, interpersonal relationships and social institutions. On a micro level, by positioning individuals at specific nexus of the vectors, intersectionality induces and shapes their unique subjective and cognitive experiences. Who we are and how we perceive are largely grounded in the discursively mediated sensitivities informed by the particular positionality within the intersectional structure. On an intermediate level, a person's epistemic and hermeneutic scope elicited and induced by the specific positionality would further influence and direct their interaction and communication with others, exercising remarkable influence over the interpersonal/intergroup relationships. On a macro level, in these regimented interpersonal/intergroup relationships, certain productive work and praxes would be routinized as the rules of regulation and operation that would be concretized into organizations and apparatuses to further guarantee their

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implementation, exercising and the established social order. Meanwhile, by "mechanism,"
I intend to emphasize the historicity and contexuality of intersectionality because it is
always conditioned by the dialectical and dynamical relationship with individuals and
social groups while exerting its influence over the latter. People are not simply the
passive receptor of the collective categorizing effects of identities, and they are also
active actors who can mobilize their emerging experiences that cannot be fully captured
by the categories to reshape their contours and reconstitute the whole intersectional
system. It is this perpetual dynamics that renders the intersectional system an unbounded
and porous contour, and its fluidity, mutability and elasticity lie in the emerging nature of
the component categories.

For further clarification, I draw upon the Foucauldian conception of power to
elaborate on why "network" would be a more suited metaphor to elucidate
intersectionality as a "mechanism." Foucault's theorization of power finds its intellectual
roots in Friedrich Nietzsche's construal of power as "social physics." As Stephen Pfhol
(2008) puts it, Nietzsche conceptualizes power as "a constitutive field of forces or
'dynamic quanta' affecting everything we do," conditioning human actions, social
relations, and social structures. Building on Nietzsche's work, Foucault (1990) challenges
the binaristic understanding of power as "powerful/powerless," and contends that power
is neither hierarchical nor unidirectional, but capillary and proceeds in every direction at
once. In this regard, power "sets the scene for social action and the interpretive
construction of human meaning and morals" (Pfhol, 2008, p. 656). As Avery Gordon
explicates, "the very tangled way people sense, intuit and experience the complexities of

modern power and personhood has everything to do with the [capillary] character of power itself" (2008, p. 194). In our daily life, the invisible power often takes shape as either multifarious discourses, people's regimented activities, or instituted social rules and organization. Just as amorphous and shapeless water is channeled by streams, creeks and rivers in natural worlds, so caterpillar and nomadic power is regulated and managed through the constructed intersectional parameters in social worlds.

The category-comprised network is the central mechanism for the regulation and organization of power in human societies. Constituted as a multi-directional and multi-dimensional structure, the network of power not only links individuals with each other as the scattered nodes, but also positions them in intersections of vectors with differential access to social resources, which mainly depends on the distance between the particular intersections and the center of the network. As the center of the network is multiply indexed and calibrated by a plethora of categories, the centralized members might be very few. For instance, in the current world, only "Anglo-Saxon, male, heterosexual, Protestant, physically robust, and economically comfortable" (Haraway1989, 42) and presumably American would be the qualified candidates for the club of power center. By contrast, the peripherized account for the majority in this system.

Unlike militant or coercive domination based on the polarized conception of powerful/powerless, the center-periphery network of power formulated through human interactions and associations is not impervious to alternative articulations, and the centralized elite few are often subject to negotiation, resistance and subversion from the periphery. As a result, the whole network is often rendered unstable and precarious as its

center shifts with the dynamics between the centralized and the peripherized. Consequently, those within and close to the center would manipulate and alter the parameters of the network, such as race, gender, social class and sexuality, to stabilize and sustain the network, cope with the changing social climate and surging challenges, and perpetuate the distinction between the centered/peripherized for the protection of the vested interests. Simply put, the essential frame of the network remains intact due less to its entrenched traditions than its elasticity, resilience and ability of mutation by morphing its multiple parameters to cope with the shifting social environment to avoid harming its center. Similar to virus that mutes itself to tackle the new technologies of antibiotics for survival, the network of power alters the contours of its parameters to enable metamorphosis for continuation and perpetuation. In this network, like a spider in a cobweb, the power center moves back and forth along the intersected threads to dodge the lethal attacks. Likewise, the social challenge on one parameter can be offset or minimized by the reconstitution and revamping of other (connected) parameter(s) to keep the basic structure intact.

As we have seen, the intersection of gender, class and sexuality grounds the basic frame of the network to stabilize China's transition from Socialism to neoliberalism. This network also grounds the structure of biopolitics for the state to produce multifarious disciplinary and normalizing technologies to dissemble and reassemble the population for China's marketization and re-integration with the global economy. By reconfiguring the parameters of gender, class and sexuality, a variety of discourses, policies, laws, administrative practices and institutions are (re)produced to facilitate and legitimize

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China's neoliberalization. As we have seen, founded on the heteronormative leverage, the rearticulation of the gender norm not only helps mitigate the social crisis deriving from the enlarging class inequalities, but also redefines and rejuvenates the nation-state entity that was anchored on the Maoist working class/peasant imagery. In addition, by recalibrating the interfaces of gender, class and sexuality, the triangulated network is reconstituted to create and valorize the middle class nucleus family as the new norm of the neoliberal Chinese society to reproduce market subjects, legitimate the widening social inequalities and China's accession to the global network of capital. Furthermore, through the intersection of these categories, millions of cheap and flexible workers have been disarticulated and rearticulated from the population as the voluntary servitude to this ongoing process.

As part and parcel of the global restructuring, China's socio-economic transformation sheds some light on the central role of the intersectional biopolitics in the neoliberal economy. Just as Mohanty says, "capital as it functions now depends on and exacerbates racist, patriarchal, and heterosexist relations of rule" (2003, p. 231). The notion of the intersectional biopolitics would help us further investigate the contingent and variant relationships between neoliberal restructuring and identity categories in different locations/contexts. Moreover, as discussed earlier, the intersectional biopolitical system is not seamless and impregnable, and its multi-dimensional and multi-directional structure is fraught with ruptures and fissures. Then it ushers in another question: how to locate and articulate the cracks within the intersectional system to effect concrete changes?

In *Economies of Abandonment*, Elizabeth Povinelli (2011) suggests that there are always the shaped, carved and assembled beings as the desired materiality of biopolitics (or what she calls "corporeality"), and the unintegrated, errant aspects of materiality (or what she calls "carnivality"). Their difference, as Povinelli argues, "becomes the positive occasion for alternative forms of life" (2011, p. 109) to challenge the categories-grounded neoliberal governance. In this regard, becoming queer—by virtue of rejecting all forms of categorizations and categories—is a solution to the wedded neoliberal governance of economies and multicultural governance of differences. Here Povinelli's invocation of queer theory to disrupt the social control and regulation in the neoliberal society echoes with the Deleuzian conception of assemblage that aims to debilitate the one and the same economy of capital and desire in contemporary societies. In *Anit-Oedipus* (1977), as Deleuze and Guattari argue, the flows and productions of desire are also the unconscious of the social productions of capital and capitalism. In other words, behind every investment of time and interest and capital, there is an investment of desire, and vice versa. On this account, they (1987) suggest that to disrupt the constant flow of capital and desire, we need to de-normalize and de-individualize ourselves from the labels and norms that are pre-established to so direct us through a multiplicity of new, collective arrangements against power. Among these arrangements, as they suggest, assemblage is achieved through a process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization along a vertical and horizontal axis. Building on Deleuze and Guattari, Puar (2012) argues that assemblage foregrounds no constants but rather "variation to variation," and within this framework, identity is conceptualized not as a bounded and territorialized category but an event resulting from the intensification of one's contingent relations with other social

actors. In this regard, she contends that the alternative notion of assemblage can unshackle us from the social conditioning by established identities, and enable a sense of potentiality, a becoming, "a moment of deterritorialization, a line of flight, something not available for immediate capture—'everything is up in the air,' and quite literally, the air is charged with possibility" (2012, p. 61).

The Deleuzian conception of assemblage epitomizes critical scholars and progressive activists' agitated and constant craving for the subversion of domination and subjugation. In the global era, the concrete social change is premised on the dismantling and challenge of the domineering Enlightenment notion of instrumental reason, which has been translated into rampant neoliberal practices and ideologies. So does it mean that we should return to its intellectual parallel and alternative, critical reason? Will this epistemic change grant us the universal and transcendental capacity that would lead us to a society of equity, justice and democracy, as the Ancient Greek philosophers foresaw? Can the humanity informed by critical reason transcend the corrupted reality that occasions and conditions its (re)formulation and help recreate a world of absolute equality and justice?

For these grand questions, humanist scholars such as Ong (2006) and Cheah (2007) have offered a less optimistic answer. As Cheah avers, "[i]nstead of regulating instrumentality, the norms generated by public deliberation [through critical reason] can always be contaminated by it" (2007, p. 77). In this regard, as Horkheimer suggests, "[p]hilosophical theory itself cannot bring it about that either the barbarizing tendency or the humanistic outlook should prevail in the future. However, by doing justice to those

images and ideas that at given times dominated reality in the role of absolutes—e.g. the

idea of the individual as it dominated the bourgeois era—and that that have been

relegated in the course of history, philosophy can function as a corrective of history"

(1947, p. 186). As I argue, as a political project, the transcendence of social realities for

social justice and democracy is always conditioned by and grounded in the detailed

charting and mapping of the mechanism of societal organization and regulation that holds

the reign. In the corporate globalization structured by and through the intersectional

biopolitics, the emancipation and liberty should always be preceded by the critical

examination and understanding of the specific mechanism of categories that is at work

for neoliberal economy and ideology in particular time and space. In other words, the

utopian rearticulation of a "post-colonial" society should thus be grounded in the

comprehensive articulation of the neoliberal society.

To enable a utopian project alternative to neoliberalism and corporate globalization,

Puar (2007) argues for the combination of intersectionality (investigating the varying

network of power) and assemblage (deterritorializing and reterritorializing the identity-

grounded social worlds). As she claims, "intersectionality attempts to comprehend

political institutions and their attendant forms of social normativity and disciplinary

administration, while assemblages, in an effort to reintroduce politics into the political,

asks what is prior to and beyond what gets established" (2012, p. 63). Though I concur

with Puar's proposition here, I am still concerned about how to achieve this

cognitive/political combination.

I argue that the feminist concept of intersectionality proffers the essential instrument for this purpose. As an alternative knowledge, it is rooted in the contradictory consciousness deriving from the categories and categorizations as the interface between the intersectional biopolitics and people's emerging experiences. The emancipatory potency of intersectionality lies in the various moments of the marginalized groups struggling with different forms of oppression and subjugation inter-connected for domination. For instance, the "outsider within" awareness of black housemaids working in white middle class families in the U.S. industrializing period (Collins, 2000), and "la mestiza" of Chicana on/across the U.S.-Mexico border fighting against the compounded effects of sexism, racism, colonialism and homophobism (Anzaldua, 1999). In this regard, intersectionality provides a heuristic device that keeping concentrating our attention on the shifting and overlapping contours of categories to locate and articulate the contradictions between the overlapping biopolitical structures and people's lived reality. These various moments are also the quintessential intellectual and political source for intersectionality to continuously update its critical edge to grapple with the changing socio-cultural climate. As mentioned earlier, at the present moment of globalization, only by working with the various contradictory moments, can we locate and articulate the ruptures and fissures of the neoliberal system to orchestrate a grounded utopia for a better, more inclusive and democratic post-neoliberal world.

Focusing on China's recent socio-economic upheavals, I hope that my dissertation would provide an example of how to rely on this conception of intersectionality to effect substantive changes. The detailed illustrations and explications of the biopolitical

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mechanism, its multiplied subjectivizing effects, and inherent contradictions, as I believe, can help different groups, such as workers, peasants, scholars, activists and policy makers to rethink about and devise specific ways to create contingent "post-neoliberal" spaces within the neoliberal apparatus *per se*. To name a few, these spaces can be enabled by the articulation of alternative gender relationship, abolition of the *Hukou* system, as well as the coalesced activist movement between different workers. These pockets of changes, though seemingly minor, are concrete and robust enough to conflate into larger crises to overturn the neoliberal domination.

Finally, by reconceptualizing intersectionality for the transnational background of neoliberal globalization, I wish my work would push forward the intellectual boundaries of women, gender and sexuality studies to constantly address the emerging problems in the new context. Relying on this new conception of intersectionality, I have also constructed a materially and culturally integrative framework to grapple with the contestation between economic justice and cultural identities that has been haunting the domain of critical studies. Bringing feminism, queer theory and critical race theory to the forefront of the heated debates over such grand issues as neoliberalism and corporate globalization, I hope that my dissertation would make the voice of the critical theories rooted in marginalized groups' experiences louder and wider within and beyond academia.

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APPENDIX I

INFORMATION LETTER (INTERVIEW)
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF SUBALTERN GROUPS IN YANGTZE RIVER AREA
OF CHINA

Date

Dear Sir or Madame:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Lisa Anderson in the Program of Women and Gender Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to survey subaltern groups in a metropolitan area in China to see how they respond to the dominant gender ideology. It seeks to collect data of the daily experience of marginalized groups and explore how neoliberal globalization has reshaped the genderscape and caused new forms of social oppression in China.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve an interview about 2 hours. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study.

This research might not bring direct benefits for the participants. However, as part of a transnational dialogue to critique the neoliberal global oppression, this research will hopefully bring in policy changes that can benefit the Chinese subaltern groups in the future. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but your name will be replaced with synonym.

I would like to audiotape this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be taped; you can also change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. After transcription, the audiotaped files will be deleted. The transcribed data of this interview will be kept in my personal computer. After ten years, it will be deleted completely.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Dr. Lisa M. Anderson, West Hall 235, Arizona State University, PO Box: 874902, Tempe, Arizona 85287-4902, Tele: 480-9658597. Or Yi Zhang, West Hall 226, Arizona State University, PO Box: 874902, Tempe, Arizona 85287-4902, Tele: 480-3990678, Email: yzhan140@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are agreeing to participate to in the study.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

By signing below, you are agreeing to be audiotaped

_____   _____

Signature   Date

APPENDIX II

IINFORMATION LETTER (FOCUS GROUP)
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF SUBALTERN GROUPS IN YANGTZE RIVER AREA
OF CHINA

Date

Dear Sir or Madame:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Lisa Anderson in the Program of Women and Gender Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to survey subaltern groups in a metropolitan area in China to see how they respond to the dominant gender ideology. It seeks to collect data of the daily experience of marginalized groups and explore how neoliberal globalization has reshaped the genderscape and caused new forms of social oppression in China.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve a group discussion of about 3 hours. Your discussion will be centered on the video clips that I provide. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study.

This research might not bring direct benefits for the participants. However, as part of a transnational dialogue to critique the neoliberal global oppression, this research will hopefully bring in policy changes that can benefit the Chinese subaltern groups in the future. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

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_____   _____
Signature   Date

By signing below, you are agreeing to be taped.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP (FEMALE)

I will show all the participants the video clip of Ma Nuo, a female participant in the match-making TV program—*If You Are the On*. In this video, Ma made her (in)famous person claim of how to find her Mr. Right: I would rather cry in a BMW than smile at the back of a bicycle. Then, I will start the group discussion. These are the questions:

1. What information does the Ma want to express in this video?
2. How does this information relate to her femininity?
3. How does this information relate to the mainstream femininity?
4. Do you think whether Ma is feminine enough? Why or why not?
5. Do you agree with Ma's opinion? Why or why not?
6. Do you think whether you can live to this ideal? Why or why not?
7. Why does Ma take such an aggressive stance to express her idealized partner? How does this strategy relate to the social upheavals in China?
8. If you have a chance, will you participate in this TV program? Why or why not?

APPENDIX IV

QUESITONS FOR FOCUS GROUP (MALE)

I will show all the participants the video clip of a music video made by two sojourning working class men which has been circulating on the Internet for a while. Also, I will show the video of their performance in the Spring Festival Gala. Then I will start the group discussion. There are the questions I will ask:

1. What information do the two guys want to express in their self-made music video?
2. How does this information relate to their masculinity?
3. How does this information relate to your masculinity?
4. Do you think whether the two guys are manly enough? Why or why not?
5. Compared with the two guys, do you think you are manly enough? Why or why not?
6. Why do they assume such masculine stance for their performance? Does this strategy work well to convey what they want to express?
7. What information do the two guys want to express in the Spring Festival Gala?
8. Though they are singing the same song, what is the difference between their performances in the music video and at the gala? Why is there such difference?
9. Which performance do you like better? Why or why not?
10. If you have a chance, will you make a music video like this and post it onto the Internet? Why or why not?

APPENDIX V

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW (FEMALE)

1. In your opinion, what is the mainstream womanhood in China now?
2. Do you think whether you can live up to this ideal womanhood? Why or why not?
3. Do you think whether the ideal womanhood has changed during the past 30 years? If you think it has changed, can you specify in what aspects it has changed?
4. If you think your lived experience does not fit into the mainstream womanhood, how do you negotiate, challenge, or subvert this norm in your daily life?
5. If you think there are any changes of the mainstream womanhood in the past 30 years, do you think whether the changes are related to the social upheavals in China? If so, can you specify how?
6. Compared with other women who can stay at home as a housewife, do you think whether your life is better than them? Why or why not?
7. Compared with other superwomen who can make much money or have great power, do you think your life is better than them? Why or why not?
8. Have you experienced any forms of discrimination when you are working in the factory?
9. If you do experience discrimination, how does it relate to your gender?
10. Do you think whether this mainstream womanhood makes it more difficult for you to be accepted as a female worker? Why or why not?
11. Have you got any forms of support from your community (e.g., your co-workers/fellow-villagers/families) when you are working in the factory? If so, can you specify in what ways?
12. Do you think whether the ideal manhood has changed during the past 30 years? If you think it has changed, can you specify in what aspects it has changed?
13. Do you think whether this ideal manhood affects your masculinity? Why or why not?
14. If you think there are any changes of the mainstream manhood in the past 30 years, do you think whether the changes are related to the social upheavals in China? If so, can you specify how?
15. If you can choose, would you like to be a housewife or superwoman? Why or why not?

APPENDIX VI

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW (MALE)

1. In your opinion, what is the mainstream manhood in China now?
2. Do you think whether you can live up to this ideal manhood? Why or why not?
3. Do you think whether the ideal manhood has changed during the past 30 years? If you think it has changed, can you specify in what aspects it has changed?
4. If you think your lived experience does not fit into the mainstream manhood, how do you negotiate, challenge, or subvert this norm in your daily life?
5. If you think there are any changes of the mainstream manhood in the past 30 years, do you think whether the changes are related to the social upheavals in China? If so, can you specify how?
6. Compared with other men who choose to stay at home to work, do you think whether your life has been getting better since you came to work in Shanghai? Why or why not?
7. Have you experienced any forms of discrimination in Shanghai?
8. If you do experience discrimination, how does it relate to your gender?
9. Do you think whether this mainstream manhood makes it more difficult for you to be accepted into the urban life? Why or why not?
10. Have you got any forms of support from your community (e.g., your co-workers/fellow-villagers/families) when you are working in Shanghai? If so, can you specify in what ways?
11. Do you think whether the ideal womanhood has changed during the past 30 years? If you think it has changed, can you specify in what aspects it has changed?
12. Do you think whether this ideal womanhood affects your masculinity? Why or why not?
13. If you think there are any changes of the mainstream womanhood in the past 30 years, do you think whether the changes are related to the social upheavals in China? If so, can you specify how?
14. Do you think whether this mainstream womanhood makes it more difficult for you to be accepted into the urban life? Why or why not?
15. If you can choose, will you come to work in Shanghai again? Why or why not?