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CHINA'S LABOR FORCE: THE ROLE OF GENDER AND RESIDENCE†

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Considerable research has been undertaken and a variety of hypotheses have been proposed to explain gender differences in occupation and income. These studies have documented that women tend to be concentrated in low-paid jobs, and that even for similar jobs women also earn less than men. This is true in both developing and developed countries, and in both rural and urban sectors (Reskin and Hartmann, 1986; Boserup, 1970).

Given this very general situation a number of theoretical explanations have been posited to account for sex differentials in occupation and income as well as for their connection with overall social and economic development and urbanization. The human capital theory argues that sex differentials in occupation and income result mainly from educational and work training differentials between men and women, i.e., from different patterns of human capital investment and from the discontinuities in women's work experience resulting from childbearing, childraising, and other domestic responsibilities (Mincer and Polachek, 1974). Both education and work experiences are crucial determinants of wages (Mincer, 1974; Corcoran et al, 1984).

It is also argued that sex segregation within occupations, which in turn generates sex differentials in income, reflects women's attitudes and preferences. These result a) from internalized beliefs that some occupations are more compatible with women's

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familial roles than others, and b) from a socialization process that predisposes women toward these selected types of work (Reskin, 1984).

Yet, many studies have found that even if individual and societal variables such as educational attainment and occupational structure are removed, women's income still averages less than men's (Suter and Miller, 1973; Gannicott, 1986). These remaining differentials have been explained in terms of sex discrimination against women in work recruitment, wage determination, work training, and occupational mobility (Blumberg, 1978; Blau, 1984).

In addition to these three factors determining gender differences in occupations and earnings, a number of relations have been posited between women's roles in the labor force and economic development. Early studies by Boserup (1970) suggested that in societies where development levels were low and agriculture required mainly manual labor, women were heavily involved in agriculture. As mechanization was introduced and agriculture became less labor intensive, women tended to shift out of agriculture into crafts or unskilled rural-based non-agricultural work. Other women moved away from rural areas altogether to find employment in unskilled and service work in urban places (See also Youssef, 1974.). Boserup (1970: 119-138) speculated that as development proceeds and women's education rises, their role in the non-agricultural labor force will come to more closely resemble that of men.

Other studies have found a more U-shaped relation between women's labor force participation and development (United Nations, 1980: 84-86). A combination of increased mechanization, surplus labor resulting from earlier high fertility, and a lag in the development of industry serve to diminish opportunities for women. This situation becomes attenuated as development proceeds and the tertiary sector grows in importance, as fertility drops, and as women's education rises to provide them with the necessary skills for work in the modern sector.

Given the multiplicity of factors affecting women's labor force roles, the situation in the People's Republic of China may be of particular interest. China is undergoing rapid development, but traditional cultural norms about women's roles remain quite strong despite policies advocating gender equality. This paper will review data from China's 1982 census on labor force participation rates and occupational distributions of men and women, with particular attention to the impact of levels of development as

indexed by degree of urbanization. Attention will then turn to the findings of surveys undertaken in two highly urbanized places——Guangzhou and Shanghai. These surveys will allow more in-depth examination of labor force and occupational patterns than does the census, for which the published data provide no cross-tabulations controlling simultaneously for residence, sex, age, or other variables. The surveys do permit control for age and education. Since they also provide information on income, gender differences in income within broad occupational groups can also be assessed.

The surveys from Guangzhou and Shanghai can therefore provide case studies of two highly urbanized locales. They are expected to show relatively low levels of differentiation by gender in labor force participation and occupational distribution. At the same time, because the two cities differ substantially in both their economic structure and historic cultural norms, the patterns for Guangzhou and Shanghai are not expected to be identical; we anticipate that because Guangzhou is the more traditional of the two cities, gender differences for it will be more pronounced than for Shanghai.

Official government policy in China since 1949 has included "equal pay for equal work" and a determination to improve the status of women (Fifth Session of the Fifth National People's Congress, 1983: 27). In practice, however, these goals have been far from fully realized (Croll, 1983). In part, full equality is impeded by China's strong cultural norms about women's roles. These have been supported especially in rural areas by government reliance on traditional social forms in the reorganization and communization of agriculture (Johnson, 1983). Using "natural villages" as the primary production units, the patriarchal family power was maintained and males continued their dominance in production. Restrictions on mobility to urban places further tied women to their traditional roles in rural areas.

Other government policies affecting the labor force also countervail efforts to ensure equality. Policy makers recognized early that legislation alone was not an adequate means to change women's roles. It was thought, instead, that the almost universal involvement of women in production activities and their resulting share of economic power, plus education, would be the most effective way to enhance the status of women (Croll, 1979; Parish, 1984). Such a policy also fit well with government efforts to raise production. The expansion and diversification of production thus became the primary focus of government efforts, with the concomitant mandate for all the working age population to be actively involved in such work. Ensuring com-

pliance with the article in China's Constitution stating that all citizens had "the right as well as the duty to work" therefore took precedence over efforts to promote equality of the sexes in the workplace.

These policies have clearly contributed to increasing the participation of women in the labor force. By 1982, women constituted 35.7 percent of non-agricultural urban workers, and the large majority of urban working age (15-55) women are employed (Emerson, 1982). In rural areas, similar changes have been apparent. By 1982, they comprised 46.8 percent of the agricultural labor force involving 91 percent of all rural working women (SSB, 1983).

Despite these dramatic changes in labor force participation among women, substantial disparities exist in the occupational distribution between men and women and in their earned income. In rural areas under the commune system, which awarded work points for hours worked, peasant women were consistently given fewer work points per hour than men even though they may have been engaged in the same work (Emerson, 1982; Croll, 1979). Moreover, in many rural areas, girls continue to be discouraged from getting more than a rudimentary education, so they have little chance to improve their positions (*China Daily*, May 13, 1986). Since introduction of the rural responsibility system, many girls have in fact been kept out of school altogether to allow them to attend to household chores or tend farm animals while the adults engage in off-farm work. The result has been an increase in rural illiteracy, especially among girls.

In urban areas, where men and women were paid at the same rate for similar factory work, women were seldom advanced as quickly, or as far to higher paying jobs (Parish, 1984). For employment requiring higher levels of education, enterprises have often required higher credentials from women than men. For example, a survey of commercial enterprises and financial agencies that hire on the basis of test scores showed that women on average needed 10 percent higher scores than men to be employed (*China Daily*, 26 February 1988).

These patterns have been documented for many separate locations in China, but few data have been available for analysis for the nation as a whole. An opportunity to examine gender differences in labor force participation and occupational distribution for urban and rural places became available with the publication of results from the

1982 Census. Since data from earlier censuses do not allow such analyses, any attempt to assess the impact of development on changing occupational composition must be approached cross-sectionally rather than longitudinally, operating under the assumption that cities are the most developed locations, towns are the next most developed, and villages (rural areas) the least developed.

ANALYSIS OF CENSUS DATA

As indicated earlier, modernization and development are expected to influence the extent and character of female employment. The assumption is that in rural areas and small towns, traditional values still strongly influence people's behavior, so that in rural areas, in particular, males are favored more strongly than females in school recruitment, in the recruitment of the non-agricultural labor force, and especially in the selection of administrative leaders and managers. On this basis, it is expected that in all non-agricultural occupational categories, rural areas would be characterized by higher ratios of employed males to employed females than would cities.

Labor Force Participation: The census data presenting the occupational composition of the labor force, subdivided by sex, show 521.4 million persons to be in the labor force: 293.5 million men and 227.8 million women. Thus 86.0 percent of all men aged 15 and over and 70.1 percent of all women were labor force participants.[1] (See Ogawa and Saito, 1987 for extensive analysis of labor force participation in

1. The size of the labor force revealed by the census deviates substantially from that reported by the State Statistical Bureau for year-end 1981 and year-end 1982, which indicates 432.8 and 447.1 million in the labor force, respectively, equivalent to a July 1 average of 439.9 million. The 81.5 million discrepancy between this average and 521.4 million reported by the census for June 30, 1982 suggests that quite different criteria were employed by the census in defining labor force participation. Judith Banister (1984) has suggested several reasons for the differences, including coverage by the census of agricultural seasonal laborers (the census was taken in the summer), omission in the statistical records of temporary workers and of persons not officially recognized as workers by brigades or industrial units, and lack of clarity in the census of the category "no-working," especially for rural persons, thereby leading to their reporting themselves as farmers or non-agricultural laborers. Until fuller information to assess the discrepancies becomes available, the reasons must remain speculative. Since the extent of the discrepancies may vary for urban and rural places (not fully ascertainable), some caution must be used in considering the patterns of employment for cities, towns, and rural places.

China.)

These rates of labor force participation differ slightly in urban and rural places, with relatively fewer women than men economically active in all places. The sex differences in rates of participation are greatest, both in absolute and relative terms, for towns, suggesting lesser job opportunities for women in these smaller urban places.

Sex Differentials in the Labor Force Structure: As noted earlier, participation of women in the labor force may be expected to increase as the level of urbanization rises. The sex ratio is therefore expected to decline, from rural to town, from town to city, as the number of women in the labor force more nearly approaches the number of men who are employed. The census data show the expected pattern for each occupational category separately, with the exception of agricultural laborers, and for the labor force as a whole when the data are standardized for occupational distribution (Table 1).

Table 1: Sex Ratios for Occupational Categories, by Urban/Rural Status, 1982

	Cities	Towns	Rural
Agricultural laborers	102.9	115.6	114.3
Production and transport workers[a]	154.5	171.2	229.2
Professionals[b]	101.6	117.2	264.7
Leaders[c]	556.4	935.6	1,905.0
Clerical workers	213.4	370.2	4,881.4
Trade	77.7	83.3	214.3
Service	75.9	95.8	210.9
Other	124.6	138.1	200.0
Total	130.3	151.2	126.9
Standardized for occupation[d]	130.3	149.3	209.2

a. Workers in all aspects of production (industrial, food processing, mining), construction, and transportation.
b. Medical, legal, scientific, engineering, and teaching personnel as well as those engaged in the arts and sports.
c. Heads of government agencies, party committees, people's organizations, enterprises, and institutions.
d. The city occupational distribution was used as the standard population.
Source: State Statistical Bureau (1983): Tables 34 and 35.

For most occupational groups, the sex ratios of rural areas are at least twice as high as those of the cities, and for some the differential is extremely sharp. This is especially true of leadership and clerical positions. The sex ratio differences are much less pronounced for production and transport workers. Only among trade and service workers do the ratios fall below 100, and they do so only in cities and towns.

The extreme differences that characterize administrative (leader and clerical) positions is difficult to explain, except in terms of cultural traditions and historical patterns of sex discrimination in education and political affairs. Government efforts to emphasize the promotion of women in public affairs, in other administrative activities, and the growing equality in education should lead to a narrowing of these differentials in future years. Opportunities for women seem to be much greater in low prestige jobs (in trade and service), especially in cities and towns. Nonetheless, the distribution by occupation suggests that one important by-product of urbanization is a more balanced sex ratio of the labor force.

Occupational Distribution: A comparison of the percentage distribution of men and women in agricultural and non-agricultural occupations (Table 2) helps to explain some of the differentials in sex ratios and confirms some general observations made by Boserup (1970) and confirmed by United Nations (1980) analysis of the sex differentials in employment patterns. These studies found that women tend to be heavily involved in agriculture where agricultural technology involves considerable manual labor. Such differences by sex are noted in China where much of agriculture still relies on manual labor. Of China's total female labor force, 77 percent were engaged in agriculture; 91 percent of rural women were so employed. These figures compare to 68 percent of all employed males and 82 percent of rural men. Unlike the pattern in most developing countries, a somewhat higher percentage of men and women are in agriculture in cities than in towns. This situation is the result of the overbounding of cities in China to include substantial rural areas. Towns are usually restricted to the built-up areas. Also differing from the pattern in other nations is the higher percentage of cadres and leaders in towns than cities. In 1982, town status was achieved primarily by places that served as the administrative centers for their counties. They had relatively small populations and their industrial and service sectors were at initial stages of development. As a result, government officials constituted a somewhat disproportionate part of the labor force.

Table 2: Distribution of the Employed Population by Occupation and Urban/Rural Status and Sex, 1982

Occupational Categories	Cities	Towns	Rural Areas	Total PRC
	TOTAL POPULATION			
Agricultural laborer	23.4	20.0	85.9	72.0
Production & transport worker	45.7	41.8	7.9	16.0
Professional	11.3	13.1	3.2	5.1
Leader	4.2	5.7	0.7	1.6
Clerical worker	4.0	5.2	0.4	1.3
Trade	4.2	6.8	0.9	1.8
Service	6.8	7.0	0.9	2.2
Other	0.3	0.3	–	–
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number (1000s)	81,762	32,424	407,192	521,378
	MALES			
Agricultural laborer	21.0	17.8	81.9	68.1
Production & transport worker	49.0	43.8	9.9	18.3
Pofessional	10.1	11.7	4.1	5.6
Leader	6.3	8.6	1.2	2.5
Clerical worker	4.9	6.9	0.7	1.7
Trade	3.2	5.2	1.1	1.7
Service	5.2	5.7	1.1	2.0
Other	0.3	0.3	0.03	0.1
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number (1000s)	46,260	19,517	227,758	293,535
	FEMALES			
Agricultural laborer	26.6	23.3	91.0	77.1
Production & transport worker	41.1	38.7	5.5	13.0
Professional	13.0	15.1	2.0	4.4
Leader	1.5	1.4	0.1	0.4
Clerical worker	3.0	2.8	0.1	0.7
Trade	5.5	9.4	0.7	1.9
Service	9.0	9.0	0.6	2.4
Other	0.3	0.3	0.02	0.1
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number (1000s)	35,502	12,907	179,434	227,843

Source: State Statistical Bureau (1983): Table 35.

The census statistics on occupation also support the UN (1980) conclusion that at low levels of development, the female share in industry is higher in rural than in urban areas. Of the non-agricultural female labor force, 61 percent of those living in rural areas are production and transport workers, compared to only 56 percent of city residents and 50 percent of town dwellers. A similar pattern does not characterize men; a higher percentage of city workers than of either rural or town workers are engaged in production and transport.

The census data clearly indicate the important role of level of urbanization in determining labor force participation and occupational distribution patterns. They also show striking differences by sex both within and between residential categories. Because only very broad occupational groupings are available from the published census data, they do not permit determination of whether differentials also exist within the general occupations listed; nor do they permit assessment of the impact of age and education on such difference. Data from sample surveys in Guangzhou and Shanghai do allow controls for age and education and also provide information on income; the surveys can therefore shed some insights into some of the questions raised by the census data.

Because Guangzhou and Shanghai are among China's largest cities, the gender patterns in labor force distribution will reflect the high levels of urbanization of these places, and can therefore be illustrative only of the differentials that characterize relatively high levels of development. But since the data available for these two cities are more detailed than those contained in the census, the case studies allow for a more in-depth analysis than is possible with the more aggregated data, and allow us to touch on some of the theoretical perspectives outlined earlier. At the same time, because Guangzhou is a much less industrialized and a more commercial city than Shanghai, while also culturally more traditional, comparison of the two allows assessment of the extent to which variation in levels of urban development and modernization are associated with gender differentials in occupation and income.

THE GUANGZHOU AND SHANGHAI SURVEYS

The surveys, undertaken in May-June 1986, consist of random samples in each city (exclusive of suburbs) of 1,000 individuals aged 15 years or more. The samples

were chosen on the basis of the household registration records and therefore include only de jure residents of these two cities; temporary residents were not sampled. (For a discussion of temporary migration in China, see Goldstein and Goldstein, 1986.) The samples were then weighted to approximate the age and sex dsitribution of the universe. The surveys collected information on basic demographic characteristics, and ascertained respondents' migration status, living arrangements, income, and role in household decision making. For this analysis, the data on age, sex, education, labor force status, occupation, and personal income will be used.

A limitation introduced by the coding scheme used for the surveys is the broad categories into which occupations are grouped; nor are they comparable to the census categories. The survey category "Cadre" encompasses persons coded as "Leader," "Clerical," or "Trades" by the census. The survey "Factory/Shop" category encompasses "Production and Transport Workers" and "Services" fo the census classification. "Managers" are restricted in the survey classification to those who are leaders of large enterprises; they would be subsumed under "Leaders" by the census. The survey's "Proprietors" are designated as "Other" by the census, indicative of the recency of individual enterprise ownership in China. As a result of these differences, comparisons between the census and survey results can not be as direct as desirable. On the other hand, information on income allows for examination of variations within occupational groups. Before turning to the data, a very brief description of Guangzhou and Shanghai is in order to point out the different characters of the two locations as they may relate to gender differences in labor force.

Located in the south of China, close to Hong Kong, Guangzhou (Canton) is the capital of its province, Guangdong. The entire province is a very distinctive area within China, with its own dialect and customs (Zhang, 1986). Guangdong's proximity to Hong Kong and past heavy emigration have led its residents to have strong ties to Chinese overseas and to other nations in general. Guangzhou, with a population of just over 3 million at year-end 1982, has developed as a major center for international trade fairs in China, and many foreign firms maintain headquarters there. Economically, much of Guangzhou's development has emphasized commercial enterprises and light industry. Consistent with its contacts with non-socialist economics, Guangzhou has been in the forefront in instituting economic reforms and developing an "open" policy for its industrial and commercial enterprises (Tan, 1987).

Far removed from Beijing, Guangzhou has therefore been both open to foreign influences and able to reinterpret some of the policies issued from Beijing. This situation may affect women's roles in contradictory ways: On the one hand, greater foreign influence and less rigid adherence to state control may be conducive to providing greater opportunities for women, especially in commerce. At the same time, traditional values are less likely to change in response to centrally issued calls for equal roles for men and women, and women may particularly be excluded from leadership positions. Because of the occupational categories used by the survey, especially the broad nature of the "Cadre" category, full evaluation of these two trends will not be possible.

Shanghai – one of China's three municipalities – has been the locus of much investment in heavy industry. It is the site, for example, of the massive Baoshan Iron and Steel Works and the Jin Shan Petro Chemical Complex, and serves as the center for a large hinterland which is one of the most developed areas of China. Although the population of Shanghai (6.3 million at 1982 year-end) is roughly twice that of Guangzhou, the retail sales values for the two cities are quite similar. Shanghai's gross industrial output value is, however, roughly six times as high as Guangzhou's (SSB, 1983: 34-102).

With its history as China's window to the West and the heavy state efforts at developing modern industry in Shanghai, the municipality might be expected to exemplify attitudes toward women's roles that are associated with modernization. Such a stance may also be reinforced by Shanghai's position as a major site where the state's policies and traditional communist teachings are closely followed. Gender differences in occupational distribution are therefore expected to be less in Shanghai than in urban places as a whole and possibly also less than in Guangzhou.

Labor Force Participation: Consistent with China's policy emphasizing the universal importance of engaging in productive activities, the large majority of men and women aged 15 and over in these two cities are employed (Table 3). Differences become apparent, however, when age is controlled. In Guangzhou, a somewhat higher percentage of males than females aged 15-24 are employed; unemployment[2] seems particularly acute among the women in this age group, among whom 12 percent are seeking work. For men and women aged 25-44, employment is almost universal, but

2. Comparable data on unemployment at the national level are not available.

Table 3: Labor Force Status by Age and Sex, Guangzhou and Shanghai, 1986

Age	Males						Females						
	Em-ployed	Student	Retired	Unem-ployed	Total Percent	Total Number*	Em-ployed	Student	House-wife	Retired	Unem-ployed	Total Percent	Total Number*
						GUANGZHOU							
15-24	67.1	28.1	–	4.8	100.0	368	60.9	27.0	–	–	12.1	100.0	336
25-44	97.2	–	–	2.8	100.0	505	95.3	–	2.0	–	2.7	100.0	469
45-54	97.1	–	2.9	–	100.0	197	77.9	–	4.1	18.0	–	100.0	174
55 and over	52.2	–	47.8	–	100.0	192	22.5	–	21.5	52.8	3.2	100.0	230
All ages	81.6	8.2	7.7	2.5	100.0	1,262	69.4	7.5	5.5	12.6	5.0	100.0	1,209
						SHANGHAI							
15-24	60.2	38.5	–	1.3	100.0	647	68.1	30.0	–	–	1.9	100.0	616
25-44	99.0	1.0	–	–	100.0	1,102	99.0	1.0	–	–	–	100.0	980
45-54	98.9	–	1.1	–	100.0	451	72.7	–	1.4	25.9	–	100.0	458
55 and over	54.9	–	45.1	–	100.0	557	16.9	–	12.7	69.5	0.9	100.0	638
All ages	80.9	9.4	9.4	0.3	100.0	2,757	68.1	7.2	3.2	20.9	0.6	100.0	2,692

*Weighted numbers are used.

gender differences again emerge for the older groups. A much larger percentage of women are retired in both the 45-55 and 55 and over age groups, reflecting in part China's retirement policy: Women retire at age 55, men at age 60. The differences may also reflect the policy popular until 1986 whereby a youth can assume the job held by a parent. Typically, pressure was placed on the mother to relinquish her job in favor of her child.

The overall pattern of labor force participation is similar in Shanghai, but the magnitude of the differences varies. Among the youngest age group a larger percentage of males are identified as students, reflecting the presence in the municipality of many universities and technical schools which tend to favor men in their enrollment policies. At the other end of the age hierarchy, a much larger percentage of the women aged 55 and over in Shanghai are retired than in Guangzhou (69.5 vs. 52.8 percent); conversely, fewer are listed as housewives (12.7 and 21.5 percent, respectively). Shanghai's longer industrial history and different cultural patterns have undoubtedly influenced women's work patterns in the past, so that many more of the currently older women were at one time in the labor force in Shanghai than was true in Guangzhou and therefore eligible for retirement. Even in terms of employment patterns, therefore, differences emerge between the two cities that suggest somewhat more traditional roles for women in Guangzhou (housewives) than in Shanghai.

Occupational Distribution: Attention turns next to the occupational distribution by gender in the two cities. Unfortunately, the coding scheme employed by the survey for occupation does not allow for separate analysis of those occupations (service and clerical work) often considered especially suitable to women, but the factory/shop category does group together occupations generally considered of lower status in China than cadre, professional, or manager. An occupational hierarchy can thus be discerned which can provide valuable insights into gender differences in occupations and the degree to which certain broad occupational categories disproportionally consist of one gender or the other.

The occupational hierarchy employed, given the data constraints, matches the findings of a 1983 study of occupational prestige in Beijing (Nan and Wen, 1988). That study broadly found that professionals and officials as well as highly skilled occupations (such as drivers, electricians, and mechanics) were among the most highly rated. Somewhat less prestigious were semi-skilled workers and operatives (including nurses, clerical workers, plumbers, and cooks). Least prestigious occupations involved

heavy labor (such as construction work and pedicab pullers) and service work (waiters, barbers, housemaids). The relative rankings differed somewhat by the age, sex, and occupations of the respondents, reflecting their own perceptions of desirable skills and access to resources and their own experience in China's recent history. Within the constraints imposed by the coding scheme and for the Guangzhou-Shanghai surveys, the occupational hierarchy used here conforms to the findings for occupational prestige for Beijing. Using the data available from the two-city survey, occuptions have been ranked with cadre as highest, followed by professionals, managers, factory/shop workers, proprietors/traders, and agricultural workers.

The occupational distributions clearly indicate the differing characters of the two cities (Table 4). Males in Guangzhou are more concentrated in the cadre, business manager, and proprietor categories than in Shanghai; in the latter place, males have

Table 4: Occupational Distribution of Employed Persons (Standardized by Age)*, by Age and Sex, and Sex Ratios by Occupation, Guangzhou and Shanghai, 1986

	Guangzhou			Shanghai		
	Males	Females	Sex Ratio	Males	Females	Sex Ratio
Cadre	17.0	8.8	258	9.3	9.4	121
Professional	6.5	10.2	74	26.8	27.7	119
Manager	3.1	3.5	110	0.4	0.3	167
Factory/Shop	49.9	47.8	124	61.9	62.4	120
Proprietor	5.9	3.0	245	1.6	–	–
Agriculture	17.5	26.6	75	–	0.2	–
Total Percent	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Total Number	170	258		207	171	
Index of Dissimilarity**			13.2			1.7

* The age distribution of the standard population (Shanghai males) is as follows: 15-24: 389; 25-44: 1092; 45-54: 446; 55 and over: 306.

** The index of dissimilarity indicates the percentage of females who would have to be redistributed among the occupational categories in order for their distribution to resemble that of males.

strikingly higher representation in the professional category (26.8 vs. 6.2 percent) and a somewhat higher percentage in the factory/shop category. Since the city of Guangzhou still encompasses some rural areas, but Shanghai proper does not, Guangzhou also has 17 percent of its male labor force employed in agriculture. Among employed females , the comparative patterns by city are similar for all categories but cadre; a smaller percent of women belong to this occupation in Guangzhou than in Shanghai. This difference suggests that cultural differences with regard to the appropriate roles for women may especially be operating to discriminate against women cadres in Guangzhou.

These sex differences are clearly shown by the sex ratios by occupation for the two cities. In Guangzhou, dramatically unbalanced sex ratios characterize the cadre and proprietor groups (258 and 245, respectively); those for managers and factory/shop workers are only moderately high, and the ratio for professionals is below 100. By contrast, in those categories for which calculations could be made in Shanghai, only managers had as high a ratio as 167; the others ranged about 120. The lower sex ratios for professionals and managers in Guangzhou compared to Shanghai may reflect less discrimination against women in these occupations in Guangzhou, or that more of those classified as professionals and managers in Guangzhou operate at lower levels within the occupational category than do those in Shanghai. In the latter case, smaller sex differentials would be expected. Overall, however, as anticipated by earlier studies (e.g., United Nations, 1980), with greater modernization, gender differences in occupation are mitigated. This effect is indicated by the index of dissimilarity between men and women in the two cities; it is only 1.7 for Shanghai showing minimal differences in occupational distribution in contrast to 13.2 for Guangzhou.

Income Differentials: What these data do not indicate is whether sex discrimination exists *within* occupational categories, that is, whether men are more likely to hold the higher status jobs within any given occupation. Some indication of such a possibility can be gained by examining differentials in personal monthly income by sex for selected occupations (Table 5). For such purposes, the three occupations containing the largest number of cases have been selected: Cadres, Professionals, and Factory/Shop workers. Although incomes are generally somewhat higher in Guangzhou than in Shanghai, in both cities and in each occupational group, conspicuously fewer women than men earn ¥150 or more,[3] and a women's median income is consistently

3. A yuan is worth approximately 30 cents in United States currency.

Table 5: Distribution of Monthly Personal Income and Median Income by Occupation, by Sex, Guangzhou and Shanghai, 1986

	Males					Females				
	Under ¥100	¥100-¥149	¥150+	Total Percent	Median Income ¥	Under ¥100	¥100-¥149	¥150+	Total Percent	Median Income ¥
					GUANGZHOU					
Cadres	8.3	64.9	26.8	100.0	128.6	34.9	49.5	15.6	100.0	116.6
Professionals	25.0	30.2	44.9	100.0	135.3	28.7	59.8	11.6	100.0	117.7
Factory/Shop	44.2	49.2	6.6	100.0	104.2	67.0	31.0	2.0	100.0	87.5
					SHANGHAI					
Cadres	21.9	66.0	12.1	100.0	116.0	67.4	29.7	2.8	100.0	91.1
Professionals	40.1	48.7	11.2	100.0	107.3	52.7	44.8	2.4	100.0	97.6
Factory/Shop	57.6	38.4	4.1	100.0	88.1	79.7	19.0	1.4	100.0	77.6

below that for men (Table 5).[4] The disparities vary, however, both by occupation and by location. In Guangzhou, the earnings ratios range from 90.7 for cadres to 84.0 for factory/shop workers, suggesting that somewhat fewer opportunities for advancement exist for women in lower status occupations. In Shanghai, women cadres have substantially lower earnings than men (the ratio is only 78.5), with professionals and factory/shop workers having ratios similar to their counterparts in Guangzhou. The income discrepancy among Shanghai's cadres is somewhat surprising since Shanghai's leadership has taken a strong role in furthering communist ideology.

Compared to the female/male earnings ratio in the United States of about 60 (Reskin and Hartmann, 1987: 11), the Chinese ratio is high and suggests low levels of discrimination. In large part, the relatively high ratios in Guangzhou and Shanghai reflect the strict control that the government exercises over salaries. Salaries for non-agricultural occupations in general are kept within a narrow range and most persons' earnings fall in the lower to middle income categories. Median income is therefore unlikely to show extreme variations by gender or occupation.

Nonetheless, the data on distribution by income category suggest that gender does indeed play an important role in determining compensation (or rank as defined by income) within occupational categories. In both Guangzhou and Shanghai, and in each occupation examined, a much smaller percentage of women than men fall into the highest income group; and conversely, much higher percentages of women are in the lowest income category. For example, whereas only 8.3 percent of the male cadres in Guangzhou and 21.9 percent in Shanghai receive less than 100 yuan each month, 34.9 and 67.4 percent, respectively, of the women do so.

Earlier discussion indicated that underlying gender differences in income may be differential educational achievements and the constraints of familial roles. Since women in China have generally less education than men and have not had equal opportunities to develop marketable skills, their lower income may well be a reflection of these educational deficiencies. The data for Guangzhou and Shanghai (not shown in tables) indicate, however, that without exception women earn less than men at every educational level, although the differences are greater at lower levels of education. The

4. Median, rather than mean, income was calculated because the data were precoded into income categories.

ratio of women's to men's earnings ranges between the mid-90s for those with more than secondary education to the mid-70s for those with primary education or less.

Women's familial roles are also thought to affect their earning power, since they may have to forego higher education or skill training to assume family responsibilities. Childcare and homemaking may also constrain their choice of jobs and force them to accept lower paid work, often on a part-time basis. Although our data do not allow direct assessment of this hypothesis, household size may serve as a rough proxy, on the assumption that larger size households include dependents (children or aged parents) which may place additional domestic burdens on women. The data show no regular pattern, however, between male/female income ratios and household size. Larger households in Guangzhou and Shanghai may in fact include more domestic helpers – hired houseworkers or retired parents who assist in childcare. Quite likely, the relation between household size and women's earnings posited on a model based on the experience of western, developed nations does not apply to the current situation in China.

Since several characteristics, including age and education, may affect sex differentials in income, a series of regression analyses were undertaken in order to allow control of several background variables.

Two dependent variables were considered. The first was occupation, on the assumption that the occupations could be validly ranked on a prestige continuum (with cadre having highest prestige, followed by professionals, managers, factory/shop workers, proprietors,[5] and agricultural workers). For Guangzhou, only age and education are significant determinants of occupational prestige (Table 6). The regression coefficient for the dummy variable sex is not significant at an acceptable level. For Shanghai, all three variables are significant, with females having a slight advantage over males in occupational prestige, when age and education are controlled. This pattern seems to indicate the expected effect of modernization (as indicated by level of education in our data) on gender differences in occupation. It may also be due to the somewhat heterogeneous composition of the occupational categories.

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5. Proprietors generally run only small shops or outdoor stalls and do not have a guaranteed income. Such a job has generally not been considered desirable in China before the late 1980s.

Table 6: Regressions on Occupation and on Personal Monthly Income, Guangzhou and Shanghai (Unstandardized Coefficients)

	Guangzhou	Shanghai
	Occupation[a]	
Age	0.034*	0.026*
Education	0.428*	0.356*
Female[b]	0.002	0.206*
Constant	−0.398	0.371
R^2	.343	.485
N	1,869	4,064
	Personal Monthly Income	
Age	0.283*	1.252*
Education	1.631*	1.879*
Female[b]	−5.055*	−6.119*
Occupation	8.116*	2.462*
Constant	52.959	29.667
R^2	.134	.321
N	1,869	4,060

a. Occupation is ranked according to status from 1 (Agriculture) to 6 (Cadre).

b. Reference group is males

*Significant at least at the .05 level.

The second dependent variable considered was personal income, controlling for the same independent variables as in the first set of regressions, plus occupation. The log of income is not used for several reasons: Given the categorical nature of the available income data, the mid-point of each income category was used in this regression analysis. The range of 0 to ¥224 monthly income has a relatively uniform distribution by age, with no extremely high values. Adjustment for distortions in distribution are therefore unnecessary.

In the regressions for both Guangzhou and Shanghai, all the independent variables were significantly related to monthly personal income. Women in Guangzhou are shown to earn about ¥5 per month less than men, when age, education, and occupation are controlled. In Shanghai, women earn just over ¥6 less than Shanghai men. The actual amounts of these differentials in earnings between men and women may seem small, yet, in view of the generally low level of income in these two cities, the differentials represent a substantial percentage of total earnings. This is especially true in Shanghai, where wages are generally lower than in Guangzhou (as indicated in the regression by constants of 29.667 and 52.959, respectively).

Taken together, these two sets of regressions on occupation and monthly personal income suggest that little discrimination against women exists in the broad occupational opportunities available to them. In fact, in Shanghai, women even have a slight advantage over men, when age and education are held constant. The major source of discrimination against women's occupational opportunities in these two cities can therefore be attributed to education, since women are generally less educated than men. Despite the seeming equality of opportunity as measured by occupational prestige, the regressions also indicate the existence of significant discrimination against women within occupations, as measured by income. Particularly surprising here is the relatively greater degree of income differentiation in Shanghai, where it had been assumed that discrimination would be less because of that city's greater exposure to modern technology and historically greater contact with the West. In evaluating gender differences in the labor force in China, therefore, it is essential to go beyond the broad occupational categories available in the census and in these survey tabulations to examine the more detailed rankings within categories.

DISCUSSION

In several respects, the data analyzed here for China support a number of the general observations made about the relation between gender differences in income and development level, and about the underlying causes of these differentials. In China, agriculture is still relatively unmechanized, and rural women participate heavily in farm work. That they are not more represented in the rural production and transport worker category, compared with men, is most likely related to the government-stimulated development of rural based industries, many of which are not handicrafts. In

urban places, corroborating the findings of other studies, sex ratios indicate a preponderance of women in the service and trade categories. These findings therefore generally conform to patterns identified for other less developed countries at early stages of modernization. At the same time, the importance of social norms in addition to degree of development is suggested by the clear differences between men and women in labor force patterns for Guangzhou and Shanghai. The strength of these factors is particularly noteworthy in view of China's policies designed to promote gender equality in the work place.

Nonetheless, these census and survey data do confirm the success of the State's mandate that every able-bodied person be productively employed. The rural and urban economic reforms introduced in the 1980s[6] may, in fact, have made such full employment even more likely than before. By encouraging rural industrialization and some limited individual enterprises in rural and urban places, persons who might be unemployed or underemployed have found work. Some localities are reported to have even changed from having large labor surpluses to having labor shortages (Lei, 1986). What is as yet not clear is the differential impact of the new policies on men and women.

The data analyzed here show that disparities currently exist in both the types of occupations considered suitable for men and women and the status, as measured by income, that men and women can attain within any broad occupational group. That the differentials, especially in income, are not greater is in large measure the result of strict State control of wages and the extremely limited opportunities until the mid-1980s of engaging in private enterprises. Nonetheless, contextual factors, including both levels of urbanization and cultural norms, continue to have a strong impact on gender differences in labor force patterns, as documented by both the census data and the surveys. The new economic policies have potential for reinforcing these differences, but also for mitigating them.

In rural areas, many of the new enterprises require levels of education and skills that most women, especially older ones, do not have (*China Daily*, 19 March 1988).

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6. The economic reforms allow for considerable individual (family)decision making with regard to rural production, and more flexible management of urban enterprises with regard to production and the hiring of labor.

These same handicaps may also eventually apply to those girls who are currently being taken out of schools to take on housework so as to free adults for work in agriculture or rural enterprises (*China Daily*, 17 April 1987). Non-agricultural work may also involve commuting or temporary residence in township centers or county towns. Such travel is more likely to be undertaken by men, who thereby are exposed to a more modern environment and may gain more modern skills to become even more employable in new enterprises. Women are likely to remain in the villages, involved in agricultural activities, especially in such sideline activities as vegetable culture, raising small livestock, or tending orchards. On the other hand, many townships are developing handicraft-type industries, and these activities do tend to hire women. In Guangdong Province, for example, where township industries have been concentrated in wool-spinning, garment and toy making, wickerwork, and electronics, 90 percent of the work force are women (*China Daily*, October 30, 1986).

An opposing trend also seems to be developing. As rural incomes rise and as male family members earn more, some women are withdrawing from the labor force to devote all their time to housework (*China Daily*, 2 February 1988). Such a development might lead to reinforcing the traditional roles of rural men and women, roles which have only slowly given way to more modern patterns. Such a trend would also be contrary to the government's emphasis that all working age people should be engaged in productive activities.

Both men and women may undertake temporary migration to cities to provide service, men as construction workers, tailors, and barbers; women going primarily into domestic service; thousands of young rural women are streaming into the cities to serve as housekeepers and provide childcare. Women as well as men also participate actively in the free markets. Some have attributed the willingness of rural women to venture into cities to the fact that these women have never had an "iron rice bowl" to provide security, so that they are willing to take the risks that temporary urbanward migration entails. Except as vendors in free markets, however, married women are not very likely to participate in these activities, which involve considerable periods of time away from home. Only a very restricted segment of women can therfore benefit from such urban-based work. In sum, the constraints under which most rural women live have generally operated to keep them involved in low skill, traditional work.

In cities, the economic reforms, from the perspective of the workers, have allowed

more people to establish their own businesses and to find work outside the State-and cooperative-run enterprises. During 1981-85, private businesses accounted for 3.6 million new jobs for urban residents, 1.1 million of which were generated in 1985 alone (*China Daily*, December 6, 1986). The number of persons engaged in privately owned retail, catering, and service trades in 1985 was 12 million, a 13-fold growth in numbers from 1980 (SSB, 1987). Such undertakings have often involved setting up simple retail establishments, making and selling clothing or small household items, or service and catering shops. These kinds of ventures have been particularly attractive to young people waiting to be assigned State jobs or to older women who do not receive pensions (because they never worked in a State enterprise) and need to augment family income. The new urban economic policies therefore also promote greater female participation in the labor force, but they may not lead to equitable distribution of income or help to increase women's skills.

The rapid introduction of modern technology may also affect women in contradictory ways. On the one hand, women will be at a disadvantage because they do not, on the whole, have the training appropriate to the use of much equipment. On the other hand, such technology may open new fields to women since it will replace the need for heavy manual work.

More importantly, the urban economic reforms may have a serious impact on the status of women through the flexibility the reforms give to enterprise management in hiring practices. In the past, workers were assigned by the State and work units had to accept whoever the State sent. Now managers can choose new workers. As a result, at least two factors have come into play against women. One is the traditional bias against women as workers outside the home. Many males still consider women inferior and unreliable. For example, in a survey of textile industries (traditionally heavy employers of women) 38 percent of the managers wanted only men (*China Daily*, 8 March 1988). In another survey of 660 enterprises, only 5 percent said they would hire women for jobs that either sex could do (*China Daily*, 26 February 1988). Women are also seen as a drain on profits because they are guaranteed paid maternity and child-care leave – the costs of which must be borne by the individual enterprise. Women are therefore the last to be hired and the first to be laid off if an enterprise is reorganizing its labor force.

This situation has had an additional impact on women even before they enter the

labor force. Universities and technical schools are now often more reluctant to admit women because they subsequently have difficulties in placing them in jobs. These schools fear that their records for job placement will be adversely affected (*China Daily*, 14 July 1987).

Another aspect of the new policies which may have an adverse effect on women relates to efforts to allow greater flexibility in the mobility of workers. In order to meet the skilled labor force needs of rapidly developing areas, firms are permitted to hire workers from other places. It is highly likely that these policies will favor men, for several reasons. Given past educational practices, men are much more likely than women to possess the technical skills that newly established or expanding industries will need. Men will therefore be in a better position to benefit form this aspect of the modernization process. Furthermore, in China children live with their mothers, so that if women were hired to work in an industry in a different city, their new work unit would have to provide facilities for their children as well. Most work units would be quite reluctant to do so. Several aspects of the new economic reforms are therefore likely to work to the detriment of achieving greater gender equality in the labor force.

Policy makers recognize the heavy burden of homemaking on women and the little help that male family members generally provide in the home (Yuan and Jin, 1986), although here, again, the home work load is somewhat more equitably distributed in urban than in rural areas. The dual work load that many women carry also severely diminishes the amount of leisure time available to them – time which could be spent acquiring more education and skills. Women are therefore also more limited in their opportunities for self-improvement.

There is no doubt that Chinese women have made great progress as a result of both official policy and the modernization process. On the other hand, our data indicate that beliefs are still prevalent that some activities are more suitable to men and others to women, and that women are less likely to achieve high status (income) positions. As modernization proceeds, however, and as education and the impact of the one child family becomes more widespread (the only-child daughter may be particularly influential), we would expect some of these differentials to narrow. Based on the experience of more developed nations it is highly unlikely, however, that they will disappear soon.

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Appendix Table: Distribution of Guangzhou and Shanghai Samples By Sex and Age, and By Education

	Guangzhou		Shanghai	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Age Group				
15-24	29.2	27.8	23.5	22.9
25-44	40.0	38.8	40.0	36.4
45-54	15.6	14.4	16.4	17.0
55 and over	15.2	19.0	20.2	23.7
Education				
None	2.7	12.8	1.3	9.8
Primary	17.3	23.8	5.4	12.0
Jr. High School	33.6	27.3	29.0	27.2
Sr. High School	38.2	33.1	40.0	36.8
Post-secondary	8.2	3.0	24.1	14.3
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number	1262	1210	2757	2692

性別與居住地在中國勞動力中所扮演的角色

Alice Goldstein* Sidney Goldstein**

(中 文 摘 要)

雖然中國大陸一向强調婦女在國家生產中的重要性，傳統的社會規範以及政策的間接作用仍然對兩性在職業結構上的差別產生很明顯的作用。但在同時，都市化程度也明顯的緩和了兩性間的差異。例如：1982年的普查資料顯示，在許多職業上鄉村的性別比例比城市高出一倍。同時在最不須要技術的工作中，婦女所佔比率也特別的高，但在城市裏，男女兩性的勞力及職業結構則比較相同。

此研究是根據中國兩個最大城市——上海與廣州的資料來印證兩性在職業及所得上的持續差異。這些差異之所以未達到更高，大部份是因爲中國大陸對薪資的嚴格控制，以及在1980年代中期以前私人企業發展極受限制所致。儘管如此，都市化程度以及文化規範的雙重影響，仍對兩性在勞力參與及所得之差異上產生很大的衝擊。特別值得注意的是上海在所得上的差異比廣州更嚴重。

由於城鄉的經濟改革，導致了短暫及永久的人口移動與職業變遷，也可能導致上述性別差異的改變。服務業及小型零售業（自由市場）或小型、低技術性的製造業創立了新的工作機會，也促進了更多婦女勞力的參與。然而由於這些都是低技術的職業，因此它們對於兩性所得分配的均等或者在婦女技術的加强上起不了作用。此外，個人企業爲了適應前述之經濟改革，在僱工時又恢復了以往性別歧視的態度，這也可能影響到婦女工作機會之獲得。

毫無疑問的，由於政府政策及現代化過程，已使中國女性有了很大的進步，可是從統計資料中，我們仍可看出有不少人相信某些經濟活動較適合男性，某些則適合女性，同時女性很難獲得高所得的職位。但是由於現代化的持續及教育與一胎化的普及（如果這唯一的孩子又是獨生女的話，或許會特別具影響力）所造成的影響，我們可以預期這些差異將逐漸縮小。然而，參考已開發國家的經驗，我們可以預料，這些差距極不可能在短期間內消失。

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CHINA'S LABOR FORCE: THE ROLE OF GENDER AND RESIDENCE

(ABSTRACT)

Although the People's Republic of China emphasizes the importance of women in national production, traditional norms as well as the indirect effects of policies have perpetuated sharp differences in the occupational structure of men and women. At the same time, level of urbanization clearly mitigates some of the differences. Data from the 1982 census indicate, for example, that for many occupations, sex ratios in rural areas are twice as high as in cities. Women are also overrepresented in those areas requiring the lowest levels of skills. In cities, male and female labor force and occupational patterns tend to be more similar.

Information from surveys in two of China's largest cities, Shanghai and Guangzhou, documents the continued existence of gender differences in occupation and income. That the differences are not greater is in large measure the result of strict State control of wages and the extremely limited opportunities until the mid-1980s of engaging in private enterprise. Nonetheless, both levels of urbanization and cultural norms continue to have a strong impact on gender differences in labor force participation and income. Of particular interest are the sharper differentials in income in Shanghai compared to Guangzhou.

These gender differences may change as a result of the rural and urban economic reforms which are increasing the temporary and permanent population mobility and job changes. The new opportunities for work in service and petty retail trade (free markets) or in small, low technology manufacturing enterprises have promoted greater female participation in the labor force. Since these are low-skilled jobs, however, they are not likely to lead to more equitable distribution of income or an increase in women's skills. Furthermore, the flexibility that the reforms give to individual enterprises in managing hiring practices means that traditional discrimination against women workers may again be a factor in determining job opportunities.

There is no doubt that Chinese women have made great progress as a result of both official policy and the modernization process. On the other hand, the data indicate that beliefs are still prevalent that some activities are more suitable to men and others to women, and that women are less likely to achieve high status (income) positions. As modernization proceeds, however, and as education and the impact of the one child family becomes more widespread (the only-child daughter may be particularly influential), we would expect some of these differentials to narrow. Based on the experience of more developed nations it is highly unlikely, however, that they will disappear soon.

Key words: Labor force, Gender, Urbanization, Occupation, China, Income Differentials.