



Gender and Work in Contemporary China

Jieyu Liu, Nina Sun, Yuan Zhong

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Introduction

This bibliography includes journal articles, books, and reports, both in English and Chinese, examining the processes of transformation of gender and work in both urban and rural China. Topics include urban laid-off workers, service workers, sex workers, white-collar professionals, and rural-to-urban migrants, as well as women's work in rural China.

Background Reading

This section includes a collection of feminist works on women's experiences in the People's Republic of China, serving as good resources for background information for anyone interested in gender and work in contemporary China. Andors 1983, Croll 1978, and Davin 1976 are among the early feminist works on women's experiences in the People's Republic of China and remain excellent background texts for anyone interested in gender and work in contemporary China. The situation on women's experiences in post-Mao China has been covered in a number of books, including Edwards 2000, Entwisle and Henderson 2000, Hooper 1984, Li 1994, Meng 1995, and Wang 2000. Hershatter 1986 provides a historical study of urban industries in Tianjin, while Rofel 1999 offers an ethnographic study of women textile workers in Hangzhou in the post-Mao era. Honig and Hershatter 1988 contains a rich sample of excerpts from newspapers and women's magazines, serving as good original resources for analysis.

Andors, Phyllis. *The Unfinished Liberation of Chinese Women, 1949–1980*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.

Examines how changing economic policies between 1949 and 1980 (such as the First Five-Year Plan and the Great Leap Forward) impacted women's employment, health, and educational opportunities. This book remains an excellent source of background information for anyone interested in gender and work in contemporary China. It is, however, a pity that the book is laid out with footnotes only and no comprehensive list of references or bibliography.

Croll, Elisabeth J. *Feminism and Socialism in China*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

This book was a pioneering study of the Chinese women's movement from its emergence in the late 19th century. Drawing upon a wide range of materials, including excerpts from studies of villages, documents, and interviews, the author examines a wide range of topics, including women in the labor process and the relationship between women's participation in social production and their access to and control of political and economic resources.

Davin, Delia. *Woman-work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.

This book was one of the first substantial studies of women in China. Drawing upon documentary resources, the author examines the effect of economic and social development policies upon the gender division of labor and the experiences of men and women in family and society. This book serves as an excellent background text for anyone interested in gender and work in contemporary China.

Edwards, Louise. "Women in the People's Republic of China: New Challenges to the Grand Gender Narrative." In *Women in Asia: Tradition, Modernity and Globalization*. Edited by Louise P. Edwards and Roces Mina, 59–84. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2000.

This book chapter offers a good overview of changing state policies and gender rhetoric in China, and their impact upon women.

Entwisle, Barbara, and Gail Henderson, eds. *Re-drawing Boundaries: Gender, Households, and Work in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

This edited volume covers over a decade of empirical research on gender and work in post-Mao China. The contributors use a variety of data and methods to examine the impact of economic reforms upon Chinese families. They consider both urban and rural areas, the rise of the private sector, industrialization, and migration. A key consideration is the way in which gender roles were redefined by the economic and institutional changes in the post-Mao reform era.

Hershatter, Gail. *The Workers of the Tianjin, 1900–1949*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986.

This book documents the experiences of workers in Tianjin in the first half of the 20th century. It covers a wide range of industries, including the cotton mills that recruited women workers. This book would be of interest to those wishing to understand the antecedents of China's current urban industries.

Honig, Emily, and Gail Hershatter. *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980's*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988.

This book serves as a good resource for anyone interested in the position of women and social change in China in the 1980s. Chapters are devoted to girlhood, adornment and sexuality, courtship, marriage, family, divorce, work, violence against women, and gender inequality. These chapters also contain a rich sample of excerpts from newspapers and women's magazines.

Hooper, Beverley. "China's Modernization: Are Young Women Going to Lose Out?" *Modern China* 10.3 (1984): 317–343.

This article reveals the way in which a revived emphasis upon women's domestic roles and femininity strengthened the traditional alternative female vision of a desirable personal future; that is, it was not one's own career advancement that mattered, but marriage to a man who was himself on the path to success. This reinforced gender stereotypes and perpetuated the unequal participation

for women in higher education and employment.

Li, Xiaojiang. "Economic Reform and the Awakening of Chinese Women's Collective Consciousness." In *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State*. Edited by Christina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White, 360–382. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Translated from Chinese, this book chapter was written by a leading academic in women's studies in China. The author analyzes the impact of reforms upon women's employment and identities. The author interprets the mass loss of jobs by women workers, during the economic restructuring of the 1990s, as an opportunity to awaken their collective consciousness.

Meng Xianfan 孟宪范. *Gaige dachao zhong de zhongguo nvxing* (改革大潮中的中国女性). Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1995.

This book draws upon case studies, interviews, and various other documents to examine the changing conditions (in terms of employment and family) faced by rural and urban women from 1978 to 1995. The book considers the opportunities as well as challenges faced by women in the early reform period.

Rofel, Lisa. *Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China after Socialism*. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1999.

Drawing upon an ethnography of a textiles factory in Hangzhou, Rofel analyzes the experiences of three generations of women workers: those who entered the factory around 1949 when the Communist Party took over China, those who were youths during the Cultural Revolution, and those who have come of age in the post-Mao era. The book provides rich information on women's attitudes toward work and marriage across three different cohorts.

Tiefenbrun, Susan. "China's Employment Laws and Their Impact on Women Working in China." *UC Davis Journal of International Law and Policy* 23 (2016): 253.

Based on a wide-coverage examination of legal texts, this article is a good reference to understand how China's employment laws have developed to deal with the female labor force over the past decades. It reviews Confucian gender ideology, such as son-preference, and chronologically summarizes gender-and-employment-related policies as well as laws enforced in the Mao era and afterward. This article also analyzes the interplay of international and national laws' influences on working women in China.

Wang, Zheng. "Gender, Employment and Women's Resistance." In *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*. Edited by Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden, 62–82. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

This review chapter considers urban women's employment in contemporary China. In particular, it focuses on the impact of economic reforms upon women's employment in urban China. Topics include whether "women workers should return home" (popular in Chinese academic debate), women layoffs, the creation of jobs that emphasize feminine beauty, and migrant women in the city.

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