

**What Advances Effective Community-Driven Development: A Cultural Perspective of Gender
Mainstreaming and Self-Organization in Rural China**

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The international development agencies and the Chinese government have become increasingly more aware of the importance of bottom-up community-driven development. Some scholars argue that the problems for community-driven development in China are mainly because of the lack of favorable policy environment and effective monitoring mechanisms. The research in this dissertation does not intend to deny the importance of those factors. The goal of this work, however, is to offer perspectives that can help organizations at all levels and of different sectors to understand the importance of embracing and integrating the local culture into development policy making and program designing. To achieve effective community-driven development, the policy makers and practitioners should first understand and respect the culture and interests of the beneficiaries.

Instead of addressing institutional and structural development issues as “hardware”, this research takes a cultural perspective as “software” to contribute to the existing literature of this field. To achieve effective community-driven development in China, partnership and cooperation between different players is crucial. Culture, both as means and ends of development, is an important factor that bonds them together. Emphasizing the significance of gender roles and responsibilities, a gendered perspective of community development in China is presented in this research.

This research also refers to theories of Complex Adaptive Systems and Self-organization mechanisms, which explain how complex, adaptive macro behavior emerges from simple, local micro decisions and how simple agents collectively solve difficult problems. The roles of community, government, and NGOs [domestic and international] in this development process will be addressed here. During the author's field study in the rural areas of China in the summer of 2007, data was collected through participatory observation, interviews, and focus groups with multiple stakeholders involved in the community-driven development programs in China. This work highlights the opportunities and challenges for effective community-driven development in China. Based upon the analysis, this research also offers policy implications for different stakeholders.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACWF: the All-China Women's Federation

AEB: Association of Embroidered Balls

AES: Association for Embroidery Skills

CAS: Complex Adaptive System

CDD: Community-Driven Development

CPR: Common Pool Resources

CSO: Civil Society Organization

GAD: Gender and Development

GONGO: Government Organized NGO

LGOPA: the State Council Leading Group on Poverty Alleviation and Development

MDG: Millennium Development Goals

MFIs: Microfinance Institutions

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

PPP: Purchasing Power Parity

RCC: Rural Credit Cooperatives

TVEs: Town and Village Enterprises

UN: The United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNIFEM: United Nations Development Fund for Women

WAD: Women and Development

WCDS: Western China Development Strategy

WID: Women in Development

PREFACE

This dissertation writing is a journey of learning, a process of growth in perseverance and self-discipline, and a great opportunity to be abundantly blessed by others. There are many people to whom I owe a big thank-you. Without their continuous help and support, this dissertation would not have been accomplished.

First of all, I would like to thank my dissertation committee who guided me to go through this whole process. Professor Louis A. Picard has been kindly advising me from the very beginning to the end of this endeavor, including setting the research questions, designing the proposal, and writing up the paper. Professor Paul J. Nelson, who is also my academic advisor in the field of international development, has been constantly helping me with my independent study in microfinance and dissertation writing. Professor Phyllis D. Coontz, who always plays an encouraging role in this battle, is the one that I would turn to whenever I had questions about research methodologies. Professor Tang, as an expert in China Studies, gave me very professional and practical advises in my field work and dissertation writing. I am very blessed to have such a dedicated and helpful committee.

My study in GSPIA has been graciously supported by many other faculties and staff from GSPIA. Professor Kevin Kearns has been my academic mentor in the field of public administration. In addition to the academic advises he offered me, I have learnt from him what a professional and diligent professor should be like. I also owe many thanks to the staff in the Student Services and secretaries for the PhD program. Special thanks go to Susan Sawyers who has been tirelessly assisting me with many time-consuming tasks.

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My parents back in China deserve a big thank-you. Although they are thousands of miles away, they have been my support and encouragement all the time. Phone calls with them twice a week are like my daily vitamins to help me stay strong. I knew I was not fighting alone because they always made me feel loved and cared. Although they cannot fully understand my research, they always stood next to me. My heartfelt gratitude goes to them.

I save my final and most important thanks to my church family here in Pittsburgh. I thank God, the ultimate source of my strength and wisdom, for all the loving sisters and brothers who have been praying hard for me. They have been helping and loving me unselfishly. They kept me accountable when I cannot be self-controlled and their prayers lifted me up when I was weak. This dissertation is not a one-man show. It is a teamwork with all my dear friends and family members. Thank you very much.



FIGURE 1: MAP OF CHINA AND POSITIONS OF THE RESEARCH SITES

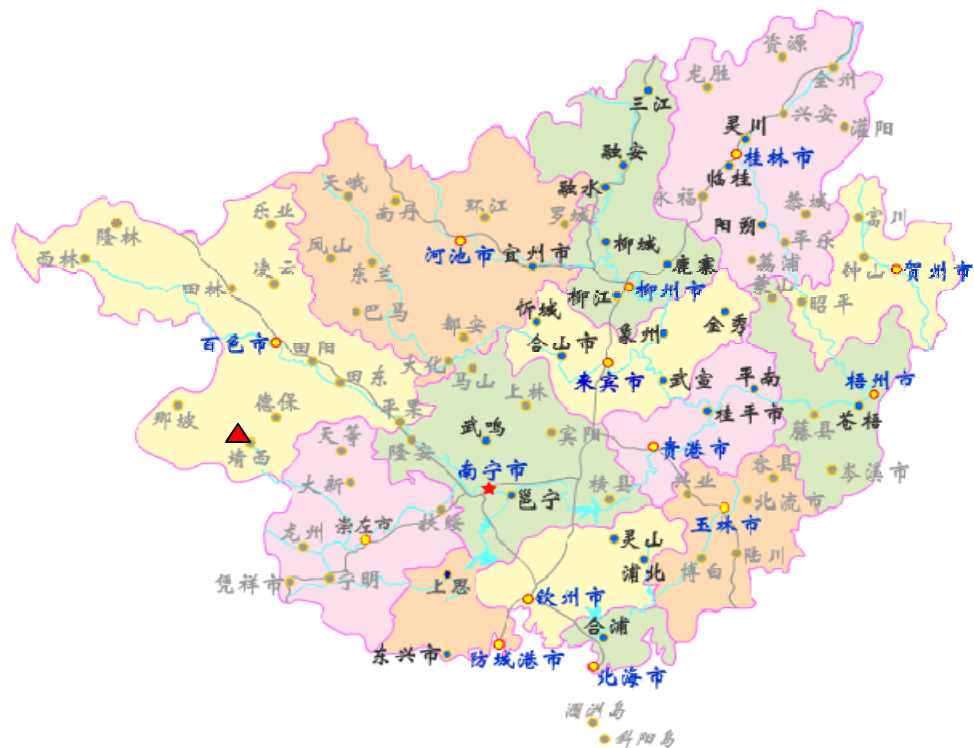


FIGURE 2: MAP OF GUANGXI AND LOCATION OF RESEARCH SITE, JINGXI COUNTY [THE RED TRIANGLE]

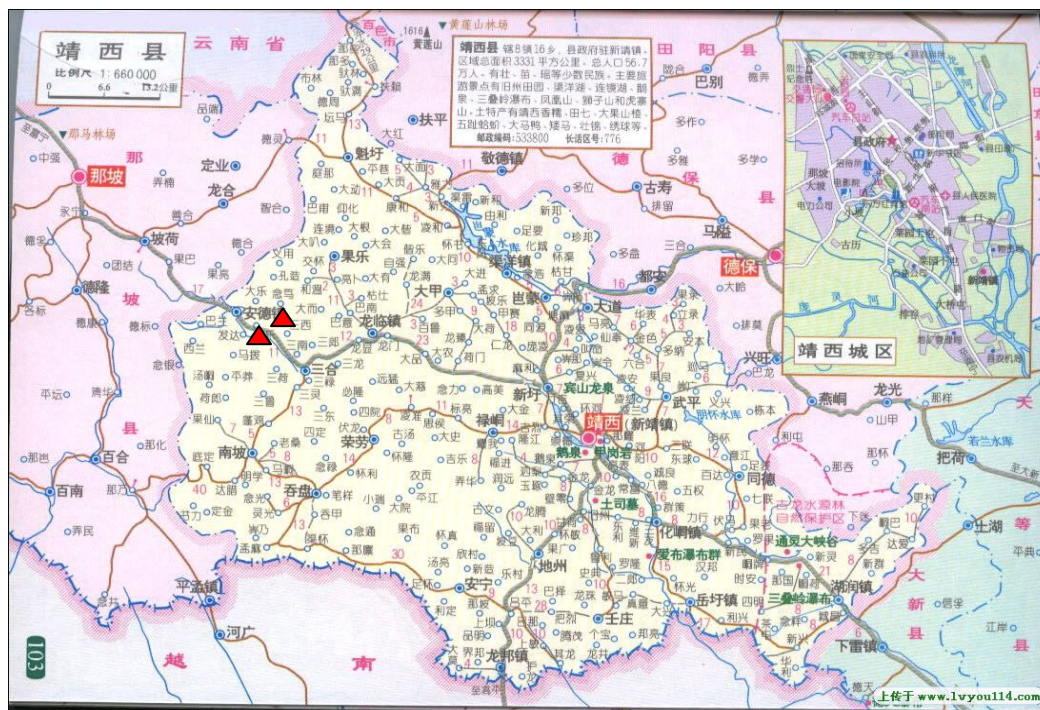


FIGURE 3: MAP OF JINGXI COUNTY, GUANGXI, & LOCATIONS OF RESEARCH VILLAGES [TWO TRIANGLES]



FIGURE 4: MAP OF SICHUAN PROVINCE & LOCATION OF RESERCH SITE [NANCHONG CITY]



FIGURE 5: MAP OF INNER MONGOLIA & LOCATION OF RESERCH REGION [CHIFENG CITY WITH RED TRIANGLE]

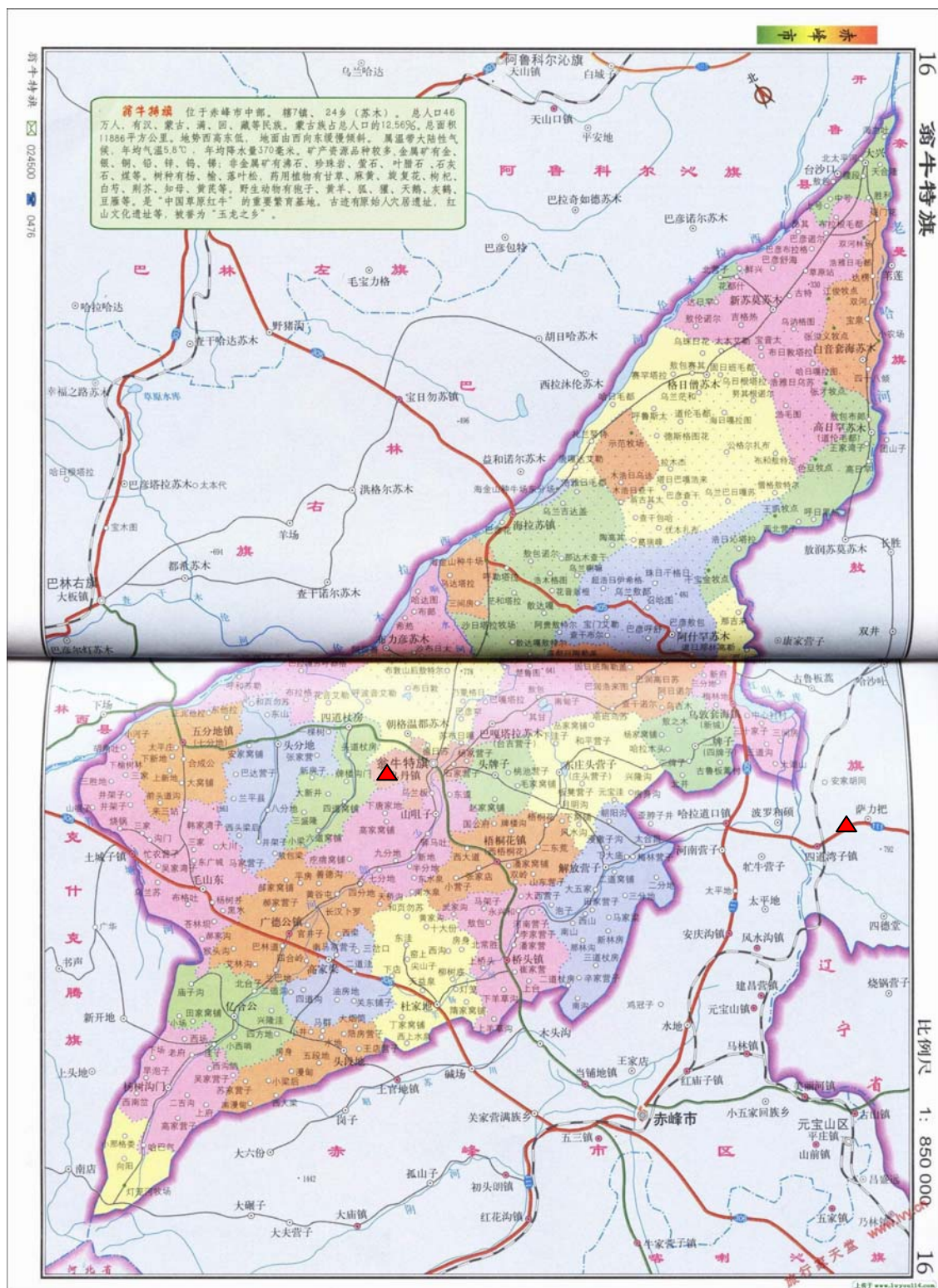


FIGURE 6: LOCATION OF RESEARCH VILLAGES IN INNER MONGOLIA

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Cultural matters are integral parts of the lives we lead. If development can be seen as enhancement of our living standards, then efforts geared to development can hardly ignore the world of culture.” [Amartya Sen, 1999, p.1]

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As one of the UN’s millennium development goals to “reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day”¹, poverty reduction still remains a challenging endeavor for many countries around the world. China has been making remarkable achievements in the past two decades. The proportion of population below \$1 [PPP] a day has dropped from 16.6% to 10.8% within three years from 2001 to 2004. Its ranking in Human Development Index has increased up to No. 81 in year 2004 from No. 101 in year 2000². However, due to the large population and the widening inequality gap, poverty alleviation, in the rural areas in particular, remains the top priority of China’s development endeavor. The Chinese phrase “fu pin”, which means to help alleviate poverty, has been carried on by the Chinese government as state policy³. At a forum on the country's poverty relief patterns and progress in the United Nations Millennium Goals, Vice Premier Hui Liangyu said "We will give emphasis to our strategy of poverty relief, and improve our

¹ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>, access date 2008/08/27

² Data is extracted from the online databases of the World Bank and the UNDP.

³ China carries on poverty fight despite achievements, Xinhua News Agency, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-10/17/content_10211820.htm, accessed on 01/15/2009

policies for the interests of the poor."⁴ How to make the development more effective is a pressing issue that both the Chinese government and international development agencies strive to solve. In the past several years, as one of the proposed solutions, community-driven development programs have been piloted in China with the joint efforts from the Chinese government and the international development community.

Poverty has been considered an economic issue for a long time. Recent discourse of development has been claiming that poverty is not only an economic issue, but also political, social, and cultural in nature as well [Streeten 1982, Sen 1988, ul Haq 1990, Martinussen, 1997]. This study of community-driven development in the rural areas of China will approach the subject of poverty and development from a cultural perspective. More economists and financial experts have recognized and accepted the idea that culture does matter in development and development does not merely mean an increase in numbers. However, as Amartya Sen argues, the issue is not *whether* culture matters, it is *how* culture matters [Rao & Walton, 2004]. The relationship between culture and development can not be explained simply by cultural determinism. On the contrary, it is a two-way interaction. This study will investigate how culture - both as means and end - interacts with development.

The connotation of culture can be very broad and complex, ranging from tradition, customs, to living styles and languages. Being aware of the variety of culture, this study will

⁴ Xinhua News Agency, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-10/17/content_10211820.htm, accessed on 01/15/2009

mainly focus on two indicators of cultural impact: gender and self-organization. In addition, the intricacy of culture is another characteristic that should not be neglected. Culture varies as the geographic locations change. It also evolves as time passes. With 56 different ethnic groups residing in a vast country, China is an excellent case study of the impact of culture on development. In this study, we will explore how gender and self-organization, as cultural phenomena, exert both positive and negative influence on community development. In addition, hopefully it will contribute to the existing literature by diving into the design of development policies and programs that will harness the advantages of these cultural factors and avoid their disadvantages.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the fall of 2008, China is going to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms. Thirty years ago, China was struggling to pull herself together from the devastating effects of the Cultural Revolution. It was at that time that Deng claimed the focus of the nation's development should be shifted from political "class struggle" to economic development, and China should open up to the outside world. Socialism with Chinese characteristics was established as the goal for the development of China.

China has undergone a continuous process of exploring ways to achieve its development goals. One of Deng's most recognized contribution to China's development is the introduction of a market economy into socialism development. China had been employing a command-and-control planned economy before Deng's economic reform. All the major sectors of the economy were controlled by the state. The state managed all the

decision-making about production, distribution, pricing, and investment. By the time of Deng's economic reform, the development of the country was hampered by the lack of efficiency, incentive, and rampant corruption. Deng introduced the market economy into China, arguing that instead of being incompatible, planning and market systems are actually complementary to each other.

"Planning and market forces are not the essential difference between socialism and capitalism. A planned economy is not the definition of socialism, because there is planning under capitalism; the market economy happens under socialism, too. Planning and market forces are both ways of controlling economic activity." [Cited in Gittings, 2005]

The development of the countryside also experienced tremendous progress. One of the most notable reforms was the implementation of the "household responsibility system" in late 1970s that allowed individual farmers to sell surplus produce in the free market. Another phenomenal reform was the rapid growth of "town and village enterprises" [TVEs] in the 1980s. TVEs have been boosting the rural economy by providing employment and sponsoring local public goods. Both of the reforms were achieved under strong management from the governments of all levels and limited participation from the local communities. The success of these reforms proved that at that particular transition period this formula of "strong government + little local participation" worked more effectively for China's economic growth. As China makes more progress in its economic development, however, where to draw the line between government intervention and local empowerment became a pressing issue for both the researchers and the practitioners.

As China makes an all-out efforts to achieve strong economic growth, the lack of attention and investment in other social and cultural aspects of the society has led to

serious consequences: the environment has been deteriorating because of the lack of environmental protection awareness among the public; the gap between the rich and the poor is getting widened and more people begin to complain about the inequality; corruption is becoming more serious because of the immature legal and monitoring systems; the morale fiber of the society is disintegrating as people are more driven by economic interest. Apparently economic growth cannot solve all these socio-cultural problems and it calls for other solutions to address these issues.

Among all the emerging issues, the lack of understanding and appreciation of various local cultures has not received enough attention. This problem will very possibly put the local culture in danger of destruction and threaten the stability of the country. The recent conflict in Tibet sounded an alarm on the importance of embracing and integrating the local cultures into the development process⁵. It is undeniable that the Chinese government has put enormous efforts and resources to promote economic development in Tibet. The achievements that have been made are also remarkable. What is worthy of more research efforts and attention, however, is to what extent the local culture is integrated and the local community is involved in the entire development process.

As mentioned above, it is not feasible to study the role of culture as a general and complex concept. This study has narrowed down to two indicators of cultural influence: gender and self-organization. Different regions have their own characteristics in gender

⁵ By looking at the conflict in Tibet from a cultural perspective, the author does not deny the fact that it is absolutely political. In fact, development can never be apolitical. The incident can be interpreted from different angles. This study focuses on the impact of culture.

roles and levels of self-organization, which have direct influence upon the development of the community. What is more important for this study, however, is to study the various contexts that promote or demote gender and self-organization development. Cultural factors, such as social trust, community cohesion, local traditions, gender roles in history, etc. are all important for this research. The following sections will provide more background on self-organizing mechanisms, primarily about microfinance programs, and gender study in China.

1.2.1 MICROFINANCE IN CHINA

The most notable self-organizing mechanisms that the Chinese government has tried to promote in the past is the microfinance mechanisms. As “banking for the poor,” microfinance has been considered an effective approach for poverty alleviation. Relying on their traditional skills and entrepreneurial instincts, the poor people, mostly women, use small loans and other financial support from local microfinance institutions [MFIs] to start, sustain, or expand small, self-supporting businesses. As a developing country with a large population of poor people, in the rural areas in particular, China learned from other developing countries and introduced microfinance models into China in early 1990s, sponsored mainly by international donors and the Chinese government.

In the past, the Chinese government implemented subsidized poverty loan program as its major poverty alleviation strategy. Since 1994, many international and domestic organizations have established a variety of microfinance models to rural China [Park, 2001]. From 1996, government-financed microfinance programs, based on the Grameen

model, have begun in a dozen provinces. The rapid expansion of government programs and high level of government involvement was different from microfinance programs in other countries. Unfortunately, these programs, like in other developing countries, have been heavily criticized for the lack of sustainability and effectiveness in reaching the poor people. Considering the number of people in poverty, the scale of sustainability of microfinance in China is not encouraging. One example is the program of Tianjin Women's Federation which had a good start but did not sustain. "Tianjin is a big city but the Federation reached less than 2,000 clients after more than seven years," says one analyst. "It should have been 30,000."⁶

In China, currently there are three categories of microfinance programs that differ in the degree of local government involvement. The three categories include nongovernmental organization [NGO] programs, mixed programs [NGO & government], and government programs. Research has shown that there is a marked difference in the success rate of the three categories of programs [Park, 2001]. Although NGO programs have much higher interest rate than those of the government programs, the NGO program performs best, followed by the mixed program, while the government program performs poorly. In general, however, these poverty alleviation efforts were not as effective as expected. NGO programs, international NGO programs in particular, are confronted with the problem of sustainability⁷. The Chinese government is concerned with the effectiveness

⁶ Microfinance in China: Growth and Struggle: Knowledge@Wharton, (<http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=1471>)

⁷ UNDP China, 2005, UNDP Support to Microfinance in China; En-gendering Development in China

of the rural credit cooperatives [RCC], the major MFIs in the rural areas in China, and is looking for new approaches to implement microfinance programs more effectively⁸.

This study will look into the feasibility for China to adopt the flexible, distributed, self-organizing mechanisms for rural community development. Details about this mechanisms are explained in section 2.4. The author also believes that this study about China will be helpful for countries that share similar features of poverty with China, such as being culturally diverse, a strong government regulatory and administrative role, and a relatively underdeveloped financial sector, primarily in the rural areas.

1.2.2 GENDER STUDIES IN CHINA

There is a famous saying in modern China that ‘women can hold up half of the sky’. Being very diligent and hardworking, women in China have contributed a great deal to the country’s economic and social progress. China has over 600 million women, which is more than one fifth of the world’s total [Cai, 2000]. Many of them, in the rural areas in particular, are still living in poverty. Some argue that the reason for this is that they are not entirely freed from the remnants of the old feudal thinking and are still bound by the local social, economic and cultural constraints. In addition, a great number of women workers in urban areas are being laid off and find it difficult to get a new job during the economic restructuring process from a planned economy to a market economy [Wu, 2004].

⁸ Microcredit not working in China, new initiative needed, People’s Daily Online, Oct.27, 2006

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, remarkable social and economic development has been achieved in China. As a result of general improvements for all Chinese citizens, women's status and conditions have been improved accordingly. The expression "women can hold up half of the sky" also mirrors the Chinese government's determination for women's emancipation and gender equality. According to the laws of China, women enjoy equal rights as men do in all matters ranging from politics, culture, and education to work, property, marriage, and family lives.⁹

Despite the significant impact of socio-economic development on women's education, employment, and marriage and family life, as well as their views and values, gender equality is still a goal that has not yet been achieved. Official statistics show that in 2004, the illiteracy rate of Chinese young women was 4.2 percent, down 27 percent from 1982. However, with 55 million women still illiterate, the education of women remains a daunting task¹⁰. In addition, vast differences exist between urban areas and the distant poor rural areas. In Beijing, only 11% of the women population are illiterate. In Tibet and Guizhou, however, the illiteracy rates of women are 69% and 45% respectively [Edwards & Roces, 2000]. Also, differences remain between the pay for men and women doing the same work. There exists a big gap between the health conditions of urban people and those who live in the rural areas. In remote and poverty-stricken areas, great efforts is needed to improve women's condition in many aspects.

⁹ Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women (Adopted at the Fifth Session of the Seventh National People's Congress on April 3, 1992), All-China Women's Federation, <http://www.women.org.cn/english/english/laws/02.htm>, accessed on 03/03/2009

¹⁰ "China has 55 million illiterate women" People's Daily Online, access date 08/11/2008. http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200607/19/eng20060719_284503.html, Source: Xinhua

Microfinance programs were employed to address the growing issues of global poverty and women in development. Women's involvement in microfinance programs in China is a topic that deserves more attention and research. Many official documents claim that women have benefited greatly from microfinance programs. Some scholars have observed, however, that women themselves often did not have much knowledge about the microfinance loan. Sometimes the loan was borrowed under their names; but it was the husbands that were responsible for using the money [Bislev, 2002]. Although some general surveys about household and gender in China have been conducted before [All-China Women's Federation, 1993], this research will go beyond those surveys and focus more on the interrelations between gender and community development, including microfinance programs. The aim of this study is to explore factors that influence women and men's participation/non-participation in community development, motivation and hindrances for their re-investment in income-generating activities, and their contribution to the development and sustainability of the community.

Like their sisters in many other developing countries, Chinese women are still considered victims who need to be liberated from marginalized and oppressed situations; and need to be empowered to make decisions and support themselves. Since many donors assume the implicit empowerment potential of the credit and saving mechanisms for the poor [Amin & Bayes, 1998; Mayoux, 2000], many scholars and experts focus on how to increase poor people's access to microfinance loans through institutional or financial strategies [Maria, 1994; Ledgerwood, 1998]. However, more recent literature on microfinance has shown us a continuing debate about microfinance and empowerment.

Some scholars point out that the access to material and intellectual resources does not necessarily lead to the control over them [Goetz & Gupta 1996; Mayoux 2000]. Others have argued that credit programs inflict intense pressure on women by pressing them to meet difficult loan repayment schedules, acceptance of the aggregate workload of domestic plus enterprise activities, acknowledging certain entrenched traditions of gender relations, etc., all of which demote the status of women [Reza, 2002]. The optimistic assumption that increasing access to resources will automatically lead to empowerment, therefore, seems questionable and insufficient for making effective poverty alleviation policies.

Some scholars argue that empowerment cannot be assumed to be an automatic outcome of microfinance [Mayoux, 2000]. The effectiveness of microfinance programs is influenced by various social and cultural factors. In order to achieve greater success in improving the status of women, the making of policies, programs, and intervention strategies must be equipped with the tools that deal with the “condition” and the “position” of women [Reza, 2002]. The “condition” refers to the level of the material needs such as wage, education, personal consumption and health care. The “position” means the socio-economic status relative to men. Concrete research on the “condition” and the “position” of women in development is inadequate, especially in the case of China.

Secondly, although most of the microfinance program donors are aware of the importance of women, there is not much research looking into microfinance programs from the perspective of gender. Questions such as how gender differentiation affects the planning, implementation and expansion of microfinance programs deserve more attention. Evidence suggests that customary gender values, rules, and rights form the moral

order of society, which restricts the access of women to social, political and legal institutions and ultimately creates and perpetuates a vicious exclusionary cycle that maintains gender inequalities [Murray, 2005].

Moreover, the study of gender is not equivalent to the study of women. More attention should be paid to the importance of gender relationships and its cultural context. In summary, gender should not only be considered as a dependent variable that is to be solved and determined by development, but also as an independent variable that will exert influence on the policy-making and programming in development. The characteristics of this independent variable, however, vary across time, ethnics, and region.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

“Community-Driven Development” [CDD] has been receiving more popularity among developing countries as an effective approach for poverty alleviation and development. Experience with CDD programs is growing, primarily in Asia and Africa. Despite the varying country conditions and program adaptations, CDD generally is supposed to deliver several program benefits: *Improved access to infrastructure and services; Effective program targeting; Capacity-building within participating communities; Open and responsive local governance*¹¹.

Having employed the command-and-control mechanisms as its primary way of development for years, China is becoming aware of the significance of participation from

¹¹ CDD Brochure, Community-Driven Development in China: Helping Poor Communities to Help Themselves, issued by the World Bank.

the bottom level. In its 10th Five-Year Plan [2001-2005], the role of government control was still highlighted for the fulfillment of the development goals, which include “...new jobs amongst town and rural migrant laborers number 40 million, and urban registered unemployment is controlled at 5 percent. The general price level should stay steady, and the balance of international payments maintained.”¹² The intervention from the government is strong in the economic restructuring process in order to optimize and upgrade its industrial structures and strengthen its world competitiveness. Apparently, economic growth and state control are the two major themes of the 10th Plan. The 11th Five-Year Plan, however, differs from the 10th plan in a very remarkable way. The Chinese government has set its 11th Five-Year [2006-2011] Plan goal of constructing a “New Socialist Countryside” which requires ‘people-centered’ measures to energize the rural poor, to make them capable and enthusiastic participants in their own development. To achieve these goals, the State Council Leading Group on Poverty Alleviation and Development [LGOPA], in collaboration with the World Bank, has initiated a pilot CDD program to test whether this approach can move China another step toward the creation of a “well-off and harmonious society” [*xiaokang shehui*]¹³.

The CDD pilot programs in 60 villages can only directly benefit a very small number of poor communities. But the pilot program could be enormously influential if CDD is

¹² Source: China Mapping Out the 11th Five-Year Development Guidelines, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/guideline/156529.htm>, access date: 08/25/2006

¹³ China Leading Group on Poverty Alleviation and Development CDD Project, Pilot Community Driven Development Program, www.worldbank.org, access date: 2008/06/20

shown to be an effective and efficient approach to improve poverty alleviation programming. LGOPA intends to review program results for potential applicability in its ongoing Village Development Planning endeavor, which is expected to reach 148,000 officially designated poor villages by 2010. Other central or provincial government agencies also expressed interest in utilizing CDD-based approaches in both rural and urban settings.

This study will examine the extent to which the interests of the ultimate beneficiaries of this pilot program, the poor villagers, are addressed. Harrison and Shirom [1999] argue that organizational decision-making and changes are achieved through a proper in-depth assessment of the sources of ineffectiveness, which they call the ‘Sharp-Image Diagnosis’ framework. This framework combines the features of an open system and the political perspectives which encourage the diagnosis of problems in the overall environmental and organizational context with all internal interests and external stakeholders involved. This study of the cultural and contextual factors for development is expected to be helpful for the pursuit of more effective ways for development.

The goal of this study is to offer insight into new approaches that can help organizations at all levels and different sectors to understand how gender and self-organization, as cultural and social factors, influence community development. The study of gender and self-organization from a cultural perspective would contribute to the process of problem analysis prior to the designing of policies and programs. Some scholars argue that the ineffectiveness of microfinance in China is mainly due to the lack of favorable policy environment and effective monitoring mechanisms [Wen, 2004; Sun, 2002]. This research

does not intend to minimize the importance of those factors but to raise awareness of other essential problems. For example, what are the criteria for a favorable environment? How do we set up those criteria? For whom policies should be favorable? Who should take the responsibility of monitoring? To design policies for effective community-driven development, the policy makers and practitioners need to understand the situation and interests of the beneficiaries first. Instead of approaching it from an institutional or structural perspective as “hardware”, this research utilizes a cultural perspective as “software” to contribute to the existing literature in this field.

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. The introductory chapter points out the problematic relationship between culture and development and how it is reflected in the development of China. It also summarizes the development initiatives that the Chinese government has employed in the past. Background information about why culture is becoming more important in China’s community development is also provided. This study is based on the author’s field study in multiple sites where community-driven development programs are piloted. The significance of the study lies in the fact that it addresses the urgent and important challenges that China needs to deal with in order to successfully shift from a state-oriented development mechanisms to a participatory community-driven one.

The existing literature about culture and development is discussed in Chapter two, highlighting gender and self-organization in particular. First of all, it describes the evolution process of the definition of development from merely an economic concept to a

concept that includes social, cultural, and political improvement. Culture, like many other factors, matters as an integral part of development. This chapter then explores the literature about the development strategies that have been pursued in different regions at different time periods. From state-run to people-centered development, from top-down to participatory development, this shift of development paradigm calls for the understanding of the local cultures to achieve effective development. The importance of gender and self-organization for development is also examined to explain why the author chose gender and self-organization as two cultural factors to study. Finally, the conceptual model and research questions for the study are presented in this chapter.

Chapter three describes the methodologies employed in this research. This research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, though qualitative methods play the primary role. The rationale for the selection of research site and research population is presented. Anthropological participatory observation was conducted in multiple research sites. Other tools for data collection include one-on-one interview, focus groups, and internet and library search, based on the Grounded Theory. Conclusions are drawn after months of “tedious” and time-consuming transcribing and coding.

Chapter four provides some baseline information about all the research regions and villages. Since the theme of the research is about the significance of culture on development, it is important to have some general understanding of the locations that the author is researching. How these regions are economically, geographically, and culturally diverse is addressed in this chapter. It sets the stage for the empirical analysis in Chapter 5 and 6.

The relationship between culture and community development is examined in Chapter five from the perspective of gender. Gender roles, identity, and responsibilities vary across regions and cultures. Through several gender factors this chapter looks into the differences between men and women and how the differences affect the development of the household and community. In addition, the comparative gender study between different regions further proves the importance of understanding the local culture for effective development. As rural development is facing the shortage of labor force, a gendered study of migrant workers examines the different attitudes and concerns toward migrant employment between men and women.

Chapter six addresses the cultural roots of self-organization in Chinese rural communities. Some cultural activities are presented to illustrate local people's self-organizing efforts in their daily lives. In addition, shared culture often times strengthens people's capacity to self-organize in order to adapt to external changes. Case studies are used to illustrate the natural development of self-organizing mechanisms in community development. The ongoing Community-Driven Development [CDD] initiative, as an efforts to promote self-organization, has brought many benefits to the local community. Achieving effective self-organization remains a challenge as there are still many pressing issues that need to be addressed. Based on the theoretical and empirical analysis, Chapter seven concludes with findings and policy implications drawn from the study for the stakeholders in this development process.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

“Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative in search of meaning” [Clifford Geertz, 1973 ,p.5]

The role of culture in development has been a longstanding debate both in academic and among development practitioners. There are two polar positions about the relationship between culture and development [Szirmai, 2005]. With Marxist theory as a good example, the structuralist approach considers culture as a source of power that constrains people’s mind and thought, which hence hampers the process of development. Scholars of the idealist approach, on the other hand, emphasize the uniqueness and hybridity of culture which shapes the way of development. Whether positive or negative, culture has always been exerting its influence on development. This fact has been recognized by many economists, anthropologists, sociologists, and leading international development agencies [Harrison & Huntington, 2000; Klitgaard, 1994]. The remaining issue, however, is what we should do with it next. The answer to the question of “how” to deal with culture in the development process keeps changing as the definition and strategies for development evolve.

What is culture? This word has become so trendy and popular that we use it under many different circumstances. Actually it seems like we are living in the jungle of different types of cultures, such as social culture, organizational culture, even office culture. Robert Bocock [1992] has identified five ways to define culture, which are summarized in table 1.

This comprehensive and complex set of definitions interpreted culture as the cultivation of nature. Based on Bocock's definition No.4 and No. 5, two main anthropological definitions of culture have been widely used in the social sciences. First, culture is defined as 'the meaning, value, and ways of life of a particular group'. Second, culture is defined as 'the social practices which produce meaning [Schech and Haggis, 2000]'. The first definition primarily features what culture is and the second focuses more on what culture does or how it does it [Bocock 1992:232]. Geertz [1973] defines culture as "a web of significance" for the existence of an individual, organization, group, or society. This study refers to this set of anthropological, environmental, and contextual concepts of culture.

TABLE 1: DEFINITIONS OF CULTURE

1	Culture=cultivating land, crops, animals
2	Culture=cultivation of mind, arts, civilization
3	Culture=process of social development
4	Culture=meaning, value, ways of life
5	Culture=practices which produce meaning

Source; Schech and Haggis [2000], adapted from Bocock [1992:234]

Geertz's definition of culture emphasizes the contextual and objective existence of culture which in his view is not a force or causal agent in the world. It is true that a web is just a web when it is not used by the spider to prey on food. However, it can be used as a weapon for the spider to protect itself or attack others to survive and grow. The real meaning of the "web" cannot be understood correctly without studying the conditions and motivations of the "agents" who spin the web. To understand the role of culture, therefore, it is not enough just to interpret the "symbolic forms" by which "people communicate,

perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitude toward life [Geertz, 1973, p.89].”

The symbolic forms inherited from generations to generations are very critical in shaping people’s social behaviors, consciously or unconsciously. It is helpful, to some extent, to tell a wink from a twitch as it tells us something is happening. What the anthropologist does is to interpret and record the winks and not twitches. However, the interpretations of “what our informants are up to, or think they are up to, and then systematize those” [Geertz 1973, p.15] is not enough for development. For academic and practitioners in the development field, in addition to understanding what the cultures are, we also need to know why they exist and how they work. To answer those questions, the people who design and spin the webs are the key subject to study on.

Culture is a changing and dynamic factor embedded in social relations among individuals and groups in different economic, political, and social contexts. The simplified polar positions of culture and development cannot offer a satisfactory answer to the unique, intricate, and complex nature of culture. As their cultures vary, different societies or ethnics may have different understanding and preference for development. For example, the influence of Confucian ethic in the development of Asian countries has been widely recognized [Dore, 1987; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede and Bond, 1988]. Therefore, a more differentiated perspective of the relationship between culture and development is needed.

This chapter will present a contour of the evolution of the concept of development and how culture fits into the picture. In addition, it also examines the role of culture in development and how culture interacts with different players in development processes.

Then it will address the significance of two what I called “cultural indicators”: gender and self-organization. Key concepts that are used in this study, such as development, gender, self-organization, and community-driven development will also be defined.

2.1 “WHAT” IS DEVELOPMENT – CULTURE AS AN END OF DEVELOPMENT

The role of culture in development cannot be fully understood without an in-depth study of the evolution of the concept of “development. The term “development” has always been a contested and problematic concept. The 72 different meanings of the term ‘development’ described by Riggs [Riggs, 1984] fully illustrate this problem. However, its origin in economics was based mainly on increasing production and consumption [Martinussen, 1997]. Lewis shows that the origin of development economics dated back to writings from the 1650s to Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* [Lewis, 1988]. Theories on sectoral imbalance, overall balance, trade and foreign exchange and organizations all helped form the foundation of development economics [Hume, 1963; Smith 1776]. The focus of these classical economic theories is long-term economic growth. Mill and Marshall are the two influential economists who led economic theory into a new paradigm, namely neo-classical economics, whose primary interests are utility and profit maximization and equilibrium analysis [Mill, 1975; Marshall, 1890]. These theories assumed a perfectly competitive market and considered raising rural surplus and transferring underutilized labor out of agriculture into industry as pre-conditions for economic growth.

Almost at the same time in the 18th century, the origins of sociological and political development theories were also established, though they might not be as striking as economic theories were. Auguste Comte, who influenced Emile Durkheim, was the first one

to use the term “sociology”. Durkheim used natural science models to analyze the social consequence of international division of labor, which he called anomie, or feeling of rootlessness and aimlessness. His thought and research methods had broad application in post-war modernization theories and anthropological research. Marx and Weber are the other two influential theorists at that time. Marxism embraced the whole society, ranging from economics, sociology, and history to politics. Marx still emphasized the precedence of economic processes and implied that social changes would follow economic influences, though he also addressed the importance of social classes. Weber, on the other hand, focused on rational, hierarchical bureaucracy and considered it the ideal model for a modern and democratic society. These theoretical roots have served as basis for the development of three modern schools of thoughts: Functionalism and anthropological research methods through Radcliffe-Brown and B. Malinowski; Talcott Parson contributed to the formation of modernization theory; and Marxism together with Neo-Weberians ushered in Post Marxist [Martinussen, 1997]. In addition to economic factors, socio-cultural elements were added into the study of development.

It was not until the 1940s that development economics became a distinct areas for study. Schumpeter’s distinction between “growth” and “development” played a significant role. He argued that growth was “circular flow” or gradual extension of the capital apparatus and increasing production. In his view, real development requires for technical innovation and entrepreneurship [Schumpeter, 1934; Martinussen 1997]. While Schumpeter challenged neo-classical economics’ dominant primacy of capital accumulation as a pre-condition for development, Keynes questioned its assumption of perfectly

competitive market and equilibrium analysis. The United States' lasting unemployment problem during the Great Depression propelled Keynes to question the self-adjustability of the optimal equilibrium and bring up the role of state intervention [Keynes, 1936]. Later on, the establishment of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's institutional control over development was also influenced by his thought.

New-institutionalism economics theories are another major contribution that economic theories have made to development theory. Based on the neo-classical economic theories, New-institutionalism economics, however, is not limited within the market sector. It questions the neo-classical perfect market assumption. The importance of transaction cost, incomplete information, property rights and institutional framework are emphasized [Coase 1960; North 1990, 1981; Stiglitz 1988]. The term "institution" refers to a set of constraints which governs the behavioral relations among individuals and groups [Nabli & Nugent, 1989]. According to this definition, Martinussen provides a good framework of the total incentive structure governing investments in a developing country, which includes firm, market and society, and the state [Martinussen, 1997]. This approach therefore is not only looking at the economic variables, but also the firm's strategies and state regulatory systems and the interactions between the three sectors. Public choice theory based on it has promoted the emergence and strengthening of civil society organizations [Ostrom, 1990]. Its influence has gone beyond development economics.

The discourse theories are distinct from the economic development models defined by the developed countries which advocated the replication of the "advanced" societies. Since the mid 1980s, a group of scholars, mainly anthropologists, sought to deconstruct

development and look for alternatives to it. They challenged the very definition of development and regarded it as a process of psychic re-colonization [Nandy, 1984]. Without considering the local culture and practice, many development programs implemented and sponsored by the West ended up in failure [Ferguson, 1990]. They also emphasize the complexity and uncertainty of the context, recommending a hybrid model and ethnography-oriented research [Escobar, 1995; Rahnema & Brawtree, 1997; Rist, 1997]. Although discourse theories have assigned great importance to the local culture and traditions and criticized the Eurocentric feature of modernization theories, the little practical guidance they can provide has made their theories of little applicability in practice. In another words, the discourse theories help raise people's awareness about the importance of culture, but not many feasible policies and solutions were drawn from them to tackle the problem of "how".

The redefining of poverty and development goals formed the foundation for alternative development perspectives. Some theorists of this perspective rejected economic growth as an end in itself. Instead, they considered development as a process of welfare and human development to enhance people's choices [Seers, 1969; Streeten, 1982; Sen, 1988; ul Haq, 1990]. Economic theories, not totally rejected though, step down from the position of primacy and serve as means for social/human development goals. Elements such as health, education, environment, gender, and culture, are not considered trickle down results from economic growth any more. In fact, these elements are receiving more attention as different aspects of a more comprehensive development concept. This

emerging “paradigm” of sustainable human development has gradually led to a new framework for development research [Martinussen, 1997].

As Sen argues, development is a process of improving people’s freedom and the word “freedom” refers to the enhancement of “human capabilities” [Sen, 1999]. As one aspect of this multi-facet concept of “freedom”, cultural freedom is surely an indicator of successful development. What is implied here is that culture, as an end, is an important component of development. Being aware of the importance of culture, however, is not enough for effective and sustainable development. Cultural factors, depending on how they interact with environmental structures, policies, and organizations, can lead to development or stagnation. How to incorporate the knowledge of culture into development policy-making and program designing is a critical step to connect “theory” with “practice”. The next section of this chapter will look at how culture, as a means of development, can influence the effectiveness of development.

2.2 “HOW” TO ACHIEVE DEVELOPMENT – CULTURE AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPMENT

Culture was not considered as a positive driving force for development in the first place. Derived from the above mentioned thoughts about development, modernization theory was developed in 1950s by scholars from various disciplines, including economists, sociologists, historians, anthropologists and politicians. The post-war newly independent countries’ failure in economic development brought neo-classical market-oriented theories into question. The basic building block of the modernization perspective is the dichotomy between traditional and modern types of social organization and value systems. It assumes

that the values, institutions, and patterns of action of traditional society are reasons for “irrationality” and underdevelopment and obstacles for modernization. Therefore, traditional norms and structures need to be overthrown to achieve social, economic, and political transformation [Munoz, 1981]. The primary question, then, will be what conditions promote or impede such transformation.

After WWII, the large number of decolonized countries drew the attention of the developed countries and in the U.S. the Point Four Program was implemented with an inflow of foreign aid to “modernize” those underdeveloped countries. State-managed development and blueprint planning were common strategies adopted by most developing countries. Rosenstein-Rodan’s “big push” theory [1957], the unbalanced growth of Hirschman [1969], the balanced growth of Nurske [1953] all addressed the need for state intervention and structural change toward industrial development. The typical example of modernization theory is Rostow’s five stages of economic growth [1960], which assumes that every country will follow the same path of modernization from tradition. What is noteworthy is that although these development economic theories assigned some importance to social and cultural conditions, their focuses are still mainly on economic aspects.

Dialectical modernization theory places the elements of tradition and culture to a more important position. Although it retains the distinction between tradition and modernity, it states that tradition does not necessarily impede development. Based on studies chiefly in Asia and Africa, theorists of this school emphasize the dialectical interaction between tradition and modernity [Gusfield, 1967; Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967;

Sandbrook, 1985; Hyden, 1983]. Dialectical modernization theories are not limited to economic or political development; instead they cover much broader interactions between state and society.

Unlike modernization theories which take industrialization and capital accumulation as their focus of analysis. Dependency perspectives, however, assume that development of a nation or a region can not be understood without looking at its history and connection with the worldwide economic-political system [Munoz, 1987]. The theorists, including Prebisch, Sunkel, Furtado, and Cardoso, sought to figure out the reasons for the post-war economic stagnation in Latin America. Based on structuralism and Neo-Marxism, dependency theories divided the world into center and periphery. The latter [underdeveloped countries] was underdeveloped because of the exploitation of the former [developed countries] for their primitive capital accumulation and the international system was unfavorable for the peripheral countries because of the unfair terms of trade [Frank, 1967; Amin, 1974, 1976; Emmanuel, 1972; Kay, 1975]. Different from the modernization theories which believe that every country should follow the same path of development from tradition to modernity, the dependency theories argue that structures of countries in periphery are so different that they can not develop in the same way as those industrialized countries did [Prebisch, 1971]. Dependency theories sought to solve development problems from a more historical and holistic perspective. However, their definition of development and primary concern is still about economic growth. Hence, it is not surprising that their solutions such as the world systems transformation of Wallerstein

[1982], delinking strategies [Frank, 1967], or dependent development [Cardozo & Evans in Munoz, 1987], are proposed mainly for the economic restructuring and development.

The international environment has been of great importance in forming the nature of public administration and policy-making in developing countries. The effects of the colonial experience have been generating great influence upon public sector activities in former colonies such as India, Philippine, and many African countries. Modernization theory is a good example of how the perspectives of Western countries impacted the administration of developing countries. Based on the notion of big government 'as the beneficent instrument of an expanding economy and an increasingly just society' [Esman, 1991, p.125], the 'golden rules' of 'scientific manager' [Taylor, 1911], principles of administration [Fayol, 1949], and the ideal-type bureaucracy [Weber, 1946] were transplanted to developing countries.

People gradually realized, however, that the environments that administrators and policy-makers operate in developing countries are unique and diverse [Riggs, 1964]. In another words, the developed and developing countries have different "webs". Many developing countries do not possess the expertise, technology, and management skills needed to perform the western development models. There are no universal principles of management. The environment is a vital element that influences the nature of policymaking or administrative reform. Some authors also suggested that the way for an effective and efficient organization is to 'fit' their structures and strategies to the demands of the environment [Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967]. Turner and Humle [1997] identified four important environmental factors for organizations, which include economic, cultural,

demographic and political factors. The development process for each organization, community, or country is a process of integration with their contextual factors.

The term of 'good governance' arose in the developing world as the Berlin Wall collapsed in 1990 and international development agencies adjusted their policies. Fundamental changes in political and administrative structures were required as a prerequisite for receiving support for development. As a result, this conditionality for support has caused problems in development and issues such as accountability and transparency were brought into the spotlight. As documented by Lewis [2001], many organizations rely on the environment for the resources they need and they must continuously negotiate and exchange to obtain them, which indicates they are to a large degree 'externally controlled'. Some governments and NGOs in developing countries were often criticized as being too close to the donors and downward accountability to the people was ignored [Carroll, 1992; Edwards and Hulme, 1995; Smillie, 1995]. Therefore, accountability is contextual, as Kearns [1996, p.39] described it, "the accountability environment is a constellation of forces – legal, political, socio-cultural, and economic – that place pressure on organizations and the people who work in them to engage in certain activities and refrain from engaging in others." This can be applied to both domestic and international scenarios. The management of development cannot be achieved without considering the environmental factors, among which culture is a critical one.

The environmental factors are essential elements for policymaking and administrative decision-making. However, strategies effective in some countries do not necessarily work in others. For example, the structural adjustment program imposed

enormous pressure on some governments in Africa who did not have the required capacity [Picard & Garrity, 1994]. Japan's MITI's state-managed development, apparently not favored by western democratic societies, fitted their environment well and boosted its development [Johnson, 1982]. The assessment of the performance and accountability of different players in the society should also be based on their contextual factors.

The strategies employed by governments and development agencies, whether nation-building first or economic growth first, market-oriented or state-oriented, all strive for the same ultimate goal, that is, economic growth. However, poverty remains a pervasive and serious problem around the world. According to statistics of the World Bank in 2004, one fifth of the world population still lives on less than \$1 a day. The deteriorating condition causes researchers and practitioners to question the mainstream economic theories and look for alternative ways.

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LIVING ON LEASS THAN \$1.08 PER DAY

Percentage of Population Living on Less Than \$1.08 per Day*

REGIONS	1981	1984	1987	1990	1993	1996	1999	2001
East Asia	57.7	38.9	28.0	29.6	24.9	16.6	15.7	14.9
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.5	3.7	4.3	6.3	3.6
Latin America and Caribbean	9.7	11.8	10.9	11.3	11.3	10.7	10.5	9.5
Middle East and North Africa	5.1	3.8	3.2	2.3	1.6	2.0	2.6	2.4
South Asia	51.5	46.8	45.0	41.3	40.1	36.6	32.2	31.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	41.6	46.3	46.8	44.6	44.1	45.6	45.7	46.4
Total	40.4	32.8	28.4	27.9	26.3	22.8	21.8	21.1

Source: Chen & Revallion, *How Have the World's Poorest Fared since the Early 1980's?* World Bank 2004.

Although some theories have shone some light on social and human factors, these factors are considered as insignificant elements in the "environment" [Easton, 1965]. Neo-classical economics assume the trickle-down effect that other social factors will develop as

economic growth is achieved. However, evidence has shown that this trickle-down effect has not worked well. Hence, theories that advocate the importance of social and cultural factors emerged. One of the extreme ones would be the theories of civil society. This school of theories has totally rejected the mainstream economic development theories. Unlike some of the previous approaches which consider NGO as one of the efficient players in economic and human development, theorists of civil society regard the establishing and strengthening of autonomous local communities as both a means to promote human well-being and as an end in itself [Korten, 1990]. These romantic and utopian approaches have been heavily criticized by scholars like Friedmann [1992]. Agreeing with Friedmann, I would argue that sustainable development is a process that needs the joint efforts of state, market and civil society.

As development is being redefined as the enhancement of people's freedom in political, economic, social, and cultural aspects, the concept of "poverty" also changed. A country like China might seem *richer* as the numbers for economic growth are shooting up. However, the worsening inequality, environmental damage, and corruption indicate that many people in the country are actually getting *poorer*. As solutions to address these pressing issues, bottom-up participatory approaches, human resource development, and people-oriented development have become popular strategies adopted by development agencies [Edwards and Fowler, 2002; Staudt, 1991; Korten, 1987; Picard and Garrity 1994; Turner and Hulme, 1997; Gran 1983]. Furthermore, as the basic need approach and people-oriented approach prevails, more participatory approaches are adopted and more players such as NGOs get involved in the process [Edwards & Hulme, 1992; Turner &

Hulme, 1997]. The most recent initiative might be what the World Bank and other international development organizations are now advocating in many developing countries -- the community-driven development [which will be discussed in detail in the following sections]. However, one of the challenges for the success of the new mechanisms is to what extent the development agencies know about the local culture and integrates it into the process.

Culture is closely interconnected with development. Poverty is not only a lack of economic and social resources, but also a lack of rights, influence, status and dignity. Recent analyses conducted by the World Bank of how the poor regard their own situation pinpoints vulnerability, insecurity and lack of status as significant factors in their perception of poverty.¹⁴ Development processes are not only associated with economic and social factors, but also correlated with culture. Culture should be incorporated as a resource to be used rather than be considered an obstacle in the process. Being aware of the local and national cultural context is of great importance in the planning and implementation of all the development cooperative efforts. Awareness of the local cultural context helps us understand the nature of poverty and more effectively strategies for poverty reduction. The capacity building and empowerment of local people are also based on the understanding of the local culture.

There are two major extreme views about the relationship between culture and development. The first include perspectives stemmed from the modernization theories and

¹⁴ Culture and Development: Strategy and guidelines, 2002. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark, ISBN:87-7964-364-7

dependency theories which tend to look at culture as a stumbling block for development. Culture matters to them because the traditional cultures are not conducive to development of market-oriented economy. Hence they are hampering factors that need to be reformed during the development process [Harrison, 2000; Huntington, 2000; Landes, 1999]. The most representative argument is Huntington's "clash of civilization" hypothesis which argues that "the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural." [1993, p.22] Here culture is considered a confrontational force that prevents a country from adopting modern systems from the western world.

The second extreme view is culture determinism, which is labeled to distinguish itself from economic determinism. Unlike the economic determinism which sees economic growth as the foundation and driving force for the development of other aspects of the society, culture determinism believes that cultural norms of certain society decide their political and economic arrangement. One good example would be Max Weber's [1976] discussion about the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism. Weber argues that the influence of religion is crucial for the establishment of economic arrangement. Instead of a variable dependent on economic growth, culture is seen as a controlling force that determines the development process.

In this study, the author aims to pursue a more balanced role of culture in development. A focus on culture does not necessarily downplay the importance of institutional, political, and economic factors. On the contrary, all these forces are indispensable to the development process. The goal of this study, therefore, is to explore ways that these forces can complement each other. Like hardware and software in a

computer, both need to be present in order to make the computer function well. Thus, a culturally informed perspective is not a cure or prescription in itself. It is more like adding another perspective of the ‘elephant’ so that everybody in the room, who has limited cognitive capacity [Simon, 1996], can have a better idea of what the “elephant” looks like¹⁵. In this case, by incorporating this cultural perspective into more conventional economic ways of interpreting development, we will have a better understanding of what development looks like and make more effective policy accordingly.

As mentioned above, culture is a very complex and broad concept. This study will look at two major threads of the “web”, gender relations and self-organizing mechanisms. The symbolic forms in gender relations and self-organizations will be examined to show their cultural roots and their impact on development. The significance of the two factors for development will be addressed in the following sections of this chapter.

2.3 WHY GENDER?

“Moving forward on gender equality and empowerment of women would have tremendous positive impacts on developments in all areas – peace and security, effective and democratic governance, human rights and poverty eradication. Put more dramatically, none of the goals of the United Nations in all of these areas will be met unless and until we address inequality between women and men.” [Carolyn Hannan, Director, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 10/31/2004]

¹⁵ The story of “the blind men and an elephant” originated from India. It featured a group of blind men who wanted to know what an elephant was like by touching different part of it. The story is used to indicate that reality may be viewed differently depending upon one's perspective, suggesting that what seems an absolute truth may be relative

Starting from the 1990s, gender equity, women's empowerment, and gender mainstreaming have become the buzzwords in the development arena. The role of women and the importance of gender equality have drawn attention from many scholars and practitioners in the development field. Many development agencies add these words to their mission statements or to the expected outcome of their programs. However, not everyone really understands the concrete meaning of these words. No matter what the motives are, being fashionable or real problem-solving, the significance of gender equality for development is apparent and undeniable. Many people consider "gender", "women", and "feminism" inter-exchangeable. As a matter of fact, however, the differences among these words are significant. In this section of the dissertation, three different theoretical frameworks will be outlined to address the evolution of the relationship between gender and development, which include women in development [WID], women and development [WAD], and gender and development [GAD]. Different frameworks have their comparative advantages under different contexts. Accordingly, different policies and strategies should be designed and implemented as the frameworks vary.

2.3.1 GENDER THEORIES VS. FEMINIST THEORIES

The term "gender" was first coined to distinguish it from the concept "sex". Simone de Beauvoir stated the difference between sex and gender in a very concise and vivid way by claiming that "a person is not born a woman, but becomes one". As sex is mainly about the biological difference between man and woman, gender is a more complicated concept. "Yet by using gender we are using a shorthand term which encodes a very crucial point: that our basic social identities as men and women are socially constructed rather than based on

fixed biological characteristics” [Young, 1988, p.98]. Therefore, for gender theorists, gender is a contextual concept which relies heavily on its social and cultural environment. The focus of gender study is more about socio-culture differences which are gradually acquired instead of the biological difference people possess when they were born.

Although gender study does not equate to the study of women or feminism study, gender theories have been developed upon the foundation of feminist theories. The core theme of feminist theories is that gender hierarchy is socially constructed and should be dismantled. Thus the focus of feminist theories is to get rid of the discriminative power structure and empower women. The study of feminist theories encompasses a variety of disciplines, including sociology, economics, anthropology, literary, and etc. Different schools of feminist theories critique the unequal social, political, and economic structures for women from different perspectives. Known as the mainstream feminism, liberal feminism claims that women should be able to show and maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. The priority of liberal feminism is the equal rights for women to pay, education, voting, childcare, and etc. They believe that political and legal reforms are necessary for women to win those rights [Mill, 1859; Friedan, 1963].

Different from the liberal feminism that emphasizes the individual choices and rights, radical feminism, based on Marxism, claims that unless the oppressive, capitalist, man-dominating social system is removed, women cannot be really freed. As mainstream feminism was initiated and led mainly by white women, black feminism argues that the women’s movement without bringing race into the picture will marginalize many people. In line with the deconstruction of modernization theory, postcolonial feminists challenge

the assumption that women of non-western societies are all passive victims of gender oppression and Western women are modern, educated and empowered. They criticized the western models and argued that the experience of women in the postcolonial countries is unique in many ways and should be considered differently [Spivak, 1988; Mohanty, 1991]. Culture is considered a critical element for the formulation of tailored strategies for women's empowerment in postcolonial countries.

Gender theories echo feminist theories in the way that they all recognize the significance of social and cultural contexts for the construction of gender structure. The major difference between the two schools of theories is that feminist theories tend to be normative and prescriptive while gender theories take a more open and explorative approach. Feminist theorists strive for the reform of the historically unequal gender structure and the emancipation and empowerment of women. Gender theorists, however, make efforts to study a much broader range of topics, including the culture, context, and logic behind people's behavior and actions. As feminist theories emphasize the historically constructed inequality between men and women, gender theories explore the gender differences across culture, time, and regions.

The development of gender theories does not ignore the fact that many women in the world are indeed living in miserable conditions and need help. The point of gender theories is to look into the problem from a different lens. It does not only see the superficial symptoms of the problem, but also make efforts to grasp the roots of it. It is like the treatment process in traditional Chinese medicine. When you have a headache, a handful of painkiller might ease your pain at that moment, but it does not cure the disease because the

pain might be caused by some problem in your stomach. In traditional Chinese medicine, the doctor needs to go through four steps, which are “observe, smell/listen, ask, and touch” [望，闻，问，切 in Chinese]. Without an appropriate understanding of the patient’s condition, you cannot have the right diagnosis and prescription¹⁶. The gender study of different cultures helps prepare the way for more effective development in general.

In addition, the advocacy of gender equality and women’s empowerment is not a zero-sum game. As feminist theories argues that women are under oppression in the patriarchy system and the unequal power relationship need to be restructured. I would argue that the empowerment of women does not have to be achieved by the weakening of men’s power. On the contrary, it calls for the cooperation between the two for the survival and prosperity of the household and community. The importance of gender study in development will be addressed in the following section.

2.3.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GENDER STUDY IN DEVELOPMENT

Based on the theories mentioned above, three major frameworks about the relationship between women/gender and development have been established, namely, women in development [WID], women and development [WAD], and gender and development [GAD]. WID focus on integrating women into the national economies of their countries. It is heavily influenced by the modernization theories which generalize the problem for women and assume the same problem for women in the world is the lack of access to development.

¹⁶《医宗金鉴》“望以目察，闻以耳占，问以言审，切以指参，明斯诊道，识病根源。” <Golden Rules for Traditional Chinese Medicine>, “In order to know the root of the disease, you need to observe with your eyes, listen with your ears, ask carefully, and touch with your fingers” (translated by the author).

Women's empowerment became the goal of many development initiatives¹⁷. It argues that women-oriented policies would enhance women's efficiency and hence promote economic development. It has helped raise people's awareness about women's needs and worked as a propelling force to help women fight to meet those needs, in the underdeveloped countries in particular. The application of this framework led to the achievement made by the women's right movement in 1960s and 1970s.

However, this framework has its own limitations as it is applied in developing countries. As the donors and development agencies play dominant roles in the development process, they try to transplant the western models into the developing countries. This top-down mechanisms aims to provide women with more accesses to economic activities through institutional and structural changes. But it over-generalizes the problems facing gender and development and de-emphasizes the importance of local context. The uniqueness of the local conditions and women's role in the household and communities are overlooked. In many cases, women become double-burdened because of the extra economic activities. As a result, efforts made under this framework have not led to real empowerment and sustainable development, though it has addressed some practical and immediate needs of women to some extent.

The WAD movement rejected previous feminist approaches which were predominantly claimed by white women from the North. Many women in the south argued

¹⁷ Empowerment is defined as “ *A process through which women and men in disadvantaged positions increase their access to knowledge, resources, decision-making power, and raise their awareness of participation in their communities, in order to reach a level of control over their own environment [Source: World Food Programme].*”

that those development models lacked perspectives from the developing countries. It believes that patriarchy exists in all societies and women cannot obtain real equality under it. With the DAWN (Development Alternatives for a New Era) Network as a representative, the WAD movement challenges the existing power structure and emphasizes the significance of race, class, and nations [Visvanathan, 1996]. It advocates the “empowerment” of women by establishing separate institutions for women, which can design and implement “women-only” programs to protect women’s interests [Parpart, 1989; Rathgeber, 1990]. This separation of women from men has placed women to a confrontational position with men, which is not helpful to cultivate an enabling and harmonious context where women need to live, whether in household, community, or society.

The GAD framework rejects the approach to study women as a force opposite to men. It takes gender, both women and men, as an independent variable in the process of development. In this framework, women are no longer considered as passive victims of oppression and targets of development. Instead, they play the role as active agents for development as men do. This framework looks at not only the material conditions of life that influence women’s status in society, but also the influence from the national, regional, and global context. It argues that both the practical interests and strategic interests of women should be addressed. Recognizing the effect of the patriarchal power in some societies, it emphasizes that the accepted norms and values in a particular society are critical to understand women’s and men’s roles and responsibilities [Sen and Grown, 1987].

Under the GAD framework, another phrase was coined and became the buzz word of the development field, namely, “gender mainstreaming”. Defined by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1997, gender mainstreaming is considered “a strategy for making women's as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of...the policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated”¹⁸. The progress from “women’s empowerment” to “gender streaming” is the recognition of the significance of contextual factors and the cooperation between men and women. Indeed, by overlooking relevant gender factors, policy-makers and institutions are running the risk of undermining their development policies and programs. Development agencies should have the ability to view the society from the perspective of gender and translate this awareness into action in the design of development policies, programs and budgets. [UNIFEM, 1993]

The GAD framework emerged at a time when the process of development was criticized. The mere focus on GDP growth and the level of industrialization is no longer sufficient to represent the meaning of a sustainable development. In 2000, world leaders and the leading development institutions agreed to form a blueprint for the world’s development. The eight Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] unfolded a more comprehensive definition of development, which covers poverty, health, education, gender equity, etc.. Among the eight MDGs, promoting gender equality and empowering women came in third. It is, however, not only a goal in itself. More importantly, it is the prerequisite

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for reaching all other goals. As Kemal Dervis stated, *"Critical to overall development success is, in my view, the need to address the gender dimension in all our work."*¹⁹

The international development community has recognized the tremendous impact that women's empowerment and gender equality could generate on economic growth, democratic governance, environment protection, and poverty reduction. Many international initiatives have been undertaken to raise the world's awareness about this issue. Some major initiatives include:

- The Rio de Janeiro conference on the environment and development [1992] acknowledged women's roles in protecting the environment, and the special impact of environmental degradation on women.
- The Vienna conference on human rights [1993] included "women's rights as human rights".
- The Cairo conference on population and development [1994] addressed women's needs for access to health, maternal care, and family planning facilities.
- The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing [1995] built on earlier international conferences, national government efforts, and lobbying by NGOs to develop gender-sensitive strategies in its Platform for Action.

¹⁹ Kemal Dervis's Statement to the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA, Kemal Dervis, UNDP Administrator, 06 September 2005

TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF WID APPROACH & GAD APPROACH

	WID	GAD
The Approach	an approach that views the absence of women in development plans and policies as the problem	an approach to development that focuses on global and gender inequalities
The Focus	Women	socially constructed relations between women and men, with special focus on subordination of women
The Problem	the exclusion of women [half of productive resources] from the development process	unequal power relations [rich vs. poor; women vs. men], which prevents equitable development and women's full participation
The Goal	more efficient, effective development that includes women	equitable, sustainable development, with women and men as decision-makers
The Solution	integrate women into the existing development process	empower the disadvantaged and women and transform unequal relationship
The Strategies	1. Focus on women's projects, on women's components of projects, and on integrated projects; 2. Increase women's productivity and income; 3. increase women's ability to look after the household	1. Reconceptualize the development process, taking gender and global inequalities into account. 2. Identify and address practical needs, as determined by women and men, to improve their conditions; at the same time, address women's strategic interests. 3. address strategic interests of the poor through people-centered development

Source: based on Moffat et al. [1991]

A significant number of development initiatives have been implemented to integrate the importance of gender. Being considered an effective approach for poverty alleviation and women's empowerment, microfinance programs, the Grameen Bank model in particular, have been employed in many developing countries. Most current research on women and microfinance, as I mentioned in the previous session, consider women as a dependent variable and microfinance the independent variable. Research has been

conducted on the relationship between poor women's participation in microfinance programs and their empowerment by using empirical data from rural Bangladesh [Bayes, 1998]. Women's empowerment was measured by three indices: inter-spouse consultation index, individual autonomy index and authority index.

However, Mayoux's research shows that the relationship is much more complicated than that. She summarized three contrasting paradigms for women's empowerment and microfinance: *Financial Self-sustainability Paradigm* [focusing on providing the framework for equal access for women and economic empowerment of women]; *Poverty Alleviation Paradigm* [focusing on increasing women's participation in self-help groups and increased wellbeing]; *Feminist Empowerment Paradigm* [focusing on gender awareness and transformation of power relations throughout society]. Although these three paradigms look at this issue from different perspectives, they share the same assumption that microfinance will definitely empower women and the difference among them is only how. Some latest research began to question this assumption and argued that unless some gender issues are addressed, microfinance can only make limited contributions.

As people began to recognize the importance of gender in global and national development initiatives, the significance of understanding gender from a local and micro (household) level calls for more attention. From the literature on gender and development, three major findings have emerged. First, there is a clear-cut division of labor by sex in all societies, although the definition of male or female task might differ cross-culturally. What is implied is that gender roles and identities differ among various cultures. Secondly, it is necessary to understand gender roles within the household in order to have a

comprehensive idea of gender roles in production. The third significant finding is that the impact of economic development on men and women are different and the impact on women has generally been negative [Momsen, 2004]. This research examines the role of gender in the development of rural China from a cultural and household perspective.

There are three major roles that women are considered to play in most parts of the world: reproduction, production, and community management [Momsen, 2004]. In rural development, women play even more important roles. In developing countries, twice as many women as men are engaged in agriculture-related activities [Odame, et al. 2002]. Although only a few countries had time series data on the gendered pattern of employment in agriculture [World Bank, 2001], there are certain common patterns in their gendered division of labor in agriculture. For example, men in general undertake heavy work and jobs in distant locations, while women carry out light, repetitious tasks like weeding and jobs close to their home [Momsen, 1988a]. Due to certain cultural constraints, statistics collected through official census are not always reliable. Field work, in contrast, provides more detailed and in-depth information about gender roles and responsibilities in household and community. This is the motivation for this research to employ the method of anthropological field work.

The Gender Baseline Survey conducted by the Women's World Banking [2005] offered a very good framework for research about gender and development, which takes gender as an independent variable. The Gender Baseline Survey was considered as an essential part of the problem analysis or stakeholder analysis. Factors used in the survey include gendered attitudes towards working; gendered spending/saving patterns; the

definition of success; level of autonomy; initial capital base; education, and etc. These factors should be integrated into the policy analysis process to develop more efficient and sustainable policies. In this research, the study of gender and development in China also refers to the framework provided by the Women's World Banking.

2.4 WHY SELF-ORGANIZATION

The concept of self-organization has been discussed in a variety of disciplines including biology, computer science, and social science. The discussion about its role in social system can be traced back to Mandeville and Hume who introduced in the concept of spontaneous and emergent order. Based on their thought, Hayek developed the theory of cultural evolution which claims that rules, norms and practices in a group are not designed, but evolve through a process of natural selection. According to this theory, groups that have more advantageous rules and practices will grow over and ultimately force out other groups. This theory of cultural evolution has exerted tremendous influence upon biological, economic, social, cultural, and political study. As it is applied in different disciplines, different terms are coined such as “self-organizing”, “self-governing”, “spontaneous order”, “emergent order”, “chaotic order”, and etc. To avoid unnecessary confusion, I will use self-organizing in this study.

As the concept of development was redefined and new development strategies were designed, the effectiveness of the state-run and the market-run programs are questioned. Achievement of sustainable development calls for more participation of the people from the bottom level. As some communities/groups have shown stronger self-organizing capacity than others in the development process, scholars began to study the factors that

lead to the differences. The context in which the community exists is one of them. The study of self-organization in China is of greater significance because the influence of years of state-control is considerable. This section of the dissertation will address the importance of self-organization in a complex adaptive system. How self-organizing groups interact with the environmental factors will also be explored.

2.4.1 DEFINING SELF-ORGANIZATION

Self-organization in the early days was defined basically as a process of evolution where the effect of the environment is minimal. It is the spontaneous reallocation of energy and action to achieve a collective goal in changing environment [Kauffman, 1993]. It was assumed that self-organization is normally stimulated by internal variation processes, which are usually called “fluctuations” or “noises”. While we recognize the importance of internal drivers for variations, we also need to be mindful that an organism does not organize itself independent of its environment. In fact, some argue that organisms cannot organize themselves unless they were taken together with their environments [Von Foerster, 1961].

As a representative of structural-functionalism, Luhmann defines social system as “a social system consists in a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the ‘optimization of gratification’ and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of system of culturally structured and shared symbols [Luhmann, 1995, p.506].”

Distinctive from the static and simple understanding of social system in Structural-Functionalism, the concept of self-organization was ushered in to explain the modern society as a complex adaptive system [CAS] of communications that has differentiated itself horizontally into a network of interconnected social systems. It is considered as a more robust, flexible, and adaptive approach. The society is composed of more complex, non-linear phenomena, rather than with the relatively simple processes of structure maintenance of diffusion. Each of these systems observes itself and its environment and reproduces itself recursively on the basis of its own, system-specific operations. Scott [2003] categorizes three organizational systems which indicate an evolution process from rational system, to natural and open systems. Among the three systems, open system is the one most closely associated with CAS. They are complex because there are many different loosely coupled and nearly decomposable elements of organizations in and out of the system [Scott 2003, Simon 1984]. They are adaptive because they are capable of self-maintenance to the environment [Scott, 2003]. However, CAS does not necessarily reject hierarchy. A balance between vertical hierarchy and horizontal loosely coupled system is required for stability, adaptation of the organization [Simon 1984, Kettl 1993, Simon 2003].

The complexity of the social system is a fact that cannot be ignored nor eliminated. What does this mean? It implies that we need to accept and embrace this fact instead of panicking about the appalling unpredictability and uncertainty of the world. It is argued that the complexity actually can be harnessed to make productive end [Axelrod & Cohen, 1999]. By constructing or removing barriers between different agents/organism, external forces influence the interaction patterns between them. The interaction between the self-

organizing agents at the local level will influence the behavior and decision-making at the macro-level.

2.4.2 SELF-ORGANIZATION, INTEGRATION & SOCIAL NETWORK

Self-organization and integration may seem in contradiction to each other. Some scholars emphasize the importance of integration more, while others claim that self-organization plays a more critical role in social systems. Integration among organisms of different levels and between organisms and their environments has been considered crucial for the success of development. Lawrence and Lorsch [1967] introduced the concept of Requisite Integration, “the felt need for joint decision-making”. It asks the question whether task characteristics make it possible for subsystems in an organization to operate independently or require continual collaboration in making decisions before a given subsystem may act. They argued that within any organizational system, given a similar degree of requisite integration, the greater the degree of differentiation in subsystem attributes between pairs of subsystems, the less effective will be the integration achieved between them. Different from Lawrence and Lorsch’s theory, Luhmann [1989] argues that the problem of ecological communication is due to society sharply differentiated set of social organizations with no real center. Each system is capable of resonance only in accordance with its own structures. He coined the concept of “Autopoiesis”, which implies that as each individual communicates with others, he becomes more creative and the group accordingly becomes more creative as a whole. Groups in interaction with other groups will lead to a more dynamic and creative society. Self can build its own capacity only

when it interacts and communicates with others. Effective self-organization can not be achieved without certain level of integration and vice versa.

Lawrence and Lorsch also claims that the overall performance in coping with the external environment will be related to there being a degree of differentiation among subsystems consistent with the requirements of their relevant sub-environments and a degree of integration consistent with requirements of the total environment. Some scholars [Koufteros, Vonderembse, & Jayaram, 2005] also began to question the debate between contingency theory [there is no best way to organizing] and the idea of ‘taking integration as the must/best’. They argue that the degree of integration must not necessarily be high; rather, it must be consistent with the requirements of the environment.

There is a degree of social integration in society, and it comes not only from powerful groups with interest imposing their will against the interests of the mass of the population. Wealth and power determine some aspects of societal structure, but at both the micro and macro level there are *many commonly shared norms and values* that contribute to social stability and social integration. Putnam [2001], perceiving social capital as *connections among individuals—social networks and the norm of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them*, identifies that the declining social capital in the United States has negatively impacted its education and children’s welfare, safe and productive neighborhoods, economic prosperity, health and happiness, as well as democracy. These commonly shared norms and values, at both micro and macro levels, compose the sub-environments and environments for self-organization. The environments not only provide

resources for the organisms to survive, they also mobilize social capitals to help agents with self-organizing adaption.

A balance between external influence and self-organization, however, is essential for effective development. Salamon [2002], in his *The Tools of Government*, addresses the ideological state-no-state debate and takes a structured examination of the new “tools” of government that have emerged. The central characteristics of the new paradigm, as Salamon called “new governance”, are: it understands governance as a collaborative endeavor between state, citizen and intermediaries; it acknowledges that governance is not self-executing; and it recognizes that government often works best by indirection. As he points out: “Network management rather than either public management or market dynamics comes closest to describing the central realities involved [p.601]”. While he emphasizes the importance of partnership, he still highlights the continuous need for public management even when indirect tools are used. Without certain level of public involvement, the reliability of private markets to give appropriate attention to public interests over private ones is doubtful.

Another argument of Lawrence and Lorsch is that when the environment requires both a high degree of subsystem differentiation and a high degree of integration, integrative devices will tend to emerge. Stephen R. Barley [in Nohria & Eccles ed., 1992] and his colleagues identify that strategic alliance between organizations could be one of the devices. Powell and Brantley [in Nohria & Eccles ed., 1992] also offered a novel perspective on inter-organization collaboration which indicates that the locus of innovation becomes a

network rather than an individual firm. It is suggested that networks are particularly well suited for rapid learning and the flexible deployment of resources.

2.4.3 SELF-ORGANIZATION & COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT [CDD]

The principles for CDD program operation fit in the redefined concept of development very well. It drew a very appealing picture of what a real community-driven development should look like. “Local empowerment, participatory governance, demand-responsiveness, administrative autonomy, greater downward accountability, and enhanced local capacity...”²⁰ All these goals sound very exhilarating to the practitioners in the development field. The problem is, however, how to make it happen. According to the World Bank’s experience, it requires clear rules of the game, appropriate capacity, access to information and financial support for the poor people, both men and women, to effectively organize themselves. The partnership with local governments and other supportive institutions is also emphasized.²¹ CDD programs have two key characteristics. First, the community members identify their local problems and choose local development activities that need to be funded under the program. Second, the community members will gradually manage program funds and implementation processes.

CDD programs present us a very ideal and encouraging vision for poverty reduction and sustainable development. It is an approach through which the World Bank aims to shift from a donor-run or state-run mechanisms to a more participatory mechanisms. By

²⁰ Community-driven development: Overview, www.worldbank.org, access date 2008/08/20

²¹ <http://go.worldbank.org/24K8IHVVS0>

providing access to power, capacity, and resources, however, does not address the root of the problem. It is a big leap forward to have people at the bottom level involved into the process, but we still need to ask ourselves whether local people are truly self-organized or they are still driven by some state-designed policy. What is required to cultivate a favorable environment for self-organizing activities? It is more meaningful to give them the opportunities to be understood, accepted, and appreciated so that they are really integrated instead of merely physically involved into the development processes. Therefore, I would argue that the significance of understanding and integrating the local culture [also as exploring and exploiting the local culture] deserves more attention in the CDD program framework.

In “Governing the Commons”, Ostrom [1990] examined communities that are effective in governing the common pool resources [CPR]. She concluded with a list of eight design principles for effective CPR governance. Since 2006, three major categories of CDD activities have been piloted in China. These include: community small-scale infrastructure and public services; community natural resources management or environmental improvement; community development funds. As the CDD programs aim to allocate the resources to the community members who will manage them collectively, the mechanisms is actually similar to governing common pool resources. Based on Ostrom’s eight principles, I created a list of factors that need to be kept in mind during the planning and implementation of CDD programs.

Ostrom: Eight “design principles” for CPR self-governance

- clearly defined boundaries [i.e. who participates in the CPR?],
- the congruence of rules and local conditions,
- participation by most of those affected,
- monitors who are either the resource users themselves, or accountable to them,
- graduated sanctions,
- readily available ways of resolving disputes,
- rights which are not challenged by authorities,
- ‘nested’ arrangements.



“Guiding principles” for Self-organizing CDD

- Who participate in the CDD programs?
- Do the rules and policies fit the local conditions/culture?
- Has the poorest of the poor been reached?
- What are the factors that keep people accountable?
- To what extent should the government get involved in monitoring, sanction and dispute resolution?
- How to integrate efforts of all levels to the development initiative?

2.5 CONCEPTUAL MODEL & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the literatures on culture and development, gender study, self-organization, the following conceptual model is designed to illustrate the rationale of this study.

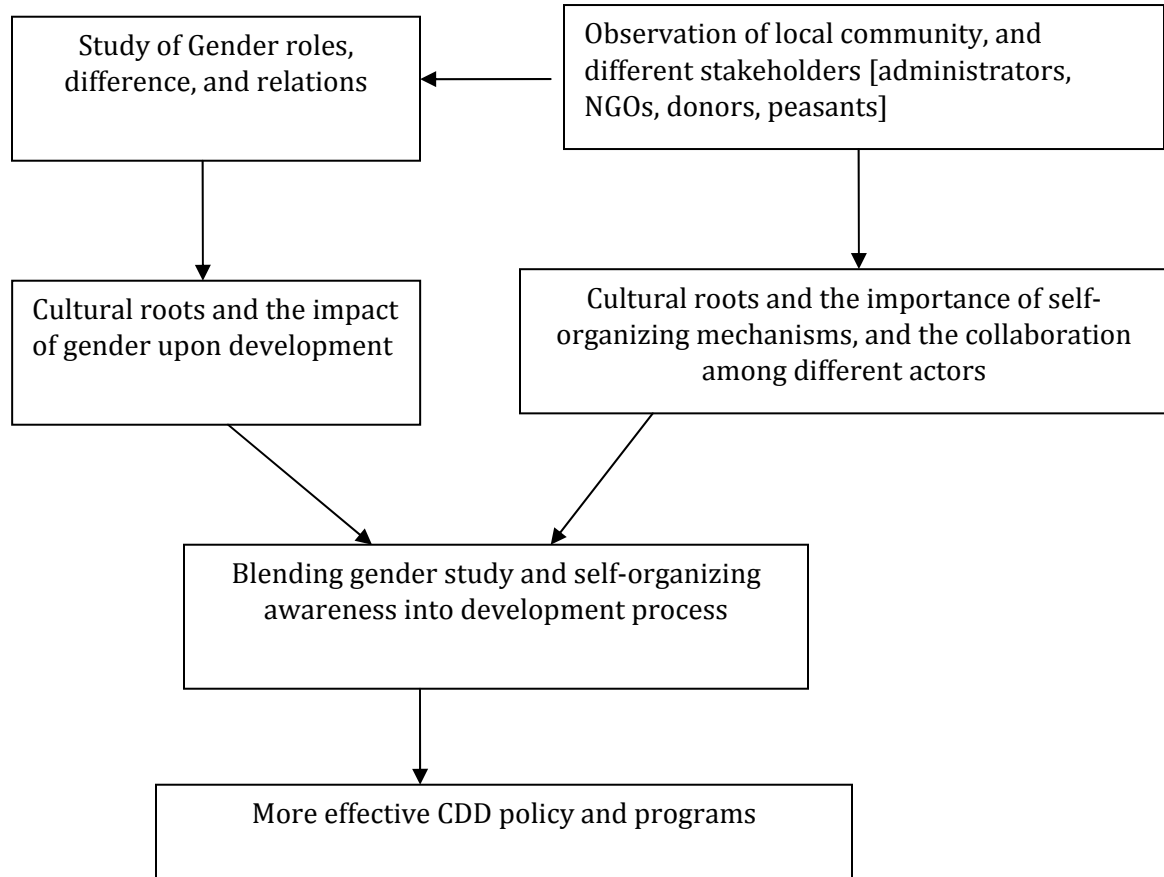


FIGURE 7: RESEARCH CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The goal of this study is to offer insight into new approaches that can help organizations across all levels and sectors to understand how gender study and self-organizing mechanisms, as cultural factors, impact community development. To achieve this goal, analysis will be conducted by answering the following research questions.

- a. To what extent the performance of existing players, e.g. government organizations, NGOs, private companies, and donors are effective/ineffective? [Are the poorest of the poor reached?]**
- b. To what extent the importance of gender relations [at both individual and organizational level] are integrated in the CDD programs in rural China?**
- c. How gender, as enabler or barrier, influences the designing and implementation of CDD programs in China?**
- d. What are the roots and potential for self-organizing approach in CDD in China?**
- e. What policy implications can be drawn from this research to improve microfinance and community-driven development in China?**

In summary, based on the previous research questions, this research is going to propose two major themes.

- a. More efforts in gender mainstreaming in the development and implementation of community driven development programs is needed to improve its effectiveness in China.**
- b. Self-organizing mechanisms will be more effective and efficient than the top-down mechanisms for the CDD programs in China.**

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGIES

3.1 COMBINATION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS

This study is an exploratory research of the importance of cultural factors like gender and self-organizing awareness for community development in the rural areas of China. In social science study, increasingly more scholars agree that both quantitative and qualitative analysis can be effective methods to achieve productive social scientific ends. Actually these two approaches are complementary to each other. Most of the studies about economic development and gender issues, however, relied largely on statistical data and significance tests to quantify research findings. The use of quantitative methodologies in analyzing social behavior and relations is debatable from the feminist point of view. The ability of quantitative analysis to conceptualize the complex pattern of individual life without violating the integrity of the relationship is questionable. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate some cultural and regional perspectives in assessing gender roles and community development. Hence, this study, based on various cases from three different provinces, is an exploratory study that employs both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Anthropological research methods are the primary methods for this study, which include participatory observation and in-depth ethnographic interviews. I stayed at the research sites for more than three months, where I ate and lived together with the local families. About 170 individual interviews with peasants, village leaders, program coordinators, International NGO representatives were conducted. Five focus group discussions were held with a total of 50 participants. Besides qualitative study, quantitative

information also plays an important role to support the study. First-hand numbers collected from local sources and second-hand statistics are very helpful back-kup information for the findings drawn from the qualitative analysis.

3.2 CHOOSING THE STUDY REGIONS/SITES

I chose to conduct the research in the three provinces for a variety of reasons. First of all, the majority of the Chinese population, about 80% of the total, is still living in the rural areas. Most of the rural and poverty stricken areas are located in the western part of China, where the three provinces I chose are located. The villages where I did my research are all national level poverty-stricken villages, with an average annual income of about 1000RMB/person [about 146USD]²². Second, the Chinese government started to embrace and adopt different development strategies, which provided a good opportunity for my research. In the year 2006, the World Bank and the Chinese government launched a pilot Community-driven development (CDD) program in four provinces of China, which included Guangxi, Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Inner Mongolia. The nature of the pilot program matches perfectly with my research topics. Hence I decided to pick three out of the four regions where they piloted the CDD programs. Initially I decided to go to Shaanxi province instead of Guangxi which is a minority ethnic populated region. As one professor suggested, however, to research on the impact of culture upon development, Guangxi should be a more suitable site of study because their culture and traditions are very unique. In addition, the cultures in Shaanxi province are similar to those in Inner Mongolia. Therefore,

²² Conversion rate on 08/13/2008, 1 Chinese Yuan Renminbi = 0.14602 US Dollar

having Guangxi province as one of my research regions would help enhance the comprehensiveness and generalizability of my study and offer more insights from comparative analysis. Hence, Guangxi [located in the south of China], Sichuan [located in the southwest of China], and Inner Mongolia [located in the north of China] were finally chosen as my research regions.

The three provinces I have chosen for my research are very different from each other in their culture and natural conditions. Guangxi is a Zhuang Ethnic Autonomous Region, where most of the people are Zhuang and have their own tradition, culture, and language. Inner Mongolia is also an Autonomous Region where both Mongolian and Han Chinese are residing. Sichuan is a province consisting of a variety of ethnicities. But in the sites I chose from Sichuan, Han Chinese covers the majority of the population living there.

Besides their different cultures, they also have distinct natural conditions. Guangxi is well known for its Karst scenery, which refers to area of limestone dominated by underground streams, hollows and pits usually caused by subsidence into underground channels. Although this unique geographic feature has brought benefit to some cities through developing tourism, the agricultural population of many places suffers from the non-cultivable land. Similarly, the Northern part of Sichuan province is covered dominantly by hills where arable lands are very rare. Inner Mongolia, where husbandry is the major means for the local people to make a living, has much vaster land than Guangxi and Sichuan. The rapid growth of deforestation and deterioration of land quality, however, is making agricultural production less profitable and appealing to peasants. Therefore, the uniqueness of the three provinces' cultures and natures leads to different types and

reasons for poverty, which provide useful materials for comparative studies. The variation in geographical, cultural, and socio-economic indicators among different sites led me to a multi-site/case study design. By collecting data from different regions, I can compare between regions of various contexts the impact of gender rules and self-organizing awareness on poverty reduction. As Donald T. Campbell [1975] emphasized, this comparison will improve the richness of data as I employ the same data collection techniques within the three different research regions.

In deciding which villages to study within each research region, I went through some difficulties and struggles. In China, it is nearly impossible to conduct any research if you do not have any local connection, either personal or official. According to my research framework, in each province two similar villages are supposed to be chosen to make sure I would have enough interviewees. The website of the Chinese government provided detailed information about the counties that were selected to pilot the CDD programs. However, within each county, 15 villages were chosen to pilot the CDD program. Due to the limited time and knowledge of the local condition, I consulted my local contacts for suggestions about which villages to choose as my research sites. In Guangxi, my local contact was a professor in Guangxi University of Nationalities, who was originally from the county that I conducted my field work. She introduced me to her relatives who worked in the county government, through whom I was connected to the villages. Because of the poor transportation in the countryside, the two villages I chose, Fada village and Sanxi village, are located relatively close to the tar road which leads to the county center. Also, since they are close enough to each other, people of the two villages share some commonalities in

their cultural and socio-economic conditions. There are other villages that are much poorer than the two I chose. But I was told that it was not possible for me to do field work there because it took several hours walking to get to the village. Also, I would have no place to stay to do the participatory observation even if I got there as the local people were too poor to host me. The fact that the two selected villages have better condition for development might be a factor of interference for evaluating the effectiveness of the development program there. The impact of the variables chosen for the research should be weighted accordingly. During my field work in the two selected villages, I stayed with a local family there.

In Sichuan province, through my previous colleague, I was introduced to Mr. Chang, deputy director of the Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development of Jialing County/District. Working as a government officer, Mr. Chang knows the poverty alleviation policies and initiatives very well. He had some experience dealing with social science researchers before and knew what I needed, which made my work much easier. When I asked for his suggestion about which villages to go, he initially suggested Baijia village and Jinfeng village, which were several hours of driving distance from the county center. Considering the poor transportation condition, however, he later changed his mind and decided to connect me with another two villages with CDD pilot programs, Luojiashi and Lijiaguang, which were 40 minutes driving from the county center. Later on I was told by one program coordinator, however, that one possible reason for Mr. Chang to change the villages for my research was that some peasants in Jinfeng village were complaining and protesting against the CDD program implementation at that time. The government did not

want too much attention from outside. I was sent to the village by the local government officers and stayed in the dorm of the town government during my field work there.

The field study in Inner Mongolia was the most difficult one. Since my connection was with the Bureau of Human Resources of the city level, which was not directly related to poverty alleviation, they did not know much about the CDD initiative. As a result, they had to contact their local branch office at the county level and ask them to connect to the county level poverty alleviation office. Finally I was connected with Wengniute County where the CDD program was piloted by the city government officials. Again they chose a village, Xinglongdi village [it is also coded as IM-1 in later analysis], which was about one hour driving on an unpaved country road away from the county center. The county government officers, without much knowledge about the concept of field work, insisted to accompany me during the whole process, which gave the local peasants the impression that I was a government officer from a higher level. It made me concerned that this would have some negative influence on the reliability of their answers. I stayed in the county hotel during my field work there.

Different from my research in Guangxi and Sichuan, two different villages were selected in Inner Mongolia. In Inner Mongolia there are several villages that are well-known for their success in microfinance programs. At the time of my research, the second phase of the CDD program, the community development fund [similar to microfinance programs] had not been carried out yet. It would be very helpful for the analysis to compare a successful case with one that had not started yet. The successful experience of those villages could be applicable to those that were still at the beginning stage. Therefore,

SLB, a village with successful micro-finance programs was added to the research design as my second research site in Inner Mongolia. With the kind support from my local contact, I was connected with SLB village [coded as IM-2 in later analysis] which was nationally well-known for its success in micro-finance programs. Also, with efficient communication with the government officers, I received the approval to do the field study by myself. I was hosted by a local peasant family in the village during my field work there.

3.3 GAINING ACCESS TO THE POPULATION

To gain access to the village population was not an easy process even though I had the research sites selected. Initially I planned to go through the network of government. In Guangxi, after I introduced myself as a doctor of philosophy candidate from the University of Pittsburgh, the provincial level government officials got very nervous and alert about my identity. Although I explained again and again that I was a Chinese who was studying in the United States, they still considered it as a foreign affair. “Foreign affairs can never be minor affairs”. They were very careful about what to say and reluctant to say anything specific except some party lines. In addition, they refused to introduce me to the government at the village level unless I had an official letter from the central government. As I was frustrated by the complicated procedures and did not know what to do, a professor in Anthropology in Guangxi University of Nationalities helped me solve the problem [see details in Chapter 3.2]. Through her personal network of connection, I eventually arrived in the village and was able to start my field work.

Due to the tight time frame for my field work, government support sometimes was necessary for me to get access to the population in a more efficient way. In Inner Mongolia, I adjusted my plan and decided to do field work in a village which was very successful in microfinance programs. Since the program was government-sponsored, I had to get the approval from the city-level government to do my field work in the village. At first the government officials were not very cooperative because many scholars and delegations had come to do research or visit the village. With a recommendation letter from the higher level government, they finally agreed to connect me to the village head. But they insisted that I sign a letter of agreement in which I agreed that, without their approval, I would not publish anything out of the research in the village. Their reasoning for this was that some scholars who came to do research in the village had published some articles which the government officials considered partial and inaccurate. The articles had very negative influence on the village as well as the city. I agreed to sign the letter and assured them that I would use pseudonyms for the villages in which I did my research.

Although there were no foreseeable risks associated with the research, I asked for an agreement from each interviewee before I conducted the interview. I introduced myself and my research topic to the interviewee first [when translation was needed, my translator did this for me]. Then we asked them if they would like to participate. If he/she agreed, I further explained that the interview would be recorded. But no information about the identity of the participants would be released. Personal information would be coded during the processes of transcription and data analysis. The tapes would be erased after the research was completed. Although most of the villagers were willing to participate, a few of

them refused to do the interview either because they were too shy or they were suspicious about the purpose of the research.

A combination of purposeful sampling methods was employed in making decisions about which research population I should approach. Since the research targeted villages that had CDD pilot programs, my sample groups were purposefully chosen from those villages. Also, due to the time limit I had for the research, with help from the local contact, I chose the interviewees from an existing pool of participants. The downside of this purposeful sampling, however, is that what I collected and learned might be limited because of the critical attributes of the targeted group. For example, people from villages that do not have any development programs might have different views about my questions.

Snowball or chain sampling was another method that I employed to gain access to the population I studied. Connection, either personal or official, was of great importance for completing the field work. Once I found someone who knew the local condition, he or she would help to connect me with others and the chain continued. In the case of Guangxi, the key contact person was Ms. Lu, the professor in Guangxi University of Nationalities. She introduced me to her relatives in the local county government, who later connected me to the village leaders and the CDD program coordinator, who eventually helped me find the interviewees for my study. In Sichuan, the two CDD program coordinators who knew the villagers very well, walked around the village with me and helped me conduct the interviews. When I did my field work in SLB village in Inner Mongolia, I stayed with a local family. The wife was the group leader for the microfinance program in the village. Through

her, I got to know other women who were involved in the microfinance program. She literally led me from door to door to do interviews with different households. These connections played a very important role in my field work. First of all, interviewees felt more at ease when they saw that I was accompanied by somebody they knew. They were more open to talk. Second, whenever there were language barriers, the contact person helped translate for me. In the case in Guangxi in particular, although mandarin had been promoted in the past decades, 99% of the population in the research site was Zhuang minority who kept their own language. Some aged people who could understand some mandarin were not able to express themselves well unless using their own language. In cases like this, the program coordinator helped me as translator.

Opportunistic Sampling was also utilized during my field work in Inner Mongolia. This kind of sampling allowed me to take advantage of the unexpected flexibility and follow some new leads during my field work. As I was doing my interviews in the first village, I was informed that the representatives of World Vision, who were helping with the CDD program coordinator training and program monitoring, were located in this county. The perspective from international NGOs about the program would certainly enhance the comprehensiveness of my research. Therefore, I decided to contact them and schedule an interview with them. The interview was conducted quite smoothly, though the local officials insisted to be present. Also, to choose SLB village as my second research site in Inner Mongolia was also a decision that took advantages of unexpected opportunities. Initially I planned to do my research in two similar villages piloting CDD programs like what I did in Guangxi Province and Sichuan Province. After I arrived in Inner Mongolia,

however, I was informed that the county I was going to visit was well-known for its successful micro-finance programs. Considering this a good opportunity for within-site comparison, I changed my original plan and decided to compare SLB village, a successful case, with Xinglongdi village which had never had any microfinance programs before. Also, the microfinance program in SLB village was targeting women as their clients. The comparison would offer more insight about the importance of gender study for successful development.

The employment of mixed purposeful sampling strategies helped in triangulation, allowed for flexibility, and met multiple interests and needs. Due to the various local conditions, I used different connections or sources of help in different regions. Some were more personal, some were with more government intervention. By comparing the interviews of different research sites, I could tell whether or not government intervention would influence people's points of views. Through opportunistic sampling, I was able to interview people of different settings to expand the scope of my research. Selecting a mixed sampling strategy was necessary for my study because it made more effective use of the limited resources available. It helped reduce the influence of constraints in terms of time, funding, and connections.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

The study employed varying data collection techniques and sources during the field work. Again the utilization of different data collection techniques helped with triangulation and allowed me more flexibility. There were primarily two phases of data collection which

further strengthened the validity and reliability of my research by improving the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and objectiveness of the data. The research instruments were a combination of interview guides, focus group discussion guides, archival document review, and library research.

The first phase of data collection was conducted before I left the United States for the research sites in rural China. The University of Pittsburgh library system provided plentiful resources for my pre-fieldwork data collection. Through the system, I obtained information about CDD programs conducted in some other countries for the purpose of comparison. Preliminary project documentation, analysis, and evaluation were collected from books, articles, and reports from the local and central governments and other development agencies involved. Through internet research, I also collected data about the pilot CDD program in China and the impact of microfinance programs in the past decades. Although the study about the natural, cultural, and social conditions in the research regions depicted a draft picture about what my field work would be like, I was mindful that I needed to be open-minded and unbiased because my first-hand experience in the field might tell me something different from the archival data and second-hand information.

The second phase of data collection, which is also the most important phase, is data collection through the field study at the research sites. Participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups discussions were conducted to collect first-hand data. The information collected helped to confirm or contradict the information collected during the first phase of data collection. Different from the quantitative study, the process of qualitative inquiry allowed me access to well-grounded, rich descriptions and

explanations of phenomena occurring in local contexts. It took about three and half months to complete the field work. About 160 interviews [25-30 in each village] with peasants were conducted. The comprehensiveness of the fieldwork and the size of the sample pool also made the qualitatively derived findings more representative.

Participant observation, as one of the major data collection methods, fitted my research very well, as my research focused on cultural factors like gender mainstreaming and self-organizing awareness. During my field work, whenever it was possible, I tried to stay with host families in the research villages or live close to them. I tried to learn their local language and ate the same food as they did. Through the cultivation of connections with people in their local environment, I was able to gain a close and intimate familiarity with people in the local communities and their practices. I was able to observe how gender roles and responsibilities were practiced in their daily lives. I also attended local funeral ceremonies and went to their weekly self-organized market place [similar to a bazaar]. All the information I collected from observation and participation were directly or indirectly related to my research. As I cultivated personal relationships with the local informants, they felt more at ease to express their own feelings and opinions with me. I had chances to learn more about their culture and some stories that I would never be able to collect otherwise. It shaped my perceptions in ways different from a full outsider. Based on the observation and participation, I was able to formulate firsthand accounts of their lives and gain novel insights.

Since the purpose of my qualitative study was to elicit people's perception about their lives and how that impacts the community-driven development, I chose the methods

of open-ended, semi-structured interviews and the approach of “narrative” [Silverman, 2000]. As Glassner and Loughlin suggested, the narrative approach is a “methodology for listening”, which is to see the world from the perspective of our informants [Glassner & Loughlin, 1987]. The key for the interview was how to motivate the informants to talk. For the first two interviews, I started with the question “what do you think is the role of a husband/wife”. The informants were kind of nervous and did not know what my purpose for asking the question was. After I realized the problem, I made some changes to my interview protocol and started with a very easy and broad question like “what do you usually do everyday?” Since the informants felt more at ease and willing to talk about this, they began to describe their daily lives which included gender roles and responsibilities. As they became more comfortable talking, I probed to get more in-depth information and asked other questions.

Besides, it is necessary to keep in mind “how respondents are using culturally available resources in order to construct their stories” [Miller and Glassner, 2004, p.134]. The research sites I had chosen were quite different in their cultures and history. Some are in the southern part of China, some are in the north. Some are minority ethnicity Chinese populated, some are Han [the major ethnicity in China] Chinese populated. Different cultures have shaped their different points of view toward certain issues. For example, their views toward “women working outside” were quite influenced by their culture. In the culture of Zhuang ethnicity, women were not considered as inferior to men as those in Han Chinese history. As most of the respondents in other villages felt like women should stay home, a higher percentage of respondents in GuangXi supported women working outside

of home. Therefore, the interviews helped me understand how the informants viewed their lives and how their particular culture or environment had made their stories different.

During the process of designing my interview protocol, I referred to the Gender Baseline Survey in Morocco conducted by the Women's World Banking. This survey examined how gender identities and consequent roles and responsibilities impacted the growth and non-growth of women's businesses. It bridged the divide between gender and microfinance. It also provided in-depth case study for microfinance institutions [MFIs] which provided products and services to female clients. Although this survey aimed to offer insight to new approaches to help women, it examined the problems from the perspective of gender which included both women and men. The interviews for the survey were conducted based on various factors/drivers for business growth, such as gender identity, saving patterns, attitude toward working women, etc.. The interview protocol for my research incorporated some of these factors from the survey. It also examined how differently men and women viewed the significance of connection, importance of education, level of autonomy at home, etc.. The objective of the interviews was to address the research questions regarding to what extent women were involved in community development programs, and how gender differences impacted the microfinance and community-driven development as either enablers or barriers.

The focus group interview was another technique I employed for the research. As one-on-one interviews can offer in-depth insight of different individual's perspectives, focus group interviews allowed me to ask questions to a larger size of audience. As some questions for the focus group discussions were broad and open-ended, very often the

group members discussed or even argued among themselves about one question. For example, I asked them what mechanisms were more efficient for them, bottom-up or top-down, and why. The discussions and disagreements among the participants turned out to be very helpful as they manifested their different perspectives about reasons for poverty and community development. There were also times that the group discussion deviated to chaos and I had to interrupt to keep the discussion on the right track. While I facilitated a focus group, I always made sure that there was a gender balance among participants. Most of the times, I did the focus groups at some participants' home or at an open area where people often came to rest and chat together. These places were more comfortable for informants to open up and express their own opinions.

The Participatory Rural Appraisal method was adopted to involve community members to review their situation and rank their difficulties and needs. I used simple preference ranking with respect to issues such as their major income sources, needs for money, and difficulties for doing small business. Participants were asked to rank different indicators according to its urgency and importance.

In addition to the information gathered through the second phase, I also made mental notes on natural conversations and field notes on ethnographic interviews [Bernard, 1994; Spradley, 1979]. When I stayed in the village and became more familiar with the villagers, I sometimes walked around the village and chatted with the local people. They told me some anecdotes about their lives which indirectly embodied the cultural roots of the community. For example, the religious ritual and practices in GuangXi had strong influence upon their gender roles and self-organizing awareness. Besides the local

villagers, I also built close relationships with the program coordinators who accompanied me during the field work. They were chosen from the local community and were the front-line staff that directly worked with the villagers and reported to the county government. Hence, they had different perspectives from the villagers and the government officials.

A dozen interviews were conducted with village leaders, program coordinators, government officials, and representatives from international NGOs. The in-depth information obtained from these interviews helped to enhance the richness of data and the depth of the research. These interviews, together with interviews with the peasants, were conducted to address the research question regarding to what extent the performance of different players were considered effective or ineffective. I also collected some first-hand statistical data from the local governments. They kindly offered written documents and reports about the program implementation and evaluation. The baseline data about the villages depicted a general picture of their living conditions, which added a more quantitative component to the research model.

3.4.1 MULTI-SITE DATA COLLECTION

Cultural factors are complex subjects to study as they are deeply rooted in the local history and heavily influenced by the local environment. To address the complexity and variety of culture, I used multi-site data collection. It did make the data-collection process more challenging for me as it required a higher level of cross-cultural competency. The three regions that I had chosen for my research differed in many ways. They had different languages, climate, tradition, even eating styles. As I was raised up in the north part of

China, the field work in the South, like Guangxi and Sichuan, were particularly challenging for me. The whole process helped me learn how important it was to understand, respect, and appreciate different cultures for successful field work, data collection and community development initiatives.

The interaction between different cultures and community development initiatives at multiple research sites expanded the scope of my research. As important indicators of culture, gender roles and self-organizing awareness are complicated concepts. Some common and generalizable principles, however, can be generated from the outward differences and complexity. Complexity is oftentimes considered as a barrier. However, it actually can be an asset. Since complexity is different from chaos, it can be harnessed and used for productive ends [Axelrod & Cohen, 1999]. The interaction patterns between different agents/players can be influenced and even determined by the contextual forces. Therefore, it is crucial for policy makers and program designers to understand the underlying values, forces, and drivers in the local communities. One of the goals of this research is to unveil and harness these values and identify the driving forces for more effective community development. It is expected that the principles harnessed out of the complexity will be helpful in integrating the local culture into policy making more effectively.

The multi-site data collection was conducted also for the purpose of comparative analysis. The use of the multi-site data collection method allowed me to record various gender roles, levels of self-organizing awareness, and ways of interaction between culture and the community development initiatives in different contexts. Although the multi-site

data collection enhanced the broadness of my research by covering a variety of cultures, it did reduce the depth of the study for each culture as the time available for the field work was quite tight. This is a trade-off between validity and generalizability that this study had to deal with.

3.4.2 LIMITATIONS OF DATA COLLECTIONS

Although I considered the field work data collection process very successful and comprehensive, there are several factors that might have influenced the validity and reliability of the data collected. The first factor is the selection of research sites. As I did not have enough knowledge about the research regions, I relied on the assistance of my local connection to choose the research sites. Although I did tell them my expectations for the research site, it is possible they had their personal considerations in mind while they chose the research site for me. For example, the government officials would possibly have chosen some places that were more effective in program implementation. Or they would have chosen villages that they had a better personal connection with, which might not be the best fit for my field work.

Secondly, the language barrier was a difficulty that I had to overcome in Guangxi and Sichuan. Since the local language in Guangxi was totally different from Mandarin, I depended a lot on the help from my local connection. However, there were times that I felt some information was lost in translation. Sometimes the translator did not translate accurately enough or they added too much of their own interpretation of the question. The interviewee's answer was influenced by the translator. There were also times that certain

questions were so intriguing to the interviewee that he started to complain about life which was not directly related to the question. Although I asked the translator to interpret as accurately as possible, they sometimes simplified the answers. Besides, the peasants interviewed sometimes interpreted the same question in different ways because of their different levels of background and capacity. For example, the question “how do you define success?”, some peasants understood it as qualities that a successful person should possess, some interpreted it as what a successful person did, while some considered it as a role model in their village. Although their answers were not structured as I expected, they did offer me some insights that helped me understand the local culture from different perspectives.

Another important factor that might have “harmed” the validity and reliability of my data was government intervention. Since some of my connections were from the government, their intervention sometimes had negative impact on the data collection. For example, during my field work in Inner Mongolia, initially the government officials suggested they accompany me to the village. As they showed up in the village in a Sedan, peasants in the village started to gather around and watch. After the first trip, I insisted to do the field work by myself and lived in the village. They finally agreed reluctantly. But their initial appearance with me in the village might have exerted some influence on the villagers, which consequently influenced how they responded to my questions. When I conducted one-on-one interviews, other peasants tended to gather around out of curiosity. Sometimes I asked them to leave so that the interviewees would not be distracted and

pressured. But sometimes they just stayed and refused to leave and I had to do the interview in the presence of other peasants.

Missing data was also one of the concerns that might have some influence on the data collected. I used an identical interview protocol for all the peasants I interviewed. Sometimes, however, I had to adjust the order of the questions to make the informants more comfortable talking. As a result, I skipped one or two questions and forgot to ask them later. There were times that some informants did not want to answer certain questions, or some questions were not applicable to certain informants. For example, the questions about roles and responsibilities of husband or wife were not suitable for those who had been single and never been married. As a result, some questions might have more missing data than others. These factors, more or less, had influenced the data collection as well as the analysis results.

TABLE 4 SUMMAY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH SITES

Province		GuangXi	Sichuan	Inner Mongolia
Similarities		national-level poverty-stricken areas		
Differences	Major Ethnic in research site	Zhuang	Han	Mongolia & Han
	Language	Zhuang, need translator	Sichuan dialect, 80% can be understood	very close to Mandarin
	Geographic Feature	Karst	Hilly	Grassland, desert
	Source of local contact	Personal contact	Government	Government
	Program	two similar villages with CDD	two similar villages with CDD	one with CDD, one with microfinance program
	Possible sources of bias	depend on local contact to pick the research villages		
		Language barrier		Government intervention

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis usually consists of three concurrent flows of activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification [Miles & Huberman, 1984]. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the “raw” data that appears in written field notes. By sharpening, sorting, discarding, and organizing data, conclusions and findings can be drawn or verified. For qualitative analysis, data display has been considered as narrative text. Although text is the most common way to display information, sometimes it can be very cumbersome and poorly structured. Therefore, in this study, data is also displayed in graphs, charts, and matrices, which I believe is helpful for the conclusion drawing process.

3.5.1 DATA REDUCTION

After I finished the interviews, I transcribed them into text transcriptions. The transcribing process was unexpectedly time-consuming. For each interview which was about 20 minutes long, I spent about one hour to finish the transcribing. It took me about two months to finish the transcriptions. Furthermore, as some interviewees spoke their own language or dialect, I also came across vocabulary and cultural difference problems. For example, the informants in Guangxi used the word “Gong Po [公婆]” to refer to husband and wife. However, in Mandarin, it meant parents-in-law. As I stayed longer in the local setting, I understood more of their culture and figured out the difference. I also asked the program coordinators for terms that I did not understand or was not sure about the meaning. The transcription process was not only typing the data collected via tape

recordings but also part of the preliminary analysis. As I reviewed all the interviews, I also made side notes explaining how each interview was related to different research questions.

The data reduction, as part of the analysis, was a process to reduce the data and sort out important themes from the texts. Since most of the questions were open-ended, sometimes the informants drifted away from the interview topic easily. By discarding the content that was irrelevant to the research and categorizing those that were relevant, I was able to transform the raw data into an organized structure. When I designed my interview protocol, based on the literature review conducted, I already had some key concepts in mind, such as “availability of time”, “level of autonomy”, “difference in saving pattern”, etc.. The transcriptions did reflect these patterns. Since I managed to follow the same interview protocol for all the research sites, it was not surprising that some overarching patterns were obvious to tell. Deductively, I placed some related phrases under those “pre-designed” categories. At the same time, however, some new themes emerged during the coding process. For example, among the following codes, “I do not think the government will listen to me”, “I even do not know what our village leader looks like”, “the government does not have long-term plan, just one-shot programs”, I inductively drew the theme “declining trust in government”.²³ There were also some other new themes such as “the need of role model”, “the impact of migrant worker”, etc.. After the whole coding process, I ended up with 15 key codes/concepts.

²³ I use “declining” in comparison with the level of trust people had in government in the eras of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping.

3.5.2 DATA DISPLAY & CONCLUSION DRAWING

The major form of data display for this study is narrative text. More than 300 pages of written field notes were collected from the field work. The textual data was helpful when I did case study analysis and needed to cite some interesting episodes from the field notes. With limited cognitive capacity of human beings, however, the large amounts of information were not conducive for effective conclusion drawing. Therefore, I simplified the data and organized them into categories. Also, I used charts, graphs and matrices to present the patterns and findings, which were more illustrative and convincing for data display.

A. Strauss and J. Corbin [1990, p.23] note that grounded theory draws conclusions which are “...inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents.” Grounded theory thus aims to derive generalization from empirical study. Inductive analytical processes will therefore help in building grounded theory and provide policy implications for the regions and programs under study. The conclusion drawing of this study is also based on Strauss’s grounded theory, which is to develop theories inductively from a corpus of data. According to the theory, the analysis followed a set of steps, which included open coding, axial coding, selective coding and core codes [Strauss, 1987]. By conducting this process carefully and discovering codes and the relationships among them, I was able to sort out some intriguing findings. More importantly, this process was not simply a summary process. By coding and categorizing the data [field notes and transcriptions], the researcher expanded rather than reduce the data as the full analytic potential of the data was harnessed. The codes and categories obtained from this process

laid the foundation for conclusion-drawing [Coffey & Atkinson, 1987]. Hence, the analysis process was a process of resonating with and explaining the research questions.

3.5.3 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The definition of the unit of analysis is related to the way that initial research questions have been defined [Yin, 2003]. This study explores a new approach for effective development policy making and program implementation. Taking gender and self-organizing awareness as essential elements for this new CDD approach, this study takes individuals involved in the processes as units of observation. The analysis, however, is also based on the investigation and assessment of practices of diverse organizations across different regions. Therefore, organizations/groups of different levels and sectors are considered as units of analysis. Fully aware of the close connection between individual and organizational behaviors, this study explores the influence of cultural factors such as individual attitude and behavior upon organizational decision-making and operations.

3.5.4 WITHIN-SITE ANALYSIS

Narrative text is still the primary way of data display for the within-site analysis. From the written field notes and transcriptions, key codes were extracted and some conclusions were drawn. Case study reports are another form of analysis that used narrative text. At each site, there were informants whose stories were very intriguing and representative. Different from quantitative data display in statistics and graphs, qualitative analysis has its comparative advantage by supporting the research with story-telling.

Besides narrative text, this research also employed other forms of data display for more efficient data analysis, such as tables, matrix, or charts. Several primary functions were performed in the analysis of each research site. First, the researcher eyeballed the transcriptions and categorized them into tables according to the common threads and contrasts that were sorted out. The following table is an excerpt of the table created for each site. Based on over 300 pages of transcriptions, entries for each informant were listed according to the key codes or categories. The data entries can be short blocks of text, quotes, abbreviations, or phrases. A good amount of data reduction and data weighting has been conducted. Also, the matrix drawn from the focus group discussion is very illustrative and helpful for conclusion drawing. The matrix of ranking helped to understand the needs and difficulties that the peasants were encountering in their lives.

TABLE 5: EXCERPT OF TABLES FOR DATA DISPLAY

			Capacity to devote time to business			Gender roles and responsibility
No.	Gender	Age	description of a typical day	Do you have extra time for doing business?	What are the difficulties for doing/expand business?	what are the roles of husband and wife in your family?
A-01	F	50s	feed hogs; cooking; clean hog pen	No	no capability; no time	men external matters; women internal matters
A-02	M	60s	farming, seedling, feeding livestock	No	too many lands to farm; no time; too old;	we work together; husband with heavy work, wife with light work

In addition, this table can lead to more refined and in-depth analysis and data displays. For example, horizontally this table shows how a variety of factors have

influenced the peasants' daily lives. As many monetary institutes consider increasing peasants' access to money or resources as the top priority for rural community development, this table draws us a more comprehensive picture of their real lives. Vertically, this table illustrates how the impact of those factors vary as some variables change, such as their gender , age, access to connection, and etc.. In addition, by combining or summarizing the entries of each informant, I obtained a clearer and broader picture of the problems they were facing. For example, by combining the answers for the difficulties for business development, I generated a list of needs that had to be addressed in order to motivate or sustain community development.

The tables and matrix are also helpful tools for comparison. I visited three different regions to conduct the field work for my research. Within each region, two villages close to each other were chosen to make sure that their cultural and geographical environments were similar. By organizing the data into the same format of tables, I was able to compare the two villages to see the commonality and differences between them. Sometimes the reasons that led to the differences can be very provoking for the research. The function of comparison was especially helpful for the research in Inner Mongolia as I compared one village with CDD program with another village that was successful with microfinance programs. Since the two villages also shared similar cultures, whether or not they had microfinance programs can be an important variable that led to big difference. To compare the data collected from the village with the program with the data from one without the program would expand the richness of the research.

Finally, the table can be used to support case study reports. Although case studies are usually based on narrative text, the table helps present the important points of the case in a more explicit and organized way. Combining the table with some interpretive analysis and commentary would make the case study report a stronger argument for the research.

3.5.5 CROSS-SITE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

As within-site analysis presented an in-depth study of each research site, the use of multi-site comparative case study design presented an intense cross cultural analysis of similar cases [Campbell, 1975]. The purpose was to increase generalizability and understand how much the process and outcomes were influenced by the local contextual variations [Miles & Huberman, 1984]. As grounded theory aims to derive generalization from empirical study, the comparison helps build theory that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon the data represents. Inductive analytical processes will thus help in building grounded theory, and will provide implications for policy relevant to the regions and programs under study.

Two forms of comparison were conducted in this research. The first form of comparison was among research sites that had community-driven development programs. The cultures, gender roles, and levels of self-organizing awareness in each research site were compared. The comparison was conducted to analyze the impact of cultural factors on program implementation. The other form of cross-site comparative design compared two sites that were similar in terms of socio-cultural contexts; but one was having the CDD program and the other was not. This kind of comparative analysis was mainly based on the

research in Inner Mongolia. Under similar cultural context, the two villages were compared in order to explore the differences that the existence of microfinance programs had made. The importance and impact of self-organizing awareness was the focal point of the comparative study.

As cross-site design often faces some threats to its internal validity, this research is no exception. The following section will focus on the possible threats for the design of this study. The first threat is about comparison group selection. When the groups to be compared differ on factors besides the treatment, then these differences may account partly or entirely for the observed differences in outcome between those who receive the treatment or program and those who do not. The comparison between the two villages in Inner Mongolia might face this kind of threat. Although they shared similar cultures and traditions and the existence of microfinance programs seemed to be the major difference between them, other factors can also influence the level of self-organizing awareness. For example, in the year 2007, Inner Mongolia was hit by severe drought. Many people felt hopeless and did not feel motivated to do anything. Different levels of severity of the drought in the two villages can lead to different attitudes toward organizing themselves and doing small business.

Another major threat stems from multiple treatment interference. When one treatment is confounded with another, it is impossible to separate the impact of one treatment from another. As I compared the three research regions and looked at the influence of different cultures on community-driven development programs, I needed to be mindful that besides cultural factors there were other reasons that might influence the

programs. For example, the national policies for development in the three provinces/regions are different. In general, in the past more resources had been allocated to Sichuan and Inner Mongolia than to Guangxi. Therefore, as I compared the three regions, the outcomes and findings needed to be weighted accordingly.

CHAPTER4: INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH REGIONS

The research regions I have chosen for the study are all located in the western part of China. When people talk about western China, pictures come to mind of ethnic minorities, poverty-stricken areas, beautiful natural scenery, and diverse geographic patterns. While China is well-known as the world's most rapid growing economy in the past two decades, a disparity between the inland west and the coastal east is growing equally quickly. Table 4.1 illustrates how much the gap between the west and the east has enlarged from the year 1980 to 2000. This widening regional gap in China has drawn attention from the Chinese government as well as international development agencies. In UNDP's Human Development Report 1994, China was already considered as one of the countries where regional inequalities had become excessively large²⁴. The severe regional inequality also endangered the stability of the society. To pursue a more balanced regional development and promote national modernization, the Chinese government launched the "West China Development Strategy" in the year 2000. It has tremendously impacted the western provinces.

Besides the geographic disadvantages and weak economic power found in western China, diverse ethnicities and cultures also exert profound influence on the development of the region. The western part of China is mostly inhabited by ethnic minorities, most of whom have their own language and cultures. Since more than 95% of the population of China is Han Chinese and the unity of 56 ethnicities has long been advocated by the Chinese

²⁴ Human Development Report 1994, published for the United Nations Development Programme, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994.

government, it is not surprising that many ethnic minorities' cultures have been more or less influenced by Han culture. For example, Mandarin Chinese has been popularized across the country and the dress styles of Han Chinese are also adopted by many other ethnic groups. Some large ethnic groups in particular, such as Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia, embrace Han cultures while still trying to preserve their own cultures. The "Western China Development Strategy" has also brought new ideas, programs, and technologies to the west. The local people, however, have to face the challenge of how to adapt to the changing new environment without losing their heritage. To reach a good balance between tradition and modernity, to harness the advantages of both -- these are crucial for effective development in western China.

TABLE 6: REGIONAL GAPS IN GDP IN CHINA, 1980-2000 [UNIT: %]

Region	1980	1991	1993	1995	1998	2000
National Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Eastern region	52.17	54.90	58.29	58.30	58.12	58.86
Central region	30.30	29.80	27.25	27.50	27.92	27.55
Western region	17.53	15.30	14.46	14.20	13.96	13.58
Ratio of eastern region to western region	2.98	3.59	4.03	4.11	4.16	4.33

Sources: Adapted from Liu et al., *Zhongguo diqu chaju* [Regional Gaps in China], p.44, with data drawn from the China Statistical Yearbook [various years]

This chapter will first offer an overview of the Chinese government's Western China Development Strategy. The positive resultant economic development in less developed regions and the negative effects the strategy has extracted will also be discussed. The seeking for more effective approaches for poverty alleviation is where the community-driven development initiative enters into the picture. The history and culture of the three research regions will be highlighted as well as how their culture has shaped the local

people's ways of thinking and behavior. The base line information about each research site presented in this chapter will help set the stage for the study.

4.1 WESTERN CHINA DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY [WCDS]

Although the West China Development Strategy was initiated in the 1990s, the concept of “developing the west” was coined long before. There had been two waves of “go west” development initiated by the Chinese government before the 1990s. In the 1950s, to pursue the goal of “balanced” national development, the state allocated more than 100 large-scale heavy, industrial, Soviet-aided projects in the west, primarily in the northwest. As a result, newly industrialized cities like Xi'an and Chengdu emerged. The second wave of “developing the west” started from the 1960s when the international political situation was volatile. As the inland southwestern part of China was considered the “third front line” –a strategically more secure area-- vast amount of resources were invested in the region to develop a range of industrial bases. Provinces like Sichuan, Guizhou and Gansu were major beneficiaries of those policies and investments. Despite the Chinese government's efforts to develop the west, the gap between the western and the coastal east continues to widen. To address the increasing regional inequality, in 1999, the “Western China Development Strategy” was initiated, which is a long-term, ongoing challenge that remains to be fulfilled.

The definition of “Western China” has varied under different stages or context of development. For the “Western China Development Strategy”, western China consists of 12 provincial units, namely Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Guangxi, Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Tibet. This initiative is planned to span a fifty year time period. By 2049, the centennial celebration of the founding of the People's

Republic China, China's western regions are to be developed into an economically prosperous, ecologically balanced, ethnically integrated, and socially harmonious and culturally diverse region [Yeung & Shen, 2004].

Starting from the year 1999, the state significantly escalated its investment into the West China. During the period of 2000-2002, the capital investment from the central government to the western regions increased to more than RMB270 billion [about USD38.6 billion]. These monies were used for infrastructure building, ecological improvement, and social undertakings. Thirty-six key construction projects, valued at RMB600 billion, including the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, West-East Gas Pipeline Project, were launched in the west. Preferential policies were also implemented for the western regions to attract domestic and foreign investment. Although the endeavor to develop the west remains challenging, the initiative has indeed brought numerous benefits to the western regions and the people living there.

There are, however, some notable lessons that need to be learned from the previous initiatives and programs. Initially, in past waves of developing the west, top-down management was the only or major mechanisms for development. Most of the policy-making, programs designing, and implementation, and allocation of resources were conducted by the central government. The interaction between central and regional politicians plays dominant role in the distribution of resources, who sometimes are motivated by their desire to maximize their own power or interests with their institutional advantages [Zhou, 2002]. It is therefore not surprising that tension and problems between

the central and local governments emerged. In addition, corruption became a major hindrance to the effectiveness of the development programs.

Moreover, the focus of previous initiatives has been mainly on economic development. The goals of the western development initiatives in the 1950s and the 1960s purposefully focused on heavy industry. Mega-projects launched helped boost the strength and capacity of the whole nation. At the beginning stage of the “Western China Development Strategy”, although some attention has been placed on social development factors such as education and medical care, economic development still takes the lion share of the investment. The objectives of the 10th five-year plan [2001-2005] easily reflect the state control over the development process and its emphasis on economic structural adjustments. “The major anticipated objectives of economic structural adjustments were to optimize and upgrade industrial structures and strengthen world competitiveness”.²⁵

The extent of state intervention and the overemphasis on economic development has raised the attention and concerns of both academic scholars and policy practitioners. The sustainability of the development programs was questioned. The Chinese government also started to put more efforts to address this issue in western China development. The 11th five-year plan [2006-2010] has called for impetus to constructing a harmonious socialist society. The anticipated objectives of the five-year plan include to “promote concordant development of regions” and to “efficiently practice strategies to invigorate

²⁵ Source: China Mapping Out the 11th Five-Year Development Guidelines, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/guideline/156529.htm>, access date: 08/25/2006

China through science and education and through human resource development.”²⁶

Besides economic development, other factors such as environmental protection and human resource development are put on the agenda for development. In addition, the state-control mechanisms are no longer considered as the best approach to construct a “harmonious society”. The changing context for development requires the Chinese government to look for new and more efficient and sustainable strategies to invigorate China. Many new ideas have been developed to address the needs, which include shifting from “state-oriented development” to “market-oriented development”, from “state driven development” to “community-driven development”, from “economic development” to “sustainable development”. Different from models that focus on the importance of “hard” institutional structure, this research aims to offer insight on the role two “soft” cultural factors -- namely gender relations and self-organizing awareness among local people.

To make the western China development more sustainable calls for the respect and understanding of the local culture. Some people claim that China’s ethnic minorities will be the biggest beneficiaries of the Western China Development Strategy as most of them inhabit the western part. However, some other scholars have expressed the concern that the development efforts might transform the western areas into places that resemble the eastern provinces with no uniqueness of their own [Zhou, 2002]. More advanced ideas and technologies have flowed into the western part of China as more people migrate to the coastal areas. People from the western regions assimilated to the new environment even

²⁶ Source: China Mapping Out the 11th Five-Year Development Guidelines, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/guideline/156529.htm>, access date: 08/25/2006

before they know it. As a result, their less visible cultural roots are often ignored. These roots, however, are so deep and essential that lack of acknowledgment of it hampers the effectiveness of capacity building, program designing and implementation. The following section of this chapter explores the cultures of the different sites for this research, focusing on the impact of gender relations and community self-organizing traditions on local people's way of thinking and behavior.

4.2 AN'DE TOWN, GUANG-XI AUTONOMOUS REGION

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Regions is situated on the coast of the Beibu Gulf. It is the only provincial unit among the 12 western provinces that has direct access to the sea. It lies along the border between China and Vietnam. As a hub of sea transportation, it assumes an important role in the Western China Development Strategy. Guangxi's total population stood at 47.2 million in 2006. Ethnic minorities account for nearly 40% of Guangxi's total population. Guangxi is rich in natural resources. Among the 96 kinds of mineral deposits found in the region, deposits of tin, manganese, antimony and lime are the largest in China. Guangxi is also rich in timber and forestry resources. A large number of cash crops, including sugarcane, palm-oil seeds, bananas, pineapple and rosin are also produced. Among them, output of sugarcane and fruits is the largest in the country.²⁷

Despite the rich natural resources, the development of Guangxi consistently falls behind other provinces, and the region is considered to be one of the poorest in China. According to some government officials in Guangxi, there are primarily three reasons for its

²⁷ Source: *Guangxi Statistical Yearbook 2007*

laggard development. First, since Guangxi is along the border line between China and Vietnam, its geo-political importance attracts conflict. As the frontline, Guangxi suffered significantly during the wars in the 1950s [China helping Vietnam against France], 60s [China helping Vietnam against the U.S.] and 70s [Sino-Vietnam war]. It took years for the region to recover from the damage these wars inflicted on the people there. Second, the central government has not paid enough attention to the development in Guangxi because of its remote geographic location. As mentioned in the first section, the central government initially paid more attention to the development of the coastal areas. The western regions did not receive focused attention until late 1990s. The third reason for Guangxi's poor performance is directly linked to its unfavorable landscape. Guangxi is well known for its Karst landscape, which covers massive mountains, caves, and dark rivers. Although the Karst landform has boosted the development of some cities like Guilin through tourism, for most of the rural areas, it is not beneficial because there is less cultivatable land for the peasants to earn a living.

The two villages for the research are in Ande Town, Jingxi County, which is located along the Sino-Vietnam border of southwest Guangxi. With a population of 580,000 and a total area of 3,331 square kilometers, Jingxi County is the most populated among the 8 counties situated along the border in Guangxi. There are 11 ethnic groups residing in Jingxi County, including Zhuang, Han, Miao, Yao, and etc.. Among the 11 ethnic groups, Zhuang people constitute about 99.4% of the total population of the county. In Ande Town, there are about 20 villages, with 7404 households and a population of 40,831. In the year 2005, the agricultural Gross Output was of RMB74, 450,000 [USD 10,747,900], with a fiscal

income of RMB417, 000 [USD60, 200] and an average income of RMB1320 per capita [USD190.5].



FIGURE 8: MAP OF ANDE TOWN, JINGXI COUNTY, GUANGXI
[FIVE VILLAGES WITH RED FLAGS ARE WITH THE CDD PILOT PROGRAM]

Among the 20 villages in Ande town, five were selected to pilot CDD programs as shown in the picture. The research was conducted in two of them, FaDa village and SanXi village. Sanxi village has a total population of 1,297, among which 700 are in the labor force. About 1% of the population received senior high school education, 0.5% of junior high school, and 0.9% received primary school education. The average annual net income for each peasant is RMB1217 [USD175]. Fada village is slightly economically stronger than Sanxi village; peasants have an average net income of RMB1400 [USD202] every year. Fada village is closer to the town center with more convenient transportation. It has a total population of 1568, among which 873 are in labor force.

As one of the major ethnic groups in western China with thousand years of history, Zhuang ethnic group has developed its own language, custom, living style, costumes, medicine, and traditions. Some social scientists consider culture and tradition as a residual

category, an intellectual disturbance which is to be brushed away. It is then understandable that they try to avoid the confrontation with tradition [Shils, 1981]. Another school of scholars, however, has been advocating the importance of understanding culture and tradition for effective development (Escobar, 1995; Sen, 2001). Traditions as important components of culture are passed on from generation to generation, which include material objects, beliefs about diverse things, images of people and events, practices and institutions [Shils, 1981].

To understand the cultural roots of Zhuang ethnic group, it is necessary to study the “Songs of Bu Luo Tuo [布洛陀经 in Chinese]”, the cultural essence of the Zhuang people [Luo, 2007]. In Zhuang language, Bu Luo Tuo means “a god that knows everything and can do everything”. Among Zhuang people, the “Songs of Bu Luo Tuo” have profound influence on their religion and traditions. According to the “Songs of Bu Luo Tuo”, Bu Luo Tuo was the god that created the world and human beings. Another main character in the “Songs of Bu Luo Tuo”, Mu Liu Jia [姆六甲 in Chinese], was Bu Luo Tuo’s mother and later his wife. She began the creation of the universe then gave birth to Bu Luo Tuo, and later helped him finish creating the universe. In the “Songs of Bu Luo Tuo”, although Bu Luo Tuo was always ranked ahead of Mu Liu Jia, they were both considered as the two chief gods that created and controlled the world. In the book, it says “Go ask Bu Luo Tuo, Go ask Mu Liu Jia, Bu Luo Tuo will tell, Mu Liu Jia will know.” Male and female gods reached a harmonious relationship in this ancient legend.

As a result of the Songs of Bu Luo Tuo’s influence, in ancient times, the Zhuang ethnic group was a matrilineal society; females played the dominant roles in society.

Although it later shifted to a patrilineal society, women still received a higher level of respect and social status than women of Han culture. Nowadays the Zhuang has more pervasively been influenced by the dominant Han culture, yet it still keeps its own language, costume, and traditions. One typical example of intact Zhuang culture is sorcery, which is still very popular in the Zhuang community despite atheism advocated by the Communist Party. Witches or wizards are considered to be the mediators who communicate with the spiritual world on behalf of the community. In Zhuang language, witch or wizard is called Boux mo [不麽- 巫师, in Chinese]. Although male Boux mo gained higher status as the society became more patrilineal, female Boux mo has always maintained unique roles that cannot be replaced by male Boux mo -- such as rituals for pregnancy, birth-giving, grain seed planting, and asking for rainfall. This respect for women in ancient Zhuang culture also has great influence on the gender roles and gender responsibilities in people's daily lives, which will be talked about in detail in the next chapter.

Song fair [歌圩 Ge Xu] is another noteworthy symbol of the Zhuang community [Lu, 2005]. During festivals or other celebratory occasions, Zhuang people will get together and sing songs, among which love songs between men and women are the main content. The times that Zhuang people usually have song fairs are March 3rd [festival of singing for the Zhuang community], spring festival, mid-August festival, or wedding occasions – all times when peasants are not busy with work in the field. Generation after generation, song fairs have been a part of their daily lives. In the past, song fair was an ideal time for young people, men and women, to socialize and look for lovers. Young boys and girls met at an

open area during the song fair festivals. After greeting each other, they started to sing to each other. The singing part was completely spontaneous; singers composed the song on the spot. The content of the songs covered a diverse range of topics. Usually the girls sang songs to ask questions and the boys would sing back to answer the questions. After several rounds of singing, if the girl was interested in the young man, she would throw her hand-made embroidered ball to him. The young man would then tie a gift to the ball and throw it back to the girl if he was also interested in the girl. By accepting the gift, the girl agreed to be in a relationship with the young man.

Compared with the Han culture in the past, which required that men and women not see and touch each other before marriage, and which indicated that marriage were always arranged by parents, Zhuang culture has shown more respect and freedom for women. Nowadays, as there are more entertainment and communication options among the Zhuang, young people no longer enjoy song fairs to the extent of their parents' generation. Elder people, however, still preserve the tradition. When I stayed in the county among the Zhuang, I often saw people gather at an open area and sing songs after dinner. Song fairs are activities that are completely self-organized by the community. For scholars and professionals in the development field, understanding and respecting the cultural roots of the Zhuang community is necessary and helpful to harness its advantages and integrate it into effective community development.

4.3 SHI-LOU TOWN, SICHUAN PROVINCE

Sichuan province is located at the upper reaches of the Yangtze River in Southwestern China. With a total area of 485,000 sq. km.. Sichuan was China's most populous province before Chongqing city was carved out of it. In 2006, its total population stood at 81.7 million. The majority of its population is Han Chinese, who scattered throughout the province. A variety of minority ethnic groups of Tibetans, Yi, Qiang and Naxi reside in the western part of the province. The two research villages that I have chosen are located in Nanchong [南充] city, which is a prefecture-level city in the north-east of Sichuan Province. With an area of 12,479 kilometers and a population of 7,300,000, Nanchong city is the second most populated city and one of the top eight large cities in Sichuan Province²⁸.

Sichuan province is named “the Province of Abundance”. Rich in natural resources, it has the most developed industrial sector in the region. Sichuan is also one of the major agricultural production centers in China. Its output of rice, wheat, rapeseed, citrus fruit, peach, sugar cane, sweet potato and Chinese herbs, accounts for a significant share of China’s total. Sichuan's nominal GDP for 2006 was 863.8 billion Yuan [US\$111.6 billion], equivalent to 10,574 RMB [US\$1370] per capita. In 2006, the per capita net income of rural residents reached 3,013 Yuan [US\$350] and the per capita disposable income of the urbanites averaged 9,350 Yuan [US\$1,048].²⁹ Despite the overall abundance, there is great

²⁸ <http://www.xzqh.org/QUHUA/51sc/13nanchong.htm>

²⁹ http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-02/02/content_4128534.htm

disparity between developments in the urban areas and that in the countryside. Poverty remains a pressing issue for many rural communities.

The territory of the province and its vicinity were the cradle of its unique local civilizations, which can be dated back to the fifteenth century B.C.. In the ninth century B.C., Shu [today's Chengdu city] and Ba [today's Chongqing city] emerged as cultural and administrative centers where two rival kingdoms were established. Although the civilization of Shu and Ba were badly destroyed by Qing Dynasty [221BC-206BC], people in Sichuan tried to preserve their culture and tradition until today. The living environment for Ba people in ancient time was not very favorable. And they lived among mountains, hills, and woods with scarce fertilized land. Ba people, however, made their living and multiplied their population with great courage and wisdom in spite of the harsh living condition. Even today, people in Chongqing city are well known for being hardworking, courageous, and shrewd.

Nanchong city, where I conducted the research, used to belong to the Kingdom of Ba. Most of the area is covered by hills and the woodland coverage is 25% of the total. The two research sites, Luojiashi village and Lijiaguan village, are located in Shilou town, Nanchong city. Luojiashi village has 232 households with a total population of 716, among which 376 are of the labor age. Lijiaguan village has 214 households with a total population of 752, among which 484 are in the labor age. Households in the two villages have an average annual net income of RMB 2800 [USD 404], which doubles that of Fada village and Sanxi village in Guangxi province. The accountant of the town government, however, told me that the numbers were not quite reliable because the actual income for the peasants was not

that high. It should be around RMB1400 per capita. But in order to show that the local government has made certain progress to apply for more budget money from the higher level government for the next year, the town government changes the number by increments every year.

The natural condition in Shilou town is not very favorably disposed for people living there. The hilly landscape does not allow much cultivatable land available for agricultural production. Transportation condition within and between villages is also very poor due to the geographic barriers. Since there is no tar road in the village, in rainy days it is quite normal for the peasants to walk in the mud for hours to carry their agricultural products, such as vegetables or eggs, to sell at the town market. Like in many rural communities in other countries, the self-organized market place is a common phenomenon in most of the rural areas in China. It is like a bazaar at the open areas of the town center, where peasants come to sell their own products and buy daily necessities such as cooking oil, salt, meat, and etc. In Shilou, it is held regularly [once a week] among villages that are close to each other.

Besides being industrious, Sichuan people are also well known for the number of migrant workers dispersed all over the country. Because of the large labor force and comparatively little cultivated land, many Sichuan people in the rural areas migrate to the urban cities to make a living. Gradually the idea of working in the cities as the only way out has become an invisible culture in the rural community. Very few people would like to work in the field and even fewer people have faith that they can make a better life through working in the village. Young boys who just finished their junior high school education are

sent out to work in the city. Money remitted back by the migrant workers is one of the major sources of income for the households in the community. The importance of migrant workers and the impact of labor migration on gender roles and rural community development will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

TABLE 7: LABOR OUTFLOW IN 2007[SHILOU TOWN, SICHUAN]

Town	Total Population	labor outflow		those stay home	
		No.	Percent [%]	No.	%
Shilou	8105	2850	35	5002	62

TABLE 8: COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION STAYING HOME [SHILOU TOWN, SICHUAN]

Gender				Age						Education					
Male		Female		under 18		19-59		60 & above		illiterate/Semi illiterate		Elementary & Junior High		Senior high & above	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2366	45	2897	55	989	20	2088	42	1925	38	350	7	4604	92	48	1

Source: data collected from Shilou town government.

4.4 WENGNIUTE COUNTY & AOHAN COUNTY, INNER MONGOLIA

The Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region is located in China's northern frontier, which shares a long border of 4,421 km with Mongolia in the north and Russia in the northeast. With a total area of 1.18 million km², Inner Mongolia is China's third largest region and accounts for 12.3% of the country's total area. Inner Mongolia is not only a base of energy

resources, but also a center for the animal husbandry industry in China. The fact that Inner Mongolia connects the eastern China with the western China with access to other countries in the north, has provided Inner Mongolia many geographic advantages for development. It also possesses abundant resources for farming and grazing. Being one of the 12 provincial units of the Western China Development Strategy, it has been granted favorable policies for development.

Inner Mongolia had a population of 23.8 million in 2004, which is about 1.83% of China's population. There are 49 ethnic groups residing in Inner Mongolia, which include Han [79%], Mongol [17%], Manchu [2%], Hui [0.9%], and Dahan'er [0.3%], and etc.³⁰. Han Chinese and Mongolian Chinese began to intermingle with each other during the East Han Dynasty [25-220 AD]. In Yuan dynasty [1271-1368 AD], when Mongolian people took control of the whole country, the integration of different cultures reached its peak and many Han people immigrated and settled on the prairie. Therefore, it is quite normal to see that Han culture and traditions have been widely accepted and practiced by people in Inner Mongolia. Yet, many traditions and cultures of Mongolian ethnicity are preserved and its profound influence on people's lives is still apparent. Different parts of Inner Mongolia have different mixes of traditions and customs depending on the level of influence from Han and Mongolian cultures. As Table 9 shows, people living in the northern, central, and southern part of Inner Mongolia have different ways of land use, house building, diet, language, and dress styles.

³⁰ 《2000 年人口普查中国民族人口资料》 *Tabulation on nationalities of 2000 population census of China*

TABLE 9: COMPARISON OF DIVERSE CULTURES IN INNER MONGOLIA

Culture		Mongolian grazing culture in the north	Mongolian and Han mixed culture in the central area	Han Culture in the south
Land Use	Management	natural grazing	half raising in shed, grazing and dry land farming	raising in shed, grazing and irrigated and dry land farming
	Land-use share [%]	grassland>80, farmland<5	Farmland: 5-15, grassland: 35-55	Farmland>25
Architecture style		Mongolian house, round roof	arched roof	hill-like or inclined roof
Diet		Milk tea, parched sugar, with salt	boiling tea, parched sugar, with salt	making tea, without salt
Language		speak Mongolian, understand Chinese	Speak Chinese, understand Mongolian	Chinese
Head scarf of man		Cloth belt around head with a knot on the side	Towel around head with a knot in the front	Towel around head with a knot behind

Source: Zhou Yi, 西部大开发前沿问题研究 [Research on Leading Questions on the Great Western Development], 2002

The power of unity and collective efforts has long been treasured by the Mongolian people. The Mongolian ethnic group used to be a nomadic group that moved from one place to another, herding their flocks of livestock and living in tents. Most of their lives depended on the nature which can be very severe and unpredictable. Therefore, Mongolian people were trained to be exceedingly strong and able to persevere in order to survive. Horse riding, archery, and wrestling were skills necessary for survival. Nowadays, these skills have become very traditional entertainment activities. The Mongolians, aware that individual human beings can be very vulnerable in the fight against the nature, have also instilled the concept of unity and the importance of collective behaviors from their

childhood. Most Mongolian people are not presently living a nomadic life, but the spirit of unity, courage, and perseverance is still preserved and emphasized. This tradition of organizing themselves for better life should be encouraged for more effective community development.

The gender role given to women in the Mongolian culture can greatly contribute to effective community development. The severe living conditions have made women an indispensable labor force for the Mongolian community. From ancient times, girls were trained to herd flocks, ride horse, and wrestle in the same way as the boys did. Women were trained to be as strong and independent as the men. Some recent research shows that, in the pastoral area in particular, 95% of women do the same work as their husbands, including herding, cutting wool, weeding, and building storage for grass. Women's opinions are considered during the decision-making in Mongolian community. However, as mentioned above, Mongolian culture has been greatly influenced by Han culture. The Han mindset that men are superior to women is crept into Mongolian daily life. Therefore, although women can be strong, hardworking, and sometimes involved in the decision-making process, the final decisions are usually made by the husbands in important issues. The co-existence of these dual characters is an important factor that needs to be taken into consideration for gender study of the community.

The two villages for the research, Xinglongdi village and SLB village, are in the territory of Chifeng city, which is located in the southeast of Inner Mongolia. Xinglongdi village is in Wengniute Banner [banner is the same as county] and SLB village in Aohan Banner. Wengniute Banner covers an area of 11, 882 square kilometers with a population

of 473,000. It is ranked as a national level poverty county. Five villages in the Banner were selected to pilot the CDD program and Xinglongdi village is one of them. The average annual net income for peasants in those villages is about RMB1,020. Xinglongdi village has a total population of 1060, among which 748 are in labor force. Among the 748 in labor age, 398 are women.

Aohan banner is of a totally different condition. It covers a smaller area of 8,300 square kilometers, yet supports a larger population of 583,000 people. It has rich mineral resources and very convenient transportation. The main industry is land farming, while the husbandry industry contributes an important role. Aohan banner is also well known for its clean and well-maintained environment. In the year 2002, it was granted the “Global 500 Award” by the U.N. Environment Programme. The population of SLB village totals 4,416, among which 890 are of minority ethnicities, 3,048 are in the labor force. About 1,442 out of the 3,048 are women laborers. The average annual net income for each peasant in the year 2006 was about RMB 3,200.

CHAPTER 5: GENDER STUDY& DEVELOPMENT IN THE THREE REGIONS

One major school of theories about development is that development in the economic sector will automatically lead to development in the social and cultural sectors [Leys, 1996]. As a result, many countries and international development organizations primarily focus on the economic outcome of development. However, increasingly more scholars have realized that social and cultural factors should not solely be considered as dependent variables of economic growth [Cowen and Shenton, 1996]. On the contrary, if they are not taken seriously as independent variables, economic growth cannot be achieved in an effective way, not to mention its assumed “trickle down” effect in social and cultural development. As an important aspect of development, gender equity and women’s empowerment has been listed as one of the millennium development goals established by the United Nations. Instead of taking gender factors as dependent variables decided by economic growth, this chapter will look into gender factors as independent variables to show how gender differences and cultural diversity can influence and shape community development.

5.1 GENDER FACTORS INFLUENCING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The clash between tradition and development is a longstanding and heated topic for discussion. For some scholars, tradition is considered a hindrance for development. For some other scholars, however, tradition and development are complementary to each other instead of incompatible. This section will, from the perspective of gender, examine several socio-cultural variables that make up a complex set of factors that influence the

effectiveness of community development. These variables include housework allocation, time availability, initial capital, access to money, level of autonomy in household, business types, saving and spending patterns. How the study of these factors will influence the development of the local community will also be discussed.

The gender distribution between men and women among the research informants is 79:83. Although the overall sample size of men and women is similar, in each province, the ratios between men and women are quite different. Taking Sichuan province for example, there are more male informants in this region. The reason for this can be attributed to the local geographic and cultural factors, which will be discussed in detail in section 5.2. For SLB village, the second research site in Inner Mongolia which is well-known for its successful microfinance programs, the research features gender factors that influence the effectiveness of microfinance programs. The microfinance programs in the village targets women and are sponsored by the Women's Federations. As a result, more female were more willing to be interviewed to talk about the program.

Table 10: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH POPULATION

	GX	SC	IM-1	IM-2	Total
F	26	16	17	24	83
M	24	35	13	7	79
Total	50	51	30	31	162

GX: Fada & Sanxi villages in Guangxi; SC: Luojiashi & Lijiaguan villages in Sichuan province;
IM-1: Xinglongdi village, the 1st site in Inner Mongolia; IM-2: SLB village, the 2nd in Inner Mongolia

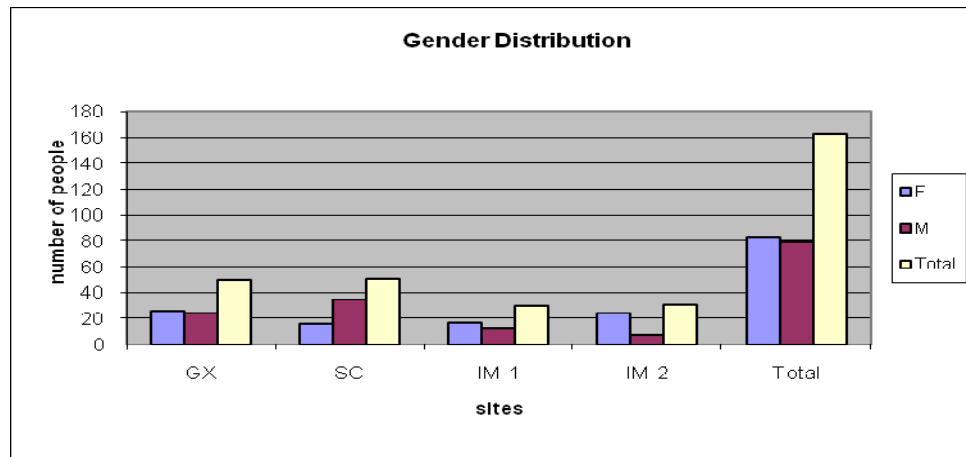


FIGURE 9: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH POPULATION

Housework Allocation

When asked if there is any division of workload between husband and wife, many informants, both men and women, answered that there is not a clear allocation of housework. Some expressed that husband and wife should share the responsibility to support the family. However, the study shows that this “unclear” division means more work for women. In Chinese tradition, men’s work is supposed to center around the outside, while women’s work is supposed to center in the house [男主外、女主内]. This tradition applies to families in which the husband works either in the town nearby or further away in the cities to win bread for the family. In the latter situation, the wife needs to care for everything at home, including the house chores and the work in the dry or patty field. For those families where husbands stay at home, while wives are considered responsible for housework such as cooking, laundry, taking care of the children, and etc., they often also need to work on additional things such as raising silkworms or working in the field. Usually the husband takes care of heavy work like carrying the fertilizer, while the wife takes care of lighter work. Therefore, the “job description” for women is more than

just “work in the house”. Development initiatives that claim to empower women by increasing their access to capital and business activities need to be mindful of the possibility of making women double-burdened.

“For wife, she needs to take care of the trivial housework. For big things, like raising silkworm, we do it together...; ...Yes, we also grow wheat to get rice, also corn to raise hogs...”

“Not too much [work for her]. If she is not busy, she will live like those women who just sit along the roadside doing nothing but chatting. What is good about that? She understands. We need money to support our old father.” [A man in his 40s in Guangxi]

The research also shows that in 33% of the households interviewed, a husband helps with the house chores when he has time. Among the 162 informants, 53 answered “yes” to the question “does the husband help with the housework?” Especially for those from Guangxi, a much higher percentage of informants answered “yes”. This can be explained by the culture of the Zhuang ethnic group in which men and women are treated more equally and women receive comparatively higher social status. While staying with a host family during my field research, every meal was prepared by the husband in the family. I was clearly told that it was the culture of that area for men to cook for the family. Husband and wife shared a higher level of cooperation in Guangxi province.

While in Sichuan and Inner Mongolia, less people answered “yes” to the questions. The dominant culture which considers women responsible for housework has much stronger influence in these regions. Another possible reason for this is that, in Sichuan and Inner Mongolia, more peasants migrate to the cities to earn a living. Those who work at places closer to home can return home to help during planting or harvesting seasons.

Those working far from home come back only once a year during the Spring Festival time. In cases like these, husbands cannot help with the housework at all. Whatever the reason, the result is that the level of cooperation between husband and wife in Sichuan and Inner Mongolia is lower than in Guangxi.

TABLE 11: COMPARISON OF HUSBANDS' INVOLVMENT IN HOUSEWORK

Does husband help with housework?					
	GX	SC	IM-1	IM-2	Total
Yes	23 46%	16 31%	10 33%	4 13%	53
No	18	19	8	17	62
No Answer or NA	9	14	12	10	45
Wife died		2			2
Total	50	51	30	31	

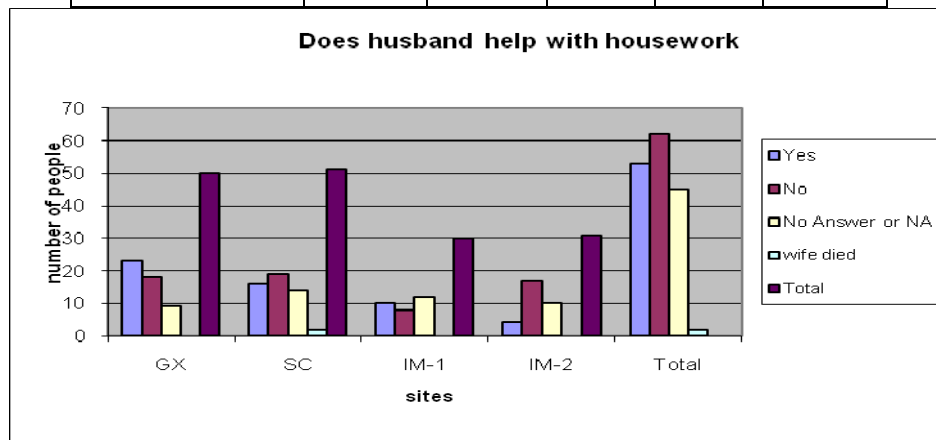


FIGURE 10: FOUR REGIONS COMPARISON OF HUSBANDS' INVOLVMENT IN HOUSEWORK

Time Availability for Starting Small Business

More than 75% of the interviewees answered affirmatively to the question about whether or not they have time to start a small business. The percentage of women that expressed their availability to start a small business was slightly higher than that of men. In Guangxi province, a much higher percentage of informants answered “no” to the question.

However, for some of the interviewees, I observed that their answer “no” to time availability was intertwined with their concerns about the lack of capital, skills, and space. Time availability seems not the major barrier for most of the peasants interviewed.

TABLE 12: GENDER DIFFERENCE IN TIME AVAILABILITY FOR SMALL BUSINESS

	Yes	No	N/A	% of Total
F	48	11	0	48/59=81%
M	57	12	3	57/72=79%

TABLE 13: FOUR-REGION COMPARISON IN TIME AVAILABILITY

Do You Have Time for Business					
	GX	SC	IM-1	IM-2	Total
Yes	31	45	29	22	127
No	18	4	1	3	26
N/A	1	2		6	9
Total	50	51	30	31	

“Yes. We, husband and wife, work together. So if there is any other work, we still can do it.” [A3, a man in his 40s, Guangxi province].

Men who do not have time to start a business are mainly occupied by land farming or a full-time job in the town nearby. Some are reluctant because they are too old. For women, however, the major reason for their unavailability is their responsibility to care for their sick and aged parents or young children. Many families in the rural areas cannot afford the expense for medical treatment in the hospital. So they prefer buying cheaper medicine and staying at home. Therefore, a better medical care system will be helpful for women to have more free time.

“I have to take care of a baby. It is my daughter's baby... We also have an old parent living with us...we donot have manpower and energy for that [business]...” [B46, a woman in 40s].

Lack of capital seems to be a common reason for both men and women’s reluctance to start a business. The lack of education or capacity is another major reason, especially for women.

“Probably I do not have the capacity to do it. I am already very busy, and I do not know anything, so I will not do business, just do housework.” [A1, a woman in her 50s];

“I do not know how to do it even I have time.” [A9, a woman in her 50s]; “I did not get any education, so I do not know how.” [A11, a woman in her 30s];

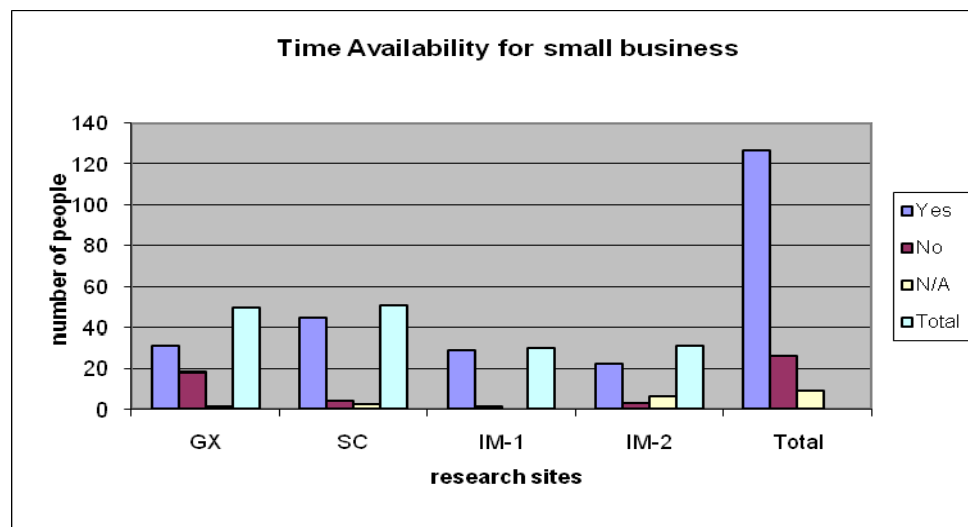


FIGURE 11: FOUR-REGION COMPARISON IN TIME AVAILABILITY FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Initial Capital Base

Although many interviewees noted that they did have time to run a small business, they expressed their concern over the lack of capital to start a small business. There is not much gender difference in the response to this question. When asked if they had the initial capital base to start a business, more than 66% of the interviewees in Guangxi, Sichuan, and Inner Mongolia-I answered “no”. For those who answered “yes” but had not yet started any business, they either are either too old to be interested in it, or they do not know what is profitable to do, or they are afraid of the risk of doing business.

“When we are not busy, we do some business. But we do not have much capital, so what we do is just collect waste and resell them. I sell them in Wudan county. I have two kids in high school. My wife just had surgery. My mom is about 80. So I have to farm land and at the same time I need to do some small business. Besides that, I need to borrow money from relatives and the bank.” [CI, a man in his 40s]

What is interesting about the second research site in Inner Mongolia is that nobody answered “yes” to the question concerning initial capital base. Yet, this village is well-known for its successful microfinance program, which has been implemented for about 8 years. Most of the interviewees are clients of the program. The peasants interviewed said that they did not have any capital money at the beginning. Microloans of 1,000 RMB [USD14.50] or 2,000 RMB [USD29.00] offered them the capital needed to jump start their small business.

“Microloan helped me a lot. We had some saving, but we used it up to build the house. Then we had no money to raise hens. At that time, baby hen was cheap, only 1.8RMB for each one. At the beginning I did not know microloan. Then I knew it and I borrowed it to buy baby hens. I had some corns to feed them. So I started it with the help of microloan. Now I can borrow more, about 4000RMB. I have high level of credit now.” [D22, woman in 30s who now raises about 2,600 hens]

TABLE 14: CAPITAL AVAILABILITY FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Do you have capital to start a business?

Sites	Gender	Yes	No	N/A
Site GX, SC, IM-1 [66% “no”]	Female	18	37	0
	Male	26	50	0
Site IM-2 [100% “no”]	Female	0	22	1
	Male	0	6	2
Total		44	115	3

Access to Money vs. Right to Use Money

Although initial capital is a major concern for both men and women to start a small business, women are confronted with another problem, which is the right to use the money. When the researcher asked the interviewees the question “who takes care of the money in your family?”, a high percentage of informants answered, “the wife takes care of the money”.

TABLE 15: FOUR-REGION COMPARISON OF ACCESS TO MONEY

Who takes care of the money?						
	W	H	Himself	Both	N/A	Total
GX	5	23	3	12	7	50
SC	17	8	1	13	12	51
IM-1	18	6	0	0	6	30
IM-2	14	4	0	3	10	31
Total	54	41	4	28	35	162

W: wife keeps the money; H: husband keeps money; Himself: single or wife died;
Both: wife and husband take care of the money together.

This is not surprising as in Chinese culture, the wife is considered as the one overseeing all housework, taking care of the money is assumed to fall under these responsibilities. To keep the money, however, does not necessarily mean they have the right to use the money. Many female interviewees noted that although they keep the money, they still need to ask for their husbands' approval to use it. Most of the female interviewees said that they can use small money to buy daily necessities such as salt or oil. For larger items that cost more money, however, they do not have the freedom to make the decision.

“Well, I am only a guard of the money, the money only passes through me [过路财神]. He uses it. I do not use it much.” [C28, a woman in her 40s]

“She keeps it [the money]. Whenever I need to use money, I get it from her. But she cannot spend large amount of money, that will be my call. She cannot make decisions about that.” [D29, a man in his 60s, used to be village leader]

Microloan programs, to some extent, have helped some women out of this difficult condition by providing them access to a microloan. The microfinance program in SLB village, the second research site in Inner Mongolia, targets women as their clients. Only women can borrow a microloan from the local microfinance institutions. According to interviews with some informants, this privilege extended to women has improved their status in the family. They now have access to money and can make decisions how to use it. The income generated from women’s businesses will, in return, enable women to have a stronger voice in family issues.

“I can [use it], but not for big things. I can use it to buy food, daily necessities, etc. I cannot make decisions about big money use. But for the microloan, that is the money I borrowed, so I have the right to decide how to use it. In that way, my status in my family was improved.” [D1, woman in her 50s, microloan user]

However, this is not the case for all the families. In some families that use microloans, the wives are not even involved in the decision-making process to borrow the microloan. Although the loan was borrowed under the wife’s name, it is the husband that decides how to use the money. The wife, of course, will symbolically bring the bi-weekly payment to the program coordinator. Therefore, for those MFIs that aim to empower women through microfinance programs, it is necessary to look deeper into and understand

more clearly the gender relations in the households and the community. To simply provide women with access to money is not enough to achieve their expected outcomes.

“Yes, it [the microloan] is borrowed under her name. But I am the one that use it and do everything.

Q: Does your wife want to be involved [in microloan use]?

A: She does not. She dares not to ask. I am the head of the family. Also I told her that she needs not to care. I will give her money to use anyway. If she wants to use more than 100RMB, she needs to let me know and discuss. If it is less than 100RMB, then she can make the decision.” [D24, man in his

40s] **Level of Autonomy**

The three obedience and the four virtues [“三从四德”] were the dominant principles women were required to follow before the new China was founded in 1949. The three obediences refer to obedience to the father before marriage, to the husband after marriage, and to the son after the death of husband. The four virtues include morality, proper speech, modest manner and diligent needlework. In accordance with these standards of good conduct, women did not have any autonomy within the family, and they had no right to make any decisions for the family.

Since the new China was founded, the liberation and empowerment of women has been one of its major goals. According to Tang and Parish [2000, p.231], “overall, Chinese urban women are faring quite well during this transition to the market economy with regard to the labor force”. However, in the rural areas, the restrictive principles still strongly effect gender roles although many women have gained more bargaining power and more opportunities for individual fulfillment. Among the 162 interviewees, half of

them showed that major family issues were decided through discussion between husband and wife. More than ¼ of the families noted that the husband was the only decision-maker. When asked if they need to ask for their husbands' approval for doing business, about 63.4% of the women answered "yes". How to motivate women to be more involved in the decision-making process, and how to help the couples work in a more cooperative way, are essential questions for development professionals to resolve in order to develop programs that are effective and sustainable.

"Man is the head of the family and make all the decisions. Very few occasions, women make decisions for the family. For those who are under 40, most of them are more equal between husband and wife. For people of my age, still men make decisions for the family. Maybe less than 1/3 are equal between husband and wife in this village" [D1, female informant in her 50s]

TABLE 16: FOUR-REGION COMPARISON OF AUTONOMY IN DECISION-MAKING

How Major Issues are Decided

	GX	SC	IM-1	IM-2	Total
Discussion	28	31	12	12	83
Husband	15	10	11	10	46
Wife	0	3	1	3	7
H/D	4	4	6	3	17
W/D				1	1
Depends/na/others	3	3	0	2	8
Total	50	51	30	31	162

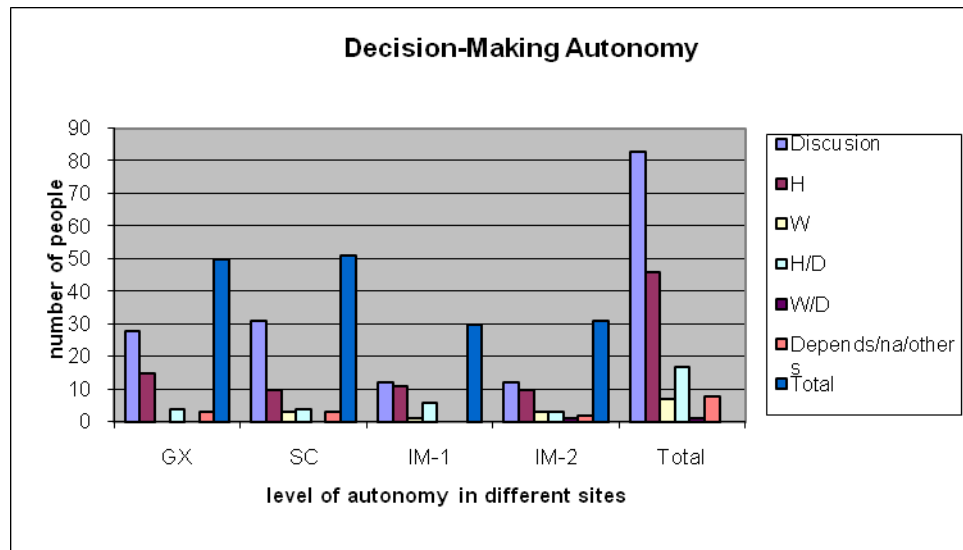


FIGURE 12: FOUR-REGION COMPARISON OF LEVEL OF AUTONOMY IN DECISION-MAKING

Note: Discussion: decision made through discussion; Husband: decision made by husband; Wife: decision made by wife; H/D: discuss but husband makes final decision; W/D: discuss but wife makes final decision; Depends/na/Others: it depends; not available.

Choice of Business Activities

A majority of the research population would like to consider raising livestock such as hogs, hens, goats, or silkworms as a way to generate extra money. They think they know how to raise them and it does not require too much initial capital money. However, baby hogs and the feed for hogs are getting more and more expensive. Consequently, many peasants complained that they cannot afford to raise livestock. When asked if they need any training for raising livestock, more than 67% of the interviewees answered “yes”. They said the livestock, especially silkworms, get sick easily. They will lose everything when the livestock get sick and die.

As Figure 17 illustrates, although men and women share some common interests such as raising livestock, growing tobacco, running a grocery store, and etc., they also have differing business interests. Women prefer light and small business that can be done at

home or around the village. This will enable them to still have time to take care of the home, aged parents, and the children. For men, location of the activities is not of major concern. Most of their work requires greater strength and capital money and is not close to their home. Take Xinglongdi village for example, many men in the village earn money by collecting and reselling waste. As more people join this business, the market becomes more competitive. Sometimes they have to drive the tricar to other provinces to collect waste, which requires them to be away from home for a month's time.

From the research population, we can see that microfinance is more appealing to women than to men. The amount of the microloan, which averages about several thousands of RMB, is not enough for some of the business activities that interest men. Even for raising livestock, men prefer to do it in a large scale, while women tend to be more conservative due to their limited time or capacity. To design policy and programs tailored for men or women, it is necessary to understand their different interests in income-generating activities.

"It is not easy to start a business with small money here. Even 20,000RMB is not enough. [What do you want to do?] Like open a factory, or open a store selling hardware which will cost about 80,000RMB."
[C24, a man in his 60s]

TABLE 17: GENDER DIFFERENCE IN BUSINESS INTERESTS

ACTIVITIES	GENDER DIFFERENCE
Fruit vendor	WOMEN
Embroidery	
Hairdressing	
Running a feed processing shop with husband	
Taxi driver	↕
Clothes retailer	
Grocery store	
Growing tobacco	
Raising livestock: hog/silkworm/hen/goats	
Selling motorcycle	MEN
Hardware store	
Plough and harrow making	
Cement producing; stone processing factory	
Waste collection	
Whatever that makes money	
Doing a diversity of things to reduce risk	

Saving and Spending Patterns

When asked what they would like to use the money for if they have extra income, about 42.6% [69 out of 162] of the interviewees said that they would use the money to improve their own living standard. 28 out of the 69 interviewees believe their most urgent need is to build a nicer house. Expense for their children is next on their list. For those whose children are still of school age, the expense for their children's education is a heavy burden for the family. For those whose children have grown up, the parents worry about their marriage and ceremony costs, which require a large sum of money. Investment in income-generating business is only third place on the list, covering about 13% of the total

responses. Expense related to agricultural production and health care are the other two major concerns of the peasants.

Another noteworthy finding is the difference between men and women in their ranking of priorities. For men, improving the living standard of the family, building a nicer house in particular, is far more important than having more money for children and investment in business. For women, however, while it is important for them to improve their living standard, children's education and marriage remains their top priority. Women also have greater concerns regarding the health care issues in the family, either for their aging parents, young children, or themselves. Expenses related to agricultural production, such as purchasing seeds or fertilizers is of almost the same importance to men and women. They all complained about the increasingly expensive agricultural materials.

To understand the peasants' common needs is integral for development agencies to design and implement programs in a more effective way. Just to give them money is not enough-- because some of the peasants will use it to pay for their children's tuition or medical fees which are their most urgent needs. How to educate and motivate the peasants to use the money in a profitable and sustainable way deserves more attention to achieve program success. Moreover, development agencies also need to put more efforts in advocacy for a more supportive education and health care system in the rural areas. Another point that deserves more consideration is how to strengthen the collaboration between different types of development agencies. The MFIs that provide microloans for small business should conduct their program in partnership with development agencies that aim to improve the education and health care systems in the rural areas. In this way,

more peasants, both women and men, can be freed from family concerns to focus more on sustainable, income- generating business activities.

TABLE 18: GENDER DIFFERENCE IN SAVING & SPENDING PATTERNS

Gendered Saving & Spending Pattern									
	AP	BS	CL	HL	ILS	OT	SP	N/A	Total
Men	4	11	14	1	43	2	1	4	80
Women	4	10	29	7	26	3	0	3	82
Total	8	21	43	8	69	5	1	7	162

Notes: AP: agricultural production; BS: business investment; CL: children; HL: health care; ILS: improving living standard; SP: senior parents; OT: others; N/A: no answer

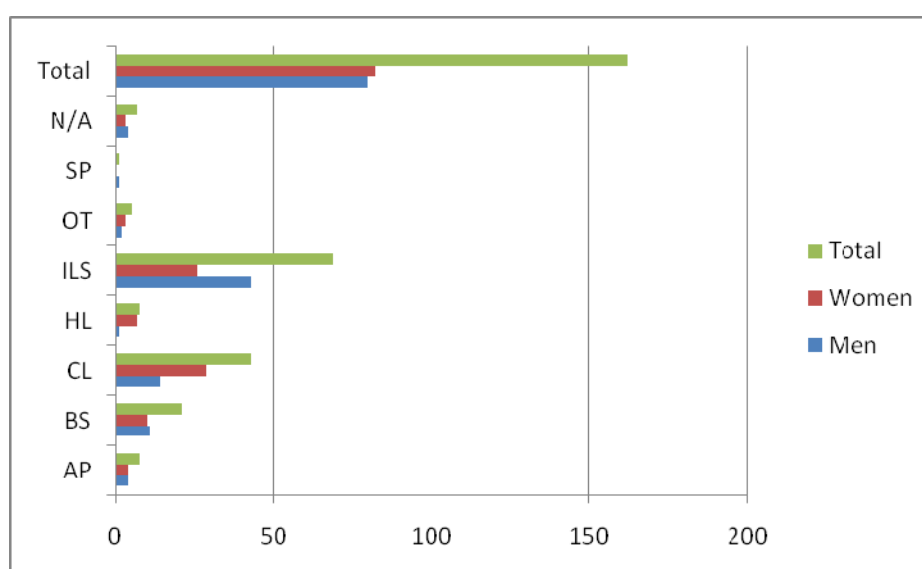


FIGURE 13: GENDERED SAVING & SPENDING PATTERNS

5.2 GENDERED VIEW OF MIGRATION FORCE TO THE CITIES

As in many other countries, during its modernization process, China has been undergoing a large-scale rural-to-urban migration movement. Comparable with the international migration trend, until the mid-1980s, migration was regarded as a male phenomenon. Presently, however, women account for almost half of the migrant population globally. Many studies have been concerned primarily with the demographic, economic, or political

effects of migration and how it should be managed [International Organization for Migration, 2006]. The impact of gender on migration patterns and experiences has not received enough study. In the case of China, literature abounds concerning the conditions of migrant workers and the improvement of women's status in China [Davin, 1996; Kenneth, 2002; Gaetano and Jacha, 2004]. However, research on a gendered understanding of migration only started recently. Women migrant workers, in particular, have long been a neglected group. The impact of migrant workers on gender relations and community development is profound in every village I visited. This section will present exploratory research on the relationship between gender and migration in China. How gender identities and responsibilities influence migration, and how the migration experience in turn impacts male and female peasants and rural community development will be discussed. Some existing problems and challenges facing women migrant workers will also be identified.

In the year 2002, China had a total rural population of around 130 million moving to the cities³¹. The volume of migrant workers has reached up to 20 percent of the population in some of China's urban areas [Wang, 1997]. This is especially true in large cities like Shanghai, where the "floating" population³² is more than three million, the equivalent of one migrant for every four residents [Kenneth, 2002]. The liberation of rural labor to off-farm jobs in cities has been seen as a necessary step for China to shift from an agricultural country to an industrialized one. As Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate, this labor force could help fill up the cities' demand for young, cheap laborers [Kenneth, 2002]. Migrants usually

³¹ www.china.org.cn, Migrant Workers Need Fair Treatment (April 30th, 2003), access date 04/16/06

³² Population with no local household registration is considered as "floating" population.

do the relatively ‘inferior’ jobs that urbanites are unwilling to do, such as house maids, waitresses, construction workers, etc.. Moreover, as many scholars agree, the earnings from nonfarm jobs account for a significant portion of the increase seen in rural income and productivity [Brauw, Huang, Rozelle, & Zhang, 2002]. Official county documents also showed that from March 2006 to March 2007, 2850 peasants in Shilou County [Sichuan province] went out to work in the cities, among which 1,900 went out of the province. A total of 4,900,000RMB [USD714, 026], about USD250.5 per worker, was remitted back home by the migrant workers. This accounts for 75% of the annual net income of a household in the countryside³³ .

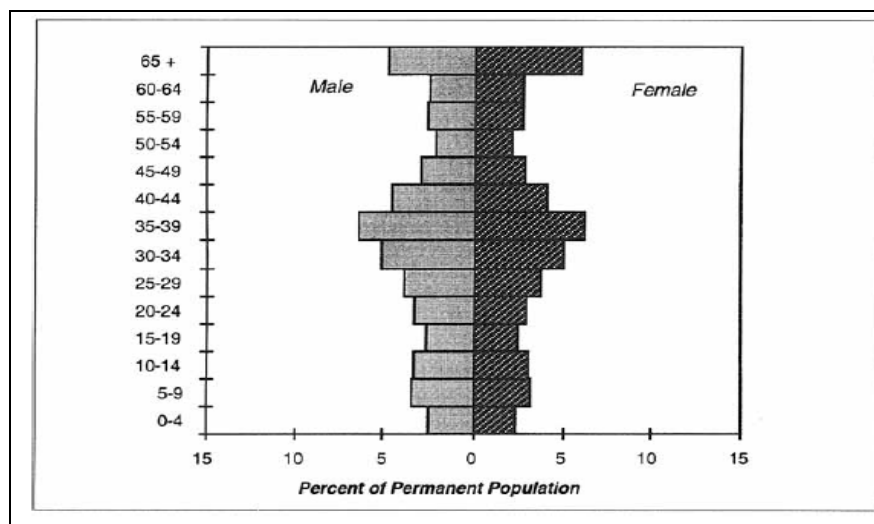


Figure 14: Age Distribution of Permanent Residents in Shanghai³⁴

³³ The statistics are from the official documents collected from Shilou county government.

³⁴Source: Kenneth [2002, p.496], based on data from the Fifth Sampling Survey of the Floating Population of Shanghai

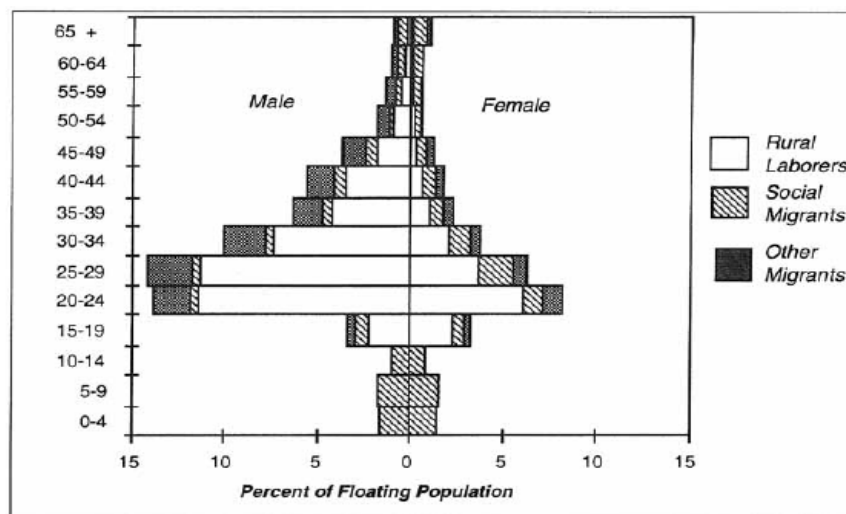


Figure 15: Age Distribution of Floating Population in Shanghai³⁵

The research on the population interviewed clearly shows the impact of migration on community development. Migration is a crucial factor that can not be ignored. With a large population, Sichuan province is well known for its sizeable migrant worker force dispersed all over the country. The age distribution in the following figure shows that only 7 out of the 51 peasants interviewed in Sichuan are less than 40 years old. Most of the people of working age go out to work in the cities. The interviewees in their 20s or 30s came back home just for a break and will later return to the cities to work. About 73% of the population is more than 50 years old. Being asked what they do everyday, a majority of them answered that taking care of their grandchildren was their major task. While I walked around the village, the most common scene I witnessed is grandparents walking around with their grandchildren.

³⁵ Source: same as figure 14.

“I am not strong enough to do heavy work. My son and daughter-in-law are working outside. So only my old wife and I and two grandsons are home. They just sent back 200RMB... I have to support my two grandsons who are at school now.” [B30, a man in his 70s]

Migration has become a subtle culture in these villages. The migrant workers can remit money to their families, but the development of the rural community faces serious shortages of manpower. Besides, not all the migrant workers can earn extra money to support their family. While I was staying in Luojiashi village [Sichuan province], the county government encouraged the peasants to build a pond for biogas production, which is a very efficient way to generate gas through fermented pig manure. The biogas can then be used for cooking and lighting. To motivate the peasants, the government is providing all the money and cement needed for the pond construction. The plan, however, has to be aborted simply due to the lack of manpower.

“We know it [biogas pond] is a good thing for us. But we do not have people who can work here. What can we do?” [Villager in Luojiashi village]

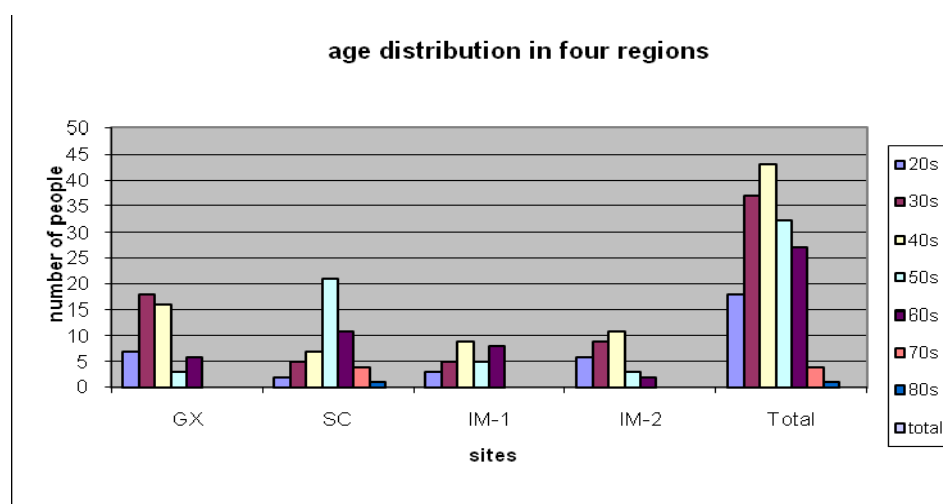


FIGURE 16: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH POPULATION IN FOUR REGIONS

TABLE 19: INFORMANTS AGE DISTRIBUTION IN FOUR RESEARCH REGIONS

	GX	SC	IM-1	IM-2	Total
20s	7	2	3	6	18
30s	18	5	5	9	37
40s	16	7	9	11	43
50s	3	21	5	3	32
60s	6	11	8	2	27
70s	0	4	0	0	4
80s	0	1	0	0	1
total	50	51	30	31	162

Some scholars propose that migrant workers are becoming an integrated group of Chinese society and a rural-migrant-urban tri-polar society has been structured [Li, 2004; Tang & Yang, 2006]. Some other scholars, however, argue that this group is still an outcast of the society, which lives in miserable conditions and is discriminated against by other social groups [Kenneth, 2002; Wang, 1997]. The study of migrant workers needs to be expanded and conducted through the lens of gender to gain a fuller and more accurate picture. Migration is not a gender-neutral issue. It is gender-related and there is much to be learned from a comparative analysis of the gender differences in migrant experience. To gain an accurate picture of the status of women today in China, one must look at and beyond literature. A great deal of literature features the impressive progress in the improvement of Chinese women's status [Tang & Yang, 2006]. Women are getting higher income, more opportunities for education, better representation in decent jobs, and stronger voices at work and home, particularly in urban areas. Although the achievement made should be acknowledged, we should be mindful that there are still groups that are marginalized. A look into the status of women migrant workers, a specific neglected group

of women who are becoming increasingly more important, will help us obtain a more balanced and comprehensive view of women's status in China.

One important reason for taking a gendered view on migration is that recently the participation rate of women in the off-farm sector rose more quickly than that of men. The statistics of Figure 3 show this trend, and also show that from 1988 to 1995, the number of female migrant workers in the rural-to-urban movement increased by 21%. This is 7% higher than that of male migrant workers. In Beijing, statistics show that women account for a third of the 4 million migrant workers in the city³⁶. One driving force for this rise in the participation of women might be the socialist ideology which equates a woman's right to work with successful emancipation of women [Tang & Parish, 2000]. All Chinese, both men and women, are encouraged to join the work force to build a new socialist economy³⁷. In urban areas, about 90 percent of the women of working age are employed; in the rural areas, nearly all women participate in the labor force [Riley, 1996; Bauer et al., 1992]. Since China initiated the market economic reform, more female labors have shifted from rural areas to urban cities.

³⁶ www.chinaview.cn, China, EU Combine to Protect Rights to Female Migrant Workers, accessed on 03/20/2006.

³⁷ The term "New Socialist Economy", also called "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics", was coined by Deng Xiaoping [Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, 1984]. In this framework, major industries are owned by state entities, but compete within a pricing system set by the market.

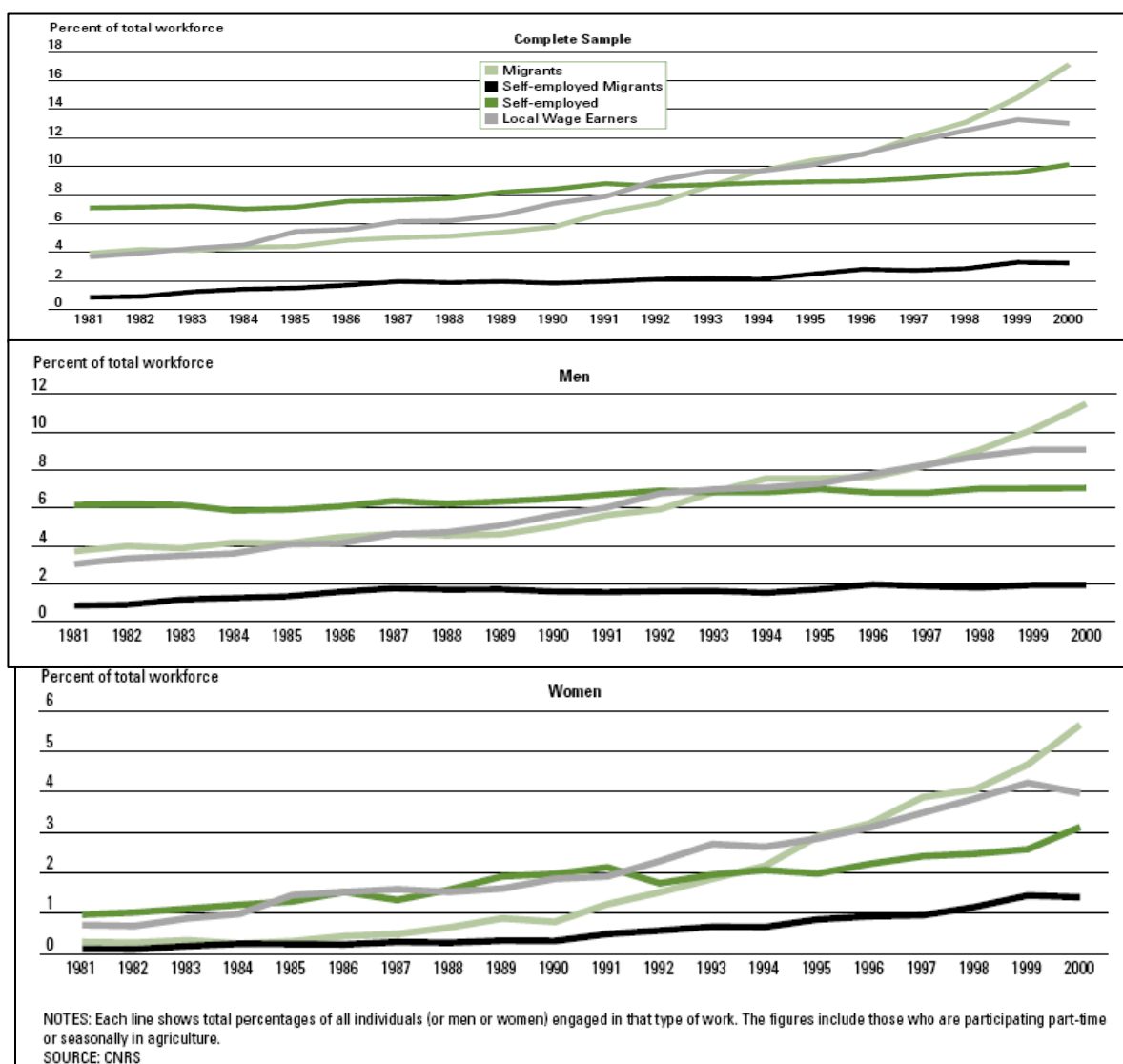


Figure 17: Percentage of Total Labor Force Engaged in Off-farm Work³⁸

While the world witnesses the unprecedented economic development in China, what is striking is that the gender discrimination in China has actually worsened. Compared with the situation 10 years ago, Chinese women's social status has declined in many ways, according to a 2001 survey by the All-China Women's Federation [Zhang,

³⁸ Source: China National Rural Survey

2002]. Chinese rural women, who are the main source of women migrants, have been pushed to the bottom of the social hierarchy, suffering more than urban women in the process of modernization. The sample advertisements of jobs listed in Figure 4 shows that many advertisements specified gender and age requirements. The positions specified for women are mainly in secretarial or service jobs even though most of the positions are in fact suitable for both men and women.

The high rate of women's participation in the work force has been reached mainly through strong intervention from the state. The recent radical economic and social reforms, which advocate market competition and shift China from a workplace-based welfare system [state-oriented] to a social welfare system [market and society-oriented], changed the context for achieving such a high participation rate [Lee, 2001]. Corresponding legal frameworks and social security systems have yet to be well-established. Since male workers are traditionally considered more capable than female workers, women are consequently marginalized under this newer market competition system.

Dates of advert	Vacancies	Requirements
27 August 2000	Clerk	Female; age 21-25; good-looking and elegant; Mandarin and Cantonese speaker; computer literate
	Security guard	Male: retired army soldier; above 1.75m in height; age below 25; or female: local resident; above 1.65m; age below 22
	Beautician	Female; five years experience in make-up sales; good-looking; good make-up skills, interpersonal skills, training skills
	Engineer	Male; age below 35; at least three years experience in electronic enterprise of foreign-investment; problem-solving skills
	Financial clerk	Female; age below 27; polytechnic qualified; two years experience in accounting; can work overtime
	Sales engineer	Male; age above 25; university qualification; competent in mechanical and electrical engineering; sales experience
30 August 2000	Project manager	Male; age above 30; university qualification; experience in software development
	Senior secretary	Female; age below 28; university qualification; years of admin and secretarial experience; computer literate; good English
2 September 2000	Sales Manager	Male; aged 25-32; university qualification; three years experience in telecom equipment sales management
3 September 2000	Tea house supervisors and waitresses	Female; age 18-23 for waitresses; good-looking
9 September 2000	Call-centre girls	Female; single; healthy; age below 23; A-level qualification; eloquent; sweet voice; clear pronunciation; Mandarin and Cantonese speaking
	Sales strategist	Male or female; university qualification; age below 35; good-looking; above 1.65m in height (the average height of female in Guangdong Province is 1.62m); at least three years sales experience
10 September 2000	Art exhibition and auction managers, sales reps, accountant	Female; age 25-35; polytechnic qualification; at least three years work experience; good interpersonal skills and social network; good-looking; above 1.63m in height
	Waitresses	Female; age 18-25; above 1.65m in height; good-looking; at least two years waitressing experience

Figure 18: Selected samples of gender-specific job advertisements in *Guang-zhou Daily*³⁹

Due to the different expectations, roles, behaviors, and relationships that society assigns to women and men, they might choose different migration patterns. Women migrants in particular can be exposed to a dual vulnerability. In China, rural gender and kinship roles, a daughters' relatively marginal roles in rural production, and the loss of autonomy that likely results from marriage, are all driving factors that create within rural women a desire to 'escape' the countryside and migrate to the cities [Gaetano & Jacka,

³⁹ Source: Lee Fang Cooke, 1998. *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.339

2004]. Social expectations of how women should behave, norms of gender propriety and popular stereotypes associating women's mobility with immorality, however, are also of great concern to young rural women and give them a lot of pressure. As a result, women have to make a good balance between their desire and concern, which oftentimes is not easy to do.

The type of job that women migrant workers choose helps illustrate how they struggle with the balancing of desire and concerns regarding working outside. Many migrant women workers choose to work in domestic service [e.g. house maid] instead of working in restaurants or clubs, assuming that domestic service is "safe" while other jobs [e.g. waitress or club staff] are relatively dangerous for women's virtuous reputation. However, the dilemma these house maids [*xiaobaomu*] face is a lower salary, lower prestige and disrespect from urbanites and their relatives since their jobs are historically associated with servility [Gaetano & Jacka, 2004].

The dual identities as "woman" and "migrant" have brought female migrants more challenges than their male counterparts in their migration experience. The gender schemas, a concept introduced by Valian [1998] referring to mentally constructed, implicit, non-conscious assumption about sex differences, are powerful shapers of people's interpretations of men and women's behaviors and motives. Being assertive and aggressive is considered inappropriate behavior against the popular schemas that women should be warm, tender, and friendly. With pressure from these schemas and the disadvantages associated with being migrants, migrant women are more vulnerable to sexual harassment and personal abuse. To make matters worse, they are often incapable of protecting their

own rights and interests. Also, being family-oriented, female migrant workers have family responsibilities on their shoulders. Compared with men, they have to face more family-related problems when they suffer injuries or conflicts at work. Sometimes such problems result in divorce⁴⁰.

"When I worked in a packing factory in a big city, maybe I had too strong sense of self-respect. I felt bad when the boss bullied me... You have to work at all times even when you get sick... I saw many girls were doing prostitute work. They were not willing to do it, but they had no choice. So it is really dangerous for young girls working outside. Well, not all of them are like that. Maybe it is better to stay home." [C7, woman in her 20s, used to work outside, now back married]

Also, the ineffectiveness of *hukou* [household registration] reform, which differently impacts male and female migrant workers, makes female migrants' situation worse. The central government has recognized the constraints of the original rural-urban dichotomy guaranteed by the *hukou* system. The reform of the *hukou* system has been carried out in some cities [Cheng & Selden, 1994]. However, the implementation of the reform at the local level is not effective enough due to different stakeholders' interests in keeping the status quo. The local governments have significant motive to maintain the status quo because migrant workers are cash cows for local bureaucracies. In Shenzhen city, taxes levied on migrant workers account for 70 percent of the local government's tax revenue [Zhang, 2002]. Urban residents, unwilling to give up their superiority and privilege, also formulate strong interest groups to oppose changes to the system. Because of the ineffectiveness of the *hukou* reform, the stigmatized titles like working sister [*dagongmei*] or sister from

⁴⁰ www.china.org.cn, Women Migrant Workers Deserve More Protection, Xinhua Agency, 08/21/2003

outside [wailaimei] are still imposing great psychological and social pressure on female migrant workers. Quite often many female migrant workers choose marriage as a way to solve the problem. It comes as no surprise then that oftentimes their marriages are neither stable nor happy, and their husbands are urbanites who live in relatively poor conditions in the cities [Kenneth, 2002].

“Some girls want to find boyfriends and get married outside. If they can do that, their lives should be better.” [B44, man in his 50s]

Another serious problem facing migrant women is the violation of the interests and rights of young female migrant workers⁴¹. The legitimate interests and rights of Chinese female migrant workers are more easily violated than their male counterparts. Although China’s Labor Law guarantees women workers maternity leave and protection for their reproductive health, many employers refuse to pay maternity leave or simply fire women workers when they get pregnant. According to the survey conducted by the Legal Research and Assistance Center for Women in 2002, 21.9 percent of newly-started companies refused to cover female employees’ expenses in giving birth, and 16.2 percent did not allow female employees to have maternity leave of at least 90 days⁴². The age limit requirement shown in Figure 4 also illustrates that employers try to avoid job seekers of child-bearing age. Even during employment, women migrants receive poorer working conditions and treatments than their male counterparts. According to the 2000 report of the Institute of

⁴¹ www.china.org.cn, Women Migrant Workers Deserve More Protection, Xinhua News Agency, August 21, 2003.

⁴² www.chinaview.cn, China, EU Combine to Protect rights of female migrant workers, 03/20/2006

Sociology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the average monthly salary for a female migrant worker in Guangdong is RMB300-RMB500 [\$37-\$62], while male migrant workers generally earn RMB500 or more per month. Women are also disadvantaged in the termination process of employment. Employment statistics also show that the proportion of female workers in the whole workforce in 1998 is 7 per cent lower than that of 1995.⁴³ In the wave of lay-offs, women are more vulnerable than their male counterparts.

A gendered perspective of migrant workers helps clarify the driving forces of a more successful community-driven development. According to the answers of the research population, there are two major reasons that women interviewed would rather work outside than stay home. The first reason is that the life outside is much simpler than their life in the rural area. Women in the rural areas not only take care of all the work in the house, they also need to help with the work in the field. Instead of having multiple, disparate responsibilities all needing attention, women working outside have only one task to do. The work in the city, oftentimes working in the factory, could be very difficult. Work starts very early in the morning and sometimes does not end until midnight. But the much simpler life and regular income are more appealing to women in the countryside. Therefore, profitable and sustainable businesses activities that can help free women from a life burdened by too many disparate and non-profitable things will be an appealing choice for women in the rural areas.

⁴³ Ministry of Statistics (1999), *China Statistics Year Book*, 1998, the Ministry of Statistics, Beijing

"Yes, it is hard [to work outside]. But you have only one work to do and you have income. Staying home, you have millions of things to take care of and have no regular income at all." [A47, a woman in 40s, worker outside, now has to come back home because of his husband's health problem]

For families where husband and wife do not share a high level of cooperation, financial independence from their husband is a driving force for women who want to work outside and for those who desire to generate extra income at home. The desire to have a certain level of autonomy in the family motivates women to participate in income-generating activities. For those families where husband and wife are more cooperative, the wives would like to work because of the desire to share her husband's burden.

"I make money outside and keep it myself. I do not need to give it to my husband. I use it for my living expense there... It is good to stay home, very free and comfortable. But I have to rely on my husband. [A47, a woman in 40s]

"...my husband needs to mail the money back home for me to use. Then when I used them up and asked him for more, he said he cannot make money that fast, even he prints the money himself, it will not be that fast [laughing]." [A32, a woman in her 30s, tried to raise silkworms, but failed]

Despite the desire for an easier life and more financial independence, the ambivalence toward working outside is strong among the research population. When asked if they think women working outside will have a negative influence on the family, 89 out of the 162 interviewees answered "yes". Most of them agreed that they will have no time to take care of the family and aging parents if they work outside. Some married women expressed the dilemma they were facing between making more money and taking care of their children.

TABLE 20: THE INFLUENCE OF WORKING OUTSIDE ON FAMILY

	GX	SC	IM-1	IM-2	Total
Yes	22	22	21	24	89
No	14	19	5	6	44
N/A	11	10	4	1	26
Maybe/Depends	3	0	0	0	3
Total	50	51	30	31	162

“Working outside, I was still worried about the aged and the kids. When I was working outside, every month, I need to spend about 400RMB on phone calls.” [A19, woman of 40s, used to work outside, now back raising silkworms]

“No, I will not do it [leaving the kids at home]. It will be meaningless for me to work outside if I do that. I make all the money just for my kid's future. If his development is ruined, what is the point of making money?” [D31, woman in her 20s]

When asked what they would prefer to do if they could choose between staying home, working outside, or staying home doing small business, the answers from the four research sites show some interesting disparities. In Guangxi and Sichuan provinces, almost the same percentage of the interviewees [23/50] answered that they would prefer to work outside. In Guangxi, compared with men [7/24], a much higher percentage of women [16/26] would like to work outside. Despite their desire for more and regular income and more financial autonomy, however, they also expressed ambivalence about working outside for a number of reasons:

- Need to take care of the whole family;
- Elderly parents to take care of;

- The living expense outside is high;
- I am too old/sick to work outside;
- I have freedom here, will not be bullied and scolded by others;

Interestingly, more men prefer to stay home to do some business; their ambivalence toward working outside is mainly due to the three reasons listed below, among which the first is the prevailing one. Therefore, although both men and women expressed the same ambivalence about working outside, they do so for different reasons. Women are more concerned about family issues, while men are more concerned about their self-respect or the level of income.

- The boss bullies, scolds and abuses you; here we have more freedom, in the city you are controlled and abused by others;
- I am too old to go out;
- It is not easy; also the income sometimes is very low;

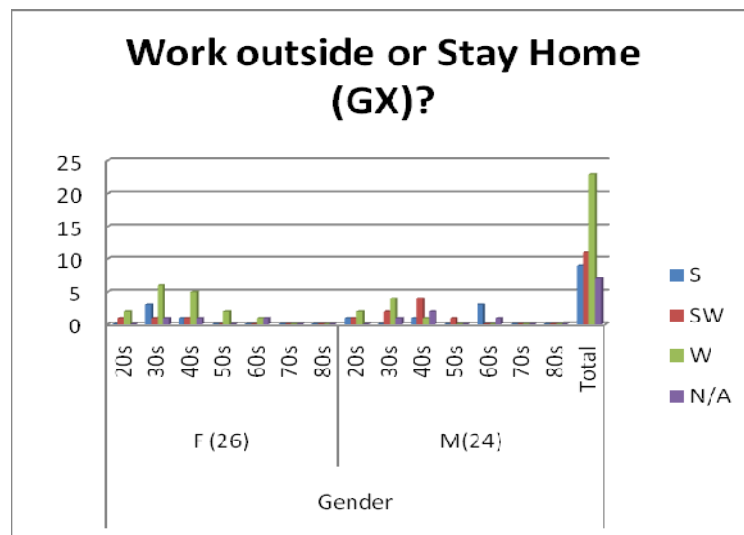


FIGURE 19: GENDER DIFFERENCE IN ATTITUDES TOWARD WORKING OUTSIDE [GUANGXI]

(S: stay home; SW: stay home also doing business; W: working outside; N/A: not applicable)

Considering the heavy influence of migrant workers in Sichuan, it is not surprising that about half of the research population in Sichuan expressed their desire to work outside. The following figure shows that the majority of those who would like to work outside are men in their 50s because the young people have left for the cities. What distinguishes Sichuan from other research provinces is that more men are left home to take care of the family due to the area's geographic features. The village is located in a hilly region where peasants have to climb up and down hills to work in the fields. Women are not strong enough to carry the materials for agricultural production, such as seeds, fertilizers, and etc. As a result, many women go out to earn money and men are left at home to take care of the family and the field. The men who are left home are mostly above 50 years old. They are not interested in doing any other business but simply desire to take care of their field. The major reason for their ambivalence toward working outside is that they are too old to do it. One of the interviewees is over 70 year old, but still he has to work in the field due to the lack of labor in his family. It is understandable then that the second choice on the list for people in villages in Sichuan is staying home.

"[Do you still work in the field?] What can we live on if we do not? We still need to eat. My son only sent back 200RMB."

[Do you still need to carry fertilizer/ manure?] No, my health is not good enough. My wife does it; she is about 69 years old." [B30, 72 years old man]

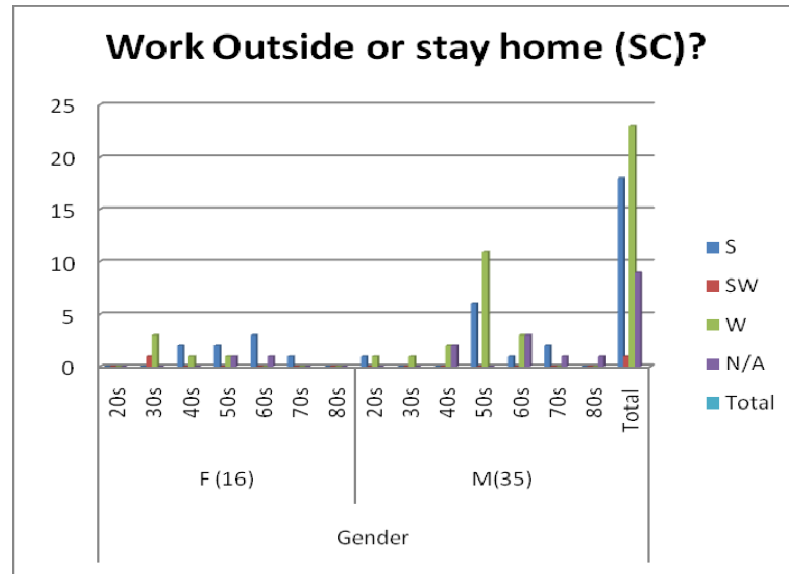


FIGURE 20: GENDER DIFFERENCE IN ATTITUDE TOWARD WORKING OUTSIDE, SICHUAN PROVINCE

The results from the two research sites in Inner Mongolia showed totally different patterns. For Xinglongdi village, the ranking of preferences is as follows: 1] staying home; 2] working outside; 3] staying home doing business. In SLB village, the ranking goes as follows: 1] staying home doing business; 2] staying home; and 3] working outside . Both the villages are located in Inner Mongolia and share similar cultures and traditions. Agriculture and husbandry are the two major industries in this region. A household can have 20-50 Mu of field [both dry land or patty field] depending on the size of the household . A family can generate more than RMB10,000 income through growing wheat, corn, or cotton. But in the year 2007, Inner Mongolia had a severe drought which greatly diminished the agricultural production.

“Yes, agriculture is ok here. Actually in our village, compared with other villages, we have more people and less land. In other villages, the average amount of land for each household is about 70Mu. Some have 200Mu. So it is not difficult for them to get 10 or 20 thousands RMB each year. In those villages,

nobody go out to work. This year is different because of the drought. So many people went out to make money.” [C4, man of his 30s, vet of the village]

There are two possible reasons why in Xinglongdi village, more people prefer to stay home. First of all, compared with SLB village, the research population is more aged. There are few young people left because the severe drought conditions compelled them to seek work else where. Secondly, more women chose to stay home because their husbands are either working outside or collecting waste. Collecting, sorting, and reselling waste is a business conducted by many households in this village (7 out of the 23 households with husbands staying home). If they are fortunate enough, they can earn about 6,000RMB-10,000RMB each year. Usually they drive a tricar around nearby villages to collect waste. Sometimes they must go to other counties to avoid increased competition from more people joining this business. As a result, women need to stay home to care for the family even though they showed the same interest in working outside as people from other research sites. The ambivalence toward working outside is very strong because of the same reasons as mentioned above.

The second research site in Inner Mongolia distinguishes itself by the high percentage of people who chose to stay home doing small business. The successful microloan programs in the village are primary reasons for it. Many households are making good money from raising hens or pigs. Consequently, people are not very interested in working outside. As the northern part of China is more influenced by the Han culture, the mindset that women should stay home is very strong. A majority of the research population, both men and women, noted that it is better for women to stay home unless they have no

other options to make a livelihood. If there are small children at home, in particular, women should stay home to care for the children. They described women as “very important to the family”.

“Everybody wants a family. It cannot be called a family, if there is no wife in this family. If the wife leaves, the home is not complete... Some women used to be very nice persons. But they became bad after they went to work in the city. We are not like your urban people. We rural people do not know that much about urban life. Many people get cheated very easily. We had somebody here. She went to work in the restaurant then she ran away with somebody else. How could she become that cold-blooded to abandon her kids?” [D22, woman in her 30s, successful in raising hens]

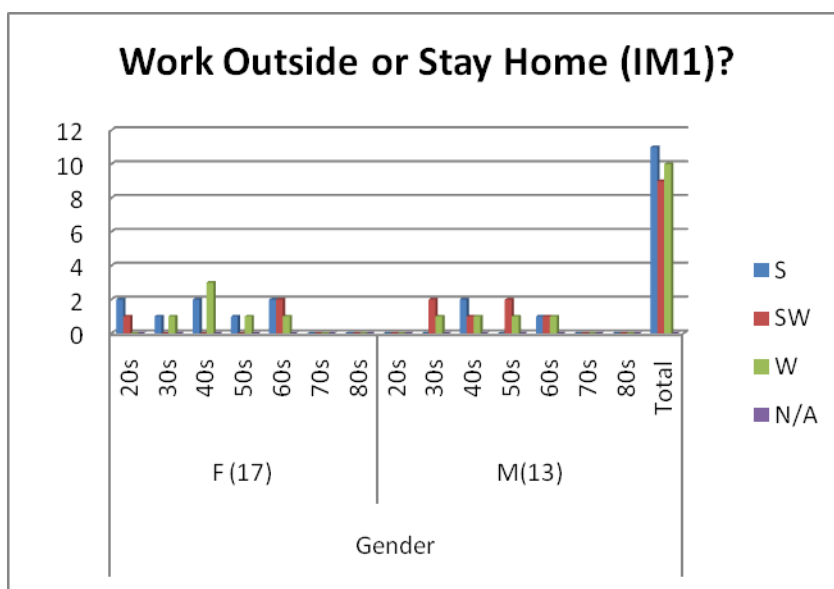


FIGURE 21: GENDER DIFFERENCE IN ATTITUDE TOWARD WORKING OUTSIDE [IM-1_

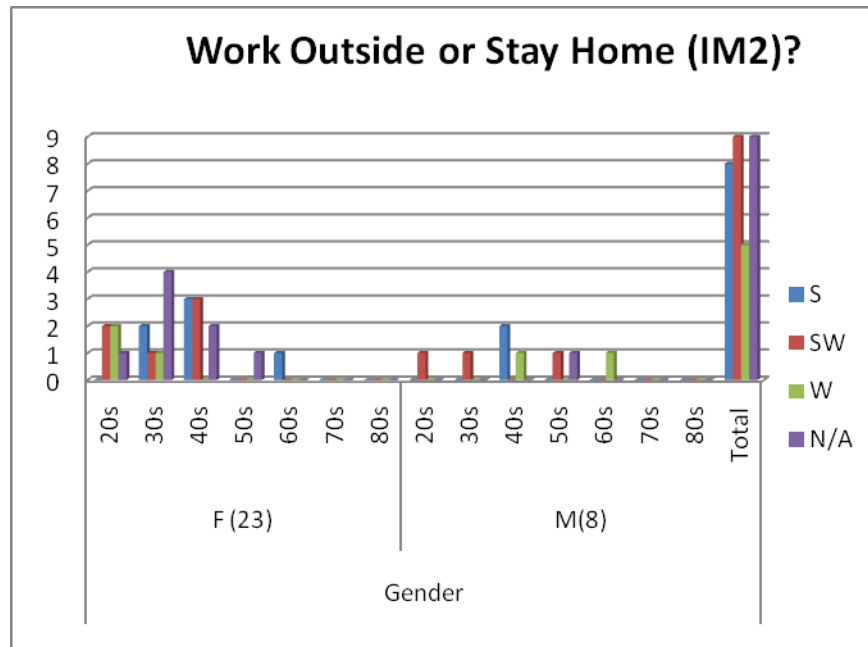


FIGURE 22: GENDER DIFFERENCE IN ATTITUDE TOWARD WORKING OUTSIDE [IM-2]

Working outside has a mixed effect on female migrant workers' lives. On the one hand, women retain greater personal autonomy, independence, acquire new skills and values. Their remittance also helps support their families back in the rural areas. The work and life in the city influences rural women's attitudes and aspirations for their future. On the other hand, the abuse and exploitation that some rural women suffered during their migrant experience casts shadows in their lives [Wright, 1999]. For those women who return to villages after several years of outside earning, while they help narrow the rural-urban gap by introducing new skills and ideas, they feel it difficult to adjust themselves back to the rural and backward situation [Davin, 1996].

"There are more fun in big city. Here you even do not have anything to talk about." [A36, woman in her 20s]

Development cannot be sustained without the participation of people that it is intended to assist. In the research sites, rural community development faces a shortage in labor as many young laborers move to the cities. Although migration and urbanization are considered inevitable trends for development, I would argue that, for some migrant workers, to work in the cities is only a choice made from no choice. Out of the 162 interviewees, 76 said that they would prefer to stay home, while 61 noted that they would like to go out working [Tables in Appendix C]. Many of the interviewees expressed the feeling that “east or west, home is the best”. Some young people started to work in the cities since the age of 15 after junior high school. Without enough education, these young migrant workers can only earn very little money which is not even enough to support themselves in the city, not to mention their parents back in the rural villages. A continuing movement to free labor off the farm is inevitable indeed for the development of China. Considering China’s large population, it calls for more than one solution to settle this issue. A gendered perspective of desires and concerns of migrant workers will help development agencies have a better understanding of their target group and design tailored programs.

One of the alternatives for urban-to-urban migration is rural-to-rural commuting and migration [Lohmar, Rozelle, and Zhao, 2000]. Due to the concerns and ambivalence about working outside, many peasants have found a middle way to solve the problem. Like the woman quoted below, they look for work opportunities in other villages or towns nearby to earn off-farm income. In this way, they make extra money while also being able to return home to care for the family and the field during busy seasons. Still, there are some gender differences in this solution. Women tend to choose lighter work such as weeding,

shepherding sheep, picking tobacco leaves or mulberry tree leaves for others. Such work can usually be found in their own village or other nearby villages so that they can go back home every day. Men are more involved in construction, mining, or working in factories. Some of them can go home every day, but some can go home only once a week or once a month. This rural-to-rural commuting and migration has provided an alternative to rural-to-urban migration. However, these jobs are mostly low-income and short-term. A more sustainable and profitable solution is needed for effective development of the rural community.

"I work for other people in the village, on hourly rate, to go weeding for people, about 20RMB per day. I cannot leave this poor home, also I have two kids at school. I have to support and take care of them, one 17, one 12..." [C3, woman of 30s]

5.3 CASE STUDY: SILKWORM FARMER

Personal Profile

Mrs. Liang is in her forties and the mother of one son who is a sophomore in college. She lives with her husband in Fada village, Guang Xi Autonomous Region. Their primary income-generating activity is raising silkworms. At the same time, they also grow wheat and corn and raise pigs and cows. One floor of their house is used for raising silkworms. They also constructed a separate building on the outskirts of the village expressly for silkworm raising. Silkworms at different life stages were raised in different rooms.

Mr. Liang used to work as a village leader. Now he is retired with a pension and stays at home raising silkworms. Forty-five years old with good health, he considers raising

silkworms a fairly fast, safe, and profitable way to earn money. The Liang family is considered a very successful case by other families in the village.

Gender Roles and Responsibilities

Both the husband and wife agree that they should share the responsibilities to support the family. Mrs. Liang described their relationship as “equal, helping each other”. Mr. Liang said that his wife also has the responsibility to work and support the family and it is meaningless “just to lay in bed and rest at home.” Although they both answered “yes” to the question “does the husband help with the housework?”, Mr. Liang still considered it primarily the wife’s responsibility to take care of the “trivial housework”. The Zhuang culture of the village is clearly evidenced in this profile as Mr. Liang, the husband, takes care of the money and most of the time goes to the market to purchase daily necessities.

“In the past when I did not raise silkworm, I worked in the morning and then played Mahjong [a popular gambling game] in the afternoon. Now I do not have time for that. But I prefer being busy like now, because I have more income.”[Mrs. Liang]

Although Mrs. Liang described their relationship as “equal”, she also noted that her husband usually makes the final decisions about major issues in the family. They started with discussion, but if they disagree, the husband will make the final call. In addition, she said she will not do any business if she does not receive her husband’s support. In contrast, Mr. Liang stated that if his wife did not agree, he would explain to her and eventually persuade her to support him.

Business Activities

The Liang family started to raise silkworms from the year 2003. At that time their relatives in Guang Zhou province who were experienced in raising silkworms told them about this business. This was also around the time the government began encouraging peasants to raise silkworms. So they took the opportunity and received free Mulberry tree saplings from the government. Their business was not very successful at the beginning. Yet they kept consulting experienced people and learned from their own failures. The husband was the leader in the family and the couple shared the same desire to have a better life.

“Some people are just satisfied with three meals a day. But I have an aging father here. Also my son is in college. So I need money to support them, to let them have a better life.” [Mr. Liang]

Mr. Liang expressed that he did not think his wife had too much work to do. They need to work hard to make more money, which is better than those who do nothing but live in poverty. Mrs. Liang echoed her husband in terms of the financial need of the family. She did admit, however, that sometimes she really felt tired. According to her description, she used to work only half day taking care of house chores and some work in the field. But now with silkworm business, she was occupied from early in the morning to late in the evening. If she was younger, she would prefer to work outside, which was much simpler and easier. They both considered their son’s education to be the most important motivation for them to earn money.

When it comes to the expansion of the business scale, Mr. and Mrs. Liang have different views. The wife was satisfied with their business and felt there was no need to

expand. The husband, however, thought otherwise. With the scale of the current business, sometimes they need to hire other people to help collect mulberry tree leaves for the silkworms. Mr. Liang is looking for partners to make the business bigger. When asked what is their definition of “being successful”, they both answered that as long as you work hard, learn, and do not give up easily, you will succeed. The high level of unity, trust, and cooperation between Mr. and Mrs. Liang is obviously critical to their success.

5.4 MAIN FINDINGS

Gender study plays an important role in development. Gender is about both men and women, which indicates that women’s development can never be accomplished without integrating men into the picture. It is crucial to understand the different roles, responsibilities, desires, and concerns men and women possess in different cultures. Development agencies need to account for these factors to figure out the enablers and barriers for effective community-driven development. The research in the three culturally different provinces reveals some patterns that development professionals need to be mindful of while they design and implement development programs.

1. Despite the fact that some husbands help with housework, the workload for women in the rural areas remains very burdensome. Some of them would rather work outside than stay home dealing with multiple things every day.
2. The levels of cooperative relationship between husband and wife differ among the local cultures. In Guangxi province, husband and wife have a higher level of cooperation than those in Sichuan and Inner Mongolia. This can exert significant

influence upon community development as many development programs require the joint efforts of both husband and wife.

3. The lack of initial capital base is the primary difficulty for both men and women to start a small business. Women are also more concerned about the lack of capacity while men are more confident [men usually have a higher level of education than women].
4. In different cultures, women have different levels of access and rights to use resources, particularly money. To achieve effective community-driven and participatory development, rules and policies need to be formulated to ensure that women are motivated and empowered to make good use of the money.
5. Men and women have differing levels of mobility. Since women are more concerned about family issues, they choose to stay close to home. This indicates that women could be the main force for community development. But the situation of Sichuan, where those who stay home are mainly men shows that there are exceptions.
6. Different saving and spending patterns between men and women affect the sustainability of the development. Women would use the extra income on the children or medical care instead of reinvestment as men would do. This calls to attention the need to establish better education and medical care systems in the rural areas.
7. The dilemma between the increasing rural-to-urban migration and the lack of labor in community-driven development calls for a further study of migrant workers,

particularly women migrant workers. Rural-to-urban migration has gradually become a subtle and invisible culture in the rural areas.

8. Different provinces have different levels of ambivalence toward working outside. Women and men have diverse concerns and desires about working outside. A healthy development of the countryside calls for more profitable and sustainable business opportunities that provide more off-farm work opportunities. Rural-to-rural migration can be one option.

CHAPTER 6: SELF-ORGANIZATION & COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

International development agencies have become more aware of the fact that the top-down command-control mechanisms and the market-oriented mechanisms are not as efficient as they were expected to be. Self-organizing groups which are governed by local communities and buffered from outside forces, as an alternative, are drawing more attention from the development agencies. Self-organizing mechanisms are considered more flexible, sustainable, and empowering for the local people. The community-driven development cooperation initiated by the World Bank aims to empower local communities and government to organize and govern their own development processes. In this chapter, the role of culture, both as means and ends, in the self-organizing processes will be addressed. This chapter will also explore the cultural roots of self-organizing awareness in the local communities, which can be harnessed for better community development. Through studies of successful and failed cases, successful experiences and challenges for sustainable community-driven development in rural China will be presented.

6.1 THE CULTURAL ROOT FOR SELF-ORGANIZING AWARENESS

As an integral part of development, culture has been drawing more attention from academia and practitioners in the field of development. Culture is of great importance for effective development policy making and program designing processes. Culture has sometimes been taken as means for development, while sometimes as ends of development processes. Similarly, the self-organizing activities are deeply embedded in the local culture. The “natural” self-organizing activities of the community will lead to the cultivation of

certain behavior patterns or traditional cultures. In return, the customary and traditional cultures, as resources, will strengthen the self-organizing capacity of the community in other social activities. Zhou Yi, in his book “Research on Leading Questions on the Great Western Development [西部大开发前沿问题研究]”, emphasized the importance to cultivate a self-propelling capacity to make good use of the advantage of indigenous resources [2002]. During my field work at the research sites, I noticed some cultural phenomena in the communities which both illustrate and strengthen the self-organizing capacity of the communities. The next section of the dissertation will present some examples of cultural activities in the research sites to illustrate the relationship between culture and self-organization mechanisms.

The local market place in the villages is a common phenomenon for peasants to trade their products and purchase their daily necessities. In every village, once or twice a week, the peasants come to the market place, which usually is located at an area where peasants from the nearby villages can access easily. Different provinces have different names for the market places. In Guangxi, Sichuan, and Inner Mongolia, the market places are called 圩 [Xu] , 场 [Chang] , 集 [Ji] respectively. In Guangxi, every three days people will gather at the town center area to be part of the market place. In Sichuan and Inner Mongolia, every five days the market place is set up once.

The market place, which is considered as a cultural tradition in the rural areas, is also a product of self-organization. On the day of the market, peasants carry their own goods, such as vegetables, eggs, daily necessities, clothes, or food, to the market place. Although the local government needs to make sure all the transactions and activities are

conducted in an orderly way, the influence from the government is minimal. The self-organizing market place serves the rural communities not only from an economic perspective, but also from a socio-cultural perspective. Besides selling their products and purchasing daily necessities, people come to the marketplace for a social purpose. The market is a place where people come to socialize with each other.

Like the following picture shows, some people also come to have their hair cut along the street. Little ones are more attracted by the food, toys, and fun activities at the market. For young people, the sense of excitement and prosperity is more appealing. They come to the marketplace to meet friends and have fun. As people in the community are connected closely through the market place, they maintain and strengthen this tradition/custom by themselves and the market place grows accordingly. In this case, maybe it is fairer to say that culture is an end of self-organization. However, once the culture is established, it can surely exert influence on the self-organizing capacity of the community.



FIGURE 23: PEOPLE GET HAIRCUT AT THE MARKET PLACE [GUANGXI]



FIGURE 24 PEOPLE COME TO THE MARKET PLACE [XU] TO BUY BABY DUCKS [GUANGXI]

The next case is more about how culture, as a means, propels the self-organization of people in the community to fight for their shared interests. Zhuang people in Guangxi province is well known for their tradition of song fairs, which has been described in details in Chapter 4. Basically song fairs are self-organizing singing activities for people to celebrate festivals or socialize with other people in the community. For young people in particular, song fairs used to provide them opportunities to get to know and find their lovers. Although young Zhuang people of today do not keep the tradition as their parents or grand-parents' generations did, you can still see the influence of this tradition in people's daily life.

When I stayed in Jingxi town, Guangxi, I was attracted by a large crowd of people at a public square where people, those of older age in particular, relax and gather to sing in groups. This place was known as a venue where people come to communicate, socialize, and entertain after dinner. The singing session might start with 2 or 3 persons in each group. As more people participate, the groups grow bigger and bigger. It is really enjoyable to see five or six groups of people competing in singing. Then I was told that the square actually was saved from the town government and the real-estate developer through a self-organized protest. Since the square is located at a very good spot, the government was planning to use it for real estate development. However, people in the community felt their interests were threatened. Basically they will have no place for community gatherings if the square was destroyed. With no external forces, people in the community came and sat at the square to protest against the town government's plan to destroy the square. As a result, the town government had to compromise and cancelled their plan for real estate

development. As a result, the culture of song fairs was also preserved in the community. The two-way relationship between culture and self-organization was fully illustrated in this case.

There are many other cultural activities that demonstrate the community members' natural capacity to organize themselves, among which the wedding and burial ceremonies are particularly noteworthy. Funerals in the rural areas of China are big events because traditionally the family that lost their family member needs to prepare a "feast" to host the friends and relatives who come to mourn and condole. When I stayed in Ande Town in Guangxi province, the father of my host family's neighbor passed away. In the following three days, I witnessed how people from the neighborhood came to help prepare the food for about 300 people. It took the family at least two pigs, dozens of ducks and fish, countless eggs, and bottles of oil and wine to prepare for the feast. In the first two days, people came to mourn and help with the preparation. On the third day when the burial ceremony took place, the dead family member was buried and about 300 people ate together afterward. Nobody organized the preparation and funeral, but the connection and bonds among community members constructed the network of assistance.

The funeral also illustrated the different gender statuses and roles in Zhuang ethnic group. It is very common that a huge amount of food was left over after the funeral ceremony and people who come to the funeral can take home a portion of the leftover food. What is interesting about Ande town, different from other villages, is that only women have the privilege to take food home, which is another glimpse of women's higher status in Zhuang ethnic community.

The cases and examples presented above indicate that, as natural systems, rural communities have their self-organizing capacity to maintain certain patterns and adapt to changes. Culture is an indispensable factor in the self-organizing processes. Likewise, the self-organizing processes contribute to the cultivation and preservation of different cultures. However, social systems are not always as simple as natural systems. The increasing uncertainty, changes, and complexity in the society have imposed more challenges to community development. Effective community development cannot be achieved through the narrowly defined “natural” self-organization of the communities. It calls for self-organizing processes that are based on the integration with the environment and collaboration with other players. As the environments get more complicated and more players are involved, how to handle the differentiation and integration of diverse cultures becomes even more challenging.

6.2 SELF-ORGANIZATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Prior to the launch of the pilot community-driven development initiative in 2006, sponsored by the State Council of the Chinese government and the World Bank, there were some comparatively successful community development programs in some villages. The self-organization mechanisms played important roles in the success of those programs. In this section of the dissertation, two successful community development cases will be analyzed. Factors that contributed to the success will be generated from these cases, which could be helpful and applicable to the ongoing CDD programs. In addition, the implementation and impact of the CDD program will also be discussed.

CASE # 1: JIU ZHOU VILLAGE – THE EMBROIDERED BALL BUSINESS

Jiuzhou village, which is also located in JingXi County of Guangxi Autonomous Region, is well known for its handmade Xiu Qiu [绣球 embroidered balls] industry. The development of the Xiu Qiu industry in Jiuzhou village is a good example that illustrates the importance of integrating the local culture into community development. Community based organizations were established as a result of the self-organizing capacity of the local community. It helps the community to adapt to the changing environment. It also contributes to the preservation and prosperity of the local culture.

The history about Xiu Qiu can be traced back to Song Dynasty [960-1279 A.D.] of ancient China. At the beginning, Xiu Qiu was used by young women of Zhuang ethnic to express their love to the men that they were interested in. At festival occasions and song fairs, young women and men tossed Xiu Qiu to each other to show their interest to each other. Considered as a symbol of Zhuang culture, making and tossing Xiu Qiu is kept as a traditional activity for many celebrative and festival occasions even nowadays. Almost every household of Jiuzhou village knows how to make Xiu Qiu. In addition to love, the cultural connotation of Xiu Qiu has also evolved to represent good harvest, good fortune, and prosperity in fertility, etc..

Although Xiu Qiu started as personal gifts between Zhuang people, it was introduced to people of other ethnicities as Zhuang ethnic and culture became more well-known by people of other parts of the country. The local governments use Xiu Qiu as presents to visitors from other provinces or regions. Villages that are good at making Xiu Qiu received

orders from the governments and sell their Xiu Qiu through the government. Basically they have no control but have to do what they were told. There was no motivation for the community to organize themselves.

Since an agent cannot organize itself independent of its environments, the environmental factors played important roles in the prosperity of the Xiu Qiu business in Jiuzhou village. Actually it was triggered by an accidental occasion. Mr. Zhu, who has won the title of “Xiu Qiu Master”, was the one that started the self-organizing process of Xiu Qiu making. In early 1980s, he went to attend a singing contest as a folk singer. At his performance, he creatively wore a Xiu Qiu around his neck to show his ethnic characteristic. One of the audience members who was a tourist from the United States found the Xiu Qiu very delicate and beautiful. He asked Mr. Zhu if he would sell it to him. He showed three fingers to Mr. Zhu, which Mr. Zhu thought meant 3RMB. Surprisingly, the American tourist gave him \$30! This accidental encounter with the tourist made Mr. Zhu realize the commercial value of Xiu Qiu. After he went back to the village, he made some Xiu Qiu by himself. Since he did not have enough connection at that time, he asked the local government to help sell the balls in the capital city of Guang Xi. All the embroidered balls were sold out in several days. In addition to that, more orders were placed by the purchasers. As a result, Mr. Zhu began to gather people in the village who were good at making Xiu Qiu to do it together. People in the community started to organize themselves to adapt to the changes from the external environment.

Communication and interaction among people in the community is crucial to start and sustain the self-organizing processes. One can build up his own capacity only when he

communicates with others. Mr. Zhu did not keep the information to himself for his own interest. Instead, he communicated with his relatives and other households in the community and scaled up the business. The cultural commonality and social ties among people facilitated the communication process. Mr. Zhu is also talented in creating original drawing patterns embroidered on the balls. He shared and taught his skills and knowledge to other households so that the capacity of the whole community was improved.

The development of collective action theories is indeed a process of pursuing factors that influence successful coordination. Effective collective actions call for the integration of individual behaviors. When a high level of integration is required for community development, integrative devices emerge. In the case of Jiuzhou village, as community members are loosely connected with each other, it requires efforts to coordinate them to meet the external demand. Self-organizing and self-governing community-based organizations were created as a result of the need for a higher level of integration. Led by Mr. Zhu, Jiuzhou Association for Embroidery Skills [AES] was established. Another community-based organization, the Association of Embroidered Balls [AEB] was set up by Ms. Huang who was well known for being skillful in Xiu Qiu making. Compared with the association established by Mr. Zhu, the AEB is more loosely structured and of smaller size. The two associations helped to coordinate individual efforts into more adaptive and effective collective action.

One of the key functions of the community-based organizations is to keep the community a learning community. The traditional Xiu Qiu is embroidered with traditional patterns such as birds and flowers, which is also what most of the households are capable

of doing. To keep pace with the time, however, the community needs to be a learning community to adapt to the ever-changing environment. The role of the associations is to update their ideas, cultivate a learning environment, and translate individual learning to collective actions, which again requires effective communication and coordination. The two associations have been very effective in organizing training sessions for their members to teach them new skills and designs. The capacity of the community as a whole has been greatly improved.



FIGURE 25 ALMOST EVERY HOUSEHOLD IN JIUZHOU VILLAGE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE EMBROIDERED BALLS

CASE #2: SLB VILLAGE – SUCCESSFUL MICROFINANCE PROGRAM

The microfinance program is nothing original in today's China. From mid 1990s, a variety of microfinance models have been established either by international and domestic organizations or the Chinese government. But many of them ended up in failure. However, the microfinance programs in SLB village of Chifeng city, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region have been set as successful examples for other parts of the country to learn from. Started from the year 2000, the microfinance program in SLB village was financially

sponsored by UNDP and implemented by the Women Federations of Chifeng city and Aohan Banner. Therefore, the successful experience of SLB village is of great value for other parts of China and even the world. It can also be applied to the ongoing pilot CDD initiative.

The microfinance programs in SLB village followed the Grameen Bank model in most of the implementation processes. According to the principles of Grameen Bank's method of action, the whole system relies heavily on solidarity groups which are small informal groups consisting of interested borrowers. Each group includes five members who come from the same background and trust each other. Depending on the number of borrowers, several groups [usually about five to ten groups] form a center. It is critical for the group formation that the members are *from similar backgrounds* and *trust each other*. When the group members do not share the same motivations and interests for attending the program, the self-organizing process is distorted. Sometimes the group formation is manipulated by some individuals. The self-help groups failed to play the role as integrative and coordinative devices and the program ended up with failure easily as a result.

"Yes, that [self-help group] is what microfinance was supposed to be, five households get the load jointly. We did it that way. But among the five households, actually only one household used the money. If I need the money, I will ask the other four to form a group to help me to get the money. "[A town officer in charge of poverty alleviation, talking about a previously failed government-sponsored microloan program, Guang Xi Autonomous Region]

In SLB village, the groups were formed among women who would like to use the money for some income generating business at home. Living in the same community, there is a high level of mutual trust between them. The mutual trust between people is a valuable social capital that turned out to be a key element for the formation of the self-help groups.

In return, the healthy functioning of the self-help groups promoted the mutual trust to an even higher level. The on-going of the virtuous circle eventually leads to successful community development.

“We came to group by ourselves. We exchanged ideas and experiences, for example, we raised hens or hogs together. So we are even much closer once we got into one group. It helps the community to be more harmonious. For example, if there are some frictions between two of us, I pay the weekly loan for you when you happen not to be at home. When you came back, you would feel warm and thankful. So the community is better. I have been working as center head for about five or six years. I think it is really good.” [Ms. Chen, microfinance program self-help group head, Inner Mongolia]

Another feature of the microfinance programs in SLB village is its focus on women. There has been much literature about microfinance which claims that women are good risks and poor women often have the best-credit ratings. In Bangladesh, for example, women default on loans less often than men, and credit extended to women has a much greater impact on household consumption and quality of life for children.⁴⁴ The differences in saving and spending patterns between men and women described in Chapter 5 also proved this since women tend to use their income on expenditures for their children and the improvement of their living condition. The microfinance program in SLB village, which aims to empower women, requires that only women in the household have the right to borrow microloans. Despite the fact that many men still exert influence on their wives about how to use the loans, the program has improved women’s social status to some extent.

⁴⁴ <http://www.ifad.org/media/news/2004/150204.htm> , access date July 16, 2008

“For the loan, that is the money I borrowed, so I have the right to decide how to use it. In that way, my status was improved.” [D1, Ms. Chen, Microloan borrower]

Another impact of the program is that more women are willing to stay home as the community provides them with more opportunities to generate income. Figure 8 is the comparison between different research sites of the percentages of women who want to work outside, stay home with no business, or stay home doing some business. Unlike other sites [Chart # 1, 2, &3] where a notable high percentage of women chose to work outside, SLB village [chart # 4] has a much higher percentage of women who are willing to stay home or stay home working.

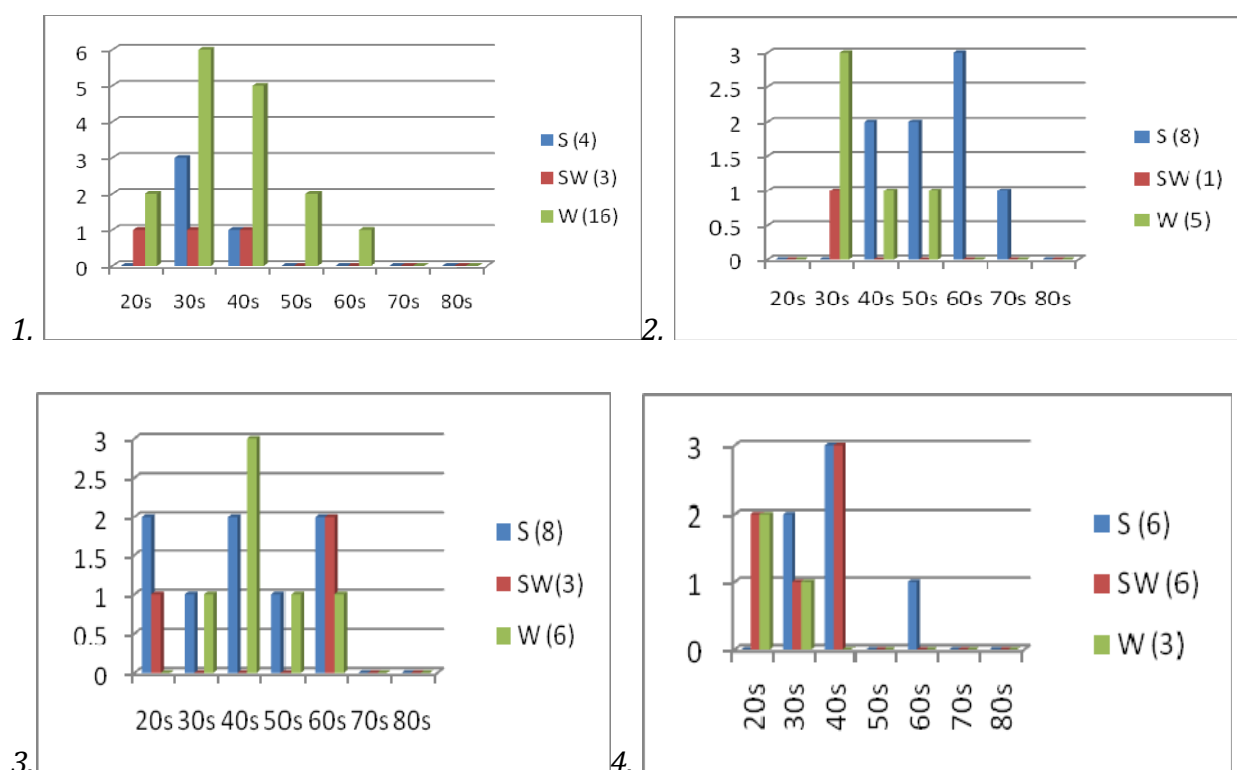


FIGURE 26: HIGHER PERCENT OF WOMEN REMAIN HOME IN VILLAGE NO.4 WHICH IS MORE DEVELOPED

The success of the microfinance program in SLB village can not be achieved without the coordinative efforts of the Women’s Federations at different levels. The Women’s

Federations of city, county, and village levels are all affiliated to the All-China Women's Federation [ACWF]. Founded in 1949, ACWF is a mass group which consists of women from various ethnic backgrounds and of all walks of the society. It is the largest NGO for improving the status of women in China, and its basic function is to represent women, protect women's rights and interest, and promote gender equality⁴⁵. Down to the village level, the All-China Women's Federation has branches in all levels of government. The connection and network it possesses can be powerful and it makes their coordination efforts much easier. The role of the Women's Federation is indispensable in the microfinance program in SLB village.

What makes the Women's Federation distinct from other NGOs is that it is not 100% non-governmental. Although it is not literally run by the government, it is closely affiliated to and strongly supported by the government. These types of NGOs are categorized as GONGOs [government-organized NGOs], which are very common in China and other developing countries. Different from both NGOs and government, GONGOs possess some comparative advantages that fit the Chinese condition very well. One of the roles of the Women's Federation is to connect the mass people with the government, which implies that they have close and direct connections with both the people and the government. In Chinese society where connection [关系] is the key almost for everything, this advantage is of significant value.

⁴⁵ <http://www.womenofchina.cn/aboutus/index.jsp#fdoa>, access date July 15, 2008.

In China, the top-down mechanisms is still the dominant way for development initiatives. Official approval or authorization from the upper level of government is required to initiate and implement certain development programs, in particular when foreign partners are involved in the efforts. Because of its close attachment to governments of all levels, the Women Federation can get approval from the upper level of government in an easier way than those real grass root NGOs. They are also more competitive in winning more support and resources from the government. Moreover, the majority of people feels more connected and open to them as they are not authoritative and commanding as government agencies. Since the Women's Federation deal with problems closely related to people's daily life, they often have fairly good reputation among people. In addition, with its broad networks in all villages, the Women's Federation can reach its target population faster. Hence, the information dissemination process, which is crucial for the success of the program, can be conducted in a more efficient way. As one coin has two sides, however, it is possible that the layers of networks sometimes lead to rigidity and red tape, which can weaken the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.

"The town and village level women leaders came to encourage us to do it [borrowing microloan]. At the beginning, we did not know much. And many people were worried that they might not be able to pay them back. Then the next year, many people borrowed because they all saw that it worked. See my hog pen there, at that time, people all thought mine was an advanced one. They all came here to visit. So they followed suit." [Ms. Chen, microloan borrower]

Besides information dissemination, another key function of the women's federations is to cultivate a learning community. Compared with programs in other research villages,

the microfinance program in SLB village has invested much more efforts into organizing trainings for its clientele. It is important to understand the local culture to help them start businesses suitable for their context. It is equally important to build the capacity of the peasants so that they can sustain the business. The Women's Federation in SLB village have been making efforts to improve people's capacity to raise livestock. Most of the women interviewed acknowledged the importance of training and noted that they had benefited from previous training sessions. They also agreed that connection and access to information were of great importance for the success of their business. The hen-raising business in the village has been scaled up to a point that a special business zone was set up for the hen-raising households. The Women's Federations at different administrative levels have successfully played their facilitative roles in the program implementation.

"Yes, a couple of years ago we had [training about raising livestock]. They also organized a trip to visit other villages." [D14, women in 40s, microloan borrower]

"Yes. The county helped organize it [the training]. They came to pick us up to go to the county center to attend the training." [D9, women in 30s, microloan borrower]

"Yes. They came to the village to give us training about raising livestock; the microloan program officer came to give us training." [D8, women in 40s, microloan borrower]

6.3 THE IMPACT OF CDD PROGRAM IN CHINA

The CDD program aims to give control of decisions and resources to community groups. Having been proved effective in some other developing countries, the CDD initiative was piloted in China in 2006, sponsored jointly by the World Bank and the State Council of the Chinese government. The designs of CDD programs in different countries vary. The CDD

programs in China mainly provide three phases of opportunities for participating communities to receive funding, which are as follows:

1. Funds for community small-scale infrastructure and public service improvement.
2. Community development funds which the community will collectively manage and provide low-cost loans to households pursuing income-generating opportunities.
3. Funds for community natural resources management or environmental improvement.

At the time when I was conducting the data collection, most of the villages had finished the first phase programs and were preparing for the second phase CDD program which was to establish revolving funds for sustainable small-loan business. Through interviews with peasants and other players involved in the processes and participatory observation of the program implementation, it is fair to say that the CDD programs have brought benefits to the community in certain ways. However, I also noticed that many pressing problems exist in the process which should deserve more attention. Some of the problems are obvious, some are less visible, and some are even intentionally neglected. If the CDD program were scaled up all over the country without addressing these problems, more serious consequences would be caused. This section of the dissertation will mainly present the benefit which CDD programs have brought to the community, both in economic value and social value. The struggles and challenges for CDD programs in China will be addressed in the next section.

In the first phase of the program, the infrastructure and public service in the villages have improved. The majority of the peasants interviewed showed their support to the

program. Being aware of the importance of physical and technological infrastructure, most of the villages used the fund for infrastructure building mainly for road building, reservoir building, or biogas pond constructing.

Compared with other poverty reduction efforts, particularly the previous top-down mechanisms, CDD programs have improved the level of transparency of the program implementation process. Hence, the efficiency in fund utilization has been improved. As the money goes straight to the village level from the State, the chance for dirty tricks is greatly reduced. Also, the peasants have more rights to monitor the use of the money. One village leader noted that in the past when the poverty alleviation fund was allocated by the higher level of government, the funding was almost cut in half when it finally reached the village level. The difference that the two ways of operation can make is breathtaking. For example, for the CDD program, 90,000 RMB was used to build a road of 1.7 kilometers long. A previous road building project funded by a different government agency which is only about 600 meters long, however, 50,000RMB was spent for the road. For the same length of road construction, the government-sponsored program cost 57% more money than the CDD road construction program does. Of course, the peasants had no chance to see the money and no idea how it was spent. Therefore, compared with the top-down mechanisms, the CDD program is more effective in a way that it reduces much of the transaction fees and the possibility for corruption. In another words, it has saved much money for the Chinese government. Again, the flip side of the story is that tension between the CDD program coordinator and the government will possibly be created because of this. This issue will be addressed in details in the next section of the dissertation.

In some of the Chinese government documents it was reported that the peasants' capacity for self-organization and self-governance has been improved since the inception of the CDD programs. My perspective is more conservative as I believe that capacity-building cannot be achieved overnight. Since China has been employing the top-down development mechanisms for years, the shift to bottom-up mechanisms is like a "cultural shock" to many Chinese people. Some officials of the county or city level told me that when they first received the plan for the CDD program, they were overwhelmed and did not know where to start. The CDD program is like a breeze of fresh air to let them know that there is another way for development.

"We have never done this before. We even did not know how to talk to the peasants about this program." [Official from the city level, Guangxi]

For the peasants, however, the impact of the CDD program is more significant. As Sen argues, development is not only about GDP, it is "a process of expanding the freedoms that people really enjoy... [Sen, 2001]." The CDD program has definitely brought the peasants some freedom in many ways. They can make decisions on their own about what community project to have. They discussed among themselves what interest rate they would like to have for the community development fund. Many peasants involved in the program were happy with the road, wells, or reservoirs they build with the CDD fund. Therefore, many peasants have gradually come to realize that they can and should be more involved in the development processes. However, the influence from the previous command-and-control system is so strong that it requires more efforts to help the peasants shift their mindset to the new system. When I conducted focus group discussions with the

peasants in the research villages, I asked them the question “ which way do you think is better, the government telling you what to do, or you telling the government what you want to do?” From the different answers received, the impact of the CDD program is obvious to tell. However, the remaining influence of the top-down system makes me more concerned. The younger participants noted that the bottom-up is more effective and tailored to their own needs. However, they added that they still needed to rely on the government and listen to the government. For the older participants, their first reaction showed their inertia of following the old system and skeptic to the new one.

“Of course the government should give us the order about what we need to do. What do we know? Also, if the government does not agree, we can do nothing.” [Focus group in Sichuan]

“But it [you telling the government what you want to do] is not very possible. Hard to say, the government might not listen to us. We do have our own needs, but the government does not give money to address those needs.” [Focus group in Inner Mongolia]

But after further discussion and explanation, some of them would agree that bottom-up should be more effective. Some participants noted that if they can have the power to decide what to do, it will be more sense-making because sometimes the government does not know the local condition well. Some other participants also said that that the government should make more efforts to listen to them. When asked their attitude toward the future of the CDD program, the officials from the World Vision also acknowledged the increase in people’s awareness about community-driven development.

“It depends on how you define "successful". If the goal of the government is to promote the concept of community-driven and shift people's mindset, that would be accomplished. Also we

learn lessons from it and know what we should make improvement on in the future. We are successful from this perspective.” (World Vision official, Inner Mongolia)

Therefore, the CDD program has enhanced people’s awareness about the bottom-up mechanisms to some extent. However, this is only the first small step of a long journey. It calls for more efforts and commitment from all levels of the society to really build up people’s capacity for self-organization and self-governance.

6.4 THE CHALLENGES FACING SELF-ORGANIZATION IN CDD

Due to the increasing complexity and uncertainty of our social systems, it is not possible for an organization or community to survive without interaction with the outside world. Self-organization must go hand in hand with adaptation. However, self-organization is not the magic bullet to solve all the development problems. Although the self-organization mechanism is considered automatic, flexible, and adaptive, it also has its drawbacks such as being selective and evolutionary. Self-organization alone is not sufficient for the survival and prosperity of a community. This part of the dissertation will address the challenges or barriers that hinder effective self-organization and adaptation to the external environment. In addition, how the intrinsic weakness of self-organization affect community development will be discussed.

Lack of Understanding of the Local Condition

The local condition here refers to a variety of factors, such as culture, tradition, geographic features, climate, etc.. Instead of embracing and integrating the local condition into the development processes, many development programs wasted huge amounts of

resources and ended up in white elephant projects. This kind of program was not unusual at the time when the state ran everything. Similar problems might emerge in the on-going CDD program if no proper action is taken in a timely manner.

During my field work, the peasants told me many stories of the white-elephant projects their village had been involved in before. In one village, pointing at some sick Ginkgo trees, some peasants told me that they were left from a government-sponsored program several years ago. Since Ginkgo has a high economic value, the government of upper level encouraged every households of the village to plant Ginkgo trees. Actually they were required to plant them as the saplings were provided by the government free of charge. So many households used their farm lands for planting Ginkgo trees. But a couple of years later, none of the trees grew well and turned out profitable as they were supposed to. It was at that time that the local government started to know from some geographic experts that the soil quality in this area was not suitable to grow Ginkgo at all. Development programs that are blindly driven by economic profit with no understanding of the local condition can do no good but harm to the local community.

The failure to recognize the variety and intricacy of culture is another possible reason that hinders successful self-organization and adaptation. It is understandable that the program designers tend to plan programs of larger scale to make it more cost-benefit effective. However, being ignorant about the local culture can result in wasteful and ineffective ends. To understand the community, the development professionals need to make more efforts to understand the variety and intricacy of the local culture. In one of the villages I stayed, raising silk-worms seemed to be a very popular and highly encouraged

business to do. Actually some of the peasants have been making fairly good profit out it. When I interviewed peasants living in the outer circle of the village, almost everyone was excited about raising silkworms. When I began to interview peasants who lived in the inner circle of the village, I assumed that they might be interested in raising silkworms also. So I asked them what the difficulties for them to raise silkworm were. The peasants being interviewed seemed confused and offended. They cannot understand why people wanted them to raise silkworms when they were actually good at something else. However, since raising silkworms is recognized and encouraged by the government, many supportive services were provided to households doing it. For those households engaged in basketry, although they did need help in term of sale and marketing, they have no support from the government to scale up their business as their “interest” or “culture” is not understood and appreciated by the government. Being sensitive to distinct cultures of different populations is a critical quality for development professionals.

“I am really not interested in raising silkworms. People in our village are specialized in basketry. People in our village knit baskets with bamboo branches. We sell it to Singapore or the United States. Our neighborhood is good at doing this.” [A45, man living in the inner circle of the village]

Tension between Different Stakeholders

The Complex Adaptive Systems consist of many interacting components which interact with each other in order to adapt to the environment. As CDD programs aim to strengthen the local communities’ capacity for self-organization, it is crucial to make sure that the environment for community development is “fostering”. From the participatory observation of the program implementation processes in different research sites, I noticed

that instead of being “fostering”, the conflict or tension between stakeholders is actually hindering the effectiveness of the program. Among the stakeholders involved in the program, local communities, governments of all levels, and international organizations are the major ones. As the community is shifting from a controlled sub-system to a self-organizing one, all the stakeholders need to find their new positions in this new system. Tension will be created when the position of some stakeholder does not fit into the new system.

The tension between the local community and the government is the most notable. When the government tries to manage or control self-organizing systems, the result usually is different from the desired effect as self-organization is resistant to control by nature. Sometimes it even results in the destruction of the system. Being aware that the government should not command or control the CDD program, governments of different levels find it hard to decide to what extent they should intervene. As a matter of fact, they still “control” the program either by intervening too much or too less.

In one of the villages I visited, the local government did not care much about the program because they consider it none of their business. One of the requirements of the CDD program implementation from the World Bank is that the funds go directly to the village level and should be managed by the villagers themselves. Another requirement is that competent villagers will be selected and trained to be the program coordinators responsible for the CDD program implementation at the village level. The concept of “democratic selection” is still not well accepted in the rural areas of China. At the beginning of the program, each village had their village leader as the program coordinator. Realizing

that it would be old wine in new bottles if the government officers keep in control of the programs, the World Bank, international NGOs involved, and the State government held open and public application, examination, and selection of qualified people. New qualified program coordinators were selected to replace the village leaders. As this measure promoted the idea of “empowerment and democracy”, the seeds of tension between the new program coordinators and the village leaders were planted at the same time. In addition, the local governments feel they are left out of the picture. They are reluctant to offer any assistance and cooperate with the program coordinator. As a result, the program coordinators had a very hard time to start the program as the villagers were still with the mindset of “listening to the government”. Therefore, the governments are exerting their influence by “not supporting” when they are supposed to support.

“...So inevitably they [village leaders] were kind of resistant when I went to the village, and kept saying that it was difficult. So at that time, I really had a hard time. For the first couple of months, I cannot carry on any work at all. So I had to walk door to door. I also explained at the village meeting why they changed coordinators. So gradually they accepted it. Now the villagers are more cooperative.” [One of the program coordinators]

The other extreme of “controlling” is that the governments take over the program by intervening too much. In another village where I did my research, the programs seemed more like government-driven instead of community-driven. Although the program coordinators were selected through public application and examination, they worked as part of the government. Since no international NGOs were involved in this village, the training of the program coordinators was conducted by the upper level government who was more used to the command-and-control system. Despite the minor differences from

previous government programs, in general the government set the tone for the CDD program implementation in this village. As the whole purpose of the CDD program design is to promote empowerment and self-organization of local community, too much external control will possibly ruin the program. Tension between the government and peasants can also be caused by this unbalanced intervention efforts. The buffering and cushion function that NGOs play is an important role in this aspect, which will be discussed in detail later.

“...In some other towns, peasants have protested and complained that the program was not well implemented...In some towns, some villages did not get programs, so they were suspicious that something was plotted behind the scenes. So I do not know what exactly happened. But there must be a reason for their protests...” [One of the program coordinator]

Another noteworthy phenomenon that I noticed during the observation is competition within and between villages or communities. The unpredictability and uncertainty of the system leads to various types of self-organization and adaptation of its components. These components compete or cooperate while interacting with their shared physical environment. In the six villages where I did my research, some communities choose to cooperate while others tend to compete. Among the various factors that might influence their choices, social capital, as a source of power base, is the one that cannot be ignored. As Francis Fukuyama [1999] described, social capital is the existence of a certain set of shared informal values or norms in a group which permit cooperation among the group members. As people in the community are connected more closely and the level of trustworthiness is higher, it is more likely for them to cooperate and vice versa. The next point will focus on the importance of trust for the success of the CDD program.

Declining Trust in the Society

Social capital is not only relationships as resources but also means to consolidate resources and defend against possible resource loss [Lin & Cook, 2001]. Social capital can be used constructively to facilitate collective action for the common good, or destructively to perpetuate domination and violence against others [V. Rao & G. Mansuri, 2004]. As shared norms and values, social capital needs to be understood in a highly contextual light. The multi-site field study offers me opportunity to witness how the level of trustworthiness as an important element of social capital, can be different among villages and how that affects the effectiveness of the CDD initiative. This section of the dissertation will mainly describe two kinds of trust: trust in the government and trust among individuals in the community. Successful community development calls for the co-existence of certain levels of these two kinds of trust.

Lijiaguan village in Sichuan province is a good case that depicts how the decline of trust in the government can affect the CDD. The decline of trust does not happen overnight. In the Mao era, the people trusted the government so much that they blindly followed the government's policies even when they were wrong. Although China opened up to the outside world in late 1970s, state-run programs remained the majority of the development initiatives in the rural areas of China. However, the ineffectiveness of the government's programs has caused enormous loss of local resources. In LJS village, the government launched different large-scale development programs before. But few of them turned out successful and many peasants had to bear the losses caused by the ineffective programs. As a result, when the CDD program was promoted in the village, people thought the

government was crying “wolf” again. This discouraged the peasants from organizing themselves and participating into the program.

“If the government has good programs, peasants see the profit, then they will follow. Like what they did before, they always talked big, never did it well. As a result, people lost faith in the government. They had programs which were not tailored to local conditions and cannot be carried out.” [B-13, LJS village, man, 27]

Another reason that caused the decline of people’s trust in the government is the lack of accountability in government performances. Among the people I interviewed in LJS village, many of them complained that the government did not fulfill their responsibilities because nobody cared about the villagers’ needs. Compared with the SLB village where people support and think highly of the work of the women’s federations, the environment for people of LJS village to organize themselves is not very encouraging.

“Well, maybe I should not say this. From 1980s, several terms of town leaders have changed. But till they left their positions, we had not got the chance to see what they looked like. So even we want to go visit them, we even do not know who we should talk with. Most of them live in the city. They do not stay here. We do not have the chance to see them.” [B20, man in 50s]

The level of trust among people, as the internal factor, sometimes is even more important than the trust in the government. The comparison between the two villages in Inner Mongolia can illustrate how trust between people as social capital can be powerful. In Xinglongdi village, one household has been successful in raising hens. What is strange is that no other households in the village followed suit. The story in SLB village is totally different. People helped each other to do business and kept each other accountable. An

informal community-based alliance which used informal strategies for achieving compliance was also established to scale up the business. What is the missing link in the XLD village then? Why aren't self-organizing mechanisms working in this village? The interviews with people from the two villages have shown that the mutual trust among people in the community was a key factor for the development of self-organization. The informal strategies that SLB village used to achieve compliance were based on the mutual trust and commitment between people. The lack of trust in the Xinglongdi community has not only hindered the development of self-organizing capacity in the community, but also discouraged the entrepreneurship of those forerunners.

"It is very hard to do something in the rural areas. Those people who do not know raising hens at all, they gossip and talk about you all the time, saying 'it is not profitable'. When the price [for the eggs] is high, they say nothing. When it is low, they started to talk about you again. So much pressure. Especially last year, when the bird flu happened, well.... It makes it even harder that we are the only household doing it here." [C21, Female in her late 20s, the only one raising hens in the village]

"We exchange ideas and experience, for example, we raise hen or hogs together. So we are even much closer once we are in a group. It is more harmonious...When it is time to pay the loan, you are not home, and I pay it for you. When you come back, you will feel warm and thankful. So the neighborhood is better." [D1, female in her late 50s, microloan self-help group leader]

Unfavorable Environment for NGOs Development

The network-based public-private-nonprofit partnership has been advocated as an efficient and inevitable trend by scholars of NGOs studies. NGOs, not merely a residual response to government and market failures, are supposed to provide collective goods with shared responsibilities and risks with the government and market [Salamon, 2002]. The development of NGOs is a symbol of the level of democracy and self-organization in the

society. Although the Chinese government is becoming more aware of the importance of NGOs, the environment for NGOs development in China is still far from being favorable.

All NGOs operate within a contextual matrix derived from specific locational and historic circumstances that change over time [Turner and Hulme, 1997]. Philanthropy and volunteerism are two important pillars that support the development of the NGO sector in America. However, the differences in traditions and cultures have led to a different social environment for NGO development in developing countries. A survey conducted by the China Youth Development Research Center suggested that the lack of recognition [71.5], lack of funds [63.4], and inadequate management [57.0%] are hindrances to volunteering [Ding, 1999]. Since the formation of NGOs in China is still a relatively new phenomenon, neither the government nor the public have sufficient knowledge about the roles and functions of NGOs from an international perspective.

Another challenge that domestic NGOs in China are facing is their complicated relationship with the government. In developing countries, Fernandez [1993] identified government-NGO relationship as a “love-hate relationship”. The relationship, however, is not as simple as these two extreme conditions. It varies from country to country, from regime to regime, and from organization to organization. It is a continuum in which each organization can find its position in between. In China, many of the existing NGOs are GONGOs [government organized NGOs] which are closely affiliated to the government. They are administratively supervised and financially supported by the government. As the government begins to cut their support to these GONGOs, the GONGOs are facing financial challenges because the fundraising mechanisms for other sources are still not well

established yet. In addition, although many GONGOs are aware that a more democratic, autonomic, and self-governing structure is essential for real effective NGO management, they still stress the importance of maintaining the good relationship with the government through which they can gain access to more resources and privileges. For the privately initiated NGOs, since it is not very possible for them to acquire funding from the government, the majority of their funding is from international donors or other sources.

For NGOs initiated by individuals or other private units, their activities can be intervened by the government through rigid laws on registration or dissolution of NGOs. In China, in order to register, NGOs have to be affiliated with government line agencies. Some NGOs try to avoid that by finding a legal association or institution to sponsor them. The drawback is that their activities have to be limited by their sponsors. Some other NGOs decided to register as for-profit and had to pay taxes for their activities. As a result, many NGOs choose to stay loose and unorganized structures and operate in black and grey markets.

For international NGOs working in China, one major challenge might be the difference in accountability environment. The key differences here are to whom to be accountable and how to measure it. As Kearns said accountability is a contextual concept. For NGOs from the developed world, the environment is one 'in which emerging themes of customer service and responsive entrepreneurship are beginning to compete with the more traditional reporting mechanisms for ensuring accountability [Kearns, 2000].' Therefore, the priority of their accountability is given to their customers. However, with different political context and financial sources, the top priorities for NGOs' accountability

in the developing world tend to be local government and overseas donors [Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Fox & Brown, 1998].

World Vision is one of the international NGOs that are involved in the CDD programs in China. As they carry out their responsibility to offer training to the program coordinators and keep the government accountable, they often find themselves in difficult positions as the local “working culture” is very different from theirs.

“The government is not willing to have NGOs watch them. We are not trying to do some revolutionary things here. We just want to make sure the program was well implemented, the goals are achieved. We think we need to follow up and talk with the local people after the programming. But the government does not like that. So when we write some report about it, they are not happy.” [World Vision officer working in Inner Mongolia]

Lack of Capacity-Building and Empowerment at the Grass Root Level

When the focus group participants were asked what the major factors that prevent them from doing small business were, they ranked the difficulties they were facing. In addition to the lack of capital and poor infrastructure, the lack of skill and knowledge is the third major reason that most of the peasants were not motivated to do small business. During the individual interviews, many peasants expressed their fear of risk in doing business. They felt like everything depended on their luck. If they are fortunate enough, they will make money. If not, the livestock died. They thought they were not capable to handle or control anything. When asked if they think training in income-generating business is helpful and necessary, 78% of the respondents expressed their need for training.

TABLE 21: COMPARISON OF SIGNIFICANCE OF TRAINING

Sites	Gender	Yes	No	Do not know
Site GX, SC&IM-1	F	43	9	4
	M	50	10	0
	Sub-total	93	19	4
Site IM-2	F	13	5	0
	M	2	2	0
	Sub-total	15	7	0
Total	F	56	14	4
	M	52	12	0
	Total & %	108 78%	26 19%	4 3%

Capacity building should go hand in hand with empowerment. It is even fairer to say that capacity building needs to be conducted beforehand to pave the path for empowerment. When the people do not have the necessary capacity, they can not make good use of the resource, rights, or opportunities that they are empowered with. Conflicts or misuse of resources might also occur due to the lack of capacity. When I was in Sanxi village, through my interview and observation, I figured that the village was facing serious shortage of water. I asked the program coordinator why the infrastructure development fund was used to build the village road instead of a reservoir. The program coordinator noted that it was the decision made collectively by the villagers. She said that actually the road in this village was fine. But when they saw other villages building road, they built road also. The government which is supposed to play a facilitative role in CDD should provide some technical support or training service to build the community up.

“CDD pays great attention to Institutions and Empowerment. But the capacity level of local people is low, so actually it is not easy to get them empowered. They did not have the capacity

needed to be empowered. I think that is a point that we did not consider carefully at the beginning. So they need help to make the right decision". [World Vision officer, Inner Mongolia]

The capacity building of the local government is also very important. To make sure the local government officials understand the concept of CDD is of great significance for the empowerment of the local community. Sometimes the local government is still used to making decisions for the local people, which hampers the capacity building for self-organization in the local community. How to step down from a directive role and play a facilitative role is a big shift of mindset for the Chinese government officials of all levels.

Identity-Drifting of Microfinance

As microfinance has been widely employed in different countries around the world, its definition has been adapted from its original one. According to the founder of microcredit programs, microcredit refers to "programs that extend small loans to very poor people for self-employment projects that generate income, allowing them to care for themselves and their families".⁴⁶ Various credit lending models have been used throughout the world. In China, the Group Model was adopted which assumes that the collective responsibility and security in a group will overcome the weakness and incapability of individuals. Self-help groups were formed to fulfill a number of purposes, such as educating each other, peer pressure, collective bargaining power etc.

⁴⁶ <http://www.grameen-info.org>, accessed on 07/22/2008

However, as the use of microfinance is expanded, its identity has been drifting away from being an approach to “help the very poor”. The fact is that many poorest of the poor people can not be helped through microfinance programs. Being selective or evolutionary by nature, self-help groups tend to consist of those who are relatively better off. In addition, the premise of microcredit is that the borrower has some unutilized or underutilized skills to generate income. But often times, the poorest of the poor people do not have any income-generating skills. As a result, the better off become even richer, the poor stay poor or even worse.

“Well, for those who are really poor, frankly speaking, they cannot borrow the loan, because people are afraid that they will not pay them back. We use microloan to do some small business, like raising hogs or hen. Like hogs, it takes at least three months to make money. So if they have nothing else at all, they cannot pay the weekly payment back.” [D1, microloan borrower]

Microfinance is supposed to be used to jump start the household’s small scale income generating business. In the village where microfinance has been very successful, it did help many households start their business and made a better life. As the scale of their business get bigger, they stopped to use the microloan. However, what is interesting to see is that some households who are even richer than them start to take advantage of microloan. As they are running much bigger scale stores or shops, they borrow microloan to meet their urgent needs for electricity payment etc. For them, the amount of the money is of no big help for their business, but the convenience of borrowing it helps them to meet their urgent need. For example, people who are running motorcycle stores of 200,000 RMB capital value would borrow 5000RMB microloans to pay bills. In addition, some other

families borrow microloan to pay their children's tuitions which is not income-generating at all, at least not in the short term. The following chart illustrates the different usages of microloan in the village. How to make sure the resources goes to those who need it most badly is a problem that self-organization mechanisms can not solve by itself. Some intervention from outside is needed to make use of the positive effects of self-organization while reduce its negative influence.

TABLE 22: LIST OF THINGS PEOPLE USE MICROLOAN FOR, SLB VILLAGE, INNER MONGOLIA

Use of Microloan
Raise hens/hogs
Urgent need for agricultural production
Revolving fund for store/shop, borrowing microloan using other households' names
Bought a raker to harrow field for people; revolving fund for the shop
Bought a freezer for selling ice creams
Small business like grocery store, then revolving fund for motorcycle business
Kids' education or living expense, then pay it back after selling grains.

6.5 CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR SELF-ORGANIZATION IN CHINA

Culture has been considered both as means and ends of human development and empowerment. As self-organization mechanisms have been gradually recognized as more effective methods to achieve sustainable community development, how to understand and implement it from a cultural perspective becomes crucial. As China starts to pilot the reform from a state-controlled development to a bottom-up development, the understanding of local and national cultures is significant for the success of the

development initiative. Through empirical observation, this chapter has shown that self-organization awareness is rooted in the local culture. Culture is embedded in the community's self-organizing activities for development.

Case studies about the embroidered balls business and microfinance programs offer valuable experience of successful self-organization mechanisms and its impact on community development. The importance of communication and integration calls for attention from stakeholders of different sectors. The interaction among components within the community and their communication with the external environment is crucial to establish a shared culture. Community-based organizations and self-help groups are good examples of integrative devices that bring individual efforts together. These self-organizing alliances not only help scale up the development efforts, but also cultivate a learning environment for the community, which is vital for the survival and prosperity of the community. A community cannot prosper without interacting with the environment. The role of the Women's Federation, as a representative of GONGOs, has been discussed to show how external forces can facilitate the self-organizing efforts. It did not only bring resources to the community. More importantly, it helps build the capacity of the community to use the resources in an effective way.

The ongoing CDD programs in China have brought the rural communities many benefits. First of all, the infrastructure conditions in the rural areas have been improved and the villagers benefited from the program in a very concrete way. Second, the implementation of CDD programs has improved the level of transparency of the development initiatives and reduced the possibility for corruption. In addition, the

awareness of self-organization mechanisms has been increased on both the government official level and the common people level. As one of the international NGO officers interviewed said, the CDD programs in China can be called “successful” if the concepts of “community-drive” and “self-organization” have been understood and accepted by all players involved in the program.

The achievement of successful community-driven development calls for an enabling environment for the community to organize themselves effectively. This chapter has listed some of the challenges for CDD programs to succeed in China. The lack of understanding of the local culture, the tensions between different stakeholders, and the declining trust in the society, all weakened the possibility for the community to organize themselves. The unfavorable environment for the development of domestic and international NGOs and the lack of capacity building and true empowerment at the local level make the community-driven development almost a fantasy. The identity-drifting crisis that some microfinance initiatives are facing warns us that self-organization mechanisms do have their disadvantages and must be complemented by other facilitative efforts. All these opportunities and challenges require different stakeholders to make adjustment and find its “fit” in this new mechanism. The next chapter will present some policy implications for the major stakeholders involved in this development efforts.

CHAPTER 7: POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study is an effort to explore the role of culture in the development of China, featuring the importance of gender and self-organization. The research was conducted to strengthen and enrich the existing literature in the related fields. In addition, it is expected that this study will help build connections between research, policy, and practice. In this final chapter of this study, based on the discussion and findings in the previous chapters, policy implications will be presented to different stakeholders involved in the development process.

Being at a transitional stage from state-controlled mechanisms to a more bottom-up approach, China is seeking strategies that fit its own characteristics. In Chapters 5 and 6, some challenges that China needs to address during its development process were discussed. In this section some general principles for solving these problems will be provided. Under these guiding principles, this study will also offer some policy recommendations to stakeholders like the government and international development agencies. Although the policy implications are drawn from perspectives of gender and self-organization, these guiding principles I believe are generalizable to other development issues.

7.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

First of all, the development efforts should start with an explorative approach instead of a prescriptive approach. In his book “The Art of War”, the Chinese war strategist Sun Tzu from the 6th century BC, pointed out that the strategy to win a war was not all

about planning because the conditions were always changing. He emphasized the importance of “knowing” the conditions of the battle field. One of his most famous strategies, which have profound influence on military and business, is that *“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”*⁴⁷ In the endeavor of development, our enemies are the pressing development issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, gender inequality, environment deterioration, etc. Therefore, before we take any action to attack our enemy, we need to do our homework to get to “know” the nature of our enemies. In addition, we also need to be clear about what we have on our own side.

What is unfortunate, however, is that oftentimes we do not really “know” about either side. We design development programs with the misconception that we know everything about our enemy. For example, women’s empowerment programs are designed based on the assumption that women are oppressed in all the developing countries which impedes the prosperity of the region. The study in the research villages has shown, however, that gender relations vary across regions, ethics, and cultures. Many regions might face the seemingly same development issue, but the causes for it can be very different. Accordingly, the strategies for solving the problem should be designed differently.

⁴⁷ Sun Tzu translated by Lionel Giles [2002]. *The Art of War*. Deodand Publishing. ISBN 0-9578868-7-X.

In addition, development can not be achieved through individual efforts. By saying to know your “self”, we actually mean to know your team. To know the strength and weakness of each team member is crucial for effective communication and collaboration. For many development programs, however, labels like “empowering” or “assisting” often blind our eyes from seeing the strength and resources of the local communities. They are often considered as victims to be empowered instead of partners to collaborate with. Therefore, a thorough explorative study of the “enemy” and “self” is the prerequisite for obtaining victory in development.

The second principle is about the balance between the external intervention and local self-organization. As it is mentioned in the previous chapters, self-organization is assumed to be more flexible and adaptive than the planned and controlled mechanisms. The self-organizing process, however, can not function well without interacting with the external environment. Moreover, the self-organizing mechanism on its own does not always lead to a productive end. Therefore, where to draw the line between external intervention and local autonomy is a very practical and challenging problem to handle.

In the case of China, this problem is even more complicated to tackle. With state-control as the pre-dominant mechanisms for more than half a century, both the governments at all levels and the local communities are lacking knowledge about self-organization mechanisms. Tremendous efforts in awareness rising is needed to prepare the way for real community-driven development. This study has shown that the provincial and local governments tend to perform in two extreme ways in the CDD program. One extreme is to leave the program to the community completely, which often cause troubles and chaos

during the implementation process. The other extreme way is to take control of the program from the community in which the original intention of CDD program is lost out. The process of exploring the balance point will be a learning process of trial-and-error which requires time and commitment from the governments at all levels.

Another balance that is crucial for effective development is the balance between the exploitation of existing resources and the exploration of new possibilities. The exploration and acceptance of new ideas for development does not necessarily mean the complete overthrow of the old ones. It will be a waste of resources and time to reinvent the wheels all the time. In this study, it is argued that culture, as existing resources, should be integrated into the development process. Moreover, the exploration of new possibilities needs to be based on the understanding of the local community's capacity to diagnose and absorb new initiatives. Capacity building is a gradual process that cannot be achieved in a short period of time. The over-exploration of new possibilities will result in a disorder and ineffective system. This study has presented cases in which community-driven mechanisms were carried out while the peasants were still not capable enough to make proper decisions. Tension, complains, and protests were caused by the overly fast changes.

The other side of the story is that exploration of new possibilities needs to be encouraged when variability is needed. A new variant, or an initial success might lose out because the discouraging external environment. When asked what their definition of being successful was, many of the people interviewed named a person in their village who was innovative and had the sense of entrepreneurship. But not every "model" lived in an

encouraging environment in their village. The lack of efforts and support in exploration will probably lead to the prematurity of new variant.

The final also the most important principle is to foster a learning system that bonds different stakeholders closely to each other. Personally I see this principle as the foundation of the other three. Argyris represents the school of learning theory by noting the discrepancy between two types of theories in human behavior: espoused theory [what people say] and theory-in-use [what people do] [Argyris & Schon, 1996]. They further point out that defensive reasoning, as single loop thinking that causes ineffective learning, is used to maintain and reward existing patterns of behavior and organizational defensive routines. Learning occurs when members of organizations adopt double loop thinking, which means to question the underlying values and assumptions of their actions, to detect and correct error and fix this discrepancy. Harrison and Shirom [1999] echoed Argyris by stating that decision-making and changes are achieved through a proper and in-depth diagnosis and assessment of the sources of ineffectiveness. They encouraged the diagnosis of problems in the overall environmental and organizational context with all internal interests and external stakeholders involved. Effective and productive change is achieved through this learning and diagnosis process.

For development professionals, we need to try to avoid efforts led by single-loop thinking which only address the superficial symbolic symptoms of the matter. To make real changes, we need to sort out the hidden norms or values that lead to the construction of the matter. This double-loop thinking is necessary for both the governments, international development agencies, and the local people to effectively adapt to this changing world.

Effective communication and coordination among all these stakeholders is necessary to tackle defensive routines, cultivate a learning environment, and translate individual learning to collective actions.

To cultivate a learning environment is important also because human are limited in many ways. Simon [1996] points out that people have bounded rationality for change and adaptation. Dunn [1997] further argues that it is not bounded rationality that limits change but rather our inability to assess the boundaries of our ignorance. It is not enough to just realize people's cognitive impairment. What we need to do is to turn our weakness to strength by embracing and understanding what we do not know. By admitting that there might be things we do not know, we are more willing to understand, accept, and embrace norms or values that are different from ours. This learning attitude will help build up mutual trust between the stakeholders. In addition, information sharing in a collective setting is helpful for effective communication and coordination, which will enhance people's capacity to achieve the collective goals.

7.2 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Based on the principles mentioned above and the study conducted in the research field, in this subsection I would offer some policy recommendations primarily to the policy-makers and program designers involved in the development process.

Encouraging gendered development programs tailored to the local culture/condition

The new China was established with Marxism as its ideological foundation. National-wide large scale movements were launched to emancipate women from the

oppressing classes and structures. It should be recognized that at that time these measures based on radical feminist theories were effective to empower women with more choices, rights, and freedom. As time changed, however, women emancipation and empowerment can no longer meet the current need to develop a “harmonious society”. A harmonious society calls for the unity between men and women, harmony between human and their living context. The concerns, strength, and experiences of women as well as men should be considered as an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all spheres.

As gender is a contextual term, its meaning might vary as its existing context changes. Factors of different levels, individual, household, community and societal, should be taken into consideration during the gender mainstreaming process. International development agencies in particular, should be mindful of the variety of culture in China and tailor their programs accordingly. Factoring gender considerations into policies does not necessarily mean for the government to redesign all the policies, but rather looking at how to incorporate the gender factor into the policy process and develop programs that fit in the specific context [Murray, 2005].

By addressing the importance of gender as a neutral concept, this study is not trying to downplay the value of women in China’s rural community development. As Linhua Xie, editor-in-chief of *Rural Women*, pointed out, women in rural China are like a precious underground resource. Once it is explored, the energy released will be massive, pushing the

country's economy further forward⁴⁸. Besides, those women who returned from their urban work experiences can become potential agents of social change in the rural areas. They could help incorporate new views and lifestyles into village life and engage in new forms of production and alternative gender divisions of labor. An appropriate understanding of women and their interaction with men and their living environment is essential for the formulation of effective policies and programs that will use this precious resource to their full potential.

Strengthening the facilitative role of the governments at all levels

As a key stakeholder in the CDD programs in China, the various levels of government face the difficulty to find the right position or role for themselves. As mentioned in the previous section, they oftentimes fall into two extreme ways, completely indifferent or too controlling. What the governments of different levels and regions should do is to find their own positions as a facilitative role in the continuum between the two extremes. Again, as the social, economic, cultural, and political contexts for the governments are different, their positions on the continuum vary. As a facilitator in the CDD program, however, the governments can play their facilitative roles in the following ways.

- 1) Establishing a more mature and complete mechanisms to address the need for medical care and education in rural China. Most of the research populations expressed their concerns about the lack of sufficient medical care and the increasing

⁴⁸ Awaking Rural Women's Potential, China Daily, January 30, 2003.

fees for education. Although the central state has established some policies about medical insurance in the rural areas, the ineffective implementation of the policies has prevented many peasants from enjoying the full benefits. The fees levied under numerous titles have made education a heavy burden for many peasants. It is the major reason that many youth go out to work at the age of 14 or 15 when they just finished their junior high school education. These burdens constrain peasants from investing both money, energy, and time into community development. Effective regulations and mechanisms should be formulated to make sure that related favorable policies will be translated into action at all levels. Hence, the peasants will be freed from these constraints and enter a virtuous cycle of development.

- 2) Enhancing the capacity of the participants in the development process by providing related knowledge and information. The experience of those successful communities has shown the importance of training and learning. Many of the peasants interviewed showed their need for training in income-generating activities. The governments need to make more efforts in organizing training that are suitable to their local conditions. In addition, people's capacity is enhanced as they are given more access and freedom to information. By providing timely information and utilizing information technology, barriers of communication and collaboration will be removed. Effective use of information and communication tools can also help us clarify misunderstandings, reduce degree of uncertainty, and enlarge people's capacity of learning and understanding of new systems. As a result, more sense-making decisions will be made. Freedom in access to information is

necessary for an effective self-organizing process. It is also a key factor to connect the seemingly separate and independent stakeholders into an integrated force.

- 3) Developing conducive policies and regulations for the establishment and operation of NGOs, both domestic and international ones. As it is presented in the previous study, the development of self-organizing activities will lead to the formation of social alliances that will enhance the capacity of each individual agent. The NGO is one form of these alliances. The current regulations for establishing NGO in China require very strict, inconvenient, and bureaucratic procedures. Many international NGOs in China also face some restrictions and challenges in the operation of their programs. A healthy and effective development calls for an open, transparent, accountable, and learning system. Social forces like NGOs are indispensable players in this system. The Chinese government needs to establish a well-balanced partnership with these social forces and private sector as well.

Creating more off-farm work opportunities in the rural areas

Although China has experienced a rapid increase of rural labor movement in recent years, there are still a disproportional number of underemployed rural labors engaged in agriculture. To develop a 'socialist new countryside', more efforts is needed to free labor off the farm. However, the capacity of the urban areas to absorb all the increasing number of off-farm labors is under question. The economic problems and reform challenges faced by urban officials, the high urban unemployment due to layoffs are all factors that might discourage rural workers seeking jobs in the cities. Using a nationally representative sample of 215 villages, Lohmar [2000] and his colleagues conclude that "rural areas with

industry and service activities may be one of the most promising sources of off-farm employment growth, a fascinating and unprecedented trend in recent history [p.26]". In Figure 5, it shows that between 1988 and 1995, the growth rate for migrants in rural-urban movement was 14 percent, while migrants in rural-rural movement had an increase of 38 percent. The gap between male and female migrant workers is even wider. The 23 percent difference between the growth rates of male and females workers in rural-to-rural movement [compared with the 8% difference in rural-to-urban movement] and the increase of female rural-to-rural migrants [44% of all rural-to-rural labor force] indicated by Figure 6, imply that rural-to-rural migration is a more preferred off-farm job by rural women. Governments at all levels, counties with resources in particular, should recognize this opportunity and design related policies to create more off-farm work opportunities, and attract more rural labors to develop local economy.

Sectors		1995			1988			Growth Rates, 1988-1995		
		Village Labor Force			Village Labor Force					
		All Workers	Male Workers	Female Workers	All Workers	Male Workers	Female Workers	All Workers	Male Workers	Female Workers
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Full-Time Agricultural Labor	(1)	67	52	77	81	73	89	-1	0	-1
Non-Agricultural Labor^a	(2)	33	48	23	19	27	11	12	11	14
Village Residents Locally Employed ^b	(3)	15	22	12	9	13	6	13	11	13
Self Employed	(4)	11	16	8	6	8	4	14	14	17
Village Enterprises	(5)	4	6	4	3	5	2	6	5	7
Rural-Urban Movement	(6)	13	20	6	9	13	3	9	9	11
Commuters	(7)	6	9	4	5	7	3	6	5	7
Migrants	(8)	7	12	3	3	6	0.5	14	13	21
Rural-Rural Movement	(9)	5	6	5	1	1	2	27	29	24
Commuters	(10)	2	3	2	1	0.7	1	18	26	10
Migrants	(11)	3	3	3	0.5	0.7	0.3	38	30	53

Source: Authors' survey.

^a Many of these workers also contribute labor to agriculture in addition to their off-farm employment

^b These workers are village residents with off-farm employment in the village.

^c These workers have off-farm employment outside the village but close enough to commute (daily) from their home village.

^d These workers have off-farm employment outside the village and must leave for at least one month at a time for their job

Figure 27: Composition of China's Rural Labor Force, 1988 and 1995 [Percent of Total Rural Labor Force]⁴⁹

<u>Gender</u>	Locally Employed			Rural to Urban Movement			Rural to Rural Movement			
	Local Workers Locally Employed	Self- Employed	Local Village Industry	All R-U Movement	Commuters	Migrants	All R-R Movement	Commuters	Migrants	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	
	<i>(Percent Female)</i>									
1995	(1)	32	30	36	22	28	15	43	41	44
1988	(2)	29	27	34	20	26	10	48	60	24

Figure 28: Gender Statistics for China's Rural Labor Force⁵⁰

The development of microenterprises is another option for people in the rural areas to participate in off-farm work. From Figure 11 we can tell that microenterprises have played significant role in helping off-farm labors obtain high-middle level income. By providing initial fund, skills, or information for investment, the government and development agencies can help those peasants start up their own small business and scale it up later when it is possible.

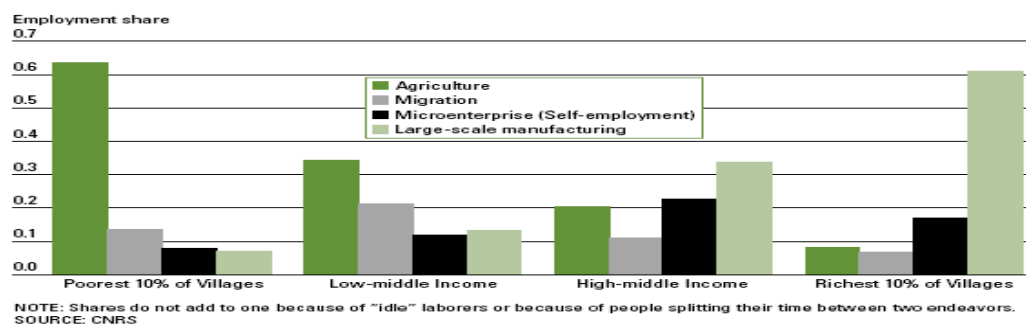


Figure 29: Off-farm Employment by Income Level, Source: China National Rural Survey

⁴⁹ Source: survey conducted by Lohmar et al..

⁵⁰ Source: same as figure 28

Recognizing and harnessing the advantages of GONGO [Government Organized NGO]

This is a relatively short-term policy recommendation. In the long-run, effective and sustainable development of China needs a self-organized and independent non-governmental sector. As self-organized NGOs in China grow stronger both in scope and capacity, they will be able to play the role that GONGOs are currently playing. They can be effective tools to reach out to the people in need and help create new opportunities to enhance people's freedom and capacity.

For the short-term, however, due to the controlling nature of the government and the poor mass base of the international NGOs in China, I would argue that GONGOs is a vital force whose advantages should be recognized and harnessed for effective community development. Since GONGOs have close connections with the government and the mass people, their contribution to the development process can be valuable. As GONGO is a phenomenon unique in developing countries, especially in China, it will take the international development agencies extra efforts to understand the nature of it well. As some development agencies find it too bureaucratic and ineffective to cooperate with the Chinese government agencies, it might be worth trying to cooperate with GONGOs in the related field.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

This study has been exploratory. By being exploratory, this study about the relationship between culture and development was conducted with an open and unbiased mind. The goal is to understand the ways development is designed and implemented in rural China and the role of culture in constructing those ways and means. The use of anthropological participatory observation and in-depth ethnographic interviews made the data collection a very eye-opening and fruitful process. The massive and informative data collected lay a good foundation on which findings and policy implications were drawn.

8.1 FUTURE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As I was conducting the field work for this study, I noticed some other pressing issues that are also worthy of research efforts. Due to the design of this study and the limited time and resources, I can not cover all of them in this research. However, I would like to bring up these issues with the expectation to raise more awareness, attention, and efforts from colleagues in the development field.

Baseline study of the level of integration of ethnic culture in development in China

With 56 different ethnicities, China is a very large and diverse country. Among the 56 ethnic groups, the Han ethnicity is the largest one that counts more than 90% of the total population. Although the other 55 minority ethnicities take only less than 10% of the population, they play important roles in the overall development of China. In another words, China can not really develop unless the minority ethnic groups prosper.

As an indispensable factor of development, culture can exert a profound influence on the development process. It is essential to respect and appreciate the uniqueness and particularity of different cultures. Effective and sustainable development, however, also calls for integrated efforts of all individual forces. Therefore, an explorative baseline study of the level of integration of ethnic cultures in the development process will be very meaningful for policy-making and program designing. Such a research project would mainly focus on the minority ethnics in China. It would look into how local people define their cultures and how important they consider their culture in their lives. More importantly, the research would explore the change of the roles and status of their culture in the development process. I believe that this baseline study is necessary and meaningful not only for the economic prosperity of local communities but also the integration and stability of the country as a whole.

The development and future of civil society in China

The natural disasters that hit China in the first part of this year, snow storm or earthquake, brought enormous hardship and sadness to many families and the country as a whole. These tragedies, however, have brought some “good” changes to the society. Many Chinese people were shocked out of their money-driven mindsets. Instead of waiting for the government to organize, they started to organize themselves to voluntarily offer help and services. Civil society is emerging in China, as many Chinese and international scholars are claiming [Tadashi, 1995]. What is the status quo and future for the civil society in China? This is a heated and challenging topic to research on considering the unique ideological and political system in China.

Salamon and Anheier explained the characteristics and common features of CSOs/NGOs, including being organizational, private, not profit distributing, self-governing and voluntary [Salamon & Anheier, 1997]. As mentioned in the previous sections, the very nature of being self-governing/self-organizing is its intrinsic resistance to external control. Too much external control will either cause disorder and chaos or kill the self-organizing agent. The rise of people's awareness about their interests and rights in China indicates the need for the development of the civil society sector. How the Chinese government will value and handle this rising tide is critical for the future of this country. Do they see them as competitors for power, or partners in this development endeavor? Although personally I do not think the multi-party system is the only way leading to democracy, I do believe that different forces and voices are needed to keep the government accountable. Civil society, in my view, in partnership with the state and other sectors, should play the role to promote a just society and an enabling environment for people [Dahl 1961; Clark 1991; White 1994; Archer 1994; Van Rooy, 1998]. Research on the future of civil society in China will not only benefit China, but also the global civil society in general.

Understanding the Migrant Workers in the Urban Areas

Among the population interviewed during my study, a strong ambivalence toward working outside was expressed. Their attitude toward working in the urban areas can be described as a mixture of love and hate. This finding has raised my interest in the understanding of lives of the migrant workers who are working in the urban areas. Previous related literatures have studied this group in terms of their geographic pattern, demographic patterns, social status, or economic income, etc.. Many of the studies,

however, only take migrant workers as research objects or victims and very few of them really make efforts to understand them as human beings. What are the motivations for them to stay in the urban areas? Do they choose to work outside because they are out of other choices? Do they share the same ambivalence toward working outside as those who stay home? How is this related to the culture that they were raised up with? A gendered approach will be needed to have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of this group. Such a study would not only help understand the group and explore ways to improve their living conditions, but also offer insights to help solve the dilemma between migration and shortage of labor in the development of the countryside.

8.2 CONCLUSION

This study aims to bring culture together with development. Echoing the existing literature in this field, this study emphasizes the criticality of culture for development. What this study is trying to add to the literature, however, is to identify and highlight certain cultural factors that enable or hamper development processes. It employs an analytic approach to illustrate how cultural factors interact with its surrounding structures, opportunities and challenges, institutions and stakeholders. As both means and ends of development, cultural elements call for more attention from development professionals in order to achieve desired outcomes. As culture is embedded in our values, behaviors and performance, it is nearly impossible to achieve effective development without having culture integrated into the picture.

This study also examines the uniqueness of culture in different societies and settings and how this has influenced development. Comparative analysis was conducted

between regions with various cultural characteristics. The results show that different cultural settings would bring different challenges and opportunities for the same development program. Proper respect for and understanding of the local culture is needed to achieve effective and sustainable development. Therefore, it is necessary for professional in the development field to adopt a learning attitude toward local cultures.

This study focuses on the impact of two significant cultural indicators on community-driven development in China, namely, gender roles and self-organization. Through a cultural lens, this study examined development and its relationship with a variety of gender factors such as gender responsibilities, gender differences in saving and spending patterns, attitudes toward working outside, etc. The study of gender roles in both household and community levels helps to identify factors which obstruct expected outcomes. It also shows the urgent need for complementary and enabling policies and services to achieve successful community-driven development.

The cultural roots for self-organizing mechanisms in the research sites were also explored. As contextual factor that development is embedded in, culture is a complex concept that varies across region, time, and ethnics. Different regions or ethnics groups possess different levels of awareness about self-organizing mechanism. Accordingly, the need for external intervention varies. Effective community-driven development requires a balance between self-organizing effort and external intervention. On the continuum from absolute bottom-up self-organizing effort to complete top-down control, people of different cultural setting should be able to find their own niches for effective development.

Integration and collaboration is another important theme of the study. As the social system is become more complex and unpredictable, integration and collaboration are inevitable trends for the survival and prosperity of individual, organization, community, and society. The purpose of understanding the uniqueness of different cultures is to figure out ways for better integration and collaboration. This study addressed the challenges that different stakeholders are facing in their pursuit of a balanced relationship between culture and development. Looking into the CDD program from a cultural perspective identified the hidden values and norms that influenced the possibility for collaboration between husband and wife, members in the community, and among multiple stakeholders in the development processes.

Based on the findings drawn from the field study and data analysis, this study also offers four general principles for a productive relationship between culture and development in China. These four principles include a shift from prescription approach to an explorative approach, a balance between external intervention and self-organizing efforts, a balance between the exploitation of existing resources and the exploration of new possibilities, and the establishment of a learning system among all stakeholders. Guided by these general principles, some policy implications were also provided mainly to policy makers and program designers for rural community-driven development.

Both development and culture are very complex and broad concepts. This study only looks into a very small piece of this puzzle. The goal of this study is to contribute to the existing literature about culture and development, in the context of China in particular. Another expected objective of this study was to connect research with policy and practice.

It is expected that the findings and implications drawn from this study will help the policy makers and development professionals obtain more understanding and knowledge about the nature of the endeavor they are engaged in. Some questions for future research are also listed at the end of the dissertation which I consider are pressing and significant issues that need to be tackled in order to achieve sustainable development in China.

The efforts in this study to address the significance of cultural factors in development should not be understood as an over-grand theory that tends to explain all development problems by cultural differences. A true understanding and achievement of sustainable development call for, again, an integration of all political, institutional, social, and cultural factors.

APPENDIX A

[ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL]

Central Research Question: What are the factors that villagers would consider for their involvement in community development programs?

Gender Identities, Roles and Responsibilities

- What, in your opinion, are the responsibilities for being a wife/husband?
- What is your role in your family?

Attitude towards Working Women

- What do you think of women who work outside?
- If you had choice, would you rather work outside or not? [for female participants]
- Do you think working outside will change anything inside the house?

Definition of Success

- How would you define a person who is successful?

Capacity to devote time to business

- Could you describe one typical day of your life?
- Do you think you have time to do business?
- If not, what are the factors that prevent you from doing business?

- Does your husband usually help with the house keeping matters?

Level of Autonomy

- How does your family make the major decisions for the family, for example, education for the kids, purchase of expensive items, etc.?
- When decisions are to be made on matters related to the family, do you participate in the discussions and decision-making?
- What are the activities/matters that you think you should be involved in the decision-makings?
- If you would like to start a business, do you think you will need help from your husband or other family members in decision-making about what to do and how to do it?

Location of Business

- Where would you have your business if you have the choice?

Type of Business

- What kind of business you are interested in? Why?

Significance of Social Connection

- Do you consider social networks/connections as an important factor for doing business? If yes, what are the ways you can establish/strengthen that kind of connections?

Saving/Spending Pattern

- If you had income-generating business, how would you spend the income/profit you earn from the business?
- Would you prefer to save or spend the money?

- Does your husband get involved in shopping for the family [for female participants]?

Education

- Do you think more education opportunities will help you do business better?
- What kind of education/training, in your opinion, is needed?

Availability of Fund to Start a Business

- Do you think you have enough financial resources to start a business?
- What are the major sources for financial support?
- How would you obtain fund for your business?

APPENDIX B

[QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS]

1. What are the major and urgent needs for cash/money in your family? Please list the top six needs, and rank them according to their urgency.
2. What are the major methods for you to earn income and support the family?
3. What are the major factors that influence [positively or negatively] the success of business?
4. Which way do you think works better for you, the government tells you what to do, or you tell the government what you want to do?

APPENDIX C

[MORE STATISTICS FOR REFERENCE]

Tables for interview question: do you want to work outside or stay home?

Do You Want to Work Outside or Stay Home? [GX]

			S	SW	W	N/A
Gender	F [26]	20s	0	1	2	0
		30s	3	1	6	1
		40s	1	1	5	1
		50s	0	0	2	0
		60s	0	0	1	1
		70s	0	0	0	0
		80s	0	0	0	0
		Total	4	3	16	3
	M[24]	20s	1	1	2	0
		30s	0	2	4	1
		40s	1	4	1	2
		50s	0	1	0	0
		60s	3	0	0	1
		70s	0	0	0	0
		80s	0	0	0	0
		Total	5	8	7	4
Total			9	11	23	7

Do You Want to Work Outside or Stay Home?
[SC]

			S	SW	W	N/A
Gender	F [16]	20s	0	0	0	0
		30s	0	1	3	0
		40s	2	0	1	0
		50s	2	0	1	1
		60s	3	0	0	1
		70s	1	0	0	0
		80s	0	0	0	0
		Total	8	1	5	2
	M[35]	20s	1	0	1	0
		30s	0	0	1	0
		40s	0	0	2	2
		50s	6	0	11	0
		60s	1	0	3	3
		70s	2	0	0	1
		80s	0	0	0	1
		Total	10	0	18	7
Total			18	1	23	9

Do You Want to Work Outside or Stay Home? [IM-1]

			S	SW	W	N/A
Gender	F [17]	20s	2	1	0	0
		30s	1	0	1	0
		40s	2	0	3	0
		50s	1	0	1	0
		60s	2	2	1	0
		70s	0	0	0	0
		80s	0	0	0	0
		Total	8	3	6	0
	M[13]	20s	0	0	0	0
		30s	0	2	1	0
		40s	2	1	1	0
		50s	0	2	1	0
		60s	1	1	1	0
		70s	0	0	0	0
		80s	0	0	0	0
		Total	3	6	4	0
Total			11	9	10	0

Do You Want to Work Outside or Stay Home? [IM-2]

			S	SW	W	N/A
Gender	F [23]	20s	0	2	2	1
		30s	2	1	1	4
		40s	3	3	0	2
		50s	0	0	0	1
		60s	1	0	0	0
		70s	0	0	0	0
		80s	0	0	0	0
		Total	6	6	3	8
	M[8]	20s	0	1	0	0
		30s	0	1	0	0
		40s	2	0	1	0
		50s	0	1	0	1
		60s	0	0	1	0
		70s	0	0	0	0
		80s	0	0	0	0
		Total	2	3	2	1
Total			8	9	5	9

Answers to the Question: what is your definition of being “successful”?

Male	Female
People running a brick factory, hardworking, trustworthy, honest	Family with a farm and raise cattle successfully
As long as you can make money, doing business making money, working outside making money.	Enough money to afford education and living expense; those who can support the family and have a better life
Those who have their own business like raising livestock, or running brick factory	Family in our village, teacher with salary, retired from government entities, also raise silkworms, pigs, cattle, very successful
Diligent, hardworking, smart, innovative, patient, capable, innovative, risk-taking, learning	Those who can build a nice house
Having skills, knowledge, connections, supportive government	Good public environment + gov. support + individual hard work
People who make contribution to the society; those who help the poor people	People smart and make money successfully
People like Mr. Xu, Mr. He, like my friend, like Mr. Liang,	People who raise livestock well, silkworms, cattle, hogs
Do not know [3]	Too old to think, no idea, no example here, no household like that
Too old to think about it [1]	Farming land + wife doing small business at home + husband work around making extra money
Family with regular job and salary, those who have retirement pension	Like Mrs. Xu, with skills
No way to succeed here [15]	Like village leader Mr. He, Mr. Xu, Mr. Liang, skills, resources
Gov. support plus individual hard work	People working outside
People who are patient	People who are committed, hardworking, determined, innovative, knowledgeable, honest, risk-taking
	People with enough capital, connection, skills, education

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