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Doktorarbeit

Educational Attainment and Career Aspiration of Contemporary Chinese Rural Youth

Bildungsniveau und Karriere Aspiration der zeitgenössischen Chinesischen Landjugend

von

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Abstract

China has experienced rapid increase in inequality since the beginning of economic reforms. According to the research result of some sociologists, the agriculture laborers and the peasant-workers hold very low social positions in contemporary China. In this background, education is the key means to change the original social positions of the peasants' children, especially the children in the poor areas. Therefore, education has a peculiar significance to the peasants, they hope their children can get high social positions by education and change their destiny. However, it is a pity that the peasants' children will encounter great difficulties in changing the social positions through education. We mainly concern the access to college education.

What are the difficulties for the rural children to change their social positions by education? What are the causes to these difficulties? What can be done to solve these problems? How will those difficulties affect educated rural youth's future career choice?

The paper aims to investigate educational inequality between urban and rural Chinese youth and how this inequality influences their job preferences after graduation at the turn of the twenty-first century. We used data conducted by Sociology Institute of CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) in 2005 about Chinese social transformation. The quantitative research was also used.

This paper advances and draws on the following six propositions. Chapter 1 is an introduction of contemporary Chinese society and educational attainment; Chapter 2 examines the process of getting enrolled into and graduating from college, trying to assess differential patterns between urban and rural youth, analyzes the institutional obstacles for rural students' higher educational attainment, and estimates the job seeking experience of urban- and rural-origin college graduates to see if they tend to make different career choices; Chapter 3, 4 and 5 test three central hypotheses; and Chapter 6 summarizes results and significance.

The three central hypotheses are: a) In order to get higher education, rural Chinese students have to overcome more institutional blockages than their urban counterparts; b) After graduation from colleges, people with rural-origin are more likely to pursue positions in formal institutional sectors (that is, within the state socialistic redistribution system) than their urban counterparts; c) Though rural-origin college graduates have recognized the importance of institutional factors in structuring people's life chances through higher educational attainment process and they have intention to pursue a position in formal institutional sectors, they have different mobility trajectories in-and-outside formal institution from urban counterparts due to the restriction of non-institutional factors in labor market.

Kurzbereibung

China hat Erfahrungen raschen Anstieg der Ungleichheit seit Beginn der Wirtschaftsreformen. Das Papier zielt darauf ab, Bildungsungleichenheit zwischen städtischen und ländlichen chinesischen Jugend, und wie diese Ungleichheit ihren Job Präferenzen nach dem Studium am Anfang des 21. Jahrhundert beeinflusst. Wir verwendeten Daten, die von CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) in 2005 durchgeführt über die chinesische gesellschaftlichen Transformation. Die quantitative Forschung wurde ebenfalls verwendet.

Das Papier stützt sich auf die folgenden sechs Kapitel. Kapitel 1 ist eine Einführung der modernen chinesischen Gesellschaft und Bildungsniveau; Kapitel 2 untersucht den Prozess der Einführung in die Studie aufgenommen und seinem Uni-Abschluss und versuchte, verschiedenen Muster zwischen städtischen und ländlichen Jugend zu beurteilen, analysiert die institutionellen Hindernisse für ländliche Studenten und schätzt die Arbeitssuche Erfahrungen, um zu sehen, wie sie zu machen neigen unterschiedliche Berufswahl ; Kapitel 3, 4 und 5 testen drei zentrale Hypothesen; und Kapitel 6 fasst die Ergebnisse und Bedeutung.

Contents

1 Preface	3
1.1 Brief Introduction of China	3
1.2 Great Disparity in the Contemporary Chinese Society	4
1.3 Influence on Educational and Social Status Attainment of the Chinese Rural Youth	10
2 Institutional Barriers for Chinese Rural Students	12
2.1 Social Mobility and Unique Chinese Social Mobility Pattern	12
2.1.1 Social Mobility	12
2.1.2 Particular Chinese Social Mobility Pattern	14
2.1.3 Development of Chinese Education	16
2.1.4 Present Chinese Education System	18
2.2 Institutional Barriers for Chinese Rural Students	20
2.2.1 Unfair Allocation of National Educational Resources between Urban and Rural Areas	21
2.2.2 National College Entrance Examination and the Discriminative College Admissions Policy Which Gives Preference to Students from the Major Cities	28
2.2.3 National College Reform of Increasing Tuition since 1997 and Admission Expansion since 1999 further Aggravated the Higher Educational Attainment Inequality in China	34
2.2.4 Rearing Institution or Son-Preference Culture in Rural Areas	40
2.2.5 Self-Job-Application System for college Graduates further Suffers the Educational Pursuit Courage of Rural-Origin Students	48
2.2.6 Registered Permanent Residence System which is the Root for All Distinguishes between Urban and Rural Students	52
2.3 Conclusion	55
3 Exploring Elements of Chinese Youth's Educational Attainment	58
3.1 Basic Description of the Data	59
3.2 Analysis of the First Hypothesis: Rural Students have Less Opportunities in Higher Educational Attainment than Their Urban Counterparts due to some Institutional Arrangement in Contemporary China	64
3.3 Conclusion	75

4	Exploring Behaviour and Reasons of Rural Student Who are More Likely to Take Advantage of Campus Resources for Future Job Application	78
4.1	Behavior and Reasons	80
4.2	Institutional Resources Available in College, which are Useful for Job Application	81
4.3	Analysis of the Second Hypothesis: Rural college students tend to cling more tightly on institutional resources on campus than urban-origin students, because of their future job concern	84
4.4	Conclusion	85
5	Exploring Social Mobility Pattern of Rural Graduates Who have a Stronger Favor in Pursuing a Position in Formal State Sectors than Urban Ones	87
5.1	Definitions of Concepts	87
5.2	Crosstable Analysis	88
5.3	Theoretical Model	93
5.4	Conclusion	107
6	Conclusion and Significance	109

Chapter 1

Preface

1.1 Brief Introduction of China

People's Republic of China (China for short) is one of the oldest civilizations on Earth, a land founded on extraordinary customs and ritual, a country that is the home of the greatest population on the planet, which is over 1.3 billion people, and a nation that is set to be the world's next super power.

For a large part of the last two millennia, China was the world's largest and most advanced economy. Then it missed the Industrial Revolution and stagnated. Only after opening to the outside world in 1978 was China's economic performance again impressive. In the course of two generations, China has changed from a desperately poor and laggard country by political and social turmoil to a position as a vibrant and dynamic economic powerhouse which seems on the way toward becoming a major power in the world. China's economic record of the past three decades is commonly seen as a great success in generating high rates of growth and greatly reducing poverty. By 2001, China has become one of the world's largest economies with a GDP estimated as US\$ 5 trillion, as measured by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)¹. Although impressive economic progress has been achieved, China is still considered a poor country with a GDP per capita of US\$4,010 (PPP) in 2001 (UNDP 2003). Its modernization, particularly in the coastal areas and cities, has been extraordinary. New industries have been developing, progress in the business environment has been enormous, and competitiveness and participation in the global economy have improved considerably. It is now predicted that the Chinese economy will become the largest in the world in about twenty years. To sustain these economic growth rates, the demand for well-educated personnel is likely to be high.

In these decades, Chinese education has achieved remarkable development, especially higher education, and more people were provided opportunities of upward social mobility. Before the founding of new China, during the two decades between 1928 and 1947, there were only 185,000 graduates of colleges and universities in China, an average of 9,000 graduates per year. By contrast, in eight years between 1949 and 1956 after its founding, there were 302,514 graduates of colleges and universities with an average of

¹Chinese currency Yuan converted to US\$ by 2001 purchasing power parity: 1 US\$ = 1.88 Yuan.

37,000 graduates per year (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1983:520). And now China is producing millions of undergraduates each year, for example 2,391,152 students graduated from regular colleges and universities in 2004 in China (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2005:690).

China's higher education institutions play two key roles in sustaining economic growth rates and in facilitating socially and environmentally responsible development in the country. First, they prepare citizens to fill high-level scientific, technical, professional and managerial positions in the public and private sectors. Second, in their capacities as repositories, generators, and communicators of knowledge, they underpin internal technological advancement, particularly in transforming research and development results for industrial productivity, and provide access to and adaptation of ideas from elsewhere in the world.

However, China was poor but every one was more or less equal. Now the gaps between the rich and poor are widening not only along the personal level, but also between the rural and urban areas, and among the cities in different regions. Unemployment increases at an unrepresented pace as ailing state enterprises run with debt and surplus labor and send millions of worker on to the streets. Official corruptions are rampant at all levels of government in an absence of independent juridical system. The country is aggravated by its migrant labor and climbing crime rate. Rapid economic development and unplanned construction have created almost terminal environmental problems. The disillusion with the traditional and socialist value has left a moral and spiritual vacuum. The cry for democracy and law becomes increasingly louder.

After thirty years of reforms and opening-up, China has achieved extraordinary accomplishments in economic development. However, it is an enormous challenge to promote socio-economic development coordinately, and many problems that are not approved of by many people still exist in the field of social development.

1.2 Great Disparity in the Contemporary Chinese Society

According to the research result of some sociologists (Lu, 2004), the agriculture laborers and peasant-workers hold very low social positions in contemporary China. Urbanites enjoy higher income, more schooling and civilized modern life, while common rural dwellers who are the majority of Chinese population earn very little money and some of them even could not possess the basic dignity of decent living standards, such as drinkable water and access to education. The large "floating population" without residency permits in urban areas may range from 90 to 150 million people, or 13 percent to 21 percent of the labor force. These people, unable to find official jobs without proper registration (*hukou* in Chinese), settle for unsavory employment in the black market as janitors, low-paid factory workers, nannies, and construction workers. The wages in these less-than-prestigious positions are hardly enough to support one person, so informal workers are often separated from their families for long periods. Their children are mostly placed in the countryside with the old grand parents, who struggle to do farming

and children cultivating at the same time.

There are also great differences between the more prosperous eastern regions, the central regions and less developed and most poverty prone western regions of the country. China is huge, with large and diverse provinces. The largest of them have more than 100 million inhabitants, more populous than even the largest European countries. But they differ greatly in natural and human resource endowments and in economic performance and welfare indicators. China's fast growth has been concentrated in the coastal eastern regions; those most open to international trade and receiving the most foreign direct investment. Parts of such prosperous areas as Beijing and Shanghai are very much like first-world countries. GDP growth rates in the central and western provinces have been significantly slower. Parts of the poorest provinces appear to be several centuries behind in their technology and living standards. Such inequalities are also growing. Some people have access to capital, education, and other assets. Others still rely primarily on their own labor in subsistence agriculture or in low-productivity enterprise.

It is said that the gap of living conditions and income development are also growing in Germany, despite positive economic indices. Since 1998 the share of poor people in the Federal Republic has risen from slightly more than 12 to over 17 percent. Between 1998 and 2003 alone, the federal citizens' net assets nominally increased by 17 percent to a total of five trillion Euros. However, the distribution of this asset is starkly unequal. The wealthiest 10 percent of the population owned "only" 44.4 percent of the total asset in 1998, but in 2003 they possessed a share of 46.8 percent. However, in the course of these five years, the debts of the poorest 10 percent population have tripled (Hartmann, 2007).

But the disparity of the Chinese society is more extraordinary, compared with Germany. China's diversity is exceptional. It is a very large country with considerable disparities among regions, cities, and industries. Though people's standard of living has improved considerably in contemporary China in terms of income, the progress has failed to reach the population as a whole, and the benefits of growth are not evenly distributed (Bian and Logan 1996). It has been recognized that "the rise in inequality in China in the 1990s was more geographic than structural" (Galbraith and Wang 2001). Significant disparity exists between and among regions and provinces in the East and the West as well as between urban and rural areas (Xie and Hannum 1996; see also Table 1-3).

The third world coexists with the first world in China's advanced regions. In the vibrant cities of the east, extremely dynamic enterprises and universities operate in high tech parks benefiting from brand new infrastructure. In nearby cities, and of course in distant western provinces, poverty is broadly spread, not only in terms of income but also in knowledge, education, and information infrastructure. Now more and more foreign people come to know that China has such big booming cities like Beijing and Shanghai which are full of skyscrapers, fancy cars and modern hotels. Already eight times of New York City, Shanghai is expanding every day. Investors are pouring more than ten billion dollars a year into the city, raising a beautiful skyline the equal of any in the world. But what does China really look like? Is that whole China? A former Swiss ambassador to China once addressed China in a public speech as "a compound of

Europe and Africa that has 400 million population live like European people and other 900 million population have the living standard of Africa” (Zhao, Sun and Zhu, 2005).

This metaphor might seem overstated, but it does actually reflect the binary essence of Chinese society where urban and rural are set as two different worlds by institutional arrangements. The inequality between the urban and the rural areas is a striking feature in China. At the same time, the imbalance of developments between regions has resulted in a “rich” East and “poor” West. The coastal eastern region is much more developed and populous than the western region. The middle interior region is between the two. The eastern and middle regions held over 70 percent of nation’s industry and commerce. The population density in the eastern region is 2.1 times that of the middle, and the population density in the middle in turn is 6.77 times that of the western. In many remote areas of the western region, the climate is disagreeable, the land is barren, the transportation and communication with the outside world is backward.

Figure 1: Map of China showing Names of Province, Autonomous Regions and Municipalities



Table 1-1: Table of Chinese Eastern, Middle and Western Parts

Province, Autonomous Regions and Municipalities	
Eastern	Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Guizhou, Yunnan, Sichuan Provinces and Autonomous Regions, and Chongqing Municipality
Middle	Shanxi, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Anhui, Jiangxi, Henan, Hubei and Hunan Provinces
Western	Hebei, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong, Guangdong Provinces, and Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin Municipalities

Table 1-2: China's Regional Income Disparities, 1998

(Current U.S. dollars)			
	Eastern	Middle	Western
Urban Disposable Income	790	546	591
Rural Net Income	353	244	188

Source: World Bank, "China and the Knowledge Economy," Washington, D. C., 2001.

The Chinese Communists rose to power through a rural revolution, and they seem achieve some success in ensuring that their drive for economic development will not leave the rural areas completely behind (Parish and Whyte, 1978). Since the founding of China, the communist government took economic methods including land reform, socialist transformation and collectivization in agriculture, individual handicraft industry, private enterprises, and the implementation of the household contracted responsibility system. Before the reform and opening-up, the peasantry enjoyed a comparatively high political status as the allied force of the working class. After the reform and opening-up, peasants benefited much from reforms of rural economy system and rapid development of rural industrialization, and their economic status was improved greatly. However, the socio-economic status of peasantry began to decline and the urban-rural inequality in China got higher and higher since the late 1990s.

Firstly, the agricultural economy has entered into depression since 1997. Statistics shows that both yields and prices of farm products have fallen at the same time. The drop in prices of corn and grain was especially remarkable, down by 40 percent in 1997 over the figure of the previous year. The trend of falling prices extended to the year of 2002. The actual prices of meat and eggs in 2001 were 17 percent lower than those in 1997². Official statistics shows that the income of peasants was increasing in this period at a lower rate.

Secondly, the peasantry is facing many other issues as well. The first issue is heavy tax burdens. After the recent reform of abolishing rural taxes, the proportion of taxes and fess imposed on the peasantry to their total income was still as high as 8.4 percent. In urban areas, the minimal taxable personal income is 800 Yuan RMB per month.

²National Bureau of Statistics of China (2003a: Table 9-7).

However, the rural per capita annual income was about 2936 Yuan RMB in 2004 (see Table 1-3), i.e., about 245 Yuan per month. Therefore, the tax burdens of peasants are extremely heavy compared with urban residents. The second issue is descending governmental investment on rural public products and services and decreasing public resources enjoyed by peasantry. For example, the proportion of expenditure on agriculture in total expenditure of public finance decreased from 10.26 percent in 1991 to 7.71 percent in 2001. In addition, the social security system in rural areas is extremely deficient. Most peasants are not covered by medical insurance and other social securities. In such situations, they have to pay considerable expenditures on education and medical healthcare. Many of them are driven to poverty for children's education or family members' illness. The third issue is increasingly serious exploitation of rural resources by cities and urban industries, such as farmland expropriation, the scissors gap between the prices of agricultural products, reverse capital flow from rural areas to urban areas, etc. Especially, farmland expropriation is perhaps the most serious issue. There were 130,039 thousand hectare of farmland in China in 1996, while the figure dropped to 127,082 thousand hectare in 2001, a decrease of about 3,000 thousand hectare over five years. All these farmlands were transferred to non-farm land. Though peasants who lost their farmland received certain compensations, some investigations showed these compensations only accounted for 10 percent to 15 percent of the actual value of appropriated land, whereas villages obtained 25 to 30 percent, and local government acquire 60 to 70 percent³. What made the situation worse was that most lost-land peasants did not get any social security and reemployment emplacement and became sort of "vagabonds" without farmland, jobs, and social security.

China's widened urban-rural division arose from a socialist industrialized process, which created a hastened heavy-industrial base at the expense of its rural population. Conducted with so-called principle of "efficiency first, with due consideration to equality", most national resources haven been allocated into urban areas which are already better industrialized in order to achieve faster economic development, so rural areas have been further lagged behind, though one of the great promises of socialism has been that it will lead to less inequality. The peasantry has lost its advantages obtained at the beginning of the reform and opening-up and tends to be a lower level social stratum with a disadvantaged position now.

For most countries, the national ratio of urban to rural incomes is about one and a half to two. But in China the ratio is approaching three now, which is extremely high by international standards. If various social welfare benefits are included, the ratio would reach four in China (World Bank, 1997). According to China Statistical Yearbook 2005, in year 2004 the per capita annual income for urban households is 10,128.5 Yuan RMB (about 1030 Euro), that is 3.4 times of the national-level per capita annual net income of rural households which is 2,936.4 Yuan RMB (about 300 Euro), and 4.7 times of the per capita annual net income of rural households for 12 western provinces which is only 2,157.9 Yuan RMB (about 220 Euro). By 2002, each urban resident had in average 14,240 Yuan RMB of saving in banks; while per rural resident had only 1,970 Yuan

³"Distribution of Three Trillion Yuan Lost by Peasants for Low-price Land Expropriation". Retrieved September 11, 2003, from <http://www.ccrs.org.cn>.

RMB.

By World Bank estimates, China had 29 million absolute poor in 2001, compared to 80 million in 1993 and 250 million in 1979, when the economic reforms started. This feat dwarfed the growth of the Gini coefficient⁴ in the same period. In 1980, after one year of reforms, it was 0.33; in 1992, when the former Communist Party leader Deng Xiaoping again promoted reforms after his famed “southern trip”, it was 0.37, and in 2003, when further reform measures were introduced according to China’s WTO commitments, it was 0.4. The wealthiest 30 percent of households shared 77 percent of the total national income while the poorest 30 percent of households shared only 8.3 percent (UNDP 2003). According to the Chinese official newspapers, the Gini coefficient has increased to 0.45 in 2005⁵ and 0.47 in 2010⁶ in China, overtaking the recognized warning level of 0.4. A professor on income distribution and poverty studies with the Beijing Normal University said that the income of the top 10 percent of the richest Chinese was 23 times that of the bottom 10 percent in the country in 2007, as compared with 1998, when the gap was only 7.3 times⁷.

Table 1-3: Basic Condition of Urban and Rural Household

		(Yuan RMB)			
	Item	2000	2002	2003	2004
Urban Households	Per Capita Annual Income	6295.91	8177.4	9061.22	10128.51
	Per Capita Annual Living Expenditures for Consumption	4998.00	6029.88	6510.94	7182.10
	Per Capita Annual Net Income	2253.42	2475.63	2622.24	2936.40
(National Total)	Per Capita Annual Total Expenditures	2652.42	2923.60	3024.99	3430.10
Rural Households (12 Western Provinces)	Per Capita Annual Net Income	1661.03	1820.87	1936.01	2157.91
	Per Capita Annual Total Expenditures	2211.35	2412.11	2514.20	2884.87

Source: China Statistical Yearbook 2005 compiled by National Bureau of Statistics of China

This widening disparity between the rural and the urban has led to one of the greatest migrations in human history, as tens of millions of Chinese have abandoned their traditional farming life, to seek their fortunes in China’s big cities. There they hope to find wealth and success, but most of them end up doing the hardest, the dirtiest, the most perilous, and the lowest paid jobs, which the urban people would not take. The typical jobs for them are construction worker, housekeeper, dustman, window cleaner of skyscraper, or waitress of small-sized restaurant. Though they have made a great attribution to the city construction and beautification, they are always being neglected

⁴The Gini coefficient, a measure of inequality developed by the Italian statistician Corrado Gini, is a measure of income inequality ranging between 0 and 1, where 0 corresponds to a society where everyone has exactly the same income, and 1 corresponds to a society where one person has all the income and everyone else has none.

⁵Quoted from *People’s Daily* September 21, 2005.

⁶Quoted from *China Daily* May 12, 2010.

⁷Quoted from *China Daily* May 12, 2010.

by the urban citizens.

The Shanghai City has a population of about twenty million, and over three million are migrant workers. Almost all those migrant workers feel that the urban people tend to push them away, and getting to know people in big cities was difficult. Though they earn more cash than they could ever get at home, often they lead an unhappy life in city and miss home very much. Each Spring Festival (also called as Chinese New Year), the most important family festival for the Chinese, they would rush home with all kinds of vehicles.

1.3 Influence on Educational and Social Status Attainment of the Chinese Rural Youth

Despite the general impression that the selective process in the modern education system is mainly based on merits or ability, many studies indicate that characteristics of status that have nothing to do with merits or ability still exert important influence on the educational opportunity enjoyed by people, especially the connections between family background and educational attainment.

Poverty means far more than simply not having enough money for minimal survival needs. It means the “denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development - to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and respect from others” (UNDP, 1997). Poverty affects all aspects of the people’s life, including health, housing, and nutrition, to name a few. Family economic background will crucially influence people’s personal educational attainment which is an important determinant for upward social mobility. As early as the model of the first status attainment built by Blau and Duncan in the 1960s, education has showed the foremost positive influence on social status attainment. Though the national ratio of urban to rural incomes is very high now in China, yet the urban-rural inequality gap in educational attainment, especially in higher education, is even bigger.

Millions of peasants feed the society, and millions of peasant-workers build the society, but they have little position in it. The society makes so many institutional barriers to divide them from the urban people, who are favored with schooling, housing and welfare policies, that Chinese peasantry cannot possess smooth upward social mobility channel as townspeople.

Though China’s economy goes on growing with a fast speed, it is well known as “world factory” and employers of manufacturing sector are competing to hire low-skilled labors, but many of China’s best and brightest, its college graduates, are facing a long stretch of unemployment. In 1999, the government began a push to expand college education to produce more professionals to meet the demands of globalization. In year 2010, more than 6.3 million graduates are anticipated to hit job market, up from one million in 1999 and 1.07 million in 2000. But the number of high-skilled, high-paying jobs has not kept pace.

Increasing numbers of graduates are competing to take the civil service exams. Whatever their private misgivings about the government, a government job is increasingly seen as the best option in economically uncertain times. As news report, Chongqing Municipal Government hopes to hire 10,000 college graduates in 2010 as village manager, with the promise that they may later be transferred as government employees. However some researchers concern that Chongqing City could not really afford such an increase for civil servants. CASS researcher report projects there may be 1 million college graduates who cannot find jobs. Working as village managers or joining the army can increase college graduates' employment, but it is not enough. Government-financed jobs are limited by its tax revenue, so the government cannot create as many jobs as necessary to cover the employment deficit yearly.

This problem is more serious for rural-origin college graduates, whose poor families have invest more percentage of savings and annual income and put bigger hope for the children's wonderful urban life in the future. You cannot tell them, "though you've invested years and money in a college education, your job prospects are in your home village."

This paper is organized as following: Chapter 1 is the introduction part, and it outlines the present China, who is in a rapid economic growth, who is also in a transition from a socialist centrally planned system to a free market system. It describes the great disparity between urban and rural worlds in contemporary China. Chapter 2 deals with theoretical issues on Chinese social mobility, presents general present Chinese education system, and highlights the institutional blockages for Chinese rural youth's educational attainment, through looking into the process of getting enrolled and graduating from college. This chapter tries to assess differential patterns between urban and rural youth, and look at the job seeking experience of urban- and rural-origin college graduates to sees if they tend to make different career choices. Chapter 3, 4 and 5 test three central hypotheses with empirical data and statistical analysis; and Chapter 6 is the conclusion, which concludes a summary and discussion of the main research significance.

The three hypotheses are: a) In order to get higher education, rural Chinese students have to overcome more institutional blockages than their urban counterparts; b) After graduation from colleges, people with rural-origin are more likely to pursue positions in formal institutional sectors (that is, within the state socialistic redistribution system) than their urban counterparts; c) Though rural-origin college graduates have recognized the importance of institutional factors in structuring people's life chances through higher educational attainment process and they have intention to pursue a position in formal institutional sectors, they have different mobility trajectories in-and-outside formal institution from urban counterparts due to the restriction of non-institutional factors in labor market.

The aim of this article is to study these institutional blockages that Chinese rural-origin students must overcome throughout their educational attainment process and the career they would like to pursue after that. For them and their families, what might be done to correct the mismatch between expectations and reality? How is this problem altering attitudes of the rural Chinese about upward mobility? If college graduates are not reaping economic rewards, how will the next generation view the value of education?

Chapter 2

Institutional Barriers for Chinese Rural Students

2.1 Social Mobility and Unique Chinese Social Mobility Pattern

2.1.1 Social Mobility

Social stratification and social mobility are analyses and description of a certain social phenomenon in a country or area from two perspectives. Social stratification is a way to analyze and describe the stratification content, form, composition, and shape of the social stratum structure in a static perspective. It focuses on the process of qualitative changes in social stratum differentiation. Social mobility aims to analyze and describe the interactions between different social strata and dynamics, time-space scopes, moving directions, and rates of such movements. It emphasizes the process of quantitative changes in social stratum differentiation. Social mobility refers to the phenomenon in which social members shift from one social status to another. In a given social stratum structure, if one moves to a higher status from a lower one, it is called *upward social mobility*, and contrariwise, it is *downward social mobility* (Lu, 2004).

The study of mobility in sociology mainly focuses on causes and effects of social mobility. An individual's each move may enable him/her to obtain a certain social status. The inherited resources that affect one's mobility are *ascription factors*, such as family background, parent's occupation and class origin; and the acquitted resources that affect one's social mobility are *achievement factors*, such as educational background and performance in political participation. Theoretically, the greater the influence of ascription factors in a society, the more closed the society will be. In contrast, a society that is dominated by achievement factors usually provides greater space for individuals' free choices and development.

In general, in the history of human society development, there is a tendency of constantly expanding social mobility. In the Middle Ages and in the feudal society, individual social status has been determined by ascription factor. Boundaries between different classes or strata were strict, clear, and nearly impassable. If one were born in a certain class

or stratum, usually he or she would be a lifetime member of that class or stratum. It was a closed society with little social mobility.

In modern society, the development of science and technology, constant expansion of mass production, and the upgrade of industrial structures create new job positions and at the same time create the needs of social mobility. Only through social mobility can new job positions be filled and the reasonable allocation of the labor force and human resources can be achieved. The freer the social mobility is in certain society, the more actively members of each social stratum represent, especially members of middle and lower strata. Motivated by hopes, they may move upward to a higher social status through individual efforts. Objectively, social mobility can push the development of social production and realized the positive mutual-stimulative interaction between the evolutions of economic structure and social structure. Such society is an open society.

Depending on the importance of inherited abilities, intergenerational social mobility is closely related to the degree of equality of opportunities in a country. What separates the “winners and losers” in a society has been pointed out not only to hinder economic growth but also to be a major force of political instability and violence. Much research has shown that education is the engine of upward social mobility and the key of life chance in modern societies, and in all industrialized or industrializing societies for which we have data, the central answer to the question “who gets ahead” is “those who get educated” (Treiman and Yip, 1989; Müller and Shavit, 1997). For this reason, the question of who gets educated has assumed a central place in stratification research. The concepts of social exclusion, income inequality, inequality of opportunities, poverty, and social mobility are intimately related.

Since Blau and Duncan’s (1967) classic study, a central issue in stratification research has been the relationship between family social origins and educational attainment, especially the role of parental economic, social, and cultural capital in advancing children’s educational attainment and upward mobility. In socialist societies, educational attainment has also long been recognized as a major determinant of occupational placement (Parkin, 1969). Higher education, in particular, is a crucial prerequisite to the occupancy of the economy’s most lucrative and influential position worldwide (DeMaggio and Mohr, 1985).

Generally there are two major analytical approaches in the study of social mobility. The first one is mobility table analysis. By adopting this approach, sociologists investigate intergenerational changes of occupational status or social strata position through joint analysis of occupational status between parent and child, or between one’s initial and current occupational status. Another method is the Blau & Duncan’s social status attainment model. It is mainly used to investigate and compare influences that are made by ascription factors and achievement factors on attainment of individual occupational status.

2.1.2 Particular Chinese Social Mobility Pattern

The rule of ascription is regarded as the primary rule of social mobility in traditional agriculture-based society, while the rule of achievement is thought to be the leading rule of social mobility in modern society. However, the pattern of social mobility in China is different from the patterns in the industrialized countries. Both the rules co-influence social mobility pattern in contemporary China.

In discussion about the ascription-achievement rule that is extensively used as an analytical tool in sociology, we found that some basic limitations have to be added to the rule, that is, assumptions about the stability of macro-level institution-policy arrangements and low intervention from such arrangements in social stratification and mobility. Scholars in industrialized countries generally study social mobility in a relatively stable context, but the social mobility in China over the past fifty years has occurred in the background of frequent transformations in social, political and economic system. The structures of social stratification, social status hierarchy, and rules of social selection have fundamentally changed. Therefore, social mobility in China is different from industrialized countries in opportunities, rules, directions, rates and scales of mobility. Industrialized countries usually are open societies, with the principal rule of achievement in social mobility; while in China, especially before the reform and opening-up, both achievement factors and ascription factors have to take effect through intermediate institutional and structural factors, which were very significant before the reforms and still functions importantly afterwards.

First, the fundamental political-institutional settings and policy arrangements in China, including the socialist public ownership, the centralized system of the planned economy and the resource allocation model stressing the development of heavy industry, etc., intervened deeply in changes of economic structure. As a result, changes of economic structure did not play a role in pushing the expansion of employment and the transition of occupational structure over a long period. Second, the arrangements of political-economic institution and policy in China have affected social position and social mobility opportunity of an individual or even a whole class profoundly. The influence of institution and policy arrangements is so enormous that sometimes it is able to eliminate one or more social classes directly.

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the country has experienced two great institutional reforms. The first one occurred just after 1949 when new China adopted the Soviet model of development to build a new political and economic system, which abolished private ownership of the means of production and introduced central planning at the level of economic sectors and state authorities. Chinese communist government put great emphasis on social equity and tried to eliminate differences among social classes. The state-planned economy system of this period put everything, including political, economic, and cultural resources under its control. The vicissitudes of individual social status, the rise and decline of social strata, all depended on changes in states, governments, institutions, and social policies. During the period political recommendation and family class origin were the primary means that determined advancement through the education system. Such criterion was to give priority to the

children of workers and peasants, so that educational attainment inequality would be reduced. Chinese society entered into period of the Cultural Revolution , a decade of turmoil with frenetic politics and stagnant economy from 1966 to 1977⁸, due to Chinese decision-makers' political illusion about social conflicts in Chinese society and utopianism of radical equalitarianism. The large-scale class struggle movements occurred at this stage brought tribulations to millions of social members in the form of downward mobility which is not a normal social phenomenon.

In 1978, the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee decided to implement the reform and open-door policy, it was the very beginning of the second great institutional innovations. Since then China has shifted its policy focus from promoting social equity to economic development. When economic growth became a priority after 1978, socioeconomic variations between people ceased to be intolerable, and indeed became an incentive mechanism serving the needs of economic growth. The elimination of class differences was no longer one of the main functions of education, giving place to the selection and preparation of skilled manpower for economic growth.

As Deng Xiaoping, former Chairman of China, made speeches in his official visit to South China in 1992 and formally proposed policy of establishing the socialist free-market system, the economic development of China has been sped up. Other sectors in diverse forms of ownership develop side by side has been taking shape. Reforms concerning establishing modern corporate system and exploring alternative ways to realize the public ownership have made significant progress in restructuring enterprises by enforcing the joint-stock and shareholding cooperative systems in state-owned and collective enterprise. The goal of the reform was to transform the planned economy system to a socialist market-based regime, starting with the rural sector. Reforms have included land transfers to households and the household responsibility system, allowing farmers to sell production above their required quotas on the market. Reforms were also introduced in ownership and management of the enterprise sector, with the township and village enterprises benefiting more than state-owned enterprises from less state hands-on activity. The national economy has grown at a continuously high speed driven by the reform.

Another transformation is from an agricultural-rural society to an industrial-urban society. The share of the primary sector in employment declined from more than 70 percent in 1978 to about 50 percent in the late 1990s. Industry, which employed only 17 percent of the labor force in 1978, now employs almost 25 percent. Since then forces of industrialization, urbanization, and marketization have pushed economy development and the transformation of economic structure, accelerated divisions in social structure, and diversified channels of social mobility. The influence of achievement factors on social mobility mechanisms has won more weight (Lu, 2004).

Before the reform and opening-up, there was a multidimensional dual status hierarchy

⁸The Cultural Revaluation (1966-77) was a decade-long mass movement, unleashed and, at least initially, orchestrated by Mao Zedong and his agents. Universities were shut down entirely from 1966 to 1972; students and other urban workers, especially professionals, were "sent down to the countryside" to work as peasants; political loyalty rather than competence became the main criterion for educational advancement.

in China. In that system, the ascription factors determined individual's social status. The rate of social mobility was extremely low. After the reform and opening-up, the dual status hierarchy has been given up gradually and more social mobility channels are available. For example, peasants can go to towns and cities to find jobs or do business; most social members can choose their occupations freely or establish their own business/enterprises; colleges and universities adopt the national college entrance examination system once again, etc. all these changes have made the rule of achievement instead of institutional arrangements and policies dominant in the social mobility mechanisms. A new pattern of social mobility has been emerging with a higher mobility rate and the social vigor has been strengthened dramatically. However, study shows that the expected reduced stratum has not deflated because agricultural laborers still make up 44 percent of the Chinese population; whereas the expected expanded stratum has not grown because the middle social stratum only accounts for 15 percent (Lu, 2004). Therefore, it is still not a modern social stratum structure featuring justice, openness, and reasonableness and contains some structural factors that may lead to social crises (Lu, 2002).

The main cause of such a phenomena is due to some existing institutional barriers in social mobility channels, retained from the former planned economy and have blocked the upward social mobility towards higher social status. Therefore, the old mechanism (e.g., traditional residence registration system, employment system, personnel administration system, and social security system) and the new one (e.g., family economic background) co-exist in the pattern of social mobility in contemporary China. In another words, the modern social mobility mechanism featuring justice, fairness and openness has not yet been formed. For example, the dual urban-rural system and relevant institution-policy arrangements that was created by the planned economy system actually established the crucial impact of ascription factors on social mobility between urban and rural areas and on the shift from agricultural to non-agricultural employment, and blocked the channels in which achievement factors may exert their influences.

In such situations, merely adopting the ascription-achievement rule to observe and analyze Chinese social mobility is inadequate. The macro-level institution-policy arrangement and the micro-level ascription-achievement rule should be combined in order to study social mobility in contemporary China.

2.1.3 Development of Chinese Education

Since the 1950s, China has made tremendous efforts to improve education, with the aim of promoting economic and social development and securing basic human rights. In six decades China has expanded its educational system rapidly and reached out to more people of all ages than in any previous period in history. It has attempted to mobilize the entire population to achieve universal literacy over a relatively short period and has devised new ways to expand and deliver all levels of schooling to its citizenry.

In 1949, there were only 205 higher educational institutes throughout the country, with 16,000 teaching staff and less than 120,000 students; there were 11,594 secondary schools

with 182,000 teachers and 1,270,000 students; and there were 346,800 primary schools with 836,000 teachers and 24,400,000 pupils. For a population of 400 million, these figures were negligible (China Education Yearbook 1990). In just a few years, in 1956, there were 403,000 students studying in higher educational institutes; there were 5,165,000 regular secondary students and 840,000 vocational secondary students; and the number of pupils reached over 63 million. After five-decade-long high-speed development, in year 2000, there were 1.49 million educational institutes with 320 million students in China (China Education Yearbook 2001). The following table presents the achievement of Chinese education.

Table 2-1: Development of Chinese Education in Recent Years

Year	1985	1990	1997	1999
Number of Educational Institutes (10,000)	144	136	157	159
Number of Students (10,000)	21,573	23,654	31,076	32,679
Proportion of Students and Teaching Staff among National Population (%)	22.0	22.2	26.7	27.5

Source: China Education Yearbooks from 1992 to 2001

The achievement is closely related with the increasing of Chinese educational expenditure. The following table shows that, in one decade from 1991 to 2000, the input has increased 4.3 times, from 73.1 billion to 384.9 billion RMB *yuan*.

Table 2-2: Incensement of Chinese Educational Expenditure

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Expenditure (billion RMB yuan)	73.15	86.71	105.99	148.88	187.79
Increased than the last year (%)	---	18.53	22.24	40.45	26.14
Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Expenditure (billion RMB yuan)	226.23	253.17	294.91	334.90	384.91
Increased than the last year (%)	20.46	11.9	16.48	13.56	14.93

Source: China Education Yearbooks from 1992 to 2001

According to a survey of Chinese private education funded by World Bank in 2000⁹, in 1998 there were 243 million students in China in over 890,000 education institutions. Of primary-age children, 99 percent were in school. Enrollment ratios were 88 percent at the junior secondary level, 35 percent at the senior secondary level, and 8 percent at the tertiary level. Government spending on education stood at 2.49 percent of GDP in 1997, about the same as in 1980, a low proportion compared with that in other countries in the region (and ranking 98th in the world). About 87 percent of expenditures were

⁹Source: Norman LaRoque and Veronica Jacobsen, "Minban: A Market and Regulatory Survey of Private Education in China" World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2000.

funded by local governments (provincial, county, municipal). About 37 percent of the government spending went to secondary education, 34 percent to primary, 18 percent to tertiary, and the rest to other types of education. Expenditure per student increases with the level of education. In 1996 it was 6.5 percent of per capita GDP at the primary level, 15 percent at the secondary level, and 65.9 percent at the tertiary level. China had 42,000 private education institutions in 1998. Those at the preschool level (85 percent) and the primary school level (8 percent) taught 6.5 million students.

Apparently current government educational policies have ignored issues of class, gender, and ethnicity. There are some contradictions, such as fiscal decentralization versus accountability, local control versus legitimation, priority versus equality, quality versus quantity, and privatization versus government control of school. Although there has been much educational legislation passed since 1949 and numerous promises made by the government, the condition of Chinese education in many remote regions and rural areas is deplorable, indeed deteriorating even further.

2.1.4 Present Chinese Education System

In the last six decades China has expanded its education system rapidly and reached out to more people of all ages than in any previous period in history. It has attempted to mobilize the entire population to achieve universal literacy over a relatively short period and has devised new ways to expand and deliver all levels of schooling to its citizenry.

Preschool or kindergarten is not required in China and would last for three years. In cities, children normally enter kindergarten as early as age three, until age six, when is the typical age to enter primary school. Generally, the length of study in primary schools is six years, and the academic year is divided into two semesters. The main subjects are Chinese and mathematics for primary school pupils.

At the age of 12, pupils would enter junior middle school which will last for three years. Primary and junior middle school education is compulsory for Chinese children. The Compulsory Education Law went into effect in 1986, and it calls for each child to have minimal nine years of formal schooling and need not pay tuition. But in economic backward rural areas even primary education is universalized, and junior middle education is even poorer.

After junior middle school, students could choose to go to vocational or technical middle school to learn some practical skills and then find a job directly. Otherwise, those students who want to go to college must enter for academic senior middle school which will last for 3 years. Then they have to enter for the National College Entrance Examination and apply for college and universities according to their exam scores.

Figure 2: Schematic Presentation of the Present Chinese Education System

		Postgraduate, Master's Degree (3-4 years), Doctoral Degree (3-4 years)		
23	Grade			
22	17	Bachelor's Degree (4-5 years university)		Adult education (TV, radio, vocational and higher learning)
21	16			
20	15			
19	14			
18	13	Short-cycle vocational diploma (2-3 years college)		
17	12	Upper secondary level general (3 years)		Secondary level vocational diploma (3-4 years)
16	11			
15	10			
14	9	Junior secondary (3-4 years)		Compulsory 9 years
13	8	Primary level (5-6 years)		
12	7			
11	6			
10	5			
9	4			
8	3	Preschool		
7	2			
6	1			
5				
4				
3				
Age				

China's present higher education system was created in the early 1950s with the goal of training high-level personnel according to perceived manpower needs of the central state plan. Between 1949 and 1959, higher education expanded sixfold in order to meet the skill requirements for industrialization, agricultural modernization, and political mobilization. Destroyed by the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), China's higher education system was rebuilt in the late 1970s. Since 1978, the Chinese Government has placed priority within the education sector upon rapid expansion and improvement of higher education to help reduce the serious human resource constraints on the country's economic and social developments.

Now in China there are over thousand regular public universities and colleges that are under the jurisdiction of and obtain their funding from one of three administrative authorities: (a) State Education Commission of the central government, (b) central ministries, and (c) provinces and municipalities. In 1994, there were 1,080 such institutions. The distribution of their enrollment was: 11 percent in 36 national key universities funded by the State Education Commission, 34 percent in 331 ministry-funded institutions, and 55 percent in 713 provincial and municipal institutions. Of the total student body in these public institutions, 52 percent enrolled in degree-earning undergraduate studies, 44 percent in short-cycle, non-degree programs, and 4 percent in postgraduate studies. These institutions employed 1.04 million staff, of whom 38

percent had teaching responsibilities, 44 percent were administrative and support staff, and 18 percent were employed in organizations affiliated with universities (such as factories and research institutes).

Resumption of the college entrance examination system and development of various educational programs provided numerous educational opportunities to the society. Over the last decade, the attendance at university in China increased from 3.4 million in 1998 to 21.5 million in 2008, reflecting China's unprecedented economic growth and its high demand for a skilled workforce. However, though the national policy was converted to follow the marketing rules, arrangements of national institutions and policies still have relatively important influence on educational attainment and social status attainment. The Chinese government is responsible for regulating the number of university graduates based on the economic and social needs of the country.

Because of various institutional arrangements set by the government, the allocation of educational attainment opportunity is not fair in China, but rather favors students of urban areas and better-developed regions. The inequality problem between rural and urban children for educational attainment is very prominent now in China, and the condition of Chinese education in rural areas is deplorable, indeed deteriorating even further. In realm of education in the reform era, inequality problems need more attention, not only because education is an important indicator or the equality of life, but also it is an investment which has increasingly been recognized as an important ingredient for sustained economic growth.

2.2 Institutional Barriers for Chinese Rural Students

Though China has made tremendous efforts to improve education, striking defects nevertheless remain in the Chinese educational system, and enormous difficulties still lie ahead for the ongoing educational reform during China's overall institutional transition at the turn of twenty-first century.

The distribution of educational opportunities in a population determines its basic social stratification to a large extent. The question of who get opportunities for education is central to the study of social stratification. The distribution of educational opportunities is not equitable in most counties. The education system as a sorting machine manifestly favors those from families of higher socioeconomic status. And this means that in most industrialized countries, education is still one of the mechanisms giving rise to socioeconomic inequality, making it structuralized, although the intensity of this function varies from country to country.

Throughout the world it is always difficult for children from the poor families to receive higher education, and urban-rural inequality exists in many developing countries, but what is unique of China is that it sets institutional barriers to block rural students from higher educational attainment. Beside family background, other social structural factors in contemporary society such as gender and ethnicity influence educational inequality.

However, in China the major social structural factors affecting the distribution of educational opportunities are mainly those derived from institutions. Some institutions unique to Chinese society play decisive roles in the allocation of resources and in the distribution of educational resources as well.

Some excellent rural students who have got enrollment of college might drop the opportunity because of economic reason, but what really blocks the way for most rural students to obtain the chance of receiving higher education is **institutional arrangements**. Those institutional barriers include unequal educational resources allocation of urban and rural areas, national college entrance examination system which disfavors rural students, raising institution in rural areas which makes rural parents prefer sending boys for higher level of education, college reform of increasing tuition since late 1990s which is called as “market-oriented educational industrialization”, and permanent household residence registration system.

2.2.1 Unfair Allocation of National Educational Resources between Urban and Rural Areas

It is well known that allocation of educational resources is closely related to the distribution of educational opportunity. First of all I would mostly like to know, concerning this issue, the allocation of national public resources.

China now has an 6-3-3-4 or 5-4-3-4 school system (see Figure 2), that is, six or five years of elementary school, three or four years of lower secondary or junior middle school, which two together is nine years of compulsory education. Then students who do not want to go to college could go to vocational schools for practical skill learning and it will last for 2 or 3 years. Other students go to three years of senior middle or senior middle school which will be a hard and competitive period, because at the end of it comes the National Entrance Examination of College which will determine whether the student could have a chance to receive four years of university education or three years of junior college education. Upper secondary schooling is usually available only at town, or sometimes in the county seat. Most government-run colleges and universities offer graduate programs, leading to the Master’s or Ph.D. degrees.

Vertically, Chinese higher education has always been characterized by its highly hierarchical structure. A highly stratified system is in place to prepare individuals for diverse workplace careers and different roles in society. The current public higher education system is dominated by universities and colleges that are under the jurisdiction of and obtain their funding from one of four administrative authorities: the Ministry of Education of the central government; other Ministries of the central government¹⁰; provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities; and regional cities and prefectures. The Ministry of Education of central government only concentrates its resources on a certain

¹⁰There were many specialize universities established by different ministries (49 of them remained in 2000) following the Soviet model in the 1950s, such as mining, chemistry, geology, railway, oil and other industries.

number of institutions under its jurisdiction for the purpose of establishing universities with a high standard in international comparison. Eventually, the administrative structure will be as follows: (1) universities selected to be under the Ministry of Education of central government jurisdiction at the top; (2) universities assigned to the provincial and municipal jurisdictions in the middle; and (3) colleges for vocational training (2-3 years short-cycle) institutions under the jurisdiction of local cities and prefectures at the bottom.

Table 2-3: Growth of New Students Enrollment by level and Type of Schools

Year	(10,000 persons, %)							
	College and University		Senior Middle School		Junior Middle School		Primary School	
	Admitted Students	Growth Rate	Admitted Students	Growth Rate	Admitted Students	Growth Rate	Admitted Students	Growth Rate
1992	75.4	21.6	234.7	-3.7	1465.0	3.8	2183.2	5.3
1993	92.4	22.5	228.3	-2.7	1479.0	1.0	2353.5	7.8
1994	90.0	-2.6	243.4	6.6	1616.4	9.3	2537.0	7.8
1995	92.6	2.9	273.6	12.4	1752.3	8.4	2531.8	-0.2
1996	96.6	4.3	282.2	3.1	1760.7	0.5	2524.7	-0.3
1997	100.0	3.5	322.6	14.3	1805.6	2.6	2462.0	-2.5
1998	108.4	8.4	359.6	11.5	1961.4	8.6	2201.4	-10.6
1999	159.7	47.3	396.3	10.2	2149.7	9.6	2029.5	-7.8
2000	220.6	38.1	472.7	19.3	2263.3	5.3	1946.5	-4.1
2001	268.3	21.6	558.0	18.0	2257.9	-0.2	1944.2	-0.1
2002	320.5	19.5	676.7	21.3	2252.3	-0.2	1952.8	0.4
2003	382.2	19.3	752.1	11.1	2195.3	-2.5	1829.4	-6.3
2004	447.3	17.0	821.5	9.2	2078.2	-5.3	1747.0	-4.5
Annual Average	188.8	17.2	432.4	10.0	1925.9	3.1	2172.5	-1.2

Source: China Statistical Yearbook 2005: Table 21-5

Table 2-4: New Enrollment Rate by Level and Type of Education

		(%)												
Year		1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Rate of	Junior middle school	78.2	80.3	85.1	89.3	91.0	92.1	92.6	92.9	93.6	94.2	95.8	96.8	97.3
	Senior middle school	21.3	20.1	21.1	22.3	22.1	22.4	22.8	24.9	29.4	32.7	36.0	37.7	39.7
Entrants	College and university	33.3	39.9	43.0	45.9	47.1	45.1	43.1	60.7	73.2	78.8	83.5	83.4	81.8
Probability of Mobility		5.6	6.4	7.7	9.1	9.5	9.3	9.1	14.1	20.1	24.3	28.8	30.4	31.6

Source: China Statistical Yearbook 2005: Table 21-5 & Table 21-7

Notes: (1) In this table, the *rate of entrants of junior middle school* refers to the proportion of that year's primary school graduates entering junior middle school; the *rate of entrants of senior middle school* refers to the proportion of that year's junior middle school graduates entering senior middle schools; and the *rate of entrants of college and university* refers to the proportion of that year's senior middle school graduates entering college and university. (2) *Probability of mobility* refers to the probability that primary school graduates could enter colleges or universities. It is equal to the product of the rate of entrants of junior middle school, the rate of entrants of senior middle school, and the rate of entrants of college and university. It was roughly calculated, taking no account of differences in enrollment dates of new students in schools at various levels.

Two opposite tendencies co-exist in contemporary Chinese education. One is that the educational undertaking has been developing and providing people with more opportunities to access education, especially higher education. In one dozen of years, the probability that a primary school graduate would move up to the university has rose 5.6 times (see Table 2-4). The admission to universities and colleges grew by an average annual rate of 17.2 percent from 1992 to 2004, in spite of the continuous decreasing primary school enrollment growth rate which is the consequence of “one-child-per-family” policy implement in China, and it is higher than other growth rates (see Table 2-3). The growth of college enrollment sped up after 1999 because of adjustments of the national policy of encouraging higher education; that is, the government decided to expand university and college enrollment from 1999 (see Table 2-3, 2-4).

The other one is that there is also a tendency of increasing inequality in attainment of educational resources and opportunities between rural and urban students. Compared to the urban education in China, rural education faces three major problems that fatally threaten the quality of it: severe shortage of education finance, high drop-out rate, and default on teacher's salaries. When the rural children spend their childhood in cattle-feeding, siblings-raising and corn-planting, the children of big cities have already enjoyed the modern technological civilization including computer, internet, etc., and begun to learn piano or Cambridge English, which would help them to gain access to the universities of high fame in the future. Such inequality is institutionalized by government's institutional arrangements.

The insufficiency of public educational funds in China is always a serious issue that holds back the development of education and the supply of educational opportunities (Research Group of China National Institute for Educational Research, 2001). Furthermore, unequal allocation of educational resources was another serious issue in China (Lu, 2004).

According to the Statistical Bulletin of Educational Budget jointly promulgated by the Ministry of Education, the State Statistics Bureau and the Ministry of Finance, China's state education budget as a percentage of GDP have remained at a fairly low level - less than 2.4 percent - throughout the 1990s (2.4 percent in 1993, 2.0 percent in 1994, 2.1 percent in 1995, and 2.4 percent in 1996, 2.55 percent in 1998, and 2.79 percent in 1999), compared with the world average of 5.2 percent and 4.5 percent for Asian countries in the same period. It was lower even than most other developing countries.

To make matters even worse, there was a widespread disparity between urban and rural regions in terms of educational expenditure.

In 1999 the proportion of national budgetary educational fund in fiscal expenditures is 14.49 percent, which is .83 percentage points lower than the last year's 15.32 percent. The total national investment in education (including various sources) was 580 billion Yuan RMB in 2002, and about 77 percent of it was invested in urban areas, which has less than 40 percent population. By contrast, residents in rural areas who account for more than 60 percent of Chinese population only obtain 23 percent of the total education inputs (Chen, 2004).

According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education of China, in sources of the total investment in compulsory education in inquired rural regions, the central government investment accounts for one percent, the provincial government invest make up 11 percent, the county-level government invest 9.8 percent, and the rest 78.2 percent is raised by the town and village-level government¹¹. Junior middle school education is an important component of compulsory education in China. In 1999, rural students took up 57.2 percent of 57,215,700 enrolled junior middle school students in China. In contrast, educational inputs in rural junior middle schools only took up 47.8 percent of the total educational investment in junior middle schools in China. In the fiscal budget, the average expenditure on every junior middle school student was 485.82 Yuan RMB in rural areas, while 811.69 Yuan RMB in urban areas, with an urban-rural ratio of 1.67:1 (Wu, 2002). Compared with urban students, rural students possess much less educational funds. Young people in depressed areas are unable to obtain deserved education. To them, the inequality begins from the starting line. In this field, the allocation of public resources is obviously unreasonable.

¹¹CLian, Yuaming (ed.). China Digital Report 2004. Beijing: China Times Economic Press: 385.

Table 2-5: Statistics on Educational Funds by Region in 2004

(10,000 Yuan RMB)

Region	Total Educational Funds	Government Appropriation for Education	Funds of Social Organizations and Citizens for Running Schools	Donations and Fund-raising for Running Schools	Total Population (year-end) (10,000 persons)	Per Capita of Total Educational Funds	Per Capita of Government Appropriation for Education	
Big Cities	3,928,773.6	2,523,392.4	62,414.5	52,207.0	1,493	2,631.5	1,690.1	
Eastern Provinces	3,070,202.2	1,925,679.2	131,565.4	49,125.3	1,742	1,762.5	1,105.4	
	Zhejiang	4,115,764.3	2,320,312.0	347,709.8	138,558.4	4,720	872.0	491.6
	Guangdong	6,222,727.2	3,800,234.9	405,892.6	97,029.6	8,304	749.3	457.6
	Jiangsu	4,653,849.6	2,607,027.0	220,429.0	229,606.0	7,433	626.1	350.7
Western Provinces	244,761.7	182,463.6	336.4	987.9	588	416.2	310.3	
	Ningxia	199,568.3	168,022.9	780.1	338.1	539	370.3	311.7
	Qinghai	954,017.5	692,410.9	15,043.6	5,830.3	3904	244.4	177.4
	Guizhou							

Source: China Statistical Yearbook 2005

We see from Table 2-5 that in 2004, each resident of Beijing got nearly 10 times more educational funds from the government than per resident of Guizhou Province which is a western province poorer in economic development. When the disparity between Beijing and Guizhou Province in educational funds allocation is so obvious, the disparity of educational resources between urban Beijing students and rural Guizhou students would be more prodigious, and such disparity is institutionalized by government's institutional arrangements.

According to policies concerning period of compulsory education, more than two-third of educational funds come from provincial and local governments, so the lack of educational fund in economic backward areas such as Guizhou Province is very deplorable. Many rural students in such areas take courses in hazardous school buildings, and they have no laboratories, dinning hall, or formal playground. In three sample poor counties that located in mountainous areas of Shanxi Province of western China, Mei Zhang made extensive interviews in 200 households. About 82 percent of the villages in the three counties are on the township-level road network, although the road quality is normally very poor. It founded that 79 percent of the villages in the three counties have electricity. As for education, data of schooling on the three counties come as follows:

The education facilities in the three counties are very poor. Over 95 percent of the villages have no middle school, and 17 percent of them do not have primary school. About half the school buildings are in very bad condition. In 1997, one-third of the schools had to bring their summer holiday forward because of the potential danger that leaking roofs might flood the classrooms. Only 50 percent of the teachers are qualified. Each year, only 70 to 80 students in each county are able to go to universities and colleges because of their reasonably good marks, a proportion much lower than in the cities¹².

¹²Zhang, Mei. *China's Poor Region: Rural-Urban Migration, Poverty, Economic Reform and Urbanisation*. London: RoutledgeCurzon Press, 2003, pp. 62.

These differences in resource allocation consequently resulted in differences of educational opportunities and conditions between rural and urban areas. The second major problem of rural education in China is high dropout rate, even in compulsory educational period. Though the Compulsory Education Law, which went into effect in 1986, calls for each child to have minimal nine years of formal schooling and need not pay tuition, unlike big cities like Beijing and Shanghai where more than 50 percent of youth aged between 20 and 35 have received college education, in economic backward rural areas even primary education is universalized, and not much better for junior middle education. In 1998, the dropout rate of enrolled junior middle school students in China was 3.23 percent, while in rural areas the rate was 4 percent (Yang, 2001). Dropout is very common in economic backward rural areas, because rural children have to take much responsibility for the family, like taking care of younger siblings, help farming in harvest period, and raising livestock. Also many poor rural children drop out of school, because their family could not even afford the miscellaneous charges. Although the cost of school fees for compulsory education is just about 440 Yuan RMB per year which is inconsequential by Western standards, it is a burden some rural poor in China simply cannot bear. Other reasons are that there are few jobs requiring education in rural areas of China, and the chance for rural students to go to higher education is extremely slim, so there is less incentive to get an education. Moreover, the scholastic nature of the uniform curricula, much of which has little relevance to rural life, compounds disadvantages faced by children from poorly educated rural families.

Although great improvement has been achieved in the past 20 years, the compulsory education in Chinese rural areas has achieved far less than in urban areas. In 2003 the dropout rate in junior high school was 2.84 percent at national level and 2.43 percent for girl students. Most dropouts are from rural areas. The average schooling for rural people older than 15 years old is less than 7 years, which is almost 3 years shorter than urban counterparts; among rural people aged between 15 and 64 years old, less than 1 percent have received higher education, which is 13 points lower than urban counterparts; China still has 85 million illiterate citizens, of which three quarters live in China's rural areas (Wu, 2002). Furthermore, official statistics shows that by 2004 China has so far offered compulsory education to 93.6 percent of its population (91.8 percent in 2003), and lifted the entrance rate for junior high school to 94.1 percent (92.7 percent in 2003) (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2005). Yet in 2004 State Department of China set the future plan for compulsory education in western China, which is to try to offer compulsory education to 85 percent of western population¹³. We can see the gap between the national level and the western level concerning compulsory educational attainment.

The third major problem in Chinese rural education is rural teachers' miserable treatment which will lead to the drain of qualified teaching staff members and lack of enthusiasm in them for teaching. Hundreds of Yuan is common for rural teachers' monthly

¹³In March 2004, State Department approved "Future Plan for Compulsory Education in Western China" (*guojia xibu diqu liangji gongjian jihua*), and decided to launch ten billions of Yuan RMB into compulsory education system in western China, in order to offer compulsory education to more than 85 percent of western population and decrease the illiterate rate of western youth down to less than 5 percent.

salary, and sometimes even this tiny salary is not distributed timely and sufficiently to the hands of rural teacher. Since in China, local town and village level administrations have to depend on themselves for the most part of financial budget for compulsory education, this led to such problems as teachers' salaries being unpaid and illegal charges being levied against students, due to lack of funds and loose management. This problem is severer in economic backward areas.

In 1993, the amount of payment in arrears for rural teacher's salary was 1,430 million Yuan RMB. Li Lanqing, Chinese former vice Premier, who was in charge of education, once reviewed this problem in a speech to officials, and he stressed that national leaders must pay more attention to it. "I have written letters to provincial leaders of 8 provinces and municipalities to ask them to attach great importance to resolve the rural teachers' salary in arrears problem. Regulations have been set down that those regions, which failed to disburse teachers' payment on time, should not pay salaries of officials, should not organize official visiting groups to foreign countries, should not buy more official-use cars, and should not construct new buildings before they settle the problem." "Through great efforts from local to national levels, the problem of defaulted 1,400 million payments for teachers was roughly solved."¹⁴

However, the same problem became serious again soon. On Chinese Teacher's Day of 2003, Lu Yongxiang, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, once quoted statistics made by made Chinese National Ministry of Education in a public speech, and he said the nationwide accumulative total amount of defaulted teachers' payment was 12,706 million Yuan RMB until that time, and the problem involved 24 provinces and municipalities¹⁵.

At present, on one hand, senior high school education has been taken prerequisite in many cities. On the other hand, in depressed villages in spacious western areas, a considerable number of teachers are often given back salary; the statutory nine-year compulsory education is far from universal and the dropout rate is relatively high. Young people in rural areas are unable to obtain deserved education like their urban counterparts. To them, the inequality of educational attainment begins from the starting line.

The poor quality of rural basic education also presents in our case study. When about 85 percent Beijing senior middle school students would be enrolled by colleges, only few top rural students have such chances. Mr. Zheng, who comes from a village of Shenqiu area in Henan Province (Respondent No. 7), failed his first try in College Entrance Exam, though he was one of the best students. He said, "In my county-level middle school, I was always among top three. But the quality of my school was nothing compared with urban ones."

Mr. Hu, who comes from Fangjing village of Aocheng Town of Ji'an County in Jiangxi Province (Respondent No. 8), described his middle school life as following. "My junior middle school required all boarding students to bring meals by themselves, so I carried

¹⁴See in *On Education: Interviews with Li Lanqing*, Beijing: People's Education Press, 2003, p. 36.

¹⁵The speech was made at 10th Sept. 2003 in the People's Congress Hall for the event of "celebrating Teachers' Day and 10th anniversary for enactment of the Teacher Law".

some rice and preserved vegetable, like dried turnip or preserved beans, to school each week. The wife of schoolmaster was in charge of collecting and cooking rice, and each weekend she was seen to carry two baskets of rice which was believed to be exploited from students. At that time, my parents gave my 50 cents each week, among them 20 cents was for traffic charges. In order to save that small amount of money, sometimes I didn't take bus but walked home on feet instead." It is hard to believe that those poor rural kids have the same opportunity for college as urban kids, who has no worry for money at all and whose primary schools offer computer and English lessons from the first school day and sometimes also dancing, drawing or piano lessons.

These differences in resource allocation consequently resulted in differences of educational opportunities and conditions between rural and urban areas. The issue has been pointed out for a decade, but the situation changed little. The major reason is that the government excessively or maybe mistakenly take the so-called "efficiency first, with due consideration to equality" principle to conduct the allocation of public education resources (Lu, 2004).

2.2.2 National College Entrance Examination and the Discriminative College Admissions Policy Which Gives Preference to Students from the Major Cities

Inequality in the structure of educational opportunity not only affects allocation of public educational resources, but also directly influences attainment of educational opportunity. Over the years, the admission requirements on grades in national college entrance examination (*gaokao* in Chinese, literally meaning *high test*) are different between different regions. Such differences leave more opportunities to students in urban areas and developed regions. Compared with students in big cities, like Beijing and Shanghai, it is more difficult for students in remote rural areas to succeed in *gaokao*, which is almost the only door to Chinese colleges and universities. The main reasons are unbalanced admission quotas of colleges, and scarce recruitment information and application guidance from rural teachers.

College entrance examination started in the early years when modern universities emerged in China, and continued after the foundation of P.R. China in 1949 until the Cultural Revolution began in 1966 when the normal pace of the education system and other sectors of life were disrupted. After the Cultural Revolution, Chinese education began to return on the right path and take effect as the major social mobility mechanism in modern society. The landmark event was the reactivation of the college entrance examination in 1977. In October 1977, the State Council approved the report submitted by the Ministry of Education concerning college enrollment in 1977. According to the report, all eligible applicants with a middle school diploma or an equal level of education, including workers, peasants, set-down educated youth, veterans, cadres, and middle school graduates, no matter what family backgrounds and class origins they had, could attend the entrance examination. The *gaokao* in 1977 and 1978 changed the fate of a group of Chinese with a large age gap and from all walks of life. Ever since that, the

examination system has been regarded as a significant factor that determines students' future development in China (Lu, 2004).

Along with progress of industrialization, Chinese society demands modern technology and a high-caliber labor force in reform era. It was such demands that effectively promoted the development of Chinese higher education and more colleges and universities had been established during this period of 1977 to 1980s. According to statistics, from 1978 to 1988, the number of colleges and universities increased from 598 to 1,075, up by 79.8 percent (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2003). Furthermore, at some level, the higher education in this period was a most fair factor that influenced social mobility, because it did not take family background and the work unit's recommendation into consideration for admission, and also a family's economic condition which is a very important influential factor in today's education, was not a factor that could affect an applicant's evaluation, because every college student did not need to pay tuition for higher education and was offered a sufficient stipend for food (Lu 2004).

Although decision making concerning many essential issues in higher education has been decentralized to the university level, control over the recruitment process remains at the central level. In Chinese *gaokao* system, it used to be only one set examination paper for university entrance throughout the country, which is designed by the central Ministry of Education. After reform, among China's 31 provinces, 16 provinces (Anhui, Beijing, Chongqing, Fujian, Guangdong, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Liaoning, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanghai, Sichuan, Tianjin, Zhejiang) now develop the higher middle school curriculum and design their own *gaokao* paper following the requirements set by the central Ministry of Education. The other 15 provinces (Gansu, Guangxi, Guizhou, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Inner Mongolia, Jilin, Shanxi, Qinghai, Tibet, Xinjiang, Yunan, Ningxia, Hainan) still follow curriculum and *gaokao* papers designed by the central Ministry of Education. The *gaokao* system has four major purposes: a quota policy to distribute opportunities to access higher education for people in different regions; a marginal-number candidacy policy to ensure quality of selection in a proportional candidate pool; political and ideological control with Marxism, Mao Zedong Thoughts and Deng's Socialist Market Economic theories being among obligatory examination subjects in *gaokao*; and a measure of academic quality control over primary and secondary schools.

Now *gaokao* is held annually and is essentially the only criterion for college admission. It is usually undertaken at the completion of secondary schooling, though there has been no age restriction since 2001. After several reforms, it now generally comprises three compulsory subjects (mathematics, Chinese, and a foreign language), one comprehensive depending on whether students are in the science or the humanities stream, and specialty subjects. The test comprises a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions covering each of the subjects. On completion, the test papers are computer scanned and managed by the Provincial Education Authorities. There are some minor differences in the application and recruitment process between provinces but mostly students now list their college preferences prior to the exam and the preferences (e.g. they list some universities as their first choice, some as their second and others as third choice) are given in four tiers (early admissions, key universities, regular colleges, and

technical colleges). In the application, students must also list departments or subjects they prefer of their appointed universities. The application then goes to provincial education planning offices to be distributed to the universities. If their first choice universities reject them, their applications are passed to their second choice universities and finally to institutions listed as their third choice (Huang, 2005).

In the progress of industrialization and market-oriented transition, diplomas and degrees of higher education became a certificate of high-caliber human resources and the cultural capital to achieve upward mobility. Consequently, *gaokao* is even considered one of the turning points in students' lives. Parents and children are equally anxious for the result of the exams and choose the schools that they long to attend. The Chinese describe *gaokao* as “thousands of troops across a single-log bridge”, because of the limited placements in university enrollment. According to statistics and calculation based on China Statistical Yearbook 2003, during the period of 1978 to early 1990, the probability for a primary school graduate to go to college and university kept lower than 5.5 percent. The probability that a primary school student would enter a university was as low as 1.3 percent in 1980, 3.7 percent in 1989, and 4.6 percent in 1991. According to Bulletin of Statistics on National Education Development in 2000 issued by the Ministry of Education, on the basis of college admission expansion in 1999, the college admission was greatly expanded in 2000. Number of admittee into college and university in 1998 was 1.1 million, and the number increased 47.4 percent in 1999 and reached 1.6 million. Actually admitted number into college and university in 2000 is 2.2 million, which is 35 percent higher than that in 1999 and almost twice of that in 1998. By 2004, the probability that a primary school graduate would move up to the university rose to 31.6 percent (see Table 2-3). Even though, the admission rate for college entrance applicants in national level was just 17 percent in 2003. As a whole, the normal higher education still only opened to a small number of people.

According to figures from the Ministry of Education, almost 6 million people competed for 220,000 college spots in 1977. Odds are much better now. In 2008, 10.5 million applicants fought for 5.99 million colleges spots. In summer 2010, about 9.57 million applicants sat in stuffy testing centers, sweating over 6.57 million spots. The two-day marathon test (it was used to be three-day-long for years) is now staged under tighter and tighter security to avoid cheating. According to the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau, there are a total of 123 exam spots for the 80,000 examinees in Beijing this year, and every exam spot has at least four to five police officers on duty to maintain order and help candidates who either get stuck in traffic or have forgotten to carry their exam IDs.¹⁶ Traffic is diverted and construction sites are closed as parents wait anxiously outside the school gates for news of how well their child hold out under what Chinese often refer to as the most grueling experience of one's lifetime.

It is very common in well-off regions that families pull out all the stops to optimize their children's scores in *gaokao*. In those crucial days, parents often stay with their children in hotels in quiet and nearby neighborhoods, so that students can better focus on their studies. Some students even study with oxygen containers, hoping to improve

¹⁶Quoted from *China Daily* 8th June, 2010.

their concentration. Some girls take contraceptives so they will not get their periods during the exam. Outside the exam sites, parents keep vigil for hours.

For students in poverty-stricken rural areas, the tough exam could be their only opportunity to escape the rigor of country life. Besides material condition, they are more disadvantaged in *gaokao* compared with students in better-developed areas, due to the uneven allocation of college entrance quotas between regions. Three major parties are involved in the annual recruitment process of higher education in China - provincial education planning offices, universities, and students. The Chinese government regulates the number of university graduates based on China's economic and social needs. A matrix of provincial quotas, university quotas, and subject quotas is negotiated annually between universities and national and provincial authorities. For national-level universities, Chinese Ministry of Education sets the student quota in consultation with each university, while for provincial-level universities recruitment plans are developed with the provincial education authority, and approved by Chinese Ministry of Education. There are regional differences among acceptance rates simply because of an imbalance of opportunity.

Examination as a form of open competition is supposed to play its role as "the main safeguard of the interests of humble origins, and the main guarantee of a measure of social justice" (Musgrove 1966). On the contrary, it serves better the original meritocracy's aim of spotting those with "inherited" ability. Even though the examination is theoretically open to all social classes, the poor enter into the competition with less confidence than their wealthy classmates who have been better prepared in better schools, better homes and better communities (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977).

Because of the set of admission quota system, it turns out that students from big cities have been favored for enrollment. The chance for Beijing and Shanghai students to get enrolled by national key universities is much higher than students from other parts of China. Compared with Gansu Province, which lies in western China, in 2001 the admission requirements on grades in college entrance examination in Beijing are 24 to 72 points lower. 2000 year's admission rate through college entrance examination attended by 3.885 million examinees exceeds 50 percent for the first time, and this year's admission rate is 71 percent in Beijing and 70 percent in Shanghai, while just 30 percent in Henan Province of middle China (Wu, 2002). Take 2006 for example, the minimum score to enter a key university for applicants from Beijing is 516, meanwhile, the minimum score for applicants from Henan Province is 591. In China, university enrollment always favors local students than students from other province, because most of university resources come from provincial authority. In Chinese prestigious Peking University, about 15 percent of recruitment come from Beijing. The figure is much higher for provincial-level universities. Less than half of the students of Shanghai University were from Provinces outside Shanghai in 2009. Therefore, students from better developed regions with many qualified higher education institutions have better chance to be accepted by colleges; while, the door for students from remote regions to go to college is much narrower. Hence *gaokao* system is another institutional barrier for rural students from poor areas to receive higher education.

Table 2-6: Number of students who entered for *gaokao* from 1995 to 2004

(10,000 Persons)								
Year	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2004
Urban	97.83	123.64	142.22	161.04	193.83	227.56	286.83	397.68
Rural	152.16	157.05	173.79	179.40	194.65	225.89	325.63	469.46

Source: Statistics of year 1995 come from *Educational Testing Yearbook*, the statistics from 1997 to 2002 come from *Educational Statistics Yearbook*, and the statistics of year 2004 come from “China Education Daily” (Yang 2006, pp. 206).

Table 2-6 shows that, more rural students entered for *gaokao* than urban students for the most of years from 1995 to 2004, because rural population is much bigger than urban population in China. But after simple calculation we could see that, the increasing rate of urban students who entered for *gaokao* is much higher than their rural counterparts. Compared with the last year, in 1999 the increasing rate of urban students is 13.2 percent, and it is four times higher than the increasing rate of rural students, which is 3.2 percent. The growing rate of urban students is three times higher than rural ones in 2000. In 2001, the amount of rural students is who entered for *gaokao* even smaller than urban ones.

Table 2-7: Ratio of students who entered for *gaokao* in ten thousand people from 1996 to 2002

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
National	21.59	22.70	25.33	27.07	30.65	35.53	47.68
Urban	29.96	31.34	34.18	36.81	42.22	47.35	57.12
Rural	17.92	18.66	20.90	21.87	24.08	28.39	41.62
Urban-rural Gap	12.04	12.68	13.28	14.94	18.14	18.96	15.50

Source: Educational Statistics Yearbook, 1996-2002 (Yang 2006, pp.207).

Compared with the absolute number, “ratio of students who enter for *gaokao* in ten thousand people” could more effectively show the opportunity gap between urban and rural students. From 1996 to 2001, obviously more and more urban students had opportunity to enter for *gaokao* than rural students. In 2002, though the urban-rural gap didn’t grow bigger than the previous year, it was still very distinct. If the college enrollment rate was the same between cities and countryside (actually the enrollment rate is higher in cities), Table 2-7 shows that urban students had better chance to go to colleges or university than rural students.

Table 2-8: College Enrollment Rate in 1990s

(%)

Year	1990	1991	1996	1997	1998
Urban	13.75	12.80	17.85	17.78	19.63
Rural	3.23	3.51	5.60	5.80	6.07
Urban-rural Gap	10.52	9.29	12.25	11.98	13.56

Source: China Population Statistics Yearbook, College & University Enrollment Yearbook, and documents of Students Department of Education Ministry. This table is quoted from Wei, Hong. 2003. "An Empirical Study on Opportunity Equality between Urban and Rural Higher Education in China", *Master Thesis of Education Institute of Beijing Normal University*.

So many rural students could not make their way to *gaokao*, due to various economic and institutional reasons. However, for those who did, the pathway for them to college is much narrower than urban students, which has been clearly shown by Table 2-8.

Furthermore, rural students receive no proper instruction of college application or major selection at all. Facing a list of hundreds of institutions and majors, it is hard to pick 10 to 20 of them. Rural students cannot reach Internet to surf information online, and their parents and teachers cannot give them much useful suggestion. In cities, besides information from Internet and guidance from experienced teachers, local colleges always give many promotional programs to young students and their parents each year, in order to illustrate their distinctive faculties and attract more qualified students.

Ms. Yuan, who comes from a village of Datong area in Shanxi Province (Respondent No. 2) talked so about "the information occlusion of countryside". She said, "In my village, no one had knowledge of neither college nor its majors, so I was absentminded in filling college application form. After answers of National College Entrance Exam were published, I estimated my marks according to it. However, I didn't know how much marks could go to which university, or which major was suit for me, so I filled the application form without any reference. My first choice was a very famous university, but actually my marks were much lower than its enrollment line. Therefore I was finally allocated to Shijiazhuang Railway Institute which was not in my application form at all. It was not what I intended to go, and actually I found out that students of my major were hard to find jobs. If I could find somebody to consult for college application information at that time, it might be a different story for me now."

Besides, better-equality high schools, and especially key senior high schools, are concentrated in urban areas, so children from major cities will be favorer in examinations in which the admission to universities is determined by measures of academic achievement. Besides, top universities have a quota system and admission requirements that favor local students, so such inequality is more prominent in elite educational institutions behind the walls of which the social elites spend the decisive years of their university education.

There is also a recommendation system for admission to college in China for educational

advancement. Most key senior high schools have the privilege to recommend talented students to key universities without taking *gaokao*. If, as seems likely, the political influence of parents could play a part in this recommendation decisions, then the children of political cadres will also be well-represented in China's elite educational institutions. It is reasonable to wonder how much room will be left for children of ability from the countryside.

Urban areas and developed regions receive more public educational resources, and at the same time, students from these areas are admitted by colleges and universities based on lower requirements and obtain more admission quotas for colleges and universities, which mean a sort of triple inequality. National college entrance examination is taken as the fairest examination system in China, but actually it seriously deprives students in rural and underdeveloped areas of educational opportunities.

2.2.3 National College Reform of Increasing Tuition since 1997 and Admission Expansion since 1999 further Aggravated the Higher Educational Attainment Inequality in China

Obviously, such inequality is institutionalized by government's institutional arrangements. In addition, because of the high tuition policy and so-called "market-oriented educational industrialization", such institutionalized inequality has been aggravated. In the late twentieth century, the governmental planned enrollment system was annulled and consequently tuition fees soared extensively in most colleges and universities, i.e., the so-called "industrialization of education" or "marketization of education".

The process of university expansion could be observed in most Western and Northern European countries. The number of students increased fast, however not everywhere at the same speed and during the same years. Italy experienced the highest increase, where after admission restrictions had at first been relaxed and later abandoned, the number of students increased from 268,000 to 682,000 between 1960 and 1970, to further increase to more than one million by 1980. In France between 1960 and 1970 the number of people studying at colleges and universities even almost tripled, from 214,000 to 630,000. In the following years, however, this development continued only in weakened form, so that in 1975 there were about 760,000 college students and in 1982 more than 850,000 (Hartmann, 2007). The university expansion came much later in China.

In 1995, according to the *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1995*, only about 2 percent of the Chinese population over the age of 25 have had postsecondary education, compared to 11 percent in Hong Kong, 14 percent in Republic of Korea, 21 percent in Japan, 14 percent in the former USSR, and 45 percent in the United States. The US National Science Foundation estimated that in 1990, only 5.6 scientists and engineers engaged in research and development per 10,000 persons in the work force in China, compared to 30 in Singapore, 38 in Taiwan (China), 37 in Republic of Korea, 75 in Japan, and 75 in the United States.

The following tables show the population quality of contemporary China.

Table 2-9: Chinese Population Quality in 2000

Educational Level	Illiterate & Semiliterate	Primary & Junior Secondary School Education	Senior Secondary School Education	Higher Education
ρ	10.97	80	11.95	3.81

Statistics Resource: Vocational Counsel Center of Nanjing University of Technology

Note: ρ = Educated Population / National Whole Population \times 100%

Table 2-10: Percentage of People with Higher Education in Labor Force (Aged between 25 and 64) in 2000

State or Region	China	United States	Japan	European Union
ρ	5.2	39	33	24

Statistics Resource: Vocational Counsel Center of Nanjing University of Technology

Note: ρ = People with Higher Education / National Whole Population \times 100%

Table 2-11: Percentage of College Students in Chinese Youth (Aged between 18 and 22) in 2003

(%)					
China	Philippines	Thailand	India	United States	European Countries
15	31	35	17	70	50-80

Statistics Resource: Vocational Counsel Center of Nanjing University of Technology

Note: It is said that 15% of college students in youth is the critical point of mass higher education.

Evidences of growing economic returns to higher education and increased wage inequality in Hong Kong, Taiwan (China), Malaysia, Indonesia, and Chile indicate that fast-growing economies can face skill scarcity if supply of well-educated people is unable to keep pace with demand. Given China's small stock of highly educated people, skill scarcity would reduce China's attractiveness to foreign investment, particularly in technology areas, limit the options for industrial upgrading, undermine the institutional capacity in all sectors, and exacerbate income inequality in a more liberalized labor market.

The development of Chinese higher education can be divided by the college admission expansion into two stages: stage of **elite** higher education and stage of **mass** higher education. During the first stage, higher education were just for small part of better-qualified population, and college students were taken as elite of the whole society and

could enjoy allowance from the state and pay just minimal incidental expenses, and could be allocated with a secure job of decent social position after graduation. During the second stage, because faster economic development needs better population quality, so the state decided to open higher education for the mass, but along with it, the tuition become much more expensive, and even unaffordable for many families, and graduates have to go to labor market and try to find a post by themselves.

In order to sustain economic growth, a critical mass of highly-trained personnel is essential in China. But public expenditure on higher education confronts many constraints. Escalating costs of higher education have forced most governments to seek new sources of funding while preserving academic standards and principles of equity.

During the 1980s and 1990s, tuition was introduced into education system in many developing countries. This trend was facilitated by various realities and research findings (Tilak 1997, 2000; World Bank 2000; Bray 2002). First, according to the rate-of-return theory in economics, higher education generates higher benefits to individuals than to the society. Second, as a reality, higher education has high unit costs that are hard to be borne solely by governments. Third, free higher education has been found to benefit mostly the children of the wealthy. Thus, policies of sharing the cost of higher education among the state, the society and the individuals were widely adopted by many countries.

Higher education in socialist China was free to all students until the mid-1980s; and it was free to the majority and expensive for a small group of the students until mid-1990s. One of the latest changes in China's higher education is the dramatic growth in student numbers, as well as in tuition. A unified tuition charge was introduced in 1997, and the average tuition reached about 31 percent of per capita GDP. In 2000/2001, the total private cost of one student for a year in university exceeded an urban resident's annual income and was four times that of a rural resident. In 2002, the average tuition for higher education reached about 46 percent of per capita GDP. Between 1992 and 2003, the government share in total education expenditure in China decreased from 84 to 62 percent, and the share of tuition increased from about 5 percent to approximately 18 percent¹⁷. The proportion of the population privileged to attend college has been and remains very small, despite a sharp acceleration of schooling expenditures and expansion of enrollment in the past decade. 0.6 percent in 1982, 1.4 percent in 1990, 2.0 percent in 1995, 4.1 percent in 2001, and 6.2 percent in 2006, according to various issues of *China Statistical Yearbook*. In 2001, more than seven million students were enrolled in Chinese higher education institutions but they were only 10 per cent of their age cohort (Huang, 2005). As higher education is becoming more open and expensive, many Chinese have increased access to higher education, while some others have suffered a decrease in access because of economic reason, especially for students from poor rural families.

Access to higher education as a universal right is stated either in international agree-

¹⁷Resource: *China Statistical Yearbook 2005*.

ments (e.g., the United Nations¹⁸) or in various national laws¹⁹. In operation, access to higher education is regulated by certain subjective and objective criteria, including performance principle and market principle. The performance principle emphasizes control of the criteria and qualifications for entering education. The market principle stresses the balance between supply and demand of students in higher education. All principles express an effort to make higher education dependent on merit criteria rather than other criteria, such as wealth, sex, age, race, ethnicity, or social status.

Nevertheless, the selectivity of higher education could hardly satisfy the goal of social equity. It is widely known that the equity of any education system could hardly reach the point of having the same proportion represented in the school by each social group as their original proportion in the society at large, even when talent is equally distributed among the population. Seen from a sociological perspective, education as a public good is hierarchically organized from primary to higher levels. Even though it is theoretically open to every person in a society, entry into higher education depends on personal will and choice, besides individual learning ability. Besides, there are many political, social, economic and cultural factors, which influence the decision of a person to enter a school and stay for many years (Huang, 2005).

As for the case of China, due to the so-called “market-oriented educational industrialization” process, in 1997 Chinese universities began to charge students tuition and accommodation fees, which keep increasing in following years. For example, the average annual tuition of a 10-month academic year for Chinese undergraduate students was about 2,000 Yuan RMB in 1997, and 3,000 Yuan RMB in 1999, already an astronomical amount for many families. However, it rocketed to 4,500 Yuan RMB in year 2000, and the amount has increase to about 6,000 Yuan RMB in year 2004. In some famous artistic universities of economic developed cities, the fees could be over 8,000 Yuan RMB in year 2004. That is a lot of money for a peasant family to come up with. According to official statistics the per capita annual net income for national rural areas was only 2,253 Yuan RMB in year 2000, and 1661 Yuan RMB for 12 western provinces (see Table 1-3). That means for those rural students who are excellent at study but ordinary in economy could not afford tuition, let alone boarding charges in cities, even they could make good marks in college entrance examination and was luckily enrolled by colleges. As a result of such institutional reform, undoubtedly it is easier for children with good family economic support to enter college than children of low-income families.

Since 1999 because of adjustments of the national policy of higher education, the higher education has been developed at a very high speed. The Chinese government believed faster economic development needs more professionals and specialized people with ability, so it decided to further expand university and college enrollment, in order to popularize higher education into mass education and improve the quality of the whole

¹⁸United Nations at Article 13 of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: “Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education.”

¹⁹‘Education Law of the People’s Republic of China’ states at Article 9 that “all citizens, regardless of ethnic group, race, sex, age, occupation, property status or religious belief, enjoy equal educational opportunities according to law”.

population. The former average growth rate of college enrollment was 9 percent. In 1996, the growth rate of enrollment of new student in senior middle school was 3.1 percent compared with the previous years. After three years of schooling when it was time for them to go to higher level of school, the enrollment rate of colleges and universities in 1999 increased 47.3 percent compared with the previous year. In 1998, 1,080,000 students were enrolled by colleges and universities. In 1999, the figure was 1,590,000. Similarly, in 1997 the growth rate of new enrollment of senior middle school was 14.3 percent, and in 2000 colleges and universities enrolled 38.1 percent more entrants than the previous year (see Table 2-3). Other problems came one after other: lack of teaching facilities and qualified teaching staff, poor campus management, decreasing of student's living conditions, decreasing of teaching quality, and most important, unemployment of college students.

The decision to increase college tuition and student enrollments was made by the national government with the goal of stimulating the economy. The central government hopes to push Chinese parents to use some of their huge savings on their children's higher education. It is anticipated that the expansion will lead to large-scale construction work at higher education institutions, which will further stimulate domestic consumption. Another major motivation for the expansion is to maintain social stability by delaying employment for some of the population. However, such condition only gives more priority to urban students, since tuition also increases dramatically. Only those in affluent areas, including major cities and coastal areas, have greatly benefited from the rapid growth in higher education.

The educational decision for rural families becomes harder under this background. If some rural students of families with big financial difficulties were enrolled by certain famous universities, their families would do their best to pay for them, because they take it as a very precious chance to leave the countryside and lead to a better life, a civilized citizen life, so they would not let it go. For example, when talking about how to afford her son to the prestigious Huazhong University of Science and Technology, a poor rural mother of ill health said proudly, "As long as his father or I had one breath left, we would help our son finish his study" (Wang, 2008).

Mrs. Lin, who comes from a village of Shenyang City in Liaoning Province (Respondent No. 11), has similar story. Through raising cows and pigs, the economic condition of her family was comparatively good in village, and has an annual income of 20,000 to 30,000 Yuan RMB. She has three other siblings, which is a great burden, but her parents always say that they would try their best to afford them with whatever they could, till whichever educational level they could reach. Mrs. Lin's annual tuition and boarding charge was 4700 Yuan RMB from 1999 to 2003, and besides part-time job salary and scholarship she still needed about 100 Yuan RMB monthly from her family, which was extremely economic and uptight among classmates, so altogether her family spend about 25,000 Yuan RMB for her college years. Her parents would do the same for all their children. "My father never let us worry about money problem, all we did was studying", said she.

Mr. Zeng of a village of Shaoyang area in Hunan Province (Respondent No. 12) spent

over 45,00 Yuan RMB for his graduate tuition and boarding charges in Tsinghua University, but his parents are just ordinary vegetable peasants, so his family had to use all saving and he had to borrow money from friends.

When a rural student was enrolled by top-ranking university, her/his poor family would sacrifice everything, including using all savings, selling all valuable property and borrowing from all relatives, to send their child to school. Of course, most relatives, friends and neighbors would not refuse to lend money to such family, because they believe that graduate from famed university would find a decent and well-paid job in big city and return their money in the near future. Besides, famed university has a system of assisting the impoverished students. Therefore, most poor rural student of prestigious university could finish their study with the help of others.

While, on the other side, an enrollment letter of an unknown college would bring a poor family into a dilemma: to go or not to go. If not let child go to such college, he/she might lost the most important development chance in lifetime; if let child go, after selling everything to pay the expensive costing in college, he/she might not find a job with a diploma of an unknown poor-quality college.

In 2000, Mrs. Yuan from a village of Datong area in Shanxi Province (Respondent No. 2) was allocated to study in Shijiazhuang Railway Institute of Hebei Province, majoring in inorganic nonmetallic material. It is an unknown college and an unpopular major, so at first Mrs. Yuan did not intended to go and planed to try again at the next year, “so I could go to a better college”, said she. But her teacher said, if she tried again and got graduated one year later, the job market might become worse. Therefore she borrowed some money, left the countryside and reluctantly went to that college, after thorough consideration.

Mrs. Li, who comes from a village of Hengshui area in Hebei Province (Respondent No. 4), was enrolled by Luoyang Institute of Engineering at Henan Province in after her first take of National College Entrance Exam, which is a third-level college (non-government funded college or privately-run college is classified as third-level college in China) and its annual tuition was as high as 2500 Yuan RMB in 1996. Finally she decided not to go and try another time, which gave much pressure to her and her family to remain another year in senior middle school.

Private college, run by local people or some individual person, is a new type of higher education in China, and it comes into being along with the booming of Chinese private economy and higher education. This kind of colleges is not standardized yet, so their tuitions are much more expensive than government funded colleges, while their educational qualities are not as good. In 2004 in the third grade of Changchong Secondary Middle School, fifteen students of Class V were enrolled by private colleges, but only one finally went there; nine students of Class II were also enrolled by private colleges, but just one decided to go and others tended to remain in the third grade for another year and try once again. The biggest reason for them not attending college was that the annual tuition of privately-run colleges is about 10,000 Yuan RMB, and that is too much for ordinary rural families (Wang 2008).

It shows that, at present those privately-run colleges serve mostly for urban families and affluent rural families, and they only give bigger chance of receiving higher education for well-off students.

Chinese parents are well known for diligently saving up for their children's education, enduring hardships that would be unimaginable for many people living in affluent industrialized nations. However, as some rural families live in absolute poverty, they have no savings and little chance to borrow money. In such cases, rural students are further disadvantaged in higher educational attainment.

When China is trying to popularize its higher education for the mass, only urban students benefit from it and obtain more opportunities to go to college, and "college dream" slipped further away for the poor rural students. Higher educational attainment inequality between rural and urban areas in China has been seriously aggravated because of "market-oriented educational industrialization" process in colleges and universities.

China's introduction of tuition fee system is a step toward the diversification of institutional financial resources that requires further development. Parallel to the step toward efficient use of resources, equity will have to be served in terms of increasing access to higher education for appropriately qualified young people from poor rural homes.

2.2.4 Rearing Institution or Son-Preference Culture in Rural Areas

Scholars report that education enhances women's eagerness and ability to work by raising their earning potential and aspirations, changing their attitudes regarding traditional roles, in the home and workplace, and providing them with the qualifications needed to find a proper job. As their educational levels rise, women may be able to move from traditional agricultural work to the modern service sector, with its wider range of occupational possibilities. More important, education is found to play a key role in women's knowledge and skills in population control and child development.

Unfortunately a gender hierarchy exists in Chinese rural rearing institution, with males on top of females, especially concerning education. Parents have lower educational expectation for girls than for boys, and it is combined with different cultural, economic and social factors: traditional value regarding the role of females in the family and in rural society, the perceived lower educational benefits for educating girls, cultural materialism that creates disincentives for staying in school for girl, and depressed urban labor market for educated women.

In the recent literature on gender studies, gender is considered a social phenomenon, as a distinct from biologically determined sex. Being socially and culturally constructed, gender defines the roles and expectations of behaviors that society assigns to men and women as well as the social relations among and between men and women (Kesselman ed al, 1995). "As an ensemble of social and cultural practices"²⁰, gender intersects with

²⁰Cristina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White, (ed). 1994. *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p.1.

every aspect of human lives, including educational attainment. Scholars report that education enhances women’s eagerness and ability to work by raising their earning potential and aspirations, changing their attitudes regarding traditional roles in the home and workplace, and providing them with the qualifications needed to find a proper job. As their educational level rise, women may be able to move from traditional agricultural work to the modern service sector, with its wider range of occupational possibilities. More important, education is found to play a key role in women’s knowledge and skills in population control and child development.

In new China the basic road to the achievement of equality was to be through female participation in the work force in accordance with Engels’s theory that “the emancipation of women will only be possible when women can take part in production on a large, social scale” (Engels, 1975: 221). Since its establishment, China’s communist government has officially guaranteed women equality with men in the socioeconomic sphere, as well as in the political, cultural and domestic spheres of life. Women’s access to higher education has also been significantly expanded. However, Ellen R. Judd in her 1994 study points out that the launch of the China’s economic reform movement, as well as the program and policies development during the reform years has not been gender-neutral as presented officially by the government (Judd, 1994). Still traditional attitude regarding women in society and gender relationship in households play a role in the relative disadvantage for rural girls to advance in education.

Unfortunately, that women “hold up half the sky in China” is only an outdated cliché in current China, and the progress toward gender equality declines in recent years. Since the 1990s, gender disparities in China were concentrated in poor rural areas, and among poor households, where children compete with more siblings for education resources and the costs of education are a burden on families. When the household education spending has become a heavier economic burden for a significant number of rural families since the late 1990s, a gender hierarchy exists and plays a more and more important role in household education decisions. In these settings, girls’ schooling, more than boys’ schooling, has been sensitive to costs, and girls need to show promise in order to remain in school (Hannum, 2009).

Table 2-12: Educational Attainment for People (age 6 and over) by Gender and Education

	Population	Male	Female
Illiterate	15.6%	9.3%	22.1%
Completion of 6 years of schooling	41.3%	41.1%	41.5%
Completion of 9 years of schooling	31.5%	36%	26.8%
Completion of 12 years of schooling	9.4%	10.9%	7.9%
Completion of 3 or more years of college	2.2%	2.8%	1.6%

Source: State Statistical Bureau, China Statistical Yearbook 1997.

Table 2-12 presents our analysis of the educational attainment of the Chinese population based on the data from the 1997 statistical yearbook. These figures put China behind many other developing countries in Asia in terms of the educational attainment of its population. The table also shows that women are the majority of illiterate and semiliterate persons in China. According to 1996 national data, women accounted for 72 percent of the 165 million illiterates. In other words, in comparison with men, women were 26 percent less likely to finish 9 years of schooling, 28 percent less likely to finish high school, and 43 percent less likely to finish college. Women had lower attainment than men because girls are less likely than boys to be enrolled in schools and more likely to drop out. Of the 2.73 million school-age children who were not in school in China in 1990, 82 percent of them were female. And of the 3 million school dropouts, 76 percent were female.

The gender gap for educational attainment is even worse for girls in poor rural areas, and the Chinese traditional son-preference culture is its root. In poor rural areas, one of the key issues that affected the implementation of nine-year compulsory education is girls' enrollment in formal schooling. It is found that the poorer the household, the greater the reliance of parents on their daughters to perform domestic duties and the greater tendency to channel resources of education to the sons. The son-preference culture here includes three related contributors: parental perceptions of abilities and appropriate roles for girls and boys, parental concerns about old-age support, and parental perceptions of different labor market outcomes for girls' and boys' education.

The first contributor is the overtly discriminatory attitudes about girls' and boys' essential academic and working abilities and rights. It is reasonable to assume that, if parents have a higher educational expectation for boys than for girls, they will be more likely to support boys than girls in decisions regarding access to schooling. Chinese values and attitudes have been heavily influenced by Confucianism for over 2,000 years. The Confucian concept of appropriate behavior for women is captured in such saying as "women without knowledge are virtuous", to make women relegate to the domestic sphere and could not assume a role in economic life and have to cling on men for living. Families in some rural areas still believe that girls were less worthy of education or less capable than boys.

The other two contributors, choices dictated by expectations of future co-residence and choice dictated by perceptions of future labor market opportunities, relate gender disparities to economic consideration, and that is family calculations about returns. It may play an important role in educational decision-making.

In rural China, traditional attitude regarding women in society and gender relationship in households play a role in the relative disadvantage for rural girls to advance in education. Traditionally sons are expected to shoulder the responsibility of continuing the family lines and supporting aging parents. Daughters are considered non-permanent members of the households. In contemporary China, most peasants are denied of endowment insurance or medical insurance (only a small percentage of peasants live in the suburbs of big cities are given medical insurance by the local government as new policy testing), and rural Chinese, who tend to continue operating on outmoded values,

ignoring the new structures around them and passing on old ideas to other people, have a deep-rooted tradition to expect sons to live with their aging parents after marriage and afford the expenses of whole household. When girls marry out of households and boys remain with families of origin, the household responsibility system reinforces the value of male children, who are expected to contribute to the increasingly uncertain future family welfare. So a gender hierarchy exists in household education decisions in most rural families in China. Rural parents have strong incentives to invest in sons as long-term insurance, including educational investments, and they have higher educational expectations for sons than for daughters. So although the establishment of the Compulsory Education Law in China in 1986 laid the legal and structural bases for gender equality in schooling, both household economic considerations, and culturally-related expectations regarding males and females at home and in society have an influence on households' decisions regarding schooling for their children, particularly girls' school attendance.

Girls who live in suburban villages and villages where there are more non-farm opportunities than farm opportunities stay in school longer. Fewer differences in enrollment or in other dimensions of basic education are found in urban areas, where schooling is better subsidized, where families are less resource constrained, on average, and where children compete with fewer or no siblings for resources (Hannum, 2009).

The complexity of family gender attitudes is also evident in the strong premium on giving birth to sons. In Gansu Province of western China, the sex ratio at birth, typically about 106 for every 100 girls, was an astounding 124.17 in 1997. This figure represented a dramatic increase from the already-high sex ratio at birth of 110.38 reported for the 1990 census. High sex ratios at birth are probably attributable to a combination of under-reporting of girl births and prenatal sex selection, with either strategy enabling families to continue to try for a boy. Many rural parents continue to bear children if earlier children are daughters, until having at least one son. Parents with no sons would feel humiliated in neighborhood, and feel uncertain about their future. Therefore, girls tend to have more siblings overall and are more likely than boys to have brothers, especially younger brothers. This pattern has educational significance, while boys commonly absorb more educational resources.

The quality of school and the usefulness of schooling for rural children, especially for rural girls, are also factors determining education for girls in poor rural communities. As Chinese education system uses nation-wide standards in examination, teaching materials, and textbooks, the education rural children received has little to do with their lives in rural areas. The teaching materials are designed so, because in China the ultimate aspiration for many students is to get into post-secondary schools. Only then could they have the chance of getting a desirable non-farming job. This demand pushes schools at all levels to work toward one goal - to move their students up the educational ladder. In 1990s only one third of high school graduates got into post-secondary schools nation-wide. As in most schools in poor rural regions, teaching quality is poorer than that of relatively more affluent and urban areas, the rates of acceptance of students from the poor regions by post-secondary schools are relatively lower. With a diminished chance for post-secondary education even for boys and the abolition of the policy

of government guaranteed job placement for college students in 1992, rural parents are less likely to consider sending their daughters to school relative to boys. In minority areas, the lack of qualified minority female teachers for local schools are also jeopardizes parents' willingness to send their daughters to school. The gender of the teacher could be a factor for minority parents.

Besides, rural girls often marry young and move to husbands' family after marriage, rural areas have little non-farm working opportunities which suite educated women. So the invest in girls' education is believed as risky to has no return and a kind of waste. Therefore rural parents are less likely to spend scarce resources on their daughters' education beyond their financial ability and legal obligation, and rural girls are more disadvantaged than rural boys especially when their family educational inputs are not enough to afford all children for higher level of education.

In most rural families' educational strategy, parents tend to arrange for their sons to receive higher level of education. Because in general daughters are expected to marry into other people's households and their futures are more dependent on whether they have a good marriage, some households would not only be reluctant to spend money on their daughters' education, but also be eager to seek a quick return of the money they have already spend on their daughters before their marriage. So some parents pull their daughters out of schools and push them into some jobs with good temporary earning but without long-term career prospects. There are some "traditional" or long-existing factors for Chinese gender inequality concerning educational attainment, such as the non-permanent role unmarried rural women had in their natal families. But some of the influences, such as the culture of materialism and the new opportunity of employment as migrant worker, were obviously related to the new and unprecedented social changes generated by the economic reform.

In the past two decades, the de-collectivization of rural economy, the reform of state-owned enterprises, and the transition to a market oriented economy have allowed many privately owned enterprises to hire a large number of young female workers in manufacture and service sectors, especially in the booming coastal cities (Xu, 2000). In addition, many rural villages and towns also have developed various small-scaled factories that hire young women with limited education. However, this type of employment is temporary and is perceived by both young women themselves and the employers as transitional jobs for young women before their marriage. In most cases it does not have career potential for young women with only elementary and lower secondary education. Nevertheless, it is a very important household economic strategy for many rural families. It does not matter whether the young rural women take these temporary jobs on their own free will for the purpose of seeking freedom and personal identity or are obligated to go to contribute to their families' financial well-being. In most cases, those young women either send money back to their families or save their hard-earned money for their own wedding. Either way, it helps rural household to get a monetary return from their daughters. After marriage, these rural women with no long-term career prospects and lesser education than that of their husbands are more likely remain in the countryside doing farming work, while their better-educated husband often go out seeking non-farming and cash earning jobs (Li and Tsang, 2002). This likely perpetuates the

inequality of gender relationship of social power in rural households.

Household education decisions may also be influenced by economic factors, the private costs of education and the potential benefits of education. In China, household education spending includes expenditures on miscellaneous school fees, textbooks, stationery, and additional expenditures on clothing, food and other boarding costs as a result of schooling. Since 1978 China's economic reforms has significantly altered the economic life in rural areas, and brought a better a higher living standard to many rural Chinese. Despite of increased income in the recent years, the vast majority of the rural households are still relatively poor. Chinese government is now shifting of financing policy from the government toward households and students, and household education spending is at present a heavy economic burden for a significant number of households, even in many big cities. Consider an illustration based on information from National Bureau of Statistics China. In 1999, per-capita total household spending averaged 1,577 RMB *yuan* in all rural areas, 4,616 *yuan* for all urban areas, and 7,499 for urban Beijing. Besides schools fees and other costs, such as costs of food and transportation etc., there are other hidden fees that increase households' economic burden as well. For example, in some regions outside institutions collected various fees through the school system, ranging from uniform and fees to immunization to medical check up. The resultant economic burden on rural households may have profound impact on access to education for children in rural China, especially for girls in the economic-backward areas.

On the other side, the improved material life has also brought the culture of materialism to rural China and pushed some rural Chinese to keep their children out of school, especially girls in the poor regions, so that they can make money. The market-oriented economy also provides opportunities for school age children to make money. Some illegal collective and private factories hired school age children.

Furthermore, in recent years the job market has changed considerably in China and continues to favor males over females. Both Ellen R. Judd's study of rural industry in rural North China (Judd, 1994) and Feng Xu's study of women migrant workers (Xu, 2000) point out that rural women are concentrated in relatively unskilled, temporary, and dead-end jobs. The perceived lower returns to female education through current job market may affect household education decision regarding boys and girls.

In contemporary Chinese labor market, women suffer from discrimination with respect to wages and employment opportunities, even for the highly educated ones. Empirically, wage discrimination is measured by the part of a gender wage gap that is unexplained by productive characteristics of individual workers, and it is more pervasive in the rural sector than in the urban sector, with the weight of the unexplained part of gender wage gaps ranging from 28 percent to 47 percent for urban workers and 84 percent to 91 percent for workers in rural industries. Women made up a disproportionately larger share of the lay-offs, accounting for 38 percent of the formal workforce but 50 percent of the lay-offs, and laid off female workers experiences a greater difficulty to reenter the labor market than male workers.

In 1992, China passed and put into effect the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interest of Women. During its amendment in 2005, a provision was added stipulating that

no employer should refuse to hire women on the ground of sex except for special types of work or posts unsuitable to women. The Labor Law, which went into effect in 1995, also carried the provision: “Females shall enjoy equal rights as males in employment. It shall not be allowed, in the recruitment of staff and workers, to use sex as a pretext for excluding females from employment or to raise recruitment standards for females, except for the types of work or posts that are not suitable for females as stipulated by the States.”

However, the law has been poorly implemented. Companies’ reluctance to bear the extra costs caused by female employees’ maternity leaves and post-maternal care has led to rampant violations of gender discrimination clauses. At a conference on the welfare of women and children in May 2007, Governor of Guangdong Province Huang Huahua admitted that gender discrimination in hiring still exists at varying extents in Guangdong. Huang said one company chief told him that hiring women was not cost-effective because women were not as strong and tough as men and took pregnancy and maternity leaves. Huang said he rebutted the man a bit emotionally, “If hiring women is so troublesome, who do you think gave birth to you?”²¹

The Center for Women’s Law and Legal Services of Peking University released a report²² in June 2009 after polling 3,000 women over one year’s time and came up with the result after data analysis and in-person interviews, which showed that one in 25 of the surveyed are forced to sign labor contracts that contain clauses forbidding them to get married or pregnant in a set period of time. More than 20 percent say employers cut salaries on women who become pregnant or give birth, and 11.2 percent lose their jobs for having a baby. Some 28 percent say employers set different criteria in recruitment and women have to perform much better than their male peers in interviews to get the same job. More than one third believe male employees have more opportunities than women in getting promoted, and 52.1 percent attribute to it the fact that women have to spend more time taking care of children and family chores. The research also found one in 20 women experienced workplace sexual harassment.

The practice of discrimination against women in hiring and firing is so widespread that some employers’ want advertisements clearly specified “men only” or requiring that female applicants be young and attractive. Sometimes the discrimination is unspoken, which means that they won’t say they need just males, but they simply eliminate all female candidates during the recruiting process using various excuses.

Jinan Times newspaper and a job hunting website, both based in eastern Shandong Province, conducted a survey of 7,311 female university students in March 2007. The question was simply “Is a good husband more important than a good job”, and 72.2 percent of the respondents answered yes. It does not, however, indicate that future wives want to cling to old family traditions of the wife running the house. The reason behind it is that an ideal job is much harder to find than a prince charming. Only 2.8 percent of respondents said female university graduates don’t face gender discrimination in current labor market, while 52.8 percent said gender discrimination is a serious

²¹Quoted from “Beijing Review” November, 2007

²²Quoted from *China Youth Daily* 14th. June 2009

problem.²³

According to a survey conducted by MyCOS Corporation in 2010, 21 percent of female students who will graduate in 2010 found jobs by the end of February of 2010, much lower than the 29.5 percent of male students, indicating that female students obviously lag behind male students in terms of employment rate. The survey shows that 13 percent of female students who have found jobs signed their labor contracts with state-owned enterprises, much lower than the proportion of male students. Private enterprises have now become the main destinations for female students, with over 50 percent of female students who have found jobs signed their labor contracts with private enterprises, 9 percentage points higher than the 43 percent of male students. Targeting students from the class of 2010, the survey involved 64,589 questionnaires, of which, 35,071 were filled out by university students and 29,518 by students from senior vocational schools and junior colleges.

In order to relieve the job-hunting pains, it is becoming a trend now that some female students of well-off families undergo cosmetic surgery before graduation, in order to stand better opportunity in harsh job competition. It is called as “beauty-economy” in China, when job opportunity and promotion chances are not only decided by qualification and working experiences but also appearance, especially for females. In many cases, when two female graduates compete for one position, the one with better looking has a better chance, even though she is less capable.

All across Chinese big cities, countless new cosmetic surgery clinics are opening their doors, offering their services not to fight with the effects of aging, but to help young females in their pursuit of careers. When ordinary rural girls cannot afford plastic surgery, the women-discriminated labor market negatively affect the educational pursuit of rural female students and the education decision making of their parents.

Table 1-3 shows that per-capita household expenditure is larger than per-capita net income for average household in rural areas, and those households must use various ways to deal with the economic burden of children’s education, for example, to borrow money from banks, relatives, or friends. Thus indicates that many households in poor rural areas are willing to spend a significant proportion of their resources on the children’s education, and the reason for this is that graduates with an upper secondary, especially post-secondary education can get a desirable job which in general means a non-agricultural job preferably in urban areas with a stable income. Most of these children who have got a desirable job through educational attainment would send money back to their families. Once some of them become cadres, they can also bestow social capital — family background and connections, to their families and local communities that may in turn lead to further economic and social advantages for households and communities.

Economic burden is one of the factors that prevented parents from sending their school age children to school or the factor that made parents to withdraw their children from school. Nationally, females are under-represented in education relative to males. For

²³Quoted from Jinan Times March 29, 2007.

example, in 1999, females accounted for 47.6 percent of enrollment in primary schools, 45.9 percent in general secondary schools, and 39.7 percent in regular institutions of higher education²⁴. Female participation declines with increasing level of schooling.

When households had to make decision on who would get to use the limited family resources to go to school, boys were favored over girls, because of the lower educational expectation for girls. Girls more tend to drop out of school early and to work either at home or in factories, to supplement household income than boys. It relates to socio-economic and cultural factors. Some factors, such as the role non-permanent role unmarried rural women had in their natal families were “traditional”, or long existent in Chinese society. But some of the influences, such as increasing economic burden for education, the culture of materialism, and the employment opportunities are obviously related to the new and unprecedented social changes generated by the economic reform.

2.2.5 Self-Job-Application System for college Graduates further Suffers the Educational Pursuit Courage of Rural-Origin Students

Along with the development of higher education, the reform of graduates’ job allocation has gone through three stages in China: guarantee job assignments, two-way selection, and self job application.

1) Stage of guarantee job placement

In October 1951, the State Council decided that “the government assigns posts for college graduates”, to ensure that each graduate was trained to fill a position as a state cadre. The high degree of predictability in personnel planning was linked to an economic situation where the priorities were to build an economy based on heavy industry. Students enrolled free of charge and were provided with stipends; after graduation, they were obliged to accept job placements from the state as their lifelong career, which was also described as “iron rice bowl” to describe the permanence, in whatever the position and wherever the location.

This job placement policy was interrupted for a dozen of years during the Cultural Revolution and resumed in 1981. At this stage, college was called “ivory tower”, and its graduates were so valuable that they were always in short supply, but they had no free will to choose their career life. It was believed that, since college graduates were raised and supported wholly by the state, they should sacrifice their own life interest for the state and go to wherever the state wanted them to go.

2) Stage of two-way selection

With the success of economic reforms, there are pressing needs for professional personnel with skill profiles different from those the system was designed to serve. The emphasis has moved from traditional industries and governmental services to new industries serving a rapidly growing internal consumer market reaching out to international markets.

²⁴*Education Statistics Yearbook of China 1999*, p.17.

The State Council issued “The Outline of Chinese Education Reform and Development” in February 1993, which declared that “graduates could choose the work unit free-willingly, and the unit may select students who are best qualified”. In March 1995, the Ministry of Education released “Attitudes for Strengthening the Job-Allocation System of College Graduates”, which officially issued that each fresh graduate was free to find a post in his/her own field. Employment decisions are reached through consultation among employers, students, and universities, implying an element of choice and competition, implying an element of choice and competition. Nonetheless, the labor market has not been fully liberalized. When state-sponsored students cannot find employment after graduation, the state still has the responsibility to provide jobs, mostly in the government service or in state-owned enterprises.

3) Stage of self job application

Since 1997, according to the regulations released by the Ministry of Education, most graduates of college began to find their posts in labor market by themselves, except for some targeted-area students who were trained for specific posts by the government.

Since the mid-1990’s because of the speeding of institutional and market economic reform, more than 50 million employees of state and collective owned enterprises became jobless or laid-off workers. At the same time, reform of bureaucracy and redundancy also led to reduction of millions of former civil servants. In the past 30 years, about 130 to 150 million rural peasants left their home land to the cities for better opportunities. Also twelve million new faces leave various levels of school to join the job market each year. When economy is not able to absorb the output of school, the condition of college students’ employment becomes harder and harder, though national and provisional governments have made many efforts, since the expansion of college enrollment in 1999. The available posts in labor market could not cover the fast increasing number of fresh graduates and school leavers each year, even though Chinese economy is blooming dramatically. Government statistics show that 87 percent of fresh college graduates found work in 2009, and the available jobs for those who succeed often pay poorly. In today’s China, the positions filled by college graduates were formerly occupied by secondary school leavers, and so on down the line. The expected salary of college graduates are decreasing dramatically these years. At the same time, the price level, especially the housing prices, in China’s big cities are climbing continuously. Therefore, many Chinese educated youth feel frustrated and confused about their future.

Table 2-13: Statistics of Chinese College Graduates' Employment (2001 - 2007)

Year	Number of Fresh Graduates (10,000 persons)	Employment Rate (%)	Number of Unemployed Graduates (10,000 persons)
2001	115	70	34.5
2002	145	64.7	51.2
2003	212	70	63.6
2004	280	73	75.6
2005	338	72.6	92.6
2006	413	71.2	118.9
2007	496		

Statistics Resource: "China Youth Daily" that issued on the 18th Dec. 2006, and its statistics came from <http://edu.people.com.cn/GB/5179241.html>

There are three major reasons to this educated unemployment problem. First is the "high scores but low qualities" of Chinese students. Primary schools prepared children to enter secondary schools, and secondary schools prepared children for their final crucial examinations - *gaokao*. Schools and teachers were judged in accordance with the examination results. School curricula were geared toward these exams, as were teaching methods. Ritualized drills, rote memorization, and pre-exam cramming had proven the surest quickest means of obtaining the desired results and were therefore the preferred means of instruction. The content of what had thus been inculcated was usually forgotten shortly after the examinations ordeal had been completed. The result is rote learning of scholastic material that is of little intrinsic value even to those few who pass the examinations and worth even less to the great majority who do not. The compulsive focus on college entrance examination stifles real learning and particularly devalues the practical application of knowledge, including that pertinent to rural development.

Because of such "diploma disease", throughout their time in school, what some students only learn is to recite their outmoded textbooks word by word and achieve good marks in examinations, in order to get enrolled by famed higher-leveled schools. Part of those young students are the only child of well-off urban families, attached with high hopes from parents and grandparents, are told to care only about test scores, instead of hands-on ability, self-study ability, hobbies, sports, politics, and so on. Another part of those young students are poor rural children, who have no other learning facility besides textbooks to compete with their urban counterparts in national exams.

When those young children do go to college, what they face is a planned higher education system, which has not changed much since 1980s and could not suit the modern labor need of Chinese market-oriented economy in the globalization age. They know little practical knowledge, have no sociability or team work spirit, are reluctant to do hard work, and fragile in both physical ability and psychological endurance. The Chinese education system is terrible at producing workers with innovative skills for Chinese economy. It produces people who memorize existing facts rather than discovering new

facts; who fish for existing solutions rather than coming up with new ones; who execute orders rather than inventing new ways of doing things. In other words they do not solve problems for their employers. Therefore, many enterprises are reluctant to sign on fresh graduates, because they always need long time training. Although Chinese universities are not without pockets of excellence, they are churning out people with high expectations and low skills. That combination cannot be good for any country, let alone a country with a low capita income.

Another reason for high unemployed rate of college graduates is that they have no accurate self-awareness and too high expectation. Many graduates only want to work in big-sized enterprise or big city governments, and they are reluctant to go to economically undeveloped cities and areas or glooming small-sized private-owned companies, because they consider themselves as “elite” of the society after higher education pursuit and want to find a self-satisfied job.

The third reason is the obstacles in Chinese personnel and registration institutions. Some graduates do find positions finally with great difficulty, but they were not able to sign employment contracts with the companies, because of *hukou*, location of personal archives, or some kind of procedure problems.

However, there are no easy answers since the educated unemployment problem obviously derived from a wide range of pressures. After a decade of intense scholarly scrutiny, education had emerged as the intervening variable, sometimes mediating but powerless to overcome the economic, demographic, social, and cultural constraints of its environment. Given existing rates of economic growth, any attempt to solve the unemployment problem by reforming school systems could not succeed so long as population growth rates remained unchanged, urban-rural disparities persisted, migration from the countryside to the cities continued, and income patterns were not realigned to reduce disparities between those with higher and lower academic qualifications.

Under this circumstance, rural-origin graduates have bigger difficulty to find a position, since they have agricultural *hukou*, backward family background, fewer social relation in cities, poor economic and cultural capital. Some study has shown that peasants have gradually changed their attitude toward their children’s higher education, along with the enrollment expansion of colleges. In early days, peasants hold high hopes for their children and wish them to go to colleges and become “dragon” one day, which is the most powerful divine mythical creature in Chinese culture, and could bring ultimate abundance, prosperity and good fortune for China. However, at present they are afraid that their children would go to colleges and become “dragon” (Li 2003). They worry that after spending such a big amount of money, their children still may not be able to find a job in cities.

2.2.6 Registered Permanent Residence System which is the Root for All Distinguishes between Urban and Rural Students

Household registration status impacts immensely on individual acquisition of education: people from farming (rural) households have much smaller educational opportunity than those from nonfarming or urban households. In the first 30 years, because the government undertook popularization of education in the countryside and at the same time consciously provided opportunities for rural people to enter secondary and tertiary schools, the impact of household registration status on individual educational attainment tended to decline. Through the 1980s and 90s, urban-rural disparities, including those in educational resources, tended to increase, leading to the gradual intensification of the impact of household registration status.

A rural-urban gap and a desire to leave the countryside behind are common in most developing countries. What is uncommon is that China has been able to contain this desire for migration with institutional arrangement for decades. Ever since the registered permanent residence (*hukou*) system was firstly implemented nationally, the urban-rural divide has been the single most important factor that structures virtually all aspects of life chances in China (Cheng and Selden 1994; Knight and Song 1999; Wu and Treiman 2004).

In the mid-1950s, rural land reform, collectivization, and then communization, plus a continuing gap between rural and urban living standards drove a large-scale peasant migration to the cities. The government soon became concerned about the disorder and extra expenses this movement might create, since it threatened to undermine the government's program of full urban employment and drive up the state's expenditure on housing, schools, parks and other social needs just when it was trying to increase investment in industry. The government thought it was necessary to limit the migration of rural population to urban areas, in order to promote the capital-intensive industrialization, which stressed the heavy industry at a relatively low social cost. Aiming at population registration and control, by the National People's Congress in 1958 the government passed strict *hukou* legislation whose effect was formally to differentiate residential groups as a means to control population movement and mobility and to shape state developmental priorities. Henceforth, China's *hukou* system has long been, and remains today, the central institutionalized mechanism defining the city-countryside relationship and shaping important elements of state-society relations in China.

This system institutionalized the social division of labor in which rural and urban residents were destined to be either "agricultural" or "non-agricultural" population. For a newborn baby, *hukou* status is inherited from the maternal line. The key to regulating formal rural-to-urban migration under the *hukou* system is to control the *hukou* status converting process from agricultural to non-agricultural, which is subject to simultaneous "policy" and "quota" controls. The former defines the qualifications of people's entitlement to non-agricultural *hukou*, whereas the latter regulates the number of qualified people who get non-agricultural *hukou*.

A citizen who wants to move from the countryside to a city must possess an employment certificate issued by the city labor bureau, a certificate of admission issued by a school, or a moving

certificate issued by the household registration office of the city of destination, and must apply to the household registration office in his or her permanent place of residence for permission to move out and fulfill the moving procedure.²⁵

By late 1970s, the regulation was strictly enforced, and mobility between the two status groups was extremely difficult under the restriction of the registered residence dual status system unless they had been specifically recruited to do. Urban economic enterprises had strict limits placed on their wage fund, and were forbidden to hire extra regular staff members without special permission. Even marriage to an urbanite did not entitle anyone to move into the cities in order to live with one's spouse. The most regular channels of "agricultural to non-agricultural *hukou* conversion process" are recruitment by an urban enterprise, enrolment in an institute of higher education, joining the army, or promotion to a senior administrative position. The policies of recruitment, enrollment and promotion are made by labor, education and personnel authorities, and the conversion quotas associated with these policies was formerly set by the State Planning Commission in planning economy period, and then mostly by local government in reform era.

The townspeople were born with the right to live and work in urban areas, and the social welfare only covered urban residents. The gaps between the two groups in economic interests and opportunities that were endowed by institutions were huge. What the townspeople enjoyed greatly surpassed that which the peasants possessed.

Unlike population registration systems in many other countries, the Chinese household permanent registration (*hukou*) system was designed not merely to provide population statistics and identify personal status, but also directly to regulate population distribution and serve many other important objectives desired by the state. Since the *hukou* system links people's accessibility to state-provided benefits and opportunities, it significantly affects personal life in many aspects, including educational and occupational attainment, and social mobility. Its power in controlling people's lives has declined in the reform era in the wake of enormous social and economic changes and increase in rural-to-urban mobility, but at some level it determines people's fates still, especially for Chinese rural residents. In contemporary China, the *hukou* system still prioritizes the city over the countryside, by controlling population movement up and down the spatially defined status hierarchy²⁶, preventing population flow to the big cities, and binding people to the village or city of their birth.

In reform era, especially since 1990s, as population movement from countryside to the

²⁵ "Regulations Governing Household Registration," (Peking: Standing Committee, National People's Congress, 9 January 1958), translated in H. Yuan Tien, *China's Population Struggle* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973), p. 113.

²⁶ A rigid hierarchy created by *hukou* system: At the bottom are peasants, classified as members of "agricultural households" who are generally unable to move into urban places to establish residence. Next come those in nonagricultural households living in rural towns, then those in county towns, district cities, provincial capital, and finally in the national level cities like Beijing and Shanghai. One can move down this hierarchy relatively easily, and parallel (to another urban place at the same administrative level) with some difficulty, but movement up, to a large urban place, is extremely difficult to arrange (Whyte and Parish, 1984).

cities accelerated, a more flexible *hukou* policy has been adopted, but the basic function and features of it are intact, and the classification of citizens are agricultural or non-agricultural based on the *hukou* registration still exists. Persons holding different *hukou* still have different political and economic rights and obligations. Transfer of *hukou* status from agricultural to non-agricultural in nowadays is still subject to policy and quota controls. The reason for that persistence might be Chinese national leaders fear the congestion, social unrest and less of political control which might accompany an increasingly mobile labor force. Therefore, the dual *hukou* system, which underwent some drastic changes in the past decades, has not lost its importance in Chinese cities. Despite large income difference between rural and urban households, the rapid urban permanent migration found in many industrializing countries has been limited in China. For over three decades, the *hukou* system has made it possible to bind China's rural population in a subaltern position on land which it did not own and could not leave.

In contemporary China, it is still very hard for people with “agricultural *hukou*” to find stable jobs in cities even if they have lived there for years. They are always labeled as underclass and receive lower salaries, fewer state-subsidized benefits, and even less civil rights than legal urban residents. They could only take up marginal jobs that are comparatively characterized by long hours, poor working conditions, low and unstable pay, and much less benefits in housing, food provided at the workplace, childcare, transportation, and entertainment — jobs which are unattractive to urban residents. What really distinguishes the Chinese disparity between rural migrants and urban employees is not the wage difference, but the difference in state-subsidized benefits. Urban employees receive welfare benefits associated with their employment, whereas only about 10 percent of rural migrants report having any kind of medical insurance coverage and less than 5 percent have retirement pension benefits, the figures for urban employees are two-thirds and 80 percent (Wang and Zuo, 1999). Furthermore rural migrants tend to live in smaller house compared with their urban counterparts and it is harder for them to find a spouse in cities or bring their families to join them if they are married. Additionally, rural migrants are socially separated from local urban residents. Often, they themselves, spouses, and children are looked down by urbanites and local government as second-level citizens. The stereotype of rural migrants is that they are uneducated, ignorant, dirty, and have high probability to do crimes.

In the past two decades, many local governments have allowed the issue of special residence permits to encourage peasants to reside in small cities and towns, in order to achieve the local urbanization target. Some medium-sized cities have also loosed their restrictions. But in more desirable places such as large cities, *hukou* is under stricter control and open sale is generally not allowed. Under a few circumstances where the permanent urban residence status would become possible for rural population to obtain, but the requirement and the price are exorbitantly high. Beijing simplifies the application process of technical employees with senior professional titles to move there. Other big cities like Shanghai, Shenzhen and Zhuhai have regulations that allow anyone who buys local commercial property at a price higher than certain level to apply for permanent *hukou* after paying administrative fees which are also very expensive for most citizens.

Without registration, one still is not able to apply for schooling, get married, or enlist in the army. In contemporary China, urban residents are still taken as the state's direct responsibility and they are confined to cities and towns with fixed and legal education, housing, employment, food, water, sewage disposal, transportation, medical facilities, police protection, and also retirement subsidy and endowment insurance. The state budget must supply urban area with all those essentials and amenities of life (Banister, 1987); however, rural residents being denied of all of those things.

2.3 Conclusion

Since economic reforms began in 1978, China has experienced fast increase in economy as well as inequality. The World Bank (1997) finds that China's overall Gini coefficient grew from 0.288 in 1981 to 0.388 in 1995, from 0.176 to 0.275 in urban areas and from 0.242 to 0.333 in rural areas. As China tries to graduate from the world's factory to a nation with a strong middle class, its peasants still aren't ready to make the leap. According to official statistics, China's urban-rural income gap reached 3.33:1 in 2009, the widest since 1978. Understanding the nature and cause of China's growth in educational inequality is critical for understanding world inequality, not only in the light of that China is emerging as a major power in the world economy, but also because it provides insight into the inequality dynamics of transition and development.

Education has long been seen as a powerful force with the potential to increase opportunity and promote social mobility. Expanding educational opportunities for the public may be an important policy tool for reversing or slowing down the rise in inequality. Thus educational expansion is considered to be one of the key development objectives and is expected to be an important equalizer. As Ashenfelter and Rouse (2000) put it, "the school is a promising place to increase the skills and incomes of individuals. As a result, educational policies have the potential to decrease existing, and growing inequalities in income". But education expansion can be inequality-increasing or inequality-reducing, depending on the quality of the education, changes in the distribution of education in the labor force and changes in the price of the increasing educational attainment. It also depends on the nature of expansion, i.e. whether access is equitable or not.

The early Chinese communist leaders like Mao Zedong had two basic educational ideals. The first was that education should be open to all people, especially laborers. The second ideal was that education should serve the proletarian politics and cultivate new type of laborers with a high level of education, moral integrity, and lofty ideals. In order to achieve such goals, the government launched a series of educational institution reforms since the establishment of new China. However, things were not in keeping with people's wish. On one hand, the educational undertaking has been developing and providing people with more opportunities to access education, especially higher education. China has witnessed great advances in education in the past three decades. The education expansion is much more tremendous in the following years due to the education policy which is aimed at increasing the number of college students. According to the

statistics report released by the Education Ministry, the number of college graduates grew from 1,337,250 in year 2002 to 1,877,500 in year 2003, increased by 40.4 percent. On the other hand, there is also an unequal tendency existing in attainment of educational resources and opportunities. The rural majority are excluded or eliminated in the early stages of the competition, because of various old or new institutional barriers.

Universally, education is an important channel of upward social mobility. In modern society, the universal education enables most people to obtain opportunities to move up to higher social status. However, the access of education, especially the access of high-quality education, is not necessarily determined by individual efforts. In fact, various basic institutional arrangements and individual family backgrounds have significant influences, sometimes even a crucial impact, on the attainment of educational opportunities. The majority of people in lower classes, especially the poor, usually obtained relatively fewer educational opportunities, because of the above mentioned powerful institutional barriers.

Poor peasants are becoming marginalized in higher education, closing off one of their best opportunities for advancement. The trend is particularly alarming in Tsinghua and Peking universities, known as China's MIT and Harvard respectively for their places atop China's academic pole. Students enrolling in those universities find themselves in more and more overwhelming company of urban peers. Statistics showed that Peking University had 16.3 percent rural students in 1999, while Tsinghua University had 17.6 percent rural students in 2000. Both figures were about 60 percent in the 1950s. Most rural college students concentrate in China's less prestigious colleges and universities. Yet the very top schools are now toward urban residents.

"When I was in university, about 80 percent of my classmates came from the countryside, or even more. Now it is different. The percentage of rural-origin students declines grievously in universities. I think about it often." said Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in a speech in 2009.

In June 2009, Mr. Jiang Gang, Deputy Director of Student Section of Chinese Education Ministry, at a press conference that 10.2 million people would sit the National College Entrance Examination (*gaokao* in Chinese) of 2009, which was about .4 million less than the previous years. 840,000 candidates dropped their opportunity to participate *gaokao* in 2009 after 12 years of education, and a great part of them were from the countryside. It is believed that the decrease of college entrance candidates is caused partly by the increasing college tuitions and the employment difficulties for college students. For most ordinary rural families, input and output have to be considered deliberately.

If a developing country is committed to achieving an egalitarian society, it should emphasize educational policies that aim for educational expansion along with equal access to education in place of its various direct redistributive policies. Particularly, policies aim to advance children from less well-off backgrounds to access higher education may be able to break generational cycles of deprivation and encourage economic growth. Emphasis on equity may not necessarily conflict with the objective of economic growth. While redistributive policies tend to be detrimental to economic growth, educational expansion and equal access to education have been identified as major factor contribut-

ing to economic growth by many studies.

When the institutional obstacles above still hold strong, the college life would remain a dream in futility for the great majority of village children. Then more rural Chinese youth have to leave it behind, and Premier Wen's anxiety will grow on.

Chapter 3

Exploring Elements of Chinese Youth's Educational Attainment

There are two sections in Part 3. Section 3.1 describes the basic description of the data used in this thesis. Our data were gathered by a research team on a project of about Chinese social transformation, conducted by the Sociology Institute of CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) in 2005. 4,800 valid samples (aged from 18 to 69) were obtained from six cities (Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Lanzhou, Nanning, and Shenyang) through a process of multi-stage stratified random sampling. 4,755 of these samples were used in our analysis, and the data were subject to weighted processing.

Our data analysis includes three major parts:

Section 3.2 explores elements of educational attainment for urban and rural Chinese students, through presenting two hypothesized models and testing elements' power with the data set. One is a linear regression model with length of schooling as the dependent variable. The other is a logistic regression model when "whether interviewee has received higher education" is dependent variable. The models were used to compare the impact of cohort and family background on the educational attainment of an individual in different cities and to compare the gaps generated by urban-rural and gender difference.

In Section 5.2, crosstable analysis was used to analyze the impact of the urban-rural divide on individual's initial job, last or current position, as well as transition rate in formal state sectors or private work units.

In Section 5.3, path model was used to estimate the impact of urban-rural divide, mother's education, and family background on individual's human and social capital attainment, and to analyze the impact of human, social and political capital on individual's stability-or-salary-preferred job choice, and the impact of human, social and political capital on the job change trajectories within or outside formal state-owned institutional sectors in different cities for different generations.

3.1 Basic Description of the Data

The questionnaire survey was conducted by the research group in six cities (Shanghai, Guangzhou, Dalian, Chengdu, Nanjing, and Lanzhou) of six different provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities in 2005. A multi-stage stratified random sampling method was employed in the survey. Subjects of the survey consisted of people from 18 to 70 years, and the sample size is 4,800. After being processed by weighting, the sample distribution in basic demographic information and major individual socio-economic background information is very close to that of the distribution of data obtained from the fifth national population census. That means the sample's representativeness in our survey is relatively good.

Males accounted for 47.4 percent of the valid samples, 52.3 percent were females (used as reference group), and 22.2 percent were females from rural areas, counties or outskirts of cities. The average age for the respondents is 45.0 years old, with the youngest 18 years old and the oldest 69. They are divided into five cohorts according to their birth age. Those people born before 1949 (that is born between 1937 and 1948) are set as "cohort0" and taken as the reference, and they account for 23.6 percent of the whole sample. Most of them received their schooling during the 1940s and 1850s. During that time period, 80 percent of Chinese population was illiterate, and the inadequate education system could only provide enrollment to fewer than 40 percent, and by some estimates, as few as 20 percent, of school-aged children.

The other four cohorts are: "cohort1" – people born in the period 1949 - 1958, mostly receiving their schooling during the 1960s, which account for 29.1 percent, and the landmark event that ended this period is the accomplishment of the socialist transformation; "cohort2" – people born between 1959 and 1966, which account for 23.6 percent, and the landmark event that ended this period is the start of the Cultural Revolution; "cohort3" – people born between 1967 and 1978, which account for 22.4 percent, and the landmark event that ended this period is the end of the Cultural Revolution; and "cohort4" – people born between 1979 and 1988, which account for 9.2 percent of the whole sample, and the landmark event of this period is the reform and opening-up.

"Cohort1" (aged 47 to 56 in 2005) were born in newly founded China, whose government has sought to construct an education policy agenda that promotes economic prosperity while remaining consistent with the socialist ideal of establishing an equitable society. This period's education policies reflected attempts from radical left-wing and more moderate camps to combine the goals of socialism with the need for economic development. Massive expansions occurred in basic-level education nationwide. Between 1949 and 1957, the number of primary schools grew from 346,800 to 547,300 and the number of secondary schools from 4,000 to 11,100 (Hannum, 1999).

Politics moved to the left in the age of "cohort 2" (aged 39 to 46 in 2005), and that is the period of "Great Forward Leap" and "Great Famine". The former sought rapid economic development via radical leftist means such as collectivization and the combination of education with productive work on a massive scale, and the total enrollment in primary and secondary education grew dramatically. But in the period of the

Great Famine, the enrollment declined at the primary and secondary levels, which were stemmed from both school closings and the hardships.

The era of “cohort 3” (aged 27 to 38 in 2005) were the most turbulent one in the history of contemporary China, because of the Cultural Revolution which is a far-reaching and chaotic social movement that brought a radical leftist political agenda to the force. During this period, political recommendation and class background were the primary means of determining progress through the education system (Unger, 1984). While educational quality certainly suffered greatly during the Cultural Revolution, the policies of this period appear to have been effective in promoting mass education among under-served groups including the rural population (Hannum and Xie, 1994).

“Cohort 4” is the group that we would like to focus on, since they were born after the embark of “open-door policy”. Most of them received their schooling during the 1990s. However, a significant part of this cohort have not completed their schooling yet, and the data gathered cannot provide their accurate final education.

Table 3-1: Cohorts

	Frequency	Percent
Cohort0(1937-1948)	751	15.6
Cohort1(1949-1958)	1,399	29.1
Cohort2(1959-1966)	1,133	23.6
Cohort3(1967-1978)	1,077	22.4
Cohort4(1979-1988)	440	9.2
Total	4,800	100.0

The interviewees came from six cities, and they were Shanghai, Guangzhou, Dalian, Chengdu, Nanjing, and Lanzhou. They are of six different provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, which are roughly representative of China’s different regions. Shanghai is a rapidly growing municipality in coastal-eastern China. Guangzhou is the provincial capital city of Guangdong Province, which is a dynamic economic province in coastal-southern areas. Dalian is an important harbor city with well-established industry and locates in Liaoning Province, which is a heavy-industry province in the Northeast. Chengdu of Sichuan Province locates in a rich agricultural plain and is a relatively less developed province in the Southwest. Lanzhou is the capital city of Gansu Province and a typical valley city in western China. The fifth city, Nanning is the capital city of Guangxi Province and locates in southwestern China. Half of Nanning’s population is minority people. Here we take Dalian as the reference city, and set as “are0”.

Table 3-2: Investigated Cities

	Area(km ²)	Population(10,000 persons)	Per Capita Disposable		Frequency	Percent
			Income for urban households (yuan)	Per Capita Annual Net Income for Rural Households (yuan)		
Dalian(area0)	12,574	590	10,378	5,106	800	16.7
Shanghai(area1)	6,340	1,742	16,683	7,337	800	16.7
Guangzhou(area2)	1,254	555	16,884	6,600	800	16.7
Lanzhou(area3)	13,271	309	7,683	2,550	800	16.7
Chengdu(area4)	12,132	1,060	10,394	4,072	800	16.7
Nanning(area5)	9,925	292	8060	2,467	800	16.7
Total					4,800	100.0

Statistics Source: Dalian, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Lanzhou, Chengdu, and Nanning municipal statistics bureaus by 2004 year end.

Generally, it is more precise in measuring the educational status by *years of schooling*. The years of schooling was taken as the sum of the duration of fulltime, off-the-job, or formal schooling plus half the duration of adult education given in years. However, considering the diverse characteristics of education received by the Chinese and the frequent changes of Chinese education system, we adopt the concept *level of education received* to measure the educational status in the study. The level of education received is a measure of diploma, while years of schooling are measured by the length of time. Generally, the concept *years of schooling* is similar to *level of education received*. However, in the current study, interviewees were born in different times and experienced several significant changes of the education system, and it is difficult to differentiate formal education from adult education. Therefore, in order to measure individual educational status by an acceptable criterion, we chose to adopt the concept the highest level of education received. After all, a diploma is a type of fixed measurement and changes little with time. In addition, the society usually adopts this criterion to assess the value of human capital.

For our all interviewees, the average years of schooling are 10.0 years long, with the 0 as the shortest and 37 years as the longest. 8.4 percent have complete technical middle school, 23.2 percent of the interviewees had senior middle school diploma, and 35.8 percent received no more education after graduation from junior middle school (that means they had just finished compulsory education). Among all the interviewees, 2.5 percent were illiterate or could hardly read, and 11.0 percent were only graduated from primary school. There were 18.6 percent of interviewees who had received higher education (including people who had graduated from junior colleges or universities, and people who had master or doctor degrees) and they were set as "*hiedu* = 1", and others were "*hiedu* = 0".

Table 3-3: Highest Level of Education

	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	121	2.5
Primary school	528	11.0
Junior middle school	1,720	35.8
Senior middle school	1,119	23.3
Technical middle school	403	8.4
Junior college	496	10.3
University	355	7.4
Master	27	0.6
Doctor	13	0.3
Others	13	0.3
Total	4,795	99.9

In our sample, 7.1 percent were minority people, and 92.8 percent were Han majority people.

The residence registration system has been an important factor that affects one's social status mobility and geographical migration over the past fifty years. We introduce this variable into the study in order to investigate the influence of institutional factors on status attainment. For all our interviewees, 38.6 percent were born in farming households with agricultural registration status (*hukou*) (set as "*chukou* = 1"), and other 61.4 percent were born in nonfarming households with non-agricultural registration status (*hukou*) (set as "*chukou* = 0").

The modern city is the outcome of industrialization as well as the embodiment of modern civilization. We operationally define this factor as "the residence when respondent was at the age of fifteen". In all interviewees, before the age of 15 years old, 36.7 percent lived in countryside, 4.1 percent lived in small counties, 4.2 percent lived in the outskirts of cities, and 54.8 percent lived in the cities. We would like to set those people who lived in cities before the age of 15 years old as "1", and others as "0". So a new variable "urban" is used to distinguish the urban and rural origins for educational attainment. Furthermore, *hukou* and resident place are highly correlated, its contingency coefficient is .623 and it is significant at .01 level ($p > 0.01$).

Table 3-4: Residence at Age 15

	Frequency	Percent
Countryside	1,755	36.7
County	197	4.1
Outskirts	201	4.2
City	2,626	54.8
Others	9	0.2
Total	4,788	100.0

For a long time in Chinese society the income levels of those gainfully employed were fairly egalitarian. Accordingly, many studies concerned with the impact of family background on educational attainment ignored the family income factor, focusing instead on the father's occupational status and educational attainment. However, the financial conditions of different families varied, even though the lack of significant differences in income levels either in urban or rural households before 1978. From 1978 onward, and especially after 1990, family's financial conditions varied more and more significantly. Therefore, we would also like to pay some special attention to the economic condition of the respondents' families at age 15, in order to see whether economic factor would influence students' educational attainment (the variable "k18" refers to the economic condition of interviewees' families before the age of 15). We see that only 6.8 percent of interviewees come from comparatively wealthy families, 30.8 percent are from families with middle-level income, and the largest portion consists of people from families of lower middle level income. Still there are 23.2 percent of interviewees from comparatively poor families. In order to see the influence of family economic condition on children's education in different periods, we examine the interaction effect of household income status and cohort.

Table 3-5: Household Income Status at Age 15

	Frequency	Percent
Lower	1,108	23.2
Lower Middle	1,865	39.1
Middle	1,470	30.8
Upper Middle (includes Upper)	323	6.8
Total	4,766	100.0

3.2 Analysis of the First Hypothesis: Rural Students have Less Opportunities in Higher Educational Attainment than Their Urban Counterparts due to some Institutional Arrangement in Contemporary China

We assume that though the access of higher education has greatly expanded in contemporary China, rural Chinese students have to overcome more institutional obstacles than their urban counterparts in order to get higher education, and those institutional obstacles include, for example, unfair allocation of national educational resources, discriminative National College Entrance Examination system, son-preference culture, market-oriented educational industrialization process, and *hukou* system. In order to prove above hypothesis, I broke down this hypothesis into the following small pieces:

1a). The expansion of higher educational access in China should be reflected among different cohorts. We would like to take those people who were born before 1949 (that is between 1937 and 1948) as the reference group and set them as “cohort0”. “Cohort1” are people born between 1949 and 1958; “cohort2” are born between 1959 and 1966; people who were born between 1967 and 1978 are set as “cohort3”; and “cohort4” refer to people born between 1979 and 1988. In the light of the hypothesis, the educational level among five cohorts should display significant differences, and the regression coefficients should be an increasing pattern.

1b). In order to prove unfair allocation of national educational resources exists among different areas, we treated Dalian City of Shandong Province as the reference city, to see the difference of resources allocation among Dalian ($area0 = 0$), Shanghai ($area1 = 1$), Guangzhou ($area2 = 1$), Nanning ($area3 = 1$), Chengdu ($area4 = 1$), and Lanzhou ($area5 = 1$). According to the hypothesis, the educational level of citizens of these cities should be statistically significant.

1c). The influence of discriminative National College Entrance Examination system on students’ higher educational attainment is reflected in the variable “urban”. We set those people who lived in cities before the age of 15 years old as “1”, and others who lived in the countryside, counties, or outskirts of cities before 15 as “0”. In light of the hypothesis, when other conditions are controlled, the effect should be positive and statistically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$).

1d).The function of *hukou* system is represented by the variable “chukou”. Interviewees born with agricultural *hukou* are set as “*chukou* = 1”, and others born with non-agricultural *hukou* are set as “*chukou* = 0”. The effect of variable “chukou” on education should be negative and statistically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$) according to the hypothesis, when other conditions are controlled.

1e). The son-preferred rearing institution would be reflected on gender (variable “male”). Man are taken as “*male* = 1”, and women are set as “*male* = 0”. Its effect on education should be positive and significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$), according to the hypothesis.

1f). As for rural areas, a new variable “femrurb” is used to reflect the crossing in-

fluence of gender and resident place before the age of 15 (that is variable “urban”). “*femrurb*” = $(1 - \textit{male}) \times (1 - \textit{urban})$. Only females living in the countryside, counties, or outskirts of cities before the age of 15 are set as “1”. Others are “0”. If the hypothesis is valid, the effect of “*femurb*” should be negative and significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$).

1g). In order to improve the educational level of minority people, the Chinese government has lay down some agenda, such as being a minority student could add more points in National College Entrance Examination. To see whether minority people are favored for educational attainment, minority interviewees are set as “*minority* = 1”, and Han people are “*minority* = 0”. If difference of higher educational access exists between Han and minority people and the later are favored, the regression coefficient of the variable “*minority*” should be positive and statically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$).

1h). The influence of university industrialization process should be reflected both on the interviewees’ educational level (“*hiedu*”) and their parents’ income level (“*k18*”). “*k18*” is an ordinary scale measurement and is divided into 4 levels: “lower”, “lower middle”, “middle”, “upper middle (includes upper)”²⁷(families of “upper” income level are rare in our sample, so we combine them with “upper middle” level). In order to see about the influence of family economic condition on children’s educational attainment in different decades, we check the interaction effect of household income levels and cohorts. Therefore we create 5 new variables:

$$\begin{aligned} \textit{incm0} &= \textit{cohort0} \times \textit{k18} \\ \textit{incm1} &= \textit{cohort1} \times \textit{k18} \\ \textit{incm2} &= \textit{cohort2} \times \textit{k18} \\ \textit{incm3} &= \textit{cohort3} \times \textit{k18} \\ \textit{incm4} &= \textit{cohort4} \times \textit{k18} \end{aligned}$$

If the industrialization process of universities does have any impact on the access of higher education in contemporary China, regression coefficients of “*incm4*” should be larger than “*incm 3*”.

In order to analyze elements that impact on the educational attainment of an individual in different periods, we apply two statistical models to our data. One is a linear regression model with number of years of education (*eduyr*) as the dependent variable. The other is a logistic regression model when dependent variable is “*hiedu*”, a categorical variable measures whether or not respondent had college education (including junior college), coded 1 when respondent had college education, otherwise coded as 0.

Firstly in order to testify our hypothesis, we would like to make an Ordinary Least Square (OLS) of linear regression model, using “*eduyr*” (educational years, or length of schooling) as dependent variable, and using “*male*” (gender), “*femurb*” (female from

²⁷Strictly speaking, ordinary scales are inappropriate for multiple regression because the linear equation requires information on the magnitude of changes. But in order to simplify our analysis, we assume that individual’s educational level would increase equally as family income status increase. Under such assumption, the relation of family income status, measured as an ordinal variable, and educational level, measured as an interval variable, would be linear.

countryside, counties or outskirts of cities), “areal” - “area5” (investigated cities) , “cohort1” - “cohort4” (different born decades), “urban” (whether lived in urban areas before 15 years old), “chukou” (whether born with agricultural *hukou*), “minority” (being minority people or not), and “incm 0” - “incm 4” (cohort household income level, representing family’s financial capital) as independent variables. Regression model R square is .278, and adjusted R square is .275. The null hypothesis that all regression coefficients are 0 has been rejected.

Table 3-6: Linear Regression of Years of Formal Education in China (n=4749)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95% Confidence Interval for B		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	7.809	0.322		24.274	0.000	7.178	8.440
cohort1	0.868	0.322	0.118	2.699	0.007	0.238	1.499
cohort2	1.765	0.347	0.223	5.090	0.000	1.085	2.445
cohort3	3.018	0.364	0.375	8.296	0.000	2.305	3.732
cohort4	4.036	0.535	0.348	7.538	0.000	2.987	5.086
area1	0.429	0.145	0.047	2.960	0.003	0.145	0.713
area2	0.047	0.145	0.005	0.326	0.745	-0.237	0.331
area3	-0.652	0.144	-0.073	-4.538	0.000	-0.933	-0.370
area4	-0.626	0.145	-0.069	-4.320	0.000	-0.911	-0.342
area5	0.118	0.152	0.013	0.780	0.435	-0.179	0.416
urban	0.266	0.164	0.040	1.620	0.105	-0.056	0.589
chukou	-1.714	0.143	-0.248	-12.024	0.000	-1.993	-1.434
male	0.279	0.113	0.042	2.474	0.013	0.058	0.501
femurb	-0.425	0.167	-0.053	-2.536	0.011	-0.753	-0.096
incm0	0.713	0.114	0.174	6.239	0.000	0.489	0.938
incm1	0.380	0.087	0.123	4.378	0.000	0.210	0.550
incm2	0.448	0.101	0.137	4.428	0.000	0.250	0.646
incm3	0.503	0.107	0.157	4.714	0.000	0.294	0.712
incm4	0.554	0.181	0.125	3.064	0.002	0.199	0.908
minority	-0.295	0.173	-0.023	-1.702	0.089	-0.635	0.045

Note: Regression model R square is .278, adjusted R square is .275.

As shown in table 3-6, when other conditions are controlled:

Hypothesis 1a shows the influence of born cohort on educational attainment. The clear trend here is that younger people tend to receive more education than the older. It shows that Chinese citizens are given increasingly more opportunities of educational attainment and Chinese education has achieved remarkable development. The scale of education provision has expanded and duration of schooling has also gradually extended. When we take those people who were born before the founding of People's Republic of China (that were born between 1937 and 1948) as the reference group ("cohort0"), people born between 1949 and 1958 ("cohort1") had an average of .868 more years of education; people born between 1959 and 1966 ("cohort2") received 1.765 more years of schooling on average; people born between 1967 and 1978 ("cohort3") had an average of 3.018 more years of education; people born between 1979 and 1988 ("cohort4") had even 4.036 more years of education (as part of them have not completed their schooling yet, it should be longer than indicated). All those regression coefficients are significant at .01 level ($p < 0.01$), and obviously increase at each younger cohort.

Hypothesis 1b does come into existence, which means the distribution of national educational resources is unfair among different areas. When Dalian City of Shandong Province is taken as the reference city (area0), interviewees of Shanghai City (area1) averagely have .429 more years of education and that is statistically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$). In Guangzhou City (area2), averagely interviewees have about the same educational level as in Dalian City, only .047 years more, but this disparity is statically insignificant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$). The interviewees in Nanning City (area3) have averagely .653 less years of education than the reference city, which is statically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$). Those people who accepted the inquiry in Chengdu City (area4) have averagely .626 less years of education than those in Dalian City, and this gap is statically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$). Interviewees of Lanzhou City enjoy .118 more years of education than those of Dalian city, but that is not statically significant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$). So we could see that interviewees of Dalian, Lanzhou and Guangzhou have similar educational level, while interviewees of Shanghai receive more education and interviewees of Nanning and Chengdu receive less.

Hypothesis 1c does not come into existence. Compared with those interviewees who grew up in rural areas, those who lived in urban areas at age 15 received an average of .266 more years of education, but the result is not statistically significant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, it might be a null hypothesis with "0" as coefficient, and National College Entrance Examination system does not discriminate students from rural areas. Concerning resident place and *hukou* are positively related, these two variables might have collinearity problem.

Hypothesis 1d could be proved, so it shows permanent registration (*hukou*) system plays a role in students' educational access. The institutional arrangement of rural-urban divided dual social system, i.e., the residence registration system, has affected the educational attainment in a long term. The independent variable is *hukou* at age 15, at a time when he/she was in school. Those who were born in the city and hence held the registered non-rural *hukou* have a greater chance of getting higher education

than those born in the countryside with registered rural residence status. Urban people had an average length of school 1.714 years longer than rural people from farming households. This disparity, which indicates the impact of *hukou* status on educational attainment, is statistically significant at .01 level ($p < 0.01$). Such unfairness was the result of institutional segmentation rather than personal reasons.

Hypothesis 1e does come into existence, which means gender is a contributing factor to the educational level in contemporary China. On average, males' schooling year is .279 more than females', and this gap is statistically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$). In other words, there was a sort of gender discrimination in education present in the Chinese society. In a family's educational strategy, parents tend to arrange for their sons to receive a higher level of education.

Hypothesis 1f has been proved, so gender factor plays a more prominent role in rural areas and the deep-rooted son-preference rearing culture there does affect rural females' educational level. Females from the countryside, counties or outskirts of the cities tend to receive less education, which is .279 years less at average, and this result is significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 1g could not be proved, which means there is no statistics to support that minority people are favored in Chinese education system. Minority interviewees' schooling is .295 years less than Han interviewees, but this coefficient is not significant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis 1h has been testified, which clearly indicates in different historical periods, household economic condition would always influence individuals' educational attainment. The trend of development of the impact of family economic background on the educational attainment of an individual declined during the earlier stage, and gradually became more prominent during the later stage. For those people who were born before 1948 (before the founding of People's Republic of China), when household income increased one level, the children would receive .713 more years of education; for people who were born between 1949 and 1958 (early period of People's Republic of China), one level increase in household income would bring .380 years more in education for interviewees; for cohort who were born between 1959 and 1966 (the Great Leap Forward and the Great Famine Period), each increase in household income level would lead to .448 years more in children's education; even for those people who were born in the most turbulent period of Chinese contemporary history (between 1967 and 1978, which is the Cultural Revolution Period), when children's family income increases one level, children's schooling would also increase .503 years; for those people who were born in reform era (between 1979 and 1988), children's educational years will increase .554 when their family economic condition increase one level. These figures show that educational opportunities distribution was fairest in early period of China founding, and educational access has comparatively weak relation with economic factor. The market-oriented educational industrialization reform in higher education begins when those peoples who were born in reform era (between 1979 and 1988) enter college and universities, and the family economic factor plays more prominent role for children's educational attainment. The fluctuating influence of family economic background on

individual educational attainment fully embodies the strong effect of changes in state policy and ideology on the mechanism of the distribution of education opportunities.

In order to testify our hypothesis, secondly we make an ordinary least square estimates (OLS) of logistic regression model, using “hiedu” (whether interviewee has received higher education) as dependent variable, and using “male” (gender), “femurb” (female from countryside, counties or outskirts of cities), “area1” - “area5” (investigated cities), “cohort1” - “cohort4” (different born eras), “urban” (whether lived in urban areas before 15 years old), “chukou” (whether born with agricultural *hukou*), “minority” (being minority people or not), and “incm 0” - “incm 4” (cohort household income level) as independent variables. The model summary is shown in table 3-7, the Psedo R square is .129, and the null hypothesis that all regression coefficients are 0 does not exist.

Table 3-7: Model Summary

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
3,928.468	0.129	0.209

Table 3-8: Logistic Regression of College Enrollment (n=4766)

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
cohort			23.767	4	0.000	
cohort1(1)	-0.370	0.387	0.910	1	0.340	0.691
cohort2(1)	0.149	0.392	0.144	1	0.704	1.161
cohort3(1)	1.135	0.371	9.339	1	0.002	3.112
cohort4(1)	0.996	0.480	4.294	1	0.038	2.706
area			32.778	5	0.000	
area1(1)	0.034	0.146	0.053	1	0.818	1.034
area2(1)	0.347	0.143	5.934	1	0.015	1.415
area3(1)	0.436	0.140	9.758	1	0.002	1.547
area4(1)	-0.156	0.155	1.015	1	0.314	0.855
area5(1)	0.495	0.148	11.235	1	0.001	1.640
urban(1)	-0.071	0.153	0.213	1	0.644	0.932
chukou(1)	-1.166	0.142	67.619	1	0.000	0.312
male(1)	0.170	0.100	2.871	1	0.090	1.185
femurb(1)	-0.372	0.172	4.701	1	0.030	0.689
incm0	0.378	0.116	10.601	1	0.001	1.459
incm1	0.329	0.101	10.575	1	0.001	1.390
incm2	0.276	0.105	6.845	1	0.009	1.318
incm3	0.342	0.091	14.189	1	0.000	1.407
incm4	0.576	0.144	15.901	1	0.000	1.779
minority(1)	-0.179	0.168	1.133	1	0.287	0.836
Constant	-2.512	0.341	54.139	1	0.000	0.081

As shown in the above table 3-8 that if other conditions are controlled:

Hypothesis 1a could be testified, which means that more and more people are endowed with higher education access opportunities in China. Compared with people who were born before the founding of People's Republic of China (between 1937 and 1948) ("cohort0"), the odds ratio of higher educational access for interviewees who were born between 1949 and 1958 ("cohort1") is .691; the odds ratio is 1.161 for people

born between 1959 and 1966 (“cohort2”). But these two ratios are insignificant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$). However, the interviewees who were born between 1967 and 1978 (“cohort3”) had more chance to go to colleges and universities than those born before the founding of China, and the odds ratio is 3.112, the probability for interviewees born between 1979 and 1988 (“cohort4”) to receive higher education is 2.706 bigger than the reference group (that is “cohort0”), and these two ratios are statistically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$). We could tell that as for higher educational access, the first three cohorts (born between 1937 and 1966) have similar probabilities and could be seen as one group, and the later two cohorts (born between 1967 and 1988) which have similar chance could be seen as another group. A great gap exists between these two groups, which show the impact of reactivation of the college entrance examination in 1977 on individuals’ higher educational attainment.

Hypothesis 1b does come into existence, and the national distribution of educational resources is unfair among different areas. Taking Dalian City of Shandong Province as reference, the odds ratio of higher educational opportunities for people who accepted interview in Shanghai City (“area1”) is 1.034 but insignificant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$), which shows higher educational opportunities are about the same in these two cities; the odds ratio of higher educational access in Guangzhou (“area2”) is 1.415, which means it has greater chance in higher educational access, and it is significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$); interviewees from Nanning City (“area3”) also have more probability in higher educational attainment than those from Dalian City, its odds ratio is 1.547, and it is significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$); the odds ratio of Chengdu City (“area4”) is .855, but it is insignificant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$); interviewees from Lanzhou City (“area5”) have more chance to go to colleges and universities than those from Dalian City, its odds ratio is 1.640 and it is significant at .01 level ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, as for higher educational access, Dalian, Shanghai and Chengdu are at the same level, while Guangzhou, Nanning and Lanzhou enjoy more opportunities of higher educational attainment.

Students from better-developed eastern cities like Shanghai have multiple choices besides entering for National College Entrance Exam, like going abroad or running business. They may achieve success in other ways, when they possess enough economic resources or social capital. However, both Nanning and Lanzhou locate in western China where citizens are relatively poor compared with Shanghai. Students from such places do not have many choices besides reading, when they want to achieve upward mobility. Besides, Lanzhou University, founded in 1909, is one of the key universities under Education Ministry and has been the best university in northwestern China. It houses 23 schools, and it currently provides education for over 36, 400 students, among whom are nearly 12,000 formal undergraduate students. So Lanzhou enjoys comparatively better higher educational resources, compared with other western cities.

Hypothesis 1c could not be proved. There is no much difference in higher educational access for people who grew up urban areas (“urban=1”) or in rural area. The odds ratio is .932, but it is insignificant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, it might still be a null hypothesis with “0” as coefficient.

Hypothesis 1d has been testified, so permanent registration (*hukou*) system plays an important role in interviewees' higher educational access. Compared with interviewees who were born with non-agricultural *hukou*, the odds ratio of higher educational access for those counterparts who were born with agricultural *hukou* is just .312, and this ratio is significantly significant at .01 level ($p < 0.01$). It is to say that the chance for urban people to go to colleges and universities is 3.205 times ($1/0.312$) of rural people's chance.

Hypothesis 1e could not be proved, and males are not obviously favored for higher educational access. The odds ratio of higher education for men is 1.185 for women, but it is not significant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis 1f has been testified, and the son-preferred household educational decision has impact on rural women's higher educational attainment. The odds for rural women to go to colleges and universities is just .689 of other people, which means other people's chance to fulfill college dream is 1.45 times ($1/0.689$) higher than rural women, and this disparity is statistically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 1g might be null, so we could not prove whether minority people are disadvantaged for higher education. The odds ratio of higher educational access for minority people is .836, compared with Han people, but it is not significant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$). We might say that when other conditions are controlled, minority people have similar chance to go to college as Han people.

Hypothesis 1h comes into existence, and economic reason plays significant role for Chinese citizens' higher educational attainment in different historical periods. For those people who were born before 1949 (between 1937 and 1948) ("cohort0"), each one level increase for household income will bring .378 increase in log odds ratio for children's higher educational access. If the household income increases one level for interviewees who were born between 1949 and 1958 ("cohort1"), the logistic odds ratio for higher educational access would add .329. When the household income would increase by one level, the logistic odds ratio of higher educational access would increase by .276 for interviewees born between 1959 and 1966 ("cohort2"). For people who were born between 1967 and 1978 ("cohort3") which is the most turbulent and left-leaning era in Chinese modern history, one level increase in household income will bring .342 enhancement in logistic odds ratio of higher educational access. The degree of logistic odds ratio increase is more prominent when family economic condition could be improved for those people who were born in reforming China (between 1979 and 1988) ("cohort4"), and the logistic odds ratio will increase .571 when household income increases one level. All those regression coefficients are statistically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$), and they show that family economic reason always plays an important role in people's higher educational access, but this effect was relatively weak at first and then became stronger since "market-oriented educational industrialization" reform in Chinese universities.

Our case study clearly shows that rural girls are more disadvantaged in education than rural boys. Mrs. Yuan, who comes from a village of Datong area in Shanxi Province (Respondent No. 2), said that it was very common in her village to prefer boys to girls for education, especially when economic resources were insufficient. When her enrollment letter for higher education was sent to her family which showed that the annual

tuition was thousands of *yuan*, all her neighbors warned her mother that it was a waste. But her mother thought that girls were not less capable than boys, which was different from other neighbors.

Mrs. Li, who comes from a village of Hengshui area in Hebei Province (Respondent No. 4), also talked about her village people's attitude for girls' education. She said, "Many girls in my village have just primary education, and most of them have not finished junior middle school, mainly because their families could not afford them. Then they would stay at home doing housework and farming. When I decided to enter for National College Entrance Exam for the second time, many neighbors told my parents that it was a waste, because I might failed again. In countryside there is no job for educated women unless they could go to cities."

When most poor rural girls do not finish junior middle school, according to our interviewees' personal experience, no wonder the sister of Mr. Li (Respondent No. 13) decided to quit school, in order to support his brother's education. Mr. Li comes from a village of Datong area in Shanxi Province and has a sister who is three years younger. This teenager girl felt that the economic condition of our family was really uptight to hold on, when both kids were in school. So she voluntarily said that she would drop out, in order to let her elder brother keep reading. Mr. Li said touchingly, "She was a good student, but she voluntarily dropped out of school after finishing junior middle school for the sake of me, which was a pity of my life."

They know they the chance is precious and they have nothing to depend on, besides reading more, sleeping less, and achieving higher marks in Entrance Exam. Their families sacrifice too much for them, and going to college and winning a decent life in cities is the only way to pay them back. Organizing education around college examinations has inspired high levels of motivation and discipline among rural middle school students, but it has also produced an inevitable by-product: once students feel they have no hope of passing, study loses all meaning. The examination system, thus, tends to polarize students. Students who are doing well are inspired to higher levels of diligence, while those who are not doing well tend to give up and eventually drop out.

In her senior middle school which is the best in her county, everyday Mrs. Yuan and her classmates get up at 5: 40 o'clock, do exercises from 6:10 o'clock, study by ourselves in classroom from 6: 20 to 7: 40 o'clock, and then it was breakfast time. She said, "We began formal classes from 8 o'clock for a full day. The classroom building was locked up at 22:30 o'clock, until then would we leave classroom and go to dormitory. I keep reading some books in bed till almost midnight."

The harmful impact of the examination system on teaching and learning is widely recognized in China, and recurring efforts have been launched to mitigate the resulting problem, life to promote "qualify education" (*sushi jiaoyu*) involved efforts to enhance curricula with art, music, vocational, practical living, and other courses, to change teaching methods that rely on simple memorization, to encourage student creativity and problem-solving ability, and to break down the isolation of students from society. But because of the unrelenting pressures of examination competition, the lack of resources places rural schools and rural students at a disadvantage in competing with

their urban counterparts and forces them to particularly concentrate time and resources on examination preparation.

Mr. Zeng, who was born in a village of Shaoyang area in Hunan Province (Respondent No. 12), also learned very studious in his senior middle school. He said, “We got up at 5:50 am, and then we did morning exercises, did morning reading, ate breakfast, and spent 15 minutes in newspaper reading in sequence before formal lessons began. At noon we took a rest for one hour. At night we studied by ourselves in classroom after classes till 10 pm, except weekend nights.”

After such studious learning, even top rural students may still fail at College Entrance Exam, due to lack of college information. Our case study also presents that rural teachers and students possess little knowledge concerning urban colleges and popular majors, which also put them in a disadvantaged position for college entrance. Teachers in big cities are expert for college application, since thousands of their students have been successfully enrolled. Take Beijing as an example, more than 80 percent of senior middle school graduates would be enrolled by colleges in recent years. However, rural teachers have little contact with urban colleges, let alone various modern majors.

Mrs. Li (Respondent No. 4) talked about her blindness in choosing her college and major. The first time she entered for the College Entrance Exam, she made high marks, but failed and was not enrolled by any college, because her choice was too high. At the second try she was enrolled by Social Work Department of China Youth University for Political Sciences. She recalled. “When I went to turn in my college application form, my teacher suddenly told me that there was such a good university which enrolled students in advance of other colleges, so I added it in my form. It was the first time that I heard China Youth University for Political Sciences, and I had no idea what social work was.” It is a university of arts, but its Social Work Department and Economy Management Department matriculate students of both arts and sciences, so as a student of sciences, Mrs. Li filled the two departments in her college application form randomly. When the enrollment letter came to her, she felt astonished, but she had to go, because she could not fail once more. The study of political sciences frustrated her. She mentioned, “I achieved only 60 per cent points in the test of philosophy. I was not interested in it at all.” Until this day, she is regretted for this decision, so she said, “Students should hear teachers’ instruction, but rural teachers’ contact and knowledge of city life was very limited, so sometimes they would offer inappropriate or even bad suggestion to students.”

Mr. Liu, who was born in Hejia Village of Biqiao Town of Langxi County in Anhui Province (Respondent 6), also failed at his try in College Entrance Exam. He is good at running, so at his second try his gym teacher told him that Athletic Sports Department paid less attention to students’ academic marks in Exam. He had little information and few choices. So Mr. Liu went to study in Athletic Sports Department in a normal institute of Anhui Province. But he said, “I found no interest in my major at all and often skipped classes.” After graduation, he was assigned to work as gym teacher in a middle school, but he didn’t like that neither. Four years later, he entered for the Graduate Candidate Test, though everyone was against it. He is happy that he is able

to change his career through pursuing graduate study, and he loves his present major.

Mrs. Yuan (Respondent No. 2) said she filled her college application form blindly. “In my village, no one had knowledge of college application. After answers of National College Entrance Exam were published, I estimated my marks. However, I didn’t know how much marks could go to which university.” She was not enrolled by any of her choices, because of her information occlusion, so she was allocated to a railway Institute which was not in my application form at all.

Without teachers’ proper instruction, rural students feel blind when they are making choice in college list. They may miss the chance for higher education, just because they haven’t applies for the right colleges whose enrollment lines match their scores in College Entrance Exam. Or they may be enrolled, but study at some majors they have no idea at first and later find no interest at all.

3.3 Conclusion

If it is forgotten that the categories defined within a student population by criteria such as social origin or sex have been unequally selected in the course of their previous schooling, it is impossible to account fully for all the variations which these criteria bring out (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). As in China, children in rural areas could not receive the same education with cohort children in urban areas because of the place of birth and family background. Such unfairness was the result of institutional segmentation rather than personal reasons.

In the process of current social transformation, unreasonable and unfair institutionalized discrimination still exists in Chinese society. These institutional arrangements have resulted in unfair distribution of social mobility opportunity among social members and fettered the development of economy. In China, rural residents undoubtedly suffer more consequences brought about by unequally educational opportunities for generally worse rural economic condition, the urban-first policy in public education resource allocation, and household permanent registration system.

Tables 3-6 and 3-8 indicate that registration status, family income status, cohort, and gender have positive influence on individuals’ level of education received. “Residence at age fifteen” has been a significant variable, which proves that the urban-rural dual system led to a gap of distribution of educational opportunities between rural and urban areas and hence became the foremost factor that affected educational status attainment. Because the educational system gives priority to cities and townships in China, children born in major cities have a greater chance to receive a better education than those born in backward countryside. The increase of the college tuition in the 1990s further negatively affected students from depressed families.

According to an estimation published in *China Education Daily* in 2001, until 2001 the probability of a rural primary school student entering college or university was only 15

percent²⁸. According to another academic calculation, the average level of this probability in China was 24.3 percent in year 2001 (Lu, 2004). That means that the probability of a rural primary school student entering college or university was 62 percent lower than the average level in China. Furthermore, because the proportion of rural population to the total population in China was 62.34 percent according to recent official statistics, so the probability of urban children entering colleges or universities reached about 40 percent, and it is 65 percent higher than the average level in China and 1.67 times higher than the level in rural areas.

Education is a major means to promote social equity. Educational level is a variable that constantly affects the attainment of social status. Although its influence has varied in different periods, the inference that the educational level determines the rank of people's social status is always tenable. As early as the model of the first status attainment built by Blau and Duncan in the 1960s, education showed the foremost positive influence on social status attainment. If the educational institution resembles something like an immense cognitive machine which continually redistributes students submitted to its examination according to their previous positions in the system of distributions, its classificatory action is in reality only the outcome of thousands of actions and effects produced by agents who themselves act like so many independent, yet objectively orchestrated, cognitive machines (Bourdieu, 2004).

The importance of education has been admitted by all people in China. However, some existing institutional barriers are still impeding equal distribution of educational opportunity. The unbalanced allocation of compulsory educational resources between rural and urban areas is a significant source of unfairness. The existing financing method in the rural compulsory educational expenditure (i.e., the expenditure is jointly paid by the central government, the local government, and students) imposes heavy burdens on families of peasants. Sometimes, in order to secure one child's education, they have to sacrifice other children's future. In addition, the so-called "industrialization of higher education" policy forces many children from families of poor peasants to quit due to expensive tuitions. They cannot compete with children from well-off urban families by only relying on academic achievements like before the 1990s.

In addition, statistical analysis of gender shows that the males received more education than females in all periods. In other words, there was a sort of sexual discrimination in education existing in Chinese society. In a family's educational strategy, parents tend to arrange for their sons to receive a higher level of education. Rural girls are the most disadvantaged due to the son-preference raising system.

In China children's upward social mobility through education is significantly influenced by ascription factors. Because of various institutional reasons, substantial educational disparities exist between urban and rural areas, between coastal and inland regions, and between males and females. Increasingly, these disparities are regarded as significant education problems by both policy-makers and educators alike because of their negative implications for socio-economic equality and equity.

²⁸ "Pay Attention to the Rise of the Rural Dropout Rate". *China Education Daily*. 6 June, 2001.

The rapid economic progress in China has had contradictory effects. On the one hand, unequal economic development increased regional difference in educational attainment for different groups. On the other hand, economic development generated strong public pressure and desires for improving education. The growing gap in education should receive more attention. Intellectual opportunities must be made available to all and such opportunities should include educational efforts that foster personal initiative and adaptability.

In conclusion, rural residents undoubtedly suffer more consequences brought about by unequal educational opportunities for general worse rural economic conditions and the urban-first policy in public educational resource allocation. Rural students have to conquer more institutional obstacles to get an opportunity of receiving higher education than their urban counterparts. But after graduation, what job preference they tend to make is what we are going to focus on in the next part after come through all those institutional barriers.

Chapter 4

Exploring Behaviour and Reasons of Rural Student Who are More Likely to Take Advantage of Campus Resources for Future Job Application

Due to the fast development of higher education, especially the striking expansion of college enrollment expansion since 1999, the annual growth rate college graduates has overran the growth rate of vacancy in job market. According to Bulletin of Statistics on National Education Development in 2003 issued by the Ministry of Education, in year 2003 the number of graduate students from college was 1,877,500 which increased 40.39 percent than the last year (540,200 more students graduated from college in 2003). Students who attended in advanced studies have also increase significantly. There were 514,600 graduate students and 136,700 doctor candidates studying in college in year 2003, which increased 150,300 than the last year in total number. Hence the competition among college graduates for job application has accelerated in early 2000s.

The increasing cost of higher education and the increasing risk in job seeking from the late 1990's, form greater challenge for rural students to get high social positions through education. Since the reform of the "combination of two categories"²⁹ in 1997, university graduates have to seek employment on their own initiative and/or through the "two-way selection" meetings arranged by the universities together with local organizations, which means graduates have to seek employment in a free labour market that is till developing but already suffers from high rates of unemployment.

In China, which has several thousand years' history of centralism, political power has always been the center of social status system. In the planned system that was estab-

²⁹One category is some students could enjoy free higher education and even some subsidy; the other category is some students must pay tuition for higher education, mainly because their points of National College Entrance Examination are not high enough. After combination of two categories, all students must pay the same amount of tuition, while poor student could apply for financial assistant.

lished after the 1950s, administrative authority was greatly strengthened once again. Although after the reform and opening-up the control of authority on social resources has been gradually weakened by the market mechanism, its influence is still significant. The great majority of the Chinese population in the countryside was subject to firm control of rural-urban migration like *hukou* system, which served as a mechanism for curtailing urban growth and manipulating relations between employment opportunities in cities and in the countryside. Children from the countryside have different life chance compared with their urban counterparts, because of these institutional barriers. As victims, they have a clearer view of the importance of them. And they come to know in later life that working in state-owned work unit would more efficiently help them change their *hukou* status than foreign capital or private-owned enterprise.

Besides the reason of possessing urban registration status, its power and authority also make the post of cadres or state and social administrators very desirable for Chinese people even since the founding of China in 1949. Obtaining such an occupational position means that one acquires the authority that is empowered to this post by the government and hence one can exercise his or her power through managing affairs that are assigned to the post by the government (Lu, 2004). Even after the 1990s, with the rapid development of extra-system economy, besides going into business, the governmental official is still the dream occupation of many college students, especially of rural-origin college students who depend more likely on old path.

When the small percentage of rural students, who are talented and persistent enough to overcome all institutional obstacles and obtain higher education opportunity, come to cities, they would feel disadvantaged in competition with urban students, since they face a totally different atmosphere which they are not familiar with. They are not used to the kinds of behavior and relationships common in modern industrialized societies: skills for modern machinery and technology like computer and Internet, new standpoint of value, cooperation across kinship and ethnic boundaries, participation in the planning of complex activities involving large numbers of people, and so forth. Peasant-origin students in such modern milieus have to engage in activities which they are strange with and become exposed to values which are far different from these that characterized traditional villages. As a result of such exposure, they lose confidence in old ways and values as the only correct way to live. Ultimately, after college years they have to compete with urban counterparts in such disadvantageous conditions for a satisfactory future job.

My hypothesis in this part is that though peasant-origin college students suffer a lot from institutional arrangements in educational attainment process, they are more likely to change to reflect their new environment by clinging on institutional resources available in colleges and universities, in order to be more competitive in applying for a position as cadre in formal institutional sectors than their urban classmates. Instead of being eager to take off influence of institution once they come out of countryside, rural college students tend to find a position in core institutional sectors by way of depending on various institutional resources in college.

There are three sections in Part 4. Section 4.1 analyses the reasons for rural college

students who tend to cling on institutional resources on campus for their future job concern. Section 4.2 is about the elements those rural students could rely on. In Section 4.3, I would test my hypothesis with case interviews.

4.1 Behavior and Reasons

To most peasants, farming has become an unwilling choice. Though agricultural tax has been recently abolished, peasants still have to afford miscellaneous fees and the expenditure of rural public goods. Most full-time agricultural households in rural areas are poor families. As long as they have a chance, peasants will try to leave agriculture and the countryside. However, the upward mobility opportunity and channels that society provides for peasants are very limited. Current institutional arrangements and social structure in China prevent peasants from directly shifting to workers and hence they have to enter into an interim state of occupational status, like peasant-workers. Therefore, joining the army and entering higher schools are the most desired upward mobility channels for the rural population.

In college, rural students could naturally become temporary urban citizens with a collective hukou. But after graduation their archives will still be sent back to original rural areas if they could not “resolve the registration problem”, that is to get an authorized permanent urban resident status. Under Chinese institutional arrangements, state-owned organizations and governmental agencies have strong power and priority to gain “quota of access to the urban” and transfer their rural-origin employees into urban residents.

Dilemma emerges in this stage. On one side, in the process of fighting with the institutional barriers for higher educational attainment, rural youth would probably hate institutional arrangements since they have always been victims for no fair reason. On the other side, through fighting with institutional arrangements rural Chinese have a clear vision of what formidable power they possess. Rural students understand that in the redistribution system in China, the status of cadre usually means obtaining dominant power and the entrance into institutional sectors constitutes the primary goal of status attainment. Furthermore, because the impact of the residence registration system upon the social member is not only a lifetime influence, but also will be transferred to the next generation through family relations, so those rural-origin college students might wish their children no longer suffer as they did, and have more opportunities for upward mobility rather than being restricted within the countryside by governmental policies. Hence once they are enrolled by college and come to cities, they will take use of all kinds of institutional resources in college, in order to become a cadre in core institutional sectors of nation or state socialistic redistribution system (state agencies and enterprises) and remain in cities legally and permanently with all social benefits and welfare.

In job seeking process after graduation, rural students care about first of all “urban resident status”. They also pay attention to the job stability, because they can not become

jobless in cities where they have no relatives or families to depend on. Unlike private-owned company, joint-venture and foreign capital enterprises, those national formal institutional sectors seldom fire employees. Also rural students desire good perspective of getting ahead within the official hierarchy. According to my previous interviews, they tend to go to state-owned enterprises, state-run organizations, and governmental agencies. Then they would be financed by public revenue³⁰ and enjoy status privileges different from their origin.

By contrast, urban college graduates care more about salary, flexible work schedule, and long holiday. They are more likely to go to joint-venture or foreign capital enterprises where they can earn a good living and make use of their capability at the same time. Because of the “One-Child Policy” which was implemented in China since late 1970s has been carried very smoothly in urban areas, so each urban family normally just have one child. So when the spoiled-urban-single-child generation could not find a well-paid job that meets their expectation, some of them would rather stay at home and depend on parents.

Furthermore, students’ parents have different dreams on them which will definitely influence the job choice of children. Cadres are in control of quite a number of state and social resources, and they have relatively high social status, so rural parents have more desire in letting children attain the occupational status of governmental officials, since it is more stable and have more social benefits. While urban parents are more open and flexible minded, and give more freedom to children for job seeking and encourage them to find position they have interest in.

4.2 Institutional Resources Available in College, which are Useful for Job Application

Like prostitution, stocks, private cars, beauty pageants, and McDonald’s, “unemployment,” thanks to collectivization, was practically absent from Chinese life for the three decades after 1949. Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms paved the way for the collapse of inefficient state-owned enterprises, shattering the “iron rice bowl” of millions of workers and creating the first wave of unemployment in post-Mao China. Unemployment among college graduates is a hot-button issue in China, since the government-directed expansion of college enrollment.

Some research has shown that rural-origin college graduates meet greater difficulties in job hunting. Based on a national scale survey data conducted in 2003 and 2005, after analyzing the over 21,000 valid samples of each year, Min Weifang and other researchers found out the following results (Min, Ding, Wen, and Yue, 2005):

- 1) Personal performance is the key factor for fresh graduates on both employment results and initial salary, and that includes excellent academic scores, foreign language proficiency, rich practical experiences, and diploma of top universities;
- 2) Comparing

³⁰It means that their salaries and benefits came from funds allocated by government fiscal budgets.

data of 2003 and 2005, graduates' family economic condition and social networking have a bigger and bigger impact on successful job hunting; 3) The employment information provided by higher education institutions can help remarkably both graduates employments and salaries; 4) Female graduates are more disadvantaged in labor market, compared with male ones; 5) Regional difference still exists for employment and salary. Graduates in western regions are harder to find jobs than other regions, and their initial salaries were obvious lower than other regions.

All these results prove that rural graduates, especially female rural graduates in western regions, meet greater difficulties in job hunting process. Since rural students are disadvantaged in personal performance, family economic condition and social networking, yet eager in getting desired position, they have to rely on all useful institutional resources available in college which help them to find a position in core institutional sectors, which include **Communist Party membership, good relation with teachers and faculty members, activity in Students Association, acquisition of scholarship due to good academic scores, Doctor or Master degree, social networking and part-time experience.**

Communist Party membership is a key component of the Communist political order. All ruling communist parties have allocated career opportunities to the loyal in an effort to promote conformity and discipline within their ranks and among their subjects. The command economy gave party administrators the authority to redistribute revenue and income among organizations and individuals, and it also gave them the authority to allocated valued jobs.

In contemporary China, Communist Party membership is very important as institutional resource and political capital, for the institutional support of the importance of Party membership is the critical position of the Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese society. Joining the Party usually is a kind of praise and honor to individual's political loyalty and performance. Party members in different walks of life were treated favorable in their strive for success in life. As soon as one has Party membership, it will support his or her succeeding mobility, especially in some critical promotions, for example, finding a position in government sectors, promoting a worker as a cadre, transferring from an ordinary division to a confidential department, or raising from the deputy to the position of the chief, etc. Therefore, Party membership is a type of scarce and valuable capital. In the politics-dominated era, such political capital was much more useful than educational capital. Party membership is not equal to the power, but those who are in charge of power must come from Party members (Lu, 2004). So Party membership will help college students to find a position in core institutional sectors and become a cadre.

As in the past, in today's China, not everyone can apply for Chinese Communist Party membership. Those who do apply are subjected to a lengthy screening process involving five stages: self-selection, political participation, daily monitoring, closed-door evaluation, and probationary examination. Individuals must pass through these "loyalty filters" to achieve CCP membership. This formal process typically requires several years to complete. So commonly people think, fresh graduates who have CPC membership

are outstanding students throughout college years.

Besides, in job application process, teachers and faculty members are important parts of rural-origin students' social networking, since they have few relatives or friends in the cities. When desirable work units come to a faculty and ask for qualified graduates, teachers would inform "suitable" students and arrange interviews. The suitable ones might be those who are on better terms with teachers.

As a society with thousands years of agricultural tradition, most Chinese live with permanent address in permanent work unit. Therefore contemporary Chinese society basically remains as a "relationship society" or an "acquaintance society", but this kind of relationship is no longer trapped with blood or region, and has a broader view. Strangers may become acquaintances in one day, due to some benefits. The Chinese take "relationship" between relatives, friends, coworkers, former classmates, or acquaintances very seriously, so someday they could take advantages through pull or influence. From seeing a doctor to finding a job, from housing welfare to children schooling, Chinese people are used to "take advantage of acquaintance", which is phrased as "get in by the back door" in Chinese language.

Take hospital as an example. Normal patient has to wait for days to see a doctor, and this doctor may be poor in quality and attitude, but good prescribing expensive medicine. On the opposite, when the patient has some relationship in the hospital, he could be taken care of efficiently within hours with a considerable price. The root lies that medical resources are very scarce in Chinese society. Unlike German medical system, there is no reliable praxis in rural countryside or urban cities, and all patients go to hospital for medical care. Only big hospitals of big cities possess qualified doctors and modern equipment. No wonder such hospitals are always crowded with patients and their family members from all over the nation, and each doctor has to look after dozens patients every day.

Education and employment are also scarce resources in China, and they are worth making good relationship with key people. Chinese parents attach great importance to children's cultivation as early as from kindergarten age. In order to be enrolled by better-qualified state-run kindergarten, all useful relationship of the whole family would be tried. Then parents would offer up valuable gifts to kindergarten teachers at each festival, so their children would be especially well taken care of and taught. This kind of social tradition grows as children grow up. For senior university students, teachers and faculty members are those key people who are able to make them jump the line, and get advanced in front of others. They and their parents would try their best to make good relationship with them, and get better job offers someday.

Of course, academic scores are always the most important to measure Chinese students' performance and quality, and attaining scholarship would present that obviously. Therefore in resume, college graduates would highlight the scholarship they had won. Other institutional resources in college like activity in Students Association, Doctor or Master Degree, social networking and part-time experience will distinguish them in employment competition.

4.3 Analysis of the Second Hypothesis: Rural college students tend to cling more tightly on institutional resources on campus than urban-origin students, because of their future job concern

In 1992, former Chinese Chairman Deng Xiaoping visited southern China and called for bolder economic reforms and the continuous opening of the Chinese economy. Since then new reform measures have been introduced and the economy has been growing at double digit rate. In this much improved environment, rapid growth has also taken place in rural non-agricultural sector. There are more and more private-owned or community-owned factories and enterprises in the countryside of the contemporary China, and rural youth are familiar with this form of economy. In some parts of China (most notably the Wenzhou region in Zhejiang Province of eastern China) there emerged many small private enterprises that are led mainly by individuals and financed largely by personal savings and borrowing from friends and relatives. But in most parts of China, rural non-agricultural development has been led primarily by the expansion of town-village enterprises. For example in Jiangsu Province of eastern China, rural non-agricultural development occurs primarily through the growth of industrial enterprises that are owned and operated by villages or townships and financed initially from surpluses generated within the community, and the entrepreneurs who seek out the market opportunities, initiate the new projects, manage production and investment, and allocate profits among alternative uses are the township and village cadres.

What rural students see from these enterprises is that the leaders of those factories and enterprises are eager to join the Communist Party, or peruse a title as “People’s Representative” honored by the local government, and some of those leaders would compete with each other to become cadres of the village or town level of government, because they want to protect their private properties and earn more money with the power of cadre status. Chinese peasants clearly know the formidable power of the institution, so the elite of them, a very small percentage who have received higher education, would join and be part of it.

Ten out of our fourteen case interviews have pursued advanced studies, and seven out of fourteen have joined CPC. Four of them have won scholarship for outstanding academic performance, and eight of them had part-time working experience in college years.

Mrs. Yuan, who comes from a village of Datong area in Shanxi Province (Respondent No. 2), graduated from a key university of Guangzhou City in Guangdong Province and went to Beijing for job hunting. She was the top students in university and has Party membership, so she was used to be quite confident. “I was very ambitious and thought I could achieve anything I wanted. However, my confidence has been destroyed in job application process,” confessed she. “My university is well acknowledged in Guangzhou. But here in Beijing, it is much harder. When I went to a job fair and looked around, I found the student in front of me was from Tsinghua University, the one at left came

from Xi'an Jiaotong University, and the one at right was graduated from Nankai University. My university is nothing compared with those most prestigious northern ones," said she sadly.

Her biggest support and hope was given by her professor, who recommended her to a nation-run inspection center. She was anxiously waiting for the interview. "It is state-owned and could endow me with a Beijing hukou. The salary is not high, but it would be very stable. I would be content with it." She was very thankful to her professor and stressed, "Beijing is a city full of capable person, without qualified recommendation, it is very hard for them to accept my resume and give me a thought. Only due to my professor's social relations, I could obtain such a chance. In Beijing, you need social relations to find a decent job."

Mrs. Guo, who was also born in a village of Datong area in Shanxi Province (Respondent No. 1), was not as lucky as Mrs. Yuan. She received no positive feedback from any work units, when she was going to graduate in several months. She said, "The condition of job market is very tough. I have sent hundreds of resumes, but heard no response at all. Sometimes I believe I am the right person for a job vacancy, I turn in my resume and tell them my virtues, but they pay no attention to me at all. Female students are also in more disadvantaged position in job application than males." She also stressed, "People say background is very important for job hunting in Beijing, since everything is related to human relations here. But as a student with no background, the only thing I could do is to depend on myself and wait for chance." She seems really depressed when she said so.

4.4 Conclusion

Why do rural students try so hard to make through all institutional obstacles and climb up the educational ladder? Why do some poor rural households spend all the savings and even go into debt to finance their children's education? The answer is that graduates with higher education can get a desirable job, which generally means a non-agricultural job with a stable income. For most people who work on the land, the financial return is uncertain and to a large degree depends on Mother Nature. Only with college certificate, the rural youth could get decent urban jobs. Then parents do not have to pay for the wedding expenses of these children, which can be very substantial, and they do not have to build another house for these children when they get married. Moreover, these children who have escaped land and poverty often send money back to their rural families. Once some of them become cadres, they can also bestow social capital - family background and connections, to their families and local communities that can be cashed into further economic and social advantages.

For rural students, institutional arrangements are like high walls that are very difficult to climb over. First they hate them, then they know their power and get used to them, and finally they depend on them and desire to become part of them because they seem ever lasting and ever strong. Only so could they achieve good economic, social and political return after all the efforts and money they spend in school. Such process could

be called as institutionalized, but it less tends to take place for urban students who have not been blocked or restricted by those high walls.

Chapter 5

Exploring Social Mobility Pattern of Rural Graduates Who have a Stronger Favor in Pursuing a Position in Formal State Sectors than Urban Ones

5.1 Definitions of Concepts

Over the past six decades, China has experienced significant transitions in society, politics and economy, which affected social mobility profoundly. The first one is the establishment of the new regime by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, in which the former social structure was thoroughly reconstructed, bourgeois and the landed class were eliminated and the social, political and economic status of workers and peasants were greatly improved. The second significant social transition is the Culture Revolution between the 1960s and the 1970s, in which a large number of intellectuals and cadres were persecuted while many ordinary workers and peasants became new political nobility in revolting campaigns. The third significant transition is the economic reform starting at the end of the 1970s, in which a new-rich stratum has been fostered by the rehabilitation of private property rights and development of a free-market economy. Consequently, a large number of political and cultural elite has emerged, and the social status of workers and peasants has been descending notably. All these transitions led to enormous tides of social mobility, changes in social structure, and two very different patterns of social mobility before and after the economic reform.

Besides cohorts, social mobility in China as a whole is also limited by social structure at individual levels and by the institutional arrangements of the states (Lu, 2004). Adjustments However, at the individual level, social mobility is a result of every social member's proactive actions to seek benefits within these structure and institutions. From the perspective of sociology, the causes that lead to every individual or group obtaining different social status, besides the influences of the structure-institution fac-

tors at the macro level, also include social resources possessed by individuals and the capability and effectiveness of exerting these resources. People normally try to make use of these crucial factors to pursue benefits in a given institutional framework and obtain corresponding social status. The possession of and exerting capability of resources varies from person to person, accordingly, so does the attainment of social status.

In sociology, *social mobility* refers to changes of an individual's social rank or stratum status. *Intergenerational mobility* and *intergenerational mobility* are two frequently adopted perspectives in analysis of social mobility. The former refers to changes of social status in one's lifetime. The latter refers to upward and downward changes between children's and their fathers' social status. By investigating people's social mobility from these two perspectives, researchers can analyze the degree of inheritance of social status attainment, which is an indicator of the degree of social openness.

Social status refers to people's positions in the hierarchy of social stratum rank of a society. In the study of social mobility, the social status is usually subdivided into occupational status, educational status, economic status, and authority status, etc. Generally, occupational status is analyzed by comparing the occupational status of one's first occupation with that of one's current occupation. If one's first occupational status is the same as his or her current occupational status, it means that no social mobility has occurred in the given period. If the difference between the first and current occupational statuses is minor, it means that a short-distance social mobility has occurred. If the difference is significant, it means that a long-distance social mobility has occurred. Normally, upward changes of social status in social mobility will advance gradually. If occurrence of the long-distance mobility grows sharply, it means usually a tremendous change of social mobility rules.

In this part, we analyze transitions of social mobility patterns in contemporary China based on intragenerational mobility tables. The intragenerational mobility table is used to investigate changes of an individual's occupational status by conjointly analyzing one's first occupation and current occupation between institutional sectors. We assume that after graduation from college, rural-origin students are more likely than their urban counterparts to pursue positions in formal institutional sectors (that is, about the job pursuing tendency of rural- and urban- origin students), by the means of crosstable analysis.

5.2 Crosstable Analysis

Governmental agencies and state-owned institutions usually control more socioeconomic resources. Among all interviewees who have received higher education, 77.7 percent found their first formal job in formal state sectors (includes "state-owned enterprises", "state-owned public institutions", "large-scale collectively owned enterprises operated by state-owned enterprises and cities", "small-scale collectively owned enterprises operated by communities", and "government institutions"), and 22.3 percent after graduation entered private sectors (includes "individually-owned business", "private-owned enterprises", "shareholding or shareholding cooperative enterprises", "township enterprises", "Sino-foreign joint ventures", "exclusively foreign-capital enterprises", and

“others”). For the present or last position, 69.4 percent work in formal state sectors, and 30.6 percent make a living in private sectors.

We assume that after graduation from college, students with rural-origin are more likely to pursue positions in formal institutional sectors (that is, within the state socialistic redistribution system), since they have a better understanding of the power of institution in China throughout the tough education attainment process. If your enemy is too strong to fight directly, you might join it to wait and see.

In order to testify this assumption, we simplify interviewees’ first formal work unit (variable “c30”) and the current or last formal work unit (variable “d10”) into two sorts: “formal state sectors” and “private sectors”, and then to see:

Table 5-1: Types of Work Units for Interviewees Who have Completed College

	First Formal Job		Current or Last Formal Job	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Individually-owned business	14	1.7	21	2.6
Private-owned enterprises	53	6.6	72	9.0
Shareholding or shareholding cooperative enterprises	27	3.4	74	9.2
State-owned enterprises	347	43.2	241	30.0
State-owned public institutions	214	26.6	222	27.6
Large-scale collectively owned enterprises operated by state-owned enterprises and cities	17	2.1	13	1.6
Small-scale collectively owned enterprises operated by communities	12	1.5	7	0.9
Township enterprises	11	1.4	9	1.1
Sino-foreign joint ventures	16	2.0	16	2.0
Foreign-capital enterprises	21	2.6	25	3.1
Government institutions	24	3.0	65	8.1
Others	48	6.0	38	4.7
Total	804	100.0	803	100.0

Table 5-2: First Occupation and Rural-Urban Origin (n=804)

		Rural-Urban		
		urban-born	rural-born	Total
Private sectors	Count	134	45	179
	% within group	21.0%	27.3%	22.3%
Formal state sectors	Count	505	120	625
	% within group	79.0%	72.7%	77.7%
Total	Count	639	165	804
	% within group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

One may tell from table 5-2 that 72.7 percent of rural-origin interviewees who have received higher education obtained their first formal position in formal state sectors after graduation, while the figure for urban-origin interviewees is 79.0 percent. The disparity is just 6.3 percent, and it is insignificant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, there is no evidence to support our second hypothesis about first job application tendency.

Our next concern is whether urban-rural origin influence interviewees' the current or last job choice?

Table 5-3: Current or Last Formal Occupation and Rural-Urban Origin

		Rural—Urban		
		urban-born	rural-born	Total
Private sectors	Count	196	50	246
	% within group	30.7%	30.3%	30.6%
Formal state sectors	Count	442	115	557
	% within group	69.3%	69.7%	69.4%
Total	Count	638	165	803
	% within group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5-3 shows that among rural-origin interviewees who have finished higher education, 69.7 percent presently hold a position in formal state sectors, while 69.3 percent of urban-origin college-graduate interviewees work in state-run or state-own work units for the moment. The discrepancy is just .4 percent, and it is not significant at .05 level ($p > 0.05$). It shows that the statistics could not prove that urban-rural origin plays a role in the type of interviewees' current of last work units.

Table 5-4: Mobility Rate of First Occupation to Current or Last Occupation

		Current or last job			
		Private sectors	Formal state sectors	Total	
1 st job	Private sectors	Count	130	45	175
		% within job	74.3%	25.7%	100.0%
	Formal state sectors	Count	115	510	625
		% within job	18.4%	81.6%	100.0%
	Total	Count	245	555	800
		% within job	30.6%	69.4%	100.0%

Table 5-4 presents some information on the job transition process from first job to current or last job. The respective mobility rates between institutional sectors are: informal-to-informal (transition outside institution system) is 74.3 percent, formal-to-informal (proverb is “plunge into the commercial sea”), informal-to-formal (proverb is “back to sea shore”) is 25.7 percent, and formal-to-formal (transition inside institution system) is 81.6 percent. We conclude from those figures that formal state sectors are more preferred in job transition process.

If the statistics were not able to prove that urban-rural origin of interviewees influence the current or last job choice, furthermore, we check whether rural college students have different employment outlook from their rural counterparts. We created two new variables from the questions 022 to 027 in the questionnaire which involves concern of job characters that interviewees would pay attention to in job application process. One is “stable” which measures how much importance interviewees would attach to job stability. The sixth level is coded as “1”, the fifth level is coded as “2”, the rest may be deduced by analogy, and coding of the first level is “6”. It turns out to be six-level ordinary scales. In order to simplify our analysis, we would use it as internal scales. In the same way, we would build the other new variable “wealth” to measure the importance interviewees would attach to earning. The principle of coding is the same, with “1” as the lowest sixth level and “6” as the highest first level. The distribution of these two variables goes as follows:

Table 5-5: Distribution of Job Preference

	stable		wealth	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1.00	31	7.4	14	3.3
2.00	43	10.2	43	10.2
3.00	64	15.2	82	19.4
4.00	87	20.7	74	17.5
5.00	99	23.6	97	23.0
6.00	96	22.9	112	26.5
Total	420	100.0	422	100.0

Table 5-6: Disparity of Job Character Preference for Urban-Rural Origin Interviewees

		stable	wealth
urban-origin	Mean	4.1064	4.3524
	N	329	332
	Std. Deviation	1.52747	1.40539
rural-origin	Mean	4.1429	3.9333
	N	91	90
	Std. Deviation	1.58865	1.60617
Total	Mean	4.1143	4.2630
	N	420	422
	Std. Deviation	1.53908	1.45870

Comparing rural-origin and urban-origin interviewees who have received higher education, the disparity is just 0.03 (4.11 for urban-origin interviewees and 4.14 for rural-origin interviewees) concerning “stable” indicator, and it is not significant at 0.05 level ($p > 0.05$). However, urban-origin interviewees (4.35) attach greater importance on job income (“wealth”) than rural-origin interviewees (3.93). The gap is 0.42, and it is statistically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$).

Those statistics show that there are many factors that would influence the occupation of positions in formal state sectors besides urban-rural origin and institutional obstacles.

When we want to find out the social mobility inside and outside institutional system, we have to take into account of institution arrangement (which influences opportunity structure of social mobility), social capital, career expectation, family condition, education attainment (human capital) and other factors.

5.3 Theoretical Model

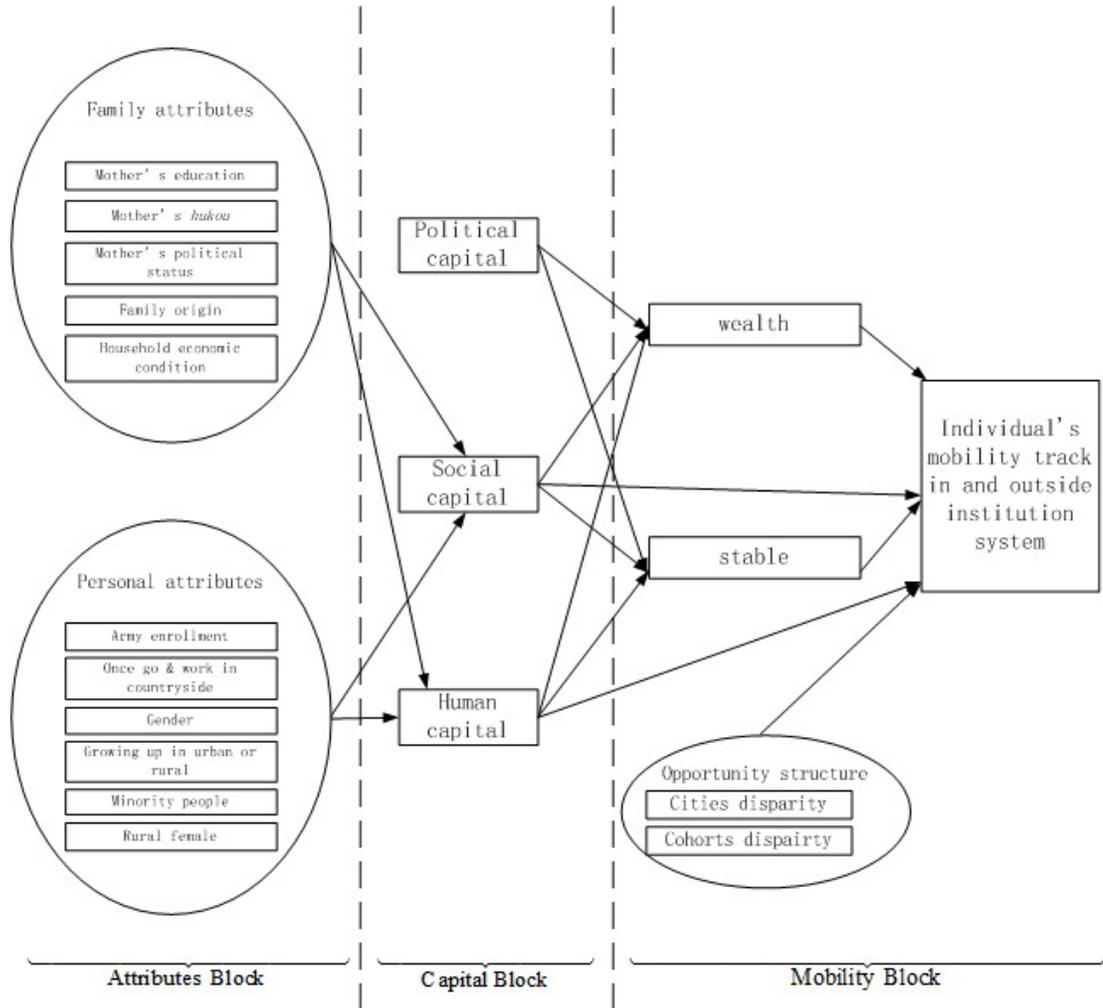
Our third and final hypothesis is that the more institutional obstacles one has to overcome, the more likely s/he recognizes the importance of institutional factors in structuring people's life chances, thus the more likely s/he pursue a position in formal state sectors.

To further explore elements and patterns of social mobility, we employ what some methodologist called system of "partial orders" or "ordered blocks" (Davis, 1985). This sequential system of cause-and-effect attempts to establish links among sets of interrelated variables.

Basically, two steps were involved here for set up the system. First we identified the potential variables and blocks of our research interest. Three blocks were thus established in our system. They are Attributes Block, Capital Block, and Mobility Block. The Attributes Block has two variables groups: Family Attributes which include mother's education, mother's *hukou*, mother's political status, family origin, and household economic condition; and Personal Attributes which include army enrollment, once go and work in countryside, gender, growing up in urban or rural areas, minority people, and rural female. Capital Block has three variables: political capital (e.g. Party membership), social capital (e.g. social net), and human capital (represented by education). Mobility Block contains wealth-or-stable preference, opportunity structure, and individual's mobility track in-and-outside institution system. Different institutional designs shape different opportunity structure for social mobility. During growing up process, people would attain human capital, social capital, and political capital. Those capitals would influence people's career choice. Besides, employment opportunities of certain eras and areas would also impact individual's mobility track.

Secondly, we proceed to draw linkage between the three blocks. The sequence from Attributes Block to Capital Block, reflects our proposition that individual's social capital and human capital are influences by its family and personal attributes. The sequence from Capital Block to Mobility Block reflects our proposition that individual's political, social and human capital would effect his/her wealth-or-stable preference, together with opportunity structure, the two groups would influence his/her mobility track in-and-outside institution system. Figure 3 below illustrates out hypothesized model with interactive variables in each block and sequential orders among the three blocks.

Figure 3: A Hypothesized Theoretical Model of Social Mobility



The one-way arrows of solid lines represent causal effects from variables to mobility block. There might well be many more other potential linkages than what we indicate in Figure 3. We have limited our selection to those that appeal to our research interest or we think deserve our attention. Though relationships hypothesized among the variables and blocks in the model may pass our logic checks, they may not reach statistical significance in our empirical runs of our data as reported in followed tables.

Here we classify individual's mobility track into four types:³¹informal-to-informal (transition outside institution system), informal-to-formal (proverb is "back to sea shore"), formal-to-informal (proverb is "plunge into the commercial sea"), and formal-to-formal (transition inside institution system). Transition outside institution system would be

³¹Since we just concern the first and the current or last jobs, so what went on between them would be neglected, e.g. got first job in formal state sectors, then plunged into the commercial sea and found the second job in private sectors, but then went back to seashore and got final job in formal state sectors again.

taken as reference type, and we will do a multinomial logistic regression analysis. The independent variables are human capital (eduyr), social capital (p12), political capital (party), framework of opportunities which include “cities disparity” (area1-are5) and “cohorts disparity” (cohort1-cohort4), and job preference which include “stable” and “wealth”.

Social capital comes about through changes in the relations among persons that facilitate action, and it exists in the relations among persons, and it facilitates productive activity (Coleman, 1988). In these contents, social capital refers to those social resources (include information, space, fields and other necessities for social activities) obtained from social net. The size of information channel is taken as its index and it has five scales: “wide” is coded as “5”; “comparatively wide” is coded as “4”; “normal” is coded as “3”; “comparatively narrow” is coded as “2”; “narrow” is coded as “1”. The proportions for each are 1.1 percent, 13.4 percent, 25.8 percent, 46.8 percent, and 12.9 percent.

Table 5-7: Size of Information Channel

	Frequency	Percent
narrow	235	12.9
comparatively narrow	853	46.8
normal	470	25.8
comparatively wide	244	13.4
wide	20	1.1
Total	1,822	100.0

Human capital is created by changes in persons that bring about skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways (Coleman, 1988), and education years (eduyr) is used as its index in this contents. The third factor is the political capital composed of ability and qualification to enter political society. Its measurement index is party membership (party). In 1822 investigated interviewees, 19.1 percent have the membership of Chinese Communist Party.

Human capital, social capital and political capital are all medi-variables: as independent variables, they would influence job choice preference; however, as dependent variables, they would be effect by family and individual attributes.

As for individual attributes, we consider those aspects include whether interviewee had joined in the army (army), whether s/he had gone and worked in countryside or factory³²

³²In 1960s, most educated urban youth were sent down to work in countryside or factories, to be educated by peasants and workers who are considered as more advanced in political status. Such experience was deemed as beneficial for later political life.

(smove), whether s/he grew up in urban areas before the age of 15 (urban), whether s/he is female living in countryside, small counties, or outskirts of cities (femurb), whether s/he is minority people (minority), and gender (male). In 1822 interviewees who have participated in path model investigation, 17.5 percent have once gone and worked in countryside or factories, 5.2 percent are minority people, 5.6 percent have been enrolled in army, 63.3 percent lived in cities before 15 years old, 45.7 percent are males, and 19.7 percent are rural female.

The residence registration system has been an important factor in one's social status mobility and geographical migration over the past fifty years. In China, Mother's *hukou* will directly lead to the type of children's *hukou*. We introduce this variable into the study in order to investigate the influence of institutional factors on status attainment. Mother's education, Mother's *hukou*, Mother's political status, family origin, household economic conditions are all ascription factors. They are types of social capital in the attainment of children's human capital and social status. The mother can take advantage of her occupational influence or social networking to help her children obtain social status.

Therefore, when regarding of family attributes, we look into household income level (k18), and family origin (rival). Beside, we also observe mother's hukou status (mhukou), because child's hukou status was inherited from mother's hukou status according to Chinese legislation. Along with that, we would like to check whether mother's educational level (meduc) and mother's Chinese Communist Party membership (mparty) would play a role for child's social and human capital. Among mothers of 1822 interviewees who have participated in path model investigation, 41.4 percent are almost illiterate, 33.4 percent have completed primary school, 16.3 percent were graduated from junior middle school, and 5.3 percent had the highest diploma of senior middle school. 1.6 percent had attended technical or vocational middle school, just 2.0 percent had graduated from junior college.

Table 5-8: Mother's Educational Level

	Frequency	Percent
Almost illiterate	755	41.4
Primary school	608	33.4
Junior middle school	297	16.3
Senior middle school	96	5.3
Technical or vocational school	29	1.6
Junior college	37	2.0
Total	1,822	100.0

Furthermore, 69.9 percent mothers in 2005 possessed non-agricultural *hukou*, 6.8 percent mothers had membership of Chinese Communist Party. In all investigated interviewees, 3.0 percent were born in families of bad-class origin³³.

The result of maximum likelihood (ML) estimation of above-mentioned theoretical path model are displayed below:

³³In the 1950s, the Communist Party assigned a permanent “class” designation, inheritable in the male line, to each family on the basis of the family head’s source of income, employment status and political status. These designations, which were included in student and employment dossiers, faded in importance during the reform period beginning in the late 1970s. There were three main categories: good-class origins (politically red inheritances, and working class), middle-class origins (nonintelligentsia middle class, and intelligentsia middle class), and bad-class origins (families of former capitalists, families of “rightists”, pre-Liberation rich peasant families, families of criminal offenders, pre-Liberation landlord families, and families of counterrevolutionaries) (Unger, 1982).

Table 5-9: Estimate of Path Model of Job Transition Tracks (n=1822)

	Social Capital	Human Capital
meduc	0.096* (0.042)	0.747** (0.059)
mhukou	-0.159 (0.132)	0.355* (0.154)
mparth	0.021 (0.178)	0.159* (0.076)
k18	0.386** (0.055)	---
rival	0.087 (0.260)	---
femurb	-0.554* (0.183)	-0.171 (0.174)
urban	-0.184 (0.160)	---
army	0.332 (0.199)	---
smove	-0.308* (0.120)	---
male	0.111 (0.112)	---
minority	-0.311 (0.204)	---
Intercepts	---	8.363** (0.215)

	Stable (stability- preferred)	Wealth (income- preferred)
p12	-0.106* (0.046)	-0.017 (0.047)
eduyr	-0.039* (0.015)	-0.048* (0.015)
party	0.263* (0.110)	-0.089 (0.109)

	Private - State sector	State - State sector	State - Private sector		
p12	-0.079 (0.142)	-0.199* (0.088)	-0.086 (0.101)		
eduyr	0.043 (0.047)	0.128** (0.030)	0.070* (0.034)		
stable	-0.116 (0.085)	-0.031 (0.055)	0.023 (0.063)		
wealth	-0.091 (0.085)	0.037 (0.055)	0.077 (0.064)		
area1	0.654 (0.545)	1.004* (0.316)	0.687* (0.343)		
area2	1.153* (0.413)	0.341 (0.248)	0.100 (0.279)		
area3	1.037* (0.405)	0.393 (0.236)	-0.281 (0.278)		
area4	-0.494 (0.525)	-0.364 (0.247)	-0.850* (0.298)		
area5	0.778 (0.577)	0.707* (0.346)	1.077* (0.365)		
COHORT1	-0.062 (0.580)	-0.129 (0.426)	1.175* (0.532)		
COHORT2	-1.261* (0.536)	-1.265* (0.378)	0.281 (0.491)		
COHORT3	-1.453* (0.537)	-2.319** (0.383)	-0.205 (0.495)		
COHORT4	-1.753* (0.853)	-3.561** (0.661)	-1.781 (0.936)		
Intercepts	0.013 (0.829)	1.737* (0.552)	-0.646 (0.678)		
Thresholds Estimates for Ordinal Response Variables					
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
p12	-1.231 (0.204)	1.168 (0.202)	2.597 (0.211)	5.350 (0.302)	
stable	-3.514 (0.197)	-2.429 (0.177)	-1.441 (0.170)	-0.651 (0.167)	0.461 (0.167)
wealth\$1	-3.883 (0.208)	-2.629 (0.180)	-1.514 (0.170)	-0.754 (0.167)	0.268 (0.167)

Note: 1. ***: $P < 0.05$, ***: $P < 0.01$.

2. Figures in parentheses are standard errors of estimated regression coefficients.

We may conclude from the above table that:

(1) Mother's educational level (meduc), household income level (k18), females living in countryside, counties or outskirts of cities (femurb), and whether has been sent to work in countryside (smove) have significant effect on social capital. The regression coefficient of mother's education (meduc) is .096, and it is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). It shows that when other conditions are the same, when mother's education increases one level, the standardized score of interviewee's social capital should add .096. Mother's education is human capital, and it would affect children's education and then children's social capital. The regression coefficient of household economic condition (k18) is .386,

which is statistically significant at .01 level ($p < 0.01$). It means that when other conditions would be controlled, the value of social capital would enhance .385 due to one level of household income level has been increased. The regression coefficients of rural women (femurb) and go and work in countryside (smove) are both negative and significant ($p < 0.05$), and they are -0.554 and -0.308 respectively. Therefore, when other conditions are under control, rural women has less social capital, and those educated urban people who have been sent to work in countryside in youth also have less social capital.

All those figures illuminate that those people who were born in wealthy and knowledgeable families have more social capital. On the other hand, women who live in rural areas or urban people who have been sent to work in countryside in leftist era have comparatively less social capital.

(2) Those independent variables which would play a role for human capital are mother's education (meduc), mother's *hukou* status (mhukou), and family economic condition (k18). The regression coefficient of mother's educational level (meduc) is .747, and it is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). It shows that when other conditions are under control, along with one increase in mother's educational level, child's schooling will also add .747 year. Mothers received relatively high level of education usually tends to help their children receive more education and hence increase the educational capital for the latter. If mother has non-agricultural *hukou* (mhukou), then when other conditions are the same, child would receive .355 more years of education compared with child whose mother has agricultural *hukou*. It shows that people born with the non-rural registration residence status have a greater chance of receiving better education than those born in the countryside and hence held the rural registration residence status. The regression coefficient of household income level is .159 and it is statistically significant at .05 level ($p < 0.05$). It implies that when other conditions are controlled, one level increase of household income would bring .159 more years of education to children.

It is obvious that parent's education, mother's *hukou* status, and family economic condition influence individual's educational attainment in our ML model.

Mrs. Yuan, who comes from a village of Datong area in Shanxi Province (Respondent No. 2), was the first and the last college student in her village, and now she has finished her Master study. She said that her mother was different from other parents in her "backward and old-fashioned" village. "People of my village pay little attention to children's study, and let them do whatever they want." But her mother remained encouraging and supporting her learning, and her mother told her "I would afford you to whichever school they could go to."

Without mother's strict supervision on study, Mrs. Guo, who comes from another village of Datong area in Shanxi Province (Respondent No. 1), might also not go to college, let alone finishing Master study. She said, "My mother is in charge of kids' education in my family. I used to be a naughty child, so my mother asked my teacher to place me in the first row of classroom, then I could be supervised by teacher more conveniently." Mrs. Guo's mother accompanied her with homework doing everyday, to make sure she did right and efficiently. "She might not approve us to buy new clothes,

but she would never say No to our request of book purchasing. My mama stopped such strict supervision only when I began studying studiously and voluntarily in senior middle school,” said she proudly.

The two interviews show that mothers’ high expectation and determination on education will greatly encourage children’s academic achievement. So we may assume that mother with more education, might attach more importance to children’s education and more positively influence children’s future mobility.

Combining (1) and (2), we see that those rural students, who could overcome all institutional obstacles and attend college, possess less social capital compared with their urban counterparts. Then we would like to see about which independent variables would affect individual’s job choice preference.

(3) Stability-preferred employment outlook is influenced by several independent variables, including human capital (eduyr), social capital (p12) and political capital (party). Human and social capital would play a negative role for stability-preferred job choice, while political capital acts positively. The regression coefficient of social capital is -0.106 and is significant ($p < 0.05$), which shows that people with more social capital pay less attention to job’s stability when other conditions are controlled. The regression coefficient of human capital is -0.039 and is significant ($p < 0.05$), which means that the more human capital one possess, the less s/he cares about job stability when other conditions are under control. Member of Communist Party tend to attach more importance to job stability than others, since its regression coefficient is .263 and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Thus it can be seen that the more human capital and social capital one holds, the more mobility s/he would tend to make in the society. It is a kind of indirect support for the hypothesis that rural college students are more like to settle on a job due to its stability. Because rural-origin college students have less social capital, so they tend to make more conservative job choice than their urban counterparts. If the positive effect of political capital is included, the process would be much more complicated.

Mr. Ye, who was born in a state-owned farm which located in a mountainous village of Hainan Province in 1978 (Respondent No. 9), the same year of Chinese open-door policy, attached great importance to job’s stability, rather than salary, position challenge or career future. When he graduated at 2001, the job market was still welcoming for fresh graduates. He simply went to a job fair and sent his resumes to several work units, which were all institutional sectors. Among several choices, he decided to work at Beijing Chaoyang District Government He attributed his preference to his rural origin.

He said, “I had many job choices at that time. Now when I think back, I realize all positions I once intended to go are all stable ones. For example, I have considered to work in Haidian Day Collegcivil administration bureau of Shanghai City, government office, and several state-owned enterprises. My former life experience in remote state-owned farm led to my present choice, for I prefer a stable life, and I don’t like change. Change might bring disaster in my eyes.” When he was a kid, the rubber farm he lived in was still in good condition, because rubber was a controlled material for the country at that time. He recalled, “Our living standard was better than surrounding villages, and

our life was quite stable due to the planned economy system. But since 1990s, foreign rubber was allowed to enter Chinese market, which was better in quality and cheaper at price, so our farm lost its former glamour. Our products were no longer wanted, and the planned economy system became corrupted in the farm, then my life also went into blue.”

Living in a city without a local *hukou* makes him feel “rootless and horrible”. So gaining a *hukou* was Mr. Ye’s first condition in job hunting. As for salary or development chance, he paid much less attention. Among many alternatives, he chose to work at government office. Repeatedly he stressed in the interview, “My former experience in rural areas led to my life choice. I used to live a stable and comfortable life in the farm, but after serious changes took place, it was destroyed. Therefore I don’t desire a life full of challenges or unstable factors. You might say I am a coward, but only stable life could give me a sense of security,” “I think many rural students prefer stability to salary in job hunting process,” “I am from remote countryside, and I have to depend on myself in big cities. So I would choose the safest alternative, instead of the benefit-biggest alternative.” During the interview, Mr. Ye mentioned that his younger sister was going to graduate from a university, and he hoped that his sister could find a stable position, too.

Mrs. Li, who comes from a village of Hengshui area in Hebei Province (Respondent No. 4), also took stability very seriously in job hunting process. In the job fairs, she asked the future employers whether they could endow her Beijing *hukou* in advance and sent resumes mostly to “government offices of municipal or district level”. She recalled, “An ensuring company also wanted me. Its chief told me that with no restriction of *hukou*, it was freer and had bigger chance there, and I might make quite a fortune in short time when I had enough clients. But that interests me not. I have to find a stable position, because I could only depend on myself in this big city. When there was any kind of risk, for example, if I earn nothing for just one month, it is disaster for me and for my family. I need to pay my family back after my graduation with my salary each month, so I have to find a stable job. I thought stability was very important.” Finally Chaoyang District Government offered her a post. She confessed that she had never discussed her salary or welfare during interviews or practice period, and until now she is quite satisfied with the job.

The two cases show that rural students feel insecure in crowded and stressful big cities, where they have neither social relation nor fortune to depend on. So they tend to pursue stable positions.

(4) Only human capital (*eduyr*) plays a significant role for wealth-preferred job choice of interviewees, and the two are negatively related. The regression coefficient of human capital is -0.048 and is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), which implies that when individual’s human capital is increasing, his/her enthusiasm on job salary would decline. People with higher educational level tend to pay less attention for salary; rather tend to attach great importance on job stability, social responsibility, or career future.

Mr. Liu, who comes from a village of Fancheng Town in Linying County in Henan Province (Respondent No. 3), graduated with Bachelor Degree in 1995. He and his

classmates all thought that “a job in government was desirable”. Many of his classmates with certain background went to work in provincial or municipal government. “As a rural boy with no background, I had to go back and worked in village-level government. One reason for us to work for government is that it is stable; the other reason is to become an official some day,” said he. But he found it was very hard for a clerk of village-level government to be promoted to higher level, so he quit and entered for Graduate Candidate Test. When he was going to graduate with Doctor Degree, he considered that “it was so good to work in central or municipal government”, but he confessed, “it was too hard”. Therefore his best wish was to find a position in a university, where he could train young people for profession. He paid little attention on salary, but he want the university to offer an apartment for him and his family.

In the following we would like to analyze individual’s mobility track in and outside institution system to see about which factor would influence this process.

(5) Human and social capital, as well as job choice preference, would not influence individual’s mobility track from outside to inside of formal state-owned institutional sectors (“back to sea shore”). However, the odds ratio of “back to shore” mobility is different among cohorts and areas. Compared with other cities, interviewees of Guangzhou City (area2) and Lanzhou City (area3) represent higher ratio of “back to shore” mobility. As for different eras, the more contemporary the cohort is, the lower the ratio of “back to shore” mobility.

(6) We may also tell from the above table that human capital (*eduyr*) has positive influence on individual’s mobility track within formal state-owned institutional sectors (such as government agencies, social organizations, state-owned or collective enterprises, army, administrative institutions, and judicial courts at all levels), while social capital (*p12*) plays negative effect on mobility track of inside-to-inside of formal sectors. The more social capital one possesses, the less likely s/he would remain working in state-owned work unit. On the other hand, when one holds more human capital, s/he tends to change jobs within formal state-owned institutional sectors. In addition to these two factors, individual’s job preference (stable and wealth) play no significant role in job transition track. As for opportunity structure, interviewees of Shanghai City (area1) and Nanning City (area5) have more opportunities to change job inside formal state-own institutional sectors, and the younger cohorts had less opportunity to transfer job within state sectors.

(7) Concerning mobility track of inside-to-outside of formal state-owned institutional sectors (go into business or called as “plunge into the commercial sea” by the common), human capital has positive effect. However, social capital and job preference (stable and wealth) play no significant role in it.

Mr. Li, who comes from a mountainous village of Zhongwei County in Ningxia Province (Respondent No. 10), firstly worked in a state-own enterprise after graduation and later jumped to a national institute. He clearly said that his intention was to gain a Beijing hukou through the first job and stay in Beijing. But later he found it too boring, “so I quit the job after one year, and compensated 10,000 *yuan* for leaving before my contract

was due. Later I was successfully hired by my present work unit. In this council for Taiwan Problem, I have lots of chances to see the world, such as short-time trip to foreign countries on business. Besides, my earning gets better, too. What is also good is that this work is related to what I learnt at school,” said he. Mr. Li changed his posts within institutional system with satisfaction. On the opposite, Mrs. Lin, wife of Mr. Li, who was born in a village of Shenyang City in Liaoning Province (Respondent No. 11), finds that it is very hard to jump into institutional system from the outside.

Compared with her husband, Mrs. Lin has less human capital. Mr. Li graduated from a university which located in Beijing and was well known as candidate school of civil servant. However, Mrs. Lin’s university is an ordinary local one which locates in the northeastern China. So when Mrs. Lin came to Beijing for job hunting, in order to unite with her lover, she met great difficulty. She recalled, “I sent many resumes to many companies, and went around for job interviews. It was a tough time, and I found some interviews were just traps. For example, they said you were employed, but you needed pay hundreds of *yuan* for working clothes, and something like that. But after paying, they would disappear. After one whole month of struggle, a small-sized advertisement company agreed to hire me, and I felt very lucky. However, there were few clerks in that company, and I needed overwork all the time. Plus, my earning was really poor. So last year I hopped to the advertisement company which I am working for right now. It is private-owned too, but its size is bigger, and has more clients.” Mrs. Lin has no acquaintance in Beijing besides her husband, so she has neither social nor political capital. Though she also wants to move to some state-owned institute or company and obtain a Beijing *hukou*, she confessed that she “get tiny chance”, because she “just posses a Bachelor Degree and is not from a famous university”. She is very happy that her husband works in institutional work unit and be endowed with a Beijing *hukou*, because “the welfare of such work unit is good, and it is stable”.

However, Mr. Ai, who comes from a village of Datong area in Shanxi Province (Respondent No. 14), wants to move out of institutional system. At the present, he worked for a state-owned enterprise which endowed him a Beijing *hukou*. But he said, “One characteristic of state-owned enterprise is that it does not run as orderly and tensely as foreign-capital enterprise. Its employees are not put with much pressure. I think we young people should learn and make progress all the time.” On his spare time, he worked as stockbroker, and believed himself to be a talented one. He said, “I would resign this job when I am well prepared for my own business. Otherwise I have to remain here.” It seems that Mr. Ai is eager to make a fortune and meet great challenge outside the institutional system, only when he believes himself to have enough capital; otherwise he would not take risk.

(8) Among different areas, Shanghai City (area1) and Nanning City (area5) offer more chances for their people to find new jobs in private sectors, while Chengdu City (area4) offers fewer chances. Among different cohorts, the more contemporary cohorts have less opportunity to move from state-own sectors to private sectors. Interviewees born between 1949 and 1959 (cohort 1) and interviewees born between 1959 and 1966 (cohort2) represent a higher ratio of “plunge into the commercial sea” movement, while interviewees born between 1967 and 1978 (cohort3) and interviewees born between 1979

and 1988 (cohort4) manifest increasingly lower ratio.

Compared with other employees, the formation and mobility of employees in formal state-owned institutional sectors (who are ambiguously classified as “cadres” by the common) receive more influence from relevant institutional arrangements, policies, and regulations of the government. Furthermore, such an influence is a leading factor, which affects this stratum at all times. In China, macro-level institutional factors that affect the development and mobility of cadre stratum include the political and legal system, the cadre personnel system, political movements, and the reforms of these institutions. Over a long period of time, government agencies at all levels in China were oversized and overstaffed with extremely low efficiency. Since 1949, several restructuring programs have been carried out in government agencies. Each restructuring program of government agencies inevitably affected social mobility of a considerable number of civil servants. Political movements, such as the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Cultural Revolution, significantly affected cadres and hence also made their social mobility go up and down. All these factors have formed different characteristics of this stratum in its size, composition, average received education, and internal and external mobility mechanism in different periods in different regions.

Before the reform of the government employee system in the 1990s, there were three channels to obtain the status of cadre according to relevant regulations: demobilized army cadres were transferred to local government agencies; college and university students obtained the status of cadre after graduation; ordinary people were employed by the government agencies in open recruitments. Later the graduate assignment and open recruitment have been combined into one. Therefore after 1993, only two channels of entering the cadre stratum exist, i.e., the emplacement of demobilized army cadres and the examination of government employee recruitment (which are called as “civil servant test” by the common). The examination system makes it possible for educated social members in all social strata to become government employees. Theoretically it provides more opportunities for rural children to become cadres through higher educational attainment. However, in practice, because rural students are more disadvantaged in higher educational attainment, it is still very hard for them to become cadres in nowadays.

The jobs in formal state-owned institutional sectors are relatively stable and secured by governmental regulations and laws. As a whole, there are great differences existing among people in this stratum in social prestige and economic income because of differences in industry, sector, regions, and period. People with actual administrative authority in departments in charge of projects examining and approving, administrative enforcing, and development planning occupy an advantaged position in the allocation of organizational resources. In developed regions in China, the amount of economic resources that cadres can utilize is far larger than that of those in underdeveloped regions.

Since the opening-up, education and age has now become important criteria of cadre selection and promotion. A large number of young talented social members have become cadres and made immense contributions to the modernization of Chinese society. In 1978 cadres with college and higher level of education only accounted for 18.02 percent in the total number of cadres in China, while in 1998, this proportion increased to 46.52

percent, up by 28.5 percent³⁴.

With the progress of economic and social development, the establishment of the socialist free-market system has attracted parts of cadres to leave their formal working units and go into business (inside-to-outside track) or move into other social strata. There were tides of officials going into business around 1993 and in 2003. This is a sort of social progress that challenged the traditional bureaucrat-centered social value system. In these days, people's value orientations and personal choices are increasingly diverse and channels of self-fulfillment are expanding. Some state and social administrators gave up the career of governmental officials for pursuing personal value by engaging in business.

A large number of cadres resigned from the government and shifted into business at the beginning of the 1990s. The phenomenon that state and social administrators in control of organizational resources shifting to the stratum in possession of economic resources indicates that the importance of economic resources in the value appraisal system has been rising. However, such movement was not very strong, and has almost vanished now. After that tide of shifting to business, there were very few newly promoted middle-aged and young cadres of formal state-owned institutional sectors following that path. The overwhelming majority of such cadres still chose to stay in the stratum and strive for promotions in administrative positions, like Mr. Ye (Respondent No. 9) and Mrs. Li (Respondent No. 4). Cadres who resigned to go into business were usually those without real power or any promising career in the formal state-owned institutional sectors, like Mr. Ai (Respondent No. 14); but some cadres with real power also went into business in order to take advantage of their social networks and influence to obtain undue personal interests, or to legalize illegal gains obtained in public offices through business activities.

People with more education may have a brighter future within formal state-owned institutional sectors, like being promoted to a better position with more power. Governments in some regions consider age and diploma as major criteria for cadre selection. Administrative competence, experience and virtue are treated as minor references. It is common in these days that only people with formal university certificates would be promoted as cadre in government branches. Otherwise, they would remain as normal clerk the whole life. The higher the diploma is, the brighter the future may be. As a result, many extraordinarily competent middle-aged cadres, who could not receive good education during the Cultural Revolution, lost their space of upward mobility in favor of "younger in average age" and "higher in educational level", and impaired their enthusiasm. In addition, when "higher in educational level" is emphasized in cadre promotion, professional competence has been paid less attention. Driven by the trend of "younger in average age" and "higher in educational level", some cadres practiced fraud by illegally procuring diplomas and falsifying their ages. In such condition, many officials go to universities for part-time study. On the other hand, people with less education but broader social net may find a bigger world outside institutional sectors, like transforming into private enterpriser and obtain more economic recourses.

³⁴Lu, Guotai. 2000. Public Administration in China. Beijing: The Central Party School Publishing House: p18.

The above path model of job transition process shows that opportunity structure is very important for individual's mobility track in- and outside of institutional system. A position in formal state-owned institutional sectors (such as government agencies, social organizations, state-owned or collective enterprises, army, administrative institutions, and judicial courts at all levels) is scarce resource, especially when China's labor force size is growing. Human, social, and political capital may assist one to obtain such scarce positions. Under such condition, individual's personal job choice preference has to be neglect at some level, and sometimes to be ignored totally, in mobility process.

5.4 Conclusion

Research shows that the stratum of cadres or state and social administrators is usually the final stop of social mobility. People do not have a strong desire to move to other strata after entering this stratum (Lu, 2004). The post of cadres is always the most preferred occupational position that people are willing to choose since 1949. Obtaining such a position means that one acquires the authority that is empowered to this post by the government and hence one can exercise his/her power through managing affairs that are assigned to the post by the government. Therefore, cadres are undoubtedly the most powerful persons in current Chinese society. Before the reform and opening-up peasants thirsted for recruitment of public-owned work unit, workers hoped to be promoted as cadres, military personnel awaited demobilization and emplacement as cadres, and cadres pursued promotion. After the reform and opening-u, college graduates expected to be assigned to government agencies as cadres as well. Even after the 1990s, with the rapid development of extra-system economy, besides going into business, the governmental official is still the dream occupation of many college students, especially for rural students.

Analysis also shows that the inflow channel of the state and social administrator stratum changed significantly before and after the economic reform. Before that, according to some statistics, slightly more than one-tenth of state and social administrators' first occupations were that of agricultural laborers. After the economic reform, the probability of entering this stratum for peasants declined sharply. Changes in the origins of state and social administrator stratum indicate that the selection rule of this stratum varied now. Before the reform, the basic criteria for selecting cadres focused on political participation performance and political status; while after the reform, academic degrees and diplomas are emphasized in cadre promotion.

As for intergenerational mobility, 53.2 percent of state and social administrator who started working before 1980 came from families of peasants; it is about 24 percent lower than its average proportion (77.4 percent) in the overall social structure. Among state and social administrators who started working after 1980, 31.1 percent came from the family of peasants and it is about 38 percent lower than its average proportion (69.2 percent) in the overall social structure (Lu, 2004). That is to say, after the economic reform, it is harder for children from peasant families to be state and social administrators.

In conclusion, the number of surplus rural laborers in China is very large, while the qual-

ity of these laborers is relatively low. In rural areas, production factors, such as capital and technology, etc., are relatively scarce. The surplus rural labor force does not create benefits to agriculture; contrarily, they participated in the distribution of agricultural hampers the growth of peasants' income. According to other countries' experience, in all countries or regions with a huge population and scarce farmland and capital, their industrial structure has evolved from a resource-intensive and labor-intensive pattern into a capital-intensive and technology-intensive pattern. For example, the major method of rural labor force transfer in Japan is to improve the productivity of agricultural labor and reduce the demand of agriculture for labor, and meanwhile absorb the surplus rural labor force via a rapidly developing industry. In order to foster qualified talents who meet the requirements of the non-agricultural sectors, rural education should be paid further attention.

In order to become an opener society, old institutional barriers like *hukou* system should be abolished or redesigned in China as soon as possible, also new barrier like family economic background and unfair allocation of public resources should also be controlled. At present, the development of Chinese economy is in a critical period. We should be aware that the sustainable development of the economy has to rely on fair and reasonable social structure. Only if unjust institutionalized discriminations that are blocking social mobility are further cleared up can the degree of openness and equity in Chinese society be improved to a greater extent.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Significance

This thesis investigates the status of educational inequality between urban and rural Chinese in the context of the major Chinese economic, political, and social institutions at the turn of the twenty-first century, and how it would influence the youth's career choices. It is known that advanced education provides people with the necessary adaptability and creativity to perform in a world characterized by rapidly developing technology and a complex management system. Though more and more Chinese are given the opportunities to receive higher education in recent years, the rural youth find bigger and bigger institutional roadblocks in their way to college. This will further stimulate their determination to find a stable job in formal institutional sectors and remain in cities decently and permanently. In spite of all government's tremendous efforts to improve advanced education, with the aim of further promoting economic and social development, striking effects nevertheless remain in the Chinese educational system, and enormous difficulties still lie ahead for the ongoing educational reform during China's overall institutional transition in the new century.

Since the establishment of P.R. China in 1949, political campaigns followed on after another and its economic situations and social policies were volatile. These changes in institutions, policies and social structures had direct influence on social mobility. From a historical perspective, before the reform, especially at the late stage of the Cultural Revolution, the overall development of Chinese society tended to a closed system, and the rule of ascription dominated the social mobility.

The reform that has started since 1978 is a momentous landmark of advancement in Chinese society. The reform started from economic systems, and then expanded to political and social systems. The goal was to transform the planned economy into the socialist free-market economy. Driven by modernization and marketization, Chinese national economy has been developing at a remarkable speed. Chinese society has been transiting from an agricultural-rural society to an industrial-urban society. According to Chinese official statistics, China's GDP grew from US\$128 billion in 1980 to US\$2,279 billion in 2005. The import and export volume for 2005 topped US\$1,422.1 billion and contracted foreign direct investment reached US\$167.2 billion. Per capita income for 2005 was US\$1,290. In terms of GDP, China has recently surpassed Japan and Germany and become the world's second largest economy. Furthermore, Shanghai

successfully hosted World Expo 2010 with the theme “Better City, Better Life”.

The institutional reform, development, and structural changes in economy have accelerated the stratification of social structure, and hence Chinese social stratum structure has been changing dramatically, social relationships between social members have been adjusting greatly, and mechanisms of social status attainment has become more fair and reasonable. Some important institutions and policies that indicated the social segregation such as class oration, the work unit system, and urban-rural dual system, have been declining. Though arrangements of national institutions and policies still have important impact on attainments and changes of people’s social status, the whole society becomes increasingly open, and the rule of achievement has become more important in social mobility. However, the population of agricultural laborers is still very large, and a great amount of them are still very poor.

Most Chinese urbanities have little notion of the grinding poverty of many peasants, especially in remote areas. When young Chinese urban children are playing computer games, reading Cambridge English, and learning piano, an 8-year-old rural boy is running a whole household and caring for two blind people. His name is Zhang Chengcheng from Maying village in the western province of Qinghai. His mother and grand mother are blind from birth, and his father, driven by poverty, left home as a migrant laborer. Chengcheng cares the family alone. From early morning he cooks, shops, fetches water and keeps house. When his seemingly endless chores are done, he studies, and he is at the top of his class³⁵.

It is very common in poor mountainous areas, elementary school children have to walk miles, rain or shine, to go to school. Because villagers are dispersed in isolated areas, many villages do not have their own elementary schools. In such poor condition, parents tend to not send their daughters to school because of a concern for safety. With even less middle schools in those regions, fewer parents would consider sending their daughter to primary schools because of diminished prospect for further schooling. Education is a way for people like Chengcheng to make out of the poverty they were born into, but it is so tough.

In the gazette of the Sixteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, it pointed out that “the first two decades of the twentieth century, for our country, is a time full of important strategic opportunities that should not be missed, and China should make full use of it to develop itself”. At present, China is at a critical moment in its history when more profound changes will happen in Chinese social-economic structure.

The experience of development in many countries has demonstrated that, in this stage, there are two possible results of development. One is positive, with sustained socio-economic advances and successful achievements of industrialization and modernization. Another is negative, usually with the great gaps in wealth, between urban and rural areas, and among different regions, with

³⁵From a book named “The good Grain People” by Aisin Gioro Wei Ran, who visited thousand of villages and documented the poverty he saw. The book was published by Fudan University in August 2010. “I’m just one person. I decided that the best thing I could do would be to tell people what’s really going on,” the author said in an interview.

an increasing rate of unemployment, with violent social conflicts and polluted environments, and so on. All these issues will eventually lead to long-term socio-economic stagnations, or even social turbulences and regressions.³⁶

After twenty years' reform and opening-up, China has achieved extraordinary accomplishments economic development, and the conditions and living standard of ordinary people have improved greatly. However, inequality is increasing both among provinces and within provinces. Maintaining strong principles of equality is important for social justice and for the efficiency of the economy. But governments in poor areas lack resources for investments, a gap widened by private resources in more affluent regions. Tertiary students come increasingly from urban families because even the best rural education is not of sufficient quality, and only urban parents can afford the high-quality senior secondary schools. Gender inequalities also appear to be increasing.

Whether China is able to grasp opportunities in this critical period and advance further depends on whether it can unceasingly push the development of the entire society. As for the situation of current China, social development lags far behind resulting in various social issues. The major social issues mentioned in the above quotation of Premier Wen Jiabao have pervasively emerged in China. In addition, worsening social security situation, a sharp increase of crime rate, uncontrollable corruptions, serious extravagance and waste, rushed of peasant-workers, complicated socio-economic problems related in agriculture, rural areas and peasants, and expanding pornography, gambling, drugs, and organized crimes have been endangering Chinese society.

The experience of China illustrates the difficulty of reconciling leftist social goals and economically pragmatic policies. Economic scarcity has dictated that policies designed to promote rapid economic development compete directly for resources with policies designed to expand social opportunities to traditionally disadvantaged groups (Hannum, 1999).

This thesis focus on two important relationships for education equality in China: the relationship of personal educational attainment and class origin, and the relationship of educational attainment and status attainment. We study these two relationships along a key dimension of social inequality: urban-rural residence.

For rural families, educational and economic policies since the 1990s have raised the opportunity costs associated with educating children. The evidence presented in the preceding chapters demonstrates that, for the large proportion of China's children who reside in rural areas, the reform of higher education since the 1990s and other institutional barriers have reduced their opportunities to receive higher education, yet not reduced their enthusiasm to find stable positions in institutional work units after graduation from colleges.

According to "Chinese College Graduates' Employment Annual Report 2010"³⁷, which

³⁶Wen, Jiabao, 2004. "Speech at the Commencement of Seminar on Understanding and Application of Scientific Development Views Attended by Provincial and Ministerial Level Officials". Beijing: *People's Daily*. March 1.

³⁷Quoted from the *China Youth Daily*, 27th June 2010.

was conducted by MyCOS Corporation and covered 220,000 college graduates around China in 2009, the social class origin of students would affect the college entrance, employment after graduation and starting salary. The students' family background were divided into four classes: family of service industry, family of peasant or migrant worker, family of administrator or clerical personnel, and family of jobless or retired. The survey shows that a bigger proportion of students who come from peasant, migrant worker or service staff families are studying in junior colleges, and a greater part of children of administrator or clerical personnel families are studying in key universities. It is also found that for all-level higher educational institutes, students of peasant and migrant worker families have to enter with higher scores of over 15 points averagely in College Entrance Examination. Children from administrator and clerical personnel families could go to key universities with averagely 557 points, while children from peasant and migrant worker families were enrolled by those key universities with an average 576 points. For children of peasant and migrant worker families, the quality of basic education is poor, yet the required entrance scores are high, so they are double disadvantaged for higher educational attainment compared with children of other classes.

For those rural-origin students who were enrolled by colleges with great luck after enormous efforts, they would still face more difficulties in job hunting compared with other students. The survey of MyCOS shows that 35 percent of students from peasant and migrant worker families has not signed employment contract at graduation, while only 15 percent of students from administrator and clerical personnel families remained unemployed at graduation.

Rural-origin students' initial salaries are also lower, which shows that they are also disadvantaged in employment quality. The survey of MyCOS presents that the starting salaries of students from peasant and migrant worker families are the lowest compared with students of other classes. It also shows that the most effective employment information for them comes from job fairs organized by colleges, while most students from administrator or clerical personnel families would take advantage of information from friends or relatives.

The significance of my thesis firstly lays at its educational attainment analysis, which is an important part of social stratification and mobility researches. Much research has shown that educational attainment is one of the most important determinants on people's social, economic and political status, and the study of patterns of educational attainment and educational inequality has always played an important role in the filed social stratification and mobility researches over time (Deng and Treiman, 1997). The level of education of the population is commonly viewed as an essential factor for a country's economic and social development. Higher education, in particular, is a crucial prerequisite to the occupancy of the economy's most lucrative and influential position worldwide (DeMaggio and Mohr, 1985).

Viewed against a horizon of incredible demographic and geographic pressures, China's efforts to build an effective education system are impressive by any standards since the foundation of the People's Republic China, despite having suffered considerable setbacks during the Cultural Revolution ear. In 1949, 80 percent of the Chinese population was

classified as either illiterate or semiliterate. Out of every 100,000 people, there were only 22 college graduates, 230 middle school graduates, and 4,500 elementary school graduates. By contrast, a 2005 population survey shows another picture: out of every 10,000 people there were 5,173 college graduates, 47,477 middle school graduates, and 31,131 elementary school graduates (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2006). In 2002, the Chinese government declared that it had accomplished the national goal of popularizing nine-year compulsory education “on the whole” by 2000³⁸. China now has 1,731 institutes of higher learning (Chinese official statistics of 2005).

Effective education is the foundation of a knowledge-based economy. Economic growth and social progress are historically strongly correlated with development of human capital. Within the course of economic development, qualifications of individuals have gained increasing importance as a production factor. Beyond mere economic reasons, a population with a high level of human capital has further advantages. Indeed, human capital is known to have a positive impact on a wide range of other outcomes. Because it favors the employability of individuals, it makes them less likely to have to rely on social solidarity or to fall into social exclusion. Though the causality is less directly assessable, societies with a high level of human capital are known to have a lower incidence of criminality or other social problems, a better health level, are more likely to have democracies and political stability. Thus, it is not surprising that governments in advanced countries typically claim to pursue two essential objectives regarding education: raise the education level of the population, on the one hand, and reduce social inequalities in educational attainment, on the other hand.

After World War II, many countries viewed higher education as a vehicle of upward social mobility for able young people from disadvantaged family backgrounds. In China as in other industrial nations, education is the “engine of social mobility”. But empirical studies showed that expansion had done little to reduce either inequality in society or participation in higher education. The education system as a sorting machine manifestly favors those from families of higher socioeconomic status. Education is a means of social reproduction whereby advantaged groups in society, whether by gender, class, race or cultural affinity, passed on these advantages to the next generation. Trow (1984:132) has described higher education “as a stratified system of institutions, graded formally or informally in status and prestige, in wealth and power, and influence of various kinds.” Educational reforms in many societies aimed to weaken the connection between family background and educational attainment, yet almost without exception these connections remain.

Some trends in the American education system are important and evident, such as dramatic reduction in overt racial discrimination, unceasing expansion, increasing diversity in the school population, and declining class sizes. In the United States, elementary education is universal and secondary education is nearly so, while postsecondary education has so many diverse forms and so few barriers to enrollment that opportunities seem virtually unchecked. Despite enormous educational expansion, the relative advantages of those of higher-status origins continue (Hout and Dohan, 1996). For example,

³⁸Source: Ministry of Education, 2003. *2002 Annual Statistical Bulletin on the Implementation of Educational Funds in China*.

in college enrollment, among the high school class of 1992, 41 percent of the graduates whose parents had no education beyond high school did not enroll in any postsecondary education, and only 25.8 percent enrolled in four-year postsecondary institutions; by contrast, just 7.5 percent of the students whose parents were college graduates did not enroll in any postsecondary education, while 71.4 percent enrolled in four-year institutions (Berkner, Chaverz, and Carroll, 1997). The American four-year postsecondary institutions are classified into four levels, from Tier One to Tier Four, which means from “the most competitive” to “noncompetitive”. About 150 universities and colleges are selected as Tier One. Research shows that children from the upper socioeconomic status quartile (as measured by combining family income and the education and occupation of the parents) have more opportunities to go to Tier One universities and colleges, compared with children from the lower socioeconomic status quartile. 74 percent of the students at the Tier One colleges came from families in the top quarter of the socioeconomic status scale, while just 3 percent came from the bottom socioeconomic status quartile, and roughly 10 percent came from the bottom half of the socioeconomic status scale (Hartmann, 2005).

The issue of educational inequality across social and ethnic groups also exists in Germany. Blossfeld (1993) but also Müller and Haun (1994) found evidence of strong links between social origin and educational attainment and that social inequalities have not reduced significantly over time. Dustmann (2001) shows that parental background is closely related to the secondary track children follow, which, in turn, is strongly correlated with subsequent educational achievement. Also Gang and Zimmermann (1999) examine the extent of the disadvantage experienced by children of immigrants in terms of educational outcomes.

Researchers demonstrate that the socioeconomic differentials in relative odds of entering secondary and higher education for persons remain strong and consistent in a wide variety of national contexts (Shavit and Blossfeld, 1993). This finding held in the United States, West Germany, England and Wales, Italy, Switzerland, Taiwan, Japan, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Israel. The exceptions to the dominant pattern were Sweden and the Netherlands, which exhibited declining inequality.

In spite of China’s tremendous accomplishment in education, the challenges inherent in education provision become stronger these years. Students of the poor rural areas are more and more disadvantaged in various ways. The problem of unevenly distributed education has attracted considerable academic attention since the 1990s (Huannum, 1999). More important, the problems persist as the economy continues to grow at a high speed. Scholars have generally viewed the unevenness of economic development in the post three decades as a principal contributor to the inequalities of education. For example, using 2000 Census data, Hannum and Wang (2006) proved that the percent of variation in years of schooling explained by birth province increased significantly in recent years in China. However, the disparities within province are more profound (Tsand and Ding, 2003). Further more, several institutional obstacles stand in the way of Chinese rural youth’s educational attainment, such as exam system and registration system. If access to all levels of schooling is available only to the financially, politically, institutional, and geographically advantaged, the bulk of China’s population will

be excluded from full participation in the growth of human capital and the income it produces.

Education is a means of equipping well-trained workers with knowledge and skills, of creating well-balanced citizens, of improving health and nutrition, of maintaining a high-quality environment, and of sustaining political and economic responsibility. High-quality education can have a positive impact on individual attitudes, values concerning personal and social relations, and the psychological propensities of individuals to be more inclusive and tolerant. From the process of schooling there emerges a new person - not simply someone with skills but also someone with an understanding of his or her own role in society.

Widening the knowledge divide, not only arithmetic but in science and law as well, risks undermining long-term economic development and social stability. However, setting priorities in education in today's China is not an easy task. Besides many other competing priorities, such as defense and infrastructure, there are also ideological, philosophical, and strategic disagreements within the party leadership and among the educational experts that make it very difficult to set policy. Thus, some see education as a compelling investment in economic development, whereas others feel that it is necessary but can be deferred. Some favor general basic academic education, and others favor specific vocational training and emphasis on occupational skills. Still others argue that the goal should be universal basic literacy and numeracy, with limits placed on access to post-basic education and training. And there are also people who privilege economic development over education.

Nevertheless, more and more people have come to consider education as a basic human right, rather than a privilege, to which all are equally entitled. For the individual, a good quality education not only enhances his/her capability to generate income, but also contributes to his/her general well-being. On a larger scale, education plays an important role not only in facilitating economic growth but also contributing to social equity. Therefore the equity and equality of education have been attached greater importance.

Using the Gini coefficient of education to measure the magnitude of educational disparities between coastal and inland provinces and between rural and urban areas in China between 1990 and 2000, some study show that the rural-urban, rather than the coastal-inland, gap is the dominant component in the total education Gini coefficient. In contrast to the increasing coastal-inland gap in income distribution and economic growth, the differences between the educational attainment of the coastal provinces and that of the inland provinces fell slightly over the course of the 1990s, while the rural-urban gap in education increased. Thus, an uneven dispersion of education between rural and urban areas was the predominant component of overall educational inequality (Qian and Smyth, 2005).

Educational inequities associated with rural poverty, gender, and ethnicity have been targeted by both the Chinese government and nongovernmental organizations. Besides long-term and massive educational investment from the central and provincial government to the poorest and least developed regions and areas, policies to boost educational

achievement for women and other disadvantaged groups must take geographic, cultural and socioeconomic factors systematically into account in the search for new answers to the challenges. For example, in addition to increased educational investment and effective enforcement of the Compulsory Education Law, government at different levels should offer incentives to groups lacking in educational opportunity. Incentives could include exemption from school fees, free provision of books, uniforms, and other needed goods, or direct subsidies to households with scholarships for educational materials and for transportation, school meals, and other charges. For another example, some non-governmental charity policies, like “Hope Project”, designed to facilitate educational development in poor areas emerged in the early 1990s, did large-scale interventions targeted toward improving education among the impoverished.

Local and national data indicate that female participation in education decreases with the level of schooling relate to male. Due to low educational credentials, rural women would be unlikely to have desirable career prospects, secure economic well being, have a political position of power, and gain social respect from society. It needs to remember that mothers play an influential role in their children’s performance in school, their rates or promotion and dropout. Child mortality falls as mothers learn. The more and better educated the mother, the greater the mother’s commitment to education. It is thus incumbent upon planners of children’s programs to include educational sessions for mothers to the extent possible, especially rural mothers. Gender inequality in education is part and parcel of China’s widening social and economic disparities. Moreover, gender inequality in education is a contributor to and a reflection of gender inequality in the larger society. Interventions promoting gender equality outside schooling are obviously indispensable. Since gender relationship is also a relationship about power, such interventions must necessarily involve the participation and support of decision-makers in all walks of social life.

Besides peasants and women, Chinese society has other marginalized groups, such as minorities and disabled persons. The vast inequality of educational attainment could affect the distribution of wealth, access to opportunities for social mobility, both economic and political development of the society, as well as the stability of the country. The Chinese leadership must therefore take the problems seriously in the new century.

Secondly, in the process of industrialization, the essence of Chinese peasants will move upward in social stratification, and college enrollment is one of the highest levels of upward social mobility.

Before the reform, Chinese peasants did not have the land ownership and the right to choose occupations. Since 1978 the large-scale social mobility of agricultural laborers emerged. With the implementation of the household contracted responsibility system with remuneration linked to output in rural areas, peasants obtained independent decision-making power in production and operation and hence they could choose their occupations more freely. The living condition of peasants has been greatly improved; however, they are still the group with the least rights.

The key for China to achieve industrialization and urbanization is to change the employment structure by adjusting industrial structure and hence pushing the agricultural

population to shift to non-agricultural population. In 1997, the proportion of the labor force in the primary industrial structure dropped to less than 50 percent for the first time in Chinese history according to Chinese official statistics; since then, this proportion has still remained around 50 percent in the following years. Such a tendency indicates that, in a country with such a huge agricultural population, it is an extremely difficult task to reduce the proportion of agricultural laborers in employment in the process of economic development. At present, the proportion of agricultural population is still too high, even higher than that of Iran and North Korea (see Table 6-1), and is significantly disproportionate to the level of economic development in China.

Table 6-1: Proportions of the Agricultural Population

	Unit: %				
Year	1990	1998	1999	2000	2001
World Totals	46.4	43.2	42.8	42.4	42.0
Asia	58.9	54.0	53.4	52.9	52.4
China	71.9	67.7	67.1	66.6	66.0
Bengal	65.2	57.6	56.6	55.6	54.7
Burma	73.3	70.8	70.5	70.2	69.9
India	58.2	54.6	54.1	53.7	53.2
Indonesia	50.9	45.4	44.8	44.1	43.4
Iran	32.1	27.4	26.9	26.4	25.9
Japan	7.0	4.4	4.1	3.9	3.6
Kazakhstan	--	20.6	20.2	19.8	19.3
North Korea	38.0	31.6	30.9	30.1	29.4
South Korea	16.1	10.0	9.3	8.8	8.2
Malaysia	26.0	19.2	18.4	17.7	17.0
Mongolia	32.0	25.7	25.0	24.3	23.6
Pakistan	55.5	51.8	51.4	50.9	50.4
Philippines	45.6	40.6	40.0	39.3	38.7
Singapore	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Thailand	56.9	50.6	49.8	49.0	48.2
Vietnam	71.2	68.1	67.7	67.3	66.9

Source: Statistics from the Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations.

The main cause of low mobility rate for Chinese rural population is due to some institutional barriers in social mobility channels retained from the former planned economy (e.g., traditional residence registration system, employment system, personnel administration system, and social security system) and have blocked the upward social mobility towards higher social status.

In the progress of industrialization, marketization and urbanization in China, undoubtedly the number of agricultural laborers will continue to drop. The agricultural laborers

are the largest parent population of social differentiations and mobility. However, the problem lies in how to achieve social justice in this process and how to enable peasants engaged in crop farming to share the fruits of social development and protect their rights and interests. Otherwise, the accumulated feeling of unfairness among agricultural laborers will eventually intensify social conflicts.

According to previous studies, pro-high-level shift in occupational structure is a pervasive phenomenon in industrialized countries (Lu, 2004). High-level occupations increase and the proportion of low-level occupation gradually decline form a trend of upward mobility. The pro-high-level trend in occupational structure in China reflects a transformation from agricultural society, and a trend of an increase in non-agricultural employment and a decrease in farm employment. With the vast development of the tertiary industry and the fast expansion of the private sector outside the planned economy system, Chinese peasants have obtained more opportunities of upward mobility. Millions of peasants are employed by the private sector, and thousands of self-employed persons and private entrepreneurs emerge. Yet one of the highest levels of such upward mobility for rural youth is to go to the city as college students and then find a suitable and stable job with certificates of higher education.

Thirdly, more flexible social mobility implicates that Chinese society has been moving toward an open society, yet the modern social mobility mechanism has not been formed completely. In a closed society, the rule of ascription is the principal social mobility rule, whereas in an open society, the rule of achievement is the leading rule of social mobility. The freer the social mobility is and the higher the rate of social mobility is, the more active the members of each social stratum, especially in middle and lower strata, perform in society.

Before 1978, political campaigns followed one after another in China and its economic situations and social policies became extremely volatile. The attainment and change of social status were determined by institutions and policies of those times. Individuals, families, and even a certain stratum were not able to control their own destinies, and the rate of social mobility was extremely low. However, after more than twenty years of reform and opening-up, China now has a higher mobility rate, the social vigor has been strengthened dramatically, and new strata such as private entrepreneurs and peasant workers have emerged. At present, for the majority of social members, the future of their careers is determined by individual efforts rather than by governmental assignments. It shows that social mobility mechanisms have been diversified and mobility channels widened. The whole society becomes increasingly open and the rule of achievement has been the leading social mobility rule.

The old mechanism and the new one co-exist in the pattern of social mobility in contemporary China. On one hand, some important achievement factors such as education have had an increasingly significant influence on individual status attainment. Performance or competence has become more and more important for socio-economic status attainment as well. All these changes show that a modern social mobility pattern has been in the process of formation. On the other hand, the influence of institution has policy on social mobility is still visible, sometimes even crucial. Unreasonable and unfair

institutionalized discrimination still exists in the Chinese society. Some institutional barriers to social mobility left by the planned economy system, such as the residence registration system, the personnel administration system, and the employment system, etc., still work and are out of agenda of reform. These institutional arrangements have resulted in unfair distribution of social mobility opportunity among social members and fettered the further development of national economy.

In other words, the modern social mobility mechanism featuring justice, reasonableness and openness has not yet been completely formed. Children with origins in lower socio-economic positions have encountered more difficulties when they made an effort to rise to higher strata. Hence, one of the reasons of why the population of agricultural laborers so large in contemporary China, and why it is so hard for talented rural students to go to college is because of some existing institutional barriers in social mobility channel retained from the former planned economy (e.g., household registration system, employment system and social security system) still have great influence on blocking the upward social mobility towards higher social status. Obviously, with such social structure, the process of modernization of Chinese economy will encounter serious difficulties; even though it developed in a certain degree, it would be unstable even with the danger of depression.

Fourthly, the all-around progress in the rural society should be paid more attention. The issue of disadvantaged people's livelihood is always a topic to which a society advocating equity and justice must pay more attention. The polarization of urban and rural worlds is more and more prominent, and the difference of educational attainment and occupational standing between rural and urban Chinese is just an epitome of the high-level urban-rural inequality in the contemporary China. The key to build a well-off society in an all-around way lies in the countryside and the future of agricultural laborers is the most difficulty issue to deal with. Urbanization in China should not be at the cost of destitution in rural areas and the sacrifice of peasants' legal rights and interest.

Furthermore, thousand of millions of peasant-workers are working in the city without enjoying corresponding urban residents' rights and interests. The employment policies implementing in some metropolises restrict the eligible employment scope of peasant-workers within the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Wages standards and labor protection of peasant-workers are lacking protection from the law.

Peasants made immense contributions to the development of China but were exploited and infringed upon. Although the national economy has developed rapidly, the scissors gap between the prices of industrial products and agricultural products, the rural-urban divide, and the gap among regions have not been reduced but continuously widening. If various benefits enjoyed by urban residents were added, the gap should be wider. Furthermore, the gap among regions has expanded year after year. Over the past two decades, rural areas in western and middle China have not thrived through developing village-owned or private enterprises as in the coastal regions. With the widening income disparity between the urbanites and peasants and among regions, some people worry that there is a real danger that large-scale social unrest might ensue threatening the

nation's stability as had happened in the Chinese history.

In contemporary China, more people find that upward mobility is possible as long as they can try their best to fight for it. Accordingly, such hope and confidence will reduce social conflicts through generating a more positive social identification. Motivated by hopes, they may move upward to a higher social status through the rule of achievement, i.e., higher educational attainment. Objectively, social mobility can push the development of social production and realize the positive mutual-stimulative interaction between the evolutions of economic structure and social structure (Lu, 2004). This may explain the following seemingly confusing phenomenon in today's China: widening gaps between urban and rural areas and among western and eastern regions, large numbers of unemployment, and serious polarization of rich and poor, all these issues, from certain point of view, could not be tolerated any more.

Balanced development in urban and rural areas requires coordination between the interests of the urban population and peasants; especially, the legal and educational rights of agricultural laborers should be given more considerations. Favorable conditions that can facilitate the transfer of peasants from agricultural labor to non-agricultural labor should be created. The rural educational system should be transformed, rural educational costs should be lowered, and hence quality of the rural labor force would be improved.

Fifthly, the educated unemployment is a serious social problem, and it may lead to the youth and their families' feeling of pessimism and individual anomie. People tend to resort to deviance if they feel their means are blocked for their achievement level they believe they can attain after great efforts and costs.

Education is as an investment in human capital, and the optimal amount of education is chosen so as to maximize lifetime earnings or more generally utility. A higher level of education entails costs in the short run, but is expected to be associated with a higher level of life-cycle earnings. How educational attainment is "rewarded" or "valued" by the labor market is also important. Though the education system does not have as sole mission to endow pupils with skills that will enable them to be successful in the labor market, this is nevertheless one of its essential tasks.

After 15 or more years of hard reading, spending all their families' savings, and even borrowing great debts, more and more rural-origin college students found out that they could not find a stable job to afford themselves in the cities. Then they might feel deprived of any upward mobility the past and see no hope in their future, they would certainly be frustrated and feel resented about the system. Once they had a cynical view of the social opportunity structure, they might have doubts over government's capability to handle the problems that emerge during the system transition as well as an apathetic attitude towards life and things in general.

In response to the job crunch, the government is cutting back on university enrollment growth to 5 percent annually. But the demand for university spots won't stop growing and the government will find it increasingly difficult to maintain a "harmonious society." More choices should be laid, for example, vocational training should be paid more

attention by the government.

German pupils are streamed into different types of secondary schools according to their learning ability at a very early stage in their educational career, at the end of primary schooling. Following full-time compulsory education, most young people pursue vocational education and training courses. The vocational school in Germany (*Berufsschule*) provides pupils with general and vocational education, paying special attention to meet the requirements of vocational training. Pupils successfully passing the final examination receive a leaving certificate which proves that they have achieved the objectives of the dual training both in the workplace and at the *Berufsschule*. This certificate entitles them to admission to advanced vocational training, for example at a technical college (*Fachschule*), or enables them to work immediately as a qualified employee or worker in one of the many state-recognized occupations for which formal training is required.

Not everyone is destined to be a successful professional or government official, and students will need to be filtered at an earlier age to vocational training, similar to the education system in Germany.

Sixthly, because only a very small percentage of rural students who are highly talented and persistent are able to go to college, and they endure various economic and institutional barriers, so they tend to be tougher, more mature and sophisticated than their urban-origin classmates. If they seize suitable chance in core institutional sectors, they are more likely to become successful later in life and become the political elite of the society. According to statistics, among current state and social administrator, about 46.2 percent came from the family of peasants (Lu, 2004). But we also see in them a personality conflict for institutional arrangements, and that might influence their later life and even the nation's future, if part of them were promoted from normal cadres to key leaders.

In conclusion, the growing gap in income distribution and educational attainment between the urban and the rural should receive more attention. Only if the quality of the rural labor force is improved can the surplus rural labor force achieve transfer effectively. And only when the cost of education decreased, peasants would receive equal educational chance with urban residents. The content of education should be reformed and more efforts should be made in improving the educational facilities, especially in the middle and western China. If the issue of peasants' education cannot be solved, the quality of the rural labor force will not be improved and hence they will be unable to meet diverse requirements in employment; in consequence, the transfer of the surplus rural labor force will be hampered and eventually various socio-economic issues related to agriculture, rural areas, and peasants cannot be solved. The rural educational system must be transformed to provide the same opportunities to rural students as are available in urban areas.

There is a need for long-term investment in education, which will improve the living standards of the disadvantage in the long run. Intellectual opportunities must be made available to all and such opportunities should include educational efforts that foster personal initiative and adaptability. Otherwise, the Chinese people will face a future of increasing inequality in the distribution of wealth and in access to opportunities for

social mobility. The vast inequality of education in China could also seriously affect the future of both economic and political development in the society as well as the stability of the country.

Though China has made impressive achievements in economic growth and poverty reduction, it faces daunting internal challenges such as ensuring employment to millions over the coming decade, continuing to maintain high growth, increasing its international competitiveness, and reducing income and regional inequalities. The barriers between low-level and high-level strata are consolidated.

Chinese rural population meets so many institutional barriers in social mobility channels proves that the modern social mobility mechanism featuring justness, reasonableness and openness has not yet been formed in China. It is impossible to find a solution for the conflict of interests between the urban and rural areas in the planned economy framework that divides people into urban and rural residents. It is urgent to abolish such a dual system thoroughly and make an overall plan on urban and rural development. Theoretically, study of blocked upward social mobility of Chinese peasantry elite will make some academic contributions to the field of sociology.

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Appendix I: Case Studies & Questionnaire

Interviews for higher educational attainment history and job application process of contemporary rural-origin Chinese, investigated by Zhu Dai in 2007 in Beijing.

1. Guo, Qi

Gender : Female

Born in : some village of Datong area, Shanxi Province, China

Siblings : two younger sisters, and one younger brother

Highest Education : Mater of Arts

Educational Hhistory:

Sociology Department, Renmin University, Beijing (Sept. 05- Jul. 07)

Sociology Department, Shaanxi Normal University, Xia'an City of Shaanxi Province (Sept. 00- Jul. 04)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family.

A: I was born in some village of Datong area, Shanxi Province of western China. After learning for 5 years in a local primary school, my whole family moved to county, so I transferred to the primary school of the county. But we still possessed agricultural *hukou*. My hometown is an economic backward area with agriculture as its main industry. Most peasants plant vegetables for living. My family still has some field in village, but since we don't live there any more, the field is rented to others. Then we rent a field of 2 *mu* (Chinese unit of area, $1mu \approx 666.7m^2$) in the outskirts of county, just to plant some corn and potato for the family.

Q: I would also like to know the economic condition of your family, the graduation of your parents, and the number of your household.

A: My father has done many kinds of jobs, like taxi driver, butcher shop owner, and hardwareman. But he's not a successful businessman, and he now works in a construction site as carpenter. My mother also raises pig in our courtyard. My father has received a complete secondary education. But he was in a troublous era when a political recommendation was required for go to college, so he didn't go to college and remained in countryside. He is the youngest and most knowledgeable one among his siblings. My mother didn't finish primary education. The father of my mother is the accountant of his village, so the economic condition of my mother's family was not bad. But my grandfather was very old-fashioned and paid no attention to daughters' education. So my mother dropped out at the forth grade of primary school, to look after her brothers. But she likes talking about her story in school, and she says she was an outstanding pupil. I have seen her diplomas of schooling merit in my grandma's home. She still feels bitter for dropping out off school forced by her father, when he could afford her to go to school. She said to me, sometimes she still made dreams of reading in school. Though my mother's education is low, I admire her because she is a wise and capable woman.

Q: Did your parents' educational experience influence you?

A: It should, especially my mother's experience. My father is very kind and nice, and he would do anything for us. But it is my mother who is in charge of kid education in my family. I

used to be a naughty child, so my mother asked my teacher to place me in the first row of classroom and to be supervised by teacher more conveniently. My mother would accompany me with homework doing when I was in primary school, to make sure I did every piece of work right and efficiently. My mama was really strict in children education.

Q: How are other parents in your county? Do they pay so much attention to children's study as your parents do?

A: I don't think so. Because my mother has no chance to fulfill her school dream, so she attaches great importance to children's education. She might not approve us to buy new clothes, but she would never say "No" to our request of book purchasing. My academic marks were not outstanding in junior middle school, and my mother had never dreamed that I would go to college someday, but she kept encouraging and supporting me. In my junior middle school, usually only the top ten students could be enrolled by the key senior middle school, and I was just among the top 30. In fact I failed in the test of going to key senior middle school. My marks are 2 points lower than its enrollment line, and I had to pay thousands of *yuan* to the school for matriculation, otherwise I would go to No. 4 Middle School. That was a poor-quality middle school in my county, and almost none of its graduate could enter college. At that time, technical secondary school was in fashion, since its students could learn some skill and be ensured with a steady job after graduation. Many top students went to technical secondary school, including a girl who is a relative of me. So I took her name and her matriculation letter, and registered in the key senior middle school. I kept using her name for half a year, until the school began to build archives for all students. It was a suffering period for being called with other's name, which made me a studious student. I have begun learning studious since then, and my marks have become better and better. After a year, I was already among the top 50 of the whole grade. In the second year, all students have to choose between the fields of arts and sciences³⁹. My mathematics teacher who was in charge of my class was very snobbish. When I wanted to change my own name back, I gave him a gift which he thought was not valuable enough, so he turned me in to the Principle. It was lucky for me that the Principle just made a talk with me kindly and then let me keep reading in the school. But that teacher kept giving me supercilious look in class, and such bad teacher I have never met in other condition. I decided to become a student of arts in the second grade, just in order to get away from this teacher. But unfortunately he was still in charge of my class and he kept creating difficulties for me. When he called every student to go forward and do mathematic problems on blackboard, I was the only one student that he would ignore. At the end of semester, it was his duty to write comments for each student in a letter for parents, but he never wrote mine. So I studied really hard in those years, in order to not let him look down upon me. He taught us mathematics, so I put much energy in mathematics learning, but I have never asked one mathproblem to him. My marks turned better and better. There were 11 times of exams for the preparation of National College Entrance Exam in the third year, I was always the top 1 or 2 of the whole grade. Since I have begun studying voluntarily hard, my mother supervised my learning no more. But she was very strict with my learning when I was younger. For example, she would not let me go outside to play with other friends at weekends but read books at home instead, and she required me to

³⁹In China, there are two sets of examination papers in National College Entrance Exam for students of arts and of sciences separately. Usually they all have to participate in the exams of English, Chinese and Mathematics. Besides that, students of arts would also exam for History and Geography, while students of sciences for Chemistry and Physics. In most senior middle school of China, students would choose between the fields of arts and sciences at the beginning of the second grade.

keep reading till 10 O'clock each day. But she stopped such strict supervision when I began studying studiously and voluntarily in senior middle school.

Q: Did you make the choice by yourself when you were applying for college?

A: Yes, Shaanxi Normal University was my first choice and I got enrolled successfully. I am a little superstitious and believe in fortuneteller. One of my relatives is a fortuneteller, and he said I should go to the Southwest where would offer me a decent job. Then I looked in the map, and found Taiyuan City of Shanxi Province, Xi'an City of Shaanxi Province, and Chongqing City of chuan Province are all in the southwest direction to my hometown. Though I was born in Shanxi Province, I don't like it. I preferred Xi'an City, for I have read a novle about the life there and thought people there were very nice and honest. There are not many key universities in Xi'an, just Xi'an Jiaotong University, Shaanxi Normal University and Northwestern University. The first one is famous for scientific fields; though both the last two are universities of arts, the tuition of Shaanxi Normal University is lower, so I decided to apply for it. As for major, my first choice was Journalism, and Sociology came as the second. I had no idea of what Sociology was about at that time, and I thought it should be an all-around field of society study. But after being allocated to Sociology Department, I fell in love with this major. Now when I enter job interviews, they sometimes ask why I chose to study in Sociology, and I answer "I like it".

Q: How was your life in Shaanxi Normal University? Did you study hard still?

A: Yes, but I also involved in many social activities and the trial of new things. As a freshman, I felt depressed on campus, so I attended no social activities. I used to be the best students in senior middle school, but I suddenly realized I was good at nothing in university, so I felt lost.

Q: You felt lost in university, because of your agricultural-origin or because of your academic achievement?

A: Neither, due to lack of capability. For example, I got very nervous when I stood in front of people to deliver speech and I could hardly express myself clearly. So I failed in the monitor competition of my class in the first time. After that failure, I kept pondering what the purpose and meaning of life were. I began reading philosophical books, and the course of Social Psychology illuminated me. The professor of that course told us, that when we were scared of something, we should keep trying for it till the fear got away. So I forced myself to make speeches in the public, and it did work. Because my academic marks were good in the first year, and my capability has been improved, I wan the monitor competition of my class in the second year, and I also wan my self-confidence back. I worked as monitor till graduation, and I did lots of works and organized many activities for my class. My marks also became better since the second grade, and then I wan scholarships each year. But the scholarship of my university is not very high: the first-level one is to give 500 *yuan* to the best student of each class at each semester, the second-level is 250 *yuan*, and 100 *yuan* for the third-level. I was awarded with national second-level scholarship in the fourth grade, and that was high.

Q: So you have won many scholarships. But have you ever loaned money for tuition or apply to university for tuition shelter, concerning the backward economic condition of your family?

A: The national scholarship that I was awarded in the fourth grade includes tuition shelter for one year. Besides that, in the third grade I borrowed a load from China Construction Bank which was especially designed for poor university students with outstanding achievement.

Q: How much was your tuition for each academic year in your undergraduate university? And was that a big economic burden to your family?

A: That was 3500 *yuan*, and it meant a lot to my family. My parents have to raise 4 children, me, my two younger sisters and my little brother. I am the oldest, and others are all in school. So the educational expenditure of my family is huge.

Q: If the first-born child is a daughter, it is very normal that rural parents would let her drop out of school at early age to look after younger siblings and help parents with housework, isn't it?

A: Yes, but my parents don't have such thought. They still hold many traditional or old-fashioned concepts, like there must be a boy to carry the family tree. But as for education, they treat us equally. My mother wishes all of us could go to college, since she thinks it is a good way out of countryside, so she keeps affording us. None of my brothers and sisters drops out of school until now. My first younger sister is in Dongbei Normal University, my second younger sister is in the first grade of senior middle school, and my kid brother is just a fourth-grade-pupil. When I was in undergraduate university, my family was really uptight, since we just built our own house in county. It is not easy for a peasant like my father who just moved from countryside to own a house in county, and we borrowed loans for house construction. They had thought my marks were not good enough in middle school and I could not go to college, but my marks became better and better, so they made their best to afford me in school. My parents had to borrowed more loans to pay my tuition for first and second university year. In the later two years in university, I supported myself by myself, through winning scholarship, doing part-time jobs and borrow the loan which was designed for academically outstanding but economically poor university student from Bank.

Q: What kind of part-time jobs did your do?

A: Mainly as family tutor. At first I looked for such kind of jobs by myself, but I stopped it after being deceived once. Later my professor voluntarily recommended me to a family as tutor. I did a pretty good job, so the family's relatives asked me to be their children's tutor also. The consumption standard is low in Xi'an City. I could earn about 1000 *yuan* in each semester as tutor at that time, and it was enough as my allowance.

Q: Your family borrowed loans for your higher education, so when you were thinking about future plan in senior year, have you considered your family economic condition?

A: Yes. I had been recommended for admission to the graduate school of my university at public expense. But I gave it up, because I wanted to go to Remin University of Beijing for graduate study. I have considered the condition of my family, but I thought going to a better university could help me with a better-paid job finding. My professor also encouraged me and told to me think in long term. He said that I would definitely find a better-paid job with a Master Degree honored by a prestigious university, and then I could pay all debts in a few years. The main reason for me to apply for other university was that my undergraduate university lacked qualified teachers. None of its teachers have received regular professional training in sociology, and all of them switch to this major late in life. So after checking information of all famous universities, I chose Remin University as my target and started my preparation for Graduate Candidate Test. I just prepared two months for my first trial of the Test, and I failed in English exam. Normally my English is good, but I was too nervous to sleep before the test day. I took English exam at the afternoon when I felt really sleepy. At first I didn't believe in the result, and went to check exam paper. I found I got very low points for my English essay writing. I had tried to apply for a special interview, since I just lack several points. But it didn't work

out. I felt rather confused at that time, for not knowing how to deal with it. Should I keep applying for Graduate Candidate Test in the next year, or should I drop the study plan and find a job directly? What I actually want was still to pursue graduate study, and Shaanxi Normal University could still matriculate me, but as a graduate student at my own expenses. My mother persuaded me to stay in Shaanxi Normal University for graduate study, since she was afraid that I would have too much pressure if I entered for the Graduate Candidate Text again. I would not reconcile myself to such a result and pay 18,000 *yuan* for a quota which I had had got for free. The chief of Sociology Apartment of Shaanxi Normal University was very nice to me, and he offered me a graduate student position at public expense majoring in Administration and Management in Northwest University of Political & Law of Xi'an City. But that is not a key university as Shaanxi Normal University, and I could not reconcile myself to it, too. That nice chief also recommended me to several working units, like Academy of Social Sciences of Shaanxi Province, and the Medical College of Gansu Province. I pondered for a long period, and consulted for suggestion everywhere, but they all asked me to weigh the alternatives by myself. Finally I decided to wait for another year and apply for Remin University again. I stayed in Xi'an city for another half a year after graduation to prepare for my second trial of Graduate Candidate Test, and I kept working as tutor during this period. I came through it and came to Remin University as graduate student at public expense at September 2005.

Q: How do you feel about graduate study?

A: I have become less studious. There are plenty of entices to keep me away from books. In Beijing I was always busy, without knowing I was handling at hand. Now the period of graduate study has shortened from 3 years to 2 years, and time is really tense for us. We have to accomplish all gradate courses in the first year, with taking 11 courses in the first semester and 8 courses in the second semester. The main task for us in the second years is thesis writing which is really tough. Besides these, I have worked as assistant to my professor to analyze some data and do some translation. In the last summer holiday, I participated in a project of some consultation company in Beijing and earned some salary. Now I could raise myself completely.

Q: Do you want to keep studying for Doctor Degree?

A: The two-year-long graduate study passed quickly. It seems I haven't found any new interest in it. I think only people with some mature idea of a certain field would pursue for PhD study, so they would have some direction. Besides, I have to consider my family condition too. Now all my sisters and brother are in school. If I keep reading and earn no salary to help my parents with their education, I would feel guilty and could not focus on study. Maybe I would continue my study later, when I have less economic pressure and have found my research direction in sociology. Moreover, I felt little tired of reading now.

Q: What kind of job do you want? And are salary and *hukou* quota important to you?

A: I want to find a job in state-own institutes or academies. I don't want to work in enterprises, because I think there is lots of pressure there. I am very traditional and think women should pursue some less-strained job in order to well tend their families. I hope for a *hukou* of Beijing which would give me a sense of belonging here. But the development potential of a job is more important than *hukou* for me. But the most important is that it should be a job that I am interested in. As for salary, I just expect a moderate one. My mama used to say that, "You don't need earn much, just enough to pay all debts in a few years." Compared with salary, *hukou* is more important to me in job application, because my boyfriend don't have *hukou* of Beijing,

and it is better that one of us could possess it and so we could have a more stable life here.

Q: Do you want to stay in Beijing as your boyfriend's account?

A: No. I like Beijing. I have thought about other cities, but I prefer northern cities. I don't like the South, while I think that southern people are stingy and scheming. I choose Beijing, firstly because it is not far away from my parents and I could pay regular visit to them if I stay here. Secondly, it is a city with rich information and many international academic activities, where I can know the most advanced trends in sociology. Thirdly, I enjoy the sunshine here. I had thought about going back to Xi'an City to work in Shaanxi Normal University, but it is not as developed as Beijing.

Q: Why do you enter for the Civil Servant Candidate Test of Beijing then?

A: Due to my own will. Furthermore all my classmates have taken it. It is very important for us to find a job in state-own institutes. I have also attended the National Civil Servant Candidate Test, but it is not a qualification test as Beijing's and its employment ratio is very low. I failed in the national one, but I have got the qualification to be a civil servant in Beijing.

Q: Do you want to work in government office?

A: Yes, I do. When I was a little girl, I dreamed to be the head of a county. I followed my father in his vegetable-selling trip and went to some surrounding areas of my county, when I was in primary school. People there had a bitter life. They even had no drinkable water, but had to drink rain water or groundwater which was contained in holes dug in ground. I longed to do something for them when I grew up some day. I chose to study in sociology, also because I want to improve the society. Moreover, I like doing volunteer jobs. I might not earn much in government office, but it's worthy it. For the same reason, I don't want to work in enterprises, since I think their culture carries the stink of money.

Q: Are you afraid of the complex relations among colleagues in government office and state-own institute? Furthermore, you might not be able to practice the knowledge you learned in university in such working units.

A: What we should learn in university is not only knowledge, but more important a thinking method. Actually students of sociology adapt to working in those kinds of working units. The relations among colleagues will be complicated in government office or state-own institute, but I can learn the method of dealing with it in later life.

Q: Do your parents also desire you to work in state-own institutes?

A: They surely do, because they think it is very stable. My boyfriend works for a foreign investment company, which is an instable job in my mama's eyes. At the present, I would try to find a job in Beijing; otherwise my boyfriend is willing to follow me to other cities. But I could not let him do that. He is a software engineer. How could he find a suitable job in an undeveloped city?

Q: Have you got any feedback of your job application?

A: None, so do my other classmates. Sociology is not a popular field in job market, and female students are in more disadvantaged position in job application than males. The condition of job market of this year is very tough. I have send hundreds of resumes with no response at all. Sometimes I believe I am the right person for a job vacancy, I turn in my resume and tell them my virtues, but they pay no attention to me. I cannot tell what kind of employee they are looking for and what is the requirement. Somebody says background is very impor-

tant for job hunting in Beijing, since everything is related to human relations here. But as a student with no background, the only thing I could do is to depend on myself and wait for chance.

2. Yuan, Xiuxia

Gender : Female

Born in : some village of Datong area, Shanxi Province, China

Siblings : one elder brother and one younger brother

Highest education : Mater of Arts (in Inorganic Nonmetallic Material)

Educational history:

Material Department, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou City of Guangdong Province (Sept. 04- Jul. 07)

Material Department, Shijiazhuang Railway Institute, Shijiazhuang City of Hebei Province (Sept. 00- Jul. 04)

Q: First of all, I would like to know some information of your village.

A: It is a lagging village. Most families plant rice and corn. Sometimes some family would raise a pig for sale, but as a whole it has a self-support and autarkic economy.

Q: How much could the average family earn each year? Are there many people who go outside to do odd jobs?

A: The comparatively wealthy families could earn more than 10,000 *yuan* each year, while the poor get only thousands of *yuan* annually. Some youth of early 20s would go out to learn some skill, but at about 30 years old they would go back home for marriage and then remain at home. Many people believe in an old saying: "The wonderful outside is never as good as poor home". They would rather stay at ruined home, than struggle in outside world. My village people are very old-fashioned.

Q: Are your parents old-fashioned, too?

A: They are different, and they want us to go out. No matter how difficult the life is, they would afford us to school, even if that means they have to live in debts. Both my parents have received little education, but they sincerely hope we could stand out among counterparts through education.

Q: How many siblings do you have? And how much education have they received?

A: My parents have three children, my elder brother, me, and my younger brother. I am the only college student in my village, since it is an economic backward and very old-fashioned village. My elder brother has got married, and is running a repair store in the village. He just finished senior middle school and didn't go to college. Formerly my mother had big hope on him, since he was a clever boy. But influenced by other children of my village, he didn't study hard, but play around with them all day. So he didn't go to college. As for my younger brother, he is reading in senior middle school now, but his marks are not very good. If he could be enrolled by any university, my parents would definitely afford him.

Q: The government has just announced that since this year, college students of normal school need not pay tuition any more. Will your younger brother apply for one normal school?

A: Money is no longer the problem. Both my elder brother and I have finished schooling, so we

could help him. The key is to go to a high-quality university, because there are too many fresh graduates each year, and only those from good schools could find decent job.

Q: Were you a studious student in middle school?

A: Yes, ever since I began schooling. I went to the best senior middle school of my county, which was very strict boarding school. Everyday we were required to get up at 5: 40 o'clock, do exercises from 6:10 o'clock, study by ourselves in classroom from 6: 20 to 7: 40 o'clock, and then it was breakfast time. We began taking formal classes from 8 o'clock for a full day. The classroom building would be locked up at 22:30 o'clock, until then would we leave classroom and went to dormitory. Then I would read some books in bed till almost midnight. As a juvenile, I had much energy and slept little at that time.

Q: Why did you study so hard? Why did you long for college?

A: I wanted to let my parents be proud of me. Besides, I saw in TV that outside world was so exciting, and universities seemed holy. After I have seen difference between rural and urban world, I was eager to change my status through my own efforts. I wished that I could go to cities for higher education, to prove that I was as good as any others.

Q: Have your parents ever thought that you would marry and become member of other family sooner or later, so it was a waste to afford you to school, especially when the educational fund of your family was scarce?

A: Many of my village people have this thought. When the enrollment letter was sent to my family which showed that I needed thousands of *yuan* annually for higher education, they warned my mother that it was a waste. But my mother thought differently. She said, "I would afford all my children to whichever school they could go to, no matter boy or girl." Since I was a kid, my mother has encouraged me to study, and told me I could do as well as boys in anything I wanted.

Q: However, other families of your village would prefer boys to girls for education especially when recourses are insufficient. Is that right?

A: Yes, it is very common. When both my elder brother and I were reading in the boarding senior middle school, the economic condition of my family was very uptight, and my parents were thrifty with every penny. But they never mentioned to let me drop out, and let my brother remain at school, due to lack of money. The only thing they told me was to catch every chance and devote myself to reading, and they would do their best to afford me, even with borrowed money. They said, "Reading is your only way out, and you have to go for it with all your efforts. We are people of nothing, but we would afford you with everything we have." My parents have different ideas form other village people. Due to their encouragement I became the first college student of my village at seven years ago. And I am still the only one. Pretty soon will I finish my graduate study, and I will certainly become the first Master of my village history. People of my village pay little attention to children's education, and let them do whatever they want. Without supervision, children would play around everyday and lose interest in study gradually. Most such children would drop out off school at early age, and their parents would blame children instead of themselves. They would say, "He is clever enough, and unable to keep reading. I have nothing to do with it." Fortunately, my parents took much responsibility in cultivating us. They would build an environment for reading at home, and urge us to finish housework on time. Without such supervision, it is easy for a rural child of backward village to indulge in pleasure and lose ambition gradually.

Q: How much was the tuition fee of your senior middle school?

A: It was not expensive, just about one thousand *yuan* each year. Plus boarding and food charges, I needed about 1500 *yuan* . When my elder brother and I were both in the same boarding senior middle school, my parents spent 6000 to 7000 *yuan* each year for us. When I went home from school at weekends, I could obviously feel that my parents became more tight-handed at each penny. Therefore I have also spent each penny prudently since junior middle school till now.

Q: How much did you spend annually in college?

A: The tuition and boarding charges were 4,000 *yuan* for each academic year, so it was 16,000 *yuan* in total for four college years. Besides this amount of money, I only took another 4,000 *yuan* from home, because I lived very economically on campus. Plus, I have won some scholarship, and also some many part-time jobs.

Q: You were enrolled by college in your first trial of National College Entrance Exam, weren't you? By which college?

A: Yes, in year 2000 by Shijiazhuang Railway Institute of Hebei Province. I studied in inorganic nonmetallic material

Q: Why did you choose this major?

A: It was a question related to the information occlusion of countryside. In my village, no one had knowledge of neither college nor its majors, so I was blind-minded in filling college application form. After answers of National College Entrance Exam were published, I estimated my marks according to it. However, I didn't know how much marks could go to which university, so I filled the application form without any reference. My first choice was a very famous university, but actually my marks were much lower than its enrollment line. Therefore I was finally allocated to Shijiazhuang Railway Institute which was not in my application form at all. It was not what I intended to go, and actually I find out that students of my major were hard to find jobs. If I could find somebody to consult for college application information at that time, it might be a different story for me now.

Q: When you received the enrollment letter from Shijiazhuang Railway Institute, which was not your choice at all, and its annual tuition was extremely expensive for your family, what did your parents say? Did they still encourage you to go?

A: My parents said it was up to me. If I wanted to go, they would give me money. If I wanted to try once again at next year, they would agree, too. At first, I planned to try again at the next year, so I could go to a better college. But my teacher told me I should go, because if I graduated one year later the job market might become worse, besides I could move to a better college or change my major through graduate study pursuing. Moreover, none of my classmates wanted to try again for the National College Entrance Exam, and all of them would leave the county and go to cities for higher education. Therefore I decided to go, too.

Q: How was your college life in Shijiazhuang City? Did you like your major?

A: I didn't like it, but I studied as hard as in senior middle school anyway. I slept little, and kept studying all the time in classroom. Every year I was honored with first-level or second-level scholarship. Only the top one student of class was entitled with first-level scholarship, and the following four students could receive second-level one.

Q: How much money did you take from home, when you first left home for college? And where

did it come from?

A: My parents gave me 6,000 *yuan*. It includes my parents' saving and some borrowed money. To pay tuition, boarding charges, and various fees, I spent about 5,000 *yuan* in freshman registration. The living standard of Shijiazhuang City was low, and I very a sparing girl, so I didn't need much allowance.

Q: In city, there must be some urban student who spent wastefully. How did you feel about that?

A: Yes. Some of my girl students went shopping regularly, and all their clothes, bags, and shoes were expensive. I thought that was too extravagant. As a girl of early twenties, I only bought one or two new clothes each year, and none of them were worthy over 100 *yuan*. But I never felt self-contempt due to that. My mind was still as simple as in middle school. The only thing I paid attention to was academic marks in school.

Q: When did you begin thinking about next step after college?

A: Job finding was not a problem for graduates of my college, since it was built by Chinese Central Ministry of Railway and all its graduates would be allocated to related bureaus. My teacher used to say, "Once you entered this school, you need no worry about future job at all." Therefore, I paid little attention to the outside world, and only focused in studying. The institute was small-sized, and I could only reach Internet in its library. So though I went to city for higher education, my knowledge of the outside world was very limited still.

Q: Didn't your urban classmates share you information of the urban life?

A: Yes, I went quite well with them. But none of them were from big cities like Beijing and Shanghai. All of them came from nearby small cities, and they were as pure and naive as me, too.

Q: When did you decide to pursue graduate study?

A: It was a fashion, and all students are thinking about it. Though I have decided to enter for Graduate Candidate Test, I have also looked a job as plan B. But graduates of my institute need not attend job fairs, for working units would come to ask for graduates continuously. My school is a college of engineering sciences, so boy students have advantages in job hunting. But because my marks were outstanding, so an overbridge company of Wuxi City agreed to employ me smoothly. This overbridge company comes to the institute to ask for graduates each year.

Q: Have you participated in activities of Students Union? Have you been a cadre of your class?

A: Yes. But my thought at that time was to put 95 per cent of my energy in studying, and put just 5 per cent in other activities. Therefore I didn't try my best in those activities. I spend little time in communicating with the society.

Q: Did you do part-time jobs?

A: Yes, but all on campus, such as working in dining hall or doing cleaning in classroom buildings. My teacher helped me find such jobs on campus. Shijiazhuang is not a blooming city, and there are few job chances. Because I could earn some salary on campus and received scholarships each year, I could almost raise myself.

Q: Could you apply for tuition shelter?

A: Yes, but the quota was extremely limited in my school. I failed in applying for it. My parents gave me the tuition and boarding charges annually.

Q: Was that a big amount of money for your family?

A: It was 4,000 *yuan* each year, and it was O.K for my family. When I went to college, my elder brother has begun earning some money, and my younger brother was still in junior middle school. There is not much spending in countryside, for rice and vegetables come from own field. My parents save all money for children's education.

Q: Since you have decided to pursue graduate study, which university would you like to go to?

A: I am born in the North, but I want to see the South. South China University of Technology locates in Guangzhou, a famous southern city, and also has material department. So I went there.

Q: How much is your tuition for graduate study?

A: I am a student at public expense. I only need 1500 *yuan* each year as boarding charges.

Q: Have you ever thought about beginning working and earning salary earlier, to eliminate your parents' burden?

A: No. All I wanted was to keep reading, and I would become a graduate student at public expense, so my parents would pay less money for me. My parents never suggested whether I should work or keep reading, they let me make decision at my own free will. During the first year in graduate school, I was still a studious and sparing student as I used to be. I was the top one student that year, and was honored with a first-level scholarship of 2000 *yuan*. My school locates in Guangzhou, a big and blooming city of southern China. Here I got into contact with the newest information, and I saw many classmates were earning money. So I began working as family tutor, too. Guangzhou students are different from my former classmates, and they spend much time in social activities, like doing practice in companies. Influenced by new environment, I went to work as family tutor, and my life began changing greatly, too. For example, when I was in undergraduate school, my monthly spending was about 150 *yuan*; it rose to about 300 *yuan* in my first year in graduate school; in the second year it turned into about 500 *yuan*. Now because I have come to Beijing to look for job, I would spend more than 1000 *yuan* each month. In the recent three years as I could earn more and more money, great changes have happened in my life, such as I have purchased mobile phone and notebook for myself. I would not spend all my scholarship and salaries, but I have saved certain amount of money each month for the job application process before graduation. Once I went to a big city, my view has been broadened and my thought has been changed. Besides, I have seen many of my urban classmates have certain strongpoint. For example, some is excellent at English, some has rich working experience, some possess special social relations, and some has published many papers. Yet I don't have any outstanding strongpoint. My marks are good, but not excellent enough.

Q: Are you a Party member?

A: I have become a Party member since the second year of my undergraduate study. Each semester, one applicator of my department could be taken in as Party member after careful assessment. Since only the best student could join the Party, and people said that graduates with Party membership were favor for working in some working units, therefore I tried for it.

Q: Since when have you come to Beijing to look for job?

A: My parents think Guangzhou City is too far away from home. Though this southern city has brought many changes to my life, I gradually found that I still like living in the North. Therefore I have always paid much attention to job information in Beijing, and I often communicate with

former classmates who are in Beijing now. I have been here for several months, and I am living at the dormitory of one old friend.

Q: Have you tried to find a job in Guangzhou?

A: Yes. In Guangzhou, a Japanese company of electronic products agreed to employ me. But I heard that Japanese company exploit Chinese employees' labor very much, and they would not let any Chinese get into contact with its key technology. Another job choice is in a real estate company of Shenzhen City. Both these two companies have offered me a monthly salary of 3000 to 4000 *yuan*, which is the average salary for fresh graduates in Guangdong Province. However, I want to find a job and stay in the North, and I long for a job with promising future. Salary is not the most important, and I want a position in which I could improve myself.

Q: Did you attend Civil Servant Candidate Test?

A: Yes, but I attached little hope to it. This Test of Beijing is for qualification, but in Guangzhou it is for post. You have to compete with many applicators for one position, so the successful rate is very small.

Q: Do you want to pursue doctor study?

A: I have always been a studious student. However in Guangzhou, people are only interested in money earning, and pay little attention in academic presuming. I had planned to attend doctor study at first, but gradually I lost interest in pursuing it. I know doctor study is very tough, I am afraid I am unable to finish it in several years. On the other side, I heard that job choices for people with Doctor Degree were fewer than ones with Master Degree. Doctors would go to research institute or university to do research, which I am not good at doing.

Q: What kind of job do you hunt in Beijing?

A: My former classmates who are in Beijing now told me that the *hukou* regulation of Beijing was extremely strict, but a *hukou* was very important for life. Right now I am waiting for the interview chance of an inspection center of China Building Materials Academy, and this center is in charge of construction material detecting. This center has the final authority to check whether certain kind of material is eligible for construction use. It is state-owned, and could endow me with a Beijing *hukou*. My professor of South China University of Technology has recommended me to this center, and I am waiting for its call for job interview. Beijing is a city full of capable persons. Without qualified recommendation, it is very hard for me to obtain such a chance. In Beijing, social relations are very helpful to find a decent job.

Q: Do you have other choice?

A: I might go to company, but few companies need graduates of my major. My university is well acknowledged in Guangzhou, so I could apply for any posts related to materials. But here in Beijing, it is much harder. For example, since my major is inorganic nonmetallic material, people would refuse me when the job vacancy is about metallic material. They would say, "We have received many resumes of graduates who major in metallic material, so we would not consider you at all." The competition here is too intense. When I went to a job fair, I would look around, and I found the student in front of me was from Tsinghua University, the one at left came from Xi'an Jiaotong University, and the one at right was graduated from Nankai University. My university is nothing compared with those most prestigious ones.

Q: How much would you earn if you were hired by the inspection center of China Building Materials Academy?

A: It should be around 2000 *yuan*, but it would be very stable, which will make me content. I used to be very ambitious, and believe I could achieve anything I wanted. However, my confidence has been almost destroyed in job application experience in Beijing. There are too many talented people here.

Q: Besides that inspection center, do you have any other job choice that could bestow a Beijing *hukou* on you?

A: No. If I could neither obtain a Beijing *hukou*, nor one post here could offer me high salary, I could go back to Guangzhou for working. *Hukou* is not a problem for living in Guangzhou, for it is not related to housing or children's education there. The only thing that matters for my Guangzhou students is salary, but not stability. They like short-period working contract, so they could jump to other company for better payment as soon as possible. One-year contract is the best. *Hukou* plays no significant role in people's living in Guangzhou. While my Beijing friends have totally different thought, and all of them want to work in a state-owned institutes for stable position. Without a *hukou* they said it was troublesome to stay in Beijing. It seems people of different areas have different point of view concerning employment, due to different regulations and economic development levels. In Guangzhou, no young people want to work in state-owned institutes, because of its poor payment.

Q: Do your parents have any suggestion for your job application?

A: They hope that I could find a stable job in Beijing, so I would be closer to them. They said, "You should try your best to find a job in Beijing. If it didn't work out anyway, you might go back to the South and work for several years. But once you get an opportunity, you should try to stay in Beijing."

3. Liu, Xinli (born in 1973, obtained Party membership in 1991)

Gender: Male

Born in : some village of Fancheng Town, Linying County, Henan Province, China

Siblings : two elder sisters and one elder brother

Highest education : Ph. D (of Scientific Socialism)

Educational History :

Philosophy Department, Graduate School, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing (Sept. 02- Jul. 07)

Administration & Social Work Department, Zhengzhou University, Henan Province (Sept. 91- Jul. 95)

Working Experience:

Office of village-level government, as clerk (1995 - 1999)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: My father has primary education and owns a repair store in town. Many people are engaged in trading business in my little town. Since late 1980s, some people of my county have been enrolled by colleges. I am the sixth to go to college. My father treats each child equally for education, and he supports us always. My mother just went to school for two years. My two elder sisters have finished junior middle school, but my elder brother doesn't like reading and

he just received primary education. When I was in college, the tuition is very cheap, only 200 *yuan* pro year.

Q: How is your town?

A: My town consists of 5 administrative districts with a population of more than 10,000. If its 32 administrative villages are counted too, its population is more than 60,000.

Q: When you became graduated from your undergraduate college, how did you hunt for job?

A: Many of my classmates found job in provincial or municipal government, but all of them have certain background. At that time, we all think government employee was a desirable job, while the economic condition of state-owned enterprises were very poor then, so nobody liked to work there. I'd like to be a civil servant and stayed in Zhengzhou City. But as a rural boy with no background, I had to go back and worked in village-level government. One reason for us to work for government is that it is stable; the other reason is to become a cadre some day. Clerks of higher level of government have greater chance to be promoted. It is very hard for a clerk of village-level government to be raised to higher level working units. I was not satisfied with my status, so I quit my job in year of 1999, and prepared to apply for Graduate Candidate Test. After twice trials, I was enrolled by Graduate School, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. And I came to Beijing.

Q: You will finish your doctor study this year. What kind of job would you like to take?

A: I would rather to work in Chinese central government, but it is too hard. Another desirable position is to work as cadre in municipal government. If I could distinguish myself in "Official Selection" of some province, I might get that chance. Also I would like to work in university. Party school of CPC recruits people of my major, but you must have certain knack or way to go there.

Q: Have you ever considered any other universities?

A: Yes. For example I have considered going to Zhengzhou University, but it no longer offers apartment for new teachers; another choice for me is to work in Henan University, but it locates in Kaifeng City of Henan Province, and this city is too small. I want to go to prestigious universities in big cities, who could offer good welfare to employees. But most of such universities are already full, and require few new teachers, especially of my major. When a university is going to open a new master point in certain field, there would be many chances. Besides that, there would be not many job vacancies in prestigious universities.

Q: Do you have any job intention right now?

A: Maybe Henan University, but I'm not decided yet, since it also offers no flat to new teachers anymore.

4. Li Shuhuan

Gender : Female

Born in : some village of Hengshui area, Hebei Province, China

Siblings : one younger brother and one younger sister

Highest Education : Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.)

Educational History :

MPA course, Graduate School, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (2004 - 2007)

Social Work Department, China Youth University for Political Sciences, Beijing (Sept. 1997- Jul. 2001)

Working experience :

Beijing Chaoyang District Municipal Commission of Development and Reform, as low-level cadre (2001 -)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: My parents are normal peasants. I have one younger brother and a younger sister.

Q: How was your educational history?

A: I had thought to go to technical secondary school, because its graduates could learn skill and be guaranteed with a job. But I was enrolled by a senior middle school, and my mother said I should go there. It was a boarding school, whose annual tuition was 365 *yuan*. It was a big amount of money for my family, because we didn't have other income source besides planting corn, wheat and cotton.

Q: Was there anybody of your family went out to do odd jobs in non-harvest season?

A: No, never. When I went to my county for senior middle school, my younger brother dropped out after he finished junior middle school. And I was always forehanded in school, because I understood that my parents tried very hard to afford me. I attended the National College Entrance Exam twice. In the first time, my marks, about 580 points, were comparatively high for students of sciences at that year. So I applied for Beijing University of Post and Telecommunications, a prestigious university, but I was not enrolled for lack of several points. In stead I received an enrollment letter of Luoyang Institute of Engineering at Henan Province, which is a poor-quality university and its annual tuition was as high as 2500 *yuan*, so I was very reluctant to go. I decided to prepare for another year. Because my grade was excellent, so I remained in my senior middle school for another year with no extra fees. The next year, my grade in National College Entrance Exam was more than 590 points, and this time I picked Beijing Normal University as my first choice.

Q: Did you feel much pressure to remain another year in senior middle school?

A: Very high pressure. All teachers said that I should go to that bad university, for I was just a girl and my family condition was poor. People told me that it was possible that my grade in Exam would be even lower in the next year. My mother was very worried, too. She wished that I could be enrolled by a better university in the next year, but she was afraid that she could not afford me if so. Therefore I decided to apply for a normal school at the next year, whose tuition was much lower than other colleges. Anyway, I felt much pressure in that year. When I went to turn in my college application form at the next year, my teacher suddenly told me that China Youth University for Political Sciences was a good university and would enroll students in advance of all colleges, so I added it in my application form. It was the first time that I heard this university. At 7th August 1997, an enrollment letter was sent to me, and I was surprised to see that China Youth University for Political Sciences matriculated me. I had no idea of this university at that time. So I went to check some information of it, and I realized it was a school for students of arts, but several departments matriculate students of both sciences and arts. I was a student good in mathematics, chemistry and physics, and I had no idea what was "social work". It was the way that I went to this university of arts accidentally. In the fresh year, I

tried to adjust myself into study of arts. I really didn't like reading books of politics at all.

Q: Which department of China Youth University for Political Sciences was your first will in college application form?

A: It was Social Work Department. Only it and Economy Management Department matriculate students of both arts and sciences, so I filled them in my application form randomly. Students should hear teachers' instruction, but rural teachers' contact and knowledge of city life was very limited, so sometimes they would offer inappropriate or even bad suggestion to their rural students. After having worked a few years in Beijing, now I know which universities are good. But back at that time, I was certain that I should go to university, but besides the most prestigious ones like Peking University, Tsinghua University, I barely knew any others. Therefore I went to China Youth University for Political Sciences, not at my own will.

Q: How much was the annual tuition? And could your parents afford it?

A: It was 1800 *yuan* each year, which was not high compared with other universities. When my father saw that I was very unhappy to receive the enrollment letter of this university, he said, "You would not turn it down as last year, wouldn't you?" Therefore, I decided to go. My parents borrowed about 5000 *yuan* from several relatives for me to register in college. After paying tuition, barding fees, and farraginous charges, not much money was left. Throughout four college years, I have never stopped doing part-time jobs, even in holidays, so I could afford myself totally.

Q: What kind of part-time job did you do?

A: Various kinds. I worked as interviewer of some investigation company to visit families and write down questionnaire. I transcribed cassette tapes for teachers of my department. Also, I have worked as family tutor for several semesters. Oh, teachers of my department often offer jobs for me. For example, I worked as assistant in freshmen's military training camp, and could earn hundreds of *yuan* each year at my third and forth grade. Working as interviewer was the main resource of my income, and I kept doing that for several years.

Q: Was your earning enough for your life in college?

A: I spent very prudently. Besides tuition and boarding charges, I needed only less than 100 *yuan* each month to buy meals.

Q: Did you applied for loans for college poor students provided by bank?

A: Yes. I obtained an interest-free loan twice, at my third and forth grade.

Q: Then how was your first two years in college?

A: I applied for tuition shelter in the first two years, and the university decreased my tuition from 1800 to 1200 *yuan* each year. At the beginning of freshmen year, I brouhgt about 5000 *yuan* to university and that was all that I took from my parents. I tried very hard to raise myself in Beijing with my own efforts. As interviewers of the investigation company, after visiting one family and filling one questionnaire I would earn 30 *yuan*. I once participated in a big-scale investigation of labor force by Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in which I went to construction sites and interviewed peasant workers each by each. Besides I once did a community investigation for Central Ministry of Civil Administration. The paying of these two activities was better, and I earned 45 *yuan* for filling each questionnaire.

Q: Did you keep doing part-time jobs in summer and winter holidays?

A: Usually I went back home for a few days in winter holiday, but in summer holiday I remained

in Beijing to do odd jobs. During academic semesters, I also did odd jobs at weekends, such as sending advertisement materials for companies in downtown at rush hour. Those materials were heavy to carry, like catalogue of IKEA. I have also worked as psychological consultant for children. A lot of social practice I have done in college years, which was bitter but valuable experience for me.

Q: Did you depend on yourself completely in Beijing?

A: Yes. I raised all tuition, boarding charges, food charges and allowance by myself.

Q: At the first year, your parents borrowed thousands of *yuan* for you to register in your university. Have the debts been paid off?

A: My parents have paid off the debts. After I began working, I regularly sent some money back. But in college years, the only thing I could do was to do odd jobs and ask no more money from my poor family.

Q: How is your younger brother now?

A: After quitting from school, he began doing farming. When I was in third grade of college, he went out to work as peasant worker in cities.

Q: How were his academic marks in school?

A: He didn't like reading, and thought it was boring. After junior middle school, he was reluctant to keep reading, so he dropped out.

Q: Then were you a studious student in middle school?

A: Yes, since I was a kid. I seldom studied to deep night like other students, but my efficiency was comparatively high. I paid much attention to accumulating daily knowledge and doing summing-up. Many of my girl students used electric torch to read in bed in deep night, but in middle school I slept regularly and kept exercising everyday. In harvest season, I would go home to help my parents with farming at weekends.

Q: How were your marks in college?

A: I was not used to study politics sciences, for I was a student of sciences. For example, I achieved only 60 per cent points in the test of philosophy. The teacher of philosophy had some accent and I could hardly understand him, besides I was not interested in what he was teaching at all.

Q: When you went to big city to study in a field that you were not interest in, did you feel any kind of lost?

A: No, I just tried my best to study. I was good at English, so my total marks were not bad. Besides, I took calculus and logic as elective courses. In college I have won several times of three-level and second-level scholarships.

Q: What students could win scholarship in your college?

A: According to marks listing, the top three students of the department would win first-level scholarship, and there were 56 students in my department.

Q: Each month you only spent less than 100 *yuan* for food. Were there urban students in your class who spent money extravagantly? And how did you feel about that?

A: Yes, but I felt nothing for it. Others could spend wastefully if they had that condition. One classmate spent at least 1000 *yuan* each month, for her parents were wealthy. It was said that she never showered in university bathhouse, but went to club to do sauna regularly. However,

there were also a certain amount of poor students in my class, and we often looked for odd jobs in holidays together. At that time, college students could receive about 56 *yuan* each month as food subsidy as regulated by municipal government. For poor students like me, it was a big amount of money could help me a lot.

Q: When did you begin to plan your future path after graduation?

A: Since the third year in college, classmates began to discuss future plan and they asked me for my plan. I was not clear what I would do next at that time, but I knew I was not interested in my major and I would not keep studying in it. Actually the economic condition of my family would not allow me to pursue advanced study, so I thought I should begin working to alleviate my parents' burden. Maybe I would attend graduate study after working for several years. At first, this thought was faint, but it became clearer gradually after being asked again and again by my classmates. Then I have decided to work after graduation. Students of Social Work Department of China Youth University for Political Sciences have similar job choices after graduation. The best choice is to work in government office of central, municipal or district level. The second is to work in university. And few of them go to company. So when I decided to work after graduation, I entered for the Civil Servant Candidate Test for central government. This Test is the competition for posts. After the Test, the Central Commission of Discipline Inspection asked me to do interview. The position there was to deal with letter of complains from the people and the calls they make to lodge complains. I knew very little about it, but I heard that this job was very tough, especially for girls. However, I failed in its final test, and a boy was chosen for the position. In the Civil Servant Candidate Test for central government, I could only apply for one post, but there were not many posts which needed girl graduates of arts with Bachelor Degree, so I applied for that post in The Central Commission of Discipline Inspection. But the Civil Servant Candidate Test of Beijing is a test for qualification. After obtain the qualification through the Test, I went to a job fair to send my resume. Later Chaoyang District Government asked me to do interview.

Q: Which working units have you also sent you resume to?

A: I didn't remember, but most of them are government offices of municipal or district level. To some companies, I have also sent my resume. They said they might not endow me with a Beijing *hukou*, but I let them keep my resume as well. Later some of those companies did ask me to do job interview, but due to *hukou* problem, I didn't go there finally. After I went to Chaoyang District Government to do interview, they introduced me and other 7 students to do practice in its Commission of Development and Reform. We would do practice for three months, and 2 of us turned it down, but I was willing to go. In the Commission, we six students were divided into three offices and began doing practice since early March. We worked from Monday to Friday from eight to five just like formal employees. The chef communicated with us regularly, to ask our understandings for certain problem. I thought, our behavior in office would be reported to the chef by our colleagues regularly, too. As for me, I liked its working environment, for this Commission consisted of only 30 employees and colleagues were nice to each other. I found nothing that I could carp at.

Q: How was your welfare?

A: We have never discussed it with the chef, since we knew that the payment of all government offices was similar. Besides, the chef told us that welfare was not a problem for us to worry about.

Q: Have you attended job interviews of other working units?

A: Yes, like Chongwen District Government of Beijing. The problem was that I began doing practice in Beijing Chaoyang District Municipal Commission of Development and Reform since early March, and after that I had no chance to attend job interviews of other working units, let alone doing practice in other units. My university asked all graduates to sign employment contract by 25th April, and I told this deadline to the chef. At early April, I have got the contract from the Commission. So I stopped looking for jobs in other working units.

Q: You obtained a Beijing *hukou* through job hunting, didn't you? Then how about housing?

A: All government office could endow employee with a local *hukou*. When I was doing practice, I paid no attention to welfare. I just wanted to get hold of this post. My university was very far away from the office, and I used to get up very early and take bus to work. But my university stopped to offer graduates lodging at end June, so I asked the chef whether the commission could provide dormitory or we fresh employees should look for apartments by ourselves. Later a three-room suite nearby was rent by the commission as our dormitory. But because that suite was very small, so we moved to another bigger suit several months later. After I was promoted, the bigger one was allocated to me for my own use.

Q: Are you satisfied with your job?

A: Yes. Few working units provide apartment to employee now, and I was envied by many of my former classmates due to the suite. Many of them had to sleep at office in the first year, before they could afford to rent a house in Beijing.

Q: Did you apply for Party membership at university?

A: I joined the Party since my third year in college.

Q: Was your Party membership helpful to your job hunting in government offices?

A: It's hard to tell. When I attend the job interview of Chaoyang District Government, they didn't require Party membership, but paid more attention on working ability. Among five fresh employees of Beijing Chaoyang District Municipal Commission of Development and Reform of that year, two were not Party members.

Q: How was the employment condition of your classmates? Was there any students find job through teacher recommendation or social relations of relatives?

A: I depended on myself in job looking. But I know one classmate went to work in Beijing Municipal Bureau of Traffic due to his uncle's social relations. Some working units did come to my department to ask for graduates in March and April, and teachers would let students apply. However, after began doing practice, I worked from eight to five o'clock everyday and paid little attention to others' job hunting.

Q: Did your parents have any suggestion for your job?

A: No, because they didn't understand neither my major nor the condition of job market here. I only informed them where I went after I have signed the employment contract.

Q: How's your younger sister? Is she still at school?

A: She is 12 years younger than me, but she dropped out off school one year ago. Once she went to senior middle school, she began feeling headache for studying. So she has quit school and remains at home now.

Q: How much schooling do the girls of your village averagely receive?

A: Many girls have just primary education, and most girls of my village have not finished junior middle school, mainly because their families could not afford them. Then they would stay at home doing housework and farming.

Q: If the first child is a girl, most families would let the girl drop out at early age to help parents, wouldn't they?

A: Yes, it's very common. When I decided to enter for National College Entrance Exam for the second time, many neighbors told my parents that it was a waste to afford me to school for so many years. In countryside there is no job for educated women unless they could go to cities. But my father said they would afford me with all their efforts.

Q: How much education has your father received?

A: Both my parents have just primary education. My father was born in a big family with many siblings, and his father died early. He was a clever student, but his family was too poor to afford him. He felt regret for his own lose at young age, so now he tried his best to afford his children to go to school, even let himself in debts.

Q: Have you attended advanced study after graduation from college?

A: I am reading MPA course in Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and I will graduate this year. The tuition is 35,000 *yuan* in total. After having finished all courses, I am writing the thesis right now.

Q: Why did you attend it?

A: Because I want to approve myself since I am still young. So after having graduated from college for three years, I decided to apply for advanced study. Its entrance test consists of six subjects, including Mathematics, English and Logic. After all daytime work ended, I had to read books till deep night to prepare for the test.

Q: Did you pay the tuition by yourself?

A: Yes, with my savings. Because my house was provided by my work unit, it saved a lot for me. Besides, I spend very economically still.

Q: Do you have any further plan for your career?

A: I would rather stay here, at least in the following years. To be honest, this unit treats me good and the chef is nice to me. Though I often complain for overworking, I have no other career choice after having worked as civil servant for six years. I could not move to company, because it has another set of farewell system which is different from government office. If I went there, I had to start from zero. As for going to another section of government, the chance is very tiny, especially for an ordinary clerk with no social relations like me.

5. Song, Nan

Gender : Female

Born in : Guanghai Village, Wanrong County, Shanxi Province, China

Siblings : one younger brother

Highest Education : First Grade of graduate study

Educational History :

Graduate school: English Department, Graduate School, the Chinese Academy of Social

Sciences (Sept. 06-)

Undergraduate school: English Department, Beijing International Studies University (Sept. 02 - Jul. 04)

Junior College: Tax Department, Shanxi University of Finance and Economics, Shanxi Province (Sept. 98- Jul. 01)

Working experience :

certain small-sized Australian company of art in Beijing, as part-time assistant (2006 -)

Chaoyang Golf Club, as translator and interpreter (2004 - 2006)

certain private school of Beijing, as English teacher (2001 - 2002)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: In my village there were no much choice for rural kids like me, and the only thing we could do is to read. But most kids of my village drop out off school after 9-year-long compulsory education, mainly due to economic reason. Even though there are only two children in my family, it is hard to afford both my younger brother and I to go to school. For other family with three or four children, it is definitely harder. In my village, all peasants used to plant only corn and wheat, and they earned little. From six or five years ago, they began to raise apple trees, which brought benefit to families. Now the average family earns about 10,000 *yuan* pro year, and some better one earns 13,000 *yuan*. As for my family, our formerly annual income was about 7,000 *yuan*. But later, my father came to Beijing to do business, so my brother and I could keep reading; otherwise we might already quit school (laugh). Now the economic condition of my family is normal in my village. But I know in many neighboring families, it is very hard for parents to afford children in middle school.

Q: Were you a studious student in middle school?

A: I went to town for secondary education, and my mother gave me 5 *yuan* as allowance each week. I've never been a studious student.

Q: Is it common in your village that girls drop out off school at early age?

A: Many of my girl classmates stopped reading after finishing primary school or junior middle school, because their parents don't let them do. Those poor girls were reluctant to leave school, but they were too young to resist parents' arrangement. But things have changed gradually in recent years. For families with comparatively good economic condition, they afford boys and girls equally for education now. But for poorer families, the situation for girls is about the same as it used to be.

Q: After you graduated from junior college, what kind of job did you intend to do?

A: My junior college locates in Taiyuan City, capital of Shanxi Province. 95 per cent of my classmates come from Shanxi. One year before my graduation, my junior college stopped allocating jobs to graduates and we had to depend on ourselves for job looking. Because my father was at Beijing, so I came here too. Originally I chose Shanxi University of Finance and Economics and this Tax Department, because after graduation all students of this department would be assigned to work in local revenue, which was a very desirable work unit. It was stable and well paid. But the job allocation policy was no longer in use when we graduated. But still three of my classmates went to revenue smoothly, because their parents worked there. Their academic

remarks were not good, but they had background, which is more important.

Q: How did you feel about your first job as English teacher in a private school of Beijing?

A: All I wanted at that time was to find some job and stay in Beijing, so I took this one. But in that private school, both students and teaching staff wanted to flow to better school. My monthly salary was just 1000 *yuan*, so I wanted to leave too. As English teacher, many of my colleagues are graduates of Beijing Foreign Language Institute or Beijing International Studies University, so I wanted to attend advanced study. I have never been a good student, so my target at that time was to get a Bachelor Degree and find a better-paid job with that. Therefore, I went to Beijing International Studies University and studies English for two years and gain the degree.

Q: What job did you find when you gained the degree? And did you gained a Beijing *hukou* through job application?

A: I went to work in a golf club which paid no attention to my *hukou*. At first I earned 2000 *yuan* each month, and later it rose to about 3000 *yuan*. As a translator and interpreter of a golf club, it was stable but tough, due I worked outside most of the time. Though I kept wearing a hat, I got flecked because of too much sunshine basking. So I began to think of changing job, but my family said Bachelor Degree was not high enough and they encouraged me to attend advanced study. So I came here, the graduate school of CASS for graduate study.

Q: Have you worried about your age when you decided to attend graduate study, because most of your classmates now must be much younger than you?

A: I worry everyday. Age is an important problem, but I think it is not crucial. I would just do my best.

Q: You are doing part-time job in a foreign company. Do you like it?

A: In this company of modern art, age is never taken as a problem, and all my colleagues are foreigners. I like its international environment. But the company is small and immature, and runs without a long-term development plan. After working there for more than one year, I still don't think I can understand modern art. I simply don't have the insight to appreciate it. Therefore I don't think that is what I should do for life.

Q: Why didn't you keep reading for so many years after finishing junior college?

A: There were 8 girls in my dormitory of junior college, and four of them are attending graduate study now. They don't have pressure, so they keep reading. But I felt high pressure at that time. My younger brother was at school, and my father was turning old and was not as strong and healthy as he used to be, so I thought I was responsible to do something for them. So I went to work after finishing junior college. But with my poor salary, I found I could hardly afford myself, so I gave little to my brother for his study. At present I am able to give some money to my brother. He is in university for graduate study too, but with a loan of bank. When I was in junior college, I desired to begin working, because I knew nothing of the society.

Q: How did you find your previous jobs?

A: The companies that I have worked for are small-sized, so their interviews were quite simple. The supervisors just asked me several question, and they paid no attention to my social activities in college. I graduated from a nameless college, so I felt very lucky to obtain a job in Beijing. I came here twice when I was a kid, and it is a holy city to me.

Q: How's your *hukou* condition now?

A: My first work unit, the private school of Beijing, could not provide me a Beijing *hukou*, so my *hukou* was left behind with my parents in the village. Until I was enrolled by the Graduate School of CASS, my *hukou* has been move from my family to the school.

Q: How's your village?

A: In my hometown, each hamlet has a primary school, from grade one to five. My hamlet is very ordinary. There are three junior middle schools in the village. I went to town for senior middle school, which was not a key one but equipped with good teachers and teaching facilities. Less than 20 per cent of students of that senior middle school were enrolled by colleges and universities.

Q: Have you ever felt unfair to be born as a rural girl? If you were born in other family of cities, your life might be much easier.

A: No. I am what I am. Besides, I have never been a studious student.

Q: Are you a Party member?

A: No. But several days ago when I paid a visit of my former classmate, her father encouraged me to join the Party, and he said it was helpful for job application and my development in the future. This former classmate is trying to join the Party now. So I think I will write my application letter to the Party soon in this year. But I still believe that ability and background are more important for job hunting in Beijing.

Q: What kind of job will you look for when you finish graduate study?

A: I will go to some middle-sized foreign-capital company, where I think I could become a middle-level administrator several years later. I like to co-work with foreigners.

6. Liu

Gender : Male

Born in : Baimi Hamlet, Hejia Village, Biqiao Town, Langxi County, Anhui Province, China

Siblings : othree younger sisters

Highest Education : First Grade of doctor study

Educational History :

Doctor study: Sociology Department, Graduate School, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Sept. 06-)

Master study: Sociology Department, Anhui University, Anhui Province (Sept. 02- Jul. 05)

Bachelor study: Athletic Sports Department, Wuhu Normal Institute, Anhui Province (Sept. 93- Jul. 97)

Working experience :

Langxi County Middle School, as gym teacher (1997 - 2002)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: I come from a common rural family which consists of 6 people. I am the eldest child, and have 3 younger sisters. My father stayed in school for two years, and my mother only went there

for one year. The income of my family mainly comes from farming. In recent years, my father begins going to cities and working as peasant worker in winter season when there is not much work in the field. My hometown is close to big cities, like Nanjing City.

Q: How is your educational history?

A: I am not a good student, and when I entered for National College Entrance Exam for the first time, I failed. I am good at running, so my gym teacher told me and my parents that next time I should take gym as my major in college. Athletic Sports Department requires students with some strong suit in sports, and pays less attention to students' academic marks in Exam than other departments of college. So the next year, I applied for Athletic Sports Department, Wuhu Normal Institute of Anhui Province, and got enrolled. The tuition was very cheap at that time. Counting semester tuition, boarding charges and pin money, my spending pro month was just about 100 *yuan* at that time. But I was not interest in my major at all, and I often skipped classes. I graduated in 1997, and because I am a ordinary rural student without social background, I was assigned back to my hometown. I worked as gym teacher in the middle school of my country, but I didn't like that neither. So four years later, due to well preparation for the Graduate Candidate Test, I was enrolled by Anhui University as graduate student of Sociology which I like very much. However, my marks were not high enough to earn a scholarship for me and I have to study at my own expenses. So at the same time I kept working as part-time gym teacher in Hefei City where my university locates. After finishing graduate study, I came to the graduate school of CASS for my doctor study in sociology.

Q: What about your three younger sisters? Do your parents encourage them for schooling?

A: The eldest one quit school in the same year when my baby sister was born and I failed in my first trial of National College Entrance Exam. At that time my second eldest sister was in junior middle school. Later my eldest younger sister went to work in factory to raise the family. Some of my tuition comes from her salary. Now my baby sister has graduated from a normal junior college in last year, and is working as part-time Chinese teacher. She is studying undergraduate courses by herself at the present, and preparing to enter for the Teacher Qualification Test. Once she got the qualification, she could become a formal teacher. When she was in junior college, her expending was 4000 to 5000 *yuan* each year which all came from my parents. They support us in education with all their heart.

Q: When you failed for the first trial in National College Entrance Exam and decided to prepare for another year, did you feel much pressure?

A: It is called as "Forth Grade". In my hometown it is very common that students fail in their first trial of the Exam, and many of them would struggle for the second or third time.

Q: Did your parents support you to keep trying for the Exam? Why?

A: My parents want me to leave countryside, as most rural parents. Besides, my family is the only Liu family in my village and has no relatives there, so we suffer from oppressing by other big families. So my parents hope that I would receive higher education and change the fate of whole family.

Q: Now you are studying for Doctor Degree. Are your parents satisfied now?

A: My parents encouraged me to go to college, because it was a kind of qualitative change for rural child. With college education, I could leave the field and go to cities. However, they were unwilling to see that I attended graduate study, but they said no words against it. Now as for doctor study, to tell the truth, they opposed it. From undergraduate to doctor study is just

quantitative change in their eyes. They think I should settle down, find a girl as my wife and build my own family, instead of lingering on campus.

Q: Then did they say you should begin working after finishing your graduate study?

A: When my graduate study was over in 2005, I made the decision of applying for doctor study by myself. My parents wanted me to go to work. Still I worked part-timely as gym teacher when I was preparing for the Doctor Candidate Test, so I could read books after work. But still I had no interest in working as a gym teacher.

Q: What are your classmates in graduate school engaged in now?

A: There were 12 students in my class, and most of them still stay in universities, like studying for Doctor Degree or teaching courses. Some went to work in newspaper or TV station.

Q: Have you ever felt unfair for the educational system in China? If you were a student of Beijing, you would meet fewer obstacles in higher educational attainment.

A: What you mean is the problem of comparative deprivation, and this kind of unfair is essential. Tell the truth, no rural people have ever had such unfair feeling.

Q: Then have you ever felt unfair when you graduated from Athletic Sports Department of Wuhu Normal Institute and could not find a so desirable job as students with no social background?

A: The life chance of Chinese relates not only to individual's *hukou* type, but more important to his/her social relations in the society. I come from the bottom of the society, as many leaders of Chinese social movement. People like me have a stronger feeling of comparative deprivation than other classes of the society. Therefore, the intellectuals from the bottom-level have intense intention to change the society. To be honest, ten years later I kept feeling strong responsibility on my shoulders for the change of the society. When a big gap between hope and reality exists, the idea of improving the society would come out. However, along with my growing up, the feeling became milder. It used to have a violent impulsion for revolution, but now I believe in social reform. This feeling of social responsibility has led me going my own way. After first job allocation, I went to the middle school of my county which was a so small world that I felt reluctant to remain in. I changed my life with attending graduate study, and I came to Hefei City through my own efforts. Now most of my former classmates stay in Hefei and Wuhu, but I have struggled to Beijing.

Q: You said you spent about 100 *yuan* each month when you were in undergraduate university. Was that a big burden for your family?

A: It was O.K., at least not as a big burden as my youngest sister's higher education to my parents. When my youngest sister was in junior college, I was a graduate student as my own expense. My parents could hardly afford two children for higher education, so I earn most of my tuition and boarding charges through working as part-time gym teacher in local school. The tuition for my graduate school was 5000 *yuan* pro year, and my parents paid only a small part for me.

Q: You said the days in graduate school was very tough, have you ever regretted quitting the teaching position and the leisure life then?

A: It was a very leisure period of time when I worked as gym teacher in that local school, but very boring too. Everyday after dinner, I would play cards with colleagues in my apartment or school's dinning hall. It was very comfortable life, but very empty too.

Q: when you leave the land and go to big city for college education, did you go well with your

urban classmates at first?

A: Being a rural or urban does little in friends making. My best friends in undergraduate college were those who skipped classes as I did. Actually I felt smaller gap between the rural and the urban in college than in middle school. When I was in middle school, the food coupon system was still in use in China. Only urban families were entitled with food coupons, while rural families were not. That was a boarding school in county, rural students like me had to carry rice to school regularly and change it to bread tickets, so we could eat in dining hall with those tickets. While, most urban students did not live at school and eat meals at home, so they could not spend all their food coupons. They sold some coupons to rural students, a little cheaper than the market price, and then we could change them to bread tickets directly. However, food coupon lost its glory gradually. Then urban students began giving them to us for free, but we did not need them, neither.

Q: In your middle school, did rural students work harder than urban ones?

A: Some urban ones study very hard. It has nothing to do with origin, but impulsion and interest.

Q: What kind of job do you want to find when you finish your doctor study?

A: Shanghai and Nanjing are two big cities close to my hometown, so my parents want me to go there for working. There are 3 universities with doctor points in sociology in Nanjing, and there are more such universities in Shanghai. But I prefer to stay in Beijing. You have to confess that Beijing is the cultural center of China. I want to work in universities or searching institutes, instead of government office which I think my character doesn't suit.

Q: Are you a Party member?

A: No. Years ago I didn't apply for membership due to my idea of revolution, and now I don't do it because of thorough pondering. I could fulfill my social responsibility, even if I was not a Party member. Besides, the Party membership is required only for becoming a government employee, but I would like to work in universities. Not only CPC, I would join no party at all. I hate to attend meetings after meetings. Human beings are meant to be free, and I think organization is the most evil thing in the society.

7. Zheng

Gender : Male

Born in : some village of Shenqiu area, Henan Province, China

Siblings : two elder sisters and one elder brother

Highest Education : Ph. D (of Marxism Philosophy)

Educational History :

Philosophy Department, Graduate School, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing (Sept. 04- Jul. 07)

Philosophy Department, Zhengzhou University, Henan Province (Sept. 01- Jul. 04)

State Capital Management Department, Henan Academy of Finance & Tax, Henan Province (Sept. 94- Jul. 97)

Working experience :

Organizes a holiday English school for local pupils in his village together with his elder brother and works as English teacher

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: Both my parents are peasants, but my father has primary education and works as accountant in our village production brigade. When I was young, the brigade subscribed for many kinds of magazines and newspapers, which were very attractive to me. Therefore, though I was not born in an educated family, I read many things as kid. There are four children in my family, and my eldest sister quit school after she finished junior middle school due to the poor economic condition of my family. My brother was the second child who was good at study and he influenced me a lot. He was enrolled by a local normal academy, graduated at 1988, and then became an English teacher in a local senior middle school. My second elder sister went to senior middle school for one year, but she didn't like reading books, and wanted to learn some skill. So she transferred to technical middle school to learn sewing. Influenced by me brother, I liked reading books since I was a kid. At the age of 15, I was introduced to the world of philosophy by my brother who at that time was in normal academy and was a fan of Nietzsche. My dream at childhood was to become a man of letters, because a child of neighbor village won a prize in some national composition contest and was enrolled by a university directly. It seemed naive now, but back at that age I just desired to follow his way. At 1993 I attended National College Entrance Exam for the first time, and chose English as my major due to the influence of my brother, but I failed. After prepared for another year, I was enrolled by Henan Academy of Finance & Tax at Zhengzhou City, Henan Province. This time I chose State Capital Management as my major, because Chinese economy developed very fast at that area. But I didn't like my major, and I was not good at mathematics. My interest was still in human sciences. There is a good bookstore nearby my school, and I went there each week to purchase a book for myself.

Q: Why did you go to normal academy like your brother?

A: Because the normal academy he went to is a local one, but the Henan Academy of Finance & Tax locates at Zhengzhou City, a very big city of Henan Province. At 1993 when I entered for National College Entrance Exam for the first time, I was enrolled by some college as student at my own expense, which I didn't take. At that year, my parents spent lots of money for my brother's wedding and his new house purchasing in county, and my grandmother was very sick and died at the next year. I have intended to join the army, but my parents were against it. So I entered for the Exam again.

Q: You prepared another year for the National College Entrance Exam. Weren't you worried about the economic condition of your family in event of that?

A: I have always been one of the poorest students in my class. Actually I depended on alms to finish my middle school, and I once made a speech as excellent poor student in middle school. The tuition was very low at that time; even so it was a big burden to my family. Because of my brother's wedding and my grandmother's funeral, the economic condition of my family was extremely uptight at that time. But after I was enrolled by Henan Academy of Finance & Tax, both my elder brother and sister helped my parents to pay my educational fees.

Q: How were your college years at Zhengzhou City?

A: I've changed a lot, such as I learned to be independent. I am be the youngest kid of family who likes book reading, so my parents seldom let me do farming. When I was a kid, the economic condition of my family was good in my village, since my father worked as accountant. Once I went to college, my whole family lived poorly. At college, I wrote few letters to my parents,

because I spend much time in reading books of human sciences. Gradually I decided to change my major through pursuing graduate study.

Q: Did you try to find a job after graduation?

A: Yes. But if you wanted to work at finance bureau of Zhengzhou, you need qualified recommendation. I could find a job in the finance bureau of my village, but I wanted to stay in Zhengzhou for the sake of my girlfriend. I was very proud at that time, and wanted to win a bright future in cities.

Q: What kind of job did you find finally?

A: I have tried to find a position in finance bureau of Zhengzhou with the help of a family acquaintance. But there was a condition for me, that I must marry someone's daughter. It was a trade, so a nobody like me could work in the bureau. I was too proud to accept it. But once I refused the arranged marriage, I turned down the only chance for me to work in Zhengzhou finance bureau.

Q: Why didn't you go to other city?

A: I am a stranger in other city, and find no person to help me. My parents were angry, because I turned down the only chance. Therefore, the only way for me out was to apply for Graduate Candidate Test.

Q: It was comparatively rare for people to apply for Graduate Candidate Test at that time, wasn't it?

A: Yes. I tried twice at the year of 2000 and 2001, and I was enrolled at 2001. After three years of learning in Henan Academy of Finance & Tax, I graduated at 1997. When I failed to find a job at finance bureau of Zhengzhou, I went to work as accountant in a factory of Zhengzhou owned by my relative at 1998.

Q: Since you have got a job at Zhengzhou, why didn't you stay there?

A: Because I had already made my mind to pursue graduate study. In addition, I have organized a holiday English school at my village together with my brother since 1996. I need to earn money, but rather with my knowledge than with strength. It was only temporarily stopped at 1997, when I was looking for job. It still runs well now. My students include school-age children, adolescent youth, and adults.

Q: You earned your tuition through this way, didn't you?

A: Yes, most my tuition came from it. Since my brother works in local middle school, so he is in charge of management and advertisement, and some of his students would come to our English school in holiday; while I am the teacher. So at that time, my only target was to pursue graduate study, and I stopped looking for job. But it was impossible to gain study materials in my village, so I had to visit bookstores and markets of second-hand books in Zhengzhou City often. Meanwhile, I also worked as part-time English teacher at a private middle school of my county.

Q: Teacher is a good occupation. Why didn't you work as teacher as your brother? Why did you choose graduate study as your only target?

A: I want to become a teacher, but of different level. A young professor of Peking University whose name was Chen Zhangliang was the man of early 1990s. I wanted to become a young famous professor like him, and graduate study was the only way for me to achieve it. As for which major I should pick, I was not sure at first. I intended to study in philosophy, which I

have been interested in since middle school. But it is a very unfamiliar subject to rural people, and my father was against it very much. He was angry with me for I turned down the chance to work in finance bureau of Zhengzhou, because it cost him much effort and money to gain. My brother persuaded my father to let me be, and he said, "He doesn't want to work in finance bureau, and he likes philosophy instead. Let him to what he wants, and maybe he will develop better in that way." Still my father and I had several severe quarrels. I never changed my mind though I knew what I chose was a difficult road. My former girlfriend broke up with me, because I could not work at Zhengzhou City. At that time, I was a poor part-time English teacher of village, but very happy inside, because I put all my attention on what I really like: philosophy and English. In the period I met a girl who later became my wife. I met her for the first time in a middle school, but we didn't talk. One year later, we met again due to other person's introduction. I was happy to see her again, and married her soon. This happened in 1999, which was before my first trial of Graduate Candidate Test.

Q: Have you ever thought about giving up your academic pursuing after getting married?

A: No. The next year, I applied for Graduate Candidate Test. I wanted to become a graduate student of philosophy, but I fell across another guy when I was going to sign up. He told me that I should study in law as him, for it was a very popular field then. When I became very hesitated because of this guy's speech, another one came up. He signed up for philosophy, and he said present society needed this branch of science. Therefore, I made up my mind to choose philosophy as my major.

Q: Did you fail in your first trial?

A: Yes, because I had few learning materials. I got only 30 per cent points in the test of "History of Marxism Philosophy", for I had never read a textbook of this field. Besides, I didn't distinguish myself well in English, too. I entered for the Test again at the next year, and often went to Zhengzhou City to purchase related books. I was successfully enrolled by Philosophy Department of Zhengzhou University at 2001, as a graduate student at my own expense.

Q: Did you like your major?

A: I liked it very much, and I felt I was no longer discriminated by my village people. After I went to graduate school, several young colleagues of my wife, who works in a local middle school, entered for the Graduate Candidate Test again and again. Only one of them succeeded after four-year-long struggle, through hiring another man to attend English test for him. I found great happiness in my graduate study, and my classmates said they had never met a person who liked philosophy as sincerely as me. Sometimes I laughed while reading books of philosophy, since I found many interesting things there. My mentor was an expert in Chinese philosophy, but I read many books of western philosophy besides his assignment, so he liked me. I was also the monitor of my class. Three years later, I graduated as the best student and was matriculated by Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences to study for Doctor Degree.

Q: Why didn't you look for a job after finishing graduate study?

A: I have decided to pursue doctor study, but following others' suggestion I looked for job as plan B, too. One teacher of my former junior college, Henan Academy of Finance & Tax, said there was a job vacancy there. I sent my resume and presented one class for trial, and they were will to hire me. But this college hesitated to give me a flat. As a married man with a child, I didn't go there for I need a shelter for my home. Soon the result my Doctor Candidate Test was published, and later I was enrolled by this school.

Q: You will finish your doctor study in a few months. What kind of job are you hunting?

A: Actually besides doing research, there are much fewer career choices for doctors than for masters, no matter of which field. I felt confused sometimes, and became less happy. When I was attending graduate study, every piece of fresh knowledge would excite me. But the fresh become less and less in later study. Now I often ask myself where my place in the society is. For years, my dream is to turn into a professor at university, but the glory of the dream is fainting when it is going to come true. To me, becoming a professor is just for living, a means to obtain all necessities for my family. However, I believe what I desire is just a normal and calm life. Still I like my field, and hope to turn into a professional of it.

Q: Have you begun to look for jobs?

A: I know a professor in Beijing University of Political & Law, and he might offer a post for me there. It is one possible way.

Q: Don't you want to become a civil servant?

A: Fame and gain are not important to me, besides I am too old to pursue those. People of early 20s might desire to become a cadre, but at my age people pay more attention to the soul of calm life.

Q: Could Beijing University of Political & Law bestow an apartment upon you?

A: Maybe. If they give me, I would be very happy. But I don't exact it now.

Q: Why do you want to work in university?

A: To keep a young heart. With such a heart, you would find fresh and curious things, so you could make progress. University is much purer and calmer than other working units in the society. Besides, it might be an advantage for my child's education in the future.

Q: Are you a Party member?

A: Yes, since 2004. I wrote my application letter when I was in Zhengzhou University, and I was taken in by the Party when I came to Graduate School, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Q: Will your Party membership help you find a job at university?

A: Who knows, and I pay no attention to such things. To be honest, I read very few books of the Party and politics, and I seldom read newspapers. The reality seems to have little connection with me.

Q: Does your wife still work at that local middle school? Will she come to Beijing to reunite with you once you find a post in Beijing University of Political & Law?

A: Yes, she is still at my hometown. It was not possible for Beijing University of Political & Law to help me transfer her to Beijing.

8. Hu, Changming

Gender : Male

Born in : Fangjing village, Aocheng Town, Ji'an County, Jiangxi Province, China

Siblings : one elder sister and one younger sister

Highest Education : Master of Engineering

Educational History :

Weekend graduate school for on-the-job engineers, Graduate School, Chinese Academy of Sciences (2004 - 2007)

Computer Sciences Department, University of Science and Technology Beijing (Sept. 1997- Jul. 2001)

working experience :

Chinasoft International Ltd, as computer engineer (2001 -)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: I was born in a remote village of Jiangxi Province. I have two sisters, one is elder and the other is younger. My kid sister was adopted, and she is still in junior middle school right now. My elder sister and I were graduated from junior middle school at the same year, and my parents did not think boy should be preferred to girl for education. My elder sister's brain received some damage in childhood, and she easily forgets what she has just learned in class. Her marks at school were not good, so my parents had wanted her to go to some technical secondary school which trains professional nurse. But she was not enrolled, because her points in entrance exam were not high enough. My marks at school were good, so I went to senior middle school, while my elder sister dropped out. My father works as skilled worker of doing measurement in a state-owned farm. In my hometown, there are just two paths for child like me: to study or to do farming. Now many of my village people go to city to work as peasant worker at very early age. But when I was young my parents kept telling me that I should study hard and find a way out with education.

Q: Why do your parents keep encouraging you to study hard?

A: Some conflicts exist in my village, like big family would bully small one. I belong to a small family, for my grandfather has just two sons and both my uncle and my father have single son. Many families in my village have more than three boy children, and they have many relatives, so they have strong power. In city, neighbors barely know each other. While in countryside, small families would be bullied by big ones of village. I could not proceed against them in court, nor could I beat them down with my strength. So I want to find a way out through study. My father was a good student in junior middle school, and was enrolled by a vocational school in 1975. He began working in farm forestry after graduation. Since I was a kid, he told me that I should find a way out when I grew up.

Q: Were you a studious student?

A: The farm forestry my father works for is far away from my home, and I lived there for two years before I began schooling. Therefore I have had contact with the outside at very early age. I went to boarding school since I was 12 years old, so I was a mature and independent boy for my age. My junior middle school required all boarding students to bring meals by themselves, so I carried some rice and preserved vegetable, like dried turnip or preserved beans, to school each week. The wife of schoolmaster was in charge of collecting and cooking rice, and each weekend she was seen to carry two baskets of rice which was she exploited from students. At that time, my parents gave my 50 cents each week, among them 20 cents was for traffic charges. In order to save that small amount of money, sometimes I didn't take bus but walked home on feet instead. After that, I went to Ji'an senior middle school which is the best one of my county. Besides, my class was called as the best one of my county, because all students were enrolled according to academic marks. I was a shy and introverted boy at that time, since Ji'an County is a very

big place compared with my village in my eyes. At first I had just two friends, who were my former classmates in junior middle school. But later, I got more friends and became more active in my class. When I was filling my college application form after I finished the National College Entrance Exam, I had no idea where I should go. I had thought about going to the South, but my uncle said that the public security of the South was not good, and he recommended Shanghai and Beijing. I decided to come to Beijing, because one of my good friends would go there. Therefore, I chose to go to University of Science and Technology Beijing. I changed a lot in college. A shy boy was what I used to be, but in college I tried to actively communicate with classmates and teachers to make friends. In the first two years, I never skipped one class and studied by myself in library each night, and my academic marks were excellent. Moreover, I had very good relationship with my roommates.

Q: How much was your college tuition? And what was that mean to your family?

A: Including boarding charges, I paid 2500 *yuan* each year. That was a big amount of money for my family, and my parents borrowed money for my education throughout four college years. My father's salary, about 300 *yuan* pro month, was the main income of my family at that time. When I went to county for senior middle school, the economic condition of my family has become uptight already. Due to it, I didn't attend graduate study directly after graduation. Both my parents are old. As a man of early 20s, I believe I should depend on myself and do some contribute to my family. In the third year of college, every student began thinking about attending graduate study, for it was the fashion. Our department has about 200 students for each grade, and I was listed as No. 12 of my grade. The top 6 students were guaranteed to be enrolled by our graduate school. If I took the Graduate Candidate Test, I had very good chance to be enrolled by our graduate school. However, I wanted to work urgently.

Q: Why were you so urgent to work?

A: I was quite naive at that time. I thought maybe after three years of graduate study, I might lost my direction and found nowhere to go. The more important, I wanted to help my family. Affording a child in city for higher education is extremely difficult for my family. I wanted to work and earn salary as soon as possible. In 2001 when I graduated, the job market was much friendlier than it is now, especially for college students of computer sciences. I planned to work for two years at first to obtain working experience and better understanding of the society, then I would come back to school for graduate study. I was pretty sure that it would work out, and I would gain more in this way. I have never regretted for this decision, just felt a little pity for myself. Compared with those classmates who attended graduate study directly after college graduation, my present condition was not bad at all. I thought I should leave school at that age, and learn to earn something through my efforts. Maybe nowadays some college student have the same opinion of attending graduate school as I used to have, and my suggestion for them is that they should cherish each study chance and try to continue their study with all means. As I said, thought I felt no regret for my former decision, I felt pity for myself. At the present, I worked with many masters and doctors. People with that academic background do have greater knowledge and brighter future. As a bachelor, sometimes I felt unconfident to discuss questions with them. Now when I was doing job interviews for fresh students, I asked them why they did not go to graduate school, and I told them that they should catch each study chance with full force. In recent years, it is hard for fresh graduates to find a well-paid job with just Bachelor Degree in IT industry, and their promotion chance is thinner.

Q: How was your job hunting process?

A: It was quite smooth actually, and I thought there were several reasons. One reason was that the job market was welcoming to fresh graduates, like Huawei Co., Ltd of Shenzhen City employed lots of fresh graduates at that year to expand the enterprise. The second reason was that my academic marks were pretty good, and had won scholarships. The third reason was that I had some subject experience on campus, for I performed one subject with my professor in senior year. China National Software & Service Co., Ltd. (CNSS for short) held a job fair, and I went there with ten pieces of resumes. I sent 9 pieces, and 9 companies of CNSS asked me to do interview. At that time, I didn't know CNSS, but my Beijinger roommate told me that it was a big-sized state-owned enterprise with good reputation in Beijing. Later I found if I joined CNSS, I could earn 2000 to 3000 *yuan* each month and gain a Beijing *hukou*, which made me satisfied. A Beijing *hukou* is important for me, and that salary also meant a lot to me. I believed I could lead a comfortable life under these two conditions.

Q: You were asked for job interview by 9 branch companies of China National Software & Service Co., Ltd.. Why did you choose Chinasoft International Ltd. to work in?

A: Maybe because of my sixth sense. The founder and boss of this company is a doctor of Beijing Institute of Technology, who invented the fist operating system in Chinese for computer which was called as "Chinese Star", later he expanded this company gradually. The company went into the field of economic business in 1998, and combined several other companies in 2000, and changed its name to "Chinasoft International Ltd." since then. The first time I came here for job interview, it gave me a good impression. Its atmosphere was quite and friendly, and working area was decorated with lots of green plants. I felt I could work comfortable here.

Q: Did you try other companies? What factors have you considered in job hunting?

A: Yes, I attended several job interviews of other companies of China National Software & Service Co., Ltd.. Besides, I was also accepted by Founder Electronics Co., Ltd., Huawei Co., Ltd., and Datang Telecom Technology Co., Ltd. after several times of tests. Huawei is a prestigious big-sized private-owned enterprise based in Shenzhen City, and its payment was comparatively high in our field. But Huawei needed me work in Shenzhen City, so I turned it down. I wanted to stay in Beijing, because I have adapted myself well to it after four college years. I dropped the offer of Datang Telecom Technology Co., Ltd. for the same reason, since it required me to go to Xi'an City. Though the welfare of both Huawei and Datang were better than Chinasoft International Ltd., such as Datang offered free lodging house for single employees, I rejected both of them. Founder Electronics Co., Ltd. is a big-sized state-owned enterprise of Beijing who is related to Peking University at some level, and it owns its own graduate school. I was attracted to Founder Electronics, because its employees had big advantage in pursuing graduate study. Besides, many of its employees worked as teacher in university at the same time, so I could learn a lot from colleagues. But finally I didn't go there, because I was not interested in the software it was developing. The branch I would work in was in charge of word processor developing and typesetting. I didn't think it was an exciting nor promising field. Besides all those Chinese enterprise, I had considered to go to NEC, a Japanese one. It was good to work in a foreign capital company, but they could not bestow me a local *hukou*. Finally I decided to come to Chinasoft International, because it could endow me with a Beijing *hukou*, and its welfare was not bad. I thought its product was practical and popular, and my first impression for it was good.

Q: Are you satisfied with your present job?

A: When I first came here, my monthly salary was 3000 *yuan*, and the company offered a bed for me in lodging house at free. Now I've been here for six years. China National Software & Service Co., Ltd. is a state-owned enterprise under the Chinese Central Ministry of Information Industry, so its management style was as efficient and orderly as foreign-capital companies. Though I felt depressing sometimes, it does offer a good learning environment for the youth. Each member of my working team goes well with each other, which makes us feel like a family. Our chef is very capable and treats each member as brother or sister. Though I would earn more if I hopped to other company, I enjoy the atmosphere here and I like my colleagues.

Q: Did your parents have any suggestion for your job hunting?

A: They don't know much, but they think I should stay at Beijing. They take Beijing as a stable city with good public security. Also after four years of college, I was reluctant to part with this city. I am the kind of person who does not like to leave accustomed stuffs and make great changes in life, so I have many old good friends. It is also the reason for me to keep working here for six years, and have refused several better offers.

Q: You planned to work for two years, and then go back to school for graduate study. Did you fulfill it?

A: I found it was very hard to go back to school after struggling several years in the society. I entered for Graduate Candidate Test and apply for on-the-job master courses for engineers at 2004. The Test is hold annually at December and consists of four subjects: Chinese, English, Mathematics, and Logic. Plus, it requires applicators to have at least two years of working experience in the field. It was very hard for me to make this decision of attending advanced study. I asked for a long vocation to prepare for the Test. I was confident with my knowledge in mathematics, so I put more attention in English study. However, when I was writing the papers in examination room, I found I had forgotten much knowledge of mathematics which I used to master quite well in college. I am glad that I made up my mind at 2004 when my working pressure was not as high as it is now. Once one enters the society, working pressure and night entertainment will weaken your academic pursuing desire. I have finished all courses by 2006, and now I am writing the mater paper. I will receive the Degree soon in this summer. It is not easy to earn it. I had to attend graduate courses each weekend from night to five, do homework and write essays on time, while not letting my study affect my normal work at company.

Q: With your Mater Degree, would you change your job?

A: A new job means lots of pressure. I wouldn't rush to do that. Besides, I know I am not a born leader or founder, because my advantage is to cooperate with others. I have good team working spirit, but I am weak in making decision by myself.

Q: Do you think your present thoughts have some connection with your rural-origin?

A: The growing-up environment will definitely influence one's character, behavior and life choices. I am a studious student and industrious employee, which must have some connection with my rural-origin. But I don't mean that urban people make less arduous efforts than rural ones, and I know some urban colleagues who work like hell.

Q: If you want to change your job, what kind of company would you go to?

A: I've never worked in foreign capital company. But I heard such company possessed many capable people and its working pressure was high for intense competition, and it might fire those clerks whose achievement is not good enough. Compared with it, state-owned company seldom fires employees, and its employees of certain level enjoy the same payment and welfare regardless

of their achievement. Actually I do wish to see how foreign-capital companies run subjects, but I get no good chance till now. I would only hop to big-sized foreign-capital company where I could learn more knowledge and experience. Otherwise, it's not worthy of leaving my present post.

9. Ye, Jianning

Gender : Male

Born in : some mountainous village of Hainan Province, China

Siblings : one younger sister

Highest Education : Bachelor of Arts

Educational History :

Social Work Department, China Youth University for Political Sciences, Beijing (Sept. 1997- Jul. 2001)

working experience :

Beijing Chaoyang District Government, as low-level cadre (2001 -)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: I was born in a state-owned farm in Hainan Province. My father has 5 siblings, yet his family has just a small piece of land. At 1965 when he was 27 years old, he heard some state-owned farm was recruiting workers, so together with some relative he moved from Guangdong Province to Hainan. I was born in 1978, in which year Chinese government began its economic reform and life style of all Chinese began to change. However, our farm still ran with old system of planned economy for a long period. Our farm produced rubber, which was still a controlled material for the country at that time. When I was a kid, our living standard was higher than peasants of surrounding villages, and our life was quite stable due to the planned economy system. But since 1990s, foreign rubber was allowed to enter Chinese market. Because foreign rubber is better in quality and cheaper than our product, our farm lost its former glamour. Our products were no longer wanted, and then the planned economy system became corrupted in our farm. When I was in adolescence, the economic condition of our farm was really tough. At that age, I began to think over questions, like which way I should choose for my future. I like reading book since I was a kid. So all my thought at that age was to go to college, and find a decent job after graduation. I have never thought about to work in our farm, or quit school and go out to work as peasant worker. When others talked that somebody of our farm went to college, I would admire him very much. Hainan is an island province of China with poor economic and educational condition. My parents felt frustrated because of the condition of our farm, so they encourage me to find a way out. At 1997, I went to Beijing for higher education.

Q: How was your college life?

A: Throughout fours years, I spent most time in library. Since third grade, I began considering my future, and I knew I had two paths to choose: attend graduate study or work. I decided to work. As I came from other provinces, I had two alternatives: one is to gain a *hukou* through find a job in state-owned institute or company, this kind of job is stable, but with comparatively poor salary; the other is to go to private-owned or foreign-capital company where employees are well-paid, but could not be endowed with a Beijing *hukou*. At 2001 when I graduated, the

job market was welcoming for fresh graduates. At first I decided to work in Haidian Day College of Beijing, but it did not work out finally. Then I went to a job fair and sent my resumes to several working units, including Beijing Chaoyang District Government, the one I am working for right now. After an interview, I was employed by it.

Q: Did you have other job choice at that time? Why did you settle down at this work unit finally?

A: I had many job choices at that time. Now when I think back, I realize all working units I once had intended to go were ones with stable positions. For example, I had considered to work in Haidian Day College civil administration bureau of Shanghai City, government office, and several state-owned enterprises. At that time, I wanted to possess a Beijing *hukou* through employment. My former life experience in remote state-owned farm led to my present choice, for I prefer a stable life, and I don't like much change. Change might bring disaster to life in my eyes. Living in a city without a local *hukou*, I would feel rootless and it was horrible to me. So gaining a *hukou* was my first condition in job hunting. As for salary or development chance, I paid much less attention. Among many alternatives, I chose this government office.

Q: How did you gain the job information?

A: I attended job fair, and sometimes teachers and acquaintances would recommended me to some posts. The job chance of Haidian Day College was introduced by one of my teachers, for I wanted to become a teacher at that time.

Q: Why did you want to become a teacher?

A: I was not a quite outstanding student, and I was not cadre of class. I didn't like to show off in that kind of activities, instead I liked to indulge myself in books. After I lost the chance to go to Haidian Day College, I still had other choices like a university of Zhenjiang Province and one of Hunan Province. Though I wanted to become a teacher, I'd rather stay in Beijing, since I have been well adapted to the life style here.

Q: Why did you attend graduate study after graduation from college?

A: I came from economic-backward region, and the economic condition of my family would influence my life choice. At that time, both my parents have retired. The farm was in almost broken economic condition, and the retired people were paid poorly. When I was in college, the annual tuition was 1800 *yuan*, and I needed about 500 *yuan* each month as my boarding charges and allowance. My parents had to earn this amount of money with all means, including debts borrowing. Because of me, my younger sister didn't go to college, but a technical secondary school instead. So I need a job with stable income as soon as possible, to raise myself and help my parents. This was the key reason for me to drop the chance of pursuing graduate study.

Q: Why did you apply for China Youth University for Political Sciences at the first place?

A: My grade in National College Entrance Exam was among the top 40 students of Hainan Province, with which I could go to any good university of any province. I applied for China Youth University for Political Sciences after considering its background, for it was called as a training school for cadres of the Communist Youth League. I thought its graduates should have bigger chance to work in institutes of the Communist Youth League or other government offices.

Q: Why do you prefer stable life? Why did you say that it was related to your former experience?

A: My former experience lead to my life choice. I used to live a stable and comfortable life in the farm, but after serious changes took place, it was destroyed. Therefore I don't desire a life

full of challenges or unstable factors. You might say I am a coward, but only stable life could give me a sense of security.

Q: Is that related to your rural-origin?

A: I think many rural students prefer stability to salary in job hunting process. Besides, Beijing has the strictest regulation for *hukou* management. After some reform in regulation of *hukou* management, some professionals of new high technology would apply for Beijing *hukou* directly. But students of arts have little chance to achieve it in that way. Facing reality, students like me have to choose a stable life. Such a choice is not led by individual reason, but due to many social factors.

Q: You said your younger sister didn't go to college because of you. Would you tell me more information of her?

A: My parents have two children, and my sister is four years younger than me. When I began working in 2001, she has been graduated from technical secondary school and worked for one year, but I let her attend the National College Entrance Exam again. Now she is studying in a Beijing college and will graduated at next year. I still wish her could find a stable job after graduation. But her view of value is different from me. She has had some social experience, and is more adapted to life changes, so she has different job intension from me.

Q: She went to technical secondary school, and you went to university. Does it mean that your parents pay more attention on boy's education than on girl's?

A: No. My parents love both of us, and sometimes they are partial to my sister for she is younger. The condition of my family at that time is that they could only afford one college student, and my marks were better.

Q: Why did you go to state-owned enterprise?

A: I am from remote countryside, and I have to depend on myself in big cities. So I would choose the safest alternative, instead of the benefit-biggest alternative. My adolescence was full of changes which have degenerated my life, so I was trying to repel changes at some level. The farm I was bore in was some kind of state-owned company too, and it lost its former glamour after system change. Therefore, I don't want to go to state-owned enterprise.

10. Li, Hongfei

Gender : Male

Born in : some mountainous village of Zhongwei County, Ningxia Province, China

Siblings : one elder brother and one elder sister

Highest Education : Bachelor of Arts

Educational History :

Social Work Department, China Youth University for Political Sciences, Beijing

(Sept. 1997- Jul. 2001) Working experience :

China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful National Reunification, as office clerk (2002 -)

some state-own enterprise, as office clerk (2001 - 2002)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your

household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: My family consists of six persons, and I was the youngest one among 3 children. My parents are peasants of 50s now, who are still doing farming in my home village. My eldest brother graduated from Ningxia University. Now he works as English teacher, and also runs an evening English school. My elder sister is peasant. Her family doesn't possess much land, but just averagely one *mu* (Chinese unit of area, $1\text{mu} \approx 666.7\text{m}^2$) for each family member. Her husband goes to cities and works as peasant worker most of the year, and only comes back home in harvest time. Her annual family income is about 10,000 *yuan*. Such family could afford children to middle school, but it is very hard for them to raise a child in university. My parents have tried very hard to send all of us to school for education. When my brother was enrolled by university, my sister was in senior middle school, and I was in junior middle school. My sister was not good at study, and so she was not enrolled by college after finishing her secondary education. It would be almost impossible for my parents to afford all three children to college, and my mother needs a helper in land. So my sister didn't enter for the National College Entrance Exam again, and decided to stay at home and help my parents in farming. Both of my brother and sister tried just once for National College Entrance Exam.

Q: Did your sister sacrifice herself for you and your brother's education? Do your parents ponder boys over girls for education?

A: My parents are comparatively open, and they would definitely afford each child to college if they could. However, they want my brother and I could find a way out especially. They have bigger hope on us. Maybe they attach greater importance to boys' education than to girls'. But the truth is that my sister was not as good at study as my brother and I. When my brother went to college, the tuition was not as high as nowadays and my family could handle it. My father began doing odd jobs since then.

Q: Why do you want to go to college?

A: I believe most rural students go to college, due to influence of parents, elder brothers or sisters. I wanted to go to college, because my elder brother has. Otherwise, I would not. I follow his path all the way, from primary to middle school. Most my teachers have been his teachers, too. He was an excellent student and was successfully enrolled by a university, and I took him as my example. I never thought about quit school and help my parents do farming, and always believed I could go out for college. Besides taking my brother as my example, my parents' sustainment also led me to college. All rural parents hope children to find a way out through education, and they would help children to fulfill it with all they have.

Q: How much was your tuition in college? And was that a big burden to your family?

A: It was 1800 *yuan* pro year, and it was O.K. to my family, because for three years I have applied for stipend, also loan, offered by university for poor students. The stipend was 1500 *yuan* each year, and my parents still had to give me some money, but not much. I also did some part-time job on campus. Each semester, the university will offer part-time jobs for poor students. I could earn about 1000 *yuan* each academic year through doing part-time job on campus. If I didn't get the stipend from school, my parents could afford me too, but it would be very hard for them.

Q: Why did you apply for China Youth University for Political Sciences?

A: I failed in my first trial of National College Entrance Exam. My English is my weak point, and I got only 50 per cent points in the Exam. At the next year, I tried again and accidentally

applied for China Youth University for Political Sciences. Not like other colleges, this one has to be applied before attending the National College Entrance Exam and it enrolls students in advance of all other universities. My teacher asked whether I could like to apply for it, and it was my first time to hear about it. I saw it as another chance, so I filled the form, and then I was enrolled by it. Actually I was happy to be matriculated by it, since it was very hard for students of remote Ningxia Province to go to Beijing for education. I have dreamed to go to Beijing since I was a kid.

Q: How was your college life?

A: I think I was a loser in college who achieved nothing in four years. I haven't read many book, even got little to memorize by. I was not a good student, and just read book before the tests. I paid little attention to academic marks once I entered college, but I joined the Party in those years. Due to campus culture, students of China Youth University for Political have a high rate of Party participation, and about 70 percent of its graduates have Party membership, which might be the highest in Chinese universities. Only two kinds of students of my university don't join the Party: ones think scorn of the Party, the others behave too unsocial. So most students join the Party on campus, and it is the trend. People would follow the path of the majority. Besides it is said the Party membership would be helpful for job finding. This university is unique, for it is called as the training school for cadres of the Communist Youth League, and most graduates work as civil servant. Because government offices prefer to hire students with Party membership, students zealously compete with each other on campus for Party membership and for class cadre election, and they throw themselves in social activities of Student Union. They believe that all these would help them find a job in government office. Besides joining the Party, I have attended some social activities too, and I have successfully run for cadre of my class.

Q: When did you begin to figure your career plan?

A: I started to look for job in Beijing in senior year. I wanted to stay in Beijing, for I thought it was a good place. I failed in the Civil Servant Candidate Test, and obtained no qualification to become a civil servant. So I have thought about to hunt a job in some private-own advertisement company or publishing house, because I have special interest in drawing. At that time, any job in Beijing would satisfy me, because as a rural student I have no social background to help me here. Finally I signed the employment contract with a state-owned enterprise, and lucky gained a Beijing *hukou*. But later I found it was very boring post, and its salary of about 1000 *yuan* was too little to live in Beijing. So I quit the job after one year, and compensated 10,000 *yuan* for leaving before my contract was due. Later I was hired by this unit, China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful National Reunification.

Q: How did you get this job?

A: One former classmate told me this council was recruiting followers, and I sent my resume. After attending an interview and writing a piece of article I was hired, which was pretty smooth. I work as office clerk here, and my duty includes drafting out documents, writing briefings and notices, and keeping cahiers. I am going to attend a training for achieves management soon. In that state-owned enterprise I used to work, I made only contact with colleagues, and had little chance to contact the society. Now in this council for Taiwan Problem, I have lots of chances to see the world, such as short-time trip to foreign countries on business. Besides, my earning gets better, too. I think this work is related to what I learn in school, and I feel adapted to it

quite well.

Q: Did you paid off your loan that your university provides for poor students?

A: Yes, in last year. But I know many fellows don't refund the loan, and the school doesn't hasten them. Now I take my school as pretty good. Besides providing us loans, it helps us to get the quota for Beijing *hukou*. In other school, only about top 20 per cent graduates get qualification from school to obtain Beijing *hukou*. But my school does not limit on the number of students to receive qualification. When some students failed in major courses and were not entitled with the degree for the time being, or when some students could not find job after graduation, the school will offer a job and let them work on campus for a while.

Q: Have you thought about attending graduate study?

A: No, because my academic marks were not good. Besides, I want to earn more money for I have borrowed loans to purchase an apartment after getting married.

Q: In your university, did you feel the gab between rural and urban students?

A: Yes, but not so distinct. Students went well with each other in my class. As freshman, I saw some urban classmates had much pocket money and could buy stuffs that I could not afford. But I knew I came from remote area and I could not live like them, and I felt the gap between them and me. However, in the freshman year everybody felt confused and puzzled, no matter where you came from. At the end of freshman year the department held a colloquium, and in it most students said that they felt hazy for how to spend college life and what to do in the future. Actually these were the questions for us throughout college years. All students around me had no target. The biggest difference between rural and urban students, I think, is that rural ones have stronger intention to do part-time jobs. My school arranges job for them, and they do it actively. That's where the big difference lies.

Q: Is it easy to obtain that loan provided by your university for poor students?

A: Not so complicated, just by filling some forms, but limited number of students could receive it. My stipend is 1500 *yuan* each month, which is the highest level. Some students receive 1000 *yuan*, or even less. I haven't done as many part-time jobs as other rural students. So in college, my life went quite uptight. Sometimes I even had no money for meal, but I felt embarrassed to borrow bread tickets from others, so I went to bed with empty stomach. However, I haven't felt sorry for myself, and college life flew quickly.

Q: Are you satisfied with your present job? Will you do job-hopping in the near future?

A: At present I have no plan to find a new job. Last year I got married, and purchased a flat. I borrowed money from friends for the first installment, and my parents and my wife's parents help us, too. About whole my monthly salary has to be put into bank for installment. Tough I do not earn much in this council, it is very stable.

11. Lin

Gender : Female

Born in : some village of Shenyang City, Liaoning Province, China

Siblings : one elder sister, one younger sister, and one kid brother

Highest Education : Bachelor of Arts

Educational History :

Chinese Literature Department, Shenyang University, Shenyang City of Liaoning Province (Sept. 1999- Jul. 2003)

Working experience :

some private-owned middle-sized advertisement company of Beijing, as office clerk (2004 -)

some private-owned small-sized advertisement company of Beijing, as office clerk (2003 - 2004)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: My father received only two years of schooling. My family consists of 6 persons, and I have one elder sister, one younger sister and a kid brother. My village locates in a vast plain and has advantage to plan crops. My family has 6 *mu* (Chinese unit of area, $1mu \approx 666.7m^2$), for we have 6 members. When I was in primary school, both my parents did farming in village. But since I went to middle school, my father began to do business in outside world. I was three years younger than my eldest sister. After my younger sister and my kid brother were born, my family became uptight. Since then my parents have begun breeding cows and pigs, and stopped farming. Farming in our land of 6 *mu* could earn just thousands of *yuan* annually, and could hardly raise the big family. My parents do a good job in breeding, and the economic condition of my family is comparatively good in my village. They earn 20,000 to 30,000 *yuan* each year now. My parents hope we girls could make a way out through education, so they sustain us to school with all their efforts.

Q: How much was your educational fees in middle school?

A: My education in primary and junior middle school was not expensive, but then I went to Shenyang City and study in a key boarding senior middle school whose tuition and boarding fees were comparatively high. Therefore, among my siblings I am the one who spends the biggest amount of money for schooling. In the boarding school, both boarding condition and teaching facilities were good. At that time, I used at least 3 *yuan* for meals each day, which was about 100 *yuan* each month. It was a big amount of money for my family. But compared with my classmates, most of whom were from cities, my spending was still low.

Q: Were you a studious student in middle school?

A: I'm the average. I was not lazy in book reading, but I never worked after midnight.

Q: Have your parents ever thought to let you drop out off school, due to your gender?

A: Never. Many of our village people who were close to my father said to him that it was a waste to afford girls to city for higher education, since girls will marry and become member of other family sooner or later. But my father never thinks that way, and keeps saying that he wants all of us to go to college. He hopes that we could see the outside world, instead of staying at home and doing farming. He hopes we could have a decent urban life, like working in office building and living in beautiful apartment.

Q: Are there many your former girl classmates who dropped out off school at early age?

A: Some of them dropped out for their parents wouldn't afford them, and some for poor academic marks.

Q: How is your elder sister's educational history? Has she influenced you?

A: No, I don't think so. After junior middle school, my elder sister went to a technical sec-

ondary school, and then she studied by herself and achieved the degree of junior college. I was an emulative pupil at primary school, and could not bear being left behind by any other one. Throughout years in primary school, I have been the best student in all exams. I was also a very good student in junior middle school. But after I went to that boarding senior middle school, I felt inferior since I was not as sophisticated and social like other urban classmates.

Q: You felt inferior when you went to city for education. Was that because of your rural origin?

A: Yes. It was a boarding school of Shenyang City, the capital city of Liaoning Province, and few students were from village. Liaoning Province locates in the vast plain, and it is easy for its rural youth to go to nearby cities to do business. So there were few rural students in my senior middle school.

Q: Since most youth of your hometown went to cities to do business instead of attending school, why did you want to keep reading?

A: That kind of life is unstable and barren. I want to enrich my life by going to universities. I have always taken university as a holy place, like a temple, which is full of fantasies. I have believed that people with higher education would surely lead a very comfortable life in big cities.

Q: Were your parents willing to afford you to higher education?

A: Yes. They have declared when I was in middle school. My father never let me worry about money problem. I was enrolled by Shenyang University at 2000, which was my first trial of National College Entrance Exam. I began my school at the age of 8, which was later than others. Therefore compared with my classmates, I am more mature and independent.

Q: Did the economic condition of your family become uptight when you went to that comparatively expansive boarding middle school?

A: Yes, I can feel that, thought my parents never said anything to me. At that time, all three daughters were at school, so it was a tough period for my parents.

Q: Why did you apply for Shenyang University?

A: It was not a key one, but my parents wanted me to go to some university of Shengyang, so I could be close to them. Shenyang is the biggest city nearby my home village. I picked Chinese Literature as my major, because I like reading novels. I heard that that it was easy for students of this major to find a comfortable job. I wanted to become an office lady at that time.

Q: How was your college life?

A: It seemed I learned nothing in four college years, but lingering. After courses, I liked staying in library to read some books, since I had nowhere else to go to. As for social activities on campus, I seldom participated in. But I knew I was too old to depend on my parents for living, so I did many part-time jobs as family tutor. I began working once I entered university, which was in advance of all my classmates. Following others' instruction, I wrote a short advertisement of which subjects I could teach on an A4-size piece of paper. Raising this advertisement, I stood in downtown at rush hour, waiting for people to offer me jobs. There were many students there who had the same purpose as me, but they were from better schools, like Liaoning University and Dongbei Normal University. The first time I stood there, I was really nervous and shy. When people approached to ask me questions, I could hardly answer them. Then I told myself, I could do it and I was as good as those students around me who were from better schools. Therefore, later I got my first job as family tutor, whose pay was 15 *yuan* pro hour. At week-ends, I went to my student's home. By the end of first semester of college, I have earned more

than 500 *yuan*. I was very proud of myself, because I could raise myself now. During the first semester vacation, I didn't go home but kept working. I earned about 1500 *yuan* during that holiday. I saved my salary to pay my tuition for the next semester.

Q: How much was your tuition?

A: It was 3900 *yuan*, and the boarding charge was 800, so I needed 4700 *yuan* each year. The tuition of my major was the lowest one in my university, because students of Chinese needed no special apparatus.

Q: You saved your salary to pay tuition. Could you support yourself completely by doing part-time jobs?

A: Besides tuition and boarding charges, I spent about 100 *yuan* each month. Though I could earn some, I needed to take money from my family. In my village, most families have just two children. But my parents have four, and want to send them all to school. So the expending of my family is much bigger than other families, and my father has much pressure.

Q: Why have your parents more children than other couples?

A: Because they wanted to have a boy child. The "One Child Policy" put into practice in my hometown at early 1980s which was a little earlier than my birth, so I was born as the second child of my family legally. My parents paid penalty for the birth of my younger sister, and then they gave birth to a boy finally. My grandmother is really old-fashioned, and all my father's brothers have boy child, so my father long for the birth of a boy all the time. My kid brother is much younger than me.

Q: Your parents paid penalty for the birth of your younger sister and brother. Did it affect your educational attainment? Do your parents favor the only boy for schooling than girls?

A: No. Actually it is good to have a kid brother, since it would greatly comfort my parents. However, I worry about him sometimes. He doesn't like reading, and didn't finish the junior middle school. All my two sisters and I have attained higher education, but it seems he never takes us as his example.

Q: Why didn't your brother finish junior middle school? Is it because the economic condition of your family is getting better and better now?

A: I think so. He is a spoiled child at some level. I am very independent, so I came to Beijing and found a job by myself. As for my elder sister, she went home after graduation from junior college and found a job as teacher of primary school, and then she got married and remained in our village. My younger sister has always been a good child who graduated from Jinzhou Normal Institute last year. Actually she did not intend to study in normal school, but my father told her it was easier for find a job in this way, since it becomes harder and harder for college graduates to obtain employment in recent years due to expansion of college enrollment. Right now she works as teacher in Beijing.

Q: Did you apply for Party membership at university? Were you a cadre of your class? Did you actively participate in social activities on campus?

A: Since my university was not a key one, there were not many activities on campus, and I seldom attended. Also because of the same reason, there were not many chances for students to enter the Party. Throughout four years, only two students of my class joined the Party.

Q: How did you find your present job?

A: After graduation, I came to Beijing to unite with my boyfriend. My parents were against it

at the first place, because they wanted me to stay in Shenyang City and be near to them. But I insisted. My boyfriend, who is my husband now, graduated three years earlier than me from a university of Beijing. After I arrived in Beijing, he accompanied me to play around for a week. Then I started to look for job. I sent many resumes to many companies, and went around for job interviews. It was a tough time, and I found some interviews were just traps. For example, they said you were employed, but you needed pay hundreds of *yuan* for working clothes, and something like that. But after you gave them the money, you would disappear. After one whole month of struggle, a small-sized advertisement company agreed to hire me, and I felt very lucky. However, there were few clerks in that company, and I needed overwork all the time. Plus, my earning was really poor. So last year I hopped to the advertisement company which I am working for right now. It is private-owned too, but its size is bigger, and has more clients. I am in charge of multifarious things, and my monthly salary is about 2000 *yuan*.

Q: Do you have a Beijing *hukou*?

A: No.

Q: Do you want to move to some state-owned institute or company, so you could obtain a Beijing *hukou*?

A: Yes, I wish so, but I get tiny chance. I just possess a Bachelor Degree and I am not from a famous university. However, I hope my husband could change his job to such work unit and gain a Beijing *hukou*. The welfare of such work unit is good, and it is stable.

12. Zeng

Gender : Male

Born in : some village of Shaoyang area, Hunan Province, China

Siblings : one younger brother

Highest Education : Juris Mater

Educational History :

Law School, Tsinghua University, Beijing (Sept. 04- Jul. 07) Sociology Department, Shaanxi Normal University, Xi'an City of Shaanxi Province (Sept. 00- Jul. 04)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family.

A: Both my parents are peasants planting vegetables. Our small county has a vegetable production brigade which consists of several production squads. My parents belong to one squad, and their responsibility is to supply county residents with fresh vegetables. When I went to middle school, the price of rice went up due to state reform, so my family began planting rice too, but just to feed ourselves and not for sale. Later when both my younger brother and I left home for education, my parents started to sell some spare rice.

Q: How's the income of your family?

A: It's Ok. But because my parents have spent lots of money for my education, so they have little savings, but no debts also. Our house was constructed in 1981 when I was born, but all our neighbors have rebuilt their houses in recent years. The area that my village allocates developed fast in recent years. A highway is under construction now and a railway in the near future. My primary school which is very close to my home is going to be torn down and turned into a vegetable market.

Q: How much is the average family income in your small county? And at which level is your family?

A: It's hard to say, since great diversity exists. There is no industry in my county, but many people are engaged in trade business. My family should be at the lower-middle level. I wish I could contribute to my family and upgrade its status after my graduation.

Q: Your parents have just two children, you and your younger brother, haven't they?

A: Yes. My brother quit school after finishing junior middle school, because he was not enrolled by a senior one and he don't like reading at all. At year 2000, he went to Guangdong Province and worked as peasant worker. Later he moved to Fujian Province. I am good at studying since I was a kid, so I keep reading with my parents' full support. If I don't need to worry about the economic pressure of my family, I would pursue more advanced study. Though my parents never ask me to help the family, I wish I could do something for them. So I would like to find a job after graduation. The Juris Master course I am taking now in Tsinghua University is a kind of professional adult education, like MBA. So its tuition is high, which is 42,000 *yuan* for three years. The boarding charge is 1,200 *yuan* per year. Like I just said, my parents did spend lots of money for my education.

Q: Where did you take your undergraduate study?

A: In Shaanxi Normal University of Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province. I majored in sociology.

Q: How much was your expenditure in middle school and undergraduate university separately?

A: I went to a key middle school of county for whole 6-year-long secondary education, whose tuition was less than 1000 *yuan* and boarding charge was just several hundreds *yuan* for each academic year. It was not high. In my undergraduate university, the tuition was 3500 *yuan* annually. Its boarding charge was 500 *yuan* per year for the first two years when we lived in an old building, and the charge rose to 1200 *yuan* per year when we moved to new apartments. What cost my parents lots of money is my graduate study.

Q: Did you study hard in middle school?

A: Yes, I have always been studious in studying. My middle school was strict in student management. We got up at 5:50 am, and then we would do morning exercises, do morning reading, eat breakfast, and spend 15 minutes in newspaper reading in sequence before formal classes began. At noon we would take a rest for one and a half hours. At night we studied by ourselves in classroom after classes till 10 pm, except weekend nights. I began such life from 1994, and kept it 6 years. At first I missed home seriously, and went back home every weekend. When I grew up, I normally went back once a month. Now I would meet my parents just once a year.

Q: Do your parents keep encouraging you for schooling?

A: Yes. I have been good at studying since I was a kid, and all people said I was born as a college student. At that time it was an honorable and holy title. But I came up with serious of educational reforms in my educational attainment process. Firstly, technical secondary school used to be very popular and usually only top students could go there, since its students were guaranteed with stable jobs. But its job allocation policy stopped before I finished junior middle school. So most good students went to senior middle school, including me. Secondly, university enrollment expanded speedily in recent years. Thirdly, from this year the graduate study is shortened from 3 years to 2 years, so in my school two groups of students become graduated in the same year which would certainly worsen the job market condition. I have studied three

years for my Mater Degree.

Q: Why did you apply for Shaanxi Normal University at first place? Was it your first choice of university application?

A: My first choice was Yanshan University at Qinhuangdao City of Hebei Province, and I wanted to study in law school there. Shaanxi Normal University was my second choice, because many of my reference books at middle school were published by its publishing house. When I was filling it as my second choice in my university application form, I listed firstly Sociology Department and secondly History Department as my preferred major. I had more interest in studying in history, but I didn't realize university matriculation would be operated according to my listing. Therefore, I was enrolled by Sociology Department. But I had some idea of sociology at that time, too. One elder schoolfellow of my middle school went to Sociology Department of Peking University, and received matriculation letters from both Harvard and Yale at graduation. He is the child of my former teacher, so he became a legend in my middle school. I worked at campus radio station in middle school, and I did an interview with the teacher, father of the legend schoolfellow, to know his story. With him as my model, I liked the field of sociology, too. But I have thought about turning to study in law since the second university year, because practically law students could earn higher salary than sociology ones after graduation. The reason for me to apply for Juris Master of Tsinghua University was that I didn't distinguish myself in the National College Entrance Exam as I should have and that was a big stroke to me. Because of high pressure, I suffered from insomnia before the Exam. So I have aspired to be enrolled by a first-class university for graduate study since my first day in university. The entrance test for Juris Master of Tsinghua University is nationwide and transparent, so there should be less black wire-pulling than others. I wanted to compete with others fairly for the matriculation of prestigious university.

Q: Why didn't you want to work with Bachelor Degree? It should be easy for students of normal university to find a job, especially to work as teacher.

A: In my class, I was the earliest and firmest one to make the decision of applying for Graduate Candidate Test after graduation. Normal schools have expanded their enrollment in non-pedagogic fields, and there are more non-pedagogic departments than pedagogic ones in Shaanxi Normal University when I went there, and certain differences existed between them. For example, the annual tuition was 3500 *yuan* for non-pedagogic majors, and 2250 *yuan* for pedagogic ones; students of pedagogic majors enjoyed more scholarship and food allowance than us.

Q: Why did you choose Tsinghua University for your graduate study?

A: My first step is to go to Beijing, since it is a holy city for study and research in my eyes. I have pondered between Peking and Tsinghua University. Peking University charges 50,000 *yuan* for the study of Juris Master, which is higher than Tsinghua, but it was not the main reason that I eliminated it. The main reason was that Peking University did not offer dormitory for us, and students of Juris Master must look for shelter by themselves off campus. I believed that living on campus would make me feel the unique culture of university, and also let me take advantages of all training facilities there. Besides, some academic scandals happened at that time, which made me feel that the academia in China was blundering. I thought, as a university prestigious for sciences and engineering courses, the academia in Tsinghua University might be purer. So I chose to apply for Tsinghua at the last minute.

Q: Have you ever considered the economic condition of your family? Was the tuition of 42,000

yuan very much for your family?

A: Yes, I have. For the first two years, the tuition is 16,000 *yuan* pro year, and it is 10,000 *yuan* for the last year when there are fewer courses. I have pondered over and over, and I thought economic difficulty was just temporal which I could handle with it with bank loan or borrowing money, but this study chance was fatal for my life. But later I came to know that banks would not provide loan for advanced adult professional education like MBA and Juris Master. Also later I knew some people did not register such education, simply because they could not afford tuition. But at first, I did not take money as a very big problem. Actually my parents paid most part of my tuition, and my three best friends in college voluntarily lent me 15,000 *yuan*. I become what I am now, due to the help of my family and friends.

Q: What does 42,000 *yuan* of tuition mean for your family?

A: I believe that my parents could afford it, for they had some savings. Since the economic reform, economic condition of each Chinese family started to improve. My father is very industrious. When other families have rebuilt their houses in recent years, my parents did not, but saved all their earnings. They spent most part of their savings in my higher education.

Q: Have you ever done part-time jobs in college?

A: No. I was very unsocial in my undergraduate years, and I pushed myself very hard to devote all my attention into study. I made a study plan counted by minutes. For example, “Economics and the Law”, a show of China Central TV Station, showed at 12.40 am, and our class finished at 12 am. But if I went to dining hall immediately after class, I would jump into crush hour and queue up in lone lines for dozens of minutes. So I would keep studying by myself in classroom for 25 minutes after class, and then use 5 minutes to walk to the dining hall. Because there were fewer students then there, I would need just 10 minutes to queue for meal. In front of TV set I would sit and eat, to watch that show of law. When the show ended at 12.55 am, I went back to dormitory and listened to radio for another show of law for 20 minutes. Then I took a rest, and got up at 2 pm and then went to library.

Q: Why were you so unsocial in college years? Was that related with your rural-origin?

A: Usually, I don't talk much. I don't have many friends, just few good indeed friends. Like my three best friends in college who voluntarily lent me money for advanced study, they treat me like brothers. We hugged and cried together when we had to separate at graduation. Thought I don't have many fellows, I never lack true friend. The best thing for me in college years is that I got to know some real nice teachers and classmates. Two of my teachers in college were very caring for students, and all students liked them. They often invited us to their homes for dinner, or made phone calls to condole us when we were in high tension of Graduate Candidate Test preparation. Till now I maintain a close contact with them.

Q: Did you make a plan B for yourself when you were preparing for the Graduate Candidate Test, such as to applying for jobs at the same time?

A: No. In the event that I failed, I would try again. My parents said I should find a job if I didn't make the Test. But I have left home and gone to boarding school since the age of 12, and I have always made my own choice.

Q: Then do you want to pursue doctor study after graduation?

A: I have had intended to do that when I entered Tsinghua University. But at that time, I felt depressed and suffered from a neurotic disorder seriously. For years, I was harassed from

insomnia. When I was preparing for the Graduate Candidate Test, I treasured very minute, so insomnia tortured me a lot. When I was lying in the bed sleeplessly at night, I felt time passing by just like feeling my vein was cut and blood was flowing in vain. Sometimes I also felt I was a fast running train with broken brakes which was going to crash soon. Finally I did a pretty good job in the Test, for I was the second best student in enrollment list. But I paid high price for it, which is my health. As soon as I entered Tsinghua University, I got seriously sick and stayed in hospital for 3 months. I changed a lot in hospital days. I realized I was too fastidious to myself, so I began to think and behave milder after that. In another word, I was not as ambitious as I used to be. I stopped morning study in graduate school, which is a custom that I have kept for years and years. Sometimes I feel guilty for not being as studious as I used to be, but I came to know a healthy body was the most important thing when I was in hospital.

Q: Did you do part-time job in you graduate school?

A: Not voluntarily, maybe because I was stubborn and would not change my mind. For just once, some acquaintance introduced me to translate an English book into Chinese. I worked for half a month and earned 2000 *yuan*, which was my first time to earn something by myself. When I changed my major and entered Tsinghua University, time was so precious for me. I never had enough time to study and to take use of leaning facilities on campus. How could I spare my precious time to do part-time job? However, I realized this idea was wrong, since many working units ask for working experience when I attend job interviews now.

Q: Are you a Party member?

A: No, I am not. In junior middle school I joined the Communist Youth League earlier than other classmates, but when I went to senior middle school I felt negative about politics of China and turned into some kind of anarchist. That was my treasonous period in adolescence, and I was suspicious and critical about everything. In my undergraduate university, one of my best friends and I were the only two students who did not apply for Party membership. In college of arts, all students strive to join the Party. But I believed that it was too utilitarian. I often thought the degeneration of Party members' quality was the reason for why the Party was now tangled with many problems like corruption and malversation. Back in the period of Chinese Civil War, some people took so great venture to join the Party and they were willing to die for the Party for certain pure ideal goal. It is a pity that it turns to be a utilitarian activity. However, Tsinghua University is stricter with process of Party membership authorization than most universities, because many of its students would become national leaders and so it is taken as a cultivation school for the Party elite. One of my roommates, who is very sophisticated since he has worked for 8 years before entering Tsinghua University, wanted to join the Party but failed twice, because of his unrighteous activities in application process. At the first time, he invited all Party members to dinner for affirmative votes, and he was turned in by someone. At the second time, he did all social activities stealthily, but later he was found in his archives that he was once punished by his technical secondary school for practicing fraud in an exam, which he never reported to the Party initiatively. I changed my attitude since I entered Tsinghua and wrote my first application letter to the Party. The first reason for my change is that I have become more practical since I grow older; secondly it is due to my love for Tsinghua. My first trip to Tsinghua was for the interview of Graduate Candidate Test, and I felt it was so holy and took it as my Mekka. Tsinghua and Peking are the two universities that all Chinese dream to go to since their childhood. But I fell ill and went to hospital right after I handed in my application letter to the Party, so my application process was halted. And I am not a Party

member yet.

Q: What kind of job are you looking for now? Have you ever gone to job fair? Has your tutor recommended you to any work unit?

A: I want to be a lawyer, and I'd rather stay in Beijing. In my graduate school, we students don't have individual tutor, so I have to depend on myself. I attend few job fairs. Mostly I send my resume through Internet to companies.

Q: Do you want to work in state-owned institutes?

A: First of all, I am not a Party member. Secondly, I don't want to become a civil servant. I am very self-disciplined, and I don't like to be bound by extrinsic rules. However, because all graduates attend the Civil Servant Candidate Test which seems to be a fashion, I took the Test of Beijing, too. I didn't attend the national one, because at that period, I was doing the part-time job as translator. Besides, its successful ratio is tiny. Among all my classmates who have attended the National Civil Servant Candidate Test, only one successfully found a post through it as far as I knew. I just took the Test of Beijing. But because I never considered it seriously, I did not prepare well and finally I failed it. I don't have the qualification to work in institutes of Beijing government, but I felt relieved for it. I took the Test, for the sake of relatives and friends. They said I should do it, so I did.

Q: Through which channel do you collect job information?

A: Mainly through Internet, like homepage of my university. As for job fairs in the society, I think they are too commercial. I once went to a job fair and handed in my resumes to 40 companies, but none of them gave me any feedback, and my classmates who went to the same fair met similar situation as me. A certain amount of high-qualified graduates from a top university go to a job fair together, but few companies want to meet and interview them after receiving their resumes, which shows that this job fair is just for show. Maybe those companies of job fairs don't read applicators' resumes at all. So I seldom go to fairs in the society, but just the job fairs organized by my university. However, Tsinghua is a university famous for sciences, and the Law School was founded in 1999 and is unknown to many companies. Therefore, the job fairs hold in my university are mainly for graduates of sciences, offering few job vacancies for students of arts, and extremely few for students of law. I have handed in some resumes in such a fair several days ago, but I receive no feedbacks until now.

Q: What kind of company do you want to work for?

A: I have sent my resume to any company that looks for students of my major. But what I really want is a promising company which pays attention to its juristic department construction. A Taiwan enterprise of IT technology, who has built up three juristic departments which are in charge of intellectual property rights, lawsuit, and tax law respectively, offers me a position as counselor of factories. I like the enterprise, but the position is in Guangdong Province, so I have not decided whether I should go.

Q: You could not decide, because you want to stay in Beijing, don't you?

A: Yes. Though I don't think job location is very important, my girlfriend asks me to stay in Beijing. She has not graduated yet. As for my parents, they trust me and would not internee my plan. They only told me that I should not push too much stress on myself. I could understand my girlfriend's idea, since Beijing is a good place for youth's development, especially for juristic staff. The Supreme Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and all central ministries locate here, and many top-ranking big-sized enterprises have branches here, so Beijing possesses many

capable people in all fields. There are many chances for young people like me to learn. That's why I hesitate to work for that Taiwan enterprise, and keep hunting for a post in law offices of Beijing. There is a small-sized law office in Beijing which has recruited half dozen of graduates from Peking, Renmin and Tsinghua universities at last year and also at the year before that. I would like to work there, since it is developing so fast.

Q: Do you mind whether your employers could endue you with a local *hukou*?

A: If I accept the offer of Taiwan enterprise and went to work in Guangdong Province, they would provide me the *hukou* of Shenzhen City. It is easy to get a Shenzhen *hukou*. I have also met with a Shanghai company, and I don't know whether they would give me a Shanghai *hukou*, but I heard there is a grading criterion for *hukou* applicators in Shanghai City. As for the small-sized law office of Beijing, it could not endue fresh employees with Beijing *hukou* immediately. But one of its partners said all those students who joined this office at last year have already obtained local *hukou*. However, it is said the *hukou* policy of Beijing become stricter this year and there is only 10,000 quotas.

Q: Does a Beijing *hukou* mean a lot to you?

A: I don't think so, but I know it is very inconvenient to live here without it. Activities like purchase of economic and suitable house and children's education require it.

Q: How much salary do you expect?

A: I hope my annual earning could be 50,000 to 60,000 *yuan* in the first year. If my English were better, I would join foreign-invested law office and earn much more. One of my roommates would go to such an office and earn 15,000 *yuan* each month, which means his annual salary would be about 200,000 *yuan*. But such office would not endue employees with Beijing *hukou*. In top-ranking Chinese law office, the monthly salary is about 8,000 *yuan*. But for fresh graduates like us who have no experience and clients, the most important thing is to learn. So in most cases, we work as assistant attorney in some famous law offices for free, for the chance to learn with the professional. After we have passed the National juridical Test and obtain the qualification, and have worked for more than one year in some law office, we could find a better position. Just like doctors, attorneys need practice and clients. Several months ago I made a trip to Changsha City, capital city of Huanan Province, and attended a job interview. I passed three tests, and went to the final interview. But I failed. The company said I was too young and had no working experience. If I had some experience, I could have got the job.

Q: You borrowed 15,000 *yuan* from friends for graduate study. Have you paid the debts?

A: No. I will pay the debts off with my first year's salary. Now my friends also need money, to purchase house or start their own business.

Q: You expect to earn 50,000 *yuan* in your first year. Will that satisfy you?

A: In the first few years, I would rent a place as shelter. If I rent home, the living pressure should not be so high in Beijing. But once I purchase a flat, life will become very rough. For a comparatively good flat, the first installment would be at least 200,000 *yuan*.

Q: What does your girlfriend plan your future? How does she think about Beijing *hukou*?

A: She is from countryside of Shanxi Province, and she actually takes Beijing *hukou* as very important. Her father had wanted me to work as civil servant. He thinks graduates of Tsinghua should work for the government. But I don't like it; besides civil servant earn comparatively low salary. Somebody says it is more stable, and has good future to be promoted as cadre someday.

However, I don't think stability is less important for young man than earning. Man has the responsibility to raise his family. Besides, my character will not adapt to the complex human relations in government offices, let alone to be promoted to leader position someday. Therefore the best place for me is law office. Foreign-invested law office operates more normative. Employees of Chinese law offices have to be involved in many social doings, like to buy clients dinner. The case is worse in smaller cities. I have passed all exams of that small-sized law office of Beijing, and they will inform me to work for trial soon. Then after working for one month, they will decide whether to employ me.

13 Li

Gender : Male

Born in : some village of Datong area, Shanxi Province, China

Siblings : one elder brother, and one younger sister

Highest Education : Mater of Sciences

Educational History :

Quantitative Economics Department, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, Dalian City (Sept. 04- Jul. 07)

Accounting Department, Shihezi University, Xinjiang Province (Sept. 00- Jul. 04)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: My parents have 3 children. My elder brother is 7 years older than me, whose highest education is primary school. He is now working as peasant worker in our hometown, and he's married and got two kids. He earns 20 or 30 thousand *yuan* each year. My younger sister is 3 years younger than me. When both she and I were in school, the economic condition of our family was really uptight. So she voluntarily said that she would drop out, in order to let me keep reading. In that condition, I think it was not totally impossible for our family to raise two children in school. Actually she was a good student, and I have always encouraged her to go to school. But she voluntarily dropped out of school after finishing junior middle school for the sake of me, which was a pity of my life. As for my parents, they are ordinary peasants. They have a field of 10 *mu* (Chinese unit of area, $1mu \approx 666.7m^2$) in our village, and they could earn 5 or 6 thousand *yuan* through doing farming work together. My mother is in better healthy condition and she could do some odd job, which would bring extra earning of 3 or 4 thousand *yuan* to our family. My father used to doing odd job at spare time too, when he was younger. But the economic condition of our family has decreased since my father got sick and was not able to do odd job at his spare time. That's the basic information of my family. As for myself, I received primary education in the school of our village, and then I went to county for junior middle school. When I was graduated from junior middle school at the year of 1997, technical secondary school was not longer in fashion as it used to be, since it became harder for its graduates to find a job. So in my class, only several students went to technical secondary school and all good students have applied for senior middle school. I was succeeded in being enrolled by Yanggao No. 1 middle school which is a key middle school of our county.

Q: You were a good student then, weren't you?

A: I was not the top one, but a studious one. There were about 50 students in my class of junior

middle school, but only 7 or 8 were enrolled by the key senior middle school which was a low proportion. In my class of senior middle school which is a key school in our county, there were also about 50 students, but only 20 per cent of them were successful of being enrolled by college and university. If students who went to junior college were accounted too, the proportion was still no higher than 80 per cent. When I was in senior middle school, I studied without any purpose and I had no idea of what kind of university that I wanted to go to. Nowadays, students have gotten detailed information of some universities and decide which one to apply for when they are still in middle school. But I only began to think about that when I was going to fill my college application form.

Q: Have your parents kept encouraging you to keep reading?

A: No. They are just peasants, and the only thing that they could do is to try their best to afford me for schooling. They know very little about study, since both of them have just primary education. I had to depend on myself when I was making my decision of which university to apply for. I was enrolled by Shihezi University of Xinjiang Province (in western China). I chose that university, because I thought I was remote enough. I was quite blind-minded when I was filling my college application form, and all I wanted to do was to go as far as I can.

Q: Why did you want to leave home and go as far as you could?

A: One reason is that my notes were high enough to go to nearby and good-qualified university. The other reason is that I wanted to see the outside world. At that time, Datong City, the capital of my Shanxi Province, was the furthest place that I have ever been to. I have never left my provinces. That's the reason that I apply for Shehezi University of Xinjiang Province, and I chose to learn Economics. Every students of science wanted to study in Computer Science and I did not want to follow them, and I noticed that students of both science and art could apply for Economics Department. I thought that was special, so I chose it with no other reference. After studying two years of introduction courses in Economic Department, all students had a chance to choose their major from three fields which were accounting, marketing and economics. I still have no plan for my future, and I chose to study in accounting because this field had the best teachers in my department.

Q: Did you study hard in your university?

A: Not so studious, but OK, and I also joined Students Union and participated in some activities. I began to think about my future in the third grade, and I realized it would very hard to find a job after my graduation, especially in Xinjiang Province. Xinjiang University and Shihezi University are the two best universities in Xinjiang Province, though there are other universities and colleges. Since my university is prestigious, the employment rate of its graduates is comparatively high. But Xinjiang is a remote province in economic-backward western China, so it has not much job vacancies for fresh graduates. It has become harder and harder for university graduate to find a job there. About 40 per cent of students of Shihezi University come from other province just like me, and most of them might have the same reason as me when they were applying for this university, that is to leave home and see the outside world. Poor marks in National College Entrance Exam might be another reason for most of us. After students like us have graduated from Shihezi University, Xinjiang job market could not offer job vacancies for so many students, so we have to go to other provinces and try our luck. In my fourth grade, I went to Xi'an City of Shaanxi Province, Guangzhou City and Shenzhen City of Guangdong Province to look for chance.

Q: How much was your tuition and where did it come from?

A: The tuition in my university was low, just 800 *yuan* for each year, because the life standard in Xinjiang Province is low and my university is not a key one. My parents paid tuition for me, 3200 *yuan* for four years. I have won once second-level and several times third-level scholarships, but I have never obtained first-level scholarship. But the scholarship was very little, just the second-level was just 70 *yuan*. Besides that we got subsidy too, but just 20 *yuan* each year. The economic condition of Xinjiang Province is lower than the national standard, so in my university the scholarship and subsidy are lower too. I had an idea when I was in university, a very normal idea that everybody has, that is to find a job in developed city. So I went to Guangzhou City of Guangzhou Province to look for chance. After staying for half a month, I lost my hope and could not hold anymore. Shihezi University was unrecognized in other provinces, so I could hardly find a job. Then I went to Shenzhen City of Guangdong Province. I could not find a steady position there, so I served as an intern in some company in order to remain in Shenzhen. My story went like this: after working as an intern for one month in Shenzhen, the result of my graduate candidate test came out and I was enrolled by Dongbei University of Finance and Economics of Dalian City, Liaoning Province. I did poor in English test, just got 53 per cent points. But then the passing line was publicized, my English mark were just 2 points above it. I did it any way. My plan at that time was: if I failed in graduate candidate test and could not find a steady job in Shenzhen after another month, I could go back to Xinjiang and stay there. Though the job market of Xinjiang is tight, it is not difficult for students of Shihezi University who majored in accounting to get a job.

Q: What kind of job did you look for in Shenzhen and Guangzhou of Guangdong Province?

A: Jobs relative to accounting. But there are too many high-qualified universities in Guangdong Province, just like in Beijing.

Q: You prepared for graduate candidate test and applied for job at the same time?

A: They were two ways out for me. I thought if I succeed in graduate candidate test, I would keep reading, otherwise I had to work. I made two plans, because the chance for me to go to graduate school of other university was thin. There were about 80 students in my apartment who majored in accounting. No, I would not narrow down to only the students of accounting field; let me talk about the whole apartment. There were about 250 students in the apartment, among them 50 students entered for the Graduate Candidate Test, but only 7 of them applied for graduate schools in other universities. Some applied for Zhongnan University of Finance and Economics, some applied for Remin University, and I applied for Dongbei University of Finance and Economics. In that year, I was the only one that succeeded in being enrolled by the graduate schools in other universities. After staying 4 years in a remote area like Shihezi, we all want to move to a better place, no matter to work, or better, to study.

Q: When you decided to go on reading, have you ever thought about that it might bring some economic pressure to your family?

A: There would be more pressure certainly, since common people don't have much earning. The economic condition of my family became uptight when I was in Shihezi university, but not too uptight. I have not done many part-time jobs, maybe because I am not a capable person. The part-time jobs I did were drudgery, like I once worked as fish catcher in Madasi Reservoir of Xinjiang Province. My daily salary is 15 *yuan*, and I worked for 20 days. Then I made a trip to Turpan, a big city of Xinjiang Province, and spent my earning out. Most of my spending in

university was offered by my parents.

Q: How much is your tuition for graduate study?

A: That is 22,000 *yuan* for two and a half years. My parents paid that for me too, so I felt shamed.

Q: Did your parents approve of your decision of going to graduate school? Have they ever mentioned to you that you should find a job and earn some money?

A: No. They give me freedom to choose by myself, and they always trust me and support me by my side. But I have made a thorough consideration of the economic pressure of my family before I decide to keep reading, and I believe it is the right choice.

Q: If you failed in your first try of Graduate Candidate Test, would you try for the second time?

A: Definitely no. If I failed and could not find a job in Shenzhen City, I would go back to Xinjiang Province and apply for a job there. That was my plan. Now I have finished my graduate study. Though I don't have so much human capital as graduates of those famous universities in Beijing, I want to find a job and stay in Beijing. My graduate major in Dongbei University of Finance and Economics is Quantitative Economics which is about model building, etc.

Q: I think you have a better idea of your future when you were applying for graduate school, so why did you choose this major?

A: I picked it up by myself. Once I did a project with my professor in undergraduate school, in which I made a touch upon Quantitative Economics. I thought it was a kind of high technology, and I got interested in it. So when I have decided to attend advanced study, I tried to find one with graduate major of Quantitative Economics. One of my former classmates was in Dongbei University of Finance and Economics then, and I asked him whether his university got this graduate major. He said "Yes", and then I just made my choice without any comparison with other universities. I might be still a little blindfold this time. Actually the employment future of this major is not so bright, since it is comparatively new. We graduates feel very high pressure to find a job this year. There has been high pressure for the graduates of this major in last year. It has been the same case even for the graduates of this major of Central University of Finance and Economics. In 2005, most of those graduates of this prestigious university signed employment contract by April. However, in 2006, there were still a group of students looking for job by August. And it becomes worse this year. Besides Dongbei University of Finance and Economics has a disadvantage of location compared with universities of Beijing, since it is situated in Dalian City, a big city of Liaoning Province of Northeastern China. Though it is a specialized university with long history and once got high achievement in science, it lost its resplendency in the industrialization process of education. Now human resources flow more frequently among universities, and many of its professors have gone to bigger cities like Beijing for better development. Students of this university also want to go to Beijing. Why don't we want to stay in Dalian City? Actually it is city with high-expenditure but low-income, though it is a beautiful city by sea. So most students of this university who comes from other provinces want to leave that city after graduation and find a job in other cities, but most students of northeastern China want to remain. Students like me who are from the North take Beijing as their dream place to dwell and develop, while students of the South would like to go to Shanghai or Shenzhen. But for graduate students of Quantitative Economics, it is not so easy to find a suitable job, since this major is comparatively new and too specialized.

Q: Have you ever thought about go on to PhD study, in order to mitigate the high pressure of

employment?

A: Never. I have no interest at all, moreover my English is poor and I heard that English course of PhD study is very tough. All I want is to find a decent job in Beijing. I have many former classmates who also try to stay here, so due to them life in Beijing would not be so bored.

Q: Have you attended job fair?

A: I apply job mainly through Internet. I browse want ads in Internet, and send my resume to companies through e-mail. I also attend job fair in campus, which is organized by university. But I do not go to job fairs of the society, because they are just for tickets sale. Such job fairs don't pay much attention on the need of applicators, but just go like a show. I attended several time, but it was a kind of waste. In 2006 year, I have worked as apprentice for half a year in Xinhua News Agency. I got the information of this internship also through Internet. I believe this experience would help with my job application, but it doesn't go smooth.

Q: What kind of work unit are you looking for?

A: Influenced by other people' opinion, I want to go to state-own enterprises or institutes, but I think the probability is not high. I just want a steady job of whatever company, so I could feed myself and rent a shelter in Beijing. I don't have much requirement as other students who are graduated in Beijing. The quality and fame of my university is not so high, and I am not such a capable person, so I cannot ask for too much. A shelter in Beijing is my first goal, and others come later. It would be marvelous if I could find a job in state-own enterprises or institutes and obtain a permanent resident quota of Beijing (*hukou*), since *hukou* is still very important for people's life chance in China. But that is just a hope.

Q: If you cannot find a job in Beijing by July, what would you do?

A: I've never considered that, because I cannot foresee my future. I would just keep trying. But I definitely don't want to go back to Dalian City.

Q: If you get a chance to work in state-own enterprises or institutes, how much is your expected salary?

A: Everybody has his own expectation, but mine is lower than students graduated from universities in Beijing. I just read an investigation of expected salary, and it said graduates of Beijing universities expect a monthly salary of 3500 to 4000 *yuan*. I might have more flexibility concerning expected salary.

Q: Do your parents have any suggestion for your job application?

A: No. How could they make a suggestion, if they know nothing of this big city?

14. Ai, Ning

Gender : Male

Born in : some village of Datong area, Shanxi Province, China

Siblings : one younger sister

Highest Education : Bachelor of Arts

Educational History :

*Finance Department, Central University of Finance and Economics (Sept. 01- Jul. 05)
working experience :*

China National Instruments Import & Export Group Cooperation (Instrimpex for short

) (Jul. 07 -)

Q: First, I would like to know some information of your family, such as the number of your household, the graduation of your parents, and the economic condition of your family.

A: My father, my mother, myself, and my younger sister. My father is an intellectual and he was graduated from junior college, while my mother is illiterate, which is a big contrast. I went to school at the age of 4, but my schooling path was very devious. I was born in the time of planned economy, and our village is very small and chained with dated tradition. Though my father is well educated, influence by big environment, there are manly shackles and my way of schooling was not smooth at all. I was sent to local gym team to play gymnastics when I was 5 years old, maybe because my parents wanted me to find certain career and future in this direction. But it failed, and I sent back to school again. After finishing my secondary education, I failed in my first try of national university entrance examination, so I had to wait and prepare for one more year to get to university. Then I was enrolled by a university of Beijing.

Q: what's your father's occupation?

A: He's a civil servant. I got non-agricultural *hukou* since I was a kid, so did my younger sister. But we live in villages and posses fields. In my family, only my mother is with agricultural *hukou*.

Q: But according to the regulations, children should follow the category of their mothers' *hukou*, shouldn't they?

A: I used to wondering that, too. I don't now why my sister and I got non-agricultural *hukou*. Maybe my father attained that for my sister and I through his power, for some concern of our future. But I never asked, and it is meaningless now. Still my family get a field of 9 *mu* (Chinese unit of area, $1mu \approx 666.7m^2$). I used to working in fields, too. My parents are still living in our village, but my mama does most part of farming, since my dad has to go to office every day and is often on business trip.

Q: So, the economic income of your family comes from both your father's salary and agricultural earning in the field. Does that mean your family has a comparatively high income in your village?

A: Right, it should be these two sources. Our village is very close to the city, not remote at all. My family always encourages children to go to school. There is not much furniture in my home, but it got several big bookshelves. All those books belong to my father and he loves book reading. But because of the Cultural Revolution, my father just got the chance to go to junior college, so he desired that his children could receive education in real universities. He was often on business trips, and he liked to visit famous universities in each city. When I was a kid, sometimes he brought me along with his in those trips, such as several trips to Beijing. I have visited all best universities of Beijing when I was a little boy. My father said to me at that time. "It would be wonderful if you could be enrolled by any one of those universities when you were grown up."

Q: Do your parents make a difference s there any difference between you and your sister concerning education?

A: No. The way of education is very open in my family. My sister and I were only supervised and urged to learn when we were in primary school, like my father would check our homework. Once we were at the level of secondary education, he never intervened our learning. Other

parents would always ask questions like “How’s your recent exams”, “At what place is your exam notes in your whole class”, “Do you have a plan”. He even didn’t ask for my intension of college application. I showed my college application form to him after I have totally filled it out. He had a look, and said. “You should enter for Renmin University of China, but not Peking University.” He just commend for this one sentence. He never intervened our learning. My sister was enrolled by college in last year, but her marks were not so good and she could not come to Beijing for higher education.

Q: In which year were you enrolled by college? And by which college?

A: At the year of 2001, by Finance Department, of Central University of Finance and Economics. I failed in my first try of National College Entrance Examination. Sometime I feel like life is a game, so I would do things according to my own interest. Though I learned hard in senior middle school, I lacked some concentration. So the result of my first try of National College Entrance Examination was very poor, I received an enrollment letter from some nameless college, and I did go. I stayed for another year in senior middle school to prepare the Examination again, but this time I failed to be enrolled by my first choice which is Peking University, and that’s why I came to Central University of Finance and Economics.

Q: Did you feel high pressure when you failed to go up to the next grade and had to stay in middle school for another year?

A: Not at all. I was very happy at that time. I would clean our dormitory with my roommates after we got up. Then together we would recite English, read ancient Chinese prose, do mathematic, and go to classes. When all classes were finished, we would play some little gambling, and the one who lost would buy breakfast for all of us. Sometime we went out to near-by restaurants for dinner, ordered a bowl of noodles which was very cheap for each of us, and drank some white wine together. That was really a happy period.

Q: Did you made your own decision to learn for one more year in middle school? And what’s your concern when you apply for colleges for the second time?

A: It was a hard decision. I was enrolled by certain college in the first year, but it was such a nameless one. At that time I desired to go to college and I felt it was a shame to postpone for another year, when all my classmates will leave for higher education. Honestly I felt that I have lost my face. But deeply I am very material and I though that it would be very hard to find a job after graduation from that kind of anonymous college. I hesitated a lot in those days, and my family gave me free will to choose. They would give me the money for college tuition if I decided to go, and they would also have no second opinion if I decided to stay and learn for another year. Basically I made my choice myself after long and serious consideration, that I would like to wait for another year and struggle for another time. In my second try of National College Entrance Examination, Peking University was my first choice for university application. I should have done that, only if that accident did not happen. When I was filling my college application form, according to my previous exam result I was pretty sure that even if I could not be enrolled by my first choice Peking University, Central University of Finance and Economics would definitely matriculate me. As for the departments of Central University of Finance and Economics, I would prefer to go to Finance Department. I chose this department, because I accidentally read a piece of report in newspaper which was brought by my father from his office. The report said that venture and opportunity co-exist in finance business at present, which made me realize that it was an interesting business. Actually I have planned to study in Marketing

Department, because I have great interest in trade. But according to list of enrollment marks of National College Entrance Examination in the last year, Marketing Department was only No. 8 or 9, while Finance Department was No.2 of Central University of Finance and Economics. Besides, my family did not want me to study in business administration nor marketing, since my father thought they were not good. That is why I chose finance as my major, and I like my major very much in college years. Though 4 years was too short to capture the soul of finance business, and I only got some instruction knowledge in college, I thought it was a very interesting and useful business.

Q: Did you study hard in university?

A: I lost in my first try of National College Entrance Examination which means I wasted one year, and I failed to be enrolled by Peking University in my second try, so I was pretty depressed at that time. Besides, all freshmen were sent to a remote and small-sized subsection of Central University of Finance and Economics to live and study. That subsection locates in northern outskirt of Beijing, and it is no bigger than the playground of my senior middle school and is surrounded by farmland. I felt so depressed in the first several months of college life, that I kept thinking that I should get out of here and try again in National College Entrance Examination. Later I considered that I had no advantage in age to try for the third time, while I was already several years older than my classmates, furthermore my family had worried about me a lot. I realized that as a grown man, I should not be too impulsive, so I decided to remain, but still I was confused of my future. During that period, I had a strong intention to quit school and do some small-sized business by myself. I know I was quite naive at that time, but then I believed I was mature already and had the capability to fulfill my dream. So in my first several months in college, I was depressed and absent-minded in study. After that period, I came to think that my major was very interesting and study intently. Though I had been focused on study in later college life, my remark never went high. There were 50 students in my class, and I once listed No. 35 in my class for one semester final examination, which was my best record. Most of the time, I listed in the last five ones.

Q: You said you like your major very much, what are the reasons that you could not distinguish yourself in exams? Did you pay much attention on hobbies? And did you do part-time jobs in college?

A: I believed that I was quite intent in studying, however I just could not make good place in exams. As for hobbies, I read lots of book, of very kinds of fields. Therefore I have some information in many fields, but no profound knowledge in any one of them. I have also worked for one year in Student Union. Certainly I did part-time job, too. For 3 years I have been working as tutor. In one winter at every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, I rode bike from my university to a pupil's home in Wu Ke Song which is very far away to earn 30 Yuan per hour. I could take Bus 849 directly from my campus to the pupil's home and it cost 4 Yuan, but I begrudged every penny spent. I have also done some translation work. I used to translate abstract of paper and earn 7 Yuan for each one piece. When I went back home for holidays, I would also work as teachers of evening class to teach pupils English. In order to prepare for graduate candidate test, I stop doing part-time jobs in the second semester of my third year in university.

Q: You earn your own allowance through doing part-time jobs, right? Then how much is your tuition? And was that a big economic burden to your family?

A: My tuition was 5000 Yuan per year, which was not easy for my family, but it was OK. My family used savings to pay tuition for me, and they didn't need borrow debt. Moreover, there is not much expenditure for my family, and my parents are both very sparing with spending.

Q: Why did you want to enter for graduate candidate test in your third year of college?

A: In order to go to Peking University. I applied for it again, but I failed once again.

Q: Did you prepare the graduate candidate test and do the job application at the same time?

A: No, but it really was hard to concentrate in exam at that time. At that time, some working units have gradually come to our university to pick up students, and it was not difficult for students of our major to find jobs. It was hard to stay calm and focus in exam preparation after seeing some of my classmates have already got desirable jobs. But I told myself that I must hold on and put all my attention in exam preparation and I would think about other thing later. Once I saw the result of exam in which I failed, I knew it meant all my efforts ended with zero and I zealously started job application. I began working in Instrimpex since July of 2005, which is a state-owned enterprise, not such a good one, but not too bad. It came to my university and asked for graduate. I had really a rough time in trying to find a job, mainly because of my poor marks. Banks, foreign-capital enterprises and state-owned enterprises all require applicators to have good achievements in exams. Everyone has a preference, and I preferred to find a job in Beijing. After studying here for 4 years, I think it was a suitable city for the young to develop. It was so so difficult for me to find a job, and the torture and suffering I felt at that time was totally unbearable. Actually I was the last one in my class to sign the employment contract. There are several reasons that might influence my job application, firstly my poor marks, secondly my outlook (be small in stature), and thirdly bad luck. Some people believe in superstition, I am not, but I was really ill-fated in job application process. Understatedly I participated in more than 80 job interviews of various companies, from super-sized enterprise to small counting house with ten employees. There was always an idea in my mind that I have no fate to stay in this city, so I made my plan B by May. I have borrowed 20 thousand Yuan, to do some small-sized trade with friends, like selling teaching materials from Beijing to my hometown. I really went to book market to collect information, went home to see about shop location and rent. A detailed plan B I have made, but later this work unit (Instrimpex) asked me to do a body check. So relieved I felt, since doing body check meant I was accepted by this unit. At 24th May I signed my employment contract with this unit, which was especially late.

Q: Is your unit able to obtain a permanent resident quota for you in Beijing (*hukou*)?

A: Yes, it is. But I did not pay much attention for that. Firstly I need a job so I can feed myself, and be independent in Beijing. Actually I have big ambition (laughing). What I am doing is just a temporary job, and sooner or later I would do my own business. I have signed a three-year-long contract with my company, which I think is suitable for me. I have almost worked for 2 years here, and I work as stockbroker for some individuals at the same time. I would resign this job when I well prepared for my own business. Otherwise I have to remain here.

Q: How's the working environment in your state-owned enterprise?

A: I think you have to build your environment by yourself. Though the big environment is important, you have to create your own small one. You would sink low in the most prestigious enterprise, if you did not work hard enough. What I mean is that self-awareness, introspection and spontaneity are very important for your development. One characteristic of state-owned

enterprise is that it does not run as orderly and tense as banks and foreign-capital enterprise. Its employees are not put with much pressure in work, especially in some service branch of enterprise. However, I think we young people should learn and make progress all the time by ourselves. I would always suggest fresh clerks to pay more attention on learning and improving themselves, and they should not just stand in a line to wait for chance falling upon them. You should not act saggy even you were in poor big environment; otherwise you would never improve yourself.

Q: What kind of business do you want to make after resign from this enterprise? Have you ever thought about apply for another job, like to work in foreign-capital enterprise?

A: When I am capable, I would quit this job and do my own business. I would work for no other enterprise, but just for myself. I might have my own company, or might accumulate my capital in other forms.

Q: Do your father have any suggestion for your future?

A: He is very open and never intervenes in what I plan to do, and he just keeps reminding me to cherish everything I've got. His boy has grown up and got his own plan, so my father has faith in me. As a foreigner in Beijing, I feel higher pressure than local resident, so I can not live aimlessly.

Q: Have you ever thought about attending in advanced studies, like entering for graduate candidate test again?

A: Not for the present. I see advanced studies as a path of knowledge learning and ability improving, not as a gangplank to go to better jobs. When I have done some achievement in my own business one day, I might attend in advanced studies, but maybe not in the form of entering for graduate candidate test. Because I realized that I am very naive and lack of knowledge, and I still have big potential.

Questionnaire

Date.....Location.....Duration.....

I Basic Information

1. Name.....Gender.....Birth Year.....
2. Hometown location
3. Number of family households
4. Whether are you a Party member? (If Yes, in which year did you join?)

II Family Background

1. Father's occupation.....
Father's age.....
Father's schooling.....
Do you think your father attaches importance to children's education? Why and how?
Do you think your father favors boys over girls for education?
2. Mother's occupation.....
Mother's age.....
Mother's schooling.....
Do you think your mother attaches importance to children's education? Why and how?
Do you think your mother favors boys over girls for education?
3. Number of your siblings.....
You brothers and sisters' schooling.....
Have any of your siblings dropped out off school at early age? Why?
4. Do you live with your grandparents at childhood?
5. Are there many young people of your hometown have gone to cities for higher education? Do your fellow village people pay attention to children's education?

III Personal Educational History

1. Highest academic degree.....
Graduated from which college.....
Graduated in which year.....
2. Educational history
3. How did you raise the educational fee throughout years? Have you borrowed money or applied for stipend for it?
4. Do you think you are a studious student at school? What is the biggest problem you have met for educational attainment?
5. Are there many urban classmates in your class? Do you feel a gap between urban and rural students?

6. What are your references and concerns when you were filling out your college application form and making your choices? Why did you choose your college and major?
7. What was your first impression of college when you went to city for higher education? Did you go well with your urban classmates?
8. How much was your annual fee and boarding charges in college? Was that a big amount of money for your rural family? Has that affected your brother's or sister's educational attainment?
9. How often did you visit your parents annually in college years?
10. Have you done part-time jobs in college years? Have you won scholarships? Have you participated in activities of Students Union?
11. Did you study hard in college? Have you joined the Party? When did you begin to plan your future path after graduation?
12. Did you pursue advanced study after college graduation? Why?

IV Working Experience

1. First job after college graduation
 Work unit:.....
 Post:.....
 Fromyear to.....year
2. Present job
 Work unit:.....
 Post:.....
 From.....year to.....year
3. Through which channel did you get the information of your first job?
4. Which factors did you pay attention to in your first job hunting process? And which one was the most important?
5. Did you achieve hukou conversion from agricultural type to non-agricultural through first-time job hunting?
6. Did you think urban classmates had advantages over rural ones for job application?
7. Which factors were important for job application when you were hunting for your first job?