

Double Bane or Double Boon?
The Effects of Gender and
the Household Registration System (*hukou*)
on Female Migrant Workers'
Employment Opportunities and
Earnings in Contemporary Urban China

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ABSTRACT

There are several diverse types of employment discrimination in China's labour market. Two of the most significant are differentials in employment opportunity and differentials in earnings by gender and household registration system (*hukou*). Thus, female migrant workers are doubly disadvantaged as victims of discrimination against both rural people and women. This thesis uses mixed research methods (both quantitative and qualitative approaches) to explore four questions related to this dual disadvantage: First, in the public sphere, are those with higher socioeconomic status (i.e., urbanites in China) willing to allow equal opportunities and rights for female migrant workers?¹ Second, in the labour market, is there any evidence to demonstrate that gender and household registration system interact to shape female migrant workers' employment opportunities and earnings? Third, still in the labour market, if a significant interaction is found between *hukou* and gender, the female migrant worker group will be compared to the members of three other groups: male migrant workers, urban males, and urban females. The following question will then be investigated: Do female migrant workers experience double² (additive assumptions), less than double or more than double (intersectional assumptions) jeopardy in employment discrimination (opportunities and earnings) in 2003 and in 2006? Last, what are the trends in employment discrimination against this group over time? In an exploration of these four questions, this thesis offers theoretical, methodological and practical contributions to an understanding of female migrant workers' experiences in urban China. It is found that Chinese urbanites indeed do not want to share social goods, attributes and services with female migrant

¹ My published co-authored paper entitled 'Unfinished Promise: Socioeconomic Status and Attitude toward Equality for Migrant Workers in Urban China' (*Prairie Metropolis Centre Working Paper Series*) has discussed a similar topic, that is, do those with higher socioeconomic status (i.e., Urbanites in China) have any inclination to create equal opportunities and rights for the migrant worker group as a whole? Some of the material has been previously published or referred to in my other papers. Considering this thesis itself is expected to be an original contribution, the text of the material has been reworded with references, or quoted and cited directly from my own papers and included in the bibliography.

² The reason for relating female migrant workers to double jeopardy is that they have double seemingly marginalized social categories of identity of being both female and rural people.

workers. This hostility and intolerance in the public sphere have affected female migrant workers' access to employment opportunities and earnings. In most cases, they have suffered more than double jeopardy with respect to employment opportunities and earnings. The trends in these two types of employment discrimination are mixed. Employment discrimination against these female migrant workers both in public sphere and in the labour market not only points to the social exclusion based on ascribed features (i.e., *hukou* and gender), but also reveals the nature of China's transitional economies that involve both institutional and socio-cultural barriers to social equality.

Keywords: female migrant workers, gender, *hukou*, employment discrimination.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Since 1978, China has initiated three decades of economic reform attempting to shift China from the Maoist socialist model (1949–76) characterized by central planning to a socialist market economy (Fan, 2003b). This historical transformation has contributed greatly to China's economy expansion and has brought about many changes in labour market in urban China, in particular, with respect to labour force dynamics and population processes (Yang & Guo, 1999).

No doubt, China's comparative advantage in the number of its labour force can be a primary reason for such a great economic growth that has stunned the world (Li & Li, 2012). However, many common people, especially workers and peasants have not benefited from this enormous economic growth, and instead, they have been deprived of their equal access to social goods, attributes and services, as well as their basic labour rights (Chan, 1998), such as employment and wages for jobs demanding the same level of skills as their urban counterparts.

This socialist transformation has also brought about great changes in regional economies, produced new push and pulls forces for migration, and promoted relaxation of migration controls, all of which created greater possibilities and opportunities for non-governmental-induced internal migration in China (Fan, 1996; Li & Li, 2012; Yang & Li, 1995). These improvements in labour force dynamics and magnitudes of population movement have engendered a new era of migration in China (Fan, 1996, 1999; Yang & Guo, 1999). Rural migrant workers (*nongmin gong*), who move from less developed regions to more developed areas for jobs, have emerged as a marginalized group in urban China (Chen, Liu, & Xie, 2010; Zhu, 2010).

There is currently a massive rural-to-urban labour force transfer that is occurring in big cities, due to strong demand for female migrant labour. This is especially true for those new export-oriented industries of the coastal regions, and female migrant workers have emerged as cheap labour (Chant & Radcliffe, 1992; Cheng & Hsiung, 1992; Davin, 2005; Fan, 1999, 2002;

Population Census Office, 2002; Yang, 2001). The female migrant workers are estimated about between 30 and 40 per cent of the migrant workers population (Davin, 2005; Jiang, Qi, Li, & Ren, 2008; Wu & Lu, 2007). But its proportion in the whole migrant worker population varies depending on regions (Jiang, Qi, Li & Ren, 2008). Female migrant workers have increasingly emerged as a distinct social group, contributing to a rapidly growing proportion of the already huge numbers of rural migrant workers in urban China.

Due to the deep-rooted influence of the household registration system in China and their shared rural identities, both male and female migrant workers have commonly experienced discrimination in Chinese cities at both a general level (i.e., in the public sphere) and in the labour market (e.g., employment opportunities, earnings). In addition, the social exclusion that results from their immigrant identity not only involves the material deprivation, but also includes psychological marginalization and inequalities rationalized in society (Zhou, Wang & Chen, 2011). More specifically, as far as discrimination against them in the public sphere is concerned, migrant workers are typically named and categorized in negative terms in both academic and official discourse, and they face many day-to-day challenges through prejudice or discrimination from their urban counterparts who have sense of privilege (Pils, 2007; Nielsen, Nyland, Smyth, Zhang & Zhu, 2006, as cited in Zhou et al., 2011). As far as discrimination against them in the labour market is concerned, many urbanites' negative perceptions or even blatant hostility towards them have unfortunately translated into broader prejudice against migrant workers, and affected many dimensions of their employment, including access to employment and earnings. It is clear that discrimination against both male and female migrant workers is still prevalent among urbanites in contemporary urban China (Jacka, 2000; Wang, Li & Zhang, 2011), placing them in an in-between status -- currently living in the cities but still having a rural identity.

The majority of studies focusing on migrants as a whole in the urban labour market has been concerned with either issues prior to entry into the urban labour market, for example, determinants of their rural-to-urban migration (Chen & Coulson, 2002; Li & Zahniser, 2002), or after entering urban labour market, namely, either positive or negative impacts of their rural-to-urban migration on individuals themselves (Chan, 1996; Solinger, 1999; Wen & Wang, 2009), communities (Chen et al., 2010), or society (Chai & Chai, 1997; Goodkind & West, 2002; Shen,

2000; Shen, Wong, & Feng, 2002; Zhu, 2002). However, the process through which they engage in the urban labour market, that is, their access to or opportunities for employment has been rarely examined.

In addition, there has been a lack of focus by Chinese academic researchers on both the excluders and the excluded. An exception is a comparative study on barriers to social integration between migrant workers and Chinese immigrants in Canada (Zong, Wang, & Li, 2011), which have shifted their focus from a traditionally one-way approach that merely emphasizes individual barriers to immigrants (e.g., language and cultural value) with the terms like ‘assimilation’, ‘acculturation’, ‘adaptation’, and ‘adjustment’, to a two-way approach, which emphasizes structural and social barriers (e.g., unequal treatments and discrimination at institutional and individual levels), using the terms like ‘social acceptance’, ‘social inclusion’, ‘social exclusion’, and ‘social tolerance’. It is through this focal shift that they have found similarities shared by migrant workers in China and Chinese immigrants in Canada – low level of identity recognition and little sense of belonging to host city/country, each of which is caused primarily by structural barriers. This study (Zong et al., 2011) has encouraged implicitly a perspective that involves both urbanites’ attitudes and migrant workers individuals’ characteristics, and their interactions as well. Given that there are numerous studies from the perspective of migrant workers, an investigation of the advantaged group, primarily consists of urbanites, and an examination of their ideology of egalitarianism towards disadvantaged groups (i.e., migrant workers) (Zhou et al., 2011), in particular, towards female migrant workers is needed.

While both males and females, due to the same rural residence status, share some discriminatory experiences occurring in the public sphere and the labour market, their actual experiences in the cities may sometimes differ from each other. Compared with their male counterparts, female migrant workers have suffered unique discrimination because of their additional gender identity (Goyette & Xie, 1999) and the effect of another institutional mechanism in China: gender ideology. As for their experiences in the labour market, according to many scholars, a combination of the *hukou* institution and traditional gender ideology has formed an ‘exploitative migrant labour regime’ ‘characterized by rural-urban and gender segmentation, low wages, poor work conditions, long hours, and minimal disruption to production’ (Fan, 2004, p. 301), making

female migrant workers exposed to discrimination and exploitation in the urban labour market (Chen, 2005; Song, 2007). In other words, female migrant workers are in the urban labour market that includes two types of segmentation. First, there is a *hukou*-based segmentation, that is, segmentation between urbanites and rural migrants in terms of individuals' *hukou* identity (rural/urban); second, there is a gender-based segmentation, that is, segmentation between these female migrant workers and their male counterparts in terms of gender (Fan, 2003). Thus, it is not surprising to see the pattern that female migrant workers are mostly concentrate in job that involve low skills and low earnings (e.g., domestic work), whereas male migrant workers dominate in physically demanding jobs (e.g., construction, manual loading and transporting) (Fan, 2000; Guo, 2010; Jiang et al., 2008; Tu and Chen, 2010; Yang, 2001). Several Chinese scholars name female migrant workers as 'the marginalized group among the marginalized group' (Song, 2007; Yang, 2001). Yu and Shan, who assume that a turbulent social regression occurs during the process of China's rapid economic transformation, compare female migrant workers to those who are particularly 'exploited in the world's greatest sweatshop' (2007, p. 76). The migration policy in China has provided some new opportunities for female migrant workers, but many changes are very limited and incomplete (Jiang, 2004).

Decades since late 1980s have witnessed an increased number of studies on Chinese labour migration, but studies that particularly focus on gender differences in the process of migration had been under-represented until 2000s (Davis, 1999; Jiang et al., 2008; Yang, 2001). Insufficient investigation of the interaction between migration and gender in China can be in part attributed to the basic assumption underlying theories of labour mobility and population movement, which assumes that female migrant workers are mostly tied to reproduction and domestic work, and thus they mainly migrate for social and familial reasons rather than economic reason, and meanwhile they play a less important role in migration than male counterparts (Gu & Jian, 1994, as cited in Fan, 2004b; Pedraza, 1991; Yang, 2001).

In these conventional studies dominated by male migrant workers, female migrant workers' particular characteristics have been ignored and treated as features of male migrant workers or of migrant population as a whole (Davis, 1999, p.22). For example, when examining labor market marginalization and employment discrimination faced by female migrant workers, many Chinese

researchers have frequently treated female migrant workers and their male counterparts equally, and there has been little exploration of the particular experiences of female migrant workers in the urban labour market (e.g., Cheng & Shi, 2006; Ding, 2009; Su & Zhou, 2005). In this sense, gender is only one of migrant workers' demographic indicators rather than a central theme to interpret migrant group (Fan, 2004b).

As the female migrant worker group has developed and formed its uniqueness, since the later twentieth century, feminism has gradually been included as an insightful perspective into immigration study, and produced a gendered migration theory and analytical framework (Yang, 2001). Nevertheless, criticized by Fan (2004b), among existing studies dealing with female migrant workers in urban labour market in China, researchers have primarily started analysis with a focus on male employees, and understood female migrant workers' employment experiences merely through simple comparison between the two gender groups (Ding, 1994; Gao, 2006; Li, 1994; Liu, 2007; Wei, 1995, as cited in Fan, 2004b; Xie, 2006; Zhu, 1994). Female labour migrants are found to have few access to employment opportunities (Chen & Qin, 2005; Guo, 2010; Tu & Chen, 2010), different occupations from (Cai, 1997; Davin, 1996a, 1996b, 1997, 1999; Guo, 2010; He & Gober, 2003), lower level of earnings (Cheng & Shi, 2006; Yang, 2001), and at the same time, they migrate for shorter distances (X. Yang, 1996; Y. Yang, 2001) and stay longer (Mallee, 1996) than their male counterparts.

Existing studies on experiences in either the public sphere or in the labour market focus on three social groups: the whole migrant worker population, females as a whole, or particular groups of female migrant workers. Key concepts, such as social exclusion and marginalization are frequently covered in these studies (Jiang & Hu, 2006; Li & Xiong, 2006; Wu & Lu, 2007; Wong Chang & He, 2007; Zhao, Ban, & Liang, 2007; Zhu, 2010). However, there have been very few studies systematically adopting the social exclusion theory, which is a theoretical approach that is specifically designed for marginalized social groups, as the theoretical framework for these studies. Even among few studies that use this theory to understand experiences of these three social groups (e.g., Hu, 2007; Jiang & Hu, 2006; A. Q. Li, 2007; Song, 2007), it normally works as neither a pragmatic theoretical tool; instead, it is treated only as a buzzword or jargon. Alternatively, some classic theories, such as labour market segmentation theory, social capital

theory, and human capital theory are frequently used to explain these marginalized social groups' experiences, without in-depth critical thinking.

In order to demonstrate the disparities between people in these marginalized groups and those in the mainstream in society, many existing studies have paid much attention to objective indicators (e.g., income), and still others, as criticized by Zhou and his colleagues (2011), with emphasis on subjective measures, have focused on psychological impacts from the perspective of victims of discrimination rather than from the standpoint of actors of discrimination. In other words, much emphasis has been given to the excluded rather than to those who exclude (Wang, Zong, & Li, 2012; Zhou, Wang, & Chen, 2011).

Moreover, while some previous studies have already identified intersections between *hukou* and gender and focused on female migrant workers' unique experiences (e.g., X. H. Jiang, 2003; Y. P. Jiang, 2003; Song, 2007; Wang, 2011), actual lives of these female migrant workers have rarely been studied using intersectional perspectives in China. For example, Fan has simultaneously considered *hukou* and gender throughout her studies on female migrant workers. On one hand, having realized that the state institutions (e.g., *hukou*) play a significant role in the transitional phase in China, and that they are also a key determinant of migrants' occupational opportunity and reward structure, Fan held that 'residence status [i.e. *hukou*] functions like ascribed attributes that have effects on labour-market returns independent of achieved attributes' (Fan, 2001, p. 479). On the other hand, her focus on gender differences to understand the labour market experiences has run through her recent works (Fan, 2003b). From her perspective, women's labour-market experiences and outcomes should be interpreted in the context of macro-level structures and forces that are gender-based in China's transitional economies (Chen, 2005; Ellis, Conway, & Bailey, 1996; Fan & Regulska, 2008). Although Fan has taken both *hukou* and gender into account for studies on female migrant workers, she has not explored the issue from the intersectional perspective. Thus, in essence, these two social categories of identity have still remained separate to some extent in her study. Nevertheless, her argument that the importance of contextualizing female migrant workers in a Chinese context cannot be ignored because both *hukou* and gender involve unique characteristics in transitional China (Fan, 2004a, 2004b) has definitely inspired me to locate my research into Chinese research context. Put simply, the

question of whether their experiences can be characterized as being equal to, less than, or more than ‘double jeopardy’³ has remained unsolved.

Employment earnings provide an example of the way in which these problems have remained unsolved. Despite combined effects of *hukou* and gender in the earnings determination process for female migrant workers, previous studies on earnings inequality have focused primarily either on urban-rural earnings inequality among Chinese residents as a whole (Tian, 2010; Wang, 2005; Xie, 2007; Xie & Yao, 2006) or on gender earnings inequality among urbanites (Shu and Bian, 2003) or among rural migrants (Gao, 2006; Liu, 2007; Meng, 1998a, 1998b; Wang, 2010; Xie, 2006). These studies, however, have arbitrarily separated these two dimensions (i.e., residence status, gender), and overlooked the significance of their intersection to affect labour market inequalities experienced by female migrant workers. They highlight the importance of each dimension in explaining variations in labour-market returns (e.g., income and benefits) among social groups, but ignore the importance of considering intersection.

Methodologically, while there has been an increased number of studies that on female migrant workers describing their lives and experiences in the city (e.g., Gaetano & Jacka, 2004; Jacka, 2006; X. H. Jiang, 2003; Y. P. Jiang, 2003; Song, 2007; Wang, 2011; Wang, Li & Zhang, 2011; Zhang, 2001), the majority of them have used qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews or ethnography. There are very few studies on female migrant workers in China quantitative methods or mixed methods in terms of a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods, in particular, from the intersectional perspective. As a result, none of them has explored the existence, degree, and trends of double jeopardy suffered by female migrant workers relative to their comparative group members using mixed research methods. Even with reference to one of the most prominent representative, Greenman and Xie’s quantitative investigation, ‘Double Jeopardy? The Interaction of Gender and Race on Earnings in the United States’ (2008) that attempts to examine the patterns of intra-group incomes inequality through the

³ ‘Double jeopardy’ in this thesis is defined as an individual who has double, triple or more interlocking social identities of category suffers the total amount of distinctive forms of disadvantage related to each of his/her stigmatized social identities of category (Greenman & Xie, 2008, p. 1218). ‘Double jeopardy’ responds to the additive assumptions (King, 1988, p. 47), which will be specifically explained in Chapter 3.

interaction of sex and race on incomes in the United States, we cannot give a definite answer to the question ‘to what extent do female migrant workers experience double jeopardy’. Thus, there is a need to introduce a benchmark to measure the degree of their double jeopardy. The details will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Practically, drawing on direct or indirect contacts and communications with many my distant relatives and friends, some of whom are female migrant workers and normally complain about the discrimination against them in various situations, I have developed an understanding of their diverse trajectory and unequal life chances in the urban society. Thus, it is necessary for researchers to enable the socially excluded group to be heard. The investigation of inequality and discrimination suffered by female migrant workers in both public sphere and employment in this thesis, in essence, demonstrates my concern about their labour rights and citizenship rights. Give the fact that discrimination is a type of ideology of inequalities, it is helpful to examine discrimination to find the solutions to eradicate or at least reduce unequal treatment caused by their double social categories of identity faced by these female migrant workers.

This thesis addresses four research questions: (1) (Chapter 5) In the public sphere, do those with higher socioeconomic status (i.e., urbanites in China) have any inclination to create equal opportunities and rights for the (female) migrant workers?⁴ (2) (Chapters 6 and 7) Existence: Is there any evidence to demonstrate that gender and the household registration system interact to shape female migrant workers’ employment opportunities and earnings in the labour market? (3) (Chapters 6 and 7) If a significant interaction is found between *hukou* and gender, the female migrant worker group will be compared to the members of three other groups: male migrant workers, urban males, and urban females. The following question will then be investigated: Do female migrant workers experience double⁵ (additive assumptions), less than double or more

⁴ As mentioned in Footnote 1, my published co-authored paper entitled ‘Unfinished Promise: Socioeconomic Status and Attitude toward Equality for Migrant Workers in Urban China’ (*Prairie Metropolis Centre Working Paper Series*) has discussed a similar topic, that is, do those with higher socioeconomic status (i.e., urbanites in China) have any inclination to create equal opportunities and rights for the migrant worker group as a whole?

⁵ The reason for relating female migrant workers to double jeopardy is that they have double seemingly marginalized social categories of identity of being both female and rural people.

than double (intersectional assumptions) jeopardy in employment discrimination (opportunities and earnings) in 2003 and in 2006? (4) (Chapters 6 and 7) Trends: If the case is either less or more than double jeopardy in each year, what are the trends in employment discrimination against this group between 2003 and 2006?

This thesis aims to achieve three contributions. First, theoretically, this thesis summarizes three primary elements in the conceptualization of social exclusion (i.e., ‘multidimensionality’, ‘dynamic’, and ‘two different sets of actors’), seeking not only to overcome the weak points of three classic theories dealing with inequality and exclusion issue but also to demonstrate the potentiality to explore the patterns, dynamics, and nature of unequal treatment, namely, discrimination in the public sphere. In particular, I employ the social exclusion theory in order to analyze discrimination against female migrant workers as a two-way process rather than one-way problem.

Most studies on intersectionality have been conducted in the European and North-American countries for women minorities, and thus it has been largely unknown whether intersectional theories and findings based on these settings and cultures can be applied to Asian context, in particular within socialist countries, like China. This thesis will examine theoretical debates between additive assumptions and intersectional assumptions, that is, whether the effects of each category of social identity can be interdependent or mutually exclusive. Through this examination, the thesis will contribute to existing intersectionality research, particularly for female migrant workers in China. Using the intersectional theory to explore female migrant workers’ experiences in the labour market has implicitly treated female migrant workers as a two-dimensional subject, instead of focusing on a single dimension that separates their double social categories of identity, females and migrant workers.

Thus, following the general theoretical framework organized by the social exclusion theory, which has critically synthesized three traditional literature relevant to social inequality and included three elements (i.e., multidimensionality, dynamic and two-party relationship) to examine experiences of female migrant workers in the public sphere in urban China, the

understanding of female migrant workers' discriminatory experiences in the labour market, in particular, with respect to their patterns, processes and nature can be guided by the intersectional theory. The specific theoretical framework will be represented in Chapter 3.

Second, methodologically, in contrast to most studies that use qualitative approaches and treat intersectionality as a theoretical paradigm only, this thesis will employ mixed methods (both qualitative and quantitative methods) and regard intersectionality also as an analytic tool. Specifically, this study will improve traditionally quantitative intersectional studies using interaction. In addition, with reference to Greenman and Xie's attempts, a two-by-two methodological model, to investigate the interaction of sex and race on incomes in the United States (2008), this thesis, by introducing two measures, 'actual status' and 'ideal status' and one ratio between, 'actual status to ideal status', will go a step further by proposing a benchmark to measure the degree to which female migrant workers experience double jeopardy, whereby giving an answer of 'equal to', 'less than' or 'greater than'. Through the comparison between results found in 2003 and in 2006, the paper will further explore the trends in employment discrimination against female migrant workers. While such methodological improvement speaks to special area studies, this thesis, as a snapshot, will also inform sociological investigation of other forms of inequality or discrimination in urban China.

Third, empirically, by taking advantage of a representative survey sample and a range of immediate communications with female migrant workers involved, this thesis will collect and accumulate a new body of information and data concerning inequality and discrimination in both public sphere and in the labour market, and thus contribute to the existing knowledge about this particular group. Accordingly, findings from this thesis may benefit both policy agents and those marginalized by labour market practice. On one hand, given that there is a strong tendency to embrace Kuznets curve⁶ and overlook social inequality and discrimination in the process of economic development, and that the amelioration of inequality and discrimination suffered by

⁶ Kuznets curve suggests that growing social inequality is an unsurprising phenomenon at initial phases of development, and assumes that social inequality implicitly represents individuals' variances in endeavor, experience, and capacity (Gustafsson, Shi, & Sicular, 2008). In essence, it rationalizes social inequality and treats it as an unavoidable consequence during the process of modernization and development (Zhang, Wu, & Sanders, 2007).

female migrant workers requires finding effective interventions at many different stages of the process in which this phenomenon occurs (Abrams, Julie, & Gordon, 2007), this thesis will inform several stakeholders (e.g., policy makers, enterprise management, service providers, and educational institutions) of the existence of severity of unequal distribution of life chances in both public sphere and labour market. On the other hand, this thesis, with its focus on institutional constraints, can validate the difficulties that many female migrant workers actually experience in the public sphere and in the labour market, and provide assurance that they are not alone in their victimization, even within their own subgroups. It is hoped that assurance may subsequently initiate a process whereby they connect with their intersecting identities in a manner that fosters resilience, strength, and empowerment, to strive for their collective labour rights and citizenship rights, and improve egalitarian ideology in urban China.

This thesis is organized as follows. I begin with a review of the current state of knowledge, including a brief historical description of two most fundamental and influencing institutional mechanisms, the household registration system (*hukou*) and gender ideology, that contribute to female migrant workers' experiences in both public sphere and in the labour market in urban China, interplay between these two mechanisms, and definitions to many key terms in this thesis, such as 'migrant workers', 'employment discrimination', 'employment inequality' and 'site, stages, and two subjects involved in employment inequality'. In the Theoretical Literature Chapter, there is a critical review of traditional literature relating employment inequality, including labour market segmentation theory, human capital theory, social capital theory, and then a comprehensive and coherent theoretical framework using the social exclusion theory is presented. A more specific theoretical perspective, the intersectional theory follows, with its origins, definition, central theoretical debates and metaphors, and empirical evidence in the labour market. This thesis then outlines in Chapter 4 a mixed data collection strategy, namely, quantitative (secondary analysis of nationally representative surveys) and qualitative methods (in-depth in-person interviews and documentary materials). The following three chapters, as the core in this thesis, respectively attempts to answer those primary four research questions: Chapter 5 explores the answer to Question 1, and both Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 try to give an answer to Question 2 to 4. Specifically, Chapter 5, in terms of the social exclusion theory and qualitative methods, explores urbanites' attitudes towards migrant workers as a whole and

towards female migrant workers in the public sphere in urban China, contributing to better understanding of what has been found about female migrant workers' experiences in the labour market in the following two chapters. Chapter 6 and 7 represent my efforts to explain female migrant workers' experiences in the urban labour market in China using the intersectional theory as theoretical perspective and using mixed approaches as methodological tool, and their existence, degree and trend as well. All these three chapters together contribute to the understanding of the patterns, process, and nature of inequality and discrimination suffered by female migrant workers relative to others, echoing what has been proposed in the general theoretical framework. Finally, this thesis closes with conclusions and implications, which is that employment discrimination experienced by these female migrant workers both in public sphere and in the labour market not only points to the social exclusion based on ascribed features, such as *hukou* and gender, but also reveals the nature of China's transitional economies that involve both institutional and socio-cultural barriers to social equality.

CHAPTER 2:

CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE IN DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY FOR FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS

Chapter 2 aims to provide readers with background information about discrimination and inequality experienced by female migrant workers in urban China. First, in terms of brief introduction of the household registration system (*hukou*), gender ideology, and interplay between these two mechanisms, this chapter offers a historical context to this thesis. Several basic and relevant definitions are then defined, including ‘migrant workers in China’, ‘employment discrimination’, ‘employment inequality’, and ‘site, stages and two subjects involved in investigation of employment inequality’.

2.1 Setting the Scene: Historical Context

During the process of economic restructuring to transform the planned economy into a socialist market economy and to adopt an open-door economic policy, Chinese economy has developed very quickly. According to the latest estimation of the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2011), China’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 47,156.4 billion yuan in 2011, and its annual increase from 2010 to 2011 is 9.2 per cent at comparable prices.

There is little doubt that such a rapid growth can be attributed to China’s 1978-2011 comparative advantage in its labour force (Li & Li, 2012). These decades have witnessed the unprecedented growth in migration population from rural to urban regions, and the emergence of a floating population, the majority of whom are rural migrant labourers (*nongmingong*), who have constituted as a new social group (Jacka, 2000; Wang, Li & Zhang, 2011).

Migrant workers’ movement from rural regions to the cities have definitely offered a necessary labour supply and contributed to long-lasting development in urban China (Li & Li, 2012). The

current massive labour force transfers from rural to urban areas through which migrant workers flood into cities forms an unprecedented scale the world has ever seen (Harvey, 2005), representing a key feature of contemporary urban China (Chan, 2010a; Goodkind and West, 2002; Li, Stanton, Fang & Lin, 2006), and are an indispensable part of China's urban economy and social progress (Jiang, 2004).

The latest estimate from scholars suggests that the number of migrant worker labour force has amounted to about 230 million in 2009 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2010b). Among this migrant population, a particular group, female migrant workers, is worth noting, because this group is very large and its number is estimated to be between thirty to forty per cent of the whole migrant workers (Davin, 2005; Jiang, Qi, Li, & Ren, 2008).

As mentioned above, in order to understand China's labour migration and its labour market, they should be contextualized in the social and economic changes in transitional China (Chen, 2005; Fan, 2003b). Accordingly, to better interpret the actual experiences faced by these female migrant workers in the public sphere and in the labour market, I must realize that the fundamental restriction upon female migrant workers includes two institutional mechanisms relevant to the double categories of social identity of female migrant workers, namely, the household registration system (*hukou*) and gender ideology in contemporary China (Jiang, 2004). There are definitely similarities between the labour migration in China and that in other countries and regions around the world, since large-scale rural-to-urban migration has been a key feature of economic and social change in the world in contemporary times. But due to differences in several dimensions, such as political, historical and socio-economic contexts, there are some differences between China and other contexts. This uniqueness may lead to quite different ways in which migration has been experienced and in which it should be understood (Gaetano & Jacka, 2004).

2.11 The household registration system (*hukou*)

The household registration system (*hukou*) is one of the most significant institutional mechanisms leading to migrant workers' actual experiences of being excluded in many dimensions in society, and at the same time, is seen as 'the foundation of China's divisive

dualistic socioeconomic structure and the country's two classes of citizenship' (Chan, 2010a, p. 357).

Since the 1950s, all Chinese citizens have been required to register with local authorities to gain their legal residency, and this registration status strictly determines where he/she lives and works (Meng, 2001). In other words, once each person was either designated with 'agricultural' or 'non-agricultural' registration status, it is nearly impossible to have a change, especially from rural to urban status (Cheng & Selden, 1994; Jacka, 2000; M. Y. Wang, 2005). Historically, the state advocated abolishing urban-rural inequalities and defined the poor peasants as the most revolutionary class, the household registration system actually placed rural people in a position of inferiority relative to their urban counterparts. The household registration system, which was sustained by employment allocation and the food rationing institution, formed a vast chasm between urban and rural regions in Chinese society for several years, ranging from the late 1950s to the early 1980s (Zhou et al., 2011; Li & Li, 2012). In essence, it can be regarded as a state intervention in rural-urban migration (Han, 2010).

The economic reform initiated in 1978 ended the state's strict control over population movements before, and it appeared that rural-urban labour migration was no longer prohibited (Jacka, 2000; Li & Li, 2012). However, decades since the economic transformation have witnessed a contradictory phenomenon: Rural people get rid of conventional constraints upon their movements and migration, and therefore they are allowed to live and work freely in the cities; but meanwhile, they are excluded from urban citizenship and all related entitlements/rights (Chan, 2010b; Chen, 2005; Zhang & Wang, 2010). Urban citizenship involves several dimensions, among which access to formal employment is prominent. This situation is most obvious in the highly segmented urban labour market defined as a two-tier labour market, in which urban residents primarily work in higher-ranked jobs (e.g., state and collective industries) and have higher earnings and more entitlements/subsidies than their rural counterparts, migrant workers (Meng, 2001). In this way, the household registration system together with other regulatory policies and mechanisms institutionalizes temporary labour migration and takes advantage of their permanently low labour costs (Florence, 2006, as cited in Han, 2010; Solinger, 1999; F. Wang, 2004; F. L. Wang, 2005).

Despite request for *hukou* reform, constraints on migration from rural to urban regions and on access to urban citizenship for migrant workers have appeared to be widespread in contemporary urban China (Meng, 2001). Subsequent oppression and exploitation, which takes the form, for example, of long-standing discrimination against the rural migrant workers, has remained the same. This situation has suggested that the dualistic structure, which was sustained by the *hukou* system and formed during the planned economy era, have changed little (Chan, 2010a; Zhang & Wang, 2010).

The term ‘marginalization’ is frequently used to describe the difficulties suffered by migrant workers in cities. Very limited access to employment in the urban labour market for migrant workers serves as the best illustration. Such labour market segmentation in urban China’s labour market can be explained by the state’s favouritism towards urbanites. On one hand, the state makes all attempts to provide urbanites with multiple kinds of resources and welfare, say, work, education and housing, whereas on the other hand, it encourages rural people to support themselves in rural regions without any help from the state (Fan, 2001). Different attitudes and treatments towards people with either urban or rural residence status echoes the dualistic urban-rural socioeconomic structure in China discussed above. Clearly, the state, its institutions and policies have together established an opportunity structure, in which labour market segmentation in terms of residence status can find its origin and legitimacy (Fan, 2002).

The social exclusion that results from their immigrant identity involves not only material-level dimensions, but also psychological-level marginalization which is justified and rationalized in society (Zhou et al., 2011). For example, with respect to the issue of naming and categorizing them, in sharp contrast to the urbanites who are called ‘insiders’ or ‘natives’ (Fan, 2002), they are negatively deemed by several terms in both academic and official writings. In academic area, they are defined as ‘blind drifters’ (*mangliu*), ‘outsider workers’ (*wailai gong*) (Jacka, 2000), ‘China’s floating population’ (*liudong renkou*) (Jacka, 2000; Liang & Ma, 2004; Yu & Chen, 2010; Zhu, 2003), ‘floaters’ (Roberts, 2002a), ‘tide of rural workers’ (*minggong chao*) (Jacka, 2000; Jiang et al., 2008), ‘visitors’ in their own country’, ‘strangers in the city’ (Zhang, 2001), ‘migrant workers’ (Windrow & Guha, 2005), ‘rural migrant workers’ (Han, 2010; Windrow & Guha, 2005; Zhang & Wang, 2010), ‘social inferiors’ (Gaetano, 2008), ‘second-class citizens’ in

urban China (Solinger, 1999), ‘three withouts’ (Han, 2010, p. 598), ‘migrant labour’ (Chan, 2010a) and ‘*dagong*’/‘*dagongmei*’ (young working women) /‘*dagongzai*’ (young working men) (Fan, 2002). In official discourses, ‘*nongmin gong*’ or ‘farmers-turned-workers’ (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2010b, as cited in Li & Li, 2012) are frequently used. All these terms are criticized by Fan (2002), who argues that ‘*qianyizhe*’, the literal translation of migrant, has been arbitrarily replaced. Each of them has implicitly mirrored the temporary nature of migrant workers, and suggested the existence of social exclusion at the psychological level against migrant workers.

The urbanites’ negative attitudes, which take a form of prejudice or discrimination, are a challenge that they have to face in both the public sphere and in the labour market. Migrant workers are normally defined by urbanites as invaders who migrate blindly to cities and bring several problems to cities (Jacka, 2000; Zhu, 2001). Some empirical studies confirm this argument. For example, a survey conducted in an old district of Guangzhou with approximately five citizens during the period from October to December 2006 revealed that approximately 60 per cent of respondents thought migrant workers were responsible for degradation of city environment, appearance, employment, and security of property; whereas 40 per cent of them attributed other problems, say, traffic/transportation jam and social disorder to migrant workers (Liu, 2008). Likewise, in another survey done in Wuhan city in 2000 claimed that migrant workers are regarded as the vagrant and the basic cause of inadequate social order (Hu & Luo, 2001). The supposed criminal trends of migrant workers are emphasized by Wang in her book *A Third Eye on China* (1994, as cited in Jacka, 2000). From her perspective, China is facing a danger that migrant workers have a new form of freedom, through which they leave the sending rural regions and move irrationally into the receiving cities. During their migration process, they disconnect contact with their social relations, and also get rid of restraints upon actions, thereby leading to large-scale disturbance.

In contrast, other scholars, Qian and Zhang (2006), for instance, in terms of a survey with 413 migrant workers and 312 urbanites living in twenty cities of Zhengjiang province between October 2005 and January 2006, argue that mass media is a principle way to learn migrant workers for urbanites and thus, diverse types of news media play an important role in shaping

urbanites' attitudes towards migrant workers. In order to avoid blatant bias in Chinese media reports about these migrant workers, there is a need for mass media to shift focus from regulating the temporary group to creating new urban citizens (Jacka, 2000). Solinger (1999), in a similar vein, points out that many social problems, such as inflation, crime, scarce natural resources, are directly linked to migrants, and they are scapegoats.

Some researchers attempt to provide explanations for this phenomenon from different perspectives (Roberts, 2001). Davin (1999) interprets it mainly from the perspective of citizens in general, and citizens' nostalgia for a more ordered past is thought to be the primary reason. Another explanation is proposed by Pye (1991). According to him, in addition to citizens in the public sphere, authorities are also worried about migrant workers' movement to the cities. The reason is that they might behave in anti-social ways due to out of constraints upon actions.

No matter whether and how much migrant workers should be blamed for current social problems in contemporary urban China, negative evaluations or even overt hostility and intolerance towards them are still strong and prevalent amongst urbanites (Jacka, 2000; Wang, Li & Zhang, 2011). Urbanites are often suspicious of their abilities and credentials, and blame migrant workers for their own downward social mobility after migrating to cities (Roberts, 2002b). Even, the state's government often treats migrant workers as the fundamental cause of several social problems (e.g., increased crime rates; traffic congestion), which suggests that they are still the victims of discrimination and exclusion and targets of surveillance (Han, 2010; Zhang, 2001).

There are some seemingly positive descriptions or accounts about migrant workers in academic and other types of publications. For example, a survey conducted in Guangzhou with about five hundred urbanites has suggested several most frequently-used terms for migrant workers, including prudent, tolerant and laborious industrious (Liu, 2008). Moreover, they are depicted as role models, who have ultimately succeeded through many years' efforts. However, these discourses have implicitly supported the individualism and entrepreneurship characterized by capitalism. Thus, the difference between urbanites and migrant workers are embedded in urbanites' praise and admiration (Jacka, 2000).

So far, it is clear migrant workers who are currently living in the cities yet still have a rural identity are the in-betweeners. Jacka (2006, p. 50, see Table 2.1⁷) makes a comparison between several words used respectively for people with urban and rural residence status/identity, and assumes that migrant workers are the junction between these two types of words.

Table 2.1. Migrants: nexus between two sets of concepts.

<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>
Country	city
Peasant	urbanite
Old	new
Tradition	modernity
self-sufficiency	market
Survival	development
Isolation	openness
Conservatism	progressive thought
Backwardness	civilization
Physicality	mental abilities
poor quality	high quality

Source: Jacka (2006, p. 50)

More recent studies on discrimination or exclusion based on the household registration system in China have increasingly compared it with racism in the Western contexts, and this line of argument can be summarized as ‘racialization’⁸. Some scholars, for instance, Han (2010, as cited in Zhou et al., 2011) have argued that though the majority of studies conducted in western settings have been primarily concerned about the issue of race, they can help to study the so-called racism in China, that is, the household registration system (*hukou*).

Different from other registration policies in some countries (e.g., Japan), the *hukou* system in China has discriminatory and oppressed implications (Yu & Shan, 2007). The *hukou* system can be seen as a type of racism in Chinese setting. Like racism, it heavily determines one’s economic,

⁷ Words listed in Table 2.1 are only one major part in Jacka’s (2006, p. 50) comparative table, rather than the whole.

⁸ The following three paragraphs related to my discussion of ‘racialization’ has been included as a small part in my published co-authored working paper entitled ‘Unfinished Promise: Socioeconomic Status and Attitude toward Equality for Migrant Workers in Urban China’ (Zhou, Wang, & Chen, 2011) (*Prairie Metropolis Centre Working Paper Series*, http://pcerii.metropolis.net/frameset_e.html).

social, and political circumstances based on an ascribed attribute (Han, 2010), namely, residence status (urban/rural resident).

Thus, it is reasonable to explore the racial or quasi-racial aspect of discrimination against Chinese rural migrant workers (Han, 2010). For example, scholar Solinger's investigation of three different ethnic groups in different countries (i.e., migrant workers in China, blacks and Asians in the U.S. and black people in South Africa under Apartheid) in early twentieth century have demonstrated the necessity of using race-oriented analytical tools to migrant workers in China and advocated focusing on the racialization process in China (Solinger, 1999, as cited in Han, 2010). Another comparative study among different ethnic groups is conducted by Pils (2007, as cited in Han, 2010), who argues that there are some similarities between the migrant workers in China and pariah in the caste system in India. Based on his study, it is found that rural residence status/identity is heavily dependent on blood rather than on place of birth.

In addition to some similarities, due to different history and economic, social and political conditions, the *hukou* system in China has some distinctive features. This point is confirmed by Han, who advocates locating racism in China. From his perspective, this contextualization not only can demonstrate the process in which Chinese migrant workers are equivalent to victims of racism in the western countries, but also can represent the distinctive racialization process of China (Han, 2010, p. 594, as cited in Zhou et al., 2011). In this regard, the term 'race' is defined in a broader sense to refer to social conflicts and interests (Han, 2010).

2.12 Gender ideology

Indeed, gender plays a significant role in interpreting labour market experiences, and such importance applies to any research context around the world (Fan & Regulska, 2008). Lim (1993) explains gender's key role in immigration study in the following way: gender differences in migration are a suggestive result of structural forces based on gender, and they have a great effect upon the status of male and female migrants as well as upon their integration into development. In developing contexts, migration is found to be a gendered process, which is shaped by both segmentation in the labour market in receiving regions and by traditional

gendered role expectations for men and women in sending areas. These socially-defined roles for both men and women have affected family strategies of production and reproduction in rural households in origin areas, and at the same time maintained and reinforced status disparity between men and women (Chant & Radcliffe, 1992). Recent decades have increasingly witnessed a greater emphasis on gender differences in some Chinese immigration studies (e.g., Davin, 2005; Ngai, 1999).

In order to evaluate the extent to which gender equality has been achieved or gender inequality has been sustained in contemporary China, some researchers have limited their observations regarding gender equality/inequality to a period of time. Bian's study (2002a), which uses 1978 as a cut-off point, has attempted to examine the effect of the economic reform on gender equality/inequality, in particular, for female migrant workers in the labour market. According to him, existing studies are inconclusive as to the direction of change. In order to make my review more substantial and comprehensive, Bian's outline of three primary lines of argument (2002a, pp. 102–104) and several other relevant studies are used below.

The first argument assumes that the development of market economy has dramatically improved female migrants' conditions. At the material level, the economic reform has provided many non-agricultural employment opportunities for rural women and reduced the gender gap in earnings (Entwisle, Henderson, Short, Bouma, & Zhai, 1995; Jiang, 2004; Matthews & Nee, 2000; Michelson & Parish, 2000, as cited in Bian, 2002a), both of which have raised their standard of living. At the psychological level, these rural women have no longer followed socio-cultural traditions, such as patriarchy and traditional prescription regarding traditional role expectations, instead, they have increased their participation in employment, and gained more dignity and self-confidence. With economic independence, they have increasingly gained respect in the family and taken more power in decision making. As for the love affairs and marriage, female migrants are more likely to have greater freedom to choose mates and start/end marriages (Cheung, Heinonen, & Liu, 2008). All these improvements have raised women's status relative to men's and contributed to greater gender equality (Entwisle et al., 1995; Matthews & Nee, 2000; Michelson & Parish, 2000, as cited in Bian, 2002a).

The second argument holds that the economic reform has deteriorated female migrant workers' social and economic situations. Despite benefits from the economic reform, female migrants have gained the least, and thus are the most marginalized social group relative to the other three comparative groups, namely, urban and rural males and rural females. Although an increased number of them have got new job opportunities in the cities and have occupied work in the secondary labour market, their greater economic roles, in essence, have resulted in double workloads (Bian, 2002a). In the rural household, they are still expected to do family chores and domestic work as before, since traditional patriarchy have reemerged and never changed (Cheung, Heinonen, & Liu, 2008). Different from early times when the state played a role of both employer and advocate of women's rights, women in recent decades have experienced reduced social welfare entitlements (e.g., health care, child care support, and education, and increased discrimination with the growth of market economy (Cheung, Heinonen, & Liu, 2008). As a result, women's status relative to men has been lowered and gender inequality has enlarged (Honig & Hershatter, 1988, as cited in Bian, 2002a).

The last argument is that variation in gender inequality across cities in urban China's labour market basically has no relationship with the economic transformation measured by marketization indicators (Shu & Bian, 2001). Much empirical evidence can support this argument. For example, Bian and his colleagues (Bian, Logan, & Shu, 2000) have identified that difference in earnings and other employment-related dimensions have changed little during the historical period from the 1950s to the 1990s. An alternative evidence to support this argument is a finding that the effect of the economic reform on levels and patterns of gender equality is varied (Woodhams, Lupton, & Xian, 2009). In addition, Jiang (2004), using the case study method to demonstrate the true lives of female migrant workers in transitional China, finds that female migrant workers have access to new economic opportunities, but they have to face many barriers to social integration, such as rural residence status determined by *hukou* and traditional expectations of gender roles and division of labour shaped by gender ideology. Likewise, another investigation suggests a mixed impact of market economy on female labour migration and participation in the labour market (Yang & Guo, 1999) against the backdrop of China's economic development. On the one hand, expansion of tertiary industry (e.g., retail trade, service sectors) have provided chances to participate in migration from rural to urban regions and many

employment opportunities in non-agricultural occupations for female migrant workers, whereas on the other hand, female migrant workers' access to urban employment is largely reduced and restricted, because many employers, governed by market forces and driven by cost-saving and profit-making calculations, have expressed reluctance in hiring women (Knight & Song, 1995).

2.13 Interplay between *hukou* and gender for female migrant workers

For purpose of clarification, two institutional mechanisms relevant to the double categories of social identity of female migrant workers have been separately discussed above. But it has to be admitted that in reality, there is interplay for these female migrant workers. The majority of scholars have not used a comprehensive model to analyze this particular social group yet, but Fan's study entitled 'the state, the migrant labour regime, and maiden workers in China' is an exception (2004a). In order to solve the question of how the state in China after Mao-era has established migrant labour regime and how maiden workers who are young and single rural females has been particularly included to contribute to the city development, Fan has critically analyzed two theoretical perspectives. The first is institutional perspective, which focuses on roles of the state, policy and institutions, and another one, feminist viewpoint advocates the significance of hierarchy and power relations in the society. In this way, she has succeeded making an analytical model that integrates gender and *hukou*. Within this model, she has offered two reasons, namely, institutional and socio-cultural explanations for the emergence and growth of female migrant workers in transitional China. Considering that these two explanations are both concerned with the role of the state, both of them are represented by her discussion about the Chinese transitional state, which includes three trends over time: from a socialist state to a developmentalist state, from socialist labor to a migrant labor regime, and from gender equality to 'silence of the state' (Fan, 2004a, p. 283–289). In general, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, though Fan's consideration of both gender and *hukou* has implicitly treated gender and *hukou* as two independent attributes and thus failed to analyze female migrant workers' actual experiences from the intersectional perspective, her analytical model that combines institutional and socio-cultural factors has helped me to do a better interpretation of fundamental gender inequality in contemporary China.

2.2 Basic Definitions

2.21 Migrant workers in China

The research will only focus on the labour of female migrants, since this thesis attempts to explore employment inequality experienced by female migrant workers in urban China. Given that some female migration is due to marriage and other associational factors (Gaetano & Jacka, 2004), there is a need to limit the scope to those female migrants who move from rural to urban areas for economic reasons, rather than to those who experience migration for social reasons, for instance, as tied movers (Rowland, 1994). This target group is called ‘female rural migrant labour’ or ‘female migrant worker’ (*nv nongmingong*).

There are diverse definitions for migrant workers (*nongmingong*). Officially, the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2010b, as cited in Li & Li, 2012, p. 112) defines migrant workers as ‘those who officially are registered as belonging to an agricultural household but have been working as non-agricultural workers either in their local area or in regions outside their region of registration for six months or more in year.

In academic writing, the definition of migrant workers is similar but less strict: Those who temporarily migrate from rural to urban areas for work motivated by economic considerations, without change in their officially issued rural household registration (Chan, 2010a; Gaetano & Jacka, 2004; Roberts, 2002a; Yang & Guo, 1999).

This term, migrant workers (*nongmingong*) in essence involves Chinese characteristic, and reflects an inconsistent combination of social identity and occupation: *Nongmin* indicates his/her social identity (i.e., rural people), whereas *gong* deems his/her occupation (working in the cities) (Cai, 2007; Li & Stearns, 2006). As Li and Li (2012, p. 112) suggest, they are ‘illicit migrants from the countryside moving to the city without seeking official approval prior to moving’. Female migrant workers are treated or defined as unofficial migrants to the cities (Gaetano & Jacka, 2004).

2.22 Employment discrimination

The term of ‘employment discrimination’ has been a recurrent theme in contemporary literature dealing with employment inequality. However, there are few strict and standard definitions of it in academic area.

One definition of employment discrimination has already been embedded in the earliest explanation of discrimination in international legal documents published in the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958. Article 1.1. (a) of the Convention defines discrimination in the following terms: ‘Any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, color, sex, religious, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation’ (No. 111) (Banton, 1994).

In other words, it is a behavior—differentiation, marginalization, constraint or predilection implemented by the government or other organizations based on individuals’ characteristics other than individuals’ productivity—that implies the detrimental treatment of individuals or social groups with respect to several rights, and in this thesis, in particular, can be seen as a pertinent judgment standard in making decisions upon hiring and wage (Quillian, 2006; Veenman, 2010; Xin, 2007).

Other legal roots in China can be found in many laws. The Employment Promotion Act of the People’s Republic of China, which was the No.70 Executive Order signed by President Jintao Hu in August 30, 2007, got approved in the NPC Standing Committee on August 30 2007, and took effect from January 1, 2008, states labourers’ rights to participate in employment and to select a job for oneself, and anti-discrimination in employment (Article 1.3). It prohibits any employment discrimination by ethnic group, race, gender, and religious beliefs. Another one is the Labour Law of People’s Republic of China, the No. 28 Executive Order signed by President Zemin Jiang on July5, 1994 approved in the NPC Standing Committee in July5, 1994 and carried out from January 1, 1995, which similarly emphasizes labourers’ equal employment rights regardless of ethnic group, race, gender, and religious beliefs (Xin, 2007).

Several scholars subsequently have developed a variety of definitions of employment discrimination, but three aspects have been consistently covered, including

(1) The focus on the contrast between two parties as well as domination of some social group members and subordination of others:

The party who prejudice feels psychologically superior, so much so that it leads to a psychological imbalance that affects his behavior and manifests itself in unfair treatment of other parties (Mends & Srighanthan, 2009, p. 246),

and

(It) is usually used to refer to acting in an unfair or demeaning manner, but it can also refer to giving someone an underserved advantage (Bernard, Whitely, & Kite, 2006, p. 396).

(2) The focus on subjective-based recruitment and selection criteria based on ascertainable or even unalterable characteristics:

It exists in many forms, including discrimination based on gender, race, ethnic group, disability, geography, religion, age and appearance (Mends & Srighanthan, 2009, p. 246),

and

It consists of behaving differently toward people based solely or primarily on their membership in a social group (Bernard et al., 2006, p. 396).

(3) The focus on the opportunity/option attainment or loss:

(...) Discrimination has occurred and, as a result, individuals lose opportunities and options (Bernard et al., 2006, p. 8).

Based on these three dimensions and the focus of this thesis, the definition of ‘employment discrimination’ in this thesis refers to any distinction, exclusion restriction or preference in

employment opportunities and employment earnings made by the employers based solely or primarily on the job applicants' membership in a social group (i.e. *hukou* and gender), which has the aim or effect of invalidating or impairing equality of rights to and interests of employment.

Specifically, employment discrimination against migrant workers refers to unequal treatment in employment and occupation based on rural residence status. Its definitions differ in the scope of unequal treatment: The broadest definition takes all inequality through employment and occupation processes, including employment access, occupation access, layoff, and social security entitlements, whereas the narrowest definition focuses on employment access only (Cai, 2007). As stated by the Employment Promotion Act of People's Republic of China (2007), the rural residents should have equal rights of labour with their urban counterparts, two important dimensions of which include equal right to participate in employment and occupation, and remuneration for labour and equal pay for equal work.

Moreover, employment discrimination against females refers to unequal treatment in employment and occupation based on woman status as a woman. Both the Employment Promotion Act (2007, Article 3.27) and the Labour Law of People's Republic of China (1994, Article 13) state women's equal labour rights with their male counterparts, and employing units must not reject women or increase the entry-level requirements for them for any gender-based reason, except for type of work deemed by the state as inappropriate for women. Meanwhile, there should no restriction upon women worker marital status and fertility in the labour contract.

2.23 Employment inequality

Since there is no existing definition, this term can be developed from its opposite, employment equity, which is defined as the 'elimination of policies and practices resulting in employment barriers and means that no person is denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability' (Canada, Employment and Immigration Commission, Annual Report, 1984-85, p. 14).

Accordingly, this term in this thesis is defined as a structural barrier in the labour market, which

makes job applicants unable to compete equally for their share of employment opportunities and income, and unable to realize their full productive potential due to non-universalistic criteria irrelevant to working abilities in the selection of people to positions and payment decision making.

2.24 Site, stages and two subjects involved in investigation of employment inequality

The exploration of employment discrimination cannot only be represented at a particular time point, since in fact, it occurs at ‘multiple decision points across the employment relationship’ and ‘even relatively small episodes of discrimination—when experienced at multiple intervals or across multiple contexts — can have substantial effects on aggregate outcomes’ (Pager, Western & Bonikowski, 2009, p. 778). In this sense, this thesis focuses on only two of these stages that are potentially affected by the combined effects of *hukou* and gender⁹. More specifically, this thesis includes an examination of inequality in employment opportunities and an examination of inequality in earnings for female migrant workers relative to their comparative groups, which respectively respond to the discrimination occurring when making hiring decisions and that when setting wages. Put simply, in an attempt to investigate employment inequality for female migrant workers, this thesis examines the discriminatory process enlarging or diminishing the vulnerability of female migrant workers in the labour market in two aspects, that is, employment opportunities and earnings.

The employment opportunities and income respectively respond to exclusion from the labour market and exclusion in the labour market. These two types of social exclusion are classified by Rodgers (1995). From his perspective, the first deal with unemployment and difficulties for the excluders to re-integrate into employment, whereas the second is concerned with problems involved in employment in the secondary labour market, including non-standard labour contracts, low earnings, dissatisfying working conditions and shifting requirements for qualification and work tasks. The explorations of both employment opportunities and income, according to

⁹ In addition to employment opportunities and earnings, pathways in the employment process that may be affected by the intersection of *hukou* and gender include ‘training opportunities, promotion, and termination decisions’ (Pager & Karafin, 2009, p. 792).

Browne and Misra (2003), are two primary economic spheres in which empirical evidence for the intersections of race and gender in the labour market can be found, and at the same time, these two spheres are closely related to controversy on labour market inequality.

This thesis limits its research scope to employing organizations. The reason is that the employing organizations are not only sites of sexism or racism, but more importantly, are a key source of discrimination (Nelson, Berrey, & Nielson, 2008).

In addition to these two stages in the employment process that respectively deal with exclusion from the labour market (employment opportunity) and exclusion in the labour market (employment earnings), this thesis includes another stage to represent the situation before female migrant workers enter the labour market, that is, people's attitudes towards female migrant workers both in the public spheres and in the labour market. Thus, an analytical logic follows this way: attitudes (stage before female migrant workers enter the labour market), access to employment opportunity (stage of their entering the labour market) and employment earnings (stage after they enter the labour market).

In order to demonstrate these three-stage dynamics of discrimination experienced by female migrant workers, it is helpful to develop a flowchart. My analytical flowchart has made reference with two flowcharts: 'Organizational dynamics of employment discrimination at three decision points' (see Figure 2.1), which modifies the flowchart of 'Differential Outcomes and Differential Treatment in the Hiring Process' (Turner, Fix, & Struyk, 1991, p. 30) (Figure 2.1)¹⁰ and 'Discrimination at three decision points' (Pager, Western & Bonikowski, 2009, p. 792) (Figure 2.2).

¹⁰ For purpose of clarification, some details in Figure 2.1 are omitted and some are modified.

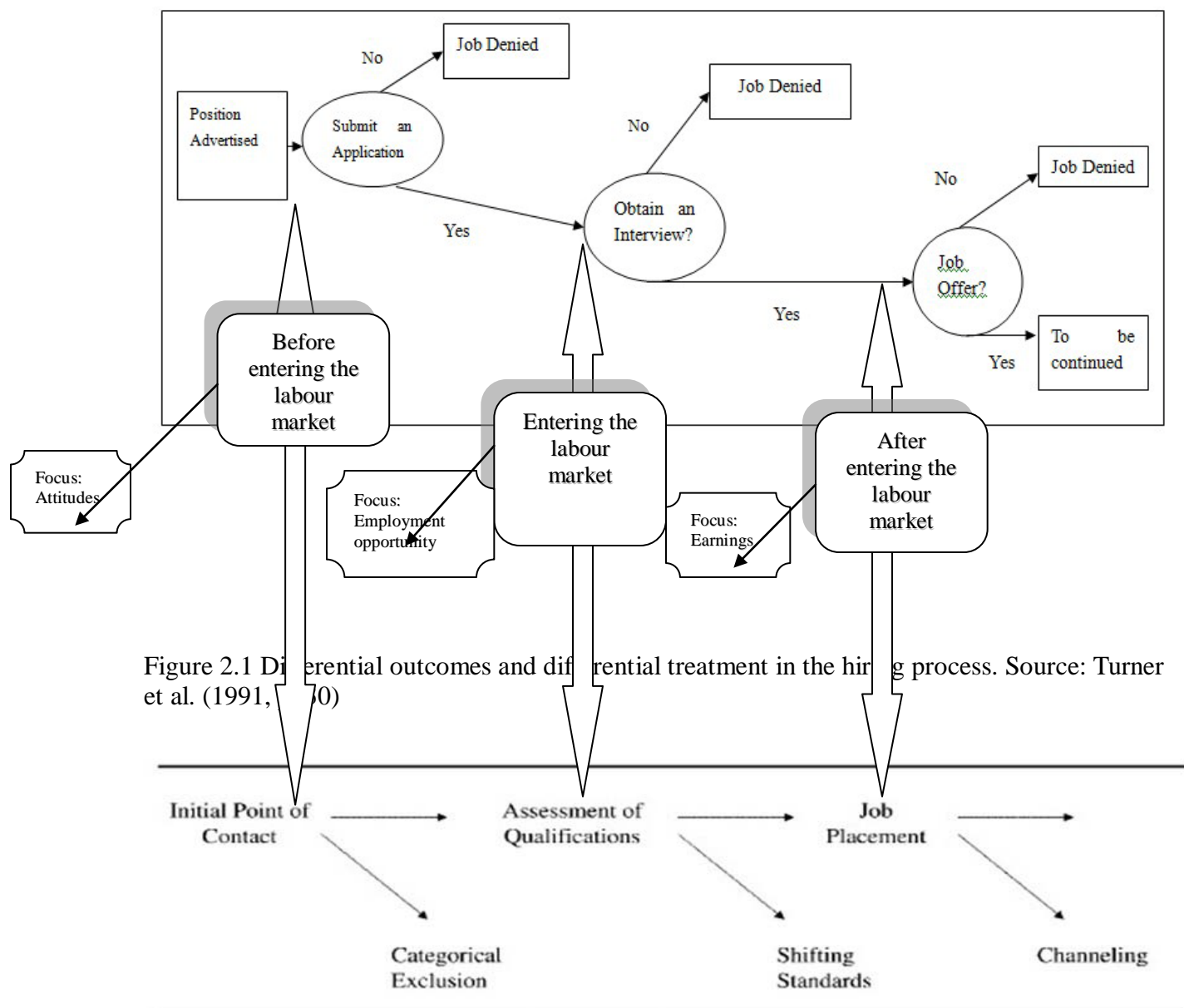


Figure 2. 2 Discrimination at three decision points. Source: Pager, Western & Bonikowski (2009, p. 792)

This composite flowchart not only offers an analytical logic but also suggests a direct observation of the process by which employment discrimination occurs, and in which employers make decisions upon hiring or wage-setting. Moreover, by focusing both demand-side and supply-side and by identifying the interactions between them, I could, to some extent, see clearly how *hukou* and gender intersect to affect these employers' perceptions of job candidates' quality and desirability, and shape these candidates' employment opportunities and earnings.

In response to my critical comments in Chapter 1 on existing studies that mainly focus on the excluded only, a two-way approach (Jain & Sloane, 1981; Zong et al., 2011) will be used in this essay. In other words, it is assumed that an examination of employment discrimination requires me to pay attention to both demand side (i.e., the employers) and supply side (i.e., job applicants).

On one hand, the demand-side of the labour market (i.e., the employers), plays a dominant role in this interactive relationship and is the agent who exerts discrimination against the job applications. In some cases, they may use some rules of thumb, such as screening devices, recruitment interviews and narrow channels of employment¹¹, to evaluate job applicants' adequacy, especially when it is difficult or impossible before they enter the organizations. Subsequently, some job applicants may be disadvantaged simply due to their membership in certain social groups (Jain & Sloane, 1981). Due to the subjective nature of each rule of thumb, job applicants are subject to employers' personal stereotypes, prejudice and even discrimination. Thus, employers may raise higher demand from job applicant A than job applicant B, or hold job applicant B who have equivalent resume more qualified than A (Pager, Western & Bonikowski, 2009).

On the other hand, the supply-side (i.e., job applicants) is subordinate in this interactive relationship, and may be beneficiaries or victims of the discriminatory practices. For those victims, their subjectivity can be interpreted through their perceived discrimination. As a frequently used approach to evaluate certain individuals' exposure to employment discrimination, measurement of perceptions of discrimination works as a barometer to form a link between individual outcomes, which are measured, for instance, by employment opportunity or by earning, and structural inequalities (i.e., employment discrimination) (Gee, Spencer, Chen, Yip, & Takeuchi, 2007).

Having learned the historical background and definitions of several key concepts related to discrimination and inequality suffered by female migrant workers in Chapter 2, I will discuss the theoretical literature in relevant studies in Chapter 3.

¹¹ These three behaviors are very similar to those proposed by Pager, Western & Bonikowski (2009: 787): 'categorical exclusion', 'shifting standards' and 'job channeling', which will be discussed with my interpretation of interviews in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Employment inequality has acquired an unprecedented prominence. Because of this, more and more researchers have sought to explore the hidden reasons for the differentiation of employment opportunities and income. The relevant theories can be divided into three theoretical perspectives, including labour market segmentation theory, human-capital theory, and social capital theory.

By critically analyzing these three theories, this thesis attempts to overcome their theoretical limitations, and to provide an extensive and insightful understanding of how and why female migrant workers have experienced inequality and discrimination due to their seemingly double disadvantaged social categories of identities relative to the other three comparative groups. This attempt will be achieved by a comprehensive theoretical model of the social exclusion approach, and a more particular theoretical framework inspired by the intersectional theory.

3.1 Labour Market Segmentation Theory

Labour market segmentation theory can be traced back to the early 1960s, and was initially developed by American economics to solve the exclusion from the labour market. However, it has gradually challenged the underlying assumption of neo-classical economics about the competition embedded in the labour market and constant allocation of employment and workers (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 2006). Specifically, this theory assumes that there is no market for labour, where both purchasers and sellers can compete with each other in a fair competition environment, and meanwhile, this theory holds that the differences in compensation for labour (e.g., earnings) cannot be attributed to the supply side only, because labour is a heterogeneous commodity and there are variances in employees' experience, skills, highest educational attainment, tastes and preferences for leisure/work, and so on (Scott & Marshall, 2012). Accordingly, labour market segmentation theory verifies the existence of differences in the demand side, which cannot be explained by individuals' characteristics. In this sense, having

realized that labour market is not perfect, this theory implicitly considers some non-market institutional and sociological factors, which may lead to differentiated consequences for employees with equivalent characteristics (Jain & Sloane, 1981).

Labour market segmentation theory primarily includes two aspects, including the distinction between primary and secondary sectors, and the concept of non-competing groups (Abercrombie et al., 2006; Scott & Marshall, 2012). First, this theory attempts to make a distinction between two sectors that are analytically independent, namely, primary sector and secondary sector, in the economy and in the national labour market. These two sectors differ from each other in many dimensions—the primary sector is characterized by high earnings and social status, complete career structures, great possibilities of promotion and multiple training opportunities, good working conditions, high level of unionization, stable and secure employment, good contract terms, and nice work cultures; whereas the secondary sector offers low earnings and social status, low requirement of skills, little probability for promotion or improvement of skills, poor working conditions, low level of unionization, insecure employment, unsatisfied contract terms, and poor work cultures (Abercrombie et al., 2006; Scott & Marshall, 2012). Many scholars who explore labour market segmentation in industrial countries (e.g., the United States, Japan) have found that this split pattern is deeply rooted in these societies and as a result, jobs in the secondary sector are dominated by several stigmatized social group members, such as women and ethnic minorities (Abercrombie et al., 2006).

Second, based on the distinctions between these two key sectors, this theory further makes efforts to deal more specifically with mobility, namely, the transition capability between these two sectors. The concept of non-competing groups is introduced to refer to those disadvantaged social group members who have little or no mobility capability (Scott & Marshall, 2012). In this sense, this concept confirms the difficulties or little possibilities for someone working in the secondary sector in transferring to the primary sector, but it does not deny the competition within the labour market per se. In other words, there are several competitions for positions among job applicants in each segmented sector, but very few for crossover from one sector to another among them, especially from the secondary to the primary sector (Abercrombie et al., 2006). In essence, by pointing out the differences between these two sectors and highly constrained

mobility between them, labour market segmentation theory attributes the segmentation mainly to the demand side (i.e., employers) rather than the supply side (i.e., employees).

Labour market segmentation theory has contributed much to our interpretation of inequality in the labour market. Two points can support this argument. First, based on the distinction between these two sectors as well as restricted movement between them, this theory considers many institutional constraints to explain inequality in the labour market. In other words, labour market segmentation theory assumes that some individuals' inferiority in the labour market heavily depends on institutional factors that individuals cannot overcome, regardless of how much personal efforts they make. Thus, labour market segmentation theory to some extent directs the studies on labour market inequality towards discrimination (Abercrombie et al., 2006).

Second, this theory, with reference to such structural constraints exerted by employers, implicitly identifies two sets of relationships between employers and employees. On one hand, labour market segmentation theory views segmentation as a form of social closure (Bauder, 2001) and points out the dominated and subordinated sides in the employment relationship. The segmentation in the labour market normally works as a discriminatory and excluded mechanism, which is used by employers to keep their power and control over the employees. On the other hand, there is a differentiation within the employees group with respect to access to the primary sector. Those who can enter the primary sector are beneficiaries, whereas those who cannot are victims, which lead to labour market inequality. Therefore, based on these two types of relationships, labour market segmentation theory is similar to many other sociological theories dealing with social stratification and social mobility (Abercrombie et al., 2006), and is very useful to explain why labour market inequality exists.

Nevertheless, this theory has two demerits (Abercrombie et al., 2006; Scott & Marshall, 2012). First, labour market segmentation theory, by explaining some individuals' disadvantages in the labour market from an institutional perspective rather than from these individuals' own deficiency, places too much emphasis on structural barriers to access employment opportunities and earnings, for instance, employers' prejudice or discrimination against some stigmatized/disadvantaged social group members. Its focus on institutional rather than on

individual obstacles can be revealed clearly by its explanation of why non-competing groups exist: Some social excluded group members, such as women and minorities, are normally encounter employers' prejudice and discrimination, and consequently, they are stereotyped to be unqualified for jobs in the primary sector in the labour market. In an attempt to attribute their disadvantaged positions in the labour market to structural barriers, Abercrombie et al. (2006) rationalizes these employees' higher frequency of job changing and absenteeism. As they indicate, their lack of work ethic may result from unsatisfied terms or conditions in the job offer (e.g., insufficient training opportunities) provided by the secondary sector rather than from their individual incompetent characteristics. These structural barriers make it very difficult or even impossible to mobilize from the secondary to the primary sector that involves higher level of qualifications and skills, and ultimately make these individuals marginalized and uncompetitive in the labour market. Therefore, this theory has shifted the conventional focus from the characteristics of the supply side to those of the supply side and labour market and employment within (Abercrombie et al., 2006).

Second, while this theory emphasizes the effect of structural barriers on some stigmatized social group members' disadvantages in the labour market, it lacks an organized examination of the discriminatory processes through which the labour market segmentation has formed. In other words, it has provided an insight into the pervasiveness and consequences of labour market segmentation suffered by some stigmatized social group members, which suggests inequality in the labour market, for instance, devaluation as labourers and highly constrained mobility (Roscigno, 2007). Nevertheless, little attention to factors contributing to these discriminatory processes leads to inability of labour market segmentation theory to explain why segmentation, a representation of labour market inequality, can exist.

3.2 Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory origins from Adam Smith's clarification of differences and disadvantages/disadvantages in earnings among employees. The basic assumption underlying this theory is that the more individuals invest time and money in their human capital, including

education, skills training, work experience and other qualities to improve their work-related capacities, knowledge and personality characteristics, the more attractive they will become to employers. In other words, investments in human capital should be regarded as a form of market capacity (Giddens, 1998), and when other influential factors are adjusted, individuals' earnings is closely related to how much they spend in human capital (Jain & Sloane, 1981; Scott & Marshall, 2012).

Having found the pattern that variances in earnings reveal different levels of human capital that employees' invest in work (Abercrombie et al., 2006), human-capital theory, on one hand, identifies the existence of homogeneity among employees, and explains it in terms of investments in human capital. Thus, in essence, this theory is an individual perspective to explain labour market inequality (Scott & Marshall, 2012). On the other hand, it helps to point out the disadvantaged groups in the labour market (e.g., women and ethnic minorities), and these stigmatized social group members are thought to invest less relative to their advantaged counterparts in human capital (Abercrombie et al., 2006). Their lower return on education in some studies has been used to suggest the existence of discrimination (Jain & Sloane, 1981).

Despite its significance for explaining labour market inequality, in particular, earnings differentials within the labour force, human-capital theory has some demerits. For example, while differences in human capital can in part explain differentiated employment outcomes (i.e., employment opportunities and earnings), several empirical evidence have found that, for instance, earnings disparities sometimes stay the same even when human capital are taken into account (Roscigno, Garcia, & Bobbitt-Zeher, 2007). Thus, it is clear that variances in human capital can only interpret a proportion of the observed differences among people in earnings, and there is still a great proportion of variance that need to be explained by other influential factors (Abercrombie et al., 2006; Jain & Sloane, 1981). This argument also can be illustrated by empirical evidence found in contemporary China. During the process of economic reform, what determines individuals' earnings in China has transformed from a state-set earnings scales system that attempted to reduce earnings disparity to a competitive labour market system in which individuals' earnings to some extent depends on their investment in human capital. This tendency has gradually become prevalent especially since the mid-1990s when the labour market gives more preference to labourers with higher level of human capital (e.g., skills, experience,

education) (Brandt & Rawski, 2008; Price & Fang, 2002). However, it has to be admitted that because of market imperfections, equivalent returns to human capital cannot be realized. As Price and Fang (2002) argue, with stronger demand for labourers' human capital in the labour market, there might be greater social inequality regarding individuals' economic opportunities and rewards.

3.3 Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory is an alternative individualist theoretical explanation for individuals' differentiated experiences in the labour market. While there is a debate regarding the nature of social capital - whether it functions as a positive, neutral, or negative social resource for individuals (Grootaert, 2001), there has been a consensus that social capital is closely related to social inequality, in particular, labour market inequality. Thus, these decades have witnessed its increased prominence within studies on the labour market inequality, and this term is used by many scholars (e.g., Bourdieu, 1983; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 1990). Social capital is maintained between individuals and meanwhile, individuals can develop it into either strong or weak, either tangible/material or intangible/psychological forms and employ it when they need (Lin, 1999, 2000). When this theory that primarily attempts to analyze occupational attainment processes is contextualized in Chinese setting, the research focus is mainly on how exchange associations are formed through which job applicants and job assigning authorities are connected with each other in terms of either strong ties or weak ties (Bian, 1997).

In contemporary China, *guanxi* refers to this kind of exchange connections and relationships, and is very significant for individuals' access to employment opportunities (Bian, 2002b; Guthrie, 1998; Luo, 2007). It functions as a series of interpersonal relationships to help exchanges of favours between individuals (Gold, 1985; Hwang, 1987; Yang, 1994). China has been a country where interpersonal connections play a significant role in social and economic activities (Cheng & Rosett, 1991; Fried, 1953; 1969; Smart, 1993; Walder, 1986). In other words, the Chinese society is full of a cultural tradition that advocates social equality and reciprocity, and meanwhile, values multiple types of relationships, such as familial and kinship (Hu, 2005; Le, 2002; Zhang et al., 2007). As for favours between individuals in contemporary China, according to Bian

(1997), tangible and material favours (e.g., job referral) tend to be more prevalent than intangible and psychological favours (e.g., moral support), because many social goods, attributes and services cannot be found in the physical market and thus can only be attained through personal connections. No matter which form it takes - either strong ties or weak ties – the connections established and sustained by *guanxi* are normally personal and fixed (Hughes, 2006), and thus social capital in the form of *guanxi* is very helpful to explore employment inequality in contemporary China.

No doubt, social capital theory, on one hand, points out the significance of social connections and relations in employment attainment, and on the other hand, makes an effort to explain the unequal access to employment among individuals through their unequal access to social resources. As Bian (1997, p. 370–371) indicates, ‘the job assignments are largely based on ad hoc decisions by authorities making it possible for personal networks to influence the process’. As a result, job applicants with either direct or indirect contact with authorities who are in charge of job assignment have higher likelihood of getting employment opportunities than those who do not.

However, similar to the demerits of human-capital theory, social capital theory, with its only focus on the significance of individual social connections and relations to employment, takes little account of the differences in structural barriers faced by different social group members (e.g., employment discrimination) (Claridge, 2004; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). The assumption underlying this ignorance is that opportunities for individuals are normally restrained by their associations with others in the society (Granovetter, 1973, 1974), and using social network in an efficient way can help them much in the process of job search (Cheung & Gui, 2006; Martin, 1997; Zhao, 2001). It should be stressed that social connections and relations are a necessary but not a sufficient reason to explain unequal distribution of employment opportunities. To some extent, human capital theory is an incomplete interpretation of individuals’ unequal access to employment opportunities in the labour market.

To sum up, in order to better understand inequality of employment opportunities and earnings experienced by female migrant workers relative to their counterparts, none of these three theories

discussed above is sufficient.

3.4 Social Exclusion Theory

The term of ‘social exclusion’ was initially proposed in France in the 1960s to refer to the poor (Bask, 2010; Edgren-Schori, 2000; Pantazis, Gordon & Levitas, 2006), and a decade later to denote the risks of social fragmentation (Koller & Davidson, 2008) and indicate individuals who have diverse disadvantages (Edgren-Schori, 2000; Silver, 1995, as cited in Koller & Davidson, 2008). During the developmental process of this term, it initially attained great attention from European Union policymakers in the 1980s, and then it developed as a sociological term in both French sociology (Paugam, 1991) and American and German sociology (e.g., Kronauer, 2002; Silver, 1994) to describe diverse types of disadvantages suffered by marginalized groups (Gordon, Adelman, Ashworth, Bradshaw, Levitas, Middleton, Pantazis, Patsios, Payne, Townsend & Williams, 2000).

Since the early 1990s, this social exclusion has no longer merely been concerned with poverty and instead, begun to apply the relationship between individuals and the society (Fangen, 2010). In particular, with the increased research interest in the labour market, this approach shifted its emphasis from political rights to unemployment in the context of current unemployment crisis (Silver, 1994), and broadened its scope to other regions of the world (Abrams et al., 2007). Increasingly, it has become a relatively mature perspective to analyze the society, which is becoming more diverse, heterogeneous and complicated (Body-Gendrot, 2002, as cited in Fangen, 2010). However, social exclusion is still considered as an umbrella concept rather than as an accurately pragmatic term (Bask, 2010; Gallie, 2004).

Within the academic area, the definition of social exclusion has been inconsistent (e.g., Atkinson, 1998; Room, 1995; Tsakoglou & Papadopoulos, 2002a), but probably one of the most comprehensive interpretation is from Koller and Davidson (2008, p. 307–308),

Social exclusion has been conceptualized as a new multidimensional form of

disadvantage, incorporating a dynamic diachronic analysis and a relational view of disadvantage between an included majority and an excluded minority (Fairclough, 2007). But it has also always involved conflicting normative perceptions of what constitutes participation in ‘mainstream’ society, sparking questions of who is included and on what basis.

This argument can be briefly summarized in this way: the conceptualization of social exclusion includes multidimensional, dynamic, and relational domains (Commins, 1993; Room, 1995; Shucksmith & Chapman, 1999).

Meanwhile, Koller and Davidson’s definition of social exclusion is very similar to Kronauer’s (1998), which attempts to be an all-inclusive theoretical summary of social exclusion. His interpretation of this term is very prevalent within the academic area, and can be expressed in this way (Kieselbach, van Heeringen, La Rosa, Lemkow Zetterling, Sokou, & Starrin, 2006, p. 3):

Social exclusion is understood as a dynamic, multidimensional process which incorporates social and economic (monetary and non-monetary) aspects of living, subjective experiences and objective situations, and which depends upon available personal and social resources.

Most characteristics covered by Kronauer’s argument (1998) draw on several key elements or domains involved in the conceptualization of social exclusion, from which I can see clearly the availability of the social exclusion approach to successfully analyze the patterns, dynamics, and nature of discrimination and inequality in employment opportunities and earnings.

Before I start the discussion of these critical elements, it should first be made clear that there are two types of social exclusion (Rodgers, 1995). The first, exclusion from the labour market, can explain unemployment or these unemployed individuals’ difficulties in reentering the labour market; the second, exclusion in the labour market, mainly focuses on individuals’ location in the secondary labour market, where they do not have access to stable employment, decent earnings, favourable working circumstances, standard labour contracts, and so on. These two types of exclusion respectively respond to the two primary areas in which this thesis explores inequality

and discrimination experienced by female migrant workers in the contemporary urban labour market in China, that is, employment opportunities (exclusion from the labour market) and earnings (exclusion in the labour market).

The social exclusion approach, which in part focuses on the distributional issues (Shucksmith, 2001) is an appropriate theoretical tool in this thesis, since social exclusion/inclusion is concerned with whether certain individuals or social groups can access the social assets and resources closely associated with their well-being (Chapman, Phimister, Shucksmith, Upward & Vera-Toscano, 1998; as cited in Reimer, 2004; Room, 1995), and employment opportunities and earnings can be seen as such valuable assets and resources.

The first factor of the social exclusion approach is called ‘dynamic’, which attempts to understand processes through which institutional mechanisms generate exclusion, and to identify factors leading to individuals’ entry or exit to social exclusion (Byrne, 2005; Room, 1995). The central tenet of this ‘dynamic’ element is suggested by Gallie (2004), who argues that social exclusion should be treated as a term that specifies a starting or ending point of a process characterized by increased or decreased vulnerability to marginalization, rather than a term used to picture a current circumstance in sharp contrast to social inclusion (Gallie, 2004). In other words, the consequence, for instance, currently getting employed or unemployed, or having access to fair payment or not cannot be regarded as a predetermined or static state (Abrams et al., 2007). Rather, whether or not to these social assets and resources might be seen as a result of combined effects of many factors. In this regard, this approach uses what Gallie (2004) defines ‘risk of exclusion’ to emphasize that social exclusion is not only related to the results of being excluded, but also is concerned with several influential factors leading to individuals’ greater or less vulnerability. From this theoretical strength standpoint, this thesis is able to convincingly demonstrate how the process of employment discrimination, plays a role in affecting marginalized group members’ experiences in the labour market.

In addition to the process, social exclusion focuses on the outcome. According to several scholars, social exclusion, on one hand, focuses on poverty (i.e., low earnings), difference, divergence and social inequality, whereas on the other hand, it emphasizes the circumstances where individuals fall into or get out of a circle (Burchardt, Le Grand, & Piachaud, 2002). Either of these two

focuses can be understood as a result of social mechanisms which serve to prevent individuals getting into the mainstream of society (Giddens, 1998).

The dynamic domain of social exclusion is concerned about not only the individuals' current situations, but also what happened before and what will happen later to them (Atkinson, 1998; Bask, 2010; Tsakloglon & Papagopoulos, 2002b; Weil, Widermeersch, & Jansen, 2005). As Reimer suggests (2004, pp. 76–77), the process is very complicated and might vary depending on several factors, including space, time and situation. Thus, the stress of changes over time helps this thesis to solve the fourth research question after the second and third ones, namely, the trends in employment discrimination against female migrant workers during a period of time (i.e., from 2003 to 2006). Moreover, because the process is closely associated with 'character of the social system' and 'the dynamic development of social structures' (Byrne, 2005, p. 2), this thesis will have a good perspective to explore the evolving institutional mechanisms in the society, through which female migrant workers' marginalization in the labour market is strengthened or lessened.

Multidimensionality, the second element of the social exclusion approach, is originally coined to indicate a series of measures of living standards (e.g., individuals' earnings, collective resources) as objective measures, and emphasize several other subjective indicators as well (Room, 1995; Tsakoglou and Papadopoulos, 2002a). It is very clear from Kieselbach and his colleagues' definition of social exclusion (2006: 3), which takes the form of original quotes above and implicitly points to the consequences of social exclusion. An alternative understanding of multidimensionality is embedded in Abrams, Hogg, and Marques' categorization of seven structural levels at which social exclusion can occur (2007). Their interpretation is different from the former that focuses on the results of social exclusion; instead, it emphasizes the causes or reasons for social exclusion. The third interpretation is made by Lang (2003), who combines these two ways of understanding multidimensional nature, and assumes that multidimensionality refers to both reasons and results of social exclusion in the society, especially in the late contemporary societies. In other words, in some cases, the social exclusion approach not only attempts to depict the multifarious character of social oppression that takes place in the advanced societies, but also aims to capture the process during which long-lasting marginalization has

gradually been signs of social inequality (Bowring, 2000, p. 309).

However, it is insufficient to know that an individual or social group might be socially excluded on more than one dimension at any single point in time (Abrams et al., 2007), that is, diverse single-dimensional causes and outcomes of social exclusion (e.g., employment discrimination by either race or gender). Due to combined or interactive effects among diverse sources and consequences, the process in which an individual or social group is marginalized might be more complicated than expected. Having recognized such complexity, some scholars define social exclusion as a term that refers to the results when an individual or social group experiences diverse forms of oppression as a whole (Madanipour, Cars, & Allen, 1998; SEU, 2001), and at the same time, they assume that these various forms of exclusion are connected, strengthen each other, or interact in a synergistic way to form a vicious cycle (Daniels, 2004; Madanipour et al., 1998). This is why several scholars interpret social exclusion as a cumulative disadvantage (Backman & Nilsson, 2011; Dannefer, 2003; DiPrete & Eirich, 2006; Tsakloglou & Papadopoulos, 2002a) or cumulative continuity (Backman & Nilsson, 2011; Sampson & Laub, 1997).

In terms of multidimensionality, the social exclusion approach has three merits. First, it departs from its conventional emphasis on poverty as the only consequence of social exclusion, and offers a full picture that includes both economic and social dimensions of livelihood, as well as objective circumstances and subjective experience (Kieselbach et al., 2006). Second, besides multiple consequences, this approach emphasizes the importance of causes for social exclusion, which contributes our understanding of a multi-faceted mechanism through which social differentiation occurs among the labour force and certain stigmatized social group members are marginalized. Third, multidimensionality provides me with an insightful and systematic perspective to analyze the accumulative inferiority in employment opportunities and earnings for certain individuals and social groups. Different from some relevant studies that concentrate entirely at particular levels of analysis or on only a limited subset of groups and individuals who are adversely affected by social exclusion based on single criteria (e.g., sex, race), or that bring together multiple dimensions (e.g., sexism, racism) yet analyze each of them respectively, the focus on multidimensionality enables me to explore cumulative effects of employment

discrimination experienced by four comparative groups, in particular, the double jeopardy issue of female migrant workers in the labour market.

The third significant domain of the social exclusion approach is named ‘two different sets of actors’¹² (Atkinson, 1998; Gallie, 2004), which not only emphasizes individuals who are excluded, but also focuses on individuals who carry out exclusion (Abrams et al., 2007; Atkinson, 1998; Byrne, 2005; Ratcliffe, 1999). Accordingly, Abrams and his colleagues introduce another key agent involved in the mutual relationship - the excluder- into the conceptualization of the social exclusion approach. Meanwhile, they make a distinction between these two parties, namely, the ‘excluder’ (‘sources’) and the ‘excluded’ (‘targets’), in the process of social exclusion. Another scholar, Tang (2002) shares common ground in this categorization and in order to make it more vivid, compares this two-agent relationship to a game. According to him, social exclusion, to some extent, can be regarded as a game, in which the game rule are fixed and some individuals are the winners whereas some are the losers. The differentiation between the winners and losers implicitly demonstrates their unequal access to social power and resources (Gallie, 2004), whereby providing me a good opportunity to explore the nature of the social exclusion, that is, domination and subordination in this thesis. This argument is supported by some scholars (Murphy, 1988; Parkin, 1979). For example, Parkin (1979) confirms domination and subordination as the nature embedded in social exclusion, and treats exclusion as a form of exploitation. From his perspective, classes and other collectives respectively occupy the dominated and subordinated positions, and the connection between these two sides is characterized by exploitation.

With the emergence of these two parties with unequal access to resources and opportunities (Lamont & Molnar, 2002), social boundaries and categories are normally made to clearly define which interest group an individual belongs to and then mark a line between in-group members and out-group members (Wang, 2008). In this boundary-drawing process, the majority of social

¹² Part of the discussion about ‘two different sets of actors’ has been included in presentation with Dr. Li Zong and Hui Li(2012), entitled ‘Barriers to Social Integration for Chinese Immigrants in Canada, Then and Now: A Comparison. Also a small part of this discussion has been included in my co-authored paper entitled ‘Unfinished Promise: Socioeconomic Status and Attitude toward Equality for Migrant Workers in Urban China’ (2011). *Prairie Metropolis Centre Working Paper Series*.

members tend to use several markers as sorting mechanisms, which take the form either of geographic (e.g., residence region, country of origin) or biological (e.g., gender, age, citizenship, or ancestral home) (Wang, 2008). Therefore, some individuals must be stereotyped and excluded from particular dimension in the mainstream society simply due to their membership of a stigmatized social group (Abrams et al., 2007). In this sense, social exclusion is formed based on social boundaries and categories, which in turn implicitly sustain and even strengthen the social exclusion, that is, the disparity and inequality between the excluders and the excluded. This is definitely a vicious circle.

In terms of the element of two agents, this thesis can benefit from the social exclusion approach in three aspects. First, considering two agents simultaneously helps me to analyze the relationship between the excluder and the excluded, in particular, the discrimination carried out by the excluders towards the excluded, since an examination of why an individual or social group is excluded needs an analysis of their association with the individual or group acting discriminatory behaviours (Abrams et al., 2007). This can explain why some scholars (e.g., Reimer, 2004; Shucksmith, 2001) define social exclusion as a relational term: ‘it is not a condition of individuals in isolation, but an integral part of the relationships in which they are embedded’ (Reimer, 2004, p. 77).

Second, the social exclusion approach does not end up with dealing with depicting the difference between the excluder and the excluded; instead, it identifies the nature of domination-subordination embedded in the two-party relationship. Thus, it might be instructive to investigate the fundamental mechanisms underlying the discriminatory practices rather than merely to do some superficial description.

Third, the domain of ‘two parties’ implicitly relates the concept of social exclusion to the self-interest perspective and its several relevant terms, such as social categories and boundaries. This attempt enriches the understanding of disadvantages in accessing employment opportunities and reasonable earnings in the labour market of certain stigmatized group members. Focusing on the relationship or matrix through which difference between the excluder and the excluded is created, rather than on the disadvantaged individuals or their difference from advantaged counterparts,

implicitly demonstrates the tenet of the social exclusion theory, namely, to challenge social inequality, and identify the reasons for and the nature of such social inequality.

In general, these three primary elements in the conceptualization of social exclusion not only demonstrate the potentiality of the social exclusion approach to explore the patterns, the dynamics, and the nature of inequality and discrimination in urban China, but also respectively overcome the weak points of three classic theories dealing with inequality and exclusion in the labour market discussed above.

First, 'dynamic' element, which emphasizes the dynamic processes rather than the static or predetermined situation of social exclusion, makes up for the deficiency of labour market segmentation theory in the interpretation of how certain people come to be devalued, marginalized, and excluded in the labour market. Although both the social exclusion approach and labour market segmentation theory share common ground in an institutional perspective, that is, emphasize the structural or institutional barriers faced by certain stigmatized groups of people in the labour market, the latter one lacks an organized examination of the discriminatory processes contributing to the very segmentation. Thus, compared with the former one, it fails to provide a convincing explanation for how inequality in employment opportunities and earnings, for instance, segmentation, forms.

Second, the domain of 'two different sets of actors', due to its focus on the existence of two parties involved, the nature of their relationship (i.e., domination-subordination), as well as the characteristic of boundary-drawing, successfully combines the excluders and the excluder (*sources*) and the excluded (*targets*). Compared with human capital theory that explores inequality in employment opportunity and income from an individual angle, the social exclusion approach, firstly, as an institutional approach, focuses the significance of structural restraints that normally take a form of employment discrimination against certain stigmatized groups of people (Gallie, 2004). In other words, in contrast to human-capital theory, the social exclusion theory does not attribute individuals' disadvantages to themselves only (Tsakloglou & Papadopoulos, 2002a, 2002b). Moreover, it should be made clear that despite this emphasis on structural barriers, the social exclusion approach does not limit its scope to the demand-side (i.e.,

employers) only; instead, it considers the supply-side (i.e., job applicants) through the introduction of two-party conception. Although the supply-side and demand-side in the labour market might be different in position, power and influence, they should be equally considered as key agents in the research. Thus, considering them simultaneously makes the social exclusion approach better than human-capital theory in investigating employment inequality.

Third, the multidimensionality factor considers several causes and consequences and their accumulative effects as well, which allows the social exclusion approach to provide a more complex and systematic explanation of certain people's inferiority in obtaining employment and earnings than social capital theory. Though both of these two theories perceive resource deprivation as a very important factor generating vulnerability to marginalization (Gallie, 2004) in the labour market, they differ in the way to treat the resources. In social capital theory, social resource, primarily taking the forms of social connections and relations, as a single-dimensional indicator (only focuses on social relationship dimension for job referral, regardless of the interaction between these social-network indicators), is regarded as the only one cause leading to differentiated results of employment. But the social exclusion approach, by considering a complicated interaction among various social resources, pays attention to the combined effects.

So far, it should be recognized that the social exclusion approach is a very helpful conceptual model to explain how inequality differentiates between people. In terms of its three prominent elements, namely, 'multidimensionality', 'dynamic', and 'two different sets of actors', the social exclusion approach, on one hand, as discussed above, responds for redeeming the weaknesses of labour market segmentation theory, human-capital theory, and social capital theories on understanding inequality and discrimination, and on the other hand, it provides a comprehensive and coherent conceptual model to unravel the patterns, process, and nature of the discrimination in urban China. Thus, it can be used as a theoretical tool in Chapter 5 to answer the first central research question.

However, when it comes to the second and third central research questions about the double jeopardy for female migrant workers with respect to their employment opportunities and earnings in urban China, in particular, to answer the question to 'equal to', 'less than', or 'more

than', the social exclusion approach appears to be too general and only can be regarded as general theoretical framework. Instead, the intersectional theory that primarily deals with double- or triple-jeopardy, should be the specific theoretical tool in this thesis.

As for the general theoretical framework, social exclusion focuses on three primary elements. Respectively, the 'multidimensionality' element helps to identify the diverse patterns of discrimination, the 'dynamic' explores the process in which different forms of discrimination take place, and the 'two different sets of actors' domain answers the question of why discrimination can be sustained for long, in other words, it captures the nature of such inequality rooted in Chinese transitional societies. The sequence of analysis is arrowed on the picture (Figure 3.1). Clearly, the 'multidimensionality' element provides analytical basis for the 'dynamic', and then the 'two different sets of actors' will find its foundation in the latter one.

As for the specific theoretical perspective, the intersectional theory goes a further step beyond the social exclusion approach, and helps us to answer the other two main research questions in this thesis.

3.5 Intersectional Theory

Given the target group in this thesis is female migrant workers in contemporary China, the intersectional theory is used as the specific theoretical approach. This approach is termed as the most appropriate approach to examine women's identity and oppression (Nash, 2008), and has made contribution to the understanding of lives of minority women who experience sex differently from White females and experience race differently from minority males (Browne & Misra, 2003; Greenman & Xie, 2008; McCall, 2005) in the western contexts.

3.5.1 Origins and definition of the intersectional theory

The development of the intersectional theory, in particular, on gender and race can be traced back to activities of civil and political rights and colored women's liberation movements in the 1960s and 1970s (Browne & Misra, 2003; Grabb & Guppy, 2009; Mehrotra, 2010). This historical

period and subsequent decade were dominated by the solipsism, which equated females with Whiteness and Blackness with males, and as a result, black women, who are simultaneously women and black, were invisible in contemporary academic fields (Bowleg, 2008; Hull, Scott, & Smith, 1982; Spelman, 1998).

The intersectional theory was initially proposed by coloured women feminists as a significant interrogation of the essentialism in White feminism that focuses on identity in the 1980s and 1990s (Crenshaw, 1991; as cited in Mehrotra, 2010; Luft & Ward, 2009; Murphy, Hunt, Zajicek, Norris, & Hamilton, 2009; Nash, 2008). Greater emphasis on particular group of women and the heterogeneity among them (e.g., McCall, 2000), the intersectional theory has advocated a comparative study approach, and due to different focus, it has brought about diverse forms of intersectional theorizing (Browne & Misra, 2003). Many scholars and activists (e.g., Anzaldú, 1999; Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1984; Hull et al., 1982; Lorde, 1984) criticized traditionally White feminism's construction of 'woman' as a monolithic category of identity, and they instead assumed the inseparability of gender and race oppressions and coloured women's particular location and perspective (Chavis & Hill, 2009; Mehrotra, 2010; Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). In this sense, they demonstrated that due to their simultaneous social categories of identity, theories of gender or theories of race cannot interpret these coloured women's distinctive experiences (Bambara, 1970; Brewer, 1993; Glenn, 1999; hooks, 1989; Hull et al., 1982; as cited in Browne & Misra, 2003, p. 488; McCall, 2001a, 2001b).

Based on an experience-oriented epistemology, these scholars also recognized that race and gender are not the only two social categories of identity to function together to shape colored women's lives. In other words, in addition to these two, there are also other social relations and systems associated with other type of social category of identity (Browne & Misra, 2003; Collins, 1999). Accordingly, the insufficiency of merely talking about theories of either race or gender suggested the need for a theory to move beyond this two-way focus and to address women's oppression through more linked social categories of identity. Many relevant analyses, thus, not only focused on the oppressions and agency of Black women and other women of colour, but also emphasized the significance of consolidative interpretation in terms of the interconnection of race, gender, class, and other social categories of identity (Chavis & Hill, 2009; Dill & Ruth,

2009; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Put simply, the intersectional theory has attempted to move beyond the race-gender-class trinity and to explain the interactive impact of other types of social division and oppression on women's lives. All of these efforts have contributed to better understanding about individuals' experiences, since they neither breaks these actual experiences into pieces nor is against the truth (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). In particular, the intersectional theory often treats the marginalized and excluded social groups, dimensions, and relationships (Frable, 1997) as the 'prototypical intersectional subjects' (Nash, 2008, p. 8).

The term 'intersectionality' was fashioned by Crenshaw (1991) to interpret the diversity of lives experienced by coloured women in terms of their identity, social location, and social oppression. From his perspective, identity politics frequently neglect intra-group differences, which results in the marginalization colored women within both (White) feminist attempts and racial equality politics.

Nevertheless, there has been ambiguity and inconsistency in how it should be conceptualized and how it can be applied in scholarship (Bowleg, 2008; Chang & Culp, 2002; Davis, 2008; Jordan-Zachery, 2007; McCall, 2005; Nash, 2008). As for its definition, it should be known first that intersectionality is only used by many scholars as a theoretical lens to study unequal treatment experienced by individuals in the past twenty years (Mehrotra, 2010), rather than as an analytical tool to examine whether or not some social relations intersect to shape individuals' lives. In the broadest sense, as Hulko (2009, p. 44) observes, intersectionality is 'a theory, a paradigm, a framework, a method, a perspective, or a lens, depending on the context and/or scholar who is using it'. Likewise, Mehrotra (2010, p.420) gives a relatively wide definition to the intersectional theory. In his words, this theory refers to

...All approaches aspire to define race, class, and gender as simultaneously experienced identities and to critique (feminist) identity politics for its essentializing view of the subject of "woman."¹³

¹³ See Mehrotra (2010, p. 420) for several previous studies, including Crenshaw (1991), Hill-Collins (1990, 2000), hooks (1984), Lorde (1984), Murphy et al. (2009), Valentine (2007).

While Mehrotra's above definition has successfully covered key elements of the intersectional theory, it is somewhat general to guide my research as a specific theoretical tool. Thus, based on diverse existing definitions in academic area (Collins, 1991; Kohlman, 2006; Wing, 1997), the theoretical theory is defined in a narrow sense as follows: The intersectional theory is a theoretical paradigm, which attempts to explore the combined, interlocking and even multiplicative forces of three primary dimensions (i.e., race, gender, class) simultaneously suffered by individuals. Together with the consideration of the intersection of economic, social, and cultural relationships shaped by diverse axes of social organizations, it provides a theoretical lens and an analytical tool of the expression of power and experiences of oppression.

3.5.2 Central theoretical debates in intersectionality and metaphors of intersectionality

One of the theoretical debates about intersectionality centers on the controversy between the additive assumptions and the intersectional assumptions, namely, whether we should simply add diverse independent and uni-dimensional analytic categories together or should treat them as interdependent and mutually constitutive (Bowleg, 2008; Browne & Misra, 2003; Collins, 1995, 1998; Crenshaw, 1991; Weber & Parra-Medina, 2003; Chavis & Hill, 2009) to conceptualize individuals' double or multiple advantages or jeopardizes.

The differences of these two assumptions in understanding the essence of intersectionality leads to their differences in interpreting how double jeopardy should be conceptualized (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). In order to make intersectionality easier to understand, some scholars (e.g., Association for Women's Rights in Development, 2004; Hancock, 2007; Mullaly, 2002, as cited in Mehrotra, 2010, p. 421; Valentine, 2007) use diverse metaphors that involve different epistemological assumptions.

The additive assumptions, often called 'mathematical metaphor' (Mehrotra, 2010, p. 421), maintain that 'a person with two or more intersecting identities experiences the distinctive forms of oppression associated with each of his or her subordinate identities summed together. The more devalued identities a person has, the more cumulative discrimination he or she faces'

(Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008, p. 378). In other words, a minority woman with two social categories of identity has two types of disadvantages, for instance, in earnings, one related to being a female and another related to being a non-White.

Therefore, in this case, sex and race do not intersect with each other, and the disadvantage experienced by this minority female compared with a White male should be the sum of the disadvantage from both gender and race (Greenman & Xie, 2008). Put simply, additive assumptions refer to ‘double jeopardy’ (King, 1988, p. 47). By contrast, the intersectional assumptions, termed as ‘metaphors of multiplication’ (Mehrotra, 2010, p. 421), hold that individuals’ identities are interlocking and should join together and interact to produce their unique and simultaneous experiences, rather than simply add together to shape individuals’ actual lives (Association for Women’s Rights in Development, 2004; Hancock, 2007; Mehrotra, 2010; Mullaly, 2002). Thus, ‘each of a person’s subordinate identities interacts in a synergistic way. People experience these identities as one, and thus contend with discrimination as a multiply marginalized other’ (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008, p. 378). Alternatively, some social constructionists challenge such arithmetical frameworks, because they are unable to picture the complicated process through which social inequality occurs. They think that the ways in which categories of identity are constructed are varied, and several factors, such as historical, social and symbolic factors can affect these ways (Mehrotra, 2010).

In addition, some metaphors deal nothing with mathematics, but aim to capture the complicated nature of intersectionality. Mehrotra (2010, p. 421) has a systematic summary, including ‘crossroads’ (Crenshaw, 1991; Valentine, 2007, cited in Mehrotra, 2010, p. 421), ‘axes of difference’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006; cited in Mehrotra, 2010, p. 421), ‘a matrix’ (Hill-Collins, 1990, 2000; cited in Mehrotra, 2010, p. 421), and ‘dynamic processes’ (Staunaes, 2003; cited in Mehrotra, 2010, p. 421).

The most notable among these is Hill-Collins’ conceptualization of interconnected oppressions, namely, matrix of domination (1990, 2000), through which she makes a distinction between additive and intersectional assumptions and favours the latter over the former. From Hill-Collins’ perspective, an analysis based on intersectionality helps to see an individual belonging to many

social groups and thus having penalty and privilege at the same time. In this sense, she suggests that when interpreting individuals' actual lives, any form of power upon them should not be treated as additive (Kohlman, 2006). Many recent scholars, for example, Bowleg (2008, p. 312) supports Collin's argument by assuming that the dilemma between additive hypothesis (e.g., Black + Lesbian + Woman) and intersectional hypothesis (e.g., Black Lesbian Woman) challenges the essence of intersectionality. From his perspective, social categories of identity and subsequent inequality are interdependent rather than mutually exclusive for social groups. Still others have supported the intersectional assumptions, and called for the way to treat social inequality and oppression as multiplicative rather than additive effects of social categories of identity (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008).

Critiques of the additive assumptions mainly include two points. First, the additive assumptions, delineate individuals' experiences as separate, independent, and summative, and implicitly deny the complexity of social oppressions, and assume an individual who has double, triple or more social categories of identity suffers the total amount of each oppression related to each of his/her disadvantaged social categories of identity (Bowleg, 2008; Collins, 1995; Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999; Grabb & Guppy, 2009; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Weber & Parra-Medina, 2003). For example, it neglects the distinctive experiences of minority females, which differs much from those of White females or from those of agnate males (King, 1988). Second, additive assumptions argue that an individual's social categories of identities or different types of discrimination associated with each identity against him/her can be ranked (Collins, 1991; Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999; Weber & Parra-Medina, 2003, as cited in Bowleg, 2008). This point is against another, which indicates that an individual can be both advantaged and disadvantaged simultaneously and thus it is inappropriate to rank his/her social categories of identity (Weber & Parra-Medina, 2003).

Nevertheless, these two assumptions share one thing in common, that is, both of them suggest that individuals with one disadvantaged social categories of identity experience less discrimination than those who have double, multiple or more disadvantaged social categories of identity (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). This argument confirms the 'multiple jeopardy-multiple advantage hypothesis'. It is proposed by Ransford, who predicts that people with two or

more most marginalized social categories of identity experience the most disadvantages among all groups and have the least access to social goods, attributes and services; at the same time, those with two or more most advantaged social categories of identity dominate all interests to a maximum (Ransford, 1980, as cited in Bowleg, 2008). In essence, this hypothesis points to the cumulative character of disadvantages and advantages experienced by people with two, triple or more disadvantaged or advantaged social categories of identity (Browne & Misra, 2003, as cited in Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008, p. 378; Epstein, 1973; King, 1988; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Reid, 1984).

3.6 Theoretical Framework

Based on the discussion above, the hypothesized theoretical framework for this thesis is presented as follows (Figure 3.1).

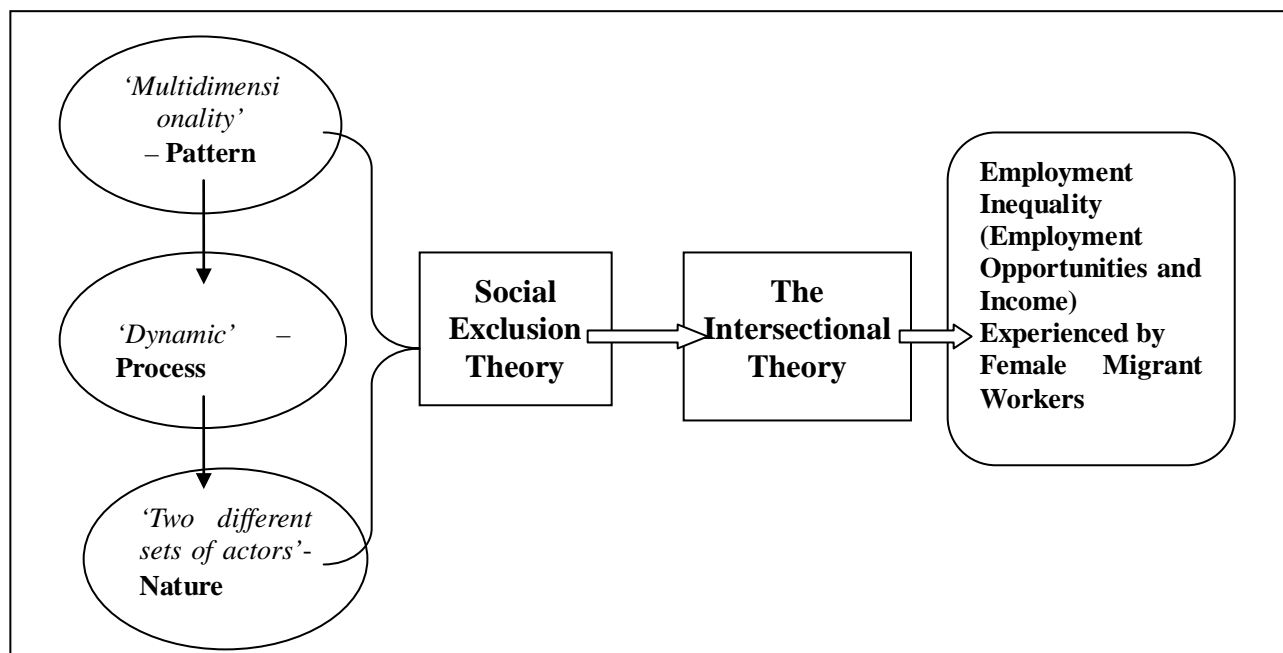


Figure 3.1 Hypothesized analytical framework for employment inequality experienced by female migrant workers in urban China.

In summary, this chapter critically analyses three classic theories dealing with employment

inequality, and treats the social exclusion theory that overcomes weakness of each classic theory as the skeleton. In order to better understand female migrant workers' experiences in public sphere and in the labour market caused by their double identities, the intersectional theory is further used as the second core theory in the theoretical framework. The next chapter will discuss methodology for this thesis.

CHAPTER 4:

METHODOLOGY

Three primary research questions in this thesis attempt, in essence, to explore the double jeopardy suffered by female migrant workers who have double social categories of identity in the urban labour market in China. In this sense, methods for studying labour market discrimination can be used. The methods most commonly used to measure labour market discrimination are race-based, and three methods – statistical data based on observation, information from both disadvantaged group members (‘targets’) and from advantaged group members (‘perpetrators’), and field audit studies of discrimination – are mainly used to contribute to the knowledge of ‘whether, how, and to what degree discrimination’ shapes the experiences of contemporary racial minority in the labour market (Pager & Shepherd, 2008, p. 183). With reference to these methods employed in race-based context, this thesis uses mixed research methods to explore the existence, degree, and trends of employment inequality experienced by female migrant workers.

4.1 Mixed Research Methods

This thesis uses mixed research methods with data from three types of sources, including statistical analyses, reports from both dominant group members (i.e., government officials, enterprise employers) and from subordinate group members (i.e., female migrant workers), and official documents/laws/policies relevant to female migrant workers’ employment issues initiated by the government.

Purposes. This form of multi-strategy research aims to achieve two purposes: complementarity and triangulation.

(1) Complementarity: This thesis cannot rely on either quantitative or qualitative methods alone but a combination, since numbers and stories offer diverse types of information (Sandelowski,

2000) and allow analyses of employment inequality suffered by female migrant workers from different perspectives. On one hand, with an orientation to a macro level (Bryman, 1988), the quantitative methods are used to identify the patterns of employment discrimination that differentiate between female migrant workers and members of other three comparative groups. The other two types of qualitative methods, in-depth individual interviews and official documents reference, on the other hand, with a particular focus on micro level (Bryman, 1988), aim to interpret the process in which unequal treatment and unequal distribution of employment opportunities and outcomes are produced and maintained in urban labour market in China. The in-depth interviews allow an examination of the process, which is helpful to unravel the motives or assumptions behind many urbanites' intolerance and employers' discriminatory selection and wage-setting decisions, and to provide an opportunity for female migrant workers to describe their actual experiences in the public sphere or in the labour market, which in turn may mirror the unequal treatment reinforced and rationalized by institutional mechanisms. Based on the macro-level investigation of the patterns and the micro-level examination of the process, official documents reference, as the second type of qualitative methods in the thesis, attempts to explore a range of institutional factors (e.g., government laws and policies), and enrich the understanding of the nature of employment discrimination against female migrant workers.

It should be clear that even though both quantitative and qualitative strategies enable me to understand some aspects of unequal treatment and unequal access to employment opportunities and earnings for female migrant workers, each of them is insufficient to provide a comprehensive examination of the full picture. For instance, quantitative data is very helpful to develop the understanding of the types of discrimination against people with certain stigmatized identity, and explore the ways in which the intensity of discrimination may vary by accumulative effect. However, quantitative analyses cannot reveal the social-interactional dimensions of discrimination. To capture these dimensions of the stratification and closure process, sociologists have to turn to qualitative materials from a randomly-selected cases or samples (Roscigno, 2007). The combination can overcome the disadvantages of each research strategy, such as lack of generality of qualitative, and inflexibility and static view in analysis of relationships between the dominated and subordinated in the quantitative methods.

(2) Triangulation: Given that no method is without its limitations, using more than one method to study the same research question, can guarantee corroboration of data or convergent validation (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Sandelowski, 2000). In other words, either quantitative or qualitative methods are able to cross-check findings deriving from one another (Deacon, Bryman, & Fenton, 1998). For instance, in-depth interviews with employers can be used to check whether there is a consistency between what they say in the survey and what they do in the actual workplace with respect to hiring and wage-setting decisions. Theoretically, the results of these combined research strategies are very helpful to mutually reinforce and thereby increasing the confidence in the findings (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 1966). If there is a failure to corroborate findings, triangulation also provides an opportunity to re-examine the results of each method carefully, which may guarantee the quality of my research.

4.2 Quantitative Method: Statistical Analysis

Advantages. There are two advantages in quantitative research (Bryman, 2004) to explain why quantitative methods are used in this thesis.

(1) Measurement: As one of the most obvious merits of quantitative methods, measurement supplies an opportunity to examine the patterns, including the existence, degree, and trends of unequal distribution of employment opportunities and earnings for female migrant workers relative to their three groups of counterparts. In terms of objective rather than subjective measurement, surveys in this thesis can capture part of what I am concerned, including urbanites' attitudes and beliefs towards migrant workers, female migrant workers' access to employment opportunities and to reasonable earnings, and convincingly report certain aspect of employment discrimination, an unobservable and empirical un-testable issue.

(2) Generalization: Since 2003 and 2006 survey of China GSS¹⁴ uses a scientific sampling method (i.e., probability sampling (Bryman, 2004)), and supplies sufficiently detailed information for the examination of multidimensional societal changes in urban China, I am confident that despite the variations across municipalities, results presented can be representative,

¹⁴ The introduction of 2003 and 2006 CGSS is presented in the following paragraph.

at least to all contemporary Chinese middle and larger cities.

Secondary Analysis. Given that both the 2003 and 2006 China GSS questionnaires are not specially designed for my research purpose and are collected by other researchers, secondary analysis is used to analyze the dataset (Bryman, 2004). This project is analyzed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), edition 16.0 for Windows.

Advantages. There are many advantages of secondary analysis, which explain why I use it for my data analysis, including low cost and time, high quality data, and the availability of subgroup analysis. But some limitations require greater attention, such as no control over data quality and the absence of key variables (Bryman, 2004), which require me to adapt myself to this dataset.

Introduction of 2003 and 2006 CGSS. 2003 and 2006 China General Social Survey (GSS) are used for my secondary analysis of the quantitative survey. These two nationally representative surveys were organized under the auspices of Renmin University of China in 2003 and have been known as the most comprehensive dataset in China. Multi-stage stratified random sampling method was used in each survey. Past rounds of the survey are the basis for several important books and numerous scholarly articles and papers. It is a public-opinion poll that has been conducted on nationally representative samples of urban citizens of the whole nation. Its objectives are to collect information about social trends to observe temporal variances in many dimensions, such as livelihood and well-being of Chinese urbanites, taking place since the initiation of reform and opening-up policy in 1978, and to provide information on specific social policy issues. The full survey includes hundreds of questions covering a broad range of social and political issues, offering comprehensive examination of multidimensional societal issues in urban China and providing demographic and socio-economic information, as well as information on expenditures and access to social benefits across different employment status groups.

It should be admitted that since the quantitative research is primarily derived from the existing datasets that were not specifically designed by me for the purpose of exploring employment inequality and discrimination for female migrant workers, the datasets do not allow me to directly test the issue of employment inequality and discrimination, and imposes constraints on

the quality of answers I can obtain.

For instance, I am unable with the available data (e.g., attitudes scale) to measure either stereotypes or unconscious attitudes of employers towards certain job applicants at the hiring or wage-setting stage, not to mention interactions *per se*. Thus, unfortunately, I cannot identify the motives or assumptions that go into the many choices and decisions made by the employers—specifically, for example, why is one job applicant more attractive than another at the hiring stage? Why is one job applicant given a higher evaluation than another (Roos & Gatta, 2009)? Nor can I learn how job applicants experience unfair treatment at the hiring and wage-setting stages.

While the 2003 and 2006 GSS questionnaires were not specifically designed for this research purpose, given that most existing studies concerning these issues are fragmentary and derived from a limited number of national contexts, the 2003 and 2006 GSS sample's geographic span makes possible analysis of employment inequality and discrimination nationwide.

Samples. Depending on different research questions in Chapters 5,¹⁵ 6, and 7, the samples vary in these three chapters. Specifically, in Chapter 6, two comparable survey data sets, both the 2003 and 2006 CGSS are used, and it takes those who were living in the urban areas during the survey period and were at the same time in the labour force as the target population. As a result of this selection, the working sample is reduced to 5,894 cases in the former dataset, and 3,484 cases in the latter.¹⁶ The target group in Chapter 7 remains the same as those in Chapter 6.

¹⁵ There is no quantitative method used in Chapter 5, and thus this chapter has no statistical analysis. Instead, there is only qualitative method used in Chapter 5. Using reports of potential discrimination, this chapter can be regarded as a study on racial stereotypes and attitudes among people in the public sphere. The potential great discrepancies between self-reports in the interview and behaviors in the reality cannot be ignored.

¹⁶ As for the selection based on labour force age, theoretically, the target group in this chapter that discusses employment opportunity and that in the next one that deals with earnings should be respectively confined to those who are working in the labour market as legal work force and stable labourers during the period ranging from they finish their schooling to their retirement (Li, 2007) during the survey period. In China, the legal age for labour force varies in sex and administrative rating (e.g., *ganbu*, *gongren*), and meanwhile, it changes across time. However, according to common sense, people at different ages normally come in and out the

Different statistical analyses in each chapter. In response to three primary research questions, this thesis involves three chapters, respectively dealing with public attitudes towards female migrant workers, in particular, female migrant workers (Chapter 5¹⁷), female migrant workers' experiences regarding employment opportunities (Chapter 6) and employment earnings (Chapter 7) relative to other three comparative group members in the labour market in urban China. Accordingly, there are different specific statistical analysis models in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

Statistical Method. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 respectively deal with female migrant workers' access to employment opportunities and earnings, thus they have the same logic of statistical analysis, named residual statistical analysis. This type of technique is the most frequently-used method to examine discrimination, in particular, in sociology and economics with a particular focus on measuring stratification-related outcomes, such as employment, earnings, and occupational status (Quillian, 2006). By exploring outcomes of inequality between different comparative groups, this method tends to focus less on 'the attitudes or perceptions of actors that might be correlated with acts of discrimination' than on 'the possible consequences of discrimination in the unequal distribution' of employment opportunities and earnings (Pager & Shepherd, 2008, pp. 183–184).

Relatively large-scale datasets offer an opportunity to identify inequalities between different comparative groups and then demonstrate the trends. In the statistical sense, if differences in all other influential indicators are taken into account, the residual gap remained in statistical outcomes is defined as discrimination (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). For purpose of clarification,

labour market, regardless of the legal labour age. This is especially the case for rural people in China. According to the Frequency in both 2003 and 2006 dataset, there are only few of respondents at the age of 60 and above. Thus, this thesis does not strictly select the cases by age criterion. Moreover, given this thesis focuses on the urban labour market, the respondents should be limited to those who are currently living in the urban areas in China during the survey period. There is no need to do any selection in the 2003 CGSS, since its general target group is urbanites. As for the 2006 CGSS, the cases should be selected for urbanites only.

¹⁷ There is qualitative method used only in Chapter 5. Using reports of potential discrimination, this chapter can be regarded as a study on racial stereotypes and attitudes among people in the public sphere. Its disadvantage that the potential great discrepancies between self-reports in the interview and behaviors in the reality cannot be ignored.

take race as an example. If there is a racial inequality, which can be numerically measured and stand for an outcome, such as employment opportunities and earnings, there must be several reasons to explain such disparity, including both indicators dealing nothing with race (e.g., highest educational attainment) and race-related factors (e.g., discrimination). Thus, following its logic, racial variation after considering differences in non-race variables should be treated as discrimination against minorities (Quillian, 2006).

Disadvantages. One problem of residual statistical analysis is that due to its underlying assumption that discrimination is the remaining racial difference after variances in other indicators associated with racial disparity are taken into account, statistical decomposition should be regarded as a way to estimate the extent to which racial disparities can be explained by indicators included in the model, rather than a way to exactly represent discrimination per se (Quillian, 2006). As a matter of fact, in most cases, it is very difficult or nearly impossible to measure all indicators associated with unequal outcomes, and at the same time, there is possibility that the inequalities caused by discrimination might be shaped by several other indicators that are not included in the analysis (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). The reason for their absence might be different, for example, some of them cannot be easily measured by the survey scale (e.g., individuals' preference or motivations). For example, in my study of employment opportunities for these four comparative groups in Chapter 6, even though I consider differences in human capital (i.e., education, skill certificate, and work experience), social capital (i.e., number of people who help respondents to get jobs) and political (i.e., Communist party membership) variables, there are still a range of employment-related factors not included in the analysis. These factors include employees' preference and 'motivation', 'reliability', 'interpersonal skills', 'punctuality', and so on, all of which have effects on employers' hiring decisions, but very difficult to measure in survey (Pager & Shepherd, 2008, p. 184). Thus, scholars using residual statistical analysis must be very cautious when interpreting evaluation of discrimination, and be clear that such estimates rely heavily on the adequacy of control (Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Quillian, 2006).

Another potential problem of residual statistical analysis is that some control variables included in the analysis might themselves be endogenous to the dependent variable (Pager & Shepherd,

2008). Tomaskovic-Devey, Thomas, and Johnston (2005) propose an example to support this argument: in a case where a job applicant's access to job vacancies is denied, he/she must find very difficult to have a stable firm tenure. If this occurs, his/her work experience might be endogenous to discrimination at the hiring stage.

Nevertheless, statistical analysis appears to contribute much to this thesis. Survey data are primarily used to get basic patterns of unequal distribution of employment opportunities for female migrant workers relative to members in other three comparative groups (Chapter 6), and patterns of unequal distribution of employment earnings for female migrant workers relative to members in other three comparative groups (Chapter 7). The 'pattern' here is defined as the existence, degree, and trends of unequal distribution of employment opportunities and earnings for female migrant workers relative to their three groups of counterparts.

Methodology. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 will make reference to Greenman and Xie's strategy (2008), termed as what McCall (2005) defined 'intercategorical', for intersectional study. McCall (2005) has provided an insightful discussion of the methodology in intersectionality study. In her work, McCall (2005, p. 1773) suggests three primary kinds of intersectionality approaches, including 'inter-categorical', 'intra-categorical' and 'anti-categorical'.

The methodology used in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 is what she terms 'inter-categorical' (McCall, 2005, p. 1786), since it is normally concerned with relationships among different social groups 'within and across analytical categories' rather than 'complexities within single social groups, single categories, or both'. At the same time, it is closely associated with quantitative methods, which attempt to empirically explore the existence and degree of the disparities among different social groups (Mehrotra, 2010, p. 423). In order to do such multi-group comparison to interpret social inequality, this approach has an underlying assumption: social categories are discrete and independent. Following this logic, intersectional studies should base on social categories to explain inequality experienced by individuals or certain social groups (McPhail, 2004).

An increased number of scholars have criticized or rejected social categories of identity (e.g., race and gender), because from their perspective, social inequality is closely associated with the

process through which social categories of identity are produced and sustained (McCall, 2005). However, analysis based on social categories of identity is recognized by the inter-categorical approach to examine patterns across groups (Greenman & Xie, 2008).

Accordingly, there are several weak points of such category-based analysis, some scholars, for instance, Greenman and Xie (2008) employ them in their analysis of the interaction of sex and race on incomes in the United States to fully understand the patterns of intra-group incomes inequality.

Following Greenman and Xie's strategy (2008) to examine whether there is intersection between race and gender with respect to earnings (Greenman & Xie, 2008), the primary task of my two chapters is respectively to determine whether there is evidence of intersectionality between *hukou* and gender in employment opportunity and in earnings in the labour market in China. If there is no interaction between *hukou* and gender, the employment opportunity/earnings ratio of female migrant workers relative to male urbanites are determined as an additive function of their *hukou*-based and gender-based disadvantages. In other words, the employment opportunity/earnings ratio of female migrant workers can be attained from two sources of information: the female-to-male employment opportunity/earnings ratio among urbanites (X), and the rural-to-urban employment opportunity/earnings ratio among males of the same group (Y). Thus, if there is no interaction between *hukou* and gender on employment opportunity/earnings, female migrant workers will have an employment opportunity/earnings ratio (Z), calculated as the product of the employment opportunity/earnings ratio of female urbanites and male migrant workers, that is, $X * Y$ (see Table 4.1, Greenman & Xie, 2008).

Table 4.1. Employment opportunity/earnings ratio relative to male urbanites.

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Urban registration</i>	1	X
<i>Rural registration</i>	Y	Z

Source: Greenman and Xie (2008, p.1223).

Hence, X, which indicates the female-to-male employment opportunity/earnings ratio among

urbanites, demonstrates the effect of gender, whereas Y, which suggests the rural-to-urban employment opportunity/earnings ratio among males of the same group, demonstrates the effect of *hukou*. Meanwhile, Z, which stands for the employment opportunity/earnings ratio of female migrant workers relative to male urbanites, in essence demonstrates a result in an ideal status.

In order to establish a benchmark to measure the degree of their double jeopardy, I go beyond Greenman and Xie's two-by-two inter-categorical research strategy, and introduce D, which is assumed to stand for the employment opportunity/earnings ratio of female migrant workers relative to male urbanites in an actual status. The comparison between Z and D is expected to demonstrate the existence of double jeopardy experienced by female migrant workers with respect to employment opportunity/earnings. If there is no interaction between gender and *hukou*, D should definitely equal to Z. If D is greater than Z, female migrant workers actually suffer less than double jeopardy (i.e., gender and *hukou*) than male urbanites, whereas if D is less than Z, female migrant workers actually suffer greater than double jeopardy (i.e., gender and *hukou*) than male urbanites.

If there is indeed an interaction between gender and *hukou* that influences female migrant workers' employment opportunity/earnings, I must evaluate the extent to which they experience the interactive effects of these two social categories of identity.

Then I fashion a new measure named intra-employment-opportunity-ratio (R) to measure this, and R is the ratio of D to Z. Thus, there should be a trend that the greater R is, employment discrimination actually experienced by female migrant workers is more than double jeopardy, whereas the smaller R is, female migrant workers should have less than double jeopardy.

Given that each specific indicator mentioned above, including X, Y, Z, D and R, represents a gross effect influenced by gender and *hukou*, and also by other factors, including human capital, social capital, political capital, demographic variables and marketization level, this chapter and next chapter, in order to see clearly the net effect of gender and the household registration system, will respectively involve two stages of statistical analysis. The first step will focus on the gross inter-employment-opportunity-ratio and intra-employment-opportunity-ratio of female migrant

workers, and the second one, after controlling for other influential factors, is concerned with the net inter-employment-opportunity-ratio and intra-employment-opportunity-ratio of these individuals.

Given variances in measured level of dependent variables in two chapters, Chapter 6 to 7, the regression models differ. Chapter 6 will use logistic regression, since the dependent variable (i.e., current employment status) is dichotomous with two outcome variables, namely, 0 or 1.

$$\dots \text{Log} [j_{ij}/(1 - j_{ij})] = b_{0j} + b_{1j} \text{ Subgroups} + \dots + b_{nj} \text{ control variable} \dots (4.1)$$

Where j_{ij} is the probability that respondent i in subgroups (i.e., female migrant workers, male migrant workers, female urbanites, male urbanites), j represents the possibility of getting employed, and b_{nj} indicates the coefficients for indicators of control variables. Please see the Appendix for the variables information for Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 will use MCA (multiple classification analysis), since the dependent variable is continuous. MCA is used to analyze the gross and net differences among several comparative groups (Li, 2007) in employment opportunity/earnings. The strategy of comparison is to see whether there is difference in employment opportunity/earnings among four groups, that is, male urbanites, female urbanites, male migrant workers, and female migrant workers, with a particular focus on the comparison between the first and last group.

There is little doubt that variations in individual's employment opportunity/earnings can be regarded as a measure of employment outcome in the labour market, and are affected by a series of factors, such as demographic factors, human capital, social capital, and political capital. Given there are three primary reasons for employment inequality caused by interplay between gender and race (Browne & Misra, 2003), namely, differences in individual human capital (e.g., highest educational attainment, skills, work experience), differences in position in the labour market (e.g., industry, region) (Reskin & Padavic, 1999), and discrimination (Altonji & Blank, 1999; Becker, 1959; Jackman, 1994; Pettigrew, 1980), this paper follows a logic: after all the

other influential indicators¹⁸ are controlled, if there is a differentiation regarding participants' employment opportunities (i.e., either get employed or unemployed), employment discrimination occurs.

In essence, the statistical procedure should be seen as a least-squares solution, and the dependent variable here are defined as a linear combination of the grand mean (intercept) and a range of categorical variables and interval variables. More specifically, in the MCA model, as far as interval variables are concerned, the regression coefficients can be estimated and takes the form of un-standardized coefficients, whereas when it comes to categorical variables, there are coefficients calculated for each category and are represented as a deviation from the grand mean of the dependent variable. Moreover, the gross deviations are effects when differences in other independent variables have not been taken into account, whereas the net deviations are effects after controlling for differences in these independent variables (Li, 2007).

The statistical model is expressed as follows:

$$\dots\dots\dots Y_j = \alpha + \beta(b_{ij}) \dots\dots\dots (4.2)$$

where Y_j is the annual earnings of individual in 2003 and 2006, α is the grand mean of Y_j , b_{ij} is a list of dummy variables in which i varies from 1 to 4, measuring membership in the four groups being compared, d_{ij} is a list of control variables. Results are produced through the natural logarithm transformation of earnings, $\log(Y_j)$.

Chapter 7 has basically followed the same logic in Chapter 6, but due to different research focus, there are some differences in variables and measurements (see the Appendix).

4.3 Qualitative Methods

In order to further explain the patterns that identified by quantitative methods, and to capture the

¹⁸ Measures of social capital are also included, since they contribute significantly to individuals' employment opportunities in Chinese labour market.

process and nature of discrimination suffered by female migrant workers in public sphere and in workplace, two types of qualitative methods, including individual interviews and documentary materials are carried out, complementing the results of the aggregate survey data.

Study setting of qualitative studies. To better understand unequal treatment and unequal distribution of employment opportunities and earnings experienced by female migrant workers relative to members from other three comparative groups in contemporary urban China, I conducted field research in Xi'an city, Shaanxi Province in China.

Xi'an, as a medium-sized provincial capital in China located in the middle of the Huang River Area, has served as the bridge between eastern China and other parts of China. It is the hub of development in the eastern China economy, and is important to the progress of Chinese economy as a metropolitan center. These decades have witnessed an increased number of labourers pouring into this city in tides and waves from other parts of China to contribute to its development. This is why Xi'an is famous for its wealth in human resources. Among this big migrating group, female migrant workers have contributed a lot. Thus, Xi'an should be a good place to examine urbanites-migrants relations and to investigate employment-based issues for female migrant workers.

4.3.1 Semi-structured individual interviews

Individual interviews were used because the findings derived from quantitative methods cannot provide the motives or assumptions that explain intolerance held by urbanites and government officials in the public sphere. The findings derived from quantitative methods are also inadequate in providing the motives or assumptions in hiring choices and wage-setting decisions made by employers. Without the richness and significant details provided by individual interviews, the interpretations about actual discriminatory employment experiences faced by female migrant workers cannot be explored.

Advantages. Several advantages can explain why qualitative methods (both individual interviews and focus groups) (Bryman, 2004) are used in this thesis.

(1) Emphasis on process: Since one of this thesis' attempts is to explore the interaction between different parties involved in issues relevant to discrimination faced female migrant workers in the general sense, and at both hiring and wage-setting stages, qualitative methods, which treat social life in terms of processes and aim to picture the nuance and deepness of individual attitudes (Orbuch, 1997), are very appropriate.

For instance, when exploring unequal distribution of employment opportunities, in-depth interviews generate many self-report from both employers and female migrant workers, depicting employers' preferences and practices and female migrant workers' experiences and difficulties. On the one hand, the complex process by which employers produce estimates of group characteristics and update those estimates over time can be identified. On the other hand, the process through which female migrant workers accept, rationalize and internalize institutional- and personally-mediated employment discrimination is very clear, too. Both employers' and female migrant workers' narratives may suggest some of the ways *hukou* and gender combine to come into play during employment interactions. Different from quantitative methods mentioned above that provide a static picture of inequality and discrimination with respect to employment opportunities and earnings for female migrant workers, qualitative methods, due to the emphasis on change and flux, allow us to explore the dynamics of the process through which the patterns are formed, and in which interdependent different social groups (i.e., employers, job-applicants) interconnect (Bryman, 2004; Feagin, 1991).

Meanwhile, qualitative methods can overcome the limits of survey questions alone for understanding the changing nature of inequality and discrimination (Pager & Quilham, 2005).

(2) Subjectively measurable research objects: Discrimination normally cannot be directly or easily observed. On the one hand, at times, targets of discrimination cannot reflect their discriminatory experiences very accurately, and thus reports from them only demonstrate their individual perceptions (what happened from their perspective) rather than reality (what actually happened to them). Several reasons can explain such inaccuracy. For example, if they are rejected at the hiring stage or receive unqualified earnings at the wage-setting stage, some of them may overstate the discrimination (Quillian, 2006). On the other hand, perpetrators of

discrimination know discrimination is illegal both in the public sphere and in the labour market, and thus they tend to conceal their discriminatory behaviors or at least underreport them to avoid possible physical or legal retaliation (Quillian, 2006; Wang, Zong, & Li, 2012; Zong & Perry, 2011).

Thus, measuring discrimination is rather difficult, even for an outcome at a single time point or in a single context (Quillian, 2006). Considering that discrimination, to some extent, reflects the process and the consequence of perpetrators of discrimination (e.g., people who are in authority positions) to discriminate against targets of discrimination (Roos & Gatta, 2009), this thesis, in order to better examine discrimination, uses qualitative methods.

One of the reasons is that qualitative methods are a good tool to explore research objects that are unobservable and un-testable empirically (Reskin, 2003), like discrimination. Qualitative methods in this thesis, in terms of the focus on inequalities, which are expressed through day-to-day interactions and encounters and are pictured by retrospective narratives (Roscigno, 2007), not only provide an opportunity for the participants to describe their relevant experiences, but also can be used to explore their subjective interpretations that reflect the nature of discrimination. Moreover, qualitative methods allow me to observe the participants' language, especially when they express ideas in a subtle way. For example, accounts of both urbanites and employers may often include an oblique attack on female migrant workers in a covert or disguised form, and disguise their discriminatory attitudes through behaviors that seem non-prejudicial. In other words, their preference or stereotypes are normally expressed through their use of subtle language (Simms, 2004; Wang et al., 2012; Zong & Perry, 2011).

(3) Seeing through the eyes of the people being studied: Analysis of discriminatory processes, in particular, analysis of first-party interpretations of what happened and its consequences allows me to see diverse costs of discrimination (Roscigno, 2007). Especially for female migrant workers with stigmatized identities, in order to truly reach a meaningful shared understanding of their experiences, the prioritization of their stories is advocated in the research.

No doubt, there is one possibility that these stories I hear from female migrant workers are not

authentic voices or not the truth. Nevertheless, their accounts provide very valuable information about female migrant worker's personal experiences.

In essence, interviews offer them an opportunity to say something for themselves, which may challenge a discursive order in the mainstream where their voices cannot be heard. Meanwhile, telling stories in the interviews implicitly demonstrates that these female migrant workers are active agents who have difficulties and expectations rather than as passive victims (Jacka, 2000). Their stories not only include much useful information about their own experiences in the urban labour market in China, but also inform other social members in the society of equal rights these female migrant workers should have.

(4) Flexibility and managing diversity: When provided a less structured interview, participants have an opportunity to speak out their real ideas. In the process, some aspects of their social world, which are highly important to them but may not even have crossed my mind, are more likely to be forthcoming. Such flexibility implicitly gives permission to managing diversity (Bryan, 2004).

Disadvantages. Some problems should also be considered in qualitative research. For instance, the validity of findings from interviews in this thesis heavily relies on whether my participants are willing to provide truthful answers to questions. There is one possibility: because of the sensitive nature of interviews (e.g., discrimination-related topics), some of my participants, for example, employers, express their discriminatory attitudes towards female migrant workers in a muted or polite tones. In this way, their accounts may be less likely to provoke outrage or indignation, and they can avoid potential legal retaliation (Pager & Karafin, 2009; Wang et al., 2012; Zong & Perry, 2011).

Semi-structure and individual form. The interview guide takes a semi-structured form, based on the following reasons:

(1) It provides me with a general framework of interview schedule. Having prepared an array of questions ahead of time, I had a clear idea of what should be asked and how to deliver my

questions to the participants in the interviews. In this way, my research questions were explored successfully and there is little risk to these participants. Also, compared to unstructured interview, I indeed efficiently monitored the interview direction and decrease the likelihood of departures from the topic.

(2) Having been given some free rein to ‘ramble’ or ‘go off at tangents’ (Bryman, 2004, p. 320), these participants have a chance to share his/her own perspectives with respect to female migrant workers’ experiences in the cities, and produce rich information or even unanticipated yet significant descriptions.

(3) With prepared guidelines, the questions are asked generally in the same way each time (Ritchie & Lewis, 2006), producing the same stimulus to my participants and thus guaranteeing the reliability.

The interviews are conducted one on one. This decision was made for three reasons:

(1) Each participant was given an opportunity to talk about his/her own attitudes, understanding and experiences of discrimination at a general level and at the hiring and wage-setting stages suffered by female migrant workers, without any other’s influence or interruption. Thus, I was able to hear their true voices. This point is especially important for female migrant workers who are normally stigmatized and thus are unwilling to share or even underreport their experiences of discrimination in order to protect their self-esteem and avoid the invalidation of their experiences by others (Harrell, 2000).

(2) Technically, it allowed a higher quality of interview record since each participant could deliver his/her answer at one time and no complicated interactions occur.

(3) Due to diverse identities, participants may have different assessments of the issue of discrimination at a general level and at both hiring and wage-setting stages faced female migrant workers, and thus need to be listened one by one with in-depth exploration.

(4) In-depth in-person interviews were normally regarded as a more effective way than other types of interviews to elicit participants' discussions about sensitive issues (Kirschenman & Neckerman, 1991; Moss & Tilly, 2003; Wilson, 1996).

Who. My interviews are conducted with thirty participants, including five government officials, five enterprise management, five urbanites and fifteen female migrant workers.

Reasons. Because one way of evaluating exposure to employment discrimination is to look at employers' preferences for certain group of workers, my participants included several types. First, some urbanites are included as participants to reflect whether, how and what discrimination was suffered by female migrant workers in the urban China's public sphere. Second, specialists or managers of enterprise, for instance, labour market entrants or human resources specialists or managers and recruitment managers who are primarily responsible for the recruitment of employees to their organizations. Third, as the constitutors of relevant employment policies, government officials are included too as another source of participants. These three types of participants are categorized as 'perpetrators', the dominant group members, whereas the other, 'targets' group are composed of subordinate group members, female migrant workers. This distinction between perpetrators and targets matches the 'two different sets of actors' domain in the social exclusion theory, contributing to the understanding of the nature of discrimination in a general level and at workplace experienced by female migrant workers in urban China.

Sampling and Access. Inclusion criteria firstly draw upon identities (i.e., job applicants or employers/government officials). For the 'targets' group, two characteristics, *hukou* status and sex/gender are used to select female migrant workers, and those being interviewed coming from a wide variety of geographic locations, with some from neighboring countryside and others from other provinces' rural areas. For the 'perpetuators' group, other demographic factors, such as age, education and family background are considered to maximize the diversity of participants.

Since qualitative methodologies do not emphasize representation but maximum diversity of the sample and the transferability of data to a larger population in the same circumstances (Bryan, 2004), participants of the individual interviews mainly came from three channels depending on

their different employment status and positions: First, female migrant workers were selected from a job fair (recruitment meeting) conducted in Xi'an city Job Referral Service Center using snowball sampling method. I sampled participants until my categories achieved theoretical saturation; in other words, until I 'collected information from enough cases in each category to allow me to draw conclusions about the validity of the result or to clarify the result' (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 249). Moreover, some of my interactions with rural relatives and friends also complemented my access to this social group. When selecting participants from the enterprise management, one of my parents' friends, who has been working in the personnel department of one big enterprise in Xi'an was asked for help to negotiate the access. She worked as gatekeeper and helped me gain access to some management within. In addition, one of my friends working at the Labour and Social Security Bureau of Xi'an city assists in recruiting and accessing some government officials.

Where. The locations differ depending on the participants' identities. For the government officials and enterprise management, the site are at their office or the meeting room, while for female migrant workers and urbanites, given the sensitivity of my research topic, the individual interviews with them are carried out at each participant's home. Such choice can be explained by two reasons. (1) According to my previous research experience, when given the choice to decide interview venues, most participants appreciated being interviewed at their homes, where they felt free to express their true opinions or feelings about such sensitive and private topics. (2) Conducting interviews at home may create an informal manner, which decreases participants' nervous feelings or worrying about being overheard or intrusion (Bryman, 2004).

Length. Each interview ranged approximately in length from thirty minutes to one hour, with the average interview lasting around forty-five minutes. Interviews covered a diversity of topics, depending on the participant. For instance, when talking with employers, topics primarily included screening procedures, and criteria for selection at the hiring stage and decisions at the wage-setting stage.

Transcription and equipment. Each interview was tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Due to an emphasis of qualitative method approaches not only on what is said but also how

accounts are generated by the participants, the procedures of recording interviews are very important. They can help me to overcome the natural limitations of my memories and the intuitive polishes which might be made on their original languages; they provide qualified materials for my narrative analysis which requires detailed transcriptions (Heritage, 1984); as well, as Roulston, DeMarrais, and Lewis (2003) indicate, the implications for interactional nature of qualitative method approach often cannot be realized until using audio-recording techniques. Thus, recording promoted a process of refinement of my conduct of interviews. The mini-disk recorder was chosen for high quality of the recording.

Unexpected situations and solutions. In my field research, there were some unexpected situations and my solutions to them were as follows.

(1) Sensitive/emotional issues: Emotional issues are unavoidable during the interviews, especially for female migrant workers due to their stigmatized identities. For these female migrant workers, recounting the tough experiences of finding jobs or unequal treatment in earnings can be very distressing. For instance, when talking about the experiences that she was devalued and rejected when applying for jobs and her determination to sacrifice herself to get her children ahead in the city, a female migrant worker began to struggle with her emotions and finally asked not to release her interviews in my thesis. Following several tips suggested by other researchers (Goodrum & Keys, 2007; Graham, Grewel, & Lewis, 2006; Kavanaugh & Ayres, 1998; Roulston et al., 2003): turning to another topic, continuing with the interview with a softly spoken comment (e.g., ‘right’, ‘I see’), allowing them to set the pace of the interview (e.g., silence), helping them to take time out of the interview context (e.g., turning off the recording device, physically leaving the participant alone for a time) seemed to be very helpful to calm her down.

(2) Being late and absence: In the event that some of my participants could be late or even not show up in the interview appointment, some preparations were done in advance. For example, a vice-manager of personnel department of the enterprise did not make it because he had something urgent at home, and thus I had to cancel the appointment with him and instead, contacted one of my participants, a female migrant worker who was working as a domestic

worker at someone's home, for whom daytime appeared to be more flexible as a backup. I arranged another time for the male vice-manager.

(3) Selecting interview locations: When selecting the locations for interviews with female migrant workers in my field research, some of them told me that she felt it inconvenient to be interviewed at home and preferred a location away from personal circumstances. I immediately realized that pursuing interviews at their homes to some extent meant the risk of inadvertently intruding on their privacy. Thus, I finally adjusted to their preference and found another venue for interviews, for instance, a small restaurant or cafe. Of course, either kind of specific location requires an environment with as little extraneous noise as possible for high-quality tape-recording as well as private space.

In my field research, researchers (i.e., I) and participants have different roles. This adheres to features of qualitative interviews, which emphasizes researcher's empathy and listening skills and advocates offering space for these participants to talk about their own perspectives or feelings (Mitchell & Irvine, 2008).

Roles and rapport. Participants' roles: Given that these participants are given enough opportunity to talk, and that I offer little in turn, they essentially play a role as informants (Mitchell & Irvine, 2008). They are placed in the 'authorial position' (Bryman 2004, p. 298) and are given direct opportunities to talk about their own interpretations about employment discrimination facing female migrant workers.

Researcher's role: The forms of relationships I attempt to have with the participants include two types.

(1) Overt roles versus covert roles: Determined by access used to gain entry into the research context and to my participants, overt role are assumed. Accordingly, I can ask questions and observe them with an open identity.

(2) Detachment versus involvement: Faced with the dilemma between developing an active

relationship with participants based on involvement and maintaining a professional researcher role and distance, I tried to adopt a ‘fixed role between supportive friend and professional researcher’ (Mitchell & Irvine, 2008, p. 41). On one hand, during the process of listening to their description about actual experiences and perspectives, I can engage in a more direct and emotional context, understand their accounts more fully and then carry that understanding into my subsequent interpretation (Sandelowski, 2000). On the other hand, distancing is preferred to some extent, and it is expected to ‘avoid the confusion and the potentially conflict-laden territory of researcher as friend’ (Mitchell & Irvine, 2008, p. 37) and the risk of going native or becoming wrapped up in the world view of these participants and losing sight of position as a researcher to develop a social scientific perspective (Bryman, 2004).

Rapport: Many efforts are made to create rapport during the fieldwork, such as identifying ways in which potential participants know clearly what participation in research actually entails (e.g., keeping honest about the length of interviews) (Wiles, Vikki, Crow, & Heath, 2006), phrasing language or questions to avoid the negative meaning (e.g., ‘inept’ or ‘unwanted’) (Ritchie & Lewis 2006, p. 161), showing visual cues of friendliness like smiling or maintaining good eye contact (Bryman, 2004), or arriving at the venue earlier and chatting generally with them prior to the interviews to ease their nervous feelings, ‘reticence’ (Ritchie & Lewis 2006, p. 163) or worry. Of course, constrained by time, establishing rapport is done quickly to encourage these participants to desire or feel relaxed to participate in and persist with the interview. The opportunity to do rapport-building in the individual in-depth interview can reduce social desirability pressures, making my participants feel at ease when expressing their ideas, especially those counter-normative beliefs (Pager & Quilham, 2005).

4.3.2 Official documentary materials

In order to collect some official information (e.g., policy, laws) concerning female migrant workers’ employment, reference to documentary material is used as another important source for qualitative data collection.

Sources. The official documents in this thesis are defined as released textual materials produced

by different levels of government (i.e., central and local) on labour policy and migration relevant to female migrant workers. They include Chinese Labour Laws and other types of existing anti-discrimination laws in China. All of them are Chinese-language documents.

Advantages. In terms of J. Scott's (1990) four judgment criteria, documentary materials, as one unobtrusive approach to collect data, is seen as authentic and as having meaning (in the sense of being clear and comprehensible to me).

Disadvantages. Documentary materials are often criticized for two standards (Scott, 1990). The first disadvantage of using documents is concerned with credibility, namely, whether the documentary source is biased. This point requires me to critically think of the documentary materials deriving either from government or from enterprise as depictions of reality. The second problem is representativeness, that is, whether the case can be generalized to broader scope. But fortunately, in the context of qualitative research, it is not a question, since no case can be representative in a statistical sense (Bryman, 2004).

4.3.3 Data analysis: Narrative analysis (NA) and qualitative content analysis

There are two approaches to analyze qualitative data, with one for the interviews, and the other for the official documentary materials.

Data analysis of interviews. As an approach to analysis that emphasizes the life stories and experiences told by participants to understand their situations and perspectives, narrative analysis (NA) is used to analyze my interview materials. Materials used for NA are the accounts provided by my participants in the interviews.

NA shifts its emphasis from 'what actually happened' to 'how participants make sense of what happened', and therefore, it places me in a better position to capture some specific points that are not directly involved in the flow of accounts (Wetherell, 1998).

Following Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002), I consider the relationship between my participants

and me as collaboration. We cooperate with each other throughout the whole research process. In addition, with an emphasis on the negotiating relationships to lessen the potential gap between the narrative told and the narrative interpreted, I give up judging these narratives from a researcher's perspective, rather, engage myself as a folklorist (Bryman, 2004) to their first-person accounts of their own understanding of the process in which female migrant workers suffer unequal treatment and employment discrimination.

Data analysis of official documentary materials. Qualitative content analysis is used to analyze the documentary materials. It includes an examination of the materials to find fundamental themes, and includes a process through which themes embedded in the materials are elicited (Bryman, 2004). In these three empirical chapters, extracted themes were organized in terms of three dimensions, including institutional, personally-mediated, and internalized discrimination against female migrant workers. The most representative comments are presented in forms of brief quotations (Jones, 1997).

In summary, this chapter primarily introduced the methodology for this thesis. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. As for the quantitative approaches, statistical models in each empirical chapter vary depending on research focus whereas as for the qualitative approaches, in-depth individual interviews and official documentary materials were employed. Empirical chapters for this thesis are represented in the following three chapters.

CHAPTER 5:

OUTSIDERS WITHIN: ATTITUDES TOWARDS EQUALITY FOR MIGRANT WORKERS AND SURMOUNTING OBSTACLES FOR FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS IN URBAN CHINA¹⁹

Chapter 5, which attempts to explore the question of ‘in the public sphere, are Chinese urbanites willing to provide equal opportunities and entitlements for female migrant workers?’, is the first empirical chapter in this thesis. The rationale for placing it at the beginning rather than after two chapters dealing with female migrant workers’ experiences in the labour market is that based on its qualitative findings about public attitudes towards female migrant workers, this chapter can offer a basis and social context in which employment discrimination occurs for female migrant workers. At the same time, it can give part explanation of why they are deprived of rights to employment opportunities and earnings in the labour market.

As far as the migrant workers’ actual experiences are concerned, many existing studies have paid much attention to the material dimension documented in objective measures, such as earnings. Still others have explored the psychosocial dimension in terms of subjective measures. For example, those studies that focus on psychological issues may look into the migrant workers’ psychological response to their migration experiences (e.g., Lin, 2005; Luo, Huang, Zhang, & Deng, 2006; Mu & Mao, 2005; Zhu, 2003). More specifically, these studies cover multiple topics, including migrant workers’ psychological explanations for rural-to-urban migration, their views of both the cities and the rural areas, interactions with indigenous urban dwellers, psychological experiences after entering the cities, the extent to which they are adapted to the cities, their self perceptions and criminal mentality (Shen & Zhang, 2006). Though these studies have offered an

¹⁹ Part of this chapter and related discussions in Chapter 8 have been included in my co-authored working paper entitled ‘Unfinished promise: socioeconomic status and attitude toward equality for migrant workers in urban China’, *Prairie Metropolis Centre Working Paper Series*, Canada. See website: <http://pcerii.metropolis.net/framesete.html>.

insightful perspective to measure migrant workers' psychology throughout their migration process, there are some weaknesses, among which is their emphasis on the excluded - those who have been discriminated against only, rather than on the excluder - those who have carried out discrimination or on both sides simultaneously (Zhou et al., 2011).

This chapter will discuss both the excluder (i.e., urbanites) and the excluded (i.e., migrant workers, in this chapter, female migrant workers) through an examination of the attitudes of the former toward the latter. Of course, given the focus of this thesis on female migrant workers, the majority of discussion in this chapter will primarily deal with the urbanites' attitudes toward this particular group. But constrained by existing datasets that do not have any question dealing with urbanites' attitudes particularly towards female migrant workers, the data analysis in this chapter will be only based on qualitative methods. Using rich first-hand qualitative data, including in-depth interviews with female migrant workers, these female migrant workers, on one hand, may have opportunities to talk about their particular experience as female migrant workers, and urbanites, on the other hand, are allowed to express their attitudes toward female migrant workers rather than toward migrant workers as a whole.

5.1 Qualitative Results

The in-depth interviews with government officials, urbanites, and female migrant workers themselves have definitely confirmed and can further better the understanding of the research results based on quantitative data.

As far as the employment laws and policies in the area of social equality are concerned, there are two approaches to equality. The first is 'liberal approach to equality' (Jewson & Mason, 1986), which refers to the employment laws and policies that attempt to abolish employers' discrimination against individuals in the labour market. It follows an assumption that discrimination throughout the employment process is against a standard fair and free market competition, since it generates inefficiency in the use of human resources and lead to inequality among individuals (Kirton & Greene, 2005; Woodhams et al., 2009).

The second is the ‘racial approach to equality’ (Jewson & Mason, 1986), which has attributed individuals’ discriminatory experiences not only to the employers’ discrimination, but also to other broader contextual factors (e.g., economic, political and cultural factors). If these contextual factors play a role, no matter how institutions/organizations operate fairly the opportunity structure and employment patterns, individuals may also possibly experience differential treatments or outcomes. But the effect of employers’ discrimination cannot be ignored (Woodhams et al., 2009).

The laws and policies against employment discrimination in China fall into the second category. Thus, the following discussion of in-depth interviews and government laws/organizational regulations regarding employment inequalities experienced by female migrant workers will be presented in relative to three types (Jones, 1997), including the institutional (the state), the personally-mediated (the organizations and employers) and internalized (the female migrants themselves) discrimination experienced by female migrant workers. The two subsequent chapters that deal respectively with employment opportunity and earnings will follow the same procedure.

5.1.1 Institutional discrimination against female migrant workers

“Born as a rural people, but worse, also as a women”

The following excerpt from an official of Bureau of Labour and Social Security of Xi’an Municipality, talking about female migrant workers’ disadvantage relative to their male counterparts due to their double identities, reveals how policy can contribute indirectly to gender/residence status discrimination:

Male and female migrants, due to their shared identity of rural people, are victims of behaviors of managers, co-workers and others, but they differ in cases. Due to the restrictions on working hours, intensity of labour, and mandated maternity benefits, which raise the cost of enterprises of hiring females, the majority employers are not willing to hire females. Thus, though legislative solutions probably raise female employees’ employment opportunities and earnings relative to their male

counterparts, they are very difficult to implement and enforce in the labour market in China. That's why we officials oftentimes say that female migrant workers are even more victims than their male counterparts. (Interviewee # 3)

Past decades especially after the economic reform have witnessed the state's persistent commitment to social inequality and its anti-discrimination practices (e.g., laws and policies) in China. However, many monitoring mechanisms and castigations in urban China are not strict and effective enough to be against discrimination (Cooke, 2005, as cited in Woodhams et al., 2009). The state's anti-sexist laws and policies can serve as an example. While such legislations were initially proposed to protect females against gender-based discrimination, there was a lack of a supporting mechanism through which they are enforced. Thus, the majority of employers driven by maximum benefits and minimum costs are more likely to break rules and females' disadvantages in the labour market cannot be changed. Their disadvantages may become reinforced when combined with ingrained traditional ideologies or gendered expectations (Woodhams et al., 2009).

The following excerpt comes from the same official, but this time he talks about female migrant workers' disadvantage relative to female urbanites:

The disadvantage of female migrant workers is compounded by their comparisons with female urbanites in many cases. They are females, but their fates are quite different due to *hukou* status. So many rules for migrants...The National stipulation of China initiated in May 1995 by the Public Security Ministry required migrant workers to do mandatory registration to keep social order and social stability. That's why female migrants and urbanites differ so much... (Interviewee # 3)

This official's accounts can be representative of many others. It is clear from this interview that, consistent with findings from many existing studies discussed in Chapter 2, urbanites, including Chinese government officials treat migrant workers as the invaders migrating blindly to the cities and destroying social order and social stability. The urbanites' negative perceptions about migrant workers is an avoidable challenge they have to suffer in many occasions – in both the

public sphere and in the labour market, during this process of migration and integration. There is little doubt that the laws and policies initiated by the state and government normally work as monitoring mechanisms and punishments, and thus can be to some extent helpful to get a clearer record of migrant workers' demographic information and improve state's intense surveillance and regulation (Li & Stearns, 2006). Nevertheless, such a 'quasi-legal category' (Zhang, 2001, p. 34) is also used to make a distinct and stable boundaries between those who have urban residence status and those who not, namely, urbanites and migrant workers. As a result, the difference and distance between two social groups are formed and even reinforced, and in the cities, their respective identities, namely, in-group members (urbanites) and out-group members (migrant workers) are legitimized. With their unequal access to opportunities and resources and different claim to self interests, social closure will be formed and lead to a vicious circle (Zhou et al., 2011).

5.1.2 Personally mediated discrimination against female migrant workers

There is a coexistence of a belief in fairness and prejudicial attitudes among urbanites toward female migrant workers. The contradiction between equal principles and gender- and *hukou*-based inequalities at the structural level is manifested in the conflict between the egalitarian values of justice and prejudice. In other words, while the majority of Chinese urbanites generally support the values of equality, many are not prepared to accept non-urban females, and have exhibited a remarkable degree of intolerance toward the increased presence of female migrant workers (Wang et al., 2012).

“Walking the talk: A coexistence of fairness belief and prejudicial attitudes”

Two questions (“do you agree that the migrant workers should enjoy the same treatment as urbanites?”²⁰ and “do you agree with the saying that in our society, the descendents of either workers or peasants should have the same opportunities as those of the others to be high-socioeconomic-status people?”) in the 2003 CGSS are used to examine urbanites' attitudes

²⁰ This survey question has been used in my co-authored paper entitled ‘Unfinished Promise: Socioeconomic Status and Attitude toward Equality for Migrant Workers in Urban China’ as the dependent variable.

towards migrant workers in urban China. From the wide agreement that migrant workers and urbanites should be treated equally, and that the descendents of either workers or peasants should have the same opportunities as those of the others to be high-socioeconomic-status people, there seems to be great tolerance and acceptance of them among the public in China's cities (Zong et al., 2011). Constrained by existing datasets that do not have any question dealing with urbanites' attitudes particularly towards female migrant workers, these two questions, which examine urbanites' attitudes towards migrant workers as a whole are used. An assumption underlying this choice is that due to the persistence of gender ideology in contemporary China, female migrant workers should have unique and oftentimes a stronger sense of marginalization than their male counterparts. Thus, responses to these two questions implicitly reflect the extent of urbanites' tolerance and acceptance of female migrant workers.

Table 5.1. Response to whether migrant workers should enjoy the same treatment as urbanites.

<i>Attitudes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Agree	4,612	86.4%
Disagree	727	13.6%
Total	5, 339	100%

Table 5.2. Response to whether the descendents of either workers or peasants should have the same opportunities as those of the others to be high-socioeconomic-status people.

<i>Attitudes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Agree	4,188	76.2%
Disagree	1, 308	23.8%
Total	5, 496	100%

However, this broadly endorsed moral commitment or notion of equal treatment and equal opportunity at a general level proves to be superficial, since there are striking discrepancies between their stated values (responses to the survey) and their self-reported attitudes in the interviews. The following is a female urbanite's account in her own words, which reflects her and many urbanites' intolerance and hostility towards female migrant workers:

Definitely, female migrant workers' migration from rural to urban, I mean, from the less developed to the developed regions, is very helpful. This labour export strategy, on the one hand, helps the rural areas to boost the local economic growth, lessen poverty and fulfill prosperity, whereas on the other hand, it allows those female migrant workers to work and live in their desired place, making their 'city dream' become true and raising their status in their families and in society. Of course, by providing them with precious job positions, our big cities can benefit...but...ur...only to some extent...(laugh, sigh)...you know what I mean? Each coin has two sides. I don't mean to devalue these female migrant workers, but actually, from the perspective of our urbanites—at least, the female urbanites — they are a particular type of commodity. Without decent appearance, good education certificate, even don't know the way to speak mandarin... but they come out and compete with us urbanites for limited resources, disturbing our equilibrium and deprive us of our sense of superiority... probably I don't know the thumb rule, but from my personal experience and judgment, I'm quite sure they are untrustworthy. (Interviewee # 7)

On the surface, this interviewee has very positive attitudes towards the migration of female migrant workers. But this positivity implicitly only applies to the sending place (i.e., the rural regions) rather than to female migrants themselves. Labour exports strategy has been long thought to be a beneficial practice to develop the state's economy. This strategy has worked in accordance with China's evident advantage in large-supply low-cost labour. This is especially the case for many land-locked rural regions, such as western and northeast China (Hare & Zhao, 1996). Some words like 'make city dream become true' and 'raise status in families and in the society' appear to be positive towards female migrant workers and reflect her fairness belief. However, it turns out to be negative when she talks about the effect of female migrants on the cities. Through words, like 'only to some extent', 'each coin has two sides', 'don't mean to devalue...but...', and 'commodity', this female urbanite has implicitly expressed her personal prejudicial attitudes towards female migrant workers.

Although female migrant workers have contributed to urban development, in terms of the denial

of the ‘institutional partnership’ (Guang, 2005, p. 358) between rural and urban, she has deliberately ignored this and instead has merely emphasized the help from the city to these female migrant workers and to their sending places. At the same time, ‘at least, the female urbanites’ suggests the reason how and why female migrant workers are stereotyped in the eyes of urbanites. The phrase ‘our urbanites’, in essence, has marked the difference and boundary between people living in the urban regions and those in the rural.

Such similar inconsistency can be found in many studies on racism and sexism in other research contexts, such as the United States (Nelson et al., 2008; Pager & Quillian, 2005; Sears, Henry, & Kosterman, 2000). When faced with the question, why do individuals’ attitudes differ from their actual behaviors?

An explanation is ‘social desirability and compensatory estimation’. From its perspective, when it comes to a relatively sensitive topic, social desirability bias may work to complicate the answers (Pager & Quillian, 2005: 370). In other words, in order to avoid possible indignation or legal sanction, employers of the employing organizations as well as the officials of the state express their discriminatory and excluded attitudes towards marginalized individuals in a more silent or polite tones. Such a discrepancy between self-reports and actual behaviors, in particular a disguised form of discrimination has suggested a contemporary expression of discrimination against certain marginalized job applicants in the hiring or wage-setting decision process (Pager & Quillian, 2005; Pager, Western & Bonikowski, 2009; Wang et al., 2012; Zong & Perry, 2011).

5.1.3 Internalized discrimination against female migrant workers

Influenced by institutionally and personally mediated discrimination against them, migrant workers have gradually accepted and formed negative self-perceptions about their own value and capabilities. Their internalized discrimination normally takes the form, for example, of embracing urbanites, self-depreciation, obedience, powerlessness, and depressed (Jones, 1997). For example, when a migrant worker has low esteem of himself/herself and of his/her peers, this migrant worker may be unclear about his/her ‘sense of self, of personhood, and of what kind of person’ he/she is. In other words, his/her sense of belonging includes both ‘sameness’ and

‘difference’ (Abercrombie et al., 2006, p. 190). Through the personal internalization mechanism, migrant workers automatically draw a boundary between urban and rural people. Therefore, migrant workers’ internalized discrimination has implicitly sustained and even reinforced institutionalized and personally-mediated discrimination against them.

The following result based on the 2003 CGSS suggests their internalized identities.

Table 5.3. Response to do you perceive yourself as urbanites or rural people.

<i>Perceived identity</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Rural people	303	81.7%
Urbanites	68	18.3%
Total	371	100%

“Traits of difference and unwanted sympathy”

The following excerpt from a female migrant worker, aged sixteen from Chang’an County, Shaanxi Province illustrates her observation of differences between urbanites and rural people, and expresses her resistance to so-called sympathy from urbanites:

Nobody tells me that I’m discriminated against, but I can tell you, yes. I still remember the early days when I was in Xi’an, working in a small noodle restaurant as a waitress. In front of my clients, especially those urban modern girls, I felt embarrassed. I have to say they’re gorgeous...They usually teased me for my rustic appearance as a working sister. In many other occasions, for example, visit to cafes or walking on the street, there were no these tough girls, but many so-called kind and warm-hearted modern girls said that I’m very pitiful, asking me whether just having come out from the village. Then they encouraged me to buy new clothes for myself and makeup...It’s horrible, you see? They must feel fantastic by showing superiority over and sympathy with you, a rustic female migrant worker, but I indeed felt extremely inferior. (Interviewee # 10)

The migration to the city exposes female migrant workers to a difference between advanced

cities and backward countryside, and forces them to face a dilemma between being modern city girls or being rustic country girls. The great disparity between urban and rural regions can be in part attributed to the household registration system (*hukou*), because it has historically formed a dualistic social structure and stratification in contemporary China since the planned economy era. Recent decades since 1978 have also witnessed significant effects on individuals, suggesting that despite some reforms, it has failed to break the invisible wall between urban-rural regions. In essence, the differentials between town and country have further reflected regional disparity in China, which can find its root in the Chinese Communist Party's development strategy and political attainment goals, the literal translation of which is 'Let certain people become rich first in order to achieve common prosperity' (*rang yi bufen ren xian fuyu qilai*). Following its tenets, the state implicitly has encouraged individuals living in the coastal regions to get wealthy first, and then their wealth has been expected to work as a spur to the development of inland regions (Xie & Hannum, 1996; Golley, 2007, as cited in Zhou et al., 2011). Different treatments based on geographical locations have generated and even reinforced the differentials between town and country, and this so-called temporary policy support to coastal regions has gradually become permanent policy guidance in contemporary China. This sharp contrast can be expressed in diverse ways, including girls' appearance.

The excerpt above echoes mostly common urbanites' views that compared with their urban counterparts who are sophisticated, majority of rural migrant workers are naïve and honest (Jacka, 2000). During the migration from rural to urban regions, not only this interviewee but many other female migrant workers have made a similar decision to change their appearance from rustic female migrants to modern girls. No matter whether they have succeeded or not, their adaptive attempts to improve their looks have implicitly reflected their desire to integrate into the host cities. Such a willingness to catch up with their modern city sisters has again confirmed the great differentials between city and countryside, and more importantly, demonstrated the sense of inferiority held by rural migrants living in the cities. To some extent, changing one's look can be regarded as a survival strategy if a woman wants to have a better livelihood in the cities, because a new relatively modern appearance may help her avoid overt discrimination in some occasions (Gaetano, 2008). But these female migrant workers have not realized that rustic appearance is only the superficial disadvantage, and what they cannot change is their rural residence status and

rural identity. Therefore, marginalization, which involves both material and psychological dimensions, has been an unsolved question that they have to face unless they go back to their origin places.

That is to say, although migrant rural workers are no longer prohibited from moving to cities for work and for livelihood, their presence in cities has not necessarily provided them with equal access to economic, social, or political rights and entitlements, as their urban counterparts with permanent urban residency status in host cities (Chan, 2010a, 2010b; Han, 2010; Solinger, 1999; Wang, 2005; Zhang et al., 2007; Zhou et al., 2011). As a result, these female migrant workers as well as their male counterparts have been the permanent in-betweeners, which can be supported by Jacka's summary table (2006; Table 2.1).

“Accent matters? A yes or no question”

An excerpt from interview with a female migrant worker, aged twenty-one, who had been in Xi'an city for five years by June 2010 suggests surmounting barriers to social integration for female migrant workers:

Five years ago when I came to Xi'an for the first time, I definitely planned staying here. This is an amazing world I've never seen! But when I opened my mouth and spoke mandarin with a strong accent, those urbanites immediately and blatantly called me working sister (*dagong mei*). At that moment, I missed my mum and wanted to go home, though it's rather backward...But then I changed my mind—like ‘newborn calves that do not fear the tiger’ (*chusheng niudu bu pa hu*)—I think I shouldn't give up, and I believed I could speak mandarin as well as those urbanites one day. It's believed that once I could speak mandarin well, I would be a real Xi'an people. And then, I bought a radio to follow the radio announcer to study standard mandarin pronunciation, the way they talked, and I kept speaking in front of the mirror to myself every day. But once again, I felt I got wrong. Even though you can speak Xi'an local language (*xi'an fangyan/hua*) well and you've lived here so long, you will never belong to this city, only because you're just a girl from village.

Gradually, I'm afraid of speaking to anyone. I'll never be a real Xi'an people. Now I'm a betweener...Actually, I'm like a kite off line, circling round and round in this city. I don't know exactly where the wind will blow me afterwards...A country girl is a country girl, forever...For a humble country girl, speaking standard mandarin can't change her fate—one day in the near future, I have to go back to my village and immediately get into marriage arranged by my parents, marrying someone, say, one of my male villagers, devoting the rest of my life to serving him and his families. (Interviewee # 11)

Despite many signs of progress in China, there remain diverse forms of social and economic inequality that continue to differentiate the experiences of urban and rural people, and those of men and women. For instance, the urban-rural disparity and the attraction of urban regions implicitly suggest rural areas' backward status relative to cities (Gaetano, 2008). In order to blur or even eliminate the boundary between urbanites and rural people, many migrant workers normally try to indicate their so-called urban membership through multiple ways, say language or as demonstrated in the case above through appearance, consumption pattern, life style, and so on (Zhang, 2001). It is through the process of racialization that the discrimination against migrant workers based on the *hukou* system has something in common with racism in the western contexts (Zhou et al., 2011). According to Han (2010, p. 596), though migrant workers do not

possess any unique, formally recognized ethnic features that distinguish them from urban residents', (...) they are subject to a whole set of discriminatory regulations and practices that are enforced largely by looking for visible/ audible identity markers like hair, apparel, personal hygiene and dialect.

All these efforts to present themselves as urban people or resist being marked as rural people, implicitly show their strong sense of inferiority and lack of sense of belonging. Institutional- and personally-mediated discrimination against them not only places them in a position of 'secondary citizens', but more importantly, rationalizes their marginalized status and stigmatized membership in cities. Through socialization and internalization of the discrimination against

female migrant workers, they have gradually accepted the prevalent values and norms associated with their stigmatized identity (Abercrombie et al., 2006). When being exposed to modern cities, they may encounter a psychological shock and then be unclear about the self-definition, namely, who am I? This can be seen as an unavoidable identity crisis. The concept of identity crisis has been borrowed by Erik Erikson, who initially used it to indicate a crisis frequently taking place in the adolescent stage of development for the youth when he/she has no clear social roles formed (cited in Scott & Marshall, 2012). Unlike adolescents' identity crisis, which involves complicated psychological and social dimensions in their sense of self (cited in Scott & Marshall, 2012) at a particular stage in life cycle, say, youth, female migrant workers' identity crisis can occur in any phase throughout their life so long as they work and live in the cities. Thus, for female migrant workers, it is not only an inevitable, but also a horizontal identity crisis.

In fact, 'speaking standard mandarin can't change her fate', for instance, of marrying a male villager and doing domestic chores as secondary earners or complete dependents in the households. Put simply, despite their migration experience and contact with broader modern society, these female migrant workers cannot change destiny. Such a paradoxical situation can be explained in part by their 'intermediary agent' status. On one hand, during the process of rural-to-urban migration, these female migrant workers have experienced a great personal change and individual development. There might be self-improvement in many aspects (Gaetano, 2008, p. 642). On the other hand, they have kept following the traditional prescriptions regarding gendered expectations and division of labour for rural females, which in turn have strengthened the difference between male migrants and female migrants. The process of modernization in contemporary China indeed has weakened people's feudal ideas and ideologies, but due to deep-seated socio-cultural tradition, there has been a delayed renewal of people's ideas and behaviours (Chen, 2005). This inconsistency between rapid economic development and slow renewal of cultural progress can be explained in part by socialization of female migrant workers. They have gradually learnt and accepted norms, such as Confucianism and patriarchy ideologies through their socialization process. As a result, many rules have become internal to them and shaped their ideas and behaviours widely and durably. Therefore, as Jacka (2000) has suggested, researchers should have a balanced judgment on these female migrant workers' experiences.

My discussion about their ‘intermediary agent’ status in the last paragraph has echoed a relational perspective that focuses on the importance of connecting people and places in immigration studies proposed by Wong and Rigg (2011). Migrants are thought to be key agents to create, sustain and affect the association between urban and rural areas (Wong & Rigg, 2011). As I mentioned in my one book review (Wang, 2012, p. 151),

This effort implicitly treats migrants as joint and active agents rather than independent and passive victims in the process of migration, and meanwhile, extends measures of interchange from traditionally tangible and economic outcomes (e.g., money remitted, skills acquired, and investments made) to less tangible social, cultural and political dimensions.²¹

“Urban *hukou*, so what! Boundary transgressions and perpetual non-locals”

It can be identified from many interviews with female migrant workers that they have been in the city for several years and changed their *hukou* status from the rural to the urban, but the majority of them remain concerned about their future, especially when they are getting old. Consider the excerpt from a female migrant worker, aged thirty-nine, who had been in Xi’an city for over twenty years since she was eighteen years old:

When I look back, twenty-one years have lapsed. Many of my working sister friends who came to Xi’an about twenty years ago with me have returned to the village. They admire me, because I’ve attained urban *hukou* living in Xi’an through many years’ perseverance and hard work finally. Probably, this is true, I’m successful and lucky. But I’m still a female migrant worker in the eyes of those urbanites, and thus I feel I’m out in the world, every day, with everything...I definitely feel that. The only difference between then and now is the difference between ‘young working sister’ (*nianqing dagong mei*) and ‘old working sister’ (*daling dagong mei*). That’s the reality I can never change, though I think I should be thought of as an urban

²¹ This paragraph of discussion has been included in my published book review entitled ‘Book Review: Asian Cities, Migrant Labor, and Contested Spaces’. *Contemporary Asia* 42(1): 150-152.

woman, living here so long and learned a lot about living here...Can you imagine how much I love this city? But the answer is less important, because I can never say 'us Xi'aners' (*wo men xi'an ren*). I found myself increasingly felt an overwhelming fear and anxiety about the future – what to do when I'm older? If I were 18 I would be excited to make every effort to experience the city lives in different ways, but now it's rather hard for me—I don't know what's on ahead of me...So what's the point in getting an urban *hukou*? I left home village for a better life and decent identity, but the life is kidding me...' (Interviewee # 13)

To become a city woman is mostly a female migrant workers' dream. During my interviews with many female migrant workers, it is clear that many of them have attributed their difficulties in integration in big cities to their rural *hukou* status. This interviewee's comments above strongly challenge this point. Rather, broader contextual cultural, political, and economic factors, for instance, deep-rooted cultural values and assumptions pose a greater barrier to social integration for these female migrant workers. For example, patriarchy has significantly affected the way of thinking of the majority of people (including female migrant workers) that education for girls is worthless. Consequently, female migrant workers have been found to mostly be low-educated, work in marginal sectors and get unsatisfactory pay. Though it might be the case that 'those involved in migration carry dual or multiple identities involving combinations of ideas and values from rural and urban settings' (Jacka, 2006, p. 211), shifting the residence status from rural to urban makes no difference with respect to their experiences as female migrant workers. In this interviewee's talk, there is little about positivity or optimism about her present and future, but a high degree of uncertainty.

“Resistance as expressions of agency”

The following excerpt is from a female migrant worker, aged twenty five, coming from Henan Province to Xi'an in 2008. Her account primarily talks about her coping strategy for dealing with labour rights violations:

My first job was a pedicurist, and it's a terrible memory for me. I was terminated

without any notice in advance after working for three months, and what's worse, my boss was very scary—upon my recruitment point, he told me the first three months are probationary period, and the salary would be lump-sum payment. I kept waiting for my salary, totally 3,000 *yuan* (RMB). Finally, nothing comes but termination. On the day I left, the boss even checked my belongings to make sure that I'd not stolen anything...full of an unutterable sense of shame and injustice...can you picture? After discussion with my families, other working sisters and their urban friends, I realized that my labour rights are seriously violated. They told me that I should not feel inferior to anyone in this city. Definitely! I have my labour power and I exchange it with my employers for money, so I deserve it, and have to fight for myself and other working sister friends! Then I visited the Women's Federation in Xi'an and luckily got an opportunity to talk to a female official there about my experiences. Fortunately, the law saved me—there was legal protection for us working sisters. The boss was required to return all my money and make an apology to me finally. (Interviewee # 19)

In addition to hard work and improvement in self-presentation and behaviors, being brave and being able to safeguard their own rights and interests and fight against inequality can also demonstrate their effective transformation during the migration process (Jacka, 2000). Despite inconclusive summary regarding what types of citizenship rights and obligations should be contained in the concept of citizenship, basic labour rights – having access to distribution (e.g., earnings) according to performance/work should be an important measure of legal labour rights. The topics particularly related to employment opportunities and earnings will be more specifically discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

In the case of this interviewee, she used the law to defend her interests, which again suggests that female migrant workers as well as their male counterparts are active agents rather than passive victims. In terms of such pragmatic strategy, they have displayed great initiative in resisting marginalization and improving their current circumstances (Zhang, 2001). Though she had no clear definition of 'labour rights', such coping tactics and resistance implicitly demonstrates that female migrant workers' 'greater sense of initiative, and a better understanding of rights and interests' (Jiang, 2004, p. 71). Their consciousness of legality has reflected they have been

increasingly independent in mind or judgment, and more aware of self-protection (Jiang, 2004).

In general, this chapter has succeeded giving an answer to the first primary research question in this thesis: In the public sphere, are privileged group members, namely, Chinese urbanites prone to share their interests with their deprived female migrant workers? Specifically, this chapter has attempted to explore urbanites' egalitarian attitudes towards female migrant workers.

Using rich first-hand interviews, it was found that the majority of urbanites living in contemporary China are not willing to share their interests with their rural counterparts, including female migrant workers. Each account, in varying degrees, has suggested the existence of social exclusion, which involves a dynamic relationship between the excluder (i.e., urbanites) and the excluded (i.e., female migrant workers). Despite such an interactive relationship, it has to make clear that the exclusion between urbanites and female migrant workers is asymmetrical. In other words, there is a paradoxical phenomenon: many urbanites are intolerant and hostile towards female migrant workers and thus exert social exclusion towards them, whereas these female migrant workers, who are excluded in the mainstream society, have made all efforts to adapt themselves to the host cities and make themselves accepted by these urbanites.

The social exclusion theory has provided me with an insightful perspective to understand the asymmetrical social exclusion between these two social groups. With the rapid development of market economy in contemporary China since the economic reform, and the state's developmental strategy and political goal as well, there is a differentiation among individuals with unequal access to social goods, attributes and services. As a result, some of them have benefited from the economic growth, whereas still others have been deprived during this process. Accordingly, two interest groups have been established.

As far as the term 'interest group' is concerned, it primarily includes three aspects: individuals' trajectories, competition fear, and rational calculations, each of which may affect the indigenous dwellers' attitudes towards immigrants (Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010). More specifically, following this logic, first, individuals with higher socioeconomic status, in order to safeguard rights and interests, normally make every effort to mark a distinct line between in-group

members ('us') and out-group members ('them') (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Vedlitz & Zahran, 2007, as cited in Zhou et al., 2011). Second, a competitive threat, in whichever type can provoke the advantaged group members' strong antagonism and exclusion of disadvantaged ones (Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958; Bonacich, 1972, 1976; Coser, 1956; Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Olzak, 1992, 1995; Wilcox & Roof, 1978). Fear of competition can take either an actual or a perceived form, and each form is able to stimulate in-group members' discriminatory and intolerant attitudes towards out-group members. The actual competitive threat primarily refers to many tangible sources, such as economic interests and material resources, while perceived competitive threat mainly indicates some intangible sources, such as culture and religious resources and interests (Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010; Fetzer, 2000; Jackson, Brown, Brown, & Marks, 2001; Scheepers, Gijsberts, & Coenders, 2002a).

Third, driven by rational calculations, advantaged social group members are more likely to classify their out-group counterparts as disadvantaged social group members to benefit more from social inequality and stratification and keep their positions of authority within (Goodwin, Operario, & Fiske, 1998; Reskin, 2000). Their sense of privilege, which is closely related to their advantaged status, usually implicitly legitimates and even reinforces their discrimination against their subordinate counterparts (Reskin, 2000).

CHAPTER 6:

DOUBLE OUTSIDERS AT THE HIRING STAGE? EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS²²

This chapter shifts the focus from female migrant workers' experiences in the public sphere to what they suffer in the labour market. Three questions are explored. First, in the labour market, is there any evidence to demonstrate that gender and the household registration system interact to shape female migrant workers' employment opportunities? Second, if yes, compared with members of other three comparative groups (i.e., rural male, urban male, and urban female), do female migrant workers experience double (additive assumptions), less than double, or more than double (intersectional assumptions) jeopardy in access to employment opportunities? These two questions are studied by mixed research methods. The last question, what are the trends in employment opportunities discrimination against this group if the case is either less or more than double jeopardy overtime, is primarily examined by quantitative methods.

6.1 Quantitative Results

In order to explore these three questions, the quantitative research method in Chapter 6 follows Greenman and Xie's strategy (2008) to examine whether there is intersectionality between *hukou* and gender with respect to earnings. The specific statistical analysis model in this chapter is logistic regression, since the dependent variable is dichotomous. The results are divided into three parts. The first part, employing logistic regression predicting odds of getting jobs by the household registration system and gender in 2003 and 2006, will focus on the actual ratio of employment opportunities for people in the labour market, with a particular focus on female migrant workers relative to male urbanites. Having realized the combined employment results

²² Part of this chapter has been peer-reviewed, accepted by and occasionally presented at a few national and international academic conferences.

for female migrant workers, the second part will attempt to decompose such results by household registration and by gender respectively in each year, from which I expect to figure out the ideal ratio of employment opportunities whereby there is no interaction between the household registration system and gender. The third part will calculate the ratio of the actual to the ideal ratio of employment opportunities for female migrant workers in the labour market in each year, and compare the two ratios to examine the trends between 2003 and 2006.

Table 6.1. Logistic regression coefficients predicting odds of getting jobs by the household registration system and gender in 2003.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	Odd	B	Odd
<i>Comparative groups</i>				
Female migrant workers (reference group)				
Male urbanites	0.622***	1.863	1.024***	2.785
Female urbanites	-0.110	0.896	0.077	1.080
Male migrant workers	1.420***	4.139	1.749***	5.746
Age			-0.090***	0.914
Marital status (unmarried=0)			1.902***	6.701
Education			0.078***	1.081
Work experience			0.000	1.000
Work experience square			0.000	1.000
Skill certificate				
The first certificate				
No certificate (reference group)				
Preliminary level			0.607***	1.835
Middle level			0.397***	1.487
Advanced level			0.493***	1.637
The second certificate				
No certificate (reference group)				
Preliminary level			0.382	1.466
Middle level			0.326	1.385
Advanced level			-0.281	0.755
The third certificate			0.575	1.777
No certificate (reference group)			-0.251	0.778
Preliminary level			-0.318	0.727
Middle level				
Advanced level			-19.840	.000
Communist party membership (yes=1)			0.426***	1.531
Number of people helping job search			0.160***	1.173
Marketization level index			.079***	1.802

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 6.1 presents the results of the logistic regression that predicts the possibility of people's opportunity to get jobs in 2003. The first model shows its association with four comparative groups. From the table, I can see that the likelihood of male urbanites of getting jobs is more than one and half times that of female migrant workers (1.863). Then the possibility for female urbanites' finding jobs is only around 89% of that for female migrant workers (0.896). Male migrant workers' probability of getting employed is more than four times as likely as female migrant workers (4.139). Thus, it is quite clear that among these four comparative groups, male migrant workers are the most privileged group to get jobs, male urbanites remain the second, then female migrant workers, while female urbanites are the most disadvantaged. In other words, the likelihood for female migrant workers to get jobs is only 0.242 relative to male migrant workers and 0.537 relative to male urbanites.

In Model 2, together with variables in Model 1, control variables, including age, marital status, human capital — education and skill certificate, social capital — number of people helping job search, political capital—party membership, and marketization level index, have been included. After considering these control variables, the sharpest shift occurs in the most disadvantaged group in the labour market, as female migrant workers fall behind female urbanites. Each of the ratios of the other two comparative groups to female migrant workers (i.e., male urbanites, male migrant workers) has increased. The male migrant workers still maintain top place, with the likelihood of getting jobs more than five times that of female migrant workers (5.746), while male urbanites remains the second, with the possibilities of attaining jobs more than two times as likely as female migrant workers (2.785). So far, the probability of female migrant workers' employment is only 0.174 relative to male migrant workers and 0.359 relative to male urbanites. Thus, taking into account variations in these control variables, female migrant workers' disadvantage in the labour market relative to members of the other three comparative groups has increased.

As far as the control variables are concerned, age is negatively correlated with people's employment opportunities (-0.090), indicating when getting one year older, the odds of getting jobs decreases 8.6% controlling for all other independent variables (0.914). Education is found to be positively associated with people's employment opportunities, which means that those with

one year more schooling have 8.1% greater probability of getting jobs, controlling for all other independent variables (1.081). The other two indicators of human capital, namely, skill certificate is not a persistent indicator of probability of getting employed, while work experience and work experience square are non-significant indicators. As for the measure of political capital, whether to be a Communist Party membership positively correlates with people's probability of being recruited, and those with such membership have one and a half times of probability of getting jobs relative to those having no such membership (1.531). Having history of marriage or not is a positively significant indicator, with the probability for those who have marriage of finding jobs is more than six times than that for those who do not (6.701). The number of people helping the respondents to find jobs, as the measure of social capital, is statistically significant with people's access to employment, and the more the respondents can resort to, the higher possibility they will have to get employed. In addition, those with one more people willing to help find jobs have 17.3% higher probability of getting jobs ultimately, controlling for all other independent variables (1.173). Besides, there is a positive relationship between marketization level and people's employment opportunities in the labour market, which means that the likelihood of getting jobs increases 8.2% with the increase of one unit of marketization level (1.082).

Having observed the actual ratio of employment opportunities for female migrant workers in 2003, which is the result of combined social categories of identity, I have to decompose such effects respectively by the household registration system and gender.

Table 6.2. Logistic regression coefficients predicting odds of getting jobs by the household registration system in 2003.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	Odd	B	Odd
<i>Comparative groups</i>				
Male rural migrant workers				
Male urbanites	-0.798***	0.450	-0.587**	0.556
<i>Age</i>				
			-0.113***	0.894
<i>Marital status (unmarried=0)</i>				
			2.662***	14.323
<i>Education</i>				
			0.050**	1.051
<i>Work experience</i>				
			0.001	1.001
<i>Work experience square</i>				
			0.000	1.000
<i>Skill certificate</i>				
The first certificate				
No certificate (reference group)				
Elementary level			0.475**	1.609
Middle level			0.430**	1.537
Advanced level			0.487*	1.628
The second certificate				
No certificate (reference group)				
Elementary level			0.597	1.816
Middle level			-0.019	0.981
Advanced level			-0.145	0.865
The third certificate				
No certificate (reference group)				
Elementary level			0.394	1.482
Middle level			0.321	1.379
Advanced level			-1.079	0.340
<i>Communist party membership (yes=1)</i>				
			0.416***	1.515
<i>Number of people helping job search</i>				
			0.222***	1.248
<i>Marketization level index</i>				
			0.082**	1.086

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 6.3. Logistic regression coefficients predicting odds of getting jobs by gender in 2003.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	Odd	B	Odd
<i>Comparative groups</i>				
Female urbanites				
Male urbanites	0.732***	2.080	0.971***	2.641
<i>Age</i>			-0.095***	0.909
<i>Marital status (unmarried=0)</i>			2.054***	7.802
<i>Education</i>			0.081***	1.085
<i>Work experience</i>			0.000	1.000
<i>Work experience square</i>			0.000	1.000
<i>Skill certificate</i>				
The first certificate				
No certificate (reference group)				
Elementary level			0.578***	1.782
Middle level			0.431***	1.538
Advanced level			0.512**	1.669
The second certificate				
No certificate (reference group)				
Elementary level			0.351	1.421
Middle level			0.363	1.437
Advanced level			-0.314	0.730
The third certificate				
No certificate (reference group)				
Elementary level			0.589	1.802
Middle level			-0.065	0.937
Advanced level			-0.317	0.728
<i>Communist party membership (yes=1)</i>			0.435***	1.544
<i>Number of people helping job search</i>			0.156***	1.169
<i>Marketization level index</i>			0.070***	1.072

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

As far as the decomposed results by the household registration system are concerned, I can see from Table 6.2 that male migrant workers have more than two times the probability of access to employment than male urbanites (0.450), whereas the ratio of the former to the latter decreases to 1.80 (0.556) after controlling for several influential factors.

As for the decomposed results by gender (Table 6.3), it is clear that male urbanites have more than double the employment opportunities as their female counterparts (2.080), while after considering many explanatory variables, the ratio of the former to the latter increases (2.641).

With reference to Greenman and Xie's (2008) strategy discussed above, now I can get the ideal ratio of employment opportunities for female migrant workers, which can be approached in two ways; one is their gross relative employment opportunities and the other is their net ones. As for the gross one, the ratio for female migrant workers is based on two figures, respectively from the results of Model 1 in Table 6.2 (0.450) and Model 1 in Table 6.3 (2.080). The ideal ratio of employment opportunities for female migrant workers is 1.069, which is calculated by $2.222 (1/0.450, \text{the ratio of employment opportunities for female urbanites relative to their male counterparts}) \times 0.481 (1/2.080, \text{the ratio of employment opportunities for male rural migrant workers relative to their urban counterparts})$.

As far as the net relative ratio of employment opportunities for female migrant workers in 2003 is concerned, it also depends on two figures, including the results of Model 2 in Table 6.2 (0.556) and Model 2 in Table 6.3 (2.641). The ideal ratio of employment opportunities for female migrant workers is 0.68, which is calculated by $1.799 (1/0.556, \text{the ratio of employment opportunities for male migrant workers relative to male urbanites}) \times 0.379 (1/2.641, \text{the ratio of employment opportunities for female urbanites relative to male urbanites})$.

Table 6.4. Gross relative employment opportunities by the household registration and gender in 2003.

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Urban registration</i>	1	0.481
<i>Rural registration</i>	2.222	1.069(0.537) 50.23%

Table 6.5. Net relative employment opportunities by the household registration and gender in 2003.

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Urban registration</i>	1	0.379
<i>Rural registration</i>	1.799	0.682(0.359) 52.64%

Given the finding in Table 6.1 that the ideal ratio of employment opportunities for female migrant workers to get jobs in 2003 is only 0.537 relative to male urbanites, and that in Table 6.4, the actual ratio of employment opportunities for female migrant workers to get jobs in that year is 1.069 relative to male urbanites, now I can get the gross intra-employment-opportunity-ratio, 0.502 ($0.537/1.069$) for them in 2003. Following the same logic, I also can get their 2003 net intra-employment-opportunity-ratio, which is 0.526.

Table 6.6. Logistic regression coefficients predicting odds of getting jobs by the household registration system and gender in 2006.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	Odd	B	Odd
<i>Comparative groups</i>				
Female migrant workers (Reference group)				
Male urbanites	0.194	1.214	-0.324	0.723
Female urbanites	0.158	1.171	-0.393	0.675
Male migrant workers	-0.141	0.868	0.220	1.246
<i>Age</i>			-0.065*	0.937
<i>Marital status (unmarried=0)</i>			0.612**	1.844
<i>Education</i>			0.169***	1.185
<i>Work experience square</i>			0.001**	1.001
<i>Skill certificate</i>			0.874***	2.397
<i>Communist party membership (yes=1)</i>			0.066	1.068
<i>Number of people helping job search</i>			0.002	1.002
<i>Marketization level index</i>			0.067	1.069

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 6.6 demonstrates the results of the logistic regression that predicts individuals' employment opportunities in the labour market in 2006. Its correlation with four comparative groups is represented in Model 1. It is clear male urbanites are the most advantaged, with their probability of getting employed more than one time as likely as that of female migrant workers (1.214), while male migrant workers, who tend to only have 86.8% possibilities to get jobs relative to female migrant workers, are the most disadvantaged. The likelihood of female migrant workers to get jobs is 0.824 relative to male urbanites (1/1.214).

Together with the variables in Model 1, Model 2 considers control variables. After taking into account variations in these control variables, the most advantaged group and disadvantaged group have respectively shifted from the male urbanites to male migrant workers and from male migrant workers to female urbanites. The probability of female migrant workers' employment relative to male urbanites increases from 0.824 to 1.383 (1/0.723).

As for the control variables, all the patterns found in Model 1 have partially remained the same in Model 2. Age is still negatively correlated with people's employment opportunities, indicating when getting one year older, the odds of getting jobs decreases 6.3%, controlling for all other independent variables (0.937). Marital status is also a statistically significant predictor. The probability of finding jobs for those who are married is one and a half times that for those who are not (1.844). Education is reported to have a positive correlation with people's employment opportunities, and those with one year more schooling have 18.5% greater probability of getting jobs, controlling for all other independent variables (1.185). In the 2006 CGSS, the other two indicators of human capital, namely, skill certificate and work experience square are both significant indicators of probability of finding jobs. Having a Communist Party membership or not, having social network for jobs or not, and level of marketization in local areas seem to add nothing to respondents' employment opportunities in the 2006 labour market.

Table 6.7. Logistic regression coefficients predicting odds of getting jobs by the household registration system in 2006.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	Odd	B	Odd
<i>Comparative groups</i>				
Male migrant workers				
Male urbanites	0.335	1.398	-0.570*	0.565
Age			-0.113**	0.893
Marital status (unmarried=0)			0.962**	2.618
Education			0.245**	1.278
Work experience square			0.002**	1.002
Skill certificate			0.633*	1.884
Communist party membership (yes=1)			-0.310	0.734
Number of people helping job search			0.000	0.999
Marketization level index			0.042	1.043

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 6.8. Logistic regression coefficients predicting odds of getting jobs by gender in 2006.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	Odd	B	Odd
<i>Comparative groups</i>				
Female urbanites				
Male urbanites	0.036	1.036	0.107	1.112
<i>Age</i>			-0.103**	0.902
<i>Marital status (unmarried=0)</i>			1.007***	2.738
<i>Education</i>			0.209***	1.232
<i>Work experience square</i>			0.002**	1.002
<i>Skill certificate</i>			0.811**	2.249
<i>Communist party membership (yes=1)</i>			0.272	1.313
<i>Number of people helping job search</i>			0.002	1.002
<i>Marketization level index</i>			0.086	1.090

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

The results for Table 6.6 – Table 6.10 (2006CGSS-based) are based on the same procedures through which the results for Table 6.1 – Table 6.5 (2003CGSS-based) are performed. As far as the decomposed results by the household registration system are concerned, I can see from Table 6.7 that in 2006, male urbanites' employment opportunities were nearly one and a half times as much as those of male migrant workers' (1.398), whereas the comparative ratio decreases after controlling for several influential factors (0.565).

As for the decomposed results by gender (Table 6.8), it is clear that 2006, male urbanites were more than one time of employment opportunities as much as their female counterparts (1.036), while after considering many explanatory variables, the comparative ratio increases to 1.112.

Table 6.9. Gross relative employment opportunities by the household registration system and gender in 2006.

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Urban registration</i>	1	0.47
<i>Rural registration</i>	5.49	2.58(0.82) 32%

Table 6.10. Net relative employment opportunities by the household registration system and gender in 2006.

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Urban registration</i>	1	0.29
<i>Rural registration</i>	3.36	0.97(1.38) 142%

As for the gross ideal ratio of employment opportunities for female migrant workers in 2006 (Table 6.9), it is 0.690, which is calculated by 0.715 (1/1.398, the ratio of employment opportunities for rural urbanites relative to male urbanites) times 0.965 (1/1.036, the ratio of employment opportunities for female urbanites relative to male urbanites).

The net ideal relative ratio of employment opportunities for female migrant workers in 2006 (Table 6.10) is 1.591, which is calculated by 1.770 (1/0.565, the ratio of employment opportunities for male migrant workers relative to male urbanites) times 0.899 (1/1.112, the ratio of employment opportunities for male rural migrant workers relative to male urbanites). Thus, the gross intra-employment-opportunity-ratio (R) in 2006 is 1.194 (0.824 /0.690), and the net one is 0. 869 (1.383/1.591).

In general, I can see from Table 6.4, Table 6.5, Table 6.9 and Table 6.10 that employment opportunities for female migrant workers are indeed products of the intersection between two social categories of identity, namely, the household registration system and gender, since their actual and ideal ratio relative to male urbanites do not equal each other, regardless of control variables (existence). In addition, given the majority of the ratio between female migrant workers' actual to the ideal ratio of employment opportunities relative to male urbanites is less than 1 (50.23%, 52.64%, 86.93%) (except for the gross intra-employment-opportunity-ratio in 2006 is 1.194), it is definitely the fact that the extent to which these female migrant workers' employment opportunities have realized actually is less than that realized ideally. In other words, female migrant workers, in daily life, have experienced more than double jeopardy with respect to employment opportunities, which are caused by the interplay between the household registration system and gender (degree). As for the trends, when not taking differences in influential factors into account, unequal distribution of employment opportunities for female migrant workers has decreased, while when considering differences in influential factors, female

migrant workers' employment opportunities has increased. Thus, employment discrimination against female migrant workers between 2003 and 2006 in the former case has appeared to be more, and in the latter case has tended to be less (trends).

However, analysis of findings involves one step further. Although these *hukou* and gender respectively play an important role in shaping and intersecting to influence the employment opportunities for female migrant workers, there are differences between the intersectional effects of race and gender on the access to work for coloured women in Western countries and those of the *hukou* and gender on employment opportunities for female migrant workers in China.

This argument echoes what I have discussed in Chapter 2 about racialization. Due to the racial or quasi-racial aspect of discrimination against Chinese rural migrant workers (Han, 2010), racism in western settings and *hukou*-based discrimination in China has shared some similarities. At the same time, these two differ from each other because of difference in many dimensions, such as economic, political and social circumstances in each context. In other words, while both racism and *hukou*-based discrimination has significantly shaped individuals' actual lives in terms of an ascribed attribute (race/residence status) (Han, 2010), discrimination against migrant workers in contemporary China has distinguishing feature. Such racialization in China reflects the particular oppression and exploitation based on race-like status for rural migrant workers, and suggests a disparity between urbanites and migrant workers (Han, 2010; Zhou et al., 2011). According to Han (2010, p. 596), current migrant workers in urban China are experiencing 'rapid industrialization' and 'socially polarizing development' in the cities. Li and Li (2012) have not only realized such similarity between migrant workers in China and migrants in the west, but also pointed out Chinese migrant workers' social status equivalent to illegal migrants in the western context.

Moreover, though they two both are based on ascribed attributes, racism in Western judges individuals in terms of visible biological racial characteristics, whereas the *hukou* system in China is manifested by visible or audible identity markers (Han, 2010) reinforced and gradually rationalized by institutional rather than biological mechanism. Thus, in essence, discrimination against migrant workers in contemporary China is heavily determined by place of birth rather

than by blood. This argument is contrary to Pils's (2007) finding for pariah in the caste system in Indian.

To this point, considering that now I only need to focus on the dimension of the household registration system rather than that of gender, and that conventionally White males are regarded as the reference group among four comparative groups (Greenman & Xie, 2008), male urbanites and male migrant workers are selected for comparison.

The household registration system is, to some extent, more complex than expected. In 2003, when differences in influential factors are not considered, male migrant workers persistently have higher likelihood of getting jobs than male urbanites (Table 6.1: 4.139 vs. 1.863; Table 6.2: 1 vs. 0.450), and the case remains the same when all other influential indicators are taken into account (Table 6.1: 5.746 vs. 2.785; Table 6.2: 1 vs. 0.556). Three years later, male migrants have fewer employment opportunities than male urbanites when other influential indicators are not taken into account (Table 6.6: 0.868 vs. 1.214; Table 6.7: 1 vs. 1.398), whereas the direction is converse after I consider other influential variables (Table 6.6: 1.246 vs. 0.723; Table 6.7: 1 vs. 0.565). Thus, it is clear from 2003 and 2006 CGSS that each ratio of male migrant workers to male urbanites is more than 1, which indicates that the employment opportunities for male migrant workers are, in most cases, higher than those for urban males in each year, irrespective of several control factors. Put simply, these findings have indicated a general pattern that male rural migrants appear to have an advantage relative to male urbanites with respect to employment opportunities in the labour market.

However, this argument is in sharp contrast with much existing literature emphasizing the *hukou* system's fundamental influence upon migrant workers. As mentioned in Chapter 2, with many calls for *hukou* reform, the state's very strict official restrictions on migration from rural to urban regions have been gradually weakened, but due to sustained dualistic structure, migrant workers have been still suffered unequal treatment by their urban counterparts. There are two quite different types of social groups in terms of *hukou* in contemporary China: one is the urbanites, who have full citizenship, work in industrial sector and access to social entitlements, while the other is the peasants, who have little citizenship, work in agricultural sector and have to afford

themselves. Despite their disadvantages, migrant workers, to some extent, cannot get away from farming, because they are required to provide industrialization and urbanization with agricultural surplus (Chan, 2010b). They cannot attain full citizenship, which has on one hand, negatively affected them at a material level, including economic, political and social dimensions in their actual lives in the cities, whereas on the other hand, has deepened their psychological inferiority. They have been provisionally tolerated and accepted by many urbanites only because of their value as cheap, vulnerable and expendable labourers. Put simply, these migrant workers are urban labours: they appear to have rights to work and earn money as subsistence allows in the cities, whereas they cannot change their rural residence status and identity. Such a paradoxical identity, together with their large labour supply, has made them similar to cheap migrant labourers in Lewis Model (Chan, 2010b).

It is clear that there is a great controversy regarding whether there is a negative effect of the household registration system on rural people's access to employment in the labour market of China. Considering this controversy, there is a difference between the empirical evidence found in this paper and the evidence found in other investigations. It is therefore prudent that I question whether such unexpected the employment advantage of male rural migrants compared to male urbanites can indeed refute the broad consensus of perspectives made by scholars regarding the relatively disadvantaged position of the former group relative to the latter. Alternatively, I must be open to the possibility that the findings could only be treated as an ostensible superiority that involves employment discrimination in nature.

In order to answer the question of why male rural migrant workers have more employment opportunities than male urbanites, I made reference with existing empirical evidence, the majority of which unequivocally argue migrant workers' absolute marginalized position relative to their urbanites counterparts in Chinese labour market. It is found that their presence in cities has not necessarily provided them with equal access to economic, social, or political rights and entitlements, such as employment opportunities and earnings, as their urban counterparts with permanent urban residency status in host cities (Chan, 2010a, 2010b; Florence, 2006; Han, 2010; Solinger, 1999; Wang, 2005; Zhang et al., 2007; Zhou et al., 2011). Together with female migrant workers, most of male migrant workers have been forbidden from taking up jobs other than those

3-D ('dangerous, dirty, and demeaning') jobs that mostly are low-skilled and physically demanding (Cai, 2007; Chan, 2001; Fan, 2000, 2008; Guo, 2010; Jiang et al., 2008; Solinger, 1999; Tu & Chen, 2010; Yang, 2001). Thus, it is clear that the types of employment and economic activities for male migrant worker group or migrant workers as a whole normally do not cover a very wide range of options (Li, 1994; Shen & Huang, 2003).

Moreover, these empirical findings have confirmed labour market segmentation explaining employment inequality in Western settings, and more specifically, have verified the understanding of a different dimension of labour market segregation, that is, the two-tier labour market with segregated nature of Chinese labour market (Knight & Song, 1995; Knight, Song, & Jia, 1999; Meng, 1998a, 2000, 2001; Wu & Li, 1996).

6.2 Qualitative Results

The in-depth interviews with government officials, urbanites, and female migrant workers themselves have confirmed and improved the understanding of the research results based on quantitative data in this chapter.

6.2.1 Institutional discrimination against female migrant workers

Female migrant workers, due to their double social categories of identity, have experienced institutional discrimination in two ways.

“The predicament of female migrant workers as rural people”

As migrant workers, they are excluded in some government policies enacted to limit migrant workers to certain industries and occupations. For instance (Cai, 2007, p. 233-234):

Permission and Limitation of Industry and Occupation for floating population in Beijing' initiated in 1996 by the Beijing Labour Bureau strictly stipulates there are 204 occupations in 12 industries available to migrant workers in Beijing, most of

which concentrate on jobs that their urban counterparts are unwilling to take.

Likewise,

Permission and Limitation of Industry, Occupation, Education and Vocational Skills for floating population in Beijing' initiated in 2000 by the Beijing Labour Bureau clearly states that eight industries, including finance, insurance, post, real estate, advertisement, information consultation service, computer application service, and travel agency, should control the entry of migrant workers.

The predicament of female migrant workers as women. As females, they are victims of some laws and policies in contemporary China that appear to be universally fair but potentially beneficial for males.

For example, the appendix to the Labour Law of People's Republic of China (*guanyu zhixing zhonghua renmin gongheguo laodongfa ruogan wenti de yijian*) states that the Labour Law of China is not applicable to employers in the domestic service (Li & Stearns, 2006). Theoretically, domestic workers can be either males or females, urban or rural, but in reality the majority of those who dominate this particular occupation are females, in particular, female migrant workers. Thus, this seemingly anti-discrimination employment policy, in essence, exerts serious employment discrimination against female migrant workers (Li & Stearns, 2006), and female migrant workers are, in essence, victims. As Yu (2005) pointed out, though there are many laws and policies against employment discrimination in China, most of them are very unclear, having no definite cut to say which kind of behavior can be defined as discriminatory and which cannot.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, following the state's constitutional obligation to gender equality in communist society, the Chinese government since 1978 has still initiated some employment laws and policies as state intervention to promote gender equality in the labour market. For example, according to the national relevant regulations (see Woodhams et al., 2009, p. 2088),

Women and men have the same right to work, discrimination on the grounds of sex is outlawed and it is illegal to refuse applicants on the basis of their sex or to set a

higher threshold for hiring women on the grounds of sex alone.

However, it has failed to remove discrimination against females, and what is worse, has facilitated it in some cases. In this sense, women living in contemporary China cannot enjoy the state-assigned social entitlements and welfare but suffer more discrimination relative to their predecessors living in early era (Cheung, Heinonen, & Liu, 2008; Fan, 2004a). Accordingly, some scholars (e.g., Woodhams et al., 2009, p. 2088) have criticized the state's limited capacity in this way:

The legislation has (in part) a 'paternalistic and restrictive' tone (Leung, 2003, p. 264), contains 'a strong element of gender bias certain aspects' (Cooke, 2003, p. 328), and lacks 'bite' for a number of reasons associated with the reforms.

6.2.2 Personally mediated discrimination against female migrant workers

The field research reveals pervasive negative attitudes by employers towards female migrant workers as a group. Although few employers attribute their difficulty in the urban labour market to several structural factors, such as lack of opportunity or prejudice, the most common explanation for their difficulty in the urban labour market are their individual deficiencies.

“Unqualified products in urban labour market: double jeopardy and inadequacy in education, skill, and work experience”

When talking about difficulties for female migrant workers to get jobs, a manager of personnel department of one state-owned enterprise in Xi'an blames them for their individual deficiencies rather than institutional or structural barriers. In his words:

I don't think there're few employment opportunities for these female migrant workers, at least, it's my impression that they can find jobs easily in service industries, like our enterprise—so many choices, if she looks pretty and still very young, we can offer her a job as wait-staff...we always need someone to fill in this

position, because of the nature of our service industry (*chuangkou fuwu hangye*). If not, they still can do maintenance, delivery, stock person, and kitchen job...either of these jobs can be an excellent entry point into the urban labour market for the majority of them! At the same time, such jobs are abundant, and the requirements for education, skills and work experience are generally insignificant. The greatest thing is that our jobs guaranteed meals and housing! ...Of course, I don't want to devalue them, but you know, they would be lucky enough if they could get positions in service industry, because as a matter of fact, these female migrant workers are unqualified products in urban labour market, because they have nothing at all—not any advantage in human capital over others, like urbanites or male migrant workers who, though have nothing at all either, at least have labour power... (Interviewee # 4)

In my many interviews with female migrant workers in my field research, it is found that in addition to male migrant workers, whom are conventionally defined as the primary migrants due to their economic reasons for migration, these female migrant workers have gradually focused on their economic benefits from the migration process and become a stream that cannot be neglected. This interviewee's account can be interpreted in this way: The levels of unemployment should be very low among female migrant workers, because there are many available choices for them to participate in the secondary market. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there has been large demand for female migrant workers especially in some coastal regions where service industries dominate. It is known that in service or related industries, employers focus on employees' 'soft skills', such as appearance, communication with clients, and other traits associated with personality (Moss & Tilly, 2001; Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009). This point may explain why young and single females are more attractive than those who are aged and married, which can further contribute the understanding of limited and short-term employment opportunities for rural females in the cities (Fan, 2003a). For the majority of female migrant workers, migration from rural to urban areas only means an interlude during their life cycle (Lee, 1995), since marriage ultimately forces them to give up their stay in the cities and their probabilities of personal development and mobility (Fan, 2003a, 2003b).

This employer names female migrant workers as 'unqualified products in urban labour market',

which in essence suggests his devaluation of female migrant workers as a whole. My interpretation of ‘unqualified products’ can be inspired by Gaetano’s definition of ‘eating spring rice’. In order to examine within the framework constructed by the state, market and family, how young and single female migrant workers in the late twenty century in Beijing navigate successfully sexuality in dispersed space, Gaetano (2008, p. 635; Hanser, 2005; Hooper, 1998; Wang, 2000) uses this term to indicate that young migrant workers who have jobs like service jobs are exploited and capitalized on their young age and femininity in cities.

Gaetano’s argument is consistent with my understanding of this employer’s discourse. This account has implied this employer’s arbitrary judgment and evaluation on female migrant workers’ capacities in terms of age only. Thus, there is a further devaluation of those relatively older female migrant workers, and this term appears to assume that female migrant workers as labourers in the labour market will be kicked out once they are no longer young. Thus, this term has exactly echoed Fan’s argument (2004a) about ‘exploitative migrant labour regime’, and again suggested pervasive discrimination against female migrant workers in the labour market.

“Nothing important but employers’ preferences: different excuses but the same reason”

A female migrant worker, aged nineteen with senior college qualification. Using her previous experience of applying for a secretary job, she complains bitterly about the injustice in the urban labour market:

Education, skills, and work experience...everything seems nothing at all. I thought I’ve done my best all along to make me better than the others...I thought I could do well in the job market, but today I felt rather depressed because I couldn’t find jobs...At the very beginning of my interviews, I was rejected because all employers said that they needed a boy rather than a girl. One day a recruitment advertisement in the newspaper wanting a girl brought me there, a very small business company. It’s a secretary job, a very common job that I’m highly qualified, I guess. I was so happy! But when I was there, the employer said friendly that the position must be filled by a girl with university degree. But he said would contact me for an interview

if the person doesn't work out. Then he asked me to leave my resume. Around twenty minutes later, when I was waiting for the bus at the bus stop in front of the door, I happened to meet a city girl, whom I met thirty minutes ago out of the interview office. Having known she's an applicant for this job, I chatted with her. But her words surprised me –she got the job offer! I had to say, she was so lucky...You know what? She only had a senior college qualification... Both of us have very low education... And both of us are girls, not boys...The only difference might be that I was born with rural identity! Probably, it's my fate...but is it fair? A similar case took place several days later when I applied for another job, also secretary, in another small company. I'm not sure whether I should say 'I'm luckier'...Because this time I got it. But the biggest problem is the great contrast between the original job listed in the newspaper and the final suggested job I attained...The boss said to me, 'That's the only option we have for you. See take it or not?' I have to say yes. That's what I'm now working at, a salesgirl. (Interviewee #16)

The discrimination in organizations has changed its form during the past decades from early times when blatant exclusion was against these individuals with explicit hostility, to the new form in contemporary era during which discrimination is embedded in non-prejudicial behaviours. Thus, the form of discrimination against stigmatized social group members (i.e., female migrant workers) in the hiring or wage-setting decision process has shifted from overt to covert manifestation (Zong and Perry, 2011; as cited in Wang, Zong and Li, 2012). This can explain why employers mostly make an excuse for not hiring female migrant workers.

This interviewee has actually suffered both a gender penalty and a residence status penalty in her job interviews. Her experience at the hiring stage is representative of many other female migrant workers. In my interviews with these female migrant workers, some of them had a rather similar plot – if they are insufficient in education, skills or work experience, they will be definitely rejected, and employers will tell them directly that they are not qualified; if they have adequate accumulation of human capital, they will also be rejected, and employers will find excuses for refusing their job application. Thus, to many female migrant workers, having qualified education,

skills or work experience makes no difference. The only difference between these two cases is the way of employers to express their rejection. In the first case, female migrant workers may meet utter refusal, whereas in the second one, they may hear the bad news in a mild tone.

This interviewee's unsuccessful experience suggests three basic patterns, more specifically, three types of behavior in employers's responses suggested by Pager, Western and Bonikowski (2009). They have been presented in Figure 2.2. in Chapter 2, when I introduce the analytical framework for this thesis. First, her words that 'I was rejected because all employers said that they needed a boy rather than a girl' suggest employers' direct rejection of her on the spot. This behavior is termed 'categorical exclusion', indicating that employers make recruitment decision only after very short communication with job applicants, and what is worse, there is no possibility to change the decision at all. Such an utter rejection may come from employers' stereotypes about these job applicants' capacities or other characteristics (Pager, Western & Bonikowski, 2009, p. 787). Second, in sharp contrast with the city girl's smooth interview process and unexpected result, this interviewee's experiences reflect employers' double standards when evaluating job applicants' adequacy, which are determined by diverse features, such as residence status in this case (Pager, Western & Bonikowski, 2009, p. 787). Third, the comparison between the original job title she saw in the newspaper, a secretary, and the final one she got, a sales girl, suggests a 'job channeling', the third type, which indicates a process during which job applicants are directed to particular positions. While as far as job channeling is concerned, there are mainly four types, including 'downward channeling, upward channeling, lateral channeling, or unknown', among female migrant workers whom I talked to during the field research, mostly report having experienced downward job channeling if they can get the offer (Pager, Western & Bonikowski, 2009, p. 787).

6.2.3 Internalized discrimination against female migrant workers

Employers' stereotypes about female migrant workers' individual insufficiencies are found to be accepted and reinforced by these female migrant workers themselves. As a result, although they find the reality is very unfair, majority of them accept it rather than strive for equal treatment.

“Left behind at the starting point”

A female migrant worker, aged nineteen, comes from a farming family in Northern Shaanxi Province and works at a hairdressing salon. She echoes many employers' complaint about their inadequacy in education, skill, and work experience using her own story about having discontinued school:

It's too hard, or I can say it's impossible for me to get a better job with my background in Xi'an, because I have no diploma and skills, not to mention work experience. My family was very poor, and I left school at my thirteen. I have two sisters and one younger brother. Neither girls finished junior school! I didn't feel hurt when one day my parents told me that 'you don't need to go to school anymore.' As a rural girl, I've no choice, like my other two sisters. So I don't care. Probably it's my responsibility to go out and earn much money to afford my family as a daughter and support my younger brother's schooling as his sister. My parents said that he's the only hope for our family, because he's a boy and thus, he should have complete university schooling. I've recognized the importance of having a diploma if you want to get a better job in Xi'an, and I paid for a training class. But to me it's a tough step...and my job didn't leave me much time...so I gave up then. I don't have any talent in study and already have left behind at the starting point! Currently, I'm still working in a hairdressing salon, from 10 a.m. till midnight every day. Oftentimes, I can't have lunch or dinner on time, and if I feel so tired, only can lean on the table to rest for a while...I think now there's no point in my improving my education or skills, because they don't mean anything to me. (Interviewee # 15)

In the field research, it is found that female migrant workers are typically low-educated, and lack professional labour skills. This finding echoes many research results of existing studies on female migrant workers' demographic information in the labour market. For example, according to Wang and his colleagues (Wang et al., 2011), because of their very limited education, and insufficient skill and work experience, nearly all female migrant workers are concentrated in the secondary labour market or informal industrial sectors. Another instance is Li and Li's study

(2012). From their perspectives, jobs for female migrant workers are typically exploitative and oppressed, since they involve long working hours, poor working conditions, little material and emotional/psychological stability, yet an inadequate earnings.

According to Li and Li (2012), there are diverse reasons to explain why they cannot finish even very preliminary education, such as economic burdens, domestic calamity, their own unqualified school performance and families' value the male child only (*zhong nan qing nv*). But one of the frequently mentioned reason for discontinuing school is the last one, that is, traditional prescriptions regarding rural gender roles and identities, as analyzed above, for instance, parents' belief that unlike boys who will be the backbone of the family, girls do not need much education. Instead, girls should start domestic and wage jobs as soon as possible to support the family and improve its financial circumstance, including their younger/older brothers' education. This kind of traditional notion has been increasingly internalized by female migrant workers, and passed from one generation to the next. As a result, many female migrant workers expressed their unwillingness to continue education in the interviews and placed an emphasis on earning money only. Thus, it is not surprising in my interviews to see that when faced up with the stuff - ending school, starting work at such a young age and supporting their family, they assume that they were born with the responsibility rather than out of luck.

Having realized their lack of education, skills and experience required by jobs in the primary labour market, there is a differentiation regarding responses among these female migrant workers. Some of them, who are able to adjust to the environment, draw part of their deposits from the bank and enroll in remedial classes or in-service training workshops, in hope of improving their education, skills and experience (Gaetano, 2004). Still others, who are shiftless or self-abandoned, are subject to urbanites' multiple types of discrimination and negative self-perceptions, voluntarily give up any opportunities for vocational training and knowledge enhancement, and end up with jobs in the secondary labour market. The third category is between these two types, and female migrant workers of this category may initially make efforts to improve their human capitals, but after much experience of failure (e.g., their own poor preparations, urbanites' discrimination), they ultimately lose hopes and are content to remain where they are now. Despite differences in state, all these female migrant workers' experience in

the host cities has suggested their difficulties in adaptation. Such difficulties should be attributed to both themselves (excluded) and others (excluder).

“Always in life: invisible group and contested meanings”

A female migrant worker, aged twenty-five, comes from a farming family in Southern Shaanxi Province, works as a domestic worker at the time of interview, and tells her story in her own words. From her telling, it is clear that migration from rural to urban areas for jobs implicitly affect them in a very negative way, since they can and sometimes feel even more discrimination from urbanites when they get jobs in the cities. Such negative self-perceptions may reduce their confidence in getting better jobs afterwards, and low-level jobs, such as domestic service, can reinforce their negative self-perceptions further. In this way, a vicious circle forms and continually affects female migrant workers' experiences:

This is my first trip in Xi'an, finding a job as a domestic worker. This is a big family and has a young child and an old people. Before I entered their family, I heard a reminder from one of my co-village working sisters, who is also working as a domestic worker in other people's house: this is not my family, and working here is quite different from living in my own family. My friend's words are definitely true-- I can feel that I'm looked down upon, and probably in their eyes all our female migrant workers working as domestic workers are inferior to others. My parents encourage me in the letter that domestic work is an absolutely decent job, because I provide for myself and all my families by my hard work, and this job is very noble, because I'm helping this family take care of the old and the young. I'm trying to convince myself of by my parent's words, but when I stand in front of this family and feel something uncomfortable, I still feel I lost my something – probably it's my dignity. I know the reason, because I'm a female migrant worker—I'm not just a woman, but I'm also rural. That's why there're some many day-to-day challenges that I face. (Interviewee # 18)

In urban China, a domestic job, which is predominantly occupied by female migrant workers, is

normally seen less decent than many other jobs in the labour market. Those female migrant workers are called nanny, housekeeper or domestic workers (*baomu*). This occupation not only means low-level earnings and intensive labour, but more importantly, hurts their feelings. Such psychological harm covers multiple types, such as disregard, contempt, dishonor, derogations, and bias. This is what Gaetano and Jacka (2004, p. 54) define ‘stigmatized’ and ‘enslaved’ occupation in the eyes of many urbanites and rural migrant workers themselves. This is especially the case for female migrant workers who are engaged in this occupation. Their sense of inferiority can be traced back to historical era when this occupation was related to servility (Gaetano and Jacka, 2004). There is little doubt that the occupation of domestic worker is not the only one which is ‘stigmatized’ and ‘enslaved’. With the rapid development of pluralistic society and occupation diversification during the past decades, there are also many others, like assistant hair stylist (*lifadian xiaogong*), foot bath massagist (*zuyu anmoshi*), bathhouse server (*zangtang cuozaoshi*)²³, and so on. Nevertheless, all these jobs indicate their marginalization in the public sphere and in the labour market.

Then there is a question: if so, why female migrant workers mostly take jobs in this or other similar occupations? There are three possible explanations. First, this kind of occupation involves low requirements of human capital, which matches their inadequacy in education, skill, and work experience as well. Second, due to traditional gender roles and identities in rural China, they normally undertake all the chores in their own families, and thus can easily adapt into this work in cities (Wang et al., 2011). Third, all these jobs are more likely to provide them with opportunities to contact people and build broader social network in the host cities, which may open up new spaces for their personal survival and development in the near future.

Thus, it is clear that the migration experiences as *baomu* or other similar jobs for them are like a coin with two sides. These jobs have indeed offered many of them entry-level employment opportunity in the cities, but at the same time, they have deprived them of dignity and self-esteem. In this sense, ‘migration involves much compromise and exacts from young rural women both sacrifices and rewards’ (Gaetano & Jacka, 2004, p. 6).

²³ This is also a common occupation for female migrant workers in my field research. This job requires giving clients a rubdown with a damp towel in the bath house.

CHAPTER 7:

DOUBLE OUTSIDERS AT THE WAGE-SETTING STAGE?

EARNINGS FOR FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS²⁴

This chapter likewise explores female migrant workers' experiences in the labour market, but the focus is their employment earnings rather than their employment opportunities. There are also three questions. First, is there any evidence to demonstrate that gender and the household registration system interact to shape female migrant workers' employment earnings? Second, if yes, compared with members of other three comparative groups (i.e., rural male, urban male, and urban female), do female migrant workers experience double (additive assumptions), less than double, or more than double (intersectional assumptions) jeopardy in employment earnings? A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is used to explore these two questions. The last question regarding the trends in employment discrimination against this group is examined primarily through quantitative methods.

7.1 Quantitative Results

In order to explore these three questions, the quantitative research method in Chapter 7 still follows Greenman and Xie's strategy (2008). But due to the dependent variable measured at a ratio level, the specific statistical analysis model in this chapter is different from that in Chapter 6. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, MCA (multiple classification analysis) is used, and the results are divided into three parts. First, analysis compares for four comparative groups the difference in gross net logged earnings and then net logged earnings are produced after all the control variables are taken into account. Implicitly, both of the gross and net logged earnings denote results in actual status. Then this result is decomposed by household registration and by gender

²⁴ Part of this chapter has been peer-reviewed and accepted by a few national and international academic conferences.

respectively in each year, and I can also get gross and net logged earnings for different comparative groups, both of which stand for results in ideal status. The last part will calculate the ratio of the actual to the ideal ratio of employment opportunities/earnings of female migrant workers in the labour market in each year, and compare the two ratios to see the trends between 2003 and 2006.

Table 7.1. Difference in earnings, in deviations from grand mean, between four comparative groups, 2003.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test
<i>Comparative groups</i>		39.644***		24.010***
Male urbanites	9.0878		9.0429	
Female urbanites	8.8413		8.8605	
Male migrant workers	8.9392		9.1497	
Female migrant workers	8.4659		8.7468	
<i>Marital status</i>				17.172***
No			8.7872	
Yes			8.9728	
<i>Education</i>			266.508	449.136***
<i>Work experience</i>			2.186	3.684
<i>Work experience square</i>			0.607	1.002
<i>Skill certificate</i>				
(first)				2.151
Preliminary			8.8398	
Middle			8.9929	
Advanced			8.9433	
(second)				2.195
Preliminary			8.7904	
Middle			9.0136	
Advanced			8.9795	
(third)				1.030
Preliminary			9.3928	
Middle			9.3120	
Advanced			9.5639	
<i>Communist party membership</i>				59.678***
No			8.9078	
Yes			9.1370	
<i>Number of people helping job search</i>			1.800	3.034
<i>Marketization level index</i>			216.817	365.393***

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 7.1 presents the gross and net difference in earnings for membership in the comparative groups in 2003. The first model calculates the gross, whereas the second model, by estimating the adjusted earnings of the groups after taking into account variations in control variables, calculates the net. When the earnings of each group are expressed as deviations from the grand mean, Model I (column 1) of Table 7.1 suggests that male urbanites have an earnings advantage compared to the other three groups, and female migrant workers are the most disadvantaged in the labour market with respect to income. But the earnings advantage of male urbanites over the other three groups is very little, as there are only marginal differences between their earnings after I do the natural logarithm transformation of earnings.

In Model II (column 2) of the Table, after differences have been taken into account in many control variables, the most advantaged group has shifted from male urbanites to male migrant workers, but the most disadvantaged group has remained the same, still female migrant workers. The original earnings disadvantage for female migrant workers compared to those most advantaged is reduced, from 0.622 to 0.296. In other words, both gross and the net earnings differences in this table unequivocally show the disadvantage of income for female migrant workers, regardless of variations in other factors.

As far as the control variables are concerned, to be expected, one indicator of human capital, educational attainment, brings positive net returns. Each additional year of schooling increases earnings by 266.508 a year. As for the other two indicators, work experience/work experience square deals nothing with individuals' earnings, and the level of certificate is not a persistently significant predictor. Political capital in terms of whether or not having a Communist Party membership brings positive returns, too. The measure of social capital, the number of people who help respondents to find jobs, brings a small net advantage, but the relationship is not statistically significant. The marketization level index brings definitely great net annual returns, with each additional unit increasing earnings by 216.817 a year. Marital status is also associated with individuals' annual earnings.

Having realized the actual gross and net difference in earnings for membership in the comparative groups in 2003, original differences may be further decomposed to see how much

can be attributed to gender and *hukou*.

Table 7.2 Difference in earnings, in deviations from grand mean, between four comparative groups, by the household registration system, 2003.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test
<i>Comparative groups</i>		3.571*		1.380
Male urbanites	9.0878		9.0744	
Male migrant workers	8.9392		9.1582	
<i>Marital status</i>				15.097***
No			8.8670	
Yes			9.0985	
<i>Education</i>			111.472	181.163***
<i>Work experience</i>			1.453	2.361
<i>Work experience square</i>			1.457	2.367
<i>Skill certificate</i>				
(first)				1.597
Preliminary			8.8358	
Middle			9.0182	
Advanced			8.9489	
(second)				1.063
Preliminary			8.6407	
Middle			8.7803	
Advanced			8.7227	
(third)				1.344
Preliminary			9.7798	
Middle			9.6452	
Advanced			10.0409	
<i>Communist party membership</i>				39.371***
No			9.0101	
Yes			9.2449	
<i>Number of people helping job search</i>			0.297	0.482
<i>Marketization level index</i>			85.829	139.489***

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 7.3. Difference in earnings, in deviations from grand mean, between four comparative groups, by gender, 2003.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test
<i>Comparative groups</i>		84.196***		58.634***
Male urbanites	9.0878		9.0575	
Female urbanites	8.8413		8.8750	
<i>Marital status</i>				21.506***
No			8.7786	
Yes			8.9887	
<i>Education</i>			256.138	453.197***
<i>Work experience</i>			2.364	4.183*
<i>Work experience square</i>			0.577	1.020
<i>Skill certificate (first)</i>				1.729
Preliminary			8.8587	
Middle			8.9983	
Advanced			8.9568	
<i>(second)</i>				2.290*
Preliminary			8.8095	
Middle			9.0278	
Advanced			8.9992	
<i>(third)</i>				1.067
Preliminary			9.4021	
Middle			9.3328	
Advanced			9.5692	
<i>Communist party membership</i>				64.750***
No			8.9233	
Yes			8.1393	
<i>Number of people helping job search</i>			1.940	3.432
<i>Marketization level index</i>			197.693	349.787***

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

As far as the decomposed results by the household registration system (Table 7.2), before adjustment, male urbanites has an earnings advantage over male migrant workers, while after adjusting for all influential factors, they earn less. As far as the decomposed results by gender (Table 7.3), male urbanites earn more than female urbanites, irrespective of influential factors.

As for the control variables, the general pattern has remained the same as it is in Table 7.1. Educational attainment still brings definite positive net returns, and each additional year of schooling increases earnings by 111.472 a year in Table 7.2 and by 256.138 in Table 7.3. The other two indicators of human capital, work experience/work experience square and the level of certificate both are not persistently significant. Political capital, in terms of having or not having a Communist Party membership, brings positive returns, while social capital in terms of the number of people who help respondents to find jobs, has no relationship with annual earnings in two tables. The marketization level index brings great net annual returns, and each additional unit increases earnings by 85.829 a year in Table 7.2 and by 197.693 in Table 7.3. Marital status is still a significant predictor of annual earnings in both years.

Table 7.4. Gross relative earnings by the household registration and gender in 2003.

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Urban registration</i>	1	0.973
<i>Rural registration</i>	0.984	0.957 (0.932) 97.39%

Table 7.5. Net relative earnings by the household registration and gender in 2003.

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Urban registration</i>	1	0.980
<i>Rural registration</i>	1.009	0.989 (0.967) 97.78%

With reference to Greenman and Xie's strategy (2008) discussed above, now I can get the gross and net earnings ratio of female migrant workers relative to male urbanites in ideal status.

As for the gross one, the earnings ratio of female migrant workers can be attained from two sources of information: the female-to-male earnings ratio among urbanites (0.973) and the rural-to-urban earnings ratio among males of the same group (0.984). The calculated result is 0.957.

Then I can get the earnings ratio of female migrant workers relative to male urbanites in an actual status (Table 7.1), which is 0.932. Thus, the ratio of actual status to ideal status for female migrant workers relative to the male urbanites is 0.9739 (97.39%). In other words, the earning disadvantage actually experienced by female migrant workers is more than that in ideal status, suggesting female migrant workers have more than double jeopardy with respect to earnings in 2003.

Following the same logic, after taking into account differences in control variables (the net), the earnings ratio for female migrant workers of actual status to ideal status relative to male urbanites is 0.9778 (97.78%). This finding confirms the fact that in 2003 female migrant workers have more than double jeopardy with respect to earnings.

Table 7.6. Difference in earnings, in deviations from grand mean, between four comparative groups, 2006.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test
<i>Comparative groups</i>		1.087		0.501
Male urbanites	10.0841		10.1102	
Female urbanites	10.0719		10.0139	
Male migrant workers	9.9128		10.0756	
Female migrant workers	9.9199		10.0640	
<i>Marital status</i>				7.725**
No			10.3363	
Yes			10.0052	
<i>Education</i>			231.075	62.096***
<i>Work experience</i>			0.293	0.079
<i>Work experience square</i>			3.119	0.838
<i>Skill certificate</i>				0.465
No			10.0797	
Preliminary			9.9624	
Middle			9.9841	
Advanced			10.2341	
Technician			10.0771	
Senior technician			10.4019	
<i>Communist party membership</i>				0.078
No			10.0715	
Yes			10.0375	
<i>Number of people helping job search</i>			943.431	251.105***
<i>Marketization level index</i>			764.768	205.513***

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 7.6 presents the gross and net difference in earnings for membership in the comparative groups in 2006. The first model calculates the gross, whereas the second model, by estimating the adjusted earnings of the groups after taking into account variations in control variables, calculates the net. When the earnings of each group are expressed as deviations from the grand mean, Model I (column 1) of Table 7.6 suggests that male urbanites have an earnings advantage compared to the other three groups, and the earnings of male migrant workers and female migrant workers are so close that they are simultaneously the disadvantaged groups in the labour

market in terms of income in 2006. Similar to findings in 2003, the earnings advantage of male urbanites over the other three groups is very small, as there are only marginal differences between their earnings after I do the natural logarithm transformation of earnings.

In Model II (column 2) of the Table, after differences have been taken into account in many control variables, the most advantaged group has remained the same, but the most advantaged group has surprisingly shifted from rural people to female urbanites. The original earnings disadvantage for female migrant workers compared to the male urbanites is reduced from 0.164 to 0.046.

As far as the control variables are concerned, to be expected, one indicator of human capital, educational attainment, brings positive net returns. Each additional year of schooling increases earnings by 231.075 a year. As for the other two indicators, work experience/work experience square and the level of certificate are insignificant predictors. Political capital, which is measured by Communist Party membership, no longer influences individuals' earnings. But the measure of social capital, the number of people who help respondents to find jobs, brings definite gain earnings, with each additional people increasing earnings by 943.431 a year. The marketization level index brings definitely great net annual returns, with each additional unit increasing earnings by 764.768 a year. Marital status is also associated with individuals' annual earnings.

Having realized the actual gross and net difference in earnings for membership in the comparative groups in 2006, original differences may be further decomposed to see how much can be attributed to gender and *hukou*.

Table 7.7. Difference in earnings, in deviations from grand mean, between four comparative groups, by the household registration system, 2006.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test
<i>Comparative groups</i>		2.284		0.330
Male urbanites	10.0841		10.0858	
Male migrant workers	9.9128		10.0199	
<i>Marital status</i>				3.574*
No			10.3010	
Yes			10.0210	
<i>Education</i>			83.007	27.099***
<i>Work experience</i>			1.276	0.417
<i>Work experience square</i>			4.105	1.340
<i>Skill certificate</i>				1.136
No			10.0722	
Preliminary			10.0021	
Middle			9.9454	
Advanced			10.5273	
Technician			10.1245	
Senior technician			10.5359	
<i>Communist party membership</i>				0.0780
No			10.0679	
Yes			10.1048	
<i>Number of people helping job search</i>			492.514	160.787***
<i>Marketization level index</i>			334.817	109.305***

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 7.8. Difference in earnings, in deviations from grand mean, between four comparative groups, by gender, 2006.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test	Predicted Mean (adjusted)	F Test
<i>Comparative groups</i>		0.022		1.294
Male urbanites	10.0841		10.1269	
Female urbanites	10.0719		10.0397	
<i>Marital status</i>				6.064*
No			10.3628	
Yes			10.0318	
<i>Education</i>			216.173	61.723***
<i>Work experience</i>			0.025	0.007
<i>Work experience square</i>			2.450	0.699
<i>Skill certificate</i>				0.371
No			10.1009	
Preliminary			9.9957	
Middle			10.0095	
Advanced			10.2264	
Technician			10.1487	
Senior technician			10.4069	
<i>Communist party membership</i>				0.037
No			10.0911	
Yes			10.0672	
<i>Number of people helping job search</i>			725.881	207.258***
<i>Marketization level index</i>			512.329	146.284***

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

As far as the decomposed results by the household registration system (Table 7.7)/by gender are concerned (Table 7.8), I can see very similar findings to those found in Table 7.6. In Table 7.7, before and after adjustment, male urbanites both have an earnings advantage over male migrant workers, and the gap reduces from 0.171 to 0.066.

As for the control variables, the general pattern has remained the same as it is in Table 7.6. Educational attainment still brings definite positive net returns, and each additional year of schooling increases earnings by 83.007 a year in Table 7.7 and by 216.173 in Table 7.8. The

other two indicators of human capital, work experience/work experience square and the level of certificate are both insignificant. Political capital in terms of whether or not having a Communist Party membership deals nothing with individuals' earnings. The social capital in terms of the number of people who help respondents to find jobs is a strong predictor of individuals' earnings, with each additional people who can help to find jobs increasing earnings by 492.514 in Table 7.7 and 725.881 in Table 7.8. The marketization level index brings great net annual returns, and each additional unit increases earnings by 334.817 a year in Table 7.7 and by 512.329 in Table 7.8. Marital status is still a significant predictor of annual earnings in both tables.

Table 7.9. Gross relative earnings by the household registration and gender in 2006.

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Urban registration</i>	1	0.999
<i>Rural registration</i>	0.983	0.982 (0.984) 100.2%

Table 7.10. Net relative earnings by the household registration and gender in 2006.

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Urban registration</i>	1	0.991
<i>Rural registration</i>	0.993	0.984 (0.995) 101.1%

Following the same procedure as for 2003, the gross ratio of actual status to ideal status for female migrant workers relative to the male urbanites is 1.002 (100. 2%), while the net one is 1.011 (101.1 %) in 2006. In other words, in both gross and net terms, the earnings disadvantage actually experienced by female migrant workers is less than that in ideal status, suggesting female migrant workers have less than double jeopardy with respect to earnings in this year.

Based on the findings above, I can clearly see the trends in earnings disadvantage for female migrant workers, which is caused by their double social categories of identity, has become less during these three years, from 2003 to 2006 (Gross: from 97.39% to 100.2%; Net: from 97.78% to 101.1%).

In general, the findings for the existence of an interaction between household registration system and gender in earnings for female migrant workers in these two chapters are similar (existence),

whereas the findings for degree and trends in these two chapters are different. As for the degree of the interaction between *houku* and gender, in 2003, what has *actually* been achieved is still less than *ideally*, but 97.39% and 97.78% have both indicated that the difference between *the actual status* and *ideal status* is very little. In other words, these female migrant workers have still suffered more than double jeopardy with respect to employment earnings, with very small differences between *actually* and *ideally* (degree). In other words, these female migrant workers have still suffered more than double jeopardy with respect to employment earnings, with very small differences between *actually* and *ideally*. In 2006, the case is quite different, since what has actually been achieved is more than ideally. Put simply, they have experienced less than double jeopardy (degree). When it comes to the trends, regardless of taking influential factors into account, discrimination against female migrant workers in their earnings have appeared to be less between 2003 and 2006 (trends).

Earnings disadvantages for female migrant workers definitely exist, irrespective of extent and trends during these three years. Similar to discussions in Chapter 6, the underlying reason for these earnings disadvantages are segmentations in the urban labour market, which point to both urban-rural segmentation and male-female segmentation (Fan, 2003b, p. 27). There is little doubt that low earnings are closely related to low positions in the labour market, which is caused by both residence status inequality and gender inequality. On one hand, highly narrowed ranges of options for employment in the urban labour market based on *hukou* for migrant workers have heavily determined their low-paying jobs. They are generally prohibited from entering the urban labour market unless they agree to take jobs that their urban counterparts are unwilling to take (Chan, 1996; Chan, 2010b; Fan, 2003a, 2004a, 2004b; Mallee, 1996), such as physically demanding jobs with relatively low earnings.

Thus, migrant workers' employment cannot be named career but only work. Even in many cases, their temporarily working in the cities can be only termed '*dagong*', which, refers to those who are employed according to literal meanings, implicitly involves a negative tone. In many discourses about migrant workers, according to Florence (2007, p. 145), this term describes an image: 'In the face of a tough, competitive but fair environment, striving, hard work, self-sacrifice, suffering, enterprising spirit, and self-learning should lead to self-fulfillment and

eventually an improvement in productivity and development'. This ostentatious image, on one hand, implicitly pervades migrant workers to accept and rationalize hard work in poor working conditions, namely, to be persistent and self-sacrificed, while on the other hand, offers them an illusion to encourage them to strive for their so-called brighter future. In essence, this term has shifted the blame on to migrant workers themselves. Though migrant workers are currently legitimate residents in the cities because of their contribution to local economic construction, there is a limit of stay that depends on whether they are members of labour force characterized by Florence's interpretation of *dagong* above (Knight et al., 1999, as cited in Fan, 2002; Zhou, 1998).

On the other hand, within group of migrants, there are differences in types of work between males and females. As mentioned in Chapter 6, male migrant workers are mostly placed in manual work, while their female counterparts are channeled to jobs like domestic service (Fan, 2003b). Such gender-based segmentation becomes more prominent during the process of marketization in China. With respect to the historical change in gender equality, Fan (2003b) has again critically pointed out the state's failure to promote gender equality during the past decades.

Fan's comment has been consistent with the second line of argument regarding the effects of the economic reform on gender equality since 1978 summarized by Bian (2002a). In other words, the state has no longer followed its conventional practices to actively protect women's rights and instead, it has only played a role of audience. It is through this process that a capitalist and exploitative mode of accumulation is allowed (Fan, 2004a). Thus, based on these two types of segmentation in the urban labour market, female migrant workers undoubtedly are excluded through more complex social mechanisms.

7.2 Qualitative Results

Similar to qualitative results in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, this part includes three parts, including institutional, personally-mediated and internalized discrimination (Jones, 1997) against female migrant workers, and covers in-depth interviews with government officials, urbanites, and female migrant workers themselves.

7.2.1 Institutional discrimination against female migrant workers

Earnings discrimination continues throughout the employment cycle for female migrant workers. But it has to be admitted that the central government has initiated several related laws and policies to protect both females and migrant workers from earnings discrimination.

“Equal pay for equal work”

In Article 31 of the Employment Promotion Act of People's Republic of China, which is the No.70 Executive Order signed by President Jintao Hu, approved in the NPC Standing Committee on August 30, 2007 and carried out from January 1, 2008 (as cited in Xin, 2007, p. 84): Both migrant workers and urbanites have equal labour rights, and any kind of barrier for migrant workers to participate in the urban labour market is strongly against.

The equal labour rights have both narrow and broad definitions. In the narrow sense, both migrant workers and urbanites should have equal rights to employment, one of which is equal pay for equal work. In a similar vein, there have long been many employment laws and policies to protect females from any type of earnings discrimination. For instance, ‘the Convention on the Equal Pay for Equal Work for Male and Female workers’ (*nannv gongren tonggong tongchou gongyue*) (Xin, 2007, p. 84).

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China states that (cited in Woodhams et al., 2009, p. 2085):

Women . . . enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, political, economic, cultural and social, and family life. The state protects the rights and interests of women, applies the principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women alike and trains and selects cadres from among women. In many ways, state attention has been successful in promoting female employment.

The state has long treated social equality as the core in its ideological and political arena.

Accordingly, the Chinese government has proposed some employment laws and policies to protect particular social groups, such as migrant workers and women workers. In addition, several relevant institutions have been founded, such as All-China Women's Federation (Woodhams et al., 2009). However, in many cases, all these efforts, which attempt to reduce an unequal distribution of opportunities and benefits (Cooke, 2001, as cited in Woodhams et al., 2009; Keith, 1997), have failed to eradicate discrimination.

Two points can be used to explain the state's failure to eliminate social inequality based on gender/*hukou* and growing discrimination against female or migrant workers, including political and economic explanation, and cultural explanation. As for the gender issue, for example, these two explanations are generally consistent with Fan's argument when she examines the reasons for females' lower positions in the labour market. According to her, several reasons, such as reemergence of conventional gendered norms, abolishment of the central planning economy system that advocates earnings equality, and existence of labour market segmentation (Fan, 2003b, p. 24). More specifically, as far as the first, conventional gendered norms is concerned, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has made efforts to eliminate traditional cultural traditions since Mao-era, Confucianism has remained deep-rooted in contemporary China, and its doctrines have helped to sustain a gender hierarchy (Bray, 1997; Ko, 1994; Walker, 1993). When it comes to the second, abolishment of the central planning economy system, as the state has experienced a transformation from the central planning economy to socialist market economy, and as the labour market has gradually been regulated, the government has played a 'hands-off' role in many aspects, including in the labour market operating (Woodhams et al., 2009, p. 2088). Consequently, employers driven by cost-minimization and benefit-maximization are more likely to sidestep laws and regulations and take some discriminatory actions if necessary (Maurer-Fazio & Hughes, 2002, as cited in Woodhams et al., 2009). That is why Cook (2001, as cited in Woodhams et al., 2009) argues that these decades have witnessed reduced power of laws and order in the labour market.

As a result, when within-job wage discrimination is concerned, where a man and a women, a migrant worker and an urban worker, equally qualified and productive and doing the same work for the same employer, are paid unequally, the situation is still very pervasive and overt in urban

China.

7.2.2 Personally mediated discrimination against female migrant workers

“Minimum cost, maximum profit”

A manager of personnel department of one state-owned enterprise in Xi'an, elaborates the rationale underlying the preference in service industries for female migrant workers:

We employers, at least in service industries, are willing to recruit female migrant workers because they are more attractive than male migrant workers or urban workers. Put simply, they're the most easily satisfied—no matter how much they dedicate to work and how much you pay finally, they looks tolerable. That's why we enterprises like this particular group of labour force—minimum cost maximum profit... expenses of maternity and childcare during their years? Our response is to hire two types of female migrant workers, one, pre-marriage young working girls, who can fill positions involving interaction with customers, like counter girls, as I mentioned just now; or the other kind, relatively older female migrants, who can do some supportive job, like maintenance and stocking. If a young working sister gets pregnant, I have to say sorry and she'll be fired immediately. So I can say that there's absolutely no discriminatory motherhood penalty at our enterprise, because all our employees have nothing to do with motherhood, and thus no extra costs of having these female migrant workers...Long before, I heard from some other employers that female migrant workers lack work ethic, but according to my own experience, these female migrant workers are very persevering and hard-working. I don't know why. Probably, I encountered exceptions? If so, I'm a lucky employer (Interviewee # 4)

This interviewee's description confirms many studies on female migrant workers' earnings disadvantage relative to other three comparative groups mentioned in Chapter 1. Scholars have reached a consensus that respectively due to segmentation of occupations based on gender and

hukou, migrant workers' average earnings is less than the urbanites', females' is less than their male counterparts, and female migrant workers' is less than male migrant workers.

It is very clear that this interviewee's account that 'there's absolutely no discriminatory motherhood penalty at our enterprise' is very ostensible. In many occasions, there are several job applicants for one position. As a manager of personnel department, this individual has to give a convincing and reasonable reason when selecting someone over other equally qualified job applicants for each position. In this regard, costs of maternity and of childcare (Stockman, 1994; Summerfield, 1994, as cited in Zhang, Hannum, & Wang, 2008) must be hidden reason for not hiring women at childbearing age. He and other employers in this enterprise must have taken all these costs into account, and their decisions at both hiring stage and wage-setting stage are closely associated with marriage and motherhood (Correll, Benard & Paik, 2007, as cited in Leicht, 2008).

In terms of their hard working, female migrant workers working in this enterprise challenge this employer's stereotypes about their group. However, his stereotypes are so deep-seated that cannot be removed immediately. Thus, he only treats it as exceptions rather than as stimulus to refine stereotypes (Taylor, 1981; Weber & Crocker, 1983, as cited in Pager & Karafin, 2009). In other words, this specific observation and experience in his own workplace have not changed or updated his long-lasting discrimination against female migrant workers.

The employers' sustained stereotypes of female migrant workers can be very helpful to understand my research findings based on quantitative methods in this chapter. While the discrimination against female migrant workers in their earnings has appeared to be less during the period from 2003 to 2006, we cannot deny that in some cases, for instance, as for the degree of the interaction between *houku* and gender on their earnings in 2003, what has *actually* been achieved is less than *ideally*, namely, these female migrant workers have still suffered more than double jeopardy with respect to employment earnings. The employers' negative perceptions towards them at the wage-setting stage might be a reasonable explanation for their lower pay.

7.2.3 Internalized discrimination against female migrant workers

“Everything that made me who I am is being a female migrant worker”

A female migrant worker, aged nineteen and coming from a farming family in Northern Shaanxi Province, works at a hairdressing salon. She describes her hardship in this hairdressing salon, working hard but getting poor earnings. In her own words:

My colleagues have a nickname for me, ‘industrious robot’, because my working days are quite busy, and I don’t have any time to take good care of myself or buy anything good for myself. Actually, I earn a relatively small sum of money, but I try to save all the money and send it back to my family. No matter how tired I feel and how low wages are, I must work outside to support my brother’s schooling and my parents’ daily costs. In this strange city, I often feel I’m an outsider, nothing is stable for me. I don’t have a permanent residence, and instead, I spend much my spare time to move house. Actually, the rent determines where I live, and the cheapest place is my perfect choice. Oftentimes, I have to work longer, because the longer you work, the more you’ll be rewarded. I’m a female migrant worker, you know what I mean? I personally can’t say that I’m a woman first and a migrant worker second, or I’m a migrant worker first and a woman second. I’m all those. Being a women and rural people, so I’m a combination – a rural woman. In addition, I don’t have education or advanced skills, so my monthly salary, 1,500 yuan is worthy of my hard work. (Interviewee # 15)

From her story, I can learn that her working life in the hairdressing salon is harsh, exploitative and tiring. In my field research, these female migrant workers give a range of reasons to explain their motivations for migration to the city, and the most frequently-mentioned one is to find a work to improve their own and their families’ livelihood. This finding is against the basic assumption underlying conventional immigration studies (I discussed it more specifically above), which assumes that female migrant workers migrate as followers and dependents for social and familial reasons rather than economic reason. Instead, with the growth of female migrant worker

group since the later twentieth century, they have played an important role in the migration population in contemporary China, through which they have also raised their power and status in families and in the society. Put simply, these female migrant workers are currently migrating to the cities for economic reasons, and thus playing a leading role rather than a supporting role in the migration army.

Despite her experiences of migration as a difficult journey, this interviewee does not provide any real critique of the earnings inequality suffered by her as a female migrant worker. Thus, it is possible that many female migrant workers have gradually internalized earnings discrimination against them and have rationalized it. In their process of socialization, two mechanisms, that is, education and mass media may be very important ways.

CHAPTER 8:

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

China has experienced economic reform since 1978. During these three decades of transformation, China's economic has developed at a rapid speed. One main reason for such economic growth is China's advantage in its labour force, the majority of which are migrant workers (*nongmin gong*). Increasingly, the development of female migrant workers has been encouraged, in particular due to great demand in destination areas. It is the particular group that this thesis attempts to explore.

Female migrant workers are victims of discrimination against both rural people and women, since they have taken on double disadvantaged or stigmatized social categories of identity. Thus, I come to face a key question of whether they suffer disadvantages from each of these two social categories of identity separately that can be added together or they experience these disadvantages from two social categories of identity that are interdependent as a whole.

Among diverse types of discrimination against this particular group, those occurring in public sphere and in the labour market are two prominent representatives. Thus, this thesis has aimed to address four research questions: First, in the public sphere, are urbanites in contemporary China willing to provide equal opportunities and entitlements for female migrant workers? Second, in the labour market, is there any evidence to demonstrate that gender and the household registration system interact to shape female migrant workers' employment opportunities and earnings? Third, still in the labour market, if yes, compared with members of other three comparative groups (i.e., rural male, urban male, and urban female), do female migrant workers, who potentially have double marginalized social categories of identity as both female and rural people, experience double (additive assumptions), less than double, or more than double (intersectional assumptions) jeopardy in employment discrimination (opportunities and earnings)? Last, if the case is either less or more than double jeopardy overtime, what are the trends in employment discrimination against this group? In an exploration of these four questions, this

thesis has offered theoretical, methodological and practical contributions to an understanding of urban migrant female workers' experiences in China.

As far as the theoretical framework is concerned, three key elements of social exclusion theory, 'multidimensionality', 'dynamic', and 'two different sets of actors', have formed the general theoretical framework for this thesis. In addition to overcoming the weaknesses of three traditional theories to explain employment inequality, this theory has offered a very comprehensive and coherent theoretical model to unravel the patterns, process, and nature of employment discrimination against female migrant workers in urban China. Specifically, the 'multidimensionality' element helps to identify the diverse patterns of employment discrimination, the 'dynamic' explores the processes by which different forms of employment discrimination take place, and the 'two different sets of actors' domain explains why unequal distribution of employment opportunities and income, taking the form of employment discrimination, can be sustained for a long time. In other words, it captures the nature of such inequality rooted in Chinese transitional societies.

Nevertheless, to get a better understanding of the last three research questions regarding the existence, degree and trends of double jeopardy suffered by female migrant workers in the labour market, the social exclusion approach has appeared, to some extent, to be general. Accordingly, the intersectional theory, as a specific theoretical perspective that primarily deals with double- or triple-jeopardy, has become the specific theoretical tool in this thesis. Although both social exclusion theory and intersectional theory are organically contextualized in western countries, my thesis is not a research that involves westernization. As for the gender dimension, it is a universal topic around the world, and thus in the process of realizing gender equality, different countries basically face similar barriers. As for the *hukou* dimension, it is clear that as I discussed above, due to racialization of *hukou* in urban China, there are many samenesses between the household registration system in China and some similar policies in other countries. Thus, when using these two theories to discuss these two institutions, this thesis uses western theories, but meanwhile, has critical thinking about them and contextualizing this research into the Chinese setting. Thus, this thesis is a research that uses western theories but has Chinese characteristics.

Hukou and gender are the only two social categories of identity discussed in this thesis. This does not mean that any other social categories of identity are unnecessary when interpreting female migrant workers' experiences in urban China. These two dimensions are the most important and fundamental identities for female migrant workers. Thus, focusing on these two dimensions represents my concern about the heterogeneity of this particular group, and offers a snapshot for other studies within the research area to study other additional dimensions (e.g., age). Thus, discussing only two social categories of identity is not against the essence of the intersectional theory, but instead, confirms the underlying assumption of the intersectional theory.

As for research methods, this thesis uses mixed research methods, including quantitative methods with statistical analyses, and qualitative methods that include both in-depth in-person interviews and official documentary reference. In particular, in those two chapters dealing with employment discrimination suffered by female migrant workers, this thesis, by introducing two measures, 'actual status' and 'ideal status', and one ratio between 'actual status to ideal status', has successfully attempted to introduce a benchmark to measure the exact degree of double jeopardy for female migrant workers in the labour market, and give a definitive answer to the question regarding the effect of labour market inequalities. So far, the last three research questions, namely existence, degree and trends regarding employment discrimination, have been solved. Three chapters, Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, are the central part in this thesis, respectively contributing to the understanding of those four primary research questions, and through the process of exploration, have echoed three key elements proposed by the social exclusion theory as the general theoretical framework.

Chapter 5 was mainly concerned with (female) migrant workers' experiences in the public sphere generally, corresponding to the first research question in this thesis, 'In contemporary urban China, are those advantaged group members, the majority of whom are urbanites, willing to share their interests with female migrant workers?' Limited by existing datasets, this chapter used only qualitative methods which take into account both the excluder (i.e., urbanites) and the excluded (i.e., female migrant workers). More importantly, through an examination of the attitudes of the excluder towards the excluded, this chapter went beyond traditional studies that inadequately focus on them independently, and instead concentrated on the implicit dynamic

interaction between the excluder and excluded. The in-depth in-person interviews validated female migrant workers' unique and more excluded experiences in the public sphere.

Both Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 dealt with female migrant workers' experiences, including employment opportunities and employment earnings in the labour market. Each chapter, used an intersectional perspective and mixed research methods to explore 2003 and 2006 CGSS data. These chapters examined the last three research questions in this thesis, namely, the existence, degree and trends of employment discrimination suffered by female migrant workers are explored.

Chapter 6 was concerned with female migrant workers' employment opportunities relative to members of other three comparative groups. The quantitative results in this chapter are summarized in three points. Firstly, employment opportunities for female migrant workers are indeed products of the intersection between two social categories of identity, namely: the household registration system and gender (existence). Secondly, though findings are mixed, the results have revealed the general pattern that the extent to which these female migrant workers' employment opportunities have been realized in reality does not achieve the ideal. In other words, they normally have suffered greater than double jeopardy with respect to employment opportunities (extent). Thirdly, this pattern has become more distinct in 2006 than in 2003 if we do consider the differences in other influential factors. If control variables are not adjusted, however, this pattern becomes less distinct in 2006 than in 2003 (trends).

In a similar vein, Chapter 7 dealt with female migrant workers' employment earnings relative to members of other three comparative groups to examine their existence, degree and trends, but it presented more complex answers based on quantitative analyses. This chapter demonstrated that employment earnings for female migrant workers are products of the intersection between their two social categories of identity, namely: the household registration system and gender (existence). However, findings in Chapter 7 regarding degree and trends are different from those in Chapter 6. As for the degree, in 2003, while what has been achieved in reality is still less than the ideal, the figures of 97.39% and 97.78% indicate that there is not a substantial difference between the reality and the ideal. In other words, female migrant workers still suffered more than

double jeopardy with respect to employment earnings, with a very small difference between their experienced and the ideal circumstances. In 2006, the case is quite different, since what was actually achieved is more than ideal. Put simply, female migrant workers experienced less than double jeopardy in 2006 (degree). When it comes to the trends, regardless of taking influential factors into account, discrimination against female migrant workers in their earnings have appeared to be less between 2003 and 2006 (trends).

Diverse types of discrimination against female migrant workers that occur on different occasions, in essence, have revealed Chinese urbanites' hostile and rejective attitudes. As discussed in my co-authored paper entitled 'Unfinished Promise: Socioeconomic Status and Attitude toward Equality for Migrant Workers in Urban China' (Zhou, Wang and Chen, 2011), such hostility and intolerance of urbanites in contemporary China can be in part explained by some government policies and political processes. It is through these policies and processes that social categories are used to differentiate Chinese citizens and in particular, to discriminate among certain disadvantaged social groups (Chan, Liu, & Yang, 1999; Zhou, 2004; Zhou et al., 2011), say, female migrant workers. The household registration system (*hukou*), which is the most fundamental mechanism for social control in contemporary China, serves as the best example. In terms of two categories, agricultural and non-agricultural, *hukou* generated two identities, namely, urbanite and peasant. As a result, a hierarchical society has been established in China, within which there are two socially constructed and clear-cut social groups, 'us' and 'them' (Nielsen, Nyland, Smyth, Zhang, & Zhu, 2006; Zhou et al., 2011).

To this regard, self-interests perspective may contribute to the better understanding of the issue. These two social groups have unequal access to social goods, attributes and services, and the boundaries between them are made based on social categories (Lamont & Molnar, 2002; Zhou et al., 2011). In each group, members who have a common claim tend to make joint attempts to keep their group interests. This is especially the case for those from advantaged group, who is defined as urbanites in contemporary China in this thesis. Accordingly, well-defined and stable social boundaries are formed between 'us' (in-group members) and 'them' (out-group members) to maintain their self interests as a whole. In essence, social boundaries help to establish social closure in the society (Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman & Tyler, 1990; Semyonov & Yom Tov, 2002;

Sides & Citrin, 2007; Zhou et al., 2011; Zick, Pettigrew & Wagner, 2008). This point was confirmed by my interviews with many urbanites, managers and government officials.

As far as the term ‘self interests’ is concerned for the advantaged group members, it includes two meanings: material benefits (e.g., income, rights to vote) and psychological benefits (e.g., superiority, sense of prejudice). There is little doubt that the discussion about the in-group members’ attitudes towards the outsiders is helpful to explain urbanites’ viewpoints and treatment of migrant worker group in contemporary China. Among diverse explanations, two lines of argument are most insightful (Zhou et al., 2011). The first argument is termed as ‘in-group favoritism’ (Schaller, 1992) and initially develops in the Western setting. After some scholars, for example, Malloy and his colleagues (2004) apply it to the Chinese context, the in-group favoritism argument holds that in China, the culture of which prefers to classify people (Parsons, 1949), individuals are very exclusive in recognizing others, and keeping a relatively close relationship with in-group members is more acceptable (Tsui & Farh, 1997). The second argument, which is named ‘native place identity’ (*tongxiang*), argues that in China the race/ethnicity concept loses meanings and instead, birthplace plays an important role in defining individuals’ social status. Therefore, these urbanites with so-called privileged identity are found to discriminate against migrant workers in cities (Zhou et al., 2011).

Olsen gives a clear definition to these advantaged group members, ‘distributional coalitions’ (Olsen, 1982), referring to those who particularly care about their own interests and show ruthless disregard for other social members’ interests. The emergence of distributional coalitions, in essence, is against Deng Xiaoping’s slogan, ‘Let certain people become rich first in order to achieve common prosperity’ (*rang yi bufen ren xian fuyu qilai*) (Zhao, 1994). Against the historical backdrop that socio-economic growth in China is slower than that in many developed countries, Deng, who is the general planner of Chinese reform and opening up, proposed this slogan as China’s political goal and development strategy in 1978. This slogan, which implicitly expects the prosperity and development of the coastal areas can provide impetus to the less developed inland regions and then the whole country can ultimately fulfill the development planning (Xie & Hannum, 1996), implicitly places more emphasis on economic growth than on promotion of egalitarian value. No doubt, Deng’s plan that gives priority to economic

development has contributed to China's rapid economic development, but neglect of social equality may become a barrier to all-round social progress in contemporary China (Zhou et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, not only *hukou* has made female migrant workers as they are today in urban China. Gender ideology is another very important institutional mechanism shaping female migrant workers' particular experiences.

The examination of both employment opportunities and earnings for female migrant workers has echoed aforementioned debate regarding the effect of the economic transformation on gender inequality during the period of economic reform. Findings from these two chapters have suggested mixed results regarding the effects of market economy development on gender equality in the labour market, which confirms the third line of argument in the debate.

Despite improvements in the level of gender equality, which takes the form, for instance, of female migrant workers' greater employment opportunities and higher employment earnings from 2003 to 2006 in the labour market, gender equality still falls short of a promised revolution for gender equalization in contemporary China. Reasons are attributed to 'the state's limited capacities, shifting government policies, and a persistent patriarchal culture' (Bian, 2002a, p. 102). In addition to these, as discussion in Chapter 2, despite a different research focus from mine, Fan's (2004a) analytical model helped me to do a better analysis of why gender inequality is persistent in contemporary China. All these explanations are used as points of reference rather than rigid categories of explanation. Accordingly, there are two explanations, namely, a political and economic explanation, and a cultural explanation.

The first explanation starts from the political and economic perspective to analyze sustained gender inequality in contemporary China. While market economy has been carried out in China since 1978 and consequently economic growth has been the central goal in Chinese political strategy, the Chinese state's control and intervention on the national economic life has never changed. Thus, the state has still affected the policies and institutions in a very significant way, and its power can be found in many dimensions, for instance, migration regulation and labour

market management (Fan, 2004a). That is why some institutional factors are emphasized when examining gender and migration in transitional context (Fan, 2004a). With changes from the totalitarian control of Communist regimes to socialist market economy during past decades (Zhou, 2004), the state has shifted its role from an advocate of ‘gender-equality agenda’ to a silent witness (Fan, 2004a, p. 301).

The second explanation deals with the cultural factor. In other words, one of barriers to gender equality, for instance, in the labour market, is attributed to ‘the powerful, persistent and pervasive’ socio-cultural tradition (Woodhams et al., 2009, p. 2086). The most prominent instance is patriarchal culture, which is rooted in Confucianism and has affected Chinese society in several aspects for many decades (Fan, 2003b). As a result, women, especially those with rural identity, are constrained both in the society and in the households. The subsequent discussion has been made reference with Fan’s (2003b) analysis of gender division of labour for female migrant workers during the socialist period in China. Other valuable empirical studies have also been included to inspire my discussion below.

At the general level, Confucianism has affected women, especially rural women in a negative way. The most three primary Confucian principles, ‘*ren* (benevolence, kindness)’, which emphasizes the most basic, important and common morality principles, ‘*yi* (be righteous)’, which advocates responsibilities and wiliness to serve others, and ‘*li* (proper conduct code)’, which requires one to act courteously (Xu, 2011, p. 647), have suggested the character and behavior of ‘*junzi*’ (gentlemen) and governed all Chinese (Chan, 1998; Chen, 1997). One representative of these principles is ‘knowing one’s place’ ideology. Following its logic, individuals, who have been placed in different positions in the hierarchy, have to do what they should in terms of their social positions. As a result, female migrant workers have been inferior to urbanites on one hand, and on the other hand, subordinate to men (Fan, 2003b).

Their subordination to men has been reflected in their experiences in households, in other words, they have been regarded subservient to father(s) before marriage and to husband(s) after marriage. These two scenes respectively respond to patriarchy and traditional household strategy that involves traditional gendered expectations and division of labour.

Before marriage, patriarchy embedded in Confucianism has been the key constraint of actual lives of women, especially of rural women. As a social system and social order, patriarchy has long worked to keep traditional family relations (Chen, 2005). Proponents of patriarchy assume that it is meaningless to invest in education for girls (Cooke, 2005; Li, 1994; Lu, 1997), since ‘daughters married out are like water spilled out’ (*jiachuqu de nver pochuqu de shui*) (Fan, 2004b, p. 246). Many female migrant workers’ accounts in interviews that talk about their lack of education and subsequent limited access to employment and relatively low earnings have confirmed this point.

Thus, it is clear that though migration experiences and greater access to education during these decades have undermined feudal thought and meanwhile promoted modern thinking for these female migrant workers, they cannot completely get rid of traditional family authority in the Chinese households (Chen, 2004, 2005, 2009). Education in my thesis is defined as formal education, that is, schooling, rather than as any other forms of informal education (e.g., skill training). Specifically, during the process of socialization, on the one hand, they have internalized the notion that a women’s *xingfu* (happiness or wellbeing) is heavily determined by her marriage, and especially in the rural regions, marriage is thought to be one of the biggest choice of life for women (Fan & Huang, 1998). Upon marriage, rural women are normally excluded from all types of activities and events, and instead, are tied to the house taking care of families and doing housework (Chen, 2004). Moreover, if they reach marrying age, say, early twenties, there will be great pressure for them to get married. Accordingly, though they know that urban wage-jobs can increase their exposure and opportunities and facilitate their economic and social mobility, they have to quit jobs in the cities and go back to rural regions for marriage (Fan, 2003a). This may explain in part why female migrant worker labour force is a homogeneous group, mainly consisting of young and single rural women. On the other hand, they have rationalized the reality that marriage is arranged by parents and they have to serve all families, including husband, husband’s parents and children. In the household, their status is the lowest (Chen, 2004, 2005).

After marriage, female migrant workers still suffer from Confucianism in the households. They have to follow the Confucian prescriptions, which involve a traditional household strategy and gendered expectations and division of labour. Such a pattern is named by a phrase ‘outside for

men and inside for women' (*nan zhu nei, nv zhu wai*) (Chen, 2004, p. 558). In other words, women and men are assigned different roles in the family: caregivers ('inside the family') and breadwinners ('outside the family') (Fan, 2003a, 2003b, Fan, 2004b). As for women, they have to assume responsibilities as wives and mothers, that is, they should be a qualified wife and a qualified mother (Chen, 2005, p. 833; Fan & Huang, 1998).

After the foundation of new China in 1949, the state government followed Engel's argument that 'women's emancipation depended on their involvement in non-domestic production' (Chen, 2004, p. 561). Gradually, the Chinese society has witnessed a tendency that the gender division of labour in the rural household characterized by the phrase 'men plowing, women weaving' (*nan geng nv zhi*) (Mann, 2000; Walker, 1993; as cited in Chen, 2004, p.560) has been replaced by sayings like 'women hold up half of the sky' (*nv ren neng ding ban bian tian*), 'things men can do, women also can do' (Honig, 2000; as cited in Chen, 2004, p.561).

Thus, in response to migration, there are some changes within the rural household. However, rural males do not change their roles in the families much and meanwhile, begin to benefit from the readjustment (Chen, 2004, p. 577), whereas many rural females do not. This pattern suggests a family strategy, 'split-household strategy' (Fan, 2009, p. 381–382; Fan, 2003b), which typically involves wife staying in rural areas and husband working in the cities. In essence, the division of labour still follows an inside-outside model in the rural household. There is a change in form from traditionally gendered division of labour to 'occupational division of labour'—women are agricultural labourers while men are urban wage workers in industrial sectors (Fan & Huang, 1998, p. 234), but not in content or essence.

There is no doubt that several factors, such as individual characteristics, household characteristics and local labour market conditions are significant determinants of work patterns. As far as household characteristics, such as child/children care demands, are concerned, they represent household's needs and shape the division of labour within the household (Chen, 2004). Partly due to the family planning policy (*jihua shengyu zhengce*), in particular, one-child policy (*dusheng zinv zhengce*), and socio-economic progress (Feeney & Wang, 1993; as cited in Chen, 2005) in contemporary China, fertility rate and the number of children decrease to some extent (Dudley, 1987). But no matter how many children in the rural household, females are expected to

have more responsibilities than males.

In the rural household that follow split-household strategy, there might a reversed pattern, which takes the form of the wife taking wage jobs in the cities whereas the husband staying in the village taking care of families. But such a reversed pattern of division of labour is frequently challenged. For example, among ninety-three split households in Fan's (2003a) fieldwork in Sichuan and Anhui provinces in 1995, only six rural households had this reversed pattern. Despite some rural females' economic success and contribution to their households' financial situation in terms of their jobs in the cities, they still feel great pressure from their husbands and families to go back village and stay in the rural regions. Thus, it is clear that such a reversed pattern of division of labour is defined as deviant (Jacka, 2006), since these female migrant workers' greater economic power is thought to be against their traditionally gendered roles (Fan, 2003a, 2003b) and threaten the existing social system and social order.

China is a country where traditional culture has worked deep into surface, pores, or fibers in the society (Leung, 2003; Maurer-Fazio & Hughes, 2002; Patrickson, 2001). During decades since 1978, more focus on economic growth than on doctrines or beliefs implicitly has allowed these cultural norms reproduce themselves, suggested as follows (Fan, 2003b, p. 29):

Despite efforts during the socialist period to reverse certain socio-cultural traditions, during the transitional phase age-old practices that promote stratifications and constrain women's social and economic mobility are being reproduced. The transitional state pursues a development path of economic growth by improving the capitalist mode of production, which promotes and thrives on a migrant labour regime characterized by segmentation, segregation and homogeneity. The combination of this development path and the reproduction of socio-cultural traditions reinforce gender segregation in the urban labour market and gender division of labour in rural households.

Moreover, it is known that rapid economic development in China can change the feudal tradition, but there might be a lag in individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Chen, 2005). Among many explanations for this lag, socialization is a reasonable one. According to many scholars

(Abercrombie et al., 2006; Bielby & Bielby, 1984; Chen, 2005; Coverman, 1985; Cunningham, 2011), it is through socialization that individuals learn to conform to social norms, such as gendered expectations and division of labour, and certain social rules are internal to individuals. Once their internalization is formed, these social rules are imposed by themselves rather than by external power, and remain relatively stable over time. Theoretically, in the process of socialization, two mechanisms, namely, education and mass media may be very important, either reinforcing traditional values and norms in a negative way or instead promoting modern concepts, such as egalitarianism in a positive way. However, considering the fact that in China, where there have been persistent traditional norms and values shaping many dimensions of individuals' lives, these two mechanisms, in most cases, during their process of socialization have affected individuals in a negative way. As a result, rural females are treated simply as symbols of inferiority in Chinese culture and discourse (Gaetano & Jacka, 2004).

So far, we should be much clearer about how *hukou* and gender ideology interact together to affect female migrant workers' experiences in the cities. The currently unique phase in China is defined as the 'socialist market economy' model, which juxtaposes a planning economy with market economy. In other words, China follows neither socialism nor capitalism. Due to sustained state' control, namely, the very planning function of the state, it originates from socialism and differs from capitalist economy (Fan, 2003b, p. 24). Both *hukou* and gender ideology are practical tools of government -- *hukou* can be seen as a formal and institutional state control, whereas gender ideology should be treated as an informal and non-institutional state control. Both of these two means of state control are in the name of keeping social stability, and in essence, are used by the government to sustain its social order and power. Specifically, *hukou* works as a 'disposal instrument of control' and leads to social stratification and division of labour, while cultural traditions, such as gender ideology, resurface and reinforce social stratification and division of labour (Fan, 2003a, 2003b). In this regard, during the transitional phase, China uses both formal/institutional and informal/non-institutional control instruments to facilitate a new labour regime. According to Fan (2004a), this new labour regime attempts to achieve minimum costs and maximized profits, and render female migrant workers in disadvantaged positions in urban society.

In addition to these two factors above that lead to the marginalization experienced by women, in particular, by rural women, we cannot deny the importance of market forces, which shapes China's gender inequality in a positive way. The transition from central planning to socialist market economy has brought about many changes in the labour market. In particular, employment in the labour market has shifted from socialist job placement mechanism to a competitive labour system. When faced the question of 'performance versus fairness' (*xiaolv yu gongping*), employers mostly think that efficiency comes first (*xiaolv youxian*). In other words, employers' motivation to pursue benefit maximization has been the most important determinant at each stage in the process of personnel decision making (Zhang et al., 2008), including hiring stage and wage-setting stage (see Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2). Due to large demand for labour with low costs in many industries, especially as expansion of the tertiary industry, employers have to recruit female migrant workers who are traditionally neglected and under-utilized. At the same time, from the perspective of employers, job applicants' characteristics closely associated with job per se are more important than other biographical features (Woodhams et al., 2009; Zhu, 2005).

No doubt both the household registration system and gender ideology in China play significant roles in explaining female migrant workers' experiences in the cities. No matter in terms of quantitative or qualitative results, it is clear that female migrant workers, who have double seemingly disadvantaged social categories of identity, namely, being women and at the same time being rural, normally cannot separate or rank these two identities, and instead, interpret the day-to-day challenges that they face in terms of these two identities together. This pattern appears more frequently and clearly in the interviews, where these female migrant workers mostly report that they experience discrimination as a whole (e.g., 'Everything that made me who I am is being a female migrant worker' in #15 interviewee's story). Similarly, from the perspectives of urbanites (e.g., 'Walking the talk: a coexistence of fairness belief and prejudicial attitudes' in the case of interviewee # 7), government officials (e.g., 'Born as a rural people, but more worse, also as a women' and 'Born as a woman, but more worse, also as a rural people' in interviewee # 3's accounts) and employers (e.g., 'Unqualified products in urban labour market: double jeopardy and inadequacy in education, skill, and work experience' in #4 interviewee's case), female migrant workers are treated as a whole persons, rather than females or migrant

workers.

From my perspective, this thesis expects to make contributions not only locally, but also globally. For instance, theoretically, my finding strongly echoes the controversy between additive assumptions and intersectional assumptions, and more importantly, confirms the basic ideas about the latter. Specifically, suggested by those who employ an intersectional perspective, multiple types of social stratification are interconnected (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), and such a complicated ways of their interlock are defined as ‘a matrix of domination’ (Collins, 1999, p. 222). Female migrant workers simultaneously have positions associated with different types of social stratification systems (i.e., *hukou* system and gender system), and cannot separate one social category of identity from the others (Kohlman, 2006). As Baca & Thornton (1996, p. 329) suggested,

Social identities, such as race and gender, cannot be reducible to individual characteristics to be explained through their separate effects on given social outcomes, and meanwhile, each individual’s advantage and disadvantage are linked.

Another argument contributes to this previous argument. This second argument indicates that each individual belongs to a subordinate group and at the same time he/she is member of a dominate group, depending on the particular site of power. Put simply, power moves freely in diverse directions (Browne & Misra, 2003). Both arguments together can help to explain the complex patterns found in this thesis, and give an answer to ‘equal to’, ‘greater than’ or ‘less than’ double jeopardy suffered by female migrant workers in the urban labour market, as summarized above.

Moreover, female migrant workers’ interpretation and understanding of their experiences in urban China are believed to be different from those of other social members, since following the logic of the intersectional theory, due to locations in a matrix of domination, their perspectives and their access to social goods, attributes and services are quite different from those of other social group members who only have any single dimension of their social categories of identity and thus are placed in one type of system in social stratification (Chavis & Hill, 2009; Mehrotra,

2010).

So far, the exploration of discrimination against female migrant workers in both public sphere and labour market in these three chapters, in essence, has provided fresh insights about the stereotypes and unequal distributions of employment opportunities and earnings for this particular social group. They are trying very hard to integrate into the cities but mostly fail. In addition, female migrant workers' interpretation and understanding of their experiences in urban China has reflected their expectation of an equal treatment in diverse aspects in the cities.

Their experiences have pointed to one paradoxical reality of contemporary China: Though female migrant workers or the whole rural migrant worker population are allowed to enter, live, work in the cities and participate in the process of city development, they have not attained full urban citizenship (Zhang & Wang, 2010). In particular, in the case of employment, their lack of labour rights implicitly has suggested inadequate human rights (Chan, 1998). Although there has been no consensus upon what types of citizenship rights and obligations should be contained in the concept of citizenship, identity/membership (i.e., belonging to a community) and the access to distribution (i.e., the right to the allocation of resource) are two primary factors (Zhang & Wang, 2010). Due to this sustained restriction on their urban citizenship, they cannot achieve social integration into the host cities in its true sense, which suggests China's incomplete urbanization (Zhang & Wang, 2010).

Here is a question for us: who benefits from this process in which female migrant workers are deprived of their basic rights in urban China? From my perspective, there are three groups of beneficiaries (both locally and globally), including Chinese urbanites, the Chinese government and many people around the world. Specifically, first, Chinese urbanites have access to many forms of self interests and benefit from the rapid economic growth and urban development which are mostly contributed by female migrants and migrants as a whole; Second, female migrants and their male counterparts are used by the Chinese government as cheap labourers to achieve the state's political and economic scheme, such as its development path of economic growth, as Fan mentioned above; Third, these female migrant workers have been working as cheap labour power in many manufacturing industries and service industries, which makes contribution to the

whole world.

One limitation in this thesis is concerned with the measurement of employment opportunity in Chapter 6. By asking respondents' current employment status, recoded to a dichotomous variable (getting employed/unemployed), employment opportunity is measured as an employment outcome or result. However, there might be a very complex process involved, that is, getting employed does not necessarily mean that a person has never faced difficulties during his/her job search, whereas those who are currently getting unemployed do not definitely think there are many barriers to access jobs. Put simply, employment opportunity as an indicator of employment outcome can only tell us one part of the picture, not the whole. Moreover, as discussed in the end of this chapter, due to the existence of labour market segmentation deep-rooted in urban China, having an access to jobs does not necessarily mean a decent position and earning. Thus, the measure of employment opportunity can be interpreted as rate of employment. This point is believed to further explain some unexpected patterns found in this chapter, for instance, male migrants are seem to be more likely to get employed than male urbanites. Such a measure, to a great extent, is limited by existing surveys, and this shortcoming is expected to be overcome by qualitative interviews and improved further in the near future by other research methods or surveys. Another limitation is the usage of 'trend' in this thesis. It is known that there should be at least three time points to form a line of change, that is, trend. But limited by the exiting datasets, I only included two time points (2003 and 2006) to discuss about the direction of change for female migrant workers' experiences in the urban labour market. However, it is still believed that comparison between these two time points can provide us with a snapshot. If there are more available datasets, this weakness can be overcome in the near future.

This thesis has opened new windows for future relevant study. For instance, first, analysis can be extended by a field audit method, one of the primary methods for studying labour market discrimination (Pager and Western, 2009) in order to explore female migrant workers' employment experiences relative to their counterparts. Second, some comparative studies on migrants across world, in particular, about female migrants (e.g., Chinese female migrant workers vs. Canadian female migrants) can be done in the near further, through which some unique and shared characteristics might be found and contribute to our understanding of female

migrant group. Third, when making further interpretation about female migrant workers' experiences in urban China, it might be very helpful to consider more specific social and cultural events since 1978 that may have great effects on female migrant workers' actual lives, such as globalization, some NGO activities, or official meetings held in China or around the world.

Practically, in order to improve female migrant workers' situation in both public sphere and in the labour market in urban China, there are some suggested solutions. For instance, at the institutional level, the Chinese government and many institutions should learn from some western countries, for instance, to establish human rights commission. In this way, some disadvantaged social group members, like female migrant workers, can be identified and have a place to appeal if they are faced with unequal treatment, and their legitimate interests can be protected. The Women's Federation, which was mentioned by a female migrant worker in my interview, is also a similar institution for these marginalized social group members, and thus any other should be promoted and encouraged more broadly. In addition, the Chinese government should have greater fund budget allocation for enterprises as an excitation mechanism to encourage employers to hire more female migrant workers and cover their entitlements, such as health care, child (ren) care support, and education and training.

In summary, the majority of female migrant workers experience discrimination against them in various situations in urban China, and thus have diverse trajectory but similarly unequal life chances. Their voices uttered in this thesis have called for a critical evaluation of and reflection on policies and practices informed by the Kuznets curve. Against the backdrop that tends to justify social inequality as an 'inevitable' outcome of 'modernity' and 'progress' (Zhang et al., 2007), my concerns arise when there is an unequal distribution of social goods, attributes and services for certain social group members. Such an inequality in contemporary China may, to some extent, reduce efficiency or violate accepted views of fairness (Gustafsson et al., 2008). Findings from this thesis implicitly underscore a notion that transitions in China, so far, despite rapid economic achievement, have not yet succeeded in eradicating discrimination and social inequality based on household registration system and gender ideology. Give the fact that discrimination is a type of ideology of inequalities, it is helpful to examine discrimination to find the solutions to eradicate or at least reduce unequal treatment caused by their double social

categories of identity faced by these female migrant workers. This thesis does not provide much encouraging evidence, but there are some promising signs (Chen, 2005). As the process of industrialization continues, it is reasonable to expect positive changes for female migrant workers.

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APPENDIX

1. Variables²⁵ in Empirical Chapters

1.1 Variables in Chapter 6²⁶

1.1.1 Dependent variable

The dependent variable in this chapter is the respondents' current employment status. The 2003 CGSS contains a question 'what is your employment status in the past three months'? There are six responses, including (1) full-time employed, (2) part-time employed, (3) temporarily employed, (4) farming, (5) unemployed, and (6) others. For purpose of logistic regression, it is coded into a dummy variable, with employed as 1 (including full-time employed, part-time employed and temporarily employed) and unemployed as 0. In the 2006 CGSS, a similar question is 'what is your current employment status?' Accordingly, there are three options, including (1) employed, (2) once employed but now unemployed, and (3) never worked. For purpose of logistic regression, this variable is coded into a dummy variable, with 1 indicating those who are currently working and 0 indicating those unemployed.

1.1.2 Independent variables

Comparative groups

Considering my focus is on female migrant workers who simultaneously involve two types of identities (i.e., both female and migrants), I will divide the whole target group in terms of these two identities into four subgroups for comparison, including male urbanites, female urbanites, male migrant workers, and female migrant workers.

²⁵ For Chapter 6, 2003 and 2006 CGSS are used. My literal translation of some survey questions has been included in my co-authored paper entitled 'Unfinished Promise: Socioeconomic Status and Attitude toward Equality for Migrant Workers in Urban China' (Prairie Metropolis Centre Working Paper Series). Thus, the text expressions of some survey questions in this thesis remain the same with those in the published paper.

²⁶ Due to minor variances in the wording of questions and responses between 2003 and 2006, there will be, if needed, separate description about the same variable included in each dataset.

Among the four comparative groups, the group of female migrant workers, as mentioned above, is the ‘prototypical intersectional subject’ (Nash, 2008: 8). In order to do a reasonable comparison through which particular experience of female migrant workers can be better understood, a sample survey of the entire labour force population in the urban labour market has been done. Meanwhile, focusing on female migrant workers’ actual experiences in the labour market does not deny the importance of other three groups.

1.1.3 Control variables

This paper deals with several control variables, including indicators of human capital, political capital, and social capital, some demographic factors (i.e., age, marital status) and marketization level index as well.

1.1.3.1 Human capital: educational attainment, work experience and skill certificate

The first measure of educational attainment provides a more consistent measure for those who accelerate or fail a grade than years of school, but is measured in different ways in 2003 and 2006. In 2003 CGSS, it is recoded into a continuous variable, indicating the exact years of education finished by 2003. In 2006 CGSS, it is a direct measure of schooling by 2006.

Though work experience is also a significant indicator of human capital contributing to individuals’ employment opportunities, the 2003 CGSS does not include an exact measure. Accordingly, a new variable is created through the question ‘what is the first/last year of your first/last job?’ The duration for the first job is the result of the last year of the first job minus the first year of the first job. Following the logic, a respondent’s work experience equals to the sum of the results from the first job to the last job. Then I can get another variable, work experience square. In the 2006 CGSS, formula work experience = age – year(s) of formal schooling -6 (Zhou, 2004) is used to create a new measure of work experience.

The third indicator skill certificate is measured in different ways in these two datasets. The 2003 CGSS involves a question ‘what is the level of each of your certificate? (Please indicate the first three significant ones)’ with four levels for each certificate, including (1) elementary-level, (2) middle-level, (3) advanced-level, and (4) no certificate attained at all. In preparation for the

logistic regression, each choice for each certificate is recoded into dummy variable. The 2006 CGSS contains a question ‘have you attained skill certificate?’ with four options (1) yes, (2) no, (3) having no idea, and (4) unavailable. In preparation for logistic regression, it is modified into a dummy variable.

1.1.3.2 Political capital

In both two datasets, I interpret an individual’s political capital by whether or not having a Communist Party membership. Those who do have such a membership are recoded into 1, while those do not are recoded into 0.

1.1.3.3 Social capital

The 2003 CGSS measures the question of ‘how many people have you resorted to find jobs?’ It is measured by actual number of people involved to help the participants’ job hunting. Unfortunately, there is no identical or similar question in the 2006 CGSS. Thus, ‘spring festival contact network’ measure is used. Specifically, the answers respectively to question ‘how many families/intimate friends/other people did you contact during this year’s spring festival?’ are summed together to create the new variable. Though there are possibilities that this new measure works only as rough indicator, it can be regarded as a ‘position generator’ that represents part of respondents’ social capital (Zhao, 2000).

1.1.3.4 Marketization level index

This measure has, to my knowledge, rarely been used in existing empirical studies on labour market inequality. Following the logic of ‘Reflection Thesis’ (Hadler, 2005: P134)²⁷, given the significance of regional and temporal dimensions in marketization level in China, employers’ employment preferences for male or urban employees in the hiring stage, which can be seen as a kind of their personal beliefs, should be sharply reduced due to their equality values. Accordingly, the level of marketization is expected to highly associate with individuals’ access to employment.

²⁷ According to ‘Reflection Thesis’ (Hadler, 2005: 134), an individual’s beliefs, to some extent, manifests his/her actual circumstance in the real world.

China's unequal distribution of economic resources has varied depending on both regional and temporal dimensions. First, the importance of the temporal dimension is related to the state's spatial heterogeneity in the period of economic transformation. Several studies of the consequences of economic transformation in China have achieved a consensus that China should be seen as a big country with spatially heterogeneous economies (Xie & Hannum, 1996; Linge & Forbes, 1990), except for few studies (e.g., Nee, 1996; Knight & Song, 1993; cited in Xie & Hannum, 1996: 951).

Second, the importance of considering regional variations as opposed to homogeneous entity involves two aspects. On the one hand, China's economic activities in different regions have unequal access to natural and human resources, while on the other hand, regional variations has been a part of a deliberate scheme in Chinese Communist Party's plan for economic reforms, which can be specified by a slogan as 'Let certain people become rich first in order to achieve common prosperity' (Zhao, 1994: P115). As a result, China's economic reform has 'disproportionately benefited coastal regions at the expense of inland areas and increasing economic disparities across regions have emerged (Linge & Forbes, 1990; Xie & Hannum, 1996).

1.2 Variables in Chapter 7²⁸

Chapter 7 has basically followed the same logic in Chapter 6, but due to different research focus, here is the specific introduction for this chapter.

As for the gender and racial earning gaps, sociological research have primarily focused more on features of the demand side (i.e., employers) rather than on those of the supply side (i.e., job applicants), and on some other cultural elements because of their possible effect on group disparity. These features not only include 'occupational segregation, labour market segmentation, and devaluation conceptions of labour market functioning', but also involve statistical discrimination that makes employers assume certain individuals less qualified than others. All these demand-side characteristics can fundamentally shape potential employees' earnings but out

²⁸ Due to minor variances in the wording of questions and responses between 2003 and 2006, there will be, if needed, separate description about the same variable included in each dataset.

of individuals' control (Leicht, 2008: 239).

1.2.1 Dependent variable

The dependent variable in this chapter is respondents' annual earnings. In both 2003 and 2006 CGSS, there is a question 'how much is your annual earnings in last whole year?' The analysis uses logged earnings.

1.2.2 Independent variables

Comparative groups (see above, the same section for Chapter 6)

1.2.3 Control variables

This chapter deals with several control variables, including indicators of human capital, political capital, and social capital, some demographic factors (e.g., marital status) and marketization level index as well.

1.2.3.1 Human capital: educational attainment, work experience and skill certificate

In this chapter, the process of variables for the first two indicators (i.e., educational attainment and work experience) remains the same as in the previous chapter.

The third indicator, skill certificate, is measured in different ways in these two datasets. The 2003 CGSS involves a question 'what is the level of each of your certificate? (Please indicate the first three significant ones)' with four levels for each certificate, including (1) elementary-level, (2) middle-level, (3) advanced-level, and (4) no certificate attained at all. It can be modified into a continuous variable, with 0 indicating no certificate attained at all, 1 indicating elementary level and 3 advanced level. The 2006 CGSS contains a question 'which is the your certificate level?' with five levels from the bottom to the top, (1) elementary, (2) middle, (3) advanced, (4) technicians, (5) senior technicians. It also can be recoded into a continuous variable, ranging from 1 to 5.

1.2.3.2-1.2.3.4

The determinants for political capital, social capital and marketization level index are the same as for Chapter 6.