UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Revolution on a Budget: Finance, Politics, Urban-Rural Divide, Gender, and Individuals in the Local Education System in Mao's China, 1949-1976

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by

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The dissertation of Chuchu Wang is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Revolution on a Budget: Finance, Politics, Urban-Rural Divide, Gender, and Individuals in the Local Education System in Mao's China, 1949-1976

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in History

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My dissertation is a case study of the county-level education system in the Mao era from 1949 to 1976. My dissertation initiates with the investigation into the financial feasibility of Mao era's expansion in education. To illuminate this issue, my research examines the county-level fiscal system. Exploring the county-level fiscal system in the political and social context distinguishes my dissertation from the existing scholarship.

The overarching argument of the whole dissertation is that the education expansion, the state's heavy extraction, and political campaigns formed a mutually beneficial triad, which

exacerbated both the urban-rural divide and gender inequality. This overarching argument consists of two sub-arguments: the first sub-argument, elaborated in chapters 1 and 2, argues that education expansion, intensive extraction, and political campaigns not only coexisted but also benefited each other. The other sub-argument, presented in chapter 3 and 4, contends that this mutually beneficial relationship intensified the urban-rural divide and amplified gender inequality. Chapter 3 focuses on the reappearance of traditional private schools in rural areas during the early 1960s, a phenomenon resulting from the state's abandonment of villages. Chapter 4 investigates 99 sexual assault cases in elementary schools in one county during the Mao era. In the 99 cases, 99 elementary school teachers sexually assaulted at least 331 students. The chapter argues that the punishment for sexual assault in elementary schools was highly politicized, which was not necessarily bad for victims, but could separate their sufferings from the sentencing process. The politicization not only means coincidence with the campaigns, but also a close relationship between the punishments and political campaigns. My field work on the urban-rural divide and the research on the sexual assault throughout the Mao era fill out the blanks in the existing scholarship. Chapter 5 examines how political campaigns, resource extraction, education policies, the urban-rural divide, gender, and other local factors influenced the personal experiences of minban teachers.

Introduction

On October 14, 2017, I travelled to Dongshan, a small remote village nestled between verdant hills and a serene river. I had never been there. I was drawn to this village by a unique religious event – a welcoming ritual for the statue of Hua Tuo, the ancient Chinese medicine physician. Enshrining and worshiping Hua Tuo was unusual in my hometown, She County, which piqued my curiosity. On my way to Dongshan, it occurred to me that my grandfather, Zhang Yiren, had worked as a minban (民办) teacher in this very village more than 38 years ago. Yiren had left the village in 1979 and never returned. He passed away in 1982, shortly after departing the village and years before I was born. My perception of him was solely through the recollections of my mother and grandmother. His impression and impact on the villagers remained an enigma to me until my visit.

During the event, I engaged in casual conversations with the villagers beneath a towering tree, using a dialect similar to theirs but with subtle differences. They noticed my unfamiliar dialect and appearance, so they asked, "Who are you?" “I am Yiren’s granddaughter.” Soon, I found myself encircled by enthusiastic villagers. News traveled quickly, and more villagers approached me, either extending invitations to their homes for tea or expressing their gratitude for Yiren's contributions. Many of the villagers I met had been Yiren's students. I was astounded by their vivid memories of a man who had passed away 35 years earlier and whom they had not seen for 38 years. They shared intricate details, such as Yiren's method of using pig hairs of varying colors to craft clothes brushes, with black hair forming the character for "happiness (喜)" at the center.

They gestured towards the slogans adorning the pavilion at the village entrance, proudly informing me that they had been painted by Yiren himself. It was during this visit that I truly began to understand my grandfather's role as a minban teacher.

Among all details, one statement left a lasting impression: "There are two people we (the villagers) appreciate the most: one is the barefoot doctor Su, sent down from Hefei (the capital city of Anhui Province), and the other is your grandfather, teacher Zhang." This statement struck a chord because it represented not a factual account or logical analysis of the Maoist era, but an unvarnished, personal perspective of that time from those at the lowest rungs of society. I believe that the understanding of this era from the grassroots level, although only leaving subtle traces in archives and deliberately obfuscated by the state, should be the focal point for historians.

The significance of this statement lies not only in its reflection of the grassroots' understanding of the era, but also in its capacity to address a range of questions that have long occupied my thoughts. Scholars such as Suzanne Pepper, Glen Peterson, and Dongping Han have all acknowledged the success of educational expansion in Mao-era China, spanning from 1949 to 1976.[1] This period saw advancements not only in education, but also in public health, agricultural technology, and other social welfare sectors, which attracted global attention and recognition.[2] However, several questions

[1] Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th-Century China: The Search for an Ideal Development Model* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996).
Glen Peterson, *The Power of Words: Literacy and Revolution in South China, 1949-95* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).
Dongping Han, *The Unknown Cultural Revolution: Life and Change in a Chinese Village* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008).
[2] Sigrid Schmalzer, *Red Revolution, Green Revolution: Scientific Farming in Socialist China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

remain unresolved: What made these successes financially feasible? How did the state allocate resources among various initiatives, such as wars, political campaigns, heavy industry, light industry, and social welfare, including education? Moreover, how did this financial distribution influence the urban-rural divide, gender inequality, and the everyday experiences of ordinary people?

Education and healthcare were considered fundamental public welfare responsibilities of a socialist state. Nevertheless, the widespread presence of minban teachers and barefoot doctors attests to the critical role they played in the socialist state's accomplishments in education and medical service provision. Upon examining the financing of education, I discovered that minban teachers, along with local communes, brigades, and production teams, were the primary driving forces behind the PRC's educational expansion. The number of minban teachers surged during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), as sent-down and returning youths swelled their ranks to approximately five million nationwide, constituting 50 percent of all teachers. In She County alone, there were 3,000 to 4,000 minban teachers during the Cultural Revolution, making up around half of all the teachers in the region. Consequently, I chose to focus on education during the Mao era as the subject of my dissertation and initiated my research using a fiscal approach.

Xiaoping Fang, *Barefoot Doctors and Western Medicine in China* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012).
Miriam Gross, *Farewell to the God of Plague: Chairman Mao's Campaign to Deworm China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016).

Education

Education served not only as a form of social welfare but also as a means for the state to disseminate propaganda and drive development. The promotion of education has been instrumental in modernization processes and nation-state building efforts. Adam Smith emphasizes the necessity of education for all, asserting that it is at the core of a thriving society.[3] Benedict Anderson explores the role of modern education in shaping the imagined community of nationalism in Southeast Asia.[4] Similarly, Eugen Weber demonstrates how mass education contributed to the construction of nation-states, the formation of national identity, and integration into the modern world in rural France.[5]

In the field of Republican China, Prasenjit Duara sees the establishment of new village schools as a crucial aspect of the state-making process. These new schools dismantled previous rural networks, organizations, and religious life.[6] Elizabeth R. VanderVen's study suggests that the state-making process was not a strictly top-down endeavor; rural society's villagers and local officials were capable of creating a school system that integrated Chinese and Western elements, as well as modern and traditional approaches.[7] Robert Culp's research argues that “lessons about national identity, political participation, and the social order in lower Yangzi region secondary schools reinforced

[3] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, Volume 2* (London: Methuen & Co.), p.249-299.
[4] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006).
[5] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).
[6] Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).
[7] Elizabeth R. VanderVen, *A School in Every Village: Educational Reform in a Northeast China County, 1904-31* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013).

one another and promoted a coherent conception of republican citizenship, characterized by direct participation and practical action for the nation's welfare."[8]. Culp's study extends beyond textbook indoctrination, examining students' involvement in civil action and its effects. Xiaoping Cong's research on teachers' schools in the late Qing and Republican eras illustrates how the state and intellectuals situated these teachers' schools within the processes of "localizing the global" and "nationalizing the local."[9] Furthermore, Cong's study highlights that concerns and discontent among students in local teachers' schools rendered these schools fertile ground for Communist expansion.

In relation to the education system during the People's Republic of China (PRC), Liang Minling's study on PRC textbooks reveals how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) harnessed these materials to instill its views on the international landscape and its own standing in the world. Textbooks underwent continual revisions in response to changes in the CCP's diplomatic policies. These adjustments underscore the CCP's aspirations to become the leader of the communist world and its efforts to position itself as the successor of "authentic Marxism (正统马克思主义)."[10]

Suzanne Pepper's comprehensive research on PRC education traces its historical origins back to the Republican era and the Soviet model.[11] Pepper's study delves into the

[8] Robert Culp, *Articulating Citizenship: Civic Education and Student Politics in Southeastern China, 1912-1940* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asian Center, 2007), p.9.
[9] Xiaoping Cong, *Teachers' Schools and the Making of the Modern Chinese Nation-State, 1897-1937* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).
[10] 余敏玲(Yu Minling), *形塑"新人"：中共宣传与苏联经验 Shaping "New people": The Chinese Propaganda and the Soviet Experience*（台北：中央研究院近代史研究所，2015 年 Taibei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 2015).
[11] Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th-Century China: The Search for an Ideal Development Model* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996).

ongoing conflicts between elitist education, deeply rooted in traditional China and centered on academic grades, and the radical education that originated from the Soviet Union and evolved in the Yan'an base. Pepper's work concentrates on education policy and system changes. My research diverges from Pepper's in three key aspects: first, my study emphasizes local society and individuals rather than the central government and its policies. Second, my research will analyze the fiscal system, exploring the cooperation and competition between political campaigns and finance. Third, my focus is on the urban-rural divide, gender inequality, and individual experiences.

Glen Peterson, Jonathan Unger, and Stig Thøgersen have all conducted local case studies, focusing on a single city, county, or province. My research also adopts a case study approach, centering on She County (歙县) in southern Anhui province. Glen Peterson investigates Guangzhou province's education and contends that "literacy education, like everything else in China, was subordinated after 1949 to the greater demands of economic development and political struggle."[12] Peterson's study also takes into account the local society's resistance to state policies, such as the promotion of the Beijing-based Mandarin language. However, Peterson does not examine the fiscal system of Guangzhou province, and thus fails to elucidate how economic development was linked to the state's education budget, or how the state's education budget affected education development in various periods. Additionally, Peterson overlooks the issue of gender inequality within the education system during the Mao era.

[12] Glen Peterson, *The Power of Words: Literacy and Revolution in South China, 1949-95* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

Jonathan Unger's research on education in Guangzhou focuses on the period before and after the Cultural Revolution.[13] His study primarily examines the local situation and personal experiences, with a particular emphasis on the urban context of Guangzhou city. His research does not provide extensive coverage of rural areas. The urban-centric approach leads to the conclusion of Cultural Revolution era education as "troubled schools." Since the study does not include the 1950s, it fails to demonstrate the evolving attitudes of the Chinese Communist Party towards education policies.

Similarly, Stig Thøgersen's research focuses on a local level case study of education in Zouping county, located in the Shandong province.[14] Compared to Peterson and Unger's studies, which concentrate on urbanized areas of Guangzhou city and Guangdong province, Zouping offers a relatively rural perspective on the education system. Thøgersen's case study, however, does not examine the county-level policy changes, thereby limiting its capacity to depict how education policies changed over different periods.

My dissertation distinguishes itself from existing scholarship on PRC and education history by examining the county-level fiscal system. By doing so, I provide a fresh perspective that sheds light not only on education policies but also on political campaigns and the state mechanism as a whole. Through a detailed analysis of year-to-year data, my research reveals that radical political campaigns, high extraction, and education expansion coexisted throughout the entire period of political campaigns. My

[13] Jonathan Unger, *Education Under Mao: Class and Competition in Canton Schools, 1960-1980* (Columbia University Press, 1982).
[14] Stig Thøgersen, *A County of Culture: Twentieth-Century China Seen from the Village Schools of Zouping, Shandong* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002).

findings demonstrate that education expansion usually occurred during periods of radical political campaigns, such as the Great Leap Forward (GLF, 1958-1960) and the Cultural Revolution. Additionally, it was during these radical campaigns that upper-level governments' extraction rates reached their highest points. For instance, during the Korean War period, the extraction rate was around 81.9%. However, during the GLF, the extraction rate increased to its peak of 86%. Despite a decrease in extraction rates during the Cultural Revolution, such practices still existed but in a more decentralized and subtle form, such as decentralized education.

Fiscal System

The centralization and decentralization of the fiscal system was crucial to the modern Chinese history. The highly centralized and fixed-revenue fiscal system before 19th century made the Qing county government situate in financial crisis and had to collect additional taxes. The additional taxes were allowed but not legalized by the central government. Taiping Rebellion changed the highly centralized fiscal system and gave more autonomy for the provincial government to finance the local militia.[15] The

[15] Before Taiping Rebellion, the Qing court collected a fixed number of taxes every year from the whole country. The Provincial government's major responsibility was to deliver or store the tax collected from county and prefect governments. The Qing central government had strict control over provincial government in the fiscal system and provincial government had no autonomy.
岩井茂树(Iwai Shigeki), 付勇译 (Fu Yong trans.) *中国近代财政史研究 Modern China's Financial History* (北京: 社会科学文献出版社, 2011 年版 Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2011).
Yeh-chien Wang, *Land Taxation in Imperial China, 1750-1911* (Harvard University Press, 1973).
During the Qing dynasty, social welfare such as education and facility construction were mainly county and prefect level governments' responsibility. The county and prefect level governments collected additional tax for social welfare under the name of "Huohao". Yongzheng emperor had tried to reform the financial system, legalize the "Huohao" tax, and give more autonomy to provincial government. But this reform stopped with the Yongzheng emperor. Since Qianlong emperor, the "Huohao" tax became necessary but illegal again. Yongzheng's attempt to rationalize the fiscal system failed.

fiscal empowerment of the provincial government and the rise of Han Chinese officials as provincial governors led to the provincial government's independence. Even the Qing court tried to reform the fixed-number tax system and implement the budget system in 1906, the reform did not save the empire from falling. The independence of the provincial government continued in the Republican era. Jia Shiyi, who had been the deputy minister of KMT central government's financial department, published a monograph to point out the problems of the fiscal system and proposed his solutions.[16] Jia proposes to downplay provincial government's role in the fiscal system and change the fiscal system into a two-level system: central and county-level government. The central and county government oversee military expenditures and the social welfares expenditures respectively. Under such system, the county government can enjoy autonomy and abundant finance. The common people do not need to hand in as much tax as the real situation then. Jia's ideas were in line with what the Republican government's policies afterwards. Republican government had initiated the reform in 1935 to downscale the provincial level finance and empower the county. Historian Iwai Shigeki thinks KMT's 1935 fiscal reform provided abundant revenue for the central government which laid the groundwork for

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See Madeleine Zelin, *The Magistrate's Tael: Rationalizing Fiscal Reform in Eighteenth Century Ching China*, (University of California Press, 1984).
Tung-tsu Chu, *Local Government in China Under the Ching* (Harvard University Press, 1962).

[16] 曾康霖，刘锡良，缪明杨主编(Zeng Kanglin, Liu Xiliang, Miu Mingyang eds.), *百年中国金融思想学说史 第2卷 The History of Chinese Financial Thought and Theory: Volume 2* (北京: 中国金融出版社, 2015年版 Beijing: China Financial Publishing House, 2015), p.66.
贾士毅 (Jia Shiyi), *民国财政史 The Financial History of Republican China* (郑州: 河南人民出版社, 2016 Zhengzhou: Henan People's Publishing House, 2016).

KMT's success in the Anti-Japanese war from 1937 to 1945. He also thinks that CCP continued KMT's policies on the county-level government.[17]

Economists specializing in socialist China's fiscal system, including Song Xinzhong, Yan Kun, and Ma Hao, concur that the fiscal system from 1949 to 1978 can be delineated into five distinct stages: 1949-52; 1953-58; 1959-70; 1971-74; and 1975-78.[18] According to their findings, the initial three years of the PRC were characterized by a highly centralized fiscal system, encompassing three tiers of government: the central government, the great district, and the province. County-level governments lacked an independent fiscal system and were solely responsible for collecting supplementary taxes to cover their expenditures. These additional taxes were not to exceed 15% of the taxes submitted to the higher-level government. The PRC's inaugural fiscal system adjustment commenced in tandem with its First Five-Year Plan. As of 1953, county governments began to implement their own budget and fiscal accounting systems. The state diminished the significance of the great district within the fiscal system, positioning county-level governments as the lowest tier in the three-level hierarchy. Nonetheless, from 1953 to 1957, county governments possessed limited authority to modify their income and

[17] 岩井茂树(Iwai Shigeki), 付勇译 (Fu Yong trans.) *中国近代财政史研究 Modern China's Financial History* (北京: 社会科学文献出版社, 2011 年版 Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2011).
[18] 宋新中 (Song Xinzhong), 中国财政体制改革研究 *Research on China's Fiscal System Reform* (北京: 中国财政经济出版社, 1991 年版 Beijing: Chinese Financial & Economic Publishing House, 1991).
阎坤 (Yan Kun), *中国县乡财政体制研究 Research on China's County and Township Fiscal System* (北京: 经济科学出版社, 2006 年 Beijing: Economic Science Press, 2006).
田毅、赵旭 (Tian Yi, Zhao Xu), *他乡之税: 一个乡镇的三十年, 一个国家的"隐秘"财政史 Taxes from Other Lands: Thirty Years of a Township, A Nation's 'Hidden' Fiscal History* (北京: 中信出版社, 2008 年版 Beijing: CITIC Press Group, 2008).
马昊 (Ma Hao), *当代中国县级公共财政制度研究 Contemporary Research on China's County-Level Public Fiscal System* (北京: 中国经济出版社, 2008 年版 Beijing: China Economic Publishing House).

expenditure. In 1958, county governments were empowered to adjust their expenditures in accordance with their revenue, with this policy slated to endure for five years (以收定支，五年不变). However, the central government introduced the fixed percentage fiscal system the following year, stipulating that county governments retain a fixed percentage of annual revenue (总额分成，一年一变). This fixed percentage system was terminated in 1971 as the state once again decentralized, granting county governments increased autonomy. County governments were only required to submit a fixed sum of revenues to higher authorities, retaining the remainder (定收定支，收支包干，保证上缴，结余留用). The 1971 decentralization led to the contraction of the central government's revenue stream. In 1975, the fiscal system reverted to the fixed percentage model, allowing county governments to retain the majority of any surplus revenue collected.

Nonetheless, without incorporating the political context and examining the tax burden on the people, the fiscal system remains insufficiently understood. Consequently, this research situates tax system transformations within the political and social landscape, drawing inspiration from the approach taken by Philip Kuhn. Kuhn juxtaposes a farmer's rebellion that transpired during the 1840s in Leiyang county, situated in southern Hunan, with the Mao era's people's communes. Through this comparative analysis, Kuhn contends that there is a continuity between the late imperial and Communist governments, arguing that the Maoist state actualized the late-Qing government's objective of eliminating middlemen and tax agents. Kuhn's insightful conclusion posits that Mao grappled with a modern iteration of a deeply entrenched historical agenda, influenced by the practical and ideological imperatives of his own era: “underneath the

practical and ideological imperatives of his own age, Mao found himself dealing with a modern version of a very old agenda." [19]

Scholars focusing on the Chinese economy, such as Barry Naughton, Christine P. W. Wong, and Pierre F. Landry, have observed that the Mao era economy exhibited both a high degree of centralization and decentralization[20]. In their studies, centralization and decentralization primarily pertain to the state's relationship with enterprises. Naughton asserts that the state exercised direct control over enterprises' labor forces and claimed all their revenue, consequently granting enterprises minimal autonomy. Nevertheless, the central state's control was constrained by transportation and the decentralized planning system. [21] Naughton posits that "there was less decision-making authority at the top (central government) and bottom (enterprise) of the Chinese industrial economy. More

[19] Philip Kuhn, *Origins of the Modern Chinese State*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p.113.
[20] Christine P. W. Wong, "The Maoist 'Model' Reconsidered: Local Self-Reliance and the Financing of Rural Industrialization," in *New Perspectives on the Cultural Revolution*, ed. William A. Joseph, Christine P. W. Wong, David Zweig (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1991).
Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).
Barry Naughton, "Industrial Policy during the Cultural Revolution: Military Preparation, Decentralization, and Leaps Forward, "in *New Perspectives on the Cultural Revolution* ed. William A. Joseph, Christine P. W. Wong, David Zweig (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1991).
Pierre F. Landry argues that post-Mao China was a strange combination of authoritarianism and decentralization. The Chinese Communist Party's economic and administrative systems were highly decentralized. At the same time, however, the People's Republic of China continued to be an authoritarian state. He suggests that the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) were periods with intense decentralization. Pierre F. Landry, *Decentralized Authoritarianism in China: The Communist Party's Control of Local Elites in the Post-Mao Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[21] "With all the plans, commands, and controls, the typical state-owned enterprise had very little authority. It could not adjust its labor force, did not retain any of its profits, and could do little other than scramble to find additional inputs and increase production. Yet, at the same time, the core planning system in China was much less centralized and much less tightly controlled than it was in the Soviet Union…… Transportation and communication were less developed, so it was not surprising that central control was exercised less effectively…… In other ways, too, China's system was less centralized, especially in the 1970s, after financial decentralization reinforced decentralization of the planning system, providing local governments with substantial leeway in making economic development decisions." Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), p.62.

authority, however, could be exercised by those in the middle, typically local government officials." [22] Contrarily, Christine P. W. Wong disputes Barry Naughton's perspective, contending that collective enterprises in rural China maintained considerable autonomy. She argues that the success of rural industrialization during the Cultural Revolution can be attributed to the centralized financial system and enterprises' independence in making investment decisions. [23]

These studies have directed researchers' attention to the centralization and decentralization of the Mao era's fiscal system. However, their analyses primarily focus on financial policies and adopt a top-down approach. They do not consider the impact of politics and political campaigns or investigate the interplay between finance and politics. This research conducts a case study of She County, examining the transformations within its fiscal system during the Mao era.

Dissertation Arguments

Approaching from a fiscal perspective, my dissertation argues that the political campaigns, high extraction, and education expansion were mutually beneficial to each other. First, political campaigns signified the state's extensive extraction from the people.

[22] Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), p.62.
[23] Christine P. W. Wong argues that "throughout the Cultural Revolution the financial system remained highly centralized, with all profits and losses of state-owned enterprises remitted upward through the hierarchy. Yet investment decisions had been substantially decentralized, along with the allocation of materials. The availability of designated and informal funds for rural industrialization meant that local governments could obtain state funds for investment and pass along all losses to the state budget, while retaining virtually all output of the enterprises for local use." Christine P. W. Wong, "The Maoist 'Model' Reconsidered: Local Self-Reliance and the Financing of Rural Industrialization," in *New Perspectives on the Cultural Revolution* ed. William A. Joseph, Christine P. W. Wong, David Zweig (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1991).

Major Maoist political campaigns, such as the Land Reform, the GLF, and the Cultural Revolution, all aimed to eradicate existing exploitations and strive towards the ultimate goal of communism, where everyone would be equal and live in abundance. However, examining these political campaigns through a fiscal lens reveals the state's high extraction concealed behind them. This high extraction, in turn, funded the initiation and intensification of the campaigns. Political campaigns eased and reduced extraction when the county government faced a severe deficit. As soon as the county government had a surplus, another campaign would emerge. The relationship between the state's initiation of political campaigns and the extraction of resources from localities remains unclear. Nevertheless, the symbiotic relationship between political campaigns and fiscal extraction proved advantageous for both.

Second, education and extraction were mutually beneficial and cooperative. Education served as a more subtle form of extraction, with decentralized education exploiting labor and resources from individuals and local production teams, brigades, or communes. Furthermore, education could be perceived as a tangible payoff of extraction, thus justifying it. Education and extraction, therefore, supported and benefited each other.

Third, education and political campaigns were beneficial to each other. Education expansion was not a consistent policy throughout the Mao era. It only expanded during radical political campaigns and stagnated or contracted once the campaign ended. The substantial extraction of political campaigns financed education, which in turn served as a visible achievement of the campaign or extraction. Political campaigns, high extraction,

and education expansion not only coexisted but also collaborated, benefiting all three elements.

My dissertation further argued that the mutually beneficial cooperation among political campaigns, high extraction, and education expansion contributed to the widening of the urban-rural divide and exacerbation of gender inequality. Villages were consistently neglected when political campaigns and education expansion ceased or shrank. The resurgence of private schools following the Great Leap Forward famine (or the Great Famine, 1959-1961) exemplifies how villages were abandoned by the state.

Female students never achieved equality with their male counterparts in terms of enrollment rates. In the inaugural year of the PRC, merely one-fifth of all students were female. By 1955, female students constituted about 40% of all students, but only approximately a quarter of those in higher grades (5th and 6th) were female. The rate of female students reaching 43.85% in 1974 was praised as a significant achievement of the education reform during the Cultural Revolution. However, the rate of female students was only mentioned in county education bureau's annual reports in 1973 and 1974. It is likely that the 43.85% rate was the highest achieved during the Mao era.

Due to the urban-rural divide and gender inequality, rural female students found themselves at the bottom of the education system, forming the most vulnerable group. The urban-rural divide placed rural areas at a disadvantage compared to the county seat, while the gender power dynamic placed female students at the bottom. Rural female students faced the compounded effects of both power structures, making them the most

vulnerable group. The prevalence of sexual assault cases involving rural female students further highlights their vulnerable position.

Lastly, I will examine how various factors, including fiscal extraction, political campaigns, education expansion, the urban-rural divide, and gender dynamics, influenced minban teachers' personal experiences. All these factors contributed to minban teachers' recruitment, salaries, and career paths. I will explore how these factors, along with local roles, contributed to personal experiences. The local roles and their impact on education will be introduced subsequently.

The primary sources for my dissertation are county-level archives and oral history. The county-level archives consist of 342 volumes from She County's finance bureau and another 450 volumes from She County's education bureau, covering the 27 years from 1949 to 1976. In addition to archives, I interviewed 46 minban teachers in She County.

I did not take oral history at face value. First, before conducting interviews, I planned the questions to ask my interviewees. My questions revolved around the villages where my interviewees were born, their family members, the work points of their production teams, the main crops and plants, the schools they attended, the fees they paid for the schools, the courses and teachers in schools, how they obtained their jobs, their workload, their salaries, the confined study they attended, and their career paths after being minban teachers. If any unique events occurred in their lives, I would inquire about the details, such as defending their rights as minban teachers or their actions during the

early years of the Cultural Revolution. Generally, I interviewed each person individually, but if some interviewees experienced the same event, I would ask each person about the others' roles to cross-verify their stories. I also interviewed some individuals multiple times to compare different versions of their experiences.

Terminology

Before delving into the details and analysis, it is important to clarify a few terms. The first term is minban (民办), which literally means "people-operated." In my dissertation, I define minban as collectively operated and supervised by the state. "Collectively operated" refers to being managed by production teams, brigades, or communes. In archival records, minban encompassed everything that was non-public. Minban schools included the traditional private schools that reemerged in the early 1960s. Minban teachers included private school teachers. In some instances, the term minban teachers also included substitute teachers in the archives, although this was not always the case. Substitute teachers' recruitment did not require government approval and was under the control of the schools. Private schools, private school teachers, and substitute teachers were not supervised by the state. If I were to adopt the archival method of using this term, the existence of private school teachers and substitute teachers would need to be clarified at different times and occasions, potentially leading to confusion for readers. Consequently, I do not include private schools, private school teachers, and substitute teachers in my definition of minban.

In the context of my dissertation, the term “education system” refers to the institutionalized education system that was strictly regulated and supervised by the state. This system primarily consisted of elementary and middle schools in She County, as there were no universities or colleges in the area. Therefore, my research does not include higher education institutions. Although the CCP ideological indoctrination and pedagogy are intriguing topics, my research will not delve extensively into them. Discussing these subjects would divert my focus from the mutually beneficial cooperation among political campaigns, heavy extraction, and education expansion, as well as its impact on the urban-rural divide, gender inequality, and personal experiences. Consequently, I will not analyze pedagogical aspects such as textbooks, examinations, teaching methods, assignments, course schedules, etc. Nor will I explore how the CCP's ideology was integrated into textbooks, teaching, class activities, examinations, assignments, and course schedules. Adult education is not included in my research either. Adult education, also referred to as "winter school," "night school," "literacy training class," or "eliminate illiteracy class (扫盲班)" in different archival records, is not well-documented, and I have not collected many oral materials about it. The lack of materials and research prevents me from incorporating adult education into my dissertation or drawing any conclusions about it.

The term "state" has been a subject of intense debate, and reaching consensus on which levels of government should be included in its definition is always challenging. In my dissertation, I consider the county government and its bureaus as the lowest level of the state. I do not include communes, brigades, or production teams in my definition of

the state. During the Cultural Revolution, communes, brigades, and production teams enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy in areas such as finance, resource allocation, and labor distribution. In the education sector, communes were even allowed to edit and distribute their own textbooks. As such, I have chosen not to include communes, brigades, and production teams in my conceptualization of the state.

The final set of terms I will address are "urban" and "rural." I concur with Hanchao Lu's critique of the dichotomous use of these two words.[24] There is no clear-cut boundary between urban and rural areas due to the existence of townships. In the context of the Mao era, the household registration (*hukou*) system further complicated the distinction between urban and rural.[25] The *hukou* system could not completely separate urban and rural populations. As Jeremy Brown argues, "alienation between village and city came about not through isolation, but through regular contact."[26] However, the *hukou*

[24] Hanchao Lu, "Urban Superiority, Modernity and Local Identity: A Think Piece on the Case of Shanghai" in *Town and Country in China: Identity and Perception* ed. David Faure and Tao Tao Liu (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan), p.126-144.

[25] Lots of research has been done on Hukou system, I just list out the main research:
Tiejun Cheng, *The Dialectics of Control: The household registration Hukou System in contemporary China* (PhD diss., State University of New York at Binghamton, 1991).
Tiejun Cheng and Mark Selden, "The Origins and Consequences of China's Hukou System," *China Quarterly*, no. 139 (September 1994), 644-668.
Fei-Ling Wang, *Organizing through Division and Exclusion: China'sHukou System* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
According to Mark Selden and Tiejun Cheng's work, the hukou system was initiated since 1954, yet did not get institutionalized in the early 1960s after the Great Famine. During the Great Leap Forward and Great Famine, massive refugees flowed into cities. But after the hukou system got institutionalized, state had strict control over migration.

[25] Usually, a change can be regarded as upward mobility from rural agriculture to rural non-agriculture, or from rural non-agriculture to urban non-agriculture. The relationship between rural non-agriculture and urban agriculture, however, remains untouched by previous research and is hard to distinguish which status is higher. It depends on different occasion: if a rural non-agriculture people change to urban agriculture in the same county or similar-sized county, it is hardly regarded as a upward mobility. However, if a rural non-agriculture people in a small county change to non-agriculture in Beijing or Shanghai, it can be regarded as an upward mobility.

[26] Jeremy Brown, *City Versus Countryside in Mao's China: Negotiating the Divide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.5.

system did exacerbate the urban-rural divide. The *hukou* system had two criteria: residence and occupation. Residences were categorized as either city or countryside, while occupations were classified as agricultural or non-agricultural. People were divided into four tiers in this hierarchical system: countryside agriculture; countryside non-agriculture; city agriculture; and city non-agriculture.[27] Typically, city dwellers held non-agricultural occupations, and those in the countryside held agricultural ones. However, some individuals, such as teachers working in rural areas, had countryside non-agricultural households. The *hukou* system was accompanied by a grain ration system, which ensured grain rations for non-agricultural individuals, including those in countryside non-agricultural households. City households, including city agricultural ones, generally had access to better healthcare and education than countryside households.[28] As a result, it became difficult to draw a clear line between urban and rural areas due to the *hukou* system. For the sake of convenience, I have continued to use the terms "urban" and "rural." However, I will strive to specify the county seat, township, or remote village whenever possible.

[27]Usually, a change can be regarded as upward mobility from rural agriculture to rural non-agriculture, or from rural non-agriculture to urban non-agriculture. The relationship between rural non-agriculture and urban agriculture, however, remains untouched by previous research and is hard to distinguish which status is higher. It depends on different occasion: if a rural non-agriculture people change to urban agriculture in the same county or similar-sized county, it is hardly regarded as a upward mobility. However, if aa rural non-agriculture people in a small county change to non-agriculture in Beijing or Shanghai, it can be regarded as an upward mobility.

[28]About urbanites occupied better education and health care in Mao era, see John Knight and Lina Song, *The Rural – Urban Divide Economic Disparities and Interactions in China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

She County

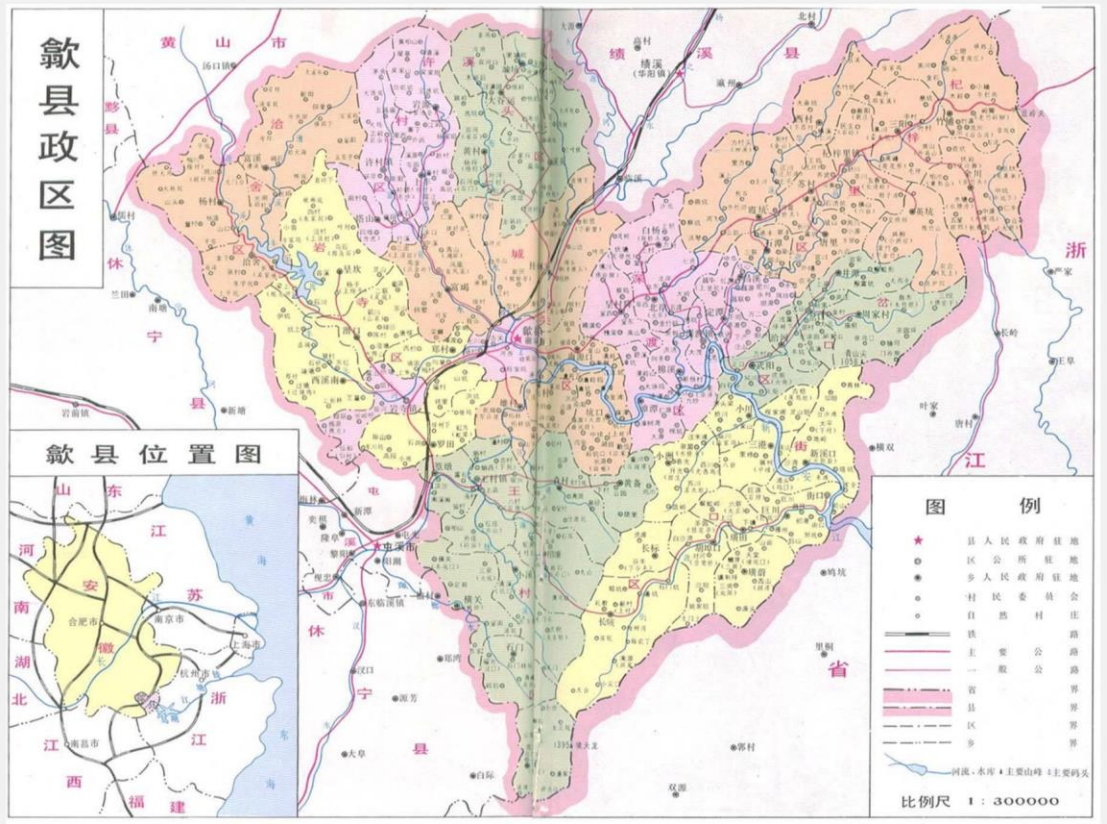

Figure 1: She County Map

She County (歙县) is located at the southern end of Anhui province. Historically, it served as the capital of Huizhou (徽州) prefecture during imperial times and was known for its significant number of gentrified merchants, strong lineage organizations in the region, and numerous civil exam degree-holders.[29] These merchants and degree-

[29] About the gentrified lineage and gentrified merchants, see Qitao Guo, *Ritual Opera and Mercantile Lineage: The Confucian Transformation of Popular Culture in Late Imperial Huizhou* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
Joseph P. McDermott, *The Making of a New Rural Order in South China, Volume 1: Village, Land, and Lineages in Huizhou, 900-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
Joseph P. McDermott, *The Making of a New Rural Order in South China, Volume 2: Merchants, Markets, and Lineages, 1500-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,2020).

holders financed their villages to construct ancestral halls, temples, and opera theaters. In Ming and Qing China, there were over 6,000 ancestral halls in the Huizhou area. In some villages within She County, there could be as many as 71 ancestral halls.[30] During the Ming and Qing dynasties, ancestral halls already functioned as classrooms, with lineage organizations playing a major role in establishing and financing schools.[31] This support for education from lineage organizations and the use of ancestral halls as classrooms continued into the Republican period. However, at the beginning of the PRC, the Land Reform resulted in the confiscation of lineage organizations' possessions, such as land, fishable water areas, ancestral halls, and real estate, by the state. Consequently, lineage organizations could provide only very limited support for education, if any at all.

During the Mao era, lineage organizations continued to wield influence. For example, two neighboring villages, Hongqin and Hongfei, each boasted a powerful lineage organization. In the mid-1960s, these two villages engaged in fierce competition to become the first to screen a movie. Members of the respective lineage organizations battled with agricultural tools over the movie films and the movie troupe from the county seat tasked with screening the film. Conflicts among lineage organizations could also give rise to instances of bullying in schools.

Ancestral halls, despite being the embodiment of ancestor worship, survived political campaigns and continued to function as classrooms. In 1963, over 50% of all classrooms were located in ancestral halls. Some classrooms were in temples, with

[30] Joseph P. McDermott, *The Making of a New Rural Order in South China, Volume 2: Merchants, Markets, and Lineages, 1500-1700*, p.62.
[31] Joseph P. McDermott, *The Making of a New Rural Order in South China, Volume 2: Merchants, Markets, and Lineages, 1500-1700*, p.65.

ancestral halls and temples together comprising 72% of all classrooms. Other locations for classrooms included opera theater stages, warehouses, Republican era school buildings, and private houses, while the remaining classrooms were in newly constructed buildings specifically designed for schools. In 1963, many of these ancestral halls and temples required repairs, with 484 of them (215 schools) needing urgent maintenance. Even in the first decade of the 21st century, some schools were still housed in ancestral halls, as shown in the picture below. It was common for teachers to work and live in these ancestral hall schools during the Mao era.

Figure2: School in an Ancestral Hall

Figure 3: She County Topographic Map

The flatland valley in the mid-west part of She County represented the primary arable land of the county, while the other regions were predominantly mountainous. The flatland area was suitable for growing rice, whereas the mountains could only support a limited amount of rice or wheat cultivation. The primary grains for people living in the

mountainous areas were corn, sweet potato, and potato. Overall, rice and corn were the two major grains in She County. In 1949, rice cultivation in She County was one season each year. Peasants began sowing and seedling in early April, transplanted the sprouts at the start of summer, and harvested in early August.[32] Since 1971, She County government promoted a two-season rice planting, which significantly increased rice production. For instance, rice production in 1965 amounted to 55,257 tons, whereas in 1976, it reached 88,814 tons. The rice production increased further when She County began cultivating hybrid rice in 1977.[33]

During the Mao era, She County's population grew from 340,879 in 1949 to 554,976 in 1976. The population increased every year, except for 1960, which was also the peak of the Great Leap Forward famine (GLF famine, 1959-1961) casualties. The population decreased by 6,497 in 1960 compared to 1959, but the actual GLF casualties that year were much higher than the decreased number. The most significant growth occurred in 1963 and 1964 when 19,898 and 18,460 infants were born, respectively.[34]

Throughout the Mao era, She County's grain production was insufficient to feed the population. She County was not self-sufficient in grain, which contributed to fewer people starving to death during the GLF famine. She County could not produce enough grain to feed its people, so it needed to have grain transferred from other counties. In the early 1950s, She County received grain from the neighboring Jingde County to the north.

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[32] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 1* (合肥: 黄山书社, 2011 Hefei: Huangshan Publishing House, 2011), p.279.
[33] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 1*, p.255.
[34] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 1*, p.162.

In 1955 alone, She County received 16,615 tons of grain from other counties. During the GLF famine, in the first half of 1961, She County received more than 850 tons of grains from neighboring counties.[35] The county gazetteer reported that in the three years of 1959, 1960, and 1961, 7,975, 12,578, and 8,388 people died, respectively.[36] In total, 28,941 people died in the GLF famine. Compared to other places in Anhui province, She County's famine casualties were relatively low.

In She County, famine casualties during the GLF (1959-1961) were not evenly distributed. The flatland, being the major rice production area, experienced more casualties than the mountainous areas. This finding supports Jisheng Yang's observation that more people died in grain production areas than in other areas.[37] Yang's conclusion is applicable to She County, where more people died in the flatland area than in the mountainous areas. People living in the mountainous areas of She County suffered less during the famine, as they had grain quotas and could purchase grain from the state's grain station. The grains supplied from neighboring counties helped to alleviate the impact of the famine for these communities.

[35] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 2* (合肥: 黄山书社, 2011 Hefei: Huangshan Publishing House, 2011), p.462.
[36] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 1*, p.147.
[37] Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958-1962* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013).

Figure 4: She County Snail Fever Map] (The red part is where snail fever located)

In addition to famine, another factor contributed to the higher death toll in the flatland area: the prevalence of snail fever. The flatland area, with its numerous rivers, creeks, and irrigation channels, was a breeding ground for the disease. The image above illustrates that the snail fever-affected area coincides with the flatland region. In the Republican era, snail fever caused significant casualties; from 1919 to 1933, approximately 140,000 people died due to the disease.[38] During the early years of the People's Republic of China, from 1952 to 1957, about 20,100 individuals were diagnosed with snail fever. In 1958 alone, 16,141 people were identified as infected.[39] However, no records indicate the number of snail fever-related deaths during the Mao era. According

[38] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 1*, p.161.
[39] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 2*, p.255.

to one of my interviewees, in a village close to the county seat, the majority of deaths in the 1950s were attributed to snail fever.

It was no coincidence that some Xin'an River Dam immigrants were relocated to the flatland area, which coincided with regions heavily impacted by snail fever and famine casualties. The main river in She County, the Xin'an River, became the Fuchun River as it entered Zhejiang province. Historically, this river was a major transportation route for Huizhou merchants, facilitating the trade of timber, tea, and other commodities to Hangzhou and beyond through the Grand Canal. The canal starts from Hangzhou on the south end. The commodities and Huizhou merchants could travel to the Yangtze River and big cities besides the canal, including Yangzhou, Tianjin, and Beijing on the north end of the canal. In June 1956, the central government approved the construction of the Xin'an River Dam, a significant nationwide project. Consequently, about 70 square kilometers (17,297 acres) of She County land was submerged under the reservoir. People were forced to relocate to higher mountains or other areas. She County residents might have been relocated within the county, to other counties, or even to other provinces. Immigrants from other counties, including those from Zhejiang province, have been relocated to She County. In early 1958, She County initiated the relocation process. Between 1958 and the first month of 1959, 22,004 people were relocated within She County. In October 1966, the central government approved a second wave of relocations as the reservoir's water level rose, displacing approximately 3,300 people. In July 1973, the central government authorized She County to relocate an additional 13,542 people. In total, 38,846 people in She County were relocated, with 10,551 moving to the flatland and 23,421 moving higher up the mountains. Others were relocated to neighboring

counties. The number of immigrants that She County received from other counties is not recorded in the county gazetteer.

Immigrants, including some of my minban teacher interviewees who were immigrants, faced discrimination from local people. The forced relocation process was poorly managed by the state, resulting in difficulties for the immigrants. Each household had limited transportation space on trucks, reserved only for furniture and agricultural tools. Consequently, people had to sell most of their possessions to the communes, and on moving day, they had to walk carrying their belongings. Their furniture and tools often arrived at the destination before them, left unguarded on the road, and were taken away by local people. Upon arrival, the state did not provide any housing or financial support for immigrants. They had to solve their housing problems independently, which often involved sourcing materials from locals. In some cases, immigrants resorted to digging graves for bricks to build new houses. As immigrants struggled to survive, their presence sometimes led to conflicts with original villagers. Discrimination was less apparent when most people in a production team were immigrants. However, when immigrants were in the minority, they could face significant discrimination, such as receiving fewer work points than they deserved. If immigrants became minban teachers, their salaries were sometimes taken away by cadres. These experiences of discrimination will be discussed further in the personal experiences chapter. It is also possible that immigrant children faced bullying in schools.

In addition to the Xin'an River immigrants, there were also a few ethnic minority individuals living in She County. According to the second national population census in

1964, She County had 46 people from five different ethnic minorities. Among these 46 individuals, 36 were Hui, 7 were Manchu, 1 was Miao, 1 was Korean, and 1 was Dong. Perhaps due to the limited number of minorities in the county, there were not many instances of mass killings.[40] I was unable to locate any of the 46 minority individuals in She County. However, in an investigation conducted in 1955, one teacher was identified as belonging to the Hui ethnic group.[41] Unfortunately, I could not find the teacher's name or any additional information about them.

The mountainous area, although not capable of producing significant amounts of grain, was home to an economically important plant that played a crucial role in She County's fiscal situation. From 1949 to 1987, tea taxes accounted for 46% of the county's total financial income over those 38 years.[42] People who grew and picked tea leaves could earn cash income. Production teams, brigades, and communes involved in tea production typically had higher work point values than areas without tea. Tea's importance in the local economy also had an impact on the education system. During the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, some production team-owned elementary schools would close temporarily for about three weeks, known as the "tea leave," when it was time to pick tea leaves. Children would become the production team's tea-picking labor force, helping the team earn cash income. The tea-producing areas were also highly favorable for sent-down youths, as they could earn more money there. During

[40] Andrew Walder, *Civil War in Guangxi: The Cultural Revolution on China's Southern Periphery* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2023).
[41] "歙县小学教师调查表 (1955 年)" ("She County Elementary School Teacher Survey Form, 1955"), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, p.62-1-55.
[42] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 1*, p.300.

the Cultural Revolution, when communes and schools were allowed to edit and print their own textbooks and open their own courses, schools in tea production areas introduced tea classes. These classes, accompanied by textbooks, taught students how to cultivate tea trees and bake tea leaves.

The timber industry has been significant in the Huizhou area since the Ming Dynasty.[43] Due to the abundant forestry resources, the She County area has rarely faced a shortage of timber. The Huizhou region was well-known for its highly skilled woodblock printing techniques.[44] During the Mao era, access to desks and benches for education was not a major problem in She County. Forestry land was decentralized to communes, brigades, or production teams in accordance with the "Sixty Articles on Agriculture," which led to the decentralization of forest ownership to the production teams. When new schools needed timber for construction, local leadership could mobilize people, including teachers and students, to venture into the forestry area and cut trees as needed.

The last thing I need to explain about She County is the political and educational administration system of the county. In 1956, the county had 445 higher-stage cooperatives, which were consolidated into 15 communes in 1958. In 1961, these 15 communes were reorganized into 56 communes under the jurisdiction of 10 towns. From 1972 to 1982, She County had 12 towns and 61 communes.[45] This political division was closely linked to the education administration system. Central elementary schools

[43] Joseph P. McDermott, *The Making of a New Rural Order in South China, Volume 1: Village, Land, and Lineages in Huizhou, 900-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.168.
[44] Kai-wing Chow: *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), p.88.
[45] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 1*, p.35-36.

oversaw all elementary schools within their respective school districts. In 1962, there were 86 school districts, which did not correspond to the number of communes, indicating that school districts were distinct from communes at that time. During the Cultural Revolution in 1968, middle schools in villages fell under the lead of communes, while elementary schools were overseen by brigades or production teams. Each town and commune's leadership included an education cadre responsible for managing the schools within the town or commune.[46]

After introducing She County, a series of questions follows: Why do we need to know about a county? Why She County? How would a county's situation help us to understand the situation of China? The study of local history has been validated in the field of new cultural history, particularly by the third generation of the Annales school.[47] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's monograph on the small French village of Montaillou serves as an excellent example, demonstrating how geography, economy, religion, and social conventions worked together in the village at the beginning of the 14th century. Choosing a local place and exploring the interplay of various factors is already a valid research approach.

Local history holds equal significance to that of a nation's history or the history of a larger region. Despite its subordinate position in power dynamics, smaller geographical scope, and less developed economic circumstances, local history should not be regarded

[46] 歙县教育志编纂领导组(She County Education Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县教育志 She County Education Chronicles* (合肥: 黄山书社, 2009 年版 Hefei: Huangshan Publishing House, 2009), p.397.
[47] Lynn Hunt, "Introduction: History, Culture, and Text", *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1989), p.3.

as inferior to that of a prominent city or larger region. In fact, local history has a more profound impact on the daily lives of ordinary people than high politics or events occurring in major urban centers. For researchers who prioritize understanding the everyday experiences and mindset of common individuals, local history is just as crucial as national history, if not more so. Consequently, questioning the representativeness of She County within the context of China as a nation state is an irrelevant concern for researchers like me.

I chose She County as my research subject, first due to the accessibility of the county's education and fiscal bureau archives from the Mao era. Given the stringent archive control in mainland China today, it was challenging to obtain such a comprehensive collection of systematic archives elsewhere outside of She County. Additionally, She County exhibits a blend of uniqueness and commonality. Every location possesses distinct characteristics arising from variations in geology, population, immigration, proximity to major cities, presence of ethnic minorities, fiscal revenue, agriculture, natural resources, public health, historical social structures, lineage organizations, and the state’s special policies on the locality, among other factors. She County is unique due to its specific combination of these factors. Besides, She County embodies commonality as it is neither a large city nor situated in the vicinity of one, which is characteristic of the majority of China and where most people reside.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 1 of my dissertation examines the transformation of education in She County throughout various periods of the Mao era. This chapter argues that the expansion of education was not a consistent policy during this time; rather, it only aligned with radical political campaigns such as the Land Reform, Korean War mobilization, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution. When these campaigns concluded, education often stagnated or even contracted, as seen during the first five-year plan and the aftermath of the famine. During periods of educational downsizing, villages were quickly neglected by the state. Schools in these areas were closed, and students from these communities were discouraged from attending school. Although female students experienced an increasing number of opportunities to attend school during the Mao era, they never achieved equal access compared to their male counterparts. This chapter also highlights the persistence of dissatisfaction and complaints throughout the Mao era, as teachers devised ways to exploit or resist the state's policies.

Chapter 2 delves into the fiscal system of She County throughout the Mao era. This chapter argues that education, resource extraction, and political campaigns were interconnected and mutually beneficial. Political campaigns such as the Land Reform, the Great Leap Forward (GLF), and the Cultural Revolution led to the state's heavy extraction of resources from the population. This high extraction, in turn, financed the initiation and intensification of these campaigns. When the county government faced a severe deficit, political campaigns ceased, and resource extraction was reduced. However, as soon as the county government experienced a surplus, another campaign was imminent. Education served as a subtle form of resource extraction. Decentralized

education systems drew upon labor and resources from the local population and production teams, brigades, or communes. Moreover, education could be seen as a tangible benefit of political campaigns and resource extraction, thereby helping to justify their existence.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, rural areas were often abandoned when the state scaled back education. Chapter 3 zeroes in on the resurgence of traditional private schools in rural regions during the early 1960s, a phenomenon resulting from the state's abandonment of these areas. The emergence of private schools can be traced back to shifts in cultural policy and the contraction of education following the Great Leap Forward (GLF) famine (1959-1961). Chapter 3 argues that the primary reason for the reemergence of private schools was the state's emphasis on agriculture in the aftermath of the GLF famine. The widespread reappearance of private schools also highlights the presence of discontent and dissatisfaction with the state's educational content and policies among the rural population following the GLF famine.

The urban-rural divide placed rural areas at a disadvantage relative to county seats, while gender dynamics further marginalized female students. Rural female students experienced the compounded effects of both power structures, making them the most vulnerable group. Chapter 4 focuses on the prevalence of sexual assault cases, predominantly involving rural female students. This chapter investigates 99 sexual assault cases in elementary schools in She County, where 99 elementary school teachers sexually assaulted at least 331 students, with the youngest victim being only 7 years old. The chapter contends that the punishment for sexual assault in elementary schools was

highly politicized. While politicization was not necessarily detrimental to the victims, it could separate their suffering from the sentencing process and result in punishments that lacked principled grounding.

In the final chapter, Chapter 5, the analysis will focus on how political campaigns, resource extraction, education policies, the urban-rural divide, gender, and other local factors influenced the personal experiences of minban teachers. This chapter will examine the recruitment, salaries, and career paths of these educators. Chapter 5 contends that various factors—including personal connections, the status of being a sent-down or returning youth, immigration status, gender, employment at elementary or middle schools, and local production team's work point values—could all impact minban teachers' recruitment, salaries, and career trajectories. Additionally, this chapter reveals that although minban teachers attempted to assert their rights and successfully organized small-scale demonstrations, they were unable to form a cohesive large-scale protest due to the diverse backgrounds and experiences among them.

Chapter 1: Education and Political Campaigns

Education expansion in Mao's China was far from consistent or smooth at the local level. This chapter investigates the CCP's evolving education policies throughout the Mao era, examining how people contributed to and reacted to these policy shifts. It underscores the ways in which various political campaigns affected different aspects of education, encompassing teachers, students, textbooks, and the broader schooling system. The chapter delves into the multifaceted education system during the major political campaigns of the Mao era, including the Land Reform, the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries, Korean War mobilization, the Anti-Right Campaign, the Great Leap Forward, the Four Clean-ups, and the Cultural Revolution.

The central argument of this chapter is that education expansion occurred alongside political campaigns, but stagnated or even contracted once those campaigns ended. The analysis considers whether education expanded or contracted each year, the experiences of teachers and students, education policies, and changes to textbooks and courses. During certain campaigns, teachers with backgrounds disapproved of by the CCP faced potential dismissal, arrest, or execution. Teachers might employ their own methods to take advantage of policies or resist and express dissent against the state's directives. Students were not immune to the impact of political campaigns. In some periods, the state actively discouraged students from attending school to save funds and maintain a steady supply of agricultural labor. In times of tight budgets, the duration of schooling could be reduced, with textbooks adjusted accordingly. Additionally, students

often contributed to the construction of school buildings or facilities free of charge to save costs for schools.

This chapter also incorporates analyses of the urban-rural divide and gender inequality. It posits that during times of education contraction or curtailing, villages suffered more than county seats, exacerbating the urban-rural divide. The chapter also contends that, while the proportion of female students among all students increased during the Mao era, female students never enjoyed the same opportunities for schooling as their male counterparts.

The Power Transition

The People's Liberation Army (PLA), the military arm of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), entered the county seat on April 28, 1949, and established a transitional military committee (军事管理委员会) the following day. Over the subsequent month, the military committee gradually assumed control of various Kuomintang (KMT) institutions, including the court, tax offices, post offices, banks, county government, education bureau, and hospitals. On May 15, the CCP established the She County party committee, and six days later, the county government was formed, with the military committee transferring power to this new entity.[48] Although the local gazetteer reported that all KMT forces were expelled from the county by the night of May 1, 1949, school

[48] 歙县党史地志办公室(She County Party History and Local Chronicles Office), *中国共产党歙县历史, 1949-1978 History of the Chinese Communist Party in She County* (合肥: 黄山书社, 2013 年版 Hefei: Huangshan Publishing House), p.1-2.

reports of military destruction indicate that hostilities persisted until May 8.[49] Consequently, the warfare in She County lasted for at least 11 days. The military transition during this period was far from peaceful, as KMT forces occupied schools throughout their retreat.

Military activities during this period significantly impacted schools, as fleeing soldiers sought overnight refuge there, resulting in most schools closing for several days due to the ongoing conflict. In June, the CCP's education bureau distributed spreadsheets to schools, intending to assess the extent of wartime destruction and, perhaps more importantly, gather general information on financial resources, teachers, students, salaries, and other relevant data.[50] In anticipation of potential compensation, some schools reported minor losses such as maps, teaching tools, desks, and benches. In addition to economic considerations, denouncing the destruction caused by the KMT army served as a means for school leaders to demonstrate their loyalty to the new CCP regime.

Some schools had already adopted the CCP's discourse months prior to the establishment of the state, framing the CCP as the savior of the people who suffered under the KMT's oppressive rule. One school recounted that over 200 KMT soldiers stayed overnight on the premises on April 28. [51] These soldiers burned or took away

[49] “学校解放前后概况调查表” (“Survey Table of Schools’ Situation Before and After Liberation”), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-6.
[50] “学校解放前后概况调查表” (“Survey Table of Schools’ Situation Before and After Liberation”), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-6.
[51] “歙县民德乡显贤东山保国民学校解放前后概况调查表 (1949 年 6 月 27 日)” (“Survey Table of Xianxian Dongshan District Village Center School’s Situation in Minde Town She County, June 27, 1949”), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-6.

desks, books, standing easels for painting, and even teachers' luggage. The villagers were subjected to similar treatment. The school denounced the KMT soldiers as "a group of bandits" (一伙强盗). The following morning, the KMT soldiers left, abducting the school headmaster, several teachers, and dozens of villagers. Amidst this dire situation, the PLA arrived. The ensuing gunfire prompted the "counteractive (KMT) soldiers to flee" (反动派的军队逃的逃、窜的窜). In contrast to the KMT soldiers' actions, the CCP soldiers comforted the people, committed no offenses, and displayed kindness. Moreover, they departed quickly, not staying overnight to pursue the KMT soldiers. This comparison, though it highlights the suffering of villagers, also emphasizes their gratitude towards the PLA for their rescue and assistance (都感激解放军来救济他们). Regardless of the veracity of this account, the dramatic portrayal of the CCP and the stark contrast between the KMT and CCP contribute to a narrative that aligns seamlessly with the CCP's discourse to legitimize its regime.

The display of political loyalty was not without its underlying motives. The school reiterated the destruction caused by the KMT army towards the end of its account, emphasizing the severe damage inflicted upon its building, rendering it uninhabitable. Additionally, the teachers who were taken away by the KMT forces did not return until a week later. Upon reading this feedback, education bureau leaders were likely pleased by the school's narrative initially, and consequently more inclined to empathize with the school's losses. As a result, they would be more likely to approve financial aid for the school. Regardless of whether the school genuinely perceived the CCP as their savior, it strategically demonstrated loyalty at every possible opportunity to secure any potential

financial support. Thus, loyalty was not merely an end in itself but also a means to obtain financial benefits.

Upon assuming power, the CCP inherited the Republican-era schooling system and endeavored to ensure a smooth and stable transition between the two regimes. Schools during the Republican era were categorized into three types based on their relationship with the government: public schools (公立学校), private schools (私立学校), and tutorial schools (私塾). Public schools were established, financed, and overseen by various levels of government, including county, township (referred to as "Xiang" or "Zhen" during the Republican era, and "district" during the first two years of the People's Republic of China), and village (known as "Bao" in the Republican era). Public schools under the purview of county governments were designated as "County Schools" (县立学校), while those overseen by township governments were called "Center Schools for Citizens" (中心国民学校).[52] Finally, village-run schools were referred to as "Schools for Citizens" (国民学校). The majority of public schools were situated in local political and economic centers.

Upon assuming control of public schools, the CCP aimed to retain the majority of the teaching staff, maintain financial support for schools, ensure the continuity of daily operations, and continue using the original textbooks for the remaining two months of the semester. The primary objective was to guarantee a peaceful and stable transition. The

[52] The “Center Schools for Citizens” followed the name of the village it located, not the town’s name. Therefore, even the school’s name was “Village Center Schools for Citizens (保中心国民学校)”, the school belonged to the town government.

guiding principle was to "unite and reform" teachers, who should not be casually reassigned to other positions. The government's focus was on a small group of "extremely reactionary and destructive individuals" (个别极端反动破坏份子),[53] with the first purge of teachers occurring during the summer vacation of 1949. The CCP not only refrained from dismissing teachers but also continued financing schools and paying teachers' salaries. The party regulated the salaries of all school staff and funding for schools, basing allocations on the type and number of classes at the school rather than the actual need, teacher numbers, or positions.[54][55] For the remaining two months of the semester, the CCP chose not to alter the textbooks. The reform of textbooks was to be undertaken "gradually," with only the "reactionary content" from the old textbooks being removed.[56]

[53] “皖南行政公署指示信：关于目前小学教育中几个问题的指示(1949 年 7 月 3 日)” (South Anhui Administrative Office Directive Letter: Instructions on Several Issues in Current Elementary School Education, July 3, 1949), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-1.

[54] The office expense is the government’s funding for schools, and the amount was based on the number and kind of classes. The office expense for each senior elementary class (grade 5&6) should be no more than 25kg of grain. If there are more than 4 senior elementary classes, each extra class can have 43.75kg of grain. The office expense for each junior elementary class (grade 1-4) can have 15kg of grain.
皖南行政公署指示信：关于目前小学教育中几个问题的指示(1949 年 7 月 3 日)” (South Anhui Administrative Office Directive Letter: Instructions on Several Issues in Current Elementary School Education, July 3, 1949), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-1.

[55] The salaries for headmaster and teaching director were the same, which was 90-115kg of grain each month. Each senior elementary class equaled one and a half teachers, and each teacher’s monthly salary was 85-100kg of grain. Each junior elementary class equaled one teacher, whose monthly salary was 75-90kg of grain.
The other workers such as logistic workers or cook would get their salaries decrease to save the education budget. Each worker of Complete Elementary School should be paid 55-70kg of grain monthly. The workers’ salary for Junior Elementary School was school’s responsibility, rather the government. (I will explain what Complete Elementary School is later in the paper.)
皖南行政公署指示信：关于目前小学教育中几个问题的指示(1949 年 7 月 3 日)” (South Anhui Administrative Office Directive Letter: Instructions on Several Issues in Current Elementary School Education, July 3, 1949), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-1.

[56] 皖南行政公署指示信：关于目前小学教育中几个问题的指示(1949 年 7 月 3 日)” (South Anhui Administrative Office Directive Letter: Instructions on Several Issues in Current Elementary School Education, July 3, 1949), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-1.

It was not until the new semester began that the CCP replaced all textbooks previously used in the areas under their control.

While private schools were typically founded by local gentry, they remained under government supervision. These schools were generally financed by local gentry and organizations, such as lineage and business associations. The local gentry and leaders of these organizations often served as board members of private schools. Despite not being directly managed and controlled by the government, private schools still required approval from the county government for establishment and were registered with the county government's education bureau. Although private schools did not have as close a relationship with the government as public schools, they were still subject to the county government's oversight. When the CCP took power, it was able to investigate the status of private schools, as they had been registered with the KMT government.

Tutorial schools exhibited greater flexibility in school management and were largely beyond the scope of government control. These schools did not require government approval for establishment nor registration with the education bureau. Typically, a group of parents or a specific organization (e.g., a lineage organization) would hire a teacher, select a location from among the parents' or organization's properties, and collectively pay the teacher. This process represented the usual method for establishing a tutorial school. Such schools either did not apply for or were unable to obtain government approval for establishment. Governments often encountered difficulties investigating and controlling tutorial schools and their curricula. Tutorial schools did not differentiate between elementary and middle schools, nor were they

required to adhere to the semester system. Their schooling schedules could be adapted to accommodate local agricultural activities, allowing parents to negotiate with teachers to temporarily close the school if children were needed for harvest or tea picking. Despite these differences, the textbooks and instruction provided by tutorial schools did not necessarily diverge from those of public and private schools. Tutorial schools typically offered two courses: Chinese and mathematics. Children could bring their own textbooks, including those used in public or private schools, and teachers would instruct them using these materials.

Another factor contributing to the limited government control over tutorial schools was their remote locations, often situated far from local political and economic centers. A significant number of tutorial schools were dispersed throughout rural and remote mountainous areas. Residents of these areas faced multiple challenges when attempting to secure government approval for school establishment, including issues related to transportation, personal connections, and stable financial resources. In some instances, tutorial schools served as the only educational option available for children in these areas.

Before the commencement of the first semester under CCP governance, the party undertook a restructuring of the education system. As tutorial schools were largely beyond the CCP's control, the reorganization focused on public and private schools, which were divided into two main categories based on education levels: middle school and elementary school. Middle schools included junior middle (grades 7-9) and senior middle (grades 10-12) levels. Prior to the summer vacation of 1949, She County had four

middle schools, three of which were public, and one was private.[57] The CCP assumed control of the private middle school and merged it with She County Middle School. Both She County Middle School and Huizhou Teachers' School featured junior and senior sections. Normal middle schools were responsible for training teachers for She County elementary schools and, on occasion, junior middle school teachers. The CCP also took over some private schools, converting them into public schools. The only private middle school in She County during the Republican era was Ziyang Middle School, which the CCP integrated into a campus of She County Middle School.

Elementary schools can be classified into three types: junior elementary schools (JES, 初级小学 or 初小), senior elementary schools (SES, 高级小学 or 高小), and complete elementary schools (CES, 完全小学 or 完小). JES refers to schools that only have a junior elementary section, comprising grades 1 through 4, and can accept children aged 7 to 9. SES refers to schools that only have a senior elementary section, including grades 5 and 6, and can admit children aged 10 to 13 who have graduated from JES. Children aged 7 to 13 are referred to as school-age children, which can vary depending on local circumstances. Junior elementary schools can be independent of senior ones. If there are insufficient students for one SES class, the junior elementary school may establish an attached senior class. If an elementary school includes both junior and senior elementary sections, it is classified as a CES. In rural areas, elementary schools should operate for no less than 40 weeks each academic year, even with the inclusion of spring

[57] The four middle schools were: She County Middle School, She County Normal Middle School, and the Attached Junior Middle School Class of Xiong Village Complete Elementary School, and Ziyang Private Middle School.

plowing and fall harvest breaks in addition to winter and summer breaks. In urban areas, elementary schools should operate for no less than 42 weeks, with summer and winter vacations not exceeding 10 weeks.

Although the CCP viewed private and tutorial schools with suspicion, they did not eliminate them. Private schools, operated by local gentries and organizations, were seen as counterrevolutionary ruling authorities in the CCP's ideology. These schools were regarded as a means for them to indoctrinate and exploit people. Meanwhile, tutorial schools, being beyond the government's control, could potentially teach content that contradicted the CCP's ideology. Despite these concerns, private and tutorial schools were not forcibly closed by the CCP.

Several factors contributed to the CCP's tolerance towards private and tutorial schools. While the CCP could have taken over and reformed these schools under its supervision, its limited budget would not have allowed for the substantial expense of financing all schools and paying all teachers' salaries. Additionally, eliminating these schools could have led to a significant increase in school dropouts. Tutorial schools, in particular, were often the only available option for children in remote, mountainous rural areas to receive education. Eradicating these schools would mean taking away educational opportunities for these children and could lead to extreme discontent in the area. Moreover, since the CCP was unable to determine the number of tutorial schools in November 1949, it was not feasible to eradicate them quickly.[58] Consequently, to ensure

[58] In November, the education bureau could only collect data from 112 tutorial schools. The document also commented that the number was far from reality. Only one district (equals town) which had not been

the popularity and legitimacy of its governance, the CCP refrained from eliminating private and tutorial schools until the financial and political situation improved.

The CCP's differing policies towards public and tutorial schools contributed to the urban-rural divide in education. By taking over public schools, the CCP ensured stable financial support for them. However, this tolerance towards tutorial schools did not translate into encouraging policies for their growth or any financial assistance. The CCP's education budget was primarily allocated to public schools, which were located in the political and economic centers of local areas, rather than to tutorial schools in remote rural areas. As a result, an urban-rural divide in education funding emerged, whether intentional or not on the part of the CCP.

In addition to reorganizing public and private schools, the CCP also began taking control of school property. Public and private schools could possess their own property, including land, buildings, waterfronts, or bodies of water (lakes or rivers). Public schools, which could belong to various levels of government—county, township, or village—might receive land or buildings from the relevant government to ensure their operation. Local gentries and organizations, as founders of private schools, would also donate property for the schools. For tutorial schools, local organizations might donate the income from certain properties to support the school. However, since tutorial schools were rarely under the CCP's supervision, their property (if any) was left untouched until the Land Reform. Two months after the CCP entered She County, they began taking

investigated yet, had at least 100 tutorial schools. “歙县私塾调查表” (“Survey Table of She County Traditional Private Schools”), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.

control of school property. Each district or township was required to establish an Education Funding Committee (教育基金委员会) to review school budgets and ensure proper education funding.[59] School headmasters were to set up this committee in collaboration with local governments (such as township governments and village heads) and individuals interested in financing education. The committee should also invite representatives from both teachers and students. This committee was responsible for overseeing the income and expenses of school property, conducting monthly accounting, and publishing the results.

Although the CCP claimed a stable transition, it was not as seamless as portrayed. An investigation of the teaching staff (headmasters, directors of teaching, and teachers) before and after the summer vacation of 1949 revealed a significant decrease. The number of elementary school teaching staff before the summer was 948, but after the summer, it dropped to 764. As a result, when the first semester under CCP governance began in September, the new regime had lost 184 teachers, which constituted nearly one-fifth (19.41%) of the original group.[60] An internal report detailed the reasons for the significant decrease in teaching staff: 14 headmasters were replaced because they were members and activists of the KMT and the Three People's Principles Youth League (三民主义青年团，三青团); 5 left as their headmaster position was merely honorary; 11 headmasters were deemed incapable of performing their duties; 26 headmasters resigned;

[59] “半年来教育工作总结提纲” (The Outline of Half Year’s Education Work Report), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.
[60] “歙县三十八年暑假前后教职员人事移动统计表” (“She County Teacher and Staff Personnel Mobility Statistics Table Before and After Summer Vacation”), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.

59 headmasters were demoted to teaching positions; and 73 teachers left their teaching positions.[61] The detailed list was intended to demonstrate to county leaders or higher-level authorities the efforts made by the education bureau and to ensure the political reliability of the new teaching staff. However, the list unintentionally exposed the substantial loss of teaching staff during the CCP's claimed stable transition.

Instead of acknowledging an unstable transition, the CCP blamed the scarcity of teaching staff on the KMT's legacy. The CCP's military occupation occurred five months before the formal declaration of the PRC's establishment (October 1, 1949). The five-month period between the military occupation and declaration was ambiguous and could be considered "pre-liberation" time, even though it was under the CCP's governance. In the same internal report that detailed the reasons for the decrease in teaching staff, the number of schools and teachers was compared before and after "liberation," while defining the unstable transition period as before "liberation." The recovery from the unstable transition by the end of the year was framed as evidence of the CCP's superiority over the KMT. The report claimed that before "liberation," there were 207 public elementary schools (including two attached elementary schools of normal middle schools), 11 private schools, 725 teaching staff, 427 classes, and 11,394 students.[62] However, the detailed list in the earlier part of the report and the dedicated investigation

[61] “半年来教育工作总结提纲” (The Outline of Half Year’s Education Work Report), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.
The Three People’s Principle of Youth League was the league to train youths for future KMT members.
[62] “半年来教育工作总结提纲” (The Outline of Half Year’s Education Work Report), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.
This report states that, after “liberation”, there were 328 public elementary schools, 21 private schools, 992 teaching staff, 707 classes, and 20085 students. These data were likely to be collected as the end of the year 1949.

results for teaching staff, as mentioned previously, suggest that the data should be attributed to the unstable transition rather than the "pre-liberation" Republican era.

The CCP not only purged nearly one-fifth of elementary school teachers to ensure political reliability, but also organized a 10-day closed military training for nearly 1,000 public and private elementary school teachers.[63] Teachers had to wake up at 5:30 am daily, with 10 minutes allotted for washing up, followed by an hour of learning and singing revolutionary songs from 5:40 to 6:40 am. They would then read newspapers for 50 minutes until 7:30 am, when breakfast commenced. Morning learning and discussions lasted for 3 hours and 20 minutes without any breaks, from 8:10 am to 11:30 am. Teachers typically attended lectures and participated in small group discussions during this time. Lunch and a noon nap break concluded at 1:30 pm, which was followed by another 3-hour small group learning and discussion session ending at 4:30 pm. Afterward, teachers had a 2.5-hour break for supper and free activities, such as showering or washing clothes. From 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm, teachers participated in large group discussions about what they had learned and discussed in small groups during the day.

[63] The training had two phases: phase 1 (the plan was July 10 -July 20) was open to teaching staff of private schools and public schools belonged to the village. But because of the rain and transportation difficulties, only 40% of the teachers who were supposed to be present came on July 10. The training delayed and started from July 13 and ended on July 22. At that time, bicycles and automobile were rare and all teachers walked from all parts of the county to the county seat to attend the training.
Phase 2 was planned to start from July 25 and ended on August 5 and was open to teaching staff of public schools belonged to the town-level and the county government. But because of the weather and flood, phase 2 was delayed during the winter vacation.
The location of the training was She County Middle School.
“歙县小学教师暑假讲习会计划草案” (“She County Elementary School Teachers’ Summer Vacation Training Conference Plan Draft”), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.
“歙县暑假教师培训总结” (She County Teachers’ Summer Vacation Training Report), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.

Lights-out was at 10 pm, 30 minutes after the evening discussion.[64] The schedule was rigorous, and the absence policy was strict. Anyone requesting absence from small or large group learning and discussions needed approval from the group leader, who would then inform the entire training committee. At 7 pm, training committee members would conduct a roll call to ensure no one left without permission.[65] This type of closed military training persisted and became stricter during the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Cultural Revolution.

The training aimed to indoctrinate teachers with the CCP's ideology under political pressure. Though detailed teaching materials were not archived, the training content can be inferred from the seven training themes: the current political situation; the New Democracy; the Chinese revolution and the Chinese Communist Party; CCP's education policy; CCP's policy towards intellectuals; Chiang Kai-shek's ten crimes; and the problems of current education. The political pressure of the training also stemmed from the investigation and purge of teachers during the training. The training report enumerated the teachers who were members of the KMT and the Three People's Principles Youth League, as well as the positions they held in the KMT government. On the last day of the training, two members were immediately dismissed from their teaching positions due to their "reactionary thoughts and behaviors."[66] While we can no longer

[64] “训练班草案补充意见” (Supplementary Opinions on the Training Class Draft), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.
[65] “训练班草案补充意见” (Supplementary Opinions on the Training Class Draft), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.
[66] “歙县暑假教师培训总结” (She County Teachers’ Summer Vacation Training Report), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.

ascertain the details of these two teachers' dismissal or whether the process was public, the political message was undoubtedly clear to all the teachers.

Besides training teachers, CCP also had other measures to ensure the school environment would be in line with CCP's ideology. Two weeks after the establishment of PRC, on Oct.15, the bureau requested all schools to hang national flags, Mao's portraits, and Sun Yet-sun's portrait. The document points out the place and size of the national flag that schools should hang. It also regulates how the portraits should be posted. Mao's portrait should also be hung to the left of Sun Yet-sun's, the founder of KMT and the Republic of China. Schools were also responsible to paint slogans and perform plays for political propaganda. One report pointed out that since a school had mistakenly painted a slogan that twisted the meaning, and the local government should check the slogans immediately after they were painted. This document shows that painting slogans and performing revolutionary dramas were schools' responsibility.

In addition to training teachers, the CCP implemented other measures to ensure the school environment aligned with its ideology. Two weeks after the establishment of the PRC, on October 15th, the bureau required all schools to display national flags, Mao's portraits, and Sun Yat-sen's portraits.[67] The document specified the location and size of the national flag to be displayed and provided guidelines on how the portraits should be arranged. Mao's portrait was to be hung to the left of Sun Yat-sen's, the founder of the

[67] "皖南人民行公署通知：为通知各级学校依照规定制作国旗及悬挂领袖像由" (South Anhui People's Administrative Office Notice: Notification Regarding the Requirement for Schools at All Levels to Make National Flags and Hang Leader Portraits in Accordance with Regulations), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-1.

KMT and the Republic of China. Schools were also responsible for painting slogans and staging plays for political propaganda. One report highlighted that a school had mistakenly painted a slogan with a distorted meaning, prompting the local government to inspect the slogans immediately after they were painted.[68] This document demonstrates that painting slogans and performing revolutionary dramas were part of the schools' responsibilities.

With the teaching staff and environment prepared, the CCP established its primary education goal of ideological indoctrination. The first goal of school education, as stated in the document issued both in earlier and later occupied areas like She County, was to shape the people of a new-democratic country. This meant that children should be able to read, write, perform simple math, acquire basic scientific knowledge, and maintain good health.[69] The term "new democracy" was a concept introduced by Mao in his paper "On New Democracy" during the Yan'an period. Mao divided the Chinese revolution into two stages: democracy and socialism. The democratic revolution encompassed both the old-democratic and new-democratic revolutions: The old-democratic revolution referred to the struggle against colonialism and was led by the bourgeoisie. China's Old Democracy revolution began with the Opium War and transitioned to the new-democratic revolution after the May Fourth Movement (1919).

[68] “关于各级小学张贴标语、公演戏剧须经审查 (1949 年 11 月)” (“Regarding the Requirement for Slogans and Public Performance of Drama at All Levels of Elementary Schools to be Reviewed”), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.

[69]“华北区小学教育暂行实施办法” (“Interim Implementation Measures for Elementary School Education in North China Region”), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-1.
The second aim is to cultivate children’s patriotism and the good habits of doing labor, supporting democracy, and abiding by disciplines.

The new-democratic revolution's political leadership shifted from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat.[70] The new-democratic society was one led by the proletariat, synonymous with the CCP. Thus, being "a person of the new-democratic society" also meant accepting and abiding by the governance of the CCP.

To achieve their educational goals and ensure ideological indoctrination, the CCP took full control of textbooks. As soon as the first semester under the CCP's governance began in September 1949, the CCP mandated that all elementary and middle schools use only approved textbooks that had already been employed in earlier occupied areas. During the Republican era, the KMT government could not, and did not have the financial means to, exercise strict control over the textbooks schools used.[71] The South Anhui Bureau approved certain elementary textbooks published by CCP-affiliated publishers in Shanghai: Dadong Shuju and the Shanghai United Publishing Company.[72] On August 11, 1949, the South Anhui Province Administrative Bureau issued an order

[70] Mao Tse-tung (Zedong), "On New Democracy", *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung: Volume 2*, (Oxford, England: Pergamon, 2014), p.339-384.

[71] 瞿骏 (Qu Jun), *天下为学说裂: 清末民初的思想革命与文化运动 The World Divided by Learning: The Intellectual Revolution and Cultural Movement in the Late Qing and Early Republican Era* (北京: 社会科学文献出版社, 2017 年版 Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2017).

[72] 上海出版志编纂委员会 (Shanghai Publishing Chronicle Compilation Committee), *上海出版志 Shanghai Publishing Chronicle* (上海: 上海社会科学院出版社, 2001 年版 Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2001).
(http://www.shtong.gov.cn/Newsite/node2/node2245/node4521/node29048/node29050/node29052/userobject1ai54454.html)
Dadong Shiju (大东书局) was established in 1916 in Shanghai. Publishing textbooks for elementary schools and middle schools was one of the most important businesses for Dadong Shiju. During the Anti-Japanese war period, the KMT government organized publishers to publish textbooks and Dadong Shuju was responsible for publishing 8% of the listed textbooks.
Shanghai United Publishing Company (上海联合出版社) was a temporary publishing company founded by Xinhua bookstore in 1949 and was combined by 62 private publishers in Shanghai to publish textbooks. This temporary publishing company was closed in 1950.

requiring all middle schools, including junior middle and high schools, to incorporate political courses for students.[73]

Since September 1949, the Chinese government has maintained strict control over the selection and distribution of textbooks, resulting in a system that often failed to meet the actual requirements of the educational institutions. Despite the unpreparedness of both textbooks and educators, the bureau mandated the use of specific temporary textbooks and the appointment of politically reliable teachers.[74] Prior to the beginning of each semester, schools estimated their textbook needs and communicated these numbers to the county Xinhua bookstore, which then distributed the materials when they became available. An investigation conducted in September 1952 revealed numerous issues with this system. One school reported that the textbooks focused heavily on urban life and employed a North China dialect, neither of which resonated with its students.[75] Several schools voiced concerns about the inadequate supply of textbooks and the inability to

[73] "皖南行政公署指示信：关于中等学校政治课等项指示各专属县市政府公私立中等学校" (South China Administrative Office Directive Letter: Instructions Regarding Political Courses in Middle Schools and Other Matters, Applicable to Public and Private Middle Schools under County and Municipal Governments), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-1.

[74] The textbook for the current semester: 陈伯达 *四大家族*; 陈伯达 *人民公敌蒋介石*; 东北军大政治部编 *现代中国的两种社会*. The textbook for next semester: *中国革命与中国共产党*, *新民主主义论*, *论联合政府*, *目前形势和我们的任务*, *论人民民主专政*.

"皖南行政公署指示信：关于中等学校政治课等项指示各专属县市政府公私立中等学校" (South China Administrative Office Directive Letter: Instructions Regarding Political Courses in Middle Schools and Other Matters, Applicable to Public and Private Middle Schools under County and Municipal Governments), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-1.

[74] "皖南行政公署指示信：关于中等学校政治课等项指示各专属县市政府公私立中等学校" (South China Administrative Office Directive Letter: Instructions Regarding Political Courses in Middle Schools and Other Matters, Applicable to Public and Private Middle Schools under County and Municipal Governments), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-1.

[75] "小学普查表: 歙县梓里小学" (Elementary School Survey Form: Zili Elementary School in She County), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-3.

distribute them on time for the start of the semester[76], with some textbooks remaining unavailable even two months after classes commenced. Frustrated by these delays, some parents attempted to purchase textbooks directly from the Xinhua bookstore in the county seat, only to discover that they were out of stock.[77] Furthermore, one school noted that they were unable to return excess textbooks or request additional ones as needed.[78] Due to the difficulty of accurately estimating textbook requirements before the start of the semester, many students did not receive the necessary materials in a timely manner, leading to significant disruptions in their education.

In the inaugural year of the PRC, a substantial gender disparity existed among both teachers and students. There were much fewer female teachers and students than male. Out of 987 total elementary school teachers, a mere 17.02% (168) were female. The proportion of female teachers was even lower in middle schools, with only 12.50% (10) of the 80 teachers being female.

Similar disparities were evident among students, as fewer opportunities were available for female students to attend school or advance to higher levels of education. Of the 20,085 elementary school students, approximately one-fifth (21.30%, 4,279) were female. Female students constituted about a quarter (26.85%, 290) of middle school

[76] “小学普查表: 歙县梓里小学” (Elementary School Survey Form: Zili Elementary School in She County), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-3.
“小学普查表：歙县水界山初级小学” (Elementary School Survey Form: Shuishanjie Elementary School in She County), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-3.
“小学普查表：歙县东山初级小学” (Elementary School Survey Form: Dongshan Junior Elementary School in She County), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-3.
[77] “小学普查表：歙县东山初级小学” (Elementary School Survey Form: Dongshan Junior Elementary School in She County), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-3.
[78] “小学普查表: 歙县梓里小学” (Elementary School Survey Form: Zili Elementary School in She County), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-3.

enrollees.[79] The following table illustrates gender inequality across different school sections:

Table 1: Male and Female Students in Different School Sections[80]

	Female Students	Male Students	Total Students	
Junior Elementary Section[81]	21.85% (3707)	78.15% (13259)	16966	20085[82]
Senior Elementary Section[83]	18.34% (572)	81.66% (2547)	3119	
Junior Middle Section[84]	30.45% (239)	69.55% (546)	785	1080[85]
Senior Middle Section	17.29% (51)	82.71% (244)	295	

This table indicates that the percentage of female students in senior elementary sections was lower than in junior elementary sections, suggesting that female students faced greater difficulty in graduating from junior sections and transitioning to senior sections. This pattern persisted in middle schools as well.

The aforementioned data excluded tutorial schools, where the gender divide was even more pronounced. Although the investigation encompassed only 112 tutorial schools— a limited sample compared to the total number— the data still revealed a significant gender imbalance. These 112 tutorial schools employed 113 teachers, all of

[79] "歙县 1949 学年度第一学期小学校统计表, 1949 年 11 月" (She County Elementary School Statistics Table for the First Semester of the 1949 Academic Year, November 1949), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.
[80] "歙县 1949 学年度第一学期小学校统计表, 1949 年 11 月" (She County Elementary School Statistics Table for the First Semester of the 1949 Academic Year, November 1949), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-2.
[81] Junior Elementary Section includes JES, junior elementary section of CES. These schools includes both public and private schools. But no tutorial schools.
[82] The number of 20085 refers to all elementary school students.
[83] Senior Elementary Section includes SES, senior elementary section of CES. These schools includes both public and private schools. But no tutorial schools.
[84] Junior Middle Section includes junior middle schools and the junior middle section of the complete middle school.
[85] The number of 1080 refers to all middle school students.

whom were male. Out of the 1,566 children attending these tutorial schools, a mere 72 were female. Consequently, 0% of the teachers and 4.6% of the students in these tutorial schools were female, further highlighting the prevailing gender inequality in this educational context.

The Korean War Mobilization

Despite the financial crisis during the Korean War, the number of elementary schools and students in She County continued to grow, as indicated by the corresponding table. The expansion of education appeared to be at odds with the ongoing war, as both demanded substantial budget allocations. However, the war and educational expansion could coexist because education played a vital role in war mobilization. In the year following the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) seizing power, China became involved in the Korean War and simultaneously launched nationwide Land Reform, the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries, and other initiatives. Historians, such as Yang Kuisong, argue that the Korean War served as a cover-up and an ideal target for channeling internal conflicts stemming from various political campaigns in China.[86] Scholarly research has examined the role of Land Reform propaganda and the involvement of the education system in such efforts.[87] My materials provide details, although not many, on how the campaigns influenced the education system. The focus of this part, however, is

[86] 杨奎松 (Yang Kuisong), 中华人民共和国建国史研究 *Study of the Founding History of the People's Republic of China* (南昌: 江西人民出版社, 2009 年版 Nanchang: Jiangxi People's Publishing House, 2009).
[87] Brian James DeMare, *Mao's Cultural Army: Drama Troupes in China's Rural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.32, 34, 77, 112.

not the top-down process. This part centers on the actions of schools and individuals during these campaigns, arguing that their behaviors did not always align with the state's intentions.

In She County, the violence associated with the Land Reform and the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries had the potential to intimidate teachers. During the Land Reform in She County, at least two teachers were executed. Additionally, in 1951, the CCP executed five teachers during the Counter-revolutionary Campaign. The archives pertaining to these executed teachers were not made public; however, their colleagues were not intentionally shielded from the news of these executions. Such incidents could give rise to rumors surrounding the reasons for the teachers' disappearance. Regardless of the nature of these rumors, the events served to instill fear and intimidation among teachers, highlighting the severity of the campaigns and the perils of becoming a political adversary.

Teachers and students initially underwent political training before being mobilized as propaganda agents to engage a wider audience. The education system played a pivotal role in the mobilization efforts during the Korean War. Teachers attended additional meetings every Sunday morning to receive political instruction. Meanwhile, war mobilization efforts permeated all aspects of students' education. In Chinese classes, students were trained to write pieces advocating for the Korean War. Mathematics courses' calculation problems are strictly limited to topics such as war prisoner numbers, casualties, and trophies. Political classes focused on Korean War propaganda materials, while history and geography classes employed supplementary

textbooks, such as *A Century's History of the US's Invasion of Other Countries*, to highlight the close relationship between North Korea and China. Music classes taught songs related to the Korean War, and art classes instructed students in creating paintings that advocated for the conflict. After being exposed to Korean War propaganda across all subjects, students were given opportunities to apply and demonstrate what they had learned through speech competitions and opera performances organized by their schools.[88]

Upon gaining performance experience within their schools, students transitioned into propaganda agents, advocating for the Korean War in public spaces. In the latter half of 1950, cadres, teachers, and students in and around the county seat organized a demonstration involving more than 3,000 people to support the CCP's involvement in the Korean War. This demonstration served a dual purpose, as it simultaneously promoted war mobilization and facilitated autumn tax collection. As such, the Korean War provided a convenient pretext for the CCP to impose a heavier tax burden on the peasantry.[89] The week of November 11th to 17th, 1951, was designated as Korean War Advocacy Week. Propaganda teams from various schools were stationed at different locations on the streets. The performances were diverse and served specific functions. The Yangge team and waist drum dance team aimed to attract the public,[90] while

[88] "歙县抗美援朝文艺宣传工作情况汇报 (1951 年)" (Report on the Situation of Anti-American Aid Korea Art and Propaganda Work in She County), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-24.
[89] "歙县抗美援朝文艺宣传工作情况汇报 (1951 年)" (Report on the Situation of Anti-American Aid Korea Art and Propaganda Work in She County), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-24.
[90] Yangge is a rural group dance performance originated in North China. Chang-tai Hong, "The Dance of Revolution: Yangge in Beijing in the Early 1950s", *The China Quarterly*, No.181 (Mar. 2005), p.82-99.

designated "propaganda people (宣传员)" delivered speeches. Supplementing these activities were other forms of performances, such as street dramas, which contributed to the overall propaganda effort.[91]

While the CCP ensured that war mobilization efforts were integrated into both in-school and out-of-school activities, there remained some room for schools to express dissent. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, certain schools demonstrated loyalty to the CCP in exchange for financial support upon its rise to power. However, not all schools consistently pledged their allegiance to the CCP. Thanks to the private collection of Xing Zhi Private Elementary School, we can gain insight into how some schools expressed their disagreements with the CCP's ideology, power transition, and the early years of the Cold War.

Xing Zhi Elementary School (行知小学) was a privately funded school that received both domestic and international financial support. Established in 1947 by Xu Shiqi (许士骐), a professor of fine arts at National Central University, the school was created in memory of his friend and fellow She County native, Tao Xingzhi (陶行知). Tao, a renowned educator trained at Columbia University, founded Xiaozhuang Experimental Village Teachers' School near Nanjing and was one of the three leaders of the Rural Reconstruction Movement in the 1920s and 1930s. He passed away a year before the school's establishment.[92] To finance the school, Xu Shiqi sought funding from

[91] “歙县抗美援朝文艺宣传工作情况汇报 (1951 年)” (Report on the Situation of Anti-American Aid Korea Art and Propaganda Work in She County), 歙县档案馆 She County Archives, 62-1-24.
[92] The three leaders were: Tao Xingzhi, Liang Shumin, and Yan Yangchu (also called James Yen).

local gentry, sold his artwork, and successfully secured financial assistance from the "Foster Parents Plan for War Children" (FPPWC), a US-based international charity organization established in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War to support children affected by warfare.[93] Gerald Tannebaum, the English secretary of Soong Ching-ling, was appointed as the China branch chief of FPPWC.[94] Soong chaired the China Welfare Institute, which was based on the China Defense League she founded during the Anti-Japanese War. Due to the connection between Tannebaum and Soong, FPPWC was integrated into the China Welfare Institute. Owing to the personal relationship between Xu Shiqi and Soong, Xu successfully applied for financial aid from FPPWC in 1948.[95]

Financial assistance from FPPWC persisted through the power transition, even though domestic financial sources ceased immediately afterwards. FPPWC's funding

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About Tao Xingzhi (T'ao Hsing-chih), see Guy S. Alitto, *The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity, Second Edition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1979), p.160-165, 227.
Xiaoping Cong*, Teacher's Schools and the Making of the Modern Chinese State, 1897-1937*.
Philip Kuhn, "T'ao Hsing-chih, 1881-1946: An Educational Reformer," *Harvard Papers on China* 13 (1959), p.163-95.
Barry Keenan, *Dewey Experiment in China: Education Reform and Political Power in the Early Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asian Center Press, 1977), p.82-109.
Yao Yusheng, "National Salvation through Education: Tao Xingzhi's Educational Radicalism" (PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1999).
About James Ye, see Hayford: *To the People: James Yen and Village China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

[93] *为苦难儿童而工作: 战灾儿童义养会南中国分会工作报告 Working for the Suffering Children: Work Report of the South China Branch of the Foster Parents Plan for War Children*, (Shanghai: China Branch of the Foster Parents Plan for War Children, 1949).

[94] Soong Ching-ling is the wife of the founder of KMT and Republican China Sun Yet-sen.

[95] FPPWC financed 27 schools, foundlings' hospitals, and other institutions in total during the two years from 1947 to 1949. FPPWC claimed that none of them were public institutions financed by KMT. Among the 27 receivers of FPPWC's support, 9 located in Shanghai, 5 in Beijing, 1 in Suzhou, 2 in Changzhou of the Yangtze River Delta, 1 in Tianjin, 1 in Nanjing, 1 in Tianjin, 1 in Jinan the capital city of Shandong province, 1 in Xi'an the capital city of Shaanxi province, 1 in Zhongshan city of Guangdong province. The rest 3 institutions were all schools in three small cities of Anhui provinces: She County, Huaiyin, and Huai'an.
为苦难儿童而工作: 战灾儿童义养会南中国分会工作报告 Working for the Suffering Children: Work Report of the South China Branch of the Foster Parents Plan for War Children, (Shanghai: China Branch of the Foster Parents Plan for War Children, 1949).

continued until the last day of 1950, six months after the outbreak of the Korean War. The financial support from FPPWC originated from "foster parent(s)" in the US. Any Americans who wanted to be “foster parent(s)” could apply to FPPWC, and sometimes a group of people applied as one foster parent.[96] The China branch of FPPWC was responsible for selecting schools to finance after conducting investigations. The selected schools would then identify children who had either lost their parent(s) during the war or were suffering extreme poverty, and provide their information to FPPWC. The organization then paired the foster parent(s) with the children. Foster parents were expected to provide a fixed amount of US dollars to the children, but the schools received the funds instead. Starting in November 1948, ten children at Xing Zhi Elementary School received monthly financial assistance of 300 US dollars in total. Months later, the monthly sum was reduced to 80 dollars. As stated in FPPWC's pamphlet, although the financial aid was intended for specific children, the school could allocate part or all the funds for the school itself. According to the school's financial report, FPPWC's contributions accounted for 70.4% of the school's total income during the initial months of support.[97] The remaining income primarily came from the She County Fellow Association in Shanghai, where Xu had previously served as secretary and later as a board member.[98] Xu established the Xing Zhi Elementary School Board in Shanghai to

[96] Mary Bertarelli’s letter to Sun Fengjiao on May 18, 1949, says that she was one of the 1000 students in Vocational High School who had all donated money to FPPWC and they were all Sun’s “Foster sisters and brothers”. Mrs. Dickman, who was a teacher in Vocational High School and also donated to FPPWC, was the Sun’s foster mother.

[97] 安徽省歙县行知小学简史编写组 A Brief History of Xingzhi Elementary School Compilation Committee, *安徽省歙县行知小学简史 A Brief History of Xingzhi Elementary School* (She County: Xingzhi Elementary School, 2007), p.18.

[98] “歙县旅沪同乡会会员名册(1945 年制)” (“Membership Roster of She County Fellow Townsmen Association in Shanghai, 1945”) Shanghai Municipal Archives, Q6-5-1034.

raise funds and address other issues. However, after the CCP took control of Shanghai in May 1949, financial assistance from Shanghai ceased. The US dollars from FPPWC became the school's primary financial source. On December 31, 1950, FPPWC notified Xing Zhi Elementary School that its financial support would be discontinued due to the Korean War and the ideological antagonism between the two countries.[99]

Figure 5: Cover page of *Working for the Suffering Children: Work Report of the South China Branch of the Foster Parents Plan for War Children*.

Compared to domestic financial sources, the stability of US financial support led school administrators to recognize the importance of maintaining strong relations with their American patrons. Communication between the "foster parents" of FPPWC and the children continued for a year under CCP governance. The FPPWC required children to write a monthly letter to their "foster parents" to keep them informed.[100] Xing Zhi School

[99] 安徽省歙县行知小学简史编写组 A Brief History of Xingzhi Elementary School Compilation Committee, *安徽省歙县行知小学简史 A Brief History of Xingzhi Elementary School* (She County: Xingzhi Elementary School, 2007), p.20.
[100] *为苦难儿童而工作: 战灾儿童义养会南中国分会工作报告 Working for the Suffering Children: Work Report of the South China Branch of the Foster Parents Plan for War Children*, (Shanghai: China Branch of the Foster Parents Plan for War Children, 1949).

preserved 31 translated Chinese letters and 32 original English letters, all written by FPPWC foster parents to children between November 1948 and April 1950. Although the FPPWC mandated at least one letter per month, correspondence was often more frequent. For example, Xu Gongji's foster parent Roy L. Wall, a World War II US Navy veteran and a 24-year-old college student in 1949, pledged to write to Gongji every Wednesday night.[101] While he didn't write as frequently as promised, he wrote more than once a month. These letters reveal the emotional support and time foster parents provided to the children. Zhang Yichang's foster parents, aware of Yichang's love for music, sent a package of small musical instruments, such as a harmonica. They also mentioned hanging Yichang's photo in their bedroom and greeting it each morning. Several foster parents attempted to send additional money and gifts, like chocolate, toys, and fabric, but only the fabric was successfully delivered to the children in She County.

Communication between foster parents and children was not private, and the school played a significant role in facilitating it. Maintaining communication would have been impossible without the school's approval and support. When a letter arrived from foster parents in the US, it was first sent to the Xing Zhi School Board in Shanghai, which typically took six days by air and nearly a month by sea. Upon receiving the letter, the school board in Shanghai translated it into Chinese and then forwarded both the original and translated versions to She County, a process that usually took two days.[102] Once the children's response letters were completed, they were sent to Shanghai for

[101] Roy L. Wall's letter to Xu Gongji, #7 in table "Xing Zhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children," use under approval.

[102] Xu Gongji's parent complained that he had expected to get a letter for two weeks. One board member commented on the edge of the letter that Gongji should explained the mailing time in the next letter.

translation and subsequently mailed to the foster parents in the US. Occasionally, some Chinese letters were sent from Shanghai to the US without translation.[103]

The school was highly committed to maintaining communication between children and foster parents, even going so far as to ghostwrite children's letters to ensure prompt and proper correspondence, as they saw it. Comments on the letters reveal the deep involvement of teachers and school board members in the writing process. Xu Shiqi, the founder of Xing Zhi Elementary School, noted on Roy L. Wall's letter (written on January 26, 1949) to Xu Gongji that "Mr. Pan should write the reply letter within three days after receiving this letter. No delay." As a result, it is likely that Mr. Pan, not the child Xu Gongji, wrote the reply letter. These comments also demonstrate Xu's eagerness to maintain timely communication. Roy included a photo of himself in the letter, and Xu Shiqi suggested that "After showing the photo to Gongji to let him know what his foster parent looks like, Xing Zhi school should keep the photo." Such comments provide evidence that the school was deeply involved in the communications and even ghostwrote the response letters. It is unclear whether all letters from the US were fully translated and shown to the children. The adult-like writing style in some letters aroused suspicion among a few foster parents. One foster parent doubted the authenticity of a letter as it appeared too advanced for an elementary school student.[104] Another parent, impressed by the maturity of the writing, expressed her desire for more letters without realizing that the

[103] T. P. Heffelfinger to Xinian, #16 in table Xing Zhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children," use under approval.
[104] Mrs. Milliken's letter to Cheng Zhaoxiong, #6 in table "Xing Zhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children," use under approval.

child might not have written it.[105] The school's ghostwriting practices raise the possibility that communication continued without the children's awareness.

The school's translation process presented a potential avenue for manipulation of information. Occasionally, the translations of the letters were inaccurate and significantly deviated from their original meanings. In a letter from Zhou Xingsheng's foster parent Vincent, it was written, “It was a grand gesture on your part to donate the sum of money remaining after the purchase of the bicycle, to the school in order that they may (purchase?) ping pong equipment. Let me thank you for the honor you have given me on calling the school contest award ‘the Andrew Award.’ Please extend my thanks a lot to your classmates.”[106] This letter indicates that Vincent sent Zhou a substantial sum of money, which Zhou partially used to buy a bicycle and donated the rest to the school for purchasing ping pong equipment. However, the Chinese translation of the letter states, " It was a grand gesture on your part to keep the money and purchase a bicycle for your school as the school’s equipment to attend a contest. I will also thank you and your friends for spending time every day for your school’s contest to win the prize of ‘Andrew Award’." The Chinese translation erroneously implies that Zhou bought the bicycle for the school and that it served as equipment for the school's contest. It omits any mention of Vincent's gratitude for naming the contest after him and the rationale behind the

[105] Mrs. R. M. King’s letter to SuQin (undated), #28 in table “Xing Zhi School’s Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children,” use under approval.
[106] The Chinese translation is “在你一方面说来我觉得你很大方，能把你的钱留下来买自行车，给校方作比赛时的设备。我要谢谢你和你的朋友们，每天抽出相当时间为了学校中的比赛来得到‘Andrew’奖品.” The Chinese letter is #10 in table “Xing Zhi School’s Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children.” The English letter is #60 in table “Xing Zhi School’s Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children,” use under approval.

"Andrew Award" title. The discrepancies in the translation could be attributed to the original letter's handwriting. The translator was also aware that these letters would be read by the school's founder and archived by the school. If the translator had fully understood the letter's content, they would not have deliberately overlooked the foster parents' expressions of gratitude. Nonetheless, this does not entirely eliminate the remote possibility that the school may have used the money to buy a bicycle before giving it to Zhou, concealed the process from Zhou, and manipulated the communication between Zhou and his parents.

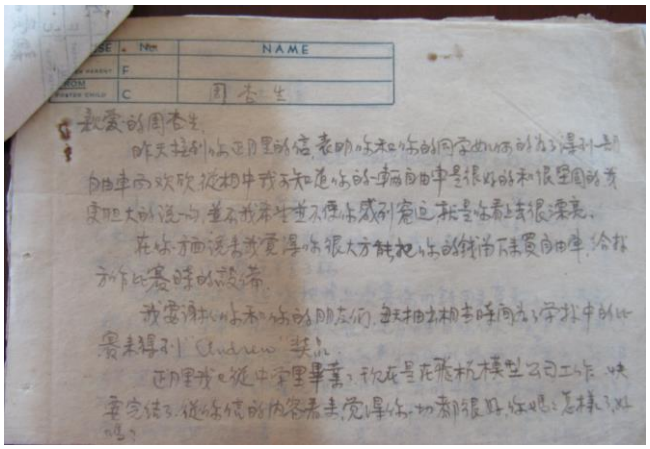
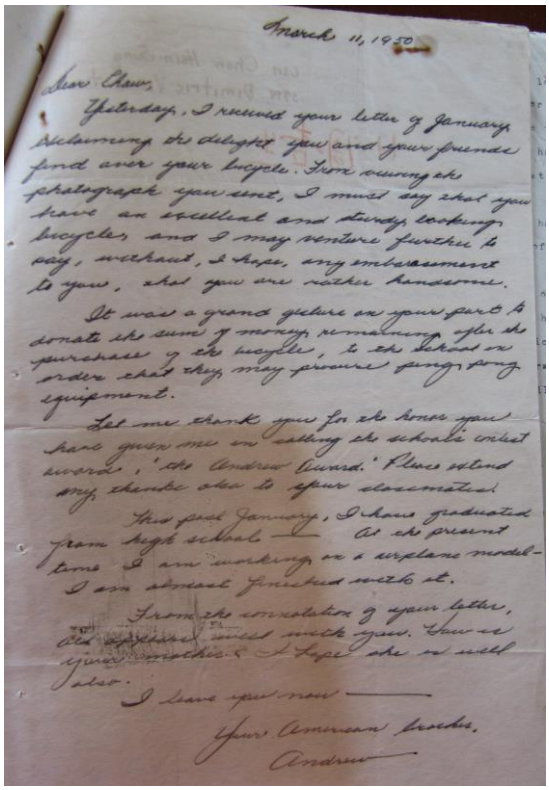


Figure 6: The Chinese translation of Vincent to Zhou Xingsheng.



March 11, 1950

Dear Chou,

Yesterday, I received your letter of January declaring the delight you and your friends find over your bicycle. From viewing the photograph you sent, I must say that you have an excellent and sturdy looking bicycles, and I may venture further to say, without, I hope, any embarassment to you, that you are rather handsome.

It was a grand picture on your part to donate the sum of money, remaining after the purchase of the bicycle, to the School in order that they may procure ping pong equipment.

Let me thank you for the honor you have given me in calling the scholarship which awards, 'The Andrew Award.' Please extend my thanks also to your classmates.

This past January, I have graduated from high school — At the present time I am working on a airplane model- I am almost finished with it.

From the annotation of your letter, the [illegible] missed with you. How is your mother? I hope she is well also.

I leave you now —

Your American brother,

Andrew

Figure 7: Vincent's original English letter to Zhou Xingsheng.

As the school played a crucial role in facilitating communication between the children and their foster parents, the letters exchanged could offer insights into the school's stance on various subjects, such as the political climate. The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) military successes and potential ideological conflicts between the US and China were topics that some American parents deliberately avoided discussing. The majority of letters centered on themes like weather, family members, recent activities, travel plans, and festivals. Some parents might have been unaware of the political situation, while others may have intentionally refrained from mentioning it. In a letter from T. P. Heffelfinger to Shinian on June 16, 1949, when the CCP's army had occupied She County and Shinian informed the foster parent about the situation, Heffelfinger wrote, " I am sorry the soldiers have occupied your school and hinder you from studying

properly. I hope by this time they have given you more than one room for your classes." Following these two sentences, Heffelfinger abruptly shifted the focus to his school children's parade and picnic, describing their attire, activities, and the ice cream and soda they enjoyed. This brief expression of sympathy and sudden change in subject suggest that the foster parent was either unwilling to delve into the ideological conflict or simply unconcerned. In a letter to Zhang Yichang, the foster parent wrote, " We understand the pain you suffered during the war time. I agree with what you said: all things, no matter good or bad, were done by people. Although the construction after war takes a long time, I believe you can make contributions." S. S. Stalter's letter to Fang Jide read, " A note from the Foster Parent's Plan, attached to your last letter, indicating that you are in the war zone, but that you are being provided for in this emergency. I hope that no difficulty befalls you and that some soon this war that the world has been suffering from will cease." Stalter was only aware of the wartime situation through a note from the FPPWC and did not express interest in or inquire about the child's circumstances. Roy L. Wall, who frequently corresponded with his foster child, demonstrated both awareness and concern regarding the situation. In his letter dated April 2, 1949, he acknowledged the events unfolding in China and expressed hope that they would not impact his foster child's education and well-being. In a subsequent letter on April 25, Roy stated in the second paragraph, "Our people living in US are all observing what happened in China with a heavy heart. No matter what the result will be, I hope these changes can bring a peaceful and flourishing China." While foster parents differed in their willingness to address the political situation, it remained an inescapable aspect of their communication.

Owing to the schools' significant involvement in the communication process and the inescapable topic of the political situation between China and the US, these letters offer insights into the school's stance towards the CCP through non-governmental exchanges between the two countries during the early years of the Cold War. Although the letters were exclusively from foster parents to children and do not reveal how the school and students discussed the current situation with their American foster parents, the school manager's comments on these letters reflect his disapproval of the ongoing warfare and potential ideological conflicts between the two nations. In a letter dated February 4, 1949, Andrew, the child of Zhou Xingsheng's foster parent, wrote to Zhou Xingsheng, explaining the meaning of Christmas and how Christians perceive war, peace, and love. Andrew's letter stated, "War is based on hatred, horror, and jealousness. Love is the weapon to overcome war. Dear Zhou, love is the base of peace, and the motivation of our same kind of people to cooperate. Because of love, my father chose to be your foster parent." These words seemed to capture Xu Shiqi's attention, prompting him to leave an extensive comment: "This is a letter written by a child, he explains the meaning of war and peace. He also shows the greatness and attraction of universal love (博爱). Although we are not Christian, we cannot deny the truth."

The school manager Xu Shiqi's comment reveals his opposition to warfare and, in this specific context, his resistance to the CCP's arrival and governance. This remark was penned in February 1949, a time when the CCP had not yet occupied She County and Shanghai, but its imminent victory was anticipated. The CCP had already commenced training cadres to assume control of Shanghai. Desiring peace during this period implied

opposition to the CCP's arrival and governance. Xu's comments typically revolved around crafting the appropriate response letter; however, this particular comment diverged from that focus. It is plausible that Xu was deeply concerned about operating the school under a regime with an ideology contrary to that of the school's patronage, prompting him to express more in his commentary.

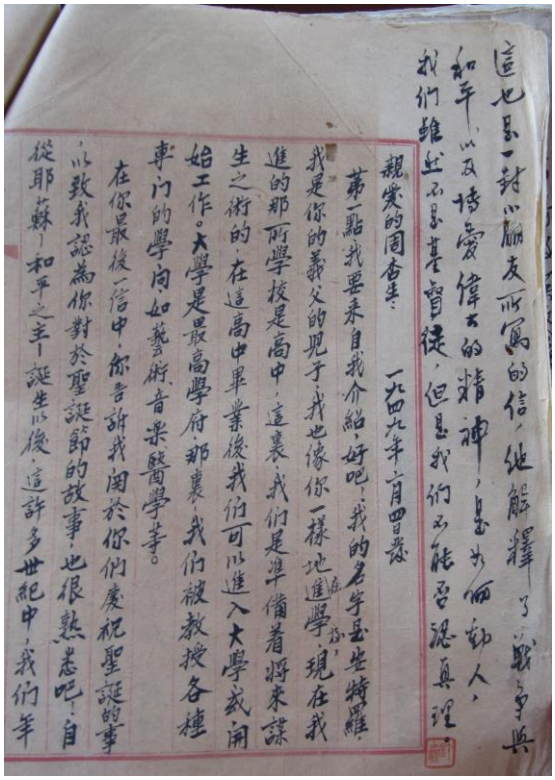


Figure 8: Xu Shiqi’s comments on the right side of the letter.

The school's endeavors to maintain and foster communication, as well as its meticulous preservation of letters throughout numerous political campaigns during the Mao era, including the violence of the Cultural Revolution, underscore the school's perspective on the leading country with an opposing ideology. The school's stance towards the US further exemplifies its disapproving attitude towards the CCP's governance. Otherwise, communication would have ceased immediately following the

power transition. If the FPPWC had terminated its financial assistance concurrently with the Shanghai association, the school likely would have discontinued communication with the US at that point. Consequently, the stability of US financial support contributed to the school's persistent, fervent efforts in sustaining communication with the US.

The preservation of these letters during various political campaigns, particularly the Cultural Revolution, raises questions about whether all school leaders during different periods were aware of the letters' existence. If the individual(s) responsible for safeguarding these letters had embraced the CCP's ideology or succumbed to the political pressure against dissenting views, they would have likely destroyed the letters during the campaigns to guarantee security and political reliability. The fact that these letters survived throughout the numerous political campaigns attests to the persistence of dissenting attitudes during the Mao era.

In 1951, Xingzhi School faced a financial crisis, and the government was unwilling to take over this private school due to budget constraints. The FPPWC's financial support, which constituted the primary income source for Xingzhi Elementary School, was terminated on the first day of 1951. The school could not survive for more than six months after the funding cut, and by June, it was unable to pay teachers' salaries. Xu Shiqi, the school's founder, appealed to the county bureau several times, requesting the government's intervention. Xu even acknowledged to the government that the school's education "has made several mistakes and deviations (已产生若干错误和偏向),"

implying dissenting attitudes towards the CCP's ideology.[107] Xu was conscious of the potential repercussions of making such a statement, yet he conveyed it to the government regardless. In his view, the school's financial desperation outweighed the possible political persecution. In July, the county rejected Xu's request, but the county government still wanted the school to continue. They provided the school with 3,000 jin of rice and explained that the school was one of the best elementary schools in the county. Moreover, following the Land Reform, the demand for education had increased, making it imperative for Xingzhi School to remain open.[108] If the county had wanted the school to close, they could have withheld funding and awaited its eventual closure. The primary factor preventing the county government from taking over the school was their limited budget.

On June 14, 1952, Mao issued an instruction stating that the CCP "should take over all private elementary and middle schools if possible."[109] Approximately three months later, on September 1, the state education bureau issued a decree mandating that "from now until the year of 1954, all private elementary and middle schools should be taken over by the government."[110] From 1951 to 1953, the number of non-public elementary school teachers dwindled from around 435,000 to around 43,000, with the

[107] "为校许士骐报请接办私立行知小学特请该示由(1951 年 7 月 10 日)" ("On Xu Shiqi's Request for Approval to Take Over the Private Xingzhi Elementary School"), She County Archives, 62-1-23.
[108] "覆关于歙县私立行知小学请求接办问题 (1951 年 8 月 3 日)" ("Reply to She County Private Xingzhi Elementary School 's Request to Take Over, August 3, 1951"), She County Archives, 62-1-24.
[109] 刘英杰 Liu Yingjie ed., *中国教育大事典, 1949-1990 Encyclopedia of Major Events in Chinese Education, 1949-1990* (杭州: 浙江教育出版社, 1993 年版 Hangzhou: Zhejiang Education Press, 1993), p.328.
[110] 何东昌 He Dongchang ed., *中华人民共和国重要教育文献, 1949-1975 Important Educational Documents of People's Republic of China, 1949-1975* (海口: 海南出版社 1998 年版 Haikou: Hainan Publishing House, 1998), p.164.

percentage dropping from 34.8% to 2.7%.[111] On August 26, 1953, after the conclusion of the Korean War and the easing of the county's budget constraints, Xingzhi School was taken over by the county government and subsequently became a public school.[112]

In March 1954, due to the campaign to criticize the film "Wu Xun Zhuan (武训传)," which later targeted Tao Xingzhi, the school renamed itself to remove Tao's name. The film was based on the real-life story of Wu Xun, a late-Qing beggar who begged for over 30 years and donated all his income to establish and finance three charity schools in rural Shandong. Although the film highlights Wu Xun's realization of the importance of education and his sacrifices for charity schools, it does not unequivocally endorse his actions. The film criticizes Wu Xun's charity schools for teaching students Confucian classics, which encouraged them to become officials of the corrupt Qing court. The film's final commentary on Wu Xun was that "although he fought for a lifetime to secure educational opportunities for poor children and to struggle against feudal forces, his individual resistance was not enough. He established three charity schools, but after he died, they were still seized by landlords. Therefore, simply relying on education alone cannot liberate the poor." Another final comment in the last part of the film was about a peasant rebellion leader, "although he burned, killed, eliminated the bully, and sought revenge, he still couldn't organize the masses." The film did not solely promote the peasants' war, which was one source of the CCP's legitimacy. Mao's criticism of the film

[111] 中央教育科学研究所 Central Institute of Educational Sciences ed., 中华人民共和国教育大事记, 1949-1982 Chronicle of Major Events in Education in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1982(北京: 教育科学出版社 1984 年版 Beijing: Educational Sciences Publishing House), p.128.
[112] "接办私立行知小学由 (1953 年 8 月 26 日)" (On Taking Over Xingzhi Private School, August 26, 1953), She County Archives, 62-1-37.

primarily focused on two points: it "fanatically promotes feudal cultures (狂热的宣传封建文化)" and "blemishes peasants' revolutionary fight (污蔑农民革命斗争)."[113] Mao's criticism of "promoting feudal cultures" is not accurate, as the film does not wholeheartedly endorse Wu Xun's efforts. The film's critical comment on the peasants' rebellion likely triggered Mao's criticism. In any case, Mao's critique of the film later extended to Tao Xingzhi, as Tao was the main figure who introduced and advocated Wu Xun's life story to the film director Sun Yu.

The First Five-year Plan

During the financial crisis brought on by the Korean War, education experienced expansion. However, this growth did not persist and even contracted once the state's financial situation improved after the war. It appears that the CCP intentionally hindered the development of education following the conflict. In the latter half of 1953, when the Korean War ended and the state's finances recovered, the CCP took over private schools like Xingzhi Elementary School. Despite this, education did not expand. In 1953, She County witnessed the closure of 10 elementary schools and a decline of nearly 1,400 students. Throughout the First Five-Year Plan period (1954-1957), when the state's financial situation should have been more robust than during the Korean War, the CCP not only failed to expand education but also impeded its development. Data from the

[113] "应当重视电影《武训传》的讨论" ("We Should Pay Attention to the Discussion on the Movie 'Biography of Wu Xun'") *毛泽东选集 第五卷 Selected Works of Mao Zedong, Volume 5* (北京:人民出版社 1977 年 4 月第 1 版 Beijing: People's Publishing House), p.46-47.

Table of Elementary Schools, Teachers, and Students indicates that from 1954 to 1957, the numbers of elementary schools, teachers, and students either stagnated or declined.

The most significant decline in student enrollment occurred in the year following the end of the Korean War, potentially exacerbating the urban-rural divide. In 1954, the number of elementary schools, teachers, and students all decreased. Although there was only one fewer school in 1954 compared to 1953, student enrollment plunged by a staggering 5,238. Why did the closure of a single school result in over 5,000 students losing access to education? One possible reason was the cancellation of the Senior Elementary Section of the CES. Out of the 5,238 affected students, 3,728 dropped out of school, while around 1,500 suspended their education. At the end of 1953, there were 36,245 elementary students; before the summer vacation of 1954, that number dropped to 35,491. After the vacation, it further declined to 33,250, and by year-end, only 31,007 students remained. The gradual decrease in student enrollment throughout the year, rather than an abrupt drop, suggests that this reduction may have been strategically planned to be less noticeable. Meanwhile, the CCP made no efforts to bring students back to school, indicating an intentional reduction in enrollment. The number of teachers also diminished, with 14 fewer teachers after the summer vacation than before. The annual report fails to address the decline in teachers or discuss plans for hiring additional educators, further suggesting that the CCP deliberately restricted education.

Remote rural areas were disproportionately impacted by the education curtailment, which contributed to the widening of the urban-rural divide. The CCP justified the reduction by stating that some remote rural schools had a small number of

students, and as a result, they were a waste of human and financial resources.[114] The so-called "small" number of students was more likely to occur in remote rural areas rather than in county seats, townships, or large villages. Consequently, the loss of students primarily took place in remote areas. The decrease in students could also lead to the loss of teachers. As the majority of student losses occurred in remote rural areas, teacher losses were also more prevalent in these locations.

In addition to the loss of students and teachers, rural areas and the peasants living there also experienced discrimination from the state. The county education bureau attributed the decline in student enrollment to the labor education course in schools. The CCP believed that labor education lowered teaching quality and dissuaded students from continuing their education. While the labor time might have been reduced later, there was no mention of it in the archives. Some students and parents felt that excessive labor in schools, rather than focusing on studying, rendered schooling pointless. This devaluation of agricultural labor inadvertently led to discrimination against rural areas and peasants engaged in agricultural work, even if it was not the CCP's explicit intention or plan.

The contraction of the education system and the widening of the urban-rural divide could contribute to school bullying and physical violence. In 1954, the CCP forced the closure of some senior elementary sections due to insufficient student numbers to justify their maintenance and support. This resulted in potential bullying and violence in schools. Chengchuan Minban Elementary School, for example, canceled its senior

[114] “在区干部会上的讲话(1954 年)” (“Speech at the District Cadres Meeting”), She County Archives, 62-1-45.

elementary section in 1954, forcing students to walk to the neighboring Song village's senior section for classes. However, these new students often engaged in altercations with the Song village students, sometimes leading to bloody conflicts. The reasons behind these fights and who started them remain unclear, but it is evident that they were not personal disputes and involved Chengchuan and Song village students. It is highly likely that Song village students perceived the newcomers as intruders, competitors for resources, and weaker individuals. Song village teachers, unfamiliar with the new students and less likely to have personal connections with them, may have viewed these students as an additional teaching burden. Song village students could feel a sense of power over the newcomers, who were temporarily separated from their parents and in an unfamiliar environment. It was also possible that lineage conflicts between these two villages remained as a topic among villagers. Song village' students might hear about the violent history and justified the necessity of violence towards Chengchuan kids. The physical violence between the two groups of students was likely a form of school bullying. Consequently, school bullying and physical violence could be seen as unintended consequences of the shrinking education system.

In 1954, the CCP recognized an issue in the education system that would spark student movements two years later: the expansion of elementary schools had outpaced the capacity of middle schools. The growth in education was primarily focused on elementary schools, with the number of schools and students nearly quadrupling to over 800 and 43,653 respectively since 1949. In contrast, there were still only two middle

schools, and their student population had not increased significantly.[115] As a result, the majority of elementary school graduates could not continue their education in middle schools. Rather than investing in education and constructing more middle schools, the CCP encouraged students to participate in agricultural labor, as they were more valuable as laborers than as students. To mitigate social discontent, the CCP employed a sophisticated propaganda strategy. However, their policy of promoting agricultural labor for students generated dissatisfaction and complaints among the general public.

The CCP was aware of the discontent and complaints, so they devised propaganda tactics to address these issues. They first divided people into five distinct groups—SES graduates, JES graduates, parents, teachers, and cadres—and analyzed each group's dissatisfaction. SES graduates believed that not attending middle school and engaging in agricultural labor was "embarrassing," as they discriminated against all occupations except intellectual pursuits. Some JES graduates thought that they couldn't avoid agricultural labor in the future anyway, so they saw no reason not to start early, which left them unmotivated to continue studying. Parents complained about the government's failure to open more middle schools, criticized teachers and children for not fulfilling their responsibilities, rejected the “moving up the social hierarchy culturally (文化翻身)” promise that the CCP made when they took power, and questioned the instability of policies that once encouraged education but now promoted agricultural labor. Some teachers might have felt “losing face” and disappointment that their students could not enter middle schools. Cadres found it challenging and tedious to handle the policy shift

[115] “在区干部会上的讲话(1954 年)” (“Speech at the District Cadres Meeting”), She County Archives, 62-1-45.

from encouraging children to attend school to mobilizing them for labor. The CCP's propaganda targeted each group's concerns and tailored their approach to address the differing perspectives among these groups.

The CCP employed a "divide and conquer" tactic in their propaganda efforts, transforming some dissatisfied individuals into a powerful propaganda force. The party viewed lower-level local cadres and teachers as key targets. These two groups, financed by the CCP, were seen as easily influenced and controllable. Additionally, they had the potential to impact other groups, making them valuable assets in the eyes of the CCP. Lower-level cadres were required to attend political study workshops. In these workshops, higher-level cadres would engage in personal conversations with them, such as dinner chats and casual talks, to understand their thoughts and ideas. Then, in more formal settings, higher-level cadres would educate the lower-level ones. Through this targeted education, lower-level cadres would become reliable propaganda workers. Teachers would receive instruction on effective strategies for managing conversations with parents, collecting their concerns, and reporting to the local government. Teachers were also expected to incorporate propaganda into their teaching. The CCP believed that once teachers and cadres aligned with the party's propaganda, they could influence students, parents, and the broader population. In doing so, they could micromanage the propaganda work directed at students, parents, and the masses, while also serving as informants for the CCP.

In addition to the "divide and conquer" tactic, the CCP also prioritized the state's goals over individual needs for higher education. The underlying logic was that

individual pursuits were inferior to the collective good. The CCP discredited the individual desire for middle school attendance by labeling it as "discriminatory towards labor." After undermining individual needs, the CCP emphasized the overarching collective goal of heavy industry industrialization. 1954 marked the beginning of the "First Five-Year Plan," which focused on the industrialization of heavy industry. Higher-level cadres instructed lower-level cadres to emphasize the importance of industrialization to those who were dissatisfied. To secure agricultural products and support industrialization, the state needed agricultural labor. Thus, the CCP glorified agricultural labor as a “better way to improve rural area’s production and unfold the collectivization. (更好的发展农业生产，开展农村的互助合作运动)”.[116] By emphasizing the state's goals, the CCP aimed to assign meaning and value to previously unacceptable life choices for children and parents. The hope was that agricultural labor would become an acceptable choice for students and parents through these tactics. While these propaganda tactics might have been effective for a short period, after two years, public complaints and discontent could no longer be contained. It is unclear whether the CCP intentionally curtailed education to address middle school enrollment issues. If that were the case, the CCP would likely have continued to restrict elementary school enrollment. However, this did not happen.

The years 1955 and 1956 saw the CCP's high leadership waver between radical leaps forward and conservative curtailment of economic development. Towards the end

[116] “在区干部会上的讲话(1954 年)” (“Speech at the District Cadres Meeting”), She County Archives, 62-1-45.

of 1955, Mao took steps to accelerate the five-year plan. In November 1955, he issued a document titled "Seventeen Articles on Agriculture (农业十七条)" to central and provincial leaders in China. In response, provincial leaders either claimed they could achieve two years' goals in one year or asserted that each acre of land could yield "thousands of jin of grains, ten thousand jin of sweet potatoes, and hundreds of jin of cotton."[117] The consequences of Mao issuing this document were similar to those of the later Great Leap Forward. In the same month that Mao issued this document, the National Education Bureau criticized the conservative tendency in education and announced that elementary schools, junior middle schools, and teacher training schools should meet the First Five-Year Plan quota one year ahead of schedule.[118] In January 1956, the CCP's Central Committee issued the "National Agricultural Development Plan (Draft) for the Years 1956-1967." The plan stipulated that "since 1956, all regions of China should implement education within 7 years or 12 years. The elementary schools in rural area should be financed by the local agricultural production cooperatives."[119]

Mao's efforts to speed up policies, however, were met with resistance from other central leaders. On February 10, 1956, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai held an executive meeting of the State Council. This meeting identified problems with the "leap" and

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[117] *People's Daily*, November 28, 1955, December 13, 1955, December 14, 1955, and January 16, 1956. 沈志华 Shen Zhihua, *中华人民共和国史第3 卷 History of People's Republic of China, Volume 3* (香港: 香港中文大学出版社, 2008 年版 Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2008), p.167.
[118] 刘英杰 Liu Yingjie ed., *中国教育大事典, 1949-1990 Encyclopedia of Major Events in Chinese Education, 1949-1990* (杭州: 浙江教育出版社, 1993 年版 Hangzhou: Zhejiang Education Press, 1993), p.321.
[119] 刘英杰 Liu Yingjie ed., *中国教育大事典, 1949-1990 Encyclopedia of Major Events in Chinese Education, 1949-1990* (杭州: 浙江教育出版社, 1993 年版 Hangzhou: Zhejiang Education Press, 1993), p.321.

revised the 1955 plan, cutting the national basic construction investment from 17 billion to 14.7 billion.[120] On June 1, Zhou reiterated that the 1956 plan was too ambitious and should "leap less 冒进少点".[121] On June 4, a CCP Central Committee meeting on the year's budget plan approved Zhou's proposal to reduce budget expenses and basic construction investment. On June 15, 1956, the third session of the First National People's Representative Conference approved the 1956 budget plan, with the main focus being on "anti-leap." Just the next day, before the conference's discussion, People's Daily published the budget report and an editor's comment emphasizing the anti-leap idea. On June 20, *People's Daily* published an editor's comment on the front page, listing the problems caused by the leap since the latter half of 1955.[122] This comment was likely composed by Liu Shaoqi.[123] Consequently, at the central government level, both Zhou and Liu worked to restrain Mao's actions.

The central government's wavering attitudes were also evident at the local level. On one hand, the number of students experienced a slight increase during 1955 and 1956. According to the county education bureau's annual report, at the end of 1955, there were 33,876 elementary students, marking an increase of 2,869 students compared to the previous year. By the end of 1956, the number of elementary students had risen to

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[120] 中共中央文献研究室编 Research Office of the CCP Central Committee Literature, 周恩来年谱 1949-1976 上卷 Chronology of Zhou Enlai 1949-1976, Volume 1 (北京: 中央文献出版社, 1997 年版 Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 1997), p.547.
[121] 沈志华 Shen Zhihua, *中华人民共和国史第3 卷 History of People's Republic of China Volume 3*, p.179.
[122] *People's Daily*, June 20, 1956.
[123] 陈清泉,宋广渭 Chen Qingquan, Song Guangwei, *陆定一传 Biography of Lu Dingyi* (北京: 中央党史出版社 1999 年版 Beijing: History of Chinese Communist Party Publishing House, 1999), p.443-444. 沈志华 Shen Zhihua, *中华人民共和国史第3 卷 History of People's Republic of China, Volume 3*, p.187-189.

40,576, an increase of 6,700 students from 1955. On the other hand, both the number of teachers and schools declined. In 1955, there were 526 elementary schools and 1,519 teachers, reflecting a decrease of 2 schools and 39 teachers compared to 1954. In 1956, the number of elementary schools had dropped to 516, and the number of teachers had fallen to 1,485, which was 10 schools and 34 teachers less than in 1955.

The combination of an increase in students and a decrease in teachers led to a higher workload for educators. The teacher-student ratio dropped from 1:19.8 in 1955 to 1:24 in 1956.[124] This decline in the teacher-student ratio signified an increase in teachers' workload, as they had more students to care, additional assignments to grade, and a greater number of courses to cover. Alongside this increased workload, public teachers' salaries also rose. Prior to 1955, teachers were paid through a mix of grain and cash. In 1955, the payment method shifted to an all-cash system, with the average monthly salary for elementary teachers reaching 26.25 RMB. By 1956, the average salary had grown by 43.01% to 37.54 RMB.

Although the state claimed to eliminate the urban-rural divide in teachers' salaries in 1956, it did not take into account the salaries of minban teachers. In 1955, the state instructed cooperatives or communes to assume partial financial responsibility for some elementary schools in remote rural areas. This transfer of financial responsibility to cooperatives or communes was a common measure adopted by the state to implement education when faced with a limited budget. Teachers in these cooperatively or

[124] “歙县 1956 年教育工作总结” (“Report of She County’s Educational Work in 1956”), She County Archives, 62-1-58.

communally funded schools were not paid by the state, and their salaries were not regulated or monitored by the state. The county government did not include their salaries in its calculations when making the statement. As a result, the urban-rural divide in teachers' salaries was not eliminated as the state claimed.

The stagnation of education in 1955 and 1956 led to a surge in discontent and complaints, rendering CCP's propaganda tactics ineffective on a national level. In 1956, students demonstrated against the shrinking enrollment in middle schools and higher education institutions. Rural students faced fewer opportunities to receive higher education and escape their rural surroundings. Consequently, rural middle school graduates were forced to return to their rural areas.[125] These student demonstrations even sparked worker strikes and protests.[126] Subsequently, some peasants took action to dismantle or withdraw from the cooperatives and communes they had recently joined.[127]

In the absence of significant accomplishments in education, the county education bureau highlighted their efforts in implementing teaching improvement plans. Enhancing teaching quality was a more cost-effective objective compared to the expansion of education. The bureau's annual report noted that they arranged for 80 elementary school teachers to attend training at teachers' schools to enhance their instructional skills during that year.[128] Additionally, the establishment of a new department within the county

[125] 沈志华 Shen Zhihua, *中华人民共和国史第3卷 History of People's Republic of China, Volume 3*, p.584-591.
[126] 沈志华 Shen Zhihua, *中华人民共和国史第3卷 History of People's Republic of China, Volume 3*, p.593.
[127] 沈志华 Shen Zhihua, *中华人民共和国史第3卷 History of People's Republic of China, Volume 3*, p.593-594.
[128] "歙县 1954 年教育工作总结" ("Report of She County's Educational Work in 1954"), She County Archives, 62-1-44.

education bureau, the Teaching and Research Section (教研室), was considered an achievement that year. The primary responsibilities of this section included organizing collaborative teaching activities and short-term training sessions for teachers across the county, as well as editing and publishing a local teaching magazine.

A critical teacher training initiative that commenced in 1956 was the Putonghua training program. The state promoted the Beijing dialect-based Mandarin Chinese, Putonghua, and provided training for elementary teachers in Beijing dialect pronunciation and the Pinyin system. In She County, over 63% of all elementary teachers, or approximately 1100 teachers, participated in three training sessions in 1956. Almost all first-grade Chinese teachers attended the trainings, as they were considered the most crucial group by the state.[129] One possible reason for the emphasis on first-grade teachers was the state's recognition of the challenges associated with promoting and implementing Mandarin Chinese. The state might have been unwilling or unable to address the dialect pronunciation of all teachers and students. Consequently, it opted for the more manageable task of correcting the first-grade teachers and students.

Improving teaching quality had the potential to exacerbate the urban-rural divide in education. Both long-term and short-term training sessions were held in county seats or townships, which disadvantaged teachers in remote rural areas. Regarding long-term training, teachers in remote areas were less likely to attend, as they often needed to teach multiple courses across different grades. In some cases, a single teacher staffed a whole

[129]"歙县 1956 年教育工作总结" ("Report of She County's Educational Work in 1956"), She County Archives, 62-1-58.

school. If these teachers left for training, there would be no one to cover their workload. In larger-scale schools, however, it would be more feasible to find substitute teachers. As for short-term training, remote rural teachers also faced challenges in attending. At the time, people predominantly traveled on foot, as automobiles and bicycles were scarce. Teachers in remote areas could spend half a day, an entire day, or even longer on transportation, which made attending short-term training and activities less feasible. Additionally, the teaching magazine published by the county education bureau was more challenging and costly to distribute to remote rural areas. Consequently, teachers in these areas were less likely to have access to all the teaching improvement plans. Therefore, the teaching improvement plan primarily benefited teachers in county seats, towns, and larger villages, further widening the urban-rural divide in education.

The state's prioritization of improving teaching quality over expanding education could contribute to the widening of the urban-rural divide. Jing village serves as an example of the struggles faced by rural areas during the period of education stagnation. In 1953, the Jing village elementary school, which included a complete elementary school (CES) and a senior elementary section (5th and 6th grades), had more than 120 students. The senior section had about 30 students before 1954, with four graduates eventually attending college and several others becoming elementary teachers after attending junior teachers' schools. However, in 1954, the county education bureau closed the school's senior elementary section. Consequently, enrollment decreased every year, and by 1957, there were fewer than 70 students. Students in the 5th and 6th grades had to walk 4.5 to 5 kilometers to attend another school, causing parents to worry about their children's safety. As a result, only seven students from Jing village were enrolled in the 5th and 6th grades,

significantly fewer than expected. Jing village exemplifies how rural areas suffered as the state deliberately curtailed the expansion of education.

The curtailing and stagnation of education were particularly unfavorable for female students. In 1955, She County conducted a survey analyzing the number of students in each grade, with the final row of the table representing female student figures. Out of 35,951 elementary students, only 14,200 were female, comprising approximately 40% (39.50%) of the total student population. While this represented a significant improvement from 1950, when merely one-fifth of elementary students were female, a closer examination of the data reveals a decline in female enrollment from lower to higher grades. The table below illustrates the number and percentage of female students across all grades: the data indicate that female students had relatively high enrollment in grades 1, 2, and 3. However, there was a 7% decrease in enrollment by grade 4. Furthermore, between grade 4 and the Senior Elementary School (SES, comprising grades 5 and 6), female student enrollment experienced a substantial drop of approximately 10%.

Table 2: She County Female Students' Numbers and Percentages

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total
Students' number	9575	8091	7247	5200	3172	2666	35951
Female students' number	4123	3663	3075	1858	823	658	14200
Female students' percentage	43.06%	45.27%	42.43%	35.73%	25.95%	24.68%	39.50%

The Anti-Rightist Campaign, the Great Leap Forward and Its Aftermath

In 1957, education began to recover from its previous stagnation, experiencing modest growth that would continue more significantly from 1958 to 1960. Compared to 1956, the number of elementary schools, students, and teachers all increased in 1957. The growth was moderate, with an increase of 5 elementary schools, 67 students, and 75 teachers.

In 1958, education experienced an unprecedented expansion compared to previous years, with an increase of 241 elementary schools, 15,642 new students, and 221 additional teachers. The middle school enrollment issue, which had triggered student movements in 1956, was seriously addressed in 1958. She County established one junior middle school, one junior teacher's school, and one junior agricultural school, providing three more junior middle schools to accommodate elementary school graduates. In March 1958, 109 minban middle schools, operated by communes, were established within just one week. Out of these, 30 minban middle schools continued operating until the end of the year. In 1958, She County consolidated its 445 higher-stage cooperatives into 15 communes, resulting in an average of 2 minban middle schools per commune. Additionally, 4 junior vocational middle schools were established by work units in She County. By the end of 1958, these middle schools had 7,216 students, nearly double the number of students in 1957 (3,715 students). This upward trend persisted for two more years. In 1959, there was an increase of 193 elementary schools, 2,207 students, and 75 teachers. This year also witnessed 9 more minban middle schools operated by the

communes. The county education bureau established three more junior middle schools; two of them were middle schools and the other was a teacher's school. In 1960, the growth continued with 27 more elementary schools, 1,191 additional students, and 169 new teachers.

The Anti-rightist Campaign at the local level was intertwined with the Rectification process. In She County, the planning and scheduling of the Rectification and Anti-rightist activities among elementary school teachers were documented in a report titled "Thoughts on Elementary Schools Rectification Plan (关于小学整风计划的意见)."[130] Though the report was undated, it was likely written in late October or early November of 1957.[131] This report was the outcome of a two-day discussion among the leaders of the county education bureau.

The Rectification and Anti-rightist Campaign were planned in four stages. The first stage, scheduled from November 30, 1957, to January 13, 1958, focused on motivation, study, and the open expression of views and criticisms toward the CCP. During the initial two weeks, from November 30 to December 13, elementary teachers were first motivated and then spent one or one and a half hours every morning at their schools, individually studying materials related to the campaign. These teachers were also convened twice during this period for group study and discussion sessions. The

[130] "有关小学整风计划的意见" (Opinions on the Elementary School Rectification Plan), She County Archives, 62-1-67.
[131] The reason for dating it in late October or early November was because one study material, Deng Xiaoping's booklet Report on Rectification was published in October 1957, and the campaign was scheduled to start from late November 1957.

primary study material was Mao's paper "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的问题)," published in the *People's Daily* on June 19, 1957. Supplementary materials included "CCPCC's Directions on Rectification" ("中国共产党中央委员会关于整风运动的指示," published in the *People's Daily* on May 1, 1957), Mao's "Wenhui Newspaper's Capitalistic Direction Should be Criticized" ("文汇报的资产阶级方向应当批判," published in the *People's Daily* on July 1, 1957), and Deng Xiaoping's booklet Report on Rectification (《关于整风运动的报告》, published by the *People's Daily Press*, October 1957), among others.

According to the report, at the onset of the campaign, all elementary teachers were clearly instructed on six criteria for identifying someone as a "rightist." These criteria were both detailed and vague simultaneously. In the first stage, elementary teachers were required to learn and study the six criteria: uniting people in China rather than dividing them; contributing to socialist construction instead of destroying it; strengthening people's democratic dictatorship instead of weakening it; reinforcing democratic centralism rather than diminishing it; consolidating the CCP's leadership instead of attempting to discard it; and bolstering the unification of all communist countries rather than crippling it. Meeting any of the negative standards could result in being labeled a "rightist," such as dividing people in China, destroying socialist construction, or weakening people's democratic dictatorship, among others. The report also emphasizes that the two most important criteria were "socialist way" (社会主义道

路) and "CCP's leadership." However, the "socialist way" was a vague concept that was not explicitly mentioned in the six criteria. It could refer to the second, third, and fourth criteria collectively, or it could serve as an umbrella term to encompass any form of discontent.

The two most important criteria and the umbrella term being exploited resonated with Cao Shuji and Li Nan's research on Tongbai County's Anti-Rightist Campaign. Based on their modeling, Cao and Li discovered that among various types of criticisms, three kinds were more likely to result in a "rightist" label: criticizing collectivization and advocating for peasants; criticizing the CCP's previous political campaigns; and employing strong emotional language in criticism.[132] These three criteria aligned with the two most important criteria mentioned in the report. Cao and Li's research also revealed that lodging complaints against specific leaders or cadres could lead to being labeled as a "rightist."

The six criteria issued in She County slightly deviated from the CCPCC's criteria; however, this difference could be considered negligible. The six criteria issued by the CCPCC on October 15, 1957, included: anti-socialist system, such as attacking the unified purchasing and marketing; anti-proletarian dictatorship or democratic centralism; opposing the CCP's leadership; dividing people to attack socialism and the CCP; organizing or actively participating in anti-socialism and anti-CCP activities; and informing on rightists who committed the aforementioned crimes. The only variation was

[132] 曹树基, 李楠 Cao Shuji, Li Nan, “划分右派：以桐柏县为基础的研究” (“Labeling Rightists: A Case Study Based on Tongbai County”), *学术界 Xueshu Jie*, no.140 January 2010.

the last criterion involving other socialist countries. It is safe to assert that at the local level, the criteria for labeling rightists exhibited only minor differences from those of the central government.

Upon studying these materials and criteria, elementary teachers were encouraged to critique the CCP. The report indicated that the primary method for this was group discussion, with the objective of allowing everyone to express their thoughts freely. To facilitate this, leaders were instructed to remain calm, listen to suggestions, abstain from offering explanations, and most importantly, refrain from arguing. The plan curbed leaders' inclination to argue or explain, but did not mention any restrictions on enticing teachers to voice their discontent, including personal grievances with specific leaders. The absence of such mention implied a lack of limitation. It is plausible that during this period, leaders might have lured certain teachers to discuss their personal grudge, interpreting these as disagreements with the "socialist way." Cao and Li's research demonstrates that complaining about a particular leader could result in being labeled as a "rightist."[133]

The second stage, referred to as "fighting back the rightists (反击右派)," did not necessarily require schools to have identified any "rightist." If none were found, no action would be taken. However, if rightists were identified, the counterattack during this stage did not involve persecution. Instead, it was a time for debate, with the appropriate approach being to "present facts and reason things out (摆事实，讲道理)." This stage

[133] 曹树基, 李楠 Cao Shuji, Li Nan, “划分右派：以桐柏县为基础的研究” (“Labeling Rightists: A Case Study Based on Tongbai County”), *学术界 Xueshu Jie*, no.140 January 2010.

was scheduled to last from January 14 to February 14, 1958. The Lunar New Year began on February 18, and teachers were permitted to take vacation starting February 15.

The report provides no details or timetable for the final two stages, but the general idea of the third stage was to "rectify rigorously and revise boldly (狠狠的整，大胆的改)," which involved continuing the open expression of views. The last stage focused on systematic confession and self-improvement. The ultimate goal of the entire campaign was to achieve a "vibrant and dynamic outlook (朝气蓬勃的新气象)," though the report does not clarify what this entails. However, based on She County's two most important criteria for labeling someone as a "rightist," it is reasonable to infer that a "vibrant and dynamic outlook" meant complete consent with the CCP's governance without any disagreement.

This report offers new insights into the current scholarship on the Anti-Rightist Campaign in three aspects. First, it reveals that all individuals involved in the Campaign were aware of the fine line between safety and danger, as well as the fluidity and vagueness of this boundary. Consequently, they understood how to navigate the campaign cautiously. Cao Shuji's research on the local-level Anti-Rightist Campaign concludes that those involved were aware of the consequences of criticizing the CCP.[134] This conclusion was derived from the timeline of how local campaigns unfolded. While my research agrees with his conclusion that local-level Anti-Rightist campaigns were launched after Mao published the names of the first eight rightists in the *People's Daily*,

[134] Cao Shuji, “An Overt Conspiracy: Creating Rightists in Rural Henan, 1957-1958”, ed., Jeremy Brown and Matthew D. Johnson, *Maoism at the Grassroots: Everyday Life in China’s Era of High Socialism*, (Cambridge: Harvard university Press, 2015), p.77-101.

and local people should have been aware of the consequences, it also highlights that local individuals not only understood the repercussions of being labeled as "rightists" but also knew how to tread carefully within the campaign.

The second aspect of this report highlights that the campaign was designed to alternate between strict and lenient phases. Ximin Cheng's research on the Anti-Rightist Campaign demonstrates that local leadership did not solely aim to label as many rightists as possible. In addition to intentions from higher levels, local and work unit leaders also considered the situations of others. They struck a balance between fulfilling the expectations of upper-level leaders and protecting their own people.[135] This report from She County suggests that such a balance, or the shifting attitudes, could be planned even before the campaign began.

Lastly, some leaders and cadres involved in the campaign were influenced by the 1942 Yan'an Rectification and its similar consequences. The report's introduction states that the 1957 Rectification differed from the 1942 version primarily in terms of scale. The 1942 Rectification occurred only within the Party, while the 1957 campaign involved people both inside and outside the Party. The report does not mention any consequences of the 1942 Rectification, nor does it discuss the outcomes of the 1957 Rectification. As a result, anyone who read this report or participated in the two-day discussion to develop this plan would have implicitly understood the potential similarities between the consequences of the two Rectifications.

[135] 程曦敏 Cheng Ximin, *谨慎与平衡: 反右运动中的地方因应 Caution and Balance: The Local Factors in the Anti-Rightist Campaign* (硕士毕业论文, 华东师范大学 2012 年 Mater Thesis, East China Normal University, 2012).

While there are no further written records in the archives detailing how the Anti-rightist Campaign unfolded within the education system in She County, oral accounts can help fill this gap. Fang Jianhua, who had been a public teacher for three years at a central elementary school in a township during the campaign, recalls that during the Spring Festival of 1958, all public teachers at the township's central elementary schools attended a confined study session at Tianning Temple, a Buddhist temple in the county seat. This study session, which lasted for over two months, saw teachers from other towns being confined in different locations. Although such an extended confinement could have affected the subsequent semester, the study session did not conflict with the normal teaching calendar. Instead, the semester was postponed until the study session concluded. According to the original plan, stage two was slated to last about a month and begin before the Spring Festival. It is possible that the confined study was a combination of stages two and three.

During the two-month confined study, teachers initially studied various documents together before dividing into smaller groups. Jianhua, who had not expressed any suggestions or criticisms before the study, was assigned the role of a small group's recorder—a position considered safe during the campaign. What left the deepest impression on Jianhua about the two-month study was not the criticism process or the political pressure, but the living conditions, particularly the food. He recalled that each teacher had to submit 0.3 RMB daily to the leaders and bring their own bedding and quilts or blankets to the temple. The food served there was exceptional compared to what was available a year later. Jianhua could still remember enjoying soy sauce-brewed pork every day at the Buddhist temple. The person in charge of cooking for the study session

was a retired headmaster from Jianhua's school, and every time Jianhua's group finished a bowl of pork, they could always get another bowl. All teachers, including those labeled as "rightist," were allowed to eat the pork. Of course, if Jianhua had not been the recorder, he might not have enjoyed the pork as much. Approximately two or three teachers were labeled as "rightist" in each central school. More than one person who experienced the campaign felt that quotas were assigned to each township or school. This type of confined study on a specific political campaign would reappear during the Cultural Revolution. However, according to Jianhua, the criticisms in 1958 were more severe, criticizing "to death," which was harsher than during the Cultural Revolution.

The consequences of She County's Anti-Rightist Campaign extended beyond labeling individuals as "rightists"; it also spurred the unbridled development of education, primarily through minban teachers and schools. The Anti-Rightist Campaign within She County's education system concluded with 340 "rightists" and 117 "counterrevolutionaries" and "bad elements." Among the 340 "rightists," 18 were middle school teachers, while 322 were elementary teachers. By March 1962, 11 "rightists" had died from "disease," and one died in the line of duty.[136] Eight months later, three more "rightists" passed away.[137] The loss of 457 public teachers, most of whom worked in central schools, was significant. These vacancies were soon filled, resulting in 221 more teachers by the end of 1958 compared to when the campaign began. The majority of the new teachers were minban teachers. Additionally, 30 minban middle schools were

[136] “关于职工享受抚恤金问题的请示报告(1962 年 3 月 30 日)” (“Request Report on the Issue of Employees Receiving Compensation, March 30, 1962”), She County Archives, 62-1-105.
[137] “歙县小学教职员工情况 (1962 年 11 月 13 日)” (Elementary School Teachers’ Situation in She County), She County Archives, 62-1-105.

established and operated by communes in 1958. The expansion of education primarily focused on the minban education system rather than the public education system.

The unprecedented expansion of education coincided with a financial burden, which was addressed through the decentralization of the fiscal system. This decentralization involved assigning some state-owned properties, such as agricultural and forestry lands, to public schools and empowering schools to start businesses, like establishing factories. Forests, farms, and factories could provide financial support for their schools, thereby relieving the county government's financial burden. In 1958, public middle schools operated six farms, which included 730 acres of arable land, 110 acres of vegetation, and 18 acres of fruit trees. Alongside farms, public middle schools also established and operated 26 factories, including backyard furnaces, fertilizer factories, chemical plants, soy sauce factories, and ink factories, among others. Commune-operated minban middle schools participated in production teams' agricultural labor to earn income and established 38 factories, such as wineries, paper mills, and lime kilns. Public elementary schools operated 275 smaller-scale farms, which included 597 acres of arable land, and they also had their own backyard furnaces and fertilizer factories.

The remarkable expansion of education during the Great Leap Forward was primarily financed by communes and schools themselves, rather than the state. Students and teachers provided free labor by working on decentralized, school-owned properties to generate income. At times, they were also organized to work for production teams without pay. In 1958, 46,579 middle and elementary school students and teachers were mobilized to harvest 10,651 acres of land. Middle school students picked 480,109 jin of

tea leaves during peak times. These figures did not include elementary students' labor during the "tea vacation." Elementary schools in tea-producing areas had a 2-3 week "tea vacation," during which students joined their parents in picking tea leaves for their production teams. For elementary schools in non-tea-producing areas, students also had a "tea vacation" and were organized to pick tea leaves in tea-producing regions. Engaging in agricultural labor was glorified by the state, primarily to justify obtaining free labor from teachers and students.

In addition to generating extra income from decentralized properties, the state also attempted to control the budget. One method of budget control involved shortening the duration of elementary education from six years to five. In 1958, She County's education bureau piloted a 5-year elementary school system in three county seat schools.[138] Students could now graduate after five years instead of six, reducing the need for teachers to cover only five grades instead of six. To educate the same number of students, the education system only needed to allocate five-sixths of the previous resources and teachers. By eliminating one year from elementary schooling, the system saved one-sixth of the education expenditures and resources for elementary education. This also meant that there might be an excess of elementary teachers. Simultaneously, the rapid expansion of middle schools demanded a large number of teachers. Consequently, some experienced elementary teachers were reassigned to middle schools, such as Yanbo's father, Xu He, whose experience will be detailed in the personal experience chapter.

[138] “1958 年工作总结” (Report on the Year 1958’s Work), She County Archives, 62-1-75.

During the Great Famine, despite the expansion of education and easy access to schools in remote mountainous areas, many students were reluctant to attend classes. The annual work report of 1961 revealed that only 50% to 60% of students in one remote mountainous area attended school in 1960.[139] The reasons for students' absence were varied, including searching for food, being too hungry and weak to attend, and avoiding schools' compulsory agricultural labor. Some students even dropped out of school to help their parents search for wild plants, wild fruit, or a specific type of pale white earth for food. Additionally, they might have engaged in agricultural labor within the production team to earn more work points and grain. Some students were also too malnourished and weak to attend school, while others were required to offer free labor at night for the school farm after attending classes during the daytime. Nevertheless, most students were unwilling to perform agricultural labor at night while hungry, and some would hide to escape labor and obtain some rest.[140] To address this problem, Lihong visited some students' homes two or three times every day to persuade them to attend school, as they would not attend otherwise.

The county did not calculate the number of students who died due to the famine, but traces found in later archives provide some clues. For instance, in 1961, three students at Huizhou Teacher's School, a senior middle school-level teacher's school with about 400 students, vomited blood and died.[141] Although a 1969 report blamed their

[139] "1961 年年度工作总结" (Report on the Year 1961's Work), She County Archives, 62-1-93.
[140] Interview with Rao Lihong, May 3rd, 2018.
[141] "歙县中学教育革命报告 1969 年" (She County Middle School Education Revolution Report of the Year 1969), She County Archives, 62-1-172.

deaths on capitalist education ideas that focused too much on studying, malnutrition was likely the true cause rather than excessive studying.

In 1961, the downsizing of education commenced, resulting in the closure of 149 elementary schools from the previous year. The biggest downsizing occurred in the same year, reducing the number of public elementary schools to 740 out of 788 total schools. Elementary students reduced by 12,560, accounting for 21.02% of the previous year's total students. More than one-fifth of students left school, either because the schools closed or they were persuaded by schools and teachers to quit. The county education bureau boasted of mobilizing 4,992 over-aged students to quit school, viewing it as a year's accomplishment.[142] The bureau also cut more than half of middle schools, leaving only 13 schools. The downsizing continued in 1962 and 1963. In 1962, 264 public elementary school teachers left teaching position.[143] In 1963, 183 public teachers left teaching position.[144] The continuous reduction of public teachers made it challenging for some schools to operate in 1963. As a result, some schools could not open because of the lack of teachers, and some could not admit all children due to the insufficient number of teachers.[145]

The rural areas were the victims of the school downsizing, with Jiekou town serving as an example. In 1960, Jiekou town had 66 minban elementary schools and

[142] “小学教育工作基本总结 (1962 年 1 月)” (A Basic Report on Elementary Education Work, January 1962), She County Archives, 62-1-102.
[143] “小学教师整编工作 (1962 年)” (“Elementary School Teachers’ Reorganization Work”), She County Archives, 62-1-103.
[144] “精简工作 1963 年” (“Downsizing Work of 1963”), She County Archives, 62-1-114.
[145] “歙县文教局关于要求增加小学教师编制的报告(1963 年 9 月 12 日)” (“She County Culture and Education Bureau's Report Requesting an Increase in the Staffing of Elementary School Teachers, September 12, 1963”), She County Archives, 62-1-116.

1,744 students. However, by 1961, the number of schools had been drastically reduced to only 19, with the number of students falling from 1,744 to 405. Similarly, in two brigades of Huangtian commune, there had been three public schools in 1957, but they were consolidated into one school in 1958, forcing students to walk 2.5 to 5 kilometers to attend. In response to parental demand, the two brigades established two minban schools in 1959. However, these two minban schools were again cancelled in 1961, further exacerbating the educational disparity between urban and rural areas.[146]

The education downsizing was a carefully planned and meticulously implemented state policy that aimed to reduce the number of students and teachers in schools. In fact, the state viewed the downsizing of students and teachers as a significant achievement, claiming that it had mobilized over 12,400 teachers and students to return to agriculture, which "reinforced the agricultural force greatly."[147]. From September 8 to 25, 1961, the county education bureau organized a confined study involving 37 middle school teachers and 300 elementary teachers, all of whom were public teachers. The majority of these teachers were deemed too old or weak by the government and were considered less competitive than their younger, stronger counterparts. As a result, the state pushed them to leave their jobs. The confined study had four stages. In the first stage, the teachers listened to speeches by leaders and engaged in group discussions for three days. In the second stage, each teacher shared their attitudes and future plans. The third stage involved applying for retirement or leaving the job, and the fourth stage was for the

[146] "关于私塾调查情况" (The Survey Result on Traditional Private Schools), She County Archives, 62-1-118.
[147] "1961 年年度工作总结" ("The Work Report of the Year 1961"), She County Archives, 62-1-93.

bureau to approve the applications and complete all necessary processes. The teachers had only six days to make their decisions, and the remaining time was spent finalizing the process. Teachers were promised that they would be able to leave their public teaching jobs once they exited the confined study. In the end, all 337 teachers left their public teaching jobs, using various reasons such as retirement, being sent down to agriculture, being sent down to elementary schools, transferring to commune cadres, or quitting altogether.[148]

Under great political pressure to resist the state's intention, some teachers had already planned to resign their jobs before the confined study and left voluntarily. However, the form of the confined study could easily trigger memories of the Anti-rightist campaign confined study. Once they heard the leaders' speeches, they were aware of the state's intention and may have been hesitant to resist, given what had happened three years earlier. Despite this, some teachers, like Yiren, were not willing to continue working as public teachers before the confined study. Yiren's father died of hunger in 1960 when he was working at the largest public elementary school in the county seat. Although Yiren sent part of his salary back to his father, it was not enough to save him from dying. Additionally, Yiren was also a suspect in the grain loss of the school at that time. It is possible that Yiren also felt the political pressure from the confined study, which led him to volunteer to resign from his job. Yiren was not the only example of teachers leaving their jobs during the famine. According to a report in 1962, when the famine had ended, 38 out of 77 teachers (about half) in the county seat were in debt.

[148] “整编工作总结 (1961 年 11 月)” (“Work Report of the Reorganization, November 1961”) She County Archives, 62-1-93.

Additionally, 165 teachers in the county did not have cotton coats, which were the only clothes for winter at that time. All public teachers in three towns received no soap, and only one-quarter of a bar of soap in a year.[149] During the famine, the situation could have been even worse. It is not surprising that some teachers were not willing to stay in the teaching job.

The reduction of schools encountered resistance from students, as evidenced by an incident in another county in Anhui province. When students learned that their school would be cancelled, they initiated a strike on June 1, 1962, and even smashed the school's glass windows.[150] The provincial government viewed this strike seriously, perhaps fearing a recurrence of the 1956 demonstration. Consequently, the provincial government issued notices to every county government to prevent similar strikes from taking place.

Minban schools and teachers played a crucial role in preventing further downsizing of education in 1962 and 1963. The downsizing had primarily targeted public teachers and schools. Despite this, the number of students and teachers in 1962 and 1963 remained about the same as in 1961. While two to three hundred public teachers left each year from 1961 to 1963, the total number of teachers in 1962 and 1963 was roughly the same as in 1961, as minban teachers filled the gaps left by the loss of public teachers. Additionally, some public teachers became minban teachers after being downsized. In 1962, only 12 out of 322 elementary school teacher "rightists" (3.73%) returned to their

[149] “歙县小学教育工作情况 (1962 年)” (The Elementary Education Work Situation, 1962), She County Archives, 62-1-102.
[150] “安徽省人民委员会关于妥善进行学校调整工作的紧急通知” (“Urgent Notice from the Anhui Provincial People's Committee on Properly Carrying Out School Adjustment Work”), She County Archives, 62-1-104.

public teaching positions under strict supervision.[151] Some of the "rightists" who had been downgraded to minban teachers shed their label and resumed teaching in minban schools. By 1962, there were 192 minban elementary schools and 216 minban teachers, which helped stabilize education and ensure that no more students would leave school. The reactions of students, parents, and local society to the downsizing, as well as the state's response to the solutions put forward by local society, are described in the "Trading Brain for Grain" chapter.

The government did not view minban schools as a concern, except for the high tuition fees charged by some of these schools. The courses and textbooks used in minban schools were identical to those in public schools. The teaching schedule and emphasis also aligned with the state's policy, with a focus on Chinese and mathematics courses, as well as abacus computation, calligraphy, and practical writing. The government's attention was drawn to the high tuition fees charged by certain minban schools. A report on elementary schools in 1962 noted that private schools were facing financial difficulties due to the limited number of students, resulting in higher tuition fees. In one minban school, for example, only 17 students were enrolled, and each student paid 13 or 14 RMB per semester. Another minban school had only 9 students, and each student submitted 90 jin of corn.[152]

[151] "歙县小学教职员工情况 (1962 年 11 月 13 日)" ("Situation of Teaching and Non-teaching Staff in She County Elementary Schools, November 13, 1962"), She County Archives, 62-1-103.
[152] "歙县小学教育工作情况 (1962 年 12 月)" ("Situation of Elementary School Education Work in She County, December 1962"), She County Archives, 62-1-102.

The Four Clean-Ups and Cultural Revolution

Overall, the period of the Four Clean-Ups and Cultural Revolution witnessed a significant expansion of education. The most significant growth occurred in 1965, during the Four Clean-ups, a year before the launch of the Cultural Revolution. In that year alone, She County added 794 new elementary schools, 1,073 new elementary teachers, and 22,433 additional elementary students. Of these new schools, only 46 were public schools, while the rest were minban schools.[153] Thus, the growth in 1965 was primarily driven by minban education rather than state-funded public education. Some of these newly established minban elementary schools did not require students to stay at school full time. Instead, students could attend for half a day or even less, based on their agricultural labor schedule. These schools prioritized the agricultural labor of students' families over their studies.[154]

During the first four years of the Cultural Revolution, education may have experienced a decline in size. However, the accuracy of data from 1966 and 1967 is questionable, as the number of schools in those years was the same as in 1965, and reliable archives do not provide data on schools, teachers, and students for these years. Furthermore, even if there were reliable data, it may not accurately reflect how education was practiced in classrooms. In 1968, there was a decline in the size of education. Compared to 1965, there was a reduction of 344 elementary schools, 137 elementary teachers, and 5092 elementary students. It is possible that this reduction occurred

[153] "关于增设一批公办小学的请示报告(1965 年 8 月 28 日)" ("Request Report on the Establishment of a Batch of Public Elementary Schools, August 28, 1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-136.
[154] "歙县文教局 1965 年工作总结" ("1965 Work Summary of the She County Culture and Education Bureau"), She County Archives, 62-1-146.

gradually between 1966 and 1968. The situation in 1969 was even worse, with a reduction of 1,922 students and 555 teachers. The decrease in birth rates during the Great Famine may have contributed to the decrease in student enrollment from 1966 to 1969.

Education saw a remarkable recovery from 1970 to 1978, surpassing the 1965 level. The decline in education ceased in 1970, with moderate growth in that year of only 18 additional elementary schools, 475 elementary students, and 57 elementary teachers. From 1971 to 1976, the number of students and teachers increased every year. The expansion of education in Yukeng Village exemplified this trend. When Zheng Zhizheng was appointed to Yukeng elementary school in 1969, there were only 10 students in total from grade 1 to grade 6. However, in 1970 and 1971, the number of students increased to over 40.[155] In 1972, the number of elementary students surpassed the 1965 level, with the greatest increase in students occurring in 1973 when there were 8,333 more elementary students than the previous year. The biggest increase in teachers occurred in 1971 when there were 369 more elementary teachers than the previous year. Although there were a small-scale decline of 1480 elementary students in 1977, the number of elementary students in 1978 reached the highest level in the PRC's history before 1985. However, after 1978, education declined every year.

In July 1966, She County's Cultural Revolution began with the emergence of big-character posters and the launch of confined study, shortly after the county party committee released a document to initiate the movement to all party branches, bureaus,

[155] Author's interview with Zheng Zhizheng, May 5th, 2018.

and communes at various levels.[156] Around mid-June, about ten days after the Beijing Party Committee sent a work team to Peking University, She County Party Committee dispatched a work team to She County Middle School.[157] In the following days, the county party committee sent several work teams to other major middle schools, the teacher's school, and various county bureaus.[158] While the county was sending work teams in June, Beijing universities were already posting big-character posters criticizing the work teams. She County Middle School followed Beijing's lead and began posting big-character posters in early July.

Since June 1966, many teachers were subjected to a prison-like confined study that lasted for 78 days. Unfortunately, no written records of this event exist in the archives, as they were destroyed at the end of 1966. Nevertheless, oral history accounts help to fill in the gaps. The confined study took place in several locations, with the two largest being Chengguan Elementary School and Dongfanghong Elementary School in the county seat. Over 1000 public teachers were confined in Chengguan Elementary School alone. Three of my interviewees, Rao Lihong, Zheng Zhizheng, and Fang Jianhua, attended the confined study. Once inside, the teachers were not allowed to leave without permission. Zheng Zhizheng attended the confined study when his wife was pregnant and was expected to deliver a baby soon. When his wife delivered the baby, he was not allowed to come back home. All teachers ate, slept, studied, and criticized within

[156] “关于认真学习毛主席著作, 积极参加社会主义’文化大革命’的通知” (“Notice on Studying Chairman Mao's Works Seriously and Actively Participating in the Socialist 'Cultural Revolution'"), She County Archives, 62-1-150.
[157] Andrew G. Walder: *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), p.271.
[158] She County Party Committee sent work teams on June 18, June 29, and the end of August.

the school walls. Every day, they lined up in groups and went to the nearby river to bathe, which was their only outing opportunity. To prevent any potential escapes, the group leaders kept a close eye on all the teachers. Each group from the same town shared one classroom, where they ate and slept on the desks. Group leaders stayed in the same classroom as their group members to supervise them. On Saturdays, teachers were allowed to play ping-pong for a short while, which was their only recreation activity. According to the county gazetteer, "suspicious" people were particularly supervised by politically reliable individuals, and were not allowed to get close to the kitchen or the well to prevent any poisoning attempts. Furthermore, they were not allowed to talk to each other, and if caught doing so, they would face criticism.[159]

The confinement of teachers within the study was not impenetrable, as evidenced by the successful escape of one individual who had been subject to criticism. Three of my interviewees were all from the same town and had been staying together in the same classroom. Jiang Huailie, the first person to be criticized at Chengguan Elementary School, was also from the same town as my interviewees and had been staying in their classroom. Following the initiation of the criticism process, the entire school was suddenly inundated with big-character posters criticizing Huailie. Undeterred, he managed to escape from the school under the cover of night and ran for approximately 20 miles before arriving at the home of Yiren, to whom he had previously introduced a position as a minban teacher. Yiren and his wife were grateful to Huailie, who had previously served as a commune's education cadre, and introduced Yiren to a minban

[159] 中共歙县历史编委会 Chinese Communist Party She County History Compilation Committee, *中国共产党歙县历史 1949-1978 Chinese Communist Party's History in She County, 1949-1978*, p.471.

teacher position. However, Yiren's wife was unaware of Huailie's situation and his plan to escape the confinement. When Huailie came, Yiren was also in the confined study too. Despite this, she offered him two boiled eggs as a token of appreciation. After a brief stay, Huailie resumed his escape and managed to remain uncaught for another hour before being recaptured. News of Huailie's disappearance spread quickly, causing widespread concern among the teachers at the school who were forced to search every corner of the campus. Although my interviewees were unsure of who pursued Huailie, Huailie was ultimately caught the following day.

Mao's attack on Liu Shaoqi, the Vice Chairman of the CCP, had an unexpected impact on those who were being criticized in the confined study. Contrary to the memoirs of intellectuals from that time, the consequences of being criticized in the confined study were not as severe as commonly believed. In fact, some individuals were able to return to leadership positions after undergoing criticism. On November 23, She County received a notice regarding the rectification and punishment of those who had been criticized during the confined study.[160] The state acknowledged that the Cultural Revolution prior to November 1966 had been wrongly led by Liu Shaoqi, who had been arrested and criticized. As a result, those who had been criticized and punished during the confined study were absolved of their punishments. Experienced education leaders were even able to reclaim their former leadership positions. In the case of Huailie, he was sent to work in agriculture on a gardening farm for six months to a year before being appointed as a headmaster of a central elementary school near the county seat. According to my three

[160] 中共歙县历史编委会 Chinese Communist Party She County History Compilation Committee, *中国共产党歙县历史 1949-1978 Chinese Communist Party's History in She County, 1949-1978*, p.469.

interviewees, the punishment received during the confined study was less severe than that of the Anti-rightist Campaign's confined study.

The Revolutionary Networking (Da Chuanlian 大串联) in She County began in October of 1966. In early October, the She County party committee organized 766 representatives to travel to Beijing. These representatives were in Tiananmen Square on November 3rd to join the huge gathering meeting with Chairman Mao. After leaving Beijing at the end of November, the representatives continued their networking efforts in various locations throughout China. Following the departure of the representatives, other students in She County also began to participate in Revolutionary Networking. Divorce among couples who joined different groups was a common occurrence during the early years of the Cultural Revolution. However, the networking also provided opportunities for young couples to develop romantic relationships. Almost all of my interviewees, who were students at She County Middle School at the time, participated in the networking. The school provided each student with two-month's dining fee of 16 RMB, which they could use to initiate their networking efforts. The students returned home before the Spring Festival in early February of 1968, except for Pan Tonggui, who was an exception. Tonggui's father did not allow him to participate in the networking. Instead, Tonggui accompanied two other individuals on a business trip where he learned how to fluff cotton, as his father was a cotton fluffer. During his years as a minban teacher, Tonggui utilized his cotton fluffing skills as a side business and earned much more money than his min-ban teaching job.

Following the return of students from networking, armed conflicts erupted between the two major factions of the rebellion. The first rebellion group had been established in She County Middle School during the summer of 1966. By January 1967, there were already 400 different groups present in She County.[161] In mid-May of 1967, these groups were consolidated into two major factions, the Allied Command (lian zhi bu 联指部) and Revolutionaries' Liaison (ge lian zhan 革联站), with more than 100 small groups falling under the two main factions. Following the formation of the two major factions, six large-scale armed battles occurred between them in 1967, on August 10-12, August 25, August 29, September 2, December 1, and December 19. Prior to the first large-scale battle, there had been ongoing conflicts between the two factions. Despite efforts by the County People's Armed Forces Department to broker a peace agreement between the factions in early August 1967, these efforts proved unsuccessful by August 7th, and the first large-scale battle occurred just three days later. In total, the six battles resulted in 14 deaths and 52 injuries.

The impact of the armed battles on the education system was most severe during the first large-scale battle. At the onset of the conflict, Allied Command was headquartered at Dongfanghong Elementary School, formerly known as Xingzhi Elementary School, which had previously been funded by the US-based charity organization FPPWC. Following the takeover of Allied Command's headquarters by Revolutionaries' Liaison, the school suffered significant damage. Every door and window

[161] 中共歙县历史编委会 Chinese Communist Party She County History Compilation Committee, *中国共产党歙县历史 1949-1978 Chinese Communist Party's History in She County, 1949-1978*, p.476.

were smashed, properties worth approximately 7,000 RMB were looted, light bulbs were smashed into the school's kitchen cookers, lime powder was mixed into rice and oil, and all of the school's woks and pans were destroyed.[162] Despite the destruction, the letters between students and their US foster parents managed to survive the violence.

During the armed conflicts, the state attempted to restore order in the education system by designating some teachers as propaganda forces. On October 25, 1967, the *People's Daily* published an article calling for all schools to "resume class and revolution" (复课闹革命). Despite the ongoing armed battles, the branch of the PLA army that assisted She County in restoring order dispatched soldiers to two county-owned middle schools, She County Middle School and Huizhou Teacher's School, to resume class and revolution in late October of 1967. On August 26, 1968, Mao ordered the resumption of classes in She County. On September 5th, the county revolutionary committee assigned PLA soldiers and workers from the She County Tea Factory, Machine Factory, and Printing Factory to form the first "Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Team." The team was sent to She County Middle School and Huizhou Teacher's School to resume class and revolution. The two middle schools were soon reorganized over the next four months. 35 teachers from the two schools formed the new She County Middle School, while 17 teachers went to Kengkou and Chengkan communes to establish two new commune-owned middle schools. Another 23 teachers formed the Poor and Lower-Middle Peasant Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Team (贫

[162] 中共歙县历史编委会 Chinese Communist Party She County History Compilation Committee, *中国共产党歙县历史 1949-1978 Chinese Communist Party's History in She County, 1949-1978*, p.487.

下中农毛泽东思想宣传队) under the cultural team of She County revolution committee.

When the propaganda team completed its mission, the 23 teachers were assigned to different communes as middle school teachers. The revolutionary committees of the two schools were responsible for deciding where the remaining 30 teachers would be placed.[163]

The armed battles and conflicts came to an end in April of 1968. Under the pressure and efforts of a branch of the People's Liberation Army (6408 South 131), the two major factions reached a truce and formed a united organization on April 18, 1968, known as the "Big United Committee" (无产阶级革命派大联合委员会), which replaced the government and restored order while managing administrative matters. By the end of June, Revolutionary Committees were formed at both the county and commune levels, replacing the "Big United Committee." [164] By the end of 1968, 11 middle schools and most CES were under the leadership of revolutionary committees.[165] Shortly after the formation of the Revolutionary Committee, a campaign to "purify class ranks" (qingli jieji duiwu 清理阶级队伍) was launched, which lasted until March of 1971.[166]

[163] "关于对原歙县中学、徽师处理问题的通知(1969 年 1 月 13 日)" ("Notice to Deal with the Previous She County Middle School and Huizhou Teachers' School, January 13, 1969"), She County Archives, 62-1-169.
[164] 中共歙县历史编委会 Chinese Communist Party She County History Compilation Committee, *中国共产党歙县历史 1949-1978 Chinese Communist Party's History in She County, 1949-1978*, p.503.
[165] "刘鹤卿在县教育工作会议上的报告(1968 年 12 月)" (Liu Heqing's Speech on the County Education Work Conference), She County Archives, 62-1-160.
[166] 中共歙县历史编委会 Chinese Communist Party She County History Compilation Committee, *中国共产党歙县历史 1949-1978 Chinese Communist Party's History in She County, 1949-1978*, p.510.

The political chaos during the Cultural Revolution had a less significant impact on rural education than on education in the county seat. One of my interviewees, Rao Lihong, recalled that the town's central elementary school where he taught was not closed during the Cultural Revolution. The school remained open, and most students attended as before. Occasionally, some students did not attend, and the teachers did not dare to inquire why, fearing criticism from the students. Instead, the teachers encouraged the students to attend school. In the schools, students learned Mao's quotations and sang revolutionary songs. According to Zheng Zhizheng, most elementary students were willing to attend school and even enjoyed it. They could meet and play with other children in school, making attending school a fun experience for them.

Revolutionary Networking provided an excuse for some rural elementary school teachers to avoid attending struggle sessions. While middle school students went out to do networking, the "Grab and Criticize Capitalist Roaders" campaign (揪斗走资派) was launched in mid-December 1966, which involved elementary students. These students needed to do revolutionary networking in nearby places to propagate this campaign and attend the struggle sessions related to it. According to Zheng Zhizheng, doing networking and propaganda work in neighboring brigades was like a happy "spring trip" for his students. When there was a struggle session in his commune, he led his students to Xintian village near the Yellow Mountain to visit senior Red Army soldiers and intentionally detoured to a commune near the county seat when returning. By the time they returned, the struggle session had already ended, and he and his students did not have to attend. Zheng Zhizheng said, "The cadre being criticized was dining with me in

the same dining hall. How could I criticize them?" (批斗的人和我都是在一个食堂吃饭的，批斗起来怎么好意思。)

My research supplements the current scholarship on rural area's Cultural Revolution. While most studies have focused on the big cities and well-known events, only a few, like Yang Su and Andrew Walder, have looked at the impact of the Cultural Revolution in rural areas. Their research highlights the mass killings that occurred in rural areas during the Repression Campaigns that lasted from 1968 to 1969 and the first four months of 1970,[167] with the peaks of killings occurring during the summers of 1967 and 1968. However, these casualties were mostly caused by the suppression campaigns launched by the authorities, rather than the armed battles among rebellion factions. While my research is primarily concerned with mass killings in rural areas, it complements Yang Su and Andrew Walder's work by demonstrating the ways in which rural communities were able to navigate the "chaotic" situation created by the rebellion groups and the subsequent restoration of order, which led to larger-scale killings.

As I previously mentioned, there was a significant expansion of education after social order was restored in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. This expansion was largely driven by a sudden increase in the number of students, which was in turn related

[167] Andrew G. Walder, *Civil War in Guangxi: The Cultural Revolution on China's Southern Periphery* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).
Yang Su, *Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution*, (Cambridge University Press, 2011). Yang Su, "Mass Killings in the Cultural Revolution: A Study of Three Provinces," in ed. Joseph W. Esherick, Paul G. Pickowicz, and Andrew G. Walder, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p.96-123.
Andrew G. Walder, "Rebellion and Repression in China, 1966-1971," *Social Science History*, volume 38, 2014, p.513-539.

to a baby boom that began in 1962, immediately following the GLF famine.[168] Prior to this period, there were typically around 10,000 or more births per year in China. However, between 1959 and 1961, this number dropped to between 4,500 and 5,500 births per year. In 1962, however, there were 18,552 newborns, and this number continued to rise in subsequent years, with 19,898 babies born in 1963 (the most during the entire Mao era) and 18,460 babies born in 1964.[169] By the time these children reached school age in 1970, there was a sudden explosion in the number of students. Thus, the baby boom that followed the GLF famine played a significant role in driving the expansion of education during this period.

During the Cultural Revolution, there was a significant expansion of middle school education in She County, which addressed the enrollment problem that had caused student movements in 1956. This expansion occurred alongside the expansion of elementary schools, and most elementary school graduates could enroll in junior middle school. By 1974, there were 73 middle schools in the county, 26 of which were public and 47 of which were commune-owned. Among the 14955 elementary schools that year, 42 of them established the affiliated junior middle school sections. These sections were run by the elementary schools they belonged to, and to the elementary school, they were like a hat worn by the elementary schools. These affiliated middle school sections were also called "wearing hat middle school (戴帽初中)." The total enrollment in these 73 middle schools and 42 junior middle school sections was 15,058 students, while there

[168] 曹树基 Cao Shuji, 大饥荒：1959-1961 年的中国人口 The Great Famine (香港: 香港国际时代出版有限公司,2005 年版 Hong Kong: Hong Kong International Time Publishing Co. Ltd., 2005).
[169] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 1*, p.162.

were 93,554 elementary students in the county that year. Among these elementary students, around 18,710 students were in the fifth grade. Most of the fifth-grade students were able to continue their education in junior middle school. The expansion of middle schools continued throughout the Cultural Revolution, with 154 middle schools in the county by 1976, accommodating 27,526 students. In 1976, there were 26 public middle schools, 50 commune-owned middle schools, and 78 “wearing hat middle schools” in the county. As a result of this expansion, middle schools became accessible to almost all elementary students in She County.

The urgent need for education resources resulting from the dramatic expansion of education since 1970 prompted the government to limit education expenditures by implementing the 5-year elementary school system in 1970, which replaced the previous 6-year system. Prior to this, the state had experimented with the 5-year elementary school system in three county seat schools during the Great Leap Forward, but the experiment was suspended during the GLF famine. In 1966, Mao advocated for a reduction in the number of school years. This proposal was formalized in Mao's "May Seventh Directive," which was published in the *People's Daily* on August 1, 1966. Mao’s directive followed and called for shortening the school years.[170] In 1971, the state made the transition to the 5-year system across all elementary schools, thereby reducing education expenditures by at least one sixth of the original amount.

To alleviate the burden of education expenditure on the state, the government implemented financial decentralization by transferring it to localities. The

[170] *People’s Daily*, August 1, 1966.

implementation of education decentralization occurred during the initial two years of the Cultural Revolution, though the exact date remains unclear. However, in 1967, only two schools, namely She County Middle School and Huizhou Teacher's School, were under the ownership of the county government. All other schools were decentralized to communes, brigades, or production teams. Subsequently, as discussed in the fiscal system chapter, the local communes, brigades, and production teams mainly supported the urgent needs of classrooms, teachers, and other resources, which accompanied the expansion of education. To fulfill the pressing demand for teachers, minban teachers were employed, primarily funded by the locality. The personal experiences chapter will examine the salaries of minban teachers. The number of minban teachers before the Cultural Revolution was 614. However, in 1973, out of 3463 elementary teachers, 1625 were minban teachers, accounting for almost half (47%) of all teachers. Additionally, there were 299 minban teachers among middle school teachers.[171] Notably, the number of minban teachers continued to increase throughout the Cultural Revolution.

Apart from financial decentralization, decentralization during the Mao era also entailed school management decentralization, which was introduced for the first time in 1969. During the Great Leap Forward, school decentralization did not imply school management decentralization, and schools remained under the leadership of the county education bureau. However, in 1969, it was intended that the representatives of the poor and lower middle peasants would take charge of the schools' leadership. In September of the same year, She County issued a directive to all communes and brigades to establish

[171] "1973 年工作总结" ("Work Report of the Year 1973"), She County Archives, 62-1-210.

an education revolution leadership team consisting of the poor and lower middle peasants.[172] The state further claimed that, in 1969, the representatives of the poor and lower middle peasants were responsible for all school matters, including finance.[173] However, in the day-to-day running of schools, it was possible for headmasters and commune education cadres to have more power than the representatives of the poor and lower middle peasants. Conversely, it was rare for the representatives to overpower the headmasters in other schools. Notably, none of the interviewees complained about the representatives' excessive interference with the school's operation.

Decentralization during the Mao era also encompassed textbook decentralization, which was introduced for the first time in the PRC. In 1971, the state decentralized the textbooks to provincial governments, communes, and even schools, marking a departure from the previous approach of central government editing and publishing all textbooks. Since then, schools have been using textbooks edited and published by provincial governments, while communes have been producing supplementary textbooks.[174] The state allowed communes and schools to edit and print their own textbooks. For instance, Juchuan commune produced 25 articles about the village and family history as supplementary textbooks from 1971 to 1974.[175] There were also textbooks or teaching

[172] "关于由贫下中农管理学校意见的通知 (1968 年 9 月 8 日)" (The Notice on the Opinion of Managing Schools by Poor and Lower-Middle Peasants, September 8, 1968), She County Archives, 62-1-160.
[173] "1969 年歙县教育工作会议" (The 1969 She County Education Work Conference), She County Archives, 62-1-69.
[174] "关于明年春季中、小学课本使用和预订的通知" ("Notice on the Use and Pre-order of Primary and Secondary School Textbooks for Next Spring"), She County Archives, 62-1-95.
[175] 歙县党史地志办公室(She County Party History and Local Chronicles Office), *中国共产党歙县历史, 1949-1978 History of the Chinese Communist Party in She County, 1949-1978*, p.514.

materials about practical skill-courses being used in schools. I will mention these practical skill-courses later in this chapter.

The decentralization of school management and textbooks was a part of Mao's education revolution, which was primarily expressed in the "May Seventh Directive." This directive was Mao's letter to Lin Biao after reading Lin's report titled "On Further Improving the Army's Work in Agricultural and Side-line Production." The letter was later published in the *People's Daily*, becoming known as the "May Seventh Directive." Two sentences in Mao's letter focused on education: “Students’ major obligation is to study, but they have to know other subjects, too. They have to study culture as well as learn about industry, agriculture, and military affairs. And they have to criticize the bourgeoisie. The number of school years should be reduced. Education needs revolution. The situation in which the bourgeoisie gets to control our school should not and cannot go on. (学生也是这样，以学为主，兼学别样，即不但学文，也要学工、学农、学军，也要批判资产阶级。学制要缩短，教育要革命，资产阶级知识分子通知我们学校的现象，再也不能继续下去了。)” The "May Seventh Directive" called for students to learn about industry, agriculture, and military affairs so that they could participate in labor in those fields. Consequently, schools were encouraged to establish new factories and acquire farmland from production teams, brigades, or communes. Students' involvement in factory and farm production could earn cash income for schools, which was another way to reduce education expenditures.

Regardless of whether economics or ideology motivated Mao to issue this directive, on the local level, the policy was to establish school-owned factories and farms. In cases where a school could not accommodate all its students, teachers had to seek internships or work opportunities for them in other factories or production teams. For example, Dongfanghong Elementary School established a knitting factory to produce mittens and cotton thread, while San Yang Elementary School, located in a remote rural area, established a chalk factory. During the Cultural Revolution, the involvement in production labor that already existed in the Great Leap Forward was practiced again. Teachers and students offered free labor in these school-owned factories. In 1974, all school-owned factories earned a profit of 4,263 RMB, and all school-owned farms earned 58,333 RMB.[176] What students learned from these factories and farms could also benefit themselves or their families.

In addition to establishing school-owned factories and farms, schools offered farm or factory-related courses to students to make them better laborers. These courses were not only beneficial to the schools but also to the wider community. Schools, production teams, brigades, or communes could edit and print their own textbooks for production labor courses. For instance, Dongfanghong Elementary School, which had established a knitting factory, set up a sock-knitting course for all students. After completing this course, students could become usable labor for the factory. Chu Gang Elementary School, which was located in a remote tea-growing rural area, set up a course on tea tree cultivation. Students learning this could benefit not only the school's tea farm but also

[176] "1974 年工作总结" ("Work Report of the Year 1974"), She County Archives, 62-1-220.

their own families. Schools also invited experienced workers to teach some courses or give lectures.[177] Additionally, schools taught practical skills such as calligraphy, abacus calculation, fertilizer making, and machine maintenance.[178] These courses aimed to equip students with skills that they could use in their daily lives. For instance, students could write big-character posters or write couplets during festivals using the calligraphy skills they learned. They could help their parents calculate work points and their value using abacus-calculation skills. They could also make fertilizer or fix machines for their families or their production teams. Some schools even set up meteorological stations to forecast the weather, earthquake stations, or pests and diseases stations to serve the agricultural and peasant communities.[179]

The education revolution also aimed to address gender inequality in enrollment rates. Female students' enrollment during the Cultural Revolution provides us with information about gender inequality throughout the Maoist era. Although the "May Seventh Directive" did not mention gender, Mao issued another instruction about the problem of female students' enrollment, stating that "the times being different, and men and women being equal 时代不同了，男女都一样." For most of the Maoist era, female children had fewer opportunities to attend school than males. However, in 1973, the county education bureau's annual report mentioned the female students' enrollment rate for the first time. The report proudly announced that 43% of all elementary students were female, viewed as a significant achievement by the county government that year. The

[177] "1975 年工作总结" ("Work Report of the Year 1975"), She County Archives, 62-1-233.
[178] "1974 年工作总结" ("Work Report of the Year 1974"), She County Archives, 62-1-220.
[179] "1975 年工作总结" ("Work Report of the Year 1975"), She County Archives, 62-1-233.

report emphasized the obstacles the state faced and Mao's words on which the policy was based. It stated that "in various places, strong efforts have been made to combat the feudal mindset of valuing sons over daughters. Mao Zedong's instructions about 'the times being different, and men and women being equal' have been widely publicized. Positive and effective measures have been taken to ensure the enrollment of girls in schools (各地针对重男轻女的封建思想，大力宣传毛主席关于“时代不同了，男女都一样”的指示，采取积极有效措施，狠抓女儿童入学工作”). The main obstacle to enrollment was the mindset of valuing males over females. Mao had already instructed achieving gender equality, but the state had to put great efforts to achieve the 43% enrollment rate. Therefore, it was reasonable to conclude that the female students' enrollment rate before 1973 was less than 43%. In 1974, the female students' enrollment rate increased slightly to 43.85%. The obstacles that blocked girls from attending school became Confucius' patriarchal ideas and Lin Biao's notion that "women are useless." Despite the state's year-long effort, the enrollment rate increased by less than 1%. After 1974, the annual reports never mentioned female students' enrollment rates again.

The education revolution during the Cultural Revolution had some similarities to Tao Xingzhi’s education ideas, but they were not identical. Tao Xingzhi’s main idea was to rebuild China’s rural society by establishing a new kind of self-governed rural community, with elementary schools at its center. The Xiaozhuang Experimental Village Teachers’ School was the first step towards establishing this community, which was followed by the establishment of elementary schools, a village hospital, a library, a meeting hall, a scientific hall, a theatrical troupe, a martial arts association, adult schools,

tea houses, a store, an armed self-defense squad, a firefighting squad, and several factories. The Xiaozhuang School's students offered free evening classes for adults and staffed a tea house. They "were put in charge of founding and running new elementary schools in the process of learning."[180]. After graduation, these students became teachers at rural elementary schools, serving as "social organizers, community leaders, caretakers, doctors, agricultural directors, legal mediators, recreational promoters, and social reformers."[181] Teachers were expected to be deeply involved in village life, "making friends (with peasants)," opening village hospitals and clinics, and more. Students were also expected to be involved in various activities that benefited the community, such as sending peasants couplets during the Spring Festival, writing letters and reading newspapers to peasants, inviting peasants to attend athletic competitions, and helping peasants eliminate locusts. While the Cultural Revolution education did involve teachers and students in agriculture, industry, and military labor in the local community, it did not fully realize Tao's education ideas. Teachers and schools were not empowered to play the role of "social organizers, community leaders, doctors, legal mediators and social reformer" in the rural community. Rather, they were designed to serve the community, rather than guide it.

[180] Xiaoping Cong, *Teachers' Schools and the Making of the Modern Chinese Nation-State, 1897-1937*, p.114.
[181] Xiaoping Cong, *Teachers' Schools and the Making of the Modern Chinese Nation-State, 1897-1937*, p.116.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the expansion of education was not a consistent policy for the CCP, as it only coincided with radical political campaigns. Notably, education witnessed growth during the Korean War, the Great Leap Forward, and the later stages of the Cultural Revolution. During the Korean War, domestic political campaigns such as the Land Reform and the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries were in progress. Consequently, education expanded alongside these radical political campaigns. However, following the conclusion of these campaigns, the state often abandoned the expansion of education, leading to stagnation or even contraction, as seen during the First Five-Year Plan and in the aftermath of the GLF famine. Villages were typically the most affected during periods of curtailment and contraction, while county seats and townships experienced less reduction. As a result, the urban-rural divide was exacerbated during these periods. Female students' rate among all students grew from 20% in 1949 to 40% in 1955 and the highest rate of 44% in 1974. Although female students had more and more opportunities attending schools during the Mao era, they never had the same opportunities as the male.

One reason for the state's expansion of education during radical campaigns was its intention to use education as a propaganda tool. However, the intended outcomes were not always achieved. During the Korean War, schools, teachers, and students served as a war mobilization force, but schools occasionally displayed dissenting ideas amidst the war effort. In the Cultural Revolution, students became Red Guards, often spearheading campaign participation and initiation, yet teachers sometimes exploited Revolutionary Networking to avoid struggle sessions. Elementary students might have perceived

propaganda work in neighboring areas as enjoyable outings rather than a serious responsibility. Furthermore, some village elementary schools did not experience the same turmoil as those in county seats or urban areas, further highlighting the complexity of education's role during radical political campaigns.

The inconsistent policy on education led to growing discontent and complaints among the population. The issue of middle school enrollment had already caught the state's attention in 1954. Despite the state's efforts to suppress these complaints by transforming teachers into propaganda forces, discontent only intensified. In 1956, the situation escalated into nationwide demonstrations. Discontent lingered in the wake of the Great Leap Forward famine, as the state reduced educational resources and discouraged rural students from attending schools following the crisis.

Throughout the Mao era, resistance and dissatisfaction were prevalent, even as education expanded during political campaigns and contracted afterward. Although the growth of education coexisted with political campaigns, the two did not appear to benefit each other significantly. The subsequent chapter, titled "Extraction, Political Campaigns, and Education" will explore the interplay between education expansion, political campaigns, and heavy extraction, illustrating how these elements coexisted and mutually benefited one another.

Appendix:

Table 3: Xingzhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children

#	From	To	Written/Mailing Date	Chinese or English	Key Words	Xu Shiqi's Comments
1	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji 徐工绩	Undated	Chinese	Receiving 7 letters at one time. What is Youth Corp? Weather.	
2	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	Undated	Chinese	Weather. Visiting Grandma. Automobile problems.	
3		Hong Yizhu 洪异助	Undated	Chinese	Valentine's Day	
4		Hong Yizhu	Undated	Chinese	Hong's interest in agriculture lessons. The music and arts lessons, and boy and girl scouts in US.	
5	Mrs. Milliken	Cheng Zhaoxiong 程兆熊	Undated	Chinese	New Year's Card. The gifts, including cloth.	
6	Mrs. Milliken	Cheng Zhaoxiong	Undated	Chinese	Thanksgiving Day. What is mooncake?	
7	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	Undated	Chinese	Graduation. Will write weekly. Cousin's graduation ceremony.	
8		Zhang Yichang 章宜昌	Undated	Chinese	Gift: shoes, socks, clothes. Weather	
9	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	Undated	Chinese	New Year's Card. Birthday. Coal miners' strike in US.	
10		Zhou Xingsheng 周杏生	Undated	Chinese	Xingsheng is generous to donate sum of the money I sent to buy a bicycle for school. School contest. Work in airplane model company.	
11	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	Undated	Chinese	Roy's teaching job. The use of cloth. Xu's birthday gifts.	
12		Zhang Yichang	Undated	Chinese	The cabbages Zhang's school planted. Photo taken on Christmas. Music.	

Table 3: Xingzhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children (continued)

13	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	Undated	Chinese	Weather. Easter Sunday. Family dinner in a Chinese restaurant.	
14	莱西	Zhang Yichang	March 11, 1949	Chinese	Zhang's photo on the wall. Our children. Our living place. Weather. Music	
15	Alice Williams	Cheng Zhaoxiong	February 14, 1949	Chinese	Valentine's Day. Paper clothing sample.	"They are Christians, and they introduce God." "Provide a paper clothing sample to US."
16	T. P. Heffelfinger	Xinian 熙年	Undated	Chinese	Family members. Weather.	
17	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	Translated on March 20, 1949	Chinese	The teachers' training system in US. Have no letter from Gongji for 2 weeks. Have family dinner in a Chinese restaurant in China town.	Xu Shiqi: "Pan Zhengbang should give it to the student to reply immediately after reading. Finish the reply letter in three days." "Tell him mailing by air taking 6 days from Shanghai to US. By sea, one month. Two days from She County to Shanghai"
18	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	May 7, 1949	Chinese	Mailing problem. Writing weekly. Chinese courses. Weather.	
19		Zhang Yichang		Chinese	Yichang's photo on our wall. Family members. Family picnic. War. Residence. Gifts.	
20	Mrs. Milliken	Cheng Zhaoxiong	April 15, (1949?)	Chinese	Letter written too mature. Confucius is like God to our Christians.	

Table 3: Xingzhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children (continued)

21	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	April 2, (1949?)	Chinese	Exam grades. April Fool's Day. Weather. American people are concerned about China's war situation.	
22	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	Undated	Chinese	Delay in mailing. Weather.	"Mr. Pan check the dates of mailing letters to Mr. Wall in the recent two months. Write the dates to Mr. Wall"
23	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	April 25, 1949	Chinese	American people are observing China's situation with a heavy heart. Weather.	
24	克里斯蒂娜开柴里奴 戴立赛美洛娜	Sun Fengjiao 孙凤娇	Undated	Chinese	Vocational School training. Weather. Agricultural course.	
25	S. S. Stalter	Fang Jide 方积德	Undated	Chinese (only abstract)	The job in publishing industry. Sent English books.	
26	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	January 26, 1949	Chinese	Self-introduction. Three-year US navy experience. Personal economic situation.	"Mr. Pan must write the reply letter in three days after receiving the letter. No more delay afterwards." "Draw a map of China and mark She county's location" "Show Mr. Wall's photo to Gongji to let him know what his foster parent looks like. Keep the photo at school."

Table 3: Xingzhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children (continued)

27	Nancy P. Williams	Zhang Yichang	Undated	Chinese	Self-introduction. Family members. Residence. Music and singing. Music instrument gifts. Winter clothes.	
28	Mrs. R. M. King	Suqin 素琴	Undated	Chinese	Suqin's first letter is mature. My Chinese chef Pu Qiubo is now in Guangdong. My husband died two months ago. Residence situation.	
29	Mrs. Dickeman	Sun Fengjiao	Undated	Chinese	More than 900 students in the school I taught in decided to adopt a child from FPPWC. The vocational school's training courses.	"The reply letter should include the following points: 1. Your feeling of having so many foster parents. 2. Self-introduction. 3. The books you like to read. 4. The difference and similarities between your school and theirs. 5. Tell them 'Sun' is your family name, 'Fengjiao' is your given name. 6. Tell them you would love to write to them as well."

Table 3: Xingzhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children (continued)

30	Andrew (foster parents' son)	Zhou Xingsheng 周杏生	February 4, 1949	Chinese	Introduction of US high school. Introduction of Christmas. Love and peace.	Xu Shiqi: "This is a letter written by a child. He explains what war and peace are, and the greatness of benevolence. Although we are not Christians, we cannot deny the truth."
31	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	February 3, 1949	Chinese	Promise to write weekly. Self-introduction. Will send gifts or money. Share my gifts and money with your friends.	Xu Shiqi: "Mr. Wall is only 24 years old. He can make time to write to Xu Gongji every Wednesday night. Can our youths have the same idea of serving regardless of race and nationality? What can we learn from him?"
32	Mary Bertarelli	Sun Fengjiao	May 18, 1949	English	Self-introduction. Introduce the vocational high school and its courses.	
33	Patricia Nalback	Sun Fengjiao	May 18, 1949	English	Introduction of the vocational high school and the New York city.	
34	S. S. Stalter	Fang Jide	Undated	English	The present sent last time. The current war in China.	
35	Nancy Williams	Zhang Yichang	October 5, 1949	English	Recent activities. Christmas festival introduction. Birthday gifts.	
36	Miriam Dickeman	Sun Fengjiao	September 26, 1949	English	School's activity plan. Teachers' summer trips.	

Table 3: Xingzhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children (continued)

37	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	January 31, 1950	English	Will write more often. Cousin's graduation ceremony.	
38	Mrs. Milliken	Cheng Zhaoxiong	April 30	English	New Year's Card. Gifts including cloth.	
39	T. P. Heffelfinger	Xi'nian	June 16, 1949	English	Sorry for the military occupation of the school. The boys' and girls' parade in US and the picnic. Vacation trips.	
40	Andrew Vincent	Zhou Xingsheng	November 13, 1949	English	Will get a bicycle for you. Will go to college next year. Zhou worked in the autumn harvest.	
41	Andrew Vincent	Zhou Xingsheng	June 5, 1949	English	Delay of writing letters. Weather. Football. Wedding ceremony.	
42	Eleanor Jeter	Hong Yizhu	Undated	English	Introduction of Valentine's Day.	
43	Eleanor Jeter	Hong Yizhu	February 17, 1950	English	Interested in your school's farm work. My school's sports.	
44	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	February 24, 1950	English	Weather. Birthday of the first president of US. Family activities. Father's automobile car.	
45	Mrs. Milliken	Cheng Zhaoxiong	February 3, (1950)	English	Thanksgiving Day. What is mooncake? Your letter looks very mature. "Do you write letters yourself or dictate them to an older person?"	
46	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	May 23, 1949	English	Friends' visit. Weather. Delay in receiving letters.	
47	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	June 15, 1949	English	Expecting letters, mailing problems. Thanks for the map. Introduction of the city I lived in. Teaching in a public high school to get teaching certificate.	
48	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	July 6, 1949	English	Work, weather	

Table 3: Xingzhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children (continued)

49	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	June 6, 1949	English	Work, reading, weather, last letter from you	
50		Suqin	May 20, 1949	English	Cannot give a projector to Suqin. We have other children to pay and raise. Cook Poow Tieu-pow returned to China.	
51	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	November 6, 1949	English	Weather, drought in US years ago, gifts, grandparents' visit.	
52	Andrew Vincent	Zhou Xingsheng	June 12, 1949	English	Summer vocation, phycology and anatomy classes I attended.	
53	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	August 30, 1949	English	Travel schedule, last weekend	
54	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	March 31, 1950	English	Got your 3 letters at one time, work, birthday gift.	
55	Nancy Williams	Zhang Yichang	February 24, 1950	English	Planting flowers, what lollipop is, introduce Christmas,	
56	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	March 4, 1950	English	A hand-painted new year's card from you, tomorrow is my birthday, weather	
57	Nancy Williams	ZhangYichang	April 13, 1950	English	Gifts I sent you, weather, Chinese "Santa Clause" in one of your paintings, "one world" idea in the painting.	
58	T. P. Heffelfinger	Hong Xinian	October 14, 1949	English	My gifts, summer vacation, sports, weather, hunting.	
59	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	April 17, 1950	English	Weather, family activity on Easter Sunday.	
60	Andrew Vincent	Zhou Xingsheng	March 11, 1950	English	Xingsheng is generous to donate sum of the money I sent to buy a bicycle for school. School contest. Work in airplane model company.	
61	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	July 16, 1949	English	Summer school, introduction of California, talk more about yourself.	

Table 3: Xingzhi School's Collection of Letters from Foster parents to Children (continued)

62	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	June 29, 1949	English	School vocation, US Independence Day, weather	
63	Roy L. Wall	Xu Gongji	February 10, 1950	English	Surprised that Gongji received 7 letters at a time. What is Junior Youth Corps? Weather. Work.	

Table 4: Elementary Schools, Students, and Teachers in She County, 1949-1985

Year	Number of Elementary Schools	Number of Students in Elementary School	Number of Teachers in Elementary Schools	Number of Elementary Students Per 10,000 people
1949	349	21125	995	623
1950	520	32410	1347	938
1951	524	37224	1680	1060
1952	539	37634	1415	1062
1953	529	36245	1396	1009
1954	528	31007	1558	889
1955	526	33876	1519	900
1956	516	40576	1485	1069
1957	521	40609	1560	1048
1958	762	56351	1781	1425
1959	955	58558	1826	1471
1960	982	59749	1995	1526
1961	788	47189	1811	1196
1962	940	47334	1848	1139
1963	994	47552	1959	1141
1964	1119	54089	2101	1275

Table 4: Elementary Schools, Students, and Teachers in She County, 1949-1985 (continued)

1965	1913	76522	3174	1755
1966	1913	76522	3081	1706
1967	1913	73785	3262	1615
1968	1569	71430	3311	1518
1969	1599	69408	2756	1429
1970	1617	69883	2813	1401
1971	1542	72259	3182	1409
1972	1489	77669	3289	1482
1973	1472	86002	3383	1612
1974	1495	93554	3547	1731
1975	1471	98332	3662	1796
1976	1477	99011	3874	1789
1977	1475	97521	3897	1741
1978	1384	101250	3861	1792
1979	1379	99811	3701	1757
1980	1359	98501	3996	1724
1981	1378	94647	4151	1640
1982	1378	89947	3770	1550
1983	1378	83570	3682	1440
1984	1341	75389	3588	1300
1985	1342	88638	3512	1200

Figure 9: The Change of Elementary Schools' Numbers from 1949 to 1985

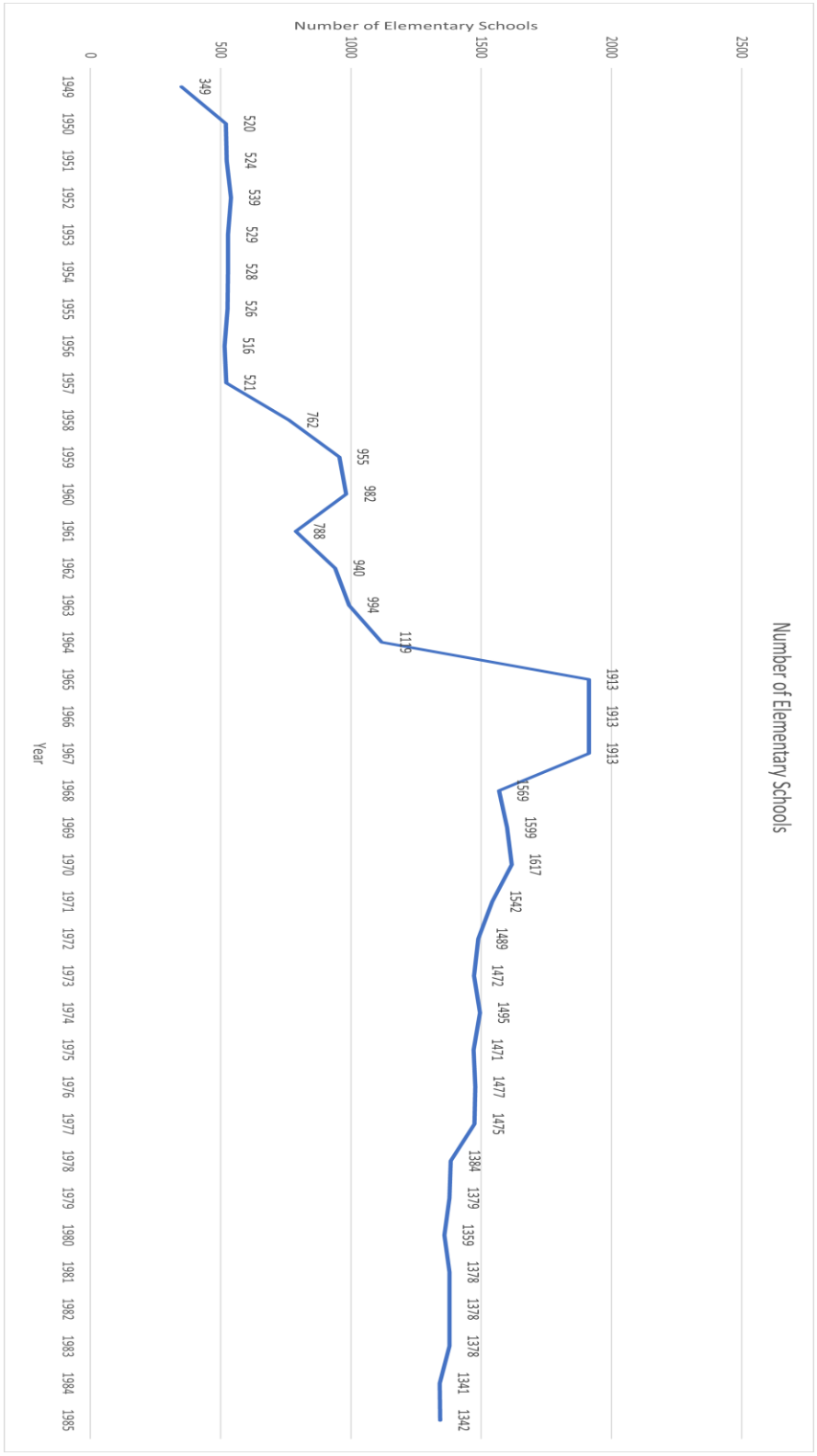
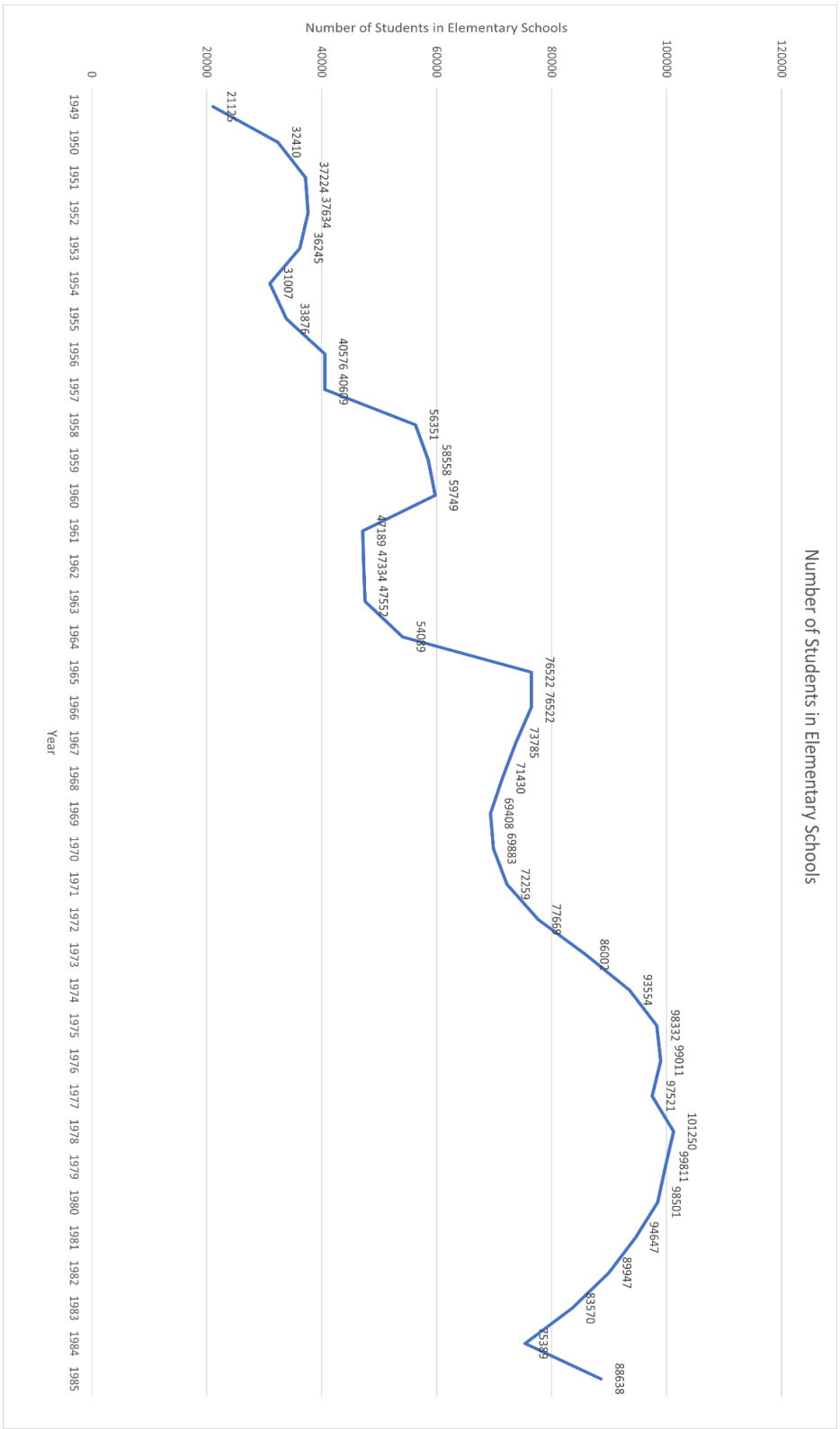


Figure 10: The Change of Elementary Students' Numbers from 1949-1985



Chapter 2: Extraction, Political Campaigns, and Education

Diverging from prior scholarship on political campaigns during the Mao era, which predominantly emphasizes elite politics, state authority, and propaganda mechanisms, this paper scrutinizes the fiscal system by conducting an in-depth case analysis of county-level fiscal structures within the political and financial milieu of the Mao era (1949-1979). Through an examination of the fiscal system's evolution in correlation with political campaigns, this chapter posits that each radical political campaign, whether intentionally orchestrated by the state or not, effectively functioned as a vehicle for resource extraction from county governments and their people. The research reveals a discernible pattern in which the manifestation of a fiscal surplus at the county government level precipitated the initiation of radical political undertakings, such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, which concurrently represented the two most resource-intensive campaigns. These radical political endeavors facilitated modifications within the tax system, strategically devised to obtain resources from county governments and, ultimately, the people.

This paper scrutinizes the county's archives within the financial context of centralization and decentralization, positing that these processes served as mechanisms for extracting resources from county governments and the people. Decentralization neither financially nor politically empowered county governments; rather, it aimed to extract resources from the people. When the state decentralized specific enterprises to county governments, this decentralization only temporarily alleviated deficits. Once the county began to experience a surplus, radical political campaigns were initiated from

above, and the county government bore the financial burden of these campaigns, ultimately incurring even greater deficits. Decentralization also entailed devolving financial responsibilities, such as education, onto local communities, thereby shifting burdens onto them. Conversely, for the majority of the Mao era, over half of the county government's revenue was submitted to the central government, indicating that the fiscal system remained highly centralized in terms of revenue allocation.

The fiscal system proved to be extractive for both county government and people. As county government consistently and reliably provided revenues to higher-level authorities while shouldering an increasing proportion of the costs associated with political campaigns, the central government effectively extracted resources from county administrations. Appendix 1 details the county government's yearly total expenditures, total income, income submitted to higher-level governments, income controlled by the county government, and funding received from upper-level administrations. Under such extensive extraction, county governments struggled to balance their budgets and were compelled to transfer the financial burden onto local communities and people. The additional financial responsibilities borne by local communities constituted a supplementary form of taxation. The CCP's approach to handling financial crises mirrored those employed during the imperial and Republican eras.

By delving into the Mao era's fiscal system within its political and financial context, this chapter argues that the expansion of education, extensive resource extraction, and radical political campaigns were mutually beneficial. Political movements, such as the Land Reform, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural

Revolution, resulted in the state's extensive extraction of resources from people. This substantial extraction, in turn, funded the initiation and intensification of these campaigns. Education served as a subtle means of extraction, while also acting as a conspicuous payoff of the political campaigns and resource extraction. Consequently, education helped legitimize both the extraction process and the political campaigns. This paper's analysis is organized into three sections: the establishment of the extractive fiscal system, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution.

The Establishment of the Extractive Fiscal System

The initial three years of the PRC were marked by both domestic and Korean warfare, which constituted a significant portion of the state's budget. The PRC became involved in the Korean War just two years after the establishment of the national government. CCP did not retreat after its success in the same year. Simultaneously, the nascent state had yet to conclude the domestic war against the KMT. With warfare ongoing, a substantial part of the CCP's budget was allocated to the military. Military expenses accounted for 60 percent of the entire budget in 1949, 41.1 percent in 1950, and 43 percent in 1951. [182]

[182]中国社会科学院中央档案馆编 Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Central Archives, *中华人民共和国经济档案资料选编 1949-1952 Selected Compilation of Economic Archive Materials of the People's Republic of China, 1949-1952* (北京: 中国城市经济社会出版社, 1989 年版 Beijing: China Urban Economy and Society Publishing House), p.29-30.

Possibly to enhance tax collection efficiency, the CCP did not establish the county-level fiscal system until 1952. [183] During the first three years of the PRC, She county's role was little more than a branch of the provincial government's revenue collection department. From 1949 to 1952, She County government submitted approximately 81.9% of all collected revenues to the provincial government. [184] In 1949, She County government's financial archives indicate that the upper-level government assigned a specific amount of grain as the collection target for the county government. In theory, the county government should have met this goal and transferred all collected revenues to the provincial government. The provincial government provided a certain amount of funding to the county (more than the county required in She county's case) to cover expenditures, and any surplus had to be returned at the end of each year. The county government did not have its own budget-making system and, theoretically, could not retain any of the collected revenue. In 1950 and 1951, the county government could collect additional taxes on agriculture and urban taxes to cover its expenditures, and according to the national tax regulations of 1950, the additional tax could not exceed 15 percent of the agricultural and urban taxes. [185] In 1951, the additional tax's percentage was adjusted to 20 percent. She county collected the additional tax in compliance with the

[183] "中共中央批转中财委关于二月财政会议的综合报告, 1951 年 3 月 31 日" ("The CCP Central Committee's Endorsement of the Comprehensive Report on the February Financial Meeting by the Central Finance Committee") 中国社会科学院中央档案馆编 Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Central Archives, *中华人民共和国经济档案资料选编 1949-1952 Selected Compilation of Economic Archive Materials of the People's Republic of China, 1949-1952*, p.104.

[184] 歙县地方志编纂委员会(She County Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县志 She County Chronicles, Volume 1*, p.576.

[185] *新解放区农业税暂行条例 Provisional Regulations on Agricultural Tax in the Newly Liberated Areas* in 刘佐 Liu Zuo, *中国税制五十年(1949-1999) Fifty Years of China's Tax System, 1949-1999* (北京: 中国经济出版社, 2000 年 Beijing: China Economy Publishing House, 2000).

regulations, but it was insufficient to meet the county government's needs. The county government had to generate revenue through alternative means.

The CCP established its county government in She County in May 1949, just one month after its army crossed the Yangtze River. Upon taking control, the CCP began to inspect the grain tax stores left by the KMT. [186] She County's peasants cultivated rice and typically harvested twice a year, usually in late July and November. Consequently, the CCP could collect grain tax twice in its first year of occupation. The grain collection target for She County in 1949 was set at 15,869,810 jin. Moreover, military training was conducted in She County, and the county was responsible for providing grain and all other supplies. [187] Thus, the She County government faced immense tax collection pressure in its inaugural year.

Because of the huge tax pressure, She County not only focused on the twice-annual grain taxations in summer and autumn, but also the property that had been owned by various social organizations in the Republican era. The county government "publicized" the school property (公产学田) as its new and crucial source of revenue income. On December 26, 1949, the She County government received the first document from the upper-level government (皖南人民行政公署, the South Anhui Prefect) directing it to take ownership of the school property. Southern Anhui province was known for the Huizhou merchants and rich lineage organizations in the Ming and Qing

[186] "皖南行政公署关于清理敌伪征存历年度田赋粮食的指示" ("The Directive of the South Anhui Administrative Office on Clearing Up Grain Levies from Past Years Collected by the Republican Government, May 24, 1949"), She County Archives, 51-1-1.
[187] "关于全力保障二野三兵团" ("On Fully Ensuring the Support for the Second Field Army and the Third Corps"), She County Archives, 51-1-1.

periods.[188] The major way to finance schools was to give them property. The property included land, houses, forests, lakes, tidal areas, and rivers.

Owing to this substantial tax pressure, She County not only focused on the biannual grain taxations in summer and autumn but also on the property that had been owned by various social organizations during the Republican era. The county government "publicized" school property (公产学田) as a new and crucial source of revenue. On December 26, 1949, the She County government received its first directive from the upper-level government (皖南人民行政公署, the South Anhui Prefect) to take ownership of the school properties. [189] Southern Anhui province was known for its Huizhou merchants and affluent lineage organizations during the Ming and Qing periods. These lineage organizations funded more schools and cultural activities than most rural areas in China. The primary method of financing schools was through property donations, including land, houses, forests, lakes, tidal areas, and rivers.

For rural households, the primary tax to submit was the agricultural tax, collected solely in the form of unhusked rice, which had a longer shelf life than husked rice. Although peasants cultivated wheat, corn, and sweet potatoes as supplementary grains, rice remained the primary grain grown in She County for most families. Taxes were collected in the form of rice rather than cash because the value of the RMB was unstable,

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[188] Qitao Guo, *Ritual Opera and Mercantile Lineage: The Confucian Transformation of Popular Culture in Late Imperial Huizhou* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
Joseph P. McDermott, *The Making of a New Rural Order in South China: Volume 1, Village, Land, and Lineage in Huizhou, 900-1600,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
Joseph P. McDermott, *The Making of a New Rural Order in South China: Volume 2, Merchants, Markets, and Lineages, 1500-1700,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge University Press, 2020).
[189] “关于整理各县公产学田的指示” (“Directive on the Arrangement of Public Property and Schools’ Fields in Each County”), She County Archives, 51-1-1.

and rice effectively functioned as hard currency. Most state-issued salaries were in the form of rice. The lowest tax collecting agency was the village (equivalent to the "Bao" in the Bao Jia system before 1952), as the county government assigned a certain quota to each village. [190] The smallest tax collecting unit was the household. Each household had a fixed number of tax points, calculated based on the quantity and quality of the household's land, as well as the number of people in the household. Higher land quality and quantity, as well as larger households, resulted in more tax points. The value of each tax point was connected to the village's quota and the village's total number of tax points, with higher village quotas yielding higher tax point values. This agricultural tax collection method was practiced in most areas of the PRC and became a national standard in 1950.

Through this calculation process, we can conclude that each household's agricultural tax amount was closely related to the assigned quota, the quality and quantity of land owned by the household, and the number of people in the household. The higher the quota assigned to the village, the more each household had to submit. The higher the quality and quantity of land, the higher the tax rate. The more people in the household, the higher the tax rate became. More importantly, the agricultural tax amount was never fixed; the state could easily adjust the quota according to its needs.

[190] 张济顺 Zhang Jishun, *远去的都市: 1950 年代的上海 A City Displaced: Shanghai in the 1950s* (北京社会科学文献出版社 2015 年版 Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2015). Appendix 1 of this book shows how the Bao Jia System was established under the Japanese occupation and continued in the Republican time. Chapter 1 shows how CCP adopted the Bao Jia System and developed it to the neighborhood committee (居民委员会) system in the urban context.

The fiscal was highly centralized, and included the extraction of resources from previously public-owned properties. This approach was consistent with the state's strategic plan and social control policies. The primary objective of the centralized fiscal system was to provide support for the Korean War effort. By establishing such a system, the state could obtain as many resources as possible from localities to fund the war. Alongside this centralized approach, the state implemented the Land Reform (1950-53) and the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries (1950-53). Yang Kuisong's research on the Land Reform and the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries suggests that the mobilization for the Korean War enabled the CCP to launch domestic political campaigns, thereby gaining strict centralized social control through these initiatives. [191] Additionally, Zhang Jishun's study on the establishment of neighborhood committees (居民委员会) in Shanghai demonstrates that the CCP gained control in previously hard-to-control urban areas during the Korean War period. [192]

The commencement and escalation of the Korean War placed a significant tax burden on each peasant, resulting in an increase in the percentage of grain production submitted as taxes in She County. According to the data, in 1950, the grain production of the entire county was 121,199,027 jin of rice, and the total population was 323,955. The agricultural tax accounted for 14.41 percent of the total grain production, with each person required to pay 53.14 jin of rice on average. However, in 1951, the grain production increased to 152,707,740 jin of rice, and the total population increased to

[191] 杨奎松 (Yang Kuisong), 中华人民共和国建国史研究 *Study of the Founding History of the People's Republic of China*.
[192] 张济顺 Zhang Jishun, *远去的都市: 1950 年代的上海 A City Displaced: Shanghai in the 1950s*.

334,880. As a result, the agricultural tax constituted 17.34 percent of the total grain production, and each person had to pay an average of 79.2 jin of rice. [193] Although there was an increase in grain production and population in 1951, the rise in taxes was greater. The percentage of agricultural taxes in total grain production increased by nearly 3 percent (2.93%). 3 percent increment is significant. As each person had to submit 26.06 jin more of rice than in 1950, indicating that in 1951, each person submitted 49.04% more grain.

The county government was concerned about the affordability of taxes, as well as the potential for such taxes to trigger anxiety and anger that could jeopardize the new state and the ongoing Land Reform. Additionally, the government was interested in determining whether people still possessed surpluses that the state could levy taxes on. In response to these questions, one rural town in the county conducted a survey of the income and expenditures of "typical households (典型户)" in 1951. The survey presented 15 families in five categories, starting with rich peasants (富农) before and after the Land Reform, followed by rich peasants before and middle peasants (中农) after the Land Reform, middle peasants before and after the Land Reform, poor peasants (贫农) before and middle peasants after the Land Reform, and finally craftsmen (手工业者). The survey results were compiled in a report, which argued that the Land Reform had significantly improved the lives of most people, particularly those who were previously

[193] “歙县地方财政及人民负担典型调查总结材料” (“Summary of Typical Survey Materials on Local Finance and People’s Burden in She County”), She County Archives, 51-1-10.

poor peasants. [194] The report sought to demonstrate the reliability of the survey by explaining how the survey team collected information in various ways. The survey team was primarily composed of poor peasants who had benefited the most from the Land Reform and were thus more willing to share their real situations. Conversely, the middle and rich peasants, who had not benefited from or were even adversely affected by the Land Reform, were uncooperative towards the survey team. To obtain data on these groups, the survey team used methods such as indoctrination, investigating neighbors and relatives, and searching relevant documents. Following the description of the data collection methods, the report claimed that the data were reliable.

According to the survey, poor peasants benefited more from the Land Reform than other peasants. The survey also revealed that the rate of agricultural tax and its additional tax from each household's total rice production varied from 9.21 percent to 34.24 percent. However, the tax rates for households in the first two categories (rich peasants before and after the Land Reform) were generally higher than the third and fourth categories (middle peasants before and after the Land Reform). Specifically, the tax rates for the first two categories were 19.58%, 34.17%, 34.24%, 27.33%, 20%, and 34.16%, respectively, while the third and fourth categories had tax rates of 16.85%, 12.64%, 22.42%, 11.20%, 9.21%, and 17.32%, respectively. The households in the first two categories were wealthier and had higher quality lands than those in the third and

[194] “歙县第八区大阜乡乡村财政情况及人民负担情况典型” (“Typical Situation of Rural Finance and People's Burden in Dafu Township, Eighth District of She County”), She County Archives, 51-1-10.

fourth categories, which could account for their higher tax rates. This implies that the richer families submitted a higher rate of tax.

The presentation of the survey results, however, suggests a different political agenda than merely proving the benefits of the Land Reform. The survey intentionally disregards the poverty that existed in the rural areas and seeks to portray a false sense of abundance among all people through a biased selection and presentation of "typical households." Firstly, the survey presents biased information is by failing to compare the household's economic situation before and after the Land Reform. Instead, it only shows the situation after the Land Reform. This lack of comparison means that the survey cannot make a strong argument about the success of the Land Reform. It seems that the survey does not aim to make such an argument in the first place.

Secondly, the survey's selection of households exhibits a biased approach. The survey only includes households that were in a better economic situation. This approach is problematic since poor peasants were the primary beneficiaries of Land Reform and the main contributors to the Korean War donations (抗美援朝捐, which were claimed to be "voluntary donations" but were actually another form of additional tax). [195] Despite the persuasive data on poor peasants, which the report claimed were the most reliable evidence to demonstrate the success of the ideology and Land Reform, the survey omits them entirely. Instead, the survey disproportionately presents data from rich peasants. The town where the survey was conducted had fewer than 10 rich peasant households,

[195] “歙县第八区大阜乡乡村财政情况及人民负担情况典型” (“Typical Situation of Rural Finance and People's Burden in Dafu Township, Eighth District of She County”), She County Archives, 51-1-10.

comprising less than 2.44 percent of the total population of 2,046 persons. [196] However, the survey introduces data from three rich peasant households, accounting for 20 percent of all families in the survey. This approach is problematic since it omits data from the primary beneficiaries of Land Reform and instead emphasizes households that were already in a better economic situation.

Thirdly, the survey presents the economic situation in a specific order, which highlights households from the best to the worst in both the order of categories and the order of households in each category. Additionally, the survey is presented with no introduction or conclusion, which can lead to confusion about how to read the data. As a result, the data presented first have a greater chance of being read and are therefore emphasized in the survey. In this particular survey, the richest household among the three rich peasant households was presented in first place, which prioritized the rich peasants in the survey. This presentation is problematic since, according to the report, although some poor peasants' lives improved, they still faced food shortages. The poor peasant households were not included in the "typical households," which indicates the survey's intentional exclusion of poor peasants.

The survey's agenda sheds light on the county government's intention in initiating the survey. The government may have had several reasons for conducting the survey. One possible reason was concern about the heavy tax burden on peasants during the Korean War, which could provoke their dissatisfaction and even anger towards the new

[196] “歙县第八区大阜乡乡村财政情况及人民负担情况典型” (“Typical Situation of Rural Finance and People's Burden in Dafu Township, Eighth District of She County”), She County Archives, 51-1-10.

regime. This discontent could merge with complaints about the violence in various on-going campaigns such as the Land Reform, the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries, the Three-Anti Campaign, etc., forming a threat to the regime. Another possibility was that the county was curious about how much surplus the households had and how much more the state could extract. As the survey aimed to show abundance, it was more likely to present evidence that justified a higher tax rate than to warn the state of the heavy tax burden on peasants. The survey's findings could have been particularly important to the county government given the significant reductions in agricultural production in the following year due to drought and Schistosomiasis, which made the collection of agricultural taxes more challenging. As a result, the agricultural tax was reduced by 16.07 percent, compromising 11.64 percent of the total grain production. [197]

In addition to the agricultural tax and its additional tax, the survey shows that each household was also required to make various donations, including donations for the Korean War, local schools' operation, planes and cannons in the Korean War, and "winter schools" (冬学), which were temporary schools opened during the slack farming season in the winter to raise the literacy rate among common people as part of the campaign to "eliminate illiteracy(扫盲)". Although these donations were supposed to be voluntary, landlords or rich peasants had already been viewed with suspicion by the CCP. Refusing

[197] “农税工作报告” (“Agricultural Tax Work Report”), She County Archives, 51-1-14.
The grain production for the year of 1952 should be 156882154 Jin of rice and the drought reduced the production by 41480 Jin. The agricultural tax was 18254445 Jin of rice in total.
About the schistosomiasis, See Miriam Gross, *Farewell to the God of the Plague: Chairman Mao’s Campaign to Deworm China*.

to contribute could easily be seen as discontent with the current regime, which could lead to worse consequences. The poor peasants, who had benefited the most from the current regime and had the opportunity to join the local leadership, were more open to ideological indoctrination and were more likely to make donations. According to the report, poor peasants were the major contributors of Korean War donations. If all other peasants made donations, the middle peasants would be vilified if they did not contribute. In the end, the donations turned out to be compulsory.

The December 26 document provided legitimacy for the confiscation of school property by arguing that the property was owned by the "feudal powers" during the KMT's counterrevolutionary rule. As the school property was considered private property of the "feudal powers," the CCP believed it had the right to take it over. Furthermore, the new regime was facing significant financial deficits nationwide, which provided additional justification for the takeover. The school property generated substantial revenue for the county government. In 1951, the revenue from school property was 436,974 jin of rice, equivalent to 57.61 percent of the agricultural additional tax and 89.41 percent of the urban additional tax. The revenue from school property constituted more than a quarter (25.43%) of the county government's total revenue.

According to the survey, in addition to the various donations, peasants were also required to pay "regulation fees" (规费) for their marriage and land certificates. The land certificates were necessary to demonstrate ownership of a particular piece of land, and those who received land through the Land Reform had to obtain a certificate to legally own the land. The survey indicated that each household paid between 44 and 50 jin of

rice for their land certificates. The county government began collecting regulation fees in 1951, and the related departments had full control over the amount charged. These departments could adjust the fee as necessary and only needed to report to the financial bureau. [198]

In 1953, a major development occurred with the establishment of a county-level fiscal system. This new system allowed for the creation of a separate budget-making system and independent sources of revenue. Additionally, a county treasury (金库) was established by the county government. As a result, the tax collection department was transferred from the provincial government to the county government, enabling the county financial bureau to receive monthly reports about the tax collection process.

The cancellation of the additional taxes, namely the agricultural and urban tax, was a significant change for the county government's revenues. [199] Although it meant the county government's fiscal independence, it also resulted in a significant cut to revenue. The establishment of the county-level fiscal system came hand in hand with the initiation of the state's monopoly policy on grain purchasing and marketing (统购统销) and rural collectivization. [200] With the initiation of collectivization, the cooperatives mainly

[198] "歙县地方财政及人民负担典型调查总结材料" ("Summary of Typical Survey Materials on Local Finance and People's Burden in She County"), She County Archives, 51-1-10.
[199] 关于农业税工作的指示 Directive on Agricultural Tax Work: "全国各地农业税的地方附加，一律取消。今后对农业只由中央统一征收一道农业税，不再附加" ("All local surcharges on agricultural taxes across the country are hereby cancelled. From now on, only one unified agricultural tax will be levied by the central government on agriculture, with no additional surcharges.") in 李成瑞 Li Chengrui, *中华人民共和国农业税史稿 Draft History of the People's Republic of China's Agricultural Tax* (北京: 中国财政经济出版社, 1962 年 Beijing: Chinese Financial & Economic Publishing House), p.348.
[200] Jean C. Oi, *State and Peasant in Contemporary China: The Political Economy of Village Government*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1991).

submitted the agricultural tax and transported it directly to the provincial government as state revenue. The county government could no longer collect the additional agricultural tax as its revenue. However, since the county government was the collector of the agricultural tax, it could receive a certain percentage of the state tax (国税) from the provincial government, which mainly referred to the agricultural tax. The county government had little control over the state tax, so She County's financial bureau did not keep records of the state tax. Moreover, the agricultural tax rate varied each year, so the percentage that the provincial government would return to the county was uncertain. Although the cancellation of the agricultural tax's additional tax meant erasing it, it was included in the formal tax. From 1953 to 1957, the average agricultural tax rate (the tax amount in the total grain production) increased 2 percent more than the average rate in the three years from 1950 to 1953, according to state data. [201] This increase meant that the central government shifted the burden to the peasants instead of sharing its previous revenue with the county government, leaving the peasants' tax burden unrelieved. The cancellation of the agricultural tax's additional tax did not mean erasing it; instead, it was included in the formal tax

The county government had the authority to collect various new taxes in addition to a certain percentage of the state tax. These included the commodity tax (货物税), commodity circulation tax (商品流通税), business tax (工商营业税), income tax (所得

[201] 汪天龙 Wang Tianlong: *1949-1965 年甘肃省农业税研究 Research on Gansu Province's Agricultural Tax from 1949-1965*, (兰州: 西北师范大学硕士学位论文, 2017 年 Lanzhou: Northwest Normal University Master Degree Thesis, 2017), p.9. The average agricultural tax rate in the three years from 1950 to 1952 was about 10%, and the average rate in the five years from 1953 to 1957 was 12%.

税), slaughter tax (屠宰税), livestock transaction tax (牲畜交易税), culture and entertainment tax (文化娱乐税), vehicle license tax (车船牌照税), contract tax (契税), and the stamp duty and its additional tax (印花税及其附加). Tea, tobacco, and raw materials for vegetable oil such as soybean, sesame, and rapeseed were subject to the commodity tax. Tea, being the major economic plant in rural She county, was the main contributor to the commodity tax. The commodity circulation tax mainly targeted alcohol and lumber transportation processes in She county. However, the lumber transportation tax was adjusted to be paid at the destination in the latter half of 1953, and since She county was the production site of lumber, it could not collect much from the transportation tax. [202] The business tax was levied on both cooperatives and private businesses, but the income tax differed for cooperatives and private businesses. For cooperatives, only increases in income were targeted for the income tax, while for private businesses, all income was taxed. Both cooperatives and private businesses were subject to the stamp duty and its additional tax.

In addition to tax revenue, the county government's financial sources comprised income from county-owned enterprises (企业收入), operational income (事业收入), and miscellaneous revenue streams. In 1953, She County's government held ownership of two enterprises: a lime factory and a rice mill. Established in 1950, the lime factory produced a primary fertilizer used in rural areas, which granted it a substantial market share and profitability. Similarly, the rice mill, indispensable to the local peasants, was a lucrative

[202] “预算管理工作” (“Budget Management Work”), She County Archives, 51-1-14.

business. Operational income (事业收入) encompassed the tuition fees collected from both elementary and middle schools. Other sources of revenue included income derived from public property (encompassing school assets), regulatory fees, and the proceeds obtained from campaign-related confiscations. [203]

With the introduction of new tax sources, the county government's revenue in 1953 doubled compared to the previous year, surging from 6,699,432,932 RMB in 1952 to 16,278,288,662 RMB in 1953. In contrast to the prior tax system, the commodity tax, slaughter tax, livestock transaction tax, culture and entertainment tax, vehicle license tax, and contract tax (契税) were novel additions. The rural population, which constituted 92.4 percent of the county's total population, faced new levies in addition to the agricultural tax. Previously exempt from taxation, vegetable oil products were now subjected to the commodity tax. Although the slaughter and sale of livestock had been taxed since the late Qing period, tax evasion remained a pervasive issue. [204] Consequently, the county government expressed concern about the evasion of these two types of taxes.

Despite the introduction of new tax sources, the county government continued to face financial challenges, primarily due to a significant increase in education expenditure. As illustrated in Appendix 2, education expenditures in 1953 tripled compared to those in 1952. This surge in education expenditure resulted from the state's assumption of control

[203] "预算管理工作" ("Budget Management Work"), She County Archives, 51-1-14.
[204] In late Republican, local authorities had the right to abolish hog-slaughter taxes to gain support from people and avoid the spread of the Communist Party.
Edward Friedman, Paul G. Pickowicz, Mark Selden, *Chinese Village, Socialist State* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), p.12.

over all schools within the county, as discussed in the education and politics chapter. Previously, these schools had been collectively owned by lineage organizations, foreign missionary organizations, or privately owned by merchants and intellectuals. For instance, at the end of 1951, there were 48 public elementary schools, 4 private schools, and 480 collectively owned schools. The 48 public schools accommodated 11,906 students and 437 teachers, while the 4 private schools hosted 566 students and 15 teachers. Collectively owned schools, with 36,325 students and 1,408 teachers, constituted the major segment of the education system. [205] Private schools played a limited role in rural education, as the number of students and teachers in collectively owned schools was three times greater than in public schools. However, each collectively owned school catered to far fewer students and teachers compared to public ones. Consequently, the construction, maintenance, and management costs of these schools were substantially higher than those of public schools. In 1953, when all schools became public, the county government assumed financial responsibility for their operation, placing a considerable burden on its finances.

Prior to 1953, the county government oversaw the financial affairs of all schools but allocated only a small portion of its revenue to education. Collectively and privately owned schools struggled to survive, as the Land Reform altered the rural areas' social structure, leaving former sponsors unable to provide financial support. Upon the establishment of its regime, the CCP confiscated all school properties. The majority of

[205] "1951 年度教育事业成果报告表" ("Education Achievements Report Form for the Year 1951"), She County Archives, 51-1-21.
There were only 2 middle schools with limited size of students and teachers in She County in 1951. Very few students could go to the middle schools then.

schools relied on donations from peasants for sustenance. Schools previously owned by the KMT government were transferred to the CCP's control at the onset of its regime. During the first three years of the PRC, funding from the county government was often insufficient and untimely. School properties, despite being under the county government's jurisdiction, were not always closely monitored. Some school principals attempted to conceal income generated from school properties or privately sought donations from peasants. In response, the county government issued a document on May 1, 1951, to all schools, condemning these unauthorized fundraising efforts. [206] The document stipulated that peasant donations to schools must be organized by township leaders and reported to the county government. Consequently, the county government maintained full control over all school funding during the first three years, though it did not significantly invest in education from its revenue.

During the five-year period from 1953 to 1957, the proportion of education expenditures within each year's total expenditures ranged from 26.21% to 44.35%. The lowest percentage occurred in 1956. The CCP initiated its first leap forward in 1955, accelerating the process of converting private businesses into public enterprises. In 1955 and 1956, the widespread transformation of private businesses into public ownership resulted in substantial deficits for the majority of county governments. [207] In late 1956,

[206] "从检查中对目前财政工作的几点紧急指示" ("Several Urgent Directives on Current Financial Work from the Inspection"), She County Archives, 51-1-8.
This document was in line with the national campaign to criticize the movie "Wu Xun Zhuan (武训传)," which was led by Mao's wife Jiang Qing and aimed to criticize the gentry class who was a major sponsor of education in rural area.
[207] 冯筱才 Feng Xiaocai, "社会主义 的'边缘人'：1956 年前后的小商小贩改造研究" ("The 'Marginal People' of Socialism: A Study on the Transformation of Small Traders and Peddlers around 1956"), *中国当代史研究 Contemporary Chinese History*, August 2011.

the CCP adjusted its economic policies, criticizing the leap forward and consequently reducing education expenditures. The county government's deficit was primarily offset by funding from the provincial government.

The final year of the first five-year plan experienced the initial wave of enterprise decentralization, and between 1949 and 1976, it was the sole year to yield a surplus. The central government even issued an edict to delegate specific enterprises to the county government. This decentralization of enterprises generated increased revenue and granted greater autonomy to the county government. Two major enterprises decentralized to She County included a winery and the Xinhua bookstore. Initially, the winery's profit was projected to be 11,722 RMB; however, by the end of 1957, it had realized a profit of 48,860 RMB.[208] The Xinhua bookstore was designated to financially partner with the county cinema, as the latter faced a deficit that could be offset by Xinhua's profits. In 1957, the cinema reported a deficit of 1,367 RMB, as mobile movie teams only managed to attract 51% of the anticipated audience. Following the decentralization of the Xinhua bookstore to the county government, it sold its entire used book collection, generating a profit of 31,153.71 RMB. This sale contributed to a 185 percent increase in its projected profit, allowing the Xinhua bookstore's earnings to compensate for the cinema's deficit.[209]

[208] “一九五七年财政工作总结和一九五八年财政工作意见” (“Summary of Financial Work in 1957 and Opinions on Financial Work in 1958”), She County Archives, 51-1-47.
[209] “一九五七年财政工作总结和一九五八年财政工作意见” (“Summary of Financial Work in 1957 and Opinions on Financial Work in 1958”), She County Archives, 51-1-47.

For the first time since its establishment, the county government experienced a financial surplus, attributable to fiscal decentralization. However, this surplus was short-lived, as the subsequent year saw the advent of the costly Great Leap Forward.

The Extraction of Great Leap Forward

The county government's surplus situation lasted only one year. During the Great Leap Forward (GLF), the fiscal system increasingly extracted resources from the county government for the benefit of higher-level governments. Consequently, the county government reverted to a deficit once the GLF commenced. While agricultural and industrial production experienced a dramatic increase in 1958, this growth was insufficient to offset the expenditures associated with the GLF. No evidence suggests that the state initiated the GLF because county governments had surpluses and could support local heavy industry, education, and other sectors' leap forward. However, without the surplus generated by the first five-year plan, the GLF would have been financially unfeasible.

Upon the completion of collectivization in 1958, the central government introduced the first nationwide agricultural tax regulations, which were published in *People's Daily,* the mouthpiece of the CCP's central committee, on June 3, 1958. [210] The primary stipulations included basing the agricultural tax on each grain's average

[210] “中华人民共和国农业税条例” (“Agricultural Tax Regulations of the People's Republic of China”), *People’s Daily*, June 5, 1958.

production rather than actual production; setting the average national tax rate at 15.5 percent of average production; allowing each province to adjust the tax rate based on the national rate, provided it did not exceed 25 percent; county governments had the right to make slight adjustments to the provincial tax rate but needed approval from the upper-level government. Additionally, the tax for the peasants who did not join people's communes would be 10 to 50 percent higher than those in the communes. The provincial government could collect a local additional tax (地方附加) alongside the agricultural tax; the local additional tax would be less than 15 percent of the agricultural tax, and the agricultural tax should be in the form of grain for most people. The central ideas of the regulations were, firstly, to legitimize the high agricultural tax rate and give county governments the power to adjust the tax rate, and secondly, to force peasants to join people's communes by levying heavier taxes on those who had not joined. [211] The regulations brought 42.89 percent more agricultural taxes than the previous year for She County.

Not only did the agricultural tax increase in 1958, but the county's total income also rose by 50 percent compared to 1957. [212] The primary contributor to this revenue surge was the tax collected from the She County Tea Factory, which fell under the industrial and agricultural products tax category. In 1957, She County merged several

[211] The extra tax towards the individual peasants started in late 1957, before the regulations were published. In 1958, the county gained 634484 Yuan agricultural tax while in the first five-year plan, the county government could get nothing from the agricultural tax. In the year of 1958, the total agricultural tax was 2349717 Yuan. “1958 年决算说明” (“Explanation of the Final Accounts for 1958”), She County Archives, 51-1-61.

[212] 1958’s county income was 151.83 percent of 1957’s. “1958 年决算说明” (“Explanation of the Final Accounts for 1958”), She County Archives, 51-1-61.

private tea factories to establish a single county-owned tea factory. However, due to the summer drought that year, tea production suffered, and the factory failed to achieve its planned profit. In 1958, tea production recovered, and the tea factory contributed nearly 5 million (4,983,413) RMB in commodity tax to the county, an increase of 2 million RMB compared to the previous year. The agricultural tax collected in 1958 amounted to only approximately 2.35 million (2,349,717) RMB, constituting less than half of the tea factory's tax contribution. The total taxes and income collected by She County amounted to 11,696,128 RMB, with the tea factory's tax accounting for nearly 42 percent of the overall sum. [213]

Despite the increase in income, She County still faced a deficit of 88,409 RMB, which can be attributed to three primary factors. First, the county government retained only a small fraction (32.08%) of all taxes and income collected. The total tax and income collected by She County in 1958 comprised five categories: industry and commercial tax, agricultural tax, operational and enterprise income, bonds, and other income. [214] In 1958, the county government collected a total of 11,696,128 RMB in taxes and income, yet it was only able to retain 3,752,007 RMB from this sum.

[213] "1958 年决算说明" ("Explanation of the Final Accounts for 1958"), She County Archives, 51-1-61.

[214] Industry and commercial taxes include the industrial and agricultural products tax; livestock slaughter tax; livestock transaction tax; cultural and entertainment tax; license tax. The industrial and agricultural products tax was mainly levied on tea products (She County Tea Factory tax); lumber; vegetable oil plants; and tobacco leaves.
Agricultural tax was levied on the grains.
Operational and enterprises' income was mainly paid by the 42 collective enterprises in the county, the major contributors of which are the winery and the lime kiln.

Table3: The Distribution of Revenue between the County and Provincial Government in 1958

	Total amount that county collected	Amount that county kept	Percentage that county kept
Industry and commercial taxes	8,394,320	2,516,696	29.98%
Agricultural tax[215]	2,349,717	634,424	27%
Operational and enterprise income	236,324	236,324	100%
Bonds	261,666	129,898	49.64%
Other income	234,665	234,665	100%
Total	11,696,128	3,752,007	32.08%

The second and most significant reason for the deficit was the county government's substantial investment in backyard furnaces and the county's heavy industry, which amounted to an increase of 19.26 times compared to the previous year. In addition to financing the backyard furnaces, She County also established two new machinery factories in 1958.

The final reason for the deficit was the 26.39% increase in education expenditure from 1957. In that year, the educational expenditure amounted to 982,016 RMB, accounting for 31.40% of all expenditures. During the first year of the Great Leap Forward (GLF), educational expenditure surged to 1,241,142 RMB, constituting 46.98% of the county's total expenditure—an increase of 26.39% from the previous year. In 1958, the state took the middle school enrollment issue seriously, establishing three additional middle schools: one junior teacher's school and one junior agricultural school. Although

[215] This was confusing. According to the regulations published on people's daily, the county government could not keep anything from the agricultural tax, but She County could keep 27 percent of the agricultural tax.

the junior agricultural school specialized in agriculture and had a vast tract of fertile land as its income source, it still required financial support from the county government for its initial operations. Despite the other two new middle schools having only four classes (309 students) in their first year, the number of classes and students would double and then triple in the subsequent years. The establishment of the three new middle schools was a significant endeavor, considering that She County had only three middle schools—housing 37 classes and 2,157 students in total—prior to the GLF.

The 26.39% increase in education expenditures, however, was insufficient to accommodate the unprecedented expansion of education. As previously discussed in the education and politics chapter, the educational expansion in 1958 exceeded any prior years. In addition to the three new county government-owned middle schools, there were 30 new commune-operated minban middle schools and 4 new work unit-run junior middle schools. The majority of middle school growth was financed not by the county government but by other sources, while elementary school growth was primarily funded by the county government. In comparison to 1957, there were 241 additional elementary schools, 15,642 new students, and 221 more teachers in 1958. The 15,642 new students represented a 38.52% increase from the student population in 1957, while the 241 additional elementary schools constituted a 46.26% growth compared to the schools in the previous year. The expansion of elementary students and schools significantly outpaced the growth of education expenditures. As mentioned in the education and politics chapter, the educational expansion was primarily driven by the minban sector, which was mainly financed by communes, brigades, or production teams.

In 1958, the education financial system underwent decentralization, allowing communes to establish and operate their own schools, and the education budget could be easily diverted to other areas. This decentralization of education finance persisted until 1960. In a single week in March 1958, 109 minban middle schools, operated by communes, were established; of these, 30 minban middle schools continued operating until the end of the year. However, the decentralization of education finance did not necessarily benefit the commune-owned schools, as education expenditures were often reallocated elsewhere. Some communes reduced or halted fellowships for students, while others lowered teachers' salaries and assigned them agricultural labor tasks. The redirection of education expenditures was a nationwide issue, which the central government acknowledged in 1960 and subsequently terminated the decentralization process that same year. [216]

The significant increase in education expenditure observed in 1957 may have contributed to the unprecedented expansion of education in 1958. In 1957, education expenditure amounted to 982,016 RMB, while in 1956, it was only 529,260 RMB. This represented an 85.55% increase in education expenditure from 1956 to 1957. Although the education expansion nearly doubled in 1957 compared to 1956, the expansion during 1957 was moderate. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that the substantial increase in education expenditures in 1957 was allocated to the construction of new

[216] “安徽省教育厅关于进一步加强我省教育经费管理的通知(1960 年 3 月 5 日)” (“Notice from Anhui Provincial Department of Education on Further Strengthening the Management of Education Funds in Our Province, March 5, 1960”), She County Archives, 62-1-88.
“陆定一副总理、李先念副总理并报 (1959 年 10 月 29 日)” (“Vice Premier Lu Dingyi and Vice Premier Li Xiannian's Report, October 29, 1959”), She County Archives, 62-1-88.

schools, which were completed in 1958. The delay between investment and the realization of education expansion could explain why a 26.39% increase in expenditure in 1958 led to a much larger education expansion, with a 38.52% growth in elementary students and a 46.26% increase in elementary schools that year.

In 1959, the first year of the Great Leap Forward (GLF) famine, the upper-level governments reached their highest extraction rate (86%) from the county government throughout the Mao era. Starting this year, the upper-level governments began extracting a specific proportion of the county government's revenue income, rather than a fixed amount. This change in the tax system did not benefit the county government; instead, its aim was to extract most of the revenues from the county. In 1959, the county government was able to retain only 14% of all types of revenues, while the remaining 86% was submitted to the upper-level governments. Concurrently, no expenditure responsibilities were transferred to the upper-level governments. In comparison to 1958, the new fixed percentage system extracted significantly more in 1959, with agricultural and lumber taxes increasing by 51.87% and 388.24%, respectively. However, the county's total income did not rise proportionally with the increases in agricultural and lumber taxes. As the tax from the She County Tea Factory constituted the primary income for the county government, a decrease in tea production caused by cold weather impacted the county's revenue, resulting in a modest revenue increase of only 1.42%.

Table 4: The Distribution of Revenue between the County and Provincial Government in 1959

	Total amount that county collected	Amount that county kept	Percentage that county kept
Industry and commercial taxes	7,363,454	1,030,884	14%
Agricultural tax[217]	3,568,427	499,580	14%
Operational and enterprises' income	312,108	43,695	13.99%
Bonds	336,760	47,146	14%
Other incomes	281,371	39,392	14%
Total	11,862,120	1,660,697	14%

In 1959, the educational leap forward persisted, with She County establishing two additional junior middle schools (Liulian and Sucun middle schools) and one more teacher's school, which provided training for elementary school teachers during the second year of the Great Leap Forward. As the educational system expanded during this period, elementary schools accommodated more children. However, the education expansion in 1959 was relatively minor compared to that of 1958. The 2,207 new elementary students constituted only 3.92% of the total students in 1958, while the 193 new elementary schools represented 25.33% of the schools in 1958. The addition of 75 elementary teachers signified a mere 4.21% growth in comparison to the number of teachers in 1958. The total education expenditure in 1959 amounted to 1,310,370 RMB, reflecting an increase of 5.58% from the previous year. Although the rise in education expenditures seemed to correlate with the expansion of education, it is plausible that some of the education expenditures were allocated to other areas. The transfer and

[217] This was confusing. According to the regulations published on people's daily, the county government could not keep anything from the agricultural tax, but She County could keep 27 percent of the agricultural tax.

utilization of education budgets in other sectors was a nationwide phenomenon, with a national document indicating that approximately 5% to 25% of the education budget was redirected elsewhere.[218]

In 1960, at the peak of the Great Leap Forward famine, during which tens of millions of people starved to death, the upper-level governments' 85% extraction rate remained unchanged. The county government was still required to submit 85% of its revenues to the provincial government. The proportion retained by the county government underwent only a minor adjustment, increasing from 14% to 15%. The agricultural tax experienced a modest decrease of 10.60% (378,427 RMB). Given the human labor losses during the famine—attributable to deaths and various illnesses caused by malnutrition—the reduction in agricultural tax provided little relief to the peasants' tax burden.

Table 5: The Distribution of Revenue between the County and Provincial Government in 1960

	Total amount that county collected	Amount that county kept	Percentage that county kept
Industry and commercial taxes	7,409,786	1,111,468	15%
Agricultural tax[219]	3,190,000	478,500	15%
Operational and enterprise income	372,003	55,800	15%
Bonds	453,562	68,034	15%
Other incomes	235,950	35,393	15%
Total	11,661,301	1,749,195	15%

[218] “陆定一副总理、李先念副总理并报 (1959 年 10 月 29 日)” (“Vice Premier Lu Dingyi and Vice Premier Li Xiannian's Report, October 29, 1959”), She County Archives, 62-1-88.
[219] This was confusing. According to the regulations published on *people's daily*, the county government could not keep anything from the agricultural tax, but She County could keep 15% of the agricultural tax.

The relatively high deficit in 1960 resulted from the persistently rising expenditures and the unchanged extraction rate imposed by upper-level governments. Moreover, the increased proportion that the county could retain did not compensate for the growth in the county government's expenditures. Education expenditure in 1960 continued to rise, reaching 1,700,980 RMB, a 29.81% increase. This expenditure was the primary driver of the overall increase in 1960. The total expenditure in 1960 amounted to 3,469,119 RMB, a 24.37% increase from 1959. The growth in education expenditures outpaced the increase in the county's controllable funds, making education the primary reason for the escalating expenditures in 1960.

During 1959 and 1960, education expenditures constituted the highest percentages (46.98% and 19.03%) of the total expenditures in the Mao era. This can be attributed to three main factors. First, the unprecedentedly high extraction rates (86% and 85%) imposed by upper-level governments left the county government with limited revenue income at their disposal. Second, in these two years, the county government no longer needed to invest heavily in backyard furnaces and heavy industry as it had in 1958. As previously mentioned, the investment in backyard furnaces and heavy industry in 1958 was 19.26 times higher than that of 1957. However, in 1959 and 1960, without such investments, the total expenditures were much lower than in 1958. Third, education expenditures continued to rise. Consequently, education expenditures accounted for the highest percentages of total expenditures in 1959 and 1960. Nonetheless, the highest

percentages do not equate to the highest amounts. Education expenditures during the Cultural Revolution surpassed those of these two years.

It was not until 1961, during the final year of the GLF famine, that upper-level governments began to alleviate the extraction burden on county governments and the people. As the famine persisted, the provincial government reduced its extraction rate from 85% to 76%, allowing the county government to retain the remaining 24%. The most significant change in the county fiscal system in 1961 was the revenue quota set by upper-level governments. The revenue target for the county government was only about 53.8% of the 1960 revenue. Agricultural revenue constituted a mere 59.23% of the previous year's figure, indicating that peasants were able to submit significantly less grain than in the prior year. Nevertheless, expenditures in 1961 were 25% higher than those in 1960. The primary increase was attributed to economic construction, which rose by 214.60% compared to the previous year. Economic construction expenditures encompassed investments in county-owned enterprises and infrastructure development, such as irrigation and agricultural construction. Despite the substantial increase in economic construction expenditures, education expenditures remained the largest, nearly twice the amount allocated to economic construction.

The decline in revenues, particularly in agricultural tax, led to the most severe deficit in She County during the Mao era, which transpired in 1961. As illustrated in Appendix 3, the year 1961 marked the largest deficit for the She County government. In that year, revenues were only half of the preceding year's amount, while expenditures were a quarter higher. Education expenditures in 1961 were slightly higher (101.73%)

compared to 1960, resulting in a substantial deficit for the county government. As depicted in Appendix 2, this deficit was primarily covered by funding from upper-level governments. The central objective of the fiscal system adjustments was to alleviate peasants' agricultural tax burden and ensure future development in agriculture and industry.

Since the upper-level governments could not continuously support the county government's huge deficit, a solution was needed to address this issue. Thus, since 1962, the county government sought to relieve its deficit by cutting education expenditures and keeping a larger proportion of its total revenues. In 1962, the county government reduced education expenditures to 77.66% of the previous year, which helped relieve the deficit. Additionally, the county government was able to keep more of its revenues, retaining 38% of the total revenue and submitting the remaining 62% to the upper-level government. The trend of reducing education expenditures continued in 1963, with expenditures being slightly lower than the previous year at 95.74% of 1962's education expenditures. In 1963, the county government was able to keep as much as 42% of its total revenues and submit the remaining 58% to the upper-level government.

Despite a decline in education expenditures in 1962 and 1963, they represented substantial portions of the county government's total outlays, amounting to 45.67% and 42.99%, respectively. Due to the relatively low rate of resource extraction by higher-level authorities, the county administration could retain a larger percentage of its revenue. Nevertheless, a higher revenue percentage did not equate to an increase in funds, as the overall revenue diminished in both years. The total income in 1962 reached its lowest

during the Mao era, with 1963's income only marginally surpassing that of the previous year. Although the county government retained a higher portion of its revenue in 1962 and 1963, the available funds for these two years were the lowest throughout the Mao era. Consequently, the county's expenditures during this period were also at their lowest. While education spending decreased in 1962 and 1963, the reduction was less significant compared to the overall decline in county government expenditures, leading to education accounting for approximately 45% (45.67% and 42.99%) of the county's total outlays.

In 1964, the fiscal system saw the introduction of a fixed submission percentage, resulting in the lowest deficit since the GLF. Subsequent to this year, the county government was able to retain 48% of its total revenue, while the remaining 52% was allocated to the upper-level government This fixed submission percentage persisted until 1971. In comparison to the prior extraction system, the fixed percentage arrangement provided the county government with greater financial autonomy. However, this respite was short-lived, as the advent of the Cultural Revolution soon followed.

Education expansion was one of several factors contributing to the county's deficit, though not the sole determinant. The county government's deficit was influenced by the interplay of three elements: revenue, extraction by the upper-level government, and expenditures. The most severe deficit in 1961 resulted from a decline in revenue, relatively high extraction by the upper-level government, and continuously increasing expenditures, including a slight rise in education expenditure. The relatively high deficit in 1960 was attributed to the upper-level governments' elevated extraction rate, increasing expenditures, and high tax collection. The deficit was determined by the

combined effect of these three factors; expenditures, particularly education expenditures alone, could not dictate the county government's deficit. As previously discussed in the politics and education chapter, education experienced moderate growth in 1957, followed by an unprecedented expansion in 1958. The increase in elementary students in 1959 was only a seventh of that in 1958. However, the county's deficit in 1958 was almost negligible (7.83%) compared to the deficit in 1959. The most severe deficit occurred in 1961, even though the county government had initiated the downsizing of the education system that same year. Consequently, the expansion of education had a limited correlation with, and was far from being the primary cause of, the county's deficit.

During the GLF and its aftermath, the radical political campaign coincided with an unparalleled extraction by the upper-level governments and an increase in the county's education expenditures. Between 1949 and 1952, the county government submitted 81.9% of the revenue it collected. However, during the GLF, the county government surrendered an even larger proportion (approximately 85%) of its revenues. At the peak of the famine induced by the campaign, the fiscal system failed to adjust the proportion extracted by the upper-level governments from the county administration. The height of the famine also saw the most substantial extraction from the peasantry. Only after the famine led to tens of millions of deaths nationwide did the fiscal system gradually alleviate the extraction burden on the county government and its people. The radical political campaign of the GLF was accompanied by an unprecedented extraction by the upper-level governments.

The Cultural Revolution and Financial Decentralization

The Cultural Revolution commenced during a period of improving financial circumstances, echoing the launch of the GLF. This recurrence suggests that it was not merely coincidental for radical campaigns to be initiated when the financial situation was improving. With the onset of the Cultural Revolution, both campaign and education expenditures surged simultaneously. The radical political campaigns once again led to huge deficits for the county government, and the solution to these deficits was to delegate certain expenditures, including education, to local communities (communes, brigades, and production teams). The county government resolved the deficit by transferring the financial burden to local communities and their inhabitants. This additional financial responsibility manifested as an unnoticeable form of surtax for the people.

Archival records from the Cultural Revolution period are markedly scarcer in both quality and quantity compared to the preceding era, resulting in limited detailed information on the financial system. Several factors contributed to the destruction of these archives. Firstly, at the end of 1966, a large-scale archive destruction movement took place, leaving few records from that year intact. Secondly, in the immediate aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, the movement to criticize the Gang of Four led to the obliteration of a significant portion of the Cultural Revolution archives. It is also plausible that professional accountants were purged during the campaign, leaving their roles to be filled by individuals with less expertise. For instance, in the 1968 final accounting table, all budget figures were identical to the final accounting numbers. Furthermore, the 1969 archives lacked both an annual financial report and a final accounting table. As a result, the records generated during the Cultural Revolution were

less comprehensive than those from previous years. Despite the loss of archival material, the remaining records are adequate to substantiate the argument.

As the Cultural Revolution intensified amidst the "Four Clean-ups" campaign in the latter half of 1964, education expenditures started to rise. Education spending in 1964 amounted to 116.52 percent of the previous year's outlays. Within that year's education expenditures, funds allocated for school construction exceeded the prior year's allocation by more than fourfold (404.15%). From 1965 onwards, education expenditures continued to increase annually, as did the county government's deficit.

During the initial three years of the Cultural Revolution, both expenditures and deficits related to the campaign soared. In 1966, administrative and party activity expenses, which included campaign expenditures, rose by more than 1.5 times (157.2%) compared to the previous year. [220] In 1967, the county government established a separate budget item for Cultural Revolution campaign funding, allowing the provincial government to approve or modify the county's budgetary proposals. That year, the provincial government approved a planned budget of 140,000 RMB, while the county government allocated 161,098 RMB under this category, amounting to 115.07 percent of the approved budget. Furthermore, the county government incurred an additional 51,913 RMB in campaign expenses, resulting in a total campaign expenditure of 213,011 RMB. As for tax collection, the first three years of the Cultural Revolution had a detrimental impact, with the county government's total tax revenue decreasing after 1966. One primary cause was the disorder within the She County Tea Factory, leading to its

[220] She County Archives, 51-1-105.

submitted taxes falling short of the established target. Since the tea factory's taxes constituted nearly half of the county's revenue, this loss exacerbated the county's deficit. However, agricultural taxes remained relatively stable, indicating that the tax burden on the people did not lessen.

In 1968, the deficit reached 1,651,817 RMB, the largest since the GLF, as illustrated in Appendix 3. This significant deficit resulted from increased spending on conferences, education, campaigns, and natural disaster relief. In 1968, the county government ceased to maintain a separate campaign expenditure column, instead distributing campaign expenses across various categories such as public affairs expenses (including conference and travel expenses), administration expenses, and sent-down youth relocation expenses. The 1968 annual financial report described campaign expenditures as the "fruitful achievements (丰硕成果)" of the Cultural Revolution. Conference expenses totaled 117,644 RMB, with one significant event in March 1968—a two-week conference attended by 3,474 cadres dedicated to establishing the county revolutionary committee—costing 32,062 RMB. From April to mid-June 1968, four county-level Maoism study camps took place, though their costs remain unknown. [221] That year, people's communes spent an additional 16,514 RMB on conferences, averaging 0.04 RMB per attendee per day. According to the report, the She County population comprised 412,850 conference attendees in that year, with nearly every individual dedicating one full day to conference participation. The report heralded this as a success in financial work. In addition to mobilizing people for various conferences, the

[221]歙县党史地志办公室(She County Party History and Local Chronicles Office), *中国共产党歙县历史, 1949-1978 History of the Chinese Communist Party in She County, 1949-1978*, p.503.

county government sent representatives to Dazhai to study the Dazhai model. Travel expenses reached their peak during the Mao era, as Dazhai's considerable distance from She County made travel costly. Moreover, 619 educated youths from the county seat and other cities were relocated to rural areas, with 65,306 RMB spent on their resettlement.

Finally, She County faced natural disasters that year, most notably the early July flood (the "July 5th Flood"), for which the county government allocated 760,000 RMB in disaster relief. The education system experienced significant damage, with more than 290 classrooms destroyed and over 1,000 pairs of desks, chairs, and benches swept away by the flood. Consequently, the education bureau spent 150,000 RMB on repairs and restoration. Due to the extensive repair and restoration costs, the education bureau had to reallocate or reduce funds initially earmarked for other purposes, such as budgets for constructing new schools.

In 1969, the huge deficit was primarily offset by funding from upper-level governments, indicating that provincial and central governments also bore the financial burden of the campaign. Consequently, the county government was not the sole entity responsible for the costs of the Cultural Revolution; the central government experienced substantial deficits as well. A portion of the expenses for the Revolutionary Networking (Da chuanlian 大串联) was covered by the central government, particularly train travel fees. In the case of She County, up until November 13, 1966, the county had accommodated 1,444 students who had registered for visits[222], in addition to those who

[222] 歙县党史地志办公室(She County Party History and Local Chronicles Office), *中国共产党歙县历史, 1949-1978 History of the Chinese Communist Party in She County, 1949-1978*, 476.

had not registered. Thus, She County provided for more than 1,444 students in reality, being responsible for at least their food and bedding expenses. The exact amount paid by the county government to accommodate and feed the "Red Guards" remains unclear, as do other expenditures. However, part of the campaign's cost was calculated in 1969, rather than at the time it occurred, further contributing to the financial deficit faced by both the county and central governments in 1969.

To address the deficit caused during the first three years of the Cultural Revolution, the state decentralized the financial system. The brief 2-page annual financial report for 1969 provides limited insight into how the county government overcame the deficit, apart from noting an increase in tea factory tax revenue as a result of the factory resuming normal operations.

Examining the changes in education finance can offer insights into how the state addressed the financial deficit. Education decentralization began with a letter published in *People's Daily*. On November 14, 1968, the newspaper featured a letter on its first page, authored by two commune leaders in Maji commune, Jiaxiang county of Shandong province, Hou Zhenmin (侯振民) and Wang Qingyu (王庆余), who were responsible for the commune's education. The letter proposed that all public elementary schools should be decentralized to the brigades, which would assume responsibility for all associated costs, including teachers' salaries. As a socialist state, they argued, elementary schools should belong to the brigades, which would be capable of managing them in terms of politics, finance, and teacher allocation. The letter outlined five benefits of decentralizing public elementary schools: protecting schools' leadership from revisionism; aiding

intellectuals' reeducation; implementing Mao's directive on maintaining poor and middle peasants' control over schools' leadership; assisting in supervising "suspicious" individuals with unfavorable family backgrounds; and alleviating the state's financial burden. The letter elaborated on the final advantage, demonstrating how decentralization would benefit the state. In Hou and Wang's commune, which had a population of around 21,000, there were 14 public elementary schools and 51 teachers. Annually, the state had to pay over 20,000 RMB for teachers' salaries, more than 3,000 RMB for school repairs and construction, and 19,584 jin of grain. If all public elementary schools were decentralized to brigades, the state could save over 23,000 RMB and 19,584 jin of grain in just one commune. This letter became known as the "Hou Wang letter".

The rapid response, prominence, and frequency of published reactions to the Hou Wang letter suggest that the decentralization was not purely a grassroots movement; the state's role in guiding and directing the initiative was evident. The "Hou Wang letter" laid the theoretical and propagandistic groundwork for nationwide decentralization of education expenditures. An editorial comment was added in front of "Hou Wang letter," inviting more reader responses and promising to publish them. From November 14, 1968, to October 19, 1973, *People's Daily* published a total of 345 articles discussing the decentralization of schools to local communities. The day after the "Hou Wang letter" was published, *People's Daily* featured four letters on the first page and a longer letter on the second page, all endorsing Hou and Wang's stance. On November 17, seven letters supporting decentralization were published on the first page.

In She County, the decentralization of the education system took place in 1969. By transferring the largest expenditure of the county government - education costs - to local communities, the state significantly reduced its expenses and resolved the deficit caused by the campaign. In 1969, the county revolutionary committee, which held administrative power in place of the government, delegated public schools to communes, brigades, and production teams. By August 1969, 15 middle schools and 831 public elementary schools had been decentralized to communes, brigades, and production teams. [223] Only She County Middle School, the sole senior high school in the county, and Huizhou Teacher's School remained under the county revolutionary committee's jurisdiction. All other schools were delegated to communes, brigades, or production teams.

The decentralization policy also affected public teachers, allowing some commune leaders to leverage the policy for their commune's financial benefit. As suggested by the Hou Wang letter, public teachers were to be decentralized and return to work in their own communes, while their public teaching positions and salaries were still maintained by the state. However, not all public teachers were decentralized to local communities. The education cadre of Shangfeng commune capitalized on this policy, approving all public teachers working in other communes to return to Shangfeng, but not allowing those working within the commune to return to their own communes. This strategy enabled Shangfeng commune to have as many state-paid teachers as possible,

[223] “1969 年歙县教育工作会议” (“The 1969 She County Education Work Conference”), She County, 62-1-178.

thereby reducing its financial burden. Consequently, Shangfeng commune saved on education expenses compared to communes that did not retain public teachers.

Decentralization shifted the expenses of educational expansion to local communes, brigades, and production teams, which were responsible for addressing classroom construction needs and the associated financial and material costs. Theoretically, the county education bureau should provide 240 RMB for each new classroom upon application and approval. However, in practice, the funds often went to commune, brigade, or production team leaderships, which could allocate them elsewhere—a common practice during the Cultural Revolution which I have mentioned in the fiscal system chapter. Even if the funds were allocated to schools as intended, 240 RMB only covered about one-tenth of the cost to build a classroom, which typically ranged from 2,000 to 2,400 RMB.[224] This sum was sufficient for carpenters' and bricklayers' wages, plus lime. Schools then needed to source their own funds or other means to purchase items like glass, bricks, lumber, desks, chairs, tiles, blackboards, and additional labor. The primary expenses were provided by the responsible communes, brigades, or production teams, which supplied construction materials and labor. Teachers and students often contributed free labor. Lumber was typically sourced locally, as forestry lands had been decentralized to production teams, which in turn provided free labor for cutting and transporting the lumber. Bricks and tiles could be taken from

[224] In a financial report in 1971, the average cost of building one square meters of classroom was 40 yuan. Each classroom was about 50 to 60 square meters. The total cost of building one classroom was 2,000 to 2,400 yuan.
"歙县 1971 年教育经费预算" ("The 1971 Education Budget for She County"), She County Archives, 62-1-198.

ancestral halls or other buildings owned by the responsible production teams. If additional bricks and tiles were required, production teams would supply the labor and materials to produce them.

The significant increase of 8,333 elementary students in 1973 highlights how local communities supported educational expansion. Accommodating these students required over 200 additional classrooms, more than 200 new teachers, and over 4,000 extra pairs of desks and benches. However, the county government only recruited 30 public teachers and allocated 140,000 RMB, which was enough to construct at most 70 classrooms—less than a third of the required number. This amount didn't account for teachers' salaries or the cost of desks and benches. The She County education bureau was not responsible for covering all costs for non-county-owned schools. It was expected to provide only 240 RMB for each new classroom, totaling at least 48,000 RMB. However, as previously mentioned, 240 RMB only covered about one-tenth of the cost for constructing a new classroom. The primary financial providers were the communes, brigades, or production teams. The 30 public teachers' salaries, amounting to about 13,000 RMB annually, were covered, while the salaries of over 170 minban teachers were mostly paid by local communities. The remaining of the 140,000 RMB wasn't sufficient to cover the material costs and carpenters' wages for more than 4,000 pairs of desks and benches. As a result, communes, brigades, and production teams bore the major financial burden for the expansion of education.

Despite having their own income from student fees and revenue generated by the farms and factories they owned, some schools had meager funds available for expansion.

During the Cultural Revolution, each student paid 1.5 RMB for tuition and 0.5 RMB for miscellaneous fees per semester. Additionally, students were required to pay for textbooks, though these fees did not contribute to the school's income. Therefore, the school could collect 2 RMB per student each semester without needing to submit this income to the responsible communes, brigades, production teams, or the county bureau. Although student fees appeared to be a significant source of income, a portion was allocated to tuition reductions. Approximately 10% of students were eligible to receive full fee refunds, and schools could reduce fees by half for an additional 20% of students. The remaining income was spent on building maintenance, desk and chair repairs, and the routine purchase of teaching resources such as charcoal, rulers, and other teaching accessories. Even when schools owned farms or factories, the products or income were typically used to support teachers' living expenses and other school-related expenditures. According to three rural school leaders I interviewed, the available funds for expansion were limited and insufficient to support the construction of new buildings.

The substantial expense of education expansion had the potential to burden communes, brigades, or production teams. The County Education Bureau commended four communes for addressing education expenses without placing too much of a burden on the people. Their solution involved sharing the financial responsibility for education expenses throughout the entire commune, even if the schools were owned by brigades or production teams. Spreading the burden across the whole commune helped alleviate the financial pressure on specific brigades or production teams. However, this approach could also give rise to new challenges, such as difficulties in collecting funds from other brigades or production teams. Regardless, the county's recognition of these four

communes highlights the widespread issue of the heavy financial burden that education expenses placed on the people.

During the Cultural Revolution, communes, brigades, or production teams were the primary sponsors of education, resulting in minimal spending by the county government on education expansion, therefore, the growth in the state's education expenditures did not adequately reflect the expansion of the education system. When education began expanding in 1970, the county's education expenditures saw only a modest increase. The education expenditures in 1971 grew by just 8.88% compared to 1969. As the education and politics chapter indicates, education experienced its most rapid growth in 1973. However, the education expenditures in 1973 increased by only 14.06% from 1971, which was lower than the education expansion rate. In 1973, there were 13,743 more students than in 1971, reflecting a 19.02% increase. As mentioned earlier, the county government allocated only 140,000 RMB for education expansion, which was far from sufficient. The bulk of the expenditures were covered by the localities. From 1972 to 1976, education continued to expand annually, yet the education expenditures in 1975 and 1976 were both lower than in 1974. Consequently, the education expenditures did not align with the education expansion since 1971.

The fixed extraction rate (52%) by the upper-level government ended in 1971, but it was followed by a higher extraction rate. After 1971, the county government was no longer required to submit a fixed percentage of its revenues to the upper-level governments. By shifting the financial burden to the communes, brigades, and production teams, the county-level fiscal system experienced a second and final surplus in 1971.

Unlike previous periods, the CCP did not initiate another costly and large-scale political campaign during this time. Instead, the changes in the fiscal system occurred more discreetly. In 1974, the upper-level government extracted 61.24% of She County's revenue, and in 1975, it extracted 59.82% of the county government's revenue. As the extraction proportion by the upper-level government increased from the 52% rate before 1971, the county government once again faced a deficit.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that the initiation of radical political campaigns when county governments were in a favorable financial position was not entirely coincidental. No documents indicate that the central government launched these campaigns due to its awareness of county governments' surpluses and ability to fund the campaigns. However, without the financial surplus at the county level, these radical campaigns would not have been economically viable. While it may be considered coincidental that the Great Leap Forward (GLF) was initiated when the county government first experienced surpluses, the launch of the Cultural Revolution confirms that the timing of radical political campaigns was not accidental when county governments were in better financial situations.

Despite the application of financial decentralization in both periods, the decentralization during the Cultural Revolution differed from that of the GLF's aftermath. After the Great Leap Forward, the state reduced the extraction rate and decentralized financial autonomy and income to the county government and the people.

However, during the Cultural Revolution, decentralization referred only to financial expenditures rather than income. By decentralizing financial expenditures, the state shifted the burden from the county government to local communities and people, which was akin to an additional tax.

Compared to the GLF period, the method of resource extraction during the Cultural Revolution was less noticeable. During the GLF, the state collected resources from county governments and individuals through high extraction and tax rates, which people could see through the loss of their grain. However, during the Cultural Revolution, the state shifted the financial burden onto the people through decentralization, and grain was not taken away from people directly. Instead, people could gain work points by participating in construction labor for schools, or only lost a small proportion of their due share from local communities. These forms of resource extraction were less direct than the high tax rates during the GLF.

As the state's extraction became opaquer, it also revealed that the various levels of the state apparatus were not treated as one homogenous organization. County governments were not viewed equally with the upper levels of government. During the GLF, both county governments and people suffered from high extraction rates, and county governments received little preferential treatment. However, during the Cultural Revolution, the state decentralized the financial burden from county governments to local communities and individuals. In the later years of the Mao era, county governments received better treatment from the state, and the state drew a clearer line between county governments and people.

Despite the increasingly invisible nature of the state's extraction, it still required people to make extra contributions or losses. This raises the question of why heavier extraction coincided with radical political campaigns. This research reveals that the increase in extraction was associated with a simultaneous increase in education expenditures during the radical political campaigns. As with other socialist states, the Mao era's political campaigns promoted and advocated for education. In rural China, the responsibility for education fell on the county governments. Therefore, edicts from the central government to promote education during political campaigns imposed a heavier financial burden on county governments.

Was the county government's fiscal extraction from people driven by the educational expansion? Prasenjit Duara views education as one motivation for the state's tax extraction. Duara's study of six villages in the North China Plain during the late Qing and Republican era reveals that state expansion failed due to what he terms "state involution."[225] With modernization came an increase in state expenditures, which required the state to expand its power to collect enough taxes. However, the state's creation of predatory tax agents only served to avoid and even destroy the cultural nexus of the local community[226], rather than aid state expansion into the community. Duara identifies modern education as a part of the state's modernization project that motivated the state to extract resources and expand its power. One example of this is the conversion

[225] Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).
[226] Cultural nexus is a complex web of cultural organizations, such as lineage, religion, and marriage. Duara's concept of cultural nexus is based on Philip Kuhn's study on the power of the local gentry and expands gentry's power to "encompass the realm of culture, especially popular culture." Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942,* p.15.

of temples into modern schools, which destroyed the cultural nexus of power in the name of state-building. Nonetheless, Duara's findings may not be completely applicable to the Mao era, as the cultural nexus of the Republican-era gentry class had been destroyed in the PRC's early years, and the social order in the Mao-era rural areas was different.

Through examining the fiscal system within the political and financial context, this research highlights the complex relationship between tax collection and education, which includes education as a tax extraction target, the concealment of tax extraction, and an imperceptible form of surtax. County governments had the authority to confiscate school property, making education vulnerable to being targeted for tax extraction. Education was also a visible form of payoff for the taxes extracted, making it an acceptable cover-up for the extraction. Moreover, during the Cultural Revolution, the county government shifted the financial burden of education to local communities, including communes, brigades, and production teams, through financial decentralization. In addition to the previous financial expenditures, local communities and their people were responsible for the additional education expenditures. Education thus became another unnoticeable form of extraction. The intricate relationship between tax extraction and education provides a more comprehensive explanation of why tax extraction and education both expanded during political campaigns, as education and extraction could mutually benefit each other.

The radical and expensive political campaigns of the Mao era saw cooperation and mutual benefit between extraction and education. Had the campaigns offered no visible payoff for the people other than heavier extraction, the campaigns may not have

garnered as much support as they did. Understanding the relationship between education and extraction could help us understand the popularity of Maoism during this period.

Appendix:

Table 6: She County's Financial Situation

Year	Total expenditure (RMB)	Total income (RMB)	Income submitted to the upper level governments (RMB)	Income that county held (RMB)	County Government's Deficit (RMB)	Funding from the upper level governments (RMB)
1949[227]	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
1950[228]	5,985,940 RMB Cash and 788,738 Jin Rice	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
1951[229]	3,398,733 Jin rice	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
1952[230]	5,350,173,555	6,699,432,932	No data	4,818,432,932	-531740623.00	1,881,000,000
1953[231]	15,075,449,806	16,278,288,662	No data	9,813,012,275	-5262437531.00	6,465,276,387
1954[232]	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
1955[233]	1,713,739.77	1,713,739.77	No data	1,391,271	-322468.77	322,468.47
1956[234]	2,019,644.92	2,096,476.43	No data	1618489.43	-401155.49	477,987
1957[235]	2,535,940.73	2,648,260.37	No data	2,547,927.37	11986.64	100,333
1958[236]	3,952,735.76	11,696,128	7,944,121	3,752,007	-88409.76	163,937

[227] This year the financial records were not available in archives.
[228] 144000Yuan cash =123 Jin rice this year
[229] This year the financial records were not available in archives.
[230] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-11.
[231] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-15.
[232] This year the financial records were not available in archives.
[233] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-26.
[234] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-38.
[235] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-49.
[236] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-61.

Table 6: She County's Financial Situation (continued)

1959[237]	2,789,431	11,862,120	10,201,423	1,660,697	-1128734.00	1,058,225
1960[238]	3,469,119	11,661,301	9,912,106	1,749,195	-1719924.00	1,874,109
1961[239]	4,309,614	6,001,655	4,395,882	1,605,773	-2703841.00	2,717,232
1962[240]	2,727,237	5,567,022	3,459,196	2,107,826	-619411.00	667,400
1963[241]	2,864,996	6,146,904	3,574,746	2,572,158	-292838.00	521,174
1964[242]	3,524,924	7,092,330	3,688,012	3,404,318	-120606.00	886,557
1965[243]	3,904,687	7,894,887	5,005,623	2,889,264	-1015423.00	406,642
1966[244]	4,175,751	7,678,919	4,005,883	3,673,036	-502715.00	413,835
1967[245]	4,183,198	7,403,307	3,849,720	3,553,587	-629611.00	654,096
1968[246]	5,217,662	7,428,845	7,428,845	0	-442100.00	4,775,562
1969[247]	4,944,342	8,861,902	4,608,189	4,253,713	-690629.00	
1970[248]	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	
1971[249]	6,430,791	13,211,634	6,700,608	6,511,026	80235.00	300,000
1972[250]	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
1973[251]	7,235,759	17,013,652	10,290,875	6,722,777	-512982.00	105,000
1974[252]	6,821,463	16,934,337	10,370,704	6,563,633	-257830.00	85,000
1975[253]	8,044,447	18,629,031	11,143,933	7,485,098	-559349.00	15,000
1976[254]	8,559,000	20,310,000	No data	No data	No data	No data

[237] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-66.
[238] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-75.
[239] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-80.
[240] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-85.
[241] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-95.
[242] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-99.
[243] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-103.
[244] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-105.
[245] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-106.
[246] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-108.
[247] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-111.
[248] This year the financial records were not available in archives.
[249] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-115.
[250] This year the financial records were not available in archives.
[251] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-122.
[252] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-127.
[253] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-130.
[254] numbers of this year were from She County Archives 51-1-133.

Table 7: She County's Education Expenditures

Year	education expenditure (RMB)	total expenditure	percentage of education expenditure in the total expenditure
1949	No data	No data	No data
1950	489927 Jin rice	68257 Jin Rice and 490430 RMB	No data
1951	1,577,725 Jin Rice	3,398,733 Jin Rice	No data
1952	3,267,595,551	5,350,173,555	61.07%
1953	6,685,718,942	15,075,449,806	44.35%
1954	No data	No data	No data
1955	661,116	1,713,739.77	38.58%
1956	529,260.49	2,019,644.92	26.21%
1957	982,015.60	2,535,940.73	38.72%
1958	1,241,142	3,952,735.76	31.40%
1959	1,310,370	2,789,431	46.98%
1960	1,700,980	3,469,119	49.03%
1961	1,533,900	4,309,614	35.59%
1962	1,245,464	2,727,237	45.67%
1963	1,231,778	2,864,996	42.99%
1964	1,363,087	3,524,924	38.67%
1965	1,400,405	3,904,687	35.86%
1966	1,527,185	4,175,751	36.57%
1967	1,899,371	4,183,198	45.40%
1968	2,000,604	5,217,662	38.34%
1969	2,054,000	4,944,342	41.54%
1970	No data	No data	No data
1971	2,236,300	6,430,791	34.77%
1972	No data	No data	No data
1973	2,550,700	7,235,759	35.25%

Table 7: She County's Education Expenditures (continued)

1974	2,599,650	6,821,463	38.11%
1975	2,548,509	8,044,447	31.68%
1976	2,590,000	8,559,000	30.26%

Chapter 3: Trading Brain for Grain: The Reappearance of Traditional Private Schools in the Early 1960s

At 11:30 a.m. on August 22, 2016, under a scorching temperature of around 102°F, I entered an old, shabby wooden house in Xu Village, located in the northern part of She County. The owner of the house was a tall, robust 67-year-old farmer, who was often referred to by his nickname "Ox." During those days, I was seeking individuals who had attended traditional private schools (私塾, or private school) in Xu Village. Most of my interviewees were in their 80s and had attended traditional schools during the Republican era (1911-1949). When I met "Ox" in person, I was surprised by his relatively young age compared to my previous interviewees. "Ox" explained that he had attended a private school in 1962, following the Great Leap Forward (GLF) famine. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had banned private schools in the early 1950s. In She County, all private schools (including traditional ones) had either been eradicated or merged with public schools by 1953.[255] My interview with "Ox" marked my first encounter with the resurgence of traditional schools in the early 1960s.

Existing scholarship on modern China's education either overlooks this issue or discusses it very broadly. Neither Jiang Chunjiao's monograph about the demise of private traditional school teachers, nor Peng Deng's book about private education in

[255] The time when private traditional schools disappeared varied in different regions. For example, this school disappeared in Shanghai as late as 1956. Tonglu county in Zhejiang province successfully eradicated this school as early as May 1949. Changshu county neighboring Shanghai finished prohibiting this school as late as the end of 1957. 蒋纯焦 Jiang Chunjiao, *一个阶层的消失: 晚清以降塾师研究 The Disappearance of a Class: A Study on Private Tutors Since the Late Qing Dynasty* (上海: 上海书店出版社, 2007 年版 Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2007), 289.

modern China, nor Unger's monograph about education in Canton from 1960 to 1980, address the resurgence of such schools in the early 1960s.[256] Wu Xiushen's research on the reappearance of these schools during this period is quite general and relies solely on official archives.[257] As a result, readers do not have access to the perspectives of teachers, students, and parents. The reappearance of these schools was a grassroots initiative, and relying exclusively on archival sources prevents us from understanding the motivations of those involved. Moreover, Wu does not offer much analysis of the historical context or the reasons for this resurgence.

My research will integrate official archives with my interviews and provide a deeper analysis of the historical context. Through a case study of the school in Xu village, I will explore the mindset of ordinary people as they attempted to strike a balance between state propaganda, personal preferences, and practical needs. The mentality of rural people, which is absent from both official archives and previous studies, is crucial for understanding this era.

The resurgence of private schools should not be seen as evidence of the state retreating from education expansion during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) in the

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[256] 蒋纯焦 Jiang Chunjiao, *一个阶层的消失: 晚清以降塾师研究 The Disappearance of a Class: A Study on Private Tutors Since the Late Qing Dynasty* (上海: 上海书店出版社, 2007 年版 Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2007).
Peng Deng, *Private Education in Modern China* (Westport: Praeger, 1997).
Jonathan Unger, *Education under Mao: Class and Competition in Canton Schools, 1960-1980* (Columbia University Press, 1982).

[257] 吴修申 Wu Xiushen, *中国共产党私塾政策研究 Research on the Chinese Communist Party's Policy on Private Tutoring Schools* (北京: 中国社会科学出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: China Social Sciences Publishing House, 2013).
吴修申 Wu Xiushen, "二十世纪六十年代初农村私塾及其整顿研究" ("Research on Rural Private Tutoring Schools and Their Rectification in the Early 1960s") *中共党史研究 Research on the History of the Chinese Communist Party*, no. 11, 2003.

early 1960s. Rather, this resurgence appears to coincide with the revival of certain types of "tradition," which had received approval from the central government since the Great Leap Forward. The reappearance of private schools is related to the cultural changes that occurred in the early 1960s.

Through exploring the political and cultural reasons contributing to the reappearance, I argue that the main reason of the reappearance was neither the de-collectivization process in the rural area, nor the loosening radical control over culture in the aftermath of the Great Famine (1959-1961). The major reason for private schools' reappearance was the state's focus on agriculture. At the peak of famine, the state intended to minimize the consumption of grain, therefore, it cut down the non-agricultural household population and sent unwanted urban population to the rural area. The state also allocated as much resource as possible, including financial support and human labor, to focus on increasing agriculture product.

Therefore, on one hand, the state curtailed the financial support for education, and dismissed a certain number of teachers in order to decrease the grain consumption. On the other hand, the state forbade the over-aged or other students to go to school, and indirectly forced them to get involved in agriculture activities. The local society found the solution of private education for these kids who were abandoned by the state. The solution, however, could not save the abandoned kids from being involved in agriculture labor for long. The state achieved its final goal in the end.

This research on the logic behind the reappearance of private traditional schools will also question our understanding of the early 1960s as a short spring of relatively

laissez-faire cultural policies. Scholars such as Edward Friedman, Paul Pickowicz, nd Mark Selden have argued that the de-collectivization in the early 1960s was not accepted by all people. Leaders of model villages in the collectivization process, such as Boss Geng in Wugong village, would probably refuse the de-collectivization reform.[258] My research on She County cannot find the same resistance as in the Wugong village, but will reveal that there was another form of resistance and reconciliation achieved between the state policies and common rural people. Implementing more liberate culture policies did not necessarily mean that the state kindly attempted to vitalize the free development of culture. The state's goal behind these policies probably was just to lessen the state's financial burden. Local society had to take over the financial burden and find solutions for the students being kicked off by the state.

"Ox" and Other Abandoned Kids

When I interviewed "Ox," he had just returned home from four hours of farming labor that morning and was preparing lunch for himself. The sunburn marks on his skin indicated that he frequently engaged in agricultural activities. Oxen were animals held in high regard by peasants because they were tame, obedient, and served as a significant alternative to human labor. Perhaps because the nickname "Ox" was so fitting for this strong and quiet individual, his real name, Wu Zhihua, was seldom mentioned by villagers.

[258] Edward Friedman, Paul G. Pickowicz, and Mark Selden, *Revolution, Resistance, and Reform in village China* (New Haven: Yale University, 2005).

In this private traditional school, there were five children, of which I interviewed three. One of the remaining two had passed away in a car accident, while the other one resided in Nanjing with his son. The three individuals I interviewed were the only available participants at the time. All five children were male, with no female students attending the private school where "Ox" studied. Among the three informants, "Ox" was the most valuable source, not only because he had a clearer memory and provided more information than the other two, but also because he was less likely to exaggerate. Although his recollections appear more reliable than the others, I will not take his words at face value. In my paper, I will corroborate his statements, summarize his narrative of the school, and analyze the agenda behind his narrative.

All three of my interviewees concurred that the private traditional school in Xu village operated for one and a half years, from early 1963 to the Mid-Autumn Festival in 1964. I interviewed them separately without cross-referencing, which lends credibility to the timeline they provided. They all recalled that the school was situated in the house of the teacher, Mr. Fourth (四先生). Mr. Fourth's name was Xu Duanfu (许端辅), and since he was the fourth son, villagers called him Mr. Fourth. The title "Mr." (先生) had been a sign of respect before the establishment of the PRC, and villagers continued to use this title to demonstrate their reverence for educated individuals. The house is located on the western periphery of the village.

"Ox" was born in 1949 and attended the state's public elementary school in the village, "Yiyun Elementary School (仪耘小学)," until he was 11 years old. When the Great Famine worsened in 1960, he, like many of his peers, dropped out of school and

went with his parents to gather wild vegetables. "Ox" was away from education for over three years and became so illiterate that he "could not distinguish the character 'Shan (山 mountain)' from 'Shui (水 water).'" Ox blamed his father for missing the registration day for the first semester of the 1962-1963 academic year. When his father tried to get him registered in early 1963 for the second semester, the headmaster rejected the request. Even 54 years later, as "Ox" recounted his time away from school, he still harshly criticized his father's carelessness in 1962 and the headmaster's indifference. He mockingly referred to the headmaster as the "slipping leather shoes headmaster" (拖皮鞋校长) since he always wore a pair of oversized leather shoes. At that time, leather shoes were rare and expensive, so wearing oversized ones deliberately showcased both one's wealth and poverty.

"Ox" was not the only child denied re-entry to public school in the aftermath of the Great Famine.[259] However, he blamed the wrong person; abandoning these dropouts was not the "slipping leather shoes headmaster's" personal decision. The students and parents were unaware of the national financial plans that ultimately abandoned them. At the peak of the famine, the state began to remove students and teachers to reduce the amount of grain it needed to provide and push them towards agricultural labor. In the aftermath of the famine, the state implemented decentralization and relatively laissez-faire policies on the economy and culture, which stimulated recovery. However, this did not translate to an increase in the education budget. On the contrary, the education budget

[259] See Edward Friedman, Paul G. Pickowicz, and Mark Selden, *Revolution, Resistance, and Reform in village China* (New Haven: Yale University, 2005). Boss Geng's daughter was one of these dropouts in Chapter 1.

was substantially cut as the situation improved. Countless dropouts like "Ox" were abandoned and sacrificed for the sake of recovery.

In the eyes of the state, innumerable peasants like "Ox" were no different from herds of oxen. No one could save them from the state's arrangement.

Fiscal and Cultural Policy Changes

In the 1961 annual report of the central government, Li Fuchun, the Vice Premier of the State Council and the Director of the State Planning Commission, announced that investment in culture and education would shrink, leading to reduced capacity in schools. The enrollment for higher education would decrease to 250,000, a reduction of 94,000 from the 1960 figure. Technical middle schools would admit 500,000 students, which was 110,000 fewer than the previous year. Middle schools would recruit 3,350,000 students, a decrease of almost one million (990,000) from 1960. The central government did not set a plan for elementary school enrollment, instead delegating this power to local governments. The document states, "We will not set enrollment targets for elementary schools; local governments will determine them (小学招生不提指标，由各地自订)." This essentially means that local governments no longer needed to worry about dropouts and could even reduce the number of students.[260]

[260] "关于安排一九六一年国民经济计划的意见—— 李富春在党的八届九中全会上的报告 (1961 年 1 月 14 日)" ("Opinions on Arranging the National Economic Plan for 1961 - Report by Li Fuchun at the Ninth Plenary Session of the Eighth Party Congress, January 14, 1961"), 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第36 册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 36* (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.44.

In January 1961, the Cultural and Education Group of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (CCPCC) issued a detailed report on the year's financial plan for culture and education. This report stated that culture and education affairs needed to be developed frugally, leading to a sharp reduction in financial support for education.[261] The planned educational expense of 800 million in 1960 was cut down to 462 million, accounting for only 58 percent of the previous plan. Of this amount, 352 million would be allocated to education; 75 million for public health and hygiene; and 30 million for science, culture, broadcasting, and physical culture. Investment for public elementary schools, which fell under county governments or lower-level local governments, would become the responsibility of these local governments.[262] Local governments were also expected to provide financial support for community education.[263]

This report not only focuses on the financial plan but also addresses the allocation of human labor, with the aim of pushing young laborers towards agriculture. The report states that over-aged students (those older than 16 years old still attending elementary or junior high school) should no longer be allowed to continue their schooling, as they were

[261] "中央文教小组关于一九六一年和今后一个时期文化教育工作安排的报告" ("Report on the Arrangement of Cultural and Educational Work for 1961 and the Next Period by the Central Cultural and Educational Group") 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第36册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 36*, p.238-239.
[262] "中央文教小组关于一九六一年和今后一个时期文化教育工作安排的报告" ("Report on the Arrangement of Cultural and Educational Work for 1961 and the Next Period by the Central Cultural and Educational Group") 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第36册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 36*, p.238.
[263] "中央文教小组关于一九六一年和今后一个时期文化教育工作安排的报告" ("Report on the Arrangement of Cultural and Educational Work for 1961 and the Next Period by the Central Cultural and Educational Group") 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第36册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 36*, p.238-39.

valuable labor resources for agricultural activity. Moreover, the report claims that students with rural Hukou (household registration) should return to their rural areas after graduating from high school, in order to reduce grain consumption.[264]

In 1962, several documents were issued to decentralize the agricultural management system and approve the production of sidelines. This retreat from radicalism alleviated the famine and improved the situation in rural areas. The well-known "Sixty Articles of Agriculture (农业六十条)" (officially titled "Working Regulations on People's Commune 农村人民公社工作条例") was first proposed by the CCPCC on March 22, 1961, and was initially experimented within limited areas.[265] After receiving positive feedback, the CCPCC held a conference in late May and early June to revise the document. The second version of the document was issued on June 15, 1961.[266] The document was revised again during the CCP's Tenth Conference of the Eighth Summit. The third version was issued on September 27, 1962.[267] These documents approved de-collectivization, stating that the working team is the basic accounting unit. In April 1962, the Central Financial and Economy Group was officially reestablished after its

[264] "中央文教小组关于一九六一年和今后一个时期文化教育工作安排的报告" ("Report on the Arrangement of Cultural and Educational Work for 1961 and the Next Period by the Central Cultural and Educational Group") *中共中央文件选集 第36册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 36*, p.238.

[265] "中共中央关于讨论和试行农村人民公社工作条例修正草案的指示" ("The CPC Central Committee's Directive on Discussing and Piloting the Draft Amendments to the Rural People's Commune Work Regulations"), *中共中央文件选集 第37册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 37*, (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.44.

[266] "中共中央关于讨论和试行农村人民公社工作条例修正草案的指示" ("The CPC Central Committee's Directive on Discussing and Piloting the Draft Amendments to the Rural People's Commune Work Regulations"), *中共中央文件选集 第37册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 37*, p.44.

[267] "农村人民公社工作条例修正草案" ("Draft Amendment to the Rural People's Commune Work Regulations") *中共中央文件选集 第41册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 41*, (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.91.

suspension during the Great Leap Forward.[268] In the same month, the state formulated the year's national financial plan and issued it. This plan focused on increasing grain production, light industry production, and foreign currency. The investment in culture and education was rarely mentioned in the entire plan. The national plan only noted that higher education enrollment should decrease from 170,000 to 130,000, which was approximately half of 1961's enrollment.[269] No attention was given to middle and elementary schools in this year's plan.

In the rural areas, greater freedom led to improvements in living conditions; however, the state's budget for education faced further cuts just one month later. From May 7 to 11, 1962, the Political Bureau held a conference to discuss a document proposed by the Central Financial and Economy Group, which aimed to revise the previously issued national financial plan. Leaders from the Education Department also attended the conference.[270] This conference approved the implementation of the Eight-Character Direction, which refers to four words: "adaptation, reinforcement,

[268] The Central Financial and Economy Group was first established in June 1958, and was led by Chen Yun, assisted by Li Fuchun and Li Xiannian. The work of this group stopped since the Great Leap Forward. The CCPCC issued a document to announce its resurrection in 19 April, 1962. The Group was led by Chen Yu and assisted by Li Fuchun and Li Xiannian. Other group members were Zhou Enlai, Tan Zhenlin, Bo Yibo, Luo Ruiqing, Cheng Zihua, Gu Mu, Yao Yilin, and Xue Muqiao. 钱庠理 Qian Xiangli, *中华人民共和国史第5卷 History of the People's Republic of China, Volume 5*, (香港: 香港中文大学出版社, 2008 年版 Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2008), p.160, 161, 166.

[269] "关于调整一九六二年国民经济计划的汇报提纲" ("Outline of the Report on Adjusting the National Economic Plan for 1962"), 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第39册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 39* (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.351.

[270] 钱庠理 Qian Xiangli, *中华人民共和国史第5卷 History of the People's Republic of China, Volume 5*, (香港: 香港中文大学出版社, 2008 年版 Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2008), p.167.

consolidation, and improvement."[271] Shortly after this conference and within the same month, the CCPCC approved and issued a report from the Education Department of the central government, which made two proposals.[272] The report claimed that since 1958, the rapid progress of education had placed a significant burden on the national economy. Even though financial expenses for education had been reduced in 1961, it remained a heavy burden. As a result, the financial investment in education in 1962 needed to be further curtailed. To achieve this goal, one proposal was to scale down public education and promote education held by the "people." The other proposal was to reduce the number of school teachers.[273] The document explicitly stated that individuals recruiting students were allowed.[274]

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[271] "关于调整一九六二年国民经济计划的汇报提纲" ("Outline of the Report on Adjusting the National Economic Plan for 1962"), 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第39册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 39*, p.351.

[272] "中共中央批发教育部党组关于进一步调整教育事业和精减学校教职工的报告" ("The CPC Central Committee Distributes the Report of the Party Group of the Ministry of Education on Further Adjusting the Education Industry and Reducing School Teachers and Staff"), 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第40册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 40* (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.141.

[273][273] "中共中央批发教育部党组关于进一步调整教育事业和精减学校教职工的报告" ("The CPC Central Committee Distributes the Report of the Party Group of the Ministry of Education on Further Adjusting the Education Industry and Reducing School Teachers and Staff"), 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第40册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 40*, p.141.

[274] "For the middle, elementary, and technical schools, 'people's' education is complementary to the public education. Individuals recruiting students is allowed (中、小学和一般技术、工艺学校，可以以公办为主，民办为辅，也可以允许个人开馆)." "中共中央批发教育部党组关于进一步调整教育事业和精减学校教职工的报告" ("The CPC Central Committee's Distribution of the Report by the Party Group of the Ministry of Education on Further Adjusting the Education Sector and Reducing School Staff") 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第40册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 40*, p.150.

During 1963 and 1964, the education budget experienced persistent cuts, even as the national economy steadily recovered and progressed. In January 1963, the national annual financial plan revealed that a sum of 190 million RMB was allocated to culture, education, and science, with the primary focus on constructing schools in urban areas.[275] Notably, no investments were planned for rural education. In October 1963, the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (CCPCC) issued a directive aimed at bolstering ideological instruction in primary and secondary schools.[276] One of the objectives of this directive was to reduce the number of teachers. In November 1964, the CCPCC released another directive to promote a "half work, half study" education system. According to this directive, the development of full-time primary schools should continue, while full-time secondary and higher education should cease to expand.[277]

However, during the Great Leap Forward, amidst challenging circumstances, the state prioritized education and dedicated a significant portion of the budget to it. On May 7, 1960, the CCPCC approved a report from the party branch within the Central Education Department, which established that year's higher education enrollment target at

[275] 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第42 册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 42* (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.42.
[276] "中共中央关于加强少年儿童校外教育和整顿中小学教师队伍的指示(一九六三年十月十八日)" ("The CPC Central Committee's Directive on Strengthening Extracurricular Education for Adolescents and Children and Rectifying the Team of Primary and Secondary School Teachers"), 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第44 册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 44* (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.79-80.
[277] "中共中央关于发展半工(耕)半读教育制度问题的批示 (一九六四年十一月十七日)" ("The CPC Central Committee's Directive on the Issue of Developing the Half-Work (Cultivation), Half-Study Education System, November 17, 1964"), 档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第47 册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 47* (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.234-235.

280,000.[278] The report highlighted that the enrollment for higher education in 1959 exceeded 270,000 and was successfully achieved. It also acknowledged that the 1960 enrollment target might not be met, as only around 280,000 students graduated from senior high school. To address this shortfall, the report called for other middle schools, including technical ones, to encourage their graduates to take the university entrance examination. Additionally, the report urged various work units to enable their young workers to participate in the exam.

In late May 1960, amidst the ongoing famine, the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (CCPCC) approved a report from the National Planning Committee (国家计委) that proposed a revision to the 1960 financial plan.[279] This report aimed to build upon the initial financial plan established in January 1960. While it did not specifically mention increasing that year's enrollment, it did emphasize the need to enhance accommodation facilities at universities. Although this ambitious plan was promoted for only three months, the 1961 national financial plan disclosed that higher education enrollment in 1960 reached 344,000, signifying a substantial leap after May

[278] "中共中央转批教育部党组关于 1960 年高等学校招生工作的请示报告 (1960 年 5 月 7 日)" ("The CPC Central Committee's Endorsement of the Request Report by the Party Group of the Ministry of Education on the Enrollment Work of Higher Education Institutions in 1960, May 7, 1960") 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第34 册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 34* (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.113.

[279] "中共中央同意国家计委党组等关于 1960 年工业生产、交通运输、基本建设计划第二本帐的安排 (1960 年 5 月 30 日)" ("The CPC Central Committee's Agreement on the Arrangement of the Second Accounting Book of the 1960 Industrial Production, Transportation, and Basic Construction Plan by the Party Group of the State Planning Commission and others, May 30, 1960") 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第34 册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 34*, p.278.

1960.[280] In July 1960, the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee submitted a report to the CCPCC, stating that since 1958, a significant number of new universities and technical middle schools had been established in Jiangsu, causing a considerable burden on the province.[281] In October 1960, the state issued a directive to expand the number of key universities from 20 to 64.[282]

The enrollments for higher education in 1959, 1960, 1961, and 1962 were 270,000, 344,000, 250,000, and 130,000, respectively. Enrollment declined significantly following the famine, dropping to less than half of the levels seen during the crisis. As the state transitioned away from radicalism and decentralized its economic planning system in the wake of the famine, it was able to alleviate certain financial burdens, including those related to education. The state recognized that a large number of students had abandoned their education during the famine. In response, post-famine plans aimed to reduce the education budget, focusing resources and labor on agricultural activities instead. Consequently, the state limited the number of teachers, reduced the number of

[280] In 19 August, CCPCC approved to control and restrict the basic construction, which was a retreat from the leaping plan three months ago. "中共中央批准国家计委党组、国家建委党组关于缩短基本建设战线保证生产的措施 (1960 年 8 月 17 日)" ("The CPC Central Committee's Approval of the Measures by the Party Group of the State Planning Commission and the Party Group of the State Construction Commission to Shorten the Basic Construction Front and Guarantee Production, August 17, 1960"), 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第34 册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 34*, p.557。

[281] "中共中央关于中央各部在地方新建学校问题的复示" ("The CPC Central Committee's Reply on the Issue of Various Central Departments Establishing New Schools Locally"), 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第34 册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 34*, p.604-607.

[282] "中共中央关于增加全国重点高等学校的决定(1960 年 10 月 22 日)" ("The CPC Central Committee's Decision on Increasing National Key Higher Education Institutions, October 22, 1960"), 档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第35 册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 35* (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.299-303.

students pursuing further education, and prohibited over-aged students from returning to school. These policies effectively directed all affected individuals towards agricultural labor. Jacob Eyferth further explores how the socialist government reallocated human labor from the handicraft industry, concentrating efforts on agricultural activities.[283]

The reemergence of traditional private schools is closely linked to the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) cultural policies in the early 1960s. The period's focus on economic recovery, along with Mao's temporary retreat following the disaster, created a relatively liberal environment for cultural production. However, it was years before the early 1960s that the state began to appreciate the value of certain traditional Chinese literature and arts.

In the realm of art, some traditional Chinese art forms, such as landscape painting, gained increasing importance as early as 1956 and 1957. As Julia F. Andrews asserts, "the reappearance of the national heritage was labeled a key element of the art world's contribution to the Hundred Flowers Campaign." [284] The three-year period from 1954 to 1956 witnessed a transition from popularization to specialization in the art arena, a process that has been thoroughly examined by Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen. Andrews defines this transition from popularization to specialization as "an important shift from a rigid emphasis on popularized subjects and forms to the administration of art as a professional, specialized undertaking." [285] She argues that the end of the Korean War in

[283] Jacob Eyferth, *Eating Rice from Bamboo Roots: The Social History of a Community of Handicraft Papermakers in Rural Sichuan, 1920-2000* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asian Center, 2009).
[284] Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1979*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), p.165.
[285] Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1979*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), p.110.

1953 diminished the perceived need for artists to create military propaganda, signaling a departure from the wartime foundations of new China art. Furthermore, a renewed focus on the technical quality of art seems to have coincided with the nationwide interest in Soviet technology.

The other reason for this transition is that the CCP's primary attention had shifted to urban areas. The revolutionary arts that originated during the Yan'an period were appealing to rural populations but failed to capture the attention of urbanites. After consolidating its regime, the CCP needed the support of urban residents. To cater to their tastes, the CCP needed to modify its revolutionary arts. Consequently, the party transitioned from popularization to specialization in the arts, which included the promotion of traditional art forms as part of the specialization process.

The Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957-1958) played a role in promoting national traditions. In the realm of arts, the campaign concluded with the triumph of Zhou Yang and his colleagues, who championed traditional national art. In an ironic twist, Jiang Feng, an iconoclastic pro-Soviet figure and a dominant force in the art world since the Yan'an period, was labeled a rightist during the movement.

The trend of promoting traditional arts persisted during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960). In April 1959, Premier Zhou Enlai addressed the National People's Congress and later, in May, invited a group of writers and artists to a conference. At both events, he candidly encouraged the development of specific traditions.

Following the failure of the Great Leap Forward, central government leaders began to reassess and retreat from previous radical policies. The "Ten Articles on

Literature and Art, (文艺十条)" established in June 1961 during the Xinqiao Conference, were later revised to become the "Eight Articles on Art and Literature(文艺八条)," published in April 1962. In February 1962, Zhou Enlai held the Guangzhou Conference, which primarily focused on arts and literature. This event highly praised traditional literati, such as the renowned female poet Li Qingzhao from the Song Dynasty.

The Sino-Soviet split likely also contributed to the CCP's cultural policy shift towards building up national heritage. As Yang Kuisong's research indicates, in the latter half of the 1950s, Khrushchev sought Mao's support to consolidate his power in the Soviet Union. Mao seized the opportunity to loosen Stalin's influence and control.[286] One method of achieving this was to emphasize and promote Chinese national culture, as opposed to Soviet socialist realism. This is also why Mao promoted national heritage during the Great Leap Forward.

In conclusion, the CCP had already shifted its attitude towards certain traditions by the mid-1950s. The Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s further contributed to the flourishing of specific traditions. As a result, the CCP's cultural policies were relatively lenient towards certain traditions in the early 1960s.

[286] 杨奎松 Yang Kuisong, *毛泽东与莫斯科的恩恩怨怨 The Ups and Downs of Mao Zedong's Relationship with Moscow* (南昌: 江西人民出版社, 2008 Nanchang: Jiangxi People's Publishing House, 2008).

Local Society's Solution

As previously discussed, the state's intention to allocate all human labor in rural areas to agriculture led to a substantial number of children being removed from public schools. Additionally, since the state's cultural policies towards certain traditions had become more lenient following the Great Leap Forward, the resurgence of traditional private schools became a possibility. Beyond these two factors, it is also crucial to examine how various participants at the time navigated and perceived this issue.

"Ox" not only expressed regret for missing out on public education but also criticized the teachings in the traditional school. He disparaged his experience there as "reading dead books (读死书)." All three of my interviewees recalled attending school daily without any breaks, both in the morning and afternoon. The only vacations during the year were the Mid-Autumn Festival and the Spring Festival. The children did not have weekends and could only return home after reciting specific poems. Each day, their first task was to recite the poems they had learned the previous day. In school, all they were required to do was punctuate, read, and recite poems under Mr. Fourth's guidance.

Another reason why "Ox" denounced the traditional school as "reading dead books" was its lack of practical benefits for the children. They could not obtain an official diploma at this school, leaving them with no opportunity to attend middle school. Moreover, "Ox's" criticism echoed the CCP's condemnation of private traditional schools since the early days of the People's Republic of China. "Ox's" negative view likely resulted from a combination of rigorous training experience, the absence of practical

benefits, and the influence of CCP propaganda. However, "Ox's" attitude was not as straightforward as it may appear.

Interestingly, despite "Ox" belittling the traditional school, he retained a deep memory of what he had learned from Mr. Fourth and took great pride in it. The experience of "reading dead books" proved valuable. When asked about his learnings, "Ox" promptly recited the first two poems from the textbook. He then fetched the textbooks from his bedroom and proudly asked me to verify the accuracy of his recitation. The poem textbook was compiled and handwritten by Mr. Fourth himself. Of the 30 poems, all but poem No. 17 are Tang poems; the 17th poem is folk literature predating the Tang dynasty. All the poems are sourced from the popular primer, Three Hundred Tang Poems.

The first poem narrates the story of a poet seeking a reclusive master, only to encounter the master's young disciple under a pine tree. The master is searching for herbs in the high mountains, shrouded in fog and clouds. The third poem portrays a lonely man fishing on a desolate riverbank in winter, without even a bird for company. The fourth poem describes the author napping on a stone under a pine tree, awakening with no idea how many years have passed. Pine trees, high mountains, fog and clouds, the stone under the pine tree, and the isolated riverbank are all common landscape elements around Xu village. Xu village is surrounded by towering mountains, blanketed with tall, ancient pine trees, and intersected by a river.

During the Great Famine, all the children in the school had to drop out and gather wild vegetables in the mountains surrounding the village. As such, they were likely quite

familiar with the scenery depicted in the poems. It is also plausible that Mr. Fourth purposefully placed these poems at the beginning of the textbook to capture the children's interest. "Ox's" vivid recollections demonstrate that Mr. Fourth's efforts were not in vain.

"Ox" exhibited a complex attitude towards the traditional school, both disparaging it and taking pride in the knowledge he acquired there. In contrast, the parents' perspective appeared more consistent. Although all parents had passed away, preventing me from speaking with them directly, their favorable attitude can be inferred from the available information. Parents were required to pay a yearly tuition fee of 30 RMB, whereas the public elementary school charged 4.5 RMB per semester (9 RMB per year), which was less than one-third of the fee Mr. Fourth collected. I am not privy to the negotiation process between the parents and Mr. Fourth, but they evidently agreed on the result. If the parents were dissatisfied, they might have opted to pay the fee monthly and send their children to the public school in September 1963, when a new academic year began. Even if the parents did not prefer the traditional school and had to pay the fee yearly due to Mr. Fourth's insistence, they could have enrolled their children in the public school in September 1964. However, the traditional school continued to operate until the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1964 (September 20th), nearly 20 days after the new academic year commenced. Given that parents paid the higher tuition fee annually and did not transfer their children to the public school when the new academic year began, we can conclude that they, at the very least, did not harbor a negative bias against the traditional school.

However, if parents were indeed in favor of traditional schooling, why didn't more of them send their children to this school? The likely reason is that the traditional school could not provide a degree for the students, effectively eliminating their opportunities for higher education. The chances of attending middle school were less than one-sixth, and the tuition fees for middle school were considerably higher than those for elementary school.[287] It appears that the parents of these five children had perhaps relinquished their children's prospects for higher education.

The reemergence of the traditional school was not only driven by parents but also by Mr. Fourth himself. He advertised his school and attempted to persuade his relatives to enroll their children. One of my interviewees, Xu Liehong, recalled that his mother, who was Mr. Fourth's cousin, had been influenced by Mr. Fourth's promotion of the school and tried to convince Liehong to attend.[288] Liehong, however, strongly rejected his mother's and uncle's suggestions, as he perceived the traditional private school as a place for "Reading Old Books (读旧书)." Although Mr. Fourth's appeal to Liehong was unsuccessful, he made an effort to promote his school and managed to win over several parents.

Mr. Fourth was a cautious individual, aware of the potential risks associated with his school. His prudence was reflected in his selection of teaching content. In his self-edited poetry textbook, very few of the poems were lighthearted. The titles of the poems

[287] Author's interview with Xu Liwei, 22 August, 2016. Xu Liwei went to middle school in 1963. He had a little more than 30 classmates, and 5 of them (including Xu Liwei) went to middle school. He also recalled that middle school students needed to pay the fee twice every semester, but he was not sure whether he paid 30 or 40 RMB each time or each semester. Nevertheless, the tuition fee for middle school was much higher than elementary school.
[288] Author's interview with Xu Liehong, 21 August 2016.

can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this chapter. Most poems criticize warfare and portray the sufferings of ordinary people. Among these 30 poems, only two—No. 20, "The Spring Trip to Qiantang Lake" by Bai Juyi, and No. 30, "Passing an Old Friend's House" by Meng Haoran—were delightful. No. 20 celebrates the enchanting and picturesque scenes around West Lake, while No. 30 describes the joyful reunion of the poet and his old friend. Most of the poems explore themes of separation between friends and relatives (Nos. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 26), lonely and scenic landscapes (Nos. 1, 3, 4, 6, 14, 24, 28, 29), the hardships of common people during wartime (Nos. 17, 22, 23, 27), and nostalgia for the past (Nos. 11, 19, 25, 27). The three longest poems in the collection—Nos. 17, 22, and 23—all depict the struggles of ordinary people in the midst of warfare. No. 17, "The Story of Mulan," narrates the tale of a daughter who disguises herself as a man to fulfill her father's military service. No. 22 is the biography of a one-armed old man who amputated his own arm to escape conscription into the Tang dynasty's invasion of Yunnan. No. 23 begins with the poignant scene of soldiers parting ways with their wives, children, or parents. Mr. Fourth could easily defend himself by asserting that he was teaching about the "evil deeds" of the "feudal society."

The State's Suspicion

In 1962, prior to Mr. Fourth establishing his private school, the Anhui provincial government had already permitted the reappearance of private schools, stating that "several individuals could jointly start an elementary school and accommodate their own

children."[289] The provincial government allowed those who started private schools to select textbooks that "were beneficial to cultural study and contained no reactionary poison."[290] The textbook requirements were vague, leaving room for interpretation and not explicitly excluding late Qing and Republican-era textbooks. As a result, the state appeared unconcerned about the textbooks in 1962.

The County education bureau became aware of the existence of private schools by the end of 1962. It is unclear whether the county education bureau learned about these schools after the provincial government's document or had already noticed and reported them to the provincial government beforehand. In late 1962, She County produced a report on the situation of elementary schools, including private schools. According to the report, there were six private schools in the county using "old books" as textbooks.[291] The existence of these private schools and their use of "old books" did not seem to trouble the county government. The report did not mention any details regarding tuition fees, the specific "old books" used, or potential issues with these texts. Thus, the county government, like the provincial government, chose to turn a blind eye to private schools.

In 1963, the state began to grow concerned about private schools. In mid-September 1963, the She County education bureau conducted an investigation on private schools within the county. According to the investigation report, by September, there were 43 private schools in She County, accommodating 928 children. These 928 children

[289] "安徽省民办小学暂行办法 (1962 年)" ("Provisional Measures for Private Primary Schools in Anhui Province, 1962"), She County Archives, 62-1-101.
[290] "安徽省民办小学暂行办法 (1962 年)" ("Provisional Measures for Private Primary Schools in Anhui Province, 1962"), She County Archives, 62-1-101.
[291] "歙县小学教育工作情况 (1962 年 12 月)" ("Situation of Primary School Education Work in She County, December 1962"), She County Archives, 62-1-102.

constituted approximately 15% of all minban school students. [292] The report indicated that 38 out of the 43 private schools were located in three remote mountainous communes. However, the actual situation might not align with the report. There were likely many more private schools than the report revealed, primarily because the three communes listed—Huangtian, Huangwei, and Jinchuan—were not the most remote mountainous areas in She County. Additionally, during my random visits and interviews in Xu village, which was not as remote as Huangtian commune, I discovered one private school. It is probable that the actual number of private schools was much higher than the report suggested. It seems likely that the county bureau conducted investigations in only three communes and gathered random information about others.

The state's primary concern regarding private schools was that they operated outside of its control. Some private schools did not inform the state of their existence and refused to follow the leaders' guidance. After a commune leader instructed a private school teacher in Huangtian commune to abandon "old books with feudalistic superstitious poison," the teacher responded, "He says his [words], I teach my [own content] (他说他的，我教我的)." Another private school prepared two different sets of textbooks. If leaders visited to conduct an inspection, the teacher would use the state-issued textbooks. Once the leaders left, the teacher would revert to teaching "old books."

The state's second concern was that private school teachers might not be politically reliable. In Huangtian commune, one private teacher, a Feng Shui Master, took

[292] “关于私塾调查情况 (1963 年 9 月)” (“On the Investigation of Private Tutoring Schools, September 1963”), She County Archives, 62-1-118.

several junior middle school graduates as his students and taught them Feng Shui. Feng Shui, a traditional Chinese approach to spatial arrangement, was considered superstitious by the CCP. The fact that relatively well-educated youths were learning Feng Shui could persuade more parents to send their children to study it, potentially expanding Feng Shui's influence in the local area, which was viewed with suspicion by the CCP. Other questionable teachers may have been affiliated with the KMT. Among the six private school teachers in Huangwei commune, two were officials during the Republican era: one was a neighborhood head, and the other was a KMT military official and township head. Another teacher had been dismissed from a public teaching position and was suspected of having leprosy. The report does not explain why this individual was dismissed or whether the leprosy diagnosis was confirmed. Nevertheless, the person was viewed with suspicion by the state.

The textbooks used in these private schools were also considered suspicious by the CCP. One "old book" featured the KMT flag on its first page. Some private schools taught students how to write land trading contracts, which was discouraged by the CCP since land trading was not promoted. The report listed several textbooks used by the private schools: *Three Character Classic (三字经), Hundred Family Names(百家姓), Thousand Character Classic (千字文), Jade Forest of Primary Education (幼学琼林), Child Prodigy Poetry (神童诗), Ancient Wisdom Literature (昔时贤文), Four-character Verses (四言杂字), Top Scholar Poetry (状元诗), Sixty-year Cycle (六十甲子), Three Talents Cycle (三才甲子),* and *Complete Collection of Literary Works from Ancient Times (古文观止)*. These textbooks focused on primary knowledge of classical Chinese,

which was not included in the state-issued textbooks. Some textbooks, such as *Four Hundred Medicinal Recipes*, covered topics like Chinese herbs. Other textbooks promoted Buddhist indoctrination, such as *Guan Yin Bodhisattva's Methods for Saving Immortals from Calamity*.

The fourth concern was the private schools' schedules and teaching methods. The report criticized private schools for employing primitive teaching methods, such as memorization and recitation, as well as for their long, non-stop teaching hours. However, the real threats were once again the teaching content of the private schools. While the report does not delve into details about teaching skills and schedules, it does provide examples of the reactionary teaching content. For instance, one private school enshrined a tablet of Confucius, and students were required to kowtow to the tablet upon entering the school and burn paper money as an offering on the first and fifteenth days of each month. Some private schools did not adhere to the state-issued school calendar and instead observed holidays not approved by the state. They took a holiday on the fifteenth day of July in the lunar calendar, which was the Ullambana festival or Ghost Festival. In She County, people would visit their ancestors' tombs and offer food and paper money during this time. Since July fifteenth was not a state-approved national holiday, private schools were criticized for observing this day as a holiday, thus contributing to the "spreading of feudalistic and superstitious ideas."

The fifth concern was the competitiveness of private schools over public schools. Ten private schools managed to attract 68 students who were originally enrolled in a single public elementary school. One private school spread a rumor that the nearby public

school would soon close, and as a result, it successfully attracted 19 students from the public school. Some private schools identified parents' discontent with public schools and used this dissatisfaction to promote their strengths. For example, some parents complained that public school teachers, who were unable to write couplets (duilian 对联), would not be able to teach effectively. One parent claimed that three years in public schools was equivalent to less than one year in private schools, stating, "I would rather spend 100 Jin of corn on private schools than spend 1 RMB on public schools."

The sixth concern was the tuition fees at private schools. The report emphasizes the inequality in tuition fees among students. If a child's family was better off, they would pay 30 RMB. A medium-income family would pay 20 RMB, and a poorer family would pay 10 RMB. While this method of collecting tuition fees might seem fair today, it was viewed as problematic by the state in 1963, though the report did not provide an explanation. The state also criticized private schools for admitting any student who paid the tuition fees, although the report did not clarify the reason for this criticism either.

The state's six concerns and the widespread presence of private schools showcased parents' and students' discontent with the state's education system. Parents believed that nearby public schools might close due to the sudden cancellation of many public schools. The state established schools during the famine, even though many students were unable to attend. However, when the famine subsided and the economy improved, the state closed schools and mobilized students to leave school. Consequently, parents lost trust in the stability of the state's education system. As a result, when private

schools claimed that nearby public schools would soon close, students and parents believed them.

People also expressed dissatisfaction with the state's education content, courses, and textbooks. Fourteen years after the CCP established its political power, the state loosened its control over some traditions. People admired classical Chinese knowledge and incorporated it into their daily lives. They displayed couplets on walls during the Spring Festival, used abacuses for calculations, consulted Feng Shui masters for construction projects, wrote traditional contracts for land transactions, and sought Chinese herbs when feeling unwell. As a result, individuals with such knowledge were highly respected. Parents were pleased if their children could learn this knowledge in school. However, some of this knowledge was criticized in state-controlled schools, and students were unable to learn it, leaving parents dissatisfied. The report indicates that some parents, upon hearing their children reciting classical Chinese texts, would praise the children and the private school system loudly. The report also criticizes people for valuing the ability to write couplets, which served as a basic practice and test of classical Chinese knowledge and required calligraphy skills. Writing couplets became a criterion for defining a man of letters and earning respect. Even during the Cultural Revolution, people's attitudes did not change significantly. Once a minban teacher could write couplets for villagers, they would quickly gain respect. However, writing couplets was not taught in public schools. Students had calligraphy classes but received limited education in classical Chinese. Parents were not satisfied with the education their children received from state-approved schools. Consequently, the CCP's denigration of

certain traditions, such as couplets, Feng Shui, and Buddhism, could not significantly influence the daily lives of ordinary people.

Some of the discontent was not only directed towards the state's education policy and teaching content but also towards the state and the CCP. When a commune leader visited a private school to investigate its teaching content, one student scolded and threatened the leader before he entered the school, saying, "If you come, I will behead you (你来，杀你的头)." Another private school student insulted local cadres by calling them "petty hoodlums (二流子)." The report attributes the students' criticism to the instigation of private schools. However, students' anger towards local leaders might have been an uncontrollable expression of their criticism towards the CCP and the state.

In 1962, a senior middle school student wrote two slogans on a male bathroom wall: "Strike down the Chinese Communist Party (打倒共产党)" and "Overthrow Chairman Mao's rule (推翻毛主席的统治)." In his hastily written confession, he admitted to having read a speech by an American representative at the United Nations, which he found in a newspaper, and agreed with the representative's assertion that China was full of poverty and hunger. [293] Since 1962, there had been discontent towards the state and the CCP among students due to the great famine. Private school students' insults towards local cadres could be one way to express their dissatisfaction with the state and the CCP.

[293] “关于开除江宝训学籍的请示报告 (1962 年 4 月 26 日)” (“Request Report on the Expulsion of Jiang Baoxun from School”), She County Archives, 62-1-103.

This discontent among the population alerted the state, which began to take control of private schools in the latter half of 1963. By the end of that year, 13 of the 43 private schools had been transformed into state-controlled minban schools. [294] The archives do not provide records on when all private schools disappeared in She County. However, according to state documents, private schools vanished before the initiation of the Four Clean-Ups Campaign in the latter half of 1964.

Conclusion

This chapter argues that the resurgence of private schools in the early 1960s was primarily driven by the state's emphasis on agricultural recovery following the Great Leap Forward famine. In an effort to allocate all possible resources to agriculture, the state, on one hand, reduced financial support for education and dismissed teachers to decrease grain consumption. On the other hand, it prohibited over-aged students and others from attending school, indirectly compelling them to engage in agricultural activities.

Private schools served as a form of grassroots resistance in rural areas against the state's intention to exclude students from education and transform them into agricultural laborers. Following the great famine, the state aimed to alleviate financial burdens and increase agricultural labor by encouraging students to leave school and engage in agricultural work. Students abandoned by the state, along with their parents, resisted

[294] “歙县文教局关于民办小学调查情况及今后意见的报告 (1963 年 11 月 22 日)” (“Report on the Investigation of Private Primary Schools and Future Opinions by the She County Bureau of Culture and Education, November 22, 1963”), She County Archives, 62-1-113.

these intentions by establishing private schools. The widespread presence of private schools also highlighted parents' discontent and dissatisfaction with the state's education policies and the teaching content provided by schools.

This study not only highlights the inferior status of rural areas within the education system but also emphasizes the lower status of female students compared to their male counterparts. In the aftermath of the GLF famine, during the downsizing of schools, Dongping Han observes that more female students left school than males, as "rural parents needed their children, especially girls, to do household chores."[295] Although Han's research focuses on a county in Shandong province, it is reasonable to assume that a similar pattern occurred in She County, with more female students leaving school than male students.

Furthermore, there were fewer opportunities for girls to regain access to education through private schools. All students in Mr. Fourth's private school were male, with no female students in attendance. In Xu village, no girls were given the chance to return to school. Parents were less willing to invest in their daughters' education. The county education bureau's investigation report did not mention the gender distribution of students in private schools. However, it can be inferred that if there had been a higher proportion of girls attending these schools, the county education bureau would have taken note of it and included it in their report.

[295] Dongping Han, *The Unknown Cultural Revolution: Life and Change in a Chinese Village* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008), p.26.

In the intersection of two power dynamics – the urban-rural divide and gender inequality – rural female students find themselves at the bottom of both hierarchies, making them the most vulnerable group. In the following chapter, I will investigate cases of sexual assault involving rural female students in elementary schools in She County.

Appendix:

Content Table of the Poem Textbook (Edited and Handwritten by Mr. Fourth)

1. 寻隐者不遇 （贾岛）
2. 新嫁娘 （王建）
3. 江雪 （柳宗元）
4. 答人 （太上隐者）
5. 夜思 （李白）
6. 敬亭独坐 （李白）
7. 游子吟 （孟郊）
8. 回乡偶书 （贺知章）
9. 逢入京使 （高适）
10. 九月九日忆山中兄弟 （王维）
11. 乌衣巷 （刘禹锡）
12. 丹阳送人 （严维）
13. 夜雨寄北 （李商隐）
14. 山形 （杜牧）

15. 枫桥夜泊 （张继）

16. 寒食寄诸弟 （钱起）

17. 木兰辞

18. 夏夜宿表兄话旧 （窦叔向）

19. 余杭形胜 （白居易）

20. 钱塘湖春行 （白居易）

21. 欲与元八卜邻先有是赠 （白居易）

22. 新丰折臂翁 （白居易）

23. 兵车行 （杜甫）

24. 下江陵 （李白）

25. 黄鹤楼闻笛 （李白）

26. 望月怀远 （张九龄）

27. 王昭君 （梁献）

28. 题潼关楼 （崔颢）

29. 辋川闲居赠裴秀才迪 （王维）

30. 过故人庄 （孟浩然）

Chapter 4: Politicizing Elementary Schools' Sexual Assault in the Mao era

This chapter investigates cases of sexual assault perpetrated by elementary school teachers against students in She County. The primary sources for this study come from the She County Education Bureau archives, which consist mainly of reports, punishment notices, and verdicts (in cases referred to the legal system). These materials are scattered across 267 volumes of archives, and at times, cases are mentioned briefly in just one or two sentences within a report. These are the only materials available to me. Despite the limited details about the crimes, the sources provide information on 99 cases that occurred during the entire Mao era (1949-1976). They offer enough data to understand how these cases were discovered, documented, and adjudicated. In these 99 cases, 99 elementary school teachers sexually assaulted at least 331 elementary school students, with the youngest victim being only 7 years old.

Among the 99 perpetrators, only four were employed at elementary schools in the county seat, while the remaining 95 worked in townships and villages. As demonstrated in previous chapters, rural areas are at a disadvantage compared to the county seat, and female students occupy a marginalized position within gender dynamics. Rural female students experience the compounded effects of these power structures, making them the most vulnerable group. The incidents of sexual assault against them underscore their heightened vulnerability.

She County was not a densely populated county in China, yet the likelihood of students being sexually assaulted by their teachers in elementary schools was high.

According to official documents, the number of elementary school students ranged from 21,125 to 99,011 throughout the Mao era. In 1958, there were 40,609 elementary school students, and that year, at least 74 of them were identified as victims. During the Four Clean-ups, the elementary school student population increased from 54,089 to 76,522, with at least 178 identified as victims during this time.[296] The number of elementary school teachers fluctuated between approximately 995 and 3,897 each year during the Mao era, and 99 of them committed sexual assault. The proportion of elementary school students encountering a teacher who committed sexual assault was alarmingly high.

This chapter argues that the punishment for sexual assault in elementary schools was highly politicized. While politicization was not necessarily bad for victims, it could disconnect victims' suffering from the sentencing process, resulting in punishments that lacked principle. In the absence of laws regarding sexual assault throughout the Mao era, political campaigns filled the void and played a crucial role in the discovery, description, sentencing, and announcement of cases within the education system. This study demonstrates that during the political campaigns of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, Four Clean-ups, and the Cultural Revolution, a significantly higher number of sexual assault cases were reported compared to other years. This indicates that more cases were brought to public attention and that the government was willing to punish these crimes during the campaigns. However, at other times, the government was aware of the existence of sexual assault crimes but chose to overlook and ignore them. It is also essential to note that due

[296] 歙县教育志编纂领导组(She County Education Chronicles Compilation Committee), *歙县教育志 She County Education Chronicles*, p.140.

to the politicization of sexual assault, the number of victims, their age, and their physical and mental suffering were never decisive factors in determining punishment.

The punishments towards the perpetrators were politicized, not only because they coincided with the campaigns, but also because there was a close relationship between the punishments and the campaigns. Without these political campaigns, the sexual assault crimes would likely never have been discovered, punished, or documented in the archives. Although some perpetrators' sexual assault crimes were not the initial reason for government investigations, the inquiries uncovered these crimes and resulted in punishment if the government intended to do so. Even though some cases were not explicitly labeled as rape cases and were sentenced under unrelated laws, the perpetrators still faced consequences for their actions.

During the Mao era, the legal system did not provide specific laws or regulations addressing sexual assault in schools. Initially, sentencing was based on the Marriage Law issued in 1950.[297] In the Anti-Rightist campaign, more than half of the cases were classified as counterrevolutionary cases and were sentenced according to the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activities. During the Four Clean-ups, the crimes were categorized as "hooligan crime[s]," and perpetrators could be labeled as "bad element[s]." No cases were sentenced under the crime of rape or statutory rape. The term 'underaged girl (younv 幼女)' was used in the archives, but no clear definition was ever

[297] The full context of the Marriage Law of 1950 can be found in the appendix of *Revolutionizing the Family: Politics, Love, and Divorce in Urban and Rural China, 1949-1968*. Neil J. Diamant, *Revolutionizing the Family: Politics, Love, and Divorce in Urban and Rural China, 1949-1968* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2000).

provided. It was unclear when a female was considered underaged. The vague concepts and application of terms such as rape, statutory rape, and female minors demonstrate that there were no laws in place to protect child victims.

In addition to the moral impetus behind this study, what insights can we gain about the Mao era through examining sexual assault in elementary schools? This research sheds light on gender issues, the legal system, child protection, teacher-student relationships, and political campaigns during the Mao era.

Existing scholarship on rape cases has primarily focused on case studies or specific victim groups. Yang and Cao's case study explores sexual extortion within the context of a "shortage economy under an authoritarian regime that monopolized nearly all social resources."[298] Jeremy Brown's case study challenges the stereotype of a lawless and chaotic Cultural Revolution, revealing that "criminal justice and public security during the Cultural Revolution were not, in fact, suspended or in a state of anarchy for ten full years."[299] Research on sent-down youths also examines cases where local and military cadres sexually assaulted them, exposing their vulnerable position in their assigned rural locations.[300] Emily Honig's paper on sexuality during the Cultural Revolution argues that despite the suppression of sexual expression, this repression could

[298] Bin, Yang and Cao Shuji, "Cadres, Grain, and Sexual Abuse in Wu Wei County, Mao China" *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 28, no.2, 2016. p.33-57.
[299] Jeremy Brown, "A Policeman, His Gun, and Alleged Rape: Competing Appeals for Justice in Tianjin 1966-1979", in ed. Daniel Leese and Puck Engman, *Victims, Perpetrator, and the Role of Law in Maoist China: A Case-study Approach* (Berlin and Boton: walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2018), p.128.
[300] Thomas P. Bernstein, *Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1977).
Michel Bonnin, translated from French by Krystyna Horko, *The Lost Generation: The Rustication of China's Education Youth (1968-1980)* (Hong Kong, The Chinese University Press, 2013).
Emily Honig and Xiaojian Zhao, *Across the Great Divide: The Sent-down Youth Movement in Mao's China, 1968-1980* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

not permeate people's everyday lives. Sent-down youths continued to receive sex education, engage in sexual activities, and give birth in rural areas.[301]

In contrast to previous scholarship, this study emphasizes the long-term changes and the relationship between sexual assault cases and various political campaigns. This research aims to expand Jeremy Brown's analysis across the entire Mao era. It reveals that not only did the later period of the Cultural Revolution provide justice to rape victims, but so did the earlier period of the Cultural Revolution, the Four Clean-ups, the Anti-rightist Campaign, and more. However, I also argue that justice for victims was limited due to the lack of principles and standards in sentencing. The number of victims, their age, and their suffering had limited influence on the sentencing process for sexual assault crimes.

A few points of clarification are needed before delving into the cases. First, it is important to understand the process by which the government and legal system tracked documents and cases. When the county education bureau was informed of the existence of certain sexual assault crimes, it would send investigators to the school to "talk and educate" the perpetrators. If it was determined that a crime had been committed, the county education bureau might assign the perpetrator to a different school of a similar ranking or might simply issue a warning. However, if the government intended to punish the perpetrator, an administrative punishment would be handed down first. If the crime was deemed serious enough, the education bureau would report the crime and the

[301] Emily Honig, "Socialist Sex: The Cultural Revolution Revisited," *Modern China,* Volume 29, No.2, April 2003, p.143-175.

perpetrator to the legal system after obtaining approval from the Supervision Council. The legal system would then take over the case and send a copy of the verdict to the education bureau after completing the sentencing. As a result, theoretically, a perpetrator sentenced in the legal system would have two documents in the archives: the legal system's verdicts and the education bureau's punishment notices. If the crime was not considered serious enough for the education bureau to report it to the legal system, the perpetrator would only receive administrative punishment. In such cases, the punishment notices would be the only source for us to learn about the crimes of perpetrators whose cases were not reported to the legal system.

The second point to clarify concerns the different terms used in the archives. There was no single specific term used to refer to sexual assault in the archives. Instead, various terms were used, including: "qiangjian 强奸 (rape)," "jianwu 奸污 (rape and tarnish)," "youjian 诱奸 (entice and rape)," "weixie 猥亵 (molest)," and "jijian 鸡奸 (homosexual sex)." The first three terms all referred to sexual penetration involving the genitals of both parties. Among these terms, youjian (entice and rape) indicated the victim's consent, while jianwu placed a higher value on female virginity compared to qiangjian. At that time, being raped as a victim was seen as being 'stained.' Weixie (molest) and wannong (toy) encompassed kissing, sexual touching of the breast, and non-penetrative sexual contact with female genitals. The final term, jijian, referred to male homosexual intercourse. The act of vaginal finger penetration was not easily classified under any of the five terms. It was considered "worse (geng e lie 更恶劣)" than genital

intercourse and warranted separate attention in verdicts and announcements. Other sexual behaviors were not mentioned or categorized in the archives. It is possible that these behaviors did not occur in any cases, or that the government and legal system agreed not to mention those behaviors in official documents. Another possibility is that these behaviors were included under the term "weixie." Due to the lack of records, this study cannot discuss other sexual actions.

The Beginning: 1953

Though no records of sexual assault exist for the first three years of the PRC, the government was aware of teachers' sexual assault against students and displayed tolerance towards such crimes. Several perpetrators sentenced in later years mentioned harassment occurring during the first three years of the PRC, indicating that sexual assault, including rape, took place in schools at that time. But was the government aware of these crimes? SSF, who was sentenced in 1958, had raped three female students in 1949, 1950, and 1952.[302] One victim became pregnant in 1950, and SSF was subsequently reassigned to another elementary school. Upon arriving at his new school, he entered a female student's bedroom at night and raped her. SSF was then forced to confess and criticize himself before the township's government. After confessing, he was assigned to a third school, where he found his third victim, whom he also impregnated. As SSF's reassignments suggest, the government was aware of the existence of these

[302] SSF is the perpetrator's name. In this chapter, I use the first letter of each character's pinyin in a person's name to name the perpetrator.
"歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1383 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no. 1383, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.

crimes. Despite being aware of these crimes, the government was not determined or willing to publicly announce and punish the perpetrators. The perpetrator was not demoted to a lower-level job, did not experience a salary reduction, nor was he brought before the legal system.

Why did the government choose to cover up the crimes and inadvertently assist the perpetrator in finding new victims? Reassigning SSF to another school could hardly be considered a punishment; on the contrary, it could help the perpetrator conceal their previous crime and seek new victims, which was precisely what transpired in SSF's case. Exposing the crimes to the public might prompt parents to question the education system of the new regime, or provide potential opponents with evidence to challenge the legitimacy of the new government. Another possibility could be that 1953 was during the education expansion and there was a teacher shortage, and as a result, one teacher's value outweighed the trauma experienced by several children.

This tolerance toward sexual assault within schools came to an end in 1953. That year, two perpetrators were punished for sexual assault. The government likely changed its stance because the Land Reform, Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries, and the Korean War had granted legitimacy to the new regime, allowing it to shift its focus to domestic affairs. The CCP's efforts in reorganizing higher education institutions demonstrated its involvement in the education system. The local education system underwent a similar transition.

These two perpetrators may have been the first to be recorded because their assaults were difficult to conceal. Both victims became pregnant and gave birth to babies.

The presence of two infants born to elementary school students who became mothers made the rapes hard to hide from parents, neighbors, and classmates. Additionally, the issue of raising the new babies could easily lead to negotiations and conflicts between the victims or their families and the perpetrators. Therefore, the rapes were much more likely to be noticed and draw the government's attention. The two cases did not mean there were only two perpetrators and two victims that year; they were merely the tip of the iceberg.

The political background and the victim's age likely contributed to the different punishments received by the two perpetrators. Both perpetrators were headmasters of elementary schools, and both victims became pregnant and gave birth to babies. The differences in the cases were the victims' ages and the perpetrators' varying political backgrounds. One victim was 16 years old, and the other was 19. The headmaster who raped the 16-year-old student was labeled as a "spy" of the KMT, was brought to the legal system, and was sentenced to one year of labor and reform (劳动改造). The words used to describe his sexual abuse were "violating laws and disrupting discipline (违法乱纪)" and "entice and rape (诱奸)."[303] In contrast, the other headmaster who raped the 19-year-old student was not brought to the legal system. The punishment he received included revoking his headmaster position, a salary cut, and being assigned to another school where he could still teach. The words used to describe his sexual abuse were

[303] “关于 CGS 违法乱纪诱奸女生法办的通报 (1953 年)” (“Notice on CGS Violating Laws and Disrupting Discipline to Entice and Rape Female Students, 1953”) She County Archives, 62-1-40.

"degenerate and corrupt (腐化堕落)" and "incorrect man-woman relationships (不正确的男女关系)."[304]

There were no articles or items in either civil or criminal law specifically addressing rape or statutory rape during that time. The Marriage Law of 1950, which was applied as the only law in the verdicts and public announcements of the two cases, actually had no direct connection to the cases. No article or item from the Marriage Law was provided in the verdict and announcement to accuse the two perpetrators. The only part of the Marriage Law that could potentially be applied to the two cases was related to raising the two children that the victims gave birth to. Articles 15 and 22 of the 1950 Marriage Law concerned the raising of extramarital children, but this issue was too trivial to be recorded in the archives. Rape or statutory rape was not mentioned in the Marriage Law. Elementary teachers' sexual abuse towards teenage students had no connection with the Marriage Law. At that time, the Marriage Law was not the only law that the PRC had issued. A series of civil laws were also produced, targeting economic crimes such as tax evasion, smuggling, illegal lumbering, and disturbance of railways. In terms of criminal law, at least two criminal laws had been issued before 1953: the Land Reform Law of June 1950 and the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activity of 1951.

Rape, including statutory rape in elementary schools, was not perceived as an issue by the new regime. It remains unclear why the government opted for the unrelated

[304] “对 LLK 处理的批复 (1953 年)” (“Reply to the Handling of LLK, 1953”), She County Archives, 62-1-40.

Marriage Law, rather than other criminal or civil laws, as the legal foundation for these cases. The CCP introduced the Land Reform Law and the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activity to eradicate individuals it deemed unreliable. Regardless of the reasons behind the government and legal system's choice of the unrelated Marriage Law, it is evident that, by doing so, sexual assault, including statutory rape in schools, was not considered a political threat to the new regime.

The First Wave: 1954 and 1955

The first wave of punishing sexual assault in elementary schools occurred between 1954 and 1955, with a total of 14 perpetrators facing penalties. Four cases are found in the 1954 archives. Information on two of the cases is derived from a single document: "The report on punishing teachers for violating laws and disrupting discipline(违法乱纪)."[305] This report briefly mentions two perpetrators' rapes, both of whom faced legal consequences. Another 1954 case involved an elementary teacher who sexually "insulted" a female student and was punished with a "major demerit" within the education system. The fourth case in 1954 contains more details, as both the teacher and student committed suicide after their sexual relationship was discovered by local villagers and reported to the government. All information on the 1955 cases comes from the "Conclusion of elementary school teachers' training and punishment" report.[306] This

[305] “关于处理违法乱纪教师的汇报 (1954 年)” (“Report on Dealing with Teachers Violating Laws and Disrupting Discipline, 1954”), She County Archives, 62-1-49.
[306] “歙县小学教师培养和处理的情况总结 (1955 年)” (“Summary of the Situation of Primary School Teacher Training and Handling in She County”), She County Archives, 62-1-52.

report focused primarily on training, with only about a quarter of its content devoted to punishment. As a result, there is limited information on the 1955 cases. In 1955, ten perpetrators faced punishment. Of these ten, five cases (involving five perpetrators) were referred to the legal system and resulted in sentencing. The other five perpetrators remained within the education system and did not face legal penalties.

One perpetrator stood out from the rest, as his rape resulted in two deaths and carried the same prison sentence as committing adultery (通奸) with four or five women. This elementary school teacher "enticed and raped" a 14-sui (12- or 13-year-old) second-grade female student multiple times, leading to her pregnancy. Likely aware of the two sexual assault cases punished by the government in the previous year, the perpetrator was frightened by the victim's pregnancy. He encouraged the young girl to have sex with other men and claim that one of them was the baby's father, hoping to conceal his assault and avoid punishment. Tragically, both the underage girl and her baby died during childbirth. Due to the deaths of the young teenager and the baby, the perpetrator was sent to the legal system and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Another teacher would receive the same sentence if he committed adultery with four or five women (妇女). The use of "women" instead of "female students (女生)" or "young females" indicates that these women were above the legal and conventional age limit for having sex. The term "adultery" instead of "rape" or "entice and rape" implies that the sexual behavior was consensual. The report does not explain why adultery with four or five women was treated as seriously as a case involving two deaths.

Often, a victim's pregnancy superseded other crimes, such as habitual rape, as the determining factor for the county's education bureau to refer a perpetrator to the legal system. Perpetrators who impregnated their victims were sent to the legal system, but those habitually raping students were only punished by the education system and faced no legal consequences. One elementary teacher was described as having "enticed and raped female students wherever he worked (到一处工作，诱奸女生一处)." These were the only words in the archives describing this perpetrator's sexual assault. There were no additional records or investigations conducted to determine how many female students had been raped by this teacher. The government did not consider the number of victims and the hidden danger posed by the perpetrator as warranting more attention or investigation. The frequent reassignment of the teacher suggests that the government was likely aware of the perpetrator's habit of raping students, yet it chose to assign the teacher to another school, enabling him to seek new victims. In 1955, his habitual rape ultimately cost the perpetrator his job as a teacher, but it was not enough to prosecute him in the legal system.

In addition to habitual rape, human trafficking of female teenagers was also deemed negligible by the government. The only six words used to describe the perpetrator's crime were "entice and rape and human-traffic (诱奸而且拐卖)." No further information was provided regarding the age of the student, how the rape was connected to human trafficking, where and to whom the female elementary student was sold, whether the victim was able to return home or not, or if the victim was still missing, her last known location, etc. The experiences and consequences faced by the female teenager

were not deemed significant enough to merit further elaboration in the report. All of the perpetrator's crimes only resulted in the loss of his teaching job, and nothing more. The human trafficking of a female teenager was not considered significant enough for the government to bring the perpetrator to the legal system.

Compared to the brevity used in describing perpetrators' crimes, the reports placed greater emphasis on the intimidating effect of the arrests. Perpetrators whom the education bureau had decided to send to the legal system were publicly arrested during a county-level teacher's conference. The arrest was kept secret from all attending teachers until it occurred. The reports do not specify who made the arrests, whether it was the police or members of the Surveillance Council(监委).[307] However, they do mention that the arrests were approved by the Surveillance Council. The perpetrators' crimes were announced at the conference immediately following the arrests. The remaining teachers were then required to criticize the perpetrators in response to the announcements. The report quotes the exact words of one teacher "having made similar errors" to emphasize the intimidating warning message of the arrests. This teacher said, "I am nervous as well as delighted during this conference. Because I made similar errors before, but the Party and people's government educated me and helped me. I have become a new person."[308] The quote from the teacher "having committed similar errors" aimed to demonstrate that

[307] Bin, Yang and Cao Shuji, "Cadres, Grain, and Sexual Abuse in Wu Wei County, Mao China" *Journal of Women's History,* Volume 28, no.2, 2016, p.33-57.
[308] "关于处理违法乱纪教师的汇报 (1954 年)" ("Report on Dealing with Teachers Violating Laws and Disrupting Discipline, 1954"), She County Archives, 62-1-49.

the government had successfully intimidated these individuals and would prevent sexual assault from occurring in the future.

The 1954 report indicates that the government was aware of numerous other teachers who had committed similar crimes. The county-level conference, where the arrests took place, had 174 attendees. Aside from headmasters and directors of teaching affairs from various schools, the remaining attendees were teachers with "poor work ethic (作风不好)" and "impure mindset (思想作风不纯)." The report does not specify the size of this group, but it does reveal that the government was aware of many more teachers who had committed similar sexual assaults. The government knew who they were, but the report does not explain why certain teachers were chosen to be punished while others faced no repercussions.

Recognizing the existence of numerous perpetrators, the government's deliberate public method of arrest in the mid-1950s indicates a hesitant attitude towards punishing the offenders. As mentioned in Chapter 1 on education and political campaigns, the mid-1950s marked a stagnation period within the education system. Unlike during times of political campaigns and educational expansion, the state did not have a significant demand for teachers in the mid-1950s. Had the government been determined to eliminate the crime, it could have punished all the teachers it was aware of, administering penalties even if the legal system could not handle the volume of cases. Conversely, if the government decided to disregard the crimes and the victims' experiences, it could have arrested the perpetrators covertly. The choice of public arrest, the demand for attendees to criticize the apprehended offenders, and the selection of conference attendees all suggest

that the government sought to deter future crimes. Simultaneously, these actions demonstrate that the state could not afford to punish all guilty teachers. Consequently, the public arrests reveal the government's ambivalent stance towards punishing the perpetrators.

The government's intention to curb future crimes was inconsistent during the Mao era; why did it punish more perpetrators in 1954 and 1955? The first possible reason was that in July 1955, the central committee of the CCP issued a directive for all levels of government to pay attention to elementary students being raped and harassed. [309] On the other hand, some perpetrators' behavior had triggered strong discontent among parents. Some parents even claimed that "Our school does not need male teachers in the future. If the government assigns a male teacher here, we would rather send our girls to herd cattle (放牛)."[310] It is possible that the second reason was merely an excuse for the government to take action under pressure from above. Alternatively, it could be that parents indeed had complaints about teachers' sexual assault offenses, and the state took these concerns seriously. As mentioned in Chapter 1 on education and political campaigns, parents also had complaints about middle school enrollment, and the government addressed these concerns seriously in 1954.

[309] "中共中央转发教育部党组关于小学生被奸污侮辱情况和处理意见报告的批示 (1955 年 7 月 1 日)" ("The CPC Central Committee's Directive on Transmitting the Report and Treatment Opinions of the Party Group of the Ministry of Education on the Situation of Primary School Students Being Raped and Insulted, July 1, 1955"), 中央档案馆、中共中央文献研究室编 (Central Archives, Research Office of the CPC Central Committee Documents ed.), *中共中央文件选集 第 19 册 Selected Documents of the CPC Central Committee Volume 19* (北京: 人民出版社, 2013 年版 Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p.420.
[310] "关于处理违法乱纪教师的汇报 (1954 年)" ("Report on Dealing with Teachers Violating Laws and Disrupting Discipline, 1954"), She County Archives, 62-1-49.

Instead of seeking legal support, the government politicized school sexual assault, labeling it as a manifestation of "bourgeois mentality (资产阶级思想)." The 1954 report vaguely implies that all sex-related cases, including adultery, violated the Marriage Law. The report repeatedly emphasizes in its conclusion that all perpetrators possessed a "bourgeois mentality." Teachers were urged to be aware of and vigilant against such mentality. While lacking legal textual support, politicizing sexual assault was not necessarily the worst outcome. Without politicization, the government might have ignored all sexual assault cases altogether.

The Second Wave: Anti-rightist Campaign, 1958

The second wave occurred in 1958, when 37 perpetrators were punished in that year alone – an unparalleled number throughout the Mao era (from 1949 to 1976). During 1956 and 1957, there were no records of school sexual assault. Only four teachers were punished for adultery in 1957. Among the 37 cases in 1958, one case (WSZ) was handled within the education system, while the remaining 36 perpetrators were reported to the legal system by the education bureau. The legal system sentenced these 36 perpetrators, and only the verdict of each case was preserved in the archives.

While the verdicts are the sole source of information for these cases, they provide sufficient data for comparison among the different cases. In the following analysis, I examine the 36 cases using the limited information supplied by the verdicts. Verdicts are meant to offer evidence and pertinent details to justify the punishment. Although many

specifics are missing from each verdict, I can utilize the available information to compare prison time and crimes. Below is a table displaying the basic information for each case.

The Anti-Rightist Campaign prompted the government to unearth and address such a substantial number of cases. The 1958 Annual Education Work Report states that "Through the Rectification and Anti-Rightist Campaign, we identified 202 rightists and purged a total of 239 counterrevolutionaries, bad elements, and rightists." Consequently, the Anti-Rightist Campaign was not solely focused on identifying rightists. Discovering and purging counterrevolutionaries and bad elements were also considered accomplishments of the Anti-Rightist Campaign. Without the Anti-Rightist Campaign, there likely would have been only 3 or 4 perpetrators punished in 1958 at most, similar to previous years. There would never have been such a large number of cases reported and sentenced.

In addition to being driven by the political campaign, the cases in 1958 were highly politicized because the CCP considered political issues more severe than rape crimes. My study reveals that a sexual assault perpetrator with any political issues had over a 50% chance of being sentenced under the law for counterrevolutionary activities rather than for rape. Political issues encompassed any connection with the KMT before 1949, such as participating in the KMT's local militia during the Anti-Japanese War (1937-45); any criticism of the CCP's policies, collectivization, or unified purchase and marketing, or even advocating for double cropping rice; any public or private statements agreeing with well-known rightists; and any expressions of sympathy towards rightists they knew. It was rare for a teacher in the early PRC period to be free of political issues.

Among the 36 perpetrators, only 5 were considered politically unproblematic by the CCP. If the perpetrator had even a single word of policy criticism or showed sympathy for a rightist they knew, their case would likely be labeled as a "counterrevolutionary case." The perpetrator would then be sentenced based on the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activity. The case's title and the law applied to the sentence showcased the most critical crime in the CCP's eyes. Among the 36 sexual assault perpetrators, 32 had political crimes mentioned in the verdict. Out of these 32 cases, 19 (59.38%) were labeled as "counterrevolutionary case[s]" and sentenced under the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activity. As a result, if a sexual assault perpetrator had any political views that the CCP might have disapproved of, they had a 60% chance of being sentenced under the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activity instead of for rape. Thus, in over half of the circumstances, the political issue was considered the most critical crime, more important than the rape.

Although the chance was less than half, under what circumstances would rape be considered more severe than political issues? The cases from 1958 reveal that there was no clear standard in the legal system to determine which crime weighed more, unless the perpetrator's rape crimes were extremely severe. WDL was accused of raping three female students under 15 years old, with the youngest being only 11 years old.[311] Although he had been the neighborhood community head (保长) for the KMT, he was

[311] WDL: “歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 738 号” (“Criminal Verdict of the People’s Court of She County, no.738, 1958”), She County Archives, 62-1-77.

sentenced for the crime of "rape." However, in other cases, severe rape crimes did not necessarily result in "rape case" labels. In addition to raping two students (15 and 16 years old), WXZ also molested two students using "contemptible ways."[312] The phrase "contemptible ways" in verdicts from that time likely referred to grabbing breasts and touching the genital area. He also committed adultery with two married women, which was considered a crime by the CCP at that time. WXZ's political issues included being the township leader for the KMT, leading students to shout reactionary slogans out loud in 1952 and criticizing the CCP's unified purchase and marketing during the Rectification Campaign in 1957. In the CCP's eyes, these political problems outweighed raping two teenage female students and molesting two other female students. WXZ's case was labeled as a "counterrevolutionary case" and was sentenced based on the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activities. Consequently, cases titled as counterrevolutionary could also include severe sexual assault crimes.

What did it mean to be labeled as a "counterrevolutionary case" and sentenced according to the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activities? Did it result in shorter or longer prison time? Comparing the average prison time and cases shows that counterrevolutionary cases could lead to slightly shorter prison sentences. The average prison time for rape-titled cases (17 cases in total) was 5.82 years, while the average prison time for counterrevolutionary cases (19 cases in total) was 5.63 years.[313] Five of the 19 counterrevolutionary-titled perpetrators (LTM, ZY, ZFD, JZM, WHX) were

[312] WXZ: “歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 972 号”, (“Criminal Verdict of the People’s Court of She County, no.972, 1958”), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
[313] LTM and JZM were both sentenced to 3 years in a Labor Camp. I count the years in the Labor Camp the same as years in prison in order to calculate the average year.

sentenced to 3 years, although this does not necessarily indicate that their crimes were less severe. JZM enticed and raped two teenage students several times, while WHX molested six female students, the youngest of whom was only 7 years old.[314] In addition, WHX raped one student. The cases of JZM and WHX demonstrate that perpetrators could receive less prison time under the counterrevolutionary title and law while still having committed serious sexual assault crimes.

But a counterrevolutionary title and law did not necessarily lead to lesser prison time for all cases. For example, LYG and FJ both raped one 17-year-old female student and got them pregnant.[315] But LYG had no connection with the KMT and was politically reliable in the eyes of the CCP. FJ, on the other hand, had been the township leader before 1949 and was also a KMT member. LYG's case was titled as a rape case and he was sentenced to 4 years, while FJ's case was titled and sentenced as a counterrevolutionary case, and he received 8 years. LYG and FJ's cases show that with similar raping crimes, the political problems of the perpetrators could lead to longer prison sentences.

The Counterrevolutionary title and law could influence but not always decide the prison time. Then, what mattered for the legal system? Did the victim's age matter? A

[314] JZM: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1338 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1338, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
WHX: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 941 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.941, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
[315] LYG: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1051 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1051, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
FJ: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 973 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.973, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.

victim's age could affect sentencing but was never a decisive factor for the legal system to decide the prison time. It was possible that the prison time for sexually assaulting an underaged female was less than an adult female. WHX molested 6 female students; the youngest victim was only 7 years old. WHX's verdict provided explicit details for this case, which was rare among all verdicts. The perpetrator "molested 6 female students by grabbing breast and touching genital area." WHX also raped one female student, whose age the verdict does not provide. With all these crimes, WHX was sentenced to only 3 years in prison. XJS and WDK raped 12-year-old and 13-year-old female students separately and got 10 and 7 years in prison respectively.[316] These sentences seemed to be fair at first glance because raping a younger girl meant a longer prison sentence. But YYL raped an 18-year-old female student, and he received the same sentence as raping a 12-year-old, which was 10 years.[317] Therefore, raping a 12-year-old female student could result in the same sentence as raping an 18-year-old.

It was also possible that raping the same aged female could result in quite diverse prison sentences, which could be up to 5 times different. For raping one 16-year-old female student, the prison time varied from 3 years to 15 years in prison. ZY and ZFD both received 3 years for this crime, while YZ and XCQ both got 5 years, JJX got 7

[316] XJS: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1050 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1050, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
WDK: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1053 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1053, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
[317] YYL: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 740 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.740, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.

years, and LZR received 15 years. [318] Therefore, the victim's age was never crucial when the legal system decided the prison time.

The usage and meaning of the term "younv" were still vague during the Anti-Rightist Campaign, however, adding this term to the case title might influence the sentence. The verdict called the victims from 11 to 17 years old "younv" in the major text of the verdicts. In WDL's case, the three victims' ages were 11, 14 and 15 years old. Verdicts also called XJS's 12-year-old victim, WDK's 13-year-old victim, WDL, JSR, WWW, and HFC's 15-year-old victims "younv."[319] In HS's case, the victim was 17 years old, and the verdict also called her younv.[320] The definition of "younv" was still very vague; the appearance of "younv" in the major text could not influence much of the court's sentence. For example, JSR and HFC's victims were called "younv," but JSR was sentenced to 4 years in prison and HFC 5 years. 4 and 5 years were not long in all cases. However, XJS and WDK's case titles were both "raping younv," as their victims were 12

[318] ZY: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1219 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1219, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
ZFD: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 938 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.938, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
YZ: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1054 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1054, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
XCQ: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 939 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.939, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
JJX: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1246 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1246, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
LZR: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1261 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1261, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
[319] JSR: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1052 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1052, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
WWW: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 942 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.942, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
HFC: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1056 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1056, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
[320] HS: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 741 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.741, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.

and 13 years old respectively. XJS and WDK's prison time was 10 and 7 years, which was relatively long in all cases.

Besides the victim's age, the number of victims did not draw much attention from the legal system either. SSF raped 3 female students whose ages were not mentioned.[321] HFC raped 2 female students, both of whom were 15 years old. SSF and HFC got the same prison time of 5 years. Raping one more female student did not result in more prison time. Compared to HFC and SSF, ZW and YZK were treated more seriously by the legal system.[322] ZW and YZK both raped two female students. The four victims were about 15 or 16 years old. ZW and YZK got the prison time of 7 years and 8 years separately. In addition, WDL raped 3 female students, the youngest of whom was only 11 years old. The other two victims were 14 and 15 years old. WDL was sentenced to 12 years in prison, while YYL raped one 18-year-old and got 10 years. The verdict does not provide more details on the 18-year-old victim's situation. If she was pregnant or experienced severe physical suffering, the verdict would have mentioned it, although it would be very brief. Comparing WDL with YYL, raping three young female students resulted in only two more years than raping one 18-year-old.

If the victim's age and number of victims did not matter for the legal system, how about pregnancy? As I have mentioned above, pregnancy used to be decisive for the education system in deciding whether to punish the perpetrator or not. But during the

[321] SSF: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1383 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no. 1383, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
[322] ZW: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1046 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1046, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
YZK: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1055 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1055, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.

Anti-Rightist Campaign, pregnancy did not seem to make a difference to sentence. Among all 37 perpetrators, 4 of them got the victims pregnant, but 2 of the 4 perpetrators were titled as committing rape crimes and other 2 as counterrevolutionary crimes. LYG raped a 17-year-old female student and the victim got pregnant after the rape. LYG got 4-year prison time. WYK also raped one female student of the same age, but he got 5 years.[323] Therefore, pregnancy did not make a noticeable difference in sentencing the perpetrators.

Class, similar to the victim's situation, played a limited role in deciding the prison time. The verdicts provide 33 perpetrators' class label information among all 36 perpetrators. The 33 perpetrators belonged to 5 classes: poor peasant, middle peasant, petite tradespeople, small land rental, and landlord. The most problematic class label was the landlord and only 1 perpetrator, SSF, was a landlord. This landlord teacher raped 3 female students, and 1 of the victims got pregnant. Although the victims' ages were not provided in the verdict, the number of victims and the pregnancy made the crime one of the most serious among all 36 cases. The legal system sentenced SSF to only 5 years in prison. Among the 36 cases, the longest prison time was 15 years. 5 years was not long among all cases. Considering the number of victims, pregnancy, and the landlord class label, SSF got incredible leniency from the legal system. Landlord's 5 years was in the medium level among the average prison time of all classes.

[323] WYK: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1049 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1049, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.

Class label's limited role was not only proven in the landlord example, but also in the average prison time of each class. Small land rentals and poor peasants' average prison time were longer than the landlord. 6 perpetrators were considered to be in the small land rental class, which was not a threat to the CCP but under radical political campaigns could be suspicious. The 6 small land rentals' average prison time was 7 years, which was the longest among all classes. The average prison time for the 14 poor peasants was 6.31 years. Poor peasants were supposed to be the most reliable class in the eyes of the CCP, while they got the second longest prison time. The middle peasants' average prison time was 4.8 years, slightly lower than the landlord. The lowest average of 4 years belonged to the petite tradesperson, whose political reliability was similar to the small land rental class. Each class's average prison time shows that the most politically unreliable landlord got great leniency from the legal system, while the most reliable poor peasants received the second longest prison time. Therefore, class label did not decide the perpetrators' prison time.

Class label was not emphasized in the verdict during the Anti-rightist Campaign, compared to other times. The class label was only mentioned in most perpetrators' brief introduction at the beginning of each verdict. 5 perpetrators' class labels were not mentioned in any part of the verdicts. The government and legal system probably did not view the vacancy of class label in the verdict important. Furthermore, no verdict blamed the crimes to their exploiting class or criticizing them for betraying the politically reliable class. Therefore, during the Anti-Rightist Campaign, class label was not viewed as relevant for the perpetrators committing the crimes.

In conclusion, none of the crimes' quantifiable factors, counterrevolutionary case title, victim's age, number of victims, pregnancy, and class label could be decisive for the legal system to decide the prison sentence. For each quantifiable factor, there were always several exceptions or evidence proving the opposite. If none of the quantifiable factors could influence all cases, there must be other factors that played a role. These factors were neither quantifiable nor could be written in the verdict. One factor was "honesty (坦白)" with the legal system. Honesty and political problems were written in the verdict, however, they were considered quite flexible and hard to measure and define. There might be other possibilities, such as personal connections with leaders or legal system leaders, which could never be shown in the verdicts. "Honesty" could be a cover for these hidden reasons.

The "honesty" with the legal system could triumph the legal text and common law practice. ZY and ZFD's cases show how the legal text was flexible and could be ignored in legal practice. ZY attended the KMT's local militia to defend the CCP, hid 27 bullets after 1949, unified local villagers to oppose the unified purchase and unified marketing policy, and criticized the CCP during the Rectification in 1957. He also enticed and raped one 16-year-old female student. ZFD was a KMT member and introduced more than 10 people to join the KMT.[324] Similar to ZY, he also criticized the CCP's policies. Both verdicts quote article 7 item 4 of the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activities as the legal basis for the sentence. Article 7 states: "Those participating in counterrevolutionary secret services or espionage activities, where one of the following

[324] ZFD: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 938 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.938, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.

circumstances is present, will be subject to the death penalty or lifelong imprisonment; where circumstances are relatively light, they will be subject to imprisonment of five years or more." Item 4 is: "those having participated in counterrevolutionary secret services or espionage organizations before liberation and continue to participate in counterrevolutionary activities after liberation." Article 7 item 4 clearly states that the sentence should at least be 5 years, but ZY and ZFD were both sentenced to 3 years. Their verdicts explain that the leniency was because of their "honesty." "Honesty" not only triumphed the legal text, but also the common law practice. The landlord SSF raped 3 female students and made 1 of them pregnant. Another perpetrator who also raped 3 students was sentenced to 12 years. But SSF was sentenced to only 5 years in prison. The verdict says because he could confess his crime honestly he could get leniency, therefore he got only 5 years.

The concept of "honesty" could present a loophole in the legal system, as individuals with severe sexual assault crimes could be sentenced under counterrevolutionary laws and use "honesty" to reduce their prison time. "Honesty" was a flexible term and could potentially disguise elements that the verdict could not explicitly mention, such as bribery and personal connections with leaders. It is unclear whether perpetrators were aware of this loophole in the legal system and deliberately exploited it to reduce their prison sentences.

The verdict does not spend much time on details of the rape crime, such as age, or physical sufferings after the assault. The verdicts normally just provide data on the number of victims and the victim's age, and sometimes the data was not complete. The

age could be missing, especially when there were several victims. For example, SSF's 3 rape victims were not provided with ages by the verdict. WHX's 6 molestation victims did not have ages provided either. The verdicts occasionally mention perpetrators using "contemptible ways" to molest female students. Only WHX's verdict explains that the meaning of "contemptible ways" was "grabbing breasts and touching genital area." None of the verdicts mention the possible physical and psychological trauma the underaged victims had suffered, such as bleeding, infection, depression, etc. The only mentioned consequence was pregnancy. But sometimes the pregnant victim's age was viewed as too minor to mention by the legal system, such as in SSF's verdict.

During the Anti-Rightist Campaign, 2 homosexual cases were discovered and sentenced. One case was of a male teacher HQZ raping another male teacher. Later he tried to rape 6 other males, including students and teachers, but did not succeed.[325] This teacher also joined the KMT army in 1948. The verdict did not provide details on his deeds in the army, only saying he introduced one more person into the army and attended three conferences. The teacher was sentenced to 5 years in prison. In the other 1958 homosexual rape case, HZY raped a male student in 1952. This teacher also joined the KMT army in 1945.[326] Both perpetrators had experience in the army and the shared army experience might be related to their shared behavior. He received leniency from the legal system because of his "honesty" and was sentenced to 5 years in prison.

[325] HQZ: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 737 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.737, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.
[326] HZY: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (58) 院刑字第 1048 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.1048, 1958"), She County Archives, 62-1-77.

During the Anti-Rightist era, both homosexual cases were labeled as "counterrevolutionary cases" and were sentenced based on the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activities. Both verdicts cited Article 7, Item 4 of the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activity of 1951 as the legal basis for the sentencing. However, this article has no direct relation to homosexual assault. As mentioned earlier, the exact wording of Article 7, Item 4 does not pertain to sexual assault or homosexual assault.

Why did the education bureau punish more teachers during the Anti-Rightist Campaign than before? How could it afford the loss? As mentioned earlier, before the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the CCP did not punish all teachers who committed sexual assault crimes, regardless of whether they intended to or could afford to. On one hand, it is possible that under the political pressure to root out rightists, the government uncovered sexual assault crimes alongside political problems, and decided to punish these perpetrators rather than merely arresting a few as a warning to others. Identifying these perpetrators was seen as an achievement of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, even though most of them were not actually rightists. On the other hand, the government found a solution for the loss of teachers by hiring non-public teachers as replacements. As a result, in 1958, the government was both willing and able to punish a larger number of teachers.

The Third Wave: The Four Clean-ups, 1964 - 1966

Did 1958's punishment warn and scare other teachers off sexual assault crimes? The cases after 1958 say no. In 1959, there were 2 elementary school teachers punished for raping students, one of whom raped a 14-year-old female student and was adulterous with two local married women.[327] The punishment he received was merely revoking his job. The perpetrator was not sent to the legal system. The other perpetrator, YYD, raped the first female student in 1954. When YYD was assigned to another school in 1958, he successfully picked his second victim. The 37 teacher's punishment in 1958 did not scare him. The sexual assault was discovered by his colleagues and leaders in 1959. The victim discovered that the perpetrator tried to commit suicide by overdosing on a certain kind of pills, and she took the same number of pills. In the end, the victim died, and the perpetrator survived. The legal system sentenced YYD 7 years in prison.[328] In 1960, there was 1 perpetrator, YSB, accused of raping one 18-year-old female student and molesting 7 female students. YSB was sentenced to 7 years in prison.[329] In June 1961, the education bureau held a 15-day Rectification campaign meeting for more than 1,500 teachers from all communes of the county. During this meeting, 6 teachers were informed and accused of raping female students. Among these 6 teachers, one perpetrator raped 3 female students in the three years from 1958 to 1960. [330] No more details about the 6 perpetrators

[327] "关于对 ZZR 腐化问题的处分决定(1959 年)" ("Decision on the Punishment for ZZR's Corruption Issue, 1959"), She County Archives, 62-1-82.
[328] YYD: "歙县人民法院刑事判决（59）院刑字第 83 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.83, 1959"), She County Archives, 62-1-84.
[329] YSB: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (60) 院刑字第 86 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.86, 1960"), She County Archives, 62-1-90.
[330] "歙县小学教师整风学习总结报告 (1961 年)" ("Summary Report on Rectification and Study of Primary School Teachers in She County"), She County Archives, 62-1-94.

were provided in the report and archives. The government punished a relatively large number of teachers in 1961, probably because the government started to downsize public teachers that year, as mentioned previously in chapter 1. In 1962, one teacher, XRJ, was dismissed from his teaching position for raping at least 3 female students of 15 and 16 years old. He first worked in the neighboring county and had been sentenced to 6 months in prison for raping female colleagues in 1953. After being released from the prison, he was able to secure a teaching job in his home county. The prison time did not stop him from raping.[331] In 1963, no teachers were punished for sexual assault.

During the Great Famine, perpetrators probably took advantage of the scarcity of material goods and daily necessities to sexually exploit female students. Although there was no record in the verdicts or report from 1959 to 1961, cases sentenced in later period provided evidence of the Great Famine period. HJM's verdict in 1964 says that this elementary school teacher enticed the female students by giving material goods. HJM easily raped one 15-year-old and molested 6 female students by giving pens and notebooks to them during the Great Famine. HJM's case provided evidence of utilizing material goods to sexually exploit students.[332] It was possible that other perpetrators being punished and sentenced during the Great Famine did similar things.

The Four Clean-ups period refers to the time from the latter half of the year 1964 until July 1966. The time divide of July 1966 can be disputable as most scholarship

[331] "关于开除 XRJ 公职的处分决定 (1962 年)" ("Decision on the Dismissal of XRJ from Public Office, 1962"), She County Archives, 62-1-109.
[332] HJM: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (64) 院刑字第 25 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.25, 1964"), She County Archives, 62-1-132.

thinks Cultural Revolution started months earlier. Here I end the Four Clean-ups in July because FZM's punishment notice, which was issued in July, did not mention the Cultural Revolution at all, while these documents were to be distributed to the Four Clean-ups leading groups of the county.[333] Furthermore, FZM's punishment notice mentioned that this case was revealed by the masses during the Four Clean-ups Campaign. However, three months later, a verdict issued in October 1966 mentioned that during the Cultural Revolution, the perpetrators still resisted and did not want to confess. Therefore, I did not include October 1966 and later into the Four Clean-ups period. I divided the time according to the records in archives.

From 1964 to 1966, there were 20 elementary school teachers punished in total. Only 8 among these 20 teachers were sent to the legal system. Compared to the Anti-Rightist Campaign, when 36 out of 37 perpetrators were reported to the legal system, a much smaller percentage of perpetrators were sentenced to prison time during the Four Clean-ups. But among the 8 perpetrators being sentenced, 6 had verdicts in the archives. The education bureau did not keep the verdicts of the other 2 perpetrators.

From quantifiable factors of rape (victim's age, number of victims, etc.), FZM, WSM, and QWM committed the most serious crimes among all perpetrators during the Four Clean-ups. Their crimes were more serious than all crimes during the Anti-rightist campaign. FZM raped 8 female students and molested 1 student. All his victims were between 12 years and 15 years old. Because his verdict was not kept in archives, we

[333] FZM: "关于对 FZM 奸污幼女学生问题的处理决定(1966 年)" ("Decision on the Handling of FZM's Issue of Raping Young Female Students"), She County Archives, 62-1-153.

cannot find out his prison time. WSM raped 7 female students from 12 to 14 years old. He also molested 6 female students of the same age group. WSM cohabited with one victim for two nights. The victim lost consciousness and was in a coma after the two nights. WSM was sentenced to 15 years in prison.[334] QWM enticed and raped 6 underaged girls when he was still a student. He molested 10 female students of 12 years old to 14 years old. QWM was not sent to the legal system, so he only received administrative punishment.[335] YXF raped 3 and molested 6 underaged female students.[336] The punishment notice does not provide the ages of the victims. He was reported to the legal system, but his verdict was missing from the archives.

On one hand, some perpetrators received relatively harsh punishment. 3 of the 6 perpetrators, HJM, WSM, and LL, were all sentenced to 15 years in prison, which during the Anti-Rightist Campaign were the longest prison sentences; only 1 perpetrator was sentenced to 15 years at the time. As I have mentioned above, WSM raped 7 and molested 6 female students. LL committed a more serious crime than any perpetrators during the Anti-rightist Campaign. LL raped 3 female students from 13 to 14 "xusui", which meant they were only 11 to 13 years old. LL also molested 24 female students, the youngest of whom was only 8 "xusui" (6 or 7 years old). He molested the underaged students by kissing them, grabbing their breasts, touching their genitals, and putting his

[334] WSM: "歙县人民法院刑事判决(65)院刑字第 135 号" " ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.135, 1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-148.
[335] QWM: "关于对 QWM 奸污猥亵幼女问题的处分决定 (1965 年)" ("Decision on the Punishment of QWM's Issue of Molesting Young Female Students, 1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-148.
[336] YXF: "关于对 YXF 奸污幼女的处分决定 (1965 年)" (Decision on the Punishment of YXF's Issue of Molesting Young Female Students, 1965), She County Archives, 62-1-148.

fingers into the victims' vaginas. In December 1965, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison, labeled as a "bad element," and had his job revoked.[337]

HJM's crime seemed to be less serious than LL, while got the same sentence. HJM raped 2 female students (15 and 14 years old) and molested 8 female students by grabbing their breasts, touching their genital areas, and kissing them. The county education bureau noticed HJM's behavior later. He was dismissed from the teaching job and sent to the legal system in February 1964.[338] Four months later, in June, HJM's punishment notice was distributed to different schools in the county.[339] Another perpetrator's verdict tells us that some schools held teachers' meetings that month to let teachers know about HJM's crime and punishment.[340] In December 1964, the county court sentenced HJM to 15 years in prison.[341]

HJM's harsh legal punishment was probably because he and another 2 perpetrators' sentences were used as warning examples to other teachers, just like the government did in 1955. In January 1965, the legal system sent a prosecution notice towards three perpetrators (HJM, WZY, and FCX) to all middle schools, all complete

[337] "关于对坏分子 LL 的处理决定 (1965 年)" ("The Punishment on 'Bad Element' LL"), She County Archives, 62-1-153.
"歙县人民法院刑事判决书 (65) 院刑字第 132 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.132, 1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-153.
[338] "关于对小学教师 HJM 玩弄女教师诱奸女学生问题的控诉(1962 年 2 月 2 日)" ("Accusation Concerning the Issue of Primary School Teacher HJM Manipulating Female Teachers and Entice and Rape Female Students, February 2, 1962") She County Archives, 62-1-108.
[339] HJM: "歙县人民法院刑事判决 (64) 院刑字第 25 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.25, 1964"), She County Archives, 62-1-132.
[340] "歙县文教局关于对教师 WZY 奸污幼女问题的处分决定 (1964 年 9 月 21 日)" (She County Education and Culture Bureau's Punishment Decision on Teacher WZY Raping and Tarnishing Younv, September 21 1964), She County Archives, 62-1-134.
[341] "歙县人民法院刑事判决书 (64) 院刑字第 25 号" ("Criminal Verdict of the People's Court of She County, no.25, 1964"), She County Archives, 62-1-134.

elementary schools, and all school districts in the county.[342] It was clear that the legal system and the government both agreed and cooperated to send the prosecution as a warning to intimidate and warn teachers in the county. The other two perpetrators, WZY and FCX, also received hasher punishments than other perpetrators during the Four Clean-ups. WZY raped one 13-year-old female student. The victim's genital area bled and hurt for 4-5 days after the rape. She later dropped out from school and tried to commit suicide. FCX raped one 14 year old female student. He also raped a dependent of a PLA s14-year-old and FCX were both sentenced to 8 years in prison. Ironically their punishment was rather serious compared to other perpetrators.

On the other hand, the government was rather lenient towards other perpetrators. Compared to WZY and FCX's intentionally serious sentence, other perpetrators committing more serious crimes received great leniency from the government. FZY raped 2 female students of only 11 and 13 years old and molested 3 students of 11, 13, and 14 years old. He was not sent to the legal system. His punishment was only probation for 1 year with his salary reduced from 49 to 45 RMB.[343] WYS raped 2 female students of 16 and 18 years old. His punishment was only revoking his job.[344] JSL raped 1 and molested 6 underaged female students. He raped the victim when she was sick and could not resist. The rape caused psychological and physical trauma to the victim. In the end, the

[342] "对奸淫幼(少)女犯 HJM、WZY、FCX 的公诉词(1965 年 1 月 23 日)" ("Public Prosecution of the Criminals HJM, WZY, FCX for Raping Minors, January 23, 1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-148.
[343] FZY: "关于对 FZY 奸污、猥亵幼女处理问题的通知(1966 年)" ("Notice on the Handling of FZY's Issue of Molesting, Raping and Tarnishing on Younv, 1966"), She County Archives, 62-1-153.
[344] WYS: "关于对 WYS 腐化堕落奸污女学生的处理决定的通知 (1966 年)" ("Notice on the Decision to Handle WYS's Corruption, Degradation, and Rape of Female Students"), She County Archives, 62-1-153.

punishment JSL got was revoking his job.[345] SBC raped 1 female student and later married the victim. The punishment he got was probation for 1 year with his salary reduced from 45.5 to 24 RMB.[346] From the point of view of the age and number of victims, FZY, WYS, and JSL's crimes were more serious than WZY and FCX, whose sentences were a warning to teachers. FZY, WYS, and JSL's punishments were much more lenient.

QWM's tricky crime and the punishment it received further demonstrated the government's indifference or tolerance towards teachers' sexual assault crimes. QWM molested 10 female students from 12 to 14 years old when he worked as an elementary school teacher. The tricky thing was he enticed and raped 6 underaged girls from 10 to 14 years old when he was still a student in the county normal high school. This crime was revealed when he became a teacher. Being aware of the crime of raping 6 underaged girls, the education bureau did not report QWM to the legal system. At first, he only got probation for 1 year with his salary reduced from 43.5 to 24 RMB in June 1965. Probably because of the launch of the Four Clean-ups, merely probation seemed too lenient. In November, county education bureau revoked his job, labeling him as a "bad element," and sending him back to the home production team to do labor under supervision. Even when the government began to take a harsh attitude towards sexual assault crimes, the government did not always report rape crimes to the legal system. It seems the rape crime

[345] JSL: "关于对 JSL 奸污幼女等问题处理的通知 1966 年)" ("Notice on the Handling of Issues such as JSL Raping and Tarnishing Young Girls"), She County Archives, 62-1-153.
[346] SBC: "关于对 SBC 的处分决定的通知(1965 年)" ("Notice on Punishment Decision on SBC, 1965") , She County Archives, 62-1-148.

that occurred when QWM was a student was barely viewed as a crime the education bureau needed to deal with.

The government's tolerance was also shown in two new kinds of punishment. Since April 1965, a new and much more lenient kind of punishment was implemented in the education system and very few cases would be sent to the legal system. The new kind of punishment was probation on the job for a certain number of years, which meant the perpetrators were allowed to continue teaching during the probationary period with a reduced salary. If the perpetrator committed no more crimes during the probation, the perpetrator could return to their previous job and salary after the probation. With the high possibility of being restored to their previous job and salary, this punishment could hardly be counted as serious. GBY's case during the Cultural Revolution shows that the perpetrator did not treat the probation seriously. He raped a female colleague and got probation for 2 years. During these 2 probationary years, he committed the more serious crime of raping female students.[347] The second kind of new punishment was to record a demerit to the perpetrator which would be kept in the perpetrator's dossier. The perpetrator's job and salary would not be hurt. Furthermore, marking a demerit could be retracked. Both of the two new kinds of punishment had limited influence on perpetrators' careers and income.

Another piece of evidence of the government's leniency was giving private warnings to teachers before punishing them. The county education bureau probably was

[347] "对 GBY 处理问题的批复(1970 年)" ("Reply to the Handling of GBY's Issue"), She County Archives, 62-1-190.

aware of certain sexual assault crimes and perpetrators. The bureau would investigate and privately warn them first. Since February 1964, WZY, an intern teacher, molested a 13-year-old female student. He raped her four times in school or on the school farmland from May to July 1964. At the beginning of May, the county education bureau was informed of WZY's sexual assault and sent an investigator to the school to investigate and educate him. This was the first warning from the government. It was not clear how much the education bureau knew about the sexual assault at that time and how the investigator "educated" WZY. But it was clear that government's first warning worked the opposite. WZY started to rape the victim from May and did not stop. In Mid-June, WZY's school held a meeting of all teachers to study a notice from the county bureau about another teacher's (HJM) sexual assault crime. Already being aware of WZY's behavior, this meeting probably was the second warning from the school or, more probably, the government. The second warning worked the opposite again, and WZY continued to rape the victim until July. According to the verdict, the victim's genital area bled and hurt for 4 to 5 days after each raping. The bleeding caused infection. The raping and physical injury resulted in depression. The 13-year-old female student later dropped out of school and tried to commit suicide.[348]

The coexistence of harshness and leniency towards sexual assault crimes demonstrated the government's conflicting intentions to constrain the crime and keep enough teachers. The two new kinds of punishments, probation and recording demerit, did not remove the perpetrators from their teaching job. The perpetrators could keep the

[348] "对奸淫幼(少)女犯 HJM、WZY、FCX 的公诉词 (1965 年 1 月 23 日)" ("Public Prosecution of the Criminals HJM, WZY, FCX for Raping Younv and Young Girls"), She County Archives, 62-1-148.

previous job or be restored to it shortly. The new kinds of punishment would not cause many vacancies in teaching positions and disturb the teaching schedule. Picking out some perpetrators and punishing them relatively harshly was used to send a warning message to all teachers. Therefore, the government had the intention to constrain the sexual assault. No matter what held the government back in punishing all perpetrators or punishing them equally, the victims' blood, infection, depression, quitting education, and suicide could not overwrite the intactness of the teachers' group.

Relatively harsh punishments were supposed to send warning messages to scare and intimidate potential perpetrators, however, in practice, these warnings could cause admiration. After knowing some details from the warning documents, other teachers might admire what the perpetrators had done. For example, SBC said to other people that "WZY was a man of action, (he) do rather than talk (WZY 真是个实干家，不说就干)." SBC clearly admired WZY's ability to successfully commit the crime. WZY tricked the 13-year-old victim to copy a marriage guaranty drafted by WZY. WZY then possessed the marriage guaranty written and signed by the 13-year-old victim. This action was written down in WZY's punishment notice in September 1964. SBC probably got to know this trick and became a copycat. SBC married his victim successfully after the rape.

Besides the government's conflicting attitudes toward sexual assault, the second difference of the Four Clean-ups time was that the government revised its previous punishment more frequently than before. Some cases were dealt with entirely within the education system, without being referred to the legal system. For unknown reasons, the education bureau revised their decision later, and these cases were then reported to the

legal system. WZY's case was one example of how the education bureau changed its decision. The county education bureau first decided to punish WZY in September 1964 and the punishment was only revoking his internship. The punishment notice does not mention reporting to the legal system. So, the government did not intend to send WZY to the court in September. In November 1964, the bureau revised its previous decision, and besides revoking his job, the bureau reported WZY's crimes to the legal system. In January 1965, the court sentenced WZY to 8 years in prison. WZY was chosen to be a warning message for all teachers.

During the Four Clean-ups, the government began to punish perpetrators who molested female students but did not rape them. Before 1965, all perpetrators being punished committed rape. No perpetrator was punished for merely molestation. Molestation was considered more of a sideline product in the investigation of a rape. In 1965, the government began to deal with molestation. 6 cases with mere molestation were punished in 1965, and only the most serious case was reported to the legal system. CDT molested 30 female students in the four years from 1961 to 1965. The youngest victim was only 7 years old and the oldest 14 years old. Among the 30 victims, 24 of them felt pain from their genital area when they urinated and walked after the molestation. Furthermore, CDT tricked the 7-year-old and one 14-year-old into his bedroom, pressed his body on the victims' and "fake the rape (假强奸)" three times.[349] In December 1965, the education bureau labeled him as a "bad element," revoked his job,

[349] This punishment notice does not explain what "fake rape" means. "关于对坏分子 CDT 的处理决定 (1965 年 12 月 27 日)" ("Decision on the Handling of the Bad Element CDT (December 27, 1965)"), She County Archives, 62-1-148.

and reported him to the legal system. The next month, the county court sentenced him to 8 years in prison. Furthermore, CDT's molestation victims increased from 27 to 30 from December 1965's punishment notice to January 1966's verdict. It was possible the actual victim number could be more than 30. Other perpetrators' actual victim numbers could also be higher than the official records.

Except CDT, all other molestation perpetrators were kept in the education system, even though some perpetrators molested a two-digit number of female students. JWZ molested 13 female students from 15 years old to 18 years old. He put his fingers into one victim's vagina which caused great pain when the victim urinated for a long time. Having molested 13 students, JWZ was not reported to the legal system. He only got probation for 1 year, and his salary reduced from 43.5 to 24 RMB this year. After this year, he would be restored to his previous job and salary.[350] ZWY molested 11 female students whose ages the education bureau's punishment notice did not bother to mention. But with such a large number of victims, the punishment was still only probation for 1 year with his salary reduced from 43.5 to 30 RMB.[351] Three other perpetrators, ZYC, HXR, and CBJ, molested 1, 4, 2 female students respectively. Probably because the number was ignorable in the eyes of the government, the punishment was only to record a demerit. Their job and salary were not influenced.[352]

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[350] "关于对 JWZ 猥亵女学生问题处理的通知(1965 年)" ("Notice on the Handling of JWZ's Issue of Molesting Female Students, 1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-148.
[351] "关于对腐化堕落分子 ZWY 处分决定的通知(1965 年)" ("Notice on the Decision to Punish the Corrupt and Degenerate ZWY, 1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-148.
[352] ZYC: "关于对 ZYC 所犯错误处分的通知(1965 年)" ("Notice on the Punishment for the Mistakes Committed by ZYC, 1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-148.
HXR: "关于对 HXR 猥亵幼年女学生问题处分的通知(1965 年)" ("Notice on the Punishment for HXR's Issue of Molesting Young Female Students (1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-148.

In all verdicts and punishment notices during the Four Clean-ups, special attention was paid to the action of putting fingers into victims' vaginas. The action of putting fingers into the vagina was hard to define as either rape or molestation. The finger action was mentioned separately in all punishment notices. Some notices view the finger action as worse than rape, while some categorize the finger action into molestation. WZY's punishment notice in November 1964 first states the victim's pains and bleeding after the rape, then immediately says "What's worse was WZY put his fingers into victim's virginal to play, which harmed the girl's health seriously." HJM's punishment notice in June 1964 puts the finger action description after molestation, showing the writer's confusion to categorize the action. "(HJM) enticed and molested 3 female students. What's especially bad was to put fingers into female student's virginal, caused bleeding, which harmed young girl's heath seriously." JWZ, QWM, LL, and JSL's punishment notices all categorize the finger action into molestation. "(JWZ) not only grabbed breasts, touched genital area, but also put fingers into the 17-year-old victim's virginal." QWM, LL, and JSL's notices have similar wordings.

The Four Clean-ups no longer used the counterrevolutionary crime title, instead, it had "hooligan" as the new crime title. Unlike the Anti-Rightist campaign, the Four Clean-ups cases were not categorized into two kinds of rape and counterrevolutionary. "Hooligan crime" became the crime title for all perpetrators sentenced by the legal system. Without the counterrevolutionary title, the legal system could no longer quote the Statue on Counterrevolutionary Activities as the basis for sentencing. In the 5 verdicts of

CBJ: "关于对 CBJ 猥亵幼年女学生问题的处分决定(1965 年)" ("Decision on the Punishment for CBJ's Issue of Molesting Young Female Students, 1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-148.

the Four Clean-ups era, every verdict declares the final sentence as “In order to protect the physical and psychological health of the next generation, maintain the socialist education career, protect the legitimacy of our county’s law, strike the hooligan crime, our court sentence (perpetrator) to (prison time).” These words indicate that the sexual assault was a crime, and the crime was special not because of the rape, but because of its harm to the younger generation. The sentencings do not mention rape but stress the victims’ age and student identity. As there was no law on rape or raping young students, the legal system categorized sexual assault as “hooligan crime (流氓犯罪).” As there was no law or regulation on how to define and sentence “hooligan crime,” the verdicts quote no legal text.

Not focused on political problems, the verdicts and punishment notices focused on the sexual assault crime from 1964 to 1966. Compared to verdicts’ conciseness in describing raping crime during the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the verdicts and education bureau punishment notices provide more details about the sexual assault crimes in the Four Clean-ups. Anti-Rightist campaign verdicts just provide the age and number of victims without more details on time, location, ways to entice or scare the victim, and the physical and psychological consequence of the sexual assault. Verdicts and punishment notices from 1964 to 1966 provide more details on the crime. LL’s verdict tells us that the perpetrator persuaded the 14-year-old student to stay overnight in his bedroom under the guise “car[ing] about her” as it was late at night. Most perpetrators utilized the excuse of private tutoring to trick the young female students to their bedroom. The prosecution toward HJM, WZY, and FCX provides more details on the consequences of WZY’s 13-

year-old victim after the rape. The underaged victim's genital area got infected. She became more and more depressed and could not continue to go to school. The victim dropped out of school and tried to committed suicide. HJM's punishment notice reveals the detail that HJM told every victim to be a "strong" person after the sexual assault and urged every victim to keep the assault a secret.

Without the counterrevolutionary crime title and law, fewer political problems were mentioned in the verdicts and punishment notices from 1964 to 1966, but the perpetrators' class label was emphasized and connected to the crime in the verdicts and punishment notices. SBC was from the problematic landlord class and the landlord class label was emphasized in SBC's punishment notice. The final conclusive paragraph of SBC's notice begins with his class label. "SBC was from the landlord class. Although he was educated and cultivated by CCP for many year after attending the teaching job, he did not accept the reform, insisted the landlord class stand, refused to implement CCP's education directions……" LL was also from the landlord class, and his education bureau punishment notice also arranged the second paragraph to stress his parents' problems. His punishment notice and verdict both start the final conclusive paragraph with his class label and relates his crime with his class. QWM was from the upper-middle peasant class which could be suspicious during radical campaign times. After introducing his class and work experiences, the punishment notice uses a separate paragraph of only one sentence to stress his father's political problem. QWM's father was a historical counterrevolutionary and rightist who was arrest in 1958 and died in prison in 1960. HJM was from the most reliable class of poor peasant, and his verdict mentions his class at the beginning of the final paragraph: "Although HJM was from the poor peasant family, he

did not accept CCP's education and reform. Therefore, he was corroded by the bourgeois class's mind which caused his life corrupted and deteriorate." No matter what class the perpetrator was from, the government and legal system both emphasized the class label and related his class with the crime.

Another new label, "bad element," was given by the government, which could coexist with the legal system's classification of a "hooligan crime" on one perpetrator. No verdict from the legal system labeled a perpetrator as a "bad element." "Bad element" only appears in the education bureau's punishment notices, therefore, only the education bureau did the labelling work. "Bad element" normally comes together with revoking jobs, not the punishments of probation or a demerit. But not all revoking job punishments had the "bad element" label. QWM, LL, WSM, CDT, and WYS were all labeled as "bad element" as well as dismissed from their teaching jobs. But JSL, YKH, and FZM, whose jobs were revoked, were not labeled as "bad element."[353] So, not all perpetrators whose jobs were revoked received the "bad element" label. For those who were punished by the education bureau first and then reported to the legal system, they could be both labeled as "bad element" and titled as "hooligan crime." LL, WSM and CDT were also reported to the legal system, where they got both the "hooligan crime" and the "bad element" label. Therefore, the "hooligan" crime title and "bad element" label could be coexistent in one perpetrator.

[353] YKH: "关于对 YKH 猥亵女学生等错误的处分决定" ("Decision on the Punishment for YKH's Mistakes Such as Molesting Female Students"), She County Archives, 62-1-153.

During the Four Clean-ups, people's letters to the government became a way for the government to be informed of sexual assault crimes. In 1965, the county education bureau had a conclusive report of how to deal with people's letters.[354] In this report, the bureau claims that it treated people's letters seriously, "not only appointed personnel to do investigation after receiving people's letter, but also cooperated with the legal system to strike the crime hard." The bureau claims it had sent 11 teachers to the legal system, dismissed 6 teachers, and gave 9 teachers administrative punishment (probation and recording a demerit). The report even mentions WZY and FCX's cases to show how the punishment towards them had won back the masses' support. The report mentions WZY and FCX's crime first because their crime was revealed to the government through people's letters, although it was not clear who wrote the letters to the bureau. JSL and FZM's punishment notices begin with the words that "During the Four Clean-ups, based on the masses' revealing, the perpetrator's confession, and our investigation……" It was likely that the "masses' revealing" refers to people's letters.

During the Four Clean-ups, a new and humiliating term, "rape and tarnish (奸污)," was used by the government and legal system, which shows that a female's virginity was valued more than before. Compared to the terms of "rape" and "entice and rape" used previously, "rape and tarnish" added another meaning of to "tarnish." The problem is whom the crime tarnished. The rape did not tarnish the perpetrators, instead, it tarnished the victims. The expression of "rape and tarnish the victim" means that the

[354] "歙县一年来处理人民来信(访)工作的汇报(1965 年 1 月 15 日)" ("Report on the Handling of People's Letters (Visits) in She County Over the Past Year, January 15, 1965"), She County Archives, 62-1-147.

victim was “pure” before the rape and the rape has “polluted” the victim. The victim was viewed as tainted after the rape. Instead of showing sympathy to the victims, the government and legal system used the “rape and tarnish” term to humiliate the victims, although they might not even realize the humiliation. “Rape and tarnish” was a phrase used in classical and modern Chinese. The government and legal system probably did not realize there was humiliation towards victims when using this term. Furthermore, in May 1966, Lin Biao distributed a document declaring his wife Ye Qun was a virgin when she married him. It might not be a coincidence that Ye Qun’s virginity guaranty and the term of “rape and tarnish” appeared around the same time. No matter whether they realized the humiliating meaning of the term or not, using this term shows that the virginity of females was valued more than before.

The Fourth Wave: Cultural Revolution and its Aftermath, Oct.1966-1976

There were 16 cases in total being dealt with during the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution. These 16 cases did not scatter evenly in these 10 years. Instead, most cases were tackled in the four years of 1966 (3 cases), 1969 (4 cases), 1970 (4 cases), and 1974 (3 cases). All 3 cases in 1966 were punished in October. No sexual assault perpetrators were punished from November 1966 until October 1969. Although the Revolutionary Networking (大串联) initiated in August, it was not until the end of October that She County’s representatives began their journey. On October 29, 1966, the revolutionary representatives of students and teachers of She County began their journey to Beijing to

see Chairman Mao.[355] Since November 1966, Red Guards in She County followed the Revolutionary Networking. It was also in November that different rebellion factions were formed. It was not a coincidence that after October 1966, there were no more cases being tackled in the coming years. After the Red Guards came back from their Revolutionary Networking before February 1968, they later joined different rebellion factions. Their conflict became violent starting in August 1967. There were six large-scale armed battles from August to December that year. The armed battle between the two major rebellion factions ended in March 1968. But it was not until after the Nineth National Congress of Chinese Communist Party (April 1969) that the government began to deal with sexual assault crime. A circular to announce the punishment towards six rape crime perpetrators clearly states that the Nineth National Congress restored order to the government.[356] In 1970, the "One Hit, Three Antis (一打三反)" campaign was initiated to dig out more politically problematic persons, including teachers accused of having committed sexual assault crimes. Another campaign that also contributed to the investigation of sexual assault crime was the "purifying class ranks" campaign; HDJ's punishment notice said his crime was revealed during the "purifying class ranks" campaign.[357] Because of these two campaigns, in 1969 and 1970, there were 8 elementary teachers punished. Four years later, the campaign of "Criticize Lin and Criticize Confucius" and the campaign of "Criticize Deng and Combat the Rightist Deviationists' Attempt to Reverse Verdicts"

[355] 歙县党史地志办公室(She County Party History and Local Chronicles Office), *中国共产党歙县历史, 1949-1978 History of the Chinese Communist Party in She County, 1949-1978,* 476.
[356] "关于小学教师 WZC 等奸污女生案件及处理情况通报(1969 年 12 月 11 日)" ("Notice on the Case of Elementary School Teacher WZC and Others Raping and Tarnishing Female Students and the Handling Situation, December 11, 1969"), She County Archives, 62-1-179.
[357] "关于对 HDJ 问题的处理批复(1970 年)" ("Reply on the Handling of the HDJ Issue, 1970"), She County Archives, 62-1-190.

were launched. In 1974, there were 3 elementary teachers punished for sexual assault. There was only 1 elementary teacher punished in 1977. The two years of 1976 and 1977 witnessed 6, with 2 middle school teachers with sexual assault crimes being punished separately.

Like the Four Clean-ups period, some perpetrators during the Cultural Revolution received relatively harsh punishments. Only 4 out of the 16 cases were reported to the legal system. From the quantifiable factors (number of victims and ages), FZZ committed the most serious crimes. FZZ raped 6 female students. The verdict does not even bother to record the ages of the victims. FZZ was not punished under the crime of "hooligan." He was labelled as a "bad element" instead and was sentenced to only 5 years in prison.[358] Another perpetrator who got 5 years in prison was YYQ. YYQ raped one 11-year-old female student. The underaged victim had physical trauma after the rape. Her vagina was ripped open and caused great bleeding which did harm to victim's health. In October 1966, he was sentenced to 5 years in prison under the crime of "hooligan."[359] The other 2 perpetrators both received less prison time: 3 years. WMS raped a 16-year-old female student and the victim got pregnant. WMS gave her abortion medicine which harmed her health so much that she had to go to Suzhou to get medical treatment. In October 1969, he was sentenced to 3 years in prison and was labelled as a "bad

[358] "中国人民解放军安徽省歙县公检法军事管制小组刑事判决书 军审字第 98 号(1972 年)" ("People's Liberation Army of China, Anhui Province, She County Public Security, Prosecution, and Military Control Group Criminal Verdict, No. 98, 1972"), She County Archives, 62-1-205.
[359] YYQ: "歙县人民法院刑事判决书 (66) 刑字第 58 号" ("She County People's Court Criminal Verdict No. 58, 1966"), She County Archives, 62-1-153.

element."[360] WZC also raped one 16-year-old female student and took the victim out to cohabit with her. The victim got pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy. The verdict does not say clearly who died shortly afterwards, the victim or the baby boy. No matter who died, the raping criminal only got 3 years in prison.

Other perpetrators with similar crimes received great leniency from the government as they were not sent to the legal system and the punishment was rather mild. DJJ also raped one 11-year-old female student and threatened her to keep silent. Beside rape, DJJ molested as many as 11 female students. In the end, he was not reported to the legal system. He was only expelled from the Communist Youth League, from his teaching job, and was sent back to home to do labor. He could also take 2 months' salary before leaving.[361] Another perpetrator, CGF, raped one 12-year-old female student and molested 5 students from 10 years old to 12 years old. CGF was not reported to the legal system and only got mild administrative punishment: probation for 2 years with his salary reduced from 34 to 28 RMB.[362] Although his probation time was 2 years, CGF's punishment was retrieved just 1 year later. [363] The 4 cases from 1972 to 1977 had very limited information. We only know that 3 perpetrators all raped female students, but we do not know the 3 victims' ages and the physical and psychological trauma the victims

[360] "关于对 WMS 奸污女学生等问题的处分决定(1969 年)" ("Decision on Disciplinary Action Against WMS for Raping and Tarnishing Female Students and Other Issues"), She County Archives, 62-1-179.
[361] "关于对 DJJ 奸污幼女问题的处分决定 (1969 年)" ("Decision on Disciplinary Action Against DJJ for Raping and Tarnishing a Young Girl, 1969"), She County Archives, 62-1-179.
[362] "关于对 CGF 奸污猥亵女学生处理决定的通知 (1966 年 10 月 24 日)" ("Notice on the Decision to Handle CGF's Case of Raping, Tarnishing and Molesting Female Students, October 24, 1966"), She County Archives, 62-1-157.
[363] "关于撤销对 CGF 奸污猥亵女学生处理决定的通知(1967 年 11 月 16 日)" ("Notice on the Cancellation of the Decision Regarding the Handling of CGF's Case of Molesting, Raping, and Tarnishing Female Students"), She County Archives, 62-1-157.

probably went through. What we do know is that the 3 perpetrators only got 1- or 2-years' probation with a slight decrease in their previous salary. The information of the fourth perpetrator is missing. We cannot know the number of victims or their ages, but he received 2 years of probation with the monthly salary of 25 RMB.

Besides reducing probation time, the government was rather lenient towards the habitual criminal. GBY had received punishment twice for sexual assault before being punished again in 1970. He molested "several" female students from 1952 to 1954. In the first wave of 1955, he was expelled from the Communist Youth League and marked a demerit. His job was not harmed for the molestation. He turned the sexual assault target to his female colleagues and because of the assault, he got probation in 1961. We do not know how long the probation was. What we do know was that the probation accelerated his crime. He raped a grade-4 female student several times from 1963 to 1965. In 1970, he got punished for the third time. Not learning anything from the perpetrator's previous behavior, the government did not report him to the legal system. The punishment was only revoking his job, sending him back home and giving him 2-months' salary before leaving. What makes GBY's case more special was that GBY worked in the KMT's special agent organization and was a group leader.

Class label and political problems had limited influence on the government and legal system's attitudes towards perpetrators and their crimes. Class label had some influence on the punishment. HDJ was a KMT member, and his crime was molesting a 15-year-old female student. HDJ was dismissed from his teaching job and sent back home. Compared to HDJ, DJJ's crime was more serious. DJJ raped one 11-year-old

female student and molested another student of the same age. Despite committing a more serious crime, DJJ received the same punishment as HDJ. DJJ came from the working class, which was more reliable than HDJ, and this political reliability might bring leniency towards DJJ. This was the only possible evidence I could find about class label and political reliability's influence on the punishment. The influence was limited. As I mentioned above, the habitual criminal GBY had serious political problems, while he got great leniency from the government. YYQ was sentenced to the longest prison time (5 years) during the Cultural Revolution while his class label (poor peasant) was the most reliable in the eyes of the CCP. Therefore, class label and political reliability might have influenced the punishment, but the influence was limited.

In general, punishment during the Cultural Revolution was more lenient than during the Four Clean-ups and the Anti-Rightist eras. During the Cultural Revolution, there were 16 cases in total and only 4 out of the 16 cases were reported to the legal system. Compared to the Four Clean-ups, where 8 out of 20 cases were reported to the legal system, the Cultural Revolution treated school sexual assault relatively leniently. In addition, the longest prison time during the Four Clean-ups was 15 years and 2 perpetrators received this punishment. 3 other perpetrators were sentenced to 8 years in prison. Meanwhile, the longest prison time during the Cultural Revolution was only 5 years and 2 perpetrators were sentenced to this time, although one committed serious crime. FZZ raped 6 female students and only got 5 years in prison. The verdict does not spend more time on the victims' age and the physical and psychological trauma the victims had been through. Therefore, the victims' sufferings were of little importance to the government and legal system.

There was great political danger of being labeled as a "bad element" during the Cultural Revolution. Unlike the Four Clean-ups time, the legal system could label perpetrators "bad element," not the government. As I have mentioned above, "bad element" was a label that was given by the government during the Four Clean-ups. But during the Cultural Revolution, the legal system could also label perpetrators "bad element." During the Cultural Revolution, the "bad element" together with "landlord," "rich peasant," "counterrevolutionary," and "rightist" were called the "five categories of black elements." A person who was labeled as one of the "five categories of black elements" and their family were under persecution during the Cultural Revolution.

Probably because of the political danger of being labeled as a "bad element" as well as the reverence towards virginity, there was great pressure for the victim, the victim's family, and the perpetrator's family to admit the existence of the sexual assault crime. During the Cultural Revolution, all verdicts and punishment notices use the term "rape and tarnish (奸污)" instead of "rape (强奸)." During the Four Clean-ups, the term "rape and tarnish" was used occasionally, while in the Cultural Revolution this word was the only word used to describe "rape." The universal use of this humiliating word towards the victim demonstrated that the reverence towards virginity grew stronger during the Cultural Revolution and would cause humiliation towards the victim and her family. Materially speaking, being sexually assaulted would also devalue the victim in marriage-matching. Historian Emily Honig also points out that losing her virginity might cause trouble for the young bride, such as being beaten by her husband and thrown out of

the family on the wedding night.[364] The victim would blame herself for these consequences. It was likely that the victim and the victim's family would not be willing to admit the existence of the crime. From the perspective of perpetrator's family members, being labeled as a "bad element" would drag them into the danger of being persecuted. Therefore, the perpetrator's family members, including his wife and wife's relatives, would try to help the perpetrator prove his innocence.

The virginity certificate and big character posters in CXX's case demonstrated the pressure and danger of admitting the crime. CXX was a foreign language teacher of the victim HMZ.[365] The crime was discovered by HMZ's classmates. HMZ's classmates found her lying in bed together with CXX alone twice. After the students reported this to the school, the school began the investigation and reported it to the county education bureau and commune leadership. The commune talked to HMZ first. A women's cadre of the commune, a female teacher, and two female students talked to HMZ. HMZ said CXX promised to help her to get into senior high school and touched her breasts, genital area and kissed her nipples several times. HMZ also admitted that CXX raped her four times. The next day, a school leader talked to CXX. CXX admitted to all crimes that HMZ had accused him of, except the rape. Three days later, the school let HMZ go back home. Just one day later, HMZ and her mother came to the school to deny everything she had confessed. They stated that what HMZ had confessed was taught to her by the female teacher who talked to her in the investigation. HMZ and her mother wrote letters to the

[364] Emily Honig, "Socialist Sex: The Cultural Revolution Revisited," *Modern China,* Volume 29, No.2, April 2003, pp. 162.
[365] "关于 CXX 奸污学生一案的调查报告(1974 年)" ("Investigation Report on the Case of CXX Raping and Tarnishing Students"), She County Archives, 62-1-224.

county education bureau, public security bureau, and county's court saying the female teacher and school leader made up the crime to persecute CXX. CXX, on the other hand, wrote and posted big-character posters and accused the teacher and the school of framing him. Before the second investigation was launched, CXX's wife FXF, FXF's brother, FXF's sister-in-law, FXF's apprentice, and the victim HMZ's mother got together and met each other frequently. FXF's sister-in-law, who was a doctor at the county hospital, took HMZ to the hospital to do an examination and got HMZ a virginity certificate. The punishment notice said the certificate was fake and HMZ's virginity had been lost. But we had no more details or evidence to tell what the truth was. Whatever the truth, the victim's family and the perpetrator's family members tried hard to deny the crime, including getting a virginity certificate and writing big-character-posters. The virginity certificate shows the importance of virginity to female students. The big-character poster was a possible consequence CXX would confront when he was prosecuted and convicted. CXX utilized the big-character posters to defend himself and attack back.

The pressure and danger of a sexual assault accusation might cause some cases to be concealed. CXX and HMZ were not alone in the pressure and danger that they were facing. The pressure and danger could happen to any victims, victim's family members, perpetrators, and perpetrator's family members. CXX was a middle school teacher, not an elementary teacher, but a victim in elementary school and her family might face even more pressure. But the archives do not have details on elementary school cases, but we can reasonably speculate that some elementary school teachers who had committed sexual assault might have negotiated with the victim's family members and agreed on

keeping the crime a secret. The silent victims' experiences and suffering would never be known to us.

In this case, the big-character posters were utilized by HMZ and her family as a means to advocate for her virginity; however, they may have held a different meaning for the passengers. The explicit sexual details, necessary to establish credibility in the posters, might have served as enticing reading material for onlookers. These posters provided a rare exposure to explicit content for passing youths at the time. As Yu Hua illustrates in his memoir-style article recounting his reading experiences during the Cultural Revolution, "Sexual innuendoes were beginning to show up in the poster exposés... Thus, I developed a taste for reading the posters." [366]

The Cultural Revolution witnesses the appearance of the crime title "rape and tarnish young girl(s) (奸污少女)." During the Cultural Revolution, there was no clear age definition of the term "underaged girl (幼女)" and "young girl (少女)." YYQ and YKY's verdicts call the 11- and 12-year-old victims "underaged girl" while DJJ's punishment notice calls the 11-year-old victim "young girl (少女)."[367] WMS and WZC's verdicts term the 16 years old victims "young girl." Therefore, during the Cultural Revolution, the definitions of "underaged girl" and "young girl" were not vague and might overlap. Although the definition of "young girl" was vague, a new crime title appeared during the Cultural Revolution. WZC's verdict clearly states in the final sentencing paragraph that

[366] Yu Hua, Allan H. Barr (trans): "Reading" in *China in Ten Words* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2011).
[367] YKY: "关于对 YKY 腐化问题的处分决定(1969 年)" ("Decision on the Disciplinary Action Regarding the Corruption Issue of YKY"), She County Archives, 62-1-179.

the perpetrator was convicted under the crime of “rape and tarnish young girl(s) (奸污少女).” Although the crime title of “rape and tarnish young girl(s) (奸污少女)” was a more precise crime title than “counterrevolutionary” or “bad element,” there was no relevant laws on “rape and tarnish young girl(s) (奸污少女).” WZC’s verdict quotes no law or regulation to sentence him.

The application of “leniency for honesty” in the Cultural Revolution could also prove the government’s leniency and flexibility towards teachers at that time. The habitual criminal GBY successfully searched for new victims and committed sexual assault every time he was assigned to a new school. His punishment notice first states that he “had wicked character, would not change and mend his errors, had great negative influence among the masses.” Then the verdict turns abruptly and claims that “because he could confess honestly, and the consequences were not very serious, therefore, he could get leniency.” The paragraph first emphasizes the perpetrator’s problematic character and his habitual crime, then suddenly claims the consequences were “not very serious.” The verdict has obvious logical flaws and conflicts in the final sentencing paragraph. The reasons causing the flaws and conflicts were not recorded in the verdict.

The government’s leniency was not only towards the sexual assault crime, but also political crime, which conflicts with most scholarship’s conclusions on the government’s demeaning attitude towards teachers. During the Cultural Revolution, especially in the beginning years, teachers were publicly humiliated, tortured, beaten, prisoned, and even killed. The most famous case was Bian Zhongyun, the vice deputy of the Experimental High School Attached to the Beijing Normal University in Beijing. She

was beaten to death by a group of students. There were countless teachers being beaten to death nationwide. Teachers during the Cultural Revolution were also belittled as "Stinking Number Nine."[368] In She County, there were 2 teachers in one middle school who committed suicide because of the public humiliation and heavy labor of their occupation. HDJ's case shows that at least after the Ninth National Congress of Chinese Communist Party, the government's attitude towards teachers became lenient and flexible in practice. HDJ molested one 15-year-old female student while committing serious political crimes such as helping a landlord friend hide property, embezzling more than 280 RMB, and listening to enemy (capitalist country) radio. He got leniency because of his "honesty."

During the Cultural Revolution, there was one homosexual assault case which was sentenced in 1970. This was the third and last homosexual case in She County throughout the Mao era. A male teacher, WHR, "xiqu (absorb, 吸取)" 20 persons' semen. He seduced the victims to stay overnight in his bedroom through material benefits and told them he would match making for them.[369] As it was semen that was taken from the 20 persons, the 20 persons were male. The Chinese word "xiqu" can also mean sucking up. Although the choice of word "xiqu" was tricky, it was likely that WHR used his mouth to suck the semen out from the victims.

[368] Kwok-sing Li complied, Mary Lok translated, *A Glossary of Political Terms of the People's Republic of China*, (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1995), p.29.
[369] "中国人民解放军安徽省歙县公检法军事管制小组刑事判决书 (69) 军审字第 85 号" ("Criminal Judgment of the Public Security, Procuratorial, and Judicial Military Control Group of She County, Anhui Province, People's Liberation Army of China, No.85, 1969"), She County Archives, 62-1-190.

During the Cultural Revolution, the legal basis for sentencing WHR was Mao's quotation. WHR was defined as a "hooligan criminal (流氓犯)" and was also labeled as a "bad element." There was no law about how to define and sentence hooligans and bad elements during the Cultural Revolution. The verdict, however, outsourced the legal support to Mao's quotations. The verdict quotes the whole sentence "the hooligans, thieves, burglary, murder, rapist, corruption offender, public order interrupter, criminals committing serious crimes of violating law and disciplines, and persons that the public masses commonly admit are bad, must be punished (社会上流氓、阿飞、盗窃、凶杀、强奸犯、贪污犯、破坏公共秩序、严重违法乱纪等严重罪犯以及公众公认为坏人的人，必须惩办)." The blurrily defined terms of "serious," "public masses," "commonly admit" could become crime titles for any people that the CCP frowned up. Even if the homosexual assault was not categorized as "hooligan," it could fit into the last category in Mao's quotation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, She County's archives record 99 elementary school teachers being punished for sexually assaulting *at least* 331 elementary school students throughout the Mao era. The youngest victim was only 7 years old. 37 elementary school teachers in the Anti-Rightist campaign assaulted at least 74 female students. The 20 elementary school teachers punished during the Four Clean-ups sexually assaulted at least 178 female

students. The 16 elementary school teachers punished in the Cultural Revolution assaulted at least 47 students. The 331 victims were far from the actual number of victims, as the verdicts and punishment notices sometimes provide the vague concept of "many" or "several," and I could not take the vague terms "many" and "several" into my calculations. Therefore, the actual number of victims could be far beyond 331.

These 99 perpetrators are clustered in four periods: 1954-55, 1958, 1964-66, and 1966-76. Three of the four waves happened simultaneously with three large-scale political movements: the Anti-Rightist Campaign, Four Clean-ups, and the Cultural Revolution. Other times the government and legal system punished a small number of perpetrators occasionally, although they were aware of the existence of more perpetrators.

Politicization was not necessarily a bad thing for victims, considering that there was no law on rape or statutory rape. In 2017, Taiwanese writer Lin Yihan committed suicide after publishing her autobiography, writing about herself being raped by her teacher since she was only 13 years old and feeling mentally controlled ever since. She committed suicide because of her mental disorder which was caused by the humiliation and pressure she received ever since she chose to make her sufferings public. When I was writing this chapter in August 2022, Zhou Xiaoxuan's appeal to sue the famous male host Zhu Jun for sexual assault was denied by the court. Although she called the police the next day and found other victims being harassed by Zhu Jun, her case was considered to have a "lack of evidence" by the legal system. It could be imagined how she was questioned again and again in court to prove the existence of harassment. In today's legal

system, it is the victims' responsibility to provide evidence for the existence of sexual assault, while victims are unprepared in almost all cases. Compared to the victims nowadays, some victims during the Mao era, especially during the Four Clean-ups, could write letters to the government to reveal the crime. Their letters were treated seriously as acting on them was a political task and achievement during the campaigns. Some victims could see their perpetrators being punished to some extent.

From 1953 until the Cultural Revolution, we can see the government and legal system's changes in dealing with sexual assault crimes. First, more kinds of sexual assault crimes were punished from the beginning until the Cultural Revolution. In the beginning, the government and legal system only punished the perpetrators who impregnated their victims. Later, pregnancy became a decisive reason for the government to report the cases to the legal system, while leniency was given to the other perpetrators, including habitual rapists. Before the Four Clean-ups, the government and legal system did not punish sexual molestation on its own; they only punished the elementary school teachers who had raped students. After the Four Clean-ups, mere molestation was considered a crime they needed to deal with, but only when the molestation had happened to multiple victims.

The second change was that the verdicts and punishment notices provide more details on victims' sufferings. During the Anti-Rightist campaign, the verdicts only provide the victims' number and age, and sometimes even this information would be vague. There were no details on the physical and psychological consequences of the sexual assault. In the Four Clean-ups, there were details about the victims' sufferings,

including the rupture of victims' vagina, bleedings, infection, coma, traveling long distances for medical treatment, depression, dropping education, abortion, suicide, and death during labor.

The third change was that there were more ways for people to reveal the crime or to defend themselves. During the Four Clean-ups, some perpetrators and their crimes were revealed because of people's letters. The government treated the letters seriously and considered it an achievement to successfully dig out the crime and punish them by following the clues from people's letters. During the Cultural Revolution, the big-character poster became a possible source for victims and perpetrators to persecute or defend themselves. No matter if it was the people's letter or a big-character poster, there were ways for people to reveal and defend.

The fourth was that the government and legal system quoted less text from irrelevant laws. In 1953, the Marriage Law of 1950 provided legal support for sentencing perpetrators. Then during the first wave, the perpetrators were accused of having a bourgeois mind. The politization of the sexual assault crimes began since then. In the Anti-Rightist campaign, about half (19 out of 37) of the perpetrators were sentenced under the crime of counterrevolutionary. The Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activities was quoted as the legal basis for sentencing. While during the Four Clean-ups and Cultural Revolution, some perpetrators were categorized as "hooligan" and "bad element." No law was quoted for the sentences, and the final conclusive sentencing words were focused on the crime of rape and how the crime

harmed the young students' physical and mental health. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao's quotation on punishing crimes was quoted as the legal support for the sentencing.

While the government and legal system was punishing more kinds of sexual assault behaviors, they also gave more leniency to some of the perpetrators. From the Anti-Rightist campaign to the Four Clean-ups and to the Cultural Revolution, less and less of a percentage of elementary teachers were reported to the legal system, thus less and less perpetrators were kept away from searching for new victims. More and more percentages of elementary teachers got only administrative punishment and could still search for new victims. Compared to the Four Clean-ups, the Cultural Revolution provided much shorter prison sentences for serious crimes.

Furthermore, contrary to most scholars' depiction of harsh persecution towards teachers during the Cultural Revolution, this chapter shows the government and legal system's leniency towards teachers committing sexual assault crimes. Two new and mild administrative punishments, probation and marking demerit, were introduced during the Cultural Revolution. The new punishments did little harm to perpetrators' jobs and salary and could hardly constrain the further development of the crime. There was more than one example of perpetrators being stimulated by the probation and continued or even exacerbated their crimes. The new punishments were also flexible in practice as probation could be retrieved in the middle of the probationary period.

Besides the growing leniency towards teachers, the government and legal system provided a public way to have flexibility towards punishing perpetrators. "Honesty" was publicly used as an excuse for granting leniency. There was no explanation of what

"honesty" meant and why "honesty" could be used to grant leniency. "Honesty" could be used as a disguise and excuse for bribery or personal connections with the leaders.

There were also loopholes in the law practice which could be utilized by the perpetrators to reduce prison time. In one loophole during the Anti-rightist Campaign, a perpetrator committing a serious rape crime could bring up some minor political problems. His case could be sentenced under the category of "counterrevolutionary case" instead of rape, applying the Statute on Punishment for Counterrevolutionary Activities to the sentencing. While the statute that the verdicts quote says the lowest prison sentence should be 5 years, "honesty" could reduce the prison time to only 3 years. If the case was sentenced under the category of rape, it could be hard to use honesty as an excuse to reduce the prison time to only 3 years.

The leniency and uneven punishment towards teachers were also related to the government's attitudes toward and finance of teachers. If the government was not willing to spend the education budget, it tended to ignore the existence of the crime or give more leniency to teachers, such as punishing them while still allowing them to teach. When political pressure was dominant and the budget was not on edge, the government would punish teachers harshly.

Victims' number, age, and their physical and mental sufferings, however, was not decisive for sentencing the perpetrators. More details were provided in the punishment notices and verdicts during the Four Clean-ups. It seemed the government and legal system began to pay attention to the victims. However, the sentencing and punishment considered many more factors than the victims' sufferings. While this study always failed

to find the decisive factor for sentencing, it also demonstrated that the government and legal system had no principle or standard in practice.

Considering the reverence towards virginity and political danger during the campaigns, there were more perpetrators and victims than the archives recorded. If the victim admitted to being sexually assaulted by her teachers, she and her family members would face humiliation and material loss, because there was reverence towards virginity since the Four Clean-ups era. If the teacher admitted the sexual assault crimes, there was danger of being persecuted not only for him, but also for his family members. Therefore, the victim and perpetrator and their family members had common ground to negotiate, and sometimes might have agreed to conceal the crime. Therefore, there were probably more perpetrators and victims than were recorded in the archives.

All perpetrators throughout Mao era were male. No records were about female perpetrators sexually assaulting male elementary students. No records were about lesbian homosexual assault. A lack of records does not mean that these crimes did not occur. Female teachers could sexually assault young male students or female students. The archives recorded evidence on how the punishment was gender biased. In 1978, an elementary school teacher, XZJ, had sexual relationship with his female married colleague Wu. After the extramarital relationship was discovered by Wu's husband, Wu beat her husband, and scolded and beat her father. Wu no longer took care of her children. In the end, Wu did not receive any punishment from the government and XZJ got probation for one year, because the punishment notices claim that all of Wu's deeds

were enticed and edged by XZJ. The female was treated as easily temptable and not actionable in the eyes of the government.

Last but not least, employing an urban-rural divide approach to analyze these cases offers a fresh perspective on understanding sexual assault cases. Among the 99 perpetrators, only 4 (JWZ, CDT, CBJ, and DJJ) worked in elementary schools in the county seat, while the remaining 95 offenders were employed at schools in townships or villages. Consequently, rural female students faced a higher likelihood of experiencing sexual assault compared to their county seat counterparts. These rural female students were subject to the compounded effects of both urban-rural and gender-based power structures, rendering them the most vulnerable group.

Appendix

Table 8: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases in 1958

Name	Class Label	Number of victims	Age of victims	Consequence of the assault	Time of Assault	Sentence	Case Title
LTM	Poor peasant	Rape: 1	unknown (Female student)		1953	3 years in Labor and Reform. Labeled as "counterrevolutionary"	counter-revolutionary
LZR	Middle peasant	Rape: 1	16	Pregnant (aborted)	1951	15 years in prison. Labeled as "counterrevolutionary"	counter-revolutionary

Table 8: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases in 1958 (continued)

LYG	Poor peasant	Rape: 1	17	Pregnant (LYG tried abortion until victim married another man)	1954	4 years in prison	Rape
LDZ	Poor peasant	Rape: 1 Harassment: 1 or more	Rape: 15		1950-1951	5 years in prison	Rape
FSB	Poor peasant	Rape: 1	15		1956	7 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
FJ	Poor peasant	Rape: 1	17	Pregnant (FJ tried abortion)	1954	8 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
XYM	Middle peasant	Rape: 1	unknown		1957	2 years in prison	Rape
SJS	Poor peasant	Rape: 1	15	Body was hurt	1952	7 years in prison	Rape
Z	Poor peasant	Homosexual rape: 1 Homosexual harassment: 6	unknown		unknown	5 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
YYL	Poor peasant	Entice and rape: 1	18		1953	10 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
HS	Middle peasant	Rape: 1 Harass: 4	Rape: 17		1957	8 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
ZY	Poor peasant	Entice and rape: 1	16		unknown	3 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
WZW	unknown	Rape: 1	Unknown Dependent of soldier		1952-1957	2 years in prison	rape
WDK	Middle peasant	Rape: 1 Harass: 3	Rape: 13 (younv)		1956-1957	7 years in prison	rape

Table 8: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases in 1958 (continued)

ZFP	Middle peasant	Harass: 3	Female student		unknown	5 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
ZFD	Middle peasant	Harass: 1	16		1953	3 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
ZW	Small Land Rental	Rape: 2	17 Xusui		1951-1952	8 years in prison	Rape
YZK	Poor peasant	Rape: 2 Harass: 1	15, 16		1954	7 years in prison	Rape
YZ	Small Land Rental	Entice and Rape: 1	16		Since 1951	5 years in prison	Rape
HZY	Middle peasant	Homosexual rape: 1	Male student		1952	5 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
CAH	Poor peasant	Rape: 1	Female student		Since 1953	4 years in prison	Rape
JJX	Small Land Rental	Rape: 1	16		1954	7 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
JZM	Middle peasant	Entice and rape: 2	Young female		1950-1954	3 years in Labor and Reform	counter-revolutionary
WHX	Petite tradespeople	Entice and rape: 1 Harassment: 6	The youngest being harassed: 7. Others unknown		Rape: 1955. Harass: unknown	3 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
WYK	Middle peasant	Rape: 1 Harassment: 4	Rape: 17		Rape: 1954 Harass: unknown	10 years in prison	Rape
XCQ	Petite tradespeople	Entice and rape: 1 Unsuccessful rape: 1	16		1953	5 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
XJS	Small Land Rental	Rape: 1	12	Sick and did not attend school after the rape	1957	10 years in prison	Rape

Table 8: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases in 1958 (continued)

WXZ	Poor peasant	Entice and rape: 2 Harassment: 2	Rape: 15, 16		unknown	7 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
WDL	Poor peasant	Rape: 3	11, 14, 15		1952	12 years in prison	Rape
WWW	Small Land Rental	Rape: 1	15		unknown	7 years in prison	Rape
JSY		Rape: 1	15		1951	4 years in prison	Rape
ZDM	Middle peasant	Rape: 1	Young female		1954	5 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
HFC	Middle Peasant	Rape: 2	15		1952-1953	5 years in prison	Rape
LLK	Small Land Rental	Rape: 1	Female student	pregnant	1953	5 years in prison	counter-revolutionary
SSF	Landlord	Rape: 3	Female student	Pregnant and delivered a baby	1949, 1950, 1952	5 years in prison	Rape
CZL	Poor peasant	Entice and rape: 1 Harassment: 2 or more	Rape: 17		1954	Dismissal. Rightist. Sent to Labor and Reform	N/A
WSZ	Middle Peasant	Rape: 1	Female student		1951	Dismissal Sent home, work under supervision	N/A

Table 9: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases During Four Clean-ups

Name	Class Label	Victims' Number	Victim's Age	Consequence of the Assault	Time of Assault	Sentence	Crime	Punish time
1 HJM	Poor peasant	Rape: 2 Molest: 6	Rape: 16&17 Molest: 14-16	Told every victim to be a "strong" person, keep secret no matter what happened	1958-1962	15 years in prison	Rape female student. Hooligan crime	May. 1964 Dec. 1964
2 FCX	Small Land Rental	Rape: 1	14		1963	8 years in prison	Rape female student. Hooligan crime	Jan. 1965
3 WZY	Poor peasant	Rape: 1	13	Victim's genital area bled and hurt for 4-5 days after the rape. She later dropped out of school and tried to commit suicide.	1964	8 years in prison	Rape younv. Hooligan crime	Sep. 1964 Nov. 1964 Jan. 1965
4 YXF	Poor peasant	Rape: 3 Molest: 5	Rape: younv Molest: younv		unknown	Unknown years in prison	unknown	Jan. 1965
5 SBC	Landlord	Rape: 1	unknown	Married the female student victim later	1954	Probation for 1 year, salary from 45.5 to 24 RMB	N/A	Apr. 1965
6 ZWY	Middle peasant	Molest: 11	unknown		unknown	Probation for 1 year, salary from 43.5 to 30 RMB	N/A	Jun. 1965

Table 9: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases During Four Clean-ups (continued)

7 QWM	Upper-middle peasant. Father counterrevolutionary & rightist.	Entice and rape: 6 Molest: 10	Entice and rape: 10-14 Molest: 12-14	Molest: kissing, grabbing breast, putting fingers into victim's vagina	Rape: QWM study in normal high school. Molest: 1963-1965	Not in legal system. "Bad element". Revoking job. Labor under supervision in hometown	N/A	Jun. 1965 Nov. 1965
8 JWZ	Middle peasant	Molest: 13	15-18	Putting fingers into one victim's vagina, causing pain when urinating	1961-1964	Probation for 1 year, salary from 43.5-35	N/A	Dec. 1965
9 LL	Despotic landlord	Rape: 3 Molest: 24	Rape: 13-14 Sui (11-13 years old) Molest: youngest 8 Sui (6 or 7 years old)	Molest: kissing, grabbing breasts, touching genitals, putting fingers into victim's vagina	1960-1964	15 years in prison. "Bad element". Revoking job.	hooligan	Dec. 1965
10 WSM	Poor peasant	Rape: 7 Molest: 6	Rape: 12-14 Molest: 12-14	One victim fainted after cohabiting with WSM for 2 nights.	1960-1965	15 years in prison. "Bad element". Revoking job.	hooligan	Dec. 1965
11 ZYC	Small Land Rental	Molest: 1	14	Grabbing breasts and kissing three times	1963-1964	Be given a demerit.	N/A	Dec. 1965
12 HXR	Rich peasant	Molest: 4	13-15		1964	Be given a demerit.	N/A	Dec. 1965
13 CBJ	Small Land Rental	Molest: 2	13		1964	Be given a demerit.	N/A	Dec. 1965

Table 9: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases During Four Clean-ups (continued)

14 CDT	landlord	Molest: 30	7-14	24 victims feel pain of the genital area when urinating and walking. Tricked the 7-year-old and 14-year-old into his room, pressed down on their body and faked the rape action	1961-1965	8 years in prison "Bad element". Revoking job.	hooligan	Dec. 1965 Jan. 1966
15 FZY	Small Land Rental	Rape: 2 Molest: 3	Rape: 11 & 13 Molest: 11, 13, 14		1957-1963	Probation for 1 year. Salary from 49 to 45	N/A	Jan. 1966
16 YKH	Rich peasant	Molest: 14	12-17	Grabbing breasts and make victim's breasts hurt for 2 weeks. Touching genital area.	1962-1965	Revoking job	N/A	Jan. 1966
17 WYS	Middle peasant	Rape: 2	16, 18	Two victims both rejected clearly. One victim dropped out of school after the rape.	1956, 1958	"Bad element." Revoking job, labor under supervision at home	N/A	Jan. 1966
18 BXZ	Middle peasant	Molest: 5	unknown	Grab breasts	1963-1964	Probation for 1 year, salary from 43.5 to 38 RMB	N/A	Apr. 1966
19 JSL	Small Land Rental	Rape: 1 Molest: 6	Rape: unknown. Molest: underaged girl	Putting fingers into three victims' vaginas. Raping victim when she was sick, causing serious menstrual cramps.	From 1958	Revoking job	N/A	Jun. 1966

Table 9: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases During Four Clean-ups (continued)

20 FZM	Poor peasant	Rape: 8 Molest: 1	12-15	Rape students by tricking, enticing, intimidating, answering questions. One victim's vagina bled and infected. Spent more than 100RMB on medical treatment of the infection.	1958-1962	Unknown prison time. Revoking job	unknown	July, 1966

Table 10: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases in the Cultural Revolution

name	Class label	Victims' number	Victim's age	Consequences of the sexual assault	Time of the assault	Punishment	Crime title	Punishment time
1 YYQ	Poor peasant	Rape: 1	11	Victim's vagina ripped open and caused great bleeding. Seriously destroyed victim's health		5 years in prison. Revoking job	hooligan	Oct. 1966
2 FZ	unknown	Rape: unknown	unknown		unknown	Revoking job. One of the "Six kinds people", under internal control	N/A	Oct. 1966
3 CGF	Middle peasant	Rape: 1 Molest: 5	Rape: 12 Molest: 10-12		1963-1965	Probation for 2 years. Salary from 34 to 28 RMB The punishment was retrieved 1 year later.	N/A	Oct. 1966 Nov. 1967

Table 10: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases in the Cultural Revolution (continued)

4 WMS	Poor peasant	Rape: 1	16	Victim got pregnant. Gave medicine to victim which caused physical trauma. Victim went to Suzhou to get medical treatment	1959	"bad element", not "hooligan." revoking job, 管制 for 3 years		Oct. 1969 奸污
5 YKY	Small Land Rental "rightist" in 1958. Revoked in 1959	Molest: 3	12 and 11		Since 1964	Revoking job, sending back home		Oct. 1969
6 WZC	unknown	Rape: 1	16	Took the victim out to other places and cohabited with her. Divorced with his wife to marry the victim. The victim got pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy. (not clear whether the baby or the victim) died shortly.	1967	3 years in prison		Sep. 1969 奸污。
7 DJJ	Working class	Rape: 1 Molest: 1	Rape: 11 Molest: 11	Threatened the rape victim to keep silent.	1963 1964	Expelling the Communist Youth League membership. Revoking job. Sending back home to do labor. Giving 2-month salary.		Oct. 1969

Table 10: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases in the Cultural Revolution (continued)

8 LJH	unknown	Rape, but no number	unknown	unknown	unknown	Revoking job, sending back home.		Mar. 1970
9 WHR	Rich peasant	Sucking semen from 20 male teenagers	teenagers		1954-1968	管制 3 years Revoking job.	Hooligan criminal	Jun. 25, 1970 Jun. 27, 1970
10 HDJ	KMT membership	Molest: 1	15		1966	Revoking job, sending back home, giving 76 RMB		May, 1970
11 GBY	Joined the KMT spy agent	Molest: many Rape: 1	Rape: Grade 4		1952-1954 1963-1965	1955: expelling the Communist Youth league membership, mark demerit 1961: probation 1970: revoking job, sending back home, giving 2-month salary		May, 1970
12 FZZ	Half-landlord rich peasant	Molest and rape: 6	unknown		Since 1970	"bad element" 5 years in prison Revoking job		Feb. 21, 1972 Feb. 20, 1972
13 CXM	unknown	Rape: unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	Probation for 2 years with the monthly salary of 25 RMB		Sep. 1974
14 ZYL	unknown	Molest and rape: 1	unknown	unknown	unknown	Probation for 2 years		Aug. 1974

Table 10: Elementary School Sexual Assault Cases in the Cultural Revolution (continued)

15 JDD	unknown	Molest and rape: 1	unknown	unknown	unknown	Probation for 1 years with the monthly salary of 32 RMB. Restored to previous job, monthly salary of 34.5 RMB		Jul. 1974 Oct. 1976
16 JJM	unknown	Rape: 1	unknown	unknown	1973-1976	Probation for 2 years with monthly salary of 34 RMB		May, 1977

Chapter 5: Personal Experiences: Minban Teachers' Recruitment, Salaries, Career Trajectories, and Defending Their Rights

As illustrated in previous chapters, during radical political campaigns, the state expanded education and decentralized the financial system. This strategy shifted the financial burden of education onto local communes, brigades, and production teams. However, how did these communities manage this financial responsibility? Their solution involved hiring minban teachers, which translates to non-public teachers. Comprised of returning educated youths, sent-down educated youths, and dismissed public teachers, minban teachers first emerged during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) when the financial system began to decentralize. This group expanded significantly, constituting approximately half of all teachers during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), when the CCP further decentralized its financial system. By 1977, there were 4.7 million minban teachers across the nation.[370] Zhang Letian, Shang Lihao, and Wei Feng, have acknowledged the importance of finance to education and the contribution minban teachers made in this realm.[371] This chapter reveals that minban teachers, despite having the same workload as public teachers, received substantially lower remuneration and

[370] 魏峰 Wei Feng, *弹性与韧性: 乡土社会民办教师政策运行的民族志 Flexibility and Resilience: An Ethnography of the Implementation of Local Society Minban Teachers' Policy* (上海: 上海三联书店, 2017 年版 Shanghai: Shanghai Sanlian Bookstore Co. Ltd, 2017).

[371] 商丽浩 Shang Lihao, *中国教育财政史论(1949-1965) Discussion on the History of Chinese Educational Finance, 1949-1965* (杭州: 浙江大学出版社, 2011 年版 Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2011).
张乐天 Zhang Letian, *新中国成立以来农村教育政策的回顾与反思 Review and Reflection on Rural Education Policy Since the Founding of New China* (北京: 北京师范大学出版社, 2016 年版 Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press, 2016).
魏峰 Wei Feng, *弹性与韧性: 乡土社会民办教师政策运行的民族志 Flexibility and Resilience: An Ethnography of the Implementation of Local Society Minban Teachers' Policy* (上海: 上海三联书店, 2017 年版 Shanghai: Shanghai Sanlian Bookstore Co. Ltd, 2017).

were excluded from the welfare benefits available to their public counterparts. Consequently, some minban teachers struggled to make ends meet with their meager salaries.

The question then arises: how did minban teachers accept such evidently unjust treatment, remain in their positions for years? Did they unite to advocate for their group and organize a strike? Some minban teachers' past as Red Guards provided experiences for them. Several minban teachers had been Red Guards and actively participated in debates advocating for better socialism during the early stages of the Cultural Revolution, as documented by scholars such as Yiqing Wu, Weiran Lin, and Hongbiao Yin.[372] Once they became minban teachers, most of them could convene twice a week for political and professional study. Every summer vacation, they were required to gather for about two weeks for the same purpose, occasionally followed by agricultural labor together. Thus, minban teachers possessed the capabilities and circumstances necessary to organize demonstrations.

This chapter will explore the motivations behind individuals accepting or even competing for the minban teaching position and their persistence in working for years by illustrating the circumstances faced by sent-down youths, returning youths, and dismissed public teachers upon arriving in rural communities, as well as their potential futures. In

[372] Weiran Lin, translated by Li Yuhua, *A Failed Chinese Cultural Enlightenment Movement: The Class Struggle Theory and the Cultural Revolution*, (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1996).
Yiqing Wu, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins: Chinese Socialism in Crisis*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).
印红标 Yin Hongbiao, *失踪者的足迹: 文化大革命期间的青年思潮 Footprints of the Disappeared: Youth Thought Trends during the Cultural Revolution* (香港: 香港中文大学出版社, 2009 Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2009).

comparison to engaging in heavy agricultural labor, a teaching job represented a significant improvement. The chapter will also demonstrate that the position was precarious and insecure for minban teachers. The anxiety experienced by these minban teachers motivated them to work diligently and contribute unpaid labor.

Michel Bonin, Thomas P. Bernstein, and Helena K. Rene have conducted research on the plight of sent-down youths during the Cultural Revolution.[373] However, their work does not extensively explore local job opportunities for these individuals, nor does it pay significant attention to the broader group of returning educated youths—those with rural household registrations who were required to return to their original rural communes after completing their education in the cities. This chapter will highlight the advantages sent-down youths held over their returning counterparts, while also revealing an additional layer of diversity among the minban teachers.

This chapter focuses on how political campaigns, resource extraction, education policies, the urban-rural divide, gender, and other local factors influenced the personal experiences of minban teachers. This chapter will examine the recruitment, salaries, and career paths of these minban teachers. This chapter argues that various factors—including personal connections, the status of being a sent-down or returning youth, immigrant, gender, employment at elementary or middle schools, and local production team's work

[373] Michel Bonin, Krystyna Horko trans., *The Lost Generation: The Rustication of China's Educated Youth, 1968-1980* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2013). Thomas P. Bernstein, *Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1977). Helena K. Rene, *China's Sent-Down Generation: Public Administration and Legacies of Mao's Rustication Program* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2013).

point values—could all impact minban teachers' recruitment, salaries, and career trajectories.

Therefore, Minban teachers exhibited diversity in terms of remuneration, recruitment, and subsequent career paths. Such variation stemmed from the financial conditions of local communities, personal connections, gender, and distinctions between sent-down and returning youths. All these factors were consequences of the decentralized financial system. Although minban teachers attempted to assert their rights and successfully organized some small-scale demonstrations, they were unable to form a cohesive large-scale protest due to the diverse backgrounds and experiences among them.

As I have mentioned in Chapter 2 about the county fiscal system, throughout the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the financial system was highly decentralized. In this chapter, I do not consider authoritarianism and financial decentralization as mutually exclusive or dichotomous concepts. Instead, I argue that financial decentralization contributed to the diversification among social groups, such as minban teachers, ultimately reinforcing the authoritarian state.

In She County, there were approximately 4,000 to 5,000 minban teachers between 1966 and 1976. My 46 interviewees represent only about 1 percent of this population, and my selection of participants was not entirely random. Although I intentionally sought to include a diverse range of regions, genders, family backgrounds, and career trajectories when selecting interviewees, I relied on personal connections to expand my sample. Despite the unavoidable biases, my sample is sufficient to illustrate the diversity among minban teachers.

Xu Yanbo

"I sat on the riverbank, all night long and alone. I could have thrown myself into the river that night," my interviewee Yanbo choked, his voice unsteadies, his jaw and hands are trembling. "I have never told anyone else about that night." The pain and desperation from half a century ago were as vivid as if they had occurred yesterday. The freezing night when he almost committed suicide took place during the initial few months following his arrival at the village " Xibian." At 21 years old, Yanbo, who had grown up in an intellectual family in the county seat and graduated from the county's only senior high school, was sent down to a remote village called Xibian on November 28, 1968, like hundreds of thousands of educated youths across the nation.[374] In an early 1970s photograph below, his subdued mood is still apparent in his smile.

Figure 11: Yanbo in the early 1970s.

Before the interview, Yanbo had already constructed a narrative of his experiences. He compiled his documents into an album, which was divided into five

[374] Interview with Xu Yanbo (interviewee #1), May 3, 2018. My interview with his friend interviewee #22 confirms the date.

sections: "Elementary School," "Junior High School," "Senior High School," "The Cultural Revolution," and "Honors." The first three parts contain his grade reports, while the Cultural Revolution section includes his introduction letter and free-transportation ticket from the "Revolutionary Networking (串联 chuanlian)." The final part showcases the honors Yanbo received as both a student and a minban teacher during his time as a sent-down youth. He titled the album "Shining Age, Bitter Memory (闪光的年月，苦涩的回忆)," which, according to his explanation, refers to his student years and the decade he spent as a sent-down youth, respectively. However, the documents in the album pertaining to his sent-down decade do not align with the "bitter memory" title.

Figure 12: Cover Page of Yanbo's Albumn

The interviews provided an explanation for this discrepancy. The album, in conjunction with the interviews, reveals that a straight-A and revolutionary student's college dream was deferred due to the Cultural Revolution, and that a minban teacher persevered while enduring difficult and unjust working conditions. The narrative established in my four interviews with Yanbo remained largely consistent. However, this narrative raises an inherent question: given the terrible working environment and unfair

treatment, why did Yanbo accept the teaching position, and what motivated him to continue working diligently for an entire decade?

Yanbo's decision to share his unsuccessful suicide attempt with me was not solely due to an outpouring of emotions; he also skillfully incorporated the event into his overall narrative. Yanbo was among the few interviewees who had constructed a coherent narrative before my interviews and consistently adhered to it. He recounted this story during dinner after our third interview. Prior to the incident, we had been discussing the despair experienced by most sent-down educated youths. After sharing his story, Yanbo fell silent, smoking continuously for nearly ten minutes before recovering from the emotional upheaval, without elaborating on the details. Consequently, I was unable to ascertain the exact date, the temperature that night, any triggering events, where he sat, his thoughts at the time, whether he had stepped or jumped into the river, what ultimately dissuaded him, or whether he continued performing heavy labor the following day. The day after our dinner, when discussing the unfair treatment his father had endured, Yanbo alluded to the incident once more: "this was also one reason for yesterday's incident (his unsuccessful suicide attempt, which he mentioned the previous day)." He deliberately forged a connection between the suicide attempt and subsequent events in his narrative. Although the suicide attempt may not have been premeditated within Yanbo's original narrative, he quickly recognized the potential role it could play in his story and employed it as compelling evidence.

Although the incident does not meet Gail Hershatter's criteria for a "good-enough story," it can be interpreted as a response to the inherent question in Yanbo's narrative

regarding his motivation for accepting an unjust job and persisting in his efforts.[375] If we do not consider the desperate and bleak potential future Yanbo faced during his time as a sent-down youth, we cannot fully comprehend the significance of the teaching job to him at that moment. This position not only offered Yanbo an escape from agricultural labor, but also provided a stable source of cash income, both of which were scarce in rural communities at the time. Additionally, the job allowed him to gain respect from the rural community. In comparison to heavy agricultural labor, a teaching job represented a considerable improvement in his living conditions, despite the harsh environment and unjust treatment.

When the Cultural Revolution erupted in June 1966 in She County, it was just a month away from the College Entrance Exam, and Yanbo was diligently preparing for it. His parents had already assembled everything for his college life, including bedding sheets and quilts, as they were confident in his performance due to his consistently strong academic record.[376] Yanbo had previously earned the title of "three-good" student four times. (See the following three pictures.) However, when the Cultural Revolution began, the exam was initially postponed to the end of the year and subsequently canceled. At the time, Yanbo could not have anticipated that this would be a lifelong departure from his intended path. When the College Entrance Exam resumed at the end of 1977, Yanbo went

[375] "A good-enough story" is "a story that does not provide a complete understanding of the past, but instead surprises and engenders thought, unspooling in different directions depending on which thread the listeners picks up. A good-enough story is available to reinterpretation; it can be woven into many larger narratives." Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2011), 3.
[376] Interview with Xu Yanbo, May 3, 2018.

to the Commune to register but was informed that he was ineligible due to being a few months beyond the age limit.

Figure 13: Yanbo's Certificates of "three-good" Student.

Yanbo had experienced the adverse effects of political movements before this incident. One and a half years prior, when Yanbo was 18 years old and a sophomore in high school, he was criticized during the "Four Cleanups" campaign because of an article he wrote. As the head of the literature and art department of the school's student union, Yanbo was responsible for writing articles and decorating the school's public blackboard. He wrote an article on the blackboard, urging students to stop using traditional charcoal pocket warmers during winter and engage in more physical exercise. Yanbo was not sure why or how he was singled out during the campaign. The "Four Cleanups" production team criticized the high school sophomore for being "detached from the poor" due to the opinions expressed in his article. Yanbo was also asked by the "Four Cleanups" production team to read big-character posters directed at his father in Tan'du junior middle school, where his father had been working for 11 years.

Yanbo's problems may have been related to his father's background. Yanbo's father was a public teacher and was considered a "dictatorship target" when the Cultural Revolution began. As a result, he was sent to the "cow shed" to do heavy labor. This was

because his father had a problematic history in the eyes of the CCP. Yanbo's father's first issue was that he joined the GMT in 1936, when he was 19 years old and a student at the local normal middle school. When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, he joined the local GMT war service group and became the leader of the propaganda sector. [377] He also joined the "Blue Shirts Society" (复兴社) in December 1937.[378] Although he claimed that his intention for joining these groups was to serve during the war, this reason was not enough to save him from trouble. A more severe issue was that he participated in the local counter-insurgency committee (戡乱委员会) in 1948, attempting to suppress the CCP's power one year before it came to power, and was elected as the director of the propaganda sector.[379] Yanbo's father had confessed to all these issues as early as 1955.[380] Interestingly, his official dossier never includes his experience with the counter-insurgency committee.[381] The most plausible explanation is that CCP leaders needed him in his teaching position, so they made a consensus not to include this information in the official documents.

Yanbo's father was indeed a capable person, an experienced teacher, and the son of the head of She County Stamp Duty Bureau (印花税局), which made him politically reliable to the Republican government. In 1946, he was assigned to be the headmaster of

[377] "教职员工简明登记表 (Brief Personal Information Forms) (1963)," Owned by interviewee Yanbo. Usage under the allowance of Xu Yanbo.
[378] "补充交代 (Supplementing Confession) (undated)" Owned by interviewee Yanbo. Usage under the allowance of Xu Yanbo.
[379] "补充交代 (Supplementing Confession) (undated)" Usage under the allowance of Xu Yanbo.
[380] "自传 (Autobiography) (1955)" Owned by interviewee Yanbo. Usage under the allowance of Xu Yanbo.
[381] "教职员工简明登记表 (Brief Personal Information Forms) (1963)," does not include his experience in counter-insurgency committee.

the largest elementary school in the county seat, just after the end of the Second World War.[382] At that time, the state faced severe financial problems, and the county government no longer had the budget for elementary schools. Schools struggled to operate and pay teachers. Yanbo's father, however, managed to use his personal connections to secure the budget for the school. In 1948, the KMT's 73rd regiment camped at the school, forcing nearly 400 students to be dispersed to various locations, including an ancestor's hall, a temple, a private house, and another elementary school in the county seat. Despite the heavy economic inflation, Yanbo's father successfully kept the school running. He was also a leader of the county's education association at that time.[383] In September 1949, the school was taken over by the CCP, and Yanbo's father retained his position, albeit only for a short time. In February 1950, the new government assigned him to a rural elementary school in Bei'an town.[384] During the subsequent land reform, his family was labeled as a "small land renter," a vulnerable label during political campaigns.

Yanbo's claim about the rumor of his father belonging to the "County Seat Gang" sheds light on the challenges faced by experienced teachers and school leaders who worked in county seat schools during the early years of the PRC. This group, which had a strong reputation in the education field, was seen as politically suspicious by the CCP

[382] The elementary school was established in 1907 by the Qing government, and was the first public elementary school in She county. At that time, it was called 歙县官立初等小学堂 (She County State-Built Elementary School). Since 1945, it changed its title to 简师附小 (Affiliated Elementary School of Simplified Teachers' School).
[383] He became a member of 歙县教育理事会理事 (Shexian County Education Council Member) in 1943. He was elected as the 常务理事 (Executive Director) in 1948. "补充交代 (Supplementing Confession) (undated)" Usage under the allowance of Xu Yanbo.
[384] "四清运动思想总结 (My Confession during the Four Clean-Ups Campaign) (October 1965)." Usage under the allowance of Xu Yanbo.

government, and therefore, targeted for removal. Yanbo's assumption is supported by archival evidence, which shows that the CCP described most Republican teachers as "politically suspicious."[385]

Yanbo's father, feeling unjustly treated and angered by the political suspicion cast upon him, made a determined effort to prove his ability as an educator. He volunteered to hold night classes for students, and within a year of being assigned to the rural school, his students' average grades topped the county.[386] His hard work and dedication to teaching were recognized, and he was soon reassigned to the original county seat school in February 1951. In December 1951, likely due to his demonstrated teaching skills and recognition from other schools and leaders, Yanbo's father was assigned to the prestigious Tunxi Junior Middle School in the prefect seat. However, the following year, he was sent to a "training class" to reform his mindset and address his historical issues, where he confessed his historical problems. Feeling anxious about his new working environment and uncertain political future, he resolved to work even harder on his teaching.

During the Cultural Revolution, Yanbo's father was designated as a "专政对象" (dictatorship target) shortly after its onset. Yanbo was instructed by the Red Guards' leaders to visit his father's school and read the big-character posters denouncing his own father. Later, Yanbo's father was forced to the school's "cow shed" - the agricultural land belonging to the school - where he performed agricultural labor under close supervision.

[385] "1950 年教育科报告" ("1950 Education Department Report"), She County Archives, 62-1-12
[386] "四清运动思想总结 (My Confession during the Four Clean-Ups Campaign) (October 1965)." Usage under the allowance of Xu Yanbo.

Yanbo recounted that his father, along with his colleagues, slept on the platform of the school's grand hall, with only a small bundle of dried straws for bedding. He never discussed the arduous labor and violent mistreatment his father endured, “I dared not to ask, and it probably was too painful for my father to mention.” Yanbo was only aware that three of his father's coworkers in the "cow shed" took their own lives. In 1967, when Yanbo's father was compelled to participate in a criticism conference in the county seat, he forgot to wear the black armband signifying "problematic" individuals. Consequently, he was publicly paraded through the streets and forced to pass by his own home. Yanbo's entire family, including 20-year-old Yanbo, bore witness to the public humiliation and degradation of his father.

On July 18, 1968, following 21 consecutive days of strenuous labor in sweltering conditions, Yanbo's father found himself physically and mentally drained. Coincidentally, students had returned to school after a two-year hiatus. As he continued to perform laborious tasks, Yanbo's father observed his colleagues preparing for teaching – an activity he deeply missed. Possibly overwhelmed by both physical exhaustion and longing for teaching, he candidly expressed in his weekly report to the leaders that he “could taste no joy in the heavy labor.”[387] Unbeknownst to him, he would be barred from teaching and assigned to manage the school farm's agricultural tools for another decade. In 1978, after over ten years away from teaching, Yanbo's father was finally reinstated at the age of 62, two years past the official retirement age. The school, recognizing his experience and capability as a teacher, did not permit him to retire, despite his

[387] “思想汇报” (“Confession, July 18, 1968”), Usage under the allowance of Xu Yanbo.

emphysema diagnosis. Ultimately, Yanbo's father succeeded in retiring at the age of 64 when his emphysema became so severe that he could no longer walk to the classroom.

As a result of his father's situation, Yanbo was regarded with suspicion and placed under surveillance starting from early 1967. The sole senior high school in the county, which Yanbo attended, suspended classes from June 1966 until the beginning of 1968. Yanbo recalled that, since early 1967, other students would secretly observe his activities at home after they had returned from "revolutionary networking." As the violence between the two primary factions intensified, the leaders of the school's faction approached Yanbo's friends for discussions. Sensing danger, Yanbo took action. Yanbo did not disclose the specifics to me, but ultimately, a friend of his father arranged for him to work as a substitute teacher for four months at a elementary school approximately 20 miles from the county seat.[388] Between 1966 and 1968, hiring substitute teachers was a widespread practice, as the local normal school had ceased assigning graduates to elementary schools in the county. Elementary schools faced a shortage of teachers, and middle school students who could not graduate or attend classes were eager to accept teaching positions to avoid the escalating violence.

In November 1968, Yanbo was compelled to relocate to the countryside. The street committee cadres threatened to remove him from his family's household registration if he refused, which would result in the loss of his grain quota and the inability to secure stable employment. "My mom wept for days. I told my mom there seemed to be no other way out in such a situation. Eventually, I had to write an

[388] The school was called Shendu elementary school.

application letter to become a sent-down youth." At that time, Yanbo was the only sent-down youth in the village and was assigned various labor-intensive tasks, which ultimately led to a lifelong back issue. During a visit from his mother, she discovered Yanbo handling night soil with his bare hands and burying it in the field. This period of extreme despair nearly drove him to suicide. "I thought I would be doing agricultural labor for the rest of my life," Yanbo recalled.

Change came around 1970. The husband of the family that initially hosted Yanbo, an experienced minban teacher of eight years, introduced him to a teaching position about 10 miles from the village. The brigade party secretary met with Yanbo and agreed to employ him, since elementary schools had been decentralized to communes and brigades were financially accountable for them at the time. Decisions regarding the hiring and salaries of elementary school minban teachers were made by brigade leaders. Once the brigade leaders made their decisions, they would instruct teachers to identify potential candidates, as there were few middle school graduates in the countryside. It was typical for brigade leaders to meet with candidates and decide whether to hire them, unless they were already acquainted with the individual beforehand.

For two years, Yanbo taught at two one-room elementary schools within the brigade, earning a modest salary that increased from 10 to 15 RMB per month. According to Yanbo, despite being provided lodging by the schools, his salary was insufficient to cover his daily expenses. Students' parents took turns providing meals for him, and he would repay them 0.3 RMB each day. This practice persisted in the countryside until the early 1980s. Although most parents declined the money out of respect for teachers,

Yanbo insisted on paying, which consumed a significant portion of his salary. His remaining income was inadequate to afford basic necessities such as soap, towels, and kerosene for the kerosene lamp, which was the only lighting option for most people who could not afford candles. Some sent-down youths initially received cash as a substitute, while others could apply for state funding to construct houses in their assigned locations. In 1969, Yanbo and his production team applied for this funding and built a three-room house in the village center to accommodate Yanbo and other sent-down youths. However, there was no additional state support for Yanbo's living expenses. To make ends meet, his mother periodically provided him with cash and purchased cigarettes for him—a habit Yanbo had developed during desperate times but could not consistently afford.

The lodging provided by the school was far from ideal. When Yanbo began teaching at his first elementary school, the production team assigned him to live on the second floor of the village's female ancestral hall. This hall was situated next to the male ancestral hall, which also served as the elementary school, and Yanbo was the only person residing in the female ancestral hall. Later, villagers informed him that several women had taken their own lives in the hall, and their restless spirits were said to haunt the building, often heard whimpering at night. Yanbo mentioned that he could hear faint footsteps ascending the stairs, which eventually turned out to be mice. However, these sounds initially frightened him.

Despite the low salary, challenging teaching environment, and poor living conditions, Yanbo was committed to his work, and his teaching skills were eventually recognized by the education cadre of the commune. During an audit of his class, the

education cadre offered a favorable evaluation.[389] Later, Yanbo expressed his desire to teach in a middle school to the cadre, and as it happened, the commune's new middle school was recruiting. Being one of the most educated teachers in the commune and having received the education cadre's endorsement, Yanbo successfully secured a position at the middle school with a monthly salary of 29 RMB. This salary was among the highest I had encountered in my interviews with minban teachers. Although Yanbo needed to spend about 10 RMB each month on food in the school's dining hall, his quality of life improved significantly. A photo taken at the time captured him with a broad smile.

Figure 14: Yanbo and his colleagures (The person in circle is Yanbo)

Upon joining the school, both teachers and students were required to contribute to its construction. While the local commune provided some financial and labor assistance, it was insufficient to cover even the basic building materials. As a result, teachers and

[389] Each commune had an education cadre to take care of the education in the commune. Education cadres were also involved in the recruitment of minban teachers, especially minban teachers of commune's middle school. They also audited classes to check teachers' teaching.

students were expected to perform unpaid labor. "I took several students into the forest several miles away from the village, chopped down trees, carried lumber back to the school together, and made two basketball stands (see the photo)," Yanbo recounted. He continued, "Teachers and students also participated in other tasks such as carrying tiles and bricks, collectively building up the school." Yanbo went the extra mile by volunteering to coordinate with a factory in the county seat and working alongside students as interns there, as they were expected to "learn from workers, peasants, and soldiers." His teaching abilities were acknowledged, and he received teaching honors from the school in 1977 and from the prefecture in 1978.

Figure 15: Yanbo and all his students graduated in 1978.

(The basketball hoop circled in the photo is made by Yanbo and students. Besides, they were involved in the construction of the school houses in the background.)

Among my interviewees, Yanbo was not the only minban teacher who volunteered for unpaid labor and showed great dedication to teaching. In comparison to most sent-down youths, Yanbo was fortunate to have a relatively stable job and better pay than his peers. More significantly, he successfully passed the cadre selection exam and became a state cadre. However, throughout his life, he declined the opportunity for a faster promotion by joining the Communist Party, opting instead for the "Jiu San Society (九三学社)." His actions aligned with his views on the Communist Party, lending credibility to his words. Nonetheless, a question arises: Why did Yanbo commit himself so passionately to teaching if he was not a supporter of the Communist Party and the working conditions were unfavorable?

"Why did you work so hard?" I asked Yanbo, considering the low pay, harsh working environment, and obligatory unpaid labor. Yanbo replied, “I just thought there might be a ‘way out’(出路) if I worked hard enough.” Yanbo likely had the college entrance exam in mind, but when the exam reopened in 1977, commune cadres informed him that he was several months beyond the age limit. College, which was just one step away, became a lifelong regret for him. In 1979, after a decade of teaching, Yanbo finally found his "way out." At that time, the state was in need of officials to regulate birth rates, so they hosted a cadre selection examination, which was only open to sent-down youths that year. Yanbo passed the exam and subsequently became a birth control cadre.

On January 3, 2023, Yanbo passed away from a Covid infection after the CCP chose to reopen without providing adequate protection to vulnerable individuals. I was unable to revisit him after our last conversation in 2018.

Zhang Yiren

In 1979, when Yanbo successfully passed the cadre selection exam and became a birth control cadre in the commune, Zhang Yiren, the individual who introduced Yanbo to the teaching profession, was reassigned from the school where he had taught for 16 years to another village's school. The reason for the transfer was unclear, but his wife and daughter suspected that it might have been connected to an incident involving the production team head at the previous school. During the semester before Yiren's reassignment, he discovered that the production team's economic plants, which were stored in the school, had gone missing. He later found some of the plants in the pocket of a pupil who happened to be the son of the production team head. Instead of criticizing and reporting the pupil, Yiren took him to the pupil's house, intending to discuss the matter with the production team head. Upon arriving at the head's residence, Yiren discovered a pile of the missing plants. Yiren hesitated to report the incident to the brigade or commune, possibly fearing for his job. He confided in his wife that he might soon face trouble.[390] At the end of the semester, Yiren received notice that he was to be transferred to another village.

[390] Interview with Jiang Yuehua, Zhang Yiren's wife, November 2017.

In October 2017, I visited the village where Yiren had taught for 16 years, coinciding with a local popular religion celebration. As I began asking questions about Yiren in public, tens of the villagers gathered around me, eager to share stories of how Yiren had helped them and their families. He used to groom all the pupils' hair for free after class or during the weekends and volunteered to make brushes for the villagers at no cost, utilizing pig hairs. The villagers also pointed to the slogans and Mao quotations still visible on the walls of the school, which also served as the ancestral hall, informing me that Yiren had written them. Even 38 years after his departure from the village, people continued to remember and respect Yiren for his contributions and dedication to the community.

In 1980, the selection exam aimed not only to promote minban teachers to public teachers but also to dismiss some based on their exam grades. Yiren took the exam, and a few days later, he confided in his friend and colleague (interviewee #31) that he had somehow learned his grade and it wasn't the worst among all minban teachers in the commune. However, during a conference attended by all the commune's teachers, the commune's education cadre announced that the only minban teacher to be dismissed was Yiren. Interviewee #31 vividly recalled Yiren's reaction. Yiren stood up immediately and asked the cadre, "Did I get the lowest grade (我是不是成绩最差的)?" The cadre remained silent. Yiren repeated the question, but the cadre still did not answer. When Yiren asked for the third time, "Did I indeed get the lowest grade (我到底是不是成绩最差的)?", the cadre finally replied, "Yes." Yiren sat down, left the conference without staying for the assigned lunch, returned to the school, packed his belongings, and

departed. According to interviewee #31 and interviewee #22, another friend and colleague of Yiren's, Yiren did not speak another word after receiving the news.

Interviewee #22 and #1 mentioned that Yiren was not proficient in pinyin and sometimes required interviewee #22's assistance during exams following their summer training sessions. Yiren had studied gymnastics at Wuhu Physical Education College before the state introduced the pinyin system in 1956, so he never had the opportunity to learn it from the start. Upon graduating from the college in 1959, Yiren was assigned to the Anhui provincial sports team, according to his friend, Rao Lihong. However, Yiren could not remain on the team, possibly due to the downsizing movement or his "rich peasants" background. Yiren was sent back to his hometown after graduation and served as a substitute teacher in his commune's central elementary school for one year. He then became a public teacher at the largest elementary school in the county seat. In 1961, Yiren "volunteered" to return to his home village. In 1963, Yiren's wife said that Yiren encountered an education cadre from the commune, who asked him to become a minban teacher in Dongshan village. This was how Yiren started his career as a minban teacher in Dongshan, where he taught for 16 years.

Yiren was dismissed from his teaching position after 16 years of service without any compensation. Three years later, when he was diagnosed with cancer and required hospital treatment, he wrote a letter to the deputy county head responsible for education, seeking financial assistance to cover his medical bills. Unfortunately, he received no response. During those three years, interviewee #22 had helped Yiren successfully raise

long-haired rabbits to earn some money. However, after Yiren's death, his family was left in debt.

Yiren was not the only minban teacher to be dismissed during the early 1980s. The state needed to create vacancies for graduates from local teacher training schools. These young and well-trained graduates were favored by the state over older minban teachers like Yiren. Additionally, the state was under pressure to provide jobs for youths, as sent-down youths had returned to the cities and were also searching for employment opportunities. Dismissing minban teachers such as Yiren allowed the state to make room for these young job seekers.

Compared to Yiren, sent-down youths like Yanbo had more "way out" options. The cadre selection exam that Yanbo took was only open to sent-down youths, meaning that other minban teachers who were returning youths were not qualified to take the exam. The first three annual public teacher selection exams were only open to minban teachers under the age of 35 who had worked continuously for 5 years. Senior minban teachers like Yiren were too old to be selected and also faced the risk of being dismissed.

Yanbo and Yiren had different career trajectories, with Yanbo becoming a cadre and Yiren being dismissed. However, the diversity among minban teachers extended beyond career trajectory and also encompassed differences in recruitment and payment. These variations were primarily influenced by factors such as their background, gender, relationship with local community leaders, and the financial situation of the local community.

Salaries

Minban teachers' salaries varied based on both the method of payment and the salary amount. Given the changes in the value of money and policies affecting Minban teachers since 1978, this section will focus solely on interviewees who began working prior to or in 1978. Four interviewees (#15, #40, #42, #43) commenced their employment after 1978 and will not be discussed in this part. There were three distinct payment methods for Minban teachers: cash, work points, and a combination of the two. The majority of the interviewees, 36 out of 42, received their salary entirely in cash.[391]

Even though the payment method was the same, it did not imply uniformity in the salary amounts. The lowest reported salary was 5 RMB per month without any work point subsidies (indicating no grain or cash support from the local communities), while the highest reached 30 RMB per month. I have compiled all the cash salary figures provided by the interviewees and presented them in the table and graph below.[392] The data reveals that most salary amounts range between 16 and 25 RMB. Factors influencing the cash salary included the type of school they taught at and the economic circumstances of the local communities.

[391] From Appendix: Minban Teacher Interviewees Information Table, interviewee #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #7, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #16, #18, #19, #20, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28, #29, #31, #32, #33, #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #41, #44, #45, #46 had been paid by sole cash salary.
Interviewee #6's situation was a little different from others, he received cash salary of 20 Yuan each month, and every year, the production team would also distribute 100-150 kg unhusked rice to him for free. I will demonstrate later why he was not categorized in the cash type.

[392] Interviewee #34, #35 could not recall the exact number of their salaries, but said they were both between 10 and 20 Yuan. So I allocate one number in the range 11-15 Yuan, and the other in 16-20 Yuan.
Interviewee #26 could only recollect that the salary was between 20-30 Yuan. So, I put one half to range 21-25 Yuan, the other half to range 26-30 Yuan.

Table 11: Distribution of Cash Salaries

Salary Range	Times of Appearance for All Salaries
5 to 10 RMB	4
11 to 15 RMB	4
16 to 20 RMB	18
21 to 25 RMB	21.5
26 to 30 RMB	9.5

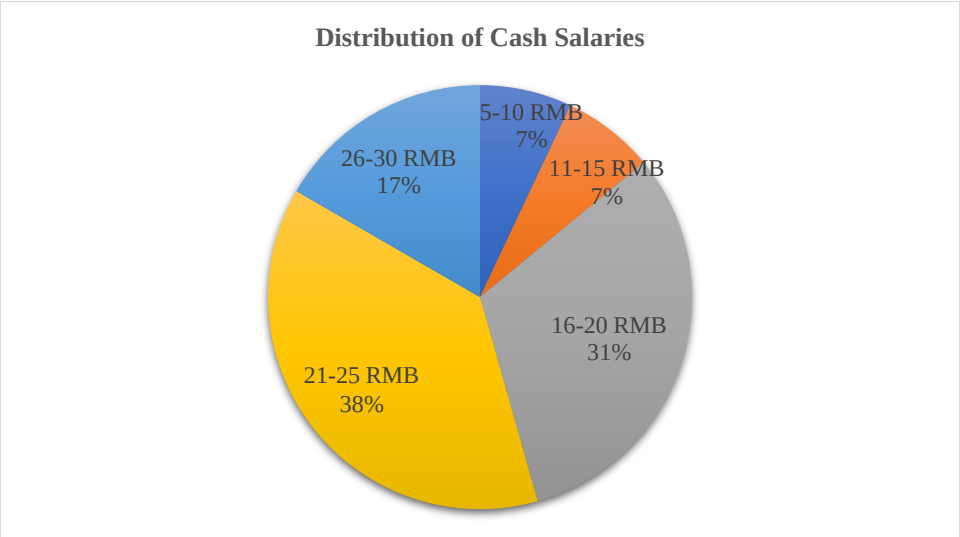

Figure 16: Distribution of Cash Salaries

In general, Minban middle school teachers received higher salaries compared to their elementary school counterparts. Among the 12 interviewees who had taught in middle schools before 1978, 11 were paid in cash, and only one was compensated through work points. These 11 interviewees provided 17 specific salary figures. Nine of these figures fell within the 21-25 RMB range, while seven were in the 26-30 RMB

bracket.[393] Only one figure fell within the 11-15 RMB range. In contrast, among the 37 exact salary figures provided by 28 cash-paid elementary school Minban teachers, merely two of the 37 salaries fell within the 26-30 RMB range.

The primary reasons for higher salaries in middle schools compared to elementary schools were twofold. First, middle schools were either owned by communes or brigades, which allowed them access to more farmland for generating cash income, They had greater access to education budgets due to their higher positioning within the financial system.

Table 12: Elementary and Middle School Minban Teachers' Salary Distribution

Salary Range	Times of Appearance for elementary school minban teachers' salaries	Times of Appearance for middle school minban teachers' salaries
5 to 10 RMB	4	0
11 to 15 RMB	2	1
16 to 20 RMB	18	0
21 to 25 RMB	11	9
26 to 30 RMB	2	7

Table 13: Middle School Minban Teachers and Their Salaries (Part 1):

Interviewee	#1	#10	#11	#12	#13	#25	#26	#31	#33	#44	#46
Salaries (RMB)	29	25	24	22, 23, 24, 25	25, 27, 28, 29	26	20-30	15	28, 29	25	25

[393] There was an overlap between middle school minban teachers and elementary school minban teachers. 6 interviewees (#1, #9, #25, #26, #44, #46) have been taught both in middle schools and elementary schools. Among these 6 interviewees, interviewee 44 could only recall the salary number when he was in middle school. Both interviewees 25 and 26's salaries in elementary schools were paid by work points. Interviewee 9's salary in middle school were paid by half cash half work points.

Table 14: Elementary School Minban Teachers and Their Salaries (Part 1):

Interviewee	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#7	#8	#9	#14	#16	#18	#19	#20	#22	#23	#24	#27
Salaries (RMB)	10, 15	20, 21, 22, 23	18	18, 22	22	30	No	18	24, 26	22	22, 18	18	24	16	29	18	18, 21, 23.5

Table 15: Elementary School Minban Teachers and Their Salaries (Part 2):

Interviewee	#28	#29	#32	#34	#35	#36	#37	#38	#41	#45	#46
Salaries (RMB)	20	18	22	10-20	10-20	20, 22	8	5	21	18, 19, 20	10

The second factor contributing to cash salary differences was the economic situation of the rural communities. If these communities had higher cash income, the value of their work points would be greater, and the Minban teachers in those communities would likely receive better pay. The highest work point value reported was 1.8 RMB per 10 work points, mentioned by interviewee #23 from her production team. She was a junior high school graduate, a sent-down youth, and a elementary school Minban teacher, earning a salary of 29 RMB per month. Interviewee #7, a senior high school graduate and elementary school Minban teacher, received a monthly salary of 30 RMB, with the work point value in his team being 1.4 RMB per 10 work points. Salaries of interviewees #7 and #23 were the highest among all participants. Although both taught at schools operated by production teams, which were at the lowest level of the state's financial system, their respective production teams had the strongest financial situations among all interviewees. Consequently, they had the highest cash salaries among all elementary school Minban teachers.

The lowest monthly salary of 5 RMB was primarily attributed to the challenging financial situation of the production team. Interviewee #38, who graduated from senior middle school in 1975 and became an elementary school Minban teacher in 1976, earned this salary. When asked about her feelings regarding the low salary, she mentioned that other villagers admired her for obtaining the job despite the low pay. This was because the work point value in her production team was a mere 0.2 RMB per 10 work points, and it was quite rare for agricultural laborers to earn 60 RMB annually through agricultural work. Her father, who had been the production team head for over 20 years, likely helped her secure the job, in addition to her relatively high education level. Her husband (interviewee #37) was also a returning youth and elementary school teacher but had only graduated from junior middle school without attending senior middle school. The work point value in his production team ranged from 0.2 to 0.3 RMB per 10 work points, and he received a monthly salary of 8 RMB without any work point subsidies at the elementary school managed by his production team. This couple had the two lowest cash salaries among all interviewees, and the work point values in their schools' production teams were relatively low as well. Comparing the two couples, #7 & #23 and #37 & #38, it becomes evident that the salary was more closely linked to the financial situation of the production teams than the teachers' education level or gender.

Receiving a cash salary did not guarantee that Minban teachers would have full access to their earnings. Interviewees #14, #19, and #36 mentioned that they were compelled by their native production team leaders to surrender their cash salaries. All three of them taught in production teams different from those in which their household registrations were located. Their departure signified a loss of agricultural labor for their

native production teams, leading their team leaders to express or at least feign discontent. These leaders would force the Minban teachers to hand over their cash salaries to the production teams, who would then provide them with a fixed number of work points in return. At the end of each year, the production teams would calculate the value of these work points and reimburse the teachers accordingly. This treatment was similar to that experienced by out-working artisans. In most cases, the production teams could generate substantial profits through this process.

Interviewee #36 attempted to resist this practice. In 1969, his first year of work, he refused to relinquish his monthly cash salary of 20 RMB to his native production team. Consequently, the production team's accountant denied his mother her annual cash income, which should have amounted to over 100 RMB after a year of hard work. Due to this, interviewee #36 chose not to resist the following year. Fortunately, in December 1971, he came across a document stating that Minban teachers should not be treated like migrant workers. Armed with this document, he successfully argued with the leaders and resisted the unjust practice. Interviewee #14's family, who were Xin'an Dam immigrants from the neighboring Chun'an county in Zhejiang province, often faced discrimination from local residents.[394] As a result, he found no support from the production team and

[394] Interviewee 14 was one of the 3 Xin'an River dam immigrant families from the neighboring province in the production team. According to Xu, the local production team people viewed them as resource competitors and scold them as occupier of the local resources. As immigrants were minorities in the production team, the production team leaders treated them unfairly, such as giving them lower work points with the same workload or distributing heavier labor to them. Interviewee 14's father joined KMT in the Republican era, so his father was labeled as "poor peasants" during the Land Reform, and received unfair treatment. His father used to do heavy labor in the brigade's brick-and-tile workshop and had earned 4-5 thousand work points. But because of his KMT membership and immigrants, he only got half of what he should get. Even so, Interviewee 14 did not criticize the production team head for being biased, instead, viewed him "relatively fair." Because Interviewee 14 felt that with his father's background problem, the head could easily take away some work points he deserved, but the head did not. Interviewee 14 attended

was forced to hand over his entire salary. Around the time when interviewee #36 succeeded in his resistance, interviewee #16 was also exempted from submitting his salary.

Interviewees #14, #19, and #36 were all returning educated youths. Upon graduation and returning to their native production teams, their households also relocated to the countryside with them. Local leaders perceived them as agricultural labor and exercised full control over them, enabling the leaders to force them to surrender their salaries. Conversely, sent-down youths were not typically considered as agricultural labor by the leaders of the production teams to which they were assigned. Instead, they were more likely viewed as resource competitors or weak laborers by the local people, and as a result, were allocated fewer work points. According to interviewees #1 and #22, sent-down youths could receive a maximum of 5 work points per day, while a strong male laborer could earn 9 to 10 work points daily with hard work. Therefore, if a sent-down youth pursued a teaching job, the previous production team leaders would likely not be bothered by it. Consequently, no sent-down youths were forced to hand over their salaries.

Confiscating the entire salary was not the only way local cadres could exploit the situation; they could also potentially pocket the cash for themselves. The treatment of artisans who faced similar circumstances can serve as an example. Interviewee #11's father was a shoe and umbrella mender who had to surrender 40 RMB to the production

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the college entrance exam in 1974 and should got the offer from the Medical College of South Anhui 皖南医学院, but the offer was detained in the commune and was given to a relative of the commune leader.

team each month when he worked outside. In return, the production team's accountant would record 400 work points per month for his father. However, the accountant took the money and recorded the work points without issuing receipts or any documentation. As a result, his father appeared no different from other agricultural labor members in the account book, allowing the accountant to covertly divert the 40 RMB cash away from the production team and into his own pocket. Interviewee #11 was aware of this situation because his father discovered the deception and wrote a big-character poster to criticize the accountant. In retaliation, the accountant, who also served as the director of public safety for the brigade, labeled his father a "bad element." Since Minban teachers received the same treatment as artisans, if it was possible for cadres to cheat artisans out of their income, they could similarly steal Minban teachers' salaries.

The second salary type was payment entirely in work points. Three interviewees (#25, #26, and #39) reported being paid in this manner. Interviewee #25 received 1,700 work points for a year of teaching. He could not clearly recall the value of work points, but he remembered that the maximum value was 0.5-0.6 RMB for 10 work points. I asked if he had calculated his yearly salary, not expecting an exact figure since he could only provide the highest work point value. Surprisingly, he had calculated the average monthly salary for the three years between 1965 and 1967 and informed me without hesitation that it amounted to 4.39 RMB per month. This was lower than the lowest cash salary of 5 RMB per month. However, he also worked as an accountant for the production team, earning an additional 300 work points annually. At the end of each year, besides the cash, he would receive 150 kg of grain for free, referred to as work point grain. Undoubtedly, he must have struggled to survive on such a meager salary and felt

compelled to determine his exact monthly income. In the end, he was both surprised and impressed by the figure, resulting in a vivid memory of the number.

While interviewee #25 was paid exclusively in work points and the local community experienced poor financial conditions, his case does not necessarily demonstrate that the rural community opted for work point payments due to their adverse financial situation. Interviewee #26, a sent-down youth in Tangkou commune, belonged to a production team with a high work point value, which exceeded 1 RMB. She received 4 work points daily, resulting in a salary ranging between 10 to 15 RMB per month, which placed her within the average range for elementary school Minban teachers. Interviewee #39 did not have a clear memory of the work point value and could only recall that his daily salary was between 0.1 and 0.4 RMB. His salary was likely similar to or lower than that of interviewee #26.

The value of work points varied annually based on a production team's income for the year, and as a result, the team's financial situation could influence Minban teachers' salaries. In 1968, interviewee #25's production team experienced a change in leadership. The new leader allocated 2,800 work points to him, and the production team's income increased substantially that year, reaching around 1 RMB per 10 work points. In addition to the extra 300 work points he received for his accountant position, he obtained 400 kg of work point grain. Consequently, his monthly salary for that year ranged between 20 and 25 RMB, which was relatively high among elementary school salaries.

The third type of payment involved a combination of cash and work points. Six interviewees were paid in this manner. Of these six teachers, five received a portion of

their salaries in cash each month, with the remainder allocated as work points at the end of each year. For example, interviewee #9 received 11 RMB in cash each month and 1,800 work points at the end of the year. In his production team, the value of work points was 0.19 RMB per 10 work points. As a result, he obtained an additional 34.2 RMB at the end of the year. Including this amount, his monthly salary equaled 13.85 RMB. Interviewee #17 received 8 RMB in cash each month and was assigned 2,000 work points at the end of the year. With a work point value of 0.3 RMB per 10 work points, he received an extra 60 RMB at the end of the year, bringing his total monthly salary to 13 RMB. Interviewees #21 and #39 had similar arrangements. Interviewee #21 received 10 RMB in cash each month and an additional 8 RMB for each of the 10 teaching months at the end of the year, resulting in a monthly salary of approximately 17 RMB. Interviewee #39 received 12 RMB in cash each month, with an additional 6 RMB per month at the end of the year, yielding a monthly salary of 18 RMB. Interviewee #20 also received 8 RMB in cash each month, but he was supposed to receive an extra 16 RMB per month at the end of the year, totaling 192 RMB. However, he rarely received the full amount, with tens of RMB missing each year. His salary was approximately 20 RMB each month.

Interviewee #6's situation was unique compared to the other five interviewees. He received 20 RMB in cash each month and, at the end of the year, received 100-150 kg of unhusked rice for free. His payment arrangement fell somewhere between the first and the last types. The reason he was placed in this category is that the free unhusked rice typically (although not always) came with work points. As mentioned later, interviewee #6's father held considerable authority in the local community and had strong connections to higher leaders. As a result, it is more likely that interviewee #6's payment arrangement

was of the last type, but due to his father's influence, he was able to receive the work point portion in advance each month instead of waiting until the end of the year.

The low salaries of most minban teachers were barely enough to support their lives, so they had to find other ways to make ends meet. Some of them engaged in agricultural labor to earn work points, while others pursued small businesses, such as working as a cotton fluffer or engaging in small private trade. Interviewees #28, #29, #37, #38, and #44 mentioned that they needed to perform agricultural labor to earn work points during any holidays (usually Sundays, summer vacations except for training days, and winter vacations). Interviewees #28, #29, and #37 claimed to be strong laborers and could earn 10 work points for every working day. For example, interviewee #28's monthly salary was 20 RMB, and his work points were worth 1.1-1.2 RMB every day. Agricultural labor helped him earn an income that placed him among the top level of my interviewees. Interviewee #29 mentioned that he could obtain one-third of a heavy laborer's work points each year, which amounted to about 660 work points worth 33-40 RMB. His monthly salary of 18 RMB was in the mediocre level among the interviewees.

Interviewee #37's production team did not have as high of a value as interviewee #28, so he could only earn an additional 3 RMB every month from agricultural labor. Combining this with his teaching salary, he could earn 11 RMB each month. While this was still considered low among my interviewees, he mentioned that his salary was already the highest in the village. As previously mentioned, interviewee #38 was interviewee #37's wife, and her monthly salary was only 5 RMB. Despite the low salary, other villagers were envious of her cash income because most of them could not earn that

much cash through agricultural labor. She also engaged in agricultural labor during the weekends to earn extra work points, but she could not recall how many work points she was able to earn.

Interviewee #44 taught in a brigade-owned middle school, and his salary was 25 RMB in cash each month. This was considered a decent salary even among middle school minban teachers. However, he was responsible for supporting his parents' livelihood, so he engaged in agricultural labor and pursued small business opportunities to supplement his income. For example, he bought oranges from his pupils' parents and sold them to third-front factory workers in the neighboring county. He also purchased bamboo from the local area and sold it in the neighboring Zhejiang province.

Interviewee #22's father was a cotton fluffer who had migrated from Yongjia county in Wenzhou prefecture of Zhejiang province during the anti-Japanese war period to avoid the conflict. Interviewee #22 spent several years sleeping in his father's workshop, which allowed him to learn the ins and outs of cotton fluffing. During the first year of the Cultural Revolution, his father advised him against participating in the "revolutionary networking" and instead encouraged him to become an apprentice to another cotton fluffer. Heeding his father's advice, Interviewee #22 went to North Anhui province to work as an apprentice in cotton fluffing. Over the course of the first three years of the Cultural Revolution, he honed his skills. When he was sent down to the countryside in November 1968, he already possessed the expertise of a professional cotton fluffer.

Interviewee #22 found a way to supplement his income as a minban teacher by working as a cotton fluffer during holidays. He could earn around 300 RMB each month from cotton fluffing, which was significantly higher than his monthly salary as a teacher (16 RMB). The reason cotton fluffing was so profitable was the constant demand for it. In Anhui province, the weather was cold and wet during the winter, making heavy cotton blankets essential for people. After several years of use, the cotton in the blankets would clump together and lose its warmth and fluffiness. Cotton fluffers used tools like arches to restore the cotton's warmth and fluffiness, which made their services valuable. Additionally, after collectivization, common people had limited access to cotton, as they could no longer grow their own. In the wake of the Great Leap Forward, the state prioritized grain production and reduced cotton cultivation. This further limited access to cotton for the general population, making the need to renew cotton blankets even more critical. As a result, the cotton fluffing business became quite lucrative.

Before Interviewee #22 became a minban teacher, he worked as a cotton fluffer for a year. A local cadre warned him that continuing in this lucrative business could potentially harm his future prospects. Interviewee #22's father had been categorized as a "little artisan (小手工业者)" during the land reform and was subsequently forced to do heavy labor for free. Sensing the potential risks, Interviewee #22 agreed to take the job as a minban teacher. While the monthly salary of 16 RMB was sufficient for a frugal lifestyle, Interviewee #22 still chose to secretly work as a cotton fluffer during school holidays to earn extra income. This allowed him to supplement his income as a minban teacher while still maintaining his official position.

Some interviewees held other jobs besides being minban teachers, but these additional jobs were not primarily for earning extra income. Interviewee #19 and #20 both were required to work as accountants for their local production teams. Interviewee #19 served as an accountant for his native production team while also holding a teaching job in a elementary school outside his native team. The leaders of his native production team wouldn't allow him to leave unless he continued to work as the accountant. To manage both responsibilities, his wife and mother helped with the simpler accounting tasks during school days, and he would complete the remaining work during holidays. Interviewee #20 wanted to move his household to the production team where he taught. The production team agreed to accept his household only if he also worked as an accountant. In order to move his household, Interviewee #20 accepted the additional responsibility of serving as the accountant.

Interviewee #35 had been a barefoot doctor for eight years, and during his first few months in that role, the elementary school principal of his production team asked him to be a substitute teacher. He managed to work as a substitute teacher for two years while also serving as a barefoot doctor. When asked how he was able to juggle both jobs simultaneously, he explained that the school was just a few yards away from his home. When he did not have a class to teach, he would go back home, grab his medicine box, and attend to his duties as a barefoot doctor. He did not mention any conflicts between the two roles, but his words suggested that he prioritized teaching over his work as a barefoot doctor.

The disparity in salary between minban teachers and public teachers was evident. Public elementary school teachers had a minimum monthly salary of 34.5 RMB, while minban teachers carried a similar workload, if not more. Despite this, the gap in compensation between the two was significant.

To summarize, minban teachers' compensation differed not only in terms of the method of payment but also the amount. Their salary was largely influenced by the financial situation of the local community they served, with richer communities being able to offer higher salaries. However, there was no clear correlation between the financial status and the payment method. Other factors that influenced minban teachers' salaries included the type of school they taught at, whether they were sent-down or returning youths, and their relationship with local leaders. Generally, middle school minban teachers received higher salaries than elementary school minban teachers. Sent-down youths had more opportunities to leave their previous production team and secure better-paying jobs. Meanwhile, returning youths were often required to submit their salaries to or perform additional work for their production teams without compensation. Some returning youths who were the children of local leaders received special benefits, such as receiving advance salary payments. Regardless of how minban teachers were paid, their salaries were not based on their teaching skills, teaching results, or abilities.

Recruitment

Being aware of the unequal treatment, several minban teachers were not willing to take the teaching job. But despite the unequal treatment, other minban teachers still

accepted the teaching job because it was one of the few jobs that provided stable cash income for rural people, apart from being soldiers, workers, or salespeople in the local Supply and Marketing Co-operation (供销社). According to interviewee #6, in 1968, out of the 150 students in his junior middle school: Huicheng middle school, only one of them successfully became a worker. The chance of securing a job as a worker was very rare for students. Likewise, interviewee #24 was one of the three youths who passed the body check to become a soldier, but only the eldest youth was successful in becoming one. “Teacher was the job I am least interested in, but I had graduated from senior middle school for 3 years and had been doing agricultural labor since then. There was no other way out, so I became a minban teacher.”. As per interviewee #37, job opportunities to be a worker or soldier were reserved for the children of local community leaders. In his production team, only four youths graduated from middle school, and only one was able to enroll as a soldier. The remaining three youths became minban teachers. Meanwhile, interviewee #16's father held a coveted position as the head of the Supply and Marketing Co-operation in another commune. The education cadre of interviewee #16's commune asked her to be a minban teacher since they knew her father, but she resigned from the teaching job once her father secured a job for her as a saleswoman in the local Supply and Marketing Co-operation. Moreover, interviewee #22, who initially planned to become a cotton-fluffer, was threatened by a local leader to become a minban teacher instead.

Despite the meager salary, being a minban teacher was still viewed as a preferable alternative to agricultural labor by rural people, and some individuals required personal

connections to obtain the position. Since schools were financially decentralized to local communities, the recruitment of minban teachers was primarily determined by local community leaders such as production team heads, brigade leaders, and commune leaders. Children of these leaders, as well as those with connections to them, enjoyed the privilege of being hired as minban teachers. Additionally, the education cadre of a community was sometimes responsible for recruiting minban teachers by searching for suitable candidates.

Interviewee #5 shared their experience of working as a substitute teacher for four years in three different elementary schools. After graduating from senior middle school, the principal of a elementary school who was from the same production team as interviewee #5 introduced them to be a substitute teacher in his school. However, after a year, interviewee #5 was informed that the son of the local brigade party secretary had graduated from the senior middle school. The production team needed to prioritize the benefits of local people, and hence, they were dismissed from their job with no compensation. Fortunately, interviewee #5 was able to find another substitute teaching position in a different elementary school, with the help of a pupil's father who was the teaching director. Interviewee #5 stayed there for three years until they were dismissed again with no compensation when the county's normal high school distributed more graduates, also known as public teachers, to the school. Eventually, the principal invited interviewee #5 to teach in a remote village as a substitute teacher. He successfully past the selection exam that year and became a public teacher. Interviewee #5 said that “the most fervent wish for minban teachers was receiving equal treatment and respect with

public teachers. (民办老师最大的愿望就是和公办教师平起平坐)". The minban teacher in interviewee #5's own production team was the son of the brigade's party secretary, who later became their brother-in-law. Interviewee #5's teaching job was much more vulnerable compared to the teaching jobs of children of brigade's party secretaries, as they were dismissed from their first teaching job to make a vacancy for the son of the local brigade's party secretary.

Out of the 46 interviewees, 35 were returning educated youths. Among these 35 returning youths, interviewees #6, #16, #20, #30, #31, #38, #3, #4, and #21 were children of local community leaders. Interviewee #6's father was the production team head for almost 20 years, enjoyed authority in the local community, and later became one of the commune leaders. In 1969, according to interviewee #6, he was named the minban teacher by the commune leaders as he was the only qualified candidate in the commune. The reliability of his statement was questionable, but there was no way to prove whether his father played a role in his nomination or not. Interviewee #6 taught in a one-room school for a year, but he found teaching so boring that he did not want to continue. The entire school was dismissed the following year, and when asked about the reason, interviewee #6 smiled but said nothing. In September 1969, a flood destroyed the school building, which was an ancestral hall, and 20 students in two grades were relocated to private homes. Interviewee #6 did not mention whether the reason for the school's closure was the scattering of the school or the financial difficulties of the production team. The only explanation provided was that he resigned from his job, and the production team approved the dismissal of the entire school. Without his father's approval, his resignation

would not have been easy. In 1970, interviewee #6 was recommended by the local commune to attend a “teacher-training school (教师进修学校)”. After graduating from this school, he became jobless again but soon secured a position as a minban teacher. Without his father's help, he would not have been able to obtain the job so easily.

Interviewee #16 faced discrimination from the local production team leaders and the school accountant when she began her teaching job. The school accountant did not give her the cash salary in the first month, and interviewee #16 suspected that the accountant, who was allegedly having an affair with another female minban teacher, may have wanted some "benefit" from her as well. However, interviewee #16 was able to resolve the issue by informing the commune's education cadre, who was her father’s friend and ordered the accountant to give her the salary. Due to her acquaintance with the cadre, rumors circulated in the production team that she may have had an affair with the cadre. It was not until interviewee #16 assisted the production team in purchasing 100W light bulbs for the tea leaf dryer that the production team leaders began to show her respect.

Interviewee #20 was able to obtain the minban teacher job through his father's introduction. His father was an accountant at a commune's factory, and his personal connections with the commune's leaders played a role in securing the job. Similarly, interviewee #30's father had served as a production team head for over a decade. Interviewee #30 made it clear that he was able to obtain his minban teacher job at the local junior middle school through his father's assistance. Interviewee #31's father had served as the deputy party secretary of the brigade for almost 20 years and wielded

considerable influence in the local community. After interviewee #31 graduated from senior high school in 1973, his father was able to help him secure a job as a contract surveyor in the county's agriculture and irrigation bureau. However, in 1977, all contract surveyors were dismissed, and interviewee #31 became unemployed. His father was quick to arrange for him to work as a minban teacher at the local junior middle school.

Local community leaders not only had the power to secure relatively better-paid minban teacher jobs for their own children, but they could also intervene in their children's job placements if necessary. For example, interviewees #30 and #31, who were both sons of local community leaders, began their teaching careers as minban teachers in junior middle schools in 1978. However, they were not qualified to attend the public teacher selection exam in the following years, which I will discuss in the following section. In contrast, the selection exam for elementary school minban teachers was held annually. Thanks to their fathers' influence, both interviewees #30 and #31 were able to transfer to elementary schools where they were qualified to take the selection exam. They acknowledged their fathers' role in securing their job placements.

It is worth noting that not all local community leaders would assist their children in securing teaching jobs. For instance, interviewee #38 shared that her father did not overtly help her obtain a minban teacher job, but his position in the community indirectly contributed to her education. When she graduated from high middle school in February 1975, the principal of her production team's elementary school asked her to become a minban teacher there. However, she declined as she was a shy person and lacked confidence in her teaching abilities. Her father did not pressure her to accept the job. The

following year, the principal returned with the brigade's revolution committee director and invited her to become a minban teacher again. This time, she accepted the offer. When interviewee #38 entered senior high school in 1972, every junior middle school student required the commune's recommendation to enter senior high school. Without her father's help, it would have been difficult for her to advance her education. As one of the few highly educated youths in the local community, the principal likely extended the invitation to interviewee #38 twice due to her educational background.

Interviewees #6, #16, #20, #30, #31, and #38 were all children of local community leaders, while interviewees #3, #4, and #21 were wives of community leaders. Interviewee #3, for example, married a public teacher who had been working for 11 years. She graduated from junior middle school in 1963 but had been doing agricultural labor since then. Unlike interviewee #6, who was also a junior middle school graduate and the son of a local community leader, interviewee #3 did not have an immediate opportunity to become a minban teacher. Interviewee #3 got married in 1965. It was not until 1976, when her husband finished constructing a elementary school, that interviewee #3 finally became a minban teacher.

Interviewee #4's husband played a significant role in assisting her with job transitions during times when relocating between communes proved challenging. She completed her junior middle school education in 1965 and was recommended by the commune to enroll in a one-year teacher training program in the city. Upon graduating, the "Revolutionary Networking" campaign had just commenced, prompting her to participate. In 1967, she returned from the networking initiative and was immediately

assigned a minban teaching position by her home commune. In 1971, she got married and continued living with her parents. However, in 1976, her father-in-law insisted that she relocate to live with her husband's family. Concurrently, her brother sought to have a second child, which would be problematic with Interviewee #4 remaining in the same household. Pressured by both her father-in-law and brother, she agreed to move, provided that she would secure a similar job in the new location. As a veteran and the 武装部长 (militia leader) of his commune, her husband successfully obtained a minban teaching position for her. Without her husband's leadership position within the commune, acquiring a comparable job would have been unattainable.

Interviewee #21's job change was not driven by a desire for a better position but rather the result of conflicts involving her husband and other school leaders. Her husband, a public teacher since 1954, held the position of teaching director at the commune's central elementary school during the 1970s. However, disagreements with the school principal led to Interviewee #21's dismissal in 1975, forcing her to return to her husband's home and engage in agricultural work. Consequently, her husband applied for a position in another commune, contingent upon securing a minban teaching position for Interviewee #21. Both successfully obtained new jobs in 1976.

Interviewee #15, on the other hand, gained access to a minban teaching position through the assistance of an education cadre from the commune, whom he had befriended during his senior high school years. With the cadre's help, he secured the job at an exceptional monthly salary of 30 RMB in cash, while his colleagues earned 18.5 or 22.5 RMB per month. Although the education cadre was not a relative, the personal

connection between him and Interviewee #15 proved instrumental in the latter's recruitment and compensation.

Interviewee #25's experience differed from others as he was introduced to the minban teaching job by the local Four-Cleanups production team. In 1964, he joined the team despite his family background as "small land loaners" and having a cousin labeled a "counterrevolutionary." His father, who was deaf and mute, had passed away during the Great Famine. As the only child, Interviewee #25 could not afford to continue his junior middle school education even after passing the entrance exam. Consequently, he attended a local agricultural middle school where he was primarily assigned the leisurely task of cattle herding. He borrowed books from friends or traded his sticky rice quota at school to acquire reading material. Upon graduation, at just 15 years old, he was not considered an adult laborer. For the following five years, he engaged in agricultural work whenever possible, earning a mere three work points per day. To support his mother financially, he sold firewood that he collected. In 1964, after the arrival of the Four-Cleanups production team in his village, he defended his cousin in an argument with the team. This bold act left a lasting impression on one of the cadres, who subsequently invited him to join the team. Initially, they assigned him an accountant position, but given that accountants were primary targets during the "Four-Cleanups" campaign, his mother refused to let him accept the role. As a result, the production team assigned him a minban teaching job instead.

However, as Interviewee #25 revealed, the production team's authority was insufficient to convince all parents to accept him as a teacher. Some parents, aware that

he had been responsible for cattle herding during his time at the agricultural middle school, derogatorily referred to him as "child buffalo herder (放牛娃)." These parents refused to accept him as a teacher and provide financial support, since his salary was solely based on work points, making him reliant on the local community for income. Fortunately, while working with the production team, Interviewee #25 had composed a pair of Spring Festival couplets for a family. The family's elder stepped forward to vouch for him, affirming that he was "educated (有文化的)." The ability to create couplets required a mastery of calligraphy and a deep understanding of traditional Chinese composition rules. It was through this demonstration of adherence to cultural practices that Interviewee #25 eventually gained acceptance from the parents.

While the introducers played a vital role in securing jobs for the previously mentioned interviewees, there were others, such as Interviewee #10, #12, #14, #18, #19, #28, #29, #33, #38, #39, and #41, for whom the introducers were not as instrumental in their recruitment. As I stated earlier, school principals, commune education cadres, or even fellow teachers could serve as introducers. Interviewees #10, #12, #18, #28, and #39 were introduced to teaching positions by school principals. Interviewee #19 and #29, on the other hand, were introduced by education cadres. However, unlike Interviewee #15's situation, they did not receive any special treatment or privileges from the cadres.

Interviewee #41's case was unique, as the teaching position resulted from a compromise between the education cadre and Interviewee #41's father. Interviewee #41 experienced severe conflicts with the son of the commune's education cadre. Upon graduating, he received a recommendation for senior high school, likely due to his

father's leadership role in the local brigade. However, the cadre disapproved and instead recommended him for a minban teaching position. According to Interviewee #41, the education cadre initially had no intention of recommending the minban teaching job to him. It was only after other commune leaders reminded the cadre of Interviewee #41's father's respected status and authority within the brigade that the education cadre decided to recommend him for the minban teaching position. Thus, the minban teaching job emerged as a compromise between the involved parties.

An alternative method of selecting minban teachers involved conducting a vote among all brigade members. This approach was experienced by Interviewees #11, #17, #35, #36, #38, and #44. Interviewees #11 and #17 were aware of the selection conference and were informed by the production team leader or the accountant. In contrast, Interviewees #35, #36, #38, and #44 were not aware of the selection process.

Becoming Public Teachers

Prior to the introduction of the public teacher selection exam in 1978, opportunities for minban teachers to transition into public teaching roles were limited. Converting minban teachers into public teachers represented an increased financial burden on the state budget, resulting in scarce and highly sought-after transfer quotas. Communes were allocated only 1-2 quotas every few years, and obtaining one typically required strong personal connections. Two interviewees discussed these narrow opportunities.

Interviewee #22 recounted an instance in which a female colleague secured a quota due to her father-in-law's position as head of the county labor bureau. A party-secretary of a brigade in the commune managed to obtain a quota from the county education bureau for his son-in-law. However, the county education bureau required the approval of the county labor bureau before allocating the quota to the commune. The labor bureau head agreed to provide the quota to the commune under the condition that it was awarded to his daughter-in-law. Consequently, she became a public teacher. This example demonstrates that not only were personal connections necessary for minban teachers to become public teachers, but they also needed particularly influential connections.

Interviewee #6 managed to obtain a quota due to his father's position as a brigade leader and his close friendship with the commune's party secretary, Wang Jiagui. In early 1967, amidst the armed conflicts between the two major factions of the Cultural Revolution, Wang Jiagui found himself on the losing side. He fled and sought refuge in the home of Interviewee #6's father, who hid him for two months and treated him well. This act of kindness forged a strong bond between them. In 1976, when Interviewee #6's father sought Wang Jiagui's assistance in transferring his son to a public teaching position, Wang Jiagui successfully secured the necessary quota.

However, the majority of minban teachers lacked the influential personal connections required to obtain such quotas. Their primary avenue for transitioning into public teaching roles was through selection exams. The first two exams took place in 1978 and 1979 and featured strict enrollment criteria. Eligible candidates had to be under

35 years of age and have at least five years of continuous teaching experience. This meant that older minban teachers with longer tenures were not qualified to take the exams. Additionally, female minban teachers who had given birth and taken several months of maternity leave within the preceding five years were also deemed ineligible to participate.

Before 1976, another route to becoming public teachers involved being recommended to colleges or universities as "worker, peasant, and soldier students" by local communes. This opportunity was also rare for most minban teachers. Interviewee #39 was recommended to a college, and upon receiving his college offer letter, he was simultaneously appointed as the brigade's revolutionary committee director.

Post-1979, the elementary school teacher selection exam continued annually, while the middle school teacher exam was halted, only resuming in 1984. Minban teachers with connections to local leaders could be transferred to elementary schools to participate in the selection exam. Interviewee #30 had been a middle school minban teacher since February 1978. Recognizing the uncertain future for middle school minban teachers, his father, who had been the production team head for nearly 20 years, transferred him to a elementary school minban teacher position in early 1981. He took the elementary school minban teacher selection exam in July that year and successfully became a public teacher. Interviewee #31's situation was similar. He had been a minban teacher in the commune's middle school since February 1978, and his father, who served as the brigade's deputy party secretary, had helped him secure the job. As the selection exam was not open to middle school teachers at the time, and elementary school teachers

were eligible to take the exam if they had taught for at least one year, his father helped him transfer from middle school to elementary school in 1982.

In the final two years of the 20th century, the state aimed to transition all existing minban teachers to public teaching positions. An anonymous informant from the education bureau disclosed that bureau leaders privately informed them of the number of minban teachers being transferred to public positions in neighboring counties. "This was a hint for us to surpass them. Some minban teachers would bring students' graded homework, filling several fertilizer bags, to prove their teaching experience. However, they didn't realize that what truly mattered was simply the employment verification letter signed by the respective town leader. If we found this signed letter, the teacher was deemed qualified for the transfer." I asked, "So, it's possible for people to leverage personal relationships and forge the verification letter, right?" The official merely smiled in response.

Gender Differences

The gender disparity among minban teachers was evident in the proportion of female teachers, the frequency with which women had to leave their teaching jobs, the challenges they faced in becoming public teachers, and the issues they encountered due to marriage and pregnancy.

As previously mentioned, Interviewee #16 encountered the threat of sexual harassment upon arriving at the sent-down village as a young female. The "benefit" that the production team accountant sought from her was of a sexual nature. When her father's

friend intervened to resolve her salary issue, she became entangled in rumors about her alleged sexual relationship. Only when she obtained rare commodities for the village did she cease to be a target for sexual advances.

Among my 46 interviewees, 14 of them (#2, #3, #4, #8, #13, #16, #21, #23, #26, #27, #32, #34, #38, #39) were women, constituting only 30.43%. Considering that I deliberately sought more female interviewees when reaching out for contacts, it is likely that female minban teachers made up about or less than 30% in larger groups, such as those at the county, province, or national level.

In addition to the approximately 30% representation of women among all minban teachers, pregnancy could also cost women their jobs and promotion opportunities. Interviewee #2 married a public teacher in 1962, just after graduating from senior middle school and failing to enter college.[395] She initially worked as a minban teacher in her own village from 1962 to 1963. Her husband worked about 10 miles away from both his and her villages, but she could stay in her maternal home after marriage. She gave birth to her first child in 1963 and took maternity leave. However, her previous school did not keep her job during her maternity leave, so she had to teach in another village in 1964. Interviewee #38 received the honor of "outstanding teacher (优秀教师)" at the county level in 1978 or 1979, and if she had attended the selection exam that year, she would have been selected first. However, she gave birth to her child that year and could not

[395] I could not know why she could not enter the college. She and her husband told me it was because her father used to be the local neighborhood leader (保长) in the Republican era. Her younger brother could not enter college due to the same reason. But the year she attended the college entrance exam, 1962, witnesses the only time when college paid more attention to grades than political background. So it was possible that interviewee #2 could not enter the college not because of her family background, but her grades.

attend the exam. There was no makeup opportunity for her. Pregnancy could also hinder female teachers' promotion chances, regardless of their teaching performance.

Female minban teachers were often the ones who sacrificed their careers to serve the needs of their families, such as taking care of parents-in-law, children, or their maternal family's needs. Interviewee #2 was one such teacher who gave up her teaching job to ease her parents-in-law's financial burden. She was a minban teacher near her birth village and lived with her maternal family after marriage. However, during the Four-Cleanups campaign, the "Four-Cleanups" production team in her husband's village forced her to move to her husband's house; otherwise, her parents-in-law would have to buy grain from the production team at the highest price. Her parents-in-law both came from rich merchant families before 1949, making them politically vulnerable during the Maoist era. Neither of them had the strength or skills to perform agricultural work, so they could only earn a few work points, which meant they received little grain and owed the production team cash every year.[396] If Interviewee #2 did not move, her parents-in-law would have to buy grain at the high price of 15.6 RMB/50 kg, while the price for other production team members was 6.8 RMB/50 kg.[397] Her husband tried to argue with the production team leader but failed. As a result, Interviewee #2 gave up her teaching job

[396] This kind of households were called over-accounting household(超计户). In the production team, everyone in a household could receive a certain amount of grain, and they had to do agricultural labor to earn work points. The production team would decide how many work points every labor could get at the end of year. The production team would also calculate the value of work point then. If the household's work points value was not enough to pay their amount of grain, this household was called over-accounting household(超计户), which meant they owned the production team money. If a family did not have enough strong adult labor, it was possible that all family members worked hard for a whole year, and in the end, they owned the production team money.

[397] Her parents had to buy the "high-price grain (高价粮)," while other production team members got "low-price grain (低价粮)." "High-price grain" did not mean better grain, it was the same grain with "low-price grain." The only difference was the price.

and moved in with her parents-in-law. In her husband's village, she worked as a barefoot doctor, an accountant, and an agricultural laborer for the production team for ten years, from 1964 to 1973. It wasn't until 1973, when her husband's production team needed a minban teacher, that she returned to her teaching job.

Interviewee #8, similar to #2, left her teaching job to take care of her father-in-law and her son. She resigned from her teaching position in 1982 after working for seven years, which made her eligible for the public teacher selection exam later that year. Her father-in-law had been a rickshaw puller in the early years of the PRC and later became a heavy laborer at the county's moving station (搬运站). When her husband (Interviewee #7) became a minban teacher in 1972 and received a high salary (30 RMB each month), her father-in-law moved from the county seat to his son's place. The couple got married in 1969 and had a son in 1970. In 1980, when the father saw that it was possible for people to do small businesses, he went back to the county seat and started a small peddler business there. He also took his grandson with him to return to the county seat. Both of them were not in good health, and she left her job to take care of them. Interviewee #21 also gave up her teaching job, which she had done for about seven years, and moved to her husband's production team in 1983. This was because the production team was distributing private lands at that time. If she did not move to the production team, the couple would not have been able to get a piece of land from the team.

Many of my female interviewees not only gave up their jobs for their husbands' families but also for their own maternal families. Their mothers could exploit them as well. For instance, Interviewee #26's mother asked her to move from a rich production

team to a poorer one in order to take care of her younger brother. Interviewee #26 initially worked in the wealthiest commune in the county in late 1968, where the work point value was more than 1 RMB per 10 work points, making it a desirable place for sent-down youths. When her brother was sent down the following year, the family tried to get him into the same commune as his sister but failed. Interviewee #26's mother felt that her son would be miserable in a strange village alone and forced her daughter to move to her son's village. Consequently, Interviewee #26 quit her high-paying job and moved to her younger brother's place.

Despite facing unequal treatment in terms of recruitment, maternal leave, and family service, female minban teachers were not favored when it came to paying salary. Female minban teachers' salaries did not differ significantly from their male counterparts. I have listed female and male minbant teachers' salaries in the two tables and graphs below. The data shows that women's chances of getting higher monthly salaries of 16-20 RMB, 21-25 RMB, and 26-30 RMB were almost the same as men's, with a difference of only 2% at most. Women were more likely (12%) to receive the lowest monthly salary range between 5 RMB and 10 RMB than men (5%). Meanwhile, men were more likely (15%) to receive a relatively low monthly salary between 11 RMB and 15 RMB than women (6%). Men's salaries were slightly more likely (20%) to fall into that range than women's (18%). Thus, women's salaries did not differ significantly from men's.

Table 16: Female Minban Teachers' Salary Allocation

Salary Range (RMB)	Times of Appearance of salaries
5-10	3 (12%)
11-15	1.5 (6%)
16-20	6.5 (25%)
21-25	10.5 (40%)
26-30	4.5 (17%)

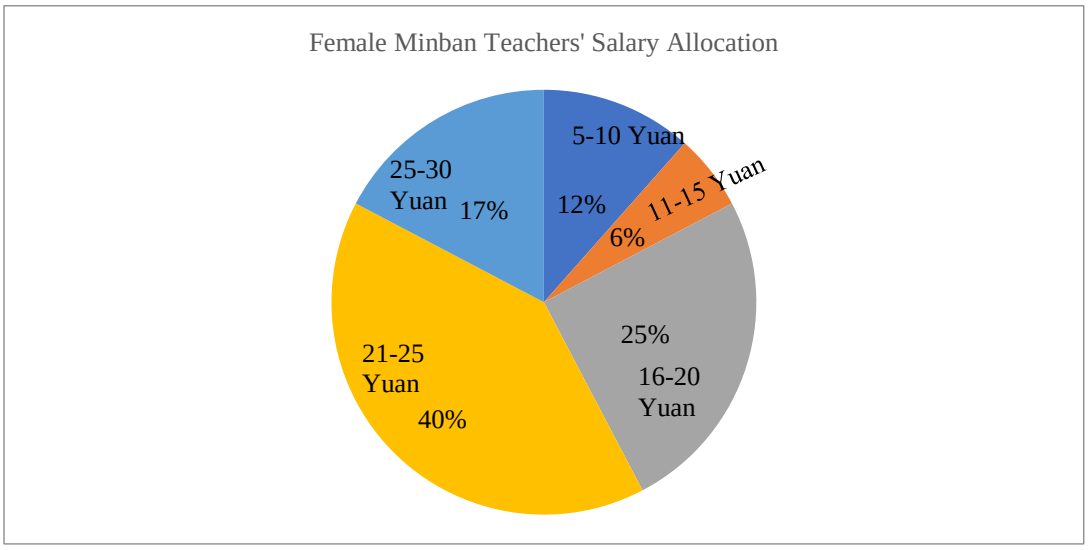

Figure 17: Female Minban Teachers' Salaries Allocation

Table 17: Male Minban Teachers' Salary Allocation:

Salary Range (RMB)	Times of Appearance of salaries
5-10	2 (5%)
11-15	5.5 (15%)
16-20	8.5 (23%)
21-25	15 (41%)
26-30	6 (16%)

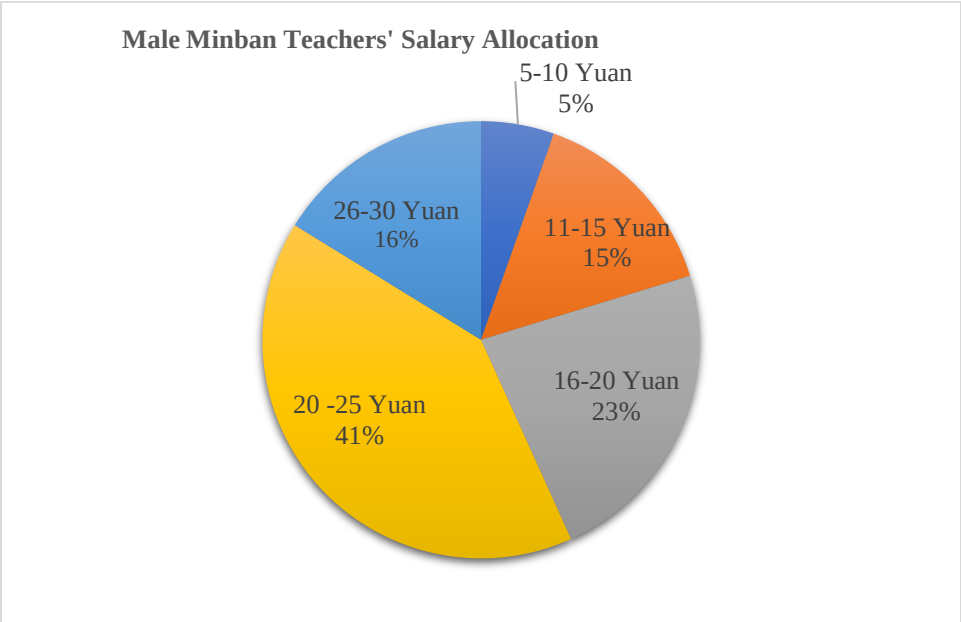

Figure 18: Male Minban Teachers' Salaries Allocation

Defending Their Rights

Minban teachers were aware of the unfair treatment they received compared to public teachers and sought opportunities to advocate for their rights. They had the means

and ability to organize demonstrations for better treatment, and some smaller or individual demonstrations succeeded in achieving their goals. However, minban teachers were unable to organize a countywide demonstration, let alone a provincial or nationwide one. One reason for the failure of larger-scale demonstrations was the diversity among minban teachers in terms of payment, methods of becoming a minban teacher, and their outcomes in the education field.

Some interviewees had been active Red Guards in 1966 and had developed the habit, courage, and skills of arguing for their opinions in front of higher authorities. They had debated with classmates and family members for better socialism. For example, interviewee #7 was an active Red Guard in 1966, and he often argued against his family members, who were part of opposing organizations. When he was sent down to the village, he quarreled with the local brigade head, who he considered a scoundrel(恶霸). He recalled his past experiences: (During the revolutionary networking in1966), “I had been to the provincial government of Anhui province; I have argued with the provincial leaders and military representatives … I was not afraid of arguing with the brigade leaders." (我到过省政府，跟省领导还有军代表交涉过……我不怕，敢吵架).”

After these active Red Guards became minban teachers, they had opportunities to gather together and discuss their workload or salary. As several interviewees mentioned, they needed to gather twice every week for political studies and teaching skills learning, and they had to attend trainings every summer during the 1970s. These gatherings allowed minban teachers to be aware of each other's treatment, ensuring that their situations were not isolated from one another.

Although these large-scale gatherings were designed for CCP's political studies, they also provided a fertile ground for potential demonstrations. According to interviewee #45, in the summer of 1972 or 1973, during the annual summer training for minban teachers held in the county seat, one minban teacher wrote big-character posters highlighting the significant inequalities between minban and public teachers. These posters were displayed on the main street of She County seat and generated a significant impact. They became a hot topic among all teachers attending the summer training, and the training was almost derailed. In response, the deputy county education bureau head came to the training to make a special speech to suppress the expansion of dissatisfaction. Interviewee #45 recalled that the deputy head discussed the national and county situations. As a result, the speech successfully stopped a large-scale demonstration from happening.

Despite the state's efforts to control the situation, resistance and small-scale demonstrations continued to occur among the minban teachers, based on my interviewees' description. For instance, interviewee #13 organized a school-wide strike in 1983 at Fuhe Middle School near the county seat. For years, minban teachers were dissatisfied with the unequal treatment compared to public teachers, who enjoyed only-child subsidy, non-staple food subsidy, teachers' union subsidy that minban teachers did not receive. According to interviewee #13, there was a fee specifically named as a minban teachers' subsidy that students had to pay, but minban teachers never received it. They knew that the school held onto this fee and had asked for it several times. In 1983, several minban teachers wanted interviewee #13 to be the organizer for their demands. She figured there could be two possible consequences: being sent to prison or being

betrayed. She made all participating minban teachers make a vow that they were not afraid of being sent to prison. She also made them agree that if anyone betrays or leaks information to school, the rest of the participants would tell the school that the informant is the organizer. After gaining their agreement, interviewee #13 wrote a report asking for better treatment and submitted it to the headmaster, requesting a response during one of the school-wide meetings: weekly meeting of all teachers in the school and the weekly political study. They waited for three weeks without any reply. On the fourth week, interviewee #13 did not wait until the headmaster spoke. She asked the headmaster whether he had read the report and what was his decision. Other minban teachers followed her and spoke up. The headmaster pounded the table and told minban teacher to wait until the meeting ended. This violent action did not scare the minban teachers. Another female minban teacher sitting on the opposite side of the headmaster pounded the table harder than him and demand for immediate response. The headmaster replied: "I already read, do not agree." "Why?" "I did not get any instruction from the township leaders." Then interviewee #13 and two other minban teachers went to the township leaders and got their agreement to distribute the minban teachers' subsidy to minban teachers. But the headmaster did not do it accordingly. Minban teachers then started their strike. At that time, minban teachers consisted of almost half of all teachers. They did not supervise the final exam, did not do the grading, did not fill out students' grade reports. The headmaster at first asked public teachers to supervise the final exams for the minban teachers. However, some public teachers were minban teachers previously. They showed their support by not supervising the exams. Several days after the strike, the headmaster finally compromised and agreed to the requests in interviewee #13's report.

Interviewee #15 and his classmates who successfully passed the public teacher selection exam in 1980 attended the local normal college for two years, along with over 100 other minban teachers. After graduating, they all became public teachers. However, their two years in college were not counted as working years, which affected their salaries. The policy changed the following year, allowing new graduates to count their two years in college as working years, resulting in higher salaries for them compared to those who graduated just a year earlier.

Interviewee #15 and his colleagues who graduated in the same year planned to "make an issue(闹事)" to fight for equal treatment. The school principal somehow learned of their plans and addressed the issue during a teachers' conference. Interviewee #15 could not recall other details of the speech, except for one specific sentence: “You should be satisfied; think about how hard life is for the minban teachers. (你们要知足，你们想想那些没有转正的民师有多苦)”. “Well, I took a thought. Yes, I think he was right. So, we did not ‘make an issue’ in the end.” Interviewee #15 smiled.

Interviewee #15's recollection indeed does not provide a full picture of the situation at that time. It did not cover the information about who tried to organize the demonstration, how many colleagues were willing to attend the demonstration, what was the plan, etc. But it does offer valuable insight into the mindset and attitudes of the teachers who were considering organizing a demonstration for equal treatment. The principal's sentence played a significant role in convincing interviewee #15 and his colleagues not to proceed with their plan. It also highlights the diversity of minban

teachers' outcomes and experiences, which can contribute to the failure of a united demonstration for their rights.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter investigates the interplay between political campaigns, extensive extraction, education, and local factors on individuals' personal experiences. Based on interviews with 46 minban teachers in She County, the chapter delves into the recruitment process, salary discrepancies, unpaid labor contributions, and career trajectories following the Cultural Revolution.

The recruitment of minban teachers heavily relied on personal connections, making it difficult to secure a position without strong ties. Salaries varied based on factors such as local community work points, connections with local leaders, immigration status, school level, and the distinction between sent-down and returning youths. Surprisingly, these wages were not tied to teaching skills, results, or abilities. Minban teachers typically earned less than or around half the salary of public teachers, despite having similar workloads. They also occasionally provided unpaid labor for school construction, often involving strenuous tasks. To transition to public teaching positions, minban teachers needed strong personal connections. Although the profession was far from ideal for some, many aspired to become minban teachers and dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to their work.

These teachers attempted to defend their rights, even organizing a successful schoolwide strike. However, the diversity among them hindered the formation of larger-

scale protests. By examining minban teachers' experiences, we can better understand how an authoritarian state maintains control and extracts value without encountering strikes or demonstrations. This perspective also sheds light on the functioning of a financially decentralized system in an authoritarian state, revealing how it extracts value from individuals and operates with minimal challenges.

Conclusion

This dissertation contends that the triadic interaction of education expansion, intensive extraction, and political campaigns not only coexisted but also collaboratively fueled one another. This mutually beneficial relationship further intensified the urban-rural divide and amplified gender inequality.

In Chapter 1, the dissertation illustrates how political campaigns coincided with education expansion. It reveals an undeniable gender disparity, where female students were consistently denied the same educational opportunities as their male counterparts. The highest proportion of female students peaked at 43.85% in 1974. This disparity scarcely drew the attention of the state. Chapter 2 asserts that political campaigns symbolized the state's intensifying extraction. It explores the interconnected relationship between political campaigns, extraction, and education. The resurgence of traditional private schools in the early 1960s, discussed in Chapter 3, highlights how rural areas were forsaken once the state prioritized agriculture and pared back on education. Suffering the double burden of the urban-rural divide and gender inequality, female students in rural areas emerged as the most vulnerable group. Chapter 4 unveils the widespread occurrence of sexual violence inflicted upon them. While the state's politicized approach to addressing these crimes provided a means for victims to pursue justice, such politicization often disconnected the punishment from the actual suffering endured by the victims. Chapter 5 delves into the interplay among political campaigns, extensive extraction, education, urban-rural divide, gender inequality, immigration, personal connections, and the personal experiences of minban teachers. Since local

communes, brigades, and production teams were the primary sponsors of education expansion, minban teachers played an essential role in the success of the educational expansion during the Mao era.

This research is not intended as an endorsement of Cold War discourse. While it acknowledges the significant expansion of education during the Mao era, it contests the notion that this was a success exclusively attributable to the socialist state. Instead, it underscores the role of local communities—communes, brigades, and production teams—and individuals in this achievement. The aim is not to glorify the Cold War narrative but rather to demonstrate that Maoist China was no utopia, nor did it present solutions for problems intrinsic to capitalism.

Concerning the provision of education to disadvantaged groups, the public school system in Mao's era held no discernible advantages over those in capitalist countries. In rural areas of Mao's China, access to steady education was precarious, as these regions were immediately forsaken when the state either stagnated or curtailed education. Even during periods of educational expansion, rural populations were primarily taught by minban teachers, who were inadequately compensated and poorly treated in comparison to public school teachers.

Those in more privileged positions—residing in county seats, for example—had stable access to better teaching resources, and teachers were better compensated and resourced. They were more likely to receive further training and experienced teachers were likely to remain in public schools. Thus, in Mao's era, education resources were centralized in public schools located primarily in county seats and townships.

Consequently, disadvantaged individuals had fewer opportunities for quality education—a problem also evident in capitalist societies.

When education was decentralized to communes, brigades, and production teams, Mao era's education appeared to resemble the system from the Imperial and Republican eras. In these earlier periods, major sponsors of education were the people and communities such as lineage organizations, townsmen associations, and industry associations. During Mao's era, the primary sponsors were local communes, brigades, and production teams.

However, this resemblance does not imply functional equivalence. Before the Land Reform, schools owned properties for income generation or received financial aid from local gentry-managed communities. However, during the Land Reform, the state confiscated schools' properties and dismantled the gentry class.

During the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, schools regained some property—either assigned by the county government or belonging to the communes, brigades, or production teams they were part of. But these times also marked a period of intense collectivization, leaving rural people with barely enough food, limited cash income, and few sidelines. This was a stark contrast to their relatively better status before collectivization. Thus, the expansion of education funded by local communes, brigades, or production teams essentially represented another form of extraction from the people—a dynamic different from the pre-Mao era when education expansion was primarily the responsibility of local communities or the gentry class. Therefore, education in Mao's era was not fundamentally similar to its pre-Mao counterparts.