HONGGUANG HE

GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND REFORM IN RURAL CHINA

Case Studies from Anhui Province

POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY CHINA

Governance, Social Organisation and Reform in Rural China

Politics and Development of Contemporary China

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Case Studies from Anhui Province

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List of Acronyms

APC Agriculture Producers' Cooperative (农业生产合作社)
CCP Chinese Communist Party (中国共产党)
CRL Contract Responsibility Land (责任田)
HRS Household (Contract) Responsibility System (家庭联产承包责任制)
KMT Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party) (国民党)
MAT Mutual Aid Team (互助组)
PB Party Branch (党支部)
PPA Poor Peasants' Association (贫农协会)
PRC People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国)
VC Villagers' Committee (村民自治委员会)
XNJ Building New Socialist Countryside (建设社会主义新农村)

Glossary of Chinese Terms

ban dizhu shi funong (rich peasants together with *chengfen* of a landlord, 半地主式富农)
Baochan Daohu (contracting agriculture to production teams, or, fixing farm output quotas for each team, 包产到户)
Baogan Daohu (Household Responsibility System, 包干到户)
changgong (long-term hired hand, 长工)
changxin (fresh grains, 偿新)
chengfen (class status, 成分)
chi zufan (meals, 吃租饭)
chiqing (eating immature or unripe crops, 吃青)
cunrong zhengjie (clean and tidy village, 村容整洁)
Dabaogan (Household Responsibility System, 大包干)
daigeng (rent in the form of labour, 代耕)
dalaocu (country bumpkin, 大老粗)
daozu (rent in the form of grain, 稻租)
dizhu (landlords, 地主)
duangong (casual labourer, 短工)
fangdao (re-lending, 放稻)
fentian daohu (land division for individual use, 分田到户)
fukua feng (boasting and exaggeration, 浮夸风)
funong he zhongnong (rich peasants and middle-income peasants, 富农和中农)
gao lidai (usury, 高利贷)
guanli minzhu (democratic management, 管理民主)
guihua (planning, 规划)
gunong (those who neither owned nor leased land and were hired to work on others' land, 雇农)
hengbao quanli (violent power, 横暴权力)
hexie shehui (harmonious society, 和谐社会)
huobi dizu (rent in the form of money, 货币地租)
huozu (flexible rent, 活租)
jiahe wanshi xing ('a harmonious family produces prosperity and fortune', 家和万事兴)
jia-tianxia ('the model of the state is more or less analogous to the family', 家天下)

juzhong weizun ('the most honoured is to be placed in the middle', 居中为尊)
kai yadang (pawn, 开押当)
mai qingmiao (buying green crops, 买青苗)
mianmao (profile, 面貌)
pingfang (one-storey house, 平房)
pinnong (poor peasants, 贫农)
qita chengfen dizhu (landlords with other *chengfen*, 其它成分地主)
renjian (the human world, 人间)
ritu sancan, yetu yixiu (eating three times per day and sleeping at night, 日图三餐, 夜图一宿)
shengchan fazhan (advanced production, 生产发展)
shenghuo jitihua (collectivisation of lives, 生活集体化)
shenghuo kuanyu (improved livelihoods, 生活宽裕)
siliao (resolving disputes in private, 私了)
songjie (gifts for festivals, 送节)
tianting (Heaven, 天庭)
wuchang fu laoyi (free labour service, 无偿服劳役)
wuxing (the Five Elements, 五行)
xiangfeng wenming (civilised social atmosphere, 乡风文明)
xiao dizhu chuzu zhe (small land lessor, 小地主出租者)
xingdong zhandouhua (militant actions, 行动战斗化)
ya zhuangfei (deposit, 押庄费)
yigan liangxi (one dry dish and two soups, 一干两稀)
yiliang weigang (taking grain as the key link, 以粮为纲)
yinjian (the surrealistic Afterlife World, 阴间)
yuanxiao (a kind of sweet dumpling made from glutinous rice flour, 元宵)
zhangyou youxu ('the honourable and the humble should be differentiated from each other', 长幼有序)
zichanjieji de anle wo (decadent nests of the bourgeoisie, 资产阶级的安乐窝)
zizhi (self-governance, 自治)
zuzhi junshihua (militarisation of organisations, 组织军事化)

Map 1 Geographical location of Xiaogang village in China

Map 2 Geographical location of Xiaogang village in Anhui Province, China

Introduction

1. Introduction

Rural China has been experiencing a dramatic social transformation since the early 20th century. This case study is a micro-level reflection of this transformation. My own village of Xiaogang is a peripheral but historically important village in Central Eastern China. On 20 February 1978, when the Chinese countryside was still under the system of collectivisation, 18 villagers secretly signed a contract to decollectivise the land and contract it to each household, marking the end of rural communisation. This Household Responsibility System (HRS or *Dabaogan*) and its aftermath are the focus of my study. Using data from a four-year period of fieldwork undertaken in Xiaogang Village, I explore the various options open to farmers in the development of their local economies. In particular, I focus on two forms of cooperation, collectivist and non-collectivist, examining how local participants were recruited and how cooperative goals became institutionalised. The powers involved in the process of cooperation are my main analytical concerns.

Why have I chosen cooperation as my focus? Cooperation is one of the basic and most important aspects of human relations (Argyle, 1991; Hinde and Groebel, 1992; Ostrom, 1990; Vermeer et al., 1998). It is safe to say that without cooperation, there would be no societies and no civilisations. However, the concept of cooperation is so general that we need to specify and operationalise it for the purposes of concrete research. Based on this, I selected two forms of cooperation in a Chinese context. Collectivist cooperation is a highly integrated and homogenised version both structurally and culturally; non-collectivist cooperation, on the other hand, is a more flexible and heterogeneous form into which Kerkvliet (2005: 15–19) has undertaken systematic research in rural

Vietnam. This provides us with a useful conduit via which rural China in the Maoist and post-Maoist eras may be compared and contrasted. Finally, using these two types of cooperation has some significant theoretical implications. My work attempts to address the following theoretical issue: contemporary China studies often focus on an opposition of state and community, but they tend to neglect the relationship between the two (that is, collectivist versus non-collectivist). I consider it crucial to pay attention to this relationship because it is the transition from one type of cooperation to the other that sees rural areas in China diverge. On this basis, I contend that research into cooperation contributes to the understanding of society and governance.

Among the key elements of cooperation are power and power relations among various actors. I have drawn upon Foucault's concept of power and power relations to facilitate an understanding of these notions.

'Power' today, according to Foucault, 'is much more complicated, much more dense and diffuse than a set of laws or a state apparatus' (Foucault, 1996: 235); to this end, a new form of power called 'disciplinary power' has emerged. There are some basic clarifications to be made here: first, power is neither omnipresent nor omniscient (Foucault, 1996: 258). In contrast to what Marxism, for example, argues, Foucault's power is a set of complex relationships. In Marxism, power is related to production, class struggle and the interests of the ruling class. Look at the Soviet Union and other Communist parties, for example, Foucault states: '[T]he idea of taking over the apparatus of the state' was 'nothing more than a marvellously simple set of formulas, but ones which absolutely did not take into account what was happening at the level of power' (Foucault, 1996: 258). Marxism's was a repressive understanding of power, which put power exclusively on the stage of the state and the ruling machine, de-emphasising alternative forms of power and regarding the monopolisation of power as the exclusive way to produce legitimacy rather than envisaging 'the possibility that the monopolization of legitimacy might in turn produce power' (Thornton, 2007: 2). Second, power is plural; it is heterogeneous, and 'is always born of something other than itself' (Foucault, 1996: 259). Put differently, there are no loci of power relations. Third, power is asymmetrical and integrated with resistance; thus counter-power, counter-tactics and counter-strategies are inevitable. In other words, power and resistance are interdependent. Individuals are not just passive recipients, kept acquiescent by the exercise of power; rather, the exercise of power is a process of agency, full of negotiation and compromise. Finally, power is exercised rather than possessed. Power achieves its reference and

identity in its relationship with other social forces; it can be converted into strategies or tactics, which people employ in order to exercise it. This is the productivity of power, for, as Foucault argues, 'power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society' (Foucault, 1978b: 93).

In sum, the traditional model emphasises the negative or repressive aspects of power, but power can also be seen as a productive element in the process of social production and reproduction. Power may be more correctly described as a 'double-edged sword' than as having a unilaterally detrimental influence. Power is internalised or interiorised when actors try to convince themselves to accept certain ideas, doctrines, dogmas and beliefs. The regime of truth and the politics of knowledge are closely intertwined with power. In accordance with Bourdieu and Passeron's discussion of 'symbolic violence' (cited in Jenkins, 2002: 104–105), Foucault further suggests that the practice of power is multifaceted, and in most cases is carried by knowledge and discourse.

Where does disciplinary power come from? How is it exercised? Previously, there is another type of power which Foucault terms 'monarchical power', the exercise of which was brutal and violent, its effects terror, fear and cost. For example, it treated convicts like animals. The opening part of *Discipline and Punish*, originally published in 1975, offers an impressive and graphic description of one example of the exercise of this type of power: the horrendous public execution of the regicide Robert-François Damiens on 2 March 1757 in Paris (Foucault, 1979: 3–5). This power was exercised at a higher political cost than disciplinary power, given that it 'resorted to glaring examples to ensure a continuous mode of operation'; monarchical power 'had to be spectacular so as to instil fear in those present' (Foucault, 1979: 3–5). But it was 'too costly in proportion to its results' (Foucault, 1996: 232–233). This form of public execution sometimes backfired and, in some cases, the public became sympathetic with convicts and a riot followed. This type of sovereign power was repressive, negative and essentially juridical.

In time, the new form of power, disciplinary power, came into being. The 'Panopticon' was a utopian programme (Foucault, 1996: 236) initiated by Jeremy Bentham through which to exercise this power. 'According to Foucault, the panopticon is typical of the processes of subjectification that govern modern life. Power organises the population into individual units that are then subject to monitoring in a system of maximum visibility' (Nick, 2000: 62). In the Table I.1, I briefly compare these two types of power.

Table I.1 The ideal difference between sovereign and disciplinary power[1]

	Monarchical or sovereign power	**Disciplinary or normalising power (Foucault, 2003: 39)**
Historical development	Pre-modern times (mainly 17th–18th centuries)	Early 19th century till the present
Operated by	Suppression, externalising	Techniques, technology like an observing gaze and internalising, surveillance and biopower
Rules	Law, jurisdiction	The procedures of normalisation
Way of exercise	Punishment, magnificent rituals	Control, surveillance and invisibility
Main actors	State, kings, aristocrats and sovereignty	Society and individuals
Examples	Public execution and torture	Panopticon, school, asylum
Character	Violent, repressive, spectacular and brutal	Productive, active, positive, non-corporal, heterogeneous and pastoral (Foucault, 1983: 213–215)
Conduit	Scaffold, gibbet, pillory, gallows tree	Knowledge, psy-sciences, e.g. psychology, psychiatry, sociology, pedagogy, criminology
Governing	The condemned body	The body, mind and soul[2]
Political cost	Relatively high and having less 'resolution'	Relatively lower and finer
Doctrine	'Everywhere under Heaven Is no land that is not the king's? To the borders of all those lands None but is the king's slave' (*The Book of Songs*, trans. Arthur Waley, 1987: 320)	'Each comrade becomes an overseer or a guardian' (Foucault, 1996: 234). 'Visibility is a trap' (Foucault, 1979: 200). 'The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body' (Foucault, 1979: 29).
Strategies	The model of Machiavellianism or Leviathan, 'the art of rulership' (Yang, 1988)	The art of government[3]

Within these dissimilarities are two important questions relevant to my own research: (1) What are the new forms of power relations in contemporary rural China among farmers, village cadres and local government (township and county)? (2) Is farmer resistance possible, and if so, how?

It is difficult to understand these questions without first familiarising oneself with Foucault's notions of power. Since Foucauldian power is de-centred and active, an individual may be self-regulated from his/her inner self. Given that power is inextricably intertwined with knowledge, specific populations may produce and internalise knowledge, and empower themselves.

Another core research concern of my case study is how to relate Foucault's framework to the broader context of contemporary China studies. I will argue that utilising Foucauldian methodology is embedded in the context of this area study and propose a paradigm shift in the following section.

2. Studying Foucault in a Chinese context

My literature review here is not so much intended to challenge these research paradigms, which undoubtedly point to important aspects of Chinese society, but rather to introduce a Foucauldian understanding of power relations and their applicability to the study of rural China. It is widely agreed that contemporary China studies have variously gone through models of totalitarianism, pluralism and state–society relations since the early 1980s (Perry, 1994). Following the dismantling of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' communism and the fall of the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe in 1989, the third model – state–society relations – has attracted more research interest and attention than the other two.

In line with Foucault, an unpacking of the concept 'state' is crucial to this study. I agree with Gries and Rosen, who emphasise that an anthropological study of the state is essential; in other words, studying the state from its lowest administrative levels up to its highest echelons. It also entails examining relations between different levels of government and identifying a constellation of state–society interactions that occur on the periphery as well as at the centre (Gries and Rosen, 2004: 4). As O'Brien (2004: 117) states: 'The Chinese state is less a monolith than a hodgepodge of disparate actors, many of whom have conflicting interests and multiple identities.' The state-versus-society paradigm 'suffered from a Liberal bias that fated them to tell us more about ourselves than

they did about China' (Gries and Rosen, 2004: 4). In reality, 'state' and 'society' are mutually constituted in the ongoing process.

Scholars in China studies have developed a range of conceptual frameworks: for example, local state corporatism (Oi, 1999), patriarchal socialism (Stacey, 1983), market clientelism or symbiotic clientelism (Wank, 1995; 1996), fragmented authoritarianism (Lieberthal, 1992) and market-preserving federalism (Montinola et al., 1995). Baum and Shevchenko (1999) term these approaches 'paradigm sweepstakes'. My view of these theoretical frameworks is that they are largely based on a state–society dichotomy. In China studies circles, the state–society dichotomy approach is one of the most important paradigms. Its focus is on the binary relations that obtain between state and society, which were initiated in the 1990s by research into civil society, corporatism, market transition, clientelism, neo-traditionalism and new institutionalism. A controversy emerged immediately after the introduction of this approach to mainland China. The debate surrounding the 'Society-based Community' (the state, like a juggernaut, penetrates every aspect of society) or the 'Community-based Society' (society, in contrast to the state, has its own autonomous space, in which it maintains a balance and its own dedicated ecosystem) further deepens the study of this paradigm (Qin, 1998; 1999a; 1999b; 2003; Li, 2004).

In reality, the instruments of central state control cannot discard their own ruling basis. The state, by its own nature, tends to perpetuate its mechanisms of control over society, especially in moments of major transformation. During the collectivised era, the central state implemented the three-level system (commune/brigade/team), with the production team as its base. Even after reform and decollectivisation, state institutions neither fully released nor dissolved their control over personnel appointments or management practices (evidence will be given in my case studies). It is on this basis that I agree with Sigley's research into Chinese governmentality; that is, the Chinese Party-state is 'regrouping' not 'retreating' (Sigley, 2006). In other words, transformations at the functional level have not really been translated into a weakening of the central state's political power over the countryside. The 'Society-based Community' still imposes an irremovable influence on post-1978 Chinese social and political development. However, I argue that this approach has its deficiencies, my reasons being as follows:

First, the binary opposition of state–society tends to simplify the vertical relations in the political hierarchy, paying little or insufficient attention to the horizontal layout at the grassroots level. Take the aforementioned 'local state corporatism' (Oi, 1999) as an example. Oi, who

takes pains to delineate the clientelism between cadres and community members in the Maoist era and the local government and industries in post-Mao times, largely overlooks the personal interaction among villagers within the political structure. Anthropologists' studies have demonstrated that definitions of village and also the village autonomy efforts have achieved greater influence over village-construction and self-identity maintenance (Feuchtwang, 1998; Chau, 2005; Yang, 2007a). The local ecological structure and the indigeneity of villages create an alternative worldview, which the theory of clientelism only partially touches upon.

Second, conventional thinking about politics and society is structured in oppositional pairs or binaries: state/society; public/private; left/right; power/resistance; coercion/freedom; legal/criminal; sane/mad; rural/urban; civilised/uncivilised; and friends/enemies. This way of thinking is deeply embedded within systems of thought, which can be traced to foundational binaries: male/female; sacred/profane; raw/cooked; and later, capitalism/socialism; core/periphery; and oriental/occidental. However, binaries are simplistic: they conceal more than they reveal. Through its analysis of the historical and contemporary development of rural China, I hope that my work will provide insight into the local rebuilding of this binary approach – in the process, disrupting the above reductive dichotomies.

Third, the state–society dichotomy approach misrepresents society by using the terminology of 'structuralism', which understands society as a seamless or neat entity, and 'functionalism', which offers a set of pre-ordained theories and tries to draw a teleological picture, usually said to be related to maintaining social or political stability. Take the 'free-riding' debate as an example. Commentators argue that the collective agricultural system in China failed in part because the state reward system was too egalitarian to provide sufficient work incentives to the farmers or to reflect the consumption problem of the rural population, who were impoverished by the state policy of extracting agriculture (Gao, 2006; Wu, 2002; Kung, 1994). A popular view attributes egalitarianism to the difficulties surrounding the monitoring of work effort by a team as well (O'Leary and Watson, 1983; Putterman, 1988; Vermeer et al. 1998), since the administrative institution of the Commune has a higher cost of surveillance. In fact, things could be explained differently. Take the 80 *mu* land in an 80-farmer village as an example. If each farmer works for the same amount of time, all things being equal, 80 farmers will get 80 units of production output (given that every unit of production is about 500 kilograms of grain); in other words, every

farmer gets 500 kilograms of grain. It would be the same if each farmer works on retained land (*ziliudi*), which is distributed by the brigade for the farmers' own family use. So the question is: why are farmers reluctant to work on public land? Why do they become 'free-riders'? I agree with the above explanations, but if the question is viewed from another perspective, the fact that farmers have no rights of distribution of the output they produce, irrespective of how hard they work on the land, discourages and frustrates them. Under such circumstances, farmers have no management and assignment rights and therefore have little incentive to put initiative into action. Farmers can thus be seen to be acting in a rational and self-oriented manner. Similarly, '[w]here innovation fails to occur one should not assume that farmers are perverse, irrational or conservative; instead, one should search for the particular institutional or commercial obstacles which are frustrating constructive change' (Griffin, 1979: 184). The state–society dichotomy does not pay sufficient attention to the nuances of these scenarios.

Fourth, the state–society dichotomy in China studies tends to neglect histories and cultures. This type of conventional Western political and sociological theory is either 'ahistorical' – not factoring in history when explaining social/political phenomena – or 'teleological', assuming a linear (usually Western) model of historical development (with liberal democracy and the market economy as the end point). Both cases tend to ignore questions of cultural difference (e.g. *guanx*i; Yang, 1994; 2002). Such complexities and nuances could be much more deeply analysed by employing the Foucauldian genealogical approach; that is, by tracing the history of institutional practices on rural cooperation, tracing systems of thought and the 'regimes of truth' behind these practices,[4] and probing into the rationalities of government instead of simply the operation of governing.

This approach challenges the assumptions implicit in many of the dominant paradigms; for example, Victor Nee's 'market transition theory' maintains that 'the more complete the shift to market coordination, the less likely [it is] that economic transactions will be embedded in networks dominated by cadres, and the more likely power – control over resources – will be located in market institutions and in social networks (*guanxi*) of private buyers and sellers' (Nee, 1989: 668). This teleological perspective, which contends that post-Maoist China is moving along a pre-defined trajectory on which the socialism–capitalism transition is the only possibility for the Chinese economy, fails to realise that in reality there is a series of other dimensions (political, cultural and geographical) that influence the economy and market transition.

Andrew Walder's concept of 'neo-traditionalism' (1986) is not based on anything to do with China's 'traditions' but rather on his judgement that personal relationships rather than contract and rule of law dominate the system. Therefore, it corresponds to a 'traditional' rather than a 'modern' social structure. This is a typical teleological argument. It presupposes a binary opposition of traditional and modern but fails to examine the hybridity of social transitions.

As regards my project, the state–society approach cannot sufficiently address my research questions given that it simplifies the power relations embedded in the village's social fabric and historical development. My research will examine in detail the interpersonal power relationships that obtain among the villagers, the agency of the various actors, and the process of individual subjectification linked to the village's recent history and everyday socio-cultural practices.

3. Genealogies of power relations: a non-top-down approach

I am using Foucault's concept to trace the different forms of cooperation and to examine the particular power issues involved in these interactions and interrelationships. Foucauldian genealogies of power were inspired by Nietzsche, a genealogist who 'rejects the meta-historical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies' (Foucault, 1977: 140). Genealogies maintain that the interpretation of power should be understood as a non-linear model, instead of as the binary opposition of state and society (Bray, 2005: 8–10). More importantly, genealogies stress the importance of technologies individualising bodies, which is an equally important version of micro-politics in terms of their history and influence. Compared with 'history', Foucauldian genealogies are 'not a timeless and essential secret[;] the secret [is] that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in piecemeal fashion from alien forms' (Foucault, 1977: 142). Vicissitudes, unpredictability, discontinuity, unsteadiness, disparagement and deviations of history make the duty of genealogies 'not to demonstrate that [the] past actively exists in the present, [but] that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form on all its vicissitudes' (Foucault, 1977: 146).

Foucault's genealogies have great academic significance for contemporary China studies. Bray (2005), Sigley (2006) and Greenhalgh and Winckler (2005), whose studies of Chinese societies have drawn upon Foucault's genealogical framework, provide an alternative to the current

state–society approach. To be specific, the focus should be not only on the levels of the social structure (workers, professionals, elites, etc.); heed should also be paid to the exercise of power, the technology of power and body politics. In this way, a more complete version of bottom-up research may be constructed. Scholars including Scott (1976; 1985) and Kerkvliet (2005) have demonstrated that key features of the village social system, such as 'subsistence ethics', the 'safety principle', 'weapons of the weak' and 'everyday politics', have safeguarded and reinforced the rural ecosystem. Their critical understanding of the Central Eastern rural areas provides a good platform from which local village politics, especially questions of cooperation, can be theorised and analysed.

In my case study, I will trace particular forms of rural cooperation to articulate the genealogies of rural governance and governmentalities in a Chinese context. In other words, I am not interested in the history of the village *per se*, but in uncovering the genealogy to explain why particular rationales and forms of cooperation persist in different historical phases.

4. Context of cooperation in the pre-People's Republic of China (PRC) era

Based on the methodological discussions above, I contend that Foucault's genealogical framework can provide new insights into the study of rural China. In this book, I focus upon rural cooperation as an empirical platform for the clarification of this approach in contemporary rural China. There are two forms of farmer cooperation in my study: non-collectivistic cooperation and collectivistic cooperation.

(1) The former means that cooperative members participate directly in an association, irrespective of whether this association is temporary or not. Farmers join the association voluntarily and with self-oriented interests.
(2) The latter means that such associations are imposed by outside force or momentum; in this case, members are more likely to be mobilised and motivated by dependence and conformity.

The key point here is that the formation of non-collectivised associations stems from a community initiative or the initiative of some members of the community as opposed to being imposed from outside. These two forms constitute my frame of analysis and provide me with ample empirical material through which to employ a genealogical approach.

These two types of cooperation are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, the overlapping and inter-connected relationships between the two forms in different historical stages are what I focused on during my fieldwork.

Using this theoretical and analytical approach, I examine the case of Anhui Province, situated in the central part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Anhui was one of the most important test bases for Chinese rural economic and political reforms. The farmers in the area first launched Responsibility Land Reform in 1961 and, in 1978, the farmers again voluntarily initiated Household Responsibility Reform, laying the foundations for a new agricultural era. Finally, in 2000, this province pioneered the rural fiscal reform of 'Tax-for-Fee'. To a large extent, Anhui has been a political pilot laboratory for agricultural reform in China after the People's Commune Movement.

But before analysing developments in the PRC era, it is worth considering how rural cooperation fared during the Republican era and how it impacted on the Chinese Nationalists, also known as the Kuomintang or KMT. Examining a broader socio-historical perspective will not only enrich our genealogical understanding of rural cooperation, but also provide a deeper background for analysis of the PRC era.

Barrington Moore, citing Fei Xiaotong, writes that 'using the hoe in cultivating rice fields has made most of the work very individualistic' and that 'group work yields no more than the sum total of individual efforts. It also does not increase efficiency much' (Moore, 1993: 209). Moore's comments notwithstanding, cooperation did exist in farming. This was most commonly seen in the sowing, transplanting and harvesting of crops by members of the same family. If there was insufficient labour, farmers would remedy this in three ways: (1) hire local farmers who had little land or could not survive on their own land; (2) hire farmers with no land, or (3) hire migrant labourers, who usually came from remote areas and sought a living by selling their labour. However, as Moore argues, these means of economic cooperation between individual peasants lacked perpetual characteristics and an institutional basis, even when there was cooperation between family members. The landlords needed to negotiate labour services every year, so that they could await the final opportunity to hire peasants on minimum wages (Schurmann, 1966: 412–425; Moore, 1993: 209–210). Hsiao Kung-chuan (1960: 312–316) discussed three forms of traditional cooperation between farmers: (1) 'Incense' or 'Pilgrimage societies', both of which were religious organisations. The 'Incense Head' presided over the ceremony and led members while the 'Incense Tail' was responsible for other affairs during the pilgrimage; (2) the 'Loan Society', which offered financial assistance

to the villagers. This was a type of financial cooperation between the villagers themselves; and (3) the 'burial association', in which peasants cooperated in arranging burials and funerals.

I would now like to examine a range of initiatives taken by government and non-government actors attempting to influence or transform the development of peasants' cooperation during the rule of the KMT (see Table I.2).

Table I.2 Magazines, administrative organs, laws and regulations drawn up by the KMT for the development of agriculture and rural areas

Year	Title	Functions or Main Content
1925	*Chinese Peasants* magazine (Chang and Halliday, 2006: 45–46)	Started publication in December 1925. It prioritised study of the peasants. Mao Zedong wrote for the opening issue.
1928	*Organising Rules of Peasants' Associations*	Peasants who engaged in agricultural production, i.e. those who did labour work and were above 16 years of age, could become members of peasants' associations.
1930	*Peasants' Association Law*	Landowners, tenant peasants who had over 10 *mu* of paddy rice land or 3 *mu* of other planting areas, or those who had an intermediate-level diploma or had studied agriculture could join peasants' associations at the township or city levels if they were 27 or older.
1933	Peasants' Bank of China, formerly Bank for Peasants from Henan, Anhui, Anhui and Jiangxi Provinces	Managed agricultural loans and agricultural construction investment, providing funding for landlords and rich peasants.
1934	Cooperative Law	The cooperatives referred to in this law aimed to seek benefit for all members and improve their living conditions through mutual assistance and common efforts on an equal basis.
1935	*Rural Education* magazine	Focused on peasants' cooperation in the rural areas.
1936	Bureau of Agricultural Development	Controlled the production and marketing of grain, cotton, muslin and clothing.
1937	China Tea Company	Monopolised the production and marketing of tea.

Continued

Table 1.2 Continued

Year	Title	Functions or Main Content
1938	*Regulating Methods for Peasants' Associations at Various Levels* enacted by the Bureau of Agricultural Development	Controlled grain production through one of its subordinate organs, the Agricultural Production Coordination Centre.
1942	The Bureau of Materials established under the Ministry of Economy.	Managed and regulated rural material production.
1942	The Ministry of Finance set up to take the place of both the Bureau of Agricultural Development and the Bureau of Materials	The large-scale purchasing and re-sale of cotton, yarn and clothing was transferred to the Regulatory Bureau of Cotton, Yarn and Clothing, which monopolised the market and exploited peasants through low-price purchase and the exchanging of cotton for yarn and yarn for clothing.

Sources: Fei and Zhang, 2006: 523; Yu, 2001: 181.

Chiang Kai-shek placed great emphasis on the importance of people's livelihoods in numerous articles written during the period of the PRC. Yet, few projects or programmes were put into practice. Chiang's government designed a ten-year plan for the industrialisation of China's agriculture, but it was little more than an armchair strategy. Chiang attached much importance to 'superincumbent moral and mental reform', which had no practical meaning (Moore, 1993: 193). Moore suggests that Chiang's political doctrines had three characteristics: first, they were merely a kind of propaganda: no social or economic projects were initiated to solve rural problems; second, there was no concrete social and political objective devised for the transformation of the traditional concepts that weakened the country's social basis; third, Chiang always resorted to military power; that is, he adopted a Fascist approach (Moore, 1993: 208). However, this does not mean that no progress was made during the rule of the KMT. In fact, the KMT enacted laws and issued statements from time to time for the purpose of improving the farmers' livelihoods. A case in point was the Social Experiment in Rural Areas advocated by Handel Lee and Y. C. James Yen (Yan Yangchu), in which over 400,000 people in Ding County, Hebei Province, participated. In 1925, the China International Famine Relief Commission, headed by American missionaries, helped the farmers in Hebei Province to establish the first group of

rural cooperatives in China, based on the assumption that famine could be prevented by promoting rural economies. The Commission argued that rural cooperatives were farmers' voluntary organisations; thus, the principle was to assist, not to replace; to guide, not to lead the cooperatives. There were at least 12 members in each cooperative: each was the head of a household in the respective rural area, and each was required to pay a fee of no less than two yuan. The Commission offered loans to cooperatives for agricultural production and operations, with an annual interest rate of 6 per cent. The cooperatives offered these loans to members with an annual interest rate of no more than 12 per cent, the cooperatives being required to deposit the difference between the interest rates in public accumulation funds in order to gradually expand the fund and loan transactions (Chen, 2005). The China International Famine Relief Commission exerted considerable influence on solutions to the problem of Chinese farmers proposed by the KMT and rural construction leaders such as Y.C. James Yen at the time. And, while the cooperative movement sponsored by the Commission was a socioeconomic movement consisting mainly of peasants, the poorer farmers were refused admission, as they could not find rich farmers to be their guarantors; nor did they have enough property to offer as collateral. This was especially true in Heze County in Shandong Province.

Another well known Peasants' Cooperation Experiment, introduced by the KMT in the 1930s, was a rural construction movement led by Liang Shuming and his collaborators. Liang (2006: 19) stated that 'the rural construction movement aims to build a new organisation structure for our nation'. Starting from rural culture, Liang argued that Chinese society attached great importance to moral regulations. He wrote: '[the] Chinese usually think more about others' needs than their own and thus the moral relationship indicates that one does not live just for himself but also for others, and such a society is one based on moral standards' (Liang, 2006: 25). This societal cooperation 'would lead to collective ownership and bridge the rural and urban gap' (cited in Day, 2008: 55). However, Liang's theory was never successfully implemented: his experimentation was cut short by the Japanese invasion in 1937. Moreover, Liang's and James Yen's village construction movement aimed to reform the countryside in a cultural and ethical dimension (Thøgersen, 2009), which ignored the structural problems of the 1930s villages, one of which was rural social erosion (Fei, 1958: 127–141).

To be specific, young people did not return to the rural areas after finishing their schooling in the cities (they were considered 'deserters'), but, while the education system helped rich rural families to migrate to

the urban areas, it could not offer them suitable jobs. China's traditional conscription system worsened the process of social erosion. Many peasants opted not to engage in agricultural production after serving in the army; instead, they participated in various forms of 'looting and other wild behaviour' (Fei, 1958: 141). Social erosion resulted in increased economic disparity, as some villagers, who were now enjoying better economic conditions and higher education, became the rural society's new elite.

Rural cooperation was also a key policy element for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-led government. It was during the Yan'an period that the CCP initiated systematic initiatives in rural cooperation. Selden (1995) writes that Chinese peasants engaged in cooperation from the 1920s to the 1930s for the purpose of acquiring financial and technical support from the government, especially for agricultural production enterprises. Cooperative organisations were initially found in anti-Japanese base areas under the leadership of the CCP as well as in areas jointly administrated by the KMT and the CCP in the early 1940s. In anti-Japanese base areas, these cooperatives were mainly invested and organised by the state for service purposes. Later, in 1943, the CCP began to promote various kinds of small-scale cooperation of mutual assistance based on the improvement of traditional cooperation. Selden (1997: 21) observes that the establishment of cooperation saw the emergence of a mixture of independence, democracy and state control. Keating (1997), who disagrees with Selden, suggests that there were local ecological/structural factors influencing the CCP's mobilisation movement in the Shaan-Gan-Ning area. Keating makes an important contribution by highlighting the villagers' indigenous organisational and demographic structures, the relative lack of power of the local elites, and the unequal relations that obtained between the local state and the villagers in peripheral regions such that in which Xiaogang Village is located.

In 1927, Mao Zedong, who was then a member of the KMT's Peasant Movement Committee and Head of the Peasant Movement Training Institute, wrote in his 'Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan' that 'peasants have to organise cooperatives for economic cooperation through joint purchase and consumption. They also depend on the government for assistance so that peasants' associations could organise loan cooperatives' (Mao, 1991: 38). However, after the adoption of the Cooperative Law, drawn up by the KMT, this compulsory system led to the rapid development of loan cooperatives as well as to the excessive numbers of loan-sharks. In March 1937, Chen

Hansheng, a well known Chinese sociologist, released a paper titled 'Are Cooperatives a Miraculous Cure for China's Problems?' in which he pointed out that the earliest cooperative movement in China was closely related to the 1919 May Fourth Movement. China's reformists began to realise that economic development could not be detached from political conditions. For many of them, the cooperative movement was the simplest and most reliable way to unite people at the bottom of the social ladder and to influence the upper class. The number of cooperatives in China grew from 19 in 1923 to 46,983 in 1938, with a total of 1.5 million participants, 44 in each cooperative on average (Zhou, 1998: 136). By 1947, there were 167,387 cooperatives, with a total of over 22 million members (Chen, 1999: 213–227).

However, many disadvantages had emerged during the cooperative movement: (1) lack of management; (2) misuse of power; (3) high interest rates compared with the yield of agricultural investment; (4) weak implementation, with only limited coverage of peasants in need (0.04 per cent of the then Chinese population) (Chen, 1999: 226). In effect, cooperatives became 'clubs' responsible only for collecting debts. Chen Hansheng concluded that China's cooperative movement was initially sponsored by intellectuals and leaders who sincerely believed that the great majority of Chinese people could live a better life. Yet, during its development, the movement became the victim of the various social problems inherent in China's economic system.

After coming to power in 1949, the CCP sought to address these underlying problems by implementing far-reaching social and economic reforms in rural China. This book will focus upon the impact of these policies, in particular the role of cooperativisation and collectivisation, through a longitudinal case study of one village, which would subsequently become famous.

5. Case study of a Central Eastern Chinese village

Xiaogang Village, the village selected for this research, is located in the central eastern part of Anhui province (see Maps 1 and 2), and is administratively affiliated with Fengyang County. On 20 February 1978, 18 villagers, from among the total of 20 families in the village, secretly convened and signed a contract which stipulated the reallocation of land to each household. This was absolutely contrary to the People's Commune law of that time, which mandated collective farming.[5] For this reason, the 18 pioneers added the following caveat to the contract: 'If one of our signatories is beheaded by the legal system, the rest of the

signatories promise to bring up his children to the age [of] eighteen' (Li, 1999; Gao, 1998; Zhou, 1998; Yang, 2006; Xia, 2005).[6]

The local political leaders had become aware of this land reallocation. In 1980, the Anhui Provincial CCP Secretary, Wan Li, recognised this new institutional creation, and in 1982, the central government claimed it as 'a great creation under the leadership of the CCP and a further development of the Marxist agricultural cooperative theory' (Chinese Central Government, 1983). After the Third Plenary of the CCP's Eleventh National People's Congress, the system of household responsibility pioneered in Xiaogang was adopted in all rural areas. On 1 January 1982, the CCP Central Committee approved 'national rural work meeting minutes', pointing out that the current responsibility system in the rural areas, including contracting work for a fixed salary, professional co-production contract payment, co-production policy on the basis of working hours, and allocation of production responsibility on the basis of family group, were all production responsibility systems under the socialist collective economy.

Drawing in the main upon Xiaogang residents' experience of various forms of cooperative organisation, I explore how local farmers were affected by and adapted to a range of developmental strategies. I attempt to ascertain the degree of input (mainly resources and support) received from government, and the outcomes experienced within this village. The main issues are (1) how the work incentives of the farmers were initiated and negotiated by governmental policies and (2) how the state cooperated with the local village and maintained its legitimacy and visibility. In the process, the intertwined relationship between collectivised and non-collectivised cooperation and the power relations involved will be examined in detail.

Before examining the post-1949 period, it is worth briefly outlining the history of Xiaogang in order to provide the social, political and cultural context required to comprehend subsequent transformations of the village.

Historically, Xiaogang was founded in 1374, during the Ming dynasty. The then emperor Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–1398) launched a large relocation programme to populate Fengyang, his home county, with the result that at the beginning of the Ming period, 80 per cent of the population in Fengyang were migrants (Zhi and Xia, 2005: 410–411). In total, approximately 582,000 Fengyang villagers were relocated between 1368 and the death of Zhu Yuanzhang in 1398. Of these, 282,000 were defeated soldiers, most of whom came from South China (Xia, 2003: 695–696). In 1374, the seventh year of the Hongwu Period, Zhu Yuanzhang ordered

the relocation of 140,000 residents from South China to Fengyang, granting them the privilege of paying zero grain tax and offering no corvée service for the first three years. Four years later, Zhu commanded the original 3,324 locals in Fengyang County to protect the royal necropolis (Zhu had built a gigantic complex in Fengyang to house his mother's tomb): hence, two different classes came into being: the relocated people and the locals (Xia, 2003: 673).

The ancestors of the people relocated to Xiaogang were a group of defeated soldiers who had been relocated from a place called the 'magpie nest' in South China. But, in the village's oral history, it is claimed that they came from a 'magpie nest' in Anhui Province. Why did they say this? It may be because Xiaogang villagers' ancestors were the soldiers who had been defeated in a battle against Zhu Yuanzhang (Zhi and Xia, 2005: 152). In order not to be stigmatised and discriminated against by the Fengyang locals, their descendants changed the details of their origins. In addition, Wang Shi, who adopted Zhu Yuanzhang as his son, came from Anhui. This could enhance their identity legitimacy (Xia, 2003: 726–737).

After settling in Fengyang, the relocated people found themselves at the lowest level of the social structure. The government levied heavy taxes on them after three years, and the land they worked on was infertile, producing barely enough to support them. Thus, like many relocated populations, they had to change their original living habits and lifestyles in order to adapt to their new environment (Xia, 2003: 739–740).

After Zhu Yuanzhang's death, in 1398, the relocated villagers started to flee the area to escape the frequent natural disasters to which it was susceptible, the heavy taxes and the oppressive local governance. They were no longer migrants but refugees. In such a context, how could the villagers and the local state connected with each other? As a relocated village, Xiaogang lacked a strong lineage system. The extant system is based on peasant households, members of which conducted their ordinary activities in a rural structure reorganised by the political power owing to its history of migration. This was a live demonstration of sovereign power relations.

By the time of the Qing dynasty, Fengyang had become a 'living hell'. When natural disasters occurred, people were compelled to leave their homes and become beggars, bearing flower drums on their backs. The flower drum (*huagu*) provided a way of living, a way for people to survive. Those who carried the drums were recognised as the poorest of the poor. During my fieldwork in Xiaogang, I heard the following song

about the flower drum, sung by a local villager surnamed Wang (Wang Ziwen, interview, 11 November 2008):

> Women in Fengyang County do the *yangko* dance,
> we go across the Yellow River during
> the first month of every Chinese lunar year.
> The cold wind, together with snow, hits our faces,
> making the journey even longer and more painful.
> It did not rain a bit in Shouzhou the year before last
> and this year there was a flood in Sizhou…,
> singing the *yangko* for poor harvest,
> still I have to make more effort in farming
> after paying taxes to the government.
> People are hurrying from everywhere for a living.
> What a life [of sorrow] we are living.

In sum, long before its 'star' status as the first decollectivised village, Xiaogang had become a village of poor, disparate and disorganised migrants. Throughout the late Qing, the Republican era, the anti-Japanese War and the 'Liberation War', the village continued to suffer socioeconomic and natural disadvantages. The local genealogies make it clear that this village was imbued with what Banfield (1967) calls 'amoral familism'. Drawing upon his studies (1967: 83–101) of the Italian peasantry, Banfield coined the term 'amoral familism' to describe the following circumstances: (1) families showing little care for the interest of other groups and communities unless their own interests are involved; (2) few organisations, whose establishment and maintenance need much time, sacrifice, mutual trust and selfless dedication; (3) little attention paid to law, for the villagers do not believe in the power and efficacy of its execution; (4) a lack of leaders and followers: any act of volunteering to establish leadership is regarded as heresy unless compelled by their own interests; (5) consensus can be reached only when individuals realise that their own interests are in conformity with those of the village. Families do not support any proposal that is in the interests of the village as a whole and brings no profit to themselves. In other words, they do not support the village's development plan at the cost of their own interests. As Huntington (1968: 31) contends: '[I]n a politically backward society lacking a sense

of political community, each leader, each individual, each group pursues and is assumed to be pursuing its own immediate short-run material goals without consideration for any broader political interest'. I believe these formulations accurately characterise the situation pertaining to Xiaogang before the arrival of the CCP-led government in 1949, in that 'amoral familism' affected villagers' patterns of cooperation, personal ambition and the governing of individual behaviour.

6. Research methodology

I utilise a non-normative approach in this research project based on a two-stage analytical process. First, I examine the official discourses surrounding rural China's policy-making processes, through local gazetteers, oral histories and village construction strategies; second, I employ a Foucauldian paradigm to uncover the localised rationale behind village formation and development. I avoid normative judgements on how power ought to have operated in the village, that is, whether a particular aspect of power was good or bad, and whether an actor's particular stance was just/unjust or fair/unfair.

This case study relies on interviews with a representative selection of the villagers in order to build up a picture of how and why cooperation worked (or did not work) within the village as a whole. The interviews were semi-structured in order to allow the interviewees sufficient scope to elaborate upon any issues they considered particularly significant, and to permit the collection of detailed information about the processes involved in local cooperation. In addition to interviews, I employed a participation observation methodology: where possible, and where permission was granted, I attended village meetings, participated in local factory and agricultural businesses, and attended other local social events. The data gathered through this method augments the material collected through the interviews. While interviews offer a window onto the experiences and opinions of individuals, participant observation offers a window onto how the villagers behave in group and social situations. The data provide an important measure of the veracity of information collected through the individual interviews.

Upon entering the village, I contacted the cadres (the local Party secretary, the Village Head) to obtain basic demographic data and a roster of the households in the village. The village Household Registration was used and constituted the sampling frame. Households were then selected from the register using a systematic sampling procedure. All the names collected during my fieldwork in Fengyang and Xiaogang and

used in this book appear as pseudonyms, except for those who agreed to have their names disclosed.

At the household level, I ensured that the male/female respondents' ratio results were unbiased. Specifically, the number of interviewed people of each gender was kept between 20 and 30. At the same time, I made sure that different age groups were evenly represented in the sample. The three chosen age groups were as follows: young, below 39 years of age; middle-aged, between 40 and 59; and elders, over 60.

Archival research was employed to write a history of the village. Local government documents, newspaper reports, local gazetteers, master plans (for village construction) and other historical materials were collected during my fieldwork and utilised to examine government discourses through the various periods. Of all the local historical materials I collected, the 581-page documentary *Thirty Years in the Countryside: Rural Fengyang's Social and Economic Development True Record (1949–1983)*, compiled by Wang Gengjin, Yang Xun, Wang Ziping, Liao Xiaodong and Yang Guansan in 1985 (published in late 1989), is the most significant because, according to Jasper Becker, it was 'never intended to be circulated outside the top echelons of the Party, for it paints a detailed and appalling picture of the [Great Leap Forward] famine' (Becker, 1996: 131–132). I refer to this book many times when discussing the Land Reform and subsequent collectivisation. This book, together with other local archives, has provided me with a useful historiography vis-à-vis the unravelling of the power structure and power relations in Xiaogang during the Maoist era.

7. Book structure

The main purpose of this book is to interpret the factors underlying the village development. As it is a non-normative project, I have no intention of offering any policy recommendations. Specifically, my analysis of rural cooperation in Xiaogang follows a diachronically broad pattern comprising five chapters, an Introduction and a Conclusion.

Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 describe the sequence of rural cooperative history in four phases. **Chapter 1**, which focuses upon the first (1949–1954) and second (1955–1978) phases, argues that villagers were heavily scrutinised by both local government and society during the Land Reform. The village and the nation coincided; mobilisation of the villagers was regarded as the representation of the nation. In such a context, the concept of Foucauldian bio-politics coincided with the increasing politicisation of villagers' bodies and lives.

Chapter 2, which is based on the third phase (1978 to the late 1990s), points out the continuous bio-politicisation of the villagers through cooperativisation and collectivisation. I do, however, also show the embeddedness of resistance in this process. The villagers' survival-oriented opposition and strategies partially subverted the all-encompassing sovereign power, which laid the foundation for the era of decollectivisation.

Chapter 3, which is also based on the third phase, argues that the introduction of the mechanism for village self-governance was a political tool used to control the villagers: it reflected the gap between the 'subjective aspirations' and 'objective attainments' of the CCP-led government. This chapter also examines the 'Party-based thug' phenomenon and its embeddedness in the local political context.

Chapter 4, based on the fourth phase (since the 2000s), demonstrates how the county-level cadres used the economic development of Xiaogang to showcase their political achievements, supporting the village's development in every possible way. In this way, the local state organisations did not devolve into playing a passive role of providing services and regulating local development. Yet, this did not mean that local governments had become independent legal entities acting in accordance with the logic of private enterprise or a capitalist economy. This chapter argues that another form of power emerged, namely 'pastoral power'. Following the discussion in the previous chapter, it emphasises the fact that in Xiaogang, there are contesting modes of power and leadership styles.

Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the village's spatial order and its transformation in the 1990s. I echo Bray's thesis that the spatialisation of government in urban China has extended to the countryside (Bray, 2009). The 'Building New Socialist Countryside' programme, launched in 2006, was a government-induced movement promoting a profile of rural China. One of its purposes was to reorder rural spaces and restructure social and domestic space. This chapter argues that this spatial transformation in Xiaogang produced a collective subjectivity in the local effort of community building.

In the **Conclusion**, I reassess the cooperative capability of Chinese farmers and reapply the Foucauldian framework to my study. By tracing the particular form of rural cooperation that pertained to Xiaogang Village, I articulate a trajectory of rural governmentality across different social stages. I argue that there was an emergence of disciplinary power towards the end of the Maoist era; sovereign power, however, did not recede in the post-Maoist era. The juxtaposition of these two types of

power has been embedded in a variety of village cooperation projects since the 1990s.

To date, much of the work in the field of Chinese governmentality studies has focused either on urban China or on general policy initiatives (such as birth control; see Greenhalgh and Winckler, 2005). This project is among the first to apply the insights and methods of governmentality to rural China on the basis of detailed ethnographic studies of village life.

In Chapter 1, I argue that throughout the late Qing, the Republican era and the anti-Japanese and 'Liberation' wars, the village's remoteness and poverty exemplified the key features of amoral familism, which continues to exert its influence over Xiaogang today. Following the change in the grassroots social structure that occurred in the People's Commune period (Chapter 2), production brigades and teams manifested a high degree of homogeneity, which negated the farmers' agency. During this period, villagers' bodies and lives were increasingly politicised by new forms of bio-politics that emerged under Maoist governance practices. Foucault (1997: 73) defines bio-politics as 'the endeavour, begun in the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems presented to governmental practice by the phenomena characteristic of a group of living human beings constituted as a population: health, sanitation, birth rate, longevity, race'. During the Maoist era, the villagers were heavily scrutinized not only by local government but by society as well. Under this regime, the countryside became a key site of nation-building; in many respects, the bio-political regimes were intended to transform villagers into new proletarian subjects who would be emblematic of the rise of a new socialist nation.

In Chapter 3, I contend that while decollectivisation was often interpreted as the second 'liberation' of Chinese farmers, new power structures emerged to replace those of the collective and the Commune. The complex of sovereign and disciplinary power represented by the local cadres gradually receded during the dismantling of the People's Commune, the institutionalisation of the HRS and the implementation of village self-governance. Concomitant with these changes has been a growing sense of societal openness and heterogeneity. But a less desirable outcome has been that the various components of decentralisation have rendered cadres increasingly incapable of mobilising villagers for state-sanctioned cooperative activities. This is evident in Xiaogang, where villagers are no longer passive subjects of a diminishing sovereign or disciplinary power. The implementation of the new socialist countryside project, together with various other cooperative undertakings, has

seen villagers participate in a growing range of village-based economic and political activities.

But, against this social background, recent political changes have resulted in the emergence of a new type of local tough or bully, a person who coerces villagers with violence, makes compulsory demands and generally oppresses the villagers. But, parallel to the coercive power of the local bully, another form of power has emerged in post-collectivist Xiaogang, namely the rise of pastoral power, a subject I analyse in Chapter 4. The late Shen Hao, who was Xiaogang's Party secretary from 2004 to 2009, exemplified a form of care and dedication to the development of Xiaogang and its inhabitants that was the very antithesis of the methods adopted by the local toughs. The collectivist orientation of this form of pastoral power in time became a common tactic used by local government agents within most village social and political activities. I reconfirm this argument in Chapter 5, in which I demonstrate the degree to which the new form of spatialisation imposed on villagers bolsters their collectivist subjectivity. In sum, the above scenarios exemplify the fact that a nuanced hybridity of governmentalities (Sigley, 2006: 504) exists within the social and political fabric of Xiaogang.

1
Land Reform and Its Implications

Xiaogang was the first state-sanctioned village in the People's Republic of China (PRC) to decollectivise. Data displayed in Xiaogang Village Memorial Hall shows that in 1979, one year after the introduction of the Household Responsibility System (HRS), the average annual income of its residents was 400 yuan, 18 times that of 1978. Also in 1979, the grain yield of the village, which had only 115 people, reached 66,500 kilograms, four times the average annual yield of the previous ten years (*Beijing Review*, 2009). In the summer of 1984, during her fieldwork in Fengyang, Perry 'could not ... but be impressed by the frantic pace of new housing construction and the evidence of rampant consumerism in the form of new watches, bicycles, sewing machines, stereos and the like' (Perry, 1986: 203). The success enjoyed by Xiaogang created a model for other parts of China; as a result, the HRS soon spread.

However, although Xiaogang has gained attention since 1978, few researchers subjected it to scrutiny prior to its rise to fame. I believe that a genealogical probe into Xiaogang's history before the 1950s will provide a reference for the examination of its development.

1. Xiaogang before the 1950s

My conversations with the staff of the Fengyang Local Gazetteer Editorial Committee, who were in charge of the county annals, revealed that there was no form of agricultural cooperation in Xiaogang around the year 1949 (Ma Shulong, interview, 11 December 2008). As well as enduring poor farming conditions and severe natural disasters, the villagers experienced a devastating drought in 1932, which saw most of them leave the village, in many cases to beg for a living. They led poor

lives; for most of the young farmers, a new set of clothes was a luxury. As regards food, they usually ate 'one dry dish and two soups' (*yigan liangxi*) and coarse grains: meat was also a luxury for them. In times of famine, many peasants had little grain left for the traditional Chinese New Year celebrations (Wang Ziwen, interview, 11 November 2008). Most peasants lived in rudimentary thatched cottages. Wang's grandfather lived in a derelict house: its roof was held together with rope. Most families had a big square table, with only one towel for common use.

Land was privately owned at that time and there were frequent transactions of land. The sellers were usually poor farmers, who had no choice but to sell their land due to family mismanagement or natural disasters. The buyers were mostly landlords, merchants or rich peasants from outside the village (also called 'absentee landlordism'). Landlords, who lived outside the village and did not think it necessary to upgrade their production technologies, merely used simple technologies and whatever rural labour was required. There was a high incidence of absentee landlordism. This social structure also promoted the conglomeration of familism in rural areas, with the rich living in the urban or town areas. As long as peasants worked hard and paid their rent on time, this relationship would not be undermined (Moore, 1993: 178–180).

The price of land during the anti-Japanese War and the 'Liberation War' periods was one ton of grain per *mu* (one *mu* equals approximately 0.167 acre or 0.067 hectare) for a superior piece of land, 600 to 800 kilograms of grain per *mu* for ordinary land, and 400 to 500 kilograms of grain per *mu* for inferior land. Land was also mortgaged and leased. Landlord–tenant relations included the following practices (Peng Youmeng and others, interview, 11 October 2008):

Rent in the form of grain (*daozu*): Rent calculated according to the area of land leased. Depending on the quality of the land as well as the irrigation facilities, most tenants paid the landlord a fixed rent (*sizu*) of seven to nine *dou* (one *dou* equals 7.5 kilograms) of grain for one *mu* of land after the autumn harvest. The grain was sent to the barn of the landlord after drying and cleaning. Some peasants paid 30 per cent of their total harvest, a system known as 'flexible rent' (*huozu*). For peasants, there were many disadvantages to fixed rent, especially in traditional farming societies such as Xiaogang. In times of famine, harvests would be extremely poor. Sometimes the peasants had to sell their sons and daughters in order to survive. Fixed rent arrangements had the potential to ruin a family and were thus more likely to be deemed exploitation by the peasants (Scott, 1976: 7).

Rent in the form of money (*huobi dizu*): A tenant paid the landlord money after the autumn harvest according to a price determined by the landlord before the harvest. Money rent was, to say the least, perilous for peasants and it involved the most serious level of exploitation; however, it was not a common practice in Xiaogang.

Rent in the form of labour (*daigeng*): Some landlords reserved tracts of land for their own use: they would ask the tenants to do the farm work as a way of paying the rent.

Long-term hired hands (*changgong*): Landlords hired two types of labourers to do their farm work for them: long-term hired hands and casual labourers. The former included cooks, assistants and cowherds and worked all year round for relatively good wages.

Casual labourers (*duangong*): These workers were hired in the busy seasons, mainly to do farm work such as ploughing, sowing and harvesting.

Usury (*gaolidai*): Exploiters charged monthly interest at the rate of one *dou* of grain for one picul (≈ 6.6 *dou*) of grain. One peasant in Xiaogang told me that another had to seek the guarantee of a rich household before he could draw on usury for emergency use (Wang Youxing, interview, 11 October 2008). Many peasants sold their land and houses to pay the interest accrued via usury. Some eventually became homeless.

Deposit (*ya zhuangfei*): Peasants had to pay a certain amount of money as a deposit in order to lease land from the landlords.

Meals (*chi zufan*): A tenant treated the landlord to two meals every year in addition to paying rent, one before the tenancy and the other on payment of the rent.

Pawning (*kaiyadang*): Peasants received cash by pawning anything valuable at the pawnshop of the landlord, and had to pay the interest when retrieving the article.

Gifts for festivals (*songjie*): There were three festivals a year: the Dragon Boat Festival (or the Summer Solstice), the Mid-Autumn Festival and the Spring Festival. Peasants donated food, grain, tea and sugar on these festive occasions.

Fresh grain (*changxin*): The tenants sent grain or wheat to the landlords immediately after the harvest so that they could be the first to taste it.

Free labour service (*wuchang fu laoyi*): Tenants needed to do some work free of charge for their landlords, including husking, milling and helping with the landlords' wedding ceremonies and funerals.

Buying green crops (*mai qingmiao*): The landlords lent money to the peasants to buy grain before the harvest. Growing grain before the harvest

time is called 'green crops' as they are young green shoots of grain. Green crops are cheaper before they are ripened. By merely paying the price of green crops, the landlords obtained the benefit of the whole ripe crops.

Re-lending (*fangdao*): After taking rent from the peasants, the landlords lent the rent (in the form of grain) back to the peasants, for example; lending 100 *dou* in spring and another five *dou* in autumn, and later charging their rent plus interest after the autumn harvest.

Fei and Zhang argue that the real reason for land concentration was not the fact that peasants paid others to fund their illnesses, deaths, weddings, funerals, clothes and military service; rather, it was the fact that most families were poor. Underdeveloped agricultural productivity gave them little power to accumulate wealth. They had to sell their land and houses if they suffered a heavy blow (Fei and Zhang, 2006: 519). In Xiaogang, the peasants' poverty could also be attributed to the landlords' harsh means of exploitation.

Xiaogang villagers led an even worse life after Japan invaded China. On 1 February 1938, the Japanese army invaded Fengyang and occupied 30 per cent of the villages and towns within the county. Chen Chong, the county's head commissioner, abandoned the county and fled with the Kuomintang (KMT, Chinese Nationalist Party) soldiers, who were bent upon saving their own lives. On 3 February, during the mop-up by the Japanese army, 100 civilians were slaughtered on the north side of Xushan Mountain: another 350 were killed in Shanma Village; all their houses were burnt to the ground. The people of Fengyang fought against the Japanese army, forming the 'Hongqianghui Association' and the 'Fengyang Anti-Japanese Guerrillas'. During the 'Liberation War', the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and KMT fought pitched battles in Fengyang, bringing considerable hardship to the local people (Han Yang, interview, 3 April 2010). People became homeless, if not hopeless. Due to the difficult circumstances, peasants at that time behaved like amoral familists, who, whenever possible, sought quick self-satisfaction and instant benefit for their nuclear families, believing that others were doing the same.

Everyone felt insecure during the war period. A peasant from Xiaogang told me that while the Spring Festival was actually 'a happy festival for the rich, it was a hard day for the poor' (Han Yang, interview, 3 April 2010). Many peasants did not dare to go home until the Chinese New Year's Eve as they had no money to pay their rent or debts. These people gained nothing from the festival: three meals a day would have been satisfactory. A poem which read 'on hearing the festival sound of firecrackers from next door, I can do nothing but whisper to my wife that tomorrow will be an ordinary day for us, and do not tell our son that it

is the Chinese New Year' best portrayed the situation of the Xiaogang villagers during the Spring Festival. Landlord–tenant relations systemised the social classification and material division. Irrespective of the form of rent, as long as the tenancy system remained unchanged, most of the villagers could only lead miserable lives. They barely had enough to eat, let alone opportunities to enhance cooperation and mutual assistance.

Following the founding of the PRC, as the next section demonstrates, a tremendous change took place, as a result of which villagers were channelled into a state system. In response to this, villagers often engaged in resistance and opposition. From the perspective of state policies, there was a profound change in peasant cooperation in Xiaogang after China implemented Land Reform from 1949 to 1952: from collectivised forms of cooperation between 1952 and 1978 to non-collectivised form of cooperation since the 1990s. This chapter will discuss the Land Reform and collectivised cooperation.

2. Land Reform

The Land Reform mainly involved the confiscation of land from landlords and its re-distribution among the peasants according to largely egalitarian principles. Mao Zedong had understood from the guiding principles and slogans of the peasant wars – from the Huangchao Uprising in the 9th century to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement in the 19th – the peasants' urgent need of land. After the release of *Instructions on Land Problems* on 4 May 1946, Liu Shaoqi had delivered a summary of the proposed execution of Land Reform at the National Land Conference held in Xibaipo Village convened by the CCP Central Committee in 1947. *The Leading Principles of China's Land Law*, which came into effect during the conference, stipulated that confiscating land from landlords and distributing land to each family according to the number of its members was the guiding principle for eliminating 'feudalism' in China. This conference marked a turning point in Chinese history: it fundamentally changed the structure of Chinese society. Mao Zedong further argued that while peasants made up 80 per cent of the population in China, they owned only 30 per cent of the land. This was the main reason why China suffered from others' aggression and oppression as well as from its own poverty and backwardness (Mao, 1991: 37). The Land Reform, which was introduced just before the founding of the People's Republic of China, provided abundant armed forces for the Liberation Army. Peasants who had acquired land frequently sent their sons to war and donated grain for public use (Fengyang Local Gazetteer Editorial Committee, 1999: 148).

Fengyang County was 'liberated' in January 1949. When the Huaihai War broke out during the same year, various programmes were initiated within the county, including reducing rent and interest, enhancing production to cope with natural disasters, and fighting against bandits and local tyrants, as well as 'counter-revolutionaries'. Under the leadership of the CCP, the peasants' urgent need of land was satisfied and they became a major force in the establishment of a new nation.

In accordance with various edicts, including the Land Reform Law of the People's Republic of China, General Rules for the Organisation of Peasants' Associations, General Rules for the Organisation of People's Courts, Decisions on Certain Questions Involved in Land Reform and Decisions on Class Divisions in Rural Areas, the Land Reform commenced in Fengyang County in January 1951. There were three steps involved, the first of which was to set up organisations to hold peasants together for the later class designation and land redistribution. In June of the same year, a Land Reform work team consisting of over 500 cadres went into the rural areas to train active peasants and to hold meetings for the purpose of setting up peasants' associations as well as many other organisations for women and the militia. Members of the team also educated peasants by sharing with them their experiences of enduring hardships; in addition, they mobilised them to fight against the local landlords. Poor peasants were encouraged to denounce local tyrants and bad landlords. Then the people's court would persecute or arrest them (Fengyang Local Gazetteer Editorial Committee, 1999: 147–148).

The second step was to designate classes in Fengyang. The purpose of this classification paved the way for the further land confiscation and redistribution. Rich peasants were first identified by applying relevant definitions to them after the peasants' association held a meeting. Designation of middle-income peasants, poor peasants and farm labourers was conducted according to principles peculiar to each village. The preliminary designation was submitted to Fengyang county for approval; later, the results were announced to the public. The detailed definitions of the class categories were as follows (Fengyang Local Gazetteer Editorial Committee, 1999: 147–149):

Landlords (*dizhu*): those who owned large tracts of land, did not work themselves, had some subordinate labourers, and lived mainly by charging rent, exploiting farm labourers and charging interest.

Landlords with other chengfen (class status) (*qita chengfen dizhu*): identified according to their degree of exploitation.

Rich peasants together with *chengfen* of a landlord (*ban dizhu shi funong*): those who leased over two-thirds of the land they owned and

worked themselves on the remaining one-third of their land. Rich peasants lived predominantly by the land they leased to others rather than doing their own farming.

Rich peasants and middle-income peasants (*funong he zhongnong*): those who worked themselves, leased no land or only a small portion of their land, together with abundant capital goods (e.g. oxen and tools). Their main means of exploitation was to hire labourers at a low cost and charge interest by loaning. After offsetting the exploiting amount as well as the amount exploited by others, those whose net exploitation income exceeded 25 per cent of all of the income they received from doing their own farming, were deemed rich peasants; otherwise, they were middle-income or middle rich peasants.

Small land lessors (*xiao dizhu chuzuzhe*): those who let most of their land due to inability or unwillingness to farm or because they worked in other occupations (e.g. doctors and teachers). They were treated as middle-income peasants.

Poor peasants (*pinnong*): those who leased land and only worked in agriculture.

Farm labourers (*gunong*): those who did not have land and did not lease land: labourers who were hired to work on others' land.

The third step was to redistribute property such as land. Confiscated land was distributed (with the exception of that set aside for public use) among middle-income and poor peasants and farm labourers. Landlords could keep part of their land to work themselves.

Finally, a meeting was held at which old title deeds were burned and new property ownership certificates issued. According to the statistics of the Fengyang County Committee Office (1950), during the fight against the landlords in Xiaoxihe Town, in which Xiaogang Village was located, 15 landlords were forced to return 359 *mu* of land; seven landlords returned ten houses, six refunded 1,500 kilograms of grain, eight went to jail, 15 were 'denounced and criticised' by other villagers, two were detained for a short period and 18 confessed their guilt publicly (Wang et al., 1989: 56). After an inspection and approval by the Fengyang County government, the Land Reform was completed. The detailed process which occurred in Xiaogang is described in the following section.

3. Classifying

In 1968, L. Ch. Schenk-Sandbergen noted that mobilisation during Mao Zedong's era had three key features: (1) all-round mobilisation across the country, from peasants' groups to women's unions; (2) all

economic, technological and social mobilisation was guided by political beliefs; and (3) political mobilisation was of the utmost importance. Individual concepts and values such as self-discipline, a sense of glory and thriftiness became the ideological starting points of national mobilisation. This is an insightful reference to the peasants' mobilisation in Xiaogang, wherein the following tactics for redefining the village were employed: (1) creating 'imagined or hypothetical enemies' and fostering class consciousness. For example, during the movement of 'speaking bitterness', poor peasants and farm labourers were encouraged to realise that their hardships were caused by class exploitation rather than by anything else;[1] (2) 'Mass Line' mobilisation, which organised the villagers to smash down the old society and create a new one; (3) the combination of workers, peasants, soldiers and businessmen who not only had excellent cultural and scientific knowledge but were also experts in farming and working; and (4) breaking down the horizontal family relationship structure, replacing it with a vertical political division, and regrouping the rural communities using new methods. By confiscating ancestral temples and land in Xiaogang, the CCP destroyed horizontal consanguinity loyalty among the villagers. By categorising rich peasants and landlords as the 'exploiting group', it mobilised the poor peasants and farm labourers. Hence, during this period, the original mental, social and economic attachment of individuals to the family diminished. Only in this way could these people be made to feel that the state's divisive principles were just and fair while not worrying about their own safety. As Hsiao Kung-chuan argues, the CCP initially controlled villages through ideological, economic and administrative means (Hsiao, 1960: 519): this was the CCP's principal political strategy in mobilising the masses (Pye, 1968: 217–218). These tactics were aimed at transforming the villagers' bodies and souls, resystemising them according to a new ethos and moral standards. Villagers were fashioned into a new type of 'governable subject', as defined by the CCP-led government's doctrines and discourse.

In addition, land was distributed not to each household but to each peasant, regardless of gender and age. By doing this, the CCP severed the original social solidarity between the villagers and prompted the peasants to fight vigorously against the local landlords. By creating a new connection between the government and the villages, the CCP paved the way for its subsequent political mobilisations (Moore, 1993: 226–227).

In reality, the peasants were not necessarily in need of democratic elections and political participation in order to realise their own interests (Liu Guiyang, interview, 5 May 2009). The critical questions were: how could the CCP mobilise the peasants, i.e. private owners of small-scale production, to become interested in the community? During the upheaval of the revolution, how could the CCP instil in the peasants the 'rights and obligations' of community participation? The revolution became increasingly fierce as a result of all-inclusive mobilisation. Mobilisation aimed to endow everyone with a sense of participation by convincing them that 'millions of people are waiting for help'. The revolutionaries not only set up new governance in the form of political, economic, legal, military and social systems and village-level communities, but also built up powerful authoritative organisations through propaganda, organisation and symbolic operations. Peasants who had hitherto not cared about politics joined the new system and participated in social movements with great commitment and perseverance (Li, 1999: 126).

In the winter of 1950, Xiaogang Village, and the neighbouring Dayan and Xiaoyan Villages, were consolidated into one village called 'Dayan Village', with over 100 households in total (Liao Jiaomei, interview, 5 August 2008). At first, no householder was categorised as a 'landlord'; but, in 1951, the new work team labelled Yan Fengxiang, who lived in the former Xiaoyan Village, 'a landlord'. Later, they held a public meeting to criticise and denounce him. Xiaogang villagers also participated in the meeting, although nobody in the village was actually identified as a landlord.

The new regime adopted the following strategies to ensure that landlords were criticised and denounced. First, Party cadres were required to have clear awareness that to criticise and denounce the 'feudal classes' – including landlords and rich peasants – was a mission needing to be tackled in a continuous way in order for them to be eliminated completely. Second, the reinforcing of 'class education' was required to improve some cadres' political awareness by disclosing their own problems and protecting the so-called interests of the masses through mobilisation. Third, through the public disclosure of the crimes of the rich classes, the masses learned that the illegal deeds of the rich had harmed their interests and violated the decrees of the Land Reform. In this way, the people were encouraged to monitor the acts of the rich and accuse them of malfeasance. Fourth, those who defied the government were deemed to have caused great damage and were punished mercilessly by the newly aroused masses (Wang et al., 1989: 39–40).

Extensive criticism and denunciation of landlords was carried out in Xiaoxihe Town, where Xiaogang was administratively located (Wang et al., 1989: 43). Over 40 activities were organised to 'criticise and denounce' eight landlords. In cases where landlords were wrongly criticised, immediate rectification was implemented. The wrong thoughts of cadres were rectified and extensive policy education was carried out among the masses. The movement for criticising and denouncing landlords was organised in proper coordination with the local People's Court. Villagers were taught that they could not achieve all-round success in activities involving criticising and denouncing landlords unless they had enough patience or comprehensively understood the 'intenseness' of the Land Reform. The county committee further demanded that joint efforts should be made to strengthen solidarity within the masses and cut off their connections with landlords. Poor peasants and farm labourers were mobilised to make complaints against the landlord class at public meetings. These peasants and labourers also associated landlords with Chiang Kai-shek and Western imperialism, and this fuelled great hatred for the landlord class. Meanwhile, the notion of becoming their own masters by closely uniting with the middle peasants was established. Conferences in which middle-income and poor peasants and farm labourers participated were also held: by comparing the two governments: the *old* Chiang Kai-shek-led government and the *new* Chinese Communist Party-led government, middle-income peasants learned that they had also been oppressed by the landlords; therefore, they united with the poor peasants and farm labourers to eliminate their common enemy. A middle-income peasant named Li Yunshan warned: 'The landlords are coming to exploit us after exploiting the poor peasants and farm labourers. We will suffer unless the landlord class is eliminated' (cited in Wang et al., 1989: 44). In the end, the poor peasants and farm labourers, together with middle-income peasants, denounced the landlord class in concert (Wang et al., 1989: 43–44). In this way, the 'class consciousness' of the villagers, especially of the poor and lower-middle peasants, was greatly enhanced.

4. Restructuring

A vast number of tactics were employed in the 'criticising and denouncing' of the landlords and this restructured the villages in a dramatic way. The work team sent to Xiaogang used five methods to clarify the 'misconduct or crimes' of the landlord class: (1) *maximising*: distinguishing vicious local 'tyrants' from other landlords and teaching

villagers to identify a 'typical' landlord; (2) *exaggerating*: reminding villagers of the landlords' old crimes and how to think from the perspective of class exploitation; (3) *scapegoating*: attributing unrelated errors and misconduct to the landlord class; (4) *omitting*: disclosing inconsistencies between landlords' words and deeds, through which the masses learned that landlords were the hidden oppressors (any evidence to the contrary was expunged); and (5) *publicising*: public 'trials' involving landlords and rich peasants were held almost every day at the time. One such meeting, which lasted for two days, was attended by a total of 13,000 people. Approximately 200 people joined in the 'complaint struggle', engaging in intense face-to-face argument. Under such circumstances, 'despotic landlords', including Song Qinfang, were forced to confess the crimes they had committed, one being that they had once packed 12 Party cadres into sacks and thrown 11 of them into the Huaihe River[2] (Wang et al., 1989: 45–46).

However, the county Party Committee argued that public trials had two disadvantages: first, no landlord was executed after a trial, and this made the masses very disappointed (some villagers argued: 'Why on earth didn't the government execute the vicious Song Qinfang, who killed so many good people?' (Wang et al., 1989: 46)). Second, the meetings lasted too long, sometimes into the evening. Only four to five landlords were involved in the two-day trial. Over 10,000 people from all walks of life attended the meeting; but, such vast numbers made it difficult to maintain order. When it came to Song Qinfang, by the second day, the landlord had still not confessed his guilt: he even argued his innocence, making excuses. The chief judge sought advice from the masses, who exhorted, 'Put a rope around his neck and hang him!' After hearing this three or four times, Song cried out for forgiveness; then, some villagers started to become sympathetic towards him (Wang et al., 1989: 46).

During this process, defining a landlord was related to the whole designation of the social class. Before labelling the different social classes, the villagers were encouraged to distinguish one class from another after studying the relevant policies at each meeting. As a result, most people could distinguish one class from another. For example, a 15-year-old boy named Lu Minsheng knew that the landlords themselves did not work and that they made a living by charging rent (Wang et al., 1989: 47). From this example, it becomes clear that distinguishing classes by implementing relevant policies had been thoroughly established. Yet, there was a tendency to 'increase the *chengfen*'; for example, middle-income peasants were often labelled rich peasants (Lu Xiaoxue, interview, 8 June 2009).

It was also important to learn to divide social classes through mutual-aid organisations; that is, to carry out class education through productive organisations. This was done by organising Party and League cadres to study the Government Administration Council's decision vis-à-vis defining social classes in the rural areas. By conducting discussions and applying the principles to specific cases, the mutual-aid organisations learned how to define social classes while leading production at the same time. When the mutual-aid organisations reached a consensus regarding the definition and categorisation of social classes in the village, the consensus was opened to the public for examination. Once it won villager recognition, it would be submitted to superior governments for approval.

5. Dividing

The distribution of five major landlords' properties in Xiaogang, including land, houses, draught oxen, draft tools and grain, constituted an important step in the Land Reform. A committee was set up, with elders, representatives of agricultural associations, and cadres each constituting one-third of the association. In the interest of fairness, the personal qualifications required of each committee member were summarised as 'being virtuous and direct in behaviour and being able to persuade others' (Wang et al., 1989: 48). The following procedure was adopted during land distribution, with the land of the middle-income peasants left untouched. First, the number of poor peasants and farm labourers was identified. Then, based on the unit of an administrative village, according to the total amount of land forfeited and collected, including that of poor peasants and labourers, villagers could get a per capita area of land, thus establishing a balance between those who were allocated land and those who were deprived of land. At that time, the area was approximately 0.2 *mu* and did not exceed 0.3 *mu* (Wang et al., 1989: 49).

As regards the disposal of debts, the debts that peasants owed to landlords were all invalidated: all debtor bills were burnt. In the case of debts that peasants owed to rich peasants, if the interest was approximately the same amount as the principal, the principal would be valid but the interest would be cancelled. If the interest was over twice as much as the principal, both the principal and the interest were cancelled, with due bills returned to the borrowers. All debts between middle-income peasants, poor peasants and farm labourers remained valid.During the process of land re-distribution, 'equalitarianism' and 'predilection for the same family' were strongly objected to. In fact, the fight against peasant

familism was still promoted – albeit cautiously. Land was distributed as follows: The original lands were taken as the basis so as to avoid a second distribution after mixing them up; the amount, quality and location of each person's land were verified and adjustments made according to the standard of actual output. As some villagers recalled (Lu Xiaoxue, interview, 8 June 2009), Huang Xueliang, a Xiaogang farm labourer, got more than 10 *mu* of land; Guan Youshen, a poor peasant, got 10 *mu* and another 3.4 *mu* from two landlords outside the village. A mule was allocated to him as well as a vat by a landlord called Yan Fengxiang. Yan Lixue, a lower-middle-income peasant, received 4.5 *mu* of land from Yan Fengxiang. The mode of this distribution signifies that the Land Reform effectively brought some changes to land property rights; it especially benefited the then landless villagers.

6. Disputing

During the Land Reform, much emphasis was placed on class status (*chengfen*), sometimes known as the 'theory of *chengfen*' or the 'theory of the unique influence of class status'.[3] This derived from the CCP's principles of class analysis, which identified and predicted peasants' political beliefs and deeds from their 'current class position' and 'family background'. Such emphasis upon an individual's *chengfen* closed the door on social reform, as it had already asserted that only the proletariat – as defined by the CCP – had the capability to lead the Revolution (Goodman, 2000: 24–25; 159). Numerous cases of injustice resulted, including the following examples:

Case One (illustrating inadequate knowledge of land use history as well as questions concerning the size of land): A landlord named Zhang Huaibin had 210 *mu* of land in 1938: this decreased to 53.8 *mu* after he sold some land. There were three family members but none of them worked by himself. Yet, Zhang was labelled a 'lessor of small land' (Wang et al., 1989: 49).

Cases Two and Three (wrong division due to ignorance of the role of working women): Wang Yuanzhang from Chezhuang Village was a rich peasant who had six family members and 84 *mu* of land. In the first half of 1946, he rented 26 *mu* to others but he took all the land back for self-farming during the latter half of the year. He hired two long-term hands as well as 40 to 50 casual labourers. Wang did not work himself. His wife did farm work for three-and-a-half months every year. Wang was labelled a 'landlord' because his wife's work 'does not count' (Wang et al., 1989: 49). Another example was Wei Xuehai, a villager living in

Mentai Township. He had 15 family members, five major labourers, three long-term hired hands, two casual labourers and 160 *mu* of land, which the family farmed by themselves. Wei's wife was a major labourer, but the masses did not consider her as such; Wei should have been labelled a 'landlord' but he was identified as a 'rich peasant' after the local Party Committee reviewed the actual conditions. The local masses did not wholly accept this decision at the time (Wang et al., 1989: 50).

Case Four (overemphasis of one's *chengfen*): There were four people in Zhou Dejin's family in Xiaogang Village: they farmed all their land, which amounted to 43.2 *mu*, with one long-term hired hand and 40 to 50 casual labourers. None of the family members did farm work. Zhou, who was a bandit, lived off the properties and land he had stolen from others and was finally labelled a 'vagrant' (Wang et al., 1989: 52).

Case Five (inappropriate calculation of exploitation): In Luliang Village, Lu Youde was a middle-income peasant with four family members (including himself) and 24 *mu* of land. All his land was let to others. Lu leased another 70 *mu* of land from a landlord for self-farming: he hired two long-term hands and worked himself. Another family member also did some farm work; but Lu was wrongly labelled a 'rich peasant' (Wang et al., 1989: 48).

Case Six (inconsistent assessment of exploitation): Wang Haiqin, a prosperous middle-income peasant with 89.6 *mu* of land, ran a peanut shop before 'Liberation'. He had two long-term labourers and three casual labourers. In 1946, he rented 55 *mu* of land and farmed 34.6 *mu* with no hired hands. In the latter half of 1947, he took back all the land for self-farming with the help of one long-term hired hand. Wang himself returned home for agricultural production; in addition, he had 45 casual labourers during the busy seasons. In 1947, he mortgaged 9 *mu* of land and left the other 15 *mu* fallow. But he was wrongly labelled a 'landlord' (Wang et al., 1989: 48).

Case Seven (economic determinism): A villager named Yao Hua in Dongpao Village, Weishui Township, had six family members, all of whom were major labourers, and two long-term hired hands. Yao had 20 *mu* of land as well as another 20 *mu* which were rented out and 54 *mu* they rented from other landlords. Yao was initially labelled a 'rich peasant' but, after an assessment of the amount he had exploited, he was finally identified as a 'middle-income peasant', a designation approved by the Fengyang Party Committee. But, as Yuan Kezhi, who was then President of the Weishui Township Agricultural Association, complained: 'If Yao Hua is not a rich peasant, there are no rich peasants in our township'. He wanted to label Yao Hua in a 'stricter' manner, just because Yao led a prosperous life.

Case Eight (tracing one's political *chengfen* as far as possible): A villager in Mentai Township named Hu Guangsheng had five family members and did a lot of farm work himself. He had 46 *mu* of land in total. Before the 'Liberation', he rented out 38 *mu* and farmed 8 *mu* by himself. After 1949, he farmed 15 *mu* on his own. He had worked in a Japanese factory during the anti-Japanese War period and had been a village security guard for the KMT. Yet, he was still doing a lot of farm work when took up the post. Hu was labelled a 'landlord' mainly because of his political history. Mr Yang, who was the leader of the work team, said: 'Neither I nor my fellow villagers think it fair that Hu is identified as a "landlord"'. Hu was finally identified as a 'rich peasant', a category approved by the local Party Committee.

Case Nine (criticism of cadres because they could not accurately identify policies and their implications, as indicated by their attaching more importance to economic than political factors, and because they were too dependent on the masses): Gao Jun, Vice Team Leader of Shili Township Work Team, said: 'Wang Jiu was labelled a landlord by the masses.' But, Wang was identified as a 'small land lessor' by local Party Committee. Gao Jun complained about the inconsistency of this classification by the masses and the local government.

Case Ten (replacing of policies with arbitrary thought and subjective ideas): Yang Chuanxin of Xiaogang Village commented: 'Look at the documents of this peasant. I have heard that he doesn't do much farm work: obviously he is a landlord' (cited in Liu Xuemin, interview, 7 May 2010).

'Human nature' began to change during the Land Reform as the masses were politically resocialised into 'land reformers' who had strong political awareness and sensibility. As Jing Jun writes:

> Implementing the Maoist theory of class struggle resulted in a radical overturning of power relations. Former community leaders were subordinated to those who once had been of inferior rank. At the same time, the local kinship structure was fractured when social distinctions were redrawn along Communist definitions of socioeconomic 'class identities' (*chengfen*) and politically determined 'family backgrounds' (*chushen*). Close relatives became distant co-villagers once individuals were stigmatized as 'class enemies', 'counter revolutionaries', or 'sons and daughters of landlords and rich peasants'. The scope of moral reasoning based on traditional ethical standards was drastically reduced as public positions fell into the hands of political activists whose solutions to local problems hinged on their deference to an obviously very effective force – the new Communist regime. (Jing, 1996: 50–51)

A further story concerning the Land Reform can be found in *Thirty Years in the Countryside* (Wang et al., 1989: 45). Zhang Yunhe, a 42-year-old former KMT member living in Laozhang Village, Fengyang, had taken many posts during the Republican period and had always bullied the masses. During the Land Reform, he often threatened villagers verbally. For example, he once said to a peasant: 'You cannot hold indefinitely the land distributed to you: some day I will take my land back, and then you will regret it' (Wang et al., 1989: 45). On 6 December 1951, a public meeting was held at which many peasants denounced Zhang. Later, Zhang told his wife to spread the rumour that the KMT would return and kill all the cadres. This made the masses (except for Wang Jinhai, who was a militia team leader) very scared: they did not dare to criticise Zhang ever again. After that, Zhang tried every means possible to undermine the militia's activities. He publicly told Zhang Deyin, a team leader of the militia: 'No matter how hard you practise every day, you will be sent to fight against the United States army in Korea and by then you will be dead. Do you really wish for this result?' (Wang et al., 1989: 45) The militia were demoralised and the team members failed to do their jobs faithfully. Under such circumstances, Wang Jinhai gave in. He went to Zhang Yunhe's house and said: 'I didn't mean to criticise you; other cadres forced me to. Please don't treat me as your enemy' (Wang et al., 1989: 46). Zhang then spread the rumour that the American army would defeat the CCP army very soon. On 16 December 1951, Zhang told Chen Youde to spread the word that Wang Jinhai had followed him and visited him at night to plead for forgiveness. Most of the masses believed him and requested that Wang be dismissed from his post. Wang Jinhai was suffering so much that he did not eat anything for two days; he even wanted to commit suicide. Later, cadre leaders of the township uncovered Zhang's tricks and mobilised the masses to engage in struggles against him. Zhang Yunhe was finally sent to a labour camp. Because the penetration of the Communist regime rebuilt the village, the villagers surrendered their agency to the all-encompassing Party/State apparatus. In other words, the system negated the villagers' agency.

This could also be explained from the perspective of biopolitics. For Foucault, biopolitics is a politics of life and life processes. It is a power over life rather than death; it is a productive, non-monarchical power. It is the politicisation of life as well as the medicalisation of politics. Biopoliticisation coincided with the increasing politicisation of the Chinese villagers' bodies and lives. Villagers were heavily scrutinised by the local government and society during the Maoist era. The countryside

and the nation coincided and mobilisation of the villagers was regarded as the representation of the nation.

The process of political resocialisation also cut across age groups. Even a five-year-old child would accuse a landlord of crimes: 'Don't take me for a kid. I speak on behalf of the adults and try to behave well' (Wang et al., 1989: 55) . This signals a policy of social 'infantilisation'. That is to say, 'individuals were treated as children who did not know what was in their own best interests' (Saich, 2004: 219). Most peasant children did not play with landlords' children: when they saw any person visiting a landlord, they would report it immediately (Wang et al., 1989: 55).

7. Conclusion

During the Land Reform, landlord ownership was abolished and peasant ownership was established to 'emancipate the productive forces' in the rural areas, increase agricultural production and pave the way for the industrialisation of China (Zhuang, 2000: 78). The Land Reform was accomplished in Xiaogang within less than two months (Yan Hongchong, interview, 5 April 2010), setting a good example regarding the CCP's policy of distributing land to all peasants and achieving common prosperity after eliminating the landlord class in China. Meanwhile, the Land Reform also enabled the state's power to function at grassroots level. Work teams were mainly responsible for conveying the central government's policies to grassroots organisations. They worked tirelessly until grassroots units, including village Party branches, agricultural associations, the militia and women's associations, had been established in the rural areas. The establishment of a new social order was finally confirmed by the consolidation of the grassroots CCP organisations. Collectivisation was the most important means for the CCP to achieve the Communist transformation of the peasants. The social strata of the latter were connected by lineages, families and villages before the establishment of the PRC. The new social structure in the rural areas was reorganised from 1947 to 1952 according to the economic conditions of each peasant. The CCP-led government divided all social groups into six general classes: landlords, rich peasants, upper-middle-income peasants, middle-income peasants, lower-middle-income peasants and poor peasants. Among these, landlords and rich peasants were considered 'bad' classes, while lower-middle-income peasants and poor peasants were 'good' classes. The CCP demolished the elites of traditional society by mobilising the poor peasants to fight the rich peasants and landlords. The dismantling of the rural landowning class paved the way for 'capital- instead of land-accumulation' (Castells,

1992: 53); moreover, the re-shuffling of the rural structure rendered any attack by an anti-CCP organisation less likely.

Party branches were set up at village level. This ensured that state and government policies would reach the grassroots organisations. Local-level agricultural associations assumed the positions of executing organisations that were led by others and took orders from their superiors after the founding of the PRC. This restructuring constituted an essential basis for the successful and smooth implementation of various decrees and large-scale social movements during the two decades following the founding of the PRC.

Villagers who received land during the Land Reform were initially happy; but long-term poverty and hardship did little to improve their living conditions. Poverty made cooperation very difficult as there was no official insurance or guarantees for villagers (Keating, 1997: 42). After the 'Liberation', villagers were busy pursuing their livelihoods; and by the time of the Cultural Revolution, of the 17 male labourers in the Xiaogang team, 15 had been team leaders or vice team leaders. There had been cadres in every family. By the end of 1977, the Commune members had nothing left. Nearly everyone in the village had become a beggar. The doors of 11 households were made of sorghum stalks: some were so poor that they had to borrow bowls from other families when their relatives came to visit. It was said that 'in one family, a lady did not leave her bed throughout winter because her baby wore the same pants as her; the village was so poor that it only had three huts, one cow, one harrow and one plough' (Liao Xihai, interview, 4 May 2010). Thus, poverty proved a 'justification' for the subsequent communisation.

After the Land Reform, 179 households of poor peasants from four townships in Daxihe Town, Fengyang County, sold 643 *mu* of land, which they had received as a result of the Land Reform. Some sold all their land and left to start new lives in Shanghai, including 47 households in Guangou Township, which sold a total of 124 *mu* of land (Wang et al., 1989: 53).[4] These 'petty peasant economy' transactions were totally against the original intentions and goals of 'socialist construction'. Peasants experiencing great difficulty required mutual aid for their agricultural production (Lu Xiaoxue, interview, 8 June 2009).

In the meantime, judging from the perspective of national economic development, Mao Zedong claimed that there were three advantages to agricultural cooperation. In *On the Cooperative Transformation of Agriculture* (31 July, 1955), Mao stated:

> If we cannot solve problems concerning agricultural cooperation within three five-year-plan periods; i.e., make a leap from

> animal-powered small-scale agricultural production to machine-enabled large-scale agricultural production, including large-scale migration and land reclamation as organised by the state (planning to reclaim 400 to 500 million mu of land), it will be impossible for us to solve the contradiction between the increasing demand for commodities, grains and industrial materials and the low yield of major crops at present, nor could we achieve the great success of socialist industrialization. (Mao, 1977: 168)

Furthermore, Mao claimed, as the most important department of socialist industrialisation, heavy industries consist of the production of tractors, other agricultural machines, chemical fertilizer, modern vehicles, kerosene, electricity, etc. which cannot be brought into full play unless large-scale agricultural production is formed on the basis of collectivisation (Mao, 1977: 168–191). Finally, Mao stipulated that

> agriculture contributes to a large proportion of funds needed for the realisation of national industrialisation and the improvement of agricultural technologies. This derives from the development of light industries which produce plenty of consumption goods for peasants in addition to agricultural tax. Trading these goods with peasants for grain and light industry materials could not only satisfy the needs of both the state and peasants but also help to accumulate sufficient funds for the state. However, the large-scale development of light industries relies on the development of both heavy industries and agriculture, as it could not be realised on the basis of a small-scale peasant economy. Only the socialist agriculture based on collectivisation could make peasants get huge purchasing power. (Mao, 1977: 173)

Undoubtedly, Mao's strategy was that agricultural collectivisation should take the form of a superimposed and compulsory system of peasant cooperation (Kueh, 2006). Mao viewed the importance of agricultural development to the national economic structure from a strategic perspective, thereby promoting the militaristic socialist transformation of China's rural areas in a radical way. However, in Xiaogang, the land transaction business contradicted the newly emerging national policy, creating a particular set of conditions under which the national programme for rural collectivisation unfolded locally. This will be the focus of the following chapter.

2
Collectivisation and Village Reconstruction

The peasants' spontaneous cooperation by no means persisted after the founding of the PRC. Hinton (1967: 625–630), during his discussion of mutual-aid teams (MATs), wrote that when the Party Branch and the Peasants' Association in Changgong Village (his area of study in Shanxi Province) brought the problem of MATs to the table for the first time, nearly all the peasants thought they were a good but impractical idea. The situation was similar in Xiaogang. The MATs were difficult to manage. This was particularly true in the allocation of farm work, as nobody would cooperate with a lazy worker. Also, it took a lot of time to arrange meetings and it was not easy to organise production; as a result, the MATs were quickly mobilised into more coercive bodies. This chapter will explore the bio-politicisation of the villagers through cooperativisation and collectivisation. The village and the nation coincided; mobilisation of the villagers was regarded as the representation of the nation. In such a context, Foucauldian bio-politics coincided with the increasing politicisation of villagers' bodies and lives. In this chapter, I will also show the embeddedness of resistance in this process. Villagers' survival-oriented opposition and strategies partially subverted the all-encompassing sovereign power, which laid the foundation for the era of decollectivisation.

1. Mutual-aid teams (MATs)

Mutual-aid teams consisted of five to eight households and represented an elementary form of agriculture cooperative. The first MAT in Xiaogang, which was formed in 1955, was organised by peasants who were relatives and friends. In 1956, all the peasants in Fengyang County were called upon to cooperate in production. Many peasants,

who joined MATs in a rush, soon found that once a member did not do well, it proved difficult for him to join other teams after quitting the original team. Members who had close connections with each other would often contemplate removing trouble-makers and lazy workers from the team. But they were also afraid of hurting others' feelings. Widows and the elderly would often be regarded as burdens: few were inclined to cooperate with them. The greatest difficulty was that MATs divided work so carefully that the peasants lacked their own space. Over the first two years, it became more and more difficult for teams to play their roles, particularly as the village government often abused its authority and considered these teams as extensions of the government. The formerly voluntary peasants' organisations became semi-official organs that followed government orders. Under these circumstances, Xiaogang village decided to readjust its mutual-aid teams, placing much emphasis on the cooperation principles argued by Mao Zedong (1977): voluntary participation, equal exchange of labourers and democratic decision-making. Meanwhile, they tried to avoid three flawed tendencies: mutual aid in everything, large-scale mutual aid, and the mutual aid of complicated multi-level organisations.

In the initial period of collectivisation, the government argued that the emergence of MATs was the spontaneous result of the villagers' agricultural production and functioned in compliance with the objective laws of development. The government was simply meeting the requirements of the peasants' economic awareness. The CCP's statement that the 'spontaneity' of the masses gave rise to collectivisation served to enhance its own legitimacy. In other words, any admission that the masses did not support the movement to establish MATs could delegitimise the CCP's authority (Pye, 1968: 218–219).

However, many problems occurred during the implementation of MATs in Fengyang County (Wang et al., 1989: 65–66; 153–154). The new government argued that as regards the development of rural economies, there were still much to be discussed about what are MATs and how to manage them. However, some people were too hasty to take the road to collectivisation. For example, over 20 village groups in Weixi Township, Changhuai District, wanted to be converted into MATs. Many groups joined MATs with the intention of receiving financial and political help from the government. Not surprisingly, many MATs did not fulfil the three principles of 'seeking mutual benefit at one's own will, exchange commodities at equal value as well as democratic management' (Mao, 1977). This lack of fulfilment went against the villagers' expectations.

At the beginning of 1955, a cadre named Huang from Xiaoxihe Town said to the Xiaogang villagers: 'You've got land, yet no one is active in taking the road of mutual-aid cooperation. You should be grateful to what you have and join the cooperatives'. He also repeated the words: 'Run to the cooperatives for help if you wish for a good harvest' (Xia, 2005: 18). Xiaogang Village's first MAT was duly established and consisted of four households: those of Yan Guochang, Guan Tingzhu, Guan Tingzhen and Huang Xueliang, who was the Team Leader (Xia, 2005: 18). The MAT adopted the method of 'exchanging labour', in other words, exchanging manpower with manpower and exchanging animal power with manpower. During the busy season or in times of emergency, all the households offered the same amount of labour, each household in turn.

By the end of 1955, of the 34 households in the village, all except the four mentioned above still carried out their farm work separately. The period during which they worked by themselves was considered the 'golden age' by the villagers during the first three decades after the PRC was founded (Xia, 2005: 18). The villagers participated in different kinds of agricultural and non-agricultural business (Lu, 2007: 87–88). Xiaogang Village increased from 24 households comprising 145 people, 18 household animals and 13 ploughs in 1951 to 34 households comprising 175 people, 39 household animals and 1,100 *mu* of land by 1956, an increase unprecedented in the village's history (Xia, 2005: 18–19).

2. Lower-and higher-stage Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives (APCs)

According to Baum, '[v]oluntary cooperation, based on principles of gradualism, self-interest, and careful preparation of public opinion among the peasant masses – hallmarks of previous CCP rural mobilisation drives – went by the board in the new Maoist campaign to eliminate private wealth and prevent rural class polarisation' (Baum, 1993). Such principles were quickly discarded in Xiaogang's road from MAT to the higher-stage cooperativisation by local authorities in the context of mobilising villagers to collectivise. The first, lower-stage, Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives (APCs) involved approximately 30 households, while the higher-stage APCs constituted as many as 300 households. The difference between the APCs and the MATs, as Thaxton points out, lay in the fact that 'the inauguration of the APC marked a shift from 'cooperativisation' to 'collectivisation' – a shift that required villagers to risk significantly more than the shift from mutual aid groups to land-pooling associations had' (Thaxton, 2008: 102).

Immediately after the peasants of Xiaogang received their land certificates, the Fengyang County government started to encourage them to join the lower-stage APCs. At first, the government held meetings for League activists to negotiate with each other. Next, meetings were held at which team members, cadres and key team leaders from nearby villages would comment on the benefits of establishing cooperatives. After comparing the APCs with the MATs, the villagers became aware that the former were infinitely better. Wang Si said: 'I've been working very hard since the age of 14, yet till today I still lead a poor life.' Li Changsheng commented:

> I've been a cowherd since I was a little kid: the landlord beat me if the cow didn't eat its fill; he never cared about me. I earned very little money, barely enough to feed my mother. If it wasn't for Chairman Mao, I would be still starving today. The only way to reciprocate the CCP is to join in the agricultural production with tremendous efforts. (Wang et al., 1989: 73–74)

The villagers gained further understanding of these policies and were in time mobilised to hold family meetings. Group meetings were then convened, at which applications for forming APCs were accepted.

Although the procedures from joining MATs to APCs were followed step by step, rash decisions continued to be made involving the following: most MAT members simply followed others in the setting-up of the APCs. Some APC leaders wanted to organise farm jobs in haste, without the cooperation of MAT members. They had many things to worry about; for example, in the new APCs, middle-income peasants were concerned that poor peasants and farm labourers might benefit at no cost (Kang, 1980: 236–272). Middle-income peasants were also unhappy that they could not be elected as cadres. Poor peasants and farm labourers were unhappy that they could not afford an ox and could not get married as they had no land. Those who had much land but little manpower were worried that they would not get enough food to eat. The old were worried that young men and women might morally degenerate when living together, that they would not live long enough to enjoy socialist welfare. Women worried about many things: a woman might not be allowed to visit her parents; their children might not have peanuts to eat once the land was transferred to the APCs, and the cooperatives would not make allowances for their special difficulties, including their relative physical weakness and monthly periods. Some villagers observed lineage differences. Meanwhile, there were also 'misleading thoughts'

among the old MATs; for this reason, a few MAT members wanted to quit (Wang et al., 1989: 73–74).

The government ordered that the principle of 'advancing steadily under active leadership' be followed, and that at least 60 per cent of all peasants must be organised (Wang et al., 1989: 74). The overall guideline was to correctly use the experience of successes and create conditions for setting up more APCs while expanding the extant cooperatives by enhancing production, managing the new APCs and taking drastic measures to develop MATs. Propaganda, together with education of the 'Mass Line', greatly improved the masses' socialist awareness. It saw them exhibit a stronger passion for taking an organised road. In addition, more labour and material assistance was given to large cooperatives run by the county Party committee in a bid to enhance agricultural cooperation in Fengyang.

This process of reorganisation was not without its problems. First, although poor peasants and the new middle-income peasants were appointed by local authorities as leaders, they did not carry any weight in actual work since poor peasants were still being rejected to join APCs in some places. Second, as regards the rich peasants, APC members were often manipulated by them who had already joined the cooperative. Third, and perhaps even more serious, was the prospect of uniting with middle-income peasants. Some, violating the principle of 'voluntary participation', dragged others into the APCs by force. In some production teams, the workpoints were the same for people of different ages. In other words, 'it lacked hard-and-fast rules on how much [of the work that] each age group should receive' (Oi, 1999: 35).

Many of the problems that existed later in the People's Commune emerged in the higher-stage APCs. Peasants lacked perception where political beliefs and ideas were concerned. They expressed only their practical interest in both MATs and APCs; but the CCP's forceful instructions vis-à-vis agricultural cooperation quickly rendered their voluntary choice ineffective. As with the Land Reform conducted in the initial period, whether or not to set up MATs or APCs was not decided by the peasants themselves; rather, it was a question of political dictatorship. Another distinct feature of the APCs was that there was no freedom to quit.

It is thus not surprising that over 60 per cent of cooperatives in Fengyang County suffered production reduction in 1956. By the middle of 1957, hundreds of members had quit APCs across the county. Over 5,000 kilograms of wheat were privately distributed. It was quite common in some places for grain to be privately distributed or stolen.

Some people who had been forced to join APCs made little attempt to enhance agricultural production, some leaving the land unattended for a year. Later, it was found during communalisation that the public accumulation funds of many lower-stage APCs had been embezzled (Wang et al., 1989: 153–154; 160–163; 170). The 1957 'Anti-Rightist' movement further disenfranchised the peasants' right to quit cooperatives. Administrative control, as well as political and ideological weapons, were used to suppress quitting. From that time on, Xiaogang entered a period of complete enforcement of collectivisation (Ye, 2003).

In the case of extremely poor peasants, the most attractive feature of joining cooperatives was that they could rely upon the cooperatives for many resources which they did not have when they farmed alone. Middle-income peasants (together with rich peasants, who had originally been denied membership of the MATs and were later forced to join the APCs) became extremely fearful that they would lose their draught animals, household utensils and farm implements. Their misgivings were understandable, given that many cooperative members treated cattle badly (Madsen, 1991: 635–636). Higher-stage APCs were lauded by many speculators during this movement. Many local cadres, especially those who had been poor peasants, along with middle-income peasants, took leading positions in the former cooperatives. All supported the transformation from lower- to higher-stage APCs. Mao (1960) referred to this period as 'the high tide of socialism in the countryside'.

Xiaogang villagers worried about the following aspects when transferring from MATs to APCs: members of the old cooperatives, who had greater economic strength, worried that they might suffer losses after joining the APCs. Households with several family members, more land than poor peasants but less labour than middle-income or rich peasants worried that they would get less income after joining the new cooperatives. Those who had no kin and could not work, and hence could not support themselves, feared there would be no guarantee for their lives after joining the large cooperatives. A few old people feared that they would have no place for burial if they joined the cooperatives (Wang et al., 1989: 151).

In 1955, the government employed coercive means. Those who did not want to join the cooperatives were either labelled 'enemies' or required to pay their debts immediately. Those who did not agree to join the cooperatives were asked to attend a meeting, where they stood and/or were forbidden to go home for a meal or sleep. As for those who were extremely stubborn, the work team first took their cattle, then their crops. If they still refused to join, the officials from the Fengyang Party

Committee would take most of their grain. Thus, most peasants were finally forced to join the cooperatives.[1]

This 'socialist transformation of agriculture' reflected the so-called 'two-line battle' in Beijing. Mao criticised Deng Zihui (who was then Head of the Central Rural Work Department):

> A high tide in the new socialist mass movement is imminent throughout the countryside. But some of our comrades, tottering along like a woman with bound feet, are complaining all the time, 'You're going too fast, much too fast'-too much carping, unwarranted complaints, boundless worries, and countless taboos – all this they take as the right policy to guide the socialist mass movement in the rural areas-No, this is not the right policy. This is wrong. (cited in Bo, 1991: 345–346, trans. by Teiwes; Sun, 1993: 121–154)

The coercion exercised in Xiaogang echoes this 'woman with bound feet' analogy. Thirty-six years later, Bo Yibo viewed Mao's improper accusations regarding Deng Zihui's path from individual farming to agricultural collectivisation as an 'inadequate understanding of the arduous, complicated, and long-term nature of the socialist transformation of agriculture[, which] led to impatience for success' (Bo, 1991: 357, translated by Teiwes; Sun, 1993: 146). In reality, the peasants' enthusiasm for higher-stage agricultural organisation around 1955 was, according to Bo Yibo (Ibid., 365), not that high.

3. Communalisation

The People's Commune was a huge collective unit between 10,000 and 20,000 people. It is estimated that there were 26, 000 People's Communes in China by October 1958 (Luo, 2006). '[O]nce human populations are distributed in a cellular manner, they become subject to transformative techniques that, it is hoped, will make the individuals and the transformed collectivities in which they participate both more useful and more docile' (cited in Ransom, 1997: 47; cf. Siu, 1989: 143–169). Such a process of 'normalisation' could be found in the People's Commune system. Mao Zedong first suggested setting up 'large cooperatives' in December 1955; subsequently, large cooperatives were established in all parts of China. But most were shut down as they yielded little effect. During the irrigation and water conservancy construction programme during the winter of 1957 and the spring of 1958, new conflicts emerged between cooperatives. Mao again advocated the establishment of large

cooperatives. In line with his suggestion, *The Report on Appropriately Combining Small Agricultural Cooperatives into Large Ones* was passed during a meeting held in Chengdu in 1958; hereafter, the 'combining of small cooperatives into large ones' was implemented countrywide. However, these large cooperatives were again different from the People's Commune. In July 1958, Mao's secretary, Chen Boda, wrote an article in which he outlined Mao's ideas about setting up a People's Commune. This started the establishment of Communes in Henan, Shandong and Hebei. On 9 August 1958, in Licheng County Beiyuan People's Commune – the first People's Commune in Shandong Province – Mao Zedong stated that 'setting up People's Communes has brought many benefits to us: it has united workers, peasants, businessmen, intellectuals and soldiers and thus made our work much easier' (Mao, 1960: 10). Four days later, the above words were published in the *People's Daily*. People's Communes were set up across China; in particular, it took Henan province only one month to switch to People's Communes in its rural areas. During an expanded meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee in 1958, *Resolutions Concerning the Establishment of People's Communes in China's Rural Areas* were reached, stipulating that People's Communes would adopt such policies as integrating government administration with commune management. It was also stressed that People's Communes still needed to adopt collective ownership and would transfer ownership to the entire people within three to six years. The resolutions also argued that the realisation of communism was not far off in China. Their publication in the *People's Daily* in September 1958, which accelerated the movement to establish People's Communes in all of China's rural areas, sparked the combination of 740,000 agricultural cooperatives into some 20,000 Communes.

The People's Communes had the following features: politically, after the abolishment of private ownership, they bound people together through collective organisations while at the same time accelerating China's socialist development. They also attached great importance to large-scale high-degree of socialisation; hence, all property was calculated and distributed by Communes. Economically, labour and land were all concentrated: much emphasis was placed upon the integration of social structures and their functions; great importance was also attached to the mobilisation and self-reliance of the masses (Ahn, 1975; O'Leary and Watson, 1983). But Communes had many problems for villagers. Due to the integration of collective economies with state power, production brigades and teams became pure recipients of orders, instructions and government policies; thus, they had little recourse to other options

or the right to refuse. As a governmental unit, a People's Commune enjoyed unarguable authority: it could collect or expropriate any property. Commune cadres were appointed or nominated by superiors rather than through elections. They did not know peasants' conditions well and did not act in Commune members' interests. As local governments and collective organisations in the rural areas were combined, the state successfully transferred any or all burdens to production brigades and teams (Shue, 1984).

From the perspective of collective action, there was no doubt that the establishment of the People's Communes was the most coercive form of peasant collectivisation. Fengyang County started to combine small cooperatives into large ones, setting up the first People's Communes on 17 August 1958. The original 28 townships, 137 agricultural cooperatives, three vegetable cooperatives and two fishing cooperatives were combined into 16 townships, including nine cooperatives (seven agricultural cooperatives, one vegetable cooperative and one fishing cooperative) in addition to seven newly established People's Communes and one state-owned farm (Wang et al., 1989: 168).

The movement to establish People's Communes is a government-led national campaign. But how could the state successfully mobilise the masses to join these Communes in less than one year without delegitimising itself?[2] This is mainly a question of social structure. The social structure during the Maoist era was compressed into clearly demarcated and mutually disconnected sections. In the official social structure, there were only three strata; namely, workers, peasants and intellectuals. The emergence of other strata and classes, such as self-employed workers and workers in private sectors, was strictly suppressed. The policy adopted in each social stratum saw members of the same class condensed and compartmentalised vis-à-vis wages and workpoints (White, 1993: 200). Vivienne Shue (1984) suggested that as peasants were gradually restricted from contacting the outside world, they became more eager to depend on and interact with their own communities. From the early 1950s to the late 1970s, rural communities gradually became 'isolated islands'; in the process, peasants' social lives were encapsulated and cellularised, and the structure of communities came to resemble a honeycomb. This form of population demarcation is less able to challenge the state legitimacy to the degree that it could not facilitate group solidarity (Zhao, 2001: 263) and organisation. In other words, as the CCP-led government both politically and economically controlled the villagers' personal and social lives, it is more able to induce, lead and mobilise peasants to join into People's Communes.

Xiaogang was designated as a member (or satellite) village of the 'Weixing People's Commune'. The latter was not only an economic but also a political, cultural and social organisation. In Fengyang County, some Communes announced that they would cover all kinds of basic living expenses for Commune members. They made tremendous efforts to improve public utilities; for example, setting up collective dining halls. According to the (incomplete) records of nine production brigades in Fengyang County, the following properties were used for equalitarianism and indiscriminate transfer of resources (Xia, 2005: 31–32): 9,224 *mu* of land, nine machines, 711 farming tools, 2,022 labourers, 400 farm animals, 2,321 rolls of cured tobacco, 382,912 kilograms of grain, 201,770 yuan for funding, six carriages, one boat, 991 pigs and sheep, 5,130 pieces of lumber, 1,054 houses, 334 fruit trees, 209,975 kilograms of fruit and vegetable as well as 49 vehicles. This programme of enforced requisitioning made the peasants very fearful and upset; for this reason, Xiaogang villagers killed their pigs and sheep for their own use before joining the Communes (Xia, 2005: 34).

During the period when People's Communes were being promoted, many people behaved rashly in their eagerness to switch to communism. In order to eliminate private ownership, Fengyang County government confiscated peasants' property, including, for example, their furniture. Some villagers said: 'There's nothing left for us except a pair of chopsticks and a bowl' (Xia, 2005: 34). A special team was formed to search every peasant's house for any private property, an action which enraged Commune members. But as one cadre said (cited in Xia, 2005: 34), 'There's no such thing as private property: even the teeth in your mouth don't belong to you. We can get them whenever we want!' One villager in Xiaogang once hid some grain beside a wall, but the work team found it and confiscated it. Such cases were not uncommon at the time (Xia, 2005: 34).

Pigs, chicken and ducks in Xiaogang were regarded as collective assets and transferred into large-scale collective-run breeding centres. Yan Hongchang was sent to work in one pig-breeding centre at the age of ten. Later, the centre was shut down, as there were few pigs left. Yan Junchang was directed to plough the Commune's land from the autumn of 1958 to the spring of 1959. But after a short period, most of the farm oxen died. In 1959, the Weixing People's Commune mobilised over 1,000 people to plant rice seedlings around Huayuan Lake, which was over 100 kilometres from Xiaogang. Guan Youshen was one such person. According to him, it took the workers four days to get there and they spent only half a day planting the seedlings. 'How ridiculous it

was to spend five days in total but only half a day doing the work' (Yan Hongchang, interview, 12 April 2010). In 1960, 3,395 labourers in 86 production teams of the Weixing People's Commune worked continuously, planting rice seedlings and reaping wheat for periods of ten days to three months (Xia, 2005: 34–35).

Clearly, the movement to establish People's Communes in rural areas was an 'equalitarianism' and 'military socialism' movement that ignored the actual conditions of the peasants' lived reality. 'The commune, a new socioeconomic unit built on the foundations of an older political-administrative unit, was to become the bridge via which state and society would meet and merge' (Schurmann, 1966: 496). As the principle advocate and promoter of the movement to establish People's Communes, Mao Zedong sought to rectify any problems that occurred during the process of communalisation. He found some relevant problems when visiting Tianjin, Hebei and Henan in 1958. In November he criticised actions such as transferring labour, products and funds without offering payment; in addition, he criticised extreme behaviour such as abolishing the commodity currency, together with the trend towards rash transfer of collective ownership to ownership by the people and from socialism to communism. The *Resolutions on Several Problems Concerning People's Communes* was passed at the 6th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee held in Wuchang in November/December 1958, during which the 'misconduct' of 'equalitarianism and indiscriminate transfer of resources' was intensively criticised. Thereafter, Fengyang began to reorganise all of the Communes within the county.

These administrative measures by the central government barely had any effect, however, and by 1960, China's agricultural structure was on the verge of collapse. In July 1959, the process of rectifying the mistakes made by the People's Communes was interrupted by the change of direction mooted at the Lushan Meeting, after which the Fengyang County government once again started the rash transfer of team ownership to commune ownership. During the first half of 1959, the dining halls, which had been shut down, opened again. In comparison with the central government, the local governments well knew the peasants' tough conditions. So, why did they continue to adopt these stringent policies? In a system where most local officials were appointed by their superiors rather than via democratic elections, 'bureaucratic careerism' (Chuan, 2000) saw officials seize every opportunity to gain promotion by following their superiors' orders. Extreme manifestations of this form of careerism included the following: when what are beneficial to the local development were inconsistent with central policy, local cadres

were likely to be labelled as pursuing 'incorrect' (e.g. revisionist) ideological routes and, fearing that they might be persecuted, no matter how important local interests were, local officials would finally acquiesce and take the routes stipulated by their superiors. It was the peasants who inevitably suffered.

In 1960, there were only ten households left in Xiaogang (with 39 people, one ox and 100 *mu* of land in total). Sixty people starved to death and 76 were forced to leave the village during the three years from 1959 to 1961. (Wu and Xia, 1986: 226–227). According to Yan Xuechang (interview, 8 May 2010), it was only the several hundred kilograms of finger millet, which they gathered from the wild fields in 1960, that helped them survive the famine. Yan Junchang recalled that during the famine, he was suffering so badly from hunger that he took some tree bark and burned it; then, he shaped it into a 'yuan*xiao*', a kind of sweet dumpling made from glutinous rice flour. To his surprise, it tasted good. Yan Hongchang said: 'People even swallowed manure after baking it when they were extremely hungry' (cited in Xia, 2005: 41).

By the autumn of 1960, agriculture had suffered so badly that the central government decided to transfer the power of the 'production brigades' to 'production teams', to stimulate peasants' enthusiasm for production. Meanwhile, the government provided the peasants with the right to produce crops and vegetables for their own family use on land designated as 'private plots'. At the end of 1961, the central government decided to designate production teams as the 'basic accounting units' of People's Communes (Pye, 1968: 208–212). Production teams and brigades played a significant role in self-management capabilities: production team leaders were appointed through democratic elections. The central government began to limit the local governments' power, at the same time encouraging more participation by the masses. However, new resistance from the bottom had already started, demonstrating the Foucauldian argument that power and resistance are interdependent.

4. Survival-oriented resistance

'At a time when rural cadres often find it necessary to bend or even violate "the spirit of the centre" to meet their targets (or to line their pockets), it is policy-based resisters rather than recalcitrants who pose the greatest challenge to cadre power and the existing local political order' (Li and O'Brien, 1996: 32). Based on research undertaken in Da Fo Village, in Henan province, Thaxton argues that popular post-Mao resistance in Do Fo 'was sparked far more often by the desires hidden

within a persistent and powerful memory of the destructive violence of village Party leaders in the Great Leap [Forward] famine' (Thaxton, 2008: 293). Based on Li, O'Brien's policy-based resistance study and Thaxton's study on righteous resistance, I found survival-oriented resistance in Xiaogang. It is survival-oriented because villagers utilised every means they could take to make their most basic life necessities meet in their everyday practice.

Many survival-oriented countermeasures emerged during the People's Commune period (Gao, 2006: 192). In 1962, the size of the Communes in Fengyang was reduced to a more manageable scale. Communes were subdivided into brigades and production teams (30–40 households), into lower-stage APCs. But before this, there was considerable resistance from the Xiaogang villagers. Thaxton (2008: 157–198; 199–230) lists the strategies of survival employed during the peasants' Great Leap Forward, which included 'foot dragging, remittances, migration, the black market, begging, crop theft, gleaning, grain concealment' and '*chiqing*' (eating immature or unripe crops, the most effective hidden strategy). In Xiaogang, similar 'weapons of the weak' were used as tactics of resistance.

Case One: In the spring of 1962, in accordance with the Fengyang County Party Committee's instructions, Xiaogang village adopted the 'Contract Responsibility Land' (CRL) system, which included contracting agricultural production to production teams, fixing quotas for grain production according to the amount of land, and contracting large-scale farm work to the teams and general (small-scale) farm work to households, calculating payment according to the amount of labour engaged. The villagers called it 'contracting agricultural production to each household', which was basically the same as the later Household Responsibility System (HRS).

When, in the spring of 1963, news came that the CRL system would be rescinded, the villagers said doubtfully: 'We have been caged like birds and just got our freedom; we don't want them to put us back into the cage again' (cited in Xia, 2005: 58). A few days later, a work team was sent to the village. A Commune cadre announced the following six disadvantages of adopting the CRL system: (1) Because it involved repetitive work, it would hamper the recovery and development of agricultural production; (2) It would widen the gap between the rich and the poor Commune members; (3) The complications that surrounded contracting agricultural production to each household would make it difficult to carry out the state's plans to promote cash crops like tobacco and oil plants. (4) The system would leave those in great difficulty

unaided; (5) It could make peasants more selfish: collective ideas could thus be weakened. (Xia, 2005: 58). In a word, the CRL system is against the central policy. However, not all of the villagers thought so. Some said: 'The only criterion to identify the correctness of a system is whether it could bring us more grain. As we have got more grain than ever before since adopting the CRL system, it is absolutely a correct system which will bring us more benefit' (cited in Xia, 2005: 58). Nevertheless, the work team still applied economic sanctions to those who adopted the CRL system. The production teams were charged an additional 10 to 30 per cent of grain. Individual peasants who adopted the system were charged 1 to 5 per cent of grain in addition to an extra agricultural tax of 10 to 50 per cent; but the total amount of taxes (including additional local taxes) should be no more than 30 per cent of the actual payment. By May 1963, the CRL system had been abolished. As all wheat produced in the previous year had been taken as collective grain, some peasants were reduced to stealing grain in order to make a living. Under such dire circumstances, the production teams in Xiaogang reaped the crops before they ripened; finally, they recovered only 464 kilograms of wheat, less than what they needed for seed (Xia, 2005: 59).

Case Two: After the enactment of the *Work Regulations of People's Communes in Rural Areas (Revised)* ('*Agriculture 60 Rules*' in short) in 1962, every villager in Xiaogang was allocated 0.5 *mu* of land. Yan Junchang's father reaped 1,500 kilograms of grain in 1962 on this land. Guan Tingzhu's land also yielded plenty of grain. In 1964, Yan Hongchang's father reaped over 5,000 kilograms of sweet potatoes, which not only met the family's requirements for food but were also used to feed the pigs. The grain yield of the production team also increased from 8,000 kilograms in 1961 to 17,500 kilograms in 1965. But soon afterwards, during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), Fengyang County launched the 'learning from Dazhai Village' movement. First and foremost, they took back the land allocated for personal needs. As the work team argued, land allotted for personal needs became the 'tail of capitalism' (Xia, 2005: 59). It competed for cattle, water, time, fertilizer and labour with collective land, seriously affecting collective production and discouraging people from becoming Commune members (Xia, 2005: 68). The land allotted to households in Xiaogang village was gradually reduced from 0.5 *mu* to 0.3 *mu* per capita, then to 0.05 *mu* per capita at the climax of 'learning from Dazhai' in 1974 (Xia, 2005: 69).The villagers called the land 'small garden plots'; but they were still restricted as regards what and how much they could sow in these plots.

Case Three: Yan Jinchang developed a strong awareness of commodity economy. In 1975, he planted some ginger, pepper, green Chinese onion and persimmon trees around his house; in addition, he raised two pigs. He earned approximately 80 yuan from one year's hard work. But he was criticised by his work team as 'an upstart who had taken the capitalist road' (cited in Xia, 2005: 59) and Yan Jinchang was heavily criticised, an action that was even publicised in the local newspaper *Wandong Communications*. His work team accused him of 'planting green Chinese onion while growing vegetables: how could he concentrate on learning from Dazhai?' Yan Jinchang said (cited in Xia, 2005: 73–74): 'It was so close that I was almost called a "capitalist"; at that time I asked: "Is socialism a society in which all people have little to eat?"'

Case Four: At the time, villagers were not allowed to raise chickens or ducks, an activity subject to 'forbidding', 'limiting', 'poisoning' or 'punishing'. 'Forbidding' meant that all Commune members in the village were forbidden to raise any form of poultry. 'Limiting' stipulated that one person might raise two chickens or ducks, two people could raise three and any one household could raise ten at most (when the 'forbidding' policy was loosened, 'limiting' policy was imposed). 'Poisoning' meant that the production teams sprinkled pesticide on collective land; thus, chickens and ducks would be poisoned to death if they wandered into these fields looking for food. 'Punishing', which aimed to prevent Commune members from letting their chickens and ducks eat crops in cultivated collective land, meant the imposition of penalties once the rule was violated.

Case Six: Guan Youshen (interview, 11 August 2009) told me that during the period of communalisation, his father often went to neighbouring villages in secret and welded boilers, stoves and basins for the peasants. When the Commune found out, members said: 'As a blacksmith, you should serve the team with the utmost effort. How dare you run from one village to another just to seek your own benefit?' His forge was subsequently smashed to pieces.

This survival-oriented resistance posed a great challenge to the local state. Engaging in these tactics was 'a form of resistance, regardless of whether it is resistance for the sake of survival or resistance for the sake of harming the state' (Thaxton, 2008: 42).

5. Conclusion

The state separated the peasants from the grain they produced through collectivisation, 'learning from Dazhai' and 'cutting the tail of capitalism'.

The value of peasants' labour and the amount they produced were decided by the state and expropriated by the collectives; thus, the peasants had to rely on collectives for their survival (Oi, 1999: 42). With the abolition of free markets for agricultural products, villagers in Xiaogang were forced to abandon the markets and other sources. The Supply and Marketing Cooperatives and the state-run grain provision centres became the only places to sell farm tools and purchase grain. And, while producing crops within a cooperative became imperative, doing one's farm work alone was not only impractical, it was illegal (Zhou, 2005).

In general, while the state was transforming rural society through the Land Reform and collectivisation movements after the founding of the PRC, a highly unified relationship structure was being established between the state and the rural society, especially after the implementation of the People's Commune system. Under the system of 'three-tier ownership on the basis of production teams', peasants did not have the right to own capital goods. They were not independent subjects of production, management and yield. As members of production teams, they could obtain benefits only through non-market means.

After committing the fruits of their labour directly to the state, peasants were provided with capital goods and subsistence in accordance with the principle of egalitarianism: they were also rewarded according to their degree of loyalty to the CCP-led government. The People's Commune system, characterised by the integration of government administration with Commune management, together with the autocratic leadership of the CCP, imposed the will of the state directly on the people of the rural areas, thereby establishing a direct relation between the government and the peasantry. In other words, the peasants were directly affiliated to the state.

Because the state exerted massive control over their interests, the peasants had to accept the state's mainstream concept of value. They consciously bound their interests to those of the state, rendering themselves subordinate to the latter, and forming the value of concepts that conformed with the requirements of the state's ideologies. In such cases, 'the state was highly integrated with the peasants, who would be punished if their actions deviated from the state's requirements' (He, 1999). This high degree of integration guaranteed the state's requirements for resources and the political mobilisation of the rural society.

The other side of this integration was resistance. Foucault maintains: 'Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to [the] power' (Foucault, 1978b: 95). In other words, power and resistance

are interdependent. Power needs resistance to become more powerful and there is no resistance without power. Peasant resistance to aspects of collectivisation, especially after the Great Leap Forward, signified that the process of bio-politicisation at the village level was by no means a simple one-way imposition. Villagers' survival-oriented opposition and strategies partially subverted local power relationships, and laid the foundation for the eventual shift to decollectivisation. This shift will be the focus of the next chapter.

3
Village Reform and Its Aftermath

The Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong (1958: 116) once said that as long as policy adjustments could provide Chinese peasants with enough food and clothing, they would not rebel, and the traditional social order could be maintained. This, however, was only partially true of Xiaogang. For what reasons and in what ways did the villagers challenge the government's authority and decollectivise? Put differently, as Perry (1986: 216) argues: 'Might not a comparable rate of growth have been achieved under liberalized economic policies that did not require the dismantling of the collective?' These are the questions I will address in this chapter. In Section 2, I will explore the advantages and disadvantages of the Household Responsibility System (HRS, *Baogan Daohu*) in terms of villager cooperation. Finally, I will explain aspects of the villagers' self-governance and the emergence of new power relations.

1. Why decollectivise?

Why did Xiaogang decollectivise in 1978? Several explanations have been proposed, which adopt differing perspectives.

Proposition One (geopolitical perspective): 'Being a long way from the reach of the power of the provincial arm of the urban-based Maoist state' (Thaxton, 2008: 336) provided Xiaogang with a relatively low-risk platform for reform. Or, to use Yang Dali's argument: 'The farther away a province was from Beijing, the political centre, the more freedom of maneuver it had and the less likely was the province to favor radical agrarian policies. Conversely, proximity to Beijing increase[d] the likelihood that a province would adopt more radical policies' (Yang, 1996: 135). Xiaogang was far from the political centre, at both the provincial and national levels.

Proposition Two (traumatisation thesis):

> The more a province suffered during the Great Leap [Forward] Famine, the more painful the lesson was for the province as a collective and the less likely the province to favor measures of agrarian radicalism, such as brigade accounting. In other words, the severity of the Great Leap Famine in a province was a good indicator of the cognitive changes that famine wrought on the population and hence of the incentives for reform in the province. (Yang, 1996: 134)

Anhui was one of China's most badly affected provinces, and, for this reason, Xiaogang's decollectivisation was understandable.

Proposition Three (bottom-up perspective): Zhou Xiao and Daniel Kelliher, arguing that the spontaneous social force of the peasants was the decisive factor in promoting rural reform, attached considerable importance vis-à-vis peasants' own decision in agricultural production and marketing to the power of the peasants as well as to their advantages in rural development (Kelliher, 1994; Zhou, 1996). Zhou (1996: 17–18) uses the acronym SULNAM (spontaneous, unorganised, leaderless, non-ideological, apolitical movement) to convey the initiative and speed of the farmers' decollectivisation movement. As discussed in previous Chapter, Xiaogang actively adopted the 'Contract Responsibility Land' (CRL) system in 1962, which is an evident demonstration that Xiaogang villagers engaged in land reform from a bottom-up spontaneous level.

Proposition Four (elitist perspective): The peasants' pleading was not the only reason for land reform. Thomas Bernstein (1999) argues that political conflict at the time accelerated the reform process. He also argues that it was due to the pressure of political parties that the HRS was implemented across the country in 1982. Its advocates stressed that the HRS accorded with the stipulations of socialism: land was still collectively owned; peasants had to seek profits as per contract. In other words, the production and collection of grain and cotton was still planned by the state. Reformers believed that the HRS would increase agricultural yields, production efficiency and peasants' incomes and further industrial diversification, thereby fostering the all-round development of the rural areas in the long run (Unger, 1986; Perry, 1986). Friedman (2010), who agrees with this argument, holds that the conservative Party members had in reality caused great hardship by preventing the path to decollectivisation. This proposition is closely related to Wan Li, then CCP's first Secretary and Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee in Anhui Province. On his own authority and insistence, villagers from

Fengyang County, where Xiaogang is located, are allowed to farm and sell surplus produce with more independence.

Proposition Five (perspective of land/man ratio): Perry (1986: 204) argued in her study of Fengyang County conducted in 1986 that 'the relatively favourable land/man ratio in Fengyang – when contrasted with the heavily overpopulated Jiangnan, for example – meant that rather substantial tracts of land were available to be contracted out to peasant households under the HRS.' This perspective points out the indigeneity of Xiaogang's motivation to reform.

These propositions offer different perspectives for understanding the decollectivisation of Xiaogang. Yang Dali (1996: 142), after conducting a statistical study of the planting area and agricultural population of each province in 1979, found that the man/land ratio did not indicate a level of significance from statistics pertaining to ratio calculated by the production teams. He argued that Heilongjiang Province, which ranked second in the country in terms of man/land ratio, was the last province to contract land to each household. Yang proved Perry's proposition to be false by this examination. In my understanding, Perry placed considerable emphasis on qualitative analysis of local data specific to Fengyang, whereas Yang argued from a quantitative perspective. Yet, they both neglected the issue of peasants' subsistence. In other words, the HRS in Xiaogang Village was neither a form of macro-political superimposition nor a problem of man/land ratio.

When discussing the current development of Xiaogang, initiators of the HRS explained to me that as a village, Xiaogang adopted the HRS primarily to solve its basic food problems. According to Perry (1986), in 1959 there were 310,000 *mu* of abandoned land, about one-fifth of land in Fengyang County. In 1960, this figure increased to 537,000 *mu*, i.e. almost two-fifths of all land. Yet, the total output of grain in that year amounted only to 95 million catties (1 catty equals 0.5 kilogram), showing approximately a 5 per cent decrease from the 100 million catties in 1959. Overall, the county's population decreased from 380,000 in 1957 to 290,000 in 1961, i.e. by almost 24 per cent. The increase in the volume of deserted land was obviously related to the decrease in population; but this does not mean that Fengyang peasants were more willing to take out a contract. And, while the large amount of deserted land provided a precondition for decollectivisation, it was not a decisive factor. In the following section, I will provide a detailed account of how the Xiaogang villagers started to decollectivise.

Yang Dali and Thaxton's Proposition One ignores the fact that being geographically located a long way from Beijing did not necessarily mean

that the province was not effectively governed by the state. Their statements that provinces located nearer to Beijing would be more likely to be monitored by the central government and attain resources and help from the state, that is, could lose their strong motivation for decollectivisation reform, and that provinces such as Anhui and Henan, which suffered the most during the Great Leap Forward, would be more willing to conduct reform themselves due to insufficient assistance and surveillance from the central government, did not explain why Anhui and Henan were amongst the first of many provinces in China to initiate the post-Mao agrarian reform. In other words, physical distance to the central government does not have a decisive impact upon the provincial reform. There are provinces which are further to Beijing than Anhui and Henan, which however did not start the reform (such as Gansu Province and the above-mentioned Heilongjiang Province).

Based on my own research in Xiaogang, I am more inclined to agree with a combination of Propositions Three and Four. On the one hand, the survival-oriented efforts of the Xiaogang villagers transformed the Commune structure. Xiaogang villager Xu Qiang disclosed (interview, 7 May 2010) that it was very common for the villagers in the late 1970s to eat grass, vegetable roots and tree bark; many people did not eat rice for several months. One saw a sharp decrease in annual village grain output and disposable income from 1973 to 1975.[1]

In 1978, there was a severe drought: it did not rain for over ten months in most parts of Anhui Province. A total of four million people did not

Table 3.1 Annual grain output and income in Xiaogang (1966–1975)

Year	Population	Grain output (catty)	Per capita grain output (catty)	Per capita income (yuan)
1966	103	22, 000	110	16.50
1967	103	30, 000	180	20
1968	105	20, 000	105	15
1969	107	40, 000	330	40
1970	107	35, 000	230	30
1971	101	34, 000	240	31
1972	101	29, 000	190	25
1973	109	34, 000	210	30
1974	109	29, 000	180	24
1975	111	29, 000	150	20
1976	111	35, 000	230	32

Source: Xia, 2005: 78–79.

have enough water to survive on, with over 60 million *mu* of land so badly affected that the villagers could not do the autumn planting. It was this violation of the villagers' 'subsistence ethics' that made them challenge the central government's sovereign power. As Scott (1976; 1985) and Kerkvliet (2005) have demonstrated in their research, subsistence ethics is an insurance principle that closely related to rural moral mentality. Its key features are 'risk averse' and 'safety first'. The drought had reduced them to no options to survive on, and destroyed the basic principle of subsistence ethics. As a result of this, Xiaogang villagers had to find a way to save their lives and their families'. Furthermore, many forms of resistance took place before the HRS was institutionalised. For example, the 1961 CRL (Contract Responsibility Land) system detailed in the previous chapter, which was objected to later, provided a great opportunity for peasants in Fengyang to promote decollectivisation (Du, 2005: 111–112).

On the other hand, policy relaxation was also very important for the implementation of the HRS; but it could not be realised without the support of a number of provincial and national leaders, including Deng Xiaoping. In this sense, I support Proposition Four. In an interview regarding the reasons for decollectivisation, Yan Junchang (personal communication, 5 May 2010) expressed his gratitude to four people: Deng Xiaoping, Anhui Party Secretary (later Vice-Premier) Wan Li, Fengyang County Party Secretary Chen Tingyuan and the Party Secretary of Chuzhou Prefecture, Wang Yuzhao. On 24 January 1980, Wan visited Xiaogang, and, upon seeing that every household had sufficient grain, said with much joy: 'Keep doing things this way and we will lead a better life in the future; in any case, I will support you'. It was not until then that the HRS was affirmed and much was achieved thereafter (Zhang, 1995). Wang and Chen called the HRS the 'land division for individual use' (*fentian daohu*), rather than using the controversial phrase 'fixing farm output quotas for each team' (*baochan daohu*) (Chen, 2009: 149–170). The Fengyang County Party Committee took the careful action of three 'should nots': 'The HRS should not be publicised, should not be advocated and should not be prohibited either' (Yan Junchang, interview, 5 May 2010). This wordsmithing made it difficult for outsiders or opponents to determine if the land was privately or collectively managed. Deng Xiaoping affirmed the HRS in 1980 and it was not until then that decollectivisation became firmly institutionalised.

In all of the above, I support a combination of Propositions Three and Four. In brief, it was a top-down as well as a bottom-up effort that made the institutionalisation of the HRS in Xiaogang possible and permissible.

2. The debate over the Household Responsibility System (HRS)

As the previous chapter demonstrates, the Land Reform and subsequent collectivisation saw history partially repeat itself as Xiaogang entered 1978. The village's land was divided again and distributed among individual households under the HRS. Many other collective assets, such as fish ponds, orchards, chicken and pig farms, trucks and small factories, were also contracted out to 'specialist households'. The whole process resembled a return to individual household production, to a 'rural household responsibility system', with a fixed quota to be sold to the state. Additional product could be sold at market prices. Rural markets re-appeared and 'surplus labour' was allowed to find work in urban areas.

As the starting point of China's agricultural modernisation, the HRS accorded with the development level of rural productive forces. It provided Xiaogang villagers with land use rights and self-management rights, as well as the right to produce and sell independently. The adoption of the HRS promoted the structural adjustment of agriculture and contributed to the emergence of specialised agricultural production households in Xiaogang. Social mobility recovered, markets were invigorated and villagers' values underwent changes. They were encouraged by the idea of getting rich through individual efforts, that is, by increasing production.

At first, the land in Xiaogang was contracted to production teams. Their members were listed as in the following table (Xia, 2005: 98):

Table 3.2 The result of contracting agriculture to production teams (*Baochan Daohu*)

Team no.	Leaders	Leaders' Relationship
1	Yan Lifu, Yan Lihua	Brothers
2	Yan Guochang, Yan Likun, Yan Lixue	Father and sons
3	Yan Jiazhi, Yan Jinchang, Guan Youjiang	Guan was Yan's son-in-law
4	Guan Youshen, Guan Youzhang, Guan Youde	Brothers
5	Yan Hongchang, Yan Fuchang	Brothers
6	Yan Jiaqi, Yan Junchang, Yan Meichang	Father and sons
7	Han Guoyun, Yan Xuechang	Neighbours
8	Guan Youkun, Yan Guopin	Neighbours

As may be seen, the above eight teams were mostly teams of fathers and sons and teams of brothers; yet, factions soon emerged.

Case One: In Team 5, there were six members of Yan Hongchang's family. In his younger brother Yan Fuchang's family there were eight members. There were two labourers in Yan Hongchang's family and four in Yan Fuchang's family. Yan Hongchang argued that the rule of workpoints should be adopted in the distribution process; to be specific, 30 per cent should be distributed according to workpoints while 70 per cent should be distributed according to the number of family members. However, as there were more labourers in Yan Fuchang's family, the latter insisted that all the production should be distributed in accordance with their workpoints. In the end, due to the many disputes that arose, Yan Fuchang requested that his family should be separated from his brother's (Xia, 2005: 117).

Case Two: In Team 6, there were a total of three households, including the father Yan Jiaqi, whose family had three members, an elder brother Yan Junchang (ten family members, including eight children) and a younger brother Yan Meichang (five members). Disputes occurred first between the two brothers. Yan Meichang and his children started their farm work very early each morning; but Yan Junchang's family started quite late, as the parents had to take care of their eight children. Yan Meichang and his children objected to this, and they frequently argued with each other about having to do the farm work by themselves.

According to Xia Yurun's (2005: 117) *Xiaogang Village and Dabaogan*, one day in December 1978, Yan Hongchang asked Guan Tingzhu how the whole village might increase their agricultural production. Guan replied: 'The "contract responsibility field" we adopted in 1962 was actually quite effective. The disputes within these teams cannot be solved unless we are allowed to do the farm work by ourselves. The only question is whether the government is willing to give such permission'. Yan Junchang and Yan Lixue received the same advice from other peasants. One evening in December 1978, all 18 households gathered in the village to discuss doing farm work by households, rather than by teams. They reached the following consensus:

> We can't end the current disputes unless we do the farm work by ourselves. At the initial stage after the establishment of the PRC, we did farm work by ourselves instead of in teams, and we were all very friendly to each other. It will surely do us good if we do farm work by ourselves, the key question being whether the government will permit us to do so. (cited in Xia, 2005: 117)

> Within a team, two households do farm work with little effort while the rest have no idea of how to do farm work; in this case, it is no better than forming no such teams. (cited in Xia, 2005: 118)

Under these circumstances, Yan Hongchang suggested signing a contract which all of the members who agree to divide communal land and assign them to individual households should sign and abide by, which resulted in the adoption of the HRS (*Baogan Daohu* or *Dabaogan*). The system brought about great change, especially in agricultural production. In 1985, the total grain yield of the county reached 450,000 tons and the per capita income of peasants reached 438 yuan, with a total agricultural output of 299 million yuan (Xia, 2005: 118). Compared with previous years, this signalled a great improvement. In the early 1980s, Xiaogang villagers were enthusiastic about building houses, purchasing agricultural machinery and constructing roads. Families could now afford household appliances such as sewing machines, fans, TV sets and washing machines (Fengyang Local Gazetteer Editorial Committee, 1999: 3).

The difference between the *Baochan Daohu* and the *Baogan Daohu* was as follows (Chen and Xia, 1998: 12). *Baochan Daohu* (which was the same as the Contract Responsibility Land system of 1961) was a system under which the production teams adhered to the collective ownership of production materials and managed the large and medium-size agricultural tools. Production materials including farm cattle and ploughs were sold to each household with their value unchanged. The production brigade was responsible for unified planning, management and accounting: the production teams contracted all farm fields and crops to each household, fixing production quotas, working hours and costs, with all products distributed at the brigade level.

In the *Baogan Daohu*, the land was collectively owned. All team members had the right to contract and use it. Other production goods were distributed to each household with some discounts; hence, members could freely do farm work on contracted land. The policy of 'ensuring enough for the state, retaining enough for the collective and the remainder is all the farmers' own' was adopted. As Hinton (1990: 52) notes, *Baogan Daohu* could be 'described as "rendering unto Caesar that which is Caesar's while I take the rest for myself"'.

Under *Baogan Daohu*, unified accounting and distribution were also abandoned; in particular, the wage calculating method of recording workpoints was completely eliminated, solving the 'headache' of how to calculate the workpoints. The principle of 'getting more rewards from

more farm work and distribution according to one's performance' was embraced.

I deem it worth mentioning that *Baogan Daohu*, i.e. the HRS, marked the real start of decollectivisation. Township cadres enjoyed less power under this system than under the system of contracting agricultural production to production teams, since the households now had more say in agricultural production, consumption and marketing.

There were four advantages in adopting the HRS according to the central government (CCP History Research Centre et al., 1998: 1275–1289). First, it was easy to be implemented: the peasants had the freedom to use the land allocated to them as they wished. In addition, the necessary means of production were made available to them. Second, it could connect individual interests with collective interests more closely. By now, more people cared about production and participated more in collective production. Thus, non-production expenditure was reduced. Third, adopting the HRS worked to adjust interpersonal relationships and helped to unite the peasants as a whole for agricultural production. Fourth, it guaranteed the peasants' production rights: they could arrange production according to specific conditions.

Their rights had not been guaranteed in the pre-HRS era for the following three reasons: cadres at various levels commanded production, issued administrative orders and imposed uniformity in all cases; Commune members were paid equally for their work and were not directly responsible for production. Only the team leader showed a degree of concern for production and this often led to improper administration. However, after adopting the HRS, Commune members could voice their objections in cases of improper arrangements or commands. In addition, land was distributed to each household; now, peasants could arrange production in accordance with their actual conditions.

In what ways did the HRS improve the cooperative system? In a speech delivered to the National Meeting of Agriculture Secretaries on 23 November 1982, Du Runsheng, the former Deputy Director of the State Agriculture Commission (1979–1982), argued:

> First, through the cooperative system the farmers [should] combine their labour on the basis of voluntary participation and mutual benefit, changing naturally to the system of public ownership of the basic means of production and improving their own economic positions without suffering the polarization of capitalism. Second, the cooperative system can gather funds, create new socialist production methods and establish the material base for a socialist public-ownership system

> with the support of large-scale socialist industry. Third, through the cooperation system it is possible to bring agriculture, the basic sector of the national economy, gradually into the state economic planning. (Du, 1995: 40–58)

My informants in Xiaogang pointed to the same advantages of adopting the HRS. Yet, problems persisted. Following the adoption of the system, land was divided into sections that were too small (Wen, 2005: 32). Some land was arranged in a crisscross pattern, which made it difficult to realise scale management. In addition, the individual peasant could not shoulder the responsibility of developing secondary and tertiary industries through organisation and production; thus, the individualisation of the rural areas increased (Lu, 2002). Unger (1986), who studied China's rural areas after decollectivisation, interviewed 28 people who had migrated from Mainland China to Hong Kong after the early 1980s. According to his research, after adopting the HRS, peasants could independently decide which crop to plant and how to dispose of the grain after handing in the quota requested by the state. They could sell the rest of their grain either to the state or in the market. In this way, former Commune members became independent producers. One interviewee told Unger (1986: 593) that, on adopting the HRS, villagers felt as if they were 'birds freed from a cage'. This was also true of Xiaogang. But, by 1984, there were hardly any collective assets left. After the realisation of decollectivisation, villagers seldom cooperated with each other, which led to many problems; for example, how to mechanise the farming of land arranged in a crisscross pattern, the difficulties surrounding the leasing of draft animals, and caring for the elders, the young, women and the sick. Chaos surrounded the distribution of the collective assets, and many local cadres abandoned the management of production teams or brigades (Chen and Xia, 1998).

Although the HRS had achieved great success (for example, it had solved the problem of food and clothing in China), He Kaiyin, a Counsellor in the Anhui Provincial Government, argued (in a speech delivered in Xiaogang on 8 November 2007) that the system had lost its appeal by 1984. Furthermore, it hindered the development of modern agriculture and the New Socialist Countryside programme (Xiong, 2008: 55–59). While some argued that agricultural development should be organised on a larger scale, the CCP Central Committee decided that the basic system of land management (i.e. the HRS) should remain unchanged. This resulted in a huge contradiction, as Xiaogang's former Party Secretary Shen Hao commented:

> We adopted the HRS under tough conditions and solved the food problem of China's peasants, which was a great contribution to mankind. If the Chinese people all become refugees, the world will not be stable. Xiaogang was of great significance in this regard. However, with economic development, this form has gone out of date. The Peasants' land was segregated in many sections, so how could they increase their per unit productivity without feeling frustrated? The key problem lies in [the fact] that we do not have an efficient group of leaders. In my opinion, the central government has considered this question and wishes to tie the peasants to the land, as it would be a disaster as far as employment is concerned to free all peasants from the land. Food security is also very important.
>
> I participated in one 'Village Leader' forum and found that no village could get rich without developing industry, or at least they should develop commerce and service industry, e.g., agribusiness. Nor do we know how to develop modern agriculture.
>
> Land circulation is a critical point here. The peasants were reluctant to become shareholders at first; later, as land appreciated, they could either buy stocks or make corresponding adjustments according to the new contracting price of land. Yet, we need the support of the government, just as Deng Xiaoping helped us to adopt the HRS in those years. (Shen Hao, interview, 8 November 2007)

Shen Hao summarised the four reasons why Xiaogang Village did not develop in the way that was expected after having adopted the HRS for 29 years.

> First, inconvenient transportation; second, barren land with poor resources and geographical conditions in addition to a tough, dry climate; third, no industry; fourth, peasants in Xiaogang were not well educated and had little sense of market. The first three points explain the restriction of objective conditions while the fourth explains the restriction of subjective conditions. After all, the peasants in Xiaogang had farmed for generations. And, most fundamental, there were some irrational contradictions and disputes in Xiaogang. (Shen Hao, interview, 8 November 2007)

There were two differences between the HRS and the land tenancy system adopted before 1949. The first was that, before 1949 the land was owned by landlords, whereas the HRS stipulated that land should be collectively owned. Second, the government played a limited role in the

land tenancy system before 1949, whereas under the HRS, the government played a more important role; to be specific, the peasants grew their crops in accordance with the planning and guidance of the state. They were required to deliver a certain amount of grain to the government, and it was illegal to sell land (although other types of land circulation were encouraged[2]). The HRS made farming profitable, and related individual farming closely to individual income. It also motivated peasants to increase agricultural output. In this way, the peasants gained a sense of identity and control over their economic activities. Meanwhile, there was greater flexibility in farming under the HRS, which provided peasants with more opportunities for extra income (Crook, 1985).

So, what is the cadres' position under the HRS? According to Selden (1998: 18), local cadres exercised several influences on the villagers after the reform. For example, the state controlled the price of fertilizer, seeds, grain and oil through a series of orders and distribution mechanisms. The market was regulated, with various quotas applied to crops. These measures were relaxed after the mid-1980s. However, as Latham argues:

> The rural cadres do not appear to have embraced the reforms with much vigor or enthusiasm. This is because the reforms, in particular the [HRS, have] complicated the supervisory tasks of rural cadres, eliminated the need for retaining some leading and non-leading cadres, threatened the economic security of many cadres, and lessened political leverage and prestige at the same time that greater political responsibility has been stressed for Party members. (Latham, 1985: 173)

Unger, supporting Latham's thesis, argues:

> With the changeover to independent smallholdings and the strengthening of market forces, the rural officials – from county headquarters down to Brigade Party committees – immediately oversaw and administered less than they had previously and thus had far fewer means at their disposal to impose their will over the peasant families. (Unger, 1986: 602)

The change from *Baochan Daohu* to *Baogan Daohu* not only reflected a fundamental technique of PRC statecraft, i.e. wordsmithing (Greenhalgh and Winckler, 2005: 11), but a shift in the process of villagers' subjectivisation. The collectivised system gave way to the household-based management unit: villagers now had more say in agricultural production

and land circulation. Bearing the above arguments in mind, I deem it worth examining the role of the local cadres in the context of village self-governance, a political project devised to democratise rural China from the late 1980s.

3. Village self-governance and the local bully

The introduction of a mechanism for villager self-governance (*zizhi*) as national policy in the 1990s played a significant role in changing the political and economic situation of rural China. In village politics, villagers' self-governance constituted an important new form of peasant cooperation with each other. I will provide the key debates on the significance of this policy before I go back to the topic of Xiaogang and argue that this policy was a new strategy for grassroots governance. However, it brought about the unintended rise of the local bully.

In 1980, the first Villagers' Committee (VC) was elected, in Guangxi Province. On 24 November 1987, the Organic Law of Villagers' Committees of the People's Republic of China (Trial) was passed. Subsequently, the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) shifted its emphasis to the implementation of this law and announced a national programme for village self-governance. On 4 November 1998, after ten years of 'experiments' in various rural areas, the final version of this law was enacted. The implementation of this landmark law attracted many studies by sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists, as well as by Chinese officials.

The rise of the VC changed the original structure of relations between the state and peasants. Under the People's Commune system, the peasants were directly governed by the state. The new law stated: 'The villagers' committee is the primary mass organisation unit of self-government, in which the villagers manage their own affairs, educate themselves and serve their own needs and in which election is held, decision made, administration maintained and supervision exercised by democratic means.' This shows that after adopting villagers' self-governance, the peasants had their own autonomous organisation, the Villagers' Committee, through which they could at least attempt to protect their interests (Chen, 2007, 150–178).

O'Brien (1994), who discusses the problems that plagued the implementation of the Organic Law of Villagers' Committees of the People's Republic of China (Trial), argues that the opposition of the local cadres and the villagers' suspicions regarding its effectiveness were the primary obstacles. Kelliher (1994) discusses the debates surrounding the processes

of village democracy from the perspectives of Chinese officials. In 1987, the trial of laws concerning villagers' self-governance extended the concept of self-governance to two aspects. One was that villagers could elect village leaders by themselves; the other was that the scope of self-governance was clearly limited by law. Kelliher also found that the biggest obstacle to the implementation of villagers' self-governance came from the township regime, which was particularly hostile to it (O'Brien, 1994).[3] Kelliher further argues that there were three official reasons for the introduction of democratic village self-governance: first, that local government failures and malfunctions could be remedied by electing Villagers' Committees to undertake village administration; second, that villager resistance against the state could be eliminated through 'self-governance' by the peasants themselves; and third, that China needed villager self-governance to safeguard its international image.

Wang Zhenyao, an official from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, wrote a paper in 1997 titled 'Villagers' Committees: The Basis for China's Democratization', which described the village's democratic election system, introduced by the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 1987. This system aimed to make new social groups, including private entrepreneurs, to check-balance the local cadres' power. Wang was confident in its future and believed that carrying out village democratic reform in a step-by-step manner was the most effective way to promote democracy in China (Wang, 1997).

However, the opponents of self-governance rejected these 'justifications', arguing that, first, regarding the problem of village leadership, it was difficult to elect talented officials through local villager elections; rather, village cadres had to adopt compulsory state policies, which frequently aroused hatred between them and the other villagers. Hence, the villagers would not elect cadres on the basis of talent. Lineage forces sometimes sabotaged the elections. The townships complained that villager self-governance weakened their control over the village cadres. Local officials believed that the Chinese peasants were not capable of managing the villages by themselves: they were too poorly educated to practise democracy. One further debate centred upon the VC's relations with the local Party Branch (PB): there were contradictions between them (Kelliher, 1994). If villager self-governance was introduced, the leadership of the village PBs would be affected; but, if the PBs had predominant power, villager self-governance could not be realised in the real sense. According to my fieldwork in Fengyang, 'shouldering two posts' seemed the most popular way to solve this issue. It meant that the director of the VC was both secretary and/or deputy secretary of the

village PB. However, this created an extreme concentration of political resources in only one or two village leaders. As a result, there were two sides to this policy implementation: it both jeopardised and contributed to the village social order: It brought friction as well as social solidarity.

Other theorists have also examined the significance of this national policy. For example, Sigley (2006: 494) argues:

> Since the onset of the reform period, the scientistic hubris of China's 'socialist arts of government' has given way somewhat to new calculations and strategies which call for governing through autonomy, whether that be through market mechanisms or the autonomous conduct of individuals.

Bray, who disagrees with the literal translation of *zizhi* as 'autonomy', suggests that:

> The Chinese term *zizhi* does not imply anything like 'absolute autonomy' but a more limited form of 'self-governance' in which the *community* is expected to manage its own affairs within the operational parameters established by government authorities'. It might be more useful to think of *zizhi* as 'governing the self' in the Foucauldian sense rather than merely as 'self-governance'; with the rider that the 'self' is understood as a collective not as an individual 'self' in this specific context. (Bray, 2006: 543, original emphasis)[4]

My research, however, suggests that in Xiaogang, the village election was no more than a front for the reorganisation of the village by the local government. In this sense, I support Sigley and Bray's thesis on Chinese self-governance, i.e. that this form of governmentalisation is a Chinese version of 'governing through community'. In other words, 'community has become a new spatialization of government' (Rose, 1996: 327). At the Villagers' Self-governance Symposium, convened in Anhui Province by Xin Qiushui, which I attended in 1999, a county cadre from Fengyang said:

> Before the adoption of villagers' self-governance, cadres did not know what to do when some villagers refused to pay the agricultural tax; but, after adopting villagers' self-governance, Village Committees mobilised all peasants to help persuade these people to pay and it always succeeded. Hence, villagers' self-governance is a 'useful weapon' to solve such problems.

Since the enactment of the national law of self-governance, four elections (in 1994, 1998, 2003 and 2011) have been held in Xiaogang.

The first election: Yan Hongchang, who promised before being elected that the village's public affairs would not cost the villagers a cent, was elected first Head of the VC in 1994. Yan Hongchang first established a tinned wire factory in Mentai Town, ten kilometres from Xiaogang Village, putting his eldest son in charge of the factory. Because the factory's capacity could not meet the market requirement, it was shut down in 2000 (Li, 2008).

The second election: In 1998, Yan Hongchang was defeated by Yan Xiaoyi, with strong support from Yu Quanhe, who was then Secretary of the Party Committee of Changjiang Village, and who adopted Yan Xiaoyi as his son (Hu Guang, interview, 7 April 2010).[5] However, Yan Xiaoyi was extremely unpopular in Xiaogang. He was a local bully, whose political career fluctuated from fishing for finless eels to accepting posts for which he was singularly unqualified. Although Yan Xiaoyi was the youngest son of one of the 18 HRS initiators Yan Junchang (a strong family background), and had joined the CCP in the early 1990s (a strong political background), he did not bring any benefit to the village development. Villagers repeatedly made complaints to the upper levels. According to my informants, Yan Xiaoyi represented the 'dark' side of the CCP-led government.

The third election: In 2003, Yan Xiaoyi sabotaged this election and did not implement it effectively. What happened in Xiaogang was that these three elections produced little effect regarding the CCP-led government's original intention of implementing this political reform. Yan Xiaoyi's case reflects an unintended consequence of the government's 'subjective aspirations'. He disrupted the 2003 elections. During a village meeting at that year, he caused considerable disturbance by insisting upon being the Village Head. He eventually commandeered the post. In 2006, Yan tried to stop the villagers from holding a new round of elections as scheduled. The resultant fights saw the new election cancelled.

The fourth election: On 26 August 2011, Guan Youjiang was elected head of the VC.

It is worth pointing out the second election and the role of Yan Xiaoyi in Xiaogang since Yan represented a typical form of power relations in the actual village political structure. Apropos of the second election in Xiaogang, Yan Xiaoyi promised that whoever voted for him would receive 500 yuan and two cows. But, after Yan Xiaoyi won the election, the villagers received only a TV, so they called Yan Xiaoyi a 'liar'. An old

lady observed that none of Yan Xiaoyi's family members was educated. They had no sense of law. Yan Xiaoyi had kept many public assets as his own, including a car, a grape model park occupying 60 *mu*, as well as two bulldozers worth over 200,000 yuan. Yan Xiaoyi was subsequently charged with misconduct. Several villagers who I interviewed told me the following stories about Yan Xiaoyi:

- Yan Xiaoyi caused conflict with investors: he wanted to assume an important post in the investors' company so that he could accrue profit for himself. The investors did not agree and conflict ensued, which frightened the investors away. The villagers were enraged and accused Yan Xiaoyi of ruining the entire village.
- Yan Xiaoyi had a tendency towards violence. He often beat others physically; for example, he once beat a little girl who was playing with firecrackers beside the road; he also beat a villager just for fun.
- In addition, Yan Xiaoyi had serious problems in his personal life. Rumour had it that he was a womaniser. It was said that Yan once had an extramarital relationship with a woman of Xiaogang.[6] When they were discovered by the woman's husband, Yan beat him severely.
- Yan Xiaoyi had faction problems: he always wanted to 'grandstand'. Yan Hongchang had been the Village Head for many years but, by 2010, he was still not a Party member. Some villagers said that the reason why Yan Xiaoyi and his father did not allow Yan Hongchang to join the CCP was because the latter might have achieved better results than they were capable of (Hu Guang, interview, 7 April 2010).
- Yan Xiaoyi could not produce a clear financial statement: he did not keep financial records of expenses paid by the villagers. He always considered his own interests first, and often spent a lot of money on personal items which he claimed in the village's name. This alleged embezzlement gave rise to considerable complaints and grievances among the villagers.
- On the afternoon of 3 March 2000 (lunar calendar), Yan Xiaoyi got drunk and beat Di Weilin, a carpenter working in the village's construction site, severely, revealing his thuggish side yet again. Later, Yan apologised to Di and advised him in private to claim compensation, as Di had threatened to sue him. The following day, the county magistrate, who had visited the construction site without giving prior notice, was told by a worker about the incident that had occurred the day before. The worker also told him that the villagers had already paid their housing fees and that Yan Xiaoyi had taken most of their

> money: they barely had enough money for food. On 5 March, the local police came to the village to investigate the case. On 9 March, a witness named Zhou Shipei was located and the case was verified. Zhou said with clear disappointment (interview, 7 April 2010): 'Even the Public Security Bureau of Fengyang County cannot punish the Village Head [Yan Xiaoyi]. What can you do with him?' Later, the Secretary of the CCP County Committee gave an order to investigate the case; as a result Yan was relieved of his post.

During my survey, many villagers said it was meaningless to hold elections which were secretly controlled by certain people. So, although villagers' self-governance was adopted in Xiaogang, little effect resulted. Democratic elections were little more than an 'image project' in the village, given that the township government could seemingly at will refuse to acknowledge those who were elected by the villagers. The story of Yan Xiaoyi, who sabotaged the village's elections repeatedly, was a case in point.

Why did Yu Quanhe resort to buying votes to help Yan Xiaoyi corrupt the village's political and social processes?[7] I think there were two reasons. Yu wished to make his 'adopted son' a village leader, so that Yan could manage the village's various affairs. Yu also wanted to accumulate social assets and to improve his personal image.[8]

Why did neither the county nor the township government pay heed to Yan Xiaoyi's problems? As Eisenstadt (1971: 63) maintains: 'Most elites or upper class[es], once they are well entrenched, tend to emphasise the ascribed qualities of their members and to take their achievements for granted.' Yan Xiaoyi was representative of a type of patriarchal familial system supported by a form of 'violent power' (*hengbao quanli*), a system that Fei (1998: 59–63) alludes to. Violent power was a tool used to maintain a coercive structure. It served the interests of the ruling class. The practice of this power was also conducive to the legibility of rural society and could safeguard the effective execution of the state's power in Xiaogang.

Viewing it as 'Party-based thug rule', Friedman and his associates note that the violence was more likely to be perpetrated in villages enjoying less state protection and patronage (Friedman et al., 1991: 270; Friedman et al., 2005: 148).[9] Thaxton disagrees with this argument:

> [I]t seems that the local Party leaders were unable to manufacture an authentication legitimacy from their superiors – which is why most studies of model villages, where the negative impact of Mao's war

> of communism was comparatively muted, are not useful guides to understanding the unbridgeable chasm that had developed between the socialist state and rural society. (Thaxton, 2008: 337)

In my view, Xiaogang's Party-based thug rule (mainly that of Yan Xiaoyi), and the emergence of the local bullies in general, is not a result of less state protection, but rather a symptom of the discrepancy between the state's 'subjective aspirations' and 'objective attainments'. This result in Thaxton's understanding is a deliberate arrangement of the local state. The Organic Law of Villagers' Committees of the People's Republic of China did not clarify the power relations between the state and the village, let alone constitutionally define them (Chen, 1999: 119–135). Some villagers were able to take advantage of this strategic ambiguity while others became its victims. This side of governmentalisation was the antithesis of the emergence of 'pastoral power', a subject I shall deal with in the next chapter.

4. Conclusion

Marketisation exerted two influences over the peasants. First, the HRS replaced the characteristic 'three-tier ownership based on production teams'. Peasants became *de facto* owners of land and could thus arrange agricultural production independently. After delivering a certain amount of grain to the state and collective organisations, peasants could dispose of the rest on their own initiative, thus becoming independent actors in their own right. For example, they could sell their grain in the market. Second, with the marketisation of the entire national economy, the original relationship of economic affiliation and protection between the peasants and the state was broken: both peasants and the state became independent subjects of the market; this saw the state gradually reduce the direct provision of capital goods and subsistence to peasants. In general, marketisation resulted in the separation of interests between the peasants and the state as well as in a possible conflict of interests.

Politically, the implementation of village self-governance was a new strategy for grassroots governance. However, it triggered the unintended rise of the local bully. Local governments were inclined to introduce some local 'bullies' or 'toughs' to lead the community's administration; i.e. to 'govern bad guys with tough guys', which appeared critical to resolving the problems that persisted.

In his review of Duara's *Culture, Power and the State* (1988), Keating writes:

> The state's drive for increased revenue resulted in a proliferation at sub-county levels of entrepreneurial brokers who, as revenue farmers, denied the state its share of the increase in the total revenue extracted from the taxpayers (a development defined as 'state involution'). These 'local bullies' penetrated levels of social organisation to which they had not previously had access, and became an 'uncontrollable power in local society'. (Keating, 1992: 172)

Entrepreneurial brokers assumed the local control previously enjoyed by the state, setting the preconditions for a series of revolutions in rural China. Although the Communist state is not the topic of Duara's study, in my case, my research confirms the return of these brokers. Yan Xiaoyi was a typical example of the local bully. This, however, is only one side of the emergence of new power relations in Xiaogang. The next chapter will deal with the other side of this process of village governmentalisation: the emergence of pastoral power.

4
Cooperation, Industrialisation and Power Relations

In 1964, the French sociologist Henri Mendras wrote in his *La Fin Des Paysans* (*The Vanishing Peasant*) that two billion peasants worldwide were standing at the entrance of industrial civilisation, and that this was the main issue that the world of the time was addressing (Mendras, 2005: 1). The Chinese version of this book triggered fierce debate over the 'end of Chinese peasantry' as an occupation. I argue that 'the end of the peasants' in *La Fin Des Paysans* refers to a process during which peasants broke from the bondage of different power actors and became independent individuals. Mendras's thesis does not mean that there will no longer be a rural population. Focusing upon agricultural and industrial projects in Xiaogang in the 2000s, this chapter emphasises the degree to which the development of agriculture and industry facilitated villagers' understanding of marketisation and power relations.

The 1990s saw many agricultural and democratic projects put in place to promote Xiaogang's economic and political development. Decentralisation of the economy had increased the scope for independent activity at each level of local government. The main responsibility of local government was economic development, which resulted in a form of local government variously referred to as 'clientelist' (Oi, 1999), 'corporatist' (Ruf, 1998) and 'bureaucratic capitalism' (Meisner, 1996). That is, the government took an active role in attracting, fostering and developing business activities within its locale. However, behind this rise in local government activism was a shift of power, for from the governmentality perspective, modern power is not only negative and repressive, but also positive and productive, circulating widely in and through the state (Greenhalgh and Winckler, 2005: 21). In other words, state and society are inextricably linked and mutually constitutive. In

this chapter I discuss the cooperative projects implemented in Xiaogang in the 2000s and the power relationships that underpin them. A particular focus will be upon the emergence of pastoral power in the process of cooperation. I will argue that although the villagers are no longer under authoritarian Party/state constraint, the autonomy or freedom they have remains severely limited.

1. Black beans, grapes and mushrooms

After decollectivisation, the strategy of 'taking grain as the key link' (*yiliang weigang*) in Xiaogang was replaced by more flexible agricultural policies. Villagers were now engaging in a variety of agricultural businesses, selling their produce to the market after they had paid their obligatory quota to the local government. Cooperation in agribusinesses had become increasingly popular throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In 2006, the central government rescinded the agricultural tax. On 31 October 2006, The Farmers' Professional Cooperative Law of the People's Republic of China was promulgated and it has been in force since 1 July 2007. The law provides governments above county level with funds and policies to support and encourage farmers to establish and develop specialised cooperatives.

Farmers' cooperative activities are the key to realising agricultural industrialisation (Wang, 2004), and to develop this is crucial to their economic welfare. A considerable part of Xiaogang villagers' annual income comes from planting value-added or cash crops, especially black beans. Their high income (see Table 4.1) in 2004 resulted from the high purchase price of black beans, which reached 10 yuan per kilogram. In addition, there was considerable market demand. The diversification of agriculture was of great significance, for it ended the Maoist policy of planting only one crop. What is more, the Fengyang government provided the necessary loans and technical support to Xiaogang villagers since 2005 and allowed them to pay the 'grain' quota with the money earned from growing black beans.

However, after 2005, when the farmers began to plant more black beans, the price decreased sharply to below one yuan per catty. Black bean cultivation was promoted by the local 'Agricultural Scientific Station' in Xiaoxihe Town since 2003; the product was sold mainly to Japan and South Korea. By 2008, there was no longer any demand, and the villagers did not know how to deal with the beans. In spite of their efforts to sell beans via the internet, little success has been achieved. So, why did black beans cease to be saleable?

Table 4.1 Annual grain output and income in Xiaogang since 1975

Year	Population	Grain output (catty)	Per capita grain output (catty)	Per capita disposable income (yuan)	National average farmer's per capital income (yuan)
1975	111	29,000	150	20	
1978	115	130,000	/	/	
1979	/	132,300	/	/	
1992	/	/	1,500	1,142	
1995	/	/	/	2,000	
1996	343	/	/	/	
1997	/	1,200,000	/	2,500	
1998	371	/	/	/	
2003	/	/	/	2,300	
2004	430	1,800,000	/	3,000	
2008	/	/	/	6,600	4,762

Notes: /: non-available.
Statistics compiled by the author.
Source: Fengyang Gazetteer office.

In 2005, the consumption of black beans decreased in Japan, and this reduced import demand. High price, low quality and adulteration had discouraged buyers from seeking supplies from China. Under the 'invisible hand' of the market economy, the crowds of merchants who had earlier thronged to purchase black beans lost all the money they had invested in this business. Therefore, they had no option but to stop purchasing. Some agricultural companies bought black bean seeds for yellow kernel beans at a very low price, passing them off as quality black beans, nefariously deceiving the farmers planting genuine black beans. Their activities resulted in low quality 'black' beans (Guan Youjiang, interview, 6 May 2010).

Xiaogang villagers were unable to either access or recognise valuable market information: they continued to plant black beans on a large scale, even expanding their plantations. This apparently irrational investment contributed to the subsequent disaster, for overstocking of black beans was inevitable. However, the reasons behind it were not quite so simple. Further conversations with local residents revealed that the major cause of the beans' unsaleablility was the farmers themselves.

Question: I asked several black bean dealers in town and was told that the state imposed more tariffs on South Korean merchants, thus they did not come for beans. Is this true?

Answer: Well, I am not sure about this. The government should of course do something, yet the farmers should also bear some responsibility. Last year when the beans sold well, some peasants dipped beans in water and even mixed pebbles with the beans in order to make them weigh more. The government, instead of educating the farmers, also played the same trick. Many South Korean merchants suffered huge losses and one businessman even committed suicide. How could we do business without credibility and integrity? (Yan Guopin, interview, 7 May 2010)

Adulterating produce obviously challenged the basic norms of the market economy. It undermined the trust between producers and buyers and ultimately led to the overstocking of black beans. Further interviews revealed, however, that it was mainly the black bean dealers, rather than the farmers, who undertook these bad practices, leaving individual growers to bear the losses that resulted from the planting of black beans. There was no farmers' association or cooperative that could compete with the sales agents of the agricultural chains (Guan Youjiang, interviews, 6 May 2010 and 10 June 2014).

At present, there are two major agricultural crops in Xiaogang: grapes and mushrooms. As the local saying goes, 'the grapes of Xiaogang are so tasty that their fragrance spreads across the Yangtze River. Its mushrooms are so popular that they have won great fame across China'. A vineyard occupying 79.53 *mu* is now rented by former village head Yan Xiaoyi, who received a loan of 300,000 yuan free of interest from the local government. Yan Xiaoyi rents another vineyard occupying 100 *mu* in nearby Yangang Village at an annual rate of 500 yuan for one *mu* of land. A total of six workers were hired to deal with the cultivation and sale of grapes. By 2006, 400 *mu* of land were used for planting grapes in Xiaogang, with a claimed annual turnover of two million yuan. In 2007, 260 *mu* of additional land were developed for planting grapes and 120 *mu* of existing vineyards were upgraded. In order to guarantee the sustained and sound development of this primary sector, grape cooperatives were set up and training sessions were held to teach the villagers how to use organic fertilizer to produce environmentally friendly grapes and further develop sales. In addition, various subsidies were provided

to villagers who sought to expand their planting area: quality grape seeds were offered to them free of charge.

Changjiang Village, Xiaogang's friendship village,[1] made a substantial contribution to popularising grape planting in Xiaogang. In order to attract more villagers to plant grapes in 2001, Changjiang took out a plot in Xiaogang, which became known as the Grape Planting Demonstration Park, and started to plant grapes. Because the cultivation of cash crops like grapes represents the peasants' major means of wealth creation, the success of the Park was of crucial significance to peasants' choices as to whether or not they would plant grapes. In 2003, the Park yielded good returns: therefore, many peasants have chosen to plant grapes since then. There was little difficulty organising the planting; but, how did the villagers solve the problem of selling their grapes? Xiaogang held a Grape Festival in nearby Chuzhou City in 2004, at which its grapes were widely promoted. The unit market price of grapes climbed from 2 yuan per kilogram in 2003 to 4 yuan in 2005, which brought tremendous benefit to the villagers. The only question that remained was the stability of the market price. In order to maintain a regular level of income, the villagers also planted other cash crops such as mushrooms and vegetables, so that they would not suffer huge losses should one kind of their crops fail.

However, Yan Jiaqi (interview, 7 July 2011) was still worried. He felt that most villagers would not know which part of the industrial structure should be adjusted. For example, the unit price of black beans had dropped from 5 yuan to 1.5 yuan due to a drop in demand. Because they could not figure out exactly how to tune into market fluctuations in supply and demand, the selling of grapes continued to be a problem.

At first, the vineyards in Xiaogang were managed by staff from Changjiang Village; but, by 2008, all the vineyards were run by the villagers. During a telephone interview (14 April 2010), Yan Xiaoyi told me that staff from Changjiang left Xiaogang after working there for a year as they were not earning much money. Under these circumstances, he persuaded the villagers to contract their vineyards out: he contracted a total of 180 *mu*. According to Yan, if a vineyard could yield more than 500 kilograms per *mu*, the villagers could earn at least 30,000 yuan per year. However, in the year following the departure of the staff from Changjiang, the local villagers failed to make a profit due to natural disasters and heavy investment. But, in 2009, favourable weather resulted in a good harvest. As there was no stable market for grapes, the peasants sometimes sold them in nearby counties or cities. Sometimes they just waited at home for dealers to purchase them. Grapes will not

sell well if they were picked days ago. Unplanned way of production has made the problem even worse. Nevertheless, the area of vineyards in Xiaogang is increasing: more and more villagers are working hard with great expectations for success.

In 2006, the production of edible mushrooms commenced in Xiaogang. In a county government document, 'Suggestions on the Planting of Edible Mushrooms', it was claimed that in order to promote the economic development of Xiaogang and strengthen its industrial structure, the following suggestions should be adopted when planting edible mushrooms. First, a subsidy of 5,000 yuan would be provided to whoever built a plastic greenhouse; second, the greenhouses must be built within the edible mushrooms production base, with each greenhouse occupying 0.61 *mu* of land. The Villagers' Committee would be responsible for the land rent within the production period from May 2006 to May 2007; third, the Villagers' Committee would also be responsible for building roads, wells and electricity facilities within the production base; fourth, technicians would be responsible for designing the greenhouses, teaching planting techniques and purchasing the mushrooms according to the market price in 2006. But a minimum unit price of 2.4 yuan per kilogram had to be agreed upon; fifth, these preferential policies would be valid during the production period from 2006 to May 2007. The villagers could decide individually whether they wanted to participate or not.

A total of 35 plastic greenhouses, which occupied 28 *mu* of land, were built, with a claimed annual turnover of 700,000 yuan. In 2009, a further 180 plastic greenhouses were built, covering an area of 150 *mu* and enabling the farmers to achieve economies of scale. In addition, a hi-tech business incubator and other infrastructure are under construction, covering an area of 30 *mu*.

Despite government promotion of this crop, many people harboured doubts about planting edible mushrooms. Wu Guangxin, Deputy Secretary of the Xiaogang Village Party Branch, provided the following analysis of the costs of planting edible mushrooms (Wu Guangxin, interview, 5 April 2010):

Clearly from Table 4.2, very little profit was realised during the first year (13,500–12,582.50 = 917.50 yuan). Guan Youshen (interview, 5 April 2014) held that 'it would yield less than the investment' but he did not agree with the above data vis-à-vis costs. Although the county government provided villagers with a subsidy of 5000 yuan and loans free of interest, the farmers had to invest a further 8,500 yuan (13,500 – 5,000 = 8,500) in order to meet the total cost in the first year. During

Table 4.2 Cost estimation of a plastic greenhouse

Size of production area: approximately 450 square metres	
Cost of construction	**Cost of production**
600 × 6.5 (unit price of bamboo) = 3,900 yuan	straw: 450 × 35 × 0.06 (unit price) = 945 yuan
bamboo material: 100 × 10.5 (unit price of bamboo) = 1,050 yuan	dairy manure: 450 × 30 × 0.08 (unit price) = 1,080 yuan
iron wire: 1.5 × 175 (unit price) = 262.5 yuan	fungi: 700 × 2.2 (unit price) = 1,540 yuan
netting 40 × 7.5 (unit price) = 300 yuan	various materials: 600 yuan
rope: 80 × 7.5 (unit price) = 600 yuan	labour fees: 1,300 yuan (conservative estimate)
curtain: 40 × 7 (unit price) = 280 yuan	
plastic membranes: 400 yuan	
bamboo sticks: 650 × 0.5 (unit price) = 325 yuan	
Total: 7,117.50 yuan	**Total: 5,465 yuan**
Overall cost: 12,582.50 yuan	
Revenue: 450 × 12.5 (about 12.5 kilograms per square meter) × 2.4 (unit price) = 13,500 yuan	

our interview, one peasant said that he had to give up planting edible mushrooms as he could not afford the 8,500 yuan investment. How the Villagers' Committee could give villagers more support needed to be resolved urgently because the villagers were afraid of going down the same road that had led to losses in the production of black beans.

In 2008, the unit price of edible mushrooms in the market was approximately 3.0 yuan per kilogram: it peaked at 6 yuan in late 2008 and then slumped to 2.4 yuan at the end of 2009. As a result, most planters 'lost their shirts'. From this, it became evident that if the production area increased or the international market contracted, mushroom dealers would demand the lowest price – or even refuse to purchase. In this way, the tragedy of the black beans came into play again.

Guan Zhengying (interview, 13 April 2010) commented:

> I built ten plastic greenhouses and invested 230,000 yuan in total, including 150,000 yuan of subsidies and loans. We manage these greenhouses as well as 40 *mu* of land by ourselves. If we could get a

> good harvest this year, I might earn a net income of 80,000 yuan: but this is still less than my 100,000 yuan loan, thus, I will surely earn nothing at all. It is really hard work.

Xu Guangxin (interview, 17 April 2010) agreed, saying: 'In my opinion, whoever plants edible mushrooms will surely suffer losses. The government is misleading the masses. Last year, the county government offered subsidies worth over one million yuan, and we still suffered losses. We should at least make a feasibility study before starting a programme'.

This posed yet another problem, for raising income is closely related to increasing output. According to the cost-benefit evaluation, under the guidance of technicians, growers should yield around 10 kilograms of mushrooms for each square metre unless there are catastrophic weather conditions or a natural disaster that causes a reduction in output. This proved a great challenge for the villagers, who were new to growing mushrooms.

An 'Edible Mushroom Cooperative' was also set up in Xiaogang. Regulations for Edible Mushroom Cooperative in Xiaogang Village of Fengyang County were passed by the Cooperative members' representative assembly on 4 November 2006. But disputes occurred within the Cooperative. Wang Zhonghua, the Chairman of the Cooperative, did not allow Xu Jiayou (the Deputy Chairman) to keep the Cooperative's seal.[2] Some staff members suspected that Wang had pocketed 50,000 yuan of donations, an accusation which Wang denied. The Cooperative did not achieve progress in integrating the mushroom market or improving the market's capacity for guarding against risks. In 2007, after detecting that the mushrooms produced in Xiaogang contained excessive amounts of farm chemicals, the Tongli Group, which originally planned to purchase Xiaogang mushrooms, decided to lower the price to 1.6 yuan per catty or even stop buying from Xiaogang.

However, mushrooms have symbolic implications for the future of Xiaogang. Zeng Qinghong (the then Vice-President of the PRC) publicly supported the mushroom project in Xiaogang, but the price remained too low to bring about any benefit for Xiaogang's development (Yan Yushan, interview, 16 April 2010). After further consultation between the government and the Tongli Group, the mushrooms were sold at a unit price of no less than 2.2 yuan. Had the government not intervened, the villagers would have suffered far greater losses.[3] One villager said:

> We can never succeed in planting edible mushrooms without a complete government-led package service, which has been proved by

> the practices in Zaoxiang and Wudian [villages located near Xiaogang]. Last year, the county government allowed us to grow vegetables, and provided us who planted edible mushrooms with subsidies but did not allow us to develop other industry, including setting up a wine plant, as the acreage of the vineyards is too small. (Yan Jinchang, interview, 12 May 2010)

The county government attached much importance to developing the mushroom economy for political reasons, and promised help including subsidies, interest-free loans and a minimum market price. This interventionist approach acted as both incentive and constraint in the case of the farmers. It encouraged Xiaogang villagers to step into the mushroom economy but at the same time it offered them limited opportunities to engage in other business, e.g. industry. The vast majority of individual farmers lacked funds to start their own large agricultural or industrial enterprises.

Although black beans, grapes and mushrooms were three main cash crops that the Xiaogang villagers were producing. The deterioration of the agricultural ecosystem today in Xiaogang makes these crops less marketable; in addition, their reputation has been tarnished – in particular by the overuse of pesticides and fertilizers.

This is not only a question of farming practice: it is also a question of sociology. The 2006 report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Huang et al., 2006) indicated that since 1980, China's annual consumption of fertilizers has almost quadrupled. Two hypotheses explain this phenomenon. One argues that it is a risky agricultural management strategy for peasants: the other holds that the contracting period of land[4] and the flow of labour have encouraged peasants to use fertilizer excessively. Some Xiaogang villagers, who work away from home during some of the year[5] and return home in the farming season, tend to accomplish the whole farming task 'at one stroke' rather than wait for the ideal time to grow their crops. Government agencies, scientific groups, planters and the suppliers of agricultural capital goods offer villagers the following 'attractive' doctrine of agricultural investment: 'A little input of fertilizer is fine, but more input will be better'. Xu Guangzhi said that: 'The pesticide salesmen told peasants that each pesticide could kill only one kind of pests, so the peasants should buy each kind' (interview, 10 May 2010). In this way, villagers have been exploited by many intermediaries; finally, they have had to bear all responsibility themselves. Owing to the vested interests of the agents of the agricultural chains, the information given to the farmers is not

necessarily correct. As far as increasing farmers' incomes and decreasing environmental destruction are concerned, farmers cannot possibly get proper information under such conditions. Gao (1999: 259) states that due to the exploitation of land and excessive use of fertilizers, soil erosion in the 1990s was very serious in the village that he studied. The agricultural ecosystem of Xiaogang appears to be heading in the same direction.

Water shortage is another problematic issue for the cash crop economy. A confrontation arose during a drought in 2004 when three Xiaogang households refused to pay the water pumping fee to the Randeng Temple Reservoir. Later, at the end of July, the village introduced an additional charge of 25 yuan per person to help their crops survive the drought. But other villagers refused to pay this charge because they considered the aforementioned three households free-riders and were not inclined to make up the outstanding fees. The Water Use Association failed to solve the problem despite great efforts at mediation. Irrigation was accordingly denied. In the end, the crops died of water deprivation. Inevitably, it was the villagers themselves who again suffered great losses (Yan Hongchang, interview, 24 April 2010).

How can this incident be explained? Despite the terrible consequences, it was a reflection of the peasants' emphasis on moral behaviour. It was by sanctioning such kinds of damage that the villagers punished the selfish decisions of others in order to safeguard the fairness of the village as a whole. The fact that the villagers failed to act in their own interests demonstrated a special logic, i.e. that they cared more about what others might gain from their behaviour than about their own gain.[6] This incident highlights the problems which continue to exist within the internal structure of the village and which impact upon the possibilities for cooperation.

2. The debate over industry and its implications

Decollectivisation of agriculture changed the economic identity of Xiaogang Village, shifting agricultural production from the collective to the family unit and giving the villagers greater autonomy in their production and consumption decisions. In addition, it gave local authorities a greater economic role as opposed to their being political vassals of the CCP. In much of China, these forces led to the decline of the collective as the key political and economic unit of organisation and to the rise of the 'corporate village', founded upon collective enterprise (Ruf, 1998: 125).

According to Ruf, this type of village is 'much like a corporation, and, employing rhetoric and practices evocative of corporatist political organisations, [the local Party committee] tried to cultivate a basis for collective identity that focused on the village as a commercial enterprise' (Ruf, 1998: 126). This system was not without its tensions, as the different actors from the village and local government took advantage of the resources sent to Xiaogang, making industrial development a contested arena, and some groups were marginalised by nepotism and favouritism. The following discussion of industry development in Xiaogang presents arguments in support of Ruf's thesis.

Prior to the early 1990s, few efforts were made to develop village industry. In 2000, a Japanese company showed interest in raising ducks in Xiaogang, after the company's managing director met one of the HRS initiators, Yan Hongchang, in Beijing. After an initial investment of 10 million yen, the Comprehensive Centre for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry was built. However, before making the second investment of approximately 300 million yen, the Japanese company wanted to make an inspection of the Centre. The night before its representatives came, the Fengyang government released a thousand ducks into a nearby pond. The next morning, when the Japanese sponsors arrived, the local officials pointed to the ducks and told them that they had been bred using their funds. This deception was quickly exposed, given that there was no appropriate breeding place in Xiaogang. Furthermore, the Japanese company noted that not one of the initiators of the HRS had attended their meeting. Expressing their disappointment to Yan Hongchang (interview, 5 March 2010), they stated: 'You are not authorised to decide on the investment and we do not have much confidence in your government'. They immediately ceased further investment. Today, the Centre sells pesticides and fertilizers on the ground floor: the first floor is used as the villagers' library.

In 1998, the County government designed a 'three-step' strategic plan to promote Xiaogang's development in agriculture, industry and tourism. In the villagers' eyes, the most effective way to get rich was to develop industry. However, due to poor transportation and scarce water resources, which were constantly alluded to by the villagers, Xiaogang experienced great difficulty in developing industry. A Xiaogang villager Zhang Xiuhua (interview, 1 April 2010) said: 'we do not have a history of industry here'. In the same year, Xiaogang built a textile mill and a car parts factory under the sponsorship of Changjiang Village. However, neither was successful. In 2005, the dispute concerning the village's industrial development rested on selecting the site of the 'Industrial

Park'. Zhang Xiuhua, a local township cadre, argued that the local government's decision did not take into consideration the village's own interests.

> The provincial government has set up an Industrial Park in Xiaoxihe Town and 7 per cent of its income is distributed to us; yet we are not happy with its location. I have told the Secretary of the CCP in County Committee that it is too far away to help us and thus we hoped that the Industrial Park can be relocated to our village, but nothing we can do now. The Park has already been built (Zhang Xiuhua, interview, 2 April 2010)

Xiaogang villagers were determined to develop industry. They realised that a life without developing agriculture was unstable and a life without developing industry was poor. But how to develop industry remained a 'headache'. Yan Hongchang (interview, 5 April 2010) observed: 'Xiaogang Village is a golden stone covered in dust, which needs to be polished'. This was confirmed during my conversation with another villager, Yan Xuetian (interview, 3 April 2010).

> Its reputation has been used by many people yet little benefit has been brought to the village. We played the political card by adopting the HRS; now we should renew our ideas and play the economic card. Yan Hongchang and I dismissed the statement that some say we are resting on our laurels, as we never stop working hard, but there are difficulties which are beyond our capabilities to resolve.

In Yan Xuetian's opinion, it will be very difficult to adopt the 'three-step' strategy, funding being the greatest problem. The villagers could regard the village as a good brand and develop enterprises around the Xiaogang brand; but, it is very important that they should prevent others from infringing on their territory and abusing their brand. Yan Hongchang (interview, 3 April 2010) added:

> Every year, high-ranking leaders come to the village to check the adoption of fundamental policies. Thus, we cannot decide by ourselves. I have heard about the 'Xiaogang Village Industrial Park' in Mentai Town, which most villagers did not know about. I suggested registration [of Xiaogang as a brand] ten years ago, but it was never implemented.

Guan Youjiang said during an interview (5 April 2010):

> The head of our County said recently that our brand had been registered. As long as we could get some projects and funds, we could start immediately with their strong support. And, after we become rich enough to drive a Mercedes-Benz or a BMW, he would like us to buy him an ordinary Santana.

Ultimately, most villagers did not attach much importance to the registration of the brand Xiaogang (Xu, 2004).[7] So, did the villagers make any effort to develop industry? In 2000, Yan Hongchang found an official document in the county government records which read:

> To 13 delegates including Yan Hongchang, we have affirmed your request of developing Xiaogang with the support of the provincial government, and a total investment of 6,610,000 yuan has been permitted so far. As for the five infrastructure projects, some have been accomplished while others are under construction. We will give you extra support to improve the village's outlook if the municipal government's financial conditions allow. (Yan Hongchang, interview, 7 April 2010)

So where did the money go? Was industry developed in the village? And, if so, where are the projects that have been accomplished or are under construction? Yan Hongchang discovered that Yan Junchang had concealed this document. In my interview (7 April 2010), Yan Junchang simply dismissed the proposal that the village had the capacity to develop industry. Yan Junchang utilised a gap between the county and the village to his own advantage. While the provincial government seemed not to know whether the investment would benefit the village, the villagers were sure of it and were continuously looking for opportunities to develop industry.

What measures should the village take to develop industry given that there is no accumulation of knowledge concerning township enterprises or an industrial basis? External resources are crucial. But if the government cuts access to these resources, the village's trajectory towards developing industry will cease abruptly. I often saw reports in the media claiming that some enterprises had made an investment in Xiaogang: Xiaogang Village Economic Development Area (1998), Xiaogang Village Agricultural, Industrial and Commercial Co. Ltd (1998), Anhui Wangxingda Telecommunication Equipment Co. Ltd (a tinned wire

factory set up in 2000), Xiaogang Village Agricultural, Industrial and Commercial Co. Ltd (2001), the Xiaogang Mushroom Factory (2000) and the Xiaogang Rice Vermicelli Processing Factory (2001). But, after visiting the village, it became evident that none of the above was real except for the Xiaogang Village Pig-raising Farm and the Changjiang Runfa Group.

According to Yan Jinchang (interview, 11 May 2013) and another villager who opted not to reveal his name, the owners of these enterprises were asked to pay taxes when they were about to start their operations. This immediately scared some of them away. The Fengyang County government indicated that Xiaogang Village was a good brand which should be cherished and preserved through various means. More importantly, however, it should attract considerable investment, not only from within the village but also from other parts of the county. However, Wu Guangxin (interview, 19 April 2010) said with much frustration: 'I suggested to our superiors that we should set up an agricultural processing factory in the village, but no measures have been taken. Instead, other villages have set up a number of factories in our name, while we still lead a miserable life'.

When asked about enterprises in the village, the villagers responded with great surprise, saying that there were no enterprises and that those who had formerly expressed a wish to invest in the village had later relocated to other places, although agreements had already been reached and buildings had been built. Yan Jinchang (interview, 8 April 2010) explained: 'The local government charge heavy taxes if enterprises are set up in our village, so they relocated them to other places through various means'.

Yan Xiaoyi (interview, 8 April 2010) argued that many of the enterprises established outside the village did business using the village's brand; however, he added, they had never brought Xiaogang villagers benefit in any form. Such enterprises included the Xiaogang Village Gas Station, Xiaogang Village Flour Shop, Xiaogang Village Restaurant, Xiaogang Village Industrial Park and Anhui Xiaogang Village Food Co. Ltd. Worse still, some enterprises tarnished the reputation of this brand through mismanagement.

County-level cadres used the economic development of Xiaogang to showcase their political achievements (even many development projects are only staying on the paper) and to prove that they had supported the village's development in every possible way. In this way, the local state organisations did not devolve (as Victor Nee predicted in 1989) into playing a passive role providing conveniences and regulation for local

development. Yet, this did not mean that local governments had become independent legal entities acting in accordance with the logic of private enterprise or a capitalist economy.

With the development of industrialisation in Xiaogang, there were two new changes to villagers' social network: first, as a result of the independence of household economic activities, there were more nuclear families and the number of 'empty nest' families was increasing rapidly; second, marital relationships played an even more important role than patrilineal relationships. The importance of 'local horizontal networks' (Yang Minchuan, 1994; Pieke, 1998) emerged. In other words, although local governments continued to play a role in local economic development, other power relationships amongst the villagers and the market started to contribute to village development. Further examination of village politics demonstrates the growing importance of local networks.

3. Village politics

In 2010 and 2014, I conducted one diachronic survey in Xiaogang regarding villagers' support for competitive elections and their awareness of political rights and political participation.[8] I interviewed approximately 50 Xiaogang families. Each interviewee was provided with a semi-structured questionnaire followed by some open-ended questions.

It is worth noting Zhong's (2006) research. Zhong's own survey, which was based on 1,162 questionnaires distributed throughout 21 towns and villages in Jiangsu Province, revealed that 60 per cent of farmers supported village elections and approximately 90 per cent thought they should have the freedom to express their own opinions. Although Zhong conducted this survey in the rural areas of Jiangsu Province, which at the time enjoyed sound economic development, his findings are also applicable to Xiaogang Village. As regards the statement that the sphere of 'democratic values' came mostly from European countries, Zhong did not make corresponding adjustments according to the actual conditions of China's political development. For example, he argued that one of the democratic values was 'competitive elections', but he did not comment on the forms of elections and possible obstacles to local elections. He also excluded illiterate people, who constituted 9 per cent of the population of the villages he surveyed; hence, his conclusions may need to be viewed with caution. My survey in Xiaogang covers what Zhong's ignored in terms of village political participation and democratisation.

In my questionnaire, in reply to 'Do you agree with the statement "Will the village cadres conscientiously pass on the policies that were

drawn up by the central government"', 32.7 per cent agreed while 57.7 per cent disagreed (See Table 4.3). Some villagers (accounting for 9.6 per cent of the total) answered 'we don't know', which indicated that they were either totally unconcerned about politics or simply did not care.

In answer to the question 'Are you aware of the fact that the state is now promoting the construction of the New Socialist Countryside', 72.7 per cent of men and only 27.3 per cent of women answered 'yes' (see Table 4.4). This may have been related to the fact that local women do not participate in political life or extra-family life.

More than one-fifth (23.1 per cent) of the villagers interviewed did not take part in the village's last election. When interviewees were asked if there were village cadres who used their positions to seek profit for themselves, approximately one-quarter replied that almost every cadre would do so (including 19.2 per cent who said it was quite common). Others claimed they did not know, which simply highlighted the fact that many villagers showed little interest in politics. When dissatisfaction and complaints about village development emerged, over 67.3 per cent of villagers whom I interviewed took the attitude of 'do-nothingness'; thus, there is obviously a growing sense of dissatisfaction, disinterest and disconnectedness in the area of village politics.

Table 4.3 Do you agree with the statement 'Will the village cadres conscientiously pass on the policies that were drawn up by the central government'?

	Number of people	**Percentage**
Absolutely agree	11	21.2
Agree to some extent	6	11.5
Disagree	30	57.7
Have no idea	5	9.6
Total	52	100.0

Table 4.4 Are you aware of the fact that the state is now promoting the construction of the New Socialist Countryside?

	Yes/No (per cent)	
Gender	**Yes**	**No**
Male	72.7	25.0
Female	27.3	75.0
Total	100	100

In more recent times, the CCP-led government has been playing a diminishing role in rural organisations, subsequent to the degradation of its status after the rural reform in 1978. Many villages have not taken in new Party members over the past two decades (Yang, 2004). For example, no village cadres have been admitted to the CCP since 1994 in Chezhuang Village (near Xiaogang); and the original 16 party members were mostly above 50 years of age. A local who I interviewed, Mr Liu, argued that more and more peasants were going outside the village to earn their living, which has greatly undermined the development of Party members. Villagers were now less enthusiastic about joining the CCP.

Xiaogang is no exception. Yan Hongchang (interview, 19 March 2010), who is determined to join the CCP, has submitted several Party membership applications over the past two decades, but his request has yet to be granted. Yan Hongchang said:

> Yan Junchang put his oar in and I could not stop it. I passed the first round when working in Yangang Village in 1994. The secretary of the village's Party committee gave me the form, but on the second day he said he could not accept me because Yan Junchang, who was then the Village Head, did not want me to get onto the Party committee. In the years afterwards, I failed to become a Party member as Yan Junchang always put his oar in. (Yan Hongchang, interview, 8 April 2010)

Yan Lixue observed:

> I joined the Party in 1983 and was the first Party member in Xiaogang. On hearing that the county Party committee had decided to accept Yan Junchang and later Yan Hongchang as Party members, I said it could not work as it would be impossible for Yan Hongchang to join the Party committee if Yan Junchang became a Party member first, which turned out to be precisely the case. The county Party committee argued that as there was not a complete system of Party membership application, the Party committee meetings could not be held; hence, it was very difficult to accept new members. (Yan Lixue, interview, 9 April 2010)

In 2004, there were 12 Party members in Xiaogang (not including Shen Hao, the cadre sent from the Anhui provincial government): Yan Guopin, Yan Lixue, Yan Junchang, Yan Xuechang (who joined the Party while

working for a transportation company), Xu Kaiwen, Wu Guangxin, Yan Debao (who joined the Party while in the army), Yan Xiaoyi (who joined the Party in 1994), Yan Jiahong, Wu Huaijin, Yan Jiuchang (who joined the Party when working in Ningbo), and Wu Tinghua (who joined the Party while working for a tree nursery company). But, why have no recipients of Party membership application letters joined the Party since 1994? Xu Guangzhi commented:

> The 18 initiators of the HRS in the village did not unite with each other: many of them did not want others to get better positions. Guan Youjiang and Yan Hongchang were qualified to join the Party, yet they have not been accepted. The village cannot be developed unless some bad guys are confined to certain posts; however, they cannot be punished as long as they do not make major mistakes. (Xu Guangzhi, interview, 13 April 2010)

The villagers saw Yan Hongchang as a wise man whereas Yan Junchang, a former team leader, was judged an authoritarian 'country bumpkin' (*dalaocu*) (Li Rupei, interview, 14 April 2010). Yet, Yan Hongchang could not join the Party as long as Yan Junchang held his membership, for, as the villagers explained, 'Yan Junchang did not like those who were more capable than him and worried about his own interests' (Han Yong and Lu Xiaoxiao, interview, 15 April 2010). Yan Junchang had no qualms about taking government funds. He was a realist.

A villager observed that Yan Hongchang had submitted a Party membership application many times. He then asked Yan Junchang about this and the latter said that the Yan Hongchang's applications had been lost. The villager added that Yan Junchang did not want others to get better positions since Party members enjoyed many political privileges and would more likely be appointed as village cadres (Wang Tianlin, interview, 17 April 2010).

The fact that Yan Junchang spared no effort in blocking Yan Hongchang from joining the Party is only one side of the scenario. The county government was also instrumental in exacerbating the conflict. Yan Hongchang (interview, 16 May 2010) stressed: 'Even if there is no conflict between us, we will doubt each other when our superiors say something misleading. Some leaders even stated that they cannot let us unite with each other: even if there is nothing wrong, they will find fault with us'. As for the reasons for this, Yan Hongchang added:

> Our village had many conflicts with the county Party committee, as they said we were active 'counterrevolutionaries' for adopting the

> HRS from the late 1970s to the early 1980s. History proved they were wrong and the central government supported our reform. It was not until 1986, when the adoption of the HRS was institutionalised, that we got political security. So, they will not admit their mistake by supporting us now: they are afraid we might retaliate. Besides, they took a lot of money from the funds which were allotted to us by the provincial government, so they are guilty of crime. (Yan Hongchang, interview, 7 May 2010)

On these issues, I raised two questions regarding villagers' attitudes towards Party members. In reply to the first: 'Do you think Party members have better moral qualities than ordinary people?', 56.5 per cent said 'no'; in reply to the second, 'Do you think Party members play a more important role than ordinary people in the village's public construction (e.g. constructing roads)?', 55.6 per cent expressed negative opinions.

To probe further, there are two forms of de-governmentalisation in Xiaogang: first, family conflict is rife in the village. The story of conflict between Yan Junchang and Yan Hongchang is a typical example of this village disassociation and disunion; second, the county and township governments have in turn sought benefit by 'hooking in' some villagers while provoking others. In this context, villagers do not want to engage in village public affairs. This is a reflection of de-governmentalisation

Table 4.5 Do you think Party members have better moral qualities than ordinary people?

	Number of people	**Percentage**
Yes	20	43.5
No	26	56.5
Total	46	100

Table 4.6 Do you think Party members play a more important role than ordinary people in the village's public construction (e.g. constructing roads)?

	Number of people	**Percentage**
Yes	20	44.4
No	25	55.6
Total	45	100

which has seen ordinary villagers develop a sense of political apathy. As one villager stated:

> Power competition is a very sensitive issue, and it is everywhere, as people all seek benefit for themselves. As long as we do not participate in such competition and mind our own business, we will cause no trouble. (Yan Fuchang, interview, 18 April 2010)

4. The rise of pastoral power: cadres sent to Xiaogang

The above discussion focused upon villagers' negative opinions of village public affairs and the conflict between Yan Hongchang and Yan Junchang, both of whom were village cadres. However, what is a typical cadre in the Chinese context? This section will examine in detail three types of cadres and argue the emergence of pastoral power, a new form of village governmentalisation.

Chinese cadres were related to the concept of the 'pastor'. In the words of Foucault (2007: 124), 'Pastorship is a fundamental type of relationship between God and men, and the king participates'. Pastoral power has four features. First, it is not limited to territory. Second, it is a power of salvation and care and 'fundamentally a beneficent power'. Third, 'pastoral power initially manifests itself in its zeal, devotion, and endless application'. Finally, it 'is an individualising power' (Foucault, 2007: 125; 126; 128). The shepherd does everything he can to take care of each of the sheep in his flock and is prepared to sacrifice himself to save each one of them. The power operates according to the principle of 'a responsibility defined by a qualitative and factual distribution, of exhaustive and instantaneous transfer, of sacrifice reversal, and of alternate correspondence' (Foucault, 2007: 170). Pastoral power is a prelude to the concept of governmentality.

Foucault (2007: 231) claims that 'Western man is individualised through the pastorate insofar as the pastorate leads him to this salvation that fixes his identity for eternity, subjects him to a network of unconditional obedience, and inculcates in him the truth of a dogma at the very moment it exhorts from him the secret of his inner truth'. The secularisation of pastoral power has transformed its features, one of which is, in the Chinese context, its collectivising effect. Bray illustrates this in detail in his work, in which he examines the role of Chinese cadres and points to the idea of the leader as a kind of 'pastor', who emerged in the history of the CCP (Bray, 2005: 59–63).

The practical application of this form of leadership is epitomised in the work of Liu Shaoqi. In his speech 'How to be a good Communist',

delivered at the Institute of Marxism and Leninism in Yan'an (July 1939), Liu (1981: 107–168) addressed nine issues regarding the Communists' self-cultivation. According to his understanding, '[t]he aim of ideological self-cultivation by members of the Communist Party is to temper themselves to become staunch and utterly devoted members and cadres of the Party who make constant progress and serve as examples for others' (Liu, 1981: 168).

In Liu's opinion, a good Communist should first have 'a high Communist morality. Whether in the Party or among the people, he is the first to suffer hardship and the last to enjoy comfort' (Liu, 1981: 137). Cadres worked in army units, villages and factories and stepped forward bravely in times of adversity and difficulty. Moreover, a good Communist 'has the greatest revolutionary courage' and 'learns how best to grasp the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism'. His primary objective is the salvation of all members of the group, the aim being to lead the masses to Communist revolution. A good Communist, Liu insisted, is 'the most sincere, most candid and happiest [of] men. Because he has no private axe to grind, nothing to conceal from the Party and nothing he cannot tell others, he has no problems of personal gain or loss and no personal anxieties other than for the interests of the Party and the revolution'. A good Communist 'has the greatest self-respect and self-esteem. Even when he is working on his own without supervision and therefore has the opportunity to do something bad, he is just as watchful over himself' (Liu, 1981: 138). This meant that the leader/pastor led by example: he was a model of ethical behaviour; cadres had to be model revolutionaries, selfless and devoted (Foucault, 1978a: 59–63).

As 'pastoralism' became entrenched in CCP operating practices, individuals were encouraged to make sacrifices to serve the group, and as a result, the cult of the martyr became central to CCP discourse. Just as pastors provided individual care for each member of the group, cadres were expected to solve individual problems and to help peasant families in difficulty. Like pastors, cadres reached into the minds and souls of the group through education and propaganda, and aimed to create a new class consciousness. With the above in mind, I identified three types of cadre in Xiaogang.

The first type of cadre was the villager, whose priority was to protect the villagers' interests. For example, in the mid-1990s, there were many kinds of mandatory appropriations, including grain quotas and other taxes. Yan Hongchang, who was then Secretary of the Village's Party Committee, reported to the then Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao during Wen's visit to Chuzhou: 'We risked our lives to adopt the HRS for a better life, and now our conditions have been greatly improved; but, still the

masses are far apart from the Party and the Party cannot live on such taxes, as this is not the correct path we should take' (Yan Hongchang, interview, 4 April 2010). Yan's efforts finally paid off. The County government thoroughly investigated the issue and returned the over-taxed amount of grain to the villagers.

How does this type of cadre relate to pastoral power? This type of cadre is deeply embedded in a local power nexus. Because cadres like Yan Hongchang have a close connection with their fellow villagers, it is much easier for them to attach themselves to the actual situation of the villagers and represent them when they are selected as representatives of the villagers. This type of cadre acts as an 'opinion leader' in village business. He is the indigenous version of pastoral power.

The second type of cadre was sent by the township and county Party committees. The villagers argued that scores of such cadres had been sent to the village, but still they did nothing to improve the village's economic development as they paid visits to the village only occasionally and did nothing practical. One villager said: 'In the past, each household was allocated to a cadre, who vowed to improve our living conditions. Yet little improvement has been achieved' (Yan Fuchang, interview, 4 April 2010). In 1995, a number of cadres were sent to the village by Xiaoxihe Town Council and the County Public Security Bureau, but once again none of them made any progress as far as the village's development was concerned. Later, in 1998, Yan Xiaoyi was appointed secretary of the Village's Party Committee but he was soon dismissed for misbehaviour.

This type of cadre uses his power only as a platform for further strengthening his political position. He actually detaches himself from the village business and does not engage in developing the village. Most of these cadres, according to my informants, did not live in the village. They lived in Xiaoxihe Town or Fengyang, paying visits to Xiaogang once or twice a week. Most of villagers did not even know their names. This type of cadre falsified the emergence of pastoral power until the arrival of the third type of cadre: Shen Hao.

Shen Hao, who was sent by the provincial government, brought many benefits to the village. Shen had been an official with the provincial Finance Department prior to serving as the Secretary of the Village's Party Committee in 2004. He started by reorganising Party affairs, introduced several new projects including a trade market and a hospital, extended the village's 'Friendship Avenue' and undertook neighbourhood construction. Shen also took villagers' wishes into consideration: he improved the village's education infrastructure by setting up a kindergarten and a junior middle school. He not only improved the village's appearance but also changed villagers' perceptions of the role of a farmer; for example,

the villagers now started to pay more attention to improving education and learning practical skills, as called for in the national programme to build a new countryside. The villagers loved Shen and held him in high esteem. Some even sent letters to the Organisation Department of Anhui Province to show their gratitude to him. After consulting with him, the provincial Party committee decided to extend his period of office in the village by another three years. When asked how he personally felt about working for so many years in the village, he replied with a smile: 'It is worth dedicating the majority of my time to the village's development: I do not regret it' (Shen Hao, interview, 11 November 2008). In this sense, he was qualified as a 'shepherd', an excellent village leader who served the village with all his heart and soul. So, how did he build such close connections with the villagers?

It was his knowledge structure that made him think about issues and state policies from a strategic viewpoint. Shen advised the villagers as follows:

> As proposed at the 17th CCP National Congress, much emphasis should be laid on the comprehensive development of urban and rural areas; it is of vital importance to solve the problems affecting agriculture, rural areas and farmers. We should make tremendous efforts to develop modern agriculture and rural economies, and enhance the construction of such infrastructures as roads, water conservancy facilities, land consolidation, hospitals, schools, trade markets and post offices. We should also build a sound agricultural service system, attract more investment in agricultural development and improve the quality and safety of our products. In addition, we should attach much importance to developing township enterprises and promoting employment. (Shen Hao, interview, 12 November 2008)

In his role of cadre, Shen cares about the village's development and encourages Xiaogang villagers to think of their long-term interests. For example, talking about modern agriculture and road construction, he said:

> A Japanese investor wants to set up a modern agricultural enterprise in Fengyang. Both Xiaoxihe and Daxihe Towns would like to provide him with low-cost labour and an uncontaminated land environment. By doing so, we hope to learn advanced technologies from him. I see this project as beneficial not only to our village but also to the entire county. Whatever others say about our village, we must do our best to get strong and rich. We have much confidence in the village's future. If this enterprise succeeds, we will enjoy great

> transportation advantages as well as other benefits. (Shen Hao, interview, 13 November 2008)

Shen suggested 'putting aside conflict over development and solving it through development'. Every villager knew that conflict existed between Yan Junchang and Yan Hongchang. Shen maintained that the best way to solve this conflict was to pursue development. In 2011, Yan Junchang's son was managing agricultural production in the village while Yan Hongchang's son was preparing to set up a factory to produce energy-saving equipment. Shen Hao agreed to provide each of them with an interest-free loan of 300,000 yuan.

Shen placed considerable emphasis on improving the villagers' living conditions. One villager commented: 'Shen does very well in government supplies. No matter who is in difficulty, he will offer some help' (Yan Jinchang, interview, 05 June 2010). Another interviewee, Guan Youjiang, said:

> Shen's hometown is in the northern part of China, where his 90-year-old mother, his wife and daughter live, but he always puts the interests of the villagers first and seldom goes home. Shen has done lots of practical things for us, including constructing roads, building communities and repairing the water tower. He is really thinking of our benefit. (Guan Youjiang, interview, 10 November 2008)

Most importantly, Shen introduced several resources which greatly enhanced the development of the village. In 2004, when he first came to the village, even the banner raised to greet him was bought on credit. Shen immediately revitalised some assets of the village. He built a guest house, attracted investment and established several joint enterprises. After years of development, great changes have taken place in the village's appearance. The village's collective funds mainly come from renting stalls in the trade market, incomes earned from participating in the coordinated planning of new residential areas, and buying stocks in the name of collective organisations. As Xiaogang is considered a 'star' village, it has special funding from the higher levels of government. It has set an example for other villages in the area of infrastructure construction such as roads, water supplies and land consolidation. Shen Hao (interview, 13 November 2008) stated: 'Xiaogang is a ship; in the past, it was steered in the wrong direction, but now it has chosen the right direction and it will ride the wind and the waves tomorrow. I am very confident that the village will have a bright future'. Some villagers observed: 'The cadres before Shen Hao did nothing practical; but, after

Shen Hao came to the village, roads were constructed, communities came into being, a trade market was set up, a hospital was built, and during this year, land has been consolidated and several buildings have sprung up. Everyone can see these successes' (Yan Lihua and Yan Peixin, interview, 10 October 2008). The village's per capita income increased from 2,300 yuan in 2003 (when Shen Hao came to Xiaogang) to 6,600 yuan in 2008 (the national average for 2008 was 4,762 yuan) (*Jingling Evening Newspaper*, 2009).

But, some villagers hold another opinion:

> We cannot rely on Shen Hao alone; he is only one man and can give orders to nobody but himself. He is not familiar with our conditions here and he does not have much experience of working in rural areas. I talked about this with him. I said, 'There is no man who never makes a mistake', but it is up to him whether he takes my advice or not. A leader should serve the masses with all his heart and soul; but, since the interests of the villagers are multiple and dispersed, a leader should be brave and far-sighted and needs the spirit of seeking truth from facts in order to integrate inconsistent or even contradictory interests. I believe that Shen Hao would not seek to profit from public funds. As long as the money is spent in the interests of the village, he should not feel fearful of any mischarges or ungrounded accusations. (Yan Meichang, interview, 13 October 2008)

In the past, Shen Hao was constrained by both the township Party Committee and the county Party Committee. He commented: 'As the first village to adopt the HRS in agriculture, Xiaogang could initially develop only agriculture. It was not until the 17th CCP National Congress (2007) that the village was allowed to develop industry. We suggested building several standard factory buildings and putting more effort into developing village industry' (Shen Hao, interview, 14 November 2008). Shen wrote a report to the county Party Committee in which he stated that he wished to build a comprehensive information building and ten standard factory buildings, and to renovate the roads. After examining this report, the county Party Committee set up the 'Xiaogang Village Work & Development Steering Committee', with Ma Zhanwen (Party Secretary of Fengyang) as the Team Leader and Fan Dijun (Fengyang County Governor) as the Vice Team Leader. This indicated that the Committee attached great importance to the village's development. But, Shen felt worried about this Committee, as he had to ask for funds from the provincial government and then pass them on to this Committee that achieved little for the village's development. He did not know how

to face the provincial government and the villagers. One can understand from the above how hard it was for Shen to do his job. Yan Hongchang said in interview (4 November 2008): 'When Shen Hao said that he wanted to go home, I told him that the villagers all loved him'. Yan tried to console him. The county Party Committee decided to promote the county's overall development by playing the Xiaogang 'card', which took most decision-making beyond the control of Shen Hao.

Having devoted himself to the development of the village for six years, Shen died on 6 November 2009 at the age of 46 following an alcohol-fuelled banquet welcoming investors who were interested in developing Xiaogang's industry. He was posthumously designated by the Fengyang County Government a martyr and an excellent Party member who 'died in the line of duty'. Hundreds of farmers and officials mourned his death. The then Chinese President Hu Jintao expressed his condolences upon hearing of Shen's death. Shen was praised by the local government as 'a fire, who lit up the broad road of rural China and led villagers to prosperity'.

Shen embodied a contemporary form of pastoral power combined with an ability to operate successfully in the new rural economy, in striking contrast to the Party thug Yan Xiaoyi. Their coexistence in a particular period reflects the fact that in Xiaogang, there are contesting modes of power and leadership styles. Shen's interest in and methods of development, and his dedication to the village of Xiaogang and its inhabitants, were the very antithesis of those of Yan Xiaoyi, the local bully I discussed in the previous chapter.

5. Conclusion

With reference to the 'phobia of the state', Foucault states:

> The state is not a universal nor in itself an autonomous source of power. The state is nothing else but the effect, the profile, the mobile shape of a perpetual stratification (*étatisation*) or stratifications, in the sense of incessant transactions which modify, or move, or drastically change, or insidiously shift sources of finance, modes of investment, decision-making centres, forms and types of control, relationships between local powers, the central authority, and so on. (Foucault, 2008: 77)

This de-essentialisation of the state needs to be analysed on the basis of the practices of governmentality. The state is not a homogeneous entity

with a 'unified degree of autonomy in relation to different social interests' (Yep, 2003: 21).

Apropos of the power relationships revealed in my case study, from the perspective of the central state's interactions with rural societies, there is a clear discrepancy between 'subjective aspirations' and 'objective attainments'. After the establishment of the People's Communes, the central state exercised 'intrusive' power over the local society. However, the social structure has undergone major transformations since 1978, at the same time generating new difficulties that the central government seems unable to solve. These recent developments have challenged the efficacy of the traditional forms of centralised state power.

The local state in Xiaogang generated a considerable amount of agricultural business such as a black beans, mushrooms and grapes. But the village cadres 'have been structurally weakened since decollectivisation and the dissolution of the Communes. They can no longer use class labels to stigmatize "backward elements", and they do not control villagers' livelihoods to the extent they did in the past' (Li and O'Brien, 1996). Under the above circumstances, new forms of power relation have emerged. Ordinary villagers, who spared no effort when it came to bettering their livelihoods, were plunged into unpredictable marketisation. The inconsistency and mismanagement that marked these recent agricultural ventures are not due to poor motivation of the villagers but to unequal and inadequate opportunities.

The first and third types of cadre I discussed above show the rise of pastoral power. They led the villagers and acted with integrity and moral standards, in striking contrast to the second type of cadre and the Party thug Yan Xiaoyi. The cadres sent to Xiaogang reflected the new governmentality of the state. It was a new form of pastoral power. As regards rural development, in the pastorisation of power, these rural cadres are regarded as leaders, as the shepherds of the village 'flock', who need to be guided, nurtured and educated. The death of Shen thus becomes a sacrifice, a form of immortality.

5
Village Spatial Order and Its Implications for Cooperation[1]

This chapter deals with the 'spatialisation of government' in Xiaogang. Rural space in China has undergone profound reconfiguration and reconstruction since the beginning of the reform era in 1978. The latest round of changes was initiated in 2006 when the central government launched a new policy known as 'Building New Socialist Countryside' (hereafter 'XNJ'). Based on the Xiaogang experience, this chapter analyses three types of rural space and delineates the logic behind their transformation over the past two decades. The chapter argues that while spatial transformation underpins many significant changes in rural social, economic and political structures, the new forms of space continue to bolster collectivised rather than individualised forms of subjectivity. In addition, although political power has been devolved through the process of rural decollectivisation, state power remains manifest in the ongoing spatial remaking of the village built environment.

1. Introduction: space and social formations

At the turn of the last millennium, the leaders of Xiaogang decided to move the village from its current location to a new site approximately 5 km away. At the time of my sojourn there in 2008, the re-building project was almost finished. My informants detailed the three reasons behind the move from the original location. First, the village had become very crowded due to having been irregularly planned. Second, the village was built on arable land, and the Chinese state was concerned about land shortage problems; the village cadres' long discussions with the villagers convinced the latter that their moving to a new area would not only increase the amount of arable land but also improve their living conditions enormously. Finally, the old village rested on

low-lying land. This meant that the villagers were constantly at risk of contracting a serious parasitic disease called 'snail fever', and diarrhoea as well; one-third of the village children suffered from parasitic intestinal roundworms. Taken together, these factors posed a serious threat to the Xiaogang villagers' lives.

Village cadres offered three incentives to villagers to move from the old site to the new area. The village had a small factory producing clay tiles: the cadres promised to offer a greatly discounted price for tiles used in newly built houses. Twenty-eight households, attracted by this inducement alone, moved immediately. In addition, the cadres offered 100 yuan for every room built in the new location. This material aid came from the local township, which also supported the villagers' relocation. Finally, the cadres built two wells and other infrastructure, including, for example, a main road system in the new area, thereby solving the problems of drinking water and transport.

My primary interest in this case study of Xiaogang village's relocation is that it echoes the recent macro-space transformations in rural China. In this chapter, the focus is upon the spatial order of the XNJ project. The key issues related to this focus are the way that space was (re)designed to govern or manage the village and how the space was (re)designed. This chapter will pose the following questions: How much of a coincidence was it that the XNJ, a top-down project, promoted this relocation and that the villagers not only voluntarily joined this comprehensive project but also reorganised their own location? Were there any problems associated with relocation? If so, what were they and how were they solved? What do the local villagers think about this central government project? What are their expectations of the local building plan? The link between space and power will be the focus of this chapter, namely, how rural spatial order is shaped by and in turn shapes power relations and local governance.

In his study of Xiajia Village in Heilongjiang Province, Yan Yunxiang argues that the changes in rural domestic spatial order that occurred after the death of Mao 'reflect a growing sense of entitlement to individual rights in private life' (Yan, 2003: 139; Yan, 2010). This chapter argues that while spatial transformation underpins many significant changes in rural social, economic and political structures, new forms of space continue to bolster collectivised rather than individualised forms of subjectivity. Needless to say, there is no clear-cut line between the privatisation and collectivisation of rural spatial change. In this chapter, I emphasise the collective subjectivity that the process of spatialisation has brought about.

Bray (2008) has also explored the interrelationships that obtain between the built environment, the government and society in contemporary

China. Drawing upon Foucault's notion of governmentality, he argues that urban planning has become a strategy of government. The government delegates social welfare and security to communities, which, in turn, bring many advantages to the government, such as efficiency, cost-effectiveness and continued attachment to Party activities, despite the breakdown of the *danwei* system. Bray, using two case studies undertaken in Wuhan to illustrate his argument in terms of social impact, shows how spatial governance is a form of disciplinary power that has influenced people's lifestyles, encouraging and promoting community values, social cohesion and a sense of belonging. In his article, Bray (2008) describes how China has developed from workplace to residence governance. He argues that the adoption of this strategy was a result of neoliberalism (that is, the social strategy of 'governing through community', as employed in the United Kingdom), which links the central government to the community. A degree of authoritarianism and coercion persists, wherein governance is a 'top-down' process, and communities perform a largely administrative role as instructed by the central government.[2] This chapter will support this argument and demonstrate the collectivising effect of village spatialisation.

As a micro-space case study, the main body of this chapter is composed of three sections: village public space, domestic/family space and spiritual space, of which the last has shown the most change as a result of Xiaogang's relocation. Suffice it to say that today there is a common quest for privacy and individuality, for, as Yan agues in his book *Private Life under Socialism*, newly modelled houses and the reconfiguration of domestic space have greatly restructured family relations and gender difference. However, during my fieldwork, I found that a collectivised form of subjectivity still persists and that this collective family identity is built into village public and spiritual spaces.

2. The 'master plan'

In 2007, Xiaogang village was designated a Model Village for the XNJ. The local authorities were impressed by the 'master plan' proposed by the village leaders, a plan initiated by the village cadres to win the Model Village competition. Being awarded this recognition would allow the local township to prioritise its development and resource support. During the planning process, the cadres consulted recognised professionals, deliberately designing the village according to the guidelines of the relevant governmental planning regulations and laws. In so doing, they were eligible for both financial and ideological support. In line with the master

plan, the village leadership planned to build new asphalt roads (a total of 1.2 km), public lavatories, canals and sluices, and to dismantle dilapidated houses. Further, the leadership decided to build a new drainage and sewage system, which would link Xiaogang's reservoirs and major rivers with the country's farmlands, a methane supply system[3] and a rubbish collection centre. A decision was taken to install new traffic lights as well. The cadres claimed that they would spare no effort in investing in and supporting infrastructure proposals and plans. They were determined to rebuild the village space and design a nearly brand new built environment.

The master plan, however, was neither unique nor unprecedented. It was a long-term development plan (*guihua*) related to the village image (*mianmao*). I should emphasise here that in 2008, the 'PRC Urban Planning Law' (1990) was replaced by the 'PRC Urban and Rural Planning Law', Article 18 of which clearly indicates that:

> Village planning should be geared to the local needs and conditions, respect the villagers' own wishes and manifest the local character. The plan should cover areas like construction scale, housing, roads, water supply, drainage, electricity supply, rubbish collection, poultry-raising, public facilities and public services.

Xiaogang's master plan was accordingly divided into five sections: the present village layout and its problems; the design outline; the design details; the immediate priorities; and suggestions.[4] It involved the whole 119,200 square metres of land and all of the villagers. This plan was not just paying lip service to the new circumstances. Xiaogang Village planning was a reflection of the strategic national project to transform rural spatial order.

3. Village space and its relocation

According to the former Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, the XNJ should not be interpreted as simply building villages in the literal sense (cited in *People's Daily Onlin*e, 2006a). Rather, the face, appearance and images were also significant dimensions of rebuilding the countryside. What was the typical *old* village? One former cadre from Xiaogang village observed in 2008:

> In old times, in building a house we needed to avoid a lot of taboos and customary restrictions. Generally, we had five restrictions, namely water, wood, earth, road and fire. This meant we never built

> a house facing water (rivers), woods (the crossbeams must not be constructed in the opposite direction of the trees and forests), earth (the corner of another house), roads and fires (e.g. chimneys, kilns). The perfect rule of relations between houses was the Azure Dragon of the East in the left, and the White Tiger of the West in the right, which preferred that the left of a house is gradually higher than the right. What is more, we must not build a house in the shape of a blade (*qie*, signifying cutting), a rake (*tui*, pushing) or an axle (*yao*, shaking), which would spell misfortune, unintended danger and unhappiness. The ideal position of a house was with ponds (not flowing rivers) in the front and mountains at the back. (Wang Xinping, interview, 21 October 2008)

The logic behind traditional village space is linked with the extant understandings of localised tradition relating to geomancy and Confucian and Daoist philosophy. The two key logics, according to my interviewees, are 'village harmony' and 'familial hierarchy': the former can only be achieved by reinforcing the latter. The size, orientation and decoration of a house should not oppose the natural order (Wang Xinping, interview, 22 October 2008). As Ruf (1998: 15) notes, traditional house-building was an attempt to symbolise a 'unity of large, extended patrilineal families', several generations living under the same roof, and the notion that a harmonious family produces prosperity and fortune (*jiahe wanshi xing*).

The recent changes in house-building have not neglected these rural architectural customs, as one can see from Figure 5.1. Before focusing in detail on how these changes have taken place in recent years, I will divide the rural space into three types: public, domestic and spiritual. I will then analyse their manifestations and the changes they have undergone. This categorisation is based on my understanding that in a given village such as Xiaogang, the three most important spatial formations are the public, the domestic and the spiritual. Villagers' practice within these spaces reflects their own understanding of what type of spatiality they respond to, are attached to and prefer.

Generally speaking, the design of rural space is concerned (1) with the location, layout and decoration of a house, and (2) with its relations with other houses in the village. The new Xiaogang is a 'cluster village'[5] located around a central road, which splits the village into two (see Figure 5.1). The village extends from east to west and there are two auxiliary roads pointing to the north and south. Each house is two metres from the next and occupies around 6 *zhang* (approximately

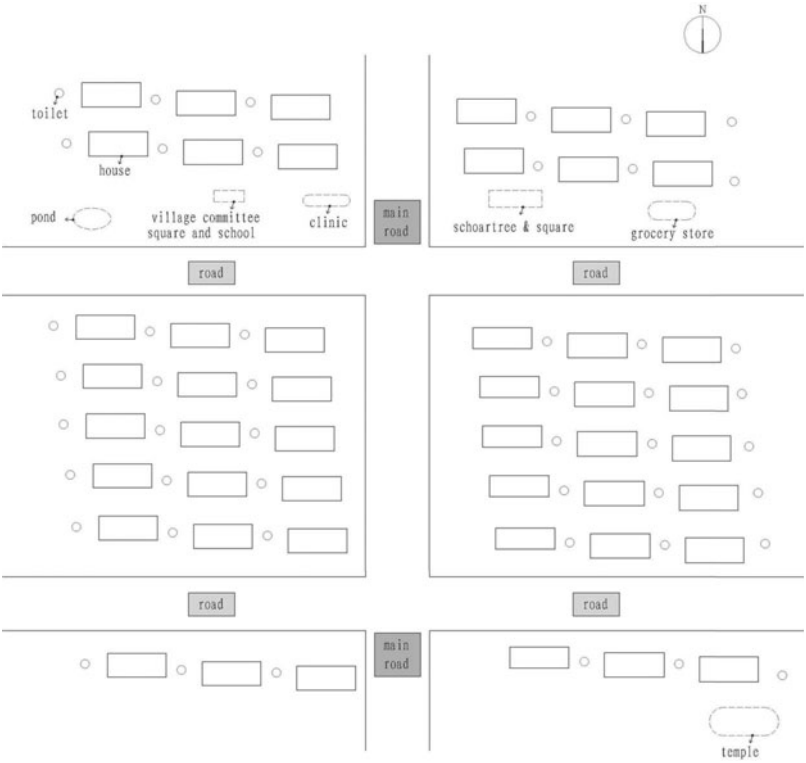

Figure 5.1 The master plan for Xiaogang village[6]

20 metres) from left to right. This design aims to facilitate the governance of village space. By mapping out a clearly spatialised place, the new village is designed to cater to the new rationale of governance, under which power is exercised in a more capillary way. As Friedman, Pickowicz and Selden note: 'Straight lines and squares seemed efficient, modern, socialist' (Friedman et al., 1991: 193).

The village relocation and new design were launched by the central government in February 2006 as part of a major XNJ campaign.[7] The key aims of this national programme were to restructure the Chinese countryside politically, socially and culturally as well as spatially, with the slogan 'advanced production (*shengchan fazhan*), improved livelihood (*shenghuo kuanyu*), civilised social atmosphere (*xiangfeng wenming*), clean and tidy villages (*cunrong zhengjie*) and democratic management

(*guanli minzhu*)'.[8] While this type of government policy was not new in the history of Chinese society, the scale and scope of this particular project was unprecedented. The project clearly stated: 'XNJ is a major historic mission in China's modernisation processes'.[9] It was greater even than projects such as Tao Xingzhi's China Education Improvement Association Programme (1927), the Countryside Reform Association Programme (1932), Yan Yangchu's Civilians' Education Programme in Hebei (1924–1936), Liang Shuming's Countryside Construction Programme in Shandong (1931) or the CCP's Cooperative Movement in the Yan'an era (1935–1948) (Liang, 2006; Selden, 1995; Luo et al., 2008: 1–6). These 'villagisation' (Scott, 1998: 235)[10] projects demonstrate that reform of rural areas has been a long-standing phenomenon in Chinese history, predating the foundation of the People's Republic in 1949. Nonetheless, the abovementioned regional and national projects exerted little influence over Xiaogang Village.

The original Xiaogang Village, according to my interviewees, was built in the Republican Era in the 1920s, when the ancestral hall played a central role in village space as both intra- and extra-familial relations were built around common surnames. As Hsu argues, the ancestral hall, as an other-worldly residence, clearly showed the villagers' 'complete submission to ancestral authorities, on the one hand, and their struggle for and recognition of individual and family superiority on the other' (Hsu, 1948: 55). However, the Land Reform enacted in the early 1950s destroyed this social system. The landlords were suppressed and replaced by the poor and middle-income peasants (see Chapter Two for further detail). In terms of village space, in the past most resources were spent on production rather than on consumption. Thus, there has been little change in village space. In September 1958, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture ordered all the provinces to launch a 'comprehensive programme in all Communes' (Luo et al., 2008: 3). The central slogan was 'militarisation of organisations (*zuzhi junshihua*), militant actions (*xingdong zhandouhua*), and collectivisation of lives (*shenghuo jitihua*)'. In line with this policy, Xiaogang did not permit any kitchens to be built in the new houses. Villagers were required to eat in the common dining hall instead of in private residences. Post 1963, when the central government reconfirmed the significance of agriculture, some new concrete houses were built. In 1964, however, Mao Zedong called for all Chinese villagers to 'learn from Dazhai Village', a call signalling an end to village house-building. As Thaxton (2008: 302) observes, villagisation 'disordered the normal architectural pattern of the household'. From then on, Xiaogang devoted all its resources to agriculture: any new houses

were stigmatised as 'decadent nests of the bourgeoisie' (*zichanjieji de anle wo*). One old villager commented to me: 'Everything was collectivised. Building your own house could only jeopardise your life'.

The 'New Socialist Countryside' movement, one of the primary objectives of China's 11th Five Year Plan (2006–2010), operated in a strikingly different context. It aimed to improve rural people's living standards, narrow the income gap between rural and urban populations,[11] expand domestic consumption and, more importantly, to echo the construction of a harmonious society (*hexie shehui*), a social developmental goal advocated by the then Chinese President Hu Jintao, to be achieved by 2020.

This scenario gave full expression to the requirement for rural economic, political, cultural and social development in the new circumstances in which the central authorities redirected attention and resources to deal with the growing gap between town and country and to the general policy neglect in the rural areas. Currently, efforts and funds are being channelled nationwide into installing rural water conservancy facilities, building roads, expanding the use of clean fuels such as methane and solar energy, building rural power networks and improving rural education, health care and hygiene systems. As Hu Jintao stated in 2007: 'We should shift our focus to infrastructure construction and social development in the rural areas and take further steps to tackle the problems arising for agriculture, farmers and the countryside.'[12]

It is in this context that the new village of Xiaogang was designed according to the consistent standards and requirements of the village master plan. All the houses face southwest and occupy the same acreage. Toilets are located outside the eastern corner of houses in the east and outside the western corner of houses in the west.[13] However, the process of building has not been without controversy and conflict. Tang Zengying, a local female villager, wanted her house to face directly south[14] rather than southwest. Her request was rejected immediately, not only by the cadres but by her fellow villagers as well. The reason was simple; refusing to be standardised interfered with the whole image of the village. For this reason, Tang's proposal met with strong public opposition. In the end, she had little option but to obey.

Zhao Houyou, a builder who also objected to the new arrangement, had already paved a house base in the old place before the whole village decided to move to the new area. The village cadres tried to persuade him to relocate but to no avail. Zhao asked for compensation for the already built base, but the village had limited financial resources and could provide him only with the standard subsidy. Moreover, by criticising his house as damaging too much arable land, the village put

him under considerable pressure. Since arable land protection is a basic national policy, Zhao finally relented.

One noteworthy aspect of this newly built village is that it has no defensive walls. As Bray's criticism of the commentators on Chinese walls shows, the walls within and around the traditional village did not denote a 'hopelessly inward-looking and moribund society, which lives in the past and rejects the possibilities of change' (Bray, 2005: 17–20). Nor did they demonstrate fear of potential enemies. Bray's criticism also applies to John Scarth, John Thomson and Maurice Freedman's observations that the southeastern Chinese village 'was often so formed to constitute a kind of embattled settlement' (Freedman, 1958: 8). Freedman wrote as follows: '[Several walled villages] are rectangular or square in shape, and are enclosed within brick walls about sixteen feet in height, flanked by square towers, and surrounded by a moat some 40 feet in width. They have one entrance protected by iron gates' (cited in Freedman, 1958: 8).[15]

While this militaristic architecture was evident in some areas at the end of 19th century, there are no such walls in the new design of Xiaogang village. Quite to the contrary, there are few visible walls around the village or between the houses. Wall-less villages and houses, however, do not mean that there are no means of defining spatiality. In the new Xiaogang, there are boundaries, which have socially symbolic implications. In most cases, separation is subtly indicated by scattered trees (pines or Chinese parasol trees), clothes lines, paving, hedges or unfenced vegetable gardens. There are some low brick walls with gates, constructed in the main to keep stray dogs and fowl out, and some houses have walls to guard against thieves, possibly indicating recent local problems of deteriorating public security.[16] Exploration and definition of walled villages require a shift in understanding from the physical boundaries to understanding the way in which space is symbolically created by the villagers.

It must be remembered that this newly built village is still influenced by the legacy of the Maoist era. As previous chapters have demonstrated, while power has not receded, the ways in which it is carried out have changed, evidenced in the emergence of a new form of governance via internalisation and interiorisation. However, the location and acreage of the new village, decisions vis-à-vis financial support and the differentiated reward system have combined to cultivate a collectivised version of subjectivity, showing that sovereign power is still influential. Despite the fact that some residents did not want to move out or build their new houses according to the master plan, at the time of the writing of this

book, there were no villagers remaining in the old location. While this cannot be exclusively attributed to the influence of sovereign power, the existence of coercion and the use of political power are clearly demonstrated. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss public space, family space and, finally, spiritual space.

4. Public space and the Grandfather Scholartree

In rural areas of China today, there is no civil society organised in a Western sense.[17] However, public space does exist. In recent decades, this type of space has been steadily and systematically developed. Chinese academia has not only paid attention to the rural tea house (Dai, 2005), to rural civic organisations and their relations with rural self-governance (Wang et al., 2004), rural public space and social control (He, 2008), institutional public space (i.e. village committees) and non-institutional public space (temple festivals, local markets and a variety of popular lunar festivals) (Li and Zhao, 2007) but also addressed the issue of the rural Habermasian public sphere (Zhu, 2005). Most academic articles deal with the social destruction that marked the decollectivisation era, the current rural social atomisation, the political vacuum in the aftermath of the Reform and Opening-up, and the urgency of restoring public space. The state-centred framework is still the dominant analytical tool. Wu (2008) categorises rural public into two spatial forms: the first is structured upon social units and is endogenous and intrinsic; the second is structured upon state authority, which is exogenous and external. In doing so, he urges the reinforcement of the government's role in rural public space. But, by locating the (trans)formations of rural public space in this dichotomy, he devalues or underestimates the heterogeneity of the rural spatial order. I will analyse two Xiaogang village public spaces and avoid the above reductionist argument.

The village has varied social connections and personal communications. When these connections and personal communications have become public and settled, a public space is formed. When the place in which these connections and personal communications happen is set in the form of buildings, a constructed public space is formed. I found two different public spaces in the new Xiaogang in terms of social formation.

The old Villagers' Committee office was located in the northwest of the village, a location higher than the other areas of the village. Thus, it was apparent that the Committee was 'watching over' the whole village spatially. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the period of the People's

Commune, the Committee office was full of political implications, for this was not only the place where villagers gathered to communicate with each other; it was also a place for propagating national policy. It was thus a place with clear political characteristics (Mao, 2000: 143). There is a square in front of the new two-storeyed Villagers' Committee. The entrance to the Committee building is to the east of the square. Entering through the gate, and walking up the steep cement steps, one sees the Committee office, which is spacious and accommodates some 40 people. The side door provides access to the roof. Looking down on the square, one is reminded of scenes of political gatherings in the Maoist era; that is to say, in some ways it resembles a miniature Tian'anmen Square.

The new Committee office marks the centre of the village, from both the perspective of scale and the position of the buildings located in the village. This suggests a manifestation of sovereign power.[18] However, the facts are quite different, for although the square outside the Committee building is large, it attracts few villagers. The pond near the square, which invariably has little water, has been transformed into a rubbish dump. A few villagers frequent the clinic and shop nearby, but people stay here for a short time only. As regards the other areas in the square, they are used for transportation and storage: they are not being fully utilised as public space. The gate of the Committee building is always locked: this building is only used as a place to receive guests on the upper levels. Even when it is open, villagers tend to ignore it, as if it has nothing to do with them.

The square's surface is made of bricks, which makes it different from its surroundings. It is separated from a primary school, which stands opposite by a wall. Around the square, there are a grocery store and a clinic. Thus, it appears that the facilities are well equipped. The Committee building is usually closed, signalling that it is a spatially politicised place. The square and the Committee building are two integral parts of the official space. However, it gives people little sense of homeliness and neighbourliness.

The People's Commune system was based on public ownership and the administrative Villagers' Committee had the dual function of managing agricultural production and administering the village (Mao, 2000: 145–147). Hence, the Committee building was not only the administrative centre of the village but also a place for large-scale gatherings. With the implementation of the Household Responsibility System in 1981, production and administrative organisations were separated in the villages, rendering the household the village's basic production unit.

At the same time, the function of the Committee was weakened, as were the functions of the square and the Committee building. As may be seen from this, specific places have their own specific purposes in a particular period of time. With the disappearance of those purposes, their influence diminishes. In the case of the Committee space, it was transformed into a space which had less impact on the villagers' daily lives.

In contrast, in the northeast, I found another public space, surrounding a scholartree, which is utilised by villagers for daily communication, leisure and gossip.[19] Villagers frequently gather under the tree, which is said to be more than 300 years old. For this reason, it is respectfully referred to as the 'Grandfather Scholartree'. People make an offering niche for the purpose of paying their respects to it. Concomitant with the development of the economy, villagers built a square around the tree, which is located at the intersection of two streets. Around the tree, people have positioned three rows of stone benches in the form of an 'L'. As a result, the square is circled. Villagers often gather here, many lingering for long periods. According to my observations in the summer of 2007, villagers gathered here from around 10:30 in the morning. The elders enjoyed the coolness, and women chatted with each other with their babies in their arms. At noon, it became more crowded: villagers often had their lunch here. Some left around 2:00 p.m., but gathered again at 4:00 p.m. and stayed until dinner time. Owing to the lack of lighting in the square, villagers did not gather here after dark. During the day, they often sat in the shade of the tree, the branches of which extend into the street opposite. Thus, the mental space of the square expands to a space where the villagers sit on stone seats in the opposite street. The unshaded area is less popular with the villagers. In sum, the area under the scholartree has been transformed by the villagers into a public space.

This analysis echoes both the Foucauldian approach employed by MacKinnon (2000) and Murdoch (1997) when studying rural Britain's local–central relations in the Scottish Highlands and the British Rural White Paper issued in 1995. MacKinnon (2000: 298) argues that 'the local state has been restructured through the development of "managerial" technologies designed to realise the objectives of neo-liberal programmes of government'. He further argues that 'managerial technologies' are designed to 'promote local economic competitiveness through deregulation and the attraction of mobile investment' (MacKinnon, 2000: 305). Murdoch (1997: 115) contends that the British Rural White Paper revealed 'how the state now seeks to govern "through communities"'. The administration of rural space in China attests to their arguments. Local Chinese villagers retain their right to self-govern and reinterpret

state policy in the context of the XNJ. However, the contingencies and specificities of the Chinese case need more examination. Although the Villagers' Committee still represents the state, the latter no longer plays a particularly active role in the villagers' lives. This supports MacKinnon's argument that local village dwellers do not passively accept state administration. The deregulation of the village is articulated in the above-mentioned antithesis: the 'Villagers' Committee versus the Grandfather Scholartree'. The former has given way to the indigenous nature of the tree, reconfirming a tendency towards non-political voluntary gathering. In other words, by participating in the public space under this tree, the villagers are reclaiming their own sociality. Murdoch's understanding that the British Rural White Paper signals 'government through communities' can also be found in Xiaogang Village, where the representative of the state, that is, the Village Committee, has gradually lost its former strong influence and mobilisation power. By so arguing, I suggest that the retransformation of the Villagers' Committee space reflects a new form of governance in which Xiaogang villagers have more autonomy to organise and communicate. This argument, however, does not mean that there is a trend towards individualisation, as I will explain below.

5. Domestic/family space and its recent remodelling

The typical traditional house in Xiaogang faced the southwest and consisted of main rooms and side rooms. The houses were usually surrounded by farmland. Within the village, there were ponds, wells and other facilities essential to daily life as well as roads leading out of the village. Figure 5.2 demonstrates, more specifically, the hierarchy of room distribution in traditional rural Chinese society. Usually, the eastern part houses the senior household members while the western and central parts are multi-functional (often as kitchens, hallways, animal pens or temporary storerooms). While it is an oversimplification to say that old Chinese houses had no space division, it is widely accepted that there was no clear demarcation between public and private spaces (Bray, 2009). Compared with British houses, Chinese houses emphasise more an ethos of differential hierarchy (Fei, 1998). The house space allocation encodes the patriarchal Confucian order. Most of the houses in Xiaogang were built like this before the 1990s, a time when some families still lived poverty-stricken lives in old tumbledown thatched cottages with doors made of straw.

In this form of family space, individuality gives way to collectivity and familial hierarchy. The (re)production of collectivised family relationships

in traditional houses has been examined in detail by Francesca Bray (1997: 57–58), David Bray (2005) and Duanfang Lu (2006). For David Bray (2005: 28), 'the most singular feature of traditional family space was the manner in which it demarcated difference within the Confucian family relationships'. The spatial distance and the distribution of rooms are patriarchal, highly gendered and male-dominated, reflecting the ethos of Confucianism. The old village houses in Xiaogang supported these demarcations.

However, in this non-compound form of dwelling, invisibility is impossible, as Figure 5.2 indicates. This is the Chinese version of a Panopticon. In accordance with this type of design, everything is within sight of all the family members. 'The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately' (Foucault, 1979: 200). This is a machine which spares no one, producing a high degree of surveillance and disciplinary power.[20]

This creation of a 'mutual surveillance' system can be traced back to the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE). when Shang Yang divided the population into groups of five to ten households (Lewis, 1990: 61–64). This

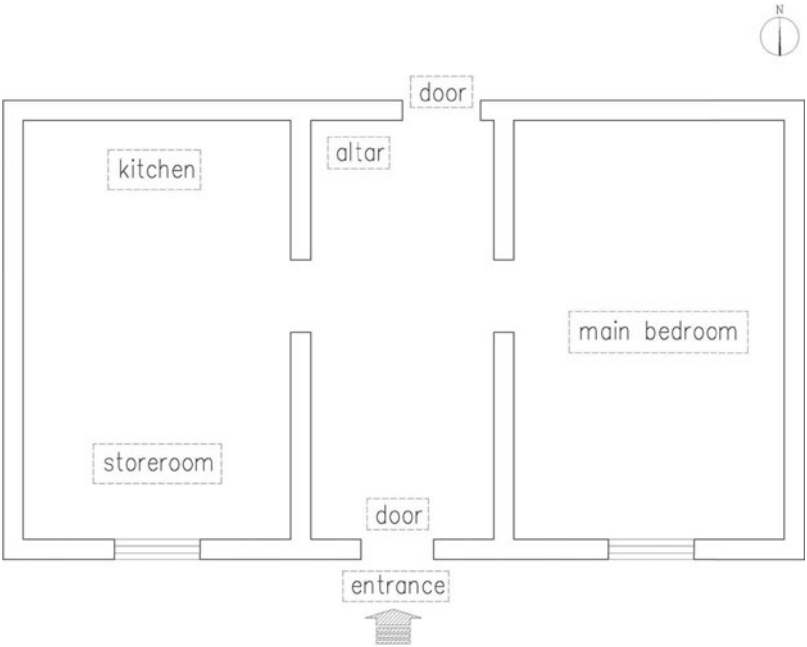

Figure 5.2 A traditional house design in Xiaogang

marked the earliest form of the *Baojia* system, through which disciplinary power, mandated by a sovereign power, was carried out. When the Maoist regime introduced its three-level system (People's Commune/production brigade/production team), there was an inescapable impulse to homogenise the village space. Since everything was politicised, there were few ways to practise individual agency. The government of the family in Mao's time also echoed the Confucian discourse: that the model of the state was more or less analogous to the family (*jia-tianxia*). The difference here is that Mao, by destroying all the intermediary forces, established a direct link between the villagers and himself, thus achieving strong consolidation of his personal absolute and coercive power[21]. This, as Greenhalgh and Winckler (2005: 21) contend, is the difference between Foucault and Mao. They both emphasised the need for institutions to impose discipline and to teach individuals to regulate their own behaviour. However, whereas Foucault advocated some autonomy for both professions and individuals, Mao aspired to an unmediated relationship between himself and the masses (Greenhalgh and Winckler, 2005: 312).

By the 1990s, according to figures released in 2007 by the Statistics Bureau of Anhui Province, per-capita housing space for Anhui farmers had increased to 34.8 square metres from 11.7 square metres in 1980, and brick, wood and reinforced concrete structures came to account for 88 per cent of the total housing space.[22] Likewise, in Xiaogang, houses underwent dramatic changes as new houses sprang up at an almost competitive pace. But were these new houses similar in style and architecture to the previous ones? A comparison between these two family spaces in two different periods is useful to any understanding of how 'new forms jostle with the old, creating complex and contingent assemblages of space, power, meaning and identity' in China (David Bray, personal communication, 2 February 2009).

The striking change concerns matters of individuality and privacy; that is, the increasing differentiation between public space and private space within the house. Habermas (1989: 44) claims that '[t]he privatization of life can be observed in a change in architectural style'. The conclusion he reaches regarding the 17th-century British gentry also applies to Xiaogang Village, which has seen a shrinking of public family life and, as a consequence, an increase in the 'solitarization of the family members' (W. H. Riehl cited in Habermas, 1989: 45). And, as far as architectural style is concerned, today there is more differentiation of function between kitchen, bathroom, living room and storeroom.

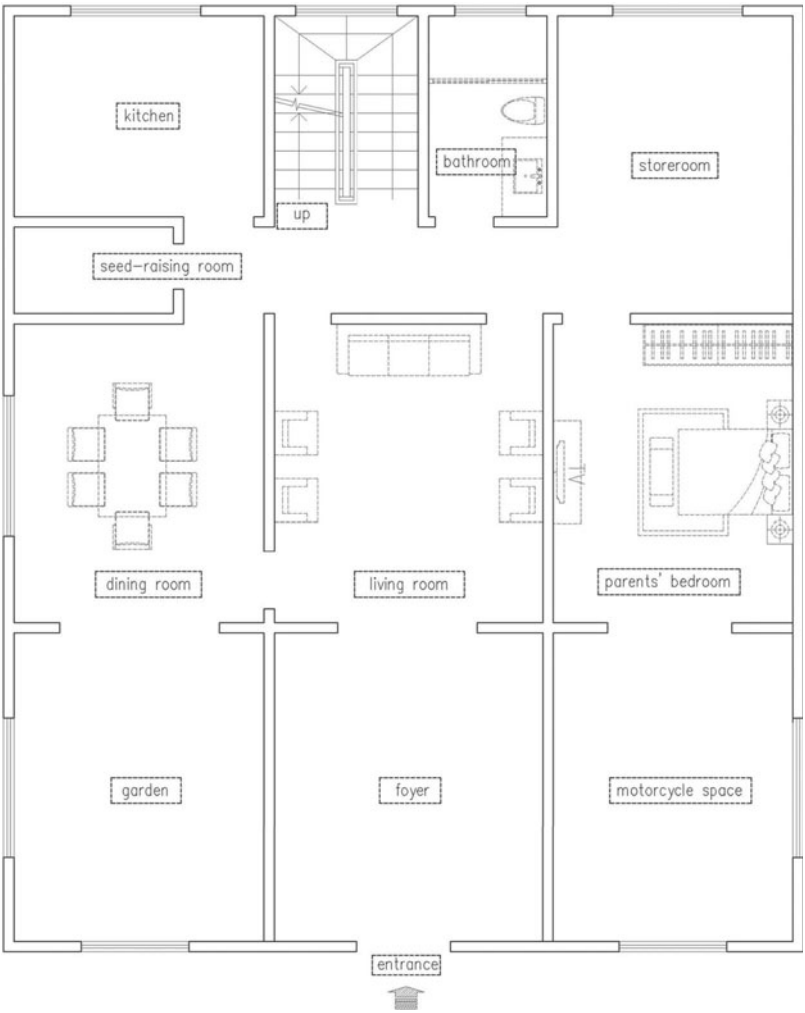

Figure 5.3 Ground floor (Model A)

Specifically, there are two models in the new Xiaogang Village.[23] In Model A (a two-storey house, see Figures 5.3 and 5.4), in relation to habitability, the main consideration is given to dividing clean and dirty places. The front garden, which faces south, is mainly used for agricultural production and living; in the middle are rooms which are regular in size, and the back garden faces north. The building enjoys

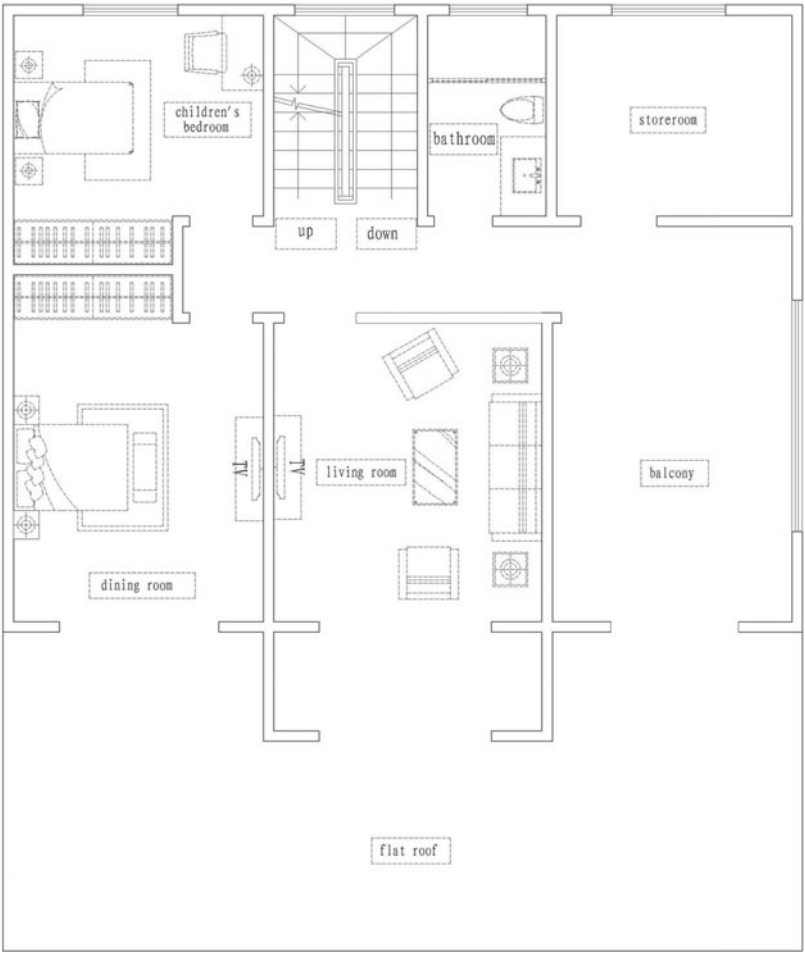

Figure 5.4 First floor (Model A)

plenty of sunlight and good ventilation. As for the division of functions, the public areas are divided into different sections. The house is also designed for water-saving: underground water is utilised, and rainwater is collected for flushing toilets, cleaning floors and irrigation. In addition, the local government promotes an environmentally friendly waste disposal design: waste treatment is divided into three parts, which is helpful for sewage systems. The local government also promotes land conservation: all the buildings in both the front and back gardens are

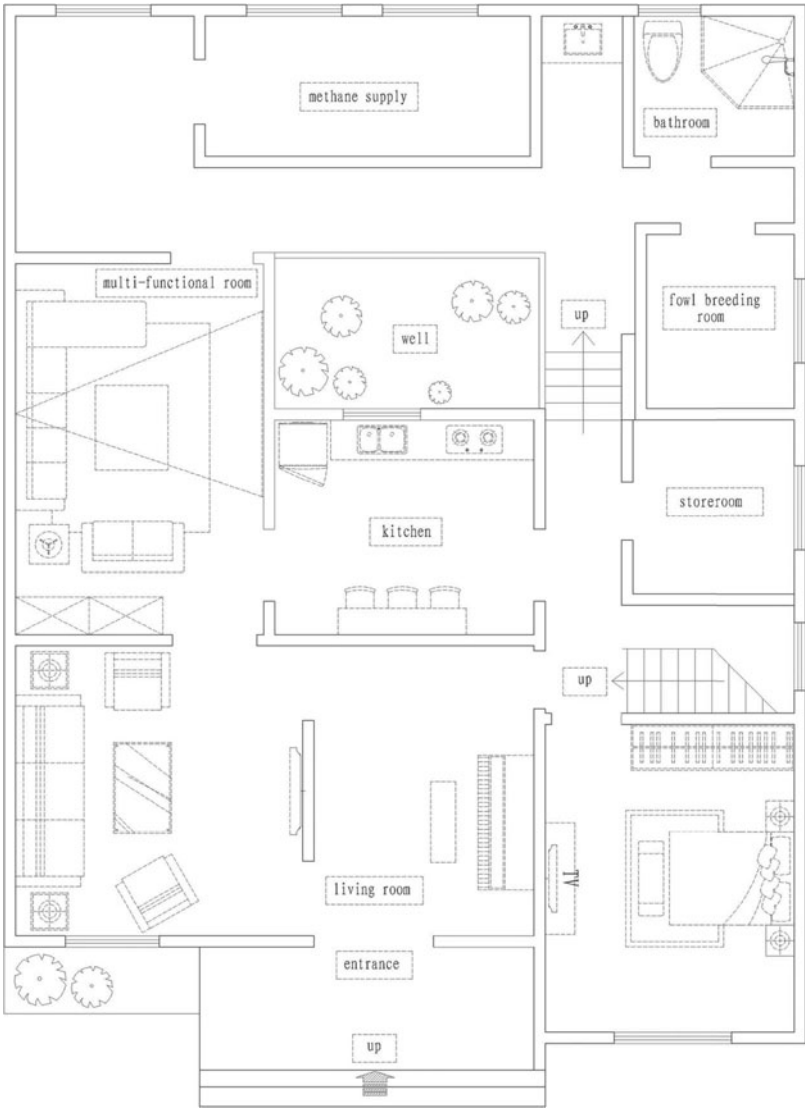

Figure 5.5 Ground floor (Model B)

square and regularly sized. Model A's external size is 157 square metres; the internal size is 140 square metres. In the interests of material-saving, the construction components are used for their functional purpose, representing environmental suitability. The doors and windows are

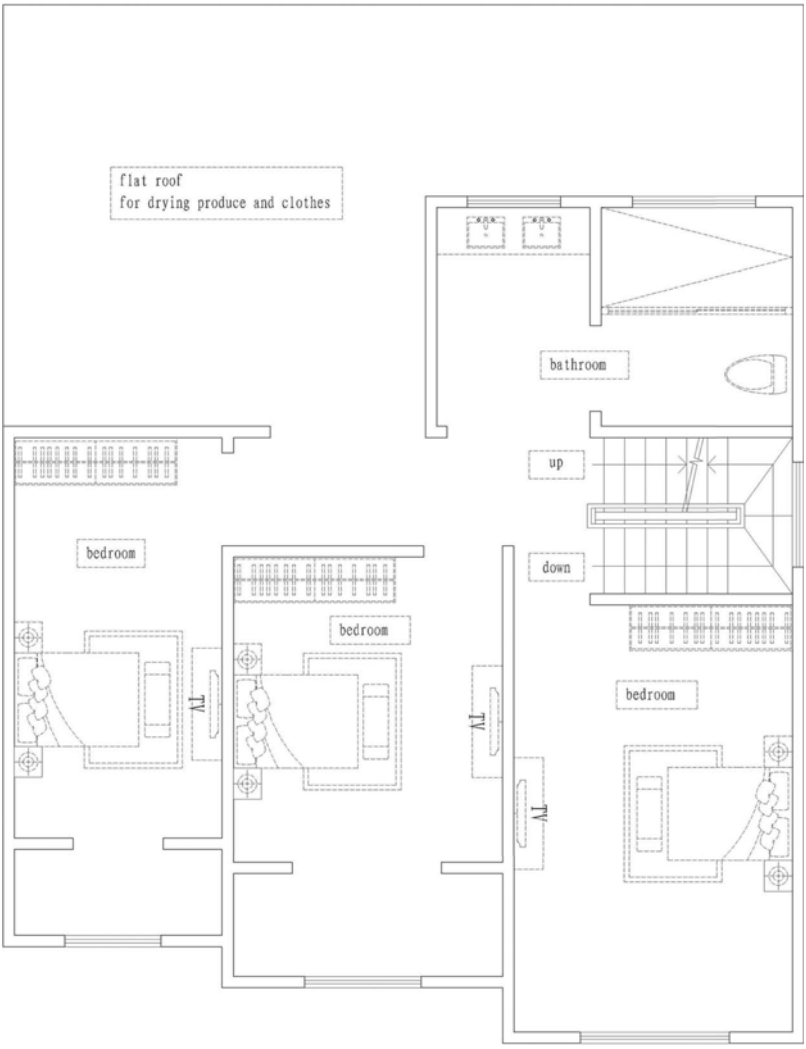

Figure 5.6 First floor (Model B)

made of new, durable lightweight steel. The roof and walls have an insulation layer made of clay and straw. The locals do not opt for decorative materials. Instead, cheap local construction materials are used, such as rubble, bluestone, moso bamboo and straw.

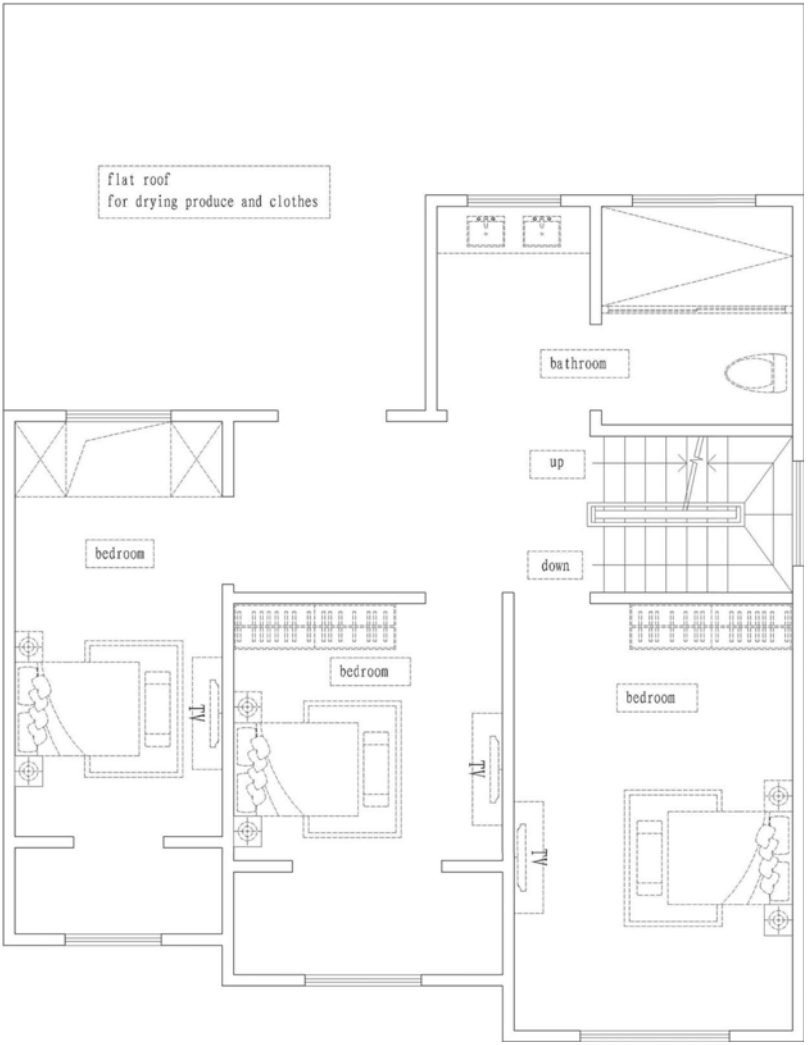

Figure 5.7 Second floor (Model B)

The Model B building (a three-storey house, see Figures 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7) caters to farmers' lifestyles and household size, since it is practical, economic, collective and simple in construction. It can be adapted for different purposes such as sideline agriculture and business. It also has a clear zoning of functions for dynamic and quiet purposes, for clean and

dirty usage, for living space and for livestock. All the rooms enjoy ventilation and sunlight: the central room is spacious and bright. And in the interest of saving energy and protecting the environment, a three-part sewage toilet and solar energy are used. The building totals 178 square metres.

How do villagers use these domestic spaces? The basic function of a house reflects only two activities for the villagers, that is, eating three times per day and sleeping at night (*ritu sancan, yetu yixiu*). Through interviews, I found that, although there has been an obvious change in function divisions, few changes are observable in the villagers' traditional lifestyles. Usually, not all the rooms are used, as most of the villagers work outside the village and come back only during Chinese New Year or to celebrate other lunar festivals. Although they have built new houses, they have not necessarily changed their lifestyle. It should be emphasised here that building this type of house is to a large degree a symbolic contribution to the current wave of spatial change. 'You have to do it even if you cannot afford it. People will sneer at you if you still have a *pingfang* (one-storey house)', a local resident told me. In other words, having a new house is to a greater extent, as Chan, Madsen and Unger conclude (2009: 298–299), a 'symbol of prestige'.

According to the Chinese Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Construction in 2008, China has the largest construction market in the world. Its rural building area increases by one billion square metres each year, nearly half of the world's total. It is estimated that the construction industry will take up 40 per cent of the country's total energy consumption by 2020, becoming the world's largest energy user with an estimated 1.5 trillion yuan spent annually (*People's Daily Online*, 2008). In 2006, approximately 81.62 per cent of Chinese homes were privately owned. This is higher than the proportion in some developed countries, for example the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany, where the rates are below 70 per cent (*People's Daily Online*, 2006b).

What is the driving force behind these spatial changes and house remodelling? As Yan Yunxiang (2003: 123) notes: 'Economic prosperity was certainly one reason that villagers were able to improve their dwellings' (Yan, 2003: 123). But, as he also notes, the spatial changes in his village 'should be understood as part of the transformation of private life, which is characterized by the rise of youth autonomy, the decline of patriarchal power, and at a deeper level, the rising awareness of the individual' (Yan, 2003: 123–124). Suffice it to say that rural domestic changes have given way to more individual freedom and autonomy. Yet, the other side of this new phenomenon is another form of collectivised subjectivity. There

was a high degree of competitiveness behind this building boom. It must be kept in mind that one of the motivations for house-building is the villagers' fear of being labelled as lagging behind the architectural fashion. As one villager told me: 'My son will be wifeless if I do not build a house like this' (Xu Musheng, interview, 24 December 2008). In other words, this building style is an uncritical response to the discourse of modernity. It shows that most villagers, after spending most of their savings, and/or a lot of money from whatever resources were available, have become victims of modernisation in their quest for privacy, modernity and superiority. As Hsu (1948: 40) noted: 'Worldly residences are not so much places to house the individual members in comfort and ease as they are signs of unity and social prestige for the family group as a whole – the dead, the living and the generations to come'.

There is some dissimilarity here from Foucault's research undertaken in certain European countries. While his focus is on the individualisation of Western governmentalities, this is only partially true in my case study. The valorisation of individuals who make their own choices is not applicable to these spatial transformations, as there are still many constraints and limitations. In the larger context, the villagers' right to make their own choices is still highly limited.

6. Spiritual space of villagers' life world

Recent research into the history and geography of villages tends to analyse space in physical terms (the location and form of villages, for example) rather than in spiritual terms (history, culture, etc.). Mayfair Yang's study is one of the few to pay attention to this topic (Yang, 2007; 2008). According to Yang:

> [U]nlike India and Africa, whose experiences have led to most of post-colonial theory, China was never fully colonized by the modern West, but was itself an ancient empire, albeit a tottering and exhausted one in the nineteenth century; the 1919 May Fourth Movement destroyed all traditional values, and the relevant institutions and practices as well, and shifted to modernity schemata whole-heartedly. (Yang, personal communication, 2007b)

Yang refers to this process as 'the most radical secularization and systematic destruction of religious life and material culture in the world' (Yang, 2007b). In relation to the revival of religion in China, Yang puts forward the concept of 'ritual governmentality', which refers to a gentle mode

of power that does not resort to belief or force (Yang, 2007b). 'The ritual performer does not need to *believe* in what the rituals are teaching, but the very performance of the ritual is a bodily *enactment* of it, and with time, these enactments create certain moral dispositions and habit-uses' (Yang, personal communication, 2007b, original emphasis). One of ritual governmentality's functions is to act as a check on sovereign power. Xiaogang's spiritual space is one such kind of ritual power.

For a long time, the village of Xiaogang has been a community connected by consanguinity. As Fei wrote in the 1940s:

> The social status determined by consanguinity cannot be chosen by individuals: consanguinity is a stable strength. In a stable society, one's geographic location depends on consanguinity. The saying 'I was born here and I will die here' has stabilised the fate between people and place. The proximity in space is a reflection of consanguinity: we knew the social status by orientation [–] the left is superior to the right, the south to the north [–] and this stands for consanguinity. (Fei, 1998: 72)

Besides the concept of spaces reflected in consanguinity, there are three types of spiritual space among villagers: (1) the Human World (*renjian*), (2) the surrealistic Afterlife World (*yinjian*) and (3) Heaven (*tianting*). It is in these places that humans, gods and deities co-exist. I will now explain the complexities surrounding these three spaces.

(1) **The Human World** is the abode of human beings. According to Li Rupei (interview, 11 November 2008), it is also a place for gods and ghosts. Gods do kind things for human beings, while ghosts do bad things. So, human beings pay tribute to the gods in return for their blessing. In addition, they will do things to comfort ghosts in order to prevent them from making trouble. Hence, praying to the gods is an important part of the villagers' life in Xiaogang.
(2) **The Afterlife World** is for ghosts and deities. People die and some become ghosts. But first they will be judged by Yan Wang (the lord of death, the ruler of the Afterlife World). They will be sent either to hell or to the secular world according to their deeds before death. Ghosts stand for evil. After a family member dies, he or she could be transformed into a ghost and cause trouble. This is one of the reasons why paying tribute to ancestors is important.
(3) **Heaven** is the abode of gods and goddesses. The characteristics of gods and goddesses represent the kindest found in human beings:

> these gods and goddesses come to the secular world to benefit the villagers. They are omniscient and omnipotent; they can grant people blessings and solve difficulties for people (Li Rupei, interview, 11 November 2008).

The burial ground in Xiaogang is another spiritual space. According to traditional principles, 'the most honoured is to be placed in the middle' (*juzhong weizun*), the honourable and the humble should be differentiated from each other (*zhangyou youxu*), and elders and their male successors should be arranged in due order in the sequence. The most influential person has his or her tomb located on the geomantic axial line of the tomb area, as are the family shrine and the altar.

As can be seen from the above, Xiaogang's spiritual space had its genesis in the villagers' perceptions about the different levels of afterlife. It is through this understanding that they construct, constitute and consolidate themselves in the surroundings in which they live. These rebuilt, renovated or re-presented spiritual spaces are further forms of collective subjectivity through which the villagers become connected to a shared spiritual world. Through them, villagers establish a link with the past; in this way, a collective subjectivity is formed.

7. Conclusion

The sovereign power of the state is still manifest in Xiaogang when it comes to where and how the village should be relocated. However, other forms of disciplinary power, often more subtle, are built into the material/social fabric of the village. As MacKinnon (2000: 299–300) observes: 'While individuals are indeed constituted through the effects of social forces, this does not preclude them from intervening creatively to transform social structures'. From this quote, it may be contended that the XNJ is the 'empowerment of strong self-reliant communities and the covert withdrawal of the state' (Murdoch, 1997: 117). In Xiaogang Village, however, the state does not withdraw: it simply redraws. It still maintains or attempts to maintain its legitimacy by cultivating a new spirit of citizenship, by building new types of village and creating new ways of life (see Hoffman, 2003). Although the XNJ claims a restructuring of the countryside and aims to reorganise the spatial order of Chinese villages in general, the project drew an unintended response from the villagers, a response that was closely related to the villagers' desire for self-image, marriage opportunities and a broad social presence in the village at large.

This chapter also draws attention to the understanding of neo-liberalism. While there is considerable debate surrounding the applicability of the concept of neoliberalism in China,[24] I contend that the marketisation of rural space has dramatically remade China's rural societies, unpacked the concentration of state power, and unravelled the previous all-embracing structure of Mao's governmentality.

The villagers were supposedly individualised by the implementation of the Household Responsibility System. But this does not mean they are autonomous. While on the one hand, in an economic sense, the villagers are much more individualised, on the other, in terms of their lifestyles and the design of their houses, there is still a high level of conformity. There is a homogeneous and faceless collective form of 'the farmer', who constitutes rural China and who is operated on by the discourse of modernisation.

Conclusion

In the previous five chapters, I have examined the history of Xiaogang Village, charting the road it has traversed from Land Reform, collectivisation and the cooperation projects of the 1990s to its new spatialisation in the early 2000s. I have opted not to use the state–society dichotomy framework in my analysis and have instead employed a bottom-up Foucauldian genealogical approach. I have stressed that the binary opposition of state vs. society has tended to simplify the complicated relations in the political hierarchy and has paid insufficient attention to the horizontal relationships at grassroots level. The state vs. society approach places too much emphasis on 'structuralism', which understands society as a seamless or neat entity, and 'functionalism', which offers a set of pre-ordained theories centred on a teleological framework focused on the maintenance of social and political stability. In critiquing these approaches, this book develops an alternative way to understand key transformations in a rural village.

By tracing the particular form of rural cooperation in Xiaogang Village, I have articulated a trajectory of rural governmentality across different social stages. I argue that there was an emergence of disciplinary power at the end of Maoist era; sovereign power, however, has not receded in the post-Maoist era. The juxtaposition of these two types of power is embedded in a variety of village cooperation projects since the 1990s. In this chapter, I reconfirm this core argument. In doing so, I extend beyond this particular case study into the broader context in which the village is embedded.

1. Collectivisation in Xiaogang

Moore argues that:

> The Chinese village, the basic cell of rural society in China as elsewhere, evidently lacked cohesiveness in comparison with those of

> India, Japan, and even many parts of Europe. There were far fewer occasions on which numerous members of the village cooperated in a common task in a way that creates the habits and sentiments of solidarity. (Moore, 1993: 208)[1]

This is a valid statement in relation to Xiaogang before 1949. In Chapter 1, I argued that throughout the late Qing, the Republican era, the anti-Japanese War and the 'Liberation War', the village's remoteness and poverty exemplified the key features of amoral familism, which continues to exert an influence over Xiaogang today. Following the changes in the grassroots social structure during the People's Commune period, production brigades and teams manifested a high degree of homogeneity, which could be more easily coordinated and regulated in contrast to heterogeneity: it completely negated farmers' agency. During this period, Foucauldian bio-politicisation coincided with the increasing politicisation of villagers' bodies and lives. Villagers were heavily scrutinised by the local government and society during the Maoist era. Under this regime, the countryside became a key site of nation-building, and in many respects the mobilisation of villagers was seen as emblematic of the rise of a new nation itself.

The aftermath of the founding of the PRC has seen China's villagers – in both body and soul – impelled into the arena of political struggle. The process of Land Reform and its subsequent communalisation signified a clear distinction between man as a living being and man as a political subject. This distinction was signalled in the re-dividing of land, new *chengfen* classification and collectivisation. Out of this revolutionising structure, new forms of villager subjectification and resistance emerged.

2. Emergence of new cooperation

In Chapter 3, I contended that while decollectivisation is often interpreted as the second 'liberation' of Chinese farmers, new power structures emerged to replace those of the collective and the Commune. The sovereign and disciplinary power enacted by the local cadres, through their roles as *both* representatives of the CCP-led state *and* local managers of the collective economy, has been gradually receding through the dismantling of the People's Commune, the institutionalisation of the HRS and the implementation of village self-governance. Concomitant with this has been a growing sense of societal openness and heterogeneity. As a result, the various components of decentralisation mean that cadres are increasingly incapable of mobilising villagers

for state-sanctioned activities. As regards Xiaogang villagers, they were never entirely passive subjects within the complex relationships of local power. The implementation of the XNJ, together with various other cooperative undertakings, shows that villagers have always been engaged in trying to re-shape village economic and political activities.

Recent village restructuring projects have also resulted in the emergence of a new type of local tough or bully (Li, 2002: 90), who coerces villagers with violence, makes compulsory demands and generally oppresses the villagers. In many ways these local toughs illustrate the extent to which the ethical constraints of socialist discourse and the political constraints of CCP authority have fallen away under decollectivisation. But, parallel to the coercive power of the local bully, there is another form of power in post-collectivist Xiaogang, namely pastoral power, which I analysed in Chapter 4. Xiaogang's Party secretary from 2004 to 2009, the late Shen Hao, exemplified a form of dedication to the development of Xiaogang and its inhabitants, which was the very antithesis of the methods adopted by the local toughs. The collectivist orientation of this form of pastoral power in time became a common tactic used by local government agents within most village social and political activities. I reconfirmed this argument in Chapter 5, where I also showed that the new form of spatialisation continuously bolsters this form of collectivising subjectivity.

The conflict between Yan Hongchang and Yan Junchang adds one more dimension to village power relations. Yan Junchang claimed that he would not do anything to impede the development of the village, but he made it clear that the village had to develop industry so that he could gain profit. Yan Junchang, however, seemed totally unaware of this. While he may have known that industry would benefit the village, he did not see such benefit accruing to himself either immediately or in the foreseeable future. The above scenarios – encompassing naked coercive power, pastoral power and economic self-interest – exemplify the fact that a nuanced hybridity of governmentalities (Sigley, 2006: 504) now exists within the social and political fabric of Xiaogang, as it does within China as a whole.

3. Bringing Foucault back: a new collectivity?

Foucault (1982) seeks to convey the notion that power is not a substance but a certain type of relation between individuals or groups, that power needs to be defined in terms of actions. Largely in response to his critics, he labels this project not an investigation of power but an investigation

into the way in which human beings become subjects or take on subjectivities. If one applies his analysis to China, his efforts to discredit the prevailing conception of power as negative and prohibiting may be seen as an attempt to redirect analyses of power relations in China from conceptions of a coercive state entity to more complex notions of individual power relations and self-regulation.

Foucault leans heavily on a number of theoretical conceptions, the most closely relevant to the Chinese case being his conceptions of pastoral power and the creation of subjectivities, especially as they are defined in relation to others. As I suggested in Chapter 4, he describes pastoralism as a type of power which seeks to govern through ethical guidance and individual self-reflection and through this it enables and bolsters the emergence of a new form of individual subjectivity.

Taking into consideration all of the above, my book deals in the main with the general shifts in economic and political policy that have impacted upon a wide array of socio-economic issues appertaining to the character of Xiaogang Village. How has Xiaogang coped with the transition from a collectivised economy to a 'socialist market economy'? While the policy initiatives of the Party-state have attempted to shape and direct development, the limitations of the 'reach of the state' are also revealed. Village development is often only as good as the cadres who take command. In this regard, I emphasise how the policy of 'village self-governance' really means a limited form of governance within the confines of what the Party-state will permit; so, in this sense, while the Party's policy on Chinese countryside in effect mobilised the enthusiasm of the masses, it was also a form of pastoral power in its own right. The township government and Party authorities can and do interfere whenever they see fit.

As regards the overall theme of the village governmentalisation, or what one might call the 'urbanisation' of rural China, I demonstrate that the now seemingly vast capacity of the Party-state has, through the medium of its New Socialist Countryside project, shifted its attention from urban construction to village construction in an effort to modernise the countryside. I analyse the spatial effects of this policy on the construction of a new village and the resultant complex interaction between the villagers and the Party-state.

I also analyse bio-politicisation's and pastoral power's trajectory throughout the village's historical development, with an emphasis on the hybridity of governmentalisation in Xiaogang. Future studies would do well to place more emphasis upon the consequences of the latest round of these change processes.

Although I place emphasis in this book upon the history of power relations in Xiaogang Village, I must confess that one of the limits of my study when applying the Foucauldian approach is that I did not further my study of the form of subjectivity of Chinese farmers. This is partly because my study of power relationships in a Chinese village obviously involves a very different context from that which Foucault examined in certain European countries. While his focus was on the individualisation of subjectivities under Western processes of governmentalisation, the focus of my study is a little different. Individual subjectivities have only partially emerged in Xiaogang, as there are still many social and collective constraints and limitations. In the larger context, the villagers' right to make their own choices is still highly limited.

Notes on Conversion of Measures

1. 1 catty *(jin)* = 0.5 kilograms
2. 1 picul (*dan*) = 100 catties = 50 kilograms
3. 1 *dou* = 15 catties
4. 1 *li* = 0.5 kilometres ≈ 0.3 miles
5. 1 *mu* ≈ 0.167 acre ≈ 0.067 hectare
6. 1 *chi* ≈ 3.3 metres
7. 1 z*hang* = 10 *chi*
8. 1 Chinese yuan ≈ USD0.125*

Note on Romanisation

I use *pinyin*, a system for romanising Chinese ideograms, to represent transliterated Chinese terms throughout this book, except in cases where the Wade-Giles term is more familiar, for example, Chiang Kai-shek or Y. C. James Yen.

Notes

Introduction

1. There is obviously some diffusion of these two types. What I include here is descriptive.
2. 'What is very striking in Bentham's text is the importance attributed to dissuasion. "It is necessary for the inmate", he writes, "to be constantly under the eyes of an inspector; this prevents the capacity of any wrong doing, even the wish to commit wrong"' (Foucault, 1996: 232). This observing gaze is an efficient way to govern the soul.
3. Such as spatialising, timing, observing, internalising, mobilising, hierarchising, supervising, rewarding, individualising, normalising, homogenising, excluding, differentiating and comparing (See Nick, 2000, 61–62).
4. For example, the statement 'peasants cannot organise themselves; they must be organised'; has this been true of Chinese farmers, who thought of themselves as an atomised entity?
5. It was illegal until the full institutionalisation of the Household Responsibility System.
6. Gao Mobo believes the story was fabricated by the Chinese government. I think it is just because of these fabrications and the subsequent real investment and propaganda, that the visibility and legibility of the power of the state could be verified and investigated (He, 2008).

1 Land Reform and Its Implications

1. Anderson states: 'In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined' (Anderson, 1991: 6). The CCP-led government constantly adapted its practices to different situations to maintain its legitimacy.
2. No reference was made to the 12th cadre.
3. As early as 11 February 1948, Mao Zedong had indicated that the '*chengfen* only' theory was against the essence of the Land Reform (Mao, 1960: 1175–1177). But his instructions were not carried out strictly in Fengyang.
4. Land was saleable in the aftermath of the Land Reform and before the process of communalisation.

2 Collectivisation and Village Reconstruction

1. Party officials who were opposed to or were suspected of being opposed to joining the collectivisation effort were also punished. In Fengyang alone,

4,362 Party cadres were investigated, 22 died under interrogation and 166 were sent to labour camps. They were labelled 'rightists' (Becker, 1996: 55).
2. One example is the 'paternalist terror' in the campaign to suppress counter-revolutionaries in 1950–1953 (see Strass, 2002).

3 Village Reform and Its Aftermath

1. The statistics show a 21 per cent increase in grain output and 60 per cent rise in per capita income in 1976 over the previous year. This is a question for further investigation.
2. This included lending, subcontracting, renting and exchanging (Xiao, 2003: 13–14).
3. Similarly, Shi Tianjian (1999) discovered that 28 of the 30 village cadres who he surveyed were against election reform.
4. Bray's works are based on his fieldwork in urban China, but I deem it applicable in Xiaogang as, during the writing of this book, urbanisation in China has steadily extended to the countryside. I will address this in detail in Chapter 5.
5. Changjiang Village, a relatively rich village located in Jiangsu Province is officially Xiaogang's 'friendship village' – part of a government-led project aiming to help villages to help each other. In this case, Changjiang was encouraged to help Xiaogang in economic development and community building.
6. A woman would carry on a clandestine love affair subsequent to the following conditions: first, the husband had low social status (for example, he became a village member by marrying a woman who lived there, i.e. by uxorilocal residence, in which case, he might be marginalised by the village); second, the husband worked outside the village for long periods (as a migrant worker), so the couple did not have a regular family life.
7. My interview with Yu Quanhe was declined by his office at the time of writing this book.
8. For instance, I found that Wang Jiahua, a Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) member of Anhui Province and Board Chairman of the Tongli Group, Chuzhou City, was also the honorary Village Head of Xiaogang, signalling his prestigious standing in the eyes of the local society.
9. See also Cao (2003).

4 Cooperation, Industrialisation and Power Relations

1. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Changjiang Village, a relatively rich village located in Jiangsu Province, was designated by the local government to support Xiaogang's development.
2. A seal is an important tool that officially authorises any decisions made by the Cooperative. It is a symbol of power.
3. While I was talking to Yan Hongchang on 12 November 2007, Chinese Central TV (Channel 2) was giving a report on Xiaogang's mushroom economy as well as its splendid reputation. This was in sharp contrast to Guan Youshen's complaints about the low price of mushrooms.

4. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Land Contract in Rural Areas came into force on 1 March 2003. It is stipulated in Article 20 that the contracting period is 30 years for land, 30 to 50 years for grassland and 30 to 70 years for forest land. As for special forest land, the contracting period could be extended with the approval of the relevant authorities.
5. My interviews (2010) show that at the time there were 50 villagers regularly working away from the village, accounting for 12 per cent of the population.
6. Luo (2005) reached the same conclusion regarding his rural irrigation resource research.
7. One of Yan Hongchang's sons, Yan Yushan, founded the Shanghai Xiaogang Greening Company Ltd in 2000 and the Shanghai Xiaogang People's Industry and Trade Company in June 2003 (Xu, 2004).
8. Similar survey results are found in Bai (2009: 141–154).

5 Village Spatial Order and Its Implications for Cooperation

1. A short version of this chapter is published in *International Journal of China Studies* (Vol. 4, No. 2, August 2013, pp. 257–280), which is titled 'Village Spatial Order and Its Transformations in an Anhui Village'.
2. This echoes Tomba's (2005) research in Beijing, which suggests that while housing reform seems to allow greater property and consumer rights, progress is slow and piecemeal due to the existing old structures and social control. Similar research findings can be found in Zuo (2010), Abramson (2011), Leaf (2011) and Shieh (2011).
3. Under the 'National Rural Methane Project', the number of households with a methane supply will increase by 23 million in 2010 from 22.6 million at the end of 2006. This project is to promote the use of methane pits to process rural organic waste and provide clean energy (*People's Daily Online*, 2006a).
4. Local building brochure entitled: *The Building and Designing of Xiaogang Village*, October 2007.
5. Basically, there are three types of village space, namely the 'linear hamlet' or 'string village', which circles a local town; the 'cluster village', 'round village' or 'walled village', which extends along rivers, lakes, creeks or roads; and the 'tessellated village', which is scattered between village ponds, open land and factories. See Cheng et al., 2001.
6. This layout partly verifies what the above quote has described.
7. Since the 1990s there has been a variety of rural programmes, laws, projects, schemes and regulations, such as the Organic Law on Village Committees (trialled in 1988, revised in 1998), the Care For Girls campaign (2000), a new Rural Cooperative Medical Care System (2007), the Nationwide Rural Subsistence Allowance System (2007), the Fertile Soil Engineering Construction Scheme (2007), the Hundred Modern Villages Project (2007), the six Documents on Three Rural issues from 2004 to 2009, the Law on Farmers' Professional Cooperatives (2007), the Returning Cropland to Forests Project (trialled in 1999 and fully implemented in 2002) and the National Rural Methane Project (2008), to name just a few. Many supplementary and complementary measures were also put in place to support these

government-led projects. In 2005, the Chinese government abolished the 2,600-year-old agriculture tax system; in 2007, it undertook to provide free compulsory schooling to all rural children for nine years. On 31 January 2010, China's state-run Xinhua news agency published a new central policy, which vowed to strengthen financial support and provide more resources to rural areas (See: Issues on Strengthening the Efforts of Urban-Rural Coordinative Development and Further Consolidating the Basis of Agriculture and Rural Development) (中共中央、国务院关于加大统筹城乡发展力度，进一步夯实农业农村发展基础的若干意见). The key feature of the ongoing XNJ is that it is the most comprehensive and systematic governmental endeavour ever undertaken. The rationale behind the current policies and programmes is not only to tackle the problems themselves, but also to deal with them in a precautionary way. Also, 'XNJ is not new in terms of rural policy implementation and evaluation *per se*, but it has introduced a new dynamic into these processes' (Ahlers and Schubert, 2009).

8. 中共中央国务院关于推进社会主义新农村建设的若干意见 (Several Suggestions Concerning the Promotion of Building a New Socialist Countryside), 2006.
9. The Fifth Plenary Session of the CCP's 16th Central Committee, October 2005, *The Proposal of the CCP Central Committee for Formulating the 11th Five-Year Plan (2001-2005) for National Economic and Social Development*.
10. 'Villagisation' is a term coined by James Scott and connotates rural reconstruction projects orchestrated by the state.
11. The income gap between the rural and the urban populations has widened from 2.57:1 in 1978 to 3.30:1 in 2006.
12. 'Chinese President Underscores Efforts to Raise Farmers' Income', 2007, www. news.cn, accessed 10 May 2009.
13. In the old village, all the toilets were open and simply constructed using mud brick or flagstones. In the 1990s, a national campaign on toilets and sanitation, initiated by the Chinese government on the basis of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), was introduced in Xiaogang Village. In line with this programme, Xiaogang villagers began to build a new type of double-urn latrine. For each toilet installed, they were awarded 50 yuan. Starting from 2006, the Xiaogang Village Committee, supported by the Patriotic Health Campaign, decided to fund more toilet-building. The Patriotic Health Campaign was founded in the 1950s, when Mao Zedong initiated a programme to 'fight against the bacteria war'. Local cadre Zhang Housheng told me that 'to keep a clean environment is an important element of XNJ'. In his understanding, having a clean toilet is related not only to personal hygiene, but, more importantly, to public health and cleanliness.
14. Why did this lady prefer this orientation? Apparently, Tang Zengying wanted to challenge two taboos. First, as an old villager told me, in traditional China, only the emperor has the authority to face 'directly south', which has connotations of absolute power and imperial superiority. Even though imperial China has collapsed, Xiaogang still acknowledges this tradition. Second, 'direct south' symbolises 'Fire', which melts 'Metal' according to the Chinese Five Elements (*wuxing*) theory. It is therefore believed that building a house facing south could result in the owner losing money (the metal element).
15. Scarth and Thomson's views originated 1860 and 1875, respectively.

16. I saw one rich family home in Xiaogang surrounded by high walls. But this was atypical within this area.
17. By this I mean that there is no intermediary force which could establish an independent organisation that exercises a 'check and balance' influence over the CCP-led government. Take the Villages Self-Governance Committee as an example. Although the Committee has had more say in recent years, it is still under the 'guidance' or 'gaze' of the local government. There is also no opposition party in the village elections, as discussed in Chapter 4, Section 3.
18. However, this does not mean that it needs to be physically located in the village centre.
19. Other important public spaces are the village alleys. As Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa (cited in Ma, 1997: 46) observes, the alley, which is between private and public space, between dwelling and community space, has the function of transportation and is also the space for life; so, it is an uncertain and vague space. Alleys in Xiaogang are like networks that illustrate where villagers live. They are public spaces where villagers can communicate and relax.
20. It should be noted that few new houses were built during the Maoist era. Those that were built followed the traditional models.
21. While I agree that there were many complicated administrative structures linking Mao and the people, these structures were more or less orchestrated by the incarnation of different mini-Maos.
22. Source: local archive office, 10 October, 2008, Fengyang County. On a national level, per-capita housing space was 22.2 square metres, of which rural space was 25 (Luo et al., 2008: 6).
23. Local building brochure entitled: *The Building and Designing of Xiaogang Village,* October 2007. See also China Rural Technology Development Centre, 2007: 84–86.
24. One of the criticisms of employing neoliberal governmentality in rural China has centred on the lack of support and resources from the government. In other words, governmentality in this area is weak and unsystematic. Judging from the urban–rural gap in terms of official development level and degree of prosperity, as defined by the central government and statistics bureaus, this is a verifiable conclusion. However, in the case of Xiaogang, it is simplistic to restrict governmentality to the urban area. Because the village is acting as a 'model' for the XNJ, it is a vehicle through which this new form of governmentality can be carried out. In the process, new forms of collective subjectivity are being made.

Conclusion

1. The argument has been challenged by many scholars (e.g. Pei, 1998).

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