ORIGINALNI NAUČNI ČLANAK UDC 930.85(510)" 1958/1978"

Vesna Vučinić-Nešković

Odeljenje za etnologiju i antropologiju
Filozofski fakultet
Univerzitet u Beogradu
vvucinic@f.bg.ac.rs

Organization of Time in the Chinese Countryside: Labor, Rhythms and Gender in the Later Maoist Period (1958-1978)*

Abstract: This paper deals with the question of how the state policies during the later Maoist period, from the beginning of the Great Leap Forward (1958) to the introduction of the Modernization Reforms (1978), affected the organization of time in the Chinese countryside. After abandoning the initial Soviet model of modernization, based on the exclusive strengthening of heavy industry, the China's leadership developed a strategy of parallel development of agriculture and industry, wherein the former would additionally support the modernization of the latter. The study is focused on the ways the longer term state plans and shorter term economic, social and ideological policies and campaigns jointly influenced the rhythms of life of Chinese peasants. The domains in which these influences became visible were: (1) the intensification of agricultural practices, (2) the introducing of the small-scale industry, and (3) the politicizing of the spare time. In the analysis the characteristic rhythms of work and rest within the daily, weekly, seasonal, and annual time spans are followed in detail.

Key Words: time, countryside, industrialization, work rhythms, Maoism, China

Introduction

Even though considerable scholarship has been devoted to the study of economic development of China during the Maoist period,[1] as well as to the

* This paper is a product of work on the project financed by the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia (no. 147035). I would like to express gratitude to my Chinese informants for their patience as well as to Prof. Ezra Vogel of Harvard University for his critical comments on the early version of this paper.

[1] There is extensive literature on Mao Zedong. Among other texts on Mao and Maoism, see: Teiwes 2010.

specificities of its rural development, a study exclusively devoted to the influences the state plans and policies had on the daily rhythms of Chinese peasants has not yet appeared. I therefore decided to try to collect the data from the Western anthropological and sociological studies in which the daily routines were described, as well as to use the rural statistical data about demography, labor and production units.[2] This data has been complemented by the information I gathered by conducting interviews with my Chinese colleagues, who themselves experienced the life in the countryside as youth, and were at the time of my initial interest for this topic, studying at Harvard University. Considering the size of Chinese territory and the diversity of regional and local situations (including natural resources, ecological circumstances, degree of development, etc.), I was not in a position to generalize, but only attempt to determine a more or less typical/average picture, based on descriptions from different parts of the country, determined either by the possibility of doing research by the respective authors or by the random origin of my respondents.

The paper will examine the situation in the period from the beginning of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, [3] to the Modernization Reforms,[4] initiated by

[2] It is worth noting that the studies of rural Chinese society during the Maoist period waned towards the end of 1980s, the reason being that by that time (which was ten years after the reforms of 1978) all the data collected through fieldwork in "communist China" had already found its place in scholarly publications. By the early 1990s, the China specialists became so fascinated with the changes in "reformed China", that most of them, abandoned the study of the previous epoch, leaving it only as a contrasting reference for the phenomena and processes characteristic of the "new China". The gap between the "two Chinas", old and new, has been bridged in different ways. One was via sociological and anthropological restudies of the regions and communities initially analyzed in the Mao era, published as new volumes (Vogel 1989, Friedman, Pickowitz, Selden 2005), or within the updated editions (Chan et al. 1992, Chan at al. 2009). Another was by transferring the Mao's epoch into the domain of recent history. The Maoist polity, economy, and rural society is presently placed within longer term overviews of the whole post-revolution period, i.e. from 1949 to 2010. (Lieberthal 1995, Saich 2004, Selden 2006, Kueh 2006, Joseph 2010).

[3] The Great Leap Forward was "a drive to increase industrial and agricultural production following the suspension of Soviet aid and the desire to catch up with the advanced nations of the world. The campaign was conceived by Mao Zedong in late 1957, adopted by the National People's Congress (*q.v.*) in 1958; it continued through 1960. Emphasis was placed on accelerated collectivization of agriculture, national self-sufficiency, and labor-intensive methods." (Glossary – China 2010: Great Leap Forward)

[4] "The core of a development strategy of the Four Modernizations aimed at turning the country into a relatively advanced industrialized nation by the year 2000. The modernizations are those of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and

Deng Xiaoping at the Third Central Committee Plenum of the Eleventh National Party Congress, which took place in the end of 1978. Special emphasis will be placed on the later part of this period, starting after the failure of the Great Leap, when the extreme pressures on the laborers were reduced; therefore the work rhythms were brought down and stabilized at a "normal" level.[5]

The initial questions asked here are: How do the schedules of work and rest in the Chinese countryside, as they appear in the generic rural work place (farms) and generic urban workplace (industry) differ? What do the rhythms, as observed through the daily, weekly, seasonal and annual time-spans tell us about the uniqueness of the Chinese communist system? The observed rhythms will be viewed as responses to the state imposed time cycles which come with a specific type of ideology and economic planning.[6] In this context, plans may be treated as symbolic systems which seek to organize time, resources, people and ideas and to direct them to ends which differ from current practice and which are unlikely to emerge in the "natural" course of events.

Urban-rural differentiation, administrative hierarchy, and economic planning in China

Urban-rural differentiation

The differentiation between rural and urban in China has to be approached carefully due to the special character of modern China's development planning and policy-making, which has stressed the continuum between the city and the countryside.

The category of "urban" in official Chinese statements has been defined in terms of rigid administrative hierarchy and population-size. Thus, in 1955, the minimal definition of "urban", wherein the town was differentiated from the village, included all seats of people's committees above the county level regardless of population, all places of 2,000 or more with at least 50% non-

national defense. The concept was embodied first in the Third Five-Year Plan (1966-70), launched in earnest by Zhou Enlai at the Fourth National People's Congress (1975), and adopted as the official party line at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee (December 1978)." (Glossary – China 2010: Four Modernizations)

[5] This period, from the early 1960s to the early 1980s, in which a more feasible system of rural governance was established, could be considered as the period of "institutionalized socialism" (Unger 2002, 9).

[6] In this, only the secular time will be considered, while the ritual time will be dealt with at another occasion.

agricultural population, and places between 1,000 and 2,000 which are 75% non-agricultural (Murphey 1980, 74).

In the 1970s, the urban settlements were defined as places inhabited by a fair-size non-agricultural population, and were divided into four categories, namely: metropolitan centers (over 1 million), large, medium, and small cities (with up to 200,000), and lastly, the transitional category of "market towns", with population between 10,000 and 20,000. The last category actually referred to the centers of rural communities, and at this point was not broken down to smaller settlements (Hua 1984, 43).[7]

Administrative hierarchy

In order to better understand the size and administrative framework of the rural economic units of concern in this paper, namely the commune, brigade and team, it is important to differentiate between all the levels of administrative and political hierarchy in China. Going from the highest level to the lowest, the country is divided into 29 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. The 192 regions are further divided into 167 cities and 2,100 counties. Each city is divided into urban districts, which in turn are scaled down into street committees, neighborhood committees and residents groups. At the same time, the counties, as rural administrative units, are divided into people's communes and these in turn, into production brigades, and production teams.

The key institution in the overall development strategy in China has been the people's commune, which combined agriculture, capital construction, and local industry with health, welfare, education and cultural activities (Lippit 1981). While at the beginning of the Great Leap Forward, 26,000 communes had been established, in the period that followed, they were recomposed into smaller ones, so that by the early 1960s, their number reached 75,000. As an official report states, they decreased again to 50,000 by 1973. The commune/brigade, same as the brigade/team size ration was approximately 1:10 (Sigurdson 1977,36, Lippit 1981).

According to data collected by Sigurdson, the size of industrial units in the countryside depended on the administrative level they were established at. Thus, the county level industries were usually state owned and employed 50-250 workers. The commune level industries were collectively owned, with 10-100 workers, while the brigade industries, also collectively owned, employed about 2-20 workers. Of course, the size could vary, especially in correlation with the proximity and magnitude of the urban center they gravitated to.

[7] Talking about useful categorization of communities in China in the 1970s, Sigurdson gave a similar list, however placing the small and medium-sized cities into the same category (Sigurdson 1977, 13).

The statistics report on the rural labor force dynamics, differentiating between the overall and the labor force engaged in agriculture for the period starting just before the Great Leap and ending with the modernization reforms. Thus, the size of the rural labor force increased from 205.7 million in 1957 to 235.3 million in 1965, and further to 303.4 million in 1978. Following the data on the labor force in exclusive agricultural production at the same points in time, it may be noted that in 1957 this was not an applicable category, while in the later period it increased rapidly from 233 million in 1965 to 294.2 million in 1978. When considering the expansion of the labor force for the later period (1965-1978), it may be noted that while the part of the force engaged in agricultural production increased by 26.3%, the part engaged in non-agricultural, i.e. mainly small-scale industrial production, increased four times (MacFarquhar, Fairbank 1987, 518) actual.

Official system of long, medium, and short term planning

When China's planning apparatus was first established in the early 1950s, it was modeled after the highly centralized Soviet system. That system basically depended on a central planning bureaucracy that calculated and balanced quantities of major goods demanded and supplied. This approach was modified during the Great Leap Forward (1958-60), when economic management was extensively decentralized. During the 1960s and 1970s, the degree of centralization in the planning system fluctuated with the actual political currents.

At the national level, planning began in the highest bodies of the central government. National economic goals and priorities were determined by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the State Council, and the National People's Congress. These decisions were then communicated to the ministries, commissions, and other agencies under the State Council to be put into effect through national economic plans. The State Planning Commission worked with the State Economic Commission, State Statistical Bureau, the former State Capital Construction Commission, People's Bank of China, the economic ministries, and other organs to formulate national plans of varying duration and import.

Long-range plans served as guidelines for the ten and twelve years periods, and were announced at various times. The primary form of medium-range planning was the five year plan, of which the purpose was to guide and integrate the annual plans to achieve balanced growth and progress toward national goals. A form of "emergency" medium-range planning appeared in the readjustment and recovery periods, when normal planning was suspended while basic imbalances in the economy were targeted and corrected.

The activities of economic units were controlled by annual plans. Their formulation began in the autumn of the preceding year, so that agricultural

output for the current year could be taken into account. The foundation of an annual plan was a "material balance table." At the national level, the first step in the preparation of this document was to estimate – for each province, autonomous region, special municipality, and enterprise under direct central control – the demand and supply for each centrally controlled good.

The initial targets were sent to the provincial-level administrations and the centrally controlled enterprises. The provincial-level bureaus further broke down the targets for allocation to the counties, and these did the same for the subordiate administrative levels, such as the communes and country-owned enterprises. Agricultural targets were distributed by communes among their brigades and teams.

At each level, individual units received their target input allocations and output quantities. Annual plans formulated at the provincial level provided the quantities for centrally controlled goods and established targets for the goods not included in the national plan, but were important to the province. The goods that were not included at the provincial level were similarly added to county and city plans.

The final stage of the planning process occurred in the individual producing units. Having received their output quotas and the figures for their allocations of capital, labor, and other supplies, enterprises generally organized their production schedules into ten-day, one-month, three-month, and six-month plans (Economic History of the PRS).

Looking at the state planning scheme from the perspective of the production units based in the countryside, it may be concluded that their production targets were only partially included in the central state planning. Many of the state-owned county-level enterprises usually had their planning targets included in the state plan. The same was true for the more important collectively owned units at county level, while all others were excluded. However, many of the commune-level and brigade-level enterprises are indirectly drawn into the state plan if they are providing minerals or other raw materials to state-owned, county-level enterprises. The same stands for situations in which items for export were produced within the rural industrial systems (Sigurdson 1977, 37).

Economic development in China during the Maoist Period

Highlights of economic development: From the Great Leap forward to the Modernization Reforms

At the end of Maoist period, China considered itself a socialist country in a transitional phase, aiming at the establishment of a communist state, which meant a commitment to plan economic, political, and social development in

order to achieve certain goals defined in terms of communist ideology. With the total area of almost 10 million square kilometers and a population of about 850 million, arable land per capita was only about 0.15 hectares. China had a modern industrial sector, which among other things produced as much steel as Great Britain, but rural areas in China accounted for 80% of the population. The Chinese leaders had often pointed to their relatively little mechanized agriculture as a mark of backwardness (Sigurdson 1977, 4-5).

The economic development of the People's Republic of China, however, cannot be fully understood without going back to the 1950s, the time of the implementation of the First Five Year Plan (1953-57). After the successful recovery from the civil war, the Chinese leadership followed the Soviet economic model of centralized planning, with primary emphasis on industrial development at the expense of agriculture and particular concentration on heavy industry and capital-intensive technology. Towards the end of this period, the concept of "walking on two legs" appeared. "The concept stands for balance of five relationships – industry and agriculture, heavy industry and light industry, large enterprises and medium-to-small enterprises, modern production methods and indigenous methods, enterprises run by the central government and those run by local authorities." (Sigurdson 1977, 8)

These principles for a new development strategy had evolved gradually from 1956, and were slowly tried out in the period up to May 1958, when a full-scale Great Leap Forward was launched. The growing imbalance between industrial and agricultural growth, dissatisfaction with inefficiency, and lack of flexibility in the decision-making process convinced the nation's leaders – particularly Mao Zedong – that the highly centralized, industry-biased Soviet model was not appropriate for China. In contrast to the First Five Year, the policies of the Second Five Year Plan, scheduled for the 1958-1963 period, which commenced as the Great Leap, emphasized: (1) improvement in the farming techniques through extended, more systematic use of manpower available within the agricultural sector, and (2) expansion of small local industries – manned with rural manpower – using indigenous, labor-intensive technologies (Sigurdson 1977, 10).

Breaking away from the Soviet model, Mao announced the new economic program, aimed at rapidly rising industrial and agricultural production simultaneously. Central planning was to be relegated to a minor role in favor of spontaneous, politically inspired production decisions from individual industrial and agricultural units. In the domain of industry, Mao announced the goal of surpassing the steel production output of Great Britain by 1968, to be acquired mainly by using slack labor and productive capacity to increase output beyond the levels previously considered feasible. The same approach was applied to agriculture, whereby the mobilization of surplus rural labor and further improvements in agricultural efficiency were to be accomplished by a

"leap" to the final stage of agricultural collectivization – the formation of people's communes.

Within a year, "backyard furnaces" producing crude iron and steel dotted the Chinese landscape, and became a hallmark of the period. Almost all Chinese villages had been reformed into working communes of several thousand individuals in size, and some succeeded in organizing their members to live and work together, as envisioned by an ideal Marxist society. The results were disastrous. Agricultural production fell behind, and China's people exhausted themselves producing substandard, un-sellable goods. Because of the reliance on the government providing and distributing food and resources and their rapid depletion due to poor planning, starvation appeared even in fertile agricultural areas.

The period following the failure of the Great Leap Forward, lasting from 1961 to 1965, could be called the phase of recovery and readjustment, when the government sharply revised the immediate goals of the economy and devised a new set of economic polities. Planning and economic coordination were to be revived, although in a less centralized form that during the First Five Year Plan. The investment priorities were reversed, with agriculture receiving first consideration, light industry second, and heavy industry third. The role of the central commune administration was reduced, and the production teams became the main decision-making units concerning production and the distribution of income to their members. Private plots, which had disappeared on some communes during the Great Leap Forward, were officially restored to farm families. In industry, a few key enterprises were returned to central state control, but control over most enterprises remained in the hands of provincial-level and local governments. Most of the small rural enterprises were shut down, thus their number fell from 2.6 million in 1959 to 45.000 in 1961, and 12.000 in 1965. The economic stability was restored, at least to the pre-Great Leap level. However, some economists point to the fact that the banning of rural enterprises had at least two negative consequences: first, the commune members had no source of cash income, thus the rural economy remained stagnant, and second, it meant cutting off the major supply source of raw materials and industrial goods and services to rural areas. Even the basic means of agricultural production, such as farm implements, were in severe shortages due to the lack of producers and the distribution system (Zhang 1999).

The beginning of the Third Five Year Plan (1966-70) coincided with the start of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), which unlike the Great Leap Forward, was primarily a political upheaval, and not intended to produce major changes in official economic policies or the basic economic model. Nonetheless, its influence was felt throughout urban society, and it profoundly affected the modern sector of the economy. Agricultural production stagnated,

but in general the rural areas experienced less turmoil than the cities. The most direct cause of production halts were: the political activity of students and workers in the mines and factories, as well as the disruption of transportation resulting from the requisitioning of trains and trucks to carry Chinese Red Guards around the country. As a consequence, the output of many factories suffered from shortages of raw materials and other supplies. Also, factories were placed into hands of revolutionary committees, consisting of representatives from the party, the workers and the Chinese People's Liberation Army, whose members often had scarce knowledge of either management or the enterprise they were supposed to run. In addition, almost all engineers, managers, scientists, technicians, and other professional personnel were "criticized," demoted, "sent down" to the countryside to "participate in labor," or even jailed. As a result, both industrial and agricultural production experienced serious decline.

As political stability was gradually restored in the 1970-74 period, a renewed drive for coordinated, balanced development was set in motion under the leadership of Premier Zhou Enlai, who commenced the Fourth Five Year Plan (1971-75). To revive efficiency in industry, Communist Party of China committees were returned to positions of leadership over the revolutionary committees, and a campaign was carried out to return skilled and highly educated personnel to the jobs from which they had been displaced during the Cultural Revolution. Universities began to reopen, and foreign contacts were expanded. Once again the economy suffered from imbalances in the capacities of different industrial sectors and an urgent need for increased supplies of modern inputs for agriculture. The small-scale state and collective owned industry, complementary with the existing needs of the local and regional economy, were systematically introduced in the countryside. Rural industrialization program focused on the development of local Five Small Industries, using indigenous technologies. (Zhang 1999).

In mid 1970s, the radical group later known as the Gang of Four attempted to dominate the power center through their network of supporters and, most important, through their control of the media. Initiatives by Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping were vigorously attacked in the press and in political campaigns as "poisonous weeds". Using official news organs, the Gang of Four advocated the primacy of nonmaterial, political incentives, radical reduction of income differences, elimination of private farm plots, and a shift of the basic accounting unit up to the brigade level in agriculture. Due to contradictory policy pronouncements and uncertain political currents, administrators and economic decision makers at all levels were practically paralyzed. Economy was in obvious stagnation. Output for the year 1975 in both industry and agriculture showed no growth. The interlude of uncertainty

finally ended when the Gang of Four was arrested in October 1976 – one month after Mao's death.

Under the leadership of Hua Guofeng and, by July 1977, the rehabilitated Deng Xiaoping, the modernization program espoused by Zhou Enlai in 1975, was reaffirmed. They also set forth a set of new policies for the purpose of accomplishing the Four Modernizations. The new policies strengthened the authority of managers and economic decision makers at the expense of party officials, stressed material incentives for workers, and called for expansion of the research and education systems. This new policy initiative was crowned at the Fifth National People's Congress (February and March 1978), when Hua Guofeng presented the revised draft of the Ten Year Plan for the 1976-85 period, originally designed three years earlier. The plan called for high rates of growth in both industry and agriculture and included 120 construction projects that would require massive and expensive imports of foreign technology. Between 1976 and 1978, the economy was in the process of recovery from the stagnation of the Cultural Revolution.

Economic, social, and ideological shifts specific to the Chinese countryside

After this short review of the highlights of overall economic planning in China, the phenomena that in the longer term influenced the most the life and work rhythms of the Chinese rural population should be accentuated.

Firstly, in the domain of *economic life*, a peasant had to accommodate the production targets determined by the consecutive five year plans, which often, as a consequence of failure of the previous one, swayed in an opposite direction, thus introducing completely different kinds of production. Thus, at some points, he had to revert to rising different livestock and crops than before, or even leave the agriculture altogether to engage in industrial production, or vice versa. This is how the focus on agricultural production was abandoned during the Great Leap (1958-60), and how the small-scale industry was banned after their demise in the period that followed (1961-65). Also, often after a radical start, as in the Great Leap, the failures brought total abandonment of the initial targets of the same five year plan, and called for *ad hoc* measures that would save the country's population from deep poverty.

The Chinese peasant also had to accommodate to the *industrialization of countryside,* as to one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Maoist era. During the Great Leap Forward the furnaces were built at which crude iron was produced 24 hours per day. In cases where raw materials lacked, collective and household utility had to burned, including tools, furniture, pots and pans. Other commune enterprises were engaged in producing building materials, farm tools, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and processing agricultural produce. After the

failure of this attempt towards "hyper fast small scale industrialization", and a complete abandonment of the small scale industry in the first part of 1960s, more rational policies were introduced. From late 1960s onwards, they brought into the countryside small-scale state and collective owned industry, complementary with the existing needs of the local and regional economy. The revival of commune and brigade enterprises was by and large in response to the government's call for agricultural mechanization and modernization aimed at raising agricultural productivity. Rural industrialization program focused on the development of local Five Small Industries (*wuxiao gongye*) – iron and steel, chemical fertilizer, cement, energy (coal mines and hydropower), and farm machinery – using indigenous technologies. The State Council decided to earmark one billion yuan a year to promote agricultural mechanization and the establishment of these local industries (Zhang 1999). Towards the end of the Cultural Revolution (1974-76), even more emphasis was placed on the revitalization of economy, while restrictions on the commune and brigade enterprises began to relax in some localities. At the beginning of 1976, the State Council established a special agency to administer commune and brigade enterprises and to promote rural small-scale industries. By 1978, there were more than 1.5 million such enterprises with a labor force of 28 million and an output of 49 billion yuan.

Secondly, the changes in the *community organization* also largely influenced the life rhythms of a Chinese peasant. *Collectivization* was one of the most prevailing processes in China, especially in its countryside, taking place in phases. Their short recollection is telling of how many different private and work organizational contexts a peasant and his family had to go through in three socialist decades. In the early phase of recovery after the war (1950-53), right after the land reform was implemented – the farmers were encouraged to form small mutual aid teams of 5-15 households each. During the First Five Year Plan, "elementary agricultural cooperatives" (with 20-40 households) were formed in 1953-54, followed by "advanced co-operatives" (100-300 families) in mid-1956. Huge people's communes[8] were inaugurated in 1958, with the Great Leap Forward, which encompassed entire marketing districts with as many as 20.000 people. They were broken down into production brigades and teams, whereby each team composed of about 40 neighboring families. After the failure of the Leap, in 1961, these mega-communes were reduced in size and the decision-making was transferred to brigades and teams. The commune structure started to erode with the economic reforms of 1978, however de-collectivization was officially proclaimed in the 1982-84 period, when communes were substituted by townships and brigades by villages.

[8] For futher reading on collectivization and the people's communes in China, see: Dutt 1961, Lippit 1977, Romich 1981, Unger 2002.

Thirdly, besides economic and social changes, the Party implemented major *ideological changes* in the countryside, including the banishing of all religious and mystic institutions and ceremonies, and replacing them with *political education sessions*. Attempts were made to enhance rural education and the status of women, and end foot-binding, child marriage and opium addiction. All through this time, political campaigns were initiated, such as the 100 Flowers Campaign (1957), promoting free speech and criticism, Socialist Education Movement, also called the Four Cleanups Movement (1963-66), with the goal to cleanse politics, economy, organization, and ideology, i.e., to remove the "reactionary elements" from the bureaucracy of the Communist Party. Soon afterwards, the Cultural Revolution was inaugurated in 1966, aiming to revive the revolutionary fervor of the masses outside formal party organizations. Reaching its peak from 1969-71, it in effect lasted until the death of Mao and the arrest of the Gang of Four, in 1976.[9]

Intensification of work rhythms in agriculture

State imposition on the kind and quantity of agricultural production

Through central planning the state determined the kind of agricultural products that should have been produced, as well as the amount to be requisitioned by it. Throughout this whole period, the stress was laid on the production of basic foods, wheat and rice, without paying enough attention to the local ecological conditions. Alongside, growing other crops was being introduced, such as cotton, sugar cane, tobacco, tea, and mulberry trees.[10]

[9] Cultural Revolution was a slogan introduced by Mao Zedong in 1940, noted again by Liu Shaoqi in 1958, and used more frequently in connection with leftist attacks on the "cultural front" in late 1965 and early 1966. The expression was used to denote the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a political campaign officially inaugurated in August 1966 to rekindle revolutionary fervor of the masses outside formal party organizations. The Cultural Revolution decade (1966-76) can be divided into three periods: 1966-69, from the militant Red Guard (*q.v.*) phase to the Ninth National Party Congress; 1969- 71, the period of the zenith and demise of Lin Biao; and 1971-76, the period of Mao's declining health and the ascendancy of the Gang of Four (*q.v.*). At the August 1977 Eleventh National Party Congress, the Cultural Revolution was declared officially to have ended with the arrest in October 1976 of the Gang of Four. (Glossary – China 2010: Cultural Revolution). For a summary of major processes during the Cultural Revolution, see: Gernet 1972/1982, 671-75, and for a comprehensive study of the same topic, see: McFarquhar 1974/1983/1999.

[10] Rawski noticed that the output in these labor-intensive activities "has grown more rapidly than output of grain crops." (Rawski 1979, 106).

While talking to my Chinese informants about the demands imposed on the local agricultural production, here is what I learned about the situation in Anhui province, eastern China, which traditionally knew of only one kind of rice, harvested once a year.

"New times brought into the fields the early rice, a new hybrid-kind developed by the scientists. Preparatory work for the planting of this rice, thus, starts right after the Spring Festival, and all along demands speedy work. Moreover, due to plentiful moisture in the winter and spring, weeds swarm the fields, which in turn divert all the attention and time to care for the early rice, endangered by unchangeable climate determinants."

Similar situation was described by the Chen villagers in Guangdong province, southern China.

"Villages throughout Gungdong were ordered in 1970-71 to cultivate a few patches of cotton and to plant wheat and sorghum as winter crops. Each region of China was to be self-sufficient. 'We all said it was crazy'; such crops would never grow well in Guagdong's subtropical climate. (…) So each Chen village team planted a few acres in the unwanted crops, with predictable results: the yields were pitiful. Worse yet, nutrients needed for the spring rice crops were sucked out of the soil; and too little time remained before the spring planting to kill off grubs by aerating the soil thoroughly. (…) " Despite the successive failures, the 'experiment' continued in almost all of the Guangdong villages. (Chan et al. 1984, 239)

Beside promoting more harvests of the basic crops than before (two instead of one, and three instead of two), thus enforcing early crop planting in the winter, the state also expected exemplary results in the quantity and quality of yields.

When, during the Great Leap Forwards, my informer was performing her tasks in the countryside of Shandong, she saw "an unbelievable scene" take place. It was the great moment for the commune, since Chairman Mao was coming to visit their cotton fields. And in order to impress him, the largest cotton flowers were dug out of their original place and stuck in again along the side of the road on display.

Another model scene presented to the wide public in *Renmin Rebao*, the national daily, during the "exaggeration wind" period came with the announcement of a team cultivating 600,000 jin of rice from one mou[11] of land, when regularly, even 2000 jin was hard to accomplish. In the sizable picture a pig could have been seen standing on the top of 'early rice satellite' growing so thick that it could carry such an enormous weight. Just to satisfy

[11] Mou is a Chinese unit of land measurement, which varies according to the location, but most commonly equals to 666.5 square meters.

reader's curiosity, the pig on the picture was supported, not by overabundant rice, but by the table hidden underneath.

Despite the fact that the described scenes were a show off for the country's leader and the raw models for the nation, they were also the metaphor pointing to the aims set forth by the state. Thus, agricultural practices had to be adapted to the high standards proscribed. Therefore, the related questions that appear are: How does one get the very large cotton flowers, or grains or rice or wheat? How is the quality of the product improved? And, how does one make it so plentiful? According to Rawski, such results are acquired by three major approaches, the intensification of the cropping practices, the acceleration of the cropping cycles, and extension of labor time into the slack season (Rawski 1979, 91-104).

Intensification of the cropping practices

The first approach, intensification of the cropping practices, means an increase in resources applied to each unit of sown acreage, considering that there are no changes in the type of crops grown or in the rotation cycle. Firstly, this assumes that every inch of space is utilized to the maximum. In land preparation, the soil is plowed deeper, while the organic fertilizers are applied in large quantities. It is applied in layers, giving the field a greater number of dressings according to the varying needs of agricultural crops at different periods of growth.

Secondly, the existing surface of land needs to be more densely planted. The policies creating tighter plant populations followed one another; the "close planting" popular in the 1950s, was substituted by the "rational close planting" after the Great Leap (in the 1960s). Even though some places (like Shensi) showed that "more rational" density, which allowed growing vegetables between the rows of cotton plant brought comparatively excellent results, some places have preferred the maximum density of exclusively cotton plants. The latter was the case in Hebei, where 3,000 to 4,000 plants per mou were planted during the mid-1960s. Another method, traditionally applied only with rice planting, which economizes on land and reduces the growing period in the main field, known as transplanting, has been adopted for a growing range of crops. Therefore, besides rice and vegetables, some regions started to transplant wheat, maize, cotton, soybeans, and such fibers as hemp and jute (Rawski 97).

Thirdly, and this concerns the aspect of crop management, each plant receives much individual attention. With cotton, during the budding period, each plant is nourished with fertilizer applied near the root of the plant, rather than it being broadcast. Then, the tips of cotton plants are plucked, or since 1961, slightly pinched. The continuous care is applied all through the growing

cycle, when at the end, the harvesting is also done on a plant-by-plant basis. Similar care is given to peanuts, maize planting is done by hand, and vegetables around Shanghai are hand watered, while herds of ducks are raised as a traditional method of controlling paddy insects (Rawski 101).

The imperative of much more labor-hours for purposes of land preparation, planting (and transplanting), and careful crop management, could have been absorbed, as Rawski assumed, through the yearly growth of the agricultural labor force. On the other hand, where these additional working hours were not absorbed by the new workers, the existing labor force had to accommodate more imposing demands, thus allocating more individual energy to the intensified tasks. This pressure for increased quality of farm products intensified the traditional work-rhythms of the peasant community.

Acceleration of the cropping cycles

Beside the described more or less traditional procedures (approach of intensifying the cropping practices), adapted or transformed to fit the new need for larger and more plentiful crops, another approach, that of acceleration of the cropping cycle, has been applied. This approach refers to an increase in the number of crops harvested per unit of cultivated land resulting from multiple cropping and intercropping.[12]

One way of raising the ration of sown to exploitable acreage is to develop plant varieties that either mature in a shorter time or are more resistant to extreme weather conditions than the existing varieties. Until the mid-1970s, in seed development, the varieties that provide high yields while resisting common plant diseases were emphasized, rather than development of fast-growing plant types. Since mid-1970s, the early-maturing varieties of rice, wheat, and vegetables were being promoted. The hybrid seeds, combined with intensive care, were to be interpolated into the existing planting cycles, so that where there was a single harvest of heat a year, now two were introduced, and where two harvests of rice were collected in a year, three were to be attempted.

The new complexity in the cropping cycle had two major consequences, the number of different tasks performed at the same time has increased, and the established yearly cycle of each crop had to be speeded up.

The report from Hubei province illustrates the problems encountered by localities attempting to intensify the cropping cycle:

[12] Both, multiple cropping and intercropping have a long history in China. In pre-war times, between 1929 and 1933, according to Buch, the multiple cropping index (sown area divided by exploitable area) had reached 1.49 in the regions from which the data was collected. Since 1949 the national index of multiple cropping has risen from 1.31 in 1952 to 1.41 in 1957 and to more than 1.50 in 1977 or 1978. (Rawski 102)

"This place harvests a cotton crop and a wheat crop each year. However, from planting to harvesting, wheat and cotton need a total of 428 days … [T]his is the principal contradiction of the two-crop system. … It finds concentrated reflection in the two periods of 'four quicks' and 'three kinds of autumn work' during the summer harvest." (Rawski 103)

The "four quicks" period (harvesting wheat, destroying the stubble, controlling insect pests, and dressing the land) lasts only about 10 days, but there are eleven kinds of procedures (jobs) to be done at the same time. The amount of work is huge, and yet there is an inevitable time limit. The period for "three kinds of autumn work" (autumn harvesting, plowing and planting) also lasts only 10 days. This period of the so called "two-way-rush", when the first crop (e.g. cotton) is to be harvested while at the same time, another (e.g. wheat or rice) is to be planted is the most critical. At this point, the crops belonging to differing rotation cycles fight for labor power, fertilizer, and water supply. If the removal of cotton plants is postponed in order to ensure the cotton harvest, wheat cannot be sown in good time. If the cotton plants are removed earlier, cotton yield will suffer. These two bottlenecks, thus, must be negotiated in order to ensure the functioning of the two-crop system (Rawski 104)

Of course, mechanization did introduce opportunities to add crops to the annual cycle without breaching the newly enlarged peak supplies of human, animal and machine power. Machines capable of replacing human labor formerly devoted to irrigation, harvesting, threshing, transport, and transplanting during seasonal periods of peak labor demand can eliminate bottlenecks limiting the spread of multiple cropping.

Extension of work on rural construction into the slack season

The third approach that was implemented in order to intensify the results in agricultural production was to prolong the yearly cycle of intense agricultural labor to consume the slack season. With the purpose of improving conditions for higher agricultural production from which the larger community would profit, rural construction is undertaken. Construction work is directed toward improving the use of existing water supplies, and reducing the vulnerability of crop yields to inadequate or excessive rainfall. These campaigns, which encompass major projects coordinated in Beijing, as well as local projects planned and carried out by communes and brigades, cover a wide range of activities including reservoir construction, forestation, flood control, hydroelectric stations, tub wells, and leveling, terracing, and reclamation of arable land. In the mid-1970s these massive campaigns involved 30% of the entire rural labor force (Rawski 109-10).

Studying the winter works campaigns during the 1962-72 period, James Nickum found that in the water conservancy activities the average participant is active for 1 ½ to 2 months during an active campaign. Rawski argues that Nickum's finding are consistent with the Chinese reports that during the mid-1960s construction consumed about 20% of the time of the rural labor force, and that in the 1970s, the share of winter works might have risen. Of course, the phase of work performed determines the intensity of building, and thus the appropriate amount of labor-days. It seems, according to Rawski, that in the initial construction phase, communes invested as much as 40-50% of their entire workdays, whereas in places where only maintenance and improvement of facilities were needed, 6-30% of the peasants' work days were allocated, with the outweighed average being 20%.

It is obvious that more specific and organized data is needed to follow upon the precise determinants of winter work labor in China of the time. Nevertheless, it appears that winter work campaigns have reduced or eliminated traditional slack periods in the farming calendar (as it appears to have been in the Republican era)[13] of a substantial segment of China's rural populace.

In summary, it may be said, that a set of agricultural policies introduced by the Chinese state affected the quality of time of the agricultural workers in the countryside. The state determined the kinds of crops to be planted, intensification of cropping practices, speeding up of the cropping cycle, and extension of work on rural construction into the slack season. All these policies changed the nature of the existing agricultural activity, thus changing the traditional working rhythms.

Politicization of the peasants' time

The political campaigns of various intensities brought in a new quality of time into the Chinese countryside, permeated by political ritual. Never before was the Chinese countryside so thoroughly immersed in ideological education. The meaning of existence as well as the purpose of production was being redefined to fit the new communist worldview. After the unpredictable periods of aggressively imposed political rituals, political time was moderated to be regularly present in daily life of the peasants.

During the Socialist Education Campaign in the Chen Village, Guangdong, a qualitatively new time had been introduced:

[13] In the 1929-33 period it was reported that rural male workers were idle for an average of 1.7 months annually, with 80% of the idle time coming in the winter months November through February. This period of seasonal idleness corresponds to the period devoted to winter work performed in the communist period.

"Special intensive sessions thus were organized systematically to introduce the peasantry to the Maoist world view. Every able bodied peasant (excluding the four-bad types, who were made to attend separate isolated sessions) had to go through this five-day training in Mao's thought. The villagers were divided into five groups of a hundred people each, which were to take the training in turn. Each contingent was a carefully balanced mix of teenagers and elderly, progressive and backward, men and women. For the whole five days they would not have to labor. (…) The first set of training sessions opened immediately after the first winter plowing of early 1966." (Chan et al. 1984, 77)

Successively, groups of villagers had an opportunity to appropriate their work-time to new kind of education: both mornings and afternoons started with choral singing of revolutionary songs. Lectures mentioning "spontaneous capitalist tendencies" and "bourgeois thought" were held until lunch. After the meal, broken up into five smaller discussion groups of twenty members, the peasants would be tutored in applying the newly learned line of thinking and its relation to their own circumstances. "Recall past bitterness" meetings were being held each night, followed by "the sweetness of the present" the following afternoon. One of the popular exercises was to show the peasants how to make these public self-examinations. After this 5-day cycle of intensive political sessions, the presence of "political time" didn't wear out.

The best opportunity to yield power (for the counselors) came in during the daily half hour of study that was organized during the peasants' lunch break. Since most of their fields were far from home, the peasants would bring their lunches with them and then would normally either rest under a shady tree or run up into the hills to water private plots or to cut grass. Now, instead, they would have to spend most of that spare time in Mao study." (Chan et al. 1984, 81)

Two or three nights every week the peasants were required to meet with the team or brigade level Mao thought counselors to learn new revolutionary songs and Mao quotes. At least once a year, usually during the late winter and early spring slack season, they also spent several days in refresher political sessions.

The example from the Chen village is representative of irregular, unpredictable cycles most thoroughly loaded with political campaigns. Such intensively used patches of political time imposed onto the countryside extracted some of the labor-days from regular agricultural work. However, it should be said that for most of the time, the cycle of the agricultural activities was given priority, thus the political meetings were introduced mainly during the slack season. Secondly, the groups involved at one time were rationally selected so as not to overly distract the agricultural work.

Even the "normal life" of the village was permeated with the political time. Later on, the established time for political discussion and study was reduced to being once a week after the evening meal, and thus became a routine part of weekly activities.

Daily rhythms of the agricultural workers

Daily rhythms of work and rest

The daily agricultural work schedule is determined by the seasons, thus, the time throughout the year is allocated differently to appropriate activities. In the description of the daily agricultural work schedules, a model of a typical, busy-season day will be presented, considering the responsibilities of both men and women.

The village starts to wake up just before daylight. In the mid 1960s, when the natural signs were used as the only time measurement, people from the Chen village remember that about an hour would have been needed before all those assigned to work in the field would gather. However, with the introduction of electricity and loud speakers, the workers were forced to be more punctual.

The first ones to arise, and start the 10 to 12 hours of labor, were women. The first announcement at 4:30 calls the women out of bed to allow them ample time to feed the pigs and prepare breakfast before their husbands arose half an hour later. The broadcasting continues nonstop for two hours until everyone assembles. The other way that interrupts morning sleep (as well as the afternoon nap) is a trumpet sound which lasts for a good five minutes. This cheerful start is followed by brisk martial music and the shouted commands of a drill instructor who supervises a wide variety of calisthenics. Of course, women and children, deadly tired after exhausting physical labor don't even think of participating in physical education, and nobody really cares (Wolf 1983, 136). During the campaigns everybody had to spend a few minutes on Mao quotes before the day's labor was assigned.

Men and strong women, assigned to the daily task by the team leader go off to the fields, which the old and weak, and those with little babies, stay behind. They work for few (usually 2 hours) until they either return home for breakfast, or receive it at the field, where it is brought by weaker women or elderly members of the family. The children are brought to the field, watched by one woman (and left to sleep under a shed) or left at home, to be cared for and fed by those women who remained to cook for the workers.

The work again ceases at noon, for lunch. This meal is, again, either eaten in the field, because of the distance of the fields from the village, or upon return home. If the woman working in the field has to prepare the meal, then she runs off earlier to do so. After lunch, men usually rest, smoke and chat or run to their private fields. In the summer they enjoy naps.

The rest is over about 3:00 pm or 3:30 pm, after which they return to their fields till sunset (6:00 or 7:00 pm). However, if it is the harvest season, they come back to work until midnight, after which they drop in bed to wake up

again at 4:00 am. This busiest season, when often, different tasks have to be performed at the same time in the same day, usually lasts for two weeks.

The domestic chores, as well as work on the sideline plots, are all squeezed around the collective tasks: early in the morning, at lunch time, on the way home from the collective fields. After dinner, they just sit around in the family circle and rest or do repairs, or else visit friends and family. Normally, political study meetings are to be attended once a week (Parish, White 1978, 207-8).

The slack season, which comes from November to February, is somewhat more relaxing. In the Chen village, the day starts at 6:30 am, in Anhui province at 9:00 am. The work-schedule is reduced to six to eight hours a day. From the agricultural tasks, the main one is to collect and prepare the fertilizer for the next season. The natural fertilizer was secured either through the collection of human waste, which would be left covered up to mature until spring or collected from the city-households, or else, through the fermentation of fallen leaves and branches, whereby the mulch (*lu fei*) would be acquired. Also, the leaves and branches would be collected for the fuel.

Otherwise, the slack season is mainly used for land reclamation or canal repair, or other construction. These heavy manual tasks absorbed much of the labor force, which would be brought out onto the site for two weeks, working approximately eight hours a day, after which other groups would be utilized.

The spare time in the slack season days, at least in Anhui, is spent in playing *paijiu* (simple *majang*, with only 2 cards) or dice, which is not considered very respectable, or in going to the town to work at the repair of citizen's houses and fences, or staying at home with the family, and keeping busy by housework.

Gender based division of agricultural labor

When focusing on the division of labor, Parish and White tell us that most able-bodied women in rural Guangdong do work regularly in the fields, unless there is nobody else to care for their children, or unless family income is sufficient to permit them to stay at home part of the time.

"Women work alongside other women, or mixed with men, depending upon the task being performed. (…) The team members are assigned to different tasks on an *ad hoc* basis with some tasks done by individuals spread out in the fields, and others by short-term groups of shifting composition. A number of informants claim that there is much informal separation of the sexes in the field labor during the slack periods, with men handling plowing and other heavy duties, and women weeding and doing other tedious tasks. In the harvest season rush, everyone pitches in side by side, although the tasks performed by men and women may not be identical." (Parish, White 203)

This somewhat generalized statement about division of labor based on gender, extracted from the work of Western researchers, may be complemented by the concrete description coming from an insider, my Chinese informant who spent two years in the village 20 km from Hefei, the capital of Anhui Province. His village grew rice, wheat, Chinese potatoes, peanuts, cotton, *caihua* (an oil vegetable) and watermelons. The major labor efforts were oriented towards double rice cropping, where the early hybrid rice was planted early in the spring, and by the time of its harvest, a simultaneous task of planting the late rice had to be performed.

Everyone rises before dawn. The work-team leader assigns tasks for that day according to parcels. Everybody first plants new rice, then goes and works at harvesting the early rice. From 4:00 or 4:20 am to 6:00 or 6:30 am, the transplanting of new rice is performed. The division of work is such that women plant and men pick the young rice from the nurseries, bring it to the field and disperse it by throwing it at regular distances for the women who stick it into the mud. This work is very laborious, and is almost exclusively performed by women, except that some weaker men help with the actual planting, if needed.

This is where women show their efficiency, which brings them social status within the community, as well as more work-points. Their efficiency is clearly displayed, since each one moves in straight lines along the field, while getting 6-8 seedlings at a time. After a plentiful portion of densely cooked rice for breakfast, after 10-15 minutes, the workers go on to cut down the ripe early rice. This time, women cut down the rice, while competing in speed with each other, while men carry the rice to the field to be processed. Women are again on display since men approaching the field can always notice how they are advancing. The men also display their strength by carrying as much as possible, thus the strong can carry 8 or 9 bundles on each side, while the weaker are satisfied with 5.

After lunch and a nap, the energetic team comes back to the field around 3:00 or 3:30 pm to continue cutting and carrying rice until 6:00 or 7:00 pm. After dinner, all the rice should be ready for processing, whereby a stick (*lianjia*) is used for loosening the rice, which is then shaken and separated from the leaves. At last, the water buffalo are brought to get the last rice out of the plants, and the task usually ends around midnight.

This description of a daily work routine reflects the relatively high degree of the preservation of traditional division of tasks between men and women, whereby each activity tells of the values appropriated to female and male roles in the Chinese rural society.

To some Western researchers who tend to look at the role of women from a more critical (or even feminist) point of view, the situation seems somewhat different. Thus, Margery Wolf argues that most women find regular collective agricultural activities a strain. While men are in forestry or orchards groups,

machinery group, or scientific research units, the women often make up most of the wheat and cotton teams. They perform hoeing, weeding, and harvesting under the watchful eyes of male team leaders (Wolf 1985, 95, 207). At some places, women have almost completely taken over the agricultural activities of the commune, freeing the men to work in the commune or state industries (Wolf 1985, 85).

Industrial rhythms in the Chinese countryside

Introducing small scale industries in the countryside

China was one of the first countries to introduce small scale industry into its countryside. It was first established in a crude way during the Great Leap Forward, and then again from the late1960s on, representing the lowest but one of the most important levels of Chinese industrial force.

The so called Five Small Industries – those producing iron and steel, farm machinery, chemical fertilizers, energy (coal and electric power), and cement – represented a package of basic industries to support agriculture. These local enterprises provided fertilizer and machines that allowed overcoming the difficulties and slowness imposed by nature as well as enabled construction of rural industry that would process the extracted agricultural products.

At the commune and brigade levels, the industrial workers were drawn directly from the peasant population – indeed, they were both peasants and workers in that they continued with few exception to live in their rural homes, their income was figured out in work points rather than in regular wages (as in industry at county and higher levels) and many were dispatched to the fields during periods of peak agricultural activity (American Rural Small-Scale Industries Delegation 1977: 238). Seasonal adjustment in employment also worked the other way around, with the possibility to shift a part of the labor force from agricultural work to industrial work in the slack season (Sigurdson 1977, 42).

Thus, besides intensifying the agricultural production, which accentuated the speeding up of the cropping cycle, the introduction of industries added a qualitatively new cycle in the countryside, that of industrial production, characterized by its own working rhythms.

In the Chen village, "within the next few years (late 1960s), the brigade enterprise team had grown to approximately a hundred full-time workers – about one-sixth of the entire working population of the village. This factory and service work was comfortably near to home, not two hours away like some of the mountain fields; the work – and pay – was assured, come rain or shine, again unlike agricultural labor; and factory personnel earned more than most field workers. So many of the peasants

wanted the jobs that a rule had to be laid down to prevent nepotism and resentment. No more than one member in any household was hired for an enterprise-team position." (Chan et al. 1984, 220)

The named rule for preventing nepotism was chosen locally by the Chen village leaders; however, all through the country there must have been other informally established rules to decide upon who will join the manufacturing, service[14] and other sideline endeavors.

Factors determining the rhythms of industrial production

When asking the question about what regulates the internal rhythms of industrial production in the Chinese countryside, we have to consider two major determinants.

The first determinant is based upon the nature of the production process itself, differentiating between the need for continuous production, and that which may be stopped and taken up again. The processes taking place in steel, paper or flour mills, and silk manufacturing are continuous, thus requiring shift work. On the contrary, production of agricultural machines, electric installations, and mechanical repairs may be stopped and continued again, thus allowing establishment of regular working schedules.

The second determinant is the rhythm of machines used in a specific production process, which in turn largely depends on the secure and even supply of resources. And for the collectively owned industry enterprises in the Chinese countryside, there were two channels of supply for production resources. Firstly, the industry may function independently, by applying to the Production-Materials Bureau, which centrally reallocates the materials. Secondly, if the same unit subcontracts certain work from a large-scale state or collective industry, then it receives the materials and desired production techniques from that same enterprise.

In the first instance, when the state reallocates the resources, more often than not, bureaucratic complexity and slowness, or lack of resources, or problems with transportation, may delay their timely arrival. In such cases, the back door connections in state bureaus may help in moving a factory's name up on the competitive list.

However, other ways, such as bartering with other small scale enterprises remain:

[14] Services were insufficiently represented in the countryside, usually being a clinic, nursery, primary school, provision store, restaurant, and barber shop.

"Longyong commanded even greater respect for his abilities to acquire machinery, spare parts, construction materials, and raw materials through informal channels. There would have been few large buildings and few new industries had Chen Village always waited for allocation through the state's supply bureaus.

There was a dearth of almost everything, from small items such as nails and plastic sheets to machine parts and large generators. Many of Lonyong's transactions thus were accomplished through private bartering.

Stocky Wang recalls, for example, that when 'some factory in Canton needed wood, which we could cut from our timber stands, and we needed steel, both sides agreed to exchange'. (…) If necessary, Longyong even greased palms. Every time he went on a buying tour he brought along sugar, peanut oil, and fruit as small 'gifts' for the various cadres with whom he would be dealing. This practice had become such a part of life in China that the Chen villagers never considered it unethical, so long as Longyong did it only in the world outside and for the benefit of the collective." (Chan et al. 223-23)

In the second instance, where the larger state-owned factory provides the resources, timely provision of materials which necessarily goes along with a good relationship between the two enterprises, determines the regularly of production rhythms in the small-industry. Thus, the large factory production-rhythms influence the rhythms of the small-scale industrial production.

"For most of the time those industries are in need of, rather than in abundance of resources", said one of my interviewees. Such shortages bring about a new kind of unintended regularity. When something is wrong or missing, or when the material has not arrived, the standard work of the machines is interrupted, everything stops. This is the time for attending to the machines – cleaning and preparing them for continuing work. The cycles within which the production-rhythms oscillate are determined by man-made time spans of the month and the year, within which the production quotas have to be satisfied.

Thus, with the delays, the first 10 days of the month are idle. In the following 10 days, when the supplies have been received, the race against time starts, becoming the most intense in the last third of the month. At that point, the work is done day and night, so that the production leader may report to those above that the norm has been satisfied. The same cycle applies to the yearly time-span, when the last quarter of the year becomes the busiest.

To summarize, the two determinants influenced the work and rest rhythms of industrial workers in the countryside in different ways. While the nature of the production process influenced the short-term, i.e. the daily work rhythms, the supply of resources influenced the medium-term, i.e., the monthly and annual work rhythms. The less and more intensive work rhythms correspond to the busy and slack seasons in domain of agricultural labor.

Daily rhythms of the rural industrial workers

Daily rhythms of work and rest

In order to answer the question how the day of those chosen to participate in industrial production looks like, we reverted to the personal account of one of the interviewees, complemented by the descriptions given by Margery Wolf.

Work is set up by the production leader on daily basis. The starting time varies to a certain degree according to the season. In the summer, the work begins around 7:30 am, in winter at 7:30 or 8:00 am, depending on the type of manufacture involved.

The break for lunch tends to conform to the local meal time. Since there are no canteens at the work-place, male workers go home for the afternoon meal. No matter what a woman does during the day, it is always her responsibility to prepare food. Often, families have an older woman who stays at home, takes care of the children and also cooks the main meal for the children and the working members of the household. If this is not the case, and the woman is employed in industry, the time of family meals is determined by the regular time she can come home during the break at the halftime or her shift when she runs home to fulfill her midday domestic obligation and then goes back to work.

The work usually continues until dusk. After production work, some meetings may be awaiting: regular weekly political study groups, or a meeting where work skills, productions plans and lags are discussed, or committees concerning some new policy or political campaign, or "voluntary jobs" are pursued (Wolf 1983, 58). Afterwards, shopping for necessities in irregular working and meagerly supplied provision stores, usually open from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm, followed by other household chores.

The same tempo of work is followed every day, without a weekly break as is enjoyed by the workers in the larger-scale industries established on 8-hour schedules. Agricultural workers labor seven days a week, making up in production during winter and fall for the times when their effort is most needed in the fields during the spring planting and summer harvesting.

Gender based division of rural industrial labor

Coming to the question of the division of labor based on gender, and in the situation where it was not possible to find overall statistical data, nor the individual descriptions from the work places, we will try to deal with the ration of men-female workers in the local level industries as partially presented by the Western scholars and visitors to China. Phyllis Andors from her research in Hebei in 1979, and an analysis of the Chinese press, concluded that the

contribution of young women is quite noticeable (Andors 1983). Others disagree with such conclusions, and show that the situation is much more complex.

Margery Wolf's data from all the brigades she visited in Jiangsu, Fujian, Shaanxi, and Sichuan, led her to conclude that the workforce in most of the brigade-level industrial enterprises consisted of men, and reversely, that a considerably smaller number of men pursued agricultural work (only 11% of all interviewed men).

The gender contribution varies according to the kind and scale of industries represented. Thus, in Tianzhuang Brigade in Jiangsu, the "heavier" the industry, the more men predominate, and vice versa. Thus, in the production of wrapping candy machinery and in the bike repair shop the males are exclusive workers (represented by 99% and 100%), in the building unit their number is almost equal to that of the female workers (52% vs. 48%), while in the cloth shoe workshop and in a tailor shop the female workers dominate, comprising 70% and 80% of the overall workforce.

In the Zhoujia Brigade of the same province, an oilcan and dustpan factory and shoe brush factory each have 70% male labor force, while in the writing brush workshop, paper box factory, noodle factory and handbag factory, female workers prevail, contributing to 64-73% of the overall workforce.

The presented data point to the fact that large differences exist in the ratio of male-female employment according to the kind of productive activity, as well as the size of the enterprise. Women are for the most part kept out of "technical" and hard work, thus from the largest, and the most productive enterprises, such as a machinery factory in Tianzhuang Brigade, with 250 employees, or an oilcan and dustpan factory in Zhoujia Brigade with 130 workers.[15] The enterprises in which their labor force prevails are very small scale (6 to 22 employees in this case), with the construction unit being the only heavier activity employing nearly half women. Some women are involved in domestic production, where they do basic processing of natural fibers, embroidery or weaving on a "putting out system", which means that the allocated work is performed at home. This piecemeal production is fitted into between agricultural work and other domestic chores, without a tight working schedule.

When correlating the nature of production process of rural industries and the gender distribution in them, it is possible to conclude that male workers dominated in the heavier industries, while women prevailed in the lighter processing industries. This also means that male work rhythms were tied to either shift work or to the regular daily working schedules, depending on the

[15] It has also been noticed that, for example, in Honan, the women as more common at the lower worker levels in factories than in higher technical and management levels in the commune and county enterprises (American Rural Small-Scale Industries Delegation 1977, 229).

industry' (dis)continuous production process. At the same time, most women, since employed in lighter industries or piecemeal domestic production, had regular or flexible daily schedules.

Nature of the rural industry work rhythms

When considering the life rhythms of industrial workers at the Chinese countryside, it becomes obvious that the nature rather than the machines primarily shape the workplace rhythms of the countryside.

The beginning and the end of workday is established by the seasonal rhythms of light and darkness as well as the trends towards an 8 hour day, established as the model-schedule in larger industrial units. The small-scale industry workers wake up with all the other villagers at dawn in order to perform their household chores, after which they go to work starting at 7:30 or 8:00, and ending with dusk. Their midday rest-hours directly correspond to the lunch and rest break of their family members, neighbors, and kin employed in agricultural labor.

As for the medium-term time spans, although the industrial workplace as defined in model state or large- and medium-scale industries allows one day a week off, the collectively managed industries, run on agricultural (village) schedules – work seven days a week, thus trying to make up for times when the labor force will be most necessary in the fields, in times of plowing and harvesting.

With the increase in number of cropping cycles and their intensification, the times when the labor-intensive agricultural tasks are performed have increased. This fact also disrupts the continuous and regular machine rhythms. Yet, at the end, everything usually works out. Luckily, the end of the production year in industry comes with the end of the Western calendar year (in December), when agricultural workers are enjoying the slack season. Thus, we may conclude that the machines in the Chinese countryside have had to conform to the dictates of the "gods of nature".

Conclusion

The centralized planning in China of the Maoist period was closely intertwined with the ideological framework upon which the whole system rested. Adoption and adaptation of Marxism-Leninism demanded transforming the traditional "one-dimensional" concept of time in which an infinitely large "now" absorbed within itself the entire future and the entire past (Bauer 1976, 375).

Progress has been demanded and with it rapidity which needs "voluntarism and activism", which stem out of a particular form of consciousness on the part

of the masses that is required for the qualitative transformation of the society. The society of producers should accomplish the jump from quantity to quality. The Great Leap Forward was an "indirect demonstration of the superiority of the human will over nature and over soundless industrial machinery". The ideal society becomes tangible reality only through revolution, during ongoing change, which is the "only absolute" (Bauer 1976, 400).

In conclusion, we may ask: How did the differing state plans and policies, taken as an expression of the theoretical connection between ideological and planning constructs, organize the time in the Chinese countryside during the Maoist period? Moreover, how did the schedules observed embody the consequences of the merge between the traditional and new time-cycles?

First of all, the change in the nature of agricultural activity itself determined different working rhythms. The state policies determined the kinds of crops to be planted, intensification of cropping practices, speeding up of the cropping cycle, and extension of work on rural construction into the slack season. All these policies changed the nature of the existing agricultural activity, thus modifying the traditional working rhythms. Thus, the countryside was to become more industry-like; the rhythms of agricultural production have become more standardized and accelerated, as if resembling the manufacturing processes of the industry.

Secondly, a new quality of time was introduced. The industries transplanted to land previously in exclusive agricultural use, were modeled after a large state-owned factory, which produced according to the unified, monotonous rhythm of 8 hours of daily work, or else a continuous shift work. The rural industry has preserved and even magnified the unique irregularities of production processes in large enterprises due to irregular allocation of resources.

However, the part of the rural population that has switched to industrial work-schedules has modified its rhythms so as to accommodate them to the agricultural daily, seasonal, and yearly routines of work and rest.

Therefore, the nature, rather than the machines, determines the essential characteristics of the workplace in the countryside.

Postscript

At the end of the Maoist period and the start of the Modernization Reforms in 1978, which introduced elements of the free market economy,[16] the main

[16] For one of the first comprehensive analysis on the early phase of agricultural reforms since 1979, see: Huang Yasheng 1985. The same author later produced two books that are important studies of different aspects of China's reforms until the present (Huang 2003, Huang 2008).

questions to be asked were: What is awaiting the Chinese peasant? Will the diversification of production in rural areas adequately balance off the opportunities for employment in agriculture, industry and services? Are the enriched peasants going to stay on land, or will the city with all its amenities become too strong a "pull-factor"? Will the newly introduced "small towns" as intermediary settlements really be able to serve as magnetic centers which would receive those peasants who "leave the soil but do not leave the countryside"? How does the distance between the rural settlement and the large city determine the opportunity for economic prosperity as well as the quality of life? How is it going to be different for men and women? Will the ideological (political) education still be needed to facilitate "voluntarism and activism", or will the market forces do this instead? And lastly, what kind of work and rest rhythms will the inhabitants of the Chinese countryside be able to create for themselves under the new production conditions?

References

American Rural Small-Scale Industries Delegation. 1977. *Rural Small-Scale Industry in the People's Republic of China*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Andors, Phyllis. 1983. *The Unfinished Liberation of Chinese Women, 1949-1980*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bauer, Wolfgang. 1976. *China and the Search for Happiness: Recurring Themes in Four Thousand Years of Chinese Cultural History*, Michael Shaw (trans.). New York: The Seabury Press.

Chan Anita, Richard Madsen, Jonathan Unger. 1984. *Chen Village: The Recent History of a Peasant Community in Mao's China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Chan Anita, Jonathan Unger, Richard Madsen.1992. *Chen Village under Mao and Deng.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Chan Anita, Richard Madsen, Jonathan Unger.2009. *Chen Village: Revolution to Globalization.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dutt, Gargi. 1961. The Rural People's Communes of China, *International Studies* 3: 45-64.

Economic History of the People's Republic of China. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Economic_history_of_China

Friedman Edward, Paul G. Pickowitz, Mark Selden. 2005. *Revolution, Resistance and Reform in Village China.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Gernet, Jacques. 1972/1982. *A History of Chinese Civilization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Glossary – China. 2010. Library of Congress_ Federal Research Division _Country Studies_Area Handbook Series_China_Glossary.htm. http://memory.loc.gov/frd/ cs/china/cn_glos. html

Hua, Kaiyuan. 1984. Some Problems of our Country's Development of Medium-Size Cities, *Jingjo Wenti* 7: 38-43.

Huang, Yasheng. 1985. State and Society in Rural China: A Study of Change in Authority Relations under the Agricultural Reform since 1979. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard College, Department of Government, honors senior thesis.

Huang, Yasheng. 2003. *Selling China: Foreign Direct Investment during the Reform Era*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Huang, Yasheng. 2008. *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the State*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Joseph, William A. (ed.). 2010. *Politics in China: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kueh, Y.Y. 2006. Mao and Agriculture in China's Industrialization: Three Antithesis in a 50-year Perspective. *The China Quarterly* 187: 700-723.

Lieberthal, Kenneth J. 1995. *Governing China: From Revolution to Reform*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Lippit, Victor. 1977. The Commune in Chinese Development. *Modern China* 3: 229-255.

Lippit, Victor. 1981. The People's Communes and China's New Development Strategy, *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 13. www.questia.com.

McFarquhar, Roderick. 1974,1983,1999. *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution* Vol. 1-3. New York: Columbia University Press.

McFarquar Roderick, John K. Fairbank (eds.). 1987. The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 14. The People's Republic of China, Part 1: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1949-1965. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Murphey, Rhoads. 1980. *The Fading of the Maoist Vision: City and Country in China's Development*. New York, London, Toronto: Methuen.

Parish William L., Whyte Martin King. 1978. *Village and Family in Contemporary China*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Rawski, Thomas G. 1979. *Economic Growth and Employment in China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Robertson, Alexander F. 1984. *People and the State: An Anthropology of Planned Development.* Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Romich, Manfred F. 1981. The Chinese People's Communes and the Modernization of Agriculture. *China Report* 17:15-24.

Saich, Tony. 2001. *The Governance and Politics of China*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Selden, Mark. 2006. Jack Gray, Mao Zedong and the Political Economy of Chinese development, *The China Quarterly* 187: 680-685.

Sigurdson, Jon. 1977. *Rural Industrialization in China*. Harvard East Asian Monographs 73. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Teiwes, Frederick C. 2010. Mao Zedong in Power (1949-1976). *Politics in China*, William A. Joseph (ed.): Oxford: Oxford University Press: 63-103.

Unger, Jonathan. 2002. *The Transformation of Rural China*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

Vogel Ezra F. 1989. *One Step Forward in China: Guangdong under Reform*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Walder, Andrew. 1987. Communist Social Structure and Workers' Politics in China. In: *Citizens and Groups in Contemporary China,* V. Falkenheim (ed.), Michigan Monographs in Chinese Studies 56, Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 45-89.

Walder, Andrew. 1984. The Remaking of the Chinese Working Class, 1949-1981, *Modern China* 10.1: 3-48.

Wolf, Margery. 1985. *Revolution Postponed: Women in Contemporary China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Vesna Vučinić – Nešković

Organizacija vremena na kineskom selu: fizički rad, ritmovi i pol u kasnijem periodu Maoizma (1958-1978)

Ova studija bavi se pitanjem na koji način je državna politika za vreme Maoističkog perioda, od početka Velikog skoka napred (1958) do uvođenja Modernizacijskih reformi (1978), uticala na organizaciju vremena na kineskom selu. Nakon napuštanja prvobitnog sovjetskog modela modernizacije, baziranog na ekskluzivnom jačanju teške industrije, kinesko političko rukovodstvo razvilo je strategiju paralelnog razvoja poljoprivrede i industrije, pri čemu je čak prvo trebalo dodatno da podržava modernizaciju drugog. Studija je usredsređena na načine na koje su dugoročni državni planovi i kratkoročnije ekonomske, društvene i ideološke odredbe i kampanje zajedno uticale na životne ritmove kineskih seljaka. Domeni u kojima su ovi uticaji postali vidljivi su: (1) intenziviranje poljoprivrednih praksi, (2) uvođenje sitne industrije, i (3) politizacija slobodnog vremena. U analizi se detaljno slede karakteristični ritmovi rada i odmora u okviru dnevnih, sedmičnih, sezonskih i godišnjih vremenskih intervala.

Ključne reči: vreme, selo, industrijalizacija, radni ritmovi, Kina, Maoizam

Vesna Vučinić – Nešković

Organisation du temps dans la campagne chinoise: travail, rythmes et genre dans la période maoïste tardive (1958-1978)

Cet article traite la question de la manière dont les politiques de l'État au cours de la période maoïste tardive, depuis le début du "Grand Bond en avant" (1958) jusqu'à l'introduction des réformes de Modernisation (1978), ont

affecté l'organisation du temps dans la campagne chinoise. Après avoir abandonné le modèle soviétique initial de modernisation, basé sur l'affermissement exclusif de l'industrie lourde, les dirigeants chinois ont développé la stratégie d'un développement parallèle de l'agriculture et de l'industrie, dans lequel l'ancien allait en plus soutenir la modernisation du nouveau. L'étude est concentrée sur les manières dont les projets de l'État à long terme et les politiques et les campagnes économiques, sociales et idéologiques à plus court terme ont conjointement influencé les rythmes de vie des paysans chinois. Les domaines dans lesquels ces influences sont devenues visibles étaient: (1) l'intensification des pratiques agricoles, (2) l'introduction de la petite industrie, et (3) la politisation des loisirs. Dans cette analyse les rythmes caractéristiques de travail et de repos à des intervalles quotidiens, hebdomadaires, saisonniers et annuels sont suivis en détail.

Mots-clés : l'organisation du temps, la campagne chinoise, la période maoïste tardive, les rythmes de vie des paysans chinois

Primljeno 23.03.2010.
Prihvaćeno 31.03.2010.