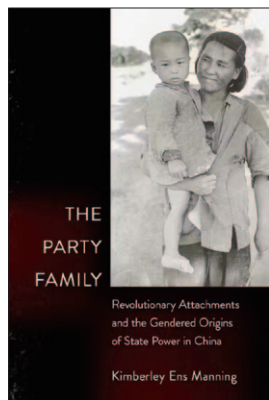


This book makes an exciting contribution to the study of intangible cultural heritage in China. However, the qualities of Su's book also have their own limits: while the book does provide a stimulating and complete picture of ICH issues in Lijiang, it does not adequately pinpoint the exceptionality of Lijiang's case. Indeed, many less famous touristic areas in China find it difficult to promote their cultural heritage and to insure their transmission even in the short term. In Lijiang, bearing the World Heritage label has profoundly transformed people's life, their livelihoods, and the local cultural fabric, but that hasn't been the case everywhere. To be fair, the author does sketch out a short international comparison with similar cases elsewhere in the world, in order to get away from the exceptionality of Lijiang's case. These comparisons, however, are only made on an international level, and could have been discussed further.



MANNING, Kimberley.
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*The Party Family:
 Revolutionary Attachments
 and the Gendered Origins
 of State Power in China.*
 Ithaca: Cornell University
 Press.

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Far from the centres of power, how is a revolution felt? Kimberley Manning's intriguing study of state power in China posits that shortly before and after the 1949 revolution, it was felt, and enacted, through family ties. *The Party Family* tells two intertwining stories. The first shows how a network of elite women, most of them wives or widows of prominent political leaders, promoted what Manning calls maternalist policies, emphasising motherhood, women's domestic role, and reproductive health. The second tracks how these policies were received and reworked in rural families in Henan and Jiangsu, as the state called upon local women cadres and ordinary women to produce, save, and sacrifice for socialist construction. Connecting the two stories is Manning's central argument that "the power of the state to extract and allocate resources (...) depends in no small part on the leadership and labor of women" (p. 2).

Part One, "States of Activism," provides an account of Chinese maternalist activism before and immediately after 1949. Maternalism, a term drawn from the study of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Euro-American movements, does not provide a clear narrative throughline, particularly since it was not generally in local use. But Manning argues that maternalist policies became part of a repertoire that activists of different political persuasions could access and rework.

Chapter One locates the sources of early twentieth-century Chinese maternalist activism in Christian missionising, Japanese discourse on virtuous mothering, and the establishment of girls' schools. Maternalist activism attracted women who were or would later become prominent political figures, including Song Qingling 宋慶齡, Deng Yingchao 鄧穎超, Cai Chang 蔡暢, and Li Dequan 李德全.

Chapter Two describes a loose network of nationalist, communist, and unaffiliated women activists, which Manning dubs the Chongqing Coalition, who cooperated on wartime projects for women's and children's welfare. This chapter also develops the concept of Party families, examining how political couples worked in overlapping domains to promote maternalist social policies.

Chapter Three finds that one important axis of rural Chinese Communist Party mobilisation centred on the woman householder and her capacity to support the war effort through domestic and farming labour. Yet the characterisation of rural women as backward, and the devaluation of women-work as uninteresting or trivial – among women activists as well as male leaders – continued to limit the scope of women's mobilisation.

Chapter Four traces the efforts of Deng Yingchao to expand rural women's landownership rights and enlarge their revolutionary role. Rural women became politically active with the encouragement of visiting teams of women's activists and male Party members in their own families. Manning offers a sobering account of the difficulties in becoming a woman leader in the face of frequent family opposition and ongoing domestic responsibilities.

Part Two, "State Capacity and Contention," focuses on the initiatives of the post-1949 state enacted partly through Party families. Chapter Five describes how the early People's Republic of China state attempted to improve social welfare and women's reproductive health while extracting resources from the rural areas to fund development. The labour of grassroots women organisers was crucial to that effort.

Chapter Six explores the implementation of the contentious Marriage Law. Women leaders associated with the Chongqing Coalition successfully pushed for one-party divorce by petition. But in addition to the well-known opposition to divorce by peasant men, male cadres, and mothers-in-law, Manning finds another surprising source of local resistance: grassroots women cadres who were intent on maintaining family stability while drawing women into collective production. This orientation of local women leaders conformed nicely with emergent national leadership priorities for family stability and economic development.

Chapter Seven analyses the Double Diligences campaign (*qinjian jianguo, qinjian chijia* 勤儉建國, 勤儉持家) promoted by Cai Chang and her husband from 1956, in which women

were exhorted to be diligent and frugal in building the country and managing the household. As rural women were mobilised to participate in collective farm work, this campaign gave them an additional task: enforce austerity at home so that the state could extract more of the harvest from rural communities to fund socialist construction. Manning calls this a “total war” approach to economic development, in which wives and mothers were responsible not only for family survival (a maternalist agenda) but also for intensified cooperation with state priorities.

Ultimately, Manning finds “the mobilization of maternalism and militancy would prove to be a deadly combination” (p. 134). Chapters Eight and Nine offer a devastating account of how that process unfolded during the Great Leap Forward, centring on one of the worst-hit provinces, Henan. In poignant excerpts from her interviews, Manning reinforces the conclusions of a substantial earlier literature: “utopic fever” (p. 209) and sumptuous feasts in collective dining halls were quickly supplanted by starvation. Dining halls initially were hailed as a step toward freeing women from domestic tasks so that they could contribute their labour directly to socialist production. But when they were disbanded, they were denounced as wasteful (never mind that excessive state procurement of crops led to a shortage of grain), and responsibility for feeding the family was returned to the woman householder. In the context of state-caused starvation, exhorting women household managers to be diligent and frugal was a cruel misrecognition of their desperate situation. One of the few potential bright spots of the Great Leap – expansion of reproductive health services with birth clinics under the newly established communes – was soon dimmed by diminishing resources.

Manning’s examination of the gendered dynamics of early socialism reminds us that national and local women leaders were active participants in the political changes of the 1950s, shaping some policies at the top and either enforcing or reconfiguring them at the grassroots. She establishes that this activism had antecedents in pre-1949 movements, especially social gospel feminism. Family ties in Party families enabled women like Deng Yingchao and Cai Chang to promote an agenda centred on women’s social welfare. The same family ties enhanced the state’s capacity to extend its political reach. Throughout, Manning observes, “the household, and the women assigned to uphold it, have been (...) central to these state projects of transformation” (p. 273).

Like all ambitious works of scholarship, *The Party Family* raises more questions than it answers. It would have been interesting to explore linkages between maternalism and the “father-mother” official (*fumuguan* 父母官) ideal of the late imperial state, and between the Double Diligences and imperial statecraft veneration of women’s thrifty virtue. Manning deploys many frameworks to address the gendered origins of state power: maternalism, the Chongqing Coalition, woman warrior, loyal soldier, total war vs. war communism. They compete for the reader’s attention, and it is not always clear how they might have been understood by participants in these historical events. Nonetheless, they are provocative in delineating positions held by overlapping networks of people at varying times.

The book does a nuanced job of showing how family ties functioned as political attachments inside high-ranking Party families, who left extensive records. In contrast, our sense of how Party families might have worked at the grassroots must rely upon scattered statements by interviewees, too sketchy to allow much certainty about Party families below the elite level.

By entitling her book *The Party Family*, Manning suggests that Party leaders sought to draw the population into a familial relationship in which hierarchical lines of authority were clear – the parents called the shots. Ironically, many state initiatives drew heavily on unmarried women without family burdens, and succeeded mainly in increasing the burden on married women for thrifty household management, as well as direct labour for the collective. Yet, simultaneously, this thoughtful book shows that by mobilising women-work leaders to organise inside households, the Party reconfigured family roles, extracted labour, improved basic health, and (intermittently and sometimes disastrously) attempted to provide social services.