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Accepted version: **Governing through 'the family' in China: The cultivation of ethical political subjects through officials' nearest and dearest**

Introduction

“The family” and families in China have been impacted significantly by state policies over the decades. As Short and Zhai argue, the Chinese government has in many instances been overtly and intentionally involved in family life in various ways such as policy related to fertility and marriage, curbs on allowing citizens to emigrate, and efforts to revamp economic policy (1996, 691). Social policies (such as the one-child policy) and institutional systems (such as the resident registration policy, or *hukou*) in China have long been an important force in terms of political intervention in family lives (Sheng 2005, 120). More recently, familial relationships, as well as friendships and relationships in neighbourhoods, have increasingly been utilized by local authorities in China in order to facilitate forced urban demolitions or to demobilize rural protesters (Deng and O’Brein 2013; O’Brein and Deng 2015, 2017; and O’Brein 2017). Thus, family policies in China are generally created as a way to alleviate or remove particular societal problems (Quach and Anderson 2008, 1089).

In this paper, we focus on the most recent political intervention into family lives which is associated with China's high-profile anti-corruption and anti-hedonism campaigns. We argue that these campaigns include tacit family-focused interventions and strategies that have been implemented for the purpose of increasing and extending the reach of these campaigns into family life and for recruiting family members as collaborators in the process of driving out these undesirable practices. We prefer the notion of 'problematization of corruption by the CCP' to the "definition of corruption." Elsewhere, we devoted an entire book to examine how corruption is problematized (perceived) by the Chinese Communist Party and how is it tackled. As we show in our book, rather than identifying illegal corruption activity *per se*, anti-corruption campaigns in China aim to induce a particular kind of morality into the officials, by which the CCP has attempted to establish a link between hedonistic lifestyles and susceptibility to becoming involved in corrupt activities. That is to say, male officials' private hedonistic lifestyles (banqueting and 'womanizing' are the core), are seen by the CCP as the entry point behaviors that can lead official into more serious forms of financial corruption associated with fulfilling their public duties.

It is against this background that officials' families are mobilized to become an aspect of the anti-corruption campaign in order to discourage male officials' hedonistic and extravagant life. That is to say, the creation of a 'culture of fear' (for example, *ex post* prosecution associated with high-profile arrests and trials) is only one side of the story, a culture of sacrifice dedicated to the transformation of the self must be formed within the Party. As we show in this paper, self-transformation is to

be achieved through the party's formal agencies, which have instituted compulsory self-criticism and criticism meetings for all officials in China (the authors), as well as through lesser known processes that require the involvement of officials' families in this process. We argue that the *ex post* prosecutions and investigations of high-ranking officials and their family members have paved the way for the establishment of *ex ante* preventive measures which also involve the cultivation of morality within the families of officials. Thus, in these various campaigns, the families of Communist officials are being tactically called upon to collaborate in the work of resocializing officials.

On 18 October 2015, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) issued the "Chinese Communist Party Standards on Integrity and Self Discipline," Regulation which states, in article 8, that the entire body of the CCP members and all levels of leading party cadres at all ranks have a duty to "manage your household with integrity, take conscious effort to make your family a positive example."¹ This type of statement is unprecedented. It is the first time in China's history that the party officially required its members to "self-cultivate a virtuous moral character and manage their household with integrity" (*xiushen, qijia*) (articles 7 and 8). This regulation, which is in a similar vein to President Xi Jinping's various

¹ See Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, "The Chinese Communist Party Standards on Integrity and Self Discipline," promulgated 21 October 2015, *China Law Translate*, <http://www.chinalawtranslate.com/中国共产党廉洁自律准则/?lang=en>; accessed 3 February 2017.

statements on the role of families, has strong Confucian roots in “*xiushen, qijia, zhiguo, pingtianxia*”. In Confucianism, it is in order to influence the world, that moral transformation of the self has to begin within the individual and in the context of the home (Chang 2011, 50). As President Xi stated,

The family is the basic cell of our society. It is our first school in our life. No matter how many changes with our time, no matter how many changes with our pattern of life, we must pay special attention to the construction of the family and to education within families in order to make tens of thousands of families become the basic sustaining point for national development, national progress and social harmony. (17 February, 2015)

Indeed, historically in Chinese society, the family was an institution governed by a set of feudal orders and ethical codes among kinships, based on Confucian doctrines. It was seen, as noted by President Xi, as the “basic cell” of society. Traditionally, the Chinese emphasis on filial duty made family loyalty a dangerous rival to the party (Ji 2004, 83). Thus, when the communists came to power, both communes in rural areas and work units in urban areas were instituted in order to maintain control over their members’ family lives (Sheng 2005, 121). The communists dealt with this friction between devotion to the family and loyalty to the party by favouring the party; however, they underscored that the family would remain critical for supporting the welfare of the individual citizen in the China they were building (Qi 2015, 146). In short, as Crabb argues, although it appears the family received a certain amount of independence from state control, in fact family life in China is “not outside the

workings of official power but intimately tied to state policies and agendas” (Crabb 2010, 386).

In this context, President Xi, in various speeches, has urged Chinese officials to cultivate a moral and “clean” family culture through the combination of elements of both Chinese traditional culture and the “red” family cultures of their revolutionary predecessors. For example, in addressing representatives of China’s Cultivated Families award winners on 12 December 2016, he said,

Leading cadres at all levels, especially senior cadres, should inherit and carry forward outstanding Chinese traditional culture; inherit and carry forward the red family cultures of the revolutionary predecessors; and learn good examples from Jiao Yulu, Gu Wenchang and Yang Shanzhou and other comrades.

Leaders at all levels should maintain noble moral and healthy living lifestyles.

Leaders must firmly encourage their relatives and children, through educating them to be law abiding, to work hard and to live simple and self-reliant lifestyles, and to understand that corruption starts with moral corruption. We must be an example for the whole society in this regard.

In this paper, we attempt to address an important but less studied phenomenon in the context of the anti-corruption and anti-hedonism campaigns, namely, the process through which the families of communist members are being co-opted by the party as a mechanism for encouraging them to become ethical communist subjects in the context of what we call China’s ethical revolution (the authors). This paper examines

the extent to which officials' families are being mobilized to facilitate the party's reformulation of the ethical ecology of the current political system.

This paper is based on original fieldwork in which we conducted 50 interviews with high, mid-level and low-level male and female officials, and in some cases, their family members across China during 2014 and 2015. The participants were from provincial governments, universities, state-owned companies and other public sectors, organizations and departments. Due to the sensitivity of our research, and for the sake of protecting our participants, their identities are anonymized. All participants freely participated in our research, they consented to take part and were informed that they could withdraw from the interview at any time. In the next section, we will introduce the background of China's anti-corruption campaign and its impact on Chinese officials' families.

Corrupt Lives of Officials outside the Family Home

Since coming to power in late 2012, President Xi has launched an anti-corruption campaign which has impacted upon all officials within the party. He referred to this campaign as "swatting flies and caging tigers" (22 January 2013). Along with this campaign, he has also introduced the "eight-point code" which imposes restrictions on officials' behaviour in order to reintroduce and reinforce the appropriate, correct and expected practices of communist officials. Furthermore, a way of improving the effectiveness of the implementation of the "eight-point code" and to improve the "working styles" among officials, President Xi also launched the "Mass Line Education" programme for the purpose of eradicating the "four undesirable work

styles,” namely, formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism and extravagance. He described these interdependent programmes as a “purification” process whereby Communist Party members can make “spicy” efforts to “sweat” corruption out of their thoughts. We refer to these various interdependent initiatives as comprising an attempted ethical revolution for the purpose of boosting the legitimacy of the Communist Party’s continuing non-democratic rule in China (the authors).

What is the impact of the anti-corruption and associated campaigns on the work and home/family lives of officials? As an official from the disciplinary department told us, “officials are now going back home right after leaving their offices. They no longer dare to go out for dinners and entertainments.” In the recent past, it was commonplace for higher-ranking officials to require more junior officers to return to their place of work after regular hours at the end of the day or on weekends to attend to “pressing” duties, which in many cases involved excessive levels of indulgence in the night-time economy (Xiao and Cooke 2012, 10). By complying, officials attempted to show they possessed characteristics such as persistence, a willingness to forfeit their own desires, and a dedication to supporting the general welfare of China’s citizens. But oftentimes, this devotion became a display of loyalty to leaders shown through the sacrifice of family and personal time for the leaders’ happiness. In many cases, officials had to spend considerable amounts

of time and energy on relationships associated with the “outside” world of career (Osburg 2013, 66) (which in the Chinese context is associated with *guanxi*).²

The anti-corruption and related anti-hedonism campaigns attempt not only to alter officials’ professional practices but also to reframe private relationships among officials in order to restore the party’s “moral ecology.” Many lower-level officials resented being obliged to entertain leaders as this took up considerable amounts of their time, money and energy. A mid-level official from a policy research department elaborates on some of these issues:

There used to be two to three dinner parties every week all, paid for from public funds. Sometimes we did not want to go, [and] not everyone wanted to eat. We were afraid of engaging in such social activities where we had to say something insincere without knowing each other. Besides, there were also trips paid for by using public funds, which in name were business trips but which in actual fact were tourist trips, that cost a lot of government funds.

According to a number of our participants, before the anti-corruption crackdown, various “excuses” were made for spending public funds for hedonistic purposes and maintaining *guanxi* relations. As another participant told us,

² There is a substantial body of literature examining *guanxi*. It generally indicates “carefully constructed and maintained relations between persons which carry mutual obligations and benefits” (Qi 2013, 309). For a detailed discussion, see Xiaoying Qi, 2013, “Guanxi, social capital theory and beyond: toward a globalized social science,” *British Journal of Sociology* 64(2), 308–324.

I have been very disgusted, and declined a variety of invitations, because I'm not happy with many people accompanying me after work. Once, when I went to Zhengzhou, the provincial government had a person accompanying me. Together with the driver and another colleague, there were four of us. At Luoyang, the local agency held a 20-person dinner for us, and 16 were from local government. I wondered whether this was held for us or for their own colleagues. (mid-level official from provincial government)

As a result of the crackdown, our participants depict a disruption of traditional *guanxi* relationships and culture. The consequence of this, for many officials, is that they feel liberated from the demands of hedonism and *guanxi* (Yan 2010, 493). As an official told us,

Now, my life is getting back to normal. I do not need to eat lots of expensive and unhealthy foods at those banquets. For example, my *sangao* problem is better.³ Moreover, you can no longer make friends with colleagues from some organizations. We are saying that we should not have friends at all. Why? Because you are public servants, so you cannot make private friends with others. You have to treat everyone the same. Thus, civil servants will have no contact with anyone in society. We should not make friends with and party with outsiders; rather, we should go home. Friendship is seen as a loss of life.

³ *Sangao* problem refers to “high blood pressure, high blood fat levels and high blood sugar.” It is often used to denote the problematic hedonistic lifestyle among Chinese political and economic elites.

People dare not make friends at the office. (a low-level official from higher education)

Through dictates such as those mentioned above, which are associated with the anti-corruption and anti-hedonism campaigns, the party is trying to separate the public and the private and to designate appropriate spaces for each of these, that is, the office and home. By so doing, they hope to clarify and define appropriate and inappropriate relationships that have become blurred by *guanxi*. Entertainment spaces are now forbidden as they blur the distinction between public and private and are associated with inappropriate relationships. The problem, as seen here, is that hedonism and *guanxi* combined can often lead to factionalism and also moral degeneration (the authors). Why is this an important aspect of the anti-corruption and anti-hedonism campaigns? It is assumed that over time, the identities, desires and relationships connected with the outside world of society come to overshadow officials' loyalty to the party and to their domestic selves, often leading to a sense of estrangement from the home (Osburg 2013, 66). A mid-level official from the disciplinary department explained the relationship between the pursuit of entertainment and pleasure outside of the family home and harmony and disharmony within the family:

Officials have had fewer opportunities for banquets recently. Why were there so many mistresses outside the marriage? Because officials didn't go home. If the official goes home often, instead of having dinners outside, the relationship between family members will be more harmonious. The smallest

cell of the society is the family. If the family is good, the whole society won't be worse, isn't it that true?

As well as encouraging harmonious interaction within the family, we argue that, by encouraging officials to go home after their eight-hour workday, it is possible for the party to create a seamless process for monitoring officials' activities. As we reveal in the next section, it is expected that officials' behaviour will be subjected to supervision by their organizational unit during the workday, and that they will be monitored by their wives, children and relatives when they are not at work (that is, outside the eight-hour workday and on weekends). Previously, it was difficult to oversee officials' behaviour beyond their professional life, and it has been suggested that this gap in the surveillance and the monitoring of officials facilitated their deviant behaviour outside regular work hours (Sun 2008, 71). As a consequence, we argue that as well as restricting opportunities for hedonism, we are beginning to see evidence from or data that "the family" is also being tactically utilized as both an agent of surveillance and also an agent for the remoralization of officials in this context.

Family as the Link between Society and the Individual

In China's post-reform era, the family was not only explicitly recognized as the most efficient institution for socializing individuals but was also given a broad range of responsibilities, which reduced the strain on public institutions. For example, the government of China has not assumed the role of providing for the well-being of its aged citizens but instead has continuously sought to use constitutional measures to

promote the responsibility of members of the family in caring for the older population (Qi 2015, 150). Indeed, in the context of industrial transition when there is a widespread sense of uncertainty and insecurity for individuals and families, the Chinese have made a vigorous effort to support the family as a fundamental aim,⁴ while at the same time have placed a priority on work as a vital way of securing the prosperity of the family (Zhang, Li and Foley 2014, 15). As such, the Chinese sense of personal growth and success has become intertwined with individuals' career success. Consequently, if a particular family member enjoys success within the arena of work, the entire family can regard those achievements as bringing dignity and honour to all the family members, and this can result in the elevation of the family's social rank (Zhang, Li and Foley 2014, 16). In this context, being an official is viewed as an important means of achieving status and material wealth, as a mid-level official from higher education told us:

For example, if a man can work, can make money and have high social status, he is the ideal. This can be achieved by being an official in China. So, if you are an official, it means you can bring a sense of security to the family.

Gaining economic security for one's family is seen as a significant factor in officials' motivations to accumulate private gains from their public offices. Furthermore, before the recent campaigns, and in line with the family-based work ethic, if an individual

⁴ It is also because of this sacrificial commitment to families among Chinese people that authorities in China often target familial relations as a means to achieve particular ends, this can take the form of what Deng and O'Brien (2013) call "relational repression."

put in overtime, then the other family members generally considered that as an action taken for the entire family instead of a sacrifice of the family for the selfish pursuit of one's own career. According to a survey conducted in 2014, over 64 per cent of officials worked over 10 hours a day, and nearly 15 per cent work between 11 and 15 hours a day.⁵ Furthermore, what has come to light is that officials under investigation for corruption did not always take bribes themselves; rather, they often used a company in which a member of their family occupied a supervisory role to conceal the source of money related to bribes (Yu 2008, 171). In a high percentage of corruption cases, it has been shown that corrupt officials' spouses and children have played a critical part in enabling and benefiting from the senior officials' corruption. Often, these members of an official's family have exploited that person's position as a means for carrying out their own dealings to enrich themselves illegally (Zhou 2006, 21). As an inspection official told us,

Corrupt spouses have already become a noticeable phenomenon in a number of cases involving corrupt government officials. The spouses of officials found to be involved in corruption have often helped their partners take bribes or take advantage of their spouses' positions to make illegal profits. At the same time, family relations have also been destroyed by investigations. Many corrupt officials have been found to have a lover. They are not loyal to family; they are betraying the family.

⁵ Qiao Cuixia and Wei Lianhe, 1 September 2014, "We should pay close attention to the living conditions of leading cadres," *Qiushi*, http://www.qstheory.cn/CPC/2014-09/01/c_1112305982.htm; accessed 16 October 2016.

Thus, family relationships can contribute to corruption. It is not unusual for an individual's devotion to family and friends to go off course, with the result that the individual's support for the common welfare becomes eroded (Zhou 2006, 21). In this sense, the family and often the factions that form around dishonest leaders can become the tipping point for what inspection officials call "moral degeneration" and ultimately corruption. This is why officials' families have also become the target of the anti-corruption and anti-hedonism campaigns. As President Xi says,

Because of bad education within families and polluted family atmospheres, some officials' wives and children have seen their home as a transaction place between power and money. They made their family members into an interest group looking only for material benefit with few emotional ties. (12 January 2015)

For this reason, the remoralization of officials necessitates the simultaneous reconstruction of family relationships, because the families of communist officials have also benefitted from and, in some cases, enabled their family members' unscrupulousness. In this context, the party's new focus on "the family" can be understood as a prevention strategy. Wherein the moral health of officials' families has become directly linked with the moral health of the party, and consequently the legitimacy of the party as a whole.

As such, the crackdown on corrupt families and the reformation of the moral family are being developed simultaneously to rebuild the morality of officials and thus improve the moral ecology of the party. President Xi has stated, "officials'

family cultures are not only issues of their own, nor are they small and private issues but an important issue for the clean culture of our party” (12 December 2016). For this reason, we argue that the Communist Party has ambitions of the Chinese family to become as both a prophylactic against corruption and also as playing a part in the party’s remoralization of officials.

Instead of dismantling the feudal authority of families as in the past, where people’s loyalty towards their families was considered a source of competition that could undermine their loyalties to the party, under President Xi, families and households are being perceived as potential spaces for the remoralization and resocialization of Chinese officials. This is enabled by the fact that, as Qi finds, in contemporary China, although filial obligations within families have remained strong, the latter are less concerned with the reproduction of fixed norms of patriarchal authority that often leads to competition with the authority of the party than with cultivating mutual financial and emotional support within the family (Qi 2016, 49). That is to say, the party under President Xi is less concerned with families as competitors for its authority, and more concerned with the family as being either a force for “evil” in the form of filial factionalism or a force for “good” in the form of a moralizing institution. Thus, the resocialization of party members is to be achieved by officials spending more time with their families. As we reveal below, they are being informed by the party that their happiness should not be dependent on the privileged status of the official but on the security that comes from the official being aligned

with the primary ethos of the party, as it has been redefined by President Xi: keeping clean and serving the masses.

Working on and through the Family Members of Officials

Where can some examples of the party's surveillance of officials and their families be seen? We have been told by a number of the inspection officials we interviewed that a great deal of their work consists of policing and patrolling the streets and monitoring luxury restaurants, private clubs and other places that officials are known to frequent. Officials' residences have also become a target of surveillance. As one of our participants observed,

It definitely has a deterrent effect. Some people at least restrain themselves a lot, and there were many fewer business people coming to our official compound (local leader residence area) to give gifts during holidays and festivals. There is no one who dares to do it publicly as they did before. They know inspection officials are monitoring our gate. (high-ranking official, provincial government)

The strategy of monitoring high-ranking officials' residential compounds is also a component of China's efforts to apprehend officials suspected of corruption who may attempt to flee overseas in an effort to avoid being arrested for corruption. *Xinhua News* reports that during the 2014 "Fox Hunt campaign" that was launched by the Ministry of Public Security, "680 corrupt Party members and government officials,

were returned to China.”⁶ The governing of “naked officials” (i.e. those whose relatives are all in foreign countries) in China is also linked with the “fox hunting” efforts abroad. According to the report, in order to “prevent more corruption-driven flights, high-level officials who have sent their families abroad are a special focus of attention.”⁷ Such “naked” functionaries may not receive promotions and are barred from holding “important and sensitive” positions in fields like the military, diplomacy and national security. In this strategy, the private lives of officials are becoming linked with their public roles as officials.

Moreover, regulations on private use of government cars and drivers are also seen as an attempt by the party to push officials back home. As an inspection official told us, “they are no longer allowed to use government cars for private purposes; they have to go home early and won’t go singing in karaoke venues.” Even if officials may drive their own cars to banquets, the severe legal punishment of drunk driving has also changed the dynamics of many banquets (Mason 2013, 131). Officials who drive after drinking alcohol risk being fired from their jobs and could face a jail sentence.

Having worked upon families through the surveillance of officials’ family’ activities in certain spaces and at certain times and through restraining officials’ behaviour outside the home, the party is simultaneously attempting to work through families to inject certain values that are more in tune with its political ideology. In this process, party inspection officials are allied with family relatives in monitoring

⁶ *Xinhua Insight*, “China in Fresh Overseas Fugitive Hunt to Contain Corruption,” 4 January, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-04/01/c_134117295.htm; accessed 31 March 2015..

⁷ *Ibid.*

officials on a 24-hour basis. In this context, the family in China functions similarly to what Foucault identifies in the eighteenth century Europe, where the family acted as “the switch point, the junction ensuring passage from one disciplinary system to another, from one apparatus ... to another” (2006, 81).

In many ways, this entire process is concerned with ensuring the health of the party and society through ensuring the health of what President Xi calls the smallest cell of society, the family. Medical and mental health analogies emerged as common themes in our interviews concerning the new role of the family. For example, an inspection official told us,

We now talk about the reconstruction of a normal family life for party members and cadres. They should have a normal family life. In the past, the abnormal working environment became normal. I know a couple, and both of them are deputy director generals of a provincial department. In the past 20 years, they may have seen each other once a month. However, as a member of a ruling party, I think first we must have a normal family life through which we can deal with our work with a healthy personality.

Thus, in order to prevent corruption (and maintain a “healthy relationship” and mental health), the family is to become an agency for transmitting and reflecting the ethos of the party. Having encouraged officials to focus on their family lives, we are also beginning to see evidence in our data of the party is gradually attempting to the greater control of families through their wider public regularization education

strategies and also direct and indirect (that is, familial) surveillance. For example, an official told us about initiatives in Da Yao county in Yunnan province:

We carried out activities, such as “clean culture in families.” We worked hard to educate spouses of party members in terms of keeping a moral culture in the family. We alarm them, give them lectures and send them letters urging them to maintain morally healthy families. We also require them to sign contracts in which they promise that they and their families will help build a “clean” culture. We try to achieve an environment where officials’ families will always bear in mind the morality and the honesty of the party culture.

Thus, what we are beginning to appreciate, is that it is through family members and these targeted “moral education” programmes that the norms of the party are to be passed into domestic life. In many respects, despite some concerns about family members enabling corruption, “the family” on the whole is being reconstructed here as the possible site for the cultivation of ethical subjects. We can see a further example of this in the Chu Xiong city government of Yunnan Province. For example, a mid-level official from the city told us,

We actively educate officials’ families so that they learn the importance of a clean and moral culture. We ask them to strictly observe the party discipline, and to raise awareness of the party’s anti-corruption campaign. We aim to raise the anti-corruption banner through officials’ families, for the purpose of building a strong anti-corruption wall in families in order to maintain peace and happiness in families. We use mobile phone text messages to send anti-

corruption messages to all female cadres of local governments and cadres of the women's federation system to remind them to be moral spouses and housekeepers so that they can contribute to the party's clean system and clean politics.

However, whenever there is a strong tendency for public authorities to support explicitly the socializing powers of the family and to mobilize familial authority for the task of making better "citizens," it is likely to result in the suppression of all seemingly disruptive tendencies (Pye 1968, 32). This can also be seen from the other side of the anti-hedonism campaign. For example, even if officials have high salaries (for example, in the case of some directors of state-owned enterprises) that allow them to afford their families' expensive lifestyles, the officials would still be regarded as hedonists, if they enjoyed lifestyles in keeping with their earnings. An official's wife complains,

What is the definition of hedonism? If my husband's salary is very high, can I buy some luxury brands? It is my personal choice as to whether I can wear luxuries or not. But the party requires us to restrain ourselves not to be hedonistic and extravagant even if I spend my own family money. It says you must live as normal people and strive for a better country. You cannot show yourself and your family off if you are a party member. It seems the poorer the officials, the stronger the party.

In this discourse, officials' wives are also expected to endure sacrifices for the sake of maintaining the virtue of party officialdom. As a result, the anti-corruption and the

anti-hedonism campaigns have wide-ranging implications for officials' (and their families') consumption patterns through introducing a culture of suspicion, in which many activities are perceived as "hedonistic" and potentially an indication of corruption. As observed by many of the officials we interviewed, "ordinary" officials and "ordinary" activities are impacted by what they see as indiscriminate anti-corruption measures. Thus, all places that can potentially be used to establish private relationships/friendships among officials are prohibited, whether they are "healthy" or "unhealthy." In other words, private intimate relationships formed in the family setting are seen as legitimate and to be encouraged, and private intimate relationships outside of the institution of families are to be discouraged. We argue that this is an example of 'government through the family' rather than 'government of the family.'

In this context, officials become the target of "education," while family members are expected to act as mediators between the party and its members. As a low-level official from an education department explained to us,

I think the purpose of anti-corruption is to fight against those officials who want to take advantage of their power to gain power and wealth. The real objective is to prevent them from thinking that I am an official, so I can gain or seek something for my family. I think there should be someone to restrain him, then he won't think he gets such extra benefits from his work.

A component of this "restraint" comes through the process of co-opting officials' families into the political project of improving the moral ecology of the party, which we argue is ultimately for the purpose of regaining the party's legitimacy. From this

perspective, we are beginning to appreciate the significance of the family in this context as it is potentially being transformed from being a pillar of the party to being the place where the party constantly threatens to become unglued. Furthermore, as our examples from Yunnan Province demonstrate, in many ways, this governmental attention on officials' families potentially obscures the lines between the private and the public realms and encroaches on the private realm (Chou 2010, 10). As we reveal below, we are beginning to see evidence in our data, that through this process interfamily relations have been strengthened, and also family-party relations are being consolidated (Zhang 2002, 167). We argue that the strengthening of these relationships is achieved through the simultaneous process of the demasculinization of elite groups within the party and the empowerment of women within the family.

Demasculinization of Elite Groups

In this section, similarly, we demonstrate that the party's co-option of families in the anti-corruption and the associated anti-hedonism campaigns has also resulted in the demasculinization of elite groups as they are seen as having a particular susceptibility to hedonism and corruption. Thus, aspects of China's current anti-corruption and anti-hedonism campaigns can be described as examples of 'family-friendly' public policy. Given that elite social networks in China primarily comprise men and that this composition is frequently reproduced and reinforced in clubs and other organizations that cater exclusively to males, a variety of elite masculinity has gradually become institutionalized and codified in China (Osburg 2013, 10–26). In the process, elite masculinity has become the normative masculinity around which male officials'

practices are oriented and measured (Osburg 2013, 10–26). As a mid-level official for an organization department told us,

In reality, men account for the majority of the workforce in the workplace; there are more men in leadership roles than women. Therefore, if the men can restrain themselves, they will affect women and their subordinates.

In the context of promoting a clean culture within families and within the party, the party's primary objective is tackling masculinized bribe-giving practices rather than promoting an idealized version of masculinity. The reason for this is these practices have become associated with masculinized practices which the party sees as "unclean." That is, these practices are associated with a male cadre's vulnerabilities and are linked with the often-grey areas of corruption. This has direct implications for female officials. In the context of masculine associations of elite networks, the sexual virtue of female officials was constantly under scrutiny by many of their peers, and they regularly faced accusations that their success is based on the manipulation of men rather than their own work and talent (Osburg 2013, 35). As a female official from higher education told us,

Talking about women, as you said, if there is no crack in the eggs, there won't be flies around them. You may even find some women in the workplace who may take the advantage of their beauty to attend some important event that they are not officially qualified to attend. Now if the leader is a little more careful, he won't provide such opportunities, and therefore those women will restrain themselves as well.

In this discourse, the metaphor of “flies” denotes female subordinates who are around the “eggs with cracks” (that is, morally dubious male high-level officials). The metaphor of “flies” is clearly a derogatory term for some female officials. As a consequence of the growing numbers of female officials, this demonization of women participating in banquets seems to be somewhat out of date in the context of increasing “desexualization of banqueting”, in which female officials who participate in banqueting are seen more as colleagues rather than as escorts or hostesses (Mason 2013, 120).⁸

In turn, these seemingly more meritocratic female officials forcefully disapprove the male-dominated system that, from their perspective, constitutes Chinese officialdom. As Mason argues, thanks to growing numbers of female officials and their relatively high levels of educational achievement due to meritocratic recruitment in China’s government system in recent years, women have provided a vivid critique of heavy alcohol consumption as a morally deficient act (2013, 108). They were dismissive of male officials whose political success derived from the power of their *guanxi* rather than their own abilities and also critical of young women who exploit their femininity and sexuality (Osburg 2013, 26).

⁸ Yet, as Mason finds, officials now become more concerned with long-term health repercussions of frequent banqueting. Particularly, female officials whose husbands are also officials are ‘double stressed,’ as they are not only concerned with their own body image and loss of productivity due to heavy and unhealthy eating and drinking during banquets but are also concerned with their husband’s health because of excessive drinking (2013, 121-122).

The party sees much potential in women. For example, they can possibly provide alternative “healthy” examples of being a Chinese official. Moreover, the female spouses of officials are also being positioned by the party to act as a “moral brake.” That is, officials’ wives are warned of the dangers of and are expected to divert their spouses away from corrupt masculine cultures and behaviours.

In this process, the party has advocated a discourse of “risks to the family” associated with corrupt officials for the purpose of reassigning responsibilities to each member of the family to look after each other.⁹ In this discourse, the formation of a “clean culture” may be found at the point where concerns related to the public and the private realms (that is, the party’s legitimacy and the family’s safety). It is also becoming a site, according to Crabb, “where one can see a re-working of the relationship between state and family” (2010, 387). Within this site, anxieties about the safety of officials reflect elements of an ethical system in China that has changed to one in which the party’s agenda for sustaining its legitimacy through the anti-corruption and other campaigns is interdependent with “private” efforts to ensure one’s family’s security. An inspection official told us,

Officials’ greed can result in their harmonious families becoming the “bitterness of the family” and “cries of the family.” As communist officials, we must be fearful and respectful of the power we hold. We need to cherish

⁹ A number of schoolteachers told us, “we also ask our students to write a letter to their parents who are working in government. The letter is entitled ‘Daddy, I do not want money, I only want a happy and complete family.’”

the self, the family and our good reputation. We should use the good honest culture of tradition within the family to foster the clean ecology of the party. We must build a strong moral line of defence against corruption and the degeneration of thought and action, and thus be clean and honest officials to guard the harmony of our families.

Thus, the achievement of the harmony and the security of the family is to be implemented through a program of moral cultivation within the family. At the same time, as the culture of fear, which is associated with heightened anxiety, emerges as a consequence of high-profile anti-corruption cases, the families of officials are also expected to act as a safe haven to assuage the anxieties of officials – including those who are a “flight risk.”

Under these initiatives, the party has encouraged women to become agents for conveying the norms of the party into the private sphere. For example, as a high-level female official told us,

We offer the “Honest Wife” program, providing education to officials’ wives concerning the harmfulness of illegal behaviours, through positive and negative examples, we introduce cases of how a woman can destroy her man’s future. If there is a good woman behind a successful man, there must be a bad woman beside a corrupt official. We see women not as just traditional wives of officials who are in obedience to their husbands. They are also professionals who are able to educate their husbands on core values, morality, culture and so on.

In this new discursive field, the discourse of the ‘husband’s greatness’ is being de-emphasized in this context, and is being replaced by a stress on maintaining a morally healthy and harmonious family. In this sense, morality is beginning to be linked to the prosperity and security of the family. In this context, officials’ moral weakness became the key factor leading to the potential instability and insecurity.

As such, there is evidence that the anti-corruption and anti-hedonism campaigns with their focus on reducing the opportunities for male officials to indulge in ‘immoral,’ expensive and corrupt activities is also creating a sense of empowerment of women in officials’ families. As the wife of an official told us, “I am now acting as a party inspection official at home to oversee my husband’s life. I feel I am empowered as he always comes back home now.” The rationale behind this approach is that, by placing women in the position of constant watchfulness over their husbands, wives have an influence on the regularity of their husbands’ professional and hence social life.

Conclusion: Reshaping and Reconnecting Public and Private Relationships

In contrast to the Communist Party’s attempt in the past to disrupt people’s primary loyalties to their families what we are witnessing in contemporary China is that, first, officials are being encouraged to break away from their alternative “families” which are associated with factions, *guanxi* and extramarital relationships, and that, second, they are being pushed back into their families. The interpersonal relations based on *guanxi* were problematized in terms of being too susceptible to corruption, while a new family norm, for the purpose of building a “clean culture,” is being created to

guide and channel interpersonal relations among officials' family members. We argue that what has behind this is an aspiration to encourage the emergence of a new type of ethical political subject who can help restore the legitimacy of the party and thus lead the Chinese people, to ensure China's prosperity (the authors). This focus has unleashed an extensive social surveillance system made possible by an army of inspection agencies comprised of disciplinary inspection officials employed to ensure the success of the high-profile anti-corruption and related campaigns in China.

However, in this paper, we argue that family members of officials are also being encouraged to play a role in those campaigns. Our data suggests that the family members of officials are also being mobilised for the purpose of monitoring officials' public as well as private relationships and behaviour. In this mobilization process, it is the relationships within officials' families that have become of interest to the party, in terms of how these families exemplify and exhibit what are deemed to be appropriate values aligned to the party. It is well established that the family is a privileged site and an instrument for governing a population in terms of sexual behaviour and demography and as such is a privilege site for the remoralization of society. However, in this paper, we also present evidence that the family in China is also beginning to be viewed by the communist party as a key institution for the remoralization of the party, through the process of encouraging the development of the ethical subjectivities of officials and this is for the ultimate purpose of enhancing the legitimacy of the party's continuing non-democratic rule in China.

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