Women Managers in Taiwan

Taiwan is a prosperous island. It has an international reputation for its exports of manufactured goods—from light to relatively high technological products. In the past four decades Taiwan has transformed itself from a predominantly agricultural society to a highly industrialized society. Between 1955 and 1990, employment in industry rose from 18 percent to 41 percent of the labor force, and employment in agriculture dropped from 54 percent to 13 percent (see Table 1). During that period, Taiwan’s population growth rate dropped from 3.8 percent to a mere 1.1 percent. Economic growth has been impressive, with an annual per capita increase from less than US$1,000 in the 1950s to more than US$10,000 in 1992, while income distribution has been kept relatively equal by world standards (Ranis, 1978).

Taiwan’s economic success is shared by three other countries in East Asia—Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea. Together they are called the East Asian NICs (newly industrializing countries) and also East Asia’s “four little dragons.” People in the “four little dragons” share a similar oriental work ethic, labeled the “Confucian ethic” since it promotes “individual and family sobriety, a high value on education, a desire for accomplishment in various skills ... and seriousness about tasks, job, family, and obligations” (Kahn, 1979, p. 121).

The NICs also share a similar economic strategy, referred to as

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Table 1
Selective economic indicators for Taiwan, 1955–86 (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agriculture (1)</th>
<th>Industry (2)</th>
<th>Manufacturing (3)</th>
<th>Tertiary (4)</th>
<th>Women in the labor force (5)</th>
<th>GNP growth rate (6)</th>
<th>Population growth rate (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>(13.2)</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>(16.3)</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>(27.5)</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>(33.5)</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>(32.0)</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


"export-oriented industrialization," which is based on exporting light manufactured goods to stimulate fast economic growth under strong government guidance (Amsden, 1979). The export industries also have one common characteristic: they employ a large supply of cheap labor, mostly young women, especially in the two major exporting industries—textiles and electronic assembly. In mid-1973, for example, women constituted 79 percent of the total workers in the textile industry and 66 percent in the electronics industry (Huang, 1977). In the three export processing zones, over 80 percent of the workers were women (Galenson, 1979, p. 393). It would be accurate to say that the economic success of the East Asian NICs is based on cheap female labor. Small and medium-size family enterprises account for the major share of export value. Although men head most of these enterprises, women secretaries who are fluent in a foreign language are in charge of communicating with foreign importers. Many women managers began their career as secretaries in such firms.

In the Chinese society of Taiwan, women’s primary role is in the family. The great majority of women who do work outside the family do so primarily to supplement family income and not to pursue a career. The proportion of women in management is approximately 11 percent and it has fluctuated over the last decade. Nonetheless, this issue has recently become a popular topic for discussion. Interest was stimulated by a bestseller entitled Nuqiangren ("Strongwoman") written by a female novelist Zhu Qiujuan (1984), who was herself a man-
Following the appearance of this book, interviews with many top women executives were reported in popular business and women's magazines in Taiwan. Apart from anecdotal stories about women managers, there is little systematic information about them. A number of studies of career women include women managers as well. From these sources, we have constructed a mosaic of women managers in Taiwan. After a brief introduction to Taiwan, we describe the processes by which women gain access to managerial positions. We then turn to a microlevel description of three aspects of women managers' lives: the challenges they face as women in a masculine world, relations with colleagues, and the influence of and on family life.

Introduction to Taiwan

Taiwan is located off the southeast coast of the Chinese mainland. Though only 14,000 square miles in size, it has a population of 21 million. Until the large Chinese immigration in the 17th century, Taiwan was sparsely populated, primarily with aboriginal tribes of Malay origin. It was ceded by China to Japan in 1895, after China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, and restored to China in 1945 after World War II. In 1949 the Nationalist Chinese government retreated to Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, after being defeated in a bloody four-year civil war during the Chinese Communist Revolution. The Nationalist Chinese government had claimed to be the sole legitimate government of China until quite recently. Taiwan's previously rigid position on this issue has led to its diplomatic isolation and made Taiwan an international pariah as country after country established diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China. Nationalist China's membership in the United Nations was replaced by the People's Republic of China in 1971. The United States withdrew official recognition from Taiwan in 1978, but maintains a semiofficial relation with the island state.

The current Taiwan government has only recently adopted more flexible policies regarding China. It now allows Taiwan residents to visit mainland China and takes no action against businessmen who trade and invest on the Chinese mainland. Although Taiwan is the world's thirteenth largest trading nation, it lacks international standing (Baum, 1991). It is neither a member of the United Nations nor a member of GATT. It does not have formal diplomatic relations with any major nation in the world but maintains semiofficial trade missions
in the capital of most countries, from London to Moscow. It sent athletes to participate in the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games under the banner of Chinese Taipei. Taiwan is a member of the Asian Development Bank, at whose annual meetings its delegates sit behind the nameplate of "Taipei, China." Taiwan's businessmen carry their suitcases around the world regardless of the obstacles resulting from the country's diplomatic isolation and without the ordinary diplomatic protection enjoyed by most businesspeople of other countries. Over half of Taiwan's exports, however, are marketed through large-scale Japanese trading companies.

Diplomatic isolation does not discourage Taiwan's businesspeople nor does it seem to hinder Taiwan’s economic growth. The growth was based on three major factors: the export-oriented government economic policies (Ho, 1978), U.S. aid (Jacoby, 1966), and the culture, which included the folk religion that tolerates economic misdemeanor, the aggressive businesspeople, and an efficient, literate labor force that is motivated by the Confucian ethic of hard work and achievement (said to be the equivalent of the Western world’s Protestant ethic) (Kahn, 1979). A basis of legitimacy for the Taiwan government is its ability to provide a better living standard than that of mainland China. Therefore, in order to provide jobs for the growing population, the government pushed forward an intensive industrialization program. From the 1950s through the 1970s, the government provided handsome financial incentives for investors and exporters, depressed agriculture prices and wages, and maintained a well-disciplined labor force by controlling labor unions. The United States provided extensive economic aid to Taiwan. Before the aid was terminated in 1965, a total of $1.4 billion was sent to the island. The amount was equivalent to about 6.4 percent of Taiwan’s GNP over the period (Jacoby, 1966, p. 38).

Government policy has changed gradually since 1980. The government has relaxed its control over the market and labor unions, and reduced its subsidies to exporters. One of the reasons for the economic liberalization is pressure from the United States for Taiwan to reduce its trade surplus. In addition, the government is reducing its political control. Economic prosperity has created a well-educated middle class and a favorable climate for political liberalization and democratization. In terms of democratization, Taiwan still lags behind its two neighbors, South Korea and the Philippines. The majority of the people on Taiwan, however, are politically conservative; they treasure their eco-
nomic gains and fear that rapid democratization might destabilize the economy and the society. Furthermore, Taiwanese export-oriented entrepreneurs, facing rising wages, the appreciation of Taiwan's currency, and shrinking profit margins, have moved their labor-intensive factories to mainland China and other Southeast Asian countries. Those remaining in Taiwan employ illegal foreign workers in increasing numbers, claiming that young Taiwanese workers are losing the traditional Confucian work ethic. The claim is based on the fact that few young workers are willing to take low-paid jobs. Although the unemployment rate in Taiwan is still low, the moving of business overseas and the hiring of foreign workers in labor-intensive industries depress wages and may also replace indigenous workers, especially older ones of both genders.

Thus, the macroenvironment in which women managers in Taiwan were raised was characterized by a politically authoritarian society with a mixed economy in which people enjoyed the freedom to conduct business, especially with foreign countries.

Socioeconomic factors contributing to the emergence of women as managers

*Open and merit-oriented education and examination system*

Social interaction in China is shaped by networks of personal relations or connection called *guanxi* (Hwang, 1987, 1990). The government bureaucracy is no exception. Promotion is based on the *guanxi* (whom you know and thus trust) as well as on the performance of the candidates. However, a universalistic merit-oriented system based on open examinations operates parallel to the parochial *guanxi* in government bureaucracy. Since the seventh century, the examination system has been one of the means used by the Chinese imperial courts to recruit new blood to their administrations and to buy off the literati (Weber, 1951, p. 116). The Chinese myth is that everyone can succeed through education (or, actually, through examination). A typical story tells of a peasant boy who had studied very hard for more than ten years, had won top ranking in a series of government exams from county level through national level, and eventually became a high-ranking government official. Once a person becomes a high-ranking official, other family members can benefit from connections with that person. Be-
cause the whole family and the extended kinship group have an interest in it, the open and fair examination system is considered almost sacred in the Chinese society.

Although the open examination provides those without connection with a way to cross the threshold into officialdom, it does not give equal opportunities for promotion. There is a long history of competition and conflict between those who acquired a position on the basis of merit and those who made it on the basis of guanxi. The latter are referred to as "black officials" (he guan). Only a few years ago, the press severely criticized the appointment of "black officials."

The examination system in Taiwan is applied to areas other than government bureaucracy, including the admitting of new students into schools and new employees into large, private firms. Because a university diploma is required for a decent job, Taiwanese parents ascribe great importance to their children’s education. Initially, parents emphasized only their sons’ education but included daughters when education for girls expanded, especially among middle-class families that can afford education for both sons and daughters. All universities, junior colleges, and public senior high schools, which are more prestigious than private ones, recruit freshmen through a system of joint-examinations administered or supervised by the government.

In 1992, 10.4 percent of women and 10.5 percent of men aged 20–24 years were in or had completed four-year universities and colleges (Ministry of the Interior, 1993). College students, especially those at national universities (which are more prestigious than private universities), come from the more economically advantaged families, either because their families can afford the costs associated with passing the highly competitive exams (cram schools, tutors, etc.) or simply because these families provide their children with better learning environments, allowing them to concentrate on preparation for the exams.

The exam system furthers educational disparity. Students from advantaged families are overrepresented in national universities, where they pay low tuition and fees—about US$1,000 for the academic year 1993–94—while students from disadvantaged families are overrepresented in private universities, where they pay high tuition and fees—about US$3,000. The ceiling cost is subject to government mandate, thus limiting the competitiveness of the private institutions and preventing these private institutions from becoming schools exclu-
Women are concentrated in the humanities and social sciences. In 1991, 61 percent of graduates with a bachelor's degree and 35 percent with a master's degree in business and social sciences were women (see Table 2). According to the joint-entrance exam system, students are required to choose among one of the three major fields before taking the exam—namely, humanities and social sciences; engineering and physical sciences; or biological sciences. Business schools are classified as part of the humanities and social sciences and, therefore, invariably recruit a large proportion of women. Majors in this field provide the major recruitment pool for managers in the public and private service sectors. Employment opportunities in the service sector have expanded rapidly in recent years. Women college graduates have an advantage over their male counterparts, who are required to do two years military service following college. When a male graduate is released from military service, his female classmates have already had two years' experience in the job market; some have already earned a master's degree.

College women have a high commitment to the labor market. In a survey of 733 women (and 871 male) students from 16 universities in Taiwan, only 29 percent of women students planned not to work full-time after graduation, 57 percent intended to continue working regardless of marriage or of having children (Yeh, 1986). Only 22 percent intended to discontinue working after marriage or when they have school-age children.

Women's entry into public service management has been greatly enhanced by the universalistic rules of access. The government holds annual service examinations administered by a special branch of government outside of the ordinary executive, judicial, and legislative branches. The establishment of the special examination branch, the Examination Yuan, indicates the importance accorded to open and impartial examinations, free from intervention from any connection from recruiting government employees. Since the majority of government services recruit from the pool of social science majors (public administration, political science, business) and the majority of graduates of these majors are women (see Table 2), women have been joining government services in increasing numbers. In 1983, women constituted 31 percent of civil servants in Taiwan (China Times, October 3, 1984, p. 3). Among those who passed the high civil service examination (gao kao), women constituted just over 1 percent in 1960, 9
Table 2
Women earning bachelor's and master's degrees in business and social sciences and passing high civil service examinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bachelor's degree (%)</th>
<th>Master's degree (%)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>36.58</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>41.53</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>9.14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>45.40</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>26.74</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>60.70</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>41.41</td>
<td>1,379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The high civil service examination qualifies a person for a government managerial position; it does not, however, guarantee such a position. In fact, 58 percent of women who pass high civil service exams are routed to nonmanagerial positions (*China Times*, August 25, 1986, p. 3) for reasons well documented in the Western gender studies literature (e.g., Kanter, 1977a, 1977b; Henning and Jardim, 1977). In some government agencies, such as the postal service, public health administration, and national financial institutions, top executives do promote women to managerial positions, probably because there are no equally qualified male candidates. For years, the Police Academy has recruited quite a few female cadets. In July 1990, a married female police officer was appointed to command a country police station, with a police force of 30 officers (*Min Sheng Daily*, July 11, 1990, p. 22). However, women constitute only a small proportion of high-level management. In 1986, women constituted 3.6 percent of all those in senior positions in the central government administration, 11 percent of those in middle-level positions, and over 70 percent of those in junior-level positions (*China Times*, August 25, 1986, p. 3). There are only two women among the 26 cabinet-level ministers, council chairpersons, and agency chiefs (the Health Administration and the Council of Cultural Affairs). This situation may be explained, in part, by the fact that promotion is governed by
seniority in the civil service, and women with adequate credentials for senior positions are relatively new. In addition, there is discrimination against women.\textsuperscript{5}

\textbf{Industrialization and the expansion of the service sector}

The export-oriented industrialization that led to the expansion of the manufacturing sector employed large numbers of unskilled women workers. It did not, however, see the promotion of women into managerial positions. Women's entry into management was brought about more by the expansion of service sectors—government services, finance, trade, advertising, the mass media—which recruit graduates from the humanities and social sciences where women predominate. Taiwan has no equal-employment law requiring employers to hire a certain quota of female workers. Qualified women candidates are recruited to managerial jobs from a rather open and merit-oriented education and examination system, which generally does not discriminate against women. Women are hired or promoted on the basis of merit, although, in most cases, they must outperform men to get the same positions.

Two developments have encouraged the hiring of women as managers. First, rapid economic expansion since the 1970s created a demand for managers. There were more managerial positions than qualified males could fill and the demand "spilled over" to women employees or applicants. Second, expansion of the service sector created "new demands" for managers. Many of the new positions were considered especially suitable for well-educated women. These new managerial positions are in areas such as personnel (to handle women workers), advertising, mass media, and research and development.

Women have been attracted to other professions where gender bias has become less significant, such as law, computers, international trade, and even architecture. The demand for professionals has increased considerably in the last two decades, and the proportion of professionals who are women has also increased (see Table 3). Women have used their education to make deep inroads into the professions. This, however, has not been the case in management. In 1992, 42 percent of the professionals were women, but they constituted only 11 percent of the managers; approximately 9,000 women were classified as in "administrative and managerial occupation."\textsuperscript{6}

The most visible top women executives are disproportionately found
in multinational corporations (MNCs). Foreign companies owned by overseas Chinese and Japanese are mostly small firms where guanxi is important, but Western companies are mostly large MNCs that consider performance more important than connections or guanxi. These MNCs recruit and promote employees mostly on the basis of objective criteria, and are therefore also less discriminating in the recruiting and promotion of women employees. One of the criteria is good command of a foreign language which is in the domain of college-educated women. Western MNCs and banks provide managerial opportunities for women managers, especially in finance, R&D, and personnel departments (Di, Shun, and Li, 1984).

A view of women managers’ lives

We discuss three aspects of women managers’ lives here: their professional challenges, their relationship with male colleagues, and their family responsibility. Since so few studies have focused directly on women managers, the characteristics reported here are only tentative and therefore possibly stereotypical.

Professional challenges

Facing negative stereotypes

Even when women are promoted on their merits, they face resistance to their leadership and need to overcome stereotypes about women in
positions of authority. There are few studies of how men view women managers. An example of an extremely negative opinion is that of a professor who was quoted commenting that women managers play multiple roles inappropriately: they play the wife's role with inadequate tenderness, the mother's role with inadequate kindness, and the supervisor's role with excessive emotionalism (Central Daily News, December 14, 1985, p. 6). According to a report from the Bureau of Personnel Administration of the Examination Yuan (China Times, August 25, 1986, p. 3), many government agencies are unwilling to accept women holders of the high civil service exam credential who are assigned to the agencies by the Personnel Administration, contending that women civil servants lack the capabilities for working independently, designing plans, drawing up proposals, and analyzing situations. They believe, furthermore, that women civil servants' level of concentration and motivation to work also deteriorates after they get married. The report concluded that after marriage, female civil servants are capable of only routine work and not of taking major responsibilities. There was no mention in the news report did not mention of any measure to be taken by the administration to solve the problem.

Such stereotypical beliefs about women make it more difficult for them to gain recognition of their authority. According to a survey of women managers conducted by the students of the Ming Chuan Junior Business College for Women (Central Daily News, March 8, 1986, p. 3), women managers complain about their lack of credibility in the eyes of their colleagues and superiors and their difficulties in exerting their authority over their male subordinates. Work pressure and performance pressure for women managers are considerable, according to the Ming Chuan survey. In a 1988 study, however, high-ranking women executives indicated that once they made it to high executive positions they no longer experienced the gender-related performance pressure and the need to prove themselves (Tang, 1988). Positive stereotypes, furthermore, work in women's favor. For example, because women are perceived to be good at social skills and coordinating, they are promoted to managerial positions to serve as coordinators between higher managers and the rank-and-file (Peng, 1982).

**Honor and duty**

Financial improprieties and corruption are quite widespread among
businesspeople and government officials in Taiwan. In a recent example, 80 vocational school principals were suspected of taking bribes from textbook dealers (United Daily News, August 17, 1991, p. 1). The problem of corruption, however, is not perceived to be particularly serious in Taiwan. People generally hold a "that's the way it goes" attitude, although the conventional Confucian thought emphasizes virtue and uprightness in vocational life (Yang, 1971; Weber, 1951). The moral failure of emperors (their corruption and, in many cases, their concupiscence) is considered by the conventional wisdom to be the major cause of the downfall of dynasties.

The Taiwan government often reminds its civil servants of the importance of uprightness in business conduct, declaring uprightness to be more important than competence for important political appointments. Although it seems that no one takes the above statements seriously, an official or manager with political enemies must act carefully so as not to be caught or trapped by his enemies. Moreover, in addition to performance, it is even more important for women than for men to be perceived by colleagues and clients as honorable and of high moral stature to ensure job security (Di, Shun, and Li, 1984). Thus, women managers emphasize principles of upright and proper conduct and guard their reputation more than their male counterparts do. Self-actualization is more important for them than wealth and power.

*Unfulfilled high expectations*

Women managers are under pressure to show that they can perform better than male managers. However, women managers often fail to get full recognition for their authority; they are frustrated by their own poor performance as leaders. They try to achieve high group performance, which is not easy, and they try to make organizational changes, which are also difficult to push forward. These disappointments lead many to feel a lack of achievement and may explain why, compared with other career women, women managers' overall job satisfaction is low. Only 61 percent of women managers reported that they were satisfied with their work, the lowest proportion, after social work, among the ten occupations studied (Cheng and Liao, 1985a). Asked why they were not satisfied (in an open-ended question), 35 percent of women managers mentioned "lack of achievement" (highest among the ten occupations), 21 percent indicated "dissatisfaction with my
performance as leader" (second only to head nurses), and 27 percent mentioned unequal treatment (not including pay) (highest among the ten occupations). Women managers have an easier time with younger male subordinates, who tend to be more compliant under the former's leadership. Younger male subordinates can relate to their female superiors as elder sisters, thus justifying their subordination to a woman (Tang, 1988). In the family, a woman's authority increases with age.

Playing it safe in politics

Most women managers lack a feminist consciousness and do not participate in current social movements. Because they do not think they personally can change the status quo, they support or at least conform to it (Tang, 1988). A woman director of a Taipei municipal bureau warned women managers in an interview that speaking out about male–female equality could trigger hostility (Wang, 1986, p. 17). A survey of women voluntary associations found that over half were semiofficial organizations and most were inactive (Cheng and Liao, 1985a). Radical women's groups do exist, but they attract only a small number of followers. Of 540 career women, 60 percent noted that there was no need for new women's movements, whereas only 19 percent mentioned that a movement for women–men's equality was needed in the next ten years (Cheng and Liao, 1985a, pp. 58–59). These businesswomen managers' attitudes were similar to those of other career women in other occupations studied.

Relationship with male colleagues

Women managers do not have an easy time adjusting to the male managers' world. Women managers, although they have good academic backgrounds, lack role models. They must continually adjust to their managerial roles and learn the norms of roles by trial and error (Wang, 1986). The gender-segregated school system separates most teenage boys and girls. They attend separate junior and senior high schools or gender-segregated classes. Dating is discouraged, if not prohibited. It is considered a distraction from their preparation for the joint-entrance exams for senior high school and university.

Being deprived of ordinary interactions with the opposite sex during the formative years introduces additional tension in the relationship between men and women managers. The culture, which keeps men and
women in separate worlds, also hinders businessmen and business-
women from interacting in terms of professional and business relation-
ships. "Men can be very buddy-buddy and can go to a club and have a
drink, but I never do that," reported a computer sales manager (Lo,
1985). The feeling of lacking close ties with male colleagues is typical
(Lo, 1985). Since men and women have different life experiences, they
have fewer topics in common. When male strangers first meet, their
military experience becomes the most popular opening topic of con-
versation. When female strangers first meet, they also have no diffi-
culty finding common interests. There is no common topic, however,
when a woman manager finds herself the only woman among a group
of male managers. Many women managers do not like the sexual jok-
ing men indulge in at informal gatherings.

Women managers are also excluded from the "wine houses" ("Play-
boy"-style restaurants), where Taiwan businessmen often go to facili-
tate business with clients. Under the influence of fine alcohol and the
flattery of attractive bar girls, businessmen become uninhibited and let
their barriers down (even if only as a pretense), thus developing a
buddy-buddy relationship (even if only superficially). In that way, they
develop special guanxi. Women managers find it difficult to join such
men's parties. The "wine houses" serve male customers exclusively; 
women managers are not welcome.

The same barrier exists in universities. An engineering professor
complained that her male colleagues like to chat with her but never
invite her to join their applied research projects and consulting work,
thus limiting her influence in industry (Hsu, 1988). Male managers
play golf together, have drinks together, and join the same club to
improve their personal ties in leisure time and form alliances; in con-
trast, women managers spend their leisure time with their families
(Peng, 1982). However, the lack of close guanxi also frees the women
from involvement in corporate corruption, committed by colleagues
with "close ties" and mutual trust.

The drinking subculture of the Taiwanese business world excludes
women in another way as well. In both the private and the public
sector, to "bottoms up" with a top leader is an honor and to "bottoms
up" for your boss is a responsibility. After a heavy dose of alcohol,
subordinates express, with dramatic displays of emotion, their great
loyalty to their bosses. Because they are, presumably, partially drunk
and unrestrained, their behavior is considered to be a sincere expres-
sion of their loyalty. The ability to "bottoms up" with one's boss is a necessary precondition to success in the Taiwanese bureaucracy (Min sheng Daily, August 4, 1991, p. 15).

Although women managers are not accustomed to drinking and some may feel uneasy about Taiwan's drinking subculture, many are also flexible, active, vigorous, and unrestrained extroverts who can "bottoms up" without hesitation at business parties and can take sexual jokes with ease. For those women managers whose daily work consists of dealing with people, being able to adapt to the drinking subculture facilitates their career. This kind of woman is labeled as a "manlike woman" (nu zhong zhangfu) or a "heroine" (nu zhong haojie). Women managers whose main responsibility is dealing with technical matters may be able to avoid this drinking subculture.

*Family responsibilities*

The traditional Chinese culture, which still exerts a strong influence on gender roles and relations in Taiwan, emphasizes women's role and responsibilities in the family. The traditional Chinese saying that "husband masters affairs outside [the family] and wife masters affairs inside" (nan zhu nei nu zhu wai) is still the rule for the division of labor between husbands and wives. This tradition discourages many highly educated women with managerial potential from pursuing their careers and encourages them to choose occupations that require minimum interference with their family responsibilities. In one study, 81 percent of women managers agreed with the statement that "between the family and the career, the family is more important," however, the figure was significantly lower than the total average which was 93 percent (Cheng and Liao, 1985a, p. 35). That a disproportionate number of women managers, especially the more senior among them, are not married is not surprising.

One study asked 540 career women to suggest research topics on women studies that reflected their greatest concerns. The topic that 58 percent of the interviewees chose was the conflict between their work and family responsibilities—that is, "how to take care of the family and have a job at the same time." Taking care of the family means different things to different working women, including childcare, housework, and dealing with both husband and in-laws (Cheng and Liao, 1985a, p. 64).

A low birthrate (see Table 1) lessens the family burden of well-edu-
cated women. In 1983, women with a four-year college education had an average of only 1.77 children (DBGAS, 1983, p. 4). Having fewer children reduces the family burden of career women. Women managers usually hire tutors to supervise their young children's homework and send the children to expensive "cram" schools to improve their academic performance, but the women still feel they cannot give them adequate time. The lack of time to share and to communicate with their children arouses feelings of guilt among a large proportion of women managers (Tang, 1988; Ming Chuan survey quoted in the Central Daily News, March 8, 1986, p. 3). Frustration is especially great when children become sick, because women must usually interrupt their business to take care of the sick child and may also feel that somehow the lack of maternal attention helped to bring about the illness.

Housework is a problem of women managers in the early period of their marriage and career. However, once they achieve a managerial income, they are able to hire a housemaid (quite often an illegal Filipino immigrant) to take care of housework, including the cooking (Chen et al., 1985). The percentage of career women who complain about the burden of housework in ten occupations is the second smallest among business managers (18 percent) and highest among head nurses (32 percent) (Cheng and Liao, 1985b, p. 46). Moreover, women managers who still take major house work responsibilities rationalize their traditional burdens. Some women reported that they were dedicated to housework and were proud of their ability to meet the demands of housework by planning and working efficiently. Some said that they did not trust their husbands' capabilities in doing the housework and preferred to do the work themselves. In a traditional family, the wife opens the door and welcomes her husband as he returns from work. Since many women managers are still working when their husbands return home, their husbands have to open the door themselves. They are thus called "key-carrying husbands" (yueshi zhangfu), and their children are called "key-carrying children" (yueshi erl) (Lin, 1985).

For many women managers, freeing themselves from some of the housework, getting recognition from husbands and mothers-in-law for the value of their work and career, and simply getting their husbands to agree to take care of themselves has been a long and difficult struggle (Tang, 1988). Even if they can hire housemaids, there are still other family responsibilities, such as taking care of children and the elderly.
In-laws and husbands exert psychological pressure on women to perform to role. A woman manager reported that her mother-in-law still expected her to do the housework, just as if she were a full-time housewife. One way to solve the in-law problem, some managers found, was to establish a separate home.

Even men who support their wives in their career usually consider their own work more important (Tang, 1988). Women managers who enjoy high status in the office are still subordinate at home. As daughters-in-law and wives in the traditional male-centered Chinese society, they are supposed to obey their mothers-in-law and husbands. When women managers climb to senior positions, their work status spills over into family life, and their husbands' status at home is threatened. Women turn their earning power into power at home. For example, they may use it to seal the complaining mouths of traditionally authoritarian mothers-in-law. Their income often makes it possible for a couple to buy a home. In Taiwan, owning a house is the goal of every family. Given the high price of an apartment in a metropolitan area, a double income is essential for wage-earning families to acquire a low-priced apartment.

The wife's income solves some problems but creates others. How to share the couple's income becomes a heated issue. Many working women consider their income their own, to be used for themselves ("my income is mine"), yet they still control their husbands' income ("your income is mine"). Their husbands may feel that their wives should share the economic burdens of the family ("your income is ours") (Cheng and Liao, 1985c). In a study of 396 married career women, 44 percent used the majority of their income at their own discretion (Cheng and Liao, 1985c). In Taiwan, salaries are transferred monthly to employees' saving accounts, and the account cards are in the employees' wives' purses. Low-ranking salary men receive their daily allowance from their wives for bus tickets and a pack of cigarettes (they carry lunch boxes).

The common practice for upper middle-class husbands is different. They accumulate their private savings by keeping (or hiding) their extra income (a common practice among women in traditional Chinese society where husbands controlled family incomes). However, according to the civil code in Taiwan, all property acquired during the duration of a marriage belongs to the husband. If a wife wants to keep her own property, the couple has to sign an agreement authorized by a
notary public, a legal action few couples bother to take. In case of
divorce, the working wife without such an agreement is in an unfavor-
able situation. Because of their high incomes, many high-ranking
women executives have gone to notaries to separate their property
from that of their husbands, so that their husbands have no claim to an
equal share of it. Nor do the husbands have to take responsibility for
their wives' debts if such an agreement has been signed.

The divorce rate in Taiwan is going up rapidly. The crude divorce
rate (number of divorces per 1,000 population) was 0.76 in 1980 and
1.41 in 1992 (Ministry of the Interior, 1981, 1993). The rate was re-
ported to be higher than Hong Kong (0.96), Japan (1.27), and South
Korea (0.77) (China Times, March 26, 1993, p. 5). University-edu-
cated women have a higher divorce rate. The higher rate, however,
does not mean that the marriages of better-educated couples are less
stable. When the marriage goes wrong, the better-educated wife may
seek a divorce, whereas the less-educated wife, with poor legal knowl-
dge, just runs away.

Single women managers have difficulty finding suitable mates and
often remain single (Chen et al., 1985). Most men prefer pretty women
to smart women, and many men do not like women who are "too
rational" (Tang, 1988). All married high-ranking women executives in
one study had married in their twenties, before they achieved high
career success (Tang, 1988).

Conclusion

Although the number of managerial women in Taiwan is small, they
are a highly visible group and more important than their numbers
would indicate. The prominence of women managers is promoted by
popular magazines and by a few academic surveys that focus on this
small minority.

The proportion of middle-management women in government ser-
vice is definitely growing. Few women, however, become managers.
Most highly educated women become professionals. Even if their qual-
ifications are the same, however, women managers do not get manage-
rial positions when they compete with men. Especially where the
positions are filled on the basis of performance, they attain managerial
positions from either the "spilled over" category (when there is no
qualified man to fill the position) or from the "new demand" category
Despite the prevalent influence of traditional cultural norms, which define the home as the woman's responsibility and woman’s rightful place as in the home, improved opportunities for advancement pull qualified women away from their traditional familial responsibilities. The tradition based on free access to examinations and the use of examination outcomes for job advancement also opens the doors to women who are both qualified and highly motivated to achieve managerial positions. In fields like advertising and insurance and in positions in MNCs, performance is considered more important and gender less so, thereby proving women with new opportunities to be successful in their careers.

Notes

1. See Amsden (1979) and Gold (1986) for Taiwan's postwar history. The Taiwan economic miracle is under criticism recently because the income gap between the higher- and lower-income groups has widened since 1980.

2. These export industries thus promote women labor participation. The women labor force participation rate rose from 33 percent in 1965 to 45 percent in 1990 (see Table 1). The labor participation rate for married women with children under the age of six was even higher than the overall women labor participation rate. Because the overall rate includes teenage girls who remain mostly in schools. Labor participation rate for teenage girls was 53 percent in 1965, but it was only 27 percent in 1989, due to increasing educational opportunities for them (DGBAS and CEPD, 1990).

3. Taiwan's primary and secondary education systems overemphasize grades and examinations. They ignore the needs of those students whose grades are below average and who are unlikely to pass entrance exams for senior high schools or junior colleges.

4. There are two levels of civil service examinations in Taiwan, the high examination (gao kao) for middle-managerial or equivalent positions and the ordinary examination (pu kao) for low-ranking and first-line managerial positions. A bachelor's degree is a requirement for taking the high exam.

5. The increasing proportion of women in government service worried Premier Yu Kuo-hua who was reported to have told the legislative body that the government should encourage more male college students to major in the humanities and the social sciences (China Times, October 3, 1984, p. 3). Women professors reported that they were not discriminated in terms of promotion, salaries, and recruitment (Hsu, 1988).

6. Since women managers are scarce in the sampling survey, their estimated number in the population is subject to sampling error, which can be large when the sample size of women managers is so small. It is too difficult to make any concluding remark on the fluctuation of the number of women in management in Taiwan at the present time. The number of women managers can be exaggerated.
since many women hold only nominal managerial positions in the numerous family enterprises in Taiwan. One reason for appointing women to nominal managerial positions is so that in case a business misdemeanor is discovered in such a company, the nominal manager (in most case the wife) can take the legal responsibility and let the actual manager (the husband) continue to do business.

7. Corruption is not unusual among male managers, but it is rare among women managers. We suspect that the reason might be that women have less financial burden than do men. Besides, many male managers need extra money to spend on their extramarital extravagances (as the subculture of the oriental businessman), women managers rarely do.

8. These feelings are also shared by men in occupations that require long working hours and thus deprive them of family life, such as professional soldiers, policemen, sailors, and even researchers.

9. In the early 1980s, to purchase an apartment in suburban Taipei cost about a 120 times the average monthly pay of a schoolteacher or white-collar worker. In the late 1980s, the cost jumped to 200 times. A popular saying states, "Marrying a good wife [i.e., with at least moderate earning power] can save a man ten years' hard work." (In the 1990s, ten years turns out to be twenty or even thirty years.)

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