

Culture and Class: Connections and Disconnections Between Schools and Families

Innovations in Early Development and Education: Bridging Research to Practice

September 26, 2015

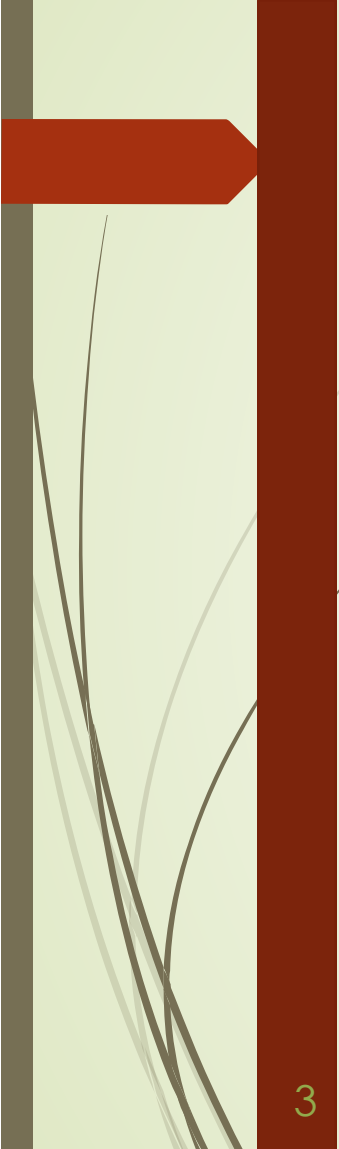
Dr. Peggy A. Kong



Acknowledgements

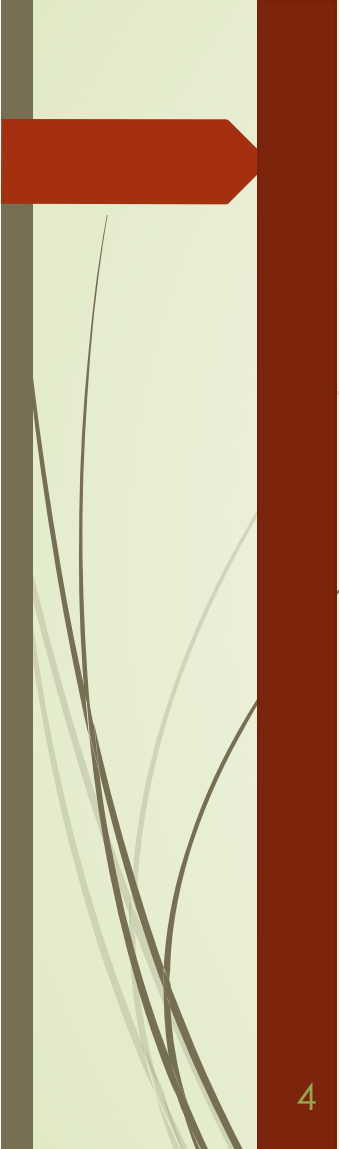
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"I want to help my child and support their education, but I don't know how."

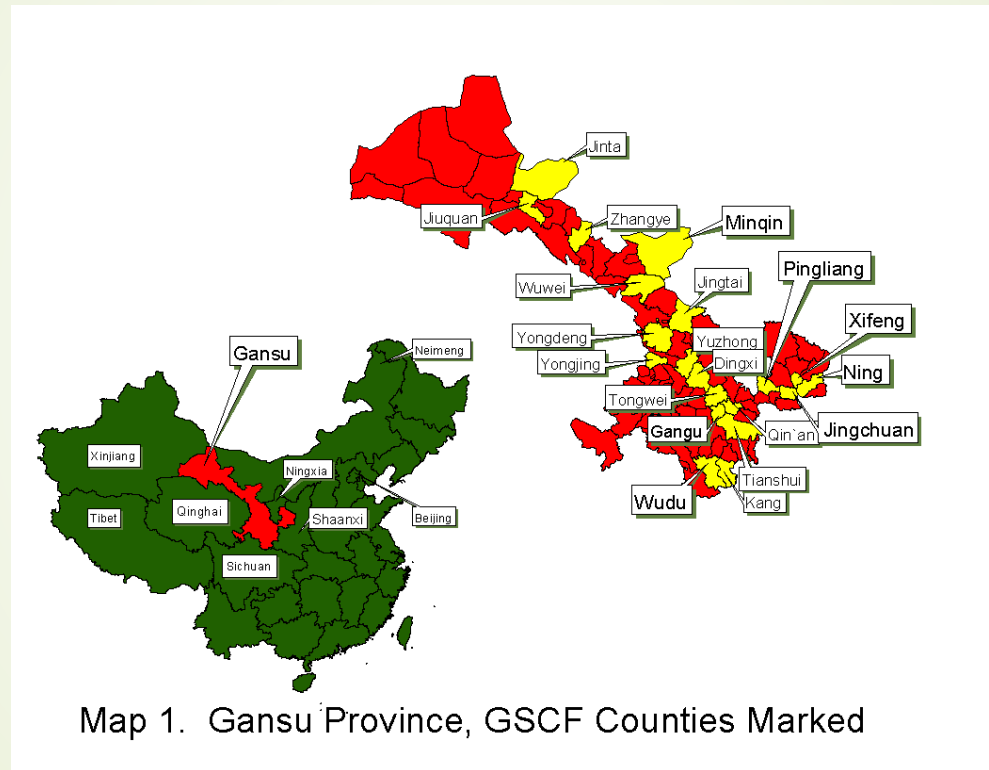
---village mother's comment, Ju Hua,
December 15, 2003



"I send my child to school, I don't know what else to do to help them."

---village mother's comment, Ju Xun,
December 17, 2003

Research Site



Map 1. Gansu Province, GSCF Counties Marked

6

5









Education in China

- Examination system
- Compulsory Education Law of 1986
- Free and compulsory education
- School fees
- Parent schools
- Education Law of 1995
- Encouragement of parent-school collaboration
- New curriculum reforms



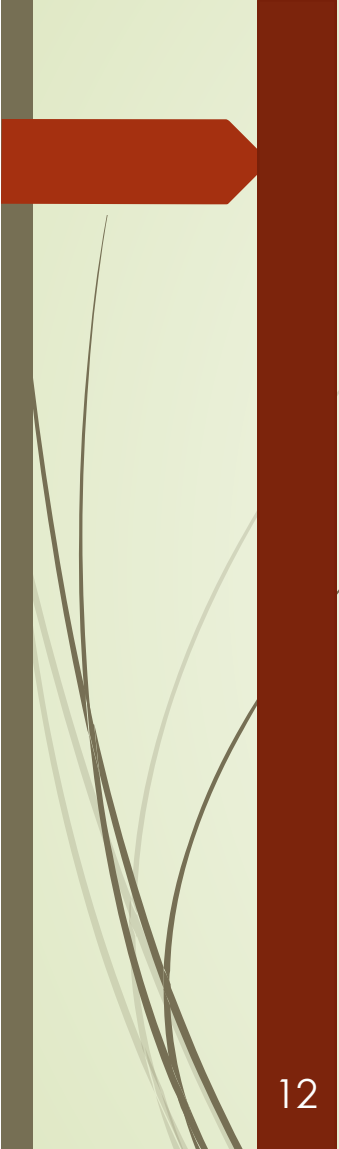
Parental Involvement and Family Background in China

- More educated families have more education-related goods in the home (Brown, 2003)
- Rural parents have few resources, difficulty coaching or helping children with homework (Lin, 1993)
- Family wealth accounted for differences in parental investment in their children's schooling (Kong, 2003)



Parent and Teacher Roles in China

- Non-overlapping roles (Stevenson and Stigler, 1992)
- Teacher as expert and parents as financial supporters (Chi and Rao, 2003)



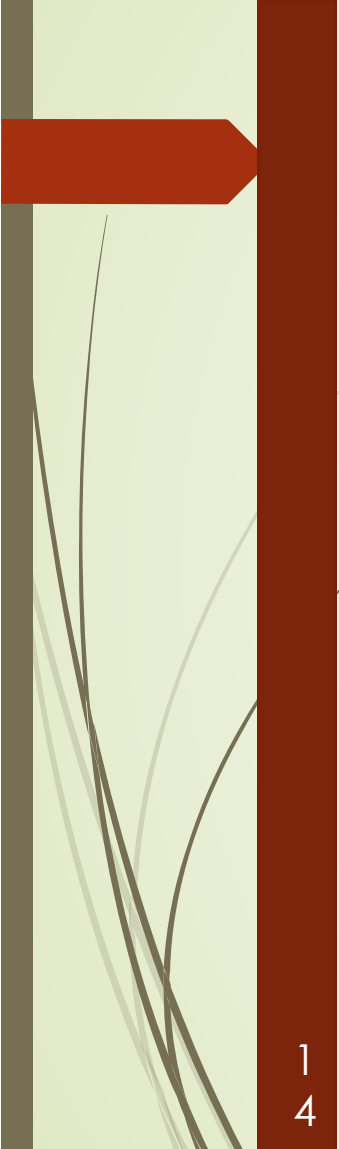
Pierre Bourdieu's Social and Cultural Reproduction and Cultural Capital

- ▶ Bourdieu theorizes that parents with little cultural capital are limited in their ability to support their children's schooling (Bourdieu, 1977).
- ▶ Bourdieu (1977) states that rural parents have had little experience with the education system (cultural capital) and, therefore, are not able to provide their children with the tools to benefit from the education system.



Prevalent Forms of Parental Involvement in Developed and Developing Country Contexts

- Helping children with homework/reading to children
- Meeting with school personnel
- Attending school activities
- Communicating with teachers/school officials
- Provision of a learning environment in the home
- Private supplementary education



Research Questions

- How do rural parents describe and understand the conditions and nature of their support for their children's schooling?
- What social interactions do they engage in to support their children's education?
- What strategies do they employ to support their children's education? How do they describe and understand these strategies?



Shao Xingwen

Shao Xingwen



Table 1. Summary of Family Background Statistics

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Mother's Education Level (n=1863)	4.32	3.45	0	13
Father's Education Level (n=1864)	7.12	3.64	0	29
Number of Kids in the Family (n=1865)	2.33	0.72	1	6
Family Wealth (n=1865)	10649.29	36247.48	120	974900
Mother in the Home (n=1863)	0.98	0.16	0	1
Father in the Home (n=1864)	0.78	0.41	0	1

Source: GSCF-2 Mother and Household Questionnaires.



What Strategies Do Rural Parents Employ to Support their Children's Education?

Strategy 1: High Educational Aspirations

“It is like this, we do what we can, we are all the same, we hope that our children will become dragons... We all feel this way, we all want the best for our children’s education, so that they will learn better, so that they will stand up. My hope is that all three of my children will go to college.”

---Mrs. An

Strategy 2: Student Agency

“I tell them [children] that all their learning materials I will take care of them. Whatever books they want I will buy. If they have problems, I will address them, the power and responsibility is up to them.”

---Mrs. An

Strategy 3: Creating a Positive Learning Environment





Strategy 3: Creating a Positive Learning Environment in Schools

“We hope to provide a positive learning environment. Now we take care of their books and school supplies, we have pens, but the kids don’t bring them, they bring the bad pens and are unable to neatly do their schoolwork, then the teacher criticizes them.”

--Mr. Lu



Strategy 3: Creating a Positive Learning Environment in the Home

“I make every effort so they do not have to do chores, so that they can spend most of their time on their studies. Even if it makes me busier I will do a little here and there when I have free time. Even if I do a little less, no matter what, just as long as my children do a reduced amount of household chores...”

--Mrs. An

Strategy 4: Seeking Academic Information in Social Relationships



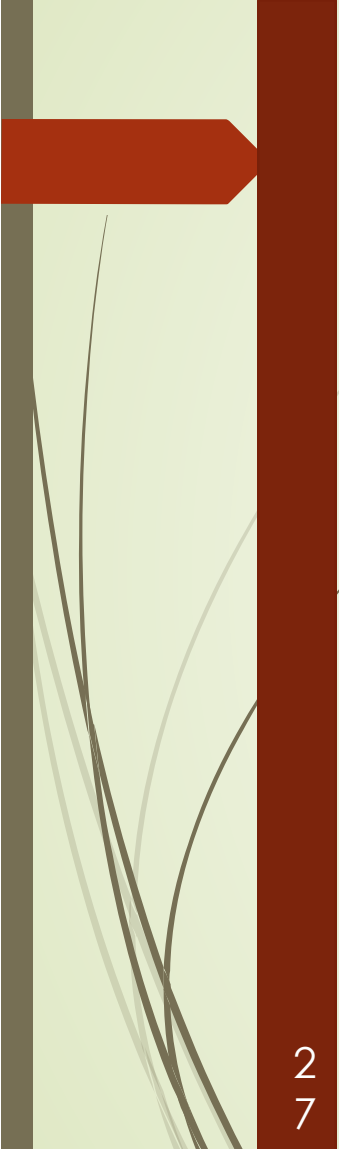


Strategy 4: Seeking Academic Information in Social Relationships

Mr. Wang tells me, “Xu Shihen [primary school principal] and I are classmates. I sometimes drop by and chat for a little bit to understand how my daughter is doing...”

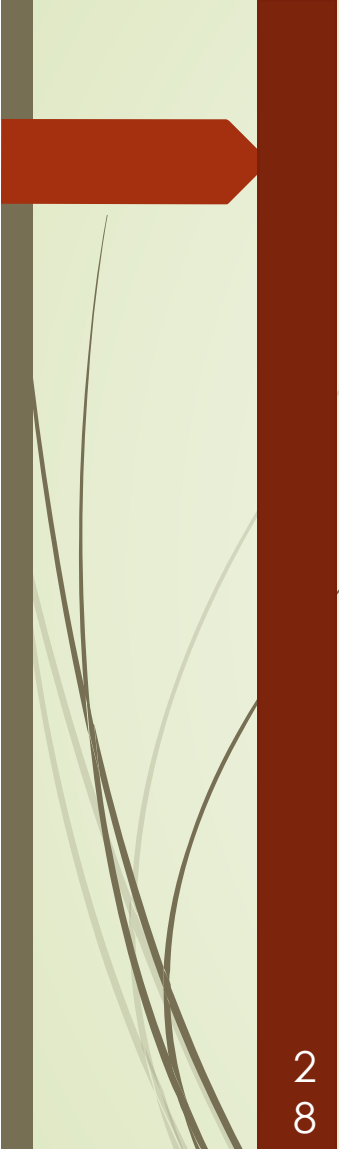
Strategy 4: Migrating





Strategy 4: Migrating

- ▶ “The primary schools are better here...my relatives told me the schools here are better...all my relatives say that Shao Xingwen primary schools are better than our schools...all the examination scores are higher here. So, we decided to transfer our sons here...The main goal of moving here was so that he [Gu Baodu] could go to school”--Mrs. Gu

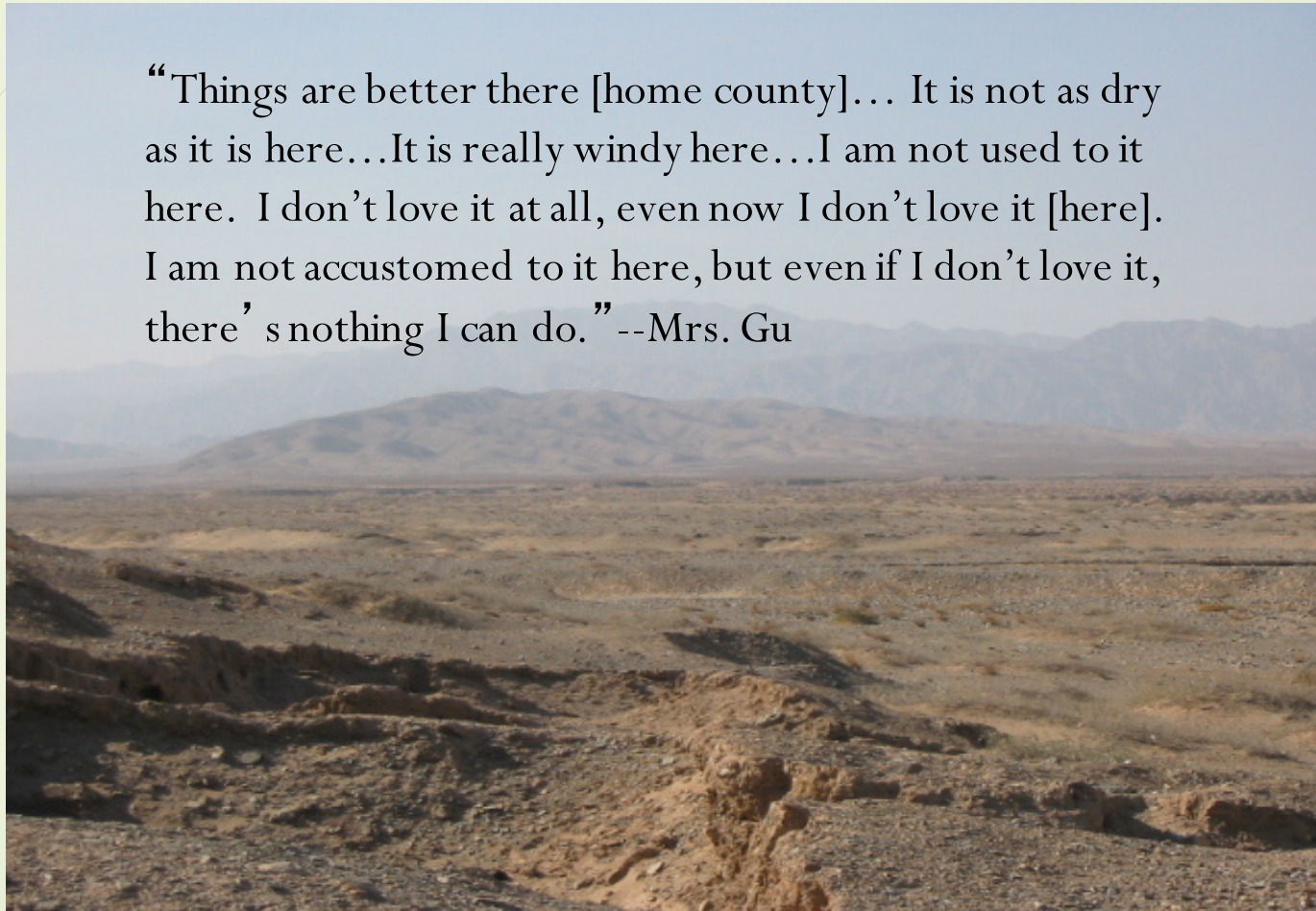


Strategy 4: Migrating

“We have the *hukou* for this area now. We have only migrated here a little while. We wanted to bring the children earlier, the schools are better here, their educational basics would have been better. Now, I regret that I did not transfer the children here sooner.”--Mrs. Gu

Strategy 4: Migrating

“Things are better there [home county]... It is not as dry as it is here...It is really windy here...I am not used to it here. I don't love it at all, even now I don't love it [here]. I am not accustomed to it here, but even if I don't love it, there's nothing I can do.” --Mrs. Gu





Discussion

- ▶ In your school and community context:
 - ▶ What are expectations for involvement of parents and teachers?
 - ▶ What are barriers to involvement of parents and teachers?
 - ▶ Examples of bridging the barriers



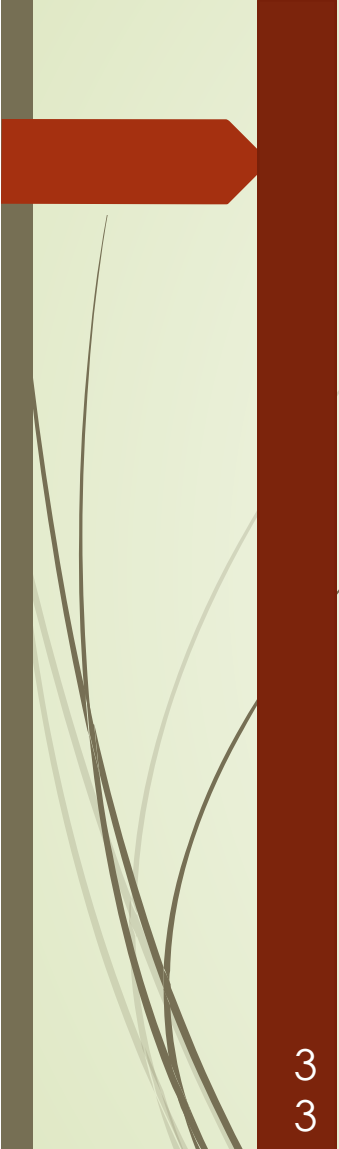
Parental Involvement Around the World

- ▶ Policies and programs have been initiated in the United States and United Kingdom that support increased parental involvement in schools (NCLB, 2001; Reay, 1999).
- ▶ In Latin America and Africa, parents are encouraged to participate at the community-level by serving on school governing boards (Eskeland & Filmer, 2002; Martiniello, 1999; Gershberg, 1999; Naidoo, 2005; Carolan-Silva, 2011).
- ▶ In China, parents and teachers are encouraged to work together to support children's schooling (Education Law, 1995).



Parental Involvement and Social Class in Developed Country Contexts

- ▶ US-based studies suggest that wealthier and more educated families provide more resources and home-based support for their children's education (Ho & Willms, 1996; Lareau, 1987; Parcel & Dufur, 2001; Lee and Bowen, 2006).
- ▶ Socioeconomic differences exist in the types and forms of interactions that parents have with school personnel, which have ensuing consequences for children's education (Lareau, 1987; Reay, 1998).
- ▶ Interactions among parents also differ according to social class or socioeconomic status (SES) (Lareau, 1987; Reay, 1998).



Rural Parental Involvement Strategies

1. Holding high educational aspirations
2. Student agency in learning
3. Providing material resources to support a positive physical school space for learning
4. Seeking academic information in social relationships
5. Migrating within the county and between counties in search of better schooling opportunities for their children

Thank you!
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