

# The Makings of a Scandal

*How CSR Failed to Meet the Labor Rights  
Expectations of the Chinese and American  
Presses in the Foxconn Suicide Scandal*

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# Abstract

When a string of suicides strikes at a Foxconn Technology Group (富士康科技集团) factory that assembles the Apple iPhone in China, accusations of worker mistreatment spread quickly in the international press. Even though statistics show that the factory's suicide rate is lower than the national average and experts and officials both assert that working conditions are legal and better than those of the average Chinese factory, the scandal still continues.

Foxconn's use of Western corporate social responsibility (CSR) codes to compensate for the lax labor policy of the Chinese productivist welfare regime seems to have failed to prevent the growing scandal. Is it possible that the press perceives Western CSR standards as inadequately suited to protect labor rights in a Chinese work environment?

This thesis uses the case study of Foxconn's CSR scandals to explore the perceived efficacy of CSR in protecting the labor rights of workers in transnational corporations (TNCs) in China. The research focuses on the media scandal that occurred following the publication of a series of three reports by *Southern Weekend* (南方周末) exploring the realities of workers' lives at a Foxconn factory in Shenzhen. This thesis uses discourse analysis of citations and paraphrases from the original *Southern Weekend* reports as its primary methodology. It examines how the concept of CSR exceeds and fails to measure up to the labor rights expectations of the Chinese and American presses. The differences between the expectations of the Chinese and American presses with regards to labor rights are also discussed.

This thesis argues that both American and Chinese presses find standard CSR codes wanting in their protection of labor rights, though each for different reasons. While the American press is more likely to emphasize the dehumanization of workers and shortcomings with regards to wages and overtime, the Chinese press is more likely to discuss workers' social isolation and broken dreams. This thesis also discusses possible origins of the discrepancy between the priorities of standard CSR codes and the labor rights priorities expressed in the Chinese and American presses, particularly contrasting the Chinese concept of the *danwei* (单位) with the Western concept of CSR.



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# Chapter I: Introduction

It is 2010 and six factory workers at the immense Longhua campus of iPhone-manufacturer Foxconn<sup>1</sup> have already committed suicide by jumping off buildings. The press informs us that their suicides are *clearly* in protest of the unbearable, slave-like labor conditions they face. In order to find out the details of the horrors of factory life, the hard-hitting Chinese newspaper *Southern Weekend* (南方周末) sends an intern undercover as an assembly-line worker at Foxconn for 28 days. Upon completion of his assignment, this young journalism intern, Liu Zhiyi, reveals all in three exposé newspaper reports.<sup>2</sup> These reports receive wide press coverage, with many American journalists using Liu Zhiyi's reports to support the hypothesis that the suicides are due to Foxconn's labor rights abuses.<sup>3</sup>

But what exactly does Liu Zhiyi reveal in his reports? What many American journalists seem to overlook is that Liu Zhiyi states that Foxconn work conditions are *better* than those of the average Chinese factory—that Foxconn is not a sweatshop. But how can this be? And if things are in fact so good at Foxconn, why are the workers killing themselves in such great numbers? The answer to this question can be found by taking a quick look at national suicide statistics for China; the Foxconn post-suicide-scandal per capita suicide rate is still significantly *lower* than the national average for the same age group.<sup>4</sup> So if the suicide rate is low, and the working conditions are better than average, why does the media still accuse Foxconn of labor rights violations?

In this thesis I will try to answer this question and many others. I will argue that the Foxconn corporate social responsibility (CSR) scandals reveal some of the shortcomings of the concept of CSR, and at the same time serve as a figurative Rorschach test for journalists as they reveal something about themselves and their cultural backgrounds by how they interpret the story.

I will explore how the contemporary Chinese economic transition from strict government control to a freer, market-style economy has created a need for a new labor policy to protect workers' rights. I will also describe how gaps both in the issues covered by contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> Foxconn Technology Group (富士康科技集团).

<sup>2</sup> Liu 2010b; Liu and Yang 2010; Yang and Liu 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Liu 2010b; Liu and Yang 2010; Yang and Liu 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Examples of this will be given in Chapter IV.

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization 1999.

labor policy and the enforcement of the existing labor policy have shifted much of the responsibility for quantifying and monitoring labor rights to employers themselves via CSR protocols.

I will then use the American and Chinese media as two points of reference to evaluate the perceived efficacy of the concept of CSR within the context of a transnational corporation (TNC) in China. I will do this by analyzing the differences and similarities between the typical priorities of CSR and the labor rights priorities expressed by the American and Chinese presses, all using the case study of the Foxconn CSR scandals. I will use discourse analysis as my primary methodology and I hope to identify the successes and shortcomings of CSR in China as perceived by the Chinese and American presses, as well as identify variances in labor rights priorities between the Chinese and American presses.

## **I.I Research Questions**

With this basic background, the proposed research problem can now be stated: My research questions are: *In what ways does the concept of CSR exceed or fail to measure up to the expectations of the Chinese and American presses? What are the differences between the expectations of the Chinese and American presses with regards to labor rights? In what ways are differences in labor rights priorities expressed through international media coverage of labor rights and corporate social responsibility scandals?*

I will additionally discuss the following questions: *In what ways do Chinese labor policies exceed or fail to measure up to the expectations of the Western and Chinese presses, international labor rights regulations and CSR codes? How does a high profile transnational corporation's role as a cultural bridge put it at increased risk for labor rights criticism?*

## **I.II Thesis Outline**

Before trying to find answers to the questions mentioned above, I must first give a general background to my topic and my theoretical framework, with a discussion of the current Chinese labor policy situation and its effects on corporate social responsibility in transnational corporations. This, along with an introduction of my case study, Foxconn, is the focus of Chapter II. Chapter III then introduces my methodology and explores some of the problems

and subsequent adaptations to the methodology that occurred in the course of my research. I also use this chapter to define the key terms that are used throughout this thesis.

In the next three chapters, different aspects of the findings of my discourse analysis are considered. In Chapter IV, I address the accusations of labor rights abuses at Foxconn found in my discourse analysis, and compare these with the results of the Fair Labor Association's evaluation of Foxconn's CSR standards. In Chapter V, I expand the discussion to issues going beyond CSR that are brought up in my discourse analysis. Chapter VI delves deeper into the issues brought up in Chapter IV and Chapter V, by discussing and analyzing the differences between the labor rights priorities implied by CSR and the labor rights priorities expressed in the American and Chinese presses. The role of the *danwei* plays significantly into this chapter. Finally, in Chapter VII, I recapitulate the findings of my thesis and give concluding remarks.

# Chapter II: Background and Theory

Before jumping into my own research and findings, there is some key background information and theory that is crucial for understanding the context of the Foxconn suicide scandals. Much of my theoretical framework is directly tied to background information and I have therefore decided to discuss these topics together. Understanding the concept of welfare regimes helps to explain the trends in contemporary Chinese labor policy and sheds light on insufficiencies in that policy. These insufficiencies, along with other factors, result in transnational corporations (TNCs), like Foxconn, being expected to take responsibility for monitoring their own CSR in order to avoid criticisms of labor rights violations. This chapter looks at these issues, introduces the Foxconn case study, and finally uses Hofstede's "cultural dimensions theory" to examine potential biases in the theoretical framework of the concept of CSR.

## II.I Classifying China within the Global Context of Welfare Regimes

Classifying the Chinese welfare regime within the global context is important for a full understanding of the complexities of current Chinese labor policy, and for understanding how those policies create pressure on TNCs like Foxconn. This is not a straightforward endeavor, however. China has a very long and complicated history that has contributed to a welfare system that blends many distinct and arguably conflicting features.

In many Western countries welfare state regimes provide labor market regulation, social protection benefits, pensions, and other social services.<sup>5</sup> Such welfare state regimes encourage de-commodification, the limiting of the extent to which individuals are merely treated as commodities on the capitalist labor market. De-commodification leads to certain expectations with regards to labor rights and the government generally takes an active role in monitoring and enforcing in-country labor rights standards. As I will demonstrate later in this thesis, these Western expectations show themselves clearly in my case study, with many American articles commenting on the low Chinese minimum wage and lack of labor rights monitoring.

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<sup>5</sup> Esping-Andersen 1990, 21–23; Wood and Gough 2006, 1696.



The Western concept of welfare state regimes is not necessarily universal, however. Wood and Gough point out that welfare regimes can in fact be created by any number of configurations of state, market, community and kin-based security factors.<sup>6</sup> Wood and Gough refer to such community and kin-based welfare systems as informal security regimes. Such informal security regimes rely heavily on client-patron obligations and various forms of social currency.<sup>7</sup> As such regimes progress in a more liberal direction, a process of de-clientelization (analogous to de-commodification) occurs.

The middle-income countries of East Asia have a blend of formal and informal welfare systems, which Wood and Gough refer to as productivist welfare regimes.<sup>8</sup> In such welfare regimes, social policy, though existent, is subordinate to the economic policy goal of maintaining high levels of economic growth. As a result, social policy in productivist welfare regimes tends to focus on education and basic health, and is much more limited in scope with regards to social protection. Social protection is therefore generally provided informally via kin and community networks.

While Wood and Gough did not consider China in their 2006 research, Gough has considered China as being a productivist welfare state in other papers.<sup>9</sup> This would probably not have been his evaluation in the early days of new China; however, what matters to this thesis is that, since the economic reform, China has clearly become a productivist welfare state. This productivist welfare state mentality also shows itself in my case study, with the Chinese migrant workers' social welfare left largely their families' responsibility.

In summary, China has a productivist welfare regime that focuses on economic growth, therefore limiting social policy that favors the laborer (social protection, labor policy, unionization rights, etc.) and focusing instead on policy that favors business. This, and other factors, have led to the perpetuation of the importance of the traditional Chinese cultural concept of *guanxi* (关系 or, literally “relationships”), a complicated system of social currency, which in many cases pinch-hits for inadequate social insurances and legal provisions.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the Chinese welfare regime both historically and currently

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<sup>6</sup> Wood and Gough 2006, 1698–1699.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1707–1708.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1705.

<sup>9</sup> Gough 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Xin and Pearce 1996.

stratifies individuals, creating various “classes” of people based primarily on birth location, with urban citizens receiving significantly better social services than rural citizens.<sup>11</sup>

## **II.II The Gaps in Contemporary Chinese Social Policy**

The last thirty years have brought on what are likely China’s two most important changes in labor policy. First, contract-based employment replaced life-long employment. Second, the labor market replaced government job-assignment.<sup>12</sup> These changes demonstrate a shift in the Chinese government’s paradigm on how to handle labor relations, with the government limiting its administrative intervention and taking a more passive role as legislator, thereby transferring greater responsibility to industries and the market. This change is further evidenced by an increase in labor legislation in the last decades.<sup>13</sup> Overarching labor policy is still necessary, however, as specific labor legislation remains fragmentary and at times in contradiction with labor policy.<sup>14</sup> This is particularly the case with labor policy regarding migrant workers, like those employed by Foxconn. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

China has also undergone a major transition in social benefits in the last thirty years. It has gone from state owned enterprises employing the vast majority of the urban labor force, and providing “cradle to grave” social security, to a hybrid system where many state enterprises have been privatized in order to allow for greater economic productivity.<sup>15</sup> Taxes and cuts to social services pick up the slack.<sup>16</sup>

In the wake of these major changes, the Chinese government has shifted its focus from the welfare of the population as a whole to the welfare of the poorest of the poor. While benefits are marginal, the government aims to provide rural minors, elderly, and disabled persons who lack family support or a reliable income stream with five guarantees: food, clothing, medical care, housing, and burial expenses. Unfortunately, these programs have been ineffective in

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<sup>11</sup> Fleisher and Yang 2003; Gao, Evans, and Garfinkel 2009; Guan 2001; Liu, He, and Fulong 2008; Ngok 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Ngok 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> And new domestic and international companies have entered the scene.

<sup>16</sup> Guan 2001; Gao, Evans, and Garfinkel 2009, 5–6.

providing support in many rural regions.<sup>17</sup> Most significantly, in our context, they also leave migrant factory workers, like those at Foxconn, with little to no social assistance.

The fragmentary nature of Chinese labor law isn't surprising when the historical context is considered, however. Prior to the economic reform labor law was virtually non-existent and arguably unnecessary in China, as the government took an active and interventionist role in China's planned economy.<sup>18</sup> Even after the economic reform, labor laws were kept to a minimum. During the 1980s the Chinese government focused on labor regulations rather than on labor laws, to allow more flexibility. In reality, many of these "labor regulations" bore a greater resemblance to general labor policies because of their lack of hierarchy and specificity, and their propagandistic language.<sup>19</sup> This lack of specificity began to cause problems as the government continued its transition into a less active role in administrative intervention. Perhaps even more fundamentally problematic than the lack of specificity was the lack of enforcement of policy. The problem compounded itself to the point where in the 1990s nearly ninety percent of foreign-funded joint venture firms were found to have violated Chinese labor rights policy in one way or another.<sup>20</sup>

For the sake of brevity, I will look at one example of the twin problems of lack of specificity and lack of enforcement—Chinese contract law. While in theory laborer and employer are to sign an official work contract at the beginning of employment, protecting the rights of both parties, in practice the employer almost always has the upper hand, in many cases negating the purpose of the work contract. Kinglun Ngok explains that there are many ways that this can happen:<sup>21</sup>

First, historically, labor forces have far exceeded labor demand in China; many employers refuse to sign contracts on the grounds that they can always find another employee who is willing to work without one. This is supported by the research of Hansen and Pang, who found that in many cases workers actually resist signing labor contracts, feeling such contracts give the employer the upper hand and limit personal freedom to come and go.<sup>22</sup> Second, Ngok explains that regulations are vague in stipulating how soon after employment labor contracts should be signed, and for what periods. This has allowed employers to force workers to

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<sup>17</sup> Gao, Evans, and Garfinkel 2009, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Ngok 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Hansen and Pang 2010, 52–53.

repeatedly sign short-term contracts and then fire workers once they get “too old”. Alternatively, employers hire workers on six-month probation contracts, which generally lack specificity with regard to wages and benefits, allowing them to legally shortchange workers on both these fronts before firing them at the end of the probation period. Third, government factory inspections are infrequent and local governments tend to focus on economic growth rather than labor rights, especially for low-income workers. Fourth, Chinese law lacks strict punishments for violations of labor regulations. In most cases the employer is only required to make compensations for lost income, and labor regulation violations are not considered criminal activity. Last, even when workers have clear evidence of contract or labor regulation violations labor dispute resolution is ineffective, requiring a complicated multi-level process of litigation which is unrealistic for most laborers to pursue.

This example shows clearly how the historical lack of labor legislation combined with the transition towards a privatized economy has created a strong imbalance in favor of the employer in the corporation/employee relationship. An outcome of this, however, is that corporations, with their new and greater freedom, are now being expected to take on greater responsibility for the welfare of their laborers. When they are perceived as not doing so the consequences they face can be serious, as in my case study.

## **II.III The Floating Population**

The “floating population” of unofficial migrants in China, in 2012 estimated at approximately 230 million,<sup>23</sup> is perhaps the group that suffers the most as a result of China’s current social policy. Coming almost exclusively from rural regions to urban areas, the migrants are ineligible for rural benefits because they are of working age and are physically capable of labor. However, as these migrants still are registered with rural *hukou* (户口 or “household registration”) they are ineligible for urban social benefits, leaving them vulnerable, often without health benefits, unemployment insurance, or pensions.<sup>24</sup> The only work available to the migrant population is usually temporary and often strenuous and dangerous, further

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<sup>23</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Fleisher and Yang 2003; Gao, Evans, and Garfinkel 2009, 11.

exacerbating the migrant's disadvantaged status.<sup>25</sup> Foxconn assembly-line factory jobs are a classic example of the sort of jobs available to these Chinese migrants.

Despite all the other odds against migrants, until recently Chinese labor policy completely neglected mention of migrant workers.<sup>26</sup> This has resulted in salary abuses towards migrants, with migrants earning an average monthly wage that is roughly half the average monthly wage of their urban counterparts.<sup>27</sup> In recent years these abuses have been responsible in part for a growing dissatisfaction among rural migrants and a changing tide, with many workers returning to the countryside in silent protest, thereby “voting with their feet”.<sup>28</sup>

New policies protecting migrant workers' rights were put in place in 2003 and 2006, and a new labor contract law was put into effect in 2008. But enforcement is still a major issue, and though the 2008 labor contract law was meant to address the migrant worker problem, it is still ambiguous in regards to who constitutes a “laborer”.<sup>29</sup>

## **II.IV Corporate Social Responsibility**

The result of these gaps in current Chinese labor policy is an increased amount of pressure on corporations to maintain a high level of social responsibility when establishing labor standards for their workers, and to carefully monitor that standards are upheld. This is particularly the case for transnational corporations who have to answer to labor standards imposed both by their home countries and by their international partners. Corporate social responsibility pressure increases exponentially for transnational corporations like Foxconn that deal with migrant workers who, as shown above, are provided with only the most elemental labor rights. This pressure comes from various sources, including but not limited to foreign investors,<sup>30</sup> non-governmental labor rights monitoring agencies,<sup>31</sup> international organizations,<sup>32</sup> and perhaps most important, consumer and general public opinion as influenced by formal and informal news coverage of CSR breaches.

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<sup>25</sup> Liu, He, and Fulong 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Ngok 2008, 56.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>28</sup> Jun and Yang 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Ngok 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Waddock, Bodwell, and Graves 2002.

<sup>31</sup> For example SACOM 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Chan, Lee, and Chan 2008.

Before going further, we need to be clear on what is meant by the term corporate social responsibility (CSR). The concept of CSR is much more than merely a set of regulations, rather it is a theoretical framework for business integrity that is at times reminiscent of pop-philosophy in its normative ethics and catchy slogans.<sup>33</sup>

The concept of CSR has developed gradually over the years, but the core ideas have remained the same. CSR gurus like to talk about the “three P’s of responsible business”, or the “triple bottom line”: people—planet—profit. The general idea is that rather than solely thinking about profits and how *stockholders* will be affected, corporations should also think about how their business plans will affect *stakeholders*, i.e. the people who work in the factories, people who live near the factories, the consumer, etc. By maintaining a focus on stakeholders, CSR in theory protects both the environment and the factory worker, all the while making revenue for the corporation by improving its reputation among consumers.

There are other ways in which the ideas of CSR are sometimes formulated, but the concepts remain essentially the same. Some CSR experts focus on the “principle of double effect” or PDE. This concept, cited as being originally taken from Thomas Aquinas,<sup>34</sup> posits that corporations’ development has both intended effects (e.g. production of goods, profits) and side effects (e.g. pollution, worker mistreatment). CSR requires that corporations take responsibility both for their intended effects and any side effects.<sup>35</sup>

While there is a certain degree of flashy marketing behind the concept of CSR, it has provided a workable theoretical framework for expressing what are intended to be universal ethical standards for businesses. Particularly relevant to my research are labor rights regulations as covered by CSR. Most often CSR is expressed through the use of CSR codes outlining good practices that will be observed and monitored. There are many different CSR codes that are used, but they tend to contain the same basic principles, with slight reformulations and emphases. For the sake of establishing the norms of CSR, I would like to briefly look at the topics included in a few common CSR codes. This is especially necessary as in this thesis I will contrast the norms and priorities laid out by CSR with the priorities expressed by the

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<sup>33</sup> It is remarkably easy for me to imagine “The Triple Bottom Line” or “The Three P’s of Responsible Business” on the spine of a book on a bookshelf next to “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” and “Think and Grow Rich”.

<sup>34</sup> Though what Thomas Aquinas wrote was approximately as much about CSR as “Sun Tzu: The Art of War” was about modern business strategy.

<sup>35</sup> Bomann-Larsen and Wiggen 2004, 17–20.

press, and in order to do this we must have a clear picture of what CSR codes' regulations regarding labor rights actually are.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has been a key player in the development of the concept of CSR codes. Many consider the ILO's "Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy" to have been a precursor to CSR codes.<sup>36</sup> The topics covered by that policy include employment promotion, equal opportunity and treatment, security of employment, training, wages, benefits and conditions of work, safety and health, freedom of association and the right to organize, collective bargaining, consultation, examination of grievances and settlement of industrial disputes.<sup>37</sup> As of 2003 the ILO had adopted more than 180 conventions and 185 recommendations, four of which are considered "core conventions".<sup>38</sup> These include freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, elimination of forced and compulsory labor, abolition of child labor and elimination of discrimination.<sup>39</sup> These ILO core conventions show up in all major CSR codes.

"Social Accountability 8000" is a CSR code that has been used by companies around the world as a statement of CSR intentions.<sup>40</sup> This code includes regulations regarding child labor, forced labor, health and safety, freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, discrimination, disciplinary practices, working hours, remuneration and management systems.<sup>41</sup> Unlike some of the other codes, this one takes into account the generally non-Western practice of factories providing dormitories where workers live; however the requirements are vague, merely stipulating that the company must "ensure that, if provided for personnel, dormitory facilities are clean, safe, and meet the basic needs of the personnel".<sup>42</sup>

Primarily American corporations have used the "Workplace Code of Conduct of the Fair Labor Association" (FLA), which includes regulations on forced labor, child labor, harassment and abuse, nondiscrimination, health and safety, freedom of association and collective bargaining, wages and benefits, hours of work and overtime compensation.<sup>43</sup> This

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<sup>36</sup> Leipziger 2003, 137.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 143–149.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 162–167.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 173–175.

particular code will factor heavily into my thesis, as it is the basis of the FLA evaluation of Foxconn in 2012.<sup>44</sup>

Such codes provide general guidelines for how factories are to be ethically run; however the implementation of strict CSR codes hasn't always proven completely effective. This is partially because wage requirements are generally very low and workers need overtime to be able to make ends meet. In her book *Factory Girls* Leslie Chang describes how big American brands like Adidas and Nike responded to accusations of sweatshop conditions by pressuring their Chinese manufacturers to improve labor conditions in their factories. Yue Yuen, one of these shoe manufacturers, responded by switching to an eleven-hour workday, giving workers Sundays free, providing counseling centers and banning hazardous chemicals. Rather than experiencing a boost in morale, Chang explains, many workers quit, complaining that there was no longer enough overtime to make ends meet.<sup>45</sup>

She goes on to describe how the American brands pressured Yue Yuen to reduce costs at the same time as reforming labor standards, putting Yue Yuen in a very awkward position. In order to meet the financial demands, Yue Yuen began charging workers for their uniforms. The American brands criticized this too, and so in the end Yue Yuen did away with uniforms altogether, allowing workers to work in their own clothes.<sup>46</sup>

The CSR codes above don't provide full solutions to problems like these, and in most cases corporations want to improve CSR without it having an effect on the bottom line. This creates pressure on both management and workers. For example, when Adidas manufacturer Yue Yuen implemented a new program to reduce work hours by demanding higher levels of efficiency, workers complained of higher levels of stress. The desire to increase efficiency also resulted in social disruption for the workers, as they were no longer allowed to room according to friendship networks, but were rather forced to room with their assembly-line colleagues.<sup>47</sup>

So CSR, while providing a theoretical framework for good treatment of workers, still can fail when put to practical use. This is often because the usual enforcers of CSR (corporations

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<sup>44</sup> Fair Labor Association 2012.

<sup>45</sup> Chang 2009, 13–14.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 114–115.



themselves) are primarily motivated by profits, and comprehensive CSR standards are generally not inexpensive.

## II.V Cultural Dimensions Theory

In addition to practical problems like those described above, some scholars have questioned whether “global” CSR strategies really work as well as their proponents would like us to believe.<sup>48</sup> This is part of a larger trend. In recent years, the study of culture in international business has played an increasingly important role. Researchers, such as Hofstede, have focused on understanding the pivotal interaction between national cultures and organizational cultures, and how this can affect productivity.<sup>49</sup>

Hofstede describes cultures as varying on a number of different quantifiable dimensions. His original theory proposed four dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance and masculinity vs. femininity.<sup>50</sup> Hofstede later added a fifth dimension to his model, long-term orientation, and added a sixth dimension in 2010, indulgence vs. self-restraint.<sup>51</sup>

Three of these dimensions are particularly relevant to my research: individualism vs. collectivism (America being highly individualist and China being highly collectivist), long-term orientation<sup>52</sup> (China scores high on this one, with the USA scoring somewhere in the middle), and power distance<sup>53</sup> (Western countries tend to score lower on this dimension, with a certain expectation of equality and democracy even within business; China tends to display rather high power distance scores).<sup>54</sup>

As I will show throughout my thesis, my case study shows significantly more nuanced societies than those described by Hofstede’s model. As I discuss in Chapter V and Chapter VI, I don’t find that China fits directly into the “collectivist box” that Hofstede’s model

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<sup>48</sup> Alan 2003.

<sup>49</sup> Including but not limited to Hofstede 1994; Hofstede 1983; Hofstede et al. 1990.

<sup>50</sup> Hofstede 1983.

<sup>51</sup> Hofstede 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Including future-focused values such as perseverance, thrift, having a sense of shame, and ordering relationships by status.

<sup>53</sup> This refers to the extent to which low-level employees in an organization accept and expect that power will be distributed in an unequal fashion.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

supplies for it. In reading other scholars' descriptions of certain Chinese young people, I am struck by their *lack* of thrift and planning ahead, rather than their "long-term orientation".<sup>55</sup>

While there are many details of the Hofstede model towards which I am ambivalent or opposed,<sup>56</sup> there are elements of Hofstede's model that are enlightening to my case study. Hofstede argues that in many cases, Western businesses have imposed Western values and priorities in non-Western societies, often leading to conflict and lack of productivity.<sup>57</sup> The concept of corporate social responsibility is one example of this phenomenon. While in theory a universal concept, corporate social responsibility implies that certain Western values—such as transparency, focus on the individual, and a certain level of equality between workers and management—should be universal standards. In China, a collectivist culture with high power distance scores, such values go directly against the grain. This can potentially lead to conflicts and CSR practices that in some ways exceed local expectations, and in other ways do not meet the local expectations of responsible behavior and labor rights. While there is limited research into this phenomenon in China in particular, researchers have discussed whether or not CSR strategies can be applied globally without taking local perspectives into account,<sup>58</sup> and Hofstede's model provides a good springboard to looking at such questions.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory has been popular in some circles, but has also met with criticism. In addition to the few I mentioned above, one of the most often voiced criticisms regarding his theory is the decision to use national boundaries to define cultures.<sup>59</sup> China and America are both arguably nations of many different cultures. Alternatively, sometimes two or more nations share a common culture across their borders. For example, in many ways the culture of parts of the Chinese province of Inner Mongolia is arguably closer to the culture of the country Mongolia than it is to the culture of the Chinese province of Guangdong.

Others have criticized Hofstede for neglecting to take gender into account, or have criticized individual elements of certain dimensions of his model.<sup>60</sup> After careful analysis of Hofstede's theories, it is hard not to agree with many of these critiques. The idea of national cultures is an oversimplification, overlooking many of the nuances of reality. Despite its shortcomings,

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<sup>55</sup> Lia 2012; Hansen and Pang 2010; Chang 2009.

<sup>56</sup> Another example, terminology: the use of the terms masculinity and femininity to describe cultures, and the very weighted terms of "indulgence" (negative) and "self-restraint" (positive).

<sup>57</sup> Hofstede 1994; Hofstede et al. 1990.

<sup>58</sup> Alan 2003.

<sup>59</sup> For example Baskerville 2003.

<sup>60</sup> For example McSweeney 2002.

however, I still feel that Hofstede's model provides certain insights that can be useful in the analysis of my data. I will avoid referring to "national cultures" or "national values" in my thesis, but I will attempt to identify trends in the respective presses of America and China, and I will use Hofstede's model in part to interpret those trends. I do not in any way claim, however, that either the Chinese press or the American press is united in its values system or priorities, nor that a country's press necessarily represents the average views of its people. The press is instead a nuanced entity that provides a small window into some of the values of some of the population.

## **II.VI Foxconn and CSR Scandals**

Despite the shortcomings of CSR described above, there is no question that CSR is becoming an imperative in the modern business world. Many scholars have researched the growing importance of CSR in business. In their article entitled "Responsibility: the new business imperative", Waddock et al. explored how new business trends pressure modern corporations to prioritize CSR.<sup>61</sup> Li and Williams also did studies that showed the importance of CSR in the modern business world.<sup>62</sup> Of particular interest to this study, DeTienne and Lewis did an analysis of Nike's response to a PR crisis brought about by reports of unethical treatment of employees in factories in Southeast Asia.<sup>63</sup> They found that Nike's increased emphasis on CSR reporting ended up creating new ethical issues; when it was found that Nike had lied in their CSR reports, those lies were difficult to legally prosecute, as CSR reporting is not considered "commercial speech" by American law<sup>64</sup> and inaccuracies are therefore not punishable.

In order to look at the perceived efficacy of CSR in China, I have conducted my research by focusing on the case study of the Foxconn Technology Group. This Taiwanese electronics manufacturer has factories worldwide, but is especially famous for its factories in China that put together Apple's best-selling iPhones, iPads and iPods.<sup>65</sup> Just over 72% of Foxconn's factory workers identify themselves as migrant workers, and more than 99% of the workers at the Longhua and Guanlan plants in Shenzhen identify themselves as migrants.<sup>66</sup> This makes

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<sup>61</sup> Waddock, Bodwell, and Graves 2002.

<sup>62</sup> Li 2006; Williams 2001.

<sup>63</sup> DeTienne and Lewis 2005.

<sup>64</sup> As advertisements would be, for example.

<sup>65</sup> Foxconn 2013.

<sup>66</sup> Fair Labor Association 2012, 5.

Foxconn an excellent microcosm for studying issues faced by transnational corporations with factories employing migrants in China, and allows us to see some of the consequences of incomplete labor policy in the world of industry.

Since 2006, Foxconn has been implicated in several scandals stemming from alleged insufficient CSR, including, but not limited to, allegations of mistreatment of workers starting in 2006, a rash of suicides among workers at the Foxconn factory campuses in Shenzhen during 2010, an explosion that occurred in an iPad assembly-line in a Foxconn factory in Chengdu in 2011, a fire in a Foxconn factory in Yantai in 2011, a scandal involving forced labor of student interns on the factory floor in 2012 and a scandal surrounding the building of a Shenzhen factory over a traditional Hakka burial ground. While the other scandals all provide interesting areas for further investigation and analysis, in this thesis I will focus on the particular scandal surrounding Foxconn's mistreatment of workers that occurred in 2010. This scandal was by no means an isolated incident, however. It was one of many scandals surrounding Foxconn's allegedly lax labor standards.

The first major Western media allegations that Foxconn's labor standards were less than adequate began with an article published by *Mail on Sunday*<sup>67</sup> describing the production journey of Apple's iPod.<sup>68</sup> The article painted a grim image of Foxconn's (and thereby Apple's) treatment of their factory workers, and in response Apple decided to do its own audit of Foxconn to assess the accusations. During this whole sequence, the story was reported on by various other news agencies, creating more buzz about the issues, with much discussion of the worker abuses through the informal channels of blogs, and micro-blogs like Twitter and Sina Weibo (新浪微博).

Foxconn's most infamous scandal began to unfold for the Western audience on April 7, 2010 with an article titled "Four suicide attempts in a month at Foxconn, the makers of the iPad" in the UK's *The Telegraph*.<sup>69</sup> The article describes the sequence of worker suicides at the Foxconn factory and links them with previous discussions of Foxconn's harsh working conditions, with the implication that the suicides are brought on by undue work pressures.

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<sup>67</sup> Independent sister newspaper to the British *Daily Mail*.

<sup>68</sup> Mail Online 2006.

<sup>69</sup> Moore 2010b.

An undercover investigation and a series of three reports published by *Southern Weekend* on May 13, 2010 fanned the flames of the scandal.<sup>70</sup> An English translation of the article brought the story to the Western media.<sup>71</sup> After the sixth suicide attempt at Foxconn in April 2009, the newspaper had sent 22-year-old reporter Liu Zhiyi to work undercover in Foxconn's Shenzhen factory for 28 days. His reports upon leaving the factory were grim, decrying the social isolation, dehumanization and broken dreams of Foxconn's migrant workers. Most of the issues he brought up, however, were not violations of international labor codes or CSR standards. This report and related articles are the core focus of this thesis.

As the suicides continued throughout 2010 and 2011, the reports, particularly in the blogosphere, kept streaming out with an ever-updating death toll. Details of the situations surrounding the suicides were mentioned in many articles as well: a young factory worker jumps to his death after his bonus was stolen at Chinese New Year,<sup>72</sup> a 19 year-old factory worker jumps to his death after only working at Foxconn for forty-two days,<sup>73</sup> a girl commits suicide after being fired and insulted,<sup>74</sup> the grisly list goes on.

While the suicides created an international media scandal, in reality they were a greatly exaggerated reaction to an inconsequential incident. According to the World Health Organization, in China in 1999 within the 15-24 age group, 6.9 per 100,000 people committed suicide.<sup>75</sup> The rates are slightly different based on gender (5.4 for males, 8.6 for females). Foxconn's Longhua campus in Shenzhen has approximately 300,000 16-25 year-old employees.<sup>76</sup> Foxconn with its fourteen (or 4.7 per 100,000) suicide attempts resulting in death over the course of 2010 doesn't even reach three-fourths of the national average. I will discuss the motivating factors behind this statistically groundless scandal later in this thesis.

Since the suicide scandal, Foxconn has faced several new labor rights scandals.<sup>77</sup> Early in 2012 a scandal occurred following American monologist Mike Daisey's appearance on radio program *This American Life* on which he did a dramatic depiction of his disturbing visit to a Foxconn factory and the miserable lives of the workers there. The tides turned in Foxconn's

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<sup>70</sup> Zhiyi Liu 2010b; Liu and Yang 2010; Yang and Liu 2010.

<sup>71</sup> Zhiyi Liu 2010b.

<sup>72</sup> Moore 2010b.

<sup>73</sup> Economic Times 2010.

<sup>74</sup> Chang 2011.

<sup>75</sup> World Health Organization 1999.

<sup>76</sup> Demick and Sarno 2010a; Demick and Sarno 2010b.

<sup>77</sup> Smith 2012.

favor when additional information was revealed, and Mike Daisey's story was found to be a fabrication.<sup>78</sup> Later in 2012 *The Telegraph* and other news sources covered a "mass suicide" protest that occurred at a Foxconn plant in Wuhan, with 150 workers threatening to jump from the roof of their factory if Foxconn management didn't improve their working conditions.<sup>79</sup> A riot in the workers dormitory of a Foxconn factory in Taiyuan, Shanxi was reported in September 2012.<sup>80</sup> In October 2012, allegations of underage "interns" at Foxconn began to surface.<sup>81</sup>

The Foxconn labor conditions scandal is by no means over yet, so it has only been possible to analyze the information available thus far. Even so, this list is far from comprehensive. The purpose of this thesis is not to cast blame or to criticize one party or another. Rather, I hope to identify how divergent priorities regarding labor rights can lead to differing evaluations of CSR efficacy in a transnational corporation and, through the microcosm of Foxconn, do a general analysis of some of the advantages and shortcomings of the concept of CSR in international business. This microcosm also allows for analysis of the difficulties faced by TNCs negotiating the balance between following local labor laws, meeting international CSR standards and avoiding criticism by the press.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Moore 2012.

<sup>80</sup> Bloomberg News 2012.

<sup>81</sup> Voigt 2012.

## Chapter III: Research Methods

There are many ways I could have chosen to research labor rights and corporate social responsibility in China, and many angles from which to look at the related problems. Over the course of the two years I have spent interacting with this project my perspective on the CSR scandals at Foxconn has evolved significantly. My methodology, however, has remained fairly consistent: discourse analysis of a case study.

While the CSR scandals of Foxconn are many and multifaceted, in this research I focus primarily on the media coverage of one particular investigation that took place during the rash of suicides at Foxconn in 2010. This undercover investigation by the hard-hitting Chinese newspaper “*Southern Weekend*”<sup>82</sup> sent a 22 year-old journalism intern named Liu Zhiyi<sup>83</sup> to enlist as a factory worker at Foxconn’s Longhua campus in Shenzhen, working there among the laborers for 28 days. His mission was to understand the lives of factory workers—how they live, and why some would choose to die. *Southern Weekend* printed three reports dealing specifically with the findings of this investigation,<sup>84</sup> and, later, one of those reports was translated to English and republished by *Engadget*,<sup>85</sup> a USA tech-news site that focuses on gadgets and consumer electronics. These source materials can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of source material news reports**<sup>86</sup>

S/N <sup>87</sup>	Date	Source	Headline/Lead
S1	12 May 2010	<i>Southern Weekend</i> (China)	<b>Youth and Destiny in the Company of Machines—Notes from 28 Days Undercover at Foxconn</b> <sup>88</sup>
S2	13 May 2010	<i>Southern Weekend</i>	<b>Cracking the Foxconn Employee Suicide "Curse"</b> <sup>89</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Chinese: 南方周末.

<sup>83</sup> Chinese: 刘志毅.

<sup>84</sup> Zhiyi Liu 2010b; Liu and Yang 2010; Yang and Liu 2010.

<sup>85</sup> Liu 2010a.

<sup>86</sup> Complete reports from this table can be found in 0. In all the tables in this chapter I have used the headline and lead capitalization of the original reports and articles.

<sup>87</sup> Source number.

<sup>88</sup> Zhiyi Liu 2010b. Original title in Chinese: 与机器相伴的青春和命运——潜伏富士康 28 天手记.

<sup>89</sup> Yang and Liu 2010. Original title in Chinese: 破解富士康员工的自杀‘魔咒’.

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		(China)	
<b>S3</b>	18 May 2010	<i>Southern Weekend</i> (China)	<b>Foxconn's "Eight Jumps": The Mystery of Suicide</b> <sup>90</sup>
<b>S4</b>	19 May 2010	<i>Engadget</i> (USA)	<b>The fate of a generation of workers: Foxconn undercover fully translated</b> <sup>91</sup>

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The *Southern Weekend* investigation created a media incident of its own, with both national and international media outlets reporting on Liu Zhiyi's findings. In the chapters that follow, I attempt to pinpoint perceived CSR shortcomings at Foxconn by analyzing the differences and similarities in coverage of various aspects of this incident in a corpus of Chinese and American news articles. My primary goal is not to assess the accuracy of the Chinese or American portrayals of the original *Southern Weekend* findings, but rather to identify how focus differs between the articles, and compare those areas of focus with the areas of focus of standard CSR regulations.

In this thesis, I have to refer to several different bodies of literature, the first being the original *Southern Weekend* reports; the second being the news articles published discussing the original reports, both in the American and Chinese medias; the third being the CSR evaluations published by FLA, Apple, Foxconn, and others; the fourth being scholarly works and other secondary source materials; and, finally, the fifth being my own thesis. In order to differentiate between these five bodies of works, I will refer to the first group of primary source materials using the word "report", the second group of primary source materials using the word "article", the third group as "CSR evaluations" or simply "evaluations", the fourth group of scholarly research and other secondary source materials using the word "paper", and my own work using the word "thesis". Many of these words can be used interchangeably, as their meanings are similar, however in this thesis I will strictly follow the above-mentioned definitions in order to reduce confusion.

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<sup>90</sup> Liu and Yang 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康‘八连跳’自杀之谜.

<sup>91</sup> Zhiyi Liu 2010a.



### III.I Two Forms of Analysis

The analysis in this thesis takes many different forms, but in my thesis I will specifically differentiate between two of them. These two forms of analysis are in some ways similar to, but must not be confused with macro-, meso-, and micro-level analysis<sup>92</sup> of Faircloughian critical discourse analysis.<sup>93</sup>

First there is *broad analysis*, a general comparison and analysis of the thematic content of the articles. Here the corpus is looked at as a whole, with all content available for consideration, not just quotes from and references to the *Southern Weekend*'s original reports. This grants a great deal of material for analysis, but by sheer volume makes useful comparisons of priorities and values in the American and Chinese presses a mammoth undertaking as a thorough analysis should ideally include all relevant content.

Deciding what content is relevant for a complete broad analysis is also challenging. Chinese articles discussing the *Southern Weekend* investigation often cite outside sources that are completely unrelated to the original *Southern Weekend* reports. For example, article C4<sup>94</sup> looks at two of the Foxconn suicides in detail, attempting to find motivations. Sources appear to be primarily direct interviews with friends and coworkers of the suicide victims. American articles also have a fair amount of material chosen from third party sources. Article A7, for example, quotes independent labor rights groups, the Shenzhen police, statistics from the World Health Organization, and Foxconn spokesman Liu Kun, among others.

Such differences in sources and levels of access result in differences in content and perspective that are both difficult to quantify and challenging to track to their origins. Doing broad analysis can provide very interesting data and striking contrasts between the Chinese and American presses, but due to the wide range of possible causes of those differences, it is inaccurate to say that those differences are representative of differences in the labor rights priorities of the American and Chinese presses. My goal with this thesis is to isolate some of these differences in priorities in order to compare them with the priorities outlined by

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<sup>92</sup> Though my research will in practice use all three of those levels of analysis, I will not use the terms macro-, meso-, and micro-level analysis in this thesis. I have made this decision primarily because it will greatly simplify my discussion, and because a six-way division of my analysis of over a one hundred pages of text would not be particularly feasible in a master's thesis.

<sup>93</sup> Fairclough 2010; Fairclough 1995; Fairclough 1989.

<sup>94</sup> Reference numbers will be used to refer to the articles from my corpus throughout this paper. The legend for the document reference numbers is available in 0 as well as in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 of this chapter.

traditional CSR codes. Therefore, while a broad analysis of the entirety of my corpus could provide some valuable points of discussion, it is not the focus of this thesis.

Second, there is *focused analysis*. This is a comparison of headlines, direct quotes and paraphrases from the original source reports<sup>95</sup> as printed in both the Chinese and American presses. Focused analysis that only considers direct citations or paraphrases of original source material in American and Chinese articles can be used to reveal the journalists' underlying framework of paradigms regarding the issues discussed. Each journalist selects what she believes to be the most important, most interesting, or most significant elements of the original source for inclusion in her article. The wide variance between articles with regard to material cited from the original *Southern Weekend* reports indicates that there is no clear, conclusive and "correct" interpretation of the final conclusions of the *Southern Weekend* investigation. Rather, each reader, each journalist reveals something about himself in how he summarizes and paraphrases the material.

This is perhaps the most valuable feature of doing *focused analysis*—it removes much of the extraneous material from the corpus, thereby allowing for a clearer view of the journalists' individual biases. This thesis attempts to explore these subtle revelations, and by doing so, identify common trends. I believe that trends that remain true across the majority of one country's sources can be tentatively interpreted as representative of values and priorities in that country's press.

### **III.II Classification of Methodology**

Many elements of the core methodology used in this thesis are borrowed from a paper by Peter Teo, entitled "Racism in the News: A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Reporting in Two Australian Newspapers".<sup>96</sup> While the subject of his research is very different, the particular variation of critical discourse analysis used by Teo proves useful in researching my subject. He begins by doing a general analysis of the content of a corpus of news articles, particularly looking at topical differences.<sup>97</sup> He analyzes headlines and leads, and quotation patterns. He then does a detailed discourse analysis of two representative articles from his

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<sup>95</sup> See Table 1.

<sup>96</sup> Teo 2000.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 13–23.

corpus.<sup>98</sup> Following Teo's example, I have adapted my methodology to meet the requirements of my corpus. Due to the size of my corpus and the difficulty of identifying truly representative articles, I will focus on a thematic analysis of headlines, paraphrases and quotes (what I refer to as *focused analysis*), use a limited amount of *broad analysis*, and will *not* do a specific analysis of two representative examples from the American and Chinese presses.

Unlike Teo<sup>99</sup>, I have chosen not to use the term critical discourse analysis (CDA) to refer to my methodology. Researchers use the term "critical discourse analysis" frequently—in some cases it seems this is done merely to avoid the more general term "discourse analysis"—but what is precisely meant by the term remains ambiguous. There seems to be a particular trend for the term CDA to be used when studies are of a somewhat normative nature, as in the case of Teo's research,<sup>100</sup> but normative discourse analyses are not necessarily critical discourse analyses. In the 2010 edition of his book on the subject, CDA founder Fairclough addresses this issue and gives some guidelines for what "counts" as being CDA and what doesn't. He mentions three major requirements:

1. "It is not just analysis of discourse (or more concretely texts), it is part of some form of systematic transdisciplinary analysis of relations between discourse and other elements of the social process."<sup>101</sup>
2. "It is not just general commentary on discourse, it includes some form of systematic analysis of text."<sup>102</sup>
3. "It is not just descriptive, it is also normative. It addresses social wrongs in their discursive aspects and possible ways of righting or mitigating them."<sup>103</sup>

Even though Fairclough's criteria of what CDA is are quite flexible and inclusive,<sup>104</sup> I have actively tried to prevent my research from becoming normative. While my original goal in choosing this topic was perhaps to "address 'social wrongs' of the day" as is implied by

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 23–39.

<sup>99</sup> Teo 2000.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Fairclough 2010, 10.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 10.

Faircloughian CDA,<sup>105</sup> long exposure to my topic has made me realize the complicated nature of the issues at stake, and my primary goal is now to understand the weaving of different threads in a complicated tapestry of a globalized labor market, and not to arbitrate or provide normative standards. To this end, I have chosen to shape my methodology to match my corpus rather than shaping my corpus to match any particular strategy of discourse analysis. I therefore choose to identify my methodology as simply being “discourse analysis”.

### III.III Selection of Corpus

To find articles regarding the *Southern Weekend* investigation published by American news outlets, I searched Google News for articles dated from between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, 2010. This was the period of days directly surrounding the May 12, 2010 release of the original *Southern Weekend* investigative report on Foxconn.<sup>106</sup> Searches included the keyword “Foxconn” combined with one or more of the following keywords: “investigation”, “*Southern Weekend*”,<sup>107</sup> “Liu Zhiyi”, and “undercover”. I also specifically perused the websites of the top ten circulation newspapers in the USA for articles using the same keywords and time period. After I had gathered all the results, I went through them one by one and gathered all the articles from American news outlets that made mention of the *Southern Weekend*’s investigative report.

These articles fell into a few major categories that I would later use in my analysis. Among the thirteen relevant articles found printed in the USA media, there were four that focused directly on the *Southern Weekend* investigation (articles A2, A3, A4 and A5 in Table 2), two that made the *Southern Weekend* investigation a major source for their articles by citing it in three or more paragraphs (articles A1 and A6 in Table 2), and seven that made the *Southern Weekend* investigation a minor source for their articles by citing it in two or fewer paragraphs (articles A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12 and A13 in Table 2).

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<sup>105</sup> Fairclough 2009, 163.

<sup>106</sup> Zhiyi Liu 2010b.

<sup>107</sup> As the translation *Southern Weekend* is one of two different English translations for 南方周末, I also used the Chinese name for the newspaper in my searches, as well as the other English translation, *Southern Weekly*.

**Table 2: Summary of USA news articles discussing the *Southern Weekend* investigation<sup>108</sup>**

S/N	Date	Source	Headline/Lead
A1	16 May 2010	<i>Digital East Asia</i>	<b>An All Too Familiar Story: 9th Suicide Jump at Foxconn this Year<sup>109</sup></b>
A2	19 May 2010	<i>MacNN</i>	<b>Reporter uncovers grim working conditions at Foxconn plant<sup>110</sup></b>
A3	19 May 2010	<i>Gizmodo</i>	<b>Undercover Report From Foxconn's Hell Factory<sup>111</sup></b>
A4	19 May 2010	<i>Business Insider</i>	<b>The Shocking Conditions Inside China's Brutal Foxconn Factory<sup>112</sup></b>
A5	20 May 2010	<i>Switched</i>	<b>Bleak Foxconn Factory Conditions Exposed by Undercover Intern<sup>113</sup></b>
A6	21 May 2010	<i>CNET Asia</i>	<b>Suicides, beatings and misery: Working life at Foxconn under scrutiny<sup>114</sup></b>
A7	21 May 2010	<i>NY Times</i>	<b>8th Death at Foxconn, Electronics Supplier in China<sup>115</sup></b>
A8	22 May 2010	<i>Digital East Asia</i>	<b>10th Suicide in 2010 at Foxconn; Incidents Finally Begin to Gain Wider Media Coverage<sup>116</sup></b>
A9	25 May 2010	<i>PC World</i>	<b>No Simple Solution to Foxconn Suicides<sup>117</sup></b>

<sup>108</sup> Complete articles from this table can be found in 0.

<sup>109</sup> Duan 2010b.

<sup>110</sup> MacNN 2010.

<sup>111</sup> Chang 2010b.

<sup>112</sup> Chang 2010a.

<sup>113</sup> Toor 2010.

<sup>114</sup> Millward 2010.

<sup>115</sup> Barboza 2010.

<sup>116</sup> Duan 2010a.

<sup>117</sup> Newman 2010.

<b>A10</b>	26 May 2010	<i>Time</i>	<b>Foxconn Suicides Rise at Shenzhen iPhone, iPad Factory</b> <sup>118</sup>
<b>A11</b>	26 May 2010	<i>Wired</i>	<b>Apple, Dell and HP to Investigate Suicides at Asian Supplier</b> <sup>119</sup>
<b>A12</b>	27 May 2010	<i>LA Times</i>	<b>Suicides roil factory in China</b> <sup>120</sup>
<b>A13</b>	28 May 2010	<i>Apple Insider</i>	<b>Foxconn plans 20 percent wage increases as suicides continue</b> <sup>121</sup>

I selected the Chinese news articles by searching baidu.com<sup>122</sup> for articles from between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, 2010 containing *all* of the following search terms: 南方周末 (*Southern Weekend*), 富士康 (Foxconn), and 刘志毅 (Liu Zhiyi). This provided hundreds of results, most being reprints of other articles. Results were narrowed down to the original prints of each of the articles, and then articles for consideration were selected based on their number of reprints. In other words, articles that have been reprinted the most have been used here for analysis as those most likely provide a representative sample of the media opinions on this case in China.

I had planned to additionally analyze *The Workers' Daily's* coverage of the *Southern Weekend* investigation, as *The Workers' Daily* is the mouthpiece of the All China Federation of Trade Unions, but I was surprised to find that *The Workers' Daily's* only coverage of the scandal were articles reprinted directly from the *Southern Weekend*<sup>123</sup> and from China Youth Daily.<sup>124</sup> This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

I chose to limit my sample to the eight Chinese articles shown in Table 3. This was because the numbers of reprints for the top eight articles were significantly more than those for the other articles. Also, as I am attempting to observe the differences in the labor rights priorities

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<sup>118</sup> Ramzy 2010.

<sup>119</sup> Chen 2010.

<sup>120</sup> Demick and Sarno 2010b.

<sup>121</sup> Oliver 2010.

<sup>122</sup> The Chinese equivalent to Google.

<sup>123</sup> Zhiyi Liu 2010b; as reprinted by *The Workers' Daily* 2010b.

<sup>124</sup> Liu 2010; as reprinted by *The Workers' Daily* 2010a.

expressed in the Chinese and USA media, these eight articles serve as a supplement to the *Southern Weekend* investigation reports, which also reflect Chinese priorities.

Using the same categories I used for classifying the American articles, I found that among the eight relevant articles selected from the Chinese media, there were none that focused only on the *Southern Weekend* investigation,<sup>125</sup> one that made the *Southern Weekend* investigation a major source by discussing it in a total of eight paragraphs (article C2 in Table 3), five that made the *Southern Weekend* investigation a minor source for their articles by citing it in two or fewer paragraphs (C3, C4, C5, C7 and C8 in Table 3), and two that both discussed the original reports and included or discussed additional interviews with Liu Zhiyi himself (C1 and C6 in Table 3).

**Table 3: Summary of Chinese news articles discussing the *Southern Weekend* investigation<sup>126</sup>**

S/N	Date	Source	Headline/Lead
C1	14 May 2010	<i>China National Radio</i> <sup>127</sup>	<b>Eight People Jump From Buildings in Six Months: Reporter Spends 28 Days Undercover to Find the Truth</b> <sup>128</sup>
C2	17 May 2010	<i>Modern Express</i> <sup>129</sup>	<b>The Depth Behind Foxconn's "Nine Jumps": The Fragments of Youth</b> <sup>130</sup>
C3	20 May 2010	<i>China Youth Daily</i> <sup>131</sup>	<b>Why Youth Withers on the Foxconn Assembly Lines</b> <sup>132</sup>
C4	22 May 2010	<i>Chutian Metropolis</i>	<b>Yesterday, Foxconn's "Tenth Jumper": 21 Year Old Worker from Hubei Dies</b> <sup>134</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Not surprising as the original *Southern Weekend* articles were widely published in other newspapers, thereby making articles repeating the same information in different words pointless.

<sup>126</sup> Complete articles from this table can be found in Appendix 3. Translations of Chinese text in this thesis are all my own unless otherwise stated.

<sup>127</sup> Chinese: 中国广播网.

<sup>128</sup> China National Radio 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康半年内八人跳楼 记者卧底 28 天找寻真相.

<sup>129</sup> Chinese: 现代快报.

<sup>130</sup> Modern Express 2010. Original title in Chinese: 纵深富士康‘九连跳’背后：青春的碎片.

<sup>131</sup> Chinese: 中国青年报.

<sup>132</sup> Fang Liu 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康流水线上的青春因何凋零.

C5	23 May 2010	Phoenix Blogs <sup>135</sup> (Hong Kong)	<b>Foxconn Employees: Essentially "Work Slaves"</b> <sup>136</sup>
C6	24 May 2010	Boraid.com <sup>137</sup>	<b>Being Human--Reflections on Foxconn's Ten Suicide Attempts</b> <sup>138</sup>
C7	25 May 2010	Xinmin Evening News <sup>139</sup>	<b>Merely Recruiting Psychiatrists is not Enough</b> <sup>140</sup>
C8	26 May 2010	21st Century Network <sup>141</sup>	<b>What is the Real Nightmare of Foxconn's "Eleven Jumps"?</b> <sup>142</sup>

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The combined texts of the articles selected for this study make up approximately one hundred pages of text, and more than half of that text is in Chinese.<sup>143</sup>

### III.IV Division of Texts for *Focused Analysis*

As mentioned above, in order to analyze the differences in priorities expressed in the Chinese and American texts, I will look specifically at headlines, citations and paraphrase patterns in the articles (referred to here as *focused analysis*), particularly concentrating on what parts of the *Southern Weekend* investigation reports are cited and how they are paraphrased.

I have already described the two forms of analysis which are used in this thesis, however my *focused analysis* is also subdivided into several categories, as mentioned above. First, and

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<sup>134</sup> Chutian Metropolis Daily 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康昨现‘第十跳’21岁湖北籍员工身亡.

<sup>133</sup> Chinese: 楚天都市报.

<sup>135</sup> Chinese: 凤凰网博报.

<sup>136</sup> Zhang 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康员工本质是‘上班奴’.

<sup>137</sup> Chinese: 博锐管理在线.

<sup>138</sup> Zhong 2010. Original title in Chinese: 人之为人——富士康 10 连跳事件反思.

<sup>139</sup> Chinese: 新民晚报.

<sup>140</sup> Shao 2010. Original title in Chinese: 仅招聘心理医生是不够的.

<sup>141</sup> Chinese: 21 世纪网.

<sup>142</sup> 21st Century Network 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康‘11 连跳’的真实梦魇是什么？

<sup>143</sup> See 0, 0, and Appendix 6.



perhaps most insightful, is the comparison of articles that used *Southern Weekend* as a minor source for their discussions: articles A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12 and A13 in Table 2 and articles C3, C4, C5, C7 and C8 in Table 3. As these articles only mention the *Southern Weekend* reports in passing, they are forced to paraphrase or summarize conclusions of the reports in a few words. This involves a fair amount of choice, thereby specifically revealing the biases and differences in paradigm of each article's author. In this thesis these will be referred to as *minor-source articles*. A complete list of the minor-source article citations analyzed can be found in 0.

Next are the articles that cite *Southern Weekend* as a major source for their discussions, including three or more paragraphs that paraphrase or cite the original *Southern Weekend* reports: articles A1 and A6 from the American articles listed in Table 2 and article C2 from the Chinese articles listed in Table 3. Since these articles cite the original reports more extensively, they are no longer forced to put the original reports "in a nutshell", and therefore would seem less likely to show bias quite as obviously. This is not always the case, however, as in Article A6, which mixes reports of beatings of workers in a Foxconn plant in Beijing with the *Southern Weekend* report on suicides in the Foxconn factory in Shenzhen, implying some sort of direct connection and arguably misrepresenting the message of the original *Southern Weekend* reports. Throughout this thesis such major citations of the source reports will be referred to as *major-source article citations*. A complete list of major-source article citations under analysis is found in 0.

There are also four American articles that make the *Southern Weekend* reports their sole source: articles A2, A3, A4, and A5 in Table 2. These articles basically report the findings of the *Southern Weekend* investigation and then (in all but article A2) give some commentary on the investigation. These articles can be found in their entirety in 0. These articles will be referred to in this thesis as *sole-source article citations*.

Finally, headlines were also analyzed. These can be found in their entirety in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 above. In this thesis these will be referred to as *headlines* when they figure into the analysis.

There are two Chinese articles that pose some difficulty in that they don't fall into any of the above-mentioned categories. Articles C1 and C6 include citations from and discussion of the original *Southern Weekend* reports and information taken from interviews with Liu Zhiyi.

Because of the interview content with Liu Zhiyi these articles contain some exclusive information. Since the quotes in these articles are harder to specify as being specifically part of my broad or focused analysis, I will not use them as extensively as the other six Chinese articles. When used, I will discuss citations from these articles alongside the *major-source articles citations* as I feel they most closely resemble that category.

### **III.V Discourse Analysis Difficulties**

There are many differences between Chinese and American articles on the Foxconn CSR scandals. Quantification of these differences is difficult. When it comes to citations within those articles (or *focused analysis*), the analysis becomes slightly simpler, however there are still many factors to be considered. Neglecting to consider differences in citation and paraphrasing styles from country to country may result in misleading and inaccurate conclusions. Consideration of the identities of the journalists and the intended audiences of the articles is also important for analysis. Only once these contributing factors have been addressed can we begin to see the underlying differences in values, priorities and worldviews.

#### **III.V.I Different Styles of Citation and Paraphrasing**

To one familiar with American media practices, a brief survey of the Chinese articles reveals a significant difference between the Chinese and American media with regards to copyright protection and plagiarism. Articles copy each other without citing quotes or references, and original text from the *Southern Weekend* reports is often quoted word-for-word without quotation marks or clear indications that the wording is being taken directly from that source.

An example of this can be found in the citations from articles C3 and C4. For all practical purposes they are the same text, with slight variations and omissions. Is C4 quoting C3, or are they both citing some other article altogether? The final sentence of both texts is a word-for-word quote from Liu Zhiyi's interview on Chinese National Radio<sup>144</sup>, but neither article acknowledges this. The source of the first part of these two quotes remains unknown.

The citations from articles C7 and C8 are based on one unknown original text. It is not a direct quote from the original four source reports listed in Table 1. Many Western readers

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<sup>144</sup> As transcribed in Article C1

would view this kind of “unacknowledged borrowing” of other writers’ words as plagiarism. This appears to be an accepted practice in Chinese journalism.

The American articles on the other hand are more likely to paraphrase. If a direct quote is used, a source is given. While this guarantees respect of copyright and safeguards against accusations of plagiarism, it leaves a great deal of responsibility to the journalists to fully comprehend the key issues of the original reports and to paraphrase the reports accurately and completely without inserting their own biases. The variances between the perspectives of these articles reveal the difficulty of this task. Some articles, like A8, assert that “...from the perspective of [the *Southern Weekend*] article, the lack of any meaningful social structure is a big part of the root cause [of the Foxconn suicide epidemic].” Other articles, like A9, claim: “what Zhiyi notices is that workers enter the factory intending to save up and start their own business, or go to college. Those dreams become impossible to achieve amidst the long hours and low pay, and the revelation is devastating.” Still others, like A11, state: “[Liu Zhiyi] reported that workers were stuck in grueling, repetitive jobs and working long hours for minimal pay.” One would almost think these authors read three totally different reports.

### **III.V.II Other Key Differences between Chinese and American Citations**

One cannot assume that the differences in the way the Chinese and American media sources deal with the same topic are all indicative of differences in values or priorities regarding that topic. Many other important influencing factors should be considered. The following is by no means a comprehensive list, but rather a few factors that are particularly salient in examining this textual corpus.

First, American and Chinese news audiences differ considerably from each other. While in theory the Chinese readership had a general knowledge of the problems faced by migrants in southern China, as well as an understanding of the average living and working conditions for factory workers in China, the average American reader can be assumed to be unaware of these things. Because of this fact, journalists writing to an American audience have much more freedom in creating context for their articles. If the journalist chooses to frame the *Southern Weekend* reports as diatribes on the deplorable factory conditions at Foxconn, the average American reader will take what is written as truth. The average American reader has never been to a factory in China, and has no idea how much better it is for workers to work at Foxconn, with its international standards of corporate social responsibility, than to suffer the

awful working conditions in many smaller Chinese factories. Also, the average American reader will have no access to the original article, and therefore relies on the journalists to present its contents accurately.

For example, article A11 claims that Liu Zhiyi “reported that workers were stuck in grueling, repetitive jobs and working long hours for minimal pay”.<sup>145</sup> While from a Western perspective these facts are true, this was by no means the main point or final conclusion of Liu Zhiyi’s reports. Liu Zhiyi is much more accurately quoted in article A9 which says “Liu Zhiyi...doesn't decry the long working hours as atrocious; he actually praises them as a way to make more money. Nor does he cite any human rights abuses. But what Zhiyi notices is that workers enter the factory intending to save up and start their own business, or go to college. Those dreams become impossible to achieve amidst the long hours and low pay, and the revelation is devastating.”

The average Chinese reader, on the other hand, can easily access the original reports, if he hasn’t read them already. This, combined with the average Chinese person’s knowledge of standard working conditions in China, leaves very minimal freedom for journalists to bend the truth in citing and paraphrasing the original reports in the way article A11 does.

Second, there is a great difference between the American and Chinese journalists reporting on the Foxconn investigation by *Southern Weekend*. The Chinese journalists are almost guaranteed to have read the original reports before writing about them. The American journalists, on the other hand, rely on secondhand information in most cases. While one of the *Southern Weekend* articles was translated into English (see S4), the translation is riddled with grammatical errors, uses direct translation of many non-English phrases without explanation, and, perhaps most importantly, is written assuming the reader has the basic knowledge and cultural context of a Chinese person. Though a few of the journalists that reported on the *Southern Weekend* investigation have a background in Chinese culture and language (For example Nan Duan<sup>146</sup>, the writer of articles A1 and A8), most appear not to. This means that, in many cases, the American journalists are simply not well enough informed about the issues at stake to offer commentary on them.

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<sup>145</sup> Chen 2010.

<sup>146</sup> Duan is the last name. For all persons whose identity is primarily classified as Chinese in this thesis (for example the authors of the Chinese reports and articles, Chinese scholars, Foxconn workers and administrators) I have used traditional Chinese name order in my text, with last name first. Nan Duan, however, writes for the American media and uses the Anglicized name order in his byline, so I have to also written his name in this way.

There are several examples of this phenomenon, but the most clear example is, once again, article A11, which actually refers to Liu Zhiyi (a male) using the feminine pronoun “she”, clearly indicating a lack of familiarity with the original source reports. Less obvious, but perhaps more dangerous are the articles that neglect to mention context in citing information. A12, for example, cites Foxconn workers’ monthly salary as \$130—to Western ears an appallingly low figure. The article neglects to mention, however, that this is the wage for beginning workers only. Further, this wage is legal and well within the national norms of wages for factory workers. While the original report had no need to mention these facts, since they are common knowledge in China, this context is crucial for American readers and yet is often unavailable in American articles.

When it comes to freedom to criticize the Chinese central government, however, the Chinese press is quite limited. While Foxconn, a Taiwanese corporation, can be fairly safely criticized, in many cases the obvious shortcomings of Chinese labor policy are only visible in the subtext of the Chinese articles. They can point out facts, but when the facts indicate that the government should take a more active role in labor rights legislation, Chinese journalists have to leave the conclusions to the reader. This is possibly part of the reason that *The Workers’ Daily* did not write its own articles on the *Southern Weekend* investigation as mentioned above. The *Southern Weekend* investigation revealed that national labor policy shortcomings are at least part of the problem at Foxconn; dancing around this issue is difficult.

The American press was not limited in this respect, however none of the American articles in my corpus used Foxconn to make a major critique of Chinese labor policy. This is quite likely due to a lack of awareness rather than any desire to protect the Chinese central government from criticism.

Finally, the journalist’s personal values and priorities play an important role in how data is analyzed and, in turn, how topics are presented and explained. In the next chapters of this thesis I will analyze the specifics of how these values and priorities reveal themselves.

## Chapter IV: Foxconn's CSR and the Press

In this chapter I will discuss how the labor conditions at Foxconn were portrayed in the *Southern Weekend's* original reports, then compare and contrast subsequent portrayals of those reports in the Chinese and American presses with the results of the CSR evaluations of Foxconn conducted by the Fair Labor Association (FLA) in 2012. Before tackling those specifics, however, I will use the first two sections of this chapter to give some background information on Foxconn's "sweatshop" allegations and the FLA—topics of specific relevance to the analysis I will do in the later sections of the chapter.

### IV.I Foxconn—"Sweatshop" Allegations

Not long after the first allegations of labor rights abuses were voiced in the West by the *Mail on Sunday* in 2006,<sup>147</sup> the term "sweatshop" began to be used to describe Foxconn.<sup>148</sup> The specific implications of this term are very vague, but one's instinctive response to the word is consistently negative. It suggests low pay, beatings, forced labor, perhaps child labor, in hot, dimly lit buildings. At the outset of the 2010 Foxconn suicide scandal, the press again used the term "sweatshop" to describe Foxconn.<sup>149</sup> It may well have been these accusations that originally spurred the *Southern Weekend* investigation and its goal, not to "[find] out what [the workers] died for, but rather to learn how they lived."<sup>150</sup>

But, interestingly, undercover *Southern Weekend* intern Liu Zhiyi states that what he found was not a sweatshop. While in report S2 Liu Zhiyi admits that the media has speculated that "sweatshop" (血汗工厂) conditions and "semi-militarized management" (半军事化管理) were the causes of the consecutive suicides at Foxconn,<sup>151</sup> in report S3 he goes so far as to assert that "the investigation of *Southern Weekend* reporters discovered that as far as workload, overtime, and salaries are concerned, Foxconn is far from being a 'sweatshop'".<sup>152</sup> Report S3 goes on to point out that every day long lines of applicants wait for the chance to

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<sup>147</sup> Mail Online 2006.

<sup>148</sup> For example Musgrove 2006.

<sup>149</sup> Sherman 2010; Tate 2010; Moore 2010a; stuff.co.nz 2010 among others.

<sup>150</sup> Citation from Report S4. See 0 for legend of report and articles numbers.

<sup>151</sup> See report S2.

<sup>152</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 南方周末记者的调查发现, 就工作强度、加班时间、薪酬福利而言, 富士康远称不上“血汗工厂”。

apply to work at the Longhua Foxconn factory, and that even after the “sixth consecutive jump” (六连跳) on April 13 there were more than 3500 new employees hired.<sup>153</sup>

In addition to saying that Foxconn is not a sweatshop, the *Southern Weekend* reports quote various sources saying that the suicides did *not* result from bad management. In report S2, Foxconn vice-chairman Chen Hongfang is quoted saying that “[with] such a large group of workers, the grassroots-level management is guaranteed to at times do things badly, but there is certainly no direct relation between this and the suicides”.<sup>154</sup> *Southern Weekend*’s own month-long investigation of Foxconn found that the company’s “management does not have any abnormalities”.<sup>155</sup> Beijing Normal University’s professor of psychology Zhang Xichao is quoted in report S2, saying that while Foxconn ought to improve preventative measures for workers’ psychological distress, “Foxconn’s employee suicide rate is very difficult to link with Foxconn’s work pressure or ‘sweatshop’ [conditions]”.<sup>156</sup> According to the same report, research psychologists generally opine that “these suicides are fundamentally related to Foxconn employees’ individual mental illness, especially depression”.<sup>157</sup>

But while the *Southern Weekend* reports don’t blame the suicides on “sweatshop conditions” or bad management, and while experts are cited who claim that the suicides are the result of individual cases of mental illness amongst the workers, the great majority of the text of reports S1/S4, S3, and parts of report S2, focus on the difficulties of life faced daily by the workers. It seems implausible to imply that those difficulties don’t have an effect on the workers’ mental health, and we see in the reports that Liu Zhiyi feels this too. He reports what the experts have found, but at the same time he tells of his own experience and how it affected him.

This doesn’t go unnoticed in the subsequent press coverage, as will be shown below and in Chapter V and Chapter VI. In some articles, Liu Zhiyi’s findings are actually presented as *confirmation* of the labor rights abuses at Foxconn, rather than as a negation of them. This

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<sup>153</sup> See report S3.

<sup>154</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 群体这么大，基层的管理上肯定会有些做得不好的地方，但这和自杀肯定是没有直接关系的。

<sup>155</sup> Report S2. Source text in original Chinese: 南方周末在富士康的近一个月调查发现，管理本身并无异常之处。

<sup>156</sup> Source text in original Chinese: “富士康员工的自杀率也很难与富士康的工作压力、‘血汗工厂’联系起来。”

<sup>157</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 参与调研的心理学家均认为，这些自杀事件基本与富士康员工个人的心理疾病，特别是抑郁症有关。

occurs particularly often in the case of the American articles, and will be discussed more fully later on in this chapter.

## IV.II Foxconn and the FLA

In order to provide an additional perspective on the issues discussed in this chapter—a mouthpiece for CSR, if you will—I will compare Liu Zhiyi’s findings and the subsequent re-framing of those findings with the 2012 evaluation of Foxconn’s CSR done by the Fair Labor Association (FLA).

The FLA describes itself as a “collaborative effort of universities, civil society organizations and socially responsible companies dedicated to protecting workers’ rights around the world.”<sup>158</sup> An international organization headquartered in Washington, DC, but with offices in China and other countries, the FLA “places the onus on companies to voluntarily meet internationally recognized labor standards wherever their products are made.”<sup>159</sup>

There have been several other independent evaluations of Foxconn’s CSR, including investigations done by Hong Kong-based Students and Scholars against Corporate Misbehavior (SACOM)<sup>160</sup> which have perhaps received the most media attention in the West. Official CSR evaluations have also been done by Foxconn<sup>161</sup> and by Apple.<sup>162</sup> I have decided to use the 2012 FLA evaluation in my thesis because it was done in cooperation with Foxconn, and therefore had a great deal more access than the SACOM evaluation. Additionally, as it was done by a third party, it is therefore likely to be more objective than CSR evaluations published by Foxconn and Apple. It is also arguably the most thorough evaluation of Foxconn’s CSR standards released to date.<sup>163</sup>

The FLA’s investigation isn’t a flawless choice, however. Aside from the chronological discrepancy of two years between the *Southern Weekend* investigation (2010) and the FLA evaluation (2012), the FLA evaluation has faced a great deal of criticism. It was severely criticized early on, particularly when, just days after the FLA investigation had begun, FLA

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<sup>158</sup> Fair Labor Association 2013.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> SACOM 2011a; SACOM 2010; SACOM 2011b.

<sup>161</sup> Foxconn Technology Group 2008; Foxconn Technology Group 2009; Foxconn Technology Group 2010; Foxconn Technology Group 2011.

<sup>162</sup> Apple 2011; Apple 2013.

<sup>163</sup> Fair Labor Association 2012.



president Auret van Heerden made a public statement saying that Foxconn's factories' working conditions were "better than average" and that perhaps workers were committing suicide due to boredom, monotony and alienation.<sup>164</sup> Several other labor rights groups, including Verité and Workers' Rights Consortium, expressed dismay at the premature statement of the FLA president.<sup>165</sup> The critiques became even stronger when van Heerden later had to eat his words and admit that Foxconn's labor violations were very extensive.<sup>166</sup>

Since the publishing of the FLA evaluation, labor rights groups like SACOM have stated that the FLA evaluation still doesn't fully cover all the labor rights violations committed by Foxconn;<sup>167</sup> however, the violations that are brought up in the report have not been contested as being untrue. For this reason I have chosen to use the FLA report as a basis for analysis in spite of its shortcomings. While it may not convey the complete extent of the labor violations at Foxconn, it does provide extensive data for analysis, data that at worst will under-express the phenomenon I am attempting to analyze and that will not exaggerate it.

The same can be said for the chronological discrepancy. While it is true that two years passed between the *Southern Weekend* investigation and the FLA evaluation, one can safely assume that in the face of the CSR scandals, factory conditions have only improved, and not worsened. Therefore, again, the FLA data will at worst under-express the phenomenon I am attempting to analyze and will not exaggerate it.

The FLA report evaluates three factories run by Foxconn, one in Chengdu and two in Shenzhen. In this thesis I will discuss only the assessment of the Longhua campus in Shenzhen, as it is the factory campus where Liu Zhiyi went undercover. In the evaluation of the Longhua campus a total of 666,680 workers were assessed. I have chosen certain topics that either mesh particularly well with Liu Zhiyi's findings or provide an interesting contrast to them, but there are many other topics that are addressed in the original FLA report that I will not discuss here.

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<sup>164</sup> Jones 2012.

<sup>165</sup> Greenhouse 2012.

<sup>166</sup> Fair Labor Association 2012.

<sup>167</sup> SACOM 2012.

### IV.III Wages

While the *Southern Weekend* reports don't accuse Foxconn of paying unfair or illegal wages, the financial struggles of the Foxconn workers are a clear theme in the reports. In report S1/S4, Liu Zhiyi explains that for workers, official holidays are often a concern because it's "hard to boil through" the days when you spend money without making any" and comments that many workers would rather work overtime than take the vacation. He mentions that iPhones are for sale in a phone shop on the Foxconn campus, but at 2,198 RMB they are far out of the workers' price range. Instead they buy knock-off, or "shanzhai" (山寨) phones that cost just a few hundred RMB.

The topic of wages also comes up in report S2, which at one point compares the current generation of migrant workers with the first, pointing out that the salaries of the new generation of workers do not measure up to those of the previous generation. The report describes how in the 1980s migrant workers' monthly salaries ranged on average from 200 to 600 RMB, while at the same time the average university professor's salary was only approximately 180 RMB. In the last decades, in stark contrast with the rapid growth in salaries of urban full-time workers, migrant workers' salaries have experienced minimal growth, leaving the migrants in a very difficult financial situation.<sup>168</sup>

Focused analysis of my corpus reveals that low wages were not highlighted as a key topic of the *Southern Weekend* reports in the minor-source American articles, which is interesting considering that Liu Zhiyi does bring up specifics of salaries at Foxconn (900 RMB per month according to S1/S4). Low pay was mentioned in passing in three of the citations (from articles A9, A11 and A12,) but in all cases in conjunction with discussions of "long hours".

The issues of wages came up in both of the major-source American articles; however, still in connection with long hours and overtime. Article A1 comments that "Employees earned a starting wage of [900 RMB] per month (US\$132), which was the legal minimum wage in Shenzhen; to earn more they needed to work over-time", and then goes on to describe overtime at the factory. Article A6 brings up wages in passing while discussing overtime, commenting that "many of the workers are phlegmatic about the hideous amount of overtime that is semi-forced upon them by Foxconn: Since the 900 [RMB] bare wage is so low, it is

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<sup>168</sup> See report S2.

actually considered desirable to be able to make more money at a factory [...] which has overtime work”.

Sole-source articles A2, A3, and A4 quote the beginning monthly salary reported by *Southern Weekend*: 900 RMB, or approximately \$130. Article A2 doesn't even bother quoting the salary in RMB, but instead comments that "...[workers] bring in monthly wages equivalent to just \$130 USD, well below what they would need to even buy one of the Apple products they help to create." Articles A3 and A4 also follow Liu Zhiyi and article A2 in commenting that with salaries like these, workers ironically are unable to purchase the products they make.

Article A5 never specifically mentions the exact figure earned by factory workers, but comments on "Shenzhen's miniscule minimum wage", and mentions, perplexingly, that "today's Foxconn employees are earning the modern-day equivalent of what a Chinese migrant worker would've earned in the 1980s". This particular ambiguous factoid was possibly caused by a misunderstanding of report S2's discussion of the differences between the two generations of migrants. Report S2's actual conclusion on this topic is well summarized in that same report by a quote from Liu Kaiming, director of Shenzhen's Institute of Contemporary Observation. He states: "considering CPI factors, the salaries received by the new generation of migrants are a great deal less than those of the first generation of migrants for the same amount of work time".<sup>169</sup>

The Chinese articles were even less likely to mention the low wages at Foxconn, with only one minor-source article mentioning wages at all when discussing the *Southern Weekend* reports (C5), and even there the wording is very mild. Article C5 comments that "We find that within Foxconn, due to non-existent private space and a relatively low base salary, employees tend to work overtime".<sup>170</sup> Foxconn's "relatively low base salary" (底薪较低) is listed second to "non-existent private space" (不存在的私人空间) as a motivation for overtime, and the base salary isn't "low" (很低 or just 低) but is only "relatively low" (较低). This article was originally published in a Hong Kong newspaper's blog site; however, it was later republished in mainstream Mainland Chinese media. While it is careful to avoid directly criticizing the government's minimum wage, it explicitly points out the connection between "relatively low

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<sup>169</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 考虑到 CPI 的因素, 新一代的打工者, 在同样的劳动时间内, 所获得的薪酬, 要远远少于第一代打工者。

<sup>170</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 我们发现, 在富士康公司内部, 由于不存在私人空间以及底薪较低, 员工们倾向于加班。

wages” and excessive overtime, a point that Mainland Chinese news outlets would be perhaps slightly more reticent to emphasize, as Foxconn's minimum wages exceeded the legal mandate.

In comparing the two sets of articles, a stark contrast is visible. While American articles did not necessarily *focus* on the low wages at Foxconn, nine out of thirteen articles did mention wages, and several of them quote a specific figure. Only one out of eight Chinese articles mentions low wages in discussing the *Southern Weekend* reports. There are many possible explanations for this:

First, Chinese journalists know that Chinese readers are more likely to be aware of the average salaries of factory workers, and are less likely to be surprised or interested to find out that Foxconn is paying what is in China a legal minimum wage. It would only be scandal if a factory were paying significantly *less* than Chinese minimum wage.<sup>171</sup> American journalists, on the other hand, are aware of the shock value of a \$130 monthly salary to the American ear. With a figure as low as that, American readers are bound to conclude that the workers are being paid unfairly. The suicides are obviously of interest to Chinese readers, but with their knowledge of Chinese norms, low wages aren't enough of an answer to the question of why workers would kill themselves. To an American reader, on the other hand, this alone may seem like motivation enough.

Second, political factors may also play a role. The Chinese press must tread carefully to avoid censure, and criticizing the government's official minimum wage by accusing Foxconn of underpaying its workers is a slippery slope.

Thirdly, and despite the previous reason, some of the Chinese articles do in fact discuss the problem of low wages,<sup>172</sup> but they have no need to directly link this issue with the *Southern Weekend* investigation, as minimum wage statistics are readily available in Chinese from other more official sources. American journalists, by contrast, appear to often rely primarily on report S4 for information, and are less likely to reference official statistics.

By the time of the FLA evaluation of Foxconn in 2012 the situation had already changed considerably from two years prior. Minimum wage rates were found to be greater than the new legally required minimum for Shenzhen of 1500 RMB a month. Sick pay was also better

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<sup>171</sup> And this indeed does occur. See Beijing Times 2012.

<sup>172</sup> For example, the above-mentioned article C5.

than the legal requirement. Despite this fact, 64.3% of the workers evaluated felt wages were not enough to cover basic needs. Here we see the Chinese productivist welfare regime leaving much of the responsibility for fair wage setting to corporations. Clearly, meeting current government wage standards is not enough for transnational corporations like Foxconn to quell the criticisms of insufficient CSR as far as wages are concerned, at least in the West—the government standards are not generous enough to meet the expectations of either the workers in China or the Western media.

## IV.IV Work Hours

As mentioned above, report S1/S4 discusses the connection between wages and overtime, and I would argue that while the report in no way implies that Foxconn's wages are illegal or that management forces workers to work overtime, it *does* imply, though perhaps not explicitly state, that at 900 RMB a month, the legal local minimum wage is too low,<sup>173</sup> and that because of this workers are compelled to work overtime in order to make a living. Perhaps the most blatant statement is made when discussing Foxconn's voluntary overtime affidavit:

*Each employee would sign a “voluntary overtime affidavit,” in order to waive the 36-hour legal limit on [...] monthly overtime hours. This isn't a bad thing, though, as many workers think that only factories that offer more overtime are “good factories,” because “without overtime, you can hardly make a living.” For the workers desperate [to make] money, overtime is [...] “a pain that can breathe:” without it, the days without money make them “suffocate;” with it, the [tireless] work [merely adds] more “pain” to the body, thus aging quicker. Most of the time [workers] staunchly choose the latter, but even the right to choose such isn't available to all. Only those with the seniors' “trust,” with good connections, or those in key positions, can often get to work overtime.”<sup>174</sup>*

The final sentence in the quote above makes it clear that Liu Zhiyi feels that for the workers at Foxconn overtime is not forced, but rather a privilege that is only available to those who have the right connections, or *guanxi* (关系).

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<sup>173</sup> As mentioned above, the legal minimum wage in Shenzhen has changed since the 2010 reports were written.

<sup>174</sup> Citation taken directly from report S4, translation is not my own but that Richard Lai the original translator of report S1. As the Richard Lai translation is unclear at times, however, I have modified it slightly to make it clearer. My modifications are all in parentheses.

Report S3 also echoes this theme of a poverty-induced craving for overtime, commenting that “money has also become the impetus for applying for overtime. This is a paradox: Chinese factory workers actively demand overtime from the capitalists, even going so far as to curry favor with their line leaders and team leaders in order to make this [overtime] happen.”<sup>175</sup>

In addition to making it clear that it is the workers who are eager to take on more overtime in order to make more money, the *Southern Weekend* reports also state that Foxconn management has tried to limit overtime, particularly after the string of suicides in 2010.

Report S2 comments that after Lu Xin’s suicide, Foxconn CEO Terry Gou contacted general manager Li Jinming to “require [management] to co-operate with the trade union, and to increase the supervision of the trade union. The independence of the trade union should be manifested. Both Foxconn administration and the trade union at the same time directly issued a document, [requiring] strict control [of] any overtime”.<sup>176</sup> It must be made clear, however, that while excessive overtime, and the connection between overtime and low wages at Foxconn is mentioned in the original *Southern Weekend* reports, it is by no means the focus of these reports.

Focused analysis of my corpus shows that excessive overtime was an issue that was frequently brought up by the American news articles, with all but one of the minor-source American articles mentioning workers either working “long hours” or “long work periods”. Article A10 is the one exception to this trend, not mentioning long hours or low pay when discussing the *Southern Weekend* reports, but rather focusing on the dehumanizing assembly-line work and the workers’ dreams of wealth and lost youth. Beijing-based journalist Austin Ramzy wrote this article with the assistance of Chinese reporter Jessie Jiang. It is likely that this can partially explain the more “Chinese” take on the topic—with a Chinese co-author, this article both shows a better understanding of the original *Southern Weekend* reports and presents a more Chinese perspective, as will be described below. Articles A12 and A13, on the other hand, offer a more Western take on the *Southern Weekend* reports, using them to emphasize the connection between low wages and overtime.

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<sup>175</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 钱也成了他们申请加班的动力。这是一个悖论：中国的工人们主动向资本家要求加班。甚至要通过讨好线长、组长来实现这一点。

<sup>176</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 富士康高层告诉南方周末记者，在卢新跳楼以后，郭台铭曾专门致电李金明，要求资方配合工会，加大工会的监督力度，要把工会的独立性体现出来。富士康的行政与工会都直接同时发文，严格控制任何超时加班。

The American major-source articles both brought up the topic of overtime, with article A1 particularly commenting on Foxconn's voluntary overtime waiver:

*“Foxconn had workers sign documents stating that they were working over-time voluntarily, in which case the employees could circumvent the government regulation of 36 hours maximum of over-time per month. Liu believed that most employees favored this setup – they saw the companies that allowed them to work the most (and therefore earn the most) as the best employers.”*

This presentation of the facts is very close to Liu Zhiyi's own presentation in S1/S4, above.

Article A6 presents the same position with slightly stronger language.

*“Interestingly, many of the workers are phlegmatic about the hideous amount of overtime that is semi-forced upon them by Foxconn: Since the 900 [RMB] bare wage is so low, it is actually considered desirable to be able to make more money at a factory (other manufacturing companies behave just like Foxconn) which has overtime work.”*

The fact that the overtime waiver is voluntary<sup>177</sup> is not mentioned, and charged expressions like “hideous amount of overtime” and “semi-forced” are used, revealing the biases of the author quite clearly. This should not be surprising, however, as Article A6 is clearly not a paragon of objectivity with its attempt to link beatings in a Foxconn factory in Beijing with the suicides in Shenzhen. While this connection may impress those Americans who are weak in Chinese geography, readers familiar with the layout of the country are left scratching their heads, wondering how beatings in the north of China are connected to suicides in the south.

This trend to exaggerate Liu Zhiyi's discussion of overtime becomes even stronger in some of the sole-source articles. Article A2 for example claims that “Liu suggests the company forces workers to work extremely long hours, only leaving enough extra time to sleep and eat”, and then says that Foxconn requires employees to sign an overtime waiver that “shields the company from government scrutiny over the long hours without additional compensation”. Article A3 claims workers “live in a sort of indentured servitude” and articles A3, A4, and A5 all mention that workers like Liu Zhiyi sign working agreements releasing Foxconn from

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<sup>177</sup> See report S1/S4.

responsibility for the long hours workers—voluntary agreements that “override Chinese state regulation”<sup>178</sup>.

Article A5 puts an interesting twist on this topic, implying that Foxconn’s management intentionally pays low wages in order to motivate overtime work. Article A5 comments that Liu Zhiyi’s report “doesn’t focus as much on Foxconn’s managerial infrastructure, as it does on the ways in which factory bosses manipulate workers into working endless hours. Because of Shenzhen’s miniscule minimum wage, any job that allows employees to earn extra via overtime is automatically perceived as a good position, allowing bosses to squeeze every ounce of work they can out of their workers at minimal cost”.

The Chinese articles did not focus on the excessive overtime; however, overtime was mentioned on more than one occasion in order to emphasize another point. The monotony of workers’ lives, “endlessly facing a machine,” was mentioned in minor-source articles C3 and C4 as a partial explanation of why workers resort to suicide when they encounter anxiety and stress. Minor-source article C5 mentions overtime, but it reveals that at Foxconn, overtime is viewed as a positive thing rather than a negative, and it focuses on how low salaries make overtime a privilege rather than a punishment. Minor-source articles C7 and C8 do not mention overtime in citing *Southern Weekend* at all. Major-source article C2 briefly comments on the motivation behind working overtime, saying: “what working people want is to earn more money, making more money means being able to change one’s life, [being able to] enjoy life; everyone wants to work overtime, but overtime brings greater pressure. ‘It’s like a vicious circle, you will never get out of it’.”<sup>179</sup>

In comparing the articles we see that the authors of the Chinese articles understood that workers *want* to work overtime in order to make more money, while the authors of the American articles did not always acknowledge this connection, using loaded terms like “semi-forced...overtime”<sup>180</sup> and “indentured servitude”<sup>181</sup>. Chinese authors were less likely to focus on the low wages/overtime aspect of the *Southern Weekend*’s findings than the American authors. Perhaps this is once again because Chinese readers are more likely to be aware of the pervasiveness of financial struggles among migrant workers, not only at Foxconn, and more

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<sup>178</sup> Quote from article A3.

<sup>179</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 打工的人想的是多挣钱, 挣钱多意味着可以改变生活, 享受生活, 人人都希望加班, 但加班带来的是更大的压力。“这像是一个怪圈, 你永远走不出去。”

<sup>180</sup> Article A6.

<sup>181</sup> Article A3.



likely to understand the compelling drive to make money to improve one's life that motivates the excessive overtime. This willingness to sacrifice the present in order to have a better future meshes well with the predictions of Hofstede's "cultural dimensions theory", which indicates that individuals from "long-term" oriented cultures, like China, are likely to focus on potential future gains over present comfort. Then again, facing low wages and poverty, there is perhaps little choice in the matter for migrants—one must work overtime to survive. The vast majority of migrants frequently work overtime. In a sample group of Chinese migrant workers studied in 2006, researchers found that a mere 13.7% of migrants worked for no more than eight hours a day, 40.30% worked eight to nine hours, 23.48% worked nine to ten hours a day and 22.50% worked more than ten hours daily.<sup>182</sup> With statistics like these, to the informed Chinese reader, overtime cannot possibly seem to be enough of a reason to explain the suicides, while to the uninformed American reader perhaps it would be.

In 2012 the FLA evaluation of Foxconn confirmed what Liu Zhiyi had stated two years before. The evaluation found significant violations in work hours, with 77.1% of workers exceeding the legal monthly limit of overtime at Longhua between March 2011 and February 2012. Interestingly enough, only 17.7% of the workers felt that they worked too much, and 33.8% desired more overtime. Contentment was greatest in the group that worked the least overtime, however.<sup>183</sup>

In addition to overtime, the FLA found that between November-December 2011 and January 2012, 37% of the workforce did not receive the FLA-required 24 consecutive hours of rest per seven-day period, and that the factory policy's required 10-15 minutes of ergonomic breaks after every two consecutive hours of work were not systematically implemented.<sup>184</sup>

In this case we see that Chinese labor policy's stipulated work hour requirements, while in fact stricter than FLA work hour requirements,<sup>185</sup> were not being enforced or monitored, and therefore abuse was the norm rather than a rare exception. But perhaps more interestingly, and in direct contrast with legal minimum wages, both the FLA's findings and Liu Zhiyi's reports indicate that both Foxconn factory management *and* Chinese workers feel the state's labor rights requirements with regard to work hours are *too* strict rather than not strict enough. As shown above, however, this connection was lost on many of the American journalists, and

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<sup>182</sup> Xinhua New Agency 2006.

<sup>183</sup> Fair Labor Association 2012.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

most of the rest of the journalists, both Chinese and American, seemed to imply that increased legal minimum wage limits were the solution to the problem rather than laxer work hour regulations.

## **IV.V Additional CSR Violations**

While wages and overtime were the primary concrete CSR violations mentioned and discussed in the original *Southern Weekend* reports and subsequent American and Chinese articles, the 2012 FLA evaluation found that Foxconn had been in clear violation of several of their CSR standards, none of which were directly discussed by Liu Zhiyi in his articles.<sup>186</sup> For the rest of Section IV.V all statistics given are taken from the FLA evaluation<sup>187</sup> unless otherwise stated. The commentary and discussion are my own.

### **IV.V.I Insurance**

China's Social Insurance Law, effective since July 1, 2011, requires basic pension insurance, basic medical insurance, work-related injury insurance, unemployment insurance, and maternity insurance for employees; however, many of these benefits are based on *hukou* (户口).<sup>188</sup> This means that the migrant workers who make up 99% of the workers at the Longhua plant are not able to claim insurance benefits such as unemployment and maternity insurance as they do not possess Shenzhen residence cards. This, once again, is arguably the government labor policy's problem rather than Foxconn's; however, the FLA is now holding Foxconn accountable for finding ways to provide these benefits.

### **IV.V.II Interns**

In 2011, interns made up 2.7% of the workforce at Foxconn. According to Chinese law the working hours of interns are not to exceed eight hours a day, five days a week, and interns are not to work seven days straight. Despite such regulations, interns were found to work both overtime and night shifts, clearly violating regulations. This created a scandal of its own as described in Chapter II, but was not an issue discussed in my corpus. As with working hours of regular employees, this is not an issue of insufficient labor policy, but rather one of corporate abuse and insufficient government monitoring and enforcement.

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

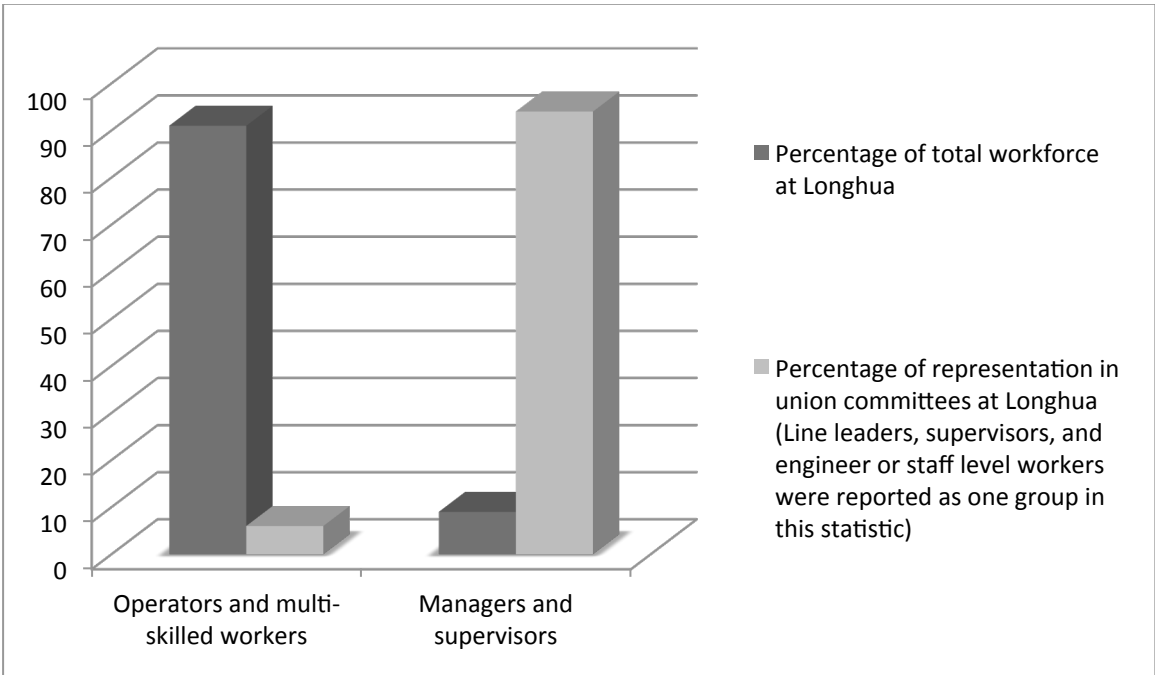
<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> See discussion in Chapter II.

**IV.V.III Unions**

The FLA evaluation found that while a workers’ union existed at Foxconn, the majority of workers were unaware of its activities. Only 32.7% of the workers surveyed were aware that workers elect representatives, and 70% didn’t know whether worker representatives participate in the factory’s decision-making processes or not.

The make-up of the union committees was very unrepresentative. At the Longhua campus, the overwhelming majority of union committee members were taken from the managerial staff, with only 2 out of 32 representatives (6%) being operators and multi-skilled workers, and those two representatives had been nominated by managers. When taken into account that operators made up 91.12% of the workforce at the Longhua plant, with managers only accounting for 0.07%, line and floor supervisors accounting for 4.91%, and engineers and other staff 3.9%, it becomes very clear that true representation was not taking place (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Percentage of workforce and union representation at the Longhua campus by job description**

The chairman and vice chairman of the local union are the factory’s Purchasing Project Manager and the Human Resources supervisor respectively. With such leadership, it seems that open discussion by under-level operators would be very difficult, especially in the context

of Chinese hierarchical business culture.<sup>189</sup> The lack of participation in the unions by low-level workers is likely due to high turnover and a lack of awareness of union activities. China's high level of power distance, as described by Hofstede,<sup>190</sup> also potentially plays a role in undermining proportional distribution of union representation—managers and common workers being on equal footing goes against the grain of millennia of Chinese tradition. FLA Benchmark ER.16 requires employers to provide all employees with a copy of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement. This is not required by Chinese law. Now that Foxconn is under the monitoring of the FLA, this will be remedied.

#### **IV.V.IV Right to Strike**

According to Article 113-64 of the Foxconn work rules in the worker handbook, workers are to be fired in case of an involvement in a strike. Foxconn has not strictly enforced this rule; however, as Chinese law does not recognize the right to strike, Foxconn is at liberty to treat workers' strikes as desired. Now that Foxconn is a member of the FLA it will delete this rule. Once again we see insufficient labor policy leaving responsibility for provision of labor rights to corporations.

#### **IV.V.V Recruitment, Hiring and Personnel Development**

All potential long-term workers beginning employment at the Longhua campus are required to sign a three-year contract that provides for an extended probation period of six months. This is legal according to China's Labor Contract Law Article 19, but goes against the guidelines set forth by the FLA, which limits probation periods to three months. This limit is instated to safeguard that employees aren't hired with intent of firing them before the six-month probation period has ended merely as a means of avoiding increased salary and benefits (as discussed in Chapter II).

#### **IV.V.VI Grievances**

When workers have grievances, it is unclear how they are to be lodged. The Foxconn grievance procedures suggest that grievances can be anonymous, but then the worker handbook says anonymous grievances will not be evaluated. Because of this lack of anonymity, some workers fear using the grievances system because of the risk of retribution, for example receiving pressure from supervisors to quit if complaints are lodged. These

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<sup>189</sup> See Chapter II and Hofstede's "Cultural Dimensions Theory".

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

grievance protocols, though still incomplete, are not required by the Chinese government, and have been developed by Foxconn management on its own in an attempt to deal with grievances.

## **IV.VI Conclusion**

In looking at the results of the FLA evaluation of Foxconn, we find that in the areas of work hours, wages, insurance, treatment of interns, unions, right to strike, recruitment, hiring, personnel development, and dealing with grievances there are two major trends that occur.

In the cases of work hours and treatment of interns, the Chinese government has already set out labor policy that is similar to FLA policy in level of strictness and specificity.

Interestingly enough, work hour regulations are the one area of labor policy where the majority of workers did not feel mistreated, and in fact desired less regulation. This perhaps explains why Foxconn management and local governments have routinely overlooked work hour violations. The forced labor of interns is harder to explain away, and here labor policy is not to blame, but rather Foxconn and the government's lack of monitoring and enforcement of that policy.

In all other cases listed here, however, problems stemmed from the insufficient nature of contemporary labor policy under the Chinese productivist welfare regime. This is particularly noticeable when observing the issues of wages, hiring and firing, insurance, unions, and the right to strike. Foxconn exceeds Chinese government expectations on all these fronts, but is still widely criticized for its lax CSR standards. As discussed in Chapter III, however, these policy shortcomings are skirted around by the Chinese press, which, out of fear of censure from the central government, must self-censor and avoid directly pointing out inadequacies. By contrast, the American press is often unaware of the policy issues and tends to keep its discussion focused on Foxconn alone rather than labor policy in general.

If we take a broader look at all of the topics analyzed by the FLA in their investigation of Foxconn's Longhua plant in Shenzhen, we find that in addition to the areas mentioned above, the FLA evaluated Foxconn with regards to workplace conduct and discipline, termination and retrenchment, health and safety, working environment, and environmental protection.<sup>191</sup> It

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<sup>191</sup> Fair Labor Association 2012.

should be noted that the sections on health and safety discuss health dangers in the factory such as dangerous equipment, toxic chemicals, inadequate emergency protocols, and other practical issues. They do not discuss more theoretical problems such as the effects of factory life on the mental health of workers. The workers' dormitories are also not discussed or evaluated. This is not surprising as the dormitories are optional living quarters, and workers can choose to find accommodations off-plant. The areas of evaluation covered are typical of a CSR evaluation, and essentially resemble the areas discussed in Foxconn's and Apple's own CSR evaluations, though there is some variation, and the FLA evaluation is significantly more comprehensive than the other two.<sup>192</sup>

We additionally see contrasts between the American and Chinese articles with regards to coverage of perceived CSR shortcomings. The American articles are more likely to bring up, and in some cases focus on, wages and overtime than the Chinese articles. This, in many ways, fits with Hofstede's discussion of long-term orientation—the long-term oriented Chinese journalists were more likely to appreciate workers' willingness to sacrifice present comfort for a better future, while the “less” long-term oriented American journalists were more likely to overlook the future-focused motivation of the Chinese workers, and focus on their exhausting present. As discussed above, however, there are several other factors that also influence this discrepancy, including risk of censure, difference in awareness of norms between the two presses and differences in how sources were cited.

Aside from wages and overtime, most of the other CSR topics addressed by the FLA evaluation were not discussed in either of the presses. Potential explanations for this will be discussed later in this thesis. While issues covered by the FLA's Foxconn CSR evaluation didn't end up being a key focus, the *Southern Weekend* reports and subsequent articles in my corpus did spend a great deal of newspaper space criticizing Foxconn on issues that are *not* covered by the FLA evaluations or by the CSR evaluations conducted by Apple or Foxconn. These issues will be discussed in Chapter V.

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid.; Foxconn Technology Group 2011; Apple 2013.

# Chapter V: Beyond CSR

In Liu Zhiyi's first report from his undercover investigation at Foxconn, he made it clear that his investigation "wasn't about finding out what [the workers who committed suicide at Foxconn] died for, but rather to learn how they lived".<sup>193</sup> In that report and in the two subsequent reports he co-authored<sup>194</sup> the everyday lives of Foxconn factory workers are revealed, and the stories of individual workers are told.

As I have shown in Chapter IV, several issues directly related to Foxconn's corporate social responsibility show up in those reports and in the other articles in my corpus. However many of the key issues discussed in the *Southern Weekend* reports and in my corpus are *not* directly connected to Foxconn's workplace CSR. These issues range from workers' social isolation, to their unrealized dreams for their futures, to their regret of lost youth. In this chapter I will explore these issues that go beyond the realm of CSR, but for which Foxconn is in many ways held responsible by the press.

As in the previous chapter, my analysis of these topics will cite the frequency of occurrence of various topics in my corpus. It is important to realize, however, that this is a qualitative study and not a quantitative one, and therefore these numbers must be taken in that context. An article with a sentence that mentions in passing that "workers struggled with feelings of isolation" would count as much as an article that devoted several paragraphs to that topic. It is only in analyzing the contents of the quotes that we find that the latter article emphasized the issue of social isolation while the former just briefly acknowledged it.

This is particularly relevant in this chapter when contrasting the American and Chinese articles, which both deal with many of the same topics, but which prioritize those topics very differently in their coverage. Therefore, the frequencies of occurrence of topics can only be taken as a brief background to supplement the more in-depth analysis.

## V.I Mental Illness and Suicides

A frequent theme in both the American and the Chinese coverage of the 2010 Foxconn suicides is the question of motivation. Why are these young workers choosing to end their

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<sup>193</sup> Report S1/S4 or Zhiyi Liu 2010a; Zhiyi Liu 2010b.

<sup>194</sup> Report S2 and S3.

lives? As already discussed in the last several chapters, the answers to these questions are varied, with many journalists blaming labor abuses and mismanagement for the suicides.<sup>195</sup>

In Chapter IV, I have shown how in looking at the *Southern Weekend* reports we find a different story. Liu Zhiyi states clearly that Foxconn is *not* a sweatshop, and while workers do work long hours, it is by choice, as they desire to earn more money to achieve their goals. So if CSR violations are not given the major blame for the worker suicides in the *Southern Weekend* reports, what is?

Answering this question is difficult, and as I have already shown, the American and Chinese media interpreted the *Southern Weekend* investigation's findings quite differently, also with significant variation within each nations' coverage. By going systematically through the *Southern Weekend* reports, however, it is possible to see what issues are brought up and which are glazed over.

On a superficial level the reports seem to support the conclusion of the psychologists called in by Foxconn to evaluate the situation—that Foxconn's wave of suicides in 2010 was the result of workers' individual mental problems. There are many passages that support this assertion. Most prominently, report S2's lead states that “research psychologists believe that the majority of Foxconn employee suicides were caused by mental illness”.<sup>196</sup> However, the lead, and, subsequently, the article, goes on to contrast that view with an implication that there is a link between the suicides and the difficulties of life faced by the new generation of migrants.

The original *Southern Weekend* reports frequently toe this line between quoting sources that say that the suicides were caused by individual cases of mental illness, and then pointing out facts that would seem to indicate otherwise.<sup>197</sup> Report S2, in particular, takes on this topic, commenting that suicide is not a problem isolated at Foxconn, and citing a suicide incident in Taizhou as well as the suicide of Zhu Chenming.<sup>198</sup>

The implication that the suicides are a part of a larger societal problem is supported in the same report with a quote from Liu Kun, the director of Foxconn's media office, who comments: “many of the problems originate upstream, it is only because the water flows here

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<sup>195</sup> See especially Chapter II and Chapter IV.

<sup>196</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 参与调研的心理学家认为，富士康员工自杀多数由心理疾病造成。

<sup>197</sup> Other examples of this can be seen in Chapter VI.

<sup>198</sup> See report S2. It is not exactly a convincing argument that Report S2 presents—one incident in Taizhou and the Foxconn-related suicide of Zhu Chenming are not exactly proof that this problem is widespread.



to Foxconn, and the problems are concentrated and exposed here, that everyone thinks these are Foxconn's problems".<sup>199</sup> Liu Kaiming, director of the Shenzhen Institute of Contemporary Observation, is also quoted, making this connection even clearer by commenting that social problems, not just psychological problems, are the root of the rash of suicides. He also notes that Foxconn's large population of workers merely reveals these problems.<sup>200</sup>

So we see that the *Southern Weekend* reports, and particularly report S2, do not accept that the rash of suicides are merely the result of individual mental illness, but rather the result of larger societal problems that affect the workers. But what are these societal problems that Liu Kaiming refers to? To answer that question we must first understand something about the identity of the average Foxconn worker.

## V.II The New-Generation Migrant Worker

So who exactly is the average Foxconn worker? According to the Fair Labor Association evaluation from 2012, the average Foxconn factory worker is male, 23 years old, and self-identifies as being a migrant. As mentioned previously, 72.2 percent of Foxconn's factory workers identify themselves as migrants, with more than 99 percent of the workers at the Longhua and Guanlan plants in Shenzhen identifying themselves as migrants.<sup>201</sup>

It is interesting, however, to see the different statistics that are brought to the forefront in the original reports and later in the American and Chinese coverage of the *Southern Weekend* investigation. Report S3 points out that all of the suicide victims share a common identity: new generation migrants. It goes on to describe this group as consisting primarily of people born in the '80s and '90s and quotes Liu Kun, director of Foxconn's media office, saying that at Foxconn more than 85% of basic level workers (基层员工) were born during these two decades.<sup>202</sup>

Report S2 comments that some sociologists and psychologists view this generation of migrant workers as having personality characteristics that make them inclined towards individualism (个人主义), more accustomed to urban consumption culture (城市的消费文化), and with

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<sup>199</sup> Source text in original Chinese: “许多问题，都出在上游，只是因为水流到了富士康这里，问题集中暴露出来，所以大家以为是富士康的问题。”刘坤认为。

<sup>200</sup> See report S2.

<sup>201</sup> Fair Labor Association 2012, 5.

<sup>202</sup> See report S3

light economic burdens. Report S2 then compares the new generation of migrant workers with the first generation of migrants, pointing out that the new generation of migrants enjoy better working and living conditions, but at the same time experience greater urban-rural split, greater wage inequality, and more profound social exclusion.<sup>203</sup>

This difference between the previous generation and current generation of migrant workers is a common theme in the original reports,<sup>204</sup> and shows itself in the subsequent Chinese articles. As mentioned earlier, report S2 points out that the salaries of the new generation of workers do not measure up to those of the previous generation.<sup>205</sup> Report S2 also points out an additional difference between the two generations of migrant workers. While the first generation of workers always had the countryside to return to, many of the new generation of migrants are unable to return to their rural roots due to a number of factors, creating an increased amount of anxiety. Many migrant workers are unfamiliar with the routines of agricultural production and have grown unaccustomed to the rural ways of life. Facing low salaries and no home to return to, these workers experience pressures the previous generation was ignorant to.<sup>206</sup>

Report S3 paints a slightly different and more critical picture of the new generation of migrants, with a quote from Li Jinming, Foxconn's administrative general manager who worked managing both generations of workers. He refers to the older generation of workers as being more diligent (勤快) and easier to satisfy, and contrasts them with the new generation of workers who expect "instant success and profits" (急功近利).<sup>207</sup>

Focused analysis of the corpus shows that the theme of the difference between the two generations of migrants was only brought out in the Chinese coverage of the *Southern Weekend* investigation, with citations from minor source article C7 and major source article C2 dealing with the topic.

Chinese minor source article C7 from *Xinmin Evening News* echoes Li Jinming's sentiments in report S3, commenting that "even if the last generation of migrant workers would have been able to cope with this sort of life, the generation of migrant workers born in the '80s and

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<sup>203</sup> See report S2.

<sup>204</sup> Particularly report S2.

<sup>205</sup> See report S2.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> See report S3.

‘90s is having a hard time continuing on. Having spent 28 days at Foxconn ‘undercover’ gathering material, *Southern Weekend*’s trainee reporter Liu Zhiyi says he feels the biggest problem is the enormous gap between employees’ dreams and harsh reality.”<sup>208</sup>

Chinese major-source article C2 from *Modern Express* also picks up on these themes commenting that “... compared with their parents’ generation, these workers have a stronger need for respect, [a stronger] need [for] a feeling of success. In this Internet age, they can see the dramatic contrast of their surrounding environment and reality, but facing bad treatment and harsh environments, as well as [their] limited level of education, they can’t change the status quo. ‘[The link] between dreams and reality has been torn. They can’t handle the blow, and their hearts are full of anxiety and helplessness’.”<sup>209</sup>

In addition to these two citations, Chinese article C6 also uses several paragraphs to discuss different facets of a relevant question—the extent to which the Foxconn suicide scandal can be attributed to *management issues* relating to the generation of workers born in the ‘80s and ‘90s.<sup>210</sup> While the formulation of the question is somewhat different, the focus is still on the differences between the new and old generations of workers.

The lack of coverage of this topic in the citations from the American articles is not particularly surprising as the concept of the modern Chinese migrant worker is not familiar to most Americans, and the historical perspective of Chinese migrant workers from the ‘80s is even more foreign to the average American reader.

### V.III Individual Workers’ Stories

One of the particularly notable elements of the original reports, and particularly of report S3, is the quotes from individual workers, describing their lives and their reactions to their surroundings. Through these individuals’ lives we are given an often rather emotionally stirring picture of the struggles of this generation of migrant workers. These anecdotes also

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<sup>208</sup> Shao 2010. Source text in original Chinese: 如果说，这样的生活，上一辈农民工尚能忍耐，那么，80后、90后新生代农民工则难以坚持下去。曾在富士康‘卧底’采访28天的南方周末实习记者刘志毅说，他感觉最大的问题，是员工心中的梦想与严酷的现实产生了巨大的落差。

<sup>209</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 但与父辈相比，这些工人更需要尊重，需要成功的感觉。在这样的网络时代，他们能看到周围的环境和现实的巨大反差，但面对低待遇和恶劣的环境，以及知识水平的限制，他们无法改变现状。“梦想和现实之间被撕裂。他们过不去这个坎，心里充满焦虑和无奈。”

<sup>210</sup> This portion of article C6 is hard to place as focused or broad analysis as it is a rather broad and encompassing reflection but one that was still directly instigated by the *Southern Weekend* reports.

illustrate many of the perceived shortcomings in the labor rights at Foxconn, and are therefore particularly relevant to my topic. The most prominent individual figure in these anecdotes is without question Lu Xin (卢新), the seventh Foxconn suicide victim of 2010.

### V.III.I Lu Xin

Report S3 uses approximately one page of text, spread out throughout the report, to discuss Lu Xin's life and background, his gradual descent into depression, and the events surrounding his suicide. He is described as extraverted (外向), optimistic (乐观), and of many talents (多才艺), in 2008 having participated in Hunan Satellite TV's *Happy Boy* singing contest.<sup>211</sup> We learn that he was from Xiangtan, Hunan; that he liked Alaskan huskies; and that he was a fan of Taiwanese actress Lin Chi-ling. It is mentioned that Lu Xin began working at Foxconn in 2009. Zeng Hongling, one of Lu Xin's co-workers, remembers that at the time of the sixth suicide of 2010 Lu Xin commented that the jumpers were "very stupid" (很傻) and that he would never do "that sort of stupid thing" (自己不会去做这样的傻事).<sup>212</sup>

Liu Zhiyi paints a tragic picture of Lu Xin's life. He mentions in passing that in 2006 Lu Xin's father worked in a coalmine in order to be able to pay for Lu Xin's university education, and while working in the mines his leg was crushed leaving him handicapped. Lu Xin's university teacher (班主任), Wang Yang, is quoted saying that before graduation Lu Xin had taken the test for admittance to civil service, but had failed and therefore had decided to apply for work at Foxconn. Liu Zhiyi comments, however, that Lu Xin's job was a relatively comfortable office job, thanks to having completed university, while most workers have to work in hot and noisy workplaces.<sup>213</sup>

But it was still no life of luxury for Lu Xin. At the time of the report, Lu Xin's family still owed more than 100,000 RMB in loans for Lu Xin's education and his father's injury, and therefore Lu Xin would send home 1500 RMB of his 1800 RMB monthly salary, leaving him with just 300 RMB to live on per month.<sup>214</sup>

Liu Zhiyi explains that Lu Xin had once dreamed of becoming a singer (歌手), but later changed his aspirations to a career as a civil servant (公务员). Then on May 2, 2010 Lu Xin's

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<sup>211</sup> Original title in Chinese: 湖南卫视的“快乐男声”。

<sup>212</sup> See report S3.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

mood took an adverse shift. Liu Zhiyi comments that though Lu Xin normally did not like to drink, on that day he “suddenly asked Zeng Hongling to drink with him. He told Zeng Hongling that he felt ‘work pressure [has become] too great’, [and that he was] ‘sleeping badly’”.<sup>215</sup>

Liu Zhiyi explains that, concerned about Lu Xin’s mental state, Zeng Hongling called Lu Xin’s family to inform them of the situation, and his mother and little brother decided to come check on him. On the morning of May 5, however, Lu Xin called his mother to tell her not to come.<sup>216</sup> Liu Zhiyi describes the last moments of Lu Xin’s life in detail:

*By May 5 at 10 pm [Lu Xin] began to appear [to be experiencing] unprecedented [levels of] anxiety, repeatedly saying he “[wasn’t] a good son”, [that he] “[gave] too little money to [his] parents”, [and that he] “[wouldn’t] survive the evening.” He began to be afraid of the whole world. A little past 11 pm, Foxconn relocated Lu Xin to the Taiwanese supervisors’ living quarters.<sup>217</sup>*

*[...]. 4:30 am on May 6, [Lu Xin’s] mother and little brother were on a train just four hours away from Shenzhen coming to take care of him, but Lu Xin didn’t wait [for their arrival]. After having tossed and turned in his bed for a few hours, Lu Xin got up [...], saying [to his friend laying next to him] that he wanted to look at the view out the window. At that point his friend [got up and] stood next to him. A few seconds later, Lu Xin jumped [to his death] from the balcony.<sup>218</sup>*

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<sup>215</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 而自杀者卢新，他曾经希望成为一个歌手，后来希望成为一个公务员。但5月2日开始，他变得情绪异常。平日不喜喝酒的他忽然要求曾红领他们一起喝酒。他告诉曾红领，他觉得“工作压力太大了”，“睡不好”。

<sup>216</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 5月5日上午，他甚至给母亲电话说没事，不用过来。——稍早一些时候，曾红领他们已经将卢新的精神异常状况告诉了他的亲属。

<sup>217</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 到5月5日晚10点，他开始显得前所未有的焦躁。他一再念叨着自己“不够孝顺，给父母的钱太少”、“自己活不过当晚”。他开始恐惧整个世界。晚上11点多，富士康公司将卢新安置到其台籍主管所住的招待所里。

<sup>218</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 5月6日凌晨4点30分，正在火车上的母亲和弟弟大约4小时后便会到达深圳照看他。但卢新没有等到这一刻。在床上几个小时的辗转反侧后，卢新从朋友的身边爬起。他说想看看窗外的风景。那时朋友就站在他的身边。几秒钟之后，他就从阳台上跳了下去。

*[Lu Xin's] best friend Wang Jun wanted to grab a hold of him [to keep him from jumping], but was only able to grab hold of the short sleeve of [Lu Xin's] white, Foxconn general-issued work uniform.<sup>219</sup>*

The tragic tone is made even stronger with quotes from song lyrics Lu Xin wrote, and quotes from his online diary, describing his regrets over his lost youth.

What is particularly notable about the *Southern Weekend's* discussion of Lu Xin's life and death is that it in many ways attributes Lu Xin's descent into depression to the hopelessness of his life at Foxconn. The contrast between Lu Xin's suicide and his original comments that the suicide victims were "stupid" (很傻), and that he would never do something like that, are used by *Southern Weekend* to implicitly show that in the case of Lu Xin, the problems perhaps did *not* "begin upstream" as suggested by Foxconn management.

### **V.III.II      Li Xiangqing**

The "BMW" driving Li Xiangqing is one of the most memorable characters in report S3. Liu Zhiyi explains that in their spare moments, warehouse workers like Li Xiangqing like to "drag race" with their hydraulic pallet jacks, calling them "BMW's", "Toyotas" and "Altos". Should they be caught by the security guards they would receive demerits, but they still never get bored of the game.<sup>220</sup>

This image of child-like, "BMW" racing Li Xiangqing is in sharp contrast with the Li Xiangqing presented elsewhere in report S3. Li Xiangqing dreams one day of being able to make enough money to become wealthy, that way he will no longer have to worry about women.<sup>221</sup> This is with good reason. Liu Zhiyi describes how Li Xiangqing also struggles with thoughts of suicide, and how his lack of money has affected his relationship with his girlfriend.

*"I really want to go jump off a building." Li Xiangqing kicks a metal cabinet with his newly issued safety boot. Just after entering Foxconn, his girlfriend broke up with him. The angry Mobile QQ<sup>222</sup> conversation almost made him cry. Outside, the machines*

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<sup>219</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 他最好的朋友王军想抓住他，却只抓到了白色、富士康统一发放的、短袖工装的衣袖。

<sup>220</sup> See report S3.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> QQ is the Chinese equivalent to Skype or iMessage.

*still rumbling, everything around him continuing as if nothing had happened. During those few days even seeing a couple walking down the street together was enough to make Li Xiangqing upset.*

*April 21 around noon, out of character, [Li Xiangqing] boldly asked “Fatty” (his line manager) for a half-day’s leave to go to the station to see his girlfriend off on her way home. He hadn’t imagined that his girlfriend in fact would be able to stay for that whole half day. He didn’t have enough money on him to be able to buy food to give her, and even had to borrow money from her for his ride back. “I felt so sorry for her, it was really terrible, the money that was supposed to be for her to take with her she wasn’t even able to take.”<sup>223</sup>*

Liu Zhiyi often contrasts Li Xiangqing with the deceased Lu Xin. At one point he mentions that at the fateful 4:30 am when Lu Xin jumped to his death, Li Xiangqing was two kilometers away working the night shift in the finished goods warehouse H3. Later, he mentions that Li Xiangqing began working at Foxconn in April 2008, but by July 2009 quit, feeling that “staying in one place for too long is boring” (在一个地方呆久了没意思). Twenty days after Li Xiangqing quit the first time, Lu Xin entered the Foxconn workforce. Then in April 2010, a month before Lu Xin’s suicide, Li Xiangqing himself re-entered the Foxconn workforce.<sup>224</sup>

Report S3 asserts that money was Lu Xin and Li Xiangqing’s common “itch” (共同之“痒”), but while money for Li Xiangqing meant the possibility of love, for Lu Xin money meant supporting his family.<sup>225</sup>

Liu Zhiyi points out that despite their similar educational backgrounds and the fact that both considered the possibility of suicide, Lu Xin and Li Xiangqing never knew each other. He comments that “even if they knew each other, they would probably rudely refer to each other

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<sup>223</sup> Source text in original Chinese: “我真想去跳楼了。”李祥庆用刚发的劳保鞋踹着金属柜子。刚进富士康，女友便和他分手了。手机 QQ 上的责骂几乎让他哭了出来。外边的机器还在轰隆隆地运转，周遭的一切也都若无其事。那几天里，李祥庆甚至看见街上走在一起的情侣就烦。

4月21日中午，他一反常态强硬地向“胖子”（管理他的线长）请了半天假，去车站送女友回家。他也没想到这一切这么快，女友原本还可以呆上半天。他身上都没有足够的钱可以买点吃的给她，反倒还从她那里拿了一点回程的路费，“太对不起她了，真的很难受，本来让她拿走的钱她也没拿”。

<sup>224</sup> See report S3.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

as ‘pubes’”.<sup>226</sup> Liu Zhiyi goes on to explain that in the factory and in the dormitories, in all but direct address, everyone is referred to as “pubes” or, literally, “dick hair” (屌毛).

“Between ‘pubes’ there is seldom friendship,” reports Liu Zhiyi. “In fact, after Ma Xiangqian [the first of the Foxconn suicide victims of 2010] died, [...] some of his roommates in the dormitory didn’t even know his name.”<sup>227</sup>

It could be argued that Li Xiangqing serves a somewhat manipulative purpose in the *Southern Weekend* reports. The similarities between Lu Xin and Li Xiangqing are in all reality very superficial, and yet the *Southern Weekend* articles present Li Xiangqing in a way that makes it almost seem like he is the voice of dead workers like Lu Xin. It is quite likely that Lu Xin and Li Xiangqing’s perspectives on factory life would have been totally different, but we are presented Li Xiangqing’s perspectives as though they are in some way representative of all the suicide victims.

In direct contrast with how these two workers are presented in *Southern Weekend*, I would argue that Lu Xin and Li Xiangqing are actually more different than alike. Lu Xin displays many traditional Chinese values, sending money to his parents and expressing dismay at his loss of a “future”.<sup>228</sup> Li Xiangqing represents the more “modern”, individualistic Chinese young person. He apparently uses money primarily for his own personal pursuits, and in quitting his stable job because “staying in one place for too long is boring” displays a very present-focused way of thinking.<sup>229</sup> Here we see Hofstede’s “cultural dimension theory” revealing its weakness in describing the complexity and variation of reality.

### V.III.III Other Workers

Quotes from worker Wang Kezhu figure into both report S1/S4 and report S3 and are used to show how factory workers attempt to achieve their dreams through hard work and study, but are often thwarted by various difficulties. Report S1/S4 tells of how when “the hard-working Wang Kezhu [...] tried to apply for courses outside [Foxconn] he ‘couldn’t understand a word,’ so he gave up”. This same incident is mentioned in report S3. In report S1/S4 Liu Zhiyi describes Wang Kezhu as very hard working, running when pushing the heavy trolleys

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid. Source text in original Chinese: 即使认识, 也应该会粗口 互称对方为 “屌毛”。

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. Complete quote in original Chinese: “屌毛” 和 “屌毛” 之间很少有友谊。甚至, 在马向前死后 [...] 他宿舍的几个舍友, 甚至不知道他的名字。

<sup>228</sup> Showing “long term orientation” and “collectivism” to use Hofstede’s dimensions.

<sup>229</sup> Lacking “long term orientation” and displaying “individualism”.



around the factory, climbing stacks of boxes to check inventory, and squeezing into small gaps to check labels. But despite this, Wang Kezhu himself admits that with his limited knowledge he has little choosing power in the work market.

Report S3 also tells of Foxconn worker Zhu Chenming, mentioning that leading up to her suicide on May 11, 2010 she had already taken time free from work because of emotional distress and her parents had already come to visit her.<sup>230</sup> It is very notable, however, that Lu Xin's life is discussed in detail in the *Southern Weekend* reports while Zhu Chenming is just mentioned in passing. There are several possible explanations for this, but the most significant one is undoubtedly timing. Zhu Chenming died on the day prior to the publication of report S1, which means that Liu Zhiyi's undercover investigation took place prior to her suicide. It is unlikely that *Southern Weekend* had very much firsthand material on Zhu Chenming and therefore was forced to leave the details to a minimum.

A list of the Foxconn suicides is given in report S3, generally giving the date, time, place and manner of death, and the name and age of the deceased. Similar lists are featured in articles C2 and C4. The Chinese articles often discussed the lives of individual workers, albeit not in the quotes used in my focused analysis. The American articles, by contrast, made very little mention of the details of individual workers' lives,<sup>231</sup> and almost never mention workers by name.

There are many possible explanations for this. A rather positive explanation would perhaps be that the American journalists were trying to avoid giving undue attention to suicide victims to avoid copycat suicides. This explanation doesn't particularly hold water when you consider the extensive American coverage of the suicides in general, however. While the American coverage usually doesn't mention particular workers by name, the worker suicides as a whole are obviously the key instigation of the articles.

A more plausible explanation is that American journalists expected the Chinese names to be unimportant and forgettable to the average American reader, and therefore limited the few descriptions of workers to statistics, for example, "an 18-year-old woman from Jiangxi province".<sup>232</sup> By doing so, however, a distance is created between the reader and the worker. This distance is increased because the place of origin is also unfamiliar to the reader. Because

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Even when conducting a broad analysis.

<sup>232</sup> See article A12.

of the lack of personal details, the American articles come across as being perhaps slightly more objective than the *Southern Weekend* reports and the Chinese articles,<sup>233</sup> though arguably less emotionally stirring.

One of the features of individual workers' stories is that they reveal firsthand the difficulties faced by workers, and reveal the inadequacy of CSR codes in providing for workers' wellbeing. While most of the articles in the American and Chinese print media did not directly cite the individual workers' stories from the original *Southern Weekend* reports, they did in many cases discuss the issues the workers' stories bring up; issues like social isolation, broken dreams, and lost youth. In the next few sections of this chapter I will look at the coverage of these and other issues one by one.

## V.IV Social Isolation

Perhaps the most significant non-CSR issue in my corpus is that of social isolation. This is prevalent not only in the original *Southern Weekend* reports, but also in the subsequent coverage. The reports present this social isolation as a pervasive problem at Foxconn. As mentioned above, when pointing out the similarities between the deceased Lu Xin and living worker Li Xiangqing in report S3, Liu Zhiyi comments that “even if they knew each other, they would probably rudely refer to each other as ‘pubes’.”<sup>234</sup> “Between ‘pubes’ there is seldom friendship.” “In fact, after Ma Xiangqian [the first of the Foxconn suicide victims of 2010] died, [...] some of his roommates in the dormitory didn’t even know his name.”<sup>235</sup>

Report S3 comments that when a new “pube” arrives in the dorm there is no welcoming ceremony, and a roommate’s departure is only noticed upon arriving back from a shift and noticing one of the ten beds in the dorm room is empty. “Each one is [just] a familiar stranger” (一个个都是熟悉的陌生人).<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> This feeling of objectivity is quite misleading, however. My analysis has by no means found the American articles to be quantifiably more accurate or objective, just more distanced from the topic.

<sup>234</sup> Report S3. Source text in original Chinese: 即使认识, 也应该会粗口互称对方为“屌毛”。

<sup>235</sup> Ibid. Complete quote in original Chinese: “屌毛”和“屌毛”之间很少有友谊。甚至, 在马向前死后 [...] 他宿舍的几个舍友, 甚至不知道他的名字。

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

Report S3 goes on to point out that the overpopulation of the factory campus contributes to the social isolation. Liu Zhiyi notes that at Foxconn even the social network of a “movie star” (明星) type like Lu Xin was primarily limited to friends and acquaintances from school.<sup>237</sup>

Later the same report discusses how the monotony of the workday limits personal time and thereby social interaction. Foxconn administrative general manager Li Jinming is quoted commenting that workers lack social outlets like student clubs; and workers, in their isolation, are forced to deal with stresses all alone.<sup>238</sup>

In Report S3, Liu Zhiyi paraphrases Emile Durkheim’s *Suicide*, stating that “the more isolated, the more alienated an individual’s social relationships are, the more likely [he is] to commit suicide. ‘The power of community is one of the best obstacles to curb suicide.’”<sup>239</sup>

Report S2 also paraphrases Durkheim, but this time contextualizes the theory to Foxconn:

*The most effective obstacle to curb suicide found by Emile Durkheim—community—is unable to provide help for China’s new generation of migrant workers.*

*“The current system of social management framework puts every migrant worker in an atomic state, they do not have self-help and communication organizations,” said Liu Kaiming.*

*Foxconn administrative general manager Li Jinming describes this “atomic” state of workers in his own way: “Neither formal organizations, such as trade unions, nor informal organizations, such as the hometown or alumni associations, are available to ordinary employees, so there is a lot of pressure, but no way to relieve [it].”<sup>240</sup>*

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> I have translated directly from Chinese here and have not quoted Durkheim’s original quote. I have used the word “community” to translate “集体” as I find the typical translation of that word, “the collective”, is more vague in English than “集体” is in Chinese. Source text in original Chinese: 个体的社会关系越孤立、越疏离，便越容易自杀。“集体的力量，是最能遏制自杀的障碍之一。”

<sup>240</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 而涂尔干所谓遏制自杀的最有效的障碍——集体，也并不能给中国的新生代打工者提供帮助。

“目前的社会管理制度框架，使每一个打工者处于原子状态，他们没有自我救助与沟通的组织。”刘开明说。

富士康行政总经理李金明以他的方式描述了工人的这种“原子”状态：“不管是正式组织，比如工会，还是非正式组织，比如老乡会，同学会，普通员工都找不到，所以压力大，却无法舒缓。”

Report S3 repeatedly describes the apathy among the workers toward the suicide of their peers. Upon learning of a new suicide, worker Li Xiangqing is quoted quipping: “Foxconn is [already] very famous, [and now even more so]. You’ve heard about the ‘six consecutive jumps, right?’”<sup>241</sup>

Report S1/S4 also describes this phenomenon: “When talking about their colleagues' suicidal jumps, there was often a surprisingly calm reaction, and sometimes [...] banter would [even] be made about it, as if they were all outsiders.”<sup>242</sup>

The social isolation of factory workers was a key topic of citations from the *Southern Weekend* reports in Chinese articles, but was only mentioned in one out of seven citations in American minor-source articles. This topic was, however, addressed in one of the two American major-source articles, and three of four American sole-source articles. It could be argued that this shows that the American articles don’t view this topic as being central in the original *Southern Weekend* investigation findings and therefore are only likely to mention it when a large number of paragraphs will be spent discussing them.

The American minor-source citation appeared in article A8, which describes how *Southern Weekend* found that, due to the lack of meaningful social structure, workers are left in isolation. The major-source citation was from article A1 and comments: “The blue-collars, [who] came from all over China, seemed to struggle at forming real connections. Workers routinely could not remember all the names of the other dorm mates they lived with, [who] came and went quite frequently.”<sup>243</sup> Interestingly, Chinese journalist Nan Duan, who undoubtedly read the original reports in Chinese, wrote both these articles.

In the sole-source American articles the issue of social isolation came up more frequently, with articles A3, A4 and A5 all discussing the topic. Article A3 summarizes Liu Zhiyi’s description quite succinctly, commenting that many of the workers “wouldn’t talk of the suicides. Others joked about it. One of the problems may be the lack of communication and friendships between work colleagues. Many workers don’t even know the names of the people working next to them. In fact, according to Southern [Weekend], the workers find [it] difficult to relate to each other because they are always wearing identical work uniforms and

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<sup>241</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 富士康好出名的, 又出名了, 你知道 ‘六连跳’ 吗?

<sup>242</sup> Translation by Richard Lai, report S4, parenthetical modifications my own.

<sup>243</sup> The original citation uses the word “which” in both places where I have inserted the word “who” for the sake of clarity.

performing the same tasks everyday. They have no interesting topics to chat about because all they do is work. If an employee becomes too stressed, they often have no one with which to share their feelings or to approach for help solving their problems.”

Article A4 doesn't focus on this topic, but does comment that “[f]riendship is a big problem in the factory. There are some workers who do not know the names of their roommates even though they have worked together for a long time.”

Article A5 provides its own slant on the issue, stating that “[t]he portrait that Zhiyi paints is chillingly bleak, pressure-packed and full of stress. If your physical or mental condition begins to suffer, you have virtually no one to confide in, thanks to the hive-mind mentality that pervades the facility.” Later, the same article comments on the apathy shown by workers to the suicides, quoting *Southern Weekend* almost word for word: “As Zhiyi says, even when workers were ‘talking about their colleagues’ suicide jumps, there was a surprisingly calm reaction, and sometimes even a banter would be made about it, as if they were all outsiders’.”

Two out of five of the Chinese minor-source articles (C3 and C4) had quotes that focus directly on workers’ social isolation: discussing how workers become disconnected, mere shadows of each other, without a social support network. The citations were nearly identical, and were in fact not taken from the original *Southern Weekend* reports, but rather taken word-for-word from an interview with Liu Zhiyi on Chinese National Radio as mentioned in Chapter III.

The citation from the sole Chinese major-source article, C2, focuses primarily on the issue of social isolation and again quotes Li Jinming word-for-word from the *Southern Weekend* report S2, but comments that the *Southern Weekend* paraphrase of Durkheim neglected to mention the complete picture of Durkheim’s findings:

*Foxconn administrative general manager Li Jinming also admits, “Neither formal organizations, such as trade unions, nor informal organizations, such as the hometown or alumni associations, are available to ordinary employees, so there is a lot of pressure, but no way to relieve [it].” This is obviously a large group of repressed souls, deprived of freedom and release.*

*“The more isolated an individual's social relationships are, the more alienated, the more likely to commit suicide.” In the report from “Southern Weekend” a sentence*

*from the French sociologist Emile Durkheim's "Suicide" is mentioned, but another assertion from Durkheim is not mentioned, "high suicide rates are correlated with excessive personal freedom and excessive control". "After the suicides, Foxconn's psychological counselor recommended workers enrich [their] leisure lives, go out more, but in fact this is not realistic."*<sup>244</sup>

In looking at the topic of social isolations we see a certain discrepancy between American and Chinese coverage. While the American journalists do mention that topic, it is generally in passing and in sole-source articles. The Chinese articles are much more likely to focus on this topic. Some possible interpretations for this discrepancy will be discussed in Chapter VI.

## V.V (Broken) Dreams

The theme of broken dreams figured prominently into Liu Zhiyi's original discussions of the workers' plight at Foxconn (particularly in report S1), and therefore, unsurprisingly, was the focus of several citations from the subsequent American and Chinese articles.

Near the beginning of report S1/S4 Liu Zhiyi mentions the size of the Foxconn plants, resembling a small town, and comments that it isn't the "sweatshop" people imagine. He goes on to comment, however, that "[t]housands of people flock here each day just to find a place of their own, to find a dream that they'll probably never realize". This theme of unrealized dreams permeates report S1/S4.

In the same report, Liu Zhiyi later compares two groups of young people, university students like himself and the factory workers at Foxconn. He comments on the differences between their lives, but still finds that they both share "the same age, the same youth[ful] dream".<sup>245</sup>

And what is that dream? We don't have to wait long to find out. In report S1/S4 Liu Zhiyi describes these dreams:

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<sup>244</sup> Article C2. Source text in original Chinese: 富士康行政总经理李金明也承认, "不管是正式组织, 比如工会, 还是非正式组织, 比如 老乡会、同学会, 普通员工都找不到, 所以压力大, 却无法舒缓。" 这显然是一大群压抑而不得自由和舒展的灵魂。

"个体的社会关系越孤立、越疏离, 便越容易自杀。" 在《南方周末》这篇报道中, 法国社会学家涂尔干《自杀论》中的这句话被提及。但没被提及的是涂尔干另外一个判断, "高自杀率伴随着过度的个人自由和过度的控制"。"自杀事件发生后, 富士康的心理咨询师建议工人丰富业余生活, 多外出, 但实际上这并不现实。"

<sup>245</sup> See report S1/S4.

If you ask the workers what their dream is, you'll often get the same answer: start a business, make money, get rich, and then you can do whatever you want. In the warehouse, they humorously name their [hydraulic pallet jacks]<sup>246</sup> "BMW". They, of course, would rather own actual BMWs, or at least possess "BMW" kind of wealth.

Liu Zhiyi then goes on to describe how the workers keep having to reevaluate the feasibility of their dreams considering their slow earning rate, and often resort to overtime, lottery tickets and horserace betting as means of making money faster.<sup>247</sup>

The theme of unrealizable dreams appears also in report S3. That report uses several paragraphs to describe how Li Xiangqing and his co-workers in the warehouses like to call their hydraulic pallet jacks "BMW" and, when the security guards aren't watching, "drag race" (飙车) with them. Liu Zhiyi comments that Li Xiangqing dreams of one day being able to make enough money to buy a real BMW, but it is clear that this dream is unlikely to come true.<sup>248</sup>

Focused analysis of my corpus shows that two out of seven American minor-source articles discuss workers' dreams. Article A9 points out that while Liu Zhiyi does not decry human rights abuses or long work hours, he does describe the workers' devastating realization that their dreams for the future are impossible to achieve due to the harsh realities of factory life. Article A10 mentioned in passing that workers dream of wealth, but feel they lack opportunities outside of Foxconn. This article does not, however, mention Liu Zhiyi's conclusion that it is working at Foxconn that breaks those dreams.

While the issue of workers' dreams did not come up in either of the American major-source articles, it did come up in three out of four American sole-source articles. Article A3 mentions the workers pretending their warehouse trolleys (hydraulic pallet jacks) are "BMW" and comments that, according to one worker, the Foxconn factory workers can't live without such dreams. Article A3 then echoes report S1/S4, commenting: "[t]hey dream of becoming rich one day. Some spend part of their salaries buying lottery tickets and betting on horse races."

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<sup>246</sup> Referred to as "hydraulic trolleys" in the original Richard Lai translation (report S4), but based on comparisons of text from other reports it appears that the word "hydraulic trolleys" (油压车) refers to hydraulic pallet jacks, or essentially hand-powered forklifts.

<sup>247</sup> See report S1/S4.

<sup>248</sup> See report S3.

Article A3 then goes on to talk about how the workers dream of falling in love, but in the factory environment find this difficult.

Article A4 also briefly mentions workers dreams, and again brings up the workers' penchant for gambling in hopes of becoming rich: "...the workers always dream of being rich someday. To fulfill this dream, they would use part of their salaries to buy lottery tickets. They also put their hopes on horse-racing gambling too."

Article A5 puts its own slant and commentary on the issue of workers dreams, commenting: "[a]s long as workers continue to hold on to their aspirations to, as Zhiyi says, 'start a business, make money and get rich' – and as long as they see Foxconn as the only way to realize those dreams – this vicious cycle will probably churn forward. And Foxconn's coffers will continue to fill up."

Two out of five Chinese minor-source articles focused on this issue in particular when citing the *Southern Weekend* reports. Articles C7 and C8 both had near identical quotes citing the enormous gap between employees' dreams and harsh reality as a root problem at Foxconn, with C7 contrasting the current generation of migrant workers with the more stoic previous generation. Chinese major-source article C2 also spends several paragraphs on this topic, particularly showing how the ever-more-affluent world around the workers makes them desire also to be able to become rich, but find this near impossible:

*In this Internet age, [the workers] can see the dramatic contrast of their surrounding environment and reality, but facing bad treatment and harsh environments, as well as [their] limited level of education, they can't change the status quo. "[The link] between dreams and reality has been torn. They can't handle the blow, and their hearts are full of anxiety and helplessness."*<sup>249</sup>

Article C2 then goes on to clarify any doubt surrounding what these dreams consist of, commenting:

*What working people want is to earn more money, making more money means being able to change one's life, [being able to] enjoy life, everyone wants to work overtime,*

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<sup>249</sup> Article C2. Source text in original Chinese: 在这样的网络时代，他们能看到周围的环境和现实的巨大反差，但面对低待遇和恶劣的环境，以及知识水平的限制，他们无法改变现状。“梦想和现实之间被撕裂。他们过不去这个坎，心里充满焦虑和无奈。”



*but overtime brings greater pressure. "It's like a vicious circle, you will never get out of it."*<sup>250</sup>

Finally article C2 quotes Liu Zhiyi's appraisal of the situation:

*"I think that the root cause of the workers' suicides is the capital-focused mode of operation. In this generation of workers this mode of operation is difficult to change, and at the same time industry lacks [prioritization of] humane care," Liu Zhiyi concludes.*<sup>251</sup>

As with the topic of social isolation, here again we see that the Chinese articles are more likely than the American articles to emphasize and discuss the topic of workers' dreams. We can also see a difference in how the topic is addressed. American journalists underline the workers' desire for wealth and their attempts to gain it through gambling and overtime, while Chinese journalists discuss the societal pressures that lead to the workers' unrealistic expectations and dreams. At face value it appears that this runs inline with the expectations of "cultural dimensions theory"—the Americans focusing on the individual and the Chinese focusing on the collective. In reality, however, I would argue that this is more likely a discrepancy of insider/outsider perspectives. As is perhaps to be expected for a story that originated in China, the American (outsider) perspective is mainly descriptive, while the Chinese (insider) perspective is more nuanced and analytical.

## **V.VI Love, Dating and Sex**

Dreams of wealth were just one type of dream mentioned in the *Southern Weekend* reports. Workers' desire to date and dreams of finding love (or at least sex) featured significantly into report S3, with several paragraphs dealing with this topic. Liu Zhi and Yang Jibin describe how sex and love are viewed by workers as being very important for "individual spiritual sustenance" (个体心灵慰藉), and are therefore at times overvalued, with some workers choosing to commit suicide as a result of relationships. Because of this, "workshops that have

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid. Source text in original Chinese: 打工的人想的是多挣钱, 挣钱多意味着可以改变生活, 享受生活, 人人都希望加班, 但加班带来的是更大的压力。"这像是一个怪圈, 你永远走不出去。"

<sup>251</sup> Ibid. Source text in original Chinese: "我觉得, 工人自杀的根本原因, 是资本运作方式, 在这一代工人中, 资本运作方式难以改变, 同时企业又缺乏人文关怀。" 刘志毅总结说。

girls are good workshops, floors with girls are good floors” (有女生的车间就是好车间，有女生的楼层就是好楼层).<sup>252</sup>

Despite this fact, report S3 explains that at the Longhua factory campus, workers don't have places that facilitate “dating” (谈恋爱). Even in the surrounding area, there are no movie theaters or municipal parks available to workers.<sup>253</sup> Other facilities are available, however, including “black internet cafes” (黑网吧) providing computers with pornography to allow workers to “resolve some of the hormonal impulses of youth” (解决这些青年人的“荷尔蒙”冲动).<sup>254</sup> After payday workers can solicit a visit with a prostitute for a special workers' price of 80 RMB.<sup>255</sup> But with both sex and love, money is still the key issue. This comes to the forefront in many of Liu Zhiyi's interviews with workers. As say the words to a song Li Xiangqing sings for Liu Zhiyi, “no money, no car, no house”, “without money will you love me?” (没钱没车没房，没有钱你会爱我吗?). Liu Zhiyi also mentions that the seventh Foxconn suicide victim of 2010, Lu Xin, despite his many talents and his interest in dating, never managed to have a relationship during his approximate nine months working at Foxconn.

Despite several paragraphs discussing this theme of love, dating and sex in report S3, focused analysis shows that only two articles referred to the topic, and, surprisingly enough, those were both American articles, major-source article A1<sup>256</sup> and sole-source article A3. Article A1 particularly mentions “talented star employee [...] Lu Xin” for whom “relationships were a luxury”, and goes on to comment that, while relationships are not feasible, cheap prostitutes<sup>257</sup> are available to factory workers.<sup>258</sup> Article A3 comments that Liu Zhiyi found that some workers “complain about their love lives”, and, unable to find lovers in the factory environment, must resort to watching porn videos in Internet cafes.

This topic shows up more frequently in both sets of articles when one does a broad analysis. What is noticeable when looking at this topic, however, is not so much the variance in the

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<sup>252</sup> See report S3.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> The article is written, however, by Nan Duan, a Chinese speaker who obviously had read report S3 for his article.

<sup>257</sup> Interestingly, Nan Duan misquotes the price of prostitutes, citing 90 Yuan per session in comparison to the 80 Yuan mentioned in report S3.

<sup>258</sup> See article A1.

coverage by the two presses, but rather the different ways readers in China and in the USA will likely perceive it.

Chinese readers are aware of the implications of the one-child policy, and know that many of the workers at Foxconn are likely to be only children. Chinese readers also know that, in Chinese culture, marriage is a crucial rite of passage and great pressure is placed on youths, especially only children, to find a suitable boyfriend/girlfriend and get married. Finally, Chinese readers know that in China money and social status are often the most basic requirements for a man to be an eligible catch.<sup>259</sup> With this background, the Chinese reader is able to understand the full implications of how the social pressures to marry play out for (especially male) workers at Foxconn. Being poor and a factory worker is bad enough, but being by consequence “unmarriageable” makes the situation worse and the social pressure greater.

American readers are unlikely to be aware of any of these factors, and therefore, while the topic may be discussed similarly in the Chinese and American presses, the resulting information conveyed to the readers is vastly different between the two.

## V.VII Lost Youth

Another reoccurring theme in the *Southern Weekend* reports is the idea of youth lost working in front of machines in the factory. This theme comes up in report S1/S4 which comments on Foxconn’s high levels of export and productive assembly lines, but then comments of the workers: “it seems like while they're controlling the machines, the machines also have them dominated: the parts gradually come together as they move up the assembly line; at the same time, the workers' pure and only youth also disappears into the rhythmic machineries”.<sup>260</sup>

The young age of the workers at Foxconn plays a particularly significant role in the *Southern Weekend* investigations because intern-turned-journalist Liu Zhiyi was only able to get a job at Foxconn because of his young age. Liu Zhiyi comments on this in report S1/S4: “We soon found out that most of *Southern Weekend's* reporters were rejected [for employment] due to age – Foxconn only recruits people around the age of 20. In comparison, being just under 23 years old, I was quickly brought into Foxconn.”

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<sup>259</sup> These issues are discussed in part in Cameron et al. 2013; Zhan 2004; Wu 1996a; Chang 2009.

<sup>260</sup> Translation by Richard Lai, report S4.

Issues surrounding youth also appear frequently in report S3. That report includes a section entitled “Helpless Youth” (不知所措的青春) that focuses on the topic of Foxconn’s young workers’ regret of lost potential and lost youth, with a particular focus on Lu Xin.<sup>261</sup> It quotes Lu Xin’s last post in his personal journal on Xiaonei Network (校内网)<sup>262</sup>, the Chinese equivalent of Facebook: “In order to make money I gave up my favorite public employment, supporting construction in the western part [of China], and came to [Foxconn]. In the end, due to a strange combination of circumstances, [I wasn’t able to get a job in] research and development and instead [work in] manufacturing. The money is fairly good, but I am wasting my life and my future.... [Sigh], I have lots of regrets.... Now [I have] gone [in the] wrong [direction] with this first step on life’s path, [I’m] lost and confused...”<sup>263</sup>

Report S3 also describes the nostalgia some of the workers feel for their childhoods. The lyrics to a song Lu Xin wrote are quoted, where he recalls his childhood years: “wind blowing gently, the passing touch of shyness, childhood memories eclipsed”.<sup>264</sup> Li Xiangqing, while lying on a warehouse pallet, tells Liu Zhiyi about his childhood memories: “looking for food for a picnic, playing King of the Children, in a cave eating peanuts he roasted himself, stealing corn to roast and eat...”<sup>265</sup>

Surprisingly, a focused analysis of my corpus shows that this topic of youth comes up in only one article, American major-source article A1, and only in passing. That article comments on Liu Zhiyi’s age<sup>266</sup> and then in parentheses states that “most full-time journalists at *Southern Weekend* were too old to be hired by Foxconn, while Liu was a suitable candidate”.

While this topic was neglected in the citations from the *Southern Weekend* reports, we do see that this issue was considered if we look at the headlines from my corpus. The headlines of one of the original Chinese source reports (report S1) and two of the subsequent Chinese news articles (articles C2 and C3) used the term *qingchun* (青春) or, literally, “spring of youth” in discussing the workers of the Foxconn factories. Additionally, the headline of

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<sup>261</sup> See report S3.

<sup>262</sup> Now known as “人人网” or “Everyone’s Network”.

<sup>263</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 放弃了最喜欢的公共职业: 支持西部建设, 为了钱, 来到了公司, 结果阴差阳错没进研发, 来到制造, 钱还算多, 但在浪费生命和前途……哎, 真的很后悔……现在在我的人生第一步就走错了, 很迷惘……

<sup>264</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 风轻轻的吹过, 掠过一丝羞涩, 儿时的往事黯然失色。

<sup>265</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 找食物去野炊, 做孩子王, 在洞里吃自己烤的花生, 偷玉米烤着吃……

<sup>266</sup> Liu Zhiyi’s age is misquoted in many articles, and in article A1 this is also the case. Liu Zhiyi was in fact 22 at the time of the investigation, but article A1 says he was 23.

article C4 mentions that the tenth jumper at Foxconn was twenty years old. This theme is less prevalent in the USA articles, with only article A12 referencing Foxconn's "young workers" in its lead. Article A3's lead, however, does mention (albeit incorrectly) that Liu Zhiyi was 20 at the time of his investigation<sup>267</sup>.

The headline of report S4 (the English translation of report S1) is particularly interesting to notice. Report S1 clearly mentions the *qingchun* of Foxconn workers in its headline, which reads *yu jiqi xiangban de qingchun he mingyun* (与机器相伴的青春和命运) or "Youth, and Destiny in the Company of Machines".<sup>268</sup> Report S4 seems to glaze over this, however, in Richard Lai's translation: "The fate of a generation of workers". Granted, the direct translation of the Chinese title is quite awkward, however Richard Lai's translation loses two key elements from the original title: the youth of Foxconn workers, and idea of constantly "being together"<sup>269</sup> with machinery. Richard Lai's use of the word "generation" does perhaps imply youth in a vague sense, however the *emphasis* on the youth of the workers is clearly lost in translation.

In looking at the coverage of the topic as a whole, it is interesting to note that while the theme of lost youth was quite important in the original *Southern Weekend* reports, a focused analysis reveals that it was essentially neglected in the subsequent coverage by both the Chinese and American presses. The topic does come up in a broad analysis however, particularly in the Chinese articles. This would seem to indicate that while the American and Chinese presses felt the topic important enough to mention in general, they didn't consider it to be a major finding of the *Southern Weekend* investigation in particular.

## V.VIII Living Conditions and Work Injuries

As mentioned in Chapter IV, most standard CSR codes neglect to give detailed specification for worker housing and what basic amenities are to be provided in housing complexes.

Despite that fact, in looking at my corpus we see that the American and Chinese presses have

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<sup>267</sup> He was in fact 22 at the time.

<sup>268</sup> Chinese: 与机器相伴的青春和命运 . The author's translation of this title is very close to the original meaning, however because of limitations of English grammar, the word order is changed. The original Chinese headline first states the complement "with machinery being together" and then clarifies that this complement modifies the subject that follows: "youth and destiny". This word order brings emphasis to the fact that the youth and destiny of the workers *are accompanied by machinery*, a distinction which is harder to make succinctly in English.

<sup>269</sup> Chinese: 相伴

certain expectations regarding what should be considered adequate living conditions, expectations which are for the most part met for the Chinese press, and which are not met for the American press.

Report S3 spends quite a bit of time describing the living conditions in the Foxconn campus. Liu Zhiyi comments that with more than 300,000 people living in an area of less than three square kilometers at Foxconn's Longhua campus at the end of 2009, "it is hard to use the simple word 'factory' to describe such an industrial community".<sup>270</sup>

The report includes a revealing walk through of the Longhua campus' layout, complete with street-side fortunetellers, lottery ticket sales points, a bookstore selling test-prep books, a cell phone shop selling unaffordable-to-factory-workers iPhones, a mall with a karaoke bar and pool tables, and an ice-skating rink.

In a quote from an interview with Liu Zhiyi, Chinese article C1 compares Foxconn's amenities to those of an enormous Chinese university. Chinese major-source article C2 comments briefly on the living conditions at Foxconn reporting that "Liu Zhiyi says that Foxconn's basic amenities are very good, with a gym and swimming pool, but very few workers are able to go. 'Twelve hours of work, eight hours' sleep, coupled with eating, walking, etc. Do you still have time to go to those places?'"

American major-source article A1 paints a very different picture of the situation, commenting that "Liu's account of life at Foxconn was incredibly depressing. 300,000 employees worked and lived on a 2 square kilometer patch of land, crammed with assembly lines and dormitories. Ten workers shared a dorm."

The American articles' discussion of living conditions is similar to the American discussion of wages and work hours in that it reveals a general lack of understanding of Chinese quality of life. A broad analysis of my corpus shows that the trends described in the focused analysis above generally hold true throughout. While the Chinese reports and articles either portray Foxconn's basic amenities in a neutral or positive light or do not mention them at all, the American articles tend to imply that living conditions are inadequate, if they mention them at all. This reveals clear differences in societal expectations.

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<sup>270</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 这个工业社区已很难用单纯的“工厂”来定义

Chinese journalists and readers can tell by a general description that the basic amenities at the Foxconn factory—dormitories and cafeterias, etc.—are not unlike those of a typical Chinese university, if not slightly better. To American journalists and readers the accommodation descriptions of ten people to a room and essentially no private space appear much less livable, and this is reflected in the texts.

While the quality of living conditions is perhaps debatable, there is little doubt in the *Southern Weekend* reports that the workers would rather have more time off the factory floor, even if that means staying in their dorms. In report S3 Liu Zhiyi mentions a worker whose foot was accidentally run over by a forklift on April 25. Thanks to his protective shoes, the worker's foot was not broken and he was allegedly still able to walk.<sup>271</sup> Rather than feeling sympathy, Lui Zhiyi found that his co-workers at Foxconn envied the injured worker. He quotes worker Wang Kezhu's reaction to the injury: "Damn, how sweet are work-related injuries! You get paid [for them]. If it was me I would rest for at least a month before returning to work."<sup>272</sup>

This idea of workers longing for mild work-related injuries was mentioned in several of the American sole-source articles. Article A3 comments:

*Liu had his most interesting chats with other workers during meals. Some told him that they envied workers who are sick. They get leave approvals and can get some rest. They also discussed about accidents in the factory: One worker got his finger cut-off during production. A few workers think that the machines are cursed. They believe it's dangerous for them to use the machines.*

Article A4 has an almost identical quote: "This Southern [Weekend] reporter also had some chats with the workers during meal times. Some of them told him that they admired those workers who got sick leave approvals so they could get some rest."

The discussion of workers' desires for work injuries reveals what Liu Zhiyi seems to find as a more pressing problem for workers—the monotony and dehumanization of factory life. As Liu Zhiyi presents it, it isn't the factory campus that the workers are eager to escape; it is their monotonous shifts on the assembly line, with pay as the only motivation.

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<sup>271</sup> See report S3.

<sup>272</sup> I have attempted to reproduce the casual tone of the original Chinese in the translation and therefore do not translate completely word-for-word here. “我靠” is a mild expletive in Chinese, and therefore translated here merely as “damn”. “爽” in conversational Chinese means essentially “comfortable”. Source text in original Chinese: 我靠，工伤，多爽，有工资的。要是我至少休息一个月才回来做事。

## V.IX Dehumanization and Monotony

A reoccurring theme in the *Southern Weekend* reports, and particularly report S1/S4, was the dehumanization of workers, and their feeling of becoming part of the machines with which they work.

In report S1, Liu Zhiyi describes the eeriness of the constant rhythm of the machines permeating the factory complex. He mentions how after using the toilet at 4am, he placed his ear to the workshop corridor wall, and “listened to the machines rumbling steadily from all four directions – this is the factory's heartbeat. The employees work, walk and eat at this beat, so no wonder I was walking so fast, eating so quickly without anyone hurrying me, even though it didn't feel good. You're like a component that's entered the assembly line, just following the rhythm, belonging to that heartbeat at 4am, no way to escape.”

Report S3 describes this monotony of factory life: “Humans have almost been hijacked by the pin machines<sup>273</sup> in the Guanlan campus. Li Xiangqing, who previously worked [in that plant], says: ‘Standing in front of the machine, doing eight hours of ‘punishment by standing’ (each shift is eight hours long), always working. While standing there, if something drops [on the floor, you have to] bend over to pick it up. [You end up] wishing things would drop all the time, [that way you] never would have to stand [back] up. If you can lie down for one minute, that is an extreme pleasure.’”<sup>274</sup> The report goes on to comment that workers have to wear earplugs to avoid the constant racket of the factory.<sup>275</sup>

This monotony isn't limited to the routines of factory life. Report S1/S4 describes the Longhua campus: “In the factory area, those neatly planned tall buildings had nothing special apart from their alphanumeric codes on the top. The machines, boxes and even the uniformed workers inside all bear the same pattern.”

This idea of the uniformed workers being “shadows of each other” is expanded upon in report S1/S4. Liu Zhiyi describes how one morning, on his way to work, he saw two workers in the window of one of the buildings, gazing down at the flow of pedestrians below. He comments that they were too far away to see well, and just looked like two black dots in the window. He

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<sup>273</sup> Possibly a mistranslation. In Chinese: 插针机。

<sup>274</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 在观澜的插针机流水线，人几乎被机器劫持了。曾在那里工作的李祥庆说：“就站在机器前，‘罚站’8小时（一个班8小时），一直工作。站着的时候，有个东西掉了弯腰去捡，恨不得一直有东西掉，一直不用站起来。要是可以躺一分钟，那就是天大的享受。”

<sup>275</sup> See report S3.



reflects: “[i]f I stood in their positions, the road's no doubt just full of moving black dots, so insignificant in comparison to the large white buildings”.

This uniformity among the workers is also a theme in report S3. That report comments that Liu Kun, Foxconn’s media office director, believes that uniformity among the workers results in their lack of interest to form friendships among themselves. He is quoted commenting: “Every day all one sees are shadows of one’s self. The same work uniforms, the same work”.<sup>276</sup>

Focused analysis of my corpus shows that the dehumanization of factory workers was only brought up by one American minor-source article when discussing the *Southern Weekend* reports, and was not directly mentioned in the Chinese minor-source citations. The American minor-source article A10 explicitly discussed this problem, describing how humans “become” parts of the machines they operate by standing in front of them all day long.

While this issue of dehumanization wasn’t discussed in the Chinese minor-source articles, it was discussed in some depth in Chinese major-source article C2. Here, the image of the dehumanized workers is particularly poignant:

*“Humans have been hijacked by machines”, “living life as fragments”, wrote the report. Liu Zhiyi told Express’s reporter that living the life of his peers [working] at Foxconn during those 28 days made him feel “sad and shocked”. “Lots of people know that Charlie Chaplin film ‘Modern Times’, the image of workers on the assembly line repeatedly tightening screws, but Foxconn workers suffer more than in the movie, [they] additionally have [to deal with] psychological shackles.”*

*In the eyes of Liu Zhiyi, Foxconn has a modern assembly line, [with] two shifts of workers, 12 hours per shift. The pressure arises from the industrialization of the production process, “especially at night, [workers] are completely hijacked by machines.” Liu Zhiyi cites an example from outside of Foxconn: “[Each] worker has a counter hanging from their waist, [push the button once and] the number on the*

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<sup>276</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 每个人每天看到的，都是自己的影子。一样的工作服，一样的工作。

*counter goes up one, the person has become part of the machine, but you can't escape.”<sup>277</sup>*

Article C2 then continues with its description of the amalgam of man and machine in the Foxconn plant, commenting that “every day what workers face are machines, what [they] see are workers wearing identical masks, hats and overalls. ‘If [someone has] the same build [as you do], you feel like you’re looking in a mirror.’ Workers are like countless, identical parts in the huge machine that is Foxconn, endlessly repeating the same action, no interaction between them.”<sup>278</sup>

Three out of four of the American sole-source articles discussed the dehumanization of workers at Foxconn, with article A3 particularly focusing on this issue and using charged language to describe the situation:

*During his 28 days of investigation, Liu Zhi Yi<sup>279</sup> was shocked to discover how the factory workers live in a sort of indentured servitude. They work all day long, stopping only to quickly eat or to sleep. They repeat the same routine again and again except on public holidays. Liu surmised that for many workers, the only escape from this cycle was to end their life.*

This article later quotes *Southern Weekend*'s anecdote of workers (specifically Li Xiangqing) longing to change position, if even just for a moment: “[a]nother worker spoke about one of the favorite activities in the factory lines: He likes to drop stuff on the floor. Why? Workers spend achingly up to eight hours standing up, so they feel that squatting down to grab a fallen object is the most restful moment of their working day.”

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<sup>277</sup> Source text in original Chinese: “人被机器劫持” “碎片一样活着”，报道中这样写道。刘志毅告诉快报记者，与富士康那些同龄人同行的 28 天，让他感到“心酸而震撼”。“很多都知道卓别林电影《摩登时代》工人在流水线上反复拧螺丝钉的镜头，但富士康的工人比电影里多遭受的，还有心理的枷锁。”

在刘志毅眼中，富士康拥有现代化的流水线，工人两班倒，每班 12 小时。压力来自这种工业化的生产流程，“尤其是夜间，完全是被机器劫持了。”刘志毅举了富士康之外的一个例子。“工人腰上挂着计数器，工作时手举一次，计数器上就多一个数字，人成了机器的一部分，但你无法逃脱。”

<sup>278</sup> Source text in original Chinese: 每天，工人们面对的是机器，看到的是戴着相同口罩、帽子和工作服的工友，“如果身材也相仿，你会以为看到了镜子。”工人们像是富士康这台巨大机器中无数相同的部件，永无休止地重复着同样的动作，彼此之间没有交集。

<sup>279</sup> The separation of Liu Zhiyi's name-characters is a mere transliteration choice. I have followed the lead of the majority of the rest of the articles in transliterating the name with the two given name-characters together. Article A3 chose otherwise.

American sole-source articles A2 and A4 also discuss this desire to drop things just to be able to pick them up again, and A4 comments that “[e]very single one of the workers is living through life like a clock. They work, they get off, they go to sleep. And the next day, they repeat the same thing again. The reporter thinks that the only way to stop this cycle is for them to end their lives.”

The topic of dehumanization received fairly similar treatment in both the American and Chinese presses. This is perhaps partially because a degree of dehumanization in the workplace is a fairly universal outcome of industrialization. It is wrong to say that the issue of dehumanization of workers was not a priority in the press when the original *Southern Weekend* reports spend many paragraphs discussing it and Chinese major-source article C2 and American sole-source articles also focused on this issue. That being said, it is interesting to note that this topic was not generally brought up in the minor-source articles, which would seem to indicate that this topic was not viewed as being central to the findings of the *Southern Weekend* investigation.

## **V.X Foxconn’s Attempts to Remedy Problems**

As was discussed earlier in this chapter, both American and Chinese media have often accused Foxconn of being a sweatshop with semi-militarized management, but the *Southern Weekend* investigation did not find this to be the case.<sup>280</sup> While the *Southern Weekend* reports do point out all the issues discussed in the sections above, Foxconn’s management is never directly blamed for any of them. It is mentioned that with regard to “humane care” (人文关怀) of workers, Foxconn has some room for improvement, but still a great deal of text is used to describe Foxconn management’s descriptions of their many attempts to remedy the problems workers face that lead to the suicides.

Report S2 particularly discusses these issues, and describes Foxconn management’s attempts to curb the rash of suicides in detail. It comments that, according to Foxconn’s administrative general manager Li Jinming, Foxconn began investigating the suicide problem after the death

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<sup>280</sup> See particularly report S2.

of Sun Danyong in July 2009, and that the topic of workers' mental health is a top priority for Foxconn's highest levels of management in China.<sup>281</sup>

The same report explains that Foxconn has begun to pay workers for information on co-workers who seem to be struggling with "abnormal moods" (情绪异常). If the case turns out to be valid, the worker who gave the information receives 200 RMB in compensation. As of May 10, 2010, this program had already identified more than twenty individuals with "abnormal moods", the more serious cases having been sent to Shenzhen's Corning Hospital, the more mild cases sent back to their families. Report S2 comments, however, that by the time of the writing of report S2, two new deaths had occurred, those of Lu Xin and Zhu Chenming, leaving Foxconn's media office director Liu Kun feeling truly "foiled and defeated" (挫败).<sup>282</sup>

The report goes on to comment that in response to Lu Xin's death, Foxconn invited several of China's best psychologists to visit the factory campus to provide psychological support, but this was also soon followed by the new suicide of Zhu Chenming. In response, Foxconn invited some of Buddhist-enclave Wutai Mountain's most famous monks to come to the factory campus to pray for the deceased.<sup>283</sup>

The same report mentions that Foxconn has established a "worker care center" (员工关爱中心) and a psychological help hotline for workers, and that at the same time anger-release rooms (literally "spiritual harbor work room" or 心灵港湾工作室) were set up, allowing for workers not only to receive counseling and therapy, but also to release their anger by beating on mannequins fitted with faces bearing the photos of Foxconn management.<sup>284</sup>

The report comments that by the end of April 2010 Foxconn had begun to encourage grouping of roommates based on friendships and hometowns, hoping to promote conversation and interaction between roommates. A 1000 RMB prize was also offered to workers who could name all of their own roommates, but the great majority was unable to do so.<sup>285</sup> As discussed in Chapter IV, the *Southern Weekend* interviews with Foxconn management also alleged many attempts to limit overtime among workers, and improve general CSR standards.

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<sup>281</sup> See report S2.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

The question of what still needs to be done is not the topic of this chapter, however it is worth noting that in report S2, Foxconn's assistant general manager (总经理) Li Jinming is quoted saying that the problem is too big for corporations to solve alone. He wishes that in addition to supporting efficient production, the government would also support living conveniences and "steadily improve community functions" (社区功能日益完善). Report S2 goes on to say that researchers wish that more than this, the government would additionally provide institutionalized work rights protection for migrants. Liu Kaiming, director of Shenzhen's Institute of Contemporary Observation, is also quoted offering a different perspective. He feels that salary increases and better social networks amongst workers are necessary factors, both of which are more directly within Foxconn's realm of influence.

Despite the significant discussion in the original *Southern Weekend* reports, focused analysis of my corpus reveals that Foxconn's attempts to curb the suicide problem were not considered to be key findings of the *Southern Weekend* investigation and therefore were not discussed when summarizing the original *Southern Weekend* reports. This is not particularly surprising as Foxconn had already made several press announcements about their suicide prevention strategies, and for both the American and Chinese newspapers in my corpus, reporting those announcements firsthand made much more sense. Because of this, most references to Foxconn management's suicide prevention work are only found in a broad analysis of my corpus, and, due to quantity, beyond the scope of analysis of this thesis.<sup>286</sup>

## **V.XI Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed some of the issues beyond CSR that were considered in the original *Southern Weekend* reports and in the subsequent American and Chinese articles. I have shown how the coverage of these topics also varied significantly between the American and Chinese presses, with American articles more likely to emphasize the dehumanization of workers and criticize general living conditions, and Chinese articles more likely to emphasize social isolation, workers' broken dreams, the struggles faced by migrants, and individual workers' stories. I have shown how, with some of these issues, "cultural dimensions theory" sheds light on potential underlying motivations. With many of the issues, however, the

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<sup>286</sup> As a very rough overview, however, I can say that Foxconn's attempts to solve its suicide problem are often cast in a negative or even jeering light, especially in the American articles.

situation is too nuanced for “cultural dimensions theory” to provide helpful or enlightening insights.

In the next chapter I will attempt to synthesize and interpret the findings discussed in this chapter and throughout this thesis. I will particularly look at how the concept of CSR failed to measure up to the expectations of the Chinese and American presses, but also discuss the discrepancy between the priorities of the Chinese and American presses with regards to labor rights.

## Chapter VI: CSR, the *Danwei*, and Foxconn

In the previous chapters I have analyzed and interpreted some of the key differences between the American and Chinese articles in my corpus. In examining my results in their entirety, however, there is a perhaps less obvious discrepancy, but a significant one none the less—namely the discrepancy between the labor rights priorities expressed by standard CSR codes and those expressed in the Chinese and American presses.

This chapter will continue to synthesize and interpret my findings. I discuss why the Western concept of CSR seems to have fallen short of the American press's expectations with regards to labor rights in my case study. I describe how in China the *danwei* 单位 system has provided an alternate, but arguably effective system of labor rights regulation, and I discuss differences in priorities between that system and the concept of CSR. Finally, I explore how this discrepancy played out in my case study.

### VI.I CSR: A Prophet Rejected in its Hometown?

As I discussed in Chapter II, the concept of CSR, though often presented as being universally relevant, is an American invention built on and in accordance with American labor rights values and priorities. What my corpus indicates, however, is that in the case of Foxconn, the labor rights provided by CSR codes failed to measure up to the expectations of both the American and the Chinese presses.

Additionally, in my corpus, standard CSR code priorities—including issues regarding insurance, treatment of interns, unions, right to strike, recruitment, hiring, personnel development, and dealing with grievances<sup>287</sup>—were not mirrored in the priorities expressed by the American press. Based on cultural differences (as will be discussed below), it is perhaps unsurprising that CSR doesn't completely meet the expectations of the Chinese press. The American press, however, emerges from the same general culture that brought about the concept of CSR. So why do we find such a discrepancy between American CSR codes and the labor rights priorities expressed by the American press in my corpus?

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<sup>287</sup> As found in the FLA evaluation of Foxconn.

There is no one correct explanation for this. The discrepancy can be explained in part by the limited nature of the source materials used in the quotes from the American articles—namely the *Southern Weekend* reports. While the American articles do put their own twist on the findings of the *Southern Weekend* investigation, it would be difficult to bring in much discussion of issues not brought up in the original reports. This may partially explain the lack of prioritization of topics like union rights and insurance in the focused analysis of the American articles in my corpus. Those topics didn't come up simply because the *Southern Weekend* reports never brought them up. Alternatively, issues of union rights and the right to strike may not be discussed in detail by the American press because American journalists are simply unaware that these rights are not provided to Foxconn workers. Therefore, one can likely assume that the findings of my focused analysis are *not* particularly useful in showing what are *not* priorities of the American press.

While it is perhaps difficult to see which CSR issues are *not* priorities for the American press, it is easier to find areas where the American press found CSR coming up short. Two issues covered by standard CSR codes were brought up in both the American and Chinese articles—wages and work hours.<sup>288</sup> What makes the discussion of wages and work hours interesting, however, is that some of the American journalists seem to understand what CSR code writers appears not to—that legal, CSR code-approved wages in China are so low that they put workers in a state of poverty that makes them feel compelled to work overtime in order to make ends meet.<sup>289</sup>

The various CSR evaluations and CSR codes seem to indicate an underlying assumption that long work hours create unreasonably high levels of stress and therefore must be limited, but many sources indicate that this is not necessarily the case and, rather, that low pay is the more significant cause of stress.<sup>290</sup> For example, in report S1, Liu Zhiyi found that workers wanted to work long hours because it *reduced* the everyday financial stress they felt, preferring the “breathable pain” (会呼吸的痛) of overtime to the “suffocation” (窒息) of poverty.<sup>291</sup> As

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<sup>288</sup> These issues were usually mentioned in passing, but once again, this does not tell us as much about the American and Chinese articles as it does about the *Southern Weekend* source reports. The issues of wages and work hours are the only CSR issues that receive significant treatment in those reports, and low wages are blamed for the long work hours.

<sup>289</sup> This also explains Foxconn's willingness to breach Chinese labor law in this one respect, as workers are equally eager to work overtime.

<sup>290</sup> See for example Chang 2009.

<sup>291</sup> Zhiyi Liu 2010b.



discussed in Chapter IV, several of the American articles in my corpus comment on the irony of this situation, that standard (American) CSR codes seems to have largely left unaddressed.

The low wages and excessive overtime at Foxconn were in fact *more likely* to be mentioned and discussed in American articles. This is potentially due to American's lack of perspective on Chinese work life. What is a fair salary and typical workweek in China appears to be nearing slave labor to many American readers, and American journalists often capitalize on this by citing figures without contextualizing them. Here we see CSR standards actually being more reflective of Chinese than American norms, with salaries and overtime policies that fit the Chinese labor context, and the American press reacts both negatively and forcefully.

So it appears that the only two standard CSR code issues discussed in the corpus are points of contention—CSR-code-mandated wages are perceived by the American press as too low, and in the case of some of the articles<sup>292</sup> CSR-code-mandated overtime restrictions are perceived as too strict in the context of the low wages.

It must be underlined, however, that while wages and overtime were discussed in the *Southern Weekend* reports and subsequent articles, other struggles faced by workers were more central to most of the articles in my corpus, especially the Chinese articles. These will be discussed in the following sections.

## VI.II      **The *Danwei***

In the last three chapters I have explored in detail how the American and Chinese presses discussed the working conditions at Foxconn in my corpus. I have also shown how on several fronts the Chinese press seems to not only have higher expectations regarding labor rights than standard CSR codes, but also higher expectations than the American press. So how is it that the Chinese press, the press of a “developing country” who have not been seeped in the long history of labor rights struggles that in part brought about the concept of CSR, is still able to come with critiques that show insufficiencies in “developed country” CSR standards? The factors influencing the phenomenon are diverse, however it is my belief that the *danwei* system of communist China is at least partially responsible for these high expectations of employers.

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<sup>292</sup> See Chapter IV for more thorough discussion of this topic.

The word *danwei* can be roughly translated as “work unit”, however it has much wider implications in the Chinese context. Li Hanlin explains that the *danwei* not only provides its members with a salary, but also offers a complete welfare package, including housing, medical care, childcare centers, kindergartens, dining halls, bath houses, service companies, and collective enterprises to provide employment to the children of staff.<sup>293</sup> With such extensive welfare provided as a part of employment, the transition to the modern Chinese era of individualism and self-reliance has been understandably somewhat rough, and the basic labor rights provided by standard CSR codes are perceived at the same time as being too strict on some fronts and on others insufficiently comprehensive.

### VI.II.I Origins

In order to understand the link between the *danwei* and modern Chinese expectations with regards to labor rights, we need to be familiar with the origins of the *danwei*. The early origins of the *danwei*-type unit can perhaps be traced back to the Warring States period (475-221 BC) when the philosopher Guanzi wrote that neighborhood walls creating enclosed residential areas would reduce the opportunities for crime and for illicit contact between men and women.<sup>294</sup> This created a method of regulating and protecting the population within the walls. Later the courtyard house, or *siheyuan* (四合院) took on a similar role.<sup>295</sup> Yang compares these ancient city units with the modern *danwei*:

*In the past the basic unit of the city was the courtyard house (siheyuan), which corresponded to the family; now the basic unit of the city is the compound (dayuan), which corresponds to the danwei or “department” (bumen). While these two basic organizational units in fact represent two different types of social structure, the enclosed compound (yuanluo) form and the implications of wall culture have continued in an unbroken historical line.*<sup>296</sup>

The connection between neighborhood walls and the modern *danwei* is in my view somewhat tenuous, however. Even making a direct tie-in between the modern *danwei* and the *siheyuan* seems like a bit of a stretch. What is undeniable, however, is that across the centuries China

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<sup>293</sup> Li 1993 as cited in Bray 2005.

<sup>294</sup> Yang 1993 as cited in Bray 2005, 24.

<sup>295</sup> Yang 1994.

<sup>296</sup> Yang 1994, 254 as cited by Bray 2005, 16.

has used enclosed living/working units in order to maintain order and a sense of harmony and safety.

Other scholars have identified other possible origins of the *danwei* concept. Lu Feng points out similarities between the *danwei* and the clan system of the feudal period, both exerting patriarchal authority over members, with a two-way relationship where the members are responsible to the group rather than thought of as individuals, but with the group responsible to care for the all its members.<sup>297</sup> Here we start to see a clearer connection to the *danwei*, with a strong sense of hierarchy and collectivism.

A stronger connection can be found in associating the origins of the *danwei* with early artisan guilds, which were often organized around place of origin and had a hierarchal, family-like structure that protected their members.<sup>298</sup> What seems to me to be the first clear example of a *danwei*-like system, however, were the employee residential compounds built by banks in the beginning of the 1900s.<sup>299</sup> These compounds often contained gardens, sports facilities, classrooms and meeting halls making it usually unnecessary for employees to leave the compound for daily activities.<sup>300</sup> Interestingly enough, these early *danwei*-like systems were in many ways modeled on European employee residential compounds, and therefore blended Chinese and European traditions.<sup>301</sup>

## VI.II.II      **The *Danwei* in its Heyday**

The *danwei* became a powerful force in urban China. Bray asserts that by 1957 over ninety-percent of the urban population belonged to some sort of socialist *danwei*.<sup>302</sup> The idea of linking work and social life was not new, but what the *danwei* changed was the level of importance and identity the place of work had in an individual's life. Bray compares Republican and Communist China with regards to this topic:

*The work place was also the focus of social life for the urban worker in Republican China. However, it was not the act of labor itself which determined a Republican worker's identity; rather it was his or her affiliation with a particular native-place-*

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<sup>297</sup> Feng 1989 as cited by Bray 2005.

<sup>298</sup> Perry 1993, 32–33 as cited by Bray 2005, 40.

<sup>299</sup> Yeh 1995.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Discussed by Bray 2005; see also Elvin 1997.

<sup>302</sup> Bray 2005, 94.

*oriented guild or gang. CCP policy, on the other hand, invested the workplace itself with significance, precisely because it was the site of labor.*<sup>303</sup>

By 1951 the *danwei* had taken on the major role of providing welfare to citizens, covering medical expenses, pensions, funeral costs, and maternity leave.<sup>304</sup> Through the *danwei* workers also received use of facilities such as sanatoriums, kindergartens, homes for the aged, orphanages, institutions for the disabled, and holiday facilities.<sup>305</sup> In comparison to the limited security provided for by modern CSR codes, the security and social integration provided by the *danwei* of the '50s seems almost surreal.

The *danwei* took on many responsibilities that would usually be left to the local government. By giving the responsibility of housing workers to the *danwei*, the government was able avoid establishing a national housing bureaucracy.<sup>306</sup> It is possible that the important role played by the *danwei* also became an instigating factor in the lax labor policy in modern China—with so much responsibility left to the *danwei*, little top-down labor policy was needed.

In constructing a *danwei*, many elements from the European utopian socialist tradition were taken into account. The *danwei* was to be a synthesis of functionality and symbolism, both with spaces to encourage productivity and spaces to promote proletarian social interaction.<sup>307</sup> Unlike modern CSR codes, which focus solely on the working environment, the *danwei* also encouraged and supported the growth of family and social networks.

### **VI.II.III      Implications of the *Danwei* System**

In many ways the *danwei* was a mixed bag for its resident. On one hand, it provided a great deal of security and welfare benefits. On the other hand, it strictly limited individual freedom, personal initiative and potential for individual development. These limitations also ended up hampering productivity and efficiency.<sup>308</sup> Salaries were very low, so for *danwei* workers most of the benefits of the *danwei* were non-financial. Bray describes this phenomenon:

*... [M]ost of the particulars of resource management were left to each danwei to arrange according to its own needs. The central government did establish universal*

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Wu 1996, 1605–8 as cited by Bray 2005, 112.

<sup>307</sup> Bray 2005, 125.

<sup>308</sup> Bray 2005.

*national scales for wages and various kinds of monetary subsidy; however, because wage rates were kept very low, direct financial reward was only a small part of the overall package of material benefits provided to urban workers through their workplace.*<sup>309</sup>

In addition to the material benefits provided by the *danwei*, there were also many social and psychological benefits. The long-term social relationships formed between members of a *danwei*, coupled with the fact that manager and low-level workers would see each other socially on a daily basis, created opportunities for developing *guanxi* (relationships) and a degree of upward mobility.<sup>310</sup> By linking working and living spaces, the *danwei* created a certain sense of place attachment and belonging to a productive community for its residents.<sup>311</sup> By contrast, none of the benefits described above are provided for or even addressed in modern CSR codes.

The benefits of the *danwei* from the point of view of control and management of the workforce were undeniable. In the collective life of the *danwei*, for example, it became very easy for management to curb lateness, malingering and unnecessary absence.<sup>312</sup> Despite the transition away from the benefits provided by the *danwei* of pre-economic reform China, even today the work unit is often used in China as a source of control of an individual's behavior. An example of this is the fact that Chinese companies have at times been fined when their employees are charged with criminal offences.<sup>313</sup>

#### **VI.II.IV      The Transition Away from the *Danwei***

In the wake of the economic reform, the importance of the *danwei* began to decline, and the government began to acknowledge the separation of work and other aspects of life by adopting the concepts of “communities” (*shequ*) and “small districts” (*xiaoqu*) as new units for distribution of urban welfare benefits.<sup>314</sup> The services provided by a *xiaoqu* are remarkably similar to those of a *danwei*, except a *xiaoqu* is independent of one's workplace.<sup>315</sup> The motivation for dismantling the *danwei* was primarily to increase

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>311</sup> Bjorklund 1986, 21.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>313</sup> Francis 1996, 855 as cited by Bray 2005, 171.

<sup>314</sup> Bray 2005, 176–171, 181.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid., 176–177.

productivity by recommodifying labor, thereby allowing workers to be hired and fired according to demand.<sup>316</sup> Cao and Chen describe this transition:

*The transition from a planned economy to a market economy implies shifting from a “danwei” organizational formation based on abstract collective interests to a contractual organizational formation guided by specific individual interests.*<sup>317</sup>

We see the interests of the individual begin to take precedence in China. This has had widespread implications. The transition towards individualism is still taking place, but the significance of the *danwei* in the Chinese consciousness is still very present.

### **VI.III     *Danwei* vs. CSR**

By the mid-1980s “Taylorism”—an American method to increase efficiency by breaking tasks down into their smallest constituent parts—was widely adopted in Chinese factories.<sup>318</sup>

While these methods increased productivity, workers no longer experienced the satisfaction of being involved all along the way though the whole production process.

New factories, like the Foxconn Longhua campus in Shenzhen,<sup>319</sup> were built and workers were moved into factory dormitories, but these factory complexes were far from the communist *danwei* with regards to benefits provided to the worker. The factories, like the *danwei*, created a dependency in the workers by paying them low wages, but at the same time the factories did not provide the additional range of benefits provided by the communist *danwei*. Bray describes this discrepancy:

*At the other end of the sector, the infamous sweatshop factories of (predominantly) southern China seem to cultivate a far less benign form of dependency: with their cramped dormitories, locked workshops, and draconian labor regimes, they resemble more prisons than danwei.*<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>317</sup> Cao and Chen 1997, 2 as cited by Bray 2005, 158.

<sup>318</sup> Bray 2005, 161.

<sup>319</sup> Built in 1988, see Dean 2007.

<sup>320</sup> Bray 2005, 172.

While the situation at Foxconn doesn't reach the extremes described by Bray in the quote above, this discrepancy between the *danwei* and modern Chinese factory life can be identified in the CSR scandals at Foxconn and in my research corpus.

### **VI.III.I      *Danwei* vs. CSR in the Foxconn Case Study**

Many of the non-CSR related critiques of Foxconn discussed in the Chinese articles can be at least partially linked to this discrepancy between the *danwei* and the modern factory. The Chinese articles' discussion of the pressures faced by the new generation of workers is an example of this. The fact that all the suicide victims were new generation migrants is hard to ignore, but the pressures brought about by migration are social issues that go far beyond the scope of standard CSR regulations.

The pressures are multifaceted and, according to the Chinese articles in my corpus, are often related to workers' unrealistic expectations of factory life and of potential success. Migrants believe that factory life will be somewhat enjoyable, or at least social, like it was in the day of the *danwei*.<sup>321</sup> Perhaps more importantly, they believe they will be able to make enough money to make a significantly better life for themselves.

These unrealistic expectations are not unique to Foxconn workers. In her book *Factory Girls*, Leslie Chang describes how successful migrants often become legends in their rural villages, and, as long-distance primary breadwinners, they often end up taking on a leadership role in the family.<sup>322</sup> The pressure is therefore very intense on migrants who *don't* manage to move ahead, but rather are struggling merely to make ends meet. But while the Chinese articles insist that these are very real pressures, they are societal pressures that are impossible for a standard CSR code to properly address.

It isn't that surprising that these issues aren't addressed in Western CSR codes, however. Aside from being abstract societal problems, they are problems that are somewhat unique to China and quite alien in the West. This is reflected in my corpus—a focused analysis of the American articles shows that the difficulties faced by Chinese migrants were completely omitted, likely due to a lack of understanding of the topic on the part of the journalists, or a lack of space to explain the issue properly to American readers unfamiliar with the topic.

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<sup>321</sup> It should be noted, however, that as these migrants are almost exclusively from the rural areas of China, they likely only have a vague understanding of the benefits and shortcomings of the pre-economic reform, urban *danwei*.

<sup>322</sup> Chang 2009, 269–302.

Similarly, *Southern Weekends*' implied criticism of Foxconn for workers' romantic difficulties follows in the same *danwei*-based perspective of looking at the work environment. Report S3, for example, points out that Foxconn doesn't provide its workers with places to socialize, or "date" (谈恋爱), and perhaps as a result of this lack, prostitution and "black internet cafes" (黑网吧) offering pornography have popped up around the factory campus to provide for the young workers' sexual desires. CSR codes do not stipulate that factory campuses should provide social facilities however, and of the major CSR codes I discussed in Chapter II, only one of them, Social Accountability 8000, even mentions dormitories or other living spaces, and there only in passing.

The factory workers' feelings of lost youth<sup>323</sup> are also potentially a result of the discrepancy between the working life of the Chinese *danwei* and the reality of factory life at Foxconn. Workers in a pre-economic reform *danwei* had the security and facilities to be able to form families and raise children, and were therefore able to "move on to adult life", even while they were still working in the same low-paying job. Foxconn workers, by contrast, are generally unable to have a family while working, and as mentioned above, even dating is difficult.<sup>324</sup> This, combined with the lack of a sense of career progression, leaves workers with a sense of aging without making progress—a feeling of lost youth. These are obviously valid feelings and they perhaps give insight into the motivation behind the workers' suicides, but from the perspective of CSR codes, they don't reveal any significant shortcomings in Foxconn's treatment of its workers.

With the increased focus on individualism and the separation of work and social life in China, however, it is perhaps not surprising that a focused analysis of my corpus showed that the topics of workers' lost youth and difficulties in romance, while appearing in the original *Southern Weekend* reports, were not cited in any of the subsequent Chinese articles. Perhaps this also indicates a lack of conviction within the general Chinese media that Foxconn should be held responsible for facilitating matchmaking for its workers.

By the time the discussion comes around to the issue of social isolation, however, the Chinese press is ready to point fingers at Foxconn, and here again there is a connection to the Chinese tradition of linking work and social life, and to the days of the *danwei*. The social isolation of

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<sup>323</sup> As described, for example, in report S3.

<sup>324</sup> See Chapter V for more details on this.



Foxconn workers is discussed at length in all three of the original *Southern Weekend* reports, and was later the key topic of citations in three out of eight of the subsequent Chinese articles. The numbers are misleading. When you compare the number of citations dealing with this topic from the Chinese articles (three out of eight) with the citations from American articles (five out of thirteen) it would appear that there is little difference between the prioritization of this topic between the two countries' presses. When you actually read the citations, however, it becomes clear that the Chinese articles citing social isolation imply that this was perhaps the most significant finding of Liu Zhiyi's investigation. By contrast, two of the five American articles mentioning this topic were written by a Chinese journalist and therefore arguably present a Chinese perspective, albeit to an American audience, and the remaining three articles were all sole-source articles that are lengthy enough to mention the topic of social isolation in passing along with a stream of other topics.

The original reports and some of the subsequent Chinese articles comment that the overpopulation of the factory campus, and the monotony of the workday, limit meaningful social interaction. Roommates in the dorms don't know each other's names, even though there are usually only ten workers to a room. Workers see their colleagues as familiar strangers. While these statements don't give a clear solution to the problem of social isolation at Foxconn, this is clearly an issue that the Chinese press feels Foxconn ought to address in some way. As the Chinese journalists are primarily of urban origin, their perspective is likely to have been in some ways influenced by growing up in or near the *danwei* system. The *danwei* dealt with these problems of social isolation by not only allowing, but also encouraging workers to start families and built social connections with their co-workers. Addressing the issue of social isolation, or community building among workers, however, is not a part of standard CSR codes.

This shortcoming in CSR codes seems to be reflective of American labor rights priorities, however. My corpus shows that the social isolation of workers was less likely to be cited as a major finding in the American articles than in the Chinese articles. Those American articles that do mention this topic were written by Chinese journalist Nan Duan or were sole-source articles that mentioned social isolation in passing. This is possibly due to differences in work culture between the West and the East. An American employer will try to build a certain amount of team loyalty in the workplace, but this is by no means a required element of workplace life. In fact, in the West a workplace that frequently encroaches on individuals'

private time with workplace social activities is viewed negatively, in stark contrast to the Chinese tradition of the *danwei* and its implied ties between work and social life.

In this particular instance the discrepancy fits well with Hofstede's research and "cultural dimensions theory" as discussed in Chapter II. We see a primarily Western, and largely American, conceptualization of labor rights (CSR) being imposed in a non-Western society (China) and the misfit is apparent. CSR standards meet many of the American press's labor rights expectations, but fail to measure up to the expectations of the Chinese press.

### **VI.III.II      The *Danwei* Outgrown?**

While the discrepancy between CSR codes and the security of the *danwei* provides insight into the Chinese criticisms of Foxconn in the cases above, in the case of workers' dreams we see another picture. It seems that here the Chinese factory worker may have in some ways outgrown the *danwei*.

The workers' feelings of inability to realize their own dreams are indirectly related to the social implications of a separation of work and social spheres. While in the *danwei* social life thrived and families lived together, in the modern factory dormitories of Shenzhen workers don't even know their roommates' names. With this sort of existence, workers understandably dream of a better life. While one could get married, have children, and live their entire life in the same *danwei*, modern migrants view the factory as a stepping-stone towards a future life of *independence*. Workers don't merely dream of having a family and settling down. They dream of buying their own houses, driving BMWs, and, yes, getting married.<sup>325</sup> They don't plan to realize their dreams by moving up through factory ranks, because for most this is simply not a realistic option.

The Chinese reports and articles arguably held Foxconn *partially* responsible for workers' broken dreams, however more than Foxconn, contemporary society is blamed for the workers' disappointments. Both reports S1/S4 and S3 discuss this topic, as well as three of the eight Chinese articles. The problem is that the modern Chinese worker dreams of much more than just marrying and having children; she dreams of wealth, independence and becoming

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<sup>325</sup> Here we see one of the major weaknesses of Hofstede's "cultural dimensions theory"—it fails to show the nuances of reality. While workers dream individualistic dreams of personal success, they still feel the collectivist pressures to marry and have a family. To achieve their individual dreams they must still form *guanxi* and follow many of the collectivist traditions of their country. The reality is much more convoluted and complicated than a mere point on a spectrum between individualism and collectivism.

successful, and this is not something realizable for the majority. In dreaming bigger dreams for herself, she has both outgrown her rural origins and outgrown the safe life of dependence of the *danwei*, but she is still greatly disadvantaged to create the better life she dreams of for herself.

The original *Southern Weekend* reports describe workers' various attempts to achieve their dreams of success—working overtime, trying to learn English, taking other extra courses—but at Foxconn these measures seem to always fall short.<sup>326</sup> Besides, with the heavy work schedules the workers keep, time for self-improvement is limited.

It isn't only at Foxconn that workers struggle to find ways to reinvent and retool themselves for success. Workers all over China dream of learning English, believing that it will be a way to move up in the world and to create new possibilities for themselves. Many begin English classes with hopes of developing fluency. They often find this task near impossible, however; partially because they have no access to native speakers, partially because the instruction methods of their classes are faulty, and partially because their teachers are under qualified and usually don't speak English fluently themselves.<sup>327</sup>

The reality of the situation is that in many cases the best way of getting a better situation for oneself is to jump ship and switch to a better job. This is risky, however, and many factory workers don't dare to make the transition. Parental pressure is particularly strong in Chinese society, and most rural parents don't understand the way things work in the city and believe that the best way to make money is to stick with a job until you rise through the ranks—the old *danwei* mentality. This is disputably quite bad advice, but many migrants, who perhaps would have dared to make the jump, decide not to in order to respect their parents, leaving them trapped in dead-end assembly-line jobs indefinitely.<sup>328</sup>

The implication of the *Southern Weekend* reports' and the Chinese articles' critique seem to be that if Foxconn were to provide more significant ways of moving up the corporate ladder from the inside, workers wouldn't feel the desperation they do to either lose security by quitting and looking for another job, or staying in a dead-end position till they reach a not-so-figurative dead-end. Obviously, CSR doesn't provide any “dream fulfillment protocols”,

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<sup>326</sup> See reports S1/S4 and S3 for example.

<sup>327</sup> Chang 2009, 98–119.

<sup>328</sup> This phenomenon is described by Chang 2009 in various chapters of her book, perhaps most significantly in chapters 5 and 10.

however what the Chinese articles seem to desire is not that Foxconn should fulfill every worker's dreams of success, but rather provide the *possibility* of real success through gradual advancement up through the ranks, without need to job-hop. If the Foxconn factory lifestyle were more sustainable for workers, with opportunities to marry and have children while working in the factory, a real permanent community of workers might actually form. But almost the opposite is the case, with some sources citing an employee turnover rate as high as five percent per month.<sup>329</sup> So for workers who can't or won't get ahead by job-hopping, the options are bleak: stay in the solitary limbo of factory life, return in shame to the countryside, or jump off a building.

Finally, the idea that workers should be provided a work environment that gives them a sense of individuality, variety and satisfaction is not a part of CSR codes, and thus gives rise to criticism of dehumanization of workers in the Foxconn case study. I am not convinced, however, that the *danwei* was necessarily much better on this particular point.

The dehumanization of workers is arguably protocol in any assembly line, and Foxconn's assembly lines are no different. In reports S1/S4 and S3, Liu Zhiyi and the workers he interviews frequently bemoan the repetitive nature of factory life, the somber uniformity of the identical buildings in the factory campus and the workers identical work uniforms. This topic was also cited in some of the subsequent Chinese and American articles—people becoming machines.<sup>330</sup> Liu Zhiyi comments that some of the workers desire a minor workplace injury just as a way of escaping the factory floor for a few days.<sup>331</sup> Another worker mentions that he likes to drop things while on the assembly line. By dropping things he is able to move to pick them up and break his constant standing position.<sup>332</sup>

The dehumanization of workers showed up in similar fashions in both the Chinese and American articles, with both pointing out the depressing monotony of factory life. The American articles were more likely to give specific examples, however, such as workers' desire for a minor work injury or the enjoyment of dropping objects in order to be able to leave the constant standing position.

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<sup>329</sup> Shayon 2010.

<sup>330</sup> For example articles A2, A3, A4, A10, and C2.

<sup>331</sup> Report S1/S4.

<sup>332</sup> Report S1/S4.

It is true that the issue of dehumanization of workers is left unaddressed by standard CSR codes, but this is probably because they are written with Western industries in mind, where salaries are higher and work hours are shorter, allowing for a very “human” social life outside of work hours. This is a privilege that isn’t as available to most factory workers in China.

That being the case, I don’t find much evidence that *danwei* work-life was significantly less monotonous. The *danwei* generally did provide a much more varied after-work life, and before the move towards “Taylorism” in the ‘80s, factory life was probably more varied. In the modern day, however, workers are lucky if they have CSR codes to limit excessive overtime and require periodic breaks. Neither CSR codes nor the typical *danwei* have rules requiring variety in job tasks or the opportunity to shift one’s working position or to be able to talk while working. What the *danwei* system did seem to offer, however, was a sense of community. The monotony of sitting in front of a machine is less daunting when your friends surround you and you can look forward to spending the evening with your family. At Foxconn, workers can look forward to a returning to their dorm rooms to crash for a few hours before starting it all over again, surrounded by familiar strangers whose names they don’t know.

## **VI.IV Conclusion**

In modern Chinese factories, like the Foxconn Longhua campus, we see the traditional Chinese connection between work and social life being strained. Had there been a greater separation between workplace and residence, this perhaps wouldn’t have been as much of a problem, but with large number of workers living in dormitories on the factory campus it becomes difficult to separate work and social life. And there rises the problem.

It is clear that the Chinese and American presses expect more of Foxconn than what mere adherence to CSR codes would provide. For the American press, living conditions, less overtime and better wages are priorities. For the Chinese press, community building is important. Workers should feel that they have the possibility of improving their situation if they work hard. Both presses feel workers should be treated as humans and not as machines. These expectations reveal underlying values with regards to labor rights, values that are very human and potentially “universal”, but which have not been codified into traditional CSR evaluations.

## Chapter VII: Conclusion

China's transitional economy and productivist welfare regime have led to labor policy gaps that have increased pressure on corporations to implement comprehensive CSR standards.<sup>333</sup> Thanks to pressure from NGOs, international organizations and others, labor policy has advanced over the last decades,<sup>334</sup> and perhaps this trend, if continued, will help to give Chinese workers an edge in negotiating labor rights with their employers. Regardless of the long-term outcome, the present situation is clear: since the Chinese government has not prioritized the development, implementation and monitoring of labor policy, many of Chinese workers' labor rights are contingent on the CSR standards of employers. Or, to look at it in another light, fully law-abiding corporations in China can be liable for international accusations of labor rights abuse because they haven't developed a high enough standard of CSR.

This seems to be the situation in my case study at Foxconn, where there are only minor breeches of Chinese labor laws, but major breeches of international CSR codes.<sup>335</sup> Interestingly, most of these breeches to CSR codes do not mirror the criticisms of working conditions portrayed in the articles in my corpus. While CSR evaluations showed Foxconn falling short in concrete areas like union rights, insurance and factory safety, the articles in my corpus tended to focus on more abstract issues like dehumanization and workers' social isolation and broken dreams.<sup>336</sup>

Manuel Castells' discussion of scandal politics can be helpful in making sense of this discrepancy. He explains that scandals do not necessarily involve unlawful behavior, but instead often focus on alleged wrongdoing based on the norms of a given society.<sup>337</sup> In my corpus this seems to be the case. Foxconn's alleged mistreatment of its workers is, for the most part, legal in China.<sup>338</sup> The scandals took off in the West because of a CSR ideology that expects corporations should be "good" and "moral", coupled with Apple's high profile status. In China the scandals took off because of Foxconn's high profile status as an employer of migrants coupled with expectations that corporations should either in some way measure up

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<sup>333</sup> See Chapter II.

<sup>334</sup> As discussed by Ngok 2008 and others.

<sup>335</sup> See Chapter IV.

<sup>336</sup> See Chapter IV and Chapter V.

<sup>337</sup> Castells 2009.

<sup>338</sup> A fact that is even acknowledged in some of the articles mentioned in this thesis, including Mail Online 2006; Markoff 2006.

to the security provided by the *danwei* system, or provide a salary high enough to allow for a sustainable individual life outside of work a la Americana. In other words, TNCs aren't only expected to abide by the law, but also are expected to meet Western labor rights standards by having their own self-imposed CSR, and to meet traditional Chinese workplace expectations by providing a real community and, ideally, some form social welfare system for workers.<sup>339</sup>

Beyond the discrepancy between CSR priorities and the labor rights expectations of the Chinese and American presses, in examining the texts in my corpus it becomes abundantly clear that there are also significant differences in the presses' interpretations of the findings of the original Southern Weekend reports. Mainland Chinese journalists indicate that the Southern Weekend investigation either found that a lack of social structure amongst workers was primarily responsible for the suicides, or the gap between workers' dreams and harsh realities left workers in desperation. American journalists, on the other hand, were not in agreement on how to interpret the reports, at times using the Southern Weekend investigation as proof of Foxconn's alleged labor abuses, such as excessive overtime, but at times also citing workers' broken dreams, social isolation and dehumanization as possible links to the suicides.<sup>340</sup> Some of these discrepancies can be partially explained by the differences between the American concept of CSR and the traditional Chinese *danwei*, however that explanation has its limitations.<sup>341</sup>

Hofstede's "cultural dimensions theory" provides a certain degree of additional perspective on the articles.<sup>342</sup> He describes the differences between collectivist and individualist cultures. Collectivist cultures, such as China, focus on the needs of the community rather than focusing on the specific needs of the individual, as in individualist cultures such as the United States.<sup>343</sup> When analyzing the suicides at Foxconn, Chinese reporters frequently cite the social isolation of workers as being a root cause of the problem. American reporters are more likely to discuss excessive overtime and other perceived labor rights violations as being the salient issue. In this particular case each group falls neatly into the expected categorization, with Chinese focusing on collectivist issues and Americans focusing on individualist issues.

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<sup>339</sup> See Chapter VI for a more thorough discussion of this topic.

<sup>340</sup> See Chapter IV and Chapter V.

<sup>341</sup> See Chapter VI.

<sup>342</sup> Hofstede 1983 and Hofstede 2005, as introduced in Chapter II.

<sup>343</sup> As discussed in Chapter II, one of Hofstede's weaknesses is that he uses national boundaries to differentiate cultures.

Hofstede's model also has its limitations, however, as it seems to oversimplify the complexity of societies by limiting them to various positions along six dichotomies. While the Chinese articles did not show excessive concern for the labor rights issues at stake, workers' dreams of wealth and individual success were emphasized.<sup>344</sup> This acknowledgment of China's recent change in the direction of individualism and materialism is of interest as it shows the complex interactions between the pressures of a collective society<sup>345</sup> and the individualistic desire for personal success and independence. "Cultural dimension theory" fails to provide much room for analysis of such nuanced, qualitative phenomena.

Regardless of the motivating factors behind these discrepancies, it is clear that following standard CSR codes alone does not fulfill the labor rights expectations of the American or Chinese presses. Each press has its own views of where CSR falls short and this creates an exponentially explosive situation for high-profile TNCs like Foxconn. In addition to abiding by national labor laws and international CSR protocols, these TNCs must also attempt to meet the varied expectations of the national and international presses in order to avoid media scandal. In the case of Foxconn this delicate balance was not met and, consequently, a statistically unremarkable string of suicides created a CSR scandal of unprecedented proportions. At least in my case study, it appears CSR codes have failed what may be their most fundamental goal: to convince the public of a corporation's social responsibility.

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<sup>344</sup> See Chapter V.

<sup>345</sup> Where success is important to be able to "fight for face" (争面子),



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<sup>346</sup> Capitalization of titles is taken directly from the sources and has not been modified. Chinese titles that did not have official translations have been translated by the author and follow the original titles, in parentheses. Pinyin is used to transliterate all Chinese authors’ names, unless the author had their own alternate choice of English name or transliteration.

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# Appendix 1: Article Reference Number Legend

S/N	Date	Source	Headline
S1	12 May 2010	<i>Southern Weekend</i> (China)	<b>Youth and Destiny in the Company of Machines—Notes from 28 Days Undercover at Foxconn</b> <sup>347</sup>
S2	13 May 2010	<i>Southern Weekend</i> (China)	<b>Cracking the Foxconn Employee Suicide "Curse"</b> <sup>348</sup>
S3	18 May 2010	<i>Southern Weekend</i> (China)	<b>Foxconn's "Eight Jumps": The Mystery of Suicide</b> <sup>349</sup>
S4	19 May 2010	<i>Engadget</i> (USA)	<b>The fate of a generation of workers: Foxconn undercover fully translated</b> <sup>350</sup>
A1	16 May 2010	Digital East Asia	<b>An All Too Familiar Story: 9th Suicide Jump at Foxconn this Year</b> <sup>351</sup>
A2	19 May 2010	MacNN	<b>Reporter uncovers grim working conditions at Foxconn plant</b> <sup>352</sup>
A3	19 May 2010	Gizmodo	<b>Undercover Report From Foxconn's Hell Factory</b> <sup>353</sup>
A4	19 May 2010	Business	<b>The Shocking Conditions Inside China's</b>

<sup>347</sup> Zhiyi Liu 2010b. Original title in Chinese: 与机器相伴的青春和命运——潜伏富士康 28 天手记.

<sup>348</sup> Yang and Liu 2010. Original title in Chinese: 破解富士康员工的自杀‘魔咒’.

<sup>349</sup> Liu and Yang 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康‘八连跳’自杀之谜.

<sup>350</sup> Zhiyi Liu 2010a.

<sup>351</sup> Duan 2010b.

<sup>352</sup> MacNN 2010.

<sup>353</sup> Chang 2010b.

		Insider	<b>Brutal Foxconn Factory</b> <sup>354</sup>
<b>A5</b>	20 May 2010	Switched	<b>Bleak Foxconn Factory Conditions Exposed by Undercover Intern</b> <sup>355</sup>
<b>A6</b>	21 May 2010	CNET Asia	<b>Suicides, beatings and misery: Working life at Foxconn under scrutiny</b> <sup>356</sup>
<b>A7</b>	21 May 2010	NY Times	<b>8th Death at Foxconn, Electronics Supplier in China</b> <sup>357</sup>
<b>A8</b>	22 May 2010	Digital East Asia	<b>10th Suicide in 2010 at Foxconn; Incidents Finally Begin to Gain Wider Media Coverage</b> <sup>358</sup>
<b>A9</b>	25 May 2010	PC World	<b>No Simple Solution to Foxconn Suicides</b> <sup>359</sup>
<b>A10</b>	26 May 2010	Time	<b>Foxconn Suicides Rise at Shenzhen iPhone, iPad Factory</b> <sup>360</sup>
<b>A11</b>	26 May 2010	Wired	<b>Apple, Dell and HP to Investigate Suicides at Asian Supplier</b> <sup>361</sup>
<b>A12</b>	27 May 2010	LA Times	<b>Suicides roil factory in China</b> <sup>362</sup>
<b>A13</b>	28 May 2010	Apple Insider	<b>Foxconn plans 20 percent wage increases as suicides continue</b> <sup>363</sup>
<b>C1</b>	14 May 2010	China National Radio <sup>364</sup>	<b>Eight People Jump From Buildings in Six Months: Reporter Spends 28 Days</b>

<sup>354</sup> Chang 2010a.

<sup>355</sup> Toor 2010.

<sup>356</sup> Millward 2010.

<sup>357</sup> Barboza 2010.

<sup>358</sup> Duan 2010a.

<sup>359</sup> Newman 2010.

<sup>360</sup> Ramzy 2010.

<sup>361</sup> Chen 2010.

<sup>362</sup> Demick and Sarno 2010b.

<sup>363</sup> Oliver 2010.

<sup>364</sup> Chinese: 中国广播网.

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**Undercover to Find the Truth<sup>365</sup>**

<b>C2</b>	17 May 2010	Modern Express <sup>366</sup>	<b>The Depth Behind Foxconn's "Nine Jumps": The Fragments of Youth<sup>367</sup></b>
<b>C3</b>	20 May 2010	China Youth Daily <sup>368</sup>	<b>Why Youth Withers on the Foxconn Assembly Lines<sup>369</sup></b>
<b>C4</b>	22 May 2010	Chutian Metropolis Daily <sup>370</sup>	<b>Yesterday, Foxconn's "Tenth Jumper": 21 Year Old Worker from Hubei Dies<sup>371</sup></b>
<b>C5</b>	23 May 2010	Phoenix Blogs <sup>372</sup> (Hong Kong)	<b>Foxconn Employees: Essentially "Work Slaves"<sup>373</sup></b>
<b>C6</b>	24 May 2010	Boraid.com <sup>374</sup>	<b>Being Human--Reflections on Foxconn's Ten Suicide Attempts<sup>375</sup></b>
<b>C7</b>	25 May 2010	Xinmin Evening News <sup>376</sup>	<b>Merely Recruiting Psychiatrists is not Enough<sup>377</sup></b>
<b>C8</b>	26 May 2010	21st Century Network <sup>378</sup>	<b>What is the Real Nightmare of Foxconn's "Eleven Jumps"?<sup>379</sup></b>

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<sup>365</sup> China National Radio 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康半年内八人跳楼 记者卧底 28 天找寻真相.

<sup>366</sup> Chinese: 现代快报.

<sup>367</sup> Modern Express 2010. Original title in Chinese: 纵深富士康‘九连跳’背后：青春的碎片.

<sup>368</sup> Chinese: 中国青年报.

<sup>369</sup> Fang Liu 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康流水线上的青春因何凋零.

<sup>370</sup> Chinese: 楚天都市报.

<sup>371</sup> Chutian Metropolis Daily 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康昨现‘第十跳’21 岁湖北籍员工身亡.

<sup>372</sup> Chinese: 凤凰网博报.

<sup>373</sup> Zhang 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康员工本质是‘上班奴’.

<sup>374</sup> Chinese: 博锐管理在线.

<sup>375</sup> Zhong 2010. Original title in Chinese: 人之为人——富士康 10 连跳事件反思.

<sup>376</sup> Chinese: 新民晚报.

<sup>377</sup> Shao 2010. Original title in Chinese: 仅招聘心理医生是不够的.

<sup>378</sup> Chinese: 21 世纪网.

<sup>379</sup> 21st Century Network 2010. Original title in Chinese: 富士康‘11 连跳’的真实梦魇是什么？.





## Appendix 2: Summary of Minor-source Article Citations

S/N	Date	Source	Summary
A7	21 May 2010	NY Times	<p>“Just last week, a Chinese newspaper, Southern Weekly, published an article co-written by an intern who said he had recently conducted an undercover investigation into Foxconn by working at one of the Shenzhen factories for 28 days this year.</p> <p>“The article called Foxconn a “typical” Chinese factory, with much better facilities than many small and medium-size factories. But it also said the employees were forced to work long periods standing, sometimes for eight hours nonstop.”<sup>380</sup></p>
A8	22 May 2010	Digital East Asia	<p>“...from the perspective of [the Southern Weekend] article, the lack of any meaningful social structure is a big part of the root cause [of the Foxconn suicide epidemic]. These 300,000 young workers live together, but they are alone and lack real relationships. In such an environment, it is very easy to develop severe mental problems when working long hours and under stress.”<sup>381</sup></p>
A9	25 May 2010	PC World	<p>“Even if there were no suicides, Foxconn would still have a culture problem, as seen by an undercover account of life at Foxconn, published in Chinese newspaper Southern Weekend and translated at <i>Engadget</i>. The reporter, Liu Zhiyi, doesn't decry the long working hours as atrocious; he actually praises</p>

<sup>380</sup> Barboza 2010.

<sup>381</sup> Duan 2010a.

them as a way to make more money. Nor does he cite any human rights abuses. But what Zhiyi notices is that workers enter the factory intending to save up and start their own business, or go to college. Those dreams become impossible to achieve amidst the long hours and low pay, and the revelation is devastating.”<sup>382</sup>

**A10** 26 May 2010 Time  
“In mid-May the Chinese newspaper Southern Weekend ran a story by a young reporter who spent a month working undercover at the [Foxconn] factory. Liu Zhiyi wrote that the workers all dreamed of wealth, but felt that they had few opportunities outside the company. The workplace wasn't a sweatshop, Liu wrote, but the assembly-line work slowly dehumanized the employees. ‘It seems as if while they operate the machines, the machines also operate them,’ the story said. ‘Parts flow by, and their youth is worn down to the rhythm of the machines.’”<sup>383</sup>

**A11** 26 May 2010 Wired  
“To offer a first-hand account of Foxconn, reporter Liu Zhiyi of the Chinese paper Southern Weekend went undercover as an employee at the factory. [He<sup>384</sup>] reported that workers were stuck in grueling, repetitive jobs and working long hours for minimal pay.”<sup>385</sup>

**A12** 27 May 2010 LA Times  
“A reporter for the hard-hitting Southern Weekly who spent 28 days working undercover in the factory said the young employees rarely stop working except to eat and sleep, and that they need to put in grueling extra hours to supplement their monthly wage of \$130.

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<sup>382</sup> Newman 2010.

<sup>383</sup> Ramzy 2010.

<sup>384</sup> The original Wired article had mistakenly believed that Liu Zhiyi is a female and thus used the pronoun “she”.

<sup>385</sup> Chen 2010.

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“The reporter, Liu Zhiyi, said the workers would sometimes stand for eight hours. ‘If you don't work overtime, you don't make money,’ Liu wrote. ‘But if you take the overtime, the fatigue will make your whole body feel the pain.’”<sup>386</sup>

**A13** 28 May 2010 Apple Insider “Recently, an undercover report from Southern Weekend revealed that employees sign ‘voluntary overtime affidavits’ to take home more than the local minimum wage that can be earned through a regular 36-hour workweek.”<sup>387</sup>

**C3** 20 May 2010 China Youth Daily “Liu Zhiyi, Southern Weekend’s trainee journalist who went undercover at Foxconn for 28 days, was surprised that [despite the] immensity of the factory district, no hometown associations [had been organized]. ‘Everyone is active in the plant, but each person became the shadow of the next, and [workers] don’t even ask each others names.’

“In Liu Zhiyi’s opinion, a person in society should have many levels of relationships, together forming a network. At Foxconn, however, apart from the production line, a person has almost no other collective relationships, only individual social relations, and each individual becomes an isolated point. After endlessly facing a machine, when [workers are] confronted with anxiety and stress that is difficult to handle, suicide is most likely.”<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Demick and Sarno 2010a.

<sup>387</sup> Oliver 2010.

<sup>388</sup> Fang Liu 2010. Original text in Chinese: 刘志毅，这个卧底富士康 28 天的《南方周末》实习记者，很惊异偌大的一个厂区，竟然连一个老乡会都没有。“每个人在厂区内活动，但每个人都成了彼此的影子，互相连姓名都不会多问。”

C4	22 May 2010	Chutian Metropolis Daily	<p>“Liu Zhiyi, Southern Weekend’s trainee journalist who went undercover at Foxconn for 28 days, was surprised that [despite the] immensity of the factory district, no hometown associations [had been organized].</p> <p>‘Everyone is active in the plant, but each person became the shadow of the next, and [workers] don’t even ask each others names.’</p> <p>“In Liu Zhiyi’s opinion, at Foxconn, each individual becomes an isolated point. After endlessly facing a machine, when [workers are] confronted with anxiety and stress that is difficult to handle, suicide is most likely.”<sup>389</sup></p>
C5	23 May 2010	Phoenix Blogs (Hong Kong)	<p>“We find that within Foxconn, due to non-existent private space and a relatively low base salary, employees tend to work overtime. According to Southern Weekend, each employee signs a ‘voluntary overtime affidavit’; thereby your overtime will no longer be subject to the legal constraints of 36 hours per month. But this is not ‘a bad thing’. On the contrary, it seems in wage earners’ opinion, a factory with lots of overtime is a ‘good factory’, because ‘if you don’t work overtime, you simply don’t earn money’. To workers who are anxious to make money, overtime is a ‘breathing pain’: If they don’t work overtime, the moneyless days ‘suffocate’ them; If they work overtime, the day-and-night, exhausting work will only</p>

在刘志毅看来，一个人在社会理应有许多层的关系，并且成为一张网。但是在富士康，一个人除了生产线外，几乎没有其他的集体关系，仅此单一的社会关系，他们每个人都成了一个孤立的点。永无休止的面对机器后，一旦遇到难以承受的焦虑与压力，最容易自杀。

<sup>389</sup> Chutian Metropolis Daily 2010. Original text in Chinese: 刘志毅，这个卧底富士康 28 天的《南方周末》实习记者，很惊异偌大的一个厂区，竟然连一个老乡会都没有。“每个人在厂区里面活动，但每个人都成了彼此的影子，互相连姓名都不会多问。”

在刘志毅看来，在富士康，每个人都成了孤立的点。永无休止的面对机器后，一旦遇到焦虑与压力，最容易自杀。

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make the body twice as ‘pained’, quickly growing old. More often than not they firmly choose the latter, even though this choice isn’t always easy to get. Only workers who the boss ‘trusts’, with whom [the boss has] good relationships, or [workers] who are in key positions, are allowed to frequently work overtime.”<sup>390</sup>

<b>C7</b>	25 May 2010	Xinmin Evening News	“Even if the last generation of migrant workers would have been able to cope with this sort of life, the generation of migrant workers born in the ‘80s and ‘90s is having a hard time continuing on. Having spent 28 days at Foxconn “undercover” gathering material, Southern Weekend’s trainee reporter Liu Zhiyi says he feels the biggest problem is the enormous gap between employees’ dreams and harsh reality.” <sup>391</sup>
<b>C8</b>	26 May 2010	21st Century Network	“Having spent 28 days at Foxconn “undercover” gathering material, Southern Weekend’s trainee reporter Liu Zhiyi says he feels the biggest problem is the enormous gap between employees’ dreams and harsh reality.” <sup>392</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Zhang 2010. Original text in Chinese: 我们发现, 在富士康公司内部, 由于不存在私人空间以及底薪较低, 员工们倾向于加班。据《南方周末》的报道, 每个员工都会签一份“自愿加班切结书”, 随后你的加班时间便不再受法律规定的每月上限 36 小时的约束。但这并不是什么“坏事”, 相反, 在许多打工仔看来, 加班多的厂才是“好厂”, 因为“不加班, 根本挣不到钱”。对急欲赚钱的打工者们, 加班更像是“会呼吸的痛”: 如果不加, 没有钱的日子让他们“窒息”; 如果加班, 日夜劳累的工作只会让身体加倍“疼痛”, 迅速老去。更多时候他们坚定地选择后者, 甚至这种选择的权利, 也不是轻易可以获得的。只有老大“信任”, 关系好, 或是身处关键岗位, 才常加得到班。

<sup>391</sup> Shao 2010. Original text in Chinese: 如果说, 这样的生活, 上一辈农民工尚能忍耐, 那么, 80 后、90 后新生代农民工则难以坚持下去。曾在富士康“卧底”采访 28 天的南方周末实习记者刘志毅说, 他感觉最大的问题, 是员工心中的梦想与严酷的现实产生了巨大的落差。

<sup>392</sup> 21st Century Network 2010. Original text in Chinese: 曾在富士康“卧底”采访 28 天的南方周末实习记者刘志毅说, 他感觉最大的问题, 是员工心中的梦想与严酷的现实产生了巨大的落差。



## Appendix 3: Summary of Major-source Article Citations

S/N	Date	Source	Summary
A1	16 May 2010	Digital East Asia	<p>“Nanfang Zhoumo (Southern Weekend), one of China’s most liberal and courageous newspapers (so much so that the government locked up their manager and editor-in-chief in 2004), has a series of articles covering the Foxconn suicides. After the incidents in April, a 23-year-old Southern Weekend intern, Liu Zhiyi, went undercover to work at Foxconn for 28 days and wrote up his thoughts (most full-time journalists at Southern Weekend were too old to be hired by Foxconn, while Liu was a suitable candidate). In his own words, ‘the 28 days of working undercover has shocked me strongly. While I didn’t uncover the truth behind why these employees chose death, I did come to understand how they were living.’</p> <p>Liu’s account of life at Foxconn was incredibly depressing. 300,000 employees worked and lived on a 2 square kilometer patch of land, crammed with assembly lines and dormitories. Ten workers shared a dorm. Employees earned a starting wage of RMB900 per month (US\$132), which was the legal minimum wage in Shenzhen; to earn more they needed to work over-time. Foxconn had workers sign documents stating that they were working over-time voluntarily, in which case the employees could circumvent the government regulation of 36 hours maximum of over-time per month. Liu believed that most employees favored this setup – they saw the companies that allowed them to</p>

work the most (and therefore earn the most) as the best employers.

Life outside of work was incredibly dull. The blue-collar, which came from all over China, seemed to struggle at forming real connections. Workers routinely could not remember all the names of the other dorm mates they lived with, which came and went quite frequently. The gender ratio meant that even for a talented star employee, such as Lu Xin (who died on May 6), who had won 2nd prize at a Foxconn internal talent show, relationships were a luxury. In its place were the cheap prostitutes a few blocks away, who offered blue-collar prices (RMB90 per session – US\$13) to these young twenty year olds. Employees also loved spending their pay on lottery tickets.”<sup>393</sup> <sup>394</sup>

**A6** 21 May CNET Asia  
2010

“Earlier today, in another new development, an English translation of an undercover report by Southern Weekend newspaper was published, in which one journalist got a job as a Foxconn assembly line worker at the massive Shenzhen facility. *Engadget* has the exclusive translation, along with a few photos (or head straight to the story in Chinese over at Southern Weekend).

Interestingly, many of the workers are phlegmatic about the hideous amount of overtime that is semi-forced upon them by Foxconn: Since the 900 yuan bare wage is so low, it is actually considered desirable to be able to make more money at a factory (other manufacturing

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<sup>393</sup> This quote has been limited to that which is clearly citing material from the original reports. The paragraphs that follow this quote could arguably be partially citing the original reports, but as it is unclear I have decided to leave them out of the *focused analysis*. Minor adjustments made to the text to increase readability; hyperlinks removed and obvious typos corrected. The original version can be found in the appendices.

<sup>394</sup> Duan 2010b.



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companies behave just like Foxconn) which has overtime work. As for the suicides, some of the workers interviewed by the undercover reporter are pretty unperturbed, saying it's just symptomatic of a large group of youngsters away from home and cooped up together, and that such spates of suicides have occurred at universities as well.

### **Under a shadow**

Such is the gloom and wretchedness now attached to Foxconn's name—and perhaps hanging in the air at its plants—that management this week brought in 100 counselors and 30 Buddhist monks to ‘release the souls’ of the deceased youngsters who had leapt to their own deaths, and to ‘prevent such accidents’ in future.”<sup>395</sup>

**C2** 17 May 2010 Modern Express

### **“The anxiety of the new generation of migrant workers**

After Foxconn’s ‘six consecutive jumps’ occurred, in order to uncover the underlying causes of the suicides, ‘Southern Weekend’ intern, 21-year-old Wuhan University School of Journalism and Communication junior Liu Zhiyi got at job at Foxconn, staying undercover for 28 days, and wrote the report ‘Foxconn's ‘Eight Jumps’: The Mystery of Suicide’.

‘Humans have been hijacked by machines,’ ‘living life as fragments’, wrote the report. Liu Zhiyi told Express’s reporter that living the life of his peers [working] at Foxconn during those 28 days made him feel ‘sad and shocked’. ‘Lots of people know that

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<sup>395</sup> Millward 2010.

Charlie Chaplin film ‘Modern Times’, the image of workers on the assembly line repeatedly tightening screws, but Foxconn workers suffer more than in the movie, [they] additionally have [to deal with] psychological shackles.’

In the eyes of Liu Zhiyi, Foxconn has a modern assembly line, [with] two shifts of workers, 12 hours per shift. The pressure arises from the industrialization of the production process, ‘especially at night, [workers] are completely hijacked by machines.’ Liu Zhiyi cites an example from outside of Foxconn: ‘[Each] worker has a counter hanging from their waist, push the button once and the number on the counter goes up one, the person has become part of the machine, but you can’t escape.’ However, compared with their parents’ generation, these workers have a stronger need for respect, [a stronger] need [for] a feeling of success. In this Internet age, they can see the dramatic contrast of their surrounding environment and reality, but facing bad treatment and harsh environments, as well as [their] limited level of education, they can’t change the status quo. ‘[The link] between dreams and reality has been torn. They can’t handle the blow, and their hearts are full of anxiety and helplessness.’

At Foxconn there are workers with educational backgrounds of everything from college [graduates] to middle schools [dropouts], with the average worker having completed secondary school. The low-educated workers also know how much education can change one’s fate. ‘They also want to learn things, but their fundamentals are weak. A worker wants to sign up to

learn English, but after going to class discovers that [he] doesn't understand anything and just gives up.' Moreover, even if a worker manages to get a slightly higher diploma, [her] treatment will only rise slightly above that of those on the very bottom [of the ladder], and still can't change [her] fate. What working people want is to earn more money, making more money means being able to change one's life, [being able to] enjoy life, everyone want to work overtime, but overtime brings greater pressure. 'It's like a vicious circle, you will never get out of it.'

Every day what workers face are machines, what [they] see are workers wearing identical masks, hats and overalls, 'If [someone has] the same build [as you do], you feel like you're looking in a mirror.' Workers are like countless, identical parts in the huge machine that is Foxconn, endlessly repeating the same action, no interaction between them. Foxconn administrative general manager Li Jinming also admits, 'Neither formal organizations, such as trade unions, nor informal organization, such as the hometown or alumni associations, are available to ordinary employees, so there is a lot of pressure, but no way to relieve [it].' This is obviously a large group of repressed souls, deprived of freedom and leisure.

'The more isolated an individual's social relationships are, the more alienated, the more likely to commit suicide.' In the report from 'Southern Weekend' a sentence from the French sociologist Emile Durkheim's 'Suicide' is mentioned, but another assertion from Durkheim is not mentioned, 'high suicide rates are correlated with excessive personal freedom and

excessive control'. 'After the suicides, Foxconn's psychological counselor recommended workers enrich [their] leisure lives, go out more, but in fact this is not realistic.' Liu Zhiyi says that Foxconn's basic amenities are very good, with a gym and swimming pool, but very few workers are able to go. 'Twelve hours of work, eight hours' sleep, coupled with eating, walking, etc., do you still have time to go to those places?'

'I think that the root cause of the workers' suicides is the capital-focused mode of operation. In this generation of workers this mode of operation is difficult to change, and at the same time industry lacks [prioritization of] humane care,' Liu Zhiyi concludes.

'This is a microcosm of the transformation of China.' Liu Kaiming, director of the Institute of Contemporary Observation in Shenzhen, says hundreds of thousands of people are migrating, but there are no corresponding social management mechanisms. The household registration system, the urban-rural dual structure, and other obstacles still keep migrant workers far out of the cities. 'Foxconn's 'consecutive jumps' incident reflects some of the pressing issues facing China's economic and social transformation; the time has come to make good on the debt of social rights and interests, the right to live, owed to migrant workers.'"<sup>396</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> Modern Express 2010. Original title in Chinese: 纵深富士康“九连跳”背后：青春的碎片. Original text in Chinese: 富士康“六连跳”发生后，为了揭开自杀事件的深层原因，《南方周末》实习生、21岁的武汉大学新闻与传播学院大三学生刘志毅应聘到富士康，卧底28天，并写出报道《富士康“八连跳”自杀之谜》。

“人被机器劫持”“碎片一样活着”，报道中这样写道。刘志毅告诉快报记者，与富士康那些同龄人同行的28天，让他感到“心酸而震撼”。“很多都知道卓别林电影《摩登时代》工人在流水线上反复拧螺丝钉的镜头，但富士康的工人比电影里多遭受的，还有心理的枷锁。”

在刘志毅眼中，富士康拥有现代化的流水线，工人两班倒，每班12小时。压力来自这种工业化的生产流程，“尤其是夜间，完全是被机器劫持了。”刘志毅举了富士康之外的一个例子。“工人腰上挂

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着计数器，工作时手举一次，计数器上就多一个数字，人成了机器的一部分，但你无法逃脱。”但与父辈相比，这些工人更需要尊重，需要成功的感觉。在这样的网络时代，他们能看到周围的环境和现实的巨大反差，但面对低待遇和恶劣的环境，以及知识水平的限制，他们无法改变现状。“梦想和现实之间被撕裂。他们过不去这个坎，心里充满焦虑和无奈。”

在富士康，工人的学历从本科到初中都有，其中又以中专为主。低学历的工人也知道，知识多少可以改变命运。“他们也想学东西，但基础太差。有个工人想报名学英语，但去了发现根本听不懂，就放弃了。”况且，即使拿到稍高一点的文凭，待遇也只会比最底层高出一点点，还是无法改变命运。打工的人想的是多挣钱，挣钱多意味着可以改变生活，享受生活，人人都希望加班，但加班带来的是更大的压力。“这像是一个怪圈，你永远走不出去。”

每天，工人们面对的是机器，看到的是戴着相同口罩、帽子和工作服的工友，“如果身材也相仿，你会以为看到了镜子。”工人们像是富士康这台巨大机器中无数相同的部件，永无休止地重复着同样的动作，彼此之间没有交集。富士康行政总经理李金明也承认，“不管是正式组织，比如工会，还是非正式组织，比如老乡会、同学会，普通员工都找不到，所以压力大，却无法舒缓。”这显然是一大群压抑而不得自由和舒展的灵魂。

“个体的社会关系越孤立、越疏离，便越容易自杀。”在《南方周末》这篇报道中，法国社会学家涂尔干《自杀论》中的这句话被提及。但没被提及的是涂尔干另外一个判断，“高自杀率伴随着过度的个人自由和过度的控制”。“自杀事件发生后，富士康的心理咨询师建议工人丰富业余生活，多外出，但实际上这并不现实。”刘志毅说，富士康的硬件条件非常好，有健身房、游泳池，但极少有工人能去。“12小时的上班，8小时睡觉，加上吃饭、走路等，你还有时间去那些地方吗？”

“我觉得，工人自杀的根本原因，是资本运作方式，在这一代工人中，资本运作方式难以改变，同时企业又缺乏人文关怀。”刘志毅总结说。

“这是‘转型中国’问题的缩影”。深圳当代社会观察研究所所长刘开明说，数十万人口迁移，却没有相应的社会管理机制配套，户籍制度、城乡二元结构等障碍仍把外来打工者们远远地挡在了城市之外。“富士康‘跳楼’事件折射出中国经济、社会转型中面临的一些迫切问题，外来打工者社会权益、生活权益的欠债已到了不得不还的时候”。



## **Appendix 4: Source Material News Reports from Table 1:**

# Report S1—与机器相伴的青春和命运——潜伏富士康 28 天手记<sup>397</sup>

*Source: Southern Weekend (南方周末)*

*Publication Date: 12 May 2010*

*Author: Liu Zhiyi (刘志毅)*

在许多打工仔看来，加班多的厂才是“好厂”，因为“不加班，根本挣不到钱”。

他们生产着世界上最顶尖的电子产品，却以最慢的速度进行着自己的财富积累。办公系统的公用账户密码被设成以“888”结尾，像很多生意人一样，他们喜欢这个数字。但是他们中或许鲜有人知道，是自己的双手保住了国家的“8”，而他们每天去加班，去买彩票，甚至去买马，却难以找到属于自己的“8”

我认识两群年轻人。

一群是与我一样的大学生，他们生活在象牙塔，与图书馆、湖光山色相伴。另一群工作在钢铁机器，巨大货柜，有无数繁杂精密生产环节的厂区里。这群人总是把他们的上级叫做“老板”，互相之间哪怕不熟也要大声用粗口唤作“屌毛”。

在富士康潜伏 28 天后，我走了出来。我一直试图把这两幅图景联系起来。可是很难。只是这两个地方生活着的人们确乎有着相同的年纪，相同的青春梦。

我的潜伏，起因于南方周末对富士康“六连跳”系列自杀原因的调查。编辑部很快发现，南方周末的记者们均因年龄较大无法进入只要 20 岁上下年轻人的富士康工厂。相较而言，不到 23 岁的我，很轻松就被招入了富士康。

28 天的打工潜伏，使我受到了强烈的震撼。这并非因为明白了他们究竟为何而死，而是知悉了他们如何活着。

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<sup>397</sup> All articles in the appendices are in their original form without any grammatical, punctuation, capitalization or spelling correction. Only spacing, font, and text flow has been adjusted slightly to allow for an easier reading experience. Hyperlinks, videos and photos have been removed, but the text in the article indicating these remains. The sources for the articles and the original web addresses can be found in the literature references.



## 【一】

他们活得最阔绰的一天是每月的 10 号，发工资的日子。这一天，自动提款机与特色餐厅里都会排起长队，以至于提款机也会时常被提空。工资由当地最低底薪 900 元加上每月不定的加班费组成。

每个员工都会签一份“自愿加班切结书”，随后你的加班时间便不再受法律规定的每月上限 36 小时的约束。但这并不是什么“坏事”，相反，在许多打工仔看来，加班多的厂才是“好厂”，因为“不加班，根本挣不到钱”。对急欲赚钱的打工者们，加班更像是“会呼吸的痛”：如果不加，没有钱的日子让他们“窒息”；如果加班，日夜劳累的工作只会让身体加倍“疼痛”，迅速老去。更多时候他们坚定地选择后者，甚至这种选择的权利，也不是轻易可以获得的。只有老大“信任”，关系好，或是身处关键岗位，才常加得到班。

所以，“五一”假期对一些人来说成了忧虑，因为花钱不挣钱的日子“很难熬”。这一天，打工仔们顾不上是什么节，更重要的是加班费；实在不行，睡个懒觉更实在。

新开的手机店门口，销售员洋气地向围观的员工们展示着 iPhone，所有人都紧紧盯着他每一个“酷炫”的操作，像看着什么新奇。可事实上，富士康生产着包括 iPhone、iPad 在内的几乎所有知名品牌数码产品的配件，那“新奇”的机器每个部件都来自这些工人们之手，只是他们从未想过拥有最终的成品。现在，这些成品就以略高于他们一个月工资的“惊爆价 2198 元”出现在眼前。这是一笔昂贵的购置，所以他们只讨论着怎样花几百元去买山寨手机。

在与他们聊天的很多时候，我无言以对，我觉得自己幸福得太过分。他们居然羡慕那些受工伤可以休假的人，一面聊着笑话一面说自己的工作岗位如何有毒。他们讨论自己的同事们跳楼自杀时，往往有着出人意料的淡定或者不屑，甚至语出戏谑，似乎每个人都是局外人。

我愿意把他们看成一群乐观与坚忍的人，也希望他们真的是与此无关。不过这愿望怎样想来，都免不了是一种心酸。我甚至想象自己有改变这一切的力量，可是就像王克

柱在上夜班的时候说“真希望有人可以踹他一脚来交换 5 分钟的休息时间”一样，很天真，更没可能。

## 【二】

你要问打工仔们的梦想是什么，答案如出一辙，做生意，赚钱、发财，其它一切在这之后都会到来。在工厂的仓库里，他们幽默地把拉货的油压车称作“宝马”。他们倒是想拥有真正的宝马，或者至少是“宝马”式的财富。

他们时而幻想，又不断地亲自撕裂自己的幻想，像一个痛苦的画者，无奈地不断撕毁自己难以成型的手稿，“这样干下去，一辈子也别想”。他们生产着世界上最顶尖的电子产品，却以最慢的速度进行着自己的财富积累。办公系统的公用账户密码被设成以“888”结尾，像很多生意人一样，他们喜欢这个数字，甚至笃信这个谐音。但是他们中或许鲜有人知道，是自己的双手保住了国家的“8”，而他们每天去加班，去买彩票，甚至去买马，却难以找到属于自己的“8”。

工作最卖命的王克柱总抱怨工资太低，想去外面报名学点东西却又“听都听不懂”，还是放弃了。他说知识太少，就只能干最初等的活，这是注定的。他有时候说头很痛，有时候又瞬间精神焕发。拉货的时候他总向前飞跑，仿佛那两板 24 箱货物根本没有多重。每天他都会爬上两三米高的货箱去盘点账目，也会钻到夹缝里去检查标识单。我问他为什么这么卖命，他并不回答，直到某一天上午我看到他停在柱子面前，突然喊出声：“救命！”他大约也不知道刚才自己说了什么，我却听到一群真实的灵魂。他们习惯了用最大努力去改变，直到努力演变为挣扎，也没有把握自己是否有那力量破开生活的大茧。

厂区里一幢幢厂房整齐敦实地竖立，除开顶上用英文字母和数字组合起来的序号，便几乎再没什么特质。厂房里的机器，仓库里的货箱，乃至流水线上着齐整工衣的工人们，也都是如此。有一天早晨，我在上班的路上看见厂房的窗户里探出两张脸，一动不动，一直望着路上的人流。太远，看不到表情，也听不见声音，那窗里仅是两个黑点。可站在他们的位置，这路上无疑也是一大群移动的黑点，无比巨大的白色厂房背景下，他们渺小而一致。

### 【三】

这个工厂的工人们用双手支配着世界上最尖端的电子产品的组装生产，不断刷新着令人激动的贸易纪录，连续7年内地出口额排名第一。但是似乎在他们操纵机器的同时，机器也操纵了他们：零部件在流水线上的一个个环节中流过，加工成型；他们单一而纯粹的青春，也在机器的特有节奏中消磨。

凌晨四点，我上完厕所侧耳贴在车间走廊的墙壁上，听到机器的隆隆声从四面传来，频率稳定不息，那是这个工厂的心跳。工人们每天就在这种固有频率的支配下工作、走路、吃饭，我此刻明白了为什么我在没有人催促的情况下会在工厂的路上走得那么快，会在食堂里吃得那么急，虽然并不舒服。你就像每个零部件一样，进入了这条流水线，顺从于那节奏，隶属于那凌晨四点的心跳，无法逃逸。

当深圳，这个曾经的边陲小镇一跃而成为珠三角东岸最繁华的都市之一，在高楼大厦鳞次栉比的背后，我遇到的却是一群迷惘焦虑的年轻人。《时代》杂志在2009年把中国工人作为了年度封面人物，这本杂志说，中国工人以“坚毅的目光，照亮了人类的未来”，然而所谓“坚毅”，却是忍耐机器异化、资本侵蚀所必需的品质。这样的“坚毅”，还是他们可承受之重吗？当电脑、手机、汽车，每一样商品都成了资本的产物，汗水、青春，乃至生命，每一样代价也被资本消耗殆尽。

这个容纳四十多万人的巨型工厂并非是人们想象中的“血汗工厂”。它提供食宿，规模达到一个中等城镇，流水作业，井井有条。与同类相较之下，这里的设备齐全而优越，待遇标准而规范。每天都有成千上万的人蜂拥而至，只为找一个自己的位置，找一个也许他永远无法实现的梦想。

这实非一个工厂的内幕，这是一代工人的命运。

（应受访人要求，文中“王克柱”为化名。）

## Report S2—破解富士康员工的自杀“魔咒”

*Source: Southern Weekend (南方周末)*

*Publication Date: 13 May 2010*

*Authors: Yang Jibin (杨继斌), Liu Zhiyi (刘志毅)*

参与调研的心理学家认为，富士康员工自杀多数由心理疾病造成。但亦有社会学者指出，新生代打工者实际收入远不如父辈，又缺乏回到农村的退路，他们的焦虑无助是自杀增加的深层原因。工厂要建立员工心理关怀机制，政府更应提供对新生代打工者的制度关怀。

### “魔咒”与心理疾病相关

在 25 岁的卢新自杀约 30 个小时之前，三名 20 岁上下的青年，相约在台州市的一处街心花园服毒。两人死亡。

在卢新自杀五天之后，他的同事、已处在家长照顾之中的许昌姑娘祝晨明从所住的宿舍楼跳楼身亡。

在更大的视野里即可发现，死亡的魔咒并不只在诅咒着“郭台铭的紫禁城”。

为了阻击接二连三出现的跳楼事件，富士康从四月上旬开始“花钱买信息”：任何职工只要发现身边的同事情绪异常，便可通知心理医师或者部门主管。若情况属实，公司奖励 200 元。

截至 5 月 10 日，这场“人民战争”让富士康卫生部发现了二十余例情绪异常者。其中已经患有较重精神疾病的，在家属同意后，送进了深圳康宁医院；另一些情绪异常但无需住院治疗的，则由家属陪伴回到了老家。“但我们觉得很挫败。”刘坤说。让富士康感觉挫败的是 5 月 6 日凌晨 4 点 30 分的卢新跳楼事件。可是，刘坤尚未从 6 日的挫败中缓过气来，新的冲击便又来了。

在卢新死后第二日，富士康将多名中国最好的心理学专家请到厂区，寻求强有力的心理学支持。但仍无济于事，员工祝晨明又跳楼。之后，富士康请了五台山最有名的高僧大德，到园区为死者祈福。

在“六连跳”到“七连跳”、“八连跳”，有媒体质疑连续出现的自杀事件，是因为富士康是“血汗工厂”，高密度的死亡与其“半军事化管理”有关。

富士康科技集团工会副主席陈宏方告诉南方周末记者，在“第六跳”发生后第二天，深圳市总工会便到富士康调查。4月13日下午，深圳市总工会公布富士康近期多位员工坠楼事件的调查结果。深圳市总工会副主席王同信称：富士康在管理方面存在漏洞和不足，希望企业吸取教训，建立人文关怀的管理体制。

“群体这么大，基层的管理上肯定会有些做得不好的地方，但这和自杀肯定是没有直接关系的。”陈宏方说。

南方周末在富士康的近一个月调查发现，管理本身并无异常之处。

“富士康员工的自杀率也很难与富士康的工作压力、‘血汗工厂’联系起来。”北师大心理学教授张西超说，“当然，我们也认为，富士康应加强对员工的心理危机干预，防止类似悲剧发生。”参与调研的心理学家均认为，这些自杀事件基本与富士康员工个人的心理疾病，特别是抑郁症有关。

据富士康集团行政总经理李金明介绍，实际上早在2009年7月份的孙丹勇事件后，员工的心理健康便出现在富士康（中国总部）最高管理层的问题单上。一批心理咨询师补充到了集团里来。

现在，富士康还开通了78585（谐音“请帮我帮我”）热线电话，给员工提供心理咨询。与此同时，一个旨在疏解员工心理压力的“心灵港湾工作室”也开设了，员工在这里不仅可以接受心理辅导、通过专业仪器放松身心，还可以在确保隐私的前提下，在宣泄室击打橡皮假人。

“公司管理层都愿意把自己的照片，套在假人上，供员工们发泄。”刘坤说。

4月下旬，针对员工之间缺少沟通的现象，为了方便室友之间交流，富士康甚至下通知鼓励朋友、老乡住在一个寝室。“我们在开展心理辅导讲座时，即兴搞过有奖问答，谁能说全自己室友的名字，便奖励1000元。但绝大部分人答不上来。”工会副主席陈宏方说。

刘坤告诉记者，郭台铭将在本周内专程赶赴深圳，为“员工关爱中心”挂牌。成立的日子还不到20天，悲剧再次发生了。

### 新一代打工者普遍性的焦虑

“许多问题，都出在上游，只是因为水流到了富士康这里，问题集中暴露出来，所以大家以为是富士康的问题。”刘坤认为。

深圳当代社会观察研究所所长刘开明，曾经多年研究过深圳的农民工问题。在他看来，“八连跳”并不仅是富士康的问题，也不仅仅是心理问题，更是社会的问题。“只是因为富士康人口基数大。”刘开明说。

刘开明在整个改革开放以来农民工群体的历史中，研究当前农民工高密度自杀的原因：20世纪80年代，在全民普遍低薪的历史背景下，农民工(外来工)的工资每月高达200—600元，当时大学教授的月工资只有180元左右。而在1992年之后，得到制度庇护的城镇在岗职工工资增长迅速，但遭遇制度性排斥的外来工工资增长则十分缓慢。随着经济增长的加速，两者之间的差距越来越大。

2008年，“珠三角”和“长三角”出口工厂的工人平均年收入仅是这两个地区城镇在岗职工年均工资的37.82%。

“考虑到CPI的因素，新一代的打工者，在同样的劳动时间内，所获得的薪酬，要远远少于第一代打工者。”刘开明说。

香港理工大学应用社会科学系副教授潘毅，早在1990年代后期，便开始关注中国的打工群体。她在接受南方周末记者采访时说，新生代打工者相对他们前辈，承受着更多的焦虑。

从2005年到2008年间，潘毅多次和同事在深圳和东莞，研究新生代打工者，她得出的结论是，相对于第一代农民工，新生代农民工面临着前所未有的压力——家乡回不去了。新生代农民工大多不会从事农业生产、不适应农村生活；二则，失地农民越来越多，即使想回去，家里也没有土地。

实际收入锐减，退路又无，新一代打工者面临着比他们的前辈更大的生存压力。

而涂尔干所谓遏制自杀的最有效的障碍——集体，也并不能给中国的新生代打工者提供帮助。

“目前的社会管理制度框架，使每一个打工者处于原子状态，他们没有自我救助与沟通的组织。”刘开明说。

富士康行政总经理李金明以他的方式描述了工人的这种“原子”状态：“不管是正式组织，比如工会，还是非正式组织，比如老乡会，同学会，普通员工都找不到，所以压力大，却无法舒缓。”

“必须从源头解决问题，一方面，提高打工者的收入，消除他们的集体焦虑感；建立有效的集体组织，让他们处于一个多维度的人际关系网中。”刘开明说

富士康高层告诉南方周末记者，在卢新跳楼以后，郭台铭曾专门致电李金明，要求资方配合工会，加大工会的监督力度，要把工会的独立性体现出来。富士康的行政与工会都直接同时发文，严格控制任何超时加班。郭台铭还请集团紧急调查，聘请海内外专家会诊集团员工的心理健康。

但在李金明看来，仅凭企业的力量是不够的。“所有的工作我们都可以做，但该怎么来解决这个量的问题呢？”李金明说。他希望，政府在提供生产便利的同时，还能提供生活的便利，社区功能日益完善。而学者们更希望政府提供对打工者权利的制度性关怀。

## Report S3—富士康“八连跳”自杀之谜

Source: *Southern Weekend* (南方周末)

Publication Date: 18 May 2010

Authors: Liu Zhiyi (刘志毅), Yang Jibin (杨继斌)

■编者按：全球最大代工厂富士康的员工在不到半年内，已发生“八连跳”系列自杀。在“六连跳”时，南方周末的实习生刘志毅以打工者身份潜伏进富士康28天，南方周末记者又正面接触大量富士康员工，多次访问富士康高层……

但这篇报道所揭示的，并非是人们想象中的“血汗工厂”的自杀内幕，而是中国部分地方产业工人的真实生存状态。

在富士康观澜园区的插针机流水线，人几乎被机器劫持了。富士康工人李祥庆说：“就站在机器前，‘罚站’8小时（一个班8小时），一直工作。站着的时候，有个东西掉了弯腰去捡，恨不得一直有东西掉，一直不用站起来。要是可以躺一分钟，那就是天大的享受。”

这些富士康工人每天上班，下班，睡觉，上班，下班，睡觉。——而这种钟表一样的生活，反过来压缩着他们社交的私人时间。即使像自杀员工卢新这样多才艺的“明星”人物，在富士康的社交圈，也仅限于同学和校友之中。

涂尔干在他的《自杀论》谈到，个体的社会关系越孤立、越疏离，便越容易自杀。“集体的力量，是最能遏制自杀的障碍之一。”

“我原来用的那台插针机伤过三个人。一个普工，一个全技员和我们线长。有两个都是在运行的时候去调机器，结果把手指扎了。不过也怪，本来是很难开的机器，在扎伤人之后，连续十几天都没出过问题，线长说这机器‘有鬼，吃血’。”富士康员工李祥庆说。

难以用统计解释的“八连跳”



心理学家称，富士康“八连跳”的自杀率仍低于全国平均自杀率。但一个年轻生命的非正常消逝，仍难以用冰冷的统计来概括和解释。

卢新从富士康龙华区VIP招待所6楼跳下，是在5月6日凌晨4点30分。这是富士康深圳厂区三个多月内发生的第七起跳楼。在“被追杀”的恐惧里挣扎了三天后，这名外向乐观的富士康2009级新干班工人，甚至来不及等待正从湖南赶往深圳的母亲和弟弟。

所有认识他的人都说他乐观、多才艺，2008年，他曾参加过湖南卫视的“快乐男声”。

“被追杀”的幻觉产生于五一期间。即使是和卢新关系最好的校友兼同事曾红领，也不知道幻觉背后的深层心理动因。5月9日上午，卢新的遗体在龙华殡仪馆火化。他残疾的父亲——为了供卢新上大学，2006年父亲在煤矿打工时腿被砸断——并未到场。

没有人知道是什么原因掀动了这系列自杀的多米诺骨牌。“但这肯定不会是最后一个。”5月10日中午，富士康集团媒体办公室主任刘坤说。

才过一天，刘坤即一语成谶。5月11日19点左右，富士康龙华园区的一线工人，24岁的河南许昌姑娘祝晨明，从租住在工厂附近的9楼跳下身亡。在此之前，其父母已陪在了她的身边。据富士康通报称，4月30日该女工已向工厂请了假，其自杀可能与情感纠纷有关。“生活中最不相同，甚至最矛盾的事件同样成为了自杀的借口。”自杀学研究的创始人涂尔干在一百年前说，“任何事件，都不是自杀的特定原因。”

尽管他们的自杀有各自的直接原因（具体因牵涉死者隐私，本文不予交代），但所有死者却有一个共同的身份：新生代打工者。他们人群构成，主要是指80后、90后。资料显示，这批人目前在农民工外出打工的1.5亿人里面占到60%，大约1个亿。刘坤提供的数据是，目前富士康的基层员工中，80、90后打工者，已经超过了85%。

死亡掠过的富士康园区，生活仍在精确地继续着。在距离卢新跳楼处不远的大道上，人一样高的车轮轰然碾过。银行、咖啡馆、食堂、商店对大雨中匆匆而过的青年们张着大门。在生产电脑主板的车间里，白色工作帽下一双双眼睛秀丽明澈，他们像往日

一样快速在主板上插进电阻、线圈。等到 17 点 30 分下班，刷卡机 依例给每个人一个 纽扣大小的笑脸标记。

在过去的 22 年里，富士康在台商郭台铭的领导下，以惊人的速度成长为世界工业史上 最庞大的工厂，目前在中国各城市共有 80 余万员工。因其独特的生产 模式，2009 年 年底，仅富士康龙华园区，这块深圳北部不到三平方公里的土地，已聚居 30 余万人， 其人口规模已相当于中国一个中小县城，如城中之城。这个 工业社区已很难用单纯的 “工厂” 来定义，因此，富士康科技集团中国总部行政经理李金明，亦被外媒称为 “ 郭台铭紫禁城里的市长” 。

卢新死后第二日，包括清华大学心理学系副主任樊富民教授、北京大学医学部精神研 究所前所长吕秋云教授等国内多名心理学专家空降深圳，会诊富士康。李金明告诉南 方周末记者，国内顶级心理学专家此行，是集团董事长郭台铭的安排。

在专家的分析里，卢新以及稍早的、同样跳楼身亡的他的湘潭大学校友刘志军和其他 四名死者（“八连跳” 中田玉和饶淑琴重伤），跳进了一个统计数据里。他们称，由 于时间仓促，自杀的原因还无数明确断定，“但可以肯定的是，富士康员工的自杀率， 是远远低于全国的自杀率的。” 2008 年，中国自杀率大约是每 10 万人中有 12 名自 杀者，而富士康的自杀率是每 10 万人大约有 2 名自杀者。

但一个年轻生命的非正常消逝，仍难以用冰冷的统计来概括和解释。

南方周末记者的调查发现，就工作强度、加班时间、薪酬福利而言，富士康远称不上 “血汗工厂”。在龙华街道富士康维稳综治办公室门口，每天都有数以千 计的打工者 排队应征，通过集合、形体查验、填表、照相、考试、身份证查验、体检、分发八个 程序后，即可成为富士康员工。高密度的自杀事件，并没有阻止更多 青年的涌入。在 “六连跳” 后的 4 月 13 日，便有超过 3500 人进入。即使排上七小时的队伍等候招工 ，他们中也仍有不少人谈笑风生，满眼期待。

而那八名自杀者中的多数，想必当年也曾以这样的方式，进入了富士康。

■链接

■2010 年上半年的富士康员工“八连跳”系列自杀事件：

- 2010 年 5 月 11 日，龙华厂区女工祝晨明从 9 楼出租屋跳楼身亡，24 岁。
- 2010 年 5 月 6 日，龙华厂区男工卢新从阳台纵身跳下身亡，24 岁。
- 2010 年 4 月 7 日，观澜樟阁村，富士康男员工身亡，22 岁。
- 2010 年 4 月 7 日，观澜厂区外宿舍，宁姓女员工坠楼身亡，18 岁。
- 2010 年 4 月 6 日，观澜 C8 栋宿舍女工饶淑琴坠楼，仍在医院治疗，18 岁。
- 2010 年 3 月 29 日，龙华厂区，一男性员工从宿舍楼上坠下，当场死亡，23 岁。
- 2010 年 3 月 17 日，富士康龙华园区，新进女员工田玉从 3 楼宿舍跳下，跌落在一楼受伤。
- 2010 年 1 月 23 日，凌晨 4 时许，富士康 19 岁员工马向前死亡。警方调查，马向前系“生前高坠死亡”。

■2010 年前的富士康员工死亡事件不完全统计：

- 2009 年 8 月 20 日 23 岁员工郑鑫崧在游泳池溺水身亡
- 2009 年 7 月 15 日 25 岁员工孙丹勇跳楼自杀
- 2008 年 3 月 16 日 28 岁员工李某猝死在出租屋内
- 2007 年 9 月 1 日 21 岁的刘兵辞工两小时后突然死亡
- 2007 年 6 月 18 日 一名侯姓女工在厕所上吊自杀碎片一样活着

在每平方公里聚居了约 15 万人的狭小空间里，人和人却似碎片一样存在着。即使卢新这样的“明星”人物，在富士康的社交圈，也仅限于几个同学和校友之中。

卢新自杀的那个凌晨 4 点 30 分，李祥庆正和同事在富士康龙华园区 2 公里外的 H3 成品仓库度过夜班最难熬的一个小时。这个时候，他们通常坐在椅子上，双手不时使劲地“干洗”着脸，盯着前方一动不动。

李祥庆是 4 月 12 日进入富士康工作的。这是他第二次来富士康。2008 年 4 月，他第一次进入富士康打工。2009 年 7 月，觉得“在一个地方呆久了没意思”，出来了。大约 20 天后，湘潭大学机电专业的应届生卢新进入富士康工作。卢新的大学班主任汪洋回忆，毕业前，卢新也去考过公务员，没考上。后来找到了富士康的工作，他还认为这是上天眷顾他的幸运事。

从学历和阅历上看，卢新和李祥庆互为镜像。前者大学本科，后者中专毕业，前者已经自杀，后者常常念叨自杀。但他们互不认识。即使认识，也应该会粗口互称对方为“屌毛”。在厂房以及宿舍里，“屌毛”是除了第一人称外的全部人称代词。“屌毛”和“屌毛”之间很少有友谊。甚至，在马向前死后（死于 2010 年 1 月 23 日凌晨，警方认定死因为猝死），他宿舍的几个舍友，甚至不知道他的名字。

“每个人每天看到的，都是自己的影子。一样的工作服，一样的工作。”刘坤说。他认为，这是打工者不愿在同事中交朋友的原因。

在这样的孤立中，他们每天上班，下班，睡觉，上班，下班，睡觉。——而这种钟表一样的生活，反过来压缩着他们社交的私人时间。“老乡会”、“同学会”这样的“非正式组织”（李金明语）在富士康几乎是没的。“一旦工作上、生活上有了压力，便没有任何人可以倾诉和分担。”李金明说。

这是一个奇怪的场景。在每平方公里聚居了约 15 万人的狭小空间里，人和人却似碎片一样存在着。即使卢新这样的“明星”人物（2009 年底的富士康新干班才艺大赛中，他凭演唱《你的样子》获得了第二名），在富士康的社交圈，也仅限于同学和校友之中。

宿舍里一个新的“屌毛”来了，没有任何欢迎仪式。等到某天下班，发现 10 个人一间的宿舍空了一个铺位，才知道一个“屌毛”走了。“一个个都是熟悉的陌生人。”李金明说。

涂尔干在他的《自杀论》谈到，个体的社会关系越孤立、越疏离，便越容易自杀。“集体的力量，是最能遏制自杀的障碍之一。”

或许恰是在这种孤立里，性或者爱情对于一个个体心灵慰藉的重要性，因此而被放大（有人便因为感情跳楼）。有女生的车间就是好车间，有女生的楼层就是好楼层。

“我真想去跳楼了。”李祥庆用刚发的劳保鞋踹着金属柜子。刚进富士康，女友便和他分手了。手机QQ上的责骂几乎让他哭了出来。外边的机器还在轰隆隆地运转，周遭的一切也都若无其事。那几天里，李祥庆甚至看见街上走在一起的情侣就烦。

4月21日中午，他一反常态强硬地向“胖子”（管理他的线长）请了半天假，去车站送女友回家。他也没想到这一切这么快，女友原本还可以呆上半天。他身上都没有足够的钱可以买点吃的给她，反倒还从她那里拿了一点回程的路费，“太对不起她了，真的很难受，本来让她拿走的钱她也没拿”。

在这样的人口密度里，谈恋爱也是拮据的。“厂区里找不到地方谈恋爱。”富士康工会副主席陈宏方说。而在整个龙华厂区和观澜厂区周围，也并无电影院以及市政公园。据曾红领回忆，卢新在去年8月进富士康以来，也尚未恋爱。尽管他多才多艺，并且也经常和曾红领聊起爱情。

黑网吧可以从另一个途径解决这些青年人的“荷尔蒙”冲动。它们隐藏在“餐馆”或者其他名目的招牌下。有专人负责拉客，拉客的会把他们安排到具体的电脑上，这里有不少“毛片”。在发工资之前，一些工友有时候也在这里轻微地“解决一下问题”。但是他们说“看得难受，不如真的去找女的”。

如果工资发了，可以去大水坑。在观澜宿舍区旁，从一个插着面破旧国旗的小路口走进去，小姐们坐在一栋旧楼下的长凳上。一次八十元到九十元的价格，应该也是专为打工仔们设定的。

但不管是性还是爱情，都会撞上“钱”这堵冰冷的墙。

“没钱没车没房”，“没有钱你会爱我吗，这么简单的一句话”。李祥庆唱着不知从哪里学来的歌曲。

他又操着湖北口音说，“妈的，老子十年之后攒够钱了开车到她家去！开真的宝马，反正不是仓库的那种。”

李祥庆所说的“仓库的那种”，指的是仓库常见的油压车。它们大多有毛病，状况最好的那台，被他称为“宝马”，其它的，则只能算作“丰田”“吉利”和“奥拓”。

“嗜血的插针机”

红色绝对是这里“大凶”的颜色。把红单发给员工，是开除，永不叙用；而把红单贴上货箱，这一整板的货便须打回返工。当然，最重要的是，它意味着受伤或死亡。

钱，是卢新和李祥庆的共同之“痒”。卢新家里因为父亲受伤和自己上学，至今还欠了十余万债务。曾红领记得卢新从第一个月 1800 元的工资中，拿了 1500 寄给家里，自己身上只留了 300 块钱。而钱对于李祥庆，则意味着他每日念叨的爱情。

是以，钱也成了他们申请加班的动力。这是一个悖论：中国的工人们主动向资本家要求加班。甚至要通过讨好线长、组长来实现这一点。

相对于其他岗位，H3 仓库里的工作轻松得有些无聊。现在，“宝马”成了李祥庆练拳的木桩人。他对着油压车的把手演练着无师自通的拳法。

F5 半成品仓库的办公桌上，有一个用矿泉水瓶子剪成的别致花盆。盛了水，养着一株不知名的小植物，一大一小两片叶子。这让堆满庞大长方体深色物体的仓库有了一点绿色。抽屉里有用了大半瓶的花露水，他们抹在太阳穴上用来提神以及驱蚊。

从南门走到北门，贯穿全厂，是 H3 仓库 4 月份新分来的员工每天的上班路线。沿路一幢幢厂房整齐敦实地竖立着，除了顶上用英文字母和数字组合的序号，几乎再没什么特质。榕树、椰树、棕榈树这些亚热带的树木夹在楼栋间，它们的苍翠蒙着尘灰。

即使最忙、最累的时候，他们也会表现得像一群疲倦的大孩子。每一个闲暇，他们都会开着“宝马”、“丰田”、“吉利”或者“奥拓”在空旷处“飙车”：站在车头，像骑机车一样，自己蹬地往前滑。——如果被保安发现，会记大过，但是他们乐此不疲。

红色绝对是这里“大凶”的颜色。把红单发给员工，是开除，永不叙用；而把红单贴上货箱，这一整板的货便须打回返工。当然，最重要的是，它意味着受伤和死亡。

“我原来用的那台插针机伤过三个人。一个普工，一个全技工和我们线长。有两个都是在运行的时候去调机器，结果把手指扎了。不过也怪，本来是很难开的机器，在扎伤人之后，连续十几天都没出过问题，线长说这机器‘有鬼，吃血’。”李祥庆说。

类似的魔幻故事在厂区流传。李祥庆原来在富士康观澜厂区是负责在塑胶板上插针的。要是有一个针眼偏了一点点，板上的孔就会比原有的大，如果出货后被 QA（品管）发现，整批都要打回重做。要是撞上某些时候手感不佳总是插不准，即使是女工，也会抄起身边的铜棒或钢棍对着机器乱捶一气。奇怪的是，打过以后，不管是机器还是自己，都顺起来了。

4月25日晚，H3成品仓库出了安全事故：堆高机轧了一个工人的脚，幸好穿了劳保鞋，未骨折，据说自己还能走路。

但伤者惹人羡慕。“我靠，工伤，多爽，有工资的。要是我至少休息一个月才回来做事。”安徽的王克柱说。

死亡的信息，似乎从来不给这个人群带来任何影响。“富士康又死人。”李祥庆一边拍着大腿，一边看着手机新闻逐字念出来。“富士康好出名的，又出名了，你知道‘六连跳’吗？”

即使卢新，曾红领回忆，当时卢也觉得自杀者离他很远，谈起“六连跳”，卢新觉得“他们很傻”，“自己不会去做这样的傻事”。

卢新是大学新干，是坐办公室的，但普工们面对的是高温、噪音等岗位。尽管能拿到相应的补贴，但是新进的普工，都盼望着能分到一个安全的岗位。可这很大程度上靠运气。运气差了，岗位不满意，便辞职或自离，重新招工进来，再赌一把。

在观澜的插针机流水线，人几乎被机器劫持了。曾在那里工作的李祥庆说：“就站在机器前，‘罚站’8小时（一个班8小时），一直工作。站着的时候，有个东西掉了弯腰去捡，恨不得一直有东西掉，一直不用站起来。要是可以躺一分钟，那就是天大

的享受。”“广西佬”李加龙的工牌里照片下方，放了一朵用一毛钱折成的花，他说是“捡到的”。工牌边挂着指甲钳和一个小塑料盒，里面是两个工作时用的耳塞，一个辞工走的人送给他的。他在碎料的岗位上。如果没有这两个桔红色的软塑胶塞子，一个班下来，巨大的噪音，能让人的手脚不听使唤。

而等到刚出厂门，打火机几乎同时作响，男工们不约而同点起烟，到这里，他们在机器前的一天的工作才算正式结束。

### 不知所措的青春

自杀者卢新在日记中说：现在我的人生第一步就走错了，很迷惘……

即使亲近如曾红领也不知道是什么让乐观、外向的卢新突然精神异常。

目前所能找到的、卢新最后的日记，发布于2009年10月26日17点35分。这篇载于“校内网”其个人主页上的日志，清晰记录这个喜欢哈士奇、喜欢林志玲的湘潭青年，对于前途的不知所措：

“放弃了最喜欢的公共职业：支持西部建设，为了钱，来到了公司，结果阴差阳错没进研发，来到制造，钱还算多，但在浪费生命和前途……哎，真的很后悔……现在我的人生第一步就走错了，很迷惘……”

在卢新自己创作的歌词里，他回忆起儿时的岁月：“风轻轻的吹过，掠过一丝羞涩，儿时的往事黯然失色。”

当躺在仓库的栈板上时，李祥庆也会讲起他的童年，找食物去野炊，做孩子王，在洞里吃自己烤的花生，偷玉米烤着吃……

在一些社会学家、心理学家的眼里，生于1985后的卢新、李祥庆这样的新生代打工者，具备这样的性格特征：更倾向于个人主义，更习惯于城市的消费文化，经济负担较轻。与第一代打工者相比，新生代农民工的工作和生活条件有所改善，但是他们却经历着更加显著的城乡分裂，更大的收入不平等，以及更深刻的社会排斥。



或许这是困于此种际遇的一种无意识表达，中国的新生代打工者在这个夏天前所未有地迷恋上死亡。5月4日，三名20岁上下的少年，相约在台州市的一处街心花园服毒，其中两人死亡。

而在管理者看来——李金明早在1993年便来大陆，他管理过两代打工者——第一代农民工更勤快，更容易满足，而新生代这些孩子，“急功近利了一些”。李金明跟南方周末记者讲述，他们这一代人，是如何从台湾农村，一步步成长为顶级的管理者。

沿着东环二路富士康龙华园区向东走去，每天都有六七个算命的蹲在路边。一个河北口音的算命师父告诉记者，来照顾他们生意的，多是富士康的青年。他们花上10块钱，让他们在自己手心寻找命运的脉络，“每天都有二三十个人”。

从南大门出来，向佳润宿舍方向走去，有一个彩票出售点。这里总是人潮汹涌，尽管没有传出过谁发了横财的消息。5月6日晚，彩票点已经下班，一员工还在一直看着那挂出来的“下班，停止销售”的牌子。

从中心花坛的喷水池往北走去，左手边有一家书店，面积不大但分类清晰，五脏俱全。书店总是有一个女工蹲在MBA数学考试的复习书边一直演算。“我只是看看，”她有些害羞，“考上了学历可以高一点啊。”本子上的一列列数字远看并不清楚。但页眉上蓝字印刷的“知识改变命运”分外鲜明。

沿着出龙华区富士康南大门的路，一直往南，大约一公里，有一个小广场。这里出售着富士康生产的各式高档手机。他们经常过来看，“这都是我们厂造的啊。”但是自己使用的，却总是四五百块钱的山寨版。

从观澜厂区的大门出来，过天桥一直往前走，有一个商场。商场四楼，有一元钱一首的K歌房和五元钱一局台球。这是年轻的打工者打发夜晚的地方。

从“红太阳歌舞厅”出来，下坡，穿过两栋住宅楼，是一个溜冰场。警察们从打工者队伍中揪出了几个赤膊的人（听说身上有摇头丸）带走。随后，震耳欲聋的音乐再次响起。

而现在，以及以后的日子呢？

河北的高海伟用一个捡到的椰子挖成了保龄球。作为一个河北人，他说他的“根”在北京，哪怕是六环外，哪怕是顺义，通县。他哥就在顺义买了房子，有个家。

王克柱说只有知识水平高才能做更多的工作，他给自己报了一个英语培训班。但很快就放弃了，“没办法，听都听不懂”。

李祥庆的梦想是赚钱、发财，不用愁女人的事情：“我的女人？跟着我走啊，我讨饭的时候在旁边看着，给你个馒头。”

而自杀者卢新，他曾经希望成为一个歌手，后来希望成为一个公务员。但5月2日开始，他变得情绪异常。平日不喜喝酒的他忽然要求曾红领他们一起喝酒。他告诉曾红领，他觉得“工作压力太大了”，“睡不好”。

到5月5日晚10点，他开始显得前所未有的焦躁。他一再念叨着自己“不够孝顺，给父母的钱太少”、“自己活不过当晚”。他开始恐惧整个世界。晚上11点多，富士康公司将卢新安置到其台籍主管所住的招待所里。

5月5日上午，他甚至给母亲电话说没事，不用过来。——稍早一些时候，曾红领他们已经将卢新的精神异常状况告诉了他的亲属。

5月6日凌晨4点30分，正在火车上的母亲和弟弟大约4小时后便会到达深圳照看他。但卢新没有等到这一刻。在床上几个小时的辗转反侧后，卢新从朋友的身边爬起。他说想看看窗外的风景。那时朋友就站在他的身边。几秒钟之后，他就从阳台上跳了下去。

他最好的朋友王军想抓住他，却只抓到了白色、富士康统一发放的、短袖工装的衣袖。

（因受访者请求，王军、王克柱为化名）

## **Report S4—The Fate of a Generation of Workers: Foxconn Undercover Fully Translated**

*Source: Engadget (USA)*

*Publication Date: 19 May 2010*

*Author: Liu Zhiyi*

*Translation: Richard Lai*

*Machine translations are still years or even decades away from perfection, so rather than sending you to an auto-translated page, we now present -- with exclusive permission from Southern Weekend -- a human translation of this damning article on Foxconn by undercover reporter Liu Zhiyi.*

I know of two groups of young people.

One group consists of university students like myself, who live in ivory towers and kept company by libraries and lake views. The other group works alongside steel machineries and large containers, all inside a factory of high-precision manufacturing environment. These guys always address their seniors as "laoban" (boss), and call their own colleagues -- regardless of familiarity -- the rude "diaomao" (pubic hair) in loud.

After going undercover in Foxconn for 28 days, I came back out. I've been trying to tie the two pictures together. But it's very difficult. Even with people living in these two places sharing the same age, the same youth dream.

My undercover was part of Southern Weekend's investigation on the then six Foxconn suicides. We soon found out that most of Southern Weekend's reporters were rejected due to age -- Foxconn only recruits people around the age of 20. In comparison, being just under 23 years old, I was quickly brought into Foxconn.

The 28-day undercover work made a strong impact on me. It wasn't about finding out what they died for, but rather to learn how they lived.

Part one

Their most sumptuous day is the 10th each month -- pay day. That day, all the ATMs and themed restaurants are packed with long lines, and consequently the ATMs are often drawn empty. The salary's made up of the ¥900 (\$132) local minimum wage and the variable overtime pay.

Each employee would sign a "voluntary overtime affidavit," in order to waive the 36-hour legal limit on your monthly overtime hours. This isn't a bad thing, though, as many workers think that only factories that offer more overtime are "good factories," because "without overtime, you can hardly make a living." For the workers desperate for making money, overtime is like "a pain that can breathe:" without it, the days without money make them "suffocate;" with it, the restless work would only add more "pain" to the body, thus aging quicker. Most of the time they staunchly choose the latter, but even the right to choose such isn't available to all. Only those with the seniors' "trust," with good connections, or those in key positions, can often get to work overtime.

So, the "May 1st" [Labour Day] festival is a concern for some, because it's "hard to boil through" the days when you spend money without making any. That day, workers would rather not celebrate any festival, and wish for more overtime pay; the reality is they can't [choose], so might as well just have a lie-in.

In front of a newly-opened phone shop, the sales assistant flashed an iPhone to the Foxconn employees, with everyone focused on his every "cool" gesture, as if it was something new. But actually, Foxconn's manufacturing covers almost every well-known brands' gadgets, including the iPhone and the iPad, so every part of this "new" device would've come from the hands of these workers, except these guys had never thought of owning the final product. And now, this whole thing is right in front of their eyes with a "smashing price of ¥2,198 (\$322)" - - just above their monthly pay. This is an expensive device, so instead they discussed how to spend some hundred yuan on a shanzhai handset.

When chatting with them, I often struggled to respond, as I felt I was ridiculously fortunate. They actually envied those who could take a leave due to work injury, while casually joking about how their station's been toxicated. When talking about their colleagues' suicidal jumps, there was often a surprisingly calm reaction, and sometimes even a banter would be made about it, as if they were all outsiders.

I'm happy to see them as a bunch of optimistic and determined people, and I wish they really had nothing to do with these [suicides]. But whatever way you look at this, it's inevitably sad. I even imagine possessing a power that can change everything, but this is like Wang Kezhu saying "I wish someone could give him [sic] a kick for a five minute break" during our night shift -- so naïve, and it's never going to happen.

## Part two

If you ask the workers what their dream is, you'll often get the same answer: start a business, make money, get rich, and then you can do whatever you want. In the warehouse, they humorously name their hydraulic trolleys "BMW's." They, of course, would rather own actual BMW's, or at least "BMW" kind of wealth.

They often dream, but also repeatedly tearing apart their dreams, like a miserable painter who keeps tearing up his or her drafts, "if we keep working like this, we might as well quit dreaming for the rest of our lives." They manufacture the world's top electronic products, yet gathering their own fortune at the slowest possible pace. The office's guest network account has a password that ends with "888" -- like many businessmen, they love this number, and they worship its phonetic equivalence ["rich"]. Little did they know that it's their own hands protecting the country's "8," yet their overtime hours, lottery tickets, and even horse racing bets, struggle to find the "8" that belongs to themselves.

The hard-working Wang Kezhu moaned that the salary was too low, but when he tried to apply for courses outside he "couldn't understand a word," so he gave up. He said without much knowledge, he could only get whatever job that came first, and that this was fate. Sometimes he'd say he's got a big headache, but would quickly become alive again. When pulling trolleys he'd often run, as if the 24 boxes of goods weigh sod all. Every day he'd climb up two to three-meter tall box stacks to check inventory, and would squeeze into small gaps to check the labels. I asked him why push so hard, but he never answered, until one morning I saw him stopping in front of a pillar, and suddenly shouted "help!" He probably didn't know what he'd just blurted out, either, but I heard the real souls. They're used to putting in so much effort to make a change, until that effort became a struggle, and that they weren't even sure if they had the power to break through the cocoon.

In the factory area, those neatly planned tall buildings had nothing special apart from their alphanumeric codes on the top. The machines, boxes and even the uniformed workers inside all bear the same pattern. One morning, on my way to work I saw two heads poking out of the buildings, just gazing at the pedestrians. Too far away, couldn't see their expressions, nor could I hear them, just two black dots at the window. If stood in their positions, the road's no doubt just full of moving black dots, so insignificant in comparison to the large white buildings.

### Part three

This factory's workers rule the world's finest gadgets' assembly lines with their two hands, and continuously break trading records that buzz the world, holding the Chinese export champion title for seven years non-stop. But it seems like while they're controlling the machines, the machines also have them dominated: the parts gradually come together as they move up the assembly line; at the same time, the workers' pure and only youth also disappear into the rhythmic machineries.

After using the toilet at 4am, I stuck my ear on the workshop corridor wall, and listened to the machines rumbling steadily from all four directions -- this is the factory's heartbeat. The employees work, walk and eat at this beat, so no wonder I was walking so fast, eating so quickly without anyone hurrying me, even though it didn't feel good. You're like a component that's entered the assembly line, just following the rhythm, belonging to that heartbeat at 4am, no way to escape.

Shenzhen, a once small border town that leaped to one of Pearl River Delta's busiest cities, hides a group of anxious young people behind row upon row of tall buildings. In 2009, Times magazine nominated "The Chinese Worker" as "Person of the Year," praising its "determined vision shone on the future of mankind,"\* but this so-called "determination" is needed to resist being mechanized and eroded by capitalism. Can they really avoid such "determination?" When computers, phones, cars, and all other commercial products become the products of capitalism, sweat, youth, and even life, all these values are exhausted by capitalism as well.

This super factory that holds some 400,000 people isn't the "sweatshop" that most would imagine. It provides accommodation that reaches the scale of a medium-sized town, all smooth and orderly. Compared to others, the facilities here are well-equipped and superior,

with employee treatment meeting standard specifications. Thousands of people flock here each day just to find a place of their own, to find a dream that they'll probably never realize.

This isn't a factory's inside story, but the fate of a generation of workers.

(As requested by the interviewee, he's given "Wang Kezhu" as his alias in this article.)

\*The actual quote in the classic edition of Time is rather different, so we'll assume this was taken from the Chinese edition.

Update: Commenter SeeKo just dropped in links for a three-part Chinese TV news segment on the Foxconn incidents, all close-captioned.





# **Appendix 5: American News Articles from Table 2**

## **Article A1—An All Too Familiar Story: 9th Suicide Jump at Foxconn this Year**

*Source: Digital East Asia*

*Publication Date: 16 May 2010*

*Author: Nan Duan*

The string of tragic suicides at the Chinese manufacturing facilities of Taiwan's Foxconn Technology Group (part of Hon Hai Precision Industry Co. Ltd.) continues. At 10:50pm on May 14, Mr. Liang, a 21 year old male employee from Anhui province, jumped from the 7th floor of Fuhua dormitory, in Foxconn's Shenzhen Longhua production base (news link in Chinese here).

There was some initial speculation over the cause of the death, as police found a knife at the scene and 4 knife wounds on the victim. Shenzhen police has announced that they have ruled out foul play, and sees the knife wounds as self mutilation prior to suicide. However the victim's relatives understandably have some doubts over the death, and have told reporters they will push the police to investigate further.

As a reminder, Foxconn is a leading global manufacturer of electronics and computer products for a who's who of consumer tech companies – Apple Inc. (NASDAQ: AAPL), Sony Corporation ((ADR) NYSE: SNE), Hewlett-Packard Company (NYSE: HPQ), Amazon.com, Inc. (NASDAQ: AMZN), Nokia Corporation ((ADR) NYSE: NOK), Motorola, Inc. (NYSE: MOT), Nintendo Co., Ltd ((ADR) OTC: NTDOY), Microsoft Corporation (NASDAQ: MSFT), Dell Inc. (NASDAQ: DELL) and Cisco Systems Inc. (NASDAQ: CSCO) — and is notorious for its secrecy and alleged excessive labor practices.

### COMMENTARY:

I find this string of deaths shocking and tragic, and if anything, they should serve as a prime example of the deep social issues underneath China's rise. A detailed discussion of the various factors that caused this tragedy is outside the scope of this blog; however I would like to briefly share some thoughts.

Nanfang Zhoumo (Southern Weekend), one of China's most liberal and courageous newspapers (so much so that the government locked up their manager and editor-in-chief in 2004), has a series of articles (article #1 | #2 | #3) covering the Foxconn suicides (links in Chinese). After the incidents in April, a 23 year old Southern Weekend intern, Liu Zhiyi, went undercover to work at Foxconn for 28 days and wrote up his thoughts (most full-time journalists at Southern Weekend were too old to be hired by Foxconn, while Liu was a suitable candidate). In his own words, "the 28 days of working undercover has shocked me strongly. While I didn't uncover the truth behind why these employees chose death, I did come to understand how they were living."

Liu's account of life at Foxconn was incredibly depressing. 300,000 employees worked and lived on a 2 square kilometer patch of land, crammed with assembly lines and dormitories. Ten workers shared a dorm. Employees earned a starting wage of 900 RMB per month (US\$132), which was the legal minimum wage in Shenzhen; to earn more they needed to work over-time. Foxconn had workers sign documents stating that they were working over-time voluntarily, in which case the employees could circumvent the government regulation of 36 hours maximum of over-time per month. Liu believed that most employees favored this setup – they saw the companies that allowed them to work the most (and therefore earn the most) as the best employers.

Life outside of work was incredibly dull. The blue-collars, which came from all over China, seemed to struggle at forming real connections. Workers routinely could not remember all the names of the other dorm mates they lived with, which came and went quite frequently. The gender ratio meant that even for a talented star employee, such as Lu Xin (who died on May 6), who had won 2nd prize at a Foxconn internal talent show, relationships were a luxury. In its place were the cheap prostitutes a few blocks away, who offered blue collar prices (RMB90 per session – US\$13) to these young twenty year olds. Employees also loved spending their pay on lottery tickets.

To be fair, Foxconn has taken some measures to stop the suicides. A counseling hotline was set up; a RMB200 (US\$30) cash reward was given out to employees who reported co-workers who were having stress issues. Besides getting monks to perform a service in memory of the dead, Foxconn chairman Terry Gou had also invited top psychiatrists to come to Shenzhen. However, none of these measures were enough to stop the momentum of the suicides.

NOTE: Some of these psychiatrists went on the record to state to media that the suicide rate at Foxconn is not above national average – however, I see that as a misleading statement since it's not an apples-to-apples comparison – the national average suicide rate is in no way a measure of the national average suicide rate of physically healthy blue-collar workers, which would be the real benchmark.

So what are the root causes of these deaths? Why did so many young people see no hope in life? Some say it is the tragedy of the second generation migrant workers (the first generation migrant workers were those who went from rural areas into the cities in the '80s and '90s), who are the victims of explicit policies aimed at suppressing rural income and raising urban income. These migrant workers, compared to their fathers' generation who successfully made a living by leaving farming and going into the cities, earned far less in real terms, and having lost their farm land, could not turn back.

Others say it is the tragedy of the over-expansion of college education, which began in the late '90s and was widely seen as a measure to delay the employment problem of young adults. As a result, China currently produces an over-supply of college graduates ill-equipped with skills needed by society. And of course there is the corruption, social injustice, lack of social welfare etc.

In the end, perhaps there is no single cause to account for why these deaths happened. Maybe Foxconn's relentless drive for economies of scale was the straw that broke the camel's back – 300,000 employees crammed in a 2 square km production complex (3 times the population density of the most dense city in the world, Manila, which makes the figure almost impossible to believe) was mentally too much for these young people to bear. By now I can only hope that this chain of suicides ends here.

## Article A2—Reporter Uncovers Grim Working Conditions at Foxconn Plant

*Source: MacNN*

*Publication Date: 19 May 2010*

*Author: Unknown*

Suicide cluster still left unexplained

An undercover reporter from the Chinese liberal newspaper Southern Weekly has taken a closer look at the working conditions inside Foxconn's factory in Shenzhen, China. The investigation exposed grim working conditions in the factory that has seen nine suicide attempts, with seven confirmed deaths, in less than six months.

The paper sent amateur reporter Liu Zhi Yi to the plant to pose as a young worker and interview many of the employees. Liu suggests the company forces workers to work extremely long hours, only leaving enough extra time to sleep and eat. Many employees allegedly yearn to drop a component, as bending over might be the only chance to break from the constant standing on assembly lines.

Foxconn is said to require employees to sign an overtime waiver that shields the company from government scrutiny over the long hours without additional compensation. Workers are said to bring in monthly wages equivalent to just \$130 USD, well below what they would need to even buy one of the Apple products they help to create.

The report blames the recent surge in suicide attempts on Foxconn's working conditions, although it is unlikely that the workers would find a better alternative among other large factories in the region. Foxconn currently employs over 450,000 individuals, representing a group larger than the entire populations of many US cities. [via M.I.C Gadget]

## Article A3—Undercover Report From Foxconn’s Hell Factory

*Source: Gizmodo*

*Publication Date: 19 May 2010*

*Author: Chris Chang*

Chinese newspaper Southern Weekly sent 20-year-old reporter Liu Zhi Yi undercover in Foxconn's factory in Shenzhen, China. For 28 days, he experienced dreadful conditions that the factory's 400,000 employees endure, churning out iPods, iPads, and iPhones for Apple nonstop.

There's no doubt about it. The Foxconn suicides were caused by job stress. Within half a year, there have been nine suicides attempts with seven confirmed deaths at Foxconn's Shenzhen factory. In the last month, that number suddenly increased to 30 new suicide attempts, prompting the company to hire counselors and even Buddhist monks to free the souls of the suicidal from purgatory.

Foxconn is one of Apple's main manufacturer contractors. Thousands of Mac minis, iPods, iPhones and iPads are assembled daily in the Shenzhen factory, which runs 24/7. The company also produces some products for Intel, Dell, and HP, among others.

After the sixth suicide attempt in April, Southern Weekly—described by The New York Times as China's most influential liberal newspaper—sent a young reporter to sneak into the factory as a worker. At the same time, they sent a senior reporter to talk with Foxconn's executives. Their mission: To discover what's really going on in that factory, and find out the true reasons behind the suicides.

During his 28 days of investigation, Liu Zhi Yi was shocked to discover how the factory workers live in a sort of indentured servitude. They work all day long, stopping only to quickly eat or to sleep. They repeat the same routine again and again except on public holidays. Liu surmised that for many workers, the only escape from this cycle was to end their life.

Liu, a graduate student, was chosen because of his young age, since the factory only hires workers in their twenties. He was hired without issue. He signed only one special document: An overtime working agreement that says the company is not responsible for their long hours of working. According to Liu, this voluntary agreement overrules Chinese state regulation.

Foxconn workers only smile on the 10th of every month. That's the day when they get their salaries. That day, the ATM machines inside the factory are crowded with workers. Their monthly salaries start at 900 Chinese Yuan—about \$130.

Most of the workers had nothing to say about the popular Apple products they assemble. Most can't afford to own an Apple product. Their salaries can only buy them knockoff versions. While gadget aficionados worldwide discuss which iPhone they should buy, Foxconn workers debate the merits of differing knockoffs.

#### Tales from the factory

Liu had his most interesting chats with other workers during meals. Some told him that they envied workers who are sick. They get leave approvals and can get some rest. They also discussed about accidents in the factory: One worker got his finger cut-off during production. A few workers think that the machines are cursed. They believe it's dangerous for them to use the machines.

Another worker spoke about one of the favorite activities in the factory lines: He likes to drop stuff on the floor. Why? Workers spend achingly up to eight hours standing up, so they feel that squatting down to grab a fallen object is the most restful moment of their working day.

Workers call their warehouse trolleys their "BMW's". While pulling them around, stacked high with tons of goods, they imagine the real BMW they hope to one day own.

According to one worker, they can't live without these dreams. They dream of becoming rich one day. Some spend part of their salaries buying lottery tickets and betting on horse races.

There are other kind of dreams too. Liu says that some of them complain about their love lives. They just can't find lovers in that environment, so they have to find alternatives: In some internet cafes—hiding in restaurants outside the factory—young men can buy access to clandestine porn videos. However, the men say that the movies get boring after long periods of time.

Many wouldn't talk of the suicides. Others joked about it. One of the problems may be the lack of communication and friendships between work colleagues. Many workers don't even know the names of the people working next to them. In fact, according to Southern Weekly, the workers find difficult to relate to each other because they are always wearing identical work uniforms and performing the same tasks everyday. They have no interesting topics to chat about because all they do is work. If an employee becomes too stressed, they often have no one with which to share their feelings or to approach for help solving their problems.

Perhaps the 100 counselors hired by Foxconn will help. I wish they had movie theaters and shopping malls inside to help them relax. But, at the end, the most important thing is that Foxconn really needs to be more human and be concerned about the health—mental and physical—of their workers, instead of treating them like dogs.

Chris Chang originally posted about Liu Zhi Yi's Southern Weekly reports on M.I.C. Gadget, a site featuring life, gadgets, and subculture in China.



## **Article A4—The Shocking Conditions Inside China's Brutal Foxconn Factory**

*Source: Business Insider*

*Publication Date: 19 May 2010*

*Author: Chris Chang*

The Foxconn suicide mess all started from job stress. Within half a year, there were 9 suicide attempts, with 7 confirmed deaths in Foxconn's factory in Shenzhen, China.

In order to find out what's really going on in that factory, the Southern Weekly, described by *The New York Times* as China's most influential liberal newspaper, sent an amateur reporter to slip into Foxconn's factory to pose as a worker and the mission is to find out the truth about the suicide cluster.

The deaths of the workers in Foxconn have caused a lot of noise in the IT world. Macs, iPods, iPhones and iPads are all assembled in Foxconn's factory of China. And now, without any explanations, workers who are assembling these gadgets have gone crazy and some of them killed themselves. After the sixth suicide attempt happened in April, Southern Weekly's amateur reporter, Liu Zhi Yi, arranged to slip into Foxconn's factory ... while another senior reporter, Yang Ji Bin, conducted interviews with the senior management. Together, they have found out the real living conditions of Foxconn workers.

...

Every single one of the workers is living through life like a clock. They work, they get off, they go to sleep. And the next day, they repeat the same thing again. The reporter thinks that the only way to stop this cycle is for them to end their lives.

If you are wondering if they are happy for producing Apple products, the answer is No. They are only happy on the 10th of every month, that's the day when they get their salaries. On the 10th, the ATMs are fully crowded with workers and their salaries start from \$900 Chinese Yuan (about \$130).

There's one special agreement workers could choose to sign for before starting to work. The workers could sign a voluntary overtime working agreement so the factory is not responsible for their long hours of working. Anyway, they still have public holidays just like anyone.

Next, revolutionary and magical gadgets including iPhones and iPads are assembled by these workers and almost all devices in the market come from them. Most of the workers have no comments about the popular Apple products since they have never dreamed of owning the gadgets since their salaries are only enough to buy a knockoff version. While the gadget nerds are discussing how to spend their money on Apple's iProducts, these workers are discussing about how to spend their money on those cheap knockoff iPhones.

This Southern Weekly reporter also had some chats with the workers during meal times. Some of them told him that they admired those workers who got sick leave approvals so they could get some rest. They also discussed their jobs to know more about the dangers. When they talk about the suicide cluster in the factory, they are [nearly] speechless and some of them even made some jokes [about] those suicide attempts.

...

Moreover, the workers always dream of being rich someday. To fulfill this dream, they would use part of their salaries to buy lottery tickets. They also put their hopes on horse-racing gambling too.

Friendship is a big problem in the factory. There are some workers who do not know the names of their roommates even though they have worked together for a long time.

...

What's more, the workers are superstitious in some ways. Previously, there have been some accidents like a worker having his finger cut off during the production of devices. Now, a few workers in the factory think that the machines are cursed, so it's dangerous for them to use the machines for their jobs. Also, one of the workers said that he constantly wanted to drop something on the floor so he could bend down to pick it up while working. Due to the long hours standing (up to 8 hours), if he had the chance to lie or squat down on the floor, it would be the most enjoyable moment during the work day [so] he could get the chance to rest.

My Conclusion:

With over 400,000 workers in the Foxconn factory of China, it will be a mess if workers are mistreated badly. It's definitely a pity for them to carry out mass production of iProducts while not being able to afford one. Some of them even killed themselves from the working pressure and I wish Foxconn could produce a better working environment like providing shopping malls, cinemas or karaoke to entertain them.

Destress rooms are probably not enough to fix their stress and I'm afraid it's a silly idea since it may lead the stressed worker to kill someone else. Also, Foxconn needs to give more human rights to their workers and show more concern for them. Foxconn, please don't treat your workers like dogs.

If Foxconn does not solve the problem, there will be more suicides. The workers definitely need beer, romance, and slightly higher pay. To put it simply, just make them happy. Let's hope we don't see a 10th jump... [Southern Weekly]

Chris Chang writes for M.I.C Gadgets, where this article was originally published. It is reprinted here with permission.

## Article A5—Bleak Foxconn Factory Conditions Exposed by Undercover Intern

*Source: Switched*

*Publication Date: 20 May 2010*

*Author: Amar Toor*

If you ever find yourself frustrated while making photocopies or fetching coffee as a summer intern, take a moment and consider how much worse it could be: you could be an intern at Chinese news site Southern Weekend, where you could be sent on an undercover, month-long assignment in China's suicide-prone Foxconn factory (which is responsible for producing iPhone prototypes).

That's exactly where intern Liu Zhiyi was stationed this April, as part of an undercover assignment to report on what factors may be at work behind the Shenzhen factory's eerily high suicide rate. As *Engadget* reports, the article doesn't focus as much on Foxconn's managerial infrastructure, as it does on the ways in which factory bosses manipulate workers into working endless hours. Because of Shenzhen's miniscule minimum wage, any job that allows employees to earn extra via overtime is automatically perceived as a good position, allowing bosses to squeeze every ounce of work they can out of their workers at minimal cost. As Zhiyi reports, the intern soon realized that the mission "wasn't about finding out what they died for, but rather to learn how they lived."

The portrait that Zhiyi paints is chillingly bleak, pressure-packed and full of stress. If your physical or mental condition begins to suffer, you have virtually no one to confide in, thanks to the hive-mind mentality that pervades the facility. As Zhiyi says, even when workers were "talking about their colleagues' suicide jumps, there was a surprisingly calm reaction, and sometimes even a banter would be made about it, as if they were all outsiders." Before signing up to work, each employee signs a form that waives the 36-hour legal limit on monthly overtime hours, allowing, theoretically, them to gain more. In reality, however, today's Foxconn employees are earning the modern-day equivalent of what a Chinese migrant worker would've earned in the 1980s.

Since the report (full translation here) was published, Foxconn has reportedly set up support lines and counseling classes for its workers. But that's unlikely to mitigate the fundamental culture of employer exploitation and blind employee conformity that's at the root of Foxconn's problems. As long as workers continue to hold on to their aspirations to, as Zhiyi says, "start a business, make money and get rich" -- and as long as they see Foxconn as the only way to realize those dreams -- this vicious cycle will probably churn forward. And Foxconn's coffers will continue to fill up. [From: Engadget and Southern Weekend]

Tags: apple, china, conformity, exploitation, factory, foxconn, iphone, Shenzhen, Suicide, top, wages, workers

## **Article A6—Suicides, Beatings and Misery: Working life at Foxconn Under Scrutiny**

*Source: CNET Asia*

*Publication Date: 21 May 2010*

*Author: Steven Millward*

Today, news of an incident in which security guards at Foxconn--makers of Apple's iPhone and iPad, as well as many Dell, HP, Sony, Nintendo, Microsoft and Cisco products--beat several factory workers, can be added to the murky stream of bad news emanating from its mainland China factories. Most grim and tragic of all are the, to date, nine suicides of young workers at their dormitories on Foxconn grounds.

As can be seen in the video (at the bottom of this post) from a local TV station, three security guards at Foxconn's Beijing plant began to get very physical with a few young factory floor workers out in the yard. Then about 10 more guards joined in, and one young lad got a pretty vicious beating.

It's not clear what the fracas was all about, but the mobile video coverage is another insight into the tough working conditions at the company's massive factories.

Undercover

Earlier today, in another new development, an English translation of an undercover report by Southern Weekend newspaper was published, in which one journalist got a job as a Foxconn assembly line worker at the massive Shenzhen facility. Engadget has the exclusive translation, along with a few photos (or head straight to the story in Chinese over at Southern Weekend).

Interestingly, many of the workers are phlegmatic about the hideous amount of overtime that is semi-forced upon them by Foxconn: Since the 900 yuan bare wage is so low, it is actually considered desirable to be able to make more money at a factory (other manufacturing companies behave just like Foxconn) which has overtime work. As for the suicides, some of the workers interviewed by the undercover reporter are pretty unperturbed, saying it's just symptomatic of a large group of youngsters away from home and cooped up together, and that such spates of suicides have occurred at universities as well.

Under a shadow

Such is the gloom and wretchedness now attached to Foxconn's name--and perhaps hanging in the air at its plants--that management this week brought in 100 counselors and 30 Buddhist monks to "release the souls" of the deceased youngsters who had leapt to their own deaths, and to "prevent such accidents" in future.

Yes, the official Foxconn line seems to be that these suicides--both the attempted and carried out ones--are accidents.

Here's the video of today's incident of security guard brutality, recorded from a local Chinese news station:

## Article A7—Another Death at Electronics Supplier in China

*Source: NY Times*

*Publication Date: 21 May 2010*

*Author: David Barboza*

SHANGHAI — For the eighth time this year, a worker has apparently committed suicide at a factory in China operated by Foxconn Technology, the world's biggest contract electronics maker and a major supplier to Apple, Dell, Hewlett-Packard and other companies.

The worker, a 21-year-old man named Nan Gang, jumped from a four-story factory after leaving work at 4 a.m. Friday, Xinhua, the official Chinese news agency, reported. Two other Foxconn workers have survived suicide attempts, but have suffered serious injuries.

No one has been able to explain what is happening at Foxconn. But the events are again raising questions about the harsh regimens used by Chinese factories to produce a growing share of the world's goods.

Labor rights groups have called some of the deaths suspicious and have asked for an independent investigation of the two Foxconn factory sites, which together employ about 420,000 workers in Shenzhen, China.

A spokesman for Foxconn, a unit of Hon Hai Precision Industry of Taiwan, could not be reached Friday. But the company recently said it had hired counselors, was planning to bring in monks and had set up a help line.

Representatives of Apple, Dell and H.P. also could not be reached for comment. But all three companies have long said that their factory suppliers abide by international labor standards.

The Shenzhen police said they were investigating the deaths at Foxconn. The 10 workers who died or were injured this year were ages 18 to 24. Six were male and four female, and most were migrant workers who had moved to southern China in search of jobs.

According to 1999 data compiled by the World Health Organization, China has a suicide rate of about 14 deaths per 100,000 people. That figure suggests that the rate at Foxconn is not



unusually high. But the company has said that in previous years, there were only one or two suicides a year at its Shenzhen factories.

In an interview a few weeks ago, Liu Kun, a Foxconn spokesman in Shenzhen, said most of the victims either had been severely depressed or had serious personal problems. He said there was no evidence the deaths were work-related.

The company has also rejected suggestions that working conditions are poor at its Shenzhen factories.

Foxconn managers say they recently built modern dormitories, improved food service and even installed recreational facilities, including swimming pools, to make workers' lives more pleasant.

For years, the Chinese state-run media have published articles saying that working conditions were harsh at Foxconn factories, with extraordinarily long hours, crowded dormitories, strict enforcement of discipline on the assembly lines and heavy fines for minor work infractions.

Just last week, a Chinese newspaper, Southern Weekly, published an article co-written by an intern who said he had recently conducted an undercover investigation into Foxconn by working at one of the Shenzhen factories for 28 days this year.

The article called Foxconn a "typical" Chinese factory, with much better facilities than many small and medium-size factories. But it also said the employees were forced to work long periods standing, sometimes for eight hours nonstop.

Last year, a 25-year-old worker named Sun Danyong committed suicide after Foxconn security personnel questioned him about whether he was to blame for a missing iPhone prototype. Shortly after he was questioned, Mr. Sun jumped from the 12th floor of an apartment building and died. He had complained to friends that the security personnel had beaten and humiliated him.

The company said Mr. Sun had not been beaten but later said it had disciplined its security staff.

China Labor Watch, a human rights group based in New York, said that because of the suicides, it recently surveyed worker attitudes about conditions at Foxconn in Shenzhen and reported that many workers complained of the pressures they were under.

“We are extremely tired, with tremendous pressure,” the group quoted one worker as saying. “We finish one step in every seven seconds, which requires us to concentrate and keep working and working. We work faster even than the machines.”

Bao Beibei contributed research.

## **Article A8—10th Suicide in 2010 at Foxconn; Incidents Finally Begin to Gain Wider Media Coverage**

*Source: Digital East Asia*

*Publication Date: 22 May 2010*

*Author: Nan Duan*

Hon Hai Precision Industry Co. Ltd.) TPE: 2317). As Xinhua news agency reports (article reprinted on Sina, link in Chinese), Mr. Nan Gang, 21 years old, from Hunan province, jumped from a dormitory building around 4:50am on May 21st.

According to Mr. Nan Huan, also from Hunan (appears to be not related to Mr. Nan Gang), Mr. Nan Gang was a logistics employee at Foxconn and earned between RMB 1,000 to 2,000 a month (US\$ 147-294). On the night of May 20, he said his phone had been stolen and he was short on cash. He was feeling low and said he wouldn't be spending the night at the dormitory.

Mr. Nan Gang's colleagues said he was quite open but had a short temper. His colleagues were alarmed at his behavior a few days before his suicide, and even on the previous day his supervisor had taken him to the counseling services. However it was not enough to prevent the incident.

It seems Foxconn has a suicide epidemic at its production base in Shenzhen. It has taken a string of measures, such as setting up more counseling services, a hotline, and even monetary rewards for workers who alert management about their peers, but it is arguable whether these measures address the root causes. Engadget has published a complete translation of the Southern Weekend article, which I discussed in my previous post, and from the perspective of that article, the lack of any meaningful social structure is a big part of the root cause. These 300,000 young workers live together, but they are alone and lack real relationships. In such an environment, it is very easy to develop severe mental problems when working long hours and under stress.

On another note, it is at least encouraging that the incidents are gaining media coverage globally. There continues to be an ongoing discussion in the Chinese media, and there has

been no signs yet of any efforts by any government organization to censor the subject (it is quite typical for local governments to push for the censoring of such “un-harmonious” news, usually when their interests are directly or indirectly involved, and the argument for censorship is usually to stop copycat behavior). Both Gizmodo and Engadget have been running articles, and traditional news outlets such as Reuters are also carrying the news. Hopefully this will push Foxconn’s major clients, such as Apple Inc. (NASDAQ: AAPL) and Sony Corporation ((ADR) NYSE: SNE), to start their own investigations.

## Article A9—No Simple Solution to Foxconn Suicides

*Source: PCWorld*

*Publication Date: 25 May 2010*

*Author: Jared Newman*

Two recent Foxconn worker suicides, the ninth and 10th this year, present a harsh reality to the Chinese electronics manufacturer and its American tech partners, including Apple, Dell, and HP: fixing the problem will be difficult, if not impossible.

The deaths of 19-year-old Li Hai and a 21-year-old worker three days earlier, as reported by the Associated Press, shows an ugly side to the consumer electronics industry. Groups like China Labor Watch lay blame on inhumane working conditions at the factory. Foxconn says it will improve living standards for its employees by hiring psychiatrists, monks, and entertainers, *The New York Times* reports. But neither a band-aid factory measure or a good dose of outrage will fix the factory's culture.

First, consider that the number of suicides is only perceived as high. The employee suicide rate at Foxconn is higher than ever this year at 10 out of an estimated 300,000 employees (says AP) or 420,000 employees (says the Times). That's still lower than China's annual suicide rate of 14 out of 100,000 people, reported by the World Health Organization, and is on par with average statistics for people of university age in China, says *The Telegraph*.

Even if there were no suicides, Foxconn would still have a culture problem, as seen by an undercover account of life at Foxconn, published in Chinese newspaper Southern Weekend and translated at Engadget. The reporter, Liu Zhiyi, doesn't decry the long working hours as atrocious; he actually praises them as a way to make more money. Nor does he cite any human rights abuses. But what Zhiyi notices is that workers enter the factory intending to save up and start their own business, or go to college. Those dreams become impossible to achieve amidst the long hours and low pay, and the revelation is devastating.

What's the solution, then? Pay higher wages? Maybe, but it's low costs that attract American companies to begin with, and who's to say that a higher wage would be enough to help workers plan an exit from factory life? Besides, Foxconn's net profits have been up and down, puncturing the argument that company's being too greedy. Foxconn can keep trying its band-

aid measures and human rights groups can keep decrying what happens at the factory, but neither effort is enough.

## Article A10—Chinese Factory Under Scrutiny As Suicides Mount

*Source: Time World*

*Publication Date: 26 May 2010*

*Author: Austin Ramzy*

The massive Foxconn factory in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen is known for assembling famous electronic goods like Apple's iPhone and iPad. But in recent months it has gained a darker image, as a place where distraught workers regularly throw themselves to their deaths. The latest fatality came on Tuesday morning, when a 19-year-old employee died in a fall in the company's Shenzhen compound, according to the state-run Xinhua news service. He was the ninth worker this year to have died in a fall from factory buildings on Foxconn's properties in Shenzhen; two have survived suicide attempts, according to state-media reports. Another teenager, who the company revealed this month died after jumping from a company building in Hebei province in January, brings the total employee death toll from falls to 10 this year.

The string of deaths has drawn attention to the labor practices of a highly successful Fortune 500 company that has 420,000 workers on its payroll in Shenzhen alone. Two dozen activists protested outside the company's Hong Kong offices on Tuesday, calling on Foxconn to improve working conditions and raise wages. The Taiwan-owned company, which is an arm of the Hon Hai Group, has defended the treatment of its workers. "A lot of things cannot be said at this point, but we are quietly doing our job," CEO Terry Gou told a business forum on Monday. With over 900,000 employees globally in the Hon Hai Group, Gou acknowledged the difficulties of employee management. "But," he said, "we are confident we will get things under control shortly." (See portraits of Chinese workers.)

Working conditions at Foxconn's factories have been under scrutiny for years. The attention was heightened in 2009 when 25-year-old employee Sun Danyong, who had been accused by management of losing an iPhone prototype, jumped to his death from his apartment in Shenzhen. Chinese press reports said Sun, who grew up in a poor village in Yunnan province and attended the top-rated Harbin Institute of Technology, might have been physically abused by company security guards searching for the missing device.

Like Sun, the Foxconn workers who died this year have all been young, ranging in age from 18 to 24. The cases all differ, but there are common themes. "They feel a sense of pressure — pressure to make more money, pressure to work harder, pressure from family or difficulties in personal relationships," says Geoffrey Crothall, an editor for the China Labour Bulletin, a Hong Kong-based workers rights' group. Experts say suicides can happen in clusters, with people in a group influenced by earlier incidents. (See pictures of China's internal migrants.)

The dead have all been migrant workers, and for many Foxconn was their first job. The company pays most of its assembly-line workers in Shenzhen the city's minimum wage of \$130 a month, and many work significant overtime hours in order to maximize their incomes. "The work [at Foxconn] is long, monotonous and boring," says Liu Kaiming, a labor researcher and executive director of the Shenzhen-based Institute of Contemporary Observation. "The speed is very fast and you can't slow down, for 10 hours a day at the minimum. You can see how someone could easily become numb and turn into a machine."

After hours, many workers live in on-site dormitories, where heavy staff turnover makes long-lasting personal connections impossible. That combination — long workdays and a minimal social safety net — leaves vulnerable young workers with few places to turn, says Liu. "Foxconn has 420,000 people; in the U.S. that would be a big city. Even in China that would be a big city, but it's a city without any families. Everyone is working. They live in a dormitory for seven months and don't know their own roommates' names." (Read about the Chinese worker.)

In 1999, the most recent year for which numbers are available, China reported its national suicide rate was 13 men and 14.8 women out of every 100,000 people. That would put the suicide rate at Foxconn below that of the population as a whole, though a lack of newer statistics makes a comparison difficult. Suicides at factories in southern China have not been uncommon over the past decade, says Liu, but in recent years improvements in telecommunications like the proliferation of mobile phones have made it easier for workers to disseminate information about deaths. And given the size and prominence of Foxconn, and its famous clients such as Apple, Sony, HP and Dell, the suicides at its Shenzhen manufacturing center have earned the company significant unwanted attention in recent weeks.

Foxconn says it has provided social options like libraries and sports for its workers, and recently has prevented many more attempted suicides. But labor activists argue it needs to



make more fundamental changes, like paying higher wages so that workers don't feel forced to work so many overtime hours.

In mid-May the Chinese newspaper Southern Weekend ran a story by a young reporter who spent a month working undercover at the factory. Liu Zhiyi wrote that the workers all dreamed of wealth, but felt that they had few opportunities outside the company. The workplace wasn't a sweatshop, Liu wrote, but the assembly-line work slowly dehumanized the employees. "It seems as if while they operate the machines, the machines also operate them," the story said. "Parts flow by, and their youth is worn down to the rhythm of the machines."

— With reporting by Jessie Jiang / Beijing

## Article A11—Apple, Dell and HP to Investigate Suicides at Asian Supplier

*Source: Wired*

*Publication Date: 26 May 2010*

*Author: Brian X. Chen*

Apple, Dell and HP are investigating their overseas partner Foxconn, a Chinese component maker that has seen several employee suicides in the past year.

Labor activists have accused Foxconn of instituting sweatshop-like work conditions for its employees, compelling nine workers to kill themselves to escape their harsh routines. Apple, Dell and HP have announced that they are in contact with Foxconn to examine the work conditions.

“We’re in direct contact with Foxconn senior management and we believe they are taking this matter very seriously,” said Steve Dowling, an Apple spokesman, in a statement to Bloomberg. “A team from Apple is independently evaluating the steps they are taking to address these tragic events and we will continue our ongoing inspections of the facilities where our products are made.”

Foxconn’s harsh work conditions have been especially high-profile because it is known for producing components for the phenomenally popular iPhone, among products for companies other than Apple. However, labor issues have been prevalent across Asian suppliers for years. Many Asian-supply workers and labor-rights activists have cited sweatshop-like conditions such as hourly wages below a dollar, violations of work hours and firings without notice.

The most sensational story about Foxconn to date involved an employee committing suicide over the loss of a prototype fourth-generation iPhone after allegedly being bullied by the company’s security officers. *The New York Times* launched an independent investigation, in which a reporter’s translator faced physical threats from a Foxconn security officer while questioning the victim’s family.

The ninth Foxconn death occurred Tuesday with a 19-year-old’s apparent suicide — just one week after the company’s eighth employee suicide.

To offer a first-hand account of Foxconn, reporter Liu Zhiyi of the Chinese paper Southern Weekend went undercover as an employee at the factory. She reported that workers were stuck in grueling, repetitive jobs and working long hours for minimal pay.

In response to the scrutiny surrounding Foxconn, billionaire Terry Gou, founder of Hon Hai (aka Foxconn Technology Group), this week opened a tour of the factory to journalists.

“We expect our suppliers to employ the same high standards we do in our own facilities,” a Dell spokesman said in a statement. “We enforce these standards through a variety of tools, including the Electronics Industry code of conduct, business reviews with suppliers, self-assessments and audits.”

HP has also said it is investigating “the Foxconn practices that may be associated with these tragic events.”

## Article A12—Suicides Roil Factory in China

*Source: LA Times*

*Publication Date: 27 May 2010*

*Authors: Barbara Demick and David Sarno*

*Nine workers at a computer component maker have killed themselves this year. Psychologists and monks have been called in; there are now punching bags. Experts cite an expectation gap of young workers.*

Reporting from Beijing and Los Angeles — Psychologists and Buddhist monks have come to console workers. There is a suicide hotline, piped-in music and a stress-release center where workers are invited to hit a punching bag with a picture of their supervisor.

But so far, nothing and nobody have been able to stop the suicides at Foxconn Technology Group, which manufactures Apple's iPhones as well as Dell and Hewlett-Packard components in Shenzhen in southern China.

The latest worker to commit suicide jumped to his death Tuesday. He was a 19-year-old identified as Li Hai, a migrant from Hunan province who had worked for the company just 42 days. He was the ninth worker at the Shenzhen facility to jump to his death this year. Another Foxconn worker committed suicide in northern China, and two others in Shenzhen survived falls.

A flotilla of social scientists, sociologists, psychologists and other experts — many of them affiliated with Beijing's Tsinghua University, where Foxconn endowed a nanotechnology center — were convening in Shenzhen on Wednesday for a meeting on how to stop the suicides. Terry Gou, the chief executive of Foxconn's parent company, Taiwan-based Hon Hai Precision Industry, cut short a meeting in Taipei, the Taiwanese capital, and was flying to Shenzhen after news of the latest death.

"This guy is stressed out. They are scared," said Peng Kaiping, a social psychologist from Tsinghua who met over the weekend with Gou. "He kept asking me, 'What can we do?' "

The deaths have triggered a debate about whether they are an epidemic of mass hysteria — each new suicide copying the death of the last — or a form of social protest. The deaths spotlight the pressure felt by a new generation of employees to work harder and make more money to keep up with China's dizzying pace of growth.

All of the workers who killed themselves were recent high school or vocational school graduates, ages 18 to 24. The group of men and women sometimes worked from 4 a.m. until late at night, often putting in extra shifts to earn overtime.

Foxconn, the world's largest maker of computer components, employs about 300,000 people at Shenzhen's Longhua Science & Technology Park, where most of the suicides took place. Most of the workers come from out of town and live in dormitories inside the compound.

The cluster of suicides is especially unnerving because it comes after a string of attacks on elementary school children that has left more than 20 people dead since mid-March. Peng said that both are "copycat cases by people with misguided ideas about social justice." He said, however, that the suicides showed that "China is reaching a critical point where it cannot develop as it once did, taking advantage of cheap labor and not paying attention to workers' rights."

Foxconn released results this month of a study saying the suicide rate at its Shenzhen facility was no higher than China's annual average of 14 cases per 100,000 people, but that the company was nevertheless concerned.

Labor experts said Foxconn's conditions are not so different from those of other Chinese factories.

"I'm not going to condemn Foxconn for appalling conditions because there are certainly worse places to work in China. The pay is basic, they do pay overtime according to the proper rates, and they pay social insurance. The work environment is clean and the food is not too bad," said Geoffrey Crothall of the Hong Kong-based China Labour Bulletin. "But there is a peculiar dynamic. The company is obsessed with security, and I must say that, from the outside, the place looks like a prison."

Foxconn is a major supplier to Apple. In July, a 25-year-old worker who was under investigation for losing the prototype of a new iPhone killed himself. He alleged in text

messages written shortly before his death that he was beaten and humiliated in the course of the investigation.

For its part, Apple says it requires its suppliers to adhere to a detailed code of conduct to protect workers' safety, including a limit of 60 work hours per week, including overtime. The company, which says it takes corrective action when it finds substandard workplace conditions, audited more than 100 of its production facilities in 2009, according to a report it released in February.

However, that report also showed that more than half of the 102 partner facilities audited had violated Apple's policy by working staff more than 60 hours a week on average. Apple also found that employees at 65 of the facilities were often working more than six days in a row.

Apple spokeswoman Kristin Huguet said the company was "saddened and upset by the recent suicides at Foxconn."

"We are in direct contact with Foxconn senior management and we believe they are taking this matter very seriously," she said. "A team from Apple is independently evaluating the steps they are taking to address these tragic events."

At Dell, a spokesman said the company was investigating the suicide reports and that the company would take action if it detected poor working conditions at Foxconn.

Analysts said Apple isn't Foxconn's biggest client, but it is the most prominent. That may mean problems at Foxconn's facilities could wind up on Apple's doorstep more frequently.

"They can't be happy about it," said Andy Hargreaves, an analyst at Pacific Crest Securities. "They promote themselves as far as being forward thinking in terms of conscience — and this is damaging to their reputation along those lines."

But, he added, there are very few manufacturing firms capable of producing phones at the rate Apple requires to satisfy demand. The company sold 8.75 million iPhones in the last quarter alone.

"If you want to build a lot of handsets and you want them to be competitively priced," Hargreaves said, "you don't have a lot of options."

A reporter for the hard-hitting Southern Weekly who spent 28 days working undercover in the factory said the young employees rarely stop working except to eat and sleep, and that they need to put in grueling extra hours to supplement their monthly wage of \$130.

The reporter, Liu Zhiyi, said the workers would sometimes stand for eight hours. "If you don't work overtime, you don't make money," Liu wrote. "But if you take the overtime, the fatigue will make your whole body feel the pain."

Struggling to stop the suicides, the company this month brought in a team of counselors and psychiatrists, as well as Buddhist monks to dispel bad spirits. A hotline was set up with the telephone number 78585, which when pronounced in Mandarin Chinese sounds like "Please help me." Employees were offered rewards of \$30 to report coworkers who might be suicidal. A room was set up with a punching bag that features portraits of managers to help the employees release anger, and last week managers began piping music into work areas.

And netting has been strung between the high-rise dormitories to catch anybody who tries to jump.

Chairman Gou said in an interview with Taiwanese television this week that "Foxconn is not a sweatshop that only goes after money and doesn't care about people's lives."

The company did not respond to a request for an interview.

The suicides have been a public relations disaster for Foxconn, with one prominent blogger quipping that the company should change its website to jumpers.com. Some have urged a boycott of its products. In Hong Kong, about 30 protesters holding up mock iPhones demonstrated outside Foxconn's offices urging better rights for workers.

In a report released Tuesday titled "Dying Young: Suicide & China's Booming Economy," the Hong Kong-based Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior, which organized the protest, attributed the suicides to the gap between expectations and reality for the new generation of migrant workers.

The report said the workers came from farming families with aspirations of living the Chinese dream in the city, but they soon realized that dream was impossible.

An 18-year-old woman from Jiangxi province, who survived a jump from the seventh story of her dormitory when a tree broke her fall, was quoted as saying she was "under work pressure."

When she jumped she had only about \$2.30 in her pocket and was in debt to a friend. "I [was] running into deep [financial] problems," she said.

Labor expert Crothall agreed that younger workers have much higher expectations than their parents.

From the Foxconn factory, he said, the workers "can get on a bus and go to glitzy shopping malls and see people their own age driving BMWs and carrying Louis Vuitton handbags."



## **Article A13—Foxconn Plans 20 Percent Wage Increases as Suicides Continue**

*Source: Apple Insider*

*Publication Date: 28 May 2010*

*Author: Sam Oliver*

After another alleged suicide at Foxconn's Shenzhen, China, plant on Wednesday, and an attempted suicide on Thursday, the company revealed that it plans to give a 20 percent pay raise to its employees.

According to Reuters, an employee jumped to his death on late Wednesday, marking the tenth suicide at the Chinese plant this year alone. Another employee attempted to slit his wrists on Thursday, but survived after receiving medical attention.

Foxconn -- the registered trade name of Hon Hai Precision Industry -- will increase workers' salaries by 20 percent. Entry-level workers at the company's factory in Longhua reportedly earn just over 900 yuan, or \$131.80 U.S. per month before overtime and bonuses.

Recently, an undercover report from Southern Weekend revealed that employees sign "voluntary overtime affidavits" to take home more than the local minimum wage that can be earned through a regular 36-hour workweek.

This week, Apple publicly stated it is looking into the issues at Foxconn, and said it is "saddened and upset" by the suicides that have occurred there recently. The Mac maker has its own investigative team that will carry out independent investigations.

Apple, along with numerous other electronics makers, partners with Foxconn for the building of its products. It creates iPhones and iPads for the Cupertino, Calif., company.

This week, other technology giants Nokia and Sony joined Apple in showing concern over the labor conditions at Foxconn. Both companies said they, too, are looking into conditions at the factory in Shenzhen. Previously, HP and Dell had also expressed a similar sentiment.

Apple began auditing its plants in 2006 after a newspaper report suggested workers at a Foxconn plant were treated unfairly and forced to operate under sweatshop-like conditions.

Apple now conducts an annual audit of its overseas partners, and last year found that more than half weren't paying their workers valid overtime rates.

## **Appendix 6: Chinese News Articles from Table 3**

# Article C1—富士康半年内八人跳楼：记者卧底 28 天找寻真相

*Source: China National Radio (中国广播网)*

*Publication Date: 14 May 2010*

*Editor: Yang Yi (杨祎)*

中广网深圳 5 月 14 日消息 据中国之声《新闻纵横》8 时 34 分报道，今年三月份，富士康龙华厂区，一名男性员工从宿舍楼上坠下，这也是今年以来发生在富士康的第六起自杀事件。之后，《南方周末》实习记者刘志毅应聘进入富士康公司打工，开始了 28 天的卧底暗访经历。本来只是想调查连续 6 次跳楼事件的原因，但是没想到在这 28 天时间里，刘志毅竟然又经历了富士康公司 2 次跳楼事件，而中间相隔还不到一周，于是 6 连跳残酷的变成了“八连跳”。

为什么富士康会连续出现 8 起跳楼事件？通过和员工们的零距离接触，刘志毅希望从中能找到员工频繁自杀的原因，详细情况我们连线《南方周末》的记者刘志毅。

主持人：在那 28 天里，你经历了和其他富士康员工一样的工作生活，那么你和你的工友们究竟是处在一个什么样的工作环境里？

刘志毅：应该说富士康的工作环境是你所能想象到的现代工厂里的工作环境，有流水生产线，有仓库，也有办公室。可以这么说，如果把它的车间、厂房全部换成教室的话，就像一个容纳着 40 几万人的超级大学校一样，有区别可能是路上最大的气味是来来往往大型卡车的尾气。当然可能具体到每个人的工作岗位可能工作环境不一样，有的可能是严格控制温度和灰尘的无尘车间，有的可能是碎料、拌料这样的有毒性的岗位，也有可能是灰尘比较多的仓库。有好几个游泳池而且有健身房，有网球场，只是去那里的人比较少一些。

主持人：给我们描述一下你身边的工友，在这么繁重复杂的工作环境下，他们都是怎样的精神状态？

刘志毅：他们的精神状态，我举一个例子，给我印象最深的还是一个最努力的工人他叫王克柱，看上去就是一个很年轻的学生的模样。他在仓库里面经常爬到一个很高的地方去盘点货物，或者钻到一个缝隙里，拉货的时候也跑的最快，他经常大喊大叫，或者是唱歌来缓解他的压力。跟他聊天的时候他告诉我说，只有知识更多一些才能做更高一点的工作，没有知识也就只能做最浅层的，就像现在的样子。包括他在内的很多人也觉得虽然工资低，但是他们的期望或许只在这个地方希望学更多东西，他曾经报过一个教育机构，但是后来连那个机构打过来的电话都没有想接，因为没有基础根本没有办法听懂。他们共同的状态是都想改变生活，但是无奈并没有变化。

他有一次知道我要走，他让我在辞职书里一定写上工资实在太低，他转念一想又有什么用呢？这些是改变不了的，他们都希望作出努力去改变自己的生活，但是好像甚至从哪里开始努力都没有头绪。在我的理解中，一个在机器面前的焦虑无奈是很多80、90后员工的共同写照。

主持人：到现在，富士康已经发生8起跳楼事件，那么在和这些工友交流过程中，他们对自杀事件都是什么反应？你暗访的目的是找寻自杀频发的原因，那么你得到的结果又是什么？

刘志毅：这个结果在13日的《南方周末》报道中阐述的还是比较清楚的。就像我们描述的那样，一个心态，他们在几十万人在厂区里面，人海茫茫，彼此都是互相的影子，然后用他们官方的话说，成了最熟悉的陌生人。在我的宿舍里面大家也确实，因为有白班有夜班，对班的可能都基本上讲不上几句话，即便在宿舍里面睡了一个月，如果你不专门去打听的话也不知道其中某个人的名字是什么。

我想如果把社会想象成一张网，如果一个人在社会的一个复杂的结点中他有很多层的关系应该是难以自杀。但是如果一个人除了工作上的生产线几乎没有其他的集体关系，像文中提到，我们采访到这么大的厂区没有一个老乡会，工人和工人看到的都是彼此相同的影子，这样单一的社会关系之下他们成了一个个孤立的点。在面对机器，在面对一些本来正常人可以解决的焦虑与压力的话，可能最容易自杀。

热搜词：张柏芝产子 地铁瞌睡哥 黑水河 校园保安 戛纳电影节 房产税

## Article C2—纵深富士康“九连跳”背后：青春的碎片

*Source: Modern Express (现代快报)*

*Publication Date: 17 May 2010*

*Author: Unknown*

5月14日晚，21岁的安徽籍男工小梁从富士康深圳龙华厂区宿舍楼坠地身亡。尽管目前还不清楚死因，但这无疑为已经发生“八连跳”的富士康又抹上一层血色。事件让公众普遍质疑“代工之王”富士康的生产经营管理方式，并开始关注这类代工厂中的年轻工人。他们是一群压抑而得不到自由舒展的灵魂，在工厂中日复一日地复制着动作、产品，同时也复制着自己的生活，就像一颗颗即将被拧毛的螺丝钉。

### 富士康“魔咒”

14日晚间富士康一名梁姓员工坠楼身亡，这是今年以来富士康科技集团第九名坠楼的员工，共造成7死2伤。现场发现一把带血的匕首，死者身上有四处刀伤。警方已经介入调查。

非正常死亡的员工的年龄和入职时间具有相当大的相似性。他们都是外地来深圳的青年打工者，分别来自河南、云南、湖南等地，年龄最大的28岁，年龄最小的仅17岁，并且都是入职不久的新人。他们被称为“新生代民工”。这个群体因为与父辈民工的不同，一度被媒体和社会学家关注，但他们的处境并没有因此而得到改善。富士康连续坠楼事件发生后，公众视线再次聚焦于这些代工厂里的工人。然而，坠楼事件仍一件接一件发生。

这种悲剧背后的深层原因是什么？何时才能终止？尽管富士康表示，通过对员工自杀事件的调查，发现这些事件与企业的生产经营管理方式没有直接的关系，但舆论的矛头大多仍对准富士康为代表的代工厂的生产经营管理方式，以及这种方式所造成的工人工作环境和心理环境的双重恶劣。

5月14日，一名自称在富士康做过一线员工的网民在天涯论坛披露了自己的经历。他总结说，从学生到工人其实是一道坎，需要关心和引导。学校和工厂是两个完全

不同性质的地方，在学校思想有包袱可以找老师谈心和诉说，而在工厂，领导要的是产品的数量和质量。在学校犯了错误，老师给你指出还给你改正的机会，而在富士康，除了挨骂、罚款，就是威胁打包走人。

### 新一代打工者的焦虑

富士康“六连跳”发生后，为了揭开自杀事件的深层原因，《南方周末》实习生、21岁的武汉大学新闻与传播学院大三学生刘志毅应聘到富士康，卧底28天，并写出报道《富士康“八连跳”自杀之谜》。

“人被机器劫持”“碎片一样活着”，报道中这样写道。刘志毅告诉快报记者，与富士康那些同龄人同行的28天，让他感到“心酸而震撼”。“很多都知道卓别林电影《摩登时代》工人在流水线上反复拧螺丝钉的镜头，但富士康的工人比电影里多遭受的，还有心理的枷锁。”

在刘志毅眼中，富士康拥有现代化的流水线，工人两班倒，每班12小时。压力来自这种工业化的生产流程，“尤其是夜间，完全是被机器劫持了。”刘志毅举了富士康之外的一个例子。“工人腰上挂着计数器，工作时手举一次，计数器上就多一个数字，人成了机器的一部分，但你无法逃脱。”但与父辈相比，这些工人更需要尊重，需要成功的感觉。在这样的网络时代，他们能看到周围的环境和现实的巨大反差，但面对低待遇和恶劣的环境，以及知识水平的限制，他们无法改变现状。“梦想和现实之间被撕裂。他们过不去这个坎，心里充满焦虑和无奈。”

在富士康，工人的学历从本科到初中都有，其中又以中专为主。低学历的工人也知道，知识多少可以改变命运。“他们也想学东西，但基础太差。有个工人想报名学英语，但去了发现根本听不懂，就放弃了。”况且，即使拿到稍高一点的文凭，待遇也只比最底层高出一点点，还是无法改变命运。打工的人想的是多挣钱，挣钱多意味着可以改变生活，享受生活，人人都希望加班，但加班带来的是更大的压力。“这像是一个怪圈，你永远走不出去。”

每天，工人们面对的是机器，看到的是戴着相同口罩、帽子和工作服的工友，“如果身材也相仿，你会以为看到了镜子。”工人们像是富士康这台巨大机器中无数相

同的部件，永无休止地重复着同样的动作，彼此之间没有交集。富士康行政总经理李金明也承认，“不管是正式组织，比如工会，还是非正式组织，比如老乡会、同学会，普通员工都找不到，所以压力大，却无法舒缓。”这显然是一大群压抑而不得自由和舒展的灵魂。

“个体的社会关系越孤立、越疏离，便越容易自杀。”在《南方周末》这篇报道中，法国社会学家涂尔干《自杀论》中的这句话被提及。但没被提及的是涂尔干另外一个判断，“高自杀率伴随着过度的个人自由和过度的控制”。“自杀事件发生后，富士康的心理咨询师建议工人丰富业余生活，多外出，但实际上这并不现实。”刘志毅说，富士康的硬件条件非常好，有健身房、游泳池，但极少有工人能去。“12小时的上班，8小时睡觉，加上吃饭、走路等，你还有时间去那些地方吗？”

“我觉得，工人自杀的根本原因，是资本运作方式，在这一代工人中，资本运作方式难以改变，同时企业又缺乏人文关怀。”刘志毅总结说。

“这是‘转型中国’问题的缩影”。深圳当代社会观察研究所所长刘开明说，数十万人口迁移，却没有相应的社会管理机制配套，户籍制度、城乡二元结构等障碍仍把外来打工者们远远地挡在了城市之外。“富士康‘跳楼’事件折射出中国经济、社会转型中面临的一些迫切问题，外来打工者社会权益、生活权益的欠债已到了不得不还的时候”。

为尊严增加成本的时代已经到来

王丽娜是江苏省律师协会维护农民工权益法律援助工作站的律师。去年10月至今，她为150多名民工打过官司，接受过800多人次的咨询。“维权难”普遍存在于外来工中，导致他们遇到这类困难时，更多时候只能“认命”。在富士康这类代工企业，更多的情况是企业 and 员工之间并没有明显纠纷，而是一种让工人喘不过气的压抑和深重的无力感。这甚至让工人无法投诉。

“相比较他们的父辈，新生代民工法律意识有所提高，自尊心也随着提高，但心理承受能力却降低了。”王丽娜说。



在江苏，尤其是苏南地区，是代工厂的集中地。根据省统计局 2008 的统计数据，全省规模以上企业中，制造业从业人数为 926943 人。仅仅在常州，目前就有 120 多万农民工，近半数是新世代农民工。

2009 年，江苏省各级劳动保障监察机构共接受群众投诉举报 4.48 万件。排名在前四位的案由——工资支付、社会保险、劳动合同和工时休假。几年来，这些数字没有明显变化，一直处于高位运行状况。“特别是工资类案由占比达四成左右，说明目前用人单位违法行为侵害的仍是劳动者的最基本权益。”省人力资源和社会保障厅有关人员表示。

“而富士康‘九连跳’的悲剧更是提醒我们，为健康、幸福、尊严增加成本的时代已经到来。”有关人士呼吁。

#### ■2010 年上半年富士康员工“九连跳”系列自杀事件

5 月 14 日晚，龙华园区福华宿舍一名梁姓员工从 7 楼坠楼身亡，1989 年出生，安徽人，2009 年 11 月进入富士康，为一线作业员。

5 月 11 日，龙华厂区女工祝晨明从 9 楼出租屋跳楼身亡，24 岁。

5 月 6 日，龙华厂区男工卢新从阳台纵身跳下身亡，24 岁。

4 月 7 日，观澜樟阁村，富士康男员工身亡，22 岁。

4 月 7 日，观澜厂区外宿舍，宁姓女员工坠楼身亡，18 岁。

4 月 6 日，观澜 C8 栋宿舍女工饶淑琴坠楼，仍在医院治疗，18 岁。

3 月 29 日，龙华厂区，一男性员工从宿舍楼上坠下，当场死亡，23 岁。

3 月 17 日，龙华园区，新进女员工田玉从 3 楼宿舍跳下受伤。

1 月 23 日，19 岁员工马向前死亡。警方调查，马向前系“生前高坠死亡”。

#### ■2010 年前富士康员工死亡事件不完全统计

2009年8月20日，23岁员工郑鑫崧在游泳池溺水身亡。

2009年7月15日，25岁员工孙丹勇跳楼自杀。

2008年3月16日，28岁员工李某猝死在出租屋内。

2007年9月1日，21岁的刘兵辞工两小时后突然死亡。

2007年6月18日，一名侯姓女工在厕所上吊自杀。

悲剧屡屡发生与政府“宽容”有关

星期柒新闻周刊：有心理学家称，富士康40多万人才死了9个，自杀率低于社会平均自杀率，您对此怎么看？

毛寿龙：这个说法不对，自杀率是一个事实描述，但你要看它的动态曲线，尤其是它的密集度。

星期柒新闻周刊：您认为，在富士康连续发生员工坠楼事件的原因是什么？

毛寿龙：这个是跟科学管理有关系的。从管理学上讲，泰勒的科学管理理论具有划时代意义。科学管理的中心问题是提高效率，要使工人掌握标准化的操作方法，实行刺激性的计件工资报酬制度，但也因此产生了一系列问题。

星期柒新闻周刊：请您具体分析一下。

毛寿龙：一个是跟工厂的性质有关。富士康工人工作的性质本身缺乏成就感，人的感觉是机械化的，人被机器化。但人是喜欢变化，喜欢成就感的。人不是机器，会抗拒，一旦爆发就会自杀。第二，工厂大规模管理会产生官僚体制，人与人之间缺乏交流。人际关系需要金钱投入，也需要时间投入，可他们连时间都没有。相比之下，小规模管理人际关系更密切，上班的时候，大家还可以相互说话，交流一下。还有，跟工厂竞争的激烈程度有关系，在中国大陆，劳动力很充足，工人们致富的愿望又很强，为了挣钱，可以放弃很多自己感兴趣的事。

星期柒新闻周刊：这种问题在代工厂普遍存在？

毛寿龙：是的。目前，社会存在不平等性，尤其是对于低端的劳动者来讲，包括一些大学生，没什么选择的余地。坠楼事件跟富士康本身管理的理念和制度有关，这本身是一个企业管理问题，但同时也是一个社会问题。之所以存在这种情况，跟政府的宽容有一定关系。另外，跟社会组织不够发达也有关。应该有社会组织对于工人的生存状况进行研究和干预。但目前，社会组织缺乏资金，政府也不够重视，所以这些问题就不能以专业的方式暴露出来，而是以死亡的方式暴露出来，结果就很悲惨，很沉重。

星期柒新闻周刊：在代工厂，人抗拒被机器化，但往往是失败的，这种冲突的结果会是什么？

毛寿龙：有人心理素质强，朋友多，可以通过某种方式宣泄。心理素质不好的人，可能就会自杀。

星期柒新闻周刊：如何防止这种悲剧继续发生呢？

毛寿龙：政府要加大扶持社会组织，提供资金，保障这些组织能够对这些问题进行研究和干预。当地政府部门、劳动部门、人大政协委员也应该多点关注、多点投入，对工厂有没有损害工人的基本权利，进行一定的执法检查。

## Article C3—富士康流水线上的青春因何凋零

*Source: China Youth Daily*

*Publication Date: 20 May 2010*

*Author: Liu Fang (刘芳)*

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不到半年，富士康跳楼事件的受害人数已经上升到9个。在此之前，富士康每年也都有自杀事件发生。

富士康新闻发言人刘坤介绍，9名员工有两个共同特点，一是年纪小，18岁到27岁之间；二是入职时间不长，进厂工作最长的是一年半，最短的只有28天。

在这家全球500强、世界最大代工厂，90后的队伍正在逐渐壮大。记者在该工厂某车间进行了初步统计，发现900多人的员工中，90后有270多人，接近总数的1/5，剩下的600多人全是80后。

而在这9起跳楼事件中，20岁左右的90后占近一半。其他的都是80后。

他们有的是婚恋和情感上遇到挫折，有的是家庭出现变故情绪低落，有的是精神异常导致悲剧。比如来自江西的饶某因感情纠纷，在跟男朋友通电话的过程中赌气跳下；李某因患有特殊疾病，年龄较大没找到女友，精神压力很大。

另外，所有事发员工还有一个共同的身份：新生代打工者。他们的人群构成，主要是80后、90后。资料显示，80后、90后目前在外出打工的1.5亿农民工里面占到60%，将近1个亿。而在富士康的基层员工中，80后、90后打工者，已经超过了85%。

一样的打工，不一样的理想

富士康工会副主席陈宏方讲了他眼中三种典型的富士康年轻人。

第一种是家庭条件较好，出来不是为了挣钱，主要是看世界，在北京、上海、广州这些大城市转过一圈后，再回去成家立业。有个富士康员工，月工资只有 2000 元，但愣是从家里要了 4 万元买了辆小车开。

第二种是家庭条件差，出来打工，把每年挣的钱都攒下来，3 年攒到五六万，回家盖房结婚过日子。

第三种有理想、有事业心，能吃苦，利用富士康提供的从专科到博士的培训，实现自己的理想。目前富士康在企业课堂“充电”的就有 8000 多人。

这几类人多来自偏远农村。有的人以前过的是走 4 小时山路才能到乡里的日子，突然到城市生活，面对摩天大楼、灯红酒绿，很容易产生失落情绪。

陈宏方说，九连跳中有一个自杀者，就是这类情况。刚来时连冲厕所都不会，一出门就不认得路，生产线上工作也跟不上别人，到哪里都要排队，觉得自己特别没用。

记者在富士康调查时发现，这些当事人都很年轻，除一名 27 岁外，其他的年龄都在 18 至 23 岁之间，均来自农村家庭，入职时间比较短。根据企业提供的资料，这些人并没有过度加班的记录。

其实，如果这些人发现自己不适应工作，马上离职，或者在事前能得到劝导和关怀，悲剧很可能避免。陈宏方坦承：“还是由于我们工作做得不够，没有帮他们把心中的压力释放出来，才导致了这种结果。”

深圳市社会科学院院长乐正分析，这些刚踏入社会又背井离乡的孩子，一旦出现精神困惑，在陌生的环境下又不知该向谁倾诉，这时如果整个社会的心理调适机制没有适时跟进，很容易出现问题。

而深圳市总工会在对富士康坠楼事件调查后，批评富士康在管理方面存在漏洞和不足。富士康 85% 以上的员工为 80 后、90 后，这些新生代农民工对企业现有的管理模式、制度和方式方法有要求变革的强烈冲动，企业本就应该及时加以调整和改变，不断适应这种变化，才能避免不必要的伤害。

40 万人挤在不到 3 平方公里的土地上

“富士康只是一个企业，不能承担一个城市的社会职能。”面对众多学者专家的解剖，刘坤坦承。

富士康作为一个世界级代工航母，用工人数量很大。仅在深圳龙华、观澜两地就有40万员工，相当于内地的一个小城市。

虽然人数和一个城市类似，但其他指标却远远逊于城市。城市里最基本的元素是家庭，但这里却是单个的个人；城市里有公益化比例和占地面积都很高的社会化设施，而这里虽然有网吧、游泳池等诸多公共设施，却难以满足几十万人的使用；另外，富士康也仅仅在近期，才成立了“关爱中心”这样的专业心理咨询机构。

40多万人，就挤在不到3平方公里的土地上。“一到下班时间，这里摩肩接踵，比深圳最繁华的中心城区华强北还热闹，走到路上都要侧着身。”刘坤说。

5月17日，记者在地处龙华的富士康园区探访看到，一些外来参观者经常用“震撼”两个字形容观感。这里有标准的足球场、有三甲医院、有企业大学，内设有情侣座、卡座、包厢座的网吧不仅可以免费上网，还可以免费点餐。“在深圳，企业如果有1个标准化的游泳池就不错了，我们有5个。”陈宏方说。

人们似乎并不能理解在硬件条件最好的深圳园区尚且能发生这样极端的事件，那么，在全国其他的富士康园区为什么没听说这种现象？

同样不能理解的是员工的流动率。富士康基层员工留在厂子里的时间，正在从几年前的3年，降到现在的一两年。富士康龙华园区资深副经理万红飞介绍，基层员工的流动率，在2004年、2005年，大约每个月为2%、3%，现在增加到4%、5%，几乎增加一倍。

9连跳发生后，富士康厂区门口的招聘点，依然有大量的人前来应聘。记者了解到，只要有报名者，几乎100%能被招进去。甚至，富士康还出台了一项特别措施，每位富士康员工只要能从老家将自己的亲戚朋友拉来做工，另有相应的现金奖励。

流水线上的青春

在富士康厂区，随处可见“魔鬼藏在细节里”的标语。这里的管理、运营乃至价值观，都堪称细节化。

每个人胸前都挂着一张工牌。用这个牌子，可以进出大门、到食堂用餐、上下班打卡。每张卡的背后都留有火警、匪警、工会、医疗、餐饮等方面的查询电话。

每位员工从流水线上下班以后，就连吃饭也是从传送带上拿饭盒，然后找到位子去吃。每天，位于厂区的中央大厨房都会源源不断地按比例配置的饭食用锡纸包好，按时间分别供应到各个餐厅。

甚至，员工日常着装规范也被具体到这样的细节：夹克的拉链不拉或者拉到一半都是不规范的，要拉到前胸位置。

记者不止一次来过富士康园区，但每次来都要有厂区内部人员来接才能进入。白天走在厂区的马路上，很少见到闲逛、嬉笑的人群，每个人似乎都有明确的目标，直奔而去。

记者提出利用员工的午餐时间采访，但被笑着拒绝了。原因是：一个普工生活的一天是这样的：6：50起床，洗漱、早餐，步行到公司，穿上统一的工作服；8：00准时上班，中午11：00下班，一个小时的吃饭休息；下午从1：30—5：30上班，再吃饭休息一小时，晚上8：00下班。中午一个小时的吃饭时间，如果算上排队等待和来回走路的时间，吃饭的时间只有十几分钟。

而在一个宿舍内部，舍友间的关系并不密切。每个人进厂后都是随机被分配到一个宿舍的。陈宏方告诉记者，富士康工会在开展心理辅导讲座时，曾做过这样的事，有工人能说全自己室友的名字，便奖励现金，但是，绝大部分人答不出来。

即使是个别性格开朗的人，也容易被这样的生活同化。自杀的员工之一卢新就是如此。这个曾经报名参加过“快男”比赛，唱歌、跳舞、旅游样样喜欢，和同事关系也不错的大男生，就在自己自杀的前3天，写了一条QQ签名：一切都过去了。

这个湘潭大学毕业的大学生，其实早就被列入干部储备班名单，可能再熬上一段时间，就可以晋升。但是，在富士康，“干部层次一共分为十四级，从师一级到师十四

级，新人进来从师一级开始，两三年调升一级，要调到师四五级这样的管理职位大概要十年工夫。”

一位在富士康工作十多年的男青年，今年 35 岁，月薪 8000 元，手下管理着一个 900 人的车间。谈到这一让人艳羡的成绩，他摊开手掌，向记者数起自己已经拿到手的各种证书和文凭，不一会儿，两只手都数完了。

刘志毅，这个卧底富士康 28 天的《南方周末》实习记者，很惊异偌大的一个厂区，竟然连一个老乡会都没有。“每个人在厂区里面活动，但每个人都成了彼此的影子，互相连姓名都不会多问。”

在刘志毅看来，一个人在社会理应有很多层的关系，并且成为一张网。但是在富士康，一个人除了生产线外，几乎没有其他的集体关系，仅此单一的社会关系，他们每个人都成了一个孤立的点。永无休止的面对机器后，一旦遇到难以承受的焦虑与压力，最容易自杀。

像对待灾难一样进行社会援助

“什么？又有人要跳楼？”5 月 17 日，正在接受记者采访的富士康新闻发言人刘坤竟然接到了这样的电话。细问之后才知道，一位富士康女员工与同在该厂上班的丈夫吵架，其夫声称：“富士康那么多人跳楼，你也去跳楼吧！”

经过员工关爱中心的连续疏导，该女工的情绪逐渐平复，但留给人们的惊讶却远远没有平息。刘坤告诉记者，员工关爱中心每天都会接到很多员工的见面咨询和电话求助。

为了杜绝坠楼事件接二连三地出现，富士康从 4 月上旬开始“花钱买信息”，任何职工只要发现身边的同事情绪异常，便可通知心理医师或者部门主管。若情况属实，公司奖励 200 元，目前已经成功控制了 30 起类似事件。

“现在最担心的就是自杀事件会对其他员工造成心理阴影，这种负面能量一旦流动起来，在一个以 80 后、90 后为主要群体的人群中是很危险的。”长期从事社会心理咨询工作的孙淇老师说。



“自杀可能跟很多原因都有关，但一定是综合力量作用的结果”。孙淇认为，初到陌生的城市打工，工作压力大、身体出现状况，再碰到婚恋问题，在没有得到社会帮助的时候，那些沉淀下来的深层次的没有解决的问题就会跳出来，成为压垮他们的最后一根稻草。“即使只是一根稻草，力量也足以让人崩溃”。

专家们认为，之所以在短时间内发生多起自杀事件，跟心理暗示有关。“有的时候，做了某件事，才发现自己已经受到了某种心理暗示。比如9连跳事件中的那名女子能够生还，是因为在跳下去的一瞬间突然后悔了，做出了自我保护措施……”

刘坤说：“新员工刚进厂没多久就出事，说明富士康对他们的人文主义关怀不够。近一两个月来，发生一连串突发事故，说明我们在管理上出现了问题。”

刘坤介绍，富士康也开始重视员工的心理异常波动，并为此展开了针对员工心理干预的措施。但是，仅有企业自身的心理援助体系是明显不够的。孙淇告诉记者，心理治疗领域一般都是以不求助不治疗为原则。因为只有当有人发出求助信号后，进行心理救助才有效。

深圳市社科院院长乐正也告诉记者，富士康作为一个企业，很难承担社会、政府应尽的责任。富士康上班时可以管着你，下班后就不管了。在当下这种完全竞争社会下，必须明确，在发生这类事件中，第二责任主体是谁？

乐正认为，地震灾情发生后，马上有社会援助组织等社会资源介入，而且是在第一时间内。富士康发生跳楼事件后，还没有一个社会组织能够介入，实际上，整个社会对目前事件中的员工心理、生活的关注还存在很大的空白。政府应该出面委托一家专业的机构进行专题调研，或者另行安排一个独立的调查机构，对此进行专项调查，提出整改意见。

孙淇表示，事件发生后，她已经和几个同行商量过，如果有可能，他们愿意作为社会援助组织介入。

本报深圳5月19日电

## Article C4—富士康昨现“第十跳” 21岁湖北籍员工身亡

*Source: Chutian Metropolis Daily (楚天都市报)*

*Publication Date: 22 May 2010*

*Author: Unknown*

综合新华社、《深圳特区报》报道据深圳市公安局宝安分局证实，21日清晨富士康一名员工坠楼身亡，这是今年以来富士康科技集团第十个坠楼的员工。

据了解，该名男工叫南钢，21岁，湖北人，凌晨4时30分许爬到工厂宿舍F4栋楼顶跳下，被富士康车辆送医后证实不治。目前大批媒体记者聚集在停放遗体的深圳市龙华人民医院。

事情发生后，深圳宝安公安分局高度重视。据勘察，现场没有打斗等可疑的痕迹，已初步认定为自杀。由于南钢没有留下遗书，因此不清楚死亡原因。

记者一早接到报料后，马上赶到富士康科技集团公司北大门。只见门口有多名保安在把守。在工厂区大门口，不少刚上完夜班的富士康科技集团员工都在议论纷纷。

有和南钢同住一栋宿舍的员工称，听说南钢上夜班，工作压力较大，他曾和一名上级吵架，后来想不开寻短见。

这些员工说，公司员工薪资不低，免费提供工作餐、住宿，也不存在强迫加班、严重超时加班等违反劳动法规现象。但是，工厂的管理比较严格，员工大多数是计件算工资的，实行“半军事化”管理，有一定的工作压力。

资料

富士康科技集团1988年在深圳地区建厂以来，迅速发展壮大，拥有60余万员工及全球顶尖IT客户群，为全球最大的电子产业专业制造商。2008年富士康出口总额达556亿美元，占中国大陆出口总额的3.9%，连续7年雄踞大陆出口200强榜首；跃居《财富》2009年全球企业500强第109位。

## 80后 90后打工者内心困惑不知向谁诉

### 富士康发言人坦承管理有问题

据《中国青年报》报道不到半年，富士康跳楼事件的受害人数已经上升到10个。富士康新闻发言人刘坤介绍，这几名员工有两个共同特点，一是年纪小，18岁到27岁之间；二是入职时间不长，进厂最长的是一年半，最短的只有28天。

他们有的是婚恋和情感上遇到挫折，有的是家庭出现变故情绪低落，有的是精神异常导致悲剧。比如来自江西的饶某因感情纠纷，在跟男朋友通电话的过程中赌气跳下；李某因患有特殊疾病，年龄较大没找到女友，精神压力很大。

另外，所有事发员工还有一个共同的身份：新生代打工者，他们主要是80后、90后。

### 跳楼员工都很年轻 没有过度加班记录

富士康工会副主席陈宏方说，进入公司的年轻人多来自偏远农村。有的人突然到城市生活，面对摩天大楼、灯红酒绿，容易失落。有个自杀者刚来时连冲厕所都不会，一出门就不认得路，生产线上工作也跟不上别人，觉得自己特没用。

记者调查发现，这些自杀当事人都很年轻，均来自农村家庭，入职时间比较短。根据企业提供的资料，这些人并没有过度加班的记录。

其实，如果这些人发现自己不能适应工作，马上离职，或者在事前能得到劝导和关怀，悲剧很可能避免。陈宏方坦承：“还是由于我们工作做得不够，没有帮他们把心中的压力释放出来。”

深圳市社会科学院院长乐正分析，这些刚踏入社会又背井离乡的孩子，一旦出现精神困惑，在陌生的环境下又不知该向谁倾诉，这时如果整个社会的心理调适机制没有适时跟进，很容易出现问题。

### 厂区硬件无可挑剔 员工流动率却很高

富士康用工人数量很大。仅在深圳龙华、观澜两地就有 40 万员工。40 多万人，挤在不到 3 平方公里的土地上。“一到下班时间，这里摩肩接踵，比深圳最繁华的中心城区华强北还热闹，走到路上都要侧着身。”刘坤说。

富士康园区，这里有标准的足球场、有三甲医院、有企业大学，内设有情侣座、卡座、包厢座的网吧不仅可以免费上网，还可以免费点餐。“在深圳，企业如果有 1 个标准化的游泳池就不错了，我们有 5 个。”陈宏方说。

人们并不能理解在硬件条件最好的深圳园区为何会发生这样极端的事件。同样不能理解的是员工的流动率。基层员工留在厂里的时间，正在从几年前的 3 年，降到一两年。流动率，在 2004 年、2005 年，大约每个月为 2%、3%，现在增加到 4%、5%。

大多数人感觉孤立 甚至不知室友名字

在富士康厂区，随处可见“魔鬼藏在细节里”的标语。

每个人胸前都挂着一张工牌。用这个牌子，可以进出大门、到食堂用餐、上下班打卡。每张卡的背后都留有火警、匪警、工会、医疗、餐饮等方面的查询电话。

每位员工从流水线上下班以后，就连吃饭也是从传送带上拿饭盒，然后找到位子去吃。每天，位于厂区的中央大厨房都会源源不断地按比例配置的饭食用锡纸包好，按时间分别供应到各个餐厅。

甚至，员工日常着装规范也被具体到这样的细节：夹克的拉链不拉或者拉到一半都是不规范的，要拉到前胸位置。

白天走在厂区的马路上，很少见到闲逛、嬉笑的人群，每个人似乎都有明确的目标，直奔而去。

记者提出利用员工的午餐时间采访，但被笑着拒绝了。原因是：一个普工生活的一天是这样的：6：50 起床，洗漱、早餐，步行到公司，穿上统一的工作服；8：00 准时上班，中午下班后，一个小时吃饭休息；下午 1：30—5：30 上班，再吃饭休息一小时，晚上 8：00 下班。中午一个小时的吃饭时间，算上排队等待和来回走路的时间，吃饭只有十几分钟。

每个人进厂后随机被分配到一个宿舍。富士康工会在开展心理辅导讲座时，曾做过这样的事，有工人能说全自己室友的名字，便奖励现金，但是，绝大部分人答不出来。

即使是个别性格开朗的人，也容易被这样的生活同化。自杀的员工之一卢新就是如此。这个曾经报名参加过“快男”比赛，和同事关系也不错的男生，在自己自杀的前3天，写了QQ签名：一切都过去了。

刘志毅，这个卧底富士康28天的《南方周末》实习记者，很惊异偌大的一个厂区，竟然连一个老乡会都没有。“每个人在厂区里面活动，但每个人都成了彼此的影子，互相连姓名都不会多问。”

在刘志毅看来，在富士康，每个人都成了孤立的点。永无休止的面对机器后，一旦遇到焦虑与压力，最容易自杀。

应对

深圳调查组入驻富士康

19日，深圳市副市长、公安局长李铭来到富士康科技集团，就近期连续发生员工跳楼事件进行调查，并与该集团高层商讨防范措施。

富士康从4月上旬开始“花钱买信息”，任何职工只要发现身边的同事情绪异常，便可通知心理医师或者部门主管。若情况属实，公司奖励200元，目前已经成功控制了30起类似事件。此外，公司正在根据“80后”和“90后”员工的喜好和需求，增加网吧和健身房等设施，举办网络游戏大赛、街舞大赛、主持人挑战大赛等，“年轻员工可以像超女一样去参加选秀和表演”。

链接

富士康五个月“十连跳”

■5月21日

一名年仅21岁的男性员工南钢从F4栋跳下身亡。

■5月14日

21岁的安徽籍男工，从宿舍楼7楼楼顶坠下，当场身亡。死者身上发现四处刀伤。

■5月11日

河南籍祝姓女员工跳楼身亡，24岁，系因感情问题自杀。

■5月6日

22岁男工卢新从阳台跳下身亡。卢新，湖南人，属富士康2009年新干班成员。

■4月7日

观澜厂区外宿舍，宁姓女员工坠楼身亡，18岁，云南人。

■4月6日

观澜C8栋宿舍饶姓女工坠楼，仍在医院治疗，18岁。跳楼原因初步怀疑系感情纠纷。

■3月29日

龙华厂区，一名从湘潭大学毕业的23岁湖南籍男员工从宿舍楼上坠下，当场死亡。

■3月17日

上午8时，一名田姓女子从宿舍楼跳下摔伤，其本人表示跳楼原因为“活着太累”。

■3月11日

晚9时30分，一名20多岁的李姓员工坠亡，原因疑为过年加班费被盗，一时想不开而轻生。

■1月23日

凌晨4时许，富士康19岁员工马向前死亡。警方调查，马向前系“生前高坠死亡”。

### 案例一

跳楼身亡的马向前曾大量服用精神类药

23岁的贵州籍农民工蒙景迪，曾与跳楼身亡的马向前住同一个寝室。蒙景迪告诉记者，他们寝室住了10个人，来自10个不同部门，平时基本上没有交流。

蒙景迪说，马向前出事前，曾在宿舍床上躺了三天，没有人过问。有舍友看见他大把吃药，但也没有问过为何吃药。司法鉴定结果显示，马向前尸体内检验出精神类药物残留物。

### 案例二

卢新的最后四天

4月底，富士康“6连跳”事件发生后，卢新的一名主管曾发现他精神状态很不好，专门找他聊天。卢新当时承诺：“绝对不会那么傻，去跳楼。”但主管还是给卢新放了两天假休息。

但从5月2日开始，卢新变得情绪异常。平日不爱喝酒的他忽然邀好友曾红领一起喝酒。他说，觉得“工作压力太大了，睡不好，想回湖南老家。”

5月3日，卢新的同学们凑钱准备帮他买回家的车票，但卢新又不同意回家，提出要到红树林玩。没想到，卢新到红树林一下车后，就直奔向一名巡警，说有人想追杀他，想害他。

公司安排曾红领和另一名好友安抚卢新，住在招待所，并联系到卢新的家人，尽快前来帮助缓解卢新情绪。5月5日晚，卢新显现出前所未有的焦躁，一再念叨着自己“不够孝顺，给父母的钱太少”、“自己活不过当晚”……

心理咨询师跟卢新沟通到第二天凌晨 1 点。5 月 6 日凌晨 4 点 30 分，卢新从朋友身边爬起，说“想看看窗外的风景”。几秒钟后，他从阳台上跳了下去。



## Article C5—富士康员工本质是“上班奴”

*Source: Phoenix Blogs (凤凰博报)*

*Publication Date: 23 May 2010*

*Author: Zhang Wen (章文)*

富士康“十连跳”是令人心痛不已的悲剧，那些逝去的年轻生命（8死2伤）永不可追回，留给我们这些旁观者沉重的反思。

已经有大量的相关报道，剖析悲剧背后的个人和社会原因。富士康公司也采取了一系列措施，加强对员工的心理辅导，不但开设电话热线，还开设宣泄室，让员工发泄情绪。

但在我看来，这些治标的措施，无法治本。问题的关键在于：如果富士康的员工们无法逃离“牢笼式”的生存状态，那么由此导致的个人心理抑郁以及自杀现象就很难避免。

40万人，挤在3平方公里的厂区内，半军事化的管理，集体宿舍、工厂以及公共食堂的三点一线，就是工人们日复一日的生活状态。据报道称，“一到下班时间，这里摩肩接踵，比深圳最繁华的中心城区华强北还热闹，走到路上都要侧着身。”

固然人是社会动物，喜欢群居，但如果无法保留一点自己的空间，私生活完全曝光在公共生活中，长此以往，人的精神状态将出现错乱。

我们发现，在富士康公司内部，由于不存在私人空间以及底薪较低，员工们倾向于加班。据《南方周末》的报道，每个员工都会签一份“自愿加班切结书”，随后你的加班时间便不再受法律规定的每月上限36小时的约束。但这并不是什么“坏事”，相反，在许多打工仔看来，加班多的厂才是“好厂”，因为“不加班，根本挣不到钱”。对急欲赚钱的打工者们，加班更像是“会呼吸的痛”：如果不加，没有钱的日子让他们“窒息”；如果加班，日夜劳累的工作只会让身体加倍“疼痛”，迅速老去。更多时候他们坚定地选择后者，甚至这种选择的权利，也不是轻易可以获得的。只有老大“信任”，关系好，或是身处关键岗位，才常加得到班。

更值得指出的是，富士康是“代工厂”，流水线上每天重复着同样的劳动，人在这里成为机器的一部分，没有任何创新可言。一年 365 天，工作单调枯燥且紧张，又很少渠道可以发泄自己的情绪，再强大的心理也会出现问题。

何况这些员工大都是 80 和 90 后，他们少不经事，很多人从农村来到城市，本身就有一个艰难适应的过程。而相比他们的父辈，这群人对自己的生活有更高的期许，但在现实中却频频碰壁，心情不好却很难找到倾诉的对象。

卧底富士康 28 天的《南方周末》实习记者刘志毅，很惊异偌大的一个厂区，竟然连一个老乡会都没有。“每个人在厂区里面活动，但每个人都成了彼此的影子，互相连姓名都不会多问。”

心理学专家认为，一个人在社会理应有很多层的关系，并且成为一张网。但是在富士康，一个人除了生产线外，几乎没有其他的集体关系，仅此单一的社会关系，他们每个人都成了一个孤立的点。永无休止的面对机器后，一旦遇到难以承受的焦虑与压力，最容易自杀。

在我看来，陆琪新书书名《上班奴》可谓是对富士康员工的形象而准确的称谓。他们待遇不高，工作单调，没有自己的私人空间，也很难看到未来的希望所在。他们的精神和肉体处于一种新型的“被奴役”状态，要摆脱殊非易事：辞职去其他公司，不一定比世界 500 强的富士康更好，很可能更糟糕；彻底告别城市回到农村，又已经不能适应乡下的生活。

前路坎坷却无路可退，他们只能选择继续被“奴役”。要解决这个问题，需要全社会的合力。政府当在制度层面使员工有对抗强势资本的手段，例如成立工会去和资方协商工资待遇以及改善生活环境；公司则应兼顾利润追求和人本精神，尽量为员工创造一个身心健康的工作环境；员工自身也需要培养“自救”意识，加强心理素质，能够在一定程度上抗挫折抗压力。

此外，应有各种社会组织可以提供援助。例如民间心理咨询机构，就可以介入，通过集体上课以及个别辅导，及时疏通已有障碍的心理，使这些人不至于在无人可倾诉无人可求助的情况下，走向自杀。

五一国际劳动节前，胡锦涛倡导“体面劳动”，是令人欣慰的表态。但怎么去解脱形形色色的“上班奴”，还他们以尊严，则是一个庞大的社会工程，需要全社会充分重视，并采取行动。

章文

资深媒体人，时事评论员。生于长江边，平生最爱水。辗转多家媒体，遂成资深；游历欧美诸国，更爱民主。相信和解方能共生。——著有《民主不是说着玩的》。

## Article C6——人之为人——富士康 10 连跳事件反思

Source: Boraid.com (博锐管理在线)

Publication Date: 25 May 2010

Author: Zhong Zhenling (钟震玲)

组织角色需要的只是个人部分特定的活动，但是前来工作的却是整个人。

——《沙因组织心理学》

富士康的第十跳彻底跳出了企业范畴，而成为一个社会热点话题。围观者众，各有看法，群声喧哗。媒体当然是当仁不让的先锋。昨晚我看了凤凰卫视的《一虎一席谈》。从现场数据来看，这个节目应该录制在第 9 跳结束之后。它像我沙龙邀请函一样落伍了：当它播出的时候，富士康已经发生了第 10 跳，真是计划赶不上变化。

节目十分值得一看，首先值得欣慰的是：我看到了媒体呈现出独立思考的角度。节目嘉宾包括了富士康新闻发言人刘坤、“卧底”富士康 28 天的《南方周末》记者刘志毅、《毕业出狼窝，工作入虎穴》作者青桐、评论员石述思，全真派曾考查过富士康的高僧、已离职的 80 后一线女主管等，一时间现场唇枪舌剑，各述己见，十分精彩，启人深思。

节目后，我思考着以下三个问题：

一、富士康员工的困境是不是中国产业升级、经济高速发展的转型期必须要面对的问题？是不是我们经济的发展一定要付出“我以我血荐轩辕”这样沉重的代价？未来五年或十年后，富士康今天所面对的问题是不是所有中国企业所要面对的问题？

二、富士康的十跳是不是可以单纯地归结为 80、90 后的管理问题？

三、富士康“不问管理问鬼神”这种行为究竟可不可取？

对于第一个问题，我觉得这是个特别宏大而且特别吓人的话题。一方面确实存在着这种可能性，另一方面还隐藏着另外一种可能性：一旦我们把某个点无限放大时，很容易犯了逻辑上面的以偏概全、静止看待事物的错误。当那位已离职的80后一线女主管力图把调子起这么高，而且预言江浙企业、珠三角的企业都要面临这样的问题时，我觉得很像是2012末世论的论调——当然，只有在2012末世论是伪命题的前提下，我们才有必要继续探讨中国企业在经济转型期的困境与出路。

接着，现场很快有人提到贫二代的说法，进而论及现代贫农和他们的父辈不同，他们的父辈还留有土地这样一个退路，他们却是没有退路的一代人。

在这样一个恢宏的背景下，我们的思考很容易变地相对沉重。不过值得庆幸的是：与2012的末世论相比，企业困境毕竟这属于我们人力可以改变的部分。未来五到十年中国的经济图景究竟如何，没有任何人可以打包票。即使是我们的政府都没有可能拍着胸口做出任何的承诺。企业在前行的过程中，可能会有各种风雨险阻。富士康在今天所发生的事件，对每家企业、每个企业人都是很好的提醒。事件可能会引起很多人的深思。如果我们群策群力，能进行有价值、有意义的建设性思考，籍由这种思考，企业——不单指富士康——就可能会改变它的一些管理方式，企业中的人可能会改变一些他们的心态与行为方式。在密集型的灾难事故之后，我们可能会比以前懂得员工心理健康的重要性，而这些可能在今天是特别微小的一些改变，可能就会影响到将来的整体格局，也许就能帮助我们规避掉将来的一些潜在、巨大的毁灭性危险。

那么，我们是不是可以把富士康10连跳事件归纳为80后、90后的管理问题呢？

同样的问题，在我所在的Q群里也曾经讨论过。郁闷者有之、拍案者有之、怒其不争者有之。我个人觉得这样的归纳是不太合适的。毕竟，一方面我们在呼唤着尊重个体，尤其是每个人个体的独特性，另一方面，我们又在简单粗暴地给人群贴上一些标签，只不过是为了论述、行事方便，这样很不好。虽然时代赋予了人群一些共性，但是个体内在体验往往让他们具有很大的差异性。80、90后确实有其成长背景，但这些成长背景是否一定就造成了他们是心理脆弱的、行为偏激的呢？不一定。否则我们无法解释为什么还有那么多人在选择生存、奋斗与创造。

如果只是针对富士康 10 连跳事件，我的建议是与其将焦点锁定在管理问题上，不如我们通过数据量化分析，锁定什么是企业中的心理高危人群。高危人群具有什么样的共同的特质、他们心理特征是什么、他们容易被什么样的事件所触发。在共同特质上，他们可能集中在某一年龄段、某一特定工种（例如压力较大的客服、研发岗位）、也可能是某一段时间（例如企业内外部环境激烈变化时）。注意：年龄段是涉及到且唯一涉及到 80 后 90 后的地方。

归纳这些并不是为了给我们指责这个人群提供证据、搜罗罪证，通过指责再把我们摆在其对立的位置上，加速、加大其破坏。归纳的理由在此只有一个：提高企业对这种破坏性极大的心理危机的可预见性，提早安排、未雨绸缪，从而在整个社会范围内降低恶性事件的发生率。

第三个问题，富士康“不管管理问鬼神”态度是否可取？

按富士康新闻发言人刘坤的说法，他们就是觉得这事可能会有用，所以他们就特别简单地做了，也不在乎外部怎么看。倒是两位高僧，他们在现场处境十分尴尬，除了主持人提问外，几乎在其他所有人眼里面都像是个笑话。而且从现场录像来看，两位高僧自己好像也不太相信自己，表情戏谑、言不及义。

让我们换个角度来看这件事。其实，如果富士康所有人都是风水信徒的话，那么高僧还真有可能起到心理慰藉作用，并通过心理慰藉促使事件向良性的方向转化。再扩大到社会范畴，如果我们全社会都“信高僧、得永生”的话，那可能富士康的这种处理方式也能为自己创造一些有利言论，从而改变事件的方向。起码大家可能会觉得：高僧化解过了，所以这事应该得到缓解，于是有意再跳者也就不再选择这种极端的行为。

但问题在于：郭台铭、刘坤等高管可能是相信的，但明显下面的员工是不太相信的。再放到我们社会范围，大家就明显地更不相信了。

其实通过一些宗教仪式来让形势不同，古已有之，武则天就曾自称为弥勒佛转世。但现如今，我们好几代人都是生在新中国，长在红旗下，从小接受的就是唯物主义教育

。忽然有一天，在我们参加工作的多年以后，要让我们相信一些宗教层面的东西，思想上确实是难以转变、接受。

所以，我们可以看到：企业在实施一个决策时，不仅仅要看拿主意的高层相信什么，也要看真正意义上的执行层相信什么，更要注意与社会周围大环境的契合度。有时候一个好的初衷，却可能带来不太美好的结果。这也许是富士康事件背后的潜在原因之一。

节目有位嘉宾的发言引起了深深的共鸣。

众人谈到富士康时，并没有一棒子打死，甚至肯定了富士康管理流程的严密性与高效性。只是企业在追求这种严密与高效的同时，员工被成为了流水线上的一环。戴明式管理的优势与弊病同时显现。这时，有名富士康的现任员工说道（大意）：公司对我们很好，上班的衣服都专门找了公司给我们洗。我们自己不能洗。但是我想说，多洗一件衣服会不会把我累死？不会。但是，我没有权力和自由来洗我的衣服，这种没有自由和尊严的感觉会不会让我去找死？可能会的。

听起来这话像是在找抽，像是被宠坏了的孩子在和父母负气，但是在血淋淋的事实面前，它显得如此沉重而压抑。我觉得这其实是一个非常典型的感受与想法。如果他们在心理上是孩子，那么我们的社会、企业有责任、有义务要教育他、帮助他，制止他们的极端自我破坏行为，支持他们寻找到更有建设性的表达方式。如果这不是孩子负气的话，那么自由与尊严确实是所有人类共同追求的精神气质，值得我们用生命去呼唤的主题。只是，每个人赋予这种最抽象、最玄奥的词具象的意义时不一样，扭曲与误读随时存在。我们需要以自我负责的方式唤起内在的勇气，以负责任的心态来面对自己的人生。

沙因在他的《沙因组织心理学》中写道：“组织角色需要的只是个人部分特定的活动，但是前来工作的却是整个人。”我们既然无法改变人的属性，那么就需要尊重人的天性。当人性被物化时，它的代价也许是隐性而深远沉重的。

企业如何将人作为人来对待？个人如何将人（自己和他人）作为人来对待？

这是一个时代前进中的必答题。

## Article C7—仅招聘心理医生是不够的

*Source: Xinmin Evening News (新民晚报)*

*Publication Date: 25 May 2010*

*Author: Shao Ning (邵宁)*

据报道，“十连跳”不幸事件后，富士康在 22 日的一次人才招聘会上开出了 20 万元到 60 万元的平均年薪，招聘一批心理医生、心理咨询师。不幸，今晨竟又发生了“十一连跳”。

多数轻生者显然都是心理出现了偏差，以高薪招聘持证心理医师、心理咨询师，希望能避免悲剧的再度发生，其出发点无疑是好的。但是，要解开这家超大型企业 40 多万员工的群体“心结”，却不是招几个心理医生就行的。

富士康的问题究竟出在哪里？公司承认，在管理上存在漏洞。有人指责他们严苛的加班制度。在富士康工作就意味着加班，不加班只能拿相当于最低工资的底薪，八九百元。虽然很多员工为了多挣钱不反对加班，但长年累月的超负荷劳动，必定摧残人的身心。

而这种劳动，又是极其单调枯燥。据电视新闻现场采访，工人每天 7 时 30 分进厂，晚上 8 时下班，去除中间 2 小时的吃饭、休息时间，实际工作时间是 10 小时。他们在流水线上重复着同样的劳动，几个小时无法喘口气，连句话都不能说。机器 24 小时运转，员工分两班工作。人成为了机器的一部分，这是非常可怕的。

如果说，这样的生活，上一辈农民工尚能忍耐，那么，80 后、90 后新生代农民工则难以坚持下去。曾在富士康“卧底”采访 28 天的南方周末实习记者刘志毅说，他感觉最大的问题，是员工心中的梦想与严酷的现实产生了巨大的落差。

20 来岁的新生代农民工与父辈有着本质的区别，他们离开贫穷的家乡不仅是为了生计，更希望过一种新的生活，能够实现自己的价值，找到属于自己的幸福。而在富士康，他们每天坐着穿梭巴士上下班，往来于固定的车间和宿舍，却不清楚未来的方向。平日里，没有人倾听他们的烦恼，为他们谋划将来。



马斯洛理论把人的需求分成生理需求、安全需求、社交需求、尊重需求和自我实现需求五类。在富士康，员工的生理需求、安全需求是有保障的，但社交需求、尊重需求，尤其是自我实现需求，却都无法实现。

富士康缺少的是发自内心的对人的关怀、对人的尊重。这一点，仅靠心理医生，以及建立名义上的“员工关爱中心”是无法弥补的。

## Article C8—富士康“11连跳”的真实梦魇是什么？

*Source: 21st Century Network (21 世纪网)*

*Publication Date: 26 May 2010*

*Editor: Li Hui (李辉)*

据新华社报道，5月25日凌晨，富士康科技集团观澜园区华南培训中心一名男性员工坠楼死亡，目前警方已介入调查。

这是富士康今年以来第11宗员工坠楼事件，共造成9死2重伤。最近一次的跳楼事件发生在4天前，死者为一名21岁的男职员。

富士康集团工会副主席陈宏方透露，25日坠楼死者名叫李海，湖南醴陵人，中专学历，死亡时年仅19岁，入职富士康42天。有消息称，该男子今早6:30分从富士康观澜园区的一幢楼房上跳下。

深圳市公安局周二确认了上述坠亡案件，但尚未确认是自杀还是意外事件。

而就在前一天，富士康总裁郭台铭首次公开回应外界种种质疑，他称富士康绝非只要钱不要命的“血汗工厂”，他也有信心在短期内把状况稳住。

郭台铭表示，富士康员工共80几万，再加起来全球的鸿海集团多达90几万人，员工的确很难管理。他说，外界不了解真相，“现在很多事都不能说，我们都默默在做。”

清华大学社会系教授罗家德，长时间调研类似富士康这样的高科技代工企业，他认为，富士康所面临问题并不是个案，它表明了企业需要转变生产模式和管理模式的紧迫性。他说，形象地讲，富士康文化是一种男性文化，或者说是一种军队文化。富士康员工当中80、90后已经占到了85%，这种军队文化可能还适合工厂管理，但已不适合80、90后了。

曾在富士康“卧底”采访28天的南方周末实习记者刘志毅说，他感觉最大的问题，是员工心中的梦想与严酷的现实产生了巨大的落差。

21 世纪网专栏作者李子旸认为，人是社会化的动物，是群居的动物，需要以各种纽带彼此联系起来。而富士康这类企业，就缺乏一个社会的氛围。

21 世纪网读者在来信中更是指出，富士康作为中国制造的佼佼者，还是被推上中国制造的祭坛，成为中国制造反人性的标本。这些年轻生命以血的代价揭开了中国制造优势的辉煌面纱的背后，其内在逻辑的反人性一面。而中国制造的优势，不是制造出一个富豪寡头，也不是制造一群先富的权贵利益集团，而是在这个制造体内的普通人的幸福生活。

大参考创办人李易今天在其博客公布了一封富士康员工的回信。这位名为周洪波的员工在信里说，作为身在一线长达 10 年的老员工，完全可以体会到富士康基层工人的辛苦，工资最低，工作最多，但这也不能成为跳楼的主要因素。

在他看来，频繁跳楼的现象更多是社会因素和个人因素。

富士康的一位资深台籍人士此前回应媒体采访时也指出，富士康的管理越来越人性化，但是社会的变化更快更剧烈。几亿的新生代打工者正面临相同的困局，只不过问题在富士康引爆，并像流行性感冒一样，让自杀也具有传染性。

关于富士康坠楼事件的争论还在持续，“11 连跳”所反映的问题也许并非仅局限在富士康内部。那么，“11 连跳”背后的真实梦魇到底是什么？人们期待用一个清醒的声音来唤醒社会的关注。