

Abstract

Perspectives on the History of a Chinese Conglomerate: Weiqiao Pioneering Group, Ltd

This lecture explores the growth of the Weiqiao Pioneering Group, Ltd. (Weiqiao Chuangye Jituan Youxian Gongsi), from a small cotton ginning factory to an industrial conglomerate with over 150,000 employees. The group is one of the primary movers behind the rapid population growth and urbanization of the town of Zouping, Shandong Province. The lecture looks at the company from three points of view defined by three different groups of sources. The first group of sources include ethnographic observations, interviews with company officials and the official statistics that document the company's growth. The second group of sources include rumour and business reportage about the leading personnel of the company. The third derives from the internet coverage of major industrial accident that occurred in Zouping in 2007. The second and third perspectives provide critical lenses onto the more hagiographic portrait derived from the first group of sources. Together, the three sources demonstrate the tensions between Capital's unending drive for profit and the company's embeddedness in local society.