

Father-Daughter Relationships among Adolescents in Shanghai

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I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Abstract

Contemporary Chinese families are experiencing an increasingly rapid pace of change because of economic growth and the consequences of the One Child policy. These changes are leading to changing expectations concerning gender roles and relationships in families, including those of fathers and daughters. In addition, the long history of Confucianism in Chinese society gives men's roles in families their own specific meanings.

The thesis analyses the family lives of girls and their fathers at key points of historical change and in the life course of young people and fathers living in Shanghai. Its contribution to knowledge rests on exploring the applicability of western theories about changing family practices and relationships in a Chinese context. The study examines daughters' and fathers' perspectives of father-daughter relationships among two cohorts of girls aged 13/14 and aged 16/17. It seeks to understand how girls and fathers construct their identities as teenagers and as fathers; their family practices; and how they negotiate parental authority and adolescent independence. A multi-method research design was employed: four focus groups conducted in schools, a questionnaire survey with girls (N=767) and their fathers (N=599), and eight pairs of semi structured interviews carried out separately with daughters and their fathers.

It was found that most girls were generally happy with their relationships with their mothers and fathers. Both fathers and their daughters valued their fathers' financial and emotional support. Although fathers 'cared about' their daughters, they did not perceive themselves as the parent who should 'take care of' their daughter's daily lives. Fathers were also found to spend less time with their daughters, especially those in the older cohort, compared with mothers. Overall, fathers' involvement was mainly focused on girls' education. However, fathers also exercised power over areas of their daughters' social lives, such as going out and making friends, internet use and romantic relationships.

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Chapter 1 Mapping the Chinese contexts: traditional influences and social changes

Contemporary Chinese families are experiencing tremendous changes: the growth of the economy, the speed of changes and the consequences of the One Child policy. These changes are inevitably leading to changing expectations of gender roles in families. In addition, the long history of Confucianism in Chinese society gives the men and women's role its own specific meanings. These factors together suggest the importance of a study of father-daughter relationships in modern China.

This study confined itself to fieldwork in Shanghai, one of the biggest cities in China. With a residential population of over eighteen million (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2009), around 1.3% of China's population, Shanghai is one of China's most important cities in terms of size and economic development. Currently it "contribute[s] more than one-eighth of the central government's financial revenue" (Wong and Lee, 2001, p. 521). Although this is a small scale Shanghai study, the broad Chinese context will be discussed together with the Shanghai local context to provide an overall picture of the traditional influences and social changes in contemporary Chinese families.

In this chapter, Confucianism will be first explored in order to provide an overall picture of people's family lives in Chinese society. A brief history of recent social changes that influence people's daily lives after the People's Republic of China era will be outlined. Following this, the differences between urban and rural China will be addressed to introduce the recent social mobility that has taken place in contemporary Chinese society. Thirdly, the impact of the one child policy on families will be explored. Lastly, the gender differences between men and women and social inequality, which has a particular salience in relation to people's respective position in the contemporary Chinese society, will also be stressed.

Confucianism was the dominant source of ethics in Chinese society for many centuries. In recent years, interest in Confucianism has seen a resurgence as a consequence of both its promotion by the Chinese government and a recovery in public interest after it was suppressed during the Cultural Revolution (The Economist, 2007). Confucianism emphasises the importance of education, collective effort, family ties and filial piety, and once again plays an important role in the lives of many Chinese (Salili, Zhou and Hoosain, 2003).

From the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, there has been a continuing process of change that has affected Chinese life in varying ways. During the Cultural Revolution, the national entrance exam was stopped for ten years and many youth were sent to the countryside to be 're-educated'. Starting from the end of the 1970s, the Chinese government started to introduce many pragmatic social and economic reforms such as the Open Door Policy. The economic development has attracted many people from rural areas to work in the city and therefore enabled more social mobility. In addition, the Open Door policy also caused tremendous changes in both social and economic life. Along with industrialisation, economic benefits and the improvement in their standard of living, the urban Chinese have also been influenced by foreign ideas and culture.

As a result of this huge increase in contact with western technologies and ideologies, urban Chinese families are facing rising conflicts as they move from a traditional lifestyle to new ways of living, with different opportunities and challenges. For example, most urban mothers work in the formal labour market and no longer stay at home as housewives. Women are expected to share financial responsibilities with men, while men are expected to play a more active role in the family, since domestic duties need to be shared when both are in waged work. These factors inevitably lead to changes in expectations and attitudes towards the roles of mothers and fathers.

The One Child Policy, perhaps one of the best known acts of the Chinese government, was introduced in 1979 to control the size of the population. Since most families now have only one child, parents may devote a great deal of care to their only child, whatever its gender. In addition to receiving more care and attention from parents, many only children have also been able to enjoy the material wealth generated as a consequence of the Open Door policy (see section 1.2).

Both traditional cultural values and social changes in modern Chinese society have created a social context that emphasizes the importance of education in Chinese people's lives. The beliefs in the importance of hard work were also stressed. Many parents who grew up in the 1949-1986 period did not get good education while they were young because of the continuous political changes (see section 1.2). Parents who had very little during their own childhood want to ensure their children have all the resources and opportunities, including education, that they had to go without. In addition, Chinese people regard good education as a guarantee of a better life in the future and thus parents take a great deal of responsibility for monitoring their children's studies and providing children with all the help they can to achieve academic success (Veeck, Flurry and

Jiang, 2003). Therefore, education has both historical and cultural significant for most parents.

In short, both from a historical and generational perspective, people's lives in contemporary China have changed tremendously. More specifically, changes in women and men's role in Chinese society in recent decades which intersect with social, cultural and technological changes have shaped new family lives in contemporary Chinese families and thus lead to new ways of parenting. It was the rapid economic and social changes in recent decades that inspired me to investigate adolescent girls' relationships with their fathers.

1.1 Influences of Confucianism

Confucianism, which can be traced back over two thousand years, plays a fundamental role in Chinese family life and it still dominates Chinese people's attitudes towards society and families. The major concepts that Confucianism promotes are: 'supreme moral person; filial piety; collective decision making; self-fulfilment; good manners; and the importance of education' (Lau and Yeung, 1996, p. 32).

Authority and obedience are fundamental to Confucianism and there are "clear hierarchies between older and younger, male and female, and ruler and ruled" (Abelmann, 1997; Laroche *et al.*, 2007, p. 114). These traditional Chinese values also define the normative beliefs and family practices for both males and females in the family. According to Confucianism, the father is the undisputed head of the family. *Nan zhu wai, nv zhu nei* (men take care of things outside the family whereas women take care of things inside the family) is a commonsense saying for most people (Shek, 2006). Other old Chinese sayings, *yi jia zhi zhu* (the master of the family) and *chu jia cong fu* (a married woman should obey her husband) clearly delineate the relative statuses of men and women in the family (Shek, 2006). Tusi Ming (2002) comprehensively reviewed the status of men and women in Chinese society. He argued that, prior to 1949 when the Peoples' Republic of China was established, agriculture was the main source of income for the family. As men were regarded as physically stronger than women, they were thought to produce more for the family. Men were also regarded as the authorities in the family and in society, while women were seen as inferior to men in Chinese society's patriarchal culture. Confucius' three obediences: 'as an unmarried woman she must obey her father, as a married woman she must obey her husband, and as a widow she must obey her adult sons' (Zang, 2003, p. 295) clearly stated women's status. As for women's marriages, it was common for these to be arranged by men. Women had little say and had to obey their fathers' wishes. Women were the ones who

took care of the family, but they did not have the opportunity to be educated. However, both men's and women's roles and responsibilities may have changed as a consequence of women's participation in the labour market as will be discussed later in this chapter.

In addition, fathers play an important role with children. The maxim *Zi bu jiao, fu zhi guo* (it is the father's fault if the child is not taught properly) emphasises the duty of fathers towards their children. As for mothers, their main duty is to 'be married to a good provider for herself, to bear children for his family and hope these children will be successful' (Cheung, 1996, p. 46). There is also a clear distinction between daughters and sons. Sons are expected to continue the family line and are the focus of the family. Daughters, who will get married and belong to other families eventually, are less important in traditional Chinese society. Therefore the relationships between fathers and sons have been the most crucial relationships (Lynn, 1974), since a father's duty is to bring up his son so that one day he may take over this power and responsibility.

With regard to childrearing, parents believe in *guan*(管), which means control or governance (Xu *et al.*, 2005). This is mainly because Chinese parents are expected to be the first teachers of the child (Xu *et al.*, 2005). For the children, filial piety is crucial in the parent-child relationship. *The Classic of Filial Piety* (孝经), one of the classic books of Confucian ideology, implies that in order to deliver filial piety children should show affection and respect to their parents (Saari, 1990). Confucius said filial piety began with the fact that everything a child was came from its parents; therefore the child must show them the deepest respect. The aim of filial piety is for the child to bring honour to the family name and glory to its parents. In this sense, children owe their very existence to their parents and therefore they are obligated unconditionally to fulfil duties to them. Success in academic life is one of the most important filial duties nowadays, as education is so heavily stressed in Chinese culture (Salili, Zhou and Hoosain, 2003). These traditional values help enhance the role of education in the family and in society as a whole.

Confucianism also has a strong influence on people's perceptions of themselves and their relationships to others and society. The concept of the self is normally defined in relation to others and it is defined in the hierarchy of relationships. Moreover, the individual self only exists in relationship to and on behalf of social groups, such as family, community and nation (Fei, 1992). In this sense, the group or collective interests are more important than the individual interests. In general, this encourages people to sacrifice their own interests to the group or collective interests so that harmony and order are maintained (Weber, 2002). As a result, 'one

can end up with no self at all' (Lau and Yeung, 1996, p. 361). A powerful symbol of this concept of deferential order is in the grammar of the Chinese language: given names are placed after family names; the larger geographical areas come first in addresses (eg. County, City, District, Street, Number) and dates are written year, month, day.

The Confucian idea of the self was adopted by the famous scholar Liang Qichao in the 1910s. He argued that the individual has a dual self: the 'small self' centred on personal interests and the 'great self' based on the interests of community, group and nation. This has been widely accepted by many Chinese from the start of the communists period (after 1949), and it is an important concept in daily life even now (Chang, 1971).

1.2 Social changes and political movements in the People's Republic of China era: a brief history

The long traditions of Confucianism and family life have undergone dramatic changes since the establishment of P.R.C. In this section, a brief history of political and social events which have had an impact on family life is presented (see table 1.1).

1949	the establishment of People's Republic of China
1958	the 'Great Leap Forward' initiated
1959-1961	the 'Three bitter years' of natural disasters
1966-1976	the Cultural Revolution and the national examinations stopped for those 10 years
	1968: The People's Daily delivers Chairman Mao's instruction to encourage young people to go to the countryside and 'Up to the mountain, down to the village'; this movement peaks
1977	National examinations for entry to universities restarted
1978	the 'Open Door' policy initiated by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China the beginning of reforms to government owned companies
1979	the One Child Policy introduced
1980	the end of the 'Up to the mountain, down to the village' movement
1986	introduction of nine year free compulsory education
1997	state-owned enterprise reform

Table 1.1: A brief Chinese history after P.R.C era

1958-1961: Great Leap Forward and 'Three bitter years'

In 1958, the Chinese government launched the Great Leap Forward (大跃进), aiming to hasten the pace of economic and technical development (Fairband, 2008). However,

the people's communes, which provided free food for everyone, did not function as well as expected. The communes falsely reported achievements to the government which had actually been impossible to accomplish. In addition, the focus on industrial development kept many people away from the fields and they missed the harvest season. In the following year, floods and a drought caused starvation. In consequence, the whole country experienced three bitter years of natural disasters from 1959 to 1961, in which both nature and mistaken political decisions were to blame.

1950s-1978: Up to the Mountain, Down to the Village and the Cultural Revolution

In the mid 1950s, many urban youths were sent, or volunteered to go, to the countryside. At the beginning, this was part of a large-scale national programme called 'Up to the Mountains, Down to the Villages', which was designed to ease the unemployment and urban growth problems in the cities (Bernstein, 1977). Rather than starting or continuing school and getting a job in the office, urban youths were 're-educated' by farmers to become manual workers, peasants and soldiers (ibid.).

The Cultural Revolution started in 1966. As a consequence, the national university entrance examination was cancelled by the government and school education was halted almost completely. School age children also became the "little Red Guards" who helped to destroy the four 'olds': old thoughts, old cultures, old customs and old habits. The revolution against the four 'olds' was intended to get rid of all the bourgeois ideology that remained in the new communist society. People believed that anything 'bourgeois' would corrupt people's minds and cause capitalist society to return (People's Daily, 2000). It is clear that society did not stress the importance of education during the Cultural Revolution. Instead, it was advocated that 'school time should be shortened and education needed to be revolutionised'. Institutions of higher education were closed for four years, until the autumn of 1970, and many members of the Red Guards never completed their education (Wang, 2008).

During the Cultural Revolution, when the whole society was in disorder and young people could neither go to university nor get jobs, going to the countryside again became the political solution. The peak time was from 1966-1968, during which all the school students in junior and senior high school in urban areas were sent to the

countryside. During the 1950s, 60s and 70s, around 18 million educated urban youths, who were known as the *Xiaxiang ZhiQing* (下乡知青) were transferred to the countryside (Ye, 2008). In 1980, the central government decided not to send more youth to the countryside and more and more *Xiaxiang ZhiQing* gradually made their own way back to the cities and their hometowns (ibid.).

1978: Open Door Policy

At the end of 1978, Deng Xiaoping became the second generation of China's leadership (Fairband, 2008). Under Deng's direction, China started the economic reform in 1978 and opened up the market to the foreign investment, which is called the 'Open Door Policy'. These reforms accelerated the modernization process of China. Higher living standards and increases in the GDP per capita followed (Gregory, 2000).

1979: One Child Policy

Another radical reform under Deng Xiaoping's regime was the only child campaign launched in 1979 to control population size. Although there was great diversity among different areas, especially in the countryside, the percentage of only children increased dramatically throughout the nation (Davis, 2000). Between 1995-1997, according to the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China (2004), 90% of all births were first children and since 1998 this stabilised at around 94%. For urban areas like Shanghai, the One Child Policy was implemented more effectively than in most other parts of the country. At its implementation in 1979, the first-child rate in Shanghai was 97.0%. From 1980 to 1997, it was over 99.5% (Shen, Yang and Li, 1999). It should be noted that the official figure did not include families who had more than one child but did not report the births of the additional children. There are also a few exceptions in which parents are permitted to have more than one child, depending on the regulations in each region. In Shanghai for example, parents may have more than one child when: parents have a disabled child; both parents are only children themselves or the parents are from a minority ethnic group that has moved to Shanghai (Shanghai Population and Family Planning Commission, 2003).

1986: Implementation of nine year compulsory education

In 1986, the government decided to implement nine years of compulsory free education for every child. As a result, more women have had the chance to get an education and this may have improved women's status in Chinese society. In 1990, 32% of women over fifteen years old could not read or write, compared with 13.0% of men. In 2000, 13.5% of women over fifteen years old could not read or write, compared with 4.9% of men (National Bureau of Statistics). However, 10.4% of the national population over six years old (around a hundred million people) still did not have any formal education in 2006, and 72.7% of those were women (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Clearly, women are gaining more and more opportunities in terms of education, but more effort is still needed to narrow the gap between men and women.

1997: State-owned Enterprise Reform

Before 1993, most urban adults were employed by large state-owned enterprises and enjoyed the 'iron rice bowl' of a job for life, relatively equal wages and comprehensive welfare provision (Yan, 2010). However, the third plenum of the Fourteenth Party Congress in 1993 decided to move from a centrally planned to a more market-based economy (Wu, 2008). As a consequence of this reform, state firms made hundreds of thousands redundant. Between 1993 and 2002, more than 63 million jobs in state-owned enterprises were cut (Hurst, 2009). At the same time, many people saw this as an opportunity to *xia hai* (下海) – 'jump to the sea' – and make money with their own business (ibid.). This caused income disparities to widen dramatically as it benefited individuals who worked hard and had good management skills.

1.3 Social mobility between urban and rural areas

There are two important aspects to understanding Chinese social mobility after 1949: the national university entrance examination and the household registration system (Li, 2005). Before we go into these two areas, it is necessary to understand the education system first.

1.31 Education systems in China and Shanghai

Since 1986, it has been compulsory for all Chinese children to have nine years education, starting at six years' old (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2006a). This usually consists of five years' primary and four years' junior high school, although in some parts of the country it is six years' primary and three years' junior high. The primary school entrance rate for school-age children has been above 97% throughout the country since 1990 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2009b). The entrance rate for junior high school (ages 11-14) has seen a steady increase from 40.6% in 1990 to 83.4% in 2008 (ibid.). In Shanghai, the enrolment rate was much higher than nationally: both primary and junior high school rates were around 99.9% in the period from 2000 to 2007 (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2009). In Shanghai, students can go to their local schools without doing any exams at both primary and junior high school levels (Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, 2010a).

Senior high school consists of three years' study. However, entry to senior high school at around 15 years old is neither compulsory nor an entitlement, and requires passing entrance examinations. In 2008, 54.0% of the students who took the exam were able to enter senior high school in Shanghai (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2009). Of the remainder, some went to vocational and technical schools after their nine years compulsory education and others started work. In 2008, 13.1% of students were in other types of schools such as vocational and technical schools (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2009). There is also a small proportion of private schools in Shanghai, as 15.1% of junior high and 11.9% of senior high school students went to private schools in 2008 (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2009).

There are two types of state school at senior high school level: ordinary state schools and key state schools. Students with the best results in the senior high school entrance exam go to the key schools. There are lots of 'key' primary schools and 'key' secondary schools in each part of the country, where children are selected mainly by their educational performance, and these are the schools whose students have had the highest success rates in getting into 'key' universities. From kindergarten to university, students take exams to get into a good institution at the next level. 'Key' schools are highly selective and students have to be academically outstanding in order to get a place. Likewise many ordinary schools set up 'key' classes to group the outstanding students together. In 2005, 20% of senior high school students were studying in 'key schools' (Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, 2006). In 2006, the newly revised Compulsory Education Law clearly indicated that the 'key' schools or 'key' classes were banned

from selecting students according to exam results, in order to narrow the gap between all the schools (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2006a). However, these 'key' schools or classes still exist because the system of preferences in the application procedure still favours the most popular schools. Take Shanghai as an example, there were 52 model schools that were permitted by local education authority to choose outstanding students over other schools in 2008 (Shanghai Municipal Educational Examinations Authority, 2008). By simply replacing the word 'key' school with the term 'model' school did not ease the competitions among the students.

The national university entrance examination (*gao kao*) is the only way to get into university in China. It takes place once a year on 7th, 8th and 9th of June and these three days determine whether high school students are eligible for higher education. Every student has only one chance a year and most students want to go to good universities (national 'key' universities or local 'key' universities). As the competition to succeed in the national exam is very fierce, it starts from a very early stage in children's education. The entrance rate for senior high school students going on to university in Shanghai is very high and it has been increasing every year, 67.4% in 2000, 82.1% in 2006 and 84.8% in 2007 (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2009).

1.32 The household registration system

The household registration system (*hu kou* system) initiated in 1958 was originally set up to prevent people moving from rural areas to urban areas due to the shortage of food, electricity and other resources (Li, 2005). The Chinese government divided the population into two categories: urban residential status and rural residential status. This registration is conferred at birth on the basis of parents' status and where parents were born (Li, 2005). For example, a child born in Shanghai to a parent who was a farmer, his/her household status thus becomes: Shanghai and agricultural. Therefore, people still hold their original household status even though they move to other places. As the system is designed to prevent people moving around, therefore, it is difficult for people from rural areas to move to urban areas because many regulations prevent this. The *hu kou* system also directly affects people's every aspect of daily life: educational attainment, career and health care (Wang, 2005). There are some occasions when people who have a rural status are allowed to change their status of household registration, the most common one is to graduate from the university and then get a work permit from a company in an urban areas. But overall it is a rigid and unfair identification system (Zhang, 2009).

More and more people are moving to the city for jobs as a result of the increasing demand of workforce in urban areas with the development of the Chinese economy. According to the World Bank, 268 million Chinese migrated from rural to urban areas between 1980 and 2000 (Yusuf and Saich, 2007) and half of the people now live in cities (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The population of rural migrants was most concentrated in big cities like Shanghai and Beijing. In 2000, the population of immigrants from outside Shanghai who lived in Shanghai more than half year consisted of 18.6% of the whole Shanghai population (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2008). The figure (this figure only includes rural migrants who live in Shanghai more than half a year) increased even more rapidly in the recent years: 25.7% in 2006 and 26.8% in 2007 (ibis.). However people still retain their household registration wherever they go and the statement ‘applicants with urban status are preferred over rural status, applications from the local city are preferred over others’ still appears in many government documents and job advertisements (Bai, 2008). For those who were originally from rural areas, they were not treated equally as the local citizens, mainly because of their household registration status. Without a local household registration, it is difficult to get to the local school and health care is more expensive for them. Therefore, people started to call for the reform of *hu kou* system. In recent years, the government has been trying to develop new rules to adapt to the new situation to make it easier for people to move around and give more rights to the rural immigrants. For example, the large scale reform of healthcare in recent years shows the government has tried to provide an equal healthcare system for both citizens who are registered and people who have temporary residency rights (Kong, 2010). The Shanghai government introduced the ‘Residence Permit System’ in 2002 to attract more talented people from outside Shanghai and enable them to have fairer access to social welfare benefits (Shanghai Municipal Government, 2002). Relatively speaking, the *hu kou* system has become less important in terms of job seeking and healthcare over the years and eventually the household system may disintegrate (Xi, 2005).

As the number of rural migrants living in Shanghai has been increasing every year (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2009), their children’s education has become a major issue, as originally the Shanghai government only offered free education for people who had Shanghai household status. In 2008, the Shanghai government started to provide free compulsory education to children whose parents did not have Shanghai household status but who had been working and living in Shanghai for more than half a year (Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, 2010b; Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, 2010c). Before that, students whose household registrations were not in Shanghai had to pay tuition fees to get into primary

and junior high schools, and there were not always enough places even for parents who could afford them. However, at senior high school level, Shanghai's government still does not provide free education for non-Shanghai householders and many children who do not hold Shanghai household status have to go back to their household region to continue their education. Moreover, children have to take the national university entrance exam in their household region, and the final university entrance exam in Shanghai is different from elsewhere in China.

1.33 Lu Xueyi's class classification

Before the 'Open Door Policy' and economic reforms in 1978, the society under the communist party was either characterized according to their socialist groups, such as workers, peasants and soldiers; or by their household status, 'rural and urban status' (Bian, 2002). However, the economic reforms destroyed the socialist allocation of economic and social resources in the society, particularly in urban areas as new occupations emerged and there was a greater mobility of labor.

Since then, scholarly interest in systems of social stratification and social equality has grown (Li, 1999). Under the strong influence of classical Marxism in China, many researchers attempted to develop class categories according to occupations: management, skilled professional, clerical, manual worker, self-employed, entrepreneur and others (Zheng, 2002). Lu Xueyi's class classification is widely used as it captures a stratified workforce after 1978 and demonstrates the contemporary occupational structure which no longer stand for an egalitarian social society (Lu, 2002). Taking account of people's social status, ten social classes were developed: government administrators/managers; senior business executives; owners of private enterprises; professionals; office workers; small business entrepreneurs; service industry worker; manufacturing workers; agriculture workers and unemployed (Appendix 1). The differences between owners of private enterprises and small business entrepreneurs are that the former category means the company employs more than eight people and the small business entrepreneurs category includes self-employed. Lu Xueyi's classification is used in my study to distinguish the occupations of parents.

1.4 Family changes: only child, only hope

Numerous researchers attempt to assess the impact of the One Child Policy on families. In this section, I will focus on changes in family structure, parent-child relationships among only children and consumer power of only children.

1.41 Changes in family structure and family size

The Marriage Law in 1980 clearly stated that couples have a duty to implement the One Child Policy (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 1980). The structure of families has changed dramatically since the introduction of the One Child Policy and the standard nuclear family was composed of one child, and a father and mother. In a recent five cities study, the data revealed that the number of nuclear families with an only child increased rapidly after the One Child policy and that it was the main family structure in the cities (Ma *et al.*, 2010). The proportion of nuclear family in 2008, 1993 and 1983 was 50.2%, 54.3% and 24.2% respectively (ibid.).

Household size is also found to have decreased gradually with changes in lifestyle and the implementation of the One Child Policy (Tang, 2005). Economic growth has also enabled more people to buy their own flats or houses once they get married, compared to the older generation. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006), the average household sizes were 4.33 in 1953, 4.43 in 1964, 4.41 in 1982, 3.96 in 1990, 3.44 in 2002 and 3.36 in 2004. In Shanghai, the average household size is relatively smaller than the national average, at 3.8, 3.03 and 2.7 in 1980, 1999 and 2006 respectively (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2007; Xu, 2001). In Shanghai, the number of generations living in one household is also decreasing and two generation families are the main family model. In 1998, two generation families consisted of 74.5% of all the families and three generations living together become less popular, with only 18.1% in Shanghai (Shen, Yang and Li, 1999).

But beyond the rise of the standard nuclear family, the growing divorce rates in the last twenty years or so have resulted in more and more people living alone or as single parents (Xu and Ye, 2002). According to Xu and Ye's national study of the divorce rate between 1980 and 2000, Shanghai had the biggest increase of all, rising seven fold during that period from 0.29% in 1980 to 2.02 in 2000 (ibid.). Nevertheless, most people are still in marriage. According to the national data in 2008, 72.25% of the whole population over aged 15 are in their first marriage and with only 1.7% of the population remarried (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2009).

1.42 The impact of the One Child Policy: relationships with friends and parents among only children

Being the only children means that they can enjoy a wealthier lifestyle than previous generations, therefore, these youngsters are often described as being more self-centred and over-protected by

their parents. There is a stereotype of the 1990s generation being spoiled, selfish and lazy (Feng, 2000). Being the only one in the family probably means that they are the centre of family life and thus more individualistic. An investigation of parent-child relationships comparing only children with ones who had siblings found that parents with one child have a closer parent-child relationship and that they do more activities together compared to parents with more children (Feng, 2002).

However, only children also have a greater desire for companionship, as many feel lonely without siblings. Thus, peer relations play an even more important role in only children's lives. Only children were found to be quicker and better at making friends in a new environment (Feng, 2000). This highlights the only child's need to be with other children of the same age. Drawing on a study by Sun Yunxiao, there was a strong desire from only children to have intimate relationships with friends. The stronger the need to make friends with other people, the happier they were with others, the more cooperative with friends, and the more respectful to other people (Sun and Zhao, 2005). Therefore, it seems that although the '1990s generation' children were brought up in an individualised and child-centred family environment, they have a strong need to be part of friendship groups with their peers.

Another consequence of the One Child Policy is that it has created an environment in which nurture is focused on either a boy or a girl, with significant implications for gender equality. Being the only children means being the 'only hope' to fulfil their parents' wishes (Fong, 2004). Parents' high expectation of their children's academic achievement are widespread amongst Chinese parents and the fact of only having one child makes parents take an interest in its education whatever its gender (Tsui and Rich, 2002). City parents seem to think that having either a boy or a girl is fine, because the reason to have children is the pleasure of enjoying family life (Wu, 1996). Several studies have revealed that, especially in urban areas, the One Child Policy has had the unintended consequence of narrowing the gender bias against girls which is deeply rooted in Confucianism and traditional Chinese society (Liu, 2006; Tsui and Rich, 2002; Veeck, Flurry and Jiang, 2003). As presented in table 1.2, the national data also show that gender differences have narrowed at all stages of enrolment in education (National Bureau of Statistics, 2001; National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

	Females as % of total student enrolment					
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2009
Higher Education	23.4	30.0	33.7	35.4	41.0	50.3
Secondary Education	39.6	40.2	41.9	44.8	46.2	47.1
Primary Education	44.6	44.8	46.2	47.3	47.6	46.4

Table 1.2: Female students' representation in education

However, people's traditional preference for sons over daughters may still remain, regardless of parents' high aspirations and expenditure on their children as will be discussed in the next section.

1.43 Golden boys and girls: the new consumers

The first generation of One Child Policy children were 'golden' boys and girls as they enjoyed all the luxuries their parents could buy them and they had become the most important consumer group (St-Maurice and Wu, 2006; The Economist, 2004). Teenagers born in the 1990s may not be able to buy luxury goods, as they are totally financially dependent on their parents; however the phenomenal success of McDonalds, KFC and Pizza Hut shows how powerful a consumer group urban Chinese children are and how much these Western companies have changed urban Chinese children's lifestyles (Watson, 2004). What's more, Elisabeth Croll's work on Chinese consumers suggests that children have been the largest and most conspicuous group of Chinese consumers during the past twenty years, as a result of parental indulgence (2006).

As already noted, Chinese families have always had a strong interest in their children's education. Moreover, investment in children's education is increasing. According to the National Statistics Bureau, the average per person expenditure on education, recreation and cultural services in cities steadily increased between 1996 and 2008, from 312.71 RMB in 1995 to 1358.26 RMB in 2008 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2009a). In Shanghai, educational spending by families, including books, private tuition and other educational products, as a proportion of an average family's annual expenditure, is second only to food at 16.5% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006). When asked how much they spent to support their primary school age children, many parents in Shanghai reported that they spent almost one parent's monthly wage every month, in 1996 (Davis and Sensenbrenner, 2000). This again confirms parents' high aspirations and expectations for their children's education.

Parental expenditure on boys and girls may also be narrowed. Girls who are only children may be able to enjoy 'unprecedented parental support because they do not have to compete with

brothers for parental investment' (Fong, 2002, p. 1098), according to Fong's ethnographic study in Dalian while she worked as an English teacher in three local high schools (Fong, 2002). Consistent with this, a survey conducted with 220 households with children attending three Yangzhou secondary schools showed no significant differences among boys and girls when they asked parents how much they had spent on their child during the previous semester on a variety of expenses related to education (Veeck, Flurry and Jiang, 2003). A survey of 1,040 high school students in Wuhan, a large city in central China, found that parents with daughters spent more on education than parents with boys (Tsui and Rich, 2002).

1.5 Men and women in Chinese society

Since 1949, several policies have been implemented to improve women's status. National laws on women's rights, such as The Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women, the Marriage Law and the Law of Labour have tried to lessen discrimination between men and women, both in the family and in society. However, the population imbalance between boys and girls and attitudes towards equality between men and women suggest it has a long way to go.

1.51 Population imbalance between boys and girls

Both Chinese academics and the western media have reported a population imbalance between male and female populations in China (Lu, 2010; Ru, Lu and Li, 2010; The Economist, 2010), which has not changed much since the One Child Policy. The factors that causing the discrepancy between men and women in the population nationally are complex and they vary in different periods and areas (Li, 2007). Some researchers argue that one reason was the gender discrimination between girls and boys, which is rooted in traditional Chinese culture's preferences for males and sons. Because of the low status of women in Chinese society parents prefer a son rather than a daughter (Li, 2007). The One Child Policy may also have increased the pressure to produce a son, as parents now have only one chance to continue the family line (The Economist, 2010). In addition, new technology and increasing income means that many people can find out the sex of their unborn child and abort a girl if they want to. The widespread use of B-type ultrasonic during pregnancy which enables people to choose to have abortion if it is a girl may contribute to increasing the gap between boys and girls (Li, 2007; Lu, 2005). However, the population trend in Shanghai is slightly different from the national picture since the proportion of men and women was quite equal. In Shanghai, men consisted 49.6% of the population in 1980 and was around 50% in 1990, 2000 and 2006 (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2007).

1.52 Attitudes towards equality between men and women

Although there is also evidence of changes in attitudes towards women's status in modern society, there still seem to be a great number of people who hold traditional values regarding male and female roles. Two national surveys of women's lives reviewed a variety of topics, including economic conditions, politics, education, married life, health, lifestyle, law and gender ideas from both men and women's perspectives (The Second Wave Research Team of Chinese Women Status, 2001). In 1990, 49.4% of women and 51.8% of men 'agree' or 'agree very much' that "men's role was primarily outside the home and women's role was inside the home". The figures for female and male participation in the 2000 survey were slightly higher than those given in 1990, at 50.4% for women and 53.9% for men. In Shanghai, the figure at both levels ('agree' and 'agree very much') was much lower at both time points, especially for men, although there was also an increase for both men and women in 2000 (ibid.). In 1990, 34.6% men 'agree' or 'agree very much' and in 2000, 42.8% men thought so (ibid.). Regardless of the rapid social and economic changes during these ten years, people's values and attitudes have not caught up and regional differences also exist.

1.53 Women in the workplace

In the period from 1911-1949, women began to go to school and enter the labour market (Sha, 2000). When the Labour Law was set up in 1994, it was clearly stated that pay should be equal according to the work people did. Thus, "*Tong gong tong chou*" (same work, same pay), which is stated in Labour Law No 46, encouraged women in the family to go out to work (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 1994). In urban areas, 90% of married women participated in the labour market during the period of 1949-1976 and there was very little part time work available (Bian, Logan and Shu, 2000). Yet women retire earlier and are outnumbered by men in the population. This has created a high proportion of dual wage earner families in China. In urban areas, the percentages of women in management jobs and professional occupations were respectively 2.9% and 17.4% in 1990 increasing to 6.1% and 22.8% in 2000 (The Second Wave Research Team of Chinese Women Status, 2001).

Even though the majority of women are in the labour market, this has not had a strong impact on motherhood as the maternity leave is 90 days (prenatal 15 days and postnatal 75 days) for most women introduced in 1988 (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 1988). According to Shanghai Population and Family Planning Commission (2003), women who give birth for the first child after the age of 24 are entitled for another thirty days and their husbands

are also entitled for three days paternal leave. In recent years, parenting has become a major task for grandparents, largely due to young couples' overloaded working lives (Nyland, Zeng and Tran, 2009). The time that parents and children spend together at home is under threat.

Despite the increases in women's labour-market participation and a small increase in their representation in management and the professions there remain traditional pressures on women to be good housewives. Wives were reported to take the responsibility for 85% of the housework, including cooking, dish-washing, laundry and cleaning (The Second Wave Research Team of Chinese Women Status, 2001). While women spent an average 4.01 hours a day on housework, men spent only 2.7 hours. The gap between women's and men's participation in housework between 1990 and 2000 had only decreased by six minutes in comparison to 1990 (ibid.).

1.6 Overview of the thesis

In this chapter, I have outlined the Chinese and Shanghai contexts that are important for my study. As this study confined itself to fieldwork in Shanghai, one should bear in mind that there are differences between the broad Chinese context and the local Shanghai context. In terms of education, the enrolment rates for primary, secondary and higher education in Shanghai are much higher than national averages. The economic growth of the last few decades has attracted a very large population of migrants from other provinces and numbers are increasing every year. With regard to family structure, Shanghai's average household size is smaller than the national average but it has the highest increase in the divorce rate. Another significant difference is that the balance of men and women in the population is relatively equal and perceptions of male and female roles are less gendered.

This chapter has discussed the impact of the One Child Policy and the relationships between parents and children in contemporary Chinese society. Following this, Chapter 2 will discuss the literature on fatherhood, father involvement and father-adolescent relationships, in both Western and Chinese contexts. The theoretical debates around adolescence will be covered in Chapter 3, together with the framework and concepts that guide the thesis. Together these three chapters provide an overall picture of the father-adolescent relationship. Chapter 4 discusses the methods used in the thesis.

These social and historical contexts are very important for interpreting my data. For the adolescent girls, they were all born after 1979 when the Only Child Policy introduced. Therefore,

being the only child has enormous impact on their relationships with their parents and how they perceive themselves as girls. However, they may still be influenced by traditional Chinese gender ideology as equality between men and women in Chinese society has not been achieved. These socio-economic changes are closely related to girls' perceptions of themselves as teenagers in modern China, and how they see themselves as being daughters, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 6, the historical and social changes are important for an examination of how the fathers and girls in my study see their roles in contemporary Shanghai families. Historically, a strict, remote and authoritarian father figure was favoured, in accordance with Confucian ideals. However, as women's status in society increased with their growing participation in the labour market and legislation promoting equality in the work place, there may have been an impact on men's role in the family domain. In addition, fathers who were born during the difficult times, such as the Cultural Revolution, grew up when politics was the focal point of life and very few consumer products and educational opportunities were available. Moreover, the resources that existed for children normally had to be divided between siblings. Parents of that generation who themselves suffered a lot wished their children to enjoy the wealth and educational opportunities that they never had the chance to enjoy in their childhoods.

Children's academic achievement is highly valued by Chinese parents and most believe that academic success is an effective way to secure a bright future. Traditionally, fathers are responsible for their children's education. In addition, success in education is regarded as a filial duty that can bring honour and other benefits to the family, as advocated by Confucian philosophy. Because most families have only one child, that child is the only hope for their parents to see the child succeed, regardless of its gender. The emphasis on education of the only daughter provides a rich background for me to explore what aspects fathers are involved in their daughters' lives in Chapter 7.

Finally, contextual factors are once more important for the investigation of negotiations between fathers and daughters regarding the girls' personal lives in Chapter 8. In traditional Chinese society girls' obedience to their parents, especially their fathers, was a social norm. As a result of modernization, along with the social changes during recent decades, major changes are taking place in parent-child relationships, such as many children being the centre of the family and seeing their parents as friends.

Now, let us turn to the literature review to discuss the current debate relating to father-daughter relationships both in the West and Chinese context.

Chapter 2 Fatherhood, father involvement and father-adolescent relationships

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the literature relating to fatherhood, father involvement and father-daughter relationships, both in the Western and Chinese contexts, focusing on their relationships with adolescent children. In addition, I will mainly focus on research about intact families, as this is the main form of family in China. Adolescence as a life course phase will be covered in Chapter 3.

I will begin by reviewing people's perceptions of fatherhood over time, because these have important implications for fathers' relationships with their children. Then, three perspectives on fathers' involvement in their children's lives will be explored: fathers' time with children; aspects of children's lives that fathers are involved in; fathers' involvement in relation to the gender and age of the child. When discussing perceptions of fatherhood and fathers' involvement, both Western and Chinese literature will be included, wherever Chinese studies are available. Finally, I will review the literature on parent-child relationships in the Chinese contexts in general as there are very few Chinese studies which focus on either fathers or daughters. The focus will be placed on parental authority and the potential conflicts between parents and children.

2.2 Perceptions of fathers' roles over time

In most traditional societies, paternal roles are associated with status, authority and power, with the father as the patriarchal head of the household (Seidler, 1988). According to Stephens (1963) in his ethnographic work in 38 societies, husbands exercise authority over their wives in two-thirds of these societies such as Japan and Ukraine. However, in the West where industrialization first occurred, fatherhood is often perceived to have changed as societies have developed (see discussion below). This is of particular relevance to my study because Chinese families are often perceived as being very traditional but China has also undergone a very rapid industrialization (not to mention globalization) in the last three decades.

In the West, fatherhood is often perceived to have become more nurturant over historical time. For example, Lamb (2000) outlined the changes in the father's role in America when he

described the aspects which became dominant in each of four historical periods: the moral teacher or guide (from Puritan times through the colonial period into early Republican times); the breadwinner father (around the time of centralized industrialization); the gender-role model, especially for sons, (in the 1930s and early 1940s) and the new nurturant father who is involved in the daily care of his children (starting from the mid-1970s).

Changes in family structures and parental employment as societies have developed have already been reflected in parenting roles in contemporary Western families (O'Brien and Shemilt, 2003). In recent decades, studies in the West suggest fathers are expected to be active and supportive in many different aspects of children's and families' lives, and there are studies showing the prominence of an emotionally supportive role in both fathers' and children's discourse. A London study of 14 years old children from working class family backgrounds, using a questionnaire survey, weekly diaries and interviews, which was carried out in the mid 1990s, found that children expected their fathers to be both materially and emotionally supportive, for example by being present at the births of children, giving care and love, and sharing domestic duties with mothers (O'Brien, 1996). One American survey study of 99 fathers aged from 30 to 87 years old and their children aged from 12 to 59 years old found that fathers placed the emotional role as the most important factor when defining a good father (Morman and Floyd, 2006).

However, many studies suggest that being a good provider is still an important aspect of fatherhood (Harrington, Van Deusen and Ladge, 2010; Pleck and Pleck, 1997; Warin *et al.*, 1999). It also remains an important aspect of male identity (Hochschild and Machung, 1990; Hochschild, 1997; Morgan, 1992). An analysis of men's perceptions of their role, based on 46 interviews with professional white middle class men working in Glasgow highlighted the significance of occupation in constructing male identity. The interviews were based on discussions of vignettes in which a man lost his job and had to take on more household responsibilities; the analysis suggested that many participants saw not being able to provide in negative terms and as 'a loss of male-self' (Riley, 2003, p. 111). Furthermore, an ethnographic Canadian study using a variety of data, such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups, couple interviews and internet surveys, found that Canadian fathers who stayed at home to be the primary caregivers still felt that they should really be out earning. Furthermore, the majority of the stay-at-home fathers expressed the feeling of being 'a failed man' because they were not at work (Doucet, 2006).

In recent studies, fathers seem to equally value emotional closeness and their role as breadwinner. In a qualitative study which interviewed 33 first-time American fathers with professional occupations and children aged three to eighteen months, providing emotional support such as listening, understanding, being compassionate, being a role model and being present were highlighted when talking about what makes a good father, as well as an emphasis on the importance of being the primary breadwinner (Harrington, Van Deusen and Ladge, 2010). An Australian study exploring children's views invited 1,449 Queensland students from four school year groups, years 1-3, years 4-7, years 8-10 and years 11-12 to write about the importance of fathers in their lives (Howard, Curtin and Fotina, 2003). The analysis indicated four major roles of the fathers: sharing time together; the importance of working; father's qualities such as physical characteristics or being a responsible person; and love and affection for the children (ibid.).

Similar changes have also been found in China. Women's participation in the workplace and the implementation of the One Child Policy have led to changes in parenting roles, particularly for fathers.

Traditionally in China, the father is the head of the household and authority figures (Ho, 1987). As Lynn points out, 'The traditional [Chinese] family was patrilineal, patrilocal, and patriarchal. The basic family concepts included 'reverence, awe and duty of children toward parents, especially toward the father' (1974, p. 33). Therefore, expressing emotions can be seen as revealing weakness and is not masculine behaviour. In this sense, fathers confronted certain barriers in terms of communicating with their children as they were not encouraged to express their emotions. The image of a 'strict father and kind mother' is also exemplified in the saying 'a man drops blood but not tears', which emphasises the tough but much less expressive male role in the family and community (Ho, 1987; Kang, 2003).

However, the implementation of the One Child Policy in 1979 and the huge growth in women's participation in the workplace have shaped new roles for fathers by decreasing the distance between them and their children. A Chinese youth development study in 2005 found 51.2% of primary and secondary school children regarded their mothers as friends and 46.7% of them (N=5438) regarded their fathers as friends (China Youth development project, 2006). These percentages have both increased by 14.7% and 10.5% respectively, compared with the data in 2000 (ibid.). As a growing number of parents were regarded not as authority figures but as friends, fathers may now be emotionally closer to their only children. In addition, the cultural

belief of *yan fu ci mu* (strict father, kind mother) may no longer hold true for many Chinese parents. A longitudinal study of 429 Hong Kong secondary students aged 12 to 16 years found that mothers tended to assert more authority and control over adolescents' lives, compared with fathers (Shek, 1998).

Despite the fact that many Chinese fathers are expected to be more involved in their children's lives and that women's participation in the labour market has increased since 1949, people still hold gendered perceptions of men's and women's roles. In 1998, in-depth interviews with 39 married couples under 55 years old in Beijing were carried out to explore husbands' and wives' perceptions of paid and domestic work. The traditional breadwinner role was still evident, as most Chinese husbands in the study tended to see the breadwinning as their major responsibility; moreover, husbands and wives saw a man's failure in his career as being 'incapable', 'lacking ambition' and 'relying on wives for financial support' (Zuo and Bian, 2001, p. 1127). Moreover, most wives in the study did not expect their husbands to share housework equally with them. For the husbands, breadwinning is their responsibility and housework is something they need only do if they wish. This is consistent with the two national surveys of women's lives in China discussed in Chapter 1, which shows that many women and men still thought the male role was primarily outside the house and the female role was inside the home (The Second Wave Research Team of Chinese Women Status, 2001).

Both in the West and China, more and more fathers are expected to take an active role in the family, but, as many studies suggest, the concept of 'main breadwinner' has remained extremely important and central to men's identities. The limited studies in the Chinese context suggest that, with the influence of the traditional cultural emphasis on men's authority, the man's role as a breadwinner is still dominant in modern Chinese families. At the same time, in the context of China's social transitions, in particular the One Child Policy and the increasing participation of women in labour, fathers have been found to be emotionally closer to the children. The social changes of family structure and gender roles in the society as a whole are important factors in any investigation of how fatherhood has changed, and they were an important influence on the questions I asked participants in my own study. On the other hand, it must be born in mind that in spite of this strong evidence for the importance of emotional closeness in modern Western fatherhood, there is some debate about the extent to which it was lacking in earlier times. The American historian Gillis argues that early modern Western fathers (Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century), especially the Protestant ones, were highly involved in many aspects of their

children's lives such as educating and disciplining their children (Gillis, 1997). The father-child bond was as intimate as the mother-child one (ibid.). McKee and O'Brien (1982) also reviewed the historical role of fathers (mainly in Britain) and argue that it was too simplistic to make general statements because of the diversity of fatherhood within any period of time. As Lamb noted, 'fathers play a number of significant roles --companions, care providers, spouses, protectors, models, moral guides, teachers and breadwinners--whose relative importance varies across historical epochs and subcultural groups' (Lamb, 2010, p.3). These historical studies, together with the studies which show the continuing importance of the breadwinner role, have cautioned me against assuming that China's development has led to a general shift in Chinese people's perceptions of fatherhood and ways of looking at different aspects of fathers' roles. It was also sensible to look at fathers' own experiences of being fathered to see if there were any changes in fatherhood. Moreover, these categorizations of the changes in fatherhood seem to be insufficient because they mainly focus on the quantity dimension of family time and therefore fail to capture the meaning of making time for family (Gillis, 1996). Similarly most of the Chinese studies discussed above and below rely on quantitative data from questionnaires. This informed my own decision to use a mixed methodology which could collect more nuanced qualitative data.

2.3 Fathers' involvement

Whilst perceptions of fatherhood may have changed over historical time, a number of studies have drawn attention to the disparity between the cultural expectations and the actual conduct of fathering (Brannen, Heptinstall and Bhopal, 2000; LaRossa, 1988; Reeves, 2005) As Burgess suggests, 'the apparent disparity in the attitudes and behaviour of fathers is often seen as an expression of the ideal versus the possible, or personal desire countered by societal constraint because, 'choice for fathers is severely limited'' (Burgess, 1997, p. 214). This has called into question how much fathers are actually involved in their children's lives. In the following sections, fathers' involvement is explored by looking at: fathers' time with their children; aspects of children's lives that fathers are involved in; fathers' involvement in relation to the gender of the child and age of the child.

2.31 Fathers' time with children

As discussed in the last section, there is an expectation of emotional closeness in modern fatherhood and time with children, such as doing activities and having meals together, is seen as important to the development of intimate relationships between parents and children (Murcott,

2003). Furthermore, expectations of parents' time with children are 'shaped by the Western ideals of family togetherness, positive engagement and children-centeredness' (Daly, 2001, p. 292). Although time spent directly with children is only one aspect of involvement, the time fathers devote to their children and what they do with them in that time are important indicators of their involvement and provides a lens through which to examine the extent to which fathers are involved.

Studies of how Western men and women spend time at home suggest that men have not caught up with women in terms of time spent doing childcare. Although research indicates that time devoted to childcare by both mothers and fathers has been increasing and that the gap between the two has narrowed, mothers are still the main carer for the children and spend much more time doing childcare than fathers (Burghes, 1997; Gauthier, Smeeding and Furstenberg, 2004; O'Brien, 2005). By comparing time-use diaries from 20 post-industrial countries, a continuing growth in both men and women's time doing childcare was observed between the 1960s and 1990s (Gershuny, 2000). In addition, both men's and women's paid working hours have increased but women's time spent doing domestic work has not decreased (*ibid.*). Similar findings were found in an American study by using four national time diary surveys (Sayer, 2004). The recent UK 2005 time use survey had similar findings, suggesting that the slight increase in men's time spent on childcare every day as a main activity did not seem to be offset by a decrease in the amount of time women spent (Lader, Short and Gershuny, 2006). On the contrary, the gap between men's and women's time spent on childcare everyday as a main activity increased from 17 minutes to 20 minutes (*ibid.*).

A highly gendered attitude to childcare is also found in China, even though the majority of women in urban cities work full time and for as many hours as men. In 2006, 89.7% of male workers worked over 40 hours a week and the figure for female workers was only slightly lower at 83.1% (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2007). Despite the fact that childcare is relatively cheap and many families have the support of other family members, such as grandparents, childcare is still seen as the mother's rather than the father's responsibility. The study by Zuo and Bian (2001) discussed earlier also shows a gendered view of women's paid work, as both women and their husbands still expected wives to take care of the housework and childcare even when some women's career achievements were much higher than their husband's. A recent pioneering study of fatherhood in China found that only 12.1% of fathers with children aged 4-6, and 25.9% with children aged 7-12, agreed that they took care of the children equally

(Zhang and Xu, 2008).

Daly (1996) argues that men's values and commitment with respect to paid work versus family work are to blame, as many see their role as provider as central to their identity (as discussed in the previous section). When men perceive their paid work as more important, they may choose to give up family time and allocate more to work. In fact, research suggests men are more likely to increase their working time when they become fathers (Biggart and O'Brien, 2010; O'Brien and Shemilt, 2003). In the UK, fathers generally work longer hours than mothers and the gap between fathers' and mothers' working hours was generally bigger than that between non-fathers and non-mothers (Biggart and O'Brien, 2009). In addition, men who have children tend to work more hours compared to men without children (O'Brien and Shemilt, 2003). This holds true even after controlling for factors such as earnings, education and partner's work status. A UK study using regression models shows that being a father, rather than career stage predicted working longer hours (Biggart and O'Brien, 2010). The fact that many men earn more than women also encouraged women to prioritise their husband's career (McDowell *et al.*, 2006). Meanwhile in the UK, women tend to move to part time work or give up work when they become mothers, trying to favour their children rather than their own careers. Furthermore, UK fathers' commitment to work is not only due to their providing role for the family. Some fathers see working as enjoyable and choose to work instead of caring for children as shown in a qualitative study of UK fathers outsourcing domestic services to migrant handymen (Perrons, Plomien and Kilkey, 2010). Interestingly, men do not see spending time with their children as a useful indicator of their responsibility and commitment to them according to a qualitative study interviewing 25 professional fathers (Dermott, 2005). Therefore, the responsibility for childcare still falls to the women.

The fact that some fathers have been found to be more engaged with children at the weekends shows that fathers are willing to be more involved with their children in certain circumstances. A previously discussed London study of 14 year old children from working class family backgrounds found that on average children spent four and a half hours with their fathers on a weekday but this increased by another three hours per day at weekends (O'Brien, 1996). An American study using time diaries of 1,761 children aged 0-12 from a national representative sample also found that fathers were more involved with children at weekends. For 516 fathers with children aged 9-12, they spent one hour and three minutes on an average weekday and this time was mostly spent on caregiving (personal care and meals together) and play/companionship.

However, their level of involvement increased to two hours and 46 minutes per day at weekends and covered many other activities such as doing housework together and having social activities (Yeung *et al.*, 2001).

Apart from the quantitative aspect of time, which focuses on its linearity, time can also be seen as a social construction, which emphasises how the time is spent between parents and children and also the meaning of that time (Gillis, 1996; Kilkey and Perrons, 2010; O'Brien and Jones, 1999). As O'Brien and Jones argue (1999), what is going on when parents and children are together and the quality of the relationships are as influential as the amount of time spent together. Likewise, Gillis (1996) stresses the importance of looking at the symbolic aspect of family time, such as the family stories, language and rituals which create the meanings of family time. Therefore, the activities that parents simultaneously engage in may be underrepresented. An ethnographic study video recorded thirty-two American dual-earner families who had at least one child aged between 8 to 10 years; it found that there were many moments which are 'spontaneous, unstructured, everyday moments of shared social interaction between family members' (Kremer-Sadlik and Paugh, 2007, p. 289). These moments are not easily captured by using methods such as time diaries, which are often used to examine primary activities and may not record secondary but still significant interactions. As Gershuny (2000) suggests mothers often multitask and it would be a mistake for me to assume that the fathers and daughters in my study will not have their own fleeting but nevertheless important interactions while they are doing other things. Therefore methodologies such as interviews, which allow participants to recall time spent together which was important to them, may give a more accurate picture of the quality as well as the quantity of father involvement.

Furthermore, children's expectations of time parents should spend with them may be different from their parents, especially for adolescents. A UK study which involved interviewing adolescent children about unsupervised time at home using the 2000 Time Use survey data found that adolescent children were not concerned about the presence or absence of their parents and some adolescents enjoyed time alone without parents (Lewis, Noden and Sarre, 2008). This was at odds with parental concern about a time squeeze (Daly, 2001; Milkie *et al.*, 2004). In addition, an English ethnographic study of 70 children aged 10-11 years old (which also included a survey of 489 children) suggested that from the children's perspectives, as well as valuing their parents being available when needed, having a say in how they spent their time and having time to themselves were also important (Christensen, 2002). In addition, the very ordinariness of family time spent together, such as in everyday routines, was what children and parents valued

(*ibid.*). Therefore as children grow up, they may wish to have more freedom and do not necessarily desire as much time with parents as they used to have.

In summary, the voluminous body of research on time use in the West demonstrates that women are still the ones who take the most responsibility for housework and childcare. Chinese parents also report that women are the ones who are expected to do the childcare, even though, unlike UK mothers, most Chinese mothers in cities work full-time and for as long as their husbands. This gendered division is primarily caused by the gendered attitude towards childcare and men's strong commitment to their work. In addition, most of the research in this area has only collected data on the quantitative aspect of parental time with their children and does not give a complete picture of parent-child interactions. Moreover, what children, particularly adolescents, think is important in terms of time spent may be different from what their parents think. As a result, many scholars have acknowledged the importance of the qualitative dimension of time which can capture the meaning of time spent together. Therefore, it is my intention to explore family practice from both daughters and fathers' perspectives, and in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

2.32 Aspects of children's lives that fathers are involved in

Just as mothers still seem to take most responsibility for childcare, fathers' involvement was found to focus mainly on certain areas, particularly on play, talking, and leisure activities. A London study involving a questionnaire survey of 843 young people aged 15-16 and 64 household interviews including 142 parents and children found that teenagers were emotionally closer to their mothers and more likely to discuss personal matters with them than their fathers. (Brannen *et al.*, 1994). An ethnographic study of Canadian fathers mentioned before found that fathers' involvement with children was mainly focused on physical activities, in contrast to that of mothers which was centred around emotional support (Doucet, 2006). A study using a subsample of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Time use Survey (TUS) 1997 looked at both mothers' and fathers' activities with their children who were under 12 years old (Craig, 2006). This study also found that the greatest proportion of fathers' time with children was spent on interactive care activities such as talking, playing, reading and teaching, while mothers spent 51% of childcare time on physical care such as bathing, feeding and dressing (*ibid.*). However, there is some evidence that fathers' involvement in physical care has increased. An American study using four national time diary surveys from the mid-1960s to the late 1990s analyzed both mothers' and fathers' time on childcare with children under the age of 18. It was found that

fathers' childcare over time had increased in both daily care and teaching/playing (Sayer, 2004). In the traditional Chinese family, the father's role was primarily characterized as a stern disciplinarian and educator (Ho, 1987). Therefore, it is the father's responsibility to educate his children, especially his son (Chapter 1), and there is evidence that this has remained the case in modern times. An early quantitative study of childrearing in the 1980s based on 468 families with 3-6 year old children in Shanghai found that fathers took most responsibility for disciplining the children in situations such as when the child talks back (Wu, 1996). Furthermore, although the traditional father's role as educator may have been weakened by the introduction of compulsory schooling by the state, the cultural emphasis on education as the route to success means that fathers may still see themselves as being responsible for their children's education (Chapter 1) but in a different way. A recent quantitative study of 660 students from two secondary schools in a middle-sized city in northern China shows that it was their fathers, rather than mothers, who were most involved in making decisions relating to their education, such as whether or not to go to university, which subject to choose and curfew time (Xia *et al.*, 2004).

Furthermore, Chinese fathers have also been found to be very helpful when their adolescent children have concerns. A Chinese survey study including parents and children in secondary school from 14 cities in mainland China in 1998 found that although mothers were the parents children had the most contact with, fathers were actively involved as well. In terms of activities together and playing, there were no significant differences between mothers and fathers. Although 40% of children talked with their mothers 'very often' and children tended to go to their mothers when they had concerns, still 30% of children reported talking with their fathers 'very often' (Feng, 2002).

In the West, mothers are found to be the parent who is more involved compared with fathers. Similar results are found in the Chinese context. In addition, there are differences in the ways fathers and mothers take care of their children. Father's involvement with children is mainly dominated by leisure activities.

In general then, fathers in both contemporary Western and Chinese contexts are noticeably less involved in what may be seen as the more mundane chores of childcare, such as preparing food for children. However, they are significantly involved in leisure activities and there is also research showing that fathers are actively involved in other aspects of childcare such as daily care and teaching. In China, fathers are highly involved in their children's education and they

have also been found to be very helpful when their children have concerns. What nearly all these studies neglect though is the effect that a child's gender has on fathers' amount and type of involvement. In fact, the studies on the aspects of daughters' lives with which fathers are involved are very limited. There was an American study that investigated fathers' roles exclusively from girls' perspectives by interviewing twenty early adolescent girls (11-13 years old) from low-income, ethnic minority families (Way and Gillman, 2000). The girls reported that fathers tended to focus exclusively on school, recreational activities and the outside world when talking with their daughters, compared with mothers who tended to talk more about personal concerns with them (ibid.). For their part, Chinese fathers may still be highly involved in their daughters' education due to the cultural emphasis on achievements and the implementation of the One Child Policy. However, whether fathers are actively involved in other aspects of their daughters' lives as they reach adolescence, such as leisure activities and talking about problems is less clear. Therefore, in this thesis I examined fathers' involvement in a wide range of aspects of their daughters' lives, including education, emotional issues and leisure activities. Another neglected aspect of father involvement in the literature is the age of the child. Therefore, in the following section I will discuss the degree of father involvement in relation to gender and age.

2.33 Fathers' involvement in relation to the gender and age of the child

Studies in the US and the UK have found that fathers are more involved with sons than daughters. For example, the American National Survey of Children found that, based on both children's and mothers' reports, in two-parent families with adolescents aged 12 to 16 the fathers are more involved with sons than daughters (Harris and Morgan, 1991). This study, which focused on families with a boy and a girl, found that daughters generally received less attention from fathers (ibid.). Another American study using longitudinal data from a sample of the National Survey of Children found that fathers were more involved with sons than daughters when the children were in early and mid-adolescence, while mothers' involvement stayed at the same level for both genders (Harris, Furstenberg and Marmer, 1998). The study was based on the analysis of 584 children's reports from three time periods: the first in 1976 when children were 7 to 11 years old, the second in 1981 when they were 11 to 16 year olds and the third in 1987 when they were 17 to 22 year olds (ibid.). A more recent American quantitative study, which recruited mothers, fathers and adolescents who were firstborns (with an average age at the time of 15 years old), revealed that fathers spent more time with their adolescent children if they were male (Updegraff *et al.*, 2001). Two UK studies discussed above had similar results, with fathers being reported by their children to spend more time with sons than daughters (Brannen *et al.*, 1994;

O'Brien, 1996). However, the literature does not provide clear evidence as to why fathers' involvement with boys is greater than with girls.

At the time of writing, there were very few Chinese studies exploring fathers' involvement in relation to the gender of their children. Traditionally, father-child relationships were mostly focused on sons. However, Feng Xiaotian's paper (2010) for the 2010 *International Conference on Fatherhood in 21st Century Asia: Research, Interventions, and Policies* in Singapore found that gender has no significant impact on father-child relationships after doing an ANOVA analysis of 933 only-child working youths in 12 cities. However, how the paper defined the relationship was not clear and there was no clear explanation why this was the case. Therefore, it will be my intention to explore whether girls and fathers in my sample think having/being a girl has influenced their relationships with their fathers, particularly in the families with only one child.

The issue of fathers' involvement in relation to the child's age is more complex as different studies divide the age range differently and not many of them explore the influences of the child's gender. For example, the UK 2005 time use survey suggested that parents with adolescents spent less time with them compared to parents with younger children (Lader, Short and Gershuny, 2006). Parents with children aged 11-15 spent an average of 14 minutes a day with them as a main activity and 35 minutes as a secondary activity, compared with parents whose children were aged 5-10 years old who spent an average of 64 minutes with them as a main activity and 37 minutes as a secondary activity (*ibid.*). Both studies suggest that fathers spend less time with teenagers compared with younger children. However, it should be born in mind that if the child's developmental stage is a factor in father involvement then the 3 or even 5 year categories which these studies use actually encompass quite broad ranges of development. The previously discussed American study using time diary data from a national representative sample tracked the fathers' time spent with their children from age 0-12 and found that on weekdays fathers spent an average of 97 minutes with children aged 0-2, 79 minutes with children aged 3-5, 57 minutes with children aged 6-8 and 63 minutes with children aged 9-12 (Yeung *et al.*, 2001).

Similar ambiguity is also found in the Chinese context. It is not clear whether Chinese fathers interact more with their children as their children grow up. Traditionally Chinese fathers would not fill their role as disciplinarians until the child was older than six or seven years (Wolf, 1970).

In this sense, fathers may be more involved with their children once they are old enough to communicate and play with. The pioneering study of fatherhood in China discussed above suggests that more fathers with children aged 7-12 old were equally or mainly responsible for childcare, compared with fathers with children 4-6 years old (Zhang and Xu, 2008). However, once their children reach adolescence, fathers' interactions with their daughters may again decrease. In a study of Taiwanese fathers' involvement which collected data from 176 pairs of fathers and their adolescent children, adolescent girls aged 10-12 years old reported more communication, time together and teaching, compared to their 13-14 years old counterparts (Beckert *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, having a girl means there may well be certain aspects of girls' lives that fathers feel less able to communicate about well. The importance of preserving girls' chastity and the non-confrontational style of men's communication may create obvious obstacles in terms of fathers' involvement. Thus, it will be interesting to see whether fathers' involvement levels have changed and whether they have less communication with their adolescent daughters as they grow up.

2.4 Parent-adolescent relationships in Chinese families

In this section, I now turn to discuss parent-child relationships in the Chinese context. The impact of the One Child Policy on parent-child relationships has been discussed in Chapter 1 and at the beginning of this chapter. In this section, the discussion will focus on parental authority in Chinese families and how adolescents negotiate with their parents.

2.41 Parental authority and control

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Chinese concept of *guan* (管), which embraces a double meaning that is to take care of and to control, govern, monitor and interfere, vividly highlights the importance of parental authority, parental control and strictness in traditional Chinese parenting (Chao, 1994; Wu, 1996). Moreover, respect for parents and interpersonal harmony are emphasized in Chinese families (Shek, 2001). A study comparing students and their mothers' views of 'bad kids' from America, Japan and China showed that Chinese respondents stressed the importance of maintaining order and harmony in family and society (Crystal and Stevenson, 1995).

For parents, family harmony is achieved through children respecting and obeying family authority. The cultural emphasis on harmony and obedience may help to explain why Chinese parents retain their power regardless of increasing demands from children as they progress

through adolescence to grant them more autonomy. Observations of three cultural groups of parents, Taiwanese, first-generation Chinese immigrants to the USA and Americans of European origin, revealed that Chinese parents were more controlling than other groups as they expected more obedience and respect from their children (Jose *et al.*, 2000). In addition, a content analysis of a Hong Kong study of parents' perceptions of the ideal child, based on interviews with 180 fathers and 240 mothers whose children were in secondary school, revealed that many parents expected their children to be obedient (Shek and Chan, 1999).

In addition, factors such as the gender of the child and the father's economic situation may also influence paternal control over their adolescent children. A more recent longitudinal study which recruited 2,559 secondary school students in Years 7, 8 and 9 in Hong Kong found that parental control was stronger over sons than daughters in all aspects, apart from the adolescent's whereabouts, specifically whether the parents knew the whereabouts of their children and whether they set any limits on the time to return home (Shek, 2008). The reason for this was that parents were more concerned about their daughters' chastity (*ibid.*) Another study analyzing data from 3,017 first year secondary school students in Hong Kong found that there were no differences between adolescents with economic disadvantage and those without in terms of the mother's control but only in relation to the father's (Shek, 2005). The fathers with economic difficulties were reported to have lower parental control because their ability to fulfill their responsibility to provide affected their confidence or ability to carry out childrearing responsibilities (*ibid.*).

2.42 Potential conflicts and negotiation between parents and children

As a result of strong parental authority, Chinese adolescents were found to expect autonomy later than their Western counterparts. An American longitudinal study, using questionnaires, examined around 1,000 adolescents' beliefs, expectations and relationships with their parents, who were from a variety of cultural backgrounds in California, including Mexican, Chinese, Filipino, and European (Fuligni, 1998). Of these, 353 adolescents were followed up two years later. Chinese American adolescents' expectations of greater autonomy were found to occur substantially later in the life course compared with that of European American adolescents (*ibid.*). A Hong Kong study which recruited 120 adolescents in Years 7, 9 and 12, mainly from lower and lower-middle class backgrounds, suggested that despite Chinese adolescents' desire for more autonomy, especially among older adolescents, there was no increase in Chinese adolescent decision-making with age (Yau and Smetana, 1996).

Although Chinese parents impose stronger authority and grant less freedom this does not mean Chinese adolescents have no conflicts with their parents and do not seek autonomy. Indeed there are studies suggesting that Chinese adolescents' autonomy seeking is similar to that found in Western countries. Yau and Smetana's study (1996) of Hong Kong adolescents (see above) found that they conflicted with their parents over everyday matters such as doing housework, making friends and doing homework. Similar to many Western studies, it also found that Hong Kong adolescents had fewer conflicts with their fathers than with their mothers (*ibid.*). This may be a result of children spending more time with their mothers than their fathers, as has been found in the West (Saari, 1990; Wu, 1996).

Whether Chinese children have more conflicts with their parents during early adolescence, compared with when they are in middle and later adolescence, is less clear. A Chinese study of 188 adolescents in Shenzhen and Hong Kong showed that there were more conflicts among the adolescents around 11-14 years old than those aged around 18 years old (Yau, Tasopoulos-Chan and Smetana, 2009). However, Xia's quantitative study of 660 students from two secondary schools in a middle-sized city in northern China gave different results, indicating more conflicts between older adolescents and their parents compared with the younger ones and more conflicts with mothers (Xia *et al.*, 2004).

Children's studies and romantic relationships seem to be the two areas concern parents the most. As a result, parents imposed a great deal of restrictions and requirements on their children regarding with whom they could make friends. A study of only children in China showed that many parents tended to like their children to make friends with high achieving students: 81.6% of fathers said they wanted their children to make friends with good students; 64.9% did not want their children to make friends of the opposite sex, and 45.3% wanted their children to reduce contact with friends for the sake of their studies (Sun and Zhao, 2005).

Fathers may find it easier to set restrictions on their daughters' going out if they say it is for the sake of their studies. However, fathers still face a barrier to taking control of their daughters' romantic relationships because communicating with them on this matter is difficult. Although there has been no research in the Chinese context, an American study showed that much discussion about romantic relationships was instigated by the mother's desire to raise the matter (Raffaelli, Bogenschneider and Flood, 1998). Possibly, fathers are not used to expressing their

emotions about this topic and may find it too embarrassing to raise the issue. In addition, girls may not wish to talk about romantic relationships with their fathers either. A study of African American families with children aged 9 to 12 found that the children generally preferred to talk about romantic relationships with their same-gender parent (Wyckoff *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, taking control of daughters' romantic relationships may be particularly difficult for fathers.

Furthermore, the widespread use of the internet among young people in China also means taking control of people's social lives in general has become more difficult. In China, the internet has become an essential component of many young people's lives, especially for only children who do not have siblings to play with. However, internet use among young people has caused huge concern for both parents and the government. According to the China Internet Network Information Center, 27.3% of the national internet population of 4.57 hundred million internet users were aged 10 to 19 (2011). According to a national survey of 7,519 youths across the country around 13% of young internet users were addicted (China Youth Association for Network Development, 2005) and in 2007, the government launched a national programme to tackle addiction to internet games. However, there have been few Chinese studies on how parents deal with their children's internet use, something which they have little control over or experience of themselves. It is therefore important to explore how fathers and their daughters resolve their conflicts relating to the use of the internet, as it has become such an important part of adolescents' lives.

It seems that Chinese parents try very hard to take control of their children's lives and conflicts are generally resolved by adolescents giving in to parents (Sun and Zhao, 2005). However, Chinese adolescents may choose other ways to get their own way, other than by directly negotiating with their parents. Compared to their western counterparts, Chinese adolescents have been found to be more likely to avoid disclosing information from their parents. In a quantitative study of 479 adolescents aged 14 to 18 in five American high schools, which included Chinese Americans, Mexican Americans and European Americans, adolescents were found to prefer lying to parents, avoidance or partial disclosure (Tasopoulos-Chan, Smetana and Yau, 2009). The Chinese Americans were found to disclose less information to their parents compared with adolescents from other ethnic groups. This was consistent with the study by Yau *et al.* (2009), which suggests that Chinese American adolescents were reluctant to discuss issues because of parents' stronger expectations of obedience and the importance of harmony in families. This is probably due to the importance of family harmony stressed in traditional Chinese culture.

Therefore, adolescents express their thoughts in an indirect and implicit way in order to preserve and protect family harmony.

In summary, cultural emphasis on parental authority and harmony in Chinese families has resulted in a slightly different developmental trajectory for ethnically Chinese adolescents compared to their European counterparts. The studies of American Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese adolescents seem to suggest that Chinese parents demand more control over their children's lives. However, Chinese adolescents are still found to have a desire for more freedom and therefore do have conflicts with their parents. It must be born in mind that most of the studies were conducted in Hong Kong or America and there are relatively few studies about mainland Chinese families. In addition, much of the work so far has been quantitative, for example using psychological scales and tests to reflect adolescents' points of view. These do not explore the process of father-adolescent communication and how fathers and daughters feel about their conflicts. More importantly, there are very few studies focused on fathers' control over their children's lives, particular in the areas that Chinese parents are most concerned about. This led me to explore issues of making friends, romantic relationships and internet use and to see how fathers and daughters resolve any conflicts that there are. In addition, as their children's academic studies are what Chinese parents are most concerned about, I will also explore father's involvement in their daughters' studies.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has set out the literature relating to fatherhood and father-child relationships during adolescence. The chapter started with a discussion of how fatherhood was perceived over time. It then went on to review fathers' involvement with their children. Evidence is reviewed in three main areas: father's time with children; aspects of children's lives that fathers are involved in; fathers' involvement in relation to the gender and age of the child. These different aspects of father's involvement provide a lens for the examination of fathering practice. At this point the discussion takes a different turn, focusing on Chinese adolescents' relationships with their parents. The review of this is to understand father-adolescent relationships in a particular cultural context, although Chinese studies are also covered in the previous sections.

In terms of how fatherhood was perceived over time, there is substantial literature both in the West and China. The increasing interest in the studies of father's involvement in the West has resulted in rich and diverse insights into fathers' role in the family. The Chinese literature has

focused on two different times: the Confucius time in which the father was seen as the authority figure and strict disciplinarian; and the post communist period in which fathers were mainly seen as breadwinners. In the Western literature a change is discussed in terms of fathers' greater involvement and emotional closeness although their importance as providers has continued to be salient. Similar to the West, being the provider is seen as one of the most important roles for Chinese fathers but more fathers are emotionally closer to their children as a result of the One Child Policy.

The Western studies of time use demonstrate increasing involvement among fathers, although mothers are still the ones who spend the most time with their children. However, there is no Chinese study that looks at parents' time with children, which leads me to investigate in the thesis the question: how much time do fathers and daughters spend together and what kind of activities do they do together?

In terms of the aspects of children's lives that fathers are involved in, the Western literature suggest that father's involvement with children tends to mainly focus on leisure activities, although there is also research showing that more fathers were actively involved in other aspects of childcare. The Chinese context, however, provides a slightly different picture. Traditionally, Chinese fathers were mainly responsible for their sons' education, and there are studies confirming that fathers nowadays are still highly involved in their children's education. More than this, fathers were also found to be emotionally involved, as some secondary school children reported that they talked to their fathers 'very often' when they had concerns. However, whether Chinese fathers were as involved with their daughters, particularly once they reached adolescence, was not clear as the Western and Chinese studies show contradictory results. Therefore, I decided to explore what aspects of their adolescent daughters' lives fathers are involved with, particularly girls from only child families.

In terms of Chinese father-adolescent relationships, the studies of American Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese and mainland Chinese suggest that Chinese parents demand more control over their lives although their adolescent children still had a strong desire for more freedom. The emphasis on family harmony, however, still seems to play an important role in the communication and negotiation between adolescents and parents, especially for fathers who were not encouraged to express their emotions.

Compared to the Western literature, there is a lack of research exploring Chinese adolescents' relationships with their fathers. Although there are a considerable number of recent studies which have focused on non-Western cultures, it can be seen that studies focused on mainland Chinese adolescents are scarce and that the existing Chinese literature rarely distinguish the gender of the parent or the child. The gender of the child becomes an important factor for the relationships between parents and children in Chinese families as pointed out earlier. The implementation of the One Child policy has had a tremendous impact on Chinese people's family life and parent-child relationships, a focus which is not often studied in national or cross-national studies. The need to understand how fathers and their only daughters see their roles in the family and their relationships provides the impetus for my study. In addition, the research in the West applies different methods and draws from different sources but most of the Chinese studies come from student questionnaires, which is a very popular method in China. As the relationship between parents and child is bi-directional, it would have been beneficial if the studies had collected data from both parents and children. In order to get a better understanding of what fathers' roles and involvement are, my study set out to include fathers' voices as well as those of their children. Last but not the least, it is questionable how far research based on the West is applicable to Chinese society (Shek, 2006). There remains also the question of how to explore Chinese society using Western theories, which now I will turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Orienting frameworks and concepts

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the concepts and the theoretical frameworks regarding the study of fathers, adolescent girls and their family lives will be discussed. Firstly, I will present the framework of time, which is relevant since the focus of the study includes two family generations - fathers and daughters. I draw on the notion of generation as it refers to historical time to situate the fathers and daughters in relation to the times in which both were growing up. The notion of the life course frames the research because the design covers two different age groups of girls and hence different transition points in their lives and relationships with their fathers. In addition, the orientation of individualism and collectivism provide a useful perspective in the Chinese context as a result of globalization and the significant social changes in recent decades. Furthermore, the concepts of identity and gender, care and fathering, family practices and family negotiations represent the main 'sensitising concepts' (Blumer, 1969) which I have employed in approaching the analysis of the data in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

3.2 Framework of time: historical time, generational time and life course time

Time is a central theme in people's lives. In daily life, time can be deployed in different ways and not necessarily in relation to chronological time (Brannen, 2002). The quantitative aspect of time, 'present time', is normally defined as the amount of time people spend on various types of activity (*ibid.*), such as the time fathers spend with children that I discussed in Chapter 2. There are also qualitative aspects of time, such as life course time and historical time (Adam *et al.*, 2008; Gillis, 1996; Kilkey and Perrons, 2010) which I will elaborate on in this chapter. Time can be used as both a conceptual category and a methodological strategy. In my study, father-daughter relationships are explored through generational time and, by choosing two age groups of girls in my sample, I am able to look at the life course dimension. Furthermore, these multiple aspects of time may coexist and interact with each other (Morgan, 1996a). As time plays a crucial role in my study, I will elaborate on time from three perspectives: historical and generational time which relate to the differences between fathers' and daughters' generations; adolescence and life course time which focus on important phases young people are going through, which is inspired by the use of time framework by researchers such as Glen Elder (1985), Tamara Hareven (1982) and Julia Brannen (2002).

3.21 Historical time and generational time

In the classic book *The Sociological Imagination* C. Wright Mills calls for a way of looking at personal life by connecting social, personal, and historical dimensions of individual lives (Mills, 1959). As he concludes, 'neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both' (Mills, 1959, p. 3).

The concept of historical time is closely associated with generational time as generations are formed as people live through their youth and experience the same historical and social events (McLeod and Thomson, 2009). Their shared experiences of historical time mean they develop a common consciousness, which make them identifiable. This collective way of reacting to certain historical events is the most crucial process during the formation of particular generations. In addition, the formative years of growing up are particularly important in terms of forming common generational identities (Mannheim, 1952). However, the influences of these historical events have different impacts on individuals and are 'the outcome of a complex and contingent relationship between timing, conditions and resources' (McLeod and Thomson, 2009, p. 111). Therefore, people's lives are not only determined by events but also people link themselves with the society they live in and in making their lives by exercising agency.

Different family generations belong to different age groups and hence parents bring to their family lives different experiences of childhood and youth from those of their children (Brannen, 2004). At the same time, there is a significant continuity among generations as family ties and obligations remain important regardless of rapid social change (Holland, Weeks and Gillies, 2003). The generation of girls in my study were born in the 1990s, which was a very different period from the 1950s and 1960s, when their parents were born and society experienced the 'Three bitter years' and the Cultural Revolution (Chapter 1). These different time lenses are useful to understand father and daughter relationships.

3.22 Adolescence and life course time

It has been argued theoretically that adolescence has been stretched at both ends, extending downwards into childhood, by starting earlier, whilst extending upwards into adulthood by finishing later (Coleman, 1997; Williams, 2002). Puberty is occurring earlier and young people are sexually active earlier (Coleman and Hendry, 1999). In addition, young people are becoming consumers earlier in the life course despite the fact that many are still financially dependent on their parents. Therefore, the hallmarks for adulthood are not so clear anymore

and there is a degree of ambiguity in using the term ‘adolescence’.

Giddens uses the concept ‘fateful moment’ to indicate when ‘individuals are called on to take decisions that are particularly consequential for their ambitions, or more generally for their future lives’ (1991, p. 112). For Giddens, ‘fateful moment’ empowers the individuals to choose their own path, and at the same time, individuals are responsible for the choices made (ibid.). In Giddens’s opinion, the ‘fateful moment’ is associated with the development of self-identity and it is crucial that the individual can recognize an event’s significance. Thomson et al. (2002) have employed this concept by identifying ‘critical moments’ in young people’s biographies and exploring how they are implicated in processes of social inclusion and exclusion. Their analysis of young people’s biographies suggests that although ‘they all describe a critical moment, these moments and their responses to them cannot all be understood as ‘fateful’, involving risk assessment, reskilling and identity work’ (Thomson *et al.*, 2002, p. 350).

As Elder noted, “[T]he life course of individuals is embedded in and shaped by the historical times and events they experience over their lifetime” (1999, p. 304). It is important to note that the concept of adolescence and the characteristics of adolescence are set in particular places and times. As Kehily suggested, “young people’s lives vary widely throughout the world and categories that are often taken for granted in Western terms are not universal or biologically based, but are embedded in culture and mean very different things in different contexts” (2007, p. 45). Even in the similar Western contexts, young people’s experiences and expectations differ between and within countries, although overall most young people are undertaking longer periods in education and are entering employment later (Brannen *et al.*, 2002). In China, there is no clear definition of youth or adolescence (Huang, 2003). The term ‘Qing chun qi’ (youth period) indicates the troublesome nature, however, the term ‘Qing shao nian’ (youngsters) is widely used, but police use age 13 to 25 define youth criminal records (Huang, 2003). In my study, I use *adolescent girls*, *young people* and *teenage girls* interchangeably to refer to girls in the study (the younger group are aged 13-14 and the older aged 16-17) who are all in their teens.

Young people are experiencing changes and important transitions and they may respond to these moments at an individual level, however, their life courses continue to be highly predictable and structured (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). For example, the girls in my study are facing important transitions in education which are set by China’s education system. The younger girls will go to senior high school in one year’s time and they need to take exams to

get into the senior high schools they wish to go. For the older ones, they are expected to take the national university entrance exam in one year's time (Chapter 1). For both, they are going through a critical transition period, during which they are encountering new experiences and undergoing a number of other social transitions such as starting new friendships or romantic relationships, together with the transition of moving into a new school. These transitions provide opportunities to examine the continuation or discontinuation of girls' behaviours and relationships with their parents. In addition, the life course perspective is brought to bear in the research design through a comparison of two age groups of girls, as a comparative approach can help to understand the changes at transitional periods.

Overall, the life course perspective will help in exploring Chinese adolescent girls' experiences of growing up, how they perceive themselves as teenage girls, and also, their relationships with significant others, especially their fathers.

3.3 Identity and gender

According to social construction theory, people's identities are formed through an ongoing process of social interactions. Similarly, gendered identity is not simply a category that people belong to but instead it is formed through active engagement with the social context and gender roles (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Therefore, gender identity is not fixed and it varies over time as people respond to changing gender norms and engage in everyday life.

The concept of constructed gendered identities is relevant to both daughters and fathers in a changing society. In China, as women increasingly participate in the labour market and their growing economic power contributes financially to the family, traditional notions of the male breadwinner and paternal masculinities may develop new meanings (discussed in previous chapters). In addition, being only children may have also changed girls' perceptions of being daughters and young women. In order to identify and disentangle values of fatherhood and girlhood in Chinese society, my study explores how fathers and daughters see their roles as fathers and daughters, and how they negotiate changing social norms and apply them in their family lives.

3.31 Adolescent identity and gender

One important feature of adolescence is the development of identity (Erikson, 1968). Giddens' concept of identity which focuses on individual creativity and freedom in terms of young people's identities and biographies provides a useful perspective. He argues that '[S]elf identity

is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood in terms of his or her biography' (Giddens, 1991, p. 53).

However, the fact that adolescents are often perceived by the media and parents to be rebellious and seeking more independence means that these perceptions can be transferred to become part of young people's 'own construction of self' (Weller, 2006, p. 104). As a result, adolescents may adopt the 'displaying' way of fulfilling people's construction of the teenage stereotype, intensifying when circumstances change including the development of new relationships and during the transition to adulthood (Finch, 2007). This negative view of adolescents has been challenged by other scholars, especially in terms of their relationships with parents (Gillies, McCarthy and Holland, 2001; Langford *et al.*, 2001; McFall and Garrington, 2011; National Family and Parenting Institute, 2000). They argue that the relationships between adolescents and parents are not as unstable and out of control as some suggest; instead most adolescents see their families positively as loving, caring, helpful and trustworthy. Moreover, in one study both young people and parents reported that their relationships had improved as they grew up (Gillies, McCarthy and Holland, 2001). Instead of looking at young people through a problematic lens, we can also see them experiencing a process of growing up (2002).

Gender is one of the most important aspects of a young person's identity. While young people are experiencing many physical changes, they also embrace the social practice of gender (Connell, 2005). Feminist scholars also argue that gender is something people 'do' or 'perform', rather than something they have (Cameron, 1998; West and Zimmerman, 1987). This approach emphasises the gender as an active process which is created through the interaction with society. Feminist and youth researchers also found that the material, cultural and social resources available within particular family environments are still important in terms of adolescents' choices (Aapola, Gonick and Harris, 2005; Thomson, Henderson and Holland, 2003). For example, a study of girlhood and the transition to adulthood suggests that the girls, who were mostly from upper and middle class families, were able to make their own choices and pursue their educational and career ambitions (Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody, 2002). In addition, it is often difficult to create a balance between being a caring daughter and an autonomous young person (Aapola, Gonick and Harris, 2005).

Adolescent girls' appearance is also a key aspect of young people's identity. In Western societies teenage girls tend to be more concerned about their body appearance, and at the same time, they

are actively involved in activities such as shopping and make up (Olson, 2006). Adolescent dissatisfaction with their own body images is widely acknowledged in the West, for both boys and girls (Ata, Ludden and Lally, 2007; Dohnt and Tiggemann, 2006; Meland, Haugland and Breidablik, 2007) and a recent study of Chinese adolescents also found dissatisfaction was also prevalent among Chinese adolescents (Li *et al.*, 2005).

Romantic experiences start to occur during adolescence and this becomes one of the profound social changes in the life course of girls (Furman, Low and Ho, 2009; Jamieson, 1999). Parents may be more concerned for girls because safety may be seen as a more important issue by the parents of girls (Way and Gillman, 2000). As girls are going through adolescence they start to become more interested in romantic relationships, it therefore raises tensions between their wishful thinking for romantic relationships and their parents' control over them.

Cultural context also has a particular salience in relation to young people's construction of self. As O'Connor suggests, 'Cultural influences on constructions of the self in late modernity do not occur in a vacuum. The shape they take is affected by the existing social and cultural context and the constructions of self that are current at that time' (2006b, p. 119). On a deeper level, young people in contemporary Chinese cities like Shanghai have moved to a modern lifestyle which is not very different from that in Western countries. Ideas from the West that arrive with globalization may affect the attitudes of young Chinese to themselves if they experience more open and wider aspects of gender identity. A good example of this is the rise of the star Yu Chun Li, who won the singing contest 'Super Girl' in China. She became very popular in the media and with the public (especially in her own adolescent age group) because of, rather than despite, her masculine hair style and appearance, which challenged traditional female stereotypes (Jakes, 2005). However, some traditional Chinese values, such as the importance of family and authority, may not have faded away as Chinese society has developed.

3.32 Fatherhood and masculinities

Fatherhood is a term that associates with the 'rights, duties, responsibilities and statuses that are attached to fathers, as well as discursive terrain around good and bad fathers' (Hobson and Morgan, 2002, p. 11). How men understand their role as fathers and what it means to them are two of the key influences on their paternal practice in family lives (McBride *et al.*, 2005; Salway, Chowbey and Clarke, 2009).

Gender ideology is another important factor which influences men's construction of fatherhood and more importantly, gender ideology can influence parenting practice. Feminist theory suggests that 'masculinity and femininity are constantly being reconstructed in a context of unequal, but shifting power relations' (Brandth and Kvande, 1998). For fathers, it may be difficult to talk about romantic relationships when traditional forms of masculinity are still dominant as there is a tension 'between men as sexual beings and as participants in affectionate relationships' (Kirkman, Rosenthal and Feldman, 2001, p. 405).

Fatherhood is a social construction and it changes across time, contexts and cultures. As discussed in Chapter 2, fatherhood in traditional Chinese families emphasises parental authority. However, in contemporary Shanghai, society stresses both traditional views of male strength through work and affectionate caring at home. Men in Shanghai have a reputation for being henpecked, a subject which has been much discussed in public and in the media. The column *Ah, Shanghaiman*, published in a popular Chinese newspaper from 1996 to 1998, in which the Taiwan-born novelist Ying Tai Long described her observations of Shanghaiman, provoked much debate (Long, 1998). The stereotypical Shanghaiman who is devoted to family life, was either strongly criticized by many for not being manly (Qin, 2004), or highly praised for caring for his wife and children so lovingly (Liu, 2003). The concept of being an involved and affectionate father, therefore, is not an unfamiliar notion to many fathers living in Shanghai. Therefore, there exist both private and public realms of masculinity (Mac an Ghail and Haywood, 2006). However, it also puts a strain on Shanghai fathers who are trying hard to live up to contemporary 'involved' paternal norms. In addition, as Chinese culture values men's power, status and authority, the question is raised about the extent to which the fathers in my study feel they are shaping their own identities.

3.4 Individualisation and collectivism

The theory of individualisation is useful in explaining the changing patterns of life courses of young people as they are going through transitions to adulthood. In the context of the duration of adolescence being stretched and the dividing line between childhood and adulthood becoming harder to define (Beck, 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Giddens, 1991; Giddens, 1994), young people's pathways are no longer seen as fixed, due to changes in the labour market, education and family relations (Beck, 1992). It is suggested that young people's biographies are 'increasingly reflexive in that young people can now choose between different lifestyles, sub-cultures and identities' (Valentine, 2003, p. 42). Beck further suggests that individuals in society

are now free from normative constraints such as social class and gender, which are two of the greatest changes in modern society (ibid.).

Following the individualisation orientation, new kinds of intimate relationships become more diverse, fluid and individualistic (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1992). The term 'pure relationship' was introduced by Giddens to indicate changes in people's close relationships with others (Giddens, 1992). He argued that the 'pure relationship' depends upon self-disclosure and can be seen as a process of active trust and opening oneself up to another (Giddens, 1999). In this sense, an intimate relationship is based on mutual knowledge and understanding. Giddens' 'pure relationship' is said to apply to sexual relationships, parent-child relations and friendships. As in other 'pure relationships', it seems that parent and child have equal rights and there is an open dialogue between them. In this sense, children's voices are expected to count, even though parents are entitled to have authority over children (Gillies, 2003).

However, there are many criticisms of the theory of individualisation (Bagnoli and Ketokivi, 2009; Brannen and Nilsen, 2002; Brannen and Nilsen, 2005; Plumridge and Thomson, 2003; Thomson *et al.*, 2002). Brannen and Nilsen (2002) draw on empirical cross national evidence to show that young people have a range of orientations to the future which are strongly shaped by their social class origins and family resources, the point they have reached in the life course and the opportunity structures of the societies in which they live. The theoretical point they make is that a focus on how young people express agency tends to neglect the social context in which they make sense of their lives and their opportunities for action. In addition, many feminists argued that young people's identities are still strongly influenced by their family backgrounds as noted before.

Furthermore, it is too early to tell whether the significant social changes brought by globalization are likely to produce a process of individualisation in contemporary Chinese society, particularly given the fact that individualism also existed in traditional Chinese culture. Hu Shi (2008), who was recognized as a key contributor to Chinese liberalism at the beginning of the 20th century, argued that there were lots of historical records of how Chinese people already valued the power of *ziji zuozhu* (making decisions by oneself). Indeed, this idea flourished during the *Chunqiu* period (770 to 476 BCE) when Confucianism began (ibid.) Confucius' concept of *youjiaowulei* (*there will be no class divisions and boundaries if you have education*) can be understood as promoting the possibility of freedom through individual educational achievement (ibid.). The

evidence of Chinese history suggests that individualism may not only be a Western idea but may also exist in Chinese culture itself.

Recently, Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim wrote a preface for a collection of Chinese studies *iChina: The rise of the individual in modern Chinese society* (Hansen and Svarverud, 2010). In this book, many scholars argued that Chinese society has gradually shifted to a more individualised society in many aspects of people's lives such as young people's choices of work, love and family (ibid.). It is true that people's lives after the Open Door Policy have more freedom compared to the Maoist period and even prior to that. Yan (2010) described individuals' lives under Maoist socialism,

'... an individual's life course was clear and standard, and conditioned by the institutional constraints. The political labelling of being from either a good class or a bad class determined the individual's political career, the birth place prescribed the individual's status as an urban or rural resident, and the local leadership made decisions about to which work unit and type of work the individual would be assigned. In terms of everyday life, there were politically and ideologically charged standards about what to wear, whom to date, when to get married, how to raise children, and so forth'. (p. 502)

Compared to that period, young people in big cities like Shanghai are now embracing a wider range of influences through magazines, television and the internet, which are all obvious manifestations of globalization (Watson, 2004). More importantly, young people have much stronger consumer power than previous generations, due to globalization and the rapid socio-economic development of China (McNeal and Yeh, 1997; McNeal and Yeh, 2003; Sun, 2003; Williams and Veeck, 1998; Ying, 2003). However, the extent to which social and economic change can bring freedom for this young generation is yet a question to be explored. As Yan himself noted, individualisation in China is a situation mixed with pre-modern, modern and late modern, which is 'characterized by the management of the party-state and the absence of cultural democracy, the absence of a welfare state regime, and the absence of classic individualism and political liberalism' (Yan, 2010, p. 510).

In addition, many argue that the roots of collectivism which encouraged family obligations, group expectations, and authority figures are still strong and that this encourages interdependence and connectedness among people, especially in terms of parent-child relationships (Peterson *et al.*, 2005). Take education as an example, many young people

nowadays have more choices and opportunities. However, at the same time, their obligations to fulfil their parents' expectations still push them into fierce competition to succeed. Another example is young people's self identity within a particular culture. The Chinese people's sense of self identity usually emphasizes the 'great self' which focuses on the relatedness and interdependence of the self instead of the 'small self' (chapter 1); therefore identity extends to a broader community of kinship networks and families (Lam, M.S.W and A.C.S.W, 1997). Similarly, the independence of Chinese adolescents is not separate from the harmony of the family and the importance of the significant others such as parents, which are seen as part of their self-identity (Yeh *et al.*, 2005).

In a complex and changing society like China, there is no clear divide between individualisation and collectivism. Instead the two may often coexist with each other, as demonstrated in the popular semi-autobiographical novel *Shanghai Baby* (Wei, 2001) and a doctoral thesis on Shanghai youth's identity relating to television and culture (Weber, 1999). In terms of the increasing relevance of the Western theory of individualisation to a society like China, we may conclude that for such theory to have relevance it must be seen in the context of a strong collectivism which permeates many domains of the society.

3.5 Care and fathering

The concept of care depends on how people define it; it is also a concept which is developing over time (Moss and Brannen, 2003). According to Tronto (1994), the concept of care consists of several components: caring about, taking care of, care-giving and care-receiving. When people have the feeling and thinking of care, they only achieve the emotional aspect of care: 'caring about'. 'Taking care of', however is fulfilled by people taking the moral responsibility and more importantly, the physical activities of care. 'Care-giving' involves physical work, most often in contact with the objects of care. The caring process does not end here and the process of care receiving is also important. According to Tronto (1994), it is very important to look at these different dimensions of care, not only 'care about'.

The obligation and responsibility dimensions of care are very important aspects of care. Many scholars argue that care is a deeply gendered concept and that there are gendered moral norms for motherhood and fatherhood (McDowell *et al.*, 2005; Tronto, 1994). In addition, labour and cost are involved in the process of care (Daly and Lewis, 1999; Hilary, 1983). In most Western countries, as discussed in Chapter 2, the traditional breadwinner role of fathers did not fade away

with women's increasing participation in the labour market. Although empirical studies show that fathers are willing to be and are more involved, women are still the ones mostly responsible for childrearing (Chapter 2). Fathers do 'care about' their children, but the 'caring for' which involves physical work is still left for the mothers to do. The practice of care is often socially negotiated in particular circumstances and what parents do in practice may not always be congruent with the moral values accepted and expected by particular social groups and society. For the mothers, the moral commitment for the children often leads them to choose what is best for their children when they make decisions about taking up paid employment (McDowell *et al.*, 2005; Williams, 2004). Although fathers recognize their obligations, they do not see spending time with children as a useful indicator of their responsibility and commitment to their children but for their jobs, according to a qualitative study interviewing 25 professional fathers (Dermott, 2005).

Similarly, the conceptual ethics of fathering as 'generative fathering' developed by Dollahite, Hawkins, and Brotherson emphasizes the strength and potential of fathers, instead of a deficit perspective on fathers. It is a 'responsibilities-based and capabilities-based perspective which asserts that fathers should and can connect with and care for their children in meaningful ways' (Dollahite and Hawkins, 1997, p. 19). Not only do fathers have the responsibility to bring up and care for their children, they also are capable of meeting children's needs by 'working to create and maintain a developing ethical relationship with them' (*ibid.* p18). Both responsibility and positive activities are emphasised.

The concepts of 'care for' and fathering are closely associated, with both focusing on men's actual practice of their childcare roles. The concepts provide a good lens to examine whether fathers not only 'care about' their children, but also whether they are actively engaged with their children's lives. This is also closely associated with the concepts of family practices and negotiation that will be discussed below.

3.6 Family practices and negotiation

Morgan's concept of 'family practice', which emphasises individuals 'doing family' provides another useful lens to understand the changing family (Morgan, 1999). Instead of seeing family as a static form, 'family practice' stresses the importance of practicing family activities. As Morgan suggests, "family life can be considered through a variety of different lenses and from different perspectives. Thus, family practices may also be gender practices, class practices, age

practices and so on. This point is made in order to stress that family life is never simply family life and that is always continuous with other areas of existence” (Morgan, 1999, p. 13).

According to Foucault, power is always a factor in human relationships and those who have power exercised over them also exercise power themselves (Foucault and Gordon, 1980). From the perspective of generation time, even while children are growing into adults they are still the child in the parent-child relationship (Allatt, 1996). According to the concept of ‘generative fathering’, parents are entrusted with the responsibility of meeting the needs of children and care for the next generation. Therefore, as *care-givers* parents have power and control over their children. Similar to this, Tronto’s concept of care also emphasized that care givers and care receivers generally have different goals and therefore there are differences in power (Tronto, 1994). The existing inequality of structural and psychological power between parents and children means it is unrealistic to expect parents and children to be equal and thus totally open with each other when communicating with each other (Jamieson, 1999).

In terms of understanding the exercise of power between parents and children, negotiation is a useful concept. Both parents and children have different and sometimes opposing goals so there is an ongoing process in which each tries to get their way (Finch, 1989). This does not always result in full agreement between all parties but nevertheless it is through negotiation that young people may gain more independence from their parents. Similarly, parents negotiate with their children to gain control over their children’s behaviour.

The process of negotiation can be either explicit or implicit (Finch and Mason, 1993). Explicit negotiation is open discussion, prompted by specific needs and conducted in a conscious way, whereas implicit negotiation takes place without direct verbal communication about the issue (Finch and Mason, 1993). Empirical studies have shown that parents often work out new ways of communicating to exercise their control and monitor children’s activities (Brannen, 1996). For example, parents’ knowledge of their children’s activities and whereabouts can be a way of maintaining control over their daily lives. In addition, by expressing concern, parents not only convey their affection to their children but demand reciprocity (Allatt, 1996). Expressions of worry can take many forms, such as ‘nagging, interfering, fussing, insisting on times to come in, helping with homework’ (Allatt, 1996, p. 134). In return, children may try to reciprocate this care and concern by doing things that can ease their parents’ minds, such as informing family members about their whereabouts. However, children’s choices about whether, what and how

much to disclose are important factors in their side of the family negotiation process (Darling, Cumsille and Martínez, 2007; Kerr and Stattin, 2000). Adolescents can gain a certain degree of autonomy by concealing information from their parents (Brannen, 1996; Solomon *et al.*, 2002).

To understand father-daughter relationships, it is useful to look at how much time they spend with each other, what fathers and daughters do in their daily lives and how they interact with each other on a daily basis. Adolescent girls, who are seeking more autonomy, are trying to get their own way in the areas of making friends, using the internet and romantic relationships. However, fathers may wish to retain authority and power over their daughters in these aspects. They may even wish to increase this control due to concerns for their daughters' safety.

3.6 Summary

The study uses the framework of time: historical time, generational time and life course time to explore father-daughter relationships in urban Chinese family. The concepts of adolescence and young people's identity relate mainly to 'life course time' as it is seen as a transitional stage in growing up. The chapter on being a teenage girl mostly draws on theories related to these concepts (Chapter 5). Conceptualising fatherhood in contemporary Chinese family I have argued has to take account of 'historical time' as well as 'life course time'; the historical changes experienced by this generation of fathers have relevance for fathers' own life course and for their expectations as fathers for their daughters. These different perspectives of time are used to construct fathers' and daughters' perceptions of fatherhood as examined in Chapter 6. The framework of time is again used to inform the chapter on family practices in Chapter 7.

In addition, the concepts of individualism and collectivism suggest different forces that shape an individual's life choices. Both the Chinese and Western concepts of individualisation are useful as they give insights into how aspects of people's lives have changed in recent decades. However, empirical research suggests the coexistence of individualism and collectivism in contemporary China. Together collectivism and individualism provide useful theoretical tools to examine to what extent fathers and daughters have developed their own biographies under the influence of globalization and the mass media. This is also explored in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

In Chapter 5, the concepts of adolescence as a life course, adolescent identity and gender are outlined to explore what girls perceive it is to be an adolescent girl and a female only child. Whether girls in my study see adolescents as rebellious teenagers; how the life course of

adolescence affects their relationship with their parents; how do they perceive issues of gender; and what are their attitudes towards romantic relationships, are all examined.

The concepts of fatherhood and masculinities are outlined to examine fathers' and daughters' understandings of what fatherhood means. In addition, the ethics of care and fathering involves not only emotional feelings but more importantly, involves taking responsibility as the caregiver. Chapter 6 examines fathers and daughters' constructions of fatherhood by looking at being a father of the 1990s generation and the perspective of fathering from both fathers and daughters.

As I shall show in Chapter 6, as parents, fathers do 'care about' their daughters. However, how much fathers actually 'take care of' their daughters is another matter (see Chapter 7). The concepts of fathering and family practice are used to examine these issues and also how fathers and daughters interact with each other in everyday life. In addition, this investigation draws on a temporal perspective of time: 'present time', 'life course time' and 'generational time'. The 'present time' looks at the time fathers spend together with their daughters. 'Life course time' explores adolescence and the differences experienced (or not) between the two age groups of girls. 'Generation time' deals with the interactions between fathers and daughters with a particular focus on communication. In Chapter 8, the concept of negotiation is employed to explore three areas of girls' personal lives where there are potential conflicts with their fathers: going out and making friends; use of internet at home and romantic relationships. The concept of negotiation helps to investigate how fathers exercise their power over their daughters and whether explicit negotiation and implicit negotiation are used.

Chapter 4 Research aims, design and methods

This chapter establishes the research questions and provides a detailed examination of the research design, data collection and how the research was carried out. Firstly, this chapter outlines the detailed research questions in this thesis, based on the theoretical framework and literature in the previous chapters. Secondly, the overall research design, setting, administration and sample will be explained. Thirdly, the methodological issues encountered while doing the fieldwork are examined. Fourthly, my approach to data analysis is justified. Lastly, the ethical issues of doing fieldwork with young people in Shanghai are discussed.

4.1 Research Questions

The study aims to explore father-daughter relationships in Shanghai from the perspectives of both fathers and daughters, to understand how they construct their identities in those roles, and to investigate their family practices and negotiations in relation to parental authority and adolescent independence. In addition, the study aims to understand these issues from life courses of two age groups of young people – thirteen to fourteen years old and sixteen to seventeen years old. Put precisely, it addresses four main questions:

- A. What does it mean to be a daughter in a particular historical generation?
 - How do girls see themselves as the teenagers in a contemporary Chinese society?
 - If they are an only child, how do girls see being the only child in the family?
 - How are girls relationships with their mothers, fathers and friends? And do these vary across the two age groups? If they do vary, in what ways?
 - How do girls see themselves as they are going through their adolescent years? And how do they see the changes as they are growing up?
 - Do girls think being a daughter is different from being a son? If they do see being a daughter as different, in what ways?
 - What do girls think it is to be a good daughter?
 - How do girls perceive their relationships with their fathers?
- B. What does it mean to be the father born in a particular generation and what does it mean to parent teenage girls in contemporary Chinese society?
 - What are fathers' own experiences of being a child and young person?
 - How do fathers perceive being the father of a teenage girl?
 - How do fathers and daughters perceive fatherhood?
- C. What kind of activities do fathers and daughters do together and how do they spend time

together?

- How much do fathers and daughters spend time together at home? And do these vary across the two age groups? If they do vary, in what ways?
- What do fathers and daughters do together? And do these vary across the two age groups? If they do vary, in what ways?
- How do they communicate with each other? And do these vary across the two age groups? If they do vary, in what ways?

D. To what extent do fathers and girls negotiate parental authority and girls' autonomy, in the areas of going out and making friends, internet use and romantic relationships?

- How much conflict is there between fathers and daughters over daily life?
- How do fathers and girls negotiate parental authority and girls' autonomy, in the areas of going out and making friends, internet use and romantic relationships?

4.2 Overall research design

A age group design was chosen to examine the changes during girls' adolescence in the context of a rapidly changing society. This cross-sectional design has two age groups of girls: the first aged thirteen to fourteen years old and the second aged sixteen to seventeen years old. It was thought that comparing the two groups would shed further insight into father-daughter relationships at two points in adolescent girls' life courses when the girls were experiencing change. The younger group was going through a stage of physiological maturation and was also preparing for the important exams they would take to get into senior high school in one year's time. The older group was about to take the most important exam of all, the national university entrance examination, which would have a major impact on their future lives. These are both times when children need a lot parental support. In addition, the focus on adolescence more generally was considered important for studying father-daughter relationships, as girls become conscious of body changes and may be more reluctant to communicate with their fathers. The changes brought about these life course events were expected to lead to changes in the girls' relationships with their fathers.

In an effort to gain a comprehensive understanding of father-daughter relationships in the context of a changing Chinese society, the research design included both fathers and daughters. As adolescent girls and their fathers are the focus of the research, schools are a typical setting to find samples of adolescents (Brannen, Heptinstall and Bhopal, 2000) and their fathers. It was decided to administer a questionnaire survey to the daughters in secondary schools and to recruit their fathers. The design also included a small number of fathers and daughters from the same

families in order to study their perspectives in more depth.

In terms of data collection methods I used an approach which combined both quantitative and qualitative data: focus groups, questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. The collection of different types of data help to address both different and similar issues, and the data generated by each are used to complement each other (Brannen, 2005; Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989). The data collection included three phases: firstly, focus groups were used to get an overview of girls' understanding of the father-daughter relationship, and also as a pilot study to generate questions for the questionnaires and interviews. Secondly, the girls and fathers' questionnaire surveys were used as a way to recruit interviewees, as well as to gain quantitative measurements of fathers' and daughters' daily family practices (for example time spent together, shared activities and negotiations about aspects of girls' lives). In addition, the questionnaire survey was designed and coded for two age groups, which made it possible to discern statistical differences between the younger and older groups. Lastly, interviewees were recruited to explore people's understanding of their own father-daughter relationships, with a focus on meanings, feelings and thoughts. The themes of girls' construction of their identities as teenage girls, fathers' understanding of their role as the parent of a teenage girl, and their communication and negotiation about parental authority were examined in more depth.

Phase 1: Focus groups with girls at school

I considered starting with focus groups with girls as a pilot study a good way to gain basic insight into how girls speak about father-daughter relationships, where there was little research done on father-child relationships in China. Another reason to carry out focus groups with girls at the beginning of the research was to generate questions for the questionnaire survey and the interviews.

The focus groups aimed to explore adolescent girls' ideas about father-daughter relationships in general, rather than probing too deeply into individual experiences which was considered inappropriate in group setting where the girls attended the same school or class and probably knew each other. Four main questions were posed (for focus group schedule see Appendix 2):

1. What do girls think about being a daughter? What does it mean to be a 'good' daughter and a 'bad' daughter?
2. How about ideas about 'traditional' father and 'modern' father?
3. What do fathers generally do in the family? And what do they do with their daughters?

4. What kind of relationships do fathers have with their daughters? Do girls think the father-daughter relationship special in any way, compared with the mother-daughter and father-son relationship?

Girls' perceptions of a good daughter and a bad daughter, the differences of being a daughter and a son were used in the data analysis to form girls' construction of being a daughter in chapter 5.

Phase 2: Questionnaire surveys of both fathers and daughters

In the second stage of my research, a questionnaire survey was administered in seventeen schools with two groups of girls and their fathers. The questionnaire survey is the most commonly used research method in China and conducting a questionnaire survey in schools provided "a ready-made frame of sampling in terms of age, sex, educational level, geographical area" (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 107). The questionnaire survey was intended to reach a relatively large sample and it included a variety of fathers and daughters by being conducted in different parts of the city and different types of schools. The questionnaire was self-completed and consisted of mostly pre-coded closed questions and a few open-ended ones. It was intended to take forty to sixty minutes to complete. By reaching a big sample of girls and their fathers, it was hoped that some of them would be interested in taking part in the interviews. Therefore, the questionnaire surveys also served as a way to find interview participants.

Two questionnaires were designed, one for fathers and one for daughters. The girls were asked to take a father's questionnaire home for their fathers to complete. Some of the questions for fathers and daughters were slightly different (Appendix 3.1 and 3.2). The girls' questionnaire was designed to assess broader aspects of their lives: their family background; their daily routine; their school lives; their activities and time spent with significant others and their relationships with their fathers. As education played an important role in girls' lives, particularly for the girls in these two groups, questions related to education were also asked. As for the fathers' questionnaire, it covered: family background; their understanding of daughters' daily lives and school lives and time spent together with their daughters.

The questionnaire survey was mainly intended to make quantitative measurements of both the fathers' and their daughters' daily family practices, such as time and activities together. Questions about both fathers' and mothers' working time were asked to provide a general picture of how much time parents had for their daughters and family life. In both the fathers' and

daughters' questionnaires, participants were asked: how long they spent with each other on the last Sunday and the school day; how often they had breakfast and dinner together; how much fathers helped their daughters with their studies and how both communicated about issues of girls' social lives, dreams for the future and worries. In addition, questions about how often fathers criticized, praised or argued with their daughters were also asked to see fathers' communication with their daughters. These helped address one of the main research question 'What kind of activities do fathers and daughters do together and how do they spend time together?'

In the girls' questionnaire, mothers' involvement in girls' lives were also asked, which enable some comparisons between fathers and mothers. Girls' relationships with the significant others, especially their friends were also included in the girls' questionnaire. Girls' views of their lives, such as whether they were happy with their appearance, whether they got on well with other people at school were asked to explore girls' perception of being a girl during adolescent years, which was designed to partly answer the main research question of 'What does it mean to be a daughter in a particular historical generation?'

Furthermore, the open questions at the end of both the fathers' and daughters' questionnaires, such as: 'As a father, what do you think your father has done the best ?' and 'As a father, what do you think you have done the best?', along with the comments that participants were invited to leave at the end of the questionnaire, were intended to provide me with further insights into father involvement with their daughters' lives from both fathers' and daughters' perspectives. These provided a rich data for the research question 'How do fathers and daughters perceive fatherhood?'

However, a limitation of the questionnaire survey was that it would be difficult to gain descriptive accounts of fathers and daughters' perspectives on their relationships and how they think of their own roles as fathers and daughters. In addition, as family relationships are negotiated in particular social contexts, a largely pre-coded survey could not explore the particularities of people's situations, thoughts and feelings. Therefore, interviews were used at the third stage.

Phase 3: semi-structured interviews with both fathers and daughters

There were several reasons why I chose to employ semi-structured interviews in the third phase

of the data collection. Firstly, as just explained, the aim of the study was to investigate fathers' and daughters' perspectives on their relationships and describe them more fully than a questionnaire survey allowed. This was a relatively descriptive and exploratory research goal which focused on meanings and beliefs. In a sense, it was hoped that the interview could provide participants with more space to develop their ideas and feelings. Secondly, verbal interaction between interviewers and interviewees has "the potential of providing rich and high illuminating material" (Robson, 2002, p. 273). By interacting with each other face to face, the expressive power of language helped produce greater detail and encouraged people to be more reflective. This was particularly useful as the society and families in Shanghai were undergoing many changes; the interaction between interviewees and the researcher provoked issues that the researcher could not always have anticipated before the fieldwork. For example, the Shanghai government changed the regulations for children from non-Shanghai household families, which entitled them to enrol in local schools when I went back to do my fieldwork in 2008. Also, it was difficult to get details about the negotiation process between girls and fathers in the questionnaire. However, participants could describe the whole process in the interview; for example, fathers' and daughters' negotiation over study related issues, internet use and romantic relationships. Thirdly, interviews were sometimes particularly good at probing deeper reasons or attitudes that may lie behind initial responses to the questions. Finally, responses provided in the interviews can be used to provide explanations for the data drawn from the questionnaires.

The girls' interview covered a range of themes: the way girls felt about being a teenager; what it meant to be a girl, not a boy; how did it feel to be an only child; time and activities with fathers and mothers; similarities between father and daughter; father's closeness and support for girls' education; girls' autonomy seeking; communication with fathers and girls' education and career aspirations. The schedule for the fathers' interviews was similar to the girls', although a few questions were adapted. The semi-structured interviews with fathers and daughters were used mainly to explore three research questions (for both girls' and fathers' interview schedule see Appendix 4.1 and 4.2): 'What does it mean to be a daughter in a particular historical generation?' 'What does it mean to be a father born in a particular generation and what does it mean to parent teenage girls in contemporary Chinese society' and 'How do fathers and daughters negotiate parental authority and adolescent independence'.

Questions about time and activities with fathers, such as how much time do fathers and daughters spend with each other, what kind of activities they do together, the closeness of father-

daughter relationships, were both asked in the questionnaire and interviews. These covered similar issues and in the interview they were served as a way to provoke a smooth conversation. However, there are also questions which complement each other, especially questions related to girls' education. In the questionnaire, a wide range of questions related to education were asked: girls' education attainment, education outcome and their future goals, fathers' support on girls' education. In the interviews, the reasons why fathers saw girls' education as important, how they were trying to influence their daughters' education were also explored. By asking about other related aspects such as fathers' own education, a better understanding was gained to explain the results in the questionnaire survey.

4.3 Research setting, administration and sample

The fieldwork took place over three visits to Shanghai. In May 2007, a pilot study which consisted of one focus group and the questionnaire design was tried out. During February 2008, another two focus groups were conducted. The main fieldwork in which I conducted the questionnaire survey for both fathers and daughters, seventeen individual interviews, and another focus group took place from November 2008 to January 2009.

Girls from Year 2 of junior high and Year 2 of senior high school were selected for the study as they were both embarking on transitions in one year's time as explained at the beginning of this chapter. Another reason for choosing girls in Year 2 rather than final year students was a practical one: students from final years in both junior and senior high schools were thought to be ideal. However it was impossible to recruit them in Shanghai, as they were all too focused on their exams and schools normally refused any activities which might distract them. In order to get a balanced sample of older girls, I went to eleven ordinary state schools, three key state schools, two private schools and one vocation school to conduct the research (detail see Appendix 5).

4.31 Focus groups: administration and selection

I gained access to four schools through my friends in Shanghai, where they were teachers, to conduct the four focus groups. The schools arranged the venue and time for me. I requested each teacher from the four different schools to arrange a quiet room where participants would not be disturbed and a time slot of around forty minutes during school time. The four focus groups took place at different settings and places (teachers' library, students' reading room, teachers' rest room, classroom) and school time (lunch time, after school time and class time).

The teachers who I contacted were also asked to recruit eight girls in Year 2 for me, by talking to the girls about the research and asking them whether they were interested in taking part in the focus group. As a result, three schools selected eight girls who volunteered to take part and another school assigned students by calling the student ID (ethical discussion see 4.62).

In total, four focus groups were conducted separately in two junior and two senior high schools. Three schools where I conducted focus groups were 'ordinary' schools where the local parents in the area sent their children. One senior high school was a highly selective 'key school'. For three 'ordinary' schools, the girls in each focus group were from the same class and knew each other. For the focus group conducted in the 'key' school, the girls were from two different classes but at the same year group.

Before the discussion, participants were informed again about the research and they were told to be free to leave if they did not wish to take part. At the same time, they were told that a digital voice recorder would be used during the discussion. An informed consent form was then passed to each participant to gain written consent. Also, they were given a blank sheet of paper to use whenever they wished to use during or after the discussion. Each focus group lasted from 45 minutes to one hour. At the end of the focus group, girls were given a short questionnaire to fill in and a contact leaflet for further enquiry. They were also reminded that if they wished to write anything down about the focus group or father-daughter relationships they could write it down on the blank sheet paper.

4.32 Questionnaire survey

a. Administration of questionnaire survey

I established contact with seventeen schools across the city in different boroughs by various means: some through friends, others through friends of friends. All the questionnaires were anonymous, however as I was interested in both the father's and the daughter's perspectives on the same family, their questionnaires were paired up beforehand using identifying numbers for each school and student, for example, School A1 and Student No1.

In the case of seven teachers who I contacted through my own friends, I asked them to arrange a time for the girls to fill in the questionnaires while I was present. Five of these agreed to arrange a time for me to send out the questionnaire and also allocated a time in school for the girls to complete it. Four of these five schools arranged the time during a lesson (which was forty-five

minutes long) and another school arranged for it to take place during lunch time (which was around one hour). I introduced myself to the girls, explained the research briefly and invited them to take part in the questionnaire. I also stressed that if they were not willing to fill in the questionnaire, they could choose not to and this was not school work that they had to do. The few girls who chose not to take part were allowed to use the time to do homework and were not given the questionnaires. Also, if they were not happy to answer any particular questions they were allowed to leave them blank. I handed out the girls' questionnaires in a sealed envelope which also contained the questionnaire for their father. When they got their envelope they were asked to fill in the girls' questionnaire, which had a pink cover, and to take home their father's questionnaire, which had a blue cover. I further explained that personal information such as email address, telephone number or home address was not required, unless they were interested in participating in a face-to-face interview as well. The girls' questionnaires were collected by me once they were completed and they were asked to return their fathers' completed questionnaire around one week's time.

I also took the questionnaire to two other schools where the school did not allocate school time for the girls to fill in the questionnaire. However, I did get the chance to hand out the questionnaire, and explain the research as I had done for the school which arranged the time for questionnaire. I asked for both girls' and fathers' questionnaires to be returned in the same envelope in one week's time.

In ten schools where I had no direct access, schools were in charge of the whole process of distributing the questionnaire. I was not able to go to these schools to explain the study and answer any questions related to it. Instead, a guidance letter highlighted the requirements for conducting the questionnaire was sent to each school (Appendix 6). I did not know exactly how they distributed the questionnaires or what was said except that in most cases they preferred to ask that both girls and fathers complete them at home and return them in the same envelope in a week's time.

Of the 767 girls from the seventeen schools, 59.6% were from junior high school and 40.4% from senior high school. Most girls were in ordinary state school (77.3%) and 15.2% were from key schools. Also, 4% of girls were from private schools and 3.4% of girls were from vocational school. The girls from the vocational school were a similar age to the senior high schools girls so they were grouped with them in the older group. Compare to the general population in Shanghai,

my sample under-represents the percentage of girls attending private schools and vocational and technical schools and those from the “key schools”.

b. Characteristics of the questionnaire sample

Here, I give a brief account of the characteristics of the samples of fathers and daughters (see also Appendix 7).

In total, 818 pairs of father’s and daughter’s questionnaires were sent out through the schools. Of these, 767 girls’ questionnaires were completed (457 girl respondents from the younger group and 310 from older group) and 599 fathers responded (368 were fathers of girls in the younger group and 231 had daughters in the older group). The girls’ sample was therefore larger than the fathers’, with 174 daughters taking part whose fathers did not. Conversely, six fathers took part in the survey whose daughters did not. In total, there were 587 pairs of father-daughter respondents.

However, when entering the data, I found that some pairs of fathers and daughters had very similar handwriting. Therefore, I went through each pair to identify them. Overall, the handwriting in 71 of the completed father questionnaires (45 from the younger group and 26 from the older one), suggested that the girls had filled in the questionnaire for their fathers. In order to confirm my observation and find out the reasons I managed to get in touch with eight respondents by phone and online (the ‘QQ’ online messaging programme – similar to MSN). Six girls admitted that they had filled in the questionnaires on behalf of their fathers. Three of these explained that they filled it in because their father had not been at home when the girls had intended to ask them to fill in the questionnaire. In two of these three cases, the girls confessed that their fathers were aware that they had filled it in for them. The other three girls had other reasons: one said her father refused to fill in the questionnaire, one said her father did not have time and the other said her father had been watching TV and was ‘too lazy’ and could not be bothered to write it himself, so she had written down his verbal answers. Of these eight contacts, the other two were with fathers. One claimed that it was he who had filled in the questionnaire, not his daughter and the other was a step-father who said his step-daughter had not asked him to complete it. In the interview, Girl Liu whose father did not take part in the interview admitted that she filled in the questionnaire for her father. When asked the reason, she said that they were having a fight recently and she did not want to give him anything and did not want to talk to him either. She said, ‘Some questions were filled in from my dad’s perspective, for example, he

wanted me to go to university. This is his wish. Most of the others were filled in from my own perspective’.

In addition, there were another four fathers’ questionnaires on which other family members had left notes explaining who had filled the form in and why. One mother filled in the form by asking her husband questions over the phone. One father answered the questions verbally while his daughter filled in the form. One divorced mother said she had filled in the form on behalf of the father. One girl’s father was in Britain and her grandfather, who was taking on the paternal role while he was away, filled it in with his own responses.

As I could not contact any of the other 63 fathers and daughters whose handwriting looked the same and confirm whether or not these were the fathers’ words, I decided to include all 71 in the analysis of the data. However, it may affect the whole sample and the data. According to the Pearson Chi-square results, there were very few significant differences between the questionnaires which had been filled in by fathers and the ones which had been filled in by someone else. However, there were significant differences in father’s working hours (Pearson Chi-square=45.736, df=24, n=441, n=441, $p<0.01$), and in answers to the questions ‘My daughter is happy with her appearance’ (Pearson Chi-square=28.016, df=4, n=571, $p<0.001$) and ‘my daughter is happy with her life’ (Pearson Chi-square=14.486, df=4, n=566, $p<0.01$). Fathers who filled in the questionnaire by themselves tended to work shorter hours than the ones who did not; 40% of those who worked less than 9 hours a day filled in questionnaires compared with 26% of fathers who worked more than nine hours who did not. In addition, fathers who filled in the questionnaires by themselves thought that their daughters were happy with their appearance; only 4.7% of those filling in the questionnaires chose the option ‘mostly disagree’ (that their daughters were happy) in comparison to 21.3% of those agreed their daughters were unhappy with their appearance who did not fill them in. Similarly, fathers who filled in the questionnaire by themselves thought that their daughters were generally happy with their life; only 5.5 % chose the option ‘mostly disagree’ in comparison to 16.7% of those who did not fill in questionnaires. It seems that girls who filled in the questionnaire for their fathers were not as happy with their appearance and life as the girls who did not.

In generational terms, both groups of girls were born in the 1990s. The 1990s generation has been brought up with strong Western cultural influences; McDonald’s, chips and pizza are as familiar as rice and noodles - and much more fashion conscious.

The great majority of fathers were born in the 1950s and 1960s (table 4.1). Of the 561 fathers who filled in their date of birth on the questionnaire survey, over two thirds (69.1%) of them were born in the 1960s, the time in which China experienced revolutionary changes under Mao Ze Dong (see table 4.1 and for more detailed information about historical change see Chapter 1). During those ten years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the national university entrance examination was cancelled and school education was almost completely halted. Instead of going to school, many young people were busy shouting slogans and reciting Mao's quotations (Wang, 2008). The average age at which these men became fathers was twenty nine years old, according to the 553 fathers' respondents in the questionnaire survey.

N=561	Historical background	N	Percentage
Before 1949	The establishment of People's Republic of China	14	2.5%
1950-1958	The 'Great Leap Forward' initiated (1958)	58	10.3%
1959-1961	The 'Three bitter years' of natural disasters (1959-1961)	61	10.9%
1962-1965	Suffering from the famine	161	28.7%
1966-1969	1966-1976: the Cultural Revolution (national examinations stopped for those 10 years)	189	33.7%
1970-1975		78	13.9%

Table 4.1 Fathers' year of birth

According to fathers' questionnaire responses, most fathers and mothers were educated up to secondary school level (table 4.2). In addition, fathers' educational level and occupational category was very similar to that of the girls' mothers.

	Parents' Education				N
	Primary	junior high	Senior high	University degree	
Fathers	4.1%	25.9%	42.6%	27.4%	591
Mothers	5.1%	32.0%	36.8%	26.1%	587

Table 4.2 Parents' educational attainment (note: university degree includes diploma degree)

I have adopted Lu Xueyi's social classification to group parents' occupations (Appendix 1). As only 358 fathers filled in their own and their wives' occupations, I decided to add their daughters' response only when the fathers did not answer these two questions (table 4.3).

	Fathers		Mothers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Government administrators/managers	0	/	1	0.2%
Senior business executives	47	7.4%	18	3.2%
Owner of private enterprises	21	3.3%	8	1.4%
Professionals	90	14.1%	120	21.5%
Office workers	82	12.8%	87	15.6%
Small business	58	9.1%	41	7.3%
Business/service industry	227	35.5%	198	35.4%
Manufacturing workers	113	17.7%	83	14.8%
Unemployed	1	0.2%	3	5.3%
N	639		559	

Table 4.3 Fathers' and mothers' occupations combined with girls' answers

As there were 587 pairs of father-daughter questionnaires and more girls than fathers completed the questionnaire, I have used the girls' questionnaire responses to describe the overall sample regarding household status, living arrangements and accommodation (for the separate characteristics of questionnaire samples for girls and fathers, see Appendix 7).

In terms of residential status, 85.7% of girls came from households with Shanghai registration while 14.3% came from migrant households (N=719). Of the 765 girls who responded, 676 were only children (88.4%). Those who came from outside Shanghai were more likely to have siblings compared to girls from Shanghai. Of the 580 Shanghainese girls, only 7.8% had siblings, whilst of the 94 girls with non-Shanghai status, 37.2% had siblings. The overall percentage of only children was 88.4%, which was slightly lower than the Shanghai statistics for the only child rate, which was over 95% (discussed in Chapter 1).

Of 731 girl respondents, 75.0% were from dual-earner families. There were 126 girls whose fathers were working but their mothers were not; 44 girls whose fathers were not working but their mothers were; and 13 girls with neither mother or father in work. As I went to schools in different areas of Shanghai the locations of my participants' residences were diverse: 35.6% lived in the city centre, 37.3% lived in the inner city and 27.3% lived in the suburbs (N=751). In terms of housing, 13.3% of girls lived in rented accommodation and 86.7% lived in owner-occupied housing (N=758). In addition, most girls lived in two or three bedroom flats; only 12.8% lived in a one bedroom flat, 44.6% lived in a two bedroom flat, 22.5% lived in three bedroom flats and 20.1% lived in houses (N=751). It should be born in mind that the size of

accommodation is not necessarily an accurate indicator of wealth, because small flats in the city centre are very expensive while houses in the suburbs might have been in the family ever since the land was allocated to them for farming. Of the 204 girls from the suburbs, 39.2% of them lived in houses. Having a house in the centre, however, was not common as most of the housing there is flats. Houses in the city are very expensive and only 27 of the 261 girls who lived in the city centre lived in houses.

4.33 Interviews: administration and sample

The interview samples were a sub-sample of the questionnaire sample. A contact information page was provided at the end of each questionnaire form, inviting both fathers and daughters to take part in interviews. There were 204 daughters who agreed to be interviewed and left their contact details on the information page (N=767) and 98 fathers wrote down their contact details (N=599), which meant that 59 pairs agreed to be interviewed. More younger girls and their fathers were willing to take part in the interview: 137 girls from the younger group compared with 67 girls in the older group, 67 fathers with younger daughters compared with 31 fathers in the older group.

As I intended to interview pairs of fathers and daughters (interviewing each separately), I chose first from the pairs of fathers and daughters among 44 pairs from the younger group and 15 pairs from the older group who filled in the information page. As I was aiming to get a wide range of father-daughter pairs, I planned to choose one pair from each school the questionnaire was distributed to. However, because in the returns from some schools no father-daughter pairs agreed to be interviewed, and because my time in Shanghai was limited, I only interviewed eight pairs and one girl in total. In most cases, I approached the fathers first and only contacted the girls when the fathers agreed to take part in the interview. In the cases where I contacted the girls through the internet, in which they left QQ numbers (online chat software), I asked the girls first. If agreed, then I asked the girls to ask whether their fathers were interested. Some fathers refused to take part in the interview when I contacted them, mainly because of the time constraints because it was approaching the Chinese New Year. In all, six pairs and another two girls agreed to take part in the interview by January 2009. I decided to stop contacting others as time was limited and I needed to come back London. Later on, one father who did not fill in the questionnaire also agreed to take part when I walked his daughter back home after we finished her interview in Starbucks. In all, I conducted seventeen individual interviews, among which, eight pairs of fathers and daughters (table 4.5).

Overall, the interview sample was very similar to the questionnaire sample (table 4.4). However, all of the girls in the interviews lived with their fathers, while 9.3% girls in the questionnaire did not. The educational level of fathers from the interview sample was much higher than those in the questionnaire sample. There were 5.1% of fathers from the questionnaire sample who had only been to primary school, but all the fathers in the interviews had been to secondary school. Also, five fathers from the interview sample had been to university or college. In terms of father's occupation, around half of the fathers in the questionnaire sample had low level occupations compared to only three out of nine fathers in the interview sample.

		Questionnaire sample		Interview sample
		Father's Q	Daughter's Q	
School type	Key school		117(15.2%)	2
	Non-key school		650 (84.8%)	7
Only child	Yes	/	676(88.4%)	8
	No	/	89(11.6%)	1
Hukou status	Shanghai	459(85.2%)	616(85.7%)	7
	Non-Shanghai	80(14.8%)	103(14.3%)	2
Dual-earner family	Yes	404(74.1%)	548(75.0%)	7
	No	141(25.9%)	183(25.0%)	2
Living arrangement	Live with father/d	559(93.8%)	665(91.7%)	9
	Live without father/d	37(6.2%)	68(9.3%)	0
Accommodation	Rented place	85(14.7%)	101(13.3%)	1
	Owned place	495(85.3%)	657(86.7%)	8
Home size	One bedroom	90(15.6%)	96(12.8%)	1
	Two bedrooms	240(41.7%)	335(44.6%)	5
	More than two bedrooms	246(42.7%)	320(42.6%)	3
Father's occupation*	Higher	113(24.7%)	151(25.5%)	2
	Middle	87(19.0%)	152(25.6%)	4
	low	258(56.3%)	290(48.9%)	3
Fathers' education	Primary school	30(5.1%)	/	0
	Junior high	188(32.0%)	/	2
	Senior high	216(36.8%)	/	2
	University or college	153(26.1%)	/	5
Total		767	599	9:8pair+1

Table 4.4 Comparing questionnaire and interview sample

*Higher level: government administrators/managers; senior business executives; owner of private enterprises; professionals

Middle level: office workers; small business; self-employed

Lower level: business/service worker; manufacturing workers; agriculture workers/unemployed

The interview sample was not a representative sample of the overall questionnaire sample, in terms of parents' occupation and education. The fathers in the interview tended to be at both

ends: either having higher degree and well-paid jobs or lower degree and low paid jobs. Also, there was one father had twins: one boy and one girl; one father was divorced and lived with his daughter together. However, in terms of age, it was similar to the questionnaire sample as six of them were born in the 1960s, the time in which China experienced revolutionary changes under Mao Ze Dong.

Father	Daughter Age	Father Year born	Father Occupation	Father Education	Home Size	Properties owned
Shen*	16-17	1965	University Student Support Officer	Diploma (3 yr Diploma)	3 bed	2
Li	16-17	1964	Senior Manager in Trading Company	Masters Degree	2 bed	2
Chen	16-17	1959	Officer in Foreign Trading Company	Senior High	2 bed	1
Cai	16-17	1963	Civil servant	BA	3 bed	2
Nina**	13-14	1973	Labourer	Senior High	1 bed	Rented
Zhan	13-14	1967	Engineer	Masters	2 bed	3
Wang***	13-14	1961	Administrative staff (in a restaurant)	Junior high	2 bed	1
Mei	13-14	1968	Manufacturing worker	Junior high	2 bed	1
Liu***	13-14	1965	Owner of private enterprises	University degree	3 bed	2

Table 4.5 Details of interview participants

* *Father Shen is the only father who has two children, who are twins (one girl, one boy).*

***Father Nina is the only immigrant family (both parents came to Shanghai to work).*

* ***Father Wang is divorced and lives with his daughter and his mother. He went to senior high school, but his senior high school degree is not recognized by the government.*

****Liu's father did not take part in the interview*

4.4 Methodological issues encountered

4.41 Issues in the focus group

The focus group was used to explore girls' views of father-daughter relationships in general. However, many girls talked about their own relationships intensively. When this happened, I did not discourage them. However, I did remind them that they could also talk about relationships in general and did not necessarily talk about their own.

The ways that the participants contributed to the focus groups differed and this is another factor that affects the outcome of focus groups and data analysis. During the conversation, some participants were very active and eager to talk about their opinions or experiences in great detail,

while the others kept silent for most of the time. However, the silent participants during the discussion should be regarded as important even though they were problematic (Smithson, 2000). By looking closely at other details, the problems of ambiguity sometimes can be solved. In the four focus groups conducted, every participant was given a blank sheet of paper so that they could make notes whenever they want and write down comments. The comments written on the blank sheet of paper were very useful for analyzing participants' attitudes and perspectives, especially for the silent ones. For example, one girl only took part in the discussion in five out of 14 questions discussed. However, she wrote some useful comments on the paper, 'Other fathers always have endless topics to talk about with their daughters, but I have nothing to talk about with my dad. I really hope that my father can talk with me more often'. We could see that she did not have as close a relationship with her father as she would have liked. Therefore, I would argue that giving different options for the participants may help to understand their views better.

When I was transcribing the focus groups, I also found that there was a great deal of group interaction during the discussion. The verbal interactions were easy to capture but some other forms of interaction such as murmurs, laughter and silence, which also provided important evidence were very difficult to capture. Some girls in my study who were silent during most of the discussion may have contributed less explicitly, such as nodding, laughing, and murmuring. However, the meanings are ambiguous and I could not go back to the participants to confirm what they meant when they used non-verbal communication.

4.42 Issues in the questionnaire survey

The questionnaire survey was distributed via schools to a large sample to assess both fathers' and daughters' perspectives on father-daughter relationships. Asking girls to take questionnaires home for their fathers to complete meant that there was a risk of either girls filling the questionnaires for their fathers or girls not letting their fathers know about the survey. There might be two different reasons for girls filling fathers' questionnaire. For some girls, it might be simply a result of being curious about the father questionnaires and how fathers might respond based on the girls' own imagination. While for others, they might want to finish the task assigned by the teachers. It also reflected some cultural factors. The habit of creating countermeasures of orders or requirements and Chinese people's cunning art of self-preservation should be taken into account. There is a common saying in China related to the implementation of government policy, "Where there is a policy implementation from the government, there will be a countermeasure created" (shang you zhengce, xia you dui ce). When ordinary people and

the local government cannot handle the policy that has been created by the central government, they start to think about all kinds of countermeasures. This reflects the Chinese people's attitude towards rules and policies in general. Whenever there is a policy coming out, the first thing people think about is how to handle it, not how to implement it. Once there is a rule, there must be a way of getting around it. As regulations and rules are everywhere, people are used to handling them and giving back what the authority wants. In my case, most of girls were asked by the teacher to hand in the questionnaire, so they may be keen to finish the task. Stressing that they did not have to complete it if they did not wish to was intended to help relieve some of the pressure on them.

In terms of the design of the questionnaire, it was reported by both fathers and girls that a few questions were not well designed. Although I piloted the questionnaire survey and asked twenty girls to comment on it, I did not get much useful feedback. One possibility was that they felt reluctant to give critical comments; another is that the number of students I approached was too small.

However, in both the girls' and fathers' questionnaire survey, they were all invited to write about what they thought of the questionnaire. Many wrote down their views, especially the girls. Some commented that questions on matters such as property should not be asked as it was an invasion of privacy. However, some girls thought there was nothing was wrong with these questions and they were happy to answer. Questions like *hukou* status and, parents' jobs were difficult for them as they did not always know how to respond. This resulted in lower response rates on these questions: 98 girls did not answer the question about household status; 85 girls did not specify their mother' job, even though 601 girls reported that their mothers were working; of the 689 who girls reported that their fathers were working, 96 did not specify his job. Quite a few girls just wrote down 'not sure' 'not clear' to these questions. However, the response rate overall for most questions was very high (mostly over 95%), apart from the above questions mentioned. Whenever there is a low response rate in the data analysis from Chapter 5 to Chapter 8, I will give the details.

In relation to the design of the questions, the questionnaire survey did not ask whether the girls lived at school or at home. However, many students in senior high school can choose to live at school and the school will provide accommodation. I realized that it was also a very important question to ask and asked the teachers to ask the girls to indicate if they lived at school during

the week. However, only 5.6% of girls indicated that they lived at school. Thus it is not clear whether they lived at home or had just failed to respond at all.

There are also a few questions that were not used in the data analysis. The timetable in the girls' questionnaire was originally designed to analyze girls' time use in a normal week. However, it turned out to be too complicated and the participants had different ways of categorizing activities and time. Therefore, I only used one interviewee's timetable as an example of how girls' spend their day. In addition, there were many questions relating to girl's education (for example, 'Do you think you can achieve more in education in the near future?') and future job plans (for example, 'Which of the following plans best describes what you will be doing after you have completed high school?') were asked but not used in the analysis. The reason for this was that I was planning to look at father's influence on girls' educational outcome at the time of designing the questionnaire. However, given the limited words of my PhD thesis, I have decided not to include this.

4.43 Issues in the interview

The choices of interview venue and the power relationships between interviewee and interviewer, which both affected the conduct of fieldwork and data analysis, are discussed as follow.

a. The interview venue:

Most of the interviews took place at the interviewees' homes. Among eight pairs of fathers and daughters' interviews, five pairs were interviewed at their homes at one visit. I interviewed one pair in a community centre and another one at the work place of the father. Another pair of father and daughter was interviewed at different places, the daughter was interviewed in a coffee shop and the father, who did not plan to take part in the research, was later interviewed at home (table 4.5).

In the six homes I visited during the interviews, five of them had two or more bedrooms. Normally, the two-bedroom flat was around 80 m² and three-bedroom flat was around 100 m². In most cases, they were large enough for holding an interview and having other family members doing whatever they wanted to do at the same time. For the interviewee who had sufficient space at home, it was an ideal place to carry out the interview. The interviewee may have felt more comfortable on their own territory. In addition, the choice of interviewees' homes also shifts the relations of power between the interviewer and the interviewee (Sin, 2003). More importantly, it is the actual site where relations between fathers and daughters develop.

Therefore, it gives the researcher an opportunity to examine other elements which are relevant to the interview, such as the location and status of home, the divisions of different rooms, especially the living area of the girls. In my case, it was also very convenient for me to do interviews at people's homes since I needed to interview both the father and the daughter.

Participants	Size of homes		In which room took place the interview?
	Bedrooms	Living rooms	
Shen	/	/	Interview at father's workplace
Li	2	1	Living room (father), coffee shop (girl)
Chen	2	1	Living room (father and daughter)
Cai	3	2	Daughter's bedroom (girl), living room (father)
Nina	1	0 (shop)	Daughter's bedroom (separated by the partition from the living space)
Zhan	2	2	Reading room (father and daughter)
Wang	/	/	Interview in the community centre
Mei	2	0	Daughter's room (father and daughter)

Table 4.6: Interview venue at homes (6 homes in total)

However, it was not an ideal venue for those who had only limited space at home or those whose homes did not afford much privacy for family members. I interviewed Father Nina and his daughter, where they lived in a shop and there was not much room. The living area was separated by a partition, which divided the space into a shop in the front and the living space behind the shop. In the living space, again they separated it into a bigger bedroom for their parents' where they put a bed and a TV. It also functioned as a living room where they had dinner and did the cooking. The girls' bedroom was separated by a partition made of wood. When I first arrived there, the father was not yet back from work. So the girl talked quite freely sitting on the bed in her parents' bedroom. After a while, her father and her uncle came back and started to watch TV in the parents' bedroom while her mother was doing the cooking. So we moved into the girl's tiny bedroom which could only accommodate one single bed. It was so tiny that the girl had to sit on the edge of the bed and put her legs on the bed. The girls' father and uncle were watching a match on TV and her mum was busy preparing the dinner. The sound proofing was not very good and the girl had to speak into the microphone instead of to me. The father's interview was the same. The father had no place to sit in his daughter's bedroom and he stood up in the corridor (between the parents living place and the daughter's bed), talking down to me while I sat on the bed. The whole interview was rushed. However, of the six homes I visited, this was the only one that did not have enough space for the interview and the only place

which had so many people at home while conducting the interview.

b. Interviewing fathers

Interviewing is not a common method in China, especially women interviewing men. As a female student in her late twenties, the power dynamics with the fathers I confronted was a useful insight into carrying out research in a society in which a male hierarchy is still dominant. In Chinese society, people are due respect on the grounds of seniority, especially men. Although the men in my sample varied in occupation and rank, they were all much older than me and at the very least had the status of long experience. A female research student interviewing men who were in positions of authority in their homes or at the workplace somehow created an imbalance in the interview. Moreover, the fathers had mostly grown up in the period before I was born, when economic and social conditions were very different. In one way, this provoked fathers to be more reflective, because they felt they had to explain things I had not experienced rather than assuming some shared understanding. At the same time, it may also have caused some difficulties as I did not know enough about this period to ask really probing questions. Lastly, as a student who was studying abroad, the fathers may have assumed that I belonged to a certain social category as did Father Shen. When asked 'how did he feel about being a father' at the beginning of the interview, Father Shen reflected, 'Living in Shanghai is very tiring indeed, but your family background probably is better, so you probably have a better living environment. Then that's different'. The issues of age, gender, class are still influential during the interaction between the researcher and the father interviewees. These factors are also likely to influence the analysis and the interpretation of the data.

4.5 Data analysis

As I adopted a mixed-method research design, the analysis of the data is both quantitative and qualitative (Plano Clark *et al.*, 2008). The questionnaire was conducted in Chinese but the input into SPSS was in English. The questionnaire was pre-coded and the analysis of the survey data was relatively simple. I mainly used SPSS to find out the frequencies of the answers to the questions; to compare the younger group with the older group; to compare fathers' involvement with mothers', or to compare girls' responses with fathers'.

The qualitative data was initially collected and transcribed in Chinese, but the first focus group and first pair of interviews were translated into English to discuss with my supervisors and also to develop a coding frame for the interviews. In the focus groups, most respondents gave relatively short answers. Therefore, the analysis was mostly focused on words. To analyse the

data, I used Nvivo and developed a number of overarching themes in the first instance: being a father; being a daughter; description of father-daughter relationships; fathers' influence on girls' lives; girls' wishes for their fathers. These reflected the questions asked in the focus group (Appendix 2).

Based on the themes of the interview schedule (Appendix 4.1 and 4.2), another more detailed coding framework was created, which consisted of different themes and sub-themes. The main themes and concepts which I developed in the course of the first data analysis were later used to frame the data analysis chapters. For example, the theme of being a daughter included girls' views (and sometimes fathers' views) of being a teenager and their reflections on the changes they were experiencing, which were used to develop Chapter 5. Drawing on a time framework, the experience of being a father consisted of sub-themes relating to fathers' experiences as a child in the post Cultural Revolution period, their own experience of being a father in the contemporary period and their narratives about being a father in the context of the interview. These data formed the basis of the chapter on being a father (Chapter 6). Both fathers and daughters' accounts of their family activities were conceptualised as family practices (Chapter 7), which covered communication, housework, time together and fathers' support of their daughters. The concept of family negotiation was used to address five main themes in the original data analysis, which are study, financial issues, going out, internet use and romantic relationships. In the writing up I decided to include separate analyses of the first two themes, namely girls' study and dealing with financial issues with the other issues in Chapter 6 and 7. The other key issues which fathers and daughters negotiated over referred to the management of conflict; they include going out, internet use and romantic relationships which are addressed in Chapter 8. Across all these themes, particular attention is paid in the analysis to gender, class and Chinese culture.

The mixed method design is intended to provide a rich, multi-dimensional account and so a fuller picture of father-daughter relationships than one method alone would have done. Both the questionnaire survey and interviews are used to answer these five research questions, which are mainly related to perceptions of fatherhood and family practice: 'How do fathers and daughters perceive fatherhood?' 'How much time do fathers and daughters spend together at home?', 'What do fathers and daughters do together?', 'How do they communicate with each other?' and 'How much conflict is there between fathers and daughters?' Although the quantitative and qualitative data sets are first analyzed separately, they are later examined together to compare the

results. In the final chapter (Chapter 9), I will give some examples of how the use of a mixed methods approach worked in practice.

There were also research questions which I did not seek to address by using more than one method. For example, I intended to explore in qualitative depth what fathers had to say about their own experience of being fathered. I did not ask about it in the questionnaire survey. Also, girls' perspectives of what being an only child meant to them were not easily accessible through the questionnaire survey questions. Therefore these were only asked in the interviews. Another example was the question of how fathers and daughters negotiate over parental authority and adolescent independence, both of which focused on the processes of negotiation.

4.6 Ethical Issues

4.6.1 Doing research with children and young people in China

The idea of the individual right to privacy is growing in Chinese society. More and more Chinese people are aware of their own rights and privacy (Lü, 2005; Qian, 2008; Zhang, 2007; Zheng, 1994). "This is my privacy" can be heard on lots of occasions when people do not want to make their own information public. Some young people have started to reject their parents' interference in their private lives, such as opening their mail. In response to a question of "what would you do if your parents or teachers looked at your diary or letter" in a survey conducted in ten cities in 1998, 44% of primary school students thought it was an opportunity for parents or teachers to know more about them; while only 2% of secondary school students thought it was parents' right to do so (Zhen *et al.*, 2000). This indicated even ten years ago some secondary school students were aware of their own privacy and views of children's privacy differed in different age groups. As they grow up, children may ask for more privacy or rights for themselves. According to Lü (2005), the respect for privacy and personal information has extended from outside the family to within the family. For example, in Shanghai most children felt their rights to subsistence, development, protection and participation were protected very well. According to a Shanghai study of children's rights from the perspectives of teachers, parents and children, and based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, young people were found to know clearly about which rights they were entitled to and how to protect themselves (Yang, He and Chen, 2007). In the same study, girls thought they were better protected and had more freedom to decide what to do in the family than boys (*ibid.*). This was consistent with parents' responses in the questionnaire in the same study.

The Chinese government has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Many laws and protection ordinances about protecting young people's rights have been reinforced. In 1991, the government published the first protection law for the young person, aimed at protecting the rights of children who are under eighteen years. In the latest version (2006) of the law for the young person (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2006b), it is clearly stated that young people's rights and privacy are protected (Cap 4). Adults doing work related to young people, like teachers and social workers, need to respect their personal dignity and respect the changes during child development (Cap1). In Shanghai, the local protection ordinance is consistent with the national laws for the young person. It is well acknowledged that both parents and schools are responsible for protecting the young person's rights. However, there is no clear ethical guidance about conducting research with children in China, not even in universities. Therefore, the researcher should be mindful of the issues arising in practice while trying to adapt the ethical guidance of the western world in the Chinese context.

Consent from parents or children's guardians is strongly required when young people under eighteen years old are involved in research, according to the ethical guidance in the west (Skelton, 2008). As I was doing my PhD in the Institute of Education, I was required to pass an ethical review in the Institute, which meant I followed all the ethical guidance according to the British Educational Research Association. However, there were also situations when it was difficult to implement. As planned, I aimed to gain parents' consent before conducting the questionnaire survey with girls at school. Therefore, I asked the schools to send out the consent form in advance to ask permission from the parents before I sent out the questionnaire survey to the girls. However, seven schools thought it was not necessary to send the letters to the parents and refused to do it. As all my fieldwork was in China, I followed the schools' suggestion and did not send consent forms to the parents when they suggested not to. I did not feel it was appropriate to challenge the schools' decisions on this.

In China, teachers and schools were regarded as the authority and students did not have much say about my access. Therefore the procedure was not an issue for the research as I gained access to different schools through friends. However, as young people were more and more aware of their freedom, the actual practice was still an issue. Also, getting access through schools affected my relationships with the young people. Therefore, I gave them my contact details, including email address, online chat account, mobile phones, as a token of trust.

4.62 Ethical issues in the administration of focus group, questionnaire and interview

a. Ethical issues in focus group

In the four focus groups I conducted, agreements were gained from the schools and girls, but not parents. I visited the schools and the girls were asked whether they were willing to take part in the focus group on the same day. It was therefore not practical to seek parents' consent in advance. The students who were asked to take part were randomly chosen by the teachers without gaining parents' consent. However, it raises the question of whether the teachers' and girls' permissions are sufficient for conducting research with children.

Other main ethical issues for the focus group were how participants were recruited. Whether the participation was strictly voluntary or not was also one factor that might affect the outcome of the focus group. In one of the four focus groups, girls were assigned by the teacher calling out their names by choosing the ID numbers in one class randomly. It was difficult for the participants to say "no" after they were chosen. Even though all the participants signed the agreement sheet and all agreed to participate in the focus group, it was still different from joining the focus group voluntarily. When the schools were involved in the recruitment of research participants, it was difficult to make sure that students' consent was the priority, as in the Chinese context, the schools and teachers were still the authority.

In addition, since the focus groups were based on pre-existing peer groups there was a possibility that this could create an embarrassing situation and that participants might feel reluctant to talk about personal or sensitive topics such as intimate relationships. When people are talking with people they know, they may be more concerned about invasion of privacy and especially may fear "repercussions after the discussion is over" (Bloor, 2001, p. 24). There were therefore both advantages and disadvantages to carrying out focus groups with pre-existing groups.

b. Ethical issues in questionnaire survey

As for the questionnaires, parents' permission was not always sought before the distribution of the girls' questionnaire because the schools did not distribute the consent forms (see 4.61). As discussed before, girls received the questionnaire even when parents' consent was not sought in seven schools. However, all the girls were asked to decide by themselves whether or not they wished to fill in the questionnaire. In addition, all the questionnaires were provided with envelopes which could be sealed easily. In this way, girls' and fathers' privacy was protected

from the girls' classmates.

The girls' questionnaires were distributed at school either by the researcher or the teachers. However, when the researcher was not there, teachers were the ones who helped carry out the survey. It was very difficult for the students to say no to the teachers when they did not wish to take part in the questionnaire survey even though I had made this option clear to the teachers. At the same time, the girls also confronted pressure from their classmates. The girls who did not live with their fathers might have felt reluctant to refuse to take part because everyone else was doing so. They may not have wanted to reveal their different situations at home to other classmates. So they took part like the other girls did.

According to the questionnaire, there were 24 girls who did not live with their fathers (3.3%, n=733). The questions about their relationships and everyday practices may have caused some uncomfortable feelings for some of the girls who did not have good relationships with their fathers, even though the researcher had stressed that everyone could withdraw or skip the questions that they did not wish to answer. At the end of questionnaire where they could write comments about the questionnaire or their relationships with their parents, two girls wrote comments which showed they were upset when answering some of the questions. One said, 'Thinking of everyone's feeling, not every senior high school student is that happy about their lives. I choose to ignore the details and problems, and learn to be happy. These questions were like adding the salt to my wound'. Another one wrote, 'For daughters who did not have much contact with their fathers, they may feel very painful when answering these questions.' It seemed that these two girls felt obliged to complete the questionnaire, as they were part of a society where authority should be respected and followed. But they were not always happy with this. Others also reported different experiences. As one wrote 'I am so glad that I can take part in your survey, I get the chance to look back and think about my relationships with my father. Actually, I have never tried to think about my relationships with him so far. Thanks'. Although some appreciated the chance to explore these issues by filling in the questionnaire, the researcher still needed to be aware of possible damage to the others.

As for the fathers' questionnaires, fathers had more freedom to choose whether or not to take part in the study and were under less pressure from the schools and the researcher. However, they risked the danger of their answers being looked at by their daughters since the questionnaires were taken back by the girls to school or girls filling in their questionnaire

without informing them as discussed before. The fathers might also feel under pressure from their daughters, who wished their fathers to fill in the questionnaire even though that was not fathers' intention. One interesting fact was that many fathers' questionnaires were given with an envelope with double-faced adhesive tape so it was quite easy for the fathers to seal the envelope if they wished. However, most questionnaires were not sealed. It seemed that fathers were not bothered about that. Moreover, the issue of fathers' questionnaires being completed by others was an ethical one.

c. Ethical issues in interviews

The aim of my study is to understand father-daughter relationships from both girls' and fathers' perspectives. As an interviewer, I was trying hard to be a subjective listener to get the views from both fathers' and daughters' perspectives, not acting as psychological consultant who was trying to help their relationships. I positioned myself as a bridge who investigated both sides of the story. However, the position of standing in the middle was difficult to balance since I had my own opinions. This could be influenced by the first people I interviewed, especially when the relationships needed to be improved and one side needed to make more of an effort. In one case, I failed to keep my own feelings out of the interview process. I interviewed Girl Nina first and she said that her communication with her father was not good and she seemed unhappy with their relationship. According to her, her father was very strict and did not try to understand her. I felt I had the obligation to try to help her. I got the impression of their relationships from girl's perspective first, and then I interviewed her father afterwards. When asking questions such as how they communicated with each other, her father's answer suggested that he did not try to understand his daughter. Therefore, I asked a few questions like 'Have you tried to talk to her about this?', as if trying to persuade her father to talk to her and listen to her more. Thus, the person I interviewed first had an impact on how I looked at the relationship. Moreover, the impression I got at the first interview had some impact on the interview I conducted next. I also sometimes expressed my own view to the interviewee by asking leading questions. In retrospect, I realised that this may have overstepped the role of researcher.

The issue of confidentiality when the participant was disclosing something that relates to personal safety was extremely challenging. Girl Mei was a thirteen year old girl who had serious problems with internet and gang friends. A few weeks after the interview, I got a call from her. She phoned me because she had trouble with her gang friends who took drugs. I wanted to help but to do so was far beyond my capacity as a researcher. So I informed the school teacher who I

originally gained contact from in her school without asking her permission. I felt sorry that I could not avoid informing the school about her troubles, which she obviously did not want anyone else to know. How to balance the trust the interviewee has given you and also protect them is a critical issue for the interviewer.

Doing interviews with parents and their children also reveals the generational imbalances of power within families and between adults and adolescents (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Robinson and Kellett, 2004), especially when the interview took place at home where the power relations were played out. In my study, I did the interviews with fathers and daughters separately. However, as most interviews took place at one visit and in the same flat, the girls were still in a place where their parents were the authorities and in control. The girls may have experienced the power imbalance with their fathers, because they were interviewed when their fathers were at home. In addition, the issue of revealing the private lives of other family members to the researcher without their consent was also problematic in the interviews with family members as consent from other family members was not sought.

The next four chapters will cover the data analysis. In Chapter 5, the girls' own identities as adolescent girls and daughters will be explored by drawing data from focus groups, the questionnaire survey and interviews. Then Chapter 6 will discuss the perceptions of being a father from both girls' and fathers' perspectives. Chapter 7 uses both the questionnaire survey and interviews to investigate fathers' time, activities and communication with their daughters. The last data chapter (Chapter 8) deals with conflicts between fathers and daughters and the ways in which they negotiate with each other, mainly drawing on the interview data.

Chapter 5 Being a teenage girl in Shanghai

5.1 Introduction

To understand the relationships between fathers and their teenage daughters, it is necessary to investigate how girls of the 1990s generation see themselves as teenagers in modern China, and how they see themselves as daughters. The rapid and profound changes in Chinese society in recent decades have had a huge impact on young peoples' self identities and their generational relationships. The social and cultural context of contemporary Chinese society is particularly interesting due to the intersection of a long tradition of men's greater access to power in China and the implementation of the One Child policy. Gender-specific beliefs which preach that women are subordinate are deeply rooted in the Confucian philosophy [details see Chapter 1]. These still influence Chinese people's lives through parents' strongly gender-stereotypical expectations of girls and boys (Liu, 2006). Liu's study suggests that parents still hold strong beliefs about girls being gentle, soft and oriental, while boys are expected to be manly and highly successful. Parents' gender-specific expectations have an impact on their children's individual identities. Cheung argues that the strength of gender stereotypes also increases with age (1996). Despite the survival of traditional attitudes to gender roles, urban girls may experience the transformation of gendered practice including being a daughter as a result of the one child policy. The old saying, 'married daughter, splashed water', which referred to the fact that a married woman became part of her husband's family, does not apply to urban families anymore, since daughters now stay in close contact with their families when they are married and continue their filial obligations. Instead, the new common saying is 'A daughter is like a little quilted vest to warm her parents' hearts' (Shi, 2009).

This chapter touches on the concepts of adolescence, gender and identity, individualization and collectivism outlined in Chapter 4, focusing on adolescent girls' identities as teenage girls and daughters. Gidden's theory (1992) for a generalised trend of individual creativity and freedom in the construction of young people's identities and biographies raises the question whether young girls in urban contemporary China provide evidence for this theory. In addition, adolescence as an important life course stage is also situated in particular times and contexts. The Confucian idea of the self, which has a strong collective orientation, also provides a useful concept (Chapter 1), which can help investigate whether in late modernity the current adolescent generation's self identities have changed in Chinese society. Therefore, four questions will be

explored:

- 1). How do girls see themselves as they are going through their adolescent years? And how do they see the changes as they are growing up?
- 2). How are girls' relationships with their mothers, fathers and friends? And do these vary across the two age groups?
- 3). Do girls think being a daughter is different from being a son?
- 4). How do girls perceive their relationships with their fathers?

The data in this chapter are mostly drawn from the girls' interviews, the girls' questionnaire survey data and the girls' focus groups. The chapter analyses the girls' narratives of their roles and perceptions of being teenage girls and being their fathers' daughters.

5.2 Being a teenage girl

5.2.1 Being a teenager in only child families

Stereotypes of adolescence

Similar to Western society, there exists in China a negative stereotype of adolescence from an adult viewpoint. More importantly, not all the stereotypes fit well with reality. While talking about being a teenager today, two girls interviewed challenged the stereotype and claimed adolescence was a positive period. As Girl Shen described: 'even though we are seen, in other people's view, to rely too much on our parents, we have our own ideas, have own new thoughts. We are the ones who lead the trend. I think this can help us do many good things. What's more, [we] are not restrained by the old thoughts. I think this is very good'. Girl Liu (whose father did not take part in the interview) also challenged the stereotype: 'I think the Reader (a Chinese magazine) mentioned that the later 1990s are very rebellious, very materialistic and very arrogant. And they say we don't have a loving heart. I think it is not true. We had a few people in our school who got sick and weren't cured. We all donated money.' The girls who challenged the negative image of adolescents seemed to believe that they were the ones who were actively creating their own identities as adolescents. Furthermore, they were trying to prove that the reality was different from the stereotypes.

However, some girls interacted with the social environment differently. Some girls seemed to be more passive and have a more negative view of being an adolescent girl. Girl Li did not agree and was not convinced that the new generation of teenage girls had the freedom to transform into a generation with modern values, who were much different from previous generations. She

thought some of the traditional beliefs had persisted, especially the gender differences. As she reasoned,

A: Teenage girls, I feel they have made a lot improvements compared with the old times. But that is to compare with long long time ago, the time when woman had to bind their feet, and did not read. Compared with them, we did make many improvements in terms of our thoughts. But I feel even though we call ourselves fashionable, following the trend, but actually we are still very traditional. I cannot actually really do something that is very rebellious, or unexpected. I am still following, what started a long long time ago. The girls' stuff, I mean. From the first moment, you are a girl, you will think you are totally different from a boy. Although we say some girls are like boys, but deep inside, it is a girl's expression.

Q: You know teenage girls still?

A: Yes, they are very traditional; I do feel that teenage girls are very traditional and obedient, no different from a woman.

[Girl Li, older group, father had a Masters degree, worked as a manager in a trading company]

The wish to have siblings

According to the questionnaire survey, 88.4% girls were only children (N=766). Among the eight only children interviewed, only one girl did not wish she had a sibling. She said she did not want to share the love of her parents. For the majority, who wished they had one or more siblings, the desire for companionship is evident in their narratives. Feeling lonely as the only child is the main reason. Girl Shen, who was the only interviewee who did have a sibling, also saw herself as one of the only child generation. She described her situation: 'Since many of us are only children, thus we could get on better with others. Because we have this kind of need, so we could get on well with others well'. Girl Chen had similar feelings, 'It is very dull at the moment. Although my mum and dad understand me well, I do not have many people at the same age [to play with]. Sometimes I will ask my cousin to come over to play with'.

Beyond that, they were also longing for love from siblings. Most only children get endless love and care from their parents. Why should they feel they needed more care? Maybe the care from people of a similar age is different from that of parents especially companionship. As Girl Zhan explained: 'Sometimes, I just wish I could get more care. And also have someone to play with. If we are at a similar age, we will have more things to talk about'.

The desire for siblings also reflects the power relationships between the only children and their

parents. For the girls whose parents were very controlling, having other children in the family could shift the power imbalance between the parents and the children. At the same time, parents may feel safer letting the child do things they wished to do if they had the company of a sibling. Girl Nina imagined her life with siblings in this way: 'I think it would be great. I wouldn't be that lonely. Sometimes I want to go out but my parents don't allow me. We don't have a computer at home, they are worried that I will get bad. Then I can only watch TV. If I was with other kids, I would, then I could go out, and my parents would feel safe to let us out. So we could go out and buy clothes, and that would be great. And also we could live together. I would like this kind of life'. Another girl revealed the reason for having more siblings if she could, '[If I have siblings], then they won't focus on me all the time. I can have a little bit of relief'.

Being the only child in their family, some girls may enjoy the attention they get from their parents and manage to get their own way since their parents put their wishes first. However, in some families, being the only one increases the power imbalance between them and their parents. As a result, it becomes more difficult to challenge parental authority. Whatever actually happens between them and their parents, girls' desire for more siblings suggests that what they probably miss the most is the companionship of children of a similar age. Although closeness with parents is important for them, being the only child probably means they get enough care and love from their parents.

Relationships with peers, mothers and fathers

For the young generation who grew up without siblings, peers groups played an even more important role in their lives. Overall, in the questionnaire, most girls said they got on well with other girls and boys at school. There were 32.1%, 33.4% and 30.0% girls who reported that they 'generally agree', 'mostly agree' and 'strongly agree' respectively that they got on well with other girls. In terms of relations with boys, fewer girls agreed strongly that they got on very well, with only 10.8% girls thinking so. However, there were still 18.1% who 'mostly agree' and 54.3% who 'generally agree' that they get on well with boys. However, the differences between younger and older groups are statically significant, in terms of their relationships with girls at school (but not with the boys): the older girls tended to get on better with girls (Linear-by-Linear Association=5.594, df=1, n=763, p<0.05).

The girls also reported talking with their friends about many things. From the questionnaire responses (table 5.1), it was clear that girls talked mostly with their friends about study (77.3%),

hobbies (86.0%), fashion (92.4%) and emotions (69.5%).

Percentage	Study	Hobbies	Future jobs	Fashion/music	Emotions
Mother	73.7	57.7	64.9	38.7	38.4
Father	60.7	47.6	55.0	20.3	15.5
Friends	77.3	86.0	58.7	92.4	69.5

Table 5. 1: Girls' responses to the multiple choice question 'who do you talk with?'

There was an age difference between younger and older girls in terms of talking about hobbies with both mothers and fathers. Older girls reported talking less about hobbies with their mothers (Pearson Chi-Square value=5.203, df=1, n=766, p<0.05) and fathers (Pearson Chi-Square value=5.362, df=1, n=764, p<0.05), compared with the younger group. Furthermore, older girls reported that they talked more about music with their friends (Pearson Chi-Square value=4.324, df=1, n=766, p<0.05) and talked more about emotional problems with them (Pearson Chi-Square value=6.259, df=1, n=766, p<0.05), compared with younger girls.

In terms of asking for help, girls chose different people to get help from when it was needed, depending on the issue involved (see table 5.2). It seems that girls tended to ask both fathers and mothers for pocket money and to ask mothers to take them out. Generally, they turned to their friends when they were upset (70.3%), had problems with their classmates (77.4%) and emotional problems (62.7%). The girls also asked their friends to help them to do sports related activities (61.4%) more than parents.

Percentage	Upset	Pocket money	Take me out	Problems with classmates	Sports	Emotional problems
Mother	45.3	65.1	71.1	41.4	31.0	37.2
Father	23.3	67.8	51.2	22.3	40.9	16.0
Friends	70.3	3.1	33.7	77.4	61.4	62.7

Table 5.2: Girls' responses to the questions: 'Who do you ask for help when you are upset/ need pocket money/ need someone to take you out/ have problems with classmates, doing sports/ have emotional problems?'

Compared with younger girls, older girls were less likely to ask for help from their fathers when they felt upset (Pearson Chi-Square value=7.686, df=1, n=765, p<0.01), to take them out (Pearson Chi-Square value=11.897, df=1, n=761, p<0.01) and need to do some exercises (Pearson Chi-Square value=7.487, df=1, n=766, p<0.01). There is no age difference in terms of seeking help from fathers when the girls had emotional problems. However, there are less

differences among the younger and older groups, in terms of seeking help from their mothers, with only two exceptions: compared with the younger girls the older girls asked less help from their mothers when they need to do some physical exercises (Pearson Chi-Square value=14.807, $df=1$, $n=767$, $p<0.001$) and asked their mothers more often for pocket money (Pearson Chi-Square value=4.224, $df=1$, $n=767$, $p<0.05$). Girls' relationships with their friends across two age groups showed a similar pattern. There was only one age group difference concerning girls seeking help from their friends. The older girls reported that they asked for more help from their friends when they had emotional problems, compared with the younger girls (Pearson Chi-Square value=8.505, $df=1$, $n=767$, $p<0.05$).

The girls in my study still regard parents as the most important people in their lives. When asked 'Who do you get on with the best at home?', 55.4% ($N=670$) reported that they got on best with their mothers and 32.4% with their fathers. In addition, 48.9% of girls felt they were 'very close' and 42.3% were 'close' to their mothers. The responses for the fathers were slightly lower, with 26.3% of girls feeling 'very close' and 49.2% 'close' to their fathers. When asked 'how happy are you with your father?', 24.8% reported 'very happy' and 55.5% of them said 'happy'. Four out of six girls in the interviews talked about their parents being the most important people in their lives. However, only one of these four said that her father was the most important one (Girl Chen). The other two girls both thought that friends and teachers were the most important.

5.22 Changes during girls' adolescent years

In the following sections, accounts given by the girls in the interviews and questionnaires demonstrate how the girls construct their own identities. The following themes include: being confident and happy; being rebellious; caring about their appearance and relationships with other young people including romantic relationships.

a. Being confident and happy with their lives

Growing confidence is regarded as an important feature of being a teenager. Four of the nine girl interviewees mentioned that adolescents have their own thoughts. In addition, a feeling of superiority is evident. When Girl Li talked about teenagers nowadays, we can see that there was a sense of superiority in her narrative.

Because we are young people, we have the inherent nature of superiority. You know that you are at the time full of vigour and vitality. And you know that you are growing, you are becoming better. You will then be very confident.

[Girl Li, aged 17, father had a Masters degree, worked as manager in a trading company]

The girls' questionnaire survey also suggests that the girls were quite confident and happy with their lives. According to table 5.3, they were only 12% girls 'mostly disagree' or 'strongly disagree' that they were happy with life. However, the differences between younger and older groups are statistically significant in terms of their agreement with being happy about life in general (Linear-by-Linear Association=19.506, df=1, n=762, p<0.001). Similarly, most girls were happy with their school life: with 4.6% of the girls were 'not happy', 7.8% of them were 'totally happy', 28.9% were 'very happy, and 58.7% were 'generally happy' at school. There were also significant differences between the younger girls and the older girls, with more younger girls being happy with their school life (Linear-by-Linear Association=29.561, df=1, n=765, p<0.001).

	Age group	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Generally agree	Mostly agree	Strongly agree
Happy with life	Age 13-14	2.6%	8.6%	37.5%	28.3%	23.0%
	Age 16-17	4.2%	11.3%	46.3%	28.8%	9.4%

Table 5.3: Compare the younger group with the older group to the question of: 'I am happy with life in general.'

b. Being rebellious

According to Chinese tradition, teachers and parents are authority figures who should be respected. Challenging teachers or parents is regarded as showing lack of respect. However, seven out of nine girls interviewed talked about teenagers being rebellious, when asked the question 'In traditional families, children should be obedient to their parents, what do you think?' More generally, girls thought that authority figures should be challenged if they were wrong; being able to challenge authority is important for their personal development. As Girl Liu from the younger group argued, 'A child should have her own personality, if you only follow what your parents say, I think when you join the society in the future, you will only learn how to obey your boss.' Girl Li, who was in the older group, explained that modern society was more reliant on knowledge than experience. Therefore, modern parents were not necessarily seen as more knowledgeable than their children. It was not reasonable to obey parents just for the sake of it. Girl Shen in the older group who had a twin brother reasoned, 'My family is not that traditional anyway. We are a bit more westernized. I think as long as we are right, we don't need to obey parents. Sometimes parents may be wrong, or they may not fit with the current society anymore. My brother and I then must speak out, because it is out of date and old views. They must accept new ideas. So I don't think we should follow parents blindly'. Girl Nina recognized the changes that she went through as she grow up, 'When I was little, I did not know much.

When he asked me to kneel down, I was just obedient and did it. But now I have my own thoughts. I will tell him not to beat me. The other night he was still beating me. Then I shouted Don't beat me! He still did it, and then I shouted again, he eventually stopped'.

In the interview, girls reported different forms of rebellion, apart from outright arguments with authority figures. They suggested different interpretations of being rebellious, such as doing things against their parents' will, showing extreme emotions or behaviour (one girl gave an example of her classmates getting angry too easily and another girl talked about her classmate having extreme thoughts) and having romantic relationships. Even having negative images of parents and teachers could be regarded as being rebellious. Although some teenagers did not rebel in practice, they did report harbouring negative opinions of parents and teachers and saw this as a sign of their inner rebellion. In short, anything that disregarded authority could be a form of rebellion. For example, Girl Cai thought she had a particularly subtle way of being rebellious. Although she admitted that she appeared very obedient on the outside, did not rebel in terms of action or have negative views of her parents, she still felt that even having different opinions from her parents was a sign of rebelliousness. As she explained: 'Take me as an example, I seem to be very obedient and I will do homework at home. But deep in my mind I was not that obedient'. From Cai's point of view, children should always listen to parents as they have the authority. She did not dare to challenge them and hide things from them. To some degree, this suggested that she was still concerned about her parents' reactions or the outcome of being rebellious.

It seems that girls would like to think that they are able to rebel in various ways. Possibly they felt they were under social pressure to accept the social norm of being a rebellious adolescent, which was discussed earlier in this chapter. As Girl Mei admitted, she was not used to fighting when she was younger, but she was doing so now. A similar situation was reported by Girl Liu. However, the questionnaire suggests that a majority of girls did not frequently argue with their fathers and mothers: 60.9% of girls reported having no argument with their fathers in the last week, and 48.2% of girls reported having no arguments in the past week with their mothers. Only 6.9% and 6.0% reported having arguments more than three times a week with their fathers and mothers. The divergence between the interview and the questionnaire data may be because the girls in the interviews felt they could more easily admit that they were rebellious.

Some girls were aware that adolescents were often influenced by other people's perceptions of

adolescents and that they were, in some way, forced to act in a particular way. In the extract below, Girl Li criticized the way people thought of teenagers as rebellious. To her it seemed that the stereotype of the rebellious teenager influenced both adult opinions and adolescent behaviour, with some teenagers 'displaying' ways of fulfilling their parents' negative construction of teenagers (Finch, 2007). Finch argues that the urge to display intensifies as particular circumstances change, including new relationships and transition to adulthood (ibid.).

'In China, I think adults don't treat adolescence as a natural thing. They think being an adolescent should mean being rebellious. Thus, some adolescents will pretend to be like that deliberately'.

[Girl Li, older group, father had a Masters degree, worked as manager in a trading company]

In this sense, neither the teenagers nor the parents had the 'right' attitude to adolescence. The teenagers had pretensions to be rebellious, because parents and adults thought that being a teenager meant being rebellious. Here, girls' display of rebelliousness in adolescence was a good example of them trying to adjust the new situation (Finch, 2007).

The interplay of different social contexts also means that girls were influenced in different ways. They not only confronted the contemporary social pressure to be rebellious, but also the traditional expectation to be an obedient child. For the girls, it was particularly important as they were expected not only to be obedient but also submissive. These two contrasting expectations may lead to tension in their constructions of their identities as adolescent girls. Girl Nina, whose family was from outside Shanghai insisted that children should obey whatever parents said. As Girl Nina understood, being obedient serves as a way to fulfill filial duty to parents. In addition, both Girl Liu and Girl Li revealed that in reality they had to obey their parents most of the time. It seems that although most girls wished that they did not need to obey authority, their parents still exercised power over many aspects of their daily lives (Chapter 8).

c. Appearance

As adolescent girls' bodies and concomitant social roles develop, adolescence can become a period of intense reflection upon body image. The general positivity of Chinese girls' body image was born out in the survey data in my study, which was also found in Sun and Zhao's study (2005); 57.4% of girls generally agreed, 14.0% mostly agreed and 9.6% strongly agreed that they were happy with their own appearance. However, the differences between younger and older groups were statically significant (Linear-by-Linear Association value=15.529, df=1,n=763,

p<0.001), with older girls being less happy with their appearance (table 5.4).

Happy with own body	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Generally agree	Mostly agree	Strongly agree
Age 13-14	3.3%	13.7%	53.5%	16.7%	12.8%
Age 16-17	1.3%	20.7%	63.1%	10.0%	4.9%

Table 5.4: Compare the younger group with the older group to the question of: 'I am happy with my body'.

In the interviews, a few girls talked about their feelings about their appearance while going through adolescence. As girls grew up, they became more sensitive about their bodies. As Girl Shen confessed when talking about changes during adolescence, 'It is kind of self-love. I just think I am getting pretty now. Whatever people say about me and I feel that my face is quite pretty. Sometimes, people will say that I am a bit fat but I think I am OK. It is just a bit wider. That's all...I have definitely become more sensitive as well'. Some fathers also noted the changes. As Father Nina commented, 'She likes clothes and wants to be pretty. In the morning, she will normally wash her hair and blow it. And she will make something to make the hair straight. That's quite a lot of changes. Even this year is different from last year... She will know the brand name and what is fashionable'.

Meanwhile, some associated caring about appearance with being rebellious. As Girl Liu commented: 'Nowadays, according to my own observation, most of the girls in my class like dressing up and they care a lot about their appearances. But maybe because it is during adolescence, therefore, they are very rebellious'.

It seems that deliberately trying to attract attention is also regarded as a form of rebellion. Being deliberately glamorous is against the traditional Chinese idea of beauty, which is supposed to be 'natural beauty'. It is obvious from the extract below that the two girls speaking are resentful of their classmates who dress up to be glamorous and attract attention.

B: Sometimes I see Zhang[another girl in her class]

A: It makes me want to vomit when I see her so ostentatious.

B: Not only ostentatious, she just looks like bewitching evil.

A: Yes, when we go out to do morning exercises, she has holes in her ears. Then she wears earrings. Our class teacher saw it and said to her, you are like a gangster, take them out. Then she took them out, but she put them back soon after, because because

A: She is very rebellious now.

[Girl Wang whose father had senior high school degree and worked in a restaurant, and her friend, both younger group]

The girls' words suggest that the 1990s generation of girls still advocate the old Chinese view of beauty. Trying too hard to show off one's beauty is not widely acceptable. This creates a dilemma for the teenage girls. On the one hand, they wish to be pretty. On the other, they are afraid of standing out. By positioning themselves in opposition to others who have a particular style, adolescent girls negotiate their own identities in terms of their style and appearance.

d. Romantic fantasies, cross-gender friendships, and romantic experiences

Many Chinese adolescents in secondary schools may not be actively involved in romantic relationships, but may still have romantic fantasies about the opposite sex. This is a new and challenging experience, as Girl Shen confessed: 'Girls, anyway, confront more problems. When we were in the junior high school, we only had issues related with classmates, teachers, and families. Now, we have extra issues with boys. Yes, we have more issues now.'

In my study it seems that girls' own expectations have an impact on girls' involvement in romantic relationships. Among nine girl interviewees, only one openly talked about her relationship with her boyfriend. One other interviewee admitted that she had once had a boyfriend. The rest, both in the younger and older groups, thought they were too young to have romantic relationships. Surprisingly, none of the girls from the interview approved of love during adolescence. Even the girl who did have a boyfriend did not think it would last long. It seemed that the girls had quite a practical approach to romantic relationships and they clearly knew when it was not suitable for a romantic relationship. Three girls (two in the older group, one in the younger group) strongly expressed their disapproval of having romantic relationships during adolescence. They did not think these were 'true love' and thought it was too early to fall in love. Girl Shen commented: 'I feel like I won't fall in love at least during secondary school. I have just set foot in society. We are not mature. I think it must be very painful to fall in love. I think maybe when we get to university. Year One or Year Two will be better'. Girl Zhan also expressed her attitude towards romantic relationships. She thought that falling in love during one's adolescent years could not be serious: 'I just feel that they [classmates who were dating] are not serious, Umm... The relationship is just a little bit deeper than good friends'.

However, adolescents are curious about the opposite sex and sometimes they may be forced to confront issues related to romantic relationships or cross-gender issues, especially when their

peer groups put pressure on them. Some girls may find themselves surrounded by peers who are very excited about romantic relationships, who are quick to make assumptions about other's relationships and keen to discuss them. This inevitably puts some pressure on the teenagers who wish to avoid gossip but still want to have non-romantic friendships with the opposite sex. Girl Shen described her own experience: 'In my opinion, I have a very ordinary relationship with boys. But some people who have big mouths will say other things, even though he and I know there is nothing happening. But I still feel annoyed. When nothing is happening and others are talking about you, you will always feel annoyed. It is like a scandal.'

It is not only the teenagers themselves, but also the teachers who are sensitive about the issue of adolescent romance. Girl Chen revealed that some teachers deliberately rearranged the seating order in the classroom to prevent girls and boys from sitting close to each other, thus creating a sensitive atmosphere. Girl Chen did not approve. She used the word 'horrible' to describe the situation.

The girls saw being adolescent as mainly positive: they perceived themselves as creative and energetic and were generally happy with their lives and bodies. Moreover, caring about their appearance was a way to express their desire for individual identity and independence. However, many girls associated their awareness of their appearance with rebelliousness and felt under peer pressure. On the one hand, some adolescent girls were confident and brave enough to challenge authority figures, especially teachers and parents, despite the Chinese tradition of respect for authority. In this sense, they were creating their own individual identities by challenging the authorities. On the other hand, most girls did not approve of the idea of having romantic relationships during secondary school. Overall, the development of adolescence seems to be complex and challenging for parents and their authority may be tested.

5.3 Being daddy's little girl

In this section, I will explore how girls perceived themselves as daughters. Firstly, I will explore to what extent and in what ways girls thought their relationship with their fathers would be different if they were male. Secondly, I will look at what girls perceive as being a 'good' or a 'bad' daughter. Finally, I will discuss girls' perceptions of their relationships with their fathers. By looking at their constructions of self from a gender perspective, we can gain a better understanding of how girls position themselves in father-daughter relationships.

5.31 Being a daughter, not a son

In the interviews, the girls were asked to imagine what they thought would be different if they had been sons. Seven out of nine girls said that being a daughter was different; only two girls said there was no difference. Two girls said that their families had been hoping for a boy when they were born. Girl Nina explained: 'At that time, my grandfather was planning to throw me away, but my mum likes girls. My mum said if the first baby was a boy, then the second time she would want a girl. In the end, the first one was girl. But she did not throw me away and she did not have another one.' (The reason Girl Nina's family was able to think about having two children is that her mother is from a minority ethnic group. In China, minorities are legally allowed to have two children). Probably for this reason, she thought she would have a better relationship with her father if she was a boy. In another case, Girl Liu described vividly how her father reacted to the moment that she was born.

I heard from my mum, when I was born, how my dad reacted first was 'ah!' and then 'ha ha.' He gave a few hollow laughs and then said 'not bad, not bad'. It seems to me that he wanted a boy at the beginning, but now, he probably feels it doesn't matter anymore. After all, it's all his kids.

[Girl Liu, younger group, father had a university degree and owned his own company]

We can see that Girl Liu thought her father's attitude towards having a daughter had changed since. At the same time, Girl Liu may be trying to convince herself that being a girl is no worse than being a boy.

However, society may still expect boys and girls to be different. For example, boys are supposed to be naughty and girls are expected to be quiet. Girl Cai described the difference between a boy and girl: 'Boys should be naughty, and I have quite a good temper, so I can control myself better'. This is in line with the research by Liu Fengshu (2006) discussed at the beginning of the chapter, who found that boys were expected to accomplish great things, such as achieving high scores at school, while girls were expected to be gentle and soft, in other words, to be ladylike and feminine.

Two girls challenged the traditional image of girls. Because Girl Wang spent lots of time playing with boys, she felt she was more like a boy than a girl. Being a boy meant being naughty and active. Girl Chen had a very gender-neutral name, and said lots of people thought she was a boy when they saw her name. However, she wanted to keep her name because she did not like ones which are too girly. In her mind, being a girl was very troublesome and she did not always like

the 'cute things' that other girls liked. She reasoned that because of her name, she was more like a boy. From her narrative, we can see that the traditional cute and gentle girl was not what she wished to become.

The girls took contradictory positions when asked whether they thought they would be better off as girls or boys. Two girls thought they were taken better care of simply because they were female. They had the impression that their fathers were very fond of them and took good care of them, whilst fathers were stricter with sons and beat them more often. As Girl Li said: 'If I was a boy, he would not try to please me like now.' Meanwhile Girl Mei, who got into lots of trouble at school and wanted to quit, confessed that 'If I was a boy, he must beat me very hard.' In contrast, one girl (Girl Nina) felt the opposite. She knew that her father would have preferred a boy and thought that he was stricter with her because she was a girl. Being brought up in the countryside, her father had very traditional values regarding boys and girls. As he was expecting an obedient daughter, he was demanding something from her which she could not always provide.

Some thought that sons would have closer relationships with fathers. As Girl Zhan understood it, the relationship between sons and fathers should be like the one between brothers: 'I feel that when sons are together with their fathers, they should be like buddies'. She could not have a fraternal relationship with her father and talk about things like wars and history. Girl Nina also agreed that being the same gender, fathers and sons would get along better.

Similarly, the girls thought that fathers did different activities with sons. Girl Li thought her father would take her to do more sports if she was male. However, being a girl meant that she had to learn piano, dancing and drawing. Girl Chen reported that her father did not want her to play basketball and football, and she reasoned that he would if she was a boy. Girl Liu imagined that because being a boy meant being good at maths, if she was a boy she could help her father with his business. These three girls all thought there were many things they could not do or were not allowed to do simply because they were female.

Similar results were found in the girls' focus groups, as the majority felt that being a daughter was different from being a son; very few said there was no difference. Most, like some of the interviewees, had the impression that their fathers were very fond of them and thought that fathers beat sons more and were stricter with sons, especially regarding boys' academic development. However, as with the interviewees, there were some contrasting opinions. A few

thought fathers treated sons better than girls and that father-son relationships were closer, sharing more activities and discussions. Interviewees and focus group members also concurred in perceiving different parental expectations of each gender: boys had to accomplish great things, especially at school, while girls were supposed to be soft and girly.

5.32 Good daughters and bad daughters

Xiao (孝) which means being respectful and obedient to parents, is one of the most important concepts of what it means to be a good child. This traditional filial piety is still crucial in modern family life, even for the younger generation. One girl wrote in her comments at the end of the questionnaire: 'It is a common saying that a daughter is her parents' warmest cotton-padded jacket. I wish that I could grow up quickly and be able to fulfil my filial piety to my mum'. In the interviews, both girls and fathers reflected on the importance of *xiao*. Girl Nina said that 'the first thing is to be *xiao*, and I think *xiao* is the same thing as listening to parents' words.'

The question of "What is a good daughter and what is a bad daughter?" was asked directly in four focus groups, eliciting a variety of interpretations about what it means to be a good daughter. Many looked at the question from their parents perspective, saying things such as 'do not make parents worry', 'do not make trouble for parents', 'do not interfere with parents' things', 'do not rebel', 'respect parents', 'fulfil parents' wishes' and 'obey parents'. Girls had clear ideas of what 'not to do'. In every focus group participants talked about 'being understanding of and caring about parents'. Some talked about showing respect to their parents. The clear articulation of what makes a good daughter supports the prevailing power of traditional Chinese morality in girls' minds, although whether or not the girls' actions met their parent's expectations of a good daughter is a question that was not asked in the focus groups.

In the focus groups, five girls also mentioned how personality and character contributed to being a good daughter, including 'doing own things properly', 'being good at studying' and having a 'good personality'. One girl in the older group also perceived that having her own ideas, not merely following everything her parents said, was a feature of being a good daughter. As she said, 'Listen to parents, but not obey everything. You need to have your own opinions. If the parents make mistakes, you should point out as well'. Clearly, acting on girls' own initiative and not just doing what they were told was promoted by the girl and this was contradictory to what other girls thought a good girl should be.

When talking about ‘being a bad daughter’ in the four focus groups, girls put forward a range of interpretations. Communication related issues, such as fighting with parents, not talking with them, lying and not listening were mentioned, as were ‘being rebellious’, ‘selfish’, ‘worrying or being uncaring’, ‘not studying hard’ and ‘playing all the time’. A girl who fell in love or got pregnant was the most extreme marker of being a bad daughter.

5.33 Daddy’s little girl: the lover from a previous life

There are many stories about the special relationships between fathers and daughters in Chinese literature, which emphasize intimacy and affection between them (Lynn, 1974). The description of the ‘daughter being the lover from previous life’ has also been widely acknowledged (it is important to note that this implies a soul mate rather than anything sexual). Fathers were invited to write down their comments at the end of the questionnaire; one father put down: ‘I think father and daughter is like what is written in a book: daughters are the lovers from men’s previous lives’.

In the interview, Father Shen commented on the relationships with his daughter, which highlighted the special relationship with his daughter.

I think, after being married for 18 years, I’ve been with my wife for 18 years, is already like this water in the tea [pointed at the tea he was drinking], no taste anymore. But you can’t live without drinking it. You can’t live without drinking water. But definitely there is no taste. My daughter is also more than 10 years, but she is always adding the tea leaves, so there is always taste there.

[Father Shen, had a college degree and worked at a university as a member of the administrative staff, daughter in the older group]

From a father’s perspective, daughters were also young and fragile. As one father commented in the questionnaire survey, ‘Daughter is like a weak tree, which needs a lot of care. Specially, when she is growing up, she will encounter many problems and obstacles. She needs to be guided, encouraged and supported’. On the other hand, girls saw fathers as strong, as one girl commented at the end of the questionnaire, ‘Father is the biggest mountain behind me. The contrasting image of ‘big mountain’ and ‘weak little tree’ is captured in another father’s comment, ‘I am the mountain behind my daughter and I stand so firmly for her. But time will break down the stone eventually. I hope she will be a pine in front of the mountain, or the river running through the mountain’. We can see that fathers wish to be close to and to support their

daughters.

Four daughters and four fathers in the interviews described the girls' use of their femininity when they were together, using the words *fa dia* (发嗲), *sa jiao* (撒娇). These terms describe the girls deliberately employing a sweet, girly manner to get their fathers to give them what they want. They can also refer to how the girls behave when they wish to get close to their parents and are also often used in the context of romantic relationships when women use 'feminine wiles'. In the interview Girl Wang described how she used her feminine character to avoid being punished, softening her father with her tears. She graphically described how her father agreed to her request: 'I then start to *sa jiao* and pretended to be very pitiful. Just like the eyes in the cartoon, with tears and look at him.' Girl Chen also admitted that she would be 'clingy' with her father once he came home from work. She would try to find a reason to get close to her father, such as asking him to help with her craft work. She explained: 'The only thing that he could not do is that he could not sleep together with me at night, this is what he could not do. Apart from that, he has done all that he could do for me'. For Girl Chen, being daddy's little girl meant that she could rely on him and he would do everything he could for her.

Fathers were aware that girls used their femininity as a weapon to get what they wanted. For some reason, they did not challenge this behaviour, although some admitted they were not used to it. Some thought their daughters were quite sweet when they did this and some found it difficult to handle. Father Chen reacted with a laugh, 'She could find you when she needs your help, then she start to *fa dia*. hehe'. However, he also sometimes found it difficult: 'She is very clingy, and she tries to find many reasons to be close with you and play with you. But sometimes, it would be uncomfortable. I prefer to be by myself, probably because of my own personality'.

At the same time, the strong and strict image of fathers may create distance between fathers and daughters. Three girls in the interviews mentioned that they were afraid of their fathers. Girl Nina said: 'I am a little bit afraid of my dad, for example, I did not do anything bad, but I will be afraid to tell him. Like exam results, I will tell my mum instead.' Girl Mei had become very rebellious and challenged her father a lot, but she still remembered the time when she was afraid of him: 'When I was little, I was really really afraid of my dad.' As a little girl who was weak and gentle, the image of her strong father was frightening for Girl Mei. Sometimes, girls were scared of their fathers because they were strict but at others they felt scared simply because their fathers were so much stronger while they were so little and weak. Another interpretation could be that girls would be afraid of their fathers because they were more distant from them compared

with their mothers.

In summary, gender-specific roles which demand that girls be gentle and feminine were still evident among the girls and their fathers. This may also be why some girls thought they would be treated differently if they were boys. In terms of girls' perception of a good daughter, the value was more centred on family-related or society-related values. One of the most important features of being a 'good daughter' is to be 'xiao', which means being obedient and listening to parents. However, neither the girls nor the fathers defined the girls as subordinate in terms of their relational discourses. Together fathers and daughters constructed what it meant to be 'daddy's little girl'. Girls were weak and feminine and in need of protection, while fathers were strong and strict. This difference in strength could be seen as threatening, with some girls in the interviews reporting being scared of their fathers. At the same time, many believed the relationships between daughters and fathers were somehow special, as the saying 'a daughter is the lover from a man's previous life' suggests. By using their femininity, girls were trying to redistribute power from their fathers to themselves, a task in which it seemed they mostly succeeded.

5.4 Summary

The overriding aim of this chapter has been to explore girls' constructions of themselves as adolescent girls, and fathers' daughters, in the context of a rapidly changing society where the majority of young people are only children.

The data from the girls' focus groups, the questionnaire survey and individual interviews show that adolescent girls generally were happy with their lives and had good relationships with peers (both girls and boys at school). Most girls in the interviews also expressed a wish to have more siblings, which indicates their desire for more company from children of a similar age. They were also happy with their own body image. The data from my study suggests that friends played an important role in teenage girls' lives, sharing interests, activities and providing support. The fact that most girls were only children and that both their parents were working full-time may explain why they felt lonely and wished for siblings. As a consequence, they tended to seek intimate relationships with peers of a similar age. Being the only children and the sole focus in the family may also cause tension, since parents may wish to keep a close eye on their only child, with no other children to distract them. While teenagers desired peer companionship and preferred spending time with their friends at school, the question of the role of parents in girls'

lives and whether their relationships changed over time is one which will be addressed in later chapters.

From a life course perspective, there exist significant differences between the older girls and younger girls in my study, especially their relationships with their fathers and mothers. On the one hand, the older girls tended to seek less help from their mothers and fathers. The questionnaire survey data show that the older girls were less likely to ask for help from their fathers when they felt upset, needed someone to take them out, needed money, and needed someone to do physical exercise with. On the other hand, older girls reported seeking more help from their friends when they had emotional problems. Compared with the older girls, younger girls were happier with their lives and their own appearance.

Girls' identity was also explored by examining girls' understanding of their role as daughters. Many thought it was different to being a son with some girls believing that fathers would have more shared interests with sons. However, being daddy's little girl also meant that fathers treated them in a more gentle way and for this reason, some girls thought they were better off as daughters. In addition, some fathers saw the father-daughter relationship as caring and close. These findings reinforce the traditionally prescribed gender roles for teenage girls, which is consistent with an Irish study, which found 'the persistence of stereotypical ways of 'doing boy/girl' (O'Connor, 2006a, p. 273).

Cultural factors play an important role in girls' development of self identity. Traditionally, girls are expected to be submissive and obedient. Although many girls saw being rebellious as normative for adolescents and generally disagreed that they should obey their parents, many admitted that they still obeyed parents in many situations. The questionnaire survey revealed that arguing with parents was not as common in this study as the Western literature suggests and that most young people are happy with their parents (Gillies, McCarthy and Holland, 2001; McFall and Garrington, 2011).

The girls' orientations to their (adolescent) bodies are actively involved in the shaping of identity. Some girls reported that they were paying more attention to their own appearance as well as their peers' appearance. However, being too glamorously dressed was regarded as being rebellious and most girls in the interviews still advocated the kind of 'natural beauty' which is embedded in Chinese culture. They were on the one hand pressurised to care about their appearance, and on

the other hand, it was not socially acceptable to overdo it. Peer pressure was very significant in terms of shaping identity relating to their body image. In addition, in terms of girls' attitudes to having romantic relationships, all girls thought having a boyfriend was not the right thing to do at their stage of life, they adopted a more practical attitude toward this. In areas of body appearance and having romantic relationships, there are still strong influences of collectivism.

Overall, for adolescent Chinese girls, some aspects of adolescent identity are similar to those of teenagers in Western countries, such as wanting to be rebellious and fashionable. However, in other areas the construction of self is underpinned by Chinese culture, such as the refusal to appear too glamorous because of the traditional Chinese 'natural beauty' ideology and the acknowledgement of 'danger' in engaging in romantic relationships; in addition they felt bound by the norm of the obedient daughter. This raises the dilemmas for girls: what should a girl who cares about her parents do if she is not interested in studying but she knows family honour depends on her success? What should she do if, as she grows up, she feels the need for more freedom but she thinks that a good girl ought to obey her parents? These are the tensions that many girls encounter in their daily lives which will be discussed later. Now, I will move on in Chapter 6 to see how fathers perceive their roles in the family.

Chapter 6 Being a father: fathers and daughters' perspectives

In Chapter 3, I explored to what extent fathers 'care about' and how much do they 'take care of' their daughters in practice, drawing from the theoretical perspectives of care (Tronto, 1994). In the West, a father's role as breadwinner has remained important over time and much of the US and UK literature suggests that it is still a dominant feature of the paternal role (Harrington, Van Deusen and Ladge, 2010; O'Brien, 1996). However, some research shows that many fathers place emotional connection with their children as central to their paternal identity (Morman and Floyd, 2006). For the Shanghai context, both historical and social changes have shaped popular images of fatherhood. Historically, a strict, remote and authoritative figure was promoted, in accordance with Confucian ideals. In addition, many Chinese nowadays still believe that men's main role is outside the home and that it is women's job to take care of children and housework (Chapter 1). However, the local context in Shanghai promotes a stereotypically feminine Shanghai man who is capable of doing cooking in the kitchen and worth taking out. In some ways, the two conceptions are contradictory, as the former advocates patriarchal masculinity and the latter encourages a more feminine identity. This therefore raises the question to what extent the father's role as breadwinner continues to be dominate in Shanghai families and whether an emotional connection to and 'care for' their children has grown in importance.

In this chapter, I am going to explore both fathers' and girls' perspectives on fatherhood drawing from the girls' focus groups, the open-ended questions in the questionnaire survey (girls' and fathers' responses) and from the interviews with fathers and daughters. Firstly, the historical times in which fathers grew up will be examined together with their own 'fathered' experiences. Just as going through adolescence is part of the life course of their daughters, so fathers also have a life course from being fathered to being the father of a teenage girl. Finally, the ultimate focus of this chapter is fathers' and girls' perceptions of paternal roles.

6.1 Fatherhood over time: past and now

6.11 Fathers' experiences on being fathered

It has been found that fathers' parenting practice is influenced by their early lives, especially by their experience of being fathered (Cabrera *et al.*, 2000). However, this does not necessarily mean they imitate their fathers' approaches. Williams (2008) argues that the new generation of fathers have generally rejected their own fathers' styles as 'old fashioned', no longer fitting with

modern circumstances. A study of Norwegian fathers who used parental leave suggests that their fathers served as negative role models, which encouraged them to create their own ways of fathering by being more involved in the family (Brandth and Kvande, 1998). Giddens (1991) also suggests that the experiences and values of previous generations have little relevance for the lives of young people anymore, since young people tend to make their own choices. However, being fathered and fathering need to be understood in the particular historical and social circumstances. As the circumstances of history, culture, community and family change, they help to shape beliefs, attitudes and expectations regarding gender roles and responsibilities (Cabrera *et al.*, 2000).

As described in Chapter 3, 47.6% (N=561) of the fathers in my study were born before and 47.6% were born during the Cultural Revolution, when life was tough and society went through many political changes. In my study, the majority of the fathers' said their experiences of being fathered as children were very different from their children's experiences, as in many Western studies of fatherhood (Brandth and Kvande, 1998; Dermott, 2003). Six fathers who were interviewed saw their own fathers as strict and distant authority figures. As Father Nina recalled: 'In our time, never mind parents shouting at you, if they just raised their voices a little, we felt so scared. When we were little, it was like being a mouse with a cat when we saw our parents. Just like this, when we got a bad score at school, we did not even dare to go back home'. From Father Nina's perspective, a father figure at that time was someone who children feared. Father Shen also recognized the power of parents at their time, 'The education we received when we were little was that we must obey our parents. Whatever they say, we should respect and obey them. Therefore, parent's words are very powerful. It does not matter whether is right or wrong, you have to do what you are told'.

When fathers were growing up, filial piety was regarded as an important aspect of parent-child relationships. At that time, being filial meant being obedient to and eventually taking care of parents (see Chapter 1). Father Li talked about a time when children had to rely totally on their parents because of the economic situation: '...at that time, that economic situation, meant we should put parents in the centre. Because we were very poor, if the unit [family] was separated, then you would totally lose the spiritual support. The function of parents was like that.'

Two fathers also mentioned little communication between fathers and children. Fathers at that time were too busy working, struggling to survive. In addition, children had siblings and elder

siblings may have learned to take over their parents' caring role for younger ones. As Father Zhan recognized, 'The time when I was little, there was very little communication between parents and children. They were busy doing their own things and you were doing your own'. This, however, has affected his own parenting and he needed to adjust to the new situation. As he admitted, 'Before, my daughter and I had very little communication. I always felt that children should play with children. But I did not realise that parents and children should communicate with each other until recently'.

There was however an exception among the eight fathers interviewed. Father Chen thought he had a close relationship with his own father: 'We were very close...Although he did not have a good salary at that time, but he tried everything he could to take care of us. He always helped me when I needed him'. He also said, 'I always see my own father as an example and I miss him so much'. It was clear that Father Chen's father had had a tremendous impact on his own fathering.

6.12 Fatherhood in the 1990s generation

During adolescence, as compared with an earlier life course phase, girls are trying out new things and new identities, and at the same time they are experiencing changes in their relationships with their parents and are wishing to have greater autonomy (see Chapter 8). This section will examine the meanings of those changes from the fathers' perspectives. The biological and psychological changes of adolescence in particular bring new challenges for parents, especially for fathers and daughters who are of the opposite sex.

'Three years is a gap' is a common saying in contemporary China, meaning that people with three years' difference in age have different values and attitudes, such is the rapidity of current social and economic change. The gap between fathers and their daughters is closer to thirty years (the average age at which they became fathers was twenty nine years old, N=553); thus if there is any truth to this saying, the difference in values and attitudes is significant. Father Shen, who worked at a university as a member of the administrative staff and had been to college, talked about the tension he experienced: 'The point is that there is no way to communicate. I have many ideas and thoughts. My children, in the end, will say, we have a few gaps between us, three years is a gap, I wonder how many gaps are there between us?'

The generation gap is also caused by the different experiences that fathers went through when they were young. They were the generation who went through many major political changes as

described in Chapter 1. For example, Father Wang had only two year's education in senior high school due to the Cultural Revolution. Father Shen was sent to the countryside and later was made redundant. Father Shen expressed his anger about the unfairness in the interview, 'It is so unfair. I was very angry about the whole thing. It was our turn to go down to the countryside. And again, it was us who were got redundant [in the 1990s when the state-owned enterprise reform started]. All the bad things come to us... We are actually the generation who sacrifice the most. It is also true that our country sacrifice our whole generation [for a better future]'. Fathers' experiences in early times also had an impact on their way of parenting. As Girl Cai understood, 'My parents were very poor when they were little, so they care a lot about saving money and not wasting things. So they had the same demand for me as well. They just use the old way to control me and pressing me'.

For fathers who were brought up in the countryside, their gap with their daughters were further reinforced by the fact that their daughters were living in Shanghai and embraced more open ideas. In Father Nina's case, he found it difficult to adjust himself as the changes were so dramatic. As he put it, 'When we were little, we were very poor. In the 1980s, we only have a few pennies in our pocket. But now, she went out with 30-50RMB and does not feel much about it. At our time, we were very afraid of our teachers. But she saw the teachers and did not feel anything, and they were like friends. I find people at their ages are all like this. I find it difficult to accept these things'. Girl Nina also agreed that her father was very traditional and she attributed this to growing up in the countryside. As she said, 'He is very traditional. After all, he was not born in big cities like Shanghai. After all, Shanghai people are more open than *xiangxiaren* (a very negative word to describe people from the countryside). It is not because I have no respect for *xiangxiaren*, but I think the kind of education they receive is very different'.

In the interviews, six fathers talked about the challenges of being fathers of teenagers and the problems of communication. Both fathers and daughters talked about differences in taste or opinions about such matters as music, appearances, clothing, and home decorations. Father Li also explained that having different values made it difficult for both sides to understand each other: 'What you think can be given up, is exactly what she values. What you value is exactly what she thinks is worthless. Her understanding is the opposite, so how can you possibly communicate with her, how to understand?' (for more discussion on communication see 7.4).

From a life course perspective, this divide between the 1960s father and the 1990s daughter is

sharpened by changes on both sides. First of all, the biological and psychological changes in the adolescent girl can mean that she no longer has the same degree of intimacy with her father as before. As Girl Nina explained: 'before, I liked my dad lot and my dad bought me whatever I liked. He was very good to me. I still remember that I used to ride on his shoulders. With him, we played together. But now, it becomes more distant, we even could not talk for a few sentences in a week'. Girl Mei distanced herself from her father because she did not see herself as daddy's little girl anymore and had started to rebel. Girl Shen reported a similar change: 'When I was little, I was always being very sticky to my dad. At that time, I needed protection from him. In my mind, he was like a hero. But now I have grown up, there must be a little bit more distance. Not like before, I would be that clingy to my dad whatever and whenever. More and more, I will be with my mum and friends. After all, there are many things I couldn't talk about with my dad'.

Secondly, there were certain barriers fathers confronted as girls grew up because they were of different genders. Father Chen admitted there were things that he and his daughter could not talk about as she became an adolescent. He used the word 'something traditional' to hint that there were barriers between them that he found it difficult to talk about. Father Nina also expressed a similar view: 'Girls are not like boys, if she is a boy, and I can say whatever I wish to talk about.' Girl Shen was more direct when talking about why she turned to her mother when she confronted problems, especially about her body changes and emotions. She thought fathers were not as sensitive as mothers: 'For example, the biological changes, surely I would tell mum. And things like emotional problems, I think men are not very good at understanding these things, so it will be better to talk with mum or my friends. People like my dad are less sensitive'.

Thirdly, middle-aged fathers are going through their own life course changes and in a generational sense (Mannheim, 1952) struggling with the gap between their formative experiences and a rapidly changing society. These include new challenges in the workplace, which is continually changing and can be very competitive. Father Shen again talked about his own frustration:

As a parent, only one word to conclude: tiring and really tiring. This kind of tiredness, in another way, still tiring, and in the end, still tiring! For myself, I feel tired. Like I am from the late 1960s generation; the 1960s generation has the stress of survival [in modern society] and working stress from the working environment. We can't compete with the 1970s and 1980s [generations]. ...My degree is not good enough to compete with others, so I have to study again.

At work, I certainly can't beat the youngsters. They know everything, while us 1960s are the older generation and we know nothing. In addition, we feel very tired ourselves.

[Father Shen, college education, university staff, daughter in the older group]

Father Shen's admission that he could not keep up with the younger generations was underpinned by the fact that many fathers born during the Cultural Revolution missed the opportunity of a good education (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, a man of the 1960s generation may feel his authority in the workplace is eroded and no longer provides him with the same masculine identity if he fails to update his knowledge. More importantly, the very idea of a threat from younger competitors may be difficult to come to terms with, as the notion that 'the elderly are the authority' used to be taken for granted but is no longer accepted among younger generations.

This is also a life course effect as Flaake suggests (2005), 'The processes of adolescent transformation trigger insecurities and shocks not only to the psychic balance of girls – for adults, they are also associated with frustration, confusion and conflict'. When both fathers and daughters are going through a transition; fathers' roles and identities sometimes have to alter alongside those of their daughters.

Another important element of being a father of the 1990s generation is that most fathers have only one child. Many fathers assumed that they would keep supporting their children whether they needed money or not, which is similar to the non-UK born parents in a British study (Brannen, 1996). The bond between parent and child may be strengthened as a result of parents' financial generosity and the only child policy. As Father Li believed, even though his daughter would leave when she went to university in the USA, his daughter will always belong to the same family even when she is married and it is impossible to separate one family from another. As he said,

A: As long as we are alive, this is one family, it will be like this forever. I can't make clear line with her. It is impossible for me, I can't do that.

Q: What if she has her own family, then you are from one family and they are one family, do you think these two are one?

A: It is together forever. You won't say this is my family and this is your family. Impossible. For me, it is impossible, I don't know how other people understand.

Q: So you wish you are always together?

A: It is not an issue of what I wish, it is the fact. This is the connection of your feeling and emotion. Am I right?

[Father Li, Masters degree, manager in a trading company, daughter in the older group]

In summary, fathers' reflections on their own experiences of being fathered tended to focus on the challenges raised for their fatherhood practices. Firstly, this is because from a generational perspective their own fathers contrasted so sharply with their experiences as fathers of children; the historical contexts are so very different. Secondly, from a life course perspective, adolescent girls are going through an important transition, just as their fathers are; fathers found it hard to keep up with a rapidly changing society and communicate with their daughters who have different values and opinions. As a result, fathers struggled with threats to their masculine identity and paternal authority.

6.2 Father's and girls' perspectives of fathering

In this section, I will focus on exploring both fathers' and girls' views of what it is to be a father. This was examined by analyzing the responses to the open-ended questions: 'As a father, what has your father done the best?' in the girls' questionnaire survey and 'As a father, what have you done the best?' in the fathers' questionnaire. In addition, eight fathers' interviews also provide more in depth.

In total, 435 father respondents responded in writing to the question 'As a father, what do you think you have done the best?' Being a parent who cared about their daughter appeared to be the most common, with 103 saying that they 'cared about' their daughters a lot. Other aspects of fathering which were stressed were: providing (80), helping or supporting their daughters (76), communicating (62), and cultivating their daughters (43). Others mentioned were being a role model (31) and respecting their daughters' choices and giving them freedom (32). Being able to accompany their daughters and spend time with them was mentioned by 21 fathers.

Girls' perspectives were similar to their fathers' comments. Among 680 girls who responded to the similar open-ended question of 'As a father, what do you think your father has done the best?' in the questionnaire, 209 girls thought their fathers were being good parents who 'cared about' them. Being able to support and help the girls appeared to be more important than providing, with 139 girls seeing their fathers as supporting them well and 88 girls saying that their father provided well for them. However, being able to provide a good study environment

did not seem very significant, as only 9 girls mentioned it. There were 81 girls who saw their fathers as good at communicating, with 26 saying that their fathers were very humorous and funny, which was not mentioned by the fathers (also discussed in section 6.3). Also, 77 girls mentioned their fathers were good at teaching them how to be a good person and how to deal with life. Another 56 girls stated that their fathers respected them and gave them enough freedom. Only 21 girls mentioned spending time or doing things together.

Some daughters and even some fathers had a low opinion of their father's involvement. When answering the question 'What do you think your father has done the best?', 35 girls and 14 fathers replied 'nothing'.

6.21 Caring about daughters

Of the 103 fathers who reported a general sense of 'caring about' (Tronto, 1994) their daughters as being the thing they did best as a father, some commented; 'I care about her' and 'I care about her a lot'. But some were more specific. Statements included: 'I care about her study'; 'I care about her daily life'; 'I care about her improvement in the study'. 'I care about her development and health'. For their part, many girls emphasized that their fathers put them first and did everything for them. Being devoted to their daughters was deeply appreciated. As one girl wrote; 'He lives around me and I am the centre of his life'.

It seemed that this 'caring about' and love from the fathers was generally conveyed in a subtle way, as most fathers and girls did not give examples or say exactly what they meant. As Girl Zhan in the older group explained in the interview, 'Fathers do not have so many different ways of expressing themselves as mothers... Chinese fathers are not very good at expressing themselves. Sometimes they care about you a lot, but they do not always express it'. Girl Zhan also mentioned that even though she would not cover up how she feels, it is normally her mother who came to her when she was upset. She explained, 'I feel that my dad feel a bit shy [even though he knew that I was upset]. After all, he is such a big man'. In the same vein, Father Nina explained why he did not express himself, 'I do not think [expressing my love to her] is necessary. What is the point of doing that? In fact, if she needs clothes, shoes, I will buy it for her. She also has enough food to eat and drink. I am taking care of her in her life. This is the way I express. Doing it is the same as saying it'. Girl Liu in the younger group describes her father's love, 'My dad's love is like air. You are breathing all the time but you do not necessary feel the existence of it. His love is everywhere, and he gives me a lot, but sometimes I will not feel it.

This does not mean he does not love me.’ In the focus group, one girl said ‘Even though he doesn’t use words to express but he loves me a lot’. Another wrote: ‘even though he lives in another city, he will take care of me’. Some girls emphasized that care could be expressed even though their fathers were not spending time with them, with comments such as ‘He cares for me a lot even though he is not always around’ and ‘my dad is busy working and comes back home once a week. He brings lots of things for us, and thinks of us a lot, and gives me lots of love.’

Only a few girls and fathers described how fathers ‘cared for’ their daughters and did something for them. The most common example given was to prepare food: 14 fathers and 19 daughters said their fathers would prepare food for them and wait for them to come back home. It seems that it is still mothers who take care of their daughters’ daily life. As Father Shen who had twins in the older group admitted, ‘Their mother takes care of them more than I do. When my wife is at home, she almost does everything. And she will get worried that they get too tired of studying hard. The kids just sleep all the time at the weekend until they did not wish to. She basically did everything and the kids just eat and leave the house. They are like little emperors.’ He went on later in the interview, ‘My wife just wishes to take care of everything for our kids. I think even after a few years later, she will still be the same. That is for sure, this is the differences between man and women’.

6.22 Providing for daughters

In urban China, most young people who are in education are still financially dependent on their parents and it is the parents’ responsibility to support children until they are in the labour market. Providing was placed as the second most important aspect of fathering, according to fathers’ responses. Many fathers saw ensuring that their families were comfortable without having to worry about material need as what they had done the best. Some mentioned working hard and providing a comfortable home. There were 22 fathers who emphasised providing economic support to ensure that their daughters had a good study environment.

In a number of cases, providing not only meant earning enough money to support the family but to give their daughters whatever they wanted; 27 fathers’ and 16 daughters’ responses suggested that providing meant fathers giving their daughters whatever they wanted.

I did not ask about girls’ spending in the questionnaire survey but I did ask this in the girls’ interviews. Among the nine girl interviewees, three girls reported that their parents gave a

regular allowance to them. However, the amount of allowance differed from 20RMB to 100 RMB a week (equivalent to 2 pounds to 10 pounds). In China, a KFC meal deal will be around 20-30RMB. Another five girls reported that their allowances were given irregularly: three girls were given the money when they asked for it; one father asked his daughter whether she needed money from time to time (Girl Li) and one father (Father Wang) gave his daughter money when he won at mah jong. The other girl's allowance was calculated according to her academic performance (Girl Liu). The better the exam result she got, the more money she was given. There were also another three girls who said they were given money as a reward for good school results.

Similar to the questionnaire survey, the interview data revealed the importance of providing. Many fathers had higher goals than simply 'providing', as they wished to bring up their children to do well and be as supportive of that as possible. However, two fathers, Father Nina and Father Wang, who had low economic resources saw being a provider as their main role. Father Wang was divorced and he saw his main aim was just to get her to school, and her success there was her own responsibility: 'The most important responsibility is to give her, and provide her to go to school. If you go to school and you could go to the university, the job in the future will be yours, not mine. Whether you are good or bad at study is all yours, not mine.' Father Nina directly confessed that he could not do anything else apart from earning money. Three financially better off fathers (Father Li, Father Chen, Father Shen) talked about wanting to provide a better environment for their daughters. Not being able to enjoy material wealth when they were young also encouraged them to provide the best they could for their daughters. As Father Chen said: 'I just want to try my best to let her enjoy. In my time we didn't have such good living conditions. It was very difficult even to buy a bicycle'. These three were also the ones who said that they expected nothing in return from their daughters. In modern urban Chinese families, the meaning of filial duty and reciprocity has shifted to the expectation of children's educational success from expecting children to take care of them in later life.

Offering financial support to their daughters provided the fathers with a sense of attachment which gave emotional significance to fatherhood (Allatt, 1996). As for Father Li, giving money to his daughter served an emotional function when he wished to express his love to his daughter. As he reasoned,

When you talk about love, it is not as empty as air. I do really like my daughter, and I will buy my daughter some clothes, this is a way [to express myself] by providing material things. This is

stronger than saying 'I love you, daughter' one hundred times. Also, who should I give the money to, if not her? In the end, it will all go to her pocket anyway.

[Father Li, Masters degree, manager in a trading company, daughter in the older group]

Another important factor that may strengthen a father's role as a provider was that most Chinese children were only children and parents were supposed to support them with what they needed, even if the children left home or got married and 'lived independently'. Fathers tended to assume they would keep supporting their children even though they did not need their financial support. As Father Shen suggested, 'Chinese people may never stop supporting their children financially'. Father Wang, who worked in a restaurant as a member of the administrative staff, also talked about his plan to give his daughter money when she got married and had her own family. Father Cai worked as a civil servant also said, 'We [parents] will get older one day, and all the houses, the car, will be hers. As long as we are able to [give to her], after all, she is the only child. It is a matter of how much you give.' Father Li thought he would not stop giving his daughter money even though she no longer needed it. 'Who else should I give it to?' As many children were only children, the parent-child link is strong and neither side wishes to be totally independent.

In addition, parents' generosity in giving more money than their children needed was a compensation strategy: parents were happy with being able to provide their own children with the wealth they never enjoyed when they were young (Crowell and Hsieh, 1995). The fathers' childhood experiences may have contributed to their sense that being the provider was important, as they were all brought up in poor conditions. This, and the special provision and protection which daughters were believed to need, may have encouraged them to provide as much as they could for their daughters. As some fathers saw it, having a daughter and having a son are different, and this may lead parents' to bring them up differently. Such gendered attitudes do not necessarily put girls in a disadvantaged position as many believed that girls should be brought up in an indulgent way and boys should be brought up in a tough way. One father wrote about father-daughter relationships at the end of the questionnaire survey: 'A father-daughter relationship is very close. In China, people prefer boys to girls. But at the same time, there is a saying that girls are parents' cotton sweater and boys are shirts. Girls should be brought up in a rich way, so that they can grow up and become delicate. Nowadays, most children are only children, and I am trying my best to bring up a 'delicate' daughter.' By being brought up in an indulgent way, girls may cultivate more sophisticated tastes and also may be less easily tempted by the outside world when they are older. For fathers, this may reinforce their responsibility as a

provider if they think girls need more material support.

6.23 Supporting and helping daughters

To be highly involved in their daughters' lives by supporting and helping them was also thought to be an important role for fathers. From the girls' points of view, being a supporter and helper seems to be more important than being a provider; 139 girls mentioned their fathers being supporters, compared with 88 girls who mentioned fathers being providers.

Both daughters and fathers themselves reported in the questionnaire that fathers supported, encouraged and helped daughters in each aspect of their lives. Statements from fathers include: 'I always support and encourage her'; 'I always encourage her to study hard and fulfil her dream'; 'I try to encourage her to develop her confidence' and 'I will give her good advice, and help her whenever needed'. Many girls emphasized the emotional effect this had on them, for example: 'He will try to make me laugh if I am upset'; 'He will make me let my bad feelings out'; and 'He always praises me and gives me confidence'.

In the questionnaire, support for girls' studies was mentioned by both fathers and daughters, with 37 of the 76 fathers who mentioned helping or supporting their daughters including their studies in that. A majority of them (23) also reported that they coached their daughters, checked their homework and helped them to solve problems they encountered. Forty five girls also said that their fathers gave them help with schoolwork. The practices of fathers helping daughters in daily lives will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

6.24 Communicating with daughters

Sixty two fathers and eighty one girls mentioned on the questionnaire that the best thing their fathers do was being able to talk and communicate with daughters. Fourteen fathers mentioned they were like friends and could talk about many things. One father said 'I take her to school everyday and talk to her about the way things are at school and her study'. Another father believed that his daughter could tell him everything, writing 'I understand my daughter well and she tells me everything'. Fourteen fathers emphasized that they treated their daughters as friends and respected their ideas. However, only five girls thought their fathers treated them as friends. For girls, their fathers' manner and tone of communicating was perhaps more important than the subject; 26 girls mentioned that their fathers were humorous and funny. Girls' statements included: 'He is very humorous, and he tells me stories about when he was little'; 'Sometimes, he is quite humorous, and he brings happiness to me' and 'We live happily and can joke with

each other.’ This is consistent with other Chinese studies which suggest that parent-child relationships in only child families are more equal and are similar to relationships between friends (China Youth development project, 2006).

In the interview, two fathers also talked about how happy they felt being able to communicate with their daughters and being friends. Father Shen was very happy to be a friend as well as a father. The extract below shows how he was satisfied with being able to chat with his children. Daily activities, such as going out for dinner together, provided a good opportunity for parents and children to talk freely. Possibly the change of geographical space has had some impact on the roles of parents and children. Both may feel free to act and create new roles for themselves because they feel less restrained than in the home environment.

Like yesterday, my wife had to work, and I also worked late. My kids [he got twins] went to the after-class lessons, so [afterwards] we had dinner outside together. At that time, we became friends, not parents any more. As a friend, we are just very casual, as Shanghainese say, just rambling, chatting and playing. I felt so happy, really. At that moment, I was so happy, better than got a prize or something.

[Father Shen, college education, university staff, daughter aged 16 when interviewed]

Girl Chen thought she always had a good relationship with her father, and she attributed it to her father’s support and good communication. As she said, ‘Whatever happens, he will listen to my thoughts. Sometimes it is about things at home or my own things. When I tell him about my dream about future such as what I like to be when I grow up, he is not discouraging like other parents. He will say just do whatever you like. If I really like, he will just support me. When he drives me to school, he will also ask me about things at school. He will always talk with me’.

The questionnaire survey analysis on what fathers had done the best suggests many fathers communicated well with their daughters. It somewhat contradicts fathers’ and daughters’ narratives about the generation gap mentioned earlier (see 6.12). This may be due to the different questions asked. In the questionnaire, the question of ‘What do you think you have done the best as a father’ was asked, while in the interview, many questions were probed to explore difficulties, such as ‘What are the most difficult thing as a father’. Also, different methods may also cause this as respondents in interviews reveal more details.

6.25 Cultivating daughters in a deliberate way

In Chinese culture, the father's role as cultivator is reflected in an old saying: 'Failing to educate the child is the fault of the father' (子不教,父之过). The word 'educate' here has a broad meaning including the whole personal development of the child. Forty three fathers in the questionnaire survey expressed their ambition to cultivate their daughters and saw this as what they did the best; 77 girls also mentioned this. Some emphasized moral education, with many fathers wishing to teach their daughter to be a good person. There were 12 fathers who mentioned that they taught their daughters *ru he zuo ren* (如何做人), which means how to be a good person, a useful person, a responsible person, an earnest and a kind person. Others talked about how to develop their daughters' intelligence, ways of thinking, personalities or interests. Some also mentioned that they were trying to teach their daughters to be independent.

The Chinese word 'peiyang' was regularly used by the fathers in the interviews when talking about their responsibilities. It has a broad meaning which can be interpreted as to 'bring up' or 'cultivate'. All fathers admitted that bringing up their children was important, but they emphasised different things, depending on their own education and/or resources. Some just had no specific ideas of how to bring up their children, whilst others were very clear about their goals, for example giving their daughters life skills such as money management and a sense of responsibility.

As Father Nina said: 'All I wish is to *peiyang chulai* (to bring her up so that she could do better than her parents), am I right?' We can see that Father Nina's perception of *peiyang chulai* is strongly associated with educational success. In the same way, Father Nina wished he could help his daughter so that his daughter could achieve more. Father Nina had migrated from the countryside to Shanghai and his family lived in a very small rented place (see Chapter 4). His economic condition constrained his ability to 'provide' for his daughter, as discussed before. However, he hoped that his daughter could have a better future. *Peiyang chulai* vividly described his ambition to be able to help his daughter to move up the social scale.

When fathers had a better educational background themselves, they may have been more ambitious in terms of bringing up and cultivating their daughters. In Father Zhan's case (he had a Masters degree) he wished to bring up his child to be a fully developed person, 'My responsibility [as a father] is to peiyang her. This means in every aspect of her ability. But I don't want to constrain her, or limit her to develop in one direction. Then, it is about being able to

peiyang (cultivate) every possible aspect. ’

As noted above, how fathers think about bringing up their daughters is gendered. Father Zhan illustrated, ‘To my understanding, daughters should be focused on cultural qualities and artistic accomplishments. There are more things to educate girls...If I had a son, I would use different ways to ‘peiyang’ him. I can say that’.

In short, by answering the open-ended questionnaire questions about what they thought the fathers had done the best, a better understanding of fathers’ construction of being a father was gained. The majority of fathers and daughters saw fathers as the parent who cared about daughters and provided for the family. Fathers also helped and supported their daughters when needed, and some were willing to communicate and cultivate their daughters. Fathers were valued not only as the ones who were financially supporting the family, but also because they were emotionally involved. However, whether fathers are actively ‘caring for’ their daughters needs to be fully examined as ‘caring about’ does not automatically lead to ‘caring for’ their daughters (Tronto, 1994) as discussed in Chapter 3.

6.3 Summary

In this chapter, I looked at fathers’ own experiences of being ‘fathered’; then I went on to explore fathers’ views of being a father of the 1990s generation. Finally, I examined both fathers and girls’ perception of paternal roles. The chapter drew on data from the various sources: girls’ focus groups, questionnaire surveys and individual interviews from both girls and fathers. It also applied the concepts of fatherhood and masculinities; care and fathering discussed in Chapter 3.

In my study, fathers’ own experiences of being fathered suggested that most fathers had experienced distant relationships with their own fathers who they saw as strict authority figures. In addition, in those times children’s needs were not the central focus, as parents were too busy finding ways to survive. There were exceptions, as Father Chen thought his own father had been extremely devoted and that they had had a close relationship.

Growing up in different social and historical backgrounds inevitably meant that fathers and daughters had different values and opinions. This caused conflicts between them and created a generation gap. At the same time, girls were interested in the outside world and no longer saw their fathers as the authority figures as they were growing up. From a life course perspective,

fathers also confronted many challenges whilst having a teenage girl. In particular, fathers were facing challenges themselves in their work places as they were going through their own life course and coping with change. It therefore was a time of life which was both physically and emotionally tiring. However, being the only children meant parent-child family ties were strong in terms of material interdependence which is likely to remain so even when girls have grown up and left home.

The desire to change from the old, traditional concept of fatherhood to a new, more emotionally involved one was also stressed as many fathers and girls reported that fathers did 'care about' and help their daughters. 'Caring about' (Tronto, 1994) their daughters was the most mentioned when the fathers were asked what they had done the best as a father. Being the only child in the family, probably made it easy and possible for the father to take more care of their children. Girls' views were similar to the fathers, who valued their fathers 'caring about' and helping them. However, none of the fathers explicitly mentioned that they should take care of their daughter's daily lives. Instead, a few fathers admitted that the mothers were responsible for their daughters' daily lives. It seems that they assumed it was the mothers who should take the responsibility. Therefore, although most fathers 'care about' their daughters, it is still mothers' responsibility to 'take care of' the daughters.

Fathers' constructions of masculinity were also revealed when they discussed their responsibilities and roles. The majority of them mentioned four main responsibilities: caring about their daughters, providing financially for the family as a breadwinner, helping or supporting and communicating with their daughters. This revealed that fathers could not only be supporting their daughters financially, but also some fathers were emotionally involved, which somehow reflected the discourse of Shanghaiman discussed at the beginning of the chapter.

While some aspects of traditional fatherhood are declining, the breadwinner role is still central in terms of Chinese fathers' roles, especially from the fathers' own points of views. Many Chinese fathers wished to provide their families with the best they could offer and took pride in this. Having suffered themselves when they were young, their role as providers has a particular historical significance. Having only children who are growing up in a consumerist society also strengthens fathers' role as providers as young people's financial demands on them increases. Many fathers also had gendered perceptions of bringing up daughters, believing that girls should be brought up in a 'rich way'. This again put more pressure on fathers to earn and provide more.

In my study, both fathers and daughters see being a parent who cares about his child as the most important role. However, girls placed the role of provider third, after supporter and helper, while fathers placed it second only to caring. This concurs with a UK study in which fathers saw being a provider as the primary role while mothers and children perceived fathers' involvement in the family as more important (Warin et al, 1999).

In the next two chapters, I will turn to fathers' family practices and their negotiations with their daughters.

Chapter 7 Family practices: a journey through time

7.1 Introduction: 'present time', 'generation time' and 'life-course time'

As discussed in Chapter 3, the frameworks of time, are those that I propose to employ in this chapter: 'present time', 'life-course time' and 'generation time' (Brannen, 2002). Through the lens of 'present time' I will look at both girls' and fathers' time at home and their activities together. By looking at 'generation time', the generational relationship between fathers and daughters will be examined, especially their communication and the conflicts that lie behind the generational differences. Running through the whole chapter – just as it runs through family life – will be an examination of 'life-course time', focusing on two phases in adolescence of the younger girls aged 13-14 and older girls aged 16-17.

With regard to 'present time', a growing lack of parental time at home is not only a Western issue. Building on the pre-existing culture of hard work which is deeply rooted in Chinese history, the need to maximise profits and catch up with the West has placed increasing demands on the workforce. In the cities, most Chinese parents both work full-time and this has changed the pattern of parenting, leaving much less time for family life although this is counterbalanced by the One Child policy. Unlike many Western countries, there are few opportunities for flexible working or part-time positions, making it hard for parents to balance work and family (see Chapter 1).

Because the fathers in my study represent a very different generation from their daughters historically, 'generation time' is also key to understanding the relationships between them. In China, friend-like relationships between parents and children have been noted (Chapter 1), as a result of the One Child Policy. This invites comparison to the late modern Western concept of the 'pure relationship' (Giddens, 1992) which is characterised by mutual self-disclosure between parents and children which is open and equal. However, openness in communication between parent and child also confronts many barriers as explored in Chapter 3. First, relations between fathers and their teenage daughters are gendered (Kirkman, Rosenthal and Feldman, 2001; Wyckoff *et al.*, 2008). Second, to further complicate the issue, the considerable historical generation gap between fathers and daughters (see Chapter 6) makes this even harder. These differences of gender and generation call into question how teenage girls and their fathers communicate with each other. The relevance of the concept of the 'pure relationship' with

respect to modern Chinese families will therefore be tested.

A third concept of time: 'life-course time' is also relevant. The changes associated with adolescence pose unique challenges for both parents and children. By comparing two groups of teenage girls from different stages in their adolescence, one from junior high school and another from senior high school, a better understanding of the challenges at different points on the life course will be gained.

As discussed in Chapter 6, fathers in contemporary Shanghai play many diverse roles. Many fathers saw being a caring and helpful father as important while at the same time seeing breadwinning as very important too. However, many fathers still perceive their role as mainly the one who 'cares about' rather than 'cares for' their daughters (Tronto, 1994). Moreover, the actual conduct of fathering still lags behind people's perceptions of fatherhood, as many scholars have argued (Brannen, Heptinstall and Bhopal, 2000; 1997; Reeves, 2005). Therefore, we cannot conclude that fatherhood has gradually evolved from the traditional strict, distant mode into a more engaged, involved and caring one. It is the intention of this chapter to explore fathers' family practices, with a focus on their time, activities and communication with their daughters, by using both the questionnaire survey and interview data.

7.2 Present time: fathers' and daughters' time and activities together

Firstly, I examine fathers' and daughters' time spent at home drawing largely on the questionnaire survey, referred to as 'present time'. The following two questions will be addressed: How much time do the girls spend with their mothers and fathers at home? What kinds of activities do girls do with their fathers when they are together?

7.21 Two trajectories: daughters' academic lives and fathers' working lives

As Morgan suggests, 'family practices are not necessarily practices which take place in times and spaces conventionally designated to do with 'family', that is the home. It is possible to see paid work outside the home as constituting part of family practices' (Morgan, 1999, p. 20). Therefore, I will start this section by examining adolescent girls' school hours and fathers' working hours to get an overall picture of how much time is available for both to spend time together at home.

Home and school are the two places where teenage girls spend the most time. Many secondary school students concentrate much of their time on their studies, doing lots of homework and

exercises to get good exam results. The girls who participated in my study have not yet faced the fierce competition involved in the entry process to university, which all depends on success in their final year examination. Nevertheless, the younger girls, who are around thirteen years old, were about to take the exam which will decide which senior school they can enter in one year's time. Meanwhile the older girls, who are around sixteen years old, expected to begin their final year in secondary school in one year's time (see Chapter 4). The pressure on both groups to achieve forces them to study for most of every day, especially for the older group. Table 7.1 below illustrates how a thirteen year old student, Girl Liu, spends a normal school day:

Time	Activities
6:30-7:30	get up, have breakfast and go to school
7:30-8:30	at school
8:30-11:45	start lessons
11:45-12:30	have lunch and go to school shops
12:30-16:30	have lessons
16:30-17:00	go back home
17:00-19:00	do homework and have dinner
19:00-23:00	do homework, shower and play piano
23:00	go to sleep

Table 7.1 Girl Liu's timetable on a school day from the questionnaire survey

Similarly, Girl Nina in the younger group mentioned her busy life even at weekends, 'I have lots of after-school activities at weekends. I need to play the saxophone, and I need to go to the drawing class, maths lessons. There are many classes I go at the weekend'. Girl Chen who were in a good senior high school expressed the pressure she was under, 'Now I am in Year 2 in senior high school, many of my classmates feel the huge pressure and it is awful. The pace is so fast and you have not figured out this point, the teacher has already jumped into the next one. Especially the English teacher we have now, she likes to take over other lessons as well. Our classmates do not like our English teacher because she took all our craft lessons. We only have craft lessons twice in a term, but she took it to have the English lesson. And she speaks so fast. It is very tiring to catch up during the lesson. After the whole lesson, your head just drop there, cannot move at all'. She went on, 'I remember that when I was in Year 1 in senior high school that I did not need to spend Sundays to do homework. I did all the revision on Saturday. But now, I am still doing my homework on Sunday night. I did not have time at all... During the week, I normally finish my homework by 10 o'clock and the latest is 11 o'clock. Some of my classmates even did not finish it until one or two in the morning. The crazy thing is that they will just fall asleep right there in front of the books'.

The data from the questionnaire survey also show that many girls have various tutorials or clubs after school or at the weekend. According to the survey results, only 12.4% of girls have never been to after-class clubs or tutorials. The difference between the two age groups is not significant (Pearson Chi-Square=5.619, df=2, n=760, p=0.06).

Concerns that students devote too much time to studying are much discussed in the press. The government has published regulations to prevent schools from making students spend too much time on homework. According to the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission (2010c), schools should ensure that they assign no more than 1.5 hours of homework to primary and junior high school students, and 2 hours at senior high school. However, it seems that this rule is widely ignored, because both schools and students are driven by the fierce competition for success in the annual university entrance exams. According to the China Youth Development Project, 55% of urban junior high school students did more than 2 hours homework a night on weekdays in 2005, which was 34.4% more than the result in 1999 (China Youth Development Project, 2006).

Another fact which needs to be borne in mind is that many students in senior high school can choose to live at school where they will be provided with accommodation and evening self-learning classes in which they can finish their homework and study. The main reason for this is that many students live far away because, although every urban student will have a local junior high school, there are relatively few state senior high schools in each district and so it is very likely that many will have to travel. Being able to live at school saves a lot of time spent on commuting, so students can concentrate more on studying and for more than 2 hours a night.

While the girls concentrate on their academic lives, most of the fathers focus on their own careers. One of the most important foundations of men's masculine identities is work (Morgan, 1992) and many of the fathers in my study still saw being a provider as one of their important roles as discussed in Chapter 6. Regardless of their occupation, most fathers seemed to be very busy with work. Fathers' busy working lives were revealed in the question of 'What are your normal working hours?' in the fathers questionnaire. Among the 452 fathers who gave their working hours, the average was 9.17 hours a day. Mothers seemed to work even longer, as the average working time for them was 9.27 hours. These figures obviously exceed the maximum 8 hours stipulated by the Labour Law (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 1994). This indicates that employers' expectations are high and competition for employment and

promotion is fierce, so many people still work long hours regardless of regulations.

Similar to the questionnaire results, seven out of eight of the fathers interviewed reported being busy with work and normally coming back home late. One father, Father Nina, a construction worker, normally got up around five or six o'clock and came back home around six or seven, often with a long commute to work. Another, Father Wang, who worked in a restaurant as a member of the administrative staff, reported that he did not live at home most of the time and spent only two or three days with his daughter in one month. As for fathers in professional jobs, such as engineers or teachers, they also had to work long hours. In addition, regardless of their work or occupation, many fathers often had to do things which did not necessarily count as work itself, but which were vital for maintaining working relationships and career success, such as dinners with colleagues and business partners. As having working meals is so common in Chinese work culture, especially among businessmen and the public sector, time with families at home is further reduced. Three admitted that they normally came back home quite late, either because they needed to have business meals or to work extra hours. As Father Chen admitted 'I spend the most time on] my work, probably because society now is different. It is developing so fast. The pressure comes together. As a result, I have to use 80% of the time on my work. I spend less time on family.' One of the four professional fathers [Father Li] said he had meals at home most of the time, but more often than not his wife and daughter had already finished their meal before he arrived.

In short, many of the fathers seemed to have long working hours and often worked beyond their formal finishing time. At the same time, the girls were busy with their own studies, having private tutorials or after-class clubs to improve their academic profile. The question of how fathers and daughters managed to spend any time together will be explored in the following section.

7.22 When two trajectories meet: time together at home

a. Time together with mothers

Of the two parents, it is generally the mother who is most directly involved with the daughter's day-to-day life and the girls in my study reported being close to their mothers. In answer to the question: 'Who do you talk to the most at home?', 63.6% of girls reported that they talked with their mothers the most, compared with 16.3% who named their fathers (n=700). In addition, 55.4% of girls reported that they were closest to their mothers, compared with 32.4% who

reported being closest to their fathers (n=670). In addition, mothers were found to spend more time with their daughters at each level of daily life: time spent together at weekdays and weekends, time having breakfast together and time having dinner together (table 7.2). Furthermore, the results are statistically significant, comparing time with mothers and fathers (all the $p < 0.001$, according to the Pearson Chi-square test).

Girls time spend with mothers and fathers	mother (N=755)	father (N=756)
	Mean*	Mean*
Time spent together in the last school day	2.80	2.52
Time spent together in the last Sunday	3.34	2.92
Time have breakfast together in the last week	2.23	2.02
Time have dinner together in the last week	3.32	3.07
Time have arguments in the last week	1.72	1.60

Table 7.2: Girls' response in relation to the time together with their mothers and fathers

*(*1: less than one hour; 2: 1-2 hours; 3: 3-5 hours 4: 6 hours and more)*

Not only did girls report having less time together with their fathers than their mothers, they also reported that their fathers were less involved in monitoring their lives and less involved in talking about future jobs. When girls were asked about parents' knowledge of their whereabouts after school, 33.4% reported that their fathers did not always know where they went, compared to 16.8% who said their mothers did not always know (n=761). Similarly, more girls reported talking with their mothers about their ideas for future careers: 60.5% talked with their mothers, compared to 47.4% with their fathers. However, in terms of giving advice rather than being asked for it, fathers were almost as highly involved as mothers, with 68.1% of girls reporting that their fathers gave advice about which university they should go to or which subject they should study, compared with 74.5% who said their mothers did (see Appendix 8).

Girls who said they were closest to their mothers also tended to argue more with them than with their fathers. In fact girls generally reported fewer arguments with their fathers than their mothers: 60.9% of girls reported having no argument with their fathers in the last week, compared with 48.2% of girls with their mothers. This is similar to the findings from Yau and Smetana's two studies discussed in Chapter 2 (1996, 2003). An obvious interpretation of this is that if girls spend less time with their fathers then there is less time to argue with them. However, this also suggests that responsibility for controlling girls' behaviour and challenging transgressions falls mainly to the mother.

The questionnaire data therefore suggests that of the two parents it is usually the mother who the girl is closest to and who is most involved in many aspects of the daughters' lives, indicating that caregiving is gendered (Brannen *et al.*, 1994; Doucet, 2006).

b. Time with fathers

Although girls tend to spend more time with their mothers, as discussed above, when looked at closely the amount of time girls spent with their fathers was still significant in three particular aspects: time together on weekdays, time together at weekends, and time spent having dinner together. In a separate question 'On the last school day, how many hours did you spend with your father?' around half (52.2%) of girls reported that they had spent more than three hours with their fathers. The amount of time spent together also increased slightly at the weekend, with 65.4% girls reported that they had spent more than three hours with their fathers. Fathers had similar views on the amount of time they spent together on both weekdays (Pearson Correlation =.474, n=576, p<0.001) and weekends (Pearson Correlation =.551, n=575, p<0.001).

Fathers' occupation	Time spent together on a school day				N
	<1 hour	1-2 hours	3-5 hours	>= 6 hours	
Senior business executives	33.3%	27.8%	36.1%	2.8%	36
Owner of private enterprises	35.7%	42.9%	21.4%	.0%	14
Professionals	17.9%	17.9%	37.2%	26.9%	78
Office workers	15.7%	20.0%	45.7%	18.6%	70
Small business	10.0%	30.0%	47.5%	12.5%	40
Business/service worker	10.5%	30.8%	33.1%	25.6%	172
Manual workers	8.8%	24.2%	47.3%	19.8%	91
unemployed	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1
Total	17.5%	26.1%	39.0%	20.3%	502

Table 7.3: Fathers' time spent with daughters according to their occupations (fathers' response combined with daughters only when fathers did not fill in the occupation question)

The differences in time spent with daughters among fathers with different occupations were significant on school days (Linear-by-Linear Association Chi-square=11.747, df=1, n=502, p<0.5) but not at weekends. Senior business executives and owners of private enterprises spent less time with their daughters, compared with those in other occupations (table 7.3). Similarly, whilst there was no difference in time spent having breakfast together, paternal occupation did affect the amount of time fathers spent with their daughters at dinner (Linear-by-Linear Association Chi-square=8.906, df=1, n=503, p<0.05). It seems that around half of fathers who

were professionals, office workers, small businessmen, business and service workers and manufacturing workers have dinner with their daughters more than 4 times in a week, whilst only about a quarter of senior business executives and owners of private enterprises did. However, there were no significant differences in times spent with daughters among fathers who had different levels of education.

As previously mentioned, many fathers led very busy working lives which they found difficult to balance with family life, while the girls had very busy academic lives. Having meals together seems to be one of the few occasions when fathers and girls spend some time with each other on a weekday and other research has shown that shared meals are considered an important part of being a family even if families do not achieve it (Murcott, 2003).

As for having breakfast, many girls reported having their breakfast by themselves without either mother or father: 45.4% of girls reported that they had not had breakfast with their fathers in the last week and 36.4% of them said they had not had it with their mothers. As some explained in the interview, one reason for this is that some girls bought their own breakfast on their way to school. Another reason is that girls got up much earlier than their parents, thus having their breakfast separately.

From the questionnaire, it appears that more than half of the girls had dinner regularly with their fathers. Half of the girls (52.0%) and just over half (55.7%) of their fathers reported having dinner with each other more than four times in the last week. Only 14.1% of girls and 8.4% of fathers reported not having a dinner together in the last week. The differences between the younger and the older group are not significant either, according to Linear-by-Linear Chi-square test.

However this is not consistent with the interview responses, in which five out of the eight fathers were reported, either by themselves or their daughters, as not often having dinner at home. Only two were reported as mostly having dinner at home. When fathers see their work obligations as more important, they put their family time as the second priority. Among the eight fathers interviewed only two, Father Cai who worked as a civil servant and Father Mei, a factory worker, had most of their meals at home during the week. Father Cai also said that he would go to the market to buy food and cook for the family. Girl Zhan said that her father always had to work extra hours and Girl Chen that her father sometimes came back home for dinner and sometimes

not. In Girl Liu's case, her father was a businessman and was sometimes very busy and sometimes quite free. Therefore, his pattern of having dinner at home was not always the same. It does seem that most fathers' work demands that they be very flexible and willing to sacrifice time with their families.

There are several reasons for this inconsistency: perhaps fathers were more likely to reveal the pressure they were under at work when talking face-to-face; another possibility is that in the interviews the fathers may have felt pressure to 'present' their intention to be a good father; or it may simply be a sampling issue. Either way, there seems to be a tension between fathering and breadwinning. As a breadwinner, they need to be committed to their jobs. At the same time, they think they should spend more time at home with their children. Being an 'involved' father is also what people expect them to be. However, this may not necessarily be what fathers themselves choose to become.

It was not the case that simply taking meals together was associated with more time with daughters. Father Cai admitted that he did not communicate much with his daughter even though he and the family ate together because his daughter was not willing to answer the questions asked by him (discussed later in 7.43). Other cases also showed that eating together did not necessarily increase communication. Girl Liu reported that her father did not allow her to talk at the dinner table, whilst in Girl Zhan's family they tended to watch TV while they were having meals. In this sense, having meals at home seemed to serve the function of nutrition but not communication.

However, some fathers did try to create more occasions for interaction in their daily life, such as getting their daughter up in the morning and chatting over shared meals. These small but important interactions have become the main alternatives when there were very few chances for both parties to sit down together and have a long conversation.

In addition, the very ordinariness and routineness of family time was what children and parents valued (Christensen, 2002). According to their daughters and themselves, three fathers (Father Chen, Father Shen, and Father Li) drove their daughters to school or to private tuition. Not only did these fathers regard it as their responsibility to support their daughters' studies by taking them there, they also saw it as precious time together. Father Chen, admitted that his daughter's school was far away but said 'Although it is very far, but every day, it is like a responsibility.

What I wish is that I could try my best to take care of her when she is living with us. I get a sense of happiness. This is the tradition from my father. He took good care of us. So I do the same for my daughter... During the drive, I will communicate with her and observe the changes in every aspect of her life. Of course, study is very important as well'. Similarly, Father Shen also appreciated this rare opportunity, 'We do not have much time to communicate with each other as we have little time together. The time that we communicate properly with each other is almost none. But I drove her to school every morning. As Shanghai people goes, when you walk together then you start talking'.

Time spent together	Girls' response N=756	Fathers' response N=585
	Mean*	Mean*
Time spent together on the last school day	2.52	2.67
Time spent together on the last Sunday	2.92	3.08
Time having breakfast together in the last week	2.02	2.34
Time having dinner together in the last week	3.07	3.20

Table 7.4 Comparison between girls' response and fathers' response

*(*1: less than one hour; 2: 1-2 hours; 3: 3-5 hours 4: 6 hours and more)*

Despite, or perhaps because of, the fathers' feelings of guilt about not spending much time with their daughters, in the questionnaire survey the men tended to report spending more time with their daughters than the girls reported spending with their fathers. Although fathers' and daughters' responses to the four questions about fathers' direct time engagement were highly correlated (according to Pearson Correction test, the correlations are all significant at 0.01 level), the fathers still tended to report a higher figure than the girls (see table 7.4).

Although the question was not asked directly in the interview, there was little evidence that the girls' minded their fathers not spending more time with them. When asked 'What would you most wish to change about your father if you could?' in four focus groups, none of the girls mentioned about spending more time together either. This was similar to findings from the UK discussed in Chapter 2, where adolescent children saw time at home alone without parents as a sign of independence and freedom (Lewis, Noden and Sarre, 2008).

The data from the questionnaire and interviews both give a general picture of the time girls spent with their mothers and fathers. Compared with fathers, mothers were more involved in girls' daily lives in each aspect, including spending time with them. When looked at closely, the data

showed that fathers and daughters still spent quite a lot of time together and more than half the father and girl respondents reported spending more than three hours a day together during weekdays, and at the weekends the time spent together increased. However, when we look at certain aspects of time together, such as meals, the picture is different. Many girls tended not to have breakfast either with their fathers (45.4%) or mothers (36.4%). In terms of having dinner together, the data from the questionnaire and interviews contrasted. In the questionnaire, around half of both the girls and the fathers reported having dinner together more than four times in the last week. However, in the interviews, fathers and daughters reported that they did not often have dinner together. In the interviews, both fathers and girls emphasized the reality that fathers were busy with work and thus did not have much time at home with their daughters. However, some of the fathers endeavoured to create more opportunities to have more interaction. In the following section I will examine the activities they share when they do manage to have some time together.

7.23 Shared activities and help with girls' studies

Among the 401 fathers who responded to the open-ended question in the questionnaire survey 'What do you like to do at home?', 34% answered 'relaxation and entertainment' and 28% liked to 'do housework'. The fact that a relatively large number of fathers enjoyed doing housework may echo the stereotypes of Shanghai man mentioned in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6. Reading and using the internet were also popular, with 13% and 8% respectively. Other things like chatting, own interests, doing exercise and helping their daughter with studying were mentioned less often. In the interviews, five fathers mentioned their interests, which were: reading the news online, going out, watching sports such as basketball matches, playing chess or ball games and playing cards or mah jong. These interests were all in the 'relaxation and entertainments' category, and were consistent with fathers' questionnaire responses. As many fathers associated their time at home with leisure, it indicated that many fathers saw 'home' mainly as a place to relax.

The girls in the interviews also talked about their own interests. Music, using the internet and drawing were the ones mentioned most often (each mentioned three times among seven girls). Apart from these, reading novels and watching cartoons were also mentioned twice.

Since girls and fathers were interested in different things, it raised the question of what fathers and daughters did when they were together. At the end of the fathers' questionnaire, fathers were invited to write freely about what they liked to do with their daughters. The activities mentioned

most were: chatting with their daughter (23.0%), enjoying entertainment like television together (20.6%), going out together (16.8%), doing exercise (14.7%) and helping with studies (7.8%). In the interview, both girls and fathers also talked about their shared interests. Two girls mentioned that they liked to do exercise and play games together. Another father talked about going to the shops together to buy music and then listen to it at home together.

In the interview, there were three pairs of fathers and daughters who admitted that they shared interests such as music, going out to take photos and writing Chinese calligraphy. Both girls and fathers thought it was the father who had an impact on the daughters' interests, rather than the other way around. Father Li described his daughter's interest in music as being influenced by him. He had been good at playing the violin when he was at university and he had insisted his daughter learned to play the piano. In another case, Girl Chen enjoyed going out with her father and taking photos since they shared the same interests.

However, sharing these interests was not always enjoyable. Father Li found it difficult to discuss music with his daughter. He admitted, 'We will have conflicts and what we like is different. We insist on our own views and tastes. When I say 'this is good', she will not agree with me. We have different opinions, thus it is difficult to discuss.' His daughter also agreed that they had different tastes, although they had similar interests. She was not willing to discuss their common interests either because she thought her father was not as good as her. Similarly, Girl Cai admitted that her interest in writing Chinese calligraphy was inherited from her father. It had been natural that writing became a common interest for both. However, she thought her father was not as good at it as she was. Thus, as she grew up, they discussed and shared their common interest less than before.

The fathers in my study showed tremendous interest in girls' educational achievement. As shown in table 5.1 in Chapter 5, 60.7% girls reported talking about study with their fathers. The open-ended question 'What's your wish for your daughter?' in the fathers' questionnaire survey again revealed fathers' high expectations of their daughters' academic achievement. Among 467 fathers who answered the question, 234 wrote wishes related to girls' academic achievement, such as going to university, getting a good result in the exam or improving her studies. Among them, 139 wanted their daughters to go to university or senior high school and 64 wished that their daughters would study hard. In the girls' questionnaire, girls reported similar interests to their fathers about their education. When girls were asked 'Is your father interested in your

study?', they answered: 27.3% 'a lot', 45.5% 'some', 21.2% 'little' and 3.9% 'not at all'. There was no statistically significant difference between the younger group and the older group, in terms of fathers' interest in their daughters' studies. (Linear-by-Linear Chi-square=.110, df=1, n=750, p=.741).

According to the questionnaire survey, 4.1% fathers had only been educated to primary school level, 25.9% had finished junior high school and 42.6% had attained their senior high school degree. Only 27.4% had been to college or university (n=591). The question of 'What does your daughter plan to do after she finish secondary school?' provided strong evidence of fathers' high aspirations for their daughters' education, in which 91.9% of fathers assumed that their daughters were planning to go to university. The fierce competition in Chinese society encouraged fathers to have high ambitions for their daughters. Father Chen vividly described the situation, 'The competition in the society is getting fiercer and fiercer. Shanghai is a city which is not only open to China, but also open to the whole world. She is not only facing the competition among Shanghai people, but the people from all over China and the world. For example, when there is a job available, she probably does not wish to take it because she is only given 1000RMB/month, but migrants will do it just for the sake of staying in Shanghai'. Fathers' ambition for their daughters' educational success is also influenced by their fathers' own experience of education as many missed the opportunity during Cultural Revolution. Father Chen revealed his own desire for more education, 'I sometimes will go to classes. When I was young, I was on the farm. Although I wanted to take the university entrance exam at that time, the farm did not allow me to go. Because once I passed the exam, I was able to leave the farm. There were also lots of limitations so I had no other choices but to stay on the farm'.

In regard to the actual help fathers had given their daughters, 17.7% said 'a lot of help', 61.2% 'some help' and 21.1% 'no help at all'. However, fathers from the younger group were reported to be more involved in helping their daughters with their studies, compared with the fathers from the older group (Linear-by-Linear Chi-square=11.166, df=1, n=755, p<.01): 21.6% of the younger girls reported their fathers helping them 'a lot', comparing to 11.9% of the older group (table 7.5). Overall, most fathers were reported to be relatively active in their girls' education. This was consistent with the article published in Yang Zi Newspaper, which showed that 20 to 25 percent of parents' leisure time was devoted to assisting their children with their studies (Huang, 1999).

Age Group	Help from fathers			total
	a lot	Some	not at all	
Younger (13-14)	21.6%	59.6%	18.8%	453
Older (16-17)	11.9%	63.6%	24.5%	302
Total	17.7%	61.2%	21.1%	755

Table 7.5: Comparing girls' responses to the question of 'Does your father help with your studies?' by the younger and older group

In the interviews, many fathers and daughters talked extensively about paternal involvement in girl's education. The father's role as helper was embodied in family practice as they assisted their daughter with her studies. Similar to the questionnaire responses, accounts given in the interviews by both girls and fathers revealed that fathers were more active in their daughters' academic lives when they were younger. None of the fathers with older girls reported coaching their daughters. However, many fathers reported being involved in their daughters' studies while they were at junior high school. The reasons varied: some fathers thought the girls had developed their learning skills and thus were able to study by themselves; some girls preferred not to ask their fathers for help and most significant of all was that, even though they were very keen, many fathers were not equipped to give help due to the limitations of their own education. For example, Father Chen who went to senior high school was limited by his own education and he helped less and less as his daughter grew up. As he said, 'When she was in primary school, quite often I helped her when she had questions. The help became less when she got to junior high school. Now she is in senior high school, and I am not able to help at all as what we learned was very different from what they are learning now. I will try to help her in other ways. For example, give her money to send her to after school tutorials. As long as she has needs in her study, I will try my best to meet her needs'.

It seems that the fathers' coaching activities were associated with their education levels, especially for the younger girls. Out of four pairs of father and daughter interviews from the younger group, three fathers only had a secondary school education. All three admitted that they did not coach their daughters. As Father Wang explained, 'It is impossible for me to coach you. Do you think I have finished my senior high school and I would know everything? Sometimes I don't know either. After all, I haven't done this for over ten or even twenty years. After all, you should rely on yourself. You can go to ask your teacher, or your classmates. Don't you come and expect me to answer your questions. That's impossible.' Father Mei (who only finished junior

high school) was also not confident about helping his daughter, admitting that he was not good at school when he was younger. This was consistent with the results from the questionnaire survey (table 7.6): according to the Linear-by-Linear Association, there is a strong association between fathers' own education and their help with girls' education (Linear-by-Linear Chi-square=29.935, df=1, n=582 p<0.001). These results are similar to a UK study of father' involvement in children's choices of higher education, which suggests that fathers who had no experience of higher education were less able to make a contribution other than providing general emotional support (Reay, David and Ball, 2005).

Father's level of education	Fathers' help with studies			
	a lot	a little	not at all	total
Primary school	16.7%	37.5%	45.8%	24
Junior high	10.6%	65.6%	23.8%	151
Senior high	18.1%	63.5%	18.5%	249
University or college	29.7%	61.4%	8.9%	158
Total	19.2%	62.4%	18.4%	582

Table 7.6: Comparing girls' responses to the question 'How much does your father help you with your studies?' with fathers' level of education.

The ways in which fathers helped their daughters' with their studies varied. Two fathers from the older group recalled times when their daughters were at junior high school. Father Li, who held a Masters degree said, 'Everything she needed, I would provide her. Any help that she hadn't thought of which I thought was necessary, I would still do it for her, whether she wanted it or not. Let me give you an example: I am very keen on her maths and I would buy her exercise books. Every time I bought one, I would buy two copies. I would give one copy to her to do first. When she was wrong, I would give her another copy to do. Or when she finished the first one, I would give her another copy to do it again.' He also showed me a picture of when he was coaching his daughter in mathematics. He seemed to be very proud that he was able to help. Another father, Father Chen, who held a senior high school degree, also helped his daughter with her studies. However, he was not as directly involved in the coaching. He helped to check whether his daughter could remember the English words she learned at school or was able to memorise the things the teacher required. Although he was not able to coach her once she was in senior high school, he occasionally checked her homework to see whether she had done it properly.

Both the questionnaire survey and the interviews revealed girls had certain freedoms to make

decisions about study-related decisions. Only 11.6% girls reported that their fathers made decisions for them about whether or not to go to after-class tuition. When it comes to study-related issues in general, 20.9% girls said their fathers made the decisions for them (n=729). When girls could not make up their minds, or faced important decisions about their studies or the future, they turned to their fathers for help. In the interviews, two girls gave the example of handing over decisions to their fathers. In Girl Chen's case, there was an opportunity to go to America as an exchange student during a summer holiday. Girl Chen implied she could go if she wanted to, however, she felt it was a serious issue and was not able to make up her mind. Girl Nina also faced a big decision when she was embarking on her final year in junior high school. As her parents were non-Shanghai householders, she could not take the entrance examination for university in Shanghai. She had to decide whether she should continue her education in Shanghai or go back to her hometown. She thought it would be better to let her father make the decision.

In conclusion, the fathers in the sample mainly saw home as a place to relax. Fathers reported enjoying doing many things together with their daughters, such as chatting, watching TV, going out together. However, there was evidence that many girls' interests, tastes and abilities were different from their fathers' and so their activities together were limited. Furthermore, the area which concerned fathers most of all, their daughters' academic achievement, was also limited by paternal ability. Although the questionnaire survey showed that fathers of girls in both the younger and older groups took an equally close interest in their daughters' education, both the interview and questionnaire data revealed that fathers with younger daughters were more involved in helping the girls' with their studies. This also varied according to the father's own level of education. Both the interview data and questionnaire data suggested that fathers' levels of education were highly associated with their involvement in their daughters' education. In the interviews, a few fathers also showed that there were different ways of helping although sometimes they were not qualified to coach. Instead of coaching their daughters' study, they found alternative ways to help.

7.3 Life course time: as girls grow up

It seems that girls in the older group spend less time with their fathers, compared with the girls in the younger group. There are statistically significant differences between the younger and older groups in the amount of time spent on many aspects of daily lives: weekdays, weekends and having breakfast with their fathers.

From table 7.7, we can see that, more girls from the younger than the older group spent over six hours a day with their fathers (23.6% vs. 15.6%) and fewer younger girls spent less than one hour than the older group (16.5% vs. 30.8%) during the weekdays (Linear-by-Linear association Chi-square=24.350 , df=1, n=756, p<0.001). There are also differences between the younger and older girls in time spent at weekends with fathers (Linear-by-Linear association Chi-square=9.828, df=1, n=756, p<0.01). The biggest differences lie among the girls who said they spent more than 6 hours with their fathers; 47.6% of the younger group spent over six hours with their fathers at weekends compared to 36.4% of the older one. The differences between younger girls and older girls were significant, in terms of having breakfast with fathers (Linear-by-linear association Chi-square=23.934, df=3, n=751, p<0.001). The girls from the older group reported that they had breakfast with their parents less often than the younger ones.

	Age groups	Time spent together with fathers				Total
		less than one hour	1-2 hours	3-5 hours	more than 6 hours	
Time spent last weekday	Younger	16.5%	23.6%	36.3%	23.6%	454
	older	30.8%	25.5%	28.1%	15.6%	302
Time spent last weekend	Younger	15.6%	13.7%	23.1%	47.6%	454
	older	21.2%	17.9%	24.5%	36.4%	302

Table 7.7 Girls' responses to the question of 'How many hours did you spend with your father in the last school day?' and 'How many hours do you spend with your father in the last Sunday?'

The evidence from the responses to the survey questions also suggests that the girls from the older group had slightly less communication with their fathers, compared with the younger group. Many of the fathers of the older daughters were reported to have praised them less often (Linear-by-Linear Chi-square=7.345, n=747, df=1, p<0.01) and criticized them less (Linear-by-Linear Chi-square=6.052, n=745, df=1, p<0.05), compared with the fathers of the younger girls.

One can argue that as fathers spend less time with their daughters as the girls grow up, the amount of communication between them may also be reduced. However, the actual results were more complicated and seemed to contradict each other. In the interviews, the fathers were able to explain the complications in communicating with their daughters, especially the changes as the girls grew up. As Father Li explained in the interview, he was having less verbal interaction with his daughter as she grew up. Instead of verbal communication, they used more non-confrontational communication (Xia, 2005). Father Li thought his daughter was old enough to understand him without communicating in words, and said 'Because she is grown up now and

she understands things, thus you don't need to say that much to her. For her it is the same, she should understand my feelings, without saying much. Like this, actually the relationship is closer in minds, but there are less and less verbal interactions'. His idea was consistent with Jamieson (1999) who suggested that good relationships between parents and children did not necessarily involve disclosure; they could be achieved by actions rather than words. Indeed, Jamieson sees not saying too much and giving the adolescent space as beneficial: 'a good relationship between some parents and their growing-up children requires increasing silence on the part of the parents rather than intense dialogue of mutual disclosure' (1999, p. 489). One daughter also wrote similar comments at the end of the questionnaire, 'Fathers and daughters do not need many words to communicate, sometimes a tiny action you can feel the love from the father'. One father wrote, 'As a father, he should have a loving heart for her daughter, but he should not display it. He should hide deeply in the heart, he should have the authority as a father.' In this vein, silence could be another form of care and fathers and daughters can feel the intimacy without verbal communication with each other.

Father Li also revealed his own expectations of how much communication they should have once his daughter reached adolescence. He did not expect to know the details of his daughter's daily life, just to know that his daughter was healthy and safe is enough. As he reasoned, 'It depends on what period. In this period when she is in senior high school, I just say 'hi' to her when she was back from school. Oh, she was studying and she knew that I am back. I also know that she is healthy and everything else was fine. That's enough.'

However, Father Li was ambivalent, 'I will say we do not understand as well as before. But the actual change is that, I can say that we have less verbal communication. She talked less with us. It seems that she has grown up'. Although he wished that he was 'closer in mind' with his daughter by communicating in a non-confrontational way, he realized that they talked with each other less often as she grew up. The lack of direct communication ran the risk of translating to lack of closeness. Father Li's feeling of closeness to his daughter did not mean that his daughter felt the same. In fact, his daughter reported that she did not think they were close. Non-confrontational communication, from his daughter's perspective reflected her unwillingness to communicate, which was in contrast to what her father wished.

In summary, the questionnaire results reflect the changes as girls grow up. The older girls tend to spend less time with their fathers, both at weekdays and weekends. The communication between

fathers and daughters not only decreases in amount, but also it appears to be more ambiguous. There is one case where the father understood the non-confrontational communication as a sign of deep understanding of each other. However, the father may not know what his daughter think.

7.4 Generational time: communication between fathers and daughters

In China, being an only child seems to have two contrasting effects in terms of inter-generational relations. On the one hand, only children are more likely to be friends with their parents and to appreciate their companionship, as discussed in Chapter 6. On the other, there is always tension between the two generations (see Chapter 6) since they were brought up in two very different historical periods and had very different social backgrounds (see Chapter 4). Therefore, there is also a gap between the traditional Chinese masculine identity and the new 'like friends' parents in the father-daughter gender dyad, as discussed in Chapter 1. In this section the discussion will therefore revolve around 'generation time', with a focus on fathers' and daughters' communication with each other.

However, various factors may constrain open communication between fathers and daughters in the Chinese context. Firstly, the idea of 'opening up' to others poses a challenge for many Chinese fathers who are influenced by a traditional stereotype of masculinity which advocates reserve. Furthermore, there is a power imbalance between parents and children, even though parents highly value emotional closeness with their children. In some cases, parents may use communication as a way to control or monitor their children (Williams, 2002). As a result, communication may reinforce the child's subordinate position. Therefore, many children may find seeking equality and openness with their parents difficult. On the one hand, adolescents wish to be treated as 'friends'. On the other, parents still wish to keep their authority and this inevitably conflicts with their wish to be close to and open with their children.

Among 435 fathers who filled in the question of 'As a father, what have you done the best?', 143 fathers mentioned that they communicated with their daughters well. However, 117 fathers among the 434 respondents to the question 'as a father, what have you not done enough?' said they did not communicate with their daughters well. It seems that some fathers were very proud that they could communicate well with their daughters, while some were struggling. In the following sections, the discussion will cover the communication that fathers and daughters find enjoyable and what they find difficult. In order to fully understand interaction between fathers and daughters in terms of communication, the subsequent analysis will explore the following

themes: how much ‘mutual’ communication they report; what enables the girls to share their thoughts with their fathers; and in what circumstances the girls close down communication. The generation gap and gender differences emerge as central factors that shape the nature of father-daughter communication.

7.41 Pure relationship? Mutual understanding between fathers and daughters

‘When I was little, my dad was able to observe the whole process of me growing up. But my father’s life before I was born is empty for me. Sometimes I will go and ask grandma, sometime I will ask him. It [my understanding of his life] is scattered around tiny things. But he is watching me the whole life.’

[Girl Chen, older group, father went to senior high school, worked as an officer in a foreign trading company]

Just over half of the girls show strong interest in their fathers’ lives, especially about when their fathers were young: 53.4% (n=726) reported in the questionnaire that they ‘wanted to know very much’ about the stories of when their fathers were young; 27.4% were ‘a little bit interested’ and only 11.7% girls were ‘not very interested’. However, despite this keen interest, very few - 7.4% - of girls reported that they did know stories about their fathers’ when they were young. This curiosity about their fathers’ lives also applied to other aspects. For example, many girls reported that they ‘want to know very much’ or were ‘a bit interested’ in their father’s hobbies (69.2%, n=725), work (51.7%, n=722), dreams (76.9%, n=724), and expectations of them (72.6%).

	0 times	Less than 2 times	2-3 times	More than three times	Total
How often did you talk with your daughter about your life in the last month?	39.1%	29.6%	19.7%	11.6%	588
How often did you talk with your daughter about your dreams in the last month?	39.8%	33.6%	16.6%	9.9%	583
How often did you talk with your daughter about your concerns about life in the last month?	56.6%	27.7%	11.1%	4.7%	578

Table 7.8: Fathers’ responses to three questions concerning their communication with their daughters in the last month.

However, only a small proportion of fathers reported that they talked about their lives, their dreams and their concerns with their daughters (table 7.8). Many fathers reported that they did

not talk at all about any of these matters with their daughters (39%, 40%, 57%). This raises some interesting questions about why fathers, who appear to want more and closer communication with their daughters, and why daughters, who want to know more about their fathers, do not communicate more. It seems there is little support here for Giddens's 'pure relationship' in terms of mutual disclosure between parents and children.

In the interviews, the fathers were not asked directly about disclosure of their personal lives to their daughters. However, not a single father mentioned aspects of their own lives they had discussed with their daughters; they all focused on how their daughters should disclose to them, but not the other way around. Although many girls knew their parents were poor when they were growing up, not many fathers talked about the times they went through. Recent history has been ignored in most parts of the school curriculum. As Father Li admitted, it was one of the aspects of her education in which he was involved the least. He assumed that his daughter would not understand this. Father Li also suggested that wishing his daughter to enjoy her current wealthy lifestyle has discouraged him from talking about these times. Father Mei discussed below in 7.43 admitted that he thought it was not necessary to talk about his work and his life with his daughter although his daughter was trying to know more about these. Similarly, Father Cai went through a lot in his life. However, he admitted, 'We do not talk about these things together, I do not want to give her the pressure'. The lack of communication on this subject could increase the chances of misunderstanding between fathers and daughters.

Surprisingly, fathers' responses to the question 'How well do you think your daughter knows you?' showed that most fathers thought their daughters knew them 'very well' (37.7%) or 'quite well' (53.2%). Only 8.2% of fathers thought their daughters knew them 'not very well' and 0.9% 'not at all'. There was a difference between the two age groups however. The fathers of the younger group thought their daughters knew them better than the fathers of the older group (Linear-by-Linear Association Chi-square= 6.450, df=1, n=571, p<0.05): 47.7% of fathers of the younger group thought their daughters knew them 'quite well' and 42.9% thought they knew them 'very well'. Meanwhile, although 62.2% of the fathers of the older group thought their daughters knew them 'quite well', only 29.0% thought they knew them 'very well'. However fathers seemed to think they knew their daughters better than their daughters knew them. In answer to the question 'How well do you think you know your daughter?', 47.3% thought they knew their daughters 'very well' and 43.8% thought they knew their daughters 'quite well'. Only 7.9% responded 'not well' and 1% 'not at all'.

When we look into fathers' knowledge of different issues in their daughters' lives in two multiple choices questions (I know well and I don't know well), 75.8% of fathers thought that they knew well about their daughters' studies, 69.8% about their hobbies and 53.6% thought they had a good knowledge of their daughters' social lives after school. In addition, 48.4% of the fathers thought they had a good knowledge of their daughters' career aspirations. However, fewer fathers knew about their daughter's life at school and their worries, with 38.1% and 39.0% respectively reporting a 'good understanding' of these areas. There were no differences between fathers of the two different age groups in the above questions.

However, although most girls thought their fathers knew them very well or quite well, overall the girls' belief in the extent of their fathers' knowledge of them was significantly lower in comparison to the fathers (Linear-by-Linear Association Chi-square= 66.582, df=1, n=574, $p<0.001$). Only 19.6% thought their father knew them 'very well' and 51.8% thought he knew them 'quite well'. Meanwhile 20.9% thought their father knew them 'not well' and 7.7% that he knew them 'not at all'(n=755).

In conclusion, only a minority of fathers (37.7%) and daughters (19.6%) thought the other knew them very well. This is easily explained by a lack of mutual disclosure. Very few fathers reported disclosures about themselves, despite the girls showing a strong interest in their fathers' lives, which suggests little evidence of mutuality in fathers and daughters' communication. Given that Chinese culture has traditionally been characterised by non-confrontational communication, the lack of strong evidence of communication is unsurprising. Non-confrontational communication 'is evident among family members, not only to preserve an individual's dignity, but also to protect family harmony and family ties' (Xia, 2005, p. 102). In the fathers' case this may be a result of them modelling themselves on their own fathers, and in this context it is actually more surprising that 90.9% of them thought their daughters knew them 'very well' or 'quite well', despite the lack of direct communication between them. Perhaps by being together and living under the same roof fathers assumed that the girls gained a good understanding of their lives.

7.42 Opening up: factors that increase girls' openness

Although fathers rarely talked about their own lives, girls talked with their fathers about many aspects of their own lives. As shown in Chapter 5, 60.7%, 55.0% and 47.6% of girls reported that they talked with their fathers about study, future jobs and hobbies respectively (see Table 5.1). In the interviews, both fathers and daughters also reported the kinds of topics they talked

about with each other. Seven pairs of fathers and daughters reported that they talked about the girls' studies. Five pairs of fathers and daughters reported talking about the girls' lives at school. Another two girls also reported in the interviews that their fathers talked about their work. One father reported in the interview that they talked about society and news generally.

As discussed in the previous section, fathers were found to have high expectations of girls' educational achievement but their own lack of education sometimes restricted their involvement, especially in terms of coaching. When this is the case, just talking with their daughters about school and study may provide an alternative opportunity for fathers to influence them to study harder.

Of course, as genuine discussions about education require participation by both sides, so the girls' willingness to respond to their fathers' desire to talk about it are also crucial. This raises the question of how girls reacted to their fathers' high expectations of, and focus on, academic achievement. Among seven pairs who talked about their education-related communication in the interview, two girls (Girl Wang and Girl Zhan) and two fathers (Father Shen, Father Chen) reported that they talked about study-related issues and all saw this as a positive interaction between them. Two girls in the interviews said they appreciated the communication with their fathers about studying. For example, in Girl Wang's case, although her father worked in a restaurant and often came back home very late, he took every chance to emphasise the importance of studying.

Sharing similar views and attitudes made it easier for both sides to be open with each other. In Girl Zhan's case, sharing similar views about the Chinese education system with her father encouraged Girl Zhan to talk more with him about her studies. This served as emotional support for Girl Zhan as she sometimes did not want to finish her homework. Her father empathised and tried to relieve the pressure on her by complaining about the Chinese education system. The support from her father may be the main reason why she liked discussing study-related issues. Similarly, Father Shen understood the pressure that his daughter was under as he said, 'The kind of study they experience is indeed more tiring than our time. They normally get up at six o'clock with only a few hours' sleep. They are only kids but they do not have joy but only pain. Especially for the kids in senior high school, they will also be blamed for not doing homework properly. Again, their parents will beat them if they have bad exam results'. He did not push too hard on his daughter and this also encouraged his daughter to be open with him.

The two fathers (Father Shen, Father Chen) who reported discussing study both chose 'driving time', when they were taking their daughters to and from school, as the primary opportunity to discuss school life and studying. This was because they had relatively few other chances to be alone with them in a private space. A further reason may be because the fathers who picked their daughters up from school saw schooling as very important and so took every opportunity to stress its importance. Another may be that the activity itself relates to school and studies; therefore it is quite natural to talk about studying at these times.

The two fathers who drove their daughters to school also discussed their daughters' school lives in general. Girl Shen was very open about her wider school life, such as being a member of the student union and relationships with other classmates. Her father talked in detail about how his daughter came to talk with him when she was confused and needed his advice. He also emphasized that he shared his own experiences but left it up to her to decide what to do. The mutual disclosure prompted intimate discussion between father and a daughter which was not mentioned by other interviewees. In addition, the respect that Father Shen showed for his daughter's opinions was much appreciated by her.

Another factor that may contribute to the degree of communication between fathers and daughters may be personality. Girl Chen seemed to have a deep need to disclose everything about her school life, explaining: 'I will tell them everything [school life]. Otherwise, I will feel so bad. For example, I will say what I have done at school. I need to let it all out to them. If I have a bad relationship with some classmates, I will feel so sad if I don't speak out. So I need to let it out.'

It seems that fathers' attitudes towards their own responsibilities are also important. Father Zhan thought it was his responsibility to help when his daughter was not happy. He thought he always ought to do something to solve her problem. Thus, he tried his best to find ways to coax her to talk to him. At the beginning, his daughter was unwilling to talk and tended to write things down in her diaries. However, Father Zhan sought advice from a psychological consultant and learned to talk to his daughter about things that she was interested in but not to interfere in her life too much. By listening to his daughter, he learned to be open and this prompted his daughter to start talking about personal things with him.

To sum up, most fathers and daughters' communication focused on girls' studies and school lives because fathers saw education as crucial. When fathers thought it was their job to help and talk with their daughters, they made a great effort and took every opportunity to do so, particularly with regard to education. Some girls appreciated their fathers' efforts and were willing to participate in the discussion, but several factors increased this willingness. Firstly, sharing similar views and attitudes about issues made them, perhaps unsurprisingly, easier to discuss. Secondly, some were more naturally inclined than others to be open and thirdly, fathers who were open themselves seemed to increase their daughters' willingness to communicate.

7.43 Closing down: so called communication

While, as shown in the last section, much time and activity with daughters was centred around girls' education, not all the respondents enjoyed this. In the interviews, three pairs of fathers and daughters (Li, Nina, Cai) admitted that although they talked about studies, they normally did not enjoy the experience, especially the girls. For example, in Girl Li's case the discussion was not open. Rather, it was one party talking and insisting that the other party accept their opinion. Clearly, Father Li was in a position where he controlled the whole conversation, which left very little room for his daughter to open up.

Q: Do you communicate with each other?

A: I listen to his talk, this is so called communication. This is what he thinks is communication.

Q: How often do you talk with each other?

A: When we can see each other. I normally lock the door. Before, I tried to bear this when he came in and interrupted me. He came in and interrupted what I was doing, just started endless talking.

Q: What does he talk to you about?

A: Study, study and study again.

[Girl Li, older group, father had a Masters degree, worked as manager in a trading company]

Girl Li clearly believes that her father was not trying to initiate a two-way conversation, but impose his views upon her. As a result, she chose to close down the communication either by not responding while pretending to listen or by locking the door. She further recorded what happened one day before the interview when her father came back from the parents' evening at school, 'He went to the parent evening and asked me to come out from my room. Just the moment I came out he started talking. While we were having dinner, he was talking. I finish all

the meal and he was still talking. I thought it was not very polite just go back to the room while he was still talking. So I started eating again, I finished two apples, and another fruit. I felt awful. It was not very healthy'. Girl Li went to one of the key schools for the most academically able students and in the interview she implied that she was very good at studying and knew how important it was to her life, so felt it was not necessary to talk about it all the time. For her father, studying was supposed to be an easy way to start a conversation but his pushing too hard, without granting her any freedom and equality in the interaction, resulted in her not giving any feedback.

Not all the fathers in my study were interested in their daughter's school life. In Girl Mei's case, her father interrupted her while she was talking about things which had happened at school and this made her feel that he did not respect her: 'He will then say, 'Don't tell me anything about your class. There are very few good students in your class. There is nothing to talk about. I don't want to listen'. I was trying to talk about something happy, but he will change the topic. I feel I wasn't respected at all'. Although one may understand why Father Mei was unwilling to listen, knowing that his daughter was hanging out with the 'bad students' at school, Father Mei's attitude towards his daughter was not helpful either. He was also unwilling to talk about his own working life with his daughter. He seemed to be very resentful that his daughter had made some comments about his life. It was evident here that Father Mei did not feel comfortable disclosing his own life to his daughter. This unwillingness to disclose may have stifled communication between them.

Different interests and values between the two generations were another reason why the communication was difficult. As Father Cai admitted, he found it difficult to find topics to talk about with his daughter. As with Girl Li, Girl Cai chose not to respond when the conversation did not interest her. As Father Cai described, '[we have] very little communication. If there is something, even if we asked her how the lunch was at school, she just answered very simply. How could you not remember what you just had for lunch?' It appeared to be that Girl Cai was unwilling to communicate with her parents. However, the reason may be because her parents asked too much or tried too hard to gain information from her. It was through not responding that she gained power and control from her parents.

Father Nina also found communication difficult. He complained that his daughter was not willing to open up when he wanted to know more about her studies. He further explained, 'Her

mum was always more protective. Of course, I love her dearly since we only have one child. But if a child is not afraid of her mum or dad, we shouldn't let her do whatever she wants. After all, she is a little girl, not a boy'. This narrative shows that gender played an important role in the way Father Nina treated his daughter and the way he communicated with her. More importantly, he seemed to think that his daughter should be less independent, simply because she was a girl. As Father Nina realised, his daughter tried to keep her bad news from reaching him because she knew he would probably scold her. He said, 'Normally I will go to talk to her, but she never comes to talk with me...And she only chooses the good news to tell me, never tells me the bad one. She knows that if she does not get a good result, I will tell her off...Instead, she will tell her mum. Sometimes she needs the parents' signature; she will take the good result to me. If it's a bad result, she won't let me sign for her.' To some degree, being strict with his daughter had pushed her away and his daughter sought help and support from her mother instead. In fact, Father Nina thought it was the mother who should take the main responsibility for his daughter's emotional and school life but he still complained about his daughter not opening up. In this his attitudes were somewhat contradictory.

Some parents and adolescents in my study found it difficult to communicate with each other. The reasons varied and included fathers having no interest in certain aspects of girls' lives or maintaining gendered views about what communication with girls should be like. However, the main obstacle seemed to be not having a more egalitarian, open attitude towards adolescents, combined with the fact that fathers still wished to retain authority and influence over their daughters.

7.5 Summary

In this chapter, the exploration of family practices has focussed on 'present time', which covers issues of girls' time spent together with their fathers; 'generational time', regarding the communication between daughters and fathers, and finally 'life course time', which is associated with different life course stages during girls' adolescence. These three timelines have been used as a way to understand fathers' and daughters' daily experiences and the possible changes across different generations and life course stages. It also helps to explore whether there is a divergence between fathers' own perception of fatherhood and the actual conduct of fathering.

In terms of 'present time', both fathers and girls were busy with their own lives: the fathers had long working hours and girls often spent most of their time studying, including formal school

learning and after-class tuition. In addition, fathers generally spent less time with their daughters than mothers at both weekdays and weekends.

Fathers were found to be highly involved in girls' studies, which suggests that fathers have a different focus on their children's lives from the mothers. Fathers showed a huge amount of interest in daughters' academic performance and they all had high aspirations for their daughters across both age groups. Although many fathers saw home as a place to relax, fathers' concern for their daughters' education and future career encouraged them to get more involved in girls' education and talk about it. Therefore, fathers' communication with their daughters mainly focused on education. Many fathers saw it as their responsibility to help and support their daughters, regardless of their own education. However, fathers of the younger group tended to help more with their studies because they were more capable of doing so. Fathers who held higher degrees such as college and university degrees tended to be more involved in helping girls' studies, such as coaching. Fathers who were not able to coach still tried to emphasize the importance of education, urging their daughters to study harder or helping daughters to make big decisions related to their education and future. Some girls appreciated this and some did not. There are many factors which can influence communication between fathers and daughters. Sharing similar attitudes about studies and education made it easy to communicate. In addition, the girls were also encouraged to communicate when their fathers made effort to spend time together and were willing to talk. However, not having an egalitarian and open attitude towards their adolescent daughters, combined with the fact that fathers still wished to retain authority and influence over their daughters, made it difficult for both sides to open up.

There are also fundamental differences between the younger and older girls in many aspects of everyday family life. Girls from the younger group spent more time with their fathers, both at weekdays and weekends. They also had more communication with their fathers. Many of the fathers of the older daughters were reported to praise them less often and criticized them less, compared with the fathers of the younger girls. The communication between fathers and daughters not only decreases in amount as girls grow up, it also appears to be more ambiguous, which may be summed as 'unspoken' communication or 'untold' closeness.

There was also very little evidence of a 'pure relationship' in terms of mutual communication between fathers and daughters in my study. Some girls wished that their fathers could be 'open' with them, by listening to them more and respecting their needs. However, there was little sign

of fathers' willingness to do this. In addition, the data were contradictory. Although there was little element of mutual disclosure in this relationship, they still reported knowing each other well. Most fathers thought their daughter knew them quite well. Furthermore, around half fathers reported knowing about girls' studies, hobbies, their wishes for their jobs. On the one hand, data from the questionnaire shows that fathers tended not to talk with their daughters about their own lives, regardless of girls' interests in them. Moreover, fathers in the interviews reasoned that they did not see it as important. However, the questionnaire data also show that both fathers and daughters reported they knew each other well. It would have been more valuable if the questionnaire survey had covered similar questions as posed in the interviews about what the girls thought they knew about their fathers.

In summary, family time is not all about positive experiences. It is a mixture of both positive and negative. When fathers shared similar views or experiences with their daughters, this was much appreciated by their daughters. By contrast, when fathers ignored their daughters' views and insisted on imposing their authority, the communication often closed down or caused conflict. Not having similar interests and views about things was an obstacle to communication. In addition, when fathers saw it as the mother's job to take care of girls' daily lives, they made less effort.

Chapter 8 Negotiations over potential conflicts

'To be honest, everyone has his/her own life, so please do not guan (control) me too much. I saw a very interesting article the other day. It was about how an American thought about Chinese parents. It said that Chinese parents were born for their children. I feel so deeply about this!'

[Girl Liu, younger group, father had a university degree and owned his own company]

8.1 Introduction

The Chinese word *guan* (管) is a culture-specific definition which means taking care of but also controlling, governing, monitoring and interfering (Chao, 1994; Wu, 1996). The word *guan* (管), vividly suggests the importance of parental authority as well as parental responsibility in Chinese family life (Chapter 1). One of the key aspects of the parent-child relationships in Chinese families is the expectation of reciprocity from children. As Chinese parents sacrifice whatever they can to care for their children, children are expected to obey and respect them in return (Xu *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, Chinese adolescents are reluctant to express disagreements with parents (Yau and Smetana, 1996) which may result in more implicit rather than explicit forms of negotiation. Last but not least, the boundaries between what is personal and what is not personal for Chinese adolescents is rather ambiguous due to Chinese people's idea of 'self' (Chapter 1).

The analysis of previous chapters has thrown light on some of the tensions that emerge between fathers and their daughters when the girls are growing up. As part of the developmental process, parents gradually have less and less control over their children. As girls grew up they increasingly demanded more autonomy and some no longer saw their fathers as heroes or absolute authority figures (see 6.12). However, such a significant shift in the balance of parental authority and adolescent autonomy does not happen overnight. It is a relatively slow process, in which both parents and children try to adapt to the new situation. In addition, there are many obstacles for girls: being financially dependent on their parents; fathers wishing to retain their parental authority, and fathers and daughters having different values and views. All these mean that girls have to negotiate with their fathers.

The focus of this chapter is the process of negotiation between fathers and their daughters regarding girls' personal lives. As discussed in Chapter 3, parents and children often have opposing goals. The parents were trying to get things under their control by employing new

ways of communication (Brannen, 1996), while the adolescents were seeking for more independence. In this situation, care is not only conveyed by affection but also through parental concern and even strictness. In return, adolescents are expected to reciprocate by complying. Therefore, 'implicit' or 'explicit' negotiation is often used by both sides to get their way. The data from this chapter will be mainly drawn from seventeen interviews of both fathers and daughters, with some additional data from the questionnaire survey. In this chapter I look at three areas of potential conflicts: going out and making friends, internet use and romantic relationships, and how girls and fathers manage these conflicts. The first two issues relate to adolescent girls' safety and are also seen by the fathers to affect their daughters' studies. Romantic relationships are something which fathers are particular concerned about.

8.2 Potential conflicts between fathers and daughters

When fathers insist on their authority and girls insist on their independence, conflict inevitably occurs. In some cases this leads to face-to-face arguments between the two. According to the questionnaire survey, 24.9%, 7.3% and 6.9% of girls reported having arguments with their fathers, 'once', '2-3 times' and 'more than 3 times' in the last week respectively. From the questionnaire survey, older girls were found to have slightly fewer arguments (Linear-by-Linear value=2.280, n=747, df=1, p<0.5).

Both fathers and daughters reported relatively few arguments with each other in the questionnaire survey. However, the interview data from both fathers and daughters revealed many conflicts between them. Six out of nine girls (four from the younger group and two from the older group) reported have arguments with their fathers. This is possibly due to differing perceptions of what counts as an argument. Another possibility is that on many occasions, when girls do not agree with their fathers, they either give up trying to get their own way or try to get it by covert means rather than openly arguing. The diversity of ways in which family conflicts present themselves means that multiple methods are required. Another factor may be a different sample in the questionnaire survey and the interviews.

Some girls no longer saw their fathers as authority figures and they began to fight to have their own way. As Girl Mei, who was from the younger group, admitted that she used to obey her father in everything. But now she started to argue with him. She became more aggressive as she described their arguments: 'If he has a row with me, I will fight back. So we just fight and fight. Sometimes, just for a word, for a tiny reason, then it becomes a huge fight'. However, some fathers react strongly to their daughters' rebellious behaviour. Although Girl Wang did not dare

to fight verbally with her father, staring at him angrily was also not acceptable. As Father Wang said, 'When she stares at me angrily, I will ask her, who do you think is older here? You or me? Of course it is me. I am your father! Should you stare at me like this? I am bringing up you, not you are taking care of me. You should be clear about this'.

Some older girls realized that often it was pointless to fight and they learned to use alternative strategies. In the interview, Girl Shen looked back to the times when she had had lots of arguments with her father, she concluded, 'It was the time when I was not very understanding.' She used to fight with her father about tiny things, such as being late for dinner. It made her cry a lot when she had arguments with him. However, in hindsight she thought it had been foolish to do that. As she put it, 'When I was in junior high school, I always had arguments with my dad. Mostly, it was nothing important to fight about. And then I would start crying. But I will not do it now. When I was in Year 1 in junior high school, I was still young but I got better when I was in Year 2. Anyway, I think it is pointless to cry all the time. My eyes were red and I thought it was meaningless. In the end, I calmed down.' As she grew up, she learned to adopt a more peaceful way to deal with conflicts: 'It is very rare that we have arguments now. It seems that we just don't argue. It is a kind of chat, talk in a reasonable and calm mood'. This may partly be because Girl Shen had become calmer and more reasonable as she got older, but a bigger factor seems to be that she learned that she would not always win, and so the argument was not worth the emotional distress.

The three girls in the interviews who reported having no arguments with their parents seemed to enjoy good communication and a relationship in which both sides tried to be fair to the other. As Girl Wang explained, 'We have a good relationship and we never fight with each other. I think he is very good to me and why should I argue with him? My dad never swears at me nor spans me. It is for my own sake when he is reasoning with me, why should I fight with him?' However, she also admitted that when she did get angry with her father, she would keep silent for a while and then let it go. By adjusting her attitude she managed to avoid arguments with her father and by being reasonable rather than heavy-handed, she managed to avoid the conflicts by trying to understand her father.

Family time is clearly not always a positive experience. Fathers' and daughters' memories of conflicts in their daily lives reveal another aspect of their family practices. According to the questionnaire survey, the majority of girls reported not having regular arguments with their

fathers. However, the interview data contradicts this. There were also differences between the younger and older girls, according to both interview and questionnaire data. Young girls tended to use a more direct way to deal with the conflicts, while the older girls chose to step back and keep silent. Whichever approach the girls adopted, it seems that fathers were still the ones who held the ultimate power, as the girls did not usually get what they wanted.

8.21 Negotiations over going out and making friends

Making friends and going out are two particular areas that caused concern to parents. Some girls reported that their fathers placed many restrictions on where and with whom their daughters could go out. None of the girl interviewees (I did not ask them directly) mentioned they were totally free to go out or socialize with friends.

Concern about girls choosing the wrong friends is one of the main reasons for parents restricting their daughters' friends. Parents normally preferred their daughters making friends with high achievers, as Girl Liu and Girl Zhan talked about their own experiences when asking for permission to go out (see Sun and Zhao (2005) for a similar finding). Father Nina confirmed this, 'It is normal to go out and play with your classmates. But the point is who you are playing with, good students or bad students. After all, you should go out with good students. We say 'one who mixes with vermilion will turn red, one who touches pitch shall be defiled therewith' (a Chinese old saying). Father Chen also recalled the times when he was worried about his daughter, 'Sometimes she came back very late. We were very worried and angry. At least she should tell us where she was... What I worry the most was that [she makes bad friends]. The society is full of all sorts of people. Sometimes she will not have the ability to tell the differences, especially the new things. And they are often very attractive. That is the time when people get into trouble'.

Safety is another concern. From fathers' point of view, being a girl meant being vulnerable. Therefore, more restrictions should be enforced to protect them. Father Wang thought being a girl meant more danger; therefore his daughter should be back home early. Similarly, Father Nina agreed that having a girl was more worrying than boys, 'If she was a boy, I would just let him go. You can let the boys be out all the time, and it does not matter. Even if they are fighting with each other, I will not get worried. What it can be worse? Maybe they are in a fight, or steal and rob something. But girls are different. If they get wrong just for one step, it will be a [disaster]. You just cannot imagine'.

The discussion of girls' going out and making friends throws light on some of the tensions that emerge between fathers and daughters. In addition, who girls referred to when talking about this specific issue revealed the degree of their fathers' involvement. When the girls talked about going out and making friends, they did not tend to distinguish between fathers and mothers. Often the girls used 'they' to refer to both mothers and fathers which is consistent with Allat Pat's study of young people (1996). None of the nine girls interviewed mentioned concealing information specifically from their fathers, but two girls specifically mentioned their mothers. Girl Zhan and Girl Liu talked about finding ways not to let their mothers know who they went out with or where they went to. Both girls were from families with high social-economic background.

None of the girls in my study reported lying to fathers, which was seen as morally wrong by Chinese adolescents. However, four girls reported concealing information from parents so that they could go out, all four from families with a high social-economic background. By not volunteering information, it avoided parental disappointment and intervention. The girls knew that if they asked their fathers for permission, the chance of rejection was high.

On the one hand, the fear of parental disapproval and punishment could encourage adolescents to conceal information from their parents (Darling *et al.*, 2006). On the other hand, knowing that parents would punish them could also encourage the girls to give in and confess to their parents. As Girl Shen and Girl Nina admitted, they had to tell their parents every time they went out, otherwise they would be punished or be in big trouble. This was particularly true when safety was concerned. Safety was one of the reasons parents restricted their children's activities. At the same time, safety was also one of the main reasons girls concealed their whereabouts from their parents. In the interview, Girl Shen explained, 'I must tell my parents. Firstly, I don't want to be shouted at when I come back. Also, it is to ensure them and let them know that I am safe in case there is anything happens'. She went on, 'My dad worried about my safety the most. It must be. I don't think my dad worries my study that much. Sometimes I will come back home late, he will call my mobile phone all the time, like this.' Girls tried to reciprocate parents' care by telling parents when they went out so that parents could stop getting worried.

However, they still had choices of when and how to conceal the information since they still wanted their own privacy and freedom. They could tell only when asked, and choose the details they wished to tell their parents. Girl Zhan and Girl Shen talked about how they managed to do

whatever they wanted to do and then reported it afterwards, or did whatever they planned to do by ignoring their parents. In addition, this daring approach of ‘just doing it’ without permission may be due to girls’ assumption that there would not be serious punishment or consequences. Girl Zhen described how she got away with it, ‘Normally they will not be against it. For example I want to go to Jing’an Temple with classmates. They will ask who I am going out with. Especially my mum, she will be thinking over, of course she was thinking whether the person is good at study, whether the person is morally good, can I go out together with her? After she had finished thinking, I just went back to my room. I just waited until that day, I just said ‘bye bye’ and left’.

Making the wrong kinds of friends and safety were the two main concerns for parents. Most parents did not want their daughters to be distracted from their studies by leisure activities. However, girls’ understanding of parents’ concerns about their safety and academic success did not stop them from going out. Some girls concealed the information from their parents and others just did what they wanted to do by giving late notice to their parents.

8.22 Use of the internet at home

The internet has become an essential part of young people’s lives but it has also become a problem for parents who want to control their children’s access (Chapter 2). Fathers’ views of the internet and how they controlled its use at home are examined here.

Both fathers and daughters talked extensively about how fathers controlled the use of the internet. All the girls wished to have internet access at home. However, among the nine girls interviewed, three girls, Girl Nina, Girl Wang and Girl Mei had no internet access at home [Girl Mei had internet access before she got addicted to the internet and her father stopped the access later on]. All three girls were from the younger group and all were from families with relatively low family resources. The other girls reported that they used the internet for many daily activities, looking at the news, chatting, reading novels and looking at cartoons. Sometimes, they also used the internet as a tool to study, to check things and to look at the notes that teachers posted online.

However, all the fathers who talked about the internet had negative views of it. They preferred to control their daughters’ use of it and thought that it was bad for them. Their reasons were: the internet could not be trusted; children could easily learn ‘bad things’ and, more importantly, would spend too much time on it, affecting their studies. As Father Cai understood, ‘As a general

rule, we do not allow her to use internet. This is not good. If you are thinking about playing games online all the time, your study will be ruined'. Father Wang explained why he did not agree to buy his daughter a computer, 'Why I don't buy her one? When she is using the internet, I don't know what kind of website she is looking at. I won't come and check her computer. I don't know things about the computer. How could I check her? I'll say the internet has everything inside, whatever you want. There is so much in it, how could I know what you are playing inside?... When you grow up, you know what you really need and you know things, I can buy you one.' Father's lesser knowledge of the internet might be another factor that influenced some of their views.

As a result, fathers used all possible ways to stop girls using the internet. Some fathers made rules about how much time and when the girls could use it. In Girl Chen's case, she could use the internet for around one hour at the weekend as a way to relax. In Girl Zhan's case, her father set a password on the computer so that she had to ask for permission every time she used the computer.

Not all fathers were so restrictive. However, they still monitored their daughters' activities occasionally to make sure they did not do anything bad. Father Chen checked the website his daughter had visited in the past two years, and he sometimes glanced at the website when his daughter was using the internet. He admitted, 'I have observed the website that she went on. It seems to be ok. She will get on the sites to look at some photos and clothes. She also looks at a lot about the celebrities. So I will pay attention to these things. But I do not interfere'. He wanted to reassure himself that everything was fine. Although he did not set any obvious limitations on internet use, he was not totally at ease.

Father Li thought learning new technology was good for his daughter's development and therefore did not set any rules at the beginning. However, his daughter's exam results declined dramatically after spending long hours on the internet. He started to restrict her internet use after that, reasoning that studying was more important and anything that distracted his daughter from that should be abandoned.

Fathers' firm attitudes and control of the internet did not seem to stop the girls using every possible opportunity to use the internet. Two girls from the older group [Girl Li and Girl Cai] talked about how they secretly used the internet while their parents were not at home. From

Father Li's interview it was clear that he actually was aware of his daughter's behavior: 'Once I came back, as soon as she heard the knock on the door and my footsteps, she then turned off the computer and left'.

Fathers, especially fathers who had younger daughters, saw the internet as a threat rather than a useful tool for learning. Father Wang and Father Nina mentioned refusing to buy computers for their daughters. For girls who had a computer at home, fathers tried different ways to make sure that their daughters used the internet 'properly'; making rules about how long they could spend online, setting a password or monitoring the internet activities occasionally. However, some girls reported secretly using the internet while their parents were not at home.

8.23 Negotiations over and fathers' attempts to control romantic relationships

The issue of romantic relationships is one of the most sensitive areas that concern both adolescents and their parents. Most girls were aware of their fathers' disapproval of having romantic relationships during adolescence. Among the nine girls interviewed, eight thought their fathers were against the idea of having boyfriends. They reported their fathers giving different reasons for this: their daughters were too young to fall in love; it would have some negative impact on their studies; it would bring family dishonor and that girls were more vulnerable when they were in the relationships compared with boys. Most girls shared similar attitudes as those of their fathers, thinking that during secondary school was not the right time to start a romantic relationship (see chapter 5).

Among the eight fathers interviewed, five fathers expressed strongly their opposition to their daughters having romantic relationships while they were in secondary schools. No matter whether they were in senior schools or junior high schools, having romantic relationship were just not allowed. Father Cai responded very strongly when asked about his attitude to the idea of his daughter having a boyfriend at this stage in her life, listing several reasons why it was not a good idea:

A: We will surely be against it. You should study while you are a student, if you TAN PENG YOU [translates directly as 'chat with friends', but means to have a boyfriend], you will have no future. Am I right? What's more, now it is impossible. Even if you have a good relationship, this is not true love. Not at all. It is waste of time and will ruin your study. There is no point. We are against it. You haven't got to the right time, you can do it when you are 23, or 24. This is allowed. But when you are studying, there is no way.

[Father Cai, university degree, worked as a civil servant, daughter in the older group]

Three fathers also connected their responsibility for their daughters' sexuality with the family reputation and possible shame. As Father Wang understood it, playing with boys was a dangerous thing that could end up with serious consequences for his daughter; girls would be shamed and girls' parents should be blamed if anything bad happened. Although he admitted that they lived in a much more open society now, at the same time it brought more risks for young girls. A more open society means more information and more chances for girls to go out and meet boys. However, for a girl to get pregnant would be seen as completely catastrophic for both the girl and her family. We can see from Father Wang's narrative his concern about being blamed by society as a bad parent.

'If she did it, how could we live in the same community anymore? What should I say to my friends? If people ask me, how should I answer? Selling the flat and move out? You are a girl, you should be particularly careful. In this society, it must not happen. It is not like our time. Nowadays, it is an open society. Once it is open, they know everything now. ...

The worst thing happen to me is that I will be condemned when I see people. But you did the shameful thing and it is your whole life, especially for girls. If boys made the mistake [make girl pregnant], it is an honour. It is very open now, still like this, very honoured. You, especially you are a girl, shameful, shameful for the whole life.'

[Father Wang, single father, senior high school degree, work in a restaurant, daughter aged 14]

There was little communication between fathers and daughters on this matter. Both sides preferred to keep a closed attitude to avoid talking about this issue which made the negotiation process very problematic, as fathers were against their daughters having boyfriends. In the interviews, five girls (Girl Chen, Girl Li, Girl Cai, Girl Liu, Girl Zhan) reported that they did not discuss romantic relationships with their fathers. Three girls (Girl Cai, Girl Shen, Girl Nina) also mentioned the difficulties that lay in communication about romantic relationships. The girls' emergence as sexual beings seems to have distanced them from their fathers, especially on this particular issue. Girl Cai described how embarrassed she felt when, while watching TV with her father, they saw an actress and actor embracing each other. Similarly, Girl Shen singled out certain 'things' she could not speak to her father about as she thought it would be embarrassing to talk with her father.

Similar to girls' response, fathers interviewed did not try to communicate with their daughters. Three fathers admitted that they never discussed romantic relationships with their daughters (Father Li, Father Cai and Father Nina). Five fathers mentioned that the topic had come up

somehow: two fathers (Father Chen and Father Zhan) reported that their daughters had asked them about their own romantic relationships and both fathers had told them their personal stories; Father Wang recalled that his daughter once asked the details of biological changes and how a baby was made after her biology lesson; Father Shen said his daughter would talk about his classmates' romantic relationships with him. For Father Mei, whose daughter once had a boyfriend, he had tried very hard to stop it.

Furthermore, the general lack of father-daughter communication about sexuality (except two fathers – Father Chen and Father Zhan) may also be due to the fathers' as well as their daughters' discomfort. Traditionally Chinese men do not feel comfortable talking openly about sexuality. In the interview, it was noticeable that most fathers used very subtle words when talking about romantic relationships. Rather than saying 'fall in love', they preferred to use the phrases 'have contacts with boys' (和男孩子接触), 'play with boys' (和男孩子一起玩), 'this thing' (这个东西), 'chat with friends' (谈朋友), 'between boys and girls' (男女之间), 'making friends with opposite sex' (异性交往) and 'things like making friends' (交友阿什么的). They tried to avoid any words directly describing romantic relationships. Only the father whose daughter had had relationships before used the phrase *lian ai* (fall in love). This was similar to an Australian study which indicates that difficulties of openness 'may rise because parents do not know the words to use or have other limitations and discomforts' (Kirkman, Rosenthal and Feldman, 2005, p. 60). On top of the discomfort that originated from the girls themselves, the fact that their fathers used very imprecise words to address this sensitive issue may signal their discomfort to their daughters and discourage them even further. The fathers' reticence also reflects their ambivalence about their daughters growing up and moving away from them physically and emotionally in the future.

On the other hand, having the right words or feeling comfortable enough to talk about romantic relationships may boost communication between parents and their children (Kirkman, Rosenthal and Feldman, 2005). Father Zhan, whose daughter in the older group reported that his daughter had asked about his own romantic relationships had a very relaxed attitude towards his daughter's romantic interests. He said, 'She was very interested in romantic relationships and she likes reading about it as well. Yesterday she was asking me about it. I felt very happy that she came to ask me about it. She asked how many relationships I had. And I honestly communicated with her. She also mentioned that at school there were a few students who were dating. But she felt her teachers and her mum were too sensitive about it. She thought it probably

was not what they thought. We talked about it. What love was about and what sort of relationship it was. I thought she could have a better understanding now'. Father Chen, another father in the interview reported being asked about his own romantic relationships before he got married by his daughter who is in the older group. Father Chen had mixed feelings about this, saying, 'Also she wanted to know about my other girlfriends before her mum, that her mother had told her of. This is strange, but also very normal'. His daughter joked with him about these previous girlfriends: 'So I will tell her most of the stories, but she is always very curious about this. She would talk about it and take the mickey out of me. Just like this.' Father Chen's case showed that the daughter's approach can influence the degree to which the father feels comfortable about the subject. As many Chinese men are not used to talking about such things, a humorous approach may help relieve their fathers' nerves and encourage communication. This is similar to a European study which found some fathers managed to ease their adolescent daughters' tension about growing up by adopting a jocular approach (Flaake, 2005).

Although there was an emerging need for fathers to be responsible for girls' sexual lives, fathers used different ways to deal with their daughters' desires for and curiosity about romantic relationships. Three fathers used force to prevent their daughters from having romantic relationships; two fathers tried to probe the girls' thoughts and activities by talking in a roundabout way. One father simply avoided the topic, signifying his refusal to discuss the matter and sending a strong signal of his opposition. Two fathers from better off families used the rare opportunity when asked by their daughters to talk about the issue.

Three girls reported that their fathers adopted a more forceful way to avoid their daughters having a romantic relationship. The girls imagined dire consequences if they did have a romantic relationship and their fathers found out. Girl Liu said that her father would forbid her from attending any local school and would move to a home far away. Both Girl Nina and Girl Wang in the younger group said that their father would 'kill her' if they ever had a boyfriend. This seemed like an exaggeration when they said it (and honour killings are very rare in China and not part of traditional culture) but it reveals the girls' worries about what would happen if they did cross this line regarding their fathers' wishes. It seemed that fathers' forceful attitudes had some impact on girls. Father Nina was very controlling making her avoid any social activities where boys were present. However, it did not always stop the girls having romantic relationships. Father Liu had strong opinions and his daughter hid from him the fact that she had a boyfriend. When Father Mei discovered that his daughter had a boyfriend, he stopped his daughter's access

to mobile phone and demanded her boyfriend to leave.

According to two girls, their fathers adopted indirect ways to find out what their daughters were up to. However, the methods they used did not seem to be effective since communication between them was difficult and the fathers were very sensitive about this topic. On one hand, they did not want to talk about it intensively. By not talking too much about it, they were trying to convince themselves that nothing was happening in their daughters' social lives. As Girl Cai complained, 'They [my parents] think while I am studying, I should totally focus on study. They think during this period, anything which is not related with study will not happen. Of course, there are things not related with my study [in my life]'. On the other hand, they wanted to be able to control the situation by confirming that their daughters had not attempted to date with boys. Thus, the conversation happened abruptly and finished suddenly. Girl Cai's parents once saw her classmate dating with a boy while they were having a walk together. Her father just threw her a very quick question which ended the conversation. As Girl Cai recalled 'He mentioned one sentence. He said, are you thinking of having a boyfriend?' As a result, Girl Cai tended to only talk about female classmates at home because she knew that her parents were sensitive about it.

Fathers' strong opposition to their daughters having romantic relationships may also contribute to the fact that they chose not to talk about sexuality with them. Father Li feared that the very mention of romantic relationships might make his daughter interested in romantic relationships. Therefore, he adopted an 'imaginary' strategy of not talking to her about romantic relationships, hoping that his daughter would then not even think about them.

Fathers' various ways of trying to control their daughters also caused another deeper problem, which was the girls feeling of not being trusted. Girl Nina thought her father did not trust her enough to let her choose her own way. She did not go out with friends if boys were included in order to avoid her father's disapproval. However, she had complicated feelings about this, as she explained, 'Sometimes I will think he is for me, really. But sometimes I think he doesn't trust me. I do really think that way. Sometimes I feel, I am your daughter, why don't you trust me? Who else you will trust then? But I will sometimes comfort myself by saying to myself, he is my dad, if I don't listen to him, who else would listen to him? Plus, he must do it for my own sake'. On one hand, she felt not trusted by her father because of his unreasonable request to have no contact with boys. On the other hand, she was trying to convince herself that what her father did

was to protect her.

In the interview sample, Girl Liu admitted to having a boyfriend at the time of the interview and she kept it secret from her parents. Another girl (Girl Mei) admitted that she had once had a boyfriend who she met through the internet. Her father had tried very hard to stop them meeting each other by confiscating her mobile phone and disconnecting the internet at home. However, she started to spend most of her time and daily allowance given on the internet cafés chatting with strangers online (she broke up with the boy for other reasons).

In short, issues relating to romantic relationships are problematic. Firstly, the majority of the fathers were not comfortable talking about romantic relationships; and they tended to use very imprecise words when talking in the interviews. For them, it was not a topic they could openly discuss with their daughters. For the fathers' generation, it may be they had received little information on this topic when they were growing up. For the girls' generation, although more information was available through the media and the internet, it was still an extremely sensitive area. Secondly, most fathers were strongly opposed to the idea of their daughters having boyfriends. As a result, fathers employed different ways to control the situation. Three fathers tended to use force, forbidding girls from getting involved and threatening them with serious consequences. Two fathers tended to use indirect ways to find out whether their daughters had such interests. One father chose to avoid the topic but wished his daughter would not think about having romantic relationships. Another two fathers of the older girls, both from better off families, were more relaxed and adopted open communication with their daughters. However, the case of the two girls who had or previously had boyfriends proved that if they really wanted to achieve some autonomy in this area it was possible to conduct relationships in secret or open defiance rather than try to negotiate with their parents.

8.3 Summary

In this chapter, the conflicts between fathers and their adolescent daughters are examined through the concept of negotiation. In traditional Chinese families, fathers were the authority figure and they were entitled to '*guan*' their children. Paternal care not only involved looking after their children, but also controlling them. Therefore, the power imbalance between fathers and their daughters still exists, even when the girls reach adolescence.

According to the questionnaire survey, the majority of girls reported not having regular

arguments with their fathers. However, the interview data contradicts this, indicating more conflicts between fathers and daughters. There were also differences between the younger and older girls, according to both the interview and questionnaire data. While younger girls tended to have more argument with their fathers, they also tended to use more direct ways to deal with the conflicts, whereas the older girls tried to avoid conflicts.

I then turned to looking at three areas of potential conflict: going out and making friends; internet use and romantic relationships. Fathers had different attitudes to how much freedom their adolescent daughters should be granted, which resulted in different negotiation processes between fathers and daughters.

In terms of making friends and going out, parents expressed concern for their daughters' safety and wished them to spend their time on studying. Fathers did not assert their power over their daughters by simply demanding they should not go out. As a result, some girls concealed information from their parents and others informed their parents about where they went after the event.

Internet use was also a matter of some conflict. Fathers tended to use both explicit and implicit forms of negotiation in relation to internet use. Because most fathers were not as computer literate as their daughters, the easiest ways for them to control internet use was either to set strict limits on when and for how long their daughters could go online, guard access with passwords or simply not provide a computer.

Fathers were also concerned that any increase in girls going out and internet use could also provoke their interest in romantic relationships. However, many fathers interviewed were not used to talking about romantic relationships, and could only use very subtle language and euphemisms to describe romantic relationships. Their awkwardness and reticence may have heightened their daughters' own feelings of discomfort and a feedback loop of mutual embarrassment may have arisen. Some fathers stated their disapproval of their daughters having romantic relationships openly. In addition, some avoided talking with their daughters about romantic relationships at all, partly in the hope that by not raising the issue they would not happen and partly because they were too embarrassed. Thus the fathers did not explicitly say their daughters could not have romantic relationships but neither did they speak directly about these matters. However their resolute silence on the matter made it abundantly clear to the girls

that romance was off-limits. When there was limited communication between them and a non-negotiable attitude to this matter, it was therefore difficult for girls to negotiate with fathers. What is more, most girls shared similar attitudes to those of their fathers, thinking that during secondary school was not the right time to start a romantic relationship.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

This thesis set out to understand father-daughter relationships in two groups of girls living in Shanghai. By comparing the two groups of adolescent girls, it analyses father-daughter relationships at two points in girls' life courses when they were growing up. This final chapter summarizes and concludes the thesis. First of all, I review the research rationale and aims, and how they are addressed through the findings. Secondly, I link the discussion of findings and theory to the particular context of contemporary China. The findings are examined in relationships to three theoretical and conceptual frameworks that informed the study: individualisation and collectivism; fathering and care; and family negotiations. Thirdly, I discuss the methodological contributions made in this study. The last section summarizes the limitations of this research and provides some suggestions for future research.

9.1 Rationale and aims in relation to the research findings

The thesis' contribution is to describe and map the patterns of the family lives of girls and their fathers at key points of historical change and in the life course of young people. In an effort to gain a comprehensive understanding of father-daughter relationships in the context of a changing Chinese society, both fathers' and daughters' perspectives were explored. Two groups of girls were chosen: the first aged thirteen to fourteen years old and the second aged sixteen to seventeen years old. Both age groups of girls were expecting to take the exam to move to school in one year's time, an important transition. Both quantitative and qualitative data were used in the data collection: focus groups, questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. The collection of different types of data helped to address both different and similar issues, and the data generated by each were used to complement each other.

In the context of understanding father daughter relationships at a particular life course phase, Chapter 5 examined girls' perspectives on being a teenager and a daughter. The findings suggest that growing up in contemporary Chinese society is similar in some respects to western society such as the attention girls place on their appearance and their desire for more independence. At the same time, adolescent girls' self identify are still strongly influenced by the Chinese culture which advocates obedience to parental authority. Most girls reported they were generally happy with their relationships with mothers and fathers. The survey data on the frequency of girls' arguments with their parents also suggested that most girls did not frequently argue with their parents. Furthermore, the focus group discussion of what defines a 'good' or 'bad' daughter

indicated that many girls saw being an obedient daughter as the important criterion for being a good daughter. However, the interview data suggest that many girls thought challenging authority was the norm for being an adolescent. Also, they start to pay more attention to their own appearance and wish to be fashionable. Girls' construction of their own identity seemed to be influenced by a traditional collectivism ideology; at the same time, they were trying hard to live according to their own wills.

Chapter 6 examined fathers' and girls' perspectives of being a father of adolescent girls. Fathers' own experiences of being fathered contrasted sharply with their own fathering. In addition, fathers had lived through a dramatic period of political reforms during which material resources were scarce and people's values of family life were very different from those of today's young people. Moreover, the fathers were brought up with other siblings and experienced strict parenting, making for a very different kind of formative experience from that of their daughters. As a result, these created generational differences between the two.

The questionnaire and interview data show the importance of both financial and emotional aspects of fatherhood. Many fathers in the interview expressed their wish to provide their families with the best they can offer and take pride in this. Having suffered themselves when they were young, their role as providers had a particular historical significance. Having only children who are growing up in a consumerist society also strengthened fathers' role as providers by meeting young people's increasing demands. At the same time, both the questionnaire and the interview data demonstrated that many fathers sought to be supportive of their daughters, and communicated with and cultivated them. This is consistent with Western studies which suggest that a father's role as breadwinner remains central to men's identities along with the increasing importance of the emotional connection with their children.

In Chapter 7 fathers' practices in relation to time spent with daughters, activities which they engaged in with daughters and communication patterns with their daughters were examined. Fathers with younger daughters seem to spend more time with them, which concurs with the Western evidence. In the survey, the younger girls were found to spend significantly more time with fathers both at weekdays and weekends, compared with older girls. In addition, fathers with younger daughters tended to praise them more and at the same time criticized them more than older girls. Similar to the Western studies, Shanghai fathers spent less time with their daughters, compared with the mothers. Moreover, time together with their daughters seems to be mostly

passive, although most fathers wish to be more supportive and do more things together. One of the reasons for spending little time together was that most fathers spend a huge amount of time at their work rather than with their family. There also existed many barriers between fathers and daughters: generational differences, power imbalance and gender differences. However, most fathers had very high expectations of their daughters' educational achievements and education became the main bridge between father-daughter interactions.

Chapter 8 looked at the process of negotiation between fathers and their daughters regarding girls' personal lives such as going out and making friends, use of internet and romantic relationships. The findings suggest that fathers were trying to take control of their daughter's lives through both implicit and explicit negotiations. They were concerned about their daughters' social activities and internet use for the following reasons: safety issues because of girls' gender, and the danger of them wasting too much time so that it could affect their studies. Fathers used different strategies to control their daughters such as making rules and guarding access to the internet. Meanwhile, girls tried to get their own way, such as concealing information from their parents, giving them late notice of their plans or doing things surreptitiously. As a consequence, some girls were able to get their own way and did whatever they wished to do. In terms of romantic relationships, fathers were strongly against their daughters' having romantic relationships but at the same time, they had little communication with their daughters on this topic. From both fathers' and daughter' narratives, it was clear that neither the fathers nor their daughters approved of having romantic relationships during adolescence. As both girls and their fathers did not feel comfortable to talk about this matter, the negotiation process became more complicated and was often not possible to achieve.

9.2 Theoretical contributions

As noted above the thesis' contribution is to describe and map the patterns of the family lives of girls and their fathers at key points of historical change and in the life course of young people. Its contribution to knowledge also rests on exploring the applicability of western theories about changing family practices and relationships in a different context. An overarching framework applied in the study was a time perspective which illuminated intergenerational relations between fathers and their daughters. It alerted attention to issues of the historical time in which each generation was raised. In addition a time perspective was used to explore everyday relations between fathers and daughters. Three sociological concepts were fruitful in the analysis of these Chinese data.

Firstly, the concepts of individualisation and collectivism proved useful sensitising concepts (Blumer, 1969). In exploring girls' constructions of female adolescence it appears that both the trend of individualisation and collectivism coexist within a fast changing Chinese society. Chinese girls' lives are more individualised in areas such as perceptions of adolescence and attitudes towards authority. However, they were under social pressure to dress in a certain ways and disapproved of romantic relationships. Their perceptions of good daughters also reinforce the importance of cultural and gender aspects of identity. For the fathers, although they are all under pressure to provide well for the family, many also tried to explore their identities as fathers who are emotionally involved as well as financially supportive.

Secondly, the concepts of 'fathering' and 'caring for' provided a useful tool to examine fathers' involvement in their daughter' lives. Fathers generally worked long hours and the daughters were busy with their own studies. As a result, little time was left for both to spend together. There was actually little evidence of the fathers shifting their priorities from work to family life and being involved in other aspects of their daughters' lives with the exception of one important domain, namely girls' academic life. Moreover, there existed many obstacles for fathers 'caring for' their daughters even though they said they were willing to spend more time with their daughters and communicate more. In particular, as only children the girls felt they had enough 'attention' from their parents.

Lastly, via the concept of family negotiations I examined the conflicts between fathers and daughters. This concept was particularly useful by applying notions of 'explicit' and 'implicit' negotiation, as both fathers and daughters often used different ways to deal with conflict. However, by looking at different issues of potential conflict separately, it appeared that negotiations were almost impossible where sensitive matters such as romantic relationships were concerned as most fathers and daughters do not communicate about this matter. However, this did not mean that fathers did not exercise their power over their daughters, or that daughters had given up their bid for more autonomy or freedom. The process of negotiation became more subtle and fathers found other ways to exercise their invisible power. These three theoretical issues will now be examined in more detail in relation to the data analysis.

9.21 Individualisation and collectivism

Many western scholars argue that people's lifestyles are more individualized, which allows for greater personal autonomy and the possibility of being less determined by gendered social norms

(Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1992). Some scholars researching Chinese society also advocate this view, arguing that there is a rise of the individual in modern Chinese society (Hansen and Svarverud, 2010). To some extent, the interview data illustrate that girls were trying to create their own identities. They not only challenged the negative stereotypes of adolescent girls but also saw challenging authority as acceptable. Moreover, they described themselves as fashion conscious (if not glamorous) in relation to dress.

However, Chinese girls' perceptions of being an adolescent girl and a good daughter from the focus group discussions seem to be at odds and present them with a dilemma. Individualisation seemed to be constrained by traditional gender stereotypes; the girls considered that 'good' daughters should be feminine and obedient. Despite the fact that this generation of young people desire the same brands as their counterparts in the West, and at the very least harbours thoughts and feelings that they consider rebellious, they still promote the idea that 'good girls' were those that conform to their parents' expectations. This raises the question of to what extent the influx of global culture has changed Chinese society. Moreover, the fashionable outlook of adolescent girls in modern Shanghai society is widely seen as a sign of them being liberal and free. However, some girls in the interviews confessed that they were under peer pressure to care about their appearance. Similar to this, all girls thought that having romantic relationships during secondary school was too soon despite the fact that many have emotional desires in relation to romantic relationships. Therefore, we cannot conclude that the new generation has totally abandoned traditional attitudes and that they are a modern generation which has emerged from globalization or completely opened itself to the West.

The data on family negotiations show that girls' concepts of self were halfway between the 'small' self and 'great' self as conceptualized in Chapter 1. The concept of the self in Chinese culture is normally defined in relation to others and it is defined in a hierarchy of relationships. For the girls, they wanted certain freedoms associated with the modern individualized self but saw the necessity to compromise their desires. On the one hand, they were concerned with maintaining family harmony and respecting their parents, as an aspect of the 'great' self, which was closely related to family and societal values. On the other, they wanted to make their own choices and to have certain freedoms, which reflect the independent 'small' self. This casts some doubt on the supposed distinction between individualized and collectivist orientations. Another example is how the girls positioned themselves when talking about themselves. When the girls talked about their own identities, some tried to distinguish themselves from others. For example,

Girl Li used 'they' to refer to adolescents nowadays and expressed her dissatisfaction about adolescents in general as she said, 'As one of the adolescents, I am not very impressed by them'. However, some still positioned themselves as 'the great self' rather than 'the small self'. For example, Girl Chen positioned herself as one of the 1990s generation as compared to the girls in the 1980s generation; she said 'I think we are better than my sister's generation, the 1980s and for example one classmate...'. This could be an indication of a collectivist orientation in Chinese girls' narrative.

Similar to girls' constructions of being a teenage girl in a highly globalized and rapidly changing nature of Shanghai society, fathers' constructions of what it means to be a good father are also influenced by its traditional aspects which emphasize the importance of providing for the family. However, the questionnaire data illustrate fathers' ability to explore their identity as a father as emotionally involved as well as financially supportive. In addition, many fathers were reported to help and communicate well with their daughters. The interview data reinforced the survey findings. While most fathers in the interview sample played the traditional masculine paternal role of taciturn moral guardian, two fathers in the interviews said they were able to talk with their daughters about sensitive topics such as romantic relationships.

In short, young Chinese girls' lives are more individualised in some domains than other areas, such as their perceptions of being adolescents and their attitudes to authority. However, we cannot say that adolescent girls are free to build their own 'biographies'. The adolescent girls are going through a process of seeking independence within a cultural context which emphasizes the importance of the 'great self' which is embedded in the hierarchy of parent-child relationships. Parents' continuing financial support for their daughters and the importance placed upon educational success together with a highly competitive education system are additional important factors which work against independence. As for the fathers, in their work and family domains they were under huge pressure to compete and keep up with the fast changing society. Having an only child who is a daughter also puts them under more pressure to bring her up well and 'in a rich way'. Therefore, the findings from this study suggest that the differences between these two concepts are often not clear cut and cannot be simply defined in an 'either/ or' way - as individualisation or collectivism. Rather the two trends coexist with each other in a complex and changing society (Weber, 2002; Weber, 1999). Such coexistence of different orientations should be looked at more closely when researching society that is experiencing complex and rapid change.

9.22 Fathering and ‘caring for’

The findings from this study point to the need not only to examine perspectives on and the conduct of family lives but also different sources of evidence. On the one hand, we can argue that fathers’ greater participation in childcare is in accordance with the popular images of ‘Shanghai man’. In the survey, both fathers and daughters reported that fathers can be actively involved in their daughters’ lives in different ways: ‘caring about’ their daughters, providing well for the family, supporting and helping when needed and communicating well. Both fathers and daughters also reported spending a lot of time together. On the other hand, the majority of fathers in the interviews admitted that they spent a large proportion of their time at work and thus little was left for the family. The questionnaire data on father’s working hours reflect this. We could therefore argue that father’s commitment to work suggests that many Chinese fathers prioritise their role as breadwinners. Although many fathers (and daughters) claimed to spend a large amount of time together and some made efforts such as driving daughters to school and tutorials, there was actually little evidence of the fathers shifting their priorities from work to family life and being involved in other aspects of their daughters’ lives with the exception of one important domain, namely girls’ academic life. Most fathers had high expectations of their daughter’s academic achievement and wanted their daughters to go to university which most fathers had never had the opportunity to do. Their high aspirations for their daughters’ education and future careers encouraged them to get more involved in girls’ education and to talk about it. Therefore, fathers’ communication with their daughters mainly focused on education. Many fathers saw it as their responsibility to help and support their daughters and fathers tried different ways to do so regardless of their own education. My study therefore serves as a basis for understanding fathers’ involvement with their daughters by looking at different perspectives and asking questions about different family practices. The evidence suggests that the actual conduct of fathering and family practices is complex. It is too simple to categorize fathers into either ‘highly involved’ or ‘not involved’. Fathers feel they are obligated to be involved in their daughters’ lives and at the same time, in their work they are also obliged to keep up with the fast changing society. The stretch at both ends created a dilemma for many working fathers.

Furthermore, the fact that fathers were mostly concentrated on girls’ education but not so much involved in other aspects of their daughters’ daily lives also suggests that fathers saw taking care of their daughters on a daily basis as the mother’s job. The popular image of the ‘involved’ fatherhood in the West and in big cities like Shanghai has not shifted the divisions between mothers and fathers in the family. Many fathers saw their main role as the ones who ‘care about’

their daughters and mothers are the ones who 'take care of' the children. The survey data reflect this, as the fathers in my study were more distant than mothers, spending less time and having fewer conversations with their daughters. This may also result from girls' growing up as many girls sought help from their mothers rather than fathers once they reached adolescence. The older girls tended to have less contact with fathers, compared with the younger group. In addition, as some fathers preferred the 'unspoken method' of communication, this may make 'caring for' even more difficult and invisible. Although many fathers wished to build an intimate relationship with their daughters, they were limited not only in the time they spent together, but, more importantly, in the things they could do together or for each other. Another interesting factor is that none of the girls in the interviews and focus groups expressed their wishes to spend more time together. This, again, may be a result of their process of seeking independence as they reached adolescence and of being only children who felt they had enough 'care' and 'attention' from adults. The girls no longer wished their fathers to be too 'involved'. In this regard, 'caring about' daughters can be easily achieved, but 'caring for' daughters was more difficult, since in adolescence girls desired greater independence from adults.

9.23 Family negotiations

The concept of family negotiation is useful in understanding how fathers and daughters dealt with situations where there were conflicts. As Finch (1989) suggests, family obligations are not rules to obey but are actively negotiated in particular relationships and situations. Family negotiations between fathers and daughters are often complicated. Moreover it is too simplistic to say that there is less adolescent autonomy in collectivist cultures, or that Chinese parents are more respected by their children. Fathers' attitudes to different activities that their daughters engaged in were different: they were less concerned about their daughters' going out and making friends; they interfered more in relation to internet use and were definitely against the idea of their daughters having romantic relationships.

Adolescent girls from a collectivist culture have a strong desire to do things they wished to do, as in the West. Some were able to get their own way because fathers could not assert their power over their daughters by simply demanding that they should not to go out or use the internet. For example, when fathers did not wish daughters to go out, they expressed their concern for their daughters' safety and commitment to studying. However, some girls partially disclosed information and some just went out without telling their parents. In terms of internet use, fathers

generally had a negative view of the internet. By using either implicit negotiations (such as occasionally checking the websites their daughters had logged on to) or explicit negotiations (such as limiting time on the internet), fathers tried to control their daughters' use of the internet. However, two girls admitted using the internet when their fathers were not at home. Two fathers from the younger group refused to buy computers for their daughters so that they did not have internet access at home at all. It seems that fathers' ways of exercising power had some impact on girls' behaviour and it did impose certain restrictions on their daughters.

The negotiations regarding romantic relationships were very different from issues of going out and internet use because the issue was non-negotiable on both sides. All the fathers were absolutely against their daughters having any kind of romantic relationship during adolescence. They rarely expressed this directly because they felt too embarrassed to talk about it but most of the girls interviewed were aware of their fathers' strong disapproval. As it happened, they typically shared similar attitudes, thinking that secondary school was not the right time to start a romantic relationship. However, the case of the two girls who did have or had had boyfriends proved that if they really wanted to achieve some autonomy in this area they could conduct their relationships in secret rather than try to negotiate parents' consent. Therefore although fathers' and daughters' values were generally aligned there was little mutual communication because the area was too sensitive and the values were non-negotiable.

In conclusion, the concept of negotiation is a useful one with which to explore how fathers and daughters deal with potential conflicts. The distinction between 'explicit' and 'implicit' negotiation is also beneficial to see how both fathers and daughters have used deal with the conflicts and how daughters get their own way in relation to going out and internet use. However, the lack of discussion or any possibility of compromise in the area of romantic relationships between Chinese fathers and their adolescent daughters suggests that these are areas which are non-negotiable. Parental authority was strongly retained in this sphere. Its non-negotiability may have been exacerbated by the gendered Chinese cultural inhibitions about expressing personal desires and emotions for both daughters and fathers.

9.3 Methodological contribution and further research

In this section I reflect on the methodological contribution and limitations that emerged from the empirical work. It is hoped that through my reflections on the empirical work in mainland China, more public debate on issues encountered while doing fieldwork in China can be encouraged.

The design consisted of focus groups, questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews and the data were collected from girls who were in their second year in either junior or senior high schools in Shanghai during 2008 and 2009. It was also collected from their fathers by asking the girls to take a questionnaire survey home for their fathers to complete and then return it to the schools.

My study has several notable limitations. In particular there were limitations in the sample. Firstly, in order to get a balanced sample of girls, I went to seventeen schools, including public and private, ordinary and key schools. Although I achieved a good response rate from both daughters and fathers, the sample underrepresented the students in private schools, who make up over 10% of the Shanghai student population but only 2% of my respondents.

Secondly, the interview sample was a sub-sample of the questionnaire survey and was subject to sample biases. Although 204 daughters and 98 fathers agreed to be interviewed and left their contact details on the information page, when I actually telephoned them I found that many fathers were no longer willing to participate. As my time in Shanghai was limited, I selected one father-daughter pair from each of the first nine schools that took part in the questionnaire survey (although in one pair the father subsequently did not take part and only his daughter was interviewed). However, among these eight intact pairs I did find a wide variety of family backgrounds and father-daughter relationships. For example, there was Girl Li, who was doing very well at school and her father, who had a masters degree and a job in senior management. They had a troubled relationship because the father tried to control her too much and she resented it. Then there was Father Mei, who was a factory worker who had lost his confidence as a father because his daughter was addicted to the internet and wanted to leave school. Meanwhile Father Wang, a single parent who worked in a restaurant and could not spend much time with her daughter, had high expectations for his daughter's education and a very close relationship with her.

Thirdly, family background was an important factor in understanding father-daughter relationships and needed careful examination. However, although the questionnaire survey asked about both fathers' and mothers' occupations and educational levels, it was difficult to identify different socio-economic backgrounds because many fathers' responses concerning their own occupations were vague. The Chinese classification for different occupations was not wholly developed as there have been many new occupations created since the Open Door Policy. In any

future study I would try to better distinguish socio-economic background by asking about salary range in addition to occupation and education.

Lastly, this study confined itself to Shanghai, one of the biggest cities in China. Although it is hoped that this study sheds some light on the dual wage earning nuclear families in large Chinese cities in the context of rapid social and economic change, one should always bear in mind that Shanghai is larger, more developed and more globalized than most cities in China and thus does not reflect China as a whole. Moreover, China is a multicultural society which has 56 major ethnic groups and there are huge variations among Chinese families, although the Confucian Han Chinese culture has been important for centuries (Shwalb *et al.*, 2010).

All these limitations needed to be borne in mind in interpreting the findings.

In terms of methodology, the study has two notable features which make it unusual in the Chinese social science context. First of all, the design employed three research methods, two of which (focus groups and semi-structured interviews) are rarely used in the Chinese context.

The four focus groups conducted as a pilot study helped gain basic insights into how girls saw father-daughter relationships in general and generated useful questions for the questionnaire survey and the interviews. Carrying out focus groups at the first stage of my research rather than other methods produced a large amount of information and interaction on a topic in a limited period of time (Morgan, 1996b). In addition, people are more creative and inspired when they communicate with each other (Laws *et al.*, 2003). It is true that in most of the focus groups, the girls were actively engaged in the discussion. The analysis of what it meant to be a good or a bad daughter and the differences between being a daughter or a son, were used to address girls' constructions of being a daughter in Chapter 5. However, one or two participants in each group were silent for most of the time. In anticipation of the ambiguity this would cause every participant in each focus group was given a blank sheet of paper so that they could make notes whenever they wanted and write down comments which they might not wish to make out loud. These were collected at the end and were very useful for analyzing participants' attitudes and perspectives, especially those of the quietest girls.

The questionnaire survey, which is a widely used method in China, was conducted in seventeen schools in Shanghai with two age groups of girls and their fathers. Using a questionnaire survey

was beneficial to my study because it collected a large amount of data by reaching a wider sample of the population and asking for fairly straightforward information (Oppenheim, 1992). The questionnaire focused on the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of father-daughter relationships and girls' lives at both school and home. The quantitative information on the amount of time girls and fathers spent together and their communication with each other provided evidence for fathers' involvement in their daughter's lives (Chapter 7). Furthermore, comparing two age groups of girls helped me understand the changes in father-daughter relationships at two points in girls' life courses. The qualitative data collected in the questionnaire survey also helped frame fathers' and daughters' constructions of fatherhood (Chapter 6). At the end of the questionnaire, I also invited all the questionnaire participants to comment on the design of the questionnaire survey, which turned out to be particularly useful (see 4.42). The problem of daughters filling in the questionnaire on their fathers' behalf is not unexpected in the Chinese context. However, in my study, it would have been difficult for me to reach the fathers without going via their daughters. Reflecting on the cultural factors related to this phenomenon is an important aspect of understanding the research process in a particular context.

The issue of some daughters filling in questionnaires on behalf of their fathers was problematic. There are a few statistical significances between fathers who filled in the questionnaires by themselves and the ones who did not. For example, it seems that girls whose fathers did not fill in the questionnaires were more likely to be unhappy with their lives in general and with their appearance, compared with the girls whose fathers filled in the questionnaires themselves. In addition, the fathers who did not fill in the questionnaires tended to work longer hours, compared with the fathers who filled in the questionnaire themselves. However since differences were found for only a minority of questions I decided to include the questionnaires completed by daughters on behalf of fathers. Another reason to include these questionnaires was because I was not able to contact each 'suspicious' participant that I identified to confirm whether my judgement was right. If I could do it again, I would emphasise more the importance of this issue when handing out the questionnaires and ask them to indicate on the questionnaires where the girls had completed them for their fathers. I would also pay more attention to the handwriting while I am entering the data, so that I could contact the participants in time to double check my judgement.

Compared to the questionnaire survey, which reached a large sample of girls and their fathers, the interview data consisted of seventeen individual interviews. This approach, which focused on meanings, beliefs and ongoing processes of family practices between fathers and daughters, explored girls' perceptions of being a daughter in Chapter 5, fathers' view of fatherhood in Chapter 6, and girls' negotiations about greater independence in Chapter 8. As the verbal interactions between the interviewer and interviewee have "the potential of providing rich and highly illuminating material" (Robson, 2002, p. 273), the interviews conducted with fathers and daughters provided a deep understanding of the complex relationships between fathers and daughters. Overall, the interview method was successful because it obtained a great deal of detailed information that the questionnaire survey could not provide, such as girls' views of growing up. However, on the issues of fathers' closeness to their daughters, how much they knew about their daughter's lives was difficult to probe. When I asked the girls 'Who do you feel closest to in your life now?' they did not seem to be willing or know how to answer the question. Similarly, when asking 'How much does your father know about your life?' in the interview, the girls did not know how to answer the questions, which seemed too vague for them.

Secondly, the study employed an approach which combines both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a rich, multi-dimensional account and so a fuller picture of father-daughter relationships than one method alone would have provided. This again was a major challenge and one that to my knowledge has been rarely attempted in research into Chinese families. The advantage of collecting different types of data enables the examination of research questions from different angles. In the analysis it is possible to examine how the different data 'mesh' together (Mason, 2006), or how from a mixed method perspective whether or not each analysis confirms, complements or contradicts the other analyses (Brannen, 2005; Brannen, 2007; Plano Clark *et al.*, 2008).

On the one hand, a mixed method approach can provide strong support for a conclusion if similar results are found by each method employed. For example, fathers' perception of fathering was explored in both the questionnaire and interview. Fathers were asked in the questionnaire 'As a father, what do you think you have done the best?' In the interview, a series of questions were asked, 'What is it like being a father? What are the happy things about being a father? What are the difficult things about being a father? Can you give a recent example of an occasion when it was difficult? What do you think is your responsibility as a father?' Both questionnaire and interview data suggest that fathers 'care about' their daughters very much and

wished to be supportive and helpful. However, they still saw their role as provider as very crucial and did not see 'taking care of' their daughters' daily lives as their roles.

In some cases, different research methods and types of data (questionnaires and interviews) proved complementary to each other. For example, to explore the question of 'What do fathers and daughters do together?', many questions in the questionnaire related to fathers' involvement in their daughters' education were asked, such as an open-ended question 'What do you like to do the most with your daughter at home?'. In the interview, 'What do you usually do with your daughter during the weekdays? What do you usually do with your daughter during the weekends? When was the last time you spent time together? Can you describe it?' were asked. The questionnaire data was more focused on both the overall picture of activities together and educational activities. While the interview looked at recent events that had happened and the description of them, it was hoped that in the interview fathers would give examples of how they were involved in their daughters' lives, which provided a different angle on the practice of fatherhood. When different data based on different methods are used to complement each other this enhances the analysis and provides a fuller picture of young people's and fathers' relationships.

In other parts of the analysis, the data were contradictory and in one case revealed new dimensions which shed light on the diversity of family life. For example, data on the frequencies of girls' arguments with their fathers based on the questionnaire data were not supported in the interviews. In the questionnaire survey, relatively few arguments were reported but in the interviews both fathers and daughters recalled having conflicts with each other more often. Dissonant data and challenging discrepancies leads the researcher to look more closely at the importance of the methods used and the framing of the questions posed to respondents. Similarly, the data on 'How much do fathers and daughters spend time together at home' shows discrepancies. The questionnaire data suggest fathers and daughters spent a great deal of time together but in the interviews most fathers and daughters claimed that they spent relatively little time. However, it is difficult to interpret the discrepancies and it is not necessarily appropriate to do so as the two samples are different, as are the methods used. The divergence may be caused by different perceptions of what counted as time together, with respondents perhaps including passive time together (for example being in the same room) when answering the survey. However another possibility could be the different ways in which the questions were asked or differences in the composition and size of the survey and interview samples.

There is still a great of research to be done on Chinese families. The study I carried out was located in one of the most affluent cities in China. Therefore in the future, I would like to compare families in urban areas with those in rural areas. In addition, following the publication of data that highlights the academic success of British Chinese secondary school students, especially girls (Office for National Statistics, 2006), I would be interested to compare children in mainland Chinese families with UK Chinese families to explore the ways in which culture influences academic performance. Parenting in mixed race families is another area that needs developing, especially parents from Chinese background. I am very interested in researching the family practices of couples who share different ethnic or cultural backgrounds and in investigating how they negotiate with each other, in terms of values and attitudes towards bringing up their children.

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Appendix 1: Class classification by Lu Xueyi

1. Government administrators/ managers 国家与社会管理者阶层
2. Senior business executives 经理人员阶层
3. Owner of private enterprises 私营企业主阶层 (private company employs more than eight people)
4. Professionals 专业技术人员阶层
5. Office workers 办事人员阶层
6. Small business 个体工商户阶层 (including self-employed)
7. Business/ service worker 商业、服务业员工阶层
8. Manufacturing workers 产业工人阶层
9. Agriculture workers 农业劳动者阶层
10. Unemployed 城乡无业、失业、半失业者阶层

Lu, X. (2002), *Dangdai Shehui Jieceng Yanjiu Baogao (Research report on contemporary China's Social Stratification)*. BeiJing: Social Science Academic Press

Appendix 2: Focus Group Schedule and questionnaire

Questions for focus group 1 :

1. As a daughter in a family, what words come into your mind in thinking about family life?
2. What does it mean to be a 'good' daughter or a 'bad' daughter?
3. What are your ideas about fathers?
4. What about ideas about typical /modern father? Which do you prefer? Why?
5. What do fathers generally do in the family?
6. What do father generally do with daughters of your age? Do fathers generally help daughters with their homework?
7. What kind of relationship do fathers have with their daughters? Do you think fathers and daughters talk with each other very often or not very often?
8. How much influence do you think fathers have on daughters? What sort of influence? How do you feel about it?
9. Do you think fathers and daughters relationship is special in a way? Why?
Do you think fathers and daughters relationship is different with fathers and sons relationship? How?
Do you think fathers and daughters relationship is different from mothers and daughters relationship? How?
10. If you could change anything about fathers, what would you change?

Questions for focus group 2 & 3&4:

1. As a daughter in a family, what words come into your mind in thinking about family life?
2. What about ideas about typical /modern father? Which do you prefer? Why?
3. What does it mean to be a 'good' daughter or a 'bad' daughter?
4. What do fathers generally do in the family?
5. What do father generally do with daughters of your age?
6. Do fathers generally help daughters with their homework? What kind of help do you think they should give? When you are making a big decision, do you think fathers have any influence on your decision? For example, going to schools.
7. What kind of relationship do fathers have with their daughters?
8. Do you think fathers are important in your life?
9. Do you think fathers sometimes control your life? How do you think they do this? How do fathers express their loves to their daughters?
10. Do you think fathers and daughters relationship is different from fathers and sons relationship? How?
Do you think fathers and daughters relationship is different from mothers and daughters relationship? How?
11. If you could change anything about fathers, what would you change?

Self-completion questionnaire

I am a PhD student studying at Institute of Education, University of London. I am very interested in family relations so I would appreciate it very much if you could spare a few minutes to fill in this questionnaire before we start the focus group. Please feel free to ask me if you have any comments. If you have any further enquiries, please contact: xuqiong1128@yahoo.com.cn

1. Who do you live with at home?

_____ ; _____ ; _____ ; _____ ; _____ ;

2. Does your mother have a job currently?

Yes No



3. If yes, what's your mother's job now?

4. Does your father have a job currently?

Yes No



5. If yes, what's your father's job now?

6. Which area do you live in?

City centre Inner city Suburbs

7. Is your home rented or owned?

Rented Owned

8. How do you describe the place you live in now with your family?

One-bedroom flat Two-bedroom flat Three-bedroom flat

Semi-detached house Detached House Other _____

9. How many residential properties do your parents own? _____

Appendix 3.1: Girls' questionnaire

Students' Questionnaire about Family Relations

Your views count!

Your action matters!

I am a PhD student studying at the Institute of Education, University of London. My research is about family relationships. I would appreciate it very much if you could spare some time to fill in this questionnaire. All the information you give will be treated as completely confidential and it will not be possible for anyone to identify you in the results of the study. If you have any further enquiries, please contact me. Thanks for your participation.

Email: qxu@ioe.ac.uk

Mobile: 0086-13916223842

Thanks again!

Qiong Xu

January 2008

You can keep this page for further enquiry.

Date:

School No.

ID No.

Girls' Questionnaire about Family Relations

Please answer all of the questions which apply by ticking **ONE** choice unless indicated choose all that apply, and leave the remainder blank. *For example:*

Are you a girl?

A. Yes B. No

Part One: Family Background

1. Who you live with at home?

Father Mother Grandma Grandma2 Grandpa1
 Grandpa2 Other _____

2. Does your mother have a job currently?

Yes No
↓

3. If yes, what's your mother's job now?

4. What's your mother's working time _____

5. Does your father have a job currently?

Yes No
↓

6. If yes, what's your father's job now? _____

7. What's your father's working time? _____

8. Which area do you live in?

City centre Inner city Suburbs

9. Is your home rented or owned?

Rented Owned

10. How do you describe the place you live in now with your family?

One-bedroom flat Two-bedroom flat Three-bedroom flat
 Semi-detached house Detached House Other _____

11. How many residential properties do your parents own? _____

12. Who accompanies you to go to the school most of the time?

Mother Father My friends None Other _____

13. Who accompanies you to go back home most of the time?

Mother Father My friends None Other _____

14. How do you come to school every day?

By bus By tube By taxi On foot Bicycle Other _____

Part Two: Social Life

A. About Myself

1. Please fill in the form with the activities that you usually do. You can also indicate the exact time below in the left row. (For example: Morning: 9:00-11:30 having class)

Time	Monday--Friday		Weekends	
	What are you doing?	With whom	What are you doing?	With whom
Early Mor ()				
Morning ()				
Noon ()				
Afternoon ()				
Late-Af ()				
Evening ()				

2. How much do you agree with the following statements? Please put one number on each statement.

Strongly		Generally		Strongly
Disagree		Agree		Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- I am very happy with my appearance.
- I am very happy with my life.
- I get along well with girls at school.
- I get along well with boys at school.
- I need to change a lot to improve myself.

B. My Educational Achievement

1. According to your educational achievement at school, in which group would you place yourself?

Below average student Average student Top student

2. How well do you think you are doing your studies?

Doing very well Doing average
 Not so well Going backwards a little

3. Are you generally happy at school?

Totally happy Very happy Generally happy Unhappy

4. Do you think you can achieve more in education in the near future?

Definitely Probably Definitely not Don't know

5. What do you plan to do after you graduate from secondary school?

Go to university Go for vocational training
 Go straight into work Other _____

6. What kind of university do you expect to go to after you finish the secondary school?

Top university nationally Top university in Shanghai Ordinary university

7. In terms of choosing different subjects in the university, which main subject will you choose?

Arts Science Not sure Other _____

8. Apart from teachers, who do you talk to about your studies?

Friends My mother My father Other _____

9. How much interest does your father show in your studies?

A lot Some A little Not at all

10. Does your father help you with your studies?

A lot A little Not at all

11. What do you want to do in the future? _____

What's your recent plan? _____

C. About My Future Work

1. Do you know what your father's job entails?

I know clearly I know roughly
 I know a little bit I don't know anything

2. Do you know what your mother's job entails?

I know clearly I know roughly
 I know a little bit I don't know anything

3. Have you ever talked to anyone about occupation at home?

Yes No
↓

4. Who have talked to about occupations in the past half-year? Please tick that all apply.

My friends My mother My father My teachers Other _____

5. Which of the following plans best describes what you will be doing after you have completed high school?

	I have a specific plan for what I will be doing.
	I am trying to decide between a couple of different plans.
	I am not sure what I will be doing, but I have started working on it.
	I don't know what I will be doing, but I am not worried about it now.
	I have no idea about it.

6. In terms of work, what is your ambition to be? _____

7. Do you think you will achieve your ambition?

Definitely Probably Probably not I don't know

8. In terms of work, do you think your father has any ambition for you?

	Yes, he would like me to be _____ (For example: An accountant).
	Yes, he would like me to do whatever I like.
	No, I am not clear about what my father expects me to do.
	No, I don't think my father has any expectations for me.

9. In terms of work, do you think your mother has any ambition for you?

	Yes, she would like me to be _____ (For example: An accountant).
	Yes, she would like me to do whatever I like.
	No, I am not clear about what my mother expect me to do.
	No, I don't think my mother has any expectations for me.

10. (Younger Group) Who do you think will give you help with choosing a high school, apart from your teachers? *Tick all that apply.*

(Older group) Who do you think will give you help with filling the form for the universities, apart from your teachers? *Tick all that apply.*

My friends My mother My father Other _____

D. Others

1. Have you ever been or do you currently go to the after-class clubs or private tutorials?

No Yes

2. At home, who is the one decide whether or not you should go to after-class clubs or private tutorials?

Myself My mother My father Other _____

3. Does your mother generally know where you go after class?

Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Not at all

4. Does your father generally know where you go after class?

Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Not at all

5. Who do you go to first to talk about particular topics?

Please tick all that apply in the table.

	My Studies	My Hobbies	My Future (what I would like to be)	Music	Emotional Problems
Mother					
Father					
Friends					

6. In the following situations, who do you think you will go to first to get help from?

Please tick all that apply in the table.

	Feeling Upset	Needing pocket money	Someone to take me somewhere	Relationships with the classmates	Doing exercises	Emotional problems
Mother						
Father						
Friends						

7. What usually happens when you need to make an important decision about education? (Tick all apply)

- I make it by myself I discuss it with my friends
 I discuss it with my mum I discuss it with my father
 My parents decide for me Other _____

Part Three: My Family

1. Who do you spend the most time with in your family?

My mother My father Other _____

2. Who do you get on with the best in your family?

My mother My father Other _____

3. Who do you talk with the most in your family?

My mother My father Other _____

4. How many hours did you spend together with your mother ***in the last school day?***

Less than 1 hour 1-2 hours 3-5 hours More than 6 hours

5. How many hours a day did you spend together with your mother ***last Sunday?***

Less than 1 hour 1-2 hours 3-5 hours More than 6 hours

6. How many hours did you spend together with your father ***in the last school day?***

Less than 1 hour 1-2 hours 3-5 hours More than 6 hours

7. How many hours a day did you spend together with your father ***last Sunday?***

Less than 1 hour 1-2 hours 3-5 hours More than 6 hours

8. How many times did you have breakfast with your father ***in the last week?***

none 1-2 times 3-4 times more than 4 times

9. How many times did you have breakfast with your mother ***in the last week?***

none 1-2 times 3-4 times more than 4 times

10. How many times did you have dinner with your father ***in the last week?***

none 1-2 times 3-4 times more than 4 times

11. How many times did you have dinner with your mother ***in the last week?***

none 1-2 times 3-4 times more than 4 times

12. How much do you enjoy the time spent with your mother?

Very much Generally Not much Not at all

13. How much do you enjoy the time spent with your father?

Very much Generally Not much Not at all

14. How often did your father praise you ***in the last week?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

15. How often did your father criticize you ***in the last week?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

16. How often did you have arguments with your father ***in the last week?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

17. How often did you have arguments with your mother ***in the last week?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

18. How well do you think your father knows you?

Very well Quite well Not well Not at all

19. How happy are you with the current relationship you have with your father?

Very happy Happy Unhappy Very unhappy

20. How close do you feel to your mother and father? Please put the number from 1 to 4 on each line.

Closeness	Very close	Close	Not very close	Not at all close
To mother				
To father				

21. Thinking about yourself how much do you agree with the following statements?

Please put one number on each statement.

Strongly

Strongly

Disagree

Agree

1

2

3

4

5

- I often have the same opinions as my father.
- My taste and preferences are usually the same as those of my father.
- Someday I will raise my own children just as my father has raised me.
- In the future, I want to adopt my father's way of living.
- I can learn a lot from my father.
- I have a good father.
- I am a good daughter.

22. What do you think your father has done the best as a father? _____

What do you think your father has not done well as a father? _____

Appendix 3.2: Fathers' questionnaire

Fathers' Questionnaire about Family Relations

Your views count!

Your action matters!

I am a PhD student studying at the Institute of Education, University of London. My research is about family relationships. I would appreciate it very much if you could spare some time to fill in this questionnaire. All the information you give will be treated as completely confidential and it will not be possible for anyone to identify you in the results of the study. If you have any further enquiries, please contact me. Thanks for your participation.

Email: xuqiong1128@yahoo.com.cn

Mobile: 0086-13916223842

Thanks again!

Qiong Xu

November 2008

You can keep this page for further enquiry.

Date:

School No.

ID No.

Fathers' Questionnaire about Family Relations

Please answer all of the questions which apply by ticking **ONE** choice **unless indicated choose all that apply**, and leave the remainder blank. *For example:*

Are you a father?

A. Yes

B. No

Part One: Family Background

1. Are you married?

Yes No, divorced Other _____

2. My date of birth: _____ My wife's date of birth _____

3. Year my daughter was born: _____ My age at that time: _____

4. Who do you live with at home?

My wife My daughter My parents Other _____

5. What is the highest level of education you've got?

Primary School Junior high School Senior high school

Bachelor Master Other _____

6. What is the highest level of education your wife has got?

Primary School Junior high School Senior high school

Bachelor Master Other _____

7. Do you have a job?

Yes No
↓

8. If yes, what's your job now? _____

9. What are your normal working hours? _____

10. When do you usually leave home for work? _____

11. When do you normally arrive home after work? _____

12. Does your wife work?

Yes No
↓

13. If yes, what's your wife's job now? _____

14. What are her normal working hours? _____

15. Which area do you live in?

City centre Inner city Suburbs

16. Is your home rented or owned?

Rented Owned

17. How do you describe the place you live in now with your family?

One-bedroom flat Two-bedroom flat Three-bedroom flat

Semi-detached house Detached house Other _____

18. How many residential properties do you own? _____

19. What do you think about your family economic status?

Above average Average Below average

Part Two: About My Daughter's Life

This part has questions about your daughter live. If there is anything that you do not know about your daughter's life, please use "x" to indicate the answers.

1. How close do you think your daughter is to her parents? Please put the number from 1 to 4 on each line.

Closeness	Very close 1	Close 2	Not very close 3	Not at all 4
To her mother				
To me				

2. How much do you agree with the following statements? Please put one number on each statement according to your knowledge of your daughter.

Strongly		Generally		Strongly
Disagree		Agree		Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- My daughter is very happy with her appearance.
- My daughter is very happy with her life.
- My daughter gets along well with the girls at school.
- My daughter is gets along well with the boys at school.
- My daughter needs to change a lot to improve herself.

3. According to your daughter's educational achievement at school, in which group would you place your daughter?

- Below average student
 Average student
 Top student

4. Do you think your daughter can achieve more in her education in the near future?

- Definitely Probably Definitely not Don't know

5. What does your daughter plan to do after she graduates from secondary school?

- Go to university Go for vocational training
 Go straight into work Other _____

6. What kind of university do you expect your daughter to go to after she finishes secondary school?

- Top university nationally Top university in Shanghai Ordinary university

7. In terms of choosing different subjects in the university, which main subject would you wish your daughter to choose?

- Arts Science Not sure Other _____

8. What's your expectation for your daughter? _____

Part Three: Family Lives

1. How many hours did you spend together with your daughter ***in the last school day?***

- Less than 1 hour 1-2 hours 3-5 hours More than 6 hours

2. How many hours a day did you spend together with your daughter ***last Sunday?***

- Less than 1 hour 1-2 hours 3-5 hours More than 6 hours

3. How many times did you have breakfast with your daughter ***in the last week?***

- none 1-2 times 3-4 times more than 4 times

4. How many times did you have dinner with your daughter ***in the last week?***

none 1-2 times 3-4 times more than 4 times

5. How often did you praise your daughter ***in the last week?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

6. How often did you criticize your daughter ***in the last week?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

7. How often did you have arguments with your daughter ***in the last week?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

8. How often did your daughter ask your help when she met some problem with her study ***in the last month?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

9. How often did your daughter ask your help when she had problems with her social life ***in the last month?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

10. How often did you talk with your daughter about your life ***in the last month?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

11. How often did you talk with your daughter about your dreams ***in the last month?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

12. How often did your daughter talk with you about her dreams ***in the last month?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

13. How often did your daughter talk with you about her worries ***in the last month?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

14. How often did you talk about your concerns for your daughter ***in the last month?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

15. How often did you talk about your expectations or wishes for your daughter ***in the last month?***

None Less than 2 times 2-3 times More than 3 times

16. How much do you enjoy the time spent with your daughter?

Very much Generally Not much Not at all

17. How well does your daughter know you?

Very well Quite well Not well Not at all

18. How well do you think you know your daughter?

Very well Quite well Not well Not at all

19. Which aspects of your daughter's life do you know about? Please use ✓ to choose the aspect that **you know a lot**, and use ✗ to choose the aspects that **you don't know a lot**.

My daughter's study. My daughter's life at school.

My daughter's hobby. My daughter's worries.

My daughter's hopes about what she wants to do after she finishes school.

My daughter's social life after school.

20. Which aspects of your daughter's life do you want to know more about?

Please use ★ to indicate the ones that you are **very interested in**, and use ✓ to indicate the

ones you are **a little bit interested in**, use ✖ to indicate the ones you are **not very interested**

in. If some aspects of your daughter's lives you **already know a lot about**, please use ○.

- What my daughter would love to do on holidays?
- Who my daughter is going out with after class and weekends?
- Is my daughter happy at school?
- Is my daughter satisfied with her educational achievement at school?
- Is my daughter happy with herself in general?
- Whether my daughter can go to a better school after she graduates?

21. What do you wish your daughter knew more about you? ***Please tick all that apply.***

- My hobby My job My dreams for my life
- My stories when I was young My expectations for her
- Other _____

22. How happy do you feel about your daughter's academic achievement at the moment?

- Very happy Happy Unhappy Very unhappy

23. How happy are you with the current relationship you have with your daughter?

- Very happy Happy Unhappy Very unhappy

24. As a father, what do you think you do the best: _____

What do you think you haven't done enough of: _____

25. What do you wish to bring to your daughter's life? _____

26. Thinking about yourself how much do you agree with the following statements? Please put one number on each statement.

Strongly					Strongly
Disagree					Agree
1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>					I often have the same opinions as my daughter.
<input type="checkbox"/>					My taste and preferences are usually the same as those of my daughters.
<input type="checkbox"/>					In the future, my daughter will adopt my way of living.
<input type="checkbox"/>					My daughter can learn a lot from me.
<input type="checkbox"/>					I am a very good father.
<input type="checkbox"/>					I have a good daughter.

About Yourself:

Things you like to do at home: _____

Your favorite activity: _____

Your favorite book: _____

The place you like to go: _____

Please write any comments you want to make about parent-child relationships or about the questionnaire.

Appendix 4.1: Interview schedule for daughters

- Tell me a little about yourself.
- What is it like being a teenager now days?
- 1. Introduction of family**
- Overall, how do you feel about being a teenager girl in the society now days?
- How do you feel about the changes you are going through as a teenager?
- Are there any positive sides of being a teenager?
- Are there any negative sides of being a teenager?
- What is important for your life now?
- How important do you think education is in your life?
- 2. Changes and being a teenager**
- Has your relationship with your father changed since you became a teenager? If so, how and when?
- Do you feel your father has a different attitude to you now since you become a teenager?
- Do you think that the time in which you are growing up and the time when your father was young are very different?
- Do you think you and your father have the same or different values?
- Probe how same and how different and what values
- 3. Being a girl, not a boy**
- How different do you think it would have been if you had been the son, not the daughter?
- Do you think your parents would treat you differently if you were a boy?
- Do you think your father would have talked about different things with you? For example?
- Do you think your father would have done different things with you? For example?
- 4. Being an only child**
- Would you like to have sisters or brothers?
- If yes, why? If no, why not? Probe mixed feelings
- 5. Family practice**
- Do you have any hobby or special interests?
- Do you usually eat together at home? How often in a week?
- With whom do you eat?
- When you eat together, what kinds of things do you usually talk about?
- Who is responsible for most of the household work at home? Is this the way you think things should be?
- Are you expected to do any of the housework at home? Is this the way you think things should be?
- Does your father do any regular household tasks at home? What are they?
- Do you spend time with your father during the weekdays?
- What about during the weekends?
- When was the last time you spent time together? Doing what activities?
- How do you feel about that?
- Do you and your father share any interests? What are they? Are you

happy with that?

Do you use the internet at home? How about your father?

Do you play with your father on the computer or discuss about computers? Can you give me an example?

6. Resemblances

Who do you think you are like?

Do you think you are like your father in any way? In which ways?

How does that make you feel?

7. Closeness

Who do you feel closest to in your life now?

How close do you feel to your father now?

Does your father show affection to you? How? How do you feel about that?

8. Support

Have you ever needed support?

In What kinds of situations do you ask for help?

Who do you usually go to look for help?

In what situations, do you go for your father's support?

What was the last time when you went to your father for help? Can you tell me more about it?

Does your father try to teach you something in your life in general?

What do you learn from your father?

Does he usually help you with your studies? How?

What was the last time he helped you with your study?

When did you last ask for help from him for your study? If you don't ask for help about the study from your father, why is that?

Does your father have contact with your teachers or school?

Who of your parents goes to the parents evening? How do you feel about that?

Do you give any help or care to your parents? What kinds?

How do you feel about giving help to parents?

What about to your father?

How do you think your father feels about what you do in the family?

Will you take care of your parents when they get old?

9. Authority, independence and autonomy

Who is the main authority figure in your family?

In traditional Chinese families, children are expected to obey parents, what do you think about that?

In your case, do you obey your father?

Give me a recent example where he wanted you to take notice of what he said. What happened? How did you feel?

How about your mother – do you take notice/ obey her? How about your grandparents?

Do your parents have any rules that they would like you to follow?

Are you happy about that? What happens if you break the rules? How do your parents react?

Give me an example of a recent time when you did something that caused some disappointment. What happened?

Do you have arguments with your father?

How often? What about? *Ask about the last time*

Since you became a teenager, do you feel that you are given more

freedom by your parents?
Do you think you should get more freedom?
Have you ever struggled to get more freedom? Give me an example.
Does your father expect you to tell him where you go? Always or only sometimes?
What will happen if you don't tell him?
How about your mum?
Does he try to restrict you about your activities? Your mother?
What sort of things worry your father most about you?
In terms of romantic relationships, has your father ever tried to restrict or influence you? How do you feel about that?
Do you think your father should interfere in these things?

Now you are a teenager, do you feel that you have more say in family decisions?
Do you feel you can decide your own things?
What kind of things can you decide by yourself?
What kind of things do your parents decide for you?
What kind of things do you discuss together and make decisions about together?
How do you feel about that?

Do your parents give you money now?
How much do you get for a week?
What kinds of things is it meant to cover?
What do you use it for?
How about lucky money you get in the Chinese New Year?

What age would you like to leave home?
When do you think your parents will stop supporting you financially?
When do you think you will be totally independent from your parents?
How much does your father know about your life? If he knows, how does he get to know about it?
Does he know about your life at school? How much does he know about your study?
Does he usually know when you are unhappy? Does he ask?
Are there any things you find difficult to talk with your father about?
Like romantic relationships
Are there any things you don't want your father to know about you?
What things? If yes. Why?

**10. Communication/
learning**

**11. Education and
Career**

Does your father know about your ideas for your future?
In the questionnaire, you wrote that you want to be ..., have you ever discussed this with your father?
What does your father hope for you?
Whose dreams are you working hard for? Your own dreams or your father's?

12. Others

How confident are you that your wishes will come true?
Are there any other questions that you think are important about fathers and daughters that have not been covered?
Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix 4.2: Interview schedule for fathers

- 1. Introduction and being a father**

Tell me a little about yourself.
What is it like being a father?
What are the happy things about being a father?
What are the difficult things about being a father?
Can you give a recent example of an occasion when it was difficult?
What do you think is your responsibility as a father?
- 2. Changes and daughters as a teenager**

Can you remember how you felt when you first knew that you had a daughter?
How do you feel about having a daughter now?

Has your relationship with your daughter changed since she became a teenager? If so, how and when?
How do you feel about your daughter being a teenager?
Do you notice any differences from when she was younger?
Has it become more difficult or easier to be a father now?
The time you lived in when you were young and the time your daughter is growing up are very different. Do you think you and your daughter have the same or different values? Please say a little bit more about it.
?
What do you think are the things in life that are most important to your daughter now?
- 3. Having a girl, not a boy**

How different do you think you would have been if you had had a son?
Do you think you would treat her differently if she had been a boy?
For example, would you have behaved differently towards her?
See what he says and follow up with probes

Would you have talked about different things with her? For example?
Done different things with her? Can you give me an example?
- 4. Only-child vs. more children**

Would you have liked to have had more children?
If yes, why? If no, why not? Probe mixed feelings
- 5. Own father-son relationships**

When you were young, society was very different. How were young people expected to behave *at that time* towards their parents?
What was your relationship like with your father?
How were you expected to behave towards your father?
How does your daughter behave towards you now?
At that time, what kind of care/support were parents supposed to give to their children? How about now?
- 6. Family practice**

Who is responsible for most of the household work at home?
Is the way you think things should be?
Do you have any regular household tasks at home? What are they?
Are you expected your daughter to do any of the housework at home?

What do you usually do with your daughter during the weekdays?
What do you usually do with your daughter during the weekends?
When was the last time you spent time together? In what activities?
How do you feel about that?
Do you have any hobby or special interests?

Do you and your daughter share any interests? How does that make you feel?

Do you use internet at home? How about your daughter?

Do you play with your daughter on computer or discuss it with her?

Can you give me an example?

7. Resemblances

Who do you think your daughter is like?

Do you think your daughter is like you in any way? In which ways?

How does that make you feel?

8. Closeness

Who does your daughter feel closest to in her life now?

How close do you think your daughter is with you?

Do you show affection to her? How? How do you feel about that?

9. Support

Have you ever given your daughter support?

In what aspects, do you give your daughter your support?

Please give a recent example when you gave help to your daughter.

Do you try to teach her something in her life?

Do you try to help her with her study? If yes, how?

In relation to her study, when did she last come to ask for your help. If she has not asked, what's the reason.

Do you have a close contact with the teachers or school?

How about going to the parents evening?

How do you think your daughter feels about that?

In what situations, does your daughter come to ask for your support?

Has your daughter ever given you any help?

What kind of help has she ever given to you?

How do you feel about it? How do you think she feels about that?

10. Authority, independence and autonomy

Who is the authority in your family?

In traditional Chinese families, children are expected to obey their parents. What do you think about that?

In your family, does your daughter obey you? How about her mother? Her grandparents?

Do you or your wife have any rules that you would like your daughter to follow?

Do you make these clear to her or does she just know what you expect?

If yes, does she agree with them? If not, how does she feel about them?

What happens if she breaks these rules? How do you react?

Give me an example of a recent time when your daughter did something that caused some disappointment? What happened?

Do you ever have arguments with your daughter?

How often? What for?

When is the last time that you had argument? Can you say a little bit about it.

Sine your daughter became a teenager, do you give her more freedom to do the things she wants?

Do you think you should give her more freedom?

Have you ever struggled about letting her have more freedom? Give me some examples.

Does she always need to tell you where she go?

What sort of things concern you the most about your daughter?
In terms of romantic relationships, have you ever asked her not to do this, and not to do that?
If your daughter has met some issues related with romantic relations, how will you try to deal with this?
Whose job do you think it is?

Does your daughter have a say in the family when make a family decision?
Does she have her own autonomy to decide her own things?
What kind of things can she decide by herself?
What kind of things do you prefer to decide for her?
What kind of things do you prefer to discuss together? Why?
Have she ever struggled about her freedom or autonomy? Give me some examples.
Does she have her own pocket money to buy things that she want?
How does your daughter get her money?
How do you want her to spend her money?

11.Communication

What age you wish she would you like her to want to leave home?
When will you stop supporting her finically?
When do you wish her to be totally independent from you?
How much do you know about your daughter's life?
If you know something, how do you get to know about it?
Do you know when your daughter is unhappy? Do you ask?
Are there any things you feel are difficult to talk with your daughter about? Like romantic relationships
Are there any things your daughter does not want you to know about her? What things? If yes. Why?

12.Education and career

Are you happy with the education you've got? Do you wish you had had more education?
What do you think about your daughter's future?
Do you discuss this with your daughter?
If yes, how does she feel about it?
Whose dream do you think she is working hard for? How do you feel about that?

13.Others

How confident are you about your daughter's future?
Overall, how do you feel about being a father of a teenager in the society nowadays?
Are there any other questions that you think are important about fathers and daughters that have not been covered?
Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix 5: Questionnaire distribution

	School types	School code	Parents' letter	Where did the girls fill in the questionnaire	Questionnaire distributed	Girls' response	Fathers' response
Junior high	Private	A2*	Yes	Home, I went there to send out	16	16	11
	Public	A1*	Yes	School, with me	68	68	53
		A3*	None	School, with me	56	56	32
		A4*	Yes	home, I went there to send out	91	91	76
		A5	Yes	Home	60	34	31
		A6	None	Home	50	49	47
		A7	None	Home	48	45	46
		A8	None	Home	50	46	34
		A9	Yes	School	52	52	38
Total					491	457	368
Senior high	Key	B1	None	Home	50	48	47
		B4	Yes	Home	40	31	26
		B6	Yes	Home	40	38	28
	Public	B2*	None	School, with me	104	104	66
		B3*	None	School, with me	20	20	17
		B7	Yes	Home	31	28	23
	Private	B5	Yes	Home	16	15	15
	Vocational	AA3*	Yes	School, with me	26	26	9
Total					327	310	231

*schools that I had direct contact

Girls' and fathers' questionnaire response rates according to age

	Questionnaire administrated		Questionnaire Respondents	
	Girls	Fathers	Girls	Fathers
Junior	491	491	457	368
Percentage	--	--	92.5%	74.4%
Senior	327	327	310	231
Percentage	--	--	94.8%	70.6%
Total	818	818	767	599

Girls' and fathers' questionnaire response rates according to school types

		Girls' responses		Fathers' responses	
		N	%	N	%
Age	Junior high (age 13-14):	457	59.6%	368	61.4%
	Senior high (age 16-17)	310	40.4%	231	38.6%
School type	Junior High				
	Private School	16	2.1%	11	1.8%
	Public School	441	57.5%	357	59.6%
	Senior High				
	Private School	15	2.0%	15	2.5%
	Public School	152	19.8%	106	17.7%
	Key school	117	15.2%	101	16.9%
Vocational school	26	3.4%	9	1.5%	
Total		767	100%	599	100%

Appendix 6: Consent forms and information leaflets

Focus group

Letter for school

Letter for schools

To whom it may concern,

I am a PhD student studying at Institute of Education, University of London. As a Chinese young women who has lived in China all my life, I am very interested in studying Chinese young people's family life, in particular daughter's relationships with their fathers. I would appreciate it very much if you could provide me a chance to talk with you. I would like to organize a discussion group in break time to include six to eight members of adolescent girls in Grade Two. The focus group discussion may last for about one hour. I am very happy to discuss further detail with you.

Email: xuqiong1128@yahoo.com.cn

Mobile phone: 0086-13916223842

With best regards,

Qiong Xu

September, 2008

Focus group

Introduction for focus group (Girls)

**Focus Groups about Family
Relations**

Your views count!

Your action matters!

I am a PhD student studying at Institute of Education, University of London. My research is about family relationships. I would appreciate it very much if you could spare some time to take part in the focus group discussion. All the information you give will be treated as completely confidential and it will not be possible for anyone to identify you in the results of the study. If you have any further enquiries, please contact me.

Thanks for your participation.

Email: xuqiong1128@yahoo.com.cn

Mobile: 0086-13916223842

QQ: 3458724

Thanks again!

Qiong Xu

September 2008

You can keep this page for further enquiry.

Focus group

Consent Form

Focus group participant's consent form

I agree to take part in the focus group. I understand that what I say would not be passed on to the school or my family.

Signature _____

Date _____

Questionnaire

Letter for schools

Letter for schools

To whom it may concern,

I am a PhD student studying at Institute of Education, University of London. As a Chinese young women who has lived in China all my life, I am very interested in studying Chinese young people's family life, in particular daughter's relationships with their fathers. I would appreciate it very much if you could provide me a chance to talk with you. I would like to organize a questionnaire during students' break time to include members of girls' of Grade Two. I am very happy to discuss further detail with you.

Email: xuqiong1128@yahoo.com.cn

Mobile phone: 0086-13916223842

With best regards,

Qiong Xu

September 2008

Questionnaire

Letter for teacher

Instructions for teachers

Dear teacher,

Thanks for helping me with my research. These are brief instructions for carrying out the questionnaire survey.

1. Please inform the girls about the research and ask them to take the Letter for Parents' Permission home **one week** before you plan to hand out the questionnaire survey.

2. If the parents do not agree their daughters to take part in the survey, they should be opted out.

If the girls themselves do not wish to take part in the survey, they should be opted out.

3. Please ask the girls to take their fathers questionnaire in the envelop back home and ask them whether they are interested in taking part in.

If so, girls need to bring back their fathers' questionnaire, as well as their back school.

4. All questionnaires are anonymous; please respect the privacy of each participant.

5. Please remind the participants that the envelopes can be self-sealed.

If you have any further enquiry, please contact

Email: xuqiong1128@yahoo.com.cn

Mobile phone: 0086-13916223842

With best regards,

Qiong Xu

September 2008

Questionnaire

Letter for parents' permission

Letter for parents' permission

Dear parents,

I am a PhD student studying at Institute of Education, University of London. As a Chinese young woman who has lived in China all my life, I am very interested in studying Chinese young people's family life, in particular daughter's relationships with their fathers and girls' lives. There are not much research on fathers in China, that's why I am particular interested in this area.

I am interested in different opinions so I will be appreciated it very much if you and your daughter are interested in my research. At this stage, you and your daughter are most welcome to participant in the questionnaire which will take about 30 minutes. All the information you provide is only for research, moreover, I will follow the ethnic procedures in the UK for looking for participants and your confidentiality will be protected.

I am writing to ask for your permission for your daughters' questionnaire which will be carried out in her school in one week's time. If you don't feel comfortable for your daughter to participant in my research please contact with me with the details I provided in this letter. Please bear in mind that you always have the right not to participant or agree your daughter to participant in my research at any time. As a father of a daughter, if you agree to take part in the research, please complete the questionnaire. I will be appreciated it very much if you send back to me when you finish it.

Furthermore, I will carry out a sample of interview after the questionnaire, so if you are also interested in having your say, please fill in another form attached together named *Interview Participants' Information*. I am sorry that I might not resume all the volunteers. But if you do interest in my research please send back all the details to me.

If you have any concerns about the research, please feel free to contact with me at any time.

Qiong Xu

September 2008

Contact details:

Email: xuqiong1128@yahoo.com.cn

Mobile phone: 0086-13916223842

Interview

Letter for recruiting interviewees

Letter for interviewees

Dear all,

I am a PhD student studying at Institute of Education, University of London. As a Chinese young woman who has lived in China all my life, I am very interested in studying Chinese young people's family life, in particular daughter's relationships with their fathers. I am interested in different opinions so I will be appreciated it very much if you could spend your precious spare time to participate in my research. At this stage, fathers and daughters are both welcomed to participate in the interview which will take about 60 minutes. All the information you provide is only for research, moreover, your confidentiality will be protected. Would you like to have your say? This is your chance to express your own opinion.

If you agree to take part in the research, please write down your contact details in the following sheet. I will contact with you and discuss the time and venue for the interview.

If you have any concerns about the research, please feel free to contact with me at any time.

Contact details:

Email: xuqiong1128@yahoo.com.cn

Mobile phone: 0086-13916223842

Qiong Xu

September, 2008

Interview

Consent form

Interview participant's consent form

I agree to take part in the interview. I understand that what I say would not be passed on to the school or my family.

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 7: Characteristics of questionnaire sample

Characteristics of Girls in the questionnaire Sample

Variable	N	%
Age	767	
Younger cohort (13-14)	457	59.6%
Older cohort (16-17)	310	40.4%
School type		
Junior high		
Private school	16	2.1%
Public school	441	57.5%
Senior high		
Ordinary public school	152	19.8%
Key public school	117	15.2%
Private school	15	2.0%
Vocational school	26	3.4%
*Hukou status	719	
Shanghai	616	85.7%
Non-Shanghai	103	14.3%
Dual-earner family	731	
Yes	548	75.0%
NO	183	25.0%
Living arrangement	733	
Child with father & mother	631	86.1%
Child live with father, but not mother	34	4.6%
Child live with mother, but not father	44	6.0%
Child live with mother, but not father	24	3.3%

Child live with neither parents, but other adult		
Accommodation	758	
Rented place	101	13.3%
Owned place	657	86.7%
Home location	751	
City center	267	35.6%
Inner city	279	37.3%
suburb	205	27.3%
Home size	751	
One bedroom	96	12.8%
Two bedrooms	335	44.6%
Three bedrooms	169	22.5%
Houses	151	20.1%
**Father's occupation	593	
High	151	25.5%
Middle	152	25.6%
Low	290	48.9%
**Mother's Occupation	516	
High	142	27.5%
Middle	109	21.1%
Low	265	51.4%

* combined with fathers' response when girl does not fill in the question of household status (because many girls were not aware of their household status)

**Higher level: government administrators/managers; senior business executives; owner of private enterprises; professionals

Middle level: office workers; small business; self-employed

Lower level: business/service worker; manufacturing workers; agriculture workers/unemployed

Characteristics of Parents in the questionnaire survey sample

Variable	N	%
Father's data of birth	561	1964.37 (mean)
Hukou status	539	100%
Shanghai	459	85.2%
Non-Shanghai	80	14.8%
Marital Status	593	
Married	550	92.7%
Divorced or Widowed	30	5.1%
Dual-earner family	545	
Yes	404	74.1%
No	141	25.9%
Living arrangement	596	
with wife& daughter	534	89.6%
live with daughter, not wife	25	4.2%
with wife, but no father	15	2.5%
neither daughter or wife	22	3.7%
Accommodation	580	
Rented place	85	14.7%
Owned place	495	85.3%
Property owned	491	
None	26	5.3%
One	310	63.1%
Two	107	21.8%
More than 3	48	9.8%
Home location	578	
City center	181	31.3%

Inner city	236	40.8%
suburb	161	27.9%
Home size	576	
One bedroom	90	15.6%
Two bedrooms	240	41.7%
Three bedrooms	125	21.7%
Houses	121	21.0%
*Father's Education	591	
Primary school	24	4.1%
Junior high	153	25.9%
Senior high	252	42.6%
University or college	162	27.4%
*Mother's education	587	
Primary school	30	5.1%
Junior high	188	32.0%
Senior high	216	36.8%
University or college	153	26.1%
**Father's occupation	458	
High	113	24.7%
Middle	87	19.0%
Low	258	56.3%
**Mother's Occupation	361	
High	93	25.8%
Middle	80	22.1%
Low	188	52.0%
Fathers' working hours (average)	445	9 hours 10 minutes and 11 seconds

Mothers' working hours (average)	344	9 hours 16 minutes and 11 seconds
----------------------------------	-----	-----------------------------------

* I did not give the option 'have never been to school' or 'prior primary' (which I should). However, in the 'other ___' option that was given, most fathers indicated 'diploma degree'.

**Higher level: government administrators/managers; senior business executives; owner of private enterprises; professionals

Middle level: office workers; small business; self-employed

Lower level: business/service worker; manufacturing workers; agriculture workers/unemployed

Appendix 8: Mother-father comparison

		Mean/percentage	
		mother (N=767)	father (N=766)
Direct engagement(time spent together, 1=less than 1 hour, 2=1-2 hours, 3=3-5 hours, 4=6+ hours)	together last school day*	2.80	2.52
	together last Sunday*	3.34	2.92
	have breakfast together last week*	2.23	2.02
	have dinner together last week*	3.32	3.07
	have arguments last week*	1.72	1.60
Parental monitoring	know where the girl go after school* (1=not know at all, 2=know occasionally, 3=mostly know, 4= always know)	3.27	2.87
Cognitive involvement (planning)	% talked with parent about daughters' career in the last six month	60.5%	47.4%
	% parent gave advice on which university/subject daughters' should study in the future	74.5%	68.1%
Emotional involvement	Closeness* (1= not close at all, 2=not very close, 3=close, 4=very close)	3.38	2.97
Communications/	% talk about daughters' study	73.7%	60.7%
	% talk about daughters' hobby	57.7%	47.6%
	% talk about daughters' ideas for future jobs	64.9%	55.0%
	% talk about fashion and music	38.7%	20.3%
	% talk about daughters' emotional issues	38.1%	15.5%

Note: *all are statistically significant (all the $p=0.000$, according to the Pearson Chi-square test).