UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

# Intimate Relations: Is There a Gender Revolution in China?

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Sociology

by

Langou Lian

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Feng Wang, Co-Chair
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2022

**DEDICATION**

To

my parents

for all their love, encouragement, and companionship
that traveled across the Pacific Ocean

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout my dissertation writing, I have received a great deal of support, advice, and encouragement. I would like to thank my dissertation committee members for their valuable time. Their insightful feedback always inspires me to push my work to another level. Without their constant support, I could not have completed this dissertation project.

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**VITA**

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Intimate Relations: Is There a Gender Revolution in China?

By

Langou Lian

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Irvine, 2022

Professor Wang Feng, Co-Chair

Associate Professor Rachel Goldberg, Co-Chair

This dissertation investigates gender, intimate relations, and family changes in contemporary China. Compared to prior work on gender changes in the public sphere, this dissertation focuses mainly on examining gender as a social structure and exploring how it operates in romantic relations and private families. Using survey data analysis and qualitative interviews, I demonstrate how gender interacts with sweeping societal changes to influence men's and women's beliefs about gender and intimate partnerships. The results show that while there has been a reappearance of traditional gender ideology in the private family, it has changed unevenly across two different dimensions. Many men recognize the importance of having a career for women's lives, but they still believe that women should prioritize family and men should prioritize work. When explaining gender differences in gender ideologies, this dissertation shows that considering all the socioeconomic explanations, the effect of marriage experiences is also essential. Even there could be a selection effect, results indicate that women's marriage experiences have a lasting impact on their gender essential belief, but such associations are not found for men. In addition, this research zooms in on the One-Child Generation to

explore shifts in gender structure and intimate relationships. I show young adults' perception of marriage and partnership using latent class analysis. I also demonstrate the gender differences in view towards husband and wife's expected role in marriage. Overall, this dissertation highlights an era of drastic change in gender and intimate relationships. It also shows a generation of young adults seeking changes in life while retaining what seems to be the unshakeable traditional rule of family life.

## INTRODUCTION

*"If my future wife wants to be a full-time housewife, I don't have a problem with it. But I don't know if I can have enough money by that time to afford that…… Personally, I don't believe being a full-time housewife is a healthy way of life, but I am not against it. But if we are both working, we need to take care of children together. I know that when dealing with this type of thing (childcare), it is always more burdensome and tiring for women than men, especially right after the baby is born. But this is just what it is."*

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*Mr.Liu, An Architect-Engineer born in 1992*

When I interviewed Mr. Liu in the Summer of 2020 through a Wechat call, he was just about to finish his first year working as an architect-engineer in his dream company in Shanghai. As a single man about to turn 30, he was not a fan of match-making dating and was not in a rush to get married. However, living alone in Shanghai and often working overtime, he also expressed the desire and difficulties in meeting someone who could potentially build a future together and keep each other accompanied. When asked to envision his married life, Mr. Liu spoke about the importance of having a career for both husband and wife to keep their own space and expand their life beyond just children, marriage, and family. It also seemed financially unsustainable for Mr. Liu to run a single-income family with his current career development. Mr. Liu strongly believed that if they are both working, he and his wife need to jointly participate in childcare to ensure their children have a quality childhood. However, it appeared inevitable and irresolvable that women would be more tasked by childcare than men. In his words, "*this is just*

*what it is.*"

Many young Chinese men and women I interviewed shared similar views as Mr. Liu. Perhaps, with the competitive labor market, the constant need to work overtime, and the high cost of living, they do not believe in the traditional "housemaker and breadwinner" division of labor. Besides adjusting to these recent economic changes, the legacy of socialist cultural and practices during Mao's era could also pose considerable impact on young people. Whyte's study (2005) shows that unlike Taiwan, family changes in China were shaped largely by the State during the socialist era. The Communist party works as a social engine which directly and indirect draw individuals away from their family to join other social institutions, such as schools. These new opportunities had fostered changes that impacted family arrangements and cultural expectation of family lives (Whyte 2005). Specifically, women's participation in the labor force and contribution to family income have become the new norm and the necessity for family growth. What seems unfathomable to these Chinese young adults is how to rearrange household labor and care work when both husband and wife need to work. The "natural" ability that women possess as skillful caregivers appears to be something unachievable to male partners. This firm belief keeps many young men from taking a vital role in the family and leads young women to unquestionably take the "second shift" at home (Hochschild 1989).

My interviewees' accounts of these gender relations changes in the workplace and family reflect a much broader transformation in China. After founding the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Communist Party tried to revolutionize the country by rejecting previous traditional systems and beliefs. The concept of gender equality was executed as part of the core beliefs of the Communist Party in its socialist days. Not only did the Party rewrite the marriage law, but it

also urged for changes in women's role in society[1] (Cai and Wang 2014). Improving women's position in society was prioritized by the Party agenda.

This top-down approach was targeted at changing women's role in the public sphere by making women look more like men. Several national propagandas aimed to promote the image of working women in the labor force (See Appendix A Figure 1). It was common to see women being portrayed similarly to men and taking jobs that were often occupied by men. Using these propaganda, the State hoped to create a "socialist feminist cultural" that celebrates proud working women (Zheng 2010). While there are different state strategies in promoting women's liberation, these top-down approaches encouraged a large proportion of women to joined the socialist revolution and the labor force (Zheng 2010; Zuo and Bian 2001).

Since the economic reform in the late 1970s, the closing of gender gaps in women's rights and power has been carried out with a bottom-up approach through the country's fast development in the economy. The Communist Party withdrew its role in promoting mass ideological campaigns, including women's liberation. Instead, the primary focus was shifted to achieving its economic goals. One of the most aggressive policy change is the enforcement of the One-Child Policy. Unintentionally, this policy has created many families with only one daughter. These only daughters do not need to compete with their brothers for resources, and they become the center of the family investment (Zhang and Sun 2014). Research shows that the One-Child Policy inadvertently promoted gender equality in education and the labor force (Lee 2012; Zhang and Sun 2014). Many of these young women have earned college degree and are now working in

[1] According to Cai and Wang (2014), the new marriage law was passed by the Communist party after 1949 prohibited arranged marriage, forced marriage, polygamy, concubinage, and child marriage. By trying to overthrow the old marriage regime, marriage was conceived as an individual decision between men and women.

the labor force (Bauer et al. 1992; Yeung and Hu 2013; Zuo and Bian 2001).

These young women are the engine that drives recent feminist movement in China. As Wang (2018) pointed out in her research of recent feminist activism, the younger generation of activists have been working outside of the Party control to promote gender equality in China (Wang 2018). With technological developments and globalization influences, recent feminist movement have been carried out spontaneously by individuals using medial mobilization (Fincher 2016; Li and Li 2017; Wang 2018). Especially, relying less on the state than the older generation, the younger generation has tried to pursuit gender liberation and arouse public attention by imposing social pressures online (Li and Li 2017). These changes highlights an awakening of a new generation of feminist mobilization in China.

Nevertheless, as one of the few Asian countries that have lived under the Confucius influences for thousands of years, China holds traditional beliefs at the core of its culture. While gender-egalitarian ideology was promoted during Mao's time, traditional beliefs in gender roles persist in many Chinese families, and women still face enormous pressure regarding marriage and childbearing (Zuo and Bian 2001). Women who do not follow the traditional pathway to adulthood and remain single after reaching age 27 are labeled as "leftover women" regardless of their education and work achievement (Fincher 2014; Zhang and Sun 2014). Research also found a return to traditional gender and family beliefs in recent years (Ji et al. 2017; Xu 2016). Especially, shifts in attitudes toward marriage-related issues have grown at a much slower pace than shifts in support for women's participation in the labor market (Luo 2021; Shu and Zhu 2012; Zuo and Bian 2001).

**Fitting into a Global Trend of Gender Revolution**

What is happening in China appears to follow the trend of gender revolution in many

Western societies. On the one hand, there has been tremendous progress in achieving gender equality in the public domain. The 2018 Global Gender Gap Report[2] shows that women's economic participation and opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment, and health have improved significantly across 149 countries. Though there are variations in how much the gender gap has been closed, this closing in gender gaps has led to drastic social changes and positive impacts on social welfare development in the West (Bolzendahl 2009; Ruggles 2015).

On the other hand, an unbreakable ceiling keeps society from moving further with this revolution. Paula England (2010) argued that the forces of gender revolution reached their limit in recent years as it has been uneven and stalled. People have shown an unwillingness to change with a minimum increase in public support toward various gender equality issues (England 2010; Ridgeway 2011; Ridgeway and Correll 2004). Besides, while women make great progress in the public domains of education, labor force, and politics, there seem to be insufficient changes in men's involvement in the private family. This lack of adjustment in male roles in the private sphere shows that gender revolution is far from being completed (Bittman et al. 2003; Daniels 1987; Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Lappegård 2015; Hochschild 1989).

According to Goldscheider and colleagues' framework of gender revolution (2015), society must move on from current changes with women's role in the public domain. Instead, to complete the gender revolution, it is important to involve men in this process and reinforce their participation in the private family. Once the gender dynamic between men and women in both public and private spheres becomes balanced, the gender revolution is completed.

[2] The World Economic Forum: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf (World Economic Forum 2018)

However, can we consider gender revolution in this straightforward manner? Some argue that this view of gender revolution is premised on some overly optimistic assumptions. First, it assumes that female labor force participation has become a norm in current society, and gender revolution in the public sphere is close to completion. The reality is that despite significant changes, gender inequality has persisted in the labor market. While more and more women are moving into traditionally male-dominated jobs, men rarely join traditional female jobs (England 2010). Thus, sex segregation, both within and across organizations, persists in the workplace (Bielby and Bielby 1992; Okamoto and England 1999), and the gender wage gap and the devaluation of women's work have similarly persisted (Cohen and Huffman 2003, 2007; Correll 2004; England 1992).

Second, this theory assumes that an increase in men's participation in the private sphere will in and of itself decrease women's family responsibilities. Some research shows that as more women have joined the labor market, men's participation in the household has also increased (Bianchi et al. 2000). Nevertheless, the rate of men's involvement in household work has grown at a slower pace, and women have remained as the primary caretakers for the family (Hochschild 1989; Hook 2016). Women often take a "second shift" at home after they finish work, and they are more likely to prioritize their partner's career than their own (Bielby and Bielby 1992; Cha 2010; Hochschild 1989). Also, when women earn more than their husbands at home, they are likely to do more housework to compensate and neutralize gender role deviance (Bittman et al. 2003; Brines 1994).

Lastly, this framework assumes that marriage, parenthood, and other family relationships will retain importance in adults' lives. It does not consider the possibility that the institutions of

marriage and family could also evolve while the gender revolution proceeds. Specifically, both men and women may not view marriage as a milestone that they need to achieve anymore.

**Gender Structure and Intimate Relationships**

Concluding from these trends of research, this research examines gender inequality in China through a structural perspective. Specifically, I analyze gender as a social structure and explore how it operates in romantic relations. Recent sociology scholars have argued that gender itself should be seen as a social structure deeply embedded in society (Martin 2004:200; Ridgeway 2011; Risman 2018). Just like race, class, political and economic systems, gender structure "as the context of daily life creates action indirectly by shaping actors' perceptions of their interests and directly by constraining choice" (Risman 2004, 2018). Put simply, men and women behave differently not because there are inherent differences between them. Instead, their positions within other social institutions (such as work and family) shape how they act and behave (Risman 2004, 2018; West and Zimmerman 1987). Successively, gender itself becomes a social structure that organizes social relations, individual practices, and behaviors (Martin 2004; Ridgeway 2011; Risman 2018).

In this dissertation, the goal is to examine how gender structure shapes cultural believes. This focus on ideation changes highlights the cultural expectation of gender relation in both public and private domains. Especially, gender ideology changes or lack of changes strongly reflects transformation in institutional arrangements and social relations. For instance, Paxton and Kunovich (2003) shows that in the political domain, gender ideology is largely associate with number of women participation national legislature (Paxton and Kunovich 2003). In a society that is under long-time Confucius influences but also has experienced globalization forces, examining gender ideology changes can be a key to uncover how gender structure

operates to shape social relationships and arrangement.

In particular, this dissertation investigates gender structure in the most intimate and romantic relationships. I explore how shifts in gender ideology associate with intimate relations and family transformations. Risman (2018) pointed out that "a structural perspective on gender is accurate only if we realize that gender itself is a structure deeply embedded in society, within individuals, in every normative expectation of others, and within institutions and cultural logics at the macro-level." And studying the operation of gender structure at the intimate relational level can future assist us in exploring gender inequality in the private sphere. Ridgeway (2011) and Ridgeway and Correll's (2004) theoretical perspective on gender and social relations suggest that gender is primarily maintained and changed through the context of the social relations (Ridgeway 2011; Ridgeway and Correll 2004), and intimate relations are the most ubiquitous form of social relations where gender is most salient. In the context of a heterosexual intimate relationship, cultural gender beliefs and gender-based material contingencies often guide individual behaviors (Ridgeway 2011). These beliefs are also the basis for women and men to define themselves in relation to one another (Ridgeway and Correll 2004).

Intimate relationships are not just an arena where gender is in play. The sweeping transformations of gender dynamics in social, economic, and political contexts also alter the gender structure and intimate relations themselves. Specifically, the uneven changes in the public domains also play a role in reshaping people's understanding of gender roles in intimate relationships. Thus, this research also extends our knowledge of whether and how gender dynamic interacts with social, economic, and cultural transformations to shape the perception of gender relations in intimate relationships. On the one hand, considering the lasting socialism influences in the private family (Whyte 1995, 2005; Yan 2003), I examine gender relationship

changes across different dimensions of family and intimate relationship as a result of early changes in State laws, policies, and propaganda. On the other hand, with profound transformations in the economic, political, and cultural spheres in recent years, I investigate how gender interacts with these sweeping societal changes to influence men's and women's beliefs about gender and intimate partnerships. As such, I intend to connect the most personal area of intimate relationships to the global transformation process and the State political shifts.

Following this introduction, chapter one offers a theoretical overview of gender structure and gender within family and marriage. Specifically, I highlight how gender structural theory can be applied to understand individual behavior in intimate relationships and attitudes towards marriage and family. I also summarize how economic and ideations changes are key factors associated with recent marriage and family transformation. Lastly, I lay out my data source and explain my analytical plan at the end.

Chapter two uses the 2010-2017 Chinese General Social Survey to provide a descriptive overview of recent changes in the gender structure and intimate relationships. Examining changes across generations, not only do I highlight behavior shifts in the public domain, but I also explain the ideation changes towards gender roles at home. Using past literature and survey research, I show how people's perceptions of sex, dating relationships, marriage, and childbearing have shifted across generations. Besides, I also included interview data to illustrate young men and women's beliefs about family arrangement and labor force participation.

Chapter three adopts the multidimensionality framework to examine gender ideology in private families. Using the Chinese General Social Survey from 2010 to 2017 and interviews with the One-Child Generation young adults, I explain gender differences in beliefs about the traditional gender division of labor and views on the intrinsic value of marriage to career to

women's life compare. It provides a more nuanced examination of gender attitudes changes in the private spheres. This chapter also looks beyond the socioeconomic explanations and analyzes how marriage experiences moderate gender differences in gender attitude. Survey and interview results show a divergent gender belief between two different private gender ideology questions. Men are more likely to oppose the rhetoric that women's life is defined by marriage, while they still believe that women should prioritize family and men should prioritize work. Also, survey analysis shows that after controlling for socioeconomic differences, women's marriage experiences have a lasting impact on their gender essential beliefs. Such associations are not found for men.

In chapter four, I pay attention to the One-Child Generation and examining their marriage partner preferences. This generation of young adults are the victims of Chinese government's attempt to strengthening the economic market. However, they are also the beneficiates who came of age during China's first decade of great economic development. Their marriage partner preferences highlights how ideologies about gender roles, and beliefs about family and intimate relationships have changed in the past few decades. Using two unique sets of questions from the 2012 Fudan Yangtze River Delta Social Transformation Survey (FYRST), I conducted latent class analysis and multinomial latent class regression to examine how young men and women view essential criteria for a marriage partner. Using information collected from my in-depth interview with the young adults, I further highlight young people's expectations of marriage and how these expectations are gendered.

Chapter five concludes this dissertation by explaining major takeaway points from each chapter. The summary reveals how gender structure has transformed people's private life, and how rearrangements in the family also shaped show gender operates at home. It highlights the

changes in how gender structure operates in intimate relationships. The results of the uneven changes between men and women in the private family reflects the progressive yet traditional transformation in gender relations. I discuss how the two phases of socialist revolution and economic reform have contributed to this changes. Lasty, I also pointed out the implication of lacking policy changes in contemporary China to promote gender equality in the family.

## CHAPTER ONE: Gender Structure and Intimate Relationships

### Gender as A Social Structure

How we analyze and understand gender has been transformed over the years. From the biological perspective that sees gender and sex as an inherent trait (Fausto-Sterling 2005; Udry 1994) to psychologists' explanation of the sex role theory (Bem 1974; Block 1973), many studies have examined different elements of gender and how it impacts people and their lives. Recently, sociologists have argued that these theoretical perspectives failed to address the structural impact of gender that exists outside of individuals. Instead, they claim that gender should be seen as a social structure that is deeply embedded in society, just like political and economic structures (Risman 2004, 2018; West and Zimmerman 1987). Gender is not an inherent trait representing who we are, but a social structure that organizes social relations, individual practices, and behaviors (Martin 2004; Ridgeway 2011). Often, gender is constituted through interactions in various social contexts. Individuals would interact with others and organize their activities to reflect or express gender (West and Zimmerman 1987). With different social structural constraints, individuals' gender certainly acts as a guideline to shape their behavior and beliefs. This structural perspective of gender is a valuable and instrumental framework for examining how gender operates at the individual, interactional, and institutional levels to guide people's daily lives (Risman 2018).

While gender structure can shape individuals, individuals can also act on and change the structure. Based on Risman's revision of her gender structure theory, gender is not an unchangeable force external to the individual (Risman 2018). Instead, there is a "recursive relationship" between individuals and the structure, in which individuals can also be active agents that shape the gender structure (Giddens 1986; Risman 1998, 2004, 2018). This

perspective acknowledges an "action" aspect of the gender structure, and it grants the opportunities to examine different gender changes in society. This also adds flexibility and reflexivity to gender structural theory. In particular, men and women might often be constrained by their gendered actions and beliefs. Yet, according to their own lives, people might act in ways that involve their personal interpretation of society (Giddens 1986; Risman 2004). Individuals often *do* gender, but sometimes they do it with the intention to show their rebellion against the existing gender norms and beliefs. For instance, even when boys and girls are socialized into various gender norms at an earlier age, they have the agency and often try to cross gender lines (Thorne 1993). In Risman's (1998) study on the gender structure of the family, she also shows that individuals are capable of changing the gendered ways of being in their families and relationships.

Many studies have applied the theory of gender structure to understand labor market employment and family relations. Few studies have utilized this theory to examine how gender operates in the context of intimate relationships among individuals. One of these studies is Risman's recent research on Millennials' lives in urban America (Risman 2018). She analyzed how rapid societal changes can lead to gender ideation and material changes at the individual and interactional levels. Young people's cultural expectations of men's and women's work, marriage, and family lives are no longer the same compared to previous generations (Risman 2018). However, Risman (2018) argues that even the gender structure has changed, its powerful forces remain to impact young people's lives and experiences in the family.

My current research continues this effort to understand how gender structure shapes people's decisions and behaviors in intimate relationships. I am particularly examining gender structure by focusing on culture ideation changes in intimate relationships. Gender ideology

changes or lack of changes reflects people's expectation of what men's and women's relationship should be in a romantic relationships. The results can highlight the cultural expectation of gender role and gender relation between partners in a relationship.

**Intimate Relationships, Marriage, and Family**

One key point of studying gender as a social structure is contextualizing it at different levels and in different situations. While the gender structure has changed in the public domain, how gender structure looks in the private sphere can also change with drastic transformations in family and marriage over the years. In contemporary Western societies, we witness the co-existence of various family forms that have never occurred before (Coontz 2006). Household size is continuously shrinking with a sharp decrease in multigenerational families and a consistent increase in singlehood. While traditional heterosexual marriage remains to be the most common relationship form, in the past few decades, the rise of non-traditional unions (e.g., same-sex marriage and cohabitation) and delays in marriage formation show more variations in individuals' private life decisions (Cherlin 2004; Coontz 2006; Ruggles 2015).

Increasing attention has been drawn to understanding these drastic demographic changes in marriage and family. Shifts in the market economy are considered the main factor in explaining historical changes in marriage and family. In mainly, the development from an agricultural society to Industrial Revolution transformed how the family economy operated in the private sphere (Coontz 2006; Ruggles 2015). After thousands of years of communal life, family members no longer needed to live a communal life, and young male members often found a factory job in the city and started their own small families. This rise of income-empowered men made them become the primary breadwinners at home. At the same times, because marriage was more affordable then, there has been a decrease in the marriage age (Ruggles 2015). With the

rising economic pressures, the male breadwinner family was later replaced by the dual-income family type because it became more necessary for both the husband and wife to work in contemporary society. In addition, gender liberation has made education more accessible to women. It has granted women the right to step out of the private domain and participate in the labor force (Coontz 2006; Risman 2018; Ruggles 2015). Nevertheless, discussions on why we are witnessing a continuous decrease in marriage and an increase in alternative forms of intimate relations are more controversial. Several perspectives have been offered to explain these recent changes.

*Gender and the Economic Perspective on Changes in Relationships:*

Many scholars argue that changes in the economic structure are still the main factors explaining shifts in private life. Scholars like Steven Ruggles (2015) state that "structural factors are responsible for the boom and bust of marriage." Specifically, the recent decline in the marriage rate and increase in marriage age is mainly due to men's lack of economic opportunity. The younger generations have lower income and resources than their father's generation (Ruggles 2015). Moreover, because marriage and childbearing have become increasingly expensive and the perception of an adequate standard of living has shifted, fewer young adults find marriage accessible to them. Overall, changes in occupation, employment characteristics, and education can account for 53.9% of marriage changes (Ruggles 2015). However, this argument may focus more on men's decisions on marriage formation than on women's. Specifically, while Ruggles (2015) and Coontz (2004) tend to focus on a macro and historical explanation of the shift in marriage, the assumption underlying Ruggles's claims of the lack of economic opportunities for young men is that marriage is male-centered mainly at the individual level. Men's economic outcomes play a more important role in marital decisions than women's.

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the role that changes in women's economic conditions would play in the process. We also need to examine how gender dynamics at the individual level could help explain changes in marriage and family. After comparing the importance of economic foundations of marriage across generations, Sweeney (2002) suggested that economic factors have become more crucial for marriage. Because men and women increasingly resemble each other in their economic prospects, their economic factors are also becoming similarly important to marriage decisions. Specifically, female economic conditions have become increasingly essential in marriage formation, while the importance of male income in marriage has not waned across generations (Sweeney 2002). Despite the wide gap in economic participation and political empowerment, females have made great strides in the labor force across the globe, with a faster narrowing in pay and employment rate in developing countries (Tzannatos 1999). For instance, in countries like the U.S., female labor force participation has also risen considerably in the last half-century, from less than 50% among women aged 18 to 64 in the 1950s to over 70% by 2010, with the most significant increase in professional and managerial occupations. In contrast to increased female labor force participation, the share of men in the labor force dropped from over 90% to below 80% (Ruggles 2015). These economic structure changes are essential for explaining romantic relationships, marriage, and family shifts.

*Gender and the Perspective of Ideation Change*

In contrast to the economic-centered explanations, others see recent changes in marriage and family due to shifts in cultural beliefs. Specifically, Lesthaeghe (2010) refers to these recent changes in the family institutions as the Second Demographic Transition (SDT). During this phase, the past economic development has led to a change in beliefs and ideas (Goldscheider et al. 2015; Lesthaeghe 2010). People are more focused on pursuing "higher-order needs" once

they have achieved financial stability, and they are more likely to concentrate on their well-being. Thus, traditional norms and rules are constantly challenged in a highly individualized society, and people are trying to redefine what marriage means. As Cherlin (2004) points out, the meaning of marriage has transitioned from institutional marriage to companionate marriage. It has further transitioned to individualized marriage in recent decades because marriage is more about personal choices and self-development. "Marriage is no longer a necessity but rather a choice" (Cherlin 2004). He suggests that the deinstitutionalization of marriage represents a culture shift, in which social norms that define people's behavior in marriage have weakened (Cherlin 2004). Social policies no longer discriminate against unmarried individuals; sex and childbearing are no longer necessarily attached to marriage, and same-sex marriage and cohabitation are protected by law. These changes in social and cultural structures have redefined what marriage means at both the macro and the micro-levels.

Even though this emphasis on culture shift appears to be convincing, it is challenging for researchers to test this ideational change empirically for several reasons. First, while researchers can infer culture shifts by analyzing trends and patterns of various relationship types over time, we also need to truly understand how people view marriage at the individual level to assess whether the *meaning* of marriage has shifted. Second, it is also unknown whether changes in beliefs and ideas are the same for both men and women at the individual level. As suggested in the theory of SDT, people who have achieved material well-being are more likely to pursue higher-order needs. Therefore, it is also essential to examine this issue from both economic and cultural perspectives to look at how beliefs about marriage vary across gender groups based on their financial resources. Lastly, we might see inconsistent results when the theory is applied to non-Western contexts. Based on a cross-national comparison of 21 countries, the results about

the deinstitutionalization of marriage were mixed. While people have become more tolerant towards alternative relationship forms, their views on the behavior of married couples and the nature of marriage are more complex (Treas, Lui, and Gubernskaya 2014).

These theories help explain how gender operates in economic, social, and cultural contexts to shape men and women's intimate relations. However, some other important factors vary across countries. For instance, government policy plays a prominent role in shaping individual private lives in China. When policies reserve certain rights to only married heterosexual couples in China, choices indeed become limited for men and women. Thus, while the marriage rate has plummeted, the divorce rate has risen, and the average age for first marriage has been delayed, there are few alternative forms of partnership. In addition, in countries like China, where the traditional Confucius belief of filial piety is still an essential part of family culture, parents play a huge role in decision making. In this case, individual lives are connected and embedded in their family relationships with others. These linked lives have a substantial impact on shaping personal life trajectories (Elder 1994). Zhang and Sun (2014) suggest that parental matchmaking in China demonstrates the enduring significance of the marriage institution, and this process reinforces traditional gender ideology. Thus, marriage and other intimate relations are not just private relationships or decisions between two people.

In this dissertation, I examine how gender ideology shifts within these changing relationships. I ask the following questions: What are people's expectation of gender role and gender relations in an intimate relationships? How do men and women differ in their expectation towards gender role and intimate relationships? Considering people's belief often changes with different social contexts and situations, are there differences in gender beliefs between people of different relationships status? Furthermore, as individual actors, how do men and women try to

act against gender structure in relationships? Are they actively interpreting gendered beliefs in their own way and trying to resist behaving along gender lines? Overall, considering how gender structure operates in the context of intimate relationships adds to our understanding of how gender shapes the most private lives of individuals daily.

**Data and Method Overview**

Building on these past studies, I mainly rely on two survey data to uncover gender structure changes in relation to transformations in intimate relations in China. Mostly, I use the 2010-2017 Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS), a nationally representative survey, to show an overall change in the gender structure. The survey is given out annually by the National Survey Research Center at the Renmin University of China. It collects data annually and bi-annually on randomly sampled Chinese adults aged 18 and above. In chapter two, I show different attitudes and behavior changes across generations using available data provided by CGSS. With China's household registration (Hukou) system being one of the main characteristics of the social stratification (Lu 2008; Yeung 2013), I also compare how gender differences and hukou difference changes across generation. In chapter three, I use these pooled data to conduct regression analysis to examine how men and women have different views on two sets of gender beliefs in the private sphere and how marriage experiences can help explain these gender differences.

Zooming in on the One-Child Generation, I use the 2012 Fudan Yangtze River Delta Social Transformation Survey (FYRST) to analyze young people's preferences for selecting a marriage partner in chapter four. This survey is designed to follow individuals born during the 1980s, China's first full decade of economic reforms and rapid growth. The FYRST survey aims to investigate the impact that the drastic post-1980 social and economic transformations have had

on this One-Child Generations' life outcomes. The 2012 FYRST included a unique module of questions to assess marriage partner preferences for men and women. Unlike other Western surveys and studies that used a single measure to capture the overall view on partner preferences, this gender-specific question structure in the 2012 FYRST survey allows for an analysis that can assess men's and women's preferences for individuals of the opposite gender and also compare with their view on people of their own gender. I highlight the changing attitudes towards intimate relationships and marriage partnerships among these One-Child Generation young adults using latent class analysis and multinomial latent class regression.

In this dissertation, I further illustrate the changing beliefs towards gender and intimate relationships by relying on many personal stories from in-depth interviews[3]. These interviews help to enrich and illuminate my quantitative survey findings. From the Summer of 2019 to the Spring of 2021, I conducted 33 interviews with young men and women in Chengdu and Shanghai. These two cities were chosen because of their unique economic development background. On the one hand, Shanghai is the metropolitan city under direct-administration in China. It is the most populous city and has a greater GDP than Beijing (Ning 2021). It is the one of the global center for finance, international business, trade. As presented by the National Bureau of Statistics of China in 2020, Shanghai not only is one of the top city in China that has the highest GDP per capital, it also has a high-level of foreign trade and economic cooperation.[4] Because of the presented economic opportunities, Shanghai attracts many migrants from all over China. According to Shanghai's Statistician Beureau, in 2017, 40% of the population living in Shanghai are long-term or short-term migrants (Shanghai Statistics Bureau 2018). The high cost

[3] IRB Approval Received: HS#2018-4462
[4] See interactive data at: https://data.stats.gov.cn/english/easyquery.htm?cn=E0103

of living and the social barrier created by Hukou differences has led to a competing labor market and great social, economic, and health inequality in this fast-developing metropolitan city (Liu, Dijst, and Geertman 2014; Roulleau-Berger and Lu 2005; Xiao, Wei, and Li 2021).

On the other hand, Chengdu is one of the new rising city with fast economic growth in China. As the capital city of Sichuan province, Chengdu city has attracted many national and international business in recent years. According to Milken Institute report, Chengdu outperformed Shenzhen and Beijing to have the best economic performance in 2019 (Eu 2019). Being a major economic center for the southwest of China, Chengdu also has remained it rich political and cultural background (Qin 2015). Chengdu has also been attracting many rural migrants with its rising available job opportunities. According to Chengdu Statistics Bureau, about 10% of population in Chengdu has a rural hukou status (Chengdu Statistics Bureau 2020).

With travel restrictions in place since the beginning of 2020, I had to conduct most of my interviews online using WeChat video call, a Chinese iMessage app. Using a snowball sampling method, the primary purpose of the interview questionnaire was to capture how Chinese young adults perceived intimate relations and how they managed these relationships. Specifically, I focused on how they view dating, marriage, family, and their partner; I also focused on their interaction with their partner and their challenges regarding relationship issues. Since there will be variations in terms of relationships status among people, the interview questionnaire had three sub-sections that were designed for interviewees who were currently dating, married or single. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. Interviewees were notified that their conversations would be recorded. Once all interviews were transcribed in Chinese, I analyzed them using MAXQDA.

Table 1.1 shows demographic characteristics of all my 33 interviewees. 20 of my

interviewees are currently living and working in Chengdu, while 13 of them are living in Shanghai. Due to some sampling biases, I had more female interviewees who were willing to participation in the interview. I have only eight male participants. At the time of the interview, the average age for all interviewees was about 28.58 years old. While only two female interviews only have a high school degree, the rest of my participants have a college degree or higher. In fact, with the growing number of young people who decided to study abroad, I also have 10 interviewees who received their degree in a foreign country and then returned to China. The work background of my interviewees vary. Some of my interviewees are ex-soldiers seeking to start a career after being discharged from the army. Some interviewees grew up in rural areas but then worked as primary school teachers in the city. Even with some limited access to the population, I also interview two female masseuses who have worked in a low-pay spa for more than two years. Six of the interviewees hold a rural hukou and are now working in Chengdu or Shanghai city. There are also ten individuals who hold a non-rural hukou, but working in a city far away from their hometown. Majority of them (17) are local residents of Chengdu or Shanghai.  To examining people's gender attitudes and beliefs towards romantic relationships, I intentionally included interviewees with various relationship status. While 13 of them are currently married, seven of them are in a dating relationships, and 13 of them are single.

[Table 1.1 about here]

I adopted Deterding and Waters's (2021) suggestion of flexible coding. I coded interviews based on different themes that were predetermined by interview questionaries. If there were new themes that repeated emerged from the interview data, then I reread the transcripts and coded them as new themes. This deductive approach is more efficient than the grounded theory approach (Deterding and Waters 2021). It also allows for transparency and a replicable process,

which minimizes the potential bias or misunderstanding in the coding process. Their accounts about their work-family life, marriage expectation, and romantic relationship experiences add more intriguing details to explain the young generation's view towards gender and private life.

## CHAPTER TWO: The Changing Gender and Intimate Relationships In China

It seemed incomprehensible to Mrs.Lin that her parents' marriage has survived for more than 30 years. Knowing each other through matchmaking, Mrs. Lin does not think their parents are the same type of person. She does not know why her parents' marriage has lasted this long, but she is also not surprised by it because "that's how it works for the older generation." As someone who often makes her own decision about career and dating relationships, Mrs. Lin cannot bear the idea of knowing her future partner through matchmaking because it is too "old fashion." She believes that she has established her ideal relationships and partners standards after going through college and hanging out with different people. There is no need for other people to get involved in the process and tell her who should be a potential partner. Thus, different from her parents, Mrs. Lin have always being in relationships with people she know. Born in 1995, Mrs.Lin married her college classmates in 2018. She had been friends with her husband for 4 years before she agreed to date him. It was important for her to know what type of person he was and whether they have matching personality and beliefs before she makes a life-long commitment.

Mr. Liu, a 28-year-old architecture engineer in Shanghai, also loathes matchmaking. He explains that the strong underlying intention of setting up two people with similar material and family backgrounds often made him feel awkward and unnatural. He understands that dating at his age is not just a casual fun experience, but a more serious phase that could lead to marriage, and matchmaking may be the most efficient practice considering he has a very heavy workload and a small friend circle. Nevertheless, he still believes that meeting someone on his own and establishing a strong affection is more in line with his expectation of building a good relationship and marriage.

These accounts on matchmaking, partnership, and romantic relationships are shared among the post-90 generation interviewees. A few of them found matchmaking acceptable and saw it as a way to make new friends. The majority of them questioned the reliability of matchmaking because they do not believe matchmaking prioritize love and feelings. Compared to their parents and grandparents, young people are reluctant to settle for only financial reasons. While facing the pressure of getting married in their late 20s to 30s, young people believe that finding someone with matching values and beliefs (三观一致) is the basis for a successful marriage and family. Especially, many Chinese young women have a college education and a stable nowadays. Even though they are often pressured to date and start a family, many young women prefer to take control of their lives and make decisions independently. These narratives reflect the drastic changes in gender relations, marriage, and family.

## The Shift in Gender Role in China

### *Gender changes in the public domain*

As explained in the introduction, political and economic transformations have ushered drastic changes in gender relationships in contemporary China. During the Maoist era, the top-down approach to include women's liberation in the Communist Party's agenda was intended to bring more women to join the labor force in a planned economy (Zuo and Bian 2001). The core goal of the Chinese government's plan was not to push for a gender-equal society that we would expect now. However, making women look more like men in the labor market allowed many women to envision a different life path outside the family.

Especially after China opened its economic market, powerful forces of globalization have reshaped gender relations in China. First of all, massive rural to urban migration brought over half a billion Chinese people to cities, raising the level of urbanization from only 20% in the late

1970s to over 60% today (Chan 2019). Nevertheless, China's household registration (Hukou) system continues to limit the social benefits that migrants can receive in the urban area. Over the years, hukou status has become one of the main characteristics of the social stratification (Lu 2008; Yeung 2013). Nevertheless, these economic development has changed both rural and urban women's life. Even without any extensive political campaign to advocate for women's rights since the late 1970s, the young generation of women has been making great strides in education and the labor force (Bauer et al. 1992; Yeung and Hu 2013). Even for rural women, they had more opportunity to receive adequate education. Some of them even had the opportunity to go to college in major cities (Bauer et al. 1992; Hannum 2015; Yeung 2013). These young women, born after the enforcement of the One-Child Policy, have become the center of family investment with parents providing exclusive financial and material support (Zhang and Sun 2014).

To examine how gender changes over time, I conducted descriptive analysis across cohort/generation. This is because that cohort are used to demonstrate unique historical imprint. Specifically, historical changes during early adulthood can form a shared and long-lasting belief among people the same generation (Alwin, Cohen, and Newcomb 1991). These cohort differences highlights social changes over time (Ryder 1965). With its social, political, and economic transformations, life-course studies on China have also established ways to categorize different generations in China (Qian and Li 2020; Shu and Zhu 2012). There are those who came of age before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. They had experienced political conflict and war as they came of age. There are those who came of age during the socialist culture revolution period during 1950s to 1970s. Their life had involved with mass mobilization and different social chaos. And, the implementation of the One-Child Policy

in late 1970s marked a unique generation of young adults who are not only the only child at home, but also have experienced the first decade of economic boom in China.

Gender difference across generation highlights how different social changes could have lasting impact on people's life and their beliefs about gender. For instance, there are significant differences in education outcome among men and women of different generations. Figure 2.1 shows that there has been a steady increase in the percentage of men and women who have a bachelor's degree or higher across generations. Compared to the trends between early ages, such an increase is steeper for the One-Child Generation born after the 1980s. The percentage of young adults who have a higher education degree is almost double that of people born during the 1970s. The gender gap in educational attainment also narrowed for the recent generation. The post-90 generation women are more likely to obtain a bachelor's degree or higher than the post-90 generation male. It is possible to conclude that because of the One-Child policy, it creates a generation of women who do not need to compete with their brothers for resources. Unlike the older generation of women who were often neglected at home, young women have now become the center of the family investment (Zhang and Sun 2014). Yet, the socialist revolution period also impact the generation who came of age during that time. With government driven policy change and propaganda, many women were able to get schooling (Salaff and Merkle 1970). As shown in Figure 2.1, the increase in Bachelor's degree attainment begins to take off for people who were born after the 1960s.

[Figure 2.1 about here]

Besides, across all working-age groups, women's participation in the public domain became indispensable with labor market rearrangements, technological advancement, and globalization. Both rural and urban young women began to seek job opportunities in

nonagricultural sectors. From 1982 to 2015, employment in agriculture for people aged 25-29 dropped from 66% of males and 75% female to only 19 and 24% respectively (Wang and Cai 2019). With China's economy growing more than 80-fold in only four decades[5], it has become a norm to recognize women's presence and ability in the market (Bauer et al. 1992; Yeung and Hu 2013).

However, the market reform has been a double-edge swore to promoting gender equality in China. As Cohen and Wang (2008) demonstrates, when the allocation of resources is no longer determined by the State but rather by the economic market during the reform, gender gap in wages and salaries has become larger than before (Cohen and Wang 2008). Occupation segregation and gender glass-ceiling continues to keep women in lower-paid services sectors and non-managerial roles (Bauer et al. 1992; Cohen and Wang 2008; Ji et al. 2017; Otis 2008; Zhang, Hannum, and Wang 2008). Overall, the traditional gender structure has been uphold by rigid barriers of the economic market to unequally benefit men over women.

Culturally, as one of the few Asian countries that have lived under the Confucius influences for thousands of years, some people still hold traditional gender beliefs at heart. Generations clashes on gender role in the public sphere is one of the most pronounced trend (Luo 2021; Qian and Li 2020; Shu and Zhu 2012). Especially, since the older people have a vastly different experiences in the planned labor market than those who came of age during or after the marketed economy, Figure 2.2 shows that comparing between gender and hukou status, two of the most important markers of inequality in China, the younger generations are more likely to disagree with firing women over men when the labor market is bad. Interestingly, the gender gap

[5] China's GDP (in current U.S. dollars) rose from 149.54 billion in 1978 to 12.238 trillion in 2017. Global GDP (including China) grew ten-fold during the same period. *World Bank Development Indicators.*

has also become wider for the younger generation as more women than men disagree with such unequal conduct at work. On the other hand, the differences between hukou status have closed across generations. Rural and non-rural young adults are equally likely to disapprove of firing women over men.

[Figure 2.2 about here]

This is partly because many young people believe women have equal competence as men in the labor force. Nowadays, more young adults do not think men have better abilities than women (see Figure 2.3). This generation trend is similar when comparing between gender and hukou status. Similar to patterns observed in Figure 2.2, the gender gap in attitudes towards men and women's ability has become wider across generations, while the differences between rural and urban people have become smaller. Compared to minor shifts across different generations of men, there has been a sharp change for the young generation of Chinese women. The younger generation of women sees themselves as equally competent than their male counterparts. Also, while rural people have less liberal attitudes than non-rural people across early generations, there are no noticeable hukou differences among younger adults.

[Figure 2.3 about here]

These generational differences and the divergent gender view between young men and women suggest that postsocialist economic reforms have resulted in gender structural changes in the public sphere. These structural changes may be less tangible as the market economic have not resulted in shifts to narrow gender gap in wage, salaries, and position of power (Bauer et al. 1992; Cohen and Wang 2008; Zhang et al. 2008). However, ideation changes towards gender inequality in the public sphere demonstrates an inevitability influence on younger generations. Especially, while young women are reluctant to changes, the recent economic developments and

global culture diffusion have altered how young women perceive gender equality and gendered arrangements in the workplace.

Nevertheless, my interview data has uncovered that there are frustration among women in regards to how far they can go with their career achievement. Especially for women who are married and have children, they mention that their career has shifted because they cannot juggle between family and career. As a 30-year old primary school teacher, Mrs. Jimi had received many school and district acknowledgement and awards about her teaching. As a head teacher, she often received calls and messages from concerned parents even after work hours. When asking about her career plans for the future, Mrs. Jimi said:

> "*Before I had my kid, I had a lot of plans and thoughts about my job. I felt hopeful (about my career). I felt I could keep working hard and maybe get a 'famous teacher' title. However, after I started taking care of my own kid, I think I reached a point that I should no longer go further with my career but rather focusing on my kid……One time, I had to do a course teaching competition at the district level. I was really frustrated because I felt that I did not do well in this competition and I also did not take care of my family and my child well. So I reassessed myself and decided to focus more on my children*"

Mrs. Jimi also mentioned that because her husband had also been working as a primary teacher, she wanted him to do well in his career because she felt he had more potential. Since she felt like she had reached a limit in her own career, she is not very willing to put more time on her own career.

Several married young women expressed similar feeling. They mentioned that there was a need for them to switch their focus to their children and family. They argued that while their careers were very important, but they were not the center piece of their life. This type of statements was quite different from how male interviewee talk about their career and family. My interview with eight young men shows that they all believed the importance for them to focus on their career and take the role as the primary breadwinner at home. These statements and beliefs

signifies the continue gender differences in career development and arrangements. They also shows how changes and beliefs about arrangements at work have been closely tied to relationship, marriage, and family shifts.

***Gender change in the private family***

It is debatable how two phases of socialist revolution and economic reform have changed the operation of gender structure in the private family. Some argue that the Chinese family has become more conjugal. Men and women's relationship in the family is no longer heavily built on economic needs, but rather on emotions, care, and love (Yan 2003). In fact, many social and state transformations during the socialist time have directly or indirectly changed how gender operates in the family. Whyte (2005) pointed out that compared to Taiwan, families in China seems more "modern". Structural shifts during its socialist days, such as employment in non-kin-based socialist firms, allocation of public housing, and wage employment for women, have indirectly led people away from traditional family relation. For many women, they have fewer family responsibilities and more freedom in making family decisions, such as divorce or remarriage (Whyte 2005).

Yet, there have not been any state or market policy changes that directly aimed at promoting gender equality in the family during both phases of socialist expansions and market reform (Davis and Friedman 2014; Whyte 1995, 2005). Besides making women look more like men in the labor force and abolishing old marriage practices, there have is no structural policy changes and social/cultural advocacy to protect women in marriage and other intimate relationships. For instance, the State wanted to reduce parental control on marriage decision and promote free love matching in China, but many people, especially women, were still supervised by state-operated work unit (Whyte 1995)

While the impact of market economic on gender equality is complex, we can still expect that the rearrangement in the labor market and the steady decrease in male income both change how the gender structure operates in the context of intimate relations at the individual level. For instance, many more young people than the older generations do not believe that the women's place is at home and men's priority should be their job (see Figure 2.4). With the recent mass urban unemployment after 2000 (Cai and Chan 2009; Giles, Park, and Zhang 2005), women's income is less dispensable than ever. As shown in Figure 2.4, there is a sharp increase among the One-Child generation in their disapproval towards traditional divisions of labor. Specifically, significantly more young women than young men disagree with such traditional arrangements. This significant gender gap between young men and women highlights how social changes after the economic reform have directly and indirectly impacted women's perceptions about . Women are more likely to disagree that their place is just in the family while only the men should prioritize their job.

[Figure 2.4 about here]

Instead, many more young women believe that men and women should take the same responsibility at home. While more women join the labor force and contribute to household income, they also expect men to shift some focus to the family. While there was not a clear generation trend between different hukou statuses, Figure 2.5 shows that among women, there is an apparent increase across generations in people's support toward having an equal share of housework at home. More young women than the older generation of women believe that men and women should share housework and care work equally. Nevertheless, such a generation trend was not observed for men. Especially compared to young women, their male counterparts are less enthusiastic about equally sharing housework at home. These apparent increases in

women's liberal attitude and men's reluctance to join the endeavor have highlighted some dilemmas of the recent gender structural changes at the individual level.

[Table 2.5 about here]

The Chinese government has started implementing policy changes to promote gender equality at home at the institutional level. The communist party had tolerated the traditional patriarchy system in exchange for social stability since the takeover (Palmer 2017). One consequence of this sacrifice on gender equality is that government officials and law enforcement often turn a blind eye to women's needs and safety at home (Palmer 2017). Gradually joining the global effort of promoting gender equality, the Communist government has begun to pay attention to gender equality issues beyond the public domain. For instance, in 2015, China finally announced its complete legislation against domestic violence after taking more than ten years to develop. Some scholars pointed out that this Law of Anti-Family Violence has not been well-implemented by the court and local law enforcement. However, the announcement of such legal regulation has shown the effort to increase public and political attention to gender equality in the family (Kaufman 2012; Sun et al. 2020).

**Changing Relationship, Shifting Family**

Likewise, there has perhaps never been a time in recent Chinese history when intimate relations and families are under such significant changes. In the past few decades, the share of unmarried individuals has risen dramatically, along with a sharp increase in marriage age. The percentage of never-married men by age 30 doubled, from 10 to 20 percent, between 2000 and 2010. The share of never-married women by the age of 30 also rose from merely 2 percent in 2000 to 8 percent in 2010. In addition, the number of marriages started to decline significantly in recent years, and the number of divorces has increased drastically from close to 100,000 in 1975

to almost 4,100,000 in 2018 (Wang, Shen, and Cai 2019). These changes in Chinese society follow a global trend of marriage decline, which demographers have explained as a shift in culture toward postmodern attitudes and norms (Lesthaeghe 2010).

Specifically, the globalization forces and changes in the labor market led to structural and cultural shifts in people's private lives. Many young adults nowadays are less likely to engage in committed relationships because these relationships tend to be costly, both emotionally and economically. Ms.Zilin, a 25-year old Shanghai woman, recalled that before she met her husband, she felt relieved while being a single person. Knowing she would unquestionably spend more time on her boyfriend if she were dating, Zilin explicitly expressed how relaxing it was for her to have time to devote to herself and her family. Some young men I interviewed explained how important it is for them to become financially stable to start a serious relationship. They believe this is a common societal expectation for people who want to begin a serious relationship and marriage.

This does not mean that Chinese young adults have no personal need to build intimate relationships. In fact, many young people are caught up in a dilemma. Based on several of my interviewee' accounts, on the one hand, they hope to have someone they can share the details of their life with sometimes. On the other hand, they do not have the money or the energy to cultivate such relationships. Many young people have turned to more convenient options to sweeten their private lives. For instance, an article published in *The Atlantic* described an emerging trend in China. Many young women were keen and devoted to engaging in a fake relationship with virtual boyfriends on a mobile app called *Love and Producer* (Li 2019). With its download rate reaching more than seven million during the first month of release, this mobile app has achieved tremendous popularity among unmarried women and a significant proportion

of wives.[6] This type of virtual romantic relationship provides a chance for both men and women to fulfill their wishes to bond without taking any risk in pledging to another person in intimate relationships. Using an online platform, such as MOMO (a mobile app with the reputation of being a hook-up social network), many more Chinese young adults also seek to develop sexual intimacy without establishing any private commitment.

The separation among sex, romantic dating, and marriage has shaken up the traditional family institution and led to changes in cultural beliefs. The cultural expectation of dating, marriage, and family has become more diverse. People's attitudes toward nontraditional nonmarital sex reflect such changes. First, marriage is no longer a prerequisite for starting a sexual relationship for many Chinese young adults. It is also not the only purpose for someone to start a romantic dating relationship (Farrer 2014; Parish, Laumann, and Mojola 2007; Yu and Xie 2015a). Figure 2.6a shows that while the overall acceptance of premarital sex is still low, there has been a steady and linear increase in approval of premarital sex across generations. On average, young adults, especially young men, are more likely to accept premarital sex than the older generations. Also, for these younger generations, sexual relationship is no longer just acceptable among heterosexual partners. Unlike the linear increase in approval toward premarital sex, a significant increase in approval of same-sex sexual relations was only observed among the younger generations (see Figure 2.6c). The One-Child Generations born after the 80s and 90s have much higher tolerance towards same-sex relations than the older generation. Even these two trends demonstrate that more and more young people do not see sex as a family-based behavior with the purpose of procreation; it is still seen as secretive after people get married. Similar to patterns that have been found in the United States (Labrecque and Whisman 2017; Treas 2002),

[6] According to JiGuang Big Dataset iAPP.

there have been minimal changes across generations in their attitudes toward extramarital sex (see Figure 2.6b). Young people have a similarly pessimistic view towards extramarital sex as their parent's and grandparents' generations.

[Figure 2.6 about here]

The cultural belief towards marriage and family have also transformed in recent years. Many Chinese people have fulfilled basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter, since the economic opening in the late 1970s. Significantly, many young men and women have homeownership even after entering labor.[7] As described by the Second Demographic Transition theory, these individuals begin to challenge traditional norms and rules that have stopped them from pursuing other personal needs (Goldscheider et al. 2015; Lesthaeghe 2010). With the increase in marriage age and delay in childbearing, the desire to have children also scaled down. Even though the Chinese government lifted its One-Child Policy in 2016 and eventually encouraged its people to have three children in 2021, many young people are no longer interested in having many kids. Figure 2.7 shows that the average number of children people want to have has decreased across generations. For young people of the One-Child generation, they hope to have less than two children on average. This changing trend is identical for men as for women. Also, while older people with a rural hukou desire more children than people with non-rural hukou, there are minimal differences between young people of different hukou statuses. Both groups of young people believe that fewer than two children are ideal.

[Figure 2.7 about here]

The high-cost of living and the effort that is needed to raise a child have scared many

[7] For the younger generation who just joined the labor force, their average real estate ownership is the same as the other older generations (see Appendix A, Figure 2.1).

young people away from having their own kid. For some of the young men and women, they believe that having a child means they need to scarifies their own life. Miss Ly said that

> "*There are benefits of having child, but I personally think that the risk of having a children is huge. You are going to be afraid that they will learn something bad. I feel that once you have a child, the rest of your life will be circling around this child. Maybe I am selfish, but I don't want my entire life to be circling around another person, to worry about their schooling, dating, marriage…I don't think this is necessary.*"

I asked Miss Ly what if she just not worry too much about her child and also seek for help from her husband or other family members. She responded that

> *"well, once you have a child, you won't think like this. Once you have a kid, it will change your life. Because being a mother is a magical thing. It will change you. So that's why I don't want to be like that."*

Other young adults also acknowledged that having a child would come with great responsibility. Many of them believed that they were still young and could not take care of a young child because they could not even take good care of themselves. This type of rhetoric fits which the prolonged transition to adulthood stage that young Chinese people are experiencing nowadays (Yeung and Hu 2013). Since many of them are having a difficult time to be economically independent and are currently relying on their parents (Lian and Wang 2021), these young adults do not believe they can take the responsibility as parents.

There are notable systematic barriers regardless of behavior and beliefs changes in the private family. The current government and family policies prevent alternative family- and relationship-making in China. Even though the share of unmarried individuals has risen dramatically, along with a sharp increase in marriage age, there are not many alternative forms of intimate relationships. The government does not recognize cohabitation, same-sex relationships, and births out of wedlock with its traditionalist policy (Mavraj 2016; Yu and Xie 2015b, 2015a). Under the influence of patriarchy, non-traditional relationships are not supported by social

institutions (Santos and Harrell 2017). With only policies in place to support married heterosexual couples and their children, many people would eventually decide to move on from cohabitation to marriage. Thus, the prevalence of cohabitation is lower, and the duration of cohabitation is shorter in China than in other Western countries (Yu and Xie 2015b).

Besides, marriage is still the only pathway to reach parenthood approved by law (Cai and Wang 2014; Mavraj 2016; Yu and Xie 2015b). The rates of increase in premarital sex, cohabitation, extramarital sex, and divorce are not changing at the same pace as the growing proportion of delaying marriage (Cai and Wang 2014). Moreover, traditional Confucius and courtship culture are still influential even as many Chinese people have become more open about sex and romantic relationships. The idea of filial piety has given parents the right to intervene in children's intimate relationship development. Even today, when marriage decisions have been transformed from collective synchronization to individual choice, parental matchmaking still plays a massive role in private lives (Zhang and Sun 2014).

These unique structural and cultural barriers likely play an essential role in shaping China's gender system and private sphere. Economic and cultural perspectives that have been offered to explain changes in Western countries might not be sufficient. Specifically, there may be a generation increase in egalitarian attitudes to support women's participation in the labor force and equal share of household work. However, without additional government and social support, it cannot assist care change at home and promote gender equality. For instance, out of 20 interviewee who had a child or had a plan about child rearing, 17 of them said they would need help from their own parents. With their busy work schedule, their parents could provide necessary assistant to take care of the new born. Nearly all of the 17 interviewees said that their mother or mother-in-law would play a major role in assisting childcare. These interview findings

are consistent with previous findings, which grandparents' assistance in child-caring are very typical in Chinese family arrangement nowadays (Chen, Liu, and Mair 2011).

In the context of these mixed changes, I use chapter three to examine changes in men's and women's beliefs about marriage and the division of labor in the family. Chapter four zooms in on the One-Child generation who came of age during this era of fast economic development and drastic social transformations. Through exploring their preference towards selecting a marriage partner, I show a young generation of Chinese with a reformist yet traditional view of marriage and intimate partnership. Overall, these results explain how the gender system has operated in the context of intimate relations in contemporary China.

## CHAPTER THREE: Traditional Gender Ideology and Links with Gender Marriage Experiences

In Western societies, gender ideologies have shifted unevenly across two dimensions of our lives: the public and the private spheres. Studies recognize that gender ideology shift is not linear (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2011; Davis and Greenstein 2009; Pepin and Cotter 2018). The rise of a so-called egalitarian essentialism belief promotes the idea of "separate but equal" within and outside the family (Pepin and Cotter 2018). Women's increasing participation in the educational, economic, and political domains has led to a more egalitarian attitude shifts toward gender arrangements in these public spheres (Oesterle et al. 2010; Ruggles 2015; Yeung and Hu 2013). Nevertheless, the lack of discussion about men's involvement in the family has made it more difficult for people to imagine a gender-equal space in the private sphere. Gender changes in the family are stalled and lagged behind transformations in the public domains (Pepin and Cotter 2018; Sayer 2016). In some Western and non-Western countries, research has shown a reappearance in supporting traditional male-breadwinner/female-homemaker roles during recent years (Cotter et al. 2011; Qian and Li 2020; Zuo and Bian 2001).

The current chapter follows these theoretical suggestions to explore the return of traditional gender ideologies in contemporary China. By examining two different types of gender ideology of the private family, I demonstrate more subtle changes in gender belief across different dimensions. Specifically, responding to Pepin and Cotter's (2018) call for analyzing "a multitude of attitude items" to discover the multidimensionality of gender attitudes, this chapter shows not only people's attitude toward the traditional division of labor but also their beliefs about the inherent value of marriage for women's lives. It explores whether Chinese people have "ambivalent" gender views, in which the rate of support towards gender equality differs across

two dimensions of the private sphere (Qian and Li 2020; Scarborough, Sin, and Risman 2019; Zuo and Bian 2001).

More importantly, this chapter joins the theoretical discussion by exploring whether ambivalence in gender views applies to men and women, and how marriage experiences are associated with these potential gender differences while counting socioeconomic explanations. Earlier research showed that women were less likely to have traditional gender beliefs than men (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Davis and Greenstein 2009; Kroska and Elman 2009). It is uncertain if such gender differences exist across different dimensions of gender attitudes in the private sphere. Besides, while higher educational attainment and labor force participation are robust at predicting men's and women's gender attitudes (Davis and Greenstein 2009; Kroska and Elman 2009; Qian and Li 2020), research that theorizes the role of marriage experiences on gender ideology is relatively incomplete (Barber and Axinn 1998), perhaps because of the difficulty to untangle the causal relations between gender attitude and marital status. However, some research have shown that gender ideologies vary greatly among people of various marital statuses (Amato and Booth 1991; Barber and Axinn 1998; Bolzendahl and Myers 2004). Especially, since women often do not receive a marriage primary, marriage remains very selective. On the other hand, marriage might continue to be more of a norm for men's life, just as their presence in the labor market (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Moffitt 2000). Due to these reasons, we could observe a different association between marriage experiences and gender ideologies for women and men. Beside, China's marriage institution has gone through notable changes just as in many Western countries (Jeffreys and Yu 2015). It is inevitable to explore how marriage experiences are associated with Chinese men's and women's gender attitudes of the private sphere considering the close association among gender, marriage experiences, and

attitudes towards private issues.

**Multidimensionality of Gender Ideology**

Like in many other societies, gender attitudes have changed unevenly across the notion of two separate spheres in China. This uneven shift reflects a lack of adjustment in men's roles at home (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2011; England 2010; Qian and Li 2020; Sayer 2016; Zuo and Bian 2001). Compared to women's increasing participation in the labor market, men's involvement in housework and childcare has grown much slower (Bianchi et al. 2000; Bittman et al. 2003; Goldscheider et al. 2015; Hochschild 1989; Hook 2016; Sayer 2016). Ever since its economic reforms in the late 1970s, the percentage of the dual-earning household has been soaring as female labor force participation gradually becomes the norm in China (Bauer et al. 1992; Yeung and Hu 2013). Gender ideology towards women's role in the public sphere has become more egalitarian. The younger generations in the urban area highly support non-traditional gender beliefs (Hu and Scott 2016; Qian and Li 2020). However, the expectation for women's roles at home has remained more traditional when comparing Chinese individuals with other Western people (Inglehart and Norris 2003). Beliefs about traditional gender roles at home have persisted or even strengthened across all generations of Chinese men and women (Qian and Li 2020).

Scholars have raised questions on interpreting the uneven shifts in gender ideology across these two dimensions. After analyzing two decades of gender attitude changes in 17 postindustrial countries, Knight and Brinton (2017) indicated the need to reconsider attitude changes as they do not only move between the two extreme points of egalitarianism and traditionalism. They argued that if we consider egalitarianism as the end goal and interpret other changes that had fallen short of such goal as traditionalism or stalled, it is easy to overlook the

nuances in attitude changes beyond such comparisons (Knight and Brinton 2017). Their research showed that even though public opinion towards gender issues has become more egalitarian overall in those 17 European countries, there are "several egalitarianism" rather than one (Knight and Brinton 2017). A study in the United States discovered that the public is not more traditional than before (Scarborough et al. 2019). Instead, the group of traditionalists has been replaced by people who have a more ambivalent view across different gender issues. The support rates towards gender equality are not increasing consistently when examining different gender attitudes (Scarborough et al. 2019). To capture those more detailed changes, scholars have asked for data that can better measure "a multitude of attitude items" beyond the two separated spheres (Jacobs and Gerson 2016; Pepin and Cotter 2018).

***Gender Ideology in Different Aspects of the Private Sphere:***

While attitudes in the private sphere have become more traditional than in the public sphere (Pepin and Cotter 2018; Qian and Li 2020; Zuo and Bian 2001), there might be different aspects of private sphere gender attitudes that need to be examined. In previous studies, researchers often grouped several questions to measure attitudes in the private sphere, and they found that a fair amount of people still hold traditional gender beliefs (Cotter et al. 2011; Qian and Li 2020; Zuo and Bian 2001). Most of these questions are along the lines of the traditional male-breadwinner/female-homemaker role, the relationship between working mothers and children, or working mothers' influence on children's well-being (Brooks and Bolzendahl 2004; Cotter et al. 2011; Qian and Li 2020) [8]. These are gender role-related questions that evolved from a position to see family and marriage as an economic unit that provides emotional, social, and

[8] Using the General Social Survey and the World Value Survey as an example, most of the private sphere gender attitude questions are centered around people's opinions of these three aspects of family arrangements.

financial supports (Becker 1965, 1973; Cherlin 2000; Moffitt 2000). It regards the gender division of labor between men and women to be efficient for running a family. These particular gender role questions measure what people think men and women should prioritize in life to maximize the benefit for the family and children (Brooks and Bolzendahl 2004; Cotter et al. 2011; Luo 2021; Qian and Li 2020; Zuo and Bian 2001).

Gender ideology in the private sphere, nevertheless, is not just limited to beliefs about what men and women "should" do and take responsibility for to maximize family gains. Women tend to prioritize family responsibility, but it does not mean that the value of family lives is more important than other aspects of their lives, such as careers. The traditional China belief argues that a women's place is at home, and their life purpose is achieved through severing their father, husband, and son[9]. Nowadays, women's self-realization may be achieved more through their careers than through marriage and family life like before (Kessler-Harris 2003). In China, female labor force participation has continued to grow together with a narrowing in income gap (Cai and Wang 2010; Yeung and Hu 2013). Their presence in the labor force has become the new norm, and many of them decide to delay marriage. The marriage rate has declined in recent years, and the number of divorces has increased drastically from close to 100,000 in 1975 to almost 4,100,000 in 2018 (Wang et al. 2019). These social changes may signal that marriage has become a life opinion rather than a necessity for women in China (Axinn and Thornton 2000; Goldin 2006; Oppenheimer 1994; A.Cherlin 2010). This is a different dimension of gender ideology that needs to be further examined.

[9] Referring to the belief of three obedience and four virtues (三从四德), and it claims that to fulfill their purpose, women should serve their father before they get married, serve their husband after they get married, and sever their son after their husband passed away. See: https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780190622671.001.0001/acref-9780190622671-e-658

## Gender Ideology: Gender Differences and Marriage Experiences

### *Gender Differences in Gender Ideology*

Men and women often have contrasting gender ideologies, and two primary reasons explain these gender differences in beliefs. First, men and women have distinct interest structures, and they are likely to support ideologies that benefit them. Second, since many social institutions are gendered, such as schools, men and women have been socialized to believe in different gender ideologies since they were young (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Davis and Greenstein 2009; Kroska and Elman 2009).

The most robust results show that women's participation in higher education and the labor force is likely to impact these two processes. Not only are women more likely to advance economically and socially by participating in education and the labor force, but these experiences also expose women to a new understanding of gender (Cha and Thébaud 2009; Cunningham 2008; Kroska and Elman 2009; Tu and Liao 2019). The impact of education and work experiences on men's gender attitudes is not clear. Scholars share the belief that men's participation in higher education and the labor force is the norm (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Moffitt 2000), and these experiences have minimal impact on men's gender attitudes. Men's gender belief is shaped by their spouse's education and labor force experiences instead. If men are closer to being a sole contributor to family income, they are less likely to support egalitarian gender beliefs (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004).

### *Gender Differences and the Role of Marriage Experiences*

While higher education and labor force participation are robust at explaining gender differences in attitudes, research that theorizes the role of marriage experiences is relatively incomplete (Barber and Axinn 1998). An earlier study showed that people with more traditional

gender ideologies were likely to marry early than those with a more egalitarian view (Barber and Axinn 1998). Other research suggested that divorced is associated with a more progressive gender attitude for women but not men (Amato and Booth 1991; Bolzendahl and Myers 2004), and remarriage was associated with an increase in egalitarian attitude (Lucier-Greer and Adler-Baeder 2011). However, no systematic study examines how marriage experiences can moderate gender differences across different dimensions of gender attitudes.

Marriage and family intuitions have always carried a gendered purpose throughout Chinese history, just as the labor market and politics. Marriage is an institution built upon patriarchal ideology to maximize male wealth and social status while continuing family lineage (Coontz 2006; Engels 1972; Hartmann 2016). Recently, as marriage turns into a life opinion rather than a necessity, it has become more selective than ever. While some Chinese people are inclined to consider marriage as a culturally and economically vital (Cong 2018; Friedman 2010; Yan 2003), many people choose to delay marriage or decide not to get married at all (Cong 2018; Yu and Xie 2015a). Those never-married people's gender beliefs may be drastically different from those who have/had marriage experiences. Either because of selection or socialization effects, we may expect marriage to have a long-lasting impact on people's gender attitudes compared to those who have no marriage experience at all.

The effect of marriage experience may also vary by gender. Marriage is probably not as rewarding as before, but this is truer for women than men. While men receive a marriage premium, women are often hurt by being married in the labor force. Like many other countries, Chinese employers usually prefer married men because they are seen as mature and responsible (Gao 2008; McDonald 2020; Woodhams, Lupton, and Xian 2009). However, married women and mothers often face significant disadvantages and discrimination in the hiring process and the

work environment because employers think those women have too many family responsibilities (Gao 2008; Woodhams et al. 2009; Zhang et al. 2008). It is possible that compared to married women, those never-married women are aware of these disadvantages, and they tend to prioritize their work. Alternatively, it is possible that after getting married, women are likely to be socialized to believe in a more traditional gender role that aligns with their marriage status. However, because men often receive marriage premiums, marriage might continue to be more of a norm for men's life, just as their presence in the labor market (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Moffitt 2000). We may not observe a close association between men's gender ideology and marriage experiences.

**Data and Method**

This chapter uses the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS) from 2010 to 2017. One primary purpose of this study is to examine the importance of marriage experience on gender ideologies by comparing those who have never been married to those who are/were in a marriage. The sample is limited to those above the median marriage age for men and women because the never-married group tends to be younger than those with at least one marriage experience. The sample now only includes women above age 22 and men above age 24. The results are also robust to limiting the sample to people above the 75$^{th}$ percentile of marriage age for each gender group[10]. After cleaning the data, the pooled sample has 55,104 cases. Probability survey weight is applied throughout the analyses, and the result section presents the weighted descriptive and inference results.

***Variables***

[10] I set the age limit because some people who are unmarried might because they are still too young to get married—for instance, those who are 18.

*Dependent Variables:* All four CGSS surveys have five questions that intend to measure people's gender ideology in public and private spheres. This study uses two questions to investigate gender ideology in the private sphere. The first question is labeled as "work and family," and it examines the traditional notion of "male breadwinner and female homemaker" roles. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree with the statement "men should prioritize work, and women should prioritize family."[11] The second question is labeled as "marriage and career," and it is based on a Chinese folk saying. Respondents were asked if they agree that "a good marriage is more important/valuable than a good career for women."[12] The responses for both questions range from "do not agree at all" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Thus, the higher number is associated with a more traditional gender attitude[13]. It is important to note that this question is derived from a social context in which the meaning of women's lives has been continuously challenged. There is no such question for men because society assumes that men confront more minor or no such concern about marriage and career than women.

*Independent variables:* Gender and marital status are the primary independent variables for the analyses. Gender is recoded into a dummy variable, "Female," in which females receive a value of 1, and males receive a value of 0. The original marital status variable includes those who were "never married," "cohabitating," "married for the first time," "married (not for the first time)," "divorced," "separated," and "widowed." This variable is recoded into a factor variable

[11] This question in Chinese: 男人以事业为重，女人以家庭为重.
[12] This question in Chinese: 干得好不如嫁得好.
[13] For the "marriage and work" question, the author intends to not describe the lower value as a more "egalitarian" attitude, but rather as a less "traditional" attitude. This is because that this question does not directly state what people think women should do, but rather emphasize on what people believe to be the value of marriage and work. We cannot directly judge whether one option is more equal than the other, and we can only argue if one option fits more with traditional beliefs than the other option.

with four groups to show a more precise comparison between those who “have never been married” and those who “are/were in a marriage” at the time of the survey. People who “have never married” or “are currently cohabitating” are the reference group and are labeled as "never married."[14] A second group includes people who are in their first marriage. Those in a second or higher-order marriage are kept as a separate group. Divorced, separated, or widowed people were coded as "no longer married."

Socioeconomic factors are included in the analysis. Completed education is measured as the highest degree earned by respondents. This variable is recoded into four categories: no college education (reference group), associate/vocational degree, bachelor’s degree, and master's degree or higher. Three variables are included in the analyses to measure people’s economic backgrounds. First, employment status is recoded into four groups: people employed in non-farming-related work (reference group), people who are working in farming, people who are currently unemployed, and people who have never worked. CGSS does not have a category for homemakers, and they are considered to either have never worked or unemployed. Second, this study uses the natural log form of annual income from the previous year in the analyses to adjust for the skewed distribution. Lastly, respondents' self-perception of economic status is included. The initial response was on a five-point Likert scale, and it is recorded into three categories: "below average" (reference group), "average," and "above average."

This study controlled for other potentially confounding factors. Cohort variables are included in the model since previous studies found significant cohort/generational differences in gender beliefs (Qian and Li 2020; Shu and Zhu 2012). Based on the coding scheme that previous

[14] In CGSS, the responses for marital status are mutually exclusive. Those who have never been married but are cohabitating are categorized as cohabitating.

scholars used, the "Unsettled Generation" includes those born before founding the People's Republic of China. People born between 1949 and 1955 are coded as the "New China Generation." The "Revolution Generation" includes people born during the Chinese Revolution period from 1956 to 1979. Lastly, people born after 1980 are coded as the "One-child Generation" (Qian and Li 2020; Shu and Zhu 2012). With China's household registration (Hukou) system being one of the main characteristics of the social stratification (Lu 2008; Yeung 2013), I also include a hukou status dummy variable. Rural hukou is coded as 1, and all other hukou statuses are combined and coded as 0. The survey year variable accounts for possible period effects. In more recent periods, people report more egalitarian gender attitudes (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Brooks and Bolzendahl 2004; Qian and Li 2020).

***Analytical Strategy***

Ordinal logistic regressions are used to model each gender's attitude separately. Focusing on gender and marital status effects, socioeconomic factors, and other confounding variables are controlled in the model. The first step examines the main effects of gender and marriage status. The second set of models includes interaction terms between gender and marital status. It looks whether there are other gender differences in gender ideologies across marital statuses. Margins plots are presented for more intuitive explanations in the following sections. Lastly, the analysis includes models stratified by gender. In the preliminary analysis, the author ran the partial ordered logistic model to check the results across all categories of the dependent variable. The results and the Wald test show that while the effect size for some variables differs slightly across each category, the general directions of the coefficients are consistent[15]. The

[15] Based on the adjusted Wald test of parallel lines assumption, the coefficients for variables "female," "highest education," "survey year," and "total income (log)" are not consistent across

ordered logistic results are presented in this study for ease of interpretation.

## Findings

### *Descriptive Results*

People's attitudes vary across different domains of the private sphere. Figure 3.1 shows that people have a more diverse view of the gender role question than the marriage and career question. A higher proportion of people do not agree with a traditional gender division of labor than the proportion of people who oppose the traditional view about marriage and career for women. However, the proportion of people who agree with the more traditional beliefs is similar between these two questions. The overtime trends show that for both dimensions of gender attitudes, there has been an decrease in support towards traditional gender beliefs in recent years.

[Figure 3.1 about here]

Gender differences in gender beliefs are also observed. Table 3.1 shows that people have a less traditional belief about the meaning of "marriage and career" than about the gender division of labor when comparing the average score across these two questions. The t-test results show that women have significantly less traditional attitudes towards the work-and-family divide than men. However, men are more likely than women to have a less traditional opinion about the statement that "a good marriage is more important for women than a good career." For men, the mean score for the marriage and career question is a lot slower than the mean for the work and family question.

[Table 3.1 about here]

These differences in gender ideologies may vary due to differences in sociodemographic

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all four comparisons of the dependent variable categories. However, the direction of the coefficients is consistent across all models.

background between men and women in the sample. The weighted descriptive results in Table 3.2 show slightly more people with rural hukous for both male and female groups. Also, most people belong to the Revolution Generation and the New China Generation. 17% of men and 19% of women were born after the One-Child Policy ratification. Accordingly, few men (9.47%) and women (5.8%) are never married, while the majority of the people are in their first marriage (78.51% for men and 74.9% for women). Less than 2% of men and women are married more than once. About 20% of women are separated, divorced, or widowed, compared to about 10% of men.

The results show significant gender variations across socioeconomic backgrounds. The weighted results present that most people do not have a college degree (84.82% for women and 81.94% for men)[16], which matches the population education level reported by the 2010 Chinese Census. The percentage of men with tertiary education is slightly higher than women. However, similar education levels do not translate into comparable employment outcomes. About 48% of men are employed in non-farming jobs, but only about 32% of women have similar employment. The unemployment rate for women is about 13 percentage points higher than for men. Women's average annual income is significantly lower than men's. They only earn about 22,000 yuan per year, while men earn about 35,000 yuan per year.

[Table 3.2 about here]

Interestingly, not much gender difference is found when looking at people's perceptions of their economic status. More than half of men and women think they have an average economic background (52.85% for women and 51.14% for men). About an equal percentage of

[16] The weighted descriptive results of the original education variable show that many of those who do not have a college education have either primary (about 25%) or junior high school education (about 30%). About 15% of them do not have any education.

men and women believe they are below average economic level (about 40% for both men and women). Less than 10% of men and women think they are above average. The following ordinal logistic regressions examine how marriage experiences are associated with Chinese men's and women's gender ideology while controlling these demographic differences.

***Gender, Marriage, and Gender Ideology***

Gender variations are found when examining attitudes towards the work-and-family divide and the importance of marriage and career for women. Results from Model 1 and Model 3 in Table 3.3 show that even after controlling for marital, economic, and demographic background, gender differences in attitudes still exist. Similar to the bivariate results in Table 3.1, gender effects differ across the two domains. For women, the odds of strongly agreeing with a traditional attitude about work and family compared to other response categories are significantly lower after controlling for socioeconomic factors (OR: 0.76, $p<0.001$)[17]. However, the odds of agreeing with the traditional view about "marriage and work" compared to other categories are higher for women than men (OR:1.07 $p<0.001$). Holding other measures equally, women are more likely to support the traditional belief that "a good marriage is more important for women than a good career."

[Table 3.3 about here]

Marriage experience is also associated with gender ideology in the private sphere, and it moderates the gender differences in attitudes. First of all, Model 1 shows that even after

[17] In the ordered logit model, the odds ratio represents that being in groups with higher value (e.g., strongly agree) versus less than or equal to this value are proportional odds times larger. So we can interpret it as the odds of choosing strongly agree significantly lower for women than choosing other lower categories combined. In the following results, I will describe the results as higher or lower odds of holding a more traditional attitude because a more traditional attitude is associated with a higher value in this case.

controlling for differences in educational and economic background, marriage has a lasting impact on gender ideology about the traditional division of labor and about marriage and work for women. In Model 1, compared to people who are never married, those in their first marriage are more likely to have a traditional view about work and family roles (OR: 1.15, P<0.01). The odds of agreeing with traditional beliefs are even higher for remarried individuals (OR: 1.28, p<0.05). Even those who are no longer married have higher odds of supporting a less traditional view than those who are never married (OR: 1.15, p<0.05). Similar patterns are shown in Model 3. People in their first marriage tend to have slightly higher support towards traditional views about the meaning of marriage and career for women (OR: 1.09, P<0.1). Remarried individuals have significantly higher odds of agreeing with the traditional belief than those who are never married at a relatively later age (OR: 1.22, p<0.05). Nevertheless, no significant is found between never-married people and those who are no longer married.

Second, marriage has a different impact on women's attitudes than men's. Model 2 and Model 4 in Table 3.3 show the results once interaction terms between females and marital status are included. For attitudes towards work and family, after including the interaction effects, the main effect of females remains significant. The never-married women still have lower odds of supporting traditional attitudes than never-married men (OR: 0.45, p<0.01). In contrast, the main effects of marital status are no longer significant, except for the “no longer married” group (OR:0.84, p<0.05). It suggests that the effect of being in a marriage is conditioned on being a female. For a more straightforward explanation of the results, Figure 3.2 presents the margin plots by gender, demonstrating the proportion of men and women who agree and strongly agree with the traditional statement about the division of labor. It suggests that women's attitudes are more likely to vary by marriage experience, especially compared to those who have never been

married at a relatively late age to those who have marriage experience. In contrast, there are fewer variations in traditional attitudes on the division of labor for men with different marital statuses. Holding other factors at the mean level, never-married women have the lowest probability of holding traditional views about work and family. Still, while a higher proportion of never-married men hold a more traditional gender attitude than women, close to half of the never-married women either agree or strongly agree with the statement that "men's place is at work while women's place is at home." Men in second or higher-order marriages tend to have the highest proportion of agreeing with these traditional beliefs about the work-and-family divide.

[Figure 3.2 about here]

Gender differences in attitudes towards marriage and work for women are also found across marital statuses. Once the interaction terms are included in Model 4, it is shown that women showed higher odds of holding a more traditional view about “marriage and work” in Model 3 is because we did not consider the moderating effect of marriage experiences of men and women. Never-married women have lower odds of agreeing with the traditional view of marriage and work than never-married men (OR:0.73, $p<0.01$), but women who have/had marriage experience have higher odds of agreeing to the traditional view than their male counterparts. Figure 3.3 shows the predicted margins for those who agree or strongly agree with the statement that "a good marriage is more important for women than a good career." Similar to the results in Figure 3.2, marriage experience slightly impacts women more than men. Compared to the never-married, women who are/were in marriage, are more likely to believe that “a good marriage is more important than a good career for women.” However, gender differences in attitudes towards marriage and career are smaller than gender differences in beliefs about the division of labor. A lower proportion of men, across marital status, tend to hold more traditional

views in the marriage domain than their beliefs about the division of labor at home. Men who have or had been married before even have lower or equal odds of holding traditional gender views on this issue than their female counterparts. For instance, for never-married men, the proportion for agreeing and strongly agreeing with the traditional division of labor statement is close to 0.2 and 0.5, respectively. However, the proportion of women holding a traditional view of marriage and career is only about 0.1 and 0.35 for never-married men. Such paradoxical results in men's belief of marriage and work and division of labor will be explained later.

[Figure 3.3 about here]

***Differences in Predictors across Gender Groups***

Table 4 further examines differences in gender ideology by stratifying the analyses by gender. These analyses permit an examination of how marital status, socioeconomic background, and demographic background have impacted men's and women's views of the private sphere differently. Supporting the results in Table 3.3, Table 3.4 shows that marriage experiences strongly affect women's beliefs about work and family. Compared to never-married women, those in their first marriage (OR:1.29, $p<0.01$) and those who were no longer married (OR:1.25, $P<0.05$) have higher odds of expressing traditional views about work and family. For men, only those who married more than once (OR:1.26, $p<0.05$) have higher odds of holding more traditional views than never-married men. Education and socioeconomic background are more strongly associated with men's opinions about work and family than their marriage experiences. Different from what was found by previous Western studies, Chinese men's economic and employment backgrounds are associated with their gender attitudes. Men with higher education, men who work in non-farming industries, and men with higher annual incomes have lower odds of expressing traditional views. For women, higher education and non-farming employment are

significantly associated with lower odds of supporting a traditional gender division of labor at home.

[Table 3.4 about here]

Second, the predictors of men's and women's views about the meaning of marriage and career for women differ from the predictors of their attitudes towards work and family. Married women (OR: 1.21, $p<0.05$) and those who married more than once (OR:1.25, $p<0.1$) have higher odds of expressing traditional attitudes than never-married women. There is no significant difference between those who are never married and those who are no longer married. Education and socioeconomic background have a stronger association with women's views about marriage and career. In particular, women with higher education levels, women employed in non-farming sectors, and women with higher annual incomes have lower odds of agreeing with the statement that "marriage is more important/valuable than a good career for women." Interestingly, there is no significant variation observed between men of different marital statuses. Education and sociological background are more strongly associated with men's odds of holding traditional views about the importance of marriage and career for women.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Gender ideologies in the private family have not changed as much as gender beliefs in the public sphere. Scholars have posed questions on how we should examine and interpret such changes in public opinion on gender ideologies (Knight and Brinton 2017; Scarborough et al. 2019). Rather than seeing changes moving between the two points of egalitarianism to traditionalism, we may find more variations in gender ideology changes that have been overlooked previously (Knight and Brinton 2017). Responding to Pepin and Cotter's (2018) call for analyzing "a multitude of attitude items" considering the multidimensional nature of gender

ideologies, this chapter further examines if attitude changes vary across two aspects of gender ideologies in the private sphere.

In China, traditional gender ideologies in the private sphere have reappeared in recent years. In previous studies, researchers mainly worked with a combined measure comprising only gender role-related questions to examine attitude in the private sphere (Qian and Li 2020; Zuo and Bian 2001). However, gender ideology in the private family involves more than beliefs about what people think men's and women's responsibility should be and whether gender specialization and division of labor are adequate for running a family. The cultural meaning of family and marriage has also transformed over time. Like other countries worldwide, female labor force participation has gradually become the norm in China, and marriage has become more about individual development rather than companionship (Cherlin 2004; Coontz 2006; Yan 2003). It is inevitable to examine how people view the meaning of marriage and career and whether this belief is also gendered (Cherlin 2004; Coontz 2006; Lesthaeghe 2010). Adopting a multidimensional approach, we might find several traditionalism rather than one in the private sphere in contemporary China.

More importantly, focusing on examining gender differences in gender attitudes, this chapter uncovers whether men's and women's beliefs on dividing family and work responsibilities would diverge from what they think to be more worthy of doing in life. The results show that such divergence in gender ideology exists among Chinese men. Compared to women, men are more likely to support the traditional division of labor. They believe that men should prioritize work while women should prioritize the family. Nevertheless, controlling for other sociodemographic factors, men are also less likely than women to agree with the statement that "a good marriage is more important than a good career for women." They think that

women's career values are the same, if not more when compared to a good marriage.

The divergence in gender attitudes has emerged not because women are more likely to have traditional views about the meaning of marriage and career than their opinion about the division of labor. When examining how marriage experiences can moderate gender differences in attitudes, the results indicate that the proportion of women who hold traditional gender ideologies at different marital relationship stages are reasonably consistent across both questions. Compared to views about the gender division of labor, men's lower approval of the traditional belief about the importance of marriage and career for women's life is the key. Across all marital statuses, a similar proportion of men and women do not believe that a good marriage is more important than a promising career for women's lives. However, many men still think men and women should follow the traditional division of labor.

This inconsistency in men's view reveals that while men think women can find similar value, if not more, through their career rather than marriage, they still believe that women should be the primary family caretaker. Several of my male interviewees have expressed that they do not think it is a good idea for women to be a stay-at-home wives. They argue that not only it is financially difficult for a family to sustain itself, it is also important for both partners to have their own life outside of the family. Nevertheless, while some of them claimed that they would discuss housework arrangement with their wives and take on some house work and childcare work, they believed their partners still may put more effort in taking care of the family. As Mr. Lin said

> *"I am willing to discuss these family arrangements and do some of it, but I am just not good at it"*

Other male interviewees argued that they were completely okay with the idea of equally share

housework and other care work with their partners. Nevertheless, because they have a higher earning and a busier schedule, they could not see these types of arrangement as practical. Several young women also talked about similar issues in their relationship. Mrs Zhen, a 35-year-old factory engineer with a 5-years old boy, said she often needed to drop work when her kid were sick or ran into problem in his kindergarten. “I can let my husband handle these situations”, Mrs Zhen said, “but I wouldn’t because I just care about my kid too much. Also, my husband is working as a senior engineer in the company. He just do not have the time or the patience to help our boy with homework or any other things.”

The fast-changing economy and the surge in female labor force participation may have made it more difficult for men to ignore women’s presence in the work (England 2000; Risman 2018). Besides, the increase in the cost of living also has made women’s income more essential in a household (Goldin 2006). Nevertheless, the continued support of the traditional division of labor mirrors men's unwillingness to return to the family (Cha and Thébaud 2009; England 2010; Hochschild 1989). Even if men believe that work is valuable and vital to women’s lives, they still expect women to follow the gender specialization rule. Work place policies and other institution arrangements also do not assist with promoting gender equality at home. The lack of childcare and social policies give no flexibility for partners to take care of their family when needed. Also, because women are seem as less committed to work than men in workplace, they are more likely to be excused to take time-off to care for the family than men (Cha 2010; Hochschild 2001; Jacobs and Gerson 2005). Thus, the biased gender structure in the labor force further impact the unequal gender division of labor at home.

Such divergence in gender beliefs can have significant real-life implications for women. Research shows that without men’s help at home and with the high expectation of women’s

performance at work, women often face the double burden to take care of both work and family (Hochschild 1989). When husband and wife both have their own job, women are likely to prioritize their partner's career over their own, and they often take on a second shift to fulfill family duty (Bielby and Bielby 1992; Cha 2010; Hochschild 1989; Sayer 2016). When women earn more than their husbands at home, they do more housework to compensate and neutralize gender role deviance (Bittman et al., 2003; Brines 1994). On the contrary, men do not need to take on the "second shift," even if they do not earn more than their spouse (Brines 1994; Cha 2010; Hochschild 1989). Perhaps the persistent cultural belief in gender role specialization has limited what people think men and women should prioritize in life.

Furthermore, this research also showed how marriage experience could have more significant associations with women's gender ideology while such associations were not found for men. Presumably, this is because marriage has become more selective for women than men nowadays. For many women, especially working women, marriage is not as rewarding as before. They are often hurt by being married in the labor force. Without government regulation, many Chinese hiring advertisements can openly state their age preference for hiring a female employee (Gao 2008). In the hiring process, women are often questioned about their marital status and childbearing plans (Gao 2008; Woodhams et al. 2009; Zhang et al. 2008). Thus, women who decide to enter marriage may see family responsibility as more important than their work responsibility. Even women who are no longer married have more traditional gender beliefs than the never-married group. It is possible that once being married, women are likely to be socialized to believe in a more traditional gender role that aligns with their marriage status. As my female interviewee talked about when they got married and had their child, they recentered their focus to care more about their family and child rather than their own career. For men, marriage continues

to be more of a norm, just as their presence in the labor market (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Moffitt 2000). Such a close association between marriage experiences and gender ideologies was not observed. Concluding from my interviews, more younger generation of men are willing to take on family work then the older generations. However, because they are often not seen as the primary caretaker, their request are not accommodated by their job. It leaves them no option but to shift those housework and childcare workload to their female partners.

In conclusion, this chapter shows that changes in traditional gender ideologies in China is complex. We need to analyze gender attitudes while considering their multidimensional nature. The gender difference across two dimensions of gender attitude reveals men's conflicting beliefs. Besides, while the data does not allow us to test the causal relationship between gender differences in ideologies and marriage experiences, the result still shows that just like employment experiences, marriage experiences have a lasting impact on gender ideology even if a person is no longer in a marriage union.

## CHAPTER FOUR: Marriage and Partner Selection for The One-Child Generation

The marriage institution in China has changed drastically since the Communist Party took over in 1949. Many scholars have argued that the political and economic changes since the take-over are the keys to understanding marriage shifts in the contemporary China (Cong 2018; Diamant 2000; Jeffreys and Yu 2015). Especially, the establishment of the 1950 Marriage Law transformed men and women's relationships in romantic relations and the marriage market. For the first time, by trying to overthrow the old marriage regime, marriage was conceived of as an individual decision between men and women (Cai and Wang 2014). Specifically, in order to align with the Communist Party's goal and distance from Feudalism traditions and beliefs, the idea of freedom (zi you, 自由) was promoted and encouraged. In the 1950 Marriage Law, this idea was further transformed into the concept of autonomy ("zizhu"自主), which granted individuals with the ability to make independent decisions about their marriage and family (Cong 2018; Jeffreys and Yu 2015; Santos and Harrell 2017).

However, traditional Confucius and courtship culture are still influential even as many Chinese people have become more open about sex, marriage, and romantic relationships. The idea of filial piety has also given parents the right to intervene in children's intimate relationship development. Even today, when marriage decisions have been transformed from collective synchronization to individual choice, parental matchmaking still plays a huge role in private lives (Zhang and Sun 2014). This chapter seeks to examine how young adults make marriage decisions when they have more freedom but are still under parental influences. By examine mate preferences and differences between young men and women, it uncovers how gender structure operates in the marriage institution.

### Marriage Partner Selection

### *Economic Explanation*

When selecting marriage partners, everyone has a "wish list" that includes the characteristics desired in a potential marriage partner they wish to spend their lives with. Economics and Psychology scholars have prompted considerable research to investigate this mate preference "wish list" in a Western context. In economists' view, marriage is ultimately a process of assortative mating, which can be well-explained through economic modeling. In A Theory of Marriage, Becker (1974) explained that individuals mainly want to get married because marriage can bring more to people than staying single (Becker 1974). To ensure the marriage will be such a rewarding choice, people focus a lot on partners' economic background, such as income (Becker 1974; Oppenheimer 1988; Smock, Manning, and Porter 2005). Using qualitative interview data, Smock (2015) shows that economic factors can be an important factor that influences people's marriage decisions. Unlike what has been argued by other scholars that people want to get married because marriage can cause changes and lead to better income or different positive outcomes, Smock's results suggest that people believe marriage ought to occur when financial status has already changed and established (Smock et al. 2005). Therefore, the financial adequacy of the potential marriage partner is the key to making marriage decisions.

While financial stability is a crucial factor when selecting marriage partners, it varies between women and men in a heterosexual marriage. Women's economic foundation becomes increasingly more important in marriage because of the fast-changing global economy and the growing participation of women in the labor force (Goldin 2006; Sweeney 2002). Besides women's employment status and income, their educational background has also played an essential role in the assortative mating process (Schwartz 2013; Sweeney 2002). Women with higher education and higher income are more likely to get married than others who do not have

such socioeconomic backgrounds. It does not mean that men's economic condition is no longer critical. Tracking two decades of family changes in the United States, Sweeney (2002) argues that men's financial foundation has not waned over time, even with women's increasing presence in the labor market. Men continue to be seen as the provider for the family, and their financial status remains a key factor for marriage formation. In fact, the rising economic instability among men and the growing difficulty in employment for men are the keys to explaining the recent decrease in the marriage formation (Oppenheimer 2000).

This economic explanation of mate preferences has been consistently supported by research over the years. However, scholars have pointed out some limitations of this approach. Pollak (2000) suggests economic factors often time cannot explain marriage decisions alone. Cultural factors also play an essential role in providing alternative explanations on people's marriage decisions. In detail, decisions regarding marriage and marriage partners must be analyzed in conjunction with other behaviors such as nonmarital fertility, divorce, remarriage, labor force participation, and so on (Pollak 2000). Marriage is no longer an economic union but an emotional union that helps build companionship and promote individual development (Amato 2004; Buss et al. 2004; Coontz 2006). Together, people's expectations of marriage and preferences for a partner have extended beyond finding someone who can just bear children and provide food for the family. Instead, Furstenberg (1996) claimed that people have a higher expectation for gaining quality interpersonal communications, intimacy, and sexual gratification in an ideal marriage (Furstenberg 1996). The current economic explanations also gloss over social contexts and different structural inequalities in society (Cherlin 2000). In Moffitt's study (2000), while confirming the economic model from a macro perspective, he also suggests that reasons for marriage formations vary by group. The decline of marriage among more educated

white men and women is a story of rising female wages. At the same time, it is a story of declining male salaries for the less educated group. Thus, the economic model of marriage formation functions needs to be analyzed and differentiated across various social groups.

***Psychological Studies on Mate Preferences***

Social psychologists have offered a more systematic inquiry of sex differences in mate preferences that are not solely limited to economic explanations. Goodwin (1990) summarized from previous psychological and sociopsychological studies that sex differences exist across two major types of mate preferences: somatic preferences and psychological preferences (Goodwin 1990). Sex differences in somatic preference explain how men and women have different standards for physical characteristics that they favor in the desired partner (Buss and Barnes 1986; Goodwin 1990). Growing from evolutionary theory, women were assumed to often rely on men for survival because of limited opportunities and resources that were presented to them. Thus, based on this trend of literature, scholars had proven that women were more likely than men to choose mates who had high survival and providing capacities (Betzig, Mulder, and Turke 1988; Buss 1989; Trivers 1985). Men valued physical attractiveness and youth more than women because men saw these two characteristics as indications for high reproductive capacity (Buss 1989; Trivers 1985).

On the other hand, when investigating sex differences in psychological preferences, researchers examine whether men and women prefer different personality types of a marriage partner (Goodwin 1990). Unlike the evident sex differences in somatic preferences, research has shown more similarities in preferred personality types for men and women (Buss and Barnes 1986; Goodwin 1990). Using various characteristic measurements across different Western

cultures, research shows that men and women value partners who are kind, considerate, honest, and humorous (Buss and Barnes 1986; Goodwin 1990).

Recently, social science research has challenged these psychological approaches to understand mate preferences as scholars argue that such views are too biological deterministic. They often neglect the changes in gender relations and the cultural context (Goodwin 1999; Lorber 1994). Specifically, these approaches reduce sex differences in somatic preferences to the biological dominance of men over women (Lorber 1994). With changes in gender relations in the family, labor market, and politics, both sexes could have changed their standards for desired characteristics in their partner. In longitudinal studies and recent cross-sectional research, researchers have found fewer sex differences in mate preferences than before. For instance, women also value the physical attractiveness of potential partners, and both men and women value physical attractiveness a lot more nowadays than before (Buss et al. 2004; Regan and Berscheid 1997). There is also no sex difference in somatic preferences as men become more likely to seek partners with providing abilities, especially from a financial perspective (Buss et al. 2004).

Besides overlooking gender-relation changes over time, these earlier sociopsychological approaches also discount the importance of cultural context in examining mate preferences, as a majority of the studies have been Western-centered. In Buss's study across 37 societies, sex differences in mate preferences were consistent, but variations still existed. For instance, there were no sex differences in the importance of chastity in Africa, the Middle East, South America, and Eastern Europe compared to other Western societies (Buss 1989). Research also found that compared to societies that are more individualist, collectivist societies tend to be less "choosey" and are less likely to emphasize individual preferences and expectations of partners (Hatfield and

Sprecher 1995; Toro-Morn and Sprecher 2003). In countries such as China, there are more traditional mate preference criteria than countries like the United States because of the more persistent influence of the traditional gender role. Chinese men are more likely to attach high values to their mate's domestic ability than American men (Toro-Morn and Sprecher 2003).

## Data and Method

### *Data and measures*

To examine marriage partner preferences for the Chinese One-Child Generation young adults, this chapter uses the 2012 Fudan Yangtze River Delta Social Transformation Survey (FYRST). In 2012, the FYRST research team included a series of questions to explore people's views towards sex, romantic relationships, and marriage. One of the modules had two questions to assess marriage partner preferences for men and women. The first question asked, "if a woman is considered as a suitable marriage partner, please mark the level of importance for the following list of criteria." The second question asked respondents if a man is considered a suitable marriage partner how would they mark the level of importance from the same list of criteria. Unlike other Western surveys and studies that used a single measure to capture the overall view on partner preferences, this gender-specific question structure in the 2012 FYRST survey allows for an analysis that can assess men's and women's preferences for individuals of the opposite gender and also compare with their view on people of their own gender.

Both questions include a list of 15 criteria that seeks to capture economic, interpersonal, physical, behavioral, and birth/constellation-related characteristics. These 15 items are family background (parents' education, employment, and so on), political background (party membership), education background, economic condition, property ownership, appearance, height, age, personality, intelligence, blood type, constellation, horoscope (生成八字), good

habit, do housework and cook. Respondents were asked to rate whether each of the criteria is "not important at all" (1), "not so important" (2), "neutral" (3), "important" (4), or "very important" (5). The descriptive result shows what people consider as "important" and "very important" criteria to highlight people's preferences. These preliminary analyses demonstrate that not many respondents choose extreme answers. Thus, the five-point liker scale is recoded into a dummy form in the analytical models. "Important" and "very important" are coded as important (1), "not important at all," "not so important," and "neutral" is coded as "not important" (0).

## ***Methodology***

This chapter took advantage of the gender-specific question design to examine and compare men's and women's views towards both genders in the marriage market. The extensive descriptive analysis focused on exploring the overall preferences for a male and a female partner. Then, further disaggregating by respondents' gender, descriptive results highlight how men and women have different standards when evaluating criteria for males and females considered suitable marriage partners in society.

### *Latent Class Analysis*

Next, I uses the Latent Class Analysis (LCA) to explore different dimensions of mate preferences. Specifically, the analysis classified people into groups of diverse preference types to identify the unobserved heterogeneity in the population based on a latent construct (in this case, mate preferences). The LCA categorized similar people into groups based on responses to the 15 indicators specified above. Thus, those clustered into the same group are assumed to share some underlying commonality or association (Nylund-Gibson and Choi 2018). Nylund and colleagues (2007), the LCA is seen as the "person-center" model and is preferred compared to "variable-center" methods such as factor analyses. This is because the LCA model does not rely on

arbitrary cutoffs to classify cases. Instead, it is empirical and data-driven since the mate preference construct is derived from patterns of item response probabilities for each class or group (Nylund et al. 2007; Scarborough et al. 2019).

Latent classes are constructed after estimating and comparing model fit indices, item response probabilities, and class membership probabilities (Collins and Lanza 2009; Nylund-Gibson and Choi 2018; Scarborough et al. 2019). First, to decide the number of classes, I go through the class enumeration process by obtaining and comparing fit indices among LCA models with a different number of classes. Three indices were calculated in the process: the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), and the Bayes Factor (BF). When evaluating BIC and AIC, models with lower values indicate better fit. The BF indicator is a pairwise comparison of fit between two models with K and K+1 numbers of classes[18]. If BF is greater than 10, it represents more significant support for models with fewer classes, K. If it is smaller than ten but greater than 3, it indicates moderate support for model K compared to model K+1.

Then the number of classes was decided after comparing these fit indices and assessing the substantive interpretation of these item response probabilities and class membership probability results. Specifically, I used the calculated item response probabilities to determine the meaning of each class. Each represents a conditional probability that a respondent in a particular class would choose one of the 15 mate preference indicators. Then I also used class membership probability to determine the probability for each respondent to belong to each latent class (Collins and Lanza 2009; Nylund-Gibson and Choi 2018; Scarborough et al. 2019). Table 4.1

[18] As Nylund-Gibson and Choi (2018) summarized, $BF_{A,B} = \exp[\mathrm{SIC}_A - \mathrm{SIC}_B]$. It compares Model A (model $K$) and Model B (model $K$+1). SIC is the Schwartz Information Criterion and is defined as $SIC = -.05(BIC)$.

shows the detailed results of those three key estimations. Based on those results, I picked a three-class model when examining female marriage partners and a four-class model for a male marriage partner at the aggregate level[19]. The following section explains how each class is categorized and labeled based on the item response probability. Then the class membership probabilities showed the chances for each respondent to fall into each class categories.

*Multinomial Latent Class Analysis*

A key factor in this research is examining how crucial sociodemographic characteristics, especially gender, are associated with One-Child Generation young adults' marriage partner references. After the class enumeration process, the multinomial latent class analysis assessed whether the relative proportion for various sociodemographic groups (e.g., men vs. women) were the same across different class memberships of mate preferences (Nylund et al. 2007). The specific reference group for male and female mate preferences was selected after identifying different class membership. Several preliminary analyses using other reference groups indicate consistent results. I will explain the chosen reference group in the next section.

Focusing on exploring gender differences in mate preference, I first assessed the effect of gender across different classes of female and male mate preference. Then, I controlled for

[19] I also disaggregate mate preferences by gender, and more variations were found. When only examining women's mate preferences, a two-class model were found when examining views towards female and a seven-class model were found for views towards male. Similar, when only examining male's preferences, a six-class model were constructed based on their view towards female partner. However, only a two-class model were found when evaluating men's view towards people of their own gender. The reason why less classes were found for men and women when examining their views towards people of the same gender may be because they are uniformly less harsh at judging their own gender. The preliminary results show that across all 15 criteria, only a small proportion of respondents believe those criteria are important when rating people of their own gender. To have a more straightforward explanation, I constructed the final class at the aggregated level, then using the multinomial latent class analysis and predicted probability to explain class membership by gender.

variables proven to significantly impact partner preferences and the assortative mating process in China (Toro-Morn and Sprecher 2003; Yu and Xie 2015a; Zhan 2016). Specifically, individuals' hukou status, the most salient marker of social stratification in China, was included as a binary variable in the second model. I compared those who have a rural hukou (coded as 1) and those who have non-rural hukou (coded as 0). Lastly, I also control the potential effects of individuals' marriage experiences and socioeconomic backgrounds in the final model. The previous chapter shows that gender attitudes are associated with an individual's marriage experiences. Thus, marital status was included in the model to compare those who were never married (coded as 0) to those who have marriage experiences (coded as 1) [20]. Employment status was recoded from the variable that asks respondents if they were working for pay. It was recoded into two categories: people who were working for pay (1) and those who were not working for pay at all (0). This is the best employment measure that captured the status of most sample respondents. Education background was recoded into three main categories: "below college or no education" (0), "Bachelor or Associate degree" (1), and "Master or above" (2). The logged total family annual income was included in the model.

**Results**

***The Important Criteria and Gender Differences***

While some important criteria are the same when evaluating both female and male partners, the level of importance for others is quite different. Figures 4.1a and 4.1b show the percentage of respondents who consider specific criteria as important or very important for the

[20] The never-married group includes two categories from the original coding: never married and cohabitating. Married, divorced, separated, and widowed people were grouped as those who have marriage experiences. This grouping reduces modeling errors that were costed by insufficient sample numbers in some original categories. Also, it highlights how marriage experiences can be crucial in shaping mate preferences.

desired female and male marriage partner. Echoing what has been found by previous studies, people nowadays do not consider the abilities to provide and to reproduce as some extremely crucial standards for a marriage partner (Buss and Barnes 1986; Goodwin 1990). Chinese young adults also do not consider physical attractiveness as important key for neither male and female partners, unlike many individuals in Western studies (Buss et al. 2004; Regan and Berscheid 1997). Instead, majority of the Chinese respondents in the sample believe that to be a desire marriage partner, for either male or female, they need to live up to having a good personality, a good living habit, and high intelligence. However, a higher percentage of respondents have indicated those critical criteria for males compared to for females.

The traditional mate preferences remain at the top of the list when evaluating marriageability, and such preferences differ for men and women. For men, their economic achievement and ability to own a property rank fourth and fifth on the list (Figure 4.1a). Specifically, close to 60% of the respondents think that if a man is considered a suitable marriage partner, their economic background is essential or very important. About half of the respondents believe that a man's property ownership is crucial for him to be seen as a potential marriage partner. Interestingly, there may be a need for men's participation at home since about 50 % of the respondents believe that doing house is a key criterion for men. For a female to be considered as a suitable marriage partner, close to 60% of respondents rank women's age as the fourth important thing on the list, followed by about 50% of respondents who think women's abilities to do housework and cook meals are essential (Figure 4.1b). These sex differences indicate that while there are some changes in people's view towards marriage and family, the enduring traditional gender division of labor is still prevalent for Chinese young adults. To be competitive

in the marriage market, men need to have the capability to provide for the family while women show their ability to take care of the home.

However, who are more progressive in their views towards marriage and family? Men or women? Disaggregating these mate preferences by gender, descriptive results indicate that Chinese young women are leading the game. Compared to their male counterparts, Chinese young women favor less traditional beliefs when evaluating marriage criteria for men and people of their sex. Figures 4.2a and 4.2b show that a high proportion of male respondents believed in the traditional gender division of labor at home. Similar to the aggregate results, most of the men respondents believe that good habits, good personality, and high intelligence are the top three criteria for a man and a woman to be considered marriageable. However, as figure 4.2a shows, when evaluating measures for a man, economic background, education level, and property ownership remain at the top of the list. While "doing housework" ranks sixth at the aggregate level (figure 4.1a), only about 30% of the male respondents believe that it is essential for a marriageable man to do housework, and it is only ranked the 10$^{th}$ on the list (Figure 4.2a). When evaluating criteria for women, male respondents believed that a woman's age and the ability to do housework are quite important (Figure 4.2b).

On the other hand, women's view on marriage criteria reflects their liberal belief in gender relationships in the family. The majority of the women believe good habits, good personality, and intelligence should be on top of the list when evaluating both males and females as a marriageable partner (see Figures 4.3a and 4.3b). For the economic background criterion, many women in this study believe that it is important for a man to have a good financial background, but a woman also needs to have a good economic foundation to be competitive in the marriage market. It is an essential evaluation element for both females and males. Ranking

fourth on the list, close to 60% of women think economic background is important when evaluating a male marriage partner, and about 50% believe it is essential for a female partner. Figure 4.3a shows that many women see men's ability to do housework as necessary. About 50% of women respondents believe this, and it has an equal ranking as the men's property ownership criterion. However, about 60% of women do not see doing housework as a critical indicator to evaluate a woman (figure 4.3b). This criterion only ranks ninth on the list.

Instead, many women believed that a woman's family background is an important factor in evaluating marriageability. These overall trends evince an undeniable shift in Chinese young adults' view of marriage and partnership. However, unlike their counterparts, more Chinese women envisioned a non-traditional gender division of labor in marriage. They do not see themselves as homemakers but rather as financial contributors to the family. Besides, their desired male partners to contribute to both family finances and homemaking.

***Types of Gender-Specific Mate Preferences***

Following these descriptive findings, I carried out the latent class analysis to classify people into groups based on the latent construct of diverse preference types. As explained in the method section, a three-class model was found for preferences towards female partners, and a four-class model was found for male partner preferences (see Table 4.1). The item response probabilities and the class membership probabilities for female and male partner preferences were presented in Table 4.2. I constructed each class based on variables with probabilities over 50%, which indicates that a respondent in a particular class would have more than a 50% chance of thinking the specific mate preference criterion as necessary. I labeled each class based on these item-specific probability results.

Three common classes were found for both male and female mate preferences. The first type is the Unconcerned. In this group, people have less than a 50% chance of considering any 15 indicators as important or very important. Second, the Minimalist class includes people who only regard personality, intelligence, and good habits as important. Lastly, people who belong to the Exhaustiveness class believe that besides these three basic characteristics, socioeconomic characteristics, individual appearances, housework skills are important when selecting marriage partners[21]. One additional class were found when evaluating preferences towards male marriage partner. It is called the materialist class. In this class, only socioeconomic characteristics, personality, intelligence, and good habits have a more than 50% chance of being considered important. Across all classes, merely many people considered political background, blood type, constellation, and horoscope as important criteria for partner selection.

What are the distributions of people based on these class memberships? The probability result shows that most people do not concern about any criteria. It is possible that those 15 items do not capture all criteria that young people would consider as important when evaluating a marriage partner. For instance, it was common for my interviewees to bring up the idea of "San Guan" (三观, three views) when asked about their mate preferences. Both young men and women I interviewed believed that having a shared understanding of life and values could be the key to determine an successful relationship and marriage. Mr. Wu, a 31-year old ex-solider talked about his interpretation of "matching background" (门当户对).[22] He argues that

> *"I think having a matching background (between partners) is still quite important, since you can feel more equal together. If there are too much differences between you and your partner, it might hurt your self-esteem. Nevertheless, when I mention 'matching*

[21] Socioeconomic characteristics include family background, education, finances, and homeownership; individual appearance includes appearance, height, and age.
[22] This is old saying in China, which means that couple coming from families of equal social status.

*background', I am more referring to matching life style. For instance, if one of the partner has better economic background, but the other one has better family background, as long as they have shared interests and hobbies, their marriage will be a lot easier."*

Many young people I interviewed shared this belief. They mentioned how difficult nowadays to maintain long-lasting and happy marriages. And because of this awareness, many of them hope to find someone who can share similar ideas. Mr. Chuo, a 28-year old bioengineer, talked about his understanding of intimate relationship and marriage after dating with his college friend while studying in the United States. He stated that in marriage or any romantic relationships, partners often need to compromise to each other. Due to this reason, he argued, if partners have similar views, beliefs, and habit, there will be fewer situations where one person need to compromise to make another person happy. This emphasize on similar view and beliefs was not mentioned in the survey questionary, but it is an important criteria that many young people use to assess their dating and marriage partners.

Yet, a higher proportion of people had indicated material-related criteria as important when evaluating males compared to females. Specifically, close to 48% of the people belong to the unconcerned groups when evaluating males, and about 57% do not think any criteria are as important when assessing females. For the minimalist group, about 20% of the people consider the three basic criteria (good personality, high IQ, good habits) as important for males, while about 33% consider them important when evaluating a female as a potential marriage partner. However, percentage distributions are different when examining classes that included socioeconomic characteristics. When evaluating male marriage partners, the proportion of people who belong to the Exhaustive group is three percentage points higher than when examining female marriage partners. Besides, there is a distinct class, the materialist class, where close to 20% of people believe that socioeconomic achievements are important in addition to the

three basic criteria when evaluating male partners. These results highlight the similar, yet different patterns when evaluating males and females as marriage partners.

***It Is a Rural/Urban Story, Rather Than a Gender One***

Next, I used the multinomial latent class analysis to examine whether and how do these mate preferences vary between gender groups while controlling for other sociodemographic factors. Considering hukou status as an important social indicator that shapes individuals' life (Lu 2008; Yeung 2013), I explicitly built a separate model to examine how hukou status can mediate the association between gender and mate preferences. The minimalist group is used as the reference group in the analysis, and odds ratio results are presented in the final table.

*Evaluating Male Partner*

When examining how people evaluate a male marriage partner, some gender differences are observed. Table 4.3 shows that across all three models, the odds of being in the unconcerned category versus the minimalist category is significantly, but slightly, lower for women than for men (coef.=0.01, $p<0.001$). Also, men and women have similar odds of being in the minimalist category versus exhaustive category when evaluating male partners. The results across all models indicate no significant gender differences in being in the minimalist category versus exhaustive category. However, women are more likely to value male partners' financial and material gains than the basic criteria. Specifically, compared to men, women have higher odds of holding materialist beliefs than minimalist views about male partners (model 1, coef: 1.62, $p<0.1$). This is still true after considering hukou differences (model 2, coef: 1.76, $p<0.1$). Gender differences become significantly greater after counting for differences in marital status, employment, education background, and family income. The odds of being in the materialist category is 2.6 higher for women than men. It means that women are more likely than men to

value male partners' financial backgrounds across the various sociodemographic backgrounds than just the three basic qualifications of personality, intelligence, and habit.

In China, hukou status remains an important indicator that explains mate preferences. Compared to people with an urban hukou, rural individuals are more likely to value those minimal criteria of a male partner than being unconcerned. Model 2 shows that the odds of being in the unconcerned category versus the minimalist category is 0.56 times lower for rural hukou people than urban people (coef: 0.56, $p<0.01$). Such hukou differences are significantly reduced once counting for variations in the sociodemographic background (Model 3, coef: 0.62, $p<0.1$). Interestingly, individuals with rural hukou than urban hukou are also less likely to value highly on male partners' financial background and other characteristics. Table 4.3 Model 2 shows that rural people have significantly lower odds than urban people of being in the materialist category (coef: 0.24, $p<0.001$) and the exhaustive category (coef: 0.35, $p<0.001$). Similarly, these rural-urban differences can be partially explained by sociodemographic variations. Once counting for individuals' sociodemographic background, the odds of being in the materialist category than the minimalist category is 0.5 lower for rural individuals than for urban people (Model 3, coef:0.50, $p<0.01$). Similarly, the odds of being in the exhaustive category than the minimalist category is about 0.46 lower for rural individuals compared to urban people. Overall, the results highlight that hukou status influences individuals' beliefs on what qualifications a man should have to be seen as a legible marriage partner in the market. While some of the hukou effects can be explained by variations in socioeconomic background, the rural-urban difference remains considerable. Rural people are more likely to have minimal requirements when evaluating a male partner than urban people. Still, they do not put too much focus on male partners' financial

wellbeing and other characteristics. For a male partner, their personality, intelligence, and habit are the most important criteria to be evaluated.

The result also shows that sociodemographic differences are most notable when comparing group membership in the materialist and minimalist categories. Controlling for gender and hukou status, the never-married have significantly higher odds than those who have marriage experiences of being in the materialist group than the minimalist group (Table 3 Model 3, coef: 2.54, $p<0.001$). People with a higher education degree are also more likely to value a male's financial background than those without a college education. Bachelor's or associate degree holders are two times more likely than those with no college education to be in the materialist group than the minimal list group (coef: 2.28, $p<0.001$). Those who have a master's degree or above are three times more likely to be in the materialist category than people with no college education. Also, while family income is associated with people's mate preferences, employment status does not have a significant impact. As family income increases, the odds of being in the materialist category versus the minimalist category also increases.

*Evaluating Female Partner*

There are significant and notable gender differences when evaluating what people think is an important criterion for a female to be a qualified marriage partner. In general, women are more likely to have specific requirements than men when evaluating a female's qualifications as a marriage partner. Table 4.4 shows that while women have higher odds of being in the unconcerned categories versus the minimalist categories than men, such gender difference is no longer significant once sociodemographic factors are introduced. However, women have significantly higher odds than men to be in the exhaustive categories versus the minimalist categories (Model 1, coef: 3.16, $p<0.001$). The odds become even greater after controlling for

hukou status in model 2 and sociodemographic factors in model 3. Women are four times more likely than men to be in the exhaustive categories than the minimalist categories, even after considering other factors (model 3, coef: 4.17, $p<0.001$). This suggests that women might highly value a male partner's financial background, but they are also more likely than men to have high standards when evaluating themselves. More women than men believe that a female needs to fulfill a comprehensive list of criteria to be considered a qualified marriage partner.

When evaluating females, hukou status is not so important as when evaluating male partners. Table 4.4 Model 2 shows that people with rural hukou have lower odds of being in the unconcerned group than urban people (coef: 0.57, $p<0.05$). However, such rural-urban differences are due to differences in sociodemographic background. Once sociodemographic factors are controlled in the model, there are no significant differences between rural and urban people in their odds of belonging to the unconcerned and the minimalist categories. Similarly, no significant differences are found between rural and urban people in their odds of being in the exhaustive category versus the minimalist category. These results suggest that unlike when people are evaluating male marriage partners, rural and urban people have similar views on some important criteria for assessing a female marriage partner.

Sociodemographic differences are also observed when examining criteria for a female partner. First, employment status is strongly associated with people's views towards a female partner. Compared to those who are not employed currently, people who have a job are more likely to belong to the unconcerned group than the minimalist group (Table 4.4 Model 3, coef: 3.06, $p<0.001$). They are also more likely to belong to the exhaustive group than the minimalist group (coef: 1.82, $p<0.05$). Second, education background only makes considerable differences when comparing the exhaustive and the minimalist categories. Compared to people who have no

college education, people with college degrees (coef:1.58, $p<0.01$) and master's degrees or above (coef: 3.58, $p<0.001$) have significantly higher odds of being in the exhaustive categories. Last, as family income increases, the odds of being in the unconcerned category versus the minimalist category increases. The odds of being in the exhaustive category also increase as family income grows. However, in this case, there are no significant differences between people who have marriage experiences and those who are never married in their view towards important criteria for a female partner. People with different marriage backgrounds and experiences share similar ideas on what criteria are considered important for a female partner.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

In the past few decades, a sequence of political and economic changes has altered China's family and marriage institution. While the establishment of the 1950 marriage law has granted people the freedom to make decisions about their marriage, the transformation of a globalized society also has led people to perceive marriage as a romantic unit that allows for cultivating a strong relationship and personal growth (Cherlin 2004, 2010; Davis and Friedman 2014; Yan 2003). This chapter reflects such changes among young adults of the One-Child Generation. The latent class membership analysis shows that many young adults do not have any firm belief over what criterion or criteria are essential for females and males to be seen as marriageable. This could possibly because the 15 items listed on the survey do not capture all the criteria that you people seen as important. For instance, as my interview data shows that many young people believed sharing similar view and beliefs could be extremely important for establishing a harmonious dating and marriage relationships. These rising beliefs might not be well presented in the survey questionary. Nevertheless, the quantitative data still shows that young people have a different mate preference compare to what have been found in previous

literatures. For those who expressed strong opinions, the majority of them value highly of partners' personalities, living habits, and intelligence. No matter when evaluating males or females, these criteria are essential for choosing someone "suitable" to build a long-lasting relationship with.

Yet, this does not entirely disapprove of economists' view that considers marriage as an economic unit and a process of assortative mating based on socioeconomic status (Becker 1974; Oppenheimer 2000). The results showed that the preference for partners with adequate material gains and financial stability remains important when evaluating marriageability. In addition, differences in people's views towards males' and females' socioeconomic backgrounds also indicated a traditional gender belief of valuing men's economic status over women's in marriage relationships. Especially, the latent class analysis shows that the belief of having an adequate family and educational background, finances, and homeownership are exclusively essential for males in the marriage market.

The additional multinomial latent class analysis further examined how these beliefs towards male and female partners vary between gender and across groups of different sociodemographic backgrounds. Building on previous findings (Buss 1989; Toro-Morn and Sprecher 2003), my analysis confirms that there are gender and sociodemographic differences in mate preferences. Most importantly, with the special question design of the FYRST data, my analysis further examined whether those differences are consistent when people evaluate males versus evaluate females. Results show that more significant gender differences were found when assessing females than when evaluating males. More women believe that females need to have an overall good "portfolio" to be marriable. More women than men believe that a female partner cannot only have a good personality, habit, and intelligence, she also needs to have an adequate

socioeconomic background, a good physical appearance, and the ability to do housework. However, with the limitation of the data, this chapter is unable to examine if this result indicates that women are harsher when evaluating people of their own gender group, or if women are more likely than men to reflect on society's expectation of them as ideal wives.

My interview with young women reveals more on why they believe economic background are important indicators to evaluate both male and female partners. Miss ZY is a 27 year-old Shanghai local. She believed that her future partner's family background is extremely important. On the hand, she argued that having a good family background means her partner grow up in a family full of love. Thus, her partners are capable to show love and care in their marriage. On the other hand, if her partner and his family have a good financial background, then he will not drag her down financial. Some young women also resonated with this belief. Since many young women nowadays have jobs and stable source of income, they want their partner have better or the same financial background as themselves. Young women see themself as financially capable of contributing to family income, but they want their partners to have the financial ability to contribute more if not the same.

The only considerable gender difference was found when evaluating the importance of materialist and minimalist categories when evaluating male marriage partners. Women only have higher odds than men to believe male partners' material background is very important. Instead, hukou status is more important for explaining differences in preferences towards male marriage partners. Compared to rural people, urban people have higher requirements towards males' financial background. This could be because many of the urban people have a higher socioeconomic background than the rural young people. They are more committed to stay in the city and start their family. With the high cost of living, many urban young adults strongly believe

the financial background of the partner, especially for male partners. Through my interview with young people with rural hukou, many of them had less pressure to buy a house in cities like Chengdu or Shanghai because they understand the difficulties to purchase a home in these cities. Thus, their expectation for a partner was less focused on the financial aspect compare to other criteria. This is not only due to the lack of resource, but also because many of the young people with rural hukou were not qualified to purchase a house in the city. The constrains posed by the hukou status continue to influence their life decisions.

Overall, this chapter demonstrates a quite complex change in gender roles and marriage beliefs due to the drastic political and social changes in the past few decades. Not only do we observe a change in young people's belief toward the marriage relation and partnership, we all see gender structural changes in marriage. Specifically, the One-Child Generation young adults are caught in between the traditional ideology. While many of them are now focusing on partner's personality and habit, many of them still have traditional gender expectations for men' and women's role at home. Globalization and social changes after the economic reform may altered young adults to see marriage as important for cultivating companionship. However, as a consequences of the fast economic development, the increase in cost of living also made it impossible for young adults to ignore the financial aspect of marriage and family. However, gender differences shows that for many young men, their expectations of marriage and gender division of labor at home remain to be more traditional than their female counterpart. Based on my interview, many young women values their career. Even they still express their intention to take care of the family and children, but they now expect their male partners to be involved as well. This gender differences may reflects that with recent increase in female education attainment and labor force participation, women may see their role changes at home.

## CHAPTER FIVE: Summary and Conclusion

Witnessing the drastic change in higher education and in the labor market, it is undeniable that gender relations in China have transformed over the past few decades. By exploring how gender operates as a social structure in intimate relationships, this dissertation uncovers the complex process of gender revolution in China. Specifically, I concentrate on examining ideation changes to reveal transformations of gender roles at home and shifts in marriage and partnership. Compared to prior work, I focus on gender structural changes in the private family. I particularly highlight the gender differences in ideation changes to demonstrate how and why Chinese men and women have taken different pace during this gender revolution. In doing so this dissertation not only furthers research on gender inequality in both public and private domains, but it also showcases a thorough comparison between men's and women's beliefs.

In particularly, how gender structure has changed in China differs from changes in other Western context. As the literature suggest, after going through two different phases of the socialist revolution and the market reform, the driving force of gender transformations has shifted from a top-down approach to a bottom-up effort. During the socialist revolutions time, the centralized political power directly impact gender arrangements at home and at work. The Communist party implemented policies and used propaganda to push for gender liberation (Cong 2018; Diamant 2000; Whyte 2005). Nevertheless, the goal was to encourage women's participation in the public domain by making women look more like men. Except for rewriting the marriage law, there was not attempt to address gender inequality at home (Cong 2018; Diamant 2000).

On the other hand, since goverment has shifted their focus from political activism to

economic development in the late 1970s, women's liberation in China has no longer been driven by mass ideological campaigns. However, the fast economic development and globalization forces have bring another form of gender liberation that is carried out with a bottom-up approach. Many people, especially the younger generations, are enlightened by gender equality activism all over the world (Fincher 2016; Li and Li 2017; Wang 2018). Even with the strict internet sensorship, people have ulitilized online plateform to mobilize gender equaility activism. For instance, recent studies have shown that Chinese women have been empowered by the recent #MeToo movement in other socities (Lin and Yang 2019; Ling and Liao 2020). As a joined force, many people in China have used the internet to disclose pass sexual harassment cases and bring people's attention to social justice and gender equality (Lin and Yang 2019; Ling and Liao 2020).

These two different phases have forged people to have deliberate views of gender and romantic relationships. Results in chapter two shows that gender ideologies differ across men and women of different generations. Coming of age during the socialist revolution time did impact people to have more liberal attitude towards women's role at home and in the labor force. However, the impact of globalization and economic reform has been more forceful. This impact of economic reform is different from what previous research has shown, in which scholars argued that economic reform may have more negative impact on gender liberation as the government tend to prioritize economic reform rather than push for social equality (Cohen and Wang 2008; Whyte 1995, 2005). Nevertheless, coming of age during the economic reform, the One-Child generation has grown up with drastic social and economic transformations domestically and globally. With the assistance of technological developments, the young generation has never been so close to other gender liberation movements around the world.

These cultural and social changes have impacted them to have an exceedingly more liberal gender attitudes than the older generation.

Yet, the polarization in gender ideologies between young men and women also reveal how much more progressive young women are in changing their life and beliefs than men. This is due to how economic reform has changed women's role and status in the past few decades. Many of the young women grow up as single daughters. With family resources devoted to assist their education and career, these young women are making great stride in the labor force (Lee 2012; Zhang and Sun 2014). Many of them can see how their lives have been different from their mother's and grandmother's generations. Observing those changes can be a powerful influence for young women to have a different expectation and foresee a different future for themselves. One of my interviewee, Miss Yue (Age 28, single), believed that

> *"There are so many other things in life can make you feel fulfilled. You don not need to get married (to feel fulfilled). Some people believe that there are certain things you need to do when you reached a certain age. But I don't think it is necessary. You only have these many years to live, and you should make yourself happy. My parents may worried that there will be no one to share your burden, but to be honest, I am equipped to take care of myself, financially and emotionally."*

Miss Yue's belief was quite different from young men that I interviewed. For young men, even they did not think it was important to get married when you reached mid-20s, they believed that getting married was still an important stage to fulfil their lives. Or, according to an ex-soldier, Mr. Yang, "getting married and having kid is to fulfil your duty to the society." Such divergence between men and women can continue to change arrangements in the private family.

In fact, chapters three and four uncover such divergence. While past research showed that there has been a reappearance of traditional gender ideology in China, chapter three pointed out that such changes have been different across two dimensions of gender attitudes because men and women have shifted their opinion differently. Men are more likely to have contradictory

views than women. While more men believe that women's careers have important value, they are also likely to support the traditional division of labor.  his divergence in gender beliefs can have significant real-life implications for women. With the high expectation for women to be both good workers and good wives, the younger generation of women may continue to the double burden at home and at work (Hochschild 1989). However, because young women's expectations and beliefs diverge from their male counterparts, many more women in the future may forgo or delay marriage to avoid such stress and trouble.

In addition, chapter three results show that marriage experiences have an different association with women's gender ideology compare to men's. While never-married women have more progressive view than those who have/had been married, men's gender believes seem to be impermeable to marriage experiences. This could be because marriage has become very selective for women than men nowadays. Marriage is no longer rewarding to many young women nowadays. Many of my female interviewees believed that marriage could be very risky for them. Unless their husband could earn more than them, they would need to support their husband financially and also take care of the family. To some young women, they believed getting married was not worthwhile. Besides, many of them discussed how they would be forced to sacrifice their own freedom once they got married. These concerns are legitimate since the Chinese government do not have regulation again gender discrimination at work. And women are often put at a disadvantaged place in the work place if they are married or with a child (Gao 2008; Woodhams et al. 2009; Zhang et al. 2008). Therefore, women who decide to enter marriage may see family responsibility as more important than their work responsibility.

However, the association between marriage experiences and women's gender ideology can also be explained by the socialization effect. It is possible that once being married, women

are likely to be socialized to believe in a more traditional gender role that aligns with their marriage status. This is especially true for women who have a child. Several female interviewees talked about how their focus on work had changed after they had their child. These young women explained that because they loved their child so much and wanted to provide the best care they could, they do not want to go further with their career once they reach a certain level at work. Instead, they expect their husbands to advance more career in order to provide for the family. Probably, because of this reason, no matter a man is married or not, marriage continues to be more of a norm. Their expected role as a provider do not change much after getting married.

Chapter four highlights One-Child Generation young adults' mate preferences. Overall, many young adults do not have any firm belief over what criterion are essential for evaluating females and males partners. This could be because the original survey questionary did not include all criterion that young people who consider as important. However, even by looking at those who expressed strong opinion, it shows that young people nowadays are more focusing on finding someone who has good personality and living habits. These are important criterion to choose "suitable" partners to build a long-lasting relationship when evaluating both males and females. However, results also show that marriage is still an economic unit. People still value partners' financial background as a important criteria. The gendered belief about men and women's expected role in marriage persisted. The belief of having an adequate family and educational background, finances, and homeownership are exclusively essential for males in the marriage market.

There were more gender differences when assessing females then males. Young women have high standards when evaluating people of their own gender while many young men still

hold traditional views about female partner. This result highlights what have been found in previous chapters. Since majority of the changes in the past few decades were about women's role in the labor force and their economic status in society, their view towards themselves is drastically different from previous generations. There are many young women nowadays hold similar believe as my interviewee, Miss Ma, who think they can provide for the family equally as their husband. They do not think their primary responsibility is to only care for the family emotionally. Young women also believe they have the ability to support their family financially like men.

These results reveal how gender structure has transformed in the most private domain of individuals' life. I also highlight how people's view of marriage and intimate relationships have changed as well. Besides the well-documented gender changes in the labor force and other public domains, gender transformations in the private sphere cannot be ignored. Especially, the unequal ideation change shows the polarization in gender ideology between young men and women. It reveals how gender structure changes in the public domain, especially women's role changes in the labor force, could lead to shift in expectation of marriage, relationships, and gender role at home. Such polarization in gender beliefs could have significant implications. On the one hand, as the divergence in gender ideology becomes greater for women and men, it is likely that more women are going to delay marriage ad child bearing. Without changing men's belief towards their role in family, it is likely that many more young women would consider marriage as a liability for their live. While not examined in this dissertation, we need to note that the speed of policy change is not catching up with people's expectation of what family and marriage life should be organized nowadays. It is especially true for women. This lack of policy change to push for child care support and gender liberation at home could drive more young

women away from marriage and childbearing. To complete the gender revolution, it is not only important to involve men in this process and reinforce their participation in the private family (Goldscheider et al. 2015), the government also should participate in this process. The government need to pay more attention to private family needs and promote adequate policies to ensure gender equality at home.

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Figure 2.1

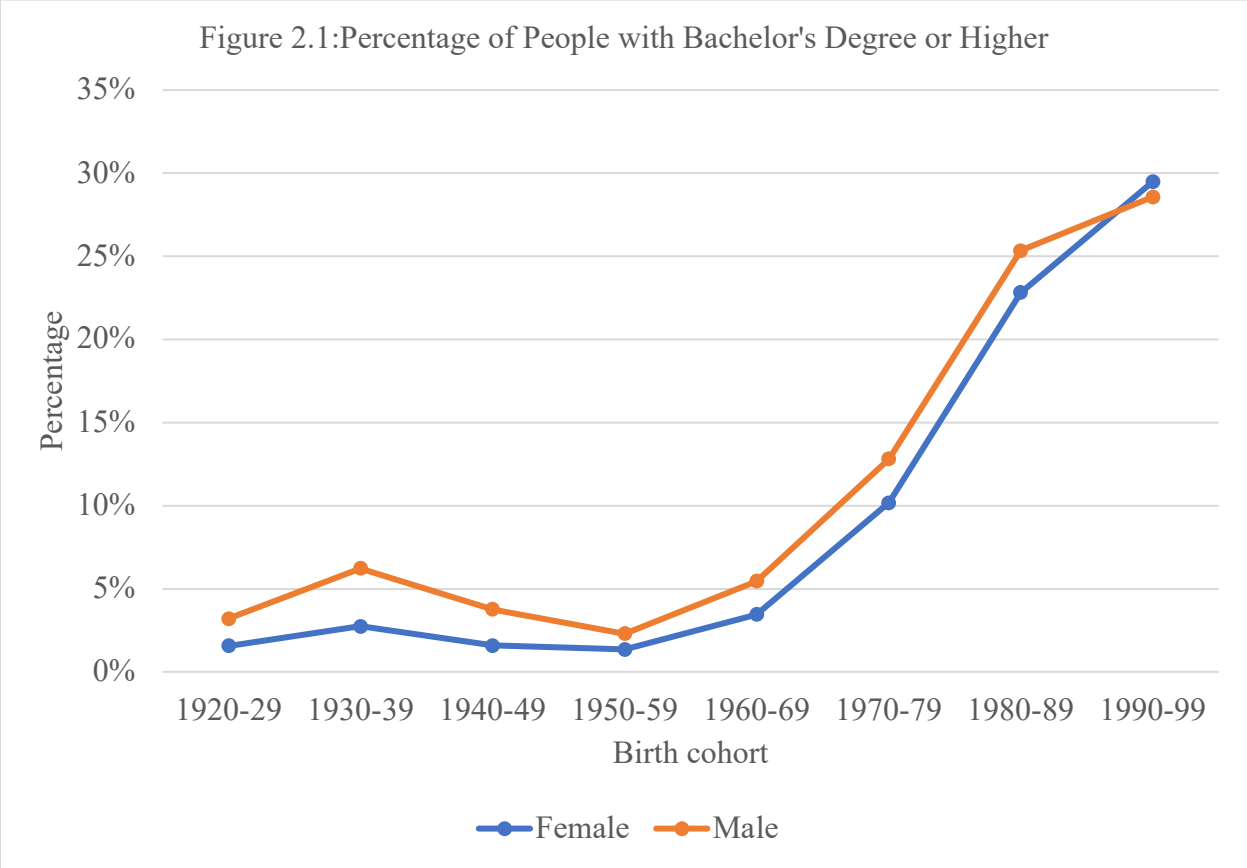


Figure 2.1:Percentage of People with Bachelor's Degree or Higher
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
Percentage
1920-29
1930-39
1940-49
1950-59
1960-69
1970-79
1980-89
1990-99
Birth cohort
Female
Male

Figure 2.2

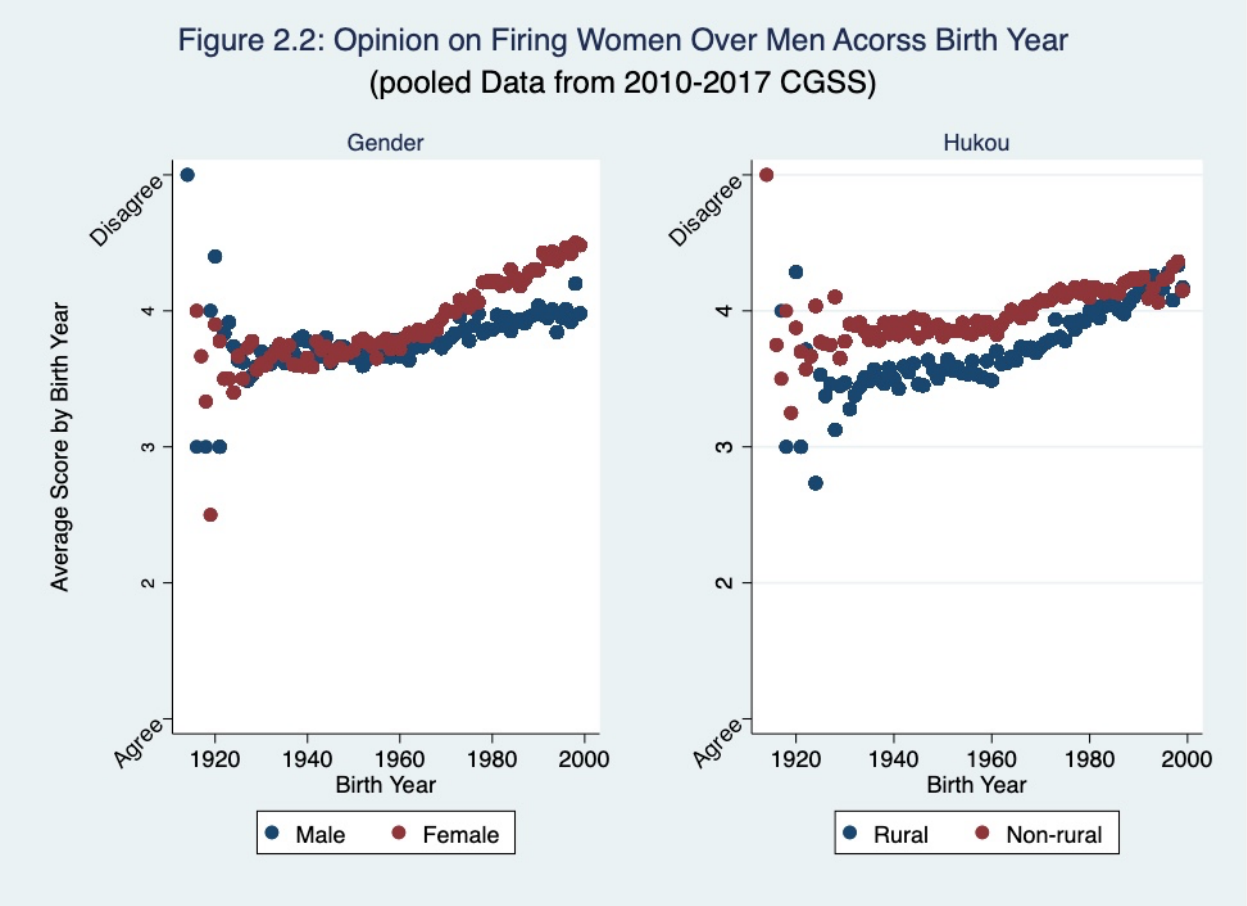


Figure 2.2: Opinion on Firing Women Over Men Acorss Birth Year
(pooled Data from 2010-2017 CGSS)
Gender
Hukou
Average Score by Birth Year
Disagree
Agree
2
3
4
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
Birth Year
Male
Female
Rural
Non-rural

Figure 2.3

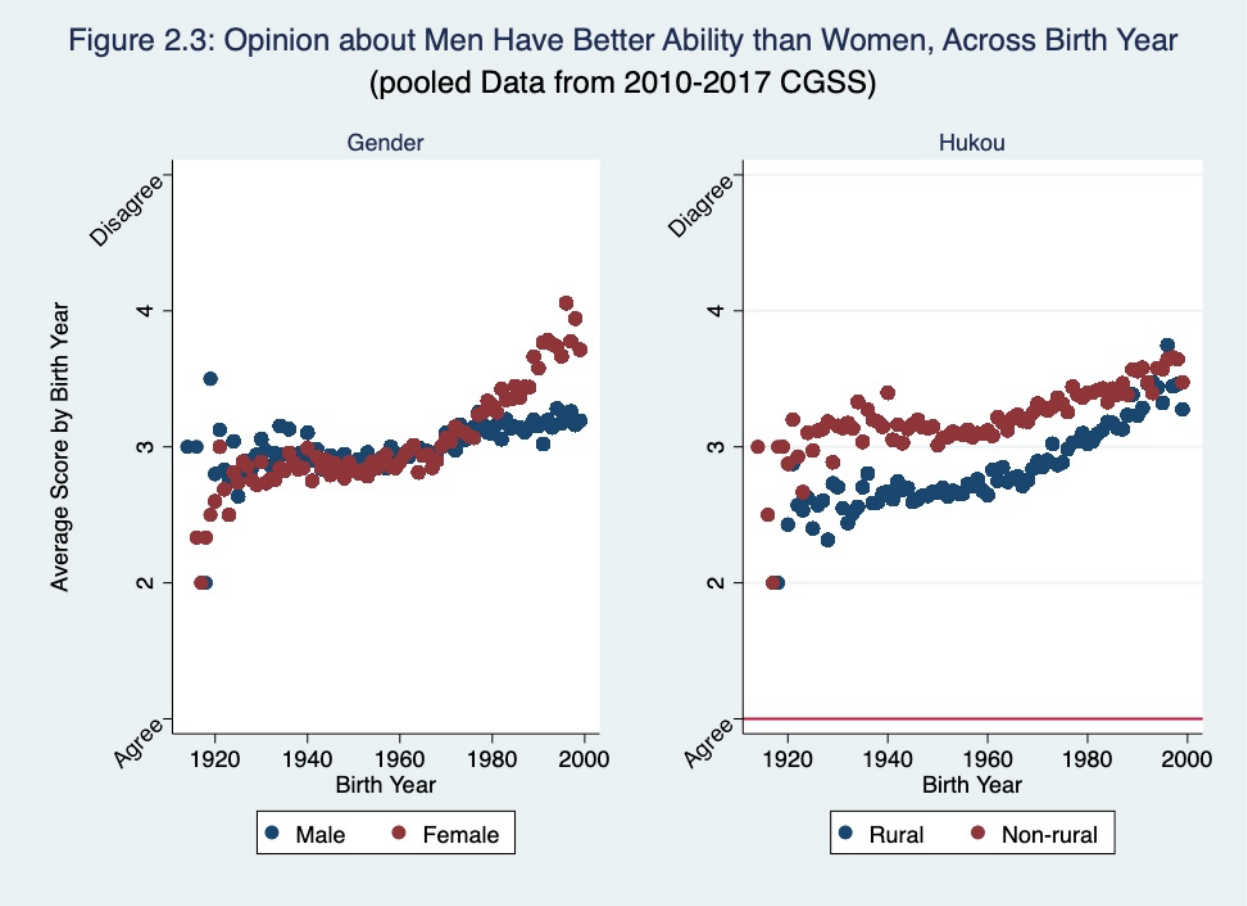


Figure 2.3: Opinion about Men Have Better Ability than Women, Across Birth Year
(pooled Data from 2010-2017 CGSS)
Gender
Hukou
Average Score by Birth Year
Disagree
Agree
Diagree
2
3
4
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
Birth Year
Male
Female
Rural
Non-rural

Figure 2.4

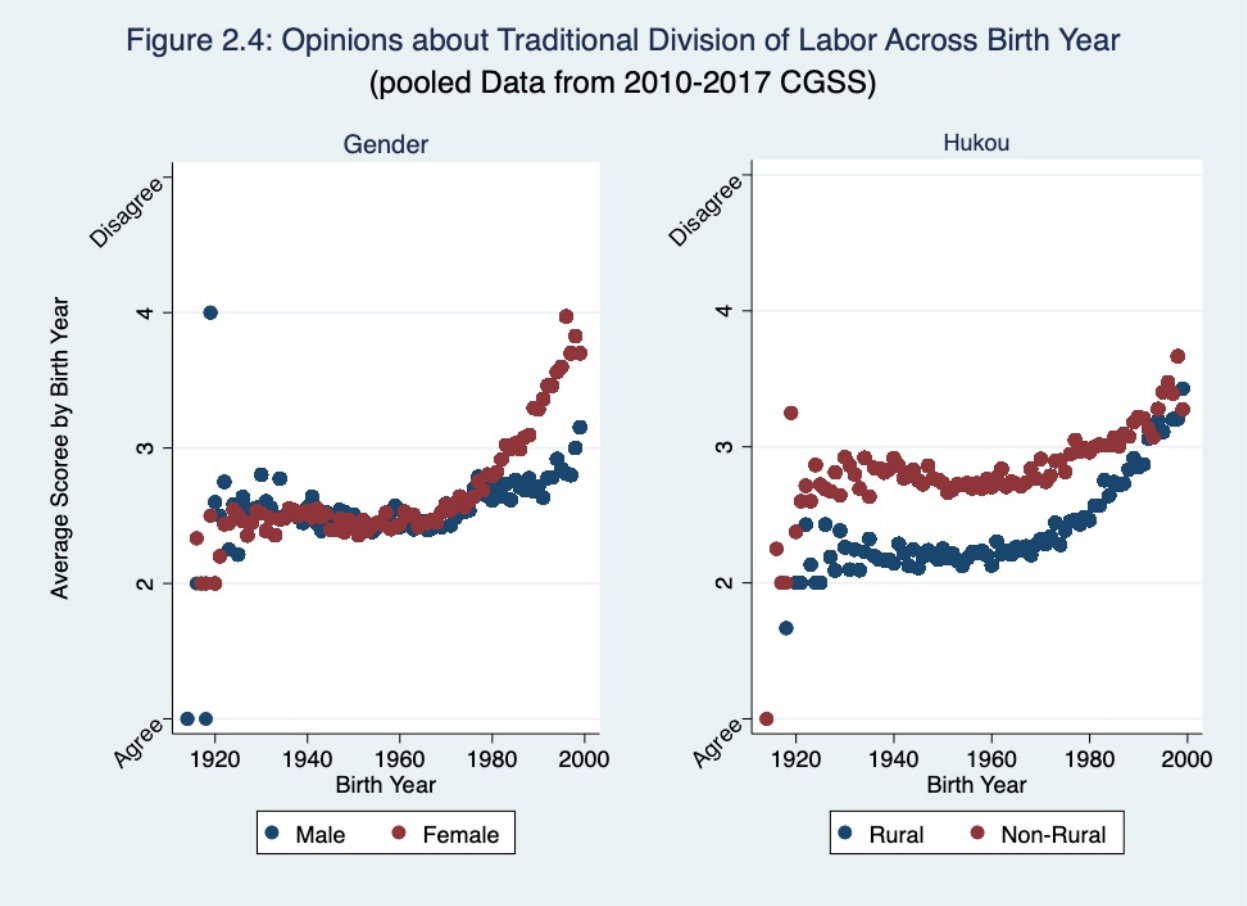


Figure 2.4: Opinions about Traditional Division of Labor Across Birth Year
(pooled Data from 2010-2017 CGSS)
Gender
Hukou
Average Scoree by Birth Year
Disagree
Agree
2
3
4
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
Birth Year
Male
Female
Rural
Non-Rural

Figure 2.5

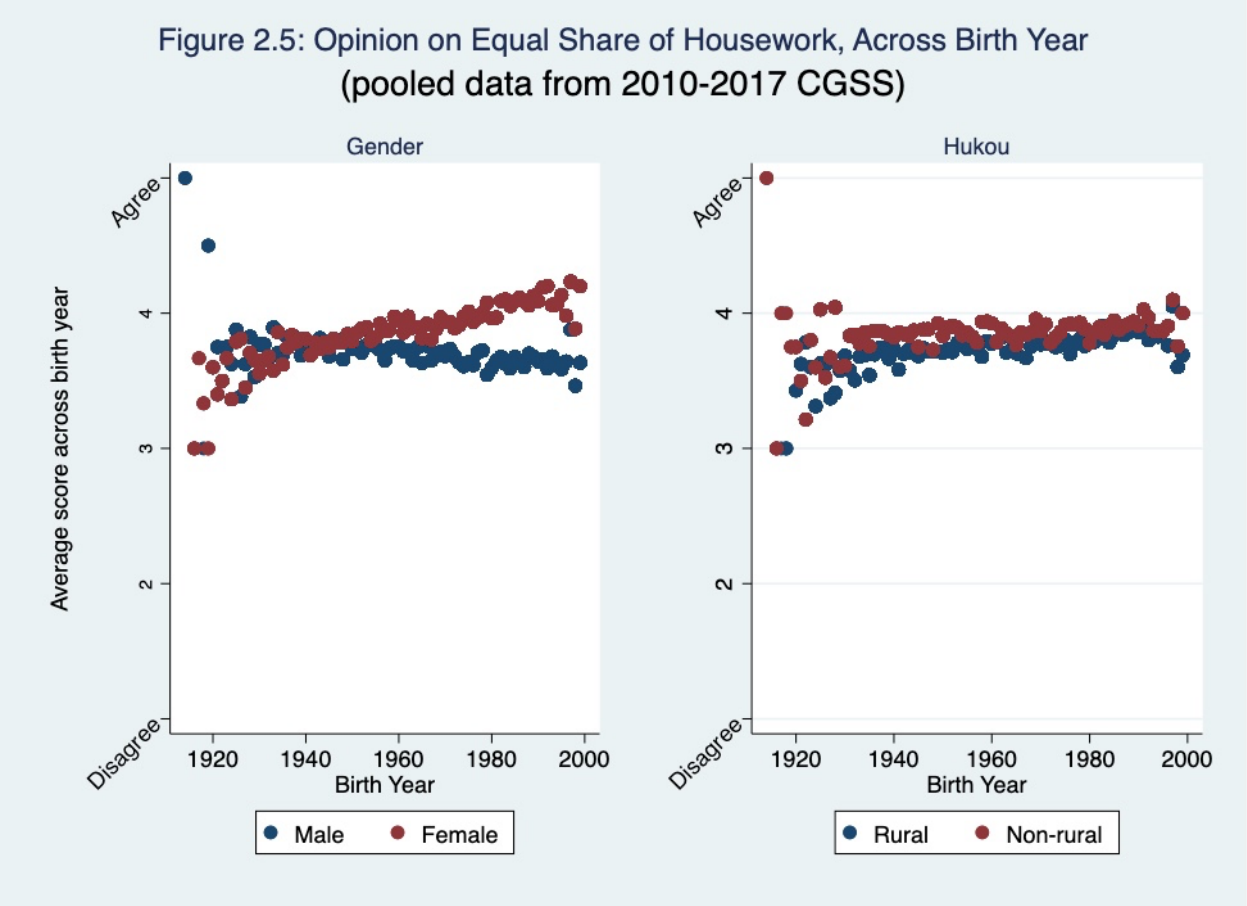


Figure 2.5: Opinion on Equal Share of Housework, Across Birth Year
(pooled data from 2010-2017 CGSS)
Gender
Hukou
Average score across birth year
Agree
Disagree
2
3
4
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
Birth Year
Male
Female
Rural
Non-rural

Figure 2.6

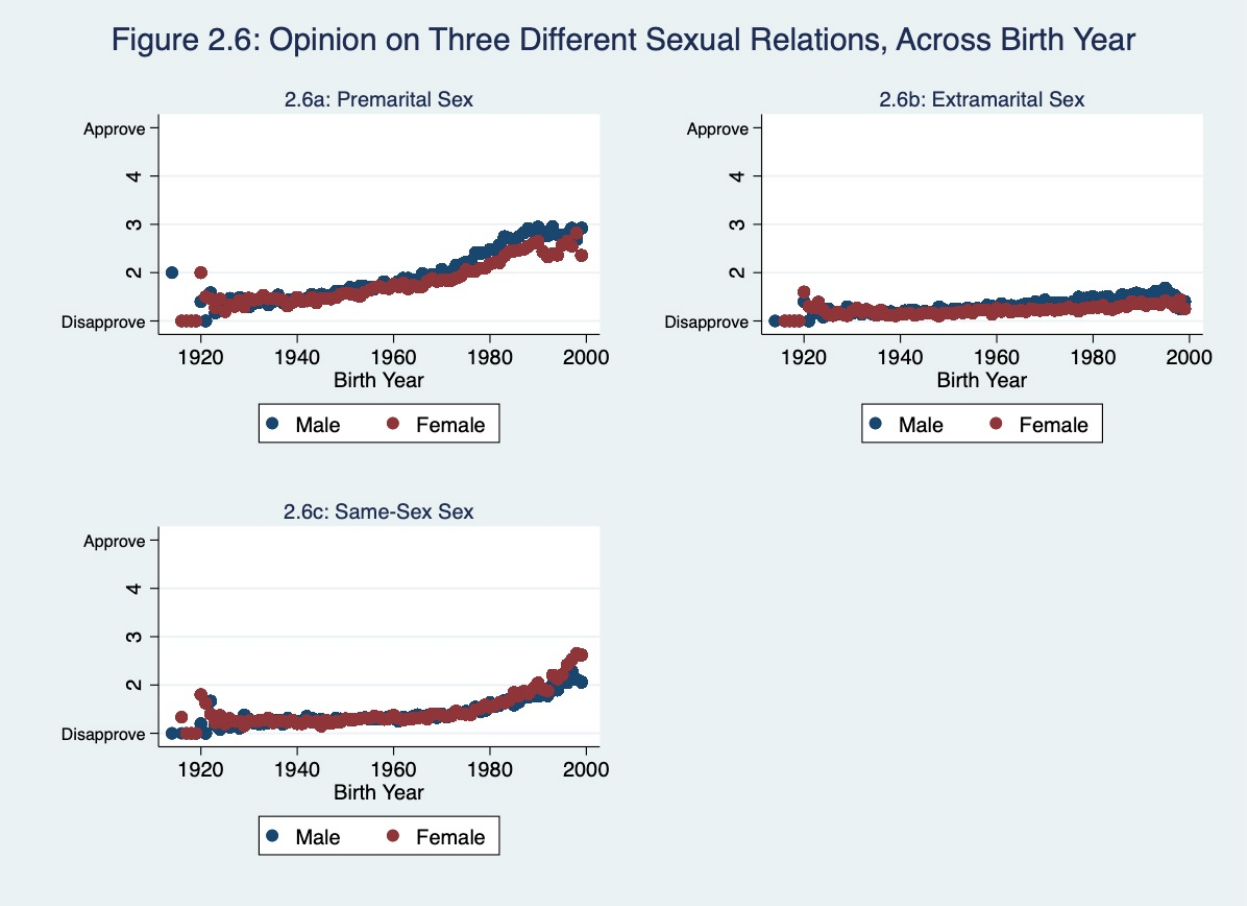


Figure 2.6: Opinion on Three Different Sexual Relations, Across Birth Year
2.6a: Premarital Sex
Approve
4
3
2
Disapprove
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
Birth Year
Male
Female
2.6b: Extramarital Sex
Approve
4
3
2
Disapprove
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
Birth Year
Male
Female
2.6c: Same-Sex Sex
Approve
4
3
2
Disapprove
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
Birth Year
Male
Female

Figure 2.7

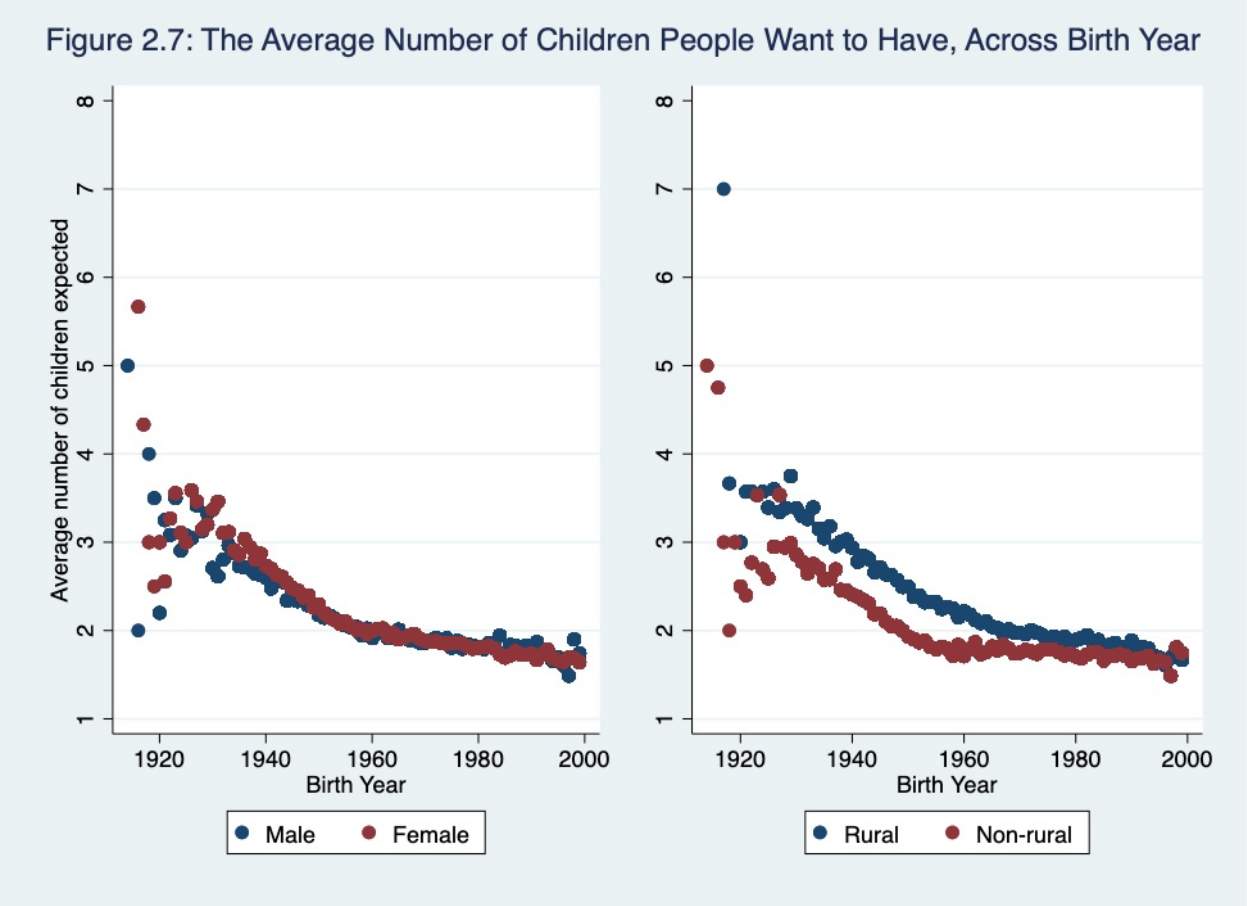
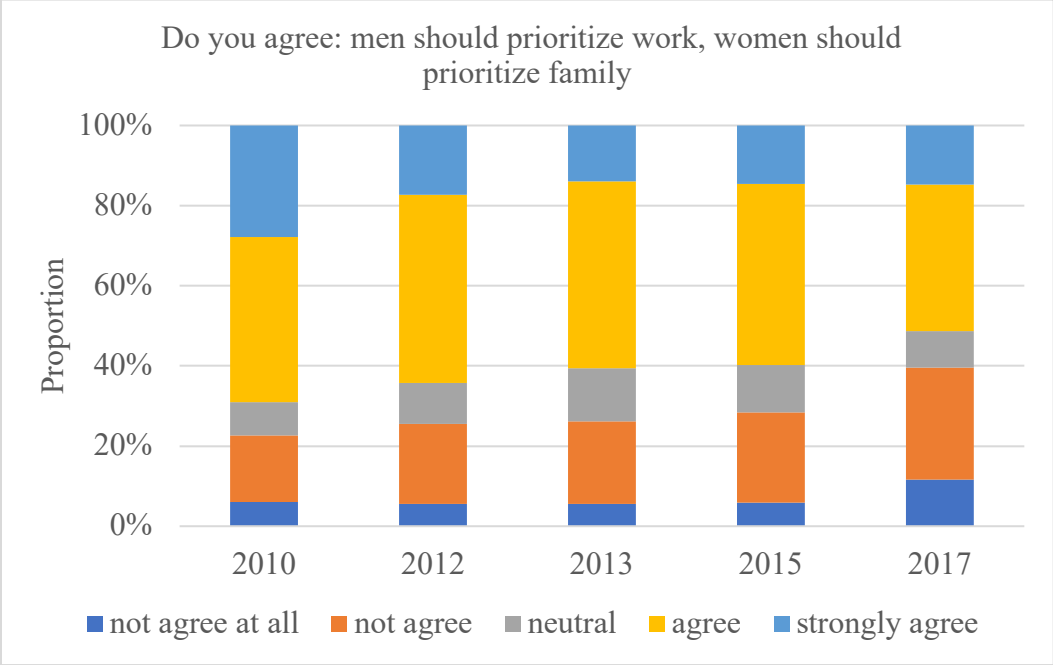
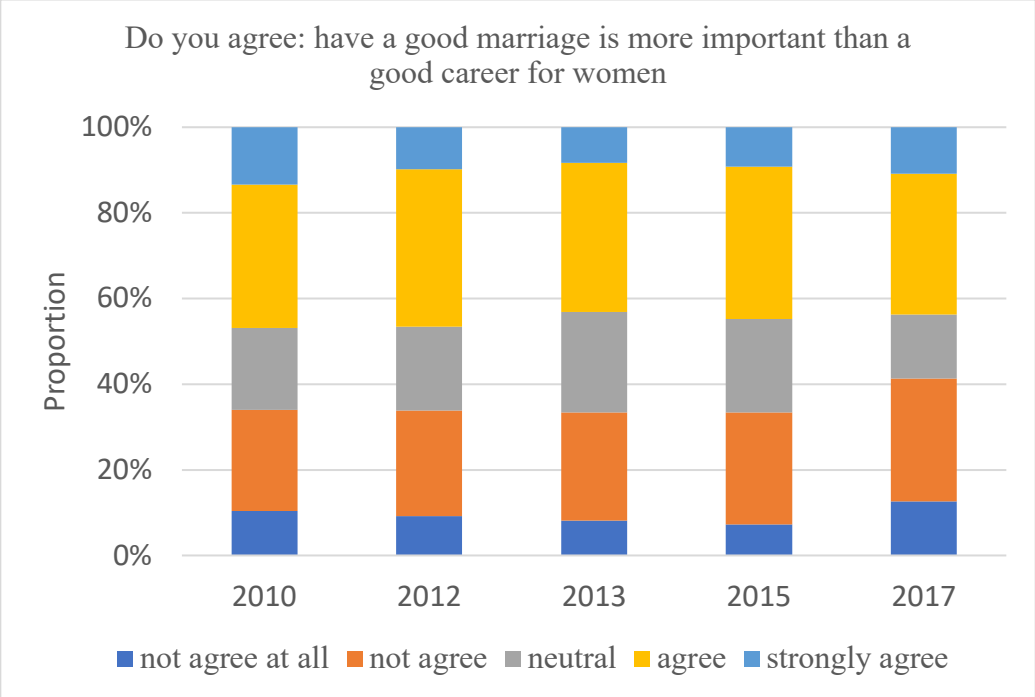


Figure 2.7: The Average Number of Children People Want to Have, Across Birth Year
Average number of children expected
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
Birth Year
Male
Female
Rural
Non-rural

Figure 3.1: Gender Ideologies in The Private Sphere Over Years




1a: Attitudes toward gender division of labor over years




1b: Attitudes toward the importance of marriage and career for women over years

Figure 3.2:

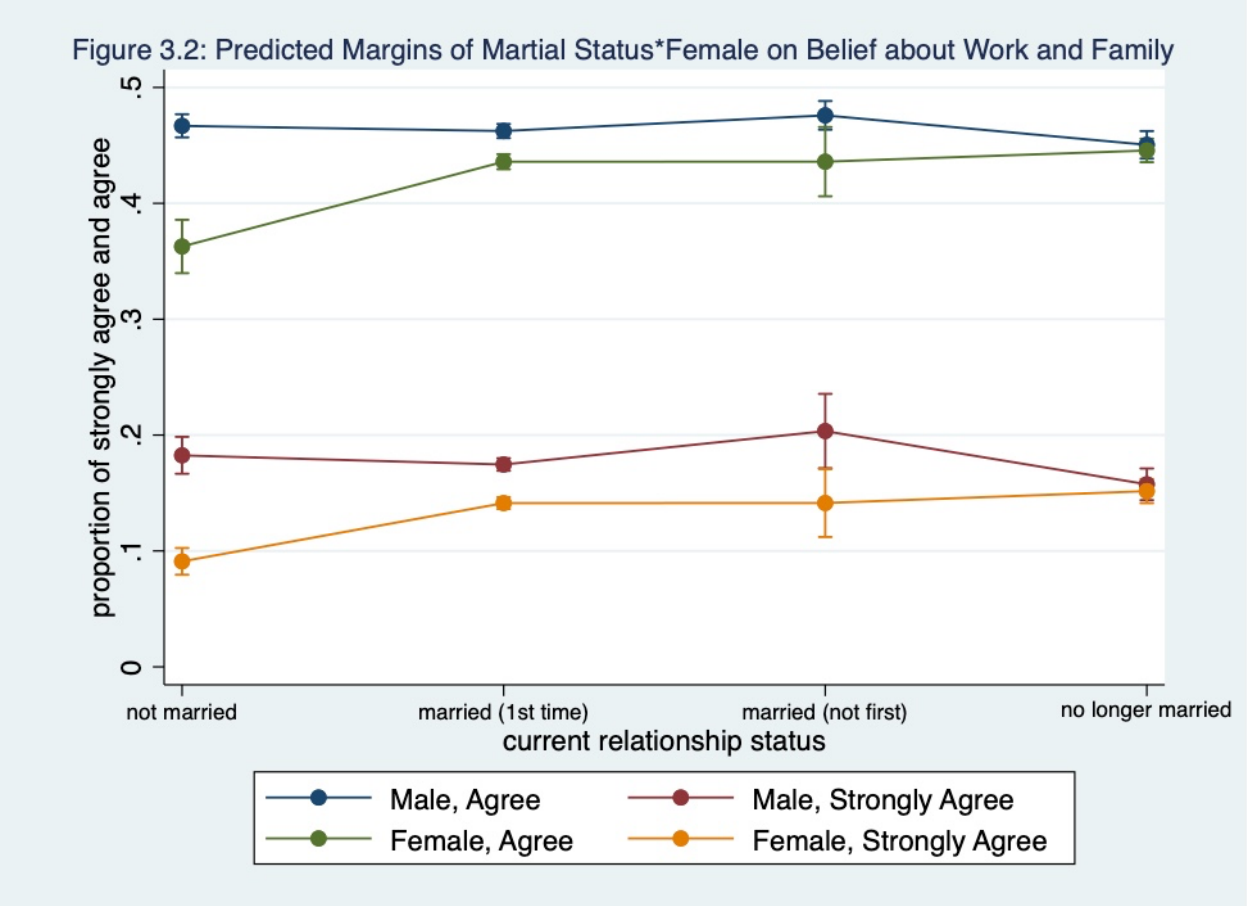


Figure 3.2: Predicted Margins of Martial Status*Female on Belief about Work and Family
proportion of strongly agree and agree
0
.1
.2
.3
.4
.5
not married
married (1st time)
married (not first)
no longer married
current relationship status
Male, Agree
Male, Strongly Agree
Female, Agree
Female, Strongly Agree

Figure 3.3:

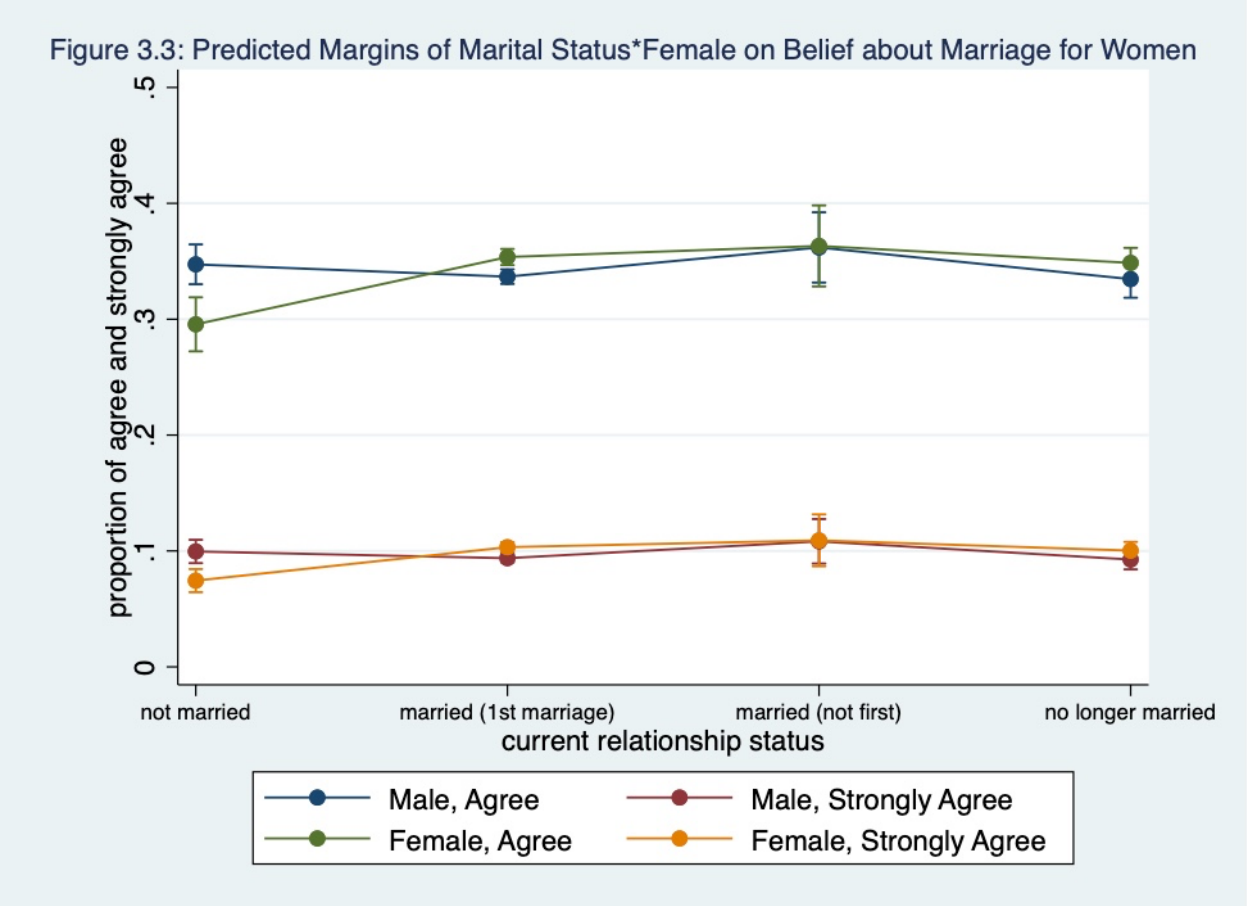


Figure 3.3: Predicted Margins of Marital Status*Female on Belief about Marriage for Women
proportion of agree and strongly agree
0
.1
.2
.3
.4
.5
not married
married (1st marriage)
married (not first)
no longer married
current relationship status
Male, Agree
Male, Strongly Agree
Female, Agree
Female, Strongly Agree

Figure 4.1

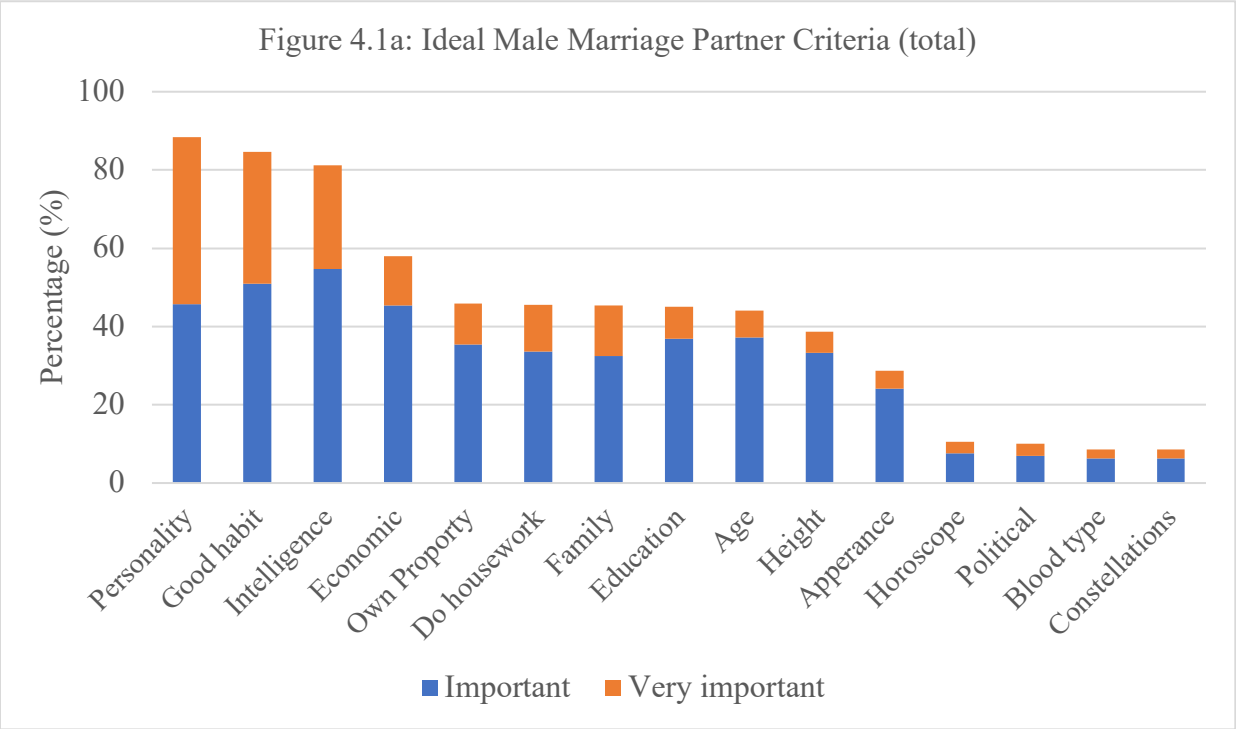


Figure 4.1a: Ideal Male Marriage Partner Criteria (total)
Percentage (%)
100
80
60
40
20
0
Personality
Good habit
Intelligence
Economic
Own Proporty
Do housework
Family
Education
Age
Height
Apperance
Horoscope
Political
Blood type
Constellations
Important
Very important

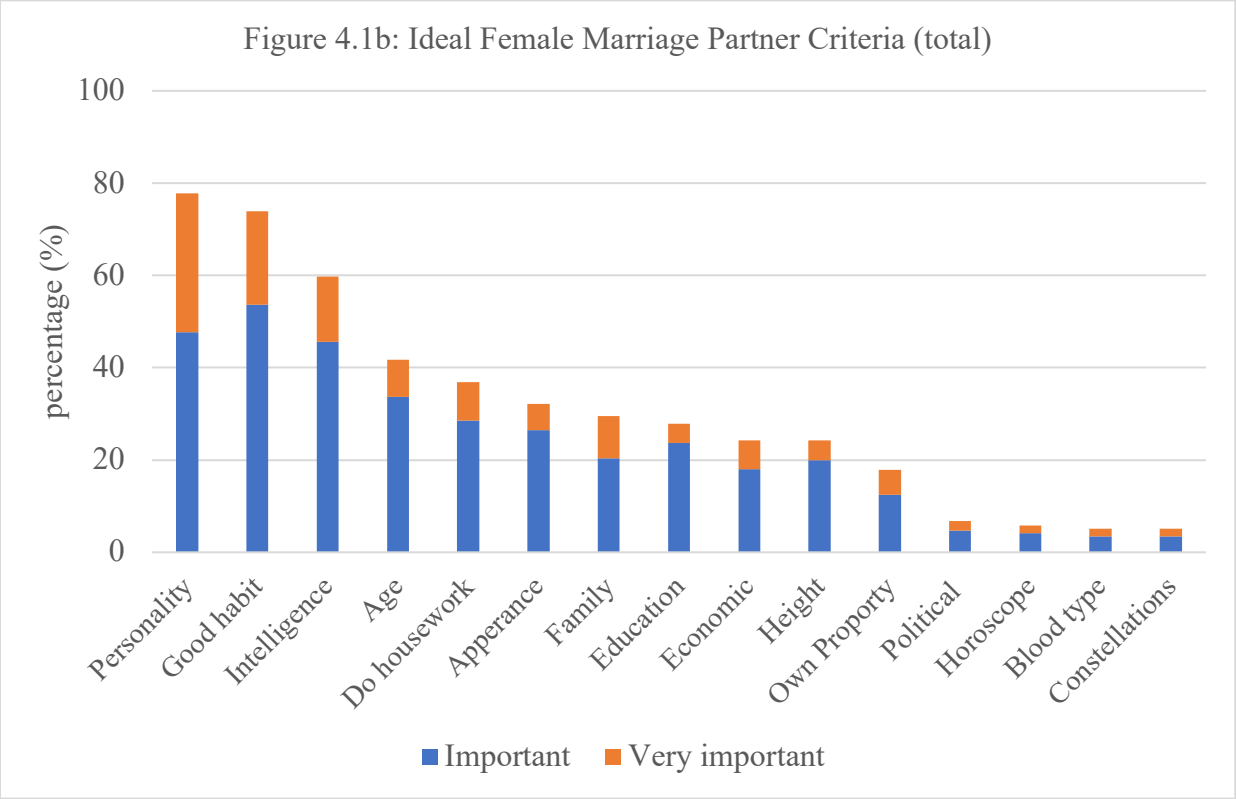


Figure 4.1b: Ideal Female Marriage Partner Criteria (total)
percentage (%)
100
80
60
40
20
0
Personality
Good habit
Intelligence
Age
Do housework
Apperance
Family
Education
Economic
Height
Own Proporty
Political
Horoscope
Blood type
Constellations
Important
Very important

Figure 4.2

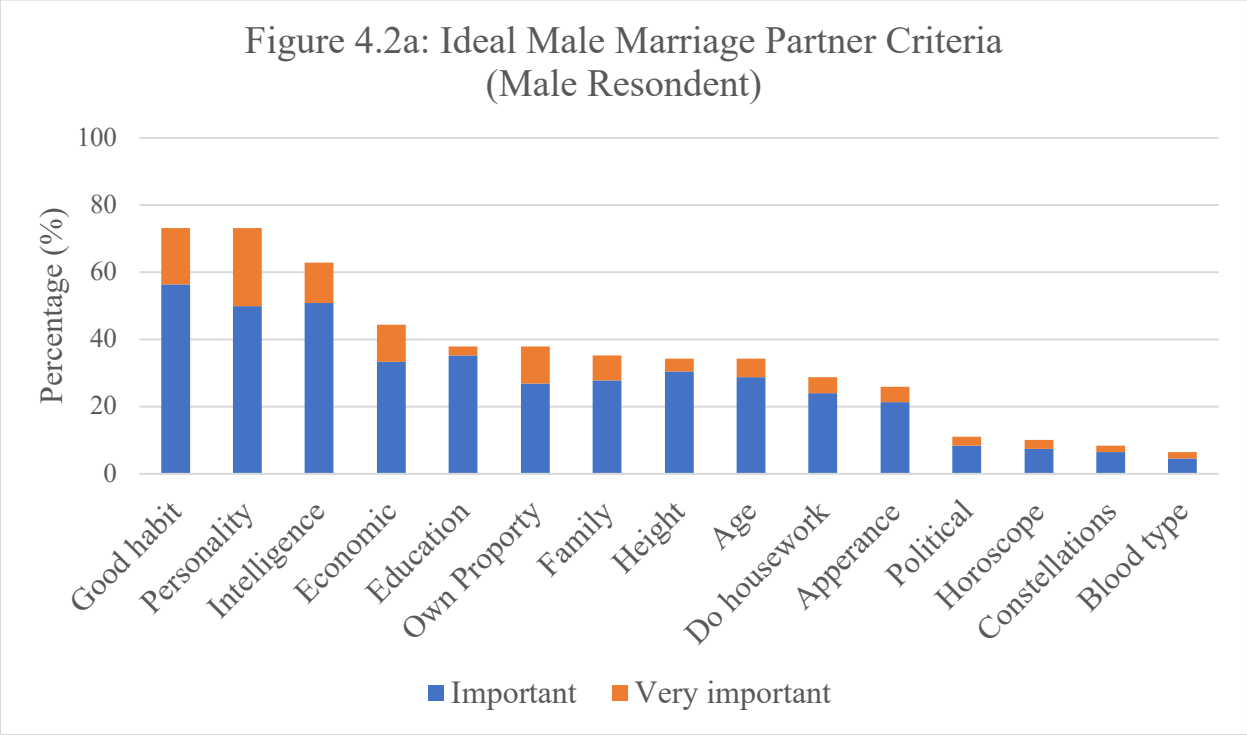


Figure 4.2a: Ideal Male Marriage Partner Criteria
(Male Resondent)
Percentage (%)
100
80
60
40
20
0
Good habit
Personality
Intelligence
Economic
Education
Own Proporty
Family
Height
Age
Do housework
Apperance
Political
Horoscope
Constellations
Blood type
Important
Very important

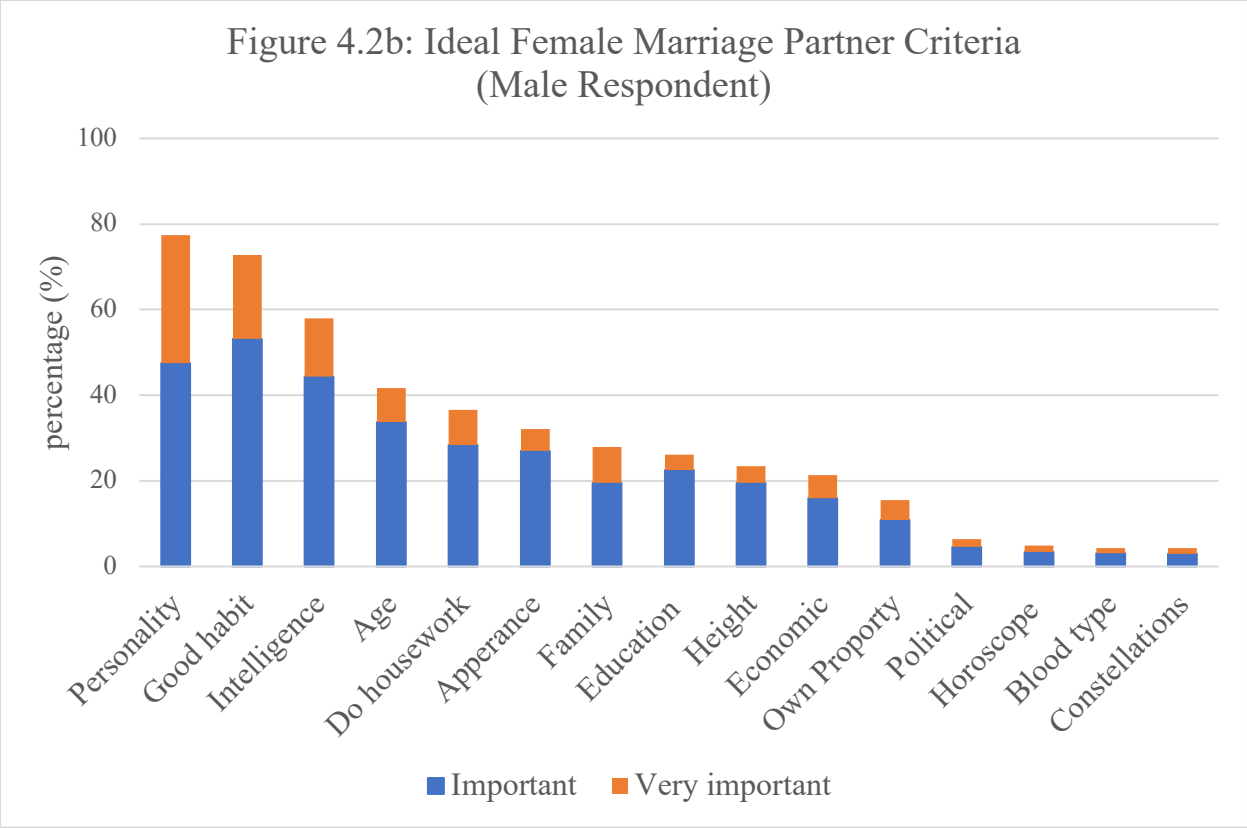


Figure 4.2b: Ideal Female Marriage Partner Criteria
(Male Respondent)
percentage (%)
100
80
60
40
20
0
Personality
Good habit
Intelligence
Age
Do housework
Apperance
Family
Education
Height
Economic
Own Proporty
Political
Horoscope
Blood type
Constellations
Important
Very important

Figure 4.3

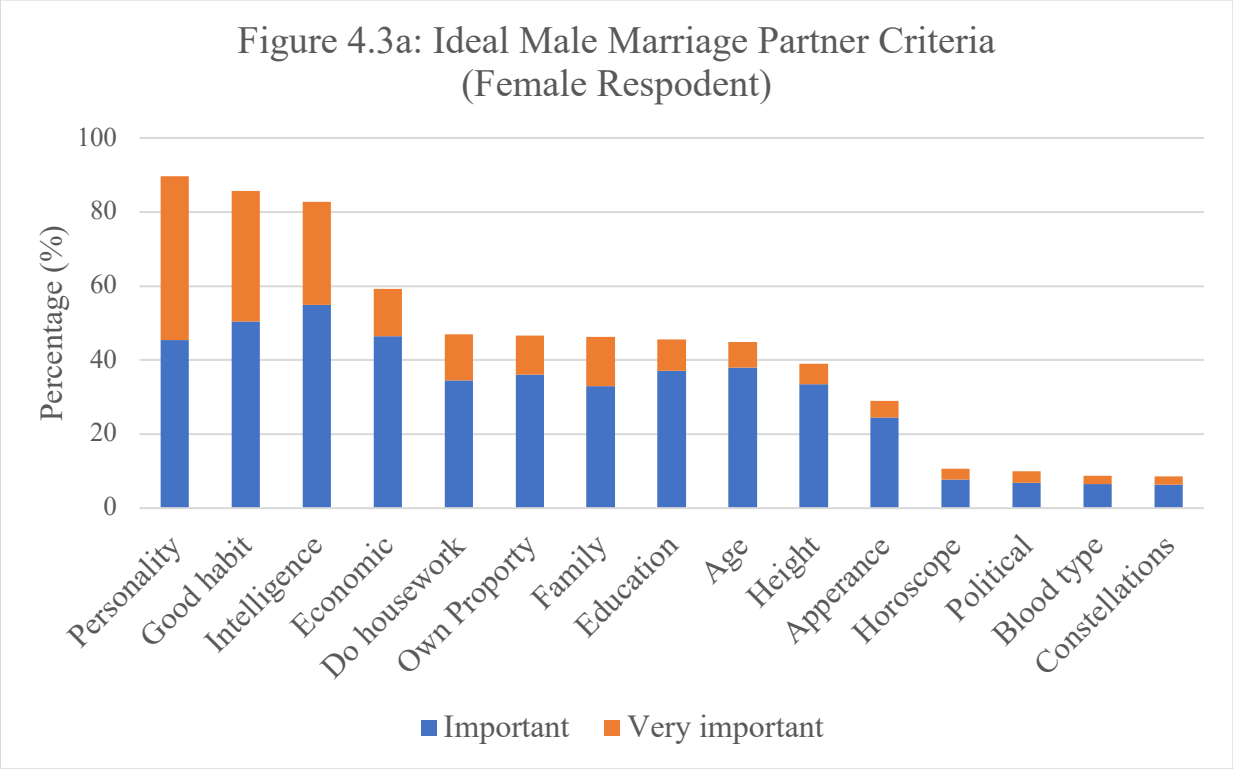


Figure 4.3a: Ideal Male Marriage Partner Criteria
(Female Respodent)
Percentage (%)
100
80
60
40
20
0
Personality
Good habit
Intelligence
Economic
Do housework
Own Proporty
Family
Education
Age
Height
Apperance
Horoscope
Political
Blood type
Constellations
Important
Very important

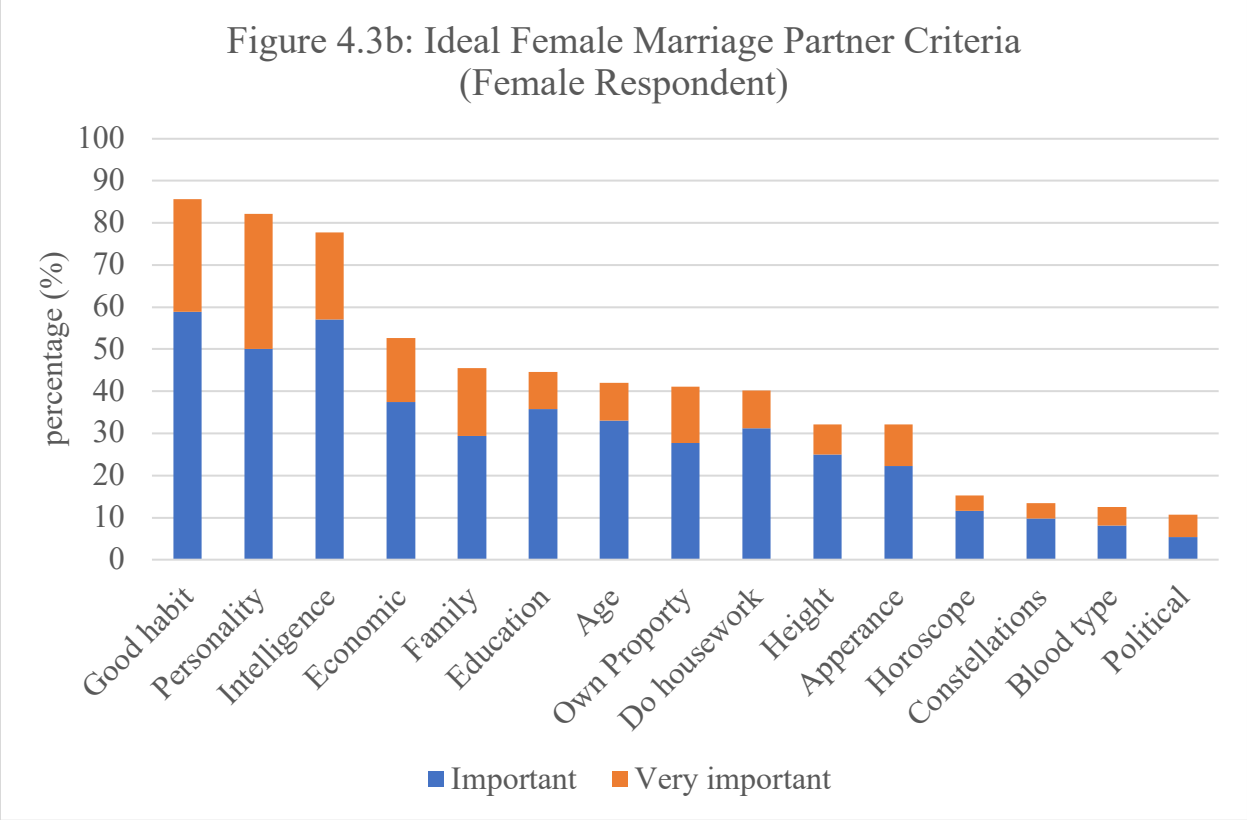


Figure 4.3b: Ideal Female Marriage Partner Criteria
(Female Respondent)
percentage (%)
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Good habit
Personality
Intelligence
Economic
Family
Education
Age
Own Proporty
Do housework
Height
Apperance
Horoscope
Constellations
Blood type
Political
Important
Very important

Table 1.1

Table 1.1.: Background Characteristics of Interviewees

| | | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| City | Chengdu | 20 |
| | Shanghai | 13 |
| Gender | Female | 25 |
| | Male | 8 |
| Hukou Status | Rural | 6 |
| | Non-rural (Local) | 17 |
| | Non-rural(Non-local) | 10 |
| Education | High school | 2 |
| | Bachelor | 15 |
| | Master's | 13 |
| | Vocational college degree | 3 |
| Study abroad | Yes | 10 |
| | No | 23 |
| Marital status | Married | 13 |
| | Dating | 7 |
| | Single | 13 |
| Children | Yes | 7 |
| | No | 26 |
| Average age | 28.58 years old | |

Table 3.1

**Table 3.1: Summary Statistics of Gender Ideology Variables, Total Mean and By Gender T-Test**

| Variable | Question | Total Mean (SE) | Female Mean (SE) | Male Mean (SE) | T test |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Work and Family** (1= not agree at all, 5= strongly agree) | men should prioritize work, women should prioritize family | 3.44 (0.01) | 3.40 (0.01) | 3.48 (0.01) | 7.07*** |
| **Women Marriage** (1= not agree at all, 5= strongly agree) | a good marriage is more important than a good career for women | 3.12 (0.01) | 3.17 (0.01) | 3.06 (0.01) | -10.76*** |

Note: *** p<0.01
Source: 2010-2017 CGSS

Table 3.2

**Table 3.2: Weighted Descriptive Results of Socioeconomic Background by Gender**

| Independent Variable | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| **Hukou Status** | | |
| Rural hukou | 53.75 | 54.83 |
| Non-rural hukou | 46.25 | 45.17 |
| **Cohort/Generation** | | |
| One-Child Gen (after 1979) | 16.81 | 18.55 |
| Revolution Gen (1956-1979) | 48.16 | 47.69 |
| New-China Gen (1949-1955) | 14.66 | 13.64 |
| Unsettle Gen (before 1949) | 20.38 | 20.12 |
| **Marital Status** | | |
| Never married | 9.47 | 5.80 |
| Married (1st time) | 78.51 | 74.90 |
| Married (2nd+ time) | 1.80 | 1.57 |
| No longer married | 10.22 | 17.74 |
| **Highest Degree Earned** | | |
| No college degree | 81.94 | 84.82 |
| Associate degree | 8.57 | 7.36 |
| Bachelor's degree | 8.31 | 6.85 |
| Master or higher | 1.18 | 0.98 |
| **Employment Status** | | |
| Employed (non-farming) | 47.69 | 32.04 |
| Employed (farming) | 23.84 | 21.95 |
| Unemployed | 27.47 | 40.89 |
| Never worked | 1.00 | 5.11 |
| **Perceived Economic Status** | | |
| Below average | 40.25 | 40.06 |
| Average | 51.14 | 52.85 |
| Above average | 8.61 | 7.09 |
| **Survey Year** | | |
| 2010 | 20.50 | 19.89 |
| 2012 | 20.43 | 20.42 |
| 2013 | 19.71 | 19.97 |
| 2015 | 18.84 | 19.17 |
| 2017 | 20.52 | 20.55 |
| **Total annual income (mean)** | 35052.11 | 22726.44 |

Note: In all CGSS surveys, the homemaker is not distinguished from unemployed
Source: CGSS 2010-2017

Table 3.3

**Table 3.3: Weighted Ordered Logistic Regression on Gender Ideology about the Private Sphere (Odds Ratio)**

| | Work and Family[a] | | Marriage and Career[b] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Model 1** | **Model 2** | **Model 3** | **Model 4** |
| **Female** | 0.76*** | 0.45*** | 1.07*** | 0.73*** |
| | (-0.02) | (-0.04) | (-0.02) | (-0.06) |
| **Marital Status (ref: Never married)** | | | | |
| Married (1st time) | 1.15*** | 0.95- | 1.09* | 0.94 |
| | (-0.05) | (0.05) | (-0.05) | (-0.05) |
| Married (2nd+ time) | 1.28*** | 1.14 | 1.22** | 1.1 |
| | (-0.11) | (-0.13) | (-0.11) | (-0.13) |
| No longer married | 1.15** | 0.84** | 1.06 | 0.92 |
| | (-0.06) | (-0.06) | (-0.06) | (-0.07) |
| **Marital Status * Female** | | | | |
| Married (1st time)*Female | | 1.73*** | | 1.53*** |
| | | (-0.15) | | (-0.14) |
| Married (2nd+ time)*Female | | 1.44** | | 1.39* |
| | | (-0.26) | | (-0.24) |
| No longer married*Female | | 2.13*** | | 1.50*** |
| | | (-0.22) | | (-0.16) |
| **Highest Degree Earned (ref: No college)** | | | | |
| Associate degree | 0.64*** | 0.65*** | 0.78*** | 0.79*** |
| | (-0.03) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) |
| Bachelor Degree | 0.62*** | 0.63*** | 0.73*** | 0.74*** |
| | (-0.03) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) |
| Master or higher | 0.58*** | 0.58*** | 0.75*** | 0.75*** |
| | (-0.06) | (-0.06) | (-0.08) | (-0.08) |
| **Employment Status (ref: Employed non-farm)** | | | | |
| Employed (farming) | 1.32*** | 1.32*** | 1.16*** | 1.16*** |
| | (-0.04) | (-0.04) | (-0.04) | (-0.04) |
| Unemployed | 1.10*** | 1.10*** | 1.06** | 1.06* |
| | (-0.03) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never worked | 1.36*** | 1.34*** | 1.36*** | 1.35*** |
| | (-0.15) | (-0.14) | (-0.13) | (-0.13) |
| **Perceived Economic Status (ref: Below average)** | | | | |
| Average | 1.04 | 1.04* | 0.92*** | 0.92*** |
| | (-0.02) | (-0.02) | (-0.02) | (-0.02) |
| Above average | 1.11** | 1.11** | 0.84*** | 0.84*** |
| | (-0.05) | (-0.05) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) |
| **Total income (ln)** | 0.87*** | 0.88*** | 0.93*** | 0.93*** |
| | (-0.01) | (-0.01) | (-0.01) | (-0.01) |
| **Rural** | 1.52*** | 1.53*** | 1.16*** | 1.17*** |
| | (-0.04) | (-0.04) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) |
| **Cohort/Generation (ref: Unsettled Gen before 1949)** | | | | |
| One-Child Gen (after 1979) | 0.88*** | 0.89** | 0.99 | 0.99 |
| | (-0.04) | (-0.04) | (-0.05) | (-0.05) |
| Revolution Gen (1956-1979) | 1.16*** | 1.16*** | 1.18*** | 1.17*** |
| | (-0.04) | (-0.04) | (-0.04) | (-0.04) |
| New-China Gen (1949-1955) | 1.11*** | 1.11*** | 1.15*** | 1.15*** |
| | (-0.04) | (-0.04) | (-0.04) | (-0.04) |
| **Year (ref:2010)** | | | | |
| 2012 | 0.74*** | 0.74*** | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| | (-0.02) | (-0.02) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) |
| 2013 | 0.70*** | 0.69*** | 0.98 | 0.97 |
| | (-0.02) | (-0.02) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) |
| 2015 | 0.67*** | 0.66*** | 1.03 | 1.02 |
| | (-0.02) | (-0.02) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) |
| 2017 | 0.54*** | 0.54*** | 0.92** | 0.92** |
| | (-0.02) | (-0.02) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) |
| Observations | 44,425 | 44,425 | 44,280 | 44,280 |

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 Source: CGSS 2010-2017

The cut-points are omitted from the table

Note: a: agreement that men should prioritize work, women family (1 not agree at all, 5 strongly agree)

b: agreement that good marriage more important than career for woman (1 not agree at all, 5 strongly agree)

Table 3.4

**Table 3.4: Weighted Ordered Logistic Regression on Gender Ideology about the Private Sphere by Gender (Odds Ratio)**

| | Work and Family[a] | | Marriage and Career[b] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** |
| **Marital Status (ref: Never married)** | | | | |
| Married (1st time) | 1.29*** | 1.02 | 1.21** | 0.99 |
| | (-0.1) | (-0.06) | (-0.09) | (-0.06) |
| Married (2nd+ time) | 1.23 | 1.26** | 1.25* | 1.15 |
| | (-0.18) | (-0.15) | (-0.17) | (-0.14) |
| No longer married | 1.25** | 0.98 | 1.14 | 1.01 |
| | (-0.11) | (-0.08) | (-0.1) | (-0.08) |
| **Highest Degree Earned (ref: No college)** | | | | |
| Associate degree | 0.57*** | 0.72*** | 0.64*** | 0.91* |
| | (-0.04) | (-0.04) | (-0.05) | (-0.05) |
| Bachelor's degree | 0.56*** | 0.69*** | 0.65*** | 0.81*** |
| | (-0.04) | (-0.04) | (-0.05) | (-0.05) |
| Master or higher | 0.53*** | 0.62*** | 0.61*** | 0.83 |
| | (-0.08) | (-0.09) | (-0.11) | (-0.11) |
| **Employment Status (ref: Employed non-farm)** | | | | |
| Employed (farming) | 1.59*** | 1.16*** | 1.22*** | 1.11** |
| | (-0.08) | (-0.05) | (-0.06) | (-0.05) |
| Unemployed | 1.25*** | 0.98 | 1.14*** | 0.97 |
| | (-0.06) | (-0.04) | (-0.05) | (-0.04) |
| Never worked | 1.69*** | 0.77 | 1.47*** | 1.14 |
| | (-0.21) | (-0.16) | (-0.17) | (-0.18) |
| **Perceived Economic Status (ref: Below average)** | | | | |
| Average | 0.96 | 1.09*** | 0.90*** | 0.92** |
| | (-0.03) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) | (-0.03) |
| Above average | 1.05 | 1.12* | 0.77*** | 0.87** |
| | (-0.07) | (-0.07) | (-0.05) | (-0.05) |
| **Total income (ln)** | 0.83*** | 0.92*** | 0.91*** | 0.96*** |
| | (-0.01) | (-0.02) | (-0.01) | (-0.02) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural** | 1.47*** | 1.56*** | 1.24*** | 1.11*** |
| | (-0.06) | (-0.06) | (-0.05) | (-0.04) |
| **Cohort/Generation (ref: Unsettled Gen before 1949)** | | | | |
| One-Child Gen (after 1979) | 0.77*** | 0.94 | 1.02 | 0.92 |
| | (-0.05) | (-0.06) | (-0.07) | (-0.06) |
| Revolution Gen (1956-1979) | 1.15*** | 1.12** | 1.26*** | 1.06 |
| | (-0.06) | (-0.05) | (-0.06) | (-0.05) |
| New-China Gen (1949-1955) | 1.05 | 1.15*** | 1.26*** | 1.05 |
| | (-0.05) | (-0.05) | (-0.06) | (-0.05) |
| **Year (ref:2010)** | | | | |
| 2012 | 0.78*** | 0.71*** | 1.02 | 0.98 |
| | (-0.04) | (-0.03) | (-0.05) | (-0.04) |
| 2013 | 0.74*** | 0.65*** | 0.96 | 0.98 |
| | (-0.04) | (-0.03) | (-0.04) | (-0.04) |
| 2015 | 0.70*** | 0.63*** | 1.01 | 1.03 |
| | (-0.03) | (-0.03) | (-0.05) | (-0.05) |
| 2017 | 0.53*** | 0.54*** | 0.85*** | 0.99 |
| | (-0.03) | (-0.03) | (-0.04) | (-0.05) |
| Observations | 21,096 | 23,329 | 21,038 | 23,242 |

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 Source: 2010-2017 CGSS

The cut-points are omitted from the table

Note: a: agreement that men should prioritize work, women family (1 not agree at all, 5 strongly agree)

b: agreement that good marriage more important than career for woman (1 not agree at all, 5 strongly agree)

Table 4.1

**Table 4.1: Latent Class Indicators**

| Model and Class | df | AIC | BIC | DF |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Female Partner(total)** | | | | |
| 2 | 28 | 18970.99 | 19132.43 | 0.00 |
| 3 | 47 | 17590.77 | 17861.75 | **>15.00** |
| 4 | 62 | 17616.49 | 17973.96 | 0.00 |
| 5 | 64 | **17273.36** | **17642.35** | 0.00 |
| **Male Partner(total)** | | | | |
| 2 | 30 | 22327.96 | 22500.93 | 0.0000 |
| 3 | 41 | 20686.53 | **20922.91** | 0.0000 |
| 4 | 61 | **20198.89** | 20550.59 | **>15.00** |
| 5 | 74 | 20223.59 | 20650.24 | 0.0000 |
| **Male Partner (men's response)** | | | | |
| 2 | 31 | 17346.26 | 17505.16 | 0.0000 |
| 3 | 37 | 2150.756 | 2336.338 | 0.3072 |
| 4 | 60 | **2011.79** | **2312.733** | **>15.00** |
| 5 | 66 | 2208.754 | 2539.791 | 0.0000 |
| **Male Partner (women's response)** | | | | |
| 4 | 63 | 16187.29 | 16510.23 | 0.0000 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 79 | 15863.76 | 16268.72 | 0.0309 |
| 6 | 95 | 15712.2 | **16199.18** | 2.9758 |
| 7 | 111 | 15652 | 16220.99 | **>15.00** |
| 8 | 127 | **15637.06** | 16288.07 | 0.0000 |
| **Female Partner (men's response)** | | | | |
| 4 | 63 | 13255.48 | 13571.47 | 0.00 |
| 5 | 77 | 13055.27 | **13441.48** | 1.17 |
| 6 | 95 | 12968.07 | 13444.56 | **9.31** |
| 7 | 111 | **12932.43** | 13489.18 | 0.00 |
| **Female Partner (women's response)** | | | | |
| 2 | 30 | 2499.208 | **2652.99** | **>15.00** |
| 3 | 42 | 2523.208 | 2738.503 | 0.02 |
| 4 | 62 | **2345.737** | 2663.554 | **>15.00** |
| 5 | 68 | 2575.209 | 2923.783 | 0.00 |

Table 4.2

**Table 4.2: Latent Class Membership and Item Probabilities**

| | Male Marriage Partner | | | | Female Marriage Partner | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Class Membership Probability | 47.52% | 20.44% | 19.16% | 12.87% | 56.50% | 33.16% | 10.23% |
| | **Unconcerned** | **Minimalist** | **Materialist** | **Exhaustiveness** | **Unconcerned** | **Minimalist** | **Exhaustiveness** |
| Family Background | 0.0020 | 0.2185 | **0.6072** | **0.7642** | 0.0063 | 0.2186 | **0.7569** |
| Political Background | 0.0009 | 0.0246 | 0.0696 | 0.3021 | 0.0000 | 0.0155 | 0.2937 |
| Education | 0.0000 | 0.1784 | **0.6375** | **0.7708** | 0.0000 | 0.2045 | **0.7508** |
| Finances | 0.0000 | 0.1226 | **0.9817** | **0.9265** | 0.0011 | 0.1210 | **0.8326** |
| House ownership | 0.0009 | 0.1014 | **0.6914** | **0.8524** | 0.0011 | 0.0743 | **0.6607** |
| Appearance | 0.0000 | 0.1371 | 0.1183 | **0.8844** | 0.0007 | 0.2581 | **0.7929** |
| Height | 0.0000 | 0.2224 | 0.2692 | **0.9658** | 0.0000 | 0.1623 | **0.7051** |
| Age | 0.0009 | 0.3318 | 0.3528 | **0.9050** | 0.0030 | 0.4125 | **0.7640** |
| Personality | 0.0084 | **0.9336** | **0.9725** | **0.9723** | 0.0174 | **0.8949** | **0.9530** |
| IQ (intelligence) | 0.0092 | **0.8025** | **0.9094** | **0.9551** | 0.0090 | **0.6457** | **0.8914** |
| Blood Type | 0.0000 | 0.0446 | 0.0298 | 0.2670 | 0.0000 | 0.0128 | 0.2154 |
| Constellation | 0.0000 | 0.0340 | 0.0317 | 0.2776 | 0.0007 | 0.0207 | 0.1859 |
| Horoscope | 0.0009 | 0.0446 | 0.0561 | 0.3136 | 0.0000 | 0.0333 | 0.1863 |
| Good Habit | 0.0022 | **0.8936** | **0.9299** | **0.9575** | 0.0086 | **0.8618** | **0.9144** |
| Do Housework | 0.0018 | 0.3909 | 0.4528 | **0.7278** | 0.0040 | 0.3569 | **0.6944** |

Note: Bolded item response probabilities indicate that a respondent in certain class would have more than 50% chance of thinking the specific mate preference criterion as important.

Table 4.3

**Table 4.3: Multinomial Latent Class Regression on Criteria for a Male to be a Qualified Marriage Partner**

| | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | | Model 3 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contrast of latent class | U vs. M | Ma vs. M | E vs. M | U vs. M | Ma vs. M | E vs. M | U vs. M | Ma vs. M | E vs. M |
| Female | 0.01*** | 1.62† | 1.48 | 0.01*** | 1.76† | 1.49 | 0.01*** | 2.60** | 1.62 |
| Rural | | | | 0.56** | 0.24*** | 0.35*** | 0.64† | 0.50** | 0.46*** |
| Never married | | | | | | | 1.22 | 2.54*** | 1.31 |
| Employed | | | | | | | 1.61 | 1.40 | 1.14 |
| Education (ref: below college or no education) | | | | | | | | | |
| Bachelor or Associate | | | | | | | 1.20 | 2.28*** | 1.58* |
| Master or above | | | | | | | 1.17 | 3.25* | 1.59 |
| Family Income (ln) | | | | | | | 1.02 | 1.28** | 1.03 |
| Constant | 24.56*** | 0.63† | 0.48 | 29.28*** | 0.87 | 0.61† | 11.68** | 0.01*** | 0.24* |

Note:

1. p<0.001***, p<0.01**, p<0.05*, P<0.1†
2. U: Unconcerned; M: Minimalist; Ma: Materialist; D: Exhaustive.

Table 4.4

**Table 4.4: Multinomial Latent Class Regression on Criteria for a Female to be a Qualified Marriage Partner**

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contrast of latent class | U vs. M | E vs. M | U vs. M | E vs. M | U vs. M | E vs. M |
| Female | >15*** | 3.16*** | >15*** | 3.22*** | >15 | 4.17*** |
| Rural | | | 0.57* | 0.84 | 0.95 | 1.19 |
| Never married | | | | | 1.53 | 1.19 |
| Employed | | | | | 3.06*** | 1.82* |
| Education (ref: below college or no education) | | | | | | |
| Bachelor or Associate | | | | | 1.48 | 1.58** |
| Master or above | | | | | 3.53† | 3.58*** |
| Family Income (ln) | | | | | 1.2** | 1.1* |
| Constant | 0.00 | 0.64*** | 0.00 | 0.65*** | 0.00 | 0.08*** |

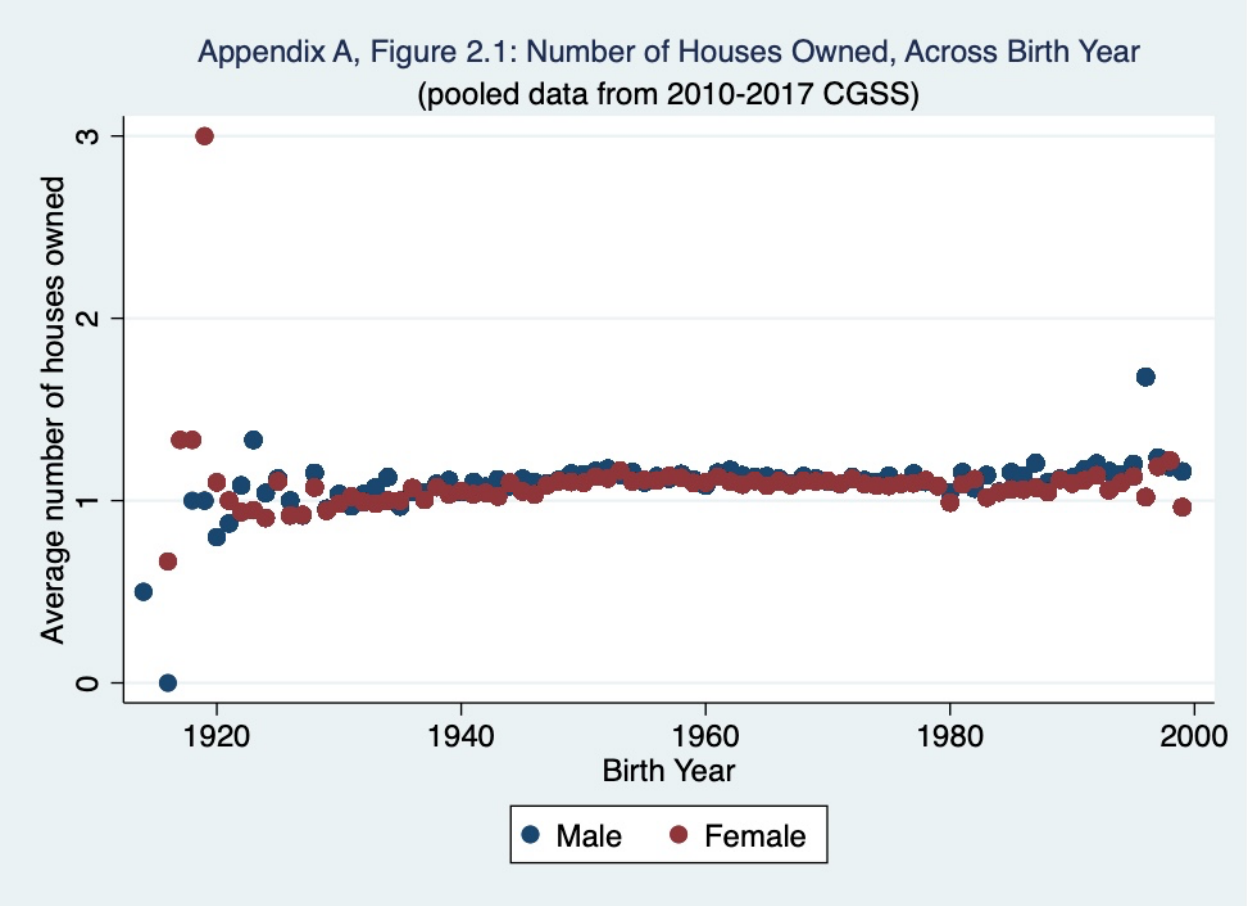
Note:
1. p<0.001***, p<0.01**, p<0.05*, P<0.1†
2. U: Unconcerned; M: Minimalist; E: Exhaustive.

**APPENDIX A:**

Figure 1: Propaganda Images of Women during Socialist Era


Image sources: https://chineseposters.net/themes/women-working

**Figures 2.1**


Appendix A, Figure 2.1: Number of Houses Owned, Across Birth Year
(pooled data from 2010-2017 CGSS)
Average number of houses owned
0
1
2
3
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
Birth Year
Male
Female

Appendix B: Interview Script

**Chinese Young Adults and Intimate Relations**

**Interview Guide**

Hello, my name is Langou Lian. Thank you for finding this time to talk to me. Just to briefly let you know about my project again. I am interested in learning about the romantic life of Chinese young adults like you, and getting to know how you and the others view romantic relationship. If there are questions you feel not comfortable to answer, you do not need to respond to those questions.

(Ask the participant to read the informed consent form and sign it if he/she/they agree/agrees to participate. Ensure the participant that no judgment attached to the answers to interview questions at all. It is definitely a safe space to talk about his/her/their stories.)

Before we start:
-Do you have any questions for me?
-Do you have a nickname for me to address you?

**Interview Questions:**

1. **General questions: Socio-demographic background**

    - Let me first ask you some basic questions about your background. If you don't mind, could you please introduce yourself and let me know a little bit more about yourself?
        i. If the respondents did not answer this question in detail, the interviewer will ask about respondents' education, political, religious and social background separately.
    - Work related:
        i. Are you currently employed?
        ii. If not, are you currently searching for one?
        iii. If yes, are you satisfied with your current job? What is your overall view and opinion about your current job?
        iv. If you worked in other companies before, what were your reasons to leave?

2. **Relationship (For people who are dating)**
    - Could please tell me about your current relationship? How did you meet this person?
        i. How long have you been together?
        ii. Can you tell me one thing you like about this relationship the most?
        iii. Can you tell me about things you feel you are struggling a bit with this relationship?

- Do you plan to marry this person? Why do you decide to (or not to) marry this person now? what are your concerns?
- what is your overall view about your current relationship? Are you satisfied? Any challenging things you are facing about this relationship?

- Have you ever talked about your future expectation of this relationship with your partner? What have you talked about so far?
    i. Plans about getting married, having children, taking care of your parents, and taking care of housework.
    ii. Have you ever gotten into any arguments when you talk about these issues? If yes, please tell more detail about it.

- Now I am going to ask you questions with some hypothetical situations:
    i. If you and your partner decide to get married, and your partners' parents suggests that both family should put in equal amount of money to pay for the down payment for an apartment after you get married. Do you think this is fair?
    ii. If your partners' parents suggests that both family should put in equal amount of money to pay for wedding, and you and your partner can collect the red envelop money after the wedding. Do you think this is fair?
    iii. If your partner or your partners' family want you to have child very soon after you get married, what do you think about it? What are some of the concerns you have?
    iv. If your partner want you to spend more time at home after having a child, what do you think about that?

- What do you parents think about this person? Have they ever try to make decisions for you about your relationship? And what do you think about that? I would ask this before you ask the hypotheticals.

- What is your view on relationship in general? What does your partner mean to you? If you think it is important to have a relationship, why is it?

- Do you think it is necessary for people to get married? If yes, why?

**3. Relationship (For people who are married)**

- Could please tell me about your current marriage? How did you meet this person?
    i. How long have you been together? How long have you been married?
    ii. Can you tell me one thing you like about this relationship the most?
    iii. Can you tell me about things you feel you are struggling a bit with this relationship
- Some of my interviewees talked a lot about arguments they had with their partner. Do you feel like you argue a lot?
    i. Have you had arguements about childrearing, family finance, housework, or anything?

ii. Tell me about a typical argument or a recent one. How did you end up solving the issue?

- what is your overall view about your current relationship? Are you satisfied? Any challenging things you are facing about this relationship?

- Now, recall the time before you get married:
  i. Have you and your partner, as well as your families, discuss issues about buying apartment or car for you two? What was that discussion about?
  ii. Did you have a conversation on "bride price", and what do you think about "bride price in general"?
  iii. When planning your wedding, did you have a conversation on who should pay for it, and how you should distribution the red envelop money? And what do you think about these conversations with your partner and his/her family?
  iv. Have your partner/partner's family and your family talk had an conversation on having a child? If you already have a child, do you recall how you and your partner made that decision?

- What is your view on relationship in general? What does your partner mean to you? If you think it is important to have a relationship, why is it?

- Do you think it is necessary for people to get married? If yes, why?

**4. Relationship (Singlehood)**

- So you told me that you are currently not dating anyone right now, are you looking to date anyone?
  i. If yes, what are your experiences so far in this process of looking?
  ii. If no, why have you decided to not date anyone as of right now?

- Have you ever felt any social pressures friends, family and others for not dating someone? If yes, would you mind tell me more about it?

- But what is your overall view about your single life right now? Are you satisfied? Any challenging things you are facing?
- Let's say you are dating someone right now, I am going to ask you questions with some hypothetical situations:
  i. If you and your partner decide to get married, and your partners' parents suggests that both family should put in equal amount of money to pay for the down payment for an apartment after you get married. Do you think this is fair?
  ii. If your partners' parents suggests that both family should put in equal amount of money to pay for wedding, and you and your partner can collect the red envelop money after the wedding. Do you think this is fair?
  iii. If your partner or your partners' family want you to have child very soon after you get married, what do you think about it? What are some of the concerns you have?

iv. If your partner want you to spend more time at home after having a child, what do you think about that?
v. What would you expect your partners to do for this family you have? If you have a child together, what do you expect your partner to do for childrearing?

- What is your view on relationship in general? What does your partner mean to you? If you think it is important to have a relationship, why is it?

- Do you think it is necessary for people to get married? If yes, why?

**5. Relationship history (these questions can be insert in difference points of the conversation when necessary):**

- Have you had any other relationships before?
- If yes, how did your previous relationship ended? Again, these are big and likely sensitive issues.
    i. If you could sum up the issues in one sentence, what would you say they were?
- Was there one or two relationships that you remember the most? Could please tell me a bit more about that relationships?
    i. What were some of the good thing about that relationship
    ii. What were some of the things that you were struggling with?

**6. Parental information and relationship with parents**

- What do your parents think about your relationship with your partner?
- Have they ever try to interfere with your relationship (current and previous)? If yes, what did they do?
- Do you often communicate with your parents? Have your parents ever talked to you about intimate relationships? What do they say?
- Do you think your parents have an impact on how you view your relationship?

**7. Comments**

- Now I have finished my question, is there anything else you want to share with me?
- Do you have questions for me?