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## “Follow your heart” – Chinese urban post-80 mothers’ expectations for their children

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### Recommended Citation

Chen, Wenjie(Rena), “Follow your heart” – Chinese urban post-80 mothers’ expectations for their children” (2013). *Senior Projects Spring 2013*. 319.  
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Bard

“Follow your heart” – Chinese urban post-80 mothers’ expectations for their children

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of Social Studies  
of Bard College

by  
Wenjie (Rena) Chen

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York  
May 2013

*This project is dedicated to my parents,  
who are not post-80 parents but have always been encouraging me to follow my heart.*

## *Acknowledgement:*

I would like to especially thank my project adviser, Stuart Levine, who inspired me in so many ways. I would like also to thank all professors at Bard Psychology Department; I would not have the ability to carry out and finish this project without your guidance and support in the past four years. I sincerely appreciate the help I received from my friends in China and in the United States. This project was also assisted by Horizon China, and I appreciate their understanding and their professional work.

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### Abstract

It has been 35 years since the Chinese government first introduced the One-Child Policy in 1978 to control the rapidly growing population. The first generation born after the policy was instated are mainly only children and are usually referred to as the "post-80" generation. As they are stepping into their thirties and becoming parents, the current project explores their expectations for their children, with a focus on urban post-80 mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice and how these expectations are different from those of the previous generations. A telephone survey was conducted with 82 urban mothers from four major cities in China. Results showed that the urban singleton mothers—mothers who are only children themselves—expected in general more freedom of choice for their children; the post-80 mothers in general were more satisfied with the freedom of choice they had in their childhood than pre-80 mothers. These results suggested that despite various critiques, the One-Child Policy might have increased Chinese urban mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice.

*Keywords:* One-Child Policy, expectations, freedom of choice

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### *Abstract*

*This study is about China's One-Child Policy and its influence on urban mothers' expectations for their children. This chapter intends to give an overview of the current study. It briefly presents the current situation and historical background of the policy, the reason and importance of doing the study, as well as the hypotheses and methods used.*



Figure 1. *Wei geming shixing jihua shengyu* (Carry out birth planning for the revolution).” A poster used in the 70s for the population control campaign (Yang, 1974).



Figure 2. *Zai nai zhong chengzhang* (Growing up in the drowning love). A comic portrait of the Chinese only child and his family.

President Carter delivered a speech in 1979 implying that for the first time in the United States, the current generation's expectancies for their children's future were not as bright as they once were. This speech proved to be detrimental to Carter's image and led to his failure to be

reelected. People wish to believe that the future will be better off than the present reality; we wish to believe that our children will live a better life.

In 1978, the Chinese government put in effect the One-Child Policy, which changed, or even shaped, Chinese family life. This policy limited the number of children a couple may have to only one child. The policy aimed to control China's soaring population growth and to facilitate its modernization movement. Figure 1 presented in the previous page is a poster used in the 70s to promote the family planning campaign. This poster features a working-class woman holding a bottle of birth control pills and a family planning booklet, with portraits of benefits of practicing family planning in the background. Two of the benefits are "raising children in a better way" and "improving mothers and children's health." Since the policy was implemented, the total birth rate—the total number of children born to a woman—dropped from approximately 5.8 in 1971 to 2.31 in 1990 (Tsui & Rich, 2002). The Head of China's National Population and Family Planning Commission announced in March 2006 that the One-Child Policy had helped China prevent 400 million births since it was officially instated (Feng, Cai & Gu, 2012; Nakra, 2012).

Though it succeeded in checking rapid population growth, did the One-Child Policy actually improve Chinese children's lives like the government promised in the poster? The comic portrait beside the poster (Figure 2.) depicts the life condition of an only child in present China. The boy is clearly the center of the family; instead of walking alone, he is sitting on a stretcher held by his parents and reading with his grandparents besides him to provide drinks and shades. People usually refer to Chinese only children like the boy featured in this comic as "little emperors," which suggests the high and centered family status they have (Fong, 2004). These children enjoy all the parental attention and family resources. Because of the policy, this family structure—the one-child family—became prevalent in present Chinese society, in contrary to the traditional



Chinese family structure, which usually favored more than one child in a family (Jiao, Ji & Jing, 1996).

Since its implementation, the policy has received a lot of critiques regarding the negative social consequences it caused. The aging society, also known as “the graying population,” is one of these undesirable social consequences. China’s birth rate has now dropped well below the replacement level of 2.1 children—2.1 children to replace two parents (Feng et al., 2012; Larson, 2013). As a result, China’s labor pool is shrinking. This situation has stimulated a lot of discussion regarding whether China should continue practicing the policy. Nevertheless, Wang Feng, the deputy head of the State Commission Office for Public Sector Reform, told the media, “China will not change its basic state policy on family planning” (People’s Daily, 2013). The current context thus calls for more efforts to understand and evaluate the influences of the One-Child Policy.

Thirty-five years have passed since the implementation of the One-Child Policy. The first generation born after the policy—who are often referred to as the “post-80 generation<sup>1</sup>”—are stepping into their thirties and becoming parents. This generation in fact provided researchers with a new way to evaluate the effects of the One-Child Policy: With the unique experiences of being the first only-child generation, now when they become parents, what do they expect for their children? Will the “little emperor” experiences lead to higher expectancies for the future of their children?

Parents’ expectations for their children have long-lasting effects on children; positive parental expectations often result in children’s better performances in social and academic areas

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<sup>1</sup> Current Chinese media usually name different generations by their birth year. The “post-80 generation” refers to the generation born between 1980 and 1990; similarly, the “post-90 generation” refers to people who were born

(Baroody & Dobbs-Oates, 2011; Froiland, Peterson & Davison, 2013; Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010). Expectations are “strong beliefs that something will happen or be the case in the future” (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2012). These strong beliefs could influence people’s behaviors and produce outcomes consistent with these beliefs (Rutchick, Smyth, Lopoo & Dusek, 2009). Therefore, the post-80 generations’ expectations for their children are important to study; these expectations may predict the performances of Chinese future generations and help us to further evaluate the One-Child Policy.

As the post-80 generation are just becoming parents, there have not been many studies done on their expectations for the future of their children. The current study is an initial attempt to explore the policy’s effects on post-80 generations’ expectations for their children as a way to assess the policy. Through this research, I try to examine post-80 parents’ –parents who were born after 1980—expectations for children in one specific area: Children’s freedom of choice, which is defined here as the extent to which one could freely choose what they like.

As mentioned before, the One-Child Policy has altered the traditional Chinese family structure to a one-child family structure. In these families parental love, care, expectations and resources are all centered on the only children. Recent studies suggested that Chinese daughters have particularly benefited from this child-centered family structure (McLoughlin, 2005; Short, Zhai, Xu & Yang, 2001; Tsui & Rich, 2002). Unlike daughters of previous generations who usually suffered from gender discriminations, post-80 daughters received similar amount of parental care and resources as their male counterparts did and their family status was also greatly elevated (Tsui & Rich, 2002). As more resources brought more options, one of the biggest differences between these two generations’ lives is the degree of freedom of choice. With significantly more family resources and care, compared with girls of previous generations, post-

80 daughters were less restricted by the gender discriminations and had more freedom of choice. Given this background, when the post-80 daughters become mothers, it is very likely that they would expect for a higher degree of freedom of choice for their children, compared with mothers who were born before the One-Child Policy. Therefore, the differences between these two generations of mothers' expectations for their children's future freedom of choice could be interpreted as one aspect of the influences of the One-Child Policy.

As the One-Child Policy has been practiced more strictly and effectively in urban cities (Tsui & Rich, 2002; Short, Zhai, Xu & Yang, 2001), the current study focuses on urban mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice only and compares expectations of urban post-80 mothers—mothers who were born after 1980—and pre-80 mothers—mothers who were born before 1980. I hypothesize that post-80 mothers will have higher expectations for their children's freedom of choice than pre-80 mothers. Furthermore, as the only daughters received as much as parental attention and resources as the sons received, I also hypothesize that urban post-80 singleton mothers—mothers who were born after 1980 and are only daughters—will have higher expectations for their children's freedom of choice than urban post-80 non-singleton mothers—mothers who were born after 1980 and have siblings.

A ten-item survey (see Appendix.1 & 2) was designed to assess urban mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice in multiple areas. 82 urban mothers, who were either singletons or non-singletons and who were born either before or after the policy was enacted, participated in the study. It has to be noted that due to the big share of the post-80 singleton mothers in urban areas, it was very hard to look for a big enough group of post-80 non-singleton mothers by myself. In order to get the best comparisons for the study, I worked with Horizon China, a leading marketing research consultancy group in China, to complete the study. I

designed the expectation survey and Horizon China distributed it to the 82 randomly selected urban mothers over the phone. Results and the interpretations of the results are presented later in this paper.

## Chapter 2 Historical Review and Hypotheses

### *Abstract*

*This chapter discusses the historical context of the One-Child Policy and presents the changes that had been made to the policy since 1978. By effectively reducing the birth rate, the One-Child Policy changed the Chinese traditional extended family structure to small one-child family structure. Despite the critiques on negative consequences brought by the policy, I argue that urban daughters have benefited from these changes. Based on this review, at the end of the chapter I propose two possible trends of post-80 urban mothers' expectations for their children.*

The introduction, implementation, and the changes of the One-Child Policy

In the early 60s, with decreasing death rate and increasing birth rate, the natural annual population growth rate<sup>2</sup> in China climbed from 1.83% in 1960 to 2.79% in 1966 (World Bank, 2012). As a result, China was confronted with a serious problem: With 7% of the world land, it needed to feed 23% of the world population. In the late 70s, facing the devastating aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping, the new leader of China after Mao's death in 1976, started a series of reforms and marketization programs to modernize Chinese society and to transform its economy into an industrial economy (Nakra, 2012). Mr. Deng, like other

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<sup>2</sup> Population growth rate is defined as the percentage change of resident population compared to previous year (World Bank Database, 2012).

professionals in the international population organizations of that time, also strongly believed that population growth could be a hindrance to the economic growth and controlling China's rapidly increasing population should be a part of the modernization movement (Feng et al., 2013; Nakra, 2012).

It was within this context that in the National People Congress in 1978, the Chinese government, officially added into the Constitution, "The state advocates and implements family planning," symbolizing the official promulgation of the family planning policy,<sup>3</sup> which is also known as the One-Child Policy. In 1980, the Communist Party of China (CPC)<sup>4</sup> sent out a public letter to mobilize its members to follow the policy first.<sup>5</sup> The letter said that given the population growth rate, Chinese population would reach 130 million in twenty years and the population explosion would largely hinder China's modernization movement—a movement that was meant to turn China into a First-World country. The Party promised its members that there would be a brighter future with fewer people and a better future for their children.

In 1982, the One-Child Policy was officially listed as one of the basic national policies in China. Article 25 in the revised Constitution emphasizes that the purpose of the family planning is to make the population growth fit into the plans of economic and social development. The Constitution also states, "couples have the obligation to practice family planning." The legal marriage age in the Chinese Marriage Law was also lifted from 20 to 22 years old for men and from 18 to 20 years old for women as a support for the implementation of the One-Child Policy.

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<sup>3</sup> "Family planning policy" is the official translation for the "One-Child Policy." As the name "One-Child Policy" is more often used in other studies, the rest of the paper uses "One-Child Policy" only to refer to this family planning policy.

<sup>4</sup> CPC is in practice the only ruling political party in China, maintaining a unitary government (Ralph, John & Lee, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> Members of Chinese Party are usually considered as role models in Chinese society.

In addition to these legal supports, Chinese government set rewards to motivate people to obey the policy and also penalties for those who exceeded the birth quota. Despite the fact that the One-Child Policy is one of the basic national policies, the practices of the policy were different depending on the region; local governments are granted the autonomy to generate their own regulations regarding the rewards and punishments based on their local economic and social development. Typically, couples that followed the policy would receive a “one-child certificate.” There were a number of benefits attached to this certificate. Across regions, these benefits usually included paid and prolonged maternity leave from work, waived operation fees when giving birth, privileges to waive tuitions and fees for children’s compulsory education, priorities to be employed,<sup>6</sup> better chances to get arranged housing, and more pension would be given upon retirement. On the other hand, couples that failed to follow the policy with a second child usually would have to give up all privileges and repay all cash rewards (Goodstadt, 1982). The third child was then “denied free education, grain rations at subsidized prices, allocation of housing space, and rural private plots (Goodstadt, 1982).” In addition, couples that had a third child would be penalized by “the deduction from the parents’ monthly earnings (Goodstadt, 1982).” The amount of the deduction and how long the couples with a third child should be penalized depended on the region; in some areas, the deduction was ten percent and the couples would be penalized for three to fourteen years.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, the One-Child Policy was practiced much more effectively and strictly in urban areas than in rural areas (Feng et al., 2013; McLoughlin, 2005). In fact, the policy has an

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<sup>6</sup> Some regions like Shanghai included the article that “All things being equal, companies registered in rural areas should first consider hire people from only child families; among only child families, families registered in rural areas should be first considered (Shanghai People’s Government, 1990).”

<sup>7</sup> In Shanghai, the couples with a third child would be penalized with the deduction for three years (Shanghai People’s Government, 1990), while in Shanxi province it was fourteen years (Shanxi People’s Congress, 1997).

exception for rural areas in all provinces and it is still in effect now; if both partners are registered in rural areas and their first child is a daughter, they are allowed to have a second child. Despite this exemption, compliance was still higher in urban areas than in rural areas. Between 1979 and 1988, on average, one out of sixteen urban women violated the policy, while one out of three women in rural areas did not follow the policy (Cooney, Wei & Powers, 1991). Other research documented various rural resistances to the policy; the traditional preferences for male children clashed with the implementation of the One-Child Policy, which led to some undesirable social consequences like large number of female infanticides and selected abortions (McLoughlin, 2005). The degrees to which the policy was reinforced in rural areas were very different depending on the region and there were other factors (like the different government-citizen relationships and local superstition traditions) involved in the implementation of the policy; thus, it is very hard to examine the effects of the One-Child Policy on rural mothers' expectations for their children. It is for this reason that the current study only focuses on the One-Child Policy's influences in urban areas, where the compliances were high and people's responses were more unanimous.

It was not until 2002 that a national Population and Family Planning Law was put into effect. The national law for the first time clearly specified Chinese citizens' legal rights during the implementation of the policy, like "women have the right to ask for special occupational protections during the period of pregnancy, delivery, and breast-feeding," and ways to protect these rights, such as "citizens may appeal for administrative review when they believe that their legitimate rights are infringed (National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, 2002)." The national Law clearly forbids local governments to abuse their legal power or to coerce people to obey the policy. Also, instead of leaving the local authorities to decide the



specific type of benefits and punishments related with the policy, Chinese government standardized and stipulated these benefits and punishments in the national Population and Family Planning Law. There are two major changes in this national Law; first of all, couples that both partners are singletons are allowed to have a second child; the second major change is that couples that exceed the birth quota suggested for them need to pay a social maintenance fee in addition to the original fines. These changes to some extent reflect the central government's determination to continue the One-Child Policy. It is thus even more necessary to examine and better understand the effects of the policy.

#### The One-Child Policy and one-child families

In terms of population control, the One-Child Policy has been successful, especially in urban cities. According to the Chinese government, China had four million fewer people in 2008 than it would have had otherwise (Taylor, 2005). The population growth rate dropped from 2.34% in 1971 to 1.45% in 1981, and then to 1.12% in 1985 and 1.08% in 1986 (McLoughlin, 2005). China's total birth rate dropped from six births per women in 1970 to two births per women in 1980, two years after the implementation of the policy, and to 1.61 births per women in 2009 (Fong, 2002; World Bank, 2012). Rural residents had higher birth rate than urban residents. Because of the policy exception that rural couples are allowed to have two children if their first one is a daughter, two-child families are almost the norm in rural areas (Fong, 2002); however, in urban areas, most of the women who married after the policy was instated have only one child.

The low fertility rate undoubtedly changed Chinese family structure and the way children are raised—only children are getting more parental attention and resources. The traditional ideal

family structure is to have many children and grandchildren. In fact, this is also a common wish (“Zi Sun Man Tang,”“子孙满堂”) people give to newly married couples in China. One of the major reasons for Chinese to have large families was to have reliable old age care, as Chinese families didn't have access to medical care until recent decades. If one child eventually leaves home and lives in another town or city that is far away, parents could count on other children that live closer to them. Nevertheless, because of the One-Child Policy, three-member families replaced the traditional large families that had five or more members, becoming the main family structure in present China, especially in urban cities. In 1990 in major cities like Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin, the percentage of all births that are first-parity births ranged between 86 and 96 percent. By 1997, the average family size in major cities ranged from 3.05 to 3.10 (Tsui & Rich, 2002). In 2000, Shanghai and Beijing's average family sizes continued going down to 2.8 and 2.9 respectively (China Census, 2002). In urban areas, the one-child family is the main culture.

As a result of the smaller family size, compared with previous generations, only children receive more parental attention and resources. My mother, who was born in the mid-60s, has two sisters and she always told me stories about how the sisters fought for new clothes, food, or opportunities to go on a business trip with their dad. However, like all other single children born after 1980, I never had to compete with anyone to get all these. Only children are usually called “little emperors” or “little suns,” because they are the center of their parents' or even their grandparents' life. All the attention, care and resources are devoted to the only children. Some parents are even described as “drowning their kids with love” (溺爱). In a survey conducted with both urban singletons and non-singletons, 67% singletons indicated that they were “spoiled” by at least one parent, compared with 54% non-singletons (Fong, 2004). With such heavy and

centered emotional and financial investments, parents in turn have much higher expectations for their only children—these children are their “only hope.”

This is especially the case for the post-80 generation's parents. These parents who were born around 1950s experienced both the “Great Famine” (1958-1961) and the disastrous Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). During the three years of the Great Famine caused by poor government policies and natural disasters, there were around 22 million deaths (Li, 1998). The education system was interrupted at all levels during the ten-year Cultural Revolution; the post-80 generation's parents either received a poor education or were not able to pursue a high level education, as the college entrance exam was completely cancelled (Tsui & Rich, 2002). Therefore, when these parents had children and were only allowed to have one child, they placed all their hopes on the only children. These parents were willing to give their post-80 children everything, to make up what they had missed in their childhood (Yue, 2010).

Expectations are “strong beliefs that something will happen or be the case in the future (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2012).” Past research in both psychology and economics have demonstrated that people's expectations for others could result in expectancy-consistent behaviors or outcomes (Curtis & Miller, 1986; Rutchick et al., 2009); common self-fulfilling prophecy examples in everyday life have showed us that even an initial fake belief, when it is strong enough, could lead to a behavior that is consistent with the belief (Merton, 1968; Madon, Willard, Gyll & Scherr, 2011). According to the expectancy-value theory, expectations often serve as motivations to actions that could make the beliefs (often positive beliefs) come true (Vroom, 1964). Parental expectations, specifically, are indeed related with parental involvement; higher parental expectations predict higher parental involvement, which often lead to children's positive performances in their development, like higher literacy interests and higher self-esteem

(Amato & Ochiltree, 1986; Baroody & Dobbs-Oates, 2011; Rutchick et al., 2009). Because the post-80 generations' parents had unfortunate growing up experiences and they were told by the Chinese government that "raising one child is better," they had very strong beliefs and thus very high expectations that their children would live a much better life than they did. These high expectations were also intensified by the fact they only had one child, meaning that they only had one shot. It was these expectations that motivated them to devote whatever they had and provide whatever they could to their children, which led to the expression that "drowning their children with love." Their high expectations contained not only strong beliefs about their children's lives, but also about their own lives—they expected that by providing children with ample resources they could improve their lives in old ages. The prevalent one-child family structure in urban areas intensified parents' expectations for their children, greatly improving children's family status. A child-centered family culture then appeared. Because of the important role expectations play in guiding and changing people's behaviors and because of the important role parental expectations play in children's development, the current study tries to assess the post-80 urban mothers' early expectations for their children, as a way to assess the influence of the One-Child Policy.

#### The empowered urban daughters

A lot of scholars have criticized China's One-Child Policy and they emphasized the involuntary fertility limitations and its negative consequences, including the increasingly skewed gender ratio, selective abortions, increasing divorce rate, the aging society and etc. (Feng, Cai & Gu, 2013; Fong, 2004; Hershatter, 2007; Kaufman et al, 1989; Nakra, 2012; Short et al., 2001). However, these critiques have focused mainly on the policy's effect in the rural areas, where

resistance to the policy was high due to the agricultural nature of the areas; the compliance of the policy in urban cities was in fact relatively high, partially due to the fact that the desire for more children was far lower in cities than in rural counterparts. In Lee's (2005) fertility desire survey with 938 urban residents aged 18 to 40 whose parents' responses were also collected, the average total number of children desired by these participants was 1.22, while their parents' desired for on average 3.4 children. Moreover, when asked about the reason for having one child, 41% participants considered the One-Child Policy as the most important factor and 30% participants reported that money—including extra childbearing, child-raising and educational costs if they have more than one child—was also a very important factor. To some extent, the policy was a relief to some urban women as it liberated them from the enormous pressure of doing housework and taking care of several children (Fong, 2004). I would by no means discount the negative consequences brought by the policy; nevertheless, I argue that there should be a more balanced view of the policy and especially in urban cities the One-Child Policy did have some positive effects, including the empowerment of urban women.

Various studies of countries worldwide have pointed out the high correlation between low birth rate and women's empowerment (Eswaran, 2002; Fong, 2004; Varkey, Kureshi, & Lesnick, 2010). Post-80 urban daughters particularly have benefited from the One-Child Policy. As recent studies suggested, the policy effectively elevated these urban daughters' family status and brought them more resources, from parental care to educational opportunities (Fong, 2004; McLoughlin, 2005; Short et al., 2001; Tsui & Rich, 2002). Compared with women of previous generations, the post-80 urban daughters are greatly empowered.

Preferences for male children in traditional Chinese families were well documented; if a family has both sons and daughters, it is the sons who will usually get better resources (Short,

Zhai, Xu & Yang, 2001). Boys were more often seen as valuable labor forces that could contribute more to the family economically, and also as more reliable support in parents' old ages; girls on the other hand would eventually get married and moved out to live and take care of their parents-in-laws. As a result, daughters usually had to compromise their dreams so that the family could afford their brothers' education or career pursues.

Nevertheless, with low resistance to the One-Child Policy, urban parents are more likely to ignore gender differences, because they only have one child. Lee's birth desire survey (2005) in four major Chinese cities indeed revealed a decline of gender discriminations in urban families; their results showed that there were no gender preferences in the number of desired boys and girls of urban parents, while the previous generation reported that they had desired to have more boys. Tsui and Rich surveyed 1040 only children who were in their eighth grade in Huhan, a large urban city in China, and found that there were no gender differences in parental expectations and attention in one-child families (2002); only girls received similar amount of family resources as only boys did, indicating a significant improvement in girls' family status. Under the child-centered family environment that was described before, these post-80 urban daughters—who are mostly only children—are also “little suns” or “emperors” in the families. Compared with daughters of previous generations who had siblings, post-80 urban singleton daughters definitely received much more attention, care, expectations and also need for old-age care from their parents and sometimes even their grandparents.

More family attention brings urban daughters more educational opportunities than before. Deeply shaped by Confucian thoughts that emphasize education and efforts, Chinese parents have always believed that education is a key determinant of their children's future success and happiness. Like sons, post-80 urban singleton daughters are often encouraged to “make full use

of their academic talents” (Fong, 2004), as they are the only objects of their parents’ investments. The percentage of girls attending colleges rose from 37.32% in 1997 to 47.08% in 2005 (News.cn, 2007). Moreover, it is now increasingly common in China for women to have graduate and even doctoral degrees. The male to female ratio among graduate students in Shanghai dropped from 2.32 in 2000 to 1.38 in 2010 (China Census, 2002, 2010).

Urban daughters obtained more educational opportunities not only at schools, but also in their daily lives. Compared with pre-80 daughters, post-80 daughters have more female role models in their lives—their working mothers. Because the One-Child Policy freed a number of mothers from housework and child-care, it’s very common in urban cities for mothers to have paid jobs and some of them even made their way into the prestigious professions. Being financially independent enabled these urban women to provide their parents with good old age support—the obstacle which in the past used to cause gender discriminations in families. To some extent, these mothers showed the society that raising a daughter could be as good as raising a son. At the same time, they are also presenting to their daughters how women could live independently and achieve as much as men do in some fields. Unlike pre-80 daughters who grew up seeing their mothers often staying at home and taking care of the whole family, most of the post-80 urban daughters grow up with two working parents. It is thus highly possible that post-80 urban daughters carry higher expectations of what women are capable of, compared with pre-80 urban daughters.

While China’s One-Child Policy did reduce the gender discrimination at the family level, the discriminations at the society level in general are still evident. Compared with men, women still have disadvantages in the job fields. Companies still prefer males to females when find people to fill in higher positions, as they consider males to be more rational and creative (Fong.

2004) and males do not need “maternity leaves.” As a result, the wage gap still exists in urban China (Mauer-Fazio & Rawski, 1999); men tend to have higher salaries than women. Therefore, urban daughters and their parents face more challenges of competing for opportunities and resources in a society where gender discriminations have long hindered women’s development. Ren and Miller did a research on gender differentials in the payoff to schooling in China in 2010; they reported that though the payoff of education for both genders are similar in urban China, urban girls are more likely to be overeducated. Consistent with Ren and Miller’s findings, Tsui and Rich (2002) found that parents of urban only daughters actually spent more on education than parents of male only children. Their results also showed that urban only daughters were more likely to take academic tutorials<sup>8</sup> than only sons.

In fact, some families are raising daughters as if they were raising sons. I myself actually could be a good example. My father encouraged me to sell newspapers to earn money for myself when I was in the first grade of the elementary school, while most of my friends were staying at home and getting whatever they wanted from their parents. My dad’s boy-raising style actually gave me a lot more life experiences than my peers’; these experiences built up my confidence and definitely helped me do better than my male peers in a lot of aspects.

In the revised 2002 national law, the gender discrimination issue is addressed with more detailed and clear solutions. In the first chapter of the Law, the third article straightforwardly emphasizes that the implementation of the family planning policy should be accompanied with increasing education and working opportunities for women and improving women’s health and social status. The thirty-fifth article forbids using ultrasound gender identification for non-

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<sup>8</sup> In addition to courses provided at school, a large share of students regardless of their age take academic tutorials in their spare time, due to the intense competition in the present society. In my memory, almost everyone in my class was taking some sort of tutorials outside of school trying to get more exercises and get higher grades.



medical reasons and aborting pregnancy based on the fetus sex, aiming to reduce gender discriminations against female infants before births. It should be mentioned that these revisions were made under the pressure of increasing forced abortions and female infanticides, which mainly happened in rural areas (McLoughlin, 2005). For urban daughters, however, the revised national Law earns them more employment opportunities, in addition to original benefits of more parental care and educational resources. Consequently, over the course of the past thirty-five years, despite some negative social consequences, the One-Child Policy has substantially changed and improved urban daughters' lives. Because of the policy, the post-80 urban daughters' lives have been significantly different from the pre-80 daughters' lives and they are empowered intellectually and socially.

#### Freedom of choice, expectations, and hypotheses

The empowerment of urban daughters brings about a great improvement in their lives: the freedom of choice, which in the current study is defined as *the extent to which one could freely choose what they like*. In my opinion, the amount of actual freedom of choice obtained could best reflect the differences between post-80 and pre-80 daughters' lives and thus capture the influences of the One-Child Policy. The One-Child Policy empowered post-80 urban daughters, especially urban singleton daughters, essentially by reducing the gender discriminations at the family level; in other words, the policy reduced the restrictions that urban daughters once had and left them with more freedom of choice. Pre-80 urban daughters who are usually non-singletons had to compete with their siblings for resources in their childhoods and early adulthoods. The situation gets worse if they have brothers; it is very likely that they have to compromise or give up whatever wishes and aspirations they have. Therefore, pre-80 urban non-

singleton daughters had few freedom of choice in their lives. On the contrary, the current post-80 urban daughters not only do not need to make compromises, but also have the ability to pick and choose; for instance, in terms of education, in addition to having the accesses to higher educations, they could also choose what they want to study as their majors. In Fong's interviews with a urban daughter and her father in Dalian, although the father expressed worries when he knew that his daughter wanted to choose Engineering as her major, he still gave her support and encouragements and believed that with hard work his daughter could definitely achieve what she wanted (2004). Therefore, as results of the changed gender perceptions at the family level, the differences between the amount of freedom of choice obtained by these two generations of urban daughters reflect the influences of the One-Child Policy.

Now, thirty-five years after the One-Child Policy was officially enacted, a big cohort of the post-80 urban daughters are becoming mothers themselves. With their unique experiences in China's transition time, what will they expect their children's to life to be like? Given that the policy will not be abandoned for another ten years (People's Daily, 2013), will they expect for a better future for their children? More importantly, as these urban singleton daughters had the ability to choose and to pursue their dreams, will they expect their children to have more freedom to do so? As expectations of the post-80 urban daughters—now also could be called “post-80 urban mothers”—could have long-lasting influences on China's next generation, it is necessary and important to understand their expectations for their children.

Despite the importance of parental expectations, Chinese parents' expectations for their children have not been studied much, not to mention specifically post-80 parents' expectations for their children's future. Among those few that studied this topic, the focus has always been Chinese parents' expectations for their children's academic development (Hou & Leung, 2011;

Leung, Hou, Gati & Li, 2011; Tsui & Rich, 2002). In 2010, Leung and Shek developed a parental scale that was the first one specifically designed for Chinese parents; it was called “Chinese Parental Expectation on Child’s Future Scale.” Nevertheless, they focused on three domains, “education attainment”, “family obligations” and “moral character” –freedom of choice was not included. As I believe that the amount of freedom of choice obtained is one of the biggest differences between post-80 urban mothers and pre-80 urban mothers’ lives, the current study, as a first attempt, focuses on this aspect and tries to assess post-80 urban mothers’ expectations for their children’s freedom of choice. Moreover, by doing so, I hope to assess the influences of the One-Child Policy not only retrospectively but also prospectively.

As compared with non-singleton children singleton children in general received higher parental expectations, more parental care and resources, they obtained more freedom of choice; with this growing up experience, singleton mothers are likely to have stronger beliefs in the possibility of obtaining the freedom of choice since they have benefited from it. As expectations essentially are strong beliefs about the what will happen in the future, I hypothesize that singleton urban mothers, compared with non-singleton urban mothers, will have higher expectations of their children’s freedom of choice. More specifically, post-80 urban singleton mothers will expect more freedom of choice for their children than post-80 urban non-singleton mothers. Furthermore, as the One-Child Policy has led to the appearance of a child-centered family culture and empowered urban women, I hypothesize that post-80 urban mothers in general will expect higher freedom of choice for their children than pre-80 urban mothers.

## Chapter 3 Method

### *Abstract*

*This chapter reviews the hypotheses in the last chapter and presents the detailed method used for this research. In addition to describing participant recruitment and survey techniques, this chapter focuses on explaining specific measurements that were used to assess mothers' freedom of choice expectations from multiple aspects.*

### Hypotheses

Based on the literature review of the One-Child Policy's influences on urban daughters, the current study proposed two main hypotheses:

- 1) Singleton mothers will have higher expectations for their children's freedom of choice than non-singleton mothers. More specifically, post-80 singleton mothers will have higher freedom of choice expectations than post-80 non-singleton mothers.*
- 2) Post-80 mothers in general will have higher expectations for their children's freedom of choice than pre-80 mothers.*

### Overview

In order to understand whether urban daughters born after the One-Child Policy was enacted in 1978 will have difference expectations for their children's freedom of choice, the current study utilized a 10-item survey to assess expectations for children's freedom of choice of

four groups of urban mothers: post-80 singleton mothers, post-80 non-singleton mothers, pre-80 singleton mothers and pre-80 non-singleton mothers. Due to the difficulty of recruiting post-80 non-singleton mothers in urban areas, I worked with Horizon China, a leading marketing research consultancy group in China, who randomly chose and recruited all participants. Surveys were delivered over phone calls by professional researchers from Horizon China and participants' answers were written down and coded into computers by these researchers for further analysis.

### Participants

In total 82 urban mothers were randomly recruited by phone calls—both land lines and cellphones—from four major cities in China, Beijing (35), Shanghai (16), Guangzhou (14), and Shenzhen (16). Among them, 40 were born before 1980—“pre-80 mothers”, and 42 were born between 1980 and 1989—“post-80 mothers.” In each generation group, half of them were singleton mothers—mothers who are the only children in their families, and half of them were non-singleton mothers—mothers who have siblings. A power analysis with 95% confidence was done prior to the study to estimate the ideal sample size needed; results suggested a sample size of 385 participants. Nevertheless, with limited budget, I was not able to afford to recruit such a large sample. The number of the current sample size was made based on the consideration of having an equal group size—20 participants per group.

The recruitment process was aided by the CATI (Compute-aided telephone interviewing) system from Horizon China. For landline phone calls, the CATI system automatically generated eight random numbers to call, according to the area code of each district. Chinese cellphone numbers are made of three parts—the first three digits represent the cellphone carriers (including

Chinamobile, Chinaunicom and Chinatelecom), the middle four represent the area, and the last four are random digits. The CATI system automatically generated the four random digit numbers to call. Once participants answered the call, interviewers would friendly invite them to participate in the study. The consent form was read out to all participants, and only after they gave oral consent would the interview start.

### Procedure

Because the CATI system generated random numbers to call, participants' background information was at first unclear and some of them might not be the target mothers; thus, after the mothers agreed to participate in the study, five filter questions were asked to recruit the target sample. The five filter questions are: 1) *Did you grow up in a city?* 2) *Do you have children?* 3) *When were you born?* 4) *Are you a single child in your family?* 5) *How old is your child?* The age of children matters in the current study, because mothers who just have their babies might not have developed clear expectations for their children's future yet. Therefore, only urban mothers with children older than one year old continued with the rest of the survey; others were friendly told that they were not our target research group and were also thanked for their time and support. If the person who picked up the phone was a male, he would be immediately told the purpose of the call and the researcher would apologize for having interrupted him. Moreover, if any category group has reached the planned the group size, the researcher would "close" the group and stop recruiting participants to that group.

Besides the filter questions, the rest of the survey contained three sections: *the priming section, the main freedom expectation section and demographic information section.*

#### *Priming*

After the filter questions, target participants were asked to first recall an episode of them and their children, and then choose an answer that best reflected their expectations for their children. This recall-episode request was intended to guide their mothers to think specially about their expectations for their children and to reduce other environmental influences, like a newspaper article she just read about children's education, or stories of their friends' children. Moreover, mothers might have different expectations for their children as their children grow up; while post-80 mothers' children are around 2 or 3 years old, most of pre-80's mother's children are older than 10 years old. Thus, to control this influence of children's age, pre-80 mothers were specifically asked to recall an episode of them and their children around 2 years old and then choose the answer that best reflected their expectations for their children around that time.

#### *Main freedom expectation section*

The main freedom expectation section had 11 questions. Mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice were assessed from four aspects that are closely related with their children's life: interests development, major choice, career development and partner choosing. For these questions, mothers were asked to rate their expectations on a 10-point scale, with 1 meaning "no freedom at all" and 10 meaning "total freedom"<sup>9</sup> (Table 1). Each aspect was assessed by one question except career development. Mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice in career development were estimated in two ways—mothers' expectations for their children's financial status, and mothers' expectations for the influence of gender in their children's job choice. Unlike other aspects, career development is more influenced by other

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<sup>9</sup> The scale of financial status question was different from others. Instead of representing "poor," 1 here represents "average financial level." The pilot study done before showed that parents' tended to report their expectations for their children's financial status above average; it is also does not sound right to these mothers' to expect their children's financial level to be below average. Therefore, in order to capture the varieties in mothers' expectations, I decided to change the scale and have the lowest level be the "average financial" level.

social factors. If you may recall from the last chapter, historical articles and research showed that Chinese urban daughters were greatly empowered by the One-Child Policy, which led to a change in perceptions of gender especially at the family level. Gender influence on job choice might be more obvious and robust considering Chinese' traditional gender stereotypes against women. For these reasons, I added the question regarding gender influence to more comprehensively understand mothers' expectations and measure effects of One-Child Policy. With "1" being "no influence at all and "10" being "completely decided by gender," the conceptual meaning of ratings for this question was opposite from others; the higher the mothers' ratings, the lower the freedom of choice expectations the mothers have.

**Table 1. Scale Survey Questions.**

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Actual Questions:</b>
Interest Development	Q.1 In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her own interest? <i>(Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "not decided by him or her at all," 10 means "completely decided by him or her.")</i>
Major Choice	Q.2 To what extent do you expect your child will be able to freely choose his or her major? <i>(Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "not decided by him or her at all," 10 means "completely decided by him or her.")</i>
Career Development	Q.3 To what level do you expect your child's financial income to be? <i>(Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "average level," 10 means "very rich.")</i>
	Q.5 Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender? <i>(Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "no influence at all," 10 means "completely decided by gender.")</i>
Partner Choosing	Q.6 If you do not like or are not content with the partner your child chooses, will you intervene? <i>(Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "no intervention at all," 10 means "completely decided by me.")</i>



Mothers were also asked to estimate the intensity of employment competition (*Q3: Do you think the employment competition your child may face will be less intense, the same as or more intense than the competition you faced?*), and the pressure of taking care of elder family members compared with the situation they had experienced (*Q7: Do you think the pressure of taking care of elderly family members your child face will be smaller, the same as or larger than what you are facing now?*). These two questions were multiple-choice questions.

To understand whether mothers' own experiences of freedom of choice were different across groups and whether their past experiences were related with their current expectations for their children, mothers were also asked to rate their satisfaction of the freedom of choice they had in the past (*Q8: Are you satisfied with the freedom of choice you had when you grew up?*). This is also a 10-point scale question, with "1" being "not at all" and "10" being "completely satisfied."

At the end of this freedom expectation section, mothers were asked to name one factor that they think affected their expectations for their children the most (*Q9*). This question was an open-ended question and answers were all coded exactly the way the mothers phrased.

As differences among mothers' expectations for their children might also be affected by the gender of their children, mothers were also kindly asked about the gender of their children (*Q10*) and they were informed that they did not have to answer this question. The last question in the main survey was regarding mothers' intentions to have another child (*Q11*). This question was asked to mainly assess mothers' responses to the recent new policy change that a couple is allowed to have two children if both partners are single children in their families and answers to this question will not be included in the expectation analysis.

*Demographic information section*

The last section of the telephone survey was about demographic information and was optional to all mothers. In this section, information of mothers' education background, marital status, salary level and occupation was collected. The salary level and education background was redefined in later analysis.

*Salary Level.* There were three salary levels used in the study, low income (below ¥4000/month), middle income (between ¥4001 and ¥6000/month) and high income (above ¥6001/month). These salary levels were decided based on participants' reported monthly salary ranges;<sup>10</sup> the top 20% participants were grouped as high-income level (20 participants), the bottom 20% participants were grouped as low-income level (25 participants; 24 participants reported "¥2001~ ¥4000/month" and 1 participant reported "below ¥2000/month"), and the rest of the participants who reported their salary ranges were grouped as middle-income level (27 participants). 9 participants declined to provide their salary ranges, thus, they were not grouped and were also excluded in later data analysis related with salary levels.

*Education level.* Participants were divided into two education levels based on their reported education levels—"below college degree" (40 participants) and "college degree and above" (40 participants). The two groups coincidentally to have the equal group size, after excluding two participants who declined to report their education level.

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<sup>10</sup> These salary ranges were pre-determined by Horizon China and participants were asked to choose the range that their monthly salaries belong to. The pre-determined monthly salary ranges were "below ¥2000", "¥2001~ ¥4000", "¥4001~ ¥6000", "¥6001~ ¥8000", "¥8001~ ¥10000", "¥10001~ ¥15000", and "above ¥15001." Because of the small sample size and the highly unbalanced numbers of participants in these salary ranges, I decided to redefine the salary levels to achieve more even numbers of participants in each level.

## Measurements

*Freedom score.* Freedom score is an index developed to estimate each mother's expectation for her child's overall freedom of choice. It is the average of a mother's ratings to Question 1 (interests), 2 (major), 3 (financial status), 5 (gender influence) and 6 (partner choosing). Question 4 (employment competition) and Question 7 (old age care pressure) were not included, as these two were multiple choice questions and answers to these two questions were categorical and not on a 10-point scale. It should also be mentioned that the scale direction of Question 5 (*Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender?*) was different from the direction of other questions--the higher the score, the more freedom of choice mothers expected their children to have. For Question 5, mothers were asked to rate the extent to which their children's job choice would be influenced by their gender; the higher the score, the more influential gender would be in children's job choice, and the less freedom of choice these children would have. Thus, mothers' ratings on Question 5 were reverse coded. The computation of the freedom score used the recoded scores of Questions 5 and actual scores of other four questions. Therefore, the higher the freedom scores, the higher expectations of overall freedom of choice a mother had for her child. This comprehensive measure enables us to examine the differences among four groups of mothers with a broader scope.

## Chapter 4 Results

### *Abstract*

*This chapter presents statistical results obtained from the survey research. Results were analyzed from two levels. First of all, mothers' ratings on combined survey items were analyzed and differences among four types of mothers—post-80 singleton, post-80 non-singleton, pre-80 singleton and pre-80 non-singleton mothers—are presented. Secondly, the influence of mothers' background, including income and education, on their ratings of survey questions were also analyzed.*

### Expectations for Children's Freedom of Choice

Before going into specific statistic results, to give an overview of mothers' responses to questions regarding their expectations for their children's freedom of choice, I present here the average scores of each type of mothers on all the scaled questions in Table 2.

Because mothers' expectations for children's future freedom of choice were assessed by multiple survey items and these items were conceptually related with each other, a 2 (singleton status: singleton/non-singleton) × 2 (birth year: post-80/pre-80) Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to detect differences among four groups of mothers. The dependent variables were mothers' ratings on Question 1 (interests), 2 (major), 5 (gender influence on job

**Table 2. Average ratings of four types of mothers on scaled survey questions**

Survey Questions	Mother Type	Mean	S.D.	N
1.In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her own interest?	Post80S	8.05	1.91	21
	Post80NS	7.21	2.8	19
	Pre80S	6.9	2.125	20
	Pre80NS	6.5	2.606	20
2.To what extent do you expect your child will be able to freely choose his or her major?	Post80S	7	2	21
	Post80NS	8	2.539	19
	Pre80S	7.05	1.932	20
	Pre80NS	6.5	2.503	20
3.To what level do you expect your child's financial income to be?	Post80S	6.86	2.744	21
	Post80NS	6.89	2.865	19
	Pre80S	7.35	2.889	20
	Pre80NS	6.85	3.453	20
5.Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender?	Post80S	4.19	2.228	21
	Post80NS	2.68	2.335	19
	Pre80S	3.6	2.326	20
	Pre80NS	1.85	1.872	20
6.If you do not like or are not content with the partner your child chooses, will you intervene?	Post80S	4.86	2.798	21
	Post80NS	3.89	2.767	19
	Pre80S	4.55	2.8	20
	Pre80NS	4.6	3.331	20
A8.Are you satisfied with the freedom of choice you had when you grew up?	Post80S	7.68	2.056	22
	Post80NS	6.75	2.789	20
	Pre80S	5.95	2.282	20
	Pre80NS	5.65	2.498	20

choice) and 6 (partner choosing).<sup>11</sup> These questions were chosen for the MANOVA for two reasons: first of all, answers to these questions were measured on a 10-point scale; secondly, these questions assessed mothers' expectations for their children's future freedom of choice only, not including the comparisons between their own freedom of choice and their expectations for their children, which were assessed by Question 4 and 7.

Question 3 (*To what level do you expect your child's financial income to be?*) was excluded from the expectation analysis and also the freedom score. Upon reflection, answers to this question could be greatly influenced by mothers' current financial status; higher income mothers will naturally be more likely to have higher expectations for their children's future financial status than lower income mothers. Results of one-way ANOVA tests<sup>12</sup> indeed revealed a significant effect of current salary level on mothers' expectations for their children's financial status,  $F(2, 68) = 4.749, p = .012, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .122$ , but no significant effect of birth year,  $F(1, 78) = .115, p > .05$ , nor singleton status,  $F(1, 78) = .116, p > .05$ . Therefore, this question reflects influence of salary level on mothers' expectations more than influence of one child policy. It also cannot accurately reflect mothers' expectations for their children's future freedom of choice, as a low-income mother expecting moderate financial status and a high-income mother expecting high level financial status might reflect the same level of freedom of choice expectations. It is for this reason that ratings of financial status were also excluded in the freedom score computation process. Answers to this question were analyzed independently by

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<sup>11</sup>Question 1: In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her own interest?

Question 2: To what extent do you expect your child will be able to freely choose his or her major?

Question 5: Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender?

Question 6: If you do not like or are not content with the partner your child chooses, will you intervene?

<sup>12</sup> 9 participants were excluded in this test as they either reported to have unstable salary or refused to report their salary level.

looking at differences among four types of mothers in each salary level, which will be discussed later in the demographic influence section.

As MANOVA has greater power to detect differences when dependent variables are correlated at a small to moderate level ( $0.1 < r < 0.6$ , Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2005), Pearson  $r$  tests were used to check the relationships between chosen dependent variables. Results (Table 3) revealed that correlations between chosen dependent variables met the requirement and none of the dependent variables were strongly correlated with one another, indicating that MANOVA was a good model in the current case.

Using Pillai's trace test, there was a significant main effect of singleton status,  $V = .176$ ,  $F(4, 74) = 3.948$ ,  $p = .006$ ,  $partial \eta^2 = .176$ ; mothers' birth year did not have a significant effect on mothers' expectations for children's freedom of choice of interests, major, partner choosing and job choices,  $V = .089$ ,  $F(4, 74) = 1.808$ ,  $p = .136$ ,  $partial \eta^2 = .089$ . There was no interaction effect of singleton status and birth year,  $V = .072$ ,  $F(4, 74) = 1.44$ ,  $p = .229$ ,  $partial \eta^2 = .072$ . Follow up ANOVAs on dependent variables showed that singleton status' effect on mothers' expectations for the gender influence on their children's job choice was significant,  $F(1, 79) = 11.771$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $partial \eta^2 = .133$ . Birth year had a marginally significant effect on mothers' expectation for children's freedom of choice of interests,  $F(1, 79) = 3.564$ ,  $p = .063$ ,  $partial \eta^2 = .044$ .

In order to detect the specific differences among four types of mothers, a univariate MANOVA was then used with the type of mothers as the independent variable. Using Pillai's trace test, there was a significant effect of mother type on mothers' expectations for children's freedom of choice of interests, major, partner choosing, and job choice,  $V = 0.325$ ,  $F(3, 77) = 2.305$ ,  $p = .009$ ,  $partial \eta^2 = .108$ . Separate ANOVAs on the outcome variables revealed a

**Table 3. Correlations Matrix of Mothers' Ratings to Each Scaled Question**

Questions	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q5	Q6	Q8
1. In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her own interest?	--					
2. To what extent do you expect your child will be able to freely choose his or her major?	.58**	--				
3. To what level do you expect your child's financial income to be?	0.03	0.01	--			
5. Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender?	-0.07	-0.11	-0.06	--		
6. If you do not like or are not content with the partner your child chooses, will you intervene?	0.21*	0.1	-0.08	0	--	
8. Are you satisfied with the freedom of choice you had when you grew up?	0.06	0.09	-0.04	0.02	0.17	--

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).



significant effect of mother type on Question 5 (gender influence on job choice) only,  $F(3, 77) = 4.60, p = .006$ ; there was no significant differences among four types of mothers' ratings on the rest of the questions (Table 4).

**Table 4. Univariate (Mother Type) ANOVAs for Each Scaled Survey Question**

Dependent Variable/Survey Questions	df	F	Sig.
1.In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her own interest?	3	1.573	0.203
2.To what extent do you expect your child will be able to freely choose his or her major?	3	1.497	0.222
3.To what level do you expect your child's financial income to be?	3	0.131	0.942
5.Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender?	3	4.456	0.006**
6.If you do not like or are not content with the partner your child chooses, will you intervene?	3	0.383	0.766
8.Are you satisfied with the freedom of choice you had when you grew up?	3	2.999	0.036*

Note: \* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$

Tukey post hoc test on Question 5 (gender influence on job choice) found that post80 singleton mothers rated the influence of gender on their children's job choice ( $M = 4.19, SD = 2.23$ ) significantly higher than pre80 non-singleton mothers ( $M = 1.85, SD = 1.87$ ),  $p = .005$ . The difference between post80 singleton mothers' ratings ( $M = 4.19, SD = 2.23$ ) and post80 non-singleton mothers' ratings ( $M = 2.60, SD = 2.30$ ), was marginally significant,  $p = .10$ . Pre80

singleton mothers' ratings ( $M = 3.60, SD = 2.33$ ) were higher than pre80 non-singleton mothers' ( $M = 1.85, SD = 1.87$ ) at a marginal significant level,  $p = .06$ .

For the two multiple choice questions (Table 5) —Question 4 (future employment competition) and Question 7 (old age care pressure)<sup>13</sup>, Chi square tests showed that while there was no significant association between the type of mothers and their expectations for the level of employment competition their children would face,  $X^2 (6) = 3.84, p >.05$ ; however, there was a significant association between the type of mothers and their expectations for the level of old age care their children would face,  $X^2 (6) = 13.539, p = .035$ .

**Table 5. Frequency of mothers' answers to two multiple choice questions (Q4 & Q7)**

Multiple Choice Question	Mother Type									
	Post80S (N=21)		Post80NS (N=20)		Pre80S (N=20)		Pre80NS (N=20)		Total (N=81)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Level of employment competition										
Smaller	6	29%	4	20%	6	30%	7	35%	23	28%
The same as	3	14%	4	20%	1	5%	1	5%	9	11%
Larger	11	52%	12	60%	12	60%	12	60%	47	58%
Level of old age care pressure*										
Smaller	6	29%	10	50%	9	45%	7	35%	32	40%
The same as	10	48%	4	20%	1	5%	9	45%	24	30%
Larger	5	24%	6	30%	10	50%	4	20%	25	31%

Note: \*  $X^2 (6) = 13.539, p = .035$

<sup>13</sup>Question 4: Do you think the employment competition your child may face will be less intense, the same as or more intense than the competition you faced?

Question 7: Do you think the pressure of taking care of elderly family members your child face will be smaller, the same as or larger than what you are facing now?

### Freedom Score

As mentioned before, mothers' ratings on financial status were excluded in the freedom score computation process. The 2 (singleton status)  $\times$  2 (birth year) ANOVA test revealed no significant effects of either birth year,  $F(1, 80) = .365, p > .05$ , or singleton status,  $F(1, 80) = .395, p > .05$ . There was also no significant interaction of these two independent variables,  $F(3, 77) = .000, p > .05$ . A one-way ANOVA test was then performed to detect if there were differences among the four types of mothers' freedom scores; no significant differences were found in the freedom scores of the four types of mothers,  $F(3, 77) = .385, p = .764$ .

### Mothers' past freedom of choice

For Question 8 (Are you satisfied with the freedom of choice when you grew up?), the 2 $\times$ 2 ANOVA revealed a significant effect of birth year,  $F(1, 81) = 7.049, p = .01, partial \eta^2 = .083$ ; post-80 mothers were significantly more content about their past freedom of choice ( $M = 7.22, SD = .37$ ) than pre-80 mothers ( $M = 5.80, SD = .381$ ). There was no significant effect of singleton status,  $F(1, 81) = 1.334, p = .252, partial \eta^2 = .017$ . The univariate ANOVA test revealed that mother type was significantly related to their ratings of this questions,  $F(3, 78) = 3.00, p = .036$ . Tukey post hoc test indicated that post80 singleton mothers were more significantly satisfied with the freedom of choice they had ( $M = 7.68, SD = 2.06$ ) than pre80 non-singleton mothers ( $M = 5.65, SD = 2.50$ ),  $p = .04$ . Compared with pre80 singleton mothers ( $M = 5.95, SD = 2.28$ ), post80 singleton mothers had marginally significant higher satisfaction with the freedom of choice they had,  $p = .10$ . There were no significant differences between post80 single and non-singleton mothers, and between pre80 single and non-singleton mothers.

A Person- $r$  test was used to see if mothers' evaluations of their previous freedom of choice was correlated with their ratings on gender influence on job choice; the test revealed a non-significant correlation,  $r = .024, p > .05$ . Mothers' past freedom of choice was also not significantly correlated with their freedom score,  $r = .129, p > .05$ .

#### Self-reported factors that will influence expectations

The survey included one open-ended question asking mothers to name one factor that they think will influence their expectations for their children the most. 50 out of 82 participants answered this question (Table 6). In general, answers could be divided into four groups—social factors, family factors, children's education situation and others. 25 mothers considered the social factor, including social pressure and competition intensity their children faced, as the most influential factor, and 13 mothers thought that family factor was the most important factor, including family financial situation and parents' education background. 5 mothers also mentioned that children's education situation, including children's grades, how much effort their children devoted into studying and teachers' assessments, were very crucial to their expectations for their children. Other factors brought up included the quality of parents and children's communication, common interests shared with their children, and children's drug abuse problems.

**Table 6. Self-reported influential factor that will affect expectations**

Type	Mother Type	Number	Percentage	Including
Social factors	Post80S	5	10%	Overall social environment condition, competition intensity, social pressure.
	Post80NS	8	16%	
	Pre80S	9	18%	
	Pre80NS	3	6%	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>50%</i>	
Family factors	Post80S	4	8%	Overall family environment, family financial status, parents' salary level, parents' education level
	Post80NS	1	2%	
	Pre80S	0	0%	
	Pre80NS	8	16%	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>26%</i>	
Children's education situation	Post80S	2	4%	Children's grade, teachers' assessments, children's self-effort
	Post80NS	1	2%	
	Pre80S	2	4%	
	Pre80NS	0	0%	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>10%</i>	
Others	Post80S	0	0%	Children's drug abuse, Children's animations, Communication between children and parents, common interests shared
	Post80NS	3	6%	
	Pre80S	3	6%	
	Pre80NS	1	2%	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>14%</i>	
Total	50	100%	2%	

#### Demographic influence

A univariate MANOVA was used to detect the effect of mothers' salary level on their expectations for their children's freedom of choice. Roy's Largest Root test revealed a non-

significant influence of mothers' salary level,  $\Theta = .113$ ,  $F(4, 66) = 1.891$ ,  $p = .122$ , *partial*  $\eta^2 = .101$ . Separate ANOVAs showed that salary level has a significant effect on expectations for gender influence on job choices,  $F(2, 69) = 3.412$ ,  $p = .039$ , *partial*  $\eta^2 = .090$ . High-income mothers expected significantly higher gender influence in their children's job choice than middle-income mothers did ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = 2.458$ ,  $M = 2.81$ ,  $SD = 2.173$ , respectively),  $p = .042$ .

Participants' salary level also did not have a significant effect on their freedom scores,  $F(2, 69) = 2.255$ ,  $p = .113$ ,  $\eta^2 = .061$ . On average, middle-income mothers had the highest freedom scores ( $M = 6.61$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ), high-income mothers had the lowest freedom scores ( $M = 5.41$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ), and low-income mothers' average freedom score were in between ( $M = 6.19$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ).

There were significant differences among four types of mothers' freedom scores in high-income group,  $F(3, 16) = 3.481$ ,  $p = .041$ , but not in low and middle-income groups. In high income mother group, singleton status significantly influenced mothers' freedom scores,  $F(1, 19) = 9.719$ ,  $p = .007$ , *partial*  $\eta^2 = .378$ , with singleton high income mothers ( $M = 5.44$ ,  $SD = .33$ ) had significantly lower freedom scores than non-singleton high income mothers ( $M = 7.213$ ,  $SD = .462$ ), regardless of age. The difference between high-income singleton and non-singleton mothers were smaller among post-80 mothers.

There was no significant effect of salary level on freedom of choice mothers had before,  $F(2, 70) = 1.777$ ,  $p > .05$ . Salary level was not associated with mothers' expectations for the future job competition their children would face,  $X^2(4) = 6.061$ ,  $p > .05$ , nor with mothers' expectations for the old age care pressure their children would have,  $X^2(4) = 1.805$ ,  $p > .05$ .

Moreover, mothers of boys had significantly higher expectations for their children's future financial income level ( $M = 7.51$ ,  $SD = 2.311$ ) than mothers of daughters ( $M = 6.16$ ,  $SD = 3.634$ ),  $t(78) = 2.032$ ,  $p = .046$ . Participants' education background had a marginally significant

effect on their overall freedom scores,  $t(76) = 1.703, p = .093$ , and their expectations for their children's future financial income,  $t(75) = -1.747, p = .085$ .

#### Additional analysis

As post-80 urban singleton mothers and pre-80 urban non-singleton mothers were two majority groups in the post and pre One-Child Policy eras and the differences between these two groups might provide more insights regarding the One-Child Policy's influences on mothers' expectations, additional analysis was done on these two groups of mothers' expectations. The detailed reasons of this additional analysis are discussed later.

A one-way (mother type) MANOVA with four dependent variables (Q1-interest, Q2-major, Q5-gender influence and Q6-partner choosing) was used to detect the differences between these two groups. Using Pillai's trace test, there was a significant effect of mother type on mothers' expectations,  $V = .364, F(1, 39) = 4.01, p = .004, partial \eta^2 = .344$ . Results of the follow-up one-way (mother type) ANOVA on the outcome variables revealed significant effects of mother type on Question 1 (interest),  $F(1, 39) = 4.74, p = .036$ , and on Question 5 (gender influence),  $F(1, 39) = 13.2, p = .001$ . The post-80 singleton mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice in interest development were significantly ( $M = 8.05, SD = 1.91$ ) higher than the pre-80 non-singleton mothers' ( $M = 6.50, SD = 2.61$ ); the post-80 singleton mothers expected significantly higher gender influence on their children's job choices ( $M = 4.19, SD = 2.23$ ) than the pre-80 non-singleton mothers did ( $M = 1.85, SD = 1.87$ ). There was no significant difference between these two groups of mothers' ratings on Question 2 (major),  $F(1, 39) = .50, p > .05$ , nor on Question 6 (partner-choosing),  $F(1, 39) = .07, p > .05$ .

The result of the independent T-test on mothers' evaluations of their past freedom of choice revealed a significant difference between the two groups of mothers,  $t(1, 39) = 8.34$ ,  $p = 0.06$ . The post-80 singleton mothers were significantly more satisfied with their past freedom of choice ( $M = 7.68$ ,  $SD = 2.01$ ) than the pre-80 non-singleton mothers ( $M = 5.65$ ,  $SD = 2.50$ ). There was no difference between these two groups of mothers' freedom scores,  $t(1, 39) = -.02$ ,  $p > .05$ . Mother type was also not associated with mothers' expectations for their children's future employment competition,  $X^2(2) = .57$ ,  $p > .05$ , nor with their expectations for the pressure of old age care their children would face,  $X^2(2) = .90$ ,  $p > .05$ .



## Chapter 5 Discussion

### *Abstract*

*This chapter discusses the meaning of the results presented in Chapter 4. Results partially supported the hypotheses and differences among four groups of mothers were mostly found in their expectations for the gender influence on children's job choice. Among all demographic factors, salary level was found to be the most influential. Implications for possible improvements of the current freedom of choice expectation measurements and suggestions for future research are presented at the end.*

The current study found that whether urban mothers were singletons or non-singletons influenced their expectations for their children's overall freedom of choice, which partially supported the Hypothesis 1.<sup>14</sup> There were no differences between post-80 and pre-80 urban mothers' expectations for their children's overall freedom of choice, which did not support the Hypothesis 2.<sup>15</sup> Since the major change that the One-Child Policy brought about is the increased number of only children in urban areas, these results suggest that the implementation of the policy has influenced urban mothers' expectations for their children's overall freedom of choice.

Nevertheless, due to the nature of the statistical model—the multivariate analysis of variance—used for this analysis, how or in what direction singleton status influenced mothers'

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<sup>14</sup> H1: Singleton mothers will have higher expectations for their children's freedom of choice than non-singleton mothers. More specifically, post-80 singleton mothers will have higher freedom of choice expectations than post-80 non-singleton mothers.

<sup>15</sup> H2: Post-80 mothers in general will have higher expectations for their children's freedom of choice than pre-80 mothers.

expectations for their children's overall freedom of choice is however unclear. As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are very few research that studied influences of the One-Child Policy on Chinese mothers' expectations for their children; thus, the current research could be viewed as an initial trial to understand the One-Child Policy's influences on mothers' expectations. The sensitivity of the measure developed in this study is unknown before testing. Under this circumstance, the multivariate analysis of variance model is the best way to help to understand the overall picture, as it could test the policy's influences not only on each aspect of the freedom of choice, but also on a combination of multiple aspects. However, the biggest disadvantage of this model is its inability to specify the effects of the independent variable. To better understand the influences of the policy, the current study did a series of analysis on each aspect of the freedom of choice and discovered possible ways in which mothers' singleton status and birth year could influence their expectations for their children's freedom of choice, which will be discussed in the next section.

Moreover, it has to be mentioned that mothers' birth year might also have influenced their expectations for their children. The sample size of the current study was small due to the limited budget; there were 82 participants, which were much lower than the 385 participants suggested by the power analysis.<sup>16</sup> It has brought to my attention that birth year accounted for 9% of total variance in the sample excluding effects of singleton status, which given the small sample size I would argue that the effect was at a moderate level. It is possible that with a larger sample, further studies might be able to detect the effect of mothers' birth year. If that is the case, then living in a different era—pre policy and post policy—might also influence mothers' expectations for their children, which suggests that the influence of the One-Child Policy is not

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<sup>16</sup> The sample size was calculated for a 95% confidence level and 80% power (Murhy and Myers, 2004).

limited to producing more only children. It might also have influenced the general culture in the present era.

#### Expectations for children's freedom of choice in specific areas

Further analysis revealed that the differences among four types of mothers mainly lay in their expectations for the influence of their children's gender on their children's job choices. Mothers' singleton status had a significant effect on their expectations for the gender influence. In general, regardless of age, singleton urban mothers expected the gender of their children to be more influential in the job choosing process than non-singleton mothers did. Mothers' birth year—whether they were born before or after 1980—did not affect how they expected the gender influence to be on their children's job choices.

Comparing the expectations of four types of mothers specifically, the current research found that post-80 singleton mothers' expectations for the gender influence were significantly higher than pre-80 non-singleton mothers' expectations. Within each birth year category (post-80 mothers and pre-80 mothers), mothers' singleton status still influenced their expectations for the gender influence, but the effect was smaller and the differences were on a marginally significant level for both categories.

In terms of freedom of choice, these results suggest that compared with non-singleton urban mothers, singleton urban mothers expected their children to have less freedom of choice when choosing jobs. This finding is opposite to my hypothesis that because One-Child Policy greatly empowered urban women, singleton urban mothers, compared with non-singleton mothers, would expect their children to be less restricted by their gender and in turn have more freedom of choice. Singleton mothers' higher expectations for the gender effects seem to suggest

that they considered gender as a more influential factor in the job field than non-singleton mothers. This view might be attributed to these mothers' own experiences at home and at work. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is an incongruence of gender discriminations at the family level and the society level. Urban singleton daughters were the only hopes in their families; as a result, the level of expectations they received was actually comparable with the level of expectations their male counterparts received –both were very high (Lee, 2005). Living in such a child-centered family environment, these urban singleton daughters internalized these expectations and their aspirations were found to be similar to the only boys' (Tsui & Rich, 2002). Nevertheless, while urban parents are more likely to ignore gender differences (Lee, 2005; Tsui & Rich, 2002), the gender discriminations in the job field are still evident (Fong, 2004; Mauer-Fazio & Rawski, 1999). Therefore, singleton mothers' expectations for themselves are more likely to be higher than the social expectations. Gender discriminations at job fields then are more salient to them than to non-singleton mothers. This experience might lead to singleton mothers' view that gender is still an influential and important factor in the current job market.

There were no significant differences between the singleton and the non-singleton mothers' expectations for children's freedom of choices in interest development, major and partner choosing. No significant differences were found between post-80 and pre-80 mothers' expectations for in these three areas. These results did not support the Hypothesis 1<sup>17</sup> and the Hypothesis 2,<sup>18</sup> suggesting that mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice were similar. Moreover, mothers' evaluations of the freedom of choice in their childhood were not significantly correlated with their expectations for their children's freedom of choice in any area.

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<sup>17</sup> H1: Singleton mothers will have higher expectations for their children's freedom of choice than non-singleton mothers. More specifically, post-80 singleton mothers will have higher freedom of choice expectations than post-80 non-singleton mothers.

<sup>18</sup> H2: Post-80 mothers in general will have higher expectations for their children's freedom of choice than pre-80 mothers.

Thus, it seemed that mothers did not form their expectations for their children's freedom of choice in the three areas based on their own experiences but some other factors. In fact, when asked to identify one factor that had influenced their expectations for their children the most, only twenty-six percent of the mothers who answered this question said that family factors—including parents' education levels, financial status and overall family situations—were the most influential. Social factors, which included overall social and economic conditions, social pressures and competition insensitivity, topped the list of factors reported by the mothers; half of the mothers reported that their expectations for their children were influenced by social factors the most.

Moreover, it is also possible that participants' response bias—participants' tendency to answer questions in a way that they think the questioner expect them to answer, instead of their true beliefs—confounded the study results. Recall from Chapter 2, I discussed that the One-Child Policy changed the Chinese traditional extended family culture to a child-centered family culture in urban areas. As the majority of urban families have only one child, these families are the focus of the present society. Medias are likely to report information that targets the singleton families. Growing up in China, I have never found any TV shows that teach parents how to educate non-singleton children; they are always about how to help singleton children grow better. Therefore, although not necessarily conform to the mainstream only child parenting philosophies, non-singleton mothers might just provide answers that they thought were right. Therefore, the finding that mothers' expectations for children's freedom of choice were similar further supported the argument that the child-centered family culture is the mainstream culture in present China.

Four groups of mothers' expectations of the intensity of future employment competition their children would face did not vary significantly from each other. Mothers in general tended to

expect the employment competition to be more intense than it was when they were looking for jobs. Interestingly, mothers' singleton status was not associated with their answers.

The type of mother—post-80 singleton and non-singleton, pre-80 singleton and non-singleton mother—was significantly associated with mothers' expectations for children's pressure of taking care of elderly members. The post-80 singleton mothers were more likely to expect their children's old age care pressure to be larger than theirs; on the contrary, the post-80 non-singleton mothers were more likely to expect the pressure to be smaller than theirs. The pre-80 singleton mothers' answers were skewed to the two extremes—half of them expected the pressure to be larger and the other half expected the opposite; the pre-80 non-singleton mothers on the other hand expected the pressure to be the same as theirs. Neither mothers' singleton status nor their birth year was associated with their expectations for their children's old age care pressure. Therefore, it seems that the urban mothers' opinions on this question varied a lot, which indicates that the mothers assessed the old age care pressure from different perspectives.

#### Mothers' past freedom of choice

Mothers' birth year had significant effects on how they evaluated the freedom of choice they had when they grew up. In general, the post-80 mothers were more satisfied than the pre-80 mothers with the freedom they had before. The singleton mothers in general were not significantly more satisfied with their past freedom of choice than the non-singleton mothers. These results thus indicate that the differences of urban daughters' freedom of choice were not at a family level, but at the society level—they reflected a difference between two eras, post and pre 1980. This finding further supports the opinion that after the implementation of the One-Child Policy, Chinese urban societies adapted a “child-centered family culture” (Yue, 2010). By

1997, the average family size in major urban cities ranged from 3.05 to 3.10 (Tsui & Rich, 2002). Immersed in this culture, parents of non-singleton mothers might also be affected and have adjusted their parenting styles to give more freedom of choice to their daughters. In contrast, the prevalent family structure before the One-Child Policy was instated in 1980 was “parent-centered”—parents had the final say, as there were usually more than one child in the family. Thus, at that time parents of singleton daughters might also to some extent conform to the main culture and these singleton daughters in turn had less freedom of choice than the post-80 singleton daughters.

Nevertheless, is there really no difference between the singleton and the non-singleton families in terms of how much freedom was granted to children in each era? Not necessarily. It should be mentioned that the post-80 singleton mothers were more unanimously satisfied with the freedom of choice they had before, while there were a lot of variances in the post-80 non-singleton mothers' evaluations.<sup>19</sup> Among the pre-80 mothers, only 10% singleton mothers were not satisfied with their freedom of choice (gave ratings below 5), while the number for the non-singleton mothers was 25%. Therefore, even though parents of the post-80 non-singleton and the pre-80 singleton mothers might have adapted or conformed to the main parenting culture, differences in their parenting styles were larger than the differences in the mainstream parenting styles.

#### Influences of mothers' demographic background

In addition to the social factors like the overall social environment, mothers' current salary level also turned out to be an influential factor that affected their expectations for their

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<sup>19</sup> Recall from Chapter 4, for Question 8 the SD for post-80 singleton mothers was 2.06 and the mode was 9;

children's freedom of choice in the future. More specifically, the mothers of relatively higher income in the current sample, compared with the mothers of middle-income, expected gender to be a significantly more influential factor in their children's job choice. There were no differences between the middle-income mothers and the lower income mothers' expectations for the gender influence. This finding was consistent with the previous one that the singleton mothers expected for higher influence of children's gender in their job choices; both findings suggest that gender discriminations still exist in the job field. The "glass ceiling" effect—despite of their qualifications, women were discriminated from higher positions—has been well documented (Fong, 2004; Mauer-Fazio & Rawski, 1990). Thus, the mothers of higher income might have more experiences with the gender discriminations than the mothers' of relatively lower income, as they climbed up the social ladder. The high-income mothers' own experiences then led to their higher expectations for the gender influence in their children's job choice.

Moreover, when doing analysis within each salary level, the current study found a significant effect of singleton status on the mothers' freedom scores—the index meant to comprehensively reflect mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice; within high income category, the singleton mothers expected significantly less freedom of choice than the non-singleton mother did. This effect was not found among mothers of middle or low-level income. This finding is surprising, as one might expect the higher income singleton mothers to expect higher freedom of choice for their children based on their own financial status. It might be the case that when mothers were asked about their expectations for their children, they used their current status as a reference, since it was more accessible at that moment. Among all mothers in the sample, the singleton mothers with high income are the most likely to have the highest expectations for themselves; again, given the remaining gender discriminations in the society,



their expectations are more difficult to meet, which may result in their impressions that there are more restrictions in life. With such an understanding, the high-income singleton mothers then are less likely to expect their children to have a lot of freedom of choice in the future.

Driven by my curiosity, I talked to two friends of mine who are post-80 singleton mothers with relatively high annual salaries in Shanghai. During our conversations, another possible confound was found. Both mothers mentioned that they did not think it was possible for children to have full freedom of choice, as they were influenced or even shaped by their parents since they were born. Both mothers were content with their current status and said that they would provide appropriate guidance to their children in terms of choosing major and partners. Thus, a possible confound of the current study was found within the two mothers' answers concerning perceptions of freedom of choice. It is possible that when asked about expectations for children's freedom of choice, mothers of different backgrounds understood the question differently. If mothers held the view that there was no absolute freedom of choice and people were constantly affected by the social context around them, then these mothers might expect their children to have a modest freedom of choice, compared with those mothers who thought that people could have full freedom of choice in their lives. In other words, although numerically these mothers seem to have different expectations for their children's freedom of choice, conceptually they both expect their children to achieve more amount of freedom of choice. The possible effects of the definition of the freedom of choice within the current study are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

It has to be mentioned that the salary level used in the current study was determined based on salaries reported by the mothers in the sample; it is different from the salary level definition used in each city. However, given that mothers' freedom scores were not associated

with their singleton status when salary level was not considered, these results to some extent reflected the influence of mothers' current financial situations on their expectations for their children's freedom of choice. More future studies are needed to understand the relationships between mothers' expectations and their current financial status.

### The effect of the One-Child Policy

While the multivariate analysis of variance test revealed a significant influence of mothers' singleton status on mothers' expectations for their children's overall freedom of choice, other analysis seemed to point to the direction that there were no differences in mothers' expectations in specific areas. Neither singleton status nor birth year was associated with mothers' freedom scores. With these seemingly contradictory findings, how shall we understand the effect of the One-Child Policy on mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice? Are there any effects after all?

Given that post-80 singleton mothers and pre-80 non-singleton mothers were the majority mother groups in the post and pre policy eras, the effect of the One-Child Policy might be better reflected in the differences between these two groups. In 1983, 91 percent of those born in China were only children, while the number was only 27 percent in 1975 shortly before 1978 when the policy was officially implemented (Kluger, 2013). In other words, singleton children and non-singleton children could be considered as minorities in pre and post eras respectively. Families that have more than one child after the implementation of the One-Child Policy are in fact special. The policy has some exceptions; for instance, couples whose first child is diagnosed with severe disease could have another child. Due to the great variety of reasons behind families with more than one child, there could be a number of other factors involved affecting the expectations

of mothers from these families. As mentioned before, the “minority” groups –post-80 non-singleton and pre-80 singleton mothers—indeed had larger variances in their answers than their counterpart groups—post-80 singleton and pre-80 non-singleton mothers. Consequently, it is very hard to compare these two “minority” groups with and within the majority groups.

Taking this into consideration, the current study specifically looked into the differences between the two majority groups in post and pre-80 generations. Overall, when looking at mothers' expectations in multiple areas together, the multivariate analysis of variance test showed that the type of mother had a significant effect on mothers' expectations. Follow-up analysis on mothers' expectations in specific areas revealed that in addition to the difference in their expectations for the influence of children's gender on children's job choice (discussed in 5.1), post-80 singleton mothers had significantly higher expectations for their children's freedom of choice in interest development than pre-80 non-singleton mothers did. Moreover, post-80 singleton mothers were more satisfied with their past freedom of choice than pre-80 singleton mothers, although this was not correlated with their expectations for their children in any area.

By comparing just two groups of mothers (twenty participants in each group), the current study's sample size became even smaller, resulting in smaller power as well. Nevertheless, analysis still revealed significant differences in mothers' expectations, suggesting a pronounced difference between the expectations of these two major groups of mothers. Thus, I would argue that these results indicate that mothers born after the implementation of the policy are more likely to have higher expectations for their children's freedom of choice than mothers born before the policy was instated. Future studies should compare these mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice with a larger sample.

The effects of the One-Child Policy on mothers' expectations were by no means easy to clarify. The current research is an initial effort and just focuses on the policy's influence on mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice. Based on the two parts of analysis—the one on four groups of mothers and the other on only two majority groups of mothers, the current study found that the One-Child Policy greatly improved the freedom of choice of urban post-80 mothers in their childhood. Moreover, although mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice could be influenced by factors like the social environment conditions and their children's academic performances, the One-Child Policy is very likely to have increased Chinese urban mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice, by reducing the family size and facilitating the appearance of the “child-centered” family culture.

#### Possible improvements for the research

As a first attempt to understand Chinese urban mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice, the current study could be improved in a lot of ways. Here I mainly focus on two possible improvements. First of all, before sending the survey into the field, I was not able to test the questions used in the study. Results from the data analysis suggest that wording of these questions might be unclear and participants might interpret the questions differently. For instance, Question 1 asked, “In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her interest?” Reflecting on my conversations with the two mothers from Shanghai, I realized that some mothers might interpret “the ability to freely choose” as “how much autonomy they would grant to their children.” Then mothers' answers to this question reflect their expectations for their children's freedom of choice at the family level. On the other hand, some participants might answer this question taking into considerations of the influences

of the social environment; these mothers might think that because of the increasingly intensive competitions in China, my child would not be able to have a high level of freedom of choice. As a result, what the question assesses is mothers' expectations for the freedom of choice their children might have at a society level. Moreover, the results of the multivariate analysis of variance test also suggest that there were underlying dimensions of influences of the mother type. For future research, it might be better to provide the definition of freedom of choice first before asking questions so that participants will not interpret differently. To better refine the survey and measurements, future researchers should consider having focus groups to understand urban mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice.

Moreover, the current study found that mothers' financial status could affect their expectations for their children. In the future, researchers might want to control this factor when recruiting participants. The influences of the One-Child Policy might be clearer when more demographic factors are controlled.

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Appendix. 1**Research Participant Information and Consent Form****DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH**

You are invited to participate in a survey research study about the post-80 urban mothers' expectations for their children, and how they are different from expectations of former generations. This study will include post-80 urban mothers and urban mothers who had children before 1978.

**WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?**

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked by a professional researcher about your opinions on 15 questions or statements of a survey over the phone. It will take you approximately 10 minutes to complete the whole survey.

**ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR BENEFITS TO ME?**

There are questions related with your family history and childhood in this survey, which might trigger uncomfortable feelings or memories. There are also questions asking about your personal information, such as your child's age, your annual salary and your education background. Please note that if you feel uncomfortable answering any of these questions, you can skip the question or withdraw from our study at anytime you want. There will be no risks of withdrawing from the study.

If you have any problems with taking this survey over the phone or have any concern about talking over the phone with me, you have every right to stop me and hang up the phone. Please let me know if you would like me to continue.

On the other hand, there are also benefits of completing the survey. These questions may help you think about various aspects of your child's future that might have been missed out, or help you reflect on your expectations for your child. Also, you are contributing to knowledge on one-child policy's influences on urban females and post-80 mothers' expectations for their children, which haven't been studied much.

### **HOW WILL MY CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?**

This study is NOT anonymous. Your identifiable information—your phone number—will be protected and stored electronically in a password-protected folder. These information can only be accessed by authorized researchers and project supervisors in Horizon (China). Moreover, your information will not be stored with data from your survey; instead, you will be assigned a participant number and only your participant number will appear with your survey responses. Only researchers will see your individual responses.

After the data collection, the electronic copy of all survey responses—with only participant numbers and no identifiable personal information—will be permanently stored in Bard Psychology senior Wenjie Chen's computer with a secure password. Please note that you might receive a call-back later from Horizon (China)'s quality check monitors; this call is only to make sure the authenticity of the interview. You will only be asked if the researcher had conducted the survey with you, and your original answers to the survey questions will not be linked with or appear in the quality check process. Your contact information and your responses will be destroyed right after the completion of the research from Horizon's database.

Please also note that your call will be recorded for quality reasons. These recordings will only be accessed for quality reviews and only by authorized supervisors and quality check auditors. Recordings will also be destroyed along with the contact information right after the completion of the research.

### **WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?**

You may ask any questions about the research at any time. If you have questions about the research after you leave today you should contact the qualified student researcher, Wenjie Chen at +86 18936086265 and [wc5259@bard.edu](mailto:wc5259@bard.edu). Because this is a student senior project, the final result of this project will be permanently and publicly available in Bard College Library. You can also contact Project Advisor Stuart Levine at [levine@bard.edu](mailto:levine@bard.edu), and Bard College Institution Review Board at [irb@bard.edu](mailto:irb@bard.edu).

Your participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to stop at any time.

By giving the oral consent, you indicate that you have heard and are aware of this consent form, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation in this research and voluntarily consent to participate. Would you like to participate in our study?

Name of Participant : \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Oral consent record:

## 调查参与知情同意书

### 调查描述

您好！我们郑重邀请您参加一个关于 80 后城市妈妈的调查。这个调查是关于 80 后城市妈妈对孩子的期望以及与 80 前城市妈妈对孩子期望的区别。这个调查将同时邀请 80 后城市妈妈与已经在 1978 前生育孩子的城市妈妈。

### 我将如何参与调查？

如果您同意参与本调查，我们的专业调研员会电话问您关于 15 个调查问题或调查观点的看法。整个调查将用时大约 10 分钟。

### 参与该调查有哪些风险和益处？

本调查有涉及家庭背景和您孩子信息的问题。基于参与者的背景，这些问题有可能会使您回想起以前的经历。该调查还会问及您的私人信息，比如您的工资和教育背景。如果任何一个调查问题或者调查观点引起了您的不适，您可以跳过该题，或者您也可以随时退出本调查。

如果您不愿意参与本次电话调研或者对于在电话中跟我交谈感到不适，您有绝对的权利停止我并且离开本次调研。请问您愿意继续本次调研嘛？

参与本调查的好处是这些问题可以在某种程度上能帮助您更加全面地思考您对您孩子未来的期望。同时，您也在帮助我们搜集和补充关于计划生育政策对于城市女性的影响以及 80 后妈妈对孩子的期望的信息。这个领域目前还没有被系统的研究，需要大量的数据资料。

### 我的个人信息会被保护吗？

请注意本次调查是非匿名的。您的个人信息——您的电话号码——是受保护的，他们会被储存在一个设有密码的电脑文件夹内。只有有权限的相关零点技术人员可以有机会接触到这些信息。而且，您的个人信息不会与您的问卷答案同时显示在数据库中。您的问卷会被编号，只有您的样本编号与您的问卷答案会同时显示。只有本调查的研究人员可以看到您的问卷答案。

在数据采集以后，巴德大学心理系大四学生陈文洁会在个人电脑里备份一份电子问卷答案汇总。这个文件内不会留有您的个人信息，只有您的样本编号。这份文件同样是密码保护的。出于对调研员的质量监测，质量监测员可能会在过后电话您来确认本次调研的真实性。监测员只会问您是否真的参与过本次调研，您原来问题的答案不会在质量监测过程中出现。在调研结束后，零点会立即将您的联系方式以及您的回答从他们的数据库中销毁。

另外，请注意，出于质量监测的原因，您的通话将会被录音。但是只有质量监测员以及调研组长有权力接触这些录音。这些录音也将在调研结束后被立即销毁。

### 如果有问题，我应该联系谁？

您可以随时向我们的数据调研员提问。如果在完成问卷后，您有任何疑问，您可以联系负责本调研的陈文洁，18936086265，或者，[wc5259@bard.edu](mailto:wc5259@bard.edu)。因为本次调研是该

学生毕业论文的一部分，本调研的最终结果会被巴德大学校图书馆永久保留。您也可以联系毕业论文导师，Stuart Levine, [levine@bard.edu](mailto:levine@bard.edu)，或者巴德大学伦理审查委员会（Bard College Institution Review Board），[irb@bard.edu](mailto:irb@bard.edu)。

请注意，本次调查是绝对自愿的，您可以在任何时候中止、退出本次调研。

给口头承诺代表您已经听过了并且了解了本参与知情同意书，有机会对本次调研和您的参与提出疑问，并且自愿同意参与本次调研。请问您愿意参与我们本次调研嘛？

您的姓名：

口头承诺：

日期：

## Appendix. 2

**Survey Questions:****Regular background screening questions:**

1. Did you grow up in a city?
2. Do you have children?
3. When were you born?
4. Are you a single child in your family?
5. What is the age of your child?

**Mothers' expectations for their children's freedom of choice****If the age of the (youngest) child is below 18:<sup>20</sup>**

Please first freely recall an episode of you and your child, and then choose an answer that best reflects your expectation for your child.

**If the age of the (youngest) child is above 18:**

Please first freely recall an episode of you and your child around age 2, and then choose an answer that best reflects your expectation for your children at that time.

Q1. In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her own interest?

Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "not decided by him or her at all," 10 means "completely decided by him or her."

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

\_\_\_\_\_→

Not decided by him or her at all

Completely decided by him or her

Q2. To what extent do you expect your child will be able to freely choose his or her major?

Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "not decided by him or her at all," 10 means "completely decided by him or her."

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

\_\_\_\_\_→

<sup>20</sup> Some mothers might be born before 1980 but just had their children. It does not make sense to ask them to recall when their children were around 2—they might just turn to 2.

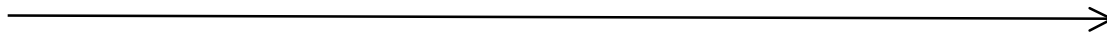


No freedom Completely decided by him or her

Q3. To what level do you expect your child's financial income to be?

Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "average level," 10 means "very rich."

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.



Average level

Very rich

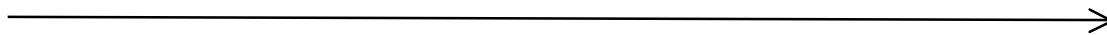
Q4. Do you think the employment competition your child may face will be less intense, the same as or more intense than the competition you faced?

- a) less intense than the competition I faced
- b) the same as the competition I faced
- c) more intense than the competition I faced

Q5. Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender?

Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "no influence at all," 10 means "completely decided by gender."

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.



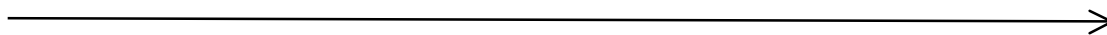
No influence at all

Completely decided by gender

Q6. If you do not like or are not content with the partner your child chooses, will you intervene?

Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "no intervention at all," 10 means "completely decided by me."

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.



Not at all

Completely decided by me

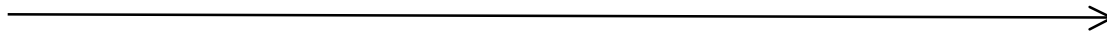
Q7. Do you think the pressure of taking care of elderly family members your child face will be smaller, the same as or larger than what you are facing now?

- d) smaller than the pressure I'm facing now
- e) the same as the pressure I'm facing now
- f) larger than the pressure I'm facing now

Q8. Are you satisfied with the freedom of choice you had when you grew up?

Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "not at all," 10 means "completely satisfied."

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.



No at all

Completely Satisfied

Q9. Please name one factor you think that affects your expectations for your child the most:

Q10. What is the gender of your child?

Q11. Do you plan to have another child?

**Other background information**

Mother's education background.

Mother's marital status.

Mother's salary level.

Mother's occupation.

**G. 过滤题**

G3. 请访问员记录受访者性别: 【单选】 g301/

1. 女 → 【继续访问】	2. 男 → 【跳答至 Y 部分】
---------------	-------------------

G4. 请问您的出生地是在地级市或者县级市的中心城区吗(如北京市的城八区)? 【单选】 g401/

1. 是 → 【继续访问】	2. 否 → 【跳答至 Y 部分】
---------------	-------------------

G5. 请问您是否有孩子? 【单选】 g501/

1. 有 → 【继续访问】	2. 没有 → 【跳答至 Y 部分】
---------------	--------------------

**X. 配额题 2**

G6. 请问您出生于哪一年? \_\_\_\_年【在横线上填写年份数字(四位), 并在下面相应选项上划圈】 g601/

1990 年-2000 年.....	1	→ 【跳答至 Y 部分】
1980 年-1989 年.....	2	→ 【查看年代配额, 如配额未满访问 A 部分, 如配额已满跳答至 Y 部分】
1960 年-1979 年.....	3	
1950 年-1959 年.....	4	→ 【跳答至 Y 部分】

G7. 请问您是否是独生子女? 【单选】 g701/

是.....	1	→ 【查看独生子女配额, 如配额未满访问 A 部分, 如配额已满回答 Y 部分】
否.....	2	

**A. 子女教育观念**

AZ1. 请问您有几个孩子? \_\_\_\_个【在横线上填写孩子数量, 并在下面相应的选项上划圈】 AZ101/

1. 只有 1 个	2. 大于 1 个
-----------	-----------

AZ2. 【针对 AZ1 选择 1 的受访者】 请问这个孩子现在几岁? \_\_\_\_岁【在横线上填写周岁年龄, 并在下面相应的选项上划圈】

【针对 AZ1 选择 2 的受访者】 所有孩子当中, 年龄最小的那个现在几岁? \_\_\_\_岁【在横线上填写周岁年龄, 并在下面相应的选项上划圈】 AZ201/

1 小于 18 岁 (不含 18 岁)	2 大于 18 岁
---------------------	-----------

A1. 【针对 A22 选择 1 的受访者】请您先回忆一个您与最小的这个孩子在一起的场景，然后请您在以下各个题目中选择最符合您对他的期望的答案。

【针对 A22 选择 2 的受访者】请您先回忆一下孩子小的时候，您与他在一起的场景，然后请您在以下各个题目中选择最符合您当时对他的期望的答案。

首先，您期望您的孩子在多大程度上可以自由选择并发展他自己的兴趣爱好？请用 1-10 分评价，1 分代表完全不由他做主，10 分代表完全由他自己做主。接下来，……

【逐行提问，单选】

	完全不由他做主←————→完全由他自己做主										拒答/说不清	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
1. 您期望您的孩子在多大程度上可以自由选择并发展他自己的兴趣爱好……	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	A1a01/
2. 您期望您的孩子在多大程度上可以自己选择学习的专业……	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	A1a02/

A3. 您期望这个孩子将来的经济收入达到怎样的水平？请用 1-10 分评价，1 分表示达到社会平均水平，10 分表示非常富有。【单选】 A301/

社会平均水平←————→非常富有										拒答/说不清
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

A4. 您觉得这个孩子将来可能面临的就业竞争比您就业时面临的小、一样大还是比您大？

【单选】

A401/

比您就业时面临的小	和我就业时一样大	比我就业时面临的大	拒答/说不清
1	2	3	9

A5. 您认为孩子将来在就业选择时是否会受到性别的影响？请用 1-10 分评价，1 分表示完全没有影响，10 分表示完全由性别决定。【单选】 A501/

完全没有影响←————→完全由性别决定										拒答/说不清
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

A6. 如果您不喜欢或不满意孩子选择的对象，您是否会进行干预？请用 1-10 分评价，1 分表示完全不干预，10 分表示完全由我决定。【单选】 A601/

完全不干预←————→完全由我决定										拒答/说不清

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----

A7. 您认为孩子将来面临的赡养老人的综合压力比您面临的小、一样大还是比您大？【单选】 A701/

比我面临的小	和我一样大	比我面临的大	拒答/说不清
1	2	3	9

A13.请问这个孩子的性别是？【单选】 A1301/

1 男	2 女
-----	-----

A8. 您对您成长过程中自由选择的权利感到满意吗？请用 1-10 分评价，1 分表示非常不满意，10 分表示非常满意。【单选】 A801/

非常不满意<————>非常满意										拒答/说不清
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

A9. 很多因素会影响您对孩子的期望，您觉得其中什么因素的影响最大？

\_\_\_\_\_【限答一项，请访员详细记录】 999 拒答/说不清

A901/

A14.您还打算再要一个孩子吗？【单选】 A1401/

1.是	2. 否	9. 拒答/说不清【不读出】
-----	------	----------------

**Z. 背景题**

Z2.请问您的文化程度是：

- 低于小学水平 ..... 0
- 1
- 小学 ..... 0
- 2
- 初中 ..... 0
- 3
- 高中/中专/技校 ..... 0
- 4

【单选】 z201/

- 大专 ..... 0
- 5
- 大学本科 ..... 0
- 6
- 本科及以上 ..... 0
- 7
- 没有接受过正规教育 ..... 9
- 7
- 拒答/说不清 ..... 9
- 9

Z3.请问您的婚姻状况是：

- 已婚 ..... 0

【单选】 z301/

- 其他 ..... 0

未婚 .....	1	拒答/说不清【不读出】 .....	6
	0		99
	2		

**24.** 为了了解不同收入者之间的不同看法，我希望了解一下您的个人月均收入水平大致相当于哪一个档次？ **【单选】 z401/**

2000元及以下 .....	0	10001—15000元 .....	0
	1		6
2001—4000元 .....	0	15001以上 .....	0
	2		7
4001—6000元 .....	0	无固定收入【不读出】 .....	9
	3		7
6001—8000元 .....	0	拒答/说不清【不读出】 .....	9
	4		9
8001—10000元 .....	0		
	5		

**25. 【读出选项】** 请问您的职业是 **【单选】 z501/**

高层管理人员：机关及事业单位处级以上（不含处级）干部 .....	01
高层管理人员：企业高层管理人员，如私营企业主、公司董事长/总裁/副总裁等 .....	02
中层管理人员：机关及事业单位处级/科级干部 .....	03
中层管理人员：企业中层管理人员，如公司部门经理等 .....	04
普通办事员：机关及事业单位普通办事人员 .....	05
普通办事员：企业普通办公室职员 .....	06
各类企事业单位的专业技术人员 .....	07
律师、会计师、文艺、记者等自由职业者 .....	08
普通专业技术人员（如汽车维修工、电脑维修工等） .....	09
自由职业者（不是为单一企事业单位服务，如自由撰稿人/自由音乐人/经纪人等） ..	10
个体户、小摊主 .....	11
工人/普通勤杂人员/售货员/服务人员/司机等 .....	12
离退休人员 .....	13
军人 .....	14
家庭主妇 .....	15
学生 .....	16
无业/失业/待业/下岗 .....	17
丧失劳动能力（不是年龄原因造成的） .....	18
其它【请注明】 .....	
拒答/说不清【不读出】 .....	99

Appendix. 3**Table 1. Scale Survey Questions.**

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Actual Questions:</b>
Interest Development	Q.1 In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her own interest? <i>(Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "not decided by him or her at all," 10 means "completely decided by him or her.)</i>
Major Choice	Q.2 To what extent do you expect your child will be able to freely choose his or her major? <i>(Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "not decided by him or her at all," 10 means "completely decided by him or her.")</i>
Career Development	Q.3 To what level do you expect your child's financial income to be? <i>(Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "average level," 10 means "very rich.")</i>
	Q.5 Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender? <i>(Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "no influence at all," 10 means "completely decided by gender.")</i>
Partner Choosing	Q.6 If you do not like or are not content with the partner your child chooses, will you intervene? <i>(Please choose from 1 to 10. 1 means "no intervention at all," 10 means "completely decided by me.")</i>

**Table 2. Average ratings of four types of mothers on scaled survey questions**

Survey Questions	Mother Type	Mean	S.D.	N
1.In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her own interest?	Post80S	8.05	1.91	21
	Post80NS	7.21	2.8	19
	Pre80S	6.9	2.125	20
	Pre80NS	6.5	2.606	20
2.To what extent do you expect your child will be able to freely choose his or her major?	Post80S	7	2	21
	Post80NS	8	2.539	19
	Pre80S	7.05	1.932	20
	Pre80NS	6.5	2.503	20
3.To what level do you expect your child's financial income to be?	Post80S	6.86	2.744	21
	Post80NS	6.89	2.865	19
	Pre80S	7.35	2.889	20
	Pre80NS	6.85	3.453	20
5.Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender?	Post80S	4.19	2.228	21
	Post80NS	2.68	2.335	19
	Pre80S	3.6	2.326	20
	Pre80NS	1.85	1.872	20
6.If you do not like or are not content with the partner your child chooses, will you intervene?	Post80S	4.86	2.798	21
	Post80NS	3.89	2.767	19
	Pre80S	4.55	2.8	20
	Pre80NS	4.6	3.331	20
A8.Are you satisfied with the freedom of choice you had when you grew up?	Post80S	7.68	2.056	22
	Post80NS	6.75	2.789	20
	Pre80S	5.95	2.282	20
	Pre80NS	5.65	2.498	20



**Table 3. Correlations Matrix of Mothers' Ratings to Each Scaled Question**

Questions	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q5	Q6	Q8
1. In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her own interest?	--					
2. To what extent do you expect your child will be able to freely choose his or her major?	.58**	--				
3. To what level do you expect your child's financial income to be?	0.03	0.01	--			
5. Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender?	-0.07	-0.11	-0.06	--		
6. If you do not like or are not content with the partner your child chooses, will you intervene?	0.21*	0.1	-0.08	0	--	
8. Are you satisfied with the freedom of choice you had when you grew up?	0.06	0.09	-0.04	0.02	0.17	--

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

**Table 4. Univariate (Mother Type) ANOVAs for Each Scaled Survey Question**

Dependent Variable/Survey Questions	df	F	Sig.
1.In your expectation, to what extent your child will be able to freely choose and develop his or her own interest?	3	1.573	0.203
2.To what extent do you expect your child will be able to freely choose his or her major?	3	1.497	0.222
3.To what level do you expect your child's financial income to be?	3	0.131	0.942
5.Do you think your child's job choice will be influenced by his or her gender?	3	4.456	0.006**
6.If you do not like or are not content with the partner your child chooses, will you intervene?	3	0.383	0.766
8.Are you satisfied with the freedom of choice you had when you grew up?	3	2.999	0.036*

Note: \* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$

**Table 5. Frequency of mothers' answers to two multiple choice questions (Q4 & Q7)**

Multiple Choice Question	Mother Type									
	Post80S		Post80NS		Pre80S		Pre80NS		Total	
	(N=21)		(N=20)		(N=20)		(N=20)		(N=81)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Level of employment competition										
Smaller	6	29%	4	20%	6	30%	7	35%	23	28%
The same as	3	14%	4	20%	1	5%	1	5%	9	11%
Larger	11	52%	12	60%	12	60%	12	60%	47	58%
Level of old age care pressure*										
Smaller	6	29%	10	50%	9	45%	7	35%	32	40%
The same as	10	48%	4	20%	1	5%	9	45%	24	30%
Larger	5	24%	6	30%	10	50%	4	20%	25	31%

Note: \*  $X^2(6) = 13.539, p = .035$

**Table 6. Self-reported influential factor that will affect expectations**

Type	Mother Type	Number	Percentage	Including
Social factors	Post80S	5	10%	Overall social environment condition, competition intensity, social pressure.
	Post80NS	8	16%	
	Pre80S	9	18%	
	Pre80NS	3	6%	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>50%</i>	
Family factors	Post80S	4	8%	Overall family environment, family financial status, parents' salary level, parents' education level
	Post80NS	1	2%	
	Pre80S	0	0%	
	Pre80NS	8	16%	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>26%</i>	
Children's education situation	Post80S	2	4%	Children's grade, teachers' assessments, children's self-effort
	Post80NS	1	2%	
	Pre80S	2	4%	
	Pre80NS	0	0%	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>10%</i>	
Others	Post80S	0	0%	Children's drug abuse, Children's animations, Communication between children and parents, common interests shared
	Post80NS	3	6%	
	Pre80S	3	6%	
	Pre80NS	1	2%	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>14%</i>	
Total	50	100%	2%	



Figure 1. *Wei geming shixing jihua shengyu* (Carry out birth planning for the revolution).” A poster used in the 70s for the population control campaign (Yang, 1974).



Figure 2. *Zai nai zhong chengzhang* (Growing up in the drowning love). A comic portrait of the Chinese only child and his family.