The Role of Global Culture and Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perceptions of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity

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Chapter 1: Introduction

For most of us the family is a ‘familiar’ institution. Indeed the English words ‘family’ and ‘familiar’ both originate from the Latin *familia* – a family. So the family is something that is well-known to us, easily recognized, a close unit that we understand and take for granted. Most people belong to at least one family during their lifetime and see that family as a source of identity, reassurance and safety, unless, as it is for some, a place of unhappiness and harm. More generally, the family as a cultural and emotional unit of social reproduction is looked upon as both necessary and desirable by lay and professional commentators alike. In the 1950s and early 1960s the sociology of the family was dominated by the functionalist perspective. This approach tended to treat the institution of the family as a universal feature, inevitable in all societies. It was assumed uncritically that the family is a good thing, positively providing for the needs of its members and carrying out basic but vital functions for society.

In the last thirty years, considerable social, economic and demographic changes have taken place in advanced societies, leading to wide-ranging changes in the family. The first significant change is the position of women. During this period there has been a huge rise in the proportion of married women working outside home. In addition, improved contraception methods have had a considerable impact on women’s control over their own lives and on both intra- and extramarital relationships. These factors, together with the influence of the women’s liberation movement, have greatly altered both the typical life pattern of women and our attitudes towards the role of women in family and society (Richardson 2000).

In the west and other ‘Westernized’ societies the steady rise of the divorce rate, the increase in cohabitation and later marriage mean that many now have direct knowledge and experience of alternative patterns of married life. Successive waves of youth cultures have continued to emphasize changing family relationships between parents and children (Luccardi and Ruspini 2005). And the steady increase in life expectancy has given many of us the experience of living at the same time as our grandparents.

The image of the family in late modern society has been further complicated by differences based on class, region, religion and ethnicity that reveal themselves as significant diversities in family structure, roles and relationships. All of these social trends – the position of women, growing variation in marriage patterns, generational differences and the increasing diversity of family forms – have had a great impact on the nature of society, representations of family life and the family itself (Haney and Pollard 2003)

As social change has occurred in society, the sociological study of the family has been adapted and reshaped. Whereas the traditional functionalist image of the family emphasized the contribution families make to the stability of society as a whole, more recent theories have taken issue with these ideas. The changing nature of society and what many see as the rapid pluralisation, fragmentation and diversification of family life, has been accompanied by a shift in theoretical focus to what has been termed the ‘postmodern’ sociological perspective. The postmodernist approach stresses the loss of traditional sources of collective identity such as the family, seeing the fragmentation of cultural and economic patterns within both public and private institutions, but notably the family, as typifying the dramatic changes that accompany

a more fluid and globally connected social world.

To summarize, the traditional family seems to be fragmenting in many parts of the industrial and post industrial world. Some regret this; others welcome it as a progressive development. As we can observe, there is no doubt that the way in which family life has been developing over the last half century reveals some remarkable and very speedy transitions, most evidently in Western societies. To take Britain as an example, by the end of the 20th century, the proportion of births outside marriage had risen to almost 40%, with almost two in five marriages likely to end in divorce. The annual marrying rate was at its lowest since records had begun 160 years earlier (Almond 2006).

Regarding Hong Kong, it will be noted in later chapters that in the past 10 years divorce and single-parent families have increasingly occurred. Young people' s values and perception of family, family functioning, marriage, parenthood and family responsibility are also rapidly changing as will be revealed in this thesis. The research study which now follows attempts to explore and examine critically contemporary theories of family life in Hong Kong in the context of global change regarding values and culture that are traditionally thought to underpin primary relationships and family building in the unique social world that is Hong Kong. The focus of the research then is to find out how young people in contemporary Hong Kong perceive their own futures in regard to three distinct but inter-linked domains that configure the way family, over time, is reproduced albeit in varying shapes according to wider social influences. Hence the study addresses the views of young people in relation to three key conceptual fields: 'Marriage', 'Parenthood' and 'Family Responsibility' in a context of local Chinese Hong Kong society exposed to late modern global and

societal changes. This study attempts to explore and examine critically contemporary theories of family together with ideas about global values and their impact upon young people in regard to marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in local Chinese Hong Kong society. It seeks to illuminate the likely choices and behaviours of young people in regard to personal lifestyle and family life. This in turn, might provide insights into future Hong Kong society and the family life cycle and related implications for social work and service / policy planning more generally.

There are four broad key research questions in this study: First, what is the role of global values in influencing the Chinese Hong Kong young adults' perceptions of 'Marriage' 'Parenthood', and 'Family Responsibility' in late modernity? Second, how does the Chinese cultural heritage in respect of family, marriage, parenthood and family responsibility find itself affected by the impact of these global values? Third, apart from the influence of the global and local culture, are there any other factors, coming from different eco-systemic levels, that affect the young people's life course transition to adulthood? Lastly, how far does the development of Family Life Cycle in the local context become affected by these changes in perception?

Underlying these research questions is a working hypothesis that young adults who are more influenced by global values and culture tend to have negative views on traditional family practices of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Conversely, those with higher attachment to Chinese cultural value will tend to have a more positive attitude towards family building. Moreover, it is assumed that there are multi-dimensional factors influencing today's young adults' views on family building. This thesis aims to find out these possible factors or constraints so as to help inform a

welfare and policy agenda that can, where needed, assist young people in their transition to adulthood.

The thesis contains nine chapters. Chapter 1 has outlined in brief the family as a basic unit of society that has seen considerable change in recent generations and, depending upon the perspective of the theorist (e.g., feminist, functionalist, critical theory) may be seen as a wholly favourable institution while others have cast it as actually or potentially oppressive and a socialising force to reinforce male and state hegemony. Following this, the topic of the research was set out in relation to family values and global change in Hong Kong and why this thesis seeks to provide an important new dimension to help address a gap in our knowledge about Hong Kong families and about the impact of globalisation.

Chapter 2 - 'Globalization in Late Modernity'. The focus of the chapter is on key literature that can help explore the dynamics between young people and their relationship to the various aspects of globalization and social change. More specifically, the chapter considers selective literature about globalization in its impact upon young adults' attitudes towards family building within a fast changing socio-economic and geo-political context that is Hong Kong.

Chapter 3 - 'Family Theories and Family Changes'. This chapter addresses essential literature to help us better understand the theme of globalization and youth and their perception of family. The first half of the chapter provides an overview of different theories of the family. The second half focuses more upon changes to the family in western societies and related issues of young people's perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family obligation. The materials examined in this chapter provide an

important context for an appreciation of families and change in Hong Kong that follows in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 - 'Globalization, Postmodernity and Family Change – the Hong Kong Context'. This chapter focuses on Chinese and Hong Kong literature on traditional and late modern influences in Chinese family life. Challenges and continuities to family life, marriage and parenting are noted. The chapter brings to conclusion a careful literature search which culminates in an outline of the key research themes and working hypotheses of the study, and the sorts of mixed methods needed to address these which then become the focus of chapter 5.

Chapter 5 - 'Methodology and Methods'. This chapter first outlines the epistemological status of the study, one which deploys the perspective of critical realism via an iterative mix of survey and constructivist methods. In essence, the research comprises a cross-sectional multi-method exploration of attitudes held by young people about marriage and family building in Hong Kong, utilizing focus groups, survey and individual interviews as the key research techniques. The strengths and weaknesses of these methods are examined. The study adopts non-probability sampling in the three stages of the research that includes a mix of purposive and snowball sampling in six focus groups involving 40 young people; quota sampling in a cross-sectional survey with 1132 young people being interviewed and purposive sampling of 10 respondents in in-depth semi-structured interviews. The target group comprises local Chinese young adults aged 17-25. The virtues and deficits of the sampling procedures are discussed and the chapter then turns to issues of ethics and finally, analysis of data.

Chapter 6 - ‘Confucian Values and Change: Key Findings of the Focus Groups’. The results of the six focus groups show that both the global values in late modernity and the traditional Chinese cultural values have an impact at different levels and dimensions on Hong Kong young adults’ views on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Some traditional aspects of the Confucian moral values appear to be durable and relatively stable but some would seem to be in decline. This chapter indicates that today’s young people experience changes in family-related roles, statuses and personal lifestyles. Transitions to adulthood would appear to be delayed for various reasons to do with ongoing education, income dependency, housing, attitudes to marriage, parenting and obligations to family. These impacts upon traditional patterns of family life cycle which in turn affect young people’s sense of citizenship, rights and responsibilities in Hong Kong society.

Chapter 7 - ‘Chinese Values, Change and Continuity: Key Findings of the Survey’. Based on the analysis of the focus group data, a self-completed survey instrument was formulated containing closed-ended questions. This survey questionnaire, distributed to a target group of 1,250 young people living on Hong Kong Island and its immediate surrounding region, sought to explore the relationship between global values and the selected dependent variables of young adults’ perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. The targeting of the sample, its high return rate, and the key findings of this large data source are the main themes of the chapter.

Chapter 8 - ‘Transitions and Challenges in the Life Plan: Key Findings of the Follow-Up Individual Interviews’. The last stage of data collection entailed an in-depth exploration of themes that surfaced in the survey data and comprised a purposive sample for ten semi-structured individual interviews with respondents

identified from the survey returns. The interviews addressed three broad domains: (i) the life plan (under the traditional family life cycle) of young people in specific regard to self-development, career development and family building that may expose to the influences of global or Chinese cultural values (ii) the constraints and difficulties young people encountered in the transition to adulthood in late modernity within an eco-systemic context; and (iii) relevant services and policies proposed by the interviewees that might help achieve a smoother transition to adulthood.

Chapter 9 - 'Perceptions, Plans and Policy Implications: An Overview of Key Findings'. This chapter offers some overview of the key findings from this multi-method design and generates some final insights into the role of global culture and values on young adults' perception of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in late modernity. Apart from global culture and values, other factors affecting the perception of Hong Kong young adults on family building are discussed. Conceptual merits and demerits are addressed in relation to key perspectives such as the family life cycle and eco-systemic ideas about young people's life transitions to adulthood. Lastly, the implications of the findings for service interventions and policy are outlined and recommendations for further research bring the chapter to a close.

In conclusion, key messages from the study are set out in relation to the role of global culture and values on young adults' perception of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in late modernity. The emphasis here is upon the ways in which local Chinese Hong Kong culture responds to globalization from the perspective of family developmental theory and the eco-systemic approach. The findings suggest that in Hong Kong society, traditional Chinese moral values are still heavily emphasized and endorsed. But it is observed that some Western global values have begun to take root

in Hong Kong society and these values might, according to the findings, be increasingly represented within the Hong Kong young people's value systems. The consequences of this for Hong Kong family life remains however an unfolding story.

Chapter 2: Globalization in Late Modernity

Introduction

Globalization has changed the world and our perception of it. Under globalization, we are connected with people in other parts of the world and become more aware of their lives, their problems and their solutions and opportunities. With globalization our ties with other parts of the world have become self evident, stronger and the world's problems are seen to have consequences for all of us. With globalization individuals and nations become more inter-related, inter-connected and inter-dependent. When studying today's youth about their perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility, it is essential to understand the possible relationship between young people and the environment locally and globally as well as the possible influence of globalization on contemporary young adults in the age of late modernity. This chapter examines the emergence of globalization in late modernity and relevant key debates. The chapter then explores the impact of globalization on people politically, economically, socially and ideologically. Also, briefly examined are selected postmodernist theories of the global world that may facilitate our understanding of various dimensions of global cultures and values such as pluralism, individualism, liberalism, feminism, fast and keen competitive culture, short and temporary inter-relationship in our new and more fluid global societies. Finally, the chapter focuses upon how we may understand today's new generation in a global world with its many changes in culture and values that bring new challenges, risks, uncertainties and choices in the everyday lives of young people.

Globalization and key debate

According to Albrow and King (1990), globalization can be viewed as the processes by which the peoples of the world are included in a global society. Under the notion of globalization, we live in the same planet and share some of the same risks and uncertainties. For instance, the 2011 tsunami in Japan affected the production of vehicles in the Toyota production plants in the USA and Europe as some of the components were made in Japan. We may, with others such as the United Nations Development Programme, regard globalization as a generative process and of paramount importance as a means to improve global governance for the benefit of humanity and not just for corporate or national interests (Cheung 2000).

By contrast, Jessop (2004) argues that globalization accelerates the interconnection of people from different parts of the world, helps the emergence of a knowledge economy with attendant problems of information overload. Jessop observes the ever increasing need for continuing education in order to improve one's competitive edge. Unsurprisingly then, globalisation can also be seen as the source of risks and harms. Virilio (1994) observed the emergence of anti-globalization social action movements and the re-assertion of traditional culture and identities as the increasing emphasis on speed and acceleration in social life was viewed by some as disruptive. With globalization, we may have a personal sense of disorientation as the past loses its significance as a guide to action. In such circumstances, it appears that we live in a runaway and ungovernable world (Jessop 2004).

The emergence of transnational corporations such as Microsoft, McDonald or Coca Cola have massive operations that speed up the exchange of goods, services and

labour across different nations. The application and mediation of the Internet has accelerated the development of the global economy. Nowadays, many economic activities can be conducted through cross-national networks. Banks, businesses, fund managers and individuals can all conduct their transactions through the Internet in different parts of the world. The development of global communication processes witnesses the easy access to information. For instance, an individual can check out the side-effects of a drug through the Internet where there may be copious information on the subject though its accuracy and reliability are unknown. In this respect, globalization can be regarded as both an economic and social transformative phenomenon.

In terms of new socialities, the development of the 'Internet' means that time and space between people in the world have become compressed. Just with one 'click', we could connect with people in different parts of the world. The political unrest in the Middle East or in any part of the world can be captured via digital equipment such as camera, mobile phones, recorders, etc. The messages can be disseminated throughout the world through email, skype or other video communication instantly (see Castells 2011).

Politically, the collapse of communism in the former USSR and Eastern Europe meant that the people in these once isolated countries are more subject to western influence and ideas. The collapse of communism also meant that people in other parts of the world can connect with these former isolated countries. In addition, the international organizations such as the United Nations and European Union have contributed to the process of globalization. Different nations can discuss issues of common concern in the United Nations. The European Union can also be regarded as a form of

transnational governance. The European Union issues directives, regulations and court judgements via common EU bodies to govern individual EU states. In Mainland China where phenomenal economic growth and increasing social liberalisation have engendered transformative change, the use of the Internet is widespread though its contents are subject to government control and there remain party political centralization and censorship powers more generally (Giddens et al. 2009).

In short, the process of globalization can have profound economic, social and political implications. However, it is relevant to note that some domestic issues such as people's views on family, marriage and family responsibility may still be subject to traditional values and attitudes as will be explored in later chapters.

According to Held et al. (1999), there are three orientations of thought on the extent of globalization, i.e. sceptics, hyper-globalizers and transformationalists. In summary, the sceptics consider that the extent of globalization has not covered all nations in the world. The present economic interdependence between nations mainly occurs in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. The trade protection policies and regulation of foreign exchange and the flow of capital prevent the occurrence of a fully globalized economy. The sceptics consider that there is still some way to go before the emergence of a truly globalized economy. On the other hand, the hyper-globalizers argue that the extent of globalization can be demonstrated by the dire consequences of the financial collapse in 2009 of the Lehman Brothers investment corporation in the US which affected the global economy. National governments cannot control threats entering or leaving their borders. For instance, the now infamous homeowners default on mortgages in the US and the resultant US monetary policy affected the economy of Hong Kong because the HK exchange rate is pegged against the US dollar at a fixed

rate. As such, the Hong Kong Government had little room to manoeuvre. Hence, the hyper-globalizers argue that the influence of national governments over the issues of financial markets has greatly declined in this global age. Lastly, the transformationalists argue that the old cultural and social patterns of a nation are subject to widespread global influences. Globalization is seen as an ongoing process with the spread of cultural influences particularly via the Internet. Yet while the impact of globalization is not in dispute the extent to which it can transform traditional and modern societies is not necessarily deep or extensive and there are likely to be counter-influence from long sedimented cultures and enduring social patterns of a nation and indeed restrictive political or cultural forces within some nations.

Postmodernist theories of the global world

Before examining the postmodernist theories of the global world, it would be important to first discuss the concept of modernity. Modernity may be referred to as the cluster of social, economic and political systems emerging in the West around the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. According to Bauman (1992), the modern, obsessively legislating, defining, structuring, segregating, classifying, recording and universalizing state reflected the essentialist splendor of belief in a universal and absolute standard of truth. Thus, the guiding principle of modernity was the search to establish reliable foundations for generalized knowledge, policy and practice using the canons of a totalizing science and the rational processing of bureaucratic formation (Parton 1994).

Many are of the view that the postmodern era started in the latter half of the 20th

century and we are ‘entering a period characterized by a lack of predictability and permanency, by weak and transitory structures, and by alternatives being constantly deconstructed within a context of fragmentation and difference’ (Ife 1999, p. 214). In its broadest sense, ‘postmodernism involves a critique of all totalizing theories, that is, theories which set out to explain everything’ (Tilley 1990, p. 327). The most compelling argument against totalizing theories is that they give a one-sided, reductive perspective on social reality and so preclude the possibility of more multi-dimensional approaches (Kellner 1989). To claim to speak for some universal truth is seen to deny both self-evident and less visible oppressions and alternative worldviews. Thus postmodernists assert that there is no one system of domination that holds pre-eminence over others. The postmodern vision of knowledge is that there are many observers, many truths and that the observer cannot be separated from the observed and the context from which they view the world.

Bauman (1992) has long argued that we occupy an increasingly pluralistic world split into a multitude of sovereign units and sites of authority with no horizontal or vertical order. We are no longer determined by historical events, cultural traditions and class relations or exclusively informed by enlightenment values promoting human emancipation, social justice and belief in rational/ scientific thought. Instead, the world is plunging into a chaotic, privatized future, recapturing medieval extremes of wealth and squalor (Stokes and Knight 1997) and large scale human suffering brought about by poverty, famine and war seemingly with no end in sight. Under the surface of post-modern life there exists a whirlpool of disorder, destruction, alienation and despair, rather than logic, reason and rational thought (Bauman 1992). Midgley (1999) further argues that accepting there are no universal truths, individuals are constructed as free to pursue their own destinies; hence reality can only be the product of one’s

own narrative imagination. Indeed when we shift from an analysis of social structures to a study of social meanings and the way these meanings are represented in cultures or by a particular gender or sexual identification, then we can see how postmodern theories are transforming the very nature of social science discourse (Powell 2001).

In all this there is, predictability, some disagreement amongst social theorists about the idea that we are entering a wholly different age or phase. For example, Parton (1998) argues that the changes depicted as distinctly 'postmodern' might better be characterized in terms of advanced liberalism or extended liberal modernity. Whereas, Beck and Lau (2005) suggest that what we are witnessing is a 'second modernity'.

Yet we may agree that society as 'postmodern' in that it is highly pluralistic and diverse. The idea that history, for example, has a singular shape has collapsed as shown by the countless films, videos, TV programmes and websites that offer competing and multiple accounts about the world. In essence, the world of ideas and values is one constantly in flux. One of the key architects of postmodernity according to Giddens (2001) is Baudrillard who was of the view that an electronic media has created a chaotic and empty world in which our social life is influenced by countless signs and images. In such a media-dominated age, meaning is created by the endless flow of images and electronic 'chatter' (as in TV programmes, Internet programmes, Facebook and Twitter) in which we respond to media images and all manner of electronically delivered opinion rather than real persons or places.

For Giddens (2001), Foucault is still the inspiration for much postmodernist thought. Foucault advanced profoundly important ideas about the relationship between discourse and power in relation to modern organizational systems. He used the term

discourse to refer to ways of talking and thinking about a particular subject united by common assumptions. Power works through discourse to shape dominant popular perceptions towards social phenomena, such as crime, madness and sexuality. Those with power or authority can establish expert discourses, i.e., foundational knowledge, which can be used as a powerful tool to restrict alternative ways of thinking or speaking. However in our electronic age those with no power or authority can still express their views via the electronic revolution of the Internet for example. More generally, the argument by Foucault about discursive power in a postmodern world becomes one whereby there exists a multitude of discourses that inevitably challenge ides of immutable truth and power.

By contrast, Ulrich Beck's landmark thesis on risk as a defining aspect of late modernity is part of a body of theory that rejects postmodernism. Beck (1992; 2001; 2009) argues that we are moving into a 'second modernity' instead of living in a world 'beyond the modern'. In the second modernity, institutions are becoming global and the control of tradition and custom on everyday life is diminishing. The old industrial society is being replaced by a 'risk society'. What the postmodernist views as chaos, Beck sees as risk in the form of anticipated and unanticipated dangers stemming from an ever expanding exploitation of resources, science and environments. Thus while the advances in science and technology and globalization give us many benefits there are enormous risks involved as well, not least in climate change, genetic engineering, pollution and pandemics. Indeed, within the realm of the intimate, there is an expectation of emotional, sexual and material benefits that would not necessarily have been assumed by earlier generations. Thus romantic love and marriage today is also accompanied by risk and calculation about securing happiness against the uncertainties and unknowables. Beck argues that the nature of risk is

changing and orginates less from natural hazards than from local and global uncertainties created by the development of science and technology and by our own social and cultural expectations around our own biographies and desires for happiness (Giddens 2001).

In summary, Giddens (2001) recognizes the world we live in today as a ‘runaway world’; a world marked by new risks and uncertainties of the sort Beck diagnoses, albeit these risks are often borne more by some nations or segments within some societies than by the more privileged. That said, trust should be placed alongside that of risk. Living in a more globalized society, our lives are influenced by people we never see or meet, who may be living on the far side of the world from us. Trust in this sense is the other side of risk – we manage risk in part through systems of trust. For instance, we typically trust in agencies for electricity supply, water and gas quality and in the effectiveness of banking systems; indeed we have little choice but to trust given the increasingly inter-dependent nature of our lives with the fate of others in a global world. Also, we do not trust blindly but increasingly become reflexive about who and what should be trusted by drawing upon the resources of an information age that helps us think and act upon the circumstances in which we live our lives. Many aspects of life that for earlier generations were simply taken for granted become matters of open contestation and decision-making both in the private and public spheres. For instance, in our private world we can in many societies control the number of children we have via modern forms of contraception; in our public democratic lives we can bring to bear our preferences for which political party to support and exercise choice in relation to all manner of social arrangements.

Young people in a global world of late modernity

The youth – a new generation or a phase in life course?

Young people are often conceptualized in very general term as a ‘generation’ which is defined historically by the time of their birth and the events, values and opportunities that shape their world. ‘Youth’ is also seen as a phase in the life course that we all experience, involving a notion of developmental stages leading from dependent childhood to independent adulthood (Henderson et al. 2007). This perspective indicates that ‘adolescence’ can be viewed as a period of experimentation, when roles and identities are searched for and tested, and over time completing the societally expected tasks that finally lead to becoming a self-regulating adult (Erikson 1968; Kroger 1996). Such approaches can affect our views about youth and can lead us to understand their experiences in a fairly simplistic and generalized ways and may ignore the diversity and specificity of experiences within an age cohort by focusing on the similarities and generalizing the experience of a minority to the majority. Moreover, when we understand youth experience as to do with some ‘phase’ they go through this can all too easily allow us to separate ourselves from young people’s experience in the present. Both the generational approach, which emphasizes and defines young people mainly by a time period or phase, and the life course perspective which defines young people somehow out of time and place (see Henderson et al. 2007), have been criticized by sociologists of youth and childhood for neglecting the lived experience of being young (James et al. 1998; Prout 2005).

Late modern sociological approaches that study the lives of young people focus on inter-generational change and point out that the more traditional and predictable life

patterns of the past which tended to be powerfully shaped by social class and gender, hold less significance today. Young people now face the challenges of the future without clear direction. Beck's distinction between 'normal' and 'choice' biographies has been employed by many youth researchers to make sense of increasingly fragmented pathways in the transition to adulthood (Du Bois-Reymond 1998; Dwyer and Wyn 2003). The chapter now briefly explores this notion of the de-standardized life course of youth and the process of reflexive biographization in late modern societies.

Youth studies in late modernity

There are two broad perspectives in youth studies in late modernity. On the one hand, youth research has focused on the holistic study of young people's transition to adulthood with theories of reflexivity that draw from Giddens, Beck or Bourdieu. On the other hand, cultural studies have applied postmodernist or poststructuralist approaches to youth. These approaches tend to focus on surface and style in the wake of theories of the 'fragmented self' (Bauman 1995). Living in a fragmented world of so many uncertainties, Baudrillard portrays a state of nihilism where no clear agency exists and young people act more in response to external stimuli. In this perspective, young people are seen as signifiers of signs, or conduits of ideologies or followers of local youth cultures which stress surface and style (Jones 2009). As Griffin (1997) puts it, youth are invisible within the postmodernist approach, cast as loose collectivities as well as highly individualized young people. As such, we can note new terms describing today's youth such as 'neo-tribes', 'hybrid cultures' and 'lifestyles'; these are used to understand youth cultures which are often cast as depoliticized and hedonistic (see Alan 2007; Muggleton 2000; Shilddrick and MacDonald 2006).

Ulrich Beck (1992) put forward the concept of 'risk society' in his reflexive modernization thesis. With fragmentation of the established structures in society and a breakdown of traditional institutions, individual social roles are not clear. In this context, individuals must reflexively construct their own biographies with all the attendant risks. Anthony Giddens (1991) suggests that in late modernity there is an endless range of potential courses of action open to individuals and collectivities. He argued that life is not only a biographical project but a 'reflexive' one where there is the exploration and construction of the altered self as part of a reflexive process in relation to personal and social change (Giddens 1991). There has been a shift from 'standardized' to 'choice' biographies. During transition to adulthood, 'choice' biographies can be understood in relation to the nature of action, decision-making and strategy by young people in dealing with risk and opportunity (Jones 2009). As we shall see in later chapters, the idea of 'choice' is likely to be quite narrow for some disadvantaged young adults in Hong Kong who participated in this research. Their access to resources to equip themselves to enter a highly competitive job market makes the notion of exercising some optional biographies somewhat tenuous.

Life course transition from youth to adulthood

Life course relates to transitions in an individual's life including from school to work, from single to married, from childlessness to parenthood and so forth. Since the mid-1970s, life courses in late-modern societies have become de-standardized (Heinz and Marshall 2003). In the post-industrial regime, there is increasing differentiation and heterogeneity as transitions are delayed, prolonged and there is increased age variance. Interruptions in education and work become common and normal. The

traditional life course model lost ground in many societies. Life courses have changed in terms of timing whereby young people postpone transitions such as having children or, contrariwise experience certain transitions earlier i.e. having intimate relationships earlier and having children before marriage or having a job before having finished their education; and in terms of reversible transitions, choices they have made are sometimes revoked and replaced by other choices (Vinken 2007). In late 20th century, major structural changes in labour markets and life chances have brought significant restructuring to how young people move from school into work (Bynner 2001; Wyn and Dwyer 1999). New forms of employment and training pathways (Raffe 2003) are constructed under global forces. According to Raffe, there are some important trends occurring in many countries. First, the youth labour market remains relatively stagnant in many advanced economies and there is less chance for young people leaving school to enter paid employment. The work for young people is mostly low-skilled, low-paid and restricted to service economies. To tackle unemployment and shortage of skills in labour markets, the governments around the world have expanded their provision of vocational training as an alternative to young people leaving school and entering workless lives. This situation is not restricted to the western societies but also in the Asian countries (Lanuza 2004). Late modernity has become more complex, the usual traditional pathways from school to work transition have diminished in many societies.

In late modernity where social life has become more uncertain and complex, there is growing interest in the way youngsters respond more individually in their transitions and plan their own career and lifestyle like a biographical project. This individualism, as Beck and Beck-Gernshein claim, is linked to the dis-embedding of tradition and structure in an age of uncertainty whereby we all come to rely on our own skills and

reflexive biographies (Wyn and Dwyer 1999). There is also a growing blending within youngsters' lives. For instance, young people might take part-time jobs alongside their studies. They may vary their activities over time such as interruption of study or work, deferral of certain pathways and then become active again in some project in later life. To summarize, many youngsters in advanced economies today live in a world in which life courses are biographized and where there is a variety of social domains and networks to explore, occupy, remain or leave.

Individualization and reflexive biographization

The concept of a reflexive project of self was first introduced by Giddens (1991) who argued about the erosion of tradition and security in late modern western cultures. Giddens claimed that we can not simply make reference to a previous generation in order to follow the models of adult life around us. We are living in a complex and flexible post-industrial environment that we need to invent ourselves, to decide our identity and our future directions (Henderson et al. 2007). This perspective invokes conditions of uncertainty and experimentation that has been applied by theorists to illuminate the contemporary developmental life course of children and adolescence (see Holland et al. 2000; Plumridge and Thomson 2003). Giddens claims that there is no simple destination for growing up in an age of late modernity. Adulthood does not exist, it has to be invented. The concept of the reflexive project of self is informed in part by a phenomenology that emphasizes the subjective experience of the individual, the present moment and in relation to situated action. Connected to this is a narrative discourse of the self, by reflexively telling one's past and future an individual can find out his or her self-identity. This narrative is circumstance-bounded and reflects the cultural and social resources that youngster can access.

Of course, Giddens's notion of the reflexive project of self also has its weak points such as being too simplistic or optimistic; or de-emphasizing the resilience of tradition, inequality and other continuities from an earlier order (Jamieson 1998); or too generalizing of the experience of a minority of people to a majority which has much less freedom of action (Skeggs 2004). There is also some conceptual difficulty in claiming agency within the theoretical notion of dis-embedded individualism (Mason 2004). Other scholars (Nilsen and Brannen 2002) argue that the difference between choice and a more circumscribed biography is too simplistic and they focus on the significance of structural inequalities which provide the boundary for individual choices. Clearly, the resources that individuals can utilize are crucial for how an individual can make choices. Structural forces and personal resources, such as gender and social class, always moderate opportunity. Youth transitions to adulthood very often relate to socio-structural constraints of class, gender, and ethnicity and the impact of the macro-system of social environment. Proactivity, independence and autonomy can be facilitated or restricted by social, cultural and institutional factors (Thomson et al. 2002; Catan 2004; Furlong and Cartmel 1997).

Changing life experiences of young people

As Beck (2009) claims, the life experiences of young people in modern societies have changed quite significantly from earlier generations. These changes cover social relationships, education, the labour market, leisure, lifestyles, and the ability to become established as independent young adults (Resnick 2005). Beck considers these changes are the outcome of the restructuring of labour markets, of an increased demand for educated workers, of flexible employment practices, and of social policies

that young people today have to encounter, the potential risks of which were possibly unknown to their parents (Beck 2009). In light of these possible risks, they can be a source of stress and vulnerability for the young generation. This in turn brings uncertainties and stress for an older generation who might not know how to protect or provide for the new generation (Beck 2001; 2009).

Global trade with new forms of technology affect traditional manufacturing communities and many industrial workers have been left redundant as they lack the skills needed to enter the new economies. Nowadays, many more individuals pursue their individual goals and create their own career paths. In the process, they change jobs, build up new skills and abilities. With the help of information technology, standard patterns of full-time work are being dissolved into more flexible arrangements such as working from home, job sharing, short-term consulting projects, 'flexitime', and so forth (Beck 1992). Globally, women have also entered the labor force in large numbers, albeit often located in less secure low paid service based and light manufacturing industries. Expanded professional and educational opportunities in more advanced societies have led many women to put off marriage and children until after they have begun a career. These changes have also meant that many working women return to work shortly after having children, instead of remaining at home with their infants. These shifts have required important adjustments within families, in the nature of the domestic division of labor, in the role of mother in child-rearing, and the emergence of more 'family friendly' working policies to accommodate the needs of 'dual earner couples' (see Adkins 1994; Dahl et al. 2004).

In the Western societies, patterns of leaving the parental home have changed considerably (Jones 1995; Rugg 1999). It is now likely that young people will

experience some form of independent housing such as student housing, an owned or rented flat, a bed-sit or shared flat before they set up a partnership home of their own (Rugg 1999; Heath and Cleaver 2003). Returning home can be for a range of reasons, mainly the ending of the reason for leaving in the first place, but also can be symptomatic of the deficiencies in the housing market, which has never catered for young people and rarely offers the levels of affordability, security and basic standards that they need.

For the majority of young people there are intermediate stages between events such as leaving school and entry into the labour market, or leaving home and becoming a householder (Jones and Wallace 1992; Beer and Faulkner 2011). Leaving home has become a significant life event in itself rather than in association with marriage (Harris 1983; Jones 1995). On the other hand, leaving school becomes less significant as an event when it is not followed by entry into the labour market (Jones and Bell 2000). Where adulthood was once closely associated with marriage and parenthood, cohabitation and later parenthood are now common. The normative transition biography along linear pathways no longer exists, if it ever did (Jones 1995; Du Bois-Reymond 1998). Transitions can involve false starts, returns to dependence and second or third attempts. Age has become less reliable as a marker of adult independence.

There has also been a trend within all European countries for family formation to be deferred by all but a minority. Where young people still typically leave home in order to marry, and the median age at marriage is rising, then the age of leaving home will also rise. But young people seem to be increasingly leaving home for other reasons, such as to study or take up a job, and in these circumstances the age of first leaving

home may become lower. In some European countries (Spain, Italy), young people may remain in the parental home until well into adulthood, only leaving in order to set up a marital home (Holdsworth and Morgan 2005; Jones 2005).

Rather than some notion of a unitary and linear transition, it is now more helpful to conceive of the transition to adult independence as consisting of interconnected strands from education to labour market, from child to partner/parent, from living in parental home to forming households and starting housing careers. Young people can become adult along one strand but not necessarily another. Thus they can become economically independent from their parents through employment but still live in the parental home including sometimes with a partner, or live as a single individual in an independent home, but still need parental support. They may return home but still be employed. This might make the problem about what adulthood is less significant. Everything is negotiable. There are many different ways of claiming adulthood and reducing loss of face, and young people unpack the concept of independence to suit their circumstances. To sum up, the patterns of leaving the parental home have changed considerably. The transition to independent adulthood can be conceived as interconnected strands leading to different combinations in late modernity.

Role of global and local culture and values on the younger generation

Culture as 'value'

Culture, comprising diverse products of the behaviour of many people, provides a relatively stable context for human development. Herskovits (1948), cited in Segall et al. (1999, p. 1) describes culture, in a classic sense, as 'the man-made part of the

environment'. Our behaviour occurs in, and is shaped and constrained by, environmental elements including those that are created by ourselves or other people. Behaviour is influenced by products of other person's behaviour. These products can be material objects, ideas, or social institutions. So we need to acknowledge that culture always influences behaviour although we may not always be aware of it (Segall et al. 1999; Bourdieu 1993).

Culture is already there as we begin life. It contains values that will be expressed and a language in which to express them. Munroe and Munroe (1980) point out that 'culture' is composed of numerous separable factors, including subsistence patterns, social and political institutions, languages, rules governing interpersonal relations, divisions of labour by sex, age, or ethnicity, population density, swelling styles, and more. Culture also includes shared preferences, rules, norms, and standards. It shapes hopes and fears, beliefs and attitudes, convictions and doubts, at least to the extent that such are shared, taught, and transmitted among people.

According to Ember and Ember (1985, p. 166), 'culture encompasses the learned behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes that are characteristic of people in a particular society or population'. They also defined it as 'the shared customs of a society'. There are treatments of culture that place it inside the heads of many individuals. Thus Geertz (1973, p. 89) identified culture with 'historically transmitted patterns of meanings embodied in symbols'. Culture provides meaning by creating significant categories, like social practices e.g. marriage and roles e.g. bridegroom, as well as values, beliefs, and premises. These meanings move, in a sense, from head to head. Barnlund and Araki (1985, p. 9) offer a behavioural definition, 'Cultures have no existence except as they are manifest in the behaviour of the people who constitute

them. A culture is only an abstraction based on the commonalities displayed in the behaviour of a given community of people'. At the same time, culture is seen as super-organic, that is, it has an existence over and above individuals. Yet, culture is indelibly 'a field of action the contents of which (objects, ideas, myths, institutions) are made by people and act back upon people, and in this sense is as much process as structure' (Boesch 1991, p. 29).

Regarding values, these tend to be reflected in heartfelt beliefs. While values are characteristics of the cultures of societies, they enter into the psychological makeup of individual human beings. If filial piety were a cultural value in a particular society (as it is identified in China and in other societies influenced by Confucian doctrines), then we would expect many individuals affected by that culture to care deeply for their parents. When activated by individuals, values become infused with feeling, as Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) suggest. Relatively abstract values transcend situations and provide standards for evaluating specific behaviours, both before and after they occur. They may refer to goals and behaviours considered appropriate for achieving them.

In short, culture can be regarded as a framework of meanings that help establish predictability and shared action in order that group life can cohere because it has at its core the notion of values. These are not simply recipes for everyday action or for validating such action (which they do of course inform) but provide a deeper sense of meaning or belief. Values while not always explicit shape the ways in which we make important choices and decide on options that inevitably arise in our private and public lives. Mooij (2011) points out two aspects of values that must be distinguished: first is value as guiding principles in life, and second is value as a preference for one mode of

behaviour over another. The distinction refers to the desirable and the desired, or what people think ought to be desired and what people actually desire – how people think the world ought to be versus what people want for themselves. The desirable refers to the general norms of a society and is worded in terms of right or wrong. The desired is what we want, what we consider important for ourselves. People's interpretation of values often refer to preferable states of being and these may of course not always align with dominant mores in a society or group. Most societies are likely to have their specific value paradoxes in which a combination of modernity and tradition co-exist.

An assumption by sociologists is that with increased wealth, expenditure on education and media increase, resulting in more egalitarian values and democratic systems that in turn would lead to convergence of consumption. In this sense, industrialization and modernization were supposed to bring a universalizing process through globalizing values and consumption patterns. Such a perspective reflects more the distinctive product of Western thinking. The consumption symbols of this universal civilization are mainly American. As a result, global cultural homogeneity is likely to be consonant with USA consumption modes. In this context cultural homogeneity becomes the consumption of the same popular material and media products, creating a global culture whose collective identity is based on shared patterns of consumption. The term 'modern' is often equated with 'Western' and the assumption is that with modernity people also will adopt Western values. Hence, the expectations were that with increased openness and capitalism in China the Chinese would turn to Western values. Instead, the Chinese are said to be rediscovering the teachings of Confucius (Mooij 2011), which for centuries has been the moral guidance of the Chinese people. In this sense, the Chinese can be said to want to be modern while retaining core

values.

An early but key definition of value comes from Kluckhohn (1951), cited in Hung (2008, p. 4), who contended that the concept of value described '…a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action'. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), cited in Hung (2008, p. 4) considered that in examining cultures scientists should include the explicit and systematic study of values and values systems. Such a view still obtains today (see Bond 1996). Hence, to explore how culture affects the young adults' perception of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility, as is the aim of this thesis, it will be important to take Chinese cultural values into consideration as it is these that may still influence attitude and behavior.

A global culture?

In the information age we live in a massive global network where information disseminates quickly and in unprecedented volumes. For example, western-made films and television programmes, which dominate the global media, tend to advance a set of political, social and economic agendas that reflect a specifically Western worldview. Some worry that globalization is leading to the creation of a 'global mono culture' that may overwhelm the strength of local customs and tradition. According to this view, globalization may be a form of inevitable colonization of world cultures in which the values, styles and outlooks of the western world are being spread aggressively to the extent that they smother local and national cultures (Falk 1999).

Advanced western states would become the reference nations in the globalization of

cultural restructuring. Non-Western countries tend to be influenced by the global culture in form of individualism, consumerism e.g. McDonald and Starbucks global corporate brands, keen competition and efficiency with the emphasis upon the new, the modern, the scientific and result oriented (Pilkington and Johnson 2003). An alternative view holds that some aspects of local culture would remain beyond the penetrative impact of globalization. For example, beliefs and values regarding social relationships and morality might resist global influence even though materialist values linked to making a living become increasingly prevalent when a nation integrates into the global market. Inglehart and Baker (2000) note that multinational survey data indicate that while economic development is followed by increased global influence of values emphasizing scientific rationality, individualism, and secularism, local traditions that define personhood and sociality such as religion and cultural beliefs (e.g. Confucianism) can be relatively resistant to the effects of globalization. Likewise, some scholars (Yoon 2003; Santana 2003) consider that input of global goods and services in East Asian countries can reinforce and reinvent traditional moral values in local communities rather than eclipse local culture.

Bond and King's (1985) still relevant and seminal study used the social identity perspective to understand Hong Kong Chinese people's responses to global culture. Global culture penetrated into Hong Kong firstly through the British colonization of Hong Kong, and followed by the rapid industrialization and modernization of the 1960s. Bond and King conducted a survey (1985) which found that most Hong Kong Chinese respondents (about 70%) believed that modernization involved technology, behaviour or material progress, whereas Westernization involved western values, thinking and cultural traditions. 64% of the respondents considered that modernization could proceed in Hong Kong without much of the western cultural

implications. About half of them indicated that they would try to preserve their Chinese identity by holding onto basic Chinese moral values such as filial piety and respect for those in legitimate authority. Hence, what we may be witnessing is not some all pervasive global culture but more the varied fragmentation of cultural forms (see Baudrillard 1988). Established identities and ways of life grounded in local communities and cultures have, for some time, been giving way to new forms of hybridised identities composed of elements from contrasting cultural sources (Hall 1992). Inevitably, there is something of an adaptation process in which parts of the global culture impart their characteristics through incorporation within local culture. There seems little doubt that old cultures of the past are changing, maintaining some of their old ways, but evolving to adapt to the technological challenges (Leeder 2004; Toffler 1999).

Apart from exploring the impact of localized traditional Chinese values on youth perceptions on family building, this thesis also attempts to examine the influence of global values on our Hong Kong younger generation. Hence, the thesis addresses key themes such as the extent to which the values held by young people reflect their own generation, or the values of a cultural grouping within the wider generation, or the global influences of labour and consumer markets. To inform this interest it will be important to draw upon insights such as from Helve (2001) who examined young people's values from the perspective of reflexive modernity and further tested Inglehart's (1997) hypothesis that economic, cultural and political change are changing people's world views away from concern with basic needs to post-materialistic values. She explored the sources of young people's world views and found that there are variations in accordance with their education, gender and family beliefs. Young adults' perceptions of values differ according to gender, educational

level and locality. They are also situational and may choose different values and ideologies under different situations. These findings suggest that the effects of wider social, political and economic trends on young adults' values vary in accordance with their position in society (see Jones 2001). Karvonen and Rahkonen (2001) examined the relationship between the value orientations of 15-year old young people and their lifestyles, social class and gender. By contrast with Helve, they found several mainstream values such as work ethic, patriotism were shared within and across age groups indicating inter-generational continuity rather than intergenerational change and difference.

From the above observations we may ask how far are values and attitudes a consequence of structural constraint or individual choice? Do young people have equality of opportunity to choose lifestyles and values? A great deal may depend on their educational level and attainment. Lifestyles, like attitudes, are likely to be structured by social class and/or education, and thereby do not easily invite treatment as an independent variable.

Local culture – Chinese cultural values and 'confucianism'

Hong Kong lies in the far south of China, at the mouth of the Pearl River. Hong Kong is mostly populated by the Chinese. To grasp something of the local culture it is important to appreciate Chinese cultural values. Any discussion of Chinese social relationships soon encounters the term 'Confucianism' which is often used as a synonym for traditional Chinese culture. Asian and western scholars have studied the long and complex history of Confucianism as philosophy, as political, moral and social theory, and as religion, and have debated its fate in the modern world.

Sociologists and anthropologists have often seen Confucian writings as intellectual elaborations on basic cultural traits of the Chinese people, whose everyday life can be seen as governed by Confucian morality. In recent years political leaders have appealed to Confucianism as the core of distinct 'Asian values' which justify forms of government and social engineering that both internal opponents and external critics sometimes condemn as authoritarian and undemocratic (Stockman 2000, p. 71).

Traditionally, social organization involved a structure of hierarchical relationships between distinct categories of people, who were expected to follow their sense of duty and behave towards each other in ways appropriate to their relationship. If everyone held to the expectations associated with their status, social stability and harmony would be maintained, and the order of the cosmos would prevail. The central social relationships were defined by the doctrine of wu lun, or five cardinal relations, as laid out by Mencius (Lau 1970, p. 102): those between father and son, ruler and subject, husband and wife, older and younger brother, and between friends. Each of these relationships was associated with a specific quality or character, respectively love or affection, righteousness or duty, distinction, precedence, and sincerity or trust. Most of these relationships were familial ones, based on hierarchies of generation, age and gender. The relationship between the ruler and the ruled was also conceived on the model of father and son, while women's social roles were seen as predominantly internal to the domestic sphere. Only by acting correctly in social relationships could a person realize these virtues of humanity (Lau op cit). The most basic of these virtues Confucius called ***ren.*** The good person cultivates *ren* by learning how to relate to fellow human beings. This requires consideration for others, by not doing to them what you would not want them to do to you. Other social virtues stressed in the Confucian writings include good faith, loyalty, sincerity and a sense of duty, as well

as filial piety. Finally, another important basis for social relationships within the Confucian framework is that of *bao,* which may be glossed as a principle of reciprocity (Yang 1957; Stockman 2000). The idea that one kindness or favour should be repaid by another and that the social order is held together by a continual exchange of services is repeatedly encountered both in written reflections on social life and in everyday situations.

Fei Xiaotong contrasted modern western society ruled by law with traditional Chinese rural society ruled by ritual. Rituals are 'publicly recognized behavioral norms' (Fei 1992, p. 96) which govern the action of people bound by particularistic relationships. He perceived a direct continuity between the Confucian term *li* and the anthropological sense of ritual. Whereas law is enforced by the state, ritual norms are upheld by the sense of tradition maintained by the local community, by the power of public opinion concerning correct behaviour in particular situations between people in particular relationships, behaviour that becomes ingrained habit shared by the members of the community.

Closely related to the concept of ritual is that of 'face'. People should act according to the principles of *li* with an appropriate demeanour, bodily bearing and facial expression. The Chinese anthropologist Hu (1944) refers to the concept 'face' as the reputation or prestige attached to worldly success, wealth and power. One can lose face by appearing as less competent than one has claimed, explicitly or implicitly, to be. This considerable emphasis on the primacy of social relationships leads also to consideration of the nature of the human personality in Chinese society. Some Chinese sociologists have suggested that western societies develop notions of autonomous selves seeking independence from the constraints of social ties, whether

this be the increasing autonomy of the maturing adult from childhood ties to parents or the striving for freedom of subjects from rulers. Chinese society by contrast sees the self as immersed in and defined by its social relationships. Hsu (1985), for example, advanced the concept of the 'relational self', with relational identities more deeply embedded in the personality than is the case with westerners, and the boundary between self and the external world less sharply defined. The self is often seen as seeking harmony with its social environment through conformity with its demands, rather than striving for independence and mastery over the environment. Some Confucian scholars have modified this interpretation through studies of literature and texts relating to the lives of imperial civil servants and striving for self-perfection by development beyond mere conformity, as a person driven by the demands of conscience to challenge the policies of emperors even at the cost of their livelihoods or lives, and even as a critic of the constraints of stultifying social convention (Tu 1985; Elvin 1985).

A familial society

China has often been seen as a peculiarly familial society, and Confucian social theory placed special emphasis on family relationships as the core of a stable and harmonious society. As regards Chinese views on marriage, Chinese family life was traditionally structured as a series of hierarchical and reciprocal relationships, according to principles of generation, age and sex (Baker 1979). Women were theoretically subordinate to men in all family relationship. The primary purpose of marriage was to continue the family patriline. Marriage was considered to be a family rather than an individual matter and hence was arranged by parents. The responsibilities of the new bride included service to her mother-in-law, who

determined her duties within the household. The new member of the household had a very low status, which improved only when she had fulfilled her primary function of producing a male successor. The elements of the Chinese family system may be summed up in the phrase ‘patrilineal, patriarchal and patrilocal’, represented as the enduring nature of the ‘traditional’ family in China. There is also a saying that socioeconomic status for marriage partners should match those of prospective married couples. Matched socioeconomic status is an important condition for happy marriage or successful matrimony. This condition is heeded in most cases today, though to a lesser extent than it used to be (Lew 1998).

As to parenthood, to Confucians, offspring represent perpetuity of lineage, and the ancestors’ lives are consequently perceived as immortal. Through reproduction, one not only passes along one’s family name, but also one’s blood, and hence life, to later generations. Therefore, anyone who severed the flow of continuity would be condemned as having committed the gravest sin of being unfilial. As the Confucian follower Tang Chun-I said, ‘… the lives of my offspring come from my life. Their existence is considered the direct evidence of the immortality of my life’. To preserve this crucial existence, a filially pious son is cautioned to take good care of his body and his mental and moral attainments. The classic text of Filial Piety reminds its readers, ‘The body with its limbs and hair and skin comes to a person from father and mother, and it is on no account to be spoiled or injured’. Thus, looking after oneself and one’s children becomes a form of repayment to one’s parents (Ng 2007, p. 131).

In China, children were not cherished as individuals whose destiny was to fulfill their own unique potential, but were valued because they – and especially the sons – would help with work in the fields, produce sons who would carry on the family name, and

provide for their parents in their old age and after death (Eastman 1988).

As to family responsibility, of all ancient virtues in China, filial piety is almost the religious respect that children owe to their parents, their grandparents, and the aged. Filial piety often determines how one is judged, not only by other members of the family, but also by society at large. As the classic homily of Filial Piety teaches, ‘filial piety is the unchanging truth of Heaven, the unfailing equity of Earth, the universal practice of man which forms the root of all virtues’, with it all enlightenment come into existence. Chinese people believe that human love toward one’s parents is innate, as children all love the parents who carried them in their arms (see Ng 2007 p. 129).

Filial piety is a powerful cultural value that prescribes the proper relationship, that is, the obligations and legitimate claims, between children and parents. It governs family functioning, especially regarding the care of elderly parents, and hence has implications for public policy toward the elderly. In the past, filial piety was defined as children’s obligations to parents and absolute respect for parental authority. Although these elements remain relevant, the level of their importance has declined considerably. Financial support of parents continues to be seen as desirable filial behaviour, but its fulfillment is considered to be situational, and is often symbolic in practice. Among the younger generation, greater emphasis is given to subjective aspects of filial piety, including love, care, and respect for parents. This generation also prefers to treat parents as equals and values open communication. Filial norms are gender specific. Filial piety requires that sons live with and provide for their aged parents, but such obligations are not imposed upon married daughters, although daughters often play an important role in caring for ailing parents. Recent surveys and case studies indicate that an increasing number of parents prefer to have daughters

than sons (The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong 1999; Miller 2004) as they have begun to recognize the contribution of daughters to their future well-being. Women often play the role of 'kin-keeper', maintaining frequent contact with parents as well as providing daily assistance and emotional support (Lye 1996).

Filial piety is often practiced in the context of reciprocal support. Although filial piety is considered to comprise the one-way obligations of children to their parents (Sung 2004), many parents provide financial support and childcare services for their adult children (Bumpass 1990; Cooney and Uhlenberg 1992). Whyte's (1997) study conducted in urban China, for example, showed that adult children considered mutual help between generations as the greatest benefit of living with parents.

Change in values and culture?

In traditional Chinese society, the values of Confucian filial piety provide the basis to culturally define the inter-generational relationships. These values surpass all other ethics (Ho 1996). Filial piety as a core ethic has been continuously practiced, taught and appreciated in behaviour, attitude, and belief throughout China (Tu 1997). The Confucian values have assumed that care for the elderly is the responsibility of adult children, and therefore, basically the family's responsibility (Bengtson and Putney 2000; Chow 2001; Pak 1996). Research has assumed filial piety to be a moral impulse in governing the inter-generational behaviour (Chow 2001; Kwan et al. 2003; Kosberg 1992; Merrill 1997; Montgomery 2000). However, these values have undergone substantial modification with industrialization. The economic independence and formation of nuclear families has affected how the new generation perceives and performs filial piety. In addition, the functions of the family are

diminishing in modern society. The family no longer functions as the provider of education, health care, and moral and vocational training for its members. These functions have now largely been taken over by government and other institutions. Modern education tends to produce a generation which values achievement, independent thinking and behaviour and the making of decisions on rational grounds. Consequently, the new generation has substantially modified or changed how they perceive and perform the values of Confucian filial piety. Research has indicated that traditional filial piety is on the decline or under transformation (Chow 2001; Ho 1996; Kwan et al. 2003; Ng 1991). The above studies have clearly indicated that the provision of caregiving is not necessarily based on a moral sense of filial piety but may be contingent and stem from a socio-economic structure and related attitudes and values (Lam 2006).

Hence, the next question is how to measure the values specific to the Chinese. Bond (1986) suggests a method of uncovering cultural universals that takes as its starting point an emic theory of human behaviour with roots in an Eastern culture, China. Most psychological theories of human behaviour and most of the instruments that have been developed to test those theories have grown out of distinctly Western cultural belief systems. However, Bond argues that given the 4,000-year recorded history of Chinese civilization and its pervasive cultural influence on East Asia, China provides an equally valid alternative place to begin the search for cultural universals.

Bond (1986) compared results from a Chinese Value Survey (CVS), developed with the cooperation of Chinese social scientists in Hong Kong, with results from Hofstede's (1980) international survey of work-related values. The Chinese survey was deliberately ethnocentric in its construction, selecting for its forty test items only

those values that Bond deemed relevant and pertinent to Chinese culture. Colleagues in twenty-two countries administered the CVS, in the appropriate local language, to homogeneous bodies of students who were fairly comparable in terms of the academic standards of their institutions. Data were analyzed at the cultural level and a factor analysis yielded four factors (values loaded > .55) named CVS I (integration), CVS II (Confucian Work Dynamism), CVS III (Human-Heartedness), and CVS IV (Moral Discipline). Each of the twenty-two groups was then ranked according to where they fell on scales for each of these four factors.

The Chinese Value Scale that includes 40 indigenous cultural values deriving from the traditional Chinese ethos. The CVS is a four factor structure, including moral discipline (i.e. keeping oneself under control with regard to others), integration (i.e., one's tolerance to others and the importance of social stability), human heartedness (i.e., one's compassion toward others and the necessity to be kind to others), and Confucian work dynamics (i.e., values derived from the teachings of Confucius, thoughts of other schools, and folk wisdom). The CVS sought to overcome the bias of other Western-based value measures while being comparable to Western models for measuring cultures (Hofestede and Bond 1988). It was deployed in this doctoral study (see chapter 7) to address the way young people's perceptions of family, marriage and parenthood may have changed due to the individualizing influences of globalization.

Summary

To conclude, globalization and changes in life course transition from youth to adulthood has been the theme of this chapter. We have noted how threats, uncertainties and insecurities have presented individuals with new choices and

challenges in their everyday lives. Because there is no ‘road map’ to these new dangers, individuals, countries and transnational organizations must negotiate risks as they make choices about how lives are to be lived. Because there are no definitive answers about the risks and futures we face in relation to their spatial, temporal or social consequences (nor their solutions either), so the new generation proceed in an uncharted and often uncertain way.

Globalization affects many countries of the world. China is also undergoing rapid changes in values and tradition. In this sense the Chinese communist state remains a decisive, dominant and fundamental feature of the political, legal and social landscape across a giant hinterland, albeit Hong Kong and nearby territories retain a mix of their former capitalist and internationalist structures while clearly a part of the new China. Such complexities together with the influences of a globalizing world – in which China has become a leading economic power, make for a fascinating case study in the instance of Hong Kong. This study will address, using the Chinese Value Scale as part of the study design, specifically globalization in its impact upon young adults’ attitudes towards family building under the fast changing socio-economic and geo-political context that is Hong Kong. Having set out this conceptual exploration of globalization and its impact upon culture and values we now move on to discuss the family. In doing so, the next chapter will look at key theories of the family within mainstream social science and conclude with a discussion of recent research into Hong Kong and Chinese family life. This, together with this chapter on globalization, then provides the theoretical framework that helps inform the research design and the analysis of findings reported in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3: Family Changes and Youth Perceptions of Family Building in Late Modernity

Introduction

This chapter is about family and family change. First, the chapter discusses different perspectives about families as groups or as institutions, emphasizing structural or functional aspects, and interaction of family members. The chapter then explores notions of the family and its diversity. The chapter takes particular note of conceptual sources around family such as the ecological framework and family development theory. These are utilized as key theoretical frameworks for this study. The chapter then moves on to explore young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in the Western world. The family changes in the western society may be taken as a pointer showing the likely global influences for young people in Hong Kong and hence of relevance to this study.

Family and family diversity

Definitions and characteristics of family

Silverstein and Auerbach (2005) define a family as two or more people who are in a relationship created by birth, marriage, or choice. Some families have legal protection and privileges, while others do not. There are different definitions of 'family' because of various theoretical approaches deriving from sociology and anthropology. The term is used by many Western sociologists and psychologists as equivalent to the immediate nuclear family (Georgas et al 2006). But this perception may reflect to a

certain degree cultural values of Western societies about family. In other parts of the world, relatives such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and even unrelated persons are considered to be 'family.' Hence, definitions of family refer to what *constitutes* a family, so that the definition in that sense is universally relevant across all cultures. One definition of family which served as a point of reference for anthropology for decades was that of Murdock (1949) (in Georgas et al. 2006, p. 4):

> The family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of sexually cohabiting adults.

Based on the analysis of 250 small societies, Murdock concludes that the nuclear family was a universal human social grouping and is a basic unit of the society. This definition has been criticized as there is evidence from some societies that the basic core of the family is the mother and her dependent children (see Gillies 2003). Murdock's definition has also been challenged, based on recent changes in the United States, Canada and northern Europe, in relation to the increase in lone-parent families, including divorced, adoptive, unmarried, or widowed mother, and same-sex families. For example, in Popenoe's (1988) definition, which has influenced the debate about the definition of family, firstly the minimal family composition is one adult and one dependent person, secondly parents do not have to be of different sexes, and thirdly the couple does not have to be married. A second aspect of the definition of family has to do with its functions as a social institution. Murdock defined the functions of family as sexual, economic, reproductive and educational. In the study of families in many small societies throughout the world by cultural anthropologists, one finding

seemed to be universal: the emphasis on genealogical relationship as a key element in families. Thus, procreation appeared to be a primary function of families in all societies. A second function was socialization of child. Economic cooperation of the members also appeared to be a key function for family survival. The concept of 'family' reflects an inherently complex, multifunctional institution with different cultural principles and meanings. Some argue that in light of the variety of family types and kinship systems in societies throughout the world, it might be better to talk about 'families' rather than attempting to define the irreducible core of 'family' as two-person or nuclear (Georgas et al. 2006; Smart 2007).

It is important to identify the distinguishing features of family which is different from groups as associations of, for example, co-workers and networks of close friends. Firstly, families last for a longer period of time than do most other social groups. We normally think of our own families as lasting throughout our lifetimes. We are typically born into a family that already exists. Families are the only groups that virtually require lifetime membership, even though some members are added and subtracted along the way. Belonging to a family is involuntary in the sense that we do not choose which parents are going to give birth to us. Secondly, families are intergenerational. The intergenerational bond is particularly crucial to human survival. Families contain both biological and affinal relationships between members. Thirdly, it is the biological act of birth that creates the fundamental family tie. We share at least some inherited characteristics with family members that are directly or indirectly related to us by birth. Fourthly, personhood is achieved through a process of socialization in a family. The major legal provision about families concerns marriage. Marital relationships are part of families. Some families are conjugal, in that they contain one or more marriages. Marriage itself involves rights and obligations under

the law, and it also creates family ties in law. Fifthly, the biological and affinal aspect of families links them to a larger kinship organization. Families extend outward to include anybody sufficiently related by blood, marriage, or adoption. This kinship group may have the identifiable boundaries of a clan, or it may be loosely organized and diffuse. The ties of kinship create the potential for lineages and collateral family relationships that can become quite extensive. Through kinship, families are tied to history, tradition, and multiple generations of group members (Klein and White 1996; Smart 2007).

It should be noted that family is not only a social organization but also a social institution. As an institution, family includes all of the beliefs and practices of and about all of the families in a particular society or geopolitical context. It also includes the ways in which different families are connected to each other and to other social institutions. There are linkages between families and schools, workplace, governments, and the mass media, and so on. Families also are involved in a society's system of social stratification. Some families have more wealth, power, and status than other families (Giddens 2006).

To differentiate the kinds of families, Silverstein and Auerbach (2005) denote traditional, modern, and postmodern families. The traditional family is heterosexual two-parent nuclear family with a husband/breadwinner and a wife/homemaker; and the modern family as a dual-earner family in which men and women both work outside the home, but only women are responsible for childcare and housework. From this perspective, the modern family is dual-earner family but not a role-sharing family. These families have not yet transformed the gendered division of labour or the gendered distribution of power. Postmodern families represent a deconstruction or

transformation of at least one aspect of the traditional family. Lesbian and gay couples and single mothers by choice would be examples of postmodern families in that they have deconstructed the cultural gendered ideology that a healthy family requires two parents of opposite sexes. New reproductive technology of conceiving children would be another example of deconstructing our culture's insistence on the importance of a biological relationship between parent and child. Transnational families would be examples of families that violate the usual characteristics of household co-residence, because these families exist across national and cultural borders (Silverstein and Auerbach 2005). In Hong Kong, there are different types of families. It is relevant to note that transnational families are also common as one of the couple may live in another country to fulfill the residency requirement while the other would continue to stay in Hong Kong to earn money. Dual-earner family is also common as the cost of living is high (Georgas et al. 2006).

Family diversity

It is worth noting at the outset that arguments about family diversity may boil down to competing definitions of what we actually mean by 'family'. As Gittins (1993, p. 155) states:

> There is no clear, unambiguous definition of what a family is – indeed, it has been argued that the family is little more than an ideology that influences and informs the ways in which people interact and co-reside with one another.

The classic study by Rapoport and Rapoport (1982) that drew on sociology, psychology and psycho-analysis, observed that the idea of family diversity is the key to understanding the reality of family life in the UK in late modernity. They argued

that society had changed profoundly in post-war years, offering choice, flexibility and a whole range of options for family living. They opined that there are five types of diversity in family: firstly there is organizational diversity. Different family types have different structures or ways of organizing the household. In some families only the husband goes out to work, in others the wife is the sole wage earner, and others are dual-worker families where both partners earn a wage. These organizational differences can have major implications for the day-to-day life of the family in question, and in particular for how roles are performed and by whom. Secondly, there is the matter of cultural diversity. The nature of family life can vary considerably between different ethnic and cultural groups. Thirdly there is class or economic diversity. Class can contribute to family diversity. Middle-class families are more likely to share domestic roles and be 'symmetrical' than working-class families. Fourthly there is life-course diversity. The nature of the family can change over the life-course of the individuals. Finally there is cohort diversity. Individuals born in the same year may have similar experiences of family life due to their common experience of wider social and historical events.

Regarding the types of family, social scientists (e.g. Smart 2007) have used a wide range of terms to classify different modes of family living. The following types are by no means exhaustive: local extended family; dispersed extended family; attenuated extended family; nuclear family; neo-conventional family; reconstituted family; lone/single parent family; 'cornflake packet family'; symmetrical family'; dual-worker family; cohabitation family; mother households and same sex family. In regard to family diversity, feminists tend to value diversity as a liberating force for women in society. The existence of different modes of family living mean that women might be able to choose which type of family to have, and therefore determine their

own lifestyle options. This view is held by Gittins (1993), and in some respect it is similar to the postmodern view. Equally, family diversity and choice may offer liberating opportunities to men as well as women. Traditionally 'a man's place' was at work, however it is slowly becoming more acceptable for men to be house-husbands, a situation that many men may experience as liberation from the more orthodox masculine gender role. By contrast, the view from what has been termed the 'New Right' is very different. Their view is that the traditional nuclear family is the superior family form, and that diversity represents a worrying challenge to this 'correct' way of living and has resulted in the family entering a state of crisis, as evidenced by the rising divorce rates and the increase in lone parents (Kirby 2000).

Given the evident existence of a wide variety of family practices, it may be more useful to spend less time searching out some moral hierarchy of family formation and spend more time studying the lived experiences of those in society and their decisions and choices, wants and desires, lives and relationships. This certainly is the aim of this thesis which now turns to theories of the family and their relevance for guiding the study design for this investigation into young people's views of family life in contemporary Hong Kong.

Family theories and theoretical framework

Overview of family theories

There are many different family theories. Some regard families as groups while others regard families as institutions. Some would focus on the structural or functional aspects of families while others would like to focus on interaction of members within

families. Some family theories are macroscopic while other family theories are microscopic. The macroscopic family theories deal with linkages between families and other groups or institutions, or between families in different cultures or societies or different periods of history. The microscopic family theories deal with personal relationships within families, a single culture or society or period of short duration.

Drawing on the seminal work of Klein and White (1996) we can note the following conceptual approaches to understanding the family. Of particular interest to this study are perspectives on the family such as the ecological framework, the family development framework, the systems framework, the conflict framework, the exchange framework and the symbolic interaction framework. Within the ecological framework, the basic notion is adaptation. According to the propositions of Hawley (1986) and Bronfenbrenner (1979), the individual grows and adapts through interchanges with its ecosystem, i.e. family and more distant environments such as school. If new information is converted to new functions or there is increased specialization of old functions, there will be ecosystem change and changes in relationships among functions. Family development theory focuses on stages of family life course with the major components of time, history and forms of family change. With time, there are the changing content of social roles in the family as well as macroscopic changes in the membership structure of the family. System theory regards the family as a goal-oriented system with a control subsystem. There are different types in family systems theory. The general system theory suggests that family systems are relatively closed systems that constantly seek out equilibrium. Communications theory puts its focus on family communications between occupants of relatively fixed statuses but able to attain flexibility via openness of exchange. Conflict theorists place focus on macro-system analysis of society and global

confrontations. There are two subtypes in Conflict theory. Micro-resource conflict theory deals with the giving and receiving of affection in an accounting of family resources. Macro-resource theory puts its emphasis on larger social structures rather than the interpersonal aspect of 'affect'. Another key theory is exchange theory, here the concept of costs and rewards enable the actors to choose the course of action that would be most profitable. Lastly, a symbolic interaction and performative perspective seeks to explain how a person may be more or less satisfied in a relationship according to how they perform their expected role in that family. A role is defined as the normative expectations attached to a specific position in a social structure. The greater the diversification of roles, the greater the role strain.

Drawing on Gillies (2003) and Kirby (2000), we can note additional sociological perspectives on family and family change such functionalist, marxist, feminist and new right approaches. Functionalism assumes the family can be studied and explained only by its relationships with the wider society and the whole social system. It examines the structure, functions and roles of the family and its members. The functionalist view is that the nuclear family is the dominant form of family in modern industrial society because it is this type which is 'functional', whereas the extended family is cast as more typical of pre-industrial society and less relevant to highly mobile modernist social and economic systems. The marxist approach to the family, not unlike the functionalist approach, adopts a structuralist perspective but one which emphasizes the influence of the economic substructure on family life and the role of the family, as part of the superstructure, in reproducing the class system. Marxists also consider the family as a product of economic forces. The family serves the interests of the ruling class by maintaining and reproducing the existing relations of production. Feminist views on the family are multiple and critical. The notion of the normative

family as a voluntary unit based on love and choice is disputed and re-cast as an economic unit which creates and maintains female dependence. The family is not seen as efficient at performing its functions. Rather, the family is seen as the agent of patriarchy, binding and blinding women to their exploitation socially, emotionally and economically. Lastly, new right advocates consider the conventional nuclear family as an ideal; variations or departures from this mode are seen as pathological. This perspective casts many of society's problems as originating in, or amplified by, the decline of nuclear family life (see Gillies 2003).

Rationale of the selected theoretical framework

After reviewing carefully the family theories and related sociological perspectives on family and family change, the ecological framework and family development theory were selected to provide conceptual support for this study. The reasons for this are as follows. There is much persuasive research that has shown that family continues to be of fundamental importance to the lives of young people (Gillies et al. 2000; Holland et al. 2000; Jones and Wallace 1992). In contrast to normative depictions of teenagers as progressively severing 'family' ties to reach independence and adulthood, young people remain firmly connected to a social network of 'family' and friends (Holland et al. 1999). This social context represents more than a set of influencing variables, in that it can be viewed as constituting individual experiences of transition to adulthood. This study seeks to provide an exploration and analysis of the experiences of youth transition to adulthood within the context of the family life cycle in Hong Kong. It focuses on how change is understood and interpreted from the perspective of young people in fulfilling socially expected developmental roles and tasks and the challenges they may encounter in the transitional process in the wider society when exposed to

influences or constraints from various levels of the ecological systems in the wider society, locally and globally.

In the past, sociological research on youth transitions has been mainly concerned with young people's passage from school to work. Youth was studied as a social category, with a particular focus on the structural factors determining the process of reaching 'adult independence'. The sociology of 'family' was conducted as a separate body of work, focusing primarily on marital relations, wider kin or the parenting of younger children. While youth researchers perceived young people as moving beyond the influence of their parents, 'family' researchers in sociology seemingly overlooked adolescence as a significant 'family' issue. Until recently, there was relatively little sociological research in Britain incorporating the separate spheres of 'youth' and 'family' studies (Gillies et al. 1999; Gillies 2003). Studies attempting a more holistic analysis of transitions to adulthood began to bridge the gap by reintegrating the public and private worlds of young people. For example, Jones and Wallace (1992) explored the way young people's economic and social relationships with parents change as they come to be recognized as independent citizens. As Jones and Wallace pointed out, the emergence of a 'life course' perspective within sociology has encouraged a theoretical reintegration of the study of young people's lives. A life course analysis attempts to describe individual pathways through an age-differentiated life-span, placing them in a social and historical context.

This focus on the way young people negotiate their route into adulthood has also characterized attempts to theorize the effects of recent economic and social changes. In particular many authors have utilized Beck's concept of the 'risk society' to explain young people's lives in an uncertain and constantly shifting world (Beck 1992;

Furlong and Cartmel 1997; Roberts 1995; Storrie 1997). According to Beck's 'individualization' thesis, a new age of modernity is replacing the old established certainties of industrial society, bringing with it a new set of risks and opportunities. As the established structures of social reproduction fragment, people are portrayed as becoming increasingly 'emancipated' from the roles and constraints associated with traditional social ties. A consequence of this new freedom is ongoing exposure to risk, which has to be negotiated at every turn in the life course. This is thought to lead to individualized life-styles in which people are compelled to accept their agency by reflexively constructing their own biographies. Giddens (1991) presents a similar account of 'high modernity', emphasizing the reflexive process of creating the self through day-to-day decisions. According to Furlong and Cartmel (1997), this intensification of individualism has led to an 'epistemological fallacy' in which the experience of self-determination and personal responsibility obscures the powerful constraining forces of existing social structures.

Theories advocated by Beck and Giddens have also been criticized on the grounds that they generate an over-individualized account of life transitions. As demonstrated elsewhere (Holland et al. 1999), growing up and becoming adult is shaped by the continuing relevance of 'family' relationships to the lives and experiences of young people. In sharp contrast to the assertions made by individualization theorists, that weakened social ties are the inevitable feature of late modernity, this chapter (and thesis) has emphasized the relational, interconnected nature of young people's understandings.

According to Hareven (1978), the life course approach can enable an analysis of collective as well as individual development, shifting emphasis away from ages and

stages, towards a focus on how individuals and families move through transitions. Elder (1978) also suggests that the life course perspective can be used to view 'family' as the interconnected life histories of its members. However, as Bernardes (1986) has argued, the notion of a 'family life course' implies a particular objective definition of family. Instead, Bernardes suggests that the idea of the 'family life course' be reconceptualized in terms of individual pathways coinciding with 'multi-dimensional developmental pathways'. This alternative view of 'family transitions' allows for a more layered exploration of individual experiences of change within diverse family forms. Theorizing young people's transitions to adulthood within a life course perspective which incorporates a collective, 'family' understanding of change and development also guards against generating an over-individualized account of life experiences (Gillies et al., 2003). Based on these conceptual insights, the study has drawn upon two key family theories – Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory (1979, 1983, 1989, 1993) and Carter and McGoldrick's family life cycle (1989, 1999) to provide a theoretical framework to help examine Hong Kong young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibilities in conditions of global and local culture in late modernity. The chapter now outlines the core assumptions of these two theories.

Eco-systemic approach

Bronfenbrenner (1979) as the leading architect of eco-systemic theory, integrated elements of ecological theory and Kurt Lewin's (1935) field theory to formulate the ideas in his now classic text *The Ecology of Human Development*. Bronfenbrenner argued that the child typically develops in the context of family-type relationships and that development is the outcome not simply of the ontogenetic factors but of the

interaction of the person's genetic endowment with the immediate family and eventually with other components of the environment. Essentially, Bronfenbrenner (1979) examined individual human behavior as a consequence of the interaction between the environment and the person. He argued that a person's behavior is a function of the interaction of their traits and abilities with the environment. He positions the individual as embedded in a microsystem (role and relations), a mesosystem (interrelations between two or more settings), an exosystem (external setting that do not include the person), and a macrosystem (e.g. culture). In Bronfenbrenner's (1979) definition of an ecological transition, a person's position in the ecological environment is altered as the result of a change in role, setting, or both. Later, Bronfenbrenner (1989) expanded this notion and discussed a model in which there are differences in developmental processes and outcomes associated with different ecological niches.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989) approach encompasses the entire environment of the developing person while maintaining a focus of the microsystem (roles and relations) and mesosystem interactions as having the greatest direct effects on the child. Bronfenbrenner (1989) has expanded and refined his approach (see Appendix 1). The most important refinement is to include time as a more integral part of his framework. This incorporation of time has led to two major additions to the theory. First, Bronfenbrenner views his ecological theory as applying 'throughout the life course' of the individual. Second, he has added the notion of the 'chronosystem', which incorporates time as the development history of the individual events and experiences and its effect on development. The need for the addition of time after the original statement of the theory is an interesting oversight for a theory dealing with developmental change over time.

The ecosystem framework has been invaluable in this study in helping to reveal the interrelationship between the global system and the local ecosystems and their possible influence on family life cycle with specific regard to young adults' perceptions about marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in Hong Kong (see Appendix 1). Thus while the main focus of this research is about the influence of global values and culture on young adults' perceptions in late modernity, Bronfenbrenner's ideas have helped identify the multiple levels, relationships and systems in which young people make sense of their world.

Family life cycle

The study has also drawn heavily upon the ideas within family development theory as refined and expanded by Carter and McGoldbrick in their work on the ever changing family life cycle (1989). Family life cycle theory has two characteristics: the first is the assumption that there is some order in the developmental patterns of individuals and families. Genetic and environmental factors are related to developments that have a combined impact on individuals and families. Another characteristic is more of an attitude or expectation whereby it is argued that individuals and families can be improved through healthy maturation and growth. This tends to be a given part of the family developmental perspective (Burr 1995).

Family development theory assumes that family members, family members' interaction, family structure and family norms all change with the passage of time. In order to understand family, we have to know the changing roles and expectations for different stages of family. For instance, family can be viewed as a social group in

which there are likely to be subgroup relationships. Such subgroup relationships can be the husband-wife relationship and the sibling relationship. Below the subgroup, there is the individual family member who has her or his own experiences of the family and the relationships in it. There are also different social norms in the family regards class and ethnicity. Also, family development scholars maintain that the family is affected by the social norms of the society and the social norms within its particular social classes or strata. The family can be viewed as a semi-closed or semi-permeable group. Family development scholars also assume that time is multidimensional. Usually, family members can recall significant events in their family. The dimension of time is very critical to understanding family change.

Carter and McGoldrick (1989) studied stress and applied family development theory in relation to the significant events in the individual and family history. Earlier work by Hill and Rodgers (1964) argued that change from one family stage to another might be stressful. For instance, the birth of the first child and transition to parenthood may cause strains for relationships in the family. Belsky and Rovine (1990) argued that there was a decline in marital relationship during the transition to parenthood.

As to the implications for interventions and policy, the concept of family life cycle and its stages alerts policymakers to the fact that there are myriad family patterns and paths, such as age and membership structure. The concepts of family life cycle and the linkage of family events with work and educational careers provide a useful framework for family therapy. It is noted that stress and coping of family members change with time in different stages of the family life cycle. The concept of a more probabilistic approach to family development (Rodgers and White 1993) helps family practitioners and their clients recognize the unpredictability in family life. This

understanding helps address problem solving for families. In addition, family development theory is useful in explaining a variety of phenomena. It explains why family systems tend to move from an emphasis on rule creation in the formation stage of the life cycle to rules being implicit and assumed later. It assists us in understanding why families deal with some issues such as inclusion before they deal with managing emotional distance for example. It helps explain variations in consumption patterns in families, patterns of giving and receiving help across generations and among other kin, variations in marital satisfaction, and patterns of mobility (Burr 1995).

In summary, the study adopted Carter and McGoldrick (1999)'s family life cycle model to help examine young adults' life course development in specific regard to marriage, parenthood and family responsibilities in a context of global and local culture in late modernity. As will be seen in later chapters, the model will be utilized in the analysis of young adults in terms of their positioning in the family life cycle. This model is based upon developmental stages, but it also includes different levels such as individual, family and social context within those stages. The model places focus on how problems can develop for individuals and families over time, especially in response to major life transitions. At the individual level, it consists of individual temperament, class, and genetic make-up as well as change over time. The family level of analysis might include an exploration of family expectations, patterns of relating, ethnicity and negotiation skills. Both the individual and the family issues are always considered within the wider socio-cultural context and how this changes over time (Smith et al. 2009). Full details of the six stages of Carter and McGoldrick's family life cycle which informed this study can be found in Appendix 2. We now turn to the family and notions of change in a context of globalization.

Globalization, postmodernity and family changes in the Western societies

According to Albrow and King (1990), the concept of globalization reflects the assimilation of its tenets into the concepts of modernity which includes industrialization, democratization, social networking, television, information technology, the joining of different groups of people in different countries. Hence, globalization is not only a spreading of economic and market processes, but also the general interconnectedness and interdependence of structure and processes throughout the world. Regarding family change, it is by no means clear to what extent families globally cling to long standing cultural tradition, or are turning toward the nuclear and lone parent family structure and function as found in North America and Western Europe. The effects of economic growth and globalization processes which lead to different forms of family structure and function are fairly uncharted but there is likely to be a mix of convergence and divergence. For example, Inkeles (1998) suggests that in some Asian countries, respect for elders remains strong and that kinship ties are retained even though nuclear families may have a separate residence. Throughout the world many societies share a similar pattern whereby extended family relationship are maintained, although modified to a certain extent. Inkeles also argues that some basic human behaviours persist seemingly irrespective of changes in family patterns. For example, the percentage of the population who never marry is remarkably stable. It is around 10 percent in Europe and somewhat lower in Asia. Regarding family roles, husbands still seem to resist helping with household chores. Though there is a convergence of similar patterns of family change in western industrialized societies, family relations appear to be too complex and subtle to respond consistently to a uniform set of influences. Moreover, some family patterns are constant across

countries and over time, suggesting that some human needs are resistive to any change of social organization, such as opposite sex relationships united in a long-term bond called marriage or other forms of cohabitation (Inkeles 1998).

Family changes in the Western societies

In light of the family changes in the global world of late modernity, Browning (2003) argues that a worldwide revival and reconstruction of marriage is both possible and necessary. While modernization and globalization yield better health and increased wealth, Browning points out that they are also undermining families across the world. For example, increases in wealth are unevenly distributed and constrain family togetherness through long working hours or by forcing a parent to look for work far away from the family residence. Moreover, awareness of cross-cultural family forms also increases our sense of the contingency and relativity of particular family patterns. Cohabitation and divorce rates, unwed mothers, and absent fathers all signal post-modernization's disruption of the family both in terms of our traditional perspectives on the family and on family formation itself.

Trevor (1998) focuses upon postmodern diversity and the accelerating change of familiar structures, relationships, mores and meanings and notes that increasingly people are not willing to follow established customs related to marriage and conjugal role patterns. They do not want to confine themselves to conventional nuclear or extended family obligations. Unmarried cohabitation, lone parenting, step relationships, dual income or single person households have become familiar patterns of domestic life. The traditional family based on the principle of lineage has been displaced by the modern family based on the principle of conjugal pairing and

manifested in the predominance of nuclear family household.

One of the changing family patterns in a postmodern world depicted by Trevor is the same-sex family type. Stacey (2005) analyzes gay male intimacy and kinship in a US global metropolis (Los Angeles). Such men and the city more readily signify for Stacey something of the anti-familial character generally associated with postmodernity. Gay men cannot rely on the biological, cultural, institutional, or legal resources through which kinship historically has been constituted, nor can they draw on traditional principles of genealogy or gender. The emergence of new same sex families however reveals the ever adaptive and changing nature of this extraordinarily versatile and resilient social unit (see Hicks 2011; Taylor 2009).

Another common phenomenon occurred in the western world is the changing views of the role of women in society. Chafetz (2004) claims that there is gender inequality rooted within the family as a source of women's oppression. Some feminists advocate sexual liberation and argue that traditional views of sex and love will only cause sexual repression and sexual oppression, which not only bring negative consequences, but also violate people's right to pursue their own sexual interests and identities (Chafetz op cit). Subversion of marriage and the family system is on the agenda for some feminists (Kwan 2006) who tend to view the family as a child-centred unit with much suspicion. In addition, one contentious aspiration which has won less than universal acceptance is the idea of the 'genderless family' advocated by some feminist writers whereby mothering is equated with fathering, and hence the preference for the term 'parenting'. This neutering of motherhood can by default lead to a situation where what might once have been described as the distinctive care of the mother is not much provided by either adult in the genderless family (see Almond 2006).

In response to the voice of feminists in Western countries, pressure for gender equality has brought political and legislative moves that have had some largely unintended consequences for the family. Flexible divorce laws have brought escalating figures for family breakdown, undermining the psychological sense of security of family members, especially but not only the children. Willis et al. (2002) point out that postmodern society is typified by institutional deconstruction, decreased collectivism, increased normlessness and helplessness, and exacerbated personal risk and stress. It is therefore possible to hypothesize that postmodernity characteristically loosens the bonds between the individual and society, thereby increasing vulnerability to depression, related pathologies such as substance abuse, and suicide. We now turn to some demographic materials that help set out the scale of family change, particularly in more economically advanced Western societies.

Georgas et al. (2006) describe changes in family types in the past 40 years, primarily in Europe, Canada, and the United States. The number of nuclear family households has increased and the biggest increase in families is the single-parent family, primarily unmarried mothers and divorced parents led by women because of breakdown of marriage and cohabitation. Young adults increasingly cohabit without marriage until they have children. The age of first marriage has increased and the percentage of married couples has decreased partly due to the increase of women entering into the workforce and to their continuing education for longer periods. The divorce rate has increased while the fertility rate has dropped drastically. Conversely, the mortality rate has decreased which results in longer lifespan of grandparents.

Demographic statistics for the European Family Demographic Statistics for the 15

countries of the European Union for 1999 are presented in the Eurostat-European Community Household Panel (Eurostat 2001). The average percentage of persons living in households with two adults and one or more dependent children, a nuclear family structure, is 36 percent in the 15 EU countries, a slight decrease from 38 percent in 1988, which can be explained partly by older couples living longer. The marriage rate for the 15 members of the European Union decreased from 7.6 percent in 1970-74 to 5.1 per 1,000 populations in 1999, while the divorce rate increased form 1.0 to 1.8. The percentage of live births outside marriage increased from 6 percent in 1970 to 27 percent in 1999, an indication of the increase in one-parent families and in the trend among young couples to marry after the birth of a child. Another related statistic is the living arrangements of young people age 16-29, in which 8 percent live in a consensual union and 18 percent are married. The fertility rate decreased from 2.59 in 1960 to 1.45 in 1999, which is below the replacement level. Average household size dropped from 2.8 in 1981/82 to 2.4 in 1999. Life expectancy is growing, estimated at 80.8 years for females and 74.5 years for males (Georgas et al. 2006, pp. 24-25).

Key insights into family change in the United States are reported by Whitehead and Popenoe (2003) with data from the National Marriage Project, and are based on the United States Bureau of the Census (see Field 2003). The same trend as in Europe of increasing cohabitation of coupes as opposed to marriage was found in the United States, with 439,000 thousand couple in 1960 as compared to 4,746,000 in 2000. In 1960, 9 percent of all children lived in lone parent families as compared to 28 percent in 2002, of which two thirds were African-American children. The percentage of children under age 19 living with two parents is 69 percent in 2002, as compared to 88 percent in 1960. Men are delaying marriage, preferring cohabitation, having more

children out of wedlock, and divorcing more easily. Eighteen percent of males aged 35-44 have never married, as compared to 7 percent in 1970. Women are also delaying marriage, and the number of marriages per 1,000 unmarried women age 15 and older has declined from 73.5 percent in 1960 to 45.6 percent in 2001. The percentage of divorced men and women increased from 1.8 percent in 1960 to 8.1 percent in 2002 for males and from 2.6 percent in 1960 to 10.7 percent for females. At the present time, the probability of a new marriage ending in divorce is approximately 50 percent. The percentage of households with children has dropped from 48.7 percent in 1960 to 32.8 percentage 2000. Also, the percentage of childless women aged 40-44 was 19 percent in 1998 as compared to 10 percent in 1980 (see Georgas et al. 2006, pp. 25-26).

Do family changes result in family disintegration or positive adaptation/ transformation?

Two key messages might derive from the above demographic overview. The first is about the family system as being in decline resulting in crisis and breakdown. Another message might be that change in family life consists of positive and adaptive elements too. The changes in family types which began during the past two centuries in Western countries as a result of industrialization, have now affected almost all nations throughout the world. Changes have taken place, not only in family types, but also in the cultural and social institutions of societies. Recent discussions regarding changes in family raised by Georgas et al. (2006) include whether (i) the new generation will continue to live in a structure namely ‘family’(ii) to what degree these changes in the family will result in psychological changes in children and adults and also their fulfillment of socially expected developmental tasks in their life course such as

becoming independent and finding a partner and having children (iii) the degree to which changes in family structure in the affluent nations of North America and northern Europe are a prediction of family change in the rest of the world as a consequence of globalization.

In sum, the demographic changes during the past four decades seem to provide some evidence for those who argue for the decline, the crisis and the breakdown of the family. The decrease of the extended family with the increase in nuclear families; the increase in unmarried lone mother families; the increased divorce rate and remarriage and families with step-parents and stepbrothers and stepsisters; the gradual replacement of marriage by consensual union, legalization of same-sex marriage and the decrease in the birth rate all provide strong support to arguments about the gradual eclipse of the traditional and nuclear family (Whitehead and Popenhoe 2003; Eurostat 2001). However, Popenoe (1988) considers the family system is not disintegrating but growing weaker, losing social power and social functions, and becoming less important in life which reflects a global trend in changes in the family. The modern form of family in which an institutionally legal lifelong sexually exclusive marriage between one man and one woman, with children, and where the male is the primary provider and ultimate authority, is no longer the mode in advanced western countries. Popenoe proposes that the new family system is post-nuclear. The classic nuclear family model of Talcott Parsons of the working father, the housekeeper mother, and the dependent children represents a minority of families in today's Western societies due to the increasing entry of the mother into the workforce. It can be noted that the Parsonian nuclear family represents only approximately 14.6 percent of families in the United Kingdom while in the United States it declined to 24 percent in 1990 (Bernardes 1997; Gottfried et al. 1999). Other studies claim that less than half of

children in the US live with both biological parents until age 19. Nearly one third are born to unmarried couples, of which the majority never live together, and another one third are born to married parents who divorce before the child reaches adulthood (McLanahan and Teitler 1999).

That said, there are other interpretations of family change such as offered by Aerts (1993) who points out that children continue to be born and raised by adults in a household. The increase in divorce rates is a normal consequence of changes in the socioeconomic role of women. Divorce can be viewed as the equal right and opportunity of women or men to leave an unhappy marriage which in the past was difficult given the social norm to maintain the integrity of the family that in turn, often led to pathological relations between the mother and father. Skolnick (1993) argues that rising divorce rates do not represent an escape from marriage. Conversely, it reflects the rising expectations for pursuing a more satisfying (next) marriage. Muncie and Sapsford (1995) claim that the late twentieth-century family is a strengthened version of its predecessors, and that the modern family offers opportunities for greater closeness and intimacy than was possible in pre-industrial societies. Parsons did not perceive changes from the extended family to the nuclear family system as reflecting the decline of the family, but as a positive change. Coontz (2000) points out that the Parsonian type of nuclear family was only a single and temporary stage in the family cycle of the generations after World War II, and family is not a dying institution but one that continues to transform. Although there are conflicting viewpoints about changes in family types in Western societies that conclude with whether the family is declining or whether these changes in family types reflect an adaptation to social and economic changes with some psychological costs, there are signs in many of these countries that people still endorse the notion of ‘family’. In a survey of the 15 EU

countries 95.7 percent believe that family is the most important thing in their lives (Georgas et al. 2006).

Young adults' perception on marriage, parenthood and family responsibilities in the Western world

Marriage and divorce

The survey by Holman and Li (1997) adds to our understanding of the multiple factors related to young adults' perceptions of their readiness for marriage. Perceptions of personal readiness for marriage depend largely on such contextual issues as socio-demographic characteristics and significant other support, and on the quality of couple interaction. Duncan (2003) found out in his study that respondents with greater risks reported equal or greater motivation to participate in marriage preparation, but they also had less optimism about marriage for themselves, which, in turn, negatively affected their motivation.

Levy et al. (1997) conducted a study in which family-of-origin variables were related to both men and women's perceptions of the conflict in marriage, as well as outsiders' ratings of their conflict resolution behaviors. Kissee et al. (2000) also examined the relationship between the young adult's perception of family emotional alliances and the young adult's intimacy development with consideration of gender differences and impact on the young adult's level of intimacy in their interpersonal relationships.

Riggio (2004) found out that divorce and conflict had significant independent effects on outcomes in young adulthood. Effects of conflict were uniformly negative for

quality of parent-child relationships, perceived social support from others, and anxiety in personal relationships. Mulder and Gunnoe (1999) in their study on College students' attitudes toward divorce found out that that gender differences existed for likely reasons for divorce. Parental divorce is said to affect the romantic relationships of young adults, especially with respect to their certainty about the relationship and perceptions of problems in it (Jacquet and Sura 2001). Moné et al. (2006) in their study found out that feelings of alienation are inversely related to the quality of parent-child relationships during childhood and young adulthood and can be found in intact as well as divorced families. Findings also indicate parental conflict is a better predictor of whether alienation occurs than parents' marital status.

Although the literature is inconsistent regarding the impact of parental divorce on young adults, some studies report that some negative attitudes may influence children's attitudes toward marriage and divorce when they grow up. For instance, Amato and Booth (1991), and Booth and Edwards (1990), found that those adults who came from divorced families exhibited lower levels of psychological well-being and marital quality. Other researchers found that young adults whose parents divorced hold more condoning attitudes toward divorce and hesitated more towards making marital commitment due to fear of repeating their parents' mistakes and getting divorced themselves (Jacquet and Sura 2001; Segrin et al. 2005).

Taylor et al. (2007) found that younger adults attach far less moral stigma than do their elders to out-of-wedlock births and cohabitation. Even though a decreasing percentage of the adult population is married, most unmarried adults say they want to marry. With marriage exerting less influence over how adults organize their lives and bear their children, cohabitation is filling some of the vacuum. Klein (2005) in her

study used the Marital Attitude Scale (see Braaten and Rosen 1998). She found that fear of intimacy and marital attitudes were related to parental marital status and gender, but not to parenting style congruence. Specifically, men revealed a greater fear of intimacy than women, while women endorsed more positive marital attitudes than men.

Other studies suggested that women are more likely than men to initiate divorce (Hetherington and Kelly 2002), and divorce attitudes of women are more likely than those of men to predict eventual divorce (Matthews et al. 1996). In fact, Larson et al. (1998) found no significant differences between males and females with regard to attitudes toward marriage. Jennings et al. (1991) investigated the effects of gender and family structure on adults' attitudes toward divorce and found that females showed more positive attitudes toward divorce than did males.

To sum up the above studies, we can suggest that the main factors leading to the changing perceptions of young people towards marriage and divorce are multiple including the experience of parental conflict and divorce, influence of family of origin, and some other socio-cultural factors in specific local contexts. In addition, factors related to young adults' perceptions of their readiness for marriage depend largely on such contextual issues as socio-demographic characteristics and significant other support, and on the quality of couple interaction.

Parenthood

Over the past several decades, fertility has declined almost everywhere in the world except in a few African countries. However, there are marked variations between

countries in terms of the pace of decline, while some low-fertility countries have been showing signs of stabilization. White (2003) examined the declining birth-rates in Australia, as well as in many other Western industrialized countries. The decline in birth-rates is explored in relation to young Australians' family formation aspirations. Aspirations were found to be linked to experience in the family of origin, perceptions of work and gender. Underlying young people's perceptions was the global value of individualism expressed through prioritized personal career and financial goals, and the need to establish a consolidated sense of self prior to partnering and parenting.

Motivations and expectations of parenthood were assessed in 505 female and male undergraduate students (O'Laughlin and Anderson 2001). Parents and those intending to have children agreed more strongly with intrinsic motivations and also endorsed more benefits for having children than did the unsure group. Those intending to have children estimated costs of parenthood to be significantly less than either parents or those unsure of having children. Women estimated the costs of parenthood to be higher than did male respondents. Results are discussed in the framework of violated expectations and the need for pre-pregnancy intervention programs.

Ram (2003) presents an overview of recent fertility decline and its effects on social change in both industrialized and industrializing countries. The focus is primarily on the levels and age patterns of fertility, which influence social change through three major mechanisms: reductions in population growth, modifications in age structure, and changes in family structure. Some future prospects are also discussed, especially in the view of the viability of immigration as a solution to population stability, ‘graying’ of the industrialized world, intergenerational support, and loneliness.

Taylor et al. (2007) found that children may be perceived as less central to marriage, but they are as important as ever to their parents. As a source of adult happiness and fulfillment, children occupy a pedestal matched only by spouses and situated well above that of jobs, career, friends, hobbies and other relatives. Plotnick (2007) found that adolescents with higher opportunity costs, as indicated by better grades and higher expectations for their schooling, expect and desire to marry and have children at older ages. The transition to parenthood has long been associated with a decline in marital quality and the strains and hardship of parenthood affect interactions between the new parents (Orbuch et al. 1996). Some longitudinal studies which followed newlywed couples over time have found that marital quality diminishes following the birth of a child (Helms 2001). Parenthood may have different effects depending on adults' positions in the life course. LaRossa et al. (2005) noted that the context of parenting and age of individuals shapes the socio-emotional experience of parenting. Adults becoming parents at a younger age may be disadvantaged in terms of financial stability, emotional maturity, and social support. Older parents may have more resources that can support the rearing of younger children (Umberson and Needham 2005).

To conclude, the decline in the fertility rate suggests that young people in a time of global transition may have changed compared to the way earlier generations placed a value on parenthood. Key factors here are linked to their experiences in the family of origin, perceptions of work and gender, individualism expressed through prioritized personal career and financial goals, and the need to establish a consolidated sense of self prior to partnering and parenting. Nevertheless, parenthood remains an essential element in the lives of most people, although increasing proportions of them desire, and are having, a smaller number of children.

Family responsibility

Recent increases in separated, divorced, and single-parent families have required young adults to assume more responsibility in their families, such as household chores (Garbarino 1986). Adolescents in such families may experience greater demands to make mature decisions (Amato 1987; Dornbusch et al. 1985) and more frequently develop companionate and sympathetic relationships with their custodial parents than do adolescents from two-parent families (see Polit 1984; Weis 1979). For the family, adolescents' responsibility-taking may contribute to increased intimacy with parents. Research suggests that adolescents have closer relationships with their parents than was portrayed in earlier generations (see Offer et al. 1990; Smollar and Youniss 1989). In turn, closer relationships lead to more positive social and emotional development (Grotevant and Cooper 1985; 1986; Hauser et al. 1984). Presumably, closeness to parents relates to family responsibility-taking, although little is known about this relationship and how adolescents view family responsibility-taking. In one study, adolescents' experiences of control, responsibility-taking, and life satisfaction were found to be strongly related, and they viewed responsibility-taking positively (Ortman 1988). By contrast, it has been noted that when youth take on family obligations in distressed families there are negative ramifications, and scales that seek to measure parenting capacities typically make reference issues around family assistance and a sense of burden (see Godsall et al. 2004).

It is relevant to note that in Asian societies, unlike the situation in most Western societies, both the elderly and young children have long relied exclusively on their families to meet their care needs. Many Asian societies do not have a universal

welfare system or other provident fund to cater for the financial needs of the elderly. As such, unlike the West, there is an expectation on family members to meet the dependency needs of the elderly (Chiu and Wong 2009)

Summary

In sum, globalization is changing the traditional models of family and family interaction. Some societies retain old patterns, struggling to maintain some semblance of the traditional roles of parents, of mothering and fathering, relationships to elders, and sibling relational patterns. There are also critics of traditional family values, particularly in the western world that seek far reaching change in the family system. It has been argued that in modernity, society was optimistic about the role that science, medicine and the state could play in the improvement of family life and in sexual and reproductive behaviour. By contrast, in late modernity, many have become increasingly sceptical about the intrusion of these discourses into the domestic sphere seeing and asserting instead a more personal freedom unconstrained by state or contested conventional mores.

The discourse of late modernity is very much about the rise of diversity, choice and individualisation. What this means in terms of our understanding of changes to the family is that we can no longer point to a single, all-encompassing family type or structure and say for sure that this type of family is the most common or is better than another. Since the social sciences are finding it difficult both to understand the present realities of family life and to foretell the future of the family, this, implicitly, can be seen as pointing to a new era in social history, that is, a postmodern era where uncertainty reigns. After examining the contemporary family theories and sociological

perspectives on family in the western world and the impact of global culture on individuals and families in late modernity, the discussion moves next to a more contextualized and particular exploration – the situation of Hong Kong in relation to these debates.

Chapter 4: Globalization, Postmodernity and Family Change – the Hong Kong Context

Introduction

Hong Kong is situated at the southeastern tip of the Chinese mainland. Hong Kong, spanning an area of 1,100km, began as a fishing village and became a British colony in 1841 after the Opium War. After 1949, there was a great influx of immigrants from Mainland China after the communist party took power. In 1997, Hong Kong was reunited with China as a Special Administrative Region under the principle of 'one-country-two-systems'. Under this principle, Hong Kong was promised that its pre-existing capitalistic and political system could be continued for fifty years. In this chapter, we focus on the family structure and its roles and functions in this unique region of the world. The chapter then presents selected demographic material about the strengths and weaknesses of the family in Hong Kong. Next, the chapter turns to the question of family change and the Hong Kong youth population, with particular reference to their socio-economic profile, life situation and problems encountered. With the help of recent research the chapter next examines young adults' values and attitudes towards family building. Finally, the chapter summarizes the key messages from the literature review in order to conclude with an outline of the study aims, objectives, working hypotheses and key concepts that informed the research design.

Changing Hong Kong families

Family structure, roles and functions in Hong Kong

The Hong Kong family structure is patrilineal in terms of descent. Generally, sons carry on the family line. In a contemporary Chinese family, fathers typically assume normative authority while mothers take care of children and household chores. Cost of living is high as is housing and it is difficult for young adults to buy their own homes. After marriage, some couples choose to live with the husband's family in order to save money. It is relevant to note that there can be a sense of stigma for husbands who reside with a wife's family of origin because it is assumed that the husband should shoulder the costs of bringing up a family instead of dependence on the wife's kin. In general, couples prefer to live on their own if affordable. Hong Kong is geographically small and its transportation is efficient, frequent and convenient. Many working couples choose to live near their parents in order that they can provide care for grand-children.

There has been a modest amount of research into the role and values of the Hong Kong Chinese family. Moore (1974) noted that the Chinese place a strong emphasis on: filial piety, harmony between people and nature, people as social beings, and a preference for tolerance. Hsu (1971) noted that the Chinese place an overriding importance on familial and social rather then individual homeostasis. The family is seen as a basic resource of support and as the roots of an individual's orientation and life goals. Research has emphasized the importance for families of harmony and solidarity, lineage prolongation and expansion, family prosperity, and family sentiments. It is noted that the Chinese demand subordination of personal goals, interests, and welfare for the interests of the family. Its pattern of socialization has been regarded as a form of collectivism (Triandis 1987).

Changing demographic and family structure

In past decades Hong Kong's economic development was coupled by population growth; now there is a downward trend. By mid 2006, Hong Kong's population reached 6.99 million and the population growth rate was 0.8. In recent years, population growth has been attributed to an increase in migration rather than natural growth. As a result of low fertility, the average household size was only 3.0 persons in 2006, declining from 3.7 persons in 1986. The total fertility rate per woman was 0.966 in 2005, as compared with 3 in the 1970s. The proportion of the population aged between 0 and 14 declined from 18% in 1999 to 15% in 2004, and further to 14% in 2009. In 1996, some 61.4 % of the total households had no children under 15, as compared with 53.7% in 1986, while 34.7% of the households had only one to two children aged below 15. Meanwhile, with the increase of life expectancy at birth, the proportion of the elderly people aged 65 and over has increased from 6.6% in 1981 to 10.7% in 1999, and will further increase to 11.6% in 2009 and 19.7% in 2029 (Census and Statistics Department 2006a). As a result, it is expected that young family members are expected to shoulder more responsibility of caring for their elderly members.

Family responsibility, interdependency of family members and filial piety have long been regarded as key values (Feldman and Rosenthal 1991). Nuclear and small-size families are the contemporary norm. With smaller family size, children in the family can be more easily indulged. Coupled with smaller family size, the burden of family obligations and taking care of elderly parents becomes heavier as fewer family members can share this out. With the gradual overshadowing of the extended family by the nuclear family, important relations are increasingly built with individuals

outside the small primary group (Lau 1981; Wu and Tseng 1985). Furthermore, in a society where productivity and achievement are emphasized, respect for the elders appears to have weakened considerably (Goodwin and Tang 1996).

The focus on socially desirable and culturally approved behaviors and social harmony has gone through much change (King and Bond 1985; Wu and Tseng 1985). Under the influence of globalization and after the political transfer of 1997, traditional Chinese values relating to family obligations, subjugation of individual needs to the greater social order and filial piety, have become weaker. After 1997, there has been an increasing demand for democracy, at the same time the gap between the rich and the poor is becoming wider. Also, after the political changes in 1997, the family structure in Hong Kong also changed as families were disrupted when children were sent abroad to study, or whole families emigrated leaving the elderly behind, or spouses and children were sent aboard to meet host country residency requirement while husbands remained in Hong Kong to earn money. Much of this has been reversed as the Hong Kong people developed more trust in the new arrangements and a better sense of integration with Mainland China, notably so given the strong support from the Motherland during crisis periods such as the SARS outbreak in 2003 and the global financial turbulence later that decade (Georgas et al. 2006).

In Hong Kong, with the increase of people working across the border, a new type of ‘split family’ has occurred as more Hong Kong people are getting married with people in Mainland China. This is especially the case as many Hong Kong men cannot find a spouse locally due to the imbalance of male to female population. Under the influence of globalization Hong Kong is also experiencing family changes just like most Western and East Asian countries. With the rise of feminism and equal status of

women in the society, family and marriage are weakening and there is a decreasing fertility rate. The birth rate in Hong Kong dropped from 86,751 in 1981 to 68,281 in 1991, and further reached its lowest at 46,965 in 2003. The total fertility rate is quite low having dropped from 1.933 in 1981 to 0.901 in 2003 and slightly rose to 0.984 in 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2007a).

Delayed marriage is also one of the major demographic changes in Hong Kong society. The median age of women marrying for the first time was 28.2 in 2006 while men traditionally married at older ages at 31.2 in 2006. Another important trend is the increasing phenomenon of singletons amongst women. Since 1994 and continuing beyond 1997, there is a clear trend towards late marriages and increasing numbers of single males and females within the prime marriageable age bands. Women who were never married in the age group 40-44 reached 16% in 2006, a sharp increase from 3% in 1981 (Census and Statistics Department 2007b). In short, the Hong Kong family is moving towards being smaller in size and more nuclear in form. The traditional Chinese family values have remained, although these are likely to have been affected by such changes as emigration, repatriation, fewer children, changing economy, and western influences. Hong Kong is experiencing socio-demographic challenges similar to those in Japan and South Korea, and to a lesser extent, Taiwan and China (Chiu and Wong 2009).

Weakening family solidarity

Weakening family solidarity is marked by the declining number of registered marriages, delay in marriages and the rising number of divorces. Marriages decreased from 50,756 in 1981 to 47,168 in 1990, and to only 43,000 in 2005. The median age

at first marriage in 2005 was 31 for male and 28 for female, as compared with 27 and 23.9 respectively in 1981. The number of divorce decrees granted in 1998 (13,129) was six times that of 1981 (2,060). The total number of divorces to the total number of marriages soared from 4.7% in 1981 to 16% in 1991, and further to 42.3% in 1998. Remarriage rate has increased seven times from 1978 to 1999 (Census and Statistics Department 2007b). Surveys on public attitudes showed that Hong Kong people are becoming more liberal towards divorce, cohabitation, pre-marital sex and being single (see Lee 1990; Ming Pao 2000). Even though we can still claim that by Western standards marriages and families are still relatively intact, there are signs that conventional family stability is deteriorating. This is not to say that new family forms arising through cohabitation or divorce are not themselves without stability.

Youth population in Hong Kong

Demographic and socioeconomic profile of young people in Hong Kong

Data collected from the Census and Statistics Department informs the following extended profile of young people in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department 2010a). This shows that the young generation accounted for 20.24% of the entire Hong Kong population in 2009. The educational attainment of this cohort was higher than older generations; however, their median income was lower. Statistics also show that youth aged 15-19 are increasingly working in the fields of wholesale, retail, import/export trading, restaurants, and hotels since 2001 (Yip et al., 2011). In studies on youth, different classifications are sometimes adopted for different age groups depending on the subject matter concerned. For instance, persons aged 15 to 24 or 12 to 24 may be respectively defined as youths for different objectives. In Hong Kong,

persons aged 15 to 24 have generally been taken as the target population in planning services for youths (Home Affairs Department, undated). This age range is also adopted by the United Nations (2010). In this study, youths or young people (these are used interchangeably) refer to the population aged 15 to 24 for both sexes. Details of the youth population are as follows:

-- *Size and structure*

The youth population increased by 541,167 or at an average annual growth rate of 2.0% over the past 45 years (i.e. from 1961 to 2006). There were 909,005 young people aged 15-24 in Hong Kong in 2006. In terms of the proportion of youth in the total population, its percentage rose from 11.8% in 1961 to a peak of 23.0% in 1981, and then dropped continuously over the past 25 years to 13.2% in 2006. Among those youths in 2006, 48.3% were aged 15 – 19 and 51.7% aged 20 – 24. The corresponding proportions were 48.0% and 52.0% in 1996; and 48.9% and 51.1% in 2001. The sex composition of the youth population can be measured by the sex ratio, which is defined as the number of male youths per 1000 female young people. In 1996, male youths outnumbered female youths; however, the situation reversed in 2001 and 2006 with slightly more female youths than male youths (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, p. 13). As we shall see in later chapters, as the number of female youths was greater than that of male youths, quite a number of female respondents were worried about finding a partner.

-- *Marital status*

Youths are less likely to be married than in the past, reflecting trends towards

marriage at later ages and towards remaining single. The proportion of youth who never married rose from 94.0% in 1996 to 97.1% in 2006, while the proportion of youths who were now married dropped from 5.8% to 2.8%. Among the youth population in 2006, 97.1% were never married; the remaining proportions of now married (2.8%), widowed (less than 0.05%), divorced (0.1%) and separated (less than 0.05%) were very low. Compared with the whole population aged 15 and over, there were marked differences in the distribution in respect of marital status. This was due to the fact that most people got married at older ages. In fact, the median ages at first marriage for men and women in 2006 were 31.2 years and 28.2 years respectively which were outside the age range of youths (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, p. 15). In the individual interviews reported in later chapters, many young adults stated that they would like to develop their career and settle down first before considering marriage.

-- *Place of birth and duration of residence in Hong Kong*

As a result of the influx of young One-way Permit holders from the mainland and foreign domestic helpers over the past ten years, there was an increase in the number of youths born outside Hong Kong. The percentage rose from 20.8% in 1996, to 21.2% in 2001 and further to 24.9% in 2006. In 2006, 91.7% of the youth population has resided in Hong Kong for seven years or more. The percentage for 1996 and 2001 were at 92.1% and 89.6% respectively. Of the youth population in 2006, 75.1% of them were born in Hong Kong, 19.7% in China (other than Hong Kong), 2.4% in Indonesia and 0.8% in Philippines. About 32% of the youths born overseas had been in Hong Kong for less than seven years, including 8.1% who had lived here for less than one year. The ethnic composition of the youth population is similar to that of the

whole population in 2006. 95.4% of youths were Chinese. This was higher than the corresponding percentage of 94.6% in 2001. The largest non-Chinese ethnic groups were Indonesians and Filipinos, constituting 2.4% and 0.8% of the youth population respectively (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, pp. 17-22).

-- *Schooling*

School attendance is common among the youth population, reflecting the fact that instead of seeking employment in the labour market, more young people continue their higher education as a result of the greater educational opportunities available in post-secondary institutions. The school attendance rate for the age group 17 – 18 increased from 63.9% in 1996 to 82.8% in 2006, and rose too for the age group 19 – 24, from 21.0% to 37.3% (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, p. 25).

-- *Education attainment*

The greater opportunities for education available to the youth population improved markedly their level of educational attainment. The proportion of youths with no schooling or only pre-primary education was less than 0.3% throughout 1996 to 2006, whereas those with secondary and higher education increased from 97.5% in 1996 to 98.8% in 2006. The proportion of the population aged 15 and over with secondary and higher education was relatively lower, at 67.9% in 1996 and 74.6% in 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, p. 26).

-- *Post-secondary education*

Owing to the increased post-secondary education opportunities in the past ten years, the youth population with post-secondary education had increased substantially both in number and in their share of the population. In 1996, 161,169 youths (or 18.5% of the youth population) had attended post-secondary education, whereas by 2006 the number reached 278,077 (or 30.6% of the youth population). The increase for youths was in line with the whole population aged 15 and over - 15.2% in 1996 and 23.0% in 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, pp. 26-27).

-- *Labour force*

During the past ten years, youth in the labour force decreased by 29,139 (6.3%) from 462,885 in 1996 to 433,746 in 2006. In 2006, the number of male young people in the labour force was 33,658 (or 13.9%) less than that in 1996. By contrast , there was an increase of 4,519 (or 2.0%) in the number of female youths over the period. (We look at their respective positions in the labour market later). Over the past ten years, the labour force participation rate of youths declined steadily from 53.2% in 1996 to 47.7% in 2006. This, to some extent, is attributed to the later entry of young people into the labour market as a result of their increasing educational opportunities. Among the working youth in 2006, 97.1% of them were employees (as compared with 89.2% of employees in the whole working population). Similar observations were noted in 1996 and 2001. In 2006, a large proportion of the working youth were engaged as ‘Service workers and shop sales workers’ (29.4%) and ‘Clerks’ (27.9%). The proportion of youths in these occupations was higher as compared to the total working population. In 2006, the ‘Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels’ sector employed 35.5% of the working youths, followed by ‘Community, social and personal services’ (28.4%) and ‘Financing, insurance, real estate and

business services' (15.0%). The distribution of working youths by industry was quite similar to that for the whole working population. The median monthly income from main employment of the working youths in 2006 was HK$6,500, about 65% of the median (HK$10,000) of the whole working population. The relatively lower median income of these youths compared to the total working population may be due to the occupations and industries they were engaged in, their educational attainment and their limited working experience (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, pp. 31-38).

-- *Living arrangement and housing*

The household sizes of those domestic households with youths were relatively larger. The average household size with youth was 3.9, which was higher than that of 3.0 for all domestic households in Hong Kong by 31.4%. There have been slight changes in the living arrangements of youth in the past ten years. The largest proportion was living with their parent(s), and the proportion was increasing steadily. The living arrangement of young people is also highly associated with their marital status. While over 92% of the never married youth lived with their parent(s) only, most (52.0%) of the now married youth lived with their spouse and/or child(ren) (but not with parent(s)). Only around 9% of the now married young people lived with their parents together with their spouse and/or child(ren), indicating that married young people tended to live apart from their parents after marriage to form their own families (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, pp. 41-45).

Participation in the labour force is another determining factor in the living arrangement of youth. Working youths were more likely to live apart from their

parent(s) than those non-working. While 83.4% of working young people lived with their parent(s) only, the proportion for non-working youth was much higher at 95.7% (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, p. 46).

-- *Geographical characteristics*

In 2006, some 57% of young people resided in the New Territories (i.e., that part of the Special Administrative Region beyond Hong Kong Island and near mainland china), while 26.9% and 15.8% lived in Kowloon and on Hong Kong Island respectively. The corresponding proportions of the whole population living in the New Territories, in Kowloon and on Hong Kong Island were respectively 52.1%, 29.4% and 18.5% (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, p. 49).

Life situation and problems encountered by today's Hong Kong young adults

-- *Economic dependence on family*

There is a trend of prolonged 'adolescence' as Hong Kong's youth become more financially dependent. According to a recent telephone survey (Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, 2006a), continued education, low-income employment, cultural factors, economic factors and housing factors all contributed to young people's prolonged financial dependency on families. This can be revealed by statistics on the proportion of youths living with parent(s). The proportion of youths living with parent(s) rose from 86.3% in 1996 to 90.4% in 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2006b, p. 42).

-- *Trends of seeking a career on the mainland China*

According to various surveys conducted by the Census and Statistics Department of Hong Kong over the past decade, the number of Hong Kong residents working on the Mainland has been on the increase. The figures show a two-fold rise, from 52,000 people in 1988 to around 157,000 in 1998. A survey (Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, 2001b), successfully interviewed 1,023 young people aged from 18 to 39 by phone. The findings show that young people with a higher level of education working on the Mainland is on the rise as a result of China's entry into the World Trade Organization. With the increasing globalization of the world economy, the mobility of workforce resources becomes a key factor. Creating international awareness among youth and enabling them to become multi-talent mobile workers so as to adapt to the changing work environment is a matter of concern to government.

-- *Young adults' values on family building*

A study on 'Indicators of Youth Values' (Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, 2001c) suggests that the attitude of most youth towards sex was relatively liberal compared to previous generations; some 35% to 45% of respondents considered pre-marital sexual relations to be wrong, with about half of the respondents finding abortions to be acceptable, and 15% to 20% believing that having more than one sexual partner at a time was acceptable. Nevertheless, the respondents still placed strong value on families and claimed that families were important, having siblings was good and believed that they would get married and have children of their own. They also placed great emphasis on the traditional value of avoiding divorce and providing financial support for their parents.

Another study on Hong Kong's post-1980s generation (Wu 2010) indicates that more young people delay marriage and choose to live with their parents even after marriage because of uncertainties over work. A study on the contemporary young generation in Hong Kong (Yip, et al. 2011) indicates that young people still hold fairly strong traditional family values and a high percentage intend to get married. In addition, data reveals that young people have strong housing aspirations, and living close to their family is a key concern for them. Later chapters will reveal similar findings from this doctoral study.

In a study on family attitudes and values in Hong Kong, Chow and Lum (2008), found that family values and attitudes in Hong Kong have become more heterogeneous over the last three decades. While the general public remained relatively traditional, they were becoming more receptive, both for themselves and for others, towards divorce, remarriage, cohabitation, pre-marital sex, childlessness, and a less traditional gender role. As will be seen in later chapters, this study too found that a majority of young people indicated that it was best to get married and have children but they were also more receptive, both for themselves and for others, towards cohabitation and pre-marital sex. Regarding youth's response to family responsibility, it is relevant to note that there may be a discrepancy between the attitudinal expression and behavioral manifestation of filial piety (see Lieber et al. 2004). Although most Chinese wish to meet the traditional standards of filial piety, there are a number of practical constraints that prevent people from aligning the former with the latter. Young adults may have to struggle for their careers and they have no time to deliver care. Distance is another factor if young adults choose to live apart from their parents instead of co-reside.

To conclude this section, in the past decade or so in Hong Kong, there have been very few studies on family-youth related topics, such as youth perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility, or on family life course development issues in a context of global and local value influence in late modernity. Indeed, such studies as do exist seldom explore the role of global values and culture on today's young adults in specific regard to family building. Hence, this study addresses some novel and challenging issues in the way today's Hong Kong young people manage the transitions of the family life cycle in a global world of late modernity. It is hoped therefore that the study may be of relevance to social work educators, service providers, policy makers and to interested parties more generally who together can jointly formulate appropriate youth and family policies and interventions to assist the transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

Operational definitions and theoretical framework for the study

Research aim, objectives and working hypotheses

We now outline the key sources that provided conceptual guidance and operational definitions that informed the study design, which in turn is set out fully in chapter 5 on methods and methodology. The research aimed to find out the Chinese Hong Kong young adults' perceptions on 'Marriage', 'Parenthood', and 'Family Responsibility' under the influence of global values in late modernity, and its impact on the family life cycle in light of these changes. Key objectives were formulated to achieve this aim. Firstly, the research sought to examine the role of global and cultural values in late modernity on Hong Kong young adults' perceptions on marriage, parenthood, and

family responsibility. Secondly, it explores the impact of the above changes on the functions and the development of the family life cycle in local Chinese Hong Kong society. Then it attempts to identify possible needs, problems, threats and opportunities that young adults might encounter in light of these changes in the life course transition. Finally, the research also explores the possible solutions and measures, both at policy and service level, in tackling problems of young adults in their life course transition in specific regard to family building in Hong Kong.

Motivating the study: conceptual sources and their location in the research design

The next chapter deals in detail with methods and methodology. Here, briefly summarized are the key conceptual and theoretical drivers for the research design stemming from the discussion so far.

In this study, three research methods (focus groups, survey and individual interviews) were used to examine the research topics outlined above and to achieve the research aims and objectives. The topics explored by these methods were informed by the literature reviews in chapters 2, 3 and 4. In essence, these chapters address the possible effects of global culture and values on young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood, family responsibility, and to the family life cycle. For ease of reference this material is summarised in Appendix 3. In the first stage, structured focus groups were deployed to collect a small proportion (a total of 40 participants) of young people's views on global values and culture, marriage, parenthood and family obligation. It was intended that the preliminary results of the focus groups would inform the survey stage in regard to the formulation of a self-administered questionnaire for a bigger youth population. In this second stage of the research, a

cross-sectional survey was conducted to collect the views of a bigger youth population. The survey expanded the scope of initial enquiry, beyond global values by addressing the impact of local Chinese cultural values on young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family obligation. Working hypotheses were formulated that included three aspects. First, that holding Chinese cultural value was a predictive factor of young people's perceptions of family building. This assumed that (a) the higher the Chinese cultural value the young adults scored, the more positive attitude towards marriage they would have; (b) the higher the Chinese cultural value the young adults scored, the more positive attitude towards parenthood they would have; (c) the higher the Chinese cultural value the young adults scored, the more commitment they would have in family responsibility. Secondly, it was hypothesized that demographic variables such as age, gender and educational attainment might have a significant relationship with young people's perception of Chinese cultural values, marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. The third hypothesis was that the young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility might be mutually affected or reciprocally influenced by each other.

Later chapters will reveal that based on the focus groups, survey and a small number of follow-up interviews, it was found that some young people were more likely influenced by global values of an individualistic life style and preferred to pursue self-development or self-actualization rather than to commit themselves to getting married or child-bearing. Also, career development interests seemed to play a vital role before young adults started a new family of their own. Hence, at the last stage of the study, qualitative individual interviews were used to explore in depth themes arising from the survey that included areas such as self-development and career plans and their relation to transitions in family life cycle development. This part of the

research was also informed by the literature on the family eco-systemic framework in order to examine positive influences and constraints at different eco-systemic levels which might affect the life transition of young people to adulthood.

Global value and Chinese cultural value

For the second stage of the study based on the results of the focus groups, a cross-sectional survey of some 1,200 young adults were sampled. They were asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire namely the Chinese Value Survey (CVS) which exists in Eastern culture involving more oriental life values and thinking. CVS was developed by Bond and co-workers (see below) known collectively as the 'Chinese Culture Connection', in response to a perceived need to measure and evaluate cultural values within the setting of a Chinese social value system that is derived from the Confucian ethos. Value perceptions from those who were ethnically Chinese which were obtained by Bond and his colleagues seemed very different from those obtained in previous studies. This was especially evident in Chinese students' responses contained in Western value studies by Rokeach (1973) and subsequently Schwartz (1992; 1994a,b), when compared to those alternative instruments measuring Eastern life values used by Bond and others (Bond 1983; Bond 1991; Bond and Cheung 1983; Bond et al. 1982; Bond and Forgas 1984; Bond et al. 1992; Bond and Pang 1991; Chan 1988; Feast and Churchman 1997; Leung and Bond 1989; Slay 1999a, 1999b). Interpretations of student responses appeared to lack validity when related to Western values. Consequently, Bond and his colleagues set about designing a questionnaire that was non-Western in nature. The CVS is the result. It contains a decidedly Chinese cultural bias not previously assessed in other Western value surveys.

The values measured by Bond and his colleagues remain universal in form, but they also include some values which are uniquely Confucian (see also Hofstede 1991). Examples are respect for tradition, humility, filial piety, and protecting one's face. This is not to say such values do not exist in Western culture, but rather their implied importance is not as great as in Eastern culture. In Western culture the emphasis is for a sense of personal fulfillment and truth in life values, people from Eastern cultures search for virtue which comes from the teachings central to an understanding of Confucian teachings (Hofstede 1991). The Confucian ethos has tended towards the formation of a dedicated and motivated as well as educated population which manifests a responsible and enhanced sense of commitment to its ideals and institutions as well as to the identity and moral fibre of its organisations with the resultant establishment of desirable social and economic outcomes (Chang et al.1997; Chen et al. 1997; Chinese Culture Connection 1987; Chiu 1989 and Ralston et al.1992). The CVS has been instrumental in enabling the validity of these constructs to be tested and confirmed. Previously these value constructs lay obscured beneath Western perceptions of their relative lack of importance in studies of culture (Bond and King 1985).

This study therefore considered life values empirically designated as oriental or Chinese. The uniqueness of these values emerges as a separate but integral system. This is not to insist that the Chinese value system cannot co-exist compatibly with a Western way of thinking but it is important not to view it as somehow subsumed in that way of thinking. Indeed, both Western and Eastern values can co-exist without conflict. Nonetheless, as the Chinese value system has been previously invisible using Western instruments of value measurement, greater analytic consideration and thought

needs to be given to its relevance (see Bond 1999), as in this doctoral study of Chinese young people in Hong Kong. Having outlined key aspects of the conceptual underpinnings of the study's approach to culture and values we now turn to the family and matters of the life-cycle, a notion that also informs the study design and the interpretation of findings.

Family life cycle

The family life cycle is the natural context within which to frame individual identity and development and to account for the effects of the social system. From a family life cycle perspective, symptoms and dysfunction are examined within a systemic context and in relation to what the culture considers to be 'normal' functioning over time. Families comprise people who have a shared history and a shared future. They encompass the entire emotional system of at least three or more generations held together by blood, legal, and/or historical ties. However, boundaries shift, psychological distance amongst members, changes, and roles within and between subsystems are constantly redefined (Norris and Tindale 1994). In essence, relationships with parents, siblings, and other family members go through transitions as they move along the life cycle and it is this notion of the life cycle development and transition as conceptualised by Carter and McGoldrick (1999) that has informed the study design and which has been captured in tabular form in Appendix 2.

Over the past 20 years, many European countries have created more openings for higher education for their young people. Coupled with an unstable employment market, changes in social and housing policies, as well as shifting attitudes towards marriage and relationships, it appears that young people, now more than ever, remain

economically dependent on their families for a longer period of time. Veevers et al. (1996) examined a number of aspects of norms regarding the appropriate timing of home-leaving. They include the degree of overall consensus regarding home-leaving age norms; variations by generation and by family type; perceptions regarding social approval and disapproval of young adults living at home. Such variables helped inform the analysis of this study.

Much of the criticism of life cycle theory addresses the limited focus of theoretical and empirical attention to the developmental stages of only one family form, the nuclear family. There are of course vast numbers of families whose life cycle varies in significant ways from the unitary and normative notion of the small nuclear unit. Individuals of different cultures and socio-economic groups go through life cycle stages at very different ages. A growing number of adults are choosing not to marry or, like the poor, find it almost impossible to afford to marry and buy a home. A growing number of women are delaying child bearing or are choosing to remain childless. The prevalence of divorce and remarriage is requiring a large proportion of many societies to manage additional and repeated life cycle stages and sometimes a complete restructuring of their families. There has been in some advanced societies a dramatic increase in the percentage of permanent single-parent households created by divorce or single-parent adoption.

Although the adoption of Carter and McGoldrick's Family Life Cycle Model in this research might not include all the possible variations across contemporary families, it has been chosen because it is more likely to reflect the current development of families in advanced economies such as Hong Kong and its flexible ordering of different stages can provide a framework for comparison between the more traditional

and more contemporary families in late modernity. Carter and McGoldrick's family life cycle includes six stages of development: The first stage is 'leaving home: single young adults'. Here, the main theme is to accept emotional and financial responsibility for self. The changes in family status required to proceed developmentally involves differentiation of self in relation to family of origin, development of intimate peer relationships, establishment of self in respect to work and financial independence. The second stage is 'the joining of families through marriage: the new couple'. The main theme is that the young couple commit to a new family system. The changes in family status required to proceed developmentally involves formation of a marital system, and realignment of relationships with extended families and friends to include spouses. The third stage is 'families with children'. The main theme is to accept new members into the system. The changes in family status required to proceed developmentally involves adjusting the marital system to make space for children, joining in child rearing, financial and household tasks, and realignment of relationships with extended family to include parenting and grand-parenting roles. The fourth stage is 'families with adolescents'. The main theme is to increase flexibility of family boundaries to permit children's independence and grandparents' frailties. The changes in family status required to proceed developmentally involves shifting of parent/child relationships to permit adolescents to move into and out of the system, refocus on midlife marital and career issues, and beginning a shift toward caring for the older generation. The fifth stage is 'launching children and moving on'. The main theme is accepting a multitude of exits from and entries into the family system. The changes in family status required to proceed developmentally involves renegotiation of the marital system as a dyad, development of adult-to-adult relationships between grown children and their parents, realignment of relationships to include in-laws and grandchildren, and dealing with disabilities and

death of parents (grandparents). The last stage is ‘families in later life’. The main theme is to accept the shifting generational roles. The changes in family status required to proceed developmentally involves maintaining own and/or couple functioning and interests in the face of physiological decline: exploration of new familial and social role options, support for more central role of middle generation, making room in the system for the wisdom and experience of the elderly, supporting the older generation without over-functioning for them, and dealing with the loss of spouse, siblings, and other peers and preparation for death.

Thus, this study will focus on how young people, when they enter a life-course transition especially for the first three stages, fulfill these developmental tasks in a family life cycle and the possible constraints they may encounter at different eco-systemic levels. Also examined will be the roles of global and local values in their life transition to adulthood especially in family building and taking family responsibility. Overall, a key theme will be the ways in which Hong Kong young people in late modernity perceive their lives within a risk society with uncertainties and where institutions and traditional values lose their influence and are replaced increasingly by reflexive biographies and individualistic lifestyles. Next we turn to the matter of getting married and becoming parents and we consider Hong Kong and other relevant research

Marriage and parenthood

According to Giddens (2006), marriage is a socially acknowledged and approved sexual union between two adult individuals. The marriage bond also connects together a wider range of kin. Parents, brothers, sisters and other blood relatives become

relatives of a partner through marriage. Marriage is thus a personal relationship and an institution, primarily such that any children resulting from the union are understood by society to be emotionally, morally, practically and legally affiliated with both the parents. In this study, the work of Gormly et al. (1987), Michaels (1988) and Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2000, 2005) on attitudes to marriage and other intimate unions helped inform the focus group interviews. For example, young adults were invited to give their opinions on marriage in different dimensions, such as making a decision to get married or not; the ideal age for getting married; preference or not to live with the older generation after marriage. Other lifestyle themes and choices were also pursued such as cohabitation, trial marriage, same-sex marriage, extra-marital affairs and pre-marital sex.

On parenthood, Ruddick (1999) points out three broad concepts: namely (a) parents tend or care for their children (b) parents raise their children and (c) parents make and maintain a family. Caring for children involves various activities such as attending to them, feeding them and protecting them. Sooner or later, most parents come to form and guide their parental activities by ideas of what they want their children to become in adulthood. But for many people parental thoughts have a wider, longer family-focus on the family. Some children are conceived in order to start or enlarge a family to satisfy parents' desires for grandchildren. In this research parenthood is defined as willing to be parents and taking up parents' roles and duties. Young adults in the focus groups were invited to discuss parenthood in relation to topics such as their choice to have or not to have children, ideal age to have children, number of children they want, willing to be an unwed mother or not, and under which social and economic conditions they would decide to have children. Such themes were informed by the insights and definitions of Gormly et al. (1987); Michaels (1988) and the Hong

Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2000, 2005).

For the cross-sectional survey, the research utilized a parenting questionnaire consisting of four parts: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for parenthood; costs and benefits of parenthood for young adults. A Likert-scale of 14 items addressed parenting motivations, and Likert-scale of 10 items used statements describing costs and benefits of having children. All Likert-scale items requested that the respondents rate their responses on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A score of three was labeled "neutral," indicating that the respondent did not particularly agree or disagree with the statement. For both the motivations and cost/benefit section of the questionnaire, separate directions were provided for respondents who were parents versus non-parents. Since the majority of questions were worded for non-parents, the parent directions requested that they respond "as if you are making the decision to become a parent for the first time but with the benefit of knowledge from your experience as a parent." Questions in the motivations section were derived from an open-ended questionnaire developed by Gormly et al. (l987) and based on Hoffman and Hoffman's (l973) measure of value of children to parents. Items in the costs and benefits section were derived from Michaels (l988) as well as Hoffman (l975). In addition, some closed-ended supplementary questions related to parenthood were added in the third part of the instrument.

Family responsibility

Family responsibility in this research refers to one who fulfills his/her role to care and provide support for parents. Filial piety is defined in accordance with the teaching of Confucius in that children should treat their parents with reverence and obedience.

According to Chow (2001), the practice of filial piety is divided into three levels. The first level includes providing parents with the necessary materials for the satisfaction of their physical needs and comforts, including attending to them when they are ill. The second level includes paying attention to parents' wishes and obeying their preferences. The third level includes behaving in such a way as to make parents happy and to bring them honor and the respect of the community. In this doctoral study, young adults were asked in the focus groups about their family responsibility to their old parents in three dimensions: first, their preference to live with their parents or parent in-law; second, their plan to provide financial support to their parents or not; and lastly the time and frequency of contacts with their parents. These questions related to family responsibility were informed (as we shall describe in the next chapter) in part by interview and survey materials used in the report on Canadian Attitudes on the Family (Wilson 2002).

For the survey, the concept of family responsibility was sought via a measure of adolescents' attitudes toward family obligation developed by Fuligni and Tseng (2008). The measure is consist of three subscales that are intended to tap three distinct, yet overlapping aspects of young adults' sense of obligation to support, assist, and respect the authority of the family. The first is termed 'current assistance' and measures young adults' beliefs about how often they should help and spend time with the family on a daily basis. The goal of this subscale is to assess attitudes towards the types of activities in which young adults would engage in order to help and be with family members on a daily basis. In addition to providing daily assistance, the idea that young adults should respect the authority of the family and make sacrifices for them was one that emerged from the literature on familism and filial piety (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995; Zhou and Bankston 1998)

and from the focus group discussions. Therefore, it was important to develop this subscale in such a way as to capture a more general sense of obligation that goes beyond the discrete tasks of daily life. Hence, respect for family was included and seven items were introduced that sought to assess young adults' views about respecting the authority of elders in their family, including parents, grandparents, and older siblings. It was also important to capture the extent to which young people believe they should consider the needs and wishes of the family when making important decisions about their own lives.

The second and linked subscale contained items to identify young adults' views about making sacrifices and doing well for the sake of the family. This subscale is the closest of the three subscales to measure 'kin collectivism' in terms of its themes and generality (see Rhee et al. 1996), but the items were designed primarily to be simple, direct, and meaningful to young adults. The third subscale attempted to assess the extent to which young adults believe that their obligation to support and assist their family was a lifelong obligation that extended into and throughout adulthood. One of the goals of creating the measure was to examine how a sense of obligation shaped motivation, behavior, and decision making during the young adult years. Making plans about schooling, work, and family formation are significant developmental tasks of the young adults and the study sought to capture how young people anticipated future family obligations and their own life plan.

Late modernity

The term late modernity is used in a number of different senses to capture changes taking place in contemporary Western societies. These changes include:

decolonization, the collapse of Soviet communism, changing patterns of consumption and employment, the decline of western economies, the declining authority of symbols of cultural and political power, changing lifestyles and political concerns, and the development of cyber time and space. Whether these and other changes represent a radical departure from the modern, a transition to a late or postmodern era, is vigorously disputed. For this research, late modernity is defined as the current period of time in which development of modernity is continuing. And the research puts focus on exploring the lifestyles and preference of young adults particularly in the aspect of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility.

Eco-systemic framework

The study also drew on the theoretical framework proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1974, 1979, 1989, 1993), that is, his ecological systems theory. This framework places the individual in the middle of a system, interacting actively through multi-directional reciprocal influences with the environment, structured in terms of the nested levels of the microsystem, the mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The microsystem represents the face-to-face interactions with the immediate, physical or social, surroundings. The way in which environment is experienced is important, rather than its objective qualities. The microsystem also includes, according to Bronfenbrenner (1993), institutions such as the family, day-care centre, pre-school or school, hospital, church, and so forth. The mesosystem reflects the linkages between two or more of these settings. The exosystem comprises further such linkages with settings of which the individual is not a part, but that nevertheless exert an influence. The macrosystem is equal to ‘culture’ in that it consists of such general aspects of society as its values and belief systems. The framework makes it obvious that the developing individual

cannot be isolated from the immediate and wider social context, and that interactions are reciprocal, so that the proper unit of analysis is neither the individual out of context, nor the contexts in themselves, but the individual in context (Segall et al.1999).

In this study the ecosystem (see Appendix 1) is utilized to hypothesize and explore the interrelationship between global and local systems and their possible influence on the family life cycle with specific regard to young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. In so doing, the barriers derived from the different levels of the ecosystem and the possible effects of global values and culture on life course transitions of the youth in a family life cycle are also be examined.

Summary

In Hong Kong, few studies have been conducted to explore the role of global culture and values on young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in late modernity. Past studies have largely focused on family structure, family behaviour and family relationship. Given that Hong Kong has long been a place where 'East meets West', young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility are likely to have become more heterogeneous. In Hong Kong, the family structure is predominantly nuclear and consists of a relatively small family unit. Under the impact of globalization, Hong Kong families are also undergoing change such as an increase in cross-border marriage, split families, rising divorce rate and dual-earner families are more prevalent as the cost of living in Hong Kong is high. Ageing of the population and low fertility rate are current issues of policy concern. It is expected that today's younger generation will have to bear a heavier responsibility

of care towards their aging parents as life expectancy is expected to be longer.

Hong Kong census data (above) reveals that more young people are delaying marriage and choosing to live with their parents after marriage because of uncertainties over the security of their employment. They often have to pursue further education and gain credentials in order to maintain their competitive edge. Unemployment amongst young adults is high compared to the overall unemployment rate in Hong Kong and financial dependence upon parents is commonplace. These and many other challenges to transition and family building will be addressed in the study and examined in later chapters with the help of the Chinese value system approach, the eco-systemic framework and family life cycle theory. Next however, it is necessary that the study design is set out in respect of methodology and methods. The justification, application, strengths and weaknesses of the design need to be demonstrated in order that the provenance of the findings can be established and their limits understood.

Chapter 5: Methodology and Methods

Introduction

Based on the literature review on family theories and family change in the previous chapters, the traditional family seems to be fragmenting in many parts of the world. There is no doubt that the way in which family life has been developing over the last half century reveals some remarkable and fast moving transitions in Western societies. In Hong Kong, young people's values and perception on family, family functioning, marriage, parenthood and family responsibility seem rapidly changing as well (Chow 2001; Chow and Lum 2008; Kwan et al. 2003; Lau et al. 2006). This study attempted to explore and examine critically contemporary theories of family together with ideas about global values and their impact upon young people in regard to marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in local Chinese Hong Kong society. It seeks to illuminate the likely choices and behaviour of young people in regard to personal lifestyle and family life. This in turn, might provide insights into future Hong Kong society and the family life cycle and related implications for social work and other service and policy planning more generally. This chapter first outlines the epistemological status of the study. Then it describes the research design and methods and examines their strengths and weaknesses as well as the particular approaches to analysis for each method. Issues of triangulation and validity are then considered. This is then followed by the sampling procedures and thereafter ethical issues.

Epistemological position of the enquiry

In accordance with Blaikie (1993, pp. 6-7), epistemology refers to a theory of

knowledge which presents a view and a justification for what can be regarded as 'knowledge'. D'Cruz and Jones (2004) further elaborate epistemology as how we know what we know and they relate this to assumptions about social reality. Ontology is related to epistemology in that it refers to how we understand reality and thereby how we will then theorize, research or explain it in particular ways. Atkinson (1992) noted that there is no single social reality and thereby no account of the social world can be somehow 'complete'. What this doctoral study aims to highlight are the various processes and meanings that can be unearthed when the role of global and cultural values on the family in late modernity are examined from the perspectives of young adults about marriage, parenthood and family obligations. Key to this exploration is a reflective stance towards the notion of knowledge held by local Chinese Hong Kong young people, which is viewed as cultural, temporal and socially specific (Delamont *et al.* 2000; Burr 2003).

In this study I chose the methodology of critical realism and developed an iterative mix of survey and constructivist methods. Realism is one way in which the epistemological basis of the natural sciences has been construed. It has entered into the social sciences in a number of ways, and one of the most significant of these is Bhaskar's (1989) notion of critical realism. This approach accepts neither a wholly constructionist nor a totalizing objectivist ontology and instead takes the view that the 'social world is reproduced and transformed in daily life' (1989, p. 4). Social phenomena are produced by generative mechanisms that are real, but these are not directly accessible to observation and are discernible only through their effects. For critical realism the task of social research is to construct hypotheses about such mechanisms and to seek out their effects (Bryman 2004).

Various forms of realism have had a significant influence on the philosophy and methodology of the social sciences (Manicas 2006; Campbell 1988; Bhaskar 1989; House 1991). The most detailed explorations of the implications of realism for research methods are in the work of scholars in the critical realist tradition, particularly Sayer (1992, 2000), Pawson and Tilley (1997). A key feature of most of these versions of realism is that they deny that we can attain a single, correct understanding of the social world. They agree that all theories about the world are grounded in a particular perspective and world view, and that all knowledge is partial, incomplete, and fallible. This position combines ontological realism with epistemological constructivism or relativism (Sayer 2000).

In light of the controversies over epistemology between positivist and interpretivist methods (Maxwell and Mittapalli 2007; Denzin and Lincoln 2005), I chose to inform this study with the methodology of critical realism insofar as it admitted the legitimacy and relevance of the key goals of qualitative research. These goals included the understanding of social actors' perspectives and meanings as real phenomena which I thought were fundamental to social science enquiry. It employed a process-oriented design, which of itself was quite social work oriented, rather than focusing narrowly on a variable-oriented approach to explanation.

In addition, realism's insistence on the inherently contextual nature of causal explanation (Pawson and Tilley 1997) supports the qualitative researcher's emphasis on the importance of context in understanding social phenomena. Furthermore, realism sees 'mind' as part of reality. As Sayer states that 'social phenomena are concept-dependent. What the practices, institutions, rules, roles, or relationships are depends on what they mean in society to its members' (1992, p. 30). Emotions, beliefs,

values, and so on are part of reality; they are not simply abstractions from behavior or constructions of the observer. And so in the focus groups and semi-structured individual interviews with young respondents, their values and beliefs on global cultures, marriage, parenthood and family obligation were also shared amongst themselves in the process of those interactions so as to construct the social reality of the subject. Putnam (1990, 1999) also argues for the legitimacy of both mental and physical ways of making sense of a diverse world. Indeed, critical realism emphasizes the need to pay systematic attention to the existence and nature of diversity in social and cultural systems (see also Maxwell and Mitapalli 2007). Thus it was important for this study to overcome those theoretical and methodological characteristics that lead to the neglect of diversity. Thus the use of qualitative methods and approaches, which focused on particular phenomena and processes and their unique contexts, could help redress any narrow focus in the more universalizing, variable-oriented quantitative method of enquiry such as the survey.

To summarize, taking the position of critical realist and in using a mix of survey, focus group and semi-structured individual interviews, helped illuminate the underlying value systems in their global and local contexts with regard to marriage, parenthood and family obligation as shifting relevancies for young adults in Hong Kong. The mixed methods design helped sustain an open approach to human diversity in values, thinking and behaviours.

Research methods and analysis

To repeat, the study design comprised a cross-sectional multi-method qualitative and quantitative exploration of attitudes held by young people about marriage and family

building in Hong Kong, utilizing focus groups, surveys and individual interviews as the key research techniques. A self-completion questionnaire survey instrument, a guided checklist of themes for focus groups and semi-structured interviews for individuals were adopted as the means for data collection. As mentioned above, the methodological position of 'critical realism' was adopted (Pawson and Tilley 1997) to secure insights into complex processes and social systems that both informed and were shaped by individual and group attitudes and beliefs. The research design could not reveal the totality of social processes that determine the institutional structures that configured the social worlds of respondents, however it was intended that the study could provide a snapshot in time of the ways in which young people perceived their futures with regard to any responsibilities towards their family of origin and particularly their ideas about creating a family of their own. Details of the three research methods and the strengths and weakness are examined as follows.

The focus groups

The focus group is an interview style designed for small groups of unrelated individuals, formed by an investigator and led in a group discussion on some particular topic or topics (Schutt 2003). Using this approach, researchers strive to learn through discussion about conscious, semiconscious, and unconscious psychological and sociocultural characteristics and processes among various groups (Stewart and Shamdasani 1990; Lengua et al. 1992; Larson et al. 2004). The focus group has a unique feature, that is to use the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group encounter (Morgan 1988). The focus group can be used as a method on its own or in combination with other methods such as surveys, observations, single interviews.

Morgan (1988, p. 11) sees focus groups as ‘useful for orienting oneself to a new field; generating hypotheses based on informants’ insights; evaluating different research sites or study populations; developing interview schedules and questionnaires and getting participants’ interpretations of results from earlier studies’.

There are a number of significant advantages associated with the use of focus groups as a data-gathering strategy (Edmunds 2000; Hagan 2006). These include high flexibility in terms of number of participants, groups, costs, duration, etc. It permits the gathering of a large amount of information from potentially large groups of people in a relatively short period of time. It can generate important insights into topics that previously were not well understood. It allows researchers to better understand how members of a group arrive at, or alter, their conclusions about some topic or issue and provides access to ‘interactionary clues’ (Berg 2007, pp. 148-9). Focus groups allow the researcher to develop an understanding about why people feel the way they do. It offers the opportunity of allowing people to probe each other’s reasons for holding a certain view. They can elicit a wide variety of different views in relation to a particular issue (Denscombe 2003) and can be used to gather information from transient populations. It places participants on a more even footing with each other and the investigator. The moderator can explore related but unanticipated topics as they arise in the course of the group’s discussion. Focus groups often do not require complex sampling strategies (Berg 2007). When effectively run they can be free flowing and allow safe argument amongst participants and for challenging group members’ viewpoints. On the whole, the focus groups offers the researcher an opportunity to study the ways in which individuals collectively make sense of and construct meanings around a phenomenon (Bryman 2004) or as a quasi-naturalistic method for studying the generation of social representations or social knowledge in

general (Lunt and Livingstone 1996).

Focus groups also have limitations. The quality of the data is deeply influenced by the skills of the facilitator to motivate and moderate. Focus group attendance is voluntary, and an insufficient number may attend a given planned session. Focus groups are difficult to organize as the 'turn up' rate cannot be assured (Berg 2007). When compared with the individual interview, the researcher has less control over proceedings. It depends on how far the researcher can allow a focus group to take over the running of proceedings. It is also difficult to record the discussion that takes place as speakers interrupt one another and talk simultaneously (Bryman 2004). A specific problem is how to document the data in a way that allows the identification of individual speakers and the differentiation between statements of several parallel speakers (Flick 2006). The data are difficult to analyze as a huge amount of material can be quickly produced, and the recordings are prone to inaudible elements which affects transcription (Bryman 2004). Hence the recordings are probably more time-consuming to transcribe than equivalent recordings of individual interviews. Regarding the group effect, there is also the possibility that people will be reluctant to disclose thoughts on sensitive, personal, political or emotional matters in the company of others (Bryman 2004). Dominant personalities may overpower and steer the group's responses unless the moderator is active. The researcher needs to manage the event to avoid this happening (Berg 2007; Bryman 2004). Generally, participants may be more prone to expressing culturally expected views than in an individual interview (Bryman 2004).

With these caveats in mind, focus groups were chosen as part of the mixed method design. In all, six focus groups of young people were introduced to the study and were

asked to respond to a number of key topics around marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. A structured approach was taken to the discussion in the first instance whereby participants were asked to undertake an exercise to rate statements about cultural value preferences. A 21-item cultural values schema was used and informed by Schwartz's *Schwartz Values Questionnaire* (1992; 1994a,b). Schwartz (1992) claimed values as an expression of and motivation for the fulfillment of basic human needs to sustain an individual's biological, social well-being and functioning. He identifies fifty six basic human values that cluster into 10 motivationally distinct value types (see Spini 2003). Through extensive empirical research in 61 countries, Schwartz has produced persuasive evidence that 44 of the 56 values in the SVQ have the same meanings across cultures and can be clustered by the motivational goal they express (Bardi and Schwartz 2003). Different clusters of values form a stable, structured continuum of motivation of different behaviors to achieve three distinct goals including biological and personal well-being or self-interest; coordinated social interaction; and demands of group functioning (see Schwartz and Boenke 2004; Schwartz and Sagiv 1995). Participants were invited to complete the value list in a few minutes and to then share their rating and choices with regard to the different items. This generated a useful introductory exchange about more general beliefs about the individual and society and where obligations and social ties might be shared, or not. Thereafter the participants discussed the remaining question-sets specifically about marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. These latter questions and probes were informed by reference to relevant attitude measures by Gormly et al. (1987), Michaels (1988) and the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2000, 2005). These measures have been used in different countries and are consistent and stable on the whole, and in that sense their reliability is well attested. The last set of questions related to some demographic particulars of the participants such as parents'

marital status, respondents' religion, family income categories, these were not the subject of discussion but were combined in the value list sheet already delivered to participants for completion at the very beginning of the focus group. Details of the interview guide can be found in Appendix 4.

The focus groups comprised a purposive sample (see below) and were identified through a snowball method. Group-based discussion methods were used in all the focus groups. In order to make the tasks more systematic, I made reference to Berg's advice (2007) about the preparation of a guide to staging and sequencing the events. This included the moderator's introduction and introductory activities; statement of the basic rules or guidelines for the interview; short question-and-answer discussions; special activities or exercises; guidance for dealing with sensitive issues. As stated above, a questionnaire was deployed at the outset to be discussed during the focus group session. Information from this questionnaire assisted both group members and the researcher. The questionnaires allowed the participants to develop a commitment to a particular set of value positions before the group discussion began (see Sussman et al. 1991). Information from this pre-group questionnaire helped to ensure that the event could draw out minority as well as majority opinions (Wimmer and Dominick 1987).

Each group started with a 'warm up' event and in doing so was informed by Stewart and Shamdasani's (1990, pp. 92–93) openings for focus groups which proved helpful in putting people at their ease and in facilitating the use of audio recording. According to Puchta and Potter (2004), one of the important things in running focus groups is to introduce an air of informality in the discussion. Hence, a receptive climate was always sought, at the same time discussions were steered and it was important not to

let participants drift too long on anecdotes with little relevance to the themes of the focus groups. The informal but subtly structured atmosphere of the focus groups encouraged subjects to speak freely about behaviors, attitudes, and opinions and seemed to be effective in engaging with young adults and gaining their diverse opinions (see also Krueger 1994).

It was important not to dominate the group but guide it subtly with regard to the themes of enquiry and to let the conversation unfold. The key themes were informed by the issues and debates outlined in the literature review on globalization, global values and late modernity and their impact on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. These were conversationally adapted by the researcher so as to make the issues accessible and relevant to the different groups. Group members were encouraged to work together to generate data and insights over a two hour period. Using an audio digital recorder helped the researcher concentrate on the process of the interview and give appropriate eye contact and non-verbal communication. Audio recording might, however, make respondents anxious, and less likely to reveal confidential information, hence a small unobtrusive but functionally effective recorder pen for audio recording was used to reduce any participants' self-consciousness or concern about the interview process.

Providing a safe, comfortable and relaxing environment with soft drinks and snacks, the group participants worked together to share perceptions, experiences and insights over an average period of two hours and during this period revealed much of their personal and family attitudes and values about the research topics. During the discussion some young people were more vocal and active and tended to dominate the discussion. It was especially obvious in the first focus group where male participants

coming from notably working class backgrounds were eager to express their opinions on marriage and having children which in turn reduced the female participants' opportunities to contribute. It was important to politely reduce the dominance of the male participants and actively invite the silent female members to express their opinions. Also in the third focus group members who were cohabitating and also those in same sex relationships seemed unhappy to hear two female participants share critical views about such lifestyles and began a conversation amongst themselves. It was necessary to politely re-state the aim of the focus group discussion as obtaining different points of view openly in an atmosphere of mutual respect, the group then re-formed and continued in agreement with this precept.

After the completion of the focus group, each interviewee was given a HK$50.00 supermarket cash coupon as a small gift for his or her participation. With the verbal and written consent (see Appendix 5) of participants, audio recording as well as some note taking were used for the collection of data. Transcriptions were undertaken in Chinese and field notes were incorporated into the transcription process.

Analysis of focus group data

The information collected during the course of the focus groups was raw data and the next task was to prepare an analytic statement based on a thematic analysis of this material (Creswell 2004; Strauss and Corbin 1998). The first step was to transcribe the entire interview of the six focus groups. This was a verbatim transcription of each question and probe asked and each individual answer given by the focus group participants. The transcripts also included the slang, dialects, or pauses offered by focus group members. Taken together, the transcription and the written notes provided

as detailed a record of the discussions as possible and each helped to cross-check the unfolding analyses that emerged during transcription and during thematic coding (see Berg 2007). The analytical process involved coding the content of the discussion to identify trends and patterns that reappeared either within a single focus group or across others. A system of indexing and retrieval of the specific terms and patterns was used. Also noted were the emphases or intensity of respondents' comments and the consistency of comments and responses to probes both within a given focus group and across a series of focus groups.

To repeat, thematic analysis was used to seek qualitative and quantitative insights in relation to the predetermined categories of discussion in a systematic and replicable manner. Tabular representations were adopted and are set out in chapter 6 in order to reveal the distributions of key themes and categories. The researcher used manual coding instead of a computer package given the relatively small sample size. Thematic analysis is one of the commonest approaches to qualitative data analysis which undertakes a search for themes in the transcripts of field notes. However, as Bryman and Burgess (1994) point out, the criteria employed in the identification of themes are often unclear. But generally researchers base their analysis on the frequency of the categorization of certain incidents, words, phrases, and so on in the transcripts that denote a theme. In other words, a theme is more likely to be identified the more times the phenomenon it denotes occurs in the course of coding. This process may also account for the prominence given to some themes over others when writing up the fruits of qualitative data analysis. In other words, a kind of implicit quantification may be in operation that influences the identification of themes and the elevation of some themes over others (Bryman 2004). By the same token it was important to be aware of the rarely stated perspective, and of matters that were never

voiced at all. Overall, the thematic structure reflected the frequency of material that addressed global values and culture; marriage; parenthood; and family responsibility.

Thematic coding is applied as a multistage procedure with respect to the comparability of the analyses (Flick 2006). Thus in the first instance it was important to address the orientation of the first focus group and produce a short analytic description. This was followed by a more in-depth analysis of the first focus group so as to develop a framework of possible categories for the analysis of the other focus groups. In the further elaboration of this system of categories, open coding was applied and then selective coding which aimed at generating thematic domains for the first group. After finishing the first focus group analysis, care was taken to cross-check the developed categories and thematic domains linked to both single case and group categories. A thematic structure resulted from this cross-checking and became increasingly refined as the analysis addressed the remaining cases and groups in order to increase their comparability. The structure was developed from the first group and continuously assessed for all further groups. It was modified if new or contradictory aspects emerge. Similar codes in the individual groups were summarized and integrated across the six groups where appropriate. This constant comparison of the data and reduction into key summaries to demonstrate correspondences and differences in the narrative content of the group discussions was a time consuming and detailed process. However, it was invaluable in remaining sensitive to subtleties and nuances in the way perspectives were voiced and elaborated in group dynamics (see Flick 2006).

The survey

For the quantitative aspect of the study a cross-sectional design and survey approach was adopted which involved sending self-completion questionnaires to a target sample of 1250 young people in three districts in the Hong Kong region. First, some brief comment on the motivation for the survey more generally. The survey would allow the capture of a large field of data on potential variations in young people's perceptions about marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Clear distinctions between cases can be made as well. The survey's cross-sectional design can provide a consistent and systematic way for establishing variations and make possible the examination of relationships or patterns of association between variables (Bryman 2004). In addition, survey research tends to focus on data based on 'real-world' observations more than theory. It involves an active attempt by the researcher to go and structure an enquiry with a span of vision that can be wide and inclusive. Its breadth of coverage means that it is more likely than other approaches to get data based on a sample of sufficient size to allow some claim to relevance and ideally generalizability. Surveys can lend themselves to future replication (Blaxter et al. 2001) and can produce large quantitative data sets in a short time for a fairly low and reasonably predictable cost (Denscombe 2003).

However, the survey has its disadvantages when data reside solely in the form of tables, pie charts and statistics and without linkage to wider theories and issues. The researcher can become preoccupied with the data to the exclusion of an adequate account of the implications of the findings for issues, problems or theories. The data provide a snapshot in time rather than a focus on the underlying processes and mechanisms that generate the phenomena in question. In this sense the significance of

the data can become neglected (Blaxter et al. 2001; Denscombe 2003). The survey does not usually allow in-depth investigation of the topic and there is usually little opportunity to check on the accuracy or honesty of the opinions captured. The researcher is often not in a position to check first hand the understandings of the respondents to the questions asked. Lastly the survey relies on breadth rather than depth for validity which raises questions about the adequacy of small scale studies (Blaxter et al. 2001; Denscombe 2003). These sorts of issues were noted by the researcher and efforts were made to build reliability and validity into the overall design as is discussed below.

To repeat, the major aspect of this mixed method study then was the deployment of a survey instrument containing close-ended questions (see Appendix 6). The choice, sequencing and phrasing of the questions across the five parts of the questionnaire was partly informed by the focus group analysis. The first part of the survey instrument addresses the importance of global/cultural values as guiding principles in young adults' lives. Participants were asked to respond to the Chinese Value Survey (CVS) using a Likert type scale of 1 to 9. One (1) represented a value which was 'of no importance to me' and nine (9) 'of supreme importance to me.' The data were analyzed using principal component analysis which was rotated orthogonally using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 14). The four scales of the CVS were named as follows: CVS I: Integrity and Tolerance; CVS II: Confucian Ethos; CVS III: Loyalty to Ideals and Humanity; CVS IV: Moderation and Moral Discipline.

CVS I has 17 value items, CVS II has 11, CVS III has 9 and CVS IV has 3 value items. CVS I is seen to reflect values which focus on social stability, strong family

bonding and chastity in women, all of which indicate the traditional importance of family. CVS II contains values which all reflected the Confucian work ethic. CVS III contains the value items which embraced ideas suggesting gentleness and compassion as contrasted with a sterner, legalistic approach to life. In CVS IV reflects moral restraint, adaptability, prudence, and self-control.

The second part of the instrument explored young adults' perceptions of marriage. Much of this section was based upon the much validated Marital Attitude Scale (MAS) developed by Braaten and Rosen (1998). The scale consists of 23 statements. Six of the items require participants to rate their feelings regarding their own present or possible future marriage, while the remaining items require participants to react to statements dealing with general concepts regarding marriage. For each item, participants were expected to rate their opinions or feelings on certain statements (see Appendix 6) on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The total MAS score ranges from a minimum of 23 to a maximum of 115. Higher scores indicate a more positive attitude towards marriage. In order to determine whether participants had negative or positive attitudes towards marriage, a midpoint value of 58 was used. Scores below 58 were regarded as indicative of negative attitude and scores from 58 and above would indicate positive attitudes. The MAS is also suited for use with persons who are both married and unmarried (Bassett et al. 1999). Some closed-ended questions related to marriage were also included in the second part of the instrument so as to supplement the MAS and to enrich the discussion of marriage. These questions included 'Are you planning to marry?'; 'What is your ideal age for getting married?'; 'What are the main considerations if you decided to get married?'; 'If you don't want to get married, what would be the reasons?'; and 'Do you find acceptable different types of sex relationship e.g. pre-marital sex, homosexuality,

unwed mother…?'.

The third part was to explore young adults' perceptions about parenthood. Here, the survey utilized a parenting questionnaire consisting of four parts: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for parenthood; costs and benefits of parenthood for young adults. A Likert-scale of 14 items addressed parenting motivations, and Likert-scale of 10 items used statements describing costs and benefits of having children. All Likert-scale items requested that the respondents rate their responses on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A score of three was labeled "neutral," indicating that the respondent did not particularly agree or disagree with the statement. For both the motivations and cost/benefit section of the questionnaire, separate directions were provided for respondents who were parents versus non-parents. Since the majority of questions were worded for non-parents, the parent directions requested that they respond "as if you are making the decision to become a parent for the first time but with the benefit of knowledge from your experience as a parent." Questions in the motivations section were derived from an open-ended questionnaire developed by Gormly et al. (l987) and based on Hoffman and Hoffman's (l973) measure of value of children to parents. Items in the costs and benefits section were derived from Michaels (l988) as well as Hoffman (l975). In addition, some closed-ended supplementary questions related to parenthood were added in the third part of the instrument. These could not easily be inserted into the earlier parenthood section and included questions such as 'Are you planning to have children?'; 'What do you think would be the ideal time for you to have your first child?'; How many children would you want?'; and 'What are the importance of some factors such as personal income, employment opportunity, child care, affecting your decision to have children?'.

For the fourth part of the survey, the measure of adolescents' attitudes toward family obligation developed by Fuligni and Tseng (2008) was adopted. It is consisted of three subscales that intended to tap into three distinct yet overlapping aspects of young adults' sense of obligation to support, assist, and respect the authority of the family. The first was called current assistance and measures young adults' beliefs about how often they should help and spend time with the family on a daily basis. The goal with this subscale was to assess attitudes towards the types of activities in which young adults would help and be with family members on a daily basis. It was apparent from the focus groups that simply spending time with other family members was considered to be an obligation, and that being with the family also could be considered a type of assistance. In addition, typical tasks were included that would be a part of young adults' daily lives, such as running errands, cooking, and sibling care. An item on helping siblings with homework was added because it emerged from focus groups as an important part of family obligation. Respondents were asked to use a scale where 1 = "Almost Never," 2 = "Once in a While," 3 = "Sometimes," 4 = "Frequently," and 5 = "Almost Always" to indicate how often they believe they should engage in these behaviors. In addition to providing daily assistance, the idea that young adults should respect the authority of the family and make sacrifices for them was one that emerged from both previous research and from focus group discussions about familism and filial piety (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995; Zhou and Bankston 1998). Therefore, a subscale was created that assessed a more global sense of obligation that went beyond the discrete tasks of daily life. Respect for family included seven items that assessed young adults' views about respecting the authority of elders in their family, including parents, grandparents, and older siblings. This also included themes around considering the needs and wishes of the family when making important decisions about their lives and about making sacrifices and

doing well for the sake of the family. This subscale was the closest of the three subscales to measure "kin collectivism" in terms of its themes and generality (see Rhee et al. 1996). Respondents used a five-point scale where 1 = "Not At All Important," 3 = "Somewhat Important," and 5 = "Very Important" to rate the importance of each of the behaviors to themselves. Finally, the subscales assessed the extent to which young adults believe that their obligation to support and assist their family was a lifelong obligation that extended into and throughout adulthood. This is particularly relevant for the young adults because one of the goals of creating the measure was to examine how a sense of obligation shaped motivation, behavior, and decision making during young adulthood. Making plans about schooling, work, and family formation are significant developmental tasks for young adults and it was important to assess the extent to which anticipated future family obligations played a role in their thinking. The subscale of future support included six items that referred to the ways in which family assistance might be manifested during adulthood, including providing financial assistance, living with or near family members, and going to college near family. Respondents used the same scale as that used for the subscale of respect for family.

Finally, the last part of the questionnaire was to collect the respondents' personal information, and also young adults' current situations including involvement in cross-border work, overtime work and continuing education.

Analysis of survey data

In regard to data analysis, contrasts and comparisons were made between the survey findings and those established by the original instruments. Their findings were used as

a source of triangulation to challenge the survey outcomes from different perspectives and angles, as were the inductive analyses of the focus group and later individual interview data. The survey findings were analyzed using descriptive bi-variate statistical management. The survey data entry process entailed careful screening and translation into numerical codes. These codes were then assigned to a data file. SPSS was employed to help summarize the data, create appropriate tables, examine relationship among the variables and perform tests of statistical significance on working hypotheses. Most of the analysis is shown as 'the number of people' and 'percentage'. Moreover, a selected set of key variables were chosen to test their relationship (bivariate analysis). In this research, the level of significance was set at 0.05 as this is the most commonly used in studies of this explorative nature (insert ref to support this).

The individual interviews

In regard to the individual interviews in the third stage of the study, these were informed by the results of the survey which helped to develop an interview guide (Appendix 7). For example, the survey results revealed that both the Chinese cultural values and the global western values had a mutual and reciprocal influence on young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family obligation. In order to explore this and other interesting findings, ten respondents were purposively identified from the survey returns on the basis of varied socio-economic backgrounds (see below) and invited to participate in a semi structured interview in order to drill down in more depth about themes arising from the survey data. This part of the study incorporated discussion of global and local culture and values and young adults' perception of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Bronfenbrenner's (1979; 1989; 1993)

eco-systemic framework assisted the analysis of the interview data. Similarly, in depth discussion about the impact of global values on the life course transition of young adults was analysed with the help of the family life cycle model designed by Carter and McGoldrick (1999).

To repeat, semi-structured interviewing was the means of data collection and involved the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and special topics listed in an interview guide. These questions were typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers were allowed freedom to digress; that is, the interviewers are permitted to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared questions (Berg 2007). A semi-structured interview guide is more structured than an informal conversational interview, because it relies on some general themes to be explored with all informants (Kumar 1996). These interviews were therefore relatively more formal. Participants were asked to sign consent forms, agreeing to participate. These interviews also had a clear start and finish time and participants were given a list of themes to be covered in the interview. However, while there is some structure, the researcher could also ask probing questions and follow up on responses as needed to generate the depth required. The interview still relies on a conversational style because the themes explored operate as a checklist and are not posed as a set of questions that are asked in exactly the same way with every informant (Patton 1987, p.111).

There are notable merits to semi-structured interviews. The interviewee has the chance to elaborate his/her ideas and views. Flexibility is allowed and adjustments to the enquiry can be made during the interview process. Also, interviews require only simple equipment and build on the conversation skills of the researcher. Direct

face-to-face contact can help the researcher to check for accuracy and relevance of data. A high response rate can be ensured as interviews are mostly arranged at a convenient time and place for interviewee (Denscombe 2003). Nevertheless, interviews have disadvantages: Data collection can be time consuming as can be analysis. Interviewees may give non-standard responses and data are not pre-coded but have an open format. Hence, the considerable time spent on transcription and coding. The reliability of data is sometimes queried as consistency and objectivity are difficult to fulfill within the dynamics of the interview encounter. There are also some barriers which may hinder the accuracy and relevance of data. For example, the impact of the recording device may be uncomfortable or threatening for some interviewees. Finally, the costs of the interviewer's time, traveling expenses and other fees may be high if the interviewees are widely scattered (Denscombe 2003).

Analysis of individual interview data

The model for analyzing qualitative data from the individual interviews was thematic analysis. This is a commonly used method (Bryman 2008; Davies 2007) that identifies themes or patterns within data (Braun and Clarke 2006). Thematic analysis is a flexible approach that is compatible with different epistemological approaches. In this instance, the method adopted was the six-stage model of Braun and Clarke (2006). In the first phase the researcher becomes familiar with the data by reading all of the transcripts and fieldnotes which assists in grasping broad patterns. After completing this, the next stage involved initial coding and being reflexive about my own assumptions and views and to be open about these in the analytic process. In phase three the codes were grouped into potential themes and compared and connections traced. These clusters of initial themes and sub-themes were organized into an initial

thematic map. Phase four entailed reviewing, refining and reducing these themes. This process involved going back and forth between these different stages in a recursive process. Phase five entailed a fresh comparison both within and across themes in order to generate their shared and dissonant features and to establish links that help grasp the systemic aspects of the perspectives of the respondents. In the final stage the themes were defined in ways that captured the core of what the theme is about and its relationship to the overall narrative about the data and its analysis.

Triangulation, reliability, replicability and validity

Triangulation

There are differences between quantitative and qualitative research in terms of their epistemological and ontological commitments, but the connection between these is not deterministic. There is a tendency for quantitative and qualitative research to be associated with their respective epistemological and ontological positions (Bryman 2004). The argument against multi-strategy research tends to be based on the idea that research methods carry epistemological commitments, and hence the belief that quantitative and qualitative research devolves from separate paradigms. This led some writers to argue that multi-strategy research is not feasible or even desirable (see Bryman 2004). However, different methodological perspectives can complement each other in the study of a complex issue, and compensate for the weaknesses of each single method. Qualitative and quantitative methods should be viewed as 'complementary rather than as rival camps' (Jick 1983, p. 135). The different methods in this study will remain autonomous albeit operating side-by-side. None of the methods combined here is seen as superior or subsidiary (see Flick 2006).

Triangulation was deployed in this study in the sense of multi methods assisting in the interpretation of data and the analytic process. Bryman (2004, p. 275) explains this thus:

> Triangulation entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena….. It was originally conceptualized by Webb et al. (1966) as an approach whereby more than one method would be employed in the development of measures which results in greater confidence in findings….. Triangulation is also being used to refer to a process of cross-checking findings deriving from both quantitative and qualitative research (Deacon et al. 1998).

Denzin (1989) distinguishes four types of triangulation namely data triangulation; investigator triangulation; theory triangulation; and methodological triangulation. Two subtypes should be differentiated: within-method and between-method triangulation. Triangulation was first conceptualized as a strategy for validating results obtained with an individual method. The focus, however, has shifted increasingly towards further enriching and completing knowledge and towards transgressing the epistemological potentials of the individual method. Thus, Denzin emphasizes that the 'triangulation of method, investigator, theory, and data remains the soundest strategy of theory construction' (1989 p. 236). Triangulation is an alternative to validation (Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Flick 1992; 2004), which increases scope, depth, and consistency in methodological proceedings (Flick 2006).

Triangulation does not mean that interpretations from one method need to be confirmed or validated by those of another. Different methods can yield different and contradictory results (Bloor et al. 2001; Blaxter et al. 2001). In any given research setting one particular method will be more suitable for some aspect of the research topic than another. Moreover, research data generated by different methods will differ

in their degree of contextualization. For instance, focus group data usually contains anecdotal material that may qualify or elaborate the general endorsement of a norm or an attitude found in response to a structured questionnaire. Nonetheless direct comparison is not possible and neither is validation by triangulation. Rejection of a validating role for triangulation should not be confounded with a rejection of multiple methods. Rather, analysis of different kinds of data including focus group data bearing on the same topic may serve to deepen and enrich a researcher's understanding. Extending the range of methods used may extend an initial analysis, but it is not necessarily a test of it.

To summarise, multi-methods combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted. The qualitative research was used to inform the quantitative element. For example, the qualitative findings of the six focus groups in the initial stage indicated young adults' differences in attitudes towards marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. These qualitative findings facilitated the quantitative research by providing some working hypotheses and informing the content of the self-completion questionnaires in the second stage of the study. Moreover, the results of the quantitative research prepared the ground for subsequent qualitative inquiry through interviews with a small purposive sample (identified from the survey on the basis of their replies and willingness to be interviewed individually) in this final stage of the study (see Bryman 2004).

Reliability and validity

Reliability and measurement validity closely relate to the quality of measures that are employed to explore different conceptual fields within the research.

Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable. It depends greatly on whether the measures that are devised for concepts are stable and consistent. The reliability of interview schedules is a central question in quantitative methods. It is very important that each respondent understands the questions in the same way and that answers can be coded without the possibility of uncertainty. This is achieved through a number of means, including: thorough pre-testing of interview schedules; thorough training of interviewers; as much use as possible of fixed-choice answers; inter-rater reliability checks on the coding of answers to open-ended questions (Silverman 1993). In the survey research, the researcher adopted the measures of Chinese Value Survey (CVS), Marital Attitude Scale (MAS), Parenting Questionnaire with four subscales and Family Responsibility Questionnaire with three sub-scales respectively. The above measures have been adopted as measures in several different studies and in different countries. They are consistent and stable on the whole and in that sense the reliability of this study is positively promoted. For the survey, it was found that the internal consistency estimates using Cronbach's alpha suggested high reliability for the four scales (CVS = .937; MAS = .815; Parenthood Scale = .884; and Family Obligation Scale = .907), and high to moderate reliabilities for each of the subscales (CVS Subscales: CVS I = .896; CVS II = .806; CVS III = .811; CVS IV = .467; Parenthood Subscales: Intrinsic Motivation = .884; Extrinsic Motivation = .798; Costs = .833; Benefits = .875; Family Obligation Subscales: Current Assistance = .853; Respect for Family = .743; and Future Support = .773). The following table summarizes the results.

Table 1: Reliabilities of CVS, MAS, Parenthood and Family Obligation Questionnaire

Name of Scale/ Subscale	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Alpha Reliability	No. of Items
CVS Overall	**273.05**	**33.367**	**67**	**360**	**.937**	**40**
I. Integrity & Tolerance	125.08	14.129	22	153	.896	17
II. Confucian Ethos	67.82	11.343	24	99	.806	11
III. Loyalty to Ideals & Humanity	61.37	8.927	12	81	.811	9
IV. Moderation & Moral Discipline	19.01	3.717	3	27	.467	3
MAS	**81.38**	**10.037**	**42**	**107**	**.815**	**23**
Parenthood Overall	**84.93**	**11.769**	**24**	**120**	**.884**	**24**
I. Intrinsic Motivation	34.61	6.643	9	45	.935	9
II. Extrinsic Motivation	15.35	3.679	5	25	.798	5
III. Costs	15.48	3.982	5	25	.833	5
IV. Benefits	19.47	3.463	5	25	.875	5
Family Obligation Overall	**77.65**	**14.463**	**33**	**117**	**.907**	**24**
I. Current Assistance	34.21	7.896	12	55	.853	11
II. Respect for Family	23.13	5.097	7	35	.743	7
III. Future Support	22.2	4.440	6	30	.773	6

Regarding reliability in the qualitative research, Silverman (1993, p. 149) considered that ‘when our analytic concern in qualitative research is with narrative structure or

membership categorizations, it is still helpful to pre-test an interview schedule and to compare how at least two researchers analyze the same data'. A method similar to inter-rater comparison can be used to ensure reliability. For focus group or semi-structured individual interviewing, data-analysis sessions can be held to listen to audio-recordings. The aim is to arrive at an agreed transcript, adequate for the task at hand. A further benefit arising from such group sessions is that they usually lead to suggestions about promising lines of analysis. Hence, reliability in qualitative research can be addressed by using standardized methods to write fieldnotes and prepare transcripts. In the case of interview and textual studies, reliability can be improved by comparing the analyses of the same data by several researchers (Silverman 1993). In this doctoral study, the researcher followed the conventional contrastive procedure of taking fieldnotes as well as audio-taping and drafting the transcripts of the focus groups and comparing both sources to help ensure the reliability of the study. The third stage of semi-structured interviews continued this practice (see Silverman 1993).

As to the validity of cross-sectional survey research, the internal validity is typically weak. For example, it was difficult to find out the causal relationship between global values and young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. The cross-sectional research design produced associations rather than causal inferences between variables. Concerning external validity of this research, it was weak as a non-random method of sampling was used which makes external validity questionable. In addition, the ecological validity may be threatened as self-completion questionnaires and semi-structured interviews might affect the actual or habitual perceptions and performance of the respondents. Hammersley (1990) interprets validity as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social

phenomena to which it refers. Silverman (1993) criticizes quantitative approaches insofar as what people say in answer to interview questions does not necessarily have a stable relationship to how they behave in naturally-occurring situations. Regarding validity issues in qualitative research, Silverman (1993) points out that researchers often fall foul of two problems: a tendency to select field data to fit an ideal conception of the phenomenon; and a tendency to select field data which are conspicuous because they are exotic, at the expense of less dramatic data. Another way in which field researchers have sidestepped the issue of validity is by stressing a concern to generate rather than to test theories. If some field researchers sidestep the issue of validity, others reject it altogether as an appropriate issue for social research.

Hammersley (1992, pp. 50–51) suggests that qualitative researchers can address issues of validity by adopting what he calls a ‘subtle form of realism’. Here, reality is assumed to be independent of the claims that researchers make about it; reality is always viewed through particular perspectives; hence our accounts represent reality they do not reproduce it. Furthermore, Silverman (1993) suggests two forms of validation as particularly appropriate to the logic of qualitative research: first, one can compare different kinds of data (e.g. quantitative and qualitative) and different methods (e.g. observation and interviews) to see whether they help inform respective analytic processes – viz triangulation (as above). The use of triangulation should operate according to ground rules that begin from a theoretical perspective and then choose methods and data which will give an account of structure and meaning from within that perspective. Second, researchers can take their findings back to the subjects being studied. Where respondents verify one’s findings, it is argued, one can be more confident of their validity. This method is known as respondent validation and informed the selection of themes and discussions in the final stage of this study

where interviews were used to further explore gathering perceptions generated from the survey and focus groups.

Replicability

With regard to the issue of replicability, the quantitative research was based on a cross-sectional research design specifying a clear and systematic survey procedure, including selecting relevant target groups; designing measures of concepts; administration of research instruments and data analysis. The questionnaire design was based on different scales previously tested and validated in different surveys. As a whole, the procedures in this aspect of the research could be replicated by others.

Sampling and procedure

The target group of the research comprised local Chinese young adults aged 17 – 25 drawn from three regions of Hong Kong. The sampling procedure reflected the different strands of the research. The study sought to identify via focus groups of young people aspects of value and attachment to family building. A large survey of young people was then conducted to explore more widely the insights gathered from the focus groups. Thereafter, interviews were conducted with a small number of individuals to investigate in more depth emerging themes and issues from the focus groups and survey. Given the exploratory and mixed method single case design it was not possible to build a fully representative sample of young people in Hong Kong and the outlying region. Instead, the research adopted a non-probability sampling approach to the three stages of the research that included a mix of purposive and snowball sampling in identifying focus group participants; quota sampling in a large

cross-sectional survey; and purposive sampling for a small number of in-depth semi-structured interviews. The actual sample sizes will be addressed shortly. First, the justification for sampling is discussed.

Focus group sampling

To repeat, for the focus groups, a mix of purposive and snowball sampling was used (Berg 2007; Silverman 2005). Purposive sampling is sometimes called judgmental sampling (Hagan 2006) and was deployed to gather a sample which could represent targeted elements of the Hong Kong youth population. Despite some serious limitations such as the lack of generalizability, purposive samples could help gain an insight and understanding by hearing from youth coming from some very different walks of life.

Another non-probability sampling strategy, which some may see as similar to convenience sampling, is known as snowball sampling, or chain referral sampling (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981; Penrod et al. 2003) or respondent-driven sampling (Heckathorn and Jeffri 2003). In this research, snowball sampling was effective to help me locate subjects with certain attributes or characteristics necessary in the study. For example, it was essential to study different categories of respondent e.g., those getting married, or cohabiting, or in same sex relationships – in brief, some difficult to locate populations. Through first identifying a small number of known people with relevant characteristics, these subjects were then asked for the names of other people who possessed similar attributes and to seek their consent in being approached. Hence, snowball samples are particularly popular among researchers interested in studying various sensitive or hard to reach populations (Lee 1993).

Clearly, such techniques could not possibly claim to produce a statistically representative sample. I relied on my social network, for example, friends and friends of friends and relatives, students and graduate students, also social contacts of these individuals to trace additional respondents. While the sample was opportunistic I sought to generate a population that was differentiated in terms of gender, age-range, marital status, working status, and educational attainment and drawn from the three target regions of residence. These regions were the Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories. They were chosen because Hong Kong is composed of these three regions and they are likely to represent different socio-economic backgrounds or characteristics of the population in Hong Kong.

The number of focus groups a researcher conducts depends on the research questions and on the number of different population subgroups required (Morgan 1988). Making reference to Krueger's suggestion (1994) that for complex problems focus group size should be kept to no more than about seven participants, six focus groups with around 6-8 respondents each were conducted by the researcher. In all, a total of 40 young people aged 17-25 joined the six focus groups. Some variables were added in the composition of each focus group so as to test out if any interrelationships between variables or any reciprocal influences would occur in certain circumstances. The proposed combination of each focus group is shown below:

Tables 2 (a-f): Focus group target characteristics

(a) 1st Focus Group – Sex

Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants
Sex	Male (4)	**Marital Status**	Married (2)	**Working Status**	Working (3)
	Female (4)		Single (3)		Studying (3)
			Cohabited(3)		Neither of Two (2)

(b) 2nd Focus Group – Age

Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants
Age	17 -21 (4)	**Educational Attainment**	Post graduates (2)	**Living District**	Hong Kong Island (2)
	22–25 (4)		Undergraduates (3)		Kowloon Peninsula (3)
			Secondary Schools (3)		New Territories (3)

(c) 3rd Focus Group – Marital Status

Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants
Marital Status	Married (3)	**Sex**	Male (4)	**Age**	17 -21 (4)
	Single (3)		Female (4)		22–25 (4)
	Cohabited (2)				

(d) 4th Focus Group – Working Status

Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants
Working Status	Working (3)	**Sex**	Male (4)	**Age**	17 -21 (4)
	Studying (3)		Female (4)		22–25 (4)
	Neither of Two (2)				

(e) 5th Focus Group – Educational Attainment

Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants
Educational Attainment	Post graduates (2)	**Sex**	Male (4)	**Age**	17 -21 (4)
			Female (4)		22–25 (4)
	Undergraduates (3)				

	Secondary Schools (3)				

(f) 6th Focus Group – Living District

Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants
Living District	Hong Kong Island (2)	**Domestic Household Income***	High income family (HK$40,001 or above) (2)	**Educational Attainment**	Post graduates (2)
	Kowloon Peninsula (3)		Middle income family (HK$8,751 – HK$40,000) (3)		Undergraduates (3)
	New Territories (3)		Low income family (HK$8,750 or below) (3)		Secondary Schools (3)

* The median monthly domestic household income for 2009 was HK$17,500 (Census and Statistics Department 2010d). Low income family is defined as family living under a monthly income less than or equal to half of the median income of all other households of

equal size (Hong Kong Council of Social Service 2005).

Within the focus groups, diversity of composition would enrich the discussion. For example, across the groups the membership reflected differences of gender, age, marital and working status, educational attainment and living district. These variables and the structuring of the groups more generally are discussed later in the chapter.

The data collection started with conducting six focus groups each with around 7 respondents during the period from July 11 to 19, 2009. A total of 40 young people aged 17-25 joined the six focus groups. Key characteristics of the sample are set out in Appendix 8. Among the participants, there were 23 male interviewees and 17 female interviewees respectively. The composition of the six focus groups is set out below:

Table 3: Focus group composition

	Group 1	**Group 2**	**Group 3**	**Group 4**	**Group 5**	**Group 6**
Date	11/7/2009	12/7/2009	22/7/2009	19/7/2009	18/7/2009	14/7/2009
Venue	Mongkok	North Point	Mongkok	Tseung Kwan O	Tseung Kwan O	North Point
Focus for comparison	Gender (male 3, female 4)	Age (17-21: 5, 22-25: 2)	Marital Status (married 2, single 2,	Working Status (working: 2, studying: 3,	Education Attainment (secondary sch 2,	Residence (HK 2, KLN 2

			cohabited 1)	non-working & non-studying:	undergrad.4, postgrad.1)	NT 3)
No. of Participants	7	7	5	7	7	7

Survey sampling

Based on the analysis of data collected in the focus groups, a self-complete survey instrument containing closed-end questions was then generated. This survey questionnaire sought to explore the relationship between global values and the selected dependent variables of young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. The draft questionnaire was piloted with 36 young adults and the internal consistency was good. The Cronbach's alpha test for the main measures was: CVS = .949; MAS = .827; parenthood Questionnaire = .815; and Family Obligation Questionnaire = .816. A small number of changes were made to the sequencing and terminology. The final revised questionnaire was distributed to a target group of 1,250 young people between early November and mid December 2010. With regard to the survey population a non-probability sampling approach was chosen for reasons of cost and practicality. The time and practical challenges in securing a randomized sample of young people with the desired different backgrounds and genders from the three regions made the adoption of a cross sectional purposive sample the appropriate choice. The sample was initially generated from the Census and Statistics Department (2006a,b) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and selected from across the three regions. The sample population of 1250 was divided into strata in terms of gender, age groups, marital status, working status, educational attainment and region of

residence. The sample was proportionately in accordance with the 2006 By-Census distributions in Hong Kong (Census op cit). The youth population characteristics and distributions which informed the sampling procedure are as follows:

Table 4: Key strata for survey population

2006 By-Census

Items		Male	Female	Total
Age	15 – 19	223,369	215,868	439,237
	20 – 24	224,834	244,934	469,268
	Total	448,203	460,802	909,005
Marital Status	Never Married	882,575(97.1%)		
	Married	25,298(2.8%)		
	Widowed	245(0.0%)		
	Divorced	662(0.1%)		
	Separated	225(0.0%)		
Labour Force	15 – 24	208,366	196,550	404,916
		(Median monthly income from main employment $6,500)		
Economic Inactive (including students (97%) and unemployed)		505,000		
Educational Attainment	No schooling	1,903 (0.2%)		
	Primary	9,406 (1.0%)		

	Lower Secondary	145,337 (16%)	
	Upper Secondary	378,991 (41.7%)	
	Sixth Form	95,291 (10.5%)	
	Diploma / Sub-degree course	127,953 (14%)	
	Degree course	150,124 (16.5%)	
Living Arrangement	Living Alone	1.1%	
	Living with parent(s) only	90.4%	
	Living with spouse and/or child(ren)	1.8%	
	Others	6.7%	
Geographical Distribution	HK Island	143,721 (15.8%)	
	Kowloon	244,272 (26.9%)	
	New Territories	520,756 (57.3%)	
	Marine	256 (0.0%)	

From the 2006 By-census, we can observe some important characteristics of the young adults. There are a total of 909,005 youngsters aged 15-24. The sex ratio is quite equally distributed. Of this population, 97% are non-married and 44% are working youth with a median monthly income of HK$6,500. Some 55% are economically inactive of which 97% are students. The educational attainment of the youth is 41.7% in upper secondary; and sixth form and above is around 40%. 90.4% of the youth are living with parents. Most of the youth (57.3%) are living in the New Territories such as Shatin, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun. 26.9% are living in the

Kowloon Peninsula while only 15.8% are in Hong Kong Island. Based on this population, the study constructed a survey frame by using a quota sampling method so that a similar proportion of demographic variables can be chosen to reflect the youth population. As some 1,200 sample of youth was chosen because of limited resources and time constraints, so the distribution was as follows:

Table 5: Survey sample

Items		Male	Female	Total
Age	15 – 19	125	125	600
	20 – 24	125	125	600
	Total	250	250	1,200
Marital Status	Never Married	1,080		
	Married	34		
Labour Force	15 – 24	Total: 528		
Economic Inactive (including students (97%) and unemployed)		Total: 660		
Educational Attainment	No schooling	2		1,200
	Primary	12		
	Lower Secondary	192		
	Upper Secondary	500		
	Sixth Form	126		
	Diploma /	168		

	Sub-degree course		
	Degree course	198	
Living Arrangement	Living Alone	12	1,200
	Living with parent(s) only	1085	
	Living with spouse and/or child(ren)	22	
	Others	80	
Geographical Distribution	HK Island	190	1,200
	Kowloon	323	
	New Territories	687	
	Marine	0	

In generating this purposive non-probability sample the researcher identified a range of children and youth centres, secondary schools, tertiary education colleges/universities, working youth centres, and churches, distributed across the three target areas of Hong Kong. The distribution list for the survey is outlined in Appendix 9. These were deemed to contain a sufficient number of young people to comprise the sorts of age-groups and key characteristics sought in the sample frame above. A joint invitation letter and consent form with reply slip (see Appendix 10) was sent to schools, colleges, welfare agencies and youth organizations to introduce the study. The purpose, procedures and potential risks of the survey were set out in the consent form. Also, compensation for participation and potential benefits was highlighted in the form as was a guarantee of confidentiality, right of participation and withdrawal, storage of data and enquiry method. The self-administered questionnaire (see

Appendix 6) was delivered personally to the agencies for their onward distribution by gatekeepers (agency managers) to their clientele. The purpose of the survey was mentioned and confidentiality of the data was repeatedly emphasized to participants. Participants had the survey verbally explained to them and informed consent (see Appendix 11) was obtained. Participants who agreed to join completed a self-administered questionnaire which was anonymous and included cover letters that introduced the survey. All the completed questionnaires in hard copies were returned in a sealed envelope to ensure confidentiality. Participants were solicited through various sources in order to obtain as balanced a sample as possible from different socioeconomic classes within the society. The results of the distribution of questionnaires were as follows:

-- *Students of high schools*

416 higher-form students from four secondary schools (with high and low banding) located in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula and New Territories respectively participated in the survey and completed a self-administered questionnaire in classrooms after a briefing by the researcher stating the purpose and procedure of the survey. They also gave their consent at this point.

-- *Students of tertiary institutions*

Different academic fields and levels of students studying in tertiary institutions were invited to join the survey through known connections and liaison with heads and course coordinators of different departments in various universities and colleges in Hong Kong. The sources included undergraduate students in Nursing at the Hong

Kong University; undergraduate students in Social Work and Journalism and Communication at Hong Kong Shue Yan University; associate degree students in Arts, Business and Management and Social Sciences Programmes from Hong Kong Polytechnic University Community College and Lingnan University respectively; certificate students in Applied Psychological Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University School of Continuing Education; and certificate and sub-degree students in Applied Social Studies at a Vocational Training Council Youth College. The above sources provided 433 participants.

-- *Young adults in the district integrated teams for youth*

Among ten integrated teams for youth which were invited to join the survey, only five consented to join as most of the integrated teams did not have enough youth aged 17-25 that could regularly come to the centres to participate in the survey. Most of their members were children and parents rather than youth as most of the young adults were not interested in joining centre activities and programmes. As such, among five integrated teams for youth that joined this survey, four came from the New Territories and one from Kowloon Peninsula. In sum, 83 participants, either were working youth or students, were recruited through this network.

-- *Young adults in the district churches*

As it proved difficult to reach out to target respondents in district integrated youth teams especially in Hong Kong Island, it was important to use other channels to select enough sub samples in the districts through local institutions such as churches. Through a snowball approach four churches located across the three regions

consented to join the survey. Pastors helped deliver questionnaires to the youth. Youth church members in turn helped deliver questionnaires to friends and schoolmates in the districts as well. A total of 103 participants were recruited.

-- *Working youth in the districts*

The researcher invited social work graduates known over the past two years who were working in different fields to participate and in turn they invited young people from their personal social network including colleagues, youth clients, relatives, friends or friends of friend with a working status. A total of 101 participants were recruited through these channels.

In all, 1,250 questionnaires were delivered across the three regions. A total of 1158 completed questionnaires were obtained. The return rate was 93%. Excluding those invalid questionnaires, there were 1132 valid questionnaires and the findings were based upon the responses of these 1132 research participants.

Individual interview sampling

The final stage of the study was the purposive sampling of a sub-set of participants self-identified from the survey as willing to engage in an interview in order to explore more deeply their views expressed via the survey return. Here, semi-structured qualitative interviewing was conducted with some 10 individuals who were identified via theoretical sampling of the questionnaire returns as being representative of some particular thematic perspective and also reflecting characteristics of the youth profile in the *Hong Kong Population By-census 2006 Thematic Report: Youths* (Census and

Statistics Department 2006b). Hence, five categories of persons were selected in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds, gender, educational attainment, job status and working conditions, income, and immigration status. The five types consisted of (a) young persons with low skill level, low academic achievements and low incomes (b) young persons with high skill level, high academic achievement and high income (c) young persons undertaking cross-border work, overtime work or with continuing education (d) young persons with no jobs, no study and/or receiving social welfare assistance (e) new arrivals to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region e.g. from the Mainland China, or returnees from overseas study.

There were several reasons for selecting the above sample of youth purposively. Firstly regarding gender, the percentage of the youth population rose from 11.8% in 1961 to a peak of 23.0% in 1981, and then dropped continuously over the past 25 years to 13.2% in 2006. The youth population in 2006 declined to 909,005. The sex ratio (i.e. number of males per 1000 females) of the youth population in 2006 was 1037. The sex ratio is relatively evenly distributed. Based on the statistics shown, the selection of gender was 5 female and 5 male for the 10 interviewees in the qualitative individual interviews.

Secondly, the greater chances for education available to the youth population improved markedly their level of academic attainment, the proportion of youths with no schooling or only primary education was less than 0.3% throughout 1996 to 2006, whereas those with secondary and higher education increased from 97.5% in 1996 to 98.8% in 2006. Meanwhile, the labour force participation rate of youths declined steadily from 53.2% in 1996 to 47.7% in 2006. This was attributable to the later entry of youths into the labour force as a result of increasing educational opportunities for

young people. The younger generation enjoyed the benefits of higher education expansion in the 1990s with more educational opportunities than those in earlier years. Improved education does not necessarily mean more employment opportunities. Unemployment rates have been increasing in the past decade for young people, especially for those post-80s and post-90s generations, even those with tertiary education. Today's better educated young people have decreasing chances of getting a professional or a managerial job than before (Wu 2010). They are increasingly driven to associate professional and clerical jobs, and even sales and service jobs. Hence it was important to select some interviewees with higher education (degree or above) and with lower education level (junior high school or below) respectively to search their views of global and cultural values and the similarities or differences in perceptions of family building in this context of socio-economic background.

Thirdly, from the By-census 2006, a large proportion of working youth were engaged as service workers and shop sales workers (29.4%) and clerks (27.9%) in 2006. Youth were highly represented in these occupations hence some respondents were chosen who worked in these settings.

Fourthly, with regard to the median monthly income from the main employment of working youth, the census in 2006 showed that it decreased by 13.3% over the past ten years, from HK$7,500 in 1996 to HK$6,500 in 2006. By contrast, the median monthly income from the main employment of the working population increased by 5.3%. The median monthly income from main employment of working youths in 2006 was about 65% of that of the whole working population. This might be related to the occupation and industries they were engaged in, their educational attainment and their limited working experience. In fact, there is sizeable income disparity in Hong

Kong. The Gini Coefficient is the most common indicator used to measure income disparity between the rich and the poor. According to the household income distribution data obtained from the *Hong Kong Population By-census 'Thematic Report: Household Income Distribution in Hong Kong'* (Census and Statistics Department 2006c, p. 14), the Gini Coefficient for Hong Kong reproduced below has been on the upward trend.

Table 6: Gini Coefficient for Hong Kong

	1996	**2001**	**2006**
Gini Coefficient	0.518	0.525	0.533
% change	+8.8%	+1.4%	+1.5%

In 2006, the figure stood at a record high of 0.533, with a % change of 1.5% compared with year 2001. Some have also argued that for a place like Hong Kong which is becoming a global city like London and New York, the occupational structure is polarized with professionals, managers in producer services at one end, and low-skilled service workers at the other end. The wealth gap between the rich and poor has widened further with the overall Gini coefficient, representing income disparity, at its highest since the figures were recorded. The Government statistics show Hong Kong's Gini coefficients, be it the overall, post-tax or tax and social benefit inclusive figures, were the highest when compared with the latest figures from Canada, Britain, New Zealand and Singapore. Since the earnings of young people relative to the general working population have been declining over time, it was considered important to select for the interviews youth representing these disparities of income.

Fifthly, Hong Kong as a world city and with the integration with mainland China since 1997, more and more people undertake cross-border work in order to earn a living or to get better work prospects. This in turn creates more and more cross-border marriage between the two places (Yang and Lu 2010). Also, with intense competition under globalization, more and more people pursue further studies or work overtime with a view to maintaining their competitiveness. From the findings of the focus groups it was noted that cross-border work, overtime work and continuing education were significant factors affecting the respondents' decisions about getting married, childbearing and fulfillment of family obligations. As such, respondents who were chosen for interviews were known to be undertaking cross-border work, overtime work and/or continuing education.

Sixthly, there are a group of persons with no jobs, no study and/or receiving social welfare assistance. Such 'hidden youth' are often withdrawn from and neglected by the community. Prolonged unemployment is known to be associated with depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and poor health among youth (Bjarnason and Sigurdardottir 2003; Mossakowski 2009). Hong Kong has 1,418,200 youth aged 15-29 – 20% of the total population (Census and Statistics Department 2010a). Nearly 35% of this population is receiving formal education; however, young people face high unemployment rates. The 2010 unemployment rates (July-Sept) for the 15-19 and 20-24 age groups was 21.7% and 13.6%, respectively, while the general population rate during the same period was only 4.4% (Census and Statistics Department 2010b). Higher unemployment rates, lower starting salaries and insecure jobs have put many young people in disadvantaged positions, protracting the transition from school to work and from childhood to adulthood and alienating them from society more

generally. Hence, young people from this background were targeted and included in the interviews.

Lastly, as a Special Administrative Region of China, there are quite a number of new arrivals from the mainland who come to Hong Kong for family reunion or for life improvement. The vulnerability of youth is often associated with some social characteristic such as immigration status, particularly in view of the various adjustment issues encountered by newly arrived youngsters. Concerning those new immigrants who have been previously living under the Communist regime, it needs further study to see whether there are any differences in their values and attitudes towards family building. Here we define these new immigrants as arrivals from mainland China to Hong Kong for a period of less than 7 years. According to Hong Kong law, a Chinese citizen who has ordinarily resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than 7 years is regarded as a permanent resident of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and enjoys the right of abode in the HKSAR. In January 2004 the government also changed the eligibility requirement for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance applicants from one year to seven years, although the director of social welfare has the discretion to determine the circumstances and needs of families in need. Returnees from overseas study were also one of the target sub samples who might provide different insights into their plans for family building in a context of global and local culture and values.

To summarize, the characteristics of the samples were as follows:

Table 7: Interview sample – key characteristics

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Characteristics
1	Male	17-25	Working youth with low education attainment (below high school), low skill level (e.g. service workers, shop sales) and with low median monthly income (i.e. HK$6,500 or below)
2	Female	17-25	Working youth with low education attainment (below high school), low skill level (e.g. service workers, shop sales) and with low median monthly income (i.e. HK$6,500 or below)
3	Male	17-25	Working youth with higher education attainment (bachelor degree or above), high skill level or professional (e.g. managers or supervisors, accountant…) and with high median monthly income (i.e. HK$17,000 or above)
4	Female	17-25	Working youth with higher education attainment (bachelor degree or above), high skill level or professional (e.g. managers or supervisors, accountant…) and with high median monthly income (i.e. HK$17,000 or above)
5	Male	17-25	Working youth with cross-border work (e.g. in the Mainland China or overseas), working overtime (work more than 60 hours a week) or with continuing education (e.g. taking short-term or

			long-term course or advanced studies)
6	Female	17-25	Working youth with cross-border work (e.g. in the Mainland China or overseas), working overtime (work more than 60 hours a week) or with continuing education (e.g. taking short-term or long-term course or advanced studies)
7	Male	17-25	Youth with no job, no study, 'hidden youth' and/or recipients of financial welfare assistance
8	Female	17-25	Youth with no job, no study, 'hidden youth' and/or recipients of financial welfare assistance
9	Male	17-25	New arrivals (less than 7 years) to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region e.g. from the Mainland China, or returnees from overseas study
10	Female	17-25	New arrivals (less than 7 years) to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region e.g. from the Mainland China, or returnees from overseas study

Details of the interviewees' characteristics can be found in Appendix 12. The sample was sent by post an invitation letter (Appendix 13) together with a consent form (Appendix 14), and an information sheet with a brief introduction to the project (Appendix 15). The purpose, procedures and commitment to anonymity were outlined in the consent form. Also compensation for participation and potential benefits was highlighted in the form, as well as guarantee of confidentiality, right of participation and withdrawal, storage of data and enquiry method. The interviewees brought along the completed consent form to the interview sessions.

The interviews were conducted in May 2011 in private settings convenient to the young people. Before the interview a checklist of essential items to take was made and included the short questionnaire on interviewee's personal information (Appendix 16), the interview schedule, spare consent forms, information sheets and a recorder. The interview environments were safe, comfortable and relaxing. The interviews began with introductions and some comment on the purpose of the research. It was made clear that they did not have to answer any questions that they did not want to. During the interview, rapport and trust was built with the participants and active listening was applied and matters were clarified when unclear. After the interview I gave thanks to the participants for their time in attending the interview. Data were stored safely. Each interview was around a period of 60 to 75 minutes. After the completion of the interview the interviewees were each given a HK$100.00 supermarket cash coupon as a small gift for their participation. With the verbal and written consent of participants, audio taping and note recording were used for the collection of data. Having introduced the main samples and stages of enquiry we now consider in more detail the role of researcher and related ethical considerations.

Role of researcher and relationship with participants

D'Cruz and Jones (2004) discuss issues of bias within the research relationship. These relationships in the research process are informed by the researcher's grasp of social reality. Quantitative research is traditionally informed by positivism. It is assumed that the researcher is separate from social reality and it is for a social researcher to be objective by separating personal values or bias from the topic and informants. Qualitative research, if informed by interpretive paradigms, generally argues that it is

necessary to be reflexive and reflective about one's subjectivity and positioning in relation to the subject being researched and informants and their subjectivities. Furthermore, the researcher is acknowledged as an active agent in constructing knowledge by means of the research process, rather than as an external actor in relation to objective knowledge.

Objectivity is a principle that aims to minimize the influences of the researcher's values, beliefs and potentially vested interests in the topic being researched. Someone who is not seen as objective within this definition is described as 'biased' (Marlow 2001, p.6). One aim is to foster an attitude of disinterest as a dispassionate enquirer whose primary task is to search for knowledge as an absolute truth, as an object of discovery, rather than trying to prove what you as researcher believe to be true (D'Cruz and Jones 2004). This is clearly an important ethical consideration. However, the principle also seeks to separate values from knowledge. As a social work educator, it is important to consider if such a research stance is possible or desirable when the objectives of social work, for example, clearly position us in particular ways in relation to disadvantage and inequality (see D'Cruz and Jones 2004).

There are evident contrasts between quantitative and qualitative research in regard to the role of researcher and participant. In quantitative research, the investigator typically decides on the concerns that s/he brings to an investigation. But in qualitative research, the perspectives of the participants and what they see as important and significant are the focal point of orientation. Moreover, the researcher usually maintains some distance from participants in quantitative research, while the researcher is typically more closely engaged. Thus, in this multi-method design, I took up different roles in different stages of the research in accordance with the

research methods used. These roles were not contradictory but complementary and helped see the ‘larger picture’ with more insight and objectivity. In the qualitative research involving focus groups and individual interviews, a less distanced and neutral role was occupied. From the very beginning, the informants in the focus groups and individual interviews viewed me as a stranger or visitor (see Agar 1980) with whom they were not familiar. However, after ice-breaking it was possible to take a peripheral but insider perspective and to understand better the individual and group viewpoint. Those who want to become involved in the world of youth must understand it from its own logic (see Adler and Adler 1987) and here preparatory reading in this field was invaluable. On the other hand, in the quantitative survey it was possible to take a more neutral and distanced position in administering the survey questionnaire. This moving in and out of different research relationships helped make issues of bias and validity more conscious and accessible (see Flick 2006).

Ethical considerations

Questions of how to protect the interests of those who are willing to take part in a study have drawn research ethics to the foreground of debate in the social sciences. Ethical issues do not solely relate to protecting the rights and privacy of individuals. They can also relate to the methodological principles underpinning the research design. Those with a social justice concern will include the very topic of the research as part of their ethical framework, by asking whether it raises socially responsible questions or has the potential to create a more just world. Moreover, ethical issues arise at all points in the research process, including analysis and interpretation. As such, researchers’ values, position and notions of truth are integral to ethical concerns. Researchers need to recognize the complexity and many facets of ethical issues (see

Blaxter et al. 2001). Hence, as a social work educator, it was important to consider also if the objectives of social work research clearly position me in particular ways in relation to disadvantage and inequality (D'Cruz and Jones 2004).

As Butler (2002, p.241) points out 'the ethical foundation for a code of ethics for social work research is to be derived from the ethics of social work itself. Such a code of ethics is to be applied when the nature of the research activity is designed to engage with the practice of social work (including at a theoretical level) and to be addressed primarily to a social work audience which might include practitioners, service users, policy makers and other social work researchers'. The particular ethical framework on which the code outlined by Butler is constructed reflects four key principles: respect for autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice. To this must be added the question of scope which refers to the process of deciding about to whom and in what circumstances the particular moral obligation applies. According to Butler (2002, p.243), 'respect for autonomy' refers to the moral obligation to respect the autonomy of each individual insofar as that is compatible with respecting the autonomy of others. It implies treating others as moral agents in their own right, as ends in themselves and not simply as means. It predicts the securing of informed consent, preserving confidentiality and a prohibition on willful deceit. Beneficence and non-maleficence may be reduced to a rational calculation of producing by one's actions a net benefit to the client. 'Justice' may be equated with the moral obligation to deal fairly in the face of competing claims, especially in relation to equalizing claims deriving from people's rights and respecting morally acceptable laws. It prohibits the pursuit of one's own interests at the expense of others legitimate interests; using scarce resources for unprofitable ends; favouring one's own particular community of interest or association and disapproval of the moral choices of others.

In sum, professional ethics are regulatory codes that guide professional behaviour in accordance with the core social work values which can be reflected in *The Code of Ethics for Social Work and Social Care Research* (Butler 2002) where emphasis is placed on doing good and not doing harm. Thus, this ethical stance was taken to ensure the interests of informants were protected in the data collection process. Moreover, guidance was sought from *The Code of Ethics for Social Work* (British Association of Social Workers 2002), the Economic and Social Research Council's *Research Ethics Framework* for the social sciences (ESRC 2010). In addition, the research plan was submitted to Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee for approval. Furthermore, as the research was conducted in Hong Kong, the study was bound by the *Code of Practice for Registered Social Workers* which is monitored by the Hong Kong Social Workers Registration Board (2010). The primary objective of the Code is the protection of clients and members of society at large. Under section 11 of Social Workers Registration Ordinance, this Code of Practice represents standards of ethical behaviour for social workers in professional relationships with clients, with colleagues, with agency, with profession, and with society as a whole.

The above codes and ethical frameworks informed the study. All participants were given information forms and consent forms and were made aware their participation was voluntary and that non-participation would have no impact on their relationship with the agency they were involved with (see Flick 2006). The respondents were also guaranteed anonymity and were informed that all questionnaires would be destroyed on completion of the study. Secure storage of all data was provided throughout the study. The researcher was not aware (or made aware by others) of any ethical

concerns about the conduct of the study at its various stages.

Summary

Bryman (2004) points out that the argument against multi-strategy research tends to be based on the idea that research methods carry epistemological commitments and that quantitative and qualitative research being separate paradigms should not be conjoined. Quantitative research has traditionally been informed by positivism and the hypothetico-deductive method. The theory drives the research and the aim in the first instance is to disprove the theory, that is, a process known as 'falsification' by showing that there is no relationship between the variables of interest (Abercrombie et al. 1988, cited in D'Cruz and Jones 2004, p. 63). Qualitative research, on the other hand, is said to rely on emergent theories and inductive reasoning that stems from the inter-subjective nature of the social world. Nonetheless, in recent years, the use of more than one social research method has been encouraged to support the constitutive structuring of interpretation in the analytic process. Nevertheless, it was important to be alert to the probability that multi-methods might lead to a similar analytic direction but are unlikely to meet at some precise, unequivocal point in their accounting for social reality. Hence, a cautious position was adopted which avoided any presumption that the use of methodological triangulation could prove that the data or analyses were absolutely correct (Denscombe 2003).

For this research, quantitative analysis of the survey was more bounded and discrete as the data were the product of statistical techniques based on mathematics and probability. Nevertheless, statistical tests of significance gave some credibility in terms of interpretation and confidence in the findings. Furthermore, large volumes of

data could be analyzed quickly using advanced and well prepared computerized procedures. Easy and clear representations were made possible by computer software which saved time and other resources that in turn reduced the cost of research. In spite of the advantages of quantitative analysis there were also demerits. For example, the researcher might become preoccupied by statistics and the search for significance (depending upon method and quality of data) and might ignore the very research purpose to attempt a more rounded interpretation of the phenomena.

With regard to the strengths of qualitative analysis in the form of focus group and semi-structured in-depth interviews, we can say the data and the analysis are more likely to be grounded in human experience and have their roots in complex social existence. Moreover, thematic analysis of transcripts can provide detailed, in-depth and thick description about complexity which quantitative analysis may not achieve. Another merit of qualitative analysis is the acceptance of ambiguity and contradictions as this is inherent in the social world. It also draws on the interpretative skills of the researcher and inevitably opens up alternative explanations. It allows that different researchers might come up with different conclusions about the nature of social existence. However, there is weak generalization in qualitative analysis as data may be less representative. Hence it is imperative not to oversimplify the explanation of the findings. Moreover, the interpretation of data implicates many personal factors such as the researcher's identity, background and beliefs. In this sense, the findings and conclusions are unavoidably selective and a creation of the researcher rather than a discovery of 'fact' per se.

With hindsight, I believe mixed methods to have been complementary rather than contradictory within this particular study. By adopting two types of research methods

with different kinds of data analysis, the study became more comprehensive, both in width and depth. On one hand, the study was able to test out key concepts using quantitative research and on the other hand was able to generate insights into the same conceptual fields from the perspectives of participants gathered in individual and group contexts. Hence, both firm and reliable data were developed via quantitative research and rich deep qualitative data were collected in the qualitative design. Of course, quantitative research is typically highly structured and can present a static image of social reality with its emphasis on relationships between variables, whereas the less structured qualitative approach brings out processes or unfolding events over time and the interconnections between the actions of participants of social settings. It is in light of these caveats about and merits of mixed methods that the thesis now presents key findings as outlined in four chapters. First, there is a chapter on the focus groups which sets out multiple themes and issues that informed the survey design. The chapter that follows then presents the key results of the survey. This is followed by a chapter informed by the semi-structured interviews. Finally, a concluding chapter seek to provide an overview of the core messages from the study, and thereafter to consider the implications of these for policy and practice.

Chapter 6: Confucian Values and Change: Key Findings of the Focus Groups

Introduction

The first stage of data collection commenced with the convening of six focus groups each with around 7 respondents during the period of July, 2009. A total of 40 young people aged 17-25 joined the six focus groups. Among the participants, there were 23 male interviewees and 17 female interviewees respectively. A purposive sample was sought that could reflect a population in terms of the relative proportions of young people in different categories that included gender, age, marital status, working status, educational attainment and region of residence. Based on a semi-structured interview guide, the members of the focus groups were facilitated to discuss a number of questions which related to the research themes. Group-based discussion methods were used in all the focus groups. This chapter presents the major findings of the six focus groups in relation to the core research topics (a) young adults' perception on global and cultural values and (b) young people's views on marriage, parenthood and family responsibilities.

Global/cultural values as guiding principles for young adults

Regarding the global or cultural values the participants of the six focus groups had diversified preferences. Broadly speaking, there were two main categories of values to explore: traditional cultural values and global values of late modernity. As regards traditional cultural values, the majority of the respondents put emphasis on family security and relationships, respect for tradition, honoring of parents and elders and

family loyalty. As to global values, the majority of the respondents emphasized freedom, personal goals, ambition, wealth, pleasure, life meaning, a spiritual life, a varied life, independence and responsibility. It appeared that the respondents had been influenced by both the global values of late modernity and Chinese culture as well. These results may relate to the specific socio-political background of Hong Kong. According to Kwok and Chan (2002) Hong Kong has been on the periphery of both the Chinese motherland and the British Empire for the last 150 years. Hong Kong was a place where Chinese and Western civilizations were blurred and intermingled. Although a mixed society to a certain degree, Hong Kong consists essentially of two racial groups – Chinese and European. Since Chinese people make up most of the population, the majority identify with Chinese culture. A key survey conducted by Lau Siu-kai (1994), cited in King (2002, p. 132) found that 92.9 percent of Hong Kong people agreed that in present-day Hong Kong, traditional Chinese values such as loyalty, filial piety, benevolence and righteousness were still respected. Notably, the results of the focus groups were in line with the above survey. Key findings are now presented about the respondents' choice of main values relating to variables of gender, age, marital status, working status, educational attainment and region of residence.

Gender and choice of most preferred values

It is relevant to note the influence of gender on young adults' choice of preferred values. The majority of the male respondents put more emphasis on personal development and placed less emphasis on family relationships.

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A3 (23-year old unemployed male who moved out of his family after conflict with parents. Cohabiting with a young female):

> I give five marks to wealth and freedom. I think that money is of utmost importance. As I have moved out (from parental home), I understand the importance of having money. (line 13-15) …The most important things are independence and sense of responsibility as I do not want to rely on others. (line 43-44)

By contrast, most of the female respondents put more emphasis on family relationships instead of personal development and ambition.

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A4 (22-year old housewife with eight-month-old baby, married after being pregnant with boy friend):
> Family relationship and well-being are the most important. (line 23)…Respect your parents is also important. (line 146)

This may be due in part to traditional cultural values regarding the roles of male and female in Chinese society. There is a Chinese saying that ‘Talent is to man what beauty is to woman’. That is why a talented man and a beautiful woman are in traditional thinking, considered an ideal couple in China. The Chinese word ‘tsai’ (talent), however, has enlarged its connotation in recent years to imply wealth, status and power (Lew 1998, p. 221). According to Confucius, the ideal Confucian ‘Five relations’, namely between ruler and subject, parent and child, husband and wife, older and younger brother, and between friends, are considered the basis of all social connections between persons. In an idealized traditional context, Confucian teaching holds that the superior member of each of the relationships such as ruler, parent, husband, older brother, older friend has the duty of benevolence and the role of provision of guidance and loving care for the subordinate member as subject, child, wife, etc. The subordinate member in turn has the duty to obey and reciprocate with, not only support, but also love and respect towards the superior (Ng 2007, p. 127). Insofar as Confucian values still permeate cultural dispositions in Hong Kong it was

noticeable that male respondents stressed personal development and material wealth e.g. money. As with research by Lee (2000), female respondents referred often to their supportive role and focused more on family and caring. This suggests the influence of traditional Chinese culture on the perception of males and females on their gendered roles in society. However, this differed from research by Chow and Lum (2008) which indicated that female respondents were less likely to agree that a man's role was to earn money and support the family and the woman's role was simply to take care of the family. The interpenetration of western and traditional values would seem to explain in part the different and sometimes contradictory views that now emerge from research in Hong Kong.

Age and choice of most preferred values

Regarding the variable of age in relation to young adults' choice of preferred value, those young respondents aged 17-20 while influenced by ideas of individualism put emphasis on spiritual dimension over material prosperity. This may reflect their search for self-identity and meaning, an orientation to a more idealistic life plan that might be expected of young people completing their schooling and college years.

> Focus Group 2, interviewee B5 (a 20-year old male undergraduate):
> I put the emphasis on meaning of life. I think that we should have a life goal. It does not matter whether we can achieve the goal or not. (line 17-18) …I also agree that one's spiritual life is very important. I am used to reflecting on myself and to see whether there is room for improvement. I am used to reflecting on a daily basis. (line 332-335)

Some indicated that they emphasized freedom, social recognition, broadmindedness and life enjoyment. They sought freedom as they had been living under the reign of

Socialist China and feared too many interventions from the Central Government. They were influenced by liberalism and believed freedom was of the "utmost importance".

> Focus Group 2, interviewee B4 (a young male undergraduate, line 45-50):
> In fact, I think that freedom is of utmost importance, especially in Hong Kong as Hong Kong is part of mainland China. Sometimes, there may be political intervention from the mainland China such as the proposed legislation on Article 23 in Hong Kong. In our neighboring Macau, the legislation on Article 23 has already been enacted. I don't want to have little freedom as can be observed in mainland China.

Those respondents aged 22-25 held different views. Some of the respondents, influenced by materialism and individualism, indicated that wealth, independence and ambition were important as they had started their career and were now shouldering family financial liabilities.

> Focus Group 2, interviewee B6 (a 23-years old female undergraduate):
> I think that money is very important. Now I am working part-time and have become more involved in society. I believe if one has no money, one can do anything you want. One cannot survive without money. In fact, wealth is not the most important in my life but at this moment I have an aspiration for wealth. (line 250-255)…I think that independence and capabilities are very important. As I do not want to rely on others, I would emphasize independence. You cannot trust others and you can only rely on yourself. In this competitive society, I will make sure that I will equip myself to meet the challenges ahead. As such, independence and capabilities are important to me. (line 274-279)

Unlike the young people in the research by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (1997) which indicated they preferred 'peace of mind' to 'wealth' and 'social status', the respondents of the higher age group in this focus group placed more emphasis on wealth.

Marital status and choice of most preferred values

Regarding the influence of marital status on young adults' most preferred value, the vast majority of young adults, irrespective of their marital status, extolled notions of individualism. As with research by Yip et al. (2011) that indicated the importance of freedom to young people, the respondents in this focus group also placed emphasis on individual needs, aspirations for personal benefits, pleasure, life enjoyment and freedom.

> Focus group 3, interviewee C1 (a 25-year old married woman who worked as account clerk, line 43-47):
> I think the most important value is pleasure, to have fun and be happy. It does not depend on money alone. My expectations are rather low. I may be content with my current living and my job. You may say that I am too complacent. But I am happy and have enjoyment in life.

Working status and choice of most preferred values

As with the research by Hartley (1991) that indicated enjoyment was important to many young adults, so the views on pleasure seeking and life enjoyment were also shared by the focus group comprising those already in the workforce. It is possible that they would have encountered problems such as stress and interpersonal tensions that made them realize the importance of enjoying life's pleasures to balance a demanding and competitive work life. Their comments generally suggested they were influenced by global values of individualism in regard to personal enjoyment and pleasure.

As with other young people, religious influences also played a part for some respondents in encouraging them to pursue a meaningful life (see Geertz 1983). Unlike the working group, those who were studying referred much less to family or financial burdens. Instead they focused on freedom, pleasure, creativity and a varied life. Apart from the value of individualism, they tended to be influenced by notions of liberalism as well. They hoped to live a creative and colorful life without too many restrictions imposed on them. In short, those who were students enjoyed freedom and sought to minimize control by parents.

Educational attainment and choice of most preferred values

Regarding the influence of educational attainment on young adults' choice of value, all secondary/ high school students espoused the value of being responsible. They may be influenced in this by school and family as these social institutions instill the importance of a sense of obligation and responsibility. Most of the respondents with an undergraduate and postgraduate qualification placed an emphasis on developing personal goals, family security and relationships, honoring of parents and the elders, and loyalty. Their comments generally suggested they tended to be influenced by both traditional family values and a global value of individualism around the notion of personal development. It is useful to recall that under a competitive global climate, citizens are likely to pursue continuing education in order to maintain their competitive edge. The results are similar to the study by Hartley (1991) that indicated the importance to young people of the traditional areas of family, work and close relationships. Social contact, enjoyment and self-development are also important to many young adults.

Locality/ residence and choice of most preferred values

Lastly, regarding the impact of residence on young adults' most preferred value, the respondents across the three regions shared the ideals of pursuing pleasure and freedom. There was no significant difference in the views of young adults in the three regions. This may be explained by the fact that Hong Kong is a relatively small region with an excellent network of communications and mobility. Hence, the impact of residence and place may be minimal in shaping young adults' perceptions of their most preferred values.

Less preferred values

Concerning those values less preferred by the young adults, Focus Group 4 comprising those who were non-working and non-studying had similar views on respect for tradition. To them, many traditional values such as ancestor worship, or superiority of male over female, were considered outdated. Male respondents tended to be more influenced by global values of pluralism and liberalism and believed such influences should not be restricted by requirements of reverence towards ancestors or elders, and that a liberal, multi-cultural society was preferred. Similarly, some female participants who tended to be more influenced by feminism and individualism, criticized the traditional values of unequal status of men and women and felt it could hinder women's personal and career development.

> Focus Group 4, interviewee D3 (21-year old male undergraduate with harmonious family and long term girl friend):
> Paying respect to your ancestors is not so important. (line 122) … I do not think that 'respecting tradition' is important. I put relatively high ratings on creativity,

> freedom and pleasure. I think that every man is unique in this world. A multi-cultural society is important to me as well. (line 138-141)
>
> Focus Group 4, interviewee D5 (a high school male student who had dropped out for several years and now returning to study, line 1382-1384):
> Traditional values do not work nowadays. For instance, regarding traditional value of respecting the elderly and listening to them, it depends on the matters concerned.
>
> Focus Group 4, interviewee D6 (a high school female graduate who was neither studying nor working):
> I give low rating to the item of respecting tradition. I think it makes no sense in respecting tradition. Tradition will hinder my personal development. (line 379-380) … Maybe because of the unequal status of man and woman in society. Many jobs can only be done by men. The society gives many privileges to men. I prefer to be a strong career woman and achieve what I want regardless of what others say about me. (line 389-391)

As with research by Wu (2010) that indicated young people in Hong Kong were less likely to think they were mainly influenced by traditional Chinese culture, so the respondents in this focus group also considered they were influenced by western values.

Nevertheless, there were participants who took an opposite view on the importance of global values to do with feminism and pluralism. Some female respondents from Focus Group 5, the studying group, considered that ambition was not their life goal because a woman who was too ambitious may not be approved of. They tended to be influenced by traditional values about women's status and saw mainly the opportunity costs paid by career women. Another working female did not favor living in a multi-cultural world as she tended to be influenced more by traditional ideas and could not accept too much diversity in daily living. The above findings suggest the

interplay of both global values and traditional Chinese values on young adults' perceptions. This push and pull between traditional and more progressive gender roles and values is not exclusive to these respondents and women from other developed economies invoke similar tensions (McRobbie 2008).

Cohabitants did not like to follow traditional values as well. They focused on their own preferences and interests, personal feelings and needs. This is perhaps understandable as they chose cohabitation rather than the more traditional route of marriage; of course cohabitation may be a prelude to marriage as well.

> Focus Group Three, interviewee C5 (a female cohabiting with her boy friend, line 273-274):
> I give the lowest mark to 'respect for tradition'. I think that is not important. I would like to follow my heart instead of the tradition.(Line273-275)

To summarize, most focus group youth seem to be influenced considerably by liberalism, individualism, feminism and pluralism. They wished to choose their own lifestyles with more freedom, pleasure, pursuit of personal goals and a varied life. Yet, a minority would treasure more traditional cultural values that focused on family security and relationship, and honoring parents and elders. Some younger people did not agree with the pursuit of wealth while others indicated that wealth was most important to them. Their value preference varied in terms of gender, age, marital status, working status, and educational attainment. In short there was no common cluster of values that spanned all groups.

Young adults' perceptions on marriage

Regarding the young people's views on marriage, a majority of the participants planned to get married. As with research by Chow and Lum (2008) and Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (1996, 2000) that indicated the young adults' strong support for marriage, so the respondents of the six focus groups also agreed that marriage was a desirable step in life. The main reasons were a preference for companionship and mutual sharing and support in marriage. They also referred to marriage as an essential task in life as was a commitment to a partner; it was a social responsibility and a form of accountability to family and society and a symbol of 'completeness'. Thus, on one hand they tended to be influenced by traditional family values to establish a family through marriage to meet family expectations. (According to Chinese tradition, a singleton is not 'complete' without another half. An unmarried person is not quite regarded as 'adult' until after marriage). On the other hand they were influenced by individualism and believed that marriage should also meet their own particular needs.

Chinese cultural values on marriage

For the Chinese, the family is the most important aspect of a person's life, the foundation of one's identity, one's morality, and a dominant source of the meaning of life. The traditional Confucian 'Five Relations,' namely between ruler and subject, parent and child, husband and wife, older and younger brother, and between friends, are considered the basis of all social connections between persons. Three out of these five relations are found within the family, a testament to the importance of family in China (Ng 2007, p. 127). According to the sage Mencius, 'on the birth of a boy, it is

wished by the parents that he shall have a wife and, on the birth of a girl, it is wished by them that she shall have a husband. This parental feeling is possessed by all' (Mencius, Book III, Pt. II, Ch 4, Sec. 6, in Cheng 1946). Hence, it is not surprising that marriage has long been viewed as an inevitable stage of life by the majority of respondents who would all have been exposed in varying degrees to traditional Chinese values.

Reasons to get married

A majority of participants stated that they wanted to get married. The reasons for getting married were different for male and female respondents. Male respondents wanted to get married because they had a preference for companionship and mutual commitment within the marriage. They also anticipated having children once married. In this we might suggest that they were also influenced by global values of individualism in that they hoped to get clear individual benefits from a marriage.

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A3 (a 23-year old unemployed youth who left home and cohabits with girl friend, line 194-196):
> I think that marriage is very important. When I get older, I need to have a companion. In other words, when you reach sixty or seventy, you have your own children to look after you.

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A1 (a 22-year old unemployed male with an old father and younger-age mother, line 199-203):
> When you are down-hearted because of your job, you need someone to listen to you and share your difficulties. Besides, if you reach forty, even if you have a spouse, you will be bored without children. If you have your children, this will add color to your life.

Amongst female respondents, there was also a majority in favor of marriage. As with

the study by Blakemore et al. (2005) that indicated a drive to marry in women predicted by traditional attitude towards gender roles, so many female respondents in the focus groups were influenced by traditional family values about marriage and regarded having children as a ‘natural’ and inevitable aspect of a woman’s future.

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A6 (a single 22-year old female undergraduate, whose mother was deceased. She hoped to have a happy family with children of her own, line 213-216):
> I think that it is natural to get married and to have children. Graduation from university, dating and marriage are normal. Hence, marriage and having children are an ordinary part of life.

Reasons not to get married

A small portion of respondents did not plan to get married. Some said that they only wanted courtship but not marriage. They had no faith in marriage, citing the failure rate of those amongst their networks. Some indicated that the most important thing was the relationship of the couple instead of the legal form of union. Some respondents equated marriage with the loss of freedom. One cohabiting respondent indicated that she would only choose marriage in order to be accountable to the baby if there was an unwed pregnancy. Another matriculated female stated that she was still young and the main target was to pursue her personal goals and longing for freedom. This would seem to be congruent with research by Wu (2010) that indicated younger people were increasingly delaying marriage. As with research by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (1996) that indicated only a small percent of the respondents claimed they did not want to get married because ‘they would prefer to be single’ or ‘they are afraid of marriage’, so only a small proportion of the respondents in this focus group did not plan to get married. The following are their views on

marriage:

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A2 (a 23-year old man who worked in his family's company and often worked overtime. He cohabited with his girl friend):
> No, I do not plan to have marriage. (line 172)… It was troublesome. I do not have enough fun and do not want to take up this responsibility. After getting marriage, my status is different. If I am just her boyfriend, I can have many options available. But after marriage, you will be bound by the marriage certificate. I do not want to reach that stage. If I go out to flirt around after marriage, it may be considered irresponsible and I do want to be a burden to others. After divorce, my partner will bear the name of 'divorcee' and will attract criticism. If at a suitable time, I and my partner consider that both can get along well, we may get married. If I do not reach that stage, marriage is not an option for me. (line 288-296)

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A7 (a 18-year old unemployed girl who stated she was cohabiting in a lesbian relationship, she did not know her family of origin and her foster father had died):
> I will not consider marriage. (line 186)… I think that it is not necessary. (line 330)… Even if you get along with the other half, there is no guarantee that the relationship will continue into the future. One may love the other at the moment, but after a few years, things may change. I prefer cohabitation. Marriage and divorce will all elicit expenses. There is no guarantee that you or your partner will not be unfaithful to the other. (line 334-339)

The respondents typically indicated that their views were in part informed by their own family backgrounds but that values pertaining to individualism and liberalism and which emphasized individual enjoyment without the burden and bondage of marriage influenced them also. The above respondents held a pluralistic view of lifestyle and were seemingly not much influenced by traditional values.

Desirable age to get married

As to the desirable age to get married, male respondents indicated around 30-35 years old as they might have reached a career peak by that age or be well on the way to career achievements. Female respondents indicated that before 30 years old was the desirable age to get married for economic and biological reasons. These results were quite similar to the research by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2000) in that more than 50% of some 514 respondents stated that the desirable age should be between 25 and 29, while 30% opted for 30 or older. We can see here the trend of delay to marriage amongst new generations.

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A1 (a 22-year old unemployed male studying basic skill based courses, line 415-418):
> At least age 31 or 32. I think that boys at age 25 or 26 were not mature enough. If you were 30-40 years old, you have reached the top golden years in career and you become more mature. You probably would still be unemployed at age 25 or 26.

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A6 (a 22-year old female undergraduate studying art and design):
> Initially I think that 26 to 27 is the desirable age to get married because you have graduated from university and have worked for a few years. But the reality is that you may not be sound economically. You have to face the reality and to consider marriage after you are financially stable. (line 397-401)…before 30 is the most desirable age to get married because one would have a baby after getting married and it is dangerous to have baby after age 35. (line 432-434)

From the above responses, shared by many of the male participants, it can be observed that male respondents considered career and economic factors as the most important pre-conditions for marriage. This might suggest both the influence of individualism and freedom at play as well as influence by traditional Chinese values

that men should have a sufficient financial ability to provide before they enter marriage as they will likely become the key breadwinner of the family.

Living with parents/ in-laws after marriage

As to whether respondents would live with parents or parent in-law after marriage, a majority of respondents indicated that they did not prefer to live with them. The results stand in some contrast to a survey by Lee (2000) which indicated that a sizeable minority of their Hong Kong sample agreed that newly married couples should live away from their parents. Instead, the focus group results here find more similarity with the research by Chow and Lum (2008) that indicated a majority of their focus group members would not want to live with their parents or parent-in-laws after marriage because of similar reasons of protecting privacy and avoiding family conflicts. The findings in this doctoral study suggest that young people prefer to establish their own household and nuclear family and prefer to live separately from their parents after marriage if possible.

> Focus Group 5, interviewee E7 (a 25-year old male social work postgraduate who worked in the Social Welfare Department and is planning to get married soon):
> I would like to have my own independent family. If we live with parents after marriage, there will be more conflicts and our parents may intervene into our daily decisions. (line 1410 -1412) … It is more inconvenient in lifestyle and daily living if we live with our parents under one roof after marriage. (line 1427 -1428) … To live nearby is a good choice as our elderly parents may need to be taken care of. If we do not live with them after marriage, my partner and I can have more space. (line 1423 -1426)

Male respondents typically wanted to have personal space and freedom while female

respondents were afraid of inter-generational domestic disagreements about lifestyle and child rearing practices. Their responses generally suggested that they were more influenced by liberalism and western values that one should leave parents and form one's own family of procreation after marriage. They wanted more private space. In Hong Kong, land is costly and most people live in high rise flats. The average size of a four person flat may be just around 60 square metres. As such, conflicts may easily crop up because of a lack of space. It is understandable that female respondents were more concerned with inter-generational domestic conflicts as females typically take on the role of care-giver responsible for child rearing and daily household chores in a Chinese family which may also invite the close attention of parents of either spouse.

Participants were asked about the likely major reasons that would influence them to live with parents of either spouse after marriage. Similar to the research findings by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (1996), so the focus group respondents tended to give reasons such as issues of honoring parents, filial duty, wishes of elders, and also for economic need. From a traditional Chinese perspective, the classic script of filial piety reminds its readers, 'The body with its limbs and hair and skin comes to a person from father and mother, and it is on no account to be spoiled or injured' (Ng 2007, p.131). Thus, looking after oneself and one's children becomes a form of repayment to one's parents. Needless to say, Chinese filial piety includes taking care and honoring one's parents. In Hong Kong, the price of flats is very high and may not be within the means of young couples. Thus, some may have to live with their parents or in-laws after marriage because of socio-economic factors such as costs and scarcity of affordable housing. However, others may do so that based on traditional motives to do with values of filial piety that may include care for elders and other family members.

Focus Group 1, interviewee A6 (a 22-year old female undergraduate, line 498-499):
They will be happier if we live with them after marriage. If we do not have money, we have to live with parents and to rely on them because living out is expensive.

Focus group 4, interviewee D7 (a 25-year old university male graduate who worked in a China trade company for a short period of time but was neither working nor studying in the last 6 months, line 71-73):
My parents have a self-owned property. I prefer to live with parents after marriage because it is expensive to rent an apartment outside. I don't want to waste money.

Impact of parents' marriage on young adults

A majority indicated that they were influenced by the nature of their parents' marriage. The findings corresponded to some Western studies in which family-of-origin variables and parents' marital conflict affected young people's motivation and commitment in marriage (Levy et al. 1997; Riggio 2004; Mulder and Gunnoe 1999; Mone et al. 2006). The focus group findings also corresponded notably to the research by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2000) that indicated more than half of the respondents claimed the union of their parents had an effect on their own views on marriage. Across the focus groups the older age group respondents (aged 22-25) said that their parents supported each other and they hoped that they would enjoy similar strong conjugal ties like their parents.

Focus Group 2, interviewee B7 (a 24-year old male Catholic, a social work undergraduate, line 590 - 594):
I think that the influence of my parents on me is great. Though my parents sometimes quarrel with each other for financial reasons, they support each other

and take care of the children in the family. I aspire to get married as I love the sense of interdependence and mutual sharing.

They also opined that they had some relatives who were single or only got married at a later age. They felt that these relatives were often lonely and that not everyone can cope with isolation. Only a small proportion of respondents indicated that they were not influenced by their parents' marriage in regard to their own attitudes and plans for marriage.

Reasons for divorce

In relation to matters of divorce most respondents tended to invoke a mix of reasons around domestic competency and commitment of the spouse to the home, their emotional involvement with the spouse and more generally if they could live together harmoniously. Unlike the research by Chow and Lum (2008) that indicated there was no significant gender differences in whether their Chinese respondents would divorce their spouse if the latter had an extra-marital relationship, the female respondents in the focus groups in this study tended to stress more often issues around the faithfulness of the spouse as a key component in considering divorce.

Sex relationship

As regards sex relationship between males and females, a majority of the respondents described how they thought it important to first court and 'fall in love' and thereafter get married with a view to maintaining a long-term relationship. This finding shares much similarity with research by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (1996, 2000) that indicated 'courtship followed by marriage' was the most popular mode

among young respondents. In this context, their comments suggested that they were influenced more by traditional family values around the notion that marriage should follow the realization of affect with a suitable partner.

Many of the participants did not accept the idea of cohabitation. Notably, respondents who were undergraduates or postgraduates shared similar views that tended to reject cohabitation, viewing it as irresponsible, without commitment, not serious and lacking full meaning as a partnership. They tended to be more influenced by the traditional values that intimate sexual relationship should only occur within a conventional marriage. The result corresponds to early studies by Wu (1981) and Lee (1992) that only a small percentage (36% and 26% respectively) of young people accepted cohabitation. Unlike the later research by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2000) and by Chow and Lum (2008) that showed a significant percentage of respondents (72% & 69% respectively) supported cohabitation, the young adults of our focus groups generally adopted more traditional attitude towards cohabitation. This focus group result was also different from some Western studies (Taylor et al. 2007; Trevor 1998) that young adults attach far less moral stigma than do their elders to cohabitation out with marriage.

> Focus Group 4, interviewee E4 (a 24-year old university graduate working in information technology, line 154 - 156):
> I do not agree with cohabitation. I think cohabitation is not responsible. Marriage is a commitment.

However, a minority of respondents, especially the younger age group (17-21) with high school education attainment, and including cohabitating respondents seemed more accepting of diverse forms of sexual relationships and marriages. A few

respondents shared views on marriage that were affected by the poor marital relationships of their relatives. Hence, some respondents shared the view that cohabitation could be considered so as to avoid wasting money in divorce and causing unhappiness to parents of both families.

> Focus Group 4, interviewee E2 (a 18-year old female high school student who failed in Advanced Level exam and now was repeating Form 7 again):
> I personally think that cohabitation is a step before marriage. It is serious and positive. Before cohabitation, both parties should have a certain understanding of each other. (line 550-553) … If my partner and I cohabited together, we would see whether we are suitable for each other. If we find that the other is not suitable, we could separate. It is better than to divorce after marriage. Divorce will cost money and hurt the relationship of both families. Marriage is not only a matter concerning the couple, it also concerns the couple's family of origin. (line 559 - 564)

In short, some of the respondents tended to be influenced by global value of pluralism and displayed tolerance towards different forms of sex relationships. It is relevant to note that most of them respected the choice of other people to cohabit or engage in gay or lesbian relationships. Their comments suggested that they tended to be more open and influenced by pluralism and liberalism in viewing other people's sexuality. The respondents from the marital status group (Focus Group 3), i.e. singles, married and cohabited, were asked about their views on pre-marital sex, homosexuality, abortion and free love. This group, when compared with other focus groups, seemed more open and receptive to different forms of relationships. All respondents of this focus group accepted pre-marital sex provided that this was based on meaningful affection. They seemed influenced by the more global social trend of open attitudes to sexual relations and believed there was no need to suppress one's sexuality. It appeared that the young adults, irrespective of their own marital status, tended to be

influenced less by a traditional value of having sex only within lawful marriage, and more by global value of pluralism, individualism and liberalism. They wanted to satisfy their personal sexual needs and did not mind other people's perceptions about their own attitude and behaviour. The results here correspond well to research by the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (2006) and by Chow and Lum (2008) which both reported that around 70% of young respondents accepted the idea of pre-marital sex.

> Focus Group 3, interviewee C1 (a 25-year old married woman who worked as an account clerk, she had pre-marital sex before getting married to her boyfriend, line 609 – 616):
> I accept pre-marital sex but there must be love first. I think the Chinese society was too conservative in the past and there was repression of sexual needs. This may have the contrary effect of arousing the curiosity of teenagers resulting in many unwed mothers at age 12 or 13. Some people may oppose to pre-marital sex for religious reasons. I think this is fine. I think that school should promote safe sex. If someone wants to have sex without love or just for fun, I do not agree with it.

Similarly, concerning the matter of homosexuality, all respondents in Focus Group 3 accepted homosexuality but most of them stated they would be very uncomfortable to witness gay or lesbian people engaging overtly in displays of affection such as kissing. Such comments might suggest that the respondents were influenced by global values of pluralism and liberalism and held a relatively open attitude towards homosexuality and did not reject gay people and would respect their choices about their own lifestyle. It was notable that one respondent indicated her positive impression on gays had come from an international movie thereby reflecting a powerful source of western global values about sexual relationships.

> Focus Group 3, interviewee C5 (an undergraduate from a wealthy family. She had cohabited with her boy friend for several years, line 950 - 954):
> I accept homosexuality. Many movies related to homosexuality also reflected there was true love among gays. There are also homosexuals in my family. I only can not accept extramarital affairs. If you choose to get married, it should be for life and you have to remain loyal.

Nevertheless, in comparing the views of all participants to pre-marital sex and homosexuality, most tended to have more tolerance towards the former than the latter. Though they stated they had believed in tolerance of homosexuality most could not accept the idea of intimate same sex behaviour displayed in public areas as homosexuality acts were still viewed as "not natural" and still not commonly accepted in local Hong Kong Chinese society. Likewise, in the research by Chow and Lum (2008) we can note that some 76% of their survey respondents did not accept same-sex relationships between two adults. This seems to be quite different from Western societies which have a much higher acceptance and tolerance of same-sex unions and family types (Stacey 2005).

> Focus Group 3, interviewee C2 (a 25-year old cleaning worker with Form 5 education level):
> I accept gay marriage, but I cannot accept gay men kissing each other in front of me. I do not feel easy. If you are my friends and you love the same sex and want to get married, I will give my blessing. (line 882 – 885) … It is natural for one man and one woman to have sex. Homosexuality is not normal. I accept cohabitation and it is not illegal. (line 889 - 890)

Abortion and replacement of pets as partners/ family members

Regarding the issue of abortion, married and cohabited respondents did not express any particularly strong or discordant views on the issue seeing it as a matter of choice

or necessity. One single respondent accepted abortion if another partner did not want to get married as it would affect the growth and wellbeing of the new life. With regard to free love, single and cohabited respondents had no comments on the issue. Most respondents said that they did not mind if women took an active role in dating men. In the research by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2000), 87.4% of young adults accepted the view that it was acceptable for 'women to take the initiative to arrange a date'. Age difference between partners was not seen as a particular problem unless the gap was too wide, as this might affect mutual and meaningful communication.

Respondents categorized by different educational attainment in Focus Group 5 were asked whether human beings could be replaced by a pet as an intimate 'other'. The majority of the respondents did not agree except one undergraduate who suffered from separation pains due to the death of a close friend. A large majority of respondents rejected the idea of pets as somehow a substitute for a partner or family because of their different biological nature, short life span and lack of language for meaningful communication. Similarly, the research by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2005) indicated that 73.8% of their sample would not prefer to keep pets than rear children, while 23.1% would. However, one respondent who took a more pluralistic view on family systems supported the idea that pets could be in a sense family members as they were loyal and friendly to humans.

> Focus Group 4, interviewee E3 (a male undergraduate):
> I think humans are more complicated and wicked. Dogs will not rebel against you. They are loyal to you. (line 857-858)… The owners of dogs and cats can regard their pets as the better half. Human and pets can form a family. (line 886-887)

To summarize, most of the respondents of the six focus groups revealed an overall preference for getting married after a mature courtship as this was viewed as one of the expected and more socially approved life stages. Their views would seem to indicate the strong influence of individualism and most hoped to get various personal needs met and a range of social and emotional benefits through marriage. The participants also had relatively open attitudes towards pre-marital sex, homosexuality abortion and free love. Most seemed to accept a sense of pluralism in the world of domestic relationships; traditional family values and influences while by no means eclipsed seemed to have weakened compared to earlier generations.

Young adults' perceptions on parenthood

Having children – a continuation of kinship?

Most of the respondents anticipated having children. This result was similar to relevant studies by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (1996, 2005) and by Chow and Lum (2008) who noted that a majority of their respondents intended to have children. The reasons for having children were to add to the variety and enjoyment of domestic arrangements and make a marriage more durable. This might suggest that respondents did not have much confidence in marriage per se in a late modern world where individual goal setting and goal seeking placed a strain on emotional and domestic relationships between dyads and hence children might help 'thicken' the ties and commitments of marriage. Other reasons were to satisfy a sense of biological imperative, to fulfill the wishes of both sets of parents, and to meet a wider sense of social expectation and to provide meaning and preoccupation within the domestic environment. Thus apart from the influence of global values such as

individualism, there is the impact of Chinese cultural values and the influence of this upon the perception of young adults on parenthood. In traditional Chinese culture, having sons and grandsons is a highly regarded status and strongly related to male preference; a means of gaining pride and happiness in later life. Sons and grandsons are considered the parents' and grandparents' fortune, whereas daughters are seen as the 'possession' of other families. The former are entitled to perpetuate the ancestral lineage while the latter are not (Lew, 1998). To Confucians, offspring represent perpetuity of lineage, and the ancestors' lives are consequently perceived as immortal. Through reproduction, one not only passes along one's family name, but also one's blood, and hence life, to later generations. Therefore, anyone who severed the flow of continuity would be condemned as having committed the gravest sin of being unfilial (Ng, 2007). Indeed, only a few respondents said they would consider adopting a child as an option. This might be due to the influence of traditional Chinese values which emphasize the importance of blood lineage. This finding corresponded to the survey by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2005) which found that a majority of young respondents said they would not adopt as adoption was no substitute for having biological children. However, the strength of such traditions needs to be seen as by no means all determining, and a small proportion of respondents stated they would rather choose cohabitation without children based on their personal preferences for freedom or sexual orientation.

Interestingly, some of the older age group (22-25) with achievements in higher education (undergraduate or above) were more influenced by traditional values surrounding procreation. They tended to be influenced by Chinese notions of collectivism whereby childbirth was not a private matter but involved the expectation and interests of parents as well. They were of the view that childbirth was a social

responsibility and a continuation of kinship. This finding was quite similar to the research by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2005) and Chow and Lum (2008), both studies indicated that older respondents showed a stronger intention to have children. The major reason for raising children was to have offspring for the family (33.5%), followed by loving kids (29.8%), and seeing procreation as a process of life (24.3%) (Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups 2005). The intention of higher age range members was somewhat different from the findings of some Western studies (see O'Laughlin and Anderson 2001) whereby those that intended to have children invoked more strongly intrinsic motivations of personal benefits and enjoyment.

> Focus Group 2, interviewee B7 (a 24-year old male Catholic, social work undergraduate, line 838-839):
> I think childbirth is the continuation of kinship. It symbolizes the sublimation of marital love.

> Focus Group 2, interviewee B6 (a 23-years old female undergraduate):
> I will take into account the financial resources. (line 413) … I think that it is social responsibility. Besides, I would like to have children and grandchildren visiting me when I am old. I like the warm family atmosphere. (line 851-853)

Sociologists who focus upon China often refer to Liang Shuming, a Confucian social reformer of the 1920s and 1930s, who stated that Chinese society is neither individual-based nor society-based but rather relationship-based. In this sense it would be regarded as unfilial to their parents if sons do not have offspring (see Lau 1970). In contrast, the younger age group (17-21) considered that having children was less about continuing the family line but more as a means to maintain the marriage. This might suggest that the younger group had some doubts about contemporary marriage to sustain itself in a late modern world; they hoped the triad of parents and

child might sustain their commitment to marriage.

> Focus Group 2, interviewee B4 (a male undergraduate who was born in mainland China and migrated to Hong Kong when he was a child, line 859-860):
> I think that having children is conducive to maintain the marriage. Children can serve as a buffer whenever there are marital conflicts.

As to reasons for having children, there was not much difference between those working or studying. However, male respondents tended to consider notions of descendency and economic capacity associated with family building, while female respondents stated that they wanted children for their own sake as well as for personal fulfillment and also to respond to the wishes of spouses. By contrast in the study by Chow and Lum (2008), female respondents were less likely to agree that child bearing was a necessary step in life. By comparison, male respondents tended to be more influenced by traditional values and aimed to fulfill the wishes of parents. Female respondents tended to be more influenced by individual life-style in that children would bring meaning and joy to their domestic world. Some respondents indicated that they hoped that their children would bring them both rewards and at some future point some support by way of filial obligation:

> Focus Group 6, interviewee F6 (a 19-year old male with high school education level, he was a single child and worked as beach life-guard, line 1367):
> The reason for having children is that they will support me when I'm old and cannot take care of myself.

Their comments generally suggested that they were on the one hand influenced by traditional value of investing in children as a means safeguard an uncertain future in later years but also their views suggested notions of individualism whereby children would fulfill their own private needs for stimulation, love and happiness.

Reasons not to have children

A minority of respondents did not wish to have children and this was usually because they had other more pressing aims around personal development such as studying or career, or earning money. It suggested that some might be much more influenced by global values to do with feminism and individualism whereby personal biographies were chosen that rejected the burden and bondage of parenthood. This finding has some correspondence with White's study (2003) which argued that underlying young people's perceptions was the global value of individualism expressed through prioritized personal career and financial goals, and the need to establish a consolidated sense of self prior to partnership and parenting. Also, in keenly competitive Hong Kong society, the urge for continuing education might further delay the timing of marriage and parenthood of young adults. Furthermore, Chow and Lum (2008) noted that long working hours, a crowded environment for family and children, and lack of money were reasons for not having children, such reasons were also cited by focus group participants.

It is also relevant to note that the older age group (22-25) would consider factors such as fertility age, baby well-being, financial implications before deciding on having the first baby. By contrast the younger age group did not refer to such planning and did not refer to fertility age or economic factors as they were, predictably, more concerned with their current studies and personal development. As to the age to have the first child after marriage, a majority of respondents spoke of being financially stable at around 30 years and saw this age as a key indicator of when they should consider having children. In addition, the respondents indicated that they did not want

to have children at an old age given the health risks and other disadvantages of being an older parent with young children. Again, the finding is similar to that discovered by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2005) whose young respondents claimed that twenty-eight was a suitable age for having a first child.

Female respondents generally referred to the aspect of physical and emotional readiness to support the normal growth of the embryo. Male respondents by contrast placed emphasis on financial circumstances and family environment by way of planning for a family. Such gender differences in orientation would seem to suggest traditional cultural assumptions at play whereby a man is expected to put his focus on the public world while a woman focuses more on the private sphere. Such roles and assumptions, by no means clear cut, were nonetheless evident across the sample.

Out of wedlock

In regard to out of wedlock childbirth, few chose this option and a majority seemed more likely to adhere to more traditional values. Most regarded that it was irresponsible to have children out of wedlock particularly if the parents were not mature and did not know how to take care of their children. This result corresponded to the findings of Chow and Lum (2008) and Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2005) whereby nearly 60% of their respective respondents did not accept having children out of wedlock. This view would seem to find support in the traditional Chinese value that procreation does not come without marriage. Notably, married respondents in the Focus Group 3, perhaps influenced by liberalism, accepted the idea of out of wedlock birth provided that the couple agreed to it and had stable finances. By comparison, younger adults from Western societies would seem to attach far less

moral stigma than do their elders to out-of-wedlock births (Taylor et al. 2007).

Measures encouraging childbirth

As to the measures to encourage childbirth, the majority of the respondents indicated that economic, employment and social measures and incentives such as maternity and paternal leave, tax allowance, textbook allowance, milk powder subsidy, and the provision of childcare services would influence young adults in their attitudes towards childbirth. In addition, the educational system and social environment such as job opportunities and legislation on a minimum wage in Hong Kong would also be factors to be taken into account. Their comments reflect that decisions about having children were not just a personal preference of the young adults but related to socio-economic factors as well. These findings were similar to the results of a large telephone survey by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups in 2005 that child care services, extending the length of statutory maternity leave and increasing child tax allowance were important measures in boosting childbirth. In their study, education, economic prospects and employment opportunities appeared to have greatest influence on young people's plans for procreation.

Furthermore, there were various orientations which guided the respondents from different education levels to decide about childbirth. Respondents at the secondary school level considered that the educational system would be a factor delaying their decision to have children. This was predictable given that they were still attempting to secure limited places at universities under keen competition and stressful public examinations. Education opportunities became the issue of most concern for this coming cluster of undergraduates. Respondents currently in university were

concerned more with career opportunities than family building. Respondents at postgraduate level considered that adequate tax allowances and child care services could encourage them to have a baby. Transition from student to independent adult parent was seen as likely in some indeterminate future for most of these respondents.

Some from the younger age group (17-21) who planned to have children considered that the government should encourage the middle class to have more children. It was believed that in recent years the Hong Kong rate of population growth was decreasing and that the middle classes in particular were less interested in having children and more engaged in lifestyle choices. Based on the knowledge that Hong Kong's population growth currently relies mainly on the childbirth of new arrivals from the mainland China (they were mostly poor and with lower education), they suggested the Hong Kong Government should take measures to encourage childbirth of local citizens.

> Focus Group2, interviewee B5 (a 20-year old male, an undergraduate with middle class background, line 1090-1091):
> I would think that children allowance is a good idea. Hong Kong Government should encourage the middle-class with good educational background to consider childbirth.

Desirable age to have first childbirth and number of children

Most respondents indicated that they would like to have a first childbirth at age of 30-35 and preferred two children, specifically one boy and one girl. In Chinese culture, the combination of Chinese characters of boy and girl makes up the word of 'Good'. Hence it is widely seen as a blessing to have one boy and one girl. Their

comments more or less reflected the trend of contemporary Hong Kong society that young adults preferred the slogan 'Two is enough' to form a nuclear family. This is different from the traditional Chinese value that 'one should have as many children as he can' to extend his family line in a once rural society. These results correspond to the findings of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2005) study that age 28 appeared to be the suitable point for those who intended to have children, with having two children as the ideal family size. It also reflects the trend of delayed parenthood among the younger generation in Hong Kong.

Young adults' perceptions on family responsibility

Chinese cultural values on family responsibility

Confucian teaching of 'Five Relations' as mentioned earlier holds that the superior member of each of the five relationships has the duty of benevolence and the role of provision of guidance and loving care for the subordinate member. The subordinate member in turn has the duty to obey and reciprocate with, not only support, but also love and respect to the superior (Ng 2007, p.127). Based on Confucian teaching, family responsibility and filial piety play an important role in the traditional Chinese culture. Of the many ancient virtues in China, filial piety forms the root of all. It is the respect that children should pay to their parents, their grandparents, and the aged. Filial piety often determines how one is judged, not only by other members of the family, but also by society at large. Chinese people believe that human love toward one's parents is somehow innate and stems from the fundamental nature of care provided by parents to a wholly dependent infant (Ng 2007).

It is also relevant to note that traditional Chinese values attached great importance to the value of collectivism cultivated by the strong ties associated with patriarchal relations. The interests of the society, the country and the family were always put first (Yang and Wang 2006, p.14). From the following findings, we can consider if such influences still obtain for today's Hong Kong young adults in taking up family obligations:

Definitions of family responsibility

Regarding views about what might constitute obligations towards the family, the young people held diverse opinions. Males and females held different orientations toward family responsibilities. Males tended to focus on external aspects in the world of work and social opportunities, with a view to supporting families financially. Females tended to focus on family matters. Both spoke of different roles and expectations that implicated gender differences. Female responses were inclined to traditional values that women should put their focus on domestic affairs and taking care of family members. These basic but fundamental gender differences may be attributed to traditional Chinese values.

According to traditional Chinese values, children were not cherished as individuals whose destiny was to fulfill their own unique potential, but were valued because they, especially the sons, would help with work in the fields, produce sons who would carry on the family name, and provide for their parents in their old age (Eastman 1988, p.15). A woman's role in the family was also cast as imperative, both to her husband and to her children, in private and in public. Chinese culture envisions the wise and virtuous woman empowering her husband and her children for social and moral

leadership, from which the family and state will benefit. Moreover, the mother plays numerous demanding roles: providing love and care for her children; love and support for her husband, and as a daughter-in-law, serving the elders of her husband's family. Motherhood is also a method of self-actualization for women in Chinese society. Glorification of motherhood proliferates in Chinese literature throughout history (Ng 2007).

Much of this tradition obtained for the respondents. The male respondents tended to focus on their (current or future) work role in order to earn a living and the females typically invoked a supportive and caring role in the family. In short, respondents across the focus groups defined family responsibilities as to study hard, care and respect parents, to provide for their needs, to raise up children responsibly, to do household chores, to both accompany and provide company for elders, typically by 'having tea' with parents / elderly at Chinese restaurants. Interestingly, some regarded 'having tea' with the elderly or parents as a form of filial piety because in Hong Kong, 'yum cha' (have tea) with 'dim sum' (small Cantonese dishes) at restaurants is a custom prevalent in Southern China. Family solidarity and cohesiveness are reinforced at such gatherings. Overall, their responses suggested they tended to be influenced strongly by traditional values of filial piety. Similarly, in the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups survey (1996), most young people defined family responsibility as living with parents and staying with them and meeting their reasonable demands. Chow and Lum (2008)'s findings showed that 59% of their Chinese respondents agreed that one should work hard to move up in order to bring honor to the family. Some 73% agreed that children should consult their parents before taking a major decision.

Gender and family responsibility

In the focus group on gender, males and females held different orientations toward family responsibilities as influenced by traditional Chinese culture. Both spoke of different roles and expectations in regard to gender. Males stated:

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A2 (a 23-year old man who worked in his family's company and often worked overtime. He cohabited with his girl friend, line 811-812):
> The father will go out and earn money and mother will take care of household chores and children.

Female responses were quite similar to those of males, that is, that women should focus more on domestic affairs, taking care of family members.

> Focus Group 1, interviewee A4 (a 22-year old housewife who had an eight-month baby. She got married after being pregnant with boy friend, line 815-818):
> I will take care of husband and children and do the household chores. My husband goes out to earn money and I am responsible for cooking and doing domestic work.

Recent surveys and case studies indicate that an increasing number of parents prefer to have daughters than sons (The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong 1999; Miller 2004) as daughters tended to contribute more to the future well-being of their parents by providing daily assistance and emotional support. This gendered and traditional divide over family roles and public / private orientation by males and females stands in some contrast to more global values around a more equal and shared approach to family practices as evidenced in some western societies.

Age and family responsibility

Regarding the focus group comprising the younger age group (17-21), it was notable that they placed emphasis on the reciprocal obligations of both parents and children. Children should care for parents while parents should take responsibility and demonstrate strong commitment towards their children. By contrast, older age groups particularly those at work, mentioned more often the need to provide financial support for their parents. The research by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2001c) showed that some young people believed providing financial support for parents was an outdated norm. The difference might be related to the age of respondents as younger ones would not be expected to make financial contributions particularly if they were studying. Over all focus groups a large majority of respondents tended to be influenced by traditional values of filial piety in the way they defined family responsibilities. The research by Ting (2009) also showed a marked emphasis amongst interviewees on subjective aspects of filial piety, namely love, care and respect for parents. Similarly, the respondents in this study also placed emphasis on reciprocal obligations and financial support.

Continuing education, overtime work, cross-border work and family responsibility

With regard to their current home and economic circumstances, most considered that their present social and economic circumstances influenced their views on marriage, child-bearing and family responsibility. Those who had to pursue further study expressed that they had less time to communicate with parents as the need for continuing education was the global trend given the keen competition amongst the

Hong Kong workforce in late modernity. Continuing education also made it necessary for them to rely on their parents financially. As Beck (2009) claims, the life experiences of young people in modern societies has changed quite significantly from earlier generations. These changes include social relationships, education, the labour market, leisure, lifestyles, and the ability to become established as independent young adults (see Resnick 2005). Beck considers these changes are the outcome of the restructuring of labour markets, of an increased demand for educated workers, of flexible employment practices, and of social policies that young people today have to encounter, the potential risks of which were possibly unknown to their parents (Beck 2009). These risks can be a potential source of stress and vulnerability for the young generation. This in turn brings uncertainties and stress for an older generation who might not know how to protect or provide for the new generation (Beck 2001; 2009).

One undergraduate expressed that he would complete all further studies before getting married.

> Focus Group 6, interviewee F7 (a 21-year old new immigrant from mainland China, from a low-income family and still studying in high school because of poor academic performance, he worked as a part-time life-guard and continued to study a coaching course for life saving):
> I do not have time to accompany my parents though I want to accompany them. (line 1092)…I have lots of things to do so I have no time for my family members. (line 1094) … I have to take courses and make friends. Hence I have no time. (line 1118 - 1119)

With the close economic ties between Hong Kong and the mainland China, the number of Hong Kong residents working on the mainland has been on the increase. They are mostly working in the Pearl River Delta, especially in Shenzhen and Dongguan. In the focus groups, some respondents stated that they had to work across

the border and undertake considerable overtime working. Nevertheless, they wanted to grasp the many opportunities in the mainland to develop their career at a young age. In this, they claimed they would necessarily put their career first before family and did not wish to rely on parents financially. They seemed to be influenced by notions of individualism in that they were prioritizing their own goals in an increasingly competitive society.

> Focus Group 5, interviewee E7 (a 25-year old male social work postgraduate who worked in the Social Welfare Department and planning to get married soon):
> I think it is necessary to remain competitive. (line 1354) … I don't mind working overtime and working across the border. Working across the border can increase my competitiveness. I may work across the border until I reach 30 years old. If my job is more secure, I may not need to work across the border anymore. (line 1360-1364) If I have a partner, I have to strike a balance and try to reach a compromise with my partner. (line 1354)

In contrast, some young people, especially female participants, preferred not to undertake cross border or overtime working because they thought it would affect their personal health, family ties and social life. Moreover, traditionally, females were not expected to shoulder the financial liabilities of their families and would normally seek to spend time with family members. That said, many male and female respondents were tasked by the demands of continuing education, seeking additional income via part-time jobs, overtime and cross-border work, all of which impacted upon ideals of fulfilling family responsibilities as well as delaying decisions to marry.

The above findings were quite similar to the study of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2003). Four focus group interviews with young people indicated two different attitudes, as in this doctoral study, that included proactive and positive views:

as well as more negative ones. Thus, the earlier one began working on the mainland, the more experience one could gain. It was an opportunity for self-enhancement. The opposite view was more reactive and negative: The respondents were reluctant to work in the mainland. The current poor economic environment in Hong Kong gave them no choice but to accept working in the mainland. They were concerned about personal safety, environment and hygiene and the rule of law in China. Nevertheless, a recent Hong Kong survey conducted by Yip et al. (2011) showed that far more young adults than before are considering working in mainland China – some 70% of males who participated indicated this possibility. This suggests some change in attitude from recent years and stands in some contrast to the survey conducted by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2003) wherein some 15.5% of respondents claimed that they would consider working in the mainland.

Balance between personal / self-development and taking family responsibility

If a conflict was perceived between personal development (e.g. career or study) and family responsibility, most of the males stated they would try to strike a balance between career and family as they considered both to be of equal importance. In brief, they wanted to get the benefits of both – a win-win situation as they deemed it. As with research in western advanced economies (see Wilson 2002), that indicates family is a priority in the lives of its citizens, so the respondents in this focus group also attach importance to family. Married female respondents tended to put the family first. In contrast single females spoke of pursuing self-development and personal goals as well as commitment to any future family. In this, global ideas associated with the rise of feminism may well be residing more or less comfortably amongst more traditional expectations about their role in society. Most of the male and female respondents aged

17-21 years indicated that they would choose personal career or further studies as their priority in life, adding that their families also wanted them to be successful and hence there was no conflict.

> Focus Group 2, interviewee B5 (a 20-year old male, an undergraduate with middle class background, line 1256-1257):
> If I have a choice, I would choose career and study, because my family will understand me. My parents want me to be successful too.

Their comments generally suggested that the younger age group was influenced both by global values of individualism and by local Chinese traditions. On one hand, they emphasized personal development whereby career and studies should be put before family. On the other hand, this value was reinforced and encouraged by their parents as traditional Chinese value puts a focus on high performance in education and career achievement of children. Chinese parents generally have high expectations, hoping their sons and daughters one day will become significant leaders in corporate and public life and in doing so will bring much honor to their parents. Hence most respondents stated their parents did not mind them spending time on studying or career development especially in the early stages of young adulthood. It was notable that in the younger age group, half of the female respondents preferred personal development to family building for the medium term ahead. This might suggest the influence of a global trend of feminism and liberalism in which young women place emphasis first upon higher education and career development.

By contrast, those in the focus group defined by working status (FG4), half of the respondents wanted to get the benefits of both career and family while half claimed they would put family first. Only one male student stated he would first pursue work

before family building. Their comments generally suggested that a majority of the respondents in the group were less willing to prioritize studying or work. They preferred to strike a balance between career and family. Their views generally suggested that they tended to be less influenced by the global value of keen competition in a knowledge-based economy like Hong Kong and more oriented to traditional values and putting family before career. That said, the majority of the participants in the focus group drawn from across the three regions stated they would put their career or studying first before family:

> Focus Group 6, interviewee F1 (a 19-year old male student studying Associate Degree course, with middle class family background who liked to join different courses and programmes that could add value to life skills):
> I would try to strike a balance. But if I cannot strike the balance, I would put personal development first. (line 1230 - 1231) … Personal development is the wishes of my parents. (line 1238)

> Focus Group 6, interviewee F3 (a 20-year old male undergraduate student who came from low-income family, line 1250 - 1252):
> I would put personal development first at this age. If I do not focus on personal development, I may have difficulty in taking care of my family.

> Focus Group 6, interviewee F4 (a 21-year old undergraduate student who was gay and from a high income family, line 1301 - 1302):
> I personally want to put family first but in reality I had to give personal development the top priority as I want to provide a better environment to family members.

Overall, respondents were seemingly influenced by global values of individualism in a competitive environment by taking continuing education or looking to career development opportunities. However, their comments also suggested that they were also influenced by traditional Chinese values wherein children could seek higher

education qualifications and career achievements and that these would be seen, symbolically, as a form of honor to their parents. And of course, finding a good job with a good salary was implicitly a way of meeting traditional expectations that children provide for their aging parents.

Summary

To sum up, the findings of the focus group interviews suggest the influence of both traditional and global values. The extent of their influence seems to vary with variables such as gender, age, marital status, working status and educational attainment. For instance, a majority of male respondents put more emphasis on personal development while females tended to stress family relationships. This suggested that the influence of Chinese cultural values still play a part in guiding young people's behaviour and decision-making. Notably, younger respondents aged 17-20 appeared influenced by ideas of individualism and self expression and put more emphasis on spiritual and creative development over material prosperity. Older respondents, influenced by materialism and individualism, indicated that wealth, independence and ambition were important, perhaps because they had started their career and had begun to shoulder family financial liability. Irrespective of marital status the vast majority of young adults seemed to varying degrees affected by individualism in their approach to marriage insofar as they emphasized individual needs and hoped to realize personal benefits. Most saw the future as one in which they wished to gain pleasure, life enjoyment and freedom. Factors such as the impact of residence seemed to make no obvious difference in respondents' views about marriage, child rearing and family responsibility.

The findings also show that a majority indicated a preference for marriage but there was also acceptance of other lifestyles such as cohabitation and pre-marital sex. Most respondents did not wish to live with parents or in-laws after marriage as was the fate of many. Most anticipated having children to make the marriage meaningful, sustainable and to continue the family lineage. As to responsibilities towards the family, it is interesting to note the continuing influence of traditional Chinese culture whereby males and females perceive different gendered orientations in regard to public and private roles. Most of the respondents indicated that their current domestic and economic circumstances would influence their views and decisions about marriage, child-bearing and family responsibility.

The insights from the focus group analysis helped inform the design of the survey and in turn the one to one interviews conducted consequent to the survey. We now turn to chapter seven and the survey findings. However, we will consider the key messages from the focus groups again in later chapters in relation to other data gathered in this study.

Chapter 7: Chinese Values, Change and Continuity: Key Findings of the Survey

Introduction

Based on the analysis of data collected in the focus groups, a self-completed survey instrument was formulated containing closed-ended questions. This survey questionnaire sought to explore the relationship between global values and the selected dependent variables of young adults' perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. The draft questionnaire was piloted with 36 young adults and the internal consistency was considered to be good. The final revised questionnaire was distributed to a target group of 1,250 young people. With regard to the survey sample, the researcher adopted non-probability sampling for reasons of cost and practicality. The time costs and practical challenges in securing a randomized sample of young people with the desired different backgrounds and genders from the three regions made the adoption of a cross sectional purposive sample the pragmatic choice. The sample was generated from the Census and Statistics Department (2006 a, b) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. The population was divided into strata in terms of gender, age groups, marital status, working status, educational attainment and region of residence. 1,250 questionnaires were delivered across the three regions of Hong Kong. A total of 1,158 completed questionnaires were obtained. The return rate was 93%. Excluding those invalid questionnaires, there were 1,132 valid questionnaires and the findings below are based upon these responses. Relevant but limited research is available on Hong Kong young people and will be considered in relation to key findings from the survey. Later chapters will also review the survey findings once more in relation to other data sources derived from

this study.

Far more survey data were generated than can be presented in this chapter and it has been necessary to select key findings only. It will be seen that a number of tables are referred to in the text below but which are not set out in the chapter for reasons of space. These can all be found in Appendix 17.

Demographic background of respondents

Among the 1,132 sample, 550 (48.6%) were male and 582 (51.4%) were female (see Table 8). A majority (N=819, 72.5%) were aged 17-20 and there were 311 (27.5%) aged 21-25 (Table 9 and 10). The mean age of the participants was 19.55 (SD=2.276), with male respondents of a mean age of 19.16 (SD=2.154) and female respondents of a mean age of 19.92 (SD=2.329). The gendered proportion of the sample fits the sex ratio of the youth population in 2006 by-census in Hong Kong. In 2006, the sex ratio, i.e. number of males per 1,000 females of the youth population was 1,037 after excluding the number of young female foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department 2006b).

The education level among the participants was as follows: 1% (N=1) had only a primary school education or below; 5% (N=6) were at the level of junior high school (S1-3); 55.6% (N=628) were at senior high school (S4-S7); 43.8% (N=495) received a college or university education or above (Table 11). Education was a predictable factor regards attitudes to parenthood but there was no significant relationship between education and views about marriage and taking up family obligations.

Table 11: Educational Attainment

Item	N	%
Primary or below	1	0.1
F.1 – F.3 (aged 12-14)	6	0.5
F.4 – F.5 (aged 15-16)	167	14.8
Matriculation (aged 17-18)	461	40.8
Tertiary, non-degree course (aged 19-20)	245	21.7
Tertiary, degree course or above (aged 21 or above)	250	22.1
Total	1130	100.0

Regarding the working status of the participants, 82.4% (N=930) were full-time students and 15.5% (N=173) were full-time working. Some 2.1% (N=29) were non-studying and non-working. According to the Profile of Youth in the Census and Statistics Department (2008), the labour force participation rate of youth, i.e. the proportion of economically active youths in the total youth population, declined steadily from 53.2% in 1996 to 47.7% in 2006. The participation rate of youths in 2006 was much lower than the 60.3% for the whole population aged 15 and over. This was attributable to the later entry of youths into the labour force as a result of the increasing educational opportunities of the young people. It is expected that the participation rate of youth will further decline in view of the increasing educational opportunities and the need for enhanced qualifications to get a job. The low percentage of working youth was a constraint in this survey as many working respondents in the target network of youth centres and local churches did not return questionnaires.

The majority of the participants were students and thus 63.2% (N=703) had no income. Of the remainder, two income clusters were notable: HK$1-2,999 (17%, N=189) and HK$10,000-$19,999 (8%, N=88) (Table 12).

As regards their family situation, most of the participants had one (50.6%, N=568) or two siblings (25.7%, N=289) (Table 13). They were mostly the eldest child (38.8%, N=435) or the youngest (34.3%, N=385) at home. 12.2% (N=137) were a single child in their families (Table 14). The results suggested that a majority of the sample are living in nuclear families with one or two siblings. This corresponds to the results of the population by-census (Census and Statistics Department 2006b), whereby the average family size is three while in 1996 the average family size was 3.3. In the survey there did not appear to be any significant relationship between number of siblings and family building or taking on family obligations.

The survey revealed that 58.3% (N=652) had no religion and 41.7% (N=467) had different types of religious affiliation. Among those with religion, more young adults believed in Christianity (34.6%, N=387) (Table 15). Religion is relevant here as it can inspire people and transmit a set of moral rules and values. For example, in Hong Kong, some 83.9% of persons aged 15 and over had participated in one or more types of social activities and 11.6% had participated in religious activities (Census and Statistics Department 2003). In our survey, 41.7% of the participants held different types of religions. This may be high compared with the statistics on participation in religious activities. This may reflect sample selection issues in relation to church based youth centres involved in the study and can be regarded as another constraint in this exploration.

Table 15: Religion

Item	N	%
Buddhist	42	3.8
Taoist	7	0.6
Catholic	21	1.9
Christianity	387	34.6
Muslim	3	0.3
None	652	58.3
Other	7	0.6
Total	1119	100.0

In regard to marital status, the majority of the participants were unmarried (98.7%, N=1108) (Table 16). The sampled youths fit the proportion of youths who had never married according to the 2006 by-census. Most of them were living in the New Territories (57.1%, N=641) (Table 17 and 18). This is similar to the youth population in census in that 52.1% of youth were living in the New Territories in 2006. Locality may be important in collecting the views of the youth because it was hypothesized that locality may reflect aspects of economic and social status. However, it was found that there was no significant relationship between locality and the views of the youths. This may be explained by the fact that Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories encompass a relatively small area where transport and information exchange is highly impacted, and spatially could be considered as an urban city region.

As the majority of the participants were full-time students, they were not involved in

cross-border work. Among the respondents, only 1.3% (N=15) were engaged in cross-border work (Table 19). Meanwhile, only 5.6% (N=61) claimed to work overtime (Table 20). 8.1% (N=89) claimed to have continuing education (Table 21).

Among the participants, 96.9% (N=1077) were living with their parent(s) (Table 22). The results of these living arrangements correspond with the youth statistics in the Profile of Youth in Hong Kong (op cit 2006b), which shows that a large proportion of young people were living with their parent(s), and the proportion was increasing steadily (The proportion of youth living with parent(s) rose from 86.3% in 1996 to 90.4% in 2006). There were apparent differences among youth in their living arrangements. For those living with parents only, 52.5% of them were aged 15 to 19 and 47.5% aged 20 to 24. Economic independence was also a determining factor in the living arrangement of youths. The proportion of working youths among those living alone (76.9%) was substantially higher than those living with parent(s), only (40.1%). This can be explained by the fact that in Hong Kong it is very expensive to buy a flat or rent an apartment. Thus many young people have to live with their parents. Another reason is the uncertainties over security of work and young people are increasingly living with their parents even after marriage (see Wu 2010). This implies that the transition to independent adulthood is often postponed for young people in Hong Kong.

To summarize, the profile of the 1132 respondents, male and female samples were evenly distributed: 48.6% (N=550) was male and 51.4% (N=582) female in the study. The mean age of the respondents was 19.55 (SD=2.276) with 72.5% at the age range of 17-20 and 27.5% at the age range of 21-25. The majority of the participants were unmarried (98.7%, N=1108) and lived with parents (96.9%, N=1077). The education

attainment of the participants was at senior high school level (55.6%, N=628) and sub-degree or above level (43.8%, N=495). 82.4% (N=930) were full-time students and 63.2% (N=703) had no income. The respondents were mostly the eldest child (38.8%, N=435) or the youngest child (34.3%, N=385) at home with one (50.6%, N=568) or two (25.7%, N=289) siblings. 58.3% (N=652) had no religion while 41.7% (N=467) had religion in various types and the majority of them were Christians (34.6%, N=387). Most of the respondents lived in the New Territories (57.1%, N=641) while a small proportion of them (16.6%, N=188) lived in Hong Kong Island. As the majority of the respondents were full-time students, only 1.3% (N=15) of the participants engaged in cross-border work. 61 respondents (5.6%) worked overtime and 89 of them (8.1%) had continuing education. We now re-examine some of these key variables in relation to their perceptions about Chinese values, marriage, parenthood and family responsibilities.

Young adults' perceptions on Chinese cultural values

To grasp if Chinese cultural values still play an important role on local Chinese young people, I adopted the Chinese Value Survey (CVS) in the first part of the survey questionnaire. CVS exists in Eastern culture involving more oriental life values and thinking. CVS was developed by Bond (1991) and a group of research workers known collectively as the 'Chinese Culture Connection' in response to their perceived need to measure and evaluate cultural values within the setting of a Chinese social value system that is derived from the Confucian ethos. CVS consists of 4 subscales. CVS I – Integrity and Tolerance indicates the importance of family with focus on social stability and strong family bonding. CVS II – Confucian Ethos contains values which all reflect the Confucian work ethic. CVS III – Loyalty to Ideals and Humanity

contains values which embrace ideas suggesting gentleness and compassion, resistance to corruption and patriotism. CVS IV – Moderation and Moral Discipline contains values on repayment of good and evil, wealth and sense of cultural discipline. Table 23 summarizes the mean score of CVS and its 4 subscales. The participants generally achieved high scores in CVS total and its 4 subscales, i.e. CVS I (M=125.08, SD=14.129); CVS II (M=67.82, SD=11.343); CVS III (M=61.37, SD=8.927); CVS IV (M=19.01, SD=3.717); and CVS Total (M=273.05, SD=33.357). Research by Lau (in Kwok and Chan, 2002, p. 132) indicated 92.9% of Hong Kong people agreed that traditional Chinese values such as loyalty, filial piety, benevolence and righteousness should still be respected. So too did this survey reveal similar findings in that young people were likely to be still influenced more or less by Chinese cultural values, and Confucian ideas still seemed to play a role in their cultural outlook.

Top five significant values on Chinese Value Survey

Table 24 sets out the 40 items of the CVS. The top 5 values that the respondents rated as the most important mainly fell in the category of CVS I which stands for integrity and tolerance. This included filial piety (M=7.99, SD=1.196), trustworthiness (M=7.92, SD=1.214), self-cultivation (M=7.74, SD=1.231) and courtesy (M=7.70, SD=1.322). The fifth one was a close intimate friend (M=7.69, SD=1.424) which fell in the category of CVS II that represents the Confucian Ethos. In regard to the top 5 values that the participants rated as less important to them, most fell in the category of CVS II- Confucian Ethos which included protecting your face (M=4.83, SD=1.915), being conservative (M=4.90, SD=1.953), non-competitiveness (M=5.60, SD=1.960) and having few desires (M=5.65, SD=1.936). Another item within the 5 less important values fell in the category of CVS III- Loyalty to Ideals and Humanity, was patriotism

(M=5.55, SD=2.014).

Table 24: Chinese Value Survey (CVS)

Chinese Value Scale	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
CVS I -Integrity & Tolerance					
Filial piety (Obedience to parents, respect for parents, honoring ancestors, financial support of parents)	1124	7.99	1.196	1	9
Trustworthiness	1131	7.92	1.214	1	9
Self-cultivation	1130	7.74	1.231	1	9
Courtesy	1132	7.70	1.322	1	9
Sincerity	1131	7.60	1.400	1	9
Kindness (Forgiveness, compassion)	1126	7.49	1.327	1	9
Patience	1131	7.38	1.224	1	9
Prudence (Carefulness)	1130	7.38	1.318	1	9
Adaptability	1129	7.22	1.416	1	9
Tolerance of others	1126	7.20	1.330	1	9
Industry (Working hard)	1131	7.19	1.360	1	9
Harmony with others	1126	7.18	1.396	1	9
Persistence (Perseverance)	1128	7.18	1.323	1	9
Knowledge (Education)	1132	7.12	1.505	1	9
Humbleness	1125	7.11	1.415	1	9
Sense of righteousness	1129	6.89	1.528	1	9
Personal steadiness and stability	1131	6.77	1.486	1	9
CVS Ⅱ – Confucian Ethos					

A close, intimate friend	1129	7.69	1.424	1	9
Chastity in women	1129	7.15	1.866	1	9
Contentedness with one's position in life	1128	6.84	1.680	1	9
Keeping oneself disinterested and pure	1130	6.68	1.638	1	9
Benevolent authority	1127	6.59	1.528	1	9
Respect for tradition	1130	5.97	1.764	1	9
Loyalty to superiors	1129	5.90	1.679	1	9
Having few desires	1128	5.65	1.936	1	9
Non-competitiveness	1131	5.60	1.960	1	9
Being conservative	1131	4.90	1.953	1	9
Protecting your "face"	1130	4.83	1.915	1	9
CVS Ⅲ - Loyalty to ideals & Humanity					
Resistance to corruption	1129	7.44	1.472	1	9
Having a sense of shame	1131	7.35	1.428	1	9
Observation of rites and rituals	1129	7.23	1.443	1	9
Solidarity with others	1128	7.13	1.367	1	9
Ordering relationships by status and observing this order	1130	6.91	1.584	1	9
Thrift	1132	6.83	1.495	1	9
Moderation, following the middle way	1121	6.66	1.636	1	9
Reciprocation of greetings and favors, gifts	1128	6.31	1.609	1	9
Patriotism	1131	5.55	2.014	1	9
CVS Ⅳ – Moderation & Moral Discipline					
Repayment of both the good and the evil that another person has caused you	1127	6.71	1.661	1	9

Wealth	1132	6.60	1.830	1	9
A sense of cultural superiority	1131	5.71	1.846	1	9

Although the mean score of the CVS total was generally high, there were some differences between the subscales. On the whole, the respondents mostly had higher scores in CVS I which focused on social stability and family bonding. This indicated some traditional Chinese values such as filial piety (M=7.99), trustworthiness (M=7.92), self-cultivation (M=7.74) and courtesy (M=7.77) still played an important role in guiding today's youth. Importance of family and harmony with others were still important to this new generation. Another value that fell in CVS II also rated by the respondent as very important was a close, intimate friend (M=7.69). As we know, the young adults who were in their life transition from adolescence to young adulthood would likely treasure peer influence and support in searching for group and individual identity (see Erikson 1975).

Conversely, we can find out from this survey that some of the Confucian values and ethos appeared to be declining. CVS II which stood for Confucian Work Dynamism had comparatively lower scores in the survey. In a materialistic world with keen competition and high consumption, Confucian values such as protecting your face (M=4.83), being conservative (M=4.90), non-competitiveness (M=5.60) and having few desires (M=5.65) were less pursued by today's young adults. Another value rated by the participants as less important was patriotism (M=5.5). Hong Kong is under China's sovereignty since 1997 and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government actively promotes civic education in respect of China sovereignty. Yet, many youngsters still had a weak sense of national identity of being Chinese within

the regime of Communist China. The younger generation did not appear to have a strong sense of patriotism and national identity, their scores on a sense of cultural superiority (M=5.71) was comparatively low as well. The survey conducted by Lau Siu-kai in 1994 (in Kwok and Chan 2002, p. 132), indicated that 56.5% of the Hong Kong Chinese consider themselves 'Hong Kongers' and 38.2% consider themselves to be Chinese. Hence the Hong Kong Chinese have a mixed identity as both Hong Kongers and Chinese and there is some evidence that young people do not necessarily adhere to some national consciousness and loyalty to a nation state (Lee and Leung 1999).

Relationship between Chinese cultural value and gender and marital status

The results of Table 25 show that the Chinese Value Survey only had a significant relationship with the demographic variable of gender and marital status. It had positive significant relationship with gender (at .01 sig. level) and negative significant relationship with marital status (at .01 sig. level) respectively. The effects of gender (r = .263) and marital status (r = - .314) on CVS were moderate and strong respectively. Changes in gender and marital status account for 22.5% of the variation in CVS. This indicates that gender difference and marital status are significant factors to affect young adults' perception of Chinese cultural values. When comparing the mean score of CVS by gender it was found that females (M=279.20, SD=28.53) have a higher mean score than males (M=266.52, SD=36.756). It implies that female participants tend to be more influenced by the Chinese cultural values than their male counterparts. This may be explained to varying degrees by the socialization process which focuses on the obedience of the female, hence they may be more receptive to traditional Chinese cultural values such as women should get married in order to be 'complete'

(see also Cheng 1946; Stockman 2000).

Young adults' perceptions on marriage

Top five significant statements on marital attitude

Regarding young people's perception on marriage, the respondents generally got a higher mean score in Marital Attitude Scale (MAS) (M=81.38, SD=10.037) (Table 26). This suggests that the sample generally displayed a positive attitude towards marriage. Table 20 provides important insights into the perceptions of the respondents. Among 23 MAS items, the top 5 statements on marriage that the respondents strongly agreed included 'people should be very cautious about entering into a marriage' (M=4.04, SD=.926); 'marriage is a sacred act' (M=3.98, SD=.911); 'people should stay married to their spouses for the rest of their lives' (M=3.97, SD=.973); 'my lifelong dream includes a happy marriage' (M=3.90, SD=1.056). The fifth one was 'people should only get married if they are sure that it will last forever' (M=3.83, SD=1.025). The highest 5 indicated that most of the young adults were still influenced by traditional Chinese values. Overall, they tended to have more positive attitudes towards marriage and would commit themselves in marriage. The results were similar to the findings of the research by Chow and Lum (2008), Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (1996, 2000) and the focus group findings reported in the previous chapter.

In regard to another top 5 statements that the participants strongly disagreed with were 'I believe a relationship can be just as strong without having to go though the marriage ceremony' (M=2.29, SD=.989); 'I have doubts about marriage' (M=3.07, SD=1.058); 'most people have to sacrifice too much in marriage' (M=3.19, SD=.963);

'people weren't meant to stay in one relationship for their entire lives' (M=3.21, SD=1.080); and 'when people don't get along, I believe they should divorce' (M=3.22, SD=1.016). These results suggest that the respondents were seemingly less influenced by global values such as individualism, liberalism, pluralism and feminism. They regarded marriage not as some barrier to self-development, pursuit of freedom and pluralistic choices in partners and personal lifestyles. Table 27 summarizes the distribution of mean scores for the 23 statements on marriage of the respondents. These results would seem to contradict some Western studies that young adults prefer to pursue other lifestyles instead of marriage (see Kiernan 1992). Rather, these results were consistent with findings in the six focus groups in this study and with other Chinese research that young people still preferred to get married as part of their life plan (Chow and Lum 2008).

Table 27: Marital Attitude Scale

Statements on Marriage	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
People should be very cautious about entering into a marriage	1130	4.04	0.926	1	5
Marriage is a sacred act	1129	3.98	0.911	1	5
People should stay married to their spouses for the rest of their lives	1128	3.97	0.973	1	5
My lifelong dream includes a happy marriage	1129	3.90	1.056	1	5
People should only get married if they are sure that it will last forever	1131	3.83	1.025	1	5
I will be satisfied when I get married	1131	3.83	0.921	1	5

Because half of all marriages end in divorce, marriage seems futile	1129	3.81	0.901	1	5
There is no such thing as a happy marriage	1130	3.80	0.960	1	5
Most marriages are unhappy situations	1131	3.77	0.867	1	5
People should marry	1131	3.67	1.010	1	5
Marriage provides companionship that is missing from other types of relationships	1129	3.65	1.049	1	5
Marriage is only a legal contract	1128	3.62	1.155	1	5
I am fearful of marriage	1131	3.61	1.001	1	5
Most couples are either unhappy in their marriage or are divorced	1128	3.47	0.967	1	5
Marriage restricts individuals from achieving their goals	1125	3.42	0.954	1	5
If I divorce, I would probably remarry	1130	3.35	0.824	1	5
I have little confidence that my marriage will be a success	1132	3.35	1.053	1	5
Most marriages aren't equal partnerships	1127	3.28	0.914	1	5
When people don't get along, I believe they should divorce	1128	3.22	1.016	1	5
People weren't meant to stay in one relationship for their entire lives	1128	3.21	1.080	1	5
Most people have to sacrifice too much	1129	3.19	0.963	1	5

in marriage					
I have doubts about marriage	1131	3.07	1.058	1	5
I believe a relationship can be just as strong without having to go through the marriage ceremony	1128	2.29	0.989	1	5

Relationship between marital attitude and income

Table 28 indicates the results of linear regression for the relationship between Marital Attitude Scale (MAS) and the demographic variables. The results show that MAS had positive significant relationship with income (at .05 sig. level). The effect of income (r = .304) was moderate. Change in income accounts for 13.3% of the variation in MAS. This implies that income is a predictive factor on young adults' perception on marriage. The higher the income, the more positive attitude towards marriage the young people would have. The results correspond with the findings of the six focus groups in which a majority of the young interviewees indicated they would get married at around 30 years as by then they anticipated a stable job and enough income to start a new family. As with the study by Wu (2010) that indicated more young people were delaying marriage because of the uncertainties with transition from school to work, so this survey reveals that the financial factor was a significant variable in their decisions over future family building.

Intention to get married

Table 29 shows the result of the respondents' intentions to get married. Excluding 33 (2.9%) young people who had already got married, 70.4% (N=794) wanted to get

married. Only 5.6% (N=63) indicated that they did not want to get married. 21.1% (N=238) had no pressing ideas about a future plan to get married. The results in Table 30 further indicate that a plan to get married had a positive significant relationship with MAS (at .01 sig. level) and Parenthood Scale (at .01 sig. level) respectively. The effect of MAS (r =.339) and Parenthood Scale (r =.189) on young adults' plan to get married was strong to moderate. Changes in MAS and Parenthood Scale accounted for 19.8% of the variation in a plan to get married. This suggests that the more positive attitudes to marriage and parenthood were likely to be linked to those young adults who were more eager to plan to get married.

Ideal age for getting married

A majority of the participants (61.5%, N=696) opined that 26-30 was the ideal age for getting married. There was also a total of 212 respondents (18.7%) indicating that 21-25 was the ideal age for getting married. 11.7% (N=132) preferred to get married at the age of 31 or above (Table 31). The result corresponds with the statistics provided by the Census and Statistics Department (2010a), the median age at first marriage for male and female is 31.1 and 28.7 respectively. Table 32 further indicates that young adults' age to get married had a negative significant relationship with MAS (at .05 sig. level). The effect of MAS on age to get married was weak. Change in MAS accounts for 1.9% of the variation in age to get married. This means that the more the negative attitude to marriage, the older the age to get married would be.

Reasons to get married

Table 33 summarizes the reasons to get married among the respondents. The top 3

reasons included public declaration of legal partnership (N=651, 57.5%); avoid loneliness (N=300, 26.5%); and procreation (N=298, 26.3%). Most of the participants had less concern about pressure from significant others (N=70, 6.2%), and sexual satisfaction (N=127, 11.2%).

Table 33: Reasons to Get Married (not more than 3 answers), N=1132

Item	N	(%)
Public declaration of legal partnership	651	57.5
Avoid loneliness	300	26.5
Procreation	298	26.3
Obtain financial security	143	12.6
Sexual satisfaction	127	11.2
Pressure from significant others	70	6.2
Others	187	16.5
N/A	124	11.0

The reasons to get married suggested they might be influenced by traditional Chinese values about marriage (‘public declaration of legal partnership’ 57.5%, N=651) that marriage is not a ‘private’ matter and couple status should be recognized and legitimized by significant others such as parents, siblings, relatives and friends. Marriage was also seen to serve procreation functions to extend the line of descendants (‘procreation’, 26.3%, N=298). Meanwhile, most of the young adults were in the ‘intimacy versus isolation’ developmental phase that involves seeking to form an intimate relationship with another person (Erikson, 1968). So it follows that

to ‘avoid loneliness’ (26.5%, N=300) might also be an important reason to plan to get married.

Regarding possible reasons not to get married (Table 34), 44.1% (N=499) expressed that not finding an appropriate partner to marry would be a key factor. Other main reasons were that they wanted more freedom (N=349, 30.8%), and they would like to be single (N=277, 24.5%). Concern over further studies (N=56, 4.9%) and scared of having and raising children (N=94, 8.3%) had less impact on their views about not to get married.

Table 34: Reasons Not to Get Married (not select more than 3 answers), N=1132

Item	N	%
I can’t find an appropriate partner to get married	499	44.1
I want more freedom	349	30.8
I like to be single	277	24.5
I’m scared of divorce	236	20.8
I’m concerned it may affect my career	163	14.4
I’m concerned over further studies	56	4.9
I’m afraid of marriage	127	11.2
I’m scared of having & raising children	94	8.3
Others	30	2.7
N/A	256	22.6

As regards the reasons the young adults did not want to get married, a majority of the respondents worried that ‘I can’t find an appropriate partner to get married’ (44.1%,

N=499). Their worries were understandable as most of the participants were still young and social life was mainly restricted to the school environment. This new generation to some extent was seemingly influenced by global values of liberalism ('I want more freedom' 30.8%, N=349) and individualism ('I'd like to be single' 24.5%, N=277). They feared they would lose freedom and did not want to give up their independence to form an intimate relationship with another person.

Acceptance of certain relationships

Regarding the acceptance of types of intimate relationships among the respondents, Table 35 indicates that the top 3 relationships the participants found more acceptable included cohabitation (M=2.59, SD=1.059), pre-marital sex (M=3.12, SD=1.167) and divorce (M=3.25, SD=0.986). Conversely, the least accepted by the respondents were extra marital affair (M=4.39, SD=.863), unwed mother (M=3.83, SD=1.025) and same-sex marriage (M=3.50, SD=1.216). (Note that the calculation of this table is different from previous tables. The higher the mean score of the item, the less acceptance of that relationship held by the young person; conversely, the lower the mean score of the item, the more the acceptance there would be)

Table 35: Acceptance of Certain Relationship / Situations

Items	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Extra Marital Affair	1131	4.39	0.863	1	5
Unwed Mother	1129	3.83	1.025	1	5
Same-sex Marriage	1131	3.50	1.216	1	5
Homosexuality	1131	3.39	1.214	1	5

Divorce	1130	3.25	0.986	1	5
Pre-marital Sex	1131	3.12	1.167	1	5
Cohabitation	1130	2.59	1.059	1	5

It is possible that some youngsters became more open to different kinds of personal lifestyles and intimate partnership such as cohabitation and pre-marital sex due to the global influence of pluralism, feminism and liberalism. This suggests that cohabitation is becoming more acceptable in local Chinese society for this new generation. Yet, traditionally, a family will lose face (Face Culture) and feel shameful if its member(s), especially the female member if cohabiting with another man as this violates certain Chinese values such as chastity in women and linked to this the notion that a sexual relationship can only be socially approved in marital relationship for women (see Eastman 1988). Such ideas still influence today's Chinese families. A young person will face pressure from his/her significant others if he/she makes such a choice and lifestyle. Also divorce is often viewed by Chinese people as personal failure and a source of family stigma and hence is not encouraged or accepted by those imbued with a more traditional family set of views. However, as youth dependence on parents is prolonged due to the lack of job opportunities, low income jobs and higher cost of housing, it is difficult for young people to start a new family of their own, that in turn delays their age of marriage (Wu 2010). Likewise, with the trend of more open attitudes towards sex within global influences, more young people may choose to have sexual relationship with their partners out of marriage or even cohabit (Georgas et al. 2006).

Furthermore, divorce has become more widely accepted in local Hong Kong society, along with the rise of feminism and the financial independence of women. That said,

while many of the local young people in this study were exposed to global values espousing a more liberal and pluralistic point of view, they did not accept that married people should have other lovers or that parenthood and childbearing can be separated from marriage. These results seem to correspond to traditional Chinese cultural values which focus on loyalty in marriage and having children and protecting them through the formal marital system. In contemporary Hong Kong there is no legalized same sex marriage. Homosexuality is still regarded by some as deviant behaviour.

Relationship between acceptance of certain relationship and religion

The results of Table 36 show the linear regression between young adults' perception of different relationships and the demographic variables. The results indicate that young adults' perception of different relationships had a positive significant relationship with religion (at .01 sig. level). The effects of religion (r = .499) on young adults' perceptions on relationships were strong. Changes in religion account for 29.8% of the variation in perception of different relationships. This means that religion is likely to affect young people's views on intimate relationships. Those with religion (notably Christian) tended to be less receptive to certain kinds of relationship and may explain why some, for example, think that sex relationships outside of marriage are unacceptable.

Relationship between acceptance of certain relationship and Chinese cultural value, marital attitude, parenthood attitude and family responsibility attitude

Table 37 shows the linear regression for the relationship between respondents' perception of different relationships and CVS, MAS, Parenthood Scale, Family

Obligation Scale. The results indicate that perception of relationship had positive significant relationship with CVS (at .05 sig. level), MAS (at .01 sig. level) and Family Obligation Scale (at .05 sig. level). The effects of CVS (r = .081) and Family Obligation (r = .041) on perception on relationship were weak while the effect of MAS (r = .284) was moderate. Changes in CVS, MAS and Family Obligation Scale account for 11.5% of the variation in perception on relationship. That means young adults with more positive attitude towards Chinese cultural values, marriage and family responsibility, were perhaps predictably less likely to accept different forms of intimate relationship or non-traditional practices.

Relationship between marital attitude and Chinese cultural value

Regarding the possible influence of CVS on young people's perception of marriage, the results of Table 38 indicates that MAS had a positive significant relationship with CVS I (at .05 sig. level) and CVS II (at .01 sig. level) but had negative significant relationship with CVS IV (at .01 sig. level) respectively. The effects of CVS I (r = .132), CVS II (r = .169) and CVS IV (r = -.205) on MAS were moderate. Changes in CVS I, CVS II and CVS IV account for 4.8% of the variation in MAS. When we go further to test the relationship between MAS and other scales such as CVS and Family Obligation Scale, it is found that MAS only had a positive significant relationship with Parenthood Scale (at .01 sig. level) (See Table 41). The effect of Parenthood Scale on MAS was strong (r = .351). Changes in the Parenthood Scale account for 12.3% of the variation in MAS. It implies that young people's perceptions of marriage are strongly influenced by their perception of parenthood. The more the positive attitude to parenthood, the more the positive attitudes would be to marriage by the participants. In essence, parenthood attitude is a predictive factor in relation to young

adults' attitudes towards marriage.

Young adults' perceptions on parenthood

Table 39 summarizes the mean score of Parenthood Scale and its 4 subscales. The participants generally got higher scores in Parenthood Scale (M=84.93, SD=11.769) and its subscales on Intrinsic Motivation (M=34.61, SD=6.643) and Benefits (M=19.47, SD=3.463). Subscales on Extrinsic Motivation (M=15.35, SD=3.679) and Costs (M=15.48, SD=3.982) scored more moderately. This suggests that the sample generally had positive attitude towards parenthood and corresponds with recent findings by Chow and Lum (2008) and our focus group findings as well.

Top five significant statements on parenthood attitude

Table 40 summarizes the distribution of mean score of the 24 statements on respondents' perception of parenthood. Among 24 items in the parenthood scale, the top 5 statements that the respondents strongly agreed with fell in the subscale on Intrinsic Motivation. These included 'I enjoy children and would like to have a child to watch him/her grow and change' (M=4.05, SD=.862); 'I believe that having children is the right thing to do' (M=4.00, SD=.829); 'Having children would enrich my life' (M=3.95, SD=.850); 'I would like to have a child to establish my own family' (M=3.91, SD=.922), and 'I would experience a sense of accomplishment by having a child' (M=3.91, SD=.867). In regard to another top 5 statements that the participants strongly disagreed with were two statements which fell mostly in the subscale on Extrinsic Motivation with statements 'I would like to have a child because most of my friends and family members have or will have children' (M=2.45, SD=.968) and 'I

would like to have a child to show that I can handle the responsibilities of adulthood' (M=3.00, SD=1.045). Another three statements fell in the subscale on Costs that included 'If I had children, I would have less time to spend with my partner' (M=2.86, SD=1.013), 'Having children may interfere with my employment opportunities and /or career advancement' (M=3.01, SD=.995) and 'Having children results in a significant loss of freedom' (M=3.07, SD=1.069).

Table 40: Parenthood

Parenthood Items	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Intrinsic Motivation					
I enjoy children and would like to have a child to watch him/her grow and change	1132	4.05	0.862	1	5
I believe that having children is the right thing to do	1132	4.00	0.829	1	5
Having children would enrich my life	1132	3.95	0.850	1	5
I would like to have a child to establish my own family	1132	3.91	0.922	1	5
I would experience a sense of accomplishment by having a child	1131	3.91	0.867	1	5
I would like to fulfill the role of being a mother/ father	1132	3.83	0.958	1	5
I believe that having children is an important part of life that I don't want to miss	1132	3.78	0.982	1	5
I would enjoy the challenge of meeting my child's needs	1132	3.67	0.913	1	5

I would like to have children as an expression of love for my spouse or partner	1132	3.52	0.995	1	5
Extrinsic Motivation					
I would like to have a child (children) to have someone to carry on, and to remember me following my death	1131	3.35	1.017	1	5
As an adult, my son or daughter could help to support the family economically if necessary	1131	3.35	0.940	1	5
Having children will provide someone to care for you in your old age	1131	3.20	0.974	1	5
I would like to have a child (children) to show that I can handle the responsibilities of adulthood	1132	3.00	1.045	1	5
I would like to have a child because most of my friends and family members have or will have children	1131	2.45	0.968	1	5
Costs					
Having children can lead to financial strain and long term debts	1132	3.32	1.040	1	5
I would have much less privacy and personal time if I had children	1132	3.22	1.020	1	5
Having children results in a significant loss of freedom	1132	3.07	1.069	1	5
Having children may interfere with my employment opportunities and/or career	1132	3.01	0.995	1	5

advancement					
If I had children, I would have less time to spend with my partner	1130	2.86	1.013	1	5
Benefits					
Having children provides growth and learning opportunities which ultimately will add meaning to a parent's life	1130	4.00	0.807	1	5
Having children adds stimulation and fun to a parent's life	1131	3.90	0.840	1	5
Having children is a way to give and receive warmth and affection	1128	3.88	0.815	1	5
Having children helps you learn to become less selfish and to make sacrifices for others	1129	3.88	0.848	1	5
Having children can help to give you a sense of accomplishment in your life	1129	3.79	0.938	1	5

The above results suggest that most of the young adults had positive attitudes towards parenthood linked to intrinsic motivations such as fulfillment of personal desires and wishes, and benefits such as having children to enrich parents' lives. In regard to another top 5 statements that the participants strongly disagreed with, two fell in the subscale on Extrinsic Motivation while another three statements fell in the subscale on Costs. Collectively, their statements might suggest that the respondents were less influenced by global values of individualism and feminism whereby parenthood could adversely affect their freedom, marital life and career development. However, the respondents were less influenced by the idea that their family of origin and familial

collectivism more widely would exert some choice over their approaches to parenthood and that they would make their own decision in this matter. These results correspond to the findings in the six focus groups whereby the majority of the young people would have children mostly because of personal preference, satisfaction and choice, and less to do with the preferences and continuation of kinship.

Relationship between parenthood attitude and education attainment

Table 41 indicates the results of linear regression for the relationship between Parenthood Scale and the demographic variables. The results show that Parenthood Scale had positive significant relationship with education attainment (at .05 sig. level). The effect of education attainment (r = .186) was moderate. Change in education attainment accounts for 11.7% of the variation in Parenthood Scale. This implies that education attainment is a predictive factor on young people's perception on parenthood. When compared with the mean score of parenthood attitude by educational attainment, it is found that the higher the educational attainment, the more positive attitude young people would take to parenthood. This may be due to the fact that young people with higher educational attainment can expect higher income so that they need not worry so much about money when deciding whether to have children. Those with low educational attainment may have difficulty in securing a job and support themselves financially. Thus, they may not seek parenthood before securing a stable job. The survey results were similar to Chow and Lum's findings (2008) that lack of money was a reason for not having children.

Intention to have children

Excluding those who already had children (N=28, 2.5%), some 60.6% (N=683) wanted to have children. Only 9.16% (N=103) indicated that they did not want to have children. 27.7% (N=313) had no views or plans about having children. This suggests the sample generally preferred to have children. Table 42 shows the linear regression for the relationship between plan to have children and CVS, MAS, Parenthood Scale, Family Obligation Scale. The results indicate that plan to have children had a positive significant relationship with MAS (at .01 sig. level) and Parenthood Scale (at .01 sig. level) respectively. The effect of MAS (r = .236) on young adults' plans to have children was moderate but Parenthood Scale (r = .436) on young adults' plans to have children was strong. Changes in MAS and Parenthood Scale account for 31.7% of the variation in plans to have children. This shows that the more positive attitudes to parenthood and marriage, the more positive attitudes the young people would have over any plan to have children.

Ideal age for having children

A majority of the participants (50.6%, N=570) opined 26-30 was the ideal age for having children. The result was similar to that of Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2005) where 28 appeared to be the majority view over a suitable age to have a first child. In our survey, there was also a total of 306 respondents (27.2%) indicating that 31-35 was the ideal age for having the first child. Only 7.3% (N=82) preferred to have children at age 21-25. Table 43 shows the linear regression for the relationship between respondents' age to have the first child and CVS, MAS, Parenthood Scale, Family Obligation Scale. The results indicate that young adults' age to have the first child had negative significant

relationship with MAS (at .01 sig. level). The effect of MAS on age to have the first child was moderate (r = -.121). Change in MAS accounts for 1.8% of the variation in age to have the first child. That means the more positive attitudes one took in marriage, the younger the people would have the first child.

Number of children

Research by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (1996, 2005) and by Chow and Lum (2008) revealed that a majority of their respondents intended to have children. Similalrly in this survey most of the participants preferred to have one (N=162, 14.6%) or two (N=651, 58.6%) children in the future. Only 7.5% (N=83) wanted to have three or more children. In Table 44 the number of children the young adults wanted had negative significant relationship with CVS (at .05 sig. level) but had positive relationship with MAS (at .05 sig. level). The effect of CVS (r = -.113) and MAS (r = .094) on number of children wanted was from moderate to weak. This implies that the more one adhered to Chinese cultural values the less the number of children young adults wanted. Conversely, the more positive attitudes to marriage, the more the number of children one wanted.

It was found that the majority of the participants generally held positive attitudes towards parenthood and opined that age 26-30 (50.6%, N=570) was the ideal point for having children. Nearly 30% (27.2%, N=306) indicated they wanted to delay parenthood to 31-35. It is likely that the age of parenthood of the new generation is becoming older and postponed, possibly due to certain structural factors (e.g., housing, income) that will be discussed below.

Important factors to have children

Table 45 presents some important factors which affect young adults' decisions to have children or not. The top 3 factors included personal income (M=4.19, SD=.853), child care (M=3.96, SD=.950) and accommodation (M=3.89, SD=.904). Political stability was the least important aspect affecting young people's attitude to having children.

Table 45: Important Factors in Having Children (can be more than 1 answer)

Item	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Personal income	1132	4.19	.853	1	5
Child care	1130	3.96	.950	1	5
Accommodation	1132	3.89	.904	1	5
Employment opportunity	1131	3.76	.964	1	5
Social environment	1130	3.69	1.013	1	5
Education system	1132	3.62	1.079	1	5
Medical care	1132	3.55	1.032	1	5
Social welfare	1132	3.53	.998	1	5
Political stability	1131	3.06	1.139	1	5
Others	45	4.60	.837	1	5

The top 3 factors included personal income (M=4.19, SD=.853), child care (M=3.96, SD=.950) and accommodation (M=3.89, SD=.904). High competitiveness in employment opportunities and stressful working environment, high standard of living but with slow increase in income, and expensive accommodation and pre-school

education may be some of the reasons for delaying the plan for parenthood. Child care services refer to nursery, child care centre, kindergarten-cum-child care centre, occasional child care service, extended hours service of child care centre, mutual help child care centre, etc. Child care services aim to support the family in taking care of children. This is important in Hong Kong and many young couples have to go out to work as costs of living are relatively high. It also explains why most of the participants preferred to have only one (N=162, 14.6%) or two (N=651, 58.6%) children in the future. Furthermore, the fact that Hong Kong can provide a stable living and working environment after the return to China in 1997 and onwards also might explain why 'political stability' became the least important in affecting young people's concern to have children.

Relationship between factors to have children and gender, full-time working, income & religion

The results of Table 46 show the linear regression for the relationship between factors to have children and the demographic variables. The results indicate that factors to have children had a positive significant relationship with gender and full-time working (at .05 sig. level) and had a negative significant relationship with income and religion (at .05 sig. level). The effects of gender (r = .187) and full-time working (r = .312) on factors to have children were moderate and strong respectively. The effects of income (r = -.301) and religion (r = -.192) on factors to have children were moderate. Changes in gender, full-time working, income and religion account for 14.8% of the variation in factors to have children. This implies that gender difference, full-time working, income and religion were predictive factors which affected young peoples' intentions to have children or not.

The statistical results show that females (M=33.53, SD=6.032) had higher mean scores in considering factors on having children than males (M=32.972, SD=6.570), this implies that female respondents tend to have more consideration of the factors in having children than males. This suggests that once the women decide to have children, they may need to consider giving up their jobs and spend less time in areas of self-development. This is also related to the Chinese traditional notion that women's success is inside the home caring and providing and not in career development. Men's traditional role is to earn a living for the family and pursue career opportunities. Hence, men's consideration of factors in having children would seem to predictably score less than females.

Regarding full-time working, those with full-time work (M=31.852, SD=6.123) tended to demonstrate less consideration about the factors of having children than those without full-time work (M=33.544, SD=6.288). This may relate to the financial status of a full-time worker who relatively tends to be less worried about having children than those who are still non-working. In addition, those with religion (M=32.622, SD=6.270) also tend to consider less the factors of having children than those without religion (M=33.738, SD=6.277). It may be surmised that the religious youth may have more faith and optimism about overcoming difficulties of bringing up a child, perhaps trusting in a deity whom they believe can support their daily tribulations.

Relationship between important factors to have children and Chinese cultural value

Concerning the relationship between factors to have children and CVS total, the results

(Table 47) indicate that the factors to have children had positive significant relationship with CVS (at .01 sig. level). The effect of CVS (r = .214) on factors to have children was moderate. This indicates that the more one held to Chinese cultural values, the more it was the case that factors to have children were viewed as important by respondents.

Relationship between parenthood attitude and Chinese cultural value, marital attitude & family responsibility attitude

When we go further to test the relationship between Parenthood Scale and other scales, the results of Table 48 indicate that the Parenthood Scale had positive significant relationship with all three scales: CVS (at .01 sig. level), MAS (at .01 sig. level) and Family Obligation Scale (at .01 sig. level). The effect of CVS (r = .105) on Parenthood Scale was weak while MAS (r = .338) was strong. The effect of Family Obligation Scale (r = .125) on Parenthood Scale was moderate. Changes in CVS, MAS and Family Obligation account for 15.4% of the variation in Parenthood Scale. That means the more the Chinese cultural values the young adults associated with, the more the positive attitudes in parenthood they would have. Similarly, the more positive attitudes in marriage and family obligation, the more the positive attitudes in parenthood they would have. Those young people with positive attitudes in marriage and family responsibility are likey to be more committed to marriage and are more willing to stay in the marriage longer, and take up family responsibilities including childbirth and child-rearing.

Young adults' perception on family responsibility

The participants generally got moderate mean scores in Family Obligation Scale total

(M=77.65, SD=14.46) and its subscales on Current Assistance (M=31.21, SD=7.896), Respect for Family (M=23.13, SD=5.097) and Future Support (M=22.20, SD=4.440) (Table 49). Comparatively, the respondents got a slightly higher score in the subscale of Future Support amongst the 3 subscales. The results suggest that this sample of young people in their early adulthood may concentrate more on their own self-development or career development. They may not prioritise time spent on assisting the family's daily affairs or doing household chores. Also assuming the global influence of individualism, pluralism and liberalism, young people may not, like previous generations, give full regard to parents' advice and instructions in relation to for example, choice of their circle of friends or choice of subjects at university. However, the sample did appear to be influenced by Chinese cultural values of filial piety and have a deep sense of a debt to be repayed to parents for their support. Thus, they did assert a wish to support and care for their parents in the future when they were getting older. Table 50 summarizes the distribution of mean score of the 24 statements on the notion of family obligation.

Table 50: Family Obligation

Family Obligation Items	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Current Assistance					
Eat meals with your family	1111	4.16	1.027	1	5
Spend time at home with your family	1127	3.71	0.966	1	5
Run errands that the family needs done	1114	3.50	1.008	1	5
Spend time with your family on weekends	1110	3.34	1.154	1	5
Spend holidays with your family	1112	3.22	1.114	1	5
Help take care of your brothers and sisters	901	3.08	1.231	1	5

Do things together with your brothers and sisters	944	3.01	1.184	1	5
Spend time with your grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles	1082	2.90	1.090	1	5
Help out around the house	991	2.58	1.179	1	5
Help your brothers or sisters with their homework	899	2.53	1.175	1	5
Help take care of your grandparents	888	2.53	1.218	1	5
Respect for Family					
Treat your grandparents with great respect	974	3.92	1.075	1	5
Treat your parents with great respect	1115	3.85	1.008	1	5
Do well for the sake of your family	1090	3.71	1.067	1	5
Respect your older brothers and sisters	821	3.44	1.151	1	5
Make sacrifices for your family	1025	3.16	1.140	1	5
Follow your parents' advice about choosing a job or major in college	1021	2.75	1.292	1	5
Follow your parents' advice about choosing friends	1031	2.51	1.238	1	5
Future Support					
Live at home with your parents until you are married	1026	4.19	1.042	1	5
Help your parents financially in the future	1072	4.17	.949	1	5
Spend time with your parents even after you no longer live with them	1029	3.96	.959	1	5
Help take care of your brothers and sisters	905	3.65	1.115	1	5

in the future					
Have your parents live with you when they get older	946	3.59	1.097	1	5
Live or go to college near your parents	863	2.87	1.336	1	5

Top five significant statements on family responsibility attitude

We can see that amongst the 24 statements in the family obligation scale (Table 50), the top 5 statements that the respondents strongly agreed with mostly fell in the subscale on Future Support. They included 'live at home with your parents until you are married' (M=4.19, SD=1.042); 'help your parents financially in the future' (M=4.17, SD=.949); 'spend time with your parents even after you no longer live with them' (M=3.96, SD=.959). Another two of the highest scores were on the subscale of Current Assistance 'eats meals with your family' (M=4.16, SD=1.027) and on the subscale of Respect for Family 'treat your grandparents with great respect' (M=3.92, SD=1.075). Such responses to these statements suggest that notions and practices of filial piety are still being socialized within Chinese families. In the eyes of many Chinese parents, children would not be viewed as adult until they got married and became financially self-reliant. Before marriage, young adults typically live with parents, give financial support to them, eat meals after work or study with family members as part of family solidarity and harmony, and spend time in their company. These acts are to show gratitude to one's parents and display commitment to a kind of familial collectivism. The statement to 'Treat your grandparents with great respect' also reflects the view shared by many Chinese that elders should be held in high regard as traditionally older people have power and influence in the extended family.

Chinese people emphasize kinship and line of descendant. Children are trained to respect their grandparents from a very young age. While the spread in Hong Kong of the nuclear family may presage a weakening of this traditional veneration of elders it is still the case that grandparents serve important daily family functions such as child care and assist in household chores and help supervise domestic workers if their offspring are dual-earner parents.

In regard to the top 5 statements that the participants strongly disagreed with, these fell mostly on the subscale of Current Assistance with statements ‘help your brothers or sisters with their homework’ (M=2.53, SD=1.175); ‘help take care of your grandparents’ (M=2.53, SD=1.218); ‘help out around the house’ (M=2.58, SD=1.179). Another two statements fell in the subscale on Respect for Family that included ‘follow your parents’ advice about choosing friends’ (M=2.51, SD=1.238) and ‘follow your parents’ advice about choosing a job or major in college’ (M=2.75, SD=1.292). As some of the sample were single children (12.2%, N=137) or were the youngest child (34.3%, N=385) in their families, some family obligations such as ‘help your brothers or sisters with their homework’, ‘help take care of your grandparents’ and ‘help out around the house’ may not be an expected responsibility for them. With the increasing influence of global values which emphasize freedom and personal choice (liberalism, individualism and pluralism) it is possible that parents’ advice about such areas as choice of friends, college courses and career paths may be declining in force.

Relationship between family responsibility attitude and gender & living with parents

The results of Table 51 show the linear regression for the relationship between Family Obligation Scale and the demographic variables. The results indicate that Family

Obligation Scale had a positive significant relationship with gender and living with parents (at .05 sig. level). The effects of gender (r = .280) and living with parents (r = .245) on Family Obligation Scale were moderate. Changes in gender and living with parents account for 18.5% of the variation in Family Obligation. This shows that gender difference and living with parents are significant factors that affect youngsters' perception of family obligation.

When compared with the mean score of family responsibility by gender, it is found that female respondents (M=79.04, SD=14.269) had higher mean scores than male respondents (M=76.072, SD=14.539). This may imply that female respondents tend to be more willing to take up family responsibilities than males. In the thematic household survey on sharing of housework by Census and Statistics Department (2003),which analyzed by sex, females spent more time on household commitments than their male counterpart in all age groups, economic activity, status groups, marital status groups and educational attainment groups. On average, females spent 3.1 hours per day on household commitments as against 1.0 hour for males.

Also, when compared with the mean score of family responsibility by living with parents, the result reveals that those living with parents (M=77.806, SD=14.414) had a higher mean score than those not living with parents (M=71.235, SD=17.851). In traditional Chinese culture as mentioned earlier, living with parents and providing support for their future are part of filial piety practices that demonstrate children's family responsibilities. This is perhaps partly why the age of leaving home of young adults in Asian societies appears higher than those of western societies that endorse global values of autonomy and early independence.

Relationship between family responsibility attitude and Chinese cultural value

When exploring the relationship between Family Obligation total and CVS 4 subscales, we find that Family Obligation only had a positive significant relationship with CVS II (at .05 sig. level) and CVS III (at .05 sig. level) respectively (Table 52). The effects of CVS II (r = .123) and CVS III (r = .184) on Family Obligation Scale were moderate. The findings reflect that Confucian Ethos and Loyalty to Ideals and Humanity were predictive factors which affected family obligation of young adults. The higher the young adults scored in CVS II and III, the more they would score on the take up of family obligations.

When we split Family Obligation into 3 subscales, we find that subscale on current assistance had a positive significant relationship with CVS III (at .05 sig. level) (See Tables 53, 54 and 55). The effect of CVS III (r = .195) on current assistance was moderate. That means the higher the young adults scored in Chinese values related to loyalty to ideals and humanity, the greater the share in family responsibility they would have. This is similar to the result of Family Obligation subscale on respect for family. The results indicate that respect for family had a positive significant relationship with CVS III (at .01 sig. level) as well. The effect of CVS III (r = .236) on respect for family was moderate.

Relationship between family responsibility attitude and Chinese cultural value, marital attitude & parenthood attitude

The results in Table 56 indicate that Family Obligation Scale had a positive significant relationship with CVS (at .01 sig. level) and Parenthood Scale (at .01 sig. level) but

with no significant relationship with MAS. The effect of CVS (r = .142) and Parenthood Scale (r = .141) were moderate on the Family Obligation Scale. The findings show that the more the young adults scored on CVS, the more they would score on the take up of family obligations. Likewise, the more positive attitude in parenthood they scored, the more the young people would score on the take up of family obligations.

Summary

To summarize, the profile of the 1132 respondents was overall similar to the statistics of Hong Kong youth population in the 2006 by-census. Male and female samples were evenly distributed: 48.6% was male and 51.4% was female in the study. The mean age of the respondents was 19.55 with 72.5% at the age range of 17-20 and 27.5% at the age range of 21-25. The majority of the participants were unmarried. The education attainment of the participants was at senior high school level and sub-degree or above level. 82.4% were full-time students and had no income. The respondents were mostly the eldest child or the youngest child at home with one or two siblings. 58.3% had no religion while 41.7% claimed various types of religion, the majority being Christian. Most of the respondents lived in the New Territories while a small proportion lived on Hong Kong Island. The majority of the respondents were full-time students, only 1.3% (N=15) of the participants had cross-border work. 61 respondents (5.6%) worked overtime and 89 of them (8.1%) had continuing education.

The survey results suggest that the sample generally got higher to moderate scores in the CVS, MAS, Parenthood Scale and Family Obligation Scale. This suggests that

they hold relatively positive attitudes towards cultural values, marriage, parenthood and family obligation. Regarding CVS, the traditional value of importance of family and filial piety, this was still strongly supported by many young people. However, traditional aspects of the Confucian Ethos such as protecting face, socially conservative attitude, non-competitiveness, having few desires and patriotism, these seemed much less adopted by the young adults. They tended to be influenced more by a keen competitive global culture in which one should actualize oneself by achieving personal interest and goals. Global values of individualism and feminism would seem to have some discernible impact on the attitudes held by the sample.

In regard to marriage, MAS results reflected that a majority of the sample planned to get married. They seemed still greatly influenced by traditional Chinese values and had faith in the ideals of the marital system. Nevertheless, their motivations were mostly individualistic and intrinsic rather than motivated by traditional notions of family collectivism e.g. by fulfilling parents' expectations or continuing the lineage of the family. It was also noted that they took more open attitudes towards different kinds of relationships such as cohabitation, pre-marital sex and divorce. It is likely that global pluralistic liberal values and lifestyles also influenced these young people in their acceptance of these relationships which lay in some contrast to previous generations.

With regard to childbearing, many young people preferred to have children for reasons which seemed to be linked to global values of individualism and intrinsic rewards such as personal enjoyment in having children, and life enrichment by establishing a family with a child; and thereby experiencing a sense of personal achievement. It seems that they were less affected by extrinsic traditional reasons such

as peer or family pressure or to fulfill the responsibilities of adulthood.

Lastly concerning young adults' perceptions of family obligation, their views tended to be influenced by traditional cultural values (e.g., to provide future support for family-of-origin through living with parents until one gets married; help parents financially; spend time with parents even after getting married; to provide company and solidarity through eating meals with the family; and to respect grandparents). By contrast, global influences which emphasize the right of freedom and to have personal choice may have been at work too. The findings revealed that respondents did not necessarily take consideration of parent's advice in deciding choice of friends, studying and career path decisions. Today's youth are assumed to have more autonomy in these areas in spite of family influence.

We now move on to the next stage of the study and analysis which is the semi-structured individual interviews. These were constructed in relation to selected aspects of the survey findings and which allowed for a more in-depth exploration of some of the issues noted above.

Chapter 8: Transitions and Challenges in the Life Plan: Key Findings of the Follow-Up Individual Interviews

Introduction

The final stage of data collection comprised ten semi-structured individual interviews carried out in May 2011 and this chapter will present key messages from this part of the study. In so doing, the interview data will not be compared in any detail to the findings from focus groups and the survey, instead this will be undertaken in the chapter that follows. Here, we first seek some conceptual location for the interviews and their analysis.

Based on the results of the focus groups and survey, a semi-structured interview guide was developed with topics that sought to follow up and explore in more depth a number of key themes. These themes collected around the relationship of global and local culture and values and young adults' perception of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in an eco-systemic framework analysis (Bronfenbrenner 1974; 1979; 1989; 1993) and also the difficulties young people encountered in the transition to adulthood in late modernity within the context of the traditional Family Life Cycle model (Carter and McGoldrick 1999). In drawing on these sources, which were outlined in some detail in earlier chapters, the respondents were, conceptually, positioned within what may be termed ecological systems theory (Segall et al 1999). This places the individual (with his/her personal qualities and abilities e.g. sex, age, health, character etc) interacting actively with the environment, structured in terms of different levels of the microsystem, the mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. To further understand the life values and the factors affecting young people's transition to

adulthood, I adopted this ecological framework to help inform the analysis of the respondents' subjective life experiences. The microsystem represents young adults' face-to-face interactions with the immediate, physical or social, surroundings. It also included institutions such as family, peers, church, school and so on. The mesosystem reflects the linkages between two or more of these settings. The exosystem comprises further such linkages with settings of which the young person is not a part e.g. neighbours, mass media, friends of family, extended family networks, work settings, social welfare services, legal services, politics and public engagement and etc., but that nevertheless exert an influence. The macrosystem refers to attitudes and ideologies of the culture in that it consists of such general aspects of society as its values, belief systems. It also includes socioeconomic systems and public and political policies, and so on. The framework makes it obvious that a developing young person cannot be isolated from her or his context, and that interactions are reciprocal, so that the proper unit of analysis is neither the young person out of context, nor the contexts in themselves, but the young person in context.

Carter and McGoldrick's Family Life Cycle Theory includes six stages of development. This study has focused on the first three stages to examine how young people, when they enter a life-course transition, fulfill the developmental tasks of early adulthood in a family life cycle and the possible constraints they may encounter at different eco-systemic levels. The first stage of the family life cycle is to explore the leaving home pattern of single young adults. Here, the main theme involves differentiation of self in relation to family of origin, development of intimate peer relationships, career development and establishment of self in respect to financial independence. The second stage is their life plan in family building in specific regard to the formation of a marital system. The main theme of the third stage is parenthood

that involves such developmental tasks as joining in child rearing, financial and household tasks, and realignment of relationships with extended family to include parenting and grand-parenting roles. These three areas, discussed in relation to a wider literature in chapters three and four, have shaped the design of the enquiry and have informed this third stage of the study – the individual interviews. Similarly, the roles of global and local values in the respondents' life transition to adulthood especially in family building and taking family responsibility have been prominent in the study objectives. Thus a key theme has been the extent to which Hong Kong young people in late modernity perceive their lives within a risk society with uncertainties and where institutions and traditional values may lose their influence and are replaced increasingly by reflexive biographies and individualistic lifestyles. Finally, relevant services and policies proposed by the new generation to achieve a smoother transition to adulthood were explored as well. To explore aspects of these key themes in more depth, semi-structured interviews were undertaken to address areas such as life planning, career development, self development, continuing education and family building.

Profiles of interviewees

Purposive sampling of a sub-set of participants self-identified from the survey as willing to engage in an interview formed the data source. Here, semi-structured qualitative interviewing was conducted with some ten individuals who were identified via theoretical sampling of the questionnaire returns as being representative both of some particular thematic perspective and also some key characteristic of the youth profile as generated by the Hong Kong 2006 Population By-census Report (Census and Statistics Department 2006a, b). Ten interviewees were selected in terms of their

socio-economic backgrounds such as gender, educational attainment, job status and working conditions, income, and immigration status. The profiles of the interviewees (see Appendix 12) were as follows:-

Case 1 (Lok, male, aged 23) –

A drawing class tutor with low education level (Secondary 5), low monthly income (around HK$3,000.00) and limited occupational skills.

Case 2 (Irene, female, aged 19) –

A programme assistant in a welfare agency with low educational level (Secondary 5), low monthly income (HK$6,500.00) and limited occupational skills.

Case 3 (Victor, male, aged 24) –

A banking management trainee with high educational level (bachelor degree in public administration), high monthly income (HK$24,000) and high skills (banking and management). He undertook overtime working (around 15 hours per week) and also continuing education (following a banking course 10 hours per week).

Case 4 (Abi, female, aged 25) –

A secondary school teacher (major in Chinese) with high educational level (bachelor degree in education), high monthly income (HK$24,000) and high skills (teacher qualification). She worked overtime (around 15 hours per week).

Case 5 (Ken, male, aged 19) –

A dog trainer of a private dog-training company with low education level (Secondary 4), undertaking cross-border work (went to the Mainland China 1-2 times per week)

and overtime working (around 10 hours per week)

Case 6 (Blossom, female, aged25) –

A private housing management officer with continuing education (taking management course 6 hours per week) and overtime work (around 25 hours per week).

Case 7 (Ting, male, aged 21) –

A young man (Secondary 5) who had few tangible connections with the local community, had no paid employment, was not studying and had no income.

Case 8 (Ching, female, aged 18) –

A young female (Secondary 5) who had few tangible connections with the local community, had no paid employment, was not studying and had no income.

Case 9 (Chak, male, aged 23) –

A printing machine assembler who had migrated in the last 3 years from mainland China)

Case 10 (Portia, female, aged 22) –

A year-one university student (major in Geography) who was an overseas returnee from US

Life plan of young people

Self-development plan

The transition from school to work is a critical milestone in the life of young people and plays a crucial role in how their future careers develop. This transition is a complicated process which not only involves a change of identity from a learner to a worker, but also a transition from adolescence to adulthood where one's life planning is at stake. We can see in the multi-method research conducted by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2006b), 60% and 45% of youth interviewees who were either studying or working respectively, had a high expectation of education and believed having a Bachelor's degree was the minimum qualification for getting an ideal job. Their life planning was to attain higher education that got a better job.

In life planning, young people are inevitably going through the process of searching for self-identity. It is often assumed that young people will choose some preferred pathway to achieving some status or position (Bauman 1995; Giddens 1991; Jones 2009; Henderson et al. 2007; Thomson et al. 2004). However, it was found that majority of the interviewees in this study did not invoke any concrete self-development plan such as pursuing one's ideals or interests, life-goals or dreams, or seeking to understand one's weaknesses and strengths and thereby facilitate personal growth. There were some exceptions such as Lok (Case 1) and Abi (Case 4). Lok wanted to pursue his dream of being an acclaimed designer. Though as a freelance designer, his income was low and with little employment stability. But that was his ambition and he did not want to do a job that he did not like.

> Lok (male, low education level and income, line 4-6):
> I am thinking of learning guitar and art… so that I will not starve and could do the job that I like.

Abi wished to be a writer but only pursued this as a private interest. She had a

full-time teaching post. She was of the view that she must retain a full-time job to support herself before developing her interests as these could not realistically support her financially:

> Abi (female high education, high income, line 62-65):
> Hong Kong does not put emphasis on art development. As such, writing can only be an interest. You cannot dream of being a writer. You have to get a full-time job first.

It is perhaps predictable that those youth with a job and with higher income and academic background will have more 'capital' to develop themselves whereas those with no income and no job have little or no resources to develop themselves (Cote 2002; Jones 2009; Sennett 2004). Those with a good academic background such as Victor stated that they intended to develop their personal abilities by private study or by reading for another degree.

> Victor (a banking management trainee with high educational level, line 45):
> I have seldom attended courses. I read information or books to improve myself.

It was therefore important to explore in more detail their life plan or lifestyle decisions in order to gather more insights into what factors constrain and promote their ambitions in life and this required further discussion of their interactions within their related ecological systems. The following were some of the constraints that affected their plans for self-development.

Constraints to self-development

-- *Social and cultural factors*

Youth is a critical period of identity formation where young people start to develop their sense of self through their social interaction with other relationships. Youth identities are exposed to various cultures under global and local influences (Jones 2009; Sing 1997; Wu 1997). In Hong Kong, the emphasis on filial piety and demands of obedience to adults and superiors continues to play an important role in the patterning of child and adolescent development. In Chinese understanding, children belong not only to parents, but also to society. They have been taught that one must sacrifice one's 'smaller self' for the sake of a 'larger self', which includes the family, the society and the nation. Confucian ideas of this collective self have long prevailed in Chinese conceptions of education (Wu 1997).

Under such local influences, it was perhaps not surprising to find that a majority of the interviewees did not seem to invoke some wholly separate sense of their own identities due to these social and cultural factors. Abi challenged the view that Hong Kong youth only had a social identity in relation to academic achievement. Chak explained frankly that he did not have any life plan of his own as he just followed the wishes of his parents:

> Abi (female, high education and income, line 94-104):
> The Hong Kong Government does not emphasize whole person development of an individual. The education system hinders the self development of the youth as it does not encourage the development of a multiple intelligence of young people. The ultimate goal of students, their parents, teachers and even the whole education system seems to aim at entering university that at the end guarantee one can have a bright future and better quality of life. If someone likes sports and art development, it is supposed they will have a difficult and hard life. So you can see today many youth are very utilitarian and self-centered because of the lack of adequate

> moral education and ethics training carried out in family, school and the whole society.
>
> Chak (a male immigrant, line 725-732):
> When I start my kindergarten education, primary school and secondary school education, and up to now my first job in Hong Kong all are decided and chosen by my parents. Yet they have asked me about my preference, I really do not know what I want to be. Actually I do not have any goal, maybe due to my character. I do not take action to fulfill what I think. I just day by day follow the path prepared by my father to be a printing machine assembler.

Chak is a typical case that is shaped by Chinese values of family 'collectivism' which put emphasis upon family and state interests rather than individual interest (Triandis 1987; Sing 1997). That is why in Chak's mind there is only the concept of 'we', but not 'I' in his life choices. According to late modernist thinking, we might conceive of Chak as someone whose independence has been deferred and hence it is hard for him to grasp his life in a more individualistic and reflexive manner. It is likely that he will continue to experience a prescribed social background as ordered by parental and family influence. Regarding Abi, her sense of self and high achievement while related positively to academic performance is nonetheless linked to the ways in which Chinese parents place much emphasis on education and diligence more generally (Sing 1997; Chao and Sue 1997).

-- *Financial constraints*

The life experiences of young people in contemporary westernised societies have changed quite significantly from earlier generations in regard to social relationships, education, the labour market, lifestyles and the ability to become independent young adults (Resnick 2005). Young people have to encounter potential risks which may be a

source of stress and vulnerability for them and their families. It is commonly found in many advanced societies that youth are often dependent on families for extended periods in which patterns of leaving the parental home have changed considerably (Beck 2001; 2009; Jones 1995; Rugg 1999; Veevers et al. 1996). Similar constraints apply in Hong Kong (see Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups 2001a) and were prominent too in the interviews with respondents in this study. For example, in terms of self development some disadvantaged young adults simply did not consider such options because they or their families had no financial means by which to promote their ambitions. For instance, Ting (Case 7) liked cooking but he had no social or financial capital by which to achieve in this area of interest:

> Ting (male with no job, no study and no income, line 31-32):
> No… because I have no money. I have to find a job. If I have money, then I can take courses.

> Irene (female with low income, low educational level and limited skills, line 62-66):
> … When I was young, I wanted to learn how to play the piano but there was no such opportunity… because of the financial constraints of my family. You know, I'm coming from a single parent family. My father resigned from his job to take care of us (five children). We are CSSA (Comprehensive Social Security Assistance) recipients. We have no extra money to develop our interests.

-- *Time constraints and poor academic background*

Young people's opportunities for self-development depend also on access to a range of external and personal resources such as social, cultural and economic capital which will affect their approaches to risk (Cote 2002; Douglas 1990; Jones 2009). Sennett (2004) argues that young people from privileged backgrounds have safety nets in the form of cultural capital which allow them to handle risk. As shown in the research by

the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2007), disadvantaged young people have met barriers in job hunting, choosing a career, staying in the job and self-enhancement. The disadvantaged respondents in our individual interviews also referred to such barriers.

Some interviewees cited difficulties such as time and poor academic background as constraints to pursuing any plans for self-development. Blossom (Case 6) said that time was an important factor. She was fully occupied in her work and did not have the additional energy or time to pursue self-development opportunities. Ken (Case 5) said that he had not achieved secondary education and could not meet the minimum English language requirement to go abroad to pursue his ambition of being a professional dog trainer.

> Blossom (female undertaking both overtime and continuing education, line 264-267):
> …because you have to give a lot of time. My present job is very demanding and I spent a lot of time on work. You know … I have been back to home at 1 am at night and then went back to work at 9am the next day.

-- *High traveling expense*

However, those with no job and no income said that they were hindered by the high tuition fees charged by self-development courses. The traveling expense was another consideration as they could not afford to go far beyond their local district to pursue training opportunities located some way off.:

> Irene (female with low income, low educational level and low skills, line 173):
> I think that the transport costs should be lower…

-- *Domination of big enterprises*

In Hong Kong, the key government policy that seeks to support vulnerable youth with low education level and no working qualification is the 'Youth Pre-employment Training Program' and the 'Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme' launched in 1999 and 2002 respectively. Both schemes aim at helping young people develop the occupational competencies needed for economic development. The Labour Department also provides one-stop advisory and support services on employment and self-employment to youngsters (Labour Department 2009). However, we should not ignore the socioeconomic problems of Hong Kong society such as inadequate job opportunities, expensive travelling costs, monopoly of the big enterprises, etc that have long affected the life chances of young people (see Sugarman 1986) and upon which policy may have limited impact.

Irene (Case 2) argued that the labour retail market was dominated largely by big conglomerates and that it was very difficult or impossible for young people to develop their entrepreneurial skills by setting up small businesses. Young adults with no financial support could not pursue their own business interests or develop related skills.

> Irene (female with low income, low educational level and low skills, line 53-54):
> … Dream? I once dreamt of starting a small business, but in Hong Kong it would be very difficult because the shopping malls are all controlled by big enterprises…

Suggestions for a better transition to young adulthood (in self-development)

The Hong Kong Government has taken some measures to facilitate a better transition of young people to adulthood especially in career training and self-development. The unemployment rate for those aged 15-24 has been hovering between 10 to 15% from the late 1990s to 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2006a). Given this worrying situation, the Hong Kong government has been implementing measures to provide pre-employment training and continuing education opportunities for young people. In Feb to April 2011, the unemployment rate for young persons aged 15-24 was 9% due to improved economic growth (see Census and Statistics Department 2011a).

In the individual interviews, participants were asked for their suggestions for practical measures at the macrosystem level such as the education system, government subsidies for courses and policies on job-seeking, skills training and so forth which might assist their self-development. Their comments included the following.

-- *School and family education*

Young people who invest in education look forward to the recognition that educational achievement can bring them, ultimately, to a career and financial security. Past research has revealed that young people who participated in programs to enhance their personal development were more likely to be successful in education (Campell and Ramey 1994). Moreover, attending vocational or technical schools may be more effective in helping young people to find employment (Cooksey and Rindfuss 2001). Hence, education is important as a form of social mobility and recognized as such by respondents such as Blossom.

Blossom (female undertaking overtime work and continuing education, line 1024-1028):

School and parental attitude is very important to develop self-identity of the youth so that they can have a whole person development and wellness training, not just focus on academic achievement. I think self-development is not equal to self-centered development. School education is not only for training up a brilliant student with high academic performance but also with moral values and an altruistic orientation that is willing to sacrifice oneself for others.

-- *Cutting of tuition fee*

Some respondents proposed that the Government might consider cutting tuition fees of government subsidized programmes, offering more self-development programmes at school and with more promotion of self-development programmes for young people:

Irene (female with low income, low educational level and low skills, line 78-80):

…Tuition fees are very high. If you read about some post-secondary courses, it may take $20,000 to $30,000 per annum. Even if the Government provides tuition fees subsidy, but the threshold is still very high.

-- *Job-seeking and skills training*

As with research by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2006b), some respondents expressed that they needed more career guidance services so as to find a job more easily. In our interviews, Ting (Case 7) indicated that he would welcome training in interpersonal relationships and interviewing skills. It is likely that some disadvantaged young adults will need basic training in developing social skills particularly in the way they relate to people when seeking a job.

> Ting (male with no job, not in education and no income, line 75):
> There was little mention of job searching skills at school.

By contrast some young adults did not think it necessary to seek the assistance of the Government who in their view could not easily deliver change in their personal circumstances and hence they preferred to rely on themselves:

> Ken (male undertaking cross-border work with overtime):
> If you need someone to help, you will not make an effort to improve yourself. (Line 223-224) … Uh…in fact, the Government cannot help much' (Line 232-233)

Ken's answer partly reflected his doubt about government capacity to offer help in matters of personal development but in doing so he also implicated the Chinese value of 'face' culture whereby seeking help in these matters may be understood negatively (see Hu 1944; Stockman 2000).

Career plan

In drawing up one's career plan, social capital is important. Young people acquire social capital through support from family, peers and other social and economic systems (Holland et al. 2007). Families that are plagued by economic hardship may be limited in the support they can provide for their children (Vander et al. 2001). In the qualitative interviews, most of the interviewees had career plans except those with no job, no income and not involved in study. Most of them wanted to climb a career ladder with various goals such as being a designer, social worker, senior bank manager, a professional dog trainer, a human resources officer, a pet beautician, etc.

Their choice of career plans were based on different reasons such as their primary interest in the specific occupation, career prospects and job stability, and the income trajectory over time. It should be noted that some young adults were not satisfied with doing a job just for financial gain but were primarily attracted to the intrinsic rewards of a career that interested them.

> Lok (male with low income, low educational level and low skills, line 126-131):
> coz I love it (design). The second reason is that I do not want to do a job just for living, just for a good flat, just for fine clothes and it would be very boring, doing routines… you are just thinking of promotion… then when you were sixty, oh! You discovered that you have wasted your life. I want to do a job that I enjoy, ah… with a sense of achievement… and a sense of satisfaction...

It seemed notable and predictable that the respondents with higher education and a middle-class milieu tended to have more clear and concrete career plans than those with lower educational level and less privileged background. They had higher personal aspirations over their career plans. Some young adults who by comparison were left behind and with limited skills did not display much hope for their future. Ting who had no job, no income and was not in education did not have any career plans and held little hope for the future claiming a history of brief employments, poor interpersonal relationship at workplace, complicated working environment, tiring tasks, and poor health etc. The following extracts show the contrasting career plans of participants:

> Victor (male with high income, high educational level and high skill):
> I would like to seize every chance to get promoted to the middle management in a few years and getting higher salary in return. (line 82-83)… I like financial jobs. They are more dynamic, competitive and challenging and always responding to the market and to environmental change… Actually I don't like

routine jobs. I want more exposure and prospects in my career. (line 92-93)

Ting (male with no job, no study and no income):
I have worked as an assistant cook in a bar but I cannot stay long at the job. I change to another job after doing several months 'cos my health is bad and always feel sick. You know it is wet and hot working in the kitchen. (line 96-99) … I change to another job to deliver meals in a fast food shop. But I resign a month later 'cos I have bad relationship with my colleagues. They blamed me for not being efficient in work. Food delivery is not a stable job. Now I am unemployed for several months. The district I live in has a lack of working opportunities. (line 161-165) … I worry about the family expenditure. My mom was unemployed recently and my father is a security man with low salary. I don't want to be a financial burden to my family. (line 151-153)

-- *Cross-border work*

Most of the male interviewees accepted cross-border work for reasons such as overseas working experiences and career exposure that in turn increased their opportunities especially in the expanding labour markets of contemporary China. Victor (Case 3) was an example. He was an ambitious young adult eager to enhance his career prospects.

Victor (male with high income, high educational level and high skill, line 204-209):
I am very willing to do so or maybe I should say I am very eager to have the opportunity to work across the border, or in USA or in … because this would be a good opportunity for training and bringing benefits to my career … I joined the study tour to USA as an overseas exchange student when I was an undergraduate. I enjoyed overseas life and knowing people of different cultures.

Conversely, most of the female interviewees did not indicate a positive interest in cross-border work because they wanted to stay near their parents or were not attracted to what they perceived as lower standards of living in some parts of mainland China

compared to Hong Kong.

> Irene (female with low income, low educational level and low skills, line 149-150):
> Cross-border work… it is very difficult for me to accept it because all my family members are in Hong Kong. I do not want to leave my family members…

-- *Overtime work*

Morris (2011) notes how the Hong Kong work ethic is intense, so it was perhaps not surprising that a majority of the interviewees accepted overtime work if required of them. In the qualitative interviews, males tended to accept the idea of more overtime work than females. They would also grasp opportunities to develop their career at a younger age particularly in regard to working opportunities in mainland China. This finding was similar to that of the six focus groups which indicated that male interviewees, compared to female, tended to put career before family. In the Chinese tradition, men's achievement is typically evaluated in relation to their public role in the world of work. They are more willing to make extra effort including overtime work. In addition, higher income, higher educational level and higher skill interviewees were more willing to accept overtime work than those with lower income, lower educational level and lower skill levels. The latter were less satisfied about career opportunities and preferred to have more leisure time and private leisure activities with family members or friends. As with life chances in other advanced economies, youth from different educational or class backgrounds would have circumscribed lifestyles and career choices. Thus Victor, a highly ambitious young adult working as a bank trainee, accepted overtime work from 9:00 am often until 20:00 pm. He was also opposed to the enactment of legislation on maximum working

hours by the Government believing this would hinder his career development.

> Victor (male with high income, high educational level and high skill, line 287-291):
> For social justice, the enactment of legislation on maximum hours is to protect the lower working class. But I don't support the enactment of legislation applying to me as I need to work hard in spite of overtime work in order to meet the work quota. So working hours, if you say, up till 8 pm, it is fine with me.'

-- *Continuing education*

It is relevant to note the influence of globalization which emphasizes a fast and keen competitive culture, in which one may have to continue further education to remain competitive. As with the research by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2006b), those who have obtained a higher qualification enjoyed a higher competitive edge in today's knowledge-based economy. Similarly, the qualitative interviews showed that a majority of the interviewees pursued or had plans for continuing education. They felt the need for continuing education in order to remain competitive. Those with undergraduate qualifications would read for a Master degree or related qualifications in order to find or keep a career on track. Abi (Case 4) was an example:

> Abi (female with high income, high educational level and high skill level, line 1288-1289):
> There is more competition. As a teacher, you have to get many qualifications and licenses, you have to learn Putonghua...

> Victor (a banking trainee, line 138-145):
> I studied public administration in university. That knowledge can't help me a lot in the present job. Now I'm studying CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) and preparing for examination for this profession… If you do not keep yourself improving by qualification someone else will overtake you one day… Though I feel tired sometimes I hope to have career achievement before 30, I have many

> continuing education plans for the near future. After 30, I may think more about my family plan.

Those without an undergraduate degree tended to read for other applied courses such as human resource management or an art course delivered by a private organization in order to gain better employment prospects. Most interviewees realized the importance of continuing education in maintaining their competitiveness in the workplace. As more people enter the job market with higher education qualifications, so they found that they had to re-equip themselves in order to reach their goals or stay competitive in their particular labour market. Thus, Victor (Case 3), a banking trainee at a local bank wanted to gain professional qualifications in banking and an MBA before the age of 30, while Blossom (Case 6), an officer at an estate management company, wanted to read for a human resource management course in order to climb up the career ladder. Ken, 19 years old, a dog trainer, who was a dropout in secondary stage 4 did not enjoy studying at school but changed his mind after working several years in different jobs and acknowledged the importance of qualifications. He planned to save enough money to acquire a professional qualification and license in dog training. He also planned to take courses in English to prepare himself to engage with foreign customers.

Unsurprisingly, those who failed in the competitive school system and found no way to compensate for this had much more difficulty in climbing up the social ladder (see Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups 2006b). Ting was a Secondary 5 school leaver and was unemployed. His family was poor and could not support him in career training. Lok, 23 year old male, also a Secondary 5 graduate and from a lower class family, was more lucky than Ting as his parents promised to subsidize half of his monthly expenditure due to their son’s insecure job and low income. Both Ting and

Lok needed ongoing parental support and their dependence on family-of-origin was extended and prolonged.

> Ting (male with no job, no study and no income):
> (on future career plan) I have not thought of it. (line 15) … Now I have no further study because I have little money.' (line 31)

Constraints to career development

-- Declining or relocation of industries

In Hong Kong, the transformation to a service economy has been accompanied by the wholesale relocation of almost all manufacturing factories outside the immediate Hong Kong region to the Pearl River Delta area in China (Liang 2007). Some young adults were uncertain about their futures in the rapidly changing economies in Hong Kong whereby many factories had moved to mainland China because of lower operating costs. Chak (Case 9) was a fairly recent immigrant now working in a printing factory and unsure of his career prospect as many similar units had moved to the nearby Guangdong province of China where production costs (notably labour) were cheaper.

> Chak (male immigrant to Hong Kong three years before, line 127-129):
> We are worried that this industry could disappear suddenly. This year, the number of printing factories is much smaller. Many factories moved across the border…

-- *Lack of localized community-based industries and working opportunities*

Chak, Ting and Ching were living in the relatively remote new town of Tuen Mun where there was a lack of industries and job market in the district. They needed to spend time and money in travelling a long distance from Tuen Mun (a district of the New Territories) to the urban centre to find jobs. For example, Chak, a new immigrant and a printing machine maintainer, needed to travel at some cost from Tuen Mun to Chai Wan (Hong Kong Island) and back daily (some 3-4 hours in total) because of lack of working opportunities in new towns.

-- *Unstable contract-based employment*

A job survey (Saunders 1998) found that there was a trend towards fixed contract and temporary work, both in Hong Kong and the mainland as the employment structure changed demanding more flexibility in the workforce. It is relevant to note that nowadays many young adults are not confident about their career prospects as their jobs are often on a fixed term contract (Wu 2010). They were not sure whether these contracts would be renewed, which in turn affected their longer-term career planning. Abi was a good example of this dilemma:

> Abi (female with high income, high educational level and high skills, line 262-265):
>
> In the past, there were permanent posts, but now many teachers have been employed on a contract term basis… The principal may say one day that the school needs to cut staff by redundancy because of low birth rate. In fact, there is much uncertainty.

-- *Low/ no income and benefits prolong family dependence*

Although the unemployment rate for young persons in Hong Kong was 9% (Census and Statistics Department 2011a) which was low compared to western countries, some respondents in the individual interviews found it difficult to find jobs due to their low education attainment, lack of work experience and young age. This phenomenon is also shown in labour market research by Ngai and Ngai (2007). Interviewees with low education and low skills generally did not easily find work. Ting (Case 7) and Ching (Case 8), both were Secondary 5 school leavers, had been unemployed for several years, became 'hidden youth' and financially relied on parental support. They always stayed at home, playing computer games and used MSN to contact friends. They seldom engaged directly with other people and lacked communication and interpersonal relationship skills.

> Ting (male with no job, no study and no income, line 443-444):
> Not taking up employment is OK for me, but if I do not take up employment, I have no money to take care of my parents.

Lok (Case 1) and Irene (Case 2) were working, their jobs were contract-based or freelance, and insecure. Their salaries were low which could not adequately support their day to day living. Lok gave no money to his parents and conversely he needed to ask them to support half of his monthly expenses.

> Irene (a contract-based programme assistant in a welfare agency, line 179-181):
> My monthly salary is only HK$6,500, but I have to give a proportion to support my family. I need to pay tax and I have much regular daily expenditure. I have no extra money to take courses to equip myself.

> Lok (a freelance drawing class tutor, line 144-146):

> On average I've HK$3,000 a month. Now I'm 23 years old but I still can't earn enough money to give my parents any. As I'm still studying a course on art, I need my parent's financial support for half of my monthly expenses.

-- *High tuition fees and availability of time*

Getting more young people into higher education has become a global trend for many societies in order to provide opportunities for individualized routes to social mobility. However, the challenges in doing this in a time of global economic uncertainty and downturn, particularly in western societies, is recognized by Henderson et al. (2007). In Hong Kong, even with government subsidies, annual tuition fees for undergraduate programmes run to about HK$42,000. Those who attend self-financed associate degree programmes have to pay up to HK$50,000 a year. This is an enormous burden for an average Hong Kong family (South China Morning Post 2008). With the depreciation of the Hong Kong dollar which is pegged to the US dollar, the tuition fees of studying abroad are even higher.

Such constraints were encountered by the interviewees in pursuing their career plans who spoke of high tuition fees and time commitments. Blossom (Case 6), a private housing management officer indicated that she could hardly squeeze enough time to pursue continuing education because she had to undertake regular overtime working. Irene (Case 2), a programme assistant at a non-government organization, wanted to be a social worker but she worried about the high tuition fees for a professional qualification. The following outlines her perception of constraints to further study:

> Irene (female with low income, low educational level and low skills, line 169-171):

> Further study depends on money! A degree or sub-degree social work course costs over HK$50,000 a year. I need to save enough money before re-entering university to study the course

Ting (Case 7), a male with no job and no study, indicated that he had no career plan. He was not sure of his area of interest and had no money to pursue further study.

-- *Personal abilities*

As with the research by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2006b), there are many challenges facing those who left school. As young adults enter the job market, they may not be confident of their abilities, especially, for example, in leading a team composed of older staff. Victor (Case 3) was fortunate to find a job with a higher rank and income (compared with peers), but had the following challenges in the early part of his career:

> Victor (male with high income, high educational level and high skill, line 109-110):
> You have to know how to lead a team, that is, you should be capable to motivate the team to work…

-- *Sexual harassment*

According to Sex Discrimination Ordinance in Hong Kong (Equal Opportunities Commission 2011), there are two types of sexual harassment. The first type is the abuse or misuse of authority e.g. demanding sexual favours in exchange for a promotion, a raise, or a passing grade in an examination. The second type is the hostile environment which involves verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that

has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance. Although women are legally protected against discrimination under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, nearly 30% of people thought that sexual harassment against female employees were common in the workplace in Hong Kong according to a survey by Women's Commission (2010). As with the report on sexual harassment in the workplace in the European Union (European Commission 1998) that indicated roughly 40% to 50% of female employees were estimated to have received unwanted sexual proposals or experienced some forms of sexual harassment. A female respondent in this study also faced such a problem. Blossom (Case 6), working in the male-dominated property management industry indicated that she had to deal with many male clients and professionals whose behaviours she found both irritating and sometimes threatening. Because of frequent sexual harassment she was planning to change her job.

> Blossom (female undertaking overtime work and continuing education, line 344-347):
> Those around age 40 and thereabouts are very interested in young ladies of my age, regardless of whether the young ladies are beautiful or not. I can be easily their love target… They would like to touch you…ugh!

-- *Discrimination*

Historically, many of the new arrivals from mainland China have lacked adequate education and skills and could only take up low-skilled jobs (Siu 1999). A survey conducted by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (2003) shows that Hong Kong people often consider new immigrants from China to be annoying, selfish and uncivilized in their attitudes and behaviour. As with the survey conducted by the

Home Affairs Bureau (1997) that indicated about 74% of new arrivals having difficulties adapting to the way of life in Hong Kong, so a respondent who was a new immigrant in this study had problem in gaining work due to difficulties in speaking Cantonese, the dialect spoken in Hong Kong. Chak (Case 9) claimed that this led to problems of discrimination against him as a new immigrant in the work setting.

> Chak (a new male immigrant, line 367-369):
> When I came to Hong Kong, I cannot speak Cantonese… I face discrimination by others… Even the customers would avoid approaching me when they know that I speak Putonghua. They know I'm coming from China.

Suggestions for a better transition to young adulthood (in career development)

As with the study by Yip et al. (2011) that indicated many Chinese respondents had little confidence in the power of ordinary citizens to influence public policy via conventional political processes, so many respondents in this study who had suggestions for a better transition to young adulthood did not think that seeking help from the government was likely to yield a positive response. Their preference instead for self-reliance may be related to the traditional Chinese 'face' culture (Hu 1944; Stockman 2000). Nonetheless, some interviewees suggested that the Government should consider cutting tuition fees so that young people could afford to take relevant courses and enhance their employability. Other measures included cutting taxes to reduce their financial burden. Some living in remote areas also suggested that the Government should provide transport subsidies to moderate travelling expenses in attending training courses in city centre areas.

> Irene (female with low income, low educational level and low skills, line

173-177):

> If I want to pursue further study, I have to travel from Tuen Mun (New Territories) to Hunghom (Kowloon Peninsula). It would take at least one hour. Generally the class starts at 7 pm and I finish work at 6 pm. And the travelling expense is high. Thus there should be some traveling subsidies.

Abi (Case 4), a female teacher, suggested that the Government should cut the administrative workload of teachers in government subsidized schools so that they could have more time to attend training. Blossom (Case 6), a private housing management officer, suggested the NGOs or the Government could provide interpersonal relationship courses or stress management courses to help the younger generation tackle the adversities they face. She suggested the private sectors could employ social workers to provide counseling services or stress management courses for employees. Victor (Case 3), a banking trainee, proposed the Government should develop more kinds of industries so as to increase the working opportunities and choices for the youth.

It is relevant to note that most of the male interviewees, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds (Case 1, Case 3, Case 5, Case 7) did not think that seeking assistance from the Government was the preferred option. Their response suggests that they were influenced by gender status and traditional Chinese cultural values that citizens, especially males, should rely on themselves to generate an income. Seeking help from the government would suggest incompetence and social inferiority. Some interviewees never thought of government as a source of direct support, e.g. Ching (Case 8), a female with no job, no study and no income, stated that she never had any expectation of assistance from the Government and the idea had never occurred to her. Similarly, Lok (male with low educational level, low skills and low-income job, line 222-223) stated:

> I consider that the Government cannot be just like an amah, (personal aid) making sure that you find the job.
>
> Victor (male with high income, high educational level and high skill, line 260): As for me, I would not like to depend on the Government.

As noted earlier, many young adults are uncertain about their career prospects as they are often employed in one or two year contracts. This may prolong their reliance on parents and their transition to independent adulthood as shown in the research by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Group (2010). This indicated that Hong Kong young people tend to be increasingly dependent economically on their family, and experience a prolonged state of 'adolescence'. Likewise, under a competitive global economy, many young adults feel the need to pursue further education in order to maintain their competitive edge or to be employable. Those without resources may be left behind. As we have seen above, there are a number of complex inter-weaving factors which affect the career plans and personal development of the young people.

Family building plan

-- *Marriage and other lifestyles*

Unlike the studies by Whitehead and Popenoe (2003) into family change in the west, this study into Hong Kong youth found that a majority of the interviewees, especially females, had plans for family building. Male interviewees preferred to get married after 30 in contrast to females who wanted to marry earlier. The male respondents considered that they might first save up enough money once around 30 while females referred to the risks associated with first births by older mothers over the age of 30.

Some interviewees considered that it is a normal aspect of the life course to get married. They considered that marriage provides protection and security. The results here were similar to the findings of the survey and the focus groups reported in the previous chapters that young people tended to have a positive attitude towards marriage and would commit themselves in marriage. As with the survey result on the reasons to get married, over half of the respondents (57.5%) considered that public declaration of legal partnership was important to them as they would enjoy better protection because of the legal status of their union. Irene provides an example of this shared perspective:

> Irene (female with low income, low educational level and low skills):
> Cohabitation does not provide protection … if there is no marriage certificate, it would affect the whole family a lot. (line 201-202) …I think a marriage certificate is very important…there is no protection for cohabited couples. How long can you trust someone? (line 640-642)

Apart from the above reasons, there is the influence of Chinese culture and values which influenced the family plans of the interviewees. According to the sage Mencius, 'on the birth of a boy, it is wished by the parents that he shall have a wife and, on the birth of a girl, it is wished by them that she shall have a husband. This parental feeling is possessed by all' (Mencius, Book III, Pt. II, Ch 4, Sec. 6, in Cheng 1946). Hence, it perhaps is not surprising that marriage has long been viewed as an inevitable stage of life by the majority of respondents who would all have been exposed in varying degrees to such traditional Chinese values:

> Blossom (female undertaking overtime work and continuing education, line 598-601):
> I believe there is everlasting marriage. I think that the Chinese culture affects

me… I am thinking it is desirable to have a companion. When you are elderly, you need to have a companion.

Chak (a new male immigrant, line 488-490):
There is a Chinese saying that when a man grows up, he should get married, I agree with this Chinese saying.

Abi (female with high income, high educational level and high skills):
I think that I have been influenced by the traditional values. Since my young age, I have been taught about that. (line 675-676) … Mom cultivated me with traditional values. My circle of friends all grew up in traditional families. We have the same thought. (line 691-692)

It is interesting to note that in Asia, some male adults still cling to what might be considered in the west as chauvinist ideas whereby they claim the major responsibility for supporting a family. Lok (Case 1) was an example of this:

Lok (male with low income, low educational level and low skills):
coz I am a 'big man' (a traditional male). I do not want my wife to help me to buy a flat, to contribute to repayment of mortgage loan… I just want to solve the problem myself. (line 355-356) … There is no reason that a wife has to contribute to the mortgage. (line 375)

However, with the expansion of universal education and the changing pattern of service-led working environment, more and more Hong Kong women now participate in the labour force (Census and Statistics Department 2001). With earning power and skills, today's women are more independent. Indeed, many of the female interviewees stated they would continue to work even after getting married or having children. Abi (Case 4), Blossom (Case 6), Portia (Case 10) tended to be more influenced by global values of feminism and preferred to keep on working outside after building a family. Hence, traditional the Chinese saying about the 'male working outside, female

working at home' is simply not applicable to all female young people in late modern Hong Kong.

> Abi (female with high income, high educational level and high skills, line 728-729):
> The concept of 'male working outside, female working at home' is outdated. Nowadays, male and female both go out to work to support their family.

As with the study by Georgas et al. (2006) into recent changes in family types in Western societies, we can see there is a sizeable increase in divorce rate and the proportion of single-parent families. Young adults increasingly cohabit without marriage and fertility rate has dropped markedly. There are evident global changes in lifestyle in the west. Likewise, a few respondents in this study would consider where relevant to them other lifestyle options such as cohabitation, same-sex marriage or being singleton as well. Here, the influence of global values and culture was seemingly a key factor. For example, Victor claimed open attitudes towards sexual relationships stating he was more influenced by western notions about liberalism, pluralism and individualism that he learned in his undergraduate studies. Portia, a returnee from overseas study in USA stated she was greatly impressed and influenced by the western style of education and culture and pursued self-development and other personal interests and freedoms.

> Victor (male with high income, high educational level and high skills):
> err … as for myself … I consider pre-marital sex acceptable. As to multiple sex partners…It is not a big deal … I will not criticize others if they have multiple sex partners … (line 344-346) … Homosexuality, now I do not feel that I have this orientation. If one day I have such sexual orientation, why should I control it? (line 355-356)

> Portia (female returnee from overseas study, line 526-528):

> I accept homosexual relationships and same sex marriage. Cohabitation and pre-marital sex are OK to me. If the partners think about it carefully and love each other deeply, then that's no problem to have a sex relationship.

It is relevant to note that their acceptance of alternative lifestyles did not mean that they would follow such practices. Indeed some felt bound by Chinese cultural values that having sexual relationships out of marriage would be seen as an irresponsible act giving no status to either and no protection to a dependant party. This would, in the view of several, affect the reputation of both partners and bring shame and stigma to both families (Hu 1944; Eastman 1988; Stockman 2000).

> Chak (a new male immigrant, line 468-469):
> Cohabitation is OK but if your partner lives with you, you have to give her status. Right? This is respect … I mean I am serious.

-- *Parenthood*

Over past decades, fertility has declined almost everywhere in the world. It is commonly found that underlying young people's perceptions to family building was the global value of individualism expressed through prioritized personal career and financial goals and the need to establish a consolidated sense of self prior to partnership and parenting (White 2003; O'Laughlin and Anderson 2001; Plotnick 2007). In some opposition to the broad thrust of these studies, a majority of the interviewees indicated that they anticipated having children as an expression of their shared love for each other and their desire for a family when practicable and affordable was notable. Most however did not invoke traditions of family lineage and family continuity as part of their thinking:

> Ken (male adult undertaking cross-border work with overtime, line 538-539):
> Regarding the Chinese thinking of continuing lineage, in fact, I do not consider it important. You can make a will to arrange your property after death.

One interviewee considered that without children a marriage would lack stimulation and meaning. Another interviewee considered that it was simply part of the 'normal' life course of young adulthood to have children.

> Lok (male adult with low income, low educational level and low skills, line 277):
> Having a baby is just a normal course of life. It is just normal behaviour.

To repeat, many of the interviewees indicated that they would like to have children for the intrinsic value of creating a new life and as part of a purposeful union with their spouse but not necessarily to sustain family lineage. However, their parents and grandparents might think otherwise. The influence of older generations and Chinese culture more generally in these matters is not to be ignored in understanding young people's lifestyle decisions (Lew 1998; Ng 2007).

> Abi (female with high income, high educational level and high skills, line 777-778):
> On the Chinese saying that "without offspring you are not practising filial piety". This saying has an indirect influence on me but not a significant one.

Victor (Case 3) indicated that he did not want children because this would affect adversely his commitments to his career. However, he noted that if his parents and partner preferred him to have children, he would prefer to have a boy instead of a girl, not based on notions of lineage, but because he assumed boys over time could take care of themselves better and that would allow him to concentrate on self-actualization and career development.

> Victor (male with high income, high educational level and high skills):
> I am very selfish…..financial burden is another concern. … Why shouldn't I choose my own goals? I don't want to waste time on children. (line 373-375) … I prefer a boy, not because a boy can help continue the lineage. The reason is there are fewer worries … I prefer that children are able to take care of themselves and I can pursue my own goals… (line 419-422)

Not surprisingly, those young adults with no job or low income had not thought much about the topic of having children given that they were unable to support themselves without parental help:

> Ting (male with no job, no study and no income, line 338):
> I think that I can't take care of myself (financially) and I cannot cope with taking care of a baby.

-- *Family responsibility*

In traditional Chinese society, the values of Confucian filial piety culturally define the nature of inter-generational relationships. The Confucian values have assumed that care for the elderly is the responsibility of adult children, and therefore, basically the family's responsibility (Bengtson and Putney 2000; Chow 2001; Pak 1996). In this study, a majority of the interviewees indicated that they already shouldered obligations or would be happy to take up family responsibilities such as taking care of their parents or siblings. They would have 'tea' with parents (having tea and little dishes 'yum cha') at restaurants is a traditional practice in socializing and consolidating family membership in southern China. Most spoke of spending time with them, assisting in household chores, some would provide money and gifts as expressions of filial piety. Reasons for taking up family responsibilities included

norms of reciprocity, affection and a culturally given sense of obligation to those that brought them up.

> Victor (male with high income, high educational level and high skills, line 443-444):
> My parents have sacrificed a lot for me, for instance, my mom, being a full-time housewife, spent a large part of her life taking care of me…

> Chak (a new male immigrant, line 577-578):
> Your parents have brought you up and taken care of you for so many years, you must repay them.

On matters of filial piety, Victor was perhaps the most influenced by global values of individualism and liberalism, indicating that he was not under some abstract duty of obligation to his parents simply because they had chosen to have children. Rather he considered that filial piety was to do with reciprocity to parents who had made sacrifices to bring up their children. His views reflected a more reciprocal sense of commitment but seemingly on more utilitarian grounds of honoring a debt:

> Victor (male with high income, high educational level and high skills):
> Why there should be responsibility towards family? They (parents) bring you into this world but this does not mean that you should respect them and have family responsibility… The only reason is …err … they have contributed to my well-being, hence I have to pay back in return. (line 495-498) … I hope that one day I could earn enough money to buy a flat for my parents… and of course I should buy one for myself first… (line 187-188)

By contrast, some respondents placed filial piety within the context of traditional religious instruction of doing good for its own sake rather than what you have received or hope to get back directly from an act:

Blossom (female undertaking overtime work and continuing education, line 884-885):
I believe that when you do something good to others, you will get something good in return in the future. Buddhism has some influence on me.

Constraints to family building and taking family responsibility for parents

-- *Prospect of finding a partner*

In examining the prospect of finding a partner, it is important to look into the unique characteristics of marriage in Hong Kong in which most grooms tend to be older than their brides. By comparing the number of men in the 25-49 age group that have never married with the never-married women in the 20-44 age group, we find that there are at least 199,200 more women than men (Census and Statistics Department 2010c). As such, women over 45 have only a very slim chance of getting married (South China Morning Post 2005). Thus it was interesting to note that female respondents were, comparatively, more worried about their prospects of finding a partner. They considered that their chance of getting married reduced as they got older. They were happy to consider a partner from the mainland. Some were not unhappy about remaining single if they could not find the partner they wanted; in this they seemed to reflect aspects of feminism in contemplating another lifestyle apart from marriage.

Abi (a female with high income, high educational level and high skills):
On cross-border marriage, I consider it acceptable as we are all Chinese. (line 752) … The chance of being singleton is high. In Hong Kong, there are more females than males. There are many single women and they consider that the meaning of life does not lie on marriage. I think that if I cannot find a suitable partner, I will not force myself into marriage. (line 735-739)

Some female respondents considered that it was difficult find a male partner in Hong

Kong as there are more women than men. In 2010, the percentage of female and male in the population are 53.2% and 46.8% respectively. There are more females than males in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department 2011b). The female respondents also felt a sense of time passing them by in terms of being married:

> Blossom (female undertaking overtime work and continuing education):
> Now I am 25. This is an important date for a girl. Many friends of mine have already got married. There is too much pressure. (line 44-45) … It is very difficult to find someone you love and also that the guy is committed to the relationship. (line 685-686)

One interviewee pointed out that in mainland China, 'arranged dating' by parents is popular in many of the provinces while it is not so common in Hong Kong. Some get married after getting to know each other through this arrangement. In Hong Kong such opportunities of 'arranged dating' by parents (see Eastman 1988; Stockman 2000) were less available and young people tended to make their own choices via other means when selecting a partner such as the idea of looking for a marriage partner through matchmaking service centres (Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups 2000).

-- *Job availability and stable income*

As with the study by Wu (2010), more young people are delaying marriage because of the uncertainties associated with difficult transitions from school to work, so in this study several respondents indicated the importance of finding a job first or to settle down in their career before dating seriously and getting married.

> Irene (female with low income, low educational level and low skills, line 273-274):

> A job is very important. Without a job, you cannot go out dating because you have to spend money on cosmetics, on food, etc in dating activities.

Lok, Ching and Ting (low income and low education attainment) did not have stable jobs or salaries and all felt uncertain and somewhat worried about family building and at the same time take up family responsibilities towards their parents too:

> Lok (a tutor in an art centre, with unstable job and low income, line 287-291):
> Ten years later I may get married. But up to now I don't have a stable job and my life is so difficult. How can I save enough money to get married, to buy a flat or to pay for a great deal of wedding expenditure? I want to support my parents financially and take up family obligations but in fact I can't do it because of my low salary.

-- *Housing constraints*

Finding affordable housing when getting married is a big issue both in the UK (see Henderson et al. 2007) and in Hong Kong where a study by Yip et al. (2011) indicated that many young people do not have enough money to obtain a property, sustain a nuclear family and raise children. Many of the interviewees felt helpless when they thought about the high property prices in Hong Kong. Their major hurdle was not having enough money to commence family building. Most considered their future in some form of rented or public housing. The costs of traditional marriage rituals (large wedding party and dinner in a restaurant) would be replaced by just having close friends to the ceremony and some modest ambition for a honeymoon. Some chose to live with parents or in-laws to save money on renting flat.

> Lok (male with no job, low educational level and low skills, line 349-351):
> (On marriage) the first hurdle is money….I am a traditional male. I do not want my spouse to contribute to the mortgage.

Irene (female with low income, low educational level and low skills, line 282-283)
It is OK by me to live in public (housing) estates. If I do not meet the eligibility criteria for public housing, I may rent a flat to form a nuclear family. Buying a flat is too expensive…

Portia (a female returnee from oversea study):
After marriage, I would live with my parents or my spouse's parents. Then I will not have the accommodation problem. I think if we have jobs, we will not die and can overcome all the difficulties. (line 657-659) … Even if I'm single, I'll keep on living with my parents. My home is my 'last resort' and my safety net and umbrella. I don't mind going back to my parents' home for protection when necessary. (line 794-797)

-- *Constraints derived from continuing education, overtime and cross-border work on building a new family or to take care of parents*

A landmark study by Wu (2010) indicated that the transition of Chinese young people from school to work and family building has become more precarious and unstable than before in a global economy driven by competitive labour markets and harsh working conditions. So more and more young people are delaying marriage. The findings in this study were similar in that it revealed many constraints in family building and also taking care of parents.

Blossom (property management officer, overtime working and continuing education, line 264-267):
I spend all my time in work. For many months I go to work at 9:00 am and return home at 12:00 at night because of overtime work and taking a course at night. I haven't talked with my parents for a long time as I don't have chance to meet them. I've no time to find a mate.

Ken (a dog trainer who had cross-border work and overtime work):

> Actually I want to date, but you know I can't afford to because of my present working conditions. I don't believe a girl would like to choose a boyfriend who had to work cross-border and work overtime until 11 or 12pm at night….Er… I need to sleep all the day during holidays because of one week's exhaustive work. I dare not date, it will waste the time of a young girl… (line 364-368)… My father is a dementia patient. I need to accept his strange behaviour and bad temper. I'm quite stressed in taking care of him because my job is quite demanding. Indeed I've no time to take care of him. I rely on my two sisters to look after him. (line 611-614)

-- *Single-child problem*

An early study (Barnet 1961) showed that 62.8% of all Hong Kong households were nuclear families. This percentage increased to 67 percent by 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2007a). In line with this, the average household size has decreased from 3.9 persons in 1981 to 3 persons in 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2008). The smaller family size and familiar 'single child' issue has implications for future inter-generational caring of older people, particularly in mainland China. The redefinition of the filial role of daughters is especially important in light of the recent trend toward the one-child family (Lye 1996). Portia is a typical case of being a single child who in future sees herself supporting her parents. She worries about how to cope with this responsibility when they retire and age:

> Portia (a returnee from overseas study, line 143-148):
> I want to be a coach to teach young people the knowledge and skills in adventure-based programmes. But I think it is only a dream. I can't take it up as a future full-time job as the income is not stable. I'm the single child and when my father retires one day, my salary equates to their income. I can't be so selfish to pursue on my own interests. I need to consider my responsibility to care for them when they get older. I need to find a job with a stable and good salary.

Suggestions for a better transition to young adulthood (in family building and taking family responsibility for parents)

The problems that the young people face are not unique to Hong Kong. Many western states such as the UK face similar problems. Higher unemployment rates, lower starting salaries and insecure jobs have put many young people in disadvantaged positions, protracting the transition from school to work and from adolescence to adulthood. Government policies could help to smooth the transitions from school to work and facilitate young people's subsequent life plan in family building and taking family responsibility (Wu 2010; The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups 2010). One such area might be to streamline the right of abode as noted below.

-- *Streamline the procedure of right of abode for cross-border marriage partner and children*

Chak (Case 9) was a new immigrant and had a girlfriend in mainland China. He referred to many hurdles for a cross-border spouse to come to Hong Kong. Hence the Government might consider removing such hurdles.

> Chak (a new male immigrant, line 594-596):
> On cross-border marriage, if you want to get married in China, your other half has to wait for at least four years before being allowed to come to Hong Kong. The Government should relax this rule.

-- *Increase employment opportunities*

Another interviewee hoped that the Government should diversify its economy in

different regions in order to broaden employment opportunities for young adults:

> Victor (a banking trainee with high education attainment, high income and high skill level, line 559-564):
> I think that the Hong Kong economy just relied too much on a single industry, i.e. financial services industry. The Government should diversify its economy and develop six potential industries, such as medical services… nowadays, the qualifications of young adults have increased with more places at tertiary institutes. These young adults have high expectations but the reality is that there are limited employment opportunities. As such, they have lots of grievances.

-- *Government's housing policy*

Many interviewees criticized the Government for its housing policy as it was chronically difficult for young adults to buy a flat when starting a new family. Victor again summarized a view shared by many, line 539-542:

> I hope that the Government could increase land supply and to regulate the developers. I don't need the Government to subsidize me in purchasing properties but I hope that the Government would regulate the property market. I consider the Government should build more subsidized housing for the younger generation.

-- *Community care for the elderly*

Interviewee Ken whose father has dementia stated he felt helpless as he had no time to take care of his father. In the absence of effective community care for the elderly the burden of care inevitably falls on family members:

> Ken (a dog trainer with cross-border and overtime work, line 602-605):
> My Dad has the problem of dementia. It is not curable. I have to learn to accept

it….I do not have time to take care of my Dad. It is so helpless…

Summary

The eco-systemic analysis on life course transition of young people showed the interplay of different systems on youth's self-development, career development and family building, and the fulfillment of development tasks in a family life cycle. At the microsystem and mesosystem level, personal qualities and family influence were important factors in affecting young people's transition from a dependent to a complete independent adult. It should be noted that some young people were not independent and could not cope with problems while some were very independent and did not want to rely on others. At the exosystem level, satisfaction level of the respondents to their life planning is related with work and social relationship. Those with temporary or contract-based jobs were dissatisfied with living because of job insecurity. Those without a job and without income indicated a low sense of life satisfaction. Some even chose to live in their own world with their computer and did not want to get in touch with others. Some interviewees cited the influence of the macrosystem, e.g. housing policy, education system, employment-related policies, elderly care system, as structural barriers to starting a family of their own. Nevertheless, many respondents did not seem to want to assert any rights as citizens nor seek to participate in actions to influence government policies. A majority of the respondents did not show much interest in public engagement, either because they attached little importance to it or they thought that the consultative process was not user-friendly and effective. Most of the interviewees were found to be unconnected to the political development of Hong Kong and some interviewees seemed quite indifferent to political participation.

When compared between older and younger generation in a family life cycle context, some interviewees considered that their life course development would be similar to their parents or the older generation e.g. to get a job, then to get married and to have baby, etc. In former times, adults would live with their parents even after marriage in an extended family. Some interviewees indicated that they preferred to live with their families even after marriage in order to take care of their elderly parents or have their elderly parents take care of their children. Nevertheless, some interviewees indicated that under the influence of globalization, there was no guarantee that the family life cycle of the next generation would be the same as that of their predecessors.

Many interviewees said that they would like to choose an individualized lifestyle different from their parents or older generation. They expressed a desire to have more variety in life and have exposure to global and different cultures e.g. go to different countries to work rather than staying in Hong Kong; go overseas on ‘work holidays’ and to experience other lifestyles; find a satisfying job and not just earn a living; have and enjoy more personal space and not live with parents. It is also relevant to note that under the influence of globalization and the rise of feminism, some female interviewees had different views on women’s roles in family and in society. For instance, some wanted to have equal status for men and women and believed that females were as capable and competent in work as males and should not be judged by their appearance and attractiveness. Some considered ‘family’ is not the ‘only thing’ a woman looked for in life; a woman could have other things to actualize herself. Some indicated that they might choose to be singleton if they did not find a suitable partner. Unlike the older generation, some interviewees expressed that they would like to have children not because they would like to continue the family line but for personal

reasons of emotional fulfillment. Overall, they seemed to be influenced by individualistic values that corresponded to the findings in both the focus groups and the survey, as will be demonstrated in more detail in the following chapter.

In sum, the individual interviews demonstrated that life plans of young people were affected by both local influences, that is, Chinese culture and values and the interplay of ecological systems in the Hong Kong context, and global and growing impact of individualized lifestyles and ideas of pluralism, liberalism, feminism, within a wider economic context of a keen competitive culture of late modernity. All these influences bring risks, challenges and uncertainties to young people's life transitions which in turn affect their family building and responsibility-taking in society. In the next chapter, we will seek to integrate the findings from focus groups, survey and interviews to glean some sense of the extent to which global culture and values impact upon young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in our late modern world, and the service and policy implications of that.

Chapter 9: Perceptions, Plans and Policy Implications: An Overview of Key Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, I will seek to integrate key findings of the three explorations (focus groups, survey, interviews), in order to better grasp the nuanced role of global culture and values on young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in late modernity. Additionally, the likely impact of traditional culture will be addressed. In doing so, conceptual support will be sought from notions of the family life cycle and eco-systemic perspective on young people's transitions to adulthood. The merits and demerits of these theoretical frameworks will be noted as will the service and policy implications of the findings. The limitations of the study design will be noted and recommendations for further research will be offered.

Young adults in contemporary Hong Kong are heterogeneous group that have been subject to the influence of global culture and values in late modernity. The mixed methods design adopted in this study revealed that a substantial proportion of young adults held traditional Chinese values on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility but simultaneously they appeared receptive to global values such as individualism, pluralism and feminism.

As with research by Chow and Lum (2008) that indicated there was strong support for traditional marriage and also acceptance of cohabitation, so it was that this study found similar findings. The findings overall suggest that a majority of young adults still endorsed the institution of marriage but many also claimed some acceptance of

other lifestyles such as gay or lesbian relationships and unions and cohabitation more generally. On parenthood, only a small minority of young adults across the three data sources stated a relative lack of interest in having children and this corresponded with the findings of Chow and Lum (2008) that most people think child-bearing is a necessary step in life. Those who preferred to have children said they would do so not for the reason of family lineage but for personal reasons such as the intrinsic emotional rewards of having children and the affirmation of family ties that this brought about. They still held a strong belief in family responsibility such as taking care of elderly parents but they noted the many challenges this invoked (as analysed by the eco-systemic approach) such as demands upon their personal capabilities and resources, family and class background, community resources and support, and the socio-economic environment such as the labour market, education system and property prices, as well as the pervasive influence of global and local culture and values. As such, some had to rely on their parents financially and could not be fully independent. In this sense the life course transition to independent adulthood had to be postponed for many, as was the case in research by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2010). Unlike the older generation, the younger generation did not totally follow the typical stages assumed by the family life cycle due in some measure to rapid societal and global changes in late modernity. Faced with such uncertainties due in part to the effects of globalization, the routinized family life cycle with pre-set development tasks could not easily 'fit' the complex individual circumstances of young people in contemporary Hong Kong. As noted by Giddens (2001), the new generation living in a world of late modernity have to make individual choices and plan ahead in facing of new challenges. For example, it soon became apparent across all data sources that young people had prolonged their dependency on parents and could not easily make significant life choices by themselves.

Role of global culture and values on young adults' perception of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in late modernity

Global / local values preferred by Hong Kong young adults

As regards traditional cultural values, the majority of the respondents in the six focus groups placed emphasis on family security and relationships, respect for tradition, honouring of parents and elders and loyalty to family. These findings were prominent in the survey findings where the participants generally got higher scores in Chinese cultural values (CVS total and its 4 subscales) such as filial piety, trustworthiness, self-cultivation, courtesy and friendship. Importance of family and harmony with others were thus still important to this sample of young people. However, some of the traditional Confucian ethos such as protecting face, conservative attitude, non-competitiveness, having few personal desires and patriotism were seemingly less relevant to the young adults. They tended to be influenced more by a competitive global culture that individuals should actualize themselves by achieving personal interests and goals. These results were quite similar to those in the six focus groups where a majority focused on freedom, personal goals, ambition, wealth, pleasure, life meaning, a spiritual life, but a varied life. Similarly, notions of independence linked to key categories to do with global values of individualism, liberalism, pluralism and feminism in late modernity were also strongly evident in their responses.

Demographic variables and preferred values

It is relevant to note the influence of key demographic variables on young adults'

choices over preferred values. As regards gender, the majority of the male respondents in the six focus groups put more emphasis on personal development and placed less emphasis on family relationships. By contrast, most of the female respondents put more emphasis on family relationships instead of personal development and ambition. In the survey findings, it was also found that Chinese cultural values had a significant relationship (at .01 sig. level) with the demographic variable of gender. Overall, female participants across the interview data tended to be more influenced by the Chinese cultural values than males. This may be explained in part by a traditional patriarchal socialization process which focuses on familial roles for the female who are deemed most 'complete' when married and family building (see Eastman 1988; Stockman 2000; Lye 1996; Lee 2000).

Regarding the variable of age in the six focus groups relating to preferred values, those younger respondents, often in school or college aged 17-20, while influenced by individualism and life pursuits, tended to put more emphasis on spiritual life over material prosperity. It was hypothesized that this was to do with their age-related pursuit of self-identity and propensity towards a more idealistic meaning to life (Erikson 1975; Brake 1980). Those respondents aged 22-25 held somewhat different views. Some of the respondents, influenced by values around materialism and individualism, indicated that wealth, independence and ambition were important. This seemed linked to their new careers at work and an increasing share of family financial liability.

The influence of marital status on young adults' in the focus groups seemed to have no obvious bearing. The vast majority of respondents emphasized individual needs and hoped to gain pleasure, life enjoyment and freedom in life. These views on

pleasure seeking and life enjoyment were also shared by the focus group comprising employed young people. As they had already entered the workforce, it is likely that they might have encountered problems such as work stress and interpersonal tensions that made them realize the importance of enjoying life's pleasures to balance the demands of a competitive work world. Their comments generally suggested they were influenced by global values of individualism that validated the pursuit of personal enjoyment and pleasure (see Hartley 1991).

Unlike the working group, those who were studying appeared to have little in the way of family or financial burdens. At this stage in their lives they seemed focused much more on freedom, pleasure, creativity and a varied life. Apart from values of individualism, they tended to be influenced more by notions of liberalism in their ambitions for a meaningful and colorful life without too many restrictions imposed on them by parents or society. This result is similar to the finding in individual interviews that indicated respondents sought an individualized lifestyle with more varieties and more exposure to global ideas and cultures.

Regarding the influence of educational attainment on young adults' choice of values in the focus groups, all secondary/ high school students recognized the importance of responsibility in the context of family and society, this being a strong normative injunction from school and their own families as well. Most respondents with undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications put focus on developing personal goals, family security and relationships, honoring of parents, elders, and family loyalty. Their comments generally suggested they tended to be influenced by both traditional family values and global values of individualism around self-development. It is important to recall that under a global economic climate, one has to pursue continuing

education in order to maintain the competitive edge of self and employer.

Lastly, regarding the impact of residence on young adults' most preferred value, the respondents from across the three regions displayed no significant differences in their views of preferred values. This might be explained by the fact that Hong Kong is a relatively small region with an excellent network of communications and access that may help homogenize value orientations.

Concerning those values less preferred by the participants in the focus groups, the studying group and the non-working and non-studying group expressed similar views concerning respect for tradition. To them, many traditional values such as ancestor worship or notions of male superiority were considered outmoded. Male respondents tended to be more influenced by global value of pluralism and liberalism whereby multiple and different voices other than those stemming from ancestral traditions or elders, should be allowed in a progressive multi-cultural society. In addition, some of the female participants who were influenced by feminism and individualism criticized the traditional values that endorsed the unequal status of men and women and the negative consequences of this for women's personal and career development. By contrast there were participants who took an opposite view to those espoused within global values of feminism and pluralism. A minority of female respondents, as in the interviews, considered that career ambition was not their sole life goal, noting that a woman who was too ambitious may not find approval in their network of family and friends. They tended to be influenced by traditional values on women's status and argued the opportunity costs in family building and emotional security paid by career women.

Cohabitants were a group who did not like to follow traditional values and tended to emphasize the importance of their own preferences and interests, personal feelings and needs. This is perhaps predictable given their choice of deferring or avoiding the more dominant Hong Kong traditions about marriage as the preferred state for the union of two people.

To summarize, the respondents from all data sources seemed to be embedded to varying extents within a cluster of value orientations influenced by liberalism, individualism, feminism and pluralism. Typically, they wished to choose their own lifestyles and sought freedoms, pleasure, the pursuit of personal goals and a varied life. Nonetheless, many still treasured ideals informed by traditional culture that focused on family security and relationships, honoring parents and elders. Some younger participants did not invoke the pursuit of wealth as their ideal while others (older ones) indicated that wealth was highly important to them. Overall, their value preferences varied in terms of gender, age, marital status, working status, and educational attainment. It would therefore be unwise to assume some clear uniformity in their attachment to values global or local.

-- *Influence of Chinese cultural values on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility*

The focus group study suggested that global values such as developing personal goals, seeking pleasure, life enjoyment, freedom and wealth were prevalent among the young people. It would seem that global culture and values engender some influence upon the respondents and affected their perceptions of their life plan such as marriage and family building. Global values that emphasized material (and rapid) success and

more open social relationships were deemed likely to affect the approach of young people towards family building and child rearing which requires long-term commitment and responsibilities. These findings were further explored in the survey stage of the study. It was assumed that Chinese cultural values (CVS) still played a role in young adults' perception of marriage, parenthood and family obligation. To test this, a linear regression analysis was used in the statistical manipulation of the survey data. The findings showed that the CVS had significant relationships with young adults' perceptions of marriage (CVS I & CVS II had a positive significant relationship with MAS (Marital Attitude Scale); CVS also had positive significant relationship with young people's perception of two sex relationships; parenthood (CVS had a positive significant relationship with the Parenthood Scale); and family responsibility (CVS had a positive significant relationship with the Family Obligation Scale). These linear regression results indicated that Chinese cultural values were likely to retain some significant influence on the sample youth's views on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Broadly, Chinese cultural values and some Confucian moral values appear to be relatively stable in response to globalization given the responses to the survey.

The survey findings also suggested that young adults' attitudes towards marriage, parenthood and family responsibility were not restricted to the variables of Chinese cultural values (CVS). The scales also had significant relationships between and amongst themselves. When further testing the relationship between MAS and other scales such as CVS, Parenthood Scale and Family Obligation Scale, the linear regression results show that MAS only had a positive significant relationship with the Parenthood Scale. Young people's perceptions on marriage were strongly influenced by their perception on parenthood. Also, the Parenthood Scale was not only having a

positive significant relationship with CVS, it had a positive relationship with the MAS and Family Obligation Scale. These linear regression results indicated that other than Chinese cultural values, the youth's perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility also mutually and reciprocally elicited significant relationships between and amongst themselves.

Global/ local values and marriage

Although the young people were influenced by global values and global culture, some of their Chinese cultural heritage remained an essential element in the lives of most. Here, we can note that the majority of the interviewees of the six focus groups held optimistic views and plans about marriage albeit they were influenced by a blend of individualism (to satisfy personal needs) and traditional cultural values. The survey findings were quite similar in this regard. The respondents to the survey generally got higher mean scores in the Marital Attitude Scale. This suggests that the sample generally took a positive and meaningful attitude towards marriage. Many thought that marriage was a 'sacred' act and people should only get married if they were sure that it would last a lifetime. Their ideal of a lifelong dream happy marriage finds support in respondents' choices in the MAS, which suggests the young people were still much influenced by traditional Chinese values. Furthermore, most did not regard marriage as some major barrier to one's self-development, pursuit of freedoms and pluralistic choices in partners and personal lifestyles. The results also show that MAS had a positive significant relationship with income. This implies that income is a predictive factor on young adults' perceptions about marriage. The higher the income, the more positive the attitude towards marriage the young people would have.

-- *Plan to get married is influenced by marital and parenthood attitudes*

The survey results showed that the majority of the respondents planned to get married (70.4%). The respondents' plan to get married had a positive significant relationship with MAS and the Parenthood Scale respectively. This suggests that the more positive attitudes to marriage and parenthood, the more the young adults were eager to plan to get married. Also, a majority of the participants (61.5%) opined that 26 to 30 was the ideal age for getting married. 11.7% preferred to get married at the age of 31 or above. Young adults' age to get married had negative significant relationship with MAS; this suggests that the more negative the attitude to marriage, the older the age to get married the young adults would consider.

-- *Reasons to get married*

The reasons to get married reflected the likely influence of traditional Chinese values about marriage. 57.5% of the respondents claimed that 'public declaration of legal partnership' was the major reason to get married. They believed that marriage was not a private matter and couple status should be recognized and legitimized by significant others such as parents, siblings, relatives and friends. Marriage was also seen to contain a procreation function to extend the line of descendants ('procreation', 26.3%). Most of the young adults could be described as in the 'intimacy versus isolation' developmental phase and were seeking to form intimate relationships with another (as in Erikson 1963). So it is perhaps not surprising to find that to 'avoid loneliness' (26.5%) was an important reason to plan to get married. Regarding reasons not to get married, these collected around three main areas - 'Could not find an appropriate partner to get married', 'Wanted more freedom' and 'Like to be single'. By contrast,

‘Concern over further studies’ and ‘Scared of having and raising children’ had less impact on the survey sample’s decision not to get married.

-- *Acceptance to different kinds of personal lifestyles and intimate partnerships*

Global values on individualism and pluralism also affect youth in contemporary advanced societies (see Midgley 1999). A majority of interviewees in the six focus groups claimed open and, to varying degrees, accepting attitudes towards pre-marital sex, homosexuality, abortion and multiple sexual partners. The survey results and interviews also correspond with these findings and suggest the global influence of pluralism, feminism and liberalism. These findings would seem to challenge the ideas of traditional Chinese culture which focuses on loyalty in marriage, sexual abstinence before marriage and no cohabitation outside of the marital system. That said, the survey results also indicate that extramarital affairs and pregnancies outside of marriage were less widely accepted across the samples of young people. Those with a religious affiliation were notably less open to various kinds of sexual relationships and intimacies.

Regarding the possible influence of CVS on young people’s perceptions of marriage, the results indicate that MAS had positive significant relationship with CVS I and CVS II. This suggests that those young people who were influenced more by traditional values on family and by the Confucian ethos tended to have positive attitudes to marriage. When we go further to test the relationship between MAS and other scales such as CVS, Parenthood and the Family Obligation Scale, it was found that MAS only had a positive significant relationship with the Parenthood Scale. This implies that young people’s perceptions of marriage were strongly influenced by their

perception on parenthood. The more positive the attitude to parenthood, the more positive the attitude would be to marriage by the participants.

To conclude, the MAS results suggested that the majority of the survey sample planned to get married. They were still influenced by traditional Chinese values and held positive views about the virtues of the marital system. Nevertheless, their motivations were mostly individualistic and intrinsic rather than motivated by extrinsic factors such as traditional collectivism whereby they would fulfill parents' expectations and also continue the lineage of the family. Additionally, they held open attitudes towards different kinds of relationships and unions. It is likely therefore that global pluralistic liberal values and individualistic lifestyles also influenced them and more so than the generation of their parents and family elders.

Global/ local values and parenthood

The participants generally got higher to moderate scores in the Parenthood Scale and its subscales. This suggests that the survey sample generally had positive attitudes towards parenthood.

-- *Reasons to have children*

When analyzing the top 5 statements about which the respondents strongly agreed, most fell on the subscale Intrinsic Motivation. This included 'I enjoy children and would like to have a child to watch him/her grow and change', 'I believe that having children is the right thing to do', 'Having children would enrich my life', 'I would like to have a child to establish my own family' and 'I would experience a sense of

accomplishment by having a child'. They hoped, as with other young people in advanced societies, to have children mostly for satisfaction of personal desires and interest rather than to satisfy notions of traditional collectivism and pressure from their family of origin (see O'Laughlin and Anderson 2001; Taylor et al. 2007). That said, their responses also suggested they were less influenced by global values of individualism and feminism in that they did not necessarily believe that parenthood would limit their freedoms, their marital life and career development.

-- *Educational attainment and parenthood attitude*

The results of the survey show that the Parenthood Scale had a positive significant relationship with educational attainment. This implies that education attainment is a predictive factor in respect of young people's perception of parenthood. Thus, the higher their educational attainment the more positive their parenthood attitude. Overall, the sample endorsed the notion of having children. Their plan to have children had a positive significant relationship with the MAS and Parenthood Scale respectively. This shows that the more the positive attitude towards parenthood and marriage, the more the positive attitude the young people would hold in their plans to have children.

-- *Number of children and relevant factors*

A majority of the participants stated that 26-30 was the ideal age for having children. Some 27.2% indicated that 31-35 was the ideal age for having the first child. From the linear regression results, the more positive attitudes one took in marriage, the younger the people would be when having the first child. Furthermore, most of the participants

preferred to have one or two children in the future. In respect of factors to have children, the top three included personal income, child care and accommodation. High competitiveness in employment opportunities, stressful working environment, high standard of living but a slow increase in income, expensive accommodation and pre-school education, these are likely to be key reasons for delaying parenthood. It may also help explain why most participants preferred to have only one or two children in the future. Similar explanations arose in focus groups and interviews.

-- *Decision to have children: gender, full-time work, income and religion*

The survey data suggested that gender difference and full-time working were predictive factors which affected young adults in planning to have children or not. Female respondents considered more factors than males in their decisions about having children. Similarly, those without full-time work considered more factors than those with full-time work. By contrast, those with religious affiliation or higher income tended to consider fewer factors. In addition, the Parenthood Scale had a positive significant relationship with all three scales: CVS, MAS and Family Obligation Scale. This suggests that those young people more likely to be influenced by Chinese cultural values would likely have more positive attitudes to parenthood. Similarly, the more positive attitudes to marriage and family obligation held by respondents, the more the positive attitudes to parenthood they would have. Overall most young people wanted to have children for individualistic and intrinsic reasons around personal enjoyment and life enrichment and sense of achievement. It seems that they were less affected by extrinsic traditional reasons such as peer or family pressure or to fulfill the line of kinship or responsibilities of adulthood.

Global/ local values and family responsibility

Traditional Chinese values attach great importance to collective interest. The Chinese value of collectivism was cultivated by strong ties generated by patriarchal systems of relations and power in which the interests of society and family were seen as indivisible and always put first (Yang and Wang 2006). Of the ancient virtues in China, filial piety forms the root of all. It is the respect that children should pay to their parents, their grandparents, and the aged. Filial piety often determines how one is judged, not only by other members of the family, but also by society at large (Ng 2007). The results suggest how these virtues are seen by contemporary young people in a context of competing global values and culture.

-- *Family responsibility taken by young adults*

Regarding the survey findings, the participants generally got moderate mean scores in the Family Obligation Scale and its subscales on 'Current Assistance', 'Respect for Family' and 'Future Support'. From the top 5 statements that the young respondents chose to strongly agree with, it can be noted that familism and filial piety are strongly socialized in Chinese families. In the eyes of many contemporary Chinese parents, children would not be viewed as adults until married and financially self-reliant. Until this point, young people would be expected to live with parents, give financial support to them where possible, eat meals with family members as part of family solidarity, and spend time in accompanying parents and elders. These acts, endorsed by respondents, display gratitude to one's parents and commitment to his/her family (a kind of collectivism, see Yang 1957; Stockman 2000). That said, in regard to the top 5 statements that the participants strongly disagreed with, it was apparent that while

willing to shoulder some family responsibilities they still wanted to make their own decisions about friends, college and work careers and not to be subject to the dictates of parents and elders in these matters, thereby implicating freedom of personal choice and the likely influence of global ideas around liberalism and individualism.

The focus groups further supported these survey findings about the likely influence of global values which emphasize freedom and choice. Most of the young adults preferred not to live with parents after marriage but a minority would live with parents for practical and economic reasons. Hence our understanding of filial piety and family support needs to be understood within a socio-economic structure and multiple interests (Lam 2006). Thus the respondents' views need to be contextualized in rising accommodation costs, child care problems, continuing education, part-time jobs, overtime work and cross-border work, which to varying degrees mediated their reliance on and contribution to the family and to their plans for marriage and parenthood.

The focus group findings also indicated that most participants were closely oriented to their own personal and career development rather than exercised by the need to perform caregiving for their parents. Global values which emphasize a fast culture of acquisition and keen competition within a knowledge-driven economy inevitably create the need for extended and ongoing study to increase employability and opportunity in a global economic world (Jessop 2004). This may delay young people's age of leaving home and their continuing financial dependence on their parents and government support (Resnick 2005; Beck 2001, 2009). Many young people became immersed in onerous study and work schedules, sometimes engaged in long working hours, cross-border working and with low incomes. All these would in

turn create dependencies and constraints on family togetherness, communication and relationships.

-- *Family responsibility is influenced by gender, living with parents, Chinese cultural values and parenthood attitude*

The survey results indicated that the Family Obligation Scale had a positive significant relationship with gender and living with parents which were significant factors affecting youngsters' perceptions of family obligation. Family Obligation only had a positive significant relationship with CVS II and CVS III respectively which suggested that the 'Confucian Ethos and Loyalty to Ideals and Humanity' were predictive factors which affected the family obligation of young adults. The higher the young adults scored in CVS II & III, the more they would take up their family obligation.

Lastly, the Family Obligation Scale had a positive significant relationship with the CVS and Parenthood Scale but no significant relationship with MAS. The findings suggest that the higher the young adults scored on CVS, the more they would indicate a willingness to take up family obligations. Likewise, the more the positive attitude in parenthood they had, the more the young people would take up their family obligation.

To conclude, data from the three methods indicated that young adults' views on family responsibility tended to be influenced by a blend of traditional cultural values and those global influences which emphasized freedoms, personal choice and autonomy.

Life plan and life course transition to young adulthood

Youth is a critical period of identity formation during which young people separate from their family of origin and develop a sense of their selves through their interactions with others in new social relationships in the wider society. In late modern society, youth identity is partly self-achieved and partly ascribed by gender, age, ethnicity and class. Peer influence can play an important role too (Erikson 1975; Brake 1980). However, ascribed identities are challenged by the pace of change in today's advanced pluralist societies (Bauman 1995). Giddens (1991) argues for a shift to self-development as reflexively organized and self-referential. In a post-modernist world of risk and uncertainty, tradition loses its hold. The self becomes a reflexive project to be explored and constructed, connecting personal and wider social change. Hence, the search for self-identities amongst participants was discussed via semi-structured individual interviews with ten young adults in order to explore the nuance and richness of their individual experiences which were unlikely to surface in the survey or focus groups.

Interestingly, most of the interviewees had no clear understanding or ideas about the notion of self-development and found this too abstract or an area yet to be explored. Most did not have any plans such as developing one's potential, pursuing one's ideals and life-goals or dreams, understanding one's weaknesses and strengths and thereby achieve some personal growth. Instead, they put their focus on how to find a good job or secure better career development. They tended to equate career development or studying with self-development. However, there were some exceptions. One interviewee wanted to pursue his dream of being a designer regardless of the low and

unstable income this generated at the time of the interview, in this sense material wellbeing so extolled in late modern economies was not a prime motive at all.

It is relevant to note that the Chinese cultural values of ‘collectivism’ place emphasis upon family and state interests rather than individual interest. Self-development per se is not a cultural given in Chinese socializing mediums of school and family. Confucian teaching focuses on ‘selflessness’ and the family or state is placed above the individual. Children and youth are trained not to prioritise or reflect upon their potential but to achieve socially constructive roles or societally expected developmental tasks of the life course. In traditional Confucian thinking, the self is very well defined within the social context. An individual’s self, identity, and roles are relational and derive meaning from a complex of significant others. There are rules and regulations for every behaviour in almost every situation. One is not expected to go beyond the defined boundary. It can be argued that in this context there is no ‘self’ as project or will as one’s own self is so closely defined by rules and relationships (Sing 1997). These ideals of Confucianism provide a ready framework for social development but less room for free development of self. This thinking fits in well with the wishes of ruling figures such as parents or bosses. The strength of these traditions is not to be underestimated and its presence noted in the comments of some respondents. Similarly, the importance of education and diligence in learning is stressed by Chinese cultural tradition. Chinese children and youth are learning/goal-oriented (Sing 1997) and parents have high aspirations and standards for their children and spend a lot of time supervising their school work (Sing and Yeung 1997). In this sense, academic aspiration to achieve better jobs and career path is what came to mind for most interviewees as self development rather than anything more rounded and personal.

To sum up the constraints surrounding self-development of respondents (at the micro and meso-system level), those young people from poor and lower educational backgrounds typically had little in the way of academic qualifications or financial support to entertain ideas of self-development, such as undertaking further (and costly) study. At the exo-system level, those living in remote areas such as new towns (e.g. Tuen Mun, Tin Shui Wai), found it difficult to travel long and expensive distances to urban centres to attend courses that might advance self-development. At the macro-system competitive market level, they were typically without resources to start a small business and compete with big enterprises, thus for those who might dream of some significant project such as their own business there was little in the way of resource or power to self-actualise their ambitions (see Jenkins 1996). This together with Chinese cultural values which emphasize collectivism but self-development much less so, may partly explain why a majority of the interviewees and focus group participants did not have any specific ideas or practical plans other than the pursuit of qualifications and a rewarding career. Added to this, it could be noted that some respondents were reluctant to seek help from the Government or other potential benefactors. In this they may have been influenced by Chinese 'face' culture, that is, reputation or prestige attached to worldly success, wealth and power. One can lose face by appearing dependent or less competent than one has claimed to be, explicitly or implicitly (Hu 1944; Stockman 2000). In the Chinese tradition, disclosing one's problems or difficulties to some other and seeking help from others (outside of close family) or from the government can be deemed as shameful and a sign of some inadequacy of the individual and the family as well. To avoid losing face, some of these young adults clearly preferred to rely on themselves.

Those young people without a job, or income, or desirable qualifications, or who had poor interpersonal skills, or were living some way from urban centres where jobs or training might exist, were particularly poorly placed to imagine opportunities for self development and futures with hope. The influx of low skilled migrant labour from mainland China also reduced chances of work for Hong Kong youth with few qualifications. By contrast those with higher educational attainment had more concrete and ambitious career plans in mind that might include gaining new professional qualifications. As in other advanced societies, the complex eco-system of personal ability, class background, gender, educational attainment, ethnic status and identity, labour market and family resources impacted upon the life chances of the participants. This together with their exposure to Chinese cultural values and western global values and trends also played a vital part in their career plan and ideas about self-development within their life course transition.

Critical review on family life cycle and eco-systemic perspective on life transition to young adulthood

Limitations of the family life cycle as a theoretical framework in youth and family studies

We now turn to some conceptual issues arising from the study that concern the explanatory adequacy of life cycle ideas. Family life cycle theory helps to explain the patterns of family formation and development that provides insight into the ways families grow and change at different stages (Klein and White 1996). However, the theory also has its limitations as a comprehensive theoretical framework in youth and family studies. The family life cycle theory has been criticized because it often has

difficulty in disentangling interactional and structural perspectives within the process of family development, an insufficient attention to the multiple types of families, the use of behaviour to infer wider norms, and too simplistic and all encompassing application of discrete stages (Rodgers and White 1993). The theory is also criticized for implicit value judgments on what constitutes success or fulfillment of developmental tasks and that the notion of 'cycle' is overly sequential when process and the past operate on the present and future and vice versa (see Klein and White 1996). The functionalist tradition within the theory tends to focus upon linearity and key events or transitions (education, age at marriage, job entry, first child) that individuals and groups (cohorts) pass through (see Modell and Hareven 1978; Marini 1984). Whereas others argue that it is not sufficient to focus simply on space-time categories associated with life events but to examine instead the social content which gives the processes and events their meaning and diversity (Jones 2009). Thus it is important here that we do not simplify and overstate 'adulthood' as a destination, when adulthood itself is becoming less stable in terms of insecure jobs, deferred marriage and parenthood.

Applicability of family life cycle in the Hong Kong context

With the above in mind, it is argued however that the family life cycle theory still applies to Hong Kong young adults for the following reasons. Firstly, in Hong Kong, while family types now reveal more heterogeneity (extended family, nuclear family, single-parent family, dual-earner family, childless family, single-person family, and step-parent family) the most common type is still the nuclear family two parent family with one or two children. Although there is an increase in divorce and remarriage, a rise in the age at first marriage, an increasing female participation in the labour force,

and decreasing fertility rate, nonetheless, this study revealed that young adults still follow relatively uniformly the development tasks outlined in the family life cycle such as finishing education, finding a job, selecting a mate, starting a new family, having children, managing a home and taking care of elderly parents. While open to more pluralistic life styles and unions only a small portion indicated that they would actually choose individualized lifestyles such as cohabitation, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, childlessness, adoption, or substitution of children by, for example, pets.

In Hong Kong, while there have been changes in household composition and family formation these are not so far reaching as in some western countries. Social expectations around the timing and shaping of individual domestic biographies while differing by social class and gender, were still reasonably predictable. Parents still see themselves with a strong responsibility for keeping children safe and on track educationally. Cohabitation and single parenthood by unwed mother was not commonly accepted by most respondents across the three samples, nor the wider community. Normative timetables of getting married, having offspring, caring for parents, and supporting the family financially and practically were fairly well ordered expectations across the three samples.

This study also found that Chinese cultural values remain strongly influential across the three samples of Hong Kong young people. Confucian teaching in relation to notions of filial piety whereby there is an obligation to care for elderly parents, where man and a woman should get married when grown up and have children, was still strong in the minds of these young adults. The prevalence of traditional Chinese cultural values in regard to the ethic of collectivism is understood in the emphasis

upon ‘we’ instead of ‘I’. Young adults as part of the family are expected to fulfill certain development tasks. A son or daughter, even in their 30s or 40s, who is unmarried may still be regarded as a child and a female singleton will be considered as somehow not ‘complete’. This social pressure on marriage and having children is not to be underestimated. It is a mark of filial piety, a highly powerful concept amongst Chinese families as it governs the parent-child relationship, including the responsibility of children to support and care for aging parents. This study highlights how it is still ideologically and culturally relevant among the young adults.

The family life cycle as an explanatory system, for the above reasons, is still relevant to the Hong Kong context and can be used as a theoretical framework for life course transition analysis. That said, there is nonetheless an increase in global influences in different aspects of family lives in advanced economies. Longevity, changes in patterns of responsibility and dependence across the life course, have led to the life course becoming much less standardized. It cannot fully explain the phenomenon of youth transition, notably in regard to family building in a world of full of uncertainties and risks. Also, we know that young people’s life transitions are also affected by local influences derived from different levels delineated by the eco-systemic perspective. For example, young people’s biographies are structured to a great extent by government policy and the institutions through which they pass, a point we will return to later on.

Reflexive biography – a new perspective for youth studies in late modernity in Hong Kong?

In the western societies, the focus of transitions research shifted towards a more

socio-biographical rather than event-mapping approach to young people's lives. The argument being that normative timetables upheld in previous research and in policy structures may represent patterns associated with an earlier modernity, or with the experiences of an older generation. However, the unique characteristics of Hong Kong youth may be more likely accounted for by the applicability of family life cycle theory rather than notion of reflexive biography within late modernist theory. In Chinese culture, getting married and moving out are the important milestones of the life course transition from childhood to independent adulthood. Owing to extended schooling and a prolonged job-hunting period, and taking into account a contemporary high unemployment rate for youth, young people are increasingly delaying marriage and among those who are married, more of them tend to live with their parents, due in some part to scarcity of affordable housing. The process of going from graduation, to finding a job, getting married, and moving out takes much longer now than decades ago because of the socioeconomic uncertainties that young adults are facing (Wu 2010).

It is relevant to note that the difficulty of having their own living space is an important hurdle to the independence of young adults in Hong Kong. Young people in advanced economies consider it important to have affordable and safe private housing before they consider themselves adults (Mulder 2006). Researchers have suggested that in countries with low fertility, high home-ownership and high real estate prices, the cost of buying a home makes it difficult for young people to form families and raise children (Ineichen 1981; Mulder 2006). In Hong Kong, there are a number of obstacles in the transition into an independent adult life, including a highly competitive education system, fewer job opportunities, limited opportunities for continuing education and a lack of affordable housing (Yip et al. 2011). This delayed

independence of youths in Hong Kong means that they are more subject to the influence of parents who are likely agents for transmitting traditional cultural values. The reflexive biographies as proposed by Giddens (1991) may not apply so readily to Hong Kong because many factors at different personal and external levels of the eco-systemic framework (such as personal abilities, family background, community resources, social policy constraints) impinge upon young adults in their making free choices. In sum, this study suggests that the family life cycle theory still has resonance in respect of Hong Kong young adults who typically remained responsive to traditional values while becoming increasingly receptive to the global values of late modernity. Broadly, the concept of reflexive biography is difficult to apply to dependent young people in Hong Kong. The theory tends to reflect more the changing historical context in Western Europe in which, as a result of the Enlightenment and industrial revolution, folk knowledge linked with traditional societies was replaced by expert knowledge, owned first by bureaucrats and in late modernity by technicians (Giddens 1994). Explanations of young people's actions and practices of life course need to be sensitive to this changing, new global, environment. But no single theory of action is likely to explain adequately the forces at work which underpin the decisions and attitudes of young people in regard to family, marriage and parenthood, and certainly in respect of Hong Kong there is still the ongoing play of Chinese tradition and values.

Applicability of eco-systemic framework in the Hong Kong context

An eco-systemic approach provides researchers and policy-makers with valuable insights into the complexity and interplay of the ecologies of young people, from micro to macro and even at the chrono-system level. For example, in Hong Kong,

there was in the 1980s and 1990s a strong working-class pattern of early entry into employment at the minimum school-leaving age, and the weekly wage was once seen as the key to adulthood. The youth unskilled or semi-skilled labour market is now more marginalized and the structure of opportunity has changed. As in Western societies (see Stafford et al. 1999, p.3), over the last two decades there has been increasing feminization of the labour market, resulting form industrial restructuring and an increase in service industry jobs and loss of manufacturing ones. This has created new sets of problems for young working-class males who are underachieving educationally and who might have expected to get traditional manual jobs. Many of the jobs once held by unqualified school leavers have disappeared. Traditional craft apprenticeships and manufacturing jobs have been replaced by jobs in the service industry, often low-paid, insecure and marginal. Young workers are now more likely to be trapped in low-grade jobs or experience early unemployment, which in turn can lead to later unemployment and lower earning power that affects their life course transition to young adulthood. In the qualitative individual interviews (see chapter 8) with respondents with low educational attainment, low/no income and low skill level, similar insecurities around low paid or joblessness were noted. Their long term unemployment or low paid work led to them becoming ‘hidden youth’ reliant on parents’ financial support. Gaining the skills to get a secure job was the major challenge for these and other young people in similar economies and the issue may be partly to do with individual capacities but is mainly to do with labour market characterisitics (see Furlong and Cartmel 2004; MacDonald and Marsh 2001; 2004).

Another example of eco-systemic constraint relates to education and policy. Young people are being encouraged to stay longer in education and training and delay their entry into full-time employment and economic independence, so that they gain the

qualifications and skills needed for employability. The current aim of the Hong Kong education system is to improve young people's life chances, prevent social exclusion and increase the region's economic competitiveness in global markets. The universal compulsory education which provides 12 years free education in Hong Kong is a good example. Since 1980, staying on rates in education and training have increased and the proportion of young people entering higher education has risen. With the reduction of government support for higher education in recent years, young people and their parents must foot the bill. However, as access to education widens and qualifications become more common, its benefit, put alongside its increasing cost, is eroding. In recent years, more and more educated young people cannot get the sort of better paid job (and prospects) they might have expected and cannot afford to have their own flat, hence they are likely to be critical of government and the policies they deem have not given them the opportunities they deserve.

The eco-systemic approach can provide a comprehensive framework to analyze the constraints and opportunities for young people in transition to adulthood in a local context. However, it tends to lack a global perspective that can capture the influence of wider effects such as the likely impact of global values, as in this enquiry into the perceptions of young adults about family building and life choices. Hence, the approach here has been to deploy a mix of concepts – the eco-systemic approach and the late modern notion of reflexive biographies, in order to capture something of the orientation of youth today. Past studies into family life in Hong Kong have largely focused on behaviours and relationships. Few studies had been undertaken to explore the role of global values in regard to the family life cycle and young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood and family responsibility in late modernity. This study found that global values associated with developing personal goals, seeking

pleasure, life enjoyment, freedom and wealth appeared prevalent amongst the young participants. They were receptive towards cohabitation, pre-marital sex, less traditional gender roles, and same sex relationships. Such values informed their attitude to marriage and family building and family responsibilities, yet they were also influenced by tradition and most thought it best to be married, to have children and to sustain family solidarities.

Nonetheless, marriage and family seem to be weakening as social institutions in Hong Kong. Socio-demographic changes indicate that total fertility rate is low at just 984 births per 1000 females in 2006. Coupled to this is the problem of an ageing population. Another notable trend is delayed marriage. The median age of women marrying for the first time increased from 23.9 in 1981 to 28.2 in 2006 while the median age at first marriage for men also increased from 27.0 in 1981 to 31.2 in 2006. (Census and Statistics Department 2007b, p.12). Another trend is the increased number of never married women. The percentage of never married women in the age group 40-44 reached 16 percent in 2006, an increase of 3 percent compared with that of 1981 (Census and Statistics Department 2007a, p.9). Give the findings of this study and the demographic shifts sketched above we now turn to relevant matters of policy and services.

Service and policy implications

Hong Kong is facing the challenges of family change. Marriage and family are weakening as social institutions. Many young people are subject to the influences of both the global and local culture and values. What then might be the implications for the findings summarised here for a matrix of policies to support young people in their

transitions to adulthood. First we suggest that the Hong Kong government should make clear its credentials regarding the 'family'.

Family-friendly city

It is proposed that the Government should facilitate a dialogue amongst public, private and non-profit sectors on ways to make Hong Kong a more family-friendly city. Family-related issues involve critical areas such as education, housing, tax regime, sports and recreation, health and welfare. The Government should consider how to cultivate attitudes and practices that can help move Hong Kong from a money-oriented city to a family-friendly city – a city for raising children, a city for bringing up a family, a city for taking care of the vulnerable and elderly (see Chow and Lum 2008).

Dynamic family policy

This study indicates that amongst many of the sample, traditional family values were not as powerful as for earlier generations. There is now an increasing number of families not organized according to the still predominant two-parent nuclear family model. The Hong Kong government should examine the difficulties encountered by different family types such as dual-earner, lone-parent, co-habiting families and modified extended families. Women especially may have greater difficulties in shouldering the dual burden of being a wage earner and a care giver in a demanding service-based economy. It can be difficult to strike a balance between work and family. As a result, women in Hong Kong now tend to delay marriage and give birth to fewer children. Though there are no official statistics on cohabitation in Hong Kong, the

number of single parents has increased from 42,309 in 1996 to 72,326 in 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2006d, p.23). In brief, family policies should be broad and flexible enough to cater for the needs of those who uphold traditional family values and attitudes, as well as those who do not (Chow and Lum 2008).

Private-public partnership for family policy

New policy initiatives typically require additional financial resources. This may be an obstacle for the government in implementing new family-friendly policies. As such, the government could consider enlarging the resource pool of private-public co-financing of long-term initiatives such as: care insurance systems, the promotion of new social enterprises providing family and childcare neighbourhood services, paternity leave and flexible working hours in private companies (Chiu and Wong 2009).

Promotion of family friendly employment practices

The results of the study indicated that some young people have to work long hours or take up additional part-time work in order to make ends meet. In so doing, they stated that they would delay their plans for parenthood or family building due to scarcities of time and money to engage in family building. The rising price of property is also a deterrent to family building as young couples cannot afford to rent or buy apartments in the city and often live with parents. The survey also revealed how some young people delay family plans to pursue further studies after work in order to make themselves more competitive in the labour market. There was also a tendency for some young people to work across the border in mainland China to take advantage of

rapid economic development there. In consequence they were not available to help their families or care for parents. Female participants across the three data sources indicated that they would continue to work after marriage and referred to numerous conflicts of interest between work, home, family building and caring obligations. Lack of a family friendly policy will deter women from having babies.

It is suggested that the Government should vigorously promote family friendly employment practices in the private and the public sectors in order to nurture a culture of mutual support and concern in the workplace (see Chiu and Wong 2009). Employers need to be reminded that employees are also members of families with multiple domestic roles. If employees can strike a proper balance between work and family responsibilities, this will likely reduce family problems and enhance productivity. A family-friendly employment environment would be enabling for all parties, including family, work and government. Indeed, the Government could set an example by implementing family-friendly employment practices such as a 5-day week, granting employees paid paternity leave, allowing employees to have home-based work, flexible work arrangements, job sharing and enhancing child-care services and facilities for employees.

More generally, the adoption of benefits such as paternity leave, marriage leave, parental leave, compassionate leave could allow employees to fulfill family responsibilities and address filial duties. The promotion of flexible work arrangements such as a five-day workweek, flexible working hours, home-based work, job sharing and a compressed work schedule would allow staff to juggle better the requirements of both family and employer. Employee support schemes could offer counselling services for employees and their family members, scholarships or education

assistance for employees and their dependents, nursery services and family recreational activities.

Standard working hours

A landmark event has been Government enacted legislation on the minimum wage to protect the livelihood of the most vulnerable and low paid, with effect from 1 May 2011. But many young people still have to work long working hours without overtime pay. This seriously affects their plans for marriage and parenthood. The Government should consider enacting legislation on standard working hours or 'maximum working hours' to ensure that employees can have time for family building and taking care of their parents (see also Chow and Lum 2008).

Comprehensive care-giving support system

Within the Confucian tradition, adult children have the moral responsibility to take care of their elderly parents. But with socio-demographic developments, such as dual-earner families, small high cost accommodation and fewer children per couple, it is increasingly difficult for young people to undertake family responsibilities. It is also expected that the number of elders without children will increase and they will have no offspring to support them and when vulnerable will rely on government for medical care, social and housing needs. The Government cannot assume the family can sustain a high level of support for elders and has to consider providing adequate social services for the elderly, more specialized service targeting the frail elderly, social clubs and specialized housing for older people. Special programmes aimed at 'active aging' should be organized that let elders feel valued and to continue to

contribute to society. Targeted outreach social services may be essential to provide community care for those older people whose children cannot help them as they work in the mainland. More generally, the government should consider the feasibility of building a community-based older people care system that supports families through a range of options such as home help, home-visiting nurses, re-enablement, and day-care services (Chiu and Wong 2009).

Care service reform

With the weakening of family and marriage as social institutions, there are resource and service implications for care services. The government could consider that care services can become a revenue-generating and employment-creating industry instead of being cast as costly welfare provision (Chiu and Wong 2009). This is the case in South Korea where social welfare expansion policies serve as family-friendly economic policies. In 1998, the Social Welfare Department of Hong Kong implemented the 'Enhanced Bought Place Scheme' to buy places from private homes for older people with a view to increasing the supply of subsidized places, reduce elders' waiting time for care home places, and also upgrade the quality of private elderly residential facilities. The Government could expand this social investment approach to achieve a 'win-win' situation that would assist a younger generation too.

Study grants / leave and education subsidy

Many young people have to find funds to pursue further study to enhance their employability. For example, a locally provided associate degree could cost a young person some ten thousand HK dollars and many would find difficulty in securing this

amount. The Government could provide an education subsidy to help young people meet this financial burden. Under the current student loan schemes for tertiary students only, students have to repay debts to the government upon graduation. Some of the respondents in the focus groups and interviews said that they have to bear a heavy burden as the (current) interest rate is around 3.5% per annum. Government could extend the repayment period and lower the interest rate to relieve the financial burden of young graduates whose starting salaries are unlikely to be high (see Yip et al. 2011).

Education and careers advice

Many young people see tertiary education as a basic requirement to get a job or career with prospects. However, places for tertiary education are limited and unable to meet demand. The Government should increase the number of places for tertiary qualifications. Apart from Government-funded university places, the Government could encourage the establishment of private universities or educational institutes. Compared with other Asian countries, Hong Kong still has a relatively small proportion of university graduates. For instance, in 2000, 24% of Singapore residents aged 25-34 had obtained university level qualifications (Statistics Singapore 2002) while in Hong Kong, only 18% of those aged 15-29 had such qualifications (Census and Statistics Department 2010a).

In this study it was evident that some respondents had few if any financial resources to improve themselves and to secure a stable job. Some respondents also had no idea of what they should do or might want to do. Better career advice and services linked to schools would assist in the transition to higher education, work and career

opportunities (Wu 2010).

Housing needs

The study revealed that some young people do not wish to live with their parents after marriage, but as rent or property prices are high in Hong Kong, so the young people have to choose to either live in a remote area or share housing with parents. Living away from the city in cheaper housing may well result in long hours traveling from home to workplace. Furthermore, once re-located the young couple may not easily access support from parents in child rearing nor can they easily visit and sustain family relations. The Government might consider building smaller size units at affordable prices to meet their housing needs. Such considerations of locality and support may affect their plans to have children.

Comprehensive youth policy

As the survey revealed, precarious employment and lower starting salaries have put many young people in disadvantaged positions and affected their intentions about marriage, parenthood or taking up family responsibilities. The Government should consider initiating a comprehensive youth policy to address the problems faced by young people. In formulating this youth policy, it would be imperative to have young people directly participating as stakeholders in the discussion of policy options.

Having considered some of the conceptual and policy issues and key messages arising from this study we now, finally, turn to the limitations of the study itself and identify limitations, weaknesses, and areas for further study.

Limitations to the study

Sampling

On sampling, in the survey, 41.7% of the participants claimed some type of religious affiliation. This is high compared to census data which noted that only 11.6 of persons aged 15 and over had participated in religious activities (Census and Statistics Department 2003). This was due in part to difficulties in obtaining a selection of those schools and youth centres without religious background to participate. It proved much easier to persuade organisations with some clear affiliation to a denomination to engage in the survey.

In the survey, 82.4% were full-time students and 15.5% (N=173) were full-time working, some 2.1% were non-studying and non-working. According to the Census and Statistics Department (2008), the proportion of economically active youth in the total youth population, was 47.7% in 2006. Hence their representation in the sample was rather low. This was due to the relatively low completion rate of questionnaires by working youth at the network of youth centres, youth employment centres and local churches that were approached.

Regarding focus group sampling, focus group attendance is voluntary, and an insufficient number may attend a given planned session. In this study, several participants absented themselves from attending the third and fourth focus groups. This made the composition of membership across the six groups slightly skewed. Moreover, the known limitations with such methods (inaudible elements, group

effects, reluctance to disclose personal material, a bias to culturally expected responses and so forth) no doubt played their part.

Measurement and validity

The various scales in the survey (except the CVS and the interview guide) were originally developed in the Western context and may not readily map across to Chinese cultural contexts. The measures were also translated in Chinese and it is possible that this may have shifted the intended meaning somewhat. Likewise, the data, recorded and analyzed in Chinese and then translated into English may likewise have suffered some loss of resonance.

Recommendations for further research

As regards further research, the initial findings of this multi-method design revealed that traditional values such as those associated with the ideals of Confucianism, still have some influence amongst the samples in this study. However, in what precise domains of this tradition and to what degree young adults agree with Confucian teachings needs to be the subject of a random quantitative analysis in order to generate a more reliable insight into its impact.

While a majority of respondents favored marriage there were many that adopted an open attitude towards pre-marital sex. This topic and sexual orientation more generally would merit much closer investigation. In contemporary Hong Kong, there is no same sex marriage and homosexuality is regarded as deviant by some. Yet in recent years more and more young people champion the cause of homosexuality and

assert that social citizenship rights apply equally to gay and lesbian people and to their marriages. It was notable that a small minority of respondents expressed the view that pets could replace humans as intimates and thereby avoid the costs and fragilities of marriage.

While a majority of respondents anticipated having children very few would consider adoption. This may be due to Chinese values that emphasize lineage and blood line. Most also said they would like, as is a traditional aspiration, a boy and a girl, yet the average household contains one child according to the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (2006a). This trend in the declining number of children per household together with the other themes above, merit detailed study as these will reveal much of a shifting landscape in matters of family definition, functioning and composition.

Likewise, the study revealed how some young people would defer marriage and family building in order to accomplish continuing education, engage in cross-border work, overtime work or career development in order to remain employable in a highly competitive economy and labour market. The extent to which this impacts upon family functioning and the broader wellbeing of families and society in Hong Kong also requires far more attention than was possible in this exploration.

Summary

This chapter has sought to integrate and identify key themes across the three data sources generated by focus groups, survey and individual interviews. The results correspond well to the research aims and working hypotheses originally set out in

chapter 4. Through this multi-method design we have found out much about Chinese Hong Kong young adults' perceptions of marriage, parenthood, and family responsibility in a context of global values and traditional Chinese values in late modernity. The application of eco-systemic and family life cycle concepts revealed much of the needs and constraints, risks and opportunities that young adults encounter in their transition to being adults with families (or not) of their own. Finally, based on the research findings, some possible solutions and measures were briefly formulated at both a policy and service level, to help young people tackle the challenges that now attend their plans for family building in Hong Kong. It is hoped therefore that the study may in some way play a part in assisting young people to achieve a better transition to their role as adults in this fast changing global world of ours.

Conclusion

We may argue that the contemporary family is a late modern family. Personal freedom in developed economies has become an everyday political issue of diversity and choice. We can no longer point to a single, all-encompassing family type or structure and say for sure that this type of family is the most common or is better than another. In late modernity where uncertainty reigns, today's young people experience changes in family-related roles, statuses and personal lifestyles. Complete transition to adulthood encounters many challenges which in turn may affect their family life and social citizenship rights and responsibilities in society. As Beck (2009) and Resnick (2005) claim, the life experiences of young people in modern societies have changed quite significantly from earlier generations. These changes address social relationships, education, the labour market, leisure, lifestyles and the ability to become established as independent young adults. They are the outcome of the restructuring of labour markets, of an increased demand for educated workers, of flexible employment practices, and of social policies that young people today have to encounter. In light of these possible risks, they can be a source of stress and vulnerability for the young generation. This in turn brings uncertainties and stress for families that might not know how to protect or provide for the new generation.

From this study, we learn that apart from global influences, one should note that many broad social trends have affected families as well. Such trends include an aging population, education and employment patterns, economic recessions, wars, migration flows, technological advances, changes in gender roles, welfare support trends, and changing social attitudes (Weston et al. 2001). Formation of the market economy, mass media and the Internet, cultural diversity and value pluralism, trends to

democratization in politics, and changes in the gendered private domestic realm also bring change in today's families (Qi and Tang 2004).

All nations with effective governance recognize the vital role of young people in the future of their societies. Provision of opportunities for youth to develop their capacities is viewed as a fundamental right and an essential investment in the future. Clearly, the resources that young people can utilize are crucial to how they can make choices. Structural forces and personal resources, such as gender and social class, always moderate opportunity. Youth transitions to adulthood very often relate to socio-structural constraints of class, gender, and ethnicity and the impact of the macro-system of social environment. Proactivity, independence and autonomy can be facilitated or restricted by social, cultural and institutional factors (Thomson et al. 2002; Catan 2004; Furlong and Cartmel 1997; Jamieson 1998). The results of this multi-method study show that global values of late modernity have impacted at different levels and dimensions on young adults' views on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Key institutions should be mobilized to support young adults' development and recognize that we all are stakeholders in the futures of young people. Youth professionals, parents, businesses, religious organizations, non-government organizations, community leaders, the media and the Government should join hands in promoting a progressive and mature new generation and help them to have a healthy transition to adulthood.

The rapid rate of globalization has made reproduction of culture and cultural change a timely topic in social science investigation. It also gives us an opportunity to explore key dynamic and cultural processes as in this study of the role of global values in the family life cycle in Hong Kong with specific regard to young adults' perceptions of

marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. The study has also sought to examine how local Chinese culture responds to globalization from the perspectives of family developmental theory, the eco-systemic approach and the notion of reflexive biography. This study has attempted to grasp aspects of multiple cultures in value-related contexts and to understand how a local culture may accept the values embedded in the global culture without giving up its core elements. In the face of globalization, a central issue confronting Hong Kong society is how it is possible to acknowledge the competitive advantages of Western logic and values in the global market and at the same time affirm the positive distinctiveness of its heritage culture.

The Hong Kong Chinese share cultural roots by virtue of their common historical heritage. They are influenced by a long standing value system which to date remains influential. In this study, the traditional Chinese family values and heritage have remained, though to a certain extent diluted by significant global and local changes. As we have seen, young people in the local culture tend to maintain favourable perceptions of their culture by affirming its social and moral values regarding family building. Although the younger generation seems to value its autonomy more than the older generation did, Hong Kong young people still give lower priority to early autonomy than do their Western counterparts. Their prolonged dependence due to global and local social and economic influences has been explored here but merits much more detailed investigation to determine the extent to which traditional Chinese values and Western global values can co-exist, conflict or come to dominate in time to come.

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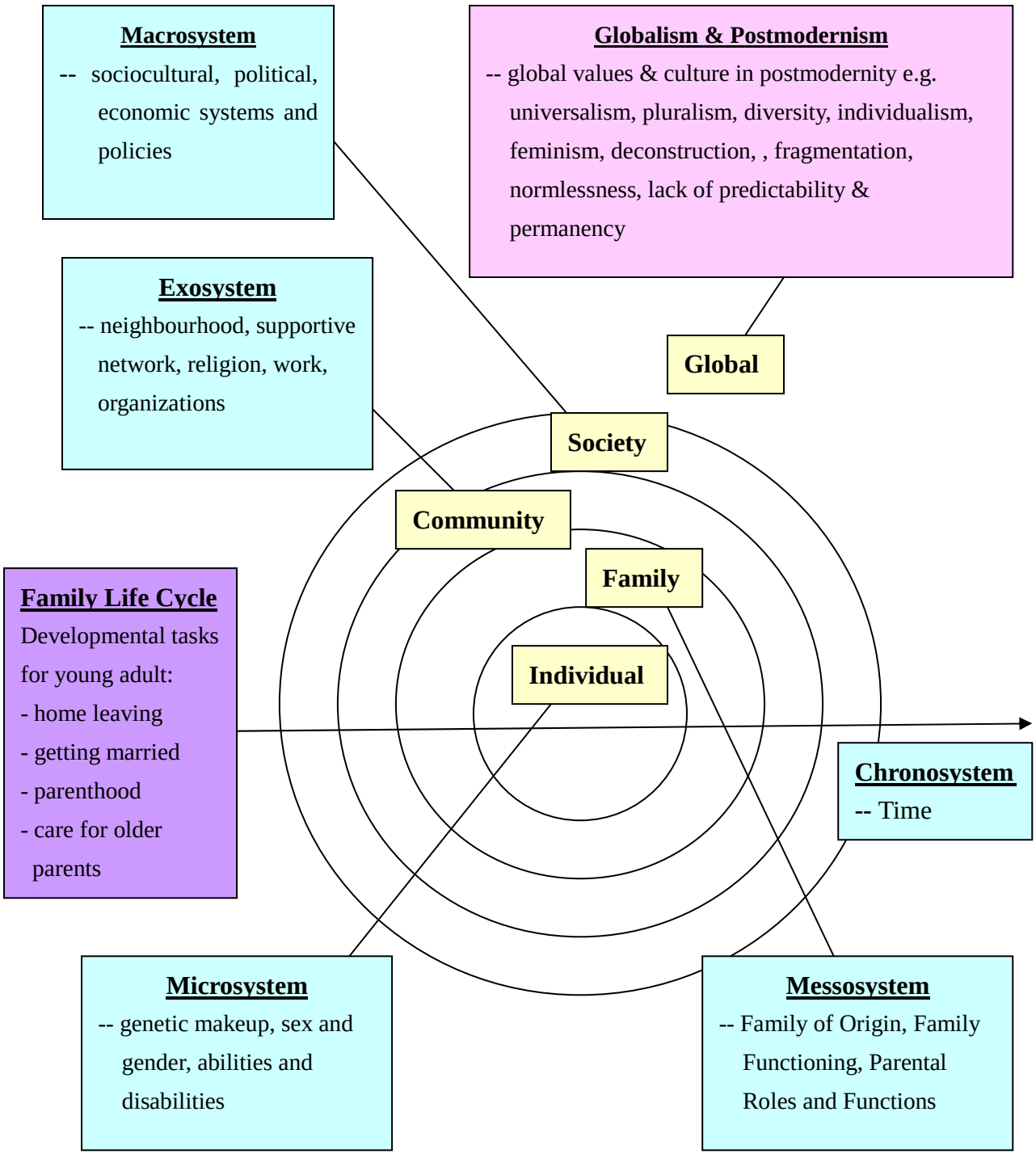
Appendix 1

Theoretical Framework



Ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner 1989)

Global culture and values

Family Life Cycle (Carter and MacGoldrick 1999)

The Stages of the Family Life Cycle

Appendix 2

(Carter, B. and McGoldrick, M. 1999)

Family Life Cycle Stage	Emotional Process of Transition: Key Principles	Second-Order Changes in Family Status Required to Proceed Developmentally
Leaving home: single young adults	Accepting emotional and financial responsibility for self	◆Differentiation of self in relation to family of origin ◆Development of intimate peer relationships ◆Establishment of self in respect to work and financial independence
The joining of families through marriage: the new couple	Commitment to new system	◆Formation of marital system ◆Realignment of relationships with extended families and friends to include spouses
Families with children	Accepting new members into the system	◆Adjusting marital system to make space for children ◆Joining in child rearing, financial and household tasks ◆Realignment of relationships with extended family to include parenting and grand-parenting roles
Families with adolescents	Increasing flexibility of family boundaries to permit children's independence and grandparents' frailties	◆Shifting of parent/child relationships to permit adolescent to move into and out of system ◆Refocus on midlife marital and career issues ◆Beginning shift toward caring for older generation
Launching children and moving on	Accepting a multitude of exits from and entries into the family system	◆Renegotiation of marital system as a dyad ◆Development of adult-to-adult relationships between grown children and their parents ◆Realignment of relationships to include in-laws and grandchildren ◆Dealing with disabilities and death of parents (grandparents)

Families in later life	Accepting the shifting generational roles	◆Maintaining own and/or couple functioning and interests in face of physiological decline: exploration of new familial and social role options ◆Support for more central role of middle generation ◆Making room in the system for the wisdom and experience of the elderly, supporting the older generation without over-functioning for them ◆Dealing with loss of spouse, siblings, and other peers and preparation for death

Possible Effects of Global Values on Young Adults' Perception on Family, Marriage, Parenthood, Family Responsibility & Family Life Cycle **Appendix 3**

Global Values and Culture in Late Modernity	**Meaning**	**Possible Effects on Young Adults' Perception on Family; Marriage; Parenthood & Family Responsibility**	**Possible Effects on Family Life Cycle**
Emphasis on Fast Culture and Competition (B. Jessop, 2004)	● acceleration of global interconnection enabled by the new information and communication technologies ● transform many other functional systems <u>Government Policy</u> - shortening of policy development cycles & limits the scope for deliberation, consultation and negotiation <u>Education System</u> - Growing obsolescence of knowledge - life-long learning - information overload	● Legal reforms in the life of traditional family in response to pressure for change bring to a vogue family concept but without strong and rational moral foundation and enough consultation ● Law not only reflects standards but also sets them. Young adults may be ready to accept what the laws say as a guide to their own conduct e.g. same-sex marriage, cohabitation ● Prolonged study may lead to delay of young people leaving home & state care, or may lead to late	● The need for prolonged study may delay many young people's age of leaving home and finding first employment; hence their financial independence is delayed as well.

	Science System - Competitive in being the first on scientific validity Mass Media - find short, new, exciting items to report at the expense of addressing significant long-term issues Health System - work-life balance, the effects of fast food diets and fast life styles Family System - ignore the old traditional family values and social relationship - emergence of cross-border working pattern overload work and longer working hours - absent father/ mother - uneven distribution of wealth	marriage or choose to be single or cohabit. Also, under the busy work and life-long learning, young adults may find difficult in performing caregiving role for their parents. They may arrange residential home instead of home care for old parents. ● Mass media spread message on short and fast-ending relationship. Family kinship, bonds and long-lasting relationships more easily ignored. Young adults prone to have immediate gratification on sexual activities, pre-marital or casual sex relationship with others. ● Scientific advances in reproductive field creates a further gulf between biological and social reality by making it physically possible to separate genetic connectedness from parenthood	

		● Cross-border working pattern constrains family togetherness, communication and relationship. It also weakens the parenting role of married young adults in the supervision of children ● Emergence of new forms of multi-cultural families & marriage adjustment problems because of cross-border marriage. ● Cross-border working easy to give rise to extra-marital affair. ● Young adults with low income status have financial difficulty to start a family.	
Emphasis on maximizing short-term	● As capital speeds up, it diminishes the conditions of the natural reproduction of natural things	● Young adults may not be willing to commit themselves in family building which requires long-term	● The unwillingness of young adults to commit themselves in family

economic profit & social relationship (Brennan, 1995)		commitment and responsibilities ● Young adults may not be willing to put energy in long-term marriage enrichment ● Young adults may not be willing to take up long-term child rearing and parenting ● More and more young people prefer to invest themselves in personal and career development than to performing care-giving role for their frail parents	may delay the joining of families through marriage. ● The unwillingness of young adults to have children may also delay the other stages of family life cycle such as families with children and adolescents.
Emphasis on developing extra economic and knowledge-driven economy (Veltz, 1996;	● It is reflected in the emphasis given to social capital, trust, innovations, learning regions and communities as well as to the competitive role of entrepreneur cities, and enterprise culture ● People live in tight working schedule and	● Young adults pursue life-long education and updating of new information and knowledge so as to increase their competitive ability in the global world ● It may delay plan on marriage,	● This may increase young adults' dependency on parental and state care

Storper, 1997)	longer working hours in high competition global world and labour market	having children, fulfilling family roles.	
Pluralism, (Bauman, 1992)	● Life is to be embraced without truth, universal standards or generalizable ideas. ● Postmodern condition is a site of constant mobility and change, with no clear direction and development (Bauman, 2002) ● Fragmentation or indeterminacy of new order (Kellner, 1989; Seidman, 1994) ● Characterized by ambiguity and uncertainty (Irving, 1994; Midgley, 1999; Powell, 2001) ● Reflexivity & reciprocity in social relations is encouraged	● Respect for difference and support for the inclusion of multiple subject positions such as indigenous people, women, children, lesbian and gay men, ethnic groupings and multicultural voices	
Individualism & Transnational Neo-liberalism	● As there are no universal truths, one is free to pursue own destinies (Midgley, 1999)	● One can freely choose any type of family composition as they feel they are entitled to this freedom and	● More families in later life may be without children. ● As to the families in later

	● Fight for justice in form of human rights or concern for individual happiness and freedom	human rights ● Young adults may accept the libertarians' views that personal and sexual relationships between adults belong entirely in the area of individual choice. ● Cost of rearing children is high and also would sacrifice personal and career development ● Calculation of self-interest rather than based on a moral sense of filial piety	life with children, calculation of self-interest may prevail over a sense of filial piety.
Feminism (Pascall G., 1997)	● Feminists point out that caring affects women's citizenship rights to access paid work. The universal idea of citizen gives feminists the basis for a claim that women should be equal citizens too. Unpaid work and politics and the	● Some women who hold the feminist view to have equal status and opportunity with men may not commit themselves in marriages. ● Some young adults who agree that	● More and more childless families will emerge in the society. An aging population without enough productive labour force may occur.

	ideological discourse around motherhood and domesticity that sustain the current division of labour is challenged.	women should have more self-development and personal interest may not want to have children.	

Appendix 4

Interview Guide for Focus Group

This interview guide consists of 5 types of questions with probes to follow each question.

Question 1: (Related to Global Value)

Write the number (1,2,3,4,5) that indicates the importance of that value for you personally. This value is:

Definitely opposed	Not much supported	Neither opposed or supported	Of some importance	Highly important
1	2	3	4	5

Value List: Before you begin, read the values in the List, choose the one that is most important to you and rate its importance. Next, choose the value that is most opposed to your values and rate it 1. Then rate the rest of the values in the List.

Value List

Rating	Value Description
	Pleasure (having as much fun as possible)
	Freedom (freedom of action and thought)
	Wealth (material possessions, money)
	Creativity (uniqueness, imagination)
	A spiritual Life (emphasis on spiritual more than material matters)
	Meaning in Life (a purpose in life)
	Respect for Tradition (preservation of time-honored customs)
	Family Security & Relationship (concern for family members)
	Social Recognition (respect, approval by others)
	A Varied Life (filled with challenge, novelty and change)
	A World of Cultural Diversity (multicultural society)
	Independent (self-reliant, self- sufficient)
	Loyalty (faithful to family, friends, group)
	Ambition (hardworking, aspiring)

	Broadminded (tolerant to different values, ideas, beliefs)
	Honoring of Parents and Elders (showing respect)
	Choosing and Developing Own Goals (selecting own purpose)
	Capable (competent, effective, efficient)
	Enjoying Life (enjoying life's pleasures)
	Responsible (dependable, reliable)
	Successful (achieving goals)

Question 2: (Related to Marriage)
Are you planning to marry?

Probes:
2.1 What are the considerations in you deciding to/not to get married?
2.2 What is your ideal age for getting married?
2.3 Do you choose to live with your own/or spouse's parents after marriage?
2.4 How far did your parents' marriage affect your decision on marriage?
2.5 Under what conditions do you think divorce is a reasonable outcome?
2.6 If you had a choice, which kind of relationship do you think you would choose? (e.g. trial marriage, marriage after the birth of a baby, only courtship but without marriage….)

Question 3: (Related to Parenthood)
Are you planning to have children?

Probes:
3.1 What are the considerations in you deciding to/not to have children?
3.2 What is your ideal age to have children?
3.3 Number of children expected?
3.4 Would you consider having children outside a legal marriage?
3.5 What measures/ factors can encourage you to have children?

Question 4: (Related to Family Responsibility)
What do you expect to pursue or achieve most by the time you are 30 years old? (e.g. knowledge, career advancement, marriage, having children……)

Probes:
4.1 What is your current position?
- Are you undertaking cross-border work?

- Are you working over time (e.g. over 40 hours a week)?
- Are you pursuing life-long education study?
- Are you living with your parents?
- Do you have financial support from your parents?
- Do you spend time with your parents?
- Do you discipline your children?

4.2 How fare does your current context affect your decision on marriage, parenthood and taking family responsibilities?

4.3 If your desire for personal development in your career or study conflicted with your family's demands and responsibilities, what would you do?

Question 5: (Related to Personal Information)

(Remark: the questions in this part will be written in a questionnaire for participants' completion a few minutes before the commencement of focus group)

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Educational background
4. Occupation
5. Salary per month
6. No. of siblings
7. Birth order
8. Religion
9. Marital status
10. Residence

-- End --

Appendix 5

The Informed Consent Form (Focus Group)

(For Participants)

The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by the PhD candidate of the School of Social Science at Cardiff University (UK), Ng Yin Ling, Tabitha.

This study aims to find out the Chinese Hong Kong young adults' perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility under the influence of global values in late modernity, and the impact on Family Life Cycle in local Chinese Hong Kong society. You will be invited to join a focus group with 6 - 8 persons. The above researcher will facilitate the participants to discuss a number of topics in the group. Participants can share their views on global and cultural values, marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Altogether, the focus group will last an average 1.5 – 2 hours.

In order to facilitate the compilation of data, you may be audio taped during the procedure. It is possible you may find talking about your personal experience during the procedure somewhat uncomfortable. Such discomforts, however, should be no greater than what we experience in everyday life.

After the completion of the focus group, you will receive a small gift for your participation. In addition, in this study, you will be invited to reflect on your personal viewpoints. Such reflection may give you insights about yourself. Moreover, this research could help inform future development and service provision for the youth.

Any information obtained in this study will remain strictly confidential, will be known to no-one, and will be used for research purposes only. Codes, not names, are used on all test instruments to protect confidentiality. You can review the audio-recording of

the procedure. We will erase the entire audio or parts of it if you want us to do so. Your participation is voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without negative consequences. For research purposes, your participation will be audio-typed for further data checking. The data will be transcribed into archives will all personal identifiers removed. The record will be disposed of 5 years after publication of the relevant research results.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact the subject researcher, Ms Ng Yin Ling, Tabitha at LG111, Main Building, Hong Kong Shue Yan University. Telephone: 21048204; Email: ylng@hksyu.edu

Signature

I _____ (Name of Participant) understand the procedures described above and agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

Date of Preparation: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Appendix 6

Survey Questionnaire

The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity

Dear friends,

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study conducted by the PhD candidate of the School of Social Science at Cardiff University (UK), Ng Yin Ling, Tabitha. This study aims to find out the Chinese Hong Kong young adults' (aged 17-25) perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility under the influence of global values in late modernity. You will be invited to fill out some brief self-report questionnaire. The questions include your views about global and cultural values, marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Altogether, the questionnaire will take on average 20 minutes. This procedure has no known risks. After the completion of the questionnaire, you will receive a small gift for your participation. In this study, you will be invited to reflect on your personal viewpoints. This research could help inform future development of policy and service provision for the youth.

Any information obtained in this study will remain strictly confidential, will be known to no-one, and will be used for research purposes only. Codes, not names, are used on all test instruments to protect confidentiality. Your participation is voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without negative consequences. All questionnaire records will be destroyed 5 years after the results have been published. If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact Ng Yin Ling, Tabitha at LG111, Main Building, Hong Kong Shue Yan University. Telephone: 21048204; Email: ylng@hksyu.edu

Signature

I _____ (Name of Participant) understand the procedures described above and agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

Date of Preparation: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Code No.：

Part I: Global Culture and Value

The aim of this study is to find out what matters are important or unimportant to people. You will find below a list of 40 items. Please indicate how important each of the 40 items is to you.

To express your opinions, imagine an Importance Scale that varies from 1 to a maximum of 9. (1) stands for "of no importance to me at all, and (9) stands for "of supreme importance to me." In other words, the larger the number, the greater will be the degree of importance to you. Give one number (either 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 or 9) to each item below, in the brackets provided to express the importance of that item to you personally.

You can concentrate better by asking yourself the following question when you rate an item: "How important is this item to me personally?" Repeat the same question when you rate the next item, and so on. THANK YOU.

Global culture and value items	of no importance to me at all ← → of supreme importance to me.								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Filial piety (Obedience to parents, respect for parents, honouring ancestors, financial support of parents)									
Industry (Working hard)									
Tolerance of others									
Harmony with others									
Humbleness									
Loyalty to superiors									
Observation of rites and rituals									
Reciprocation of greetings and favours, gifts									

	of no importance to me at all ← → of supreme importance to me.								
Kindness (Forgiveness, compassion)									
Knowledge (Education)									
Solidarity with others									
Moderation, following the middle way									
Self-cultivation									
Ordering relationships by status and observing this order									
Sense of righteousness									
Benevolent authority									
Non-competitiveness									
Personal steadiness and stability									
Resistance to corruption									
Patriotism									
Sincerity									
Keeping oneself disinterested and pure									
Thrift									
Persistence (Perseverance)									
Patience									
Repayment of both the good and the evil that another person has caused you									
A sense of cultural superiority									
Adaptability									
Prudence (Carefulness)									
Trustworthiness									
Having a sense of shame									
Courtesy									
Contentedness with one's position in life									
Being conservative									
Protecting your "face"									
A close, intimate friend									
Chastity in women									
Having few desires									
Respect for tradition									
Wealth									

Part II: Marriage

Please indicate by ticking how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding marriage:

	Marriage items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	People should marry					
2.	I have little confidence that my marriage will be a success					
3.	People should stay married to their spouses for the rest of their lives					
4.	Most couples are either unhappy in their marriage or are divorced					
5.	I will be satisfied when I get married					
6.	I am fearful of marriage					
7.	I have doubts about marriage					
8.	People should only get married if they are sure that it will last forever					
9.	People should be very cautious about entering into a marriage					
10	Most marriages are unhappy situations					
11	Marriage is only a legal contract					
12	Marriage is a sacred act					
13	Most marriages aren't equal partnerships					
14	Most people have to sacrifice too much in marriage					

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15	Because half of all marriages end in divorce, marriage seems futile					
16	If I divorce, I would probably remarry					
17	When people don't get along, I believe they should divorce					
18	I believe a relationship can be just as strong without having to go through the marriage ceremony.					
19	My lifelong dream includes a happy marriage					
20	There is no such a thing as a happy marriage					
21	Marriage restricts individuals from achieving their goals					
22	People weren't meant to stay in one relationship for their entire lives					
23	Marriage provides companionship that is missing from other types of relationships					

24. Are you planning to marry?

☐ Yes (has got married) ☐ Yes (not yet married)

☐ No (definitely do not plan to get married) ☐ No (has not thought about it)

25. What is your ideal age for getting married?

☐ Under 21 ☐ 21 – 25 ☐ 26 – 30 ☐ 31 – 35

☐ 36 or above ☐ NA

26. Which of the following do you think the likely considerations in you deciding to get married? (Rank your top 3 priorities)

☐ Pressure from significant others ☐ Avoid loneliness

☐ Sexual satisfaction ☐ Procreation

☐ Obtain financial security

☐ Public declaration of legal partnership relationship

☐ Others (please specify：_____)

☐ NA

27. If you don't want to get married, what would be the reasons? (Rank your top 3 priorities)

☐ I'd like to be single ☐ I'm afraid of marriage

☐ I'm scared of divorce ☐ I'm scared of having & raising children

☐ I want more freedom ☐ I'm scared re marriage & my further studies

☐ I'm scared of marriage affecting my career

☐ I can't find an appropriate partner to get married

☐ Others (please specify：_____) ☐ NA

28. Please state whether the following situations would be acceptable or not to you.

Relationship	**Not acceptable at all**	**Not acceptable as such**	**Neutral**	**Quite acceptable**	**Very much acceptable**
Cohabitation					
Pre-marital Sex					
Unwed Mother					
Extra Marital Affair					
Divorce					
Homosexuality					
Same-sex marriage					

Part III: Parenthood

Please indicate by ticking how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding parenthood:

	Parenthood items	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
1.	I would like to have a child to establish my own family					

2.	I enjoy children and would like to have a child to watch him/her grow and change					
3.	I believe that having children is the right thing to do					
4.	I would experience a sense of accomplishment by having a child					
5.	I believe that having children is an important part of life that I don't want to miss					
6.	I would like to have children as an expression of love for my spouse or partner					
7.	Having children would enrich my life					
8.	I would enjoy the challenge of meeting my child's needs					
9.	I would like to fulfill the role of being a mother/father					
10.	I would like to have a child (children) to have someone to carry on, and to remember me following my death					
11.	I would like to have a child (children) to show that I can handle the responsibilities of adulthood					
		Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**

12.	I would like to have a child because most of my friends and family members have or will have children					
13.	Having children will provide someone to care for you in your old age					
14.	As an adult, my son or daughter could help to support the family economically if necessary					
15.	Having children results in a significant loss of freedom					
16.	Having children can lead to financial strain and long term debts					
17.	Having children may interfere with my employment opportunities and/or career advancement					
18.	If I had children, I would have less time to spend with my partner					
19.	I would have much less privacy and personal time if I had children					
20.	Having children is a way to give and receive warmth and affection					
21.	Having children adds stimulation and fun to a parent's life					
		Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**

22.	Having children provides growth and learning opportunities which ultimately will add meaning to a parent's life					
23.	Having children helps you learn to become less selfish and to make sacrifices for others					
24.	Having children can help to give you a sense of accomplishment in your life					

25. Are you planning to have children?
☐ Yes (already have children) ☐ Yes (don't have children)
☐ No (definitely do not plan to have children) ☐ No (have never thought about it)

26. What do you think would be the ideal time for you to have your first child?
☐ Under 21 ☐ 21 – 25 ☐ 26 – 30 ☐ 31 – 35
☐ 36 or above ☐ NA

27. How many children would you want?
☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four or above ☐ N.A.

28. Please rate the important of the following factors for your decision to or not to have children. Please indicate on a scale of 5, 1 point indicate the least important; 5 points indicate the most great important.

Factors	**the least important** ⟷ **the most great important**				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Personal income					
Employment opportunity					
Accommodation					
Political stability					
Education system					

	the least important				**the most great important**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Medical care					
Social welfare					
Social environment					
Child care					

Part IV: Family Responsibility

Please indicate by ticking how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding Family Responsibility:

	Current Assistance	**Almost Never**	**Once in a while**	**Sometimes**	**Frequently**	**Almost Always**
1.	Spend time with your grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles					
2.	Spend time at home with your family					
3.	Run errands that the family needs done					
4.	Help your brothers or sisters with their homework					
5.	Spend holidays with your family					
6.	Help out around the house					
7.	Spend time with your family on weekends					
8.	Help take care of your brothers and sisters					
9.	Eat meals with your family					

		Almost Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Always
10.	Help take care of your grandparents					
11.	Do things together with your brothers and sisters					

	Respect for Family	Not At All Important	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
12.	Treat your parents with great respect					
13.	Follow your parents' advice about choosing friends					
14.	Do well for the sake of your family					
15.	Follow your parents' advice about choosing a job or major in college					
16.	Treat your grandparents with great respect					
17.	Respect your older brothers and sisters					
18.	Make sacrifices for your family					

	Future Support	Not At All Important	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
19.	Help your parents financially in the future					
20.	Live at home with your parents until you are married					
21.	Help take care of your brothers and sisters in the future					
22.	Spend time with your parents even after you no longer live with them					
23.	Live or go to college near your parents					
24.	Have your parents live with you when they get older					

Part V: Personal Information

1. Sex： ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What is your age? _____

3. Educational background

☐ Primary or below ☐ F.1 – F.3 ☐ F.4 - F.5 ☐ Matriculation

☐Tertiary, non-degree course ☐ Tertiary, degree course or above

4. Occupation

☐ Service Worker and Shop Sales Assistant ☐ Manager/ Administrator ☐ Professional ☐ Associate Professional

☐ Plant and Machine Operator and Assembler ☐ Clerk ☐ Student ☐ Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Worker

☐ Craft and Machine Operator and Assembler ☐ Housewife ☐ Non-skilled Worker ☐ Unclassified

☐ Unemployed

5. What is your salary per month?

☐ $1 – 2,999 ☐ $3,000 – 3,999 ☐ $4,000 –4,999 ☐ $5,000 – 5,999

☐ $6,000 – 6,999 ☐ $7,000 – 7,999 ☐ $8,000 – 8,999 ☐ $9,000 –9,999

☐ $10,000 –14,999 ☐ $15,000 –19,999 ☐ $20,000 –29,999 ☐$30,000 or above

☐ No salary

6. How many siblings do you have (including yourself)?

☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ Five and above

7. What is your birth order?

☐ The eldest ☐ The middle ☐ The smallest ☐ Single child

8. Religion

☐ Buddhist ☐ Taoist ☐ Catholic ☐ Christianity

☐ Muslim ☐ None ☐ Other (Please specify : _____)

9. Marital status

☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated
☐ Cohabiting ☐spouse deceased ☐Other （ Please specify _____）

10. Which district do you live in?

☐ Wan Chai	☐Kowloon City	☐ Sai Kung	☐ Tuen Mun	☐Eastern	☐ Wong Tai Sin	☐ Sha Tin
☐ Yuen Long	☐ Central & Western	☐Mongkok	☐Islands	☐ North	☐Southern	☐Sham Shui Po
☐Tsuen Wan	☐ Tai Po	☐ Kwun Tong	☐ Yau Tsim	☐ Kwai Tsing		

11. Are you undertaking cross-border work?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N.A.

12. Are you working over time?

☐ Yes (Working hours per week：_____hours)
☐ No (Working hours per week：_____hours)
☐ N.A.

13. Are you pursuing life-long education study?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N.A.

14. Are you living with your parents?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N.A.

– End –

Remark: If you are willing to join our next stage of individual interview (which will be conducted in the coming months next year), please write down your name and telephone contact no. and we will make contact with you very soon. Thank you!

Name: _____ Tel. No. _____

Appendix 7

Interview Schedule

(For Participants of the Individual Interview)

Cardiff University
School of Social Science

Research Topic: The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity

This interview guide consists of 2 sets of questions with probes follow each question.

Question 1: What is your life plan?

Probes:

1.1 Self-development plan

1.1.1Do you have any self-development plan? (e.g. self-exploration and self-understanding, develop one's interest and potential or have dreams and self-actualization plan…)

1.1.2 Why do/ don't you have a self-development plan?

1.1.3 What kind of difficulties might you encounter when you start your self-development plan?

1.1.4 What policies, measures or service provision can facilitate or help you develop your self-development plan(s)?

1.2 Career plan

1.2.1 Do you have any career plan? (e.g. career choice, job expectation…)

1.2.2 Why do/ don't you have/ a career plan?

1.2.3 What kind of difficulties may you encounter when you start your career plan?

1.2.4 Do you accept/ undertake cross-border work or overtime work? Why? How far does cross-border or overtime work affect your decision on marriage, parenthood and taking family responsibilities?

1.2.5 Do you have any continuing education after work? Why? How far does continuing education affect your decision on marriage, parenthood and taking family responsibilities?

1.2.6 What policies, measures or service provision can facilitate or help you develop your career plan?

1.3 Plan for Family Building

1.3.1 Do you have any plan for family building (e.g. getting married, parenthood, taking care of parents), or having other individual life styles (e.g. cohabitation, singleton …)?

1.3.2 Why do you/ don't have the family building plan?

1.3.3 What kinds of culture/values mostly affect your perceptions of family building/ individualized lifestyle, the western or traditional Chinese ones? Or some other influences?

1.3.4 What kind of difficulties may you encounter when you start your family building or having your individualized lifestyle?

1.3.5 What kind of family responsibilities do you think you need to take up for your family-of-origin? Do you have any difficulties in taking up these obligations?

1.3.6 What policies, measures or service provision can support or help you start a family or having your own lifestyle?

Question 2: How far does your individual life course development relate to the normative Family Life Cycle in late modernity?

Probes:

2.1 Do you think that your life course development is the same as your older generation (traditional family life cycle consists of younger generation going through stages of leaving home when entering adulthood, then getting married, having children, fulfilling civic responsibilities and taking care of the older generation and etc…) **or would there be some differences in choices and lifestyles?**

2.2 How far do the following systems affect your transition from a dependent teenager to a complete independent adult?

- Microsystem (e.g. genetic makeup, gender, abilities and disabilities…)
- Mesosystem (e.g. class of FOO, family functioning, parental roles, socialization…)
- Exosystem (e.g. neighbourhood, supportive network, religion, work, organizations…)
- Macrosystem (e.g. sociocultural, political, economic systems and policies…)
- Globalism (e.g. global culture and values in postmodernity i.e. universalism, pluralism, individualism, feminism, liberalism, deconstruction, fast and keen competitive culture, Internet & knowledge-driven society…)

Appendix 8

Focus Group – Key Characteristics of the Sample

(1st Focus Group -- Gender)

Date: July 11, 2009 (Sat)
Time: 6-8 pm
Venue: Meeting Room, Langham Place, Mongkok, Hong Kong
Attendance: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7

Composition of the Focus Group Members:

Main Variable	No. of Participant	Other Variable	No. of Participant	Other Variable	No. of Participant
Sex	Male (3)	**Marital Status**	Married (1)	**Working Status**	Working (2)
	Female (4)		Single (3)		Studying (1)
			Cohabiting (3)		Neither of Two (3)

Brief Description of the Focus Group Members

No.	Name of Member	Sex	Marital Status	Working Status	Personal Background
A1	X	Male	Single	Neither	He had an old father but a younger mother. He was the eldest son at home with a younger sister and brother. He was unemployed and now studying some courses in the Hong Kong Life Rescuing Society
A2	X	Male	Cohabited	Working	He worked in his family's company and often worked overtime.
A3	X	Male	Cohabited	Working	He had some family problems and left home. He was

					unemployed for a long time and had no money.
A4	X	Female	Married	Neither	She got married after being pregnant with her boy friend. She had an eight-month baby and now became pregnant again. She was a housewife now. Her husband was older than her by many years.
A5	X	Female	Single	Neither	After finishing advanced level examination, she stayed at home and did not continue to study. She had low motivation to find a job.
A6	X	Female	Single	Studying	She was studying in a university. Her mother committed suicide when she was 2-years old. She hoped to have a happy family with children of her own.
A7	X	Female	Cohabited	Neither	She was a South Asian minority who claimed herself a lesbian and now cohabited with a woman. She was fostered and did not know her family of origin. She was for a long time unemployed.

Group Composition and Brief Description of Group Members

(2nd Focus Group -- Age)

Date: July 12, 2009 (Sun.)
Time: 2:30 – 4:30 pm
Venue: H302, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, North Point, Hong Kong.
Attendance: B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7

Composition of the Focus Group Members:

Main Variable	No. of Participant	Other Variable	No. of Participant	Other Variable	No. of Participant
Age	17 -21 (5)	**Educational Attainment**	Postgraduate (0)	**Living District**	Hong Kong Island (1)
	22–25 (2)		Undergraduate (5)		Kowloon Peninsula (2)
			Secondary School (2)		New Territories (4)

No.	Name of Member	Age	Educational Attainment	Living District	Personal Background
B1	X	17 -21	Secondary	NT	She was a Form 7 student living with father, mother and a younger sister.
B2	X	17 -21	Secondary	NT	He was a Form 7 student.
B3	X	17 -21	Undergraduate	HK	He was an IVE student. He had a younger sister. He had a stable relationship with a

					girlfriend.
B4	X	17 -21	Undergraduate	NT	He was a university student. He was born in the Mainland China and migrated to Hong Kong when he was a child. He claimed an independent character.
B5	X	17-21	Undergraduate	KLN	He had an elder brother and a twin brother. He was studying in a university.
B6	X	22–25	Undergraduate	NT	She was the single child in the family. She was independent and assertive.
B7	X	22–25	Undergraduate	KLN	He was a Catholic and had already graduated from university. He wanted to be a social worker.

Group Composition and Brief Description of Group Members

(3rd Focus Group – Marital Status)

Date: July 22, 2009 (Wed.)
Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm
Venue: Meeting Room, Langham Place, Mongkok, Hong Kong.
Attendance: C1, C2, C3, C4, C5

Composition of the Focus Group Members:

Variable	No. of Participant	Other Variable	No. of Participant	Other Variable	No. of Participant
Marital Status	Married (2)	**Sex**	Male (3)	**Age**	22–25 (5)
	Single (2)		Female (2)		
	Cohabited(1)				

Brief Description of the Focus Group Members

No.	Name of Member	Marital Status	Sex	Age	Personal Background
C1	X	Married	Female	22–25	She was a Form 7 graduate. She worked in a company as account clerk. She came from a single parent family. Her parents separated when she was young and now she lived with her mother and brother. She had good relationship with her family members. She was a Buddhist and was quite weak in health. She sought a simple life.
C2	X	Married	Male	22–25	He was a cleaning worker. He was the youngest son in the family. He started dating and courtship with his girl friend after graduating from Form 5 secondary school. He registered

					to get married in 2008 but hadn't lived together. They will live together after completing the wedding dinner He claimed an optimistic character and had good relationship with his family members.
C3	X	Single	Male	22–25	He was studying associate degree and had a stable relationship with his girl friend. He had claimed a righteous character.
C4	X	Single	Male	22–25	He was an accountant and sometimes needed cross border work in the Mainland China. He sought wealth and was eager to earn money. He acted as a part-time homework tutor and to revise books for students in weekends and Sundays in order to earn more money.
C5	X	Cohabited	Female	22–25	She came from a wealthy family. She had cohabited with her boy friend for six years. Recently her relationship with her boy friend had broken and needed to go back to live with her parents again.

Group Composition and Brief Description of Group Members

(4th Focus Group – Working Status)

Date: July 19, 2009 (Sunday)
Time: 2:30 – 4:30 pm
Venue: Conference Room of Metro Town Clubhouse, Tiu Keng Leng, New Territories
Attendance: D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7

Composition of the Focus Group Members:

Main Variable	No. of Participant	Other Variable	No. of Participant	Other Variable	No. of Participant
Working Status	Working (2)	**Sex**	Male (3)	**Age**	17 -21 (5)
	Studying (3)		Female (4)		22–25 (2)
	Neither Working Nor Studying (2)				

Brief Description of the Focus Group Members

No.	Name of Member	Working Status	Sex	Age	Personal Background
D1	X	Working (non-crossborder)	Female	22 - 25	She was working in a company with production line in the Mainland China. She was a Christian and had strong religious belief and value in family and marriage.
D2	X	Working (non-crossborder)	Female	17 -21	She was an account clerk. She had a brother who was neither working nor studying. She stated that she would not work cross-border especially in the Mainland China. She

					was one of the breadwinners in the family and she did not like the job she was working now.
D3	X	Studying (university)	Male	17 -21	He was studying a degree course in social science. He had a harmonious family and a stable relationship with girl friend.
D4	X	Studying (university)	Female	17-21	She was studying a degree course in accounting. The marital relationship of her parents was not good.
D5	X	Studying (secondary school)	Male	17 -21	He had nothing to do but spent his time playing for five years after graduating from Secondary Form 3. Two years ago he said he awakened from an aimless life and started his studies again.
D6	X	Neither Working Nor Studying	Female	17 -21	She was neither working nor studying after graduating from Form 7. She was not eager to find jobs or to further her studies. She spent her time staying at home not currently engaging in education, employment and training.
D7	X	Neither Working Nor Studying	Male	22–25	He claimed to be romantic and creative. He liked and was good at music and singing songs. After graduating from university,

					he worked in a China trade company but only worked a short time and was dismissed by the boss. Now he was neither working nor studying for half a year. He tried to think about his future and direction.

Group Composition and Brief Description of Group Members

(5th Focus Group – Educational Attainment)

Date: July 18, 2009 (Saturday)
Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm
Venue: Conference Room of Metro Town Clubhouse, Tiu Keng Leng, New Territories
Attendance: E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7

Composition of the Focus Group Members:

Main Variable	No. of Participant	Other Variable	No. of Participant	Other Variable	No. of Participant
Educational Attainment	Postgraduate (1)	**Sex**	Male (4)	**Age**	17 -21 (3)
	Undergraduate (4)		Female (3)		22–25 (4)
	Secondary School (2)				

Brief Description of the Focus Group Members

No.	Name of Member	Educational Attainment	Sex	Age	Personal Background
E1	X	Secondary School	Male	17 - 21	He was a secondary school student who believed in Christianity
E2	X	Secondary School	Female	17 -21	She was a Buddhist who had a healthy family. She failed in Advanced Level exam and now was repeating Form 7 again.
E3	X	Undergraduate	Male	17 -21	He was studying in a university and had distant relationship with mother and sister.
E4	X	Undergraduate	Male	22 - 25	He was a university graduate and now was doing a job

					related to information technology. He and his mother were Christians and he had an older brother with learning disability.
E5	X	Undergraduate	Female	17 -21	She was a university student studying social work. She had elderly parents and also a young sister at home as well. She hoped to complete the course earlier so that she could work and earn a living for the family.
E6	X	Undergraduate	Female	22–25	She was an undergraduate and now was working as a social worker. She came from a single-parent family and had ambivalent relationship with her mother. She planned to get married next year.
E7	X	Postgraduate	Male	22 - 25	He was an undergraduate and now was working in the Social Welfare Department. He continued his master degree study in Hong Kong University.

Group Composition and Brief Description of Group Members

(6th Focus Group – Living District)

Date: July 14, 2009 (Tue.)
Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Venue: LG101, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, North Point, Hong Kong.
Attendance: F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7

Composition of the Focus Group Members:

Main Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participant
Living District	Hong Kong Island (2)	**Family Income**	High income family ($40,001 or above) (2)	**Educational Attainment**	Undergraduate (3)
	Kowloon Peninsula (2)		Middle income family ($8,751 - $40,000) (2)		Associate Degree (1)
	New Territories (3)		Low income family ($8,750 or below) (3)		Secondary School (3)

Brief Description of the Focus Group Members

No.	Name of Member	Living District	Family Income	Educational Attainment	Personal Background
F1	X	Hong Kong Island	Middle Income	Associate Degree	He came from a nuclear family with parents and an elder sister. He was studying an associate degree course in Open University. He liked to

					join different courses and programmes that could add value to life. He was hard working and sought a meaningful life.
F2	X	Kowloon Peninsula	High Income	Undergraduate	Her parents had divorced and she had poor relationship with her stepmother. Now she was living with grandma. She had engaged in a lesbian relationship.
F3	X	Hong Kong Island	Low Income	Undergraduate	He came from low-income family and lived with his parents and elder sister. Now he was studying a bachelor degree course in Economic and Finance in a university. He had a girl friend.
F4	X	New Territories	High Income	Undergraduate	He was a single child that came from a wealthy family. He was now studying the third year in a university. He started to have homosexual tendency in upper form of secondary school and found himself attracted to male friends and classmates. He was very afraid of sexual identity being disclosed and dared not go to study. His parents were angry and could not accept his sexuality. He applied for stopping schooling for one year because of emotional

					and health problems.
F5	X	Kowloon Peninsula	Low Income	Secondary School	She was a secondary school student.
F6	X	New Territories	Middle Income	Secondary School	He was a single child and said he was rebellious. Now he was working as a life-guard in beach.
F7	X	New Territories	Low Income	Secondary School	He migrated to Hong Kong from the Mainland China. He came from a low-income family and had two brothers. Although he was now 21 years old but still studied Form 5 level in a secondary school. He worked as a part-time life-guard and continued to study a coaching course for life saving.

Survey – Distribution List (As at 20.12.2010)

Appendix 9

Organization	Location	Contact Person	Date of Delivery	Date of Return	Target Group	Age Range	No. of Delivery	No. of Return	Code No.
Higher School (around 416)									
NLSI Lui Kwok Pat Fong College	Kowloon Peninsula	the Principal	1.11.2010	1.11.2010	F.6 & 7 (4 classes)	17-19	120	112	A 1-112
The Church of Christ in China Kei Long College	New Territories	School Social Work Supervisor	1.11.2010	22.11.2010	F.7 (1 class)	17-19	30	29	B 113-141
Semple Memorial Secondary School	New Territories	Vice-principal	1.11.2010	28.11.2010	F.6 & 7 (4 classes)	17-19	130	120	C 142-261
SKH Bishop Baker Secondary School	New Territories	School Social Work Supervisor	19.11.2010	12.2010	F.6 & 7 (4 classes)	17-19	130	118	D 262-379
Hong Kong Tang King Po College	H.K. Island	teacher	25.11.2010	.12.2010	F.7 (2 classes)	17-19	60	37	E 380-416
Tertiary Institutions (Certificate/ Associate-Degree/ Diploma/ Degree) (around 433)									
Hong Kong	H.K.	Teaching	1.11.2010	30.11.2010	Undergraduate	19-24	60	55	F 417-471

University – School of Nursing	Island	Consultant			(Nursing Students)				
Hong Kong Shue Yan University – Department of Journalism and Communication	H.K. Island	Assistant Professor	4.11.2010	6.11.2010	Undergraduate (Journalism and Communication)	19-24	60	44	G 472-515
Hong Kong Shue Yan University – Department of Social Work	H.K. Island	Assistant Professor	8.11.2010	22.11.2010	Undergraduate (Social Work)	19-24	40	37	H 520-552
Hong Kong Baptist University – School of Continuing Education	Kowloon Peninsula	Teaching Staff	2.11.2010	18.12.2010	Students of Project Yi Jin (Certificate in Applied Psychological Studies)	18-21	80	77	I 553-629
Hong Kong Polytechnic University – Community	Kowloon Peninsula	Programme Leader	3.11.2010	12.2010	Associate Degree Students	19-23	100	94	J 630-723

College (Associate Degree Scheme in Applied Social Studies)									
Lingnan University – Community College (Social Sciences Programme)	New Territories	Head of Social Sciences Programmes	2.11.2010	30.11.2010	Associate Degree Students	19-23	73	73	K 724-796
Vocational Training Council – Youth College	H.K. Island/ Kowloon Peninsula		1.11.2010	30.11.2010	Certificate or Sub-degree Students	18-21	50	49	L 797-845
District Integrated Youth Centre (around 83)									
Hong Kong Christian Service – Kwun Tong Integrated Children & Youth	Kowloon Peninsula	Youth Worker	8.11.2010	30.11.2010	Youth Members	17-24	18	12	M 846-857

service									
YWCA Tin Shui Wai Integrated Social Service Centre	New Territories	Youth Worker	8.11.2010	3.12.2010	Youth Members	17-24	10	9	N 858-866
ELCHK Tuen Mun Integrated Youth Service Centre	New Territories	Centre In-charge	1.11.2010	30.11.2010	Youth Members	17-24	18	13	O 867-879
BGCA Jockey Club South Kwai Chung Children & Youth Integrated Service Centre	New Territories	Supervisor	5.11.2010	30.11.2010	Youth Members	17-24	25	24	P 880-903
BGCA Jockey Club Shek Yam Children & Youth Integrated Service Centre	New Territories	Supervisor	5.11.2010	22.11.2010	Youth Members	17-24	25	25	Q 904-928
District Church (around 103)									

Western District Evangelical Church	H.K. Island	Pastor	1.11.2010	30.11.2010	Church member in youth fellowship	17-24	20	20	R 929-948
Carmel Divine Grace Foundation Secondary School Youth Fellowship	New Territories	Fellowship Tutor	1.11.2010	3.12.2010	Church member in youth fellowship	17-24	15	5	S 949-953
Mandy's church	H.K. Island	Pastor	1.11.2010	21.11.2010	Church member in youth fellowship & their friends	17-25	80	78	T 954-1031
District Working Youth (around 101)									
Working youth from graduates	Kln/ HK/NT	Email invitation	8.11.2010	30.11.2010	Working youth/ students	17-25	70	65	U1032-1096
Graduates' friends and friend of friends	Kln/ HK/NT	Email invitation	8.11.2010	30.11.2010	Working youth/ students	17-25	21	21	V1097-1117
Graduates' colleagues and their friends	Kln/ HK/NT	Email invitation	8.11.2010	30.11.2010	Working youth	17-25	15	15	W1118-1132

Total							**1250**	**1132**	

Appendix 10

Survey – Invitation Letter cum Reply Slip

(For Principal/ Teacher/ Supervisor/ Centre In-charge)

Cardiff University
School of Social Science

The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity

Dear Principal/ Teacher/ Supervisor/ Centre In-charge,

I am Tabitha Ng, PhD candidate of School of Social Science at the Cardiff University, UK. I aim to conduct a research project on "The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity" and would like to invite your senior-form students/ centre members to participate. The purpose of the research aims to find out the Chinese Hong Kong young adults' (17-25) perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility under the influence of global values in late modernity, and the impact on Family Life Cycle in local Chinese Hong Kong society. As your senior form students fall into the appropriate age-range sample, they are kindly invited to participate.

For the purposes of this research I want to ask your students/members to complete a questionnaire (see attachment). The purpose of the questionnaire is to get their views about global and cultural values, marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Altogether, the questionnaire will take on average 15-20 minutes. This procedure involves no known risks. After completion of the questionnaire, the participants will receive a small gift for their participation. In this study, the participants will be invited to reflect on their personal viewpoints. Such reflection may give them insights about themselves. In addition, this research could help inform future development and service provision for the youth.

Even if you agree to let your students/members participate now you can change your mind later and withdraw. If you inform me that you have changed your mind I will delete the questionnaire data you send to me.

Please complete the reply slip below to indicate whether you agree to participate in this research. Please be assured that all information obtained will be used for research purposes only. Your students/members will not be identified by name in any report of the completed study.

Participation is entirely voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without negative consequences. If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me at LG111, Main Building, Hong Kong Shue Yan University. Telephone: 21048204; Email: ylng@hksyu.edu

If you understand the contents described above and agree to participate in this research, please sign below. Your help is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

PhD Candidate of School of Social Science
The Cardiff University,UK

Reply Slip

Name of Principal/ Teacher/ Supervisor/ Centre In-charge: _____

I ** will / will not participate in the research. (** Please delete as inappropriate.)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 11

The Informed Consent Form (Survey)

(For Participants)

The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by the PhD candidate of the School of Social Science at Cardiff University (UK), Ng Yin Ling, Tabitha.

This study aims to find out the Chinese Hong Kong young adults' perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility under the influence of global values in late modernity, and the impact on Family Life Cycle in local Chinese Hong Kong society. You will be invited to fill out some brief self-report questionnaire. The questions include your views about global and cultural values, marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Altogether, the questionnaire will take on average 15-20 minutes. This procedure has no known risks. After the completion of the focus group, you will receive a small gift for your participation. In this study, you will be invited to reflect on your personal viewpoints. Such reflection may give you insights about yourself. In addition, this research could help inform future development of policy and service provision for the youth.

Any information obtained in this study will remain strictly confidential, will be known to no-one, and will be used for research purposes only. Codes, not names, are used on all test instruments to protect confidentiality.

Your participation is voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without negative consequences. The record will be saved for up to 5 years after publication of the relevant results.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact Ng Yin Ling, Tabitha at LG111, Main Building, Hong Kong Shue Yan

University. Telephone: 21048204; Email: ylng@hksyu.edu

Signature

I _____ (Name of Participant) understand the procedures described above and agree to participate in this study.

_____	_____
Signature of Participant	Date
Date of Preparation:	Expiration Date: _____

Individual Interview – Key Characteristics of the Sample (Appendix 12)

Case	Sex	Age	Education level	Occupation	Monthly income	No. of sibling	Birth order	Religion	Marital status	Living District	Cross-border work	Overtime work	Continuing education	Living with parents
1	M	23	S 5	Drawing tutor	HK$2,900	1	Smallest	Christianity	Single	HK Island	No	No	Yes (5 hrs a week) (Art Course)	Yes
2	F	19	S5	Programme assistant	HK$5,500	4	Middle	No	Single	New Territories	No	No	No	Yes
3	M	24	Under-graduate	Banking Management Trainee	HK$ 24,000	1	Smallest	No	Single	Kowloon Peninsula	No	Yes (OT:15 hrs a week)	Yes (10 hrs a week) (Banking Course)	Yes
4	F	25	Under-graduate	Secondary school teacher	HK$ 25,000	2	Eldest	No	Single	New Territories	No	Yes (OT:20 hrs a week)	No	Yes
5	M	19	S5	Dog trainer	HK$7,500	2	Smallest	Christianity	Single	New Territories	Yes (China)	Yes (OT:10	No	Yes

												hrs a week)		
6	F	25	Diploma	Private housing management clerk	HK$9,800	3	Smallest	No	Single	New Territories	No	Yes (OT:25 hrs a week)	Yes (6 hrs a week) (Management Course)	Yes
7	M	21	S5	Unemployed	No	1	Smallest	No	Single	New Territories	NA	NA	No	Yes
8	F	18	S4	Unemployed	No	4	Middle	No	Single	New Territories	NA	NA	Yes (6 hrs a week) (pet make-up training course)	Yes
9	M	23	S5	Printing machine assembler	HK$9,500	2	Middle	Christianity	Single	New Territories	Yes (China)	Yes (OT:10 hrs a week)	No	Yes
10	F	22	Post-secondary	University student (major in Geography)	No	No	Single child	No	Single	Hong Kong Island	NA	NA	NA	Yes

Appendix 13

Invitation Letter

(For Participants of the Individual Interview)

Cardiff University
School of Social Science

Research Topic: The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity

Date

Dear Participant,

Invitation to attend individual interview

I am Tabitha Ng, PhD candidate of School of Social Science at the Cardiff University, UK. I refer to our telephone conversation dated May __, 2011. I thank for your consent to attend an individual interview of the research project on 'The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity'. The purpose of the research aims to find out the Chinese Hong Kong young adults' (17-25) perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility under the influence of global values in late modernity, and the impact on Family Life Cycle in local Chinese Hong Kong society. Details of the individual interview are as follows:

Date: _____

Time: _____(60-75 mins.)

Venue: _____

Focus of Interview: Please refer to the interview schedule

For the purposes of this research you are kindly invited to attend an individual interview to share your personal viewpoints about global and cultural values, marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Such reflection may give you insights about yourself and the research can help inform future development and service provision for the youth.

Altogether, the interview will take on average 60-75 minutes. The procedure involves no known risks. For research purposes, your participation will be audio-taped for further data checking. The data will be transcribed into archives with all personal identifies removed. The record will be disposed of 5 years after publication of the relevant research results. Participation is entirely voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without negative consequences. Even if you agree to participate now you can change your mind later and withdraw. If you inform me that you have changed your mind I will delete the interview data that you have shared in the interview. Please be assured that all information obtained will be used for research purposes only. You will not be identified by name in any report of the completed study. Any information obtained in this study will remain very confidential and the data will be strictly kept storage. The record will be disposed of 5 years after publication of the relevant results. After completion of the interview, you will receive a small gift for your participation.

I enclose herewith the following documents for your information:
- a copy of the consent form
- a copy of the interview schedule
- a copy of the information sheet – brief introduction of the research project

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me at LG111, Main Building, Hong Kong Shue Yan University. Telephone: 21048204; Email: ylng@hksyu.edu

If you understand the contents described above and agree to participate in this research, please sign in the consent form and bring along to the interview session for record. Your attendance and help are very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

_____

Ng Yin Ling, Tabitha
PhD Candidate of School of Social Science
The Cardiff University, UK

Appendix 14

The Informed Consent Form

(For Participants of the Individual Interview)

Cardiff University
School of Social Science

Research Topic: The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by the PhD candidate of the School of Social Science at Cardiff University (UK), Ng Yin Ling, Tabitha.

This study aims to find out the Chinese Hong Kong young adults' perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family responsibility under the influence of global values in late modernity, and the impact on Family Life Cycle in local Chinese Hong Kong society. You will be invited to attend an individual interview. The interview questions include your views about global and cultural values, marriage, parenthood and family responsibility. Altogether, the interview will take on average 60-75 minutes. This procedure has no known risks. In this study, you will be invited to reflect on your personal viewpoints. Such reflection may give you insights about yourself. In addition, this research can help inform future development of policy and service provision for the Hong Kong youth.

For research purposes, your participation will be audio-taped for further data checking. The data will be transcribed into archives with all personal identifiers removed. Your participation is voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without negative consequences. Any information obtained in this study will remain strictly confidential, will be known to no-one, and will be used for research purposes only. Codes, not names, are used on all test instruments to protect confidentiality. All data will be strictly kept in storage. The record will be disposed of 5 years after publication of the relevant results. After the completion of the individual interview, you will receive a small gift for your participation.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact Ng Yin Ling, Tabitha at LG111, Main Building, Hong Kong Shue Yan University. Telephone: 21048204; Email: ylng@hksyu.edu

Signature

I _____ (Name of Participant) understand the procedures described above and agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

Date of Preparation: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Appendix 15

Information Sheet - Brief Introduction of the Research

(For Participants of the Individual Interview)

Cardiff University
School of Social Science

Research Topic: The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity

Family life which has been developing over the last half century reveals remarkable and very speedy transitions in the Western societies. In Hong Kong, young people's values and perception on family and family functioning seem changing rapidly as well. This research aims to examine the possible effects of global culture and values on local Chinese cultural heritage with specific regard to young adults' perceptions on marriage, parenthood and family obligation in the global world of late modernity where conditions of risks and uncertainties require careful illumination. The research helps illuminate the likely choices and behaviour of young people in regard to personal lifestyle and family life. This in turn, may provide insights into future Hong Kong society and the family life cycle and related implications for social work and service / policy planning more generally.

This research is a cross-sectional multi-method exploration of attitudes held by young people about marriage and family building in Hong Kong, utilizing focus groups, surveys and individual interviews as the key research techniques. The design contained both qualitative and quantitative methods. A self-completion questionnaire survey instrument, a guided checklist of themes for focus groups and semi-structured interviews for individuals are adopted as the means for data collection. The research looks for qualitative and quantitative insights into complex processes and social systems that both inform and are shaped by individual and group attitudes and beliefs. The research design can not reveal the totality of social processes that determine the institutional structures that configure our social worlds, however it is intended that the study can provide a snapshot in time of the ways in which young people perceive their futures with regard to any responsibilities towards their family of origin and particularly their ideas about creating a family of their own.

Appendix 16

Short Questionnaire - Personal Information

(For Participants of the Individual Interview)

Cardiff University
School of Social Science

Research Topic: The Role of Global Values in Regard to the Family Life Cycle in Hong Kong with Specific Regard to Young Adults' Perception of Marriage, Parenthood and Family Responsibility in Late Modernity

15. Sex： ☐ Male ☐ Female

16. What is your age? _____

17. Educational background

☐ Primary or below ☐ F.1 – F.3 ☐ F.4 - F.5 ☐ Matriculation
☐Tertiary,non-degree course ☐Tertiary,degree course or above

18. Occupation

☐ Manager/ Administrator ☐ Professional ☐ Associate Professional
☐ Clerk ☐ Service Worker and Shop Sales Assistant ☐ Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Worker
☐ Craft and Machine Operator and Assembler ☐ Plant and Machine Operator and Assembler ☐ Non-skilled Worker
☐ Student ☐ Housewife ☐ Unclassified

☐ Unemployed

19. What is your salary per month?

☐ $1 – 2,999 ☐ $3,000 – 3,999 ☐ $4,000 –4,999 ☐ $5,000 – 5,999
☐ $6,000 – 6,999 ☐ $7,000 – 7,999 ☐ $8,000 – 8,999 ☐ $9,000 –9,999
☐ $10,000 –14,999 ☐ $15,000 –19,999 ☐ $20,000 –29,999 ☐$30,000 or above
☐ No salary

20. How many siblings do you have (including yourself)?

☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ Five and above

21. What is your birth order?

☐ The eldest ☐ The middle ☐ The smallest ☐ Single child

22. Religion

☐ Buddhist ☐ Taoist ☐ Catholic ☐ Christianity
☐ Muslim ☐ None ☐ Other
Please specify：_____）

23. Marital status

☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated
☐ Cohabiting ☐Spouse deceased ☐Other
Please specify: _____）

24. Which district do you live in?

☐ Wan Chai ☐ Kowloon City ☐ Sai Kung ☐ Tuen Mun
☐ Eastern ☐ Wong Tai Sin ☐ Sha Tin ☐ Yuen Long
☐ Central & Western ☐ Mongkok ☐ Islands ☐ North
☐ Southern ☐ Sham Shui Po ☐ Tsuen Wan ☐ Tai Po
☐ Kwun Tong ☐ Yau Tsim ☐ Kwai Tsing

25. Are you undertaking cross-border work?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N.A.

26. Are you working overtime?

☐ Yes (Working hours per week：_____hours)
☐ No (Working hours per week：_____hours)
☐ N.A.

27. Are you pursuing life-long education study?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N.A.

28. Are you living with your parents?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N.A.

Appendix 17

Survey – Statistical Tables

Table 8: Gender

Item	N	%
Male	550	48.6
Female	582	51.4
Total	1132	100.0

Table 9: Age

Item	N	%
17	233	20.6
18	226	20.0
19	206	18.2
20	154	13.6
21	72	6.4
22	78	6.9
23	69	6.1
24	48	4.2
25	44	3.9
Total	1130	100.0

Table 10: Age Range

Item	N	%
17-20	819	72.5
21-25	311	27.5
Total	1130	100.0

Table 11: Educational Attainment

Item	N	%
Primary or below	1	0.1
F.1 – F.3 (aged 12-14)	6	0.5
F.4 – F.5 (aged 15-16)	167	14.8

Matriculation (aged 17-18)	461	40.8
Tertiary, non-degree course (aged 19-20)	245	21.7
Tertiary, degree course or above (aged 21 or above)	250	22.1
Total	1130	100.0

Table 12: Income

Item	N	%
$1 – 2999	189	17.0
$3000 – 3999	31	2.8
$4000 – 4999	15	1.3
$5000 – 5999	11	1.0
$6000 – 6999	11	1.0
$7000 – 7999	17	1.5
$8000 – 8999	31	2.8
$9000 – 9999	12	1.1
$10000 – 14999	64	5.8
$15000 – 19999	24	2.2
$20000 – 29999	3	0.3
$30000 or above	1	0.1
No salary	703	63.2
Total	1112	100.0

Table 13: No. of Siblings

Item	N	%
None	153	13.6
One	568	50.6
Two	289	25.7
Three	77	6.9
Four	26	2.3
Five or above	10	0.9
Total	1123	100.0

Table 14: Birth Order

Item	N	%

The eldest	435	38.8
The middle	165	14.7
The smallest	385	34.3
Single child	137	12.2
Total	1122	100.0

Table 15: Religion

Item	N	%
Buddhist	42	3.8
Taoist	7	0.6
Catholic	21	1.9
Christianity	387	34.6
Muslim	3	0.3
None	652	58.3
Other	7	0.6
Total	1119	100.0

Table 16: Marital Status

Item	N	%
Single	1108	98.7
Married	3	0.3
Divorced	0	0
Separated	1	0.1
Cohabiting	5	0.4
Spouse decreased	5	0.4
Other	1	0.1
Total	1123	100.0

Table 17: Living District

Item	N	%
Wan Chai	27	2.4
Kowloon City	26	2.3
Sai Kung	50	4.5
Tuen Mun	173	15.4

Eastern	89	7.9
Wong Tai Sin	36	3.2
Sha Tin	54	4.8
Yuen Long	200	17.8
Central & Western	41	3.7
Mongkok	15	1.3
Islands	11	1.0
North	30	2.7
Southern	31	2.8
Sham Shui Po	28	2.5
Tsuen Wan	32	2.8
Tai Po	25	2.2
Kwun Tong	182	16.2
Yau Tsim	7	0.6
Kwai Tsing	66	5.9
Total	1123	100.0

Table 18: Living District (by Three Regions)

Item	N	%
Hong Kong Island	188	16.7
Kowloon Peninsula	294	26.2
New Territories	641	57.1
Total	1123	100.0

Table 19: Cross-border work

Item	N	%
Yes	15	1.3
No	253	22.8
N/A	844	75.9
Total	1112	100.0

Table 20: Work overtime

Item	N	%
Yes	61	5.6

No	182	16.8
N/A	842	77.6
Total	1085	100.0

Table 21: Continuing education

Item	N	%
Yes	89	8.1
No	144	13.1
N/A	868	78.8
Total	1101	100.0

Table 22: Living with parents

Item	N	%
Yes	1077	96.9
No	29	2.6
N/A	6	0.5
Total	1112	100.0

Table 23: Summary Statistic for Chinese Value Survey (CVS) and Sub-Scales Used in the Analysis

Sub-Scale	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
CVS I - Integrity & Tolerance	1087	125.08	14.129	22	153
CVS Ⅱ - Confucian Ethos	1106	67.82	11.343	24	99
CVS Ⅲ - Loyalty to ideals & Humanity	1103	61.37	8.927	12	81
CVS Ⅳ- Moderation & Moral Discipline	1126	19.01	3.717	3	27
CVS Total	**1038**	**273.05**	**33.367**	**67**	**360**

Table 24: Chinese Value Survey (CVS)

Chinese Value Scale	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
CVS I -Integrity & Tolerance					

Filial piety (Obedience to parents, respect for parents, honoring ancestors, financial support of parents)	1124	7.99	1.196	1	9
Trustworthiness	1131	7.92	1.214	1	9
Self-cultivation	1130	7.74	1.231	1	9
Courtesy	1132	7.70	1.322	1	9
Sincerity	1131	7.60	1.400	1	9
Kindness (Forgiveness, compassion)	1126	7.49	1.327	1	9
Patience	1131	7.38	1.224	1	9
Prudence (Carefulness)	1130	7.38	1.318	1	9
Adaptability	1129	7.22	1.416	1	9
Tolerance of others	1126	7.20	1.330	1	9
Industry (Working hard)	1131	7.19	1.360	1	9
Harmony with others	1126	7.18	1.396	1	9
Persistence (Perseverance)	1128	7.18	1.323	1	9
Knowledge (Education)	1132	7.12	1.505	1	9
Humbleness	1125	7.11	1.415	1	9
Sense of righteousness	1129	6.89	1.528	1	9
Personal steadiness and stability	1131	6.77	1.486	1	9
CVS Ⅱ – Confucian Ethos					
A close, intimate friend	1129	7.69	1.424	1	9
Chastity in women	1129	7.15	1.866	1	9
Contentedness with one’s position in life	1128	6.84	1.680	1	9
Keeping oneself disinterested and pure	1130	6.68	1.638	1	9
Benevolent authority	1127	6.59	1.528	1	9
Respect for tradition	1130	5.97	1.764	1	9
Loyalty to superiors	1129	5.90	1.679	1	9
Having few desires	1128	5.65	1.936	1	9
Non-competitiveness	1131	5.60	1.960	1	9
Being conservative	1131	4.90	1.953	1	9
Protecting your “face”	1130	4.83	1.915	1	9
CVS Ⅲ - Loyalty to ideals & Humanity					
Resistance to corruption	1129	7.44	1.472	1	9
Having a sense of shame	1131	7.35	1.428	1	9
Observation of rites and rituals	1129	7.23	1.443	1	9
Solidarity with others	1128	7.13	1.367	1	9
Ordering relationships by status and observing this order	1130	6.91	1.584	1	9

Thrift	1132	6.83	1.495	1	9
Moderation, following the middle way	1121	6.66	1.636	1	9
Reciprocation of greetings and favors, gifts	1128	6.31	1.609	1	9
Patriotism	1131	5.55	2.014	1	9
CVS Ⅳ – Moderation & Moral Discipline					
Repayment of both the good and the evil that another person has caused you	1127	6.71	1.661	1	9
Wealth	1132	6.60	1.830	1	9
A sense of cultural superiority	1131	5.71	1.846	1	9

Table 25: Regression Result for Relationship between CVS and Demographic Variables

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
Gender	16.801	3.371**	.263
Age	-.811	-.563	-.060
Education Attainment	2.758	1.209	.107
Full-time Studying	9.602	1.083	.131
Full-time Working	4.116	.42	.059
Income	.577	.460	.063
No. of Sibling	-1.948	-.703	-.057
Religion	2.571	.513	.040
Marital Status	-73.862	-3.991**	-.314
Living District	-.118	-.040	-.003
Cross-border Work	7.420	.784	.061
Overtime Work	7.286	1.352	.104
Continuing Education	4.575	.896	.070
Living with Parents	17.432	1.854	.138
Intercept	241.595	7.528	
R^2 = .225, N = 1132, **p < .01			

Table 26: Summary Statistic for Marital Attitude Scale (MAS) Used in the Analysis Scale

Scale	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
MAS Total	**1095**	**81.38**	**10.037**	**42**	**107**

Table 27: Marital Attitude Scale

Statements on Marriage	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
People should be very cautious about entering into a marriage	1130	4.04	0.926	1	5
Marriage is a sacred act	1129	3.98	0.911	1	5
People should stay married to their spouses for the rest of their lives	1128	3.97	0.973	1	5
My lifelong dream includes a happy marriage	1129	3.90	1.056	1	5
People should only get married if they are sure that it will last forever	1131	3.83	1.025	1	5
I will be satisfied when I get married	1131	3.83	0.921	1	5
Because half of all marriages end in divorce, marriage seems futile	1129	3.81	0.901	1	5
There is no such thing as a happy marriage	1130	3.80	0.960	1	5
Most marriages are unhappy situations	1131	3.77	0.867	1	5
People should marry	1131	3.67	1.010	1	5
Marriage provides companionship that is missing from other types of relationships	1129	3.65	1.049	1	5
Marriage is only a legal contract	1128	3.62	1.155	1	5
I am fearful of marriage	1131	3.61	1.001	1	5
Most couples are either unhappy in their marriage or are divorced	1128	3.47	0.967	1	5
Marriage restricts individuals from achieving their goals	1125	3.42	0.954	1	5
If I divorce, I would probably remarry	1130	3.35	0.824	1	5
I have little confidence that my marriage will be a success	1132	3.35	1.053	1	5
Most marriages aren’t equal partnerships	1127	3.28	0.914	1	5
When people don’t get along, I believe they should divorce	1128	3.22	1.016	1	5
People weren’t meant to stay in one relationship for their entire lives	1128	3.21	1.080	1	5
Most people have to sacrifice too much in marriage	1129	3.19	0.963	1	5

I have doubts about marriage	1131	3.07	1.058	1	5
I believe a relationship can be just as strong without having to go through the marriage ceremony	1128	2.29	0.989	1	5

Table 28: Regression Result for Relationship between MAS and Demographic Variables

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
Gender	-2.062	-1.144	-.093
Age	-5.561	-.107	-.012
Education Attainment	1.381	1.695	.156
Full-time Studying	.902	.282	.035
Full-time Working	-2.304	-.665	-.093
Income	.954	2.237*	.304
No. of Sibling	1.383	1.384	.116
Religion	2.272	1.273	.102
Marital Status	-7.951	-1.175	-.095
Living District	.228	.220	.017
Cross-border Work	-.146	-.044	-.004
Overtime Work	-.818	-.420	-.033
Continuing Education	1.051	.575	.046
Living with Parents	2.923	.881	.068
Intercept	66.246	5.837	
R^2 = .133, N = 1132, *p < .05			

Table 29: Planning to Get Married

Item	N	Valid %
Yes (Married)	33	2.9
Yes (Not Married)	794	70.4
No (Don’t want to get married)	63	5.6
No (No idea on marriage)	238	21.1
Total	1128	100.0

Table 30: Regression Result for Relationship between Plan to Get Married and CVS, MAS, Parenthood, Family Obligation

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS	1.726	.352	.014
MAS	1.487	8.394**	.339
Parenthood	6.891	4.609**	.189
Family Obligation	2.650	.224	.009
Intercept	-1.116	-5.552	
R^2 = .198, N = 1132, **p < .01			

Table 31: Ideal Age for Getting Married

Item	N	Valid %
21 or below	18	1.6
21-25	212	18.7
26-30	696	61.5
31-35	121	10.7
36 or above	11	1.0
N/A	73	6.5
Total	1131	100.0

Table 32: Regression Result for Relationship between Age to Get Married and CVS, MAS, Parenthood, Family Obligation

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS	3.309	.390	.017
MAS	-6.802	-2.179 *	-.099
Parenthood	-3.708	-1.435	-.066
Family Obligation	-6.207	-.309	-.014
Intercept	3.762	10.599	
R^2 = .019, N = 1132, *p < .05			

Table 33: Reasons to Get Married (not more than 3 answers), N=1132

Item	N	(%)
Public declaration of legal partnership	651	57.5
Avoid loneliness	300	26.5

Procreation	298	26.3
Obtain financial security	143	12.6
Sexual satisfaction	127	11.2
Pressure from significant others	70	6.2
Others	187	16.5
N/A	124	11.0

Table 34: Reasons Not to Get Married (not select more than 3 answers), N=1132

Item	N	%
I can't find an appropriate partner to get married	499	44.1
I want more freedom	349	30.8
I like to be single	277	24.5
I'm scared of divorce	236	20.8
I'm concerned it may affect my career	163	14.4
I'm concerned over further studies	56	4.9
I'm afraid of marriage	127	11.2
I'm scared of having & raising children	94	8.3
Others	30	2.7
N/A	256	22.6

Table 35: Acceptance of Certain Relationship / Situations

Items	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Extra Marital Affair	1131	4.39	0.863	1	5
Unwed Mother	1129	3.83	1.025	1	5
Same-sex Marriage	1131	3.50	1.216	1	5
Homosexuality	1131	3.39	1.214	1	5
Divorce	1130	3.25	0.986	1	5
Pre-marital Sex	1131	3.12	1.167	1	5
Cohabitation	1130	2.59	1.059	1	5

Table 36: Regression Result for Relationship between Perceptions on Relationships and Demographic Variables

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
Gender	-.479	-.609	-.043

Age	.363	1.549	.156
Education Attainment	-.161	-.439	-.036
Full-time Studying	.331	.226	.026
Full-time Working	2.841	1.822	.229
Income	-.331	-1.711	-.210
No. of Sibling	.163	.366	.027
Religion	5.585	7.039**	.499
Marital Status	-6.184	-2.033*	-.145
Living District	.530	1.133	.078
Cross-border Work	.802	.521	.037
Overtime Work	.795	.916	.064
Continuing Education	.981	1.216	.086
Living with Parents	1.798	1.158	.079
Intercept	10.378	2.012	
R^2 = .298, N = 1132, *p < .05, **p < .01			

Table 37: Regression Result for Relationship between Perception on Relationships and CVS, MAS, Parenthood, Family Obligation

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS	1.194	1.980*	.081
MAS	.145	6.673**	.284
Parenthood	1.730	.948	.041
Family Obligation	3.266	2.262*	.092
Intercept	4.971	2.018	
R^2 = .115, N = 1132, *p < .05, **p < .01			

Table 38: Regression Result for Relationship between MAS and CVS I, II, III, IV

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS I	9.414	2.490*	.132
CVS II	.150	3.589**	.169
CVS III	-4.958	-.744	-.044
CVS IV	-.588	-5.472**	-.205
Intercept	73.071	26.087	
R^2 = .048, N = 1132, *p < .05, **p < .01			

Table 39: Summary Statistics for Parenthood Sub-Scales Used in the Analysis

Sub-Scale	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Intrinsic Motivation	1131	34.61	6.643	9	45
Extrinsic Motivation	1128	15.35	3.679	5	25
Costs	1130	15.48	3.982	5	25
Benefits	1122	19.47	3.463	5	25
Parenthood Total	**1116**	**84.93**	**11.769**	**24**	**120**

Table 40: Parenthood

Parenthood Items	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Intrinsic Motivation					
I enjoy children and would like to have a child to watch him/her grow and change	1132	4.05	0.862	1	5
I believe that having children is the right thing to do	1132	4.00	0.829	1	5
Having children would enrich my life	1132	3.95	0.850	1	5
I would like to have a child to establish my own family	1132	3.91	0.922	1	5
I would experience a sense of accomplishment by having a child	1131	3.91	0.867	1	5
I would like to fulfill the role of being a mother/ father	1132	3.83	0.958	1	5
I believe that having children is an important part of life that I don’t want to miss	1132	3.78	0.982	1	5
I would enjoy the challenge of meeting my child’s needs	1132	3.67	0.913	1	5
I would like to have children as an expression of love for my spouse or partner	1132	3.52	0.995	1	5
Extrinsic Motivation					
I would like to have a child (children) to have someone to carry on, and to remember me following my death	1131	3.35	1.017	1	5
As an adult, my son or daughter could help to support the family economically if necessary	1131	3.35	0.940	1	5
Having children will provide someone to	1131	3.20	0.974	1	5

care for you in your old age					
I would like to have a child (children) to show that I can handle the responsibilities of adulthood	1132	3.00	1.045	1	5
I would like to have a child because most of my friends and family members have or will have children	1131	2.45	0.968	1	5
Costs					
Having children can lead to financial strain and long term debts	1132	3.32	1.040	1	5
I would have much less privacy and personal time if I had children	1132	3.22	1.020	1	5
Having children results in a significant loss of freedom	1132	3.07	1.069	1	5
Having children may interfere with my employment opportunities and/or career advancement	1132	3.01	0.995	1	5
If I had children, I would have less time to spend with my partner	1130	2.86	1.013	1	5
Benefits					
Having children provides growth and learning opportunities which ultimately will add meaning to a parent's life	1130	4.00	0.807	1	5
Having children adds stimulation and fun to a parent's life	1131	3.90	0.840	1	5
Having children is a way to give and receive warmth and affection	1128	3.88	0.815	1	5
Having children helps you learn to become less selfish and to make sacrifices for others	1129	3.88	0.848	1	5
Having children can help to give you a sense of accomplishment in your life	1129	3.79	0.938	1	5

Table 41: Regression Result for Relationship between Parenthood and Demographic Variables

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
Gender	1.661	.884	.071

Age	.391	.702	.079
Education Attainment	1.761	2.022*	.186
Full-time Studying	5.259	1.558	.192
Full-time Working	-.878	-.234	-.034
Income	.204	.424	.061
No. of Sibling	1.376	1.312	.109
Religion	-1.076	-.569	-.046
Marital Status	2.665	.371	.030
Living District	-6.603	-.055	-.004
Cross-border Work	3.958	1.121	.089
Overtime Work	-3.611	-1.757	-.138
Continuing Education	.562	.293	.023
Living with Parents	-4.296	-1.222	-.094
Intercept	67.575	5.556	
R^2 = .117, N = 1132, *p < .05			

Table 42: Regression Result for Relationship between Plan to Have Children and CVS, MAS, Parenthood Scale, Family Obligation Scale

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS	2.739	.545	.019
MAS	1.153	6.346**	.236
Parenthood	1.761	11.493**	.436
Family Obligation	-1.086	-.893	-.032
Intercept	-1.794	-8.688	
R^2 = .317, N = 1132, **p < .01			

Table 43: Regression Result for Relationship between Age to Have First Child and CVS, MAS, Parenthood Scale, Family Obligation Scale

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS	-2.797	-.003	.000
MAS	-8.332	-2.581**	-.121
Parenthood	-1.499	-.510	-.024
Family Obligation	1.813	.867	.040
Intercept	3.924	10.395	

R^2 = .018, N = 1132, **p < .01

Table 44: Regression Result for Relationship between No. of Children Wanted and CVS, MAS, Parenthood Scale, Family Obligation Scale

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS	-1.992	-2.382*	-.113
MAS	6.128	1.974*	.094
Parenthood	5.145	1.778	.087
Family Obligation	9.183	.461	.022
Intercept	1.477	4.030	
R^2 = .029, N = 1132, *p < .05			

Table 45: Important Factors on Having Children (can more than 1 answer)

Item	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Personal income	1132	4.19	.853	1	5
Child care	1130	3.96	.950	1	5
Accommodation	1132	3.89	.904	1	5
Employment opportunity	1131	3.76	.964	1	5
Social environment	1130	3.69	1.013	1	5
Education system	1132	3.62	1.079	1	5
Medical care	1132	3.55	1.032	1	5
Social welfare	1132	3.53	.998	1	5
Political stability	1131	3.06	1.139	1	5
Others	45	4.60	.837	1	5

Table 46: Regression Result for Relationship between Factors to Have Children and Demographic Variables

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
Gender	2.356	2.404 *	.187
Age	-.421	-1.450	-.159
Education Attainment	.713	1.574	.140
Full-time Studying	2.201	1.240	.149

Full-time Working	4.372	2.262 *	.312
Income	-.535	-2.252 *	-.301
No. of Sibling	-.512	-.929	-.075
Religion	-2.428	-2.467 *	-.192
Marital Status	6.090	1.608	.125
Living District	9.480	.165	.012
Cross-border Work	-.361	-.194	-.015
Overtime Work	7.358	.069	.005
Continuing Education	.599	.599	.046
Living with Parents	-.837	-.452	-.034
Intercept	38.501	6.094	
R^2 = .148, N = 1132, *p < .05			

Table 47: Regression Result for Relationship between Factors to Have Children and CVS, MAS, Parenthood Scale, Family Obligation Scale

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS	3.840	5.098**	.214
MAS	-4.431	-1.633	-.072
Parenthood	4.700	.204	.009
Family Obligation	-5.364	-.030	-.001
Intercept	25.902	8.401	
R^2 = .05, N = 1132, **p < .01			

Table 48: Regression Result for Relationship between Parenthood Scale and CVS, MAS, Family Obligation Scale

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS	3.679	2.680**	.105
MAS	.408	8.711**	.338
Family Obligation	.105	3.189**	.125
Intercept	33.872	6.177	
R^2 = .154, N = 1132, **p < .01			

Table 49: Summary Statistics for Family Obligation Sub-Scales Used in the Analysis

Sub-Scale	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Current Assistance	654	31.21	7.896	12	55
Respect for Family	610	23.13	5.097	7	35
Future Support	647	22.20	4.440	6	30
Family Obligation Total	**647**	**77.65**	**14.46**	**33**	**117**

Table 50: Family Obligation

Family Obligation Items	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Current Assistance					
Eat meals with your family	1111	4.16	1.027	1	5
Spend time at home with your family	1127	3.71	0.966	1	5
Run errands that the family needs done	1114	3.50	1.008	1	5
Spend time with your family on weekends	1110	3.34	1.154	1	5
Spend holidays with your family	1112	3.22	1.114	1	5
Help take care of your brothers and sisters	901	3.08	1.231	1	5
Do things together with your brothers and sisters	944	3.01	1.184	1	5
Spend time with your grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles	1082	2.90	1.090	1	5
Help out around the house	991	2.58	1.179	1	5
Help your brothers or sisters with their homework	899	2.53	1.175	1	5
Help take care of your grandparents	888	2.53	1.218	1	5
Respect for Family					
Treat your grandparents with great respect	974	3.92	1.075	1	5
Treat your parents with great respect	1115	3.85	1.008	1	5
Do well for the sake of your family	1090	3.71	1.067	1	5
Respect your older brothers and sisters	821	3.44	1.151	1	5
Make sacrifices for your family	1025	3.16	1.140	1	5
Follow your parents' advice about choosing a job or major in college	1021	2.75	1.292	1	5
Follow your parents' advice about choosing friends	1031	2.51	1.238	1	5
Future Support					
Live at home with your parents until you are married	1026	4.19	1.042	1	5
Help your parents financially in the future	1072	4.17	.949	1	5

Spend time with your parents even after you no longer live with them	1029	3.96	.959	1	5
Help take care of your brothers and sisters in the future	905	3.65	1.115	1	5
Have your parents live with you when they get older	946	3.59	1.097	1	5
Live or go to college near your parents	863	2.87	1.336	1	5

Table 51: Regression Result for Relationship between Family Obligation and Demographic Variables

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
Gender	8.373	2.180*	.280
Age	1.684	1.617	.261
Education Attainment	-1.092	-.623	-.084
Full-time Studying	4.362	.724	.132
Full-time Working	4.566	.625	.142
Monthly Salary	-.495	-.536	-.121
No. of Sibling	.843	.408	.052
Religion	-1.907	-.471	-.063
Marital Status	15.161	1.278	.151
Living District	4.995	.024	.003
Cross-border Work	1.901	.276	.034
Overtime Work	.401	.105	.013
Continuing Education	4.218	1.139	.136
Living with Parents	13.572	2.109*	.245
Intercept	22.572	.999	
R^2 = .185, N = 1132, *p < .05			

Table 52: Regression Result for Relationship between Family Obligation Scale and CVS I, II, III, IV

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS I	-.115	-1.644	-.118
CVS II	.115	2.028*	.123
CVS III	.293	2.228*	.184

CVS IV	-3.139	-.163	-.008
Intercept	63.930	12.818	
R^2 = .039, N = 1132, *p < .05			

Table 53: Regression Result for Relationship between Family Obligation Subscale (Current Assistance) and CVS I, II, III, IV

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS I	-6.834	-1.774	-.123
CVS II	7.562	1.806	.112
CVS III	.168	2.489*	.195
CVS IV	-3.360	-.315	-.016
Intercept	27.819	9.815	
R^2 = .038, N = 1132, *p < .05			

Table 54: Regression Result for Relationship between Family Obligation Subscale (Respect for Family) and CVS I, II, III, IV

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS I	-2.490	-.979	-.074
CVS II	4.345	1.564	.102
CVS III	.126	2.789**	.236
CVS IV	-4.137	-.598	-.031
Intercept	16.181	9.122	
R^2 = .059, N = 1132, **p < .01			

Table 55: Regression Result for Relationship between Family Obligation Subscale (Future Support) and CVS I, II, III, IV

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS I	-2.121	-.098	-.007
CVS II	4.540	1.922	.118
CVS III	1.281	.315	.026
CVS IV	1.386	.234	.012

Intercept	18.342	11.914
R^2 = .020, N = 1132		

Table 56: Regression Result for Relationship between Parenthood Subscale (Benefits) and CVS I, II, III, IV

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
CVS I	2.541	1.935	.103
CVS II	2.854	1.935*	.093
CVS III	-1.114	-.048	-.003
CVS IV	-8.118	-2.315*	-.087
Intercept	15.964	16.445	
R^2 = .022, N = 1132, *p < .05			