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STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

I hereby declare having conducted this academic work with integrity. I confirm that I have not used plagiarism or any form of undue use of information or falsification of results along the process leading to its elaboration.

I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Minho.

ABSTRACT

This thesis reflects on the Chinese tradition of Filial Piety - 'Xiào' - a cultural construction that places the younger generations in a position of respect and submission to elders - and its relationship with the current understanding on the Rights of the Child in contemporary China. Placing its focus on the Rights of Participation, the research adopts a postcolonial approach to Children's Rights, challenging hegemonic views and contextualizing participation within the cultural traditions it seeks to understand. Designed as a case study, the research aimed at investigating urban Chinese families' acknowledgment of Xiào and its influence on the possibilities of children having their opinions taken into account in matters concerning their lives. Data collection took place in an international school in urban south China, adopting a qualitative approach. By conducting interviews with parents, grandparents, and focus groups with children, the research was developed within the Sociology of Childhood theoretical framework, involving adults as significant figures in children´s lives and considering children as reliable participants who are capable of providing relevant data about their own experiences. Findings have indicated that cultural constructions that regard Filial Piety as a highly important virtue have not disappeared, but meanings attributed to Filial Piety have been changing in close relation with the participants' experience of citizenship across time. Children's participation in home-decision making has been found to happen among patterns of compromise, resistance, negotiation, and the development of a sense of responsibility. Findings also indicate that some topics of family daily life are more open to discussion than others, reinforcing changing patterns of Xiao and the construction of a sense of child participation built around both global and local influences.

KEYWORDS: Rights of participation; China; Sociology of Childhood; Post colonialism; Intergenerationality

RESUMO

Esta tese reflete sobre a tradição chinesa de Piedade Filial - 'Xiào' - uma construção cultural que coloca as gerações mais novas em uma posição de respeito e submissão aos mais velhos - e sua relação com o entendimento atual sobre os Direitos da Criança na China contemporânea. Tendo como foco os Direitos de Participação, a pesquisa adota uma abordagem pós-colonialista dos Direitos da Criança, desafiando as visões hegemônicas e contextualizando a participação dentro das tradições culturais que busca compreender. Concebida como um estudo de caso, a pesquisa teve como objetivo investigar a compreensão da tradição de Xiào por famílias urbanas chinesas e a influência de tal tradição nas possibilidades de as crianças terem suas opiniões levadas em conta em questões que lhe dizem respeito. A coleta de dados ocorreu em uma escola internacional no sul da China urbana, tendo uma abordagem qualitativa. Por meio da realização de entrevistas com pais e avós e grupos focais com crianças, a pesquisa foi desenvolvida dentro do referencial teórico da Sociologia da Infância, envolvendo os adultos como figuras significativas na vida das crianças e considerando as crianças como participantes competentes, capazes de fornecerem dados relevantes sobre suas próprias experiências. Os resultados da pesquisa indicaram que as construções culturais que consideram a Xiao como uma virtude altamente importante não desapareceram, mas os significados atribuídos à tradição têm mudado em estreita relação com a experiência de cidadania dos participantes ao longo do tempo. Indicam, ainda, que a participação das crianças na tomada de decisões em casa ocorre entre padrões de compromisso, resistência, negociação e o desenvolvimento de um senso de responsabilidade. Os resultados também indicam que alguns tópicos do cotidiano familiar são mais abertos à discussão do que outros, reforçando os padrões de mudança de Xiao e a construção de um senso de participação infantil construído em torno de influências, tanto globais quanto locais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Direitos de Participação; China; Sociologia da Infância; Poscolonialismo; Intergeneracionalidade

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
UN	United Nations
KMT	Kuomintang or Chinese Nationalist Party
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
EU	European Union
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
CNY	Chinese Yuan
Hukou	Household Registration System
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
IB	International Baccalaureate
SOE	State Owned Enterprises
OHCHR	Office of Higher Commissioner Human Rights

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INTRODUCTION

Down the Rabbit Hole

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, "and what is the use of a book," thought Alice "without pictures or conversations?"

So she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

There was nothing so *very* remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so *very* much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!" (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but when the Rabbit actually *took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket*, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and fortunately was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.

In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again.

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down a very deep well.

Lewis Carrol

This thesis is the result of a four years adventure in China (plus another two of writing in a different part of the globe). Travelling to China was something that has not been carefully planned in all details, but rather an opportunity that I grabbed as it came – much in the same way as bored Alice chased the White Rabbit and found herself falling into the unknown. To explain how I landed on my Wonderland – my case study on the concepts of Xiao and child participation – I feel the need first to answer the question: why China? After explaining my personal motivations, I will describe my theoretical inspirations, inviting my readers to discover "Why Xiao?". Finally, I introduce the organizational aspects of the thesis, walking through a brief overview of each chapter's content.

Why China? – Local and global connections of a personal (and intergenerational) narrative

The idea of travelling abroad and discovering new horizons beyond Brazil was a dream that grew in me since I was a child. Though I didn't have a specific place in mind, my childhood memories include vivid episodes of waiting for my dad to return from his work travels. Back then, at the beginning of the 1990s, every time my dad returned, we would play a game my brothers and I had created: my dad would say the country

he had just come back from, and the four of us – my three brothers and I – would race to a giant world map we had framed in our living room. The first to pinpoint my dad's last location on the map won the game. Though my father's job as a shoe industry businessman has taken him pretty much everywhere, he has developed strong connections with India and China – which back in the 1990s were full-on establishing themselves in the global market. I remember listening to his travel experiences with a sense of wonder every time he told us about the different – at times strange – customs he observed. I also remember his sense of fascination and respect while telling us about his interactions with people from different cultures. In this sense, I consider these childhood memories a seed from which this thesis grew into a motion of "listening to 'the other'" (Harris-Short, 2001) – an idea that I will recall in the upcoming paragraphs.

Back to "why China?" - and still stemming from my childhood connections - had China not been an emerging power in the global market scene back in the 1990s, when my father was travelling the world and building his career, I would probably have traveled somewhere else. That realization speaks deeply to the globalization theme that cuts across this entire thesis. As Wyness (2015) notes – and we will later explore in the following chapters - "The 1978 Chinese government's 'open door' policy ushered in a period of massive economic expansion, with the economy being 'internationalized': foreign investment increased by 850% between 1983 and 2007" (p. 64). My father's relations with China – and later my brother's, whom I came to live with when moving away from Brazil – result from this open-door policy and the expansion of China's power in the international market. However, back in time, I would never have thought these globalization processes would have taken me to investigate its very effects on Chinese children's lives.

Finally, having said that the dream of travelling abroad had been a longstanding one, I found myself with the opportunity to travel after finishing my Master in Childhood Studies in January 2015. Having a sense of accomplishment with the end of an important stage of my life, I was ready for [what I thought it would be] a break from my studies, and joined my older brother who, following my father's career footsteps, had been living in China since the beginning of the 2000s. What I thought would be a year break (as I had initially planned to go back to Brazil after this period) turned to be a game-changer in my life. I started working at an international school, teaching 3-4-year-old children who were in their majority Chinese. As an experienced early years educator (in Brazil) and an advocate for child protagonism, I could not help but be mesmerized by all the cultural differences I was noticing. In this sense, I think of my lived experience in China as put by Heidegger (as cited in Larossa, 2002 and Davis, 2014a), who defines lived experience as something that does not pass us by but passes through and transforms us. In this process of trying to understand the new world I was in, I decided to go back to my Childhood Studies journey and turned my 'one-year break' into my next five-year project – a Ph.D. research on Xiao and children's participation rights.

Why Xiao? - Listening to "the other"

Back to reading, participating in discussions, and interacting with professors and scholars in the Childhood Studies field, my initial research interests were to enhance child participation in the school context I was inserted. Coming from an understanding of children as competent social actors (Sarmento et al., 2007; Sarmento, 2009; Corsaro, 2011) and of the Sociology of Childhood as a way of understanding society through what it offers to its children (Sarmento 2009), I found myself in the lack of local understandings about child participation in the new context I was suddenly in. What were Chinese views about the child, about participation, and about child-participation in society? Freeman (1998) writes that we must engage in dialogue with the different local perspectives if we want to make significant contributions to children's rights. It was by engaging in dialogue with the community I was inserted that I learned how important the principle of Xiao – or Filial Piety as some parents translated it to me - is in Chinese culture. Back then, as I had a clear image of children as right holders, with the right of participating and having a voice in matters affecting their lives (Sarmento et al., 2007), the more I read about Xiao, the more questions I had about how that child – who is expected to be devoted to parents – could express their voice and participate in a culturally appropriate way that did not harm their right holder status. In that sense, Freeman (1998) points out that sets of norms like the Convention on the Rights of the Child "requires us to make judgments across different communities" and he poses the question: "Can valid judgments be made across different communities?" (p. 26). The author goes on and states that "Exercising judgments against other communities is both easier (because there will be support from many others, including those who do not see problems in their own communities), and more difficult (because we are intrusive outsiders, and because we must understand before we can judge)" (Freeman, 1998, p. 27). By recognizing my status of an "outsider", a "foreigner", an "other" I had an urge of understanding before I could judge, not in the binary sense of judgment as in right or wrong, but in a plural sense that enables an understanding of nuances and different possibilities of being a child and participating in different contexts. As Harris-Short (2001) puts it, this research process has been a true exercise of broadening the mind.

> Listening to 'the other' will certainly require compromise and flexibility — a 'broadening of the mind'. This should not, however, be regarded as a 'problem' or 'weakness' in respecting cultural difference. The rich diversity of culture and tradition which 'the other' offers can be drawn on to strengthen and broaden both the scope and effectiveness of the international human rights regime. (Harris-Short, 2001, p.47)

In this exercise of listening to the other, as much as I have dedicated my entire being to engaging in dialogue, I am aware that my perspective is still the perspective of an outsider. And how does the perspective of an outsider can contribute to the discussion of children's rights? As Kohan (2007) points out, the value of

the journey of a foreigner, a stranger, an other, is "not 'the truth' of their thesis – which may be debatable and controversial in its assumptions – [...], but the friction it supposes and provokes, the thought it unleashes, as a solidary, unheard, dissonant expression and, after all, strong enough to interrogate what cannot be interrogated" (p. 55). In this sense, I hope this research can inspire more scholarly initiatives that give visibility to the different ways of being children around the globe and, as Liebel (2020) puts, ways that question "the dominance of forms of knowledge, ways of thinking and seeing that make the childhoods of the Global South invisible or only distort their expression and lead to disregard, discrimination and negation" (p. 217).

How the thesis is organized

In Chapter One, I write about the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, situating its historical background and exploring the text's main developments and challenges with a specific focus on children's participation rights. Thereafter, I propose to think the Rights of the Child document in lights of Cultural Diversity, discussing the power-relations implicated in the childhood ideal the Convention portrays. To overcome an abstract (or culturally misplaced) parameter of child-participation from which Chinese children should not be measured against, I bring socially relevant aspects from which participation may be understood by our case study participants. Ranging from Confucian philosophy with its collectivist traditions (in which individual interests are subject to in-group needs), passing through the influences of globalization and the rise of a particular understanding of the contemporary Chinese individual and, finally, exploring the concept of participation through the lenses of Chinese citizenship and democracy, Chapter one lays the foundation to start negotiating a cross-cultural understanding of children's participation rights in China.

Developing from ideas presented in Chapter one, Chapter two deepens a bit more into the concept of Xiao, which traditionally implies a child's devotion to their parents, offering a literature review on changing patterns regarding the tradition observed in contemporary China. By articulating ideas around Xiao with the notion of children's participation rights, Chapter two presents our research questions while making an incursion into the Rights of the Child in China and scholarly work regarding Chinese children's participation rights. After posing the research questions, we present our methodological approach, situating the study within the Childhood Studies field and detailing the methodological framework of our case study. Next, we explain our data collection phases – writing about the ethical challenges involved in each stage of the research – and describe our data collection tools, the different data sets the study generated, as well as the procedures we used to handle and analyse our data.

Divided into two main sections, Chapter three brings data referring to our participant's understanding of Xiao and child participation. Section one begins by looking at traditional meanings of Xiao brought up from literature, moving onto a generational analysis that considers each group of participants' answers and

contextualizes grandparents', parents', and children's Xiao definitions within historical events affecting family organizations in each generation. After looking at changes in Chinese society over a three-generational period – and how such changes affect Xiao practices and our participants' intergenerational relationships – we move on to looking at commonalities found among children's parents' and grandparents' definitions of Xiao. In the search for contemporary, shared meanings of Xiao, our data analyses show how the aspects of Respect, Love/care, Companionship, and Self-cultivation compose complementary prisms of Xiao tradition according to our participant's understanding.

Moving on, Chapter three Section 2 analyses our participants' answers concerning child participation within the family context. Facing a lack of data coming from the grandparents' group in that matter, we draw an analysis regarding the grandparents' role in daily family arrangements (in the context of this case study) based on mentions (or the lack of them) made by the children and by parents when narrating home decision-making negotiation. By analyzing the two sets of data (children's and parents') about child participation in the family context, Chapter three Section 2 explores both the parents and the children's perspectives on negotiating daily matters such as food choices, bed-time, friends, after-school schedules and different types of play. In exploring parents' and children's perspectives, the Section presents four categories emerging from each data set and cross-references parental narratives of free, guided, controlled, or non-negotiable choices, with children's narratives of displaying a sense of responsibility, negotiation, compromise, and resistance when participating in home-decision making.

Finally, Chapter 4 articulates Xiao meanings brought up by our participants with our analysis on child participation within the family context. By recalling the study's perspective of respecting tradition "without essentializing it" (Burman, 2019, p. 12) and challenging ideas of subalternity often linked to childhoods that do not conform (Abebe and Ofosu-Kusi, 2016; Castro, 2019; Liebel, 2020), Chapter 4 presents our findings regarding Xiao and child participation in the family context, demonstrating changes occurred in the Chinese scenario over the three generations. We argue that contemporary understandings built around child participation in the context of our research are established in connection with both global and local perspectives on childhood that are in constant interaction. By positioning ourselves against binary understandings of global and local perspectives, we offer a pluralist point of view from which to look at "the other", recognizing the challenge of raising children's status in [all] local settings as a global endeavor and the need of doing so without dismissing local values in favor of dominant views on childhood.

Closing this introduction, I leave an old Brazilian poem as a provocation that hopefully will put us to question the binary ways in which we have historically conditioned ourselves to think. Though the poem is a beautiful piece of Brazilian children's literature, I can only hope for a 21st century in which children are offered additional possibilities of being children rather than mutually exclusive alternatives to living their childhood.

You either have rain and do not have sun,
or have sun and do not have rain!

You either wear gloves and do not wear a ring,
or wear a ring and do not wear gloves!

Whomever goes up in the air does not stay on the ground,
Whomever stays on the ground does not go up in the air.

It is a great pity that one cannot
be at the same time in two places!

I either save money and do not buy candy
or I buy candy and do not save money.

Either this or that: either this or that...
and I keep choosing all day long!

I don't know if I play, I don't know if I study,
if I run or if I keep calm.

But I still cannot understand
what is best: whether it is this or that.

Cecília Meireles, 1964
Translation mine

Ou se tem chuva e não se tem sol,
ou se tem sol e não se tem chuva!

Ou se calça a luva e não se põe o anel,
ou se põe o anel e não se calça a luva!

Quem sobe nos ares não fica no chão,
Quem fica no chão não sobe nos ares.

É uma grande pena que não se possa
estar ao mesmo tempo em dois lugares!

Ou guardo dinheiro e não compro o doce,
ou compro o doce e não guardo o dinheiro.

Ou isto ou aquilo: ou isto ou aquilo...
e vivo escolhendo o dia inteiro!

Não sei se brinco, não sei se estudo,
se saio correndo ou fico tranqüilo.

Mas não consegui entender ainda
qual é melhor: se é isto ou aquilo.

Cecília Meireles, 1964

1. CHILDHOOD AND RIGHTS

1.1.The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Talking about children's participation in society has assumed a completely different meaning since promulgation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). As states Thomas (2011), the CRC has underpinned the promotion of children's rights around the world since 1989. Reynaert et al. (2009) also reaffirms its essential relevance for any scholarly work regarding children's rights. Even though there is a variety of paradigms and schools of thought when talking about children's rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child prevails as the main framework for scholarly debates on that matter. Considered as a historical milestone, the Convention is both a political instrument aimed at improving children's position in society and a pedagogical document that sets ideal practices of how to deal with children, not only for States, but for every member of society (Verhellen, 2015).

1.1.1. A brief history of the Rights of the Child

In order to understand how the present document on the Rights of the Child came about, it is important to look at its historical background. The current embodiment of the Convention has been mainly attributed to a combination of two macro-social developments: the development of the global human rights project since the World War II and a changing image of childhood we have been experiencing over time (Mower Jr., 1997; Holzscheiter, 2010; Verhellen, 2015)

By shedding light onto the human rights movement, Verhellen (2015) describes the human rights trajectory by classifying it into three generations. According to the author, the first generation of human rights started to evolve from the end of the eighteenth century, mainly through the American (1776) and French (1789) revolutions. Fighting for having the State parties away from interfering in the private life of its citizens, people conquered their first individual rights (which he refers as "first generation of rights") such as the right to freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, the right of assembly, the right to life, etc. Moyn (2010) acknowledges the proclamation of the eternal rights of man as an important milestone in the Enlightenment Era, however the author argues that the 18th century notion of bloody revolution attached to the rights struggle constituted a quite different conception if compared to current understandings on human rights.

Moving forward, Mower Jr. (1997) argues about the impact of the World War I and II on the development of human rights. According to the author, the establishment of basic rights were an attempt to protect all human beings from the hardships people had undergone during the war. In the same direction, Glendon (2004) presents the Universal Declaration of Humans Rights (1948) as a post-war realization of

"common standards of decency that can and should be accepted by people of all nations and cultures." (p.142). Moyn (2010) also associates the development of human rights to the World Wars' aftermath. Moyn's point of view, however, portrays the human rights project as "the last utopia" in which – after the end of formal colonialism, the postcolonial state crisis and the failure of communism – fighting for human rights appeared to be the only hope for a free way of life. Verhellen (2015) also acknowledges the impact of the 20th century global conflicts into the rights discussion, sustaining that the outcomes of the Wars experience extended society's debate, leveraging a second generation of human rights with greater focus on social justice. Not only should the State parties abstain from exaggerated interference on private life, but it should also act towards ensuring certain social standards to all citizens such as the right to a minimum income, to work, to health care, to education, to leisure, etc. From Verhellen's point of view (2015) a third generation of human rights is in the process of being fully negotiated. The author sustains that we have been advancing in our discussions regarding human rights over the last few decades, placing focus on the so-called solidarity rights (such as the right to peace, a healthy environment, cultural integrity, self-government, sustainable development, etc.) which according to the author are meant to be the next steps of our human rights ladder.

Although human rights achievements in different countries have been influencing discussions in between nations, Verhellen (2015) draws attention to the fact that until recently, human rights were considered a matter for national concern only. He highlights the League of Nations (1920) as the first real attempt to internalisation of human rights. By adopting a defensive approach, the League of Nations had the main concern of avoiding war recurrence. Peters (2015) joins Verhellen (2015) in recognizing the League's failure in preventing major international conflicts. Weiss and Thakur (2010) reaffirm that prior to the World War II International concern with human rights focused on the laws of war itself, lacking interest in protection of minorities. It was only after World War II and the setting up of the United Nations (1945) that the international human rights project really started taking off, assuming a more pro-active approach towards ensuring human rights to people all over the world. By providing a global forum that intended to settle international disputes the UN was set as a certain kind of world court – an international entity that would regulate codes of conduct, and regulatory, surveillance, and compliance instruments (Weiss and Thakur, 2010; Peters, 2015; Verhellen, 2015).

Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) and its two Covenants – often regarded as "The International Bill of Rights" - more declarations and treaties have been developed in regards of specific groups of people (children, woman, refugees, workers, people with disabilities, stateless, etc.) (Mower Jr., 1997; Verhellen, 2015). Weiss and Thakur (2010) highlight that until the 1980's discussions within the UN mainly revolved around ideological disputes between West and East. While the former focused on political and civil rights, the latter aimed attention at economic and social rights. Towards the end of the Cold War, the emergence of groups concerned with the rights of women and children begun to change the

scenario, driving the UN focus to the elaboration of a wide array of treaties. Such treaties and declarations aimed at addressing the rights of specific groups of people, as well as specific problems of international concern (such as genocide, war crimes, torture, racial discrimination, etc.). (MacFarlane & Khong, 2006; Weiss and Thakur, 2010; Verhellen, 2015). The defensive approach once proposed by the League of Nations in 1920 has now been replaced for an active attitude that not only fights human rights abuses but also makes efforts to improve people's living conditions. By analysing problems and making policy recommendations, the UN has been working on promoting global human dignity (Berthelot, 2004; Verhellen, 2015).

Although all rights specified in the UN Covenants also apply to children, the international community decided to adopt a separate Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) alongside the existing documents, treating children explicitly as a category of rights holders. The main argument for such decision lays on the realisation of children as a particularly vulnerable group whose rights need extra attention. Criticizing a supposedly universality attributed to human rights Santos (2007) writes about the need to continue reflecting on the varied contexts in which human rights are needed. According to the author, human rights are intended to be a powerful response to the world's problems and therefore, intended to be universally valid. By drawing attention to the effects of globalization in increasing contact zones between different cultures, economies, social and political system, Santos (2007) argues that, today more than ever, the abstract universality of human rights is a weak response to tough issues. Thus, the author proposes that "only by recognizing the current weaknesses of human rights and their relationship with the dimensions of global injustice, that it is possible to build from them - and beyond them - ideas and practices of strong resistance" (Santos, 2007, p. 23).

Moving forward to a second macro-social development linked to the CRC, a changing image of childhood has also played a big role in the process of recognising children as rights bearers. Veerman (2009) writes about how this image has been changing, highlighting the fact as an important process when talking about the Rights of the Child: "If the concept of childhood is subject to change, ideas on rights of the child will change with it" (Veerman, p.4, 2009). In this regard, the so called – and much criticised – "Áries' discussion" brings up the realisation of childhood as a social construct. (Buck & Gillespie 2011; Verhellen, 2015). Although the investigation conducted by the French researcher has been criticised for many subsequent writers, Aries´ work (1960) has provided an extremely important scientific contribution, bringing up the notion that it is not possible to generalise an image of childhood. Instead, it is crucial to consider that children are socially, economically and historically defined (Jenks, 2005; Veerman, 2009). Bearing it in mind, it is crucial to understand the holistic image of childhood – currently portrayed by the CRC – as a contemporary social construct.

By looking back in time, many authors argue that medieval childhood had been held back from being perceived as a social category due to high child mortality rates in the Middle Ages (Ariès, 1979; Archard, 2015; Verhellen, 2015). According to this theory, the wake of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century brought up a different perspective. With the development of medical science associated with emergent philosophical views on the "nature of the child"[1] the institutionalization of children's physical health and emotional well-being became a concern of public policy. By viewing children as an emergent social group - the "future citizens" of society – state parties started to interfere in family affairs, playing a more active role in ensuring the well-being of children. However, under the law, young people were still confined to the private sphere, being considered as property of their parents (Mower Jr., 1997; Jenks, 2005; Holzscheiter, 2010). By focusing on future and progress, the Enlightenment ideals slowly created a specific image of child which was immature and not-yet capable in opposition to the ideal of a full-knowing capable adult. (Jenks, 2005; Buck & Gillespie, 2011; Verhellen, 2015). Perceived as incomplete human beings, whose only remedy was "to grow up" (O'Neil, 1988, as cited in Verhellen, 2015), children's education was designed to achieve the ideal society of the future.

Although the Enlightenment ideas have brought important contributions towards raising children's status in society, the nourishment of an idea of child as 'future citizen' therefore threw children into a "*limbo"* (Verhellen, 2015). Viewed as an adult-to-be, the 'imanent child' needs to wait, learn and prepare itself for real life. (McGillivray, 1997; Holzscheiter, 2010; Verhellen, 2015). Over the turn of the nineteenth century, most western countries created specific laws and institutions, separating adults/parents and children into different regimes of social control through child protection laws and compulsory education. (Verhellen, 2015). The increasing industrialized society with its rising living standards have also contributed to a shift into an idea of children as a social category to be protected and cared for. The adult-to-be notion has progressively shared scene with an ideal of childhood as a protected and sacred sphere. (Jenks, 2005; Holzscheiter, 2010).

Consolidating institutionalization of childhood, the twentieth century witnessed the beginning of a politicization process of childhood. By placing children as subjects of national and international politics, the 20th century society created a variety of laws and policies in order to ensure the well-being of children around the world (Holzscheiter, 2010). Young people were finally accorded the status of a person under the law (Mower Jr. 1997; Holzscheiter, 2010), becoming 'more and more the property of the state and less and less the private property of their parents' (Verhellen, 2015, p. 28). However, at the beginning point of the children's rights talk "it was children's vulnerability, and their developmental needs, that were emphasised rather than their autonomy." (Thomas, 2011, p. 4). Marked by *protection* rather than *freedom* the first documents on

[1]In opposition to "the evil child" theory developed by Hobbes in the 17th century, the emergence of Rousseau's philosophical view on the child as being naturally good and innocent, contributed towards discouraging repressive practices of childrearing. (Holzscheiter, 2010)

children's rights assumed a paternalistic view, disregarding children's possibility of taking part in decision-making (Hammarberg, 1990; Liebel & Saadi, 2012).

In opposition of the not-capable idea of child, many authors in the twentieth century have been advocating for a different view on childhood, arguing for children to be regarded as individuals, full-fledged citizens, capable of exercising their rights independently. This new image of childhood, known as the heart of the "Children's Rights Movement" became one of the foundations of the CRC. However, although the text of the Convention aimed to counter the previous paternalistic perspective, by advocating for children to be considered as active bearers of rights instead of passive objects of protection a paternalistic view over children has not entirely disappeared. (Buck & Gillespie, 2011; Verhellen, 2015) As dependency and autonomy were both topics of discussion of the international children's rights movement at the time the Convention was designed, it is still possible to see remnants of paternalism on the final text. However, Verhellen (2015) highlights that the Convention addresses children in their entirety, representing a win for the children's rights movement as it portrays them as active subjects of rights.

1.1.2. The text of the Convention

The CRC (1989) which evolved from the previous Declaration of the Rights of the Child – first designed in 1924 and enlarged in 1959 – is a much more detailed text portraying a different image of child and unlike the previous documents, with binding legal force (Buck & Gillespie, 2011; Verhellen, 2015).

Verhellen (2015) explains the Convention's structure as subdivided into four main parts: its preamble explaining the background of the Convention, giving a frame of reference in the lights of which the articles are to be interpreted; the substantive articles stating the rights of the child and State parties obligations; the procedures for monitoring and implementing the Convention; the formal provisions governing its entry into force. Verhellen (2015) underlines that by breaking up with the traditional subdivision of human rights presented in the Bill of Rights, the CRC combines civil, political, economic and social rights together (first and second "generation" of rights), implying that there should be no distinction in between different groups of rights as they are interconnected and depending on each other. However, the author points out that, although this new approach bears all rights in equal importance, it brings difficulties for implementation as State parties still struggle to conduct an integrated policy involving different ministries in enforcing the rights of the child.

In order to illustrate the indivisibility of the Convention, Verhellen (2015) points out that it is not possible to read its articles by trying to separate them into different categories of rights. By introducing the so-called "Three Ps" – Protection, Provision and Participation, Verhellen (2015) refers to a typology in which the Convention should be interpreted by understanding Protection, Provision and Participation as interdependent

and indivisible axis within the entire document. Gaitán (2018) refers to the same interdependence and indivisibility necessary to understanding the Rights of the Child and refers to the "three Ps" slogan as a simplistic solution that, despite having served as a pedagogical tool and made the innovative aspects of the Convention easily understandable, its continuous use risks jeopardizing the holistic aspect of children's rights, offering a false impression of hierarchy among the rights of the children which are, by definition, 'indivisible, interdependent and inherent'.

Analysing the monitoring and implementation system adopted by the CRC, Verhellen (2015) points out that the Convention is a "hard law" and not a "declaration of love" as some people use to think of it, the author emphasizes the necessary political consciousness required from all State parties joining the Convention. Signing the document represents a commitment in making efforts to gradually translate the CRC's principles into National law and "new proposed laws or amended existing laws affecting children should follow a child rights approach and not lower the (minimum) standards of the CRC" (pg. 54).

However, Archard (2015) considers the limitations the CRC faces in practice. According to the author, it has not yet achieved the expected impact upon domestic legislation in many countries. Archard (2015) reminds that States ratifying the Convention are required to bring their national law into lines with its provisions and report their progress in implementing the Convention to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Yet many have failed to submit annual reports on time. Furthermore, he cites everyday situations that children around the World should be protected from but which States still fail in safeguarding young people's basic rights. Archard (2015) declares that the CRC has not yet achieved its purpose of shaping, constraining and changing the law of the ratifying nations.

1.1.3. Participation Rights

As stated before, the CRC presents the rights of the child in a well-rounded approach, connecting provision, protection and participation. However, the participation axis seems to be the one which challenges society the most (Alderson, 2008; Lansdown, 2010). Stating the right of the child to be heard and have his/her opinions taken into account, Article 12 is pointed as one of the key articles regarding participation (Lansdown, 2010; Liebel & Saadi, 2012; Lundy, 2007). It addresses the legal and social status of children, enforcing the need for building a culture of respect for their views. According to Article 12, "the child who is capable of forming his or her own views" has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting him/her. Furthermore, Article 12 states that the child's view must "be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child." (The United Nations, 1989, Article 12)

Regarding accomplishing participation rights, Fitzgerald et al. (2010) states that it has still been "a struggle over recognition" (Fitzgerald et al., 2010, p. 293). It is possible to understand such struggle mentioned by the authors considering that participation rights for children are a fairly new concept. Liebel and Saadi (2012) remind us that before the CRC, children were accorded rights of provision and protection only. Lansdown (2010) refers to the years following the promulgation of the Convention until present as "a period of both advocacy to promote and legitimate the concept of participation, and exploration of strategies for translating it into practice" (p.11).

Archard (2015) reaffirms the importance and innovation brought by Article 12, which acknowledges the child as someone who has an identity of their own, not to be regarded simply as a part of a family from which the parents speak on her behalf. Although it is a remarkable achievement compared to previous official documents, the capability condition ("the child who is capable of forming his or her own views") thus goes some way to meeting the criticism about viewing children from a paternalistic point of view. Archard (2015) argues, that by stating that the views of the child must be given "due weight in accordance with the age and maturity" (CRC, Article 12), the CRC opens room for viewing children as individuals who mature from infantile incapacity of making informed decisions to more capable of forming their views as they approach adulthood. The attachment of both conditions, capability and weight, makes Article 12 limited. Although making one's views known makes a difference, the right to be heard does not give the child the right to make their own choices, as stated by the author "The right to be heard is only the right to have an opportunity to influence the person who will otherwise choose for the child." (pg. 66). The tension between the notion of children as a right-holders and the way their rights are codified by the CRC raises questions about whether or not children are truly enabled to independently exercise their rights as they depend on other actors to do so (Liebel & Sadi, 2012; Lundy, 2007; Verhellen, 2015).

It is also important to remember that because of the connection established in between the entire text of the Convention, Article 12 cannot be viewed in isolation (Verhellen, 2015; Lundy, 2007). Lundy (2007) points Article 2 – non-discrimination, Article 3 – best interests, Article 5 –right to guidance, Article 13 –right to seek, receive and impart information, and Article 19 – protection from abuse, as other important parameters in which lights the right of the child to be heard needs to be considered.

Archard (2015) specifically analyses the relationship between Article 12 and Article 3. From the author's point of view, while Article 3 seems to be paternalist (requiring those entrusted with the care of children to do what they, but not necessarily the child herself, judge is the best), Article 12 shows an anti-paternalist approach (requiring those entrusted with the care and protection to take seriously what the child wants to have happened). Verhellen (2015) further discusses the tension presented by Archard by reminding that the actual situation in evaluating children's competence has become somehow confused and paradoxical.

While a new image of child as an active subject arises, we still base some of our actions on the previously established image, viewing children as passive objects of provision and protection.

According to Verhellen (2015) the main argument presented by advocates against autonomous rights is that children lack experience to make rational decisions that would be in their best interests. On the other hand, advocates pro autonomous rights contradict the incompetence argument by grounding their reasoning in different schools of thought. The author identifies three main trends which advocate for increased competence for children: 1. A reformist trend, which defends that children gradually acquire the competence of making well-founded rational decisions. Although supporters of this view acknowledge the arguments in favour of incompetence as valid, they claim children become gradually competent much younger than is generally assumed. 2. A liberationist trend, which discuss the validity of the incompetence arguments on moral grounds. The Liberationists defend equality for all people, calling on morals to defend children should not be discriminated because of their age. 3. An emancipatory trend which further the Liberationists' argument by asking why it would not be possible to accord children the same rights granted to adults.

By supporting the emancipatory trend, Archard (2015) draws attention to the fact that in the actual situation, children need to prove their capacity in order to exercise their autonomy rights, proposing it should be the opposite. Just like with adults, children should have the right to have their opinion respected unless individual incapacities are proven. According to Verhellen, "the main advantage compared to the present situation would be that the onus of proof is reversed" (Verhellen, p. 52).

The problem with an image of child is endorsed by Yanghee Lee - Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child:

> The biggest challenge for the realisation of children's rights is still societal attitude and how people view children. The status of children is simply not as high as other human beings. People are recognising the human rights treaties, but there are still many stumbling blocks. (as cited in Liebel and Saadi, 2015, p. 108)

That is to say that the discussion brought in this thesis about children's participation in society is a global rather than a local struggle. Although children's participation has been pointed as a priority across European national policy agendas, Kränz-Nagl and Zartler (2010) state that most actions taken still fail in focusing attention on contributions *by* children, proposing contributions *to* children instead. Certainly the discussions held in Europe about children's participation will be different from the reality faced by Chinese society. Yet, it is necessary to advocate for participation rights being sensitive and respectful to cultural differences (Archard, 2015; Verhellen, 2015), recognising that building a strong image of the capable child is something we all need to work on. Finally, even though society has philosophical challenges regarding participation rights to overcome, Liebel and Saadi (2015) bring a positive perspective about the CRC,

reminding the great shift towards taking children seriously that the document represents. We might have many battles to fight for, but we should not forget all victories we have already had.

1.2. The Rights of the Child and Cultural Diversity

To start talking about cultural differences, Archard (2015) highlights that the rights stated on the CRC are universal and the large number of signatories to the Convention indicates recognition that those should be rights applying to every child in the World. Yet, it is necessary to be sensitive both to cultural diversity and to the different local realities of implementing rights. Those who can easily honour the principles of the CRC due to their actual social reality should not criticise the poorer societies who still struggle to implement it fully. In addition, Archard (2015) reminds us that the CRC has been sometimes pointed as a document which codifies a Western, urban, middle-class ideal of childhood. The author raises the point that some non-Western cultures may not fully share the same ideal of childhood portrayed by the Convention. Provoked by Archard's (2015) hypothesis, the question we raise in the context of this research is how the idea of childhood portrayed by the Convention relates to Chinese culture in the lights of Xiao phenomena.

Punch (2016) also highlights there are many existing differences in between Majority and Minority World childhoods that must be acknowledged when discussing about children's lives from a cross-cultural perspective. Punch (2016) uses the terminology Majority World and Minority World to refer to what has been previously known as 'the third world' and 'the first world' respectively. Punch's choice for wording cultural-economical-geographical differences as Majority and Minority World is described by herself as an attempt to encourage questioning of unequal power relations where certain populations and issues tend to be privileged despite being the minority (Punch, 2003). According to the author, it is necessary to develop studies on childhood within both contexts, focusing on gaining a better understanding of the different realities and avoiding comparisons. Punch (2016) argues that "a key danger of attempting global comparisons is to over-homogenise the Majority and Minority Worlds, masking the diversity within and across different countries." (Punch, 2016, p. 357). According to Punch (2016) we should try to understand the 'other childhoods' as they are, instead of conceptualising them as what they are not. Other authors have written about the need of developing studies that represent children's varied ways of living across the globe. By using the same logic presented by Punch (2016) and a rather different terminology, Liebel (2020) refers to the ideal of childhood of the Global North as a hegemonic view from which children in the Global South are often measured against, even though their life experiences do not match the experiences of children in the Global North. When using such terms, the author explains the geopolitical, rather than geographical, meaning he has in mind "which takes into account the division and inequality between and within different regions of the world." (Liebel,

2020, p. 5). Cregan and Cuthbert (2014) also write about the Northern and Southern different logics, saying that:

> The fact that geopolitical power was centred in the Global North over the course of much of the twentieth century – and that proceedings, policies and conventions in those global bodies were, as a result, infused with Global Northern 'world views' – has led to the domination of particular understandings of children and childhood that have often been at odds with the realities of children's day- to- day lives in local settings ... of the Global South" (Cregan & Cuthbert, 2014, p. 8)

The same power relations referred by Punch (2016) as Minority/Majority World, and by other authors as Global North/Global South (Kate Cregan and Denise Cuthbert, 2014; Twum-Danso, et al., 2019; Liebel, 2020) are called out by Burman (2019) who warns to the dangers of essentializing a 'West and the Rest' binarism (Burman, 2019, p.7). In this quest, the author calls for post-colonial studies of childhood that challenge the established power-relations web and reframe the experiences of children worldwide - studies "in which children figure as more than policy or theory tropes" (Burman, 2019, p. 6). Though using different terminology to name imbalanced power-relations in theorizing childhood, these authors help us to think of our case study in a way that avoids measuring our participant's experiences against a hegemonic ideal of children's rights, but rather, looks at their reality with curiosity and seeks for understanding what it means to perform Xiào and exercise their right to participate in home decision-making within their own context.

1.2.1. Discussing participation from a cross-cultural understanding

Talking about participation from a cross-cultural perspective means considering all nuances that the concept of participation may assume and may be influenced by. Mason and Bolzan (2010) point to the existence of distinct branches of understanding regarding children participation, arguing the need to investigate the concept across different cultures.

While Alderson (2008) highlights the wide range of meaning the word provides, Liebel and Saadi (2012) bring to discussion the semantic aspects characterizing the term as a floating signifier, arguing that its broadness provides space to a wide range of different, and even contradictory, meanings and interests: "Participation can be active or passive; invited or uninvited; forced or voluntary; unplanned or used with manipulative aims; morally good, bad or neutral" (Liebel & Saadi, 2012, p. 163). Mason and Bolzan (2010) also highlight the ambiguity of the term. Seeking for a cross-cultural understanding of the participatory principles of the CRC, the authors conducted their research within five different Asian-Pacific countries, exploring some of the ways in which participation is being understood and implemented in each of them. During their research process, it became evident that cultural context and traditions from each country – as

well as different understandings of the term 'child participation', among the culturally diverse research group were crucial in collecting and interpreting data.

Although the concept of participation may be broad, the CRC narrows it into a specific understanding of participation. The text of the Convention proposes: that the child must be enabled to express her views and have it taken into account in any decision-making affecting her (Article 12); the right to freedom of expression – whether by seeking, receiving and/or imparting information and ideas (Article 13); freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14), freedom of association (Article 15) right to privacy (Article 16) and to access to information (Article 17).

In an analysis of scholarly work on Children's Rights since the adoption of the CRC, Reynaert et al. (2009) acknowledges the participation theme as one of the top three predominate topics addressed by academic literature. By focusing his analysis in the way scholars have been 'constructing understandings of children's rights out of the Convention' (Reynaert et al., 2009, p. 519) the author highlights the participation debate as composed by distinct views on the *nature, purpose* and *form* that participation should assume.

By reducing participation into an understanding of being consulted and making decisions, the minority world tends to place focus on *talking, thinking and deciding,* disregarding possibilities of children participating in society by *doing* (Alderson, 2008). With reference to other forms of participation such as *experiences*, *activities* and r*elationships,* Mathew et al. (2010) express concern regarding broadening the definition by questioning whether enlarging the concept would nurture a simplistic view of the matter. Reynaert et al. (2009) on the other hand argues that the negotiation model - which features children's individuality and their verbal competencies - is representative of a white, western, middle-class community and is not equally applicable across all groups of children. Liebel and Saadi (2012) remind us that the minority world does not possess a monopoly in determining what is more appropriate in terms of children's rights or children's participation, emphasizing that all societies and cultures have aspects to improve and revaluate and one should not serve as an ultimate parameter for another.

Reynaert et al. (2009) reinforces the need for cross-cultural studies of children's rights. The author evaluates that academic discussion on the CRC should cut across its customary analysis of how to implement children's rights and focus on debating the meaning of it for children from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Children's rights have been "presented as the new norm in policy and practice without questioning or problematizing this new norm." (Reynaert et al., 2009, p. 528). By disregarding diversity, the rights debate becomes detached from the reality in which children's rights are to be realized, thus failing to engage with the specific conditions and contexts of many young people around the globe (Reynaert et al., 2009).

Given these points, one can say that defining participation only makes sense within a context. Different groups and societies will present different understandings of participation. The challenge for child participation advocates is to facilitate child participation "in a way that enables children's voices to be heard and at the same time avoids destabilising the very cultures which sustain and further the interests of the children who live their lives in these cultures" (Mason & Bolzan, 2010, p. 131). As Harris-Short (2001) points out, the fact that human rights norms can often be interpreted in many different ways should not be faced as a weakness of the international human rights regime, but rather as an opportunity to strengthen dialogue among different cultures as the different interpretations of human rights *abstract* language comes from its contextualization within *real* contexts. In an attempt to establish dialogue, the following sections will be addressing two specific issues pointed out by academic research as significant structural factors in influencing child participation and considered relevant in the context of this research: Participation within an ethos of collectivism proposed by Confucian philosophy and Participation understood through the lenses of citizenship. By seeking a better understanding of participation within the Chinese context, the following sections aim to support a thorough analysis of the data collected with Chinese children, parents and grandparents about their understandings on Filial Piety and participation.

1.3. Cultural influences in participation understandings in China

1.3.1. Considering the influences of Chinese philosophy in participation understandings: Participation within an ethos of collectivism.

As stated in the previous section, the concept of participation has been challenging scholars and policy makers into progressing with the promotion of children's participation across different cultures. In their cross-cultural study about participation Mason and Bolzan (2010) suggested that camouflaged semantic and conceptual subtleties in the use of the English word 'participation' triggered different interpretations coming from participants of different countries. Among their findings Mason and Bolzan pointed that Chinese partakers' considered collectivism as playing a significant role in their participation understandings. The authors state that "Participants from Thailand, Sri Lanka, China and India considered that in their countries, where the ethos of collectivism has been dominant, responsibility to family and community has traditionally taken precedence over individual rights" (Mason & Bolzan, 2010, p. 128).

This section aims at addressing philosophical Chinese concepts that support the mentioned 'ethos of collectivism'.

1.3.1.2. The individual and the society in Chinese philosophy: Confucianism and Collectivism

To understand how the right to participate is perceived in Chinese society it is necessary to further explore the relationship in between individual and society in Chinese culture. Scholarly work has often considered Chinese culture as collectivist arguing it emphasises obligations and collective gains rather than individual interests (Hui, 1988; Yu and Yang, 1994; Lu, 1998; Wang & Liu, 2010; Huang & Chang, 2017).

Many authors have used the construct Individualism x Collectivism as a conceptual framework to explain differences in between interactions within societies. Individualism is attributed to the reasoning brought by the European Enlightenment – which portrayed the ideal citizen in an individualistic sense, being total and complete in himself, fully capable and standing apart from society. (Wang & Liu, 2010; Liebel & Saadi, 2012) Liebel and Saadi (2012) cite the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) who described society as the sum of single individuals. The relationship in between individual and society in this case would emerge from the subject who constitutes himself as part of the society he/she is immersed in. Based on ideals of freedom and autonomy this notion of individualism has been acknowledged as a positive value by the Western societies.

Collectivism, on the other hand, has been linked to Confucian ideas which emphasize the group over the individual (Lu, 1998; Wang & Liu, 2010, Naftali, 2016). Huang and Chang (2017), arguing that although the Chinese collectivist culture has its roots in Confucian philosophy, similar beliefs were found in other feudal agricultural societies. "Traditionalism" – which applies to a wide range of cultures – also advocates for values such as collectivism, the development of long-term relationships, avoidance of conflict and patriarchal views (Huang & Chang, 2017; Hungtington, 1993; Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Huang and Chang (2017) explain these commonalities arguing that both Confucianism and Traditionalism were originated from the social structure of feudal agricultural societies. Although it is possible to notice an overlap of Traditionalism over Confucianism they are not the same, because Confucianism was developed within China's socio-agricultural history and it naturally includes components of Traditionalism. Confucianism, however, "reflects the historical and cultural experience of the Chinese cultural sphere" (Huang & Chang, 2017, p.3).

One of the most significant characteristics of Confucius teachings that help us understand the Confucian ethos of collectivism is the Five Cardinal Relationships (wu lun). According to Confucius ethical norms, social relations are based on mutual and complementary obligations ruled by the *wu lun* (five human relationships: sovereign–subject, parent–child, older brother–younger brother, husband–wife and senior friend–junior friend). In this model, the family is the first group in which a person has a specific role to play, being the standard point for all social organizations (Wu & Tseng, 1985; Feng, 2008; Phuong-Mai et al., 2005). Pursue for harmony and consensus is the ultimate motivation regulating the five pairs of relationships in which the ruler owes the subject protection and consideration while the subject owes the ruler respect and

obedience (Phuong-Mai et al., 2005). Chen (1986) portray "Loyalty and filial piety" as the core ethical values of Confucian though, specifying that obedience is owing to one's superiors if they are morally qualified. The harmony of the *wu lun* is, then, based on the premise that each person needs to perform a role in accordance with one's position in the social web and with the ethical norms attached to each role - "obedience is not unconditional and it requires that the superior behaves morally right" (Huang & Chang, 2017, p. 34).

In the Confucian *Wu Lun*, relationships of authority are characterized as sovereign-subject; parent-child and husband-wife. Authority over someone must be accompanied by values of benevolence, compassion for people, acting for the benefit of the subjects and the share of their worries (Chen, 1986), whereas moral principles for dealing with others who share equal status (e.g. sibling-sibling; friend-friend) are said to be honesty and righteousness. Relationships with strangers should also be ruled by the principles of harmony and peace, avoiding conflicts and striving for harmonious interactions in an equal basis (Huang & Chang, 2017, Berthrong, 2014).

The self, in Confucian philosophy, is developed within the Five Cardinal Relationships. Phuong-Mai et al. (2005) state that in Confucian thought, a person is primarily a member of a family' (p. 404). According to the author, in a Confucius Heritage Culture, for the sake of the family's interest everyone in the family is compelled to "accept a certain set of commitments, under shared responsibilities" (Phuong-Mai et al., 2005, p. 405). Wu and Tseng (1985) also support the idea of family as a central unit in Chinese culture arguing that literature often regards individual achievement as a family accomplishment. In the traditional Confucian China, the birth of a child had often being regarded "not so much as the birth of an individual with its own individual right to existence but as one link in a network or continuum of lives connecting ancestors with descendants" (Kinney, 1995, p. 7).

The value attributed to family in Confucian teachings however doesn't disregard self-development. The notion of self is present in Confucianism but it, definitely, differs from the Western concept of individual (King & Bond, 1985; Lu, 1998). The individual is conceptualized as a relational being who has a role to perform in accordance with their place in the *Wu Lun*. Symbolically situated in a web of relational network, the individual will define himself in a different manner depending on who he interacts with (King & Bond, 1985). In this sense the self is an existing entity that separates from the collective by achieving transformation and enlightenment through self-control and cultivation - which can only be developed in inter-human relationships within a social context. Unlike the Western notion of individual which is grounded in liberty and autonomy, the Confucian self is developed through moral perfection by conforming to established cultural norms (Lu, 1998). Working hard, acquiring skills and education, being patient and persevering compound the set of virtues an individual should strive for in order to develop self-cultivation (Phuong-Mai et al., 2005, Wang & Liu, 2010, Huang & Chang, 2017).

Because Confucianism discourages selfish desires, the Chinese concept of self has often been misinterpreted as "de-emphasized, suppressed, and restrained" (Wang & Liu, 2010). However, Yang (1991) describes the *self* as the driving force of individual action. According to Confucian teachings individual goals should be set for the benefit of social objectives (Ames, 1994; Wang & Liu, 2010). Niles (1998) states that "respect and concern for family and a willingness to feel responsible for and serve in-groups does not need to be in conflict with an individual striving for his or her own goals, because ultimately they can benefit the family or community as a whole" (p. 338)

Another import point to stress is that, although Confucian Heritage societies are linked to collectivist values, it is important to understand that there is no such a concept as an "abstract collective" in Confucian teachings. Brewer and Chen (2007) warn that the term collectivism can easily be misinterpreted in cross-cultural studies. The authors claim for the need of understanding the so called "collectivist societies" from the lenses of relationalism. From this perspective, it is people's orientation to their relational others that will compel them to favour their in-groups. The assumption that "groups bind and mutually obligate individuals" (Oyserman et al., 2002, p.3) only works when the relationship between those individuals is taken into account – whether they see each other as a member of an in-group or out-group relationship (Yum, 1988). Grounding their argument on Confucian rules of reciprocity, Wang and Liu (2010) assert that is the relationship in between the individuals that will determine whether or not they are likely to favour one another. Group needs and interests will only be placed above of that of the individual depending on the relationship with the "other" involved. Bell (2000) also argues that Confucianism and Chinese philosophy is better described by the expression "relationship-based" rather than group-based. By taking relationalism into account, the assumption that members of a "collectivist" society place the interests of the group over individual gains, assumes a whole new perspective. From this point of view, the five cardinal relationships would constitute the standard point for network formations (Wang & Liu, 2010), which can be extended beyond the family through the establishment of guanxi (further connections also ruled by the principle of reciprocity) with other people, constituting new in-group ties (Bell, 2000). After all, it is always the relationship – whether given (by the individual's position in the wu lun) or developed by the rules of reciprocity (guanxi) - that will compel the individual to place group interests above of his own.

1.3.1.3. Changing China: from a Confucian philosophical mind-set to a market-oriented individualization process.

Despite differences regarding individualist/collectivist philosophies between Western and Eastern traditions, we do not intend to engage in a binary opposition comparison. Punch (2016) reminds that globalisation has been contributing in overlapping boundaries between Majority and Minority Worlds. Mason

and Bolzan (2010) also indicate the dynamism of cultural systems which are constantly changing as they influence each other. In fact, many authors have pointed out that changes in the Chinese socio-political settings have been contributing to a process of individualization in the country. Seeking for the country's economic growth, in the past sixty years the Chinese Communist Party has been placing great focus on market reforms promoting individual productivity and competitiveness (Naftali, 2016; Hansen & Pang, 2008; Yan, 2003; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2010).

To start tracking the individualization path in Chinese society it is important to take a look at its history. The New Culture Movement (1919-32) – also known as the May Fourth Movement, or the Chinese Enlightenment – has been identified as an important milestone in the Chinese individualization path (Svarverud, 2010; Naftali, 2016). With the fall of the Qing Empire and the rise of the Chinese Republic (1912) China had been experiencing warlordism and repeated foreign invasions. Leaders, reformers and educators main concern became the rise of a new and powerful nation that could not only survive but defeat its foreign aggressors. Importing ideas from the United States, Europe and Japan – where a new elite of Chinese scholars graduated from – and having witnessed the barbaric potentialities of European civilization during the World War I (1914-18) - the New Culture Movement intellectuals tried to "understand the revolutionary outside world at the same time that [they] struggled to revaluate China's inherited culture" (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006, p. 249). May Fourth intellectuals promoted values of "reason versus tradition, freedom versus authority, and glorification of life and human values versus their suppression." (Shih, 1934, p. 44). In the hopes of saving Chinese society from "stagnation and extinction" (Naftali, 2016) the New Culture Movement fought tradition with scientific thought, advocated for values of freedom and individual autonomy and blamed Confucian values and family morality for China's backwardness. (Kenley, 2003; Fairbank & Goldman, 2006; Yan, 2010a; Naftali, 2016).

It is important to understand that although it had been the first time that ideas of freedom, autonomy and individuality came about in the Chinese scenario, the May Fourth Movement was far from being an organized campaign towards a new culture. Instead, it was a confluence of several intellectual trends, with new and even divergent ideas. John Dewey, in 1921, defined the Movement as a "hysterical mixture of unrelated ideas and miscellaneous pieces of Western science and thought" and yet providing "one of the firmest bases of hope for the future of China" (Dewey, as cited in Kenley, 2003, p. 4). Amongst New Culture Movement advocates arose a group of militants who aspired to have China under a new state power. The Chinese Communist Movement – that later originated the Chinese Communist Party – started with the claims for a new culture that would bring China back to its glory (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006).

Yan acknowledges the importance of May Fourth ideas, but endorses the beginning of the Chinese individualization process as starting in the 1950's with actual governmental reforms (Yan, 2010a). According

to Yan, after the 1949 Revolution – when the Communist Party finally won China's civil war and established the People's Republic of China – "the Chinese socialist state pulled the family institution out of the communal and/or lineage structure in which the family had been deeply embedded" (Yan, 2010b, p. 209). During the Mao Era (1949-76) individual citizens were liberated from economic dependence on family and started experiencing state control over various aspects of their life. Through political campaigns and the introduction of several government policies individuals were liberated from the family collective and yet shaped into members of another collective – the socialist state collective. (Yan, 2010b). However in the long run, collectivization policies implemented in the economic sphere failed in promoting China's economic growth. In the 1970's the socialist agricultural model was replaced for decollectivization of the production system and an era of consolidation and development would finally begin with Deng Xiaoping's assumption of power. By importing Western science, technology and adapting Western economic methods to China's needs, the government invested in market-oriented reforms while trying to maintain traditional Confucian values and the Communist political system (Yan, 2010b; Fairbank & Goldman; 2006, Beck & Beck-Gernshein, 2010).

As a worldwide tendency, individualization has been associated with the theories of second modernity. The expansion of trade market, industrialization, and changes in family structure (from extended families to nuclear families), has led the entire world to change its dynamics, walking towards perceiving individuals as single units (Beck & Beck-Gernshein, 2010; Wang & Liu, 2010). However, one cannot assume that the individualization path has followed the same patterns around the world, nor that it has resulted in the same image of individual. Beck and Beck-Gernshein (2010) warn that we can no longer assume that the European individualization path is "the original, true and authentic one" (p. XVI). Instead we should consider the array of non-European individualization patterns "which are connected in a whole variety of ways" (p. XVI). By exploring Chinese history, Yan (2010a) also contests the universality of the individualization thesis, arguing that the individualization process in China has been pushed by instrumental purposes through top-down governmental actions which intended to increase the nation's wealth and power. By pushing productivity and competitiveness, individualization has been promoted as a means to an end. At the same time that a market-oriented individualization which encourages the individual pursue of happiness has been taking place in the Chinese scenario, the political aspect of individuals engaging in the public life has been discouraged by the government. (Beck and Beck-Gernshein, 2010; Steele & Lynch, 2012; Yan, 2016). In this sense, individual liberty and freedom of lifestyles are welcomed and encouraged in the private sphere only. "Should these developments lead to calls for participation and democracy, they will be prohibited, if possible preventively, through rigorous state controls and corresponding demarcations between the private and public spheres" (Beck & Beck-Gernshein, 2010, p. XIX)

This "half-baked individualization", as stated by Yan (2016) - in which individual choice is welcomed in the private, but not in the public life - or "mismatch in China's moral culture", as stated by Wang (2002) –

in which inherited collective values coexist with a growing capitalist economy that encourages competition and individual initiative in the pursue of own interests – brings us to a deeper understanding of the relationship in between individual and society in the Chinese settings. Whereas there is no agreement amongst scholars about whether contemporary Chinese society would be classified as collective or individualistic, we prefer to understand the participation theme as being negotiated in between collective and individual logics that coexist in Chinese society. Naftali (2016) points out the tensions and contradictions between new and global visions and the Chinese long-held Confucian notions together with its cultural repertoire of the socialist-collectivist period, arguing that both repertoires play a significant role in the way contemporary Chinese society develops nowadays. Huang and Chang (2017) also describe the relationship between Confucianism and the Chinese modernization process as being responsible for producing change in the character of Confucianism rather than weakening Confucian culture in Chinese society.

As Liebel (2012) suggests, it is important to acknowledge "the existence of a multiplicity of different cultures also within a society" (p. 3). Following this understanding, this thesis adopts the alternative proposed by Liebel and Saadi (2012) of investigating practices and concepts of participation within the contexts they appear and the meanings they assume for the persons living in the societies under discussion. In this sense, the ideas presented in this section intended to offer an insight into Chinese beliefs that might appear as supporting some of the partakers' understandings on participation.

1.3.2. Participation understood through the lenses of citizenship and democracy

Another important key factor to analyse participation from a cross-cultural point of view are the ideas of citizenship and democracy. Although the scope of this thesis deals with children's participation only within the family context, it is important to remember that adult-child relations are structured within a broader social web. The possibilities of participation people are given within the society they are part of, will certainly influence their understanding on participation. Mason and Bolzan (2010) argue for that idea by stating that meanings of participation will vary based on citizenship structures experienced by people in different countries: "it cannot be assumed that the meaning of 'participation' in a liberal democracy is the same as it is in a country with a hierarchical system of social relations, a predominantly communist country, or one racked by internal strife" (Mason & Bolzan, 2010, p. 130).

Being citizenship understood as the status of being part of a particular country in which the individual has a collection of entitlements within the society he belongs (Winter, 1997) leads us to understand that being a citizen in China is not the same as being a citizen in Portugal, in Brazil, or in England for example. In this terms we can say that political participation entitlements may vary for citizens of different parts of the world.

The concept of participation then comes across politics in the sense that the idea of participation conveyed by the CRC – the talking, thinking, deciding approach (Alderson, 2008) - is tightly linked with Western values of democracy, which do not necessarily assume the same meaning for societies that have followed a different ideological path throughout history (Weil & Jing, 2012).

1.3.2.1. China and democracy: a brief history - understanding the Chinese path towards its current socialist democracy

As stated in the previous section, Democracy as a political concept has not arisen in China until recently. Unlike in European history – where decision-making participatory principles have been idealized since the Ancient Greece – decision making and involvement in political matters in China have always been of business of a few people (Xingzhong, 2002; Pan, 2012). With dynasties dating back to 2100 B.C. China has a millenary history of power centralization. Being unified for the first time during the Qin dynasty (221 B.C.) the nation has experienced continuous consolidation of power in the hands of Chinese sovereign emperors during an imperial period that lasted until the 19th century (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006; Zhang, 2012). Zhang (2012) argues that because China's long history of power centralization "chinese philosophy took it for granted that stable governance could not be achieved through regular competition between equal parties. (...) Rather, a benevolent governor was expected to rule" (Zhang, 2012, p. 114). Zhang's argument – together with Confucian ideas of harmony prevailing over conflict (He, 2010) - may explain why still in the present time China is a country ruled by a single party. Nathan (1985) describes the Chinese democracy as an attempt to be a 'realm of harmony' between the citizen and the government, seeking for the people's common interests instead of aiming at conflict and antagonism often brought by individuals and groups who try to force their selfish interests on the state. In the words of Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese government aimed at creating "a democracy which is at a higher level and more substantial than that of capitalist countries" (Nathan, 1985, l. 77). Weatherley (2014) explains such differences between the Chinese and other nations' view on Democracy by bringing Wu Jingxiong - 1930s Chairman of the Chinese Constitution drafting Committee – point. Jingxiong claimed that while European and American citizens struggled against feudalism and despotism and quested for individual freedom, China's struggle had been the nation's survival. By taking different starting points – the individual and the nation – West and East elaborated different points of view on how to better govern the nation-state.

1.3.2.1.1. The fall of the Qing Empire, establishment of the Republic and the first bloom of the democratic ideas

The 19th century was one in which China experienced profound socio-political changes. The Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1911) - the last empire of China - collapsed in 1911 as the result of "a number of major social crisis". (Naftali, 2014). Being defeated by Western powers and suffering with poverty caused by population growth and lack of industrialization a movement for reform started to grow among the population. Although ideas of Democracy had arisen in a more representative manner during The New Culture Movement (as explored in the previous section) democracy had not been faced as a final goal in itself but as a mean of achieving greater development. Weil and Jing (2012) reinforce the idea by stating that Chinese modern history "made it inevitable that the pursuit of democracy would be shadowed and even sacrificed in the pursuit of other national goals" (Weil & Jing, 2012, p. 117). Nathan (1985) argues that the concept of democracy came to China as an 'ornament of modernity' – a principle that had been already settled in the West and imported as 'an asset for rulers' who would govern in the people's interest. Democracy has not been fought from below but inserted as a top-down concept and adapted according to the internal conflicts China was experiencing at that time.

The beginning of the Republican period (1912 – 1949) was marked by warlordism, foreign invasions, civil war and many episodes of power struggle over the new Republic. Communist and Nationalist ideologies dominated public debate involving all sectors of society - students, merchands, factory workers, and eventually peasants, were mobilized into politics. Yet, both Nationalist and Communist power representatives continued to defeat attempts of the public to exert real influence in government. By discouraging the existence of interest groups other than the ones the two parties established themselves and controlling the press both Nationalists and Communists viewed democracy as an instrumental mean to legitimize authority. No matter who raised to power, China was doomed to be ruled by a dictatorship – "a dictatorship, they said, that was in the people's interests." (Nathan, 1985, l. 126). Furthermore, the Chinese national survival concern raised even stronger during the years of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), fading the discussion about democracy and constitutionalism into background (Svensson, 1996; Fung, 2006)

Regarding China's participation in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Weatherley (2014) questions Chian Kai-shek's[2] sudden interest in the International Human Rights agenda. Given "Chiang Kai-shek's patent disinterest in human rights and the large scale violations of human rights that took place under Chiang's watch" (Weatherley, 2014, p. 110) the author describes Chinese collaboration with the United Nations as an artifice of KMT (Kuomingtang or Nationalist) party to gain international recognition and support its fight against the CCP (Chinese Communist Party).

[2] Nationalist politician and leader of the Republic of China between 1928-1949

1.3.2.1.2. The Mao Era – Mass democracy

Despite KMT attempts to remain in power, China's civil war ended with the raise of Mao Zedong (founder of the Chinese Communist Party) as the new Chinese leader and the establishment of the People's Republic of China (1949). Differently from the communist regimes experienced in most Eastern European countries – where alien tanks had it imposed, Chinese communism won its battle from within China's own borders, being characterized as the outcome of a hard-fought civil war. In fact, Mao Zedong – leader and main figure of the Chinese Communist Movement - enjoyed a great level of popular legitimacy (Perry, 1994, Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). Under Mao's rule and his 'mass participatory democracy' citizens of China were encouraged to come out in numbers and support the government's new policies. By having the masses participating in national campaigns and making them responsible for watching over the bureaucracy - under the guide of the Chairman leader – Mao assured the population's loyalty, making them feel like they were an essential part of the national project and relying on the masses to protect the national goal of strengthening the country and defending his ideas against external and internal threat. However, power was concentrated in the leader's circle who controlled all aspects of life through economic management, police surveillance, political supervision and propaganda (Nathan, 1985, Breslin, 1998, Weatherley, 2014).

Democracy continued to be thematised and although there were a few reformers who would say that democracy's benefits could only be enjoyed if the people were given power, "China had no visible movement of dissent" during the Mao era (Nathan, 1985, l. 134). Despite Nathan (1985) suggests a lack of interest in diffusing power during the years that Mao successfully promoted economic growth and improved the life quality of Chinese people, one can also question whether it was due to the Chairman's rightful popularity or to effective propaganda and press control. In fact, the first eight years of the People's Republic of China were a period of great development for the country (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006), however, it is also true that intellectual expression was tightly controlled. (Weartherley, 2014). In the New Republic the CCP leadership made various efforts in order to build a socialist democratic system including the promulgation of a new Constitution (1954) - which established the gradual implementation of the people's congress system, multi-party cooperation and political consultation - laying the legal foundation for a democratic New China. Mao Zedong also made his contributions to the establishment of the Chinese democratic system, devoting himself to his country and people, however, although participation was at the heart of Maoist mass democracy, the CCP's Chairman democratic ideas had certain "one-sidedness" and emphasized centralism (Weatherley, 2014, Fang, 2015).

As a development of Mao's attempts of bringing the people to participate into the government's project, the Chairman leader became convinced that a government needed to be exposed to the frank view of its people. In Mao's words "The policy of letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought

contend is designed to promote the flourishing of the arts and the progress of science" (Mao Zedong, 1956, as cited in Wearthley, 2014). However, The Hundred Flowers Campaign (1956) didn't last long. After only five weeks of "blooming and contending" (Wearthley, 2014, p. 136) the government not only shut its shortly given freedom of speech down, but punished intellectuals who had spoken against the party. Over 500,000 intellectuals were sent to do manual activities in a "re-education" program which was supposed to break down barriers between mental and physical work. (Weatherley, 2014).

1.3.2.1.3. The Cultural Revolution

The year of 1958 was the time when Mao's project began to sink. With plans of accelerating social and economic development the CCP Chairman launched an ambitious program called The Great Leap Forward. Mao's refusal to take his fellows advices and change the course of his extremist socialist policies resulted in famine and massive deaths in the rural area, bringing social chaos and lowering the leader's popularity among the party. After the losses brought by the Great Leap Forward Mao was removed from his post as Chairman of the People's Republic of China. While the CCP tried to remedy China's situation, the party had been torn with deep divisions from within. (Leiberthal, 1997, Fairbank & Goldman, 2006, Dikotter, 2008, Weatherley, 2014). These circumstances ultimately unfolded into the Chinese Cultural Revolution – which was referred by Fairbank and Goldman (2006, p. 343) as China's "ten lost years".

Through the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) Mao Zedong tried to regain his position in the country's leadership, fighting against those in authority who were advocating for a path towards economic recovery that differed from his socialist vision. The military leader accused many of his fellow politicians of "taking the capitalist road" (Harding, 1997, p.178) and called on students, workers, peasants, soldiers, revolutionary intellectuals and cadres to make a proletarian revolution. Mao and his supporters believed it was necessary "to transform education, literature and art, and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base" (Harding, 1997, p. 178)[3]. By evoking the Maoist understanding of mass democracy, the Central Committee concerning the Cultural Revolution officially encouraged mass protests, defying the CCP leadership who would not dare to arise against the masses. (Harding, 1997, MacFarquhar, 1997, Fang, 2015)

Although the masses were the main force of the movement, they were only called to support the Revolution Group, but at no time were they involved in decision making. Decisions were arbitrarily taken either

[3] Quotation extracted by Harding (1997) from "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," in "Collection of documents Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

by Mao alone or by ad hoc political groups set by the Revolution's leader. During these chaotic years, and in the name of establishing a New Socialist Culture in China, many people – both ordinary citizens (such as teachers, intellectuals and local leaders) and people from the government - were arrested, confined, tortured and executed. (Keeping, 2008, Weatherley, 2014). The movement - which was declared ended in 1969 but only really silenced in 1976 after Mao's death - had such negative impact in Chinese history that the CCP itself later regarded the Cultural Revolution as causing "destruction of democracy and the rule of law" under Mao, who "acted more and more arbitrarily and subjectively, and increasingly put himself above the Central Committee of the Party" (Resolution on Certain Issues in the History of the Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China, People's Publishing House, 1981, pp. 32–33).

By the end of the Cultural Revolution (1969) Mao seemed to have accomplished his goal of regaining power and setting the country back into the socialist path. The military leader established alliances and chose carefully the ones surrounding him in power. Mao used his political influence and prestige to keep the higher positions of the CCP only among people who he knew would support his vision and keep his project going. However, Mao's health condition wasn't the most favourable and the issue of finding a suitable successor became a threat to the gains obtained during the Cultural Revolution. In the search of a new Chinese leader, the period between the announcement of the Revolution's end (1969) and Mao's death (1976) was of many episodes of power struggle. In 1978 Deng Xiaoping – a former party leader who had been actively engaged in the civil war against the Nationalists and had been exiled during the Cultural Revolution for bearing disagreements with Mao's methods - was appointed by the CCP to replace Hua Guofeng (previously appointed by Mao himself) in the country's leadership, beginning a new era of economic growth and national stability. Deng's raise to power can be attributed partly to a massive citizens' public manifestation in Tiananmen Square in 1976 in retaliation to the Gang of Four (composed by Mao's wife and her political allies who aspired to take power), partly to the bureaucrats' reestablishment of control over the radical leftist wing of the party (Goodman, 1994, MacFarquhar, 1997, Weatherley, 2014, Pantsov & Levine, 2015).

1.3.2.1.4, Deng Xiaoping and the Reform Era

Following the 1911 and 1949 revolutions, Deng Xiaoping's appointment to the country's leadership has been regarded as the third great turning point in modern Chinese history (Tsou, 1987; Goodman, 1994, Goldman, 2005). After the wounds left by the Cultural Revolution Deng Xiaoping, who has suffered himself for previously manifesting his political views, sought to implement a more predictable system for decision-making based in inner-party democracy (Weatherley, 2014; Goodman, 1994). According to Deng's vision "the personalized and dogmatic politics of the Cultural Revolution were to be replaced by a system based on collective leadership, discussion and debate" (Goodman, 1994, p. 98).

Deng Xiaoping's enthusiasm for promoting democracy in China, however, was later compared by one of his first party secretaries to the Chinese tale of Lord Ye - "Lord Ye loved looking at Dragons (Yegong haolong), but when a real dragon appeared, he was terrified" (Vogel, 2011, l. 5393). In fact, Deng had great sympathy for the idea of democracy and the transition from Hua Guofeng's cadre to his own had been marked by an atmosphere of open debate about China's pressing issues. The political atmosphere of the transitional period between Hua and Deng led a group of citizens to express their views about China and democracy. The movement in which people hung posters on a large brick wall in Xidan Street in Beijing – later called as "The Democracy Wall" – expressed varied views, ranging from embittered accounts of personal abuse during the Cultural Revolution to more general demands for the introduction of democracy and genuine respect for human rights. The Democracy Wall movement lasted for about a year (November 1978 to December 1979) before being completely shut down by Deng. Although the recently appointed Chinese leader had expressed his support to the Democracy Wall at the beginning of the movement, the situation began to worry Deng as some posters started to attack the CCP monopoly and even Deng Xiaoping himself (Goodman, 1994, Vogel, 2011, Weatherley, 2014). By March 1979, fearing societal chaos after the recently ended Cultural Revolution, Deng issued a regulation determining that "slogans, posters, books, magazines, photographs, and other materials which oppose socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the Communist Party, Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought[4] are formally prohibited." (Garside, 1982, p.257). After the regulation being issued and under the shadows of the consequences people had suffered in the Hundred Flowers Movement, the number of citizens who stopped to read the posters dropped considerably. Only a few people were brave enough continue putting their posters up as officials started to ask for name and work unit of anyone who wished to hang their written views on the Democracy Wall. All posters were moved to a less visited location until they were finally taken down in December 1979. (Vogel, 2011).

The 1979 announcement of the Four Basic Principles made clear that there were limits to Deng's vision of democracy. The "more open society" was open to debate as long as public manifestations didn't challenge 1. The socialist road; 2. The dictatorship of the proletariat; 3. The leadership of the CCP; and 4. Marxism—Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. (Goodman, 1994, MacFarquhar, 1997, Fewsmith, 2008). While the Four Basic Principles served as a boundary for defining what was acceptable in public expression, Deng's didn't seem to be as concerned with ideology as much as he was about maintaining the party rule. The General Secretary famous quote about cats and mice[5] illustrates well his pursue of placing China's practical needs above ideology. Workers were encouraged to focus on production rather than spending time on ideological exhortation while Deng himself advocated for a 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics' and

[4] After the Cultural Revolution Mao Zedong's Thought has been referred in Chinese literature as the ideology developed by the state leader - compiled from his writings and speeches – and treated as an independent body of study (Meisner, 2007; Khan, 2018).

[5] *"It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white; as long as it catches mice"*

implemented economic reforms that stimulated greater market freedom, opened the country's door to foreign business and set China back on the economic growth path. (Goldman, 2005; Fewsmith, 2008; Fang, 2015).

Although being face-to-face with the Democracy dragon had terrified Deng to the point of making him set ground rules to keep it at a certain distance, the political reforms promoted by the Chinese leader make it undeniable that he still appreciated the idea of democracy at some degree – and the benefits it could bring to China. Unlike his predecessors who had personified decision-making, Deng Xiaoping's concept of collective leadership created conditions for shared responsibilities within the government (Goodman, 1994, Vogel, 2011). Furthermore, through the establishment of the 'Guiding Principles for Inner-Party Life' (1980), the Revision of the Party Constitution and a number of political reforms, Deng fought for routinization of the government – separating the Party from the government and consolidating routine procedures for appointing and dismissing members. Deng firmly believed that a well-structured system where party and government rules applied to all individuals impartially was to prevent deviation from the normal course of decision-making. (Chang, 1988; Goodman, 1994; Fewsmith, 2008; Weatherley, 2014). As an advocate of democratic centralism, Deng Xiaoping sustained that intra-party debate - in which party members were free to articulate their views - was extremely necessary to find appropriate solutions for the problems at rise. In this context struggle involving different points of view were not be punished but respected and debated. Once a decision had been made "every party member was duty-bound to carry it out" (Goodman, 1994, p. 56). Power was redistributed among the National Party Congress and the Central Committee and measures were taken to ensure tighter control over the government members and prevent local-level power abuse (Chang, 1988; Goodman, 1994; Weatherley, 2014). Attempting to protect the Chinese nation from totalitarian dictatorship and preventing past from being repeated, Deng advocated for rejuvenation of the leadership, recommending retirement of old CCP members – who could be serving as a Central Advisory Committee if they wished so - and creating a training program to identify future leaders. Undertaking the cause of abolishing a system of lifelong tenure cadres on himself, Deng Xiaoping retired from daily administration in 1985 and from his position as Paramount leader[6] in 1989 (Chang, 1988; Goodman, 1994; Weatherley, 2007).

1.3.2.1.5. The Tiananmen incident

In the context of political and economic reforms, the early 1980s were characterized by political stability and economic growth. In 1984 the Chinese government decided it was time to broaden the notion of 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics' and extend the economic reform – successfully implemented in the rural areas – to the urban economy. The reform program was delivered by Chen Yun in the 3rd Plenum of the

[6] As the Paramount leader Deng Xiaoping was regarded more or less as "the final arbiter in the decision-making process, though clearly not in a routine way" (Goodman, 1994, p. 113)

12th Central Committee of the CCP (October, 1984), leading to an inflationary economy boost (Goodman, 1994). In reaction the CCP leadership started to work on drafting plans of a price reform that would control the situation. At this point, party members began to polarize around two different visions of reform: A market-oriented – but yet planned – economy, or a freer market-determined plan. The first would restrict political liberalization, having the CCP to continue exercising control over economy and society while the latter proposed a more open political system, though still supporting the rule of the CCP. While the government experimented with the reform plans trying to control economic fluctuation, public and party expectation grew - both around speculations of a more open political system and around Deng's retirement (which would be the first Chinese leader to voluntarily leave his post in the Republic's history) (Zhao, 2001; Goodman, 1994). Instigated by a group of intellectuals, students' protests broke out in 1986 against the increase of living coasts and accused government of corruption, calling for greater democracy and human rights. The General Secretary Hu Yaobang – who was an open minded reformer - was accused by party leftists of being too tolerant at the student's manifestations, failing to supress the protests. As a result, Hu was forced to resign his position in the party leadership (1987), being allowed to retain membership in the Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. (Chang, 1988; Goodman, 1994; Fewsmith, 2018).

After Hu Yaobang forced resignation in 1987, students and intellectuals who had in the former leader their best hopes for China's democratic future were disappointed (Chang, 1988). Fearing the possibility of further public manifestations, the government decided to slow down reform plans. However, the unsolved economical tensions together with rumours of further upcoming reforms which suggested liberalization, unfolded into one of the most tragic events in the history of Chinese democracy (Chang, 1988; Zhao, 2001; Sarotte, 2012). Students and intellectuals who had already been preparing for a public pro-democracy manifestation in the 7th anniversary of the May 4th Movement[7] were surprised by the sudden death of Hu Yaobang in April 1989. Although the movement had no organized claims or a general coordination the students thematised free press, free association, political democracy and official corruption. (Goodman, 1994; Zhao, 2001) As the days passed what began with some students marching to Tiannanmen Square escalated into a larger movement with an increasing number of people camping in Beijing's most famous political spot. Shaken by what he judged as a conspiracy, Deng manifested his intolerance to the demonstrators' behaviour, announcing that a dialogue could be held, but he would not tolerate defiance of the Communist Party leadership (Goodman, 1994; Pantsov & Levine, 2015). Communication between the Party leaders and protesters seemed to become troubled as the Paramount leader's public declarations did not come out in unison with the General Secretary words and students got more and more enraged at each dialogue session or speech that came out. While the government accused demonstrators of trying to destroy the party and the

[7] previously referred to in pages 18 and 22.

socialist system the students claimed to be acting out of patriotism and trying to help the CCP to become "a genuine party of the people" (Pantsov & Levine, 2015, p. 410).

Protests were being carried for under a month and the number of people gathering in the Square increased each day. Workers and civil servants joined students and teachers in the manifests. Convinced that the students' purpose was to "set up a bourgeois republic on the Western model" and fearing to revive the civil war he saw during the Cultural Revolution, Deng wanted to avoid the chaos that a multi-party election could provoke at that point. Against Zhao Ziyang's will – General Secretary of China at the time – but supported by the majority of the Party leadership, Deng was decided to supress the movement without further concessions or dialogue. In May 20th, with nearly 1.2 million people joining the protests in the streets of Beijing, the Paramount Leader – supported by the Party veterans Li Peng, Yang Shangkun, and Qiao Shi - declared martial law. (Goodman, 1994; Zhao, 2001; Pantsov & Levine, 2015). Zhao Ziyang, who sympathized with the student's cause and had previously warned Deng that the demonstrators' claim for democracy was in line with the Chinese constitution, asked for his resignation and personally joined the students, manifesting his sympathy and trying to calm the situation down – although he knew it was too late. (Sarotte, 2012; Pantsov & Levine, 2015). Deng assigned Jiang Zemin as the new General Secretary and shortly after – May 31st – announced he was decided to withdraw from his Paramount leader position as soon as the new leadership was in place. (Zhao, 2001; Pantsov & Levine, 2015)

After the People's Liberation Army was sent to contain the manifest, conflicts in the streets and the Square still went on for a few days. The number of protesters gradually diminished but a few thousands of demonstrators remained camped in Tiananmen Square. What exactly happened in between the government walls in June 4th – when the troops were given orders to shoot fire at people who refused to dissolve the manifest – remains a state secret. Sarotte (2012) stresses the CCP efforts in trying to erase the memory of June 4th. By exercising aggressive censorship, the Party keeps Tiananmen massacre as a forbidden topic on the Chinese press, scholarship, classroom teaching and internet – and all those who dare to mention Tiananmen may be punished on the grounds of government conspiracy (Sarotte, 2012; He, 2014; Lim, 2014). The memory of the brutal episode in which thousands of army troops opened fire on unarmed civilians remains alive by the narratives of the people who are able to leave the country. In the aftermath of the massacre the police accounted for 241 deaths – although eyewitnesses report a higher figure estimating around 3000 life losses. The exact number is part of Tiananmen's silence and may never be known. (Lim, 2014; Pantsov & Levine, 2015)

1.3.2.1.6. After Tiananmen – the delicate balance between a liberalist economy and tight political control

As “the inevitable result of the domestic microclimate and the international macroclimate” (Deng Xiaoping, in Fewsmith, 2015, p. 22) the Tiananmen incident remains in the CCP memory as a painful reminder of what public dissatisfaction may lead to. Beyond the Chinese people’s sorrow the Tiananmen episode and its International media coverage costed China temporary isolation in the global market scenario. As Muhlhahn (2019) stresses “while the world had viewed Chinese reforms before 1989 with sympathy, [after Tiananmen] this changed fundamentally” (p. 537). The only way to recover from crisis and leverage its economy was to engage in the growing international market. The strategies Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin found to get around the financial crisis and transform China’s economy were crucial in determining the party’s rule future. (Lim, 2014; Muhlhahn, 2019). By adopting a multilateralism approach, Chinese international affairs invested in building “constructive strategic partnerships” across the globe, willing to be recognised as a “responsible great power”. During Jiang Zemin’s (1993-2003) and Hu Jintao’s (2003-2013) term of office, China increased contribution to global humanitarian programs and made efforts to engage with western criticisms of its human rights record. Seeking to alleviate fears of China’s rise in the international scenario, the General Secretary Hu Jintao promoted two basic concepts for China’s approach to international relations: the pursue of “peaceful development” and of a “harmonious world” (Muhlhahn, 2019). The successful turn of Chinese economy – which sustained a double-digit growth and rising living standards for the decades following Tiananmen – may have appeased Chinese citizens who have now a range of new opportunities offered by the economic liberalization, however, democracy claims remain a field for discussion. (Lim, 2014; Fewsmith, 2015; Muhlhahn, 2019).

Political reform continued to be upheld side-by-side with the Chinese economic reform. Whereas keeping China’s economic growth was a non-negotiable goal, the government leadership made it clear that there was no turning back into reformulating Chinese economy towards liberalization. With a market-oriented economy falling farer and farer from Marx’s socialist philosophy, inner-party discussions began to revolve around negotiating the party’s principles. Unable to abandon Marxism without giving up claims to legitimacy, the CCP has been investing in a nationalist discourse to uphold its “Socialism with Chinese characteristics”. The truth is that with privatization of the majority of Chinese state owned enterprises, relaxation of inner-country mobility policies, the country’s dependency on foreign capital and all other measures taken to boost China’s economy have contributed for making people less and less dependent on the state. The CCP’s approach of refusing a Western parliamentary democracy and sustaining a “socialist democracy” has been developed based on a nationalist discourse that exalts China’s history and cultural traditions, refuses Western “cultural invasion” and calls for perfecting the existent system (Fewsmith, 2015, Zhong, 2018).

China’s current political system has been defined as a multi-party structure ruled by the Chinese Communist Party. Village elections were introduced in a trial basis in the 1980’s and have undergone several modifications under the Organic Law of Villagers' Committees since then, being fully implemented in all

Chinese rural villages in 1998. (Pastor & Tan, 2000; Wang, 2014; Muhlhahn, 2019). The village election process, however, have been described by scholars more as a government manoeuvre for improving the existing administrative system and enhance Party's legitimacy – with no intent of moving elections up the political ladder. By making local administrators more accountable the CCP found a way of fighting local corruption and regaining people's trust in the existing system (Landry, 2008; Fewsmith, 2015; Muhlhahn, 2019). In attempts to develop Chinese socialist democracy, General Secretary Hu Jintao spoke about the need of promoting participation of the non-party masses during the Fourth Plenum of the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party (2004). Hu Jintao's speech didn't specify neither how nor to which degree Chinese citizens should be able to participate in government's affairs, however it opened a door for party discussion (Fewsmith, 2015). Eight years later, in the 18th National Congress of the CCP (2012) General Secretary Xi Jinping puts forward his thoughts on socialist consultative democracy, promoting the need for standardization and regularization of gathering public opinion into matters affecting the citizens (Yide, 2015; Junru, 2018). According to Junru (2018) Xi Jinping defends consultative democracy as the essence of people's democracy, placing public consultation in a higher degree of importance over electoral democracy – which again points to the CCP's intentions of setting aside any possibilities of elections beyond the village level. By further developing public consultation as their means of achieving greater democracy, the Chinese Communist Party claims to be making efforts in involving people into political participation, however the Chinese understanding of democracy has been re-defined in its own terms, diverging in many aspects from the EU's (European Union) perceptions of democracy.

1.4. Negotiating a cross-cultural understanding of the children's right of participation in a changing China

Our intent when briefly exploring the Chinese ethos of collectivism and China's social democracy history is to drive attention to the many aspects imbricated in building a cross-cultural understanding of the children's right of participation.

Kranz-Nagl and Zartler (2010) explain how different democracy understandings play a role in encouraging children's participation in society. The authors argue that while young democracies focus on promoting children's participation as a tool for introducing young people to the rules and procedures of democracy, countries with more solid experience in the democratic processes tend to promote children's participation based on rights principles.

When analysing the Chinese history in pursue of their democracy, Fung (2006) states that "Democracy means different things to different people at different times" (Fung, 2006, p. 348). Based on the

literature review presented in the previous sections, one could say that Chinese society have been building and negotiating their understandings on both democracy and individualization. The children's right of participation will then be understood and promoted in Chinese society according to the country's specific views on both matters. In this sense, the intent of this research, when investigating the children's possibilities of participation within the Xiao context, is to understand how children's participation has been practised among the research partakers.

By looking at the Chinese tradition of Xiao and the Chinese children's possibilities of participation in home decision making, we follow Reynaert et al.'s (2009) understanding that whereas it is necessary to acknowledge and advocate for Children's Rights, it is also crucial to avoid falling into a rights-talk trap. According to the author "the most important consequence of this rights-talk is that it conceives rights as an end to dialogue" (Reynaert et al., 2009, p. 526). Instead of looking for simplistic solutions based exclusively on law, Rights' scholarship should rather consider social issues in its complex relationships, taking the rights dialogue beyond the triptych "standard-setting – implementation – monitoring" and addressing the meaning of children's rights in its different contexts (Reynaert et al., 2009).

After formally presenting the research problem, the following chapters will address the partakers' understandings on Filial Piety and analyse children's participation in home decision-making. Both concepts (Filial Piety and Participation) should be understood in the lights of the ideas presented in this section: 1. A changing China in which modernization have not weakened Confucian beliefs but re-shaped and re-signified them. 2. The Chinese trajectory in pursue for democracy and human rights as playing a significant role in the way both adults and children will negotiate participation.

2. XIAO (FILIAL PIETY) AND PARTICIPATION RIGHTS: UNFOLDING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the previous chapter – when exploring the relationship between individual and society in Chinese culture – we addressed the Confucian notion of social order based on the Five Cardinal Relationships (Wu Lun) - in which the pair parent-child appears as one of the philosopher's focus. As this research deals with participation of Chinese children in their family environment, it seemed to be imperative to address the concept of Filial Piety as a key understanding in the intergenerational relationships of our case study.

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the Chinese character representing Xiào (孝) is composed by a combination of the characters 老 (lao – meaning old) placed above the character 子 (zi – meaning child).

Figure 1: Composition of the Xiao character

Xiao is regarded in Confucianism thought as the foundation of virtue from what all teaching grows out of (Feng, 2008; Huang & Chang, 2017). Together with Loyalty, Xiao (Filial Piety) ranks at the top of the eight fundamental virtues[8] that – according to Confucius - should drive all human relationships (Lai, 2009; Huang & Chang, 2017). Xiao (Filial Piety) implies children respecting their parents, broadening into youth respecting their elders and deceased ancestors.

When translated into English, Xiào has been predominantly named as Filial Piety, indicating a sense of devotion to one´s parents. However, it is necessary to attempt to possible semantic losses when a concept is transposed to another language. Feng (2008) indicates that although Xiào has been translated as "filial piety" since the Jesuits (1500 AC), such translation may convey the idea of an objective attitude of filial devotion – when in fact Xiào denotes a mental and subjective family worship frame of mind. As stated by Feng (2008) Xiào implies an entire way of living one´s life rather than merely focusing on superficial behaviors.

According to the author (Feng, 2008) the expression "being good to parents and ancestors" (rather than the term Filial Piety) would better capture Xiào´s essence. However, as the sentence becomes too long

[8] loyalty and filial piety, benevolence and love, honesty and justice, and harmony and peace are the eight fundamental virtues described by Confucius (Lai, 2009).

to be repeated over along the text, Feng chooses to use the word Xiào – with no translation – in an attempt to avoid possible misconceptions carried out by the English terminology. Rosemont and Ames (2008) when translating Confucius´ literature refer to Xiào as "family reverence". Feng (2008) clarifies Xiao as a concept by explaining that such virtue is not limited to being good to parents in a narrow sense (for instance, serving their immediate or bodily needs) but includes being good to parents in a broadest sense. By practicing good conduct one performs Xiào by bringing one's family a good name and making a good name for oneself. Confucius further expands Xiào's dimension by stating that it "starts with serving one's parents, progresses with serving one's lord, and ends with establishing oneself." (Feng, 2008, p.4). In fact, Feng explains that Confucius presents Xiào as not merely designated to ordering an individual's life, but as a way of ordering an entire society.

Literature review on current patterns of Filial Piety shows several articles approaching contemporary notions of Xiao. Chow (2001) and Yang (1997) state that among Confucius teachings, Xiào continues to be the main concept regulating parents and children´s relationships in contemporary Asian societies, impelling children to obey and care for their parents. Cheng and Chan (2006) describe the central role family assumes in Chinese society. Functioning as a closed-knit social unit in which each member performs a specific role, family members draw on each other's resources to meet mutual needs. Based on Xiào tradition – which includes the understanding that youth should take care of their elders and provide them with assistance - the authors justify why elderly care in China has – still nowadays – been working with minimal State intervention.

When considering what Xiào traditionally represents for Chinese people, Cheng and Chan (2006) mention a range of behavioral prescriptions such as showing respect to parents, being obedient, honoring and promoting family public prestige, generating a male heir to continue family lineage, living with parents (or near them when co-residence is not possible), taking care of parents when they fall ill and avoiding injuries on one's own body (following Xiào belief that body belongs to parents). However, the authors point out that industrialization and urbanization in contemporary China has brought fundamental changes in family structure, affecting the way in which Xiào has been practiced among Chinese families. In addition, the one-child policy adopted in the country since 1979 (lasting until 2016[9]) also impacted contemporary Xiao practices. Government birth control measures forced many families to give up having a male heir. Cheng and Chan (2006) also point out that along with the one-child policy a gender equity discourse promoted by the Chinese Communist Party have been slowly modifying Chinese families' preference for a male child.

In a study attempting to measure the most relevant Xiào practices in contemporary Confucian Heritage societies Lum et al. (2015) conducted a survey in Hong Kong with 1080 individuals aged 18 to 80

[9] The One-Child Policy was introduced by the Chinese Government in 1979 as an initiative to control population growth. It has been modified in 2016 allowing families to have two children since then.

years, developing a scale of important Filial behaviors. Although the researchers assume the study´s relevance remains unclear in other countries (such as China, Taiwan and Singapore), the Hongkongnese constructs on Filial Piety help us to develop our understanding when investigating the relation of Chinese beliefs on Filial Piety with children´s participation in home decision making. As part of their research, Lum et al.'s literature review (2015) compiled 42 Xiao behaviors from which they developed a Contemporary Filial Piety Scale. After surveying 1080 individuals in Hong Kong the researchers analyzed the most relevant filial behaviors as falling into three categories: 1. Pragmatic obligations; 2. Compassionate reverence; 3. Family continuity.

The first category (pragmatic obligations) refers to behaviors such as: arranging care for parents when they can no longer care for themselves, providing financial substance to parents when they can no longer financially support themselves, arranging appropriate treatment for parents when they fall ill, attending parents´ funeral no matter no matter where participants are at the moment, visiting parents regularly when participants don´t live with them, being thankful for parents´ nurturing. The second category (compassionate reverence) addresses practices such as: trying one´s best to achieve parents´ expectations and complete parents´ unachieved goals. The third category (family continuity) relates to having a male child to carry family lineage and having at least one child to ensure family continuity.

By reflecting on their data Lum et al. (2015) analyses social changes that have been taking place in Confucian Heritage societies (and more specifically in Hong Kong). According to the authors, Xiào practices have evolved in many Asian societies, modifying parents´ and children´s views on both caregiving and submission towards elderly. As reported by the researchers, the authoritarian paradigm has been shifting to an egalitarian parent-child relationship belief. An idea of compassionate understanding begins to emerge in parents and children´s relationship, reflecting higher levels of importance placed over emotion and affection.

To extend the discussion, Sung (1995) proposes that Xiào should be viewed beyond merely behavioral aspects of responsibility, sacrifice and payment. The author argues that a better understanding of Xiào phenomena can only be achieved if emotional components – such as affection, harmony and respect - are included in the analysis. By attempting to explain contemporary changes in Xiào tradition, Yeh and Bedford (2004) propose to break filial piety's analysis down by classifying Xiao behaviors into two paradigms: the authoritarian and affectional model. Although the duality clearly emphasizes different aspects Xiào can assume, Yeh and Bedford (2004) argue that despite behavioral differences between the first and the latter approach, a notion of children's debt to their parents and unconditional need for compensation remains as common ground for both Xiao parenting styles.

Another study conducted by Yue and Ng (1999), examined how elderly people (aged 60 to 80 years old) and young students (aged 18 to 25) in Beijing viewed Filial Piety in contemporary Chinese society. The

researchers reported that, unlike Hong Kong, Taiwan and other Chinese communities around the world – which have abundance of empirical findings about the changing patterns of Filial Piety – little has been written about how filial obligations have been defined and practiced in contemporary China. Yue and Ng research points out that although significant changes have been detected between the different generational groups, both elderly and young people continue to feed high expectations regarding filial obligations. The surveys showed that "obeying parents" attracted the lowest obligation rating from young participants while "respecting parents" received the highest score from the same age group. According the authors, the pattern indicates that for young Chinese people it is important to respect parents, but not necessarily to obey them (even though the elder generation expects obedience from their children). Another interesting pattern found by the researchers was about financial support. When comparing elder and youth participants´ answers, the study indicates young people are more likely to provide financial support to their parents than what the elder generation expect from them. Another point considered by the authors in their data analysis was about gender differences of perception on filial obligations. While young males place a great importance on financial support, young females seem to be more concerned about maintaining frequent contact with their elderly parents.

Several other studies can be found regarding Xiào in contemporary Asian societies and it is possible to perceive a trending concern about how the different generations face and deal with filial obligations/expectations. Yue and Ng (1999) highlight the changes that have been taking place in China in recent decades – such as the spread of public education, traditional knowledge being displaced by science, the increasing replacement of extended families with nuclear families and the fast pace of technological revolutions – as important factors and possibly responsible for a power shift from the elder to the new generations. The authors suggest that for the young generations, Xiào beliefs combine a retention of some Filial Piety traditional values with a transformation of tenets considered less relevant in contemporary Chinese society.

Although it is possible to notice increasing academic interest in the changing patterns of Xiao beliefs amongst the different generational groups, this study aims at understanding changes in the lights of the Rights of the Child. Does the filial notion clash with children's participatory rights? How have Chinese families (grandparents, parents and children) been addressing their filial beliefs in the lights of contemporary changes occurred in China regarding children's lives? In addition, seeking for understanding the children´s possibilities of taking part in family decision-making, the study aims at understanding how Xiao beliefs and practices affect the way children are listened to, having their opinions taken into account. In this matter it is important to situate academic literature produced in relation to the Rights of the Child in China.

According to OHCHR data[10], the Government of China ratified the World´s Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) in 1992, safe-conducting Article 6 of the Convention (on the right to life and the highest child survival and development) under the prerequisite that the Convention would agree with Article 25 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China on family planning and with Article 2 of China's Law of the Protection of Minors. Article 6 of the CRC states that:

> 1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
> 2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child. (The United Nations, 1989)

In turn, Article 25 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and Article 2 of of China's Law of the Protection of Minors.state respectively:

> Article 25: The state shall promote family planning to see that population growth is consistent with economic and social development plans. (People's Republic of China, 1982)
>
> Article 2: "Minors" as used in this Law, refers to citizens under the age of eighteen. (People's Republic of China, 1991)

Since then, the Chinese government has periodically submitted reports on progress made in implementing the CRC. Having signed two of the Optional Protocols (Optional Protocol on Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography - signed in 2000 and ratified in 2002, and Optional Protocol on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict - signed in 2001 and ratified in 2008), the Government of China does not yet have registered actions on the OHCHR website regarding signature of the third optional Protocol to the Convention (concerning implementation of Communication Procedure).

According to the Atlas of Social Indicators for Children in China (UNICEF, 2014), government efforts in improving life quality of Chinese young citizens have been remarkable. Through creation and implementation of the National Program of Action for Children, the State have been focusing on child´s development and promoting the realization of children's rights of survival, protection, development and participation. The National Program of Action for Children has been implemented in stages, starting from 1992 to 2000, 2001-2010, being currently in its third phase (2011-2020). Our literature review has shown there are significant developments in the improvement of children's rights, which does not exempt China from still facing many challenges in that regard. A more detailed overview of China's main developments and challenges is offered in Chapter 3 when we analyze societal changes throughout history, landing on contemporary developments regarding children's, women and elderly rights.

Regarding academic literature written on the Rights of the Child in China, the main recurrence of topics found in a literary research outlines the following patterns: most articles found acknowledge the one-

[10] Committee on the rights of the Child - Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights website last consulted in July 2021.

child policy and its implications in Chinese society and children´s lives. The Rights of the Child in opposition of physical or sexual abuse in China was another recurring topic ranking in second place. Disparities between rural and urban China has been also widely explored, indicating the need of looking at child welfare within the different settings, migrant children and children left behind by migrant parents. Finally, a small amount of articles was also found acknowledging themes such as rights of privacy and participation.

Looking closer at scholarly work about participation rights in China - which are the focus of this thesis – I draw particular attention to Naftali's research (2009). The author writes about child empowerment in China and analyses the emergence of the Children's Rights discourse in contemporary Chinese society. By interviewing grandparents, parents and teachers, her research investigates how Chinese adults have been dealing with the 'new norm' in their everyday interactions with children. Naftali - who is a professor of the Asian Studies department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem - researches topics such as children, youth, gender, family, science and subjectivity, militarism and nation-state, globalization and the emergence of the new middle class in contemporary China. She has written two books devoted to childhood in Contemporary China (Naftali, 2009, Naftali, 2014) in which she raises the issue of an existing clash between the idea of participation and the concept of Xiào in parents' and educators' speech. By interviewing upper middle class parents in Shanghai, Naftali perceives an idea of "democratic" relationships between parents and their children emerging from her interviewees' responses. According to the author it displays how the rights of the child discourse – brought about both by government actions and by globalization processes – has been taking effect in Chinese society. However, even though Naftali identify child-participation advocacy in adult discourse, the researcher points out contradictions among family practices when parents do not provide children with enough freedom to decide what to do with their free time and fill up their children's evenings and weekends with extra-class activities chosen for them. Naftali (2009) analyses this phenomena as a cultural trait, pointing out that studying is considered the main duty of a Chinese child. Participating in various extra-class activities is then perceived by Chinese parents as a necessary condition for their (only) child to compete with others and thrive in society. Cheng and Chan's (2006) view on Xiao – of bringing honor to family – suggests that a successful child will also be able to provide financial support to aged parents and help us to understand Naftali's point on the cultural aspects of such practices.

Still addressing conflicted notions between the children's rights discourse and traditional conceptions of Xiào. Naftali (2014) argues that, even among informants who claimed to fully support the notion of an autonomous child, there was often a sense that correct boundaries between children and adults were becoming dangerously blurred. While the Chinese tradition of Xiào sustains a notion of respect towards elders, Naftali (2014) identifies adults' discomfort regarding contemporary changes and a feeling of uncertainty against the One Child Policy generation: "a generation of egocentric and stubborn 'little emperors' who expect the elders to serve them" – according to Naftali's informants.

West (2002), who also writes about children's participation rights in China, mentions "traditional childhoods". According to West, strong emphasis on obedience, respect and duty towards parents are a hindering point for children's participation. The author acknowledges recent social changes that promote child participation in family decision-making, but reinforces that coercive practices towards school performance and family obligations still stand on the way between Chinese children and their families.

2.1. Research questions and Methodological Framework

Our literature review on the Rights of the Child pointed to an urgent need of addressing children's rights from a cross-cultural understanding (Reynaert et al., 2009; Mason & Bolzan, 2010; Liebel, 2012; Archard, 2015; Punch, 2016).

By looking at Xiào as a core concept of traditional Chinese values (Chen, 1986; Yang, 1997; Chow, 2001; Feng, 2008; Lai, 2009; Huang & Chang, 2017) and the clashes pointed by scholarly work between Chinese traditions and the development of participatory practices for children (West, 2002; Naftali, 2009; 2016), a deeper investigation on Filial Piety and its relationship with the Chinese children's possibilities of participation appears to be worth of a cross-culture inquiry.

By adopting an interpretivist paradigm, this research understands participant's reality as local and specifically constructed and highlights historical and cultural specificities that help us to frame the partakers' beliefs and knowledge on Xiao and child-participation (Chen et al, 2011; Lauckner et al, 2012). Hammersley (2014) explains the interpretivist argument by pointing out that "human social actions, relationships and institutions are fundamentally different in kind from physical phenomena" (p. 179) and require more than physical description to be explained. The author highlights the importance of gaining cultural knowledge around the investigated phenomena in order to make sense of what we see. Based on this paradigm, our research seeks for understanding:

- How the concept of Xiào is understood by children, parents and grandparents in urban China.
- What changes occurred over the past three generations regarding Xiao understandings.
- In the context of Xiào, how it is perceived (by children, parents and grandparents) the children's possibilities of:
    - Expressing their wishes and wills.
    - Giving opinions on matters that affect them.

Believing that the context in which we investigate is crucially important when answering such questions, the research undertakes a case study methodology. Following Yin's (2003) understanding that a case study "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (p.13) this research aims at understanding the relationship between Xiao and child participation in home-decision making by taking in consideration our participants' unique reality. That said, we do not intend to make concluding statements that generalize the partakers' life experiences to the broader public because, as state Lincoln and Guba (2000), "generalizations are assertions of enduring value that are context-free" (p. 27) and, as such, tend to ignore the complexity of human constructs and interactions. (Donmoyer, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Furthermore, the research is situated within the field of Sociology of Childhood and encompasses childhood from its sociological viewpoint. By understanding childhood as a structural form – abstracted from individual children - we pull away from psychological approaches of inquiry and focus on cultural and social transformations as a way of interpreting our data (Qvortrup, 2009; Sarmento, 2009). Within the childhood interpretivist studies thread, the study looks at children as subjects inserted in the social category of childhood, and seeks for understanding their symbolic creations and subjectivation processes in relation to Xiao and participation within their realities in interaction with adults (parents and grandparents) and other children. (Marchi & Sarmento, 2008; Sarmento 2009).

To investigate the relationship established between Xiào and child participation in contemporary China from the Childhood Studies perspective, the study considers children as its main actors. In this sense, this research's approach differs from those that consider adults as the main source of information to understand children's realities (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009) and turns its focus on the current generation of children, considering them as reliable informants and competent social actors (Sarmento, 2009; Lange and Mierendorff, 2009; Corsaro, 2011). Based on Corsaro´s concept of Interpretive Reproduction (1993), we consider the children´s perspective on Xiào essential in understanding contemporary changing patterns of Filial Piety. Corsaro (1993) explains how children produce (and not only reproduce) culture, creatively appropriating information from the adult world and transforming it amongst their peers according to their own concerns. Thus, from a Sociology of Childhood approach, we understand that children "do not simply internalize society and culture, but they actively contribute to cultural production and change." (Corsaro, 1993, p.489).

Parents and grandparents are featured in the study as important characters figuring in the children's lives. By having children as the study's main focus and yet including parents and grandparents in our research, we considered Punch's (2016) point of view about the importance of intergenerational investigations within Childhood Studies. The author points out that in a political struggle for the establishment of a research field that focus on children as main informants, the Childhood Studies discipline has failed to consider children

within their families and in relationships with other age groups. Punch suggests that it is time to re-consider adults in childhood studies and to examine children's relationships with other generations, stepping forward in our investigations. In addition, by considering the fine social fabric at play regarding Xiao and family relationships (Lum et al, 2015; Cheng and Chan 2006), I believe it is essential to conduct such study with children by listening to the experiences of parents and grandparents - as they are important characters of the children's lives and Xiao relationships. By adopting this paradigm, the research aims at understanding Filial Piety by researching over three generations – grandparents, parents and children - having children as key informants.

2.1.1. The case study framework

Our case study research took place in an international school in South China. As one of the 40 international schools of its chain located in China, and one of the 177 IB[11] schools spread across the country. The International School was chosen due the researcher ties with its community. Being a teacher in that school from 2015 to 2019, interacting with this community, sparkled my curiosity of learning more about Chinese culture and understanding its child-adult relationships.

Located in the Guangdong Province, South China, Dongguan lies in the famous Pearl River Delta area, between Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay and Guangzhou-Shenzhen Science and Technology Innovation Region. Being part of the Pearl River Delta Economic Zone, the city's location makes it a key pole of industrialization and urban development. (Yeung, 2001; Bui et al, 2003). Figure 2 situates Guangdong's Province on China's map and shows Dongguan's location within its Province. Figure 3 displays a more detailed map of Guangdong, geographically situating Dongguan in relation to important neighbour cities – such as Guangzhou (Guangdong's capital), Shenzhen (China's first Special Economic Zone[12]) and Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China[13]).

[11] International Baccalaureate

[12] Special Economic Zones, created in the 1980s as part of China's Open Door Policy, are zones in which foreign and domestic trade and investment are conducted without the need of authorization of the Chinese central government in Beijing. They are intended to function as zones of rapid economic growth by using tax and business incentives to attract foreign investment and technology (Britannica, 2019)

[13] Special Administrative Regions (SARs) exist as relatively autonomous areas within the People's Republic of China territory and maintain a separate legal, administrative, and judicial systems from the rest of the country (https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/other/special-administrative-region-sar/)

Figure 2: Dongguan's location in China
Source: https://www.chinahighlights.com

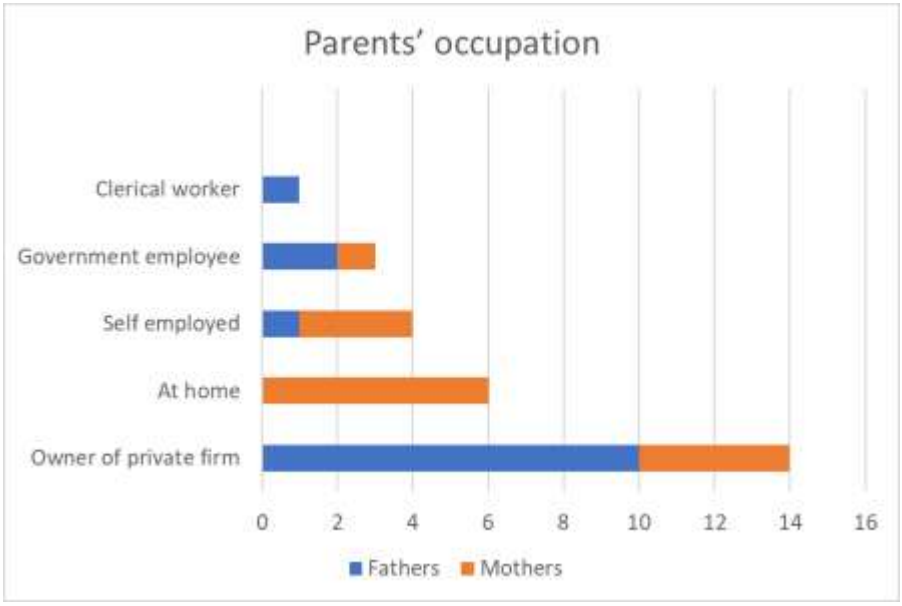
Figure 3: Dongguan's location in Guangdong Province
Source: https://www.chinahighlights.com/

Dongguan became a county-level[14] city in 1985 and was upgraded to prefecture-level city in 1988[15]. Dongguan's population was of 8.220,200 million according to the last China 2010 Census (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012) and was reported by the city's government as of 8,392.200 million in 2018 (Dongguan Today, 2018). Most of Dongguan's population is currently composed of migrant workers – 6.3 million habitants are not originally from the city (National Bureau of statistics, 2012).

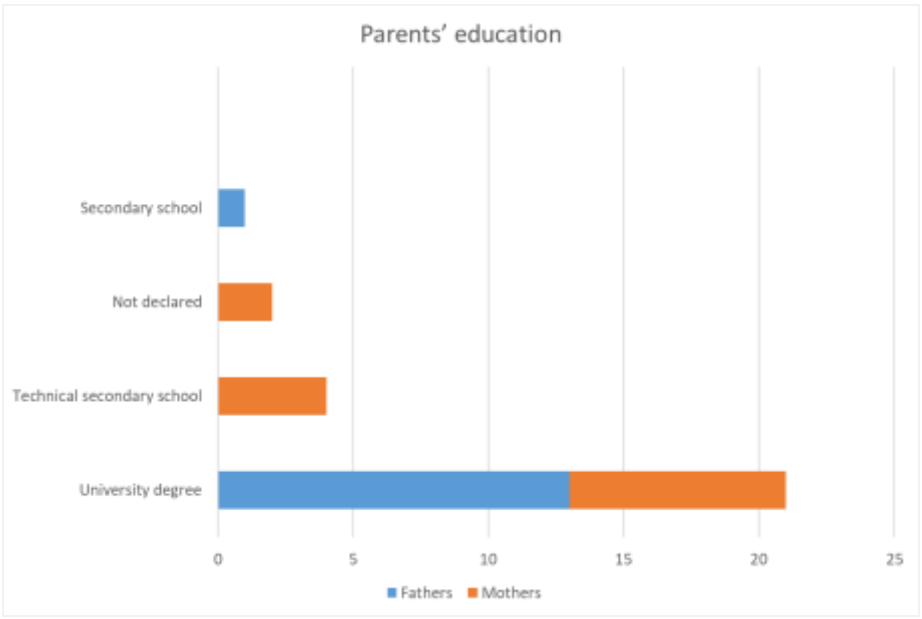
The fact that our participants belong to an International private school community indicates that families are part of an elite urban group. The school lies in a beautiful condominium with restricted access to residents and members of the school community. While minimum wages of a Chinese worker vary from

[14] China's administrative division levels (from biggest to smallest) are called Provincial-level, Prefecture-level; County-level; Township-level and Village-level.
[15] Most Prefecture-level cities have Counties, Townships and Villages under their administration. Dongguan has been upgraded to from County to Prefecture-level in 1988 and has only Townships and Villages under its administration. (Yeung, 2001)

690,00 CNY to 2.480,00 CNY[16] (depending on educational level) most of our participant families had a monthly household income of 50.000,00 CNY[17] or above. Two thirds of the children lived with their nuclear family while one third lived in some sort of extended family arrangement (with either one or two elders). The majority of participant parents were owners of private firms and had university degrees. The charts below specify all parents' occupations and education degrees by gender.



Graph 1: Parents' occupation by gender



Graph 2: Parents' education degree by gender

[16] 690,00 CNY to 2480,00 CNY = 86 EUR to 312 EUR as in 28/06/2020 https://tradingeconomics.com/china/wages

[17] 50.000,00 Chinese Yuan Renminbi = 6.293 EUR as in 28/06/2020

Regarding language, our group of participants displayed a variety of needs. Children spoke fluent English and Mandarin and some of them additionally spoke Cantonese. The majority of the parents didn't speak English and all grandparents spoke only Mandarin. In face of such diversity, it was necessary to count with translation services. Aware that conducting qualitative research in a multi-language context can pose many challenges for both data collection and data analysis (Temple & Young, 2004; Larkin & Schotsmans, 2007; Nes et al, 2010; Inhetveen, 2012) we took a few measures to ensure righteousness and accuracy in the process of collecting data and translating participants' responses.

First and foremost, by following Temple's and Young's (2004) understanding that "The relationships between languages and researchers, translators and the people they seek to represent are as crucial as issues of which word is best in a sentence in a language" (p. 164), it was essential that the research assistant was someone who would be able to carry on the project from start to end and, therefore, would participate of both interviews with adults and focus groups with children. In that sense, the study privileged the idea that meanings are constructed through social interaction between interviewer and interviewees, rather than exclusively expressed by language (Barret, 1992; Temple & Young, 2004). Rather than a language specialist, it was necessary to have someone who would be able to connect with the children and the researcher. Someone who were part of the children's world. Simon (1996) also expresses the importance of a translator's understanding of participants' reality:

> The solutions to many of the translator's dilemmas are not to be found in dictionaries, but rather in an understanding of the way language is tied to local realities, to literary forms and to changing identities. Translators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate the degree to which the two different worlds they inhibit are 'the same'. These are not technical difficulties, they are not the domain of specialists in obscure or quaint vocabularies... In fact the process of meaning transfer has less to do with finding the cultural inscription of a term than in reconstructing its value (p. 137-8)

For that reason, I invited a competent educator who worked at the case study school to participate in the project as my research assistant. Before the start of data collection, the research assistant and I had a few meetings where we discussed the investigation project. She diligently translated all research materials needed for the realisation of the study and conducted interviews and focus groups with me – so participants could use their preferred language to answer questions and express their thoughts. Throughout the text, and mainly in the focus groups transcriptions, her name comes up many times in conversations with the children. In the transcriptions I will be referring to her as Ms. Kindness as she was a vital part of our bilingual environment and very dear to the children. During the entire process of data collection, we held regular meetings discussing details about interviews and focus groups. To ensure accuracy of all translated documents, a language specialist (who was also my private Mandarin teacher) also laid careful eyes on the research materials, reviewing transcriptions and translations together with the researcher.

2.2. Data collection

Our data collection involving the three groups of participants (parents, grandparents and children), was conducted in two phases. Each phase had distinct and complementary goals, aiming at different data sets. The collection of each data set required specific data collection tools and put us face to face with distinct ethical challenges that we explain in the sections below.

2.2.1. Data collection phases

2.2.1.1. Phase one

The first phase of the study had the purpose of not only collecting data that would help us to answer the research questions, but also to understand how children were taught about Xiao. To gain access to children's opinions about their social world, it was necessary to approach the children in a specific way (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009) and gaining knowledge of participants' Xiao family practices was crucial in this task. Learning about the way families teach Xiao to their children helped us to design appropriate data collection instruments for the study's next phase – focus groups with children. Although the grandparents' data set was intended to be collected in phase one, ethical challenges[18] compelled us to gather such data later in phase two.

During the study's first phase perhaps the most relevant information we learned from parents' interviews was that families don't talk about Xiao – they practice it. When asked about how she teaches Xiao to her children, Sophia's mother highlights the importance of leading by example:

> The first aspect is to lead by example, let the children see themselves what you do, if you don't do it well, and you are never very filial, if you are indifferent to the family and parents, then it is how your child will be naturally educated, she will be the same, so she won't be passionate about her parents if you are not. So lead by example. (Sophia's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

In a similar manner, Lydia's mother also reinforces the importance of being her children's role model when teaching about Xiao:

> I will be their role model. You [Lydia's mom herself] will tell her you need to let the elderly get the food first. They [Lydia and her sister] need to share good things with their grandparents. If they have birthday parties, they need to serve the cake for their grandparents first. I will not teach her on purpose but tell her. They will see what I do in daily life. (Lydia's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

[18] Ethical challenges involving grandparents' data collection are detailed in the next section.

As exemplified by in the two excerpts above, the interviews carried during the study's first phase showed us that rather than talking about Xiao as a concept, parents focused on teaching by example while focusing on a range of behaviors that they considered Xiao. Such behaviors will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3 – Xiao (Filial Piety) within the Chinese Family – however, learning about this cultural trait was crucial in planning for both our research invitation and for our data collection instruments that targeted young participants.

2.2.1.2. Phase two

In phase two we collected data about the children's understanding of Xiao, as well as about their perceptions on how home decision making that involve them are made. The grandparents' data set was also collected during phase two, gathering information about the elder participants' perceptions of Xiao. Additionally, the parents' data sample was complemented with their participation in the creation of a family artefact that invited the three generations of participants in its making.

The table below illustrates the different phases of data collection, the period in which each data set was collected, as well as which participants are featured in each data set. The specific data collection tools of each data set will be detailed in section 2.2.3.

Data collection phases	Data sets	Period of collection and participants featured in data set							
		2017			2018				
		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Fev	Mar	Apr	May
Phase 1	Interview with parents								
Phase 2	Focus groups with children								
	Child-led interviews with grandparents								
	Family ball making								

Parents Children Grandparents

Table 1: Data collection phases

As illustrated above, Phase 1 was carried out throughout the months of October, November and December 2017, period in which we conducted interviews with parents. Phase two was carried out from February to May 2018, period in which we conducted focus groups with children. Parallel to our focus groups sessions, the children interviewed their grandparents throughout the months of March and April. The family ball activity – involving the three groups of participants – was also conducted in April.

2.2.2. Entering the field: addressing ethical challenges

When data collection started in October of 2017, the case study's international school had 198 students aged 3 to 6 years old. Although most students were born in China, the school had a considerable number of mixed families (foreign dads married to Chinese moms) as well as some foreign students. In order to select the research's target group, an initial socio-cultural questionnaire with a brief explanation of the study was sent to all Year One students' families [Appendix E].

From the 60 questionnaires we sent out, 35 returned to our hands for appreciation. After receiving the socio-cultural questionnaires back, the 15 families who did not have full Chinese composition (grandparents, parents and children born in China) were thanked for taking their time in answering our questions, while the 20 families who had full Chinese composition were explained about the subsequent research steps and invited to participate in the study.

Because the research aimed at three different age groups, it was necessary to unfold the study invitation into different steps. In phase one, parents were the first group we reached out to. After receiving the socio-cultural questionnaires back, we contacted 20 families who fit our target group. Following Alderson's (2014) understanding about the importance of informed and voluntary consent, our intention in this second contact was to further explain our research intentions, present the study's schedule plan, set up two interviews per family – one with parents and one with grandparents – and last but not least, explain about the study's second phase (data collection with the children). As Alderson states:

> Informed and voluntary consent is central to research ethics to ensure that people understand what is involved; they agree to any risks or inconveniences because they think the hoped-for benefits of the research are worth supporting; and they make a decision free from pressure or persuasion. (Alderson, 2014, p. 96)

Similarly to Alderson (2014), O´Reily et al. (2013) also reinforce the need of allowing people to make free, informed choices about their lives, underlining that it is not sufficient to ask whether or not someone is willing to take part in a research project. Instead, the authors (2013) support that the key for making free and informed choices is receiving sufficient and accurate information, delivered in a way that participants are able to understand.

Based on such ethical principles, we began our contact with the 20 families of Chinese descent by contacting parents, hoping to get them on board with the study's big picture and have their informed and voluntary consent. A total of 14 mothers expressed interest in participating in the research and were happy to have their children being invited in the study. However, all of them said it would be inconvenient to interview grandparents – even though we offered to go to their house if necessary. All 14 mothers preferred to have their interview in the school building and didn't want to trouble grandparents in asking them to talk to us. They provided us with grandparents' birth date – which enabled us to analyse the different generations by

historical cohorts. When informing parents about the research's schedule we explained that we would later be inviting their children to participate in 10 focus groups sessions that would occur from February to April 2018. The children's participation was optional and children could later decide with their parents whether or not they wanted to join our focus groups. However, children whose parents did not grant us an interview would not be invited to join the study.

Hammersley and Traianou (2012) outline the complexity of the process for obtaining informed consent and advert that difficult questions often arise over how a researcher should respond to such challenges. As the authors state "while informed consent is an important principle that addresses, in particular, the issue of respecting people's autonomy, it is not a simple concept, nor does it offer any blanket solution to ethical problems" (p. 7).

What to do about parents' denial in inviting their elders to an interview? Should the mothers we contacted offer consent only regarding themselves as individuals, or should their denial to invite grandparents into the study be taken as an answer from their family? In a similar context, Hammersley and Trianou pose the reflection

> [...] those in management positions within large organisations will sometimes act to prevent any member of their organisation participating in a research project, or they may effectively order all members to participate. Difficult questions can arise over how a researcher should respond to either of these situations. (Hammersley & Traianou, 2010, p. 10)

Mothers were preventing grandparents from participating, even before asking for their opinion. The challenge posed in such case was trying to reach out to grandparents while respecting the mothers' position. To deal with such ethical challenge, we decided to take parents' denial and move forward with the phases they were on board with, redesigning our data collection plan and providing a later opportunity for grandparents' participation in the second phase of the study[19]. In doing so, we respected the mothers' denial and provided a second chance for families who found it inconvenient to invite grandparents to talk to the researcher, but still valued the grandparents' participation in the study. Not all families involved grandparents into this step and we respected their choice in not doing so.

When we entered phase two, another challenge in the process of obtaining informed consent was wording the research's invitation to the children. Woodhead and Faulkner (2000) argue about the importance of approaching children in a way that makes sense to them. The authors argue that wording questions that do not connect with the children's everyday experiences pose serious challenges and prevent young people from showing their "true competencies" (p.25). Because we have learned from parents that families *practice* Xiao rather than *talk* about it, we considered that inviting children to tell us about their Chinese family would

[19] Data collection methods for gathering the grandparents' data sample is described in more details in page 66.

make more sense to them. The invitation process of our young participants occurred in mid-January 2018 – just before the Chinese New Year holiday – as described in the field notes below.

> Having the parents consent to approach their children and invite them to participate in a focus group, I contacted the teachers, and asked what would be the best time to talk to these specific children without too much disruption to their daily routines. After agreeing on a specific time, I went to the four Year One classes, introduced myself and told the children I would like to talk to some of them about a homework I was doing. They were four children from Year One A, four children from Year One B, one child from Year One C and four children from Year One D. Class by class, I called the children and ask if they could follow me to the library for a quick talk about the help I was needing from them. With each class group, I thoroughly explained about the research project in terms they would understand, describing it as 'my homework'. As there were four classes, I presented my research four times.
>
> I explained to each one of the groups that I was doing a homework about families in China. I told the children that the reason I called them and not their classmates was because their parents have already helped me with my "homework". I would like to invite them to help me too, but it was of their choice whether or not they wanted to do so. I gave to each one of them an envelope containing an invitation letter and a consent form that should be signed by their parents in case the children decided to help me with my study.[20] I told them that if they said yes, we would meet every Friday after school. They would come to my classroom and we would do activities and talk about their families.
>
> January 2018, field notes

After inviting the children to talk about their families and getting their parents to sign the consent form for the study's second phase, the children and I met for our first session. I explained the study again, answered their questions and helped them to fill in their assent forms [Appendix A]. The children did not have questions around the research topic and seemed to be very confident about talking about their families:

> Ms Jessica: I am doing a homework about the families in China. Remember?
> Sofia: Yes.
> Ms. Jessica: Does your family live in China?
> All the children: Yes!
> Belle: oh yes!
> Ultraman: We stay in the China.
> Ms Jessica: Yes, so that´s why I invited you. Because I need to write about the families in China. We will listen to stories, make drawings, we will do a lot of different activities to talk about your family in China.

Instead, when filling in the assent form, their questions surrounded other details of my explanation. Details that apparently caught their attention as they tried to relate my words to their personal experiences:

> Ms. Jessica: So the first question you need to answer: "Has someone explained this project to you? My homework. Did I explain my homework to you?"
> Children: Yes.
> Ms Jessica: Then you can tick "Yes".

[20] The children's assent was given during the first session of the focus group. We made sure to explain the research activities in depth and clear up all questions the children had, explaining the research both in English and Chinese.

Belle: I don't know.
Ms Jessica: My homework. Ms Jessica needs to write the homework because I am a student just like you. Does your teacher, Mr. Mauricio, gives you homework? I have a teacher as well. You have to do your homework. I have to do my homework.
Belle smiles.
Chimpanzee: Where is it?
Ms. Jessica: My homework is that I need to write about the families in China.
Chimpanzee: Where is your teacher?
Ms Jessica: My teacher is in Portugal.
Lydia: Is Leslye?
Ms. Jessica: What?
Ms. Kindness: Lydia said a name.
Lydia: Leslye 老师。(teacher Leslye)
Ms. Jessica: Ah... No. My teacher´s name is Natalia.
Lydia: Oh, ok.
Ms. Jessica: Did you understand what I have to do Belle? That I have to write my homework about the families in China?
Belle: Yes.
Ms Jessica: So did I explain my project to you?
Children: Yes

In fact, when we mentioned the word Xiao for the first time, in session two, the children did not know what it meant:

Ms. Jessica: Today we are going to talk about something and I want to know if you have ever heard about this word. Do you know what Xiào is?
Children: Xiào, Xiào Xiào. – The children start repeating trying to find the meaning of it.
Princess Pink: Xiào (笑 [smile]- drawing a smile on her face)
Belle: Mei xia ren - (没吓人 – a not scary person)
Chimpanzee: Xiao (小 [small] pointing at herself)
Ms. Kindness: Not smile. 孝这是孝道。对爸爸，妈妈的孝道。[Not like in smile. Xiào like in xiào dao. Xiào dao to daddy and mommy]
Princess Pink looks contemplative and keep repeating Xiào, placing her finger on her face and wondering what Xiào is. Some children look at their name tags, some children look at us and smile, but no one have any other guess.
Ms. Kindness: [Trying to check if the children have heard about Filial Piety rephrasing with another related word].孝顺。 你们孝不孝爸爸，妈妈啊? [Xiào shun. Are you Xiao to daddy and mommy?]
Princess Pink: hã. Xiào. Xiào... (keep repeating and wondering)
Ultraman: 不孝。(not xiao)
Ms. Jessica: Have you ever heard this word?
Chimpanzee: No. [shaking her head]
Belle and Sofia also shake their heads in agreement with Chimpanzee.
Ms Jessica: No? You don´t know what it is?
Princess Pink: No.

> Ms Jessica: Ok. So today Ms. Jessica will show you a video about Xiào. After the video we can talk again about what you think of Xiào.

As the excerpt above shows, it was clear that talking about Xiao was not part of the children's family experiences. In this regard, we considered that, if inviting the children to talk about Xiao – being that a term that they have possibly never heard about before – such estrangement could be an initial barrier for their participation in our study. As Fernandes (2016) reminds us, it is important that we create adequate conditions to include children in research. By suggesting that scholarly work should avoid an *eticocide* of knowledge in which adult perspectives are favoured at the expense of children's views, the author calls for "feasible and meaningful ethics for children" (p. 769). According to Fernandes (2016), it is important to safeguard traditional ethical principles while simultaneously considering the specific ethical challenges that arise from research with children. Establishing a dialogue with other authors, Fernandes endorses Alderson and Morrow's position that "traditional ethics rightly stresses the importance of non-interference, and of avoiding deliberate harm, but little is said of the harm created when overprotecting children by silencing and excluding them from research (Alderson and Morrow, 2011, p.21). In face of an ethical dilemma of providing our young target group with necessary information about our research without undermining their interest in participating – and consequently excluding the children's views – we recall Alderson and Morrow's (2011) reflection that "Ethics does not provide clear, agreed solutions. Its main use is as a method for exploring dilemmas in order to understand them more clearly and deeply" (p.21).

To overcome such dilemma we stand with Fernandes (2016) who points out the richness that children's perspectives add to research and with Scott's (2000) who argues that he views of children are extremely important in broadening our understanding of social life. Sustaining the relevance of making children's views visible, Scott adds that treating children as competent respondents doesn't eliminate the fact that adults need to be competent inquirers. In our context, it meant that even though families may not talked about Xiao, it didn't mean that the children could not relate to Xiao behaviours and tell us about patterns they observed in their everyday life. By considering that children "provide reliable responses if questioned about events that are meaningful to their lives" (Scott, 2000, p. 89) , we invited our young target group to participate in a research to talk about their families, deepening into the concept of Xiao throughout the focus groups sessions as we spoke more and more about their families. Thereby, wording our study interests in a way that valued the children's competencies accounted for the two dimensions of research ethics that Ferrnandes speaks of

> Debating about ethics takes us in two directions. One accounts for the importance of existing ethical regulations and codes or, more mildly, the formulation of ethical principles. The other emphasizes the researcher's individual responsibility and personal skills while continuously reflecting on their

> own practice. Ethical principles and codes are important, but they are not enough to account for the complexity of events a researcher faces in doing the research. (Fernandes, 2016, p. 768)

Regarding the grandparents' data sample, we also needed to address the initial denial got from parents (who found it inconvenient to invite grandparents to a formal interview). In order to comply with our research goals and gather qualitative data from grandparents, we proposed a child-led interview as one of our focus group activities. Our 4th focus group session was dedicated to invite the children to interview their grandparents and have them to sign invitation letters that explained the study – in a child-friendly language – to their elders. Grandparents received two letters – one from the researcher (explaining the study and the grandparents' right of choose to participate or not [Appendix B]) and one signed by the children [Appendix C].

When inviting our young participants to interview their grandparents, some of them showed concern about how to explain the research to their elders:

> Ms. Jessica: I would like to ask you if you can ask your grandparents about Xiào. What do you think?
> Chimpanzee: I don't know...
> The children seem puzzled about how they would interview their grandparents and I keep on explaining.
> Ms. Jessica: If you would like to help me with this, you can ask your daddy and mommy to bring you to your grandparent's house, or to call them. If they say it's OK, then you can ask your grandparents these questions. I prepared this nice package you can bring home, to help you explain the questions to your grandparents. This letter says: dear grandparents, I am helping Ms. Jessica with her paper about Xiao and families in China, participating in a research and talking about Xiao in my family.
> Belle: Ms Jessica, my mom is don't know English
> Ms. Jessica: It's OK, it is written in Chinese too. Maybe Ms. Kindness can read it in Chinese.
> Ms. Kindness reads the letter to the children in Chinese.

Besides being worried about the research's language, the children presented other valid concerns such as not being able to do an in-person interview and finding out when they were expected to bring their data back. In the excerpt below Ultraman exposes his worries about how to interview his grandma who is away:

> Ultraman: 我爷爷奶奶在河南。小我妹妹一岁也在湖南 (My grandparents are in Hunan right now. My little sister is one year old and she is also in Hunan)
> Ms Kindness: Your grandparents are in Hunan right now, right? Do you think you can call them or do you have their Wechat[21]?

[21] Wechat is a communication app used in China. Wechat allows it users to send voice or text messages, as well as doing audio and video calls.

Ultraman: 我那个，我妈妈的手机上可以打给我那个..... (My.....My mom's phone can call my.....)
Ms Kindness:外公外婆，对不对？好，那你可以打电话问他们问题，好不好 (Grandparents, right? Alright, you can call them and ask them the questions)
Ultraman: 我可以，我妈妈只可以打给我的外婆。(Yes, I can. My mom can only call my grandma)
Ms Kindness: 好，你可以就打电话给外婆就问她问题好吗？(Yes, you can call your grandma and ask her questions, OK?)
Ultraman nodded his head.

Finding out which and how many of their grandparents to interview was another point raised by the children. Just like in the dialogue above, when Ultraman reinforced that his mom could call *only* his grandma, other participants also made it clear they wouldn't be able to interview all of their grandparents:

Lydia: Ms. Kindness, 我的爷爷去世了。(Ms. Kindness, my grandfather passed away)
Ms Kindness:但是你只需要问奶奶就好了。那些问题都是中文的，知道吗？你可以让妈妈帮忙打电话，然后你问奶奶，好吗？ (You can ask your grandma if you want, is that OK?)
Lydia:好。(OK.)
Chimpanzee: Ms Kindness，但是我妈妈没有我爷爷奶奶的电话，只有我爸爸有。 (Ms Kindness, but my mom doesn't have my grandparents' [yeye and nainai – paternal line grandparents] phone number. Only my dad has.)
Ms Kindness: 那你也可以问外公外婆啊。(You can also ask your waigong and waipo [grandparents from the mother's line]). You can ask the daddy and mommy of your daddy, or you can also ask the daddy and mommy of your mommy. Only one is enough.

We acknowledged all the children's questions and answered them one by one. They could ask their parents to take them to the grandparents' house, or they could call them. If they were able to interview one of their grandparents, we would love to hear what they think about Xiao. After all, we made it clear it was also ok if they didn't want or were not able to interview any of their elders.

2.2.1. Data sets and data collection tools

Carried out in two phases and involving different groups of participants, the research has generated distinct data sets. The table below offers an overview of our data sample, illustrating data sets and participants

involved in data collection of each set. The following sections of the text will detail our methodological choices in the collection of each data set.

	Data set	Sample	Participants
Phase one	Interview with parents	14 interviews (15 questions)	14 parents
Phase two	Focus groups with children	10 focus groups sessions	9 children
	Child-led interviews with grandparents	5 interviews (2 questions)	5 grandparents
	Family balls	9 family balls with: • A grandparents' layer • A parents' layer • A children's layer	4 grandparents[22] 9 parents 9 children

Table 2: Data sample overview

2.2.1.1. Interviews with parents

During the study's first phase we started to collect our data by using semi-structured interviews as tool to approach subjects and exchange qualitative information. Kvart (2007) classifies interviews as a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee in which interaction the interviewer learns about the interviewer's life experiences. Flewitt (2014) also highlights the usefulness of interviews as a qualitative research tool to gain insight into participants' "experiences, perceptions, identities and beliefs" (p. 136).

Interviews with parents had fifteen questions [Appendix D] and lasted approximately 30 to 45 min each. The first section of the interview addressed topics such as the meaning of Xiao, how parents teach Xiao, how they think Xiao has been changing since they were children and whether they think Xiao fits with listening to children's opinions and wishes. The second section of the interview focused on home decision-making more specifically, asking for examples of how parents deal with situations in which the children´s and the adult's opinions may be conflictive. General disagreements, types of play, food choices, after-school classes,

[22] From the 4 grandparents who participated in the making of the family ball, 2 of them also participated in the child-led interviews and 2 did not. The two data sets combined (child-led interviews and family balls) provides us with data from 7 different grandparents.

bedtime, choosing friends and having free time to play were addressed with daily life examples during the last section of our interview.

The parents' interviews were conducted by the researcher and the research assistant. The interview form was translated beforehand into Chinese and interviewees were asked whether they preferred to have their session conducted in English or Chinese. As all parents preferred to be interviewed in Chinese, the research assistant translated parents' responses after each answer, which enabled the researcher to ask follow up questions when necessary. Follow up questions intended to "clarify and extend the interview statements" (Kvart, 2007) providing an enriched understanding of participants' answers. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated by the research assistant.

A total of 14 mothers granted us an interview. All phase one interviews[23] were used to design our focus groups activities, as well as in our broader data analysis (regardless of whether other family members joined the study in the later phases of research). Mothers whose children have participated in phase two of this research have been identified as "mom" following their children's self-chosen codename (Ex. Princess Pink's mom; Dragon's mom; Chimpanzee's mom. The five mothers whose children did not participate in phase two of this study have been identified as one of the animals of the Chinese zodiac sign. In the interest of preserving their identity, we did not use their real Chinese zodiac sign but rather picked animals which culturally attributed (positive) characteristics[24] reminded us of their personality. These five mothers are identified throughout the text as Tiger mom, Snake mom, Rabbit mom, Goat mom and Ox mom.

2.2.3.2. Focus groups with children

For the study's second phase we decided to use focus groups as a tool to gather data from our young participants. Lange and Mierendorff (2009) highlight that focus groups can be especially suitable to research with children, as the method creates a safe peer environment and softens the adult-child power imbalances existent in one-on-one interviews. Additionally, Kölbi and Bilmann-Mahecha (as cited in Lange & Mierendorff, 2009) point out that the use of focus groups are helpful in triggering children's memories and encouraging them to share their opinions as they listen to other children speaking about the same topic.

Data body accounting for the children's group encompasses nine children in total. Eight of them participated from the beginning to the end of the study. One child joined only session 1 and 2 and left the

[23] 13 interviews were carried out during phase one. Dragon's mom joined the study in phase two and her interview accounts for the 14th of our interviews data set, being used in our broader data analysis only.

[24] According to Chinese culture, the positive traits of Tiger people are bravery and warm-heartedness; Snake is associated with generosity and mental sharpness; Rabbit represents compassion, kindness and popularity; Goat is associated with a loving and supporting attitude, whereas Ox represents reliability, protectiveness and goal-orientation. Source: https://studycli.org/chinese-culture/chinese-zodiac/

study.[25] By session seven we had one more child joining the group. His classmates told him about our activities and he asked his mother to join us[26].

The focus groups sessions occurred in the school building during after school time.[27] Sessions were conducted by the researcher and the research assistant and lasted 45 min each. Regarding language, children were fluent in English and activities were conducted in a mix of English and Chinese, depending on what the children felt most comfortable with in each occasion. The adult group composition of a foreign + a Chinese national was a setting the children were familiar with, replicating the teacher pair they have in their classrooms. The children were used to speak in English and have the Chinese teacher's help whenever necessary if they wanted to communicate something they were unable to do in English, or if they wanted to clarify anything using mother tongue.

Generally, when asked in English, our young participants would answer in English. We made it clear in various occasions that if they preferred to answer in Chinese it was completely fine too. Indeed in a few occasions some children preferred to speak in Chinese. In this cases, the research assistant would instantly translate it and include me in the conversation. Sometimes children would start speaking in English and switch to Chinese if they felt it was easier to express themselves, depending on what they were talking about. Every time I asked questions (in English) we paid careful attention to the children's body reactions and face expressions. Whenever the research assistant or I noticed there was doubt or confusion, she would repeat the question in Mandarin. Due to the research's international settings, bilinguism was something we (children, researcher and research assistant) were all used to, and meanings were constructed together through everyone's interactions. If the children felt there were mistranslations, they instantly jumped in and corrected it.

> Ms. Jessica: What do you want to draw on your ball? What do you think Xiao is?
> Sofia: 我觉得孝也是，我去公园，有水，我怕姥姥滑倒。 (I think Xiao is when I go to the park I will worry if my grandma will fall down if I see water on the floor)
> Ms Kindness: She said when she goes to the zoo, if she sees water on the floor she is afraid that her grandparents will fall down.
> Belle: No, that is not zoo. That is park. (Belle corrects Ms. Kindness's translation)

All sessions were video-recorded, transcribed and translated by the research assistant and passed on to the researcher. Videos, transcriptions and translations were carefully reviewed by the researcher and run by a language specialist, making sure we didn't miss anything.

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[25] The child told me she wanted to take ballet classes and our group's time was conflicting with her schedule. Data originated from this child was excluded from data analysis.

[26] Dragon's mother granted us an interview during the data collection's second phase. She accounts for the 14th mother of our group of interviewed parents.

[27] Children attended school from 9:00 to 16:00. The school offered a range of optional after school clubs (such as piano, ballet, chess, taekwondo, etc) running from 16:00 to 16:45.

Our 10 focus groups sessions were divided into two sets.

The first set (sessions 1 – 6) intended to gather data that defined Xiào from the children´s point of view, helping us to answer research questions 1 and 2. The second set of sessions (sessions 7 – 10) focused on the children´s possibilities of voicing opinions and having it taken into account in home-decision making, collecting specific data to address research question 3. When addressing home-decision making with the children we conducted activities and had conversations targeting the same topics we approached during the parents' interviews: negotiating types of play, food choices, after-school classes, bedtime, choosing friends and having free time to play.

For each focus group session we used conversation triggers that helped us to start talking about Xiao (in sessions one to 6) and about home-decision making (in sessions 7 to 10). By using stories, videos, images and role-play we introduced the topics we would be talking about, beginning a conversation with our young participants and gathering their opinion about Xiao and child participation within their families.

In session one, the story *My First Chinese New Year* (by Karen Katz) – a story about a family that prepares their house to spend the Chinese New Year holiday together – prompted a conversation about what the children did in their last Chinese New Year holiday and who they spent the holidays with. Although this initial conversation did not get straight into definitions of Xiao, it seemed an appropriate way to begin our focus group sessions as the children had just came back from holidays and we have invited them to speak with us about their Chinese families. Additionally, we also learned from the parents' interviews that they considered spending holidays (and time) together as being one of the faces of Xiao:

> We will take our children and my mom to my husband's hometown in some big family holidays. I tell him [my child] that when the big family holidays come, you need to go back to your home like your daddy and mommy no matter where you will be in the future. Because we live in Dongguan with my parents while my husband's parents live in Guangzhou, we will get together and have a big meal every Chinese New Year's eve, no matter how busy they are. (Ox mom– Translated from Mandarin)

Conversations triggered by the story helped us to get to know each other better and understand how they perceived the importance of family in this specific period of the year. After talking about their Chinese New Year holiday with the group, we invited the children to draw a picture about their holiday. As they finished their pictures we asked them individually about their drawings, making sure we understood what they wanted to highlight. In the occasion, we also asked follow up questions that helped us understand which family members they spent their holiday with.

In our second focus group session, we used another story to start talking about Xiao. The Chinese folktale of Huang Xiang was presented as an animated video in the children's mother tongue[28]. The story of Huang Xiang is one of the 24 Paragons of Filial Piety and dates back from the Yuan Dynasty (1260-1368 AC). Jacobs and Century (2012) explain how popular the Paragons are in China by stating that the 24 stories are "more familiar to most Chinese than Grimms' Fairy Tales are to Americans" (p. 11). The story helped us to connect with the children's understanding of the folktale. Knowing that Huang Xiang was Xiao to his dad, the children started to word their own definitions of Xiao based on the Chinese folktale and their own family experiences. After a group conversation each child drew a picture and told us how they are Xiao to their parents.

In our third focus group session we started our conversations based on a video from a children's YouKu[29] channel. On the video[30], a young adult female host dressed in colourful clothes introduces the children to the topic of the video and tells them they will be talking about Xiao. During the next 6 minutes the video features a made up story that looks like a child role-play. A blond Barbie sitting on her doll's-house sofa is shopping online, when her mother-in-law (a brunet Barbie) comes into the room with cleaning equipment. While the mother-in-law cleans the place, the blond Barbie complains about the quality of the service her mother-in-law is performing. A child Barbie then comes to scene. Having just arrived from school, the child joins her mother and grandma for dinner. While the mom continues to mistreat her mother-in-law, the child watches and tries to soften the situation by saying nice words about her grandmother's dinner. When the grandmother leaves the table, the child teaches her mom a lesson about Xiao.

When looking for participant-friendly materials that would serve as conversation starters we found this video suitable not only for its role-play approach, but also because it puts the child in a powerful position to speak about Xiao. By taking away the pressure from children being the ones on the spotlight of performing Xiao behaviours, we expected to provide a safer atmosphere for them to speak about what they think it is and it is not Xiao. The conversations generated from the video brought up interesting aspects that did not appear in the previous sessions.

Images and games also aided our conversations with the children. As part of our third, fourth and fifth session we presented images of the New 24 Paragons of Filial Piety[31] to the children and played a game where we invited participants to think about their parents' behaviour towards grandparents. After looking at each image and listening to the Xiao behaviour, participants should raise a sign saying yes or no to tell us

[28] Video available on https://youtu.be/b1TGcv122hA in Chinese. English translation can be seen by pressing CC (closed captions) on the bottom right of the screen. A transcription of the English translation can also be seen in Appendix F

[29] The YouKu platform is the Chinese alternative to YouTube.

[30] Video available on https://youtu.be/4WIhGuQIeWU in Chinese. English translation can be seen by pressing CC (closed captions) on the bottom right of the screen. A transcription of the English translation can also be seen in Appendix G

[31] The New 24 Paragons of Filial Piety was a campaign promoted by the Chinese government in 2013. We present a more detailed overview of the Paragons in Chapter 3, where we identify the Paragons influence on Xiao definitions provided by parents.

whether their parents performed the mentioned behaviour. Although not all images urged the children to talk, some of them instigated interesting conversations about Xiao within their families. Besides our work on the New 24 Paragons of Filial Piety, sessions four and five were also dedicated to inviting the children to interview their grandparents (session four) and introducing the idea of building a family artefact (session five).[32]

In session six we talked about what we had discussed so far. I prepared a power point with images to trigger the children's memory, reminding them of the stories we listened to, the drawings they made, the New Paragons they commented the most on, as well as what their grandparents and parents have written on their family balls about Xiao. After a recap, we invited the children to plan what they wanted to draw on their family balls. They made draft drawings offering their individual take on Xiao and then transferred their draft to their actual Family Ball. We kept their draft drawings and recorded a video of each child explaining us about their final drawings on the balls.

In session seven we started to talk about home-decision making. By introducing the children to two sets of dolls – one of Western look and the other of Asian look – we began a conversation about the dolls who knew about Xiao and the dolls who did not.

Figure 4: Western family dolls set

Figure 5: Asian family dolls set

In this session we talked about bedtime and how the dolls who knew and the dolls who didn't know about Xiao would react when their parents told them it was bedtime. We also addressed the topic of friendship by talking about being friends with the dolls who were not Xiao to parents. The children spoke about their openness (or not) to be friends with non-Xiao dolls and what they think their parents would say about it.

In session eight we had a group conversation about food choices aided by toys as conversation starters. We set up a table with healthy and unhealthy pretend-play food and gave paper plates to the children, who were asked to select three items they would pick for a meal.

[32] Both the interviews and the family balls involved other groups of participants and are considered separate data sets. A more detailed description of the both processes is offered in subsections 2.2.3.3. Child-led interviews, and 2.2.3.4. Family Balls.

Figure 6: Focus group conversation starter - food choices

After the children had their plates ready, we asked them what they think their parents would say about their choices, and what their grandparents would say. We then talked about what would happen after the children listened to their family members' opinions.

In our last two sessions we jumped straight into asking the children about different types of play and about their schedules. Although we did have some group conversation, most of those two sessions were dedicated to fill in individual booklets we created to aid data collection. We started session nine by asking our young participants if there was anything that they would like to play but their parents didn't allow them. After a short group conversation we gave the children individual booklets to fill in with information about different kinds of play that could be considered dangerous or messy. The children should answer what their parents would say, what their grandparents would say, and what they would do after listening to family members' opinions.

Figure 7: Types of Play Booklet - page one[33]

[33] The Types of Play Booklet was composed of 11 pages, each page featuring a different kind of play. The 11 kinds of play in the book were: 1. Running very fast; 2. Racing on my scooter; 3. Climbing up a slide; 4. Jumping off a slide; 5. Climbing monkey bars; 6. Jumping off a swing; 7. Play with paint; 8. Play with mud; 9. Play in the swimming pool; 10. Water play; 11. Playing in the rain.

After finishing their booklets, we invited the children for a tour in the playground, asking them to observe and find places where they think their parents wouldn't let them play. Each child took a picture of their selected place and told us what they would do after having play denied by parents.

Following a similar structure, session ten was dedicated to the making of another booklet. We started our session by singing a song about the days of the week and told the children that for our last session we would like to know a bit more about their week. We asked the children specifically what they did after school each day. Participants filled in their booklets together and while they talked about their activities, we also asked them to fill in who chose those activities and whether they liked it or not.

Figure 8: After school schedule booklet - page one

After filling the booklets with information about the seven days of the week, the last page intended to capture their wishes for the following year. We asked the children what activity they would like to do and what they think their parents would think about it. Finally, the children answered whether they thought their parents would let them do such activity (regardless of liking it or not).

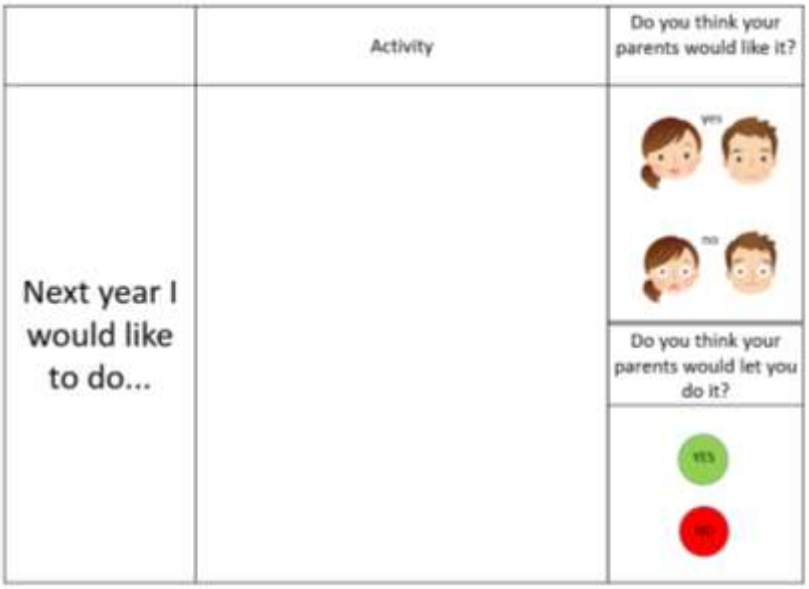


Figure 9: After school schedule booklet - page eight

2.2.3.2.1. The Mosaic Approach

As described above, we developed a range of different tools to gather our data during the focus groups sessions. Inspired by Moss' and Clark's Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2001) using such diversity of tools is an attempt to move beyond the spoken word, playing to the strengths of young participants and raising possibilities that enable children as active participants in research (Clark, 2010; 2014). When explaining the use of observations, interviews, book making, tours, slide shows, map making and the gathering of parents' and practitioners' perspectives in her research, Clark states

> Observation and interviewing sit alongside participatory tools, including children's use of cameras, child-led tours and map making in which children play an active role in gathering and discussing the research material [...] This is designed to be an active research process where meanings are constructed from a variety of sources and by different individuals in order to compile a picture or series of pictures. (Clark, 2010, p.32)

Drawing from Moss' and Clark's experiences with young participants, we also believe that a more detailed image of Xiao and child-participation can be gained from a number of different methods or pieces that value expressive languages and facilitate children's "thinking about experiences and communicating these ideas with others" (Clark, 2010, p.32). To build our mosaic we looked at the group conversations, the drawings, the objective answers to the New Paragons questions, the booklets and the pictures of types of play as separate pieces of information. Each piece can be looked at individually or combined with other pieces to form an overall image of the children's opinions about Xiao and home-decision making. In the next subsections, we will describe data samples that constitute each of the focus groups' mosaic pieces.

2.2.3.2.1.1. Group conversations

Our ten focus groups sessions generated an extensive record of group conversations between the researcher and the children. While some pieces of our mosaic are composed of samples from each child's individual input, the *group conversations* piece accounts for the constructs of our group's social interaction. The transcription of our focus groups accounts for a 177 pages document that contemplates group talk.

2.2.3.2.1.2. Drawings

Some sessions had the group conversations as a starting point, moving on to opportunities for individual input. The children's drawings about their Chinese New Year holiday (in session one); the drawings

inspired by Huang Xiang's tale (where participants explain how they show Xiao to their parents – in session two); and the drawings made for their family balls (in session six). These drawings – combined with the children's individual explanations about them – constitute three extra pieces of our mosaic.

2.2.3.2.1.3. Yes/no question game on the 24 New Paragons of Filial Piety

The children's answers collected from the Yes/No questions about the New 24 Paragons of Filial Piety (sessions three, four and five) are also analysed as a separate piece of our mosaic. The comments children made about the Paragons appear in the *group conversation*s piece and were used to better understand their perspectives on the given behaviours. However, a compilation of their yes/no answers (organized in a graph) provided us with the opportunity of analysing patterns among participants' answers and identifying the most common behaviours observed by the children, for example.

2.2.3.2.1.4 Booklets and picture taking

The booklet about types of play – where the children analysed 11 different kinds of play and indicated what parents would say, what grandparents would say and what they [children] would do after listening to their family members, accounts for another piece of information that allowed us to create a graph and identify patterns. In the types of play session, rather than having the children explain page by page of their booklets, we took them for a tour around the school and asked them to take a picture of something their parents wouldn't allow them to play with. We also asked them what they would do after listening to their parents' advice/request. While the information from the booklets provides us with a larger amount of objective data, the open-ended questions offer a less structured possibility for the children to speak about situations in which their interests collide with parents'. These two different approaches to the same topic – negotiation of play – are combined to form another piece of our mosaic.

Finally, the booklets our young participants' filled about their daily schedule (in session ten) together with their explanations, constitutes the last piece of our focus groups mosaic.

2.2.3.3. Child-led interviews with grandparents

Although the child-led interviews with grandparents occurred as one of the activities proposed by our focus groups, we consider them as a separate data set because it brings data regarding a different group of

participants. All data encompassing the children's perceptions about the interviews are registered in the focus groups' transcription and are analysed within the children's data set.

After being invited to interview their grandparents (focus groups session four), the children took home an interview pack containing: one explanation letter from the researcher, one invitation letter (with a blank space to be signed by the children), three interview cards, one plastic ball and one permanent marker. Two of the interview cards contained questions and the third interview card contained a question/task. Aided by the question cards, the children asked their grandparents what Xiao is, and how grandparents taught Xiao to their children (our young participants' parents). The question/task card was an invitation to grandparents draw/write the meaning of Xiao on a plastic ball that would become a family artefact. The question/task card explained that parents and children would later add subsequent layers to plastic ball they were receiving, composing a family artefact.

Figure 10: Grandparents' interview pack[34]

Some interviews were delivered in video, some were delivered in audio-recording. Interviews were transcribed and translated into English. From the nine children who participated in our focus groups, five of them sent us a recording of their interview with one of their grandparents. From the 9 family balls we sent home, four of them had the grandparents' writing on it – 2 of those grandparents participated in the interview and two didn't – giving us qualitative data coming from 7 different grandparents in total.

[34] The grandparents' pack included: one explanation letter from the researcher, one invitation letter (with a blank space to be signed by the children), three interview question cards, one plastic ball and one permanent marker.

2.2.3.4. Family balls

Figure 11: Four layer Jade Puzzle Ball

The production of a family artefact was inspired by the traditional Chinese art of carving Jade Puzzle Balls[35]. Chinese Puzzle Balls (xiàng-yá-qiú 象牙球) date back from the 14th century and are made of several concentric spheres nested inside each other. The Puzzle balls may have 3 up to 15 layers, all carved from the same block of material in a way that the inner layers free-float inside the outer ones. (Tarnai, 2010; Sofield et al., 2016). Although there is little English literature about the symbolism of such object, I was introduced to this item during my holiday trip to Beijing, where they called it a Jade Family Ball. Typically, a dragon and a phoenix are carved on the sphere's outer layer, symbolizing male and female forces. (Schaumberg, 2017; Sparavigna, 2018). Sparavigna (2018) writes that "almost all of the symbols that we can find decorating the puzzle balls are associated with ensuring a long and happy marriage" (p. 3). By looking at the Jade Puzzle Balls I was instantly reminded of my research – and the different layers of meaning that each generation attributes to Xiao. We introduced the Jade Puzzle Ball to the children in session 5, using the object as an inspiration to create our Family Balls – an artefact that contained Xiao meanings as understood by each generation of participants.

Figure 12: Jade Ball and Family Ball packages – second layer

[35] The artefact may also be called Chinese Ivory Balls as they were made out of Ivory in the past.

The grandparents' and the parents' layer of the family ball was photographed before a subsequent layer was added. Previously to drawing on the third layer, the children made us a draft drawing on a piece of paper. Family Balls were taken home on the same session the children finished drawing on them. Draft drawings were kept as a record of the children's layer, together with videos of the children telling us about what they drew on their balls. The analysis of parents' and grandparents' layer is based on a series of photographs that captures all angles of the refereed layers. The analysis of the children's layer is made based on their draft drawings and the videos where they hold their ball and explain us about it. The collection of pictures and drawings composes our Family Balls data set.

2.3. Data handling and analysis

Because having an extensive and diverse data composition, it was necessary to ensure that data collection and analysis were "epistemologically congruent" (O'Reilly et al., 2013, p.221). Clark (2014) expresses some of the challenges involved in working with a "multi-method, polyvocal and participatory approach" (p.203) – challenges to which we could very much relate. In making sense of such kind of data, the author reinforces the importance of distinguishing between the views expressed by the different groups of participants. Clark also highlights the need to look for emerging themes from each of the research tools adopted (Clark, 2014). Our very first task in organizing our diverse data was dividing it into cases. Because the nature of our data (which is composed both by individual views and group constructions) as well as the sociological framework of this research, it made sense that cases were viewed as the generational groups – grandparents, parents, children - rather than the individuals or their families.

The table below details the types of data and analytic tools we used for each research material in each of the cases.

Cases	Data	Description	Tools
Grandparents	• Year of birth	Year of birth of 34 grandparents	Graphs - Excel
	• Child-led interview (2 questions)	5 interviews	Coding - Qualitative analysis using Nvivo
	• Family ball layer	4 balls (7 pictures capturing different angles and written information)	Coding

Parents	• Interviews (15 questions)	14 interviews	Coding - Qualitative analysis using Nvivo + Graph making in Excel (for more objective questions)
	• Year of birth	Year of birth of 18 parents	Construction of graphs
	• Family ball layer	9 balls (35 pictures capturing different angles in writing and drawings)	Coding
Children	• Focus groups transcriptions	10 sessions (177 pages of transcription)	Coding - Qualitative analysis using Nvivo
	• Family ball layer	9 drawings with children's explanation	Coding
	• Drawings about family celebrations (Chinese New Year)	8 drawings with children's explanation	Coding
	• Drawings about Xiao	7 drawings with children's explanation	Coding
	• How are my parents Xiao to my grandparents? – Children's yes/no answers to the 24 Paragons of Filial Piety	24 yes/no questions	Graphs – Quantitative data Excel + Coding of qualitative data
	• Types of play chart • After school activities chart	9 booklets with objective questions	Graphs + coding
		9 booklets with drawings, objective questions and the children's explanation about their drawings	Graphs + coding

Table 3: Data sets and analytic tools

Having our data divided into cases, we began a search for emerging themes within cases (Henderson and Thomson, 2014), searching initially for answers to research questions one and two – What Xiao is for each group of participants, and how the concept has changed over the past three generations. Only after knowing more about how participants understood and practiced Xiao that we could analyse its relationship with home decision-making.

Each of the research materials was analysed by using tools that suited the type of data at hand. To deal with more extensive data, such as interviews and focus groups transcriptions, we used the software Nvivo

12 to aid coding, working with participants' responses in finding emerging themes that would help us to answer the research questions. More objective data (such as birth dates, generational cohorts and objective questions) were analysed with the aid of Microsoft Excel, creating graphs and tables that helped us to identify patterns. By following a thematic analysis approach, the research questions guided our search, but the researcher has not defined themes beforehand. (O'Reilly, 2013; Henderson & Thomson, 2014; Smith, 2014). In choosing such strategy, we also considered Fernandes' (2016) and Sarmento's (2009) advice regarding research with children. Fernandes (2016) highlights that it is important to regard children as active subjects not only during data collection, being mindful of how we treat their voices in data analysis. According to the author, it is necessary to articulate epistemological and ethical precautions to prevent from hidden agendas and ideological assumptions over children (Fernandes, 2016). Sarmento (2009) also reinforces that researching with children implies undertaking the children's concerns and dilemmas rather than being guided by an adult-centred agenda.

With that in mind, our analysis searched from themes coming from each research material and then compared emerging themes within cases. During this stage of our analysis the first themes – illustrated in the scheme below – began to appear. A more detailed overview of such categories, as well as mini case studies that represent each of them, is explored throughout Chapter 3 Section one.

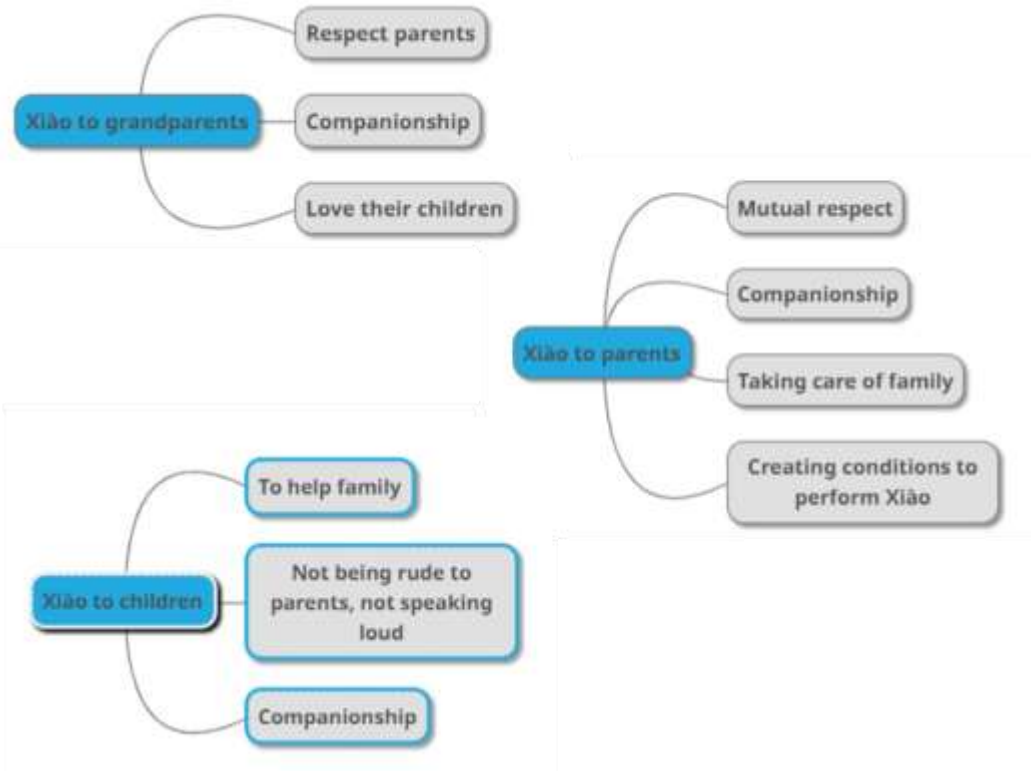


Figure 13: Emerging themes about Xiao meanings – Grandparents', parents' and children's cases

After completing within-case analysis we broadened our perspective, cross-referencing data and looking for patterns across cases. Hammersley (2014) highlights how useful a within-case and cross-case analysis combined can be. According to the author, within-case and cross-case analysis "provide different kinds of information" (p. 118) and therefore, there is much to be gained from combining both modes of analysis (Hammersley, 2014).

After gaining a better understanding of what Xiao represents to our participants and how it has changed over the generations, we started looking at the data regarding children's participation within their families. Although more specific questions about home decision-making were targeted at the second section of parents' interview and at the last four sessions of the children's focus groups, we scanned throughout the entire data set, looking again for references to child participation. As the child-led interviews with grandparents were short and more focused on Xiao definitions, our data regarding home-decision making comes from parents and children only. The mention of grandparents (either by parents or by children) was noted and analysed to try gaining some perspective on how grandparents play a role in the children's everyday lives. Such mentions are explored in Chapter 3 Section two, however, data concerning grandparents in home decision-making is rather limited. Our analysis focus then on the parent-child relationship and how everyday decisions are negotiated between parents and children.

By analysing patterns in parents' responses regarding child participation in home decision-making the following themes [Figure 14] emerged from the adults' responses. Chapter 3 Section two explores examples of each category of choice, as well as criteria used by parents in deciding how to deal with the different kinds of decisions regarding children. In looking for patterns within materials collected from the children, different categories arised from our data [Figure 15], offering a different (and complementary) perspective about home decision-making.

Figure 15: Home-decision making emerging themes (parents' case)

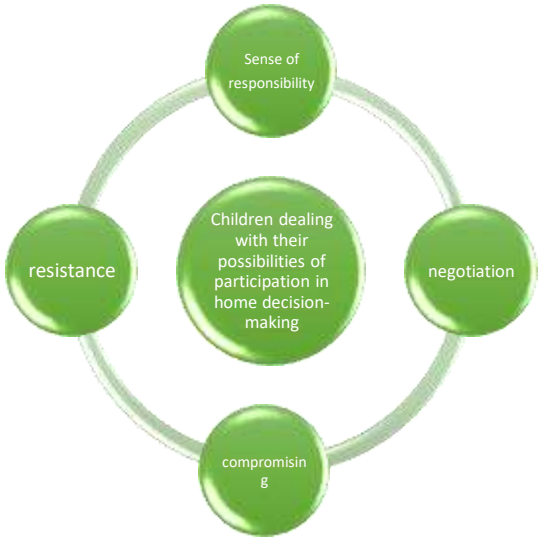


Figure 14: Home decision making emerging themes (children's case)

After exploring Xiao and home decision-making from both adult and child perspectives, we wrap up Chapter 3, moving onto our concluding thoughts. Chapter 4 pulls both analysis - on Xiao meanings and changes, as well as on the way the families handle everyday life decisions – to reflect on the relationship between Xiao and child participation in home decision-making.

3. XIAO AND PARTICIPATION RIGHTS: INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

3.1. Understanding Xiao from our participants' perspective

We have started this thesis by revisiting the Rights of The Child's history and the development of children's participation within the international discourse. Throughout the first chapter we have lay the foundations for discussing children's participation from a cross-cultural perspective and featured important philosophical and political influences in participation understandings within Chinese culture. In chapter two we have unfolded our research questions by deepening our cultural analysis of child's participation in Chinese society whilst focusing on Xiào (filial piety) as a cultural practice that regulates child-adult relationships.

In order to understand how Xiào relates to Chinese children's participation it is crucial to gain a better understanding on the concept of Xiào itself. Chapter one has shown how Chinese philosophical and political understandings have been changing over the past century. Chapter two has presented Xiào as an equally dynamic concept which doesn't remain static in regards of such changes.

In analysing our participants' understandings of Xiào, we perceived the need of considering their point of view through two different and complementary lenses: 1. Our three groups of participants (grandparents, parents and children) belong to different generations. 2. Our participants continue to develop their understandings of Xiao as they move along their life-course and perform different roles within their families. This first section will address family changing patterns across the three generations of participants, making connections with our data and then look for patterns among Xiao definitions coming from the three generational groups - grandparents, parents and children – and seek for shared meanings of Xiao.

3.1.1. From tradition to contemporary changes: Understanding the Chinese traditional family

To start talking about changing patterns in Chinese family arrangements we considered important to visit what Chinese scholars recognize as traditional family arrangements. Kang-Hu (1930) and Lee (1953) have written about their contemporary perceptions on the "Desintegration of China's Traditional Family" and how "China's ancient family system" was doomed to disappear in the face of modernization. In making such statements about the unavoidable changes the Chinese family was to face, both authors draw a similar and detailed picture of the traditional family structure which help us to better understand changes in the long-established Chinese family dynamics.

In the traditional patriarchal family "the husband is the master of his wife and concubines, and the father is practically a demigod to his children" (Kang-Hu, 1930, p. 41). Being the family's patriarch – the oldest male member of the family clan – represents moral and financial responsibility towards other family

members. His moral obligation with his family is to ensure that no member violates family traditions and that family keeps (or raises) its status face society. (Kang-Hu, 1930; Lee, 1953). Lee further describes the patriarch's moral duty by explaining that a father

> Naturally loves his sons and daughters just as much as his wife does, but socially he, as a patriarch, is traditionally entrusted with the responsibility for the rightful and proper conduct of other members in the family and also for their success in society. [...] In fulfilling his duty, the father has to exercise his authority to punish a misbehaving member in order not only to correct him (or her) but to maintain harmony and order in the household. Because of this, he is generally respected, but rarely loved. (Lee, 1953, p. 275)

In such manner, the husband's role is more associated with maintaining family esteem, while the wife's role is more associated with the family love and care (Lee, 1953; Kang-Hu, 1930).

Regarding the patriarch's financial responsibility, it does not necessarily mean providing for all family members – as the traditional Chinese family here described is the extended family – but fostering and protecting the family's financial harmony. Kang-Hu (1930) offers an example of financial responsibility towards one's clan by refereeing to a recurrent moral dilemma faced by Chinese politics:

> Once a member in the family or clan rises to a high position in the Government, his relatives and kinsmen will crowd his office seeking for jobs and pay. If he patronizes them to please his clan elders, he becomes responsible for their misdeeds and is criticized by outsiders; but if he rejects them, he may be even more severely attacked by his own clan and sometimes made so uncomfortable that he dare not return home. (Kang-Hu, 1930, p.45)

Thus, whereas being the one entrusted with the family's financial harmony may mean being the household's leading working force, the family's patriarch could instead (or in addition) be the one ensuring the family has been properly supported through other members of the clan. (Kang-Hu, 1930; Lee, 1953; Baker, 1979). Lee (1953) presents another example of the traditional Chinese family's financial management by mentioning a common practice among clans who identify a potential talented member:

> A brilliant son may be supported not only by the resources of his immediate family, but many a large and prosperous clan generally makes practice of raising enough funds to support a gifted member to gain fame and position. This is done mainly on the ground that members of the entire family or clan may all be benefited some day. (Lee, 1953, p.278)

Therefore, the clan's success through one of its member is not only regarded as financial growth, but also beheld as family moral triumph.

The size of a traditional Chinese extended family is mainly defined by the family's finances and the patriarch's ability in keeping it functional is paramount. Lee (1953) states that "disintegration of the household generally begins when the patriarch has become too weak to enforce the family's rules, and collectively owned

funds are used for private interests" (p.273). Traditional Chinese extended families can be both vertically extended (grandparents, parents and children) and horizontally extended (when all the patriarch's adult children, their wives and offspring live together). According to Kang-Hu (1930) it is an established custom that "when either of the parents is alive, no married sons should live separately." (p. 40). Depending on the family's economic conditions, it is not always possible to keep financial harmony among that many members. In this case, the eldest son is expected to live with his parents. (Baker, 1979; Chu et al., 2011, Hu and Scott, 2014). However "the most desirable solution is naturally to keep the house from being partitioned and to encourage as many generations as possible to live together" (Lee, 1953, p. 274). Nevertheless, whereas such traditions of maintaining a largely extended household were highly valued, families with more than 4 – 6 people and two generations living together were not common for peasants, representing more an ideal than the real life examples of the majority of the feudal Chinese families - (Buck, 1930; Engel, 1984; Hare-Mustin & Hare, 1986).

Patrinilearity plays a fundamental role in the household's composition as women are designated to move to their husband's house and become part of another family, whereas men should stay with their parents and bring their wife in (Kang-Hu, 1930; Lee, 1953). In this sense, the patrilineal logic also defines gender roles. Men will continue the family lineage by carrying the family's name while women will contribute with her husband's family name descent. As in Confucian philosophy "there are three things that are unfilial, and to have no posterity is the greatest of them all" (Mencius, as cited in Lee, 1989, p. 275), women are expected to have a male heir who will be carrying on the family's lineage. Lee observes that "unless this is fulfilled, her position in the family is precarious" (Lee, 1953, p. 275).

Another important aspect of the wife's role is to harmonically adjust to her new household. Lee (1953) describes the wife's position within her new family by explaining that

> In contrast to the situation in a conjugal family, her affiliation with her husband's family is considered to be far more important than the simple fact of her being a spouse. Because of this, she is rigidly required to comply with the traditions and rules of the family into which she has married, no matter how disagreeable and unreasonable they may be to her. Should she have difficulty in getting along with the family, not to mention any misconduct on her part, her husband, regardless of what his feelings may be, is forced to repudiate her to maintain the integrity of the family institution (Lee, 1953, p. 275)

Lee's description helps us understand the importance of match-making and the traditional arranged marriage system. From this perspective, more important than the husband-wife romantic relationship is the likelihood of the wife's adaptation to her husband's family – "Personal attraction and love between bride and groom were considered unnecessary, if not harmful, and precautions often were taken to prevent emotional involvements from disrupting family stability" (Engel, 1984, p. 956). Xia et al (2014) also indicates that individual adjustments in a marriage is merely secondary in relation to the family unit itself. In addition, Lee

(1953) reminds that demonstration of public affection between husband and wife is strongly discouraged. Within the traditional ideal, a marriage relationship is seen as "husband and wife in bed, but friends out of it". Lee considers that living in a shared household may influence this cultural trait "on account of the mother-in-law's feelings. Naturally she does not like her son to be taken away by another woman" (Lee, 1953, p. 277). Diamant (2000) also supports the idea that blindly arranged marriages helped protecting the patrilineal system by privileging mother-son bond over husband-wife relationship. Although the relationship between the wife and her mother-in-law is considered important to maintain household harmony, in the patrilineal logic the wife will always be in a disadvantaged position. "The training of the daughters-in-law and grand-daughters-in-law, is entrusted to their mothers-in-law, especially to the patriarch's wife." (Lee, 1953, p. 278).

Ancestor worship is also practiced in the context of honouring one's family and is not faced as a superstition, but as an attitude. Kang-Hu (1930) explains that "there is indeed no superstition; not even the religious principle of reward or punishment" (p. 42).

3.1.1.1. The family members named in Mandarin Chinese

Although the traditional family dynamics has been gradually fading as Kang-Hu (1930) and Lee (1953) predicted, the patrilineal logic still have its effects in contemporary Chinese society and is intrinsically carved into Chinese language.

To be able to better look at the mentioning of grandparents in our data – we will briefly explore the words that refer to each family member in Chinese. Child in Chinese is represented by the characters 孩子 (háizi). When speaking about a child's gender, the words "boy and girl" are created by adding either the male 男 (nán) or the female 女 (nü) character in front of the former block, becoming 男孩子 (nan haizi) for boy and 女孩子 (nü haizi) for girl. The word "parents" – 父母 (fumu) - has been kindly explained by Peppa Pig's grandpa[36]:

> You need to show Xiao to parents [父母 fumu] with ethics. Do you know what "fu" is and what "mu" is? 父 (fu) means father and 母(mu) means mother. That is why we call "fumu". (Peppa Pig's grandpa)

In addition, it is common – especially for children – to use 爸爸 (baba) referring to their father and 妈妈 (mama) referring to their mother.

[36] Peppa Pig's grandpa was interviewed by Peppa Pig. He explained the meaning of the word "fumu" to Peppa Pig, making sure she was understanding his explanation about Xiào.

When it gets to grandparents, family member terminology gets more specific. The grandmother and grandfather from the wife's side are named differently from the grandmother and grandfather from the husband's side. The children who participated in our research demonstrated their knowledge of it while we were going over their family tree:

Ms. Jessica: Great! Let´s see our family tree. (Showing the picture of a family tree on the screen). You might be a girl, or a boy (Ms. Jessica shows the two family trees)
Ms. Jessica: The first one, the bigger person is yourself. Right?
Ms. Kindness: 这下边是你们自己。(The one at the bottom is yourself).
Ms. Jessica: And then comes... daddy and mommy. (showing the tree branches, with pictures of fictional daddy and mommy).
Ms. Kindness:然后有爸爸妈妈生日去来的。下边是爸爸和妈妈。 (And then comes daddy and mommy. Down here is daddy and mommy)
Ms. Jessica: Mommy has her daddy and mommy (pointing at the branches on the mother´s side); Who are those?
Sophia: 外婆和外公。(wai po and wai gong. Sophia says the Chinese words for grandma from the mother´s side and grandpa from the mother´s side)
Ms. Kindness: 对 (yes)!
Ms. Jessica: And daddy has his daddy and mommy.
Ultraman: 爷爷和奶奶 (yeye and nainai)
Sophia:爷爷和奶奶。(yeye and nainai)
(Both Ultraman and Sophia want to show they know the words – they say the Chinese words for grandpa – yeye, and grandma – nainai – from the father's side)

Figure 16: Family tree presented to the children - focus group material

Looking at a Chinese dictionary and the characters' semantics, the character, 外 (wai) means outside, while 婆 (po) and 公 (gong) mean respectively grandmother and grandfather. D'Agostino (2021) explains that the two characters come together to mean 'outside grandmother' and 'outside grandfather' because "women in traditional China were seen as departing their own family and joining their husband's family through the process of marriage" (D'Agostino, 2021, Vocabulary for grandparents and older relatives, paragraph 1)

The block of characters for paternal grandfather and grandmother are each composed by a repetition of the same ideogram. While 爷爷 (yeye) means paternal grandfather, the character 爷 (ye) alone means "n. grandpa (father's side); respectful address for an elderly man; old term of address for a rich man; master, lord; god" (Chinese dictionary). A grandmother from the father's side is called 奶奶 (nainai), and while the

repetition of the characters makes up such definition, the character 奶 (nai) alone means "milk; breast; to breast-feed" (Chinese dictionary).

Differentiating the grandparents' family line is so common in Chinese that our bilingual focus group with the children had confused one of our participants at a time. During one of our activities I asked the children in English if their mom and dad showed love to grandpa and grandma. Sofia seemed puzzled with my question and instantly said she didn't know. Ms. Kindness then asked her in Chinese: 他们有没有用行为去表达孝道啊？ (Do they use their behaviour to express Xiao?). Sofia then detailed her question by saying 就是我不知道我妈妈对我外婆和奶奶好不好。我不知道。我不知道你说奶奶还是外婆? (I don't know if my mom treats my grandmas [wai po and nainai] well. I don't know. Do you mean nai nai [mom's mom] or wai po [dad's mom]? Even though Sofia concluded at the end that everyone in her family treated each other well, it seemed important to her to clarify the question.

3.1.2. Looking through generational lenses: the Chinese family across the time.

> Our generation is not that autocratic. We will listen to the children and we allow them to make their decisions. I think it can fit in Xiao. (Lydia's mom)
>
> When we were kids, our parents didn't teach us what Xiào is, but we knew how to do it. Nowadays the kids don't know. (Peppa Pig's mom)

References to the differences in dealing with Xiao across generations appeared already in the very first stage of our research when we were interviewing parents. Lydia's mom direct reference to the word generation and Peppa Pig's mom indirect allusion to the same concept are just a few examples of how our data has shown contemporary understandings of Xiao in tight connection to changes experienced by the three generations involved in re-creating filial piety concepts and practices.

Although Chapter One has provided a better understanding of social changing patterns in contemporary China – by focusing on political and philosophical struggles from which a new China has been arising – we will now continue to address Chinese contemporary history by taking a closer look at how such changes have been impacting the Chinese family. On that note, it is worth to explain the methodological choice of looking at the family structure within a thesis in the scope of Childhood Studies.

The first reason we look at the Chinese family across time is to give us an insight into the lives of children – even though we recognize that the information collected is far from giving a greater picture of childhood in its structural form. The absence of scholarly work that consider children as social group - especially in regards to the childhood of grandparents and the first generational cohort of parents (periods

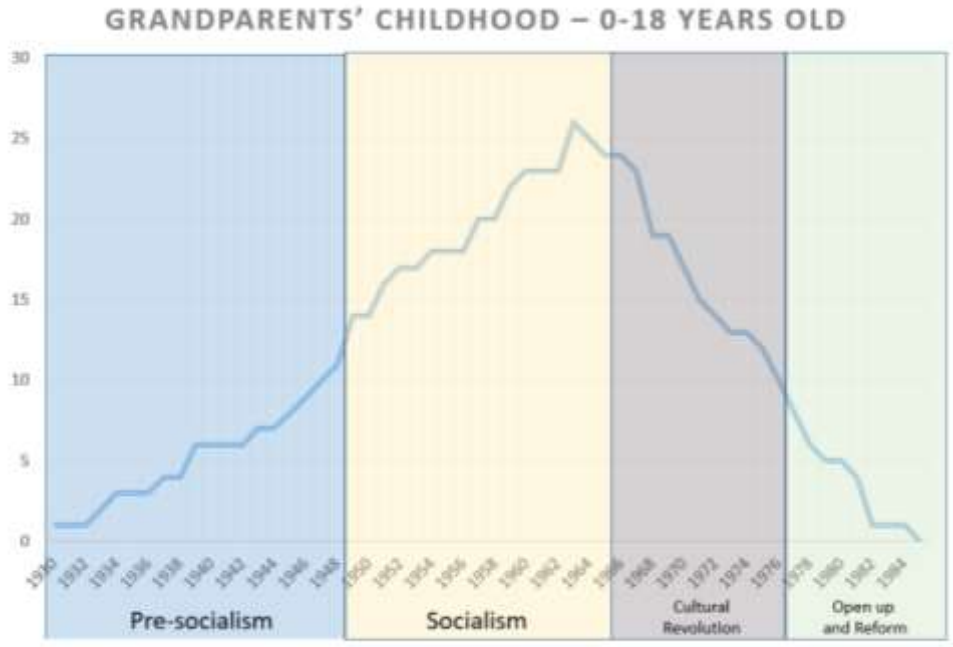
detailed in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.) – already speaks as an evidence of how low the status of young children was back then. It was not until the Post-Reform period in the 1990s that literature regarding children as a single statistical unit began to appear in the Chinese scholar scenario.

Additionally, the methodological option of looking at changes in family patterns across time comes from an understanding that Xiao is a concept that regulates not only the children's lives, but family relationships. In that sense it is important to understand the changes Chinese families have undergone since the time our older participants were children, until present time. Punch (2016) highlights the need of expanding intergenerational research in order to move forward with Childhood Studies. The author points out that "childhood studies has been keen to centre its focus on children, and less attention has been given to children within families" (Punch, 2016, p. 356). Though we too strive to assert children as active agents who are not merely viewed as family members (Holt, 2011; Punch, 2016) we see the value of inquiring into family relationships as a complementary asset that helps us to comply with the scope of this thesis. By investigating the impacts of Xiao practices on contemporary Chinese children's lives, we look at changes in family patterns while reminding ourselves that Xiao is a concept that lives simultaneously among different generations of family actors. In this sense, we regard Xiao within a "generationing" framework (Ansell, 2014; Huijsmans, 2016; Alanen, 2020) in which its meaning is constructed by inter-generational categories of participants (grandparents, parents and children) in ongoing interaction.

3.1.2.1. The grandparents' generational order

Belle's yeye – the oldest grandparent of the families participating in this study – was born in 1930. Although Belle's yeye was not directly involved in our data collection (he didn't give us an interview and lived far away from Belle) we considered the birthdate of the children's oldest grandparent as a starting point to look at changes in the Chinese family scenario.

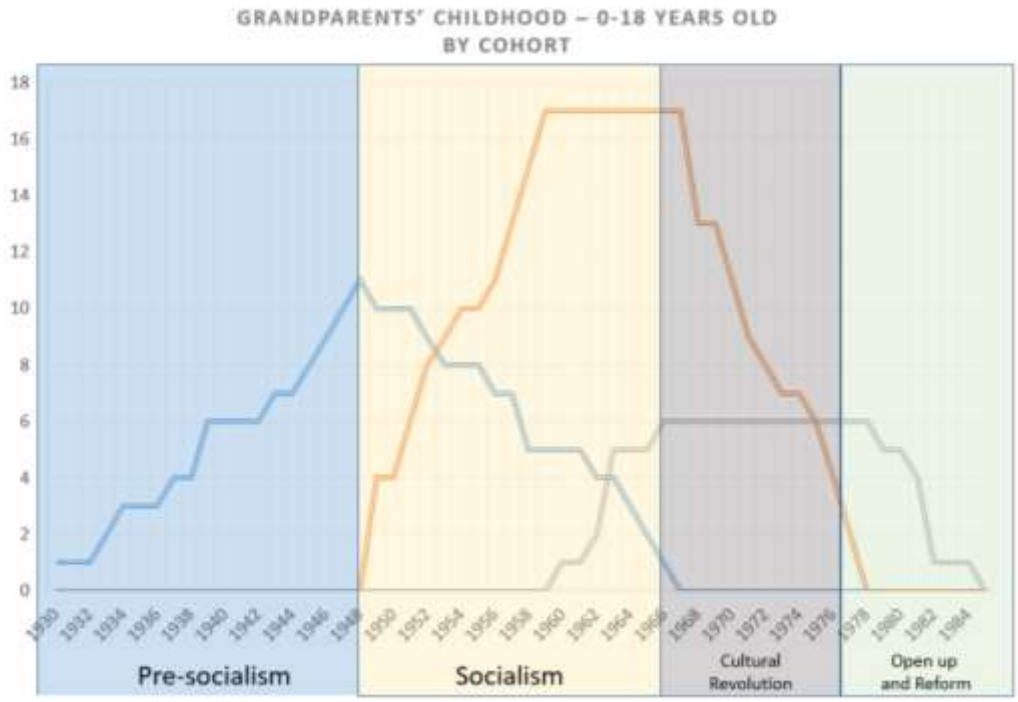
By looking at all grandparents year of birth and the changes occurred over the course of the years, we decided to analyse the impacts of the different historic periods on our participants life experiences by taking into consideration that Xiao is experienced differently depending of the role that each participant plays in the relationship. Therefore, we established the age of 18 years old as a cut-off date for understanding in which historic period the majority of our participants have experienced Xiao as children. This section will detail the main changes in family organizations during the periods shown in the chart.



Graph 3: Grandparents' childhood by historic periods - 0 to 18 years old

Based on the generational studies of Mannheim (1952 [1982]), Egri and Ralston (2004), Weller (2010) and Clark (2012) we consider that generation cohorts are defined by the cultural/historic experiences shared by a group of people with approximate age. In this sense, we followed Egri and Ralson's (2004) understanding and, rather than looking for common age groups or median year of birth as proxies for generation, we looked at the socio-historical events of China, trying to more accurately define generational cohorts to understand our data. Thereby, we divided our group of grandparents in three different cohorts as shown in the chart below. From the 34 grandparents we collected data about[37], 7 grandparents have experienced Xiao as children during the pre-socialist period, and 3 of them were born in the turn of one period to the other. That means that 1/3 of the grandparents (directly or indirectly involved in this study) were children either before the Republican period or at the beginning of the People's Republica era. As a matter of reference, we will be calling this group as the 1st grandparents' cohort. The 2nd grandparents' cohort – which constitutes the majority of grandparents - have experienced their childhood during the socialist period and the turn of the Cultural Revolution. A 3rd cohort was identified as being born in the last years of the Socialist period, spending part of their childhood during the Cultural revolution and experiencing the reform era still under the age of 18.

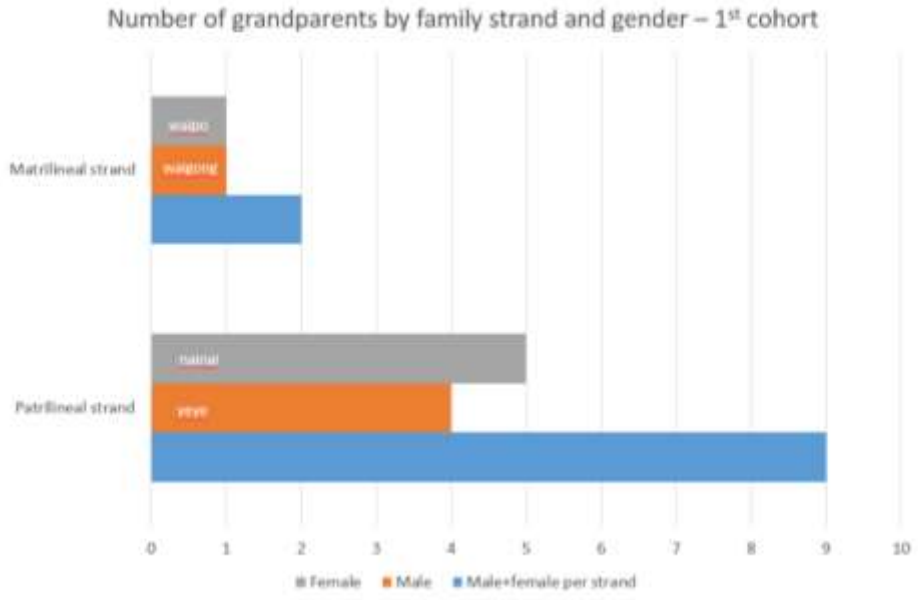
[37] We had 9 children in our study group, however, one of the families only declared the year of birth of 2 grandparents, which left 2 out of our account



Graph 4: Grandparents' childhood by cohort - 0 to 18 years old

3.1.2.1.1. The 1st grandparents' cohort – grandparents born between 1930 and 1948

The first cohort of grandparents accounts for approximately 1/3 of the total number of our senior body. By observing our data we noticed that the majority of the grandparents' belonging to this cohort were part of the child's patrilineal strand. Only two grandparents allocated in the 1st cohort – which happened to be a couple – were from the child's matrilineal strand.



Graph 5: Number of grandparents by family strand and gender - 1st cohort

This group of grandparents were born during the Pre-socialist period (1930-1948) and most of them experienced childhood not only during the Pré-socialist era, but also during the first years of the Republican period (1949-1959). Major changes in family patterns of both periods are explored as follows.

3.1.2.1.2. The pre-socialist period (1930-1948)

In the 1930's the traditional Chinese family was already under revision. At the height of the New Culture Movement[38], Confucian values of family and Filial Piety were being attacked by intellectuals who "equated Confucian virtue with cannibalism and pleaded with readers to 'save the children' from being 'devoured by their families'" (Naftali, 2016, p. 29). Such movement advocated for the parents' sense of duty towards their children – instead of the opposite that had been preached by Filial Piety over the past two millennia. National climate was however controversial. While Communists and Nationalists fought for power, the new family ideas introduced by the New Culture Movement (1919) were counter fought with the raise of a government-led movement – the New Life Movement (1934) - that advocated for the return of traditional Confucian values (Liu, 2013; Muhlhahn, 2019).

Kang-hu (1930) highlights that the transition from an agricultural to an industrialized society was beginning to play its role in the way Chinese families were changing:

> The Western nations became involved in the industrial revolution before China did and their old family system faced the same crisis and suffered terribly about half a century earlier than that of the Chinese. The [Chinese] family system is still in the process of transformation.[...] The clan organization with its old-style families will finally disappear from human institutions, and political, economic, or fraternal societies will take its place. To this general tendency China will prove to be no exception, though she may show reluctance in following suit. (Kang-hu, 1930, p. 46)

Other authors have also claimed industrialization's crucial role in family changing patterns in China and around the world (Goode, 1982; Xu and Xue, 2017). However, what is interesting to grasp from Kang-Hu's article on "The Chinese Family System" is: 1. His contemporary perception of family changing patterns in the 1930's. 2. His consciousness of China's similarities and differences in relation to other societies – which makes him draw the important conclusion that, even with changes brought about by modernization, China still has very specific culture characteristics on its own that "will simply emerge in a different form. The future world may thus be more cosmopolitan, but not necessarily uniform and monotonous." (Kang-hu, 1930, p. 46).

[38] In Chapter One, section 1.3.1.3. (Changing China: from a Confucian philosophical mind set to a market-oriented individualization process) we offered a detailed revision of the New Culture Movement (1919 - 32) and its influences in beginning to change long-established Confucian values.

Although China was experiencing its very first stage of industrialization (1911-1949) and was still considered mainly agricultural in the 1930's (Bui et al, 2003; Xu and Tang, 2019), families were beginning to experience changes among long-held traditional practices. Strictly arranged marriages begun to be negotiated between parents and their children – with however a substantial degree of parental involvement and control (Whyte, 1995). The estimated average household size was of 5.0 to 5.5 people (Yi, 1986; Whyte & Parish, 1984; Davis & Harrell, 1993) and 48.5% of Chinese families lived under the three generations/one roof scheme (Yi, 1986).

It is however worth to remember the danger of generalizing China's social indicators – either because it is extremely hard to find statistic data concerning the period under revision (as China had its first National Population Census in 1953) or because life styles highly varied across China's vast territory (Lin, 1997; Bramall, 2007; Cook and Halsall, 2012). Bearing that in mind, to help us to understand our participants' context, we sought both for socio-historical information that specifically concerned Guangdong province, as well as for national historical milestones that would have influenced these grandparents' generation in their family relationships as a whole.

Guangdong's political climate in the 1930s was still contentious. Dominated by the Chinese military since the 1911 Revolution – which overthrew China's last imperial dynasty – militarization of politics encouraged landlords to adopt a violence prone land administration, where military landlords "sometimes took the law into their own hands and tyrannized their tenants according to their whims" (Lin, 1997, p. 129). With unequal land distribution and peasants being continually oppressed by landlords, the country was divided between Nationalists and Communists. Gray (1964) estimates that "in the Canton delta region it is probable that only one-fifth of farmers were still wholly owner-operators" (Gray, 1964, p.213). Contributing for an even more chaotic scenario, the Japanese invasion in 1938 has also been highlighted by Potter and Potter (1990) as a traumatic period "when the Japanese invaded and captured Guangzhou and Dongguan city". (p.29)

Regarding Guangdong's economy, although the province was predominately agricultural in the 1930s – with strong production of rice, cane sugar and silk, Guangdong has been pointed as one of the pioneers of China's early industrialization[39]. (Lin, 1997; Yeung, 2001; Xu and Tang, 2019).

Lin (1997) indicates that Guangdong had high birth and death rates in the 1930s. The author attributes birth patterns to early marriage practices – with most women getting married between 15-19 years old, whereas in the male category both 15-19 and 20-24 age groups registered high percentages of marriage.

[39] Guangdong ranked in second place regarding China's early industrialization development, being classified just behind Jiantsu Province where lays Shangai. Xu and Tang (2019) present a comparison between modern and handicraft industry in 1933 in Guangdong per industry sectors, showing that water, electricity and gas were 100% generated through modern industrial processes – just as the military industry which also didn't depend on handicraft production at all. The industry of electric appliances was also considerably developed in the area – with more than 70% of its production being made through modern industrial processes. Other sectors such as machinery, metal products, textile and rubber & leather, figured between 20% and 50% of industrial production, whereas lumber, transport equipment, soil and stone, chemical products, clothing, accessories and instruments and others were mainly handicrafted.

The high death rates have been attributed to "poor nutritional and sanitary standards, the absence of medical breakthrough, the recurrence of natural calamities and, above all, political disorder" (Lin, 1997, p. 25) – resulting in both high infant mortality and short life expectancy. While Lin deals with the same issue of finding enough sources to present an accurate figure of birth/death rates, the author estimates according to his research that infant mortality in Guangdong was of 226 per 1000 newborns, whereas adult life expectancy was of 35 years. Although not writing specifically about Guangdong, other authors such as Buck (1930) and Chiao (1934) support Lin's figures of birth/death/marriage/life expectancy patterns in the 1930s rural China. Intergenerational co-residence was practiced in the grounds of both a practical survival strategy – as adding wife and children was equal to adding extra labour force – and a highly valued filial custom. (Lin, 1997; Zhang, 2004). In her anthropological research about filial piety in the 1930s Zongshan village (located in Guangdong Province), Zhang observed that even if a family had enough resources to split the household, no one would dare to do so under the charges of being considered unfilial. (Zhang, 2004).

Dragon's yeye – the only grandparent from the 1st cohort who gave us an interview – emphasized the aspect of respect in Xiao:

> Xiao means the son needs to show Xiao to parents, respect them, understand? Why we need to show respect to our parents? Because your parents brought you up since you are little and let you be tall, be strong, right? You should respect your father and your mother, right? (Dragon's yeye – Translated from Mandarin)

Another interesting point to note from Dragon's yeye interview is the indifference he pays to gender when it comes to respecting parents. When answering Dragon about how he taught Xiao to Dragon's dad, Dragon's yeye states:

> As for this question, your grandpa show them by himself. Because grandpa's mother is still here. I show respect to my mother in front of your dad. At that time, your grandpa was your dad's role model. This is the best way, right? (Dragon's yeye – Translated from Mandarin)

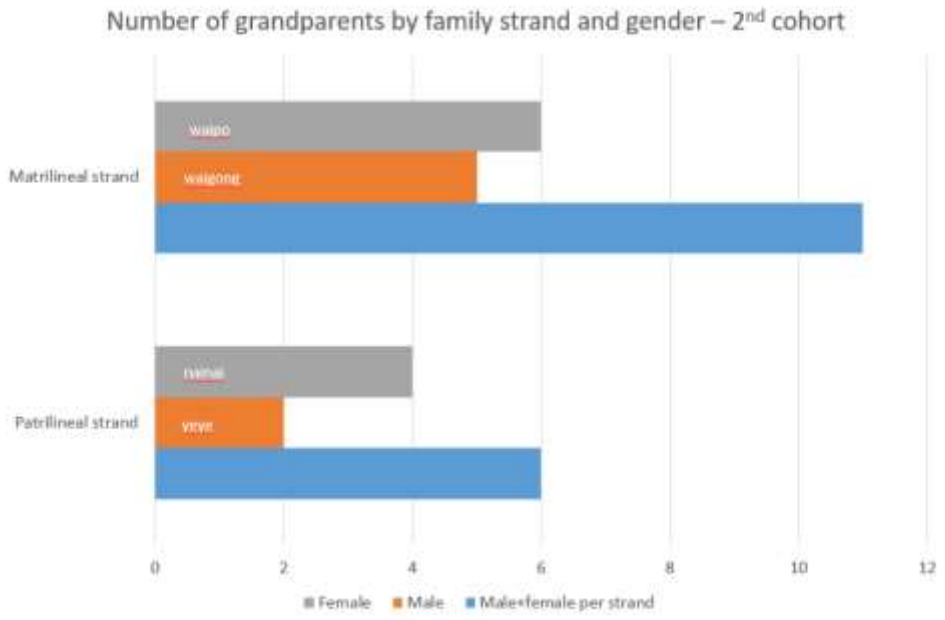
Although it is hard – and even risky - to try an association between Dragon's yeye view on Xiao and the events happening in the history of Chinese family during his childhood, we prefer to use his positioning in the first grandparents' cohort as a reference for understanding where his experiences begin. As previous sections of this paper have shown[40], women's position in the Chinese traditional family wasn't held with much regard and, though women's status hadn't change much during the Pré-socialist period, it would undergo

[40] See section 3.1 about the Chinese traditional family.

sharp changes in the subsequent chapters of Chinese history. With that in mind, we understand that although Dragon's yeye belongs to the first cohort of grandparents, he continues to experience further changes in the family structure throughout his life. Therefore, his definition of Xiao is one that has its first imprints coming from the Pré-Socialist period, but is also influenced by the following periods and life experiences he undergoes in the course of his existence.

3.1.2.1.3. The 1st and the 2nd cohort meet each other - The socialist period (1949 – 1965)

While most grandparents of our first cohort were under the age of 18 during the first years of the Socialist period, another group was being born at the beginning of the Republican era and experienced during their childhood both the Chinese socialism rise (1949 – 1965) and its decay (1966-1977). This second cohort (grandparents born between 1949 and 1959) accounts for the majority of our grandparents – 50% of our senior body of research was born in first decade of the Republican era. Most grandparents of this cohort belong to the matrilineal family strand.



Graph 6: Number of grandparents by family strand and gender - 2nd cohort

With the CCP's victory over the Nationalist party and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese family would undergo sharper changes. Land reform and the establishment of the first Marriage Law (both in 1950); agricultural and urban collectivization (1953-1957) and the enforcement of the Hukou Household Registration System (1958) had direct impact in the way families organized themselves after the socialist revolution.

The Marriage Law of 1950 was launched as one of the first measures of the new socialist regime. Attempting to abolish the feudal marriage system and raise the social status of women and children[41] (Diamant, 2000, Muhlhaham, 2014, Xia et al., 2014), "The 1950 Marriage Law challenged Chinese traditional beliefs and practices by encouraging free choice of marital partners, monogamy, and equality within the marital relationship." (Xia et al., 2014, p. 259). Within the socialist project of building a productive and liberated nation, the law prohibited: polygamy, concubinage, blindly arranged marriages, child marriage[42], child betrothal – and all exaction of money or gifts in connection with marriage - and gave women the right to seek for divorce (Cook, 1986, Diamant, 2000, Muhlhaham, 2014, Xia et al., 2014). According to the General Principles of the 1950's Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China

> The feudal marriage system which is based on arbitrary and compulsory arrangements and the superiority of man over woman and ignores the children's best interests shall be abolished. The New-Democratic marriage system, which is based on the free choice of partners on monogamy, on equal rights for both sexes, and on the protection of the lawful interests of women and children, shall be put into effect. (The Marriage Law, 1950, as cited in Cook, 1986, p. 64)

Diamant (2000a) highlights that despite its title, "the Marriage Law went far beyond matters relating exclusively to 'marriage.'" (p.178), threatening patriarchal power and altering family relationships within the intergenerational order. By prohibiting child betrothal and promoting free-choice in spouse selection, the law aimed at making marriage the personal property of husband and wife (Ocko, 1991; Davis, 2014b) and tried to minimize inter-generational interference. In his anthropological research in 1950's rural China, Yan (2003) accounts for increasing negotiation between parents and their adult children when deciding on a marriage partner. Furthermore, by enabling women to sue for divorce, the law empowered female individuals who would now find themselves having a say in the family – or else they would use their right and threaten to break their marriage ties. (Diamant, 2000; Xiao, 2014).

Land reform – which overlapped with the establishment of the Marriage Law – confiscated the rural property of rich landlords and redistributed it among the poor, levelling the villagers economic status (Yan, 2003; Chen, 2015). Furthermore, by taking individuals – regardless of their sex or age – to the centre of the socialist policy, the CCP strengthened the position of male and female young peasants who then shared the same economic status of their parents. (Baker, 1979; Diamant, 2000; Xiao, 2014). Although the immediate impact of land reform was enriching poor peasants and facilitating their dream of getting married and having their extended family (Yan, 2003), Diamant (2000) adds that the overlap of both policies – Marriage Law and Land Reform – had unintended and yet crucial consequences for family relationships. Because held virtually

[41] Not necessarily young children

[42] The 1950's Marriage Law set the minimum age for marriage as of 20 for men and 18 for woman (Cook, 1986; Xia et al., 2014)

at the same time, the author highlights how people's understandings of one policy were interchangeably applied to the other. In this regards Diamant illustrates that

> one official in the Shanghai suburbs argued, "during land reform we reformed land; in the Marriage Law we should reform grandparents. "And in a village in the Beijing suburbs, village officials proclaimed, "in this movement grandfathers have turned into landlords!" (Diamant, 2000a, p. 187)

Although such correlations might not had been intended by the CCP, popular understanding shows how the newly implemented policies contributed in shaking Chinese inter-generational power relations that had already been under attack since the turn of the 20th century.

Following Land Reform, the establishment of the agricultural collectives continued contributing in altering family patterns. Stripped off inherited property, power relations between the old and the youth continued to struggle. Women were encouraged to join the socialist cause and help the country to grow through their work-force. Elderly and child care – previously handled exclusively by family affairs – were to some extent shared with the state rural collectives (Yan, 2003; Xia and Zhou, 2003; Thøgersen and Anru, 2010, Xiulan, 2011; Chen, 2015). Yan adds that from the 1950s to the 1970s individuals "gradually gained more autonomy and independence in their private lives yet became dependents of the collectives and the state in public life" (Yan, 2003, p.16).

In the urban areas, land reform was held in a more gradual scale – foreign capitalists and anti-revolutionaries property was immediately confiscated by the state but private ownership and land transactions were still allowed. However, through strict control on rent and heavy investments in public housing the CCP gradually took over urban land as well. (Ding and Kanaap, 2003; Logan et al, 2009). Ding and Knaap state that "By the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, nearly all land was owned by collectives or by the state. (Ding and Knaap, 2003, p.1).

Similarly to the agricultural collectives, the Danwei system – an urban social scheme regulated by the citizens' work units. – was established in the cities (Lü, 1997; Zhao, 2001; Bray, 2005). Bray (2005) ilustrates the Danwei dynamics based on a Chinese informant's description:

> She lived in an apartment in a vast compound of five-story gray-brick buildings managed by her ministry. All her neighbours were also employed by the ministry. To go in or out of the one entrance, she had to walk past an army guard in uniform, and if she brought visitors into the compound, they had to register in the sentry box. The woman's nine-year-old son went to school in another building inside the compound; she shopped for groceries in the compound store; when the family was sick there was a clinic in the compound. (Bray, 2005, p. 5)

According to Bray's description it is possible to see the Chinese state paternalistic policies working also in the city. Urban citizens were seen as part of the state collective, being transformed "from consumers and employees into clients of a socialist state" (Davis and Harell, 1993, p. 51). More than simply a welfare

system, the work-units would function in a similar way as the village collectives, organizing the lives of urban citizens while being the primary institution to govern their salary, benefits, housing and food rations. (Davis and Harell, 1993; Diamant, 2000). By taking charge of functions previously attributed to the family, the state privatized the familial institution.

Moreover, with the enforcement of the household registration system (Hukou) in 1958, rural to urban migration became strictly controlled and nearly impossible to happen. The Chinese population was stratified by the state, which offered social welfare benefits to citizens registered under an urban hukou, and kept rural peasants tied up to their villages and to their rural registration status. (Davis and Harell, 1993; Diamand, 2000; Fan, 2008; Chen, 2015) Under the Hukou system, peasants who wished to move outside of their village were required to obtain a recommendation letter from their village officials and authorization from the receiving village – a double permission that according to Diamant (2000) was "usually impossible to obtain." (Diamant, 2000, p. 228). Obtaining a temporary working permit in the cities was however a possibility for the rural youth in life change pursuit. This floating population - who was allowed to live and work in cities but remained registered under their original rural hukou - could not access health care, state-housing, education, and other social and economic benefits offered to urban citizens. (Fan, 2008; Diamant, 2000). Permanent change of hukou type was only possible if a rural resident had been recruited by a state-owned enterprise, if one acquired a university degree or had been demobilized from military service (Liu, 2005; Thørgensen and Anru, 2010). Implications for the family structure were that urban families became smaller while the extended family survived for longer in the countryside (Davis and Harell, 1993; Yan, 2003; Thørgensen and Anru, 2010). Thørgensen and Anru (2010) illustrate that "while daughters normally married out of the village, sons and daughters-in-law would almost certainly be around when parents grew old and needed care." (p.68). Furthermore, in many villages, parents observed the principle of surname exogamy for brides which frequently meant that the bride must come from another village (Friedmann, 1985)

Belonging to the 2nd cohort, four grandparents provided us with qualitative data about Xiao. One of them was from the patrilineal strand (one nainai) and three were from the matrilineal strand (two waipos and one waigong). By exploring the data we noticed that the group of grandparents placed a strong focus on explaining Xiao by prescribing a range of attitudes the children should enact. The word "need" (as in should) along with prescriptions of how one should behave in order to show Xiao, appears in the responses of the four participants of this cohort.

> You need to show Xiao to parents (Peppa Pig's waigong)
>
> Regardless of whether the children are married or working, they need to visit their parents as much as possible. (Chimpanzee's nainai)
>
> You need to know your parents' habits. (Ultraman's waipo)

Don't shout at the elderly (Belle's waipo)

The prescription of proper behaviour towards parents, however, comes together with the mentioning of developing close parent-child relationships. Respect is still mentioned as a bottom to top attitude (children should respect parents), but love and togetherness appear as an important element of Xiao too. Belle's waipo writes Togetherness[43] as a definition for Xiao on Belle's family ball. Chimpanzee's nainai states:

> I taught my son to show respect to the elderly and to love the children. (Chimpanzee's nainai – Translated from Mandarin)

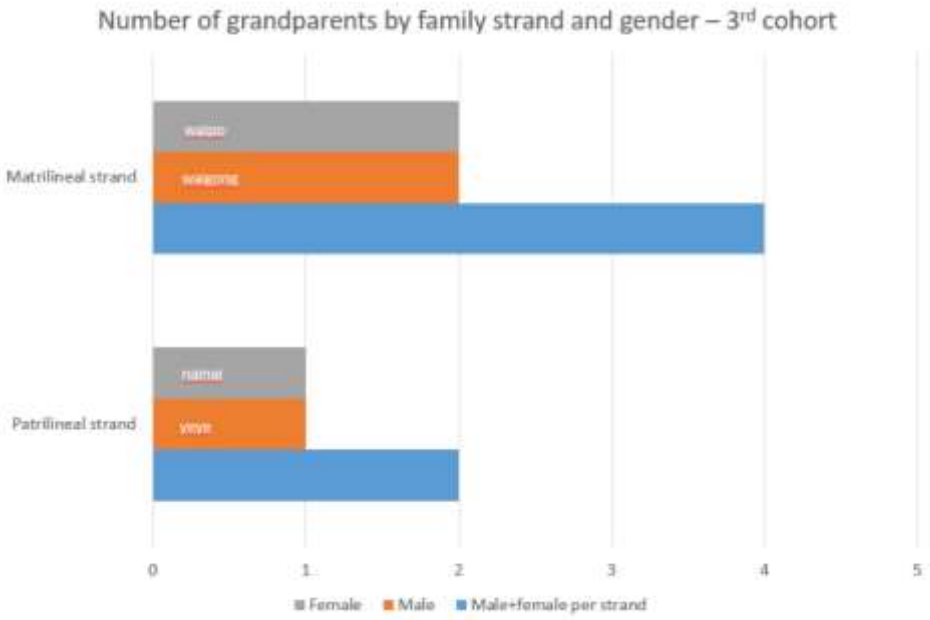
Another point that sparkled our interest was the appearance of the word "elderly" (instead of "parents" only) in two out of the four interviews of this cohort. By marking that Xiào needs to be demonstrated towards the *elderly*, our participants reinforce the three generations bond of Xiào relationships.

3.1.2.1.4. The third cohort of grandparents - The Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976)

In 1966 the youngest grandparent of our participant families was being born. The third cohort of grandparents – born between the last years of the Socialist era and the beginning of the Cultural Revolution experienced the Socialist decay, the troubled years of the Cultural Revolution and the beginning of Reform and open up to a market-oriented economy that transformed China – all before they turned 18.

This last cohort of grandparents are the minority of their generational group – they account for 17% of the senior family members composing this study – 6 out of the 34 grandparents we have data about. The majority of them belong to the matrilineal strand. The patrilineal strand figuring in this cohort is composed by a couple – Dinosaur's yeye and nainai. Interestingly, Dinosaur's waipo and waigong also belong to the 3rd cohort of grandparents – which makes them the youngest family participating in our research.

[43] 八九不离十(Ba jiu bu li shi) is a Chinese Proverb which literally translates as "eight and nine don't leave ten". The expression is found in Chinese lexicon dictionaries meaning, "quite close" or "very near" (TrainChinese online dictionary) and was translated as togetherness according to the context in which it appeared.



Graph 7: Number of grandparents by family strand and gender - 3rd cohort

During the period in which our third cohort of grandparents experienced their childhoods, Chinese families were going through the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976). Collectivization had failed in promoting economy growth and brought severe material deprivation – especially to the families in the countryside (Gu, 2018). During the years of the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong fuelled another attack to old values by calling upon young students to "wash away all the sludge and filthy water left over from the old society." (Diamant, 2000b, p. 284). Supported by the country's politics, the Red Guards movement empowered Chinese youth by entrusting them with a mission of teaching the "ignorant older persons" to be loyal to their country and to the socialist cause. Confucian values and patriarchy were again under attack and socialist inculcation was strongly promoted in schools across the country. (Diamant, 2000b; Clark, 2012; Gu, 2018, Hu & Scott, 2016). Han (2000) also explains how Chinese students under the Cultural Revolution were engaged in several money-making activities that helped them to learn about the socialist vision, but drove them away from learning the usual academics. Clayre (1984) describes the Cultural Revolution generation as "a generation of young people whose confidence in any code of belief had been destroyed, and who had also lost their chances of education" (Clayre, 1984, as cited in Cook, 1986, p. 76).

Qualitative data from grandparents born in the 3rd cohort comes from Dinosaurs' yeye interview and Sofia's waipo family ball. Again, respect towards the elderly is emphasized in Dinosaur's yeye words. Respect towards the elderly appears in connection with love towards the children – indicating a two-way street.

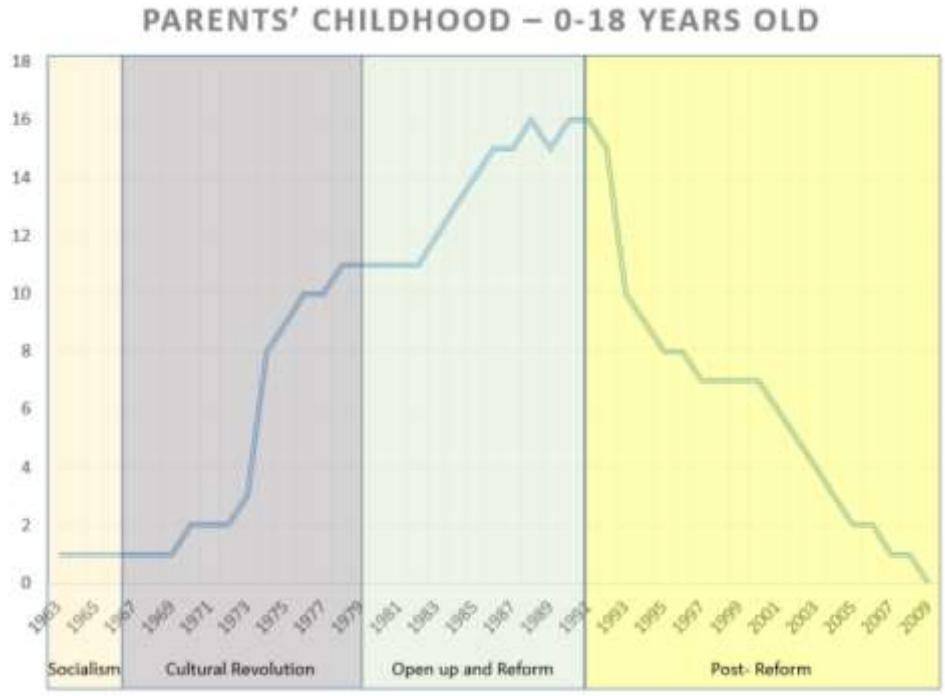
> I taught Dinosaur's father to learn more about Chinese traditional culture. Showing respect to the elderly, taking care of the children and being friendly to classmates. He needs to put Xiao in the first place, care more about the elderly and support them. He needs to respect the elderly and love the children. (Dinosaur's yeye – Translated from Mandarin)

Sofia's waipo didn't give us an interview, but she wrote the meaning Xiao assumes for her in Sofia's family ball. By writing the characters 陪伴 (which means to accompany) Sofia's grandma echoes some of the concerns also stated by grandparents of the 2nd cohort of not being left alone.

A peculiarity of data here is that the period in which our third cohort of grandparents is born also marks the beginning of a generational overlap. However, because Belle's dad (born in 1963) is considerably older than our second elder parent (next in line is Ultraman's dad, born in 1970), we preferred to consider him an exception in the parents' generational order. Nevertheless, we also pondered that, because Belle's dad didn't participate in our interviews (it was Belle's mom who talked to us) making such exception wouldn't affect the treatment of our qualitative data.

3.1.2.2. The parents' generational order

Our group of parents have their birthdates spread between 1963 and 1989. As illustrated in the chart below, a considerable number of parents were born in the last years of the Cultural Revolution and the majority of parents spent their childhood throughout the years of China's opening up and Reform.



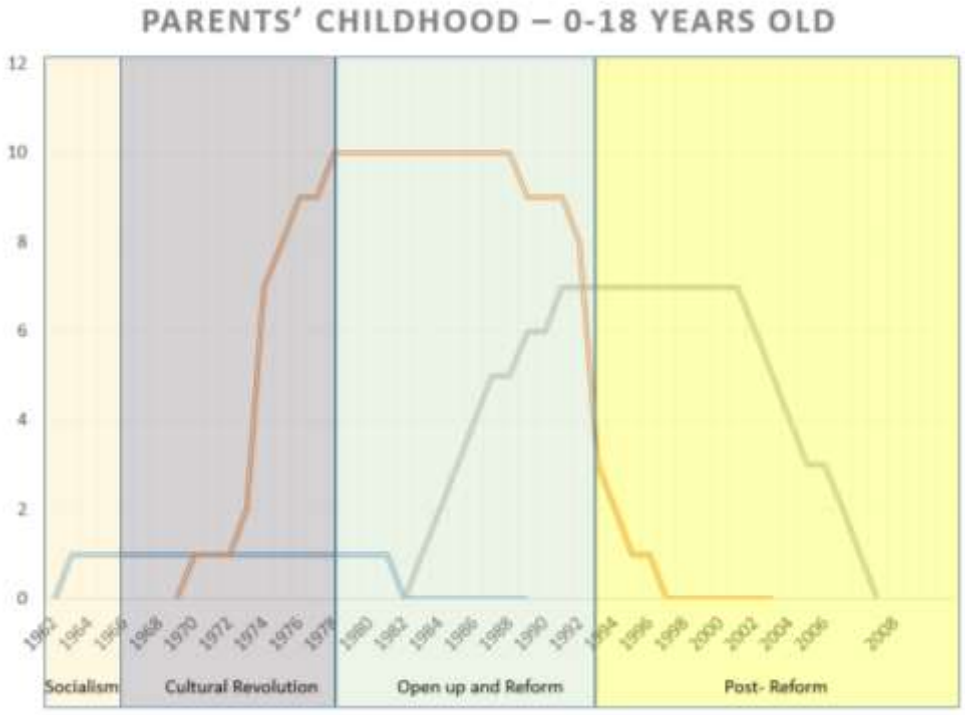
Graph 8: Parents' childhood by historic periods - 0 to 18 years old

Aside from Belle's dad, the parents' generational order has been divided into two cohorts. The first cohort accounts for parents born between 1970 and 1984, while the second cohort is composed by parents

born between 1985 and onwards. Such division has been inspired by Clark's (2012) work on Chinese youth and supported by other authors' understandings on the latest generations of Chinese citizens (Moore, 2005; Lian, 2013).

According to Clark (2012), the period between the end of the Cultural Revolution until the mid1980s – the time in which our first cohort of parents spent their childhood - was the period in which "the foundations for the flourishing of [contemporary] Chinese youth cultures were laid" (p. 53). A massive widening of popular cultural choices, including the rise of television, shaped Chinese popular culture in a mix of national and imported ideas - from movies, music, fashion and more (Clark, 2012). While Moore (2005) and Lian (2013) call the same phenomena, respectively, "the Ku generation" and "the post-1980s generation", both authors also refer to the influences that international culture plays in the way a new generation arises in China during the Reform period.

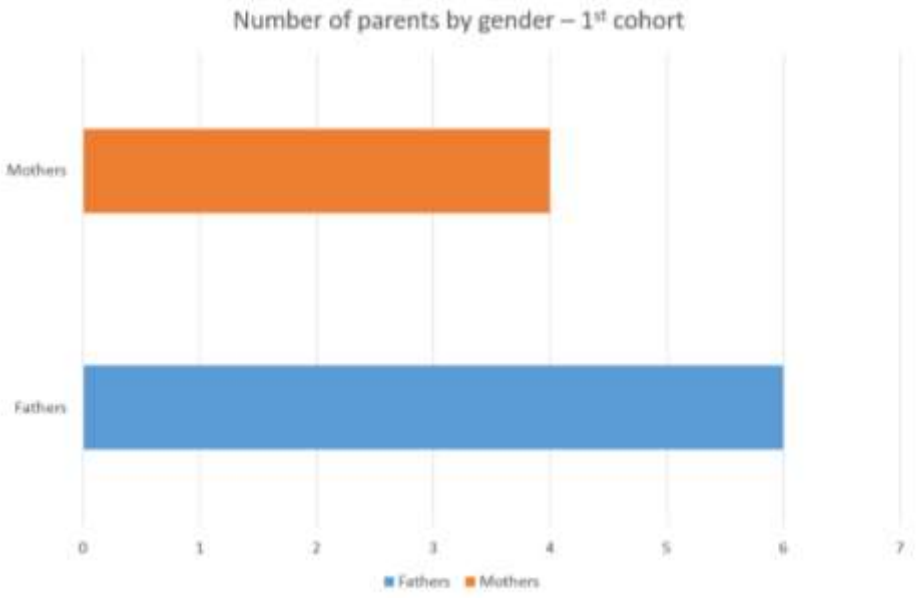
Finally, we found it useful to divide our group of parents into two cohorts in order to analyse the experiences of those born during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (who spent their childhood split between Revolution and Reform), separately from the ones born in the Reform period. The second cohort of parents were then born in the Chinese capitalist era and spent their childhood mainly during the 1990s and 2000s (a period in which globalization was playing its role not only in popular culture, but started to shape Chinese laws through the enforcement of international treaties).



Graph 9: Parents' childhood by cohort - 0 to 18 years old

3.1.2.2.1. The first cohort of parents - The opening up and reform period.

Our first cohort of parents was born during the Cultural Revolution and experienced the Socialist decay (explored in the previous sub-section) and China's opening up and economic reform. The parents' first cohort is composed by 4 mothers and 6 fathers who are not necessarily couples. It is important to keep in mind that our qualitative data regarding Xiao comes from the interviews given by the four mothers of this cohort. Although we have invited parents (fathers and mothers) to participate in the study as a whole, only the mothers came in for the interview process.



Graph 10: Number of parents by gender - 1st cohort

After the chaotic Cultural Revolution, China begun to set its way towards a market-oriented economy, abandoning some of the socialist policies set during the Mao Era and beginning to build what they have been calling Socialism with Chinese characteristics. It was during the Opening up and Reform Era that our youngest group of parents were born. In this section we seek for an understanding of Deng Xiaoping's new policies impact on family relationships.

Right after Deng's appointment as General Secretary of the CCP (1978), the new Chinese Leader announced the implementation of the Four Modernizations[44] program. As rapid population growth would hinder the CCP's project of building an independent and modern industrial state, the Family Control Policy[45] (also known as One Child Policy) was introduced in 1979 - shortly after Deng's first announcement of reform. (Liang & Lee, 2005; Pantsov & Levine, 2015).

[44] agriculture, industry, defense, and science and technology

[45] For nearly 30 of the 36 years that it existed (1979–2015), many exceptions applied, allowing about half of all parents in China to have a second child (Hesketh and Zhu, 1997; Nauck and Trommsdorff, 2005)

Although the Family Control Policy has been evaluated by many authors as one of the most controversial policies in the history of the People's Republic, it contributed to raise the status of many Chinese children born from the 1980s onwards (Anagnost, 1997; Naftali, 2016; Liu, 2021). By controlling childbirth ratio and promoting practices of "quality" childrearing, the Chinese government invested in disseminating scientific information about child health and psychology, calling upon the population to "reproduce less in order to nurture better" (Anagnost, 1997, p. 214). Such measures, in the long run, contributed to a shift in Chinese family ethics, placing greater focus on children – in contrast with traditional views of elders as the family core. (Xu, 2017; Liu, 2021).

Notwithstanding the fact that limiting the number of children per couple (in a society with traditional preferenc for male heir), reinforced discriminatory practices against girls in several areas of the country (ranging from female infanticide to sex-selected abortion, abandonment of baby girls and unreported births of female children) (Croll, 1985; Bannister, 1987; Greenhalgh, 2003), Naftali (2016) argues that urban female children enjoyed positive outcomes of family control. Free of competition against a brother, single-child daughters received greater parental support and educational investment (Fong, 2002; Tsui and Rich, 2002; Naftali, 2016). That seems to be the case of Sophia's mom, who mentioned the policy impacts in her education as a child:

> When I was a child, my mother always showed how she took care of her parents. But she and everyone also spoiled me as I am an only child in my family. I think that's why I didn't know what my responsibility was when I was young. So now I think it is more important to teach my kids to learn to share and know their responsibility. They cannot always depend on parents and put themselves in the centre. (Sophia's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Although Sophia's mom belongs to the second cohort of parents, the policy implemented in 1979 continued to affect the lives of children throughout the following years.

In addition, as urban women in the 1980s had greater possibilities of pursuing paid work than women did in the past, adult daughters were for the first time faced with the opportunity of demonstrating filiality to their own parents through financial support. (Naftali, 2016).

Whereas only children would enjoy more attention and care and have better educational opportunities, the Family Control Policy, on the other hand, further challenged patterns of elderly care. Couples with only one child – especially if they had a daughter – were suddenly faced with either the fear of not having old-age financial security ensured, or frightened with the possibility of not having enough children to care for their fragile old-age health (Friedmann, 1985). In the rural areas – even though the policy has been later relaxed to allow couples a second child in case their first born had been a girl – having a small family didn't appeal to the majority of peasants. For a peasant family – who needed the labour force of both boys and girls - more family members meant higher household income. The small family imposed by the government's new

policies was far from the ideal of having two sons and one or two daughters. Friedmann (1985) reports that by the end of 1981 approximately 40% of rural births were of third or even forth children.

Back in the cities – where most families fell under the one child rule – family control was in better alignment with urban couples' private interests. Experiencing a shortage in housing options, having only one child would make couple's daily life arrangements easier. Moreover, urban citizens were in their majority state-owned enterprise employees - and enjoyed retirement benefits that their rural counterparts did not. Not having to worry about financial support in their old age made urban couples more inclined to agree with family control measures. In addition, while more children generated higher household income in the villages, the same didn't apply to city life. Whereas rural children would become economically independent by the age of ten, an urban child was an additional consumer, financially dependent on their parents until about the age of sixteen (Whyte & Parish, 1984; Friedmann, 1985). Such particularities do not however mean that the Family Control Policy had not caused urban families any worries or anxiety. Both Friedmann (1985) and Naftali (2016) describe the most common reservations among urban couples as the fear of raising a spoiled child and concerns about old-age loneliness.

However, as we can see from some of the parents' interview, not all participants born during the Family Control rule were raised in nuclear families.

> I also lived in a big family when I was a child. My grandpa has two sons. They lived together so we get along well with my uncle's children. (Snake mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Another important milestone for family relationship was the promulgation of a revised version of the Marriage Law (1980). The government, which in prior years had been already investing in campaigns that promoted later marriage and lower fertility, raised the minimal marriage age to 22 and 20 - for men and women respectively. The Law also reinforced the equal status of husband and wife and allowed the married couple to choose which family name the newly established household was going to adopt. For the first time it was possible that couples would be linked to the wife's family instead of the husband's – if they wished to do so. (Cook, 1986). In fact, we learned from some parents that their family living arrangements were of an extended family that shared living quarters with the wife's parents.

> Because we live in Dongguan with my parents while my husband's parents live in Guangzhou. We will get together and have a big meal every New Year's Eve no matter how busy they are. (Ox mom, Translated from Mandarin)

> My parents have been living with us in Dongguan for 18 years. [...] My husband is very traditional, so he does well in this [Xiao]. [...] I think my husband does well, otherwise, we wouldn't be able to live together with my parents for such a long time. (Belle's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

In line with the government's project of raising Chinese woman's status, the revised Marriage Law of 1980 gave husband and wife – as well as parents and children – the right to inherit each other's property[46] (The Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China, 1980). Under the feudal system, family property would be passed onto sons and not daughters. Widows did not have lawful right over their dead husband's property as traditional customs dictated that the elder son would take over the family household if the patriarch passed away (Cook, 1986)

Changes in divorce regulations had also granted more freedom to individuals in deciding about the termination of their relationship. Under the 1950s Marriage Law both men and women could file a divorce petition, however, state mediation – which held the final say and tried at its best to keep marriage ties – was mandatory. Cook (1986) states that especially during the years of the Cultural Revolution divorces were very difficult to obtain. The 1980s Marriage Law kept mediation as a requirement, but specified that "In cases of complete alienation of mutual affection, and when mediation has failed, divorce should be granted" (The Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China, 1980, Article 25). Xia et al (2014) and Davis (2014b) also reinforce the New Marriage Law's approach as being more liberal, giving individuals – and not the state – the final say about their relationship ties.

In regards of intergenerational relationships, the 1980 Marriage Law kept 1950's regulations of reciprocal duties between parents and children into caring for each other. By stating that "Parents have the duty to rear and educate their children; children have the duty to support and assist their parents" (The Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China, 1980, Article 15), the state officially withdraws from primary responsibility towards elderly and delegates such job to the family (Cook, 1986; Davis and Harell, 1993; Xia et al, 2014). Although elderly and child care practices proposed by the PRC in the 1950s seemed to be a start into gradually taking Chinese society towards a broader welfare state, the government "soon discovered that the communes were an inefficient and expensive method of caring for children and the elderly. Hence, this prime responsibility was returned to the family" (Cook, 1986, p. 74). The notion of children caring for their elders emerges strongly from our data throughout the three generational groups and will be further explored in section 3.3. However, to make a link between the events experienced by the first cohort of parents and some of these participants' thoughts in relation to elderly care we can take Dragon's mom words:

> I think the most important of Xiào is to take care of elders (Dragon's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

In a more detailed manner, Lydia's mom also expresses her thoughts on the importance of caring for the elders:

[46] Cook (1986) reminds that "property" aimed mainly at addressing personal property - and not necessarily land - as most land belonged to the Chinese government.

> We need to show respect to them. Because when they are getting old, they will lose their abilities to work gradually. They will rely on us more because their abilities will deteriorate day by day. (Lydia's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

In addition, with the adoption of a Household Responsibility System (1983)[47], the communes' role was progressively redefined and families were again responsible for their own earnings – and consequently for the management of their personal affairs. As collectivization of agriculture had lead rural areas to famine instead of development, such changes "benefited both the villagers and the state" (Yan, 2010, p. 19), increasing motivation for productivity through differentiated earnings according to the household performance. In a similar manner, urban citizens also began to gradually experience economic transition. The so called "Iron Rice Bowl" – a term used in reference to job security and life-time benefits enjoyed by state-owned enterprise's workers – was doomed to slowly disappear. The change, however, was not abrupt. Aware that rapid and widespread privatisation could cause social disruption, the state tried to create the necessary conditions for change and held SOE[48] reform gradually throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Ding et al., 2000; Parker & Pan, 2007). During economic reform – and more sharply during the 1990s – millions of workers gradually lost their pensions, medical care and other benefits (Yan, 2010). Such reforms – both in urban and rural settings - have impacted Chinese society and promoted methods of management based on individual performance that emphasized monetary resources (Fewsmith, 2008; Yan, 2010).

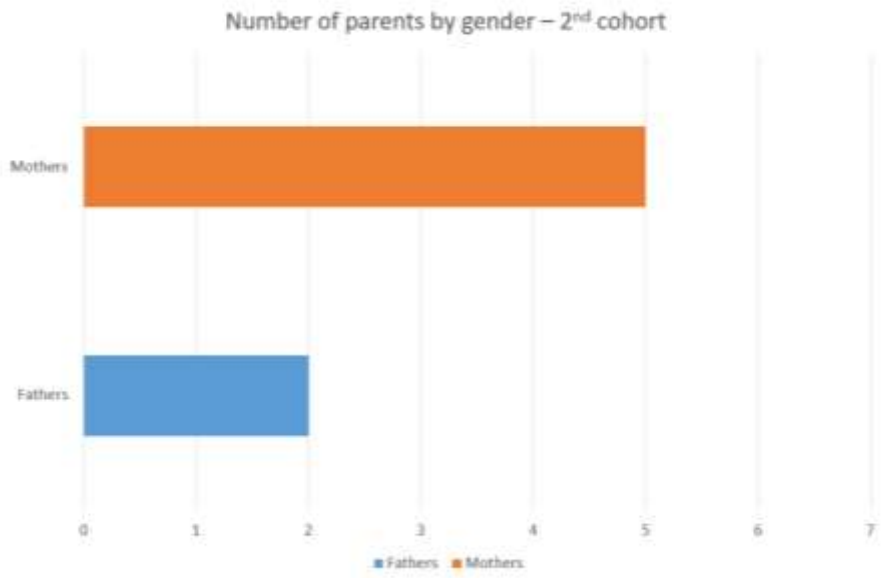
Western influence on "films, novels, television programs, music, fashions and foods" were also a relevant outcome of the 1980s reform. After 30 years of strict communist rule in which China had been relatively closed to the outside world, economic reform threw China into the broader international market. The 1980s Chinese youth "keenly embraced a mix of international and local cultural practices" (Clark, 2012, p.6), recreating Chinese culture in their own contemporary terms. While the older generation was concerned with "spiritual pollution" brought by international influence, young Chinese citizens adopted new hairstyles, changed fashions and explored diversified musical options as a way of expressing difference. (Yan, 2010; Clark, 2012).

3.1.2.2.2. The post-reform generation (1990 - onwards)

The years following the Chinese Economic Reform brought about a raise to the Chinese population living standards. Lim (2014) states that with incomes rising exponentially due economic liberalization "Everyone got richer, much richer" (p.207). That is the scenario in which our second (and last) cohort of parents were

[47] De-collectivization of agriculture
[48] SOE – State Owned Enterprise

born. The second cohort of parents is composed by 5 mothers and 2 fathers. The fathers born in the Post-reform generation were married to mothers within the same generational cohort.



Graph 11: Number of parents by gender - 2nd cohort

It was from this period on that our participants' city underwent sharper changes towards becoming a less rural and more urbanely developed town. Brammal (2007) mentions Dongguan as a classical example of rural industrialization in the Guangdong area. Being accorded county status until September 1985, Dongguan was under the jurisdiction of Huiyang prefecture until 1988, when it then became its own independent city (Vogel, 1989; Yeung, 2001). Dinosaur's mom – our case study's youngest parent who was born in 1989 – mentions the changes in lifestyle when comparing her childhood experiences to her son's current reality.

> When I was a child, there were many fields around us. And my father had a field. He always asked me to work there, so I would understand how hard it is the farmers work in the field. We had many chances to know about the farming and we could climb trees, so we could learn the hardship of patience from our life experience. But now life is getting better, and there is no field in the city. (Dinosaur's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Clark (2012) also reinforces that acceleration of income growth had dramatically changed Chinese citizens' lives during the 1990s. According to the author "Private home ownership, private cars, and open choice in finding employment had become established by the turn of the millennium." (Clark, 2012, p. 6). With raising living standards, life expectancy also increased. Davis and Harell (1993) draw attention to the fact that by mid 1980s it became "common for both spouses to remain alive, active, and self-sufficient long

after their fifties" (p. 147). Such changes had direct impact in the Chinese household composition, leading to an increased number of two-person households composed by aged couples, together with the rise of a three-person household composed by parents and one child. (Davis and Harell, 1993; Xu & Xue, 2017). Though born within the first cohort of parents, Dragon's mom reflects about changes in co-residence customs.

> In traditional China, Xiào is to wish children could take care of elders by living together. To foreigner, they may think to bring up children is to hope them become an independent person rather than to live with them together. I could not accept the foreigner's view when I was young. But after I have children, I know that my children will grow up and have their families. They will be an independent and valued people in this social. So I will bless them even though they are not with me. I will not ask them to stay with me, which I think is mistake to Xiào. (Dragon's mom – Translated from Mandarin).

Such changes into the household composition did not necessarily weakened family ties, but have certainly changed the way in which Chinese families organized themselves. Davis and Harell (1993) propose the term "Networked Families" to describe the "multifaceted interdependency" observed in contemporary Chinese kinship in which parents and their married children live apart. According to the authors, contemporary Chinese families tend to cultivate a very close mutual contact that is not the norm in the west. David and Harell highlight that such interdependency can be particularly seen in relation to the interchange of gifts and money occurring between parents and their married children. Xu and Xue (2017) also remind us that despite increased household split tendencies, the three generations still tie together by Chinese law that entrusts child and elderly care primary responsibility to the family.

The Networked Family concept (Davis and Harell, 1993) also helps us to understand data divergence regarding household composition in our case study. Whereas 4 out of 9 parents declared their family lived together with at least one of the child's grandparents, data collected from the children showed different results. Belle and Dragon confirmed their parents' view on household composition, telling us they lived with one of their grandparents. While Lydia's and Princess Pink's moms specified their household composition as "child, sibling(s), parents and grandparents", we learned from the children that grandparents did not live in the same house, but in the same area.

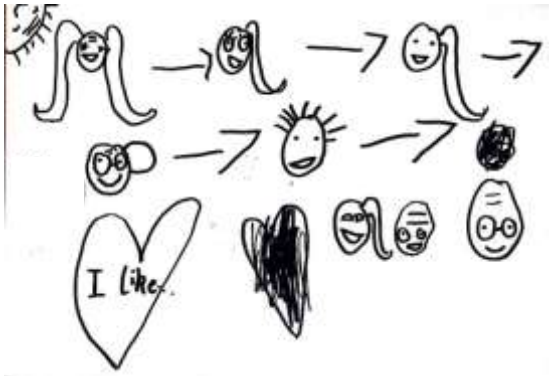


Figure 16: Lydia's family tree

Lydia: This is my sister. This is me. This is my mommy. This is grandma, is mommy's mother. And this is my daddy. This is grandpa, is mommy's daddy. And this is my daddy's mommy and daddy.

Ms Jessica: Where do they live?

Ms Kindness: 他们住在哪？(Where do they live?)

Lydia: 我奶奶不是和我住在一个房子的。可是她住在万科高尔夫。(My grandma [nainai - dad's mom] doesn't live in the same house as me. But she also lives in Wanke Golf Garden [same condominium as Lydia]

Ms. Kindness: 你们住在附近对不对？(They live nearby. You live near them, right?)

Lydia: 嗯。(Yes.)

Ms Kindness: What about your grandma and grandpa from your mommy?

Lydia: 住在那个新风。(They live in Xinfeng.)

Ms Kindness explained: It's a street in Dongguan, not the same area as Lydia.

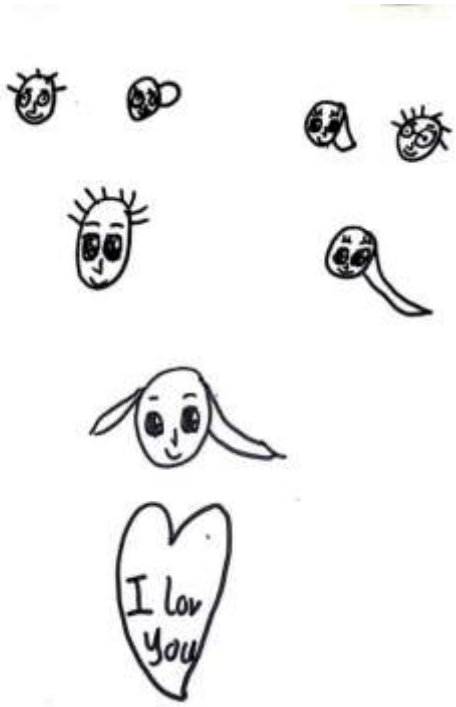


Figure 18: Princess Pink's family tree

Ms Jessica: Can you tell us about your drawing? Who is that?

Princess Pink: Me. And my mommy and daddy. And my mommy's mommy and daddy. And my daddy's mommy and daddy.

Ms Jessica: This grandparents. Where do they live? (Ms Jessica pointed at the grandparents from her mom)

Princess Pink: Qingxi.

Ms Kindness: It is a town in Dongguan.

Ms Jessica: And this grandparents. Where do they live?

Princess Pink: I don't know?

Ms Kindness: 是不是也住在你家附近，住在东城？因为你妈妈上次跟我说。(Do they live near you? In Dongcheng?)

Princess Pink: 对。 (Yes.)

As opposed to Lydia's and Princess Pink's family responses, Dinosaur's parents specified their household composition as "child, sibling(s) and parents" whereas Dinosaur had a different take on his family living arrangements:

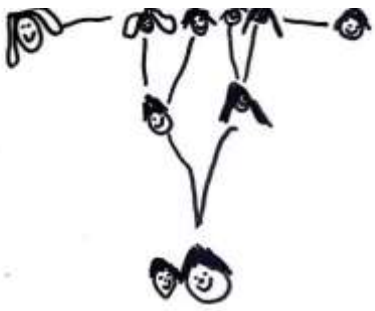


Figure 19: Dinosaur's family tree

Dinosaur: This is me and my sister.
Ms Jessica: And here?
Dinosaur: This is my dad and this is my mom. This is my dad's mom and this is my dad's dad. This is my dad's friend [pointing at the person we drew beside his grandparents].
Ms Jessica: Who are those?
Dinosaur: This is my mom's dad and this is my mom's mom. And this is my mom's friend [pointing at the person we drew beside his grandparents]
Ms Jessica: Where do they live, grandpa and grandma?
Dinosaur: In their house.
Ms Kindness: Dinosaur, 爷爷奶奶住在哪里啊？爸爸的妈妈和爸爸住在哪里？(Dinosaur, where do you grandparents of you dad live?)
Dinosaur:在家里。(At home.)
Ms Kindness:跟你一起住吗？(Do they live with you?)
Dinosaur:对。(Yes.)
Ms Kindness:那么妈妈的爸爸妈妈呢？外公外婆呢？(What about mommy's daddy and mommy?)
Dinosaur:在家里。(At home.)
Ms Kindness:也跟你住吗？(Also live with you?)
Dinosaur:嗯。(Yes.)

We later learned that Dinosaur's grandparents lived in the same area as Dinosaur. They often picked Dinosaur up from school and took him home, holding very close family ties. "Mommy's and daddy's friends" who appeared in his drawing could be his aunt and uncle, who also lived nearby and were frequently around.

Such divergences give us insight into the complexity of contemporary co-residence understandings within the Chinese family. In this sense, the idea of a "networked family of separate but linked households" (Davis and Harell, 1993, p. 49) seems to make more sense than the idea of co-residence simply defined as two or three generations living together.

Adding on another perspective on co-residence, Xu and Xue (2017) suggests that rather than analysing the changes in contemporary Chinese family based on census figures only, we should look at studies from the perspective of the family life cycle. According to the authors, studies that take into consideration the different stages of life confirm that, despite the raise of nuclear families in China, both young Chinese couples and the elderly mainly live in an extended family. Xu and Xia (2014) state that changes from nuclear to extended family in China are "fluid and somewhat elusive" (p.36). It means that, depending current family needs – of taking care of new-born children, or aged parents for example – family members will move together

or live separately during the different stages of the family cycle. (Bian et al., 1998; Xu and Xia, 2014). When mentioning the companionship aspect of Xiao, Lydia's mom helps us to understand how a family member illness plays a role in changing everyday family routines.

> You will feel Xiao especially when parents get sick. [...] Recently, my dad was confirmed his diagnosis of lung cancer. When we experienced this, we decided to try our best to stay more with them. Just like my mother-in-law, after my father-in-law passed away, she has never asked anything from us, no support or money whatsoever. All she wants is for you to visit her more, chat with her and have dinner with her. (Lydia's mom [1st cohort of parents] – Translated from Mandarin)

Besides the impact of Economic Reform into transforming family living arrangements, opening up to the international market has also brought China closer to the global human rights discussion (Keith, 1997). A number of laws promulgated during the 1990s have contributed for a change of mind-set in the way each one of the actors involved into filial piety relationships should be viewed and treated. Laws such as The Minors Protection Law (1991), the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women (1992) and the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (1996) lay the foundations for contemporary understandings of children, women and elderly rights in China (Keith, 1997; Naftali, 2009).

The first of these three groups to have a document tackling their specific rights were children. According to UNICEF data (2014), the Chinese government ratified the World´s Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) in 1991[49]. Right after, China promulgates its first law concerning specifically children. Though many authors indicate that empowering youth has been a focus of the Chinese Communist Party since the beginning of the Republican Era (MacFarquhar, 1997; Diamant, 2000; Muhlhahan, 2019), such focus had been placed on strengthening the power of youth, but not necessarily centred around raising the social status of young children.

Although 1991 Minors Protection Law maintained its civic focus on "training" children "to be builders of and successors to the socialist cause with lofty ideals, sound morality, better education and a good sense of discipline" (Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors, 2007), the document was innovative in scope and language by recognizing people under the age of 18 as a separate social group who is entitled to protection and respect. For the first time, protection of children's rights are regarded as a common duty of Chinese society – and not addressed as a simple matter of family affairs. (Keith, 1997; Naftali, 2009).

Following up with human rights of specific groups, China promulgates the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women Act in 1992. By the information previously presented in this chapter, it is undeniable that the Chinese government has been working on raising the status of Chinese women since the proclamation of

[49] The Chinese government ratified the CRC under the prerequisite that the Convention would agree with Article 25 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China on family planning. By this means, the government of China safe-conducts Article 6 of the Convention (on the right to life and the highest child survival and development).

the People's Republic. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by China in 1980, however, the 1992 law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women constitutes a milestone in terms of legislation concerning specifically the rights of Chinese women. China regards such law as the first official document to cover "all aspects of women's social and productive life, [...setting out] the political, cultural, educational, labour and economic rights of women, as well as their rights with regard to marriage, family and the person" (UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 1997, p. 6)

Reports submitted to the UN regarding both conventions (the CRC and the CEDAW), as well as the UN Committee concluding observations, help us to understand both the positive changes such laws have produced in Chinese society, and the challenges yet to be addressed concerning those two groups.

China's second report on the CEDAW (1997) states that the laws that have been put in place guarantees equality between women and men in their enjoyment of "rights, status, personal honour and dignity" (p.3), but acknowledges that Chinese women's equal rights have yet to be fully realized in daily life. The report recognizes that "disrespect for and discrimination against women, and even violations of their rights and interests, are not uncommon, and the overall talents and abilities of China's women also need further improvement" (p.3). The report then details the actions taken in different sectors of society, in order to strengthen realization of women's rights in China. Similarly to women's rights, children's rights have also been on the Chinese governments agenda. Since 1991, the government has been consistently working on implementing laws and procedures to safeguard and promote children's rights. Through creation and implementation of the National Program of Action for Children the State has been focusing on child´s development and promoting the realization of children's rights of survival, protection, development and participation (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1995; 2005; 2012; UNICEF, 2014)

By promoting actions such as the establishment of specialized agencies to implement the Women's Act and the Minors law, formulation of specific implementation measures by the different provinces (taking in consideration geographic particular conditions and needs of Chinese women and children); nationwide legal-awareness campaigns; review and monitoring of law implementation; and the creation of the National Programmes for The Development of Chinese Women and National Program of Action for Children; the government has been working towards improving the lives of those specific groups.

In appreciation of China's reports, both the UN's Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the UN's Committee on the Rights of the Child commended the Chinese government for further strengthening the country's legislative framework, as well as for creating programs to ensure implementation of its laws in favour of women and children. The government's efforts in combining economic reform (that has been creating strong and steady economic growth) with social restructuring (that takes the social well-

being of Chinese citizens into account), has also been noted by the Committee as a positive aspect of China's trajectory.

Some issues pointed out by the UN's Committees were the lack of definition for "discrimination against women" in Chinese Law – which in consequence does not provide effective mechanisms in case of violation of women's rights. (UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 1997, p. 29; 2014, p. 17); and the inexistence of specific and independent working committees to deal with women's and children's rights. The fact that the country's main policies for both groups are created within the same working committee - The National Working Committee on Women and Children - is highlighted by the UN as a negative aspect that perpetuates the identification of women with children (UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women , 1999; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2012). In the 2014 Concluding Observations Report, the UN notes that the Chinese government has increased human and financial resources for The National Working Committee on Women and Children and recommends that the State Party continues to strengthen its National Working Committee to enable it to effectively function as a machinery for the advancement of Women's Rights.

Participation of both women and children in policy decision-making, protection of women and children against violence, as well as education of girls and women – specially in the rural areas - are also matters in which China has been working and are pointed as areas of concern by the UN.

The third group implicated in the scope of this thesis - the elderly - do not yet have an International Convention in their favour, and have had their rights addressed by contemporary Chinese law in China's own terms. The law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly promulgated in 1996 reiterated adult children's responsibility in supporting their aged parents and established mechanisms for supervision of such responsibilities by the civil society.

3.1.2.3. The children's generational order – childhood in contemporary urban China

The nine children who participated in this case study were born in 2013. Since their grandparents' childhood to present times China has incredibly changed. As other authors have indicated – and as this study has echoed - Xiao continues to be held in high regard, though Xiao meaning has been changing across the times. China's 21st century urban children have their rights being addressed and advocated by the civil society (UNICEF,) and parents are becoming more and more aware of Children's Rights (Naftali, 2016). This generation of children are born in a world in which the internet and globalization allows them the new freedom of "manipulating their world themselves" in a way that their parents were not able to do in the past (Clark, 2012).

> Personally speaking, now, the children are different with what we were. They think they are independent and they have many thoughts that we didn't have. They can tell us what they think while I had to obey my parents. (Ox mom, [1st cohort of parents] – Translated from Mandarin)

Belle's mom also expresses the differences she notices between her childhood and her children's generation.

> [...] the children nowadays are different from us. They are more self-centred while we were more traditional. (Belle's mom [1st cohort of parents] – Translated from Mandarin).

Scanning for an example within the children's data of what Belle's mom and Ox mom referred to as a more independent generation who have many thoughts the parents' generation didn't have, we could look at the dialogue below. After explaining my research interests to the children, I invited them to fill in the assent form. We read the questions together; going over each one of them to make sure the children understood what we were asking.

> Ms. Jessica – So... let´s see the second question [from the children's assent form]: Have you asked all the questions you wanted to ask?
> Ms. Kindness: 第二个问题 - 你问过你想问的所有问题吗？ (the second question is: Have you asked all the questions you wanted to ask?)
> Some children answered yes. Belle and Dinosaur say no. I ask them:
> Ms. Jessica – No? Do you have any questions? Belle, Dinosaur, you can ask me.
> Belle: No, I don´t have any questions.
> Ms. Jessica: So you can tick yes. Yes, you have asked all the questions you wanted to ask.
> Belle: But I don´t have any questions.
> Ms. Jessica: So you have zero questions. (Ms. Jessica shows her hand showing zero) How many questions you asked?
> Belle: Zero
> Ms. Jessica: And how many you wanted to ask?
> Belle smiles and says: Zero.
> Ms. Jessica: Have you asked all the questions you wanted to?
> Belle then smiles at me and answers "yes" while she immediately proceeds to colour in the "yes" happy face on her assent form.

Though I found out the hard way that the supposedly "child-friendly" assent form from one of my books was not exactly participant-friendly to all the children - as the question did not make sense to people who had no questions - I was thrilled by Belle's determination in defending her point of view. She did not colour in "yes" just because I said so. She did not simply obeyed an adult. She was assertive in upholding her answer "I don't have any questions", and only changed her mind when I explained better what I meant.

The difference between generations pointed out by parents perhaps lie on the very principle of listening to children. The fact that parents' had to obey their elders doesn't mean that they, when children,

did not have different ideas. On that note, it wouldn't be the children who were different nowadays, but the adults who seem to be inclined to listen to what children have to say. Dragon's mom speaks of such changes by explaining how she finds herself to be more open to her children's ideas than her parents were to hers:

> When I was young, Xiào is obedience, is to listen to parents. What parents said is right. However, I think everyone can make mistakes even we elders. So I encourage children to point out our mistakes if they think we are wrong. (Dragon's mom [1st cohort of parents] – Translated from Mandarin.

Another example of the children expressing their feelings about an adult-made decision arose when we talked about bed-time. We had a role-play with a family of Asian-like dolls. Xiao Ming and Xiao Li were the children-dolls names:

> Ms. Jessica: Can you tell me what would happen if Xiao Ming and Xiao Li… they are playing (Ms. Jessica picks the dolls and place them back standing) And daddy comes and say:" Xiao Ming and Xiao Li, can you go to bed? Tomorrow is a school day."
> Lydia was holding Xiao Ming and Xiao Li and says: OK. (she makes the children dolls walk towards the bed and sleep again.
> Ms Jessica: What if they are not feeling sleepy? What happens?
> Princess Pink: They will play.
> Lydia: And then dad sleeping, they will play.
> Princess Pink: And they will scared
> Ms Jessica: Who will be scared?
> Princess Pink: Xiao Ming and Xiao Li.
> Ms Jessica: Why?
> Princess Pink: Because it is too… late.
> Ms Jessica: And they will be scared?
> Children: Yes.
> Ms Jessica: Scared of what?
> Chimpanzee: Because of the monster.
> Belle: No! Scared of the daddy and mommy, the grandma and grandpa.
> Princess Pink: No! 不是 (It is not)
> Belle looks at Princess Pink and stops to think
> Ms Jessica: Yes or no? Princess Pink thinks no. Belle thinks yes. But if they don't go to sleep. And daddy comes to tell them:" You need to go to sleep". They don't want to. Will they tell daddy or will they not tell daddy?
> Lydia: Not tell daddy.
> Dinosaur: Tell.
> Ms Jessica: What will they do?
> Belle: Play, play.

In this scenario, the children present different ideas about telling or not telling parents regarding the fact that the dolls do not feel like sleeping. They also have different thoughts on why Xiao Ming and Xiao Li could feel scared of remaining awake when it is bed time, what the children seem to agree on is that Xiao Ming and Xiao Li should do what they feel like doing: playing. Whereas the role-play episode doesn't

necessarily reflect what the children themselves would do in such situation (but what the dolls should do), it certainly shows that blindly obeying parents is not exactly something that these children believe in.

Another point to be explored regarding Xiao developments within the children's generational order is the relationship between the young and the elderly. In the previous subsection (the period corresponding to the last cohort of parents) we left off on the promulgation of the law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (1996). Zhang and Goza (2006) draw attention to the impacts of low mortality and low fertility on China's demographics over time. Such transition resulted in an increased number of living generations with fewer members within each generation. Increasing concern about the aged population growth has lead the government to invest in Xiao campaigns that reminded young people about their responsibility towards the elderly. In 2012 the Chinese government amended the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly, including a clause that specifically stipulated that "family members living apart from the elderly shall frequently visit the eldery" (PRC, 2012). Shortly after the China's National Committee on Aging, together with All-China Women's Federation lauched "The New 24 Paragons of Filial Piety" campaign, in an attempt of speaking to the population's ingrained Confucian values while giving a more up-to-date approach to the old narratives (Jacobs and Century, 2012; Ting, 2013). The material speaks to both children and adults, encompassing 24 illustrated examples of how to be filial to parents. Instead of warming the parents' bed or swiping mosquitos away (as in the old Confucian Parables), contemporary examples of filiality feature often visiting parents, listening to their old stories, taking parents to travel and spending holidays together [see the 24 examples in Appendix H]. Many of the examples featured in the 24 New Paragons of Filial Piety Campain were mentioned by parents during the interviews - though they never brought up the existence of a government campaign on the matter.

According to the children, the most observed Xiao behaviors in their families were related to accompanying the elderly. When inquired about the paragons, all of our young participants said that parents often brought them (the children) to visit grandparents, as well as they often spent holidays together (children, parents and grandparents). All the children also reported seeing their parents regularly calling their grandparents. Other behaviours suggested by the paragons that the children could notice among their parents were: making close communication with grandparents (pointed out by 8 out of 9 children); bringing grandparents along to attend to important activities (7 out of 9); supporting grandparents' leisure activities (7 out of 9); bringing grandparents for periodic doctors' appointments (6 out of 9) and cooking for grandparents (6 out of 9).

The children's close relationship with the elderly can also be observed when we look at our young participants' definitions of Xiao. When drawing on their family balls, 6 out of 9 children mentioned their grandparents while explaining what Xiao means to them. Ultramen explains Xiao by telling us how his parents look after his grandparents:

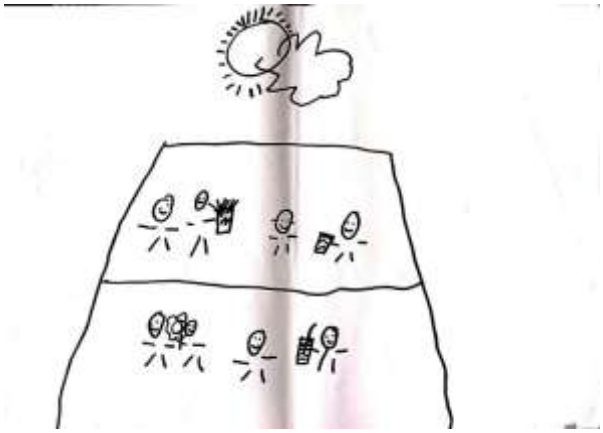


Figure 20: Ultraman's drawing about Xiao

Ultraman: 我妈妈给我奶奶麦当劳的薯条，然后我爸爸给我爷爷那个水。然后我妈妈又给我奶奶（食物）。然后我爸爸又给我爷爷果汁。(My mom gave my grandma McDonald's french-fries. My dad gave my grandpa water. Then my mom gave my grandma (flower). Then my dad gave my grandpa juice.)

Ms Kindness: 所以你认为这就是孝，是不是？(So this is what you think Xiao is, right?)

Ultraman: 帮人家。(Help others).

Sophia also describes the dimension of companionship in her drawing. According to her, Sophia's mom bringing Sophia and her grandma to the park is Xiao:

Figure 21: Sophia's drawing about Xiao

Ms Kindness: 可以跟我讲你画了什么吗？(Can you tell me what you drew?)

Sophia hears the question in Chinese but prefers to answer in English: Me and mommy and grandma go to the park. And my grandma see a little house. It's a baby house. (She) Let me go in. And I go. I see a ball and I take it home and grandma come to see the ball. And I hear the bird sound. And my mom and I and my grandma go home and my mom teach my grandma make a cake.

Ms Kindness: You made a cake?你认为孝是什么？你可以用中文讲。(What do you think Xiao is? You can speak in Chinese.)

Sophia: 我觉得，我觉得妈妈带我和姥姥去公园就是孝顺。(I think my mom take my grandma and me to the park is Xiao.)

Ms Kindness: 哦，（这）就是孝，是不是？(OK, this is Xiao, right?)

Sophia: 嗯。(Yes.)

In Sophia's definition, the three generations appear to be equally involved in this Xiao relationship. Sophia's drawing also reminds me of Zhang and Goza's (2006) study on the Chinese "sandwich generation". Sophia's mom, who is pictured in the middle, holding hands with Sophia and her grandma, is a classical example of "the middle generation who oftentimes must simultaneously care for both younger and older generations" (p. 161). As Sophia's mom told us herself, she is an only child in her family, meaning that she doesn't have siblings to share the responsibility of caring for her elders.

Princess Pink shows us her understanding of Xiao by mentioning one of the 24 New Paragons of Filial Piety as advertised by the National Committee on Aging's campaign:

Princess Pink: 我画的就是我、爸爸妈妈和我哥哥、爷爷奶奶一起做运动。(I drew that I was doing sports with my parents, my brother and my grandparents.)

Ms Kindness: 那你认为孝是什么呢？(What do you think Xiao is?)

Princess Pink: 孝就是跟爸爸妈妈一起做运动。(Xiao means doing sports with dad and mom.)

Figure 22: Princess Pink's drawing about Xiao

Though in this specific occasion Princess Pink said that Xiao means doing sports with *dad and mom*, without placing emphasis on her grandparents - who are also in the picture - when transferring her drawing to the family ball she said:

> Princess Pink: 我画了我和我家人一起做运动。(I drew I am doing sports with my family)
> Ms Kindness: 一起运动 (doing sports together)，Right? Who are they?
> Princess Pink: Daddy, my brother and my mommy and me and my grandpa and grandma.

It appears that Princess Pink's relationship with her grandparents assumes a different dynamics than what we see in Sophia's drawing, for example. However, the three generations are still tied together in Princess Pink's understanding of Xiao.

In Peppa Pig's definition of Xiao, she places a greater emphasis on what she does herself rather than how the other characters perform Xiao together. Picturing the relationship in a yet different way, the common ground remains the presence of three generations in the Xiao relationship:

Ms Kindness:可以告诉我你画了什么吗？(Can you tell me what you drew?)

Peppa Pig: 可以，这就是我爷爷，这是我妈妈，这是我奶奶，这是我爸爸。然后呢，我帮他们拿衣服放在这（一个盆子），然后呢，我妈妈，我爷爷还有我爸爸看着我。(Yes, this is my grandpa. This is my mom. This is my grandma and this is my dad. I help them to put the clothes here. Then, my mom, my grandpa and my dad look at me.)

Ms Kindness:就看着你，那你认为孝是什么？(They look at you. What do you think Xiao is?)

Peppa Pig: 认为孝就是帮妈妈收衣服。(Xiao is helping mommy to collect the clothes)

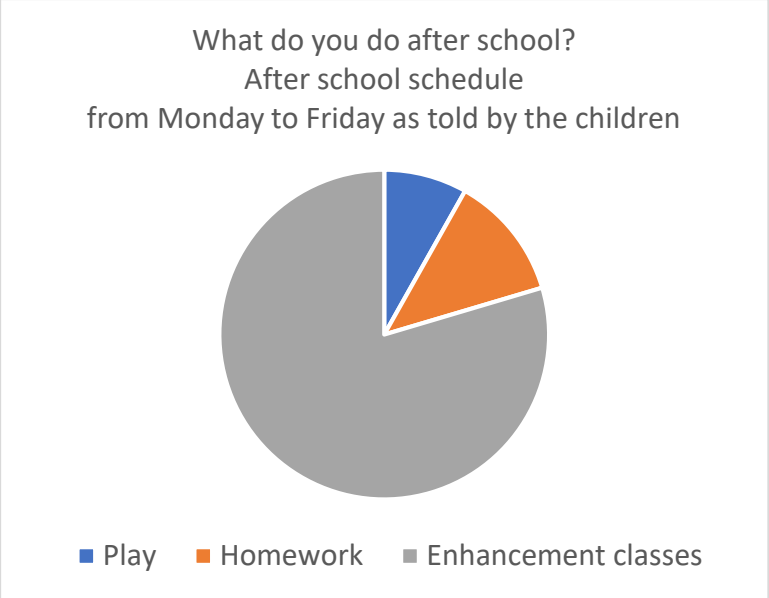
Figure 23: Peppa Pig's drawing about Xiao

It is interesting to observe how each child pictures the Xiao relationship in a different way. While it is not our aim to interpret such drawings as the participants' absolute truth of Xiao, observing patterns and cross-referencing it with historical events and sociological constructions surrounding Xiao relationships can definitely help us to visualize a bigger picture regarding contemporary understandings of Xiao.

Furthermore, the mention of internet, video-calls, iPads and other technologies, as well as easy access to children's global mass-media (Barbies, Peppa Pig, Ultraman, Spiderman, McDonalds) figure in our data as an undeniable part of contemporary Chinese children's lives, echoing Croll's (2006) findings about the international market's expansion and its focus on Chinese children from the 1990s onwards. Some of the children mentioned international travels and, although we know that traveling abroad is not the norm for the majority of Chinese children, it is interesting to note that it has been a possibility opened to this generation of participants, and not experienced by their grandparents and parents during their childhoods.

Another particularity of this generation of participants is the educational pressure they face. As economy continued to develop, education has become a huge part in succeeding in China's 21st century. Li and Liu (2015) point to an expansion of the Chinese higher educational system particularly after 1999. Djundeva et al (2019) state that "Between 2000 and 2015, the proportion of Chinese entering tertiary education increased from below 10% to above 40%. [...] In China, the enrolment in tertiary education expanded from 23% in 2010 to 43.4% in 2015" (Djundeva et al, 2019, p. 6). Woronov (2008) and Naftali (2016) dissert about how Chinese universities' selection system impacts children's lives as a top-down scheme, in which performance on the National College Entrance Examination is directly associated with the school levels a student has previously attended. Chinese students are pressured to do well and study hard during their childhood and being accepted in a top university depends on their performance in the National Exam – which depends on passing exams to enter a good middle school. Succeeding in China's National exams is a concern that pervades the entire educational system, spilling down even to the youngest students enrolled in Chinese schools as they receive a good deal of school work – either from their teachers or from their concerned parents who want to keep them in a "competitive edge" (Woronov, 2008; Naftali, 2016). Our group of young participants were very busy children who went to school from 9h to 16h. Most of them attended to enhancement classes after school. Lydia was the only child who had most of her after school schedule filled with home activities (homework, play and house chores), going to enhancement classes only once a week. According to her mom – who is a teacher in a Chinese public school – "One or two classes will be enough. They will be so tired if they have too many after school clubs." (Lydia's mom interview). The other eight

children of our group had an average of four to five weekdays filled with after school enhancement classes[50] – having sometimes two different after school activities in the same day.



Graph 12: Children's after school schedule - Monday to Friday

When telling me about her after school schedule, Belle drew "homework" on her Tuesday and told us that after doing her homework, she played with her mom. Later – after finishing her whole schedule, Belle remembered she also had Lego classes on Tuesdays. Her detailed Tuesday description offers us an insight of how the children manage to play in their busy schedules.

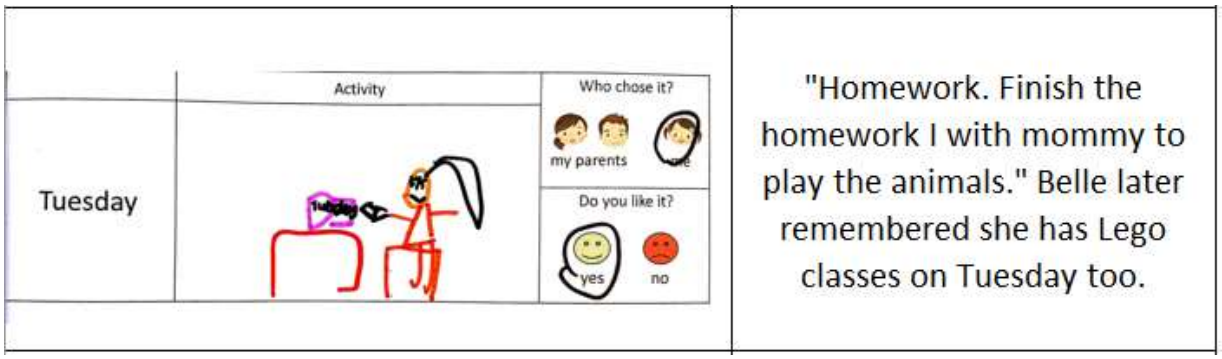


Figure 24: Belle's after school schedule - Tuesday page

Though we will later explore the children's participation in organizing their weekly schedules and choosing such activities, a first glance at our data confirms the busy-ness of our 6-year-old participants with activities intended to "raise the children's quality" as Naftali (2016) describes. Taking in consideration such

[50] Enhancement classes listed by the children were Art, Lego, Tennis, Chess, Gym, Piano, Swimming, English, Maths, Ballet, Tutoring (help with school related content), Little Scientist, Wood Work, Drumm and Golf classes.

busy routines, I can only be forever grateful to the children who accepted my invitation and helped me with this research.

3.1.3. Searching for a shared meaning of Xiao

After digging into the changes occurred in family organizations throughout the previous section, we will now look more closely at the meanings that each generational group – grandparents, parents and children – attributed to Xiao and try to establish connections in the search for shared understandings of filial piety among the three generations.

In the search for shared meanings of Xiao among our participants, it is worth to revisit our emerging themes scheme (previously presented in Chapter 2) and establish connections that will help us to define what Xiao is for our participants.

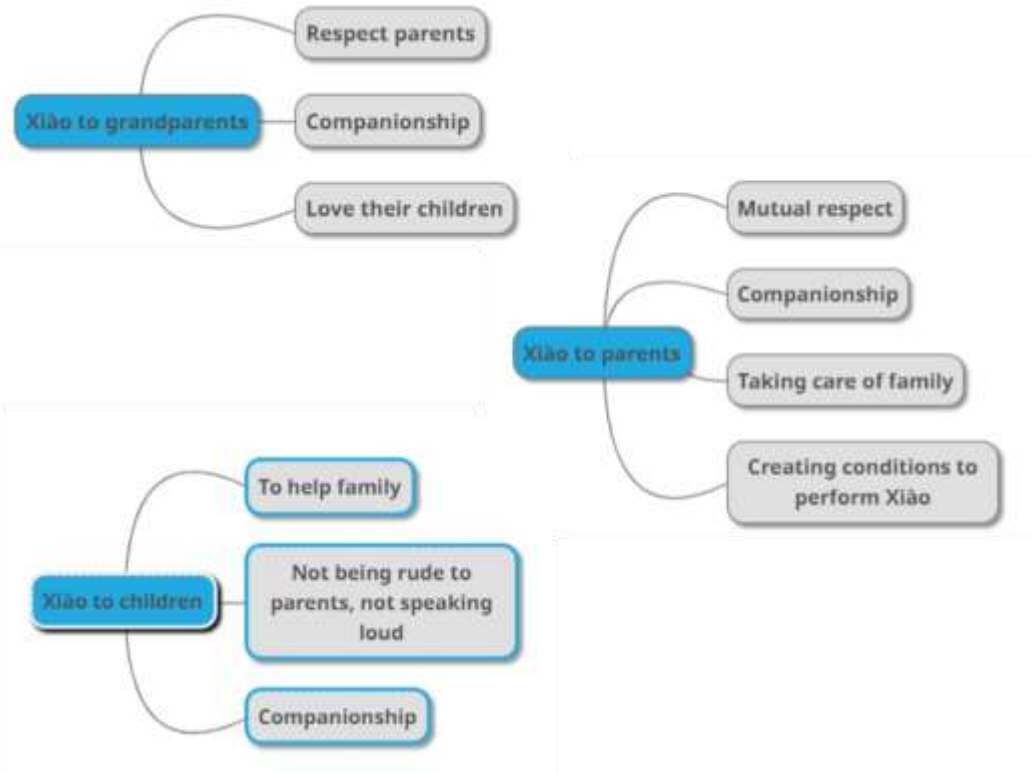


Figure 13: Emerging themes about Xiao meanings – Grandparents', parents' and children's cases[51]

When establishing connections between each category's emerging themes, we noticed the aspect of Respect appears as a strong front throughout our data. Not being rude to parents and not speaking loud (Xiao characteristics pointed out by the children) were grouped with indications of mutual respect (mentioned by parents) and statements of the importance of paying respect to parents (mentioned by grandparents).

[51] Previously presented in section 2.3

Subsection 3.3.1. addresses the "Respect" aspect of Xiao according to our participants' views. Subsection 3.3.2. brings the "Loving and Caring" aspect of Xiao relationships, connecting the grandparents' view on the value of adults loving their children, with parents' and children's perceptions on taking care of their family and helping at home. Subsequently, the aspect of Companionship – clearly identified in the three sets of data – is explored in subsection 3.3.3. In subsection 3.3.4. we take a look at portraits of self within Xiao relationships. Based on the forth emerging theme coming from the parents' data set (creating conditions to perform Xiao), we establish a few connections with data coming from the two other groups of participants. Though grandparents and children have not directly referred to the aspect of self as some parents have, it is worth to take a closer look and consider possible connections.

Finally, it is important to point out that our participants' mentioning of respect, love, companionship and cultivation of self, have been placed into these four categories in a didactic effort to make the many faces of Xiao more visible to the reader. However, the category in which each of these examples appear should not be understood as their only possibility of placement. Often a participant's statement links to more than one category, though for the purpose of fluidity we have not repeated examples throughout the text. Therefore, we invite our reader to examine each of the categories while pondering Xiao as a complex concept in which all elements are intrinsically interconnected.

3.1.3.1. Being a good child – the Respect aspect of Xiao

Many scholars have written about Xiao as a Confucian value that emphasises respect to elders (Ho, 1994; Sung, 1995; Yue and Ng, 1999). But what exactly showing respect means? Sung (2001) ratifies the lack of a detailed view on this broad concept. According to the author "Until now, elder respect has been described in abstract terms; it has been a concept too general to provide clear guidance for practice. The view that does receive popular support is that elder respect is `being courteous and obedient to elders.' (Sung, 2001, p. 190). Though Sung (2001) highlights courtesy and obedience, our data indicates a downplay of obedience in relation to courtesy. While children have narrated several situations of negotiating adult requests and grandparents have not mentioned the word obedience at all, parents have many times stated how the notion of respect has changed overtime. One example is Chimpanzee's mom view on obeying elders:

> Maybe, we are not that strict with this nowadays. But like us, if our parents told us that we cannot do, we had to obey. However, I think they (the children nowadays) have more freedom. It will be not a big deal if you don't make some serious mistakes. (Chimpanzee's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

In agreement with our findings, Goh and Kuczynski (2009) observed during their research on contemporary Chinese childrearing values that "traditional ideas that children should obey and not talk back

have been replaced by a new tolerance of assertive children" (p. 507). Yue and Ng (1999) research on Contemporary views of filial piety among elderly and their adult children echoed the idea of children respecting while not necessarily obeying parents. In this context, we intend to explore what our participants mean when they refer to "respect".

In Zeng Zi's classical text of Xiao, the Confucius disciple uses the character 敬 (jìng) when referring to respect:

> 子曰：'愛親者不敢惡於人，**敬**親者不敢慢於人。 愛**敬**盡於事親，而德教加於百姓，刑於四海。蓋天 子之孝也。'
> The Teacher said: "He who loves his parents does not dare to do evil unto others; he who **respects** his parents does not dare to be arrogant to others. Love and **respect** are exerted to the utmost in serving the parents, and this virtue and teaching is extended to the people; the example is shown to the whole world beyond China. That is the Xiao of the Son of Heaven." (Feng, 2008, p. 5, emphasis added).

According to Chinese-English dictionaries (Chinese dictionary, n/d) the character 敬 (jìng) is associated with respect, politeness and honour. Looking at our data we can see 敬 (jìng) being mentioned more than 20 times by parents and grandparents' in their definitions of Xiao. Dragon's yeye explanation is one example of the many times the word respect (敬 jìng) was quoted by our adult participants:

> 你这个问题呢，爷爷跟你讲讲。孝道呢，就是说，儿子要对父母要孝顺，尊**敬**父母，知道没有？Let grandpa answer your question. Xiao means the son needs to show Xiao to parents, **respect** them, understand? (Dragon's yeye – Translated from Mandarin)

Though the children have never used the word "respect" to define Xiao, our young participants explained the concept by pointing out that Huang Xiang – the character who was an example of filiality in the children's story – wanted to be a good boy:

> Ms Jessica: I want to know... would you do what Huang Xiang did?
> Princess Pink: Yes.
> Ms Jessica: Why? Why do you think we should do like Huang Xiang?
> Peppa Pig: Because Huang Xiang wants to be a good boy.

Showing respect and being a good child has also been described in detail by Chimpanzee's nainai. She explains how she has taught her son to show respect by doing good:

> I taught my son to show respect to the elderly and to love the children. This is the tradition of China. He needs to do good. When he sees the elderly getting in the bus or walking on the road, you need to let them go first. I also taught him if he sees the elderly walk with crutches, he should help them across the road and take them to their destination safely. This is Xiao. That is it. Keep it simple. (Chimpanzee's nainai – Translated from Mandarin)

Again we can see the dimension of respect, of being a good child, in relation to being polite. In a similar manner, Chimpanzee's mom defines Xiao by writing on her family ball:

Figure 25: Chimpanzee's mom family ball layer

尊重尊敬父母 对长辈要有礼貌

Respect parents, be polite to elders (Chimpanzee's mom)

Above her sentence, Chimpanzee's mom drew her family sitting around a table while sharing a meal. Her drawing reminds me of an excerpt of our interview, when I asked her for an example of how she teaches Xiao to her children:

> Umm, you need to respect your grandparents if they are here. For example, you need to let them get the food first if you have meal with them. Yes, just like this. (Chimpanzee's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

In a similar manner, Ultraman also describes Xiao as the practice of "doing good things". After recalling the activities, we have been doing in our focus groups sessions, I asked the children what they think Xiao is. Ultraman then answered:

> Ultraman: 做点好的事情。(Do some good things.)
>
> Ms Kindness: 什么好的事情啊？(What kind of good things?)
>
> Ultraman: 做一点帮别人那个拿东西啊。(Helping the others to carry their bags.)

Another angle of being respectful and treating others well that appears in our data regards the way family members speak to each other. When giving a personal definition of Xiao, Belle's waipó wrote on her family ball:

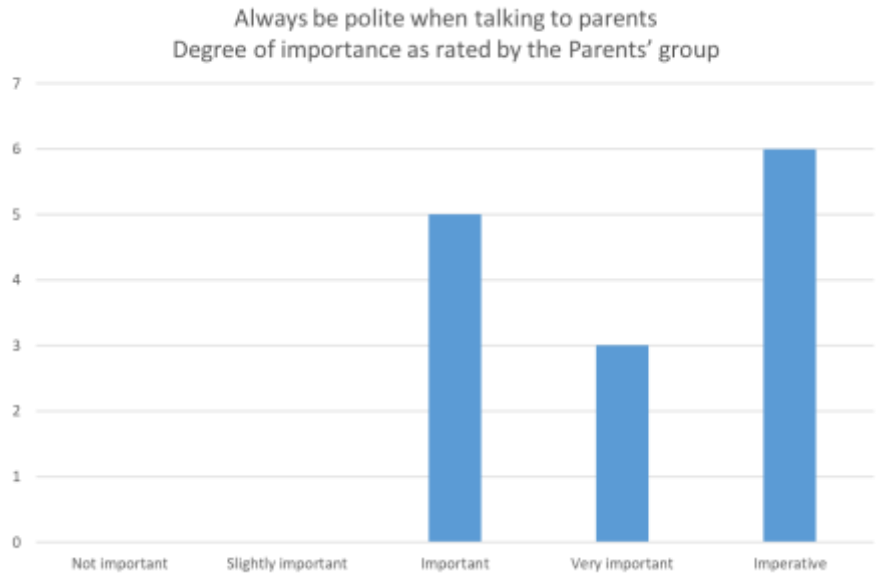
> 不要对老人大声 - don't shout at the eldery (Belle's waipo – Translated from Mandarin)

Not shouting, or not speaking loudly, has also been pointed out by the children. After watching the role-play like video featuring a made up story about Xiao, Belle talked about the way the mother addressed the grandmother:

> Belle: 那个女孩子的妈妈很大声对那个女孩子的奶奶，我觉得这样子很不好的。 (the girl's mother talk very loud to the girl's grandma, I think it is very bad).

Although a non-Mandarin speaker could not tell volume differences throughout the speech of the characters, the language the mother used with the grandmother appeared to be harsh from the children's point of view. In that sense, Belle's comment draws us to understand her waipó's sentence (don't shout at the elderly) in a more complex way. Speaking loud and shouting appears to be linked to speaking harshly, regardless of the volume family members talk to each other.

When looking at the parents' group and their opinions on the importance of speaking politely to elders, such trait of Xiao appears in different scales of relevance. Though none of the parents rated "always being polite when talking to parents" as not important, their opinions on whether it is important, very important or imperative varied.



Graph 13: Degree of importance of being polite to parents - Parents' data set

Such differences could be related not only to personal opinion, but to the Sandwich Generation (Zhang and Goza, 2006) phenomena. Parents who have to care for both their children and their own parents may see themselves caught in a crossfire when trying to raise the younger according to certain principles while performing Xiao to their family:

> Sometimes what my mom says to my children and what she teaches them may differ from me. I will not talk to my parents in front of my children. I will talk to them when my children are asleep. This is my thought, but I will not talk to them in front of my children, like "you can't say this to them. You are wrong." Then my mom will feel awkward. In our family, my parents will spoil children so I will deal with the conflict like this. (Snake mom – translated from Mandarin)

Because teaching Xiao is believed to be done by role-modelling Xiao behaviours, conflicts as the one mentioned by Snake mom can be particularly challenging for adult children – those who are the Sandwich

Generation. Such conflicts however do not dismiss the importance parents attribute to speaking to elders politely. Belle's mom, who rated the interview item "Always be polite when talking to parents" as "important", talks about how she sees Xiao in her family and mentions her husband as an example of Xiao when he talks to Belle's waipó patiently:

> Well, I think my husband does a great job. He will be their role model. He will show the children how he treat his parents. Just like what happen usually, talking to parents. Just like yesterday, my husband talked to my mom but my husband didn't get what she said. He felt a little bit anxious. Then he asked my mom to say again and say slowly so he can get it. I think this is also a behavior that shows Xiao. Just be patient to the elderly. Listening to them tell you slowly, just like that. (Belle's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Indeed, the children learn from what they experience in their families. During our focus group session in which we discussed the video of the little girl teaching her mom about Xiao, the children manifested their opinions about what they see in daily life:

> Peppa Pig: But..., my daddy is not Xiao to my grandpa.
> Ms Jessica: Why?
> Peppa Pig: I don´t know.
> Sofia: My mommy and my daddy don´t shout at my grandma and my grandpa. My grandpa and my grandma and my mommy and my daddy is good. And I am good.

Again, we circle back to "being a good child". As pointed out by Sofia, the way one speaks to another is an important element of respect, of "being good". Chen and Lau (2018) address the topic of "being a good child" in contemporary China. According to the authors, although Chinese Confucian traditions portray "good children" as obedient, sensible and academically inclined, the ultimate purpose of cultivating such qualities is to become a useful member of society. Chen and Lau (2021) argue that although a dominant understanding of 'being a good child' emphasises conformity, it allows for children's agency as young people quickly learn what is expected of them and how they can make a useful contribution to their immediate community. By building on Goh an Kuczynski (2009) idea of the Chinese agentic child and analysing child agency within the wu-lun relationship pairs[52] framework, Chen and Lau (2018) argue that contemporary Chinese children "learn that the pursuit of familial, communal and national interests is a project that enables them to acquire personal prestige and power and extend personal influence within their networks" (2018, l. 5268). In this sense, Clark and Castro remind us that "acts of agency are often inseparable from the heightened structures children and youth are forced to work within and around" (2018, l. 420)

[52] A more detailed explanation of the wu lun relationshio pairs (or Five Cardinal Relationships) has been previously explored in pg. 28.

3.1.3.1.1. Being grateful – respect towards who?

As we have shown through exploring our data, it is undeniable that respect is an important element of Xiao. It is however worth to elaborate on our participants' view concerning the direction respect goes towards. Is respect due to parents or is it a two-way street between parents and children? Canda (2013) states that "there is an ethos of mutually caring reciprocity implied by filial piety, in which parents love and care for children when they are young and as they age and, complementarily, children respect and care for parents" (Canda, 2013, p. 215). This relationship in which parents love and care for their children while children respect and care for their parents is clearly stated by Dragon's yeye:

> Xiao means the son needs to show Xiao to parents, respect them, understand? Why we need to show respect to our parents? Because your parents brought you up since you are little and let you be tall, be strong, right? You should respect your father and your mother, right? (Dragon's yeye – Translated from Mandarin)

The reason Dragon's yeye attributes to why children should show respect to parents has also been explored by scholarly work on Filial Piety that emphasizes the notion of repayment for parents' kindness (Kong, 1995; Lew, 1995; Sung, 2001; 2007). According to Sung (2001), the principle of filial piety guides the offspring to respect parents in recognition of all the care and love received from them. Sophia's mom also features this notion of gratitude on her family ball by writing "感念亲恩" (be grateful) on one of its faces. On the opposite side she also wrote "寸草春晖" (literally translated into "young grass, warm sun"). My research assistant was able to instantly identify Sophia's mom words as a reference to a well-known Chinese poem from the Tang Dynasty. According to the assistant translation notes, the sentence refers to "a metaphor that parents' love is profound and difficult to repay". The poem, called Song of the Parting Son (游子吟) is translated as follows:

> 慈母手中线，游子身上衣。
> (from the threads a mother's hand weaves, a gown for parting son is made)
> 临行密密缝，意恐迟迟归。
> (Sewn stich by stich before he leaves, for fear his return will be delayed)
> 谁言**寸草**心，报得三**春晖。**
> (Such kindness as **young grass** receives, from the **warm sun** can't be repayed)
> (CGTN, 2020 – emphasis added)

The poem, in which the warm sun symbolizes the mother's love and young grass (also translated as inch-long, or small grass) symbolizes the son, brings the idea of how humble any gesture of filial piety will always be in face of a parent's love (Hujiang Chinese, 2017). Though such notion of gratitude was not a strong front in the children's data set, it appeared in Chimpanzee's explanation about why she would act the way Huang Xiang acted towards his father:

Ms. Jessica: Would you do it for your dad or not?
Chimpanzee: I do.
Ms Jessica: Why?
Chimpanzee: Because my daddy is...
Ms Kindness: Chimpanzee, you can say it in Chinese, it is ok.
Chimpanzee: 公司，我爸爸。(Company. My daddy)
Ms Kindness: 爸爸要去公司上班，是不是？(Your daddy needs to go to the company to work, right?)
Chimpanzee: Yes.

Teaching the children to be grateful to elders' love, however, doesn't seem to be something these families do by calling out respect towards oneself, but by pointing at other family members' acts of kindness and suggesting recognition of such actions. Dinosaur's mom provides us with an example of how she teaches her son to be grateful to elders' love:

> Because sometimes the elders spoil kids so much, I always let my kids know why grandpa and grandma treat them so well. I think they have to know why people treat them well so that they can be thankful. So I will always catch a chance to teach how grandpa or grandma love them very much. For an example, once my son didn't want to walk outside, his grandma carried him in her arms until they arrived home. He (the child) was very happy and excited, and thanked his grandma. Then I teach him not only to be thankful but also understand that, grandma always satisfies his wishes because they love him so much. (Dinosaur's mom – Translated from Mandarin).

When looking at the children's data set we can also see that a child's act of kindness towards their elders is not invoked by the person who is receiving it. Rather, Xiao actions must come from within:

Ms Jessica: But do you do that [doing things like Huang Xiang did] because mommy and daddy tell you to do that or you just want to make them happy?
Lydia: Make them happy. I want. (I want to make them happy)

As Lydia states, she does as Huang Xiang not because her parents request it, but because she wants to make them happy. That is not to say that conflicts do not arise, but that the person reminding both elders and children of expected Xiao behaviours is usually someone neutral to the situation – or in many cases the person's own conscious bringing back all they have already learned about Xiao relationships. In that regard, Belle made an interesting observation about the role-play video we watched together:

Ms. Jessica: Remember we saw the video about the little girl and her mommy who shouted at grandma?
Belle: It's mommy shout at grandma. And the little girl shout to mommy.

Though I had selected the video with the intention of taking the children out of a judgment spotlight (given that the video features a mother who is not Xiao to the child's grandmother), Belle pointed out that the

way the little girl talked to her mom –teaching her mother how she should be speaking to grandma – was not good either. The tone the young Barbie used towards her mother appeared to be inappropriate from Belle's perspective.

Finally, even though our young participants identified 'unXiao' behaviours towards elders as being not good, they also pointed out that children should be treated with equal respect. When asked about how his parents address his grandparents, Ultraman preferred to talk about his parents' behaviour towards himself:

> Ms Jessica: Ultraman, are your parents Xiao to your grandparents?
> Ultraman: My mom shouts loud with me, not give me.
> Ms. Jessica: What?
> Ms. Kindness: Not give you what?
> Ultraman:我要说那个 Chinese。(I want to speak in Chinese)
> Ms Kindness:说吧。(OK.)
> Ultraman: 我妈妈对我很大声说话。(My mom talk too loud to me.)
> Ms Kindness: 然后呢？(And then)
> Ultraman: 没了。(That's it.)
> Ms. Kindness: Ah... His mom always talk loud to him
> Ms. Jessica: Ok. So...
> Ultraman: Me too.
> Ms. Jessica: What?
> Ms Kindness: He said me too.
> Ms Jessica: You too? You also talk loud?
> Ultraman: Yes.

In another situation, Sophia also told us about her family members' behaviour towards one another. Even though the focus of our question was her parents' behaviour towards grandparents, she described a relationship of mutual respect:

> Sofia: 就是我不知道我妈妈对我姥姥和奶奶好不好。(I don't know if my mom treat my grandmas well.)
> Ms Kindness: 你觉得她对你姥姥和奶奶好不好啊？(Do you think that your mommy treats your grandmas well?)
> Sofia: 我不知道。(I don't know.)
> Ms Kindness: 你觉得妈妈在家乖不乖。(Do you think mommy behaves well at home?)
> Sofia: 妈妈听我话，就是也听姥姥和姥爷话。(Mommy listens to me and she also listens to grandma and grandpa.)

Parents seem to share the idea of mutual respect and yet, somehow sustain that Xiao means "showing respect to parents". One example of describing respect from both perspectives can be found during Ultraman's mom interview:

> What is Xiao? I think that first respecting elderly, then be caring.
> [...]
> When we were young, my parents believed that spare the rod, spoil the child while the children nowadays are not treated like this. We should be more patient to the children. I think that I also learn from my children every time I teach them. Sometimes, I chat with my friends, I will compare the way how to teach children with them. Maybe I also need to change myself to guide them in a correct way. (Ultraman's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Ultraman's mom first describes Xiao as respecting "elderly", however when asked about what has changed in Xiao relationships since she was a child, she mentions being more patient to children and learning from them. Goat mom also defines Xiao as respecting "parents" and brings the idea of mutual respect later on our interview:

> First, be nice to our parents and respect them.
> [...]
> I listen to her [my child's] opinion, I respect her and then I listen to her ideas. In turn, she will learn from me. Because the children are learning from adults. And then in turn, she will listen to my ideas and respect me. (Goat mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Both views – of children owing respect to parents and of relationships where parents and children should respect each other – are found throughout the entire parents' data set. Whereas the grandparents' group seem to have it very clear that the children's job is to respect parents and the parents' job is to love the children, our 6-year-old participants, on the other hand, manifest solid views of mutual love and respect. While the dual approach to respect found in the parents' data set can be interpreted in multiple ways – such as a dilemma between their childhood experiences and contemporary understandings of parent-child relationships; or/and their double responsibility towards a younger and an older generation – the inseparable relationship between respect and love is undeniable and worth of a closer look.

3.1.2.2. Loving and caring

Figure 26: 爱 (love) – Dragon's yeye family ball layer

Blending in with respect, another face of Xiao appears to be the loving and caring aspect of family relationships. Echoing Chimpanzee's nainai and Dinosaur's yeye ideas of Xiao as a relationship of love and respect[53], Dragon's yeye also places love as an important aspect of Xiao. As a representation of what

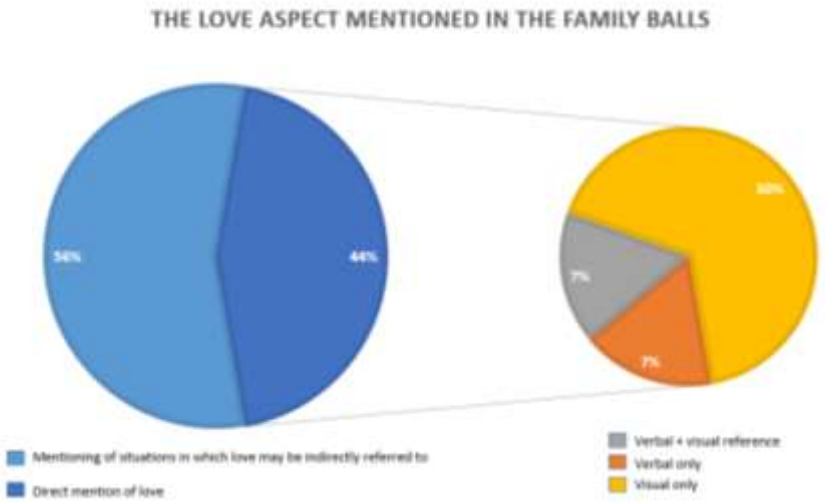
[53] Chimpanzee's nainai and Dinosaur's yeye sentences have been previously explored in session 3.2. Their sentences were "I taught my son to show respect to the elderly and to love the children" (Chimpanzee's nainai) and "I taught Dinosaur's father to learn more about Chinese traditional culture. Showing respect to the elderly, taking care of the children and being friendly to classmates. He needs to put Xiao in the first place, care more about the elderly and support them. He needs to respect the elderly and love the children" – appearing in pg 107 and 109 respectively.

Xiao is, Dragon's yeye wrote the character 爱 (which means love) on his family ball, drawing a heart shape around it [Figure 26].

Figure 27. Lydia's mom family ball layer.

Following up on visual representations of Xiao, Lydia's mom also drew hearts and people on her family ball's layer. Without using words, her family ball gives us the idea of people holding each other's hands, people who are kept together by love [Figure 27]. In fact, when we look at the family balls beyond words we can see the aspect of love weighing even heavier.

The graph below illustrates participants' references to love on the three layers of their family balls. Though it is not possible to identify any situation in which love is not present – given that many of their descriptions of Xiao could have a loving relationship implied – we were able to pinpoint the direct mention of the word "love" and/or the presence of hearts as a graphic representation of love. The percentages shown in the graph accounts for the 27 samples collected (9 samples of each of the 3 layers):



Graph 14: Verbal and visual mentions of love in Xiào

As the graph demonstrates, 12 samples (44% of the total samples) bring up the concept of love. While 14% of these samples mentioned the word *love*, an additional 30% had visual representations that pointed to the same concept. It was the case of Sophia's waipo and Peppa Pig's mom samples, for example. As Figure 2827 and Figure 2928 show, both pieces bring up other aspects of filial piety in the form of writing while surrounded by hearts, connecting the love aspect to their writings.

Figure 28. Sophia's waipo family ball layer.

Figure 29: Peppa Pig's mom family ball layer

All direct mentions of love (either by using the word or by symbolic drawing) were collected from the adults' samples. That is not to say that the aspect of love was not present in the children's representations of Xiao, but that different lenses are needed to analyse each piece of work. While adult perspectives may offer more easily quantifiable elements, children's perspectives help us to understand the everyday meaning of abstract words such as love. Chimpanzee shows us the aspect of love on her family ball draft drawing:

Chimpanzee: This is mommy dog and this is baby dog. This is a little mouse. This is me and this is my brother.

Ms Jessica: And what did you draw about Xiao?

Chimpanzee: I give my grandma the flower.

Figure 30: Chimpanzee's draft drawing about Xiao

Ultraman's ball – whose layers have been carefully crafted from a family team-work effort – also shows everyday examples of love. Because Ultraman lives far from his grandparents, he did not have the opportunity to hand the family ball to his elders. Ultraman interviewed his grandmother on a video call and, with his family's help, he drew on grandma's layer himself.

Figure 31 Ultraman's family ball - grandparents' layer drawn by Ultraman

Ms. Jessica: Do you remember what it is?

Ultraman: My sister

Ms. Jessica: Why did you draw your sister?

Ultraman: Because I give her the pacifier

Ms. Jessica: Why?

Ultraman: Because my baby sister cries. I give her the pacifier

Just like Chimpanzee, Ultraman presents a concrete example of love. Caring for your family by comforting a young family member who is crying is a warm gesture that shows love. Showing love through actions is also exemplified by Dragon's mom in two different moments of her interview:

> I think the most important of Xiào is to take care for elders. Moreover, to provide something that will bring warmth to them. It is not necessarily a gift or money. Sometimes just a greeting will make them feel sweet.
> [...]
> Firstly, I think there must be love in a family. Therefore, I teach them to love parents and to cherish the moment and the life. Because we love them so much, we hope they will also love us. Love is unconditional. And we show love to children with words, actions, and body language. [...] I think children already know how to care for parents. For example, if I am sick and they bring me a bottle of water, I will feel such warm. Therefore, I think the elders need more care. Moreover, we will share things like delicious food or a fun place. We parents will try our best to provide children what they need. (Dragon's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Dragons' mom speaks about love through actions. Though she reinforces that "elders need more care", she also speaks about her expression of love towards her children. In the same manner, Snake mom also brings both sides of the love relationship, reinforcing a position in which actions are more powerful than words:

> I think that if you give more love to your children, you don't need to talk too much about Xiao to them and they can feel it. In our family, we treat the elderly well. (Snake mom – Translated from Mandarin)

When we look at Xiao as a concrete expression of love – from children towards their elders and vice-versa, we are able to capture the intrinsic meaning of the many behaviour prescriptions appearing throughout our data. One example of such behavioural prescriptions is the recommendation of celebrating parents' birthday, as highlighted by Ultraman's waipó:

> 记住父母的生日和年龄。
>
> Remember your parents' birthday and age.

Also featured in the 24 New Paragons of Filial Piety government's material, caring for the birthday of elders appeared to be very important to Belle too:

> Ms. Jessica: Do your daddy and mommy throw a birthday party to your grandparents?
> Peppa Pig, Ultraman and Sofia raise NO.
> Belle, Lydia, Dragon and Princess Pink raise YES
> Belle looks surprised at the children holding NO signs and asks: 打的弄爷爷奶奶生日你呢? (Don´t your grandparents have birthday party?)

Nevertheless, Xiao manifestations of love and care appear to have the ultimate purpose of making parents happy:

> Ms Kindness: 你们的爸爸妈妈有没有帮爷爷奶奶分担他们的忧虑？让他们觉得很开心？
> (Do your daddy and mommy help your grandparents to share their worries, to make them happy?)
> Sofia: 我爸爸妈妈让我爷爷奶奶觉的很开心。(My daddy and mommy make my grandparents very happy.)

Just as Sophia observed in her family, Belle's mom also highlights the importance of making parents happy. On her family ball, Belle's mom wrote:

> 给父母按摩，带他们去旅游，吃好吃的
> Massage parents, take them to travel, eat delicious food.
> 让他们开心的像个孩子!
> Make them happy like a child!

The desire of making parents happy is also manifested by the children on their drawings about Xiao. Princess Pink told us about how she helps to hang the clothes to make her parents happy:

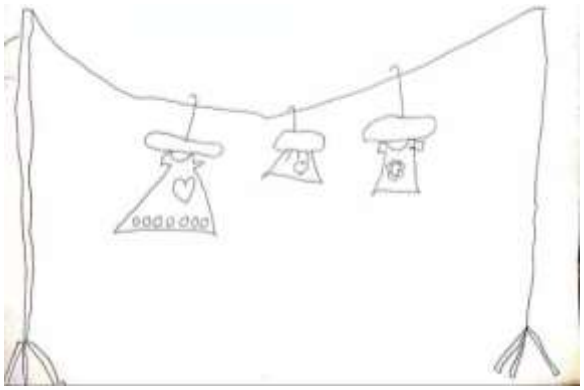


Figure 32: Princess Pink's drawing – Huang Xiang story

Ms Jessica: What did you draw?
Princess Pink: I draw... ...我帮妈妈晒衣服。(I helped mommy to hang the clothes)
Ms. Kindness: She helps mommy to set the clothes under the sun and let them dry.
Ms Jessica: Hmm. Why Princess Pink?
Princess Pink: Because I want to make mommy happy.

In a similar manner, Peppa Pig also drew about helping out at home, saying that she doesn't want her mom to be tired.

Ms. Jessica: Peppa Pig, what did you draw?

Peppa Pig: I helped my mommy mop the floor.
Ms Jessica: Why?

Peppa Pig: Because I don't want my mommy be tired.

Figure 33: Peppa Pig's drawing - Huang Xiang story

In this caring relationship, love is equally manifested by ensuring family members' emotional well-being and physical health. In her drawing about Xiao Sophia shows concern about her grandmother's physical well-being:

> Sofia: 我觉得孝也是，我去公园，有水，我怕姥姥滑倒。 (I think Xiao is when I go to the park I will worry if my grandma will fall down if I see water on the floor)

In another situation, when discussing the 24 New Paragons of Filial Piety, Belle also told us about her grandmother's health:

> Ms Kindness: 你们的爸爸妈妈有没有带爷爷奶奶去医院做检查啊？(Would your parents bring your grandparents to the hospital to see the doctor or check their bodies?)
>
> Belle: Ms Kindness, 我婆婆摔跤的时候，我妈妈带她（去看医生）了。(Ms Kindness, my grandma fell down one day, my mom took her [to the hospital].)

Bringing grandparents for periodic body check was one of the seven most observed Xiao behaviours among the children's perspectives on the New 24 Paragons. Five out of nine children confirmed that their parents often brought grandparents to doctors' appointments. Chimpanzee also highlighted looking after elders' health as a Xiao behaviour featured on her mom's family ball:

> Ms Jessica: Who knows what mommy or daddy wrote on the Xiao ball?
> Chimpanzee: I can speak Chinese.

Ms. Jessica: Yes you can.
Chimpanzee: 我说如果爷爷奶奶生病的时候，我们去看望他。如果爸爸妈妈生病了，我们要去看 (I say if my grandparents are sick, we need to visit them. If my parents are sick, we also need to visit them).

Though grandparents didn't mention their health needs, parents also described looking after elderly physical well-being as a Xiao concern. Peppa Pig's mom describes how she takes care of her family by mentioning the health challenges they have been facing:

> I didn't understand before. But now as parent, I think Xiào is to take care of my family. I think the way how I take care of my elder relatives will directly influence on how my child show respect to his family. I think Xiào is from this way. Now the kids they don't know what exactly Xiào is. As a daughter of my parents or my parents-in-law, if I can set a good example for my kids, I think they will imitate me. For example, my mother in law was sick before, and she had some operations in HK. My whole family were highly caring for her. So I think if I tried to show how to care about the family, and this will influence on my children. I don't know what is Xiào, maybe the way I do is Xiào– try my best to take care of my family. (Peppa Pig's mom)

Another interesting point in the parents' data set is the mentioning of their responsibility as adult children to disseminate scientific information among their parents. Rabbit mom tells us about how she takes upon herself the responsibility of guiding her parents to "trust science" and eat healthily:

> As far as I am concerned, because the years of the older generation are not as modern as now, their thoughts are more traditional. We need to guide to eat healthily. They need to trust science. They don't pay too much attention to this. I think you need to guide them how to keep in good health. [...] But you should talk to them nicely instead of ordering them to do so (Rabbit mom - Translated from Mandarin)

As explored in the previous section, it was from the Opening Up and Reform generation (1980s) onwards that scientific information on health and psychology matters became accessible to the greater public in China. As seen in Rabbit mom's words, a hold on scientific information that was not available to the older generation can be an instrument of micro-power shifts. Yue and Ng (1999) also write about "the displacement of traditional knowledge by science, and the fast pace of technological revolutions" (p. 216), stating that such generational changes have contributed to transfer to the younger generation a knowledge power that once belonged exclusively to elders. Rabbit mom seems to be aware of the power scientific knowledge holds as she deems herself responsible for guiding her elders towards a healthy lifestyle while "talk(ing) to them nicely instead of ordering them to do so".

In a similar manner, Snake mom brings up the technology factor:

> Listening to children's opinions and wishes... You need to listen to the adults. Now, you need to listen to the children. It's common. I think it is electronic time, our parents don't know how to use

mobile phones and we need to teach them right? We get used to each other. I don't think we have conflict. (Snake mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Being also one of the topics featured in the 24 New Paragons campaign, teaching elders about technology integrated one of the questions we asked during our focus group activities:

Ms. Jessica: We can teach them about the internet. Do they know about the internet? Grandpa and grandma?
Many children say no.
Chimpanzee: My grandpa don't know. I know.
Lydia: I know.
Ms Kindness: 爷爷奶奶会用电脑吗？会不会用网络？(Do your grandparents know how to use computer? Do they know how to use internet.)
Sofia: 我的奶奶会用电脑。(My grandma knows how to use computer.)
Ms Kindness:你奶奶会用啊？(Your grandma can use?)
Sofia:我也会用电脑。(I can use computer too.)
Ms Jessica: Do you think you can teach them?
Chimpanzee: Yes.
Sofia: 我姥姥也会用电脑。(My grandma (mommy's mommy) can also use computer.)
Ms Kindness: 那爸爸妈妈会教吗？会教爷爷奶奶用电脑吗？(Will your parents teach them? Will they teach them how to use computer?)
Sofia: 是爷爷奶奶自己会的。(My grandparents know this themselves.)

In this excerpt, we see the children taking pride in holding information that they can help their grandparents with. Sophia – whose grandparents belong to the 3rd grandparents cohort – is the only child who says that her grandparents don't need help. Nevertheless, as technology continues to develop, it is only reasonable to assume that most grandparents and parents will, at some point, be outdated by new technologies that their children have a better understanding of. As we did not find help quests coming from the older generations towards the younger, it appears that using knowledge to demonstrate love and care for elders is rather a bottom-top initiative coming from the ones who possess an expertise that can be put at the family disposal.

3.1.3.3. Staying with you – the Companionship aspect of Xiao

Ms. Jessica: Let's see your ball, Sofia.
Ms. Jessica showed the pictures of Sofia's ball.
Ms Kindness: I can see. Do you know these two Chinese characters' meaning?
Sofia: 不会。(No.)
Ms Kindness: It's called "pei ban (accompany)". Do you know "pei ban"? do you know the meaning of "pei ban"?
Sofia: 我有点忘了。(I forgot.)

Ms Kindness: You forgot?
Dinosaur raises his hand
Ms. Kindness: Dinosaur.
Dinosaur: 陪你。(Staying with you.)
Ms Kindness: 哦，陪你。(Yes, staying with you).

The excerpt above - when Sophia presents the group with her grandparents' layer of the family ball – highlights another important face Xiao takes to the three groups of participants. Though the word accompanies (陪伴) is not part of every child's vocabulary, our young participants have shown us along the way that they all see "staying with you" and spending quality time with their family as an important aspect of Xiao. The companionship facet is seen in Belle's family ball draft drawing.

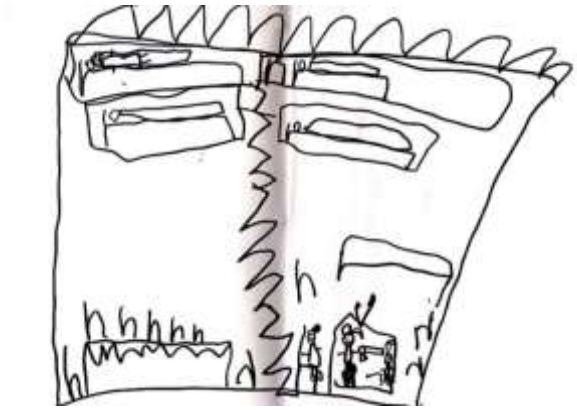


Figure 34: Belle's draft drawing about Xiao

Belle: 我在这里睡觉。然后我婆婆在这看我妈妈喜欢看的电视节目，我婆婆也喜欢看。然后我爸爸还有我妈妈都出去了。还有我哥哥、我小哥哥在上学。只有我和我婆婆在家里面。然后就没有了。(I am sleeping here. And then my grandma is watching my mom's favorite TV show. My grandma also likes it. My dad and mom are outside. My brothers are in school. Only my grandma and I stay at home. And no more.)

Belle offers us insight on her perspective of Xiao as spending time with her grandma. At the same time that she marks the absence of her parents in that specific moment, the mention of grandma watching her "mom's favourite TV show" also suggests a previous relationship in which Belle sees her mom and grandma spending time together watching TV. This sense of family togetherness is also present in Sophia's drawing (previously introduced in session 3.3.3) who described Xiao as her mom taking grandma and Sophia herself to the park:

Figure 35: Sophia's draft drawing about Xiao

我觉得，我觉得妈妈带我和姥姥去公园就是孝顺。(I think my mom take my grandma and me to the park is Xiao).[54]

[54] Data previously presented in page 115.

Figure 36: Dinosaur's mom family ball layer

Dinosaur's mom also features togetherness in her family ball layer. Being the only parent who decided to write exclusively in English, Dinosaur's mom chose the words "true, time, talk, try, forever, love, play, study, care, together, adapt, good, ask" to describe Xiao. Though some of these words are fit for other aspects of Xiao explored in this thesis, the words "together, time, talk, play" speak to the core of spending quality time with family. Chimpanzee's nainai also reinforces the importance of children being present in their elders' life:

> No matter the son and daughter have their own families or they have to work, they need to go home to visit their parents. Because you cannot let the elderly feel lonely. What's more, you should go travelling with them, right? Going travelling with family, with grandson and granddaughter, right? This is also Xiao. (Chimpanzee's nainai – Translated from Mandarin).

In a compilation of companionship examples emerging from our data, our participants mentioned chatting and taking an interest in each other's life, visiting and calling elders, going out and travelling together, staying together during special occasions such as holidays and birthdays, as well as sharing a meal and/or fun experiences with family members. Ox mom presents us with an example of how she takes interest in her elderly parents' life:

> Try to communicate more with your parents. To stay with parents as much as possible. Having dinner with them, chat with them and accompany them to do something that they like. Do some things that they like. Like my parents, my dad likes watching movies while my mom prefer to do spa. If I have time, I will go to watch movies with my dad and go to spa with my mom. (Ox mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Visiting elders was also recognized by the children as a Xiao attitude practiced by their families. When discussing the 24 New Paragons of Filial Piety I asked them:

> Ms. Jessica: So... Do your parent´s bring you to your grandparents house? You know that the grandparents love the children sooo much. Do you parents bring you to your grandparents´ house?
> Belle promptly raises YES.
> Peppa Pig: Only my mommy bring me.
> Belle: My daddy bring me
> Ms. Jessica: So you daddy brings you to your grandma and grandpa
> Belle: I say YES.
> All the children raise YES.

When visiting is not possible, families seem to find their way around physical distance by calling each other. Princess Pink's mom tell us about how she teaches her older son (Princess Pink's big brother) to call his grandparents often:

> For example, my son studies in Canada. I ask him to call his grandparents periodically. My father passed away, we need to call grandma and be concerned about her health, especially in some big family holidays like Mid-autumn festival and spring festival. He also need to call when his grandparents' birthday arrive. He cannot just send a message. I think that is so important. They can't send messages, they must call. (Princess Pink's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Though some parents spoke about "teaching their children" to call elders because children are "too young to understand" (Dragon's mom – Translated from Mandarin), our young participants indicated otherwise. When discussing about calling elders, all the children have reported seeing their parents practicing this Xiao behaviour and some of them showed initiative themselves:

> Do daddy and mommy make phone calls to grandma and grandpa?
> Sofia: Yes! I call grandma!
> Belle: YES!
> Sofia: I call... I call... the watch!
> Belle: Daddy call my grandpa.
> Sofia: 我电话手表 (I call with the watch). Sofia points at her watch (a Chinese technology for children that can actually call phone numbers previously registered on the device)
> All the children raise YES signs.

In another moment, when revisiting the topic and recalling Xiao behaviours we have discussed in our focus group sessions, Belle took pride in announcing that she could call her grandparents herself:

> Ms. Jessica [showing a power point with images of Xiao behaviours discussed in the previous sessions] Also making a phone call for daddy and mommy or grandpa and grandma.
> Belle stands up and points at the screen, showing the phone she sees in the picture.
> Belle: I can do this one.

Figure 37: Chimpanzee's mom family ball layer

Additionally, going out and travelling together was also brought up several times by grandparents, parents and children. Among other Xiao behaviours, Ultraman's nainai, mentioned: "Go for a walk with your parents if you have time. [•••] Often go traveling with your parents." (Ultraman's nainai – Translated from Mandarin). Chimpanzee's mom brings the same idea on her family ball when she draws a car, followed by a prescription of "Accompanying parents, take parents on a trip to make parents happy".

Sophia also drew a picture of her grandma travelling with her during the Chinese New Year holiday. When we asked Sophia about her vacation she told us:

Sophia: Here is Disney. And me and grandma in Disney jiudian (Disney hotel).

Ms Jessica: what did you do there?

Sophia: I take the flowers. (I picked the flowers)

Ms Jessica: Something else?
Sophia: And me and my grandma in hotel. And I see the video. (My grandma and I were in the hotel and I watched a video)

Figure 38: Sophia's Chinese New Year drawing

Furthermore, our three groups of participants have equally advocated for being together for special occasions - such as holidays and birthdays. Though the subject came up among grandparents, parents and children, we noticed different approaches coming from each group. While grandparents mainly showed concern about loneliness, parents acknowledged the importance of spending holidays with elders, but also manifested that although ideal, it is not always possible to spend every holiday together. Lydia's mom mentioned the elderly physical condition as a barrier to travel in family:

> If we travel nearby, we must take our parents with unless we need to travel far away and their physical conditions don't allow them to go with us. As you know, we must stay with them (parents) in important festivals (Lydia's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Other family practicalities may eventually get on the way, just as Belle told us about her Chinese New Year holiday:

> Belle: I go to HongKong and I go to Wanying Hotel. And I go to the DisneyLand. Ms Kindness 怎么说面试？(how to say mianshi (interview) in Chinese?)
> Ms Kindness: You went to a school to have an interview?
> Belle: 我哥哥 (My brother)
> Ms Kindness: Her brother had an interview in HongKong. And Belle went there with her brother.
> Ms Jessica: That's very sweet Belle. What did you do there?
> Belle: I go home. I go to Dongguan and play with my little brother.

Belle's family had to go to Hong Kong to accompany her brother, who was having an interview in a prestigious school. Belle's grandmother (who lives with Belle) couldn't join them, nor was the family able to

gather with Belle's dad set of grandparents. As we will be exploring in the next subsection, studying hard and seeking self-development is another feature of Xiao.

Apart from Belle, only two other children reported having spent Chinese New Year (the most recent celebration before our sessions) without their grandparents. The remaining 60% of our young participants spent the festival among three generations of family members. When asked what they did for the Chinese New Year holiday, children seemed to focus on the different places they went with their families, and the activities they did together. Peppa Pig features a place her family went to have a meal together and that Peppa and her brother could also enjoy play.

Figure 39: Peppa Pig's Chinese New Year drawing

Peppa Pig: I go to Australia and I go to that place to eat food and play with my friends. I go there with my mom, my dad, my grandma, my grandpa, and my brother and my sister and my daddy's friends. And we go to the slide play and we go to eat food

Ultraman also places emphasis on the place his family traveled to and the leisure activities at his disposal. When asked about his Chinese New Year holiday, Ultraman told us his family went to Macao (Special Administrative Region of China and expensive holiday destination):

Figure 40: Ultraman's Chinese New Year drawing

Ms Jessica: What did you draw?
Ultraman: Macao.
Ms Jessica: what did you do there?
Ultraman: I see the key can open the door
Ms Jessica: You opened the door? How was it?
Ultraman: Macao have swimming pool.
Ms Jessica: And who else went to Macao with you?
Ultraman: My mom, dad, sister, my grandma, grandpa and my baby sister.
Ms Jessica: Grandma and grandpa from daddy's mommy and daddy or mommy's mommy and daddy?
Ultraman: Mommy and daddy. (Both of daddy's parents and mommy's parents came to Macao with him)

As we can see in Ultraman's drawing, the hotel facilities were highlighted in his holiday description. The red figure holding a card is Ultraman's drawing of the hotel key. Besides it he draws himself in the swimming pool. The drawing also shows the "up and down bed" (bunk bed). Though it slipped away asking Ultraman about the numbers on the left side of his drawing, being in Macao before and seeing the size of the buildings, I would guess he refers to the lift he has been to get to his hotel room.

Highlights of the cool places the children have been with their families are all over our young participants' holiday descriptions. By looking at the children's drawings and comparing their views with the parents' perspectives on spending holidays in family, we can clearly see differences in the way each group thinks about such experiences. As Snake mom explains, from the parents' point of view, many of those carefully planned family trips seem to be planned around providing elders with experiences they did not have back in their youth days:

> What we do now is... Because we are in different places, we will go traveling with them [elder parents] when they are free. In their time, they didn't have the opportunity to go to the other places. And I didn't see this mentioned above. (Snake mom – Translated from Mandarin)

However, whether focusing on providing elders with pleasant experiences or just spending quality time in family, the companionship aspect of Xiao appears across the three groups of participants in the sense of sharing. Sharing "things like delicious food or a fun place" (Dragon's mom – data previously presented in pg 140) has the potential of connecting family members. Ox mom also mentions sharing as a Xiao practice:

> For example, if he gets some good things, I will ask him to share. I ask my kids to help their parents and grandparents to get the food at meal and share good food with them. Sharing, share many things. (Ox mom – Translated from Mandarin)

In her translator notes, my research assistant complemented Ox mom's answer by explaining, "In China, we will share many dishes at a meal. It's polite to help the others to get their favourite cuisines and serve them the dishes that you think are good".

Ox mom's and Ms. Kindness translator notes serve as a cultural insight into the way Chinese families share things – by putting individual preferences at the disposal of the ones you are sharing with. The practice of sharing is exactly what Ultramen pictures on his family ball. Ultaman's drawing (previously analysed in section 3.2.3)[56] shows his family members sharing a meal and helping each other:

[56] In section 3.2.3 Ultraman's drawing his analysed regarding grandparents' presence in the children's family experiences.

Ultraman: 我妈妈给我奶奶麦当劳的薯条，然后我爸爸给我爷爷那个水。然后我妈妈又给我奶奶（食物）。然后我爸爸又给我爷爷果汁。(My mom gave my grandma McDonald's french-fries. My dad gave my grandpa water. Then my mom gave my grandma (flower). Then my dad gave my grandpa juice).
Ms Kindness: 所以你认为这就是孝，是不是？(So this is what you think Xiao is, right?)
Ultraman: 帮人家。(Help others).

Figure 41: Ultraman's drawing about Xiao

The importance of sharing as a Xiao trait has also been further explained by Sophia's mom. When asked about practical examples of how she teaches Xiao to her children, Sophia's mom said:

> The first aspect is to lead by example, [...]. The second is to teach children share good things with people, such as like the moral story in Chinese, which is about Kong Rong shared the biggest pear with his elder brother. If a kid is spoiled, and always get the best thing, he would realize that, that thing should be his and he will not share with parents or other family members. And he will also think that all the people should put him in the centre. So I always teach my children to share with people at first. (Sophia's mom – Translated from Mandarin).

The moral story Sophia's mom refers to is part of the san zi jing (三字经). Translated as "The Three-character Classic", the san zi jing texts have been used since the 13th century to educate young children – serving both to teach Chinese characters and moral principles. Zhu and Hu (2016) highlight that "even though modern Chinese preschools are extensively integrating western philosophies and practices into the development of new curricula, the use of classic primer reading materials remains" serving as "an instrument to preserve Chinese culture in early childhood education" (Zhu and Hu, 2016, p. 415). The widely known story of Kong Rong is used by Sophia's mom to illustrate the importance of sharing not only from a companionship perspective, but also as a selfless practice of giving preference to others. While we will further explore the Xiao aspect of self in the next subsection, we leave our reflections on companionship with Dragon's mom thoughts, reminding us that all faces of Xiao are intrinsically inter-connected:

> In addition, *to accompany elders*. If we can pay attention to elders in some special holidays with a sense of ceremony, they will think they are *respected* by their children. In my opinion *Parents raise us with such hardships*, and the purpose is not to hope that we will pay back to them, but at least when they need us, *we can think of them from time to time*. I think so. (Dragon's mom – Translated from Mandarin, emphasis added)

3.1.3.4. The dimension of self – Xiao as an inner motivation in itself

To complete our analysis on the meanings Xiao assumes to our participants we finally address the dimension of self within Filial Piety understandings. First noticed in the parents' data set, the Xiao relationship with oneself completes a cycle in which being a good child, loving, caring for and accompanying family members does not make sense without an inner motivation for doing so. In that sense, Chimpanzee's mom highlighted:

> Umm, respecting the children. You must show respect to her. Personally, I think that if you ask them to do something and they do it against their will, she [her child] violates the principles of Xiao somehow. (Chimpanzee's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Chimpanzee's mom perspective can be understood in the lights of our literature review brought about in section 1.3.1.2. – The Individual and the society in Chinese philosophy – where we addressed the Confucian notion of self. A self that discourages selfish decisions but encourages individual goal setting that benefits the family as a whole (Ames, 1994; Niles, 1998; Wang and Liu, 2010). As we can see in Chimpanzee's mom view on Xiao, she acknowledges the notion of self and recognizes that children should not do things against their will just to please elders.

Aside from the ancient Confucian notion of self, Yan's work on the individualization path in Chinese society (Yan, 2010a; 2010b) gives us an insight in how Confucian heritage combined with the current political-economic societal scenario shape contemporary Chinese notions of self. Yan's theory is that in contrast with individualization processes of other societies that took individual happiness, autonomy and freedom as a starting point to differentiate individual and group, China's path to individualization was pushed by the state as part of a modernization strategy, compelling individuals to take more responsibility and become more productive. (Yan, 2016). Driven by economic reform the Chinese individualization path has been heavily wrapped in consumerism, as individuals are encouraged to pursue personal happiness while supressed from manifesting public interest in political matters (Yan, 2016). The notion of self-development still stands and, in the same measure, individuals are encouraged to continue their quest for success and reminded of their individual responsibilities towards their family. (Ting, 2013; Yan, 2016; Huang & Chang, 2017). This notion of self-development connected with family appreciation is illustrated by Rabbit mom:

> Xiao. You need to take care of your parents. But you need to take care of yourself first. Only when you can take care of yourself you can take care of your parents. That's why I think that being strong is treating parents with filial respect. (Rabbit mom – Translated from Mandarin)

In a similar manner, Tiger mom explains how she teaches Xiao to her son and reinforces the importance of self-development as a process that benefits family:

> First of all, we will ask him to show respect to everyone. For example, parents, colleges, friends, younger people, elders exactly... Second, we will help him to be independent and be able to deal with social situations which can help us to feel relieved. (Tiger mom – Translated from Mandarin)

As we can see in Rabbit mom and Tiger mom definitions of Xiao, a well-balanced individual who can take care of oneself manifests Xiao to family as they keep their parents at ease and displays the ability of caring for others. Another interesting aspect appearing in the parent's data set is how self-development appears in interaction with other aspects of Xiao. Tiger mom mentions the conflict between providing better educational opportunities and staying close to older children throughout their school path:

> I will choose a good school, choose a good school representative to choose a good teacher, choose a good network, I have to consider the network of this school. In the process of choosing this school, there will be problems. For example, education in Hong Kong is very good, but because parents are working here, it is difficult to have the ability to accompany him to study there, that is, to choose education. (Tiger mom – Translated from Mandarin)

As Tiger mom states, self-development opportunities provided by a better school may surpass parents' wishes to be closer to their children. From the parents' point of view the self-development face of Xiao that encompasses hard-working, patience, perseverance and self-cultivation (Phuong-Mai et al., 2005, Wang & Liu, 2010, Huang & Chang, 2017) is part of being a good child, loving and caring for family – even if it means spending less time together. From the grandparents' point of view – even though companionship has appeared stronger – Xiao is also remembered as self-development in the sense of becoming a good person. Chimpanzee's nainai mentions that she taught her son "to do good". Peppa Pig's yeye states that children "need to show Xiao to parents with ethics".

The fact that grandparents don't emphasize self-development in the same measure as parents can be both interpreted in the lights of a previously mentioned family cycle theory (Bian et al., 1998; Xu and Xia, 2014) - in which grandparents are not as worried about personal achievements as they are about preventing loneliness – as well as under a framework in which the occurrence of further developments in the Chinese individualization process appear to be stronger from the Opening Up and Reform Generation onwards (Yan, 2010; 2016; Clark, 2012).

In regards to the children's data set, the most eye-catching demonstration of an inner motivation to perform Xiao appears in our early conversations about the story of Huang Xiang. As shown in section 3.3.1. many children stated they would do as Huang Xiang (who warmed his dad's bed and swiped mosquitoes away from his father) because Huang Xiang wanted to be a good boy and they wanted to make their parents happy. Besides pleasing parents, four children mentioned that they would do like Huang Xiang and perform house chores because they like it:

Ms Jessica: But do you do that [doing things like Huang Xiang did] because mommy and daddy tell you to do that or you just want to make them happy?
Lydia: Make them happy. I want. (I want to make them happy)
Chimpanzee: Because I like.
Princess Pink: Because I like to clean.

Just like Chimpanzee and Princess Pink, Ultraman also demonstrates an inner motivation to help at home.

Ms. Jessica: Ultraman, what did you draw?
Ultraman: I cleaned up my toys.
Ms Jessica: Why?
Ultraman: Because I want clean so nice.
Ms. Jessica: Do you want to say something in Chinese?
Ultraman: No.
Ms. Jessica: Ok. Thank you Ultraman

Figure 42: Ultraman's drawing - Huang Xiang story

This inner motivation displayed by the children appears to be much more connected to a sense of agency that derives from the notion of self-development identified in the parents' data.

Far from too quickly claiming the children's statements as an evidence of child agency within their families we shed light on this piece of our data as to understand the children's viewpoint on Xiao in relation to oneself. In this sense, Wyness (2015) notion of emotional agency appears to be helpful. The author reflects about sociologist Archer's work on the inner narratives people create in order to do things, connecting the children's inner dialogues and the way they articulate their feelings with their actions. To Wyness (2015), children's emotional agency is manifested when young people find an internal (rather than external) motivation to act upon matters concerning their lives. The idea of children helping parents because they like it (and taking pride on how well they can perform tasks they take upon themselves) can be understood as our young participants' quest for taking charge of their daily life decisions.

3.2. Xiao and child-participation in home-decision making

As stated in Chapter 2, when investigating about Xiao we strive to understand how children, parents and grandparents perceive the children's possibilities of expressing wishes and giving opinions on matters that affect their lives. After exploring in Chapter 3 contemporary understandings of Xiao is defined by our participants we now move onto analysing child-participation in home-decision making in our participants' households. Data presented in both chapters 3 and 4 will be crucial in establishing connections/estrangements between the concepts of Xiao and child-participatory rights when moving onto our concluding thoughts.

Before we start looking at the different categories and analysing how decision-making processes play out in our participants' households, it is important to revisit the complexity of participatory rights explored in Chapter 1[57]. Lundy (2007) points out that "the meaning of individual provisions of the UNCRC can only be understood when they are read and interpreted in conjunction with the other rights protected in the Convention." (p.931). Therefore, a child's right of "forming his or her own views", "expressing those views freely in all matters affecting the child" and "the views of the child being given due weight" in accordance with the child's "age and maturity" (CRC, Article 12) can only be fully realized when understood in connection with other rights expressed in the UNCRC. In our data analysis, this means that providing children with indistinct free choice does not necessarily indicate that a child's view has been given due weight, while not letting a child completely free to do something might come out of parents' genuine concern for their safety. We can see examples of such situations in Tiger mom's and Ultraman mom's statements:

> He can choose his toys freely, and what kind of clothes, like short-sleeved, long-sleeved, orange, or green. And if I ask him to fold the quilt into square, but he likes to fold it into rectangle. Such this little personal things, I will let him to choose freely. It doesn't matter. (Tiger mom - Translated from Mandarin)

Though Tiger mom provides her child with free choice in "little personal things", she does so because "it doesn't matter". Later in her interview, Tiger mom states that "education is the biggest problem" and that she will choose herself "a good school, a good school representative to choose a good teacher, a good network", indicating less willingness to discuss with her child matters that she thinks are important for his future. On the other hand, Ultraman's mom who states not letting her son free to choose how to play outdoors, demonstrates to have his best interests (and safety) in mind:

> Interview question: Your child wants to play outside. He wants to run, jump and climb obstacles. He might end up with some scratches. What would you do?

[57] See section 1.1.3. Participation Rights (p. 12)

> Umm, I am sure I will stop him. He runs too fast. He can move fast and he is too active. Because he got hurt when he was two years old, I have a shadow in my mind. He had several stitches in a head wound. Personally speaking, I am afraid that he will get hurt when he goes outside. Whenever he calls "mommy", I will be frighten. Because he bled a lot at that time. I nestled him in my arms and went to the hospital. I stayed beside him and watched him to be stitched. He cried and some people had to prevent him from moving. He was so young, I am always afraid of that, just like when he runs or do something dangerous. (Ultraman's mom - Translated from Mandarin)

While we agree with Lundy (2007) that adults may find "compelling reasons for not giving children's views due weight" and that "the practice of actively involving pupils in decision making should not be portrayed as an option which is in the gift of adults but a legal imperative which is the right of the child" (Lundy, p. 931), we also understand that tensions between participation and protection that are still present in the text of the Convention (Liebel & Saadi, 2012; Verhellen, 2015; Archard, 2015), as well as an yet emergent image of child as a competent social actor - rather than a passive object of provision and protection - (Landsdown, 2010; Liebel and Saadi, 2012; Archard, 2015), play a role in influencing parental attitude towards decision-making involving children in a global level. Furthermore, when considering our participants' context and their own experiences of participation as Chinese citizens, the idea that certain areas are more open to individual input than others can be understood within their social experiences[58]. According to Yan (2010) "the rights movement in China still bears the heavy influence of state power and the traditional notion that an individual's identity and rights are dependent on, instead of independent from, the state." (Yan, 2010, p. 501). In this context, the idea that child's participation is dependent on adults' permission, rather than a right on its own doesn't fall far from Yan's understanding of the Chinese rights approach.

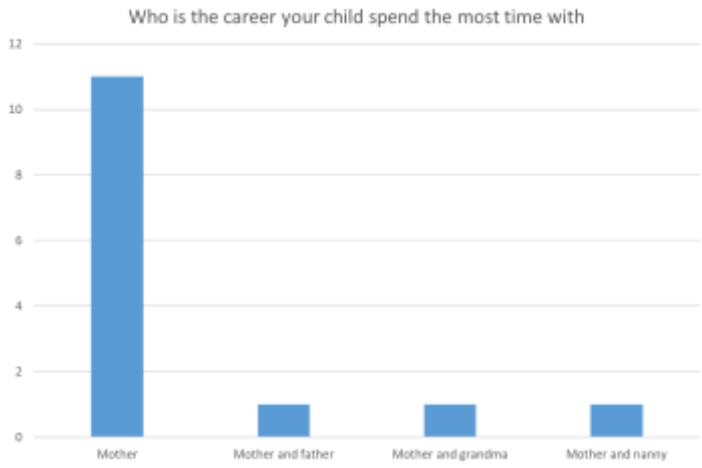
3.2.1. The role of grandparents

To start with, the first element we would like to highlight in our data is the downplay of grandparents' connection to child decision making at home in relation to our initial readings. When doing an initial literature review, we observed Naftali's (2016) point of view on the role Chinese grandparents play in their grandchildren's lives. According to Naftali (2016) grandparents "continue to play a prominent role in caring for young children in China" and "continue to teach children the value of obedience to elders and seniors, and to exercise relatively harsh disciplinary methods with children" (p. 43). Our data, however, displayed a rather different perspective coming from both parents and children. On one hand, parents have manifested their opposition to the idea of grandparents being burdened with the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren. That is explicit in Ultraman's mom interview:

[58] See connections established between participation understandings and citizenship experiences in page 21, section 1.3.2. Participation understood through the lenses of citizenship and democracy.

You cannot ask your parents to help you to take care of your own children. Sometimes, taking care of your children will influence their elderly lives. You need to take care of your children yourself. (Utraman's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Complementing Ultraman's mom explanation, Graph 15 illustrates that in the majority of families participating in the study, parents took upon themselves the main responsibility of caring for their young children. The same perspective appears to be shared by the young participants of this study. Though it is possible to see a close relationship between children and their grandparents (as explored in Chapter 3), when explaining about home-decision making processes, the children pictured their grandparents as taking either a neutral role or assuming a position of trying to please their grandchildren. Chimpanzee's description of home-decision making regarding food shows us that neutral position that our young participants often described their grandparents taking:



Graph 15: Career who spends the most time with the child

Ms Jessica: How about your grandma and grandpa.
Ms Kindness：爷爷奶奶呢？爷爷奶奶让你吃这些东西吗？(What about your grandma and grandpa? Will they let you eat this?)
Chimpanzee: 爷爷奶奶平常都没有说话。(Grandma and grandpa don't say anything.)
Ms Kindness: Grandpa and grandma don't say anything, maybe they don't live together. 你们没有住在一起，对不对？(Do you live toguether?)
Chimpanzee: 不是，一般般爷爷奶奶会来我们家，平常。(No, grandma and grandpa usually come to our home)
Ms Kindness: 就是他们不会干涉你吃什么，对不对？(But they will not say anything about your food?)
Chimpanzee: 对。(right)

Similarly, Peppa Pig also pictures her grandparents as taking a neutral role regarding her food choices:

Ms Jessica: What about your grandpa and grandma? Do they tell you something about food?
Ms Kindness: 爷爷奶奶有没有告诉你要吃什么？(Do your grandparents tell you what you need to eat?)
Peppa Pig shook her head negatively.

In another occasion, when talking about play, I asked the children:

Ms Jessica: I want to know if there is anything that mommy, daddy or grandpa and grandma they tell you that you cannot play because it is too dangerous or it's too dirty or it's too messy.

The children then started telling me about things they were not allowed to play. When doing so, all of them except for Belle who also mentioned her grandma, placed focus on their mothers not allowing them some types of play:

Sophia: My mommy don't let me play hot things.
Princess Pink: My mommy don't let me play the net.
Ms Jessica: The internet?
Princess Pink: Net. 网子。(climbing net ropes)
[...]
Belle: 我，我婆婆不让我玩那些温度计。(My grandma will not let me play the thermometer)
[...]
Lydia: 我妈妈说我不能玩游乐场的那个后面的网子的。(My mommy says I cannot play the net in the theme park)
[...]
Chimpanzee: 我妈妈不让我玩锋利的东西。(My mommy will not let me play something that is sharp)
[...]
Ultraman: My mommy don't let me play phone.

The children's emphasis on negotiating home decision making with their mothers makes sense as we match the information with data collected in our socio-cultural survey in which mothers classified themselves as being the carer who spends the most time with their children outside school hours (as shown above in Graph 15.

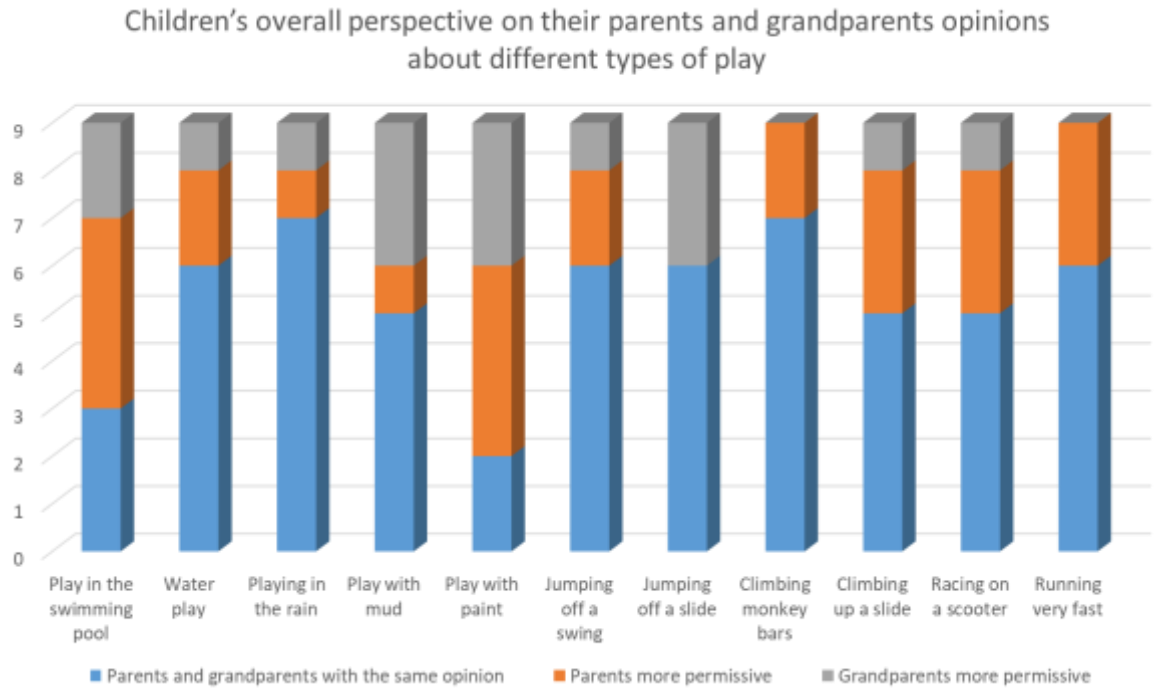
The neutral role of grandparents may also appear as a reinforcement of the parents' position. That was evident when we proposed a bedtime role-play with family dolls:

Chimpanzee got the daddy doll. Princess Pink got Xiao Li. Dinosaur got Xiao Ming. Belle chose grandma. Lydia chose mommy and Sophia chose grandpa. Then all the children tried to play together.
Princess Pink:谁是一家人的 (who is the first family)
Lydia: 我是一家人 (I am the first)
Chimpanzee [playing dad]: go to sleeping
Princess Pink [playing the child girl]: 不可以 (no)
Lydia [playing mom]: Go to sleep
Belle [playing grandma]: 不能从你的卧室回来 (you can't come back from your bedroom)

> The children who were holding the children dolls ran stood up and started walking around the classroom, making the dolls run. The children who were holding the parents and grandparents dolls chased them.
> Sofia [playing grandpa]: 去睡觉啊 (go to sleep)
> Dinosaur puts Xiao Ming to sleep and the rest of the children keep on chasing Xiao Li. I thank them and ask them to sit back on the mat.

In this role-play episode we see the children divided into adult roles and child roles. Who is a parent and who is a grandparent doesn't seem to make that much of a difference on the actions taken: adults are trying to get the children to sleep and the children [Xiao Ming and Xiao Li] refuse to. The chasing game ends when one of the children gets tired and decides to listen to their family's request and go to bed. There were no harsh discipline measures involved to get the children to go to sleep coming from neither parents nor grandparents.

Another situation in which we can see the children's perspective on parents and grandparents as having a similar role in decision-making processes is by looking at their "types of play" booklets[59]. Among the eleven types of play we presented, the children classified as mostly equal their parents and grandparents opinions about whether children could go and play, be careful, or stop their attempts to play. As the graph below illustrates, except for "play in the swimming pool" and "play with paint" our young participants believe that the majority of parents and grandparents would have the same opinion about children engaging in the different types of play.



Graph 16: Parents' and grandparents' opinion on the different types of play - children's perspective

[59] A detailed explanation of the booklets is presented in pages 63 and 66.

Regarding the harsh disciplinary methods issue mentioned by Naftali (2016), it seems our group of parents worried about their elders dealing with young children in the opposite way of a rigid education regime, showing concern about the children being spoiled by their grandparents instead. Like other references to grandparents "spoiling" children presented earlier in Chapter 3[60], Rabbit mom also manifests her concern in a very explicit way:

> [...], you need to tell them [grandparents] not to spoil the children. (Rabbit mom – Translated from Mandarin)

From our young participants' point of view we see some mentioning of grandparents trying to please the children in home-decision making. When talking about food choices, Sophia tells us that her grandparents let her eat candies while her parents try to avoid it:

> Ms Kindness: 然后如果爷爷奶奶呢？(How about grandpa and grandma?) How about grandpa and grandma?
>
> Sofia: 就让我吃糖。(They let me eat candies)

However, rather than a permissive attitude, grandparents being neutral or reinforcing the parents' position appears more frequently in the children's data set. Mentioning of harsh discipline coming from grandparents does not figure in our data - neither from the parents nor from the children's point of view.

3.2.2. Participation rights in action: parents and children negotiating home-decision making

To start our inquiry on the children´s right of being listen to in connection with Filial Piety beliefs, we asked parents whether they thought listening to children´s opinions and wishes would be conflictive with the Chinese principles of Xiào. All parents stated that they don´t see Xiao as being conflictive with the idea of listening to children. According to our interviewees, the World has changed from the time they were children themselves:

> Our generation is not autocratic. (Lydia's mom, [1st cohort of parents] – Translated from Mandarin)
>
> [...], the children are different from what we were. They think they are independent and they have many thoughts that we didn't have. They can tell us what they think while I had to obey my parents. (Ox mom, [1st cohort of parents] – Translated from Mandarin)

[60] See Parent 11's quote in page 126 - "my parents will spoil children so I will deal with the conflict like this."; and Dinosaur's mom quote in page 129 – "Because sometimes the elders spoil kids so much, I always let my kids know why grandpa and grandma treat them so well."

> In the past parents in China would point who you should marry with. *Nowadays, people are just free to choose their love. It is a modern society, right?* – (Snake mom, [1st cohort of parents] – *answered in English*)

Such changes, extensively explored in Chapter 3, point to the mindset shift in which respect appears detached from obedience (Yue and Ng, 1999; Goh and Kuczynski 2009)[61] and, being independent/cultivating a personal opinion raises as a self-development trait of Xiao[62]. Parents acknowledged their generation as believing in respect as a process where one has to listen to another, finding a balance in between the different opinions:

> I listen to her opinion, I respect her, and then I listen to her ideas. In turn, she will learn from me. Because the children are learning from adults. And then in turn, she will listen to my ideas and respect me. (Goat mom – Translated from Mandarin)

> You need to listen to them if you love them. (Snake mom – Translated from Mandarin)

> I will communicate with my parents so that they can understand me. Like my children, they have more ideas and are more active, so I would like to respect them. We always communicate with each other to find a balance. (Tiger mom – Translated from Mandarin)

The shift from obedience to respect as a two-way street where children respect parents and vice-versa can be attributed to the innumerous changes regarding the status of children and young children in contemporary China, as explored in Chapter 3.

Looking for practical examples on how the interviewed parents deal with listening to their children in daily matters, the second part of parents' interview was designed with questions about everyday situations related to different types of play (with the risk of getting slightly hurt), choosing friends, after school classes, food choices and bed time. The same topics were addressed during our focus groups, when we sought for the children's perspectives on home-decision making negotiation[63]. To analyse parents' answers we categorized their narratives into four different types of decision-making processes - the four categories have not been pre-determined beforehand but arisen from our analysis on our adult participants' answers. Situations described by parents were categorized into free choice decisions, guided choices (when parents give advice and negotiate), controlled choices (when the child was able to choose within given options) and non-negotiable decisions (when parents determine what the child should do). Patterns found among parents' answers are presented in Table 3 and are analysed within the next subsections.

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[61] See section 3.3.1. Being a good child – the Respect aspect of Xiao (pg. 139)

[62] See section 3.3.4. The dimension of self (pg. 168)

[63] Home-decision making was specifically addressed during sessions 7, 8, 9 and 10. The data collection tools and procedures are described on pages 62 - 64.

Patterns on choice possibility in home decision making for children according to parents				
Activity	free	guided	controlled	non-negotiable
Dangerous play	7	3	1	3
Friends	10	2	1	1
After school classes	2	10	1	1
Food choices	2	1	11	0
Bed time	2	1	2	9

Table 4: Patterns on choice possibility according to parents

When looking for emerging categories in the children's data set, a different array of decision-making processes spurt out of our research materials. The children's perspective on negotiating with parents brings about a distinct angle that enables us to gain a more holistic understanding on home decision making in our participants' everyday life. By analysing home decision-making from a framework that emerges from our young participants' perspective, the agency theme becomes more and more evident. As Wyness (2015) points out, "[a] social conception of agency emphasizes its embedded nature in the way that agency emerges from relationships and roles that children play in decision-making processes, in the work they undertake and in the way they interact with adults" (Wyness, 2015, p. 18). In that sense, agency is a relational concept, which lies under the notion of the child as a social actor (Corsaro, 2011), the child as a "social being and significant doing" (Oswell, 2013). When narrating decision-making processes in their homes, the children displayed a *sense of responsibility* towards certain matters, *negotiation* strategies, *resistance* manoeuvres and a *compromising* attitude within certain situations. These four categories (as illustrated on Figure 15) emerged from conversations in which we primarily focused on parent-child conflicted interests. While we do recognize decision-making processes also present situations in which all parts involved may not have conflicted opinions, our focus on divergence of interests aimed at understanding conflict-solving strategies adopted by our participants.

Figure 15: Home-decision making emerging themes (children's case)

While we were able to identify patterns in the choice possibilities parents' offered to children depending on specific matters at hand, when we tried to establish preference patterns analysing the children's responses towards specific topics[64], such task proved to be very difficult within a focus group setting. Circumstances such as group input or the child's own shift of thinking framework often changed participants'

[64] Food choices, types of play, friends, bedtime, after school activities

responses. Rather than mapping when our participants chose one or the other approach to decision-making, the four categories that emerged from the children's data set can be better understood if seen as a dynamic cycle of multiple possibilities rather than static one-way paths. Children may choose to start with negotiating or with taking responsibility based on their personal priorities and by reading situational signs. Negotiation might lead to compromising or to having their way when adults are not looking. Often times we noticed children compromising because they took responsibility over something they had previously agreed upon in a negotiation.

As a way of organizing this section, cross-referencing categories coming from parents and children's data sets, we chose to structure our text by splitting it into two subsections named after the patterns found among parents' perspectives on decision-making – subsection 4.2.1. Free and guided choices and subsection 4.2.2. Controlled choices and non-negotiable decisions – exclusively because of the more static nature of parental perspective patterns. The categories of analysis emerging from the children's data set are cross-referenced throughout the entire section, being called out as we bring children's perspectives together with parental views.

3.2.2.1. Free and guided choices

From our parents' data set we noticed that decision-making involving play with the possibility of getting slightly hurt and choosing friends within the circle provided by parents (the school they enrolled their child in; parents´ social circle; neighbourhood) were often dealt with in a more free manner, with more possibilities of child's input:

> Interview question: Your child wants to play outside. She wants to run, jump and climb obstacles. She might end up with some scratches. What would you do?
> If it is Sophia, I will remind her. I would tell her what may happen to her. If she still wants to have a try, I will let her go. And if she really falls down or gets hurt somehow, I would tell her we can deal with it, but she cannot cry because I have already reminded her. (Sophia's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

During our focus groups, Sophia reinforced her family's free approach to decision-making involving play:

> Ms Jessica: Can tell me more things that your family let you play and what they don't let you play?
>
> Sophia: My mom let me play everything.

In fact, Sophia displayed a sense of responsibility towards what she considered unappropriated play. When asked to take a picture of a place on the playground where her parents wouldn't let her play, Sophia photographed the playground plants and told us:

Sophia: 妈妈不让我碰树叶，因为妈妈说不能伤害植物 (Mom won't let me touch the plants, because my mother said that I can't hurt the plants).

Ms. Kindness: Would you listen to mommy?

Sophia: Yes. 我也不想伤害植物 (Yes, I don't want to hurt the plants either)

Figure 43: Places where play is not allowed - photo by Sophia

Just as Sophia's mom, 7 out of the 14 interviewed parents declared letting their children free to choose how to play, dealing with the consequences together with the child in case something goes wrong. Data collected from the children shows that in the majority of the situations parents will warn children to be careful, but they would not stop them from trying different types of play. The table below shows the children's perspective on their parents' approach to negotiating play episodes.

Types of play	What would my parents say?			What would I do after hearing what my family said?		
	GO	CAREFUL	STOP	GO	CAREFUL	STOP
Swimming pool	3	5	1	5	3	1
Water play	2	4	3	4	2	3
Playing in the rain	1	1	7	1	2	6
Play with mud	1	1	7	3	2	4
Play with paint	1	4	4	3	3	3
Jump off a swing	0	5	4	5	1	3
Jump off a slide	0	7	2	6	2	1
Climb monkey bars	6	0	3	6	0	3
Climb up a slide	6	3	0	8	1	0
Race on my scooter	7	1	1	9	0	0
Run very fast	5	4	1	6	1	2
	Column 1			Column 2		

Table 5: Negotiating play episodes as viewed by children

As the children have indicated in their booklets, the majority of play situations appeared to be fluidly negotiated between adults and young family members. Even Ultraman's mom – whose concern with her child's safety we have previously analyzed on page 156 – declared to understand that she should take play situations more self-assured while recognizing she still has trouble to let Ultraman decide for himself how to play in different scenarios:

> I had some lessons before, the teachers told us that we cannot always say "Don't run, go slowly". Don't say this all the time. You can let them try because he can judge whether it will be dangerous or not, right? For example, there is a small pool, you say "Dangerous, don't go there!" even if you haven't approached there. They will want to go there especially when you try to stop him. You can go there with him. Don't stop him. They will be more curious if you stop him. Just stay with him and make sure he is safe. It will be OK if he is safe. (Ultraman's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

What is interesting to observe when comparing Table 5's columns 1 and 2, is that for the majority of the play situations children said they would just go and play - regardless of whether they thought parents would tell them to be careful or just let them be. The three categories in which children thought their parents would not approve of them playing were what we call here "messy play". When we compare what the children think their parents would say and what children would actually do in the three "messy play" categories, we notice that unlike the other types of play, the majority of the children would do as their parents[65] asked them to, not exploring that type of play or being careful in such exploration. That makes us wonder whether this group of parents were particularly strict when it comes to messy play or it was the children who were not interested in these messy possibilities. Like in the previously explored situation narrated by Sophia, whilst she tells us her mom would not let her play with plants, Sophia also manifests her lack of interest in playing with plants as she did not want to hurt the plants either.

Peppa Pig manifests a similar position when telling us about her food choices. After filling her plate with pretend-play carrots, grapes and eggs, Peppa justifies her food choices by saying that her mom doesn't let her eat fried food. However, when we asked Peppa Pig if she likes fried food she actually says that she doesn't:

> Ms Jessica: Peppa Pig, why did you choose these foods?
>
> Peppa Pig: 因为我妈妈不给我吃上火的东西。(Because my mom would not let me eat fried food.)
>
> Ms Kindness: Mommy doesn't let her eat fried food.
>
> Ms Jessica: Would you like to eat fried food?
>
> Ms Kindness: 你喜不喜欢吃上火的东西？(Do you like to eat fried food?)
>
> Peppa Pig shood her head negatively.

[65] According to the children's point of view

Peppa Pig's position in relation to fried food could be associated to a sense of responsibility as well. By looking at Peppa's mom interview, we noticed the "fried food" topic is an object of concern for Peppa's family:

> I will not control what they eat. But my oldest kid is a little bit too fat, I will ask him not to eat too much. But if I ask him not to eat, he will eat more. Because I think children are rebellious, they like to do things against you. If I keep asking him not to eat too much so many times, he will eat more, so I will not control him. It is not like I won't let him eat these deep-fried foods, but I worry about him because he is only 10 years old but already over 60kg. (Peppa Pig's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Peppa chose healthy foods even before knowing we would ask her what she thought her parents' opinion on her plate would be, but she later justified her choices by saying that her mom does not let her eat fried foods. It appears that recurrent concerns about fried food manifested in Peppa's house – even though directed at her brother – cultivated a sense of responsibility in Peppa, who learned these foods were not good for her and, consequently she did not develop a taste for it.

By analysing Sophia's lack of interest in playing with plants and Peppa's lack of interest in eating fried foods, alongside with episodes in which the children's interest collided with their parents' it appears that saying "no" to messy play is something that comes from both parties, rather than a one side decision followed by a submissive attitude. In fact, what we can see from the children's data is that when children and parents had conflictive interests, children usually did what they think was best. In Chimpanzee's case, she told us her mother would not let her play on the playground stairs, and that she would then play behind her mother's back.

Figure 44: Places where play is not allowed - photo by Chimpanzee

Chimpanzee:妈妈不让我玩楼梯 (My mom won't let me play on the stairs)

Ms. Kindness: 为什么? (Why?)

Chimpanzee: 因为我妈妈担心我有时候会从这里转身跳下来，会碰到那里，会死的 (Because my mother is worried that I sometimes turn around and jump from here, I will meet there [Chimpanzee points the ground], I will die)

Ms. Kindness: Would you listen to mommy? Or would you say, please, please, I want to play?

Chimpanzee:我偷偷的玩 (I will play secretly)

Though our data contains episodes in which participants portrayed decision-making about play as being conflictive – such as the situation narrated by Chimpanzee - negotiation of play situations have overall been found to be somehow fluid among parents and children.

Sustaining the free-choice pattern described by parents, friendship decisions did not appear to be a source of conflict in parent-child negotiation either. Belle's mom justifies the need of letting her child free to make her own friends:

> I let her choose her own friends for sure. I need to show respect to her. Otherwise, I would not have chosen this school for her. As you know, if I wanted to interfere, I would have chosen a Confucius School for her. Because international school is more open and encourage the children to make their own decisions. I hope my children to have character like this. (Belle's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Just as Belle's mom, 10 out of 14 parents affirmed they did not interfere in their child's choices of making friends. When speaking about friendships in our focus groups, the children seemed to be equally at ease with their freedom to establish relationships with other children:

> Ms Jessica: Did your parents ever say to you " Don't be friends with this child"?
> Belle: No.
> Ms Kindness: 你们妈妈和爸爸有没有跟你们说过"不要跟这个小朋友做朋友"，有没有说过这样的话？(Have your parents ever said "Don't be friends with this child"? Have they said that?)
> Belle: 没有。(No)
> Peppa Pig: No.
> Sofia shook her head.
> Ms Jessica: They never said that?
> Ms Kindness: What about you, Sofia? 他们有没有跟你说不要跟谁做朋友？有没有这样子说？(What about you, Sofia? Have them ever said "Don't be friends with them." Have them said that?)
> Sofia shook her head.

When talking about friendship choice possibilities, Lydia brought up that she would like to be friends with our non-Xiao dolls because they would be naughty sometimes:

> Ms Kindness: 你会不会跟他们做朋友？即使他们不会孝，你会不会跟他们做朋友？(Would you like to be friends with them even if they are not Xiao?)
> Lydia: 会。(Yes.)
> Ms Kindness: 为什么呢？(Why?)
> Lydia: 因为他们有时候会调皮。(Because they will be naughty sometimes)
> Ms Kindness: She said yes. I asked her why. She said because sometimes they will be naughty.
> Lydia: 有时候我也会有些调皮。(Sometimes, I will also be naughty – Lydia said with a grin on her face)

Ms Kindness: Sometimes, she will also be naughty.
Ms. Jessica: Do you think your mommy would allow you to be friend with them?
Lydia and Dinosaur: No.

Here, though hypothetically speaking, Lydia displays resistance to what she thinks her mom would say about a friendship with naughty children. In the sequence, Belle comes up with a solution for Lydia's dilemma:

Belle: 我妈妈让我跟他们做好朋友。因为我想要教他们什么是孝。(My mom let me be friends with them because I want to teach them what Xiao is)

Lydia: Me too.

Belle's answer could figure here as both a sense of responsibility display as well as a manoeuvre to get Lydia what she wanted – a free pass to be friends with the non-Xiao dolls. In this situation it appears that Belle's sense of responsibility almost blur with resistance to adult rule. At the end of the day, teaching Xiao to the naughty dolls seems to be the best solution to achieve an ultimate goal – be friends with the non-Xiao pretend-characters.

Concerns about children making friends with naughty children were only raised by 4 out of the 14 parents we interviewed. While only one displayed a more rigid approach to the topic, saying that children "can't make friends with those who don't listen to their parents or are naughty" (Ox mom – Translated from Mandarin), other parents who raised such concerns told us they work around the situation by guiding their children to make good choices:

Dragon's mom: Yes, I do interfere. And I think that is so important. There is an old saying, "The birds of a feather gather together"[66]. I think kids are too young to judge people and choose friends. They are naïve. For example, I always provide Dragon's elder brother some suggestions. You should not deliberately talk about it, but just talk about things as you see them. Because I think kids before 12-year-old, they will not know what you have done. After 12-year-old, they become smarter, and they will understand that adults are tactically interfering in their life and may resist to it.
Interviewer: Can you give us an example of how you guide Dragon in making friends?
Dragon's mom: I think the kids are too young and they depend on parents for a lot of things. For example, if I find a child whose character is appreciate among his classmates, such as his classmate *****[classmate's name], I will provide some chances to let them play together. Or I will suggest his mother if they can attend to the basketball class together. So I think that parents play an important role for the young kids. And they [children] only can keep a forever friendship if they meet outside school. Because in class, they study together but cannot have a deep friendship. What's more, People could make friends with their neighbours before, but now we close the door after we are back home. So parents should be positive to take kids outside and help them to make friends. Kids are too young to go out and make friends. (Dragon's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

[66] 人以类聚，物以群分

From Dragon's mom perspective, we see that though making friends have been classified as a free choice by most parents, there is some sort of control in this freedom as parents are the ones who take children to places and encourage them (or not) to establish deeper connections with certain children. As we saw in the excerpts above, our young participants seem to be aware that, though parents don't deliberately interfere on their friendship choices, they might have an opinion on children's friends.

After-school classes were classified by most of the parents as a non-academic content and, because of its extra-curricular status, handled in a more or less free approach. When writing about children in China, Naftali (2016) raises a point that "many parents try to ensure that children's spare time will be spent studying or engaging in various skill-enhancement activities designed to 'raise the child's quality'"(Naftali, 2016, p. 49). While the author argues that such practice undermines children's possibilities of "play and relaxation", our participants manifested a different perspective. During our interviews, parents sustained that extra-curricular activities were a possibility for children to discover and explore their interests, portraying such activities as leisure. Ultraman's mom describes her intentions in providing her son with different activities:

> For example, he can join the painting class, piano class, taekwondo class etc. But he can choose what he likes. If he doesn't like, we will not push him. If he likes it, we can let him develop in the right direction. He doesn't have to master all he learns or have great success. I just want him to cultivate his interests from his childhood. (Ultraman's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

In a similar manner, Tiger mom also tells us about the importance of supporting her child in pursuing her interests:

> We will tell her she should choose what she is interested in learning. Because she has so many classes right now like piano, ballet, Chinese handwriting... Yes, there is painting... So we usually tell her to let us know if you like it, if you really like it or if you don't like it. Also if you are interested in anything else, you let me know and we will help you to pursue it. (Tiger mom – Translated from Mandarin)

The idea that such activities are an entertainment experience and part of the children's leisure time is perhaps a cultural trait that other authors who have written about the strong presence of enhancement classes in the life of urban Chinese children may have overlooked. Rolandsen (2011), who wrote a comprehensive study about leisure in urban China, argues that "Chinese surveys show that both occupation and income level are decisive for the kinds of leisure activities in which the Chinese engage" (p. 49). The author sustains there is a lack of free-of-charge opportunities for leisure in both rural and urban areas of China. In this scenario, Chinese families of lower income spend most of their spare time in front of the TV while higher income families have a bigger variety of leisure opportunities at their disposal. (Rolandsen, 2011). Based on a nationwide survey on China's leisure patterns, Wei and Stodolska (2015) also ranked watching TV and surfing on the internet as the two preferred leisure choices of the average Chinese. In fact, spending

too much time in front of the TV is something we noticed being a concern among our participants – who all belong to high income families. Dinosaur's mom manifested her opinion on the matter during our interview:

> He is free to choose what to do in his spare time. On weekends, he can totally choose whatever he likes, to watch TV or to play outside, as long as it is not anything dangerous. However, if he watches TV for a whole day, I will blame him. (Dinosaur's mom – Translated from Mandarin]

The same topic came up during our focus groups. While discussing parent-child negotiation of play episodes, Chimpanzee told us:

> Chimpanzee: 我妈妈不让我看那么多电视，如果看这么多电视，就把那个关掉。(My mom will not let me watch TV for a long time, if I watch TV for a long time, she will turn it off)

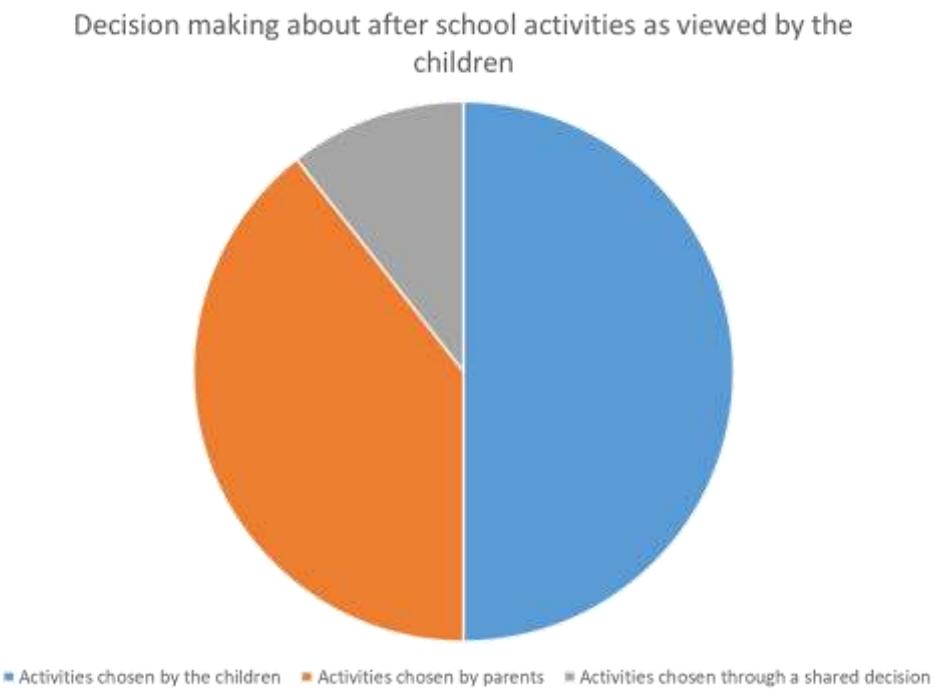
The fact that these families have the financial means to provide their children with activities other than TV puts them in a position of supporting the discovery and development of different interests by their children. Ox mom and Peppa Pig's mom elaborate on this idea:

> Personally speaking, I think it is good if the children have a variety of hobbies. They cannot have no interests at all. (Ox mom – Translated from Mandarin)

> I will support whatever they are interested in. Especially my oldest son he does not have any interest. I hope he can at least have one interest. Peppa Pig is very interested in dancing. (Peppa Pig's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

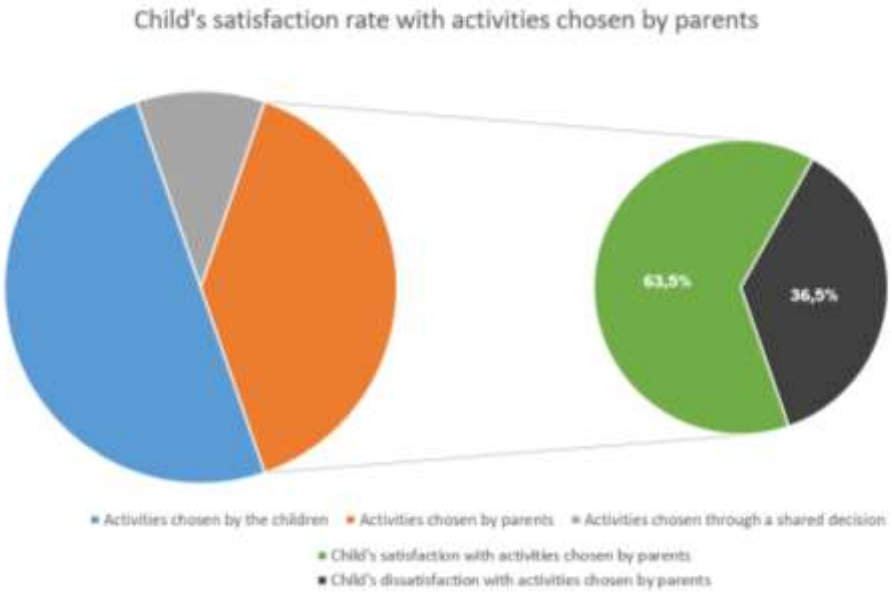
While acknowledging that leisure can assume different forms among different cultures and different people, Rolandsen (2011) draws an important line between leisure and non-leisure activities. According to the author "activities that are undertaken in a person's 'spare' time but forced upon the individual by authorities – be they parents or agents of the party-state – cannot be regarded as leisure practices, but rather as the fulfilment of duties" (p-44). Based on Rolandsen's assertion, the only way to tell weather our participants' extra-curricular activities are a source of entertainment or a burden is by listening to their opinions on the matter.

To start analysing the children's opinions on their extra-curricular activities we firstly draw attention to our young participants' view about who made decisions about their after school schedules. As the graph below shows, the children classified half of their extracurricular activities as chosen by themselves and an additional 10.6% as chosen through shared decisions between child and parents. The figure accounting for activities chosen by adults alone is of 39.4%.



Graph 17: Decision-making about after school activities - as viewed by the children

Though activities chosen by adults' figure as a big chunk of our chart, another interesting point to explore is the children's satisfaction rate in relation to such activities. As the graph below shows, 63.5% of the activities chosen by parents are pleasing to the children, even though taking part in those activities has not been a child-driven decision.

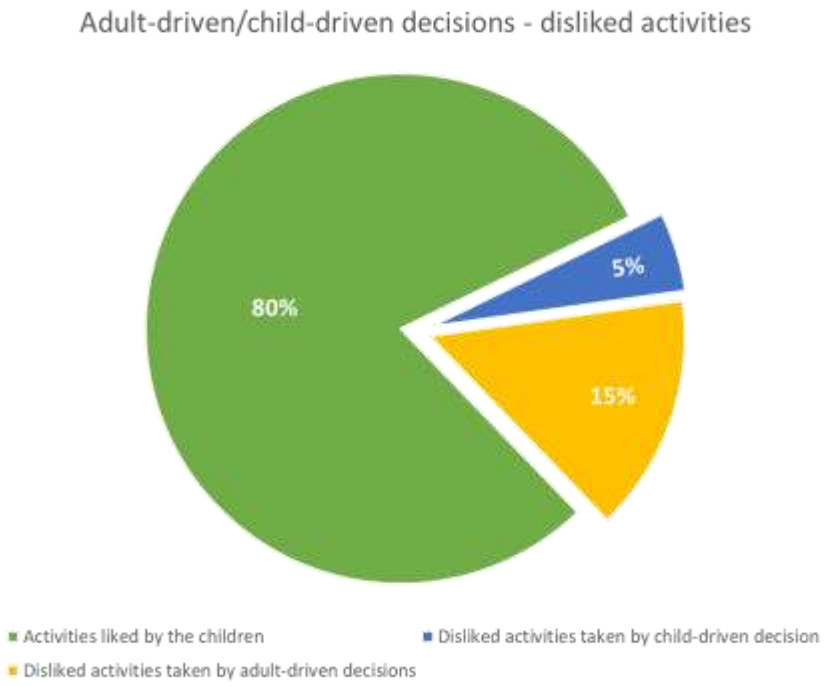


Graph 18: Children's satisfaction rate with activities chosen by their parents

In observing such trait of our data we draw attention to Bjerke's (2011) work with children's expressions of agency when negotiating decision-making processes with adults at home and in school. In her research with Norwegian children, Bjerke (2011) argues that young people "not necessarily ask for increased independence from adults, but rather to be recognised as 'differently equal' partners in shared decision-making processes" (p.93). Following this thought, we come to see our young participants' positive attitude towards the 63,5% of activities chosen by their parents as indicative of a respectful relationship from adults towards children when negotiating family daily schedules. In the figure below, Dragon represents one of his extra-curricular activities chosen by his parents and manifests his satisfaction with their choice:

Figure 45: Dragon's after school schedule - Thursday page

Looking at the 36,5% of adult-chosen activities that are of the children's dislike can be better analysed if we broaden the picture to look at children's likes and dislikes as a whole. The graph below illustrates our young participants' disliked extra-curricular appointments in comparison with their overall after school activities. When looking at both adult and child-driven decisions on after-school activities the children like to attend, the figure accounts for 80% of their after-school arrangements. A range of different engagements appeared as activities the children enjoyed undertaking in their spare time such as art class, LEGO class, chess club, gymnastics, being tutored by one of their school teachers, play, family outings, English class, piano, ballet, doing house chores, taking swimming classes, drawing classes, science-play club, wood work lab, golf class, drum class and Ms. Jessica's research activities. From the remaining 20% of disliked activities, 5% have been undertaken by the children's own initiative, leaving 15% of activities chosen by adults that are not of the children's liking.



Graph 19: Children's disliked activities - child/adult-driven decision ratio

The 5% of self-chosen and disliked activities appeared in Sophia's, Dinosaur's and Dragon's schedules. Sophia indicates homework as taken on her own account while pointing out she doesn't like it. She also wrote on her booklet that on Sundays her mom takes her "to see places" and marked both options (like and dislike). While we counted her divided opinion as half a point for our pool of disliked activities, we also asked Sophia why she circled both options:

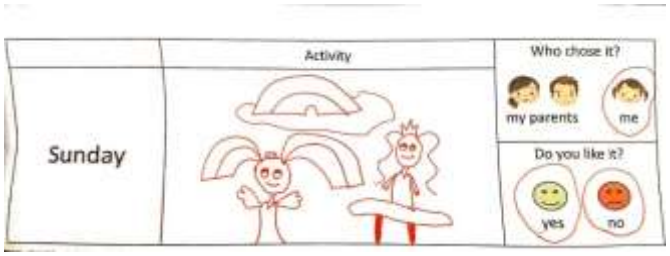


Figure 46: Sophia's after school schedule - Sunday page

Ms. Jessica: Sofia, let me see yours. What did you draw on Sunday?
Sophia: My mommy takes me outside to see places.
Ms. Jessica: And do you like it?
Sophia: Yes and no.
Ms. Jessica: Why?
Sophia: Because sometimes I like it and sometimes I don't.
Ms. Jessica: And do you tell mommy when you don't like it?
Sophia: Yes.
Ms. Jessica: And what does she say.
Sophia: It's Ok.

In a similar logic, Dragon also marked both "like" and "dislike" on his Sunday page, when he has gymnastics – an activity he chose himself. Dinosaur points out that on Sundays he and his family "go outside with the car". Without providing further details, he says he doesn't like it. While he we wonder if he might be referring to a specific outing based on his most recent weekend memories, or to a recurrent routine where he suggests going on a trip and ends up not enjoying it for some reason, Dinosaur had no doubt in affirming he chose the activity himself and he did not like it in the end:

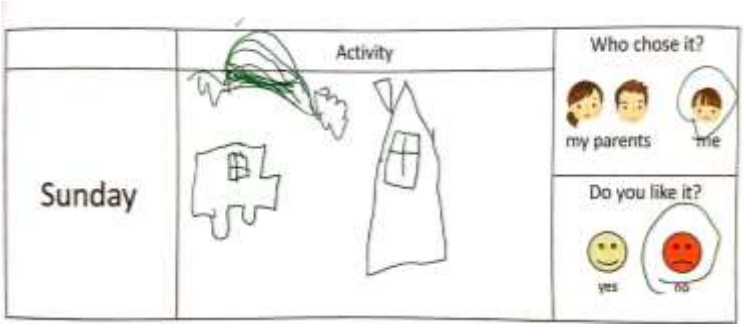


Figure 47: Dinosaur's after school schedule - Sunday page

We can see a sense of responsibility being displayed for these 5% of activities the children declared undertaking on their own initiative even though they don't like it. Our young participants took ownership of their choices even when they turn out not to be enjoyable.

In relation to the 15% of after-school activities the children do not like but take it because of their parents' choice, it seems there is a family negotiation at play in such situations. Rather than classifying after-school scheduling as a free-choice matter, most parents declared to guide their children through the decision-making process, offering possibilities and being open to what children had to say about it. In this process, parents claimed to discuss with their child what classes they would like to take and, in case they don´t like it later on, they would ask them to persist for at least one semester, revaluating and renegotiating classes taken when the next semester begins. Dragon's mom describes how her family decides on extra-curricular activities and how they handle the situation if Dragon does not like a specific activity chosen for him:

> Indeed, he is not interested in some classes. Usually in this case, we will coax him to attend the class in the beginning. In my opinion, he should attend to the class even if he is not interested because he has no idea about it. If he is truly not interested in that class after attending a few times, I will not force him to go to the class again. Because it will be money and time wasting. (Dragon's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Dragon seems to be aware of his negotiation possibilities. When talking about his after school schedule, we asked Dragon if he had told his family that he does not like the activity his parents chose for him. Dragon said he hasn't told them yet, showing compromise with his family decision-making dynamics – he will tell his parents, but he needs to finish the class package that has already been paid for.

Figure 48: Dragon's after school schedule - Wednesday page

Dragon: I do tennis. And I don't like it.
Ms. Jessica: You don't like it? Did you tell mommy?
Dragon: No, I forgot.
Ms. Jessica: You forgot to tell mommy you don't like it? How many times did you have class?
Dragon: A lot of times.
Ms. Jessica: A lot of times? And you never told mommy you don't like it?
Dragon: No.
Ms. Jessica: Are you going to tell mommy?
Dragon nods his head positively.
Ms. Jessica: And what do you think she is going to say?

Dragon: She will say "You need to finish the tennis and you can... and you can... and you can no play tennis again.

A similar situation can be seen on Princess Pink's schedule. When noticing she has marked she doesn't like Piano classes we asked her whether she had communicated her dislike to her parents:

Figure 49: Princess Pink's after school schedule - Wednesday page

Ms. Jessica: Oh, Princess Pink, you said you don't like piano. Did you tell your parents you don't like it?
Princess Pink: No!
Ms. Jessica: You didn't tell them?
Princess Pink: I didn't.
Ms. Jessica: Are you going to tell them? Mom, dad, I don't like piano.
Princess Pink: No.
Ms. Jessica: No? So are you going to do piano and you don't like it? Why don't you tell your parents.
Princess Pink: I don't know.
(Princess Pink turns to the next page and keeps on drawing. She seems ok with having to do the classes even though she doesn't like it, and she clearly doesn't want to speak with me about it anymore)

When looking at our interview with Princess Pink's mom we get a clearer idea of why Princess Pink seems settled with doing the Piano classes she doesn't enjoy.

> Now, Princess Pink has ballet classes at school that she really likes. [...] She also has Chinese chess class at home once a week. But she is not into piano. She likes to play the piano when she comes to have classes at the teacher's home. But when we ask her to practice at home, she will be angry. I will talk to her that she chose the classes at the beginning. She chose the classes in front of her teacher. She said she wanted to have 30 classes. I asked if she was sure. Then she said 20. I confirmed with her and paid for the classes. I asked her to keep her promise because she chose that herself, not me. Now, she just finished her second classes. I asked her to insist on it. Once she chooses, I will help her to finish. She cannot say she doesn't want it anymore. It is not about the money. She can choose again after these 20 classes. If she wants to have piano classes, I will let her continue. If she doesn't want it, I will not force her. She has to finish these 20 classes. (Princess Pink's mom – Translated from Mandarin)[67]

Based on both Princess Pink's and her mom's view on Princess Pink's piano classes, we see the compromise aspect of decision-making. Our young participant was settled with completing the classes she signed up for, even though she did not like it. Princess Pink seems to know she will be offered a choice again once the agreed period is over. Though Princess Pink's mom argues her daughter chose the piano classes herself, Princess Pink indicated on her booklet the piano classes were chosen by her parents.

By looking at Chimpanzee's extra-curricular activities we also see a long-term family negotiation. When we interviewed Chimpanzee's mom in November 2018 she told us about her daughter's schedule at the time:

[67] We interviewed Princess Pink's mom in December 2018. Princess Pink filled in her after-school booklet in May 2019. Counting the holidays we predict Princess Pink was close to the end of her 20 piano classes.

> She [Chimpanzee] has dancing, painting and Lego (clubs). She chose some and I suggested some for her, such as dancing. I think girls need good temperament. She needs that, so I chose [dance] for her. At the very beginning, she didn't like it, but now, she likes it more and more. (Chimpanzee's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

When we talked to the children – in May of 2019 – Chimpanzee confirmed her mom's view on her dance classes. Chimpanzee told us she was taking ballet twice a week and, besides the activity had been chosen by her parents, she enjoyed the ballet classes and smiled when telling us about it:

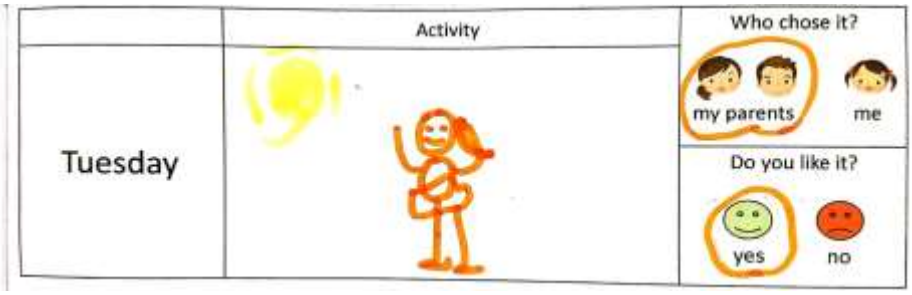


Figure 50: Chimpanzee's after school schedule - Tuesday page

Besides the ballet classes (chosen by her parents) our young respondent's liked activities included Lego classes and homework (which Chimpanzee declared having chosen it herself). The girl however had two other adult-chosen appointments in her schedule that she told us she wasn't too keen on attending – her swimming and drawing classes:

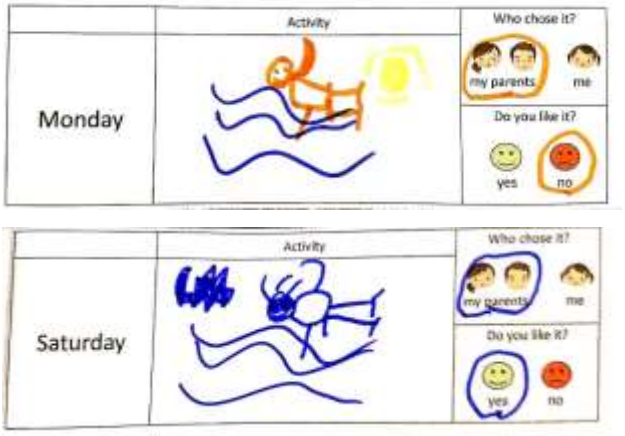


Figure 51: Chimpanzee's after school schedule - Monday and Saturday pages

Ms. Jessica: What do you do on Monday?
Chimpanzee: Swimming.
Ms Jessica: You marked you don't like it on this page (pointing at Monday's page) and that you like it on this page (pointing at Saturday's page) Do you like swimming or you don't like swimming class?
Chimpanzee: I don't know.
Ms Jessica: Why you don't know? Do you like it?
Chimpanzee: Already finish. I had two classes. I had two days and I finish.
Ms Jessica: Would you like to do more swimming classes?
Chimpanzee: No more.
Ms Jessica: So you don't like it.
Chimpanzee: Because I have so many already.

While it seems Chimpanzee was able to convince her parents she no longer wanted to take swimming classes – she had two classes and then finished – the same did not work for the drawing classes:

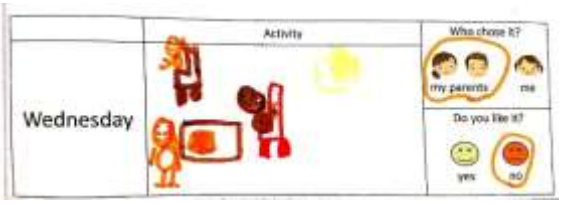
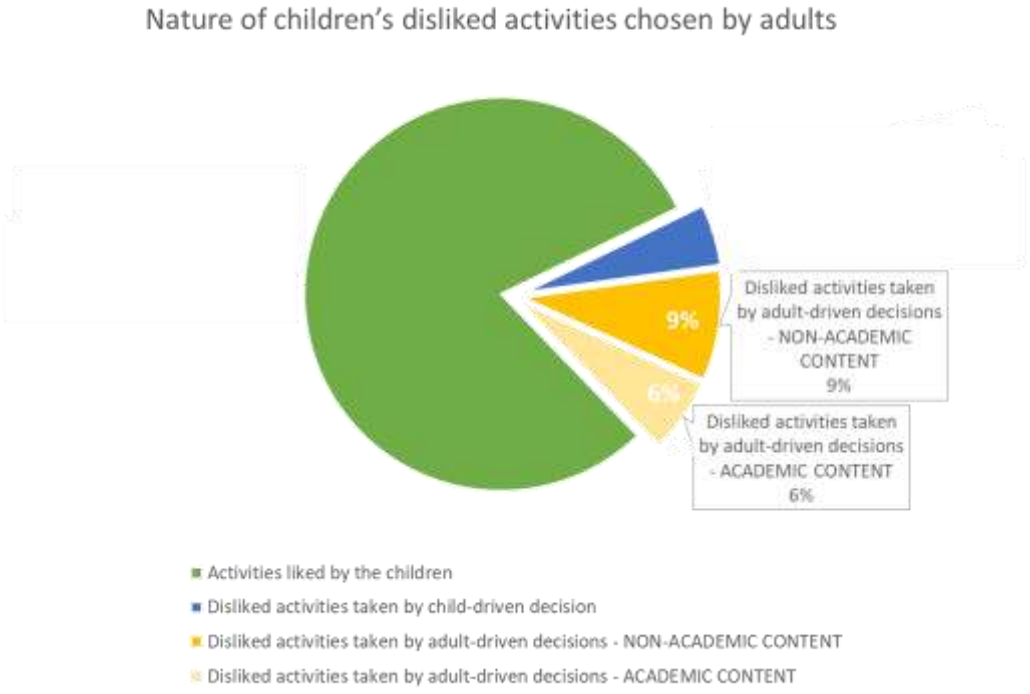


Figure 52: Chimpanzee's after school schedule - Wednesday page

Ms Jessica: You can mark there. Who chose the drawing class for you? Yourself or your mommy and daddy?
Chimpanzee: My mommy. I don't like it.
Ms Jessica: You don't like the drawing class? Have you told your mommy you don't like it?
Chimpanzee: Yes.
Ms Jessica: And what did she say?
Chimpanzee: She said need to.

By analysing how children and parents negotiate over after-school schedules, we see Chimpanzee's mom "need to" as a long-term negotiation - Chimpanzee was allowed to give up on her swimming classes but was asked to keep one class she did not like that much. By keeping Chimpanzee in the drawing classes for the semester, her mom probably hopes her daughter might discover a new interest as it happened with ballet.

Finally, we can also learn about these decision-making processes by looking at the nature of the mentioned disliked activities. As illustrated in the graph below, from the 15% of adult-chosen activities the children disliked, 9% of them were of non-academic content (piano, tennis, swimming and drawing), while the other 6% were of academic content (Maths and homework).



Graph 20: Nature of children's disliked activities chosen by adults

While our analysis suggests that activities of non-academic content figuring in our data as adult-chosen and disliked by the children are part of a long-term negotiation between children and their caregivers - with parents encouraging their children to persist on a set task in the hopes of helping them to explore

different areas - before they [the children] finally make up their minds about whether to adopt such activities into their recreation routines - adult-chosen activities of academic content, on the other hand, cannot fall into the leisure label. When children indicated they don't like doing homework at home, or taking extra Maths classes, our data did not show a possibility of negotiation in these cases. While we will be talking a closer look into academic-related values in the next session (controlled choices and non-negotiable decisions), our analysis of the majority of extra-curricular activities as leisure for the group of children we investigated with stands.

Regarding the quantity of extra-curricular activities our young participants bear in their weekly schedules, we acknowledge Chinese children's need of more free-time has been a heated topic among scholars. While many authors have written about the structuring of Chinese children's free-time as being imposed by adults (Ying, 2003; Fong, 2004; Greenhalg and Winkler, 2005; Natftali, 2016), our data has shown a shared desire between children and adults of having scheduled leisure activities. Dinosaur's mom shares her perspective on the topic:

> All of his after-school classes are about his interests and he insist to attend them every day. (...) So all the after-school classes start around 4:30pm, and after classes he goes home before 6:00pm. He has no more classes on weekends but a class for Lego on Saturday. He will be bored at home if there is no class in day, so he always asks what classes he will attend. (Dinosaur's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Dinosaur's mom observation about her son being "bored at home" in the absence of scheduled activities reminds us of Rolandsen's argument that "spare time in itself is no guarantee of leisure" (Rolandsen, 2011, p.41). Kleiber, who defines leisure as 'the combination of free time and the expectation of preferred experience' (Kleiber 1999, p.4) then direct us back to analysing the children's expectations about the management of their spare time. After discussing after school schedules, we asked the children what they expected from next term's schedules. The majority of them indicated a desire to continue with their favourite classes. Four children suggested classes they did not have in their current schedules. From those who suggested new activities, two children were attending to one or more activities they didn't like (a scenario in which the new activity could come as a replacement of the disliked one), and two children were happy with their current extra-classes (in which case the new activity would come as an extra). However, it is important to point out that by asking what the children would like to do next term, we did not discuss the possibility of having more free time at home, which lead our participants to base their desire on their current schedules.

Finally, it is also important to acknowledge our participants' age group, recognizing that children's freedom of choice regarding their schedules may vary according to school level. Dragon's mom draws attention to the academic pressure Chinese children face as they grow older:

> In my opinion, we should provide more freedom to the kids especially when they in the kindergarten. Otherwise, when they are in the primary school, they will have more homework and need to study harder. That is to say that there will be more constraints. So I will allow my kids to relax and play more when they are in kindergarten. (Dragon's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

3.2.2.2. Controlled choices and non-negotiable decisions

Decisions regarding children´s health and education, were considered more serious becoming gradually less open to discussion. Parents endorsed decision-making involving food as being mainly controlled choices – 11 out of 14 parents declared to limit children's alternatives when negotiating eating options. Sophia's mom details how she handles controlled meal choices with her child. When asked whether she thinks children should be able to choose by themselves what to eat, Sophia's mom replied:

> Yes, they can. I always ask her what she wants to eat in the weekend. But because I think she is too young, I will give several options according to health and let her choose. And she can choose her favourite in my options. (Sophia's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Similarly, Dragon's mom reinforces the idea of providing children with a choice while limiting the offer of unhealthy food:

> Yes, he can choose what to eat but that should be healthy food. He only can eat a little junk food. For example, if he wants to try French fries that he never ate before, he can eat it this time. If he is sick, he cannot eat it. Although I usually allow him to try different food. (Dragon's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

From the children's perspective, parental guidance on food choices was a controversial topic. When asked about whether their parents would let them eat the food of their choice, most of the children's opinions did not match their parents' answers. While Sophia's mom thinks she is "really strict" with food choices and "will not let her [Sophia] choose freely but she can choose based on my [mom's] options." (Sophia's mom – Translated from Mandarin), Sophia herself placed a toy hamburger, fries and ice-cream on her pretend-play plate and told us that her mother would let her eat "a little bit" of these foods. Lydia's mom, on the other hand, told us that she "will let them [her children] choose the food from the refrigerator themselves, no matter ice-cream or fried food" while Lydia, after placing two ice-creams and a handful of rice on her paper plate, said that her "mommy just gives me eat rice because she will not let me eat cold things which will cause stomachache".

The divergence of views on food decision-making shows us a nuanced nature of children's agency as proposed by Wyness (2015). According to the author, "agency cannot simply be equated with individual choice or individual autonomy (p. 13). When analysing inter-generational decision-making processes Wyness challenges a "zero-sum conception of power" and adds that "children's voices are often heard and

acknowledged through more interconnected relations between children and adults" (p.14). In a similar logic, Goh and Kuczynski (2009) who write about agency and power of single children in multi-generational families in China, also sustain that children's agency is manifested through 'bidirectional influence' in which children and parents may negotiate their perspectives during direct interaction. To Goh and Kuczynski, bidirectional influence "also assumes that processes of contradiction such as conflict, ambiguity and ambivalence are inherent in parent–child relationships and give rise to qualitative change as parents and children mutually and continuously adapt to each other over time." (Goh and Kuczynski, 2009, p. 508). In observing decision-making regarding, food we witnessed our young participants' opinions adapting to the different scenarios, traveling through the four categories we identified within children's decision-making strategies in our research. Negotiation, compromising, displaying a sense of responsibility and resistance were shown by our young participants in various moments when talking about food. A thorough example of the children's different strategies involving food decision-making can be seen in our conversation about the Xiao dolls desire for eating ice-cream:

> Ms Jessica: Do you remember Xiao Ming and Xiao Li?
> Children: Yes. (excited)
> Ms Jessica: They are very Xiao to their parents, remember? They respect their parents. And they want to eat ice-cream. They love ice-cream. Xiao Ming and Xiao Li got ice cream on their plates (I pick three ice creams and put on Xiao Ming and Xiao Li's plates, the children smile) but then Xiao Ming and Xiao Li's mom arrives and she says "no, you cannot eat ice-cream. Ice-cream is not good for you."
> Ultraman: Because it is 垃圾食品。(Because it is junk food.)
> Ms Jessica: What do you think they should do?
> Dragon: Mom sleep, they will go to eat the ice-cream.
> Chimpanzee: Ms Kindness， 如果妈妈不在的时候，他们会偷偷吃 ice-cream。 (Ms Kindness, if mommy is not there, they will eat ice-cream.)
> Ms Jessica: Who thinks differently?
> Dinosaur: They will not listen and they go to eat.
> Ms Jessica: In front of mommy or behind mommy?
> Dinosaur: 在妈妈后面。(Behind mommy)
> Ms Jessica: What do you think, Sofia?
> Sophia: I think they listen.
> Ms Jessica: But they love ice-cream. Do you think they will say "OK, I would not eat" or will they ask "can I have a little bit"?
> Sophia: 他们会说"我就吃一点点，妈妈"。(They would say "Can I eat a little bit, mom.")
> Ms Jessica: They will try to tell mommy that they want to eat a little bit, what else do you think they would say? What do you think Xiao Ming and Xiao Li would say? They are very Xiao to their parents. What would they do?
> Ultraman: Can I eat please?
> Ms Jessica: They will ask mommy Ultraman? What do you think, Lydia?
> Lydia: OK, I will not eat.
> Ms Jessica: What do you think Dinosaur?
> Dinosaur: Mommy says "no", and Xiao Ming and Xiao Li will go to eat.
> Ms Jessica: They will go to eat or they will not eat?

Dinosaur: Go to eat.
Ms Jessica: Behind mommy or in front of mommy?
Children: Behind.
Ms Jessica: Peppa Pig, what do you think of Xiao Ming and Xiao Li will do.
Peppa Pig: OK, they will not eat.

In the excerpt above the children manifest varied opinions and suggest different possibilities of conflict-resolution for Xiao Ming and Xiao Li who would like to eat ice cream but have their mom saying the food they chose is not healthy. Ultraman displays a sense of responsibility by quickly calling out that ice cream "is junk food". Dragon suggests Xiao Ming and Xiao Li should wait until their parents go to bed and eat the ice cream secretly. Chimpanzee and Dinosaur promptly support Dragon's resistance approach. Sophia starts with a compromising/sense of responsibility attitude by saying the dolls would listen to their parents but changes her opinion into negotiating after giving the situation some thought and realizing the dolls really wanted to eat ice cream. Ultraman supports Sophia's quest by suggesting some more polite words Xiao Ming and Xiao Li could use to try and convince their parents. Lydia and Peppa Pig manifest a compromising/sense of responsibility attitude suggesting that the dolls will not eat ice cream.

The children's varied opinions on the food topic also came about when talking about hypothetical decision-making situations involving themselves. After putting a hamburguer, french fries and ice-cream on her pretend play plate, Sophia anticipates that her mom would not let her completely free to eat such items, but the fact that Sophia chose these foods opens up a negotiation arena for Sophia's mom allowing her to eat "a little bit":

Ms Kindness:妈妈会让你吃上火的东西吗？(Will mommy let you eat fried food?)

Sophia: 让我吃一点。(She will let me eat a little bit.)

Lydia – who chose a compromising/sense of responsibility approach for the Xiao dolls conflict – here displays a resistance/negotiation attitude:

Ms Jessica: Can you tell us what would mommy say if she sees this plate?
Lydia: My mommy just gives me eat rice because.....因为我妈妈不给我吃冷的东西，我肚子会痛的。(because she will not let me eat cold things which will cause stomachache.)
Ms Kindness: She will not let you eat cold food because she thinks you will have stomachache after eating these things. Would you say "mommy, mommy, can I have a little bit please?"
Ms Jessica: Or you would just listen to mommy?
Lydia: 直接吃。(I will eat.)
Ms Kindness: 你就直接吃？妈妈叫你不要吃，你就直接吃，对不对？(You will eat? If your mommy ask you not to eat, you will eat?)

Lydia: 吃一点点。(I will eat a little bit.)

Differently from the negotiation episode described by Sophia – where Sophia's mom would make a concession and let her eat a little bit, the process described by Lydia is one where the child's resistance makes her feel empowered. In the situation described by Lydia she doesn't use words to bargain with her parents. Instead, Lydia acts towards her wishes – "I will eat". Yet, by limiting the quantity to a smaller amount than what she would have if her parents did not oppose to her food choices ("I will eat a little bit"), Lydia takes active part on a negotiation process that does not involve her talking, but doing.

To illustrate the compromising aspect of food decision-making, Ultraman tells us what he thinks his parents would say if they saw the hamburguer, ice-cream and French fries he put on his plate:

Ms Kindness: Ultraman，如果你妈妈看见你的碟子? (Ultraman. If your mommy sees your plate?
Ultraman: 妈妈会说吃蔬菜 (Mommy would say to eat vegetables)
Ms. Kindness: 你怎么做呢？(And what would you do?)
Ultraman: 我就直接吃这些。(I will eat these directly.)
Ms Kindness: 你会吃什么？吃哪些？(What would you eat?)
Ultraman: 青菜。(Vegetables.)
Ms Kindness: Would you listen to mommy?
Ultraman: Yes.

While we don't have how to tell whether Ultraman speaks from a place of compromising or from a sense of responsibility, our young participant made it clear that in this case he would listen to his parents' advice. Finally, another example of children displaying a sense of responsibility towards their food choices can be found in a comment made by Sophia:

Ms Kindness: 然后如果爷爷奶奶呢？(How about grandpa and grandma?) How about grandpa and grandma?
Sofia: 就让我吃糖。(They let me eat candies)
Ms Kindness:让你吃糖啊？(They let you eat candies?)
Sofia: 就让我吃零食。(They let me eat snack.)
Ms Kindness: Oh，grandma and grandpa let you eat snack, like candies?
Sofia: 我有一颗蛀牙。(I have one decayed tooth.)

Although Sophia did not elaborate on how often she actually takes on her grandparents' offer of candy, the girl displays a sense of responsibility by linking eating sweets to having a decayed tooth, showing concern for her buccal health.

Moving from controlled choices to non-negotiable decisions, from the parents' point of view bedtime was mainly a decision taken by adults rather than a negotiation. However, parents stated bedtime was already

settled into the family routine and did not usually figured as source of conflict in the parent-child relationship. In the excerpt below, Peppa Pig's mom describes bedtime routines from her point of view:

> Interviewer : Who decides what time your child goes to bed? How strict or free are you about your child's bedtime?
> Peppa Pig's mom: Me. I often ask them to go to sleep.
> Interviewer： How strict are you about your child´s bedtime?
> Peppa Pig's mom: I think I am a little bit strict. They have to go the bed before 10:00, and get up around 6:00. But they are already used to do it.

Just as Peppa Pig's mom, eight other parents also shared an understanding that they imposed decisions regarding bedtime on their children. Chimpanzee's mom justifies the adult-structured routine stating that she thinks it is important for children to have a good night of sleep:

> Usually, I will ask her to sleep. I will ask her to sleep at a certain time because I think that sleeping is very important to them. (Chimpanzee's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

On the same direction, Dragon's mom details why she finds herself being strict with bedtime routines:

> Usually he showers at eight and goes to bed at nine o'clock. Then I will chat with him before he sleeps. We will talk about what happened at school or I will tell him a story. He may fall asleep between 9:30-10:00. I think bedtime is very important. Because your sleep will influence your mood on the next day. For example, although his elder brother has grown up, I will definitely supervise him to sleep within the time I set. There can be no excuses. (Dragon's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Though most parents perceived bedtime routines as their decision, when looking at the children's data set we noticed that although the initiative of setting up sleeping routines came in the majority of the cases from the parents, the children perceived themselves as active participants in the decision making process playing what they believe to be their part:

> Can you tell what happens at your home if your parents asks you to go to bed?
> Dinosaur: I go to bed.
> Lydia: I go.
> Peppa Pig: My parents don't ask me. I go.
> Dinosaur: Mommy asks me, I go.
> [...]
> Ms Jessica: You go to sleep? Did it happen that your parents ask you to go to sleep but you are not feeling sleepy?
> Belle: I sleep.
> Dinosaur: I sleep too.
> Ms Kindness: What if mommy asks you to go to sleep and you don't want to sleep? What would you do?
> Princess Pink: I go to sleep.
> Belle: I will go.

As the excerpt above shows, my insistence in asking about disagreements regarding bedtime routines did not seem to make any sense to the children, who continued to tell me that they would go to bed at the time their parents asked them to. In a follow up question, the reason why the children displayed such willingness to comply with established house routines became clearer:

> Ms Jessica: You go to sleep? It never happen you don't go to sleep?
> Dragon shakes his head negatively.
> Princess Pink: Yes, because at seven o'clock, I will wake up.
> Chimpanzee: I will close my eyes and I will go to sleep.
> Princess Pink: And at seven o'clock I will wake up.
> Ms. Jessica: Oh, you all wake up very early
> Chimpanzee: I three o'clock (Chimpanzee reinforces how early she wakes up)
> Ms Jessica: Three o'clock? So can you tell me why you should go to sleep when mommy tell us to go to sleep? Belle.
> Belle: Night you don't sleep and mommy you sleep. And you are late.
> [...]
> Chimpanzee: Because you don't sleep, you don't wake up.
> Ms. Jessica: Oh, I get it. If you don't sleep you don't wake up on time the other day because you are very tired.

The children appeared to be on board with bedtime routines, displaying a sense of responsibility towards going to bed in good time. Though parents considered themselves "strict" regarding sleep routines, what we see when looking at the children's data set is what Wyness (2012) calls an interdependent participative relationship – where children are "both responsive to the arrangements made by adults for their welfare and implicated in these arrangements as active participants (Wyness, 2012, p. 436).

Parental concern with sustaining a bedtime routine that our adult participants considered "strict" appears to be related to the importance they attribute to decision-making regarding school. Even though the children displayed willingness to go to bed in a set time because they didn't want to be late to school themselves, the fact that most parents classified bedtime routines as "imposed" by them rather than a shared decision based on mutual responsibilities, make us think of categories in which parents are less open to child's input. Dinosaur's mom – one of the few parents who described a more free approach to sleeping routines, highlights the link between bedtime and school life:

> It doesn't happen that often, but last night, he should have gone to bed at 7:30. He always goes to bed at 7:30 by himself, but yesterday he didn't until 8:30. Because I promised him to play Lego with him before bed. However, I got involved in preparing fruits and got late. He insisted to play Lego, otherwise he was unwilling to go to bed. I told him that if he was late for school tomorrow, he should take responsibility for being late. (Dinosaur's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

In a similar logic, Tiger mom also reinforces the importance she attributes to school, classifying academic-related decisions as non-negotiable:

> I will allow him to choose in my guide, such as he can choose his interests. But he cannot be completely free to make a big decision, like on education, he may say he doesn't want to go to school and he can draw all day, that is not allowed. Anything related to education he is not allowed to be completely free to choose. Such as on how to choose a school, he may think that a certain school is beautiful, but if I know it is not a good school, I will not allow him to choose. As well as bedtime when he is a student, I cannot accept that he goes to bed late. (Tiger mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Besides bed-time concerns, we have been having a taste of how much these families value education and of the non-negotiable character academic matters assume, even for our 6 year-old participants. Homework was a frequently mentioned topic among the children during our focus groups, appearing in the most random moments of our conversations. When we talked about the non-Xiao dolls, Belle explained how our pretend-play characters could learn about Xiao and mentioned homework as a natural part of a child's routine:

> Belle: 就是叫他们早一点睡觉，然后他们不听的话，然后就他爸爸妈妈在他面前放学后写完作业再告诉他们什么是孝。(They ask them to sleep earlier. If they don't listen, their parents can tell them what Xiao is after they finish homework after school.)

In another situation, Sophia also brought up the topic when telling us about her family ball. While Sophia dealt with her homework, her mom and grandma drew on the artefact:

> Ms Jessica: Sophia, did you talk to your grandpa or grandma?
>
> Sophia: 没有，我忘问了。那时候我在写作业。然后妈妈和姥姥帮我做的。(No, I forgot. I was doing my homework. My mom and my grandma helped me to make this [family ball])

Homework was featured in almost all of the children's after-school schedule booklets (8 out of 9). The only child who did not mentioned homework in his booklet was Dragon, not because he didn't have weekly homework, but probably because he decided to feature other after-school activities instead. By looking at Dragon's mom interview we understand that homework is too part of Dragon's routine. Her narrative also offers a more detailed picture of what Dragon's free time looks like:

> Usually, from after school to the time to go home (before 6:00pm or 6:30 pm), there is about 1 hour. If there is an after-school class, he will go to the class. After that he can play what he is interested in. For example, if he finished the chess class, he can play in the garden. The garden is so large that he can play what he likes. Then when he arrives home, he has to finish what he should do first, such as homework. After that, he can choose to play what he likes until bedtime. Such as, he can watch TV, read books, or play Lego. (Dragon's mom - Translated from Mandarin)

Homework divided our young participants' opinions on whether the task was self-chosen or adult-imposed. The children also had different points of view regarding liking the task or not. Regardless of who had chosen the activity or whether they like it or not, homework appeared as a non-negotiable in both adult and children's data set. Dinosaur offers us an example of the mandatory nature the task holds in his weekly routine:

Figure 53:Dinosaur's after school schedule - Wednesday page

Ms. Jessica: Who else has something they don't like?
Dinosaur: Me! Is homework.
Ms. Jessica: And did you tell mommy you don't like it?
Dinosaur: Yes... (Dinosaur smiles)
Ms. Jessica: What did she tell you then?
Dinosaur: DO! Uh! (Dinosaur cross his arms and frowns, pretending to be his mom. Then he laughs)

Equally non-negotiable were Peppa Pig's after school Maths class. When I asked the girl about her Wednesday page, Peppa seemed very upset to the point I could not clearly understand what she said. I then asked for Ms. Kindness's help, who had a conversation with Peppa in Chinese:

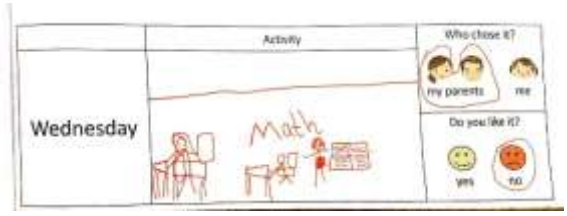


Figure 54: Peppa Pig's after school schedule - Wednesday page

Ms. Jessica: I am sorry, I do not understand Peppa Pig. Can you tell Ms. Kindness in Chinese? Ms. Kindness, she was telling me that she doesn't like Maths and she told mommy. And I asked her what mommy said. I cannot understand what she is saying. Can you tell Ms. Kindness Peppa Pig?
Peppa Pig: 妈妈说还要上 (Mommy said I still need to go)
Ms. Kindness: Oh, you still need to do Maths, right? Did you talk with your mommy? 你跟妈妈谈过吗 你跟妈妈说你不喜欢数学 ，但是是在学校上的课吗? (Have you talked to your mother? You told your mother that you don't like Maths, is it a class at school?)
Peppa Pig shakes her head indicating that it is not a class at school. She is talking about extra classes that happen after school.
Peppa Pig: 但是那个老师讲的太大声我不喜欢 (The teacher shouts at me, I don't like it) – Peppa Pig almost cries
Ms. Kindness:哦，是在学校外面上课的那个老师讲话太大声了你不喜欢还是很喜欢 Mr. ****上的课对不对，那你有没有和老师沟通过啊，你可以跟老师说你说话声音小一点好吗，你有和学校那个 after school 老师说吗，也许你跟老师说一下你可以小声点吗，老师就会小声点呢. (Oh, the teacher from outside school is too loud. You don't like it. Do you like Mr. [school teacher's name] class? Can you tell the teacher to

speak more softly to you? You should talk to the after school teacher, maybe you tell the teacher that you can whisper, the teacher will whisper?) – Ms. Kindness tries to calm Peppa Pig down.
Ms. Kindness: Ok?
Peppa Pig: No...

Peppa Pig's tears were her way of demonstrating resistance to an after school appointment that has been imposed on her. Because of its academic nature Peppa's Maths classes were however a non-negotiable. Later that day, when Ms. Kindness spoke to Peppa's mom explaining what Peppa has told us about her after school Maths class, her mother told Ms. Kindness that Peppa wasn't doing very well in Maths and mom decided to enrol her in extra-classes. Though at that moment Peppa's mom did not indicate a possibility of re-visiting the decision about Peppa attending to extra Maths classes, she told Ms. Kindness she would be talking to the teacher about shouting.

What parents and children told us about academic related activities reflects what Goh and Kuczynski (2009) also found in their study. The authors acknowledged that Chinese parents were receptive to children's influence but there were limits to which negotiation was not possible. According to their study most parents "would not compromise where schoolwork was concerned" (Goh and Kuczynski, 2009, p.528)

4. XIAO AND PARTICIPATION – ESTABLISHING DIALOGUES BETWEEN GLOBAL AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Wrapping up our findings, our literature review has shown how multifaceted the concepts of Xiao and participation can already be when looked at as independent ideas. Throughout this research process, the endeavour of combining both concepts has proven to be equally complex. By trying to avoid polarized views on both Xiao and participation - in which one can easily fall into a "West and the Rest" trap (Hall, 2018; Burman, 2019) – we chose to position ourselves in a way that "respects tradition without essentialising it" (Burman, 2019, p. 12), acknowledging changes the concept of Xiao has undergone over the generations implicated in this research, as well as shedding light on the power relations involved in the idea of a "global child" (Castro, 2019) which developed from understandings disseminated by the CRC (1989).

Drawing attention to such power relations means to challenge the "Eurocentric character of developmental models and norms" (Burman, 2019) of childhood and make visible the existence of other childhoods around the globe (Kesby et al., 2006, Liebel, 2020) while challenging ideas of subalternity often linked to these childhoods that do not conform (Abebe and Ofosu-Kusi, 2016; Castro, 2019; Liebel, 2020). By following Burman's approach to "child as a method", we too strive for "challenging modes and models of childhood that work to secure discourses of normalisation and pathologisation, including those configured around being less/more developed" (Burman, 2019, p. 19). Furthermore, we reiterate Liebel's (2020) approach to postcolonial childhood studies that do "not reject constructs such as 'modern childhood' or 'children's rights'" but question "the supposed exceptionality or absolutism of these terms, by contextualizing them" (Liebel, 2020, p. 10).

. Beginning our discussion, Chapter 1 addressed the context in which the idea of children's rights emerged, its connection with World War I and II's aftermath (Mower Jr., 1997; Glendon, 2004; Moyn 2010, Verhellen, 2015), as well as with a changing image of childhood that continues to evolve (Jenks, 2005; Veerman, 2009; Holzscheiter, 2010, Hammarberg, 1990; Liebel, 2012). As a development of the Global Human Rights project, the Rights of the Child document reflects an international attempt to raise the quality of children's lives across the globe in the Post-War World (Berthelot, 2004; Weiss and Takur, 2010), though the image of child it portrays is still under negotiation both within and across nations (Archard, 2004; Reynaert et al., 2009; Veerman, 2009; Buck & Giullespie, 2011; Liebel and Saadi 2012). When talking specifically about children's participation rights, our literature review has shown that recognizing children as capable citizens and taking their views into account in decision-making processes is a right yet to be fully realized in a global level (Alderson, 2008; Lansdown, 2010; Fitzgerald et al., 2010). Being participatory rights a fairly new concept when talking about the Rights of Child history (Lansdown, 2010; Liebel and Saadi, 2012), the very

CRC text may still provoke conflictive views of children's capabilities and therefore hinder their possibilities of participation rights full enjoyment (Archard, 2015; Liebel and Saadi, 2012; Lundy, 2007; Verhellen, 2015).

After acknowledging the challenge of raising children's status and recognizing young people as fully capable participants in society as a global endeavour, this research called for a cross-cultural understanding of participation rights. By addressing the meaning of participation rights in the Chinese context, our intent of fighting a "rights-talk trap" (Reynaert et al., 2009), when writing about Xiao and children's participation rights in China, has been grounded in notions of respect and curiosity for cultural diversity. Supported by a range of authors who advocate for cross-cultural investigations of children's rights (Reynaert et al., 2009; Mason and Bolzan, 2010; Liebel and Saadi, 2012; Punch, 2016), we sought for culturally specific understandings of participation in China. Drawing from Confucianism influence and China's history with participatory practices, we showed how the notion of individual pervades its own particular interpretations in Chinese society. The traditional Confucian notion of self – which is cultivated through relational interactions within the wu-lun relationship pairs (Wu and Tseng, 1985; Feng, 2008; Phuong-Mai et al., 2005) portrays the ideal of achieving self-development through performing well wu-lun established roles. As seen in section 1.3.1.2., the Confucian notion of self discourages selfish desires and drives individuals to regulate personal goals in a way that somehow benefits in-group members (Ames, 1994; Niles, 1998; Wang and Liu, 2010). Additionally, as a result of both globalization developments and China's shift to a market-oriented economy, Chinese citizens have been experiencing a unique individualization process in which individual choice is encouraged in certain matters and participation has been defined within China's socialist-democracy terms (Naftali, 2016; Hansen and Pang, 2008, Yan, 2008; 2010; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2010; Fewsmith, 2015, Zhong, 2018).

After drawing attention to circumstances surrounding child-participation understandings in the Chinese context, Chapter 2 posed the research question, articulating Xiao - the Confucian notion of self-cultivation found in the parent-child relationship pair – and the changing nature of Xiao relationships in contemporary China. Seeking for current understandings of Xiao and children's possibilities of participation in home decision-making among Chinese families (children, parents, and grandparents), Chapter 2 also lay this investigation's approach within the Sociology of Childhood perspective. By looking at childhood as a social category (Jenks, 2005; Qvortrup, 2009; Sarmento, 2009) and acknowledging children as subjects who actively contribute to social transformation through recreating culture (Corsaro, 1993; Marchi & Sarmento, 2008; Lange; Mierendorff, 2009), we set this research's intention of bringing the voice of our 6-year-old participants on an equal basis of relevance with the contributions of our adult participants.

Beginning our data analysis, Chapter 3 looked at Xiao in both its historical/traditional perspective as well as its contemporary meaning for our case study's participants. The study has shown changing patterns in Xiao's understandings over the three generations involved in this research. The influences of globalization

processes experienced by our participants are undeniable and figure in a great deal of data we explored in sections 3.2.1 (the grandparents' generational order), 3.2.2 (the parents' generational order), and 3.2.3 (the children's generational order). In the face of the evident role globalization has played (and continues to play) in the way Chinese children, parents, and grandparents reshape their traditions and values, our quest is not to try and separate what is global from what is local but to understand what our participants create in the interchange of both worlds. In doing so, we follow Burman's (2019) decolonization thoughts and resist antagonistic disputes between "hegemonic forms of childhood and the reinstatement of indigenous forms, but rather of exploring how their interplay can work to destabilise both local and wider systems of domination" (Burman, 2019, p.19). On a similar note, Chen (2010), who also ditches the western/eastern antagonism in "Asia as a method", considers the West as "fragments internal to the local" rather than an opposing entity. Such perspectives seem to be useful in this context as we also view the global influences as one of the many cultural resources from which contemporary Chinese citizens build local understandings of Xiao and child participation.

To establish a connection between the local changing patterns figuring in our findings and a recent global mass-media production featuring a Xiao story, the 2020 film Mulan recently released by the Disney studios presents an interesting translation of the term "Xiao" that speaks to this interplay of global and local worlds. In the final scene of the 2020 live-action release, Mulan - the girl who went to battle to spare her old father from the burdens of war - proves to be a great warrior and receives an engraved sword from the Chinese Emperor in recognition of her bravery. When opening her gift, the Disney English-speaking Mulan reads the engraved character 孝 (Xiào) out loud as "devotion to family". The choice of wording, replacing the traditional translation "Filial Piety", seems to mirror the mindset shift we have been finding throughout our research process. While the term "Filial Piety" suggests a unidirectional devotional attitude from a child to their parents, "Devotion to Family" allows for a multidirectional understanding in which parent and child are devoted to each other. In this sense, redefinitions in the Chinese social context in the last century seem to play a crucial role in how the tradition reshapes itself according to the new lifestyles that arise in Contemporary China.

Throughout Chapter 3, our data has shown that being a good child and showing respect to parents continues to be a highly valued trait of Xiao, though both our literature review (Yue and Ng, 1999; Goh and Kuczynsk, 2009) and participants' contributions have shown that respecting parents is becoming more and more dissociated from blindly obeying elders. The fact that parents are nowadays more open to listening to their children's arguments and negotiating daily matters is grounded on a new notion of Xiao that fosters mutual respect between the younger and the older generations. When analysing our data, we saw a quest for mutual respect within family members arising in Chinese society from the time our older participants' were children. From the New Culture Movement back in the 1930s to land reform and the first Marriage Law of 1950, a desire for more equity among family members - that started long before China's opening to the

international market in the 1980s - was only enhanced as Chinese citizens began to experience their culture in connection with global developments. Following China's economic reform, the revised version of the Marriage Law and the Family Planning Policy in the 1980s all the way to the international treaties regarding the rights of women and children in the 1990s, the rising status of Chinese youth, women, and children, plays an essential part in promoting Xiao relationships of mutual respect. In this quest for a renewed notion of Xiao in which characters of all ages and genders should have a voice of equal importance, our participants' perceptions that Xiao traditions continue to be highly important reflect contemporary discussions about listening to the children's voices. Our participants have portrayed a renewed notion of Xiao that allows for negotiation within a relationship that values mutual understanding between parent and child, fosters gratitude to parents, and encourages children to pursue self-development and agency. The inner motivation our participants referred to as an essential element of Xiao – doing good to parents because you feel it in your heart, and not out of obligation - relates to this notion of self-development and agency. By saying that doing things against your will "violates the principles of Xiao somehow" (Chimpanzee's mom. p. 152), by taking pride in helping the older generations to "trust science" (Rabbit mom, p.143) and by doing house chores - not because parents asked to, but because children take pride in being able to perform such tasks themselves (children's data set, p. 153) – our participants showed there is a sense of agency embedded in the self-development notion of Xiao. That is the same sense of agency that appears in parent-child negotiation when children trust their judgment and dive into play experiences regardless of their parents' opinion on potential falls and scratches or when children show ownership of their bedtime routines, food choices, and after-school schedules - either by agreeing with parents and taking responsibility/compromising or by standing by their opinions and resisting/negotiating.

Building on the notion of self-development and agency, the idea of Xiao as caring for family appears to be intrinsically connected to one's possibilities of doing so. As one of our participants mentioned, "you need to take care of your parents, but you need to take care of yourself first" (Rabbit mom, p. 152). By nurturing Xiao virtues on oneself, one can also manifest Xiao to family and look after them. The caring aspect of Xiao can be seen in our participants' decision-making processes when parents manifested their preference for guidance over free choice. When guiding children, parents offered their opinion yet providing choices according to their personal beliefs on what is good for their child. If free choice is offered when the outcome "doesn't matter" (Tiger mom, p.155), then offering guidance and negotiating possibilities is a more legitimate way of acknowledging children as equal partners in decision-making.

Though we can see many aspects in which a renovated notion of Xiao has been promoting relationships of mutual respect between children and adults, we also bumped into elements that may hinder equal decision-making partnerships between the different generations and are, therefore, worthy of our attention. As Liebel states, "the lesser 'weight' as typically seen characteristic of children is, itself, an

expression of the social power relations, which are to be faced by the acknowledgement and 'equality' of children as subjects." (Liebel, 2012, p. 199). While raising children's status in the social power-relations web is not a battle exclusive to China, our data has shown contextually relevant aspects from which Children's Participation Rights advocates in China can draw future discussions.

Among the aspects that may hinder child participation developments, we saw a parental fear of raising spoiled children as a potentially challenging discourse for fully realising child empowerment. The 'spoiled child' ghost appeared a few times throughout our data, figuring in Sophia's mom account of Xiao when she narrates her childhood as a "spoiled" singleton (pg 110), as well as when she manifests concerns about raising Sophia to learn that a child should know their responsibilities, share goods with other family members and not to think of themselves as the center of family attention (p. 110, p.151). Alongside these lines, parents also mentioned the pressure of educating their children to understand why their family treats them so well (Dinosaur's mom, p. 135) and the need of reminding grandparents "not to spoil" the children (Rabbit mom, p. 160). Such concerns can be associated with "the convergence of historical, political and social influences" on creating specific images of child (Wyness, 2015), being, in this case, associated with societal fear in the face of the Family Control Policy implementation back in the 1980s. Wu (1996) describes how the Chinese media and the academic community have repeatedly portrayed single children as selfish, spoiled, self-centred, and over-dependent on parents as a reaction to the "one-child policy" implementation. The "little emperors" suffering from a "4-2-1 syndrome" (the attention of 4 grandparents and 2 parents dedicated to 1 single child) became objects of social concern (Wu, 1996; Jing, 2000; Agnost, 1997; Goh & Kuczynski, 2009; Naftali, 2016; Lau & Chen, 2019) for the fear they would turn into a generation of self-centred children "who expected their elders to serve them" (Naftali, 2016, p. 111). Our participants who were born within the Family Planning Policy (the two generations of parents presented in pgs. 109 and 113) seem to be – in their majority – open to listening to their children's opinions but still haunted by the spoiled child ghost. These conceptions can be seen in Belle's mom opinion (previously analysed in pg. 137) about considering her child's point of view:

> When we were young, my parents believed that spare the rod, spoil the child while the children nowadays are not treated like this. We should be more patient to the children. I think that I also learn from my children every time I teach them. (Belle's mom – Translated from Mandarin)

Following this pattern, Naftali also observed "indications that the recognition of children's agency rights is on the ascendance among young urban parents born in the 1980s, who are themselves singletons, and among educated professionals who consume childrearing advice via the popular media" (Naftali, 2019, p. 292). However, the tensions between old and renewed notions of Xiao and the fear of raising spoiled little emperors pose a challenge to be addressed in the way Chinese children are portrayed. By knowing "the role that adults play in shaping discourses on childhood" (Wyness, 2015, p.19), we join forces with Goh and Kuczynski (2009), advocating for a cast-off on the little emperor theory, replacing the self-centred image of

child for one of the 'agentic child'. While the authors propose that the Chinese agentic child would be "a child that has kinship with the assertive Western child, despite distinctive cultural particularities in his expression of agency" (p. 524), I propose we go a step further in building an empowered image of Chinese children whose expression of agency is portrayed and understood within the intergenerational context it comes from.

In this sense, child agency and participation in family matters cut across intergenerational relationships based not only on a moral contract of mutual respect but also on the interdependence established by the society our participants live in. As explored in Chapter 3, Chinese children, parents, and grandparents share an intergenerational responsibility of caring for one another, grounded not only on Xiao traditions but on national laws that clearly state the parents' responsibility to rear and educate their children and the children's duty to support and assist their parents (p. 112). While the International Convention on the Rights of the Child has been guiding national actions in the interest of raising children's social status and improving their living conditions in dialogue with global understandings of childhood (p. 119), the rights of the elderly lag behind. In the absence of an international document with binding force addressing their rights, older persons in China are very much left with national laws that reflect local understandings of elderly rights and sustain family interdependence (Yan, 2003; Qi, 2014; Childs, 2020).

Intertwined in a three-generational bond, children's agency and participation in family matters carry the local mark of Xiao as young people play an active role in deciding about visiting and spending time with grandparents. We can see examples of children's agency regarding the companionship aspect of Xiao in our focus group conversation about the 24 New Paragons of Filial Piety (p. 147) – when the children unanimously stated their excitement about visiting grandparents, as well as when showing initiative of calling their grandparents themselves. Princess Pink's mom also accounts for her daughter's influence in keeping Xiao companionship ties with family elders:

> Sometimes, Princess Pink will finish dinner early, so we will go to visit grandparents with her because we live nearby. Grandpa usually comes to our house at 7pm. **I will ask Princess Pink if she wants to go to grandpa's house or not. If she wants it, I will drive her to grandparents' house** and go back at 9pm. So the elderly will be happy. (Princess Pink's mom – Translated from Mandarin [emphasis added])

On the other side of child-agency, another point in which the notion of Xiao and the Children's right to participation seems to get tangled relates to the self-cultivation aspect of Xiao and the pressure Chinese citizens face regarding individual performance and success. As explored in Chapter 3, in the transition from a communist welfare system to a market-oriented economy, the gradual privatization of labour has impacted Chinese society and promoted methods of management based on individual performance that emphasized monetary resources (p. 113). Contemporary Chinese citizens – especially the ones inhabiting the cities - "live in an environment where a fluid labour market, flexible employment, increasing risks, [...], and a greater

emphasis on individual responsibility and self-reliance" (Yan, 2010, p. 510) feed a market economy based on a consumerist ideology. Within this scenario, the success of Chinese networked families (p.115) very much depends on the individual thriving of its family members. Alongside adult concerns of prospering in China's aggressive labour market, children are also pressured into succeeding in an equally competitive educational system (p. 126 - 126). To this end, the self-cultivation aspect of Xiao (explored in section 3.3.4) appears to surpass the companionship dimension of Filial Piety. Examples of educational endeavours being prioritized over spending time with family can be seen in Belle's narrative of her last Chinese New Year holiday - when Belle went to Hong Kong with her nuclear family for a school interview, leaving grandma behind in their city of residency (p. 148), as well as in Tiger mom's account of educational choices. When asked if there was anything else she thought children should not be completely free to choose, Tiger mom highlighted:

> It seems that there is no mention of education. [...] I think this is the biggest problem. Education is very important. Education does not mean that there is a book for him to read. I think this educational environment is very important for his friends and contacts. For example, I will choose a good school, choose a good school representative who choose a good teacher, choose a good network, I have to consider the network of this school. In the process of choosing this school, there will be problems. For example, education in Hong Kong is very good, but because parents are working here [in Dongguan]**, it is difficult to have the ability to accompany him to study there, that is, to choose education - not mentioned**. (Tiger mom – Translated from Mandarin, [emphasis added])

By emphasising the importance of having her son in a good school, Tiger mom considers the possibility of living apart from each other. She also refers to the choosing of a school as her own concern ("I will choose"), not including her child in the decision-making process. As explored in section 4.2.2., we found non-negotiable decisions to be mainly linked to educational matters (p. 187), coming from a parental understanding of *caring for their family* (and doing what they believe is best for their offspring to succeed in China's competitive educational system). Our young participants – who were only in kindergarten - have repeatedly mentioned the routinely and mandatory nature of homework (p.127; 173; 185), sometimes taking ownership of their "responsibility", sometimes conditioning the task's completion to parental surveillance. Though our young participants still enjoyed a great deal of leisure time, we are aware that age might play a crucial role in determining how much homework Chinese children have to comply with. Indications of age-related school pressures can be seen in our data when Dragon's mom compares the free time of kindergarten and primary school children (p. 179). Naftali (2016) also acknowledges the pressures faced by Chinese students whose homework grows proportionally to their school age. The author also points out that burdened Chinese children's voice has been reaching national media, promoting discussions about "letting up the pressure" Chinese students face and "allowing children to have a childhood" (Naftali, 2016, p. 53). While we also advocate for the listening of children's voices, we point out that freeing children from excessive school

pressures takes more than only parental will, demanding the joint effort of families, schools, and national regulations.

At the end of this thesis, we reinforce our position on standing up for Chinese children as a minority of a minority, acknowledging their minority status as children and as part of a nation that holds cultural specificities in relation to the 'hegemonic West' (Nieuwenhuys, 2010; Cregan & Cuthbert, 2014; Burman, 2019; Libel 2020). As James and James (2012) define, "The minority group status of children identifies them as a social group that, in terms of its lack of political power and lack of access to resources, is exploited and discriminated against, and is considered as separate and different from the majority adult population" (James and James, 2012, p. 74). Acknowledging Chinese children as part of a global minority and committing to raising their status within local settings has been one of the tasks we undertook in this thesis. By bringing the children's voices to the scene and making their social contributions and struggles visible, we strived to strengthen the image of an agentic child who arises in the 21st century – not only in China but also in all parts of the globe. Our second task in this endeavour has been acknowledging the minority status of non-European cultures within the power-relations embedded in the development of international policies and laws. By bringing culturally specific understandings surrounding the notions of Xiao and participation in China, we strived to challenge hegemonic views of childhood and offer perspective on local ways of life. Within this framework, viewing Chinese children as a minority of a minority means to stand side-by-side with them in the [global] endeavour of raising children's social status within [every] local settings, yet not dismissing Chinese values in favour of dominant views of childhood. As per globalization matters, we recognize the no-turning-back character of such processes and hope that this thesis, as part of a growing body of scholarly work on Chinese childhoods, can contribute to global discussions that challenge essentialisms in the life of children in China and around the world.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Child assent form

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN
talking about family and home decision making

PROJECT: Listening to the voice of the children in urban China – investigating the relationship between Filial Piety and children´s participation in home decision-making.

JESSICA DREYER
Phd Researcher - Minho University

MS. MICHELLE
Reasearch Assistant

MARK ALL YOU AGREE WITH:

Has someone explained this project to you?	☺ yes	☹ no
Have you asked all the questions you want to ask?	☺ yes	☹ no
Do you understand it is OK to stop taking part at any time?	☺ yes	☹ no
Are you happy to take part?	☺ yes	☹ no

If any answers are ´NO´ or you **do not** want to take part, **do not** sign your name!

if you do want to take part, you can write your name below:

Your name _____

Date: _____

The person who explained this project to you needs to sign too:

Print name _____ Print name _____
Sign _____ **Sign** _____

Appendix B - Researcher's invitation letter to grandparents

Dear grandparents
亲爱的祖父母们，

I am a PhD researcher conducting a study about Filial Piety
and children in China.
我是一名正在组织一项有关中国传统孝道和孩子的调查的博士生。

My research consists on understanding the changes that have been happening in the way Filial Piety is practiced in China and the possibility to cultivate Filial Piety traditions
with the agenda of listening to children.
我的研究由了解中国传统孝道的变化和通过聆听孩子想法培养孝道的可能性组成。

I have interviewed parents and have been interviewing the children at the moment, learning together with them what Filial Piety is and how it works in everyday family life. Your opinion would be very valuable to understand more about Filial Piety phenomena.
我已经采访过各位参与调查的父母和孩子，在访问中和他们学习何为孝道和孝道是如何贯穿日常家庭生活的方方面面。您的意见对我们了解更多孝行有着深远的意义和价值。

For that reason I would like to invite you to attend to an interview. The interview takes only 20 to 30 min, and you can either come to school or we can go to your home to conduct the interview. You can schedule any day in between March and May.
因此，我诚挚邀请您参的采访。采访大约耗时 20-30 分钟。您可以选择到我们学校接受访问或者让我们登门访问。您可以在三月至五月选择任意一天方便接受采访的时间

If you would like to contribute with our research, please sign in and we will be contacting you to check what time it would be more convenient for you to attend, as well as where you would like the interview to take place. If you don´t live in Dongguan and are not able to come, we understand and thank you for your consideration and support.
如果您愿意继续参与我们的调查，请在此通知上签名，我们会联系您和您确认什么时候和在什么地方更加方便您接受我们的访问。如果您不在东莞居住和暂时没法来莞，我们也会理解并感激您的支持。

Thank you

谢谢你

Ms. Jessica Dreyer (Ph.D. researcher)

(博士研究员)

Appendix C - Child's invitation letter to grandparents

Appendix D - Parents' interview questions

Section One

1. What is Xiào?
   您觉得什么是孝？

2. We will give you a chart to complete with some behaviors related to Xiào. Please categorize them according your personal beliefs and responsibilities classifying them according what it is Imperative, Very important, Important, Slightly important or Not important at all for you personally (whether it is not relevant or because you believe it is someone else´s responsibility such as the government or others)
   我们为您提供了一个表格，列举了一些关于孝的行为，请根据就您个人而言，根据您的信念和责任把列举的行为作出（必要，非常重要，重要，有些重要，不重要）的区分。（如若您觉得这与自己不相关或者觉得这应该是政府或他人的责任也可以抒发自己的意见.）

		Not important at all 不重要	Slightly important 稍微重要	Important 重要的	Very important 很重要	Imperative 迫切
1	Arrange care for parents when they can no longer care for themselves (personal higyene, feeding) 當父母不能自理時，你會親自或安排 他人照顧其起居飲食（如，個人衛生/ 餵食）					
2	Provide financial subsistence to parents when they can no longer financially support themselves 如果父母沒有經濟能力，你會供養他們。					
3	Arrange appropriate treatment for parents when they fall ill 如果父母生病時，你會為他們安排合適治療。					
4	Attend parents' funerals no matter where I am 如果父親/母親去世後，無論身在何處，你都會親自為他們奔喪					
5	Visit parents regularly if I am not living with them 當你不與父母同住時，你會定期探望父母。					
6	Be thankful to parents' nurturing 對父母的養育之恩心存感激。					
8	Try my best to achieve parents' expectation 你會盡力達成父母對你的期望。					
9	Always be polite when talking to parents 與父母談話，你會溫和有禮。					
10	Try my best to complete parents' unachieved goals 如果父母有未完成的心願，你會盡力替他們達成。					
11	Always care about parents' well-being 你會經常對父母噓寒問暖					
12	Have one male child to carry on the family lineage 有一男一女继承家系					
13	Have at least a child to ensure family continuity 至少有一个孩子以确保家庭的连续性					

3. Can you think of other important behaviors related to Xiào tradition?
   除上述事件，您还觉得有哪些重要的行为是体现出孝的呢？
   A:我觉得有些是抽点时间带他们去旅下游啊。去外面玩一下啊，这样子。额，然后还有就是说自己生的小孩就不要父母带，可能有时候就是说，让父母带就影响他们的晚年生活。可能尽量自己带一下。

4. How do you teach Xiào to your children?
   您如何教导您的孩子孝道？

   4.1. Can you give some practical examples?
   请您列举一些实际的例子

5. What do you think has changed in the way you were taught Xiào in the past (when you were a child) and the way you teach it to your children?
   您觉得现在有哪些因素的出现导致您儿时被教导孝道的途径和现在您教导孩子孝道的方式发生了变化？

6. Nowadays, people worldwide have been talking about the importance of listening to the children´s opinions and wishes. Do you think it can fit in with the Chinese principles of Xiào? Explain

现在，世界各地的人们一直谈论有关聆听孩子的意见及愿望的重要性。您觉得这与中国传统的孝道准则有冲突吗？

Section Two

7. We´ve selected a couple of situations where the children´s opinions and the adult's opinions may be conflictive. Thinking of the way you raised your children, tell us how you would deal with these situations in the context of Xiào:
我们选择了一些小孩与大人意见相悖的情景。结合您抚养您的孩子的经历，告诉我们您会如何以孝处理这些情况。

7.1. Your child wants to play outside. He/she wants to run, jump and climb obstacles. He/she might end up with some scratches. What would you do?
您的孩子想要到户外玩，他/她想跑、跳或攀越障碍，过程中他/她有可能会有些擦伤。您会如何做？

7.2. Your child wants to choose what to eat. Do you think children can choose by themselves what to eat? How do you deal with your child if he/she wants to eat sweets or fried food?
您的孩子想要选择自己的食物。您觉得孩子们可以自行选择自己要吃什么吗？当他们想要甜食或者油炸食物的时候，您会怎么做？

7.3. Your child did something you have told him/her not to do. How do you handle this kind of situation?
您的孩子做了一些您叫他/她不要做的事情。您会如何处理这样的情况？

7.4. Your child shows a passionate interest for some particular areas of study and seems to be bored or not interest on some others. How do you approach your child´s personal interests?
您的孩子对于别的小孩觉得沉闷或不感兴趣的学习领域出现非常浓厚的兴趣。您会如何走近、了解您孩子的兴趣？

7.5. About your child´s after school schedule
关于您的孩子的课后安排：

7.5.1 – Is he/she enrolled in extra-class activities? If yes, who chose these classes for him/her? What if he/she doesn´t want attend to it? Or not interested in it
他/她有参与课后兴趣班吗？如果有，请问谁为孩子选择的课程？如果他/她不想参加或不感兴趣会如何？

7.5.2 - Considering that children already have a study schedule at school, how much free time do you think children should have to play and pursue their own interests after school?
考虑到孩子在学校也有课程安排，课后您觉得孩子们要用多少时间追求自己的兴趣呢？

7.6. Who decides what time your child go to bed? How strict or free are you about your child´s bedtime?

谁决定孩子上床睡觉的时间？您对于孩子的睡眠时间管得松还是严？

7.7. Do you suggest or interfere on who you-r child should be friends with or allow him/her to choose by him/herself his/her social circle?

您是否曾经建议或干预您孩子的交友选择或您是够准许他/她自行选择自己的社交圈子？

8. Can you think of anything else we haven´t mention that children:
您觉得除了上述情景，还有哪些是我们没有提及孩子

8.1 Should be completely free to choose
应该完全自由选择
8.2 Should be not completely free to choose

不应该任由他们自由选择

Appendix E - Initial letter and Socio-cultural questionnaire

Dear Parents of Year One C & Year One D,

亲爱的大 C 班和大 D 班的家长：

Ms. Jessica (Nursery C Class teacher) is studying her PhD. As part of her research she would like to invite you to collaborate on her project. Ms. Jessica has been teaching at our school for two years, and has been seeking a better understanding of Chinese culture. She believes her research, once published, can help other foreign teachers in China to understand, value and respect the culture they are immersed in. It is great to celebrate Chinese culture and make it known worldwide. The first part of Ms. Jessica's research is a survey, which is attached. We hope that you will choose the help Ms. Jessica's research by filling out the attached form (it will be used for her research purpose- it is not compulsory). EtonHouse International School Dongguan values and supports initiatives which promote our children´s culture and can enrich their everyday experience at school. Jessica 老师是我校小 C 班的主班老师，她正在攻读她的博士学位。她非常希望您能参与到她的研究项目中。Jessica 在我校已任教 2 年，在教学期间，她探索着用更好的方式来理解中国文化。她相信通过发表自己的研究可以帮助更多在中国教学的外国老师更好的了解、重视并尊重中国文化，同时也可以弘扬中国文化。附件中有一份调查问卷，这是她研究项目的第一部分。我们希望大家能参与到 Jessica 老师的研究中来，填写调查问卷（此调查问卷将用于老师的研究项目，并非强制填写）。东莞伊顿国际学校重视并支持这些对我们的孩子有积极作用的项目。

Ms. Hina Patel, EtonHouse International School, Dongguan, Principal
东莞伊顿国际学校校长，Hina Patel 女士

Dear Parents，亲爱的家长，

My name is Jessica Dreyer and I have been working with children in China for two years. During this period, I have started studying a PhD course at UMINHO University (Portugal) in the field of Child Studies. I have been fascinated by the differences I found between Chinese culture and my personal cultural background. By asking about important traditions in China, I got to know an important element of Chinese culture called Filial Piety. I´ve been reading and researching about this topic and finding out how important Filial Piety is in the way Chinese society is built. As a researcher interested in children and studying about new trends in Child Studies, I also got to know about contemporary relevance of listening to the children´s voices and opinions. My actual research consists on understanding the changes that have been happening in the way Filial Piety is practiced in China and the possibility to cultivate Filial Piety traditions with the agenda of listening to children. How can we achieve this in a way that respects both Chinese traditions and children´s wishes and opinions? It is a complicated question and one that doesn´t require a direct answer. However, you can help me understand better by filling out this survey which is the first part of my research. Thank you for your time, I´m looking forward to your reply.

我叫 Jessica Dreyer，我已在中国从事幼儿教育工作 2 年了。在这期间，我开始攻读 UMINHO 大学（葡萄牙）的博士学位课程，研究领域是儿童研究。我非常沉醉于对中国文化和自己本国文化的差异研究。说到重要的中国传统文化，孝道是重要的元素之一。关于这个课题我已阅读并研究了很多资料，我发现孝道是中国社会不可或缺的重要部分。作为一个对孩子和儿童研究新动向有浓厚兴趣的研究者，我也知道倾听孩子们的声音和想法的当代意义。我目前研究的是孝道在中国社会的演变与发展以及孝道文化在幼儿倾听教育中的参透与运用的可能性。怎样可以在教育中做到既尊重中国传统又能倾听孩子们的愿望和想法？这是一个复杂的问题，也没有一个直接的答案。但是，您可以通过填写这张调查问卷帮助我来继续探索这个问题。非常感谢您的参与。期待着您的回复。

Ms. Jessica Dreyer, PhD researcher – UMINHO University,
UMINHO 大学博士学位研究者，Jessica Dreyer

1. Child´s name:_____ Class:_____

2. Child´s gender: ( ) Male ( ) Female

3. How many people live in your house? _____

Choose the option which best describes your household composition

A( ) Child and parents

B( ) Child, parents and grandparents

C( ) Child, parents and sibling(s)

D( ) Child, parents, grandparents and sibling(s)

E( ) Only child and grandparents

4. Household income per month (*sum* of the *incomes* from *all the people who live in the house):*

( ) Less than 12.000,00 RMB

( ) 12.000,00 to 15.000,00 RMB

( ) 25.000,00 to 50.000,00 RMB

( ) 50.000,00 RMB and above

5. Which area in Dongguan does your family live:

( )	Dongcheng Subdistrict	东城街道	( )	Huangjiang Town	黄江镇
( )	Nancheng Subdistrict	南城街道	( )	Qingxi Town	清溪镇
( )	Wanjiang Subdistrict	万江街道	( )	Tangxia Town	塘厦镇
( )	Guangcheng Subdistrict	莞城街道	( )	Fenggang Town	凤岗镇
( )	Shijie Town	石碣镇	( )	Dalingshan Town	大岭山镇
( )	Shilong Town	石龙镇	( )	Chang´an Town	长安镇
( )	Chashan Town	茶山镇	( )	Humen Town	虎门镇
( )	Shipai Town	石排镇	( )	Houjie Town	厚街镇
( )	Qishi Town	企石镇	( )	Shatian Town	沙田镇
( )	Hengli Town	横沥镇	( )	Daojiao Town	道滘镇
( )	Qiaotou Town	桥头镇	( )	Hongmei Town	洪梅镇
( )	Xiegang Town	谢岗镇	( )	Machong Town	麻涌镇
( )	Dongkeng Town	东坑镇	( )	Wangniudun Town	望牛墩镇
( )	Changping Town	常平镇	( )	Zhongtang Town	中堂镇
( )	Liaobu Town	寮步镇	( )	Gaobu Town	高埗镇
( )	Zhangmutou Town	樟木头镇	( )	Outside Dongguan	
( )	Dalang Town	大朗镇			

5. Parent´s occupation

Father

A( ) Owner (manager) of private firm;
B( ) Self-employed;
C( ) Government employee;
D( ) Clerical/office staff;
E( ) Skilled worker;
F( ) Unskilled worker;
G( ) Salesclerk or Service worker
H( ) Not employed/at home work

Mother

A( ) Owner (manager) of private firm;
B( ) Self-employed;
C( ) Government employee;
D( ) Clerical/office staff;
E( ) Skilled worker;
F( ) Unskilled worker;
G( ) Salesclerk or Service worker
H( ) Not employed/at home work

7. Parent´s Education level

Father

A( ) Never schooled
B( ) Classes for eliminating illiteracy
C( ) Elementary school
D( ) Secondary school
E( ) Technical secondary school
F( ) University (studying)
G( ) University (graduated)
H( ) Post-graduated

Mother

A( ) Never schooled
B( ) Classes for eliminating illiteracy
C( ) Elementary school
D( ) Secondary school
E( ) Technical secondary school
F( ) University (studying)
G( ) University (graduated)
H( ) Post-graduated

Has the father ever studied abroad?
In relation to home country ( ) Yes ( ) No

Has the mother ever studied abroad? In relation to home country ( ) Yes ( ) No

Has the father ever studied at an international school
at his home country? ( ) Yes ( ) No

Has the mother ever studied at an international school
at her home country? ( ) Yes ( ) No

About your child´s cultural identity

1. Where was your child born? _____
2. What is your child´s nationality?_____
3. Does your child have a second citizenship? ( ) Yes ( ) No
   From which country? _____

4. Where is the family from?
   Mother:_____ Father:_____
   Grandma:_____ Grandma:_____
   Grandpa:_____ Grandpa:_____

Siblings (if applicable) nationality

_____

5. How old was your child when you moved to China?

   _____

6. How often does your child visit his/her citizenship country?
   A( ) More than three times per year
   B( ) Three times per year
   C( ) Twice a year
   D( ) Once a year
   E( ) Never did yet

7. Who is the carer your child spends the most time with outside of school?
   ( ) Mother ( ) Father ( ) Grandma ( ) Grandpa ( )Nanny ( )Other
   _____

8. Does your child have a nanny? ( )Yes ( )No
   Where is she from? _____
   How many time per day does she spend with your child?
   ( ) less than 2 hours per day
   ( ) 2 to 4 hours per day
   ( )more than 4 hours per day

Does she spend time with your child on the weekends?

( )No, she doesn't take care of my child on weekends
( )Yes, less than 2 hours per day on weekends
( ) 2 to 4 hours per day on weekends
( ) 4 to 6 hours per day on weekends
( ) 6 to 8 hours per day on weekends
( ) more than 8 hours per day on weekends

9. Which culture do you think your child identifies more with?
   ( ) Chinese ( ) The country he/she was born ( )Other
   _____

10. Why did you choose an international school for your child? (Rank the reasons in order of importance, ticking only once the numbers 1 – 5). Tell us what is the 1st reason you choose an international school for your child, the 2nd reason and so on.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th (use only if you fill the field "other"
I believe the educational methods are better						
I want my child to learn English						
I want my child to study abroad in the future						
I want my child to have friendship and understanding of people from different cultures						
I have friends who have their child in the same school						
Other (if necessary) _____ ___						

Appendix F - Huang Xiang's story - transcription of video's English translation

[00:00:02.16]

Huang Xiang warms the bed

[00:00:07.08]

In the East Han Dynasty, in a city called Anlu

lived a poor peasant family

[00:00:14.19]

One day, a woman gave birth to a boy

The father named the boy Huang Xiang

[00:00:24.22]

When Huang Xiang was 9 years old, his mom fell ill

and passed away

[00:00:35.19]

After his mom passed away

Huang Xiang cared more about his father

[00:00:43.08]

Winter nigths are particularly cold

and sleeping is painful

[00:00:51.20]

One night, Huang Xiang was reading by the desk

[00:00:56.00]

While he held his book

his hands became very, very cold

[00:01:00.18]

"It is such a cold night...

...and dad is getting old...

...he must feel even colder than me...

...my dad works very hard during the day...

...if he can't sleep well at night...

...it will be a problem"

[00:01:14.16]

Huang Xiang thought about it for a while and walked into his father's room

he made his father's bed

took his clothes off and lay on the bed

[00:01:23.15]

Huang Xiang used his body temperature

to make the ice coldness become warmer

[00:01:29.19]

when his father saw it

he embraced Huang Xiang in his loving arms

[00:01:37.19]

Huang Xiang warmed his father's bed

and became well-known in the neighborhood

all his neighbors would say

that he is a Xiao child

[00:01:51.19]
In the summer, Huang Xiang's poor house
becomes humid and hot
and there is a lot of mosquitoes around

[00:02:01.12]
At night, everyone is enjoying the cool temperatures in the yard

[00:02:06.00]
the night becomes darker and darker
and everybody is preparing to go to bed

[00:02:11.03]
At this moment, they realize
that Huang Xiang hasn't been there the whole time
[00:02:16.11]

[00:02:19.16]
"Son?"

[00:02:21.14]
his dad called him

[00:02:23.21]
"Dad, I am here"

[00:02:27.00]
Huang Xiang answered
while walking out from his dad's bedroom

[00:02:32.18]

"What were you doing?"

[00:02:34.12]

His dad asked curiously

[00:02:36.15]

"It is too hot in the room, and there is a lot of mosquitoes...

...I used the fan to swipe the mosquitoes away...

...and now the bedroom is also cooler...

...then you can sleep well"

Huang Xiang said smiling

[00:02:51.18]

"You are a such a good boy, you cooled the room for me...

...but you sweated yourself"

[00:02:58.08]

"Dad, it is ok...

...I feel cool as long as you feel cool"

[00:03:05.09]

From that day

every day after dinner

Huang Xiang always used the fan to swipe the mosquitoes away

and then to cool down his dad's bed and pillow

so after a tiring day of work

his dad can sleep more comfortably

[00:03:23.20]

Huang Xiang's Xiao act towards his father

is one in a million

his neighbors all praised him

[00:03:30.17]

"here someone who is Xiao to parents...

...and also know how to love the people...

and his own country"

[00:03:42.04]

Huang Xiang grew up and became a magistrate

he lived up to his people's expectations

and did a lot of good things for the locals

[00:03:51.09]

Huang Xiang's Xiao story

has been passed down throughout the ages

Appendix G - Barbie made up story - English translation of the video trascription

0:00:02.457,0:00:04.389
Hello, good morning, my name is XiaoXin
please watch this video carefully and I will ask you some questions at the end.

0:00:10.720,0:00:14.220
MOM: Oh, this one look so pretty
MOM: It is ten o'clock, I have to start booking it.
MOM: It is great, this price at the moment is the best
MOM: I am going to take this one
MOM: Except by this one... I need to buy something else.
MOM: I need to change my high heels
MOM: Ok, changed my high heels
MOM: Oh, it is so messy in the house
MOM: So dirty
MOM: Hey, I see you. What are you doing there?
MOM: Why don't you come to clean the house?
MOM: It is so messy, can't you see?

0:00:42.000,0:00:45.000
NAINAI: Oh, I am sorry, I am cooking now.

0:00:45.000,0:00:48.729
MOM: Stop cooking. First tidy this up and then continue cooking.

0:00:48.729,0:00:50.240
NAINAI: Oh, ok, ok.

0:00:52.541,0:00:56.587
MOM: Aya, what did I say? You can't even clean the floor?
MOM: You dropped my bucket down, you are going to break it. You will have to pay for it.
MOM: Do you think it didn't cost anything?

0:01:01.758,0:01:04.580
NAINAI: Oh, It wasn't on purpose.

0:01:05.105,0:01:06.503
MOM: I don't care
MOM: Come on, continue.

0:01:08.411,0:01:10.485
NAINAI: Oh, ok, ok.

0:01:10.485,0:01:14.905
MOM: Aya... My sisters called me to go out this weekend.
MOM: Oh, I don't have any clothes to go.
MOM: I need to buy new clothes

MOM: Look pretty, hahaha
MOM: Buy new clothes
MOM: Hey, didn't you see?
MOM: You brushed my shoes
MOM: You made my shoes dirty, now you have to wash my shoes

0:01:33.402,0:01:38.213
NAINAI: Oh, sorry, I did not see, it wasn't on purpose

0:01:38.213,0:01:41.035
MOM: Not on purpose? I think you did it on purpose.
MOM: Hurry up, take my shoes and clean it.

0:01:43.577,0:01:48.339
NAINAI: Ok, sorry, let me finish cleaning here first, then I will wash your shoes.

0:01:48.339,0:01:52.169
MOM: You are so dumb, you can't even clean the floor.

0:01:52.169,0:02:00.000
NAINAI: I finished cleaning the floor. Can you take off your shoes now so I can clean it?

0:02:00.000,0:02:03.171
MOM: Do you know how late it is? My daughter is coming from school soon.
MOM: You should go cook!

0:02:06.481,0:02:09.244
NAINAI: Oh, ok, ok, I will do it now.

0:02:10.878,0:02:12.512
CHILD: Mom, I am home!

0:02:12.512,0:02:14.927
MOM: Oh, yes, you are here!

0:02:14.927,0:02:16.927
CHILD: Grandma, I am back!

0:02:18.391,0:02:20.414
NAINAI: Oh my dear, you are here.
NAINAI: Come, give grandma a hug.

0:02:22.965,0:02:26.464
MOM: Ah, your hands are dirty to hug. You should go cook.

0:02:27.260,0:02:30.090
NAINAI: Oh, alright. My dear grandaughter is hungry now
NAINAI: I am almost finished with cooking. Just a moment.

0:02:35.065,0:02:37.734
CHILD: Mom, you were so bad to grandma.

0:02:37.734,0:02:41.012
MOM: Ah, what do you know? You are a child.
MOM: Let's go, let's go eat.

0:02:42.672,0:02:45.816
CHILD: Wow! That is a huge roasted chicken!
CHILD: That is my favourite kind of food!
CHILD: Thank you grandma.

0:02:50.206,0:02:52.960
MOM: Why did you say thank you to your grandma? Your mom asked her to make it.

0:02:52.960,0:02:56.290
CHILD: Mom, wasn't it cooked by grabdma?

0:02:56.290,0:02:58.939
MOM: It was, but I bought the chicken.

0:02:58.939,0:03:00.939
CHILD: Oh, ok.

0:03:00.939,0:03:04.007
NAINAI: It doesn't matter. Let's enjoy the food

0:03:04.380,0:03:05.303
CHILD: Sure

0:03:05.303,0:03:08.309
MOM: Mom will give you a chicken leg.

0:03:08.309,0:03:10.966
CHILD: Thank you mom, that is so yummy.
CHILD: Grandma, take a chicken leg too.

0:03:12.966,0:03:17.018
MOM: Oh, your grandma doesn't need it. Her teeth are not good, she can't bite it et all.

0:03:17.018,0:03:21.170
NAINAI: Don't worry my dear, just enjoy your food. My teeth are not very good.
NAINAI: I am sure I won't be able to bite it very well. Don't worry, don't worry.

0:03:24.800,0:03:27.999
CHILD: Grandma, you are getting old, so you need to eat more meat.
CHILD: It is good for your health.

0:03:30.617,0:03:34.993

NAINAI: Oh, I am old now, I don't need it. I am healthy
NAINAI: Let's eat, just enjoy your food.

0:03:39.000,0:03:41.235
CHILD: Oh, I am sorry mom, I dropped the bowl.

0:03:41.235,0:03:44.449
MOM; It doesn't matter, doesn't matter. It is just a bowl.
MOM: Are you ok? We just have to pick it up.
MOM: If it is broken I will give you a new one. Doesn't matter, doesn't matter.
MOM: Is your hand ok?

0:03:51.470,0:03:52.817
CHILD: It's ok, I didn't hurt myself.

0:03:52.817,0:03:54.608
MOM: It's ok, it's ok.
MOM: Oh, If the child drops the bowl it is ok. Buy you did it? You are an adult.
MOM: You are useless.
MOM: What can you do? Tell me.
MOM: I don't charge you anything for you to live here, and you broke my bowl?

0:04:09.335,0:04:09.835
NAINAI: Oh...

0:04:09.835,0:04:12.892
MOM: I think you don't want to live in here anymore.
MOM: I really should send you somewhere else.

0:04:16.062,0:04:18.265
NAINAI: Oh, I didn't do it on purpose.

0:04:18.265,0:04:20.674
MOM: How do I know you didn't do it on purpose?
MOM: You make me feel disgusted.

0:04:22.656,0:04:29.723
NANAI: Oh, my dear grandaughter, I am full now. Please, enjoy your food

0:04:32.784,0:04:34.540
CHILD: Grandma

0:04:34.540,0:04:37.503
MOM: Don't call her, just eat your food.

0:04:37.706,0:04:38.901
CHILD: I don't want to

0:04:39.000,0:04:41.881

MOM: Uh? Why? Isn't it good?

0:04:42.457,0:04:46.211
CHILD: No, mom. How can you treat grandma like this?

0:04:46.211,0:04:49.440
MOM: Oh, you talk too much. If you don't want to eat just leave the table.

0:04:50.062,0:04:51.040
CHILD: Then I won't eat

0:04:51.040,0:04:52.800
MOM: It doesn't matter. I will clean up then.

0:04:57.545,0:05:00.000
CHILD: Oh, what would you say about that now?
CHILD: You are an adult and you dropped the bowl.
CHILD: Can't you do things right?
CHILD: When you get old I will send you to an institution
CHILD: Huh! I am tired of looking at you.

0:05:15.454,0:05:22.280
MOM: Oh, my dear. How can you say this to mom?

0:05:22.280,0:05:25.346
CHILD: Mom, you did the same thing to grandma
CHILD: I just learned from you

0:05:27.414,0:05:29.160
MOM; Uh? I...

0:05:29.160,0:05:31.003
CHILD: Mom, do you understand?
CHILD: All of your behaviors can affect me.
CHILD: If you do this to grandma now, when you get old I will do the same to you
CHILD: My teacher told me that Xiao should come first.
CHILD: We need to respect the elders
CHILD: Mom, you are my mother
CHILD: I respect you
CHILD: I will learn from you
CHILD: So whatever you do, the way you act, I will do the same
CHILD: So mom, grandma now is older
CHILD: She fed dad when he was young, and she takes care of us
CHILD: You shouldn't treat her like this.
CHILD: Mom, also think about yourself. You will get old.
CHILD: Imagine if we treated you like this. Wouldn't you feel sad?

0:06:11.840,0:06:17.339
MOM: Oh my dear. Sorry, I did something bad. I shoul'd not act like this

MOM: I will change. Please forgive me.

0:06:20.390,0:06:30.237
Children, will you be Xiao to your parents? Try your best to u

经常带着爱人、子女回家

Often bring your partner and children back to parentsu home

节假日尽量与父母共度

Try to spend holidays with your parents

为父母举办生日宴会

Hold a birthday party for your parents

亲自给父母做饭

Cook meals for your parents yourself

各周份父母打个电话

Call your parents every week

父母的零花钱不能少

Make sure your parents have enough pocket money

为父母建立“关爱卡”

Establish a “Love and Care card” for your parents

仔细聆听父母的往事

Listen attentively to your parents when they talk about their past

教父母学会上网

Teach your parents how to use the internet

经常为父母拍照

Often take photos of your parents

对父母的爱要说出口

Your love for your parents must be expressed

打开父母的心结

Help to ease your parents´ mind

支持父母的业余爱好

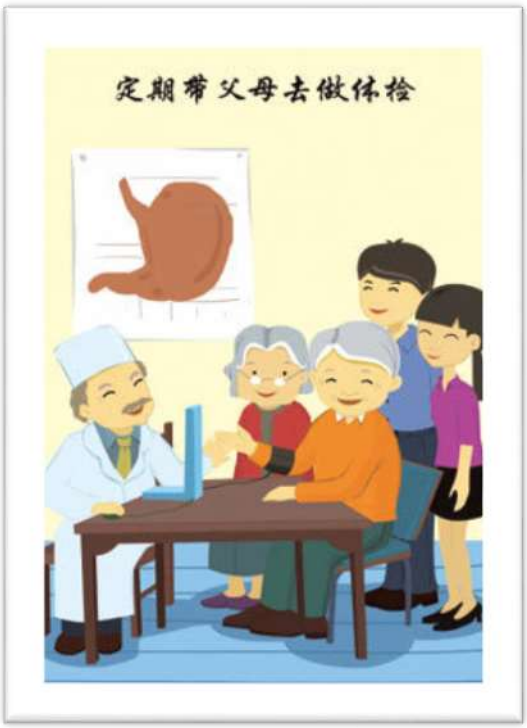
Support your parents hobbies

为父母购买适合的保险

Purchase suitable insurance for your parents

支持单身父母再婚

Support your widowed parent to re-marry



定期带父母去做体检

Bring your parents to periodic medical checks

常跟父母做交心的沟通

Often make close communication with your parents

带父母参观你工作的地方

Bring your parents to visit your workplace

带父母一起出席重要活动

Bring your parents along when attending important activities

带父母去旅行，或故地重游

Take your parents to travel frequently or re-visit places they have been before

和父母一起锻炼身体

Do physical exercises with your parents

适当参与父母的活动

Participate appropriately in your parents´activities

陪父母拜访他们的老朋友 Accompany your parents to visit their old friends

陪父母看一场老电影

Take parents to watch an old movie