Between Responsibilities and Privileges: The Gender Construction of Fatherhood in

Hong Kong

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Between Responsibilities and Privileges: The Gender Construction of Fatherhood in

Hong Kong

Submitted by LIONG, Chan Ching Mario

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This is a pioneering study on the construction of fatherhood in the

socio-cultural context of Hong Kong. Fatherhood is constructed socially and

culturally, reflected in the thinking and practice of fathers. It is defined by, and

simultaneously reproduces masculinity. In this study, fatherhood is critically

examined using practice theory and the concept of gender performativity. The

fieldwork, carried out from 2004 to 2006, consisted primarily of participant

observation in men's groups, and interviews, in particular, in-depth interviews with

30 heterosexual biological fathers from different walks of life. This study finds that

fatherhood in Hong Kong is constructed within the patriarchal ideology and structure

across the societal, organizational, and individual levels. Patriarchy is rooted in the

history of Hong Kong and continues to exist in contemporary society. In both the

colonial and post-colonial periods, notions of masculinity and fatherhood in Hong

Kong are seen to be extremely conservative and they highlight the role of the state in the adoption and reproduction of patriarchal ideology. While changes towards gender equality have occurred slowly after long-term struggle, a coherent gender policy has been lacking. This has contributed to a socio-cultural environment that encourages the naturalization and normalization of the patriarchal structure and practices in the family. The recent development of the "new good men" notion (in which men were redefined to be loving husbands, and caring fathers who shared housework and were involved with children) was found to be a front and was utilized as a means to resurrect men's power and status in the family. Three main paternal responsibilities were identified, namely economic provision, education, as well as establishing and maintaining a child-oriented family through marriage. In carrying out these responsibilities, men enjoyed the privileges and hegemony legitimized in the social structure. Failure in fulfilling the structural requirements resulted in the disruption of paternal power and masculinity but not subversion to the hegemonic structure.

論文撮要

　　本文研究香港社會文化建構的父親身份。父親身份由社會文化建構而成，反映在父親的思想和實踐中。父親身份和男性特質實互為表裡，互相影響。本文透過實踐論和性別操演的概念來批判分析父親身份。研究資料主要來自二零零四年至二零零六年的田野考察，其中包括男士小組中的參與觀察，以及和三十位不同背景的異性戀親生父親深入訪談。本研究發現不論是社會上、組織裡或個人層面，香港父親身份實由父權意識形態及社會結構所構成。父權意識植根香港歷史，而且在當代社會仍然根深柢固。不論是殖民時期或後殖民時期，香港的男性特質和父親身份都是極端保守，而且反映了政府持守並延續的父權意識。雖然香港社會持續有著女性主義的抗爭，但性別平等的觀念來得很慢，而且社會上一直欠缺統一的性別政策。香港過去的經驗實合理化了父權結構和做法。近年出現的「新好男人」概念（男士能夠成為深情的丈夫和慈愛的父親，並分擔家務和照顧孩子）實為門面工夫，實質為重建男人於家庭的權力和地位。本研究發現三項主要的父親責任，包括經濟、教育、透過婚姻來建立和維持以孩子為主的家庭。男人能夠從這些責任取得社會結構支持的特權。然而即使有些父親未能滿足這些結構要求而失去權力，甚至經歷男性特質的崩解，他們都不會反抗那霸權結構。

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Writing the acknowledgement is the most enjoyable part of this piece of work. Apart from its indication of the completion of the task, it is also a chance for me to realize that I am so fortunate to have so many people backing me. Moreover, it is a reminder for me and my readers that this piece of work is not what I can achieve on my own.

Indebtedness fills the course of my graduate study and the writing of this dissertation. I am particularly grateful to my thesis supervisor, Siumi Maria Tam, who has given me a lot of encouragement and patience, and often had more confidence in my abilities than I did. Her support, especially during my transition to the anthropology discipline, has been invaluable in these seven years. When I look back, I notice that I have indeed learnt a lot from her, both as a scholar and a person. I also have to thank her for helping me in getting access to my fieldsite. I am thankful to the guidance from Joseph Bosco in my understanding of the Chinese marriage, family, and parenthood, and his comments and advice to my dissertation. I also appreciate the help from Anthony Fung for his insightful reading of and comments to my draft.

During the lonely postgraduate study path, I am very grateful to have many friends in the Gender Studies Programme who have given me a lot of insights and

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Chapter I

Introduction: Fatherhood Revisited

My transition to fatherhood took place a little more than 25 years ago. I still vividly remember the excitement, the fears, the concerns, the self-searching, and the changes ushered in by this life-transforming event. Over a quarter of a century later, after the birth, growth, and development of four sons, I can still recall the monumental nature of becoming a father for the first time.

- (Palkovitz 2007:27)

On Father's Day, June 21, 2009, a middle-aged man in Guangdong sat on the road. In his hand was a letter of apology to his four children who were studying in senior secondary school and in college. As the semester was ending, it was time for students to pay school fees. This father could not afford to pay school fees for his children and regarded himself a disqualified father. He did not dare to admit his financial difficulty in front of his children, let alone showing them the apology he wrote. So, this father chose to run out of his home and isolate himself from his children on Father's Day. This is a story reported in *Taiyanbao* (2009:A18).

No one is born a father. In Palkovitz's quote, he used the word "becoming" to describe his own transition to fatherhood. Fatherhood is constructed by the social and cultural conditions in which an actor exists. Consequently, several questions

came to my mind after reading the story of the Guangdong father: Why was the

inability to pay his children's school fees so serious that he could not face his own

children? In what sense did he consider himself a failure? Why did he find himself

powerless? Is the father's response related to the construction of masculinity? How is

that idea of masculinity related to power and authority among fathers?

Parenthood is gendered. Fatherhood is often considered opposite to motherhood.

We assume that the father differs from the mother because they are roles of different

(opposite) genders. Therefore they should behave differently, carry out different

social expectations, and consequently possess different kinds of authority and power.

In a society guided by patriarchal ideology and history, fathers are often the heads of

households. Their way to achieve or maintain power is to fulfil responsibility

assigned to their gender, which in turn becomes the condition from which they

acquire or claim their authority. On one hand, fathers need to shoulder the

responsibility to provide for their wife, children, and other family members; on the

other hand, this need allows them to acquire economic resources and social capital

that give them the authoritative position within the family. Men's power is thus

guaranteed by patriarchal values and structure in society.

Feminists have long criticized that maintaining a distinct gender division in

parenting is equivalent to sustaining gender stereotypes and gender inequality. One

famous critique towards uninvolved fathering is from Nancy Chodorow (1978). In her psychoanalytic theory, both female and male new-born infants have a sense of oneness with the mother. However, as they grow up, while daughters continue to identify with their mother, sons are pushed away by the mother in order that they can identify with the more remote father. She believes that this creates the effect that male children unconsciously reject anything feminine, including their nurturing psychic quality. At the same time, female children develop a sense of inferiority as they identify with a culturally devalued femininity. Coltrane (1996) also thinks that this practice of division of parenting (mothering in opposite to fathering) has created a vicious cycle in maintaining gender inequality in society.

Similar differentiation of parenthood based on gender is observed in Hong Kong. Fathers are often the breadwinners or even the sole breadwinners in the family. They also take up the role of educators as they discipline children and teach them knowledge and skills. Since the 1990s, with changing gender and social relations, as well as gender politics brought about by the women's movement, this traditional notion of fatherhood is being contested. Cultural ideal has it that fathers provide sole economic support for the family. Yet actual practices cannot be farther away from the ideal. Particularly since the financial crisis in 1997, unemployment and under-employment of men, as well as increased education and job opportunity for

women have made that sole male breadwinner ideal rare in Hong Kong. In addition,

school teachers, sports coaches, extra-curricular interest class instructors, and private

tutors have taken up a large part of the father's educator role. Together with the

challenges towards traditional masculinity and male privileges since the

second-wave feminist movement, the socio-cultural conditions have posed serious

challenges to traditional fatherhood as well as paternal authority and power.

In view of this changing gender relation, in recent years some non-government

organizations, notably the Catholic Church's welfare organization, Caritas, have

argued for the need to promote the notion of "new fatherhood". As implied in its

newsletter, fathers should not only bring money home but are also expected to be

caring, to be leaders and protectors of the family, to be good role models to the

children, and to help develop the potential of their children (*Ming 'ai nan shi cheng*

zhang zhong xin 2003:3, 7, 29). With the efforts of women's movement in the 1980s

and 1990s, equality between women and men has been put in the mainstream

political agenda. It has even become a discourse of political correctness in Hong

Kong society. These non-government organizations which argued for the "new

fatherhood" notion claimed that the notion was in-keeping with gender equality as

fathers were required to be more caring and to share housework and childcare with

their wives, thus responding to the claim of feminists. They argued that the new

notion would bring about positive change in spousal relations and the family, thus women and men, children and parents, as well as the larger society, would all benefit with more input from men in parenting.

Nevertheless, in the West, some feminists do not agree with the gender equality claim of "new fatherhood". For instance, Sara Ruddick (1997) attacks "new fatherhood" as a notion encouraging sexual distinctiveness as well as masculine and compulsory heterosexual parenting. She criticises the idea of distinctive fatherhood as a "regulative idea which has harmed women, has probably harmed children and may harm men" (Ruddick 1997:206). Rather, she argues that both women and men should not assume any distinctive roles in parenting. For these feminist critics, "new fatherhood" is really a response from men to the changing gender relations within the family. Except the caring role, the qualities and duties that fathers are urged to have are indeed not different from the traditional notions of breadwinner and educator. They have not given up the two most obvious sources of power and authority for men. Thus Ruddick believes that these promoters of "new fatherhood" are just trying to re-establish the status of fathers in the family today while reaffirming traditional roles and status of men. Thus, "new fatherhood" is nothing new at all. It has not answered the call of the feminists. Rather it has hijacked their position.

In fact, the construction of "new fatherhood" reveals that fatherhood is not only constructed distinctively from motherhood but also linked closely to masculinity in specific socio-cultural milieu. Men are not born fathers but they take on the role of fathers by subscribing to the particular behaviours that present to others certain father images. Goffman (1959) points out that people are always performing with varying degrees of belief in their performance. "To be a given kind of person, then, is not merely to possess the required attributes, but also to sustain the standards of conduct and appearance that one's social grouping attaches thereto" (Goffman 1959:65). Individuals have to control their "front", which is how they appear to others, to manage others' impression of them (Goffman 1959). Fathers, as men, are expected (by others and themselves) to be manly so as to bring a masculine perspective and to be a masculine role model for the children. Fathers have to control how they appear to others, including their spouses and children, so as to achieve the masculine performance and maintain their status.

Fatherhood does not have an essence but is simply a masculine performance which is rendered natural and normal with repetitive practice. According to Judith Butler (1990), the experience of being a certain gender is in fact performative. "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender... [I]dentity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results"

(Butler 1990:25). And performativity refers to "the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (Butler 1993:2). "Father", as a gendered identity, is also performative, reiterative, and citational. Fatherhood is learnt, acquired, and repeated to render it "natural" – "naturally" being a father and a man. The identity of father is indeed a display of masculinities rather than simply a given.

Although there is no essence in fatherhood, the performance of fatherhood is discursively restricted. Father is indeed a dynamic and heterogeneous subjectivity and is heavily influenced by socio-cultural discourses. Foucault (1977) has suggested that the central discourses invite and persuade individuals to conform to norms by creating desires. People thus internalize those external norms and rules to monitor themselves, resulting in "docile" subjects supporting the discursive claims (Foucault 1977). These discourses are often linked with the social and economic conditions in formulating the gender structure which then mould marriage, family, and fatherhood. Embedded in this discursive power, fathers are pushed to check against the norms and standards of masculinity.

"Father" is never a fixed identity. Neither is it "natural". Various social, cultural, and historical factors exert discursive influence over fatherhood. Father is both the product and the reproducer of the social structure. On one hand, patriarchal social

structure shapes fathers' behaviours and decisions; on the other hand, fathers' power and authority reinforces the patriarchal structure. Thus, studying fatherhood will reveal the concept of masculinity and power embedded in society.

In illuminating masculinity and power through fatherhood, Hong Kong is a peculiar case worthy of investigation. Unlike the feminist movement in the West, eradication of oppressive measures towards female and the subsequent women's movement in Hong Kong were not brewed by the locals, but influenced by the Western educated Chinese Christians and elite women, as well as female expatriates (Sinn 1994; Smith 1985, 1995; Wong 2000). The women's movement was considered to be an imported ideology against Chinese traditions (patriarchy). Hong Kong was among the last Asian countries to eradicate some imperial Chinese patriarchal customs, like concubinage and *muijai* system (these two customs and their related social movements will be described and explained in Chapter II), which contributed to its Western outlook.

With the continuous efforts of the educated women and female expatriates after World War II, although the Hong Kong Government did not have a comprehensive women's policy, several legal reforms removing discrimination against women and girls appeared in the 1970s (Kwok et al. 1997). These slowly transformed the gender relations in Hong Kong society. Since the 1980s, the politicization of Hong Kong

society facilitated some local and grass-root women's groups to appear to push forward the mainstreaming of women's political agenda (Kwok et al. 1997).

Together with the changing social, economic, and political situations, especially after the Asian financial crisis causing high rate of unemployment, the rise in women's status has forced men to rethink their gender roles and relations. When compared with the men's movement in the USA or the UK which started in the 1970s, the men's movement in Hong Kong, introduced by Christian social service organizations in the 1990s, is a relatively new phenomenon. Although this men's movement is not widespread in mainstream Hong Kong society, more and more men are concerned with their gender situation and have chosen to take part, in varying degrees, in the men's movement. Some anti-feminist men's groups have also developed. The blend of an entrenched patriarchy, recent developments in the women's movement, and the men's responses to the women's movement, have made up an interesting milieu in which different notions about masculinity intersect. This thesis investigates how the hegemony of men as manifested through fatherhood, develops in this particular juncture of Hong Kong society.

Fatherhood, in this study, is analyzed on three levels, namely societal level, organizational level and individual level. On the societal level, history of women and men in Hong Kong society, economic, political, and cultural institutions, and gender

movements laid the background of the practices of fathers, forming the social structure. On the organizational level, the discourses, rituals, and ritualization of men's groups were important elements in shaping manhood and fatherhood. The notions of "new good father" and "new good man" put forward by the organization aimed to redefine men and masculinities and to resurrect men's power and recognition of men within the family. On the individual level, men exhibited the internalized patriarchal structure through their practices in fatherhood, mainly in their economic provision, education of children, and marriage and family concepts.

The present study tries to expose how fatherhood as a gendered parenting experience, is constructed, interpreted, and practiced in the family, and how it reflects and constructs the naturalized practices of men in the present Hong Kong society. Through understanding fatherhood, this study aims at shedding light on the naturalization and normalization of patriarchal structures and values in masculine practices and domination.

Literature Review

Fatherhood can be defined according to the biological relatedness, relationship between mother and father, and legal status of marriage and/or paternity. The father identity can be assumed through biology (biological father), marriage and remarriage (step-father), and adoption (foster father). Mere biological ties cannot constitute

fatherhood. For instance, sperm donor does not have the social or legal ties for fatherhood (Marsiglio, Day, & Lamb 2000) while a step-father and/or foster father with no blood relationship with their children are socially recognized. Yet fatherhood may not be restricted by marriage. Divorced father can continue their relationship with children, no matter they are resident (living with children) / custodial (having the custody of children sentenced by court) or non-resident / non-custodial. Heterosexuality is not a must for fathers. Gay fathers can assume fatherhood through the above ways and also surrogacy (Dunne 2001).

Studies on the father as subject have appeared in recent decades under the influence of feminism. Inspired by women's studies which aims at documenting women's experiences which have been neglected in the conventional disciplinary research (Auslander 1997), men's studies wants to do the same, by investigating masculinities and experiences of men as gendered beings within the larger context of gender relations. The study of fatherhood aims at revealing the diverse and interrelated meanings between paternal masculinities and manhood itself (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003). Literature on fatherhood has different foci, including the history and changes of father's roles and fatherhood ideals, subjective experiences of fathers, and "new fatherhood/masculinity" and its critiques.

Fatherhood in the West

Fatherhood in the West has undergone changes. In the Roman times during which the father was portrayed as the pillars of order in both the public and private domain, he had the authority over the life and death of his children (de Tocqueville 1969; Zoja 2001). During the 18th and 19th century, the father was recognized as the central moral and political figure within the family (Lamb 1997; Burgess 1997). The authoritarian father figure was legitimized by the image of God the father, and was intertwined with the king who was deemed to take care of the whole commonwealth like the father who provides for his children (Foster 1994; Seidler 1988; Bonvillain 2007). Middle-class fathers in the 19th century America played central role in providing and teaching (Johansen 2001). They paid a lot of effort in equipping their children with knowledge, morals, and opportunities to be included into the ranks of the middle class (ibid:9). They were also central in teaching religious values and secular knowledge and skills (ibid:9). At the turn of the 20th century, mother became the focus of children's development, justified by maternal instinct discourses (Dudley & Stone 2001; Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003). Father's role turned to stress on breadwinning, protecting, and gender role modelling due to the long working hours away from home by industrialization (Lamb 1997; Lupton & Barclay 1997; Dudley & Stone 2001). After World War II, middle-class notion of fatherhood

started to appear, stating that fathers can also be psychologically close to children and fathers should be less disciplinary (Dudley & Stone 2001; Robinson & Barret 1986). In contemporary Western societies, the notion of responsibility and importance of the father reappears. The idea of co-parenting leads fathers to share more of the child-rearing tasks; yet the issue of deadbeat fathers who avoid or ignore the financial obligation to their children after divorce triggered a lot of studies on the negative effects on children (Dudley & Stone 2001; Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003).

These studies have contributed to the understanding that the subjectivity of father is constructed differently in different periods of time, from the pre-modern powerful father as delegated from God, to the modern economic and moral provider, to the diverse and contradictory images in the postmodern society (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003). The deconstruction of fatherhood reveals the underlying gender ideology and construction in different social, cultural, and political conditions. With the rise of feminism and pro-feminist men's movement, studies that propose reflections upon masculinity appear.

Some men's studies scholars, inspired by feminism, initiated studies to criticize the conventional notion of masculinity. These scholars have pointed out the bad effects of traditional masculinity on men's health and lives. Levant and Kopecky

(1995) argue that men are trained socially to commit themselves to the traditional masculine code that sacrifices their health and even their lives, including aggressive and competitive, reluctant to see doctors, workaholic, emotionally inexpressive, unwilling to seek help, plus unhealthy habits like smoking and drinking, dangerous sports, and violent behaviours in order to numb their stresses and anxieties. Eisler and Skidmore (1987) have coined the term "masculine gender role stress" (MGRS) to describe the tendency that men who adhere more to traditional masculinity will suffer more from elevated bodily stress responses when their masculinity is being challenged. These elevated stress responses can be devastating to their physical and mental health. Pleck (1981) agrees that men are trained to acquire traits that are dysfunctional to their work and family. Men are socialized to see their breadwinning role as fundamental to their gender identity and family functioning, leading to their engagement towards employment but away from childcare (Trivers 1972; Rypma 1976; Rossi 1977).

Considering the maladaptive effects of the conventional masculinity, these men's studies scholars investigated ways to benefit men in reconstructing masculinity. Barnett, Davidson, and Marshall (1991), for example, claim that a man's physical well-being will be better when he is satisfied with his fathering role. Barnett, Marshall, and Pleck (1992) add that both husband and fathering roles are significant

predictors of men's psychological well-being. Despite the benefits of involved paternity, the majority of fathers are found to spend less time with children than do mothers in Australia (Russell & Bowman 2000; Bittman & Pixley 1997), Britain and the United States (McMahon 1999). These scholars thus urge for a return of men to their family as caring husbands and involved fathers.

Since the late 1980s, some scholars have speculated that there are inherent problems in the traditional patriarchal ideology of fatherhood, and have thus tried to argue for a "new fatherhood" or a reconstructed masculinity (e.g. Brooks & Silverstein 1995; Levant 1992; Levant & Kopecky 1995). This "new fatherhood" involves emotionally intimate relationship between fathers and children in addition to the traditional provider role, making mothers and fathers interchangeable in terms of their roles in the family, and in effect degendering the parenting role (Silverstein, Auerbach, & Levant 2002). White (1994) and Brandth & Kvande (1998) think that the adoption of the "new fatherhood" notion comes from the recollections of fathers today of their own emotional distance from their fathers. These modern fathers are determined to construct a more emotionally connected form of relationship with their children, in order to compensate the void in their own experience of growing up (see Silverstein et al. 2002; White 1994; Brandth & Kvande 1998). Lamb (1997) proposes the importance of paternal involvement in building positive psychological

characteristics in children and in freeing the mother to develop herself. Thus, by establishing a "new fatherhood", power can be more equally distributed between the mother and the father (Silverstein et al. 2002).

In response to the urge of more involved fathering, various research on the subjective experience and actual practices of fathers were conducted. Some studies try to discover the reasons for fathers to have children from their narrations (e.g. Jacobs 1995). Some focus on the benefit of personal growth in fatherhood (e.g. Drobeck 1996; Liebler 1996). Some examine paternal responsibility. For instance, King (1994) and Amato (1998) discover that fathers contribute to children's lives through economic provision, education, and emotional support while Daly (1993a) investigated fathers' aim of being role models to their children and how they did so. Others look into more personal relationship between father and children. For example, Cooley (1996) looks into the grieving process and subjective thought of fathers who lost their children, and Hrabowski, Maton, & Grief (2006) explore the relationship with sons from the narration of black fathers.

These studies try to situate fathers in the subject position to re-discover their actual experiences and thinking. Nevertheless, they lack a critical reflection on the construction of gender, masculinity, and fatherhood. Other scholars, however, show doubt on the notion of "new fatherhood". They find that the "new father" standard

creates more burdens upon men. Dudley and Stone (2001), for instance, argue that "new fathers" have double roles: they are simultaneously expected to be good child-carers and high-flyers in their careers. These conflicting expectations of men to achieve in different ways are unrealistic. Lupton and Barclay (1997) believe that men face many competing notions of masculinity which they find difficult to reconcile and follow in daily life. They point out that "new fatherhood" is indeed the new hegemonic discourse and ideal our society has created for modern day fathers to follow.

Feminists further criticize the concept of "new fatherhood" as old wine in new bottle. Most importantly, "new fatherhood" is not giving up the traditional provider role, as modern fathers still admire their own fathers who have contributed to their families through breadwinning (Silverstein et al 2002, White 1994, Brandth & Kvande 1998). Economic condition is still the epitome of masculinity. At the same time, other hegemonic "functions" of fathers still prevail, including provision, protection, and discipline (Ruddick 1997). Townsend (2002) shows that fathers contribute to their children through economic provision, protection, endowment, and emotional closeness. He proposes the concept of "package deal" which is the cultural requirement of being a qualified man and it includes work, marriage, home ownership, and children (ibid:30). Fathers, through their paid work, provide their

children with material well-being, safety, and schooling and other activities (ibid:136). Fathers give their children a caring mother with good characters through marriage and good endowment through a "good" home which bars them from "bad" influences, and a protective shelter (ibid:77-79). Waller's study proposes a similar argument. Among those unmarried parents interviewed, they mentioned that fathers need to be emotionally involved with their children, but at the same time to provide economic support and guidance to them (Waller 2002). Moreover, Cowan & Cowan (1992) and LaRossa & LaRossa (1981) find that parental roles tend to result in stereotypical gender division of labour with father focusing on economic provision and mother on childcare and housework, even though the couples had planned for an egalitarian division of domestic work. Thus, the "new fatherhood", despite its "new" appearance, is not eradicating conventional gender notions.

As a result, feminists argue that the claim of "new fatherhood" to counteract the hegemony of fathers fails as "new fatherhood" indeed aims to resurrect masculine domination within the family. "New fatherhood" seems to add only one more additional factor – emotional connectedness with children – to the traditional fatherhood. Thus, "new fatherhood" sustains father's status quo in the family, which is in fact reproducing and reaffirming the traditional masculine and heterosexual notion of fatherhood (Ruddick 1997; Vavrus 2002; Zoja 2001). Without actually

deconstructing the normalized masculine configuration, "new fatherhood" remains

essentially a hegemonic fatherhood.

As originally proposed by Antonio Gramsci (1971), hegemony is the way a

dominant class controls society, with the state, capitalists, intellectuals, and even the

dominated groups participating in its construction. Adopting this concept and

extending its meaning further, Judith Butler (2000) defines hegemony as "the way in

which power operates to form our everyday understanding of social relations, and to

orchestrate the ways in which we consent to (and reproduce) those tacit and covert

relations of power" (p.13-14). Hegemony here does not point towards one particular

dominating group that exercises control over other subordinating groups. Rather, it

naturalizes and normalizes one particular perspective of seeing things (Surman 1994),

favouring certain characteristics in particular subjectivities. The majority of the

population is convinced that the domination is natural and normal through the

discursive persuasion of the media, social institutions, and the state (Donaldson

1993).

Based on Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Hearn (2004) proposes the

framework of Critical Studies on Men (CSM) that takes power into consideration in

the analysis of men's practices within the critical feminist perspective. CSM

"critically addresses men in the context of gendered power relations" (ibid:50) and

does not take men as a biological given but a "social category" and a "gender class" (ibid:49). It questions men's societal and structural dominations in patriarchies, recognizes unities and differences between men, and examines men's specific practices, identities, sexualities, and subjectivities (ibid:245). This framework puts the analysis of hegemony of men as its focus, which aims at addressing the construction, normalization, and naturalization of men as a social category and their domination and control (ibid:59). Yet men, as a social category, can be understood as both a ruling class and not a ruling class (ibid:61). It is because the hegemonic gender order that forms the dominating men and subordinating women also creates differentiations among men (ibid:61). Thus the hegemony of men favours certain construction(s) of men and men's practice(s), with the participation and cooperation from both women and men.

Hearn (2004) argues that the analysis of hegemony of men can offer a more thorough and clear analysis of domination in gender order than the concept "hegemonic masculinity". Connell (1995) identifies the concept of hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p.77). Jeff Hearn (2004) argues that the concept is confusing as it can refer to a

cultural representation, everyday practice, and institutional structure and it is difficult to understand how the dominant and dominating ways connect with each other (pp.58-59). Rather, an analysis of the hegemony of men will reveal the naturalized, normalized, and taken-for-granted way that the social and cultural acceptance of the identity of men and their practices in sustaining patriarchy subordinates women, men, and children (ibid:59).

This study aims to reveal the hegemony of men so as to explain the process in which men's thinking and practices contribute to patriarchy. Patriarchy is a system of social structure, practices, relations that enable men to dominate, oppress, and exploit women (Cain, Khanam, & Nahar 1979; Sangari 2002; Walby 1990). Past studies point out that women are constrained by their marital and familial role as unpaid domestic workers so that they cannot advance their economic and political power and need to be dependent on men, leading to the domination of men over women (Delphy 1984; Eisenstein 1979; Hartmann 1976; Millett 1970). Other scholars further argue that patriarchy does not only affect the family but also various social fields. Hartmann (1976) suggests that women are also oppressed in the public sphere by job segregation and they can only hold low paid jobs. This argument is supported by Bonvillain (2007) and Mies (1986) who elucidate that patriarchy cooperates with capitalism to strengthen domination and power of men. Walby (1990)

and Sangari (2002) further discover that patriarchy is dispersed over many aspects of social life. Walby (1990) identifies six aspects, namely household labour, paid work, state, male violence, sexuality, and cultural institutions. Among these various aspects, Sangari (2002) indicates that domination of men over women requires both coercion and wide consensus, including consent from women. All these studies point out the structural basis of patriarchy. But an analysis of the process of how individuals', especially men's ideology and practice contribute to patriarchy is lacking. Adopting the critical study on men approach, this study aims to fill this gap.

This study analyzes the process and practice of the hegemony of fatherhood, by investigating the subjectivity of fathers, and its construction variously by the state, social history, men's organizations, and individual's practices. The study also aims to explore how the dominant discourse produces men's domination over women, children, and other men in contemporary Hong Kong society. In analysing the hegemony of men, it is clear that the dominant and naturalized discourses of patriarchy function within the family. For instance, in the dominant discourse, the authority and power of men in the family comes from the income they bring home, making other family members dependent on them. This discourse, however, assumes that the family is diametrically opposed to work. In the capitalist system, men serve the function of production in the public sphere: bringing wages home to maintain

family needs; and in contrast women serve the reproductive function in the domestic sphere: taking care of children and husband to reproduce labour (Yanagisako & Collier 2004). This assumes that family life is isolated from the wider public sphere (Yanagisako & Collier 2004). Parenting and family life are indeed supported by labour within and outside the family. Ruddick (1997) criticizes that assuming provision as a function of fatherhood is just obscuring others' contribution through such activities as planting food, buying food, cooking, making clothes, and so on. Hegemony of men works by obscuring the contribution of others to justify the privileges and domination of the ruling gender class, and by ignoring and even eradicating the importance of women and children. In addition, the hegemony also subordinates men who do not live up to the hegemonic standard and do not carry out the hegemonic practices.

Thus in examining the hegemony of fathers, we need to investigate the relations between fatherhood and the family, and the consideration of the familial structure is noteworthy. While family is a universal concept, the wide range of manifestations both as a social institution and as everyday practice, shows that family is a social construction which can only be understood under specific historical and cultural contexts (Coltrane 1998). To investigate fatherhood in Hong Kong, it is important to situate it in the Chinese family structure. In the following section, I will analyze the

processes involved in the production and reproduction of patriarchal power in fatherhood in anthropology of Chinese family.

Chinese Family as a Cultural Ideal

Traditional Chinese family or *jia*[1]家 is considered to persist through time in which both the ancestors and the descendents work together for the good of this particular kinship unit (Ebrey 2003:22-23). The traditional Chinese family adopts the patrilineal kinship system which stresses the importance of male descent and the relationship traces through the male line (Baker 1979). Family is thus a male group whose existence is reproduced by bringing in brides. It includes the deceased members (patrilineal ancestors), living members of the household, and the not-yet-born (descendants) (Wolf 1972). This is based on and reinforced by Confucian ideology that stresses the importance of filial piety and obligations to the patrilineal ancestors, legitimating the family organized hierarchically such that older men have control and power over women and younger males (Ebrey 2003:23).

The importance of legitimate membership of a descent and the identity from a common ancestor is closely linked to the inheritance right. Lineage members share jointly-owned property and they are highly conscious of themselves as descendants of ancestors who are the founders of the lineage (Watson 1982). According to the

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[1] Romanization is used to indicate Chinese words based on the Putonghua (Mandarin) Pinyin system.

patrilineal logic, inheritance follows the male line. Men, but not women, are thus the legitimate owners of the family. Family is considered to have common assets to which only males have access (Ebrey 2003:23). Male descendents have equal shares of the family's property while female descendents inherit only some movable goods when they get married (Baker 1979).

Within this patrilineal kinship system, marriage is the way to bring in brides from another family for reproduction (Ebrey 2003:32). Thus, it is of the heterosexual nature. Marriage is recognized to be an alliance between two families through the union of a male and a female. For Han Chinese, after marriage the newlywed couple will adopt patrilocal or virilocal residence in which the wife moves to the husband's family. This is one of the "three obeying 三從"[2] of women in Confucian thought. Spousal relationship is patriarchal. The wife should focus on the interest of her husband's family. For instance, she should care for the heirs of her husband, no matter they are her own children or not (Hsu 1948). Husbands should have control over their wives. A man is considered to be a bad manager if he loses control over his wife and concubines who are attached to him (Ebrey 2003:14).

Marriage is for the family rather than the romance between the couple. Ebrey

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[2] "Three obeying" (*san cong* 三從) is a Confucian teaching to compel women to obey their fathers before marriage, to obey their husbands after marriage, and to obey their sons when they grow old. It was originated from the Confucian classic *li ji* 禮記 (Book of Rites).

(2003), citing Sima Guang 司馬光, a Neo-Confucian in Song Dynasty, points out

that marriage is for the family to perpetuate itself through the incorporation of new

members (ibid:32). In this family-oriented thinking, when a married man has no

children or has just very young ones, he should acquire concubines to get more

offspring for the family (ibid:32). On the contrary, remarriage of women is

considered to be harming their husbands' families in Song dynasty and after (ibid:32).

In imperial China, a wife could be divorced by his husband or his family with

reasons such as being talkative and infertility (Wong 2000). Spousal relation is

unequal in this social structure. Also, a woman has to bear sons to be qualified as an

ancestress of her husband's lineage (Baker 1979). To protect the interest of the

patrilineal family, women were subordinated and controlled.

Parenting in Chinese Culture

Fathers in the Chinese kinship system have a lot of power and control over their

sons and daughters as well as the family's property for which they are the chief

trustees (Baker 1979). Fathers get their authority from acting as the family heads and

financial managers, in charge of moral and economic affairs in the family (Cohen

1992). Over their life course, men are always accumulating new responsibilities and

rights (Watson 1986:627). Only if they are ill, incompetent, or choose to relax and

enjoy life, then they will pass the two roles to one of his sons (Cohen 1992). In

addition, fathers gain respect and power from the ideology of filial piety which requires descendants to respect and listen to senior members of the family (Baker 1979).

With power and control, fatherhood in the traditional Chinese culture is mainly about educating and punishing sons and daughters for the good of the family, as shown in the Chinese proverb "it is the father's fault if he just raises his children but does not educate them" (「養不教父之過」). A father can punish his sons by beating them for "drunkenness, laziness, gambling, disobedience, or almost any behaviour inimical to him, such behaviour by definition being unfilial" (Baker 1979:114-115). Men as the family heads are responsible for any misconducts and crimes committed by family members (Baker 1979). Fathers also have the power and rights to name their children, especially sons (Watson 1986:620). It implies that fathers are the "civilized" parents who in turn "socialize" the sons by giving them names for living in the public domain (Watson 1986:619).

The marriage, family, and fatherhood described above are the cultural ideal for Han Chinese as derived from Confucianism. Although individual father and family may differ from the structure in practice, in those structural-functionalist studies, the actual practices and subjective experience were not the focus and thus rarely documented.

For ethnic groups other than the Han Chinese, the concept and role of father can be quite different. The Moso, who adopt a matrilineal descent system, live in their natal family headed by a matriarch, with children staying with their mothers while living separately from their biological fathers (Shih 2000; Zhou 2001). Although the relationship between father and children is mostly known to everyone, the role of principal supporter is assumed not by the biological fathers but by other matrilineal relatives (Zhou 2001:108-110). Without the hegemony of men and fathers, gender relations in Moso are found to be equal and peaceful (Zhou 2001:70-102).

The Moso fatherhood is not only different from the Han Chinese one but also the Western one – biology has widely been the accepted reason for fathers to shoulder responsibility towards their children. Waller (2002) found that in the USA even among unmarried parents most of them thought that biological fathers were responsible for their children no matter whether children were born out of unplanned pregnancy or that the fathers were planning to start new relationships. These parents argued that fathers were responsible for the birth of children since they could actively stop that from happening (Waller 2002:51).

The contrasting concepts of fatherhood among the Moso and the Han illustrate that fatherhood is socially and culturally constructed. Schneider (2004) claims that kinship denotes social relations rather than biological ones. Kinship is not all the

same in the world as primary reproductive relationship created by heterosexual intercourse and pregnancy (Schneider 2004). For instance, the Nuers recognize marriage between people of the same sex (Yanagisako & Collier 2004). In addition, biologically only females can bear children. But this does not naturally lead to restricting women in the reproductive domain. Kinship is shaped by social, historical, and cultural factors in the organization of production and reproduction (Yanagisko & Collier 2004). Fatherhood and motherhood are two constructs that should be understood in their distinct socio-cultural contexts. I will discuss in the following section motherhood in the Chinese cultural context.

As mentioned above, women brought in from another patrilineal family through marriage are for continuing the descent line of their husbands' families. Biological maternity is considered natural and important. Confucian scholars believe that children are best living with their biological fathers and mothers (Ebrey 2003). Otherwise, social or familial problems can arise. Thus, biological mothers are the ones to care for and protect the interests of their children.

Despite the importance of biological mothers to children and the family, both Rubie Watson (1986) and Margery Wolf (1972) report that Chinese women are marginalized as they are economically dependent on their husbands. They are relegated to the domestic sphere and therefore experience prohibitions and

restrictions (Watson 1986). Rubie Watson (1986) claims that women exist only in relation to their husbands or children as wives and mothers and they are not considered as "full" persons as men are. Further, in her study on Taiwanese family, Wolf (1972) finds that daughters are considered formally as temporary members of their fathers' families, and they are expected to get married to help perpetuate other families so as to get economic security.

In spite of all these, women are not without their agency or influence. According to Wolf (1972), women do not identify with the patrilineal families very much. They form their "uterine family" in which the mother is the centre with her children rallying around her (ibid:33-35). This smaller, closer, more lasting unit is more meaningful to the mother than the formal patrilineal one (ibid:33,36). Margery Wolf (1972) finds that this uterine family centres around the interest of the mother in the larger patrilineal context of the family since mothers who raise their sons properly have influence over their sons' actions and decisions, even in those activities exclusive to men (ibid:40). Thus, sons bear religious value as well as economic and political security for their mothers (Salaff 1981). The future of the mothers is linked with their sons' future (Wolf 1972). So in protecting their sons' and their own interest, women paradoxically support the patriarchal structure. This explains why mothers, in this context, are the defenders and rules-enforcers for

patriarchal attitudes and values (Tam 1992).

Under the patriarchal social system, women and men join hands in maintaining gender inequality. Men in the traditional Chinese culture are granted recognition through descent and formal power to control properties. They are also culturally licensed to dominate over their wives and request others to contribute and sacrifice for the family which is dominated and owned by men themselves. With the male head's financial power and his authority over other family members, patriarchy in family is sustained. Women, who are economically dependent upon men, can only submit themselves to men or get their way through informal means, that is, by influencing men who are close to them. Yet in this way, women ironically help to reproduce the existing patriarchy.

Despite the contribution of women to the protection of male's interests, men are not required to repay them. Rather, patriarchy sets a hierarchy between genders and at the same time uses filial piety to differentiate among classes of men. Filial piety governs men within the Chinese family according to their roles as son and father (Kwan 2005). It is considered the starting point of realization of benevolence to others (Raiten 1989:9). Filial piety requires the father to provide his son with necessary materials and to educate and discipline him to be an upright man; it requires the son to obey, respect, and please his father because he owes his father

everything he gets from him, including his life (Hsu 1948). Filial duties include taking care of the physical needs of parents, bearing reverence and gratitude to them, glorifying the family through moral, academic, and political achievements, and mourning and ancestral remembrance (Raiten 1989:11-14). Continuing the patrilineal descent line (Hsu 1948; Raiten 1989) and managing the family business (Cohen 1992) are also important elements of filial piety. No matter in which position, they are required to do everything for the good of the patrilineal family whose interest centres on the male members. Since filial piety only stresses the requirement of doing everything good for the family and parents, a husband has no obligation to be good to his wife within the patriarchal family structure. He is only responsible for the patrilineal family. A husband only needs to provide his wife financially. In return, she is required to obey her husband and do everything good for him and his family, even if that contradicts her own will.

In contemporary Chinese society, the patrilineal family structure and filial piety continue to exist. In some family firms in Taiwan, Greenhalgh (1994) examines the patrilineal logic of cooperation of fathers and children in running the family business. Under the patriarchal ideology, male heirs enjoy higher status in the firm. Fathers are the entrepreneurs and heads of the firms; sons are employed as managers; and daughters are clerks or accountants (ibid:754). Fathers in this way are the providers

of the wages to children. Children work in the family firm not only because of the wage, since under the traditional Chinese ideology, children, especially sons owed their fathers their labour, loyalty and commitment in exchange for the benefits of family membership, including economic support, political protection, training, marriage, and a portion of family property at division of family (ibid:758). Fathers mainly used this waged labour as training to prepare their sons for taking over the business (ibid:762). For girls, the wages were considered to be the early investment on their dowry (ibid:761).

In investigating the Chinese family, due to the different schools of thought, anthropologists and other social researchers are mainly divided into two camps in looking at the issue, namely the structural functionalist approach which emphasizes the cultural ideal of the family and the relations within it (the structure), and the agency approach that looks at the actual practices of individuals inside the social structure.

Early anthropologists studying the Chinese family have focused on the structural aspect, like studying the prevalence of different family arrangements and the cultural ideals behind. For example, Hsu (1943) suggests the preference and higher status of joint family over nuclear family or stem family which in practice are more numerous; Fei (1946) distinguishes the different familial arrangements of

peasant and gentry classes; Freedman (1970) links family complexity with its wealth and economic circumstances; Myron Cohen (1992) sees the Chinese family as a structure bearing the functions of economics and resource management; Rubie Watson (1986) links men's acquisition of names in different life stages with their growing responsibilities and rights while women's nameless circumstances defined their lesser personed status; Chuang and Wolf (1995) analyzes the different patterns of marriage, including major, minor and uxorilocal practices in Taiwan from 1881 to 1905 with reference to the economic conditions of the families involved and population distributions of the two sexes. The structural aspect of the family was the academic spotlight of the structural functionalist period. The familial structure was thought to be designed to serve certain goals within the society. Established practices were described to be the determining factors in shaping people's minds, choices, and behaviours.

When anthropologists looked into the actual practice of women within the patriarchal Chinese family structure, they often discovered behaviours which were not in line with the ideological familial structure. Structurally, women leave their natal families as they marry, and their affiliation changes to their husbands' families. Yet in practice, quite a number of them remain close with their natal families after marriage. Margery Wolf (1972) in her classic study *Women and the Family in Rural*

Taiwan argues that structurally women are defined as irrelevant to their father's family because they do not have any formal position in it but in practice married women do not lose contact with their natal families. Their brothers even play an important ritual role throughout their lives (Wolf 1972). Ellen Judd (1989) also rejects the classical structural-functionalist model and finds that married women who are supposed to leave their fathers' families reside in their natal families sometimes. They even return to their natal families daily to help with their work (Judd 1989). Norma Diamond (1975) even notices that women who are able to stay in their natal village are more likely to be leaders in the community. This practice is definitely against the structural norm of having only men as public leaders. In addition, Margery Wolf (1972) finds that married women are not actually identified with their husbands' patrilineal families but form uterine families which include only them and their children. Wolf (1972) suggests that it is the way married women survive sentimentally and practically in a new family and community with no ties of childhood or ties of kinship for them to rely on.

As a result, some anthropologists studying Chinese society looked at people's actual practices and behavioural patterns in family. They stressed more on the personal and interpersonal factors contributed to different family circumstances. Margery Wolf (1972) discovers rivalry among brothers and the manipulation of their

wives can determine whether joint family is possible. Freedman (1970) points out that the ability of father to sustain his authority and control is also another factor that holds the family members together. Barbara Ward (1965) and Margery Wolf (1968), when they studied people in Hong Kong, also place their eyes on the reasons of the people staying in joint families.

Although these findings seem not to be supporting the thought that human beings are free in making decisions, they do point out that people are not just following the structure. It shows that structure is not stable and fixed. It interacts with people who do have some degree of agency. This interaction results in changes in the agents as well as the structure. As a result, agency and structure blend with each other. For instance, when explaining the presence of delayed-transfer marriage, which refers to the practice that wives refusing to live with their husbands or refusing to marriage at all in the Canton Delta in the early 20th century, Janice Stockard (1989) points out that economic ability together with the anti-marital bias among young women gave rise to the tolerated form of marriage. She concludes that the systems of delayed transfer marriage and sericulture together shaped the women's decisions which in turn affected the system (Stockard 1989).

The cultural ideology frames fatherhood in terms of what responsibility a father should bear, what right a father can exercise, how a father and other family members

should behave and interact. In actual practice, fatherhood involves the performance

of masculinity and the interplay of gender power and relations. The subjective

experience and interpretation of the subject of fatherhood, the father, also contribute

to the construction. As a result, it is important to contextualize fatherhood by looking

at the everyday practice and subjective thinking of fathers, and to examine

fatherhood from multiple socio-cultural dimensions. So how is fatherhood in the

contemporary Hong Kong society? In the following section, I will discuss some of

the local studies on fatherhood.

Fatherhood in Hong Kong

Research on fathers in Hong Kong are increasing in number in recent years,

examining different facets of the father, including fathers' sources of stress (Au

1989), paternal involvement of drug abuser fathers (Fong 2004), the learning needs

of first-time fathers (Yuen, W. 2005), the negative impact on children when fathers as

domestic violence perpetrators visit them (Yuen K. 2005), the negative influence on

children of father absence (Lo 1994), father-child conflict (Chan 2006; Tsang 1996),

the non-custodial divorced fathers (Kwan 2005), the parenting of the single father

(Wong 2004; Yue 1994), and father's involvement in childcare and homework

supervision (Lu & He 1996; Yip 1999). The majority of these studies come out of the

social work discipline, addressing some of the "problems" of fatherhood rather than

giving subjectivity to the father. Studies that investigate the subjectivity of the father are limited. Some exceptions are the dissertations of Ting-sam Chan, who analyzes fathers' narration of their fathering experience, Mei-ling Fan, who examines the paternal involvement of fathers with disabled children, and Chun-cheong Chan who studied the effect of divorce on single fathers.

Chan (2000) finds that quite some of the fathers were not enthusiastic in fatherhood before being fathers. After experiencing fatherhood themselves for some time, all of them had a growing sense of connectedness and enjoyed caring the children themselves. They thought that their children were their extension of life. None of them felt regretful of becoming fathers. Fan (2002) discovers that the interviewed fathers with disabled children were very committed to their family and children. Apart from economic provision, they also shared housework and childcare duties with their spouses actively, no matter how exhausted they were after work. Chan (1997) interviewed two single fathers taking care of children. He indicates that divorce damaged their self-esteem with the appearance of a lot of negative emotions and a threat to their masculine identity. Also they perceived being discriminated by others due to their divorce status. In assuming the new role, both single fathers indicated difficulties in handling their children's emotion and housework.

Despite the fact that the three dissertations are valuable pieces of study which

captures the voice of fathers in Hong Kong, Fan (2002)'s findings are limited to fathers with disabled children, whose status may explain their unexpected active involvement in childcare, Chan (1997)'s study is limited by its sample size, and Chan (2000) does not aim at revealing the cultural meaning and implications of fathering practices, not to mention revealing the gender power relations embedded in the ideology and practices of fatherhood. Past research studies on Chinese fatherhood focus on the Chinese family structure rather than the practices of individual fathers while the local studies on fathers' practices and subjective experiences lack the critical analysis of power from gender and feminist perspective.

The present study thus tries to fill this gap among the limited fathers' studies in the Chinese context of Hong Kong by investigating the ideology and practices from the narration of fathers, and at the same time critically examining the hegemony embedded. Using the approach of CSM, this study aims to expose the patriarchal privileges of men and the power sustained by the gender hegemony in the thinking and behaviours of fathers. This study also aims at resolving the interacting process of ideology and practice in sustaining patriarchy in fatherhood. Theories on resolving the debate of structure versus agency are employed as the theoretical framework.

Structure versus Agency

Structure refers to the contextual constraints that fall on individual social actors

in shaping their consciousness and behaviours. According to Musolf (2003), "structure refers to social arrangements, social relations, and social practices which exert enormous power and constraint over our lives" (p.6) and it exists before any individual social actors and will continue to exist after they have gone. In addition, structure is external to and out of any individual's control: "Structure is usually conceived as "external" and "objective" features of social order that are thought to have controlling power over culture and action" (Rubinstein 2001:3); "[s]tructure refers to the innumerable social facts over which the individual, qua individual, does not have much control and which he or she cannot escape" (Musolf 2003:6).

Although the focus of social science has been surrounding the external factors, some theorists have acknowledged human agency or free choice in making decisions of action. Parker (2000) points out that structures do not exist without human action – indeed they are products of historical processes. Musolf (2003) also thinks that "human beings have collectively constructed the structures of our world and that world is alterable by human agency" (2003:7). Agency refers to the ability that human beings can make sense of their environment and act according to their interpretation (Musolf 2003).

The emphasis on structure is more prevalent among social scientists. Structure is often the factor that social scientists look for in explaining some social phenomena.

For instance, structural functionalists who think that the existing social structure serves useful purposes for the society believe in determinism. The argument for the greater influence of social structure on human behaviours and values over individuals justifies "stratification as indefeasible" (Musolf 2003:9). Change does not seem to be necessary and possible.

However, arguing for complete agency is not totally convincing either. Human beings are not totally free in their actions. Snow (2001) suggests acknowledging the existence of both: on one hand human beings are not passive actors merely carrying out orders from the structure; on the other hand they are not totally free but choose their lines of action within the predispositions and structural constraints. "Human beings are producers as well as produced, shapers as well as shaped, influencing as well as influenced" (Musolf 2003:8).

Social scientists have been trying to excel the agency-structure dichotomy and formulate theories to understand how the two interact to produce and reproduce society itself. Bourdieu, for example, proposes the concepts of 'habitus', 'field', and 'capital' in mapping the connection and interaction between agency and structure. He thinks that social actors do not just confront their circumstances but they make up part of the social conditions themselves. A social actor occupies a certain position within the social space in which he or she acquires a social identity which helps them

survive in that particular social space but at the same time "renders them largely incapable of perceiving social reality, in all of its arbitrariness, as anything other than 'the way things are'" (Jenkins 2002:70). In the process, the social actors are themselves reproducing and reaffirming the social structure which trains them to be the ones they are at present time (Jenkins 2002). Jenkins (2002) argues that Bourdieu is indeed suggesting an embodiment of structure within agents which he calls habitus.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus can help explain how human recreates the social order in a taken-for-granted way that the social order has created them. Individual internalizes social rules, and then reproduces them by acting according to the rules, thus reflecting the institutional values in individuals: "[Habitus is] the site of the internalization of reality and the externalization of internality" (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977:205, quoted in Jenkins 2002:79). Structure is embodied by habitus in social actors who behave within the structural constraint, thus creating the endless cycle of control and reproduction of control between structure and agent, which Bourdieu describes as "the dialectical relationship between the objective structures and the cognitive and motivating structures which they produce and which tend to reproduce them" (Bourdieu 1977:83).

According to Jenkins (2002), Bourdieu's concept of habitus is a generative

scheme rooted in the body that "the idiosyncratic combines with the systematic"; it is something that exists in people's minds, as well as their practices and interactions with others and the environment (ibid:75). It affects people in every aspect including "ways of talking, ways of moving, ways of making things, or whatever" (ibid:75). Although habitus is so influential in people's lives, people are not aware of the way they are shaped in behaving and thinking. They just thoughtlessly carry out their established routine which makes them competent in the particular social space.

The principles em-bodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit...(Bourdieu 1977:87)

In this sense, Bourdieu indeed is suggesting that human beings do make decisions but they are making choices within the constraints of the structure embodied by habitus. Wacquant (1989), in explaining the relationship between agency and structure, points out that "individuals make choices...[but] they do not choose the principals of these choices" (Wacquant 1989:45). Jenkins (2002) adds that human beings are not the free agents as described by phenomenology or social interactionism. Decision-making is just an appearance to social actors and it is just an option part of or a reflection of the habitus if not an illusion at all (Wacquant 1989:43-44).

Habitus only operates in relation to a social field. The same habitus can produce very different practices depending upon what is going on in the field. "A field…is a structured system of social positions – occupied either by individuals or institutions – the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants" (Jenkins 2002:85). Field is the mediating context between external environment and individual practice (Jenkins 2002:86). While a field exists only when social actors brings in the corresponding dispositions and fills it with meaning, the social actors have to integrate the rules that constitute the field into their habitus.

In a field, power relation exists according to the capital or resources which are at stake (Jenkins 2002:85). Capital may take different forms, namely economic (material resources), social (valued relations), cultural (relevant knowledge), and symbolic (social prestige) (Jenkins 2002:85). The field controls the participants' belief in the legitimacy and value of the relevant capital in the field (Jenkins 2002:85). Within a field, social actors strive to preserve or improve their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field.

Habitus is not something fixed or stable. It is indeed the effect of history for that particular group or class. So for people within a certain field or class, they have similar habitus which constitutes their collective recognition of their identity. While '[h]abitus disposes actors to do certain things [as] it provides a basis for the

generation of practices' (Jenkins 2002:78), it has to be appropriate to the constraints,

demands and opportunities within a certain field (Bourdieu 1990:52-65; Bourdieu

1991:37-42, cited in Jenkins 2002:78). So habitus is 'objectively adjusted to the

particular conditions in which it is constituted' (Bourdieu 1977:54).

Another social theorist that tries to uncover the relation between structure and

agency is Anthony Giddens. He proposed the concept of structuration to solve the

interacting property between structure and agency. Structuration addresses the

dialectical relationship between structure and agency in which "the structural

properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they

recursively organize; the moment of the production of action is also one of

reproduction in the contexts of the day-to-day enactment of social life" (Giddens

1984:25-26). Giddens thinks that individual as social actors and social systems

(structure) are interdependent: they cannot exist without the other. Structure is

created by the activities of social actors (Giddens 1989:256) and it in turn provides

the framework that makes agents' activities possible (Giddens 1984). Giddens refers

to this interacting and reproducing property between agency and structure the duality

of structuration. Although social actors do not produce the structure themselves, they

are recreating practices and conditions through their activities that reinforce the

structure, providing the basis for their activities (Giddens 1984). In the structuration

process, actors do not recognize the consequences of their actions: their activity produces the conditions of action for their future activity and others' activities (Ritzer 2000). Thus, in a nutshell, for Giddens, structure is both the medium through which agents carry out their actions and the outcome reproduced by actors' practices. (Scott 1995).

In the process of structuration, most of the time the actors are not aware of the reasons for conducting certain actions in particular manners. Yet Giddens does not exclude the situation where rationalization of action is required and intentionality is aware to the social actor. Rationalization of action refers to the clarification of meaning of events when asked and challenged. Most of the time, the social actor monitors his or her action on the level of practical consciousness for accomplishing some practical and immediate goals. In the process, intentionality, which refers to the influence of actor's knowledge and/or belief of the consequences of certain practice on actor's action in order to achieve those outcomes (Cohen 1989; Giddens 1984), does not imply the absence of unintended or unexpected consequences. According to structuration theory, unintended outcomes provide an opportunity for change in the structure although reproduction of structure is also possible (Cohen 1989:55). From my field data, I would like to propose a concept which I name as "structural thinking". It adds to structuration theory in explaining how the reproduction of

structure is made possible by both intended and unintended consequences, and the motivation provided by the promised outcome of the structure. I will discuss this concept briefly here. Structural thinking refers to the adoption of established practices and norms as the legitimate justification for making decisions and guidelines for one's life with the expectation and belief that the promised consequences will follow if one is obedient to the structure. In this study, structural thinking explains both the intention and motivation for fathers to establish their fatherhood according to the cultural structure. Structural thinking not only controls fatherhood, but also provides the father with legitimacy and power to expect domination over and obedience from his wife and children. Intended outcomes reinforce the power of the structure; unintended consequences on one hand lead the father to blame other social actors for violating the norms and on the other hand provide the possibility of change in behavior. However, from my field data, this change in behavior does not imply change in thinking or structure. Fathers continue to stick to patriarchal thinking as they modify their action to achieve immediate goals. I will elaborate on the concept in Chapter VI and provide illustrations with my field data.

This study thus targets at revealing how fathers interpret and internalize the patriarchal structure from their socio-cultural environment and naturalize it into their

own practices which consequently reproduce the power relations in the family. I seek

to understand how fathers in Hong Kong actualize the cultural ideals of Chinese

familial masculinity in their agency within the context of the patriarchal society.

What do Hong Kong fathers think about and how do they practice their fatherhood?

Is their fatherhood patriarchal? Is it the same as the conventional fatherhood or

taking new form(s)? How do fathers think about the patriarchal fatherhood that they

were exposed to in the past? In analyzing fathers' practices, theories of

structure/agency are employed as the framework to analyze the hegemonic practices

of men, and how cultural structure interacts with the agency of fathers, and how

patriarchy exists in our present society.

Methodology

<u>Field site</u>

The first field site of the present study is the Love and Help Centre (LHC)[3]. It is

one of the first social service agencies in Hong Kong that targets male clients, as

well as to promote the "new good man" (新好男人) and "new good father" (新好爸

爸) notions. I found that this site provided an obvious context in which the

(re)formulation of manhood and fatherhood was practiced.

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[3] This is a pseudonym given to the men's centre which I joined in order to carry out participant observation. The adoption of the pseudonym is to protect the privacy of my informants as well as staff of the organization.

LHC was a non-government organization (NGO) established under a Christian-based organization in Hong Kong. It originated from two counselling groups for men who encountered extra-marital affairs, and which had expanded to become several family service units jointly providing a range of services to men. The goal of the Centre was to urge men to assume their family role as husbands and fathers, and to create an environment of mutual support for the participants. LHC emphasized that men need other men to share their worries and needs (especially emotional needs), and that men should be capable of facing challenges from both their career and family. LHC organized courses and workshops to teach men how to be good fathers, how to manage stress, how to fulfil emotional needs, and how to be close to their spouses. It also coordinated self-help groups for men. In addition, LHC organizes an Annual Celebration to promote the "new good man" notion. The Annual Celebration encouraged fathers to enjoy the growth of their children and to value the personal growth that they themselves experienced in fatherhood as breadwinners and educators. It also explored the direction and development of manhood and fatherhood in Hong Kong.

There were many men's self-help groups run by LHC. In my fieldwork, I identified two of them as my main sites of observation: one was a district-based

men's group, and the other one was the "Triumph Group[4]". The first group was situated within a family service centre in a district with many working class new-arrival[5] residents from the Mainland. The majority of the members were divorced men who were resident fathers taking care of their children. Most of them came from the working class. The "Triumph Group" was situated inside a family crisis unit that provided accommodation and counselling to clients encountering family problems. The family crisis unit provided a venue for the group to hold activities and sometimes referred their clients to join the group. The social background of the members of this group was more diverse, with divorced men who were resident fathers and non-resident fathers, some were professionals, and some were working class people.

In addition to the above two groups, my third site of participant observation was a group that championed men's rights. The founding members and social worker of this group came from LHC and had later invited outsiders to join them. This group did not aim at self-help or counselling. Its members had a similar thought towards men's situation in Hong Kong – that all men were disadvantaged. They tried to persuade the government to take care of men's needs in its policies, as well as

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[4] A pseudonym for the men's group under LHC.

[5] New-arrival people are defined as people come to live in Hong Kong for three years or less by the Census and Statistics Department.

lobbied legislative councillors to push the government to grant men paternity leave, to help unemployed men find jobs, to have more concern over men's health problems, and so on. Their rationale in fighting for men's rights was that women's movement had lifted women's status much higher than men's and thus men were suffering as a result.

Finally, through snowball referrals of my informants, I also invited other fathers who did not join any men's groups or self-help groups to provide information and act as interviewees.

Methods

The research was conducted in two parts: the first part was participant observation in the field site; the second part comprised of in-depth interviews with individual fathers. Participant observation in the field site let me to observe men in self-help group situations and to document the discourses among them about parenting, fatherhood, the various situations faced by men, and their practices in these situations. Through these observations I also saw how the groups persuaded and imposed different values on their members.

To understand the cultural and social ideas on fatherhood, in-depth interview carried out among a smaller number of informants is appropriate to discover the complexity of ideas, meanings, and behaviours that can account for the gender and

social construction of fatherhood in Hong Kong (see Bernard 2002; Daly 1993b). I

adopted the face-to-face semi-structured interview with a total of 30 fathers of

diverse backgrounds. Semi-structured interview can have the non-directive

advantage of unstructured interview which allows the informant to wander into areas

that are important to them (Daly 1993b), and at the same time can prevent the

passivity generated by highly structured interviewing (Cicourel 1967:58).

My informants, including the members of the above men's groups, and fathers

invited from snowball and convenience sampling, came from diverse backgrounds.

They were aged from 41 to 70, consisted of professionals (teacher, lawyer, company

consultant, accountant, social worker, and medical practitioner), business owners,

clerk, blue collar workers (driver, masseur, construction worker, and hospital

assistant), the unemployed and social security receivers, and retiree. Sixteen of them

were married, 5 were divorced non-resident fathers (who did not stay with their

children), 8 were divorced resident fathers (who stayed with their children), and one

was a widower father. To protect the privacy of my informants, I have assigned

pseudonyms to them. In some cases, I have assigned two or more pseudonyms to the

same person to further avoid them being recognized in their narrations. Below is a

table summarizing the details of my major informants.

Table 1 Summary of Major Informants

No.	Age	Marital Status	Children	Occupation
1	Early 30s	Married	1-month old son	Driver
2	50	Married	Two daughters aged 21 and 18	Home-maker
3	Early 40s	Married	A daughter aged 9	Owner of a business
4	44	Married	Three daughters aged 25, 19, and 13 and a son aged 8	Construction company supervisor
5	Mid-40	Divorced non-resident	Two sons aged 21 and 18.	Construction worker
6	Mid-50	Married	A son aged 17 and a daughter aged 11	Construction worker
7	Over 70	Married	A son aged 50 and a daughter in her 40s	Owner of a business
8	Mid-50	Married	Two daughters aged 23 and 20, and a son aged 17.	Company consultant
9	Late 40s	Divorced resident	A daughter aged 24 and a son aged 20	Driver
10	48	Married	Two sons aged 13 and 11	Lawyer

No.	Age	Marital Status	Children	Occupation
11	41	Divorced resident	Two sons aged 12 and 8	Unemployed
12	43	Divorced resident	A daughter aged 14 and a son aged 11	Driver
13	Early 50s	Widower	Two daughters aged 27 and 24, and a son aged 11	Driver
14	53	Married	A daughter aged 14	Accountant
15	Early 50s	Divorced resident	A son aged 10 and a daughter aged 8	Masseur
16	38	Divorced resident	A daughter aged 15 and a son aged 10	Driver
17	48	Married	A son aged 16 and a daughter aged 8	Social worker
18	43	Divorced (remarried) non-resident	A daughter aged 11	Translator
19	49	Married	Two daughters aged 22 and 19	Owner of a business
20	49	Married	A son aged 22	Chinese medicine practitioner
21	Late 50s	Married	Two daughters aged late 20s and a son aged 19	Teacher

No.	Age	Marital Status	Children	Occupation
22	52	Divorced resident	A daughter aged 18 and a son aged 11	Teacher
23	56	Divorced resident	Two daughters aged 11 and 9	Clerk
24	Early 40s	Married	Two daughters aged 9 and 5	Teacher
25	46	Married	A daughter aged 19 and a son aged 14	Hospital worker
26	43	Married	A daughter aged 10 and a son aged 8	Communications professional
27	48	Divorced resident	Two sons aged 18 and 14	Owner of a business
28	Mid-70s	Divorced (remarried) non-resident	Two sons aged early 40s and mid-30s	Retiree
29	Late 40s	Divorced non-resident	A daughter aged 20	Owner of a business
30	Mid-50s	Divorced resident	A daughter aged 24	Driver

Interview questions surrounded three aspects of fatherhood: identity,

responsibility, and practice. Fathers were asked their perception of being fathers,

their parenting duties in the family, their actual practices of these duties, and the

parenting work shared by mothers and/or other family members. Spousal and

parent-child relationships were also explored in the interviews.

Limitations of the Present Study

Fatherhood in this study is taken to be established through both the biological bond with the child and the heterosexual monogamous marital relation with the mother. Although divorced, remarried, and widower fathers were involved, the lives and experiences of gay fathers, step-fathers, foster fathers, teen fathers, unmarried fathers, and transsexual/transgender fathers were unfortunately not included in this study, which may possibly yield some different perspectives in looking at gender, masculinity, and family. As participant observation was conducted in the men's centre which targeted at helping men with marital problems, and a large part of my informants came from the centre, their views on marriage and fatherhood may not represent the majority of fathers who did not join the men's centre. Also, only Cantonese-speaking fathers have been interviewed. While they are the mainstream, it would have added much to the understanding of diversity in fatherhood had I met with new immigrant fathers (from the mainland) and fathers of different ethnicities (e.g. South East Asian) during my fieldwork. Furthermore, spouses and children of the fathers interviewed could seldom be reached for further clarification or interview, as interviewees were generally reluctant to introduce the mother and children for interviews, especially among the divorced or separated fathers.

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation looks at fatherhood first against the social, economic, and cultural backgrounds of Hong Kong society, then from the organizational level of LHC, and finally from individual men's narratives on their fatherhoods. Chapter II deals with the history of development of masculinities and fatherhoods in the context of changing Hong Kong society; and examines the influence from women's movement and the subsequent men's movement on masculinities and men's life in the city. Chapter III concerns the discourse of "new good men" and "new good father" proposed by LHC and its gender politics that aim to promote the above notions by its media campaign, public activities, and group dynamics. Chapter IV tries to figure out how fathers interviewed in this study created a discourse to legitimize their "given" opportunity for economic and career pursuit and the power they obtained as a result. Some fathers considered themselves failures in this paternal "duty" and tried to compensate in other ways. Chapter V covers issues in the education of children, which includes both formal academic training (schooling) and fathers' teaching on manners, values, and skills, interpreted by fathers as training of their children for the public sphere, and as inheritance of their abilities and strengths by their children, and as a form of protection. Chapter VI accounts for the importance of marriage which is the basis of family and the stage of fatherhood.

Chapter VII is the conclusion, which summarizes the findings of the present study

and discusses the manifestations of hegemony of men in fatherhood and its process

through ideology and practice.

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Chapter II

Masculinity and Fatherhood in Hong Kong

"That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important

of all the lessons that history has to teach."

- (Huxley 1959:308)

The construction of fatherhood as a manifestation of masculinity is inseparable

from the gender milieu of the larger society. Hong Kong has long been a patriarchal

society with men situated in a hegemonic position (Cheung 1997; Cheung, Lai, Au,

& Ngai 1997; Tam, Fung, Kam, & Liong 2009; Westwood 1997). Men have

dominated the public sphere and also constituted the authority within the family

(Choi & Ting 2009). As gender awareness started to flourish and as social and

economic changes required the public labour of women, women's overall status has

risen (Mak 2009; Wong & Lee 2009; Zhang 1995). Gender equality is now on the

mainstream political agenda. Yet the shadow of patriarchy still looms over the

society. In Hong Kong, the men's movement that started to appear in the 1990s was a

response to the feminist movement. Rather than promoting gender equality, it is a

backlash against the fight for women's rights; it has not detached itself from

patriarchy. Even the government adopts a gender-insensitive if not male-dominant

approach in handling social problems, despite its formal commitment to the

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

(CEDAW).

Patriarchy is the common language of different ideologies in Hong Kong. Patriarchy has persisted in society as it previously gained support from the government in the colonial period, and it has continued to be the guiding principle of the Special Administrative Region (SAR) government in the postcolonial era. In this chapter, I argue that patriarchy has been and continues to be the dominant ideology and basis of gender relations in mainstream Hong Kong society. The effort which has been put into fighting against patriarchy is still very much marginalized. With the traditional patriarchal claims and values brought about by Confucianism and Christianity, both supported by the colonial rulers, we witness a process of deepening of patriarchal thinking. When paired up, divine and traditional justifications prove to be a strong force which has created a difficult situation for feminism. Growing up in this patriarchal environment, Hong Kong residents in the 21st century continue to uphold and reproduce stereotypical views on gender. Men and fathers are no exception. I will trace in the following sections how mainstream masculinity and fatherhood in Hong Kong was fundamentally patriarchal and how it developed in the spheres of economics, politics, and the family.

Early Colonial Period: Patriarchy Supported by Confucianism, Colonialism,

and Christianity

Before British colonization in 1842, Hong Kong was a village in Xin'an County,

Guangdong Province. At that time, Hong Kong was dominated by large-scale

single-lineage villages (Baker 1968; Hayes 1977). Village organization was based on

patrilineal descent, resembling other villages in South China. Men were heads of

families as well as leaders of lineages with decision-making power (Cheung 2006;

Freedman 1970; Hsu 1948). During the colonial rule, patriarchal ideology and

practice continued and was even strengthened. In the following section, I will

explain how hegemony of men was consolidated in the political, economic, and

cultural arenas.

The British colonial government took on the patriarchal tradition of Hong Kong

and continued to reinforce it through their policies. Hong Kong, to the British, was a

place for them to make money rather than a political arena. Under the rule of the

Qing dynasty, village elders in Hong Kong were in practice under the rule of the

Xin'an County government, as long as their villages paid tax and did not commit

crimes (Hayes 2003). After the Nanjing Treaty ceded Hong Kong to the British in the

mid-19th Century, the British continued to recognize the authority of these village

leaders who supported the British regime (Ting 2003). At the beginning, rights were

granted to them to settle disputes and assist police constables in fighting crimes within their ruling areas (Cai 2001; Ting 2003). Nonetheless, due to strong opposition from the European community which opposed to giving power to the local Chinese, these village leaders were removed from the formal authority since the 1860s (Ting 2003). Still, these indigenous men enjoyed the authority and high status in their de facto ruling of their villages with their patriarchal traditions. These men's authority, power and political interest were not much reduced but were recognized by the colonial governance. For instance, until 1994, the colonial government allowed the local patriarchs to restrict their village elections to men only (Cheung 2006). The local Chinese patriarchs were thus willing to cooperate with the colonial government.

In addition to winning those indigenous villagers' obedience, the colonial government invited some rich merchants, landowners, and professionals to be its advisors on local administration (Smith 1995). These positions were not actually holding any administrative power but these elite men accepted those titles with the aim of advancing their social status and their own business (Cai 2001). Although they did not represent the local people, their role as society's leaders was not challenged by the silent majority (Smith 1995). Rather, common people recognized the social authority of these elite men by seeking help from them when they were in

dispute or were in trouble with the colonial policy and law.

Apart from political benefits, the British helped produce and maintain

hegemony of men in the economic sphere. After the British occupied Hong Kong,

the Qing government banned its people to trade with the English. Yet economic

motive triumphed over political order. Some Chinese men ignored the Qing's orders

and came to Hong Kong to trade (Smith 1995). They were rewarded by the colonial

government with land in Hong Kong, making a quick fortune; some of them returned

to their hometown in Mainland China, while others became rich landlords in Hong

Kong (Smith 1995).

Women who were economically dependent on men had to be under the control

of a male-centred system since birth. Smith (1995), for example, shows how, in

19th-century Hong Kong, rich men were more concerned with their daughters'

marriage rather than their personal qualities and abilities. The focus was getting their

daughters married and be given sufficient dowries. Wives and concubines got a share

of the estate if they remained chaste. Women were objects to be provided with

enough food and expenses. They were not expected to have any achievement and

thus not given the resources to acquire achievement. The control from the patriarch

was to make sure that they did not ruin the family's harmony and economic interest.

Colonial governance reinforced male dominance in both the economic and

political arenas with the cooperation of elite men who earned their fortunes in the

protected and free trading environment of Hong Kong society. These rich men were

not willing to lose their economic benefits by offending the British. So they

cooperated with the British to advance both their economic and political status.

Among the common people, men also dominated the economic and political

space. In that colonial period of time, the large majority of the Chinese population in

Hong Kong were men emigrating from Mainland China to work as coolies,

carpenters, servants, hawkers, and so on (Cai 2001; Wong 1974; Xian 1997). At the

beginning, they formed their own groups according to their ethnicities to fight for

better working opportunities (Cai 2001). Later on, they cooperated to form some

larger neighbourhood or religious organizations to better protect their interests under

the colonial rule (Cai 2001).

Economy was the guiding principle in manhood. Men should be responsible to

their family by acting as breadwinners even though they had to withstand hardship.

So a lot of men left their children and wives to earn a living or strive for their

financial success. Around the year 1898, before and after the British takeover of the

New Territories, many men moved out of the villages and worked in the urban area

as cooks and waiters, or as seamen on ocean-going ships, or just went to other

countries to pursue a living (Hayes 1976). Common women in Hong Kong had little

access to resources and they had to live with what the men had left to them. As women were bounded by the traditional values and inadequate education, they were restricted to the village where they were left to maintain the household. Some escaped from the "assigned duties" by choosing to be spinsters, by running away from the villages, or even by committing suicide (Hayes 1976). Some women asked Buddha to help them reincarnate as men in their next lives (Hayes 1976). Women were denied of their individuality; they were to serve and conform to the patriarchal system which formed the basis of their own selling and trafficking.

Culturally, in the early colonial rule, the British national religion, Christianity, was influential in both reducing and strengthening patriarchy in Hong Kong society. The privileged position of Christianity provided economic, social, and cultural capital to the converted Chinese men. The religion led its Chinese followers to abandon some of their patriarchal customs but it also brought about patriarchy in other aspects. It gradually penetrated the society in this early colonial period, and in later periods blended with Confucianism and capitalism to strengthen patriarchy in the city.

Christianity was spread in the colony first through the work of some missionaries who set up churches, schools, and clinics for the locals and at the same time disseminated Bible teachings to them (Shi 1999). Through setting up schools in

Hong Kong, the missionaries successfully created a group of English-educated young Christians. They aimed to train Chinese personnel who could bring the Western ideas, especially Christian belief, to the Chinese community (Brown 1993; Shi 1999).

Western education was constructed to be culturally superior by associating it with upper class status. Take the first Christian school, Morrison School as an example. Compared with the congested living environment of the Chinese home, students of the Morrison school could enjoy privacy and quietness which were only enjoyed by the rich (Smith 1985; Brown 1993). Facilities and service provided to the Chinese students were unthinkable in the social context of the 19th-century Hong Kong. Students had their own rooms in the dormitory; libraries, study rooms, recreation centres, and counselling service were provided to them (Brown 1993). During their study, boys were treated by the principal as part of his family and some even gained the opportunity to meet British or Western people in the government, military, and business circles in social gatherings (Smith 1985). These gatherings provided them the opportunity to observe and practice British social skills and etiquette (Smith 1985). Western culture and practice, associated with its upper class status, was perceived to be superior to the Chinese ways of living. The training of European social skills, in addition to the knowledge of the Western perspective,

paved the way for these young men to soar in the Western-dominated world. In view

of the bright prospect of their children, the originally sceptical parents gradually

formed the perception that Western culture or at least the knowledge of English

language was favourable in terms of career prospect and monetary reward (Smith

1985). Christian values, which accompanied the superiority of Western culture and

knowledge, became rooted in those young boys' minds. They started to criticize or

demean Chinese culture (Smith 1985). China's inferiority was thus rooted in the

minds of these male students who later gained dominance and recognition in the

public sphere.

Apart from privileges in education and class mobility, political advantage was

also granted to Chinese Christians. Under British rule, Christians, who mostly shared

the mentality of the colonizers, were awarded a higher status in the society. They

were awarded medals for their contribution to the colonial rule (Shi 1999). They

gained more economic and political opportunities in the society. They were even

considered by the colonizers to be loyal citizens who would continually support their

ruling of the city (Shi 1999).

With the increasing social recognition of Christian schools in the colony

(Brown 1993), the colonial rulers expanded the influence of Christianity by

providing subsidy to Chinese schools in Hong Kong so as to appoint Christians to

the schools' supervisory committee (Shi 1999). As a result, the educational system created a group of students who supported Christian values, or at least accepted the teachings and standpoints of the Christian Church. In this way, both the colonial government and the Christian Church benefited from having more local people who recognized the colonial rule. On one hand, they could facilitate the colonial rule in the Chinese community as those local leaders acted as a bridge between the colonizers and the colonized; on the other hand, Christianity could be perpetuated and could gain more political influence. Chinese men who were trained in Christian education later played important roles in Hong Kong and Mainland China (Smith 1985).

Christianity did change some of the patriarchal practices of Hong Kong society at that time. As a monotheist religion which only recognized monogamy, Christianity opposed the worship of ancestors and practice of concubinage. Despite being condemned as unfilial, many early Chinese Christians rejected to worship their ancestors or to take in concubines even though they did not have any heirs (Shi 1999). However, some Chinese Christian men did not give up the patriarchal benefits they had been enjoying under the Chinese customs, and took in concubines after they earned their fortune. They considered this a kind of class status, a way to show the prosperity of their family (Shi 1999).

Nevertheless, Christianity had its own patriarchal practices and these were continued in the colony. As mentioned above, the Christian schools only admitted male students in the early days, resulting in the situation that men continued to excel in the public sphere. Although the Chinese Christians turned their focus of worship away from their ancestors to the Heavenly Father, the concept of male blood line of the family still dominated their thinking. Rich Chinese Christians still passed their properties to their sons or male relatives only (Smith 1995).

Compared to Christianity, Confucian values were more prevalent in Hong Kong society at that period of time. Male descents were considered the only legitimate heirs of family's properties (Shiga 1978; Watson 1991). The estates of these rich men were handed down to their eldest son according to customary practice (Smith 1995). Confucian values of obedience and harmony were stressed in the wills of rich men, such that children, wives, and concubines were required to follow the unequal arrangement. As sons were considered more important to the family than daughters, rich men only concerned with their sons' personal qualities, asking them to acquire stereotypical masculine qualities like integrity, uprightness, and courtesy in their wills (Smith 1995). Some rich men even described themselves in their wills as capable masculine figures dedicating to the family and requested their male heirs to follow their examples (Smith 1995). The patriarchal family structure not only

granted men legitimate authority, but also instructed them to see it as their life goal.

Fathers worked hard for their sons who in turn did the same for their sons. Thus,

family was an institution that housed the interests of its male members only.

In this period, the British colonizers preserved and even adopted the patriarchal

Chinese ideology and practices to facilitate their governance. Although Christian

leaders did try to persuade its Chinese followers to abolish some of the oppressive

measures against women, the hegemony of men was in general maintained. With

Confucian values still in place, women and men possessed unequal power in society.

Pre-World War II: Patriarchal Cooperation between Local Elites and Colonial

Rulers

In the twentieth century, Hong Kong started to become a place of settlement for

emigrants from Mainland China. Around 1911 when the Qing Dynasty was

overthrown, the political situation on the Mainland worsened, pushing a lot of

refugees to move to Hong Kong. This time the immigrants brought along their

family members, thus making the male-to-female ratio of Hong Kong population

less unbalanced (1000:727.63) (Xian 1997). These immigrants included both

investors as well as labourers who subsequently contributed to the manufacturing

industries and trading in Hong Kong (Xian 1997). The situation of these migrants

was different from their predecessors. They started to live in Hong Kong as a

family — as husbands, wives and children, although they might still consider Hong

Kong as only a temporary settling place. They formed the first generation of the

"settled stem family" (Wong 1974).

In this period, the colonial government continued to act as the agent of

patriarchy as shown in its policy. Factories had started to increase in number since

the early 1900s and reached the peak in 1930s, recruiting a quarter of the working

population in the colony (Ngo 2003). Instead of supporting the growing

manufacturing industry, the colonial government began to regulate employment in

the industry by passing factory legislations which prohibited child labour, regulated

factory safety and employment of women and young persons, restricting the

industry's development (Ngo 2003). This not only limited the development of the

manufacturing industry but also hampered women's participation in labour market,

reinforcing men as the sole breadwinners in lower-class families.

Although they were strong in economic power, the newly arrived Chinese

manufacturers, unlike their predecessors, did not gain much political status in the

colony. They did not form a strong political voice in lobbying for government

support but only depended on their own network and resources to survive (Ngo

2003). Although they might have contributed significantly to the economy, they

could not enjoy the corresponding political power. However, they did not intend to

gain political status but only economic benefits since many of them, though settled

in Hong Kong, considered the city not as their permanent residence. They expected

to return to Mainland China when peace resumed.

Women continued to occupy a peripheral position in society as in the early

colonial period. Females did not have equal opportunity to receive education,

particularly for those living in the villages in the New Territories. In 1911, in the

southern district of the New Territories, only 231 females could read and write, and

7760 were illiterate; in the northern district, 235 females could read and write, while

25,664 were illiterate (Hayes 1976). After World War II when school was more

popular but still not free, poor parents especially in the rural areas preferred to send

only their sons to schools (Hayes 1976).

Women who were wives or daughters were considered the properties of their

husbands and fathers. At that time, women trafficking was a lucrative business in

Hong Kong. Many women and young girls were kidnapped and sold to foreign

countries as prostitutes. The Chinese community became conscious of women

trafficking not because of the awareness and protection of women's human rights,

but because of the notion that women and girls were men's property and female

trafficking was considered as infringement of their property rights (Sinn 1994). This

argument gained evidence in the strong opposition from the Chinese community

when the colonial government responded to the trafficking problem by outlawing

trading of human beings in 1875 (Sinn 1994).

Legislation against human trafficking in the colony was again not an action for

protecting women but out of political pressure from the British homeland. In fact the

colonizers did not preserve Chinese traditions as they claimed, but instead created

new features of Chinese tradition during their rule (Cheung 2006). At that time,

Chinese men, as heads of household, had the power to sell their wives and children

(particularly daughters), especially when economically deprived. Rich families

benefited from the labour of the bought daughters (*mui tsai* 妹仔, as explained

below), or gained members through adopting them. Under the pressure from the

Chinese community, the Attorney-General in most cases did not prosecute anyone if

the child appeared to be fairly treated and the defendant had gained the parent's

consent (Sinn 1994). The law did not protect women — instead it hindered their

freedom. When some women left their husbands with their lovers, the husbands

would claim to the police that their wives were kidnapped and hoped that the police

could find and return their wives to them and prosecute the "kidnappers" (Sinn 1994).

The law, therefore, reinforced the ideology and practice of treating women as the

property of men in the family.

Mui tsai is an obvious example of subordination of women within the family in

that period of Hong Kong. Mui tsai, literally meaning "little sister", were young girls from poor families sold by their parents to the wealthy homes intended to perform household tasks. They were not regarded as a part of the family and appeared to be without parents or siblings (Watson 1991). Although they were supposed to be provided basic necessities by the master's family, they could not enjoy personal freedom (Watson 1991). They could only hope for emancipation when their master family married them out. Yet in reality, those who were found attractive would be taken by the household head as concubines (Smith 1995). Many cases reported maltreatment of these young girls by the master's family. Girls sold as mui tsai could be sold again and again (Jaschok 1988), some as concubines and some as prostitutes against their will (Sinn 1994).

As early as the 1920s, at the same time when labourers in Hong Kong began to fight for their rights, women's rights were also put on the political agenda (Smith 1995; Wong 2000). The first organized movement for gender equality in Hong Kong was the urge for abolition of mui tsai system. Patriarchy, in face of the opposition to its manifestation, showed tenacious resistance. Men who held strong political and economic power, like the wealthy merchants of the Chamber of Commerce, Chinese unofficial members in the legislature, compradors of large banks and companies, local community leaders, and the District Watch Committee, came out to support

women trafficking with reasons like: the system benefited the girls, their parents, and the wealthy; Chinese customary practices should not be challenged by foreign women (Smith 1995; Wong 2000). The supporting side even brought forth the pseudo-gender-equality argument that mui tsai were like male coolies who worked for a living — but male coolies were not sold against their own will and they seldom experienced sexual violence. These wealthy merchants even threatened the colonial government that they would retreat their investment from Hong Kong if the mui tsai system was abolished (Sinn 1994).

The argument over the mui tsai issue revealed that Chinese patriarchy was rampant in Hong Kong society at that time (Sinn 1994). Family, rather than individuality, was upheld. The patriarch was culturally legitimate to represent the family and to possess absolute power over his children, wives, and concubines, which means he could sell them away like properties (Sinn 1994). Often the selling of children happened in extreme economic difficulties--daughters were sold first, often as concubines or mui tsai, to upper class families (Wong 2000). In extreme desperate conditions, sons were sold too, but as adopted sons, not slaves (Wong 2000). This human trafficking practice of mui tsai, with a large majority of the victims being female, was justified in the patriarchal society as a charity to the poor (Watson 1991). Thus, significantly, Po Leung Kuk, which was a charitable

organization set up by rich Chinese merchants to rescue abducted Chinese women, did not opt to put an end to the mui tsai system and concubinage (Sinn 1994).

Although Britain had banned human trafficking in the early 20th century, its officials despatched to the colony were reluctant to change the Chinese custom. Economically, the colonizer was not willing to bear the cost for housing and providing employment for mui tsai after abolition of the practice (Watson 1991; Wong 2000). Politically, labourers in the colony conducted large-scale strike twice in the 1920s, challenging the stability of the colonial governance and the economic interest of the colonizers and local elites (Wong 2000). The colonial government did not want to further empower the labourers by passing an ordinance abolishing mui tsai (Wong 2000). Thus, in face of the strong opposition from the local community leaders, the governor and other government officials then surrendered and turned to support the powerful local men (Sinn 1994).

Groups supporting the abolition of the system, led by Chinese Christians, Chinese professional men, and expatriate women, pointed out that the rich were indeed exploiting the poor and practicing slavery with the system in which they could get labour in very cheap price (Shi 1999; Wong 2000). Finally, in the 1920, the recruitment of new mui tsai was outlawed, and the colonial government started to restore the existing mui tsai to their parents (Poon 2004). However, the practice of

mui tsai only disappeared after World War II in the urban area and in the 1950s in the

villages in the New Territories (Sinn 1994). Hong Kong society did not seem to

suffer economically from any retreat of merchants. Rather, it experienced an

economic boom from industrialization in the post-war era.

Chinese Christians in the colony thus showed themselves as a progressive and

revolutionary force. They introduced Western medicine and education; and they

urged for equality between women and men. Rich Chinese Christians started to let

their daughters inherit their properties (Shi 1999). Chinese female Christians were

encouraged to have education and could establish their career as preachers, teachers,

nurses, and doctors (Shi 1999). But this seemingly gender-equal appearance among

Chinese Christians did not mean that they had totally abandoned patriarchal ideology

and practice. Teachings of the conventional Christianity showed male-centred and

patriarchal perspectives (Bonvillain 2007; Daly 1975). Also, as discussed in the

section above, the majority of the educated Christians were men, who dominated the

public sphere and the family. In the later period of the colonial rule and in

contemporary Hong Kong, Christianity cooperated with Chinese patriarchy and

became a conservative force in influencing government policy especially in marriage,

family, and sexuality issues.

Following the first wave women's movement in Europe, the urge for gender

equality started to appear in Hong Kong society in this era, with the effort of expatriate women and Western-educated local Chinese. Patriarchy, however, still dominated society as both the colonial rulers and rich Chinese families had vested interests in keeping alive patriarchal ideology and practice.

Post-World War II: Reproducing and Challenging Male Dominance

After World War II, the civil war in Mainland China drove a lot of Chinese migrants to Hong Kong. The population of Hong Kong rose from about 600,000 to more than 2 million (Zheng 1997). Until 1966, only 30% of the workers between 15 and 65 years old were locally born (England 1971). The male migrants, as heads of households, brought their spouses and children from Mainland China to Hong Kong (Hopkins 1971). These men were mostly of working class background, working as hawkers and cooks, and running small family stalls or shops (Hopkins 1971).

Before the 1960s, the colonial government only focused on providing basic services for the refugees, and left other societal needs including education, to charitable organizations of which Christian organizations constituted an important part (Brown 1993; Kwong 1999). Christian groups were keen in providing social services to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing population, and thus established their influence among the populace.

Since 1965, the colonial government began to take up more responsibility in

social welfare such as providing basic housing for the migrants. The ideal of the patrilineal extended family continued to exist in these housing estates. While the government designed the estates with the nuclear family in mind, occupiers considered it normal to live with their extended family and relatives due to the traditional ideal of having several generations living under the same roof. Often elderly parents from Mainland China as well as wives and babies brought in by sons were added to the already small and crowded rooms (Hopkins 1971).

Patriarchal familial arrangements continued to flourish in those new housing arrangement. As a result, often only sons, but not daughters who would "marry out", succeeded fathers' right as tenants and as heads of households (Hopkins 1971). The elderly invited to the rooms had to be taken care of by family members other than the men who assumed the sole breadwinners' role within the family (Hopkins 1971). The duty then fell on the wives' shoulders.

Lineages in rural Hong Kong also continued to preserve the patriarchal structure and customs. Worship of (male) ancestors was taken as one of the most important rituals in the patrilineal lineages. Patrilineality was thus consolidated through the cooperation of men on both the practical level (preparation for ritual sacrifices and earning for ritual expenses) and the spiritual level (ancestors' worship) (Hayes 2003). Men were considered socialized individuals who could grow and

accumulate new responsibilities and rights. Women, although they provided labour

essential to their husbands' families, were economically dependent on their husbands

(Watson 1986). They were considered outsiders and would not be incorporated into

their husbands' lineage, and enjoyed no inheritance rights or right to participate in

lineage rituals (Watson 1981). Lineage elders who had the power to make decisions

on matters of security and conduct of lineage members, were all male. They also

oversaw familial matters, like adoption of children, division of family property, and

taking in husbands for widows; when disputes arose in the lineage or family, they

were the ones to mediate (Hayes 2003).

Hong Kong's economy soared with the industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s,

manifesting and reproducing patriarchy. The economic upturn allowed people to

improve their living standard by working hard, strengthening the discourse that

emphasized the importance of earning money (Lee 1981). For example, although

factory workers needed to work long hours with low wages and also lacked job

security, their breadwinner role made the male workers reluctant to express their

discontent directly and publicly through social movement (England 1971).

Masculinity was not associated with political rights but only with economic gains.

Patriarchy was reinforced with obedience in the workplace. These male

factory-owners considered themselves to be the ones who provided the workers with

money and so workers belonged to them (England 1971). They treated their workers

like fathers to children. Young female workers were hired in increasing numbers as

they were considered more obedient. Patriarchy, which emphasized hierarchy and

control, was justified by capitalism, subordinating not only women but also men of

the lower class. It did not privilege men equally.

Concubinage was tolerated in colonial Hong Kong until 1971, coexisting with

monogamous marriage under the Marriage Ordinance. With the urge from women in

Hong Kong to abolish concubinage since the 1930s, the colonial government

initiated the review process in 1948 (Wong 2000). Similar to the issue of mui tsai

system, many powerful and wealthy Chinese men opposed to the abolition. They

emphasized that concubinage was a Chinese tradition, which helped to maintain filial

piety by expanding the patriline, plus the family structure would be in danger if

concubinage was abolished (Wong 2000). Some women's groups, including YWCA,

Hong Kong Council of Women, the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club, and the

Hong Kong Association of University Women, cooperated and launched a petition

campaign against concubinage (Wong 2000:155). The Protestant Church in Hong

Kong, upholding monogamy in its belief, stood with the women's groups (Shi 1999;

Wong 2000). They argued that concubinage was an "uncivilized" custom already

abandoned in China, caused injustice to the principal wives, and harmed the

concubines, and the families involved as it was a form of slavery (Wong 2000:159-160). Although the colonial rulers mainly invited limited numbers of powerful and wealthy Chinese men into their governing circle, their opinions were magnified. As a result, even though the abolition finally succeeded when the practices became less popular and unjustifiable with the stronger urge for equality between women and men in both local and international contexts, the process of abolition was lengthy and Hong Kong was the last society to do so among its Asian neighbours (Wong 2000). The cooperation of the colonial rulers and local patriarchs to maintain male privilege and hegemony was again demonstrated.

1980s Onwards: Diverse Scenarios

Women's Status on the Rise

Equality between women and men gained increasing acceptance in Hong Kong society after the victory over the abolition of polygamy. Economic development also helped to improve women's status. Female labour participation increased steadily from 42.8% in 1971 to 49.5% in 1981. The employment rate for women aged between 25 and 54 increased sharply from 34.5% in 1971 to 53.1% in 1981, meaning that more young women gained economic power (Hong Kong Women's Foundation and the Department of Social Work and Social administration of the University of Hong Kong 1995).

Policy that sustained inequality of wages between women and men among civil

servants was eradicated. Before that, the Salaries Commission stipulated, mainly

based on the Victorian legacy, that the salary of female officers should be set at

around 70% of the salary of their male counterparts (Kwok, Chow, Lee, & Wu 1997).

In 1975, the wage disparity was eliminated in Civil Service, and by 1981, equal

fringe benefits were provided for married civil servants regardless of sex (Kwok et al.

1997).

Women's individual identity started to be recognized through the changes in

marriage laws in the 1970s. The Married Persons Status Ordinance, passed in 1972,

gives married women the right to hold property; the Intestate's Estate Ordinance,

passed in 1971, states that both daughters and sons can equally share their parents'

estate; the Separation and Maintenance Orders Ordinance and the Matrimonial

Proceedings and Property Ordinance help married women claim maintenance in case

of separation or wilful neglect (Pegg 1986); the Matrimonial Causes Ordinance, also

passed in 1971, allows both wife and husband to petition for a divorce with the

reasons of irretrievable breakdown of marriage (Kwok et al. 1997).

In the previous periods, the women's movement was mainly led by expatriate

women and well-to-do Chinese women. In the 1980s, grassroots feminist groups

appeared, and they were active in bringing women's needs and rights to the

mainstream political agenda, and urged the government to set up a working group to

consider women's needs, which later developed into a petition for the establishment

of the women's commission (Lai, Au, & Cheung 1997). The Sex Discrimination

Ordinance, enacted in 1995, together with the establishment of the Equal

Opportunities Commission in 1996 and the Women's Commission in 2001, shows

societal recognition of women's equal status and the formalization of women's needs

and concerns on the political agenda.

One of the landmarks of feminist groups' achievement was overthrowing the

customary inheritance practice in the New Territories. Before 1994, the New

Territories Ordinance banned indigenous women residents of the New Territories

from inheriting land and property (Wong 2000). As only men had the rights to

control properties, women had to be dependent on their male relatives for their living

(Jones 1995). In late 1993 and 1994, some indigenous rural women, backed by

women's groups such as the Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres and the

Hong Kong Christian Council, fought for their inheritance rights (Wong 2000). The

majority of these indigenous women did not have any male siblings to inherit their

fathers' properties. Eliza Chan (1995) argues that their thinking and agitations in fact

reinforced the patrilineal system. But the women's groups came to frame the

movement in terms of human rights, equality, and opposition to patriarchy (Stern

2005). When the Legislative Council passed the New Territories Ordinance

(Amendment) in 1994, granting rural women the right of inheritance, this movement

became a triumph of women's rights and gender equality values over conservative

patriarchal practice and ideas.

Men's Movement as Backlash

Hong Kong men finally started to review their gender identity in the 1990s after

women's groups had staked claims for half a century. They tried to respond to the

charges of the women's movement. As the women's movement demanded men to

change in order to achieve equality, men should therefore not focus only on work but

spend more time with the family, share childcare and housework with their wives,

and acquire caring personality (Lai, Au, & Cheung 1997). But there were various

responses from men's groups. Some agreed that men had to change their roles, while

others believed that men's status was in fact inferior to that of women in the 21st

century.

The earliest men's movement in Hong Kong started in close similarity with the

mythopoetic camp[1] or Promise Keepers[2] in the USA (Chan 2001). In 1991,

Breakthrough, a Protestant organization, organized seminars, workshops, and talks

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[1] Mythopoetic men's movement emphasizes the importance of male mentors to the growth of men, as they think that only men can really train others to be authentic men. They adopt some male figures in the Greek myth or the archetypes in the Jungian depth psychology as their role models (Kimmel 1995).

[2] Promise Keepers is a Christian organization in the USA that aims at transforming men to be more family-oriented and encourage them to support other men with the teachings of the Bible.

and published widely on "new men's roles" and fatherhood (Chan 2001). It urged

men to change their traditional role which was detrimental to their health and

relationship: men should face their emotions and bear their familial responsibility. Its

religious background led it promote some male role models from the Bible, just like

the Promise Keepers (see Ou & Zeng 2001; Cai & Ou 1998; Ou 2003). This was

similar to the mythopoetic men's movement using figures in the Greek myth as the

learning models. Mythopoetic men believe in personal change rather than changing

the patriarchal institution in helping men adapt to the changing gender role. In some

of the mythopoetic gatherings in the USA, the male participants were led to display

and/or construct anger towards mothers who prevented them from building close

relationships with their fathers and ex-wives who rendered men childless and living

in poverty (Kimmel 1995:7). Agreeing with Kimmel (1995), Schwalbe (1995) also

criticizes the mythopoetic men's movement in the USA as sexist. Although the

messages of the men's movement authors in Hong Kong do not convey such kind of

anti-feminist themes, the advice for men is based on gender stereotypes and

conventional masculinity. Thus, together with the ignorance of institutional gender

power, this kind of men's movement cannot be said to promote gender equality.

The Caritas Personal Growth Centre for Men is another site of men's movement

in Hong Kong which appeared in the late 1990s. Apart from the counselling services

and self-help groups for men, the Centre, with Catholic background, has been very

active in promoting the "new good men" concept. This concept urges men to accept

new roles like househusband, caring father, and loving husband. The Centre also

promotes to society the idea that men are disadvantaged under the existing gender

stereotypes. It organizes a men's festival annually to consolidate the "new good

men" identity among its members, to increase awareness of men's issues in society,

and to promote "new good men" notion to the general public. With close connection

with the media, some of the Centre's social workers have become opinion leaders on

men's issues. Moreover, it has collaborated with commercial enterprises to promote

the "new good men" image. For example, in 2004, the Centre persuaded the health

product company "OSIM" to promote its new product — a hand-held massager —

with the new good man concept that men could be gentle and loving. In the

television commercial, a young man used the new product to massage his female

partner who seemed to be enjoying the moment.

Other men's groups in Hong Kong also have their roots in some social service

agencies that target at the family. These groups focus on helping different

"problematic" men: men as perpetrators in domestic violence, unemployed men, men

with extra-marital affairs, and men with post-natal depressive wives (Chan 2001).

The formats of these groups vary from therapeutic groups for perpetrators, self-help

groups for unemployed men, to training courses or seminars for men with family problems (Chan 2001). Since these groups identify their members as "problematic", they aim at changing men's gender concepts and relations within the family.

Men's rights groups exist in Hong Kong. Some members of the Caritas Personal Growth Centre for Men formed the Men's Rights Concern Group. The group urges the government to pay more attention to those men in need — unemployed men, and male victims of both physical and mental domestic violence. It lobbied the government to set up a men's commission to overlook men's needs in government policies. It also cooperated with a legislative councillor in pushing paid paternity leave. Its goals in persuading the public to pay more attention to men's needs are not against feminist goals. Its rationales in arguing for their work, however, are anti-feminist. Its members argued that women occupied the labour market at the grassroots' level, leaving men difficult to find jobs. Although the low-skilled service sector is concentrated with female labour, the reason for the situation is that women who had worked in the manufacturing sector in the past were forced to work in the low-skilled and low-paid service occupations after the factories in Hong Kong moved to Mainland China, provided their disadvantages with respect to age, educational qualifications, and skills (Ngo 2000). Ngo (2000) concluded that men still occupied managerial positions and crafts and skilled manual jobs while women

were still subordinate to men in the workplace in general. Members from the men's

rights group also ignored the fact that the majority of domestic violence victims are

women but blamed women of occupying too many governmental resources in

helping domestic violence victims. Neglecting male dominance and inferiority of

women's status in the society, they considered Women's Commission, which is an

advisory body supported by the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau to give

suggestions to the government to incorporate women's needs and perspectives in

policy-making, an example of gender discrimination against men. So the group

urged the government to set up a men's commission at the same level so as to be

gender equal. The underlying logic in their mind is that the pursuit of women's rights

or feminist goals is antagonistic to men's rights and benefits. So men have to fight

for identical attention and support from the government.

Anti-feminist men's movement also exists in cyber space. One example is the

"Hong Kong Men's Issues Netpage". Set up in 1999, its members posted

anti-feminist ideas and values in their forum[3]. Chan (2001) points out that the

website is indeed a backlash to feminist movement as it "depict[s] men as the victims

[and] [t]hey call for Hong Kong men to fight against women, and to 'demystify'

feminist arguments" (p.215).

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[3] "Hong Kong Men's Issue Netpage": http://www.geocities.com/hkmi/

Although the main ideas of some of these men's groups match with the liberal feminist view adopted by most women's groups in Hong Kong, like encouraging men to return to the family and to be caring husbands and responsible fathers, as well as helping men to face and express their own emotions, they are not regarded as pro-feminist. These men's groups do not put gender equality as one of their missions and encouraging men to change is just a way to help socially vulnerable men who had problems with unemployment, marriage, or family (Chan 2001). These men did not consider their problems or suffering part of the larger patriarchal structure. They often just pushed their anger towards women nearby – wives, ex-wives, women labour, and so on. When encountering crises in manhood like unemployment and divorce, without the help from the Centre in adopting a gender perspective, these men still clang on to the conventional masculinity and manhood. Without considering and even ignoring women's situations and male dominance in our society and family, the aim of keeping the family institution intact is not contributing to gender equality.

The under-development of a feminist movement, combined with patriarchal ideology of Hong Kong society, a pro-feminist men's movement is hard to develop (Chan 2001). Men's groups in Hong Kong show a lack of interest and concern towards gender equality issues. Some men became activists in an anti-feminist

movement. They were antagonistic towards women's improved status and overemphasized the inferior situation of some men who were disadvantaged because of social class and education. The emphasis on men's needs hides the nostalgia towards male authority and hegemony in the past leading to the thinking that men's rights are robbed and their status is threatened.

When analyzing the growth of anti-feminist men's movement in the Western societies, scholars of the profeminist camp, like Kimmel and Kaufman (1995), consider that men's place in society is challenged by the changing global political and economic relations, feminism, and lesbian and gay movement. The homogeneity of the public domain (mostly white, middle-class men) was jeopardized by the opening up of the society to women and people of other ethnicities (ibid:18). Moreover, the certainties in gender division of labour and sexuality in the private sphere were again threatened by the rise of feminist and gay and lesbian movements (ibid:17-18). Thus the privileged men ("middle-class, white, middle-aged heterosexual") perceived themselves powerless and fought back (ibid:18).

This phenomenon can also be applied to Hong Kong situation. After the financial crisis in 1997, Hong Kong suffered from economic depression, causing historically high rates of unemployment. With the economic downturn, many men were laid off. At the same time, women who could accept lower wages were able to

find unskilled jobs, resulting in the feminization of the unskilled labour market

(Huang & Cai 1998). Although it was indeed a kind of capitalist exploitation,

women's advantage in the low-paid unskilled labour market was considered a threat

to men's employment status by the men's rights groups.

Patriarchy Remained

Despite the improved status of women and girls in education, employment, and

legal protection, many patriarchal values and practices were still prevalent in Hong

Kong society in the 1980s. For instance, men assumed the sole economic provider's

role; sons were preferred in the family (Salaff 1981). Albeit young females did

actually gain more personal freedom and bargaining power in the family because of

their economic contribution, it did not necessarily mean that they were free from the

patriarchal ideology. Salaff (1981) discovers that patriarchal values and practices

were rooted in both male and female members of the "centripetal family" in which

pooling resources from members was practiced. For instance, many young girls were

exploited of educational opportunity and had to work to supplement the family

income or to support their male siblings financially in receiving further education

(Salaff 1981).

Women and girls are still in an inferior position in the 21st century. For instance,

women are seriously underrepresented in the political arena; sexism and gender

stereotyping are being transmitted in schools; women are more prone to domestic violence (The Women's Foundation 2006).

The rise in standard of living benefited the genders differently. The middle-class in Hong Kong expanded largely in the early 1980s. The numbers of managers, professionals, and business owners grew, with a high concentration of men. In the 1980s, 80% of the male population had employment, compared to only 47% of female being employed (Census and Statistics Department n.d.b). Wong (1991) finds that the employment participation rate of women levelled off after 1976, remaining at about 50%. In 2007, 49.6% of female population were employed while 70.4% of male population were in the labour force. Men were the ones who enjoyed much of the fruit of economic boom.

Higher education and well-paid jobs were predominantly male spheres. Although more women were able to enter tertiary education, resulting in more female students and more women entering higher-earning jobs, subjects provided in vocational training are still predominantly of male's interest, resulting in male students outnumbering female students (Kwok et al. 1997). This made female less competitive in joining the workforce than males if they failed to go through tertiary education. Even among people with the same educational level, gender disparity in employment earnings still existed (Census and Statistics Department 2008). In 2007,

the median monthly wage of female was $9,500 while that of male was $12,000

(Census and Statistics Department 2008). Census and Statistics Department (2008)

explained that a high proportion of male employees worked as professionals and in

the management level which had a higher salary while female employees were more

numerous in clerical and elementary occupations.

In addition, women's familial duty was used by employers as a way to exploit

them (Li & Huang 2001). Housewives who need to look after their children and

family tend to look for part-time jobs near their homes, thus resulting in their

acceptance of low wages (Li & Huang 2001).

Patriarchal ideas were also reflected in the government policy. When the state

embraced some conventional notions that bounded women and men, it reproduced

the existing patriarchy. For instance, a government television commercial urges

divorced non-resident fathers to pay alimony to support their children (see "Pay

maintenance" at http://www.isd.gov.hk/eng/tvapi/payer_1e.html). It shapes the image

of "responsible" fatherhood by defining it in terms of economic provision:

Dad: As a parent, I naturally care about my kids.

            I want them to grow up in a happy and healthy environment.

            After my divorce, even though the kids don't live with me, I still

            do my best to take care of them.

Voice-over: Be a Caring Parent

                  Pay Maintenance on Time

End-super: Be a Caring Parent

                  Pay Maintenance on Time

So, according to the commercial, the way for a responsible father to take care of children is to support them economically. The government associates masculinity with economic provision. At the same time, the commercial defines motherhood as child-carer. In the commercial, the father brought his two children back to their home where a woman, possibly the mother and the man's ex-wife, was waiting. Another example of the government holding the stereotypical gender division of labour is shown in the commercial "Family Education (Commitment) (1)" produced by Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (see http://www.isd.gov.hk/eng/tvapi/07_hw70.html). In the commercial, the mother is portrayed as a housewife responsible for all the housework while the other family members are helping her out.

Women still assumed the majority of house chores and child-caring in spite of their employment status (Lit, Fok, & Ip-Yim 1991; Tsang 1994; Xianggang xiao tong qun yi hui 1990). Family is considered the basic unit of social provision. Without adequate social service from the government, women are responsible for the welfare of each individual member of the family (Kwok et al. 1997). Inadequacy of

government-funded elderly caring centres is widely recognized in Hong Kong society. In addition, government-funded child care facilities are only provided to extremely poor families or families with marital or health problems. The SAR government, which aimed to resurrect Chinese traditions, emphasized the importance of "family" and urged young people to live with their elderly parents and relatives. This means actually moving the caring burden of both the elderly and the children to women in the family. Within this discourse, women who may already have double or even triple burden and thus are unable to fulfil the caring task are considered irresponsible (Association for the Advancement of Feminism 1990).

Under the patriarchal ideology, family-oriented attitude is itself perpetuating gender inequalities. Despite the contribution of women to the family, their efforts in the private sphere as housewives or double-burden women are not recognized by the society (Lai, Au, & Cheung 1997). Housewives bear stigmatized identities in the society (Ho 2007). Without a waged work, their contribution to the family is not counted as economic activity in the society. Even worse, family itself may not be safe to its contributing members. According to the Social Welfare Department (2005), 87.6% of domestic violence victims were women in 2005. These cases, however, are often downplayed as argument or quarrel between wife and husband due to lack of communication in the society (Lai, Au, & Cheung 1997). Thus, the patriarchal

family ideology masks male privileges and subordination of women within the family.

In Hong Kong, the family is often the site where patriarchy is reproduced and maintained. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the colonial government ended the Chinese customary marriage, put forward free compulsory education, developed new towns and encouraged young couples to move there. All these social changes, together with providing more welfare, reduced the influence of extended family while creating the government as the caring parent (Jones 2001). Member of individual nuclear families, having lost the dependence on their extended kin network, needed to take care of themselves (Jones 2001; Lau 1982; Salaff 1981), resulting in the form of patriarchy in which husband and father dominated over wife and children, especially daughters (Jones 2001; Salaff 1981). The regime after 1997 returned to the emphasis on traditional values, self-reliance and dependence on the extended family (Jones 2001) by promoting the Confucian notion.

Hong Kong SAR government, without any gender perspective, promoted the family-oriented value to the society. In 2007, the Chief Executive announced to set up a Family's Commission to oversee the different commissions dedicated to different groups of people, like women, elderly, and youth. Government's policies would then be considering the needs of these groups of people within the family

context. The rationale was that if family was carrying out its function and every member was satisfied within their family, their needs would be satisfied and their problems solved. It resonates with the traditional Confucian saying, "A man has to improve his own character, to maintain harmony in his family, to manage the nation, and to bring peace to the world" (修身齊家治國平天下), and "if there is peace and harmony in the family, then everything will be successful" (家和萬事興).

The thinking that social problems would not exist if everyone values their family ignores the structural factor in causing those social problems and reveals the fact that the government is not willing to bear its responsibility. In this discourse, the patriarchal structure of the family was not discussed and realized. Harmony of the family involves submission and sacrifice of certain family members. Mostly, they are women. For instance, when it is suggested that the elderly should be taken care of by the family members rather than going to hospice or home for the aged, it is to delegate the responsibility of caring the elderly from the government to the women in the family. Therefore, emphasizing family without considering or revising its patriarchal feature, which includes gender division of labour, indeed intensifies gender inequality.

Patriarchy is maintained in this respect with the cooperation between Confucianism and capitalism, subordinating women and men. Individuals, both

females and males, are subsumed under familial duties which in turn are manipulated by the larger polity (Salaff 1981). Inherited from its colonial predecessor, the SAR government is dedicated to the laissez-faire economic policies and thus low expenditure (Petersen 2009). As a result family has to bear the resources and responsibility of taking care of the economic and psychological needs of its members for the larger society, which is thought to be reasonable under the Confucian ideology. However, family is a site for gender performance, restricting both women and men (Choi & Ting 2009). Women are to be carers without any economic recognition. Men, as breadwinners, have to subordinate themselves under the capitalist market economy, especially for those working class men who have less bargaining power in the market economy. They often go into financial and identity crisis once they lose the skills needed in the market. As Hong Kong has to depend on the global capitalist economy, its control over the demand of the labour is very limited. Together with limited welfare, the insecure economic condition creates suffering on women and men.

Another cultural force in maintaining patriarchy is the deep-rooted religion in the former British colony — Christianity. The influence of Christianity did not diminish after the handover of the sovereignty and continues to be tremendous in Hong Kong. With the support from the colonial government, the Anglican and

Roman Catholic Churches received extensive privileges and exerted tremendous influence in the colony (Kwong 1999). Schools run by Christian organizations dominate the educational system in Hong Kong, not to mention the fact that many prestigious secondary schools in Hong Kong are Christian schools established with a long history (Brown 1993). Christian values are prevalent in schools and in general in the educational experience of Hong Kong students. These prominent schools which receive "better" academically qualified students and thus have a high university-entry rate aim to train individuals who bore some Christian ideas to become influential in the society. Kwong (1999) notes that a lot more young people identify themselves as Christians, especially in the university student population. It creates a huge Christian ideology and power in the middle-class population who becomes dominant in the society.

When Christians gain power and authority in the society, they gradually lose the motivation in having social reforms and they become the new conservative force that sustains the status quo. The Roman Catholic Church and some fundamentalist Christian conservatives are active in spreading their values on sexuality, marriage, and family in the society. Students, especially female students, are told not to have pre-marital sexual intercourse through abortion video clips and pictures of sexually transmitted diseases which aim at inducing fear of sex in them (see *Wen Hui Po*

2007; Wu 2007). Youngsters are deprived of sexuality and parenthood. They are thought to be sexless, vulnerable, and not capable of taking care of themselves and others. Christianity, in the 21st century Hong Kong society, co-operates with Confucianism, which emphasizes order within the patriarchal family structure and restraint on sexuality.

Christianity also defines family and masculinity in terms of heterosexuality. Fundamentalist Christian groups strongly oppose to homosexuality as shown in the discussion of protecting lesbian and gay couples in the amendment of the domestic violence ordinance proposed by the government and the discussion of Sexual Orientation Discrimination Ordinance (see Cai 2006, ping guo ri bao 2009, xin bao 2009). They strongly oppose lesbian and gay marriage and family. The high profile promotion and mobilization of their supporters have been successful in creating negative stereotypes and prejudice against lesbian and gay citizens since the discussion on decriminalization of homosexuality in 1991. Therefore, although tolerance towards homosexuality increases, the mainstream society still sees homosexuality as an inferior kind of sexuality and personhood. Home Affairs Bureau commissioned a survey in 2005 to ask 2040 Hong Kong residents about their attitudes towards gays and lesbians. The survey shows that despite the apparent acceptance of gays and lesbians in the society, a large proportion of the general

public still demonstrated negative views towards lesbians and gays: 41.9%, 49.1%, and 38.9% of the respondents from random sampling thought that homosexuality was a psychological disorder, anti-family, and a violation to morality respectively, and only 40% of the people interviewed accepted their family members to be homosexuals (MVA Hong Kong Limited 2006).

Sexuality seems to be the most important aspect of the Christian groups' religious value and morality, more important than justice, equality, love and respect, that they have to defend vigorously. Gays and lesbians are not protected by law for their equal opportunity in education, work, and living, and not even safeguarded from domestic violence, not to mention the fact that they are denied legal marriage or civil union rights. In order to maintain the patriarchal heterosexual hegemony, the fundamentalist Christian groups even exaggerated and distorted the "harm" of lesbian and gay existence (see Liang 2009).

The Christian discourse aims at crystallizing sexuality, marriage, family, and masculinity in the society under its religious notion. In the Christian discourse, marriage is the legitimate institution to accommodate sexuality. Family is fixed as heterosexual and monogamous social institution. With the tremendous influence of the fundamental Christian discourses which are backed up by plentiful financial resources, and their domination in the educational sector, the Christian definitions of

family and masculinity become the moral hegemony in the city, perpetuating

patriarchy and homophobia.

Family and Fatherhood in Hong Kong Today

In the patriarchal Hong Kong society, despite changes in gender status and

family, family remains a social institution that sustains conventional gender

performance. Although dual earner families are not uncommon in Hong Kong from

1980s onwards, double burden still cannot leave women. Labour force participation

increased women's financial independence which influenced the division of labour at

home (Hong Kong Women Foundation and the Department of Social Work and

Social Administration of the University of Hong Kong 1995). Tsang (1994) points

out that changes occurred within the "small double-income nuclear families" when

women participated in the labour force. For instance, wives who sought employment

outside the family could not assume as much housework duty as full-time

housewives could and thus husbands had to share some of the duties (Tsang 1994).

Among middle-class families, foreign domestic workers further helped women

reduce their housework and childcare burden. Having said so, women are still

responsible for the majority of housework (Choi & Ting 2009). Children's

homework, extra-curricular activities, and their discipline are mainly the duties of

the mothers (Hong Kong Women Foundation and the Department of Social Work

and Social Administration of the University of Hong Kong 1995).

On the other hand, men are still considered the default breadwinner in the family. With the economic boom brought about by industrialization, wages and rent increased sharply in the 1980s, leading many factories in Hong Kong moving to China in the 1990s. More and more husbands and fathers began to work in Mainland China, separating many families. Families were further separated by the 1980s Hong Kong's sovereignty issue and the June fourth event in 1989, which led to the emigration of a lot of middle-class families. This wave of emigration from Hong Kong resulted in the phenomenon of "astronaut" families — while wives and children settled in the host country, the husband stayed in Hong Kong for work and business.

In addition, father's role in Hong Kong still pretty much follows the conventional path of breadwinner and educator. The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups conducted a survey in 2001 to investigate the expected roles and actual behaviours of fathers. They interviewed 510 fathers aged between 20 and 65 using a structured questionnaire. More than 90% of them thought that "good" fathers should be able to bring enough income home, should maintain a good marriage relation, and should be good role model to the children (The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups 2001). Yet 23.1% admitted that they did not have enough time for their

children and 16.1% did not understand their children. However, the wish of having more time for family and children did not come first for these fathers. They wanted most to earn more money to support the family (23.4%) while their worry of unemployment came above all other worries (31.9%). When asked what they would do with their children, 38% said they played with their children; 33.7% helped children with their homework; 30% watched television with their children. Over 60% of the fathers were concerned with the academic performance of their children; 37.3% with their health; 33.5% with their conduct.

Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong carried out another survey in 2001 asking 1378 fathers whose children were studying primary school, which further substantiated that fathers were pretty much traditional. Breadwinning was still thought to be the most important duty of fathers. 51.1% of the surveyed fathers opposed to their wives having paid work outside the family except when the family faced serious financial difficulties. 42.2% responded that their children were looked after by their spouse. Around half of them did not participate in taking care of their children (bringing children to school and back home, attending children's extra-curricular activities, arranging children's leisure activities). 47% of them had done none or little housework. Rather, they were responsible for paying household fees (51.4%), repairing work (37.5%), and educating children (50.1%). Work had

occupied much of their life. 70.9% of the fathers had to work more than nine hours per day and 26.5% even had to work more than 11 hours a day. High unemployment rate, together with the breadwinner role, created much stress to these fathers. More than half of them worried that their income would be reduced while about 40% were afraid of unemployment.

The focus on breadwinning role of fathers is more evident among some middle-aged grass-root and unemployed fathers. Caritas Community Development Service conducted two small-scale research studies on grass-root men and unemployed fathers in 2003 and 2004 respectively. The studies find that the male informants considered economic ability the most important indicator of masculinity (Ming ai she qu fa zhan fu wu 2003, 2004). Thus they saw themselves as losers (Ming ai she qu fa zhan fu wu 2003, 2004).

Routine childcare is thought to be the maternal domain. Lu & He (1996) find that most fathers thought that they should be the household heads and did not participate much in childcare as they considered it the responsibility of the mother. Kwan (2005) discovers that non-custodial divorced fathers only provided financial support to their children and tended to be detached from them after separation because they felt inadequate in childcare and did not want to bother with that. Yip (1999) notes that fathers were passive in supervising children's schoolwork although

children considered fathers' help as a sign of love. Only upon mother's request or

when mothers were not available, fathers would take part in it (Yip 1999).

Nonetheless, fatherhood in Hong Kong is undergoing change. Divorce is getting

more prevalent in Hong Kong. In 1981, the crude divorce rate was 0.4 per 1000

population (Census and Statistics Department 2007). In 2006, per 1000 population,

there were 2.54 cases of divorce (Census and Statistics Department 2007). Thus,

more and more single fathers exist and they face particular problems because of their

gender. To study the rarely touched topic of single fatherhood in Hong Kong, Chen

& Yu (2005) conducted a systematic albeit small-scale qualitative study on some

working class single fathers in 2004. Due to the fact that they had to look after

children, without much childcare support, most of these single fathers could not find

suitable jobs. They had to rely on social security which made them feel inferior.

Moreover, they considered their families "broken" and blamed their former spouses

of their "failure in marriage". Chen & Yu (2005) also find that most single fathers

still held the belief that they were not as suitable as mothers to look after children.

Yet Wong (2004) discovers that singles fathers performed familial matters well

comparing to their counterparts in intact families, except in disciplining children. A

quantitative study finds that the gender concept of the single father has influence on

their single fatherhood. Yue (1994) points out that masculine fathers were found to

be more sex-typed towards gender division of labour, less affective with children, and showed less fulfilment in assuming the caring role when compared with androgynous and feminine fathers. Only feminine fathers who placed family first did not worry much about their career advancement when compared to the masculine and androgynous counterparts who regarded career more important (Yue 1994).

While single fathers are forced to take up the caring role, some fathers in two-parent families also went on the same path. With the increasing demand for men to participate in housework and child-rearing, men's participation in housework and childcare continues to increase although fathers' increased participation in child-caring is mostly restricted to recreational activities with their children (Tsang 1994). Economic downturn after the Asian financial crisis changed the gender division of labour within some families. Many men were laid off or had their income reduced. Some of their wives still luckily maintained their employment. Thus, out of some parenting needs in these families which required one of the parents to stay home to take care of the children, the men gave up their jobs or job-seeking and their wives became the sole breadwinners. After the Asian Financial Crisis, a new kind of fatherhood emerged under such circumstances. These fathers called themselves the "full-time father" or "stay-at-home dads" in the West.

The appearance of "stay-at-home dads" caught the attention from the media.

These fathers often mentioned how they strived to overcome their own gender stereotypes and others' discrimination in the media interviews. Some of them even published their own homemaker and parenting experiences (see Pan (2002) and Wang (2006)). Often, they mentioned that they did need some time to overcome the psychological obstacles in becoming a househusband and full-time father. They needed to tell their friends and relatives their decisions and explained to them why. Often a man staying at home is considered by the mainstream society as jobless and even useless. Thus, these men needed to overcome and endure the social and gender discrimination.

This new kind of fatherhood appeared in the context of increasing emphasis on parenthood in Hong Kong society. Quality of parenting becomes a subject of focus in the mass media. Experts on parenting appear in books, newspapers, seminars, radio and television programmes to teach parents how to be good fathers and mothers. Parents are required to communicate with and understand their children; to respect them and avoid physical punishment; to be their good role models; to broaden their knowledge base by playing, reading, and travelling. Two social factors contribute to this phenomenon, namely low birth rate, and competitive economic environment.

The birth rate of Hong Kong in recent years is low among developed countries in the world. The average family size dropped steadily from 3.9 in 1982 to 3 in 2008.

The drop in birth rate further provides evidence to the situation. In 1971, per 1000 population, the birth rate was 19.7 (Census and Statistics Department n.d.a). However, in 1991, it dropped to 12 per 1000 population (Census and Statistics Department n.d.a). In 2008, it was further down to 11.3 per 1000 population (Census and Statistics Department n.d.a). With fewer children, parents are more able and willing to put more resources on them.

Parenting attitude is also associated with the economy of the society. In the late 1980s, the economy of Hong Kong experienced restructuring. Factories moved from Hong Kong to the Mainland, resulting in large number of skilled workers, especially female workers underemployed or even unemployed. The economy of Hong Kong was transformed mainly into the financial and service sectors in the 1990s which required employees with higher educational level. After the economic downturn triggered by the Asian financial crisis in 1997, unemployment rate of Hong Kong increased. Unemployment rate hit the peak after the subsequent September 11 terrorist attack in 2001 and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003 (The Women's Foundation 2006). People with lower educational level cannot easily seek jobs. The competition of getting employment in Hong Kong becomes keener and keener. People are very concerned with their educational level and working experience to make themselves more competitive in the keen labour market.

Parents also impose that thinking to their children, seeking ways to improve their achievements — academic results and other extracurricular abilities, so as to make them more competitive in seeking better schooling and jobs with higher salary and better prospect. This is validated by Tsang (1994) who points out that studies in the 1980s had already shown the parenting goal had changed to producing independent and competent children. Lit, Fok, and Ip-Yim (1991) find that fathers were interested in parent education programmes which helped them improve children's discipline and academic achievements. Parents are eager to improve their parenting to produce competitive children.

With the increasing importance of parenting in contemporary Hong Kong, father's involvement starts to increase. With the rise of "new good men" notion, rather than being considered as lazy and economically dependent husbands, "stay-at-home dads" are often portrayed as loving and caring men who sacrifice their career for looking after the family and children in the media. In this sense, the label of househusband, which is derived from the identity of housewife, is often not welcomed by these fathers who consider the label weird and demeaning to them. Rather, "full-time father" is the preferred name for them, which can professionalize their fathering status and indicate their dedication, care, and sacrifice to their family, spouse, and children.

This phenomenon shows that the notion of stereotypical gender division of labour and the patriarchal ideology of demeaning women's work are still prevalent in the society, even among those "open-minded" men. In patriarchal society, women's work — housework is considered trivial and men's duty — economic provision is more important. Being a househusband has the implication of being laid off and staying at home, which is a symbol of a loser in the capitalistic society. However, when men claim themselves to be "full-time fathers" by giving up their career, they establish the discourse of actively seeking another contribution to the family and society. Although fathers actually go on the path which is regarded as natural for women after marriage and after giving birth to children, they are portrayed as sacrificing for and contributing to the family in the media representation.

Conclusion: State and Social Patriarchy

From the history of masculinity and fatherhood in Hong Kong society, we can see that male domination and patriarchal ideology continues to be prevalent. Patriarchy cooperates with the state to facilitate its governance and realize its economic interest, no matter it is the colonial or local Hong Kong ruler. This kind of cooperation is not uncommon and was found in the history of the ruling party of Hong Kong's suzerain. In order to increase production during the Great Leap Forward period in China, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) adopted the

propaganda of "emancipating women" in mobilizing women to join agricultural and industrial production (Stacey 1983). Yet women earned significantly less work points than their male counterparts in performing the same work (Croll 1982; Stacey 1979). Moreover, with the opposition and resistance from the patriarchs, the CCP then broke its commitment on gender equality and surrendered to the patriarchal demands, mobilizing women to return to familial production (Stacey 1983). Even the radical CCP which was tough in eradicating the culturally deep-rooted Confucian ideals and practices gave up on fighting against patriarchy but in turn, cooperated with it to facilitate its ruling authority (Bonvillain 2007).

Patriarchy in Hong Kong is thus preserved by government policy, religion, and men's organizations, within specific economic and political contexts, and has not faced severe challenge. Liberal feminism has been the major perspective of the mainstream feminist movement, and as discussed above, the feminist movement has focused mainly on same treatment and equal opportunity for women and men. Other feminist perspectives, like radical feminism, are lacking in Hong Kong. Gender ideology is not a main concern in the society. The notion of nuclear family with monogamous heterosexual couples is not challenged. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer rights have been ignored after the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1991. The rise of women's economic status further masks the need for eradicating

patriarchy, diverting the society's attention from the social situation of gender

inequity and patriarchal ideology. These have led to the continuation of the

normalized and naturalized male dominance in a subtle way

With these patriarchal social and cultural conditions, men enjoy the hegemony

unconsciously and think that it is natural and normal. The rise in women's status and

change in familial structure threatened some men and triggered them to gather

together and devise a new notion of masculinity to restore their perceived decline in

status within the family.

Thus, "new fatherhood" is nothing new. The notion of new fatherhood came out

of the men's movement in resurrecting patriarchal family and the emphasis of

parenting in order to produce "successful" children. It still stares at the conventional

familial institution rather than aiming at promoting gender equality. Society's

attention on stay-at-home father reveals the gender stereotypical ideology in the

society, no matter it is discrimination against them or praising them to be very

sacrificing. Within this context, fatherhood in Hong Kong is largely a manifestation

of conventional masculinity, even though it seems to have put on some new clothes. I

will discuss how the Centre and individual fathers interpreted and shaped

masculinity in the subsequent chapters. First I will discuss the rituals and

ritualization adopted by the men's centre in bringing about a new masculinity

standard in the next chapter.

Chapter III

Organizing Masculinities

"Any ritual is an opportunity for transformation."

- (Starhawk 1987:100)

The feminist movement has shed new light on social life by bringing forth the analytic category of gender. It has changed women's lives and forced men to re-consider their gender situation. Against the patriarchal background in Hong Kong society, the rise of women's status and the urge for gender equality were perceived by men as a threat to their hegemony. For instance, with the legitimization of divorce, conventional family and fatherhood were thought to lose their stability. With the economic downturn and the subsequent prevalence of unemployment, men were said to lose their economic dominance in the past when they were the sole breadwinners. This triggered the dominant gender class to gather force. A men's movement in the name of family protection appeared, in order to restore their position within the family. One commonality of these groups was the promotion of the "new good men" and "new good father" notion, and claiming that this was beneficial to the family.

The Love and Help Centre (LHC) was one of the many welfare agencies that promoted the "new good men" and "new good father" notions to its clients and the general public. The Centre had two main goals: (1) to promote the positive image of

men in the family context (e.g. "Men can be caring husbands and responsible fathers"); and (2) to help "problematic" men and fathers become "good". The Centre adopted three ways to achieve these goals: (1) an annual celebration; (2) a media campaign; and (3) small discussion groups. The annual celebration served a dual purpose: promoting the positive image of men in the family context to the general public, and consolidating service users' "new good men" identity. This was the single most important activity for the men's service programme of the Centre. An ongoing programme was the media campaign. Throughout the year, the Centre invited men's groups and individual members to tell their personal stories in local newspapers and television programmes, thereby displaying the "products" of the Centre. A more regular service at the Centre was discussion groups. In these men's groups, social workers and service users ritualized certain practices to create their "new good men" identity.

In this chapter, I will analyze the three domains of work of LHC, with an emphasis on the processes – how these values were exercised and reinforced in the "new good men" notion. Utilizing anthropological theories on rituals, ritualization and performance, I will analyze how the ideology of fatherhood was constructed and manifested in the Centre and among the service users. First of all, I would like to provide some description of the organization as a background.

The Organization – "Love and Help"

Love and Help Centre (LHC) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded by the Catholic Church in the post World War II period. Christian values were embedded in their work, especially when it comes to family service. LHC defined a legitimate family as a nuclear family based on heterosexual, monogamous marriage, and believed that it is of utmost importance for society to keep the family intact. Changes to this family structure would result in social problems. Factors causing family problems included rising divorce rate, reduction in the size of the family, higher employment rate among women, or dual career parents. With an aim to "preserve and strengthen the family as a unit", their work was creating and maintaining "harmony" in the nuclear family.

The "complete family", according to LHC, should be based on dating and then marriage between a heterosexual man and a heterosexual woman. The Centre assumed that when they got married, they had never experienced co-habitation and thus needed time and knowledge to build a harmonious marriage relationship and nuclear family. So LHC offered workshops for just-married couples to learn to manage their new married life. This thinking reflects the philosophy of LHC of what normality is in marriage and what constitutes family.

With the aim to produce "harmonious" families, LHC provided family counselling service to couples to help them develop attitudes and techniques that would bring about a harmonious relationship, and to help resolve their conflicts. The Centre also upheld the teaching that sex should only be practiced among married couples, and that sexual life was the foundation of good marriage." All in all, the "complete family" is the most important social unit and marriage and sexuality are subsumed under and serve the family.

LHC, however, had to acknowledge that divorce was on the rise. Nevertheless, these were considered "broken" family as opposed to the "complete family". The "broken family" had to be avoided, and so separation could only be the final resort to marital problems. LHC's strategy was to offer courses for individuals who were facing marriage problems or were thinking about divorce, to help them think seriously about marriage or divorce. It was again a measure to save "complete families" even though divorce was admitted to be a legitimate way out.

In addition, although LHC accepted that remarriage and cohabitation existed, these couples were considered inferior to those in "normal" marriages. Separate counselling programmes for remarried couples showed that remarriage was not considered as sacred as the "perfect" marriage. Likewise, co-habitation was considered an "alternative" and secondary relationship.

It is clear then that, in LHC's visions, objectives, and programmes, traditional family values were central, and were promoted in all the events conducted by the Centre. In the following section, I will first lay out an analytical framework based on anthropological theories on ritual, ritualization, and performance. Then I will describe and analyze how the Centre practiced and strengthened its values through rituals and performances in its activities.

Ritual, Ritualization and Performance

Ritual, according to Turner (1995), is "performed in privileged spaces and times, set off from the periods and areas reserved for work, food and sleep" (p.25). The ritual actor is separated from her/his usual living, has new experiences which change her/him when she/he returns to her/his daily life. The ritual process does indeed excel secular living though not yet in the realm of sacredness. Ritual consists of cultural symbols rich in meanings which can be understood in context (Turner 1974). Through ritual, participants go through certain procedures and activities collectively, and acquire new identities when they return to their usual lives. So, Turner (1995) thinks that actors are transformed when they participate in some ceremonial acts.

While Victor Turner considers ritual as a privileged setting from usual living, Erving Goffman considers ritual as behaviours existing in our everyday life. He thinks that ritual "is a perfunctory, conventionalized act through which an individual portrays

his respect and regard for some object of ultimate value to that object of ultimate value or to its stand-in" (Goffman 1972:62). It is a way the society trains its citizens to be self-regulating individuals so that society itself can maintain its order and existence. Ritual achieves this learning by imposing moral rules upon individuals (Goffman 1972).

Goffman analyzes social activity in terms of ritual to map out its operating logic. For instance, social rules require the participants of a gathering to be involved in it without dividing their attention to matters not relevant to their interactions, with the belief that this kind of attention signifies the importance of the gathering itself (Goffman 1966). Every participant has to appear to be attending to the interactions in the gathering, no matter what actually they are attending to in their own minds. Since ritual action is prescribed, the actor may not possess the specific beliefs, intentions, ideas or values as indicated in the ritual action itself, yet the audience (including other participants) would not doubt the actor's intention but would automatically consider that the actor does agree with the ideas (Rostas 1998). In this perspective, ritual act is considered to carry the aim of displaying certain images and goals and is happening in our daily interaction. Meanwhile, ritual participants sacrifice their individuality to create a certain social identity (Goffman 1966). In Rostas (1998)'s term, it is the denying of ego (p.90). In sum, ritual can turn an aggregate of people

into a social group with a common identity.

Erik Erikson combines the views of Turner and Goffman. He adopts the anthropological meaning of "ritual" – "a deepened communality, a proven ceremonial form, and a timeless quality from which all participants emerge with a sense of awe and purification" (Erikson 1977:78). He thinks that ritual can help actors internalize values of the group, create communality among group members, and build "a set of behaviour patterns" in the particular culture (ibid:81-82). So he considers everyday interaction to possess these features of ceremonial ritual. Transformation can occur in the everyday setting with the ceremonial ritual acts, which is ritualization. Through carrying out certain behaviours like ritual acts, actors can "elevate the satisfaction of immediate needs into the context of a communal actuality" and "deflect feelings of unworthiness onto outsiders within and without one's culture who are excluded or exclude themselves from knowing the right way" (ibid:82). Participants of a ritualized culture would see their ways of seeing and doing things as the only appropriate way and wonder why others do not follow them when they see behaviours different from their own (Erikson 1977). Ritualization is thus the way to make the actors perform ritual actions – to make them act non-intentionally (Rostas 1998).

The "new good men" identity was delivered to the service-users of LHC through ritual in the annual celebration as well as ritualization in the discussion groups. Rules and values of "new good men" / "new good father" were taught to and internalized by individual members coming from diverse backgrounds. The identity of "new good men" was created to be different from, if not opposite to, that of "the traditional men", "the other men" or "men outside", thus indicating a sense of superiority. Scholars have pointed out that tradition can be in fact a modern construction (see Hobsbawm 1992, Cheung 2006). By the same token, "traditional men" and "other men" did not necessarily exist before "new good men" — both were constructed at the same time. "Traditional men" and "other men" identity might not reflect what fatherhoods were like in the past or fatherhoods outside LHC. They were adopted to problematize and marginalize fatherhoods outside the discourse of "new good father". Consequently, in order to avoid being problematized, "new good men" image had to be performed.

Compared with the unconscious nature of ritual and ritualization, performance is intentional and involves participants' self-consciousness. Rostas (1998) suggests that performance is different from ritual because performers need to intentionally load their acts with meanings and symbols and may even be overdoing it while ritual actors need not be conscious with the meanings of their actions. Goffman (1972)

explains that everyone performs in their everyday life to convince themselves and others that they are actually what they appear to be. Sometimes, they need to avoid doing something, avoid certain situations as well as persons to achieve their "front", their self-impression to others (Goffman 1972). Thus, a performance is an intentional act: "[A] performance is 'socialized', moulded, and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented" (Goffman 1959:30). It works in the same way for a social group, added that the front becomes a collective matter and more explicit:

> [I]t is to be noted that a given social front tends to become institutionalized in terms of the abstract stereotyped expectations to which it gives rise, and tends to take on a meaning and stability apart from the specific tasks which happen at the time to be performed in its name. The front becomes a "collective representation" and a fact in its own right (Goffman 1959:24).

Apart from training its service-users, LHC also promoted the "new good men" notion and image to the general public. Performances of "new good men" and "new good father" appeared in the event organized by LHC and the media interviews of some of the chosen members. Discussion group members, in the presence of guests, also tried to exhibit their "new good men" image and practices.

Nevertheless, provided the social condition of patriarchy as mentioned in Chapter II, men growing up in that environment upheld male dominance thinking. Pierre Bourdieu explained this phenomenon with the concept, *habitus*. In his book "The Logic of Practice", Bourdieu (1990) suggests that "the socialized body does not stand in opposition to society; it is one of its forms of existence" (p.29). Social actors "respond dispositionally to the opportunities and constraints offered by various situations" (ibid:100) out of a system called habitus. Habitus is

a system of durable transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them (ibid:53).

Habitus provides the dispositions for one to act. Once formed, the primary dispositions will have enduring effect, which will only be elaborated rather than changed by subsequent experiences of the social actors (Bourdieu 1990). People with similar life experiences often have the same habitus.

Provided the patriarchal social condition as mentioned in Chapter II, men growing up in that environment possess male dominance habitus which is resilient to change. Thus, although actors might not be conscious of their intention, the "new

good men" ritual, instead of changing members' patriarchal habitus, was elaborated within the hegemony of men. In the following analysis, emphasis is put on the hidden patriarchal messages brought out by the rituals and performances.

The 2004 Annual Celebration

Every year in spring, LHC held a territory-wide celebration. The theme of the Celebration was based on a Confucian saying that a man should know his life goal by the time he turns 40. This fits in with the clientele of the Centre, who were mostly middle-aged men ranging from 30 to 50 years old.

In the 2004 Celebration, the slogan was "Born with paternal rights, Support paternal role, Enjoy paternal duties". This message reflects that LHC considered fathers being alienated from the family. Using the discourse of fatherhood as "natural", men's participation in the family as husbands and fathers was expressed to be a right which was not debatable and was a must for all fathers. It was to fight against the common argument, or fear that men were expendable within the family. Nevertheless, it created a discursive requirement for all biological (and social) fathers to fulfil the responsibilities set out (by LHC). With this proposition in mind, the Centre urged the society and other family members to support fathers to assume those roles and duties. It implies two things: first, some members of the society and some families did not support, or they even discouraged, fathers to assume their roles

in the family. Second, by the fact that some fathers did not assume their paternal roles was due to lack of support from the society and other family members. The Centre somehow assumed that all fathers were willing to assume these inborn paternal roles and duties and that the inability to assume those roles was not the fault of the fathers. The message brought out was to confirm father's status and to reassure fathers of their legitimacy in the family. LHC thus somehow reinforced, if not initiated, the fathers' rights or men's rights movement in Hong Kong.

In order to analyze the discourses brought out by the Annual Celebration, I will present below a thick description of the event in 2004. The idea of thick description, as proposed by anthropologist Clifford Geertz, suggests that human life is embedded in culture which is full of symbols and meanings (Geertz 1973). He considers culture as text and anthropology as interpretive science searching for meaning and sorting out the system of signification (Geertz 1973). Thick description refers to the detailed documentation of the context of a certain social and cultural behaviour in order to identify the appropriate and accurate meanings in them. Adopting Geertz's notion, the section below unravels the values of LHC through a detailed contextual description of the event.

The Event

On a hot sunny day in spring 2004, the Annual Celebration was scheduled to start at 2pm in a downtown park. As a volunteer of the Centre, I arrived at 1:15pm and immediately met with the social worker in charge. He asked me to put on the Annual Celebration T-shirt on the back of which was the slogan: "Born with paternal rights, Support paternal role, Enjoy paternal duties". Then I was told to help with decorating the venue with the banners provided by the Centre.

The Annual Celebration started promptly at 2pm. The first activity was the stall games. There were totally four stalls: one had the theme of anti domestic violence, another one was held by the district-based men's self-help group, and the last two were organized by the other LHC men's groups. The stalls were a means of public education of the paternity notion of LHC through games. For instance, one game required participants to throw some balls into baskets labelled with "father's duties" (e.g. "share housework", "earn money to support family", "understand children"), father's rights ("right to decide" and "teach children"), and father's needs ("need to be understood", "need to be loved", "need to be respected" and so on). All these echoed with the official slogan and theme – "fathers have rights and duties". A lot of parents brought their children to play the stall games on the day.

After one hour of stall games, the Celebration proceeded to the next event – a press conference to report a survey on Hong Kong fathers' situation. The LHC social worker first reported on the conclusion of the survey: the majority of Hong Kong people agreed that fathers have rights and duties but in reality fathers only had duties but no rights because the society did not support fathers to carry out their paternal roles. Then he presented the results of the survey: a total of 965 fathers were interviewed between February and April 2004. It showed that 91% of the fathers thought that they had rights to enjoy paternal duties and child-caring. Fathers reported that playing with their children could help reduce their stress. Yet the report showed that not all fathers could enjoy their paternal roles. Some of them had long working hours and could hardly have time to be with their children. Some fathers found that they did not know how to get along with their children and often needed their spouses to help bring them together. The social worker attributed the alienation between fathers and children to the lack of social support towards paternity. He urged the government and society to provide an environment conducive to paternal role, for instance, granting fathers paternal leave and creating an atmosphere to support fathers who took care of their children.

At around 4:15pm, a male emcee appeared on the stage. He introduced himself as a father who had been unemployed after the SARS outbreak[1]. Before the epidemic he was a tour guide. After that he was forced to be a househusband taking care of his son. At first, he was very depressed but later he discovered happiness in fulfilling his paternal role. He said he was grateful to LHC for helping him in his difficult time. Now he was employed again, and wanted to share the advantage of the paternal role with others. He then introduced the supervisor of LHC to give a speech. The supervisor talked about the importance of father to children in the family and reiterated that fathers should enjoy their role while society should provide enough support for them to carry out their duties.

After the speech, there were some performances. The first one was a group of fathers singing some songs. They introduced themselves as fathers who had learnt and changed to be "new good fathers", and they came to share the happiness of fathering. The first song they sang was "念親恩" (literally "thinking of parents' love"). The fathers said that they only discovered that their parents were really good to them after they themselves had children. The fathering experience made them understand how their own parents felt. One of the fathers gave an example: once he saw his son reading in the dark, so he turned on the light for him even though that

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[1] Hong Kong suffered from the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003. 1755 persons were infected with 299 deaths. The government was blamed of reacting slowly in preventing and restricting the outbreak, causing a lot of infections and high mortality rate. The economy was hit severely, especially tourism.

was against his son's will. He then understood why his parents did something against his will when he was small: because his parents thought that it was good to him. So he wondered why he rebelled against his parents when he was young. The second song was about war. They said that everyone should avoid fighting in the family because it was important to have a harmonious family. Then one of the fathers asked another one to talk about some difficulties in his life, like breaking up with his girlfriend. But that father said that it was more painful when he was unemployed and then turned to describe his painful feelings and low self-esteem during his unemployment period. Then finally they sang the last song with their spouses and children on the stage, showing their "good" families. The emcee said that they were very good role models of fathers and asked the audience to clap hands (to appreciate their performance and their good father roles).

The next performance was an improvisation drama aiming at getting the audience to share their emotions and feelings through their own story. A drama team made up of some of the LHC members came onto the stage. The first person to share his experience was a man who described himself as a very mean father in the past, who had always said negative things to his daughter. Once his daughter wanted to join a competition, but he immediately discouraged her by saying that she would lose. He said that he did not know why he had always said something so negative

and just could not help doing so. But then he knew that he should say something

positive and encouraging to increase his daughter's confidence because negative

comments made her lose motivation. The drama team used some movements and

words to display his negative comments and the advantages of encouraging

comments. Then the man was asked if that performance could represent his feelings.

He agreed. The next person to come on stage was a little girl who was guided to

share her happiest time with her father: when he bought her a toy. The emcee then

said that father was very important in children's mind. The drama team also replayed

her happy feelings.

Then a professional storyteller, "Uncle Hung Chai 雄仔叔叔[2]", told a story

about his relationship with his own father and with his son. He recalled several

memorable experiences that he had shared with his father when he was small and

described some of the stories he had with his son. He had had a close and memorable

relationship with his father, and was then enjoying his own fatherhood.

After the performances was the last part of the Celebration – "Enjoy a walk

with your children in the sunset". The activity aimed at getting parents to walk with

their children and enjoy their time of being together. But it turned out to be a parade

with a crowd of parents and children walking around the park.

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[2] "Uncle Hung Chai" was a professional storyteller who went to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools to tell stories and organize workshops.

"New Fatherhood" as Resurrection of Traditional Notion of Masculinity and Family

Are "new good men" and "new good father" notions promoting gender equality and liberating men from conventional oppressive role? In a patriarchal society, emphasis of the family often means male dominance as discussed in Chapter II. The message brought about by the Annual Celebration was found to fall into this category. The strategic choice of adopting Confucian notion of masculinity in determining the date of the Annual Celebration was already a symbol of resurrecting the conventional masculine role in the family, needless to say the other elements in the Celebration.

The central message was clear – from the words of the emcee, the counter games, to the survey report – wage work was considered the most important notion in fatherhood. The emcee's story in particular was an epitome. Although he talked about how he got used to being a househusband and stay-at-home dad and later found enjoyment in paternity, he spoke of his re-employment as a triumph and it was a happy-ending. In the stall games, three of the stalls mentioned work and the ability to support the family economically as one of father's roles. The survey report proposed that the society should encourage more after-work time or leave for fathers to carry out their paternal duties. All these reinforced the cultural ideal that fathers'

primary duty was to be the breadwinner, while paternal role was secondary to full-time employment.

When it came to child-caring and housework, the father did not appear as the one who mainly shoulder these duties. For instance, in the survey report, fathers were found to enjoy *playing* with their children. Fathers thus could choose which activity to get involved in fulfilling their familial role. So who was the one to look after the children and to do the housework? Statistics showed that mothers and wives did the most part of it no matter they held full-time employment or not (Census and Statistics Department 2004). Fathers were also thought of being the educator and the decision-maker for children as indicated in the stall games. These roles were regarded as the rights of fathers, meaning that the authority of fathers should be maintained or resurrected in the family. These ideas of a good father were never new at all but just reinforcing the existing gender relations.

The "new good men" and "new good father" notions did not liberate men from traditional roles and bring diversity to masculinities. As discussed above, economic requirement on men still prevailed in LHC's message. The authority of men was also emphasized. The educational role and authority of the father was highlighted in the performance of those "new good fathers". Filial piety was the message brought out by the song "Thinking of parents' love". Fathers claimed that they knew what was

good to the children and thus children should listen to their fathers even though they might not agree at the moment. It was a performance constructing the legitimacy of paternal authority. This legitimacy then brought up the second theme of the performance – harmony within the family. Interpreting this theme together with the last scene of this performance – the spouses and children of these fathers all went up to the stage and stood behind the fathers, supporting them singing – we can conclude that they were constructing a harmonious family with the authority of the father supported by wives and children. Because the father knows what is good to the children, his authority should be respected in order to establish a harmonious family without argument or negotiation. Even though the father was acting against the will of the children forcefully, he was being good to them. The traditional notions of men to succeed in career and to be head of the harmonious family (i.e. to succeed in keeping wife and children under control) were reiterated in this "new" discourse.

Although new elements of doing housework, taking care of, playing and interacting with children, as well as caring for the wife were added into the "new good men", and "new good father" notions, it was to re-instate a new hegemonic standard of masculinity instead of bringing diversity. The "new" hegemonic standards did not eliminate the patriarchál elements of fatherhood.

In addition, the "complete" notion of family was upheld in the Annual Celebration 2004. The final part of the singing performance in the Celebration when the performing singers' wives and children appeared on stage to stand at their back created a sense of harmony of the "complete family". These fathers on stage, who succeeded in maintaining a "complete family", with wives and children supporting them, received admiration, support and praise from their family members, peers and the other audience made up of the general public.

LHC's Media Campaign

Although the "complete family" was upheld as the standard or the goal for their clients, the reality was that the majority of LHC's clients were facing marriage, family, and/or employment problems. What did LHC do to serve these clients? How did LHC see their service-users? As a social service provider, LHC had to help these "problematic" men get out of their difficulties and hopefully get back the "perfect" marriage and "complete family". Besides its role as a social service provider, LHC also aimed to raise public awareness on the needs of men, especially those men who were facing difficulties, and to eliminate negative impressions on men. Thus they often liaised with the media to publish news on some of their clients to spread more positive messages. Two kinds of examples were provided by the Centre to the media for making features: full-time father/househusband and non-resident divorced fathers.

At the same time, members were very willing to accept this new identity by telling others their stories and achievements in becoming "new good men". As a result, although LHC upheld the conventional marriage and family as the ideal, paradoxically it made use of the transformation of these "problematic" fathers into "new good fathers" to push forward society's acceptance of men's and fathers' rights. At the same time, with the public attention on men's needs, LHC could then continue its men's service financially. Below I will analyze how LHC adopted the media to promote its values as well as how it viewed its service-users.

When interviewed, full-time fathers usually mentioned how they overcame the difficult period of unemployment; how they got used to the bad comments upon their unemployment status; how they adapted and managed housework and child-care. They mentioned how unemployment took away their self-esteem and how the social workers had helped them. The story sometimes ended up that the men accepted what their full-time father / househusband status. These stories, although included "happy endings", still conveyed the message that full-time father and househusband were marginalized statuses for men as the protagonists needed to "accept" themselves and to help others to regain their self-esteem. In the stories of unemployed men, the fathers were not portrayed as happy full-time fathers or househusbands, but only as men who could adapt to failure with the help of the Centre. Some of them only

showed their back in the photos, further reinforcing the stigma. In the news features,

some LHC's social workers were interviewed to give advice to unemployed men in

general. The advice was seldom similar to the common opinion to unemployed

women – enjoy being housewives – but seeking help from social workers, getting

retraining opportunity, applying social security if financially in need, avoid negative

thinking upon losing financial power and so on. It reflects the common gender

stereotypical view that work constitutes a man's identity.

For non-resident divorced fathers, cases in which fathers were rejected by

ex-wives to meet their children were often selected for media interview. For instance,

a LHC's pamphlet to promote public acceptance of non-resident divorced fathers

included a news features on a non-resident divorced father who still cared for his

children. The man's ex-wife was granted custody of their daughter. Although not

living together, he always thought of the damage made to his daughter by the divorce.

So he wanted to devote more time and effort to his daughter. But his ex-wife always

used some excuses to reject his visit. His daughter who longed for meeting him

always felt disappointed. Thus, he tried not to meet her anymore, hoping that his

ex-wife could give her a happy life. However, after some time, his ex-wife told him

that their daughter became very rebellious and did very badly in school examinations.

He thought that he could not be silent anymore and tried hard to care for his daughter,

trying to give her a "warm" family when she stayed at his apartment once or twice a month. He cooked for her and her friends, played sports with her and so on. The story ends with the daughter's improved academic results and conduct.

In this narration, the father portrayed was different from the traditional image. He was caring, patient, and self-regulating. The wife was blamed as the person who neglected the welfare of the daughter by not allowing her to see her father, not taking care of her well (thus leading to her behavioural and academic problems), perpetuating hatred in the daughter against the father. Then the stereotypical role of the father as a leader and saviour appeared. The father was the rational parent, who placed the benefits of the daughter first. He was also the educator and counsellor who directed his daughter back to normal. He was the one to save her daughter.

The media exposure of full-time fathers, househusbands, unemployed men, and non-resident divorced fathers was a performance, in Goffman's term, that aimed at creating a desirable front to the general public to earn their support and acceptance. Hegemonic masculinity was displayed in the stories of men overcoming difficulties including unemployment and change of gender and familial role, and saving their children out of crisis. The images that fathers were capable, flexible, tough, persistent, brave, and sacrificing were exhibited in the carefully selected media coverage. Hegemonic and conventional masculinity was reinforced.

For the interviewed fathers, in delivering their stories in the framework described above, they were also exposed to and reinforced by the approach and value of LHC. They considered themselves "problematic" and "deviant" while at the same time treasuring the hegemonic masculinity emphasized and praised in the media coverage. This can be shown in the section below on the ritualization of LHC's discussion groups. Thus, through ritualization of the media campaign in which interviewed fathers narrated and repeated their stories in the designated performance, they internalized the hegemony of conventional marriage, family, and masculine subjectivity.

The selection of unconventional fatherhoods in the media campaign does not signify the promotion of diversity or paradigm shift of LHC. Rather, it was reproducing the marginality of these subjectivities. These fathers were portrayed to encounter problems and difficulties due to their employment, familial, and marital status, which already symbolize deviance. In addition, they were clandestinely compared to those conventional, hegemonic fathers with "perfect" marriage and "complete family" so that their stories ended with "restoration to normal" or situations with elements of the conventional family.

Problematizing Family and Fatherhood

LHC's discourse on masculinity and fatherhood "problematized", on one hand, their clients and, on the other hand, the "complete nuclear family". "Problematized" here carries two meanings: the first one applies to the clients, meaning that the Centre considered their clients having problems, abnormal, not up to the standard in their familial, marital and paternal status; the second meaning applies to the concept of family, meaning that the discourse of the Centre paradoxically destabilizes the mainstream notion of "complete family".

Although the notion of "complete family" was upheld in the Annual Celebration 2004, the majority of the clients of the Centre were men who faced marriage and family difficulties: some were divorced fathers; some were in conflict with their wives; some had difficulties in getting along with their children. In contrast to the fathers on stage who received admiration, support and praise, these clients were thought of as "problematic" men and fathers who needed help from the Centre. The Annual Celebration 2004 is thus a ritual to worship the "complete family" and to marginalize "problematic" families and fathers.

Apart from the Festival, the worship of the "complete family" was demonstrated in LHC's design of family activity. Once, at the end of a meeting of the district-based group, the social worker in charge, Clive, distributed a leaflet about

a hiking organized by LHC. It was to urge members to go hiking with their children and spouses so as to improve their relationship. Thus, Clive asked the members to consider going with their spouses. However, since most of the members of the group were divorced men, some of them immediately challenged Clive by saying that they had already divorced and asked him to provide female partners for them. Although they were speaking in a joking way, Clive was embarrassed by the lack of consideration of the members' family status in organizing the activity. It indicates that LHC organized activities with the "complete family" in its mind. Family, to them, was the "complete" one. It was the "orthodox" type of family while divorce was deviant or abnormal.

In contrasting divorced-fatherhood and "complete family", a dichotomy of divorced-fatherhood as deviant fatherhood versus fatherhood in "complete family" as normal fatherhood was formed. Divorced fathers were seen to have marital problems with their spouses. Thus, in LHC, the minority of service-users who succeeded in restoring good relationship with their wives at the edge of divorce were taken as exemplars in the group and were often praised in the group meetings. Even for those clients who maintained bad relationship with their wives but at least succeeded in preventing a divorce, the social workers would consider that a good

result. For the majority of members who were divorced, both the social workers and the members themselves considered them problematic.

Nevertheless, the effort of LHC in changing the social stigma against divorced (non-resident) fathers paradoxically problematized and destabilized the concept of family in the conventional sense. The exemplars of divorced fathers brought up to the media aimed to tell the public that these fathers could be very caring and responsible and that children in such kind of family could also grow up healthily. Therefore, although "complete family" was worshipped and considered superior, divorced family with active participation of father was not that problematic. Paradoxically, this campaign widened the family category with the recognition and inclusion of separated and divorced one.

LHC's Discussion Groups

LHC set up some discussion groups with the aim to gather its clients with similar social and personal backgrounds to support each other after the courses, workshops, and/or counselling. Social workers brought the idea of "new good men" to the groups and set up certain practices to further change their members or consolidate what they had learnt. Meanings of these practices might or might not be mentioned explicitly. But they became rituals of the groups which were carried out in every meeting. Thus, these practices often had been internalized in individual

clients through ritualization, leading these men believe that they were "new good men" and "new good fathers".

In the analysis below, I will discuss how the "new good men" and "new good father" identity was internalized through ritualization in the discussion groups based on the field data from my fieldwork in the two discussion groups of LHC: the district-based discussion group, and the Triumph Group. The district-based group was situated in a northern district far away from the downtown. The majority of the population in the district was poor. Members of the district-based group were of the residents of the district, with their backgrounds more homogenous than those of the Triumph Group. The majority of the district-based group members were unemployed and working class men. On the contrary, Triumph Group comprised of male members from different walks of life: professionals, businessmen, blue-collar workers, and the unemployed. In terms of marital and parental statuses, members of both groups were not much different. There were married, divorced resident, and divorced non-resident fathers in both groups. Both groups had their own committees. For the district-based group, the social worker in charge took a more active role in initiating and organizing activities. But Triumph Group was more established as members were spontaneous in organizing and participating different activities of the

group. The social worker in charge only served as the facilitator and the bridge between the group and LHC.

Ritualizing "New Good Men"

The two groups differed in their formats of their regular meetings. The district-based group met once a month on Sundays while Triumph Group had their meeting every Tuesday evening. The social worker of the district-based group would plan the topics to discuss for every meeting. Often the topics were around men's needs and situations. Then members would share their opinions and experiences. In the sharing, they would inform others of their recent marital and familial situations and would sometimes seek help and advice from their fellow members. Members of the Triumph Group, on the other hand, ran their weekly meeting more spontaneously. In the weekly meeting of the Triumph Group, except when they invited some guest speakers or singers, a large part of the meeting was made up of sharing one by one about their personal matters like work, family, marriage, and parenting. Members called the sharing session "the weather report" (天氣報告), which consisted of two meanings: (1) They were very concerned about each other's recent situation, just as much as they were concerned about the weather; and (2) the group encouraged the male participants to share their situations, problems, emotions and feelings which could change like weather. "The weather report" allowed everyone participating in

the meeting to share what they wanted to share, allocating equal chance for everyone to speak, regardless of personality (talkative or quiet), class, occupation, and so on. Members were allowed to stay silent if they refused to say or had nothing particular to say. As the Triumph Group was consisted of members from all walks of life, the ritual of "weather report" matched with the goal of fostering equality among members in the group. The social worker once overtly recognized that every member attending the meeting was indeed contributing to the group either with their professional knowledge, experience, or even time (for those who just sat there silently). It reminded me of the custom of *sihk puhn* (eating from the common pot) in the village of San Tin in Hong Kong as described by James Watson (1987). Villagers, from the very wealthy to the very poor, were made equal by eating from the same basin which contained various kinds of food (Watson 1987). Cohesion of the community was then fostered (Watson 1987). The "weather report" was a similar ritual. It did not happen in the district-based group which consisted of members of nearly homogenous social class.

The contents of sharing personal matters, however, did not differ much between the two groups. Members shared that they were praised or awarded by their employers; they talked about how they learnt to improve spousal relation; they mentioned their happy time with their children; they told the others what they had

read in books teaching men how to understand women better so as to improve their marriage relation. They also shared marriage, parenting, work, and health problems in the group. Other members would provide their advice, opinions, and comments. During the sharing session, members of both groups also shared personal feelings and emotions. The practice matched with the "new good men" notion of being sensitive to others and one's own feelings, not the traditional men's impersonal talk on politics or women. For instance, a member of Triumph Group who had a distant relationship with his daughter often recalled that she scolded him in front of their domestic worker. He was very sad as he loved his daughter very much although he did not express that directly. Every time when he told the conflicts with his daughter to the group, he looked very depressed and sad. Other members then tried to comfort him by offering solutions or alternative thinking in considering the matter.

Nevertheless, when the formal meeting ended, members of both groups would have a meal (for district-based group, it was lunch; for Triumph Group, it was late dinner) together in some nearby Chinese restaurants. At that time, the topics they chatted were different from what they talked about in the formal meetings. They included politics, stock market, women's appearance and virtues, public policies, history, and so on which were stereotypical topics of men. For instance, a member of Triumph Group shared that he liked a woman news anchor very much because she

was pretty and at the same time she was willing to leave a well-paid job and became a reporter investigating poor situations of the people. This led to a discussion on the appearance and virtues of different women celebrities'. Another example: a member of the district-based group once told me his experience on the stock market, which led the whole group talking about their views on different stocks. In these informal gatherings, members did not talk much about their personal and emotional problems as in the formal meetings.

Thus, those formal weekly meetings of both groups were similar and were scenes that made the members "new good men" who could share and express their feelings. Members were allowed chances and time to talk one by one. Interruptions were discouraged by the social worker, and some senior members. The social worker would even ask members who chatted secretly to pay attention to the member who was talking. These rules and rituals led members to listen and attend to others' words and emotions. However, in informal gatherings, they might not attend to the one who was talking. So there could be several small group discussions at the same time.

The rule and setting in the formal meeting created the scene for the "new good men" identity for each member and moulded them the appropriate way to talk, listen, respond, and react, as well as restricted the contents of their discussions. The formal meeting is indeed a ritual that was separated from the everyday habit of those male

members, according to Turner's (1992) concept of ritual, with the aim of acquiring the "new good men" identity. Ritual acts like attending to others' words and emotions, and speaking one by one symbolized some of the features of "new good men" – paying respect to others, and emotionally expressive and attentive. Through practicing the ritual acts, LHC aimed to change the members to embody those "new good men" values. Three main ritual acts were identified, namely change, praise, and frankness. They were repeatedly mentioned and practiced in the discussion groups, leading the actors, and the audience believe that the actors themselves had been transformed to "new good men".

Change

Change was the most frequently occurring topic in their sharing. This was one of the most important ritual acts of LHC service-users. Often they mentioned that they had been just like ordinary men who did not take care of children, did not know how to communicate with children, and had bad relationship with wife before coming to the group. Their marriage and family were in danger. After attending the group and listening to the advice from fellow group members, they learnt and changed to the present "new good men". Marriage problems were solved by adopting the "new good men" practices. For instance, Edward (aged 46, resident

married father, hospital worker) once thanked the chair of Triumph Group, Lionel, in a meeting for teaching him the way to save his marriage:

> Lionel taught me to send bouquets, and called my wife to say some sweet words. I found it quite troublesome but it works! The relationship between us becomes better.

Help from the Centre was also frequently mentioned during the meetings. For example, Jason (above 50, resident married father, home-maker) recalled his experience of nearly breaking his family by gambling. He was thankful to LHC for saving his family:

> I was unemployed after my injury. I gambled and was in debt. One night, I would like to go to casino in Macau again. But at that time I saw "Love and Help" hotline commercial on television. I thought that I could not gamble anymore. Then I called the hotline and received counselling from the social workers. Now I am a house-husband and my wife has forgiven me.

Relationship with children could also benefit from the "new good men" practice. Xavier (50, non-resident divorced father, business owner) shared his experience of building close relationship with his daughter after divorce:

> After divorce, the relationship with my daughter had been very bad. She hated me and did not talk to me. After several years' efforts, the relationship

was recovered. Last weekend, I went to watch the sunset with my daughter. I enjoyed it very much!

Change also involved the acceptance of new gender role. Ben (43, resident divorced father, financial planner) revealed his painful yet successful learning experience of taking care of the household after his wife left the family:

Before divorce, I did not need to take care of the children. So when I needed to take care of them, then I knew there is a lot of niggling stuff to take care of. I learnt from the beginning and now I can manage.

The identity of "new good men" was established as the opposite of "old bad men" whom they wanted to change. The identity could not stand on itself but was created in relation to other "bad men". For instance, from the above narrations, ignorance in taking care of and communicating with children, bad marital relationship, and inability to manage financial problems were all qualified as characteristics of "ordinary men", "other men", and "traditional men". It was common to hear them talking about other "bad men" in the meetings. For example, when members of the Triumph Group commented on an assault of a kid ordered by his step-mother who was angry with her husband (the kid's father) keeping mistresses, they condemned both the woman and man. After criticizing that the father was irresponsible as he kept mistresses and did not take care of his children,

they praised themselves and said that they represented only a few of the male population. The chair added that as responsible men they had the duty to pass good values to the next generation. It shows that they were really proud of their "new good men" identity and felt the responsibility to promote the notion.

The ritual act of narrating change could strengthen members' communal identity as "new good men". No matter how different they were in their "old selves", after the change, they became successful and assembled under the "new good men" notion. Moreover, in front of some new members or guests to the groups who might be experiencing similar problems as they were in the past, this ritual act could encourage the new-comers to join the "new good men" group and learn to load those practices.

Praising

Praise was a way to unite members, to reinforce target behaviours of "new good men", to strengthen individual members' confidence, and to appreciate members' achievements. The ritual act of praising created a collective and supporting atmosphere among the members. It was also a way to distinguish these "new good men" from ordinary men who often held competitive attitude towards other men.

Social workers introduced clapping in the group to praise particular members' "good" behaviours. When guests or new members attended the group meeting, when

some members had contributed to the group, or when certain members displayed target behaviours of "new good men", social workers would ask the attending members to clap to show their appreciation and acceptance of the target people. For instance, a member of the district-based group, Harris, was interviewed by a television telling his story of forgiving his ex-wife who had had an extra-marital affair. The social worker showed the programme to the members in a group meeting. Harris's positive behaviours like forgiving his ex-wife, taking care of his children, and studying hard to apply for jobs were praised by the social worker and the attending members. He then became the protagonist with members appreciating him as a successful "new good man" by clapping. Another member of the district-based group, Martin, was the target of clapping when he announced to the group that he gained an employment and left the social security net. He received applause from the group again when he was promoted after three months' hard work. Frank of the Triumph Group gained applause from his fellow members when he thanked them for helping him improve his marital relation.

Often these applauses were initiated by the social worker or a particular member of the group. After some members mentioned his "new good men" behaviours or achievements, the social worker or some member would suggest giving applause to them to show their support, encouragement, and appreciation. The

ritual act was significant in creating the "new good men" identity. On one hand, it allowed members to display their appreciation of others' achievements; on the other hand, it gave the target member reinforcement of exhibiting target behaviours and meeting the "new good men" standard. During clapping, all members, including those who clapped and the one who received the applause, were "new good men" and they were of one collective identity.

Frankness

Many group members stressed to me that they were frank in sharing their difficulties, experiences, advice, and emotions to others, which is one of the important criteria to be "new good men" as proposed by LHC. The members often told me, "Men outside the group are very utilitarian, unlike us who are frank", or "Men outside the group seldom talk about their problems and failure since they cannot lose face in front of other men". This "new good men" feature was reflected when group members asked their peers for advice on their problems, and they shared their own experiences without hesitation. For instance, in my first visit to the district-based group, after a guest, Leo, finished sharing that he had communication problems with his ex-wife, Jones immediately asked why communication problem came out and at the same time he shared his marriage problems in the past. Afterwards, Timothy actively shared that he and his wife had communication

problems and the problems created consequently. Moreover, in my second visit to the district-based group, after watching the interview of Chuck telling his divorce and his single-fatherhood, other members with similar experience actively shared their stories. Chuck told me that frankness was the characteristic of their group and it was of particular importance.

Frankness is a ritual of "new good men". "New good men" are expected to share with their peers their difficulties, successes, concerns, and emotions honestly. They should not be afraid of showing their weaknesses. Group members exercised this ritual habitually and even somewhat unconsciously. At the beginning, the sharing behaviour was carried out with conscious efforts or out of group pressure. For instance the guest Leo, mentioned above, originally was not willing to reveal his marriage problems and his relationship with his ex-wife in the group. But after many members asked him, he finally told them the reasons behind. Some members were also very reserved in telling their situations and problems when they first joined the group. They often just listened and said nothing. When they joined the groups more often and noticed that others spoke of their own problems, together with some encouragement from the social workers, these reserved members began to open up and mentioned their problems in the group.

Apart from a ritual act to train the members, revealing one's own experiences in the group was a rite of passage to the "new good men" identity. As "traditional" manhood does not encourage men to share their own problems with other men, without passing through this rite, no one was qualified to be "new good men". Practically, members of the discussion groups were strangers to one another before joining the groups. Sharing frankly became very important in building up members' collective identity. In addition, through sharing one's own problems and frankly giving comments and advice to the fellow members, the "new good men" practices could be more easily adopted and internalized in individual members.

Although the "new good men" practices claimed to be a departure from the conventional masculinity, these ritual acts indeed reinforced the patriarchal thinking in the service-users of LHC rather than transforming them. Indeed, the fact that these rituals being adopted by the members indicated that they did not contradict with their existing masculinity. The field data indicated that the ritual act indeed concealed the patriarchal practice of controlling the family and children, and competition among members. Conventional masculinity was remained untouched. I would like to argue that the "new good men" was in fact a sugar-coating of patriarchal thinking which aimed to resurrect men's power and status within the family.

"New Good Men" as Patriarchal Cover

The discourse of "change" did not necessarily indicate a departure from conventional and patriarchal fatherhood. Being a "new good man" does not necessarily mean leaving the patriarchal mentality behind as claimed by the members. These "new good men" still shared male-dominant thought with "the other men". A member of the Triumph Group, Frank, often shared his successful story of saving his marriage from the edge of divorce. He frequently quarrelled with his wife over financial issues as well as children's matters. After listening to the advice of his fellow members, he tried to please his wife by sending her flowers, and saying some sweet words to her. He was very proud and happy of being able to keep his family intact. Yet he explicitly said in the group meeting that those acts were really meaningless but to save his family he had to please his wife with those pointless matters. Thus, we can see that the ritual act of mentioning change to "new good men" identity did not mean actual change of the patriarchal thinking. Rather than respecting or treasuring his wife's feelings, Frank held a utilitarian attitude towards the "new good men" act to fulfil his familial goal.

These "new good fathers" also held dominant thinking towards their children. Once in a regular meeting of the district-based group, the social worker in charge initiated a discussion over youngsters. His aim was to teach the participants to

respect and communicate with their children more rather than imposing their values on them. The fathers, however, vigorously complained that the young generation was incapable, not obedient, without life goal, and so on. During small group discussions, some fathers shared the rebellious behaviours of their children when they wanted to control them with paternal authority. In the meeting, some female service-users of LHC were present and tried to share their keys to being intimate with their children and how to understand them. Yet these fathers continued to be furious and the social worker in charge felt disappointed at not being able to deliver his message.

The same complaints over youngsters also occurred in Triumph Group. Some members of Triumph Group had distant relationship with their children. A few of them shared in the meeting and thus triggered some negative comments towards youngsters from some of the participants. Some fathers, however, hid their distant relationships with some of their children and just shared the close relationships. I did not notice in the regular meeting that some of my informants had more than one child until I interviewed them. This showed that the discourse of "change" in the "new good men" identity was selective in nature and hid the conventional and patriarchal manhood and fatherhood.

Moreover, members of both the district-based group and Triumph Group held stricter standard towards their daughters. They thought that girls would get hurt more

easily. They particularly worried that their daughters would have sex too early, which these fathers considered as a "loss". They acknowledged that males were legitimate to have more sex partners due to biology. Although they justified their strict control over daughters with worries of them getting pregnant and thus their lives ruined, their discriminatory thinking about male and female sexuality was undeniably inherited from the patriarchal control on female's virginity.

The ritual act of praise, on the surface, created a unified appreciative atmosphere among the "new good men"; but underneath, it induced achievement-oriented attitude among participants. LHC intentionally adopted praise as a way to boost members' self-esteem. This ritual practice encouraged some members to disclose their achievements in employment and family. In doing so, these members communicated to the group that they were distinctive from other members.

Achievement in employment was one of the distinctive features talked about. Martin of the district-based group often mentioned his achievements in the meeting. Once he said that he was praised by his supervisor in his work. Several months later he told the group that he was promoted to the post of supervisor due to his good working performance. He often mentioned that he had had a prosperous time when he could take his family to travel abroad several times a year. After passing through

a hard time of unemployment, he could rise again since he had the knowledge, experience, and ability to handle his job and colleague relation. Frank, member of the Triumph Group, also mentioned several times in the group that he was praised and awarded by his supervisor in addition to his successful experience in saving his family from the edge of divorce.

Parenting style and family status were other sources of distinctiveness. Jones of the district-based group told his fellow members during a sharing session on parenting methods that he was an open father who did not impose his own values on his children while many fathers said that they restricted their children a lot. He claimed that he did not stop his son and daughter to experience sex, unlike the other members. During the in-depth interview, Jones emphasized to me that he was not "a case" referred to the group by a social worker like the others, meaning that he was not "problematic". He joined the group spontaneously in order to repay the financial help he received from LHC. Terence, who was a founding member of Triumph Group and a married father, told me privately that he had a happy family with no problem and thus he wanted to leave Triumph Group to set up a men's rights group. Although he still occasionally attended the meeting of Triumph Group, he invited other men with similar family backgrounds to join him to fight for men's rights.

Cultural capital could be an element that divided the members of the Triumph Group. In mentioning his experience in holding a mini concert for an amateur folk song singer, Wayne criticized the concert of being too vulgar because the singer chose too many Cantonese songs to please the audience. Then he said that even some of the members of the Triumph Group who did not listen to English songs liked the English songs sung by the singer. From his narration, Wayne implied that English songs were more sophisticated than Cantonese songs and members who listened to English songs were culturally superior. In the meeting when the district-based group visited the Triumph Group, some men who had higher educational level somewhat dominated the meeting. A lawyer talked a lot about his concern on men's rights; a financial planner mentioned that he would like to help men with financial difficulty; a man who had studied in the United States said that he was well-informed of the men's movement. These professionals showed a sense of superiority in offering help to the other men. The social worker in charge finally had to reaffirm the equality among members by saying that all members were contributing to the group with their ability, experience-sharing, and time to soothe the working class members.

The harmonious and supporting atmosphere appeared in the ritual act of praise concealed the competitive, achievement- and distinctiveness-oriented attitude in the discussion groups. Some members were eager to show that they were capable or

different from other "problematic" men. Conventional masculinity did exist among these "new good men".

Frankness was named as the key feature of these men's groups but again, there were some limitations. Nelson, a founding member of the Triumph Group, remarked that frank sharing was just the appearance since sharing of inner feelings was difficult among the members. For example, when he told the chair of the Triumph Group, Lionel, who was also his secondary school classmate, about his marital problem, Lionel at once blamed him. Lionel believed that it was Nelson's extra-marital affair that had caused the problem. Nelson felt that frankly putting his anxiety forward in the group only resulted in being scolded. He did not get help or understanding.

Nelson thought that the competitive thinking among men pushed him away from sharing his inner feelings frankly. He was a teacher who earned about $90,000 a month together with his wife. After divorce, he quit his job and could only find another teaching post with less than $30,000 a month. He did not want his children to lower their living standard, but, he found it very hard to cover the expenses with his reduced salary. He felt that he could not share his anxiety about the financial difficulty with his fellow group members as many of them were earning much less than he was.

Even I did not disclose that (his financial hardship) in the group. I cannot do so since many of the group members are of lower class, earning several thousand dollars [a month] only. Some of them are even unemployed. I cannot tell them that I cannot afford the family expenses with my income. I earn a lot more than they do. They would just say that I was showing off if I told them. *That's the stupidity of men.* I can only complain to you but cannot complain in the group. I will only be scolded [if I do].

Therefore, Nelson only shared his health problems with his fellow group members. He said that they would give him some health tips. But if he told them his financial difficulty, he thought that others would be silent as they would think that Nelson was exaggerating his hardship. As a result, the deepest hardship was kept to himself and frankness was restricted to some superficial matters.

Not all members thought like Nelson. As mentioned in the previous section, some members did not hesitate to share their achievements and superiority; others shared their problems. Yet, frankness did not mean sharing without reservation. Members seldom disclosed their weaknesses and emotions in front of the group. They shared problems (marital, parenting, employment, and financial) with their fellow members but not their existing weaknesses (they only mentioned their wrong doings in the past). Emotional support (like patting) lacked even when some

members were sad in their face (I never noticed any one of them cried in the group).

Frankness was limited to exchange of ideas, sharing problems and opinions.

Even when members were being frank in criticizing some other members, the social worker would stop them from doing so. Once a member admitted that he could not apologize to his daughter in words and so he chose to wash dishes to compensate for his wrong doings. Other members then told him to apologize and they themselves could and would do so. Apart from being frank in offering suggestions, this behaviour was also a display of achievement of "new good men" practice. Finally, the social worker told them to stop criticizing the member.

In a nutshell, ritual acts practiced in the discussion groups of LHC contained patriarchal and conventional masculinities. While some ritual acts, including frankness and change, could not be exercised to the planned degree and yield the planned results, other, like praise, strengthened conventional competitive masculine feature. Rather than saying that the rituals could transform the men to the "new good men" as envisioned by LHC, the patriarchal masculinity, in turn, twisted those ritual acts to serve its ends.

Performing "New Good Men"

The above mentioned ritual acts created the "new good men" identity and community. Members of the men's groups fostered these "new good men" fronts in

other counterparts when they together created the atmosphere. By acting so,

members believed that they were the "new good men", thus further consolidating the

behaviours. It matched closely with what Goffman suggested: "He can be sincerely

convinced that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality, when his

audience is also convinced in this way about the show he puts on" (Goffman

1959:15). By doing so, they gained the individual and group identity of "new good

men".

Ritualization occurred in the regular meetings trained the actors to carry out the

ritual practices without much conscious effort. In front of the audience, performance

with the intention to display the "new good men" identity was carried out. In the

section below, I will document using thick description a weekly meeting of the

Triumph Group when some members of a housewife's group visited. The meeting

demonstrated the performance of "new good men" identity.

In the weekly meeting, ten members of the Triumph Group attended the

meeting together with Ben, the social worker in charge. Before the meeting started,

some of members set up chairs by putting them in a circle. Others took out some

snacks and drinks and placed them on a table in the middle of the circle. When the

members of the housewives' group came, Ben immediately talked with the social

worker of the housewives' group while the vice-chair, Adam, and a committee

member of the Triumph Group offered some snacks and drinks to their guests and

distributed name tags to them. When every one had settled down, Adam introduced

himself and asked all the others to do the same. Ben initiated the discussion by

suggesting the two groups to share ideas on the criteria of good men and women.

Although the suggestion was agreed by two Triumph Group's members, participants

of the meeting did not discuss that topic in the beginning.

A member of the women's group introduced their group. The group was

established on 4 March 2001, with the aim to raise society's awareness of the needs

of housewives. Their missions included recognition of housewives' unpaid labour,

request for more educational opportunities for housewives so as to teach their

children to be good citizens, concern for housewives' occupational disease, and

urging the government to set up a retirement scheme for housewives. Adam praised

them for taking care of the families so that men could strive for their career. Then he

introduced the Triumph Group in return.

A member of the Triumph Group said that he improved a lot in handling family

affairs and his marital relation after joining the Group. He mentioned that he then got

some recognition in his work with his family settled. Some of the members of the

housewives' group smiled. Adam thought that it was very valuable for men to gather

together once a week. The gatherings could help them release their stress and learn

some extra knowledge. The chair of the Triumph Group, Lionel, who often spoke a lot in the weekly meetings and gave a lot of advice to the fellow members, started to speak at that time by asking in a joking way whether he could join the housewives' group because he did housework too. A member of the housewives' group said that they did have male members and they knew that men did housework too. She said that all people having done unpaid housework were eligible to join. Adam said that he did housework too and a lot of Triumph Group's members did housework.

Donald, who founded a men's rights group, asked how the housewives' group contacted some government officials. He thought that family problems were not going to be solved if only women's problems were taken care of but leaving men's problems untouched. Members of the housewives' group said that they mainly depended on their social worker in charge. The social worker then explained that they had to come up with an issue each year from members' discussion, and to collect enough information before meeting with legislative councillors or government officials. She had to lead the members to make plans.

Lionel chatted with Ben for a while and suggested participants to exchange ideas on gender relations. He started the discussion by sharing his bad experience of his frequent quarrelling with his ex-wife for his sons' schoolwork. He emphasized the importance of familial harmony to the society and that the Triumph Group was

working towards that goal. A member of the housewives' group complained about her husband. After work, he just sat in front of the television and ignored the children. Although he explained that he had been exhausted from work and wanted to relax at home, his wife did not accept that. She mentioned that she was also exhausted after doing housework until late at night and had to get up early in the morning to bring children to school. Lionel suggested all participants giving applause to this woman. All members clapped except Donald who was reading the pamphlets of the housewives' group. Another member of the housewives' group followed up with similar complaints towards her husband. Donald then joined in the discussion by saying that not all men ignored children. Lionel interrupted him by saying that they should let their guests speak more but Donald insisted to continue.

Donald stressed that he cared for his sons very much. He wanted to teach them mathematics but his wife stopped him from doing so. He listened to his wife and did not insist. He said that his sons often wanted to see him. He mentioned that his son got a medal in the swimming gala and that he did pay attention to that small achievement of his son. However, at that time, a member of the housewives' group interrupted and corrected him by saying that the medal was a big achievement for his son, not a small one. Donald stopped for a while and then continued to stress that he was a responsible father and different from other men. He said that he had been

interviewed by many media while other news about men was often talking about negative aspects.

A member of the housewives' group then switched the topic to interpersonal communication between husbands and wives. She found that it was good to talk about personal interests with husbands instead of family or children's matters. However, some members of the Triumph Group responded by explaining that men worked too hard and so did not want to talk much after returning home and that men and women were different in their discussion topics. Donald agreed with his members but emphasized that he would definitely accompany his wife even though he had been exhausted from work. Members of the housewives' group said that they understood the feelings of their husbands and so tried not to speak too much to them. Then members of both groups talked about their spouses' responses after knowing that they joined the groups.

Lionel tried to summarize and analyze the discussions. He said that men and women should learn from their parents since women of that generation could sacrifice but women nowadays would not even tolerate men who did not do housework. So if women nowadays thought that their husbands had extra-marital affairs, they would think of divorce and hurt the family and children. So he suggested Triumph Group cooperating with the housewives' group to change the

social atmosphere which stressed too much on individual's rights rather than the family. He mentioned about his divorce, saying that he did not know how to manage the relationship with his ex-wife at that time. An old woman of the housewives' group said that she did endure a lot in her marriage. She only started her own life by studying in evening schools after her children had grown up. Donald said that men should learn from women as women had better social skills. He stressed that he and his friends were not bad men. A member of the housewives' group said that parents of her generation had not learnt about the ways to be parents as their own parents were not good role models for them. Men of that generation were patriarchal, and not willing to communicate with women. Ben wanted to change the discussion from condemning and complaining men to discrimination against men. He raised a notion: society recognized maternal love but did not value father's love. In his opinion, most often paternal love was associated with breadwinning only and fathers could not experience being loved. Donald shared that he played with his sons and hugged them. His sons commented that their father could be very playful while serious at work. Donald said that his sons would share their own feelings with him but not with his wife because she did not understand them. Lionel then openly criticized Donald of thinking that all men were like him. The discussion then stopped for a moment. A new member of the Triumph Group tried to soothe the atmosphere by asking Donald

to tell the media his secrets of maintaining good family relations. Facing the challenges from Lionel, Donald did not respond to the comment from the new member but stressed that he was not showing off and he just wanted to learn from the discussion with the housewives' group. Then he said that he wanted to change the existing fatherhood in Hong Kong because men of his father's generation did not do well in paternity.

Adam then asked their guests what criteria they would use to define a good man. Members of the housewives' group thought that good men should be able to communicate with their wives and know their wives' needs. A member of the Triumph Group complained that women would look down upon men who did housework and women often brought up past mistakes of men in quarrels. In order not to let the discussion into an argument between women and men, a member of the Triumph Group then tried to praise women by saying that women often could have more insights into problems than men could.

Lionel continued by sharing what he had learnt in reading after his marital problem. He said that men often tended to solve problems in the rational sense but did not consider the emotional side. He pointed out that not every man knew or had the chance to learn. Donald opposed to Lionel's idea and thought that good fathers were very diverse, not necessarily of one type only. He shared that he had never fed

his sons and helped change their diapers but he did contribute to the family. Thus, people should not judge fathers by some fixed behaviours. Donald proposed that good fathers were those who placed their families first, worked for the families, and appreciated their spouses' efforts. Yet Lionel immediately challenged Donald's "new good man" identity by asking why he had never fed and changed diapers for his two sons. Donald seemed to be quite embarrassed and responded that he was very anxious when his sons were ill and he had taken them to the hospital at mid-night to justify that he had taken care of his sons. Still Lionel was not satisfied and asked Donald why he did not feed his sons and changed diapers for them. Adam supported Lionel by saying that men often were not willing to admit not doing enough. Donald defended that members should respect each other and rejected that not feeding his sons and not changing diapers for them were wrong. Other members then mentioned one by one that they had fed and changed diapers for their children. Some also mentioned that they had a very close physical and psychological relationship with their children.

The discussion then gradually changed to marital relationship. Two members of the Triumph Group mentioned that sometimes once a man told his wife that he was in debt, she would divorce with him immediately. They implied that women put a lot of emphasis on men's financial contribution to the family. Yet members of the

housewives' group argued that the wives might be angry with their husbands because the men were not honest and thus the wives doubted how their husbands had spent the money. Some members of the Triumph Group, including Lionel, supported the housewives' group's argument.

Ben then tried to soothe the atmosphere by praising women for being caring. He pointed out that women had strived for their own rights for a very long period of time while men's movement had just started. He thought that it was valuable to exchange ideas between women's centre and men's centre to know each other's point of view. Members of the Triumph Group, including those who had different points of view with the women's group, shared that it was a very valuable experience and that they learnt a lot from the meeting. Some said that they met some ideal women; some learnt that he needed to tell his wife honestly when he encountered financial problems; some learnt to share and communicate with his wife; some found out women's perspective on divorce; some appreciated women's pain in giving birth and effort in bringing up children and taking care of the family. These "new good men" did not forget to mention their beliefs at the end: husbands and wives should understand each other and appreciate each other's efforts so as to build a harmonious family. The meeting ended with some members of the Triumph Group tidying things up and storing the chairs and the remaining snacks and drinks. Adam talked with

some Triumph Group's and women's group's members while Lionel chatted with women's group's social worker.

The members of the Triumph Group were very conscious of the performance with the "new good men" front. They often stressed how they were different from the traditional men who were deemed inferior. As a result, they were eager to show off their "new good men" identity. In the meeting, they simply defined "new good men" by doing housework which was achievable by all of the members. As some of the members were divorced resident fathers, they inevitably did housework and looked after their children. Yet this change might be out of practical needs instead of an ideological change towards familial roles and duties.

In delivering the "new good men" identity to outsiders, some simple and obvious defining behaviour had to be stressed and demonstrated. According to Rostas (1998) and Goffman (1972), this kind of performance needs to be intentional and sometimes even overdoing. Members of the Triumph Group intentionally mentioned that they did housework in front of their guests. Even more, a member's failure in feeding and changing diapers for his sons was caught as "misconduct" within the "new good father" discourse, and was problematized as the practice of "traditional men". To draw a line from "problematic" "traditional men", other members immediately claimed their participation in such kinds of caring work one

by one. The identity was simplified based on the stereotypical concept that doing housework represented caring men. The collective identity of "new good men" could then be taken on with mere participation in the act, not necessarily with the actual psychological content. Consequently, many members of the group could take on the identity easily.

Moreover, as Goffman (1972) has suggested, the front has to be sustained by avoiding or hiding some situations. The pursuit of "new good men" and "new good father" identity is a display of change from the "problematic" past. The new identity given by LHC implies a problem-less familial role and fatherhood as these "new men" and "new fathers" were equipped with the knowledge to please their spouses and children.

In the meeting, members avoided mentioning their divorced status and only a man who maintained a "perfect" marriage openly announced his "success". Also most of them hid the fact that they depended upon their ex-spouses to look after the housework before their marital problems.

As a result, the "new good men" front was created by displaying the required attributes and hiding those undesirable features. Indeed, without an actual psychological content, the identity could be fragile. When a member of the housewives' group pointed out Donald's belittling attitude towards his son's

achievement, his "new good father" identity was immediately challenged. So Donald immediately re-stated his "new good men" identity by differentiating himself from "other" men as he was responsible towards his family and children.

Nevertheless, change from "old bad men" to "new good men" does not mean departure from patriarchy. Behind the front of "new good men" was the backstage of patriarchal thinking. First, the emphasis on the family hid patriarchal interest. Women who sacrificed themselves to serve their husbands and children received applause (Lionel suggested giving applause to the woman guest who did housework until late at night but had to get up early to bring children to school). Women who could meet the needs of their husbands were praised (Donald and others praised a woman who avoided talking to her exhausted husband even though she did have a lot to tell him but brought him a cup of tea to let him relax). Housewives whose productivity was ignored were urged to subsume their needs under their husbands'. Harmonious familial relation was created by sacrificing women's needs. Gendered power relations were neglected while male interest was promoted. The structural discrimination against housewives, proposed at the beginning of the meeting by the housewives' group was not the point of interest of these "new good men". They only appreciated housewives' obedience to and sacrifice for their husbands.

Second, the discussion was dominated by the male members of the

Triumph Group. The meeting did not quite achieve their stated goal of

exchanging ideas with women but became a stage of their "new good men"

performance. Members of Triumph Group sharing their "new good men"

achievements did attract others to share their own positive experiences,

resulting in a competition-like sharing pattern. For instance, in correcting the

image given out by Donald who did not feed his children and changed diapers

for them, other members revealed one by one that they did feed and change

diapers of their children. It was a display of their achievement of the "new

good men" identity and that they could actually behave consistently with their

identity.

Third, Triumph Group members revealed their male dominance in the

discussion. For instance, Adam held the stereotypical idea on gender division of

labour. He did not pay attention to or he was not well-informed of the issue of

unpaid labour and welfare of housewife. On a deeper level, he shared the mainstream

discourse of the Hong Kong society, which did not consider caring work in the

family contributing to the society, not just to the nuclear family or the husband alone.

He just stuck to the conventional discourse of gender division of labour in the family.

Through praising the housewives contribution of their unpaid labour, the patriarchal

idea of men enjoying the privilege of gaining power and status in both the public and

private spheres was justified.

When a member of the housewives' group stretched out her friendly hand to the

men's group by suggesting a way to have a better communication with her husband,

members of the Triumph Group considered it a natural act of a wife to please the

husband. They neglected the boredom and needs of housewife. They did not think of

that in return. Lionel even distorted the discussion by suggesting cooperation

between the two groups to bring the society back to the patriarchal origin. Thus, the

discussion was dominated by male interest and the missions of the housewives'

group mentioned at the beginning of the meeting were ignored. When a housewife

speculated that and tried to point out the patriarchal practice of their parents'

generation, the social worker of the Triumph Group interrupted and changed the

topic to discrimination against men.

Fourth, Triumph Group only showed interest in men's rights and needs but

ignored those of women. In the meeting, the social worker of the Triumph Group

upheld the idea of LHC: promoting "new good men" and urging society to concern

about men's needs. He tried to insert these notions in the discussion and hoped to

spread the ideas. Another member, Donald, was even more eager to pursue men's

rights. With the aim of improving the status of men, Donald wanted to understand

how he could let his ideas on men's needs become a social agenda. After the meeting, he told me that the achievement of the housewives' group in having connection with government officials and legislative councillors was an example of the government's and society's bias towards women's needs and negligence of men's hardship. So he was quite jealous of what the housewives' group had achieved. He was also discontent of the criticisms towards men from the housewives' group. So every time someone, no matter they were from the housewives' group or the Triumph Group, mentioned some negative aspects of husbands and fathers, Donald defended by his caring attitude towards his children and wife as a counter-argument.

When the patriarchal ideology was untouched, these "new men" could continue to enjoy and practice their existing hegemony. The "new good men" identity gradually formed through the ritualization of weekly meetings and some special events like the Annual Celebration. With ritualization, LHC members were trained to embody practices in demonstrating "new good men" identity. Even though these "new good men" had internalized those ritual acts and carried them out without much conscious effort, they still retained conventional and patriarchal masculine characteristics. So why patriarchy or patriarchal masculinity was so resilient even among these "new good men" who were supposed to have undergone transformation?

Conclusion: Restoration of Patriarchal Habitus

Underlying the "new good men" rituals was the aim of resurrecting men's status and power within the family. The large majority of LHC members came to the Centre and joined the groups because of marital and familial problems. They had experienced losing control in the family, either due to dispute with spouse and/or children, divorce, and unemployment and/or financial difficulty. Those grew up in the patriarchal socio-cultural environment tended to consider their hegemony as natural and normal and thus developed the patriarchal habitus as shown in both the LHC social workers and service-users. This position resulted in the worship of "complete family" and problematizing divorced fatherhood, which in turn strengthened the concept of normalcy within the family, meaning the return to the patriarchal father-centred nuclear family.

The "new good man" notion came out of this societal need. A new wave of "new good man" movement in Hong Kong started in 1998 when the Asian financial crisis broke out. The movement flourished since 2003 when the SARS outbreak occurred and when political instability and dissatisfaction was prominent. Unemployment and financial difficulty, together with marital and other familial difficulties, struck many men in society and challenged the legitimacy of conventional masculinity. These difficulties revealed the fragility of masculine

dominance in the family which was built upon possession of wealth and career, and an everlasting marriage. Divorce and unemployment took away the father's centre position within the family. Unemployment took away the authority of father as the breadwinner, while divorce deprived the father of a spouse who could take care of his children and the daily routine of the family, and most often the custody of their children as well. Fatherhood was then in jeopardy as men could no longer assume authority and dominance within the family.

The "new good man" notion re-appeared at the time when it was believed that the notion could help men adapt to new challenges, and attracted men who experienced the above-mentioned difficulties such as distant relationships with their children. Although started off as measures inspired by women's movement and feminism, in reality, the "new good man" ritual practices aiming at restoring the "problematic" fathers to their "normal" status contained patriarchal thoughts. Although men were requested to be more caring towards their children and spouses, this was taken as a way to reinstate normalcy in the family, with father as the breadwinner, educator, and leader. Rather than breaking the patriarchal vicious cycle, the "new good men" notion aims to restore father back to the familiar patriarchal situation – to be in control again.

With the aim of normalcy, ritual and ritualization of "new good men"

documented in this chapter was produced and carried out to create a seemingly

"new" notion of masculinity that justified the patriarchal ideology and value in the

family. "New good fathers" had displayed their care and sacrifice towards the family

and children, and thus worth gaining back respect – authority and dominance from

their children, spouses, and even the society. The seemingly gender liberating

attitudes and behaviours were indeed the front to show others rather than the means

to the gender equality goal. Rather than really subverting the existing masculinities

and social structure, the "new good men" notion was indeed "old wine in new

bottle".

At the same time, these "new good men" together created a habitus normalizing

the "new" masculinity. In demanding members and even men in the general public to

follow the "new" rules, LHC set up "new good men" identity as the new hegemonic

standard, idealizing monogamous nuclear family, problematizing divorced and single

fatherhood and family, and standardizing masculinity. Those who failed to

demonstrate the set out qualities were criticized and deemed unqualified.

However, we need to notice that this notion of new fatherhood was an emerging

pattern and was not widely practiced. With the economic restructuring of the society

into service and post-industrial economy, the city received more Western influence

which emphasized the problems of absent fathers and the importance of fathers in children's development. The media helped disperse the message and we can see the parenting columns in popular local newspapers citing experts talking about good fatherhood. The notion of "new good father" became the new familial masculinity standard that imposed new demands on fathers while at the same time helped restore the paternal importance within the family.

In the next three chapters, we will look at how individual fathers, with the influence from the patriarchal society and the notion of new masculinity, defined, described, and constructed their fatherhoods in terms of responsibilities and how these responsibilities manifested the hegemony of men.

Chapter IV

Invisible Love, Visible Hegemony: Economic Provision in Fatherhood

Ox ploughs the land so horse gets to eat corn; father earns money so son gets to

enjoy life. (牛耕田, 馬食谷, 老竇賺錢, 仔享福)

– Cantonese proverb

When my informants talked about the responsibility of fathers, the single most important thing had to be breadwinning, or providing for the family and children. This was not a surprise, because in both Chinese traditional notion of manhood and in the modern society of Hong Kong, men are assumed to take care of the public sphere while women the private. Men are allowed to leave their family behind as they strive in their career while women are expected to give up their work to take care of the children at home.

Economic provision is the conventional masculine code of demonstrating love to children (Levant & Pollack 1995). This discourse was also prevalent among many of my informants. However, since industrialization, the dichotomy of "home versus workplace" was created, resulting in the physical and psychological separation of work from home in the contemporary society (ibid). So when fathers are doing their labour of love to feed and support their beloved children, they are invisible to their loved ones. Father's love towards their children is indeed an "invisible love". This

"invisible love" justifies father's breadwinning role while legitimizes father's absence from taking care of children and from most of the life of children (Hewlett 2000; Pleck 1981; Pleck & Lang 1978).

This chapter targets at examining the naturalized ideas and practices of fathers in this invisible labour of love to see how they construct masculinity and legitimate patriarchy in the family. Goffman's theory of presentation and performance is employed as the framework in analyzing the construction of masculinity.

According to Goffman (1959), people tend to exhibit certain behaviours and to present certain objects of symbols consciously so as to control how others see them, and in the performance they believe, with varying degrees, that they actually possess the target qualities. They adopt what the socio-cultural structure has suggested to create a certain attribute and impression:

> [I]t is to be noted that a given social front tends to become institutionalized in terms of the abstract stereotyped expectations to which it gives rise, and tends to take on a meaning and stability apart from the specific tasks which happen at the time to be performed in its name. The front becomes a "collective representation" and a fact in its own right (ibid:24).

When an actor takes on an established social role, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it. Whether his acquisition of

the role was primarily motivated by a desire to perform the given task or by a

desire to maintain the corresponding front, the actor will find that he must do

both (ibid:24).

[A] performance is "socialized", moulded, and modified to fit into the

understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented (ibid:30).

The stereotypical gender division of labour requires the father to be the

breadwinner and mother the care-taker, and it is consistent with the family structure

in the Confucian tradition (Hsu 1948). In the Confucian ideal, the father is the

manager of the family, in charge of the financial affairs, as well as pooling and

redistribution of economic resources in the family (Cohen 1992; Diamond 1969)

This Confucian ideal of complementary roles of women and men in the family is the

established structure for the ideology and practice of fatherhood in Hong Kong today,

providing the framework needed for fathers to refer to in determining and shaping

their own practices.

Although the patriarchal structure provides the framework and reference of

contemporary fatherhood, with the influence of the women's movement and of the

notion of equality since the 1970s, rationalization for stereotypical gender roles have

to extend beyond the Confucian familial structure. Rather, other aspects of life are

stressed to resonate with the structure. For example, from my field data, my

informants considered breadwinning their contribution to the happiness of their spouses and children. The performance of breadwinning, on one hand shows to others that the father is taking up his responsibility, on the other hand incorporates the sense of paternal responsibility into the father's individual identity. According to Goffman (1959:15-17), the performance on the front stage can convince both the audience and the performer that the performance reflects the reality and the exhibiting characters are the true personality.

Yet this positive rationalization does not indicate a change in the existing patriarchal structure. The sacrifice of the father in providing economically for the family members creates an expectation for the claimed/promised consequences in the structure. I coin this thinking "structural thinking", which refers to the incorporation of structures provided and the subsequent expectation to have the "promised" consequences by following the structural requirements. Thus, structural thinking is a part of the habitus and it motivates the agents to adopt or endure the structure; consequently the structure is strengthened and reproduced. The structural thinking of the father is realized in one way through economic provision: the father who has finished his labour of love after work has fulfilled his duty to the family and thus should enjoy privileges like exemption from housework and childcare and respect and obedience of children and spouse. So even though the father does not consider

economic provision a kind of power or privilege as before, he has the nostalgia to get the patriarchal reward within the family. In this thinking, the father ignores their privilege (economic provision gives him the power and authority over his spouse and children) and regards the patriarchal reward a natural, normal, and reasonable result of their effort. The hegemony of men (naturalized and normalized ideology and practice of men resulting in their privilege over women) is thus maintained and reproduced.

Let's now turn to the field data to see how the father makes sense of their economic role and how this role maintains male dominance.

Expression of Love and Care

Economic provision is the expression of love and care to the family by fathers. They have to sweat and toil in carrying out this responsibility. According to my informants, fathers were sacrificing for the good of the family. They considered breadwinning hard but at the same time they were willing to take up the role readily. So, some of them simply equated economic provision with love to their children and spouses in their narration of the breadwinning role. In order to improve the living standard of the family, fathers were willing to sacrifice their own interests or dreams which hindered them from winning more bread.

Vincent was a 46-year-old married father and a hospital worker. His goal of

working was to make his children grow up healthily. He considered it the duty of both him and his wife. But when his wife was pregnant, he worried about her health and safety and thus asked her to quit her job. He was willing to take up the role of providing by himself. So, to Vincent, economic provision was an expression of love and care towards his children and wife.

Burt, a 46-year-old construction worker, was a non-resident divorced father with two sons at the time of interview. When he knew that his wife was pregnant and quit her job, Burt readily took up the sole breadwinner role to improve the living standard of his family. He felt stressed but still worked hard in order to buy an apartment to give his children and spouse a comfortable home. Although Burt did not state it clearly, it is not difficult to sense that Burt did consider the needs of his wife and children very important.

Dominic, a 49-year-old married father and a legal professional, even put provision and love in parallel to show that his main way to love his children was by breadwinning:

> I wished that our children could grow up healthily. I wanted to provide him economically and to show my love to him.

When a man takes up the father role, the front of economic provision is already waiting for him. Within the field of family, breadwinning is laid within the habitus of

the father as the way they contribute to the well-being of his children and spouse. As masked within this gendered structure of the family, the father experiences fatherhood of his own father to be primarily of economic provision. So bringing money home appears to him to be the most prominent way to show his love and care to his family. In the performance of economic provision, the father actually believes in this "inherent" duty, resulting in strong motivation in his employment, self-sacrifice in money use, and giving up one's dream.

The most common reaction of fathers after having children is becoming more motivated in work. Goethe, a 50-year-old married father, was a gentle father. He was a home-maker and a free-lance masseur who used to be a factory worker. His two daughters had grown up and lived separately from Goethe and his wife. When asked to recall his early fatherhood, Goethe told me that he was powered by his two daughters in carrying out the originally routine factory work:

Having children made me more motivated in my work. Before having children, I didn't have much motivation in my work. You know, you need to buy milk powder for them; not only that. You have to spend a lot......I worked harder. Sometimes I would think of buying something to my two girls. I played less mahjong. That's true. I got more motivated when I got my second daughter.

Sunny (age 49, an owner of medium enterprise, had two daughters studying in

college) further elaborated the reason for the motivation to work and study hard so as to provide for his children. He thought that material benefit could prevent his daughters from suffering the hardship that he himself had gone through as a child.

Children not only motivate the father to work harder but also make him sacrifice his own enjoyment so as to save more for them. Henry, a resident divorced father aged about 50, said that children were his reason for saving more money. He used to earn a lot more money by running his businesses before having children. But he did not save the money earned and lived lavishly. But after becoming a father, especially after his wife left him with most of his savings, he had to rely on social security and secretly do part-time jobs to maintain his living while at the same time taking care of his daughter. He became frugal so as to give more to his daughter:

> I had to save as much as I could. For meals, I let my daughter have enough and then I ate the left-over. I chose to walk instead of getting on a public transport in order to save money for my daughter.

Money is also the way for Martin to show his love and care to his children and wife. He was a 44-year-old married father and a construction supervisor. He wanted his family to enjoy all of the fruits of his sweat and toil and did not want to waste it on anyone else. When later on he was broke because he was cheated by his business partner and consequently had to live on his own savings and social security, he

would rather reduce his part of food and let his children have more. He described the importance of his children and wife having the best material support he could offer:

I want my children to have a stable life. When I had my first child at 25, I gave all my money to my wife. I kept only very little for myself. I bought a computer for my children very early. I bought them things that were uncommon at that time. I bought karaoke and video game which cost more than $1000 at that time. I wanted them to be satisfied. I gave them the best I could.

In the past, when I had money left, I took them on tours to foreign places. I didn't spend the money on dating girls and on prostitutes. I am a good father. I don't know other fathers. I did my part. Then I was broke. We needed to eat $10 meals. We had cheap food…We also needed to leave some food for my eldest daughter who worked till late at night. I ate very little and left more to my children.

Apart from the sacrifice of material comforts, father is willing to sweat for children's better future. Dino was a 40-year-old driver. After divorce with his wife, Dino took care of his two children. When he found that his children were not doing well in their study, he was planning to give up his social life, his work, and familiar environment of Hong Kong to immigrate to the USA for a better education of his children. Although he concluded that he would not be able to live in the USA and

most probably would not be going there after evaluating his financial condition, he did plan seriously and was willing to work as a junior chef in a Chinese restaurant just for earning enough for his children's daily and educational expenses there.

A father will also sacrifice his own dream for his children. Before Timothy (41 years old, divorced resident father, unemployed) found out about his wife's extra-marital affair, he placed his wife and children at the highest priority, and he worked very hard to earn enough to support them. This was the way he showed his affection and the importance of his wife and children in his life. He put aside his own dream of starting a restaurant as he did not want to risk losing a stable income for his family.

Economic provision was considered as one of the criteria, or even the most important one, in judging whether a father is good or not. A good father can provide his children with material needs and enjoyment. Sometimes, in the process, he needs to sacrifice his own material benefits, his sense of safety, and his dream. However, for some fathers, even when he had sacrificed, he still felt sorry for not being able to provide better material benefits to his children. Fathers thought that they were held responsible for giving a "good" living standard to their children. So, the act of economic provision not only makes the audience and the social actor believe that it is natural and normal during performance, it is internalized in fathers' habitus.

Stephen was a blue-collar worker, aged 55 at the time of interview. He was a married father although he had a distant relationship with his wife. In the 1990s when the economy of Hong Kong boomed, Stephen had quite a good income. He tried to provide his children with good health care and food. Stephen regretted being unable to provide his children with a "good" living after the economy of Hong Kong turned bad. When his son blamed him for not choosing to be a civil servant so that he could get government's education allowance to study abroad, he himself accepted the blame and was regretful for not caring his son enough. Therefore, he tried to compensate his economic deficiency with staying close with his children and to teach them to help those in need and enjoy mental happiness. As what Goffman (1959:36) has suggested, "If an individual is to give expression to ideal standards during his performance, then he will have to forgo or conceal action which is inconsistent with these standards", the compensation was a way to sustain the performance of love and care even when the prescribed way to do so was in vain. Nonetheless, it reinforces the fact that economic provision was deemed the first in the priority list of paternal responsibility while emotional attachment was secondary and acts as a kind of compensation for the lack of material wellness.

Thus, when economic provision is the expression of love and care, it is also a criterion to evaluate fatherhood. A father who can provide for his children and will

feel sorry if he cannot is a good father. A good father is also willing to sacrifice for his children's material benefits. These action and thoughts signify a man to be a loving and caring father.

Paradoxically, economic provision alienates the father from the family. The symbolic dichotomy of work and family illustrates the shaping of work culture as opposite to or at least incompatible with fathering. Long and inflexible working hours, extension of work to family (for instance, employees have to work at home after office hour, like Leo), and heavy workload in contemporary work assume every individual to be independent and free from other life aspects. The patriarchal work culture fits and pushes fatherhood to be breadwinning. Parenting aspect of fatherhood is rendered invisible in the workplace (Højgaard 1997).

Work numbed Paul's sensitivity on the problem of his family. Paul was a 50-year-old married father and a company consultant. Even though he wanted to build a healthy familial environment for his children, he could not sense the presence of psychological problems induced in his second daughter by the birth of his son. Paul said,

> At that time, we lived with my mother who had a very old-fashioned mind and she expected to have a grandson. When she found out that our second child was a girl, she then became cold to my wife and my second daughter. At that

time, I didn't know this kind of stuff. I had great stress as I had my own factory in the Mainland.

Pan, 43, non-resident remarried father, knew the importance and the way of playing with and educating children. He was very serious in bringing up his daughter. He bought a lot of toys for her. However, he was exhausted by his work which deprived him of the energy to play with his daughter.

Economic provision becomes the expression of love and care in some fatherhood reflects the fact that emotional detachment and distance between father and children are characterized in masculinity of these fathers. Although they love their children, they cannot escape this performance of masculinity which has become their "real essence" of individuality, as proposed in Goffman's theory. The audience, their children and spouses, is also convinced of the "realness" of the masculine performance. Thus the invisible love becomes naturalized in fatherhood, in which love and care have to be expressed in the indirect way of economic provision which symbolizes the sharing of resources earned from the paternal power. As a result, the pursuit of career and the distance from home are justified in fatherhood under the internalized love and care discourse.

Sunny's story can tell us how the economic responsibility estranged him and his children. Despite that others kept reminding him to spend more time with his family,

Sunny only focused on his career. He described his "fault" regretfully:

> [When my daughters studied in secondary school], I also studied in the evening. So I was very busy. [When my daughters were babies], my wife also blamed me for not helping her in taking care of the children...My wife was considerate but sometimes still blamed me for not helping her. I did not know what to say.

Sunny had been following the structural thinking of fatherhood and strived hard to be the economic provider of the family. He expected that he would be treated as the "king" in the family after he fulfilled his duty but it turned out that he had a difficult relationship with his spouse and daughters. When Sunny looked back on his relationship with his daughters, he was very regretful. He reiterated his regret several times during the interview:

> I now thought that I was wrong to just do my own stuff when my children were small. If I had known at that time, I wouldn't have done that. I should have treasured the time when they were still small. Now our relationship is alienated.

> If I could go back [in time], I would be a better father. I would spend more time with my children. Earning money is important but family is also important. I think that family and work can be balanced. I would squeeze time for my

children…I would chat with them, play with them, let them learn more stuff. If my wife did not want to bring them out to play, I would. I would try my best to sacrifice some of my work to adjust to childcare.

Structural thinking moulded Sunny's fatherhood experience to be mainly of developing his career to satisfy his economic provider's duty. However, when he satisfied what the gender structure requested him to do (breadwinning), he did not get what was promised – a father identity. The father identity, to him, was respect and close relationship with his two daughters. This unintended consequence did not bring about change in his fatherhood even though Sunny regretted his focus on his career in the past. He continued to work hard in his business while recalling the "good old days" when his daughters were close to him. He said,

> [When] I returned home after work, I asked my younger daughter to bring slippers to me. She was willing to do so at that time. And sometimes I bought some candies for them. They were very happy. They jumped on my knees. That's the happiest time. I often dream of that now. At that time, I felt that I was a father. Now I don't feel that I am a father.

The gender structure of work strengthens the invisibility of father's care. This "invisible love" is only expressed in terms of the non-emotional and invisible task of breadwinning. To love one's wife and children is not saying "I love you" or taking

care of them in person, but bringing in money – which is the trophy of men's labour of love. Economic provision is a non-emotional way to show the emotions of love and care. In addition, the contemporary notion of work which dichotomizes breadwinning and caring has been internalized in individual fathers' mind and becomes the father's habitus. It thus becomes the justifiable reason for fathers not taking part in childcare and even absence during important moments.

Maurice, a 43-year-old divorced resident father working as a driver, appeared to me as an aloof strong man at first, but in the narration of his fatherhood I could sense that he was a caring father. The family, according to Maurice, referred to economic not the emotional needs of individual members. When asked about his feeling when he knew that his first daughter was born, he said,

> I have to think about how to spend and save money out of my limited wage. Children come second. It is different from the view of mothers who place children first and then the family…When my daughter was born, I was working. It seemed that I was not concerned about her. But, you know, the feeling was strange. Other fathers would accompany their wives but I just worked. My wife doubted whether I was concerned about her or not. Indeed I was not concerned about that aspect. I didn't know how to face my wife and daughter. I could only "fix" (originally in Cantonese 搞掂) my family. Stuff outside the family I don't

know what to do.

What came to his mind immediately after knowing that his wife was pregnant were the expenses after having children. So he took on his duty by earning more money. He found that breadwinning was his most important duty to the extent that he just visited his wife after she had given birth for a while and then immediately returned to work. As he thought that caring for children was not his job, he would rather focus on his own duty – breadwinning. Economic responsibility occupied Maurice's mind when he was going to be a father. He was pushed to fulfil his economic duty – described by him as "fixing the family stuff". Sometimes, the habitus of father emphasizing the sense of responsibility creates worry and anxiety in the father with the changing identity. Yet the emotionally detached economic provision serves as a cover for the negative emotions. Maurice said,

> Everyone is different in fatherhood. I also worried and was nervous but did not express it. I continued to work and did my duty. I did not concern much about the feelings of my wife…My wife chose to give birth in a private hospital which cost us a lot…Anyway, I had to pay even though it was expensive.

So when the emotions of worry and anxiety signified weakness and vulnerability which are not compatible with manliness (Bennett 2007; Jakupcak, Salters, Gratz, & Roemer 2003), the non-emotional economic provision was a way to

escape the expression of these "weak emotions" both in public and in private while at the same time fulfilling the sense of responsibility.

It is not that fathers I have interviewed did not love and care about their children. But their way of loving and caring was different from mother's intimate and meticulous caring. The father's habitus stresses the economic responsibility in fatherhood, thus the direct sentimental expression often has to give way to the invisible love. But why does the father's habitus appear that way? We have to look at the structural influence to understand its internalization.

Making the Family Complete and Stable (齊家)

In the Confucian ideology, the family is one of the four main missions[1] of a man and the most fundamental one at that. The ultimate goal of a man is to bring peace to and manage the world in an orderly manner. Within the Chinese kinship system, family is a corporate entity that members of the group can have a share of the jointly-owned property and shared resources in the economic aspect (Watson 1982). While the father is the legitimate family head and financial manager in charge of the economic affairs in the family, managing the family well means, above all, taking care of the material well-being of the members.

Family is often cited as the main reason for the father's hard work in

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[1] They are learning and improving in morality and knowledge, getting married and managing a harmonious family, becoming an official and running the government, and finally bringing peace to the world and becoming an emperor (Höchsmann 2004) (In Chinese: 修身、齊家、治國、平天下).

breadwinning. To keep the family peaceful and stable, economic condition is the key to link family members together. The father is the initiator and provider for all family members. Economic provision is the jurisdiction of the father as head of the family. Paul said,

> For men, it doesn't matter. When you have wisdom, experience, interpersonal network, and work opportunity, it's not a problem to earn your living. When you earn enough for the expenses for the family, your family is stable.

Sunny also told me,

> The [father's] duty is to make your family not worried of their living. So fathers have to work hard to earn more money...If I have no family burden, I will not be that hard-working. It's toilsome.

With the structural thinking, a father expects to gain the structural promise of control over the family members by providing economic support. He would feel short-changed if he cannot gain what is promised. For instance, this is a common discourse from fathers interviewed that obedience of children was expected after a hard day's work. Anson, a 43-year-old married father and the owner of a small recycling company, expected to receive obedience from his daughter in return for economic provision. He felt that the hardship in his work was not justified when his

daughter did not listen to him. He said,

> I cannot escape from [the responsibility of economic provision]...Generally I am willing to bear this responsibility. Only when [my daughter] was naughty, I temporarily felt angry and unhappy in fulfilling this duty.

Anson demanded his daughter to be obedient to him provided his sweat and toil in providing for her. This structural thinking motivated him to work hard and at the same time made him blame his daughter of being naughty and scold her when his expectation failed.

A father would be considered to be incapable of achieving the masculine missions without first managing his family well. It means making the family complete and stable, with children, wife, and concubines under control – of the patriarch. Economic provision gives the structural reason for control and obedience (Freedman 1970). Cohen (1992) points out that the father would have little power within the family if he was not the financial manager. Economic provision is thus an exchange process for the paternal authority.

This is evident in Goethe's experience. Goethe used to be the major breadwinner of his family. Although his wife also worked in the factory, most of the household expenses were paid by Goethe's income because his wife gave most of

her income to her natal family in Mainland China. According to Goethe, although he was not a patriarch, his wife was obedient to him, making him happy. After he hurt his back in an accident and lost his working ability some years before the interview, the family income depended upon his wife's wage work. Goethe even started gambling and created a large debt. Finally, with the persuasion of a social worker, Goethe's wife agreed to repay Goethe's debt with her savings. His wife became dominant in the family, sometimes scolding Goethe. Yet Goethe was grateful to his wife after the incident as she continued to stay with him and saved him out of the financial crisis. So he was willing to be a househusband and to be compliant to his wife.

Even though Goethe accepted his househusband identity and subordinate position in the family, he still carried the patriarchal thinking and structural thinking on economic provision mentioned above. He accepted his subordinate role because he was grateful to his wife who expressed her love and care to him by supporting him financially. Also when the economic provider role had shifted to his wife, he obeyed the "rule of game" that he became the subordinate man in the family. The structural thinking that the economic provider deserves a respectable position in the family was in Goethe's mind.

Even though economic provision can grant fathers' authority, it is a means, not

an end. The aim of breadwinning is to produce a self-sufficient family in which children, who are originally supported by their fathers, are finally capable of generating monetary income for themselves and even for parents and other family members. The father's economic contribution thus aims at promoting coherence among family members. On one hand, father's economic provision could bring the family together because it gives everyone material benefits; on the other hand, when children grow up, they are expected to pool their income to contribute to the family, resulting in a common goal among family members. Chinese family is an economic unit that requests the contribution of individual members (Cohen 1992; Salaff 1981). Father's economic provision serves as the initial contribution before children can develop their economic ability. The father expects the children to do the same to the family, leading to a sense of sharing and unity in the family. The notion of "making the family complete and stable" is therefore accomplished through economic provision in establishing a self-sufficient family.

When asked about the responsibility of father, Paul suggested that he did expect his children to continue his effort to build the family economically:

I told them that I couldn't achieve [a luxurious living] in my lifetime. I told them not to demand that much and not to give me pressure. I hope that [my children] can achieve that and give me enjoyment [when I retire]…My elder

daughter is going to start working this year...When my elder daughter works,

my economic condition will get better.

Apart from establishing a sense of belonging through sharing a common duty,

economic provision of the father, as the family head, gives the family, especially the

children, an identity and, more importantly, dignity. Economic provision defines the

capability of fathers with whom children identify themselves. Work not only can

provide material enjoyment, it is also a way to protect children from being

humiliated. It is demonstrated by the words of Jones, who was a resident divorced

father with two working children. Even though his children brought in an income,

Jones insisted that he had to work. He said,

> Work is important to men, and men without work are often depressed and
>
> have low self-esteem. They will have no goals. Their children will be
>
> humiliated by their friends since their fathers are without work...Although I
>
> don't have much financial pressure, I take up a driver job three nights a week.

Economic provision is the structural reason for the father to justify their control

within the family; is the mean for the father to unite the family; is the way for the

father to protect the family. These are the father's rights and responsibilities and they,

at the same time, define his masculinity.

Defining Masculinity – Capability and Recognition in the Public Sphere

Not only does economic provision link father and children through a common sense of duty, and through sharing material goods and identity, it is also an arena to define masculinity and fatherhood vis-à-vis femininity and motherhood. To provide for the family in economic terms, one has to hold a job. Some fathers considered work as reflection of their ability and they considered their working ability crucial to their masculinity (Acker 1992; Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003). Unemployment creates feeling of shame and inadequacy, as well as disempowerment in men (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003). In addition, the Protestant ethic, which states that economic condition and ability is associated with the blessing from God and the conduct of the person (Weber 1976), is widely accepted in the Christian-influenced capitalistic Hong Kong society. With the influence of both the Chinese familial notion of masculinity and the Protestant ethics, economic provision is deemed to be related to one's ability and identity, if not dignity, especially for men. Economic provision is considered a duty or an ability that cannot be ignored within masculinity, if not the ultimate goal of a man.

One of the important criteria of manhood is waged work (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003). The initiation of fatherhood has to depend on economic condition and ability. Martin, who married at the young age of 19, experienced being looked down

upon by others as he was not able to earn much. He internalized the expectation and

strived hard to achieve a higher economic ability. He described his experience this

way:

> I was married at an early age, 19. At that time, I was an immature young
>
> guy, already a father then…The responsibility of paying rent and feeding the
>
> family all depended on me. I worked hard. If one job could not give me enough
>
> money, then I did two. I was young then. I didn't know what love was. I got
>
> married because my girlfriend was pregnant. I just knew that the child had to be
>
> born and I needed to take care of the family by supporting my wife and my
>
> children. I had a child and so I needed to find a job. At that time, I still hadn't
>
> had any skills. So I tried to be a construction apprentice.

Goffman (1959) has pointed out that the structure has already constructed the

front for a social actor to assume a certain role. When Martin took up his father role,

he realized that what he should do was to earn money for the family even though he

did not have any plan or experience beforehand. Masculinity in the familial context

involves taking up the duty of economic provision. Pressure from others further

reinforces this habitus, motivating the fathers to do what is prescribed by the

structure to demonstrate their sense of responsibility and their ability.

In addition to the construction of masculinity, the condition for Martin to work

hard also depends on the socio-economic environment. The abovementioned experience happened in the 1980s when Hong Kong's economy was booming. So Martin, as a young man at that time, could hold two jobs. The socio-economic environment facilitated a young father like Martin to construct his manhood and fatherhood based primarily on economic provision. His pride as a father was bringing material benefits to his wife and children.

When economic provision is an important aspect of fatherhood, fatherhood will be affected by the socio-economic environment. Sunny's fatherhood was mainly about striving to maintain his work, leading to the abovementioned regret he had during the time of interview. Sunny described the effort he paid in his career to make him outstanding from his other fellow counterparts:

> I worked in an electronic factory and people there advised me that I should not just be a factory worker. They advised me to study. So I thought I should first finish secondary school…Later I had a chance to become a technician. I was interested in electronics. After I graduated from secondary school, I studied in the Technical Institute. Although my HKCEE[2] results were not good, at least I finished my study after coming a long way. That's a lot of effort!

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[2] Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) is a public examination organized by Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. Normally, a student having completed her/his five-year secondary education will take the examination. Results of the examination determine whether the candidates can be promoted to form six in local secondary schools and further study in college. However, for employment purpose, grade E in most subjects is widely accepted in Hong Kong as a basic level of achievement for employment.

If I didn't further my study in the evening school, I would just be a factory

worker only. When [Hong Kong's] factories moved to the Mainland, what could

I do? A friend of mine now works as a caretaker in an apartment building. At

that time, economic needs filled my brain. I did not only consider the near

future but for the longer term. If I hadn't got some qualifications, I might still

be able to be promoted as a technician in the factory. But how about when

factories move to the Mainland?

The public recognition and achievement gained at work in turn defines

capability which is deemed crucial to masculinity (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003).

Education gave Sunny the ability to run his own trading business when factories

moved to the Mainland. His effort in further study and work helped him survive in

the changing economy of Hong Kong. In fulfilling the front of economic provision,

work is the crucial script. This part of masculinity is intensified by the lack of a

decent welfare system and the fact that Hong Kong's economy is always dependent

on the larger social, economic, and political context.

Work also gives fathers a sense of achievement in terms of the capability to talk

with their grown-up and educated children, as well as the experience to teach and

impress them. When fathers can settle the family economy by their income-earning

work, they are then qualified to communicate and bring the experience and

knowledge from the outside world to their children. Thus, recognizable achievement in work outside the family sustains the powerful father figure as a knowledgeable man, further defining their masculinity.

Paul was very clear about his advantage in reconciling his work experience and education of his children. His exposure in the public sphere provided knowledge for him to guide his children. When asked what he thought about his fatherhood, he answered,

> When you experience more [from work], have a rich knowledge, and get more real cases, you can have strong communication ability. When the children grow up and encounter problems in their life, I think that it's not hard at all to communicate with them and guide them. Chatting with them is an entertainment to me.

Willy, a 43-year-old married father who was a stay-at-home father at the time of interview, even brought the outside world into his family to let his children know the existing problems in society. He was proud of giving some uncommon exposure to his children through his work:

> [A]lthough I was a full-time father for two years, I had a full-time job last year. That is…being a parent in the Home Sweet Home[3]…The organization

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[3] It is a pseudonym for a resident child care service provided by an NGO for children who face familial problems and are unsuitable to stay at their families of origin.

employed our whole family to live with eight children…The children came from very diverse backgrounds: Some with parents who had committed suicide; some with parents who were drug addicts and were in prison. There were many kinds of people… [My children] learnt a lot of special stuff. I thought that they grew a lot. They could face the real world.

Family is the stage of fatherhood. Economic provision is one of the fronts that fathers display to demonstrate their masculinity, with the support of work. Work is a site of gaining recognition through an occupational identity, acquiring qualifications, knowledge, and skills, and promotion in career. In the family, the father brings back the material benefits and knowledge and skills to guide his children. According to Goffman (1959:24), in realizing the "abstract stereotyped expectations", the performed task is institutionalized with meaning and stability. Masculinity, which is constructed in terms of ability, authority, and social recognition is strengthened through fathers providing material benefits as well as identity and dignity to children. Economic provision is thus institutionalized as the basis of fatherhood.

Defining Masculinity as Opposite to the Feminine Family

Work in contemporary society is separated from the family, taking the father physically away from the daily routine of the family and close encounter with children. It provides a stage for father to perform a separation from the feminine

sphere of the family and caring duty. Lis Højgaard (1997) adopts the conception of

deep and transpersonal symbolic structures of gender as proposed by Silvia Gherardi

(1994, cited in Højgaard 1997) to point out that masculinity and femininity are "deep

rooted symbolic universes of meaning structured as opposites" (p.248). Yet Højgaard

(1997) suggests that the dichotomized symbolic structure of gender is not fixed

although it exhibits stability through reproduction of gendered subjects who live

within the limits to be "recognizable and acceptable to others and [themselves]"

(p.248). In the existing habitus, the assumption of the masculine economic provision

role signifies the exemption of the feminine familial duty like housework and

childcare.

The notion that emphasizes men's economic contribution paves the way for

father's emphasis on work. With the structural thinking that familial matters would

be taken care of by their wives after completing their duty of economic provision,

fathers do not feel the double burden of having to hold both work and familial duties

when they encounter conflict between the two. So in weighing work and familial

duties, fathers inevitably embrace work. Underlying the emphasis on family, the

concept of masculinity that work is more crucial prevails among most fathers.

With the definition of masculinity skewed towards work, some father thought

that they had no other responsibility in carrying out familial duties after economic

provision and so it was not at all problematic to place family after work. Daniel, 49, whom I met in a church, was a medical professional and a married father with a son. He thought that family was not his area of concern but work was. He said,

> A man needs to support the family economy. Even if both the wife and the husband work, the husband still feels that he is obliged to be the breadwinner. It's a kind of invisible pressure.

Thinking that he could not do anything when his wife was giving birth to his son and that the engagement of the public sphere was more important, Daniel went to a bowling competition and visited his wife after the son was born. He described the way when his son was born to me:

> After I sent my wife to the hospital, I had to go to work. My son was going to be born but I still need to work. Even after my son was born, that evening, I could not go to visit my wife immediately after work. Why? I needed to represent my company in a bowling competition. It's my first time to play bowling but I got a medal. I told people that it's the luck brought by my son. I did send my wife to the hospital. [But] I am like this. Once I promise people something, I will definitely carry out my promise unless in some very exceptional circumstances. My son was born already and I needed not to go to the hospital so urgently. I couldn't help in the delivery. I didn't know how to

take care of him and feed him. So going there earlier or later made no difference.

Daniel's case illustrates the patriarchal thinking that family is subordinate to work and public sphere. The patriarchal family structure is designed to suit the working role of the father. Fathers are exempted from the tedious duty of house chores and child-caring. This gendered family gives fathers opportunities to explore the public sphere. As a result, fathers expect their wives tackle the family matters for them while they act as the manager who just appear when necessary. The patriarchal family structure legitimizes the father's expectation with structural thinking that defines his major familial role to be economic provider. Fathers thus put their career first.

Leo, 48, a married father with a son and a daughter, was the most gender-aware father among my interviewees. He himself initiated to share his daily experience with his children and wife during dinner. Every day after dinner, he was the one who washed the dishes even though his wife was a home-maker. Yet to him, work still occupied a higher priority. Thus, after dinner, he would continue his unfinished work at home. When I asked him how he managed his busy work and fathering, he said, '

I have my career. My children are a part of my life but not all of it. I still have other things to deal with...Now, after I return home and having done the

housework, I have to work in front of the computer and think of [some projects] and write memos...Does work affect my fatherhood? It probably does but not much. Life is like that. You have a lot of aspects to deal with.

Fathers have the privilege of making choices among family, friends, work, and further study. They are not bound to taking care of children. Fathers consider themselves inclined to the public sphere. So a gender-aware father like Leo, under the existing gender structure, chose to place more importance on his work. Even though he was aware that his work would reduce the time he could share with his children, he thought that men's inclination towards work was normal and natural. Even when problems appeared in the relationship with children, some fathers were still not willing to sacrifice their privilege of choice. Dominic relied on his wife to take care of the house chores and the two sons. He found that they developed much closer relationship with their mother than with him and often they did not listen to him. Although he wanted his sons to be close to him, he was not willing to devote all of his time to them. He described his dilemma to me:

> [My children's] expectation is both a pressure and an enjoyment for me. They want me to spend more time with them and so I have more difficulty in like further study or going out with my friends. But I try my best to schedule my time to balance between family and friends. It's not possible to stick with

my friends and leave my family. It's also not possible to just spend time with

my family and leave my friends. I would like to have a balance. But sometimes

I feel tired after work.

Women, on the other hand, are deprived of these choices due to their housework

and caring duty. Paul realized the restriction and deprivation of women as wives and

mothers:

>Mother's role is more toilsome as it is restrictive. For example, I can take
>
>up continuous study. If I hadn't studied, how can I get a high-paid job that gives
>
>me autonomy, friends, and time to do volunteer work? Does my wife have a
>
>chance to further study or to take up an internship? It's impossible. Pregnancy,
>
>tedious childcare work like changing diapers and feeding, and the tedious caring
>
>work later in the children's life are really toilsome and require attention 24
>
>hours a day.

Sunny also mentioned the privilege he received from the gender structure to get

achievement in the public sphere through work. He realized his economic provision

duty was partly sustained by his wife's homemaking. He said,

>My wife did not earn much. She was only a factor-worker. How much
>
>could she earn? If I hadn't taken up evening school, I would only be a factory
>
>worker too.

As Sunny mentioned that he and his wife earned similar wages at the time of pregnancy, the gender division of labour and the subsequent further study opportunity were not decided out of practical reason of earning power but the habitus in the field of family.

Even though Paul and Sunny realized the restriction on women's role and explicitly mentioned it, they did not find it problematic. They considered the gender division of labour within the family natural and normal because masculinity and femininity were different and thus women and men should assume different roles and result in different statuses.

Gender inequality is not unknown to members of patriarchal societies. However, instead of trying to change it, the mainstream discourse in Hong Kong reproduces it by celebrating the toil and sacrifice of mothers, especially during Mother's Day which helps sustain and legitimize the patriarchal system. In order to allow fathers to go to work, not only do mothers have to take up the fathers' share of housework and parenting, but often all family members are asked to yield to father's work plan. Because of Willy's work and later the establishment of his business, the entire family had to move to the Mainland in order to stay together. Even though his wife also held a job, Willy's work took a higher priority. He explained his theory on family to me:

> Because I did business in the Mainland at that time, my whole family

moved to the Mainland. This is rare. Usually it's the husband who stays there. But I thought that if my work…needed me to stay in the Mainland, I needed the whole family to go there. I couldn't lose my family due to work, so we went together until my son was one or two years old. It's a very special experience…Before I decided to go to Mainland to work, I discussed with my wife. So this was a family decision. My wife quit her job and followed me to the Mainland. Family is our first priority, more important than work.

Although Willy claimed that he placed family above work, what he did was making his work dominate other family members who had to follow and adapt according to his work. "Family" and "we" were subsumed under the career interest of the father. Thus, the claimed consensus was indeed a product of the patriarchal family structure that places father's career interest first. The default role of breadwinning in fatherhood demonstrates the "reflex" feature of the habitus. Even though the actors realize the unfairness of the structure, the habitus paralyzes their ability to be aware of the illogical decision to follow the structure. Practices outside the habitus become unthinkable to them.

However, the patriarchal familial structure may not benefit men all the time. When they are out of the designated masculine position, and need to assume the "mothering" role out of some practical reasons, this restriction of the habitus does

pose conflicts in their mind and make them uneasy.

Rowan's story can illustrate the point. Rowan was a 40 something married father. He had a daughter and a son. He was an officer of a non-governmental organization before he became a househusband. After noticing that his daughter suffered great stress in her study because of her dyslexia and that his son was spoilt and rude, he decided to quit his job and stay home after some discussion with his wife and a period of psychological struggle. At the beginning, Rowan found that being a stay-at-home father meant the loss of dignity and self-worth. When he brought his daughter to a hospital for assessment of her dyslexia, he used the term "full-time father" in the occupation field of the record form as a way to reduce the embarrassment.

At that time, Rowan did not hold any job, part-time or full-time, and dedicated all his effort to his children and family. Although Rowan said that he had the mentality to face the discrimination, he still regarded work as crucial to a man's identity. So he had to develop the euphemism, "full-time father", for his stay-at-home father status to mainly convince himself that he was not jobless and "useless".

Nevertheless, the concept that he had to work did not leave him. Rowan considered work as a task recognizable outside the family, but not so for housework, taking care of children and education of children. Work was supposed to be in the

public sphere and should allow others to appreciate his capability and contribution.

So after having decided to be a stay-at-home dad, Willy could not wait to get back to work. At the time of interview, he was working full-time as a full-time communications professional that allows him to stay at home to take care of his children most of the time. Before that, he sought every chance to write a column on his "special" fathering experience. During the interview, he did not mention his enjoyment in being a stay-at-home father, handling the house chores and childcare. Rather, he enjoyed the public recognition he obtained from his stay-at-home father experience. He had written a column in a local newspaper about his fathering experience, which earned him a lot of recognition and appreciation from the readers' feedback. His success in being able to manage both the family and to develop his career stimulated him to plan to write a book to tell others how to manage life. Comparing being a stay-at-home father and holding a full-time job, Rowan enjoyed having the public recognition that he could obtain from a job:

> I didn't plan to be a full-time dad forever. I planned to be one for five years...I thought that I would not have work for five years' but I have full-time jobs in just two and a half years...So I am a part-time dad now. I have to slowly get out of the full-time father role.

Work dominated Rowan's mind even when he was a stay-at-home dad. He had

planned to go back to work at the end and was happy to be able to keep his full-time fatherhood short. He defined success not in terms of his fatherhood per se but his ability in resolving his familial problems, and at the same time developing his career. Thus, what made Rowan satisfied was the demonstration of his capability through this stay-at-home fatherhood and his career.

Rowan's story can explain why house-husband identity is considered a failure or even an insult in the patriarchal society. A house-husband does not have a public appearance, and does not generate any monetary income, which, according to the habitus in the family, implies being irresponsible. Even when some fathers accepted being a househusband, they still could not give up the social prestige and status attached to waged work that was closely linked with masculinity.

Paul had a similar experience and thinking. When Paul suffered a heart attack, he became a house-husband and stay-at-home father unwillingly for several years during his recovery. He was frustrated to be at home, thinking that he was a loser. He did not enjoy doing housework and taking care of his children. Work outside the family, to Paul, was an index of success and recognition. He was very satisfied to be a company consultant at the time of interview. Therefore, when he had to rest at home because of the illness, he did not give up further studying and immediately looked for a full-time job after recovering. He emphasized his work achievements as

the head of a factory and consultant of a company to illustrate his capability.

The incompatibility of housework and masculinity, together with the discrimination from others and the degradation of caring work led Paul feel that he lost his dignity as a man during that "difficult" period. When I asked him to talk more on his feelings and experience during the days when he stayed at home, he used the word "slipped" (originally in Cantonese 跌低) to describe his "fall of status", reflecting his inferiority feeling in doing caring work. He said,

When I slipped and needed to be a mother, I had to learn and be retrained from the very beginning. I felt that I couldn't manage, and it was hard...Also, the discrimination from neighbours...some friends and colleagues phoned me to show their concern. But there were some people with evil hearts...I used to work hard in the medium level of the society. It's hard to accept the stress. When I look back on my last 20 years, I find that the hardest time as a father was those years [when I stayed home].

Not only do fathers who had been in the management level could not accept being a househusband, Timothy, who had been a dim sum chef in a Chinese restaurant, could not get used to the identity either. After his wife had an extra-marital affair and left him, he was forced to give up his work and to take care of his two sons by himself while living on social security. He admitted that he did

not participate in the daily care of his elder son when he was still an infant because

that was left to his wife and his mother. He was responsible to bring in an income for

the family. When he became a stay-at-home father, he felt being discriminated and

looked down upon by others. As time went by, he picked up enough courage to face

his change in life. Having said that, he still felt uncomfortable in doing housework

and child-caring. He had a low self-esteem.

The father's habitus, as the internalized structural disposition, predisposes work

as the way to exercise responsible fatherhood, forming the established front of a

father. This habitus has its roots in the patriarchal culture and is reproduced in

everyday discourse. Work can bring about economic, social, and symbolic capitals,

in Bourdieu's terms. These rewards establish the paternal authority and justify the

privilege of not participating in housework and childcare as they cannot bring about

the same social rewards. On the other hand, the loss of work results in discrimination

and humiliation from others, as well as the loss of privileges. The positive

consequence of work and negative result of out-of-work create the importance of

work in masculinity. At the same time, the avoidance or trivialization of housework

and childcare symbolizes the degradation towards femininity.

Thus, when some fathers had to stay at home out of some practical reasons,

what they encountered was an incompatible element on the established front stage.

In order to explain the disruptions of the front, there needed to be discursive justifications to explain the "abnormality" to preserve masculinity: Rowan had to solve his two children's academic and personality problems; Paul suffered from an uncontrollable illness; Timothy had to handle the problems caused by his irresponsible ex-wife. In these discourses, the masculine front is preserved to a certain degree either with the problem-solving heroic image or some uncontrollable accident to explain the househusband role. In addition, this mismatch in the front stage has to be kept short with a "happy-ending" of the father returning to the public sphere. Without the resolution at the end of the scene of stay-at-home fatherhood, the conflict continues and produces the sense of inferiority, like the case of Timothy.

Conclusion: Invisible Love as Masculine Performance of Power

Love and care are used as a discourse to legitimize the "compulsory" economic provider role of father in the minds of individual fathers, their family members, and even other unrelated people. Economic ability is justified for power and authority within the family. In the field of work, economic capital is considered one of the judging criteria of status by the habitus. When this habitus of work is brought into the field of the family, father, the breadwinner, can justify his privileges and hegemony. When fathers insist on the importance of work, and masculinity is shown by performing with the belief that work is the more important and appropriate arena

for men according to the habitus, economic provision is further institutionalized or reinforced as the unquestionable front on the stage of fatherhood. The rigid gender division of labour within the family is thus internalized and strengthened.

From the narration of fathers, we can see that economic provision manifest certain qualities that fathers possess, including the pursuit of success and social recognition, restrictive emotionality, and power within the family. So apart from the material benefits brought to the family, economic provision draws the performative domain of masculinity among fathers. The qualities mentioned above create the masculinity of power and dignity, requesting others, including spouses and children, to respect. As the founder and the provider of the family, together with social recognition of its leading role, fathers possess power over other family members. Patriarchy is sugar-coated with the discourse of love and care.

Under the capitalistic social structure, economic provision signifies the source of all the aspects in family and parenting. It is created as the most important contribution to the family and its members within the capitalistic discourse, with the needs and smooth running of the family all dependable on the economic provision of the father. It neglects or ignores the contribution of other members of the family and the larger society, the lacking of which can paralyze the family. Structural thinking motivates the expression of love and care in terms of economic provision as respect

and power is promised in the process by the socio-cultural structure. Patriarchy here works with capitalistic logic to sustain the hegemony of men.

Masculinity is the display and performance of the individuality of men. Establishing the family, demonstrating ability and social recognition, and rejecting femininity all signify the striving for power in individual. Men are there to fulfil their structural missions and gain the promised possessions. These are the individual achievements laid out in the socio-cultural structure. Men are expected to grow in accumulating these kinds of social and cultural capital in climbing up the ladder of social recognition, as what Rubie Watson (1986) has suggested: "Chinese males are always growing, becoming, accumulating new responsibilities and new rights" (p.627). Structural thinking of progressing according to stages in life after completing missions turns the chaotic social world into some "logical" motivational illusion for men to reproduce the hegemonic structure. Yet the failure in attaining the "logical" missions often results in disruptions of one's masculinity. Besides the examples mentioned in this chapter, we can see more of these cases in Chapter VI when we discuss marriage and family in fatherhood.

Having mentioned the privileges granted to men under the patriarchal structure, not all men are qualified to receive them. Men who cannot or do not provide for their family are considered as "receivers" even though they contributed to the family by

doing housework and taking care of children. The feminine contribution of

housework and caring is often considered as "negligible" and thus women often earn

the name of "being supported economically" by their husbands, implying their

"inability" and "inferiority". Economic provision signifies power and ability.

Through being a man and shouldering the responsibility of economic provision,

fathers expect to gain social prestige in society and status and authority within the

family, which signify masculinity.

When a father cannot assume the provider role, he loses the privilege to be

exempted from feminine familial duty and thus has to be a house-husband which is

emasculating. He feels shameful and depressed when he cannot have the prestige of

masculinity. Nonetheless, these fathers will try to compensate this deficiency with

another domain of paternity – education, which we will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter V

Educating Children

"To feed without teaching is the father's fault."(養不教，父之過)

– (Wang 1986:3)

While to fulfil economic duty is considered an essential responsibility of a father as shown in the last chapter, education of the children is considered an even more important aspect of fatherhood. The phrase "To feed without teaching is the father's fault" from "*San Zi Jing*"三字經 (Three-character Classic)[1] captures the significance of education in Chinese fatherhood. In the context where this saying emerged, education was for the production of appropriate successors for the family–lineage in order to guarantee its prosperity and success (Woodside & Elman 1994). Nowadays in Hong Kong society where the large family has been reduced to the nuclear family and where individualism prevails, education is the way that fathers pass on their valued qualities to their children to prepare them for surviving in the public sphere. The qualities and abilities that fathers expect their children to acquire imply and reflect the masculinities of the fathers themselves. The outcome of children thus signifies the achievement of fathers.

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[1] Three-character Classic is a classic Chinese text created in the Song Dynasty by Wang Yinglin. The arrangement of three characters as a phrase facilitates easy learning and recitation by children. The contents of this text include Confucian morality and Chinese history. Although it is not taught in public schools nowadays in Hong Kong, some popular phrases, like the quote above, are frequently cited and known to most Chinese.

Like economic provision, education is a domain of fatherhood that fosters the power of the father and contributes to the maintenance of patriarchy and conventional masculinity in the family. Education, in this study, refers to both formal academic training (schooling) and teaching of skills, manners, and values. This chapter aims to discuss how education shapes fatherhood and provides legitimacy to paternal authority and power in Hong Kong society. In order to understand how education can reproduce power, it is necessary to analyze the ideology of education in Chinese fatherhood and masculinity.

Ideology of Education in Chinese Fatherhood

The concept of *wen* 文 is an element of Chinese masculinity that pushes fathers to stress the importance of education of their children and to assume the educator's role. The concept of the *wen-wu* 文武 dyad proposed by Kam Louie refers to the achievement of both cultural and physical capabilities in life (Louie 2003). Wen-wu literally means "literary–martial". Wen is the intellectual, artistic, and cultural facet while *wu* 武 is the physical, martial, and athletic component. They are not opposite or mutually exclusive. On the contrary, an ideal man is expected to triumph in both aspects (Louie 2003).

The "twin brother" talents of wen and wu are not equal in status, however. Founders of Confucianism, like Confucius and Mencius, suggested that a man

should improve himself in morality and ability before he could assume the official

duty to run the state (Woodside & Elman 1994:1). "[A]n extract from the Confucian

classic *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋 says: 'The virtues of wen are superior, the

greatness of wu is lower, and this has always and will always be the case'" (Louie

2002:18). Morality and ability are defined by the understanding of Confucian

classics and thus are displayed in the literary sense. It can be demonstrated in the

Confucian notion of education which consists of the process of teaching and learning,

and produces culture/literature (wen) – socialization of the less literate or even

illiterate (Woodside & Elman 1994:3). Therefore, although both wen and wu talents

were officially assessed in government examinations in Imperial China, the ultimate

social authority and political power to run the state as officials was determined by

the *wenju* (civil service examinations) (Louie 2002:5). The preference of wen to wu

was associated with the gain of more political and social power by attaining

recognized qualifications in wenju, and was further advanced by the general respect

and admiration from fellow villagers, family members, and friends as one succeeded

in the civil service examinations.

The subsequent establishment of the national school system in Song dynasty

further realized the Confucian teaching (Woodside & Elman 1994), leading to the

association of wen with the more elite masculinity, and wu with non-elite

masculinity (Louie 2002). The sense of superiority in wen vis-à-vis wu continues to

live in contemporary Chinese society. James Watson (2004), for example, finds that

leaders of the villages in San Tin and Ha Tsuen in Hong Kong made efforts to

cultivate a respectable and superior image by showing personal qualities like

calmness under stress, and non-violence or violence with restraint (Watson 2004).

Wen qualities are thus also prominent among non-scholars.

As the civil service examination was open to all male citizens – "[a]ll Chinese

men, regardless of social standing, had the right to aspire to high-ranking civil posts

through the examination system" (Louie 2002:14), it was not rare to hear a man of

peasant origin elevated to official status after passing the wenju. Wen is not

associated with a particular social class. Rather it is a kind of personal quality: "Wen

is generally understood to refer to those genteel, refined qualities that were

associated with literary and artistic pursuits of the classical scholars, and can thereby

be partly analysed as a leisure-class masculine model" (Louie 2002:14).

Neo-Confucian scholars, in particular, dignified this scholar-gentleman masculinity

and downgraded the wu quality as aggressive, barbaric, and uncivilized (Blake

1994).

This wen quality could be gained through education. Therefore, families,

especially the elite ones, tended to invest their financial and cultural resources to

boys to succeed in the intellectual arena (Woodside & Elman 1994:1), in view of the social prestige and power gained through the development of wen qualities and achievements. In order to achieve the quality and excel in the civil service examination, boys were trained since the age of four or five on Confucian classics and history, as well as on essay writing since the age of ten (Bailey 2007).

The father was particularly concerned with his sons' academic and career achievements. One typical example was Ceng Guo-fan 曾國藩 who was a well-known Confucian scholar, official, and military general of the late Qing Dynasty in China. He wrote a lot of personal letters to his sons encouraging them to read even when he was preoccupied by his official duties. Kwang-ching Liu (1994) suggests that Ceng wished to see his family attain political and educational success. Thus, he encouraged his brothers and sons to have proper preparation for the civil service examinations by writing them personal letters and using his authority as the patriarch of the family and one who had achieved a high political status (ibid:97). He repeatedly told them to be virtuous – rise early and work hard to strive for literacy and knowledge – so that they could take up the scholarly vocation of service to the state (ibid:80, 88). Another father Yan Zhitui who wrote the *yan shijia xun* 顏氏家訓 *(Family Instructions for the Yan Clan)* also repeatedly told his sons the utilitarian goal of learning — being an official and earning wealth and fame subsequently (Lee

2000:487-489). The descendents having outstanding performance in the civil service examinations would bring fame to the family and symbolize success of the educated (Lee 2000). As the patriarch of the family, the Chinese father was eager to have his family members succeed in the political and cultural arenas.

Academic achievement became the pursuit of formal and informal education. As the civil service examinations tested on the Confucian classics, Lee (2000:38) argues that this pursuit of success in examination and the subsequent officialdom reproduced the existing structural self-accusing and self-justifying persona. Those who failed the examination would blame themselves for not making enough effort while those who succeeded to rise in the political sphere would rationalize their privilege with the knowledge of Confucian morality and philosophy. Both actions legitimated the civil service examination as the gateway to a successful career of scholars. It thus created the notion of "everything is inferior to studying" 萬般皆下品，唯有讀書高.[2]

Many of my informants shared this cultural ideal about education. In their expectations for their children, fathers deemed the pursuit of academic achievement highest in priority. They expected their children to achieve good examination results and high academic qualifications. In contemporary society, successes in fields other

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[2] From Wang Zhu, 汪洙. 1998. *Shen tong shi* 神童詩 (Poems by a Gifted Child). Ji nan 濟南: Qi lu shu she 齊魯書社.

than the academic, like music, sports, and so on, can also yield high social status and economic return. Yet fathers still focused solely on the academic as the only path to achievement. Studying was regarded as the only sign of diligence, and indicated that children were serious about their own life, which greatly pleased the fathers.

Daniel, age 49, whom I met in a church service, was a Chinese medicine practitioner. He was married and had a son studying in the secondary level. He was much relieved when his son decided to become a Christian, which signified his willingness to study. He said,

> I knew that he was concerned about himself. So I needed not worry that he would *turn bad* or *turn to be unwilling to study*. I knew that he had chosen the right way.

In placing the phrases "turn bad" (in original Cantonese 變壞) and "turn to be unwilling to study" (in original Cantonese 變得冇心機讀書) in parallel, Daniel thought that studying (which indicated his son's motivation to strive for academic achievement) and adopting the Christian morality were two important and pleasant results of his education of his son. What Daniel expected his son to attain reflects the cultural notion of wen which indicates the moral and intellectual qualities of a man.

Jack's younger daughter had been "rebellious" as a secondary school student. She often skipped classes and ran away from home. Although Jack, aged 50, was a

kind married father and could talk with her at that time, she just did not listen to his advice. After she got a full-time job as an assistant working in the airport, she found it difficult to communicate with tourists in English. She realized the importance of study in order to advance in her job. Jack was delighted to know that she was on the right track when she told him her willingness to further study.

With wen being an important hegemonic element of Chinese masculinity, the father not only emphasizes his children to acquire the target qualities, but also espouses it as the legitimate reason for assuming the chief educator role in fatherhood. Considering that they themselves have acquired a refined masculinity, fathers believe that they are suitable for the socializing role, as the "cultural parent".

Father as the Cultural Parent

The ideal Chinese father is the cultural parent within the family. Within the patrilineal structure the father and the son are part of each other and part of the larger familial chain; and the father has the authority and responsibility to teach and discipline the son (Hsu 1948). Moreover, the father was the one to name his children, especially sons. He was found to concern about the quality of his own name and those of his sons' because names of man symbolize the socialized, educated, and individuated features (Watson 1986:619). Often a boy's name came from the classics or famous poems while the name of a girl was more general (Watson 1986:621).

Names of men give them the sense of immortality (Blake 1994:689), and signify the wen quality. Thus, the father has the cultural legitimacy and authority in socializing his children in the moral aspect and encouraging them to excel in the academic arena.

Chinese fathers have long been concerned with children's education. The father has to improve his children's intellectual ability, like teaching them words, and writing prose, and to socialize them, including teaching them to follow the moral conviction, to behave properly, to have a right value (Lee 2000:479-480). Through education, the father expects the children to continue the family's elite status. For instance, the emperor expected his sons to have high political ability so as to succeed the ruling status. Succession of the father's high achievements in the academia, and capabilities like calligraphy, astronomical computations, mathematics, as well as popular religious doctrines and incantations were considered favourable and symbolized the success of the family (Lee 2000:482-485). In teaching morality to children and the family, these royal fathers, as heads of elite lineages, could help produce members who were filial, leading to a harmonious lineage and family, which was the state (Lee 2000:498).

Nonetheless, education was not restricted to sons, even in Imperial China. Daughters of the elite class also received tuition by teachers of the Confucian

classics and history together with their brothers (Bailey 2007:5). As mothers were also engaged in educating their children in terms of Confucian morality, the education of females was thought to be necessary (Bailey 2007:5; Lee 2000:496). However, the domain of education that the mother engaged was only the morality aspect. Since the late Ming dynasty, the gender distinction in educational content was emphasized, with female focusing on learning and teaching morality (Bailey 2007:5-6). At the turn of the 20th century, many held the belief that "public education for girls should train a new generation of rational, hardworking, thrifty and selfless household managers equipped with a wide range of domestic (and modern) skills and inculcated with the necessary 'womanly' virtues of obedience and modesty" (Bailey 2007:122). Therefore, in education, the father had the final say and was the mentor in planning children's life while the mother assumed a secondary position teaching them to be obedient.

Education as the Exclusive Privilege of Father

In the sphere of education, the fathers interviewed in this study were the main characters in the family in accomplishing the mission. They thought that they were the legitimate and knowledgeable parent in setting up the direction of education for their children when compared to the mother. They would like to assume the authority figure in educating children so that children could grow up in the most appropriate

way.

For fathers who were the sole breadwinners in the family, the educator role was unquestionably the exclusive duty of fathers. In their minds, fathers represented the public sphere. Their experience in the public sphere led them to think that they themselves were more capable of equipping children with what was needed for their future success. For example, as the sole breadwinner of his nuclear family, Dominic thought that he was the more suitable parent to introduce his two sons to the public sphere and how to acquire the appropriate man's role. Daniel even proposed that the father should be "the director" while the mother can only be "the executor" in terms of education. From the interview, I felt that Daniel was not active in the daily teaching of his son. Yet he considered that he was the director in education and he should have the final say. He described himself as "the supervisor of the executor" – his wife, the mother:

> Teaching…is the responsibility of the father. The father is the leader and he
> must be a good role model for the children. The ways I and my wife teach my
> son don't differ much. Although it's she who teaches our son, I notice that her
> teaching does not differ from what I expect.

Another interviewee, Paul, even commented explicitly that his wife was not qualified to educate his children. He thought that he was more suitable because he

was "educated" and had certain "achievement in [his] career". From the use of wordings like "she knows little" and "just that stuff" (originally 嗰啲嘢 in Cantonese, meaning trivial stuff) in describing his wife, it appeared to me that he looked down upon her as he thought that house chore and child-caring were trivial. Though he taught his children to be filial and appreciate their mother's hard work, it was a patronizing act. He said,

> Fathers should bear the breadwinning role and stress the moral education of the children...So I take up the role of teaching as I can communicate with them. I tell them: Mom takes care of you. She hasn't received much education in Hong Kong and knows little and so her responsibility is *just that stuff*...Then I tell my wife: you have already fulfilled your responsibility to bring them up. For things like education, moral conduct and life plan, I should do more.

Fathers considered themselves superior to mothers in educating children since they had more education, and thus could turn children into "better" persons. Thus, fathers had to correct mothers in the way of socializing the children. Often interviewees told me about cases of how they corrected their wives when it came to educating their children. It implies that fathers are at a better position to teach the children than mothers. Paul, for example, described to me how he was annoyed when his wife transmitted wrong values to the children. When Paul's wife told Paul and their

children a story of her friend selling her apartment to repay her son's debt and to apply for government housing, she showed her support to her friend. Yet Paul thought that it was abusing the public resources and thus it was wrong. He stopped his wife immediately as he did not want his children to think like that.

In their descriptions, these fathers believed that they were more rational, moral, and knowledgeable and therefore were more suitable than their wives in educating their children. In some cases, when fathers could not stop "inaccurate parenting" of their wives, an undesirable outcome happened. Jack, for example, attributed the rebelliousness of his younger daughter to his wife's incorrect teaching methods. He had tried to correct his wife but she was straightforward and could not help doing so. It resulted in a misbehaved child and bad relationship between mother and daughter. Jack said,

> I think there's one more factor that has led to [my younger daughter's] rebellious behaviour. My wife often compares our two daughters…I told my wife that she shouldn't say something like that as it would hurt the relationship between them. The girls were fine when they were in primary school but they started to compete when they grew older, especially in secondary school when my younger daughter became rebellious. I told my wife not to compare the younger daughter with [her sister] in their academic results. The more you

compare the worse she gets.

Fathers considered themselves in a good standing to educate their children. Under the influence of the cultural superiority of wen, Chinese masculinity is closely linked with education. Together with knowledge of and exposure to the public sphere, the fathers interviewed in my study all considered themselves the more legitimate parent in educating their children. Education is another source of recognition in fatherhood besides economic provision. Influenced by the valuing of wen in Chinese masculinity, the identity of cultural parent grants fathers the sense of importance within the family. However, when fathers face marital problems or divorce, the power and authority of fatherhood is being challenged. The mother becomes "disobedient" to the father and thus sabotages his authority. The ideal fatherhood of having all family members subsumed under the leading of the father is disrupted. Men may feel the loss of the home (Braver 1998). In that situation, education is the site for the father to reclaim their legitimacy of fatherhood and sense of importance since the basis of the educator's role of the father – wen – is considered as the masculinity that these fathers possess.

Education as a Site of Power Struggle

When the sense of importance of the father is jeopardized in marriage by marital problem or divorce, education serves as a way to maintain influence in

fatherhood. Therefore, some fathers insisted that their ways of teaching the children were superior to the mothers' even though they eventually recognized the value of the mothers' teachings. Education is the site that shows paternal influence and importance which the father cannot give up, especially in situations of fragility.

The experience of Benjamin, who was in his early 40s at the time of interview, was illustrative of this argument. His daughter stayed with her mother after the divorce, and Benjamin visited her twice a week. He could maintain a close relationship with her. He argued that he completed the education of his daughter by counteracting what his ex-wife had taught her although he did not oppose to what his ex-wife had done. He explained,

> [My daughter's] mother is a much *socialized* (original English word from Benjamin, meaning well-mannered and worldly) person. She understands etiquette and interpersonal relationship very much. As she has already [trained our daughter on manners] very well, I need not add on that. Rather, when my daughter reaches adolescence, I want to free her from these strings...So I want her to know that those manners and rules are just a system of operation. Her mother has taught her that very well. It's the first stage. She *socialized* her (original English word from Benjamin, meaning teaching manner and interpersonal relations to her daughter). I will focus on the second stage. I will

de-socialize her (original English word from Benjamin, meaning teaching his

daughter that etiquette was not absolute or natural). Then she will be a complete

person. If she doesn't go through the first stage, she can't live {properly} in

society. [But] the second stage will make her understand those [rules that she

had learnt] are not absolute. They are just some points you need to take notice

of in the game…[She needs to realize that] the rules are set by participants. You

need not follow the rules of the games [blindly]… you can discuss and set

another rule.

Benjamin described himself as a higher-level educator when compared to his

ex-wife in teaching their daughter. While the mother taught the daughter to follow

social rules, Benjamin would try to demonstrate critical thinking by doing the

opposite to mother's teachings to make their daughter a "complete" person. He said,

"Whenever her mother is angry on those things, I will do the opposite to balance off.

The more her mother is angry, the more I show that it's no problem." But when

asked to give an example on how he taught his daughter in the opposite way to his

ex-wife, his teaching was more of supplementing the mother's than of contradicting.

He indeed had a similar thinking as his ex-wife did in the practical sense:

For example, her mother gets angry when she is messy. I will later tell her

that the way she puts her things will make it difficult to find them later. Mother

has a reason to get angry…I want her to know the reason behind those proper acts and don't want her to take them as a formality only. For example, greeting others before you start eating is being polite. Politeness is important as it can make others happy in your interaction with others. But is it [morally] bad if you don't greet others before you eat? Not really. But still I demanded her to greet others first. I let her get used to that. After you get used to that, you [would do it naturally]. But if you [haven't learnt that] at the very beginning, you cannot operate properly in society. I want her to know how to operate in society. It's important.

Benjamin explained to his daughter why her mother asked her to put her own things in an orderly manner. He tried to make his daughter understand and subsequently follow her mother's words. He even asked his daughter to follow social rules to be polite so as to be able to live smoothly in the society. What he taught his daughter was actually not different from his ex-wife's. Indeed, he reinforced what she had taught their daughter. Towards the end of the interview, Benjamin admitted that it was not that their philosophies of education differed but their relationship mattered. He said calmly,

We often argued over our daughter's education. I knew that it's because the foundation of our relationship wasn't good…The argument over education was

just a way to express that...We were arguing over some concepts [because] we did not love each other. If we loved each other, it didn't matter which approach we followed. Following mine or hers didn't really matter...[I]t wasn't love at the foundation [of our relationship]. It was competition. We just had to argue with each other.

Benjamin transferred his discontent of his ex-wife to her education approach. Their relationship problem was projected on to parental duties. His rejection of her way of teaching did not mean he disagreed with the content but was a way to reduce the mother's contribution in the child's upbringing and to demonstrate his own paternal authority and influence. Education is the way to construct authority and sense of importance in fatherhood, especially when it is threatened, for instance by divorce.

Another case was Jason. Jason was in his 50s, and had a son and a daughter. Some years before the interview, he discovered that his wife had an extra-marital affair. He was very disappointed with her and regarded her selfish and not devoted to the family. During the interview he especially picked education to criticize her role in parenting, in contrast to his ways of parenting:

My wife is not good as she only sticks to her way of parenting. She doesn't want to improve...My wife is serious. Her parenting style is authoritarian and

she stressed only academic performance. She was influenced by her own father who never smiled. She was brought up in that parenting style. I am not like her...I don't parent in that way. I hug my children...so that they can feel love and happiness.

Jason's criticism towards his wife's parenting style demonstrates his discontent towards her. At the beginning of the interview, he kept on criticizing his wife's teaching methods. Near the end of the interview, he eventually revealed that his wife had had an extra-marital affair that broke his heart. Then he started to recognize his wife's contribution:

My wife is good to our children. She is a good person, but maybe she just doesn't express her love to them...She is serious, like a mother, a parent. [But] I am like a friend to the children...Our children are afraid of my wife. She used to beat them. Now she doesn't.

My son got very good results in primary school. He often got the second place in class and was within the top ten in primary five and six. I was very happy to see him doing well at school. His mother pushed him a lot. She paid for his private tuition. It was the effort of my wife. Although we have different approaches in teaching children, I don't want to abate her contribution.

The concept of father as the cultural parent provides the legitimacy for fathers

to claim and sustain their educating role and authority. When society changes and men lose the privileges and power as in the past, cultural ideals help to their superiority. As wen constitutes the hegemonic masculinity in the Chinese context, education is legitimated by the cultural tradition for fathers to show his importance in the family. Thus, when encountering threats like the wife's extra-marital affair, divorce, or separation from the daughter, the abovementioned fathers chose to regain their power and sense of importance within the family through education of their children. Education implies influence and power of the fathers over their children. It connects the father and his children. Consequently, "good" children signifying the achievement of the father as the educator become the reward of the father, especially during times of turmoil.

After discussing the ideology of education in fatherhood, I will analyze the practice of fathers in education to elucidate how it creates and maintains the hegemony of men. In the next section, I will discuss the two main goals of education – inheritance and protection, which reflects the patriarchal family-oriented thinking in the mind of the fathers interviewed.

Practice of Education in Fatherhood

Goals of Education

Education, to my informants, serves two main goals of their fatherhood, namely

inheritance and protection. To them, fathers would pass the socially desirable

qualities, abilities, and values to their children to produce another "quality"

generation on the familial level. Fathers, as heads of nuclear families, would hope to

see their children succeeding the advantages they had enjoyed and would consider

the children's life as their own achievements. On the individual level, fathers would

want to protect their children from poverty, harm, undesirable social outcomes, and

sufferings through education. These two goals thus intertwined with each other and

fuelled fathers' effort and sacrifice in educating children.

American fathers also thought like that. Middle-class fathers in the 19th century

considered education as a way to equip their children with necessary skills and

knowledge as well as values for them to lead a decent life and continue the

middle-class status of the family (Johansen 2001:110). Townsend (2002) finds a

similar mindset among contemporary American fathers. He discovers that education

is a way fathers adopt to protect the children from bad influences, like drug abuse

(ibid:63-64). Therefore, the father is concerned about whether children would be

admitted to schools with appropriate values and they themselves would try to pass

proper values to their children as well (ibid:64, 66). In addition, fathers want to

provide enough schooling, for instance college education, to children, and to train

self-reliance and necessary knowledge for children to be able to gain opportunities in

the world (ibid:76). They hope to continue their own desirable practice and status in their children as well as to protect them from suffering.

Inheritance

Education is a way that a father passes on good qualities, skills, and qualifications to his children. With his own high qualifications, the father expected his children to achieve high. Informants who were university graduates and professionals tended to mobilize their financial resources as well as cultural and social capital to complete this class inheritance project.

Gary, 53, had an accounting degree from Canada, and his wife was a graduate from a Taiwan university. He expected his daughter to get a college degree and he supported her with two kinds of capital – economic provision and citizenship. He said,

> I expected my daughter to complete college education. Her parents both completed university and how can she not do the same?... I told her that studying would let you know more...You could have a stable income and live a healthy and stable life [after you got a university degree]...As I am a Canadian citizen, although she was born in Hong Kong, she can study in Canada. I have told her that.

Another informant, Willy, could not quite accept the fact that his daughter was

unable to manage her schoolwork as he thought that both he and his wife were well-educated. He considered that a crisis to his family. After considerable struggle, he gave up his full-time job to stay home, so that he could train and take care of his two children. Willy told me,

> My daughter has dyslexia. Indeed both my two children do. They are poor with words...For example my daughter came second last in class in Primary One...That's a big alarm to us because my wife and I are educated people. We are both clever and smart, hahaha. Why was our daughter like that? Then I started to be concerned with her school work more.

Apart from academic performance, fathers also required children to learn some knowledge and skill that had social recognition. Eric, a married father in his late 40s, saw that his son and daughter had outstanding reading ability and original thinking when compared to children of the same age. His narration exposes his pride and excitement for his children. Eric attributed their accomplishment to his training of imaginative reading activity with them when they were small. He told me,

> [My son] can read a lot...This, to a certain extent, creates a difference in his thinking from other classmates. He is more mature than the boys in his class...My daughter is even more independent. She reads even more than his elder brother...[W]hen they were small, I tried to stimulate their interest in

reading. I read some story books with them. I didn't just read the texts to them but I added my own creativity to make the story funnier. It's to let them imagine. So their ability to talk and tell story is strong.

These middle-class fathers expected that their children to acquire the abilities that the father deemed important. The achievement of children was linked to the pride of the father while the failure of children was the responsibility of the father. So these fathers would try to use their resources to help their children develop abilities that could continue the middle-class status. Achievement and ability related to the academic field, and knowledge that is valued in the society can help children secure the earning power and social status in the society. Expectation and training of these socially-recognized qualities, resulted from the inheritance concept, aims at continuing and even improving the social status of the family started off by the father who possesses cultural and symbolic capital.

What fathers pass down may not necessarily be academic qualifications but can be personal qualities, especially self-reliance and understanding of the world. Samuel, age 50, was a truck driver. His wife had passed away when I met him and he had to look after his 11-year-old son on his own. Samuel himself experienced a sense of loss when his mother passed away. He had been too dependent on his mother to take care of his daily life and thus could not manage his life properly when she left. He

therefore did not want the same to happen to his son. So he requested his son to go to school since he was Primary Three or Four. He also stopped hiring the domestic worker and taught his son to cook to train him to be independent.

Theodore, who was a social worker in his early 40s when I first met him, was disappointed by social policies and thought that the orientation of social work could not actually benefit the minority. He chose to quit his job and became an author in order to promote his philosophy. He wanted his daughter to inherit his understanding of the world – one needs not follow the rules set out in the society and can change them.

Some fathers were concerned whether their children could contribute to the society. Thus, they tried to pass a sense of responsibility to their children. This thought coincides with the sense of responsibility to the nation in manhood in Chinese Confucian culture. The Confucian scholar Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 who was a philosopher, historian, and linguist in late Ming and early Qing period proposed, 'The fate of the nation is the responsibility of men' 天下興亡，匹夫有責[3]. The sense of responsibility to the nation is defined as part of Chinese masculinity. This thought was deeply embedded in the mind of fathers who not only carried it themselves but also tried to influence their children to do so.

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[3] Gu, Yanwu 顧炎武. 1998. *Ri zhi lu* 日知錄. Xi'an: Shanxi ren min chu ban she 陝西人民出版社.

During the time when he suffered from a heart problem and unemployment, Paul met many people encountering different life problems, which made him realize the importance of spiritual support to people experiencing crisis. He then participated in some counselling voluntary work and wanted his daughter to contribute to society in the way he did. Paul said,

> I encouraged my daughter to study social work as I thought that society needed help. After she studied social work, she found that education was even better as it could prevent problems from happening. So she changed to study education.

Being the founding member and leader of a men's rights group, Thomas, in his late 40s, wanted his two sons to be aware of the discrimination on men that existed in the society, and to have sympathy towards the poor men in the society. He himself developed the idea that men was underprivileged when he saw his mother joining a women's group during his childhood but he did not hear of any men's group. He showed his sons that the media often rationalized violence towards men. He also brought them to the men's group he joined and let them know the poor lives of some men.

Through education, the fathers wanted to pass down their desired qualities to their children. They developed their own values and/or missions from their negative

experiences or observations which became their motivation to help change the situation. At the same time, they would like to pass on their values and perspectives to their children. Often children's subjectivity is absent from the narrations. Some father, like Theodore, realized the paternal hegemony in exerting too much influence on guiding children to the direction he desired. Nevertheless, even though he reminded himself not to exercise too much influence on his daughter, the intention to guide children in the desired direction was still inevitable in his paternal role. He told me his dilemma:

I want her to be herself and I don't want to influence her so much. But she is influenced by me more inevitably as I am her dad. So I think that I should strike a balance.

Yet when Theodore discovered that his daughter had adopted a gender identity that deviated from his expectation, he could not help directing his daughter's gender to the "appropriate" state, and revealed his hope for his daughter to be feminine. He said,

[My daughter] is boyish. Her sex role is more inclined to the masculine. I don't ask her to be a boy or a girl. But I encourage her to have more feminine stuff to balance off…But I don't force her not to be a boy, like make her wear a dress and not trousers. Maybe when she starts dating, she will change.

In the above fathers' narrations, we can see that the qualities fathers emphasized were masculine ideals – independence and the ability to help and save others. With the concept of inheritance in mind, fathers regarded their children successors of desired qualities and qualifications. Fathers regarded children's achievements and good qualities as their own achievements. They felt proud when children internalized their teachings, which signified recognition and significance of the father. In large part, the authority and power of fathers come from children inheriting the abilities and values from them.

In his study on 19th century American fathers, Johansen (2001) also finds this dilemma of fathers in expecting children to be independent while at the same time required them to be obedient. He analyzes that fathers can preserve authority and power in training children to be industrious and obedient because the education of fathers tends to reproduce the existing norms (ibid:111). As a result, obedience often weighs heavier in father's education.

Samuel's narration can illustrate the point. He communicated to me frankly his disappointment of his son disagreeing with him. Samuel was very happy and contented when his son obeyed and admired him but felt disappointed when he began to lose this authoritative status:

With the inheritance notion in mind, some fathers interviewed even extended

their achievement of education to areas to which he had not contributed. Martin was not the one who took care of his children's homework, but he thought that he was the one who educated the children. He said,

> When my children were small, I worked hard and was busy and so I didn't care about their homework. But my children were all good at studying. My eldest and second daughters and the youngest son all got good results in schools. They always came first or second in class...I needed not care about their schoolwork. They are good...My wife didn't work outside and thus took care of the children. I told her not to let children turn bad. If they have problems, tell me...I set up a good role model for them and I know how to teach them...Their mother doesn't know how to teach them.

With the influence of wen in Chinese masculinity, fathers considered themselves the legitimate educators, passing down and equipping children with proper abilities and values, in order to be competent and capable. Nonetheless, this inheritance concept exposes the hegemony of men within the family in neglecting the contribution of the mother and other relevant people, like teachers, as well as the effort of children themselves.

Protection

Apart from inheritance, education serves another purpose in the mind of

fathers – protection through socialization. Similar to inheritance, fathers emphasized two aspects of education in protecting their children – appropriate abilities and skills as well as correct values. Children were expected to be equipped with proper abilities and skills to be able to survive and succeed in the society. They were also expected to adopt correct values so as to have a happy and secure life. This mentality reflects the belief that protecting members of the family is the responsibility and right of the father who is the head of the family. Protection provides the legitimacy for fathers to execute their education and demand obedience.

The cultural notion of wen in Chinese masculinity pushes fathers to emphasize academic performance of children. The ultimate realization of wen was through success in the civil service examinations in the imperial era. This notion of wen is still prevalent in the contemporary Chinese society. For instance, in Taiwan, the political candidates tend to attract their supporters with their high academic qualifications (Louie 2002:20). Practically, in nowadays Hong Kong society, it is widely believed that achieving good marks in examinations and entering good schools ensure a decent future career prospect and living standard of children. Therefore, fathers regard study as a way to protect children's future living. They try hard to encourage and provide for their children to achieve higher academic achievements.

Frank, aged 40, was a secondary school teacher. He was married and had two daughters. He and his wife were anxious about finding good secondary schools for their daughters. He said,

Whenever my elder daughter learnt some extra-curricular stuff, the motivation behind was to have something to show to the principals during school interviews.

I demand my daughters to achieve certain academic level; at least I won't give up on that. It is to let her know that exam is a chance for her to show her ability. She cannot treat it casually. We do all these for her future good.

Anson showed a similar thinking as Frank. He regarded the extra-curricular activity an opportunity for his daughter to acquire special skills to impress those good secondary schools. His aim of equipping his daughter with better qualifications was to protect her from economic and social sufferings in the future. Anson said,

Now my daughter has two extra-curricular activities: Girl Guide and playing pi-pa. She learns pi-pa outside the school…Few people are interested in learning pi-pa. You know, now schools count these in the application. So these activities are useful. My daughter does not particularly dislike or like [pi-pa]. Maybe she hasn't developed her own interest. We need to teach children according to their talent. But you must first get into the system, which requires

you to learn something to be qualified for the system.

Even though some fathers did not take much care of their children's study, they were anxious with their children's academic results and future prospect in their study during critical moments. Leo at first showed a laissez-faire attitude towards his son's academic prospect in the interview. Yet, after speaking for a while, he started to admit that he was anxious about his English level because he was studying in a secondary school with Chinese as the medium of instruction. Indeed Leo was concerned about his son's academic performance very much:

> The exam is his and he is the one who takes the exam, not me. I am not nervous at all…As my children have pretty good results, I am not anxious about their academic performance. But there is still something that makes me anxious. Their English is so bad…So I am anxious, too. I hope that they can study well and have a better prospect.

Class background does affect fathers' expectation of children. The abovementioned fathers were of middle-class background and were concerned about the competitiveness of their children. Fathers with high academic qualifications interpreted success in terms of academic qualifications, social status, and competitive edge and thus wanted their children to succeed in those aspects. Working-class fathers tried their very best to equip their children with enough skills to protect them

from poverty and sufferings, not aiming high. For instance, Paul, who had further studied in the Open University, expected his children to acquire university degrees and become professionals to soar in the financial society of Hong Kong, while Goethe and Stephen, who were blue-collar workers, hoped that their children could have a stable and worriless living through education. Still, academic qualifications were linked with future living standard among fathers of all classes.

An exemplar of working-class father concerned about children's future was Maurice. Worrying that his daughter could not earn her living with low academic qualifications, Maurice tried hard to arrange a lot of vocational training courses for her, even though her daughter did not respond positively. He told me his plan:

[My daughter] resisted the teachers [in the grammar school] very much. So I decided that she could not study in the grammar school anymore. I found some courses in vocational training institute for her to study, like beauty and hair styling courses. I thought these courses were more interesting for her and at the same time she could be equipped with some vocational skills. But she still always skipped classes and failed the attendance requirement...I will enrol another hair styling course for her in the next semester. I have also asked some of my friends who own hair salons to hire her as junior after she has completed the course.

Apart from academic performance and career, my informants also stressed the importance of correct values in order to lead a happy life. They would like their children to inherit their understanding of the world in order to be protected with proper values which could direct them to the right path. So fathers tried to immune their children against something undesirable with negative consequences of those behaviours (Townsend 2002:62).

Dickson, a married father in his early 40s, intentionally brought his children to see some undesirable matters like drug abuse and prostitution, so as to induce a negative emotion and subsequent avoidance of those behaviours. He said,

In carrying out protection to children, fathers need to exercise various control on the children, producing and reproducing paternal authority and power in the process. The fathers interviewed often worried that their children would engage in some illegal behaviours, like joining the gangsters, stealing, drug abuse, and prostitution. Some worried that the impulsivity of their adolescent children would bring them into trouble. Some were anxious of children following their wrong step and became addicted in gambling. In order to protect their children to avoid the undesirable behaviours, fathers adopted "consequence education" – teaching children the negative consequences of some behaviour. This includes various ways to induce fright in their children, including negative portrayals on gangsters from the

media, visit to jail, father's previous counter-example. In addition, when fathers caught their children engaging in those undesirable acts, they tended to punish the children more seriously, including the use of physical punishment. Justified by the protection concept, rather than discussing with them peacefully, fathers tend to be authoritative in teaching children their own values, and to control them with various ways, including physical punishment.

Among the correct values with which the fathers educated their children, sexuality of daughters was particularly underscored. This emphasis was particularly prominent among those informants who had daughters. They would teach their daughters how to choose a proper spouse. These fathers were often found to hold the patriarchal belief that girls lose in sexual relation. They were particularly anxious and controlling of their daughters' sexuality and dating. They thus taught their daughters to abstain from sexual intercourse or even intimate behaviours like kissing and hugging with some "detrimental" sexual outcomes, like pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases. For fathers who thought that they could do nothing to stop their daughters to have sex, they reminded them to use condom to protect themselves. Yet no fathers mentioned that they taught similar measures to their sons. Sex was regarded something threatening to their female children among fathers.

Among these fathers, Martin was the most intrusive and controlling. He

prohibited his daughter of having sexual experience totally before marriage despite

the fact that he himself had pre-marital sex with his present wife and got married

after knowing that she was pregnant. He was hiding this back stage from his

daughters. In the front stage, he was a father on the moral high ground. He even

discouraged his daughters from kissing and hugging with boys. He described his

teaching to me,

> I just told [my second daughter] not to get too close with [her
>
> boyfriend]…I told the guy directly that they could sleep in the same room and
>
> even cohabitate. But they couldn't have pre-marital sex. I don't want my
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> daughter to lose…The first time the guy stayed overnight in my apartment, they
>
> already slept in the same bed. When I knew, I scolded them both. I kicked the
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> guy out and my daughter was mad at me. Then I asked her if I was wrong, "You
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> two are just friends and not couples!" She cried and said that they were in love.
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> I told her that daddy wanted to protect her and didn't want to see her do
>
> something wrong. At the end, she apologized to me…I was not stopping [her]
>
> from dating but just didn't want [her] to have sex.

For Martin, sex was closely related to reproduction. Without money, a reliable

husband with career, and a nuclear family, pregnancy and thus sexual intercourse

were detrimental and unthinkable to his daughter. Among many outcomes of sexual

intercourse, pregnancy was named by Martin as the reason he forbade his daughter from having sex.

Fathers considered sexuality a threat to their female children (Townsend 2002:66). Although not all fathers with daughters mentioned the same worry to me, none of the fathers expressed anxiety over their sons' sexuality. This resonates with what Townsend (2002) has found in his American sample. Sexual intercourse which is a mutual human behaviour was thought to be a zero-sum game with the male party gained while the female counterpart lost.

Chinese sexuality has its history of being anchored in the site of the family for continuing the descent line, with love and pleasure being secondary (Brownell & Wasserstrom 2002). This is particularly true for female whose chastity is to ensure the purity of the blood line. Women had to be "restrained and disciplined by prescriptions of purity, chastity and naivety as well as sexual segregation" (Louie 2003:8). Chinese women can only actualize themselves through wifehood and motherhood (Evans 2002:336). Chinese women still consider sexual intercourse as a marital duty with little pleasure (Li 1996; Liu et al. 1997). Female subjectivity is denied with femininity coerced into "passivity and submissiveness" and thus succumbs to the masculinity of "mastering, controlling and moderating of sexual desires" (Louie 2003:8).

This control on female sexuality is not limited to China as patriarchy can find its roots cross-culturally. Kamen (2000) points out that while America girls seem to enjoy more sexual freedom than before, sexually active girls continue to encounter a lot of trouble. Tolman (2002) describes an American father who on one hand was proud to see his daughter being attractive and desirable to her male peers, on the other hand he was worried that she would lose sexually when she went out with boys (p.4-5). Yet this same man was excited in describing his son's sexual experiences, without any concern or worries even in the contemporary age of rampant HIV/AIDS. Girls thus are assumed to have no sexual desires of their own but are just the objects of boys' and men's sexual desire (ibid:5) The denial of girls' sexual subjectivity, which is believed to protect them, often results in unprotected intercourse, causing tremendous physical, social, psychological, and material consequences to them (ibid:9).

A similar belief in Chinese culture is reflected in the phrase, "However, starving to death is trivial; loss of chastity is crucial 然餓死事極小，失節事極大[4]". The female body in ancient times was the property of the father before marriage and husband after. Thus, the father had the right to control his daughters' sexuality. In addition, as virginity of women was a legitimate requirement for marriage to a better

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[4] The phrase came from a Confucian scholar Cheng Yi in the Song Dynasty (c.f. Zhu, Xi, ed. 1965. Jin Si Lu 近思錄 (Records of Recent Thoughts). Taipei: Commercial Press.)

husband, sexual intercourse was presented as an exchange for material and economic support from the husband and his family for the rest of the women's life. Control over female sexuality is an important step in reproducing patriarchy (Snitow, Stansell, & Thompson 1983; Vance 1984).

In contemporary discourse, the Confucian interpretation of female sexuality and body is revived in the discourse of "devastating" consequences of pre-marital pregnancy and STDs. Daughters were said to lose and suffer from sex because they were left with unwanted and abandoned babies. An unmarried, pregnant daughter was a burden to the natal family as illustrated by Martin's words to his younger daughter when he caught her sleeping with her boyfriend:

You don't have much money and have no preparation. You must have a sum of money to settle down. How can [your boyfriend] have a family if he still doesn't have his own career?...You are still small and haven't yet got a job. You are still under my control...You cannot yet bear the consequence of pre-marital sex. If you have babies, we, as parents, have to bring them up as you are still not able to handle. Are you willing to create more troubles to [us]?

The female body was objectified, problematized, and reduced to a descent-producing and trouble-inducing pile of flesh in exchange for stable material provision. Female sexuality was claimed to carry no sensual pleasure but only

afflictions. Hence, father's protection and control were justified.

Both inheritance and protection serve to maintain the existing status and structure, and at the same time, reproduce the paternal authority and control over children when they walk down the path set out by the father. In the process, the father determines what qualities are good and require the children to acquire, which largely follows from the existing structural conditions. The analysis of power can be further substantiated by Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence.

Bourdieu uses the concept "symbolic violence" to analyze the reproduction of class and the power embedded. Symbolic violence "is the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e. culture) upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate" (Jenkins 2002:104). Power relations are embedded in the process and exist "in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder" (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977:viii). In the exercise of symbolic violence, coined as "pedagogic action" by Bourdieu, not just culture is reproduced, but also the power relations, reflecting the interests of dominant groups or classes, tending to reproduce the uneven distribution of cultural capital among the groups or classes which inhabit the social space in question, hence reproducing social structure" (Jenkins 2002:105). To carry out pedagogic action, "pedagogic authority" is necessary, which is "an arbitrary power to act, misrecognised by its practitioners and

recipients as legitimate" (ibid:105). Jenkins (2002) suggests that pedagogic authority

is most typically exists in the relationship between parent and child (p.105).

In Martin's education of sexuality to his daughter, the symbolic violence of

imposing the patriarchal ideology on female sexuality discussed above on his

daughter was exercised. The restriction on female sexuality was justified. At the

same time, the power and authority of the father in controlling daughter's sexuality

was made legitimate. Even the vigorous way of kicking the boyfriend out was

legitimized as the pedagogic authority by the apology from the daughter.

Inheritance and protection are seen as legitimate reasons for the father to

demand his children to acquire those qualities he thinks desirable. Inheritance

reflects the familial habitus which creates the disguise that the father is born with the

target qualities passed down and it is natural and normal for children to acquire them,

especially for the middle-class father who has acquired certain social status.

Protection masks the hegemonic control of the father on the values, behaviours, and

abilities that are demanded in the children. Often those required qualities originate

from the social structure that is embedded with patriarchal values. In the process, as

suggested by Bourdieu, power relations exist. The action of defining and demanding

which qualities are desirable exhibits the authority of the father which is legitimized

by the inequality of cultural capital possessed by the father and the children and by

the structural relationship of an educating father and a learning child. The child is demanded to reproduce and recognize the paternal authority in the process.

Conclusion: Education as Manifestation of Paternal Authority

The Confucian notion of the superiority of wen quality dominates Chinese masculinity. The father emphasizes education in his children to improve their social standing. In return, power and authority come from the educator's role as it signifies access and possession of social and cultural capital. According to Goffman (1959), a social actor "can be sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality [w]hen his audience is also convinced in this way about the show he puts on..." (p.15). Through carrying out the practice of education, the father as the authority and knowledgeable figure is made believed in his audience – the children and the spouse – and himself through the citational and repetitive (adopting Judith Butler's terms) education performance.

Education is the domain of power that fathers grasp firmly. In their narration of educating children, the father who is deemed the cultural parent within the family is the one who imparts values to children, sets the direction of education, and controls the definition of right and wrong. Because "upward mobility involves the presentation of proper performances and that efforts to move upward and efforts to keep from moving downward are expressed in terms of sacrifices made for the

maintenance of front" (Goffman 1959:31), in the process of education, fathers have to pay efforts and even sacrifice to sustain his authoritative front. The cultural recognition of education's multiple uses – as knowledge of the public sphere, as transmission of capability, and as protection against poverty and bad influences - legitimizes the father's sense of superiority and domination in the children's education which in turn reinforces the patriarchal perception of masculine power, sustains the paternal power and control of children in the family.

After discussing the manifestation of hegemony of fathers through economic provision and education, in the next chapter, I will analyze the foundation of fatherhood – marriage and family, as well as the ideology embedded in the two institutions which help substantiate the father's significance in society.

Chapter VI

The "Child-oriented" Family

When wife is virtuous, son is filial, then father is relieved.

– Hakka proverb.

The photo shows an 80-year-old man kneeling on the floor as he offered a piece of mooncake to his wife who had been married to him for 61 years. "They spent a romantic Mid-Autumn Festival together", wrote the journalist, in her report on an activity organized by a local shopping mall in 2008 during Mid-Autumn Festival, which is traditionally considered a time for family members to gather together (Ji 2008). The reporter's description of marriage as a romantic relationship between two individuals is a well accepted idea and the major discourse on marriage in Hong Kong today. The romance notion consistently appears in the media as well as in weddings, echoing the Western concept of marriage.

As Wasserman (2007) suggests, marriage can be a public declaration of love, and can signify the legitimacy of sexual relations and of parenting, the establishment of a nuclear family, and its economic stability. It is a social and civil recognition of the conjugal union between two persons. Despite the prevalent analysis that the Chinese marriage has historically been a union of two families, nonetheless affection and passion between the married couple has also been a constant theme in Chinese

literature. For instance, in *Lienüzhuan* 列女傳[1], one story depicts a man who refused to divorce his wife even when she asked him to do so because of her inability to bring his family any children. The man was described as an exemplary husband rather than an unfilial son (Hinsch 2007:403). I argue, however, that this romance discourse masks the fact that the marriage system itself is patriarchal.

Affection as presented in the discourse of marriage in China is indeed constituted of male hegemony. Hinsch (2007) finds that, for example, in describing the affection between a couple, the word *benevolence* (*en* 恩) is employed. The word denotes a hierarchical relation between husband and wife: the wife's loyalty and affection towards her husband is assumed, while the husband's liking of his wife is a generous gift to a subordinate (ibid:405). Moreover, affection is just considered an ideal and not a prevalent fact (ibid:409).

In Hinsch's analysis, affection in Imperial China was further thought to be detrimental to the patriarchal family structure among Confucian ritualists who regarded marriage as a way to strengthen kinship ties so as to build a stable and prosperous society with simple and clear patrilineal bloodlines (ibid:402, 409). Under this collective-oriented structure, individuals' rights, especially that of women, were not the target of protection. Since the Song dynasty, divorce, remarriage, or

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[1] *Lienüzhuan* is a book written in Han dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE), recording stories of women. It reflects the Confucian requirements on the conduct of women.

extra-marital affair was considered detrimental to the family. In addition, as affection

was emotional and consisted of unpredictability to the kinship structure, it was

deemed dangerous (ibid:408). Thus, individuals' passion was often diverted to

feelings contained in kinship, for instance, giving birth to a child to demonstrate and

complete one's affection for the family (ibid:394). In orthodox discourse, there

simply is no place for individual feelings.

Patriarchal marriage structure has had a long history in China. As suggested in

the *Book of Rites* 禮記[2], marriage is to unite two families or lineages and to

perpetuate the patriline (Croll 1981:4). Ling (2000:46) points out that married

women in the traditional Chinese extended family were expected to serve and please

every family member of the husband, and to act submissively. So, marriage, in the

patriarchal sense, means obtaining additional labour force for the patrilineal family.

A wife could contribute her labour on routine house chores as well as familial

economy like weaving cloth or agriculture (Hinsch 2007:404). With the traditional

ideal of bringing a male heir to the family, marriage also functioned to continue the

patriline (Ebrey 1991:2). A man could legitimately divorce his wife or take a

concubine if his wife could not give birth to a son (Wong 2000:138). Moreover,

marriage signified men's social and economic status. Throughout dynastic China,

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[2] The *Book of Rites* is one of the Confucian classics. It was developed from the teachings of Confucius and emphasizes piety and rules of conduct, with the aim of placing order to the society.

many wealthy Chinese gentry-landowners and merchants displayed their power by acquiring concubines (Ling 2000:55; Waltner 1996:71). In this discourse and cultural practice, women not only belonged to men but also were functional to their families. Marriage indeed served as a platform on which the patriarchal structure and male hegemony was realized.

Marriage as a Masculine Mission

Even participation in this structure is patriarchal. For men, establishing a nuclear family and realizing fatherhood are important steps to becoming a responsible member of society. According to the *Great Learning* 大學[3], a man's ultimate mission is to demonstrate his virtue throughout the world (Gardner 2007:8). To achieve that, he has to equip himself with the great learning through the eight steps: investigating things 格物, extending knowledge 致知, being sincere 誠意, rectifying the heart 正心, cultivating oneself 修身, forming a family and keeping it in order 齊家, governing the nation 治國, and bringing peace to the world 平天下 (Höchsmann 2004:49). In the Confucian tradition, a man has to refine himself by cultivating intellectual and moral qualities before he can carry out the external endeavours. That is, he should first achieve personal excellence which legitimates his authority in the family and the state (ibid:50). Among these personal missions,

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[3] The *Great Learning*, often attributed to Confucius and his disciples, is a chapter from the *Book of Rites*. It describes the education for governing the state and the "conditions of just rule" (Höchsmann 2004:49).

establishing a family through marriage is an important intermediary step between the private and the public domains. Thus, marriage and family is a man's channel to exhibit his personal qualities and is also the foundation of his further masculine expedition as a ruler bringing peace to the world. For women, the goal of marriage is humbler. The native family for women is only temporary --their real home is the husband's patrilineal family. That is, women can only find a proper place of belonging through marriage, where they would live out their life, and after death be worshipped as an ancestress by their descendents (Stockard 1989:49).

The familial-social structure has paved the path for men – they should develop themselves through education, build a family through marriage, and strive for a career. Even in the contemporary times, this ideology constitutes Chinese men's habitus. For men, the idea that marriage is the institutional prerequisite for the family is internalized and naturalized. Among my interviewees, no one showed any hesitation about getting married. Instead of seeing marriage as a romantic alliance, they regarded it a mission and a rite of passage in their lives. When asked about how his marriage and fatherhood started, Mark, a resident divorced father in his 40s, said,

I didn't have a plan of when and how to get married. At that time, I had been dating with my girlfriend for more than one year. She suggested that we get married. I thought that I was at a suitable age and so we got married.

Thomas, an unemployed resident divorced father in his early 40s, considered marriage a mission not only for himself but also for his family. He met his South-East Asian ex-wife through a marriage bureau. He got married because he felt that he was at a suitable age to have his own family and to have his own children:

> My parents told me, "There are three things that would make a son unfilial. Among them, not having children (sons) is the most serious" 不孝有三，無後為大[4]. I then knew that they expected me to get married and bear grandchildren for them. I agreed as I wanted to make them happy.

> It is a natural duty to get married and have children. I feel that I have achieved a perfect peace of mind to my parents after I have my two sons…One must get married and have children. That's why human beings are created to fulfil the law of reproduction cycle.

These fathers had internalized the familial structure so much that marriage to them was a rite of passage that they should pass through to demonstrate the sense of responsibility as a normal adult man. In everyday life, the Confucian notion of marriage and family is often the major point of reference, emphasizing the interests of a male-oriented social structure. So being a responsible man means contribution to

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[4] This phrase has its source from the *Mencius* 孟子, which records the philosophy of Mencius and is written in the Warring States Period (403-221 BCE). The paragraph the phrase comes from describes three unfilial act of a son – not persuading parents to correct their errors, not being an official to support the elderly parents, and not getting married and producing children.

the structure. According to Thomas, marriage was for having children and thus fulfilling his duty as a son. We can notice that the thought of individual agent, including that of the father, was missing in these structural discourses. Rather, the fathers I have interviewed treated marriage as a performance of the masculine mission. Although not many fathers thought like Thomas – a man had to get married and have children to make parents happy, they accepted the structural request and considered that marriage is for children. In fulfilling the structural requirement, fathers expected they could get the rewards promised by the structure. In the following sections, I will analyze the meaning of marriage, family, and children in fatherhood, and discuss how it is interpreted in the naturalized and normalized practices of fathers in granting them power in the familial context.

Meaning of Marriage and Family

Marriage paves the way for family and fatherhood. According to Townsend (2002), marriage is for fathers to provide caring mothers to their children. It resonates with Shek's (2001) view that Hong Kong fathers regard marriage to be an important element within the family. A majority of the respondents in Shek's study believed that fathers played an important role in creating a family with communication, interaction between parent and children, involvement of parent, marital quality, and lack of conflict for their children (ibid). Marriage is thus the

foundation for establishing this child-oriented fatherhood.

Marriage: A Breeding Ground for Desired Children

Men tend to link marriage with children. Kaufman (1997) discovers that men who have been married for some years are inclined to plan to have children, and are ready to sacrifice for them (pp.439-440). When my informants mentioned marriage or marriage-related issues, they referred to marriage as "the basis of a family and the healthy growth of their children". Marriage is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a means to provide a stable environment for children with both father and mother taking care of their daily, as well as economic, educational and emotional needs. So, being married but without children is unthinkable to these fathers.

Jamie, a married father in his 50s, told me his love affair before he met his wife. Apart from the reason that his ex-girlfriend saw another man secretly, they broke up because Jamie wanted to get married and have children while she did not. He said,

> When I got married, I wanted to have children. I had dated a girl before I met my wife. Because she didn't want to have children, we broke up. She loved me and I loved her...She told me that she didn't want to get married. Even if we got married, she didn't want to have children...But I think that marriage is a life stage which everyone has to pass through. For me, it's a must. Also it's a must to have children...I told her that. But she insisted [that she did not want any

children].

Marriage is linked with children. The mere presence of love was not sufficient for Jamie to get married. His marriage had to lead to children. The same idea was shared by the divorced fathers I interviewed. (Re)marriage, to them, is thought to be a means to provide a mother to supervise and take care of their children; not to satisfy the father's sentimental and/or sexual needs, at least in the narration of fatherhood. Ralph, who was a resident divorced father in his early 40s, was afraid to be lonely in his old age. But more importantly children were the main concern in his decision to start a new relationship. Marriage, to him, was a way to provide a caring mother to his children, not a romantic union. He said,

Do I find a partner when I am 60? Or should I find a partner now? If I [have a partner], will this affect my children? Though they need not identify [my new wife] as their new mom, at the end they will need to have some kind of relationship with her. And if they have to live with a woman who isn't their mom, what will their relationship be?

If one thinks that Ralph might be thinking too much before a real opportunity appeared, Isaac, a resident divorced father in his 50s, told me that he actually considered his children high up in the priority list when a woman approached him:

There was a woman who lived in another public housing estate. She was

also a single parent. She asked me whether I want to have a partner. I told her that it is not for me to decide whether we can be husband and wife or not, but my daughter. Whoever can take care of my daughter and can get along well with her I will marry. You have to please my child first, and then I will stay with you. I won't let the new woman interfere with my child who has followed me for such a long time.

Only fathers who had experienced divorce or relationship difficulty with their spouses spontaneously mentioned their marriage when I asked them to talk about their fatherhood. For fathers who did not have any difficulty in their marriage relations, they did not talk much about marriage. Marriage is something that is fundamental yet taken for granted when compared with economic provision and education, both of which require conscious and continual efforts and activities to sustain. Under the familial social structure, marriage is constructed as a lifelong commitment in which the man is thought to own his wife forever. Without having experienced marriage problems and the shattering of this marital structure, marriage is taken for granted and no particular effort is considered to be needed.

Nevertheless, from the words of fathers who talked about marriage, we can see its importance in fatherhood. Children were often their focus and they tried hard to give their children the best they could, particularly a stable family sustained through

marriage. These fathers were willing to endure hardship to maintain the marriage for children. Thus, for fathers, with or without marriage problems, marriage is literally a breeding ground for children. Brian's story is a typical case of this notion.

Brian, in his early 50s, was a married father. When I interviewed him in a local fast food restaurant about his fatherhood, he described to me how he got into his present marriage. Brian met his wife when he worked in Taiwan. Attracted to her sexually but not sentimentally, Brian planned to maintain only a sexual relationship with her. Yet she kept writing love letters to him after he returned to Hong Kong. Thinking that he was already 35 and would be too late if he did not marry at that time, Brian married the Taiwanese woman. There was no elaborate banquet.

Throughout these years together, Brian's dislike for his wife continued to grow. He described her as "rude, discourteous, cold, introvert, not verbally expressive of her feelings, and with bad interpersonal skills". He mentioned to me a lot of incidents when he was furious about his wife's disobedience to him. He hated her so much that he could not bear to be with her alone in the house. He chose to go out during holidays.

On the contrary, Brian's love towards his daughter was not diminished by the anger she induced in him. She often made him angry with her behavioural problems and poor academic results. Yet Brian loved her very much. He defined a happy

family with close relationships between father and children, rather than a harmonious or even loving relationship between spouses. Given his bad relationship with his wife, he particularly treasured his daughter whom he considered a target to express the affection deep-down in him:

I [had some health problems] and now my eyes are not good…I told my daughter jokingly that I might not be able to live longer than 10 years…[S]he was nervous and bought my favourite food for me. I was kind of whining [to gain her attention and care]…I am not reserved and always kiss and hug her.

I told [my daughter] that she was the most important person for me in this world…Sometimes I said to my daughter jokingly that if she dies then I will follow [her] or if something unfortunate happens and she passes away, there would be nothing worth living for. I don't know if I can survive the blow if she dies.

Although Brian seemed to be sentimental, marriage for him was a life stage to pass through and a means to have children. The function of his wife as his daughter's mother was more important than the sentimental feelings between them. Consequently, he did not think of divorcing his wife although he no longer loved her, and so as long as she treated his daughter well, he was willing to tolerate the loveless marriage. He said,

My daughter talked with [my wife] a lot. My wife would give her money to spend…She paid for her books, clothes, toys and other stuff…It's natural for my daughter to have a better relationship with her.

Given the importance of the daughter and the care that her mother could provide, Brian could tolerate the difficult marital relation.

Another example is Kenny, a married father in his mid-40s. He hated his wife as she had had an extra-marital affair that hurt him so much. He even blamed her for causing a stroke he had had, and he called her "the enemy". Although he criticized her of being irresponsible to the family, he admitted that she really cared about the children:

> [She] works long hours as she knows that I will contribute all my efforts to the family. She needs not worry at all. She even ignores the family. She just shoulders the tuition expenses of the children. When she has more money, she will buy some clothes for them.

Another reason for Kenny to keep this problematic marriage was his daughter:

> I worry about my daughter. Since I don't know how to care for and teach her, especially those biological matters, I have to maintain the relationship with my wife. I wish that she can help teach my daughter.

Children were the immediate concern for these fathers encountering sour

marriages. The wife was considered to be functional in the family, especially in parenting. In a loveless union, the importance of and focus on children is particularly demonstrated. In the dominant discourse naturalizing the mother-child relationship (Chodorow 1978; Coltrane 1989), the wife is considered to be able to mediate in the father-child relationship through her emotional role (Hochschild 1983; Liljestrom 1986). The father often gains indirect understanding of his children through the mother (Backett 1987:84). As the relationship with children is the most important element in fatherhood, for the fathers I have interviewed, the sentiment with the wife was considered secondary when compared to the perceived benefits in children.

For the divorced fathers interviewed in this study, maintaining a harmonious relationship with their ex-partners was important because of the children. Donald, a non-resident divorced father in his 40s, for example, thought that the parents' marriage had a strong influence on the development of the children. Putting his daughter's psychological growth first, he tried to maintain a relationship with his ex-wife. Even though Donald wanted very much to have the daughter's custody, he would rather let his ex-wife have it, so as not to worsen the relationship with her. He recounted,

> …[A]fter some discussion with her, I knew that she wouldn't let go. If I fought with her, there would be conflict [between us] and we would end up in

court. It's not the issue of who got the custody. If we made things messy, we would both lose and be unhappy. The two adults would be unhappy and the child would be unhappy. The child would think that you guys had said how good your relationship was and made a lot of promises and now it ended up like that. It would give her a very bad example. I didn't like that...So if [my ex-wife] insisted, I let her take care of [our daughter].

Keeping a harmonious relationship with the wife is therefore in the interest of the father who wants to maintain his relationship with the children. In maintaining the relationship with the wife, the father not only can protect his children from loss of maternal care, but can also keep the tie with their children, justifying their sense of responsibility for their children (Furstenberg & Cherlin 1991:118). Often the father has to depend upon his ex-wife to keep in touch with the children after divorce (Arendell 1995:63).

Apart from specific functions that a mother serves, her mere existence can contribute to the "complete family" ideology that is deemed to be of utmost importance to children's development and fatherhood. In the "complete family" discourse, the family is divided into the dichotomy of "complete" versus "broken" state. "Complete" family means the marriage of the parents is intact-- not necessarily without problems, but at least the marriage is in effect. As mentioned above, a

"complete family" brought about by marriage is thought to bring benefits to the children. When parents separate or divorce, the family becomes "broken". It is considered that this will be detrimental to children's development. Thinking of the negative consequences that would happen to his children, Ryan, a married father aged 46, tried hard to make up with his wife when their relationship turned sour. By making her happy, Ryan aimed to maintain his family intact for his children. Ryan told me how he thought:

> [W]hen I had marriage problem, I sought help [from the social worker] because I thought of my children. [I thought] if my marriage failed, then they had to grow up in a broken family. I wanted to keep my family intact for my children…If my children grew up in a broken family, then the impact on them could be enormous. I read in the newspaper that after the parents' divorce, children's academic results drop tremendously. Their psychological state is affected greatly. So, thinking about my children, no matter how wrong my wife was, I would endure for my kids.

After following the advice of his peers from the men's group, Ryan saved his marriage by improving his relationship with his wife, like sending flowers to her. He was often cited as a successful case in the men's group.

From this narration, we can guess that what Ryan's wife needed was his care

and love. Yet Ryan took their relationship for granted and focused only on the

children. As a result, according to Ryan, he and his wife often quarrelled over

children's schooling, and the financial situation of the family. Ryan thought that his

wife was wrong as she did not put the family and children first. In this discourse,

marital satisfaction has to give way to family and children. The pursuit of individual

pleasure in marital relationship was deemed improper. Even though Ryan actively

sought ways to make his wife happy to reconcile their relationship, he considered it a

means to maintain the family for his children.

Ryan's story illustrates that children were often stressed while the wife was

secondary. Under the Chinese patrilineal family structure, the wife who comes from

another family and lineage is considered an outsider even though she formally

belongs to her husband's family (Watson 1981:87; Wolf 1972:35). In addition, when

divorce is now considered a socially and legally legitimate way to end an unhappy or

unsatisfactory marriage, and the number of divorces keeps increasing (17,771

divorce decrees in 2008 compared to 2,062 in 1981 and 9,473 in 1996) (Census and

Statistics Department n.d.a), marriage is more vulnerable than the biological

father-children relationship which is considered unbreakable. Also, as I have

discussed in the beginning of the chapter, the structural requirement for a man to

enter adulthood is to get married, have his own family, and to produce male heirs.

Affection for wife is considered a bonus rather than a requirement in this familial habitus. When marriage and family become the stage for the performance of parenting, romantic relationships between couples are regarded optional or functional in maintaining the family structure.

Hence, some fathers endured a bad marriage even though they had very painful relationships with their spouses, for instance when the wife was infidel. One example was Kenny. To him, a "complete" family for his children was important. Thus, he chose to disregard his infidel wife but just focused on her role as the mother of his children.

Some fathers even pushed the emphasis on "complete family" to the extreme. They considered the damage to the children from a "broken family" more severe than physical harm. Keith was more worried about the social stigma of single-parent family on his daughters than the suitability of his wife in taking care of them. Even though he knew early on that his wife was not a caring mother, as she had once proposed to "sell" their two daughters to cover her loss in an investment, and had even beaten him in a quarrel, he still did not want his wife to leave him and the children. He explained,

I thought, my daughters would be brought up in a single-parent family.

Their psychological development would have problems. They would be

discriminated against by others and had low self-esteem.

The preference of "complete family" over a "broken" one, and the interest of the children were often emphasized as the main reason for these fathers to keep their marital relationship. The mere presence of both father and mother was regarded best for the children's development. Marriage serves the dual purpose of reproduction and parenting. Parenting requires the legitimization provided by marriage. "Termination of marriage meant a breach in family, not just in the marital relationship. Marriage and parenthood went hand in hand, a package deal; the men's understandings of themselves as fathers assumed a marital relationship to the mothers of their children" (Arendell 1995:62). A nuclear family established upon marriage between a husband and a wife gives children a stable configuration, which is thought to be the only ideal setting for "healthy" children. Consequently, problems in some children, such as hatred towards the parents, refusing to stay home, refusing to go to school, and having negative perceptions of marriage, were all attributed to the parents' marriage problems or divorce. With this mentality, these "problematic" fathers who experienced divorce considered that their "failure" in marriage had caused developmental problems in their children and felt guilty about it.

Maurice noticed that his daughter experienced emotional problems after his divorce. He observed that her academic performance was only average before, but

his marriage problems made her academic results decline further. For example, she did not submit homework, and behaved emotionally and often isolated herself by shutting herself in the room. She refused to talk to Maurice or her mother. Maurice interpreted this behaviour as avoidance of her parents' marital problems.

Likewise, Donald reported that his divorce had caused harm on his daughter's psychological state, and she felt sad for not being able to see him as often as before. Being laughed at by her classmates further worsened her feelings:

> She felt that she doesn't measure up with others [who have a complete family]. She had low self-esteem [because] her parents were not as good as others' parents as they had separated.

In Donald's subsequent visits he assured her of his continual care and support. Moreover, when divorce and single parenthood became more common among her peers, the feeling of inferiority gradually went away. This shows that the so-called negative consequences of divorce and separation are often the effects of the hegemonic discourse of "complete family" and the social stigma attached to it.

Donald described the change of her daughter to me:

> She didn't tell the teacher directly about her feelings but the teacher read her journal and asked her…So she knew that telling others was not a problem. Others would accept her. Now, it's even more so because a lot of her classmates

have the same experience. She isn't the only one [with divorced parents].

Although it's not the majority…[s]he feels better.

Because of the care Donald continued to show to his daughter, she gradually

understood that her parents' divorce did not symbolize the end of her relationship

with her father. Instead, they had a closer relationship.

From the interviews of divorced resident fathers, many of them began to put in

more efforts for their children after the divorce. When compared to the mere

existence of traditional fathers who alienated themselves from interacting with

children, the interaction and care from these fathers were more intense. Clement, a

resident divorced father in his early 50s, gave his own example:

Some fathers [of my son's classmates in intact families] shared that they

did not attend to or take care of their children very much. They did not know

which grade their children were studying in. They even said that they did not

care about these things, or they did not have time to take care of their children.

If I still have a wife to take care of my children, I may still be like these fathers.

Resident divorced fathers who became stay-at-home fathers could even develop

close relationship with their children because they took care of them every day.

Examples are Henry and Timothy. When I went to the men's meetings, I often saw

Henry bringing his daughter along. It was not difficult to see them hugging and

whispering. Henry had also mentioned his close relationship with her:

> For my daughter, she has always said that she will go where I go....She
>
> always sticks to me.

Timothy also enjoyed a close relationship with his sons, especially the younger one:

> I often chat with my sons. I chat with them during dinner. They will tell me
>
> things that happen in schools. Since the elder son is now studying in secondary
>
> school, he is busier. So I chat with my younger son more often. I tell him about
>
> my past and stories about the other parts of the world that I have heard. He is
>
> interested and asks me a lot of questions.

With the belief that single parenthood leads to lack of care and love for the children, these fathers tried hard to be more involved in their children's life. In this sense, the inferiority complex due to divorce and single parent status pushed them to counteract the dominant discourse and compensate for their failure in providing a stable family environment and a loving mother. Fathers became more involved in communicating with their children, not just being playmates; they accompanied their children to go to interest groups and parks, not as a family day activity but a personal time with the children; they paid more attention to their children's behaviours, habits, routines, and activities; they got to know their children's friends so as to understand their children more; they looked after their children's everyday needs, like clothing,

meals, and extra-curricular activities. They strived to be "new good fathers" who took care of their children more closely and carefully, and aimed to form intimate bonding and emotional attachment with them. "New good fatherhood" is thus fostered (or forced to happen) in the divorced resident fatherhood. The "new good father" identity is somewhat the product of divorce. LHC's promotion of the "new good father" notion was born out of the situation that many of its male clients encountered marriage problems and became single fathers. It urged the public not to discriminate against these fathers and even encouraged fathers in two-parent families to learn to be caring fathers. Thus, at both individual and organizational levels, although a "complete" family was considered the ideal and the "new good father" identity emerged as a compensation for the "missing mother", ironically it at the same time demonstrated the fault of traditional fatherhood in the "complete family" which was still considered ideal in these divorced fathers' minds.

On the contrary, it is not uncommon to find fathers from "complete families" suffering from distant relationships with their children. Although Dominic loved his sons and wanted to be close to them, he found that they were more attached to their mother who was a full-time mother and took care of them. He tried to please them and interact with them whenever he had the chance. Yet their responses were not positive. He seemed to be frustrated and helpless when he described that to me:

They don't tell me much about their own secrets. But sometimes when they were beaten by their mother, they would tell me. Although not much, they did. When they told me, I listened to them as much as possible. I wouldn't ignore them.

[My elder son] doesn't listen to me and sometimes is bad-tempered. For instance, when I ask him something, he says, 'It's none of your business!' or he answers me back. How do I feel? Well…I try to convince myself that he is now in the rebellious stage but sometimes I argue with him.

Sunny regretted not showing concern to his daughters when they were small. He repeatedly described his relationship with them as "alienated". He attributed his remote relationship with his children to his focus on work and study in their early years. He said,

I now thought that I was wrong to just do my own stuff when the children were small. If I had known at that time, I wouldn't have done so. I should have treasured the time when they were still small. Now our relationship is alienated.

As a result, it is not the marital status of fathers that affects their relationship with children; rather it is the father's preference, priority, and attitudes towards children that are more important. What really counts in fatherhood is indeed the quality of relationship. Yet, while fathers who encountered divorce or relationship

problems with their wives were showing more love and care towards their children, still the children and even the fathers themselves considered single fatherhood problematic. So what make them consider single parenthood deficient, defective and inferior?

The difference between "normal" and "abnormal" family is defined in relation to the "complete family" notion. Maintaining the "completeness" of the family is important to a man since it implies his personal quality and ability in fulfilling the men's cultural mission. A divorced father is often deemed to be "erroneous" – the father being viewed as perpetrators while his wife and children victims in divorce (Arendell 1995:66). Clement was considered as a father who had some problems by his child's class teacher when his single father identity was disclosed:

> The class teacher thought that I was a parent who had *lost* his wife. There's got to be something wrong {with me}.

On the other hand, if the mother is the single parent, then the family which lacks a father has a different problem – it lacks social legitimacy. Children in such a family are considered "defective". The legitimacy of a family prevents children from being teased or discriminated against in school and other social settings. Donald's daughter was excited when her fellow students praised him for his good English after he took part in a role play on Parents' Day. Donald believed that it helped to take

away her sense of inferiority that had developed as her classmates teased her for not having a father. He said,

> In the past, she wasn't willing to tell others about her family and about the separation of her parents. Some of her classmates had laughed at her, 'Your father left his wife and children!'...Maybe [Parent's Day] was a chance for her to regain some face. It was just a role play, so I didn't care whether I was praised or criticized. No big deal. But for her, she believed that her friends thought her dad was good and quite smart. She gained back some face as her friends now thought well of her family.

The conventional notion of the nuclear family with a father, a mother, and children signifies normality and social legitimacy, neglecting the actual relational contents of the family and individuals involved. While it does not reflect the reality, and sometimes even puts undue pressure on the individuals in the family, the emphasis on structural completeness, as in mainstream discourse which LHC adopted, made these fathers think that they needed to work harder to compensate for the "inferiority". This thought ironically helps to reconstruct some of my informants' role in the family – making them loving spouses and caring fathers. As a result, under the notion of "new good father", on one hand these caring divorced fathers were inferior in terms of their family structure; on the other hand they enjoyed

praises and satisfaction as "new good fathers". These push and pull factors led them

pay more effort and endure hardship in fatherhood for the sake of the children.

Meaning of Family

With children coming first in their mind, the fathers interviewed in this study

often equated their family with their children. Children are the raison d'être of the

family. Husband and wife are thus defined in terms of their parenting role as father

and mother, rather than of a marital union as husband and wife. This explains the

importance of the notion of fatherhood over the husband identity.

A common observation in Hong Kong society is that parents often refer to each

other as "dad" and "mom" even if it is just between the spouses. Martin was one

example. In his mind, family is the synonym of children. He equated his children

with the family when he talked about his expectations for them, showing that his

children were the foundation of his family. He also addressed himself as "father"

when he talked to his wife.

To my informants, marriage did not directly lead to a family. The men's sense

of responsibility to the family came only after their children were born. Children

were the essence and the aim of the family. Like Burt, he only realized his

responsibility for the family after his children were born:

People said that we grow up when we get married. I think that dating and

marriage are not that different. But when you become a father, there are more

duties…[A]fter having children, you really have much burden. You would have

to plan for your future. Where there were just[my wife and I], we would spend

our income to buy clothes, or eat out in restaurants, or go travelling as our

salaries were more than enough. When there was [a child], we would plan – like

moving to a bigger flat to have more space, or saving more money for the

child's schooling.

Frank also felt that he became more serious in life after he had children. To him,

marriage was not comparable to fatherhood:

[After having children], I really thought more. I changed totally. I not only

thought for myself. After having my wife, I would think for her. But the degree

could not be compared to that for my two daughters. Thinking for the children

is not only thinking about what they are doing on that day, but planning for

them in the coming years.

The sense of responsibility arrives significantly after fatherhood. While

responsibility comes with rights, the above thinking reflects that fatherhood signifies

power and status for men. When children come, family is then established. In the

father's habitus, this family should be led by him. He has the responsibility to pass

down desirable qualities to the children to protect them as individuals and to

preserve the family with good qualities and success. At the same time, he has the authority and right to control children and to dominate the family.

The Father-centred Family

The thinking that family begins with fatherhood reflects that the father is the centre of the family. He is the one who links all members of the family together as the family belongs to him. This notion of centrality of the father is illustrated by the case of Bernard. Bernard, 44, a married father, thought that his children were linked with him for the whole life and they were one as a family, with father as the head, through the biological relationship. Bernard said,

I told my children to gather together even after my death. I told them that

they were flesh and blood. Husbands are not flesh and blood…When two

children fought each other, the father was sad. They were our flesh and blood.

This family-oriented idea reflects the thinking that children are the continuation of fathers and thus they are expected to fulfil the inheritance project by adopting the abilities and values of fathers. Children are considered to come from and belong to fathers. The notion of father-centred family provides the father with a masculine mission to accomplish – the power to influence others. This mission in turn justifies the control over children.

Willy described to me the reason why he would like to be a father. He would

like to have a descendent or an inheritor whom he could demonstrate his power or capability to influence them to acquire certain talents, personalities, and values. In Willy's mind, the masculinity, defined by the power to influence, is demonstrated through fatherhood. He said,

> Yes, I want to be a father very much. When I was studying in secondary school, I had already decided to have a son when I grew up. It was like a primitive desire to have a descendant and to have someone like you. I think that the [paternal] role is a very important stage in life. If you don't pass through it, it is very difficult to grow…There is a song…"how many roads must a man walks down…before you call him a man"…If you don't experience [paternity], you can't say that you are mature enough to be qualified as a man. So you asked me whether [paternity] is important; it is very important. Life is complete by then, so complete that you are confident to influence your next generation.

Leo and Samuel also shared Willy's view. Leo, who had planned to be a father in his high school days, had already felt the importance of fatherhood because he had the power to build or ruin another life through education. Samuel felt the responsibility in developing his son to be a grown-up with his own career and position to contribute to the society. Bringing up children is thus a manifestation of the power to influence in fathers.

Regarding what the father could influence the children, Terence concretely stated his goal – continuing the sense of coherence among family members that the father had established. He said,

> [W]e don't need to seek help from others [outside the family] and there's nothing we cannot solve...[In the family,] we can discuss whatever we want to discuss. The culture of the family is established. I hope that when my children grow up and have their own families, they can keep this culture.

Control of Children

Just as the inheritance notion discussed in Chapter V, the influential power and responsibility give the father reason to exert control over his children, regardless of the willingness of the children. With the influential power in mind, authoritative fathers think that children are their possession and target of control. Paul opposed to his younger daughter getting baptized without asking for his permission. He proposed a lot of reasons to make her give up the decision; he legitimized his opinion with the religion of his patrilineal family, her young age, and the father's authority over his children. In the end, Paul was satisfied to see that his daughter gave in and agreed to get baptized later. He was less concerned about her own thoughts or feelings than winning the "battle" with his daughter over the issue:

> Our family is a Buddhist family and my dad was a Buddhist. Of course, I

believe in freedom of religion. But for those great changes I think she needed to discuss with her dad as she was only in Form 3 or 4. She wasn't an adult yet. I couldn't accept it. She wasn't 18 yet and wasn't grown up. For religion, and other big issues, she had to respect me…I think that she had to discuss with me on these important decisions. She didn't consider my presence and didn't discuss with me. I couldn't accept it. If she had discussed with me, I might accept.

In this narration, Paul mentioned many times that he could not accept that his daughter did not ask for his permission to claim her religion. Paul was offended and felt being deprived of his paternal authority as his daughter identified herself with a religion other than his own. The concept of children as the father's possession was clear.

Likewise, Martin bluntly admitted that his children were his possession. He cited the cultural notion of continuation of descent line, and the father's contribution of money and education for the children, and so they were thought to belong to the father. He argued that without him, his children could not be the same. This rationalized his control and authority over them. He said,

The four children are my asset, my property (資產 in original Cantonese). I just hope that they can grow up healthily. In return, the most important thing is

that they are filial. If you educate them well, they will. I educate them well, so I am confident that they are filial. Children are forever yours. They have your blood. Your grandchildren will worship you. They will continue the descent line. I have four children. If one of them is bad, I have three other.

Martin considered his children the harvest of his efforts. They contributed to the rewards of his fatherhood – being supported financially, passing on the patrilineal line, and being worshipped. He did not regard the individual qualities of his children as the components of his fatherhood, but only those tangible rewards counted. So he said that he could still be qualified as a successful father even if one of his children did not measure up to his expectations.

Martin's concept of possession of children could be exhibited in his control of his daughter's dating. He set the rules for children, especially daughters, regarding when to start dating and to have sex. He also wanted to control his daughters' boyfriends. He tried every way to grasp the details of their dating partners to prevent them from picking undesirable ones. He thought that he had the right to "give" his children (daughters) to someone he thought suitable. He said,

> I told [my second daughter] to bring her boyfriend for me to see. I have tried to watch secretly what her boyfriend looked like after school. If his hair was dyed yellow, then it's absolutely a "no". I tried to read the person from

details. I asked my daughter whether she held hands with her boyfriend…I

didn't stop her from dating. She loves the boy. It's fine. I just told her not to get

too close with the boy. Now she is still dating with that guy. The guy is quite

good and his family is simple…But the guy isn't rich. His mother gambles a lot

while his father has already retired…I of course hope that my daughter can

marry to a rich man. But if it isn't the case, then they have to depend on

themselves.

The smallest child is still small, just 13 to 14. No dating now. Ok, for the

eldest, I knew that she was dating about five or six years ago. She was dating

with a man who worked in Canada…He said that he was a boss…He had even

slept in my place for some days. I let them sleep together…The man initially

stayed in a hotel. I was nice and invited him to stay in my place…I wanted to

know his character, good or bad. I don't trust his words…As I allow my

daughter to date with him and sleep with him, I have given him my daughter.

But he strongly defended his power when the children tried to resist. Martin

decided not to let his second daughter have sex with her boyfriend who had no

financial ability. Martin was not concerned with physical harms that his daughter

would suffer from sexual intercourse but the harm to her socio-economic future and

life opportunities. González-López (2004) found that Mexican immigrant fathers in

the United States of America were worried that their daughters' future would be ruined by the negative consequences of pre-marital sexual intercourse, like pregnancy out of wedlock, sexually transmitted diseases, and sexual abuse. Yet Martin was mainly concerned about the lack of financial ability of his daughter's boyfriend in forming a family if she got pregnant. Even though Martin himself had had pre-marital sex and married his wife at the age of 19 when she got pregnant, he did not find himself problematic and did not hesitate to stop his second daughter from having sex. It shows pedagogic authority that existed between Martin and his daughter. Martin simply hid his past at the backstage, showing only his front as a righteous father disciplining a daughter who had done wrong. Both Martin and his daughter recognized this paternal control and authority as legitimate, without considering the need of mutual understanding or equal dialogue. In this way, the father's power is sustained. Not all the fathers I have interviewed were as authoritative as Martin. Some fathers, like Dino and Jones, were more tolerant with their daughters' sexuality. They did not prohibit their daughters to have sex during dating. They only reminded them to use condom to protect themselves and offered to teach them the way to wear it. Yet, they did not show any concern over this piece of sexual knowledge for their sons. So they still carried the mindset that sexuality was somewhat detrimental to female. None of the fathers I have met mentioned to me the

same worry or concern towards their sons' sexual activity. Only Dominic was concerned about the appropriateness of his sons in showing their sexual interest:

> When [my sons] made jokes on sex, I didn't stop them. I told them not to tell such jokes much at home and not to tell them at all in school, especially in front of teachers or people who don't like that. I don't stop them from saying that. Rather I find it very normal…I told them not to commit indecent act as the consequence is enormous. But I tell them that it's normal for them to love a girl. It doesn't matter.

So when a father is concerned with his son's sexuality, it is a worry towards whether he can control his sexual impulse or desire towards the female so as not to violate the law. (Hetero)sexual interest and desire are legitimated in masculinity. While female is considered passive in sexuality and needs protection no matter in terms of prohibition or condom, male is constructed to be active in sexuality and has impulsive sexual needs that need guidance.

Sexuality vs. Family

Although one of the key elements of masculinity is heterosexuality (Gavanas 2004), my informants rarely talked about their own sexuality in the interview. When they mentioned sexuality it was either talking about sex with their wives or how sex could interfere with their family and relationship with children.

For these fathers, sex was essentially heterosexual and was solely carried out with their marriage partners. Burt recalled that he sensed that there was something wrong in the marriage relation when his wife refused to have sex with him. She preferred to sleep in the same bed with their sons. Even though at times she had sex with him, Burt felt she was fulfilling a wife's responsibility to satisfy the husband's sexual need, and he could not sense her sexual desire and satisfaction. Keith told me once he had lost heavily in horse racing, and he wanted his wife to please him by having sex with him. She refused but he forced himself on her. Another time they were home alone, and when he wanted sex, she refused, claiming that she was afraid to get pregnant. Again Keith ignored her and forced her to have sex. Gary told me he hated his wife, but he had liked his wife's figure when he first met her. Even though he did not love her, he liked to have sex with her before they got married. He did not mention any sexual desire towards another woman.

For these fathers, heterosexual desire helped to construct this hegemony of men. The woman is deemed responsible to satisfy the man's sexual need. In this discourse, the woman does not have her sexual subjectivity and the man does not need to consider her feeling. In addition, sex, in the narration of these men, is the way for them to connect with their own emotions and feelings, not their partners'.

(Hetero)sexuality is thus a dominating practice for men to sense and express emotion

and feeling. Sexuality outside the original marriage is considered opposite to and detrimental to paternity. The sexual partners mentioned by the fathers above were only their wives. None of the fathers interviewed told me their sexual experience or desire towards women other than their wives. Martin emphasized to me that he was a responsible husband and father because he did not have extra-marital affairs and did not spend money on other women. Ralph wanted to find a partner after divorce. Yet thinking that the new partner might not be accepted by his two children, he gave up that idea. Issac would only consider a new partner if she has the ability and willingness to take care of his daughter. Even when a single mother approached him, he still placed his daughter higher up in the priority. Once in a meeting of the Prosperous Group, members discussed a piece of news on a six-year-old boy being assaulted by his step-mother who was said to be angry with her husband having a mistress. They condemned the father of the boy for being promiscuous. They thought that he was the one who should be responsible for the assault – if he could be loyal to his first wife who was the boy's mother, the boy would not have been hurt. The members then concluded that they were all "new good fathers" who cared about the family.

Anna Gavanas (2004) found the same idea in her study on fatherhood politics in the United States. She discovered that fathers' groups tried to domesticate fatherhood

by monogamous heterosexual marriage and responsible fatherhood. Sexuality was thought as a natural drive of men and it had to be controlled within the family, and moral values (ibid:128). Unrestrained sexuality is thought to cause damage to the family as fathers need to spend extra resources on more than one household (ibid). So men have to learn to control their own sexuality. If he can control his sexual behaviour, he can have more energy to focus on breadwinning and improving the living standard of his family (ibid). However, some of her informants still tried to seduce her into sexual relationships.

For my informants, they did not show any sign of extra-marital sexual relationship. They were either silent about their sexuality, or mentioning their sexual relation with their wives. One may suspect that cultural factor plays a part. However, (hetero)sexuality is also an important element of Chinese masculinity. Many educated elite men in ancient China who sought sexual pleasure from learned courtesans earned a reputation and rise in social status. In contemporary China, wealthy and powerful men also display their status by attracting beautiful women (Uretsky 2003:51).

This phenomenon has two contributing factors. Those fathers insisting on sex with their wives and avoiding extra-marital sex all came from the LHC sample. With their marriage problems and/or the influence of LHC, these men tended to be

concerned with the integrity of the family and relationship with their children. Their

masculinity was not constructed on sexual exploration but fatherhood and family

status. In some of the meetings of the district-based men's group, some woman

members of LHC joined in the discussion. Although these women were the minority

in the group, the interaction between these women and men was not at all sexual.

These women were seen as companions in building "complete" and harmonious

family in the group. The male members often asked for their views and opinions

towards some of their family, marital, and parenting problems and issues. After the

meeting, they would go to have lunch together. During these informal gatherings, the

interaction continued to focus on everyday life issues, like stock market, discussion

on some local news, as well as sharing on their family and children. Inside and

outside the groups, these men were consistent in maintaining the family. Class factor

may be relevant here. While the rich may enjoy sexual privilege, working-class and

middle-class men are limited in their resources. Spending extra resources on women

is considered to lead to reduction in those spent on the family and children, resulting

in being accused of being irresponsible to the family. Another factor is that a young

male researcher like me did not ignite the thinking of (hetero)sexuality among these

men in their narration of fatherhood. I am different from Anna Gavanas who was a

white woman attracting the sexual and racial imagination of some of her informants.

Although fatherhood is based on heterosexuality among my informants, it is thought to be contradictory to the pursuit of sexuality, especially outside marriage. Once fatherhood is established, sexuality is not the focus. These fathers tended to control their sexuality to maintain their fatherhood. Many of them praised themselves to be loyal husbands who did not have extra-marital affairs. This can further demonstrate that the father-centred family was the main interest of these fathers who could dominate within the family structure.

Devalued Wife

In the discourse of the father-centred family, the mother should be obedient to the father. To some of my interviewees who held patriarchal belief, not only should the children be kept under control, the wife should also be obedient to the husband who was the head of the family. Disregarding the wife's wishes, these fathers often stuck to the stereotypical domestic division of labour, demanding her to assume the carer role. Frank thought that it was his wife's job to take care of their babies. So when she found it hard to manage both her waged work and caring work, he asked her to quit her job and become a full-time mother. He had never thought of sharing the caring task with her. He said,

> At night, when the children cried, I seldom needed to get up. Often it was the mother or domestic worker who handled that. When mother was working, it

was harder for her. It was because at that time she was feeding the baby…Later, it was so tough that [I thought] she should quit her job.

Requesting the wife to take up the caring job does not mean just a household division of labour. Although fathers enjoyed the higher living standard because of their wives' domestic contribution (Kaufman 1997:442), they still kept on belittling the caring work that women did. They obviously carried with them the misogynist or patriarchal concept of assigning "inferior" tasks to women. Looking after children was deemed an inferior task which should not be taken up by fathers. The father role and the mother role are thus constructed to have different statuses.

Although Dominic claimed that he sometimes fed his sons and changed their diapers, he thought that he was doing extra, and that taking care of his children was not an important task. He said,

> After they were born, mostly it's my wife who took care of them. I just sometimes helped her out. But I think that it's not the most important thing for me to take care of them.

Terence employed the wordings "just that stuff" (originally 嗰啲嘢 in Cantonese, literally meaning trivial stuff) when he referred to housework and child-caring, and thought that it was normal for the father to assume "superior tasks" such as education, while delegating "inferior tasks" to the less capable parent – the

mother:

> So I took up the role of teaching as I could communicate with [my
> children]. I told them: Mom takes care of you. She hasn't received much
> education in Hong Kong and knows little and so her responsibility is just that
> trivial stuff.

Relegating the wife to the domestic sphere while disparaging her contribution

seems to imply the perspective that women were inferior and thus they deserved to

be in the lower-status sphere.   Yet it is exactly the constraint of the domestic sphere

that hindered or stopped the wives from participating in the higher-status public

sphere and acquiring socially recognizable abilities and statuses. This double-blade

sword helps create and sustain the father's control in the family. Bernard felt very

content that his wife was not capable of excelling in the public sphere, willing to

give in to him, and did not put any threat upon him. She was considered a good wife:

> My wife follows [my instructions] as she doesn't work. If she worked, her
> social circle would be different. She may know another guy. She doesn't. She is
> a housewife who does the housework and takes care of the husband and
> children. She has done her part. I must do my part too…She was silly. That's
> her weakness. But I love her. There's no need to be so clever.

By keeping his wife at home Bernard aims at dismantling her threat.

Dependence and obedience are deemed essential in sustaining the power of the father in the family. However, Bernard expected his wife to be flexible, so that she could satisfy whatever he demanded. When Bernard had a stable job, he appreciated her to be a housewife who would not go out to meet other men and could spend all her time to take care of him and his children. But when he was unemployed, he blamed his wife for not sharing his financial burden. When his wife was reluctant to seek waged work, he was angry with her, totally forgetting how he had "disabled" her job-seeking ability:

> I had asked her if she could find a job as I was unemployed. I hadn't got social security then. She got the message but didn't do it. She just said that she would get a job if she could find one. But how could she find one if she didn't start job searching? At last, she worked for a moment. She supposedly should support half of the family. If I could, I would, but I couldn't…During my hardest time, I hated my wife. Since we married she hasn't gone to work.

These fathers' expectations towards their wives often displayed their dominance within the family. On one hand, they saw their wives not only in subordinate position but also in derogatory terms. The wife's domestic contribution was depicted invisible and worthless (Arendell 1995:56). On the other hand, the wife is functional and should follow the order of the patriarch whenever he needs her. At the end, these

fathers believed that they were the heads of the family without doubt, neglecting the subjective feeling of their wives entirely.

The patriarchal discourse creates a biased parenthood, favouring father's input while demeaning mother's contribution. In the patriarchal familial structure, the gender division of parenting is clear cut and neglects the subjectivities of individuals involved. At the same time, values are attached to different types of parenting tasks, creating power differentials. With the discourse that father's tasks are superior and important, fatherhood is made indispensable in the family and paternal rights and authority can be sustained.

Influence of Motherhood

However, the patriarchal discourse neglects the fact that the dominant fatherhood cannot be maintained without the help of the subordinate motherhood. The mother is significant in shaping this patriarchal fatherhood. Marriage is the way a father brings in a mother to his children. He will then leave the routine caring work to her and he himself pursues the path of higher social status and prestige. Paul's fatherhood can illustrate this point. He appreciated very much his wife's contribution to the family in terms of housework and childcare, letting him study and pursue work with higher status and pay. He could also be free to build up his social network and influence in the public sphere through his voluntary work. At home, he was the

authority figure who told the children what was right and wrong. He also guided his children onto career paths that he found desirable. In the presence of a mother, the path of conventional fatherhood – breadwinning and educating children - is made possible. These mothers did not only contribute to the conventional fatherhood through housework and caring work, their home-maker status restricted their vision and knowledge of the public sphere, resulting in their sense of inferiority and expectation that fathers should assume the more powerful education task. Martin and his children had once ridiculed the mother that she did not even know the capital of South Korea to be Seoul. When he narrated that experience to me, Martin commented that he just loved his wife being that stupid.

Because the mother was the one who took care of the children's daily needs, including their school work while the father only saw his children after work, this created lenient and compassionate fathers and strict mothers. From the accounts of the fathers who mentioned this difference in attitude towards children, all of them construct their fatherhood opposite to the motherhood. When the mother concerned much about the academic performance of the children and demanded them to work hard, the father tended to think that children should be given more time to relax and play. Sometimes, it is the mother who creates the "playing father" in the family. As Frank worked outside home, his wife intentionally arranged opportunities for the two

daughters to play with their father in the evening. In addition, fathers allowed children to violate some of the "strict" rules set out by mothers. Pan even told his daughter that the manners her mother taught her were not that absolute.

Yet this opposite parenthood is not absolute and does not follow from the biological sex. When the mother is absent or unable to assume this caring work, fatherhood will then become more caring. When the mother works, the father will have to assume certain caring tasks in the family. Both Stephen and his wife needed to work. His wife was a driver and needed to work longer hour while Stephen, a construction site worker, did not need to work every day. So Stephen told me that he was the one who cooked for the children and brought them to school.

Moreover, when the mother left after divorce or even passed away, the father had to assume the full caring role. Sean, a driver aged over 50, had to take care of his children after his wife passed away. In the past, Sean did not bother to take care of his children. It was his wife who brought up his two daughters. He told me that he seldom interacted with his two daughters at that time, leading to his alienated relationship with them, especially his second daughter who was in the adolescent stage. The death of his wife made him learn from the very beginning in taking care of his youngest son. He had to cook for his son, bring him to school, and teach him how to do homework. Sean thought that his wife sacrificed her health to give him a

son and so he particularly wanted to give the best to his son. Also Sean understood the importance of building relationship with his children. He tried to chat more with his son.

Timothy experienced a similar fatherhood after his wife left him due to her extra-marital affair. As a cook in a restaurant, he had had to work long hours and did not take care of his two sons before. He changed his role from breadwinner to stay-at-home father by quitting his job and receiving social security. He had to learn housework from scratch, bring his sons to school, prepare meals, and so on. He was transformed into a caring father. In the past, he seldom hugged and kissed his sons. After he took care of them, he had built close relationships with them. He actively hugged his two sons and his younger son even requested to hug Timothy every day before going home after school.

Apart from the absence of a caring mother, a caring fatherhood can come from the worry of the mother. Willy gained the support from his wife to be a stay-at-home father. She provided Willy with her full confidence in him to solve the problems in the family – children's academic performance and personality problems. With the belief that he was the one and only one who can save the family, Willy thought that his change in role and "sacrifice" of his career status could relieve his wife's worry and make her happy.

In addition, a caring fatherhood can come from the economic assistance of the mother and her aggressive personality. Goethe was originally head of the family who shouldered the major family expenses. His wife was obedient to him at that time. Later when Goethe suffered from injury and could not work, he gambled and lost a large sum of money. Only with the help from his wife he could settle his debt. With gratitude to his wife, Goethe was obedient to his wife and became a caring husband. Moreover, as his wife was easily annoyed and was not patient in taking care of children, Goethe was often the one who took care of their two daughters when they were toddlers. He acted as a buffer between his furious wife and younger daughter when they quarrelled.

Motherhood is important in shaping fatherhood and vice versa. They are not fixed after all. Essentializing the two parenthoods serves to perpetuate the inferiority of women and dominance of the father within the family and in society. Rather, responding to the needs of children according to abilities of parents and situations can actually show love and care towards children and create an equal thinking in them. This is consistent with Sara Ruddick (1997)'s and Barbara Rothman (2000)'s claims that combining motherhood and fatherhood into caring parenthood can eliminate the notion of power and encourage care and equality in children.

Conclusion: Structural Thinking Legitimizing Men's Hegemony

Within the Chinese patriarchal familial structure, the father puts children on a very high position in his priority list. This belief subsequently motivates the toil and pain of the father in marriage and ("complete") family which are deemed to be the foundation and facilitating environment in the interest of children.

As a result, fathers expect to get what they are promised by the patriarchal structure – filial children and an obedient wife. I call this expectation "structural thinking" within the patriarchal habitus. Structural thinking is the internalization of the existing social structure, including social norms, rules and long-established practices, with the expectation of gaining the benefits and outcomes which are defined and promised by the structure. Realization of the expectation reinforces the thinking itself and the justification of the existing structure. For instance, Ryan had thought that if he earned enough money for his family and avoided any chance of committing adultery, his wife would be obedient to him and they could work towards the beneficial growth of their children. As discussed above, this concept of marriage as the foundation of fatherhood rather than a romantic alliance is common among my informants. This structural thinking makes Ryan neglect the feelings of his wife. He later found out that she could not offer care to the children if she did not receive his

care. Because the structural demand is patriarchal, it is not surprising that structural thinking will lead to the negligence of women's subjectivity and the dominance of men in the family.

Nevertheless, when the promised outcomes do not occur, structural thinking leads the social actor to blame other individual actors rather than seeing the biased nature of the structure, thus leaving the power-laden structure unchallenged. For Ryan, he at first blamed his wife for being selfish and not fully devoting herself to the children. Although he finally accepted the advice from fellow members of the men's group that he should show more concern for his wife, he still considered that it was more a functional act for keeping a caring mother for his children, rather than a truly sentimental expression towards his spouse. Men, as the beneficiary of the patriarchal structure, in turn preserve it by demanding themselves and others to conform to it.

Structural thinking is thus a part of the habitus of the father, which shares its resilient property. In structural thinking, individual's will and interest are often subsumed under the requirements of the power-laden structure. It leads men to defend the patriarchal family, and thus the father tends to see his wife and children as participants of *his* family structure. He treats them not as individuals but a part of the family which is made up of roles: "father", "mother", "son" and "daughter". For

instance, considering the "complete family" significant in the healthy development

of children, some interviewees, as described above, were willing to tolerate a painful

or loveless marriage just to guarantee a caring mother and a legitimate, intact family

for the children. At the same time, they regarded that their wives should perform

their structural function within the family, and that their children should assume an

obedient and filial role. Thus, structural thinking naturalizes the hegemony of men

and masks its reproduction through its reference to a larger or traditional social

structure. The men's emphasis on structural role in the ideology and practice of

family makes family a site where fathers can exert their power and authority over

their wives and children. Within this family structure, the father's power is justified

by social institutions such as cultural tradition and religion.

Children are used as the reason for reproducing the existing familial structure,

subsuming every family member under the structural demand. Marriage is for

children and the family is constructed by children. Bringing up children becomes the

reason for paternal authority. When paternal expectation is breached and structural

thinking is challenged, individual actors will be blamed. The structure remains

unchallenged and as a result, social actors miss the chance to rethink and establish a

more equal familial relationship.

Yet the father's authority and domination because of structural thinking are

two-edged blades – they not only place him above other individual family members, but also lead to the inferiority of self. In the child-oriented notion of marriage and family, fathers expect to obtain their promised rights, by completing the paternal mission. Divorce disrupts the privileged status of the father within the family. The notion of "complete" family is a result of structural thinking – when the father and the mother stay together to raise a child, the child will grow properly. The father tends to consider that it is his failure for not being able to maintain a "complete" family for the children, in addition to reproaching the wife. The discourse of "complete" family over "broken" family further deepens the sense of inferiority among these fathers. The thought of compensation arisen from the "broken" family context is likely to breed the "new fatherhood" identity when the father is forced to take care and get close to their children. The notion of "new good father" is indeed based on structural thinking.

Chapter VII

Conclusion: Rethinking Fatherhood and Family

The structure of masculine domination is the ultimate principle of these countless

singular relationships of domination/submission, which, while they differ in their

form according to the position in space of the agents concerned – sometimes

immense and visible, sometimes infinitesimal and almost invisible, but homologous

and therefore united by a family resemblance – separate and unite men and women

in each of the social universes, thus maintaining between them the 'mystic boundary'

to which Virginia Woolf referred.

- (Bourdieu 2001:108)

With the seemingly gender-equal appearance of Hong Kong society, where

there is an Equal Opportunities Commission that guards against sex and family

status discrimination, and a Women's Commission that promotes the interest of

women especially in governmental policy-making, it seems patriarchy has been

uprooted in this former British colony. In reality, however, Confucianism and

Christianity as mainstream ideologies continue to play an important part in

rationalizing practices of male dominance. For instance, customs such as the wife

adopting the husband's surname after marriage, and men being the decision-maker in

the family are still regarded normal and justified within the Confucian context (Wang

2006). Christianity, which dominates the education system in the city, is itself patriarchal. Female Christian clergy, although growing in number, are still rare when compared to their male counterparts (Huang 2001). Moreover, church leadership still remains a decidedly male sphere (Ao & Huang 2002; Huang 2001; Wong 1998). Even if women are ordained as clergy, they are stereotypically assigned to tackle issues on women, children, and youth, and are seldom given the opportunity to preside upon ceremonial, administrative or management work (Ao & Huang 2002). On the political level, the colonial government has perpetuated male dominance with its policies which protected the interest of Chinese male business and rural elites in the name of respecting the Chinese customs (Lee 2003:4). On the familial level, women are restricted by the patriarchal family which takes advantage of women's labour but does not grant them the power and rights that they deserve (Lee 2003:7; Salaff 1981:273). Women, indeed, are still underprivileged in the family, employment, and political participation (Equal Opportunities Commission 1997).

Against the backdrop of these patriarchal influences, the "new good men" notion proposed by men's organizations in Hong Kong has been interpreted and carried out as a way to resurrect paternal authority and power within the family. In the name of building the "harmonious family", the care and contribution made to the family by men in fact is not to promote gender equality but to protect the patriarchal

family which is in the structural interest of men. The "new good men" discourse continues to construct the father as the breadwinner, source of authority, and head of the "harmonious family", thus keeping the wife and children under control.

The patriarchal notion of family, however, does not benefit all men. Under the patriarchal familial structure, the "complete family" is honoured while other forms of family are considered problematic. Men who are divorced and therefore are "unable" to maintain a "complete family" are deemed problematic by the men's organizations, the society, and even the men themselves. Although the hegemonic discourse of "complete family" is hurting the men themselves, rather than subverting the power inequality embedded in the discourse, men tend to blame their former spouses for taking away what have been promised to them in the male-centred structure.

Divorce is often seen as a personal and social problem. It is looked at as a disease that will pass on to the next generation (Catton 1988) or as a reflection of too much individual freedom (Dizard & Gadlin 1990:189). Children are said to be the major sufferers of this "problem" (Rice 1994:564). These thoughts are popular in the public opinion of Hong Kong society and in my informants' mind. In terms of the discourse of father-centred family, divorce is considered a disruption, a transition, and a period of disequilibrium (ibid:576). Yet, this view of divorce as problematic is often supported by some studies that suffer from methodological problems (ibid:568).

Rice (1994) criticizes the approach of some studies that treat marriage, birth of children, and divorce as demographic variables and correlate them with social problems like delinquency, and school dropouts as if they are the effects of divorce (p.579). Moreover, there are no consistent findings on the comparison of adjustment of children from intact and divorced families (Lowery & Settle 1985). Also in my own findings, divorce made the residential fathers participate more actively in their children's physical, psychological, and educational lives. Paradoxically, they took care of their children's everyday needs and became "new good fathers" when compared to their fatherhoods before the divorce.

The "complete family" discourse is thus patriarchal. It targets at maintaining the structural integrity of the family but neglects and ignores the hegemony and inequality within the structure. It also ignores the needs and subjectivity of individual members. From a feminist perspective, divorce can be a form of resistance towards the oppressive features of the hegemonic family (Rice & Rice 1986). The data shown in my study can illustrate how the family is patriarchal and oppressive.

Hegemony of Men in the Family

"Paternal responsibilities" manifest the hegemony of men and the patriarchal familial structure. Marriage and family, breadwinning, and education are the three naturalized and normalized duties in the discourse of fatherhood, granting men the

power within the family. In establishing a family through marriage, the father aimed to provide children with a "complete family" which was thought to facilitate their healthy development and a caring mother to look after them. Relationship with the wife was not important provided that it did not lead to divorce or separation. Even if effort was made to please the wife, the father mainly did that for children to prevent the family from "breaking down". This child-oriented fatherhood provides the sense of importance in fathers through the control over children and the sense of superiority over the wife. Paternal power also comes from the other two responsibilities. Economic provision signifies the success and recognition of men in the public sphere, which is transferred into the respect from and control of the wife and children. It also creates the subjectivity of men with economic gains (economic capital), knowledge (cultural capital), prestige (symbolic capital), and social network (social capital). These different kinds of capital in turn provide the father with the power to perform the second domain of paternal responsibility – education. In education, fathers often utilized the various forms of capital they gained from the public sphere to pass on the values and knowledge to their children. With wen quality a major element in the hegemonic Chinese masculinity, the father gains power through assuming this role of "cultural parent". The goals of education as inheritance and protection convey the message that children are the possession of the

father who is in control of the values and qualities passed to them. As a result, paternal power and authority from breadwinning and educating in return strengthen and further legitimize the father's position in the family which is the source of his dominance.

Family is one of the patriarchal structures that breed masculine power and privileges. As discussed in Chapter III, the "new good men/father" notion that urges men to return to the family was not aiming at achieving gender equality but raising men's status. Family is the site of the manifestation of masculine power (Adams & Coltrane 2005:240). Time and time again research has shown that men are beneficiaries of traditional marriage. Married men have better prospect in jobs and earn more than their unmarried counterparts (Nock 1998:82), and they enjoy greater marital satisfaction than married women (Fowers 1991); married women on the other hand have more mental problems and are more depressed than married men (Busfield 1996; Horwitz, White, & Howell-White 1996; Marks 1996). Women often bear the major responsibility of housework, regardless of their occupational status (Census and Statistics Department 2003; Hochschild 1989; The Women's Foundation 2006), not to mention the fact that women constitute the large majority (about 85%) of domestic violence victims (Women's Commission 2007). Rice (1994) thus points out that the increase in women proposing divorce reflects their resistance

to the oppressive family.

Nevertheless, not all men benefit from the hegemony. Among the three domains of paternal responsibility found in this study, failure or over-doing in one of them can lead to the breakdown of another one. Losing one's employment for example can remove the father from the position of the family head. On the other hand, focusing too much on work leads the father to be alienated from his spouse and children and as a result become isolated in the family. Divorce may require residential fathers to quit their job in order to look after their children. It may also lead to a sense of losing control and losing the sense of importance in fathers, which in turn manifests in the struggle of power between the married couple over the children's education, further hurting the relationship.

When rights and responsibilities are interconnected, men who do not or cannot carry out their assigned responsibilities will not be able to enjoy the privileges granted by the structure. In this study, for example, unemployed fathers considered themselves "useless", "failed", and inferior". Some fathers also felt helpless and desperate when their children did not listen to them. Divorce was seen to take the non-residential father away from his site of power while residential fathers considered that his "broken family" would leave damaging scars on their children. These fathers considered themselves "failures" although they tried hard to

compensate for these "weaknesses". While patriarchal ideology made these men

define themselves as having failed their role as fathers, they were actually deprived

social actors, who simultaneously contributed to the reinforcement of the oppressive

structure. As embodiment of the patriarchal structure, the habitus of the father creates

"a profound and durable transformation of bodies (and minds)" (Bourdieu 2001:23)

which appears as the natural law forming the dominant principle of gender division.

It mediates between "individuals' subjective worlds and the cultural world into

which they are born and which they share with others" (Jenkins 2002:75). As the

socio-historical context of Hong Kong is patriarchal, as described in Chapter II,

fathers who grew up in that social and familial context tend to have their habitus

shaped in favour of rationalizing and naturalizing privileges and practices of men.

When the mother and children grow up in and become an integral part of the

patriarchal circumstances, they acquire the same habitus that "renders them largely

incapable of perceiving social reality" (ibid:70). So they cooperate with the father to

reproduce the existing social structure and the habitus. The father habitus is further

maintained by structural thinking which motivates the father to try hard to fulfil their

structural responsibilities of breadwinning, educating, and building and maintaining

the marriage and family in return for the privileges like power, authority, and

domestic care and labour from the wife. However, when the promised privileges do

not appear, fathers tend to blame themselves for not paying enough effort (e.g. not

taking up a stable or money-making profession) or making adequate sacrifice (e.g.

not spending enough time with children), or they will blame others, mainly the wife,

for being selfish and for ruining the family and/or the children's life. Structure

becomes the only way for the father to resist the unexpected because it has been his

guidance and justification of his power. In structural thinking, individuals are

expected to act according to the rules of the patriarchal structure. As a result, rather

than reflecting on the repressive structure, social actors reproduce patriarchy by

reproaching individuals (including themselves) for not being able to fit in with the

structural demands, neglecting the agency of social actors.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the family is not a shelter in which members

can autonomously live their lives, but is a stage for performing gender and a site for

exercising power. Individuals are required to act according to different familial roles

which are gendered and embedded with power differentials (Coltrane 1996:200). In

this habitus, fatherhood is a manifestation of this gender performance in which

fathers are expected and expect themselves to be breadwinners, educators, and heads

of the family to keep their spouses and children under control. Under the existing

patriarchal structure, even when the father "returns to" the family, it just strengthens

the gender oppressive situation in the family. The "new good men/father" notion

which encourages men to return to the family does not change the hegemony of

men – men as provider, authority, and leader – and does not change the hegemony of

family – two-parent family as the ideal foundation for children. Indeed it creates a

new hegemonic standard of familial masculinity that lays the foundation for

resurrecting the power and authority of men within the family. As Adams and

Coltrane (2005) have suggested, this kind of men's movement does not aim at

eliminating gender inequality by changing the patriarchal elements of masculinity

(p.243). Rather, it points to the loss of men as outsiders of the family (p.243). As a

result, men still eye on the privileges of patriarchy in looking at the familial

relationship and the return to the family is still serving the male interest. It is thus the

structure that we need to be particularly conscious of. It is not the same as blaming

individual fathers for being dominant. When the government and the mainstream

society are still holding the patriarchal notion of fatherhood and family (e.g. the

father is the head of the household and breadwinner); we should be aware that this

kind of discourse will alienate the father from other family members, will devalue

home-maker's contribution, will create a sense of inferiority among those fathers

who care for their children but fail in achieving the familial masculine standard, and

will perpetuate the patriarchal authority through reproducing an oppressive, rigid

masculinity. It will also disregard the importance of father-child and spousal

relationships.

Class is a factor that contributes to the differentiation and hierarchy in masculinity. Class does not differentiate fathers in terms of their marital status (married or divorced) and familial role (breadwinner or househusband or stay-at-home dad) but middle-class and working class fathers do differ in their acceptance of caring fatherhood. Although the caring fatherhood of both the middle-class and working-class fathers was triggered by marital and familial problems like children's academic and disciplinary problems and unemployment, because of financial restrictions, working-class fathers accepted their "new fatherhood" more readily and comfortably than their middle-class counterparts. When the divorced working-class fathers were granted the custody of the children, they became the only care-takers for their children as they did not have the resources to hire domestic workers. Although some of them might have relatives or elder daughters to depend on, their help was occasional and these fathers had to handle the housework and child-caring themselves. Some of them quit their jobs and received social security; some of them acquired new jobs of more flexible working hours. They were willing to take up their caring role by giving up their original career or dream. Children became the source of their sense of importance. However, middle-class fathers who possessed more social, cultural, and symbolic capital than

the working-class fathers and tended not to be willing to be confined to the domestic sphere. With career aspirations and resources to satisfy them, middle-class fathers aimed at returning to their original career path after a certain period of caring fatherhood. This is contradictory to a common idea that the notion of "new good father" grows out of the middle-class context and thus more middle-class fathers were ready to be caring fathers. Deutsch (1999) suggests that fathers with low income cannot move up the career ladder and are more likely to take care of children than the higher-income fathers. It reflects that power manifested in terms of economic and social status is valuable in masculinity. If it can be satisfied, fathers with resources would not readily give it up. In adopting a critical perspective in the study of men, I have tried to debunk the myth about fatherhood ideology and practice. Fathers grow up and live their lives under the patriarchal structure that grants them privileges, which are often unnoticeable for men as the privileged class. Even in situations that put masculinity in crisis, habitus restricts them from seeing the inequality- or power-laden structure and the possibility of alternative options outside the structure. In investigating men's lives as fathers, I wish to advance the understanding of gender in Hong Kong.

Reconsidering Gender in Hong Kong

Gender studies in Hong Kong started off putting women in focus. Women's

studies in the West came out of the patriarchal context of the academia which took

men as the representative of all human beings. Men were treated as if they had no

gender or gender had no effect in their lives (Kimmel & Messner 2001:x), while

women were considered deviant or deficient when compared to men or even totally

absent from the patriarchal academic discourse (Spender 1981:2). Following in the

footsteps of its Western counterpart, the discipline of women's studies in Hong Kong

came out with the mission of documenting the lost women's experiences at that time

while at the same time discovering women's lives and roles, which has been

neglected in the conventional disciplinary research. Women's problems and needs,

like women as victims of domestic violence, prostitution, rape, double burden of

working women, women's attitudes in reproduction, and needs in child-caring were

explored (Zhang 1995:62). Social researchers also investigated the under-privileges

of women in different aspects of the society, like education, work, and political

participation (Zhang 1995:64-65).

Apart from putting women as the foci of study, gender scholars began to

analyze social issues using the concept of gender. This approach involves the

understanding of the society in terms of a relational system where gender intertwines

with economy, politics, and culture. Gender is no longer just a variable in analysis

but becomes the main analytical concept that directs the perspective in research

(Zhang 1995:65). Researchers tried to look into some factors that lead to gender inequality, like gender stereotypes in media and education, low political participation of women, and different economic conditions between women and men (see the Women's Foundation 2006).

The feminist urge of changing gender relations and stereotypes triggered men to rethink their masculinities, which induced the recent study of men and masculinities in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, apart from the popular books that write on men and masculinity from the mythopoetic camp, academic studies on Hong Kong men as individuals and masculinity, are seriously lacking (Tam et al. 2009:338-339), not to mention ethnographic data. When the feminist has pointed out that the conventional knowledge is male-centred, women's studies have somehow retrieved women's lost lives and narratives, men are still hidden from the spotlight of the academia. The structurally dominating men are rendered invisible as gendered beings and only appear in terms of their social status (Tam et al. 2009:338). In achieving the feminist goal of uprooting the patriarchal cause of gender inequality, we must also look into the socio-cultural construction of masculinity and how men actually carry out their gender subjectivity, and exercise their power in their everyday life. Fatherhood is one of the many facets that men manifest their masculinity and power.

As mentioned in Chapter I, past studies on fathers in Hong Kong consider

fathers as objects of investigation, aiming at discovering the impact of fathers' behaviours on children. Even when they look into the needs of fathers, they tend to use some pre-defined measuring tools. Studies that elicit subjective narrations from fathers tend to lack reflection of the power and values embedded. This study tries to contribute to the understanding of gender in Hong Kong by looking at the subjective experience and thinking of men as fathers who took advantage of or suffered from the socio-cultural construction of gender in their fatherhoods. In restoring men's gender in this study, I do not take men as the norm but instead try to dig out the power relations in the concept of gender. This critical approach in men's studies can help break and find how the normalization and naturalization of gender practices facilitate the exercise of power and authority of men. Fathers are found to gain gender privileges from the three main paternal responsibilities, namely economic provision, education, and marriage/family. In carrying out those duties, fathers are indeed exercising their power in excelling in the public sphere, passing down their values and maintaining authority, and controlling other family members. Yet these aspects at the same time oppress men who cannot fulfil the structural masculine requirements. In identifying the diversity of fathers' lives and thinking, the hegemonic standard of masculinity, which categorizes men into "successful" or "problematic", is uncovered. Consequently, this study not only can reveal men's

lives as fathers, but also exposes the oppressive features of the patriarchal familial/parenting structure that limit both women's autonomy and men's potential and experience of being caring and loving.

This study has also tried to contribute to the understanding of the construction of Chinese fatherhood in Hong Kong by looking at the ideology and practice of fathers in their own narration and everyday action. In doing so, I analyze the processes of production and reproduction of the hegemony and privileges of men in society, in men's organizations, and in the family. Fatherhood is found to be a gendered performance, as guided and controlled by the structure which is in turn maintained by fathers' thinking and behaviours. Fathers embodied the gender structure in a taken-for-granted way. Their unconscious performance of paternal responsibilities has justified and naturalized the structural values and rules (Ruddick 2004:161), granting them structural privileges which in turn push them to believe that those values are legitimate. As a result, structure and agency mutually reinforce each other and normalize the hegemony and power of men/fathers.

Change for the Future: Respecting Individuality

Nevertheless, changes seem to be possible when more and more men are willing to be more involved in parenting and women excelling in the public sphere.

Coltrane (1996) argues that the gender division of labour within the family has to

change with more women entering the workforce and men can develop sensitivity and caring personality when they get involved in childcare because the conventional masculine style of interaction (directive and authoritative) causes more trouble than solving problems in taking care of small children. However, he also admits that this change in masculinity does not necessarily result in gender equality (ibid:234).

Thus, Ruddick (1998) points out that the harm from the patriarchal family will remain untouched by this nurturant fathering (p.230). She rejects distinctive fatherhood as it always carries prestige and power along with it (Ruddick 1997). Yes, economic provision, education, and emotional attachment are necessary in parenting. But should they be monopolized by the father or do they need to be maintained in the existing format? This present structural requirement obscures the fact that economic provision is the source of patriarchal power (Ruddick 1997:207-209). It conceals the contribution of the mother who completes the provision process by shopping, cooking, cleaning, and so on (ibid:207-208).

Adopting Ruddick's (1997) analytical framework, I argue that education and marriage/family are also involved in the degradation of individual subjects. In education, fathers often see themselves as rational and just, while children are seen as vulnerable and unknowledgeable, thus belittling children's creative thinking and autonomous choice. In addition, the notion that only heterosexual monogamous

family is the "complete family" excludes all other familial arrangements, including

single parent as well as lesbian and gay family. Recognizing the presence of habitus

and structural thinking can help raise possibilities for change in the masculine

configuration. Men do get privileges from the structure but also suffer oppression

and exclusion when they cannot satisfy the structural requirements. The agency of

each family member and empathy among family members, regardless of sex and

sexuality should be emphasized. It is then each individual member can achieve and

enjoy relational satisfaction within actual familial situations. Moving away from

structural requirements, we may be able to build a world free of the dichotomous

thinking of masculinity versus femininity, while all parents can enjoy intimacy, care,

and connection with their children (Silverstein 1996:30-31).

With a focus on human needs and subjectivity, family forms other than the

heterosexual monogamous nuclear form is different but not inferior. We have to give

up the hegemonic assumption that family has its biological origin universally

(Stevens 1990:81). The concept of family should be enlarged to include more diverse

forms, including any combination of adults and children aiming to take care of one

another, rather than upholding the ideal of an "intact family" (Silverstein 1996:6, 31).

The paternal responsibilities found in this study need not be assumed by men.

Biblarz and Stacey (2010) concludes from their own study and other studies that

parenting ability is not gender-specific while single-sex family may foster more androgynous parenting than the "complete" family typically with an uninvolving married heterosexual father (p.17). To build a gender-equal family, the necessity of a "new good father" is actually questionable.

Recently I encountered a Mass Transit Railway (MTR) commercial that portrays a "new good father" image to promote its service:

A father cooks breakfast for his son while his son sleeps at the table before going to school. "I will do anything I can as I have only this son," the father says to himself. On the day of the school parent-child performance, the father holds his son's hand as they go to the venue, both wearing a robot costume. "I will walk with him no matter how far it is," the father speaks with determination. Every day, before going to work in Central, the father takes his son to school in Wan Chai by Mass Transit Railway (MTR). On the train, the father dozes off while his son rests on his chest. As the train passes University Station, the father thinks, "My biggest wish is to have him attend University" while the son draws on his father's hand a picture: a father holding the hand of a child who wears a mortar board. When the father sees it, he hugs his son with satisfaction.

In this commercial, the audience does not know the marital and family status of this father. He can be a married father, divorced resident father, or even a gay father.

From my field data, it is quite typical of the divorced resident father as he takes care of his son, while a married father typically would not get involved. But after all it does not matter. Marital and family status does not affect the intimate relationship between the father and the son in the commercial. The aim of the commercial is to conjure up a homey association between the company and the audience, through the warm father-child relationship. The father and the son share the same goal and cooperate to work on the son's educational success.

Although the commercial conveys the conventional idea of success in terms of educational attainment and individual perseverance, neglecting other possible discriminatory systemic factors like class, it nonetheless displays an alternative fatherhood: one that is beyond the dominant role of breadwinner, educator, and head of family. The commercial shows that fatherhood needs not be patriarchal and authoritative. A father who truly puts the child first will respect the needs and thoughts of family members as individuals. If a father only focuses on the masculine identity, and its structural requirements and privileges, he may sacrifice his own agency and that of his children, rendering each family member a reproducer of the patriarchal structure.

Exposing the patriarchal structure and the process of power construction in Hong Kong fatherhood, this thesis hopes to encourage an awareness of a more

humane fatherhood and family system that respect and accommodate individual

subjectivity, needs, and aspirations.

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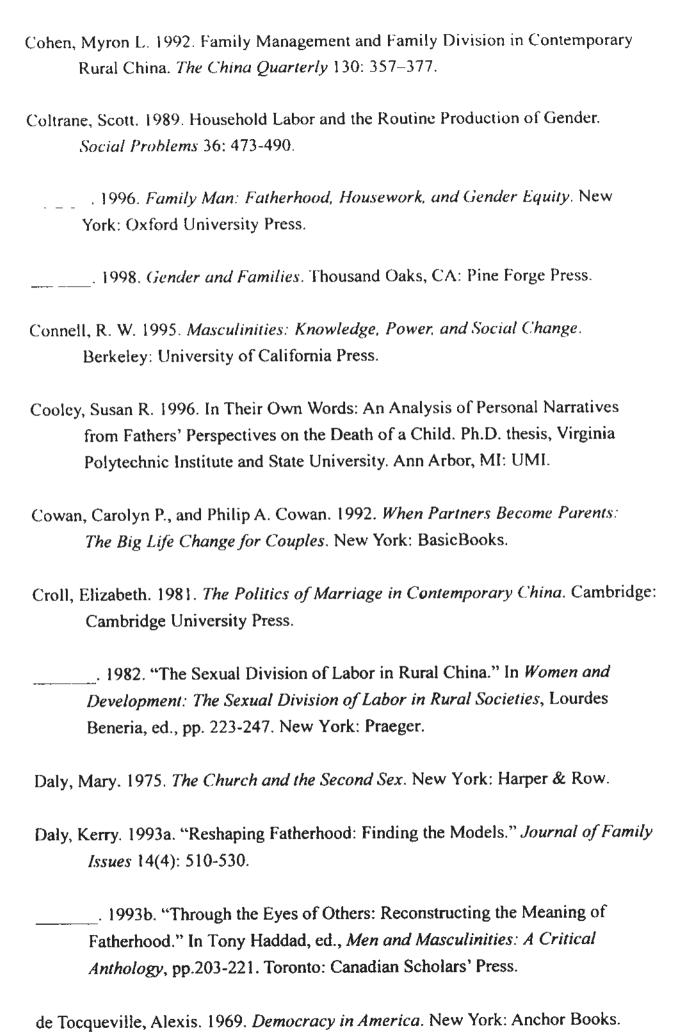
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