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Between Autonomy and Interdependence: The Changing Parental Role in Adult Children's Family Formation in China

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Abstract: This paper investigates changes in the parental role in family formation in contemporary China. Existing studies often focus narrowly on spouse search or are limited to specific historical periods or locations. Expanding the intergenerational contract framework, we adopt a multidimensional approach that examines both parental influence over spouse choice and monetary support after marriage. Using data from the 2006 and 2017 Chinese General Social Survey, we construct marriage cohorts reflecting China's major social, political, and economic transitions to chart parental involvement in family formation over seven decades. We find a temporary decline in parental influence during the reform era of rapid modernization. Rather than a linear progression toward youth autonomy and independence, we observe lingering parental influence over spouse choice and deepening parental monetary support after marriage, particularly among those married in the 2010s. In addition, gender, *hukou* status, only child status, and father's education are significant predictors of parental monetary support. In the newly negotiated intergenerational contract, parents selectively retreat from or advance in different aspects of family formation, in response to modernization forces, China's familist culture, and the necessity of intergenerational interdependence in an increasingly neoliberal economy. The continued and divergent roles of parents in family formation have important implications for understanding generational dynamics within families and the reproduction of social inequality.

Keywords: family formation; spouse choice; parental influence; marriage cohort; intergenerational contract; intergenerational interdependence; parental monetary support

Highlights:

- Parental influence over spouse choice declined in the 1990s and 2000s but not in the 2010s

- Parental monetary support for married adult children increased rapidly in the post-reform era, especially for those married in the 2000s and 2010s
- Daughters reported stronger parental influence over spouse choice but received less parental monetary support
- Individuals who converted their *hukou* from rural to urban reported weaker parental influence over spouse choice and less parental monetary support than those with consistently rural *hukou*
- Individuals who are only children reported receiving more parental monetary support than those with siblings
- Individuals with fathers who were better educated received more parental monetary support

1. Introduction

Across the globe, the life courses of parents and adult children now overlap more than ever before, due to increasing life expectancies and declining fertility rates over recent decades. This extended intergenerational overlap has profound implications for how parents and adult children balance their independence with interdependence. In Western industrialized societies, as young adults exhibit increasingly individualized and diversified life choices in union formation, dissolution, and parenthood (Furstenberg, 2014; Lesthaeghe, 2010; Thornton, 2001), they are turning more often to parents for financial assistance and housing support amid growing economic instability and uncertainty (Berngruber, 2021; Fingerman et al., 2015; Olofsson et al., 2020; Swartz et al., 2011; Wightman et al., 2013). In Asia, parents and adult children also adapt the terms of their intergenerational relationships, as they navigate rapid, state-driven industrialization and modernization under limited welfare provisions (Croll, 2006).

China, with its dramatic social, economic, political, and demographic changes compressed into just a few decades, presents a unique context to examine how parents and adult children renegotiate intergenerational roles to cope with these shifts. Adult children's family formation constitutes a major domain in such intergenerational negotiations, and it is the focus of this study. We investigate how parental role in adult children's family formation has evolved over generations and for different social groups. We use family formation to mean the social and biological processes through which individuals establish and develop family units, typically encompassing union formation, childbearing, and household establishment. In this paper, we focus specifically on union formation and early post-marital household establishment; fertility dynamics are beyond our scope.

Existing literature has generated valuable insights into long-term trends in parental involvement in children's marriage in China, particularly highlighting distinct patterns across historical periods and between urban and rural contexts (Croll, 1981; Parish & Whyte, 1978;

Pasternak, 1986; Riley, 1994; Tian & Davis, 2019; To, 2015; Whyte, 1990, 2020; X. Xu, 1998; X. Xu & Whyte, 1990; Yan, 2003; Zang, 1993, 2008; Zavoretti, 2016; J. Zhang & Sun, 2014). Evidence shows that 1) there has been a noticeable decline in parental authority over mate selection from the pre-1949 period to the 1980s in urban settings (Pasternak, 1986; Unger, 1993; Whyte, 1990; X. Xu, 1998; X. Xu & Whyte, 1990; Zang, 1993) and from the 1950s to the 1990s in rural settings (A. Xu, 1997; Yan, 2003), although with fluctuations in magnitude and pace across historical periods and locations of study (Croll, 1981; Whyte, 2020; A. Xu, 1997; X. Xu, 1998); 2) parental authority in mate selection is weaker in urban areas than in rural areas (Croll, 1981; Riley, 1994; A. Xu, 1997); and 3) recent years has seen parents' increasing involvement in brokering their children's spouse selection process in sporadic case studies, focusing on the emergence of "matchmaking corners" in big cities (Tian & Davis, 2019; To, 2015; J. Zhang & Sun, 2014).

However, this body of literature has yet to fully unpack the complexities and nuances of parental involvement in adult children's family formation, constrained by a limited temporal scope as most studies narrowly focus either on the socialist and early-reform era or solely on recent developments. Moreover, most studies are based on documentary records, in-depth interviews, ethnographic observations, or sample surveys in selected localities (e.g., Pasternak 1986 in Tianjin, Whyte 1990 in Chengdu, Zavoretti 2016 in Nanjing, and Tian and Davis 2019 in Shanghai; A. Xu 1997 in rural Guangdong and Gansu and Yan 2003 in a Northeast village), which calls into question the generalizability of their findings.

A notable exception is Liu and Mu (2022), the first study that systematically examined the change in mate selection over decades using nationally representative data. They documented a transition from arranged to introduced marriages between 1950 and 1979 and then to self-initiated marriages between 1980 and 2014, sketching a general decline of parental authority in mate selection. However, the study's focus on spouse search alone limits our understanding

of parents' broader involvement in children's marriage life; its classification of birth and marriage cohorts based on generic decades does not fully reflect the temporal specificities of the political, socioeconomic, and policy changes in China's developmental trajectory; and its lumping of all post-2000 marriages into one category overlooks nuanced developments in the most recent decade.

To address these research gaps, this paper examines parental involvement in family formation over seven decades, using data from the 2006 and 2017 Chinese General Social Surveys and constructing marriage cohorts that reflect China's major social, political, and economic transitions. We find a temporary decline in parental influence during the reform era of rapid modernization. Rather than a linear progression toward youth autonomy and independence, we observe lingering parental influence over spouse choice and deepening parental monetary support after marriage, particularly among those married in the 2010s.

We contribute to existing literature in several ways. First, building on Liu and Mu (2022), we adopt a multidimensional approach in understanding parents' roles in adult children's family formation, analyzing both parental influence over spouse choice and parental monetary support upon and after marriage. Second, compared with most other research conducted in specific regions, this study based on nationally representative samples produces more generalizable findings. Last, using cohort analysis, we map out parents' involvement in children's marriage over seven decades in China's history, yielding a holistic and dynamic picture of the "linked lives" of Chinese people of different generations in negotiating rapid social changes. We also advance theoretical development in existing literature on marriage and family studies by expanding the concept of "intergenerational contract" (Croll, 2006; Ikels, 1993) to analyze the multiple dimensions and processes of parental involvement. Our findings about the multifaceted parental role in children's family formation capture nuances and complexities in intergenerational interactions and family life.

In what follows, we first present theoretical considerations and move on to formulate the research hypotheses based on China's changing social context. We then describe the data and methods for empirical analysis, which is followed by a presentation of main research findings. We conclude by discussing the theoretical and social implications of the study.

2. Beyond Parental Authority: The Intergenerational Contract Perspective

In this study, we expand the concept of intergenerational contract as a framework in analyzing parents' role in adult children's family formation, building on a growing literature in gerontology and public policy studies in western developed contexts (Albertini & Kohli, 2013; Bengtson & Achenbaum, 1993) and East Asian societies (Chou, 2011; Croll, 2006; Göransson, 2013; Ikels, 1993; Izuhara, 2002). Derived from the notion of social contract in the 17th and 18th centuries that describes an agreement between the state and the people, the concept of intergenerational contract refers to tacit agreements that regulate each generation's responsibilities toward preceding and succeeding generations (Albertini & Kohli, 2013; Bengtson & Achenbaum, 1993). These agreements may take the form of public intergenerational transfers via welfare states that balance care needs and productivity across generations (Albertini & Kohli, 2013; Bengtson & Achenbaum, 1993), or they may operate through social norms that shape informal exchanges of care and support within families, especially in East Asian societies with strong familist traditions (Croll, 2006; Göransson, 2013; Ikels, 1993).

Although the concept has mostly been applied in aging studies examining how elderly parents incentivize adult children's support (e.g., Ikels, 1993), we argue that it also holds analytical power for understanding intergenerational dynamics across different stages of the family life cycle. In the context of youths' transition to adulthood—our focus here—the intergenerational contract remains a useful lens. As adult children pursue higher education, enter full-time employment, and start their own families amid escalating costs and growing

demands of parenting and work, they increasingly depend on parental support to cope with everyday practical demands and may come to value the contributions of the older generation. At the same time, parents continue to invest heavily in their adult children through financial transfers, housework, grandchild care, and other forms of assistance, with the aim of securing future filial support. Evidence suggests that helping a son meet his marriage expenses is viewed as a core parental obligation under the intergenerational contract, and failure to fulfill this obligation may absolve the son of his duty to support his parents in old age (D. Davis, 1993).

This concept offers analytical strengths in several ways. First, unlike the sweeping and Western-centric modernization thesis—which posits universal and unidirectional changes in intergenerational dynamics driven by economic development (Goode, 1963) but is often poorly substantiated by empirical evidence—the intergenerational contract, as a middle-range theory, focuses on how the (multigenerational) family as an organizational unit mediates and moderates the impact of broader social changes on individual behavior. This perspective offers more accurate and context-sensitive analysis. Indeed, extensive research shows that, contrary to modernization predictions of nuclearization and independence, Chinese families continue to operate under multigenerational and collective imperatives rather than prioritizing individual rational choices (Gu, 2022; Yan, 2021a), even as generational roles and commitments remain subject to negotiation.

Second, and relatedly, unlike filial piety, the primary principle of Confucian familism that prescribes hierarchical, patrilineal, and patriarchal obligations of children toward their parents (Baker, 1979; Wolf, 1984), the intergenerational contract framework enables analysis of how generational roles and commitments may shift in response to changing social norms and to needs arising in specific contexts, rather than being fixed or predetermined (Gu, 2022; Ikels, 1993; Yan, 2021a). In this study, such shifts are examined in the context of multidimensional parental involvement in adult children’s family formation. By underscoring the dynamic and

context-dependent nature of intergenerational arrangements, the framework offers great potential for exploring how broader social transformations shape familial decision-making and exchanges in ways that vary by gender, socioeconomic status, social policies, and political and economic arrangements.

Last, reciprocity is inherent to any contracting process, as receiving benefits creates obligations for repayment, thus fostering ongoing exchanges and mutual interactions between the involved parties (Gouldner, 1960). The concept presupposes dynamic, multi-dimensional exchanges between generations in clarifying their respective responsibilities and expectations. In the context of parental involvement in children's family formation, the intergenerational contract perspective allows for analysis of both parents' authority or influence in children's mate selection and their continual tangible or intangible support to help young couples settle in their marriage life. These two dimensions—parental authority (rights) and parental support (responsibilities)—constitute two sides of the same coin. In other words, we can infer from these two dimensions a reciprocal intergenerational relationship: adult children's willingness to yield to parental influence over spouse choice in exchange for parental monetary support or to demonstrate filial piety.

3. The Changing Contexts and Research Hypotheses

To examine how parental authority and support evolve over time and across social groups, we now turn to cohort contexts (see Table 1) and propose research hypotheses. We define a cohort as a group of individuals who entered marriage under similar circumstances shaped by shared political, economic, and policy forces. For each cohort, we detail the political, social, and economic conditions that structure parental influence and involvement in family formation.

We begin with a brief overview of traditional family norms and marriage practices to set the stage for understanding the drastic ideological and socioeconomic shifts of recent decades.

Arranged marriage dominated pre-modern China where parents enjoyed absolute power in determining with who, when, and how their children would get married (Croll, 1981), as part of the patriarchal family arrangements rooted in a pecking order of the generation-age-sex matrix (Baker, 1979). Under the cardinal ideology of *xiao* or filial piety, young people, supposedly the subjects of marriage, had little say in the process, from spouse search till the wedding ceremony (Wolf, 1984). It was not rare that the bride and groom met for the first time on their wedding day (X. Xu & Whyte, 1990). Such a system was under serious challenge in the early 20th century, when leading intellectuals influenced by Western thoughts attributed China's underdevelopment in recent history to Confucianism (Whyte, 2003). Arranged marriage, regarded a legacy of the 'feudalist' Confucian social order, was heavily criticized for its suppression of the young, women in particular.

3.1 1950-1977: Socialist era

In 1950, arranged marriage was legally banned in the New Marriage Law by the government of the newly established People's Republic of China (PRC) (D. S. Davis, 2014). The well-publicized Marriage Law covered three aspects: 1) marriage formation based on free choice of partners, monogamy, and equality between marriage partners, 2) permission of dissolution of marriage (by consent, mediation or trial), and 3) robust intergenerational relations, such as family support among parents and children (Diamant, 2000). This law redefined marriage as a voluntary agreement between marriage partners, prohibited interference of third parties (including parents), increased the legal minimum age at marriage, and outlawed arranged marriage (Diamant, 2000). Youth autonomy and freedom in mate selection was thus elevated as part of the socialist ideology and institutional arrangement in Maoist China at the height of state socialism. In particular, during the Cultural Revolution characterized by excessive and

extreme political campaigns and movements, parental authority was denounced and lavish wedding banquets and exchanges of gifts were banned (Croll, 1984; Unger, 1984).

It is important to note the inner contradictions here: despite its clear position for free choice marriage, the Communist ethos did not encourage romance among its young workers and advised them to prioritize a shared ideological preference of socialist nation-building (Wolf, 1984); while promoting free choice of partners that might expand youth autonomy, it also retained its ideological stance of intergenerational interdependence, particularly with regards to old age support.

This was also a period characterized by the state's over-investment in heavy industry at the expense of everyday consumables, resulting in chronic shortages of consumer goods and housing. The shortage of housing meant that co-residence with parents upon marriage, at least temporarily, was necessary, adding to the cultural norm of intergenerational co-residence (Riley, 1994). In rural villages, widespread poverty, lack of mobility, the dominant patrilocal living arrangement, and the continued importance of family as a productive unit made mutual dependence the essence of intergenerational relations (Croll, 1981), despite ideological constructions of arranged marriage and parental authority as 'backward, feudal evils' (X. Xu, 1998).

3.2 1978-1991: Early Reform era

Since 1978, to save the country from economic bankruptcy and political chaos, the state once again has shifted gear towards economy-oriented policies and marriage has become more 'privatized' in the state's view (D. S. Davis, 2014). Across rural and urban areas, the expanded freedom of mobility and growing educational and job opportunities significantly increased young people's economic independence vis-à-vis their family. As China opened up to foreign investments, it was also exposed to influences of popular culture, consumerist lifestyles, and Western ideas of individual freedom, personal autonomy and happiness, and modern sex and

family behaviors. In tandem with the strict family planning policy to pursue population quality over quantity, often dubbed as ‘One-Child Policy’, state policy encouraged late marriage and late childbirth among young people. The revised Marriage Law in 1980 increased the legal age of marriage to 20 for females and 22 for males.

Growing economic prosperity began to redefine the economic foundation of family formation. For a dwindling population of urban state employees, the work unit kept its welfare function of allocating housing, and modern appliances such as refrigerator, washing machine, and television set became ‘standard’ household items. In rural China, empirical evidence suggests that marriage expenses including bride price and a marriage banquet increased rapidly (Yan, 2003, 2005).

3.3 1992-1999: Mid reform era

This cohort reached adulthood when China fully adopted the export-oriented economic model after Deng Xiaoping’s famous southern tour in 1992. The country witnessed rapid economic development, ushering in an era of generally improved living standards and economic opportunities. Youths of this era found expanding opportunities of social interaction with potential spouses, which, in combination with the growing influence of Western popular culture, gave rise to an emerging dating culture and courtship process prior to marriage. Studies on sexual attitude and behavior of urban youths in big cities like Shanghai and Beijing in the 1990s showed that public space and commercial places that provided privacy and encouraged interactions between members of opposite sex had grown with the booming economy, and a dating culture was firmly established (Farrer, 2002). Meanwhile, parental approval remained symbolically and socially important as a seal on the love relationship, leading to a young couple either finalizing the conditions of a marriage or breaking up (Farrer, 2014).

For rural youths, mass migration to cities has removed them from the watch of their primary group in the village and their off-farm work in industrial towns and cities presented the

opportunity to mingle with the opposite sex. With the largest annual movement of humans in history, ideals of romantic love and dating and new forms of entertainment streamed off railways, roads, highways, and radio waves into rural villages. There was a growing acceptance of premarital sex and cohabitation across birth cohorts (Yeung & Hu, 2016). Under the influence of pop culture and mass media, rural youths developed demands for emotional expressivity, communication, privacy, and intimacy in courtship and conjugal relation (Yan, 2003). We expect a significant decline in parental influence over spouse choice during this period.

3.4 2000-2009: the Globalization era

China's One-child Policy cohort came of age during this time. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, massive layoffs in state-owned enterprises retrenched millions of workers; reforms in medical care and housing freed work units from providing these services to their employees, making the market the only choice; and the joint effect of the termination of job allocation for college graduates and massification of higher education led to intense competition for employment. Rural-to-urban labor migration accelerated after China joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO). While any remnant restrictions on rural-urban migration have been largely lifted to facilitate labor mobility, the *hukou* system as a bamboo wall segregating urban and rural residents' rights to social services and public provisions remains (Chan, 2009). In a word, young adults faced a highly competitive labor market with growing uncertainty, instability, and inequality. Such drastic economic development and growing social inequalities are found to produce greater social anxieties around social status, which facilitate conditions for parents' increasing involvement in 'engineering' their children's lives (J. Zhang & Sun, 2014).

Moreover, marriage increasingly became an expensive project, especially in terms of housing. In urban China, where the welfare allocation of housing was terminated in 1998, ushering in an era of nationwide marketization, monetization, and commercialization of

housing. Housing prices have been soaring since early 2000s until recent years. Self-financing a marriage home is increasingly difficult if not completely out of reach for young adults (D. S. Davis, 2014). Nonetheless, the norm of home ownership prevails, particularly for men who by custom are expected to provide the marital residence. Where flats are too expensive for the young ‘singleton’ couple, they get help from two sets of parents who chip in with their life savings (Li & Fan, 2020; K. Wu, 2019).

The urban housing reform may at first seem less relevant for rural residents who have always built their own houses on the assigned land parcel for construction on the basis of their local *hukou*. By the patrilocal custom of marriage, the groom and his parents are expected to provide a family home for the couple. Since the 2000s, however, having a newly constructed house in a decent location has become a prerequisite for arranging a marriage for men (Jiang et al., 2015). The soaring marriage expenses are maintained by the face-related competition and social comparison in the rural community where there is an excess of men in the marriage market due to sex selection practices in childbirth among rural couples in the era of One Child Policy. Parents consider getting their sons married their most important responsibility and failing to do so signifies a total failure of parenthood and carries a deep sense of shame (Choi & Luo, 2016; Jiang et al., 2015). More recently, the combination of rural depopulation, mass school closure, and rapid urbanization and housing development has normalized the aspiration for getting a flat in the nearby towns and cities for the newly-wed (Feng, 2022).

We consider housing to be an important aspect of the economic foundation of family formation in this context and aim to test whether parental monetary support increases in response to housing commodification in this era.

3.5 2010-2017: the ‘New Era’

Many of the social and economic conditions of the previous era remain for the most recent marriage cohort: rural-urban labor migration keeps growing but at a slower pace; the

opportunities of higher education continue to grow albeit benefiting urban youths more than rural youths; income inequality widens and competition intensifies; affordable social services such as childcare are lacking; and the economic requisites of marriage (housing in particular) keep inflating beyond the wage level of an average dual-income household. Such conditions necessitate adult children's continual dependence on their parents for economic support and other forms of involvement (i.e., providing informal child care).

This is reinforced in public policies and discourses about the value of the family, especially in the New Era (since 2013) where official discourses elevate traditional family virtues for national prosperity (Yan, 2021b). The Supreme Court's 2011 interpretation of the revised 2001 Marriage Law stipulates that in cases where parents purchase a property for their (adult) child after the child's marriage and the property is registered in the child's name, the property is considered a gift to their child alone to the exclusion of their spouse (D. S. Davis, 2014). This legal turn privileging familial over conjugal claims to property may have unintentionally strengthened the intergenerational tie between parents and their adult children.

Qualitative studies suggest that close emotional bonds between parents and children, combined with young adults' reliance on parental economic resources, have fostered a reinterpretation of parental involvement in marriage decisions (Lui, 2019; To, 2015). In this context, such involvement is often viewed as welcome and as reaffirming intergenerational intimacy, while considering and accommodating parental opinions is seen as an expression of filial piety.

[Table 1 here]

Based on the above discussion, we propose the following research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Parental influence over spouse choice declines and then rises across marriage cohorts: the mid-reform and globalization cohorts are less likely to report parental influence, while the new era cohort is more likely to report it than the early reform cohort.

Hypothesis 2: Parental monetary support increases across marriage cohorts, with the mid-reform, globalization, and new era cohorts more likely to receive parental monetary support than the early reform cohort.

Hypothesis 3: Respondents reporting stronger parental influence are also more likely to receive parental monetary support.

3.6 Gender effects

In addition, we attend to two major social structures in Chinese society that may exert differential impact of parental involvement on children's family formation, i.e., gender and rural-urban divide. First, it is widely accepted that family and marriage are gendered institutions (Risman, 2004). The Confucian family system has been noted for its strict gender stratification system: since childhood, sons and daughters are socialized and raised differently, forming two sets of 'family contracts' that systematically favor sons (Greenhalgh, 1985). We recognize that the past four decades have expanded women's access to education and to parental investments in their human capital, with urban only daughters benefiting the most (Fong, 2004; Gu & Yeung, 2021; Tsui & Rich, 2002; X. Wu & Zhang, 2010; Yeung, 2013). Nevertheless, our focus here is on parental authority and monetary support specific to family formation. As the data will show, gender differences in these domains have persisted.

Gendered cultural norms and practices surrounding family formation continue to shape how parental influence manifests differently for women and men in matters of spouse choice and monetary support. Concerns about daughters' prospect of social mobility through marriage and the socioeconomic standing of potential grooms and their families reflect longstanding expectations of women "marrying up," as well as patrilineal and patrilocal traditions that link marriage to intergenerational co-residence and eldercare responsibilities (Eklund, 2018). Daughters, in turn, may be more receptive to parental interventions in marital and reproductive decisions due to their typically closer emotional bonds with parents (Lai & Choi, 2021). Nevertheless, women may receive less parental financial support during and after marriage formation, as parents often concentrate economic resources on sons in the hope of enhancing

their marriage prospects, continuing the patrilineal line, and securing old-age care (Chai & Feng, 2021; D. S. Davis & Friedman, 2014). Building on these considerations, we propose the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 4a: Women are more likely than men to report parental influence over spouse choice.

Hypothesis 4b: Women are less likely than men to report receiving parental monetary support.

3.7 Urban-rural divide

Another established truth in contemporary China is that decades-long urban-biased development policies and institutional arrangements have in effect segregated the rural and the urban into two societies (Bian, 2002; Chan & Zhang, 1999; Yeung & Hu, 2013). Due to similar considerations, some previous studies have singled out urban and rural settings for separate analyses (with H. Liu & Mu, 2022; Lui, 2019 as exceptions). By examining both the rural and the urban populations' marriage patterns over decades, we provide important comparative evidence of uneven social changes in the two societies.

Considering the fundamental role of *hukou* in defining one's life chances, we compare three groups—urban natives (inherited urban *hukou* from parents), urban converters (inherited rural *hukou* from parents but later converted to urban *hukou*) and rural stayers (inherited rural *hukou* from parents). Conversion from rural to urban *hukou* has historically been tightly controlled by the state, especially during the Mao era, and typically signals upward social mobility (Cheng & Selden, 1994; X. Wu & Treiman, 2004). In recent decades, the expansion of higher education and urban economy has enabled a select group of rural-origin individuals to obtain urban *hukou*. Compared to rural stayers, urban converters and natives are less subject to normative pressure from tightly knit kinship networks in rural villages and more exposed to modern ideals emphasizing romantic love, personal autonomy, and individual decision-making (Farrer, 2002;

Yeung & Hu, 2016). As a result, they may be less receptive to parental influence over spouse choice. Furthermore, although urban converters tend to be positively selected from rural-origin families, often with greater human and economic capital that facilitated their *hukou* conversion, they form families in urban settings where living costs and marriage expenses far exceed those in rural areas. Given their ‘upward mobility’ status, the flow of economic resources may run in the opposite direction: from the ‘successful’ sons and daughters to the parents who had previously sacrificed to support them. While parents may still provide childcare and other forms of functional help, their monetary contributions are thus likely insufficient, making urban converters less likely to report receiving such support. We therefore propose the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 5a: Urban converters and urban natives are less likely than rural stayers to report parental influence over spouse choice.

Hypothesis 5b: Urban converters are less likely than rural stayers to report receiving parental monetary support.

4. Data and Methods

Our data source is the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS, <http://cgss.ruc.edu.cn/>), a repeated cross-sectional, nationally representative survey conducted by the National Survey Research Center at Renmin University of China. We pool data from the 2006 and 2017 CGSS, because both collected retrospective information on parental influence over spouse choice and parental financial support after marriage. Our analysis is restricted to first marriages for two reasons. First, higher-order marriages remain rare in China despite rising divorce rates in recent decades. In our sample, the share of higher-order marriages is 1.32% in CGSS 2006 and 2.97% in CGSS 2017. Second, higher-order marriages may differ from first marriages in the process of spouse choice and parental investment. Our initial sample comprises of 5,549 ever-married men and women, including 2,548 interviewed in CGSS 2006 and 3,001 interviewed in CGSS 2017. To mitigate potential survivor bias and recall error, we further restrict the main analysis to respondents who were under age 75 at the time of the survey and who entered their first

marriage between ages 14 and 40. These two restrictions reduce the final analytical sample by 323 respondents.

Our measure of parental influence in marriage is derived from a question asking respondents how much influence their parents had on their spouse choice. It consists of four categories – “having no influence at all”, “having not much influence”, “having some influence”, and “very influential”. The original response options also include “parents were already deceased at the time of the marriage” (less than 1.8% of the original samples fall into this category), which we treat as missing value.

To further understand parental role in adult children’s lives after marriage, we construct a variable based on one question asking whether the respondent had received any monetary support (in purchasing/constructing a house or investing in a business) from parents since marriage, and if yes, how much. Response options include: 1) yes, a great deal, 2) yes, some, 3) no, and 4) parents were already deceased. We retain and reverse code the first three categories and code the last category as missing value (less than 5% of the original samples).

As both parental influence over spouse choice and parental monetary support are ordinal variables, we adopt Generalized Logistic Regression that can estimate partial proportional odds model for two reasons. First, the partial proportional odds model is less restrictive than the ordered logit model that imposes the proportional odds or parallel lines assumption, which is often violated in practice and in our data. Second, the partial proportional odds model is more parsimonious and interpretable than the multinomial regression model, a non-ordinal alternative. We use the user-written program *gologit2* in Stata/MP 16 (Williams, 2006). For ease of interpretation, we present average marginal effects instead of log odds in the paper. The log odds results are included in the Supplementary Materials (see Tables S1 and S2). Average marginal effects can be understood as the difference in predicted probabilities of an outcome category between categories of a predictor variable.

We measure change in parental role in family formation over time by marriage cohort. We categorize respondents into five marriage cohorts based on the year of their first marriage: the socialist cohort (1950-77), the early reform cohort (1978-91), the mid reform cohort (1992-99), the globalization cohort (2000-09), and the ‘New Era’ cohort (2010-17). Cohort analysis is widely used in social sciences to study the impact of social, historical, and environmental factors on groups of individuals. By constructing marriage cohorts based on the discussed socioeconomic and political changes in the previous section that shape family formation and intergenerational relationships, we examine how the twists and turns of social and ideological forces are associated with changes in the strength of parental influence over spouse choice, and how shifting economic requisites of family formation implicate parents’ continual involvement in adult children’s lives after marriage (Hypotheses 1 and 2). To test Hypothesis 3, we include parental influence over spouse choice as an independent variable in the models on parental monetary support.

Our other predictors include gender, *hukou* status, age at marriage, parenthood status (only for the model on parental monetary support), ethnic minority status, only child status, education, father’s education, father’s party membership, father’s work unit type, type of childhood neighborhood, region, and survey year. Gender, parenthood status, ethnic minority status, only child status, and father’s party membership are binary variables where 1 indicates “female”, “with child(ren)” “non-Han”, “only child”, and “party member” and 0 “male”, “without children”, “Han”, “not only child”, and “not party member”, respectively. Previous studies have shown that both gender and ethnicity are significant predictors of parental influence over marriage formation (Liu & Mu, 2022; Zang, 2007). *Hukou* status is categorized based on both the respondent’s original *hukou* and their status at the time of the survey: 1) rural stayers (rural origin and rural at survey), 2) rural-to-urban converters (rural origin but urban at survey), and 3) urban natives (urban origin and urban at survey). Age at marriage is grouped into three

categories: married before age 22, married at ages 22–25, and married after age 25. These cutoffs are based on two considerations. First, the legal minimum age of marriage set in 1980 is 22 for men and 20 for women. Second, the mean age at first marriage for women remained in the early 20s from 1970 to 2013, surpassing 25 only in 2014 (Raymo et al., 2015; X. Zhang et al., 2024). This categorization allows us to capture variation in marriage timing relative to both legal thresholds and prevailing demographic trends, without imposing normative assumptions about what constitutes early or late marriage. Education is coded into four categories: primary school or below, junior high school, senior high school, and junior college and above. Father’s education is coded into four categories: illiterate or semi-illiterate, primary school, junior high school, and senior high school and above. Father’s work unit type (defined as when the respondent was 18 years old in the 2006 survey and 14 years old in the 2017 survey) has four categories: 1) peasants, 2) non-state sector (employed in private sector or self-employed), 3) state-owned enterprise, and 4) state sector. The four types of work unit reflect differential access to job stability and security, as well as benefits such as heavily subsidized housing, generous health care, and pension entitlements (Bian, 2002; Walder, 1988; X. Wu, 2019). The state sector is the most privileged, followed by state-owned enterprise, the non-state sector, and peasants, who have the least access to such provisions. Controlling for the father’s work unit type allows us to account for both parental status maintenance motivations and the family economic resources that may shape parental involvement in adult children’s family formation. The type of childhood neighborhood also has four categories: villages, townships and towns, prefecture-level cities and counties, and municipalities and provincial capitals. Region has four categories: East, Central, Northeast, and West. Lastly, we control for survey year fixed effects. After excluding cases with missing values on any of the variables, the final analytical sample includes 4,367 respondents.

In the next section, we present results first on parental influence over spouse choice, and then parental monetary support after marriage.

5. Results

5.1 Parental influence over spouse choice weakening but far from dead

The top panel of Table 2 and Figure 1 show the distribution of parental influence over spouse choice by marriage cohort. In the eldest marriage cohort, about 15% of respondents reported that their parents were very influential. The post-reform era saw an overall declining trend until the 2010s, with 11% of the 1978-91 cohort, 7% of the 1992-99 cohort, and 6% of the 2000-09 cohort reporting that their parents were being very influential in spouse choice. This trend appeared to stall or even reverse in the youngest marriage cohort of 2010-17, with about 9% of respondents reporting parental dominance. The share of those experiencing some parental influence remained rather stable at around 30% over time. “Free-choice” marriages, where parents had no influence at all, showed a modest upward trend until the 2000s but began to decline in the youngest cohort, falling below its pre-reform level. The category of parents having not much influence grew and accounted for about 35% of marriages formed between 2010 and 2017.

[Table 2 here]

[Figure 1 here]

While there is no denying the weakening of parental authority over spouse choice, the evidence also suggests that parents’ presence and involvement in adult children’s marriage choices continued to be felt by younger cohorts. This was confirmed by the generalized logistic regression results in Table 3. Compared to the early reform cohort (1978-91), the mid-reform cohort (1992-99) and the globalization cohort (2000-09) were more likely to report little to no parental influence and less likely to report some or a great deal of influence. The result for the

youngest marriage cohort (2010-17), however, was not statistically significant. These results were largely consistent with Hypothesis 1.

[Table 3 here]

While a recent ethnographic study of mate selection in Guangdong suggests that sons were more constrained by parental authority than daughters (Lui, 2019), our study, based on nationally representative samples, found that daughters reported stronger parental influence over spouse selection than sons (see Table 3). Hypothesis 4a was supported. Compared to individuals with consistently rural *hukou* status, those who changed their *hukou* from rural to urban reported weaker parental influence over spouse choice, and those with consistently urban *hukou* status were especially unlikely to report strong parental influence (see Table 3). This was consistent with Hypothesis 5a.

As expected, respondents who married at more mature ages were less likely to report strong parental influence over spouse choice than those married at ages 22-25. The effects of father's education level, party membership, and work unit type, revealed two parallel logics. On one hand, those with better-educated fathers were especially unlikely to report some or a great deal of parental influence. Adult children with a Communist Party member father were less likely to report any parental influence over spouse selection. Father's education and party membership may reflect values and ideologies that may discourage parental interference in spouse selection. On the other hand, adult children with a father working in the state sector were more likely to report stronger parental influence. This may indicate that parents with higher economic status and resources were more motivated to involve themselves in children's marriage choices to preserve family economic standing.

5.2 Marriage Expenses Financing: Growing parental monetary support after marriage

Parental involvement does not stop at spouse selection. Our research has revealed evidence of growing downward transfers from parents to married children. The second panel of Table 2 and Figure 2 show how much monetary support (for purposes such as purchasing a flat or starting a business) Chinese couples have received from their parents since marriage. A major shift emerged in the 1990s as the One-Child-Policy generation came of age: the majority of those married before this period received no monetary support from parents after marriage, but the reverse was true for those married afterward. The decline in the percentage of respondents reporting no monetary support from parents was gradual between the Socialist cohort and the early reform cohort and became more pronounced in subsequent cohorts. Meanwhile, the share of those reporting some monetary support from parents rose steadily from the reform period onward, reaching 64% in the youngest marriage cohort. While only about 3% of the eldest marriage cohort received a great deal of monetary support from parents, 13% of the youngest cohort did so. Taken together, nearly four-fifths of young Chinese married between 2010 and 2017 continued receiving some or a substantial amount of monetary support from their parents even after marriage.

[Figure 2 here]

Consistent with the descriptive patterns, the probabilities of receiving some or substantial monetary support from parents grew rapidly over marriage cohorts, especially among those marriages formed during and after the 1990s (see Table 4). This supported Hypothesis 2 and aligned with the emergence of an increasingly expensive marriage package as the market reforms deepened and the state further retreated from its ideological stance against “feudal” practices such as bride price and wedding banquets. It may also reflect soaring housing prices and the norm of home ownership as an essential part of the marriage package.

[Table 4 here]

As expected, parental influence over spouse choice shows a spillover effect on parental monetary support. Compared with those reporting no parental influence, respondents who reported not much, some, or a great deal of parental influence were less likely to receive no monetary support and more likely to receive at least some support. Those who reported parents being very influential in their spouse choice were more likely to receive a great deal of parental monetary support. These patterns align with Hypothesis 3.

The results also show that women were less likely to receive financial support from parents than men, all else being equal, supporting Hypothesis 4b. Compared to rural stayers, respondents who converted to urban *hukou* were more likely to report receiving no monetary support and less likely to report receiving some or a great deal of parental monetary support. In contrast, when considered as a whole, those with a consistently urban *hukou* did not report statistically significant differences in levels of parental monetary support compared to their rural counterparts. Hypothesis 5b is supported.

Respondents married at later ages were less likely to report parental monetary support than those married between 22 and 25. Respondents who were only children were more likely to receive financial support than those with siblings, all else being equal. Additionally, the educational gradient in parental monetary support has concerning implications for social inequality. Better-educated Chinese and those with better-educated fathers, who were themselves more socioeconomically advantaged, were more likely to receive monetary support from parents than those with only primary education or below and those whose father had no formal schooling. Furthermore, respondents whose fathers worked in state-owned enterprise seemed to be more likely to report parental monetary support than those with peasant fathers.

As we use two cross-sectional surveys to trace cohort shifts over seven decades, we conducted several sensitivity analyses to address (i) shifting social norms in perceived parental influence/support, (ii) changing norms of educational attainment, and (iii) recall or age-related

measurement error. First, to probe social expectations, we show that how the respondent met their spouse is consistently associated with the parental influence measure (those who met their spouse on their own are substantially less likely to report high parental influence), lending support to the measure's internal coherence. Second, to address concerns about credential inflation, we re-estimate models using alternative measures of education, including cohort-specific educational percentiles and a binary indicator for junior college and above, with similar results. Third, to mitigate potential recall bias, we restrict the sample to narrower age ranges and obtain comparable results. The main results remain robust (full sensitivity outputs available upon request).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Drawing upon nationally representative data, we have conducted a cohort analysis of five marriage cohorts from 1950 to 2017 to chart the long-term trajectory of parental involvement in adult children's family formation. We have documented a general weakening of parental influence over spouse selection, particularly in the post-reform era, though the trend is not strictly lineal. Parental influence over spouse choice declined significantly in the early post-reform decades but plateaued in the youngest marriage cohort (2010-17). Our findings on cohort trends in parental authority are broadly consistent with the linear decline reported in Liu and Mu (2022) up to the globalization cohort. However, our results also reveal a reversal in the most recent cohort, a pattern not captured in their study, which did not distinguish marriages formed in the 2010s from those in the 2000s. Additionally, while their study focuses on how couples met (e.g., arranged vs. non-arranged, self-initiated vs. introduced), our study centers on perceived parental influence over spouse choice. Although both indicators reflect parental authority, the latter may serve as a more direct measure.

Evidence also confirms that parental involvement continues after marriage contraction: younger cohorts married in the 1990s and onwards are more likely to report receiving financial

support from parents. What emerges from these empirical patterns is an intergenerational contract in Chinese families regarding children's marriage—one that is characterized by parents' selective retreat in certain areas of the family formation process while retaining, and at times advancing, their role in others to enhance their offspring's marriage prospects. This pattern appears to reflect a mix of negotiation, norm-bound responsibilities, and rational deliberation by families responding to a rapidly changing society.

Beyond cohort patterns, our analysis also reveals emerging social stratification in family formation. Gender, *hukou* status, only child status, education, and father's education are found to be significant determinants of parental involvement. Compared with men, women report stronger parental influence over spouse choice but less parental monetary support. Our finding of greater parental influence among women contrasts with Lui (2019), who finds that sons are more constrained by parental authority than daughters. Lui's study is based on ethnographic fieldwork and 125 interviews with urban residents, rural migrants, and rural non-migrants in Guangdong province, using snowball sampling. Her findings reflect the lived experiences and personal narratives of a specific group of respondents in a region known as a patriarchal stronghold. In contrast, our study draws on two nationally representative surveys and examines gender differences using standardized survey questions about perceived parental influence over spouse choice. These differences in methodological approach, sample composition, and measurement likely contribute to the divergent findings, which future research could further unpack. The observed female disadvantage in parental monetary support has long-term implications for women's economic status and wealth accumulation, as highlighted in other research (Fincher, 2014).

Both urban converters and urban natives enjoy greater autonomy in spouse choice than rural stayers. However, urban converters generally report receiving less parental monetary support than rural stayers, while urban natives show no clear advantage in this regard. These patterns

likely reflect the rising costs of family formation in urban China and the widening gap in parental resources between urban natives and converters on the one hand, and rural stayers on the other. Urban converters face a mismatch: their parents' rural resources are often insufficient for urban marriage and housing market norms; at the same time, as upwardly mobile children, they may be expected to remit to rural parents, reducing net parental transfers. Forming families in high-cost urban settings with comparatively limited parental resources may thus help explain why urban converters report lower parental monetary support. Furthermore, respondents who are only children, better educated, or whose father is better educated are more likely to receive parental monetary support than their less privileged counterparts.

This study contributes to the literature on several fronts. First, through a cohort study design utilizing data covering nearly seven decades and by operationalizing parental involvement as a multifaceted phenomenon, we have presented a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of long-term trends in young adults' transition to first marriage in the context of family change in the PRC history. We find a general weakening trend of parental influence over spouse choice, though parents across different periods retain at least some influence. However, with respect to financial support, as economic stresses escalate and the marriage package becomes more expensive, parents of recent marriage cohorts are transferring more resources to support their adult children's family formation. We argue for more contextualized analyses that are sensitive to the multidimensional and interwoven shifts in policy, economic and demographic development, and lingering cultural legacies.

Second, the study documents emerging patterns of social stratification around family formation in contemporary China. The growing trend of downward financial transfers from parents to adult children, likely a response to an increasingly expensive 'marriage package' for establishing a new household, signals the reproduction of social inequality between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the underprivileged. In the Chinese context, class cleavages

coalesce around rural-urban origin and father's educational status, which are likely to create gaps in marriageability between the haves and the have-nots. For disadvantaged groups, marriage has become increasingly unaffordable, as shown in research on 'bare branch' single men in rural areas (e.g., Attané et al., 2019). For the privileged, marriage has become a channel of funneling multigenerational resources and consolidating and multiplying existing advantages. We also identify gendered patterns with implications for gender (in)equality: women report greater parental influence over spouse choice but lesser parental financial support after marriage. How these trends will implicate future patterns of inequality in China warrants further research.

Last, and theoretically, we have extended the application of the concept of intergenerational contract (Ikels, 1993) to marriage and intergenerational studies. This concept is productive in two ways. First, it reveals a collective orientation in Chinese family behaviours and relations, where the lives of parents and adult children remain linked and interdependent throughout the life course, despite modernization forces pulling them toward individualization. Second, it captures the nuanced changes and continuities in how parents have been involved in their children's family formation over decades, reflecting ongoing negotiations of intergenerational roles in light of evolving norms, needs, and contextual forces. Our findings affirm the value of this concept in understanding how Chinese families of different generations cooperate and support one another to fend against uncertainties and anxieties in a volatile policy and social landscape. In the newly negotiated intergenerational contract, parents selectively retreat from or advance in different aspects of family formation, shaped by modernization forces, familist cultural legacies, and the persistent need for intergenerational interdependence in an increasingly neoliberal economy.

This study has rich social implications. In terms of intergenerational relations, the waning parental influence in spouse selection may reflect profound changes in the context of declining

fertility rates, the coming of age of the only-child generation, and the diffusion of ideas of intergenerational intimacy. They could jointly help to democratize the parent-child relation and bond them emotionally closer than ever (Yan, 2016). However, against the hegemonic vision of the ideal family comprising a heterosexual married couple with (now up to three) biological child(ren), closer parent-child bonding and continuing involvement of parents in one's marriage decisions also raise the question about how much freedom and autonomy young Chinese actually have about who to marry or whether to marry. This is particularly concerning as our study also shows that parental influence over spouse choice is positively associated with parental monetary support after marriage, which implies that younger cohorts may feel the pressure to give in to parental demands and expectations regarding spouse choice in exchange for parental monetary support. This concern is indirectly supported by some recent qualitative studies that discussed how parents influence their gay offspring's decision to turn to nominal marriage (Choi & Luo, 2016) and how single professional women in their late 20s and early 30s struggle to balance between their own individual preferences and fulfilling their parents' demands regarding marriage timing and partner choice (To, 2015). Parental influence over spouse choice also has important implications for assortative mating, as Allendorf and Pandian (2016) have shown for India and Tian and Davis (2019) for Shanghai.

This research is not without limitations. First and foremost, the measures of parental influence over spouse choice and parental monetary support are subjective and retrospective, and thus prone to measurement error arising from shifting cultural framings. Accordingly, our findings should be interpreted as reflecting perceived rather than objective parental influence and support. Relatedly, our cohort analysis is based on cross-sectional surveys conducted in 2006 and 2017 and is therefore subject to potential survivor bias and recall error. While the upper age limit at the time of survey and the age-at-marriage restriction help reduce bias arising from differential survival and memory decay among older respondents, they do not fully

eliminate these concerns. Robustness checks using alternative age cutoffs yield consistent results (see Tables S3a, S3b, S4a, and S4b in the Supplementary Materials). Nevertheless, we caution against overinterpreting findings for the earliest marriage cohort, whereas results for later cohorts are likely less affected by survivor bias and recall error. Further, our measure of parental financial support is only a categorical measure without the exact numerations. It is also an aggregate measure that does not include specific purposes for the contributions. Future surveys should collect data on different types of financial contributions by different family members to gain a clearer picture of intergenerational transfers with regards to marriage, such as towards financing the marital home, the purchase price of the marital home, bride price or dowry if any, as well as other marriage expenses. Also due to data limitation, we are not able to fully flesh out the extent of gender, rural-urban, and social class gradients in parental monetary support.

Despite these limitations, this research contributes to the ongoing theoretical debates on how marriage and family relations evolve amidst rapid social changes and add new and comprehensive empirical evidence to the literature on Chinese families. Furthermore, by expanding the focus from spouse choice to marriage expenses financing, this research shows new angles of examining parental influence and youth autonomy in marriage and family life. This will be particularly useful to other Asian societies where there is also a strong tradition of arranged marriage and extensive parental involvement in adult children's lives throughout the life course (Allendorf & Pandian, 2016; Malhotra, 1997). While parental influence over spouse choice may be a limited concern beyond Asia, the intensified parental economic support over the past few decades reflects a global trend, including developed western societies such as Britain, United States, Germany, and Sweden (Berngruber, 2021; Fingerman et al., 2015; Olofsson et al., 2020; Swartz et al., 2011; West et al., 2017; Wightman et al., 2013), where parents provide financial resources and in-home housing support for their adult children in a

varied and prolonged transition to adulthood amid labor market uncertainties and housing unaffordability.

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Table 1

Table 1. Definition of marriage cohort and structural conditions shaping youth autonomy and parental influence

Marriage cohort	Economic requisites of family formation (housing in particular)	Family and marriage policies/discourses	Rural-to-urban migration
Socialist (1950-77)	Work unit system in urban areas (housing shortage); Rural collectivization (poverty; starvation); customary wedding banquets and lavish exchanges of gifts banned during Cultural Revolution	1950 Marriage Law promoting free-choice marriage and prohibiting intervention by parents; peak of ideological attack on parental authority during Cultural Revolution	Mobility highly restricted
Early Reform (1978-91)	Welfare allocation of urban housing largely intact; shortage of housing reduced; rising marriage costs in rural areas	One Child Policy implemented; the 1980 revised Marriage Law raised legal marriageable ages	Rural economic reforms and emerging labor migration
Mid-reform (1992-99)	Rising bride price in rural areas; Dual track housing system (urban state employees)		Emergence of a dating culture in cities; rapidly growing rural-urban labor migration
Globalization (2000-09)	Rising housing prices; neoliberal social policy (massive lay-offs; commodification of education, medical service, and housing)	The 2001 revised Marriage Law; emerging “leftover women” discourse; One child policy generation coming of age	Massification of higher education; rapidly growing rural-urban labor migration
New Era (2010-17)	Rising housing prices and expenses of marriage; widening inequality	Marriage Law amendment in 2011; the resurgence of gender inequality and comeback of ‘traditional’ family values	The growth of rural-urban labor migration slowed down

Table 2. Distribution of dependent and independent variables by marriage cohort, % (Sample size: 4,367)

	Socialist (pre- 1978)	Early reform (1978-91)	Mid- reform (1992- 99)	Globalization (2000-09)	New era (2010- 17)
Parental influence over spouse choice					
Having no influence at all	24.42	25.67	29.04	28.72	23.86
Having not much influence	26.04	31.16	33.17	33.02	35.23
Having some influence	34.68	31.93	30.41	32.08	31.82
Very influential	14.86	11.24	7.38	6.17	9.09
Monetary support from parents					
No support	65.67	58.84	44.31	32.62	22.35
Some support	31.8	38.5	51.06	57.99	64.39
A great deal of support	2.53	2.66	4.63	9.4	13.26
Female	54.61	56.24	54.82	56.38	54.17
<i>Hukou</i> status					
Rural stayer	54.72	52.63	55.57	54.09	65.15
Urban converter	22.12	13.72	14.02	15.57	12.12
Urban native	23.16	33.65	30.41	30.34	22.73
Age at marriage					
Married before age 22	42.63	25.43	20.4	16.64	13.64
Married at ages 22-25	41.24	47.55	51.94	46.04	35.23
Married after age 25	16.13	27.03	27.66	37.32	51.14
With children	99.54	98.88	96.62	83.09	75
Non-Han ethnic minority	4.95	5.2	6.63	6.85	5.3
Only child	5.07	3.49	4.38	15.03	27.27
Education					
Primary or below	61.41	29.63	22.15	11.68	6.06
Junior high	22.12	39.03	40.05	37.18	26.14
Senior high	10.48	23.6	23.53	27.52	22.35
Junior college and above	5.99	7.75	14.27	23.62	45.45
Father's education					
Illiterate/Semi-illiterate	69.55	48.63	30.93	18.29	12.88
Primary	23.97	32.19	39.36	35.51	26.89
Junior high	4.21	12.31	18.7	29.37	29.92
Senior high and above	2.27	6.87	11	16.82	30.3
Father's work unit type*					
Peasants	75.12	58.96	59.95	59.06	56.44
Non-state sectors	5.53	5.97	7.01	15.57	28.41
State-own enterprises	13.13	23.48	20.03	15.57	8.33
State sectors	6.22	11.59	13.02	9.8	6.82
Father's party membership	4.61	12.66	10.89	12.62	11.74
Type of childhood neighborhood					
Villages	47.35	43.05	42.8	43.62	42.05
Townships and towns	11.06	11.18	12.02	11.41	12.5
Prefecture-level cities and counties	28	26.26	30.66	33.56	31.06

Municipalities and provincial capitals	13.59	19.52	14.52	11.41	14.39
Region					
East	32.95	40.57	35.17	45.5	45.45
Central	29.38	27.03	24.78	21.21	20.83
Northeast	10.25	10.47	12.27	10.6	9.47
West	27.42	21.94	27.78	22.68	24.24
Survey year = 2017	38.02	45.48	40.43	57.32	100

*In the 2006 survey, respondents were asked about their father's work unit type when they were 18 years old, whereas in the 2017 survey, they were asked about their father's work unit type when they were 14 years old.

Table 3. Average marginal effects on parental influence over spouse choice, estimated based on generalized logistic regression models

Variables	Having no influence at all	Having not much influence	Having some influence	Very influential
Marriage cohort (ref. = Early reform (1978-91))				
Socialist (pre-1978)	-0.024 (0.014)	-0.008 (0.005)	0.020 (0.012)	0.013 (0.008)
Mid-reform (1992-99)	0.043** (0.016)	0.009** (0.003)	-0.034** (0.012)	-0.019** (0.007)
Globalization (2000-09)	0.043* (0.017)	0.009** (0.003)	-0.033* (0.013)	-0.019** (0.007)
New era (2010-17)	0.028 (0.027)	0.007 (0.006)	-0.022 (0.021)	-0.013 (0.012)
Female (ref. = Male)	-0.063*** (0.011)	-0.015*** (0.003)	0.049*** (0.008)	0.030*** (0.005)
<i>Hukou</i> status (ref. = Rural stayer)				
Urban converter	0.057** (0.018)	0.012*** (0.004)	-0.042** (0.013)	-0.027*** (0.008)
Urban native	0.034 (0.022)	0.033 (0.019)	-0.011 (0.022)	-0.056*** (0.012)
Age at marriage (ref. = Married at ages 22-25)				
Married before age 22	0.002 (0.013)	0.001 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.010)	-0.001 (0.007)
Married after age 25	0.008 (0.016)	0.011 (0.016)	0.019 (0.017)	-0.038*** (0.010)
Ethnic minority (ref. = Han)	0.069* (0.028)	-0.083** (0.026)	-0.037 (0.028)	0.051** (0.017)
Only child (ref. = Not only child)	-0.041 (0.021)	-0.010 (0.005)	0.032 (0.017)	0.019 (0.010)
Education (ref. = primary or below)				
Junior high	0.022 (0.014)	0.005 (0.004)	-0.017 (0.011)	-0.010 (0.007)
Senior high	0.024 (0.018)	0.006 (0.004)	-0.018 (0.014)	-0.011 (0.008)
Junior college and above	-0.011 (0.021)	-0.004 (0.007)	0.009 (0.017)	0.006 (0.011)
Father's education (ref. = illiterate or semi-illiterate)				
Primary	-0.001 (0.016)	0.056*** (0.016)	-0.036* (0.017)	-0.019 (0.011)
Junior high	0.000 (0.022)	0.075*** (0.021)	-0.032 (0.022)	-0.042** (0.014)
Senior high and above	-0.021 (0.026)	0.079** (0.027)	-0.003 (0.029)	-0.055*** (0.016)
Father's Party Membership (ref. = Non-member)	0.056** (0.022)	-0.031 (0.023)	-0.045 (0.024)	0.020 (0.016)
Father's work unit (ref. = peasants)				
Non-state sector	0.009	0.002	-0.007	-0.004

	(0.022)	(0.004)	(0.017)	(0.010)
State-own enterprise	-0.015	-0.004	0.012	0.007
	(0.020)	(0.005)	(0.015)	(0.010)
State sector	-0.046*	-0.014	0.036*	0.024*
	(0.021)	(0.008)	(0.016)	(0.012)
Type of childhood neighborhood (ref. = Villages)				
Townships and towns	-0.033*	-0.011	0.026*	0.018
	(0.017)	(0.006)	(0.013)	(0.010)
Prefecture-level cities and counties	0.005	0.001	-0.004	-0.002
	(0.015)	(0.003)	(0.011)	(0.007)
Municipalities and provincial capitals	0.042	-0.057*	0.036	-0.021
	(0.026)	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.016)
Region (ref. = East)				
Central	-0.022	0.045*	0.000	-0.023*
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.011)
Northeast	-0.033	-0.007	0.023	0.017
	(0.019)	(0.005)	(0.013)	(0.010)
West	-0.060***	-0.001	0.080***	-0.019
	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.012)
Survey year 2017 (ref. = 2006)	-0.035**	-0.009**	0.027**	0.016**
	(0.012)	(0.003)	(0.009)	(0.006)
Observations	4,367			

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 4. Average marginal effects on parental monetary support, estimated based on generalized logistic regression models

Variables	No support	Some support	A great deal of support
Marriage cohort (ref. = Early reform (1978-91))			
Socialist (pre-1978)	0.038 (0.021)	-0.033 (0.019)	-0.004 (0.002)
Mid-reform (1992-99)	-0.131*** (0.021)	0.110*** (0.017)	0.021*** (0.004)
Globalization (2000-09)	-0.240*** (0.023)	0.192*** (0.018)	0.048*** (0.006)
New era (2010-17)	-0.314*** (0.032)	0.236*** (0.020)	0.078*** (0.014)
Parental influence (ref. = Having no influence at all)			
Having not much influence	-0.026 (0.019)	0.054** (0.018)	-0.028*** (0.008)
Having some influence	-0.118*** (0.019)	0.141*** (0.018)	-0.023** (0.008)
Very influential	-0.097*** (0.025)	0.068*** (0.017)	0.029*** (0.008)
Female (ref. = Male)	0.069*** (0.014)	-0.055*** (0.012)	-0.013*** (0.003)
<i>Hukou</i> status (ref. = Rural stayer)			
Urban converter	0.046* (0.023)	-0.038* (0.019)	-0.008* (0.004)
Urban native	-0.020 (0.026)	0.016 (0.020)	0.004 (0.005)
Age at marriage (ref. = Married at ages 22-25)			
Married before age 22	0.002 (0.018)	-0.002 (0.014)	-0.000 (0.004)
Married after age 25	0.062*** (0.017)	-0.050*** (0.014)	-0.012*** (0.003)
With children (ref. = No children)	-0.036 (0.032)	0.029 (0.026)	0.007 (0.006)
Ethnic minority (ref. = Han)	0.045 (0.031)	-0.036 (0.025)	-0.009 (0.006)
Only child (ref. = Not only child)	-0.099*** (0.028)	0.080*** (0.022)	0.019*** (0.006)
Education (ref. = primary or below)			
Junior high	-0.040* (0.019)	0.033* (0.016)	0.007* (0.003)
Senior high	-0.061* (0.024)	0.049* (0.019)	0.011* (0.004)
Junior college and above	-0.043 (0.030)	0.035 (0.024)	0.008 (0.005)
Father's education (ref. = illiterate or semi-illiterate)			
Primary	-0.034 (0.018)	0.028 (0.015)	0.006 (0.003)

Junior high	-0.078** (0.024)	0.063** (0.020)	0.015** (0.005)
Senior high and above	-0.105*** (0.031)	0.084*** (0.024)	0.021** (0.007)
Father's Party Membership (ref. = Non-member)	-0.040 (0.024)	0.032 (0.019)	0.008 (0.005)
Father's work unit (ref. = peasants)			
Non-state sector	-0.030 (0.028)	0.025 (0.023)	0.006 (0.005)
State-own enterprise	-0.016 (0.027)	-0.008 (0.024)	0.024* (0.010)
State sector	-0.053 (0.029)	0.043 (0.023)	0.010 (0.006)
Type of childhood neighborhood (ref. = Villages)			
Townships and towns	-0.050* (0.024)	0.040* (0.019)	0.011* (0.005)
Prefecture-level cities and counties	-0.012 (0.019)	0.010 (0.016)	0.002 (0.004)
Municipalities and provincial capitals	0.035 (0.028)	-0.028 (0.023)	-0.006 (0.005)
Region (ref. = East)			
Central	-0.022 (0.019)	0.018 (0.015)	0.004 (0.004)
Northeast	-0.011 (0.024)	0.009 (0.020)	0.002 (0.005)
West	-0.036 (0.019)	0.029 (0.015)	0.007 (0.004)
Survey year 2017 (ref. = 2006)	-0.029 (0.016)	0.023 (0.013)	0.006 (0.003)
Observations	4,367		

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Figure 1

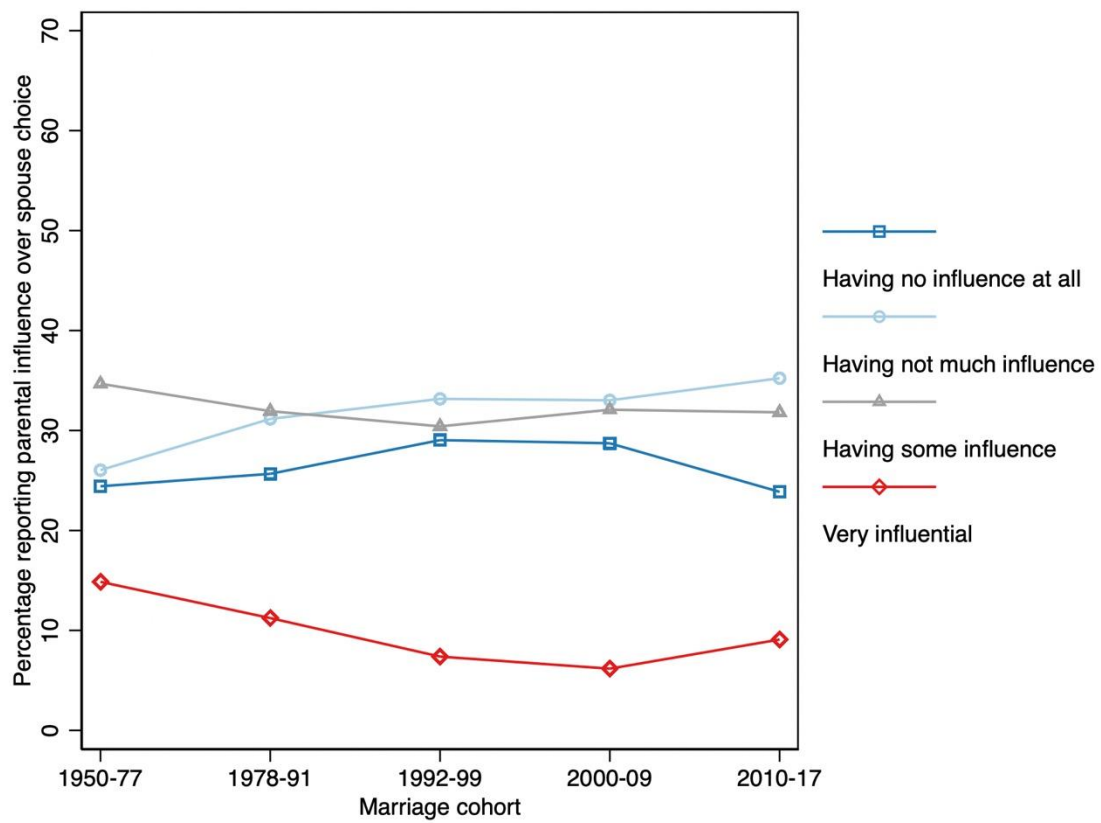


Figure 1. Parental influence over spouse choice by marriage cohort

Figure 2

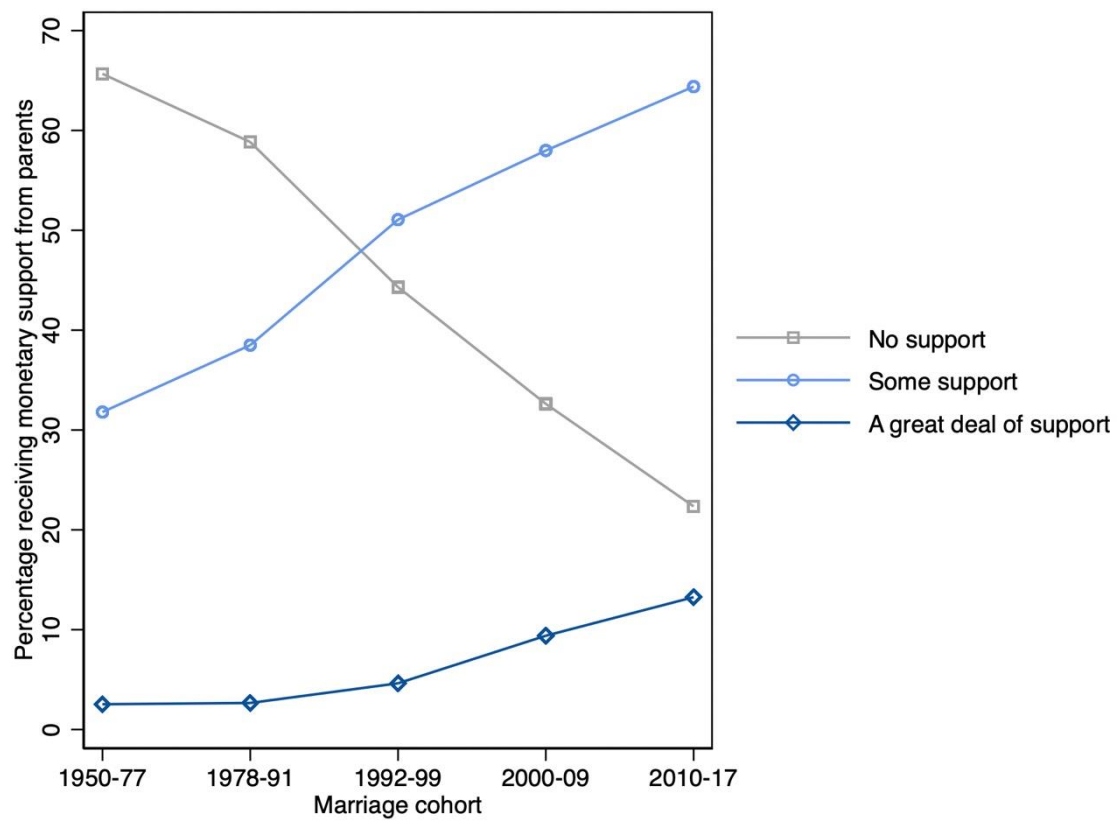


Figure 2. Parental monetary support by marriage cohort

Supplementary materials for

Between Autonomy and Interdependence: The Changing Parental Role in Adult Children's Family Formation in China

Table S1 presents the results from Table 3 in log odds.

Table S2 presents the results from Table 4 in log odds.

Tables S3a and S3b present the results from analyses restricted to respondents aged under 70 at the time of the survey.

Tables S4a and S4b present the results from analyses restricted to respondents aged under 65 at the time of the survey.

Table S1

Table S1. Results of generalized logistic regression (partial proportional odds models) on parental influence over spouse choice

Variables	Parental influence: 1 Having no influence at all, 2. Having not much influence, 3. Having some influence, 4. Very influential		
	1 vs. 2+3+4	1+2 vs. 3+4	1+2+3 vs. 4
Marriage cohort (ref. = Early reform (1978-91))			
Socialist (pre-1978)	0.136 (0.082)	0.136 (0.082)	0.136 (0.082)
Mid-reform (1992-99)	-0.223** (0.080)	-0.223** (0.080)	-0.223** (0.080)
Globalization (2000-09)	-0.220* (0.088)	-0.220* (0.088)	-0.220* (0.088)
New era (2010-17)	-0.144 (0.138)	-0.144 (0.138)	-0.144 (0.138)
Female (ref. = Male)	0.334*** (0.058)	0.334*** (0.058)	0.334*** (0.058)
<i>Hukou</i> status (ref. = Rural stayer)			
Urban converter	-0.292** (0.090)	-0.292** (0.090)	-0.292** (0.090)
Urban native	-0.179 (0.116)	-0.281* (0.110)	-0.690*** (0.170)
Age at marriage (ref. = Married at ages 22-25)			
Married before age 22	-0.012 (0.071)	-0.012 (0.071)	-0.012 (0.071)
Married after age 25	-0.043 (0.084)	-0.081 (0.079)	-0.473*** (0.139)
Ethnic minority (ref. = Han)	-0.362* (0.147)	0.058 (0.135)	0.568** (0.187)
Only child (ref. = Not only child)	0.218 (0.113)	0.218 (0.113)	0.218 (0.113)
Education (ref. = primary or below)			
Junior high	-0.117 (0.076)	-0.117 (0.076)	-0.117 (0.076)
Senior high	-0.123 (0.094)	-0.123 (0.094)	-0.123 (0.094)
Junior college and above	0.063 (0.117)	0.063 (0.117)	0.063 (0.117)
Father's education (ref. = illiterate or semi-illiterate)			
Primary	0.004 (0.086)	-0.232** (0.077)	-0.200 (0.118)
Junior high	-0.001 (0.113)	-0.315** (0.105)	-0.496** (0.176)

Senior high and above	0.115 (0.144)	-0.240 (0.133)	-0.684** (0.244)
Father's Party Membership (ref. = Non-member)	-0.293* (0.114)	-0.106 (0.109)	0.229 (0.179)
Father's work unit (ref. = peasants)			
Non-state sector	-0.044 (0.112)	-0.044 (0.112)	-0.044 (0.112)
State-own enterprise	0.080 (0.107)	0.080 (0.107)	0.080 (0.107)
State sector	0.252* (0.119)	0.252* (0.119)	0.252* (0.119)
Type of childhood neighborhood (ref. = Villages)			
Townships and towns	0.185 (0.096)	0.185 (0.096)	0.185 (0.096)
Prefecture-level cities and counties	-0.026 (0.077)	-0.026 (0.077)	-0.026 (0.077)
Municipalities and provincial capitals	-0.212 (0.127)	0.062 (0.121)	-0.254 (0.213)
Region (ref. = East)			
Central	0.114 (0.091)	-0.098 (0.083)	-0.263* (0.129)
Northeast	0.169 (0.098)	0.169 (0.098)	0.169 (0.098)
West	0.319*** (0.095)	0.252** (0.083)	-0.216 (0.131)
Survey year 2017 (ref. = 2006)	0.182** (0.061)	0.182** (0.061)	0.182** (0.061)
Constant	0.892*** (0.113)	-0.284** (0.108)	-1.851*** (0.128)
Observations	4,367		

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table S2

Table S2. Results of generalized logistic regression (partial proportional odds models) on parental monetary support

Variables	Parental monetary support: 1 No monetary support, 2. Some monetary support, 3. A great deal of monetary support	
	1 vs. 2+3	1+2 vs. 3
Marriage cohort (ref. = Early reform (1978-91))		
Socialist (pre-1978)	-0.164 (0.093)	-0.164 (0.093)
Mid-reform (1992-99)	0.550*** (0.088)	0.550*** (0.088)
Globalization (2000-09)	1.027*** (0.101)	1.027*** (0.101)
New era (2010-17)	1.393*** (0.162)	1.393*** (0.162)
Parental influence (ref. = Having no influence at all)		
Having not much influence	0.118 (0.085)	-0.665*** (0.184)
Having some influence	0.531*** (0.085)	-0.509** (0.178)
Very influential	0.437*** (0.115)	0.437*** (0.115)
Female (ref. = Male)	-0.309*** (0.066)	-0.309*** (0.066)
<i>Hukou</i> status (ref. = Rural stayer)		
Urban converter	-0.209* (0.103)	-0.209* (0.103)
Urban native	0.091 (0.115)	0.091 (0.115)
Age at marriage (ref. = Married at ages 22-25)		
Married before age 22	-0.011 (0.080)	-0.011 (0.080)
Married after age 25	-0.281*** (0.080)	-0.281*** (0.080)
With children (ref. = No children)	0.163 (0.145)	0.163 (0.145)
Ethnic minority (ref. = Han)	-0.201 (0.138)	-0.201 (0.138)
Only child (ref. = Not only child)	0.446*** (0.125)	0.446*** (0.125)
Education (ref. = primary or below)		
Junior high	0.180* (0.086)	0.180* (0.086)

Senior high	0.270*	0.270*
	(0.106)	(0.106)
Junior college and above	0.193	0.193
	(0.131)	(0.131)
Father's education (ref. = illiterate or semi-illiterate)		
Primary	0.149	0.149
	(0.079)	(0.079)
Junior high	0.343**	0.343**
	(0.106)	(0.106)
Senior high and above	0.464***	0.464***
	(0.135)	(0.135)
Father's Party Membership (ref. = Non-member)	0.181	0.181
	(0.108)	(0.108)
Father's work unit (ref. = peasants)		
Non-state sector	0.136	0.136
	(0.124)	(0.124)
State-own enterprise	0.073	0.511**
	(0.120)	(0.187)
State sector	0.239	0.239
	(0.131)	(0.131)
Type of childhood neighborhood (ref. = Villages)		
Townships and towns	0.225*	0.225*
	(0.108)	(0.108)
Prefecture-level cities and counties	0.055	0.055
	(0.087)	(0.087)
Municipalities and provincial capitals	-0.156	-0.156
	(0.126)	(0.126)
Region (ref. = East)		
Central	0.100	0.100
	(0.084)	(0.084)
Northeast	0.048	0.048
	(0.109)	(0.109)
West	0.160	0.160
	(0.086)	(0.086)
Survey year 2017 (ref. = 2006)	0.129	0.129
	(0.069)	(0.069)
Constant	-1.033***	-3.812***
	(0.193)	(0.220)
Observations	4,367	

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table S3a

Table S3a. Results of generalized logistic regression (partial proportional odds models) on parental influence over spouse choice (restricted to those aged under 70 at the time of the survey)

Variables	Parental influence: 1 Having no influence at all, 2. Having not much influence, 3. Having some influence, 4. Very influential		
	1 vs. 2+3+4	1+2 vs. 3+4	1+2+3 vs. 4
Marriage cohort (ref. = Early reform (1978-91))			
Socialist (pre-1978)	0.135 (0.086)	0.135 (0.086)	0.135 (0.086)
Mid-reform (1992-99)	-0.224** (0.080)	-0.224** (0.080)	-0.224** (0.080)
Globalization (2000-09)	-0.220* (0.088)	-0.220* (0.088)	-0.220* (0.088)
New era (2010-17)	-0.142 (0.139)	-0.142 (0.139)	-0.142 (0.139)
Female (ref. = Male)	0.330*** (0.059)	0.330*** (0.059)	0.330*** (0.059)
<i>Hukou</i> status (ref. = Rural stayer)			
Urban converter	-0.310*** (0.091)	-0.310*** (0.091)	-0.310*** (0.091)
Urban native	-0.198 (0.117)	-0.296** (0.111)	-0.682*** (0.172)
Age at marriage (ref. = Married at ages 22-25)			
Married before age 22	-0.010 (0.072)	-0.010 (0.072)	-0.010 (0.072)
Married after age 25	-0.041 (0.085)	-0.097 (0.080)	-0.502*** (0.143)
Ethnic minority (ref. = Han)	-0.358* (0.148)	0.081 (0.137)	0.587** (0.189)
Only child (ref. = Not only child)	0.232* (0.114)	0.232* (0.114)	0.232* (0.114)
Education (ref. = primary or below)			
Junior high	-0.109 (0.077)	-0.109 (0.077)	-0.109 (0.077)
Senior high	-0.108 (0.095)	-0.108 (0.095)	-0.108 (0.095)
Junior college and above	0.076 (0.119)	0.076 (0.119)	0.076 (0.119)
Father's education (ref. = illiterate or semi-illiterate)			
Primary	0.010 (0.087)	-0.248** (0.078)	-0.200 (0.120)
Junior high	-0.015 (0.113)	-0.341** (0.105)	-0.489** (0.178)
Senior high and above	0.102 (0.145)	-0.250 (0.134)	-0.676** (0.246)
Father's Party Membership (ref. = Non-member)	-0.294* (0.115)	-0.124 (0.110)	0.225 (0.181)

Father's work unit (ref. = peasants)			
Non-state sector	-0.025 (0.114)	-0.025 (0.114)	-0.025 (0.114)
State-own enterprise	0.139 (0.109)	0.139 (0.109)	0.139 (0.109)
State sector	0.292* (0.120)	0.292* (0.120)	0.292* (0.120)
Type of childhood neighborhood (ref. = Villages)			
Townships and towns	0.188 (0.097)	0.188 (0.097)	0.188 (0.097)
Prefecture-level cities and counties	-0.013 (0.078)	-0.013 (0.078)	-0.013 (0.078)
Municipalities and provincial capitals	-0.229 (0.129)	0.053 (0.123)	-0.329 (0.220)
Region (ref. = East)			
Central	0.097 (0.092)	-0.114 (0.084)	-0.317* (0.133)
Northeast	0.160 (0.100)	0.160 (0.100)	0.160 (0.100)
West	0.295** (0.095)	0.245** (0.084)	-0.204 (0.133)
Survey year 2017 (ref. = 2006)	0.182** (0.063)	0.182** (0.063)	0.182** (0.063)
Constant	0.885*** (0.115)	-0.280* (0.109)	-1.865*** (0.130)
Observations	4,250		

Standard errors in parentheses. Results reported in log odds.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table S3b

Table S3b. Results of generalized logistic regression (partial proportional odds models) on parental monetary support (restricted to those aged under 70 at the time of the survey)

Variables	Parental monetary support: 1 No monetary support, 2. Some monetary support, 3. A great deal of monetary support	
	1 vs. 2+3	1+2 vs. 3
Marriage cohort (ref. = Early reform (1978-91))		
Socialist (pre-1978)	-0.179 (0.099)	-0.179 (0.099)
Mid-reform (1992-99)	0.543*** (0.088)	0.543*** (0.088)
Globalization (2000-09)	1.023*** (0.101)	1.023*** (0.101)
New era (2010-17)	1.390*** (0.163)	1.390*** (0.163)
Parental influence (ref. = Having no influence at all)		
Having not much influence	0.098 (0.086)	-0.694*** (0.185)
Having some influence	0.502*** (0.086)	-0.520** (0.179)
Very influential	0.389*** (0.117)	0.389*** (0.117)
Female (ref. = Male)	-0.315*** (0.066)	-0.315*** (0.066)
<i>Hukou</i> status (ref. = Rural stayer)		
Urban converter	-0.215* (0.104)	-0.215* (0.104)
Urban native	0.069 (0.116)	0.069 (0.116)
Age at marriage (ref. = Married at ages 22-25)		
Married before age 22	-0.030 (0.081)	-0.030 (0.081)
Married after age 25	-0.285*** (0.081)	-0.285*** (0.081)
With children (ref. = No children)	0.175 (0.146)	0.175 (0.146)
Ethnic minority (ref. = Han)	-0.194 (0.139)	-0.194 (0.139)
Only child (ref. = Not only child)	0.455*** (0.127)	0.455*** (0.127)
Education (ref. = primary or below)		
Junior high	0.155 (0.087)	0.155 (0.087)
Senior high	0.265* (0.107)	0.265* (0.107)
Junior college and above	0.180 (0.133)	0.180 (0.133)

Father's education (ref. = illiterate or semi-illiterate)		
Primary	0.171*	0.171*
	(0.079)	(0.079)
Junior high	0.343**	0.343**
	(0.106)	(0.106)
Senior high and above	0.479***	0.479***
	(0.136)	(0.136)
Father's Party Membership (ref. = Non-member)	0.195	0.195
	(0.109)	(0.109)
Father's work unit (ref. = peasants)		
Non-state sector	0.111	0.111
	(0.126)	(0.126)
State-own enterprise	0.088	0.512**
	(0.122)	(0.188)
State sector	0.238	0.238
	(0.132)	(0.132)
Type of childhood neighborhood (ref. = Villages)		
Townships and towns	0.253*	0.253*
	(0.108)	(0.108)
Prefecture-level cities and counties	0.079	0.079
	(0.088)	(0.088)
Municipalities and provincial capitals	-0.115	-0.115
	(0.128)	(0.128)
Region (ref. = East)		
Central	0.075	0.075
	(0.085)	(0.085)
Northeast	0.075	0.075
	(0.111)	(0.111)
West	0.174*	0.174*
	(0.087)	(0.087)
Survey year 2017 (ref. = 2006)	0.130	0.130
	(0.071)	(0.071)
Constant	-1.022***	-3.798***
	(0.194)	(0.221)
Observations	4,250	

Standard errors in parentheses. Results reported in log odds.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table S4a

Table S4a. Results of generalized logistic regression (partial proportional odds models) on parental influence over spouse choice (restricted to those aged under 65 at the time of the survey)

Variables	Parental influence: 1 Having no influence at all, 2. Having not much influence, 3. Having some influence, 4. Very influential		
	1 vs. 2+3+4	1+2 vs. 3+4	1+2+3 vs. 4
Marriage cohort (ref. = Early reform (1978-91))			
Socialist (pre-1978)	0.149 (0.099)	0.149 (0.099)	0.149 (0.099)
Mid-reform (1992-99)	-0.240** (0.080)	-0.240** (0.080)	-0.240** (0.080)
Globalization (2000-09)	-0.257** (0.089)	-0.257** (0.089)	-0.257** (0.089)
New era (2010-17)	-0.200 (0.140)	-0.200 (0.140)	-0.200 (0.140)
Female (ref. = Male)	0.317*** (0.061)	0.317*** (0.061)	0.317*** (0.061)
<i>Hukou</i> status (ref. = Rural stayer)			
Urban converter	-0.291** (0.095)	-0.291** (0.095)	-0.291** (0.095)
Urban native	-0.206 (0.122)	-0.301** (0.115)	-0.685*** (0.179)
Age at marriage (ref. = Married at ages 22-25)			
Married before age 22	-0.016 (0.075)	-0.016 (0.075)	-0.016 (0.075)
Married after age 25	-0.018 (0.089)	-0.053 (0.083)	-0.489** (0.150)
Ethnic minority (ref. = Han)	-0.332* (0.154)	0.151 (0.141)	0.642** (0.197)
Only child (ref. = Not only child)	0.269* (0.116)	0.269* (0.116)	0.269* (0.116)
Education (ref. = primary or below)			
Junior high	-0.066 (0.080)	-0.066 (0.080)	-0.066 (0.080)
Senior high	-0.074 (0.098)	-0.074 (0.098)	-0.074 (0.098)
Junior college and above	0.116 (0.123)	0.116 (0.123)	0.116 (0.123)
Father's education (ref. = illiterate or semi-illiterate)			
Primary	0.063 (0.090)	-0.212** (0.081)	-0.159 (0.125)
Junior high	0.018 (0.115)	-0.317** (0.107)	-0.478** (0.182)
Senior high and above	0.105 (0.147)	-0.252 (0.137)	-0.692** (0.252)
Father's Party Membership (ref. = Non-member)	-0.266* (0.117)	-0.127 (0.112)	0.251 (0.184)

Father's work unit (ref. = peasants)			
Non-state sector	-0.028 (0.116)	-0.028 (0.116)	-0.028 (0.116)
State-own enterprise	0.101 (0.112)	0.101 (0.112)	0.101 (0.112)
State sector	0.266* (0.123)	0.266* (0.123)	0.266* (0.123)
Type of childhood neighborhood (ref. = Villages)			
Townships and towns	0.159 (0.099)	0.159 (0.099)	0.159 (0.099)
Prefecture-level cities and counties	-0.026 (0.080)	-0.026 (0.080)	-0.026 (0.080)
Municipalities and provincial capitals	-0.228 (0.135)	0.084 (0.128)	-0.269 (0.229)
Region (ref. = East)			
Central	0.099 (0.095)	-0.120 (0.086)	-0.306* (0.138)
Northeast	0.186 (0.104)	0.186 (0.104)	0.186 (0.104)
West	0.295** (0.098)	0.212* (0.087)	-0.249 (0.141)
Survey year 2017 (ref. = 2006)	0.214** (0.067)	0.214** (0.067)	0.214** (0.067)
Constant	0.845*** (0.118)	-0.318** (0.113)	-1.906*** (0.135)
Observations	3,976		

Standard errors in parentheses. Results reported in log odds.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table S4b

Table S4b. Results of generalized logistic regression (partial proportional odds models) on parental monetary support (restricted to those aged under 65 at the time of the survey)

Variables	Parental monetary support: 1 No monetary support, 2. Some monetary support, 3. A great deal of monetary support	
	1 vs. 2+3	1+2 vs. 3
Marriage cohort (ref. = Early reform (1978-91))		
Socialist (pre-1978)	-0.284* (0.115)	-0.284* (0.115)
Mid-reform (1992-99)	0.544*** (0.089)	0.544*** (0.089)
Globalization (2000-09)	1.039*** (0.103)	1.039*** (0.103)
New era (2010-17)	1.438*** (0.165)	1.438*** (0.165)
Parental influence (ref. = Having no influence at all)		
Having not much influence	0.126 (0.089)	-0.645*** (0.189)
Having some influence	0.500*** (0.089)	-0.502** (0.185)
Very influential	0.368** (0.122)	0.368** (0.122)
Female (ref. = Male)	-0.311*** (0.069)	-0.311*** (0.069)
<i>Hukou</i> status (ref. = Rural stayer)		
Urban converter	-0.205 (0.109)	-0.205 (0.109)
Urban native	0.119 (0.120)	0.119 (0.120)
Age at marriage (ref. = Married at ages 22-25)		
Married before age 22	-0.029 (0.085)	-0.029 (0.085)
Married after age 25	-0.312*** (0.084)	-0.312*** (0.084)
With children (ref. = No children)	0.188 (0.147)	0.188 (0.147)
Ethnic minority (ref. = Han)	-0.150 (0.144)	-0.150 (0.144)
Only child (ref. = Not only child)	0.442*** (0.130)	0.442*** (0.130)
Education (ref. = primary or below)		
Junior high	0.182* (0.091)	0.182* (0.091)
Senior high	0.267* (0.110)	0.267* (0.110)
Junior college and above	0.208 (0.138)	0.208 (0.138)

Father's education (ref. = illiterate or semi-illiterate)		
Primary	0.147 (0.082)	0.147 (0.082)
Junior high	0.329** (0.108)	0.329** (0.108)
Senior high and above	0.457** (0.139)	0.457** (0.139)
Father's Party Membership (ref. = Non-member)	0.224* (0.111)	0.224* (0.111)
Father's work unit (ref. = peasants)		
Non-state sector	0.113 (0.129)	0.113 (0.129)
State-own enterprise	0.095 (0.126)	0.522** (0.194)
State sector	0.249 (0.136)	0.249 (0.136)
Type of childhood neighborhood (ref. = Villages)		
Townships and towns	0.214 (0.112)	0.214 (0.112)
Prefecture-level cities and counties	0.049 (0.091)	0.049 (0.091)
Municipalities and provincial capitals	-0.133 (0.133)	-0.133 (0.133)
Region (ref. = East)		
Central	0.071 (0.087)	0.071 (0.087)
Northeast	0.092 (0.115)	0.092 (0.115)
West	0.145 (0.090)	0.145 (0.090)
Survey year 2017 (ref. = 2006)	0.090 (0.075)	0.090 (0.075)
Constant	-1.021*** (0.197)	-3.841*** (0.226)
Observations	3,976	

Standard errors in parentheses. Results reported in log odds.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05